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Human Automata, Identity and Creativity in George Du Maurier's Trilby and Raymond Roussel's Locus Solus

Adrienne M. Orr
The University of Western Ontario

Supervisor
Dr. Christopher Keep
The University of Western Ontario

Graduate Program in Comparative Literature
A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree in Master of Arts
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HUMAN AUTOMATA, IDENTITY AND CREATIVITY IN GEORGE DU MAURIER'S *TRILBY* AND RAYMOND ROUSSEL'S *LOCUS SOLUS*

(Spine title: Human Automata, Identity and Creativity in *Trilby* and *Locus Solus*)

(Thesis format: Monograph)

by

Adrienne Orr

Graduate Program in Comparative Literature

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

The School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
The University of Western Ontario
London, Ontario, Canada

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THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

CERTIFICATE OF EXAMINATION

Supervisor

____
Dr. Christopher Keep

Supervisory Committee

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____

Examiners

____
Dr. Janelle Blankenship

____
Dr. David Darby

____
Dr. Carole Farber

____

The thesis by

Adrienne Orr

entitled:

Human Automata, Identity and Creativity in George Du Maurier's *Trilby* and Raymond Roussel's *Locus Solus*

is accepted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
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Date

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Dr. Melitta Adamson
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// Abstract

George Du Maurier's *Trilby* (1895) and Raymond Roussel's *Locus Solus* (1914) feature a unique figure, the human automaton, a human being who has been transformed into a machine. Rather than becoming objectified and dehumanized, thus transformed they produce great music and art defined by the single quality supposedly irreproducible by machines—variability. Drawing multiplicity from the sameness of exact repetition in their art, the human automata's identities are equally capable of embodying otherness and oppositions in a plural identity that remains uniquely singular. This challenges contemporary attitudes towards automation as a fixative, deterministic and reductive, and ultimately dehumanizing, transformation. Linking automatism, otherness located within the self, and creativity, the human automaton becomes a marker of the potential for the malleability of identity that, in enriching creative expression, interrogates the boundary limits of human and machine.

Keywords

human automaton, human-machine complex, dehumanization, mesmerism, traumatic re-enactment, altered states, nineteenth-century psychology, *Trilby*, *Locus Solus*, George Du Maurier, Raymond Roussel, Frederic W.H. Myers, Pierre Janet, performance

Dedication

To mom and dad,

without whose love and support I could never have made it to where I am today,

with all my love, *thank you*.

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I would never have been able to complete this project without the following people:

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I want to thank Dr. John Stout for introducing me to Raymond Roussel in such a way that I could meander my way back to *Locus Solus*.

To all my friends and colleagues who have taken this journey with me, thank you for making the last two years in London my home away from home, and making Western my home away from home away from home.

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Introduction

George Du Maurier's *Trilby* (1895) and Raymond Roussel's *Locus Solus* (1914) are two extremely disparate novels. The first, initially published serially in *Harper's Monthly* before being printed in book form, was tremendous popular, bringing fame to an author already highly regarded for his caricatures in *Punch*. *Trilby* has been called the best-selling novel of the nineteenth century for its success both in England and internationally (Pick 2). It spawned theatrical adaptations and parodies and was used to market a diverse range of products from sweets and sausages to games and toys to soaps and toothpastes, and of course the trilby hat, which retains its name today (Jenkins 246-7). The novel's villain, Svengali entered the public imagination alongside contemporaries Count Dracula and Sherlock Holmes, as well as the lexicon as a term to designate a person holding a potentially sinister mesmeric influence over another. The novel itself is a sensationalist and sentimental narrative, set in the art scene of the Quartier Latin in Paris of the 1850s. The conventional narrative deals with the titular heroine, a bohemian *grisette* and tone-deaf artist's model transformed into an opera diva. A plot that explores the bohemian artist lifestyle, it takes on such broader themes as the nature of art and artistic value, social and cultural identity, the politics of class and gender, and the boundaries of nationality.

By comparison, *Locus Solus* was far less appreciated at the time of its publication. The book was self-published at great expense to the author, who was well-known but highly criticised for the incomprehensibility of his works. Far from the internationally best-selling *Trilby*, copies of *Locus Solus* on sale in bookshops languished there, as "most of them remained, alas, gathering dust" (Ford, *Republic*, 137). The novel also appeared as a serial publication in an unsuccessful effort to boost publicity and earn the author some appreciation and recognition. For similar reasons, Roussel paid Pierre Frondaie, known for his theatrical adaptations, to turn *Locus Solus* into a play; this, too, was disastrously unsuccessful. During Roussel's lifetime, his work earned little praise, garnering recognition only from the Surrealist movement, which saw in it a precursor of its own innovative style and concerns (Ford, *Republic*, xxvi). The confusion and hostility with which his novels were generally met was due in large part to the unconventional nature of

his writing. While not the most daunting example in this regard, *Locus Solus* breaks with many conventions of the realist novel as a form. It consists of an episodic narrative with seven self-contained chapters that present the various fantastic inventions of scientist Martial Canterel. These range from oxygenated water allowing one to breathe freely while submerged to the reanimation of the dead by means of innovative metallic substances. The novel is largely lacking in such conventional features as a plot and characters, limited as it is to a simple tour of the grounds by invited guests who mostly remain nameless and without description. The focus instead is on excruciatingly detailed explanations of Canterel's various inventions and their origins as they present themselves on the path along which the visitors, and the reader, meander.

Yet, despite their differences, these novels are united in that they both feature human beings who have been transformed into performing machines in different ways. In *Trilby*, Svengali mesmerizes Trilby, stripping her of any conscious ability to direct her own actions, and turning her into a singing sensation who performs her concerts automatically. As Svengali's assistant Gecko declares, the mesmerized Trilby becomes "'just a singing-machine'" (Du Maurier 299). In *Locus Solus*, the reanimated dead are revived by an electrical charge from applying Canterel's *vitalium* and *resurrectine*, and transformed into machines as they unconsciously and automatically reproduce specific scenes from their lives as theatre pieces.

On the surface, the mechanization that these characters undergo, particularly in the latter case of the reanimated dead, might seem to be a dehumanizing process. The contemporary cultural and intellectual discourse surrounding the transformation of humans into machines, particularly in the context of industrialization and nineteenth- and early twentieth-century psychology, creates precisely that expectation. This discourse envisions the loss of one's conscious and volitional control over one's own behaviour—and the fixed, invariable, and automatic actions that arise as a result—as diminishing one's physical and psychic life, fragmenting one's identity and sense of self, damaging to one's capacity for artistic experience and production, and ultimately holding dire consequences for one's humanity.

However, both novels problematize such a reading by portraying characters that are captivating, unique, and who exude creative potential, all precisely because they have

been made into machines. Though Trilby is “just a singing-machine” when she is transformed into the diva La Svengali, she is an incredibly talented one: declared to be the greatest singer of the century, and even of all time, she is praised by performers and audiences alike, captivating all of Europe with the simple beauty of her performances and the incredible capacity of her magnificent voice. Like Trilby, Canterel’s subjects have a strongly artistic tendency: in addition to becoming the unwitting actors in the theatre pieces of their lives, many of them produce creative works of art and literature with each repetition of the exact same sequence of events. These compelling performances display all the hallmarks of a rich life: joy and laughter, sadness and despair, illness and health, family and love relationships. Such depictions contrast with the contemporary attitudes that suggested mechanization leads only to the degradation of human experience. By thus confusing the boundary between the human and the machine in these depictions of human automata, both authors explore the implications of mechanization and test the limits of what exactly it means to be human.

* * *

The fact that these characters become entertainment pieces producing music and art in their mechanized state connects them with the automata popular in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Though automata—in the sense of devices concealing a mechanism and giving the appearance of spontaneous movement—date back to Ancient Greece, by the early nineteenth century the meaning shifted to refer specifically to mechanical devices that reproduce the actions of living beings (OED). Not only did the clockwork machines concealed within human figures reproduce external appearance, but these automata also imitated internal functions by reproducing typically human actions in the same way in which a human being would produce them—or at least in as similar a manner as the technology would allow. As automata produced in the eighteenth and nineteenth century were distinguished by their inventors’ every effort to duplicate human behaviour as closely as possible, “the design of automata became increasingly a matter, not just of representation, but of simulation” (Riskin 605). The automaton is therefore a figure that interrogates the boundary between human and machine.

In 1738, Jacques de Vaucanson leased a private showroom in Paris to display his latest creation: an automaton dubbed the Flute Player, a life-sized human figure mounted

on a four-foot pedestal with a repertoire of twelve different tunes (Wood 22). While visitors were impressed by "the lifelike manner in which Vaucanson's android moved its head, lips, and fingers over the holes of the instrument," many—including the Paris Academy of Sciences—were under the impression that the figure's actions were merely decoys and that the music was actually produced by a separate mechanism concealed in the pedestal (Nocks 32; Wood 21). To convince people otherwise, Vaucanson submitted a memoir to the Academy, published as *La Mécanisme du Fluteur Automate* (1738), in which he gave an extremely detailed account of the mechanism by which his automaton functioned so as to demonstrate above all that his automaton did in fact genuinely play its instrument (Riskin 615). Vaucanson notes that he had taken on the challenge of the flautist precisely because, as he "had learned from his musical acquaintances, [the flute] was considered one of the hardest instruments to play … notes are produced not just by fingers and breath but by varying amounts of air blown into the flute, and different shapings of the lips" (Wood 22). After first describing how a human flautist would play his instrument, Vaucanson proceeds to explain how he reproduced each of the necessary actions. He describes a complex system of bellows and pulleys that push air through the pipe and aperture corresponding to the Flute Player's trachea and mouth (Vaucanson 9-10). The mouth, complete with lips capable of widening and narrowing so as to manipulate the air passing over the flute's tone hole and a tongue to interrupt the flow of air as necessary, also moves towards and away from the instrument to simulate tilting it forwards and backwards, necessary to vary the notes (Vaucanson 10). The same system of cylinders, chains, levers, and valves that controls the mouth and lips also manipulates the automaton's fingers over appropriate keys (Vaucanson 10-12). It was said that if the flute were exchanged for a similar one, it would play just the same (Riskin 613-4). As the Flute Player produced the various notes just as any flautist might, its design imitated humanity as closely as was possible with clockwork: several times in his account, Vaucanson repeats that, with the various components of the mechanism, "[J]'imite l'action de l'homme" (Vaucanson 14).[1]

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[1] "I imitate the action of a man" (trans. mine).

Denis Diderot wrote about Vaucanson's Flute Player in his *Encyclopédie*, classifying it as an android, which he defined as an "automate ayant figure humaine & qui, par le moyen de certains ressorts, *&c.* bien disposés, agit & fait d'autres fonctions extérieurement semblables à celles de l'homme" (Diderot and L'Alembert 1: 448).[2] Throughout the eighteenth century, similar automata capable of performing human functions were produced by a number of different inventors. In 1739, Vaucanson added a pipe-and-drum player to his exhibition that functioned in much the same way as the Flute Player, varying its breath and fingering to play the pipe while simultaneously drumming (Wood 25). Pierre Jaquet-Droz, along with his son Henri-Louis and apprentice Henri Maillardet, constructed a set of three automata first exhibited in 1774: the Scribe, the Draughtsman and the Musician (Nocks 34). The Scribe could compose any message up to forty letters, while the Draughtsman could draw four sketches; these two lifelike boys were accompanied by the figure of a girl who played the clavichord by pressing her fingers against the keys (Bedini 39). The Musician was particularly emotive: her "eyes followed her fingers and [her] breast heaved with the music," giving a "titillating … impression of the bodily manifestation of powerful emotion" (Riskin 631). Around the turn of the century, Maillardet built his own writer-draughtsman, which composed four drawings and three poems, one of which was signed, "Écrit par l'Automate de Maillardet" (Nocks 35).[3] Perhaps the most famous automaton in circulation was Wolfgang von Kempelen's chess-playing Turk: after an opponent, usually drawn from the audience, made a move,

> the automaton would survey the board with his head, sometimes roll his eyes, before 'deciding' how to play. With each of its moves a muffled sound of wheels was heard, like that of a grandfather clock. … If the opponent made a false move (as many did, trying to trick the automaton), the Chess Player would shake its head and return the piece to its previous position. (Wood 66-7)

While Kempelen's automaton seemed able to think and strategize, in reality only its motions were driven by clockwork: its chess moves were initiated and guided by a human player concealed in the automaton's base. While many suspected some kind of fraud, the

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[2] "an automaton having human form and which, by means of certain well-placed springs, etc., moves and performs other functions externally similar to those of man" (trans. mine).

[3] "Written by the Automaton of Maillardet" (trans. mine).

Turk nevertheless had a long career in spite of being a hoax: built in 1769, and touring Europe and America through 1840, the Turk bested such figures as Frederick the Great, Benjamin Franklin, Napoleon, and Charles Babbage (Riskin 620-1).

Automata such as these were popular well into the nineteenth century, as, like the Turk, many of them made tours of Europe and the world. Though Vaucanson's Flute Player vanished soon after Goethe saw it in Germany in 1805 (Byrd 34), the Jaquet-Droz automata travelled with their inventors from Switzerland to France and England, after which they were sold and continued touring for decades before returning in 1906 and entering a museum (Nocks 34). A drawing dating to the 1860s suggests that Maillardet's writer-draughtsman was in use at least until then (Penniman). In addition to pieces from the previous century that were in circulation, there was also a surge in production and manufacture of new automata around the second half of the nineteenth century thanks in part to displays at international exhibitions as early as the Crystal Palace of 1851and as late as the Columbian Exposition in Chicago 1893 (Nocks 38). At the London Exhibition in 1862, Alexandre Nicolas Théroude "add[ed] to the 'imitation of life' by placing his mechanisms inside his figures like his dancing couple, rather than hiding them in a pedestal" (Nocks 39). Gustave Vichy, contributing to the Universal Exhibition of 1878 in Paris, was "lauded for his lifelike figures. One visitor, noting the provocative looks and gestures of the Vichy automata, commented that if this exhibition were being held in the Middle Ages, Vichy 'at the very least' would be excommunicated for his audacious behaviour" (Nocks 40). These inventors demonstrated the same effort to create automata that aimed at reproducing human functions as realistically as possible.

Not only do these notable examples of automata reproduce actions normally considered to be restricted to human beings, they specifically aim to do so in the same manner as a human being would. A flautist breathes and fingers keys, playing an instrument to produce music; a writer uses pen and ink to compose drawings and poems; a heaving breast and sidelong glances convey emotions; and even the capacity to think and strategize is apparently seen with a checkmate. The effort to approximate every aspect of human behaviour extended even to the incorporation of human features into these inventions. Johann Maelzel, who purchased and exhibited Kempelen's Turk, gave the automaton a voice by a system of bellows, enabling it to declare "échec et mat" when

it won a match (Wood 73, Inglis 3). For his Flute Player, Vaucanson described how "[c]haque bout de doigt est garni de peau, pour imites la mollesse du doigt naturel, afin de pouvoir boucher le trou exactement" (Vaucanson 11).[4] By reproducing human functions using human features—or their closest simulated equivalents—automata became more than mere curiosities or entertainment pieces. They were experiments whose value "lay principally in their dramatization of a philosophical problem that preoccupied audiences of workers, philosophers, and kings: the problem of whether human and animal functions were essentially mechanical" (Riskin 602). If distinctly human behaviours are reproducible by machines—albeit in a far more rudimentary way—then what are humans but more sophisticated and complex machines? What is there to distinguish a human being from an automaton? Is there any essential difference between humans and machines, or are they interchangeable? Can machines reproduce all human behaviour, or is there some key feature that is irreproducible that can serve to distinguish humans from machines?

* * *

These are the questions that *Trilby* and *Locus Solus* take up, exploring the differences between human and machine by transforming their characters into human automata. Like Vaucanson's Flute Player, Svengali's Trilby and Canterel's reanimated dead automatically produce their performances without making the decision to do so, repeat the same fixed set of behaviours, and are incapable of any actions beyond their limited programming. The texts explore the implications of this transformation by asking what losses and what gains accompany such automation and mechanization, and what the implications are for the nature of human identity. In short, what distinguishes us as humans?

Trilby and *Locus Solus* are not the first to use the automaton to explore these questions. In doing so, these texts engage with a discourse that recognizes the similarities between humans and machines, but that also insists on fundamental differences that distinguish us. Most notably, René Descartes used the analogy of the automaton in

[4] "each fingertip is covered in skin [leather], to imitate the natural softness of the finger, so as to plug the hole exactly" (trans. mine).

Discours de la méthode (1637), in which he considered those functions of the human body that could operate mechanically, "sans que nous y pensions," by imagining God creating an exact replica of a human body lacking only a rational soul (Descartes 44).[5] He determined that these functions included the power to move one's limbs, waking and sleep, dreams, sensory perceptions, hunger and thirst, passions, and even memory. Descartes compared the human body's ability to move itself without being led by the will with the functioning of automata:

> ce qui ne semblera nullement étrange à ceux qui, sachant combien divers *automates*, ou machines mouvantes, l'industrie des hommes peut faire, sans y employer que fort peu de pièces, à comparaison de la grande multitude des os, des muscles, des nerfs, des artères, des veines et de toutes les autres parties qui sont dans le corps de chaque animal, considéreront ce corps comme une machine qui, ayant été faite des mains de Dieu, est incomparablement mieux ordonnée et en a en soi des mouvements plus admirables qu'aucune de celles qui peuvent être inventées par les hommes. (Descartes 52-3)[6]

In this, Descartes seems to be arguing that human beings are simply extremely complex and sophisticated examples of machinery. However, though his analogy begins with the human body, it shifts midway to the animal body: while he argues that these mechanical functions make animals nothing more than machines, Descartes insists that certain human qualities could not be explained by mechanism alone. Humans are to be distinguished by their possession of a rational soul, immaterial and therefore not subject to the same laws as the physical body. Noting that animals, lacking such a soul, would be indistinguishable from any sophisticated machines that reproduced them, Descartes argues that the same is not true of human beings. First, unlike a machine, human beings are capable of self-expression and can use language in an adaptive way to respond to changing circumstances; second, machines act in a predetermined manner to fulfil—whether poorly or expertly—set functions, while humans are capable of a far greater variety of actions and are adaptive to changing circumstances (Descartes 53-4). Both points indicate

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[5] "without our thinking of them" (Maclean 39). All English translations of Descartes' *Discours* by Ian Maclean.

[6] This will not appear at all strange to those who know how wide a range of different automata or moving machines the skill of man can make using only very few parts, in comparison to the great number of bones, muscles, nerves, arteries, veins, and all the other parts in the body of every animal. For they will consider this body as a machine which, having been made by the hand of God, is incomparably better ordered and has in itself more amazing movements than any that can be created by men. (Maclean 46)

Descartes' conviction that the rational soul imbues human beings with the capacity for free, self-determined, willful, and spontaneous action of which a machine is incapable. Therefore, while Descartes' initial analogy suggests that on a certain level human beings are merely automata, the possession of a rational soul ensures that one moves beyond that mechanical nature thanks to the capacity for conscious and willful action that such a soul enables.

Julien Offray de la Mettrie saw no reason to limit the mechanical nature of living bodies only to animals. In his treatise, *L'Homme machine* (1748), La Mettrie extends Descartes' *bête machine* hypothesis to humans,[7] insisting that that the difference between humans and animals is merely one of degree: "Des Animaux à l'Homme, la transition n'est pas violente; les vrais Philosophes en conviendront" (La Mettrie 78).[8] Staunchly materialist, La Mettrie argues "qu'il n'y a dans tout l'Univers qu'une seul substance diversement modifiée," therefore denying the existence of any immaterial soul that would distinguish between humans and animals (La Mettrie 117).[9] With this argument, La Mettrie aims to show "that animals share to some degree our intelligence, while we share to every degree their 'machineness'" (Gunderson 215). The mechanical nature of particular human behaviours occurring beyond conscious control was visible in certain intuitive responses like recoiling at a sudden precipice or shutting one's eyes in anticipation of a blow, and physiological ones like pupils contracting in sunlight and dilating in darkness. Referring to "ces ressorts de la Machine humaine," La Mettrie noted that "[t]ous les mouvements vitaux, animaux, naturels, et automatiques se font par leur action" (La Mettrie 101).[10] Again, the automaton became an example to explain that man

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[7] He even implied that this was precisely the argument Descartes had wanted to express, but could not due to the intellectual climate: "Car enfin, quoiqu'il chante sur la distinction des deux substances; il est visible que ce n'est qu'un tour d'adresse, un ruse de stile, pour faire avaler aux Théologiens un poison caché à l'ombre d'une Analogie qui frappe tout le Monder, et qu'eux seuls ne voient pas" (La Mettrie 111). ["For whatever he recounts about the distinction between the two substances, it is obvious that it was only a trick, a cunning device to make the theologians swallow the poison hidden behind an analogy that strikes everyone and that they alone cannot see" (Thomson 35). All English translations of La Mettrie's *L'Homme Machine* by Ann Thomson.]

[8] "From animals to man there is no abrupt transition, as true philosophers will agree" (Thomson 13).

[9] "that there is in the whole universe only one diversely modified substance" (Thomson 39).

[10] "these springs of the human machine … [a]ll the vital, animal, natural and automatic movements are carried out thanks to them" (Thomson 28).

is only a far more complex machine differing only in degree to those produced by the likes of Vaucanson:

> S'il a fallu plus d'instrumens, plus de Roüages, plus de ressorts pour marquer les mouvements des Planètes, que pour marquer les Heures, ou les repeter; s'il a fallu plus d'art à Vaucanson pour faire son *Fluteur*, que pour son *Canard*, il eût dû en emploier encore davantage pour faire un *Parleur*; … Il étoit donc de même nécessaire que la Nature emploiât plus d'art et d'appareil pour faire et entretenir une Machine, qui pendant un siècle entier pût marquer tous les battemens du coeur et de l'esprit; car si on n'en voit pas au pouls les heures, c'est du moins le Baromètre de la chaleur et de la vivacité, par laquelle on peut juger de la nature de l'Ame. (La Mettrie 109-10)[11]

While La Mettrie retains the term soul, he makes a point of stating that it is used to signify the part in us that thinks. Instead of the result of some immaterial substance, it is rather the complexity of the machine-like organism that provides humans with the capacity for thought, "car le cerveau a ses muscles pour penser, comme les jambes pour marcher" (La Mettrie 102).[12] La Mettrie adds that, "puis que toutes les facultés de l'Ame dépendent tellement de la propre Organisation du Cerveau et de tout le Corps, … elles ne sont visiblement que cette Organisation même" (La Mettrie 98).[13] Thus, La Mettrie argues that the human's machine nature was not incompatible with the capacities Descartes attributed to a rational soul:

> Etre Machine, sentir, penser, savoir distinguer le bien du mal, comme le bleu du jaune, en un mot être né avec de l'Intelligence, et un Instinct sur de Morale, et n'être qu'un Animal, sont donc des choses qui ne sont pas plus contradictoires, qu'être un Singe, ou un Perroquet, et savoir se donner du plaisir. (La Mettrie 112)[14]

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[11] If it took more instruments, more cogs, more springs to show the movement of the planets than to show or tell the time, if it took Vaucanson more artistry to make his flautist than his duck, he would have needed even more to make a speaking machine… Thus, in the same way, nature needed more artistry and machinery to construct and maintain a machine which could continue for a whole century to tell all the beats of the heart and of the mind; for if we cannot tell the time from the pulse, it is at least the barometer of heat and liveliness, from which we can judge the nature of the soul. (Thomson 34)

[12] "for the brain possesses muscles for thinking as the legs do for walking" (Thomson 28).

[13] "since all the soul's faculties depend so much on the specific organization of the brain and of the whole body … they are clearly nothing but that very organisation" (Thomson 26).

[14] To be a machine and to feel, to think and to be able to distinguish right from wrong, like blue from yellow – in a word to be born with intelligence and a sure instinct for morality and to be but an animal – are therefore characters which are no more contradictory, than to be an ape or a parrot and to be able to give oneself pleasure. (Thomson 35)

La Mettrie's implication is the same as that dramatized by automata: human beings may be nothing more than complex machines, but machines that are nevertheless distinguished by the capacity for free and undetermined action and thought, conscious self-awareness, and willful behaviour.

Indeed, it was precisely this human capacity for spontaneous and willful behaviour adaptable to changing circumstances that was a central argument against the authenticity of Kempelen's chess-playing Turk. In his article, "Maelzel's Chess-Player" (1836), Edgar Allan Poe argues that that no automaton, no matter how sophisticated, could be capable of anything but fixed and determinate actions. Declaring chess to be an uncertain and unpredictable activity, where "from the first move in the game … no especial second move follows of necessity," Poe argues that the fixed and determinate actions of an automaton "would be necessarily interrupted and disarranged by the indeterminate will of his antagonist" (Poe 319). For this reason, he concluded that the Turk hid a human agent: "It is quite certain that the operations of the Automaton are regulated by mind, and by nothing else" (Poe 319). Gaby Wood cites another critic writing about the Turk, Robert Willis, who made a similar argument when he insisted that "no machine could make decisions governed by reason. 'It cannot,' he wrote, 'be made to vary its operations so as to meet the ever-varying circumstances of a game of chess. This is the province of the intellect alone'" (Wood 74). Willis stated further that the Turk "'cannot … usurp and exercise the faculties of the human mind'" (qtd. in Wood 74). Like Poe, Willis' complaint against the Turk builds the distinction between human and machine around the former's capacity to exhibit truly conscious and variable behaviour, which the latter—able only to repeat predetermined actions—cannot reproduce.

The conclusion of the contemporary discourse, then, was that human beings are certainly distinguishable from automata. The very reproduction of human features and functions by machines, even as it showed their similarities, also demonstrated that which is apparently irreproducible: as Jessica Riskin notes, automata "dramatized two contradictory claims at once: that living creatures were essentially machines and that living creatures were the antithesis of machines" (Riskin 612). For these authors, the distinction lay in the fact that an automaton is only ever capable of endlessly repeating the same limited set of fixed and determined actions, invariable beyond what has been

programmed into it by its inventor. While the automaton's actions may give the impression of self-directed activity—even conscious activity—it is merely "a mechanical dissembler … appearing to possess that which, by definition, it cannot – autonomy" (Inglis 1). This lack points to their limitations relative to the human beings they simulate, suggesting that humans are distinguished from their machine nature by the capacity for spontaneous and adaptive action that is enabled by conscious awareness and volition. This is the same distinction that psychologist and philosopher, William James, would make in the late nineteenth century when he argued that "adaptive behaviour is beyond machines, and … this is the conclusive difference between them and living creatures … an ability to respond to uncertain and unpredictable internal and external environments freed (unlike machines) from programmed routines and responses" (Rylance 102). Therefore, the contemporary discourse established that the automaton's ability to reproduce human activities, while indicating that human beings may be nothing more than complex machines, suggests that we are machines that are nevertheless distinguished by the capacity for free and undetermined action and thought through the exercise of conscious self-awareness and willful behaviour.

* * *

The implication of such a distinction is that the loss of autonomy and consciousness reduces humans to machines that are incapable of anything but fixed, determined, invariable and unchanging behaviour. *Trilby* and *Locus Solus* would seem to enact precisely this transformation: the human automata in each text lack the conscious awareness or volition that would allow them to direct their own performances, and are therefore limited to an unchanging set of fixed, determined, and repetitive actions. However, though they exhibit the qualities of the machine, they maintain one particularly important distinction: they retain and even enhance their capacity for variability, a quality that defines their performances. This is not meant to suggest that these characters have not actually become mechanized, but rather indicates the novels' concern with interrogating the boundary limits separating human from machine and the implications of the transformation of one into the other.

By imbuing these human automata with precisely that feature which the machine is not supposed to be able to reproduce, these novels directly challenge the discourse

surrounding the dehumanizing impact of mechanization. The criticism of industrialization in the nineteenth century uses the analogy of the automaton in order to suggest that the loss of autonomy and conscious volition leaves the factory worker incapable of anything but invariable behaviour, reducing the worker to a mere machine and often viewing the transformation as a degrading one. In this discourse, the automaton is imagined as a "symbol of all that is reactive, affectless and inhuman" (Inglis 1). The incapacity for variation due to the suspension of one's conscious volition in directing one's own behaviour becomes the symbol of a fragmenting, reductive and destructive mechanization.

Just as eighteenth- and nineteenth-century automata had dramatized the problem of whether humans and machines are interchangeable, so, too, did the factory machines of the industrial period. Though not taking on an external human appearance, the nature of the Victorian-era industrial machines allies them with the automaton: they are automatic machines used to accomplish specialized tasks; they perpetually repeat the same action or sequence, producing the same result infinitely and invariably; and, once set in motion, their operation is not controlled by a human agent (Sussman, *Technology*, 6). Moreover, these machines became increasingly capable of taking over human functions. One important example is the jacquard loom, invented by Joseph-Marie Jacquard in 1801 and based in part on a previous loom designed by Vaucanson, which used perforated cards to weave different patterns of cloth (Bautista Paz et al 142). A belt of cards, each corresponding to a new row in the pattern, would automatically be drawn forward after the completion of each line, while the wires of the jacquard loom "replaced the fingers of the weaver" as they picked up and carried the necessary threads (Weissenbacher 431; Sussman, *Technology*, 49). While still requiring a human operator, the worker's function was greatly reduced as the loom itself produced the designated pattern automatically: "The man sitting in front of the machine had only to pass the threads and to choose the card for the cloth. Once this operation [was] performed, it was sufficient to operate the lever that made the threads run and transform them into the cloth that emerged from the top" (Bautista Paz et al 143). In weaving patterned fabrics automatically, the jacquard loom took over not only a human function but one that had been considered highly skilled and creative, much in the way of an automaton: "The fact that a machine could do

this human job belonged … in the same category as the fact that a machine could play a musical instrument" (Riskin 627). As Andrew Zimmerman notes, though industrial machinery may not take on a human form, the fact that "a machine can represent a human presupposes that humans are somehow already machinelike, or at least that there is a common denominator between humans and machines, a means of circulation, so that they can be exchanged" (Zimmerman 16). Like the automaton before it, the capacity of the industrial machine to reproduce ever more complex human functions maintained if not intensified the sense that humans were by nature little more than machines.

Certainly, there was an attitude of appreciation and awe at the capacities of the machine as evidence of the progress and innovation enabled by industrialization and the human inventiveness that they represented. In his study, *Victorians and the Machine*, Herbert L. Sussman notes that even the Victorian author disconcerted by the rise of industrialism around him nevertheless "admire[d] his age for its technological skill" (Sussman, *Machine*, 7). Yet, at the same time, there was anxiety as to how such progress was being purchased: if the automated machines of the factory suggested the likeness between humans and machines, then the workers who operated them demonstrated that humans could themselves be reduced to machines. As Hal Foster has noted, the "automaton or machine-as-man announces the modern factory, the central site where man-as-machine, worker-as-automaton, is produced" (Foster 131). Contemporary critics were concerned at this notion, as "the idea of humans being turned into machines was becoming a current topic for political discussion" (Wood 117). Most notable of those concerned by the mechanization of the worker was certainly Karl Marx in his critique of industrial capitalism, *Capital* (1867). Marx argued that the workman forced to operate a machine that largely runs independently of him is reduced merely to an automatic piece of that machine: "In the factory we have a lifeless mechanism independent of the workman, who becomes its mere living appendage" (Marx 461-2). Though otherwise a conscious and willful individual, the factory worker that Marx describes demonstrates all the features one expects from an automaton.

First, the worker's actions are not determined by his own conscious volition or autonomous control. Rather, his behaviour is the result of external demands placed upon him: "[T]he motion of the whole system does not proceed from the workman, but from the machinery"; therefore, "it is the movements of the machine that he must follow" (Marx 460; 461). The worker's lack of voluntary control in his labour is evident in the operator of the jacquard loom whose actions are only in response to the demands of the machine he tends: "[T]he only task of the operatives [was] to feed the raw material to the toothed drums, then stop the machine for a moment if snags developed" (Sussman, *Technology*, 35). To emphasise this point, Marx compares the relationship as one of machine as master and human as servant, indicating the worker's lack of free will and conscious decision-making in the course of production. Like the automaton, the worker's available actions are limited in number as the division of labour in the factory setting reduces his job to merely the same task invariably and endlessly repeated, "convert[ing] his whole body into the automatic specialised implement of that operation" (Marx 372). As Marx notes sardonically, "[t]o work at a machine, the workman should be taught from childhood, in order that he may learn to adapt his own movements to the uniform and unceasing motion of an automaton" (Marx 460). A component of the machine, the worker becomes as much of an automaton as the machinery he operates, as his actions are determined externally, beyond his voluntary control, invariable and endlessly repeated.

Certainly, not everyone was critical of industrialization. Yet even those who praised the factory system as progressive and efficient tended also to use the same imagery. In such depictions, the workers and machines "form[ed] a symbiotic whole … portrayed in a celebratory manner as the description of the smooth and productive functioning of the industrial system" (Kang 232). Importantly, these defenders of industry, rather than distinguishing between the human worker and the machine, continued to view the worker as a mechanized appendage of the machine he operates. An important example is *The Philosophy of Manufactures* (1835) by Andrew Ure, one of the industrial apologists to whom Marx is reacting in *Capital*. Ure also envisions the factory as a "vast automaton, composed of various mechanical

and intellectual organs … all of them being subordinated to a self-regulated moving force" (Ure 13-4). Zimmerman notes that Ure's conception of the factory worker extends the mechanistic visions of Descartes and La Mettrie "by grasping the body not merely theoretically as machine but also practically, as a mechanically manipulatable machine. … [H]umans, for Ure, do not merely *resemble* machines; they can be constructed and operated like machines" (Zimmerman 14). In Ure's ideal factory, "humans and machines are nearly interchangeable, forming … a complete, organized body of cooperative labor" (Ketabgian 22). Harmony is achieved by disciplining the individual worker: the goal lies "in training human beings to renounce their desultory habits of work, and to identify themselves with unvarying regularity to the complex automaton" (Ure 15). Doing away with the worker's autonomy and individuality leaves an efficient and regulated machine-like laborer in his place: the cooperative labor of the factory is one "to which the bodies and interests of specific workers are subordinated" (Ketabgian 22). In fact, Ure praises the factory for deskilling workers, as he notes "the more skillful the workman, the more self-willed and intractable he is apt to become, and, of course, the less fit a component of a mechanical system, in which, by occasional irregularities, he may do great damage" (Ure 20). Though Ure sees such discipline as beneficent, nevertheless, he shares the sense that the transformation of human beings into machines suspends their capacity for conscious volition and autonomous action, reducing them to automata whose actions are fixed, externally determined, and repetitive.

The same transformation into human automata that the characters of *Trilby* and *Locus Solus* undergo is here seen in the industrial setting. The factory worker, incapable of autonomous behaviour as his actions are no longer governed by his own conscious will, is made to repeat automatically and endlessly a limited set of activities that are fixed, determined and unchangeable. These human automata are figures of loss as the human is overcome and erased by the machine. As Kai Mikkonen notes in his study of French literature dealing with humans as machines, *The Plot Machine*, even those more

inclined to view technological progress in a positive light[15] "exploited and incorporated the potential threat of merging with the machine" and displayed "the technological menace of being overcharged, derailed or becoming a robot with no will of its own" (Mikkonen 21). While at its best, regulated, fixed and automatic behaviour was cast as efficiency, discipline, and progress, the same attributes, taken to the extreme, threatened the destruction and dehumanization of those transformed by mechanization (Kang 232). In being overtaken by the machine, the factory worker becomes divided against himself: as factory "hands," the "unified energy of the body and certainly of the creative mind at play in the labor … was no longer necessary" (Sussman, *Technology*, 148). The human automaton of industry is one in which the human succumbs to and is corrupted by the machine.

Critics of industrialization emphasised that the repetition of determined, fixed, and automatic behaviour, occurring in the absence of conscious and volitional action, is precisely the cause of the reductive and fragmenting dehumanization that the factory worker experiences. As Sussman notes, the general attitude was that "the rhythms created by the machine itself had a profound and primarily destructive effect on the psychic life … [and] as mechanization expands the affective life declines" (Sussman, *Machine*, 4). He continues, adding that the qualities associated with the machine, particularly "its unwearied ability to repeat the same action, pose the greatest danger to the psyche. Literature consistently suggests that the rhythms of the machine are … destructive. The machine thus becomes both cause and symbol for … declining emotional vitality" (Sussman, *Machine*, 4). This is evident in Marx's description of the losses suffered by the mechanized factory worker as he conflates the worker's mental and physical suffering with his incapacity to exercise his conscious will: "factory work exhausts the nervous system to the uttermost, it does away with the many-sided play of the muscles, and confiscates every atom of freedom, both in bodily and intellectual activity" (Marx 462). Marx further emphasises that the worker's suffering is attributable to his incapacity to vary his actions away from a prescribed and fixed sequence by noting that the worker's

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[15] Paul Alkon's study, *Science Fiction before 1900: Imagination Discovers Technology*, argues that, in general, the French literature of the nineteenth century held a more positive, technophilic attitude relative to its American, and English contemporaries.

"miserable routine of endless drudgery and toil in which the same mechanical process is gone through over and over again, is like the labour of Sisyphus. The burden of labour, like the rock, keeps ever falling back on the worn-out labourer" (Marx 462).

Another critic who sees the incapacity for variation as the corrupting influence of the machine is John Ruskin, deemed "the most influential of the Victorian anti-machine voices" and an exemplar of the nineteenth-century expression of "the sense of damage to the inward life caused by tedious repetition of a limited task" (Sussman, *Technology*, 148). Like Marx, Ruskin, seeing in the factory worker "a slave in being forced to follow the regular and repetitive patterns of the machine," stresses the "abnormality, the distortion of natural activity" in such mechanization (Sussman, *Machine*, 85). He juxtaposes the human against the machine in terms of the artistic value of the products generated by each, writing:

> In vulgar design, the curves of the circling tendril would have been similar to each other, and might have been drawn by a machine, or by some mathematical formula. But in good design all imitation by machinery is impossible. No curve is like another for an instant; no branch springs at an expected point. A cadence is observed … but every clause has its own change, its own surprises. (Ruskin 281)

Ruskin defines the features of great art and architecture as possessing precisely those qualities that the machine cannot achieve, irregularity and variety: the works and art produced by the human hand are to be appreciated specifically for their exclusive capacity to capture the "ever varying forms" that were "inimitable by the regular repetitions of the machine" (Sussman, *Machine*, 81). According to Sussman, Ruskin's perspective is typical of literature of the Victorian period, which "consistently opposes the organic to the mechanistic," finding in the organic the irregularity and freedom not found in the orderly, determined, and fixed machine (Sussman, *Machine*, 5). Ruskin's criticism of the incapacity of machine-made art to reproduce variability demonstrates the association made by the discourse surrounding industrialization between the invariability that results from mechanization and the corrupting and dehumanizing influence of reducing humans to machines.

This discourse stands in stark contrast with the creative products of the human automata in *Trilby* and *Locus Solus*. By depicting the artistic products of the human automata as defined precisely by that feature which the machine is not supposed to be

able to reproduce—variability—these novels challenge the attitude the mechanization they experience is reductive and fixative. Rather than showing the absence of variability to indicate mechanization and subsequently dehumanization, these novels assign precisely that characteristic to their mechanized characters in an effort to interrogate the boundaries between human and machine.

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For the human automata of *Trilby* and *Locus Solus*, the same capacity for variability that defines their artistic capacities is also located in their identities. The human automaton is an apt figure to represent this plurality as it is itself capable of embodying otherness while still maintaining a uniquely singular identity. At once both human and machine, this figure embodies its own opposite and yet maintains both aspects within a unified form. It is simultaneously double and singular, capable of being other to itself and yet embodying both at once. In becoming automated, the characters in *Trilby* and *Locus Solus* are capable of that very same duality as they immediately become other to themselves and yet retain their original selves in such a way as to suggest the continuity that exists between the two. This ability is extended to their identity more generally as they characteristically embody opposing qualities simultaneously. Emphasising the defining continuities that run through all incarnations, though these complex characters demonstrate a multifaceted identity that is multiplied against itself, both texts resist the sense of fragmentation and loss of self.

In this, the novels challenge not only the discourse of industrialization, but also that surrounding physiological psychology at the turn of the century. Like critics of industrialism, nineteenth-century understandings of the mind imagined the exercise of conscious volition as the key distinguishing feature preventing human beings from succumbing to their innately mechanical nature. The metaphor of the human automaton was once again used to demonstrate the corrupting influence of such mechanization. Moreover, these attitudes established a causative link between automation, the loss of one's will, and the fragmentation of one's identity due to the subsequent incapacity to maintain a unified self.

If the fact that industrialization could result in the creation of human automata was disconcerting, new discoveries in physiology and their application for understanding the

human mind also prompted similar anxieties concerning the possibility that humans were reducible to mere machines. If the reaction to mechanization was to emphasise the distinction between the organic and the machine, this binary opposition was somewhat problematized as, over the course of the nineteenth century, it seemed that the organic itself was quickly becoming mechanical. In 1833, the discovery of reflex response showed that nervous impulses transmitted to the spinal cord resulted in immediate and automatic reactions which could not be considered consciously volitional (Matus, *Shock*, 34-5). English physiologist Marshall Hall—drawing on earlier experiments showing that frogs lacking their heads were yet capable of moving their legs when their spinal cord was stimulated—distinguished between the sensory-volitional system, associated with the cerebral cortex and responsible for rational, learned, conscious, and purposive or volitional behaviour, and the reflexive excitory-motor system of the lower brain and spinal cord that was responsible for automatic, instinctual and emotional behaviour beyond one's conscious control (Greenwood 283). However, experiments in the 1870s[16] demonstrated that the apparent seat of consciousness and volition, the cerebral cortex, could also be stimulated to produce automatic reactions, prompting questions as to whether reflex action could be extended to explain behaviours normally understood to be conscious and volitional. As William James phrased he question, "'Why not say that just as the spinal cord is a machine with few reflexes, so the hemispheres are a machine with many, and that is all the difference?'" (qtd. in Greenwood 284).

James is of course referring to those theorists who argued exactly that. The discovery that certain behaviours normally considered to be the result of conscious volition could be automatically reproduced without the involvement of the will prompted the argument that all human behaviour, physical and mental, could be reproduced automatically. This seemed to confirm the philosophical problem proposed by the automaton as humans were envisioned to be little more than complex machines—if that distinction could even be maintained. Most notable of those proponents of this automaton

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[16] Experiments conducted by Gustav Fritsch and Edward Hitzig in 1870, in which they operated on dogs in their Berlin boarding houses, showed the "'irritability' of the cerebral cortex: they demonstrated that the cerebral cortex responds to electrical stimulation, and that one region of the cortex is responsible for muscular contractions. Their experiments were quickly replicated, initially by David Ferrier (1843-1928) in Britain and Leonardi Bianchi (1848-1927) in Italy" (Greenwood 283).

theory was T.H. Huxley, the "de facto spokesperson for materialist physiology during the 1870s" (Stiles, "Cerebral," 145). Like La Mettrie before him, Huxley saw no reason not to extend Descartes' mechanistic understanding of the automatic nature of animal behaviour to include humans as well. He writes in his essay, "On the Hypothesis that Animals Are Automata, and Its History" (1874), that "to the best of my judgment, the argumentation which applies to brutes holds equally good of men; and therefore, that all states of consciousness in us, as in them, are immediately caused by molecular changes of the brain substance" (Huxley 239). Huxley argues that all human behaviour, both simple and more difficult tasks, results from automatic reflex action. He notes

> the unquestionable fact that, in ourselves, co-ordinate, purposive actions may take place, without the intervention of consciousness or volition, or even contrary to the latter. As actions of a certain degree of complexity are brought about by mere mechanism, why may not actions of still greater complexity be the result of a more refined mechanism? (Huxley 216).

Huxley demonstrates the fact that actions normally considered conscious and volitional could be automatically reproduced with neither consciousness nor volition by pointing to the case of a French soldier wounded in battle by a musket ball to the head. As a result of the injury, the soldier would occasionally fall into a state apparently "devoid of any kind of consciousness" as he remained stubbornly unaware of his surroundings: though pinched with pins or shocked by strong electric currents, he indicated no sign of pain; he did not react to any pleasant or unpleasant smells, or any noises. When called to interact with his surroundings, he maintains the same ignorance: "[H]e eats and drinks with avidity whatever is offered, and takes asafoetida, or vinegar, or quinine, as readily as water" (Huxley 225). The soldier also displays a weakened will as he "offers no resistance to any change in direction which may be impressed upon him, or to the forcible acceleration or retardation of his movements" (Huxley 225). Yet, in this absent state, he nevertheless continues to walk, eat, drink, smoke, dress and undress, sleep and wake as he usually would. As the soldier produces these actions without any influence of his consciousness or will, Huxley declares that "he was in the condition of one of Vaucanson's automata—a senseless mechanism worked by molecular changes in his nervous system" (Huxley 227). Once again, the metaphor of the automaton is invoked to demonstrate human beings' fundamentally mechanical nature.

If the soldier in his abnormal state was to be considered as an automaton, then, for Huxley, humans in a normal state are merely “conscious automata” (Huxley 239). For Huxley, the term “conscious” was not meant to suggest that there is any greater degree of control over one’s behaviour in a normal state; in fact, he claims that “there is no proof that any state of consciousness is the cause of change in the motion of the matter of the organism” (Huxley 239). Rather, as all human behaviour is determined by physiological mechanisms, consciousness must be viewed as merely one’s awareness that a certain behaviour has been produced. He notes that “the feeling we call volition is not the cause of a voluntary act, but the symbol of that state of the brain which is the immediate cause of the act” (Huxley 239). Huxley therefore reduces consciousness, “long regarded as the quintessential capacity of human beings, distinguishing them and placing them above all sentient creatures,” to merely “a by-product of the important and indeed primary activity going on elsewhere” (Matus, *Shock*, 25). With the role of consciousness so greatly reduced, Huxley’s argument threatened to erase the key distinguishing feature preventing humans from being nothing but more sophisticated automata.

Of course, it should come as no surprise that Huxley and other proponents of the automaton theory were criticised for so severely reducing the role of consciousness, and that responses insisted on its crucial importance in governing behaviour. Since the experiments and discoveries in neurophysiology noted above “checked the ideological accusations that physiological psychology was simply a materialist fantasy,” responses to Huxley’s theory could not—and did not— deny the physiological basis and automatic nature of certain behaviours (Rylance 71). In fact, one of Huxley’s more vocal critics, William B. Carpenter, had himself coined the phrase “unconscious cerebration” in the 1850s to indicate those mental processes that operate outside the purview of one’s conscious volition or awareness as the result of either physiological reflex or habitual action that has becomes reflexive (Matus, *Victorian*, 1263). In the preface to the fourth edition of *Principles of Mental Physiology* (1876), Carpenter acknowledges Huxley’s essay, and agrees that contemporary research has served “to elucidate the mechanism of automatic action [and] to define with greater precision the share it takes in the diversified phenomena of animal life, psychical as well as physical” (Carpenter ix). However, he also notes that perspectives like Huxley’s,

> dwelling exclusively on physical action as the only thing with which science has to do, and repudiating the doctrine (based on the universal experience of mankind) that the mental states which we call volitions and emotions have a causative relation to bodily changes, … appear to me to grasp only one half of the problem, to see only one side of the shield. (Carpenter ix)

Carpenter argues that while many aspects of mental and physical behaviours can be regarded as automatic, the sovereignty of higher faculties such as consciousness and volition remains a critical component in determining one's behaviour. He, like many of his contemporaries, recasts the Cartesian duality of rational soul and mechanized body as a division between upper and lower nerve centers, the first being responsible for conscious volitional action in which one wills and is (usually) aware of one's actions, and the second being responsible for the automatic and mechanical actions that can occur beyond the control of the conscious mind (Rand 282). Descartes' division between body and soul becomes a distinction "between two principal modes of vital activity, one automatic and unconscious, the other volitional and conscious" (Rand 282). Carpenter explains the distinction between these higher and lower faculties and the relationship between automatism and volition with the analogy of a horse and rider. He writes:

> It is not the rider's whip or spur that furnishes the *power*, but the nerves and muscles of the horse… But the rate and direction of the movement are determined by the Will of the rider, who impresses his mandates on the well-trained steed with as much readiness and certainty as if he were acting on his own limbs. (Carpenter 24, original emphasis)

Carpenter notes that the horse can operate automatically without any conscious direction from the rider, performing actions that both concur with and oppose his own desires or intentions, suggesting that automatic behaviours can operate outside of and even conflict with one's will.

However, he also notes that the will usually prevails: though the particular automatic mechanisms may be beyond his immediate control, one is able to direct the whole organism. Carpenter insists on "the control which the Will can exert over the *direction* of the thoughts, and over the *motive force* exerted by the feelings" (Carpenter 27, original emphasis). Moreover, he emphasises that the exercise of willful control in order to encourage or reject the various automatisms that arise is a means of shaping one's identity:

> This exercise of the Will, moreover, if habitually exerted in certain directions, will tend to form the Character, by establishing a set of *acquired habitudes*; … in proportion as our Will acquires domination over our Automatic tendencies, the spontaneous succession of our Ideas and the play of our Emotions show the influence of its habitual control; while our Character and Conduct of Life come to be the expression of our best Intellectual energies, directed by the Motives which we *determinately elect* as our guiding principles of action. (Carpenter 26, original emphasis)

The capacity to determine one's own identity through the conscious selection of which of those features to encourage and which to discourage as they automatically arise from our organism indicates the paramount importance of the will as the distinguishing feature in keeping humans from being determined by their mechanistic physiology. In maintaining that the higher faculties of consciousness and will are able to govern the lower faculties' otherwise automatic functions, Carpenter insists on the capacity for voluntary and adaptive action as the distinguishing feature preventing one from being merely an automaton.

Thus, for Carpenter, the exercise of the will is "that great bulwark against claims of human automatism" (Matus, *Victorian*, 1260). Noting Huxley's example of the French soldier, Carpenter argues that his condition does not indicate the insignificance of consciousness, but instead points to its absolute necessity: "For we cannot help recognizing a marked difference between the *normal* and the *abnormal* states of such subjects; and … that difference essentially consists in the suspension in the latter state of that volitional power, which in the former directs and controls the successions of thought and action" (Carpenter xxi, original emphasis). For Carpenter, Huxley's soldier is an automaton because he lacks conscious volition and is unable to direct his own behaviour. The very fact that the conscious soldier makes far better decisions than the abnormal soldier whose will is suspended—such as refusing to drink vinegar and quinine that the latter would automatically quaff—was sufficient to demonstrate the importance of the will in enabling adaptive, self-determined and free behaviour. Such an emphasis is typical of the nineteenth century: as Rick Rylance notes, for "many Victorians, the exercise of the will, particularly the ethical will, was the behavioural feature that most clearly distinguished humans from other species" (Rylance 73). If the exercise of conscious volition separated humans from animals, most certainly it distinguished us from

machines: Carpenter insists on the exercise of the will as a barrier against succumbing to the automatic behaviours that form our own innately mechanical nature.

However, envisioning the exercise of one's conscious volition as a safeguard keeping humans from their machine nature implied that the loss of that faculty meant succumbing to that nature. Jill Matus stresses the "anxiety expressed in a wide range of Victorian psychological writing about the threat of automatism and the suspension of the will" (Matus, *Shock*, 35). Indeed, the consideration of altered states of mind defined by the suspension of consciousness and the will was a "cultural preoccupation" of the nineteenth century (Pick 78). Examples of such states include mesmerism and hypnosis, somnambulism, trances and hallucinations, hysteria and various forms of madness, states of trauma or shock, dreams and even being overcome by powerful emotions (Matus, *Shock*, 38, 68). Just as the automaton of industrialism had indicated, these altered states all pointed to the disconcerting fact that one's conscious will could easily be eroded, and what would otherwise be considered volitional behaviours could be reproduced automatically. Indeed, late nineteenth century physiological psychology in Britain and France focused study on such altered states as somnambulism, hysteria, and hypnotic suggestion in which subjects demonstrated "apparently purposeful but automatic behaviour" (Greenwood 285). It is precisely this kind of altered state in which the mesmerized Trilby and the reanimated dead find themselves: with their conscious will suspended, what would otherwise be deemed purposive behaviour is actually the result of automatic actions determined beyond the purview of their own volition.

With their own consciousness will suspended, the behaviour of subjects in altered states was no longer determined by their own efforts, but governed instead by mechanical responses to internal, physiological reflexes or external stimuli—that is, governed by one's environment, or even more worrisome, by the influence of others. While the hands that gently guide Huxley's soldier as he walks about unaware of his surroundings may be innocuous, there was significant concern over the possibility of more sinister influences. Mesmerism and hypnosis highlighted this fear: "mesmerism's most disturbing quality … was, paradoxically, that the unconscious might respond to someone else's will" (Gracombe 100). Yet, even in those altered states that did not involve the domineering influence of a maleficent other, the mere fact that one could no longer be in control of

one's actions was seen as a threat to one's own subjectivity. If subjects in an altered state of consciousness could "behave in ways that their conscious selves might not sanction … then how was it possible to speak of an integrated or authoritative self?" (Matus, *Victorian*, 1263). The same fragmentation suffered by the factory worker as he becomes an appendage to the machine is repeated in how one is envisioned as other to oneself in these altered states. Beyond drinking quinine and vinegar in place of water, Huxley's soldier also exhibited a distinct change of character in his altered state: "[T]hough, in his normal state, he is a perfectly honest man, in his abnormal condition he is an inveterate thief, stealing and hiding away whatever he can lay hands on… Hoffman's [sic] terrible conception of the 'Doppelt-gänger' is realised by men in this state—who live two lives" (Huxley 231n1). The fact that one could act in a way to which they would normally object raised questions about "a stable, unified identity by suggesting that there were hidden—unconscious—mental regions that might contradict one's own self" (Gracombe 100). Carpenter suggests this in his consideration of the actions performed by Huxley's soldier: "[W]e should hold the French sergeant fully 'responsible' for any theft he might commit when in full possession of his wits, and yet for the very same action performed in his automatic state, we should be ready to admit the excuse that he had no power of self-control" (Carpenter xxi). Carpenter concludes that the soldier cannot be held responsible for any actions performed in his altered state because he is not himself. Moreover, Carpenter's emphasis on the exercise of the will as a means of determining one's identity by choosing to encourage certain characteristics simultaneously implies the same conclusion—that if behaviour is not consciously willed, it belongs to someone—or something—that is *not* oneself.

Thus, in the discourse surrounding physiological psychology at the turn of the century, the human automaton that emerges through the suspension of the all-important will displays a fragmented identity not unlike that of the mechanized factory worker of the industrial system. The disconcerting consequences of the factory worker's transformation into a machine extended to subjects who demonstrated automatic behaviour in altered states as these were defined as abnormal: "[T]he weakening or suspension of the will, signalled that … automatisms were morbid and pathological" (Hamilton 191). Carlos Alvarado, noting the continued prevalence of the physiological

and pathological approach adopted in psychology even at the turn of the century, quotes one British physician's typical opinion on such altered states as somnambulism: they were "'hardly ever found in persons of robust bodily and mental constitutions'" (qtd. in Alvarado, "Dissociation," 12). The psychology of the late nineteenth century established a causative link between automation, the loss of one's will, and the fragmentation of oneself due to the incapacity to maintain a unified identity without the exercise of conscious volition.

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Trilby and *Locus Solus* contest this link by enacting only part of it. As human automata, Trilby and Canterel's subjects exhibit the automatic behaviour typical of subjects in altered states. Their inability to exercise their conscious will means that their actions, taking on the qualities of the machine, become fixed, determined beyond their own volition, repetitive and unchangeable. Such automation in turn leads each to develop an identity that is divided against itself. However, as these characters do not lose their original identity, but instead maintain a sense of continuity through each incarnation, the novels challenge the contemporary intellectual and cultural discourse that anxiously envisions automation and mechanization as a fixative, reductive, and dehumanizing process. Instead, these novels depict the transformation into human automata as revealing and extending the characteristically plural identities of the performers, demonstrating not a fragmented and alienated self, but a complex, multifaceted, and singular identity. Rather than mechanization leading to the degradation of human experience and psychic life, they depict characters that are captivating, unique, and dynamic: they are at once other and themselves, multiple and singular, various and unified. Therefore, though the characters are made other to themselves, the implication is not of a corruption or loss of identity or of the reduction to mindless machine, but instead an expansion of identity. The transformation into human automata opens up a space that allows them to incorporate otherness within the self, revealing and extending an identity that is plural and yet unified.

The same variability that defines this multifaceted identity is subsequently used to produce art: automation enables each to use that capacity for multiplicity and engagement with the other that defines their identity equally as the source of great artistic expression.

Defying the alleged artistic stagnation of the machine, these human automata become capable of exceptional creativity based on the single quality that the machine is not supposed to be able to reproduce, finding variability in the repetition of the same, automated action in order to create new and unique performances and works of art. Thus, the texts challenge the implication of a dehumanizing or pathological deterioration of the self by suggesting instead that automation and the consequent incorporation of otherness within the self is a means of expanding one's creative potential. In *Trilby* and *Locus Solus*, the human automaton is used as a figure to explore the expansion of the boundaries of identity, of creative potential and of what is to be considered uniquely human experience.

Pursuing a historical approach that keeps in mind the contemporary cultural and intellectual discourse with which both novels engage, the following chapters will address the ways in which *Trilby* and *Locus Solus* take up and apply certain ideas and attitudes circulating at the time of their respective publications while challenging and discarding others. In doing so, the aim is to consider the multiple perspectives concerning the relationship between human and machine in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. As Tamara Ketabgian has pointed out, the nineteenth century in particular is "famed for [its] organic sympathies, … [its] tragic vision of industrial alienation, and [its] corresponding antipathy towards the machine," a one-sided attitude often shared by the critical literature (Ketabgian 1). This project aims in part to complicate this perspective by pointing to the alternate points of view that envision a more positive integration of human and machine, and pointing to that perspective as co-existing and engaging with the more antipathetic attitudes.

While relying on the criteria defining the mechanical and the attitudes surrounding mechanization that arise from and are evident in industrialization, the following chapters move away from the kind of literal coupling of human and machine seen in the factory. Though recent work considering the relationship between humans and machines has broadened the terms by which the interaction between human and machine is to be understood in nineteenth and twentieth century literature, there has been a tendency, as in for example Mark Seltzer's *Bodies and Machines*, to focus on such situations of coupling or co-ordinating with the machine. These approaches address the merger of humans and

machines by way of interaction, either as bodies operating machinery or by means of prosthesis integrated into or extending the capacities of the human body, as with the use of such technologies as the steam engine, the camera, or the phonograph. Other scholarship exploring the interaction between humans and machines, such as Ketabgian's *The Lives of Machines*, in addition to these mergers, has also considered situations in which technology has been used in a metaphorical sense to explore both the "humanness" of machines and the "machineness" of humans. This project aims to position itself between these two perspectives by considering cases where the recognition of the human body itself as being a machine is used to explore the qualities that become the criteria by which humans and machines become—or resist becoming—distinguishable.

Continuing from the standpoint of the emergent psychology of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the following chapters engage with the perspectives established above while also entertaining alternate theories that were proposed as counterpoints to the physiological psychology that made up the orthodox opinion at the turn of the century. This is not intended to suggest that the authors under consideration were specifically influenced by particular psychologists or that the authors were so familiar with these thinkers as to purposefully apply their theories in the writing of these novels. Instead, these alternate and emerging perspectives are used as an avenue by which to explore the themes and issues that are under consideration in each text, namely the link forged between automation and mechanization, the incorporation of otherness within a plural yet unified identity, and the subsequent capacity of the human automata to use that same variability as a source of creative productivity.

Chapter One deals with George Du Maurier's *Trilby*. It begins with an examination of mesmerism and hypnosis as a means of producing altered states that induce human automatism, and considers how this practice was understood and used in the psychological and medical discourse of the time by drawing on the work of Jean-Martin Charcot and his associates at La Salpêtrière in Paris and the work of Frederic W.H. Myers of the Society for Psychical Research in London. In addition, particular attention is paid to how the practice of mesmerism was conceived of in the popular imagination of the nineteenth century in order to demonstrate the ways in which Du Maurier both draws on and challenges the stereotype of the sinister mesmerist who corrupts the innocent

subject. By investigating the nature of the relationship between Svengali and Trilby as that of an inventor and his automaton, the chapter examines the degree to which Trilby participates in the performances of the diva La Svengali into whom she transforms. Considering the nature of her identity in the context of Charcot's and Myers' work, the chapter aims to demonstrate Trilby's capacity to incorporate otherness within herself in becoming a human automaton—both the external otherness of her mesmerist's influence, and the internal otherness of the variability she locates within herself as a result of this transformation. After linking the variability of Trilby's identity as a human automaton with the broader themes of the novel—specifically, that a hybrid identity is the source of artistic genius—the chapter concludes with a discussion of the audience's reception of La Svengali's performances to suggest the way in which the novel argues for the importance of the inclusion of otherness within the self as a means of expanding identity and creative potential.

Chapter Two examines Roussel's *Locus Solus* through two major perspectives. Firstly, the work of Pierre Janet on dissociation and traumatic re-enactments in hysterical patients frames the discussion of the automation experienced by Canterel's subjects in their altered states. As a student of Charcot's at La Salpêtrière and a corresponding member of the SPR familiar with Myers' theories, Janet's work is uniquely positioned to consider the implications of human automatism for the nature of identity. Secondly, the chapter examines in detail the specific method by which Roussel composed his novels: his *procédé* automatically generated multiple and alternate meanings through the repetition of the same pieces of language, subsequently unifying the variety of meanings into a singular and harmonized object or image. The chapter combines both of these perspectives in order to examine the automata and human automata that populate Canterel's park, Locus Solus. Considering how the automatic and mechanical repetition of an identical sequence of actions produces variation and otherness while maintaining a unified form, the chapter points to this as the defining feature of both the identities of the performers and the artistic works that they produce.

Both *Trilby* and *Locus Solus* resist the attitude that automation leads to the degradation of human experience by pointing to the dynamic identities of the human automata they depict and the enormous creative potential enabled by such a

transformation. By mechanizing these characters and then defining them by the single characteristic that is allegedly irreproducible by the machine, these novels challenge the attitude that such automation is dehumanizing. They suggest that humans are not reducible to machines, but rather, simply, that humans are machines. Automation and mechanization, rather than reducing one to a fixed and limited fragment of oneself, instead becomes a means of exploring and expanding one's potential.

Chapter 1: Finding Artistry in Otherness in *Trilby*

George Du Maurier's *Trilby* features as its titular heroine a young woman transformed into a human automaton when she is mesmerized and forced to give up conscious and volitional control over her own actions. Engaging with the debate surrounding the potential advantages and dangers of mesmerism as a practice, the novel explores concerns as to the implications of such an abdication of agency suggested by the mechanization of the self. For many, the transformation of a mesmerized subject into a human automaton implied not only the loss of one's will but also the loss of one's sense of self: with control over one's actions subject to the will of another, a skilled mesmerist could make one do or become anything or anyone, erasing one's own identity and establishing a foreign and unwanted one in its place. Contemporary fears surrounding mesmerism and hypnosis centred on precisely this sort of corrupting influence of an ill-intentioned mesmerist over an innocent victim. However, while the orthodox opinion held that the automating quality of mesmerism could lead to the corruption and erasure of one's identity, alternative theories—such as those of Frederic W. H. Myers—posited instead that the very same automatism pointed rather to an expansion of identity and selfhood by indicating its plurality.

Trilby engages with both attitudes, using the figure of the human automaton to explore the nature of identity. While the novel relies on the stereotype of the evil mesmerist controlling the naïve victim by having the sinister Svengali transform the innocent Trilby into the diva La Svengali, it also suggests that such a polarizing view of the relationship is flawed. While recognizing Svengali's necessary influence in the change, Trilby's own contributions to La Svengali's automated performances are also strongly emphasised throughout the novel, suggesting the continuity that exists between her waking and hypnotised selves. While she becomes other to herself while mesmerized, she draws on a multiplicity that originates internally in addition to incorporating the changes that are imposed on her by an external agent. As each incarnation of her identity is united by a distinguishing "Trilbyness," this multiplication of identity does not indicate the fragmentation of the self, but rather the expansion of the boundaries of identity. The novel employs the figure of the human automaton to reveal the nature of identity as plural

and mutable, with an apparently infinite capacity for change and variability, that yet maintains a unified selfhood.

The same transformation into a human automaton that enables variability in Trilby's identity becomes the source of her unique and unprecedented singing talent. Trilby's voice, a marker of both her singular Trilbyness and her capacity to embody otherness within herself, relies on that plurality to draw infinite variations from the repetition of the same notes and tunes. Svengali's hypnotic control unleashes Trilby's own creative potential as automation enables her to use that feature that marks her identity as both multiple and unique as the defining quality of her captivating performances. Developing a theme that is highlighted more generally throughout the text, the novel envisions the embodiment of otherness within the self as a necessary aspect of artistic and creative genius. Trilby's transformation into a human automaton indicates that such mechanization is not the fragmenting or reductive experience leading to the destruction of oneself and one's psychic life that was so feared. Rather, by establishing Trilby's transformation as an expansion not only of the boundaries of identity but of creative and human potential, Du Maurier's novel presents a vision of automatism not as a corrupting, reductive or destructive force, but as a productive and enabling one.

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The plot of *Trilby*, an innocent young woman ensnared by the powers of a nefarious mesmerist, plays on both the popularity of mesmerism in the Victorian period as well as the fears surrounding it. By the 1840s, mesmeric demonstrations were so popular in Britain that most Victorians would have been familiar with the practice: "[A]lmost any member of society—from factory worker to aristocrat to priest—might succumb to the powerful attractions of the mesmeric séance" (Winter 1-2). Exhibitions of mesmerism took place in a wide range of settings, from public shows to private gatherings, for entertainment in town halls and city streets as well as in the more serious academic and professional settings such as universities and hospitals (Winter 4). Its popularity sparked debate as to the potential advantages and dangers that might arise from the practice. Importantly, it was seen as an important tool in examining and understanding the various functions of the brain and the mind. Study using mesmerized subjects

> proceeded on the assumption that one or both of two things were happening in these altered mental states: first, the restraining powers of the judgment and the will were compromised or even suspended … and hence one could examine aspects of both by seeing how the mind functioned without them; and second, certain mental faculties were excited to a greater degree than in the healthy, normal state, and hence more accessible to study. (Winter 29)

For British physiological psychologists, such examples of mesmerism and hypnosis demonstrated the underlying automatic functions that governed unconscious behaviour. William Carpenter noted that mesmerism allowed the automatic reflex actions of the spine and brain that he believed governed certain aspects of mental functioning to become more readily apparent, as the suspension of the will meant that "the mental reflexes became more influential than in people in ordinary mental states" (Winter 288). The mesmerized subject's "voluntary control over the current of thought is entirely suspended, the individual being for the time (so to speak) a mere *thinking automaton*, the whole course of whose ideas is determinable by suggestions operating from without" (qtd. in Winter 289). The automatic behaviour displayed during hypnosis served to indicate the internal, automatic processes of the mind by writing them onto the external, mechanized body.

This human automatism was evident among one of the most famous uses of mesmerism and hypnosis to study the mind, that of Jean-Martin Charcot at La Salpêtrière in Paris. From 1862 to 1893, he held public lectures showcasing the hysterical patients being treated at the mental hospital. While Charcot lectured on a range of syndromes and symptoms associated with hysteria and madness, his lessons on "hypnotic automatism" were among those that drew the most public attention, both French and foreign, frequented as they were by medical professionals, students, artists, actors, authors, socialites, political figures, journalists, and aristocrats (Marshall 131, 141). Presenting a young female subject to his audience, Charcot would hypnotize his patient and have her repeat, unconsciously and automatically, the symptoms of hysteria that he wished to demonstrate for his lecture. Under hypnosis, the patients became as inanimate objects subject to the control of the mesmerist. One audience member observed that Charcot's hypnotic voice made him a "'puppeteer of wax figures'" (Marshall 144); Charcot himself describes his subjects as being "'transformed into a kind of expressive statue, an

immobile model that displays the most varied expressions with such striking veracity any artist could surely benefit from it'" (qtd. in Borgstrom 6). Of course, they do not express emotions they are presently feeling, but rather unconsciously and automatically reproducing states demanded by the mesmerist. The patients chosen for Charcot's performances were selected specifically for the machine-like quality of their repetitive and unchanging behaviour: two women, Augustine and Blanche, were particular favourites "precisely because they were able to reproduce the 'faces of hysteria' with utmost precision and regularity" (Borgstrom 12). Thus, their conscious will suspended as they performed the various hysterical symptoms demanded of them, these subjects became human automata under hypnosis.

The suspension of the will which promised to further knowledge about the nature of the mind also prompted concerns as to the threat that such a loss posed to the mesmerized subject. As Jill Matus notes, if "mesmerism and hypnotism produced excitement because of what they could reveal about the mind, they also provoked fear of manipulation and the abdication of agency" (Matus, *Shock*, 39). Victorians emphasised self-possession as a defining characteristic in maintaining a stable and healthy identity. Character was judged on the basis of virtue and self-control; mastering one's own body was of utmost importance, and often negatively portrayed characters were depicted as having lost control over themselves, or as having undermined the self-control of another (Winter 102). Opponents of mesmerism saw in the automatic behaviours induced in a trance evidence of just such an abdication of agency and were concerned at the loss of one's self-possession and self-control. Winter quotes one disconcerted observer's opinion that the mesmeric subject he had witnessed appeared "'as a piece of breathing organization, possessed of no independent powers, thinking, feeling, knowing, only through [the mesmerist's] will'"; another "nervous witness to a trial in Leicester foretold that there would be 'animated beings standing in the street like galleries of lifeless statues'" (Winter 121). The automatic behaviour demonstrated by hypnotised subjects as they carried out unconsciously and without volition the suggestions imposed by another became an indication of the loss of one's own identity and sense of self.

As a physician working with Charcot, Paul Richer's accounts of experiments he conducted portray exactly this use of hypnosis to confuse and fragment the subject's

identity as she executes automatically the hypnotiser's suggestions. His hypnotised subject "would perform on his command the mimetic gestures of certain social types. When told she was a nun, for example, the patient would immediately fall to her knees and cross herself repeatedly; told she was an actress, she would hike up her skirts and make scandalous propositions at the interns" (Borgstrom 5). With each transformation suggested to her—into a bird, a dog, or *Monsieur X* or *Y*—the subject "'loses any notion of that which forms her own personality, and creates from memory the personality which is imposed on her'" (qtd. in Borgstrom 4). The automatic behaviour prompted by external commands and enacted without conscious volition or even awareness suggested that one's own sense of personal identity could evaporate and that the mesmerist could impose on his subject the identity of anything or anyone. Importantly, this example hints at the idea that the original identity is not altogether lost: though the identity is imposed and false, the actions are drawn from the subject's own sense of how such a person would behave. Nevertheless, the dominant tone of erasure and imposition in this example demonstrates that the very tool with which medical professionals better understood the mind was also perceived as a weapon against the integrity of the self.

The possibility of losing one's identity in a hypnotic trance, coupled with the possibility of the imposition of another, foreign and unwanted identity being established in its place by a malevolent mesmerist, sparked a great deal of anxiety. The fundamentally unequal relationship between hypnotiser and hypnotised was "frequently cast as an insidious infiltration of a subject's mind by the untrustworthy practitioner" (Pick 69). Most often in the literary depictions of the nineteenth century, the parties were cast as a sinister, foreign and male mesmerizer who ensnares a young, innocent, passive female victim, controlling her body and mind (Willis and Wynne 8). Audiences' apprehensions were centred on the corruption of identity that was seen to be a consequence of succumbing to mesmeric control and the subsequent loss of one's will: "Certainly, the dominant anxiety … seems to concern individual autonomy and free will: to what extent can the passive subject retain her self-control, autonomy and individuality under the hypnotist's gaze?" (Poznar 413-4). In the popular view, the answer was not at all, as the subject is deprived of control over her body and mind, and loses "'ownership' of her thoughts, feelings, words and actions" to the mesmerist (Poznar 413). The sorts of

compromising situations that arose from hypnotic control were thoroughly explored in this literature, and by the mid-1880s, the potential dangers fell into two categories: the danger of sexual assault, and the danger of enforced criminality (Leighton 208). The automatism that resulted from the loss of one's will in hypnosis was feared not only for forcing subjects into such compromising situations, but because it could force them to become other than themselves. A person could unwittingly and unwillingly be made a criminal through hypnosis by being made to perform automatically acts to which she would normally object: "Experiments on mesmerized subjects had long involved instruction to commit acts inimical to the waking subject's moral sense" (Leighton 208). In becoming a human automaton by enacting these unconscious, involuntary and automatic behaviours, the hypnotised subject is threatened by the loss of her very identity as it is supplanted with one that is external and foreign to her. Thus, hypnosis, and the accompanying automatism, was seen as a state-altering process capable of fragmenting the subject's identity and rendering her other to herself.

However, not everyone agreed that the automatic behaviours evident in such experiences as hypnosis, somnambulism, trance states, and similar phenomena where the conscious will is suspended, were merely the result of the physiological reflexes that Carpenter and his colleagues suggested. In fact, the Society for Psychical Research was founded precisely to consider "alternative views of human nature to those contained in the pathological and automatic behavioral theories proposed by Carpenter and others" (Alvarado, "Dissociation," 12). One of the Society's founders, Frederic W.H. Myers, made several excursions to France in the 1880s, witnessing and participating in experiments using hypnosis at the Hôpital Civil at Nancy and La Salpêtrière. In a series of essays published in the 1880s and 1890s in the *Proceedings for the Society of Psychical Research*, which were later reworked into his posthumously published *Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death* (1903), Myers argued instead that the automatic behaviours apparent in such altered states are in fact evidence of another level of conscious activity that is usually inaccessible to the normal, waking self. While one becomes other to oneself in such cases, it is an otherness that originates internally rather than one imposed externally.

Myers recognised sensory and motor automatisms occurring outside the conscious will and awareness of the subject, both in normal and abnormal states. In the glossary of *Human Personality*, automatism is defined "as expressing such images as arise, as well as such movements as are made, without the initiation, and generally without the concurrence, of conscious thought and will" (Myers, *Human*, xv). A key example that he explores in his essays is automatic writing, where an individual—whose normal consciousness is distracted or suspended—composes messages mechanically, with neither volitional control over nor even awareness of his actions. Myers, noting the intelligent and purposeful nature of the messages thus conveyed, as well as the continuity of the conversation over several occurrences, proposed a range of possible explanations for this phenomenon, from fraud perpetrated by a conscious writer to possession or inspiration by spirits or extra-human intelligences (Hamilton 149). While not discounting the possibility of supernatural explanations in some cases,[17] most often Myers concluded that the writing should be attributed to the individual subject himself: where the message "'fails to convey any facts which demonstrably are not known to the writer and have never been known to him, there is no need to assume that any intelligence but his own has been concerned in the message' (Myers, "Automatic Writing," 1). As these intelligent compositions are clearly not produced by the normal waking mind, Myers concluded that the compositions of automatic writing were the result of a subliminal consciousness sending messages to the normal, waking self.

Myers envisioned the subliminal self as encompassing everything that one experiences, but existing largely outside one's normal consciousness. The supraliminal self, what "one ordinarily identifies as oneself, the self of common experience," draws on only some of the experiences, memories, thoughts and sensations available to the subliminal self, the selection of which is determined by the demands of ordinary life (Crabtree, *From Mesmer*, 334). However, the subliminal self is not merely a storehouse operating by automatic reflex action, but instead—as Myers' experiments in automatic

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[17] Myers' theories presented these phenomena on a continuum from normal to supernatural (Hamilton 149). While his interest lay in parapsychology, in finding evidence for the human soul and its survival of death, he often demonstrated a more conservative analysis, attributing events to the supernormal only when it seemed that they could not be attributed to the individual himself (Alvarado, "Centenary," 7, 16).

writing suggest—exhibits "the characteristics which we associate with conscious life" and is therefore to be considered "a *subliminal* or *ultra-marginal consciousness*" (Myers, *Human*, 14, original emphasis). Myers concluded that our normal waking state, "the stream of consciousness in which we habitually live is not the only consciousness which exists in connection with our organism" (Myers, "Subliminal," 301). Rather, the various elements encompassed by the subliminal self can potentially combine in a variety of different arrangements, with "each arrangement being distinguishable from the rest by differences in the chain of memories which pertains to it" (Myers, "French," 387). While one chain of memories and experiences forms one's conscious waking self, alternate chains of memories or streams of consciousness can form other, submerged personalities: "[A] subordinate personality tends to be created within us whenever any set of recurrent ideas and sensations are sufficiently isolated, by whatever cause, from the primary series with which we are accustomed to associate our personal identity" (Myers, "Automatic Writing III," 254). These alternate personalities are most apparent when the consciousness of the normal waking self is suspended, and one is placed in an altered state:

> I consider that dreams, with natural somnambulism, automatic writing, with so-called mediumistic trance, as well as certain intoxications, epilepsies, hysterias, and recurrent insanities, afford examples of the development of what I have called secondary mnemonic chains,--fresh personalities, more or less complete, alongside the normal state. And I would add that hypnotism is only the name given to a group of empirical methods of inducing these fresh personalities, of shifting the centres of maximum energy, and starting a new mnemonic chain. (Myers, "French," 387)

According to Myers, it is these submerged personalities that, for various reasons, rise up from the subliminal self to effect the behaviours that—occurring outside of the conscious volition and awareness of the waking state—appear as automatisms. In the case of hypnosis, and particularly post-hypnotic suggestions, Myers argues that "some part of the subliminal self comes forward in response to an appeal sent, as it were, downwards from the supraliminal, and displaces the supraliminal self, or part of it" (Gauld 287). The automatic behaviour occurring outside the subject's normal conscious awareness and volition was therefore explained "by reference to the functioning of an extra and 'submerged' stream of consciousness associated with his organism" (Gauld 283). Operating outside of what one normally considers to be his conscious self, these

interruptions give the impression of automatic behaviours beyond one's awareness and control. In contrast with the perspective that the automatic behaviour induced by hypnosis results in the loss of one's identity, Myers' theory of the subliminal self suggests instead that such automatic action is actually an indication of multiple identities existing beyond one's normal consciousness.

Though the normal, waking state may seem to take precedence over other, submerged personalities, Myers stressed that these subliminal selves are in no way inferior to the waking self. In fact, they even seemed capable of improvements: "[T]here seemed good evidence that states of consciousness other than the ordinary waking state were superior in very important ways. These states sometimes manifested more acute memory, higher moral values, [and] greater control over the physical organism" (Crabtree, *From Mesmer*, 333). The personality that emerges in a waking state is dominant simply because "among [one's] potential selves this one has shown itself the fittest to meet the needs of common life" (Myers, "Subliminal," 301). Occasionally, it proves itself to be unfit: Myers notes the example of Félida X., who manifested a second personality that was "altogether *superior* to the first—physically superior, since the nervous pains which had troubled her from childhood have disappeared; and morally superior, inasmuch as her morose, self-centred disposition is exchanged for a cheerful activity" (Myers, "Multiplex," 503). Adopting this second personality, Félida X. considers her normal state to be "the 'état bête,' as she now calls what was once the only personality that she knew" (Myers, "Multiplex," 503). In fact, Myers noted that one could potentially "use the hypnotic stratum in the subliminal (that part of the subliminal that had the power to exercise a control over the physiology of the body that the waking self could not) to eliminate through suggestion and self-suggestion undesirable characteristics and cultivate positive ones" (Hamilton 188-9). Myers thus emphasised the possibilities available in such hypnotic states for the recombination of one's personality traits as a means of improving the self.

Though there is a tendency to equate one's personal identity only with one's normal consciousness, the subliminal personalities are not to be viewed as isolated or abnormal alternates to a true self, but instead serve to form one's "total individuality" (Myers, "Subliminal," 301). Though alternate personalities may only "manifest themselves from

time to time, either coincidently with the primary personality, or in its temporary abeyance, and may appear to be (within certain limits) distinct from that primary personality … yet they are mere modifications in the functioning of the same individual" (Myers, "Automatic Writing III," 254). Importantly, these alternate personalities may manifest as complete opposites. Myers provides the example of Louis V., whose personality radically transformed after a traumatic experience and an extended hystero-epileptic fit: "His character had become violent, greedy, and quarrelsome, and his tastes were radically changed. For instance, though he had before the attack been a total abstainer, he now not only drank his own wine but stole the wine of the other patients" (Myers, "Multiplex," 497). Escaping treatment at Bonneval, Louis V. re-emerged years later as a private of the marines convicted of theft and committed to Rochefort asylum, having memories related only to the time corresponding to the change in his personality. After treatment, Louis V.'s personality was again transformed, becoming gentle, respectful and modest, the opposite of the insolent and savagely impulsive private of the marines. However, Myers was quick to note that this personality had no memory of his time as a marine, knew nothing of Rochefort, and believed himself to be at Bonneval; his memory corresponded only to "periods during which, so far as can now be ascertained, his character was of this same decorous type" (Myers, "Multiplex," 498).

In spite of their clear differences, Myers insisted that this variability does not suggest one true identity supplanted by another abnormal or false self. Rather, he argued that each alternate personality is a facet of a total individuality, noting that in each state, Louis V. "is only half himself": because the memories of each successive personality are juxtaposed and without overlap, "as it were, in separate compartments," it is impossible to declare "in what central channel the stream of his being flows" (Myers, "Multiplex," 500). It is not the case that Louis V. is either one personality or the other; rather, he is both (and more, as other personalities manifest). For Myers, one's total individuality is "a complex, a shifting thing,--a unity upbuilt from multiplicity,--an empire aggregated from the fusion of disparate nationalities" (Myers, "Automatic Writing III," 260). While this multiplicity may require that certain aspects of one's personality be inaccessible to others, Myers nevertheless envisioned a unified self—one that is only ever incompletely visible: "I conceive also that no Self of which we can here have cognisance is in reality

more than a fragment of a larger Self,--revealed in a fashion at once shifting and limited through an organism not so framed as to afford it full manifestation" (Myers, *Human*, 15). Myers' concept of the subliminal self challenged notions of a stable and singular identity, instead viewing the self as multifaceted, with the normal waking consciousness representing only one part of the whole, and varied, individual.

While the orthodox opinion of the nature of the mind seemed to demonstrate that the automatic behaviours apparent in a mesmerized subject resulted in the loss of identity and selfhood, Myers' alternative theory of the subliminal self and the nature of identity challenged that conclusion. His understanding of automatic behaviour as resulting from the actions of alternative personalities existing below the threshold of normal consciousness indicates not so much a loss of self as it points to the expansion of the self and the multiple nature of identity.

* * *

George du Maurier's *Trilby* engages with this cultural and intellectual discourse of the implications of mesmerism for one's identity by presenting a woman who has been transformed into a human automaton while in a hypnotised state. *Trilby*, first published serially in 1894, and as a book the following year,[18] tells the story of the *grisette* Trilby O'Ferrall, an innocent, naïve and artless artists' model of the Quartier Latin in 1850s Paris. With her strange beauty and wonderful personality, she captures the hearts of three British men, Taffy, Sandy the Laird, and most of all Little Billee. When her low social position forces her to break her engagement to Little Billee, she is ensnared by the nefarious hypnotist Svengali, who transforms the tone deaf girl into the greatest opera singer of the century. She in turn captivates all of Europe with her incredible talent. Automated and mechanized under hypnosis, this transformation seemingly causes Trilby to give up her own identity to become the diva La Svengali as she relinquishes her will to her mesmerizer.

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[18] The published book differed from the serials: a lawsuit from James McNeill Whistler protesting his resemblance to the character Joe Sibley forced changes to the version that went to the presses; also, the final publication restored material that had been censored on moral grounds (Purcell 62). All page references are to the Oxford edition of the published book unless otherwise stated.

Discussion of *Trilby* often focuses on the particularly villainous nature of Svengali's control over and objectification of Trilby through hypnosis. In her introduction to the Oxford edition, Elaine Showalter notes that it "has become commonplace to say that Trilby becomes Svengali's victim, and that he is the dark satanic force who takes over her spirit" (Showalter xvii); Fiona Coll repeats this sentiment when she notes that "Trilby's tragic end is generally understood to come at the hands of that archetypally evil impresario, Svengali, who purportedly mesmerizes and manipulates her into becoming Europe's greatest singing star" (Coll 742). Positioning Trilby as the victim of Svengali's hypnotic control is typical of the fears surrounding the corrupting influence of mesmerism in late Victorian fiction, and indeed the first description of mesmerism in the novel explicitly presents the audience with this attitude. After seeing Svengali place Trilby in a trance that relieves the pain of her neuralgia, Sandy impresses upon her the danger that such a practice can pose:

> 'I wouldn't have much to do with him, all the same!' said the Laird. 'I'd sooner have any pain than have it cured in that unnatural way, and by such a man as that! He's a bad fellow, Svengali—I'm sure of it! He mesmerized you; that's what it is—mesmerism! I've often heard of it, but never seen it done before. They get you into their power, and just make you do any blessed thing they please—lie, murder, steal—anything! and kill yourself into the bargain when they've done with you! It's just too terrible to think of!' (Du Maurier 52)

Even though Trilby's neuralgia is alleviated, the positive outcome is not enough to dispel Sandy's conviction that mesmerism is an inherently dangerous practice. His concern over Svengali's ability to make Trilby into an unwitting and unwilling criminal reflects the stereotypical relationship between an innocent victim and malevolent mesmerist that so much troubled the popular imagination.

The narrator's initial description of Svengali's overwhelmingly despicable nature lends a great deal of credibility to the Laird's anxious warning. Svengali is introduced as "a tall bony individual of any age between thirty and forty-five, of Jewish aspect, well-featured but sinister" (Du Maurier 11). His Jewishness, which is noted repeatedly throughout the novel, is a central feature of this particularly repugnant character. As Sarah Gracombe notes, "Svengali is not just incidentally 'an Oriental Israelite Hebrew Jew'; rather, his entire mental and physical being, all of his qualities—both bad and good—are generated by (or more aptly degenerated from) his Eastern-European Jewish

blood" (Gracombe 92). Svengali is frequently identified as both other and despicable in the same breath. Immediately after identifying his Jewishness, the narrator describes Svengali's physical appearance with less than subtle disgust:

> He was very shabby and dirty… His thick, heavy, languid, lustreless black hair fell down behind his ears to his shoulders, in that musician-like way that is so offensive to the normal English-man. … [He] spoke fluent French with a German accent and humourous German twists and idioms, and his voice was very thin and mean and harsh, and often broke into a disagreeable falsetto. (Du Maurier 11)

Svengali is here defined in opposition to "Englishness," with a great deal of emphasis on associating his more sinister features with this foreignness. Physically repulsive, his character matches his appearance:

> [He] would either fawn or bully, and could be grossly impertinent. He had a kind of cynical humour, which was more offensive than amusing… And his laughter was always derisive and full of malice. And his egotism and conceit were not to be borne; and then he was both tawdry and dirty in his person; more greasily, mattedly unkempt than even a really successful pianist has any right to be. (Du Maurier 41)

As each new complaint about his personality is quickly followed by another, it would seem that the narrator has nothing positive to say about Svengali. While he is somewhat redeemed by his genius for music, even this one asset is presented in such a way as to invite the reader's disdain:

> He had but one virtue—his love of his art; or, rather, his love of himself as a master of his art—the master; for he despised, or affected to despise, all other musicians, living or dead—even those whose work he interpreted so divinely, and pitied them for not hearing Svengali give utterance to their music, which of course they could not utter themselves. (Du Maurier 41)

Even his musical genius is here presented as a fault: he takes too much pride in his own talents, and displays only contempt for those master musicians that inspire him. Rather than a redeeming feature, the narrator presents Svengali's single virtue as further evidence of a corrupt nature.

Admittedly, Svengali is a musical genius. His performances are so captivating that even when he plays only fragments of songs, they become "bars of such beauty and meaning! Scraps, snatches, short melodies, meant to fetch, to charm immediately, or to melt or sadden or madden just for a moment" (Du Maurier 12). His talent is such that

even those repulsed by his personality are touched by his musical genius: "[T]he Laird and Taffy were almost as wild in their enthusiasm as Little Billee—a silent enthusiasm too deep for speech… [T]he three Britishers were too much moved … and there was a stillness" (Du Maurier 12). This entrancing quality of Svengali's performance draws again on Jewish stereotypes: "Victorian fictional Jews were many times to be cast not only as repulsive, but also as psychologically penetrating. They were captivating, even as they (or at least the men) were physically revolting" (Pick 143). Svengali's distasteful character lends an especially unnerving aspect to the music he plays as he tries to hold Trilby's interest and attention. After many failed attempts at wooing her, Svengali plays Chopin's funeral march for her, "and where the pretty soft part comes in, he would whisper to Trilby, 'That is Svengali coming to look at you in your mahogany glass case!'" (Du Maurier 92). The narrator notes that it is Svengali's foreignness that makes this threat so ominous:

> [T]hese vicious imaginings of Svengali's, which look so tame in English print, sounded much more ghastly in French, pronounced with a Hebrew-German accent, and uttered in his hoarse, rasping, nasal, throaty rook's caw, his big yellow teeth baring themselves in a mongrel canine snarl, his heavy upper eyelids drooping over his insolent black eyes. (Du Maurier 92).

The "psychological penetration" apparent in Svengali's enchanting and captivating music is viewed as particularly sinister when the quality is invoked by his hypnotic powers. In response to Trilby's rebuffing his sinister attempts at seduction, Svengali "would playfully try to mesmerize her with his glance" (Du Maurier 73). His "playful" efforts both captivate and frighten Trilby: he would "sidle up nearer and nearer to her, making passes and counterpasses, with stern command in his eyes, till she would shake and shiver and almost sicken with fear, and all but feel the spell come over her, as in a nightmare, and rouse herself with a great effort and escape" (Du Maurier 73). Though in that moment she is not fully hypnotised, Trilby is clearly deeply unsettled by Svengali's behaviour.

The perception of Svengali and his mesmeric powers in this introduction places him firmly within the stereotype of the evil foreign hypnotist out to destroy the innocent and victimized young woman. This stereotype is intrinsically linked to his foreignness, particularly his Jewishness, invoking the "image of the bewitching and inveigling Jew

[that] brought together a range of fears: not only of exploitation and parasitism, but the prospect of a kind of enchantment, in which an abject and dirty alien figure successfully entered into and distorted the victim's mind and body" (Pick 221). One, therefore, expects to encounter in Trilby the fulfilment of the other half of the stereotype, a young woman who suffers from the loss of her will and the erasure of her identity as she becomes the automated subject of Svengali's mesmeric gaze.

Indeed, the description of the mesmerized Trilby offered by Gecko, Svengali's assistant, delivers precisely that vision of Trilby. Gecko first hints at how Trilby becomes a human automaton under Svengali's control by describing the physical mechanization she experiences while receiving musical training under hypnosis. Together, Svengali and Gecko develop Trilby's voice through an arduous regimen: "'Well, we both taught her together—for three years—morning, noon, and night—six—eight hours a day. It used to split me the heart to see her worked like that!'" (Du Maurier 296). Phyllis Weliver notes that this "is a feat no vocal cords or body could achieve, no matter how magnificent the physique. Du Maurier would have known this fact since he was a talented tenor of some significance" (Weliver, "Conclusion", 260). Under hypnosis, then, Trilby develops a machine-like endurance to allow her to withstand the physical demands imposed on her. Echoing descriptions of Charcot's objectified hysterical patients, once in this hypnotic state, Trilby is transformed into a living statue, simultaneously objectified and animated by the trance: "'He [Svengali] had but to say "*Dors!*" and she suddenly became an unconscious Trilby of marble, who could produce wonderful sounds'" (Du Maurier 299). Finally, Gecko describes in no uncertain terms the transformation into an automaton that Trilby undergoes while under Svengali's hypnotic influence: "'Trilby was just a singing-machine—an organ to play upon—an instrument of music—a Stradivarius—a flexible flageolet of flesh and blood—a voice, and nothing more'" (Du Maurier 299). This description, conflating the organic and the machine, describes Trilby's experience under hypnosis as the making of a human automaton.

Gecko also describes how Trilby suffers from the loss of her will and the subsequent erasure of her identity as the direct result of this transformation. Trilby responds automatically to Svengali's commands, obeying his will rather than her own. When Svengali had Trilby under hypnosis, she would sing "just the sounds he wanted,

and nothing else—and think his thoughts and wish his wishes—and love him at his bidding with a strange, unreal, factitious love … just his own love for himself turned inside out—*à l'envers*—and reflected back on him, as from a mirror … *un écho, un simulacre, quoi! pas autre chose!*'" (Du Maurier 299). This automatic behaviour has all the hallmarks of being reduced to a machine as her responses are limited to a set of actions that are fixed and determined beyond her control and that she has no power to change. As a result of this transformation, Trilby's own identity is erased, leaving space for a new one of Svengali's own choosing to be imposed in its place. The automatic responses that follow Svengali's commands are far removed from the repulsion that Trilby felt towards him at the beginning of the novel, recalling the experiments at La Salpêtrière in which the hysterical patients performed the emotions demanded of them rather than the ones they actually felt. Much in the same way that Richer imposed new and false personas on his hypnotised patients, by undermining Trilby's will and replacing it with his own, Svengali seems to overwrite her personality and identity with one that he prefers. Gecko's description has Svengali invading the boundaries of Trilby's identity, emptying her out as he imposes on her his will, his desires, and even his talent, all of which is signalled by her new name. Gecko notes that, when La Svengali sings, hers is

> 'just the unconscious voice that Svengali sang with—for it takes two to sing like La Svengali, monsieur—the one who has got the voice, and the one who knows what to do with it. … So that when you heard her sing the "Nussbaum", the "Impromptu", you heard Svengali singing with her voice, just as you hear Joachim play a *chaconne* of Bach with his fiddle! … Herr Joachim's fiddle … what does it know of Sebastian Bach?' (Du Maurier 299)

In this description, Trilby is treated as an automated machine that has become the mindless vessel emptied of identity and selfhood into which Svengali places his musical genius. Trilby is merely an instrument to be played like a flageolet or a pianoforte, "a 'case' he fills with sound" (Showalter xix). Gecko emphasises La Svengali's mindlessness in her hypnotic state, saying, "'[S]he heard nothing—felt nothing—saw nothing!'" (Du Maurier 299). From this description, it would seem that there is nothing of Trilby left as she is reduced to merely repeating automatically and absently the fixed and determined behaviours required of her by forces external to her.

The perceived change to her personality resulting from the loss of her will while under Svengali's control is most apparent in the way the three British men respond to her treatment of Little Billee. Catching sight of her carriage as she and Svengali leave a concert, Little Billee tries to draw their attention in order to speak with them. Little Billee catches Svengali's eye, and the latter draws La Svengali's attention to their old acquaintance: "Little Billee bowed. She stared at him with a cold stare of disdain, and cut him dead—so did Svengali. And as they passed he heard them both snigger—she with a little-high-pitched flippant snigger worthy of a London barmaid" (Du Maurier 234-5). Though they do not yet realise that La Svengali's behaviour is an automatic response prompted by a hypnotic suggestion, the action does solidify Sandy's opinion that the famous diva is someone else entirely: "'It's not Trilby—I swear! She could *never* have done that—it's not *in* her!'" (Du Maurier 235). His conviction demonstrates the extent to which La Svengali has apparently become a different person while under hypnosis, and this is exactly how Gecko describes her transformation. As he explains to Taffy,

> '*There were two Trilbys.* There was the Trilby you knew, who could not sing one single note in tune. She was an angel of paradise. … But all at once—pr-r-r-out! presto! *augenblick*! … with one wave of his hand over her—with one look of his eye—with a word—Svengali could turn her into the other Trilby, *his* Trilby—and make her do whatever he liked.' (Du Maurier 298, original emphasis)

Svengali's hypnotic control destabilizes Trilby's identity: divided against herself, the Trilby that is known to the three British men in her waking state is seemingly erased in order to form this second incarnation as La Svengali. This alternate self, over which Svengali has complete control, is reduced to automatic actions produced by his suggestions, forming an identity of his choosing. Thus, "Gecko's doubled, deadened description of the 'two Trilbys,' … can be mapped out upon Victorian concerns about mesmerism's threat to the integrity of individual identity" (Coll 746). From Gecko's description and Sandy's observations, Trilby's experience under hypnosis fulfills the fears that the subject's transformation into a human automaton threatens her identity: she is defined as Svengali's victim, her agency is abolished, her identity fractured, and her personality overwritten with an entirely different one as she falls under his hypnotic spell.

* * *

Like Sandy's initial warning against the dangers of mesmerism, Gecko's description of Trilby's transformation into La Svengali under hypnosis identifies the relationship between Svengali and Trilby as one of evil master corrupting the identity and integrity of his innocent victim. Often, scholarly discussion of *Trilby* adopts the same perspective. One example is Daniel Pick's summary of the novel:

> Svengali attempts to win over the heroine of the book, a young artists' model named Trilby. He hypnotises her without her consent. … Trilby is eventually compelled to marry Svengali and is then transformed into an international concert star, who sings zombie-like, to ecstatic audiences while under Svengali's spell. When Trilby finally escapes the mesmerist's clutches in very public and dramatic circumstances it is only to collapse, broken and exhausted. (Pick 1-2)

Coll has noted of this summary that it "polarizes the two characters into dynamic opposition: Svengali is the active agent, the masterful manipulator, and the driving force of the narrative. Trilby, on the other hand, is the innocent victim, the collateral damage, the inert handmaiden of Svengali's unquenchable ambition" (Coll 745). That prioritization of Svengali's role is also evident in Showalter's introduction, where she compares the novel to Charcot's experiments: "Svengali's ability to dissolve Trilby's physical and emotional pain through hypnosis connects him to Jean-Martin Charcot, who, in his Paris clinic at the Salpêtrière hospital, had staged public displays of hypnotized hysterical 'divas' in the 1880s and 1890s. Like Svengali, Charcot instructed his patients to perform acts they did not recall" (Showalter xix). Showalter's description implicitly subordinates Trilby in the comparison: like Charcot's hysterical "divas," Trilby is merely a lifeless object to be staged by Svengali, present only so that she can be made absent, losing her identity as she performs automatically concerts she does not even recall participating in while under his powerful hypnotic control.

However, such a description comes at the expense of Trilby's own perspective. As Coll notes, these "[c]ritical approaches to *Trilby* tend, in large part, to elide Trilby's own experience as a thinking, feeling subject in favour of an emphasis upon Svengali's powers of mesmeric influence" (Coll 744). In spite of Sandy's concerns about the dangers of mesmerism and Gecko's conviction that Trilby is helpless to resist the loss of her identity and selfhood in the face of Svengali's control, the novel itself complicates that explanation. While Svengali's powers are substantial, so are Trilby's.

Figure 1: Un Impromptu de Chopin
Source: George Du Maurier, *Trilby*, New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1894: 331.

The relationship of the evil hypnotist dominating the objectified victim is first troubled by Du Maurier's drawings of La Svengali's performances. In two drawings of her during her concerts, she towers over Svengali (see figs. 1, 3); in a third, showing the pair bowing to their admiring audience, she and Svengali are drawn as mirror images, hand in hand, with neither one dominating the other (see fig. 2). As Nina Auerbach notes, "[n]one of the illustrations reflects the paradigm of prone victim and omnipotent devourer… When under Svengali's spell, the Trilby of the illustrations looms so monumentally over him that she seems about to swoop down and crush him" (Auerbach 284). These drawings suggest less Svengali's control over her performance, and instead that a contribution from both is necessary to create La Svengali. Thus, Gecko's comment that "it takes two to sing like La Svengali … the one who has got the voice, and the one who knows what [to] do with it," while affirming Svengali's ability to intervene in Trilby's identity, is also indicative of Trilby's own role in her performances as La Svengali.

By examining more closely Trilby's transformation into a human automaton, it becomes evident that Gecko's description of her utter submission to and subordination by Svengali is not entirely accurate. His vision of Trilby under hypnosis defines her as

Figure 2: 'And the remembrance of them--hand in hand'

Source: George Du Maurier, *Trilby*, New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1894: 338.

merely an instrument to be played, an empty vessel to be filled with sound; however, Svengali has no voice with which to fill that space. Though he is a musical genius, and a talented pianist—"the best pianist of his time at the Conservatory in Leipsic" (Du Maurier 41-2)—he has no singing talent himself. While he "had ardently wished to sing, and had studied hard to that end in Germany, in Italy, in France, with the forlorn hope of evolving from some inner recess a voice to sing with … [h]e was absolutely without voice, beyond the harsh, hoarse, weak raven's croak he used to speak with, and no method availed to make one for him" (Du Maurier 42). Unable to sing aloud, "in his head he went for ever singing, singing, singing, as probably no human nightingale has ever yet

been able to sing out loud" (Du Maurier 42). With no singing voice of his own, Svengali needs another to vocalize the music he hears internally.

That voice is Trilby's. Prior to becoming La Svengali, Trilby already has an incredible voice. When Taffy asks Gecko how Svengali was able to train the artless Trilby he knew, "'who had no ear for music whatever,'" Gecko replies: "'She had not much ear. But she had such a voice as had never been heard. Svengali knew that. He had found it out long ago'" (Du Maurier 296). Indeed, that scene appears earlier in the novel, when Svengali expresses amazement with Trilby's voice when she gives her usual cry of greeting, "'Milk below'": "'It is a wonderful cry, matemoiselle—*wunderschön*! It comes straight through the heart; it has its roots in the stomach, and blossoms into music on the lips like the voice of Madame Alboni[19]—voce sulle labbre! It is a good production—c'est un cri du coeur!' Trilby blushed with pride and pleasure" (Du Maurier 50). Upon examining Trilby, Svengali discovers that, while she may not have the ear of a great singer, she does have the oral and nasal structure of one. He praises her with a rather hyperbolic description of these features:

> "'Himmel! The roof of your mouth is like the dome of the Panthéon; there is room in it for "toutes les gloires de la France," and a little to spare! The entrance to your throat is like the middle porch of St Sulpice when the doors are open for the faithful on All Saints' Day; and not one tooth is missing … and your little tongue is scooped out like the leaf of a pink peony, and the bridge of your nose is like the belly of a Stradivarius—what a sounding board! and inside your beautiful big chest the lungs are made of leather!" (Du Maurier 50-1)

The incredible capacity and quality of Trilby's singing voice exists long before Svengali's training, and is still recognizable afterwards. When Sandy expresses doubt as to whether La Svengali is in fact their old friend Trilby, Little Billee and Taffy "wouldn't hear of it, and voted him cracked, and declared they even recognized the peculiar twang of her old speaking voice in the voice she now sang with" (Du Maurier 222). Thus, the novel suggests that Svengali requires Trilby specifically in order to produce La Svengali's incredible performances, explaining his unceasing pursuit of her in spite of her

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[19] The acclaimed opera singer Marietta Alboni (1826-1894) is mentioned several times: first by Trilby who, after performing her ghastly rendition of 'Ben Bolt', naively relates how her talent was compared to the singer's (Du Maurier 19); second, as the contralto whose performance touched Little Billee deeply (Du Maurier 43); and finally as the loser in the comparison between herself and La Svengali (Du Maurier 169).

evident efforts to rebuff him. This continuity between Trilby and La Svengali hints that it is not simply a case of erasing Trilby in order to impose a new identity in her place.

Importantly, in spite of having an incredible voice, Trilby most certainly has no singing talent to speak of. This is evident from the first time she sings (or tries to sing) "Ben Bolt": the narrator laments of the performance that "[a]s some things are too sad and too deep for tears, so some things are too grotesque and too funny for laughter" (Du Maurier 18). As Taffy points out, Trilby's difficulty lies in the fact that she is completely tone deaf. In her rendition of "Ben Bolt,"

> [s]he followed more or less the shape of the tune, going up when it rose and down when it fell, but with such immense intervals between the notes as were never dreamed of in any mortal melody. It was as though she could never once have deviated into tune, never once have hit upon a true note, even by a fluke—in fact, as though she were absolutely tone deaf, and without ear, although she stuck to the time correctly enough. (Du Maurier 18-19)

This defect leaves her with very little musical sense. Showing little interest in Svengali's performance of Schubert's "Rosemonde," when he instead plays a common ditty, "striking wrong notes, and banging out a bass in a different key—a hideously grotesque performance," Trilby responds, "'Yes, I like that better. It's gayer, you know'" (Du Maurier 18). When Svengali tests her ear, she is completely unable to tell the difference between a C in the middle and the F above it; it is only "when he struck a note in the bass and another in the treble that she could perceive any difference" (Du Maurier 76). Though she has the voice and the physical structure of a great opera singer, her complete inability to distinguish one note from another ensures that transforming Trilby into an operatic diva therefore requires more than just these features alone.

Therefore, rather than envisioning a musician playing an instrument, it would be more accurate to consider La Svengali as similar to Jacquet-Droz's Musical Lady or Vaucanson's Flute Player. Like these inventors, Svengali only creates the machine; it is Trilby who produces the music. Just as Vaucanson built a machine that varied breath and fingered keys, thereby allowing the machine itself to produce the individual notes and thereby play songs, so does Svengali train Trilby under hypnosis by taking "'her voice note by note … Svengali with his little flexible flageolet, [Gecko] with [his] violin—that is how [they] taught her to make the sounds—and then how to use them'" (Du Maurier

Figure 3: 'Au clair de la lune' **Figure 4: 'The soft eyes'**
Source: George Du Maurier, *Trilby*, New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1894: 319; 98.

296-7). Because the voice with which she sings is already Trilby's own, when Svengali transforms Trilby into a human automaton through hypnosis, the "singing-machine" he creates is a not a machine with which he sings, but a machine that can itself (herself) sing.

Indeed, Trilby contributes more than just her voice to La Svengali: as the hypnotised diva, her performance includes elements of her identity as the Quartier Latin grisette. The Trilby who "bore herself with an easy, unembarrassed grace" is clearly seen when La Svengali "put her hand to her heart quite simply and with a most wining natural gesture, an adorable gaucherie—like a graceful and unconscious schoolgirl" (Du Maurier 13; 209). Trilby's "all-embracing smile of uncommon width and quite irresistible sweetness, simplicity, and friendly trust" is also repeated in La Svengali: the "contour [of her face] was divine, and its character so tender, so humble, so touchingly simple and sweet, that one melted at the sight of her" (Du Maurier 13, 209). When La Svengali sings, she takes a rather odd pose: she "stood with her hands behind her, one foot (the left one) on a little stool that had been left there on purpose" (Du Maurier 210). As Weliver notes, this behaviour "is informed by Trilby's conscious experiences since she also displays her foot while modelling" (Weliver, "Conclusion", 264). In fact, Trilby is drawn in a pose that is strikingly similar to her concert performances when she models for the artists of

the Quartier Latin (see fig. 4). Just as Richer's hypnotised patients' performances of nuns and actresses hinted that their waking selves were not completely lost in the transformation, so, too, does the strong echo of Trilby's modelling suggest that the automatic behaviour that La Svengali displays as she performs is at least in part derived from Trilby's waking self.

In these performances, through the mechanization of Svengali's hypnotic gaze, Trilby is able to produce amazing music. As La Svengali, she not only becomes a great singer, but Glorioli, the best male singer of the century, names her as his female counterpart: "'[I]t was Alboni, till la petite Adelina Patti[20] came out a year or two ago; and now it is *La Svengali*'" (Du Maurier 169, original emphasis). Glorioli tells Little Billee, "'Mon ami, an apple is an excellent thing—until you have tried a peach! Her voice to that of Alboni is as a peach to an apple'" (Du Maurier 169). Of course, given that the origin of her talent lies in hypnosis, La Svengali is dependent on Svengali in order to perform. Though her hypnotised state is revealed only at the novel's conclusion, each of her concerts hints at Svengali's integral role in the performances. La Svengali's Paris début suggests Svengali's hypnotic influence: she begins with a beat from Svengali in her direction, and sings "without the slightest appearance of effort, without any accompaniment whatever, he still beating time—conducting her, in fact, just as if she had been an orchestra herself" (Du Maurier 210). Her London début is postponed when Svengali is injured and refuses to allow La Svengali to sing without him as conductor, suggesting her inability to perform without him. Indeed, when the concert is rescheduled, Svengali dies right before the performance, leaving La Svengali completely unable to sing as she reverts back to the tone deaf Trilby and gives a dreadful performance of "Ben Bolt." The audience is told that "Monsieur Svengali had suddenly died … [and] that his wife had seen it from her place on the stage, and had apparently gone out of her senses, which accounted for her extraordinary behaviour" (Du Maurier 251). However, in truth, La Svengali—no longer subject to her mesmerist's gaze—is also no longer able to sing.

Though La Svengali's voice may be Trilby's, her ear belongs to Svengali. Though Svengali cannot sing aloud, his genius for music ensures that he understands every

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[20] Adelina Patti (1843-1919, highly acclaimed opera singer of the nineteenth century.

nuance of the human voice. The novel suggests that it is because he could not sing that "he grew to understand the human voice as perhaps no one has understood it—before or since" (Du Maurier 42). Instead, Svengali hears music playing within him, in his mind listening to the music that his voice cannot make. His ear for the nuances of the human voice is what allows him to train Trilby, to take her voice "note by note" and allow her to discern the differences that her tone deafness otherwise precludes. Though La Svengali takes the lesson to heart, evident in her skilled performances, it is only under Svengali's mesmeric influence that the lesson holds and Trilby's tone deafness is lifted. When the trance is abruptly lifted, though her voice remains, Svengali's ear disappears: her tone deafness returns, and La Svengali is left unable to sing.

Yet, while Trilby is only able to perform while under Svengali's hypnotic control, he is also dependent on her. Trilby is not the first woman that Svengali trains in the hopes of singing vicariously through another. He volunteers to train Honorine Cahen, a young woman who, much like Trilby, is an artist's model in the Quartier Latin, "a very humble person indeed, socially…, of a very lively disposition, and [who] had a charming voice" (Du Maurier 43). Though the narrator does not explicitly mention hypnosis, Svengali does have a curious hold over Honorine: "[S]he went to see him in his garret, and he played to her, and leered and ogled, and flashed his bold, black, beady Jew's eyes into hers, and she straightaway mentally prostrated herself in reverence and adoration" (Du Maurier 44). Svengali pours all of his attention into training Honorine, and yet, in spite of his best efforts, he fails to transform her into a diva. Though Honorine had "an exquisite ear she had no real musical intelligence" (Du Maurier 44). Svengali, unable to develop talent out of nothing, grows ever more impatient, abusive and cruel. Honorine practised and did all she could to please him, but ultimately she fails: "Her voice cracked; her ear became demoralized … her spirit quenched and broken, and with no more voice singing left in her" (Du Maurier 45-6). Thus, Svengali's efforts have the opposite effect, destroying her voice rather than developing it. Far from being able to transform just anyone into La Svengali, he needs Trilby specifically: "[H]e is tied to Trilby for his artistic fulfillment and for the expression of his best side. Svengali might boast that he creates La Svengali, but the music-master is also dependent on her" (Weliver, "Conclusion", 266). Svengali's dependence on Trilby suggests that his absolute dominion

over her is not quite as complete as might first be believed and that Trilby herself contributes as much to the performances of La Svengali as her mesmerizer does. As is suggested by Du Maurier's drawing of the two as mirror images, hand-in-hand as they are applauded after the concert, La Svengali's performance relies on both as interdependent contributors.

Trilby's transformation into a human automaton therefore reveals that the automatic behaviours she exhibits under Svengali's control are not merely an indication of the substitution of her own will and conscious action for another's corrupting influence. While Svengali's influence does change her, it is not simply the imposition of an entirely new, false and externally-constructed identity onto her; as is hinted by the example of Richer's patients, this is more of a collaborative relationship with input from both sides—and Trilby has considerable input. In addition to his own influence shaping La Svengali, by mesmerizing Trilby, Svengali actually enables her to develop a quality that she already possesses. As he depends on Trilby's own specific talents to transform her into a diva, Trilby participates in the performances of La Svengali far more than one might be led to believe by Gecko's descriptions. Like an automaton whose actions are determined by the inventor but nevertheless itself produces a performance, while Trilby is necessarily transformed by Svengali's hypnotic gaze, her continued influence over her own concerts in spite of the automated and involuntary nature of her behaviour indicates that her identity has not been erased and overwritten by this process. Rather, the boundaries of her identity have been expanded to encompass new incarnations.

The differences between Trilby as the bohemian artist's model and the celebrated diva La Svengali are evident. As noted above, there are distinct changes in her personality, apparent in her reaction to her former friends. Even her physical appearance is different: "[I]n spite of a likeness quite marvellous there were well-marked differences. Her face was narrower and longer, her eyes larger, and their expression not the same; then she seemed taller and stouter, and her shoulders broader and more drooping" (Du Maurier 222). However, though they may not be identical, nor is it true that Trilby and La Svengali are entirely distinct individuals with entirely separate selves—the very fact that Trilby retains her voice as La Svengali highlights the continuity between the two. While

there are apparent differences between the two incarnations, rather than the second erasing and overwriting the first, Trilby is present in both identities.

The continuity of certain features of the grisette combined with the new and different ones apparent only in the diva suggests that hypnosis has revealed something like the alternate personalities available to Myers' subliminal self. As Myers's theory suggests, under hypnosis, new combinations of different aspects of Trilby's personality create new streams of consciousness and new selves. This new automated incarnation of Trilby displays different facets of Trilby's identity that she could not otherwise have enacted. Her improved physical capacities under hypnosis give her the opportunity to sing, an activity Trilby enjoys and believes herself to be good at in spite of opinions to the contrary: "Some people think I can't sing a bit. All I can say is that I've often had to sing it ["Ben Bolt"] six or seven times running in *lots* of studios" (Du Maurier 19). The same desire to please that she demonstrates when playing housemaid to the three British artists emerges during her musical training with Svengali while under hypnosis: when unable to produce the results Svengali desires of her, for which he raps her knuckles, she responds with the plaintive cry, "'[J]e fais tout ce que peux'" (Du Maurier 246).[21] And while the three British men believe that Trilby would never have been so cold to Little Billee by snubbing him, it is not difficult to imagine that some part of her might harbour resentment towards him after a broken engagement that led her to quit Paris, leaving her friends and family, where her brother's death sunk her into so great a depression that she contemplated suicide. That these aspects of La Svengali seem to belong more to her waking personality collapses the opposition between "the 'real' Trilby (the tone-deaf but charming *grisette* of the novel's start) and the 'unconscious Trilby,' hypnotized by Svengali into a world-class performer" (Gracombe 81). If these are the automated responses produced under hypnosis, they are informed by something like a subliminal self that displays the hallmarks of Trilby's identity as she exists in her waking state. Indeed, one might wonder, after Myers, whether the traits that only now emerge in La Svengali are those deemed "unfit" for Trilby's waking existence—pride in a distinctly flawed talent; sympathy with a sinister and vile foreigner; and anger at a man who took

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[21] "'I am doing all that I can'" (trans mine).

no action when society deemed her to be unworthy of marrying. Regardless, rather than divisively separating Trilby into two opposing selves, with the one overwriting the other, the continuities that indicate her presence in both identities suggest instead that the limits of her identity are expanded to encompass both incarnations.

Even with the external influences that Svengali brings to her, La Svengali can be seen as yet another variation of Trilby's already plural identity. Prior to becoming La Svengali, Trilby embodies opposing identities simultaneously. Curiously, Martha Banta argues that "Trilby was so wonderfully one person at the start of the story (present model and lady; future angel and martyr)" (Banta 21-22). This seems somewhat contradictory as Banta's "singular" Trilby contains four identities—model, lady, angel, martyr—before even addressing La Svengali. However, her statement actually highlights a truth of Trilby's character prior to falling under Svengali's hypnotic spell, that her identity encompasses several different, opposing types and is yet singularly Trilby. This is first suggested when Trilby is introduced, with the disruption of certain opposing identities written on her body. The description of her collapses gender boundaries as she embodies elements of both sexes: "It was the figure of a very tall and fully developed young female, clad in the grey overcoat of a French infantry soldier, continued netherwards by a short striped petticoat" (Du Maurier 12). The gender ambiguity is also found in her voice, which "might almost to have belonged to any sex" (Du Maurier 12). Furthermore, the narrator notes that "[s]he would have made a singularly handsome boy" and that "it was a real pity she wasn't a boy, [as] she would have made such a jolly one" (Du Maurier 13). The description of her character, "out of the common clever, simple, humorous, honest, brave, and kind," contains certain traits that are typically feminine and others that are typically masculine (Du Maurier 13). Trilby appears at once as both male and female.

This embodiment of oppositional identities is also evident in the depiction of Trilby's English and French sides. The "lady" to which Banta refers is to be found in Trilby's English side: "Trilby's English was more or less that of her father, a highly educated man; … and, indeed, when alone with them [the three British men] she was so absolutely 'like a lady' that it seemed quite odd (though very seductive) to see her in a grisette's cap and dress and apron" (Du Maurier 64-5). By contrast, in French, Trilby is the bohemian artist's model: "Trilby's French was that of the Quartier Latin—droll,

slangy, piquant, quaint, picturesque—quite the reverse of ungainly, but in which there was scarcely a turn of phrase that would not stamp the speaker as being hopelessly, emphatically 'no lady'!" (Du Maurier 64). While seeming to be mutually exclusive, these two identities are each identified as "a new incarnation of Trilbyness" (Du Maurier 65). Though not in a hypnotised state at this point, Trilby's ability to combine and recombine the various and at times oppositional elements of her identity into different incarnations is reminiscent of the way in which Myers envisions the nature of identity: multiple and malleable. One might even envision her "Trilbyness" as the subliminal self into which she dips, drawing out certain combinations of characteristics with every new incarnation.

Not only is Trilby capable of being other to herself, but she also unifies those oppositions. It is not the case that Trilby is only an English self sometimes, and only a French self at others. Often, she is both at once: besides frequently switching from English to French in the same sentence, Trilby combines the two languages, speaking "with an accent half Scotch and certain French intonations" (Du Maurier 13). Trilby eludes categorization as either "English" or "French," refusing to be pigeon-holed in either of the opposing personalities—lady and bohemian—associated with each side, precisely by encompassing both of these identities at once. As Coll notes, Trilby's ability to straddle both English and French "displays the same impiety towards the boundaries of nation as her character does towards those of gender and domestic space: the audacity of Trilby's cross-dressing is matched by the outrageousness of her unique facility with cross-speaking" (Coll 756). As was seen with Myers, Trilby's identity is multifaceted, sometimes displaying one personality, sometimes another, sometimes both together as the various and occasionally oppositional elements that constitute her whole self combine and recombine. Her changeable identity is her defining quality: she has a "seemingly boundless capacity for mutability. The great singer she becomes when mesmerized is only an index of her endlessly changing nature" (Auerbach 285). Therefore, it is not the case that Svengali has transformed Trilby into somebody else: "She does not need Svengali to incite her to new incarnations; her power of metamorphosis defines her character" (Auerbach 285). Instead, the automation that she experiences under hypnosis reveals that La Svengali is simply yet another incarnation of Trilby's ever variable

identity, drawing on elements from Trilby's waking personality and on new ones that arise internally and externally under Svengali's hypnotic influence.

The fact that Trilby has no recollection of ever being La Svengali might seem to problematize the extension of Trilby's capacity to alternate between several identities in her waking state to her experience under hypnosis. When Trilby comes out of her hypnotic trance at her final concert, she has no memory of her time as the celebrated diva, exclaiming: "'Sing at the theatre! *I* never sang at any theatre'" (Du Maurier 255, original emphasis). Nor does she recall any of the significant moments of her time as La Svengali: she has no memory of the carriage ride when she snubbed Little Billee, of marrying Svengali, of learning to sing, or of any of her performances during their travels. When her friends raise all the memories she should have, she denies each one: "'[W]hat should *I* rehearse? … *I* never sang anywhere! … *I* never rode in a swell carriage with Svengali!'" (Du Maurier 255, original emphasis). This discontinuity in her memory can easily be construed as fragmentation of self. Yet, as Myers points out with the case of Louis V., the compartmentalization of memories associated with each alternate personality that manifests does not negate the overall unity of identity. The novel hints at this with every statement that Trilby makes about her actions as La Svengali: with each insistent "'*I* never'" Trilby points to the fact that, in fact, she did do all these things, in spite of having no memory of them. There is an "I" in nearly every other sentence as Trilby relates to her friends what she remembers and does not, conflating the two to suggest that whether she remembers or not, she did become La Svengali.

More importantly, each incarnation of Trilby's identity, including La Svengali, is unified by that singular marker of her essential "Trilbyness," her voice, ensuring that there is a sense of a continuous self running through each new variation of her personality. Trilby's voice stands for the unity of her plural identity as it signals her ability to be other to herself even as she remains herself. Prior to her transformation, the particular intonation and accent of Trilby's speaking voice unites her English ladylike side with her French bohemian side. After, the quality that made her voice potentially that of either a man or a woman translates into La Svengali's contralto: her voice has "the 'hermaphroditic' quality" of spanning "the lowest female range … [to] the highest male range" (Frank 109; Denisoff 159-60). Moreover, it is by her unique voice that these two

selves are united: Little Billee and Taffy recognize La Svengali as continuous with the artist's model they knew in the Quartier Latin because of her voice. In its ability to embody multiple identities at once, Trilby's voice is representative of her very capacity to incorporate otherness and variations into a unified self. As La Svengali's talent depends on this voice, she appears as yet another incarnation falling under the broader umbrella of a singular identity. Her very transformation into a human automaton—a figure that embodies opposition within a singular form—points to Trilby's capacity to encompass all of these various incarnations, further expanding the boundaries of her identity as she embodies the multiplicity of otherness within a singular self.

Trilby's transformation into an automaton highlights and extends her capacity to embody oppositional qualities and multiple personalities into a singular identity, challenging the Victorian anxiety over the potential dangers of hypnosis. Certainly, Svengali's hypnotic gaze ensures that Trilby's transformation results in the automatic, repetitive, unconscious and unwilled behaviour that is expected. However, the result of this automation is not the destruction but the expansion of Trilby's identity. While Svengali's own influence does shape La Svengali, it is also evident that her identity is not lost: Trilby's personality, mannerisms and features all inform the automatic responses that Svengali's hypnotic suggestions demand, and her singular voice further emphasises the continuous identity that unifies each new incarnation. Despite Victorian fears to the contrary, in transforming into a human automaton in becoming La Svengali, Trilby does not lose her identity, but rather broadens it as both Trilby as the artless grisette and Trilby as the automated subject of hypnosis are necessary to be the diva that she is.

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The same transformation turning Trilby into a human automaton that allows for a plural yet singular identity becomes the defining quality of La Svengali's unique musical genius and creative abilities. La Svengali's talent is remarkable precisely for its capacity to create multiple variations as she repeats the exact same notes and tunes. When lauding La Svengali's immense talents, Glorioli emphasises not only the remarkable quality of her voice, but also "what she does with it—it's incredible! it gives one cold all down the back!" (Du Maurier 169). Gecko provides a more detailed description of exactly what it is that she does: "'She was a *phénomène*, monsieur! She could keep on one note and

make it go through all the colours of the rainbow … each [note] had as many overtones as the bells in the Carillon de Notre Dame" (Du Maurier 296, original emphasis). At her Paris début, La Svengali's first song is a performance of the same short nursery rhyme, "Au clair de la lune"—which, the narrator takes care to point out, is limited to only a single verse—three times over. Yet, due to the immense capacity of her voice, she is able to take the same notes and the same tune and make them different each time. She sings the verse first "without any expression whatever—not the slightest. Just the words and the tune; in the middle of her voice, and not loud at all … one felt it to be not only faultless but infallible; and the seduction, the novelty of it, the strangely sympathetic quality!" (Du Maurier 210-11). Already able to take a common nursery rhyme and make it new, the second time she sings "with but little added expression and no louder; but with a sort of breathy widening of her voice that made it like a broad heavenly smile of universal motherhood turned into sound. One felt all the genial gaiety and grace and impishness of Pierrot and Columbine idealized into frolicsome beauty and holy innocence" (Du Maurier 212). The entirely different character of this second repetition is met with a completely different incarnation in the third: "Then she came back to earth, and saddened and veiled and darkened her voice as she sang the verse for the third time; and it was a great and sombre tragedy, too deep for any more tears… It was no longer Pierrot and Columbine—it was Marguerite—it was Faust!" (Du Maurier 212). While one might expect immense changes to the song so that it might convey such great shifts, this immense variation found in each repetition of the same verse is accomplished "by mere tone, slight, subtle changes in the quality of the sound—too quick and elusive to be taken count of, but to be felt with, oh, what poignant sympathy" (Du Maurier 212). There is no perceptible difference in the notes themselves, just as there is no change to the tune itself as she repeats the same verse. And yet, La Svengali takes what ought to be the mechanical rendition of this limited, fixed and unchangeable nursery rhyme, and, by repeating it exactly, transforms it first into the gayest comedy and then into the deepest tragedy. It is this remarkable quality of La Svengali's voice to invest the same notes and the same tunes with endless variations that makes La Svengali the uniquely gifted performer who amazes all of Europe. Thus, the very same transformation that reveals Trilby's ability to embody otherness within a singular self provides her with a singing

voice that allows her to translate that mutability of identity into an artistic performance. In both cases, what should be characteristically limited, reductive, and invariable mechanized behaviour is infused with a variety and multiplicity that is maintained in a singular form.

In translating her capacity to incorporate otherness within her identity into the source of her creative abilities, Trilby is aligned with a theme that runs through the novel more generally, the incorporation of otherness within the self as the source of one's artistic and creative abilities. The same principle of including otherness within one's own character that is the ultimate root of La Svengali's musical genius is also found in Little Billee's artistic talent. Of the three British men, he is the only one to show any real potential. The other two "recognized in him a quickness, a keenness, a delicacy of perception, in matters of form and colour, a mysterious facility and felicity of execution, a sense of all that was sweet and beautiful in nature, and a ready power of expressing it, that … amounted to true genius" (Du Maurier 9). This incredible talent is attributed to the otherness apparent in Little Billee's identity. The narrator describes Little Billee as having "in his winning and handsome face … just a faint suggestion of some possible very remote Jewish ancestor—just a tinge of that strong, sturdy, irrepressible, indomitable, indelible blood" (Du Maurier 6-7). The association of Little Billee's genius with "his tinge of Jewish blood suggests that in order for mainstream English culture to be truly vibrant, it too needs to be infused with more 'priceless,' creative, Jewish blood" (Gracombe 93-4). In fact, throughout the novel, those characters who display any real talent for art or music all have some Jewish roots. Glorioli's musical talents are associated with his Jewish heritage: "Glorioli—the biggest, handsomest, and most distinguished looking Jew that ever was—one of the Sephardim (one of the Seraphim!)—hailed from Spain" (Du Maurier 168). Similarly, Honorine is a French "Jewess" whose performances of French folk songs Svengali admires and whose talents he tries to enhance by training her. When she sings well, her musical gifts are encoded as Jewish thanks to Svengali's praising pet names: "his 'Rose of Sharon',[22] his 'pearl of Pabylon', his 'cazelle-eyed liddle Cherusalem skylark'" (Du Maurier 44). And of course, most

[22] Song of Solomon 2:1.

notable in this regard is Svengali himself, whose musical genius, as noted above, is associated with his Jewishness.

Unlike Svengali, who is largely defined by his Jewishness, Little Billee's Jewishness makes up only a small, though absolutely necessary, part of his identity. As Denisoff notes, the two men are placed on "a spectrum of genius" where the one is only "*tinge[d]* with ethnicity" and the opposite end is "saturate[d] with Jewishness" (Denisoff 154, original emphasis). The Jewish blood in Little Billee's veins is "of such priceless value" because it comes

> in diluted homoeopathic doses, like the dry white Spanish wine called montijo, which is not to be taken pure; but without a judicious admixture of which no sherry can go round the world and keep its flavour intact; or like the famous bulldog strain, which is not beautiful in itself, and yet just for lacking a little of the same no greyhound can ever hope to be a champion. (Du Maurier 7)

As this passage suggests, Jewish blood in its "pure form," though creatively potent, is also hazardous. Even this small dose in "Billie's tainted blood—which has bestowed on him his artistic acumen—also makes him a weaker male than his counterparts, an implication demonstrated throughout the narrative in his emotional volatility, brooding Romanticism, swooning hysteria, and early death from a broken heart" (Davison 89). Svengali's "pure" Jewishness poses a correspondingly more dangerous threat in that it is also seen as the source of his malignant personality and awful character, betraying the novel's rather xenophobic perspective: "Du Maurier, too, is shocked and troubled by the paradoxical situation that he formulates. His racist paradigm indicates a serious flaw: the vexing, the repulsive Jew is also the source of art" (Anolik 165). The first in-depth description of Svengali juxtaposes these two opposing aspects of his character:

> Svengali playing Chopin on the pianoforte, even (or especially) Svengali playing 'Ben Bolt' on that penny whistle of his, was as one of the heavenly host. Svengali walking up and down the earth seeking whom he might cheat, betray, exploit, borrow money from, make brutal fun of, bully if he dared, cringe to if he must—man, woman, child, or dog—was about as bad as they make 'em. (Du Maurier 42)

Thus, while the novel acknowledges the importance of the mutability of identity and the importance of incorporating otherness within the self to create great art and music, it also wonders with anxiety as to whether artistic and musical genius is worth the dangers that such an inclusion of otherness may also entail.

While the novel clearly aligns difference and foreignness with the production of great art and music, it weighs that potential against anxieties that these same qualities can be as disruptive as they are creative. Svengali's more sinister otherness recalls the typical anxieties surrounding mesmerism that are peppered throughout the novel—namely, the sense of restriction from automatic behaviour, the usurpation of one's will and the supplanting of one's own sense of self by an external, foreign and false identity. Indeed, the stereotype of induced criminality and violation determining Sandy's initial fears that Svengali can make Trilby do anything under hypnosis are repeated when the three friends learn of their marriage: "Trilby's amnesiac singing performances are unsettling, but they are also exciting. What really seems to bother Little Billee and his friends is what may have happened between Svengali and Trilby offstage" (Gracombe 101). However, while Svengali's transformation of Trilby into La Svengali does shape her identity in a way that makes her distinct from her original waking self, his influence is not simply a case of imposing purely external changes that falsify Trilby's identity. Rather, the changes that result actually allow her to express another self that is originally located internally. First and foremost is the fact that taking his ear allows the tone-deaf girl to use her own voice, a feature critical in the expression of her identity and creativity. Furthermore, the change to her personality attested to by the hypnotic suggestion in the carriage ride enables her to express the anger she should rightly feel and that, the novel hints, Little Billee feels he rightly deserves—after the encounter, he is demoralized, longs for love and becomes restless. Even the affection that La Svengali is made to reflect back upon her mesmerist—the allegedly sordid nature of which seeming to be more the hypothesis of those fearful for Trilby's safety rather than being based on any actual example—seems to extend Trilby's universal capacity for sympathy and love. As Svengali's influence serves to locate the otherness that exists within Trilby's own self rather than imposing it externally, the danger of having one's own identity eradicated by the external imposition of another self is eliminated. As the danger of being invaded by a sinister and foreign otherness is transformed into the incorporation of the other's influence as a means of producing great music—an ear for a voice—the novel suggests that it is the very inclusion of otherness within the self that eliminates any potential danger it may pose and translates it into creative potential.

Indeed, there seems to be an effort to lessen the perceived danger that Svengali poses to Trilby. The greatest anxiety associated with his hypnotic control over her—that due to the loss of her will she will be taken advantage of—is openly challenged by Trilby's own assertions that she was in no way mistreated by Svengali. The memories that Trilby has of her time with Svengali and Gecko "are not entirely consistent with the scheme of entrapment and forced confinement he is supposed to have imposed upon her" (Coll 745). In fact, she describes Svengali as "kindness itself, always!" (Du Maurier 255). Distraught and suicidal after her broken engagement with Little Billee and the death of her little brother, Jeannot, Trilby sought out Svengali to cure the pain of her neuralgia as he had done at their first meeting. She stays with him by choice, after he tells her "'how fond he was of [her], and how he would always cure [her], and take care of [her] and marry [her], if [she] would go away with him. He said he would devote his whole life to [her]'" (Du Maurier 257). Trilby does not remember getting married, but the reason she gives for not doing so—because, being already married, "'[h]e couldn't, poor fellow!'"—suggests a great deal of sympathy with him rather than just the simple repulsion she is supposed to have felt (Du Maurier 257). Trilby describes her time spent with Svengali as remarkably similar to the time she spent with the three British men:

> I used to try and do all I could—be a daughter to him, as I couldn't be anything else—mend his things, and all that, and cook him little French dishes. I fancy we was very poor at one time; we were always moving from place to place. But I always had the best of everything. He insisted on that—even if he had to go without himself. (Du Maurier 258)

In addition to suggesting that Trilby was not the victim everyone believed, her assertions trouble the reader's impression of Svengali's innately and purely sinister character. While his bad behaviour is still evident—the very act of mesmerizing her without her knowledge certainly speaks to this—nevertheless, Trilby's narrative casts doubt on the stereotype of the evil hypnotist out only to dominate and destroy his innocent victim by corrupting her by imposing his otherness on her.

Moreover, every act of mesmerism that is seen in the novel is a productive one. Svengali transforms Trilby into a singing sensation, not a murderous or thieving villain. Before this, at their first meeting, Svengali hypnotises Trilby in order to relieve the pain of her neuralgia—something he will do numerous times throughout the novel—and

simultaneously gives a brief display of his mesmeric powers by preventing Trilby from opening her eyes or her mouth, or from standing. Upon awakening, she is thrilled at being cured, "and in her gratitude she kissed Svengali's hand" (Du Maurier 49). Though she has some impression of the mesmeric paralysis that entrapped her, she hardly seems concerned by her experience. Instead, her response is one of pleasure and gratitude towards Svengali in spite of his ominous nature: "'He's a rum 'un, ain't he?' said Trilby. 'He reminds me of a big hungry spider, and makes me feel like a fly! But he's cured my pain! he's cured my pain! Ah! you don't know what my pain is when it comes!'" (Du Maurier 52). It is in fact Sandy, already convinced of the dangers of mesmerism, who impresses upon Trilby the danger posed. It is not the actual experience of mesmerism that unnerves Trilby, but Sandy's demeanor when speaking of its dangers. The first indication that she is unsettled comes only in response to his speech:

> Cold shivers went down Trilby's back as she listened. She had a singularly impressionable nature, as was shown by her quick and ready susceptibility to Svengali's hypnotic influence. And all that day … she was haunted by the memory of Svengali's big eyes and the touch of his soft, dirty fingertips on her face; and her fear and her repulsion grew together. (Du Maurier 53)

That Trilby is repulsed by Svengali, and rebuffs his later advances with a sense of cold fright, stems more from the Laird's description of the potential dangers of mesmerism than from her own experience of it.

Furthermore, by briefly adopting Svengali's own perspective, the narrative calls into question whether his malice is a result of his Jewishness, or because he is a victim of the exclusionary xenophobia of anti-Semitism, the effects of which have taken a toll on his life and psyche (Showalter xx). Svengali, feeling bitter towards Little Billee, spits in his face; he regrets doing so almost immediately as Taffy comes to Little Billee's defense. The free indirect discourse reveals Svengali's interior monologue in which he refers to the dreaded Taffy as "the pig-headed Yorkshireman—the huge British Philistine, the irresponsible bull, the junker, the ex-Crimean, Front-de-Boeuf, who had always reminded him of the brutal and contemptuous sword-clanking, spur-jingling aristocrats of his own country—ruffians that treated Jews like dogs" (Du Maurier 245). After noting that Svengali constantly dreamt of "being tweaked and slapped over again by a colossal nightmare Taffy, and waking up in agonies of terror, rage, and shame," the narrator

quickly adds that Svengali's "life had been a long, hard struggle" (Du Maurier 245). Immediately, Svengali's otherness becomes a source of sympathy rather than an indication of the potential danger he poses. It would seem that, rather than being an innate trait of his Jewish identity, Svengali's malice has more to do with the way that he has been treated in the face of the anti-Semitic stereotypes by which he is judged. The dangerous quality of Svengali's identity comes from the fact that he has been alienated as a result of his otherness, having been pigeon-holed into a category of identity whose limits are clearly defined and whose boundaries he cannot move beyond. Such otherness that has been excluded, kept external and on the margins, becomes dangerous.

The interdependence between Svengali and Trilby needed to produce La Svengali's performances noted above suggests the importance of allowing the inclusion of otherness to influence the self rather than excluding it. Through Trilby, Svengali is able to vocalize the music he experiences internally; he requires her otherness, her mutability, in order to express his own talents. Rather than dominating her, his intervention allows Trilby to expand the boundaries of her identity and thereby her own potential. Thus, by transforming what would be considered Svengali's imposition of his dangerous foreignness on Trilby through mesmerism into an influence that serves to locate otherness internally—and then using that as a means of producing great art and music—the novel suggests the advantages of such an inclusion of difference, inclusion of the other, into the self.[23]

Indeed, the audience's reception of La Svengali's performances reinforces the acceptance of the foreign and the other within the self. Defined by her ability to include multiplicity and otherness within a singular self, with the music she produces possessing that same quality of variability and singularity, La Svengali's performances are widely regarded as the pinnacle of human achievement. Glorioli names La Svengali the best female singer of the century, her abilities having surpassed all her predecessors: hers is "'[e]very voice a mortal woman can have—three octaves—four! … Everything that Paganini could do with his violin, she does with her voice—only better—and what a

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[23] As Sarah Gracombe suggests, this argument extends to the whole of culture: she reads the stagnation of artistic merit seen in the English parlors of the novel as an indication that Englishness could use an infusion of foreign culture (Gracombe 89).

voice! un vrai baume!" (Du Maurier 170). Once again, the novel points to the fact that automation and mechanization have not had a restrictive or destructive impact on Trilby's identity or creativity, but rather that such a transformation has opened up an apparently infinite space of expanded potential. Glorioli's comment that her voice is as a peach to the apples that are her contemporaries indicates that her talent is of such "absolute quality" as to "assimilate it to the register of what is unrepresentable… Her voice is of a different order, belonging to a register until then unknown, its quality seemingly impossible to convey in words" (Frank 182). By relying on a talent that is defined by its multiplicity and inclusion of otherness within the self, La Svengali pushes the limits of what the human voice can achieve.

La Svengali's performances are unique in the incredibly enthusiastic and sincere response they evoke from the crowd. The novel satirizes the typical audience by mocking party guests who stroll about outside rather than appreciating a masterful performance of Bach; even "those who concentrate on the music are ridiculed for affecting a musical knowledge" (Weliver, "Music", 70). By comparison, the audience responds to La Svengali's performances with genuine and unselfconscious appreciation. After each song, the applause comes as a "storm … and grew and spread and echoed—voice, hands, feet, sticks, umbrellas!" (Du Maurier 212). In contrast with the silent, stony looks with which the other performers are greeted, La Svengali evokes displays of real emotion: "And, indeed, here was this immense audience, made up of the most cynically critical people in the world … assisting with rapt ears and streaming eyes" (Du Maurier 214). Trilby's friends are similarly affected: "[A] big tear had fallen on to Taffy's left whisker; the Laird was trying hard to keep his tears back" (Du Maurier 212). Little Billee—who became stunted emotionally as a result of a brain fever he suffered after the broken engagement—has the profoundest reaction: "As the first bars of the song came pouring out of her parted lips … something melted in his brain, and all his long-lost power of loving came back with a rush. It was like the sudden curing of a deafness that has been lasting for years" (Du Maurier 171). There is no attempt to falsify oneself by dissembling or affecting musical appreciation; rather, the audiences react as their true selves, "their pose is stripped away and an identity located beneath social attitudinizing is unmasked" (Weliver, "Music", 72). Effort is no longer wasted on fulfilling the expectations of a

social type; instead, this display of unrestrained and honest emotion indicates a true appreciation and acceptance of La Svengali's specific performance and her unique talents. As that performance is possible only as a result of the transformation into a human automaton that enables her to include otherness within herself and to imbue her performance with the same multiplicity that defines her identity, the audience's approval of her concert is equally an acceptance of that inclusion of otherness within the self.

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In its engagement with the discussion surrounding the potential benefits and dangers associated with mesmerism, Du Maurier's *Trilby* builds up anxieties surrounding the automating quality of the loss of will in hypnosis and the possibility of having one's identity overwritten and replaced by an insidious foreignness precisely in order to dispel such fears. By enacting the mechanizing and automating capacities of mesmerism revealed by the work of Charcot and his associates at La Salpêtrière, the novel recognizes and presents the anxieties in the contemporary popular imagination concerning the hypnotist's ability to transform his subject into a human automaton. However, the attitude that such a transformation serves only to destabilize and supplant one's own identity with a corrupting and falsifying otherness is ultimately rejected. Instead, as Myers' theory of the subliminal self and the multiplex personality had done, the novel points to the potential for automation to locate otherness within the self, to expand and broaden the horizons of individual identity, and to encompass multiplicity and difference within a singular and united self.

In becoming a human automaton, Trilby's transformation into La Svengali enables yet another incarnation of an identity that is defined by the ability to combine oppositional qualities within a unified self. She is at once both male and female, both artful and artless, both dignified lady and rambunctious bohemian, both English and French, both familiar and foreign. She is at once an angel and siren, a victim and a victor, a subject and an object, and both human and machine. This multiplicity does not fragment or eradicate her identity: every incarnation of Trilby, even La Svengali, becomes part of a total identity that is singular and unique, as every personality embodies all with the markers of her essential Trilbyness. The particular marker of this is her voice: a link providing continuity through every incarnation, the unique capacity to draw

endless variations from singular notes and tunes reflects the same otherness and multiplicity running through a unified and singular self.

Framing Trilby solely as Svengali's victim suffering from the erasure of her identity and selfhood does a disservice to the intricacies of her character and to the complexities of the text. By viewing Trilby through her role as a human automaton, it is evident that her contribution to her performances while under hypnosis is crucial to the novel's understanding of the link between the human and the automated, the relationship between the self and the other, and most importantly the nature of identity as at once plural and singular. When Trilby gives up her will in becoming an automated subject, the result is not victimization but added potential. The expansion of the self through the acknowledgement and engagement with otherness results in the production of great artistry that itself pushes the limits of what the human voice is capable of achieving. The audience's acceptance of La Svengali as immensely talented, and the fact that her talent is itself based on the same variability evident in her identity, suggests an argument for openness to otherness and the inclusion of difference, and approval of this plurality made apparent in automation.

Chapter 2: The Infinite Variations of Identical Repetitions in *Locus Solus*

In Raymond Roussel's *Locus Solus*, the figure of the human automaton is one of a number of inventions populating the titular park surrounding the inventor Martial Canterel's villa in Montmorency that use the combination of the human with the machine as a means of producing art. The inventions themselves are the product of a specific literary technique developed by Roussel that depends on both human and machine efforts: by his *procédé*, the author uses the automatic repetition of language to generate different meanings from the same words and sounds, then consciously unifies these multiple meanings into an object or image, retaining the initial differences within a singular form. Canterel's inventions literalize this process: though limited to repeating mechanically a fixed, determined, and unchanging set of behaviours or functions, they infuse each repetition with a capacity for variability, which in turn becomes the defining feature of the artistic works they produce.

While many of Canterel's inventions point to the collaboration between human and machine as a means of producing creative works, the pride of place in Canterel's park, taking up the middle third of the text, is that which locates the machine as internal to the human, Canterel's reanimated dead and their theatrical performances. These human automata repeat perfectly and infinitely specific scenes from their lives. Their performances are limited to the automatic actions of the machine, composed of a fixed sequence that is not determined by any conscious choice and from which they cannot deviate.

Just as with the *procédé*, this fixed automatic behaviour leads to multiplication and difference: both the identities of the human automata and the art that they produce are uniquely defined by their capacity to find otherness in the repetition of the same. In becoming human automata, Canterel's subjects are divided against themselves, able to incorporate otherness and oppositions into a singular and unified identity that yet retains its multiplicity. The nature of their behaviour connects these automatic performances to the psychological discourse surrounding hysteria and its symptoms in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Most notably, Pierre Janet's examination of traumatic re-

enactments according to his theory of dissociation invites the comparison with the human automata in *Locus Solus*, as Janet investigates automatism and its implications for the multiplication of identity. Though Roussel's novel resonates with Janet's work, the latter pathologizes such multiplicity while the former resists such an implication—in spite of the subjects' deceased status—as the transformation into human automata extends the same plurality of identity experienced by Canterel's subjects to their performances. Just as the automation Canterel's subjects undergo points to an identity capable of being other to itself while remaining singular and unified, so, too, are these performers able to create works of art that are uniquely defined by their originality and variability from the exact replicas they produce in each theatrical repetition.

By considering the human automata through the contemporary psychology, as a literalization of Roussel's *procédé*, and in relation to the other inventions in Canterel's park, the link that Roussel forges between automation and the combination of human and machine, the incorporation of otherness within the self, and creative potential becomes evident. Like Du Maurier, Roussel uses the figure of the human automaton along with their performances and the works they produce to suggest that such mechanization does not diminish what it is to be human, but instead draws out the very qualities that make us human, and thereby interrogates the limits of what is to be considered human experience.

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In *Locus Solus*, while Canterel's subjects are literally transformed into human automata by his actual intervention with substances that provide a stimulating electric charge, this mechanical intervention is conflated with the automation brought about by highly emotionally charged or traumatic experiences, as these are the subjects of the automatic performances. Though not all of the events that the reanimated dead reproduce are necessarily traumatic, those that do point to a parallel with the study of hysteria around the turn of the century.

During his time as a professor at the lyceum in Le Havre, and later in Paris working at the Lycée Louis-le-Grand and studying with Charcot at La Salpêtrière, Pierre Janet developed a theory of the mind to explain hysteria and its symptoms. A well-respected psychologist even before he earned his medical degree in 1893, Janet differed from his contemporaries in their belief that automatic behaviours were derived from the

physiological reflexes that occur beyond the purview of one's consciousness (Crabtree, *From Mesmer*, 314-5). Janet pointed to hysterical patients in a somnambulistic state who could "speak, resolve problems, manifest spontaneous sympathies and antipathies, and sometimes resist the commands of their magnetizer or hypnotist. These are not the actions of an automatic puppet" (Crabtree, *From Mesmer*, 315). However, he did not deny the existence of automatic behaviours, noting that some philosophers refuse to acknowledge "dans l'esprit humain un automatisme, qui est cependant réel et sans lequel beaucoup de phénomènes sont inexplicables, parce qu'ils se figurent qu'admettre l'automatisme, c'est supprimer la conscience et réduire l'homme à un pur mécanisme'" (Janet, *L'Automatisme*, 2).[24] Janet argues instead that automatism and consciousness are not mutually exclusive, but that in fact they tend to coincide: "[O]n peut admettre simultanément et l'automatisme et la conscience, et par là donner satisfaction à ceux qui constatent dans l'homme une forme d'activité élémentaire tout à fait déterminée, comme celle d'un automate, et à ceux qui veulent conserver à l'homme, jusque dans ses actions les plus simples, la conscience et la sensibilité" (Janet, *L'Automatisme*, 2).[25] He agrees that certain actions could be considered automatic—that is, that they are sudden or involuntary, arise from within the subject rather than as the result of being externally manipulated,[26] are regular, rigorously determined, invariable and not subject to whims (Janet, *L'Automatisme*, 2). However, Janet denies that automatic behaviours occur as a result of the lack of consciousness, arguing instead that they are automatic precisely because they belong to consciousness—only a consciousness that is other than the subject's normal, waking self. Not unlike that of Myers, whose work Janet cites a number of times in *L'Automatisme psychologique* (1889), Janet's understanding of automatism as the result of a secondary level of consciousness pointed to the possibility of multiple personalities located within the self.

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[24] "In the human mind an automatism, that is nevertheless real and without which many phenomena are inexplicable, because they believe that admitting to such automatism is to abolish consciousness and reduce the human to a pure machine" (trans. mine).

[25] "We can admit simultaneously to both automatism and consciousness, and thereby satisfy those who find in the human a form of elementary activity altogether determined, like that of an automaton, and those who would conserve in the human, even in his simplest actions, consciousness and sensibility" (trans. mine).

[26] To explain this point, Janet contrasts a mechanical doll that walks on its own against a hand-pump. The first is automatic as its motions are derived internally; the second is not because its motions are the result of being manipulated externally (Janet, *L'Automatisme*, 2).

In his essay, “L’Amnésie et la dissociation des souvenirs par l’émotion” (1904), Janet notes a curious phenomenon apparent in some hysterics: they experience complete amnesia of a traumatic event while conscious, but while in a somnambulistic state remember and re-enact every detail of that same event. He notes that

> ces deux phénomènes en apparence opposés constituent un syndrome, qu’ils sont liés ensemble et que la maladie consiste en deux choses simultanées: 1) l’incapacité où est le sujet d’évoquer consciemment et volontairement les souvenirs; 2) la reproduction automatique irrésistible et inopportune de ces mêmes souvenirs. (Janet, “L’Amnésie,” 438)[27]

Janet presents his hysterical patient Irène as the key example in this case study, an example he would use many times in his later works. Irène had nursed her mother night and day during a lengthy illness; on the night she died, Irène did not recognize her passing, continuing to nurse the corpse—giving her water, wiping her mouth, and even struggling to place her back on the bed when the corpse fell to the floor. The next morning, rather than alerting people of her mother’s passing, Irène wandered the streets of Paris, stopping in at relatives’ houses to ask for food: “On la satisfait et on lui demande comment va sa mère: ‘Bien, répond-elle, elle a passé une bonne nuit’” (Janet, “L’Amnésie,” 443).[28] When it was discovered that Irène’s mother was dead, and arrangements were made, Irène refused to believe in her mother’s passing as she had no memory of that night. Even after attending the funeral, memory loss, and the fact that she felt no sadness at losing the mother she so dearly loved, convinced Irène that her mother was not dead. Once she was admitted to the hospital, Janet tried to get Irène to recount the night of her mother’s passing: “Malgré tous les efforts possibles, les souvenirs des derniers jours, de la mort, de l’enterrement ne peuvent réapparaître consciemment… Au milieu de ces efforts, le sujet commence à retrouver le souvenir des événements postérieurs à cette époque, il semble que la conscience a sauté involontairement une

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[27] these two phenomena, apparently opposites, constitute one syndrome, that they are linked together and that the illness consists of two simultaneous things: 1) the inability of the subject to evoke consciously and voluntarily his memories; 2) the automatic, irresistible and inappropriate reproduction of these same memories. (trans. mine)

[28] “They fed her and asked her how her mother was: she replied, ‘Well, she had a good night’” (trans. mine).

dizaine de jours" (Janet, "L'Amnésie," 434).[29] Irène had a significant gap in her recollection, unable to raise anything from that period of her life.

Though she held no conscious memory of the event, Irène would often fall into an altered, somnambulistic state in which the events became accessible. Not only was the memory made available, but, significantly, it was transformed into automatic action, as Janet first suggests when he writes that "[l]e sujet … commence des crises d'hystérie dans lesquelles les souvenirs cherchés se manifestent automatiquement d'une toute autre manière" (Janet, L'Amnésie, 434).[30] During these hysteric episodes, Irène would recreate exactly and with meticulous detail the night of her mother's death:

> Plusieurs fois par jour, en effet, et souvent pendant plusieurs heures consécutives, Irène a des crises de somnambulisme spontané avec bavardages pendant lesquelles elle joue et elle raconte constamment tous les détails de la mort de sa mère. Il est important tout d'abord d'insister … sur la précision des souvenirs qu'elle semble manifester. (Janet, "L'Amnésie," 420-1)[31]

In these altered states, Irène would lose all awareness of her surroundings, and repeat the same behaviours of the night her mother died: bringing a glass to the lips of an imaginary person, cleaning that person's mouth, even talking with that person, she would arrange an imaginary body on the bed, crying out when it fell to the ground, and then replacing the corpse on the bed as she had done with her mother (Van der Kolk and Van der Hart 162). Irène would have no memory of these automatic, unconscious and repetitive actions upon waking: "[U]n instant après elle affirme n'avoir été dérangée par rien" (Janet, "L'Amnésie," 423).[32] Though a precise record of the events surrounding her mother's death was obviously maintained, the memory was completely inaccessible to her conscious mind and appeared only in these traumatic re-enactments.

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[29] "In spite of all possible efforts, the memories of her last days, of her death, of the funeral could not reappear consciously… In the middle of these efforts, the subject began to recall the memories of events occurring after this period; it seemed as though her consciousness involuntarily jumped forward ten days" (trans. mine).

[30] "the subject … has hysterical crises in which the memories sought after manifest themselves automatically in an entirely different manner" (trans. mine)

[31] Several times a day, and often during several consecutive hours, Irène had spontaneous somnambulistic crises in which she chattered, during which she re-enacted and recounted constantly all the details of her mother's death. It is important first of all to insist … on the precision of the memories that she seemed to make manifest. (trans. mine)

[32] "An instant later, she affirmed never having been disturbed by anything" (trans. mine).

To explain this phenomenon,[33] Janet's theory of hysteria emphasises the central role of memory. In healthy individuals, the proper function of memory is the integration or synthesis of an experience in all its aspects—sensations, emotions, thoughts, and actions—into a unified system. This system perpetually adapts to each new experience: "[L]a faculté de synthèse … doit, à chaque moment de la vie, coordonner d'une manière nouvelle nos sensations et nos images" (Janet, *Névroses*, 68).[34] This integrative activity functions automatically, organizing and categorizing these memories into "ever-enlarging and flexible meaning schemes," forming a map by which to navigate any further interaction with the environment (Van der Kolk and Van der Hart 159). Every experience is retained, stored in the subconscious; when relevant to the present, these memories are retrievable in a diluted form. Janet terms this ability to retrieve relevant past ideas "*la reproduction des images,*" noting that

> [p]ar un mécanisme … les phénomènes psychologiques primitifs qui se sont conservés à l'état latent réapparaissent un peu moins forts, moins complets surtout, mais à peu près avec les mêmes caractères que la première fois. On les appelle alors des images et on comprend que la renaissance des images au moment opportun soit une condition essentielle du souvenir complet. (Janet, *Névroses*, 134)[35]

For Janet, it is this function of synthesis that establishes an individual's personality and sense of self. The automatic reproduction of a memory alone is not enough for one to be

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[33] Notably, Sigmund Freud also recognized similar symptoms in patients in his early work with Breuer. In the article, "On the Psychical Mechanism of Hysterical Phenomena" (1893), which makes reference to their indebtedness to Janet's recent work, Freud and Breuer note the inaccessibility of traumatic memories to the waking self; the automatic repetition of these memories in altered, somnambulistic states; and the tendency for such dissociation to manifest as double consciousness (Freud and Breuer 6-10). While Freud later broke with Janet significantly in developing drive theory, he retains certain ideas surrounding traumatic re-enactments in his "compulsion to repeat," explored in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920). With Freud's repetition compulsion, traumatized subjects repeat unconsciously and automatically experiences they do not consciously remember, "reproductions, which emerge with … unwished-for exactitude" (Freud, *Beyond*, 19). However, the repetition compulsion also takes on a distinctly symbolic quality as Freud's examples are of subjects who repeat the intentions, feelings or motivations behind a repressed act that then shape their new experiences, rather than repetition of the act itself (Freud, *Beyond*, 23-4). As such, in spite of the similarities, the concern with the exact repetition of events by Canterel's reanimated dead prompts us to limit ourselves to Janet's theory.

[34] "The faculty of synthesis … must, at each moment of life, coordinate in a new way our sensations and images" (trans. mine).

[35] By a mechanism … the primitive psychological phenomena that are conserved in a latent state reappear a little weaker, certainly less complete, but with about the same character as the first time. We call these, therefore, images and understand that the re-emergence of these images at an opportune moment is an essential condition of a complete memory. (trans. mine)

conscious of it as part of oneself: "[I]l faut encore que la *perception personnelle* saisisse cette image et la rattache aux autres souvenirs, aux sensations nettes ou confuses, extérieures ou intérieures, dont l'ensemble constitue notre personnalité" (Janet, *Névroses*, 135, original emphasis).[36] This process of "*perception personnelle des souvenirs*" or "*personnification*" is constant as one is always noting new sensations and experiences, incorporating them into the memory system that is the foundation of one's personality (Janet, *Névroses*, 135). For Janet, one's sense of a complete and unified self relies on the ability to integrate experiences into a memory system uniting and making accessible all of one's experiences.

In hysterical patients, this integrative and synthesising function is disrupted. These individuals, unable to cope with the exceptional strength of certain experiences, such as traumatic or highly emotional incidents, find their powers of synthesis weakened: "[L]'émotion a une action dissolvante sur l'esprit, elle diminue sa synthèse" (Janet, *Automatisme*, 457).[37] In these circumstances, the experience becomes dissociated, cut off from the conscious mind, with the result that the subject is amnestic of the experience which has become inaccessible to him (Howell 56). Janet terms these dissociated experiences "les idées fixes"; they are "loin d'être complètement *conscientes*, c'est-à-dire complètement connue par le sujet lui-même. … [L]es idées fixes se développent en dehors de la conscience normale comme dans un état second, un somnambulisme" (Janet, *Névroses*, 26).[38] Thus, Irène's memories of her mother's death are only available to her in an altered, somnambulistic state, inaccessible to her conscious mind. As the traumatic memory bypasses consciousness in this way, it cannot be integrated into one's personal sense of self: "[L]e souvenir se présente quand la conscience claire et personnelle est absente, quand le souvenir est isolé, sans rapport avec la vie complète de la malade"

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[36] "It is also necessary that the *personal perception* seizes that image and attaches it to other memories, to clear or confused sensations and exterior or interior ones, of which the whole constitutes our personality" (trans. mine).
[37] "Emotion has a dissolving effect on the mind, it diminishes its ability to synthesize" (trans. mine).
[38] "fixed ideas … far from being completely conscious, that is completely known to the subject himself. … Fixed ideas develop independently outside normal consciousness as in a secondary state, a somnambulism" (trans mine).

(Janet, *Névroses*, 137).[39] Irène could not remember her mother's death as an integrated experience that has bearing on her own present, but rather repeats the past as an isolated event without any association with her personal sense of self.

Importantly, in Janet's theory of dissociation, this lack of synthesis does not suggest the loss of identity, but rather the splitting or doubling of identity. While the experience is inaccessible to normal consciousness, as Irène's re-enactments suggest, the recollection of the event itself remains intact: "[L]es éléments bannis de la conscience ne perdent pas leur charpente logique, leur construction, leur cohérence, leur structuration, leurs associations" (Thoret 753).[40] Instead, these fixed ideas dissociated from normal consciousness can form a second personality, "reflect[ing] a horizontally layered model of mind: when a subject does not remember a trauma, its 'memory' is contained in an alternate stream of consciousness, which may be subconscious or dominate consciousness" (Van der Kolk and Van der Hart 168). Much in the same way that Myers' compartmentalization of memory pointed to the existence of alternate personalities, Janet's theory of dissociation also sees alternate selves arising as a result of memories shunted into different streams of consciousness. In *L'Automatisme psychologique*, Janet provides an example of such subconscious alternate personalities in his patient Lucie, consisting of: Lucie 1, the subject in her normal, waking state; Lucie 2, the same subject in a somnambulistic state arising in an ordinary hypnotic trance; and Lucie 3, somnambulistic and in a deepened hypnotic trance. Unsuccessful in a certain treatment on Lucie 2, Janet "re-hypnotised" the already entranced patient, thereby discovering Lucie 3:

> Lucie 3 se souvenait parfaitement de sa vie normale, elle se souvenait également des somnambulismes provoqués précédemment et de tout ce que Lucie 2 avait pu dire; en outre, elle pouvait me raconter en détail ses crises d'hystérie, … ses somnambulismes naturels pendant lesquels elle avait été se préparer à dîner ou faire son ménage, ses cauchemars, etc., toutes choses dont ni Lucie 1, ni Lucie 2 n'avaient jamais présenté le moindre souvenir. (Janet, *L'Automatisme*, 87-8). [41]

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[39] "The memory presents itself when the clear and personal consciousness is absent, when the memory is isolated, disconnected from the complete life of the patient" (trans. mine).

[40] "The elements banished from consciousness do not lose their framing logic, their construction, their coherence, their structuration, their associations" (trans. mine).

[41] Lucie 3 remembered perfectly her normal life; she remembered equally the somnambulistic states just provoked and all that Lucie 2 had said; furthermore, she could tell me in detail about her hysterical crises

With Lucie, the dissociated memories that were never synthesized into her normal personality instead aggregated and formed alternate selves outside of her normal consciousness. As with Irène's amnesia concerning her mother's death, the normal consciousness remained entirely ignorant of the experiences of the alternates.

Though these alternates are inaccessible to the dominant personality, which is often unaware of them, these secondary personalities can come to dominate the normal self. Fixed ideas can interrupt one's normal consciousness, either as a momentary lapse or as one personality succeeding another. One falls into an altered state in which one carries out actions that, to that normal self, appear automatic: sudden, involuntary, arising internally, and characteristically limited to a determined sequence that is invariable and repetitive. These can be relatively minor behaviours: Janet relates the example of a young woman who experienced brief dissociative episodes in which she unconsciously and automatically made a jumping motion as she walked. By placing the woman under hypnosis, Janet discovered that she was re-enacting her suicide attempt in which she jumped into the Seine (Van der Hart and Friedman 8). In more extreme cases, such as Irène's, entire events—emotions, gestures, speech, and so on—are reproduced unconsciously and automatically. When Irène falls into a somnambulistic state, she repeats, both in speech and in action, and "avec une extrême intensité d'expression mais d'une manière automatique et isolée ces mêmes souvenirs que je [Janet] lui demandais d'exprimer modérément en conservant la conscience personnelle et la conscience du monde extérieur" (Janet, "L'Amnésie," 450).[42] Both examples suggest that what was once conscious and willful action when first experienced has been transformed into unconscious and automatic, repetitive behaviour beyond conscious awareness and voluntary control. As Janet notes, "les actes automatiques sont les actes pour lesquels il

… her natural somnambulistic events during which she made herself ready for diner or cleaned, her nightmares, etc., all the things of which neither Lucie 1 nor Lucie 2 ever indicated the slightest memory. (trans. mine)

[42] "with an extreme intensity of expression but of an automatic and isolated manner, the same memories which I had asked her to express moderately and while conserving her personal consciousness and conscious awareness of her surroundings" (trans. mine).

suffit de répéter un ancien groupement d'images déjà liées ensemble, en un mot les actes déjà voulus autrefois" (Janet, *Névroses*, 13).[43] As their actions are unconscious, involuntary, unchanging, and repetitive in these altered states, Janet's hysterical patients behave as human automata.

Dissociated events do not always aggregate into a personality, and may remain isolated and independent outside normal consciousness. Janet notes the case of Marcelle, for whom no fully-developed secondary personality appeared, though she was susceptible to the invasion of fixed ideas into her normal self. In such cases, Janet emphasises the same destabilization of identity: "Il n'y a chez elle, ni une, ni deux personnalités à ce moment; il y en a une infinité, autant qu'il y a d'idées fixes" (Janet, *Névroses*, 40).[44] The existence of fixed ideas outside normal consciousness that repeat automatically beyond voluntary control immediately indicates multiple centers of consciousness and a selfhood that is infinitely variable. However, Janet also notes that, for hysterics, this splitting of the self can have negative repercussions for the normal consciousness. The normal self is frozen: "[C]es malades étaient devenus incapables d'avoir la perception personnelle de leurs souvenirs, comme si leur personnalité arrêtée définitivement à un certain point ne pouvait plus s'accroître par l'adjonction, l'assimilation d'éléments nouveaux" (Janet, "L'Amnésie," 441).[45] Due to the inability to integrate and synthesize new experiences, the normal or primary self is arrested.

By pathologizing this division of the self into multiple points of consciousness as a key symptom of hysteria, Janet suggested the threat to an integrated, unified sense of self posed by such dissociations. Indeed, the goal of therapy is the re-integration of the fixed ideas into the memory system of the normal consciousness in order to eliminate the alternates: "A cure implied a strongly diminished tendency towards dissociating and an increasingly integrated personality. Since no complexly-developed dissociated parts (selves) exist in an integrated personality, by definition there are none to evoke" (Van der

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[43] "The automatic actions are actions for which it suffices to repeat a past grouping of images already linked together—in a word, actions previously willed" (trans. mine).

[44] "With her, there is not one, not two personalities at this moment; there is an infinite number, as many as there are fixed ideas" (trans. mine).

[45] "These patients had become incapable of any personal perception of their memories, as though their personality, arrested definitively at a certain point, could no longer grow by the addition or assimilation of new elements" (trans. mine).

Hart and Friedman 8). Janet relates that, though Marcelle, during her illness, expressed anxiety about feeling other to herself, after treatment, she felt restored to herself: "La perception interne ou personnelle, l'idée qu'elle a de sa propre personnalité redevient normale. Elle se reconnaît elle-même, avoue être Marcelle et non une autre" (Janet, *Névroses*, 51).[46] Though Janet's theory suggests the possibility of multiple centers of consciousness existing within and capable of governing the same self, his pathologizing of this state and his cure for it suggests continued anxiety over the existence of a disunited self and the possibility of uncontrolled, automatic behaviour beyond the purview of conscious volition.

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In Janet's *De l'Angoisse à l'Extase* (1927), he discusses a patient, 'Martial,' a neuropathic writer overcome by a strange feeling of rapture and sense of self-importance when composing his first major work at the age of nineteen. The patient was Raymond Roussel, whom Janet treated for a number of years prior to the First World War. In this work, Janet reports Roussel's declaration of his own incredible literary genius in composing *La Doublure* (1897):

> 'On sent à quelque chose de particulier que l'on fait un chef-d'œuvre, que l'on est un prodige… J'étais l'égal de Dante et de Shakespeare, je sentais ce que Victor Hugo vieilli a senti à soixante-dix ans, ce que Napoléon a senti en 1811, ce que Tannhauser rêvait au Venusberg : je sentais la gloire.' (Janet, *De l'Angoisse*, 134)[47]

Unfortunately, Roussel's audience did not agree with him: *La Doublure* (1897) was a complete failure, poorly received, and even less well understood. In fact, Roussel earned only infamy and notoriety among his contemporaries for "the absolute strangeness of his work and the vast fortune he dissipated in trying to draw attention to it" (Ashberry, "Foreword," xi). During his lifetime, Roussel never achieved the recognition he craved for what he considered to be works of genius.

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[46] "The internal or personal perception, the idea that she has of her own personality returns to normal. She recognizes herself, avows that she is Marcelle and no one else" (trans. mine).

[47] One senses by some special means that one is composing a masterpiece, that one is a prodigy… I was the equal of Dante and of Shakespeare, I was feeling what the aged Victor Huge had felt at seventy years old, what Napoleon had felt in 1811, what Tannhauser dreamed of at Venusberg: I felt glory. (trans. mine)

Near the end of his life, Roussel composed an essay to be published posthumously, entitled, *Comment j'ai écrit certains de mes livres* (1935). The essay is aimed at relieving some of the alienating strangeness of Roussel's works by explaining the processes by which they were derived, in an effort to make them more accessible and thereby more popular. He concludes with a reference to "le sentiment douloureux que j'éprouvai toujours en voyant mes œuvres se heurter à une incompréhension hostile presque générale" and writes that, in the publication of this piece, he seeks solace "dans l'espoir que j'aurai peut-être un peu d'épanouissement posthume à l'endroit de mes livres" (Roussel, *Comment,* 34, 35).[48] Roussel begins by stating that he had always intended to reveal the "very special method" of writing that he had invented, and by which he composed his major works, *Impressions d'Afrique* (1910), *L'Etoile au front* (1925), *La Poussière de soleils* (1927), and *Locus Solus* (1914).[49] This *procédé* involves first finding two words whose forms are nearly identical. He provides the example of *billard* (billiard table) and *pillard* (plunderer). To these words are added others that have, at minimum, two possible definitions; the result is the composition of two nearly identical phrases with completely different meanings. With *billard* and *pillard*, the two phrases became: "*Les lettres du blanc sur les bandes du vieux billard*…" and "*Les lettres du blanc sur les bandes du vieux pillard*…" (Roussel, *Comment,* 11).[50] Taking the phrases generated in this manner, "il s'agissait d'écrire un conte pouvant commencer par la première et finir par la seconde" (Roussel, *Comment,* 12).[51] Another variation of the *procédé*—what Roussel termed the *procédé évolué* or his evolutionary method—depends on the phonetic similarity of words: an initial phrase is doubled according to the homonyms derived from it. Roussel provides an example from *Locus Solus*: "1° *Demoiselle* (jeune fille) à *prétendant ;* 2° *demoiselle* (hie) à *reître en dents.* Je me trouvais donc en face de ce

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[48] "the painful sensation I have always experienced on seeing my works run up against an almost totally hostile incomprehension," … "in the hope that I may perhaps gain a little posthumous recognition for my books" (Winkfield 19). All English translations of Roussel's *Comment* by Trevor Winkfield.

[49] Roussel notes that he employed this method for several of his shorter works as well, but specifically states that this method did not extend to his other major works, *La Doublure* (1897), *La Vue* (1904), and *Nouvelles Impressions d'Afrique* (1932) (Roussel, *Comment,* 4, 13).

[50] "The white letters on the cushions of the old billiard table…; The white man's letters on the hordes of the old plunderer…" (Winkfield 3).

[51] "it was a case of writing a story which could begin with the first and end with the second" (Winkfield 3).

problème : l'exécution d'une mosaïque par une hie" (Roussel, *Comment,* 23).[52] The first half of Roussel's essay is devoted to listing examples of sentences and antisentences generated by his *procédé*.

Throughout the essay, Roussel insists that the *procédé* functions largely in the manner of an automated machine, that is, independently of his own conscious efforts and beyond his willful control. First, he insists that he never drew on his own personal experiences as sources of inspiration. After listing the various countries and continents he visited during his excursions around the world, he notes "un fait assez curieux … de tous ces voyages, je n'ai jamais rien tiré pour mes livres. Il m'a paru que la chose méritait d'être signalée tant elle montre clairement que chez moi l'imagination est tout" (Roussel, *Comment*, 27).[53] By emphasising imagination, Roussel does not mean his own creative energies, but instead aims to highlight the complete absence of any concerted effort to reproduce reality. For Roussel, "l'univers de la fiction ne doit rien contenir de réel" (Basset 157).[54] Even when he does include references to the real world, such as the mention of historical figures, they are most often imagined stories, apocryphal details unknown to history (Heppenstall 51). Roussel, in avoiding representations of the real and the familiar, refrains from any explicit efforts at conscious self-expression.

Furthermore, by refusing to depict the real, Roussel ensures that he comes to the text without any conscious preconceived notions for its direction. Rather than drawing inspiration from his own experiences, the initial words and phrases which Roussel submits to this process are taken from whatever happens to present itself:

> J'usais de n'importe quoi. Ainsi on voyait partout à ce moment une réclame pour je ne sais quel appareil nommé « Phonotypia » ; cela me donna « fausse note tibia » … Je me servis même du nom et de l'adresse de mon cordonnier : « Hellstern, 5, place Vendôme », dont je fis « Hélice tourne zinc plat se rend (devient) dôme » …

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[52] "1st. *Demoiselle* (young girl) *à prétendant* [suitor]' 2nd. *demoiselle* (pavior's beetle) *à reître en dents* [soldier of fortune in teeth]. I consequently found myself confronted with the following problem: the execution of a mosaic by a pavior's beetle" (Winkfield 11).

[53] "a rather curious fact … from all these voyages I never took a single thing for my books. It seemed to me that the circumstance deserves mention, since it proves so well how imagination counts for everything in my work" (Winkfield 14).

[54] "the universe of fiction must contain nothing of the real" (trans mine).

> Le chiffre cinq avait été pris au hasard ; je ne crois pas qu'il était exact. (Roussel, *Comment,* 21)[55]

The selection of these initial phrases is not premeditated, but relies on chance: "[I]l s'agit pour Roussel de ne pas concevoir son œuvre avant de l'écrire, de ne rien tirer, semble-t-il, de son propre fonds, mais de solliciter soigneusement le hasard et de ne retenir que ce qu'il propose" (Dhainaut 15).[56] As the *procédé* uses random phrases arising spontaneously, it produces equally unexpected results: "Au départ, il y a ces lots, dont aucun instrument, aucune ruse ne prévoit la sortie ; puis le merveilleux mécanisme s'en empire, les transforme" (Foucault 53).[57] Roussel himself acknowledges the "création imprévue due à des combinaisons phoniques" of the *procédé* (Roussel, *Comment,* 23).[58] The unforeseen outcomes generated by the *procédé* suggest Roussel's lack of conscious control in directing its functioning.

In fact, the way in which Roussel speaks of the *procédé* implies rather that he merely follows its direction. Noting the shift to the evolutionary method, he writes: "Le procédé évolua et je fus conduit à prendre une phrase quelconque, dont je tirais des images en la disloquant, un peu comme s'il se fût agi d'en extraire des dessins de rébus" (Roussel, *Comment,* 20).[59] By removing his personal investment in the *procédé* as much as possible, Roussel ensures that the resulting sentences and antisentences "were not 'freely' composed but produced by the operation of mechanical techniques for generating and/or manipulating bits of language" (McHale 3). In the place of the author's conscious efforts at creativity, there is only the automatic functioning of a machine: as Michel Foucault writes, "Le lecteur pense reconnaître les errements sans chemins de

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[55] I used anything at hand. For instance, there was a well-known advertisement for some apparatus called 'Phonotypia'; this supplied me with 'fausse note tibia' [wrong note tibia] … I even utilized the name and address of my shoemaker: 'Hellstern, 5, place Vendôme,' gave me 'Hélice tourne zinc plat se rend (devient) dôme' [Propeller turns zinc flat goes (becomes) dome]… The figure five was chosen at random; I do not know it if was the correct one. (Winkfield 9)

[56] "Roussel refrains from conceiving his work prior to writing, pulls nothing, it would seem, from his own reserves, but instead carefully solicits chance and retains only what it proposes" (trans. mine).

[57] "At the start no instrument or stratagem can predict their outcome. Then the marvelous mechanism takes over and transforms them" (Ruas 40). All English translations of Foucault's *Raymond Roussel* by Charles Ruas.

[58] "unforeseen creation due to phonic combinations" (Winkfield 11).

[59] "As the method developed I was led to take a random phrase from which I drew images by distorting it, a little as through it were a case of deriving them from the drawings of a rebus" (Winkfield 8).

l'imaginations là où il n'y a que les hasards de langage traités méthodiquement" (Foucault 53).[60] The *procédé* takes on the character of a machine functioning automatically, producing results that are independent of the person feeding words into the device. In this way, Roussel's *procédé* exploits the mechanical aspect of language, its "capacity to produce meaning independently of human intention" (Alison 123). Rather than relying solely on Roussel's own conscious volition to produce imaginative works, the *procédé* is driven by the automatic functioning of language itself.

Roussel's *procédé* relies on a particular play of language, the pun. In generating the antisentences, each word is doubled, either as a homograph or homophone, gaining a second meaning while maintaining the same form in its repetition. Every word is converted into a double entendre (Ford, "Genius," 113). The *procédé* depends on the way language allows multiple meanings to be derived from the same words: "[C]omme ils se présentent, la machine du procédé les traitera de la même manière : elle glissera sa lame au milieu de leur épaisseur pour y faire surgir deux significations étrangères dans l'unité maintenue de la forme" (Foucault 51).[61] Roussel's use of the *procédé* establishes a theme that will carry on through the entirety of his work, the idea that the new can be produced through the repetition of the same. The *procédé* discovers that idea within the "dédoublement du langage qui, à partir d'un noyau simple, s'écarte de lui-même et fait naître sans cesse d'autre figures (prolifération de la distance, vide qui naît sous les pas du double, croissance labyrinthique des corridors semblables et différents)" (Foucault 23).[62] It is this essential difference between like words, the space that exists between the repetition of the identical phrases, that becomes a source of creative potential.

This particular use of language is not limited to the initial phrases generated by the *procédé*, but influences Roussel's writing style throughout his works. Foucault argues that Roussel's writings

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[60] "The reader thinks he recognizes the wayward wanderings of the imagination where in fact there is only random language, methodically treated" (Ruas 40).
[61] "[A]s they appear, the mechanism of the process will treat them the same way: it will insert its blade into their girth and bring forth two strange meanings while maintaining the unity of form" (Ruas 39).
[62] "duality of language which starts from a simple core, divides itself in two, and produces new figures. (It's a proliferation of distance, a void created in the wake of the double, a labyrinthine extension of corridors which seem similar and yet are different" (Ruas 16).

> seront l'envers méthodique des 'figures de style' : le style, c'est … la possibilité, masqué et désignée à la fois, de dire la même chose, mais autrement. Tout le langage de Roussel, style renversé, cherche à dire subrepticement deux choses avec les mêmes mots. (Foucault 25)[63]

Indeed, throughout his works, Roussel frequently uses the same word in different contexts to evoke its different meanings, likely a residual effect of the different images generated by the *procédé*. Carl Lovitt raises the example of "feu":

> the word 'feu', which could have been derived from the title through its latin [sic] etymology 'focus', is used in the text in the following ways: 'le feu des enchères publiques' (16), a drawing 'en lignes de feu' (61), Voltaire expostulating with 'esprit et feu' (92), the 'feux' of the glowing sphere in the aqua-micans (97), the 'feu' which burns Lydie's dress (180), the 'coup de feu' from Cortier's gun (127), and a reference to the dead man as 'feu Francois Charles' (Lovitt 197)

By repeating the same word in as many contexts as possible, each with a different sense, Roussel exploits a fundamental truth of language: words, while remaining singular in form, are capable of an internal metamorphosis that can generate seemingly infinite disparate meanings. As Foucault writes, it is language's "essentielle et merveilleuse pauvreté [qui] ramène à lui-même en lui donnant son pouvoir de métamorphose : dire autre chose avec les mêmes mots, donner aux mêmes mots un autre sens" (Foucault 124).[64] This metamorphosis demonstrates that words resist occupying a fixed position. The fact that Roussel's *procédé* has equal success with phrases taken from Victor Hugo's poetry as his bootmaker's address indicates that all language is subject to this indeterminacy, "cancelling out any metaphorical kernel or permanence or identity" (Hill 826). Just as with the destabilizing of identity seen in Janet's hysterical patients, when the same form is split against itself, its original identity is not lost but rather becomes multiplied. Perpetually mutable and whose meanings are potentially infinite, this highlights the innate capacity of language to generate the new through the repetition of

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[63] methodically reverse the 'elements of style.' Style is … the possibility, masked and identified at the same time, of saying the same thing but in other ways. All of Roussel's language, in its reversal of style, surreptitiously tries to say two things with the same words. (Ruas 18)

[64] "marvelous and essential poverty [that] forces it back upon itself by giving it the power of metamorphosis; to say other things with the same words, to give the same words another meaning" (Ruas 98).

the same. The *procédé* exploits that capacity in order to produce the multiple meanings that become the foundations of Roussel's texts.

Importantly, the mechanical function is only the first part of Roussel's *procédé*, limited to providing the two initial linguistic events that, alone, have such disparate meanings that they are without any natural link. Most often, the words making up the derivative antisentence are themselves unrelated: "Segments discrets, sans communication sémantique, et qui n'ont d'autres liens qu'un compliqué zigzag par quoi ils se rattachent individuellement au noyau initial" (Foucault 48).[65] The second step in Roussel's *procédé* is to provide these discrete phrases with a frame of reference that unifies their disparate meanings into a single story. As Foucault notes, it is up to Roussel to "trouver une courbe telle qu'elle pourra passer par toutes les pointes extérieures de cette étoile—par tous les extrêmes piquants verbaux qui ont été projetés à la périphérie par l'obscure explosion … du langage premier" (Foucault 49).[66] The effort required to construct such a story shares something of the synthesising function uniting disparate experiences into a unified memory system in Janet's theory of the mind. However, it is distinguished by the fact that, in this case, not only are Roussel's conscious efforts required, but the synthesis does not do away with the multiplicity.

In this second stage of the *procédé,* Roussel takes the output from the mechanical first stage, and unifies the two phrases by joining them together within a logical narrative structure. First, he integrates each of the disparate elements of the antisentence into an expanded explanatory narrative. His example from *Locus Solus* of the *demoiselle à reître en dents*, as Roussel noted, presents him with the execution of a mosaic by a paving beetle: *la hie* is made mobile, suspended from an aerostat that predicts minute changes in the weather and steers itself accordingly; it is capable of picking up teeth through another of Canterel's discoveries, two metals that, when brought together, generate a magnetic force capable of attracting—and extracting—teeth; and it deposits those teeth into a mosaic depicting a German solider, a figure from a Scandinavian legend, *Den Rytter*. The

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[65] "They are discrete segments, without semantic communication, with no relationship other than a complicated zigzag that attaches them individually to the original core" (Ruas 37).
[66] "to discover a curve that will touch all the exterior points of the star, all the pointed verbal extremes which have been projected to the periphery by the dark explosion … of the first language" (Ruas 37).

legend depicted in the mosaic picks up the initial sentence, *demoiselle à prétendant*: the Duke Gjörtz, a nobleman, had fallen in love with the beautiful Christel, the wife of his vassal, Baron Skjelrup; he summons his reiter, Aag, and sends him to retrieve Christel. Thus, Roussel constructs a narrative that links, in a more or less logical manner, all of the disparate elements generated by the *procédé*.

The narrative style of *Locus Solus* reflects this process: each machine is first presented as an initial enigma with various elements that seem haphazardly thrown together, followed subsequently by a narrative that explains the origins of each element, how they came to be combined, and how they came to produce or make use of the various elements initially presented. In the case of *la hie*, the narrator provides his initial observations: a punning beetle attached to an immobile aerostat; a field scattered with human teeth of various colours and shapes; and a partially completed mosaic. When *la hie* begins to move, its functioning is still a mystery: it seems able automatically to make use of the weather to drive itself; it is somehow able to pick up and deposit teeth; and it is somehow able to deposit an appropriately sized and coloured tooth into the right place in the mosaic. It is only once Canterel offers his narrative of the invention of *la hie*, the origin of its various components (the newly invented method to predict the weather to the minutest change; his tooth extractor and its magnetic metals; the legend of the reiter, the suitor, and the young lady), and how he came to make use of each of those components for the whole, that the disparate elements initially introduced are unified into a coherent story.

The frame of reference provided by Roussel's conscious narrativizing ensures that the doubled meanings of words are reunited within a singular form. Roussel is able "to conjoin two irrational meanings of a pun through narrative" (Rosenbaum 113). Both of the *demoiselle à prétendant* and the *demoiselle à reître en dents* are made to refer to the same element: the mosaic itself, with its unique manner of construction and its subject matter, embodies the recombination of the two meanings of *demoiselle* as the story of one is also the story of the other. Language, which has been

> lancée dans deux directions différentes, soudain est ramenée en face d'elle-même et contrainte de se croiser. … [E]lle révèle dans le mot le lieu d'une rencontre imprévue entre les figures du monde les plus éloignées (il est la distance abolie, le

> point de choc des êtres, la différence ramassée sur elle-même en une forme unique, duelle, ambiguë, minotaurine); (Foucault 22-3)[67]

Roussel's narrativizing ensures that the singular made double by the *procédé* remains singular. It is not merely a case that the word is doubled against itself to create different meanings, but that those divergent meanings are then reunited within the same form as the narrative makes them both refer back to the same idea. This is the "double postulation simultanée de Roussel, hanté par les thèmes de la doublure et de l'unicité, caractéristiques de ses écrits" (Béhar 76).[68] That Roussel locates this doubled unity within a mosaic suggests the creative potential that lies in the ability to reproduce otherness and multiplicity within a singular form, precisely what the *procédé* offered to him.

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The *procédé* itself unites the efforts of human and machine, of conscious volition with the unwilled, automatic functioning of methodically-treated language, in order to produce the texts it generates. Though the *procédé* was not revealed until after Roussel's death, it shows itself in his texts as the machines that populate his novels are "always, apart from anything else, a kind of scale model or *mise-en-abyme* of the procedures by which the text housing it was itself produced" (McHale 3). Canterel's inventions serve to introduce the same themes evident in the *procédé*—the mechanical function of the process that allows the repetition of the same to produce variety, and the unification of that variety within the same form—into the foreground of the novel.

Canterel's *Locus Solus* is a particularly apt setting in which to develop these themes. The park surrounds his villa in Montmorency, a "solitary place" where he displays his various inventions and discoveries to the group of visitors he has invited for a tour. Populated as it is with the bizarre output of Roussel's *procédé*, this unique park leaves the visitors confronted at every turn by the unlikely, the fantastic, the impossible

[67] sent in two different directions, is suddenly brought up short, face-to-face with itself and forced to meet again. … [I]t reveals words as the unexpected meeting place of the most distant figures of reality. (It is distance abolished; at the point of contact, differences are brought together in a unique form: dual, ambiguous, Minotaur-like). (Ruas 16)

[68] "Roussel's simultaneously double postulation, haunted by themes of doubling and unity, characteristic of his writings" (trans. mine)

all made possible, including: *la hie*, the flying, mosaic-building paving beetle; a giant diamond-shaped tank filled with *aqua micans*, a substance that allows one to breathe underwater, which in turn holds a number of other inventions that take advantage of the oxygenated water's strange properties; and human corpses reanimated by Canterel's double invention, the substances *résurrectine* and *vitalium*.[69] Each new invention speaks to the apparent limitlessness of Canterel's creative genius and abilities, and with a new marvel around every corner, *Locus Solus* appears as a space of apparently unending creativity. With the guests having only a few hours to tour this immense park, one wonders at the possible inventions and discoveries that Canterel did not include on the tour.[70]

While these inventions make the park the unique setting that it is, they also lend it a remarkable multiplicity. The various purposes of these machines ensure that "[l]'espace de *Locus Solus* est ainsi polymorphe ou polyvalent, à la fois scène et salle de spectacle, hôpital, morgue, mais aussi jardin, laboratoire et musée" (Besnier 62).[71] Canterel himself is the director, doctor, scientist, and lecturer, all brought together under the frequently-used honorific, "le maître." One might expect, from the inventions he produces, an eccentric on the unappreciated fringes of the scientific community. However, the opposite is true; when Canterel announces his discoveries "au monde scientifique [c'est] dans une conférence prodigieusement courue" (Roussel, *Locus*, 9).[72] He spends much of the year working at *Locus Solus* where he is "entouré de disciples qui, pleins d'une admiration passionnée pour ses continuelles découvertes, le secondent avec fanatisme dans l'accomplissement de son œuvre" (Roussel, *Locus*, 9).[73] The narrator goes on to

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[69] These inventions occupy the first four chapters; the final three chapters introduce the mysterious and sometimes apparently supernatural tools used by others invited to *Locus Solus* (namely Lucius Egroizard, the sybil Felicity, and Noël the fortune-teller), which Canterel then studied, determined their nature, and used to further his own discoveries.

[70] Indeed, Roussel left out a number of Canterel's inventions from *Locus Solus*: "Roussel quarried its seven self-contained chapters from a vast sprawling draft almost twice as long as the published version" (Ford, "Genius," 115).

[71] "space in *Locus Solus* is therefore multiform or multipurpose, at once stage and theatre, hospital, morgue, as well as garden, laboratory and museum" (trans. mine).

[72] "to the scientific world [it is] at a prodigiously packed lecture" (Cuningham 5). All English translations of Roussel's *Locus Solus* are by Rupert Copeland Cuningham unless otherwise stated.

[73] "surrounded by disciples full of passionate admiration for his continual discoveries, who lend enthusiastic support to the completion of his work" (Cuningham 5).

describe Canterel as independently wealthy, handsome, gifted with a "merveilleuse intelligence" and a "voix chaude et persuasive [qui] donnait beaucoup d'attrait à son élocution prenante, dont la séduction et la clarté faisaient de lui un des champions de la parole" (Roussel, *Locus*, 10).[74] From this introduction, it would seem that nothing is out of reach for this apparently omnipotent scientific genius.

It is strange, then, that, while it is his status as a renowned scientist that draws his visitors to Locus Solus, for the majority of the novel Canterel becomes as much a bystander as his guests. Contrary to what one would expect from such an inventor, Canterel never flips a switch, turns a dial, or so much as starts up a machine; there is no tinkering, no adjusting, no calibrating; in fact, for the vast majority of his presentations, Canterel participates very little.[75] While there is no forgetting that these are displays of Canterel's wondrous creations, he stands decidedly apart from his works when they are first presented. As Basset writes, "le créateur est maintenu dans une fonction ambiguë. L'artiste est toujours l'inventeur du dispositif machinique qu'il fait fonctionner mais, au cours de cette performance, il est relégué au simple rang de spectateur" (Basset 164).[76] Canterel is able to stand apart as a spectator because the majority of his inventions are automata: once they have been built and set in motion, they function independently of their creator, who merely observes their flawless operation alongside his guests. Canterel stands in relation to his machines much in the same way as Janet to his hypnotised patients or Roussel to his *procédé*: he initiates a mechanical process from which he removes himself as the largely automatic functioning of the machine is carried out.

By positioning Canterel as a spectator, the initial presentation of his inventions prioritizes their automatic functioning. Indeed, the narrator who provides the initial descriptions of each machine consistently observes their ability to govern themselves. This is particularly striking in the narrator's description of *la hie*: "Soudain la hie s'enleva d'elle-même dans les airs et, poussée par un soufflé modeste, se posa non loin de

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[74] "warm persuasive voice [that] lent great charm to his engaging delivery, whose seductiveness and precision made him a master of the spoken word" (Cuningham 6).

[75] On only one occasion, Canterel confirms a discovery in the present of the text, finding the ingredients of gun powder in blood.

[76] "The inventor holds an ambiguous role. The artist remains the inventor of the mechanical apparatus that he makes function but, over the course of this performance, he is relegated to the rank of mere spectator" (trans. mine).

nous, après une directe et lente excursion de quinze à vingt pieds, sur une dent de fumeur brunie par le tabac" (Roussel, *Locus*, 30).[77] For the following several pages, the narrator provides his observations of *la hie*, "mapping a magnified, machine-tooled, imaginative topography from which the human is virtually absent" (Porush 31). He notes how each individual function of the machine—raising and lowering itself, flying to each necessary location, picking up and depositing teeth—is regulated by various lenses, rods, valves, and chronometers. The automatic and self-regulated function of these processes is repeatedly stressed in these descriptions: "une soupape automatique d'aluminium"; "[a]ctionnées par d'invisibles roues dentées en rapport avec le mécanisme des chronomètres, les tiges … pouvaient donner aux miroirs toutes sortes d'inclinaisons"; "une des griffes s'allongea d'elle-même grâce à une aiguille interne qui descendit d'un demi-centimètre" (Roussel, *Locus*, 30, 31, 34).[78] The narrator notes that his observations of these various mechanisms solve the mystery of the initial flight by demonstrating how *la hie* was capable of moving itself: "[N]ous comprenions maintenant comment le premier voyage de la hie s'était perpétré au moyen de la lentille et de la soupape" (Roussel, *Locus*, 35).[79] Nothing but the automatic functioning of the machine is emphasised in this initial description.

Even Canterel begins his explanation of *la hie* by noting the machine's independence and freedom from his control. Having developed "jusqu'aux dernières limites du possible l'art de prédire le temps … Canterel imagina un appareil capable de créer une œuvre esthétique due aux seuls efforts combinés du soleil et du vent" (Roussel, *Locus*, 35-6).[80] He built the machine so that it could regulate and operate itself:

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[77] "Suddenly, of its own accord, the paving-beetle rose into the air and, propelled by a gentle breeze, made a slow, straight flight of some fifteen to twenty feet, alighting not far from us upon a smoker's tooth browned by tobacco" (Cuningham 25).

[78] "an automatic aluminum valve"; "the rods, set in motion by invisible cogwheels geared to the chronometer's mechanism, were capable of inclining the mirrors in any direction"; "the bottom of one of the claws was automatically lengthened by the lowering of an internal needle by half a centimetre" (Cuningham 26, 27, 29)

[79] "[W]e now understood how the paving-beetle had performed its first journey by means of the lens and the valve" (Cuningham 30).

[80] "the art of weather-forecasting to its furthest possible limits … Canterel conceived a device capable of creating a work of aesthetic merit solely due to the combined efforts of the sun and wind" (Cuningham 30-1).

> Il construisit la *demoiselle* que nous avions sous les yeux et la pourvut des cinq chronomètres supérieurs chargés d'en régler toutes les évolutions – le plus haut ouvrant ou refermant la soupape, tandis que les autres, en actionnant les miroirs et la lentille, s'occupaient de gonfler aves les feux solaires l'enveloppe de l'aérostat, grâce à la substance jaune, qui, due à une préparation spéciale, exhalait sous tout ascendant calorique une certaine quantité d'hydrogène. … De cette manière, Canterel avait un instrument qui, sans aucune autre aide que celle du soleil plus ou moins dégagé, pouvait, en profitant de tel courant atmosphérique prévu longtemps d'avance, accomplir un trajet précis. (Roussel, *Locus*, 36, original emphasis).[81]

The explicit aim of this passage is to highlight the automatic functioning of *la hie* as it governs its own operations. However, the description also points more subtly to Canterel's own involvement, which he later reveals: besides building the machine, Canterel forecasted the weather for the ten days necessary to complete the mosaic and calibrated the machine so that it might take proper advantage of the changes in the wind and the sun over that time. Importantly, Canterel's contribution, while necessarily pointing to his own involvement, also relies on forces beyond his control: he does not manipulate the sun or air currents, but uses them in order to direct and steer the operations of *la hie*. This dependence is remarkably reminiscent of Roussel's efforts to remove himself from any conscious direction of the *procédé* in the search for homonyms: while necessarily involving his input, that input is as far removed from conscious volition as possible. Because he relies on the weather, Canterel cannot freely choose where the machine will go. Canterel's contribution is introduced in a subordinated way in order to emphasise the automatic functioning of the machine beyond his free control, just as the first stage of the *procédé* operated without Roussel's conscious direction.

Instead, *la hie* follows the direction of the wind, and by its guidance is able to position itself over an appropriately coloured tooth, pick it up, carry it back to the mosaic, and deposit it in the mosaic where an image is gradually assembled. With each exact repetition of the same sequence of actions, *la hie* is able to place a new tooth in a new

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[81] He constructed the punner that stood before our eyes and provided it with five very accurate chronometers whose task was to regulate all its operations. The top one opened or shut the valve, while the others, working the mirrors and the lens, were employed in using the solar rays to inflate the aerostat's envelope by means of the yellow substance. The latter, due to its special preparation, released a certain quantity of hydrogen. … In this way Canterel possessed an instrument which could make use of a particular air current foreseen long before to perform an accurate journey, with no other assistance than that of the more or less obscured sun. (Cuningham 31)

location, creating in the mosaic new forms from the repetition of the same—just as with the *procédé*. In fact, the selection of teeth as the material from which to build the mosaic can be likened to the haphazard words and phrases fed into the *procédé*. In deciding on the material with which to construct the mosaic, Canterel notes that he "aurait acquis des résultats analogues en adoptant pour sa mosaïque des morceaux de fer doux diversement colorés, qu'un électro-aimant eût sans peine captés puis lâchés par l'effet d'un courant discontinu" (Roussel, *Locus*, 39).[82] However, he ultimately chooses teeth as the medium of choice for the mosaic. Unlike iron, which someone would have to colour appropriately, the idea of teeth "le séduisait en outre par l'imprévu que donnerait au curieux tableau projeté l'emploi de fragments découpés et teintés par le hasard seul à l'exclusion de toute volonté artistique et préméditante" (Roussel, *Locus*, 40).[83] Therefore, the teeth are "les syllabes multicolores arrachées par Roussel à la bouche des hommes" (Foucault 60).[84] They stand in for the random, chance language transformed through the repetition that offers it new meaning. With the chance materials provided to it, *la hie*'s eternally repetitious behaviour serves to construct the new.

While it is *la hie*'s repetitive action that generates the necessary variations in the placement of the teeth, it is Canterel who unifies that variability into a single image. Alone—and with a steady supply of teeth randomly scattered across the field—*la hie*'s repetitive sequences would certainly assemble the varied teeth into a mosaic; but, like the semantically dysfunctional antisentence generated by the *procédé*, the image produced would be an incoherent and disordered one. Canterel's involvement in the production of the mosaic, like Roussel's role in the *procédé*, ensures that *la hie*'s actions result in a harmonized and unified image and narrative. As the narrator rightly intuits when first approaching *la hie*, the collection of teeth from which *la hie* draws to build the mosaic are not so haphazardly distributed as their random arrangement over the field would suggest. He notes that the guests are "très attentifs à ne pas déplacer les dents éparses,

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[82] "would have obtained similar results by using variously-coloured pieces of soft iron for his mosaic; an electro-magnet could easily have picked these up, then dropped them, by means of a discontinuous current" (Cuningham 34).

[83] "attracted him because of the novelty the projected picture would derive from the use of fragments shaped and coloured entirely by chance, with no artistic desire or premeditation" (Cuningham 34).

[84] "the multicolored syllables extracted by Roussel from the human mouth" (Ruas 46).

dont l'apparent désordre était sans nul doute le résultat laborieux d'études approfondies" (Roussel, *Locus*, 30).[85] He turns out to be correct, as Canterel later reveals: "Laissant libre l'emplacement de la future mosaïque, il semait sciemment aux alentours les éléments dentaires de toutes nuances, pour les rendre prêts à être happés aux différents pèlerinages de la hie. D'avance, les dents étaient judicieusement orientées selon le sens exact que leur assignaient dans le tableau leurs divers contours" (Roussel, *Locus*, 51).[86] It should be noted that, in contrast with Roussel's intervention only after his *procédé* has done its work, by necessity Canterel's harmonizing of the image comes at the start of the process.

Canterel takes great care to remark that his choices are anticipatory of the projected functioning of *la hie*. It is only after having calculated where the machine will be that he sets about organizing the teeth: "[S]es prévisions météorologiques sous les yeux, il se livra pendant une nuit complète à un terrible labeur, distinguant sans erreurs les multiples coloris subtils de ses matériaux dentaires" (Roussel, *Locus*, 50-1).[87] In his placement of the teeth, Canterel does not override the functioning of *la hie*, but draws from its expected variations and movements to produce the unified image. Indeed, even his choice of subject matter for the mosaic is governed by the variations that *la hie* is expected to generate from the materials provided: "Pour l'œuvre d'art à exécuter, Canterel voulut choisir un sujet tant soit peu fuligineux, à cause de tons bruns et jaunâtres qui domineraient forcément dans les matériaux de la mosaïque" (Roussel, *Locus*, 41).[88] Moreover, his choice of materials is dependent on his collaboration with *la hie*: he notes that, though similar results could have been obtained with an electro-magnet and coloured iron, this "nécessitait dans la hie volante l'installation difficultueuse d'un

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[85] "taking great care not to displace the scattered teeth whose apparent disorder was undoubtedly the outcome of deep and laborious study" (Cuningham 26).
[86] "Leaving the site of the future mosaic empty, he sprinkled the constituent teeth of every shade around it, ready to be snapped up in the paving-beetle's peregrinations. The teeth were judiciously disposed beforehand in the precise orientation their various contours assigned them in the picture" (Cuningham 45).
[87] "[W]ith his meteorological predictions before him, he devoted himself during one whole night to the appalling labour of accurately sorting out the many subtle shades of his dental material" (Cuningham 45).
[88] "For the work to be executed, Canterel determined to adopt some rather murky subject, on account of the browns and yellowish shades that would necessarily predominate" (Cuningham 36).

alourdissant système de piles plein de graves inconvénients" (Roussel, *Locus*, 39).[89] He finds in the teeth a more suitable medium because it is easily incorporated into the flying punner. Canterel's actions, though they come in advance, do not disrupt *la hie*'s functioning or its ability to produce the new from a series of repeated actions. Instead, they provide *la hie*'s output with order and harmony that result in a singular image, where otherwise there would only have been disorder. The fact that the work produced is a mosaic emphasises this point: it relies on the combination of independent fragments distinguished by their variety brought together to form a harmonized image. As with Roussel's *procédé*, Canterel's conscious efforts point to both a similarity with and a distinction from Janet's notion of synthesis: once again, uniting the multiplicity produced by automatic processes into a singular form does not do away with the initial variety that is generated.

For some, the fact that Canterel places specifically-coloured teeth in the predetermined locations he knows *la hie* will visit is an indication of the inventor's complete control of the production of the mosaic. Indeed, for many, this detail suggests that *la hie* is merely an intermediary tool between the true artist, Canterel, and his work of art. David Porush notes this suggestion, writing, "Canterel's punner, at first magical, is nothing more than a hyper-advanced mechanical paintbrush" (Porush 34-5). And yet, in the same breath in which Canterel explains his placement of the teeth, he also makes a point of mentioning that he based his designs for the mosaic on a specific painting: "[U]n modèle exécuté à l'huile, d'après ses indications, par un portraitiste avisé, qui avait distribué chaque teinte en quantité plus ou moins grande suivant le nombre de dents ou de racines la représentant" (Roussel, *Locus*, 51).[90] Canterel's commission of the painting specified the exact colouring and texture of the image; his placement of the teeth serves to ensure the same of the mosaic. Porush makes a similar comparison when he notes that "the closest analogues to Roussel's fantastic metaphor for this artistry-at-a-distance were the scripts of a playwright or the scores of a musician: both are first created in forms

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[89] "would have called for the arduous installation in the flying punner of a weighty system of batteries, which would have been attended by many serious disadvantages" (Cuningham 34).

[90] "[A] sketch in oils, made to his specifications by a careful portrait-painter, who had laid on a varying amount of each colour according to the number of teeth or roots it represented" (Cuningham 45).

entirely different from the ones in which they are ultimately performed" (Porush 34). None would deny the painter's responsibility for the resulting sketch because it is based on the specifications of its commissioner, the orchestra's responsibility for the performance of the composer's work, or the actor's responsibility for the theatre produced from the playwright's script. By noting the painter's sketch at the same moment that he describes the placement of the teeth, Canterel suggests that the same responsibility for the execution of the mosaic be extended to *la hie* as it layers teeth with its magnetic and flying capabilities instead of paint with a brush. He even makes a point of noting that he left *la hie*'s canvas blank by leaving the site of the future mosaic empty. Like the composer or the playwright, Canterel chooses the subject, design, and organization of the mosaic, while the execution, as by an orchestra or an actor, is left to *la hie*. Thus, Canterel, like Svengali before him, stands in relation to his invention not just as its creator, but more importantly as a collaborator: just as Svengali contributes to a performance that equally belongs to Trilby, so, too, does Canterel contribute to a mosaic that also belongs to *la hie*. The composition itself is a result of the combined work of the conscious designer and the automatic functioning of his invention as their joint contributions fill in the space of the mosaic.

Basset is right to suggest that the role played by Canterel's inventions "permet d'interroger la relation entre le créateur et sa création" (Basset 166-7).[91] However, she adds that this is a "relation caractérisée par une rupture : le créateur est spectateur d'une performance où la machine devient créatrice" (Basset 167).[92] Lovitt conveys a similar sentiment when he refers to *la hie*'s mosaic as an example of an "unauthored text" so frequently "reiterated throughout the fiction in the form of numerous impersonal creations, of works generated without human interference" (Lovitt 95). This attitude reverses the opinion expressed earlier, that *la hie* is merely a high tech tool, an advanced mechanical paintbrush. Both try to endow either Canterel or his machine with sole responsibility for the production of the mosaic when in actuality it is the result of the

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[91] "Permits the interrogation of the relationship between artist and artwork [inventor and invention]" (trans. mine).

[92] "a relationship characterized by a rupture: the artist is the spectator of a performance where the machine becomes artist" (trans. mine).

combined efforts of the two. In much the same way that Roussel's *procédé* relies on the combination of conscious volition and automatic functioning to produce its texts, Canterel's invention requires the same joint efforts of human and machine. By initially positioning Canterel as a spectator and prioritizing in his stead the integral—and largely independent—role played by *la hie* in the production of the mosaic, the text demonstrates that Canterel does not maintain complete control over his invention, but rather that he collaborates with it in order to produce this uniquely creative work of art. Canterel's limitless genius is tied to his collaboration with the machine as both the mechanical function of *la hie*—particularly its ability to produce the new and varied forms from automatic and infinite repetitions of the same set of fixed and determined actions—and Canterel's more conscious participation in uniting that variety within a unified form are necessary for the production of the mosaic.

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With *la hie*, the collaborative efforts between human and machine are located within two separate actors, the inventor and his invention. In the central section of the novel, Canterel introduces an innovation that transforms people into automata, locating the machine within the self. The middle chapter, making up nearly a full third of the text, opens as the guests are led along a path that runs parallel to a long, low building made of iron and glass. Inside the building, a few metres from the glass, people stand at intervals on different stages set up inside. As the guests walk along the path, each individual or group performs a brief and bizarre scene, each disconnected from the previous: an imprisoned man composing a poem in the blank leaves of two volumes of a dictionary, writing using a flower stem and water and gilding the letters with gold dust; an old couple renewing their vows by symbolically uniting their hands in a vice; an actor playing a scene on a stage; a child reciting a poem for his mother; an artist producing a sketch of a clown and a sculpture from that sketch; a man receiving an experimental medical treatment; a woman having a neurotic attack at the sight of blood; and, finally, a man following a series of clues that lead him to such a disheartening discovery that he kills himself.

Reaching the end of the building, Canterel reveals the secret of this strange series of tableaux vivants. Two substances, *résurrectine* and *vitalium*, have enabled him to

reanimate the recently deceased. The first is injected to form a cushion around the brain, while the second is a metal tube plugged into the injection hole. Independently, they are inert, but when the two substances are brought in contact they "dégageassent à l'instant une électricité puissante, qui, pénétrant le cerveau, triomphait de la rigidité cadavérique et douait le sujet d'une impressionnante vie factice" (Roussel, *Locus*, 129).[93] Importantly, the subject is not returned to life: it is not a case that they are reawakened from death, experiencing life anew, but rather that they unconsciously repeat certain experiences from before their deaths. In this, they are like Janet's hysterical patients: in an altered state, their normal waking self—their living self—is inaccessible and arrested at a specific endpoint.

Canterel's subjects repeat events that were of particular significance to them while they were alive: "Par suite d'un curieux éveil de mémoire, ce dernier reproduisait aussitôt, avec une stricte exactitude, les moindres mouvements accomplis par lui durant telles minutes marquantes de son existence" (Roussel, *Locus*, 118).[94] The selected behaviour remains unknown until it is actually performed, leaving Canterel to decipher the actions with the aid of the family and friends who initially witnessed the events, after which he builds up a scene around them that enables them to fulfill the actions that their bodies reproduce. In these performances, the people exhibit the unconscious, autonomous, and repetitive behaviour expected of an automaton. They are transformed into "the robot-like dead," "des cadavres automates" (Lovitt 99; Foucault 206).[95] Like the traumatic re-enactments of fixed ideas discussed by Janet, these are dissociated events, cut off from the subject's normal consciousness, enacted with the subject completely unaware of his surroundings. Behaviour becomes the automated behaviour of the machine in this altered state as it is rigorously determined, limited to an unchangeable sequence, repetitive and beyond voluntary control. Having no ability to vary their actions once an event has been selected, the subject's behaviour is permanently fixed: "[I]l

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[93] "release a powerful current of electricity at that moment, which penetrated the brain and overcame its cadaveric rigidity, endowing the subject with an impressive artificial life" (Cuningham 118).
[94] "As a consequence of a curious awakening of memory, the latter would at once reproduce, with strict exactitude, every slightest action performed by him during certain outstanding minutes of his life" (Cuningham 118).
[95] "automaton corpses" (Ruas 166).

répétait indéfiniment la même invariable série de faits et gestes choisie une fois pour toutes" (Roussel, *Locus*, 129).[96] This exact sequence of movements and actions is infinitely repeatable, provided the subject has an appropriate setting with which to interact: "[L]e cadavre, trouvant en place meubles, points d'appui, résistances diverses, affaires à soulever, s'exécutait sans chutes ni gestes faussés. On le ramenait à son point de départ après l'achèvement de son cycle d'opérations, qu'il recommençait indéfiniment sans nulle variante" (Roussel, *Locus*, 131).[97] Once initiated, the subject requires no intervention in order to function, producing these actions automatically whenever "plugged in": a subject "retrouvait l'immobilité de la mort dès qu'on lui retirait, en la saisissant par un minuscule anneau mauvais conducteur, la tige de vitalium, qui, introduite à nouveau dans son crâne, sous l'abri dissimulateur des cheveux, lui faisait toujours reprendre son rôle au point initial" (Roussel, *Locus*, 131).[98] The people are completely unconscious of their surroundings, never engaging with anything outside of the scene which they endlessly repeat.

Yet, within the scene itself, each subject demonstrates consciousness and awareness relative to the sequence of actions they are undertaking. In the first performance, Gérard, the imprisoned man, prior to writing his poem, first weaves a bonnet from filaments of pear cores to cover the head of a statue of an infant (revealed later as a substitute for the child he has smuggled to freedom). Throughout this labour, he is "[s]ans cesse aux écoutes … semblant talonné par la crainte de quelque surprise" (Roussel, *Locus*, 104).[99] After this task has been completed, "son attitude, pendant un bref instant, sembla trahir un peu de vague et d'absence"; however, he quickly recovers his lucidity as he turns to his new task, creating materials with which to write his poem (Roussel, *Locus*, 105).[100] Gérard's behaviour, like the rest of the subjects, is remarkably like that of Janet's patient,

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[96] "[H]e would indefinitely repeat the same unvarying series of deeds and gestures which he had chosen once and for all" (Cuningham 118).
[97] "[T]he corpses, finding furniture, supports, various resistances and things to lift all in their right places, performed without falls or false moves. After completing his cycle of operations, which he would repeat indefinitely without any variation at all, he was brought back to his starting-point" (Cuningham 120).
[98] "was returned to the immobility of death when the plug of vitalium was withdrawn, grasped by a tiny non-conducting ring; reintroduced into his skull beneath the dissembling cover of his hair, it always caused him to resume his role at the beginning" (Cuningham 120).
[99] "continually on the alert and apparently dogged by the fear of interruption" (Cuningham 94).
[100] "for a brief instant, his attitude seemed to betray a certain vagueness and absence" (Cuningham 95-6).

Irène, during her traumatic re-enactments: he performs deliberate actions, but does so in a mechanical manner, indicating that what was initially conscious behaviour when first performed has become the unconscious and involuntary repetition of an automaton.

This initial display of conscious behaviour also serves to reinforce the idea that, in spite of their transformation, these are still human beings. On its own, turning corpses into machines has a particularly dehumanizing tone. However, as the revelation of Canterel's process comes only after the presentation of a sequence of plays with conscious actors presenting a variety of scenes, the individual subjects are presented first as normal human beings. Indeed, the narrator's initial observations give no indication that these are anything other than series of people performing bizarre scenes, noting only that "[d]ebout, des gens s'échelonnaient au long de la paroi de verre que nous avions maintenant près de nous et vers laquelle se tourna tout notre groupe" (Roussel, *Locus*, 102).[101] In the initial presentation, there is no distinction made between the subjects transformed by Canterel's invention and the actors he has hired to play the other roles required by the scene. Occasionally, the narrator notes an individual out of costume and wrapped in furs, but only later is it revealed that this is a family member wishing to play their own role, protected against the intense cold that is required to keep the subjects from deteriorating. The only other hint indicating that something may be amiss is the repeated mention of one of Canterel's assistants mysteriously popping into or out of each scene as the guests approach. Again, though, it is only later, in the very last lines of the chapter, that his role is revealed: "Enveloppé de fourrures, un aide de Canterel mettait ou enlevait aux huit morts leur autoritaire bouchon de vitalium—et faisait au besoin se succéder les scènes sans interruption en ayant régulièrement soin d'animer tel sujet un peu avant de réengourdir tel autre" (Roussel, *Locus*, 197).[102] Even the actual process of mechanization leaves no evidence: the *résurrectine* is internal, and the *vitalium* is hidden under the subject's hair. This is the precisely the inverse of the manner in which *la hie* was presented—prioritizing the automated over the human—but serves the same purpose: the

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[101] "[t]here were people standing at intervals along the glass wall now beside us, towards which our whole group turned" (Cuningham 93).

[102] "One of Canterel's assistants, wrapped in furs, would insert or remove the eight corpses' controlling plug of vitalium—and make the scenes follow one another uninterruptedly, when required, by being careful always to reanimate one subject just before deanimating the one before" (Cuningham 185).

fact that the narrator's initial observations omit any indication of mechanization ensures that, when the origin of their performances is revealed, in that newly-apparent mechanization they nevertheless retain their humanity. Like the actions of *la hie*, Canterel's subjects represent a combination of human and machine rather than being one or the other.

Moreover, while the performances themselves take on the qualities of the machine in their automation and infinite repeatability, the scenes that are reproduced are displays of distinctly human emotions, actions, and experiences. Just as Janet's hysterical patients repeat in their traumatic re-enactments every sensation, emotion, thought, and action of the original experience, so too do Canterel's subjects automatically reproduce every physical and psychological detail of their memory with perfect exactitude. The range of scenes provides us with both happy and sad moments, both creative and destructive ones: reading, writing, language; literature, art, theatre; marriage and anniversaries; illness and medicine; and, ultimately, suicide. These scenes take on a double role in which, in the first telling, they prove the humanity of the subjects with the choice of emotionally-charged experiences, and then, when described a second time, demonstrate that such a display of humanity resulted from a mechanized form. Each scene serves to demonstrate that "the emotions that one might assume to be our most human feature can also be seen as the most mechanized: as vitalium triggers the memory of strong emotion, the corpses become subject to them and their endless repetition" (Rosenbaum 97). As the endless repetition is itself of a sequence of lived events, it is also a reminder of the humanity of the individual that repeats them. This in turn suggests that such mechanization does not result in dehumanization, but rather the incorporation of the machine into a self that yet retains its humanity. Canterel's invention thus produces human automata representing the hybridity of human and machine, encapsulating both oppositions within a unified form.

This embodiment of both human and machine also results in the unification of other contrasting qualities within the same self. As noted above, these performances are at once a display of conscious, volitional actions as well as being the result of automated, unconscious mechanization. This automation transforms them into inanimate machines at the same time as it reanimates them in their performances of the scenes of their lives. The space in which they perform is suggestive of this ability to eliminate boundaries by

simultaneously encompassing opposite extremes. The "cage" in which the subjects are housed is "[u]niquement constituée d'immenses vitres que supportait une solide et fine carcasse de fer, la transparente construction" (Roussel, *Locus*, 102).[103] In this space, the private experiences of each subject become public: "Le verre annule la séparation des espaces, leur autonomie, et soumet chacun au regard de tous, instaurant le règne d'un voyeurisme généralisé" (Besnier 63).[104] The glass cage acts as a morgue, with seven generators working to establish and keep the interior consistently cold. Though the freezing temperatures preserve the bodies in death, that preservation simultaneously enables the continuation of life as the subjects depict all its stages, childhood, youth, parenthood and old age. In this way, the very preservation of the dead bodies also ensures their continued life: "[P]rotégés par la vitre qui leur permet d'être vues, à l'abri de cette parenthèse transparente et gelée, la vie et la mort peuvent communiquer afin de rester, l'une dans l'autre, l'une malgré l'autre" (Foucault 97).[105] The concurrence of life and death is demonstrated by the suicide of the last subject: François-Charles Cortier's return to his life is also the scene of his death, indicating how the subjects are at once alive and dead within the glass cage. Automation thus provides access to a doubled self, a self that embodies otherness.

Each of the subjects is at once human and machine, conscious and unconscious, animated and inanimate, alive and dead. These human automata display a mutability that is characteristic of all Canterel's inventions. The other glass cage in the novel, the giant diamond-shaped container of the *aqua micans* allows for the similar elimination of boundaries. Canterel's invention is simultaneously liquid and air, its double nature allowing people and land animals to breathe underwater as aquatic life. Like the glass cage housing the reanimated corpses, the giant diamond also houses humans who have become machines: the ballerina Faustine, whose body is transformed into an Aeolian harp as she dances underwater, and the semi-decomposed head of Danton, reanimated

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[103] "transparent construction … composed of immense panes of glass supported by a rigid, though delicate iron framework" (Cuningham 93).

[104] "The glass erases the separation between spaces, their autonomy, and submits each [subject] to the regard of all, instating the reign of a general voyeurism" (trans. mine).

[105] "Protected by the glass which enables them to be seen, sheltered by this transparent and frozen parenthesis, life and death can communicate in order to remain one within the other, one in spite of the other" (Ruas 78).

using the *aqua micans*' electric charge. Like the other reanimated dead, Danton repeats automatically parts of his life, in this case parts of speeches given during the time of the French Revolution, incomplete due to the fragmentary state of the body. Patrick Besnier argues that, in Canterel's park, "la matière est comme saisie d'un irrépressible besoin d'échapper à sa forme, à son apparence 'normale' (mais ce mot n'a évidemment aucun sens à Locus solus!)" (Besnier 59).[106] While it is true that these inventions become their opposites, it is not a question of changing or discarding one form for another but of incorporating that otherness into one's own self. Canterel's inventions are able simultaneously "de devenir les autres et de rester les mêmes" (Foucault 97).[107] As the meticulously identical repetition of each movement, expression, word and gesture in the performances of the reanimated corpses suggests, form remains constant as various oppositional characteristics are united within it. Besnier's conclusion, though, stands: "La matière n'est pas fixe, elle est par nature instable, sans identité permanente" (Besnier 58).[108] As the subjects become other to themselves, they elude a permanently fixed and singular self. When the machine is incorporated into the self in the human automata, its capacity to produce new and varied forms from the repetition of the same becomes a means of exploring the variability that leaves identity ever mutable.

In automatically repeating scenes from their lives, all of the subjects are doubled against themselves, becoming at once the same as and other to their lived existence. As in Roussel's *procédé*, the repetition of the same generates otherness as the automatic reiteration of events serves to distance the subjects from their previous lives. Just as the automatic behaviour displayed by Janet's patients pointed to a multiple identity, Canterel's subjects are equally cut off from their normal, lived existed in these re-enactments of their experiences. They repeat the past as isolated events, dissociated from their living selves, their entire existence located within one scene with the remainder of their life experiences and their memories made inaccessible to them in their automated and mechanized state. Their automation ensures that while each scene that is "elicited

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[106] "It is as though matter is seized by in irrepressible need to escape its form, its 'normal' appearance (but this word evidently has no meaning at Locus Solus!)" (trans. mine)
[107] "to become others and to remain the same" (Ruas 78).
[108] "matter is not fixed, it is by nature unstable, without a permanent identity" (trans. mine).

mechanically is identical to what was originally felt, … [it is] cordoned off from a meaningful life narrative that can continue to unfold" (Rosenbaum 97). Limited to the perpetual repetition of the same sequence, the subjects are forbidden from continuing the life that was once theirs. Canterel himself notes that the goal of his initial experiments is "une complète illusion de la vie" rather than the restoration of a life allowed to continue on (Roussel, *Locus*, 129).[109] Occurring in place of such an artificial extension of life after death, the repetition of past experiences in these altered states becomes an imitation of that previous life rather than a continuation of it (Ford, *Republic*, 133). Indeed, Canterel considers the success of his experiment by noting "avec quelle rigueur absolue les tranches de vie reconstitués ressemblaient à leurs modèles" (Roussel, *Locus*, 155).[110] Thus, Canterel's subjects resist Janet's all-important integration and synthesis, necessary to incorporate experiences so as to form a sense of an indivisible self, and thereby become doubled or split against themselves. In this, Canterel's subjects are like Marcelle or Irène, for whom an alternate self existed without becoming an alternate personality in the way of Lucie, while nevertheless indicating a multiplicity of identity.

Yet, while the automatic behaviour of Canterel's subjects points to a multiplicity of identity that creates distance between their current performances and their original lives, the absolute exactitude of these repetition serves as an indication that they are at once the same selves even in this multiplication. These scenes perfectly reproduce every detail: "[M]obilité du regard, jeu continuel des poumons, parole, agissements divers, marche, rien n'y manquait" (Roussel, *Locus*, 129).[111] The precision with which the subjects enact these scenes ensures that there is no denying that they are identical and drawn solely from their normal existence. Canterel even tries as much as possible to use the materials from the initial event in setting the scenes in the glass cage: "Après identification de la scène, Canterel, se documentant soigneusement, effectuait en un point de la salle de verre une reconstitution fidèle du cadre voulu, en se servant le plus souvent possible des objets

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[109] "a complete illusion of life" (Cuningham 118).
[110] "the perfect exactitude with which the reconstituted slices of life imitated their originals" (Cuningham 144).
[111] "[M]obility of expression, the continual working of the lungs, speech, various actions, walking—nothing was missing" (Cuningham 118).

originaux eux-mêmes" (Roussel, *Locus*, 130-1).[112] Wherever the originals could not be acquired (or where they would have been altered or damaged through use in the repeated scenes, such as one letter on which the subject proceeds to write an addendum and another that becomes stained with blood), Canterel has perfect facsimiles made so that the subject can engage with them in the exact same manner. Just as "la répétition du langage avec lui-même qui par-delà le grand appareil méticuleux qui l'abolit, se retrouve tel quel, formé des mêmes matériaux, des mêmes phonèmes, de mots et de phrases qui s'équivalent," so too does the subject, after death, find himself returned to the same body, the same behaviours, the same actions, the same life they had led (Foucault 63).[113] The fact that they remain completely unaware of their surroundings outside of the scene they enact—their housing in the glass cage, or their removal to Canterel's park—indicates that they are experiencing the event just as they did the first time. Indeed, this is the appeal for their relatives, who have volunteered for Canterel's experiment and have come to *Locus Solus* "tendrement désireuses de voir quelqu'un des leurs, condamné sans espoir, revivre sous leurs yeux après l'instant fatal" (Roussel, *Locus*, 129).[114] They continue to participate in and observe the scenes because they feel that they are in fact witnessing that person's life again.

Most importantly, the scenes that each subject relives are ones they remember as significant to them in their first lives, that is, scenes that were an integral part of that first self's memories. Janet notes that dissociated traumatic memories initially bypass the conscious mind, never becoming consciously held memories, thereby distinguishing the waking self from the alternates in a way that pathologizes this multiplicity. However, Roussel never indicates that these are suppressed or lost memories recovered by this process, but rather that they were important parts of the living individual's conscious memory—the most significant of their experiences in life. Breaking from Janet by

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[112] "After identifying the scene, Canterel did some careful research and constructed a faithful reproduction of the required setting somewhere within the glass hall, availing himself as often as possible of the original objects themselves" (Cuningham 120).
[113] "The language repeats itself beyond the enormous, meticulous mechanism that annihilates it, only to find itself formed again with the same materials, the same phonemes, and equivalent words and sentences" (Ruas 48)
[114] "wishing tenderly to see one of their loved ones, condemned without hope, live again before their eyes after the fatal moment" (trans. mine)

demonstrating that, while these memories are cut off from the waking self they are nevertheless simultaneously part of the waking self, Canterel's subjects resist the compartmentalization of memory that separates the alternate personalities arising from automatic behaviour. Though, mechanized, they do no display the conscious attempts at unification of Roussel's *procédé* or of Canterel's involvement in *la hie*'s mosaic, these human automata nevertheless maintain a unified identity that maintains multiplicity within a singular form. In the automatic repetition of their performances, Canterel's subjects are both other to themselves and the same selves simultaneously. This is particularly emphasised by the third scene presented in the glass cage, that of the actor, Lauze, who repeats a scene from the role for which he was particularly famous, Roland de Mendebourg. During the re-enactment, Lauze never breaks character: his return to life is "uniquement inspirée par les planches" (Roussel, Locus, 144).[115] The play itself concerns a historical figure (one invented by Roussel), and the events depicted are historically accurate. Thus, in Lauze's automatic repetition, he is at once himself as the actor playing the role, and not himself as he re-enacts the life of Roland de Mendebourg.

Furthermore, in the penultimate scene presented in the glass cage, the variable nature of identity is again emphasised as the subject, Ethelfleda Exley, takes on multiple, oppositional roles. This scene reveals that, "[j]ust as machine and human forms can be interchanged, one cultural identity may also be swapped for another" (Mikkonen 251). Canterel's later narrative reveals how the portion of the story selected as the scene to be repeated automatically is one in which the character's various identities converge. The woman in this seventh scene suffering a neurotic attack at the sight of blood is Ethelfleda Exley, wife of Lord Alban Exley, an English peer. Ethelfleda is therefore a "pairesse," suggesting immediately the French word "paire" and her doubleness (Stoekl 47). Their marriage was a love match, Ethelfleda being the daughter of a poor colonel. As a child living in India, her father was killed before her eyes when he was attacked by a tiger during an expedition:[116] "D'intarissables flots vermeils coulant de la carotide ouverte

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[115] "wholly inspired by the stage" (Cuningham 133).

[116] Allan Stoekl suggests that blood itself becomes inherently double in this scene as it indicates both the poverty of the man who sheds it, and the class system enabling nobility that results from his (and others') sacrifice: "the same blood, her father's, was shed in India so that a society and an economic system that

avaient, pour jamais, donné à Ethelfleda l'horreur nerveuse du sang et, jusqu'à un certain point, des objets de couleur rouge" (Roussel, *Locus*, 169).[117] Her continued fear of blood and the colour red indicate that even as a peeress, Ethelfleda is still the impoverished girl who witnessed the attack. This fear prompts Ethelfleda to suppress even the pink of her nails: "Elle avait notamment adopté … une mode récente concernant certain étamage des ongles, qui … créait au bout de chaque doigt une sorte d'étincelant petit miroir" (Roussel, *Locus*, 169).[118] In suppressing the colour and the root her fear, Ethelfleda also tries to suppress the identity of the poor commoner betrayed by the blood that now maintains her as a peeress. Her blood is therefore a double indicator of her working-class origins and her new nobility.

The scene that Ethelfleda automatically repeats picks up the moment when she succumbs to her fear of red. While vacationing with her husband, she receives a letter:

> L'enveloppe offerte par lui [Casimir, a hotel employee] montrait, dans sa suscription noire, le mot *pairesse* tracé à l'encre rouge au-dessus du nom: *Lady Alban Exley*. Mort un an avant un frère aîné célibataire, le père d'Alban—nommé Alban aussi—n'avait jamais été que *lord de courtoisie* étranger à la pairie. Aussi, pour distinguer les deux ladies Alban Exley, avait-on respectivement recours aux termes *douairière* et *pairesse*. (Roussel, *Locus*, 170, original emphasis)[119]

The letter, a request for financial aid, is from Ethelfleda's childhood friend; wanting to keep the request secret, the young woman had written "pairesse" in bold red ink so as to ensure that the addressee would not be confused with her mother-in-law. The letter is directed to Ethelfleda as both the poor commoner who sympathises with the young woman as well as the rich peeress in a position to provide aid. Ethelfleda receives a shock

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honors lords and ladies (members of a nobility that luxuriously consumes wealth produced by workers) can exist" (Stoekl 46).

[117] "The endless flood of vermilion pouring from the open carotid had ever afterwards given Ethelfleda a neurotic horror of blood and, to some extent, of red-coloured objects" (Cuningham 158).

[118] "she had adopted a recent fashion of tinning the fingernails in a certain way, which created a kind of sparkling little mirror at each finger-tip" (Cuningham 158).

[119] The address, in black, on the envelope presented by him showed the word 'peeress' written in red ink above the name 'Lady Alban Exley'. Since Alban's father—also named Alban—had died one year before his bachelor elder brother, he had never been more than a lord by courtesy, and did not figure in the peerage. So, to distinguish between the two Ladies Alban Exley, people had recourse to the terms 'Dowager' and 'Peeress'. (Cuningham 159)

at the sight of the letter: “Voyant ressortir, en cette couleur rouge redoutée, le mot qui entre tous, justement, servait à la désigner de façon sûre, elle se fixa sur place, impressionnée, et, ne pouvant réprimer une crispation nerveuse, se piqua le pouce à une épine” on the rose she held (Roussel, *Locus*, 171).[120] The bloodstained letter becomes a double symbol of Ethelfleda’s doubleness as poor commoner and rich noblewoman. Her automatic repetition of this particular scene reveals a space of otherness within identity itself as she encompasses these oppositional characteristics.

The same automation that enables and reveals otherness within the identities of Canterel’s subjects is also the source of their creativity. Though Lauze may be the only one of these human automata whose stage is literal, each of the subjects’ automatic repetitions of their lives becomes a piece of theatre. The language of the theatre is used throughout the chapter, describing these figures as both characters and actors: the subjects are referred to as “personnages” and each is “habillé conformément à l’esprit de son rôle” (Roussel, *Locus*, 127, 131).[121] Each subject moves around on a unique stage-set constructed precisely so that he or she might enact the particular scene required by that role: a ruined chapel converted into a dungeon, an ornamental Catholic altar, a theatre, a room holding a single chair, an artist’s studio, a chamber for experimental medical treatments, a French hotel, and a study. Coming to the first of these stage sets, the narrator describes it just as a conventional theatre, as “une sorte de chambre carrée, où manquaient, pour qu’on pût bien et clairement la voir, le plafond et celui des quatre murs qui nous eût fait face de tour près en nous montrant son côté extérieur” (Roussel, *Locus*, 102-3).[122] By imitating their own lives, what was initially artless—the normal behaviour of a person living his life—has been endowed with new meaning as the subjects themselves become both theatrical performers and dramatic works. They are at once the characters in the story and the actors presenting it as they simultaneously relive the life of the past and re-enact that life in the present. It is that very multiplicity generated by their

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[120] “When she saw the word which, of all words, served to designate her precisely and unequivocally, standing out in this dreaded colour red, she was rooted to the spot in consternation and, unable to repress a nervous shudder, pricked her thumb upon a thorn” (Cuningham 159-60).
[121] “characters”; “dressed according to the character of his part” (Cuningham 117, 120).
[122] “a kind of square room all by itself… To make it fully and clearly visible, the ceiling and one of the four walls—the one whose exterior should have been facing us nearby—were missing” (Cuningham 093).

automation that recreates these scenes as theatre: each performance is one in which "cerner la différence et la singularité de chaque personnage devient le véritable drame" (Finter 157).[123] By locating the machine within the self, as Canterel's invention of *vitalium* and *résurrectine* does both literally and symbolically, the subjects gain the machine's capacity to derive the new from automatic repetitions of the same. Through this automation, incorporating otherness and becoming doubled against themselves, these subjects are transformed into works of art.

In addition to becoming theatre pieces themselves, many of the reanimated subjects also produce a new oeuvre d'art with each automatic repetition of the scene. Echoing the *procédé*'s and *la hie*'s capacity to produce the new from the repetition of the same, each of the artistically-inclined human automata produce original works and performances with each identical re-enactment. The poet, Gérard, records his poem in so ancient a set of books that only one pair remains, and so after each re-enactment the poem is effaced so as to be written anew during the next. The actor, Lauze, repeats the key scene of his play, just as any actor would in a second or third night's performance. Similarly, the child, Hubert Scellos, recites a poem by Ronsard that he had memorized and performed faultlessly for his mother's birthday, now repeating it verbatim in this automatic reproduction, just as any child who has memorized a passage would do when called upon to perform it again. But Canterel takes greatest pride in the artist Jerjeck, whose talent as a sculptor depends on the minutest gestures in its reliance on delicate and precise detailing, leaving Canterel with a means of demonstrating most clearly the absolutely perfect re-enactments of which his subjects are capable when automated. With each repetition, Jerjeck creates a new pair of sketches and a sculpture that are unequivocally identical to the originals he produced in life:

> Pourvu de son matériel exact des derniers temps, Jerjeck, mort, fit, en ratures d'abord, en cire nocturne ensuite, un Gilles identique à celui qui, de son vivant, avait paru dans les minutes en cause. L'expérience, renouvelée, fut chaque fois concluante, touchant l'extraordinaire finesse de l'œuvre ainsi créée. (Roussel, *Locus*, 161)[124]

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[123] "determining the difference and the singularity of each character becomes the real drama" (trans. mine).
[124] The dead Jerjeck, provided with the exact implements he had employed in the past, made a clown, first on the scraperboard then in nocturnal wax, identical to that produced during the relevant minutes of his life.

While the manner in which these works were created may suggest that they are mere copies of originals made during Jerjeck's lifetime, this is countered by the fact that their aesthetic and artistic merit is repeatedly stressed. When first seeing Jerjeck at work, the narrator describes the first ink sketch produced as "un vrai chef-d'oeuvre de grâce et de charme" and the second sketch, "même contemplé à rebours, nous séduisait par l'élégance de son fini" (Roussel, *Locus*, 112-3).[125] The sculpture itself "avançait vite, acquérant une finesse incomparable… A la fin nous eûmes sous les yeux une exquise figurine noire" (Roussel, *Locus*, 114-5).[126] While the sketches and sculpture are by necessity exact copies, they are not viewed as mere facsimiles but as original works of art.

To emphasise the originality of the works produced, the uniqueness of Jerjeck's singular methods and style is also emphasised in the initial presentation of the scene. Rather than a drawing in ink, Jerjeck begins with a white sheet covered in black ink. Once dried, he then removes the ink strategically with a scraper, leaving only the fine lines making up the outline of the clown. The signature clay which he uses for his sculptures, nocturnal wax, is also unique: the special speckling of white giving it the appearance of the night sky is a result of the fact that it is secreted by a certain plant. Finally, Jerjeck sculpts his clay using tools made from dried breadcrumbs, later revealed to be a habit from his days at school when he could not afford artists' tools. The unique manner in which Jerjeck draws his sketches and sculpts his clown stresses the originality of his process and the works derived from it in spite of the fact that it is now being repeated in a mechanized and automatic manner.

The threat to originality potentially posed by this automatic repetition is equally mitigated by the imitative quality of Jerjeck's sculpture even before his transformation

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The experiment was repeated and each time proved to be conclusive as regards the extraordinary delicacy of the work created in this way. (Cuningham 149-50)

[125] "a truly graceful and charming masterpiece" … "even seen the wrong way up, fascinated us by the elegance of its finish" (Cuningham 103).

[126] "made rapid progress and acquired an incomparable delicacy… At last we had an exquisite black figurine before our eyes" (Cuningham 104).

into a human automaton. Jerjeck's two sketches are of the front and back of a clown whose pose already has something of an imitative quality, as certain details of the design are drawn from Watteau. Jerjeck's two sketches create a single unified image: "[L]'absolue similitude de pose, d'allure et de proportions des deux résultats rendait indubitable le fait d'unicité touchant la conception de l'artiste" (Roussel, *Locus*, 113).[127] From this composite sketch, Jerjeck produces an identical clown with the nocturnal wax: "A mesure que l'ouvrage avançait, nous reconnaissions sans cesse mieux, en la figurine, le Gilles de tout à l'heure, dont elle était la servile copie sculpturale, comme en témoignaient, au reste, de continuels coups d'œil interrogateurs jetés par l'artiste sur la feuille à fond noir" (Roussel, *Locus*, 114).[128] In the shape, pose, gesture and expression, the sculpture is absolutely identical to the clown in Jerjeck's sketches, emphasising the point that in itself repetition does not detract from the artistic merit of the work produced.

Importantly, the sculpted clown, while an exact repetition of the clown in the sketches, is simultaneously the sketches' inverse. Jerjeck creates white lines with the specks in his special nocturnal wax wherever his ink sketch used black lines against the white background. The result is that the sculpture is the "parfait négatif en somme … du Gilles espiègle dont la feuille offrait le positif" (Roussel, *Locus*, 115).[129] Jerjeck introduces difference even as he traces identical lines to reproduce the exact same clown. Like the automatic action of the human automaton that now produces all three works of art, Jerjeck's sculpture is simultaneously an exact repetition of the original clown of the sketches and an entirely new work. The same is true of the automatic process by which he now makes all of his sculptures, and by which the other human automata produce drama and literature: the repetition of the same action serves to create a new and unique work of artistic merit every time. The same automation that locates multiplicity within the self produces the repetitious behaviour by which these works of art, embodying otherness and sameness at once, are created.

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[127] "[T]he complete identity of pose, appearance and proportions in the two productions made it impossible to doubt the singleness of the artist's conception" (Cuningham 103).
[128] "The further the work progressed, the better we were able to recognize the figurine as the clown we had beheld just now, of which it was an exact sculptural copy—as was in any case testified by the enquiring glances which the artist incessantly darted at the black-grounded sheet" (Cuningham 104).
[129] "a perfect negative of the playful clown whose positive was shown upon the sheet" (Cuningham 104-5).

Of course, unlike Trilby, the subjects of Canterel's experiments find themselves in altered states from which they will never awake. Like Janet's hysterical patients, the normal, lived existence is arrested: unconscious of anything outside their own automatic actions, they are unable to experience new events and impressions, endlessly looping the past. The text has a bittersweet tone to it as the relatives of the dead come to Canterel in an effort to recapture what has been lost to them; they are often at once saddened and comforted by the sight of their loved ones' re-enactments as they are at once restored and lost to life. Often, this is read as a comment on the absolutely insurmountable nature of death. Foucault writes that the repetition of life in these scenes is in fact a repetition of death: "La scène que joue la mort imitant la vie imite la mort de façon aussi vivante que l'avait vécue la vie. La limite que la résurrectine n'as pas abolie répète la vie dans la mort et dans la vie ce qui était déjà la mort" (Foucault 111).[130] He adds that Canterel's subjects "fonctionnent à la limite inférieure de la résurrection, sur ce seuil dont jamais elles ne tournent la clef; elles forment de cette résurrection somme l'image extérieure, discursive, mécanisée et absolument impuissante" (Foucault 111).[131] However, as the production of art with each repetition demonstrates, this endless repetition is not a futile exercise: though they cannot overcome death in this recovery of the past, the reanimate dead are not entirely powerless. In becoming automated, Canterel's subjects gain the capacity of the machine for endless repetition defying the limits of time: "[L]a machine rivalise avec l'homme par son pouvoir de répétition illimité. Alors que les activités humaines sont bornées dans le temps, la production machinique est infinie" (Basset 165).[132] Never losing their human qualities in this transformation, the subject's capacity for the production of art is extended beyond the limited time of their own lives. More than just the works they produce themselves, their knowledge and abilities are passed on as well: Jerjeck's student, Jacques Polge, watches the artist repeat his creative moments so that the disciple can study the master's techniques and apply them to his own artistry. Though

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[130] "The scene plays death imitating life imitating death in a manner as vivid as it was lived in life. The barrier not abolished by the *resurrectine* repeats life in death, and in life what was already dead" (Ruas 88-9).
[131] "function at the inferior limit of resurrection, on the threshold where they will never turn the key. They form the outward image of a discursive, mechanical, and absolutely powerless resurrection" (Ruas 88).
[132] "The machine rivals man by its powers of unlimited repetition. While human activities are confined to time, machine production is infinite" (trans. mine).

not an artistic example, the last scene reproduces what had otherwise been the mystery of François-Jules Cortier's actions before his suicide: it becomes understood that he followed clues that revealed his own father to be his fiancé's murderer. This new knowledge saves the life of the man erroneously jailed for the crime.

Moreover, this passing on of knowledge is repeated in Canterel's involvement with the human automata and their performances. After creating these human automata and placing them on their stage-sets, Canterel seems to step aside, allowing them to perform without any intervention being required of him. His role seems particularly minimized especially relative to his notable involvement with *la hie*, as the human side of the collaboration with the machine is taken over by the subjects themselves. Yet, while Canterel does not shape his performers in the same way that Svengali's intervention shaped Trilby, nevertheless he does have a role to play: it is his own narrative that provides the full account behind the initial descriptions provided by the narrator. This narrative allows all that the human automata experience to be conveyed to the audience, passing on their experiences and their stories. Just as the art that the human automata produce extends past their own lived existence, so does Canterel's story-telling leave each of his subjects with a lasting legacy. The incorporation of the machine into the human may not offer the possibility of life beyond death for the individual person, but it does offer the possibility of infinite life for their art, especially in collaboration with the others that take up their processes and their stories, a legacy made possible by the combination of human and machine.

* * *

The many combinations of human and machine that form *Locus Solus*, whether in Roussel's *procédé* and the mechanical use of language, in Canterel's collaboration with *la hie*, or with the machine located internally in the reanimated dead, all point to the capacity to generate infinite meaning from the automatic repetition of the same and the ability to harmonize that multiplicity within a singular image. The reanimated dead, in becoming human automata, are unique in that they make use of this capacity for harmonious multiplicity to convey the plural nature of identity enabled and revealed by automation. In light of both Janet's dissociation theory and Roussel's own *procédé*, in becoming doubled against themselves through the automatic repetition of the same

sequence of actions, the human automata allow multiplicity and otherness to be contained within an identity that maintains the unity of these variations within a singular form.

Though the words “reanimated dead” may initially call up impressions of the dehumanizing quality of mechanization and the uncanny sense of the lifeless acting in the absence of life, the connection of automation with artistic production and creativity troubles these anxieties. Producing performances that highlight every facet of the human experience, Canterel’s subjects infuse the same difference-generating repetition and unification of otherness that exists in their own identities into their art, both in becoming theatrical pieces themselves, and in the works of literature, drama and art that they subsequently produce. As the same automatic repetition translates this plurality of identity into captivating works of art recognized as masterpieces, Canterel’s subjects challenge the pathological perception of such multiplicity, and instead gesture towards the elimination of boundaries and the expansion of capacities of the self when allied with the machine.

Moreover, in these performances, the human automata are not only artists, but teachers, their audience taking up the knowledge and techniques passed on from these repetitions. The production of art, the passing on of knowledge, and Canterel’s collaborative efforts in making their stories known all point to the legacy made possible by the combination of human and machine efforts in these artistic productions. This seems to fulfill Roussel’s own desires, expressed in *Comment j’ai écrit certains de mes livres*, that his very special method of writing might provide him with some posthumous fame and recognition as other writers take up and apply his techniques. In fact it did: the Oulipo group picked up the premise of his *procédé*, combining mechanical processes and conscious efforts to produce works of literature, a famous example being Italo Calvino’s *If on a winter’s night a traveler* (Tresch 325). In becoming human automata, Canterel’s subjects test the boundary limits of the possible: automation, in opening a space of otherness within themselves, allows them to be at once human and machine, conscious and unconscious, alive and dead, scientific displays and oeuvres d’art, creative works and creative artists. Though they may never awake from their altered states, the artistic production and the creative legacy that result from this combination of human and machine points nevertheless to the possibility of a life after death.

Conclusion

It is rather fitting that George Du Maurier's *Trilby* and Raymond Roussel's *Locus Solus*, two extremely disparate novels that would seem to differ from each other in nearly every way, are united in their giving central importance to the figure of the human automaton. Casting the transformation of human into machine as one that retains the defining features of both rather than showing one side overcoming the other, these authors locate the same multiplicity and ability to embody oppositions within their characters' identities, while still maintaining a sense of a continuous self, that the figure itself suggests. As human automata, their performances explore the plural nature of a singular identity by translating the capacity to find otherness and variability in sameness and repetition into creative and artistic productions. These novels suggest that even in being automated and divided against oneself, one resists being disassembled or compartmentalized, finding in this unified variability a broadened sense of selfhood and an expanded capacity for artistic self-expression. By challenging attitudes that mechanization leads only to diminishment, fragmentation, and dehumanization, and instead imbuing these characters with a multiplicity that prompts an enriched and impactful creative experience for performer and audience alike, these novels challenge and push the boundaries of what it means to be human.

In reading *Trilby* and *Locus Solus* through their use of the figure of the human automaton, other themes that join the two novels become more readily apparent. By envisioning the interaction between Svengali and Trilby, and Canterel and his subjects as comparable with that between inventor and automaton, it becomes possible to reconsider the dynamics of these relationships. If the automata of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were built so that they could in turn produce their own creative works, so, too, can these relationships be seen for their collaborative nature. Rather than Trilby being overwhelmed and erased by her mesmerist, she engages with him, producing a performance that is a result of both her contributions and his. Canterel's inventiveness enables the reanimated dead to produce performances from which he then stands apart, only to return in a capacity that allows these performances to be understood and passed on. In the first case, the implications of such a collaborative effort point to the acceptance

and inclusion of the foreign, excluded other through the recognition that such otherness exists within the self. In the latter, collaborative efforts allow one's own performances, abilities and knowledge to be heard, understood, and imparted to the future, allowing one to leave a legacy that goes beyond the limitations of time and space. Both collaborations point to an interdependent relationship in which incorporating otherness and collaborating with the other become a means of improved self-expression, of expanded creative productivity, and of pushing the limits of human potential.

Reimagining the human automaton as the result of a collaborative relationship also suggests the way in which agency is understood in these two novels. Shifting from a relationship where one dominates and erases the other to one of interdependence allows these authors to recognize that the subject of mechanization is still involved to a significant degree. Though in their respective altered states they are capable only of automatic behaviour, both Trilby and the reanimated dead contribute substantially to their own performances as it is their own memories, identities, abilities, mannerisms and personalities that produce and inform the content, and that shape the form. The novels present an enabling vision of agency: rather than limiting agency to only the exercise of conscious volition, one is capable of directing and informing one's own actions even when one's will is suspended. Though every perceived weapon against the integrity of the self is launched at these characters, they defy the fragmentation and erasure of identity that supposedly ought to have resulted, suggesting that identity is made of sterner stuff. One's own sense of self retains its influence, directing one's behaviour even when consciousness is suspended and that control ought to have been lost.

Recall that it was this reduction of the role of consciousness that was perceived as the most threatening aspect of the automation theory proposed by T.H. Huxley, and the grounds for the arguments against it. Responding to Huxley, William Carpenter expressed his concern that dismissing consciousness meant dismissing agency when he wrote,

> I cannot anticipate the time when that belief [in the existence of 'self-determining power'] will be eliminated from the thought of Mankind; when the words 'ought,' 'duty,' 'responsibility,' 'choice,' 'self-control,' and the like, will cease to have the meaning we at present attach to them;—and when we shall really treat each other as automata who cannot help doing whatever our 'heredity' and 'environments' necessitate. (Carpenter xlviii-xlix)

In the spirit of Roussel's *procédé*, these novels seem to do precisely that: by broadening the scope of "self-determined" action to encompass that which is produced without any involvement of the conscious will, these novels gesture towards the new meanings to be found in such terms.

The unexpected agency found in the human automata reinforces these novels' efforts to interrogate contemporary anxieties surrounding the merger of human and machine displayed in the depiction of mechanization as dehumanizing and in the pathological interpretations of automatism. By associating the incorporation of the machine into the self with new avenues opened for creativity and artistic potential, these novels resist such readings and align themselves with more positive attitudes surrounding technological progress. The mechanized performances produced by Trilby and Canterel's subjects are not the rudimentary efforts of mechanical automata or industrial manufacture, but are masterworks that push the limits of what it is possible for humans to achieve. By internalizing the machine, both *Trilby* and *Locus Solus* suggest not only the possibilities offered by the use of machines in artistic production, but also highlight the newly available talents that arise from recognizing one's own machine nature.

These novels aim to dispel the anxiety surrounding mechanization by taking up the philosophical problem posed by the automaton concerning the possibility of distinguishing human from machine. By removing that key, human feature—conscious volition—the human automata featured in both *Trilby* and *Locus Solus* demonstrate that humans are fundamentally machines. However, by infusing their identities with the one quality derived from conscious volition that the machine is allegedly incapable of reproducing—variability—these human automata demonstrate that being machines does not dehumanize us. Rather, it extends our capacity for the most human of endeavours—creativity—and demonstrates, not a loss, but an expansion of the terms by which we understand what it means to be human.

If the capacity for variability is the one quality that rehumanizes these human automata, what should happen if this quality is then extended to the machine itself? The novels demonstrate that the same, exact action can become the source of infinite multiplicity, suggesting that it is not beyond the capabilities of the machine. Indeed,

Vaucanson's Flute Player was theoretically capable of it. A difficult instrument due to its "'undetermined' aperture," a successful flautist relies on the position of the lips and the force of the breath, "subject to an 'infinity' of variations," in order to play (Riskin 615). The technology of the period meant that Vaucanson limited his construction to only four variables, but these alone produced twelve tunes, prompting one to wonder what he could have achieved with more sophisticated technology allowing more and more subtle variables. Variability, it would seem, is not out of reach for the machine.

It is one thing to vary one's functions, and it is another to be able to apply those variations appropriately. This distinctly human feature was the chief complaint disproving the automatic nature of Kempelen's chess player: not only was it capable only of determined and fixed actions, but no matter how many of these it could theoretically reproduce, as an automaton could not respond to the moves of a willful opponent, could not strategize, such variety would have no bearing on a match. Only humans are capable of the kind of adaptive behaviour that signals conscious intelligence, and therefore, a machine could not possibly be capable of playing chess. At least, not until 1997, when IBM's supercomputer Deep Blue famously won a six-game series against world chess champion, Garry Kasparov. Fifteen years later, even the lowly home computer can now run basic chess programs capable of challenging and defeating the average player. The machine has proven itself capable of both infinite variations and the ability to apply them appropriately.

Even more recently, in 2011, another IBM supercomputer, Watson, participated in a *Jeopardy!* tournament, proving its capacity not only for variation and adaptability, but even pointing towards the possibility that a machine can think. IBM developed Watson to understand natural language, recognizing speech and responding orally. More than just a basic understanding of dictionary definitions, Watson is able to discern double meanings, puns, rhymes, and inferred hints. In coming up with a response, Watson "generates hypotheses—recognizing that there are different probabilities of various outcomes" and weighs the different possible answers before selecting a response (IBM). Watson is also capable of refining answers by "tracking feedback—learning from success and failure—to improve future results" (IBM). IBM's website notes that Watson's use of spoken language "break[s] down the barrier between people and machines" (IBM). While this

explanation was likely meant as a reference to the ease with which one might interface with the computer, it also points to Watson's capacity—like the automaton—to take on human functions and perform them in a distinctly human manner. Importantly, the capacity to learn language was the first of two criteria Descartes used to distinguish humans from machines as it demonstrates, for him, the uniquely human capacity to adapt and respond to ever-changing circumstances. Watson's great capacity to learn and use language seems to make the supercomputer a capable contender to compete in the Turing Test: if a judge cannot tell the difference between the linguistic responses from a human, and those from a computer program trying to give the impression of humanity, can the computer be said to think or to be intelligent?

Jeopardy! provided the ultimate setting to test Watson's capacity for language, hypothesising, learning, and adapting to changing circumstances—and in light of Descartes' assertion and Alan Turing's thought experiment, a test of his humanness. *Jeopardy!* is famously a game of language: "The clues given to contestants require analysis and understanding of subtle meaning, irony, riddles and other language complexities in which humans excel and computers traditionally do not" (IBM). Watson proved eminently successful: in a two-game combined-point match, IBM's supercomputer handily defeated the two best players ever to appear on *Jeopardy!*, all-time champions Ken Jennings and Brad Rutter. The final score was 77,147 dollars to Watson, 24,000 dollars to Jennings, and 21,600 dollars to Rutter. Watson easily beat humans at their own game, pointing to the fact that as technology progresses, the boundary line between human and machine is growing ever more porous and dissoluble. Watson even placed the sort of odd bet—6,435 dollars—that human players tend to make more for fun than for strategy. If Watson had appeared on *Jeopardy!* not as a computer monitor, but in a human form, what would have been left to distinguish him from his human opponents? Would someone not looking at the television screen as Watson responded correctly to clue after clue have realised the difference? Only the slightly mechanical intonation of Watson's speaking voice may have given the game away. Had all three players been behind the computer screens of the Turing Test, perhaps there would have been nothing to distinguish them.

Mixed in with the wonder at Watson's abilities during his appearance on *Jeopardy!* were the same anxieties and fears concerning the ever-increasing difficulty in distinguishing humans from machines to which Du Maurier and Roussel were responding a century earlier. Brad Rutter's comments in an interview before the match on his reasons for participating highlight precisely this apprehension: "There's a bit of a John Henry thing for me. I kind of like the idea of going up against a machine and maybe showing that humanity has something else going on that you can't—at least not yet—reproduce digitally" (IBM). The audience's laughter at Watson's unusual bets in the Daily Double clues points to the same worry that the machine is, perhaps, becoming too human: is Watson's uncanny behaviour the result of programmed mathematical algorithm, or a personality quirk—a ghost in the machine? Ken Jennings got the last word in on the subject of the human being overwhelmed by the machine when he wrote below his answer in Final Jeopardy!, "I for one welcome our new computer overlords" (Jeopardy!). Even in this joking manner, anxieties about the loss of our humanity in the face of the machine are still apparent. This entertaining performance of the remarkably-human machine carries with it all the concerns prompted by the automaton three centuries earlier, demonstrating the persistent discomfort with the idea addressed by *Trilby* and *Locus Solus*, that humans are nothing more than machines.

It has already been noted that in the nineteenth century, the meaning of the word "automata" shifted from referring to all apparently-spontaneous mechanisms to those capable of reproducing the actions of living beings, and particularly humans. The current definition offered by the *Oxford English Dictionary* extends this even further to include humans behaving as machines. The conflation of the two points to the ever-diminishing criteria on which to base a distinction between the human and the machine. But, as *Trilby* and *Locus Solus* demonstrate, to point to the human and the machine as indistinguishable does not mean that we lose our humanity. As the human automata in both novels demonstrate, it is not a matter of being one or the other, of being human because one is not a machine. Instead, they suggest, we are human because we are machines. If such is the case, in embracing the machine within us, we may have nothing to lose and everything to gain.

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Curriculum Vitae

Name:	Adrienne Orr
Post-secondary Education and Degrees:	McMaster University Hamilton, Ontario, Canada 2005-2009 B.A. The University of Western Ontario London, Ontario, Canada 2010-2012 M.A.
Honours and Awards:	Dean's Entrance Scholarship, The University of Western Ontario 2010 The Kit Memorial Scholarship, McMaster University 2009 The Joan Jackson Dunbar Travel Scholarship, McMaster University 2009 The Comparative Literature Prize, McMaster University 2007 Dean's Honour List, McMaster University 2005-2010
Related Work Experience:	Graduate Teaching Assistant – The University of Western Ontario *From Homer to Picasso: Western Culture through the Ages* 2010-2012 Undergraduate Teaching Assistant – McMaster University *Inquiry in the Humanities* 2010
Conference Experience:	Presenter. "Know Thyself: Dickens's Doubles and the Disruption of History in *A Tale of Two Cities*." May 2012. *Aftermaths: Revolution and Recovery* 4th Annual Graduate Conference Centre for the Study of Theory and Criticism The University of Western Ontario