

SPIRITS OF THE AGE: GHOST STORIES AND THE VICTORIAN PSYCHE

Jen Cadwallader

A dissertation submitted to the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of English and Comparative Literature.

Chapel Hill

2009

Approved by:

Laurie Langbauer

Jeanne Moskal

Thomas Reinert

Beverly Taylor

James Thompson

© 2009
Jen Cadwallader
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

ABSTRACT

JEN CADWALLADER: *Spirits of the Age: Ghost Stories and the Victorian Psyche*
(Under the direction of Beverly Taylor)

“Spirits of the Age: Ghost Stories and the Victorian Psyche” situates the ghost as a central figure in an on-going debate between nascent psychology and theology over the province of the psyche. Early in the nineteenth century, physiologists such as Samuel Hibbert, John Ferriar and William Newnham posited theories that sought to trace spiritual experiences to physical causes, a move that participated in the more general “attack on faith” lamented by intellectuals of the Victorian period. By mid-century, various of these theories – from ghosts as a form of “sunspot” to ghost-seeing as a result of strong drink – had disseminated widely across popular culture, and, I argue, had become a key feature of the period’s ghost fiction. Fictional ghosts provided an access point for questions regarding the origins and nature of experience: Ebenezer Scrooge, for example, must decide if he is being visited by his former business partner or a particularly nasty stomach disorder. The answer to this question, here and in ghost fiction across the period, points toward the shifting dynamic between spiritual and scientific epistemologies. As I demonstrate, Victorian ghost stories reveal an intellectual climate wherein writers such as Charles Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell and Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu reject the rigid binary in which the meaning of experience is dictated by either religious or scientific thought; instead, by drawing on the very psychological theories which sought to dismiss the divine nature of the supernatural, these writers argue for a greater degree of human agency in determining experience’s spiritual value.

Ghost stories thus represent a countercurrent in the trend toward increased secularism in the Victorian period. By employing the theories and methodologies of the psychologist, ghost story writers reimagined the mind's ability to access the divine. In each of the ghost stories I examine, I argue that a new faith in the power of the mind reinvigorated Victorian spiritual faith.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES.....	vi
INTRODUCTION.....	1
Chapter	
I. PHYSIOLOGY, PHARMACOLOGY AND THE GHOST STORIES OF J. S. LE FANU.....	12
II. TIME, PSYCHOLOGY, AND DICKENS’S SPIRITS OF CHRISTMAS.....	53
III. THE ANATOMY OF DESIRE: MADNESS, MESMERISM AND THE SPECTERS OF FEMALE SEXUALITY.....	97
IV. SPIRIT PHOTOGRAPHY AND THE VICTORIAN CULTURE OF MOURNING.....	139
WORKS CITED.....	175

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure

1. Anonymous, “Mr. Mesmer’s Tub”.....132
2. William H. Mumler, “Mrs. French of Boston with her son’s spirit”.....149
3. Frederick Hudson, “Lady Helena Newenham and the Spirit of her Daughter”.....150
4. *Harper’s Weekly*.....156
5. *Punch*.....161

Introduction

The familiar story about the nineteenth century, and particularly the Victorian period, is a story of eroding faith, of growing doubt. It was a time of “living without God in the world” (Miller 1). John Ruskin famously wrote in an 1851 letter to a friend, “You speak of the Flimsiness of your own faith. Mine, which was never strong, is being beaten into mere gold leaf, and flutters in weak rags from the letter of its old forms . . . If only the Geologists would let me alone, I could do very well, but those dreadful Hammers! I hear the clink of them at the end of every cadence of the Bible verses” (qtd in Alexander 72). Ruskin, at least, was still reading his Bible. Fifty years later, Thomas Hardy reflected nostalgically, “How sweet it was in years far hied /To start the wheels of day with trustful prayer, /To lie down liegely at the eventide /And feel a blest assurance he was there!” (41-44). This, from a poem called “God’s Funeral.” In Hardy’s estimation, God was a “man-projected Figure” created when we once needed solace, destroyed now in our new understanding of the world (21). What Hardy and Ruskin both hint at is the other half of this familiar story of the “age of doubt”: while people’s faith was cast as the tragically doomed hero, the villain of the story is science. From the geologists mentioned by Ruskin who helped discountenance belief in Biblical time, to astronomers who extended the size of the universe and thereby shrunk Victorians’ place within it, to naturalists such as Darwin and Spenser whose evolutionary theory recast the orderly,

God-controlled world as a messy, disorganized chaos where chance ruled supreme, science, in its many forms, was blamed for Christianity's dwindling following.

"Spirits of the Age: Ghost Stories and the Victorian Psyche" is situated in this context. Once exclusively the property of religion, the ghost was appropriated by science early in the nineteenth century and became a much-contested figure during the Victorian period. Through an examination of the treatment of ghosts in the nineteenth century, I would like to suggest a new way to read the old familiar story of the conflict between science and religion. My dissertation is divided into three parts: in this introduction, I will outline some theories for ghost-seeing which brought the ghost into the conflicted space between scientific and religious thought; in my chapters on Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, Charles Dickens, and Margaret Oliphant and Rhoda Broughton I will discuss ghost stories that, as a reaction to the debate over ghost-seeing, helped create a more hopeful model for interactions between these two types of thought; and in my final dissertation chapter I will discuss the Spiritualist Movement and the ways in which, out of initial conflict, we see Victorians adapting scientific thinking to a new form of faith.

Scientific rationalizations for ghost-seeing began appearing early in the nineteenth century. First among them was Manchester physician John Ferriar's 1813 *Essay Towards a Theory of Apparitions*. Ferriar's theory, which depends on Erasmus Darwin's research on vision,¹ likens ghosts to sunspots: both are impressions left on the eye which appear visible after the actual object has left the field of vision. A deceased relative might seem to appear to the living because the image of the deceased had been imprinted

¹ See Darwin's *Zoonomia*, Section XL. "On the Ocular Spectra of Light and Colours," pp. 605-608 particularly.

on the brain. In certain states of excitement, that mental impression may transmit itself once more the eye, creating the appearance of a ghost.

Ferriar's work was based on his extensive treatment of the mentally ill in the Manchester Infirmary's lunatic hospital. Antiquarian and geologist Samuel Hibbert lacked Ferriar's medical credentials, yet his 1824 *Sketches of the Philosophy of Apparitions* was rather popular, going on to a second edition within a year of being published. Hibbert takes a different approach than Ferriar's work, and instead of relying solely on optics to explain ghost-seeing (though his text does refer to Ferriar's argument), Hibbert traces these visions to the circulatory system. He elaborates on "certain states of the sanguineous system, in which a remarkable connexion between such states and an undue vividness of mental feelings appears to be established" (10). For example, too much or too little blood, or missing one's regularly scheduled blood-letting, could result in a taxation of the mind which in turn could cause spectral illusions to appear.

Yet another theory is propounded in William Newnham's 1830 *Essay on Superstition*. Newnham, a general medical practitioner who specialized in obstetrics and gynecology, argues that ghost-seeing is based on what he terms the "extensive sympathy" of the brain. He explains, "It is, however, accepted in the present discussion, that the brain stands so closely related to other organs of the body, that it possesses the capacity of suffering with them whenever they are in a state of irritation; and also, of reflecting upon them its own morbid actions, which they in their turn oftentimes assume, and then become secondary irritants to the brain" (75). Thus any bodily illness, like indigestion, for example, can cause a "cerebral disorder" which in turn might produce spectral illusions (119).

Finally, drawing on the work of his predecessors, the famed optician Sir David Brewster's *Natural Magic* argues "In a state of indisposition, the phosphorescence of the retina appears in new and more alarming forms. When the stomach is under a temporary derangement accompanied with headache, the pressure of the blood-vessels upon the retina shows itself, in total darkness, by a faint blue light floating before the eye, varying in its shape" (20). Brewster here combines elements of Ferriar's ocular theory with Newnham's "sympathy of the organs" theory in order to produce his ghosts.

While these theories vary in their particulars, they have one thing in common: each theory suggests that in one way or another, our own bodies are producing the specters that haunt us. Ferriar, Hibbert, Newnham, and Brewster each trace spectral visions to physiological causes, which indeed explains their interest in ghost-seeing in the first place. Like many scientific disciplines, psychology was in its nascence in the early years of the nineteenth century. As psychologist and historian Daniel Robinson notes, "before 1750, works of a psychological nature are actually and purely philosophical" (xviii). Today, "brain" and "mind" are used mostly interchangeably; however, to the early psychologist, the two had distinct meanings and it was unclear whether the mind was a wholly insubstantial part of the soul or if it had a material presence, inextricably linking it to the brain. In fact, the term "psychology" from its first use in the mid-seventeenth century referred to "a doctrine which searches out mans Soul and the effects of it" (*OED*, W. Harvey's *Anatomical Exercises*, 1653). It was not until the second half of the nineteenth century that the term took on its present day meaning, when, for example, Thomas Huxley states, "Psychology is a part of the science of life or biology . . . the psychologist studies the so-called 'faculties' of the mind" (*OED*, Hume 1879).

Thus, in this transitional period for the field of psychology, areas of study which could help scientists map out physical connections between the senses and the brain – connections that suggested that how we think was related physically to how we perceive – were of the highest interest. Ghost-seeing provided a really useful subject for this type of work because a ghost’s existence was entirely a matter of personal perception, unverifiable except through the senses. As Hibbert states, “these illusions . . . more than almost every other class of mental phenomena, [are calculated] to throw considerable light upon certain important laws connected with the physiology of the human mind” (vi).

But to suggest that the ghost was an entirely “man-projected Figure,” to use Hardy’s phrase, is to raise two contentious, and, I hope to demonstrate, related issues. Physiological theories for ghost-seeing create a number of potential causes for alarm: indigestion, poor circulation, certain states of sleepiness, temporary malfunctions of the senses were all linked to spectral visions. In effect, these theories leave the mind prey to the body. Brewster writes, “. . . we never think of distrusting an organ [the eye] which we have never found to deceive us; and the truth of the maxim that ‘seeing is believing’ is too deeply rooted in our nature to admit on any occasion of a single exception” (17). Brewster suggests that we should, in fact, distrust our senses: they are waiting to “deceive us.” Like the ghosts now lodged in our minds, our bodies are alien, hostile entities completely out of our control, ready to betray us at any time. A ghost is a trick, an imposition of our gross physical bodies on our rational being, with no other significance than to tell us that one system or another is on the fritz. In assigning this form of “madness” various physical causes, early psychologists in a way oversimplify the matter,

and there is a very dangerous logical extension to this line of reasoning. Newnham argues,

There are also many finer shades of cerebral disturbance, which . . . pass off as peculiarity of manner, odd habits, whim, ill-humour, or eccentricity. But from what source is this peculiarity of manner derived? . . . It cannot be derived from any peculiarity of the spiritual essence: for it is absurd to suppose, that there are souls of different kinds But the difficulty is easily removed, by considering it as the character which is stamped upon the *manifestation* of spiritual existence, by the *material medium* through which it is rendered cognizable: and thus it is, that these changes of thought and feeling are often ascribable to variations of health

(76-7 italics original)

The human soul, indistinguishable one from another, is colored as it is filtered through the brain, Newnham theorizes. Newnham reduces personality – those “whims,” “odd habits,” and “eccentricities” that mark individuality – to a species of “mental disturbance” caused by “variations of health.” That which makes us, us, is thus entirely out of our control: shaped by physical frailties rather than conscious choices.

The second troubling issue raised by physiological theories for ghost-seeing is that by denying ghosts autonomy or any sort of existence separate from our malfunctioning senses, these theories directly conflicted with religious doctrine. Physiological theories for ghost-seeing, like theories in other scientific disciplines, were guilty of what was termed “materialism”: thinking only in terms of the physical or material, these theories denied the existence of the spiritual. Of course Ferriar, Hibbert, Newnham, and Brewster were entirely cognizant that they were treading on hallowed ground, so to speak, and preface their works with various comments meant to disarm Christian critics. Ferriar writes, “Observe, however, that the following treatise is applicable, in its principles, to profane history, and to the delusions of individuals only.

If any thing contained in the ensuing pages could be construed into the most indirect reference to theological discussions, the manuscript would have been committed, without mercy, to the flames” (ix). Ferriar implies that his work has no bearing on theological discussions because ghosts themselves should have no place in these discussions.

Similarly, Newnham states, the “Author most sincerely and fervently prays, that [these essays] may prove the means of widening the agency of real religion, by contracting the limits of the prejudices against its influence” (x). In other words, by disproving superstitious beliefs, Newnham claims to be, in a way, purifying Christianity, making it more respectable. But how justified are these theorists in separating ghost-seeing from Christian doctrine?

This was a question being debated even among theologians. If we go back to the previous century, we find evidence which suggests that belief in ghosts was still an integral part of Christian faith. The *Sadducismus Triumphatus: Or, a full and plain Evidence Concerning Witches and Apparitions*, written by Charles II’s chaplain, Joseph Glanvil, had by 1726 reached its fourth edition: evidence that it was continuing to find a strong readership well after its original printing in 1681. As Glanvil states in his preface, “And those that dare not bluntly say, There is No God, content themselves (for a fair Step and Introduction) to deny there are Spirits or Witches.” In other words, denying the existence of one type of supernatural being is the first step on that slippery slope toward atheism. After all, as Glanvil notes, both ghosts and witches appear in the Bible. Of course, Glanvil’s argument is echoing a minority opinion among scholars – the kind of reasoning that led to the Salem Witch Trials (1692) was becoming scarcer and scarcer over the course of the eighteenth century. Among the laity, however, a belief that ghosts

had a place within a Christian universe still persisted. Owen Davies writes that it was a common notion that “their righteousness enhanced by their heavenly residence, ghosts sometimes returned to haunt the sinful and plague the consciences of moral transgressors” (4). He found that “as late as 1728 the body of [a Dorset boy] was exhumed on the orders of the coroner after several witnesses said they had seen his ghost” – the ghost’s appearance an indication that he had been murdered (5). In other words, the authorities were still likely to give supernatural testimony weight in legal matters. Even more famously, only fifty years prior to Ferriar’s writing on apparitions, in January of 1762 you could read in any of the London newspapers, amid the shipping news and the list of prominent marriages, about investigations into the “strange noise that had been so frequently heard” in Cock-Lane (*London Evening-Post*). These sounds – a violent scratching noise and a series of knocks – emanated from the vicinity of a young girl’s bed, and were, according to her and the family who lived there, communications from the room’s previous occupant, the now-deceased Fanny Lynes. “Scratching Fanny” as the manifestation came to be called, was back to accuse her former lover of poisoning her. She communicated through her knocks – one knock for yes, two for no – investigators asked her a series of questions; to quote from one newspaper account: “If she would be pleased if Mr. [Kent, her former lover] was hanged? One Knock” (*London Evening-Post*). So strong was the public outcry based on this ghostly accusation that Mr. Kent was in danger of a murder trial. A number of clergymen testified publicly that “Scratching Fanny” was a real ghost and that Kent was therefore a murderer. The Lord Mayor of London appointed a commission to investigate and discovered the hoax, but the incident points to how widespread (even among the clergy) was this belief in ghosts.

And this belief remained relatively unchanged through the early part of the nineteenth century. In 1804, the “Hammersmith Ghost” apparently frightened two women to death, although the *Times* declared that the ghost was likely someone dressed in a white costume having a bit of a night lark (Jan. 6). That same year, another ghost – this of a headless woman – apparently frightened a number of soldiers in St. James Park (*Times*, Jan. 13). Ghost sightings continued to appear in the *Times* throughout the first half of the century. Thus, as Ferriar and his ilk are writing about “mere superstitions” the popular thinking on ghosts aligns them more directly with mainstream Christianity.

These examples demonstrate that ghost-seeing theorists, were, in fact, opposing Christian doctrine accepted by the populace, if not necessarily endorsed by theologians. These early physiological accounts of ghost-seeing were doubly disturbing, then: not only alienating one from one’s own body, but smacking of heresy and seeming to suggest that Christian faith amounts to a species of mental failing.

Between the spate of theories explaining “spectral phenomena” produced in the first few decades of the nineteenth century and the formation of the Society for Psychical Research in 1882, a radical shift in the relationship between religious and scientific thought took place. The antagonistic (though apologetic) role toward spiritual matters evinced early in the period gave way to a more conciliatory attitude later in the century. The formation of the SPR, whose members included eminent physicists, mathematicians, and psychologists, a future Prime Minister and a Nobel Laureate, signaled a moment when science entered religion’s service. Formally, the SPR maintained an objective stance; its members, however, largely hoped to prove the existence of miracles, of ghosts, and ultimately of God, through scientific research. As one member of the SPR said in his

eulogy for Henry Sedgwick, the SPR's first president, "We caught together the distant hope that Science might in our own age make sufficient progress to open the spiritual gateway which she had been thought to close" (qtd in Haynes 8). In the following chapters, I argue that the Victorian ghost story anticipated and influenced this shift in the relationship between religion and science.

Far from laying belief in ghosts to rest, in attacking the ghost's external existence, psychology provoked a defensive response that breathed new life (so to speak) into spirituality. Fueled in part by this early scientific interest in ghosts, the Victorian period became the golden age of the ghost story. Hack writers and leading novelists alike tried their hand at the genre, as an examination of the era's periodicals attests. Ghost stories introduced the stock figure of the "man of science," the rationalistic, materialistic skeptic who is destined to receive a supernatural comeuppance by story's end. Within this conflict, writers began to develop a more nuanced understanding of the ghost's central role in the often tense dialogue between science and religion. Fictional ghosts provided an access point for questions regarding the origins and nature of experience: Ebenezer Scrooge, for example, must decide if he is being visited by his former business partner or a particularly nasty stomach disorder. The answer to this question, here and in ghost fiction across the period, points toward the shifting dynamic between spiritual and scientific epistemologies. As I will demonstrate, Victorian ghost stories reveal an intellectual climate wherein writers such as Charles Dickens, Margaret Oliphant, and others reject the rigid binary in which the meaning of experience is dictated by either religious or scientific thought; instead, by drawing on the very psychological theories that

sought to dismiss the divine nature of the supernatural, these writers argue for a greater degree of human agency in determining experience's spiritual value.

Ghost stories thus represent a countercurrent in the trend toward increased secularism in the Victorian period. By employing the theories and methodologies of the psychologist, ghost story writers reimagined the mind's ability to access the divine. This practice is evident, for example, in Dickens's use of ghosts as agents of memory in his Christmas stories. Drawing on Alexander Bain's theory of psychological relativism, Dickens founds Scrooge's and Redlaw's redemption on their mental ability to traverse time. Similarly, a belief in the power of observation and deduction informs both Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories and his spiritualist writings. Just as Holmes is able to deduce a suspect's life history by the part of his hair (or something along these lines), Doyle's spiritualist works contend that careful study of physical phenomena will lead to revelations about the nature of the divine. Like Doyle's discerning detective, the protagonists of nineteenth-century ghost stories demonstrate that a new faith in the power of the mind reinvigorated Victorian religious faith.

Chapter 1

Physiology, Pharmacology and the Ghost Stories of J. S. Le Fanu

Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu recycled material throughout his career. At his most ambitious he developed short stories into novels such as *A Wyvern Mystery* and *The Fortunes of Colonel Torlogh O'Brien*;² at his least ambitious he made minor changes to existing works, slapped on new titles, and sent them on their merry way (as is the case with “The Watcher,” republished as “The Familiar,” and “The Haunted House in Westminster,” republished as “Mr. Justice Harbottle”). Generous scholars have remarked on the “industrious re-articulation of his material” (Sullivan 13), others have perhaps more aptly labeled Le Fanu as a bibliographer’s nightmare, and one critic has wryly suggested that any lengthy study of his work will result in “déjà LeFanu” (Browne 5). A positive result of Le Fanu’s rewriting habit is the insight it offers into the development of his major preoccupations and concerns as a writer. For example, in turning his short story “A Passage in the Secret History of an Irish Countess” (1838) into the novel *Uncle Silas* (1864), Le Fanu made a number of significant changes. An exchange of settings from Ireland to Derbyshire reflects Le Fanu’s desire to appeal to the more lucrative

² *A Wyvern Mystery* is based on the story “A Chapter in the History of a Tyrone Family,” which, incidentally, supplied the central plot (of a man who hides his mad wife in one part of his home while his new bride takes up residence in another) of *Jane Eyre*. Le Fanu’s *The Fortunes of Colonel Torlogh O'Brien* is based on the story “An Adventure of Hardress Fitzgerald, a Royalist Captain.” For a complete list of Le Fanu’s publication history, including stories republished under new names or expanded into novels, see Gary William Crawford, *J. Sheridan Le Fanu: A Bio-Bibliography*.

English market, a course he followed routinely after Richard Bentley became his publisher. A major plot change – switching Silas Ruthyn’s innocent daughter Monica for the villainous Madame de la Rougierre as the novel’s climactic murder victim, is perhaps, as Ivan Melada suggests, a concession to middle-class Victorian mores (50). Such a revision highlights Le Fanu’s identification with the Victorian literary aesthetic and his move away from the more gruesome, shocking gothic tales and local legends that captured his youthful fancy. Another significant revision of the original story is, as one would expect in reading a novel based on a short story, the deepened and more nuanced characters of the novel’s chief villains, Silas Ruthyn and Madame de la Rougierre. Both characters, deservedly among the best-known in Le Fanu’s canon, take on the vice (in addition to their already established habitual greed and murderous inclinations) of substance abuse. Although “A Passage in the Secret History of an Irish Countess” makes an oblique reference to Madame de la Rougierre’s love of drink, *Uncle Silas* repeatedly and explicitly portrays her as an alcoholic. Arthur, Silas’s counterpart in “A Passage in the Secret History of an Irish Countess,” is addicted only to gaming, while Silas becomes dependent on opium in his novel form. So pointed is Le Fanu’s inclusion of this flaw in the two characters that both die as a direct result of substance abuse: Madame de la Rougierre is bludgeoned to death after drinking a narcotic-laced glass of wine intended for Maud, the novel’s heroine, while Silas deliberately takes a fatal dose of laudanum. The punishment of such excess is typical in Victorian literature, and thus may be construed as another of Le Fanu’s attempts to capitalize on the tastes of his readers; however, I would argue that pharmacological concerns are central to Le Fanu’s fiction. That Madame de la Rougierre and Silas transform from villains to addict-villains signals

Le Fanu's strengthening interest in the subject over the course of his writing career. From the besotted spirit in his first published story, "The Ghost and the Bone-setter" (1838), to the green tea swilling clergyman in one of his last stories, "Green Tea" (1869), Le Fanu's *oeuvre* displays a marked attention to the effects of stimulants on the mind. By tracing this preoccupation across Le Fanu's two short story sequences, I hope to demonstrate that while substance abuse began as a rather straightforward moral and political issue, Le Fanu's later work registers his growing unease with both religious and scientific explanations of the connection between mind and body.

While Le Fanu wrote in a variety of genres, penning historical novels with Scott in mind, gothic novels that betray the influence of Radcliffe, and even trying his hand at satire,³ his continuing interest for scholars lies in the body of ghost stories he produced over his thirty-five year writing career. Like Patricia Coughlin, I believe that "this body of work is not adequately described as a scattered series of slight, whimsical contributions to the genre of the Victorian ghost-story, but rather that it has a unity of purpose and meaning" (18). Le Fanu's two series of short stories, the sequence of early tales published in the *Dublin University Magazine* between 1838 and 1840 and posthumously as *The Purcell Papers*, and the sequence published in various journals between 1869 and 1872 and collected as *In a Glass Darkly*, employ a similar framing device. *The Purcell Papers* are purported to be the collected anecdotes of Father Francis Purcell, the parish priest of Drumcoolagh, in the south of Ireland. Likewise, *In a Glass Darkly* is represented as a series of "cases" presided over by Dr. Martin Hesselius, a

³ Le Fanu objected to his fiction being labeled "sensational," and asked the press to instead consider his work part of the "school of tragic English romance, which has been ennobled, and in great measure founded, by the genius of Sir Walter Scott" ("Preliminary Word" vii). See Melada, p. 43, for a discussion of Radcliffe's influence on Le Fanu.

noted metaphysician. It has been argued that Le Fanu chose the voice of Purcell “in much the same way that Maria Edgeworth used Thady Quirk in *Castle Rackrent*. The priest, like the family retainer, was a privileged person with access to the secrets of a castle superior to his own” (McCormack, *Sheridan* 55). Regarding *In a Glass Darkly*, Robert Tracy suggests that Le Fanu employed Hesselius (a character in “Green Tea”) as an expedient means for unifying an otherwise random group of stories (xxix). However, Le Fanu’s move from clergyman to man of science seems more pointed than these explanations suggest. In fact, I would argue that Le Fanu’s two collections plot a trajectory common to the period: *The Purcell Papers* participates in a worldview informed by religion, while *In a Glass Darkly* takes its cues from the realm of science. The years between the writing of each group of stories saw a mania for scientific, rational explanations for all kinds of phenomena, including, and central to Le Fanu’s writing, theories for ghost-seeing. While traditional Christian superstition often viewed ghost-seeing as a “horror” visited upon the heads of sinners, in the hands of early psychologists ghosts became related to mental aberrations. Substance abuse, a motif common to both story series, takes on different meanings when read through the lens of religious versus scientific thought, and Le Fanu’s fiction, after testing and rejecting the rigidity inherent in both modes of thought, ultimately leaves his characters – and his readers – adrift in a universe with no clear answers and no single system to explain the workings of the world. Unlike Dickens, who, I will argue in the next chapter, claims a greater ability for man to understand and emulate the divine based on psychological theory, Le Fanu does not attempt to reconcile science and religion. Characters following the lights of either system reach a point beyond which those lights cannot shine, an unknowable darkness where all

meaning resides. Le Fanu, the “father of the modern ghost story,” led his literary descendants down this path; his writing, by demolishing the systems through which the ghost was understood, opened the door into the darkness, allowing Dickens, Oliphant, Broughton, Conan Doyle, and countless others to venture forth.

I. Temperance and Le Fanu’s Early Ghost Stories

“ . . . abstamiousness is a fine thing, although it’s mighty dhry.”
“The Quare Gander”

Le Fanu, the son of an Irish Protestant clergyman, received his early education, along with his brother William, at home amidst his father’s large library, where he “spent much of his time in poring over many a quaint and curious volume” (*Seventy Years* 8). Gothic tales undoubtedly sparked his interest: in the 1838 story “A Drunkard’s Dream” he quotes Coleridge’s “Christabel” and refers to Polidori’s *Vathek*, and as Sullivan notes, the supernatural conceit of “The Ghost and the Bone-Setter” – a spirit who emerges from his portrait – may well have been borrowed from Walpole’s *Castle of Otranto* (11). Yet equal to the influence of the gothic fiction Le Fanu encountered in his early reading were the legends and figures of the Irish peasantry among whom he was raised. Take “The Ghost and the Bone-Setter” for example. The story is based on the local superstition, “prevalent throughout the south of Ireland,” that the soul of the last buried body in the graveyard is responsible for supplying his or her fellows with water while they dwell in purgatory (“Ghost” 3). Of course, no one would want a relative to be in this position in

the afterlife, hence Le Fanu witnessed a number of fights between funeral parties in his neighborhood. His brother relates one memorable episode:

Two funerals were approaching Abington Churchyard in opposite directions, one from Murroe, the other from Barrington's Bridge. The former was nearing the churchyard gate; on perceiving this the people in the other funeral took a short cut by running across a field, carrying the coffin with them, which they succeeded in throwing over the wall of the churchyard before the others were able to get in by the gate. This was counted such sharp practice that they were at once attacked by the other party, and a battle royal ensued.

(*Seventy Years* 38)

In Le Fanu's story, the ghost of "the ould squire" is in this unlucky position. More than this, the story's principal character, Terry Neil, is likely based on the Le Fanu's coachman, "an amateur surgeon" who treated the local peasantry in the absence of a medical professional (*Seventy Years* 36). Like the coachman, the fictional Terry Neil is

mighty handy entirely for carpenter's work, and mendin' ould spudethrees, an' the likes i' that. An' so he tuck up with bone-setting, as was most nathural, for none of them could come up to him in mendin' the leg iv a stool or a table; an' sure, there never was a bone-setter got so much custom--man an' child, young an' ould--there never was such breakin' and mendin' of bones known in the memory of man.

("Ghost" 7)

Nor is this the only instance of a real person making an appearance in Le Fanu's fiction. In a letter to his mother, Le Fanu admits good-humouredly to being caught writing about a past acquaintance in an unflattering way. He writes, "The possibility of this [discovery] had struck me when I introduced him but I scouted it, for I remember him when I was a child, an old man. There can be no doubt that the story is a horrid libel on him and I live in daily expectation of a message" (qtd in McCormack, *Sheridan* 120). This transmission

of incidents and people from life into fiction suggests that Le Fanu felt a sense of connection and sympathy with the Irish peasantry with whom he lived in such close quarters, and helps explain the mixed politics of Le Fanu's fiction.

Though Le Fanu was a member of the Anglo-Irish Protestant ascendancy, his fiction betrays a lively interest in and sympathy for the cause of the Catholic majority. W. J. McCormack, describing Le Fanu's reading of "Shamus O'Brien" – a ballad celebrating peasant rebellion and Irish nationhood – at a meeting of the staunchly Tory Historical Society, for which Le Fanu served as treasurer and later president, writes, "For a conservative, it was an odd recitation, its dialect as much as its politics puzzling to the orthodox supporters of Wellington and Peel" (*Sheridan* 51). Though Le Fanu firmly avowed his support for the Protestant cause, his fictional voice seemed to undercut this political stance. As McCormack suggests, "It is as well that the delicate arithmetic of the committee was expressed in conservative and liberal terms. By these he was clearly in the former camp, but had there been talk of nationalists, his place would be more difficult to define" (*Sheridan* 52). Le Fanu's nationalist sentiments found voice in the persona of Father Purcell. Like Le Fanu, Purcell is a man of "refined" habits and "literary" tastes; like him, too, Purcell is a "curious and industrious collector of old local traditions" ("Ghost" 1). However, Purcell, who "for nearly fifty years discharged the arduous duties of parish priest in the south of Ireland" is in an ideal position to both encounter and treat sympathetically the histories and legends of the Irish peasantry ("Ghost" 1). Through this voice, Le Fanu is able to express a sentimental attachment to both landscape and people that would have seemed out of place in the eldest son of the dean of Emly.

Le Fanu was seventeen when the Tithe Wars began and his family became a target for local Catholic animosity. While prior to 1831 the Le Fanus lived on “most friendly terms with the peasantry,” the next five years were marked by increasing hostility and occasional violence (*Seventy Years* 44). In his account of this period, William Le Fanu notes that the Le Fanus’ relationship with their Catholic neighbors seemed to change overnight. Casual friendliness was replaced with hostile glaring, and “none of [the family] went out alone, and [they] were always well armed” (63). On one outing, William was attacked by rock throwers (65). Perhaps more frightening because of the coldblooded planning involved was the attempted assassination of Charles Coote, rector of Doon, the Le Fanus’ nearest fellow clergyman and a family relation. Traveling home from church one morning he paused to water his horse and was confronted with

a thundering report, which nearly deafened him, and a cloud of smoke came from a little grove close by him. The blunderbuss which had been aimed at him had burst: its shattered remains, a half-emptied bottle of whisky, and a quantity of blood were found in the grove.

(Seventy Years 67)

Though Coote drew more of the peasantry’s ire through his very public clashes with the parish priest, it would have taken no great stretch for Le Fanu to imagine his father similarly threatened. That William vividly recalls the whiskey bottle next to the exploded gun indicates how closely linked violence and drunkenness were in the minds of the Le Fanus. Indeed, the two had long been seen as a troubling pair by the Protestant Ascendancy.

Public drunkenness, and the violence that often followed it, was a source of disruption and a threat to the landholding Protestant Ascendancy, dependent on the peasant class for its income and status. Alcohol consumption increased during the first

few decades of the nineteenth century at the same time that industrialization created the need for more regulated labor. Brian Howard Harrison argues that “accelerated urbanization and the need for precision and regularity made existing levels of drunkenness less tolerable” (92). Perhaps more significantly, drunkenness was seen as a threat to the existing social order. As Anya Taylor notes, “alcohol introduces festivity and dissolves hierarchy” (6); however, in the context of the political and social unrest of Ireland in the 1830s, anything that hinted at a breakdown in class boundaries was a source of anxiety for the Protestant Ascendancy. In fact, many among the Ascendancy believed that alcohol was helping fuel unrest and rebellion. Elizabeth Malcolm, in her study of nineteenth-century Irish temperance movements, notes that many brewers and drink sellers were involved in nationalist organizations, and “it was widely believed that alehouses were used for United Irish meetings and for the storage of weapons” (53). Not only was revenue from drinking thought to be aiding Irish rebellion, many believed that alcohol was used as a lure to draw followers to the nationalist cause. In 1834, John Edgar argued that “there is a strong temptation for persons to unite themselves with political societies, on account of the spirit drinking which frequently takes place in the lodges of these societies” (qtd in Malcolm 57).

The dual threats to income and class status prompted a number of responses from the Protestant Ascendancy. For example, under the pseudonym “Martin Doyle,” William Hickey, dean of Tacumshane, wrote tracts addressed to the peasant class trying to persuade them that it was in their own self-interest to practice temperance. To drunkenness he attributed three evils: poverty, violence, and ill-health. Hickey drew on

superstition and exaggeration in his description of the last. People should avoid heavy drinkers, Hickey argued, because

though a man's nose does not always show that there is a fire within, I may very seriously tell you that there are instances of persons being burned to death, without the application of fire or candle, from the constant use of ardent spirits. If a man's nose, however, be fiery red from drink, I should always apprehend that combustion might take place in his body.

(58)

The focus of Hickey's warning is not the danger of drinking oneself, it is the danger of being around others who drink. Imagine how terrible those nationalist meetings will be, Hickey seems to suggest, when all of the whiskey drinkers around you start exploding. For those who may have missed Hickey's political message, he goes on to write, "The Irish character is naturally kind and cheerful; and were it kept free from the excitement of politics and whiskey, would shine, as to its lower classes, beyond that of other nations" (64). Here, Hickey links drinking to politics, betraying the same Protestant Ascendancy concerns noted above. He also subtly discourages rebellion by pointing to the peasant class as having an already established national identity. For his work, Hickey was highly praised in the *Dublin University Magazine*, itself a mouthpiece for the Protestant

Ascendancy:

We are well aware of the many adverse influences which must obstruct the efforts of a clergyman of the Church of England in diffusing, no matter how unpolemically, or how much soever in a spirit of peace and love, those scriptural truths which might act with a reclaiming and purifying influence on the minds of the benighted peasantry of Ireland.

("Our Portrait" 376)

Unpolemic indeed.

Unsurprisingly – given their economic and political motivation – the first Temperance Societies to appear in Ireland, in 1829, were “almost wholly Protestant in composition” (Malcolm 56). Organized efforts to curb the drinking habits of the Irish Catholic peasantry could more effectively address the issues of economic turmoil and political unrest than any type of legislation.⁴ Malcolm notes that the American Temperance Society, which formed three years prior to those established in Ireland, “provided a model” for these Irish societies (67). Specifically, “the A.T.S. aimed its propaganda . . . at the affluent moderate drinker. If the leaders of society abstained from spirits and thus set an example to their subordinates, drinking would soon fall out of fashion” (Malcolm 61). This sentiment is similar to that expressed in Le Fanu’s Purcell stories. In his treatment of intemperance in *The Purcell Papers*, Le Fanu unites the Anglo-Irish political mission with his nationalistic sympathies.

The first Purcell story, “The Ghost and the Bone-setter,” modifies this Temperance message to better reflect Le Fanu’s mixed politics. Of his father, Terry Neil Jr. proudly proclaims, “he was as honest and as sober a man, barrin’ he was a little bit too partial to the glass, as you’d find in a day’s walk” (6). Terry Neil Sr. is thus portrayed as a heavy drinker, but Le Fanu’s tone is lighthearted and comical. Far less comical is Le Fanu’s portrayal of the ghostly “ould Squire,” who died when he “bursted a bloodvessel pullin’ a cork out iv a bottle,” and whose spirit smells strongly of sulphur (8). Not only has drink cost the squire his life, it has also, Le Fanu implies, damned his soul. The aristocratic character, the character whose influence upon his fellows is demonstrated in the obligation they are under to “sit up” in the manor when the family is away (an oblique

⁴ For a discussion of legislation aimed at reducing alcohol consumption in Ireland, see Malcolm, pp. 50-2, 56.

reference to the absenteeism so detrimental to the Irish nationalistic cause, perhaps), receives the more heavy-handed treatment. Ignoring the supernatural element for a moment, the story may be said to revolve around the confrontation between the upper- and lower-classes. The old Squire invokes this class distinction when describing his current state: “‘Well’ says the sperit, ‘although I was as sober as most men – at laste as most gintlemen,’ says he; ‘an though at different periods a most extempory Christian, and most charitable and inhuman to the poor,’ says he; ‘for all that I’m not as asy where I am now,’ says he, ‘as I had a right to expect,’ says he” (21). By aligning himself with “most gintlemen,” the old Squire unwittingly condemns his entire class along with himself when he notes his “extempory” Christianity and “inhuman” treatment of the poor. The ironic misuse of language here creates a critique in keeping with Le Fanu’s sympathy toward the Irish peasantry and his disapproval of their absentee landlords. That Terry Neil gives up alcohol and reforms based on this experience while the old Squire is banished through accidentally drinking holy water is further evidence of Le Fanu’s commitment to the political underpinnings of the Irish Temperance Movement: from the spirit of the old Squire to Terry Neil Sr. to Terry Neil Jr. a gradual reformation in terms of sobriety may be traced. The squire is damned, but Terry Neil Sr. breaks free from the negative influence of the upper-class and reforms within his lifetime. His son seems even more advanced as a model of industry and sobriety, and is described as a “well-spoken man” and an educator of the parish’s children by Father Purcell (5). The moral manages to satisfy both Le Fanu’s Irish Ascendancy principles and his nationalistic sentiments.

To return to the supernatural element of the story, it must be noted how atypical of Le Fanu’s body of ghost fiction “The Ghost and the Bone-setter” is. Generally

speaking, as V. S. Pritchett remarks, “Le Fanu’s ghosts are the most disquieting of all: the ghosts that can be justified, blobs of the unconscious that have floated up to the surface of the mind, and which are not irresponsible and perambulatory figments of family history, mooning and clanking about in fancy dress” (122). But a “figment of family history” precisely describes the old Squire, who steps right out of his portrait and breaks bottles all over the house. If Le Fanu’s later, better known ghosts (with which Pritchett is solely concerned) are fetched forth from the shadowy recesses of his characters’ guilt- and fear-ridden psyches, how do we then account for this opening tale in the Le Fanu canon? The psychological depth that marks his later work, and is a feature even of a few of the Purcell stories, is missing here, and indeed, would be wholly out of place in this quasi-comic adventure. What links Terry Neil to the old Squire is their mutual love for spirits: the story goes so far as to suggest that Terry’s sighting of one type of spirit is entirely due to imbibing too much of the other type. The effect of this possibility reduces the plot to a simple case of one drunken fool dreaming of another drunken fool, yet it also taps into the superstitious belief that the Divine punished sins such as drunkenness with fearful hallucinations or visitations from spirits. The story’s comic turn – Terry Neil wakes up clutching the leg of a chair rather than the squire’s (a plot device that recurs toward the end of *A Christmas Carol*) – does double duty by reinforcing Le Fanu’s Temperance message.

“The Ghost and the Bone-setter” was published in January of 1838; by the end of the year a new force had come to dominate the Temperance mission in Ireland. Father Theobald Mathew, ordained into the Capuchin order in 1814, founded the Abstinence Society in 1838, and “from the very beginning, [his] endeavors yielded striking success”

(Malcolm 111). Mathew's movement differed in a number of respects from the largely Protestant Temperance societies then active in Ireland. He advocated teetotalism rather than abstinence only from strong liquor, and his appeal was directed further down the social ladder than were the appeals of the Protestant Temperance groups. Malcolm summarizes the political significance between these two positions: "The anti-spirits campaign was conservative in its outlook Teetotalism, on the other hand, appealed openly to Catholics and particularly to drunkards with what it claimed was a simple formula for their economic betterment. Politically its sympathies inclined toward nationalism" (99). Mathew's famous "pledge" had strong overtones of Catholic ceremony, furthering his appeal to the peasantry. W. H. Daniels, one of the earliest historians of temperance movements, writes that Mathew's pledges "were held to be almost sacramental, and [his] temperance medals were actually worn as charms and amulets, like the holy relics which good Catholics delight to have upon their persons to keep all bad spirits away" (212).

Le Fanu's sympathies were already aligned with Mathew's mission. While Malcolm notes that the "Tory press was certainly hostile" in its treatment of Mathew and the Abstinence Society, the *Le Fanus* do not appear to have shared this sentiment (117). Joseph and William attended a few of Mathew's "monster meetings," – so called because of the enormous crowds they drew – and William's account of Mathew is laudatory: he was "one of the simplest minded men [William] had ever known" and "his noble temperance work . . . soon was crowned with such marvelous and unparalleled success" (56). "The Drunkard's Dream" (1838), written after Le Fanu witnessed Father Mathew administering the pledge, clearly shows the Abstinence Society's influence.

The tale is one of only a couple in which Purcell is an active participant in the proceedings and provides eyewitness testimony. In this case he is called to administer the last rites to one of his parishioners, Pat Connell, the “drunkard” of the story’s title. Notably, Connell and his family live in a small apartment building “without ventilation, reeking with all manner of offensive effluviæ, and lined by dingy, smoky, sickly and pent-up buildings” – a marked contrast to Purcell’s other parishioners, who, though often poor, are not depicted as living in such wretched squalor (“Drunkard” 208-9). Le Fanu thus underscores the link between intemperance and indigence established in Temperance literature and made prominent in Father Mathew’s preaching. Further, Purcell, after receiving his summons, anticipates that he will find Connell, a “presumptuous sinner . . . but too probably perishing under the consequences of some mad fit of intoxication” (“Drunkard” 208). In this remark, Purcell unites the moral and physical repercussions of drunkenness: excessive drinking is both Connell’s sin and the likely cause of his death. This connection is one of the common arguments of Temperance literature. Doyle, for example, in his lengthy musings on spontaneous combustion writes that it “is as awful [an instance] of divine visitation as can well be conceived” (58-9). Doyle’s underlying assumption is that the sin of drunkenness receives direct, physical punishment at the hands of the divine. Father Mathew was well-known for taking advantage of such superstitious beliefs to forward and enforce his abstinence message. Queen Victoria, on granting Mathew a pension (which he declined), lamented: “It is quite true that he has done much by preaching temperance, but by the aid of superstition, which can hardly be patronised by the crown” (qtd. in Malcolm 141). As Malcolm notes, Mathew did not directly advocate these superstitious beliefs, but he also did nothing to discountenance

them. One observer of the abstinence movement wrote, “Beyond doubt, superstitious ideas are mixed up with [the pledge] – a large proportion of those who have taken it conceiving that a breach of their promise would entail some fearful visitation” (qtd. in Malcolm 121). That, as Daniels notes, pledge takers wore their temperance medals like a holy relic to “keep all bad spirits away” suggests a dual use for the medal: to keep both drinkable “spirits” away, and to keep divine spirit visitors away.

This idea, that a relapse into intemperance will result in a “fearful visitation,” forms the basis for the supernatural events of “The Drunkard’s Dream.” After returning from the brink of death (or beyond, the story suggests), Connell confesses to Father Purcell his fearful vision of dining in Hell, and the temporary reprieve granted to him by the devil, a creature described as “taller than twelve men, and his face was very proud and terrible to look at” (“Drunkard” 224). Purcell uses Connell’s fears for his future state to advocate reform: he tells Connell “our salvation depended not upon the word or deed of a moment, but upon the habits of a life, that, in fine, if he at once discarded his idle companions and evil habits, and firmly adhered to a sober, industrious, and religious course of life, the powers of darkness might claim his soul in vain . . .” (“Drunkard” 228). Purcell’s message is perhaps more Protestant than Catholic, but its association of sobriety and industry echo Father Mathew’s message. The results of Connell’s new-found sobriety, too, could serve as a textbook example in support of the Abstinence message. Purcell notes, “I saw that man shake off idle and debauched companions . . . and revive his long discarded habits of industry and sobriety” (“Drunkard” 229). Further, “with his better habits he recovered his former extensive and profitable employment” (“Drunkard” 231). Though Purcell, as a Catholic priest, should ostensibly be more attuned to his

parishioners' spiritual rather than material well-being, here the two are virtually synonymous. Le Fanu's emphasis coincides with Mathew's. Perhaps the strongest tie between "The Drunkard's Dream" and Mathew's preaching lies in Connell's gruesome end. Purcell had advocated the effects of the "habits of life" rather than any single act in determining salvation, however, it is a single act which sends Connell to a (presumably) fiery afterlife. We are told

The unfortunate man had accidentally met an early friend just returned, after a long absence, and in a moment of excitement, forgetting everything in the warmth of his joy, he yielded to his urgent invitation to accompany him into a public-house Connell . . . had announced his determination to take nothing more than the strictest temperance would warrant But oh! who can describe the inveterate tenacity with which a drunkard's habits cling to him through life? He may repent – he may reform – . . . but amid all this reformation and compunction, who can tell the moment in which the base and ruinous propensity may not recur, triumphing over resolution, remorse, shame, everything, and prostrating its victim once more in all that is destructive and revolting in that fatal vice?

("Drunkard" 232-3)

Intoxicated, Connell returns home to his horrified wife; she reports seeing him leave the apartment in the company of a strange man; from here he tumbles down the stairs and breaks his neck, dying in exactly the spot he imagined he previously sunk down into Hell. Le Fanu's repeated stress on the significance of Connell's momentary lapse deliberately undermines Purcell's more lenient message of redemption. What Protestant Temperance adherents would easily forgive – extenuating circumstances which now and then lead to over-drinking – Mathew's followers would treat as the breaking of a sacred vow. That Connell was visited by an evil spirit following his debauch would be only a matter of course according to this more rigid cosmology. Thus, while both "The Ghost and the Bone-setter" and "The Drunkard's Dream" have temperance-related themes, the darker

tone and stricter moral of the latter demonstrates at least Le Fanu's willingness to consider Mathew's abstinence message. If nothing more, the story indicates the distance Le Fanu was willing to travel in service of the Temperance cause.

Sullivan's remark, that Le Fanu "did not attempt anything" like the Temperance-tract quality of "The Drunkard's Dream" again, needs slight amending on two fronts. First, Le Fanu dealt with exactly this theme again when he republished "The Drunkard's Dream" as "The Vision of Tom Chuff" (1870) in *All the Year Round*. Secondly, the Temperance theme, and specifically, this theme in relation to Father Mathew, recurs twice within the *Purcell Papers*. Two comic pieces, "The Quare Gander" (1840) and "Billy Malowney's Taste of Love and Glory" (1840), have plots that revolve around an instance of drunkenness; both tales also include rather disparaging remarks about Father Mathew. To deal with the less interesting of the two first, Billy Malowney, a rather hot-headed hero, drowns his anger at his sweetheart in a great deal of whiskey and, in his drunken state, enlists with the Welsh Confusileers to fight against "Bonyparty." The tale's narrator describes his behavior at a wake: "he paid no attention the rest of the evening to any soart of diversion but the whisky alone; an' every glass he'd drink it's what he'd be wishing the devil had the women . . . wid the goodness iv the sperits, an' the badness of his temper . . . he grew all as one as you might say almost, saving your presence, bastely drunk!" ("Billy" 261-2). Here is a situation typical of the concerns first raised by the Protestant Temperance societies: excessive drinking at a wake, the descent into a "beast-like" state indicative of loss of control, loss of reason. The repercussions for Malowney are slight, however. His desire to marry Molly Donovan is delayed by a number of years, but his time spent fighting the French earns him the respect of his

village, and rumors of Napoleon's fear of his battle-prowess make him into a legendary figure of sorts. Le Fanu has clearly pulled back from his earlier severity in relation to temperance. In concluding this tale with a description of Malowney's marriage to Molly, the narrator says, "An' begorra I'd be afeared to tell ye, because you would not believe me, since that blessid man Father Mathew put an end to all sorts of sociality, the Lord reward him, how many gallons iv pottieen whisky⁵ was dhrank upon that most solemn and tindher occasion" ("Billy" 288). Mathew would not, perhaps, enjoy the "reward" this narrator feels he deserves in return for putting an end to sociality, but the comment was certainly appreciated by the Protestant readers of the *Dublin University Magazine*. It stands, however, as a record of how widespread Mathew's influence was: the narrator is perhaps one of the estimated seven million who took the pledge. The story as a whole implies that wild adventures such as Billy Malowney's are at a distance; the breakdown of order represented in Malowney's drunkenness is echoed in the story's wartime setting. Such debauchery is thus relegated to the past. The narrator still enjoys his reminiscence of past occasions for drinking, but the very fact that he is able to cheerfully tell this tale to his parish priest indicates that the moral laxity inherent in his narrative is not a cause for present concern. Such a position is clearly a concession to the effectiveness of Mathew's work.

"The Quare Gander," like "The Drunkard's Dream" connects a supernatural visitation to excessive drinking; however, it does so in a way that criticizes and undermines this superstitious belief. This, one of the final stories framed by Father Purcell's perspective, moves away from the more rigid relationship Le Fanu had earlier

⁵ "Pottieen" or potteen whisky is the drink of choice among Le Fanu's Irish peasantry. The drink carried specific political connotations. Those who drank it, in effect, were proclaiming loyalty to the Irish nationalist cause. See Malcolm, pp. 33-4, for a fuller discussion.

established between sin and divine punishment. The tale, of a goose believed to be possessed by the protagonist's father, who then appears to speak when the protagonist is accidentally locked in a basket with it, maintains a deceptively light tone throughout. Yet unlike Le Fanu's other supernatural tales, here the possibility of a divine (or hellish) source for a spiritual experience is wholly denied. Terence Mooney's farmhands think the ghost of Mooney's father is communicating with them because, as the storyteller relates, "[Mooney] and Jer Garvan finished a quart [of whiskey] betune them" and fell asleep in the wrong place ("Quare" 240). Mooney's transgression still leads to a spirit-visit of sorts, but it is entirely of his own creating. The voice the farmhands hear is Mooney's own, a fitting metaphor for the theme of being haunted by one's conscience, which Le Fanu moves toward in his later ghost fiction. Mooney punishes himself (unwittingly) for his excess; crime and punishment are both accomplished through Mooney's agency – he is a closed system. The tale, then, though comic in nature, contains the most cynical understanding of the relationship between God and man in Le Fanu's early work, and in it, we see Le Fanu already moving away from the easy answers and the cause and effect relationship between drinking and ghost seeing promoted by Christian dogma.

II. Some "Strange Disturbances" Between Two Systems

The 1853 story "An Account of Some Strange Disturbances in Aungier Street," published in the *Dublin University Magazine*, marks a shift in Le Fanu's attitude toward ghost-seeing. Here for the first time he includes references to scientific theories

regarding “spectral phenomena,” and here, too, we first glimpse the influence of Swedenborgianism that becomes prominent in *In a Glass Darkly*. Le Fanu has moved beyond Father Purcell, but he has not yet created Dr. Hesselius; as a transitional piece, “Strange Disturbances” depicts the beginnings Le Fanu’s distrust of institutionally sanctioned explanations for spiritual experiences.

Le Fanu divides the story’s narrative between its two protagonists, Dick and his cousin, Tom Ludlow, and in doing so, gestures toward the dual (and dueling) explanations for ghost-seeing: the material, scientific view and the spiritual, religious view. Dick, our initial narrator, is a medical student at the time of the story’s events; the reader is led to assume that he has gone on to success in his field. Given his choice of studies, he is more or less committed to the materialist view, yet notes that he has an “excitable or nervous temperament” (“Strange” 19) and a “superstitious weakness” regarding the sinister quality of the Aungier Street house where the two men take up residence at the narrative’s start (“Strange” 21). This combination of traits allows him to both apply scientific theories to his experiences, and to question the efficacy of science’s theoretical solutions. Upon first becoming troubled with nightly visions of a portrait “mysteriously glued to the window-panes . . . of an old man, in a crimson flowered silk dressing-gown,” Dick approaches Tom for help (“Strange” 21-22). He says,

I had—I can’t say exactly why, but it may have been from the exquisite anguish and profound impressions of unearthly horror, with which this strange phantasmagoria was associated—an insurmountable antipathy to describing the exact nature of my nightly troubles to my friend and comrade. Generally, however, I told him that I was haunted by abominable dreams; and, true to the imputed materialism of medicine, we put our heads together to dispel my horrors, not by exorcism, but by a tonic.

(“Strange” 22)

Dick's dislike of discussing the vision – due, he thinks, to the “anguish” and “horror” the portrait inspires – testifies to his discomfort with non-material symptoms of bodily distress. Feelings are rather amorphous, but sleep is a verifiable phenomenon that can be tinkered with through medical intervention.

Just as Dick's materialism is tempered by his superstitious sentiments, so is his ghost-seeing experience lessened in intensity by his distance from the ghost of Judge Horrocks. The Judge's manifestations before Dick come in the form of the portrait outside his bedroom window and the giant rat on the stairs who is the “evil being in masquerade, and rambling through the house upon some infernal night lark” (“Strange” 27). The actual ghost of Judge Horrocks is reserved for Tom, who is as extreme in his initial skepticism (and materialism) as he is in his eventual conversion to belief. When Dick and Tom first move into the Aungier Street house, Tom “most affectedly ridiculed” Dick's fear of one particular bedroom. Though Tom's first sighting of Judge Horrocks crossing his room is so frightening he finds himself paralyzed for hours, by the next morning he “was trying to persuade [him]self that the whole thing was an illusion” (“Strange” 29). So invested is he in his rational understanding of ghosts that within a few days, he says, “I grew more confident, and began to fancy that I believed in the theories of spectral illusions, with which I had at first vainly tried to impose upon my convictions” (“Strange” 29). These responses to ghost-seeing underscore the strength of Tom's skepticism both in that he is initially able to tell himself he is deluded despite the strong (and paralyzing) evidence of his senses, and in that his skeptical stance ultimately triumphs over his “convictions.” Like Dick, Tom has judged the experience wrongly, ignoring what he feels to be true in order to remain faithful to his materialistic credo. It is

perhaps because of his distrust of system-guided human judgment that Le Fanu chose Judge Horrocks, the fallible, corrupt, “hanging judge” as his specter: Tom and Dick are truly haunted by and because of bad judgment. More specifically, this bad judgment is entirely the product of Tom’s and Dick’s adherence to the scientific system’s understanding of spiritual phenomena, at the expense of a deeper truth both men initially understand.

The extremity of Tom’s skepticism is matched by the totality of his belief by the end of his experience. As Dick says, “The sceptic [sic] was . . . destined to receive a lesson” (“Strange” 21). This is the common theme of ghost fiction by mid-century, and again points to Le Fanu’s shifting focus. Ghosts in *The Purcell Papers* are accepted as a matter of course, a fitting result of excess. The man of science, the enlightened rationalist who receives a comeuppance at the hands of a spirit, today is a stock figure of ghost fiction, but was only just beginning to appear when Le Fanu wrote “Strange Disturbances.” Tom ends his experience at the Aungier Street house a changed man, going so far as to give up medicine to enter the Church. It is a move which would have pleased Father Purcell; Le Fanu does not seem as sure. Tom’s career change indicates that he has rejected one system in favor of another, but his conviction that a “true” explanation for ghost-seeing can be found in religion is never endorsed by the story. The superabundance of “explanations” for Judge Horrocks’s appearances, along with a catalogue of his victims – some guilty, like the drunkard who seemingly fell down the stairs and broke his neck (*a la* “The Drunkard’s Dream”), and some perfectly innocent, like the number of children terrorized by the spirit. Nowhere in the story is the simple cause and effect relationship between sin and spiritual punishment which features so

prominently in *The Purcell Papers*. Tom, sure in his new belief in the Christian system, is dead before Dick tells the story, “a sacrifice to contagion, contracted in the noble discharge of his duties” (19). The reader is left with only Dick’s voice to make sense of the story, and Dick, half believing in the “something greater” the ghost represents, but still anchored in his materialistic rejection of spiritual matters, has no real answer to offer.

There are a great number of drinking references in “Strange Disturbances,” giving the impression that in this revisionary tale Le Fanu wanted to study the relationship between ghost-seeing and drinking from every conceivable angle. Alcohol plays a key role in both Dick’s and Tom’s adventures with Judge Horrocks. In Dick’s case, alcohol, specifically whiskey punch, is used as another form of tonic. He says, “as the best mode of keeping the ‘Black spirits and white,/ Blue spirits and grey,’ with which I was environed, at bay, I had adopted the practice recommended by the wisdom of my ancestors, and ‘kept my spirits up by pouring spirits down’” (“Strange” 24). This notion marks a radical reversal on Le Fanu’s part. In *The Purcell Papers*, alcohol is the catalyst for spirit-seeing; here, Dick drinks to try to escape such a vision. Le Fanu thus abolishes the cause and effect relationship he had established previously, signaling that ghost-seeing and excessive drinking are no longer linked as a simple moral issue.

Dick’s notion is to dull his senses; underlying this idea is the materialistic belief that the vision of Judge Horrocks is a product of his senses. Over three successive nights, Dick has the opportunity (whether he would like it or not) to test this theory. On the first night, the Judge’s rat form flops down the stairs from the attic before Dick drinks his punch. The supernatural occurrence here is unconnected with consumption of alcohol. On the second night, “the *morale* of the garrison was . . . excellent” given Dick’s punch

intake; his consequent ghostly experience is with his china hutch, which he attacks with a poker when he mistakes an inverted pair of teacups for staring eyes (“Strange” 25). Here is a ghost-seeing experience akin to that in “The Quare Gander”: spirit drinking has led to spirit seeing, but the sight is entirely manmade. As a test of Dick’s theory regarding dulling the senses to supernatural visions, the experience is inconclusive. Dick rushes out to confront the ghost because he hears its footfall on the stairs, just as he had on the previous night; his sense of the spirit’s presence is unaltered. However, his senses are confused enough to mistake the hutch for a supernatural creature in the darkness, partially supporting his belief in the whiskey’s efficacy. Finally, on the third night, Dick’s reliance on alcohol becomes both mental and physical. He says “I sate down and stared at the square label on the solemn and reserved-looking black bottle, until ‘FLANAGAN & CO.’S BEST OLD MALT WHISKY’ grew into a sort of subdued accompaniment to all the fantastic and horrible speculations which chased one another through my brain” (“Strange” 26). Likewise, Dick restores his nerves with strong punch. It is on this night that Dick finally visually encounters the rat who has successively disturbed his evenings with its nightly rambles on the stairs. The fact that Dick had been disturbed whether or not he consumed alcohol effectively undermines his theory that dulling the senses will shut out supernatural visitations. Le Fanu seems to indicate that the forces behind ghostly appearances are stronger than the human capability of altering sensory perception. Dick’s three-time adventure defies both traditional superstition and physiological theories for ghost-seeing.

In defying and denying the “answers” offered by religion and science, Le Fanu points toward ghost-seeing as an experience that lies outside of any system’s

explanations, an understanding more fully articulated in Tom's account of his experience with Judge Horrocks. Like Dick, Tom has three supernatural encounters. The first, described above, is unrelated to alcohol; however, prior to Tom's second sighting of Judge Horrocks, he notes cheering himself up by listening to a "loud drunken quarrel in the back lane" outside his bedroom window ("Strange" 30). Just as Dick raised his spirits through drinking, so has Tom raised his through the idea of drunkenness – a sort of proof that the mind's power is equal to the body's. The drunken quarrel he hears going on in the street is a reminder of his mundane, normal surroundings; it is proof to him of the impossibility of a second supernatural occurrence. However, like his conviction that the world is bound by natural, material laws, Tom's understanding of his surroundings is flawed. The materialist view, just like Tom's sense of being surrounded by the mundane, lulls Tom into feelings of complacency. As he begins to drift off to sleep, the subject of drunkenness again arises. Tom hears a man singing "Murphy Delany": "Twas Murphy Delany, so funny and frisky, / Stept into a shebeen shop⁶ to get his skin full; / He reeled out again pretty well lined with whiskey, / As fresh as a shamrock, as blind as a bull" ("Strange" 30). Tom surmises that the singer's state "resembled that of his hero," which effectively adds a second layer to the drunkenness of the scene. As the singer's voice fades into the distance, Tom continues to think of the song, imaginatively following Murphy Delany on his drunken adventures. The song ends with its hero hanged, and the repetition of the phrase "dead, dead, dead" is the cue for Judge Horrocks's visit. This sequence of events creates a contrast between the reasoning behind spirit visits in *The Purcell Papers* and Le Fanu's new understanding of spirit visits as exemplified in

⁶ An establishment that sells alcohol illegally, which again is a mark of political affiliation with the cause of Irish nationalism.

“Strange Disturbances.” In the song both Tom and the drunkard in the street below sing, drunkenness is punished with death, establishing the same sense of cause and effect featured in *The Purcell Papers*. This song’s presence creates tension between its portrayal of justice and the seeming lack of justice in the story’s events. While Murphy Delany is punished for vice, his counterpart, the drunken singer, escapes unscathed. It is Tom, whose only sin is the contemplation of a song about drunkenness, who receives a horrifying spectral visitor. In other words, “Strange Disturbances” undermines any sense of logical cause and effect based in the Christian system. It, too, disturbs the logic of materialism. Tom’s encounter with the spirit is neither attributable to inebriation (as some physiologists argued), or something he can defend against through drinking (as Dick attempts to do). Alcoholic spirits and supernatural spirits are both present in the scene, and nothing logical links them together.

“An Account of Some Strange Disturbances in Aungier Street” is disturbing because of its lack of answers. The ghost of Judge Horrocks appears – exists – for no discernable reason; drinking neither brings about divine punishment, or protects the mind from ghostly encounters. Le Fanu undercuts both Christian and scientific systems, an approach that will become more marked in the stories that comprise *In a Glass Darkly*.

III. Questioning Spirits in Le Fanu’s Later Ghost Stories

“ . . . I tried to comfort myself by repeating again and again the assurance, ‘the thing is purely disease, a well-known physical affection . . .’”

“Green Tea”

Le Fanu's interest in psychology is evident to some extent in *The Purcell Papers*. "The Drunkard's Dream," for example, begins with Father Purcell's philosophical reflection on the mysteries of dreams. He writes

It does appear that a mental phenomenon so extraordinary cannot be wholly without its use. We know, indeed, that in the olden times it has been made the organ of communication between the Deity and His creatures; and when, as I have seen, a dream produces upon a mind, to all appearances hopelessly reprobate and depraved, an effect so powerful and so lasting as to break down the inveterate habits, and reform the life of an abandoned sinner, we see in the result, in the reformation of morals which appeared incorrigible, in the reclamation of a human soul which seemed to be irretrievably lost, something more than could be produced by a mere chimera of the slumbering fancy, something more than could arise from the capricious images of a terrified imagination; but once presented, we behold in all these things, and in their tremendous and mysterious results, the operation of the hand of God.

("Drunkard" 202-3)

Already in this early story, Le Fanu is speculating about the mind's "extraordinary" abilities, particularly in relation to spiritual matters. Purcell connects a mental operation with a moral conversion, seeing the "hand of God" at work in the products of the imagination. That the imagination is "terrified" suggests that for Le Fanu, terror has a salubrious effect on moral life. Just as the superstitious fear of a spirit-visit served as a check to Father Mathew's pledge-takers, so might a terrifying experience, imaginary or not, work to scare a person straight, so to speak. As evidence for the existence of God-inspired dreams, Purcell cites biblical authority and his own experience; mental phenomena undergo an ontological shift in *In a Glass Darkly*, where Dr. Hesselius invests them with physiological origins.

In the title to his 1872 collection of supernatural tales, Le Fanu neatly captures the paradox that is the essence of the ghost story: a ghost-seeing experience is essentially a

claim to see beyond life, beyond death, into the unknown. In effect, it purports to have an answer to *the* question. But in slightly altering 1 Corinthians: “For now we see through a glass, darkly”, to “in a glass darkly,” Le Fanu seems to deny the experience’s worth. It does not grant us the momentary power to see beyond, to see through death into afterlife as easily as looking through a window, and instead posits that the ghost story’s glass is not transparent but reflective. As Robert Tracy writes, “A clergyman’s son, we can be sure he did not misquote scripture lightly. The glass of his title is not a window-pane through which we glimpse dim intimations of a spiritual world, or of divine truth. It is a mirror in which we glimpse our own darker nature” (xv). The ghost stories in this collection, Le Fanu’s title suggests, only reveal the image of our own fears and insecurities. I would suggest that Tracy is only partially right: the title does mark Le Fanu’s focus on the self, but in story after story, a sense of the divine is pervasive. Le Fanu does not, then, deny the connection between the supernatural and the divine; instead, his title points to man’s increasing inability to comprehend this connection. McCormack argues,

In, replacing *through*, appears to deny even this degree of limited penetration The aspirant Christian now finds his attention trapped, or obscured, or obstructed, *within* what might have been thought the medium of successful vision. The misquotation, at this level, is quite at one with the religious misgivings of Matthew Arnold’s ‘Dover Beach,’ and with the Victorian crisis of faith generally.

(*Dissolute* 141)

In a Glass Darkly presents a marked shift from *The Purcell Papers* in terms of the religious convictions of the stories’ protagonists, in keeping, as McCormack notes, with the more general erosion of faith across the nineteenth century. Specifically, the inclusion of Dr. Hesselius as the stories’ framer places the origin of the “crisis of faith” in

the nascent field of psychology. Just as Father Purcell, “simply by his presence . . . emphasizes the spiritual aspect of the stories,” so does Hesselius’s presence emphasize the pseudo-medical explanations for ghost-seeing (Harris 11). While Le Fanu’s interest in pharmacology remains strong in these later stories, his temperance themes take second place to explorations of these pseudo-medical explanations’ connection between imbibing and seeing spirits. While *The Purcell Papers* presents a straightforward Christian cosmology, and while “Strange Disturbances” balances a rejection of this cosmology with a similar rejection of materialistic theories for ghost seeing, *In a Glass Darkly* almost nostalgically looks back at the faith of Le Fanu’s earlier stories even as it suggests that man’s growing materialism and the inadequacy of organized religion make accessing and understanding the spiritual impossible.

There is much to suggest that Le Fanu himself suffered a crisis of faith prior to writing the stories of *In a Glass Darkly*. The sudden death of Le Fanu’s wife, his “darling Susie,” in May of 1858 undermined his spiritual life; indeed, the very tenor of his existence changed. William writes, “from this time he entirely forsook general society, and was seldom seen except by his near relations and a few familiar friends” (*Seventy Years* 151). Le Fanu the recluse replaced Le Fanu the public speaker, the former president of the Historical Society.

In fact, Le Fanu’s trust in both medical and spiritual wisdom seems to have been shaken by Susan’s death. In a journal entry composed hours after his wife’s passing, Le Fanu writes, “I will not trouble myself with the faithless thought that the errors of art or the misapprehensions of the beloved patient hastened her death God be praised – I can rest upon this as upon a rock – I need trouble myself no more about doctors – or their

measures or what might have been – It was the will of my heavenly Father that she should die exactly when and as she did – and in that certainty ends all speculation” (Lozès 157-60). The tone of this claim is indicative more of his doubts than his assurance in the justification of his loss. That he states his convictions so positively points to the internal questions he is struggling with. Did Susan’s doctors treat her correctly? Was she divinely fated to pass at this time? The mistrust of authoritative wisdom evident in “Strange Disturbances” could only gain new fuel from Le Fanu’s sudden encounter with death. His close interactions with the medical professionals who treated – but could not save – Susan, and his readings in the psychological treatises dealing with ghost-seeing⁷ provided him with ample material to create *In a Glass Darkly*’s framer, Martin Hesselius.

While Father Purcell is a sympathetic narrator whose feelings in many ways echoed Le Fanu’s own, Hesselius is entirely unlikeable, and his character is subtly ridiculed and reviled throughout the text. Le Fanu characterizes Hesselius as a “German physician,” a nod to both Swedenborg and the German psychologists whose influence shaped British treatises on the mind and on ghost-seeing. Hesselius claims for himself powers beyond those of a normal medical practitioner. He describes himself as a

medical philosopher . . . elaborating theories by the aid of cases sought out by himself, and by him watched and scrutinized with more time at hand, and consequently infinitely more minuteness than the ordinary practitioner can afford, [who] falls insensibly into habits of observation, which accompany him everywhere, and are exercised, as some people would say, impertinently, upon every subject that presents itself with the least likelihood of rewarding inquiry.

⁷ According to Ivan Melada, even after Le Fanu became a bit of a recluse, “on the few occasions when Le Fanu left his house, it was to make nightly visits to old bookstores in search of books about ghosts and demons” (22). In these visits to bookstores, Le Fanu would have undoubtedly come across treatises on ghost-seeing such as those written by Ferrier, Newnham, Hibbert, and Brewster.

(“Green Tea” 8)

Not only has Hesselius set himself apart from his medical colleagues, he has also distanced himself from humanity. He dehumanizes his patients, referring to them as “cases,” and all who come in contact with him are reduced to potential “subjects.” Unlike Father Purcell, whose sympathy with the characters who populate his tales brings both him and the reader closer to them, Hesselius’s treatment of his subjects and cases invites the reader to similarly regard these characters clinically, as aberrations, as curiosities. His vision is at once alienating and alienated – a dark view of humanity which isolates individuals based on their neuroses. Hesselius’s vision catalogues and categorizes; all who come in contact with him are given a mental file folder where the “facts” about them are neatly logged away. In his characterization of Hesselius, Le Fanu critiques the presumption of the field of psychology in general. Like his real-life counterparts, Hesselius claims to be able to divine the inner workings of the mind based on observable data. When he first meets the Reverend Jennings in “Green Tea,” he says, “I penetrated his thoughts without his being aware of it, and was careful to say nothing which could betray to his sensitive vigilance my suspicions regarding his position.” (9). Hesselius’s language is that of the conqueror describing his power over his subject, which gives additional meaning to his previous use of the term “subject.” People are both his study and, through his “penetrating” gaze, under his control.

What keeps Hesselius’s view of humanity as so many case-studies from being the view of Le Fanu are the various reactions of Hesselius’s subjects to him. Throughout the stories that comprise *In a Glass Darkly*, protagonists attempt to break free of Hesselius’s cataloging effort by reaching out for sympathy, for understanding that provokes a human

connection rather than produces additional data for their files. Jennings confesses his terrible secret – being haunted by a blasphemous demon monkey – hoping to be reassured that all will yet be well, hoping that connecting with another human being will help him break out of his internal mental struggle. Likewise, Captain Barton, in “The Familiar,” tries to describe his haunting experience and the guilt that underlies it to a doctor with the same need for sympathy inherent in Jennings’ confession. While Jennings’ and Barton’s words fail to move their respective doctors, they do work to align the reader’s sympathies with them, and in doing so, they further underscore the coldness and ineffectiveness of Hesselius and his ilk.

By creating a problematic relationship between doctor and patient, and by recruiting his readers’ sympathies on the side of the patient, Le Fanu highlights the failings of the new psychological/physiognomic approach to medicine. Chiefly this failing is manifested in Doctor Hesselius’s inability to comprehend the totality of human experience. While he repeatedly claims to believe in the supernatural, he treats his patients’ encounters with it not as spiritual experiences but as evidence of a deranged sensorium. This is a marked contrast to Father Purcell’s understanding of such experiences – Purcell, of course, sees in the dreams and superstitious portents of his parishioners the active hand of God guiding his flock. In the case of Reverend Jennings’ experience with his demon monkey, Hesselius remarks, “I told him that he must regard his illness strictly as one dependent on physical, though *subtle* physical, causes” (“Green Tea” 33). His theory is that the human body possesses a “circulation arterial and venous in its mechanism, through the nerves of this system, thus considered, the brain is the heart. The fluid, which is propagated hence through one class of nerves, returns in an

altered state through another, and the nature of that fluid is spiritual, though not immaterial, any more than . . . light or electricity are so” (“Green Tea” 39). The pseudo-medical terminology Hesselius spouts here parodies early psychologists. Just as Newnham, for example, reduced aspects of personality to the products of interactions between the brain and bodily organs, so has Hesselius given spirituality a physical origin. Experiences that are supernatural in nature are produced, according to Hesselius, by a disturbance in the body’s spiritual fluid. Such a theory, by extension, reduces all religious experience to a type of illness. While Father Purcell took the supernatural out of man’s control by marking it as a lesson direct from God with a clearcut moral attached, Hesselius removes God from the equation, relegating the supernatural to a symptom treatable through healthy living.

Le Fanu’s dissatisfaction with this connection between body and spirit is manifested through the impotence of Hesselius’s prescriptive cures. Jennings’ suicide – what most psychologists would consider a rather strong indication of the inefficacy of their treatment – is by Hesselius almost blithely shrugged off. In fact, he claims, Jennings was not really troubled by a supernatural vision at all: “[his] case was in the distinctive manner a complication, and the complaint under which he really succumbed, was hereditary suicidal mania” (“Green Tea” 39). In other words, Jennings was always suicidal; the demon monkey business that took place before his death was simply a coincidence. An easy prognosis, given that the only person who could gainsay it is dead. But to further distance himself from the odor of failure, Hesselius concludes the “case” by noting: “Poor Mr. Jennings I cannot call a patient of mine, for I had not even begun to treat his case, and he had not yet given me, I am convinced, his full and unreserved

confidence. If the patient do not array himself on the side of the disease, his cure is certain” (40). Such a statement cannot fail to rouse the readers’ incredulity. What, possibly, could Jennings have been holding back, given that this respectable clergyman had already admitted to a belief that he was perpetually haunted by a small, sinister, foul-mouthed monkey? It seems only too clear that Jennings overcame a considerable fear of judgment to tell his story because he was convinced that his confession was his only chance for help. Further, Hesselius attributes to Jennings a desire to die, a desire to remain incurable. Hesselius distances himself from blame by locating it entirely on his patient’s shoulders, but more problematic that this is his remark that “cure is certain.” Elsewhere Hesselius states, “There is another class of affections which are truly termed . . . spectral illusions. These latter I look upon as being no less simply curable than a cold in the head or a trifling dyspepsia” (“Green Tea” 38). Hesselius here reduces mental illness to a simple physical affliction (although medicine has yet to cure the cold either), a “trifling” affliction, even. This statement gets at the center of the debate over the makeup of the mind. Was it, as physiologists argued, a purely physical part of the body, like any other organ, treatable in the same way that the stomach or liver is treatable? Or – to take the theological perspective – was the mind the seat of the soul, the immaterial spirit for which the body served as a casing?

Ultimately, this relationship between mind and body is tested through Le Fanu’s many instances of substance use in *In a Glass Darkly*. In *The Purcell Papers*, drinking was a moral issue: to break your abstinence pledge or to imbibe too freely was to call down spirits, not as hallucinations produced by an alcohol-induced derangement of the senses, but as heavenly guides toward the path of virtue or hellish avengers punishing

transgressors. *In a Glass Darkly* never endorses this position, but it is far more critical of psychological theories for ghost-seeing that linked such visions to pharmacological products. The physiologists discussed in the Introduction each credited substances such as alcohol and opium with the ability to produce ghosts. Ferriar notes that “[spectral] impressions have no doubt been produced, or strengthened by narcotic potions” (96); Hibbert remarks upon the dangers of inhaling nitrous oxide (anesthesia) or “febrile miasma” (bad air), both of which are capable of “affecting the quality of our mental feelings . . . until the mind gradually becomes unconscious of actual impressions, and the recollected images of our thought, vivified to the height of sensations, appear, as it were, to take their place” (15-16); and Newnham notes, “We must here also notice the effects produced upon [the brain] by various substances; and particularly by alcoholic fluids, tea, and coffee . . . when the quantity [of alcohol] taken has been larger, reason is suspended – it is absolutely drowned: in some instances, perfect insanity is produced” (94-5). Not only do these theories ignore the possibility of spirits external to the body, in granting substances such as tea and alcohol so much power over the mind – even to the extent of causing insanity – they reduce the mind to a near-impotent organ, subject to even minor changes in the body. Self-control, a moral sense – these are meaningless if the slightest chemical imbalance could cause one to become something else altogether.

Of the five stories published in *In a Glass Darkly*, four include protagonists whose lives are centered on or greatly changed by their use of an illicit or chemically-altering substance; the exception, “The Familiar,” with its protagonist who turns first to a doctor and next to a clergyman for guidance, but finds no help from either, clearly shares similar concerns with the other tales. “Carmilla,” Le Fanu’s famous vampire story, is

truly the oddball of the collection, and given that its supernaturalism deals with mythical creatures rather than the mortal confrontation with the spirit world, I will not discuss it here. The remaining three stories contain a drugstore's-worth of pharmacological products, from the bowls of punch favored by Judge Harbottle in "Mr. Justice Harbottle," to Reverend Jennings' green tea in "Green Tea," to a whole host of poisons, teas, and alcoholic beverages administered to Richard Beckett in "The Room in the Dragon Volant."

"Mr. Justice Harbottle" in many ways resembles the type of tale found in *The Purcell Papers*. The story provides the back-story for the hanging judge who haunts Dick and Tom in "Strange Disturbances." Judge Harbottle's life is similar to Pat Connell's in "The Drunkard's Dream." He lives a life of excess, as his "mulberry-coloured face" and "big, carbuncled⁸ nose" testify ("Harbottle" 88). For his sins, he is dragged before a spirit-court and sentenced to death. The story's logic would certainly meet with Father Purcell's approval, but a new focus – a critique of psychological theories for ghost seeing – is generated by the tension between the story's content and Hesselius's opening remarks on it. Surprisingly, Hesselius accepts the existence of the supernatural in the story. He writes,

[Harbottle's experience] was one of the best declared cases of and opening of the interior sense, which I have met with. It was affected too, by the phenomenon, which occurs so frequently as to indicate a law of these eccentric conditions . . . the contagious character of this sort of intrusion of the spirit-world upon the proper domain of matter. So soon as the spirit-action has established itself in the case of one patient, its developed energy begins to radiate, more or less effectually, upon others. . . . After appearances are the result of the law explained in Vol. II Section 17 to 49 [of Hesselius's *Essay on the Interior Sense*]. . . . We see the operation

⁸ According to the *OED*, a carbuncle is "a red spot or pimple on the nose or face caused by habits of intemperance."

of this principle perfectly displayed, in certain cases of lunacy,
of epilepsy, of catalepsy, and of mania
(“Harbottle” 83-4)

Hesseliu’s concern here is with understanding the mechanics of a spiritual experience; Harbottle’s case is interesting because it illustrates a “law” pertaining to the spirit world Hesseliu has devised himself. By discussing Harbottle’s experience in these terms, Hesseliu is able to place it in the same category as epilepsy or mania – as just another disease of the mind. Surely this is a case of “murdering to dissect.” In his scientific evaluation of Harbottle’s spiritual experience, Hesseliu has completely missed the point. Greater truths about sin and its consequences, about the justness of the universe, elude Hesseliu because of his scientific mindset. Hesseliu’s commentary on “Mr. Justice Harbottle” lends weight to the collection’s title. The scientific worldview Hesseliu epitomizes can only ever point inward, never through to those truths not bound by laws and not subject to measurements and clinical study.

Reverend Jennings is similarly trapped in a limited worldview in “Green Tea.” The irony here, of course, is that Jennings is a clergyman, supposedly more able to accept the mysteries of the divine. What Le Fanu creates in Jennings is perhaps a representative of Victorian man. Disillusioned with what he perceives to be the limitations of Christianity, Jennings begins to research “the religious metaphysics of the ancients” (“Green Tea” 21). But at the same time that Jennings recognizes the inadequacies of Christianity, he blindly adheres to the scientific system. After his first terrifying encounter with the demon monkey, he states,

I tried to comfort myself by repeating again and again the assurance, “the thing is purely disease, a well-known physical affection, as distinctly as small-pox or neuralgia.

Doctors are all agreed on that, philosophy demonstrates it.
I must not be a fool. I've been sitting up too late, and I
daresay my digestion is quite wrong, and with God's help,
I shall be all right, and this is but a symptom of nervous
dyspepsia.

(“Green Tea” 26)

Jennings seeks not only answers but comfort in the wisdom of medicine – it is a substitute for religious conviction. It is also a trap, a blind alley that prevents Jennings from coming to a true understanding of his spiritual experience. In deciding that the entire experience is the fault of green tea consumption, Jennings precipitates his own demise. He attempts to cure a physical malady with a physical change, leaving himself wide open to the effects of the spiritual.

“The Room in the Dragon Volant” contains no real supernatural element (all are explained away in the story as the tricks of a gang of thieves), yet its focus on the effects of pharmacological products on the mind provides perhaps the best metaphor for Le Fanu's understanding of the failures of science and religion. The story's protagonist, Richard Beckett, continually succumbs to the effects of alcohol and strong coffee administered to him by the thieves that are plotting against him. It is unsurprising then, that he is put in mortal peril by a cup of black coffee followed by a “miniature glass—a fairy glass—of noyau,” both spiked with a poison that sends him into a state of paralysis. The thieves who have taken him plan to bury him alive – by the time the poison wears off, Richard will be deep underground and will die in the grave. If by any chance his body were to be exhumed, the poison, having run its course, would not be detectable in his body. This “perfect” – albeit farfetched – murder provides Le Fanu with a situation in which he can focus on his pharmacological concerns. Under the influence of the poison administered to him, Richard loses all control of his body. He is paralyzed

from head to foot. However, he still retains the complete and perfect use of his mind and his senses. He has ample time to dwell on the horror of his situation, and the vision and hearing necessary to understand exactly what is happening to him. Richard's physical reaction to the drug points to the separation of mind and body in Le Fanu's work. The mind in this story is not just any other organ, subject to the same material laws that govern the stomach. While Richard's entire body is frozen by the drug, his mind is still free. This distinction between mind and body also symbolizes Le Fanu's concern with material understandings of the world. The material – the physical body – is trapped, literally paralyzed, and likely to go to the grave that way, while the spiritual – the mind – is free, not bound by the laws that govern the material body. So is man trapped in only dwelling in material possibilities.

Le Fanu's many supernatural tales are concerned with the limitations man must deal with when operating within a system of thought – either religious or scientific – and his focus on pharmacological issues demonstrates a shift in his understanding of the place of such systems in dealing with spiritual experiences. Ultimately, Le Fanu is unable to place faith in science or religion; both are inadequate to explain the mysteries and deeper meanings his fiction explores. What is most frightening about Le Fanu's ghost stories is the dead end where he leaves his readers, without answers and without the tools to find them, and his suggestion, particularly throughout *In a Glass Darkly*, that man's new focus on the scientific system will only lead him further and further from real knowledge. Le Fanu's vision, though disillusioned, aided those ghost story writers that followed in his footsteps. By disassociating spiritual experiences from the religious and scientific

systems that sought to define them, Le Fanu challenged his contemporaries to try to find ways in which the spiritual could be understood.

Chapter 2

Time, Psychology, and Dickens's Spirits of Christmas

In an era obsessed with spiritualism and all things occult it is unsurprising that Dickens had a number of his own ghostly encounters. Like so many of his contemporaries, he attended a séance, and was greatly amused by a “Psycho-grapher, which writes at the dictation of spirits. It delivered itself . . . of this extraordinarily lucid message: x. y. z! upon which it was gravely explained by the true believers that ‘the spirits were out of temper about something’” (*Letters*, March 7, 1854). Unlike Elizabeth Barrett Browning, who expressed great wonder over the “spirit hands” which touched her during a séance,⁹ Dickens’s only source of amazement was at the credulity of his host. Dickens also lived for a time in a haunted house, as he notes in the semi-autobiographical opening chapter of *The Haunted House*:¹⁰

In . . . an old Italian palace, which bore the reputation of being very badly haunted indeed, and which had recently been twice abandoned on that account, I lived eight months, most tranquilly and pleasantly: notwithstanding that the house had a score of mysterious bedrooms, which were never used, and possessed, in one large room in which I sat reading, times out of number at all hours, and next to which I slept, a haunted chamber of the first pretensions.” (11)

⁹ For an account of the séance Browning attended, conducted by the medium Daniel Dunglas, see Taplin, Gardner. *The Life of Elizabeth Barrett Browning*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1957, pp. 293-296.

¹⁰ As Peter Ackroyd argues in his introduction to *The Haunted House*.

The “old Italian palace” refers to the Palazzo Peschiere in Genoa, where Dickens composed his second Christmas book, *The Chimes*. His dismissive attitude toward the house’s reputation is evident not only in the act of reading “at all hours” in the haunted chamber, but also in his description of the palace in *Pictures from Italy*: “There is not in Italy, they say (and I believe them), a lovelier residence than the Palazzo Peschiere surrounded by beautiful gardens of its own, adorned with statues, vases, fountains, marble basins, terraces, walks of orange-trees and lemon-trees, groves of roses and camellias” (54). Ghostly goings-on could not be further from his thoughts when reminiscing about the residence. Even the “score of mysterious bedrooms” Dickens describes in *The Haunted House* he graciously offers in a letter to friends considering a visit – an act which suggests he confidently believed their rest in these rooms would be undisturbed (*Letters* Aug. 9, 1844). All in all, life in the haunted palace seems not to have struck any deep chord in Dickens. Finally, in a third ghostly encounter, Dickens investigated reports of a haunting near Gad’s Hill. He writes to Wilkie Collins:

Rumours were brought into the house on Saturday night, that there was a ‘ghost’ up at Larkin’s monument Time, nine o’clock. Village talk and credulity, amazing. I . . . shouldered my double-barrelled gun, well loaded with shot. ‘Now observe,’ says I to the domestics, ‘if anybody is playing tricks and has got a head, I’ll blow it off.’ Immense impression. New groom evidently convinced that he has entered the service of a bloodthirsty demon. We ascend to the monument. Stop at the gate. Moon is rising. Heavy shadows. ‘Now, look out!’ (from the bloodthirsty demon, in a loud, distinct voice). ‘If the ghost is here and I see him, so help me God I’ll fire at him!’ Suddenly, as we enter the field, a most extraordinary noise responds terrific noise human noise and yet superhuman noise Noise repeated portentous, derisive, dull, dismal, damnable. We advance toward the sound. Something white comes lumbering through the darkness. An asthmatic sheep!
(*Letters* Oct. 24, 1860)

In these three episodes, Dickens's satiric stance toward his time's other-worldly beliefs is everywhere apparent. To him, the ghost-craze and the popularity of the Spiritualist Movement represented a shallow, meaningless echo of true Christian faith. After a fictitious encounter with a self-important medium, Dickens's narrator in "The Mortals in the House" notes, "I can no more reconcile the mere banging of doors, ringing of bells, creaking of boards, and suchlike insignificances, with the majestic beauty and pervading analogy of all the divine rules that I am permitted to understand, than I had been able, a little while before, to yoke the spiritual intercourse of my fellow-traveller to the chariot of the rising sun" (*Haunted House* 9). The biblical allusion is hard to miss: Spiritualists, like the medium on the train who is given the weighty message "A bird in the hand is worth two in the Bosh" (5) are in no way able to connect to the import of the "rising sun" – Christ and the true teachings of Christianity. Like his famous protagonist in *A Christmas Carol*, Dickens's attitude toward ghosts seems to be of the "Bah! Humbug!" variety.

Dickens's impatience with his contemporaries' preoccupation with the supernatural seems out of character given his numerous literary forays into the realm of ghosts and goblins. He not only contributed ghost stories such as "To be Taken with a Grain of Salt" and "The Signal-Man" to his periodicals, he also solicited similar supernatural tales from fellow writers such as Collins and Elizabeth Gaskell. Further, Dickens's irreverent tone when describing his real-life ghostly encounters is a marked contrast to the seriousness with which he treats his most famous ghosts, the four spirits of *A Christmas Carol* and the Ghost in *The Haunted Man*.¹¹

¹¹ Though its full title is *The Haunted Man and the Ghost's Bargain*, for the sake of brevity, I will refer to it as *The Haunted Man* throughout.

Though Dickens evinces much skepticism about the existence of ghosts, he refuses to dismiss them in his fiction using current psychological theories for ghost-seeing. In the second of two supernatural tales that make up “To be Read at Dusk” one storyteller relates an incident that occurred to his master:

“I have just now seen,” Mr. James repeated, looking full at me, that I might see how collected he was, “the phantom of my brother John. I was sitting up in bed, unable to sleep, when it came into my room, in a white dress, and regarding me earnestly, passed up to the end of the room, glanced at some papers on my writing-desk, turned, and, still looking earnestly at me as it passed the bed, went out at the door. Now, I am not in the least mad, and am not in the least disposed to invest that phantom with any external existence out of myself. I think it is a warning to me that I am ill; and I think I had better be bled.” (243)

James’s matter-of-fact assertion that he needs to be bled draws on the work of Samuel Hibbert, who theorized that ghost-seeing was a form of hallucination caused by circulatory problems. In his 1824 *Sketches of the Philosophy of Apparitions* Hibbert elaborates on “certain states of the sanguineous system, in which a remarkable connexion between such states and an undue vividness of mental feelings appears to be established” (10). For example, too much or too little blood, or missing one’s regularly scheduled blood-letting, could result in a taxation of the mind which in turn could cause spectral illusions to appear. Catherine Crowe, in *The Night Side of Nature* remarks, “The books of Dr. Ferriar, Dr. Hibbert, and Dr. Thatcher . . . are all written to support one exclusive theory, and they only give such cases as serve to sustain it . . . whatever instance cannot be covered by this theory, they reject as false, or treat as a case of extraordinary coincidence” (18). Dickens seems equally unimpressed with Hibbert’s theory. James, after seeing his brother’s apparition, is called to attend him on his deathbed. His dying

brother's last words to him are: "James, you have seen me before, to-night – and you know it!" (244). If James had relied on Hibbert's psychological explanation for his vision, he would have missed a last earthly meeting with his cherished brother. The significance of the vision – reassurance that though physical bonds may dissolve in death, spiritual bonds are eternal – would be lost to him.

In a similar manner, Ebenezer Scrooge is forced to choose between explaining away his ghost-sighting with a psychological theory or accepting both its reality and the greater spiritual meaning its existence implies. When the ghost of Jacob Marley appears before Scrooge, Scrooge is initially skeptical:

"Why do you doubt your senses?"
"Because," said Scrooge, "a little thing affects them. A slight disorder of the stomach makes them cheats. You may be an undigested bit of beef, a blot of mustard, a crumb of cheese, a fragment of an underdone potato. There's more of gravy than of grave about you, whatever you are!" (59)

Scrooge's explanation is based on a popular theory proposed by W. Newnham in his *Essay on Superstition* (1830). Newnham argues, "the brain stands so closely related to other organs of the body, that it possesses the capacity of suffering with them whenever they are in a state of irritation; and also, of reflecting upon them its own morbid actions, which they in their turn oftentimes assume, and then become secondary irritants to the brain" (75). Thus any bodily illness, like indigestion, for example, can cause a "cerebral disorder" which in turn might produce spectral illusions (119). Scrooge's iteration of this theory renders it both comical and wholly inadequate to deal with the ghostly presence before him.

While Dickens undermines psychological theories for ghost-seeing in his fiction, he never fully endorses ghosts as realities in his fiction either. Both James and Scrooge had been preoccupied earlier in the day with thoughts of the person whose ghost they later see. James is worrying about his brother's health, having just been told that he is very ill. Scrooge is forcibly reminded of Jacob Marley's death when asked by the charitable gentleman if they are addressing Scrooge or Marley: "Mr. Marley has been dead these seven years. . . . He died seven years ago, this very night" (50). Thus, it is conceivable that both characters are mentally projecting what is on their minds. A reading of Scrooge's ghosts as mental projection is further supported when Scrooge finds himself not entreating the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come, but addressing his bedpost (126). Dickens's ghosts, then, tread on middle-ground – possibly they are mental projections, but if so, they are not simply aberrations, indications of the mind's susceptibility to the whims of the body. Rather, if ghosts are mental projections, they are indicative of the mind's connection to the soul; as these two examples illustrate, a higher power interested in the betterment of each character seems to be directing the spirit encounters.

In summing up Dickens's complicated relationship with ghosts, Peter Ackroyd argues that he had "a real sense of the numinous" despite his disappointing experiences (704). Likewise John Forster, Dickens's friend and early biographer, writes, "such was his interest generally in things supernatural, that, but for the strong restraining power of his common sense, he might have fallen into the follies of spiritualism." Dickens was in the position of one who wanted to believe but was disappointed in the smoke-and-mirrors treatment the spirit world received at the hands of the Spiritualists. He believed that

ghost-seeing had the potential to be a tool for salvation, just as Ebenezer Scrooge is ultimately redeemed through the intervention of his spirit visitants. However, to Dickens, a ghost's power lay not in its confirmation and description of the afterlife (the absorbing interest of the Spiritualists), but in its ability to arrest the psyche, to make man question his sanity, and in doing so, to reflect on the self. For Dickens, the ghost acted as a psychological other in an age sorely lacking in introspection. In this chapter, I will argue that Dickens engages in the debate over Victorian man's troubled relationship with time in two of his Christmas books: *A Christmas Carol* and *The Haunted Man*. In both works, Dickens combines a unique perception of Christmas time with a theory that ghosts offer man a way to mentally traverse space and time, helping him gain the psychological relativism necessary to his moral and spiritual growth.

I. Time and the Victorian Mind

To refer to the Victorian period as lacking in introspection is not, of course, to lay claim to any special insight into the hearts and minds of nineteenth-century man; rather, the generalization refers to the Victorians' own fear for themselves. Walter Houghton opens *The Victorian Frame of Mind* by describing the period as one that felt itself to be a time of transition. Matthew Arnold proclaimed that he and his contemporaries were "Wandering between two worlds, one dead / The other powerless to be born, / With nowhere yet to rest [our] head[s]" (85-87). Arnold's idea that there was no rest to be had pervaded the age. In his 1875 essay "Life at High Pressure," William R. Greg wrote that the Victorians were living "without leisure and without pause – a life of haste – above all

a life of excitement, such as haste inevitably involves” (263). Greg points to the way of life his contemporaries saw themselves transitioning toward: the Victorian period was becoming remarkable for its rapid pace. He writes, “the most salient characteristic of life in this latter portion of the nineteenth century is its SPEED – what we may call its hurry, the rate at which we move, the high-pressure at which we work” (263). The speed of transportation, of communication, of business transactions, the speed with which one could rise to the top, and the speed with which one could tumble down again – to many the times were overwhelming. There were serious moral implications to this style of life, as Greg notes: “[the life of haste is] a life filled so full, even if it be full of interest and toil, that we have no time to reflect where we have been and whither we intend to go; what we have done and what we plan to do, still less what is the value, and the purpose, and the price of what we have seen, and done, and visited” (268). Greg implies that the life of haste, the life of the modern British gentleman, lacked the space (and time) for mental reflection. The “value” that is lost is man’s mental and spiritual development: if no thought is given to the meaning of experience, nothing can be learned from it. Man stagnates, remaining fixed in character rather than improving through experience. Such a life, Greg says, “can scarcely be deemed an adequate or worthy life” (268). In Greg’s account, Victorian man’s relationship to time is expressly connected to his psychological makeup. He writes, “few of us have ever estimated adequately the degree in which an *atmosphere of excitement*, especially when we enter it young and continue in it habitually, is fatal to the higher and deeper life” (269, italics original here and throughout). Greg theorizes that a generation, the “young,” is rising up without any

introspective powers – dangerous in that this lack keeps the young from knowing themselves (the “deeper” life), and that it retards their moral sense (the “higher” life).

Tied to this sense of Victorian man is the idea that the life of haste was most closely associated with the goings-on of the public sphere, where such haste was directed toward material gain. In his discussion of Victorian perceptions of time, N. N. Feltes argues that the period saw a “change to a consciousness of time as commodity” (248). This shift in thinking is traceable to the Industrial Revolution, which emphasized the speed of labor rather than the finished product of cottage industry. Hans Meyerhoff notes, “Time was an indispensable instrument for the production of goods in an ever expanding market. Thus time itself came to be looked on as a precious commodity, because it alone made possible the production of all other commodities. We still say: Time is money. It is equated with money because the commodities produced in time mean money” (106). Thus, Victorian man in his life of haste has lost time to reflect, and further, he has replaced a general sense of time with the narrow view that time is money.

Dickens’s own preoccupation with time and man’s relationship to it has been noted by a number of scholars. James E. Marlow premises a book-length study on the hypothesis that Dickens’s “work may be read as a dialogue with his readers about the topics that were at the forefront of the Victorian imagination: time and one’s conscious address to it” (14). Brigid Lowe Crawford, in her study of *Dombey and Son* and the first “Uncommercial Traveller” article, notes, “Both are products of a particular sense of history and attitude to remembrance that can be observed elsewhere in the culture of the period” (187). N. N. Feltes examines Dickens’s relationship to the time-as-commodity attitude in the wake of the Ten Hours movement of the 1830s and 1840s. Finally, S. J.

Schad argues that Dickens's novels' "articulation of time is so marked by rhetoric that the novels' very understanding of time and history is, to a considerable extent, fashioned in its likeness" (423).

As the number of approaches to the study of Dickens and time suggests, Dickens's concepts of time, history, and man's connection to each is complex. He does not simply assert that reflecting on the past will raise the moral consciousness of the present. As we shall see in *The Haunted Man*, fixating on the past is as harmful to moral development as ignoring it altogether. In fact, Dickens's ire seems directed at the unrealistic sentimentalizing he saw taking place at the national level in relation to the past. Characteristic of this sentimental attitude is the "red-faced gentleman" of *The Chimes*. After meeting Trotty Veck, he declares, "'Who can take any interest in a fellow like this,' meaning Trotty; 'in such degenerate times as these? Look at him! What an object! The good old times, the grand old times, the great old times! *Those* were the times for a bold peasantry, and all that sort of thing'" (168). Specifically, the red-faced gentleman's response is a parody¹² of the Young England movement, which promoted a system of class relations based on an idealized version of feudalism. Conservatives sympathized with the movement; Greg claims that the members are "the more amiable portion of our aristocracy" ("England as it is" 180). Indeed, many of the Tories who espoused the movement had quite a romanticized view of themselves. Ruskin, raised to venerate rank and class, calls on the nobility to

be lords indeed, and give us laws – dukes indeed, and give

¹² Dickens's parody was originally much stronger, and his Young England gentleman played a larger role. He revised the character, exchanging the "Young England gentleman" for "a real good old city Tory" based on Forster's disapproval (Forster). Much of the Young England gentleman's speech is retained in the character of the red-faced gentleman, however. Michael Slater appends the original scene in *The Christmas Books Volume I*, pp. 249-252.

us guiding – princes indeed, and give us beginning of truer dynasty. . . . how many yet of you there . . . who still retain the ancient and eternal purpose of knighthood, to subdue the wicked, and aid the weak? To them, be they few or many, we English people call for help to the wretchedness, and for rule over the baseness, of multitudes of desolate and deceived.
(qtd. in Houghton 327)

Ruskin's plea clearly marks the aristocracy as chivalric heroes in the mold of an Ivanhoe, and to heighten the contrast between aristocrat and common man, he labels the multitude "base," "wretched," "desolate," and "deceived." The lower classes become a rabble unworthy of the nobility's help, a relationship similar to the Christian idea that man is unworthy of the forgiveness of God. As Houghton notes, "Tory paternalism found its natural expression in the heroic image" (327).

Dickens was underwhelmed by this brand of paternalism. Sir Joseph Bowley tells Trotty, "Your only business, my good fellow . . . your only business in life is with me. You needn't trouble yourself to think about anything. I will think for you; I know what is good for you; I am your perpetual parent. Such is the dispensation of an all-wise Providence!" (182). For this thinking, Sir Joseph calls himself the "Poor Man's Friend." Paternalism in Dickens's description is translated into self-congratulation over empty rhetoric. Instead of emphasizing how the nobility could help the "multitude of desolate and deceived," the example of Sir Joseph points to how the multitude can benefit the nobility: "be respectful, exercise your self-denial, bring up your family on next to nothing, pay your rent as regularly as the clock strikes" (182). The Young England attitude allows the aristocracy to ignore the needs and concerns of the lower classes both through the easy dismissal exhibited by the red-faced gentleman and the "let us do the thinking for them" mentality of Sir Joseph. The Young Englanders are thus at fault for

willful ignorance of the present in their glorification of a non-existent past. This ignorance is harmful at the national level, leading to the neglect of the poor, and, in Dickens's estimation, it is harmful on the personal level as well. The red-faced gentleman

extolled the good old times, the grand old times, the great old times. No matter what anybody else said, he still went turning round and round in one set form of words concerning them; as a poor squirrel turns and turns in its revolving cage; touching the mechanism, and trick of which, it has probably quite as distinct perceptions, as ever this red-faced gentleman had of his deceased Millennium. (169)

The gentleman is reduced to the mental equivalent of a rodent, trapped in the cage of his own lack of perception.

Dickens's dislike of nostalgia may partly account for his dismissive attitude toward ghosts. After all, ghosts are, by logical necessity, of the past – their lives are past, the times in which they lived are past. Their presence is a reminder of “the good old days.” More specifically, ghosts in the nineteenth century's popular imagination are often linked to the same feudal past the Young England movement idealized. In E. Nesbit's “Man-Size in Marble” for example, the supernatural visitants are literally “knight[s] in full plate armour” (187). Popular accounts of hauntings often featured medieval figures, like the famed princes in the Tower of London or the Grey Lady of Stirling Castle. And just as the red-faced gentleman of *The Chimes* is drawn imaginatively to incidentals of long ago fashion – “You don't call these, times, do you? I don't. Look into Strutt's Costumes, and see what a Porter used to be, in any of the good old English reigns” – a highlight of “authentic” accounts and ghost stories alike is the special attention given to the dress of bygone eras (168). One of Catherine Crowe's

ghost-seers identifies her apparition by its “complete Russian costume” (270), while the frightened general in Sir Walter Scott’s “The Tapestry Chamber” recognizes the portrait of his revenant because both wear “an old-fashioned gown which . . . ladies call a sacque; that is, a sort of robe, completely loose in the body, but gathered into broad plaits upon the neck and shoulders, which fall down to the ground, and terminate in a species of train” (8). Scott’s attention to the details of dress heightens the tension between past and present in his story, but further, it adds a romantic charm to the narrative. The ghost as a site of nostalgia, where Victorians could dwell on simpler times, might partially account for the popularity of ghost stories during the period.

In another sense, popular notions of ghost hearkened back to a time of aristocratic privilege because of their close association with the aristocracy’s inheritance in the present. Scott’s tale provides one such example: Lord Woodville inherits not only an “ancient feudal fortress” (2), but almost as a matter of course he also inherits the ghost of a “wretched ancestress . . . of whose crimes a black and fearful catalogue is recorded in a family history in [his] charter-chest” (11-12). Both castle and ghost are signs of Lord Woodville’s pedigree. Dickens satirizes this connection between ghosts and the aristocracy in *Bleak House*, where Mrs. Rouncewell, the housekeeper who scarcely believes a world exists outside of Chesney Wold, “considers that a family [like the Dedlocks] of such antiquity and importance has a right to a ghost. She regards a ghost as one of the privileges of the upper classes; a genteel distinction to which common people have no claim” (83). So firm is her conviction, she won’t even share the story of the Dedlock ghost with commoners like Mr. Guppy and Tony Jobling when they tour the

house. Ghosts in nineteenth-century fiction, then, are a type of class distinction, another category whereby to separate the have's and the have-not's.

Given Dickens's association of ghosts with the privileged past of the upper class, it is unsurprising that his use of them would differ from the general trend. In his ghost stories, spirits are often disconnected from "the good old days." The specter in "To be Taken with a Grain of Salt" is wholly attached to the present; rather than seeing the remains of one long dead and gone, the narrator is haunted by an apparition of a man still very much alive. In "The Signal-Man," the lonely signal-man is visited by the ghost he will become in the future. Likewise, the spirits in *A Christmas Carol*, though they are of a different sort than the typical ghost, encompass all time, representing past, present and yet to come. Dickens's unconventional use of ghosts points to a different concept of their function in literature; instead of the site of nostalgic daydreams, ghosts, particularly in *A Christmas Carol* and *The Haunted Man*, serve as a connection between the physical body and the part of the mind divorced from time and space, a part Catherine Crowe labels the "constructive imagination," significant because it is man's link to the divine.

In turning to Dickens's Christmas stories, I shall first argue that he situates Christmas as an atemporal space, aligning it with his particular brand of ghost. After establishing this link between Christmas and ghosts, I shall demonstrate through a close reading of *A Christmas Carol* and *The Haunted Man* that Dickens uses the Christmas ghost as a means to explore Victorian psychology, particularly connections between the psyche and time.

II. Space, Time, and Christmas Time

Dickens opens his 1853 Christmas story for *Household Words* with an analogy of life and time. The main character of “Nobody’s Story” lives

on the bank of a mighty river, broad and deep, which was always silently rolling on to a vast undiscovered ocean. It had rolled on, ever since the world began. It had changed its course sometimes, and turned into new channels, leaving its old ways dry and barren; but it had ever been upon the flow, and ever was to flow until Time should be no more. Against its strong unfathomable stream, nothing made head. No living creature, no flower, no leaf, no particle of animate or inanimate existence, ever strayed back from the undiscovered ocean. The tide of the river set resistlessly towards it; and the tide never stopped, any more than the earth stops in its circling round the sun. (62)

The relentlessness of time, the constant, irreversible affect it has on life emphasized in this passage is a typical articulation of Dickens’s view, and he includes similar analogies in novels such as *Little Dorritt* and *David Copperfield*, as well as in a number of his shorter works. Brigid Lowe Crawford highlights this concept of time in an Uncommercial Traveller article, “The Shipwreck.” Here time is compared to an ocean which offers readers an “orderly, teleological universe in which details range themselves in regular and predictable sequence” (187). But while this is Dickens’s general notion of time, I would argue that he makes an exception in the case of Christmas time. In *The Haunted Man* old Philip proclaims,

going round the building every year, as I’m a-doing now, and freshening up the bare rooms with these branches and berries [of holly], freshens up my bare old brain. One year brings back another, and that year another, and those others numbers! At last, it seems to me as if the birth-time of our Lord was the birth-time of all I have ever had affection for, or mourned for, or delighted

in, -- and they're a pretty many, for I'm eighty-seven! (385)

Christmas is thus a portal through which man can move backwards, skipping from one year to the previous one, and in doing so, as Philip does, he may traverse the course of his entire life. It is a way of “making head” against the flow of the river of time. Dickens ties the act of moving imaginatively back through time with the yearly hanging of holly. Philip, even at eighty-seven, remembers Christmas when his height was “a little way above the level of his knee” and his mother told him holly berries were “food for birds” (383). He says, “The pretty little fellow thought – that’s me, you understand – that birds’ eyes were so bright, perhaps, because the berries they lived on in winter were so bright” (383). He recalls sitting with his wife, “among ‘em all, boys and girls, little children and babies, many a year, when the berries like these were not shining half so bright all around us, as their bright faces” (384). The continuous presence of the holly points to an important sameness from one Christmas to the next – though loved ones are born and loved ones die, the traditions surrounding Christmas are unchanged. It is this sameness, achieved through tradition, which allows Phillip to access his past life. Similarly, the semi-autobiographical narrator in Dickens’s 1850 essay “A Christmas Tree” uses the trappings of tradition – in this case, the Christmas tree – to step back into his childhood. He writes, “Straight, in the middle of the room . . . a shadowy tree arises; and, looking up into the dreamy brightness of its top – for I observe in this tree the singular property that it appears to grow downward towards the earth – I look into my youngest Christmas recollections!” (4). Dickens emphasizes the eternal quality in Christmas through his attention to tradition.

In a recent article, Andrew Smith argues that the emphasis on the material objects associated with Christmas tradition in *A Christmas Carol* highlight an irresolvable problem in Scrooge's "redemption." He writes, "Scrooge's benign, seasonally redistributive capitalism" as demonstrated through the purchase of turkeys and presents "implies a change at the social periphery . . . which does not touch the central mechanisms of economic power" (40). In other words, Scrooge's actions are premised on the values of a system which is itself problematic. Smith continues, "Scrooge may have gone from unhappy miser to jovial capitalist but this hardly transforms the system, but rather invites one to accept it as potentially benign" (45). Thus the material objects associated with Christmas, such as the pile of foodstuffs upon which the Ghost of Christmas Present makes his throne, point not to the unique bounty and spirit of giving emphasized at Christmas time, but instead highlight "a link between bounty and the 'degradation' that it produces" (Smith 50). The system by which some gain wealth forces others into poverty. While I do not disagree with Smith's argument that *A Christmas Carol* unconsciously demonstrates its inability to move beyond the terms of the capitalist system, I believe Dickens's focus on Christmas's material goods – holly, wreaths, "immense twelfth-cakes" (86), a pudding like a "speckled cannon-ball, so hard and firm, blazing in half of half-a-quartern of ignited brandy" (96) – operates on a level outside of economic considerations. Indeed, Mrs. Cratchit's pudding, though a material object, itself points to the Cratchits' poverty. Dickens's point in dwelling on it is to emphasize not its value in economic terms, but its value in spiritual terms: "Everybody had something to say about it, but nobody said or thought it was at all a small pudding for a large family. It would have been flat heresy to do so" (96). The pudding serves to

bring the family together, to remind them of their blessings, and they regard it in light of a religious experience (thus the “heresy” of speaking negatively about it). To return briefly to “A Christmas Tree,” the narrator writes, “A moment’s pause, O vanishing tree, of which the lower boughs are dark to me as yet, and let me look once more If Age be hiding for me in the unseen portion of thy downward growth, O may I, with a grey head, turn a child’s heart to that figure yet, and a child’s trustfulness and confidence” (18). The tree allows the narrator not only to glance back, but to contemplate his future. Geoffrey Rowell writes of this scene “Dickens uses the Christmas Tree as a kind of medieval memory system tracing the associations of Christmas down the branches of the tree.” More than this, the objects of Christmas tradition serve as talismans; their power lies in the promise they hold to keep open man’s imaginative access to time past, present, and future.

Ghosts are also a Christmas tradition Dickens makes use of in his construction of Christmas time. Though a belief persists that Dickens made ghosts a regular part of the festival of Christmas through *A Christmas Carol*, in filling his Christmas stories with ghosts, Dickens is drawing on a longstanding connection between the two. As David Parker notes, “The first publication firmly linking ghost stories with Christmas appeared circa 1730. *Round about our Coal Fire* is a curious Grub Street production, subtitled ‘Christmas Entertainments’” (105). In this text, the anonymous author records a number of supernatural tales, which he says make up “one of the great Amusements, when the Country folks begin to repose themselves” (qtd. in Parker 105). Thus as early as the first decades of the eighteenth century, it was customary, at least in rural areas, to tell ghost stories at Christmas. The 1839 Christmas number for *Bentley’s Miscellany* (under

William Harrison Ainsworth's editorship, Dickens having resigned the post in March of that year) elaborates on this rural tradition. In W. Jerdan's "The Dead Man's Race, A Christmas Story," we are told:

Some years ago a happy party were assembled at the hospitable mansion of a 'fine old English gentleman' keeping their Christmas holiday as it should be kept, round a huge Yule log, with wine and waissail, and jest and song Game succeeded game . . . till all were abandoned through pure fatigue . . . when story-telling became the order of the evening. (142)

The opening highlights a number of Christmas traditions associated with the country estate; in addition to food, drink, and games the visitors, family and servants are all careful to observe "grade and rank" throughout the evening (142). Storytelling at Christmas is a formalized event: we are told the host called for "tale or song or something for the general amusement, all round in succession, hinting at salt and water for defaulters to the festive contributions. What with the wish to please, and the fear to offend, one followed another without interruption in the prescribed task" (142). Ghost stories and supernatural tales make up a portion of this general storytelling tradition. Because of this association between Christmas and ghostly tales, the Christmas party became a convenient frame for literary ghost stories. Jerdan's story is one such example. After the opening description of the festivities, the rest of the narrative is given to the story of the "dead man's race."

In another Christmas number of the *Miscellany*, this for 1840, the story "The Picture Bedroom" by "Dalton" uses a similar frame to introduce a ghost story. In this case the opening narrative is given a setting more urban, middle class and centered on family. Auditors include members of the professional classes – a young military

gentleman, a lawyer, a doctor – and enough children to completely bury the storyteller when they climb upon him in their excitement. The carefully preserved social order of the country house is unimportant in this more intimate setting, and the formalities surrounding the tradition of storytelling are also more relaxed. Instead of the lordly injunction that each tell a tale or face a penalty, we have “‘A ghost story! a ghost story!’ burst from a dozen pairs of lips, and ran like wild fire through the party” (349). The differences in class, setting, and type of gathering in the two frames point to the ubiquity of storytelling, and particularly ghost story telling, in the years preceding *A Christmas Carol*.

While these examples point to the longstanding tradition of which *A Christmas Carol* is a part, they also highlight the unique changes Dickens made to his version of the Christmas ghost story. David Parker says of *Round about our Coal Fire*, “The anonymous author . . . was evidently less interested in the festival [of Christmas] than in apparitions, witches, ghosts, fairies, and the like” (105). This lack of interest in Christmas itself is evident in Jerdan’s and Dalton’s stories as well. Both Christmas-party frames are used for mere convenience: readers would quickly recognize a holiday gathering as an appropriate context for the telling of a ghost story, whatever its content. Not only do both stories lack any direct association with Christmas, both lack a moral which might put them in tune with the season. “The Dead Man’s Race” in particular records such a random event – a man being chased across a lonely moor by a dead man in a coffin, apparently on wheels – that readers would be hard-pressed to draw any sense out of it at all.¹³ Dickens’s association of ghosts with Christmas is unique in that he

¹³ Given the country-house setting Jerdan chooses, the story might be intended as an example of a quaint rural superstition.

specifically relates his ghosts to the season. In *Pickwick Papers*, for example, Gabriel Grub is dragged off by goblins on Christmas Eve; the same happens to Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol*. Redlaw, while not forced anywhere by his revenant, also has his ghostly confrontation on Christmas Eve. Each story also provides a moral suited for the season: compassion, charity and kindness are stressed in all three. Further, as I will demonstrate in my readings of *A Christmas Carol* and *The Haunted Man*, ghosts serve as a particular type of Christmas talisman; unlike holly or Christmas trees, ghosts are active embodiments of the mental power to move through time and space, to look up and down the mighty river.

In *A Christmas Carol*, the Ghost of Christmas Present asks Scrooge if he ever “walked forth with the younger members of my family; meaning (for I am very young) my elder brothers born in these later years” – brothers of whom he has “more than eighteen hundred” (87). The Ghost of Christmas Present’s query again marks the sameness of Christmas time over the years – all of the Christmases are kin – but more to the point, each Christmas is brother to the next. Dickens could have just as easily made one Christmas father to the next, as New Year’s Day is the “infant heir” of the old year in *The Chimes*. By connecting each Christmas fraternally, Dickens removes Christmas from the progress of generation to generation: Christmases are all of the same generation. If time is indeed a mighty river, carrying all life inexorably onward to the infinite ocean, then each Christmas is an inlet near the riverbank, protected from the tidal pull; a leaf – or a life – in that still water is able to look upriver and downriver before moving on again, and it may stop in these pools at regular intervals along the whole course of the river. To Dickens, this is one of the most significant aspects of Christmas.

While Dickens begins many of his novels by emphasizing their specific historical moment – the “best of times . . . worst of times” of *A Tale of Two Cities*, the “modern times of ours” of *Our Mutual Friend* – true to his conception of Christmas, he emphasizes the ahistorical nature of time in both *A Christmas Carol* and *The Haunted Man*. To be sure, both works are set near the time in which they were composed;¹⁴ references to workhouses, the Sunday Observance Bill, and Peckham Fair mark these as products of the period. These are superficial trappings, however. In each story, Dickens emphasizes still-time, the space outside the flow of the river. In *A Christmas Carol*, this effect is achieved first by Dickens’s invocation of the fairy tale genre. After the opening digression on Marley and door-nails, the narrative begins, “Once upon a time – of all the good days in the year, on Christmas Eve – old Scrooge sat busy in his counting-house” (47). The sentence, in effect, marks three distinct notions of time: the timelessness of the fairy tale, the time-out-of-time of Christmas, and the more of less specific historical moment evoked by the reference to the counting-house. What the mixing of these three times in the opening of the narration achieves is a succinct declaration of Dickens’s conceit. Like a fairy tale, *A Christmas Carol* will provide a timeless moral; this moral can only be learned through recognition of the significance of Christmas time; and this moral has an immediate application for the times, particularly for businessmen in the public sphere, emblemized by the counting-house.

Dickens creates a similar spot of still-time nested within historical time in the opening of *The Haunted Man*. He first situates Redlaw in a “retired part of an ancient

¹⁴ As David Parker argues, the reference to Peckham Fair in *The Haunted Man*, which “grew to be a nuisance, as fairs generally do, and was abolished in 1827” (“Peckham and Dulwich”), can be seen as “a deliberate invitation to readers to imagine the action of the book taking place before 1827, or not much later” (18).

endowment for students, once a brave edifice planted in an open place, but now the obsolete whim of forgotten architects; smoke-age-and-weather-darkened, squeezed on every side by the overgrowing of the great city” (374). It is a place that time has passed by. The modern city has grown up around it, but it has remained unchanged, an isolated island in a stream of progress. Dickens next points to the tension between the time passing outside Redlaw’s dwelling and time standing still within it. He begins a series of sentences each beginning with the word “when” – thirty-two in all – which moves the narrative from the bustling outside world to the still life inside. The “outside” sentences are full of movement: “When the wind was blowing, shrill and shrewd, with the going down of the blurred sun” and “When people in the streets bent down their heads and ran before the weather” (375). Contrasted to these is the state of Redlaw highlighted by the “inside” sentences: “When he sat . . . gazing at the fire. When, as it rose and fell, the shadows went and came. When he took no heed of them, with his bodily eyes; but let them come or let them go, looked fixedly at the fire” (377). Through his repetitive use “when” Dickens establishes time as the organizing principle around which outer and inner scenes revolve, yet time is qualitatively different in the two spaces. The rapid movement of people and even the environment around Redlaw only heightens the sense of his stillness before the fire.

In both *A Christmas Carol* and *The Haunted Man*, Dickens combines the talismanic power of ghosts with the atemporality of Christmas in order to posit a solution to the time anxieties of his era.

III. The Psychology of Time in *A Christmas Carol* and *The Haunted Man*

In *Victorian Relativity*, Christopher Herbert argues that Einstein's work on relativity is an outgrowth of nineteenth-century philosophy. He writes: "The relativity movement, even in its most abstract and technically scientific manifestations, has been driven by the imagining of a newly emancipated order of thought amid a context of growing and (its distinctive characteristic) ever more insidious repression, and it has always been inseparable from 'moral relativism'" (8). While Herbert traces this history chiefly through Victorian moral philosophers and scientific minds such as J. S. Mill, Herbert Spenser, and Karl Pearson, the antagonism between "insidious repression" and moral relativism is evident in the time-as-money public sphere with which Dickens concerns himself in *A Christmas Carol*. Discussing *Dombey and Son*, Crawford writes, "The chief object of satire in the novel is hubristic unconsciousness of the relativity of every perspective, of every account of the shape of history" (203). The Victorian man of business, of which Dombey and Scrooge both serve as examples, is concerned only with gain, and sees the world only as so much raw material out of which useful (and profitable) products may be made. In an oft-quoted passage, Dickens sums up Dombey's outlook:

The earth was made for Dombey and Son to trade in, and the sun and moon were made to give them light. Rivers and seas were formed to float their ships . . . stars and planets circled in their orbits, to preserve inviolate a system of which they were the centre. Common abbreviations took new meaning in his eyes, and had sole reference to them. A. D. had no concern with anno Domini, but stood for Anno Dombei – and Son. (50)

The absolutism of Dombey's perception leaves no room for the relevance of history – to Dombey the past can be read in the ledgers recording his firm's business transactions. The time-is-money mentality of the public sphere thus represses and excludes every other type of thought. Herbert notes that Victorian writing on relativity posits “an ideal regime of values. This ideal regime forms the inverse image of all systems of autocracy and absolutism. Its presiding values are reciprocity; interconnectedness; the privileging of diversity, dissent, and creativity; and the systematic demystification of established structures of authority” (9). In Herbert's list we can see many of the lessons absolutist businessmen like Dombey and Scrooge come to learn: Lee Erickson argues that in a “primitive Keynesian” way, Scrooge learns the value of reciprocity (51); Harry Stone argues that the moral of *A Christmas Carol* is “All society is connected” (50). Certainly the novel privileges creativity: Scrooge in the beginning of the narrative “had as little of what is called fancy about him as any man in the City of London” (54); however, in the end of the novel, we give him high marks for addressing his bedpost as if it were a sentient being. My chief concern, however, is with the “systematic demystification of established structures of authority” – specifically, with the public sphere's absolutist view of time. In setting up Christmas as an atemporal space, Dickens has already begun the demystification process; in addressing Scrooge's conscious relationship to Christmas, he posits a solution to its inherent threat.

The absolutist view of time is dangerous not only in that it discounts all other ways of thinking, it is also the mechanism whereby Greg's “young” lose touch with the higher and deeper life. In relativistic terms, Herbert expresses Greg's anxiety: “not to enter into two-way relations with another thing is simply not to exist. All things, in order

to have identities of their own, are enmeshed in a perpetual traffic of communication with other things” (9). In not contemplating the world around them, Victorian men of business cease to have identities of their own – it is Greg’s inadequate, unworthy life. Dickens exemplifies this lack of identity early in *A Christmas Carol*. He writes, “The firm was known as Scrooge and Marley. Sometimes people new to the business called Scrooge Scrooge, and sometimes Marley, but he answered to both names: it was all the same to him” (46). Scrooge’s identity is lost in his preoccupying interest in his business – its name takes precedence over his. He is so out of touch with his personal identity that even his name is irrelevant to him. The firm of Scrooge and Marley has literally consumed him. Psychologist Alexander Bain, in his 1855 treatise *The Senses and the Intellect*, explains this lack of identity differently. In defining the intellect, Bain writes, “The first and most fundamental property is the Consciousness of Difference, or Discrimination” (325); “every mental experience is necessarily twofold . . . everything known to us is known in connexion with . . . the opposite or negation of itself . . . when we pass from one member of a contrast to the other . . . both members must be present” (565). In light of this theory, Scrooge’s refrain “Bah! Humbug!” takes on new meaning. Each time he is confronted with an idea outside his time-is-money mentality, he rejects it with this offhand remark. When Fred presents him with the logic “What right have you to be dismal? what reason have you to be morose? You’re rich enough,” Dickens writes, “Scrooge having no better answer ready on the spur of the moment said ‘Bah!’ again; and followed it up with ‘Humbug’” (48). In this way, Scrooge remains unconscious of difference, and can thus be said to be entirely lacking in “mental experience.” In the spiritual journey Scrooge undertakes, he will be forced to examine difference; this

ultimately helps him develop the tools of self-awareness necessary for his moral conversion.

Dickens explicitly links Scrooge's moral conversion to his re-estimation of the significance of time, marking *A Christmas Carol* as a direct address to the concerns about the psychological damage done to Victorians living in the high-speed world of commerce. Dickens takes pains to depict Scrooge as the stereotypical businessman who emphatically believes that time is money. When Fred confronts his uncle with a "Merry Christmas," Scrooge returns: "Out upon merry Christmas! What's Christmas time to you but a time for paying bills without money; a time for finding yourself a year older, but not an hour richer; a time for balancing your books and having every item in 'em through a round dozen of months presented dead against you?" (48). Scrooge cannot conceive of another way to think of Christmas time but through the measure of profit – and in Fred's case – loss. Likewise, when Bob Cratchit observes that a day off for Christmas is only a once-a-year occurrence, Scrooge replies, "A poor excuse for picking a man's pocket every twenty-fifth of December!" (53). Scrooge measures each day in terms of its monetary value. A day not spent earning money is to him a day wasted. Scrooge's association of time with economic gain makes him unappreciative of past time or future time. When Scrooge is told that the Ghost of Christmas Past is the ghost not of "Long Past," but of "[his] past" the narrator writes, "Perhaps, Scrooge could not have told anybody why, if anybody could have asked him; but he had a special desire to see the Spirit in his cap; and begged him to be covered" (69). Scrooge's first thought, when confronted with his past, is to try to cover it, to bury it. It is something he has no use for, and as this passage suggests, something he finds disquieting. The Ghost's reply indicates

that Scrooge's desire is habitual to him: "'What!' exclaimed the Ghost, 'would you so soon put out, with worldly hands the light I give? Is it not enough that you are one of those whose passions made this cap, and force me through whole trains of years to wear it low upon my brow!'" (69). Scrooge has a history of ignoring the past and is part of a group whose "worldly hands," i.e. material interests, have reduced the role of the past, the light of which represents the moral good learned from experience, in favor of concentration on present monetary gain. This lost value is precisely what the Christmas spirits teach Scrooge.

The rules for Scrooge's engagement with the spirits are established in temporal terms. Marley tells Scrooge, "Expect the first to-morrow, when the bell tolls one. . . . Expect the second on the next night at the same hour. The third upon the next night when the last stroke of twelve has ceased to vibrate" (63). The three-day timeline not only recalls Christian symbolism associating three days with resurrection and redemption, it also creates the dissonance between Scrooge's perception of time as money and its passage over the course of his spiritual journey. When Scrooge awakens after his encounter with Marley's ghost he finds that instead of morning, it appears to be night again. Scrooge is at first afraid that, like a scene out of Byron's "Darkness," night has taken over the world:

"Why, it isn't possible," said Scrooge, "that I can have slept through a whole day and far into another night. It isn't possible that anything has happened to the sun, and this is twelve at noon!"

The idea being an alarming one, he scrambled out of bed, and groped his way to the window All he could make out was, that . . . there was no noise of people running to and fro, and making a great stir, as there unquestionably would have been if night had beaten off bright day, and taken possession of the world. This was a great relief, because "three days after sight of this First

of Exchange pay to Mr. Ebenezer Scrooge or his order” and so forth, would have become a mere United States security if there were no days to count by.

(66)

Scrooge’s concern here, even in the face of a possible apocalypse, is with the loss of a system for measuring when bills are due. Contrasted to this is Scrooge’s perception of the loss of a day when he awakens after his experience with the Ghost of Christmas Past. Dickens writes, “Awaking in the middle of a prodigiously tough snore, and sitting up in bed to get his thoughts together, Scrooge had no occasion to be told that the bell was again upon the stroke of One. He felt that he was restored to consciousness in the right nick of time, for the especial purpose of holding a conference with the second messenger despatched to him” (85). In this case, Scrooge is completely unconcerned about what appears to be the loss of another day; instead, his feelings toward time are more passive. He feels himself “restored” at the “right time” as if he recognizes a higher will guiding his course. And while Scrooge in the opening sequence watches the clock jealously lest he lose a minute of the labor Cratchit owes him – “With an ill-will Scrooge . . . tacitly admitted the fact [that the work-day was over] to the expectant clerk” – Scrooge post-ghostly encounter no longer needs the clock to know the hour (53). His sense of time has become less quantitative and more qualitative.

Each scene Scrooge visits with his spirit guides helps him empathize with others; each also forces him to see time in other than monetary terms. The first scene Scrooge visits with the Ghost of Christmas Past is one that shows him the sympathetic child he used to be, but more precisely, it shows him a child still able to participate in other modes of time, before time became to him a way to measure gain. He sees himself reading, and

as he watches, fictional being after fictional being spring to life around him: “‘It’s dear old honest Ali Baba! Yes, yes, I know! One Christmas time, when yonder solitary child was left here all alone, he *did* come, for the first time, just like that. Poor boy! And Valentine,’ said Scrooge, ‘and his wild brother, Orson; there they go!’” (72). Here is a Scrooge who is happy to “spend” time in such unproductive ways as reading fiction, and further, here is a Scrooge able to participate imaginatively in other times and others’ lives. So strong is this imaginative capacity that Scrooge is able to call the characters forth into visible form – he sees them as clearly as he sees the ghost of Jacob Marley and the three Christmas spirits. Catherine Crowe points to a connection between the imagination and ghost-seeing: “By *imagination* I do not simply mean to convey the common notion implied by that much abused word, which is only *fancy*, but the *constructive* imagination, which is a much higher function, and which, inasmuch as man is made in the likeness of God, bears a distant relation to that sublime power by which the Creator projects, creates and upholds his universe” (276). Crowe suggests that even the imaginative act of ghost-seeing brings us more in line with the divine and puts us in touch with our spiritual selves. This is the ability Scrooge needs to regain. Further, Scrooge’s childhood ability to participate in these fictional lives marks his past relativism. As a child he is able to accommodate worldviews he does not share, unlike the dismissive “Bah! Humbug!” absolutism of his adult self.

In furthering Scrooge’s education in the proper uses of time, the Ghost of Christmas Past shows him scenes where he chose rightly how to spend time, and scenes where he chose wrongly. The Ghost takes Scrooge to the warehouse where he served his apprenticeship; there old Fezziwig tells his two apprentices, “‘Yo ho, my boys . . . No

more work tonight. Christmas Eve, Dick. Christmas, Ebenezer!” (75). Fezziwig does not begrudge his employees’ time off, but encourages them in their play. He is Dickens’s idealized model of a businessman. Throughout the whole of the “domestic ball” which follows, “Scrooge had acted like a man out of his wits. His heart and soul were in the scene, and with his former self. He corroborated everything, remembered everything, enjoyed everything, and underwent the strangest agitation” (78). Forcing Scrooge to view his past revives in him his understanding of the joy to be had in pursuits other than business. This is an understanding Scrooge lacked in his earlier encounter with Fred, and in gaining it his emotional and moral senses are rekindled.

The next scene shows Scrooge with his fiancé, Belle, who in releasing him from their engagement says, “You may – the memory of what is past half makes me hope you will – have pain in this. A very, very brief time, and you will dismiss the recollection of it, gladly, as an unprofitable dream, from which it happened well that you awoke” (80-81). The truth of Belle’s words is forced upon the present-day Scrooge who for many years has ceased to think of her existence. In burying this memory as “unprofitable” Scrooge made the choice to concentrate on time as money rather than time as teacher and moral guide. Ironically, Belle’s criticism of Scrooge in this scene – that his avarice has blinded him to all other human feelings and concerns – is precisely the lesson the spirits seek to teach him. The key to his redemption was already always available to Scrooge, but only if he understood and practiced his mental ability to move freely in time and space.

That the Ghost of Christmas Present shows Scrooge so many domestic scenes – the dinner at the Cratchits, the miner and his family singing carols, the sailors with their

“homeward hopes,” Fred’s Christmas party – indicates his particular lesson regarding Scrooge’s reorientation in time. The Ghost helps Scrooge understand difference, in Bain’s sense of the word; Scrooge can better understand what his life is not by viewing its opposite and seeing what others’ lives are. It is only by having this opposite always before him mentally that he can gain knowledge of himself. Scrooge must contemplate present time – including the present time that others occupy – in order to be morally guided by it. It is another step towards abolishing Scrooge’s absolutist mentality in favor of relativistic thinking. As a confirmed bachelor, domestic scenes are largely unknown to Scrooge. This in itself is troubling in terms of Victorian ideology. Generally, the domestic sphere was thought to act as a panacea to the ills of the world of commerce; in his home, surrounded by wife and children, the Victorian man of business could find redemption for the sins he committed in the greedy, sordid public sphere. The home, with the angelic wife at its center, provided a “time out” to Greg’s fast-paced, morally bankrupt life at high pressure. In “Of Queen’s Gardens” Ruskin writes

The man, in his rough work in open world, must encounter all peril and trial: to him, therefore, must be the failure, the offense, the inevitable error: often he must be wounded, or subdued; often misled; and always hardened. But he guards the woman from all this; within his house, as ruled by her, unless she herself has sought it, need enter no danger, no temptation, no cause of error or offense. This is the true nature of home—it is the place of Peace; the shelter, not only from all injury, but from all terror, doubt, and division.

Indeed, Dickens himself often made use of this formula – witness Wemmick’s conversion from the dry, hard “post-office” mouthed man only interested in portable property to the genial, considerate son and lover when he transitions from the office to his Walworth property (*Great Expectations* 210). Scrooge, and Redlaw as well, must do

without this haven. Dickens's solution is to have each man learn to rely on inner resources. Scrooge's ability to visit his own past and to imaginatively participate in others' presents (as he does when he plays Christmas games at his nephew's party) gives him access to domestic spaces wherein he can find redemption.

The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come demonstrates to Scrooge what is lost in only thinking of the present and in valuing time as a measure of monetary gain. Long before Scrooge does, the reader realizes that all of the signs the Ghost reveals point grimly to his death. Scrooge's mental block on the idea of his own death indicate that this is a future he has not contemplated; like *Dombey* he sees himself as a part of a business that will go on forever. When the Ghost takes Scrooge to the Royal Exchange, Scrooge "looked about in that very place for his own image; but another man stood in his accustomed corner, and though the clock pointed to his usual time of day for being there, he saw no likeness of himself among the multitudes that poured in through the Porch" (113). This Scrooge understands as meaning that his future self has undergone a moral conversion – between this idea and the sense of himself as part of an endless business world there is no room for the possibility of death. Scrooge's lack of forethought is specifically a Christian failing: in not contemplating the afterlife, Scrooge simultaneously fails to think of the consequences of his present actions. Because there is nothing outside the world of commerce in Scrooge's thinking, there is no need to regulate his behavior other than by the measure of what will yield the most profit, or incur the least cost.

Scrooge, measuring everything in monetary terms, is given a glimpse of what his life ends up being worth in these same terms. The material effects surrounding his dead body, itself reduced to a material object, are reckoned in sixpence and crown pieces in a

second-hand shop. The men of business in whose esteem Scrooge “had made a point always of standing well . . . in a business point of view, that is” will only consider attending his funeral if something – in this case, lunch – is to be gained (112). When in horror it dawns on Scrooge that he is the dead man being treated so callously, he begs the Ghost to show him “any person in the town, who feels emotion caused by this man’s death” (119). All that he gets is the relief felt by a poor couple who gain a reprieve for their debt through his death. “We may sleep to-night with light hearts, Caroline!” says the husband to his wife (120). The grotesqueness of each of these scenes serves only to highlight Scrooge’s own way of thinking: if he sees in his future only a continuation of his time-is-money mentality, the future will treat with him on those terms.

That Scrooge learns his lesson concerning the importance of contemplating time is clear in the end of the novel. He tells the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come, “I will honor Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future” (126). Gone is the Scrooge who has no use for past time and future time and only sees present time as it relates to his business dealings; now Scrooge recognizes the importance of mentally traversing time and space, of keeping before him difference as represented by others’ lives and ways of thinking; he has become a true relativist. Scrooge is now unconcerned about losing the monetary worth of a day: “I don’t know what day of the month it is I don’t know how long I’ve been among the Spirits. I don’t know anything. I’m quite a baby. Never mind. I don’t care” (128). The irony of his statement is that it was when he was the absolutist businessman that he truly knew nothing, and lacked the ability for conscious thought. Now, his reference to himself as a baby indicates an open-mindedness that will eschew the “Bah! Humbug!”

refrain. In gaining the ability to see difference, Scrooge gains a new self-awareness. He encounters the alms collectors he had mistreated in the opening of the narrative, and this time, when asked, “Mr. Scrooge?” he replies, “Yes . . . that is my name, and I fear it may not be pleasant to you” (130). Scrooge has a sense of self-identity, and the ability to recognize his failings from another’s point of view. Further, Scrooge proves that he sees the value in spending time in other ways than in conducting business by spending Christmas Day with his nephew, Fred. This represents Scrooge actually choosing to repeat time, as he has already mentally participated in Fred’s Christmas party. Thus, Scrooge’s physical attendance represents his desire to be part of a community, to be part of a domestic circle. The value of both has been made clear to him. He hopes to catch Bob Cratchit coming in late to work only to play a prank on him; this is the behavior of a Fezziwig, not the man Scrooge used to be. He recognizes that those who laugh at him for his conversion are “blind anyway” – blind in the way he once was (134). Scrooge’s lesson in time-consciousness has made him a new man.

In *A Christmas Carol*, Dickens creates in Christmas an atemporal space where Scrooge is able to reorient himself in relation to time. Indeed, that the events of the story occur over three nights and simultaneously “all in one night” points to Christmas’s timelessness. Within the out-of-time boundaries of Christmas, Scrooge learns to think in relative terms, keeping before him the lessons of the past, the variety of lives in the present, and the possibilities the future holds. Specifically, this reorientation to time serves to combat the economic absolutism endemic to the period. In reexamining this theme in *The Haunted Man*, Dickens moves beyond a critique of the time-is-money

mentality to offer a broader vision of the psychological complexities inherent in the connection between time and the psyche.

In *The Haunted Man*, Dickens again addresses the Victorian period's troubled relationship to time, but from a position almost the inverse to that of his first Christmas book. If Scrooge prior to his moral conversion is like a piece of detritus skimming along the surface of the great river of time and not caring to try to stop to look forward or back, Redlaw is one who has long been sunk in the river, snagged on a rock, and unable to look anywhere but behind him, into his past. Indeed, the narrator describes him as "indefinably grim, although well-knit and well-proportioned; his grizzled hair hanging, like tangled seaweed, about his face, -- as if he had been, through his whole life, a lonely mark for the chafing and beating of the great deep of humanity" (373). To extend Dickens's metaphor, Redlaw has become waterlogged. One effect of this focus on a mind haunted by its past is the further articulation of Dickens's dislike of nostalgia. While Redlaw is not nostalgic himself – his oft-repeated reference to his "sorrow and [his] wrong" serves as a reminder that his reminiscences are not of the pleasant variety – his mental focus, like the Young England movement's and *The Chimes*' red-faced gentleman's, has been on the past to the exclusion of the present. Redlaw says to the Ghost, "If, living here alone, I have made too much of all that was and might have been, and too little of what is, the evil, I believe, has fallen on me, and not on others" (395). In dwelling on the wrong done him by the best friend who, though engaged to Redlaw's sister, eloped with his own fiancé instead, and on thoughts of how different life might have been if this had not occurred ("what might have been"), Redlaw is blinded to the

realities of the present. He is like the red-faced gentleman who dismisses Trotty Veck in favor of the “bold peasantry” of a bygone era. However, unlike the mentally enfeebled red-faced gentleman, Redlaw has the self-awareness to recognize that his fixation on the past has been an “evil” to him. This marks a psychological complexity largely missing in Dickens’s earlier works on the time-mind connection.

While others have seen Redlaw’s depth of character as attributable to the autobiographical nature of *The Haunted Man*, or as a failed attempt at a study of the subconscious, these readings overlook Dickens’s engagement with issues of psychological relativism.¹⁵ In his discussion of the Christmas books, James Reed writes, “what we understand of [Scrooge] is evoked largely by purely external characteristics. By 1848, with *The Haunted Man*, we find a significant development of method. Though Dickens is still inventing fairy tales with happy endings, he is now looking more profoundly and more sombrely into the nature of the haunted mind” (167). In *A Christmas Carol*, Dickens develops the psychological relativism of his protagonist through a supernatural journey to the past, present, and future. Like the four ghosts or the fictional characters who visit the younger Scrooge at school, time in the novel is given an external existence, the value of which Scrooge learns to internalize when he exclaims that he will “honor Christmas in [his] heart” and “will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future” (126). In *The Haunted Man*, Redlaw must learn the external value of time from better understanding its internal working in himself and those around him. The two hypotheses

¹⁵ In “Remembrance of Wrongs Past in *The Haunted Man*” Scott Moncrieff argues that “Redlaw seems to stand in for Dickens himself,” and proceeds to map onto the story various events of Dickens’s life (536). Jerry Herron argues that although Dickens’s “interest in *The Haunted Man* focuses on pathologically disrupted memory Unfortunately, he did not have at his disposal a specialized psychological vocabulary” (47).

Redlaw forwards in his conversation with the Ghost – that dwelling on the past has been an evil to him, and that it has not harmed others – Dickens tests within the context of the absolutist versus relativistic thinking of the time.

Redlaw has much in common with his predecessor Ebenezer Scrooge. Both men are lonely bachelors, both were neglected children, both had engagements broken, both have lost a dearly loved sister, and both have risen to great success in the world; however, the paths of their respective successes diverge sharply. Scrooge is the epitome of the Victorian man of business; his absolutist mentality takes the shape of seeing life only in relation to commercial enterprises and seeing time only as a measure of money. Redlaw on the other hand is “as the world knew, far and wide, a learned man in chemistry” (374). Redlaw has as little to do with commerce as Scrooge’s nephew, Fred, yet despite this, he displays the absolutist mentality symptomatic of the times. Regarding the concept of man’s relationship to time, Redlaw says, “These revolutions of years, which we commemorate . . . what do *they* recall! Are there any minds in which they do not re-awaken some sorry, or some trouble?” (394). Likewise, after listening to Phillip Swidger’s catalogue of Christmas memories, filled as it is with scenes of beauty, and happinesses as well as sorrows, Redlaw notes, “What is the remembrance of that old man who was here to-night? A tissue of sorrow and trouble” (394). Focused on the pain of his own past, Redlaw can only see the same in the lives around him. This narrow view is elevated into a dangerous absolutism when compounded with Redlaw’s confidence in his scientific mind. The Ghost, who mocks Redlaw with his own secret thoughts, feelings, and desires, insinuates “with its evil smile” that Redlaw is “a [man] of higher cultivation and profounder thought” than his fellow beings (394). Given the Ghost’s insight into

Redlaw's mind and Redlaw's acceptance of him as the "evil spirit of myself," Dickens implies that it is Redlaw who feels this sense of mental superiority (394). Thus, when the Ghost proclaims, "Your wisdom has discovered that the memory of sorrow, wrong, and trouble is the lot of all mankind, and that mankind would be happier, in its other memories, without it" the reader is meant to understand that this is not the insidious temptation of some external evil but the self-confidence of the scientific mind, epitomized by Redlaw (396). He fully believes that he has, in his wisdom, discovered a great truth about the human condition. In the Ghost's directive to "Go! Be [mankind's] benefactor" and in Redlaw's attempt to carry this order out, the text recalls another chemist and would-be benefactor of humanity (396). Victor Frankenstein also desires to "pour a torrent of light into our dark world" (932) and sees as man's highest calling being "hailed as the benefactor of your species; your name adored" (1028). In creating life, Frankenstein oversteps the natural order and challenges the preeminence of God; likewise, Redlaw works in opposition to the Christ figure, Milly Swidger, sewing discord and animosity among the poor while she spreads charity and love. Through this characterization of Redlaw, Dickens critiques the dismissal of the moral and spiritual worth of time from the perspective of the man of science rather than the man of business.

In critiquing the absolutist dismissal of spirituality in the figure of the scientific thinker, Dickens is able to more directly address psychological theories regarding ghost-seeing. While in texts such as "To be Read at Dusk" and *A Christmas Carol* the possibility that the "ghosts" are mental projections is only hinted at obliquely, in *The Haunted Man*, this possibility is more forcibly suggested. As I have noted above, the Ghost's conversation is observed by Redlaw to be the echo of his inmost thoughts.

Further, the Ghost is an “awful likeness” of Redlaw, suggesting that it is an external projection of the self (389). Finally, at the end of the story, the narrator remarks, “Some people have said since, that [Redlaw] only thought what has been herein set down; others, that he read it in the fire, one winter night about the twilight time; others, that the Ghost was but the representation of his own gloomy thoughts, and Milly the embodiment of his better wisdom. I say nothing” (472). Through these allusions to the Ghost’s psychic rather than spiritual origin, Dickens invites his readers to view the text as a psychological study rather than a supernatural tale. As such, he aligns *The Haunted Man* with the stories reported by Hibbert and his ilk, where ghosts are linked to mental disturbances and diseases of the senses. However, for Dickens, the psychic origin of the Ghost does not preclude the spiritual worth of Redlaw’s encounter. In fact, just as the mental origin of the Ghost in *The Haunted Man* is made more explicit than in *A Christmas Carol*, so, too, is the spiritual conversion. It could be argued that Scrooge’s transformation is more moral than spiritual as its Christian context is only vaguely referred to: Scrooge becomes a “good” man, who knows how to “keep Christmas well” (134). Redlaw’s transformation, on the other hand, is explicitly a spiritual, Christian awakening. He exclaims, “O Thou . . . who through the teaching of pure love, has graciously restored me to the memory which was the memory of Christ upon the cross, and of all the good who perished in His cause, receive my thanks” (470). In Redlaw’s direct address to God, Dickens firmly marks ghost-seeing as a link to the divine, and fleshes out Catherine Crowe’s notion of the constructive imagination. Redlaw’s path to repentance and spiritual growth is through his dealings with the Ghost; the Ghost’s psychic origin is

irrelevant to Redlaw's conversion. Thus Dickens refutes the scientific orthodoxy that would exclude all but the material from human nature.

In striking the Ghost's bargain, Redlaw learns – to his horror – what the absolutism of the scientific mind actually entails. Prior to his dealings with the Ghost, Redlaw is self-absorbed to the extent that William must physically prod him to ensure that he at least takes a minimal interest in conversation (379). He is so focused on his past that the present is largely a blur, and so quick to attribute his feelings to others that he categorizes Phillip's happy reminiscences as a "tissue of sorrow." For all this, however, Redlaw is still a compassionate, kind man. He is eager to help a student when he hears of that student's illness, and he says of himself, "I have never been a hater of my kind, - never morose, indifferent, or hard, to anything around me" (395). In accepting the Ghost's offer, Redlaw becomes all of these things. Led astray first by the belief that he understands human nature and knows how to improve on it, Redlaw undergoes a transformation in which he loses his memory of past sorrows and "the intertwined chain of feelings and associations, each in its turn dependent on, and nourished by, the banished recollections" but retains his "knowledge [and the] result of study" (395). In other words, Redlaw becomes the purely scientific mind: his mental faculties are left intact but he is stripped of his emotional life. As the purely scientific mind, Redlaw is only able to see the material aspects of the world around him. On his ill-fated mission to share his "gift" with others, he experiences three moments that demonstrate what is lost through scientific absolutism:

The first occasion was when they were crossing an old church-yard, and Redlaw stopped among the graves, utterly at a loss how to connect them with any tender, softening, or consoling thought. The second was, when the breaking forth of the moon

induced him to look up at the Heavens, where he saw her in her glory, surrounded by a host of stars he still knew by the names and histories which human science has appended to them; but where he saw nothing else he had been wont to see, felt nothing he had been wont to feel, in looking up there, on a bright night. The third was when he stopped to listen to a plaintive strain of music, but could only hear a tune, made manifest to him by the dry mechanism of the instruments and his own ears, with no address to any mystery within him, without a whisper in it of the past, or of the future

(437)

In each of these moments Redlaw is only able to recognize the physical, material attributes of his attention's focus; his senses register sights and sounds but with no corresponding inner sense of their spiritual worth. Like Scrooge, who had never contemplated his own death and was thus unprepared to meet it, Redlaw gazes at the cemetery but has lost all understanding of an afterlife. Like Dombey, for whom the stars exist to guide his trading vessels, Redlaw looks at the night sky and sees only a catalogue of scientific names – a poor measure of the divine glory of the heavens. Music, too, is reduced to a kind of machinery; the notes stir nothing deeper in Redlaw because his exclusive focus on the material allows for nothing deeper to exist. The world of the scientific absolutist – the Hibberts and the Ferriars who see only material causes and material reactions – is a cold and frightening place.

What Redlaw fails to understand both before his ghostly encounter and while he embodies pure scientific materialism is time's effect on the psyche, specifically in terms of man's moral and spiritual development. This lesson, which Scrooge learns through a three-day journey to the past, present, and future, Redlaw learns through studying the personalities of those around him. On his journey to relieve the sufferings of the poor by erasing their troubled memories he encounters a young prostitute of whom "he had a

perception that she was one of many, and that he saw the type of thousands, when he saw her, drooping at his feet” (433). The prostitute, representing this type, seems to be the perfect candidate for memory modification; however, when Redlaw questions her regarding her past sorrows, he was “much disquieted, to note that in her awakened recollection of this wrong, the first trace of her old humanity and frozen tenderness appeared to show itself” (433-4). Redlaw witnesses time’s salutary effect on the higher and deeper life through this and other encounters. The moral of the story, oft repeated and even engraved on a painting in one scene lest the reader miss it is “Lord! Keep my memory green!” (472). The saying alludes not only to the importance of keeping the past fresh by reliving it, but also to the notion that mentally traversing time and space is the path to mental and spiritual growth. Philip, who easily moves across his eighty-seven years through reflecting on green holly, is described in vegetative terms: he is the “trunk of the tree” from which the Swidger family has grown, and just as he literally gave his family life, so does he figuratively keep them alive in his memory (379). Redlaw, when he is frozen in time – in his past – is a destroyer of green life: “As he fell a-musing in his chair alone, the healthy holly withered on the wall, and dropped – dead branches” (389). In learning to keep his memory green, Redlaw learns to honor his past rather than rue it, to apply the lessons of it to his present, and to keep alive his hopes for the future.

Both Redlaw’s and Scrooge’s lessons in the significance of time are facilitated by their interaction with ghosts, highlighting Dickens’s use of ghosts as psychic talismans. However, in suggesting that Redlaw’s Ghost is a projection of his mental struggles and in shifting the presence of the past, present and future into the inner lives of his characters, Dickens moves his study of the time-mind connection out of the realm of fairy tales and

toward a sort of psychological realism. This suggests that Dickens did not see his solution to Victorian man's disregard for time in fairy tale terms – it is not a cure-all kiss from a random prince – romantic and impractical; rather, he saw the need for a reorientation to time, and the use of Christmas time and tradition to achieve it, as a plausible course of action. The irony is that Dickens's Christmas books, particularly *A Christmas Carol*, became themselves a Christmas tradition, capable of opening to their readers the vista of years long past and those yet to come.

Chapter 3

The Anatomy of Desire: Madness, Mesmerism, and the Specters of Female Sexuality

While Rhoda Broughton and Margaret Oliphant were never in any sense rivals, they were, in regards to their literary sensibilities and in the depictions of their heroines, polar opposites. Broughton, a leading member of the sensational school of fiction following the 1867 publication of *Cometh Up as a Flower*, was so well known for her passionate heroines and racy plots that her body of work helped establish Bret Harte's satiric "recipe" for sensation fiction: "Take two large human hearts, and break one against the other, stir frequently with a long 'spoon,' serve at white heat, with a sauce composed of molten-lava kisses, and garnish freely with wild oats" (qtd in E. Arnold 276). Thus while fellow sensationalist Mary Elizabeth Braddon pronounced Broughton "a genius and a prose poet" (Black 44), the more conservative Oliphant, in her review of *Cometh Up as a Flower*, declared, "It is a shame to women so to write; and it is a shame to the women who read and accept as a true representation of themselves and their ways the equivocal talk and fleshly inclinations herein attributed to them." The two novelists' residencies in Oxford for a time overlapped (Broughton moved there in 1877 on the advice of Matthew Arnold and Oliphant took up residence there while her sons attended the university), and their receptions there say much about the opposing camps from which they wrote. Broughton was famously snubbed upon her entrance into Oxford

society – Lewis Carroll went so far as to refuse a friend’s dinner invitation because “I cannot bring myself to meet Miss Rhoda Broughton, of whose novels I greatly disapprove” (Arnold 267). Oliphant, on the other hand, was warmly received, and wryly remarked, “I rather think I was set up as the proper novelist in opposition to Miss Broughton” (Sadleir 94). But while Margaret Oliphant and Rhoda Broughton represent in many respects the opposite sides of the conservative/liberal spectrum regarding the “woman question,” in their shared concern over portrayals of women in the sciences we see how universal were such apprehensions.

The connection between mind and body was for women complicated by Victorian theories regarding the imperatives of female sexual function. In a variety of ways, these theories separated the category “woman” from general discussions of human psychology; a woman’s psychological makeup largely stemmed from her reproductive organs, argued sociologists, psychologists, and medical professionals, thus everything from her intelligence to her inclinations was tied to her sexuality. Ghost stories by women writers of the period register this focus on female sexuality. In works by Broughton and Oliphant, the ghost figures as a double, reflecting the psyche of the character who witnesses it, and through this psychic personification, the ghost calls into question theories of mind and body – in this, these stories are no different from those by these authors’ male contemporaries. More specifically, these stories focus on gendered psychological theories: female protagonists’ supernatural experiences help them discredit their male contemporaries’ psycho-sexual theories and invest them with the agency necessary for spiritual growth independent of their (supposed) physical limitations.

Rather than making use of scientific theories of mind to reclaim their spirituality, Oliphant and Broughton use the spiritual to reclaim their minds.

I. Theories of Mind and Body

Psycho-sexual theories regarding women were largely used in social discussions about the equality of the sexes. A brief discussion of the relative mental powers of men and women in *Descent of Man* (1871) became in the hands of Spencer and other sociologists a fully developed theory linking women's inferiority to their reproductive organs. In *Descent*, Darwin writes, "The chief distinction in the intellectual powers of the two sexes is shewn by man attaining to a higher eminence, in whatever he takes up, than women can attain – whether requiring deep thought, reason, or imagination, or merely the use of the senses and hands" (2:326-7). Spencer unites this idea with another taken from *Descent* regarding the notion of "arrested development." According to Darwin, arrests of development are responsible for "various monstrosities" such as the "microcephalous idiots" whose "skulls are smaller, and the convolutions of the brain are less complex than in normal men" (1:121). Spencer uses this idea of arrested development as an explanation for female inferiority. In *The Study of Sociology* (1873), he writes

whereas in man individual evolution continues until the physiological cost of self-maintenance very nearly balances what nutrition supplies, in women an arrest of individual development takes place while there is yet a considerable margin of nutrition, otherwise there could be no offspring.
(373-374)

Instead of fully maturing, according to Spencer's theory, women reserve a portion of their developmental energy for the use of future offspring. The evidence for such a theory is perfect in its simplicity: from the arrested development of women comes "the chief contrasts in bodily form: the masculine figure being distinguished from the feminine by the greater relative sizes of the parts which carry on external actions and entail physiological cost" (Spencer 374). Thus, as plainly as women are in general physically smaller than men, so are they less developed, and this lack of development applies to the brain as well as the body:

This rather earlier cessation of individual evolution . . . has two results on the mind. The mental manifestations have somewhat less of general power and massiveness; and beyond this there is a perceptible falling short in those two faculties, intellectual and emotional, which are the latest products of human evolution – the power of abstract reasoning and that most abstract of the emotions, the sentiment of justice – the sentiment which regulates conduct irrespective of personal attachments and the likes or dislikes felt for individuals.
(Spencer 374)

Spencer's theory seems to directly refute Mill and others who argued for greater educational opportunities for women and believed that such opportunities would fit women to be as active in the public arena as similarly educated men. With his multiple invocations of "evolution," – a word which sounded with a fatal ring for many Victorians – Spencer dismisses equality through better education as a biological impossibility. Further, while Darwin writes generally of mental inferiority in "deep thought, reason, or imagination" Spencer focuses his argument on abstract reasoning and the understanding of justice. Such pointed attention to these two types of mental exertion echoed the sentiments of many who opposed women's suffrage on the basis that they were too

emotional to vote fairly or understand the complex needs of society. As Spencer notes, women's inability to move beyond their sympathetic feelings "makes women err still more than men do in seeking what seems an immediate public good without thought of distant public evils" (380). By appareling this opinion in the cloth of biology, Spencer provided a supporting argument to anti-suffragists well into the twentieth century.¹⁶

Indeed, anthropologist James McGrigor Allan vituperates, "could all the male intellect in the world be suddenly paralysed or annihilated, there is not sufficient development of the abstract principles of justice, morality, truth, or of causality and inventive power in the female sex, to hold the mechanism of society together for one week" (ccx).

While both Darwin and Spencer tempered their arguments regarding female mental inferiority with the belief that a slowly evolving society would gradually diminish the differences between the male and female intellect, others saw women's inferiority as more fixed. In an 1874 speech delivered to the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, W. L. Distant, supporting his argument with verbatim passages taken from *The Study of Sociology*, confidently asserted, "It cannot . . . be denied that there are physiological conditions which must for ever tend against the possibility of women as a rule arriving at an equal, much less acquiring a superior, position to men in the mental struggle" (84). Not only does Distant's argument point to women's mental inferiority as a condition that will exist "for ever," he implies in his last clause that there is some sort of competition, a "struggle" between men and women over mental ability. Rather than members of the same species evolving alongside one another, Distant paints women as a separate species competing with men for the resources necessary for survival.

¹⁶ See, for example, Almroth Wright's *The Unexpurgated Case Against Woman Suffrage*, particularly pp. vi, 35-38.

These two themes – the fixity of women’s mental inferiority, and the fear that the quest for equality would lead to competition between the sexes – are picked up again in Patrick Geddes’ and J. Arthur Thomson’s *The Evolution of Sex* (1889). In this “extremely influential, but now forgotten, study of sex-differentiation” (Conway 142), Geddes and Thomson argued that women’s supposedly inferior position throughout history in actuality demonstrated the “complex and sympathetic co-operation between the differentiated sexes in and around which all progress past or future must depend” (288). In other words, women’s subordinate position to men helped maintain peaceful relations between the sexes and ensured the success of the human race. Like Spencer, Geddes and Thomson saw women’s mental abilities as a result of their sexual function. They write, “The more active males, with a consequently wider range of experience, may have bigger brains and more intelligence; but the females, especially as mothers, have indubitably a larger and more habitual share of the altruistic emotions” (290). Geddes’ and Thomson’s biological theory is just another articulation of the age-old stereotype of the rational man and the emotional woman. While enfranchisement posed one threat to this perfect symbiosis between man and woman, industrialization was potentially an even greater evil. Regarding the question of achieving equality between the sexes, Geddes and Thomson write:

. . . it consistently appeared that all things would be settled as soon as women were sufficiently plunged into the competitive industrial struggle for their own daily bread. While, as the complexly ruinous results of this inter-sexual competition for subsistence upon both sexes and upon family life have begun to become manifest, the more recent economic panacea of redistribution of wealth has naturally been invoked, and we have merely somehow to raise women’s wages.

(287)

Like Distant, Geddes and Thomson see any move toward equal sexual relations as “inter-sexual competition.” Woman becomes the enemy of man and the destroyer of family life. Fortunately, this potentially bleak prognostication has little chance of coming true: “to obliterate [the distinctions between male and female] it would be necessary to have all evolution over again on a new basis. What was decided among the prehistoric Protozoa cannot be annulled by Act of Parliament” (Geddes and Thomson 286). Women may attempt to enter the workforce, Parliament may even grant them the right to vote, but nothing can change the fact that “man thinks more, woman feels more” (Geddes and Thomson 291). Biology is destiny; in Distant’s words, it is “for ever.”

Women who chose occupations outside of their domestic duties were traitors to the race, aiming at its downfall through their selfish neglect of their proper biological function. Certainly this idea, the main thrust of Distant’s and Geddes’ and Thomson’s theories, sparked anger, hurt, and resentment among the small but vocal group of professional women. However, the broader argument, that women were intellectually inferior to men based on the irrefutable laws of nature, was potentially far more damaging to women’s advancement. The theory, quite obviously, had holes in it – holes in the shapes of George Eliot, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and other extraordinary women whose superior intelligence was recognized by both sexes. The very achievements that made these women notable also marked them as notorious under the rubric of Victorian psycho-sexual theory.

In *Mind and Body* (1870), physician and psychologist Henry Maudsley closely parallels many of Spencer’s theories regarding female sexual development. He writes

It has been affirmed by some philosophers that there is no essential difference between the mind of a woman and that

of a man; and that if a girl were subjected to the same education as a boy, she would resemble him in tastes, feelings, pursuits, and powers. To my mind it would not be one whit more absurd to affirm that the antlers of the stag, the human beard, and the cock's comb, are effects of education; or that, by putting a girl to the same education as a boy, the female generative organs might be transformed into male organs.

(35)

Clearly this reiterates the idea that in respect to intelligence, men and women are essentially different, separated by the effects of biology rather than the dissimilarities of their educations. Also like Spencer, Maudsley links mental abilities to the sexual organs: to bring woman to the same mental condition as man would require “transforming” her sexual organs to man's. Maudsley takes his argument a step further in discussing those women who do exhibit a high level of intelligence:

While woman preserves her sex, she will necessarily be feebler than man, and, having her special bodily and mental characters, will have to a certain extent her own sphere of activity; where she has become thoroughly masculine in nature, or hermaphrodite in mind – when, in fact, she has pretty well divested herself of her sex – then she may take his ground, and do his work; but she will have lost her feminine attractions, and probably also her chief feminine functions.

(35)

Maudsley labels women who engage in intellectual pursuits, who move beyond their “own sphere of activity” – the business of keeping house and raising children – as aberrations of the female sex, marking their superior intelligence as a fault in such a way as was most calculated to insult the women so labeled and discourage other women from following the same path. Not only is intelligence an unhealthy sign of masculinity in a woman, it likely signals her loss of femininity both in appearance and in function.

Maudsley claims that women who pursue intellectual activities or activities outside the

domestic sphere are making a choice to give up their sexual function; such women will no longer be capable of motherhood, or will be ill-equipped for such a role. Such a theory obviously carries with it the moral directive not to pursue “masculine” activities, or try to better oneself through intellectual engagements. For a woman to remain a true woman, for her to possess the ability to be a good mother, she must be “necessarily feebler” than man. Margaret Oliphant’s passing conversation with an acquaintance points to the seeds of self-doubt sewn by Maudsley’s argument. She writes of meeting “Mary Hewitt, a mild, kind delightful woman, who frightened me very much, I remember, by telling me of many babies whom she had lost through some defective valve in the heart, which she said was somehow connected with too much mental work on the part of the mother, – a foolish thing, I should think, yet the same thing occurred twice to myself” (*Autobiography* 78). Oliphant, who lost her first two children early in their infancy, has now to question whether she is to blame for their deaths because of her work as a novelist. Maudsley’s theory effectively divides a woman’s mind from her body – the two seem at cross-purposes. To follow one’s intellectual proclivities is to deprive the body of necessary energy; to maintain the body’s store of energy, one must repress the abilities of the mind.

The female reproductive organs were thought responsible for women’s “feeble mindedness” in general, but other theories linked these organs with women’s emotional state and psychological makeup. Chiefly, these theories focused on the three “epochs” of a woman’s sexual development: puberty, menstruation and sexual activity, and motherhood. Before puberty, women are credited with not only equaling their male counterparts’ rate of development, but exceeding it. Spencer notes that “girls come

earlier to maturity than boys” (374). He is drawing on the accepted wisdom of the time. At the June 15, 1869 meeting of the Anthropological Society of London, for example, James McGrigor Allan made a similar claim and used it as the basis for discrediting women’s intellectual abilities at adulthood:

I deduce from this fact [girls’ more rapid development] a conclusion quite opposed to that of mental equality of the sexes. In the animal and vegetable kingdoms we find this invariable law—rapidity of growth inversely proportionate to the degree of perfection at maturity. The higher the animal or plant in the scale of being, the more slowly does it reach its utmost capacity of development. Girls are physically and mentally more precocious than boys. The human female arrives sooner than the male at maturity, and furnishes one of the strongest arguments against the alleged equality of the sexes. The quicker appreciation of girls is the instinct, or intuitive faculty in operation; while the slower boy is an example of the latent reasoning power not yet developed. Compare them in after-life, when the boy has become a young man full of intelligence, and the girl has been educated into a young lady reading novels, working crochet, and going into hysterics at the sight of a mouse or a spider.

(cxcvii)

Allen’s conclusion that women demonstrate their inferiority based on the habits of novel reading and piece work seem appallingly unscientific and shallow today, yet the majority of respondents at the Anthropological Society’s meeting found little to argue with in Allen’s assertions. The onset of puberty in a woman was considered the point at which her more animal nature became dominant; after puberty she could exert herself to no greater intellectual pursuit than reading novels. The onset of puberty also altered a woman’s psychological makeup, according to Maudsley. He writes:

The great mental revolution which occurs at puberty may go beyond its physiological limits, in some instances, and become pathological. The vague feelings, blind longings, and obscure impulses, which then arise in the mind attest the awakening of an impulse which knows not at first its aim or the means of its gratification; a kind of vague and yearning melancholy is

engendered, which leads to an abandonment to poetry of a
gloomy Byronic kind

(75)

Maudsley characterizes women's first response to menstruation as confusing: it brings on feelings that are "vague," "blind," and "obscure." The sense of distance between mind and body advanced by the theory of arrested development – the idea that a woman's mind and body are in conflict over a limited resource – is here given a new dimension, specifically relating the mind/body disconnect to the development of sexual feeling. Maudsley indicates that women are not capable of comprehending the "awakening impulse" of sexuality, a nod toward the common belief that women were more or less asexual. The body, then, is not only a claimant for a limited amount of available energy also desired by the mind, it is a potential source of terror: from it arise unknowable, mysterious urges that leave women in perpetual melancholy.

II. Liminal Spaces and Oliphant's "The Library Window"

The young narrator of Oliphant's "The Library Window" is in precisely the state of mind described by Maudsley. As Simon Cooke (245-6) and Tamar Heller (28) note, she is at the point of puberty in the story, caught in the liminal space between childhood and adulthood. A number of textual clues point to this: her placement under the guardianship of her aunt, labels such as "honey" (the constant address of her aunt), and "bairn" (12, 23), as Lady Carnbee dubs her, and a description of her "little head" (27) point toward her child-like state, while Mr. Pitmilly's labeling her as "Missy" (20) and "young lady" (37, 39), Lady Carnbee's belief that "the young lassie" would "cock up her

bonnet at the sight of a young lord” (31), and the baker’s boy’s appreciation of her as a “braw ane” (38) all point to her as a young woman. More tellingly, the narrator has been sent to her Aunt Mary’s home in St. Rule’s (significantly named) because of a vaguely defined illness. She explains, “Whenever we had anything the matter with us in these days, we were sent to St. Rule’s to get up our strength. And this was my case at the time of which I am going to speak” (4). That there is something “the matter” with her, then, must be taken for granted. But in her lack of symptoms and in her own unconcern with her state of health, we may assume, as Cooke does, that her illness is along the lines of “the onset of nervous or hysterical disturbances” (246) – that her poor health is an emotional state as much as it is a physical weakness, indicative of the sort of alteration, the “mental revolution” Maudsley describes occurring at puberty. Also indicative of her still-developing adult sensibilities are her responses to ideas of flirtation and sexual attraction. The only man she has contact with for most of the story, Mr. Pitmilley, is “old” (5), “white haired” (6), and “always a friend” (32) – in other words, non-sexualized, and not sexually threatening to the narrator. However, her interactions with him also point to her awakening sense of opposite-sex relations. She says, “Mr. Pitmilley had a way of laughing as he spoke, which did not please me; but it was true that he was not perhaps desirous of pleasing me” (5-6). In this thought we see the narrator’s confused sense of the type of homage men pay to women – their desire to “please” through tone and word as part of the discourse between the sexes. Not knowing whether Mr. Pitmilley cares to please her points toward her own uncertainty regarding her developmental status – if she is a woman, he would make an effort to please her, if she is a child, she would be disregarded. The narrator’s response to Lady Carnbee’s accusation that she is

daydreaming about “some man,” is equally telling: “I am thinking of no man,” she responds, “half crying. ‘It is very unkind and dreadful of you to say so, Lady Carnbee. I never thought of—any man, in all my life!’ [she] cried in a passion of indignation” (24). Her denial points both towards sexual innocence – the thought of a man is “dreadful,” – and, in its strength, in the “passion” of her “indignation,” Oliphant hints that the narrator “protests too much.”

Both Cooke and Heller agree that “The Library Window” reflects the psycho-sexual theories of the mid to late Victorian period. Heller writes that the story “recalls the cluster of late nineteenth-century discourses – scientific, medical, and literary – that argued that women’s bodies inextricably imprisoned their minds and that they could not develop one without damaging the other” (25), while Cooke notes that “the tale contains several features that suggest the presence of . . . psychological theories as a shaping influence” and singles out Maudsley as a primary influence (244). However, to argue that Oliphant is simply presenting a case study of hysteria, as Cooke does, a tale of “a young woman who undergoes a mental collapse and is ultimately driven mad,” is to miss the spiritual import of the text (243). Likewise, Heller stresses the ghost’s symbolic status (as a representative of “literary authority”) to the exclusion of its status as a ghost (24). Rather than madness, I will argue that the narrator achieves a kind of spiritual enlightenment at the end of the story; rather than read the ghost as a symbolic presence, I will argue that its reality in the story reconciles the narrator with her mental abilities and with herself.

Although the story begins with the narrator already arrived in St. Rule’s, and already suffering from the mental revolution of puberty, her early history, only hinted at

in the narrative, provides a refutation to Maudsley's theory that puberty sinks young girls into gloomy poetry-reading melancholy. The narrator sums up her childhood by noting "Everybody had said, since ever I learned to speak, that I was fantastic and fanciful and dreamy, and all the other words with which a girl who may happen to like poetry, and to be fond of thinking is so often made uncomfortable" (4-5). Cooke ties the narrator's "dreaminess" throughout the story to the onset of puberty, arguing that her "melancholy introspection is particularly expressed in terms of dreaminess which was routinely associated with hysterical apathy" (247). But by the narrator's own admission, "dreaminess" was a natural part of her disposition, a characteristic noticeable in her from her earliest years. It is connected, not to the onset of puberty, but to her intellectualism, her fondness for thinking, as she puts it. The narrator has been made uncomfortable all her life for her pronounced intellect, placing her in the same position as those adult women who were said to have neglected biological function in pursuit of their selfish desire for learning. Thus Oliphant's young narrator is not a fictionalized version of Maudsley's theories regarding pubescent girls precisely because the symptoms he saw as developing through puberty are in the narrator preexisting. Oliphant calls into question the notion that biology drives Maudsley's theory of pubescent melancholia. What seems to cause the narrator's unhappiness is her sense of being different, a sense she has gained from the language used to describe her, the terms used disapprovingly by friends and family to mark her as abnormal. Social conditions have put the narrator at odds with herself.

The "dreaminess" that characterizes the narrator reflects another facet of Maudsley's developmental theory – it is another symptom of the female malady – but

Oliphant's portrayal of female dreaminess renders it a positive, constructive behavior. Cooke writes that "Paralyzed by inertia, literally bored stiff by the comings and goings of the old people around her, [the narrator] is the model of female languor, of mental illness apparently expressing itself in the incapacity of the body" (246). This description leaves much of the narrator's mental landscape unexplored. True, she does seem bored by her surroundings, noting "To tell the truth, there never was very much going on inside. The house belonged to my aunt, to whom (she says, Thank God!) nothing ever happens she was old, and very quiet. Her life went on in a routine never broken. She got up at the same hour every day, and did the same things in the same rotation, day by day the same" (3). Aunt Mary, it seems, is just as much a figure of inertia as her niece – she is resistant to change and thankful for its absence. It is likewise true that the narrator exhibits some "incapacity of the body." She tells the reader, "I did very little work, I fear—now and then a few stitches when the spirit moved me, or when I had got well afloat in a dream, and was more tempted to follow it out than to read my book, as sometimes happened" (4). The narrator is a far cry from the model of female industry idealized in the period's conduct literature. Oliphant contrasts this stillness of body with the narrator's life prior to her arrival in St. Rule's. According to the narrator, "My mother would not have let me do it, I know. She would have remembered dozens of things that were to do. She would have sent me up-stairs to fetch something which I am quite sure she did not want, or down-stairs to carry some quite unnecessary message to the housemaid. She liked to keep me running about" (4). By linking such busywork with the narrator's mother's sense of propriety, Oliphant also connects it to those discomfort-producing phrases uttered by the adults in the narrator's pre-St. Rule's life. Both are used as a check to the

narrator's intellectual engagements. Thus, just as Oliphant is critical of the atmosphere of hostility toward female intellectualism created by the labels applied to the narrator, so is she critical of the notion – shared by Maudsley and the narrator's mother – that “dreaminess” and idleness are moral or psychological failings.

In fact, the narrator's dreaminess is anything but idle. The kind of languor Cooke comprehends in her lack of physical activity is belied by the mental work in which she is engaged. “Dreaminess” suggests a fair amount of passivity – the mind in a dream is inactive, a hostage to the strange workings of the subconscious. This in part does describe the narrator's mental state. She sometimes feels herself “well afloat in a dream” and senses the conversation around her “as if the air had blown it to me” (4). But using the raw material of airborne conversation, the narrator engages in acts of creation. Of the voices she hears coming from the street below, she says, “sometimes they said to each other something that was amusing, and often something that suggested a whole story” (10). The narrator, then, is not passively letting conversation wash over her, she is speculating on meaning, mentally authoring fiction to accompany the snippets of conversation she hears. This form of story creation coincides with her speculations regarding the library window. Heller notes that “. . . if we see the ghost as her own creation, she writes on the ‘opaque’ space of the library wall” (26). This is likewise true without the ghost necessarily being a fiction. If the narrator is merely observing him in the same manner she overhears conversation, she is then still engaged in a meaning-making act. When she first shifts her attention to the window, she says she looked into it and

could see the grey space and air a little deeper, and a sort of vision, very dim, of a wall, and something against it I

looked more intently, and made sure it was a piece of furniture, either a writing-table or perhaps a large bookcase. No doubt it must be the last, since this was part of the old library. I never visited the old College Library, but I had seen such places before, and I could well imagine it to myself.

(11-12)

In this description, the narrator moves from passive awareness to close, active observation through her intensified gaze. She “interprets” with finer and finer distinction the meaning of the dark object she sees within the room, based on logical deductions drawn from the combination of her sense perception and previous experience. Finally, in a creative leap, she moves from the perceived dark shape to an entire “well imagined” room. This mental progression – from dark shape, to furniture, to bookcase, to library room – points toward the narrator’s blend of empirical and creative thought.

The blend is one Oliphant employs in her religious speculations. Again and again throughout her life Oliphant questioned the divine purpose behind the deaths of her grown children:¹⁷ Maggie, who died at age 10, Cyril (“Tiddy”) who died at 33, and Frances (“Cecco”), her youngest, who died at 34. She wanted more than anything to fathom some idea of their heavenly existences, trying “to follow [Maggie] in imagination, to think of her delight and surprise when from the fever, wandering and languor of her bed she came suddenly into the company of angels and the presence of the Lord” (*Autobiography* 39). She imagines Tiddy in the embrace of God, writing, “Thou wilt cradle him in thy arms. Thou wilt comfort him as one whom his mother comforteth” (*Autobiography* 84). After Cecco’s death, she wonders, “Does [God] provide, as I sometimes think, some special work for those whose lives were unfulfilled here? Oh so many, so many, all unfulfilled . . . and now both of my own are among them”

¹⁷ Oliphant also lost two children in their infancies.

(*Autobiography* 124). Oliphant, whose life works included a great many texts and essays on Christianity, whose “bedrock security, as she saw it, of her own faith in God’s existence allowed her outbursts against God’s unfathomable ways” found comfort in the imaginative leaps she made toward her heaven-bound children (Jay 139). The creative leap is a leap of faith.

In “The Library Window,” the narrator’s imaginative leaps are also, significantly, leaps of faith, but whereas Oliphant’s imaginative acts had as their foundation her unshakeable belief in divine justice, the narrator founds her imaginative acts on faith in her own abilities. Early in the narrative, she confesses, “I had a sort of second-sight, and was conscious of things to which I paid no attention” (5). Oliphant is certainly playing with the nuances of meaning inherent in the term “second-sight,” which in Scotland referred to a type of prescience often related to death or to the ability to “see” events occurring at a great remove from the seer. Oliphant’s narrator is not foretelling the future, however, nor is she seeing a death (although she might be seeing the dead). Instead, her ability, in connection with the vision she has of the scholar within the library window, hints at the distances the narrator is overcoming: the distance between her life and his afterlife, the distance between the limitations placed on her as a young woman and his intellectual freedom, and perhaps, if the ghostly scholar is a reflection of her psyche, the distance between her conscious thoughts and her subconscious desires. But in the day to day use of her “second-sight” Oliphant grants her narrator a different ability than those traditionally ascribed to the term. Second-sight becomes no more and no less than a kind of extra-ordinary awareness, a heightened sensory perception. It is an ability of the body rather than the mind: the narrator’s conscious thought is busy elsewhere

while her senses register the sights and sounds around her. In seeing the library window, and in seeing through the library window, the narrator credits her physical ability: “For certainly there was a feeling of space behind the panes which these old half-blind ladies had disputed about whether they were glass or only fictitious panes marked on the wall. How silly! when eyes that could see could make it out in a minute” (11). The narrator contrasts her youth with the other ladies’ age in order to claim for herself a physical strength these other women lack. Sight and second-sight are markers of bodily power.

While claiming physical power might be considered tantamount to admitting mental weakness based on Victorian notions of female development, the narrator of “The Library Window” refuses to acknowledge any such deficiency. In trying to understand her ability to see through the library window she

would have been better pleased to make out to myself that it was some superiority in me which made it so clear to me, if it were only the great superiority of young eyes over old—though that was not quite enough to satisfy me, seeing it was a superiority which I shared with every little lass and lad in the street. I rather wanted, I believe, to think that there was some particular insight in me which gave clearness to my sight

(17)

It is to the combination of sight and insight, of physical and mental powers, that the narrator hopes to attribute her vision of the window. The young girl whose intellect has been ridiculed at home, and whose physical wellbeing has been called into question (thus her removal to St. Rule’s for her undefined “illness”), sees in this sight of the window a sign of self-worth. While the narrator does not “fit in” at home, and while at her aunt Mary’s she is likewise ill-suited for days spent in the drawing room, in her ability to see into the room beyond the library window, she is able to escape the narrow confines of her

window seat. The window seat – on the margins of the drawing room, at the edge of social life, in the liminal space between inside and outside worlds – is the only place where the narrator feels comfortable, but through that imaginative leap based on faith in herself, she is able to occupy the library chamber. Her belief in what she is seeing literally pushes back the gray spaces of the room.

In her literary biography of Oliphant, Elisabeth Jay writes, “It was in the world of fancy, or fantasy, in her *Stories of the Seen and Unseen* . . . that Mrs. Oliphant discovered a place to ponder further upon irresolvable paradoxes and gender-related confusions” (157). This “uncolonized” space, as Jay terms it, between the living and the dead in Oliphant’s early ghost stories is likewise the place where “The Library Window’s” young narrator works out her own gender issues and where Oliphant reconciles a lifelong ambivalence toward female sexuality with the exigencies of female intellectual growth. While St. Rule’s is the panacea prescribed in the narrator’s family for any sort of illness, it seems particularly suited for treatment of young girls who are straying off the socially acceptable path toward womanhood. It is, after all, a town where women take tea and gossip on one side of the street, while the men are ensconced in the seat of learning, the college, on the other side of the street. It is a town where Mr. Pitmilly, the only man in Aunt Mary’s drawing-room, is deferred to as a matter of course, “talking with mild authority like a little oracle among the ladies” (8). It is a town where the women are synecdochely represented as dresses and bonnets in the narrator’s mind. It is a town, where, as its name implies, life is carefully ruled, physically by the clean lines of the street separating men’s and women’s activities, and socially, for as the narrator remarks, “In St Rule’s they have a great way of throwing stones at each other” (27). Innocent

childhood diversion carries the double entendre of a carefully policed society. The narrator resists efforts to assimilate her into this ruled world through her imaginative forays across the street. As Heller notes, the specter of the student is “an idealized form of her escape from domesticity” (28). The narrator is metaphorically crossing a line, breaking a rule, and entering the (in this case, literally) gray space that constitutes Oliphant’s world of fancy. In this space, the narrator achieves a triumph of intellectual and sexual expression not reconcilable with the ruled world’s expectations for women.

The climax of Oliphant’s story highlights the tension between the narrator’s personal triumph and the impossibility of such a triumph carrying any meaning in the rule-bound reality of St. Rule’s. The narrator is finally lured from her liminal position by an invitation to a party in the College library. The visit to the library is more than a simple walk across the street, though. In going out, the narrator is coming out, crossing the formal threshold between sexually innocent child and sexually available young lady. Her desire to physically occupy the space of her vision and physically interact with the visionary scholar is explicitly sexualized. The narrator writes,

It occurred to me, however, when I was dressing . . . that he might perhaps, it was just possible, be there. And when I thought of that, I took out my white frock—though Janet had laid out my blue one—and my little pearl necklace which I had thought was too good to wear. . . . though I did not think much of my appearance then, there must have been something about me—pale as I was but apt to colour in a moment, with my dress so white, and my pearls so white, and my hair all shadowy—perhaps, that was pleasant to look at

(34)

The narrator’s choice of white on white – white dress and white pearls – emphasizes her chastity, certainly, but this dress also emphasizes the sexual allure of chaste young women. The narrator’s pearls are another version of Lady Cambee’s flashing diamond

ring, a sign of enticement which a number of scholars have pointed to as a symbol of sexuality in the text. That the narrator is “apt to colour in a moment” again suggests her position on the threshold of womanhood: she is virginally pale, but ready to shift into the ruddy, full-blooded color of sexual arousal. Most significant, though, is the fact that the narrator chooses this attire with the scholar in mind. In deliberately donning the garb of the debutante, the narrator effectively marks the transition from child to adult as a matter of choice rather than a biological inevitability. The narrator’s curiosity, her awakened empathy, and her desire do more to move her into adulthood than her vague illness or any exertion of St. Rule’s social pressure. In this, Oliphant grants the mind much greater control over the body than is accounted for in Maudsley’s pubescent theory. In fact, in transmuting the narrator’s mental longings into a sexual urge, Oliphant unites mind and body, and demonstrates that they can have a single purpose.

The narrator’s disastrous experience in the library points to the lack of space for her combined mental and sexual desires. Quite literally, the room the narrator seeks, the room she had viewed so many times from her side of the street, does not exist in the library building. As the narrator traverses the large room where the party is taking place, she begins to grow uneasy, realizing that the space does not physically match the room she viewed from across the street. She writes,

On that side of the wall which was to the street there seemed no windows at all. A long line of bookcases filled it from end to end. I could not see what that meant either, but it confused me. I was altogether confused. I felt as if I was in a strange country, not knowing where I was going, not knowing what I might find out next. If there were no windows on the wall to the street, where was my window? My heart, which had been jumping up and calming down again all the time, gave a great leap at this, as if it would have come out of me—but I did not know what it could mean.

Significantly, Oliphant portrays the narrator's moment of realization as both a mental and physical experience. Her mental confusion is mirrored in the erratic beating of her heart, and further exemplified in the confused roles played by mind and heart. Instead of a mental leap, it is the narrator's heart that leaps into knowledge.

The lack of a room in the library holding the object of her desire signals a lack of space in the world outside her head for that desire to exist. Jenni Calder argues that in contrast to her realist fiction, Oliphant's ghost stories "approach the physical and the emotional in a rather different way. In them . . . she explores vulnerable areas of feeling and belief, testing the powers of faith and imagination against the intellectual infrastructure that was being put into place through the nineteenth century. That infrastructure was almost entirely the work of men" (173). Oliphant's ghost story, like the library room, can only exist outside the parameters – social and scientific – of a masculinely-defined reality.

Given the lack of space, both physically and in terms of social conventions, for the narrator's desire to exist, her persistent belief in the scholar and his room pushes her beyond the bounds of acceptable behavior. She seems to have undergone a psychic break, a mental breakdown, leaving Mr. Pitmilley exclaiming "It's peetiful, it's peetiful," and causing the maid to "burst out crying" (39). But what seems so clearly a breakdown is, in another sense, a breakthrough. The narrator states, "Never in all these days had I seen that room so clearly" (39). The narrator's belief in the scholar and his room despite her sure knowledge that neither are possible lends an urgency to her desire and a strength to her vision. It is only after the narrator is shown that he cannot be that the Scholar

looks at her, opens the window, and acknowledges her with a wave. What her mind has yearned for – surer sight of him – has been fulfilled. She achieves a bodily fulfillment as well. As a number of scholars have noted, the moment is rife with the language of orgasm, ending with the narrator feeling “so content, and . . . so worn out and satisfied” (41). The ambiguity surrounding this encounter hinges on a central set of questions: is Oliphant, by portraying the narrator’s vision as a kind of madness (in the eyes of the minor characters, and in showing the reader as well as the narrator the physical impossibility of either the Scholar or his room existing) equating female vision and the unchecked imagination with sexual malady? Or is she instead, as I have argued in this chapter, claiming that women might have true vision, and great intellectual abilities as exhibited in the strength of their imaginations, and healthy, undiminished sexuality? Is her story challenging readers to accept that mental power and reproductive ability can coexist in the female body by asking them to accept that the Scholar’s room and the physical library can occupy the same space? There is no one answer to this; as Elizabeth Winston notes, the story “yields no stable meaning” and is marked most by “elusiveness and indeterminacy” (53).

Reading the moment of recognition between the narrator and the Scholar as a spiritual encounter (rather than, say, a moment of delusional madness or a symbolic exchange) is useful in this context. Indeed, the moment seems to invite such a reading. It is only after the narrator repeatedly exhorts him, “Say something to me!” that the Scholar draws her closer to the window “as if [she] were a puppet moved by his will” (40). He finally sees, the narrator relates, that she all along “was watching him, looking for him, believing in him” (40). From the need-filled prayer that captures the Scholar’s attention,

to the narrator's sense of being guided by his will, to the question of belief, the scene resonates with Christian overtones. Whether the Scholar's wave is a salutation or a warning, his presence before the narrator is benign. It is an answer to her prayer though the Scholar makes no utterance. His recognition of her "speaks" to the narrator by reassuring her that her vision is true, but more than this, she is reassured that she is being watched, she is acknowledged, she is not alone. The narrator receives the comfort sought for by so many spiritual doubters in this great Age of Doubt. That the narrator's doubt is self-doubt, doubt in her mental abilities, suggests that the spiritual recognition of her sanctions these abilities. To underscore the strength of this spiritual sanctioning, Oliphant ensures that the reader cannot easily dismiss the narrator's vision as delusion. The baker's boy, who the narrator sees "staring up at the open window, with his mouth open and his face full of wonder" is brought before Aunt Mary and Mr. Pitmilley and made to confess that he was looking at "yon windy yonder in the library that is nae windy. And it was open – sure's death. You may laugh if you like" (43). The narrator's vision is confirmed not by some other young girl, possibly hysterical, but by the practical, down-to-earth baker's boy, who must acknowledge what he saw even against his will, and even as his judgment tells him it is impossible.

III. Broughton's Haunted Female Body

Like "The Library Window," Rhoda Broughton's "The Man with the Nose" is a story about a young woman, Elizabeth, haunted by repeated sightings of an unknown

man. It, too, is a story about liminal spaces: focused on one couple's honeymoon, it captures Elizabeth's transition from maiden to wife, a status change that carries with it an implied shift into sexual experience. Thus, like the narrator of "The Library Window," the transformative epoch Elizabeth has arrived at is underwritten by her sexuality. The initiation into sexual activity was not, for women, precisely akin to other activities they took up upon entering the married state, though it was certainly considered one of their many domestic duties. Instead, medical practitioners theorized that sexual activity had a psychic effect on women, awakening a potentially dangerous sexual desire in them. This belief aligns sexual activity with puberty in terms of a shared influence on a woman's mind. While Oliphant's specter in "The Library Window" signals a sort of divine approbation of the combined mental and physical desires of women, the specter in Broughton's story seems only to point inward, at the division science had created between a woman's mind and her body. So estranged is Elizabeth from her body's functions – its demands and its desires – that she registers these functions as a spectral other, a sexualized figure whose existence is as mystifying as it is frightening. In portraying Elizabeth's encounters with this figure as a battle of wills, Broughton critiques the ideology that taught women to distrust their bodies; in further portraying the battle of wills as one that Elizabeth loses, Broughton points to the futility of women living up to the standard set for them by the medical profession.

King Lear's famous denunciation of his daughters and all the female sex – "Down from the waist they are Centaurs / Though women all above" – was given scientific validation of a sort in the mid-nineteenth century (Shakespeare 4.6 124-125). Beneath the many and voluminous layers of the Victorian woman's skirt, frightening, monstrous

things were afoot (ahooof?). The pseudo-Darwinian theories that differentiated between man's and woman's mental abilities based on sexual function helped shape the rhetoric and practice in the burgeoning obstetrical and gynecological field, while arguments in psychology surrounding the potential mental crisis of puberty found continuance in the Victorians' understanding of menstruation and sexual activity. As James McGrigor Allan argues, at puberty, "The boy, springing into manhood, is at once and for ever developed, and, so far as sex is concerned, completed. Whereas the woman, for a period varying from twenty to thirty years, is an admirably constructed apparatus for the most mysterious and sublime of nature's mysteries—the reproductive process" (cxcviii). In Allan's account, a man's body is stable, "at once and for ever developed," whereas puberty signals for women not only the advent of adulthood, but the beginning of instability and chaos. The adult woman's body is not solid flesh but a casing, an "apparatus" for a "mysterious process." It is never fixed, never at rest, always in flux. The price of this constant change, was, according to the medical profession, paid in emotional and mental well-being. Referring to the medical profession's iteration of Spenser's notion of arrested development, Mary Poovey writes,

The model of the human body implicit in this physiology is that of a closed system containing a fixed quantity of energy; if stimulation or expenditure occurred in one part of the system, corresponding depletion or excitation had to occur in another. . . . for women, it grounded an economy that was perceived to be continuously internally unstable. This instability was considered a function of what medical men denominated female 'periodicity,' a state inaugurated by puberty, signaled by menstruation, and epitomized in childbearing.

(36)

As a system, the female body was constantly striving for balance, but just as constantly thrown off balance by its reproductive organs. As S. Weir Mitchell, a celebrated

specialist in hysterical disorders, implies, the “spasms, rigours, nervousness, and curious mental states, which haunt the times of sexual change in a woman’s life” are commonplace, the stuff of everyday (219). “Haunted” by the work of her reproductive organs, the Victorian woman was told to live in perpetual fear of the sharp beat of hooves, the attack of the beast from which she could never escape.

While Margaret Oliphant had come to rethink many of her conservative views on women by the time she wrote “The Library Window,” in 1867 she was firmly opposed to the more liberated women found in sensation fiction. The “fleshly inclinations” Oliphant decries in her *Cometh Up Like a Flower* review are one of the most characteristic features of Broughton’s heroines. R.C. Terry writes that the “archetypal Broughton heroine [is] . . . full of feminine warmth, and sexuality” (114). Tamar Heller similarly describes Broughton’s protagonists: “Broughton’s full-bodied heroines are female Oliver Twists, asking for more of everything they are not allowed--sexual, intellectual, and emotional fulfillment” (89). For Terry, Broughton’s significance as a novelist “lies in this uninhibited directness about women’s strong feelings, and by implication, their sexual needs in a male-dominated society” (110). So frank are Broughton’s typical heroines that they might confess, like Kate Chester in *Not Wisely but too Well*, to a willingness to “do anything wicked, anything insane” for the men they desire (51). Broughton’s work explores not only the ways women express sexual desire, but the repercussions of such expressions.

Elizabeth, Broughton’s protagonist in “The Man with the Nose,” is at odds with the “full-bodied,” “uninhibited” heroines of her other fiction. The appellation Broughton consistently applies to Elizabeth’s dialogue is “meek” and she is repeatedly referred to as

“timid” – characteristics that align Elizabeth with Dickens’s domestic angels rather than with the bold heroines common in sensation fiction. Broughton is quick to establish Elizabeth’s timidity specifically in relation to her sexuality. The opening scene of the story finds Elizabeth and her then-fiancé (who serves as the story’s narrator) discussing their honeymoon plans, a subject superficially centered on possible destinations but fraught with a subtext focused on their upcoming sexual encounter. The two characters’ nervousness about sex is sublimated instead into fear of appearing ridiculous in public as “honeymooners”; their wish to appear like any long-married couple on holiday speaks to their desire to be past the sexual awkwardness of the wedding night and the honeymoon period. Tellingly, the figurative language they use to convey their fears of conspicuity is laden with references to sin. In response to Elizabeth’s suggestion that they disguise themselves, the narrator says, “With an old portmanteau and in rags, we shall still have the mark of the Beast upon us” (37). Such phrasing alludes both to an association with the devil and connects the honeymoon period with a time given to bestial inclinations. In the couple’s decision to “betake [them]selves to some spot where such as [they] do chiefly congregate – where [they] shall be swallowed up and lost in the multitude of [their] fellow-sinners,” we see their surface concern with *gaucherie* disturbed again by uneasy allusions to immorality and loss of control (38). In one sense, these allusions seem misplaced: Broughton is weighing down her characters with fears of sexual temptation more appropriate to couples with no intention of marrying. In another sense, however, Broughton uses the concerns of Elizabeth and her fiancé to criticize the rigor of the Victorian denigration of sexuality. She implies that the stringent moral code that taught both men and women to abhor sexual expression as the deepest depravity was not

so easy to set aside at the moment when the sexual act was sanctioned by the Church and society. The lessons of childhood are not easily forgotten, it seems.

More pointedly, Broughton connects the narrator's sexual anxieties with an aversion to female physicality. After the wedding night has taken place ("I have got over it; we have both got over it tolerably, creditably," (44) the narrator states – a tongue in cheek reference to sex masquerading as information about the ceremony itself), the narrator becomes fixated on the female body. During a boating excursion, he notes "There are few actions more disgusting than eating *can* be made. A handsome girl close to us – her immaturity evidenced by the two long tails of black hair down her back – is thrusting her knife halfway down her throat" (57). Specifically, the narrator is disgusted with the girl's actions as she satisfies one of the needs of her body. His initial attraction to her "handsome" form is overruled by repulsion at the uninhibited expression of her enjoyment of food. The description of her eating seems deliberately sexualized, as if to imply that for the narrator, all displays of female desire are the same, all sexualized and disgusting. Only moments later, the narrator spies "a fat woman," who, interested in a bird on the water, "leans over the back of the boat, and, by some happy effect of crinoline, displays to her fellow- passengers two yards of thick, white cotton legs. She is, fortunately for herself, unconscious of her generosity" (59). The biting sarcasm of this remark betrays the narrator's anger, his outrage at being confronted with the intimate details of the female body. Like the young girl whose eating so offends him, this woman is acting on a desire, oblivious to the judgment of those around her. The narrator's characterization of her as "fat" links her to the eating girl: she is unable to control the excesses of her physical desires. Both women, then, are precisely the type that

Broughton's fiction generally focuses on – literally “full-bodied” and decidedly “uninhibited.”

Elizabeth's meekness and timidity – the characteristics that differentiate her from these women – are called into question because of the narrator's strong judgment. His vituperative response to the two random women on the boat indicates that where women's expressions of desire are concerned, he is far from an objective observer. Thus, when he states that Elizabeth's purchase of a feathered bonnet creates for him so “delicious [a] picture of a child playing at being grown up, having practised a theft on its mother's wardrobe, that for the last two hours I have been in a foolish ecstasy of love and laughter over her and it” (47), he seems to illustrate his own need to infantilize Elizabeth rather than her actual childishness. Elizabeth buys the bonnet, as she says, “in order to look married”; in other words, she is laying claim to her new status as a wife and a sexually active woman (47). The narrator dismisses Elizabeth's acknowledgment of her newly acquired sexual knowledge by characterizing it as childish playfulness. He refuses to allow Elizabeth the space to be a knowing adult, marking all attempts at adulthood on her part as pretend.

In “The Library Window,” the narrator's intellectual ambitions are figured partly as sexual longings, demonstrating the unity of her mind and body and pointing toward a connection between society's dismissal of both types of feminine desire. Neither is acceptable; Oliphant's narrator crosses the threshold of puberty into an adulthood of mental and physical repression. The adult female body is constantly in flux, as Allan argues; during menstruation, women were even thought to “suffer under a languor and depression which disqualify them for thought or action, and render it extremely doubtful

how far they can be considered responsible beings while the crisis lasts” (Allan cxcviii). However, the virtuous woman was required to remain aloof from her body, she was to ignore the click of her centaur’s hooves and instead focus her thoughts heavenward. Her initiation into sexual activity was a potentially dangerous time for her in the struggle between mind and body. In his essay on prostitution, W. R. Greg (discussed in the previous chapter) writes, “there is a radical and essential difference between the sexes In men, in general, the sexual desire is inherent and spontaneous, and belongs to the condition of puberty. In the other sex, the desire is dormant, if not non-existent, till excited; always till excited by undue familiarities; almost always till excited by actual intercourse” (qtd in Poovey 5). In other words, a first sexual encounter, whether as a prostitute or wife, could plunge women into the depths of their animal natures, revealing an until-then unknown physical desire. Sex was a betrayal of their virtuous selves, a fall for the prostitute and the wife alike. Elizabeth’s seemingly innocent purchase of a hat is in this context fraught with frightening possibilities for her new husband. He must wonder whether her desire to look like a married woman is an acknowledgement of the sexual urges any virtuous woman would adamantly deny.

Elizabeth’s purchase of the hat and the narrator’s response to it encapsulate the central struggle of the story between Elizabeth’s feelings of sexual desire and her desire to remain virtuous in the eyes of a husband who is disgusted with all forms of female desire. This struggle is also at the heart of medical debates regarding women in the decades leading up to Broughton’s composition of “The Man with the Nose.” Mary Poovey writes in *Uneven Developments*, “the division among medical men about whether woman’s nature – and therefore her difference from man – would be formulated

primarily in terms of morality or physiology constituted an important impediment to the professionalization of medicine at the same time that it exposed the contradiction written into the Victorian image of woman” (25). Poovey’s research in Victorian obstetrics, particularly regarding the debate about chloroform use, reveals that the medical profession was deeply uncomfortable with any discoveries that pointed toward woman’s physiological (i.e. sexual) natures rather than their moral natures. The use of chloroform was repeatedly denigrated, not because of chloroform’s inefficacy, but because of women’s reactions to it prior to unconsciousness. Poovey notes that many British journals’ focus was not on “random ‘instances of delirium, and spasms, and convulsions,’ but specifically female displays of *sexual* excitation” (30, italics original). These displays, which ranged from “involuntary confidences [and] emotions,” (qtd in Poovey 34) to “the movements attendant on the sexual orgasm,” (qtd in Poovey 31) were deeply disconcerting to the attending doctors, but rather than discuss their own anxieties regarding women’s sexual natures, medical professionals weighing in on the chloroform debate stressed their female patients’ distress at these unconscious actions. W. Tyler Smith writes, “Still, I may venture to say, that to the women of this country the bare possibility of having feelings of such a kind excited and manifested in outward uncontrollable actions, would be more shocking even to anticipate, than the endurance of the last extremity of physical pain” (qtd in Poovey 31). Smith’s assertion suggests that women would rather undergo “the last extremity of physical pain” than publicly express sexual desire. This powerfully underscores the public’s faith in the strength of women’s moral natures, but Smith’s assertion also serves as a challenge to women considering the use of chloroform. If the virtuous woman would forego such relief because of the risk it

involved, how is the woman who accepts chloroform to be judged? Indeed, following public enthusiasm for chloroform use, a number of medical professionals suggested that women sought the anesthetic for sexual gratification, while more virtuous women, uninformed about the dangers of chloroform use, were being “decoyed to their destruction” (qtd in Poovey 48).

The details of Elizabeth’s medical history – her sudden illness after an encounter with a mesmerist and her lengthy convalescence in Ulleswater – draw directly on descriptions of women under the influence of chloroform and suggest that Broughton was herself interested in this medical debate. Prior to their marriage, Elizabeth confesses to the narrator, “I was very ill, very – I lay in bed for five whole weeks, and – and was off my head, and said odd and wicked things that you would not have expected me to say” (41). Like the anesthetized women discussed by W. Tyler Smith and others, Elizabeth’s loss of bodily control exhibits itself through socially unacceptable expressions. While Elizabeth’s utterances are vaguely “odd and wicked,” we can infer that they are of a sexual nature because she thinks that her fiancé would never have expected them from her. His refusal to acknowledge her sexuality is one of the characteristics that defines their relationship. The context in which Elizabeth confesses to this illness – during the discussion of honeymoon plans – also links it to her sexual fears. Significantly, while Elizabeth’s behavior while ill mimics the initial actions of an anesthetized woman, her loss of control is due to no drug. Instead, she falls ill immediately after being mesmerized.

Broughton’s use of mesmerism as a catalyst for Elizabeth’s illness provides a more pointed critique of the medical profession’s collective response to displays of

female sexual desire. Like chloroform, mesmerism was largely used in treating pain and anxiety. Dickens, for example, treated Augusta de la Rue for chronic muscle spasms and insomnia through a months-long course in mesmeric trances. His work as a mesmerist reveals much about the practice as a whole. Peter Ackroyd writes of Dickens, “he would never allow himself to be mesmerised, not on any account, and this in turn emphasises other aspects of [mesmeric] powers: in Dickens it was part of his need to control, to dominate, to manipulate” (245). Dickens’s desire for this type of power (and Madame de la Rue’s choice to give it to him) echoes Victorian gender constructs. As scholars have noted, the mesmerized subject was most often female, the mesmerizer male. Figure 1, an image of Franz Anton Mesmer and a subject, illustrates these gendered notions of power. The female, slumped over the chair, is entirely passive and entirely in the power of Mesmer, whose figure looms over her just as his hands and eyes control her. More to the point in regards to the gendered power dynamic between mesmerizer and mesmerized, Sharrona Pearl argues, “By providing the means to control women's bodies, mesmerism also allowed men to control their sexuality. Women entered ecstatic states under male physical direction, leading to potentially compromising situations. Consequently, the intimate relationship between mesmerizer and mesmerized led to suspicion about the morality of the experience” (163). Certainly Catherine Dickens harbored such suspicions regarding her husband’s work with the de la Rues. Just as the chloroform debate seemed at times to focus less on efficacy and more on the propriety of some of its more sensational side-effects, Broughton’s mesmeric episode is centered on spectacle. Elizabeth undergoes mesmerism not for the treatment of an illness, but for the titillation of an audience. The traveling mesmerist she goes to see with her parents asks to



Figure 1. Anonymous French cartoon, *Mr. Mesmer's tub*, 1780s.

mesmerize her and she acquiesces: “I thought it would be quite good fun, and – and – I let him” (40). Elizabeth tells the narrator that while mesmerized “I believe I did all sorts of extraordinary things that he told me – sung and danced, and made a fool of myself – but when I came home I was very ill, very” (40-1). This mesmeric episode, by cutting out the middle man, so to speak – removing chloroform from the encounter – more emphatically points to male control of the female body. Portrayed as a physical power here, the episode suggests the ideological control over the female body being exercised by the medical profession. Both medical practitioners and mesmerists are concerned with the ways in which a woman exhibits herself.

The episode also reveals the latent desire underlying Elizabeth’s decision to be mesmerized. “I thought it would be quite good fun, and – and – I let him,” she tells her fiancé. She wants to have fun, but her hesitancy in the halting admission “and – and – I let him” suggests a sense of guilt at such a seemingly innocent diversion. It is a strange apprehension unless at some level Elizabeth also realizes that her desire to place herself in the mesmerist’s control is implicitly sexual. Knowledge of her own sexual desire (or sexual curiosity) is so unwelcome to Elizabeth that she tries to abolish it completely. She refuses to go anywhere near Ulleswater, despite the narrator’s teasing, and admits “I try to think about it as little as possible” (41). This episode from her past is not one she will forget in the normal march of time; it is one that she must work at repressing. Elizabeth’s attempt to achieve a disconnect between her mind and body is already compromised; even before she falls prey to the specter who visits her during her honeymoon, she is haunted by her sexual needs.

Elizabeth's honeymoon chronicles both her increasingly desperate struggle to repress her sexuality and, directly related to this, the narrator's increasingly dismissive attitude toward her. Shortly after the newlyweds reach their honeymoon destination, Elizabeth begins to be nightly visited by a peculiar specter. At the foot of her bed – the bridal bed – she sees a man. He is no one she recognizes, and initially, she is only able to tell her husband, “he had a *nose!*” (52, italics original). After the narrator laughs at her, she continues, “But it was *such* a nose It was very prominent . . . and very sharply chiseled; the nostrils very much cut out” (52, italics original). The detailed, phallic description of the specter's physical presence links him with Elizabeth's repressed sexual urges, as does the timing of his visits – while Elizabeth for the first time in her life lies in bed beside a man, one who, significantly, would prefer to think of her as innocent and child-like. The specter is also connected to Elizabeth's subconscious sexual desire through his power over her self-control. Elizabeth is not only horrified by the large-nosed spectacle her nightly visitor presents, she also feels compelled to somehow be with him. She tells her husband, “I *hated* it . . . I loathed it – abhorred it. I was ice-cold with fear and horror, but – I felt myself going to him” (54, italics original). Like her experience with the mesmerist, Elizabeth feels terror, not in regards to the specter himself, but at her reaction to him, her inability to control her physical response to him. The struggle between her mind and body grows stronger over the course of her honeymoon, and eventually Elizabeth seems to recognize that she will not be able to resist her specter on her own. She begs the narrator to physically restrain her: “‘Tighter, tighter!’ she is crying, wildly. ‘What are you thinking of? You are letting me go!’” (48). Her husband is, of course, the ideal figure to check her growing physical desire. As the

embodiment of the medical profession's attitude toward female sexuality, he has been actively working to contain and stifle Elizabeth's desires throughout the narrative. His disgust at displays of female desire (again mirroring the attitude of the medical profession) has all along made it impossible for Elizabeth to both express desire and live as a respectable, virtuous young woman. That Elizabeth disappears completely and without a trace upon finally giving in to her physical desire pointedly illustrates the lack of space for such desire to exist.

Elizabeth's waning ability to control the clamors of her physical desire exists in an inverse relationship to the narrator's growing need to dismiss her feelings altogether. Prior to her initial encounter with the specter, the narrator reveals that his sense of Elizabeth's "nervous temperament" is both fixed and inaccurate. He takes his blushing bride to – of all places – an exhibition by Wiertz¹⁸ featuring a "horrible cholera-picture – the man buried alive by mistake, pushing up the lid of his coffin, and stretching a ghastly face and livid hands out of his winding-sheet toward you, while awful gray-blue coffins are piled around, and noisome toads and giant spiders crawl damply about" (45-6). It is hardly the type of entertainment likely to set the mood for romance, as the narrator belatedly seems to realize. He writes, "On first seeing it, I have reproached myself for bringing one of so nervous a temperament as Elizabeth to see so haunting and hideous a spectacle; but she is less impressed than I expected – less impressed than I am myself" (46). Working under the assumption that Elizabeth will have an innocent, child-like ignorance of the horrors of disease and death, he expects her to react strongly to Wiertz's

¹⁸ Antoine Wiertz (1806-1865), Belgian painter and sculptor. His often disturbing and graphically-detailed subject matter includes decapitated heads, suicide, and the impact of a bullet with a would-be rapist's skull. The image the narrator here refers to is *The Premature Burial* (1854).

graphic painting. Her lack of response disconcerts him but does not alter this preconceived notion. That the narrator still believes Elizabeth should be horribly shaken by Wiertz's painting is evident when he attributes her first sighting of the large-nosed specter to viewing the painting earlier that day. This assessment renews his confidence in his ability to understand wife, and it allows him to dismiss her vision as an example of the female nervousness he thinks is common and acceptable to the sex. The narrator is almost jolly in his response to his wife's terror because this terror, if it points to a nervous temperament, also highlights Elizabeth's childish innocence. The narrator's reactions to Elizabeth's spectral encounters over the course of the honeymoon increasingly cast her as a child. After the first encounter, he labels her "my little one" (51). Elizabeth becomes "my dearest child" (62) the next time she sees the specter, and this remains the only term of endearment the narrator uses for the remainder of the story. His tone, too, shifts, so that by the end of the honeymoon, he is addressing her "with an air of worldly experience and superior wisdom" (69) and "dictatorially" (73). In other words, as Elizabeth becomes increasingly dominated by her body's sexual needs, the needs that most make her want to join the specter, her husband is increasingly trying to push her in the other direction, casting her as more and more child-like. His inability to see her as she really is becomes symbolically represented in her disappearance at the story's end. When the narrator learns of his wife's disappearance, apparently with a strange man, he is outraged. He exclaims, "So this is it! With that pure child-face, with that divine ignorance – only three weeks married – this is the trick she has played me!" (78). The irony of the situation is that this is the trick he has played on himself – seeing a child instead of a woman, willfully pressing upon her the Victorian period's notion of "divine ignorance."

Elizabeth pops out of existence much like the room in Oliphant's library. A social/scientific space does not exist for her to be both morally good and sexually uninhibited; the crucible of her honeymoon period brings these two warring sides of her together, to her destruction.

In her study of supernaturalism in the novels of Gaskell, Eliot, and Charlotte and Emily Brontë, Vanessa Dickerson argues that Victorian men and women wrote ghost stories in different ways. While male authors (Dickerson cites Le Fanu and Dickens specifically) wrote "from the hegemonic position in a society in which the masculine ways of knowing, thinking, and doing were automatically acknowledged as best," women wrote ghost stories with less self-assurance and more critical resistance to the ideologies that defined them. My earlier chapters, I hope, demonstrate that male writers of ghost stories could be equally resistant to the theological and scientific frames that attempted to define their individuality; however, I agree with Dickerson that women's supernatural tales are fundamentally different. Cast as an other scientifically and socially, women writers had in the ghost stories to contend not just with current psychological theories in general, but specifically with those that placed women in their marginal position. As Oliphant's "The Library Window" and Broughton's "The Man with the Nose" illustrate, this response was as much about reclaiming the female body as it was about protecting individuality. The victories achieved by the female protagonists in both stories are perhaps pyrrhic, but the stories themselves represent small but positive gains in the battle for female equality. As Broughton repeatedly said of herself later in her life, "she who had once been looked upon as the Zola of English fiction was now regarded as its reincarnated Miss Younge" (Arnold 274). The change Broughton notes was not in her

fiction, but in the public's attitude toward female sexuality. By 1920, the heroines who had shocked Oliphant were "that host of bonny healthy English girls" (Arnold 262).

Chapter 4

Spirit Photography and the Victorian Culture of Mourning

“All photographs are memento mori. To take a photograph is to participate in another person’s (or thing’s) mortality, vulnerability, mutability.”
Susan Sontag, *On Photography*

November 18, 1852 – London. A cold, gray, blustery day in one of the rainiest months Londoners had seen in years, yet the streets, from the Horse Guards to Charing Cross, Buckingham Palace to Constitution Hill, Piccadilly to St. James’s Street, were crammed with 1.5 million spectators – over a fifth of the total population of England at the time.¹⁹ They were there to witness the funeral procession of the Duke of Wellington, and given the title of this chapter, a description of the proceedings may seem an odd place to begin. After all, the first rappings of the Spiritualist Movement, which helped popularize and promote spirit photography, had been heard only four years prior at the home of the Fox sisters in Hydesville, New York.²⁰ The spirit photograph itself would

¹⁹ Weather conditions according to the *Times*: “Day broke heavily, the wind being loaded with moisture, the sky threatening-looking . . . It was as cold and cheerless a morning as could well be conceived” (November 19, 1852). See also the various accounts listed by Pearsall, page 378. Parade route according to Wolffe. Population according to the census of 1851 – England and Wales, pop. 17,914,148. For information pertaining to the rest of Great Britain, see *Gendocs: Geneological Research in England and Wales*, <http://www.gendocs.demon.co.uk/pop.html#EW>.

²⁰ Kate and Margaret Fox claimed to be communicating with a spirit through a series of raps heard in their home. Their story drew a great deal of attention, and thanks to their older sister Leah’s managerial skills, they turned their story into a lucrative career, giving demonstrations in public venues. The popularity of their performances and the idea that communication with the spirit world was possible gave rise to the Spiritualist Movement. In 1888, Margaret publicly confessed that the spirit rapping was actually the sound of her toe joint popping; she recanted this statement in 1889.

not be born until the engraver William Mumler produced “extras” on a photographic plate in 1861 – nearly ten years after the Iron Duke’s death. Nonetheless, my reasons for beginning with Wellington’s funeral are two-fold. First, my objective in writing this essay is to establish the spirit photograph’s importance within its intended context: as a part of the elaborate culture of mourning in Victorian England. A handful of illuminating essays have focused on spirit photography in recent years,²¹ but none do so through the lens (no pun intended) of mourning practices. Wellington’s funeral, as the largest and most elaborate of the century, illustrates mourning rituals taken to an extreme, almost grossly exaggerated as some believed, and thus usefully highlights the controversial practices of which the spirit photograph was a part. My second reason for beginning with the Duke’s funeral is that I believe the event helps mark a paradigmatic shift in the practice and beliefs associated with mourning, a shift that both prepared the way for the spirit photograph and help explain the spirit photograph’s significance within the context of mourning rituals.

By all accounts, the Duke’s funeral was quite a show. Those gathered along the streets, in the windows of shops, and on the rooftops watched solemnly as over 10,000, marching and in carriages, accompanied a funeral car of gigantic proportions. Twenty-seven feet long and seventeen tall, the car weighed over ten tons and required a team of twelve horses to pull it forward and a team of men to hold it back on slopes lest it crush the horses. Intended as a fitting tribute to the Duke’s greatness and his contributions to the state both in war and at peace, it seems the car was more a celebration of Victorian

²¹ See Paul Firenze, “Spirit Photography: How Early Spiritualists Tried to Save Religion by Using Science,” Tom Gunning, “Phantom Images and Modern Manifestations: Spirit Photography, Magic Theater, Trick Films, and Photography’s Uncanny” and Paola Cortés-Rocca, “Ghost in the Machine: Photographs of Specters in the Nineteenth Century.”

materialism than anything else. As one observer wrote, “Behold! a lumbering pile creaking heavily on its 6 low wheels! A confused heap of banners and ill-wreathed laurels tossed disorderly about; a tasteless mound of bronze and gilding and black and silver mingled without reason; surmounted by a tawdry flapping canopy” (E. A. Napier, qtd in Wolffe 43). Such a description could serve as the definition for the mid-Victorian aesthetic. Dickens, with even more than his usual asperity, noted “for forms of ugliness, horrible combinations of colour, hideous motion, and general failure, there was never such a work achieved as the Car” (qtd in Ames 165).

The Duke’s funeral car proved to be the rule rather than the exception in terms of the materialism surrounding his death. Dickens wrote a scathing review of the events leading up to the funeral parade in *Household Words*, calling his readers’ attention to some of the more mercenary aspects of this solemn occasion. He cites a number of goods advertised in the *Times* including “Duke of Wellington Funeral Cake,” “Duke of Wellington Funeral Wine,” and “the celebrated lemon biscuits” which Dickens writes “were considered by the manufacturer as the only assuagers of the national grief” (98). These consumables, as wholesome and delicious as they undoubtedly were, are but a small sampling of the material goods associated with the great man’s death. Indeed, advertisements such as these could be likened to vendors hawking peanuts and ice cold beer before the big game. Even more material gain could be had by selling seats to the parade, and Dickens lists example after example of shopkeepers and private citizens advertising seats in front of windows looking over the parade route. Upper floors were advertised for genteel families desiring “unobstructed views” while the lower classes could find room on a per-seat basis in ground floor shops. In fact, the classified section

of the *Times* for the days leading up to the funeral was filled almost completely by advertisements for seats, rooms, autographs, letters, portraits, etc. – all associated with Wellington.²² Without doubt, though, it was the parade’s organizers, rather than the enterprising inhabitants along the parade route, who truly turned the Duke’s death into a paean to Victorian materialism. As a number of scholars have noted,²³ the splendor of Napoleon’s 1840 interment in Paris’s Les Invalides would still have been fresh in the minds of the public officials planning the parade, and it was not to be thought that Napoleon, who couldn’t best his rival in life, would be allowed to best him in death. The British were playing an international game of “keeping up with the Jones’s,” and this time they won. The Duke’s funeral was considered one of the greatest public events of the century.

The crowd that gathered for the Duke’s funeral, both to pay its respects and demonstrate its respectability, was of unprecedented size – a rather unpleasant surprise for the authorities, but of note here because it points to another shift in attitudes about mourning: in this case, a sliding of the sacred into the realm of secular entertainment. To say that the size of the crowd was an unpleasant surprise to authorities is a bit of an understatement. In fact, on the opening day of the lying-in-state at Chelsea Hospital, the number of visitors combined with an uncontrolled flow of traffic into and out of the hospital and a smaller than necessary police force resulted in the deaths of two people and “many accidents, such as broken bones, dislocations, severe bruises, wounds from

²² Two consecutive advertisements from November 16, 1852 issue of the *Times* serve as a striking example: “RELICS of the late Duke of WELLINGTON. For SALE, a WAISTCOAT, in good preservation, worn by his Grace some years back,” followed by “REFRESHMENTS, on the Day of the Funeral of the Duke of Wellington” Clearly, any possible angle by which money could be had was being exploited.

²³ See Wolffe, page 29, Curl, page 216, and Pearsall, page 369.

being thrown down and trodden under foot, and permanent injury to health from pressure and extreme fright” (*Times*, November 15, 1852). The police were not wholly to blame, however. Wolffe writes: “The commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Sir Richard Mayne, openly admitted that, unduly influenced by the limited public interest at the funerals of William IV in 1837 and the Duke of Sussex in 1843, he had seriously underestimated the likely size of the crowd” (36). Mayne had no real indication, given the public turnouts for the last two state funerals, that Wellington’s would be any different. Pearsall argues that the increase in the number of spectators can partially be accounted for by the hero-worship that surrounded Wellington. This hero worship, while it certainly surrounded the Duke’s figure, was not much in evidence at the news of his death. Wolffe recounts various reactions:

The news [of the Duke’s death] reached Doncaster on the morning of the St Leger, but, Charles Greville recalled, ‘most people were too much occupied with their own concerns to bestow much thought or lamentation on this great national loss.’ At Hereford the Three Choirs Festival was in full swing. The ‘Dead March’ was played before the evening oratorio on 16 September and seen as reflecting a unanimous sentiment in the audience. On the following day, however, the programme continued and the mood appeared anything but sombre.

(28)

Clearly, the news of the Iron Duke’s death did not elicit the attitude of mourning that would account for the number of spectators at his funeral. Likewise, on the day of the funeral this sentiment seemed somewhat missing. A writer for the *Star of Freedom* reported: “We saw crowds of decent-looking people, hungry, tired and dirty, coming from ‘the sight,’ and indulging in jokes and laughter, and we noticed a considerable number of drunken men and women with any quantity of short pipes. But we did not see – we really did not – and we grieve to make the announcement – one solitary tear” (qtd

in Wolffe, 47). I would argue that this air of levity is partially accounted for by the spectators' interest in being entertained by the funeral. Ample evidence seems to point in this direction. There is the wholesale commodification of the event – from Wellington-themed foodstuffs, to souvenir prints, to choice seats to the show – all of which point to a carnivalesque environment. There is, too, the reaction of the crowd, members of which most frequently described the parade and interment in terms of their theatricality. The *Times* reporter writes of the marching soldiers: “The men, of course, carried their arms reversed, which, combined with the mournful music and the slow funeral pace at which they marched, had a singularly imposing effect” (November 19, 1852). Similarly, a writer for the *Illustrated London News* described the moment when the coffin was lowered into the crypt at St. Paul's Cathedral as a “scene” that was “probably the most impressive of all” (qtd in Pearsall 379). “Imposing effects” and “impressive scenes” are more the language of secular entertainment than sacred event.

The enjoyment of the theatrical flourishes surrounding the funeral was partly due to the technological innovations behind the magic, so to speak. Pearsall notes that the “struggle of the undertakers with the coffin, machinery and draperies, enacting a drama showcasing technological novelty, became indistinguishable from any other aspect of the ceremony” (378). I would go further and say that the “drama showcasing technological novelty” was an integral part of the entire event, from the lying-in-state to the final interment. Spectators marveled at the mechanical canopy used on the funeral car (lowering itself to pass under Temple Bar). The newly installed gas lights in St. Paul's – between five and seven thousand of them – began to draw a crowd well before the actual funeral. Two days prior to the event, one observer wrote,

[Went] to St. Paul's to see it lit up. The effect was good, but it was like a great rout; all London was there strolling and staring about in the midst of a thousand workmen going on with their business all the same, and all the fine ladies scrambling over vast masses of timber, or ducking to avoid the great beams that were constantly sweeping along.

(Greville 289)

From this account it is clear that the technological marvel was itself the attraction; however, the lights caused quite a stir during the interment as well: "The memory of those [gas lights] in the interior of St. Paul's will ever be dear to those who have, with artistic eyes, drunk in the beauty of the *chiaroscuro*," said one reporter (qtd in Morley 85). Finally, it was the contraption that lowered the coffin through St. Paul's floor in such dramatic style that caused more than one observer to call it "something to be forever remembered." In this awestruck reaction, we can see how easily a feat of technology can seem almost magical and mystifying; technology that so fluidly becomes part of the religious experience might one day just as easily be the religious experience itself. In fact, Pearsall notes that the Crystal Palace Exhibition, held in London just one year before Wellington's funeral, might have contributed to the number of spectators (370). Many were hungry to recreate the excitement of Prince Albert's tribute to technology. In the duke's funeral, this taste was well-sated.

Materialism and a focus on technology within the context of religious ceremony: these mark seeds of change in cultural attitudes toward mourning in the Victorian period. In looking at the spirit photograph in the context of Victorian mourning rituals, I hope to show the seeds come to bloom. The popularity of the spirit photograph in the second half of the nineteenth century points to a culture which saw its materialism spilling over into

religious doctrine, and culture whose interest in technology was transforming into a type of religious faith.

I. Materiality in Mourning and Beyond

“ . . . the most grandiose result of the photographic enterprise is to give us the sense that we can hold the whole world in our heads.”

Susan Sontag, *On Photography*

A parlor cluttered with mismatched furniture, wallpapered in some busy pattern, lace doilies covering every surface like a thick layer of cobwebbing, enough bric-a-brac to make the average-sized person feel like an overgrown bull in a china shop – this is the stereotype of Victorian décor. We tend to think of the Victorians as surrounded by things, a perception with some basis in fact. Following on the heels of the Industrial Revolution, the Victorian period ushered in the age of commodity culture. Mass-produced goods were widely marketed and easily affordable, and a newly risen middle class was eager to buy, buy, buy. Some, like Carlyle, who urged the leaders of the new capitalist system to “retire into their own hearts, and ask solemnly, If there is nothing but vulturous hunger for fine wines, valet reputation and gilt carriages there” were outraged at the “mammonism” of the age (1116). Others, like Disraeli, saw celebrations of Victorian materialism such as the Crystal Palace Exhibition positively: “It is a privilege to live in this age of rapid and brilliant events. What an error to consider it a utilitarian age. It is one of infinite romance” (qtd. in *Victorian Age* 1049). Whether derided or applauded, the period is marked by its materialism.

The funeral trade was no exception to this general trend. While no nineteenth-century funeral was quite as extravagant as Wellington's, even the average middle-class affair involved a great deal of show and expense. A typical undertaker provided an array of goods, from the inner and outer coffins, hearse, and mourning coach, to the various items of dress worn by the mourners – gloves, hatbands, and scarves – to professional mourners, or “mutes” (a position Oliver Twist holds early in his career). These goods covered the actual funeral but only scratch the surface of the “trade in death.” Entire London shops specialized in mourning clothes, and mourning fashions were advertised in leading periodicals. Mourning cards, mourning stationery, mourning fans, mourning ear trumpets – all were commonplace. Mourning jewelry such as jet earrings and necklaces and mourning brooches and lockets were also popular. These last two items generally contained a photograph of the deceased on one side and some of the deceased's hair on the other. In fact, “hair art,” skillfully woven in a crosshatched pattern or delicately pasted to paper backing and cut into elaborate shapes, reached its zenith during the Victorian period. Photography too, held an important place in the clutter of mourning artifacts. Louis Kaplan notes, “Funerary images of dead children in an age of high infant mortality were a popular genre of daguerreotype from the beginnings of photography.” So high was the demand for post-mortem photographs, many photographers were able to make a living from them alone (Firenze 76).

As ubiquitous as the collection of mourning ephemera was, the practice still had its detractors. Dickens called Victorian mourning rituals a “barbarous” system “which, while it could possibly do no honor to the memory of the dead, did great dishonour to the living, as inducing them to associate the most solemn of human occasions with

unmeaning mummeries, dishonest debt, profuse waste, and bad example in an utter oblivion of responsibility” (“Trading”). Part of Dickens’ discomfort with his era’s mourning rituals stems from the view that much of the display was prompted by class-consciousness rather than the desire to honor the departed. James Curl, in his catalogue of mourning artifacts, notes “expressions of social position and status found in coffin-plates and –handles, in hearses, in mourning-cards, and in dress” (194). Mourning practices, like other ritualized familial events – births, baptisms, marriages – were, in large measure, a socially accepted (and expected) time to put on a show of wealth and rank. Given a rising middle class eager to mark its place in the social fabric, mourning rituals could, and did, get out of hand. Much of what became standard fare in middle- and even lower-class funerals – the mutes, the ostrich plumes, the scarves, the placement of mourners – was a pantomime of the funerary rites of the nobility²⁴, a show of heraldry which could have no significance for the majority of the population. In fact, Pat Jalland records one undertaker, who “called as a witness was obliged to confess his ignorance that funerals were based on the heraldic array of the baronial funeral” (195). The Victorian funeral was, in some ways, a performance where neither the actors nor the audience knew what the play was about – “unmeaning mummery” indeed.

Yet viewing the materialism surrounding Victorian death as a mere show of social status belies the real feelings of grief, the profound sense of loss experienced by mourners. Jalland chides, “criticism [of Victorian mourning artifacts] tends to judge surviving artefacts by later twentieth-century standards and assumptions. It neglects the significant role of visible symbols of remembrance in the natural dynamics of grief” (299). Wearing the carefully woven hair of a deceased loved one may seem morbid or

²⁴ See Curl, page 195 for a description of heraldic significance of common funeral practices.

maudlin by twenty-first century standards, but it was common practice for Victorian mourners, for whom it provided an outlet for grief in an era not known for displays of excessive emotion.

When William Mumler produced the first photograph with “extras” – a spirit photograph – in Boston in 1861, he was both extending the tradition of the post-mortem photograph and cashing in on the growing popularity of Spiritualism, a movement concerned with producing physical evidence of life after death. His “extras” were aptly named – appearing in addition to the person actually being photographed, and costing quite a bit extra in comparison to a normal portrait. For many mourners, however, the expense was worth it. As Mumler’s business partner disingenuously replied when questioned about the exorbitant fee: “persons who had lost their relatives and others dear to them . . . sometimes would not part with [their spirit portraits] for thousands of dollars” (qtd in Leja 1). Taking Nancy Armstrong’s assertion that “the so-called material world to which Victorians were apparently so committed was one they knew chiefly through transparent images, images which in turn seemed to bring them conceptual and even physical control over that world” as my starting point, I would like to discuss the ways the spirit photograph, within the material world of mourning, offered a unique form of conceptual and physical control over grief (5).

The spirit photograph differed from other types of mourning ephemera in that it offered mourners a different view of themselves. Figures 2 and 3 are representative examples of spirit photographs by Mumler, and Frederick Hudson respectively.²⁵

Though the photographs vary in their details, the basic composition of each is the same: a

²⁵ The pioneers of spirit photography in the United States and England. Édouard Buguet, discussed below, pioneered spirit photography in France.

centralized sitter (the camera's focal point) with a "spirit" hovering in the upper left or right of the frame. While there is a practical component to this composition – the



Figure 2. William H. Mumler. "Mrs. French of Boston with her son's spirit," ca. 1870. Wm. B. Becker Collection, American Museum of Photography.



Figure 3. Frederick Hudson, “Lady Helena Newenham and the Spirit of her Daughter,” ca. 1872. Wm. B. Becker Collection, American Museum of Photography.

position of the sitter leaves a considerable amount of empty space above them for the photographer to work with – it also creates a powerful message about mourning.

Mourning ephemera such as hair art, mourning cards and post-mortem photographs focus on the figure of the departed. Likewise, funerals, such as the parade for Wellington with which I began, saw the departed at center-stage, rolling down the street in great state, while the grieving watched from the sidelines. In the spirit photograph, the relative positions of mourned and mourner are reversed – as these photographs show, it is now the mourned who watches the mourner. This positioning, this focus on the grieving, says at a glance what Tennyson devotes 133 cantos to in *In Memoriam*. Like *In Memoriam*, the spirit photograph is, on the surface, a tribute to one departed, but also like *In Memoriam*, the spirit photograph is a reflection on the act and value of mourning itself.

Mourning rituals in Victorian England were not only ostentatious displays of social position, they were also highly regulated. “Mourning” during the period was more noun than verb, referring to the state of one’s dress rather than the state of one’s feelings. Socially prescribed rules were in place from the length of time one mourned (varying by degree of relation) to the particular fabric mourning clothes were cut from. Physical displays of grief were expected to be kept under control by both men and women, and as Jalland notes “Women did not usually attend upper- and middle-class funerals in the early and mid-Victorian periods, on the grounds that allegedly they could not control their feelings” (221). These social regulations seem to suggest not only that displays of grief were improper, but also that there was a psychological “norm” to grief: two years for a husband, two weeks for a second cousin, and so on. Feelings ranging from “thank

God the bastard's dead" to "my life! my soul! I shall never be the same" could be viewed as deviant behavior, a subversion of the public good. The regulation of mourning devalued and discouraged individual feeling, an idea Tennyson raises in *In Memoriam*.

Imagining public reactions to his grief, he writes:

The traveller hears me now and then,
And sometimes harshly will he speak:
'This fellow would make weakness weak,
And melt the waxen hearts of men.'

Another answers: 'Let him be,
He loves to make parade of pain,
That with his piping he may gain
The praise that comes to constancy.'

A third is wroth: 'Is this an hour
For private sorrow's barren song,
When more and more the people throng
The chairs and thrones of civil power?'

(XXI, 5-16)

These various responses – first, that inspiring grief is irresponsible, second, that an “excess” of grief is selfish vanity – culminate in the third speaker’s anger that an individual would let useless or “barren” personal feelings become a diversion from his or her public duty. Each stanza pits the community against the individual; each shows the individual’s expression of mourning under attack. Mourning that stepped outside socially mandated norms amounted to a crime against one’s community. The publication of *In Memoriam* could thus be seen as an act of defiance: Tennyson’s public announcement that his grief exceeds the standard prescribed by his society. It is an assertion of the merit of individual feeling, a negotiation of the place of that feeling within the confines of the

social sphere. The spirit photograph makes this same claim.²⁶ Photography has been called a modern form of mummification, and in the spirit photograph, the mourner is frozen forever in a state of grief. Grief becomes objectified, tangible and visible; it takes on a presence outside the mourner. Unlike the post-mortem photograph, which allows the mourner to meditate on the departed, the spirit photograph lets the mourner meditate on themselves. In a society where mourning was highly visible in dress, but where grief was all but taboo, the spirit photograph provided a space to gain conceptual control over one's feelings.

More significantly, the spirit photograph helped Victorians conceptualize the nature of the soul and the afterlife. Paola Cortés-Roca writes that the poignancy of spirit photography is in the “effect caused by the coexistence of life and death in the same space” (160). This is the surface jolt, the instant recognition of the two extremes yoked together. But there is also a startling and important sameness in the spirit photograph. In *Camera Lucida*, Roland Barthes notes that the experience of being photographed is “a micro-version of death,” it is “truly becoming a specter” (14). In the static, deadened image of the self, the mourner becomes like the ghostly image projected onto the film and is forcefully reminded of his or her own mortality. The message is not necessarily a negative one, however. Armstrong writes, “the transparency of the woman's image in the spirit photograph tells us she has detached herself from that image and gone on with life outside the frame” (175). More specifically, the spirit photograph makes an assertion about what kind of existence the “spirit” went on with outside the frame. It serves as a

²⁶ It could be usefully argued that remaining in mourning after the proscribed period for such dress is ended makes this same statement, as Victoria's example illustrates. A key difference is in the spirit photograph's separateness from the body, a space which allows for the contemplation of the act of mourning.

stage where Victorians could plot out a reassuring version of the afterlife, particularly in an age of eroding faith.

The nature of the soul was a point of contention and anxiety during the Victorian period. One strain of nineteenth-century theological thought saw individuality as a temporary state. As W. Newnham puts it, “it is absurd to suppose, that there are souls of different kinds” (76). Newnham’s assertion, found in his 1830 *Essay on Superstition*, is part of a larger argument in favor of a physiological basis for the mind. Characteristics of personality, Newnham claims, can all be traced to physiological causes. For example, “peculiarity of manner, odd habits, whim, ill-humour, or eccentricity” are the result of bodily disturbances rather than attributes of personality (76). One’s soul, on the other hand, is identical to every other soul; once its physical shell is cast off, the soul would enter upon its permanent state. Tennyson’s vision of the afterlife describes this state: “each, who seems a separate whole, / Should move his rounds, and fusing all / The skirts of self again, should fall / Remerging in the general Soul” (xlvi 1-4). In this doctrine, man only “seems a separate whole,” but he is doomed to “fall” into the collective, eternally god-worshipping soul. As one young girl in Elizabeth Stuart Phelps’ Spiritualist novel, *The Gates Ajar*, more comically describes it, “I always supposed . . . that you just floated round in heaven – you know – all together – something like ju-jube paste!” (83). “General Soul” or great glob of “ju-jube paste,” Tennyson sums up the feelings of a great many when he writes that this doctrine is “vague as all unsweet” (xlvi 5). In fact, in this doctrine Tennyson may have seen to his dismay the doomed end to the constant struggle between the needs of the individual and the needs of the community he portrays in Canto XXI. The spirit photograph was thus viewed with relief because it

directly refuted the collective soul doctrine. As the spirit photograph clearly shows, spirits have discrete bodies after death, and furthermore, they retain (at least to the eyes of eager-to-believe relatives) the same physical appearance. This seems to suggest that the self is retained in the afterlife, and that the dissolution into the collective soul that so many feared does not take place. Also in support of this hypothesis is the fact that the spirit appears on the photographic plate in the first place. Spirit photographers asserted that they themselves had no control over or knowledge of how spirits appeared in their photographs. Thus the appearance of the spirit on the developed film indicates that the spirit chose to appear, proof that individual autonomy and willful action survives death. Further, that the spirit manifested itself in the photograph of a loved one signifies the retention of personal feelings and memories. The spirit appeared because it still remembers and cares for its living relatives. This belies the belief that the afterlife will consist of a generalized devotion to the divine.

The appearance of autonomous, material spirits in photographs by Mumler and his ilk pointed not only to a concept of the soul which refuted worrisome orthodoxy, it also suggested a specific, and for many a reassuring, version of heaven. This particular vision is one notable for its similarity to everyday life, its recognizability. Ghosts, these photographs suggest, not only retain human form, they also still wear clothing and sport fashionable hairstyles.²⁷ Not only do spirits appear in fashionable dress, they also have stuff – wispy bits of fabric to wave about, wreaths of flowers, jewelry, even potted plants. It seems that you can, in fact, take it with you. The very materialism derided by Dickens and others as unmeaning mummery, seen as a sign of the godlessness of the times, is in

²⁷ Obviously, this represents the limits of the photographers responsible for these images – their ghosts were after all, taken from life, be they models or cut-outs from periodicals.

the spirit photograph given a heavenly endorsement. From the material goods surrounding the spirit in the photograph, much concerning the nature of heaven could be extrapolated. It was no giant leap to move from a potted plant in heaven, to supposing there would be a table for that potted plant to rest upon, and if there is a table in heaven, surely there exists a matching loveseat and a drawing room to hold such furniture in heaven as well. A house would be necessary to contain the drawing room, and from there, a celestial city and surrounding countryside come into easy view. Rather than a heaven where everyone just “floats around,” as the young girl in *The Gates Ajar* puts it, the heaven presented in the spirit photograph is a material one, like to earth as a mirror image, but a mirror image that reflects only the good, and none of the blemishes.

This “material heaven” was one endorsed and promoted by Spiritualists particularly, and is fully articulated in Phelps’ three *Gates* novels. Nina Baym notes that each of the three novels “conveys the same notion of the spiritual world as a perfected, beautified version of the world we live in. Except for the absence of sin, death, and defect, the next world is recognizably our own, with landscapes, towns, homes, people. It is the world as one would wish it to be” (viii). The spirit photograph seems to uphold this vision of perfection. Although one cartoonist imagined spirits seeking vengeance against a Bluebeardian husband who sat for Mumler (see figure 4), in the actual practice of spirit photography, the spirit extras were invariably identified as departed friends or loved ones.²⁸ Love and compassion appear to be the only motivation behind the spirits’ visits, suggesting that all “rougher” emotions have been transcended. The translucent appearance of the photographed spirits also pointed toward a more perfect state. During

²⁸ That is, if they were identifiable. A large percentage of spirit extras were too faint or vaguely formed for sitters to recognize. A number of Mumler’s clients, for example, reported sitting multiple times before they received satisfactory results. See Coates, pages 7-13 for detailed accounts of Mumler’s process.

Mumler's trial for fraud, Judge John W. Edmonds testified, "I believe the camera can take a photograph of a spirit, and I believe also that spirits have materiality – not that gross materiality that mortals possess . . ." (qtd in Coates 5). The ethereal body presented in spirit photography is refined: its otherworldly beauty signifies its inner transformation.

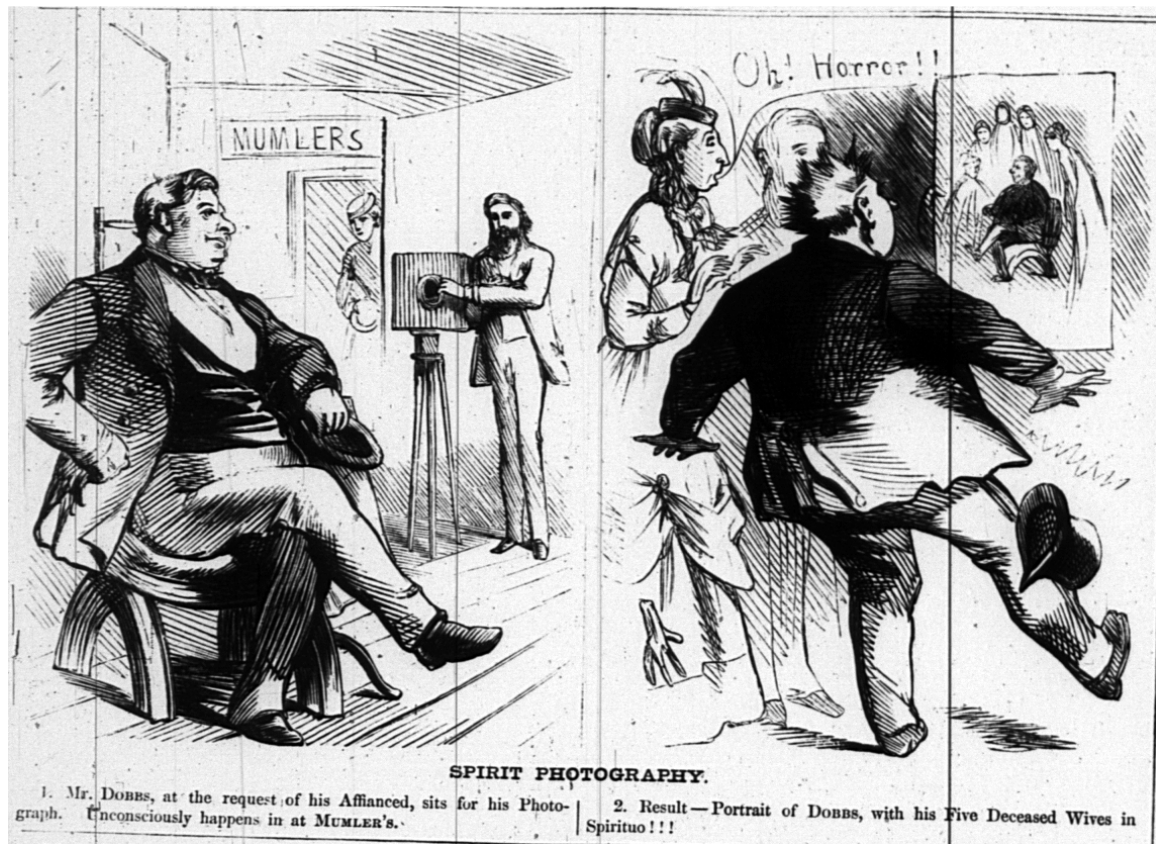


Figure 4. *Harper's Weekly*, May 8, 1869.

The particular version of heaven promoted by the Spiritualist Movement and embodied through spirit photography had tremendous appeal during the nineteenth century: the “spirits” first came knocking in 1848, and by the century’s end over six million in England and the United States alone had answered their call. In the United States, part of the popularity of Spiritualism and spirit photography was due to the impact of the Civil War. So many loved ones met early and tragic deaths that it was a comfort to think of them getting a second chance to live out the life they were meant to have. In England, the fervor for the version of heaven portrayed in spirit photography is attributable to an equal fervor for – and oftentimes frustration with the failures of – social reform. Class inequality, workhouse and factory conditions, overcrowding in the cities, all of Dickens’s poor starving orphans – everything that made Victorians lament the “condition of England” would find redress in a material heaven. Phelps illustrates this in a scene from *The Gates Ajar*. Deacon Quirk questions Aunt Winifred for having promised one poor girl in her Sunday school class a piano in heaven. She responds:

I am surprised that you should be [surprised], Deacon Quirk. Do you believe that God would take a poor little disappointed girl like Clo, who has been all her life here forbidden the enjoyment of a perfectly innocent taste, and keep her in His happy heaven eternal years, without finding the means to gratify it? I don’t. (85-86)

Victorians, striving to perfect their society but finding it an uphill climb, could see in the spirit photograph’s heavenly vision their dreams come to fruition. In fact, many

reformers were drawn to the Spiritualist Movement and the version of heaven it proffered. As Tom Gunning notes, “Spiritualists as a rule supported abolitionism and temperance reforms, experimented with founding communistic communities, and championed a host of women’s rights issues, including dress and marriage reforms, as well as suffrage” (46). Like Tennyson who saw the perfect “Christ-type” in Arthur Hallum and with him, reassurance that evolution was divinely guided, Victorians could see in the spirit photograph a similar reassurance about the evolution of society.

It is not surprising that the spirit photograph became a popular mourning artifact in the second half of the nineteenth century. It offered Victorians the space for personal grief, asserted individuality in the face of societal pressure to conform, but more than this, in its vision of a material heaven, it helped Victorians move beyond grief. Its ultimate message was one of hope.

II. Science, Technology, and the New Faith

“Photographs furnish evidence. Something we hear about, but doubt, seems proven when we’re shown a photograph of it.”
Susan Sontag, *On Photography*

The intellectual climate of the Victorian period was particularly receptive to supernatural beliefs of all sorts. As Mrs. Crayford wryly remarks in Wilkie Collins’s *The Frozen Deep*, the nineteenth century is marked by the great many who “believe in dancing tables, and in messages sent from the other world by spirits who can’t spell” (5). The works of Dickens and Elizabeth Barrett Browning for example, are at times touched with supernatural elements – Dickens’s Christmas ghosts, the hints of hauntings in his

more “realistic” fiction (*Bleak House*’s “Ghost Walk” for example), Browning’s superstitious ritual in “A Romance of the Ganges” – and these elements, presented without bias for the reader’s examination, make it easier to reconcile the brilliant minds responsible for *Great Expectations* and *Aurora Leigh* with their stranger convictions, such as Dickens’s devotion to animal magnetism (he was a practicing mesmerist), and Browning’s belief in a medium’s ability to conjure physical spirits (she was convinced after “spirit hands” crowned her with a flowered wreath at a séance). The supernatural elements in works by Dickens and Browning hint at their beliefs, but more difficult is the attempt to square the paragon of logic, Baker Street’s dispassionate detective, Mr. Sherlock Holmes, with his creator, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, author of such Spiritualist texts as *The New Revelation*, *The Edge of the Unknown*, and *The Vital Message*. Indeed, it seems hardly conceivable that the mind capable of creating a character whose cold logic and powers of observation could cut through every deception was so easily swayed by the parlor tricks of swindling mediums and scurrilous spirit photographers. Readers of the Sherlock Holmes stories might well have been astounded after reading Doyle’s account of lunching with a medium possessed of a hunchbacked ostler named David,²⁹ filled as it is by circular logic and touches of naiveté. Incredible might Doyle’s firm endorsement of the Cottingley fairies, published in *The Strand* (also home to Sherlock Holmes), seem to his fans. It is easy to imagine the scores of readers who upon finishing his article scratched their heads, looked skyward, and asked in fearful wonder, “Sir Arthur Conan Doyle believes in fairies? What is the world coming to?” A 1926 *Punch* cartoon (figure 5), showing Doyle chained to a chair, his head wreathed by clouds, while

²⁹ In *The Edge of the Unknown*, pages 77-80, Doyle lists as proof that the episode was genuine the changed expression on the medium’s face and her ability to accurately describe the type of clothing worn by a groom at the start of the nineteenth century.

Sherlock Holmes stands nearby deep in troubled thought, is a good measure of the public's reaction. To some extent, this is still the public reaction today. The popular notion of Doyle's Spiritualistic beliefs is nicely summed up by Mark Haddon's protagonist in *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*: "when [Doyle] got old



MR. PUNCH'S PERSONALITIES.

XII. - SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE.

YOUR own creation, that great sleuth
 Who spent his life in chasing Truth -
 How does he view your late defiance
 (O ARTHUR !) of the laws of Science ?

He disapproves your strange vagaries,
 Your spooks and photographs of fairies ;
 And holds you foot-cuffed when you're fain
 To navigate the vast inane.

We sympathise with *Holmes* ; and yet
 In *Punch's* heart your name is set ;
 Of every DOYLE he's still a lover
 For DICKY'S sake, who did his cover.

Figure 5. *Punch*, May 12, 1926.

he joined the Spiritualist Society, which meant that he believed you could communicate with the dead. This was because his son died of influenza during the First World War and he still wanted to talk to him” (88). However, Doyle’s interest in Spiritualism is not something he came to late in life when despair set in and his mind started to wander; in fact, this interest predates the Sherlock Holmes stories. I would argue that Doyle’s spiritualistic beliefs and the Sherlock Holmes stories use the same ideological framework: one that sees all knowledge as obtainable through observation, and believes that all things are reducible to physical signs. In drawing a connection between the world of Sherlock Holmes and the world of spirits in which Doyle believed, I hope to clarify the place of spirit photography as a marker of a change in Victorian faith.

The publication of *The New Revelation* in 1918 was not, in fact, Doyle’s first public declaration in favor of Spiritualism. His earliest fiction, including the short stories “The Mystery of Sarassa Valley” (1879), “John Barrington Cowles” (1884), and “The Great Keinplatz Experiment” (1885), deals heavily in supernatural occurrences; demons, ghosts, and murdering mesmerists stand as a testament not only to the tastes of the times, but to Doyle’s growing fascination with Spiritualism and the pseudo-sciences surrounding it. Doyle gave up Catholicism as early as the start of the 1880s, and by the middle of that decade he had already attended a number of séances. The 1883 story “The Captain of the Pole-Star” demonstrates the influence Spiritualists such as Alfred Drayson had over the young doctor. Doyle’s narrator writes

In discussing [the nature of the soul] we touched upon modern spiritualism, and I made some joking allusion to the impostures of Slade, upon which, to my surprise, [Captain Craigie] warned me most impressively against confusing the innocent with the guilty, and argued that it would be as logical to brand Christianity as an error, because Judas who professed that religion was a villain.

The story presupposes the existence of ghosts and paints Captain Craigie as a tragic hero of sorts. Most tellingly, Captain Craigie's argument in favor of Spiritualism is based on a similar analogy Drayson shared with Doyle.³⁰ Doyle's hints of Spiritualist leanings solidified into fact in 1887, when he wrote a letter to the Spiritualist journal, *Light*, endorsing Spiritualism. He writes, "I could no more doubt the existence of the phenomena than I could doubt the existence of lions in Africa, though I have been to that continent and have never chanced to see one. I felt that if human evidence – regarding both the quantity and the quality of the witnesses – can prove anything, it can prove this" (qtd. in Coren 46). Such a declaration, if written by a famous author, would have created a great deal of public noise; however, when written by a small town doctor with a shaky practice and a few short stories to his name, the letter was, understandably, not much fodder for public gossip.³¹ Thus Doyle's return to Spiritualism (not that he left off the belief, but he was busy racing other hobbyhorses – full-time writing, the Boer War, running for office, solving real crimes, etc.) was marked by such public surprise and dismay.

Coincidentally, the first Sherlock Holmes story, the novella *A Study in Scarlet*, was also published in 1887. On the surface, Spiritualist letter and detective novella could not be more different; however, the same basic system of beliefs underlies each. In *A*

³⁰ See Coren, pages 44-45.

³¹ Not much fodder for public gossip, though Coren is right to assert that the letter "was a courageous act because spiritualism was not taken seriously by everybody and though not openly mocked as it is today it was nevertheless thought to be on the edge of foolishness. There was a strong move within the medical profession to parody and marginalize it until it was virtually impossible for a doctor to continue to practice if he held such views" (48).

Study in Scarlet, Sherlock Holmes outlines his detective method in an article called “The Book of Life.” Dr. Watson, who does not know the author of the piece, notes

The reasoning was close and intense, but the deductions appeared to me to be far fetched and exaggerated. The writer claimed by a momentary expression, a twitch of a muscle or a glance of an eye, to fathom a man’s inmost thoughts. Deceit, according to him, was an impossibility in the case of one trained to observation and analysis. His conclusions were as infallible as so many propositions of Euclid. So startling would his results appear to the uninitiated that until they learned the processes by which he had arrived at them they might well consider him as a necromancer. (14)

Dr. Watson’s assessment, that such an ability seems “far fetched and exaggerated,” is apt, but this very ability is the appeal of Sherlock Holmes. He has developed a system whereby a man’s entire history may be traceable in his appearance. Fears, passions, motives: each manifests itself in something physical and discernable to the well-trained eye. Such a system fulfills the promises made by phrenology and physiognomy; it reduces man to the categorizable. It is a god-like power, and indeed, Sherlock Holmes often swoops in after the stumblings and bumbings of Dr. Watson or the incompetent Scotland Yard detectives, Gregson and Lestrade, with all the answers and the mystery unraveled from beginning to end. Michael Levine refers to this moment at the end of each story as “apocalyptic” (249); I prefer the term “divine dénouement,” but either way, the big reveal is brought about through superhuman ability – a bit of wish fulfillment for an audience eager to understand their world through the visible, the physical.

Dr. Watson himself draws a connection between Sherlock Holmes’ system of detection and Spiritualism in noting that Holmes could be compared to a necromancer. Such a charge is easily leveled at a group of people trying to call up the dead and get them to write or rap out messages. Sherlock Holmes practices his mediumship on the

living rather than the dead, but he is constantly met with the same skepticism and occasional accusations of trickery the Spiritualists faced. Holmes' interview with the cabman in *A Study in Scarlet* is typical: "John Rance sprang to his feet with a frightened face and suspicion in his eyes. 'Where was you hid to see all that?' he cried. 'It seems to me you knows a deal more than you should'" (31). Fear coupled with suspicion (the basic ingredients for prejudice): this is the attitude Doyle became accustomed to when he began his championship of the Spiritualist Movement. Further, Rance's assertion that Holmes "knows more than [he] should" likens the detective's ability to the supernatural while simultaneously marking a proper limit to human intelligence. Prosecutor Elbridge T. Gerry, during Mumler's fraud trial, makes a similar claim about the Spiritualist Movement: "The fundamental error of spiritualism consists in regarding the mind as infinite, whereas it is only finite. . . . There are very many things which the human mind is incapable of comprehending at all" (26-28). Though the areas of knowledge Sherlock Holmes and Spiritualists specialized in differed, both lay claim to a greater ability to know than was commonly attributed to man.

That which makes Sherlock Holmes so appealing – his ability to read the "Book of Life" – is precisely the appeal of the Spiritualist Movement. The frontispiece to the first volume of the *Spiritual Magazine* states that Spiritualism aims "through a careful reverent study of facts, at a knowledge of the laws and principles which govern the occult forces of the universe; of the relations of spirit to matter, and of man to God and the Spiritual world." Spiritualism is premised on the notion that the divine and the afterlife can be broken down and systematically understood through physical signs – the "reverent

study of facts.” Thomas Brevior, in defining the Spiritualist, could be another Sherlock Holmes:

The man accustomed to regard things from the external, will see only – and will care to see only – the outward manifestations of spirits; while the philosophic thinker will look beyond, and seek to discover the principles and internal truths to which they lead. He will try to gain from them new insight into the affinities and laws of spirit and matter.

(28)

Like the “philosophic thinker,” Sherlock Holmes has looked beyond the outward manifestations of physical appearance in order to understand the laws of human nature. Holmes’ “manifestations” are the incidentals of dress and bearing – the mud on one’s boots or a nervous twitch; for the Spiritualist, manifestations included spirit writing and rapping, ectoplasmic emanations, and photographs of “extras.”

Like many Spiritualists, Doyle championed the abilities of the spirit photographers. He sat for a number of spirit portraits with various photographers, and in his study of these photographs, he noted the different methods employed by the photographers and their varied results – the differences in appearance of the spirit extras. A skeptic of spirit photography might see this as evidence of fraud: each photographer had developed unique methods for practicing their deception, and the differing models they used as spirits – the old plates of previous sitters, cut-outs from magazines, posed dummies – were the cause of the varied look of the spirits. None of this occurred to Doyle, however. Despite the general skepticism voiced by his fellow members of the Society for Psychical Research,³² Doyle saw the spirit photograph as one more proof of

³² The Society addressed the subject of spirit photography at their 46th General Meeting, and again in a series of letters to the editor of the *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* in 1891-2. Eleanor Mildred Sidgwick dismissed the claims of spirit photographers, writing, “I think it unlikely that satisfactory evidence in so difficult a matter could be obtained when the *bona fides* of all concerned is not above

an underlying order to the spirit world. He writes of these differences: “Whatever the eventual explanation, the only hypothesis which at present covers the facts is that of a wise invisible Intelligence, presiding over the operation and working in his own fashion, which shows different results with different circles” (*History* 56). Doyle’s assertion is a mark of how compelling was the belief in a knowable spirit world, and how strong a hold was the idea of it having physical signifiers. Doyle’s unswerving faith is in man’s ability to catalog and scientifically explain the divine as much as it is in the divine itself – he is as sure of an “eventual explanation” as he is of the “invisible Intelligence” pulling the strings.

While the spirit photograph had its most eager and willing-to-believe audience in Spiritualists like Doyle, growing faith in science and new technology also contributed to its popularity. In fact, of the “manifestations” Spiritualists claimed as proof of a spirit world in constant contact with the world of the living, the spirit photograph had perhaps the most widespread appeal, combining as it did man’s modern ingenuity and the neutrality of scientific observation. Paul Firenze writes, “Since nearly everyone agreed that the camera operated on scientific principles and that the photographic image was a neutral and accurate record of the subject, if something appeared on the negative that had not appeared to the human eye, then it was obvious that the human eye was in error, not the unflinching gaze of the camera eye” (75). The rise of spirit photography as a proof of

suspicion, or even when a person whose co-operation is essential has a direct pecuniary interest in the result” (159). It is perhaps ironic that while the Society’s and Sherlock Holmes’ methods of inquiry corresponded (the Society’s aim was “to approach [its subjects] without prejudice . . . in the same spirit of exact and unimpassioned inquiry which has enabled science to solve so many problems”), Doyle himself was passionately prepossessed in favor of Spiritualistic phenomena such as spirit photography (Sidgwick, *Proceedings* 4). Doyle’s eventual public criticism of the SPR was partially due to its investigation of “psychic photographer” William Hope, which Doyle claimed bore “some signs of a conspiracy against the medium” (*History* 87). See Doyle’s chapter on the SPR in *The History of Spiritualism*, Volume 2 and his *The Case for Spirit Photography* (1923) for a more detailed account.

religious doctrine was a source of contention in scientific circles, and resulted in formal charges being brought against Mumler in 1869. Mumler's trial quickly made clear that it was not a simple matter of some doctored photographs at stake. A complexity of issues came into focus in the courtroom regarding truth and the nature of modern faith.

From the early days of the daguerreotype and the calotype, the camera had been heralded as a conveyer of Truth and Fact. One newspaper predicted photographers would travel the world, taking pictures of famous monuments and natural wonders "and bring home exact representations of all the sublime and ridiculous objects which it now costs so much to see" (qtd in Pollack 84). The photographic representation of the monument is equated with the real thing, the only difference being the cost of the view. The applications for journalism are readily apparent, as this same article notes: "a gardener cannot elope with an heiress, or a reverend bishop commit an indiscretion, but straightaway, an officious daguerreotype will proclaim the whole affair to the world" (qtd in Pollack 85). Likewise, various branches of the sciences began to put photography to work for them. As early as the 1840s, the daguerreotype was being used in conjunction with the microscope and telescope to produce detailed images of celestial bodies and cellular structures. Not only did the new photographic process allow scientists to collect data more quickly and accurately, it also helped them disseminate their findings. Larry J. Schaaf notes, "The authenticity of photographic images, cheaply made and conveniently distributed on sheets of paper, could encourage the spread of scientific knowledge throughout a society increasingly eager for information" (26).

Unsurprising then, that the Photographic Section of the American Institute, "an organization of amateur and professional scientists and photographers" were behind the

undercover investigation into Mumler's work (Leja 24). Michael Leja notes, "The PSAI desired to establish photography as a legitimate scientific technology and as a truthful form of representation. It sought to protect the medium from fraudulent practitioners and con artists such as Mumler (26). Mumler's work created images which met with (quite appropriate) skepticism, and if people began questioning the veracity of one type of photography, they might question other, more legitimate types as well. Further, Mumler's photographs were dangerous not only because they were (to most people) recognizably fakes, they also demonstrated how easily photographic images could be faked. Depending on who was holding it, the mirror held up to nature could be as warped as one found in a funhouse. Over the course of the trial, prosecuting attorney Elbridge T. Gerry brought in a number of photographers to demonstrate how Mumler's spirit portraits might have been produced. The testimony of these witnesses – reproduced in leading newspapers – had an unintended effect, Leja explains: "press coverage of the trial only increased public awareness that photography could be used fraudulently" (45). Another unwanted consequence of the publicity surrounding the trial, at least in the eyes of the prosecution and the PSAI, was the public's increased awareness of spirit photography itself. According to Coates, "there was a little 'boom' in spirit photography from 1872 till 1877" (44). He notes that the "success of Mr. Mumler's mediumship in the United States and the discussion of the subject through the Press in London led many there to have a keen interest in the matter," directly resulting in the first British spirit photographs, produced in 1872 (22). Instead of ending the threat Mumler's work posed to the legitimacy of photography, those responsible for prosecuting him caused the threat to spread.

Courtroom demonstrations of photographic manipulations did little to dissuade those who believed spirit photographs were “real.” Witness after witness for the defense positively identified deceased loved ones in Mumler’s photographs, despite the almost derisive treatment they met with during Gerry’s cross-examination. Gerry built the prosecution’s case around the idea that Mumler’s supporters were naïve and easily led. Of Judge Edmonds, Gerry concludes, “He knew nothing of photography, and as he was already a believer in spiritualism, it is fair to presume that he did not require very strong proof to insure his belief that Mumler’s spirit forms were supernatural” (13). Another defense witness he belittles as “a credulous old lady [who] identified [her son] by the length of his ears!” (17). Finally, he says of Mr. Charles F. Livermore, “Polonius-like, he sees in the clouds either a whale or any other shape the adroit operator claims that it assumes and even the most powerful microscope will not detect the likeness – showing the credulity of a mind prepared to believe” (18). Gerry’s line of reasoning amounted to an attack on faith itself, equating as it does belief with “credulity.” In fact, Gerry attempted to put faith on trial when he considered calling to the stand a Dr. Parsons, who “was to testify that seeing spirits was a symptom of a malfunctioning imagination. Gerry was persuaded by the objections of the defense lawyer and by the advice of the presiding judge that the prosecution’s case would be ill served by arguing that religion was insanity” (Leja 32). This did not stop Gerry from equating some forms of belief with mental aberrations however. Of defense witnesses Edmonds and Paul Bremond, both of whom claimed to have had interactions with the spirit world, Gerry states, “Their extraordinary testimony, as to what they saw and heard, can be accounted for only as statements of hallucination; in other words, that what each described was ‘a

false creation, proceeding from the heat oppressed brain” (30).³³ If we regard Gerry’s attitude toward faith as part of a general trend toward religious skepticism, the role of the spirit photograph in helping to stem this tide becomes clear. At the loss of a loved one, when even the strongest faith might be shaken, spirit photography offered proof positive of the Divine.

The trial of Édouard Buguet in 1875 even more readily demonstrates the strength of the new faith in technology. While Mumler maintained his innocence throughout his hearing,³⁴ Buguet immediately confessed to doctoring his photographs, and even created a series of images to demonstrate how he fooled his clients. Incredibly, this was not enough to shake the faith of those who had spirit photographs taken by him. Over one hundred former clients came forward to acknowledge their belief in the veracity of Buguet’s work (Chéroux 51). In his account of the trial, Coates makes a clear distinction between Buguet and his photographs: “Mediumship neither implies manliness, honesty nor spiritual worth, and in this case Buguet’s mediumship did not save him from being a worthless fellow This self-confessed knave *could not* and did not explain how all his spirit pictures were obtained, and his demonstrations only went to show how some could be made” (62). Clement Chéroux claims that this type of reasoning resembles a species of mental acrobatics: “Bending over backwards to maintain their belief, convinced that behind the trial lay a settling of political scores, a new Inquisition or Galileo affair, the spiritualists refused to accept that they had been duped” (51). I would

³³ Although here, Gerry goes on to note “I do not assert that they are insane. They are not the only men of intelligence who have been afflicted in this way with mental delusions” (30). A rather equivocal concession, that.

³⁴ In fact, he maintained his ignorance, claiming to have no idea how spirit extras appeared in his photographs: “[Mumler] asserts that these so-called spirit forms are produced by means wholly beyond his control, for which he cannot account, and that those means are unknown, and not human” (Gerry 8).

argue that rather than demonstrating a stubborn refusal to appear foolish, Buguet's clients illustrate how strong the faith in technology was at the time. They believed that the camera, like a logical, dispassionate Sherlock Holmes, was not susceptible to corruption.

Ironically, both sides were trying to achieve the same end: the champions of science were trying to preserve the integrity of the photographic image, while Spiritualists were trying to preserve their faith in the camera's abilities. Part of the reason the two sides were at cross purposes was more than just the matter of fraud, but had to do with the purpose to which each side was putting the photograph. Employed as a tool of religion, the photograph is always subject to skepticism – such is the case with anything that claims to be a physical manifestation of divinity. The PSAI was both aiming to distance themselves from this type of usage, and to discount the Spiritualists' results. They may not have won the battle (Mumler was acquitted on insufficient evidence), but it appears that they won the war. Most reasonable people, on seeing a photograph of a “ghost,” wonder whether it is fraud or a failure of the camera (reflected light, dust on the lens). Even when viewing the most fantastic photographs of spiral galaxies, these same questions do not arise.

In the short-term, however, science's refusal to share, its reluctance to allow Spiritualists to use its methods and guiding principles in the search of the supernatural, was seen by many as narrow-minded prejudice of the highest order. The nineteenth-century ghost story was often the battleground for conflicts between faith and science, and in Rudyard Kipling's “At the End of the Passage” the scientific minds that refused to recognize photography's ability to reveal spiritual truths come under attack. In the story, four men face the bleakness of the dry season in India – the horrors of heat and disease

and solitude. One of the four, Hummil, cracks under the strain and dies. Spurstow, the man of science, the doctor, explains that before he died, Hummil claimed to be haunted by dreams of “a blind face that cries and can’t wipe its eyes, a blind face that chases him down corridors” (340). Spurstow is dismissive of the claim, and more than likely at this point, so is the reader. When Kipling introduces the archaic superstition that the eyes can record the last thing they saw at the moment of death through the “grey blurs” Mottram sees on Hummil’s pupils, Spurstow is still skeptical: “‘Tisn’t medical science . . . Things in a dead man’s eyes,” he says (343). As a man of science, however, Spurstow needs proof, and he uses his camera as the objective tool to arrive at it. Spurstow snaps a picture of Hummil’s eyes,

and the doctor retreated into the bathroom with a Kodak camera. After a few minutes there was the sound of something being hammered to pieces, and he emerged, very white indeed.

‘Have you got the picture?’ said Mottram. ‘What does the thing look like?’

‘It was impossible, of course. You needn’t look, Mottram. I’ve torn up the films. There was nothing there. It was impossible.’

(344)

This is the moment of the camera’s triumph. It has revealed a truth too difficult for the biased, skeptical eye of Spurstow to bear. In destroying his camera, Spurstow himself becomes the “blind face that cries and cannot wipe its eyes” from Hummil’s dream. He has blinded himself to the camera’s truth, to the greater spiritual truths of the story, but the horror of what he has seen, like the tears, cannot be wiped from his mind. The poignancy of Kipling’s story rests on the reader’s acceptance of the camera’s power of perception. The story would lose its thrill of horror if the reader couldn’t conceive of the camera’s ability to see more clearly and more truthfully than the human eye.

The popularity of spirit photography is thus a mark of a shift toward faith in science and technology and away from faith in traditional Christian doctrine. The afterlife needn't remain a mystery when its inhabitants could be seen on the photographic plate. Like the six thousand gas lights installed in St. Paul's cathedral in honor of Wellington's funeral, the spirit photograph was, in part, a technological triumph over the darkness of death.

The spirit photograph offered multiple benefits in the context of mourning practices. Not only did spirit photography give the bereaved the necessary space to mourn, it offered them hope in a pleasing concept of reunification in a material heaven. As a relic of the Spiritualist Movement, spirit photography confirmed faith in some, and rescued others from doubt. More broadly, the spirit photograph is a marker of a shift in faith, of a belief in man's ability to reveal the nature and workings of the Divine, and in technology's ability to enhance man's powers of perception. In an age of eroding faith, the spirit photograph helped Victorian man negotiate the place of spirituality in an increasingly modernized, technologically advanced society.

Works Cited

- Ackroyd, Peter. *Dickens*. New York: Harper Collins, 1990.
- Alexander, Edward. *Matthew Arnold, John Ruskin, and the Modern Temper*. Columbus: The Ohio State UP, 1973.
- Allan, James McGrigor. "On the Real Differences in the Minds of Men and Women." *Journal of the Anthropological Society of London, Vol. 7*. London: Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, 1869. cxcv-ccxix.
- Ames, Winslow. *Prince Albert and Victorian Taste*. New York: Viking Press, 1968.
- Armstrong, Nancy. *Fiction in the Age of Photography: The Legacy of British Realism*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1999.
- Arnold, Ethel M. "Rhoda Broughton as I Knew Her." *Fortnightly Review* 114: 262-278. 1920.
- Arnold, Matthew. "Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse." *Victorian Poetry and Poetics*. Eds. Walter E. Houghton and G. Robert Stange. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1968. p. 476-478.
- Bain, Alexander. *The Senses and the Intellect*. London: Longman, 1864.
- Barthes, Roland. *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*. Trans. Richard Howard. New York: Hill and Wang, 1980.
- Baym, Nina. "Introduction." *Three Spiritualist Novels*. Elizabeth Stuart Phelps. Chicago: U of Illinois P, 2000.
- Black, Helen C. *Notable Women Authors of the Day*. Glasgow: David Bryce and Son, 1893.
- Brevior, Thomas. "What it is to be a Spiritualist." *The Spiritual Magazine*, Vol. 1. London: Job Caudwell, 1866. 27-30.
- Brewster, Sir David. *Natural Magic*. London: John Murray, 1834.
- Broughton, Rhoda. *Not Wisely But Too Well*. Dover, New Hampshire: Alan Sutton, 1993.
- . "The Man with the Nose." *Tales for Christmas Eve*. London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1873.

- Browne, Joseph. "Ghosts and Ghouls and LeFanu." *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies* 8 (1) 5-15. 1982.
- Calder, Jenni. "Science and the Supernatural in the Stories of Margaret Oliphant." *A Question of Identity: Women, Science, and Literature*. Ed. Marina Benjamin. New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1993. 173-91.
- Carlyle, Thomas. *Past and Present. The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, Vol. 2. Ed. M. H. Abrams. New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 2000.
- Ch eroux, Clement. "Ghost Dialectics: Spirit photography in entertainment and belief." *The Perfect Medium: Photography and the Occult*. Eds. Clement Ch eroux et al. New Haven: Yale UP, 2005.
- Coates, James. *Photographing the Invisible*. Chicago: Advanced Thought Publishing, 1911.
- Collins, Wilkie. *The Frozen Deep*. London: Hesperus, 2004.
- Conway, Jill. "Stereotypes of Femininity in a Theory of Sexual Evolution." *Suffer and Be Still: Women in the Victorian Age*. Ed. Martha Vicinus. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1973.
- Cook, Simon. "Margaret Oliphant's 'The Library Window' and the Idea of 'Adolescent Insanity.'" *Victorians Institute Journal* 34: 243-57. 2006.
- Coren, Michael. *Conan Doyle*. London: Bloomsbury, 1995.
- Cort es-Roca, Paola. "Ghosts in the Machine: Photographs of Specters in the Nineteenth Century." *Mosaic* 38(1): 152-168. 2005.
- Coughlin, Patricia. "Doubles, Shadows, Sedan-Chairs and the Past: The 'Ghost Stories' of J. S. Le Fanu." *Critical Approaches to Anglo-Irish Literature*. Eds. Michael Allen and Angela Wilcox. Gerrards Cross (Buckinghamshire): C. Smythe, 1989.
- Crawford, Brigid Lowe. "Charles Dickens, Uncommercial Space-Time Traveller: *Dombey and Son* and the Ethics of History." *Dickens Quarterly* 19 (4): 187-219. 2002.
- Crowe, Catherine. *The Night Side of Nature Vol. I*. London: T. C. Newby, 1849.
- Curl, James Stevens. *The Victorian Celebration of Death*. Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing, 2000.
- Dalton. "The Picture Bedroom." *Bentley's Miscellany* Vol. VII. London: Richard

- Bentley, 1840.
- Daniels, W. H. *The Temperance Reform and Its Great Reformers*. New York: Nelson And Phillips, 1878.
- Darwin, Charles. *The Descent of Man Vol 2*. New York: American Home Library, 1902.
- Darwin, Erasmus. *Zoonomia: The Laws of Organic Life*. Third Edition. Dublin: B. Dugdale, 1800.
- Davies, Owen. *The Haunted: A Social History of Ghosts*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.
- Dickens, Charles. *Bleak House: A Norton Critical Edition*. Eds. George Ford and Sylvère Monod. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1977.
- . *The Chimes. The Christmas Books Vol. I*. Ed. Michael Slater. New York: Penguin, 1971.
- . *A Christmas Carol. The Christmas Books Vol. I*. Ed. Michael Slater. New York: Penguin, 1971.
- . "A Christmas Tree." *Christmas Stories*. Ed. Margaret Lane. London: Oxford UP, 1956.
- . *Dombey and Son*. New York: Penguin, 1985.
- . *The Haunted House*. London: Hesperus, 2002.
- . *The Haunted Man and the Ghost's Bargain. Christmas Books*. Ed. Ruth Glancy. New York: Oxford UP, 1988.
- . *The Letters of Charles Dickens*. Eds. Graham Storey and Kathleen Tillotson. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1988.
- . "Nobody's Story." *Christmas Stories*. Ed. Margaret Lane. London: Oxford UP, 1956.
- . *Pictures from Italy*. New York: Penguin, 1998.
- . "To be Read at Dusk." *The Complete Ghost Stories of Charles Dickens*. Ed. Peter Haining. London: M. Joseph, 1982.
- . "Trading in Death." *'Gone Astray' and Other Papers from Household Words, 1851-59*. Ed. Michael Slater. Columbus: The Ohio State UP, 1999.

- Distant, W. L. "On the Mental Differences Between the Sexes." *Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol. 4. London: Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, 1875. 78-87.
- Doyle, Arthur Conan. "The Captain of the 'Pole-Star.'" *The Oxford Book of Victorian Ghost Stories*. eds. Michael Cox and R. A. Gilbert. New York: Oxford UP, 2003.
- . *The History of Spiritualism*, Vol. 2. London: Cassell, 1926.
- . *A Study in Scarlet. Sherlock Holmes: The Complete Novels and Stories*, Vol. 1. New York: Bantam, 1986.
- Doyle, Martin. *Hints Addressed to the Smallholders and Peasantry of Ireland, on Subjects Connected with Health, Temperance, Morals, &c.* Dublin: W. Curry, 1833.
- Erickson, Lee. "The Primitive Keynesianism of Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*." *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 30 (1): 51-66. 1997.
- Feltes, N. N. "To Saunter, To Hurry: Dickens, Time, and Industrial Capitalism." *Victorian Studies* 20. 245-267. 1977.
- Ferriar, John. *An Essay Toward a Theory of Apparitions*. London: Caddell and Davies, 1813.
- Firenze, Paul. "Spirit Photography: How Early Spiritualists Tried To Save Religion by Using Science." *Skeptic* 11(2): 70-78. 2004.
- Forster, John. *The Life of Charles Dickens*. The Victorian Literary Studies Archive. <<http://victorian.lang.nagoya-u.ac.jp/concordance/dickens/>>. Accessed 6 January 2007.
- "Frontispiece." *The Spiritual Magazine*, Vol. 1. London: Job Caudwell, 1866.
- Geddes, Patrick and Thomson, J. Arthur. *The Evolution of Sex*. London: Walter Scott, 1908.
- Gerry, Elbridge T. *The Mumler "Spirit" Photograph Case: Argument of Mr. Elbridge T. Gerry, of Counsel for the People, Before Justice Dowling, on the Preliminary Examination of Wm. H. Mumler, Charged with Obtaining Money by Pretended "Spirit" Photographs*. New York: Baker, Voorhis, and Co., 1869.
- Glanvil, Joseph. *Sadducismus Triumphatus: Or, A Full and Plain Evidence Concering Witches and Apparitions*. Fourth Edition. London: Bettesworth and Bailey, 1726.
- Greg, W. R. "England as it is." *Miscellaneous Essays, Second Series*. London: Trübner

- and Co., 1884.
- . "Life at High Pressure." *Literary and Social Judgments Vol. II*. London: Trübner and Co., 1877.
- Greville, Charles. *The Great World: Portraits and Scenes from Greville's Memoirs*. Ed. Louis Kronenberger. Garden City: Doubleday, 1963.
- Gunning, Tom. "Phantom Images and Modern Manifestations: Spirit Photography, Magic Theater, Trick Films, and Photography's Uncanny." *Fugitive Images: From Photography to Video*. Ed. Patrice Petro. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1995.
- Haddon, Mark. *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. New York: Vintage, 2003.
- Hardy, Thomas. "God's Funeral." *Selected Poems*. London: J. M. Dent, 1994.
- Harris, Sally. "Spiritual Warnings: The Ghost Stories of Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu." *Victorians Institute Journal* 31: 9-39. 2003.
- Harrison, Brian Howard. *Drink and the Victorians: the Temperance Question in England, 1815-1872*. Staffordshire: Keele UP, 1994.
- Haynes, Renee. *The Society for Psychical Research: A History*. London: MacDonald and Co., 1982.
- Heller, Tamar. "Textual Seductions: Women's Reading and Writing in Margaret Oliphant's 'The Library Window.'" *Victorian Literature and Culture* 25 (1): 23-37. 1997.
- . "'That Muddy, Polluted Flood of Earthly Love': Ambivalence about the Body in Rhoda Broughton's Not Wisely but Too Well." *Victorian Sensations: Essays on a Scandalous Genre*. Eds. Kimberly Harrison and Richard Fantina. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2006. 87-101.
- Herbert, Christopher. *Victorian Relativity: Radical Thought and Scientific Discovery*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2001.
- Herron, Jerry. "The Haunted Man and the Two Scrooges." *Studies in Short Fiction* 19. 45-50. 1982.
- Hibbert, Samuel. *Sketches of the Philosophy of Apparitions, or An Attempt to Trace Such Illusions to Their Physical Causes*. London: G. and W. B. Whittaker, 1824.
- Historical Weather Events*.
http://homepage.ntlworld.com/booty.weather/climate/1850_1899.htm. 25 May 2006.

Houghton, Walter. *The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830-1870*. New Haven, Yale UP, 1957.

“Introduction to the Victorian Age.” *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, Vol. 2. Ed. M. H. Abrams. New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 2000. 1043-1063.

Jalland, Pat. *Death in the Victorian Family*. New York: Oxford UP, 1996.

Jay, Elisabeth. *Mrs. Oliphant: A Fiction to Herself*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1995.

Jerdan, W. “The Dead Man’s Race, A Christmas Story.” *Bentley’s Miscellany* Vol. V. London: Richard Bentley, 1839.

Kaplan, Louis. “Where the Paranoid Meets the Paranormal: Speculations on Spirit Photography.” *Art Journal* 62(2): 7 pages. <<http://www.findarticles.com>>. 2003.

Kipling, Rudyard. “At the End of the Passage.” *The Oxford Book of Victorian Ghost Stories*. Eds. Michael Cox and R. A. Gilbert. New York: Oxford UP, 2003.

Le Fanu, Joseph Sheridan. “An Account of Some Strange Disturbances on Aungier Street.” *The Oxford Book of Victorian Ghost Stories*. Eds. Michael Cox and R. A. Gilbert. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1991.

---. “Billy Maloney’s Taste of Love and Glory.” *The Purcell Papers*, Vol. 3. New York: Arno Press, 1977.

---. “The Drunkard’s Dream.” *The Purcell Papers*, Vol. 1. New York: Arno Press, 1977.

---. “The Ghost and the Bone-Setter.” *The Purcell Papers*, Vol. 1. New York: Arno Press, 1977.

---. “Green Tea.” *In a Glass Darkly*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1993.

---. “Mr. Justice Harbottle.” *In a Glass Darkly*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1993.

---. “A Preliminary Word.” *Uncle Silas: A Tale of Bartram-Haugh*, Vol. 1. London: Richard Bentley, 1864.

---. “The Room in the Dragon Volant.” *In a Glass Darkly*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1993.

---. “The Quare Gander.” *The Purcell Papers*, Vol. 3. New York: Arno Press, 1977.

Le Fanu, William. *Seventy Years of Irish Life: Being Anecdotes and Reminiscences*. London: E. Arnold, 1902.

- Leja, Michael. *Looking Askance: Skepticism and American Art from Eakins to Duchamp*. Berkeley: U of California P, 2004.
- Levine, Michael. "The Vanishing Point: Sherlock Holmes and the Ends of Perspective." *Criticism* 39(2): 249-273. 1997.
- Malcolm, Elizabeth. *Ireland Sober, Ireland Free: Drink and Temperance in Nineteenth Century Ireland*. New York: MacMillan, 1986.
- Marlow, James E. *Charles Dickens: The Uses of Time*. Selinsgrove: Susquehanna UP, 1994.
- Maudsley, Henry. *Mind and Body: An Inquiry into Their Connection and Mutual Influence, Specially in Reference to Mental Disorders*. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1874.
- McCormack, W. J. *Dissolute Characters: Irish Literary History Through Balzac, Sheridan Le Fanu, Yeats, and Bowen*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1993.
- . *Sheridan Le Fanu and Victorian Ireland*. Dublin: Lilliput Press, 1991.
- Meyerhoff, Hans. *Time in Literature*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1955.
- Miller, J. Hillis. *The Disappearance of God: Five Nineteenth-Century Writers*. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 2000.
- Mitchell, S. Weir. *Lectures on Diseases of the Nervous System, Especially in Woman*. Philadelphia: Henry C. Lea's Son and Company, 1881.
- Moncrieff, Scott. "Remembrance of Wrongs Past in *The Haunted Man*." *Studies in Short Fiction* 28 (4): 535-541. 1991.
- Morley, John. *Death, Heaven and the Victorians*. London: Studio Vista, 1971.
- Nesbit, E. "Man-Size in Marble." *The Oxford Book of English Ghost Stories*. Eds. Michael Cox and R. A. Gilbert. New York: Oxford UP, 1989.
- Newnham, W. *Essay on Superstition: Being an Inquiry into the Effects of Physical Influence on the Mind*. London: J. Hatchard and Son, 1830.
- Oliphant, Margaret. *The Autobiography of Margaret Oliphant*. Ed. Elisabeth Jay. Peterborough: Broadview, 2002.
- . *The Library Window*. Tampa: U of Tampa P, 2006.
- "Our Portrait Gallery – No. VII." *Dublin University Magazine* Vol. 15. Dublin: William

- Curry, 1840.
- Parker, David. *Christmas and Charles Dickens*. New York: AMS Press, 2005.
- Pearl, Sharonna. "Dazed and Abused: Gender and Mesmerism in Wilkie Collins." *Victorian Literary Mesmerism*. Eds. Martin Willis and Catherine Wynne. New York: Rodopi, 2006. 163-181.
- Pearsall, Cornelia D. J. "Burying the Duke: Victorian Mourning and the Funeral of the Duke of Wellington." *Victorian Literature and Culture* 27(2): 365-393. 1999.
- "Peckham and Dulwich." *Old and New London: Volume 6* (1878)
<<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.asp?compid=45282>. Accessed 25 January 2007.
- Phelps, Elizabeth Stuart. *The Gates Ajar. Three Spiritualist Novels*. Chicago: U of Illinois P, 2000.
- Pollack, Peter. *The Picture History of Photography*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1969.
- Poovey, Mary. *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1988.
- Pritchett, V. S. "An Irish Ghost." *The Living Novel*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1946.
- Robinson, Daniel N. *An Intellectual History of Psychology*. New York: Macmillan, 1976.
- Rowell, Geoffrey. "Dickens and the Construction of Christmas." *History Today* 43 (12): 17-24. 1993. <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=9312137665&site=ehost-live>. Accessed 25 January 2007.
- Ruskin, John. "Of Queen's Gardens." *Sesame and Lilies. Essays: English and American Vol. XXVIII*. Ed. Charles W. Eliot. New York: P.F. Collier & Son, 1909. <<http://www.bartleby.com>>. Accessed 29 January 2007.
- Sadleir, Michael. *Things Past*. London: Constable, 1944.
- Schaaf, Larry J. "Invention and Discovery: First Images." *Beauty of Another Order*. Ed. Ann Thomas. New Haven: Yale UP, 1997.
- Schad, S. J. "The I and You of Time: Rhetoric and History in Dickens." *ELH* 56 (2): 423-438. 1989.
- Scott, Walter. "The Tapestry Chamber." *The Oxford Book of English Ghost Stories*.

- Eds. Michael Cox and R. A. Gilbert. New York: Oxford UP, 1989.
- Shakespeare, William. *King Lear. The Complete Signet Classic Shakespeare*. Ed. Sylvan Barnet. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1972. 1174-1226.
- Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein. The Norton Anthology of English Literature Vol. 2*. Ed. M. H. Abrams. New York: W. W. Norton, 1993.
- Sidgwick, Eleanor Mildred. "Letter to the Editor." *The Journal of the Society for Psychical Research*, Vol. 5. London: The Society's Rooms, 1892.
- Sidgwick, Henry. "President's Address." *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, Vol. 1. London: Trübner, 1883.
- Smith, Andrew. "Dickens' Ghosts: Invisible Economic and Christmas." *Victorian Review* 31 (2): 36-55. 2005.
- Spencer, Herbert. *The Study of Sociology*. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1874.
- Stone, Harry. "A Christmas Carol's Fairy Tale Format." *Readings on A Christmas Carol*. Ed. Jill Karson. San Diego: Greenhaven, 2000.
- Sullivan, Kevin. "Sheridan Le Fanu: The Purcell Papers, 1838-40." *Irish University Review* 2(1): 5-19. 1972.
- Taylor, Anya. *Bacchus in Romantic England: Writers and Drink, 1780-1830*. New York: St. Martin's, 1999.
- Tennyson, Alfred. *In Memoriam, A.H.H. Victorian Poetry and Poetics*. Eds. Walter E. Houghton and G. Robert Stange. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1968.
- Terry, R.C. *Victorian Popular Fiction, 1860-80*. London: MacMillan, 1983.
- Times* (London). Jan. 6, 1804; Jan. 13, 1804; Nov. 15, 1852; Nov. 16, 1852; Nov. 19, 1852.
- Tracy, Robert. "Introduction." *In a Glass Darkly*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1993. vii-xxviii.
- Winston, Elizabeth. "Introduction." *The Library Window*. Tampa: U of Tampa P, 2006. xi-xiii.
- Wolffe, John. *Great Deaths: Grieving, Religion, and Nationhood in Victorian and Edwardian Britain*. New York: Oxford UP, 2000.
- Wright, Almroth. *The Unexpurgated Case Against Woman Suffrage*. London: Constable and Co., 1913.