

Symptomatic Writings:
Prefigurations of Freudian Theories and
Models of the Mind in the Fiction of Sheridan Le Fanu,
Wilkie Collins and George Eliot

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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Abstract

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This thesis examines ways in which the writings of Sheridan Le Fanu (1814-1873), Wilkie Collins (1824-1889) and George Eliot (1819-1880) anticipate aspects of the works of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939). It argues that psychoanalytic theories were a product of their time, finding their ancestry in Victorian psychological, philosophical, scientific and social thought, aspects of which also informed the work of Le Fanu, Collins and Eliot.

I foreground Freud's work of the 1890s, especially his *Project for a Scientific Psychology* (1950; written in 1895), the forerunner of *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), *The Unconscious* (1915), *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920) and *The Ego and the Id* (1923). The energy-filled psychical system the *Project* outlines is informed by nineteenth-century ideas on force. I discuss systemic equilibrium in Le Fanu's short stories, the tendency to inertia in Eliot's *Romola* (1862-3) and the mechanics of satisfaction in *Middlemarch* (1871-2) and *Daniel Deronda* (1876); all these concepts find roots in nineteenth- or pre-nineteenth-century spiritual or scientific thought, and prefigure Freud's *Project*. The association of ideas, a basic foundation of psychoanalysis, is discussed with reference to Collins's *Basil* (1852), *The Woman in White* (1860), *No Name* (1862) and *Armadale* (1866). I suggest how Collins's knowledge of the work of W. B. Carpenter (1813-1885) and Frances Power Cobbe (1822-1904), and Eliot's engagement with the ideas of George Henry Lewes (1817-1878) and Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) are evident in their fictions. Throughout, I show that unconscious mental processes were discussed decades before Freud.

I also consider how Victorian theories and fictions shed light on Freud. Theories of the fallibility of memory, which I argue impact on *The Moonstone* (1868), illuminate Freud's seduction theory episode of the 1890s. That Eliot, Lewes and Spencer equate unity with social and scientific progress interrogates Freud's divisive methodology. The emphasis on the value of ancestral experience in Eliot's late fiction suggests that we are the product of our predecessors.

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Introduction

When, from the year 1893 onwards, I plunged into investigations ... of the origin of mental disturbances, it would certainly never have occurred to me to look for a confirmation of my findings in imaginative writings. I was thus more than a little surprised to find that the author of *Gradiva*, which was published in 1903, had taken as the basis of its creation the very thing that I believed myself to have freshly discovered from the sources of my medical experience. How was it that the author arrived at the same knowledge as the doctor – or at least behaved as though he possessed the same knowledge?¹

Sigmund Freud's Reading

Sigmund Freud's reading of Wilhelm Jensen's 1903 novel *Gradiva* was in many respects symptomatic of his complex relationship with sources which were then claimed as supporting texts by psychoanalysis. In the first place, he did not find Jensen's text himself, but was recommended it by C. G. Jung, who, in Ernest Jones's telling phrase, 'called his attention to the novel'.² In reading the text, Freud's astonishment, expressed in the above passage, that an author could, as it seemed, almost by magic, come to the same conclusions about the mind's workings as himself, was not for him an unprecedented feeling. In a letter to the writer Arthur Schnitzler in 1906, Freud wrote, 'I have often asked myself in astonishment how you came by this or that piece of secret knowledge which I had acquired by a painstaking investigation of the subject'.³ In the years following 1906, the time which, according to Freud, heralded the end of the 'latency period' of psychoanalysis,⁴ he was informed more than once that already published

¹ Sigmund Freud, 'Delusions and Dreams in Jensen's "Gradiva"' (1907), in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. and ed. by James Strachey and others, 24 vols (London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1953-74), IX, 1-95 (p. 54). *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works* will hereafter be referenced as *SE*.

At this first reference to the *Standard Edition* I should note that in this thesis I will be attributing its editorship to James Strachey, its general editor, who, it hardly needs pointing out, did not single-handedly translate and edit all of Freud's works in these volumes. This seems to be common practice – Frank J. Sulloway and Jeffrey Masson are examples of major Freud scholars that attribute all editorial comment to Strachey. Strachey himself made it clear that his was the responsibility for 'the final decision upon every point whether of the translation or the commentary' ('General Preface', in *SE*, I, xiii-xxii (p. xxi)). I therefore cite Strachey as editor (apart from when referring to volume XXIV, which was edited after his death), although strictly technically I should perhaps refer to 'Strachey, and others', exact attribution being unclear.

² Ernest Jones, *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud, Volume II: 1901-1919, Years of Maturity*, 3 vols (New York: Basic Books, 1953-57), vol II: *1901-1919, Years of Maturity*, 341. According to Jones, Jung claimed that Freud wrote this essay especially to please him, as they had not yet met by this point. The essay therefore could be seen as something of a courting gesture, Freud's concession to outside influences.

³ Sigmund Freud to Arthur Schnitzler, 8 May 1906, in *Letters of Sigmund Freud* (1960), ed. by Ernst L. Freud, trans. by Tania Stern and James Stern (New York: Dover Publications, 1992), p. 251.

⁴ Sigmund Freud, 'On the History of the Psychoanalytic Movement' (1914), in *SE*, XIV, 1-66 (p. 27). This period lasted, according to Freud, 'for more than ten years', and started from about 1896, when he

thinkers held various pieces of the 'secret knowledge' of his theories. This circumstance had much to do with the fact that, as opposed to the state of 'splendid isolation' which he claimed to have undergone in the 1890s and early 1900s, now Freud was attracting a group of followers, many of whom read widely in philosophy and literature. Coming out of a period in which he 'did not have to read any publications, nor listen to any ill-informed opponents', which Freud saw as examples of the 'advantages and charms' of his solitary state ('On the History', p. 22), he must have been disconcerted to begin to realize the essentially illusory nature of his intellectual isolation. Isolation, real or imagined, was a position which appealed strongly to Freud. We can see this in his description of his disenchantment of the belief that repression, the 'corner-stone on which the whole structure of psycho-analysis rests' ('On the History', p. 16), was his original idea:

The theory of repression quite certainly came to me independently of any other source; I know of no outside impression which might have suggested it to me, and for a long time I imagined it to be entirely original, until Otto Rank ... showed us a passage in Schopenhauer's *World as Will and Idea* in which the philosopher seeks to give an explanation of insanity. What he says there about the struggle against accepting a distressing piece of reality coincides with my concept of repression so completely that once again I owe the chance of making a discovery to my not being well-read ... In later years I have denied myself the very great pleasure of reading the works of Nietzsche, with the deliberate object of not being hampered in working out the impressions received in psycho-analysis by any sort of anticipatory ideas. I had therefore to be prepared – and I am so, gladly – to forgo all claims to priority in the many instances in which laborious psycho-analytic investigation can merely confirm the truths which the philosopher recognized by intuition. ('On the History', pp. 15-16)

Many years later, in a speech honouring Freud's eightieth birthday, Thomas Mann took the attitude that Freud displays, in this very interesting passage, to its limits. By 1936, Freud's surprised discovery of his lack of priority had explicitly become what was only implied in 1914, a result of his heroic, stoic years battling alone:

I repeat that the profound sympathy between the two spheres [of literature and psychoanalysis] had existed for a long time unperceived. Actually we know that Sigmund Freud ... trod the steep path alone and independently, as physician and natural scientist, without knowing that reinforcement and encouragement lay to his hand in literature. He did not know Nietzsche, scattered throughout whose pages one finds premonitory flashes of truly Freudian insight; he did not know Novalis ... he did not know Kierkegaard ... and, finally, he did not know Schopenhauer, the melancholy symphonist of a philosophy of the instinct, groping for change and redemption. Probably it must be so. By his unaided effort, without knowledge of any previous intuitive achievement, he had methodically to follow out the line of his own researches; the driving force of his activity was probably increased by this very freedom from special advantage. And we think of him as solitary – the attitude is inseparable from our earliest picture of the man.⁵

Mann describes Freud in glowing terms, and one feels this is partly to compensate for what is, in places, a speech about how Freud's theories have been prefigured. If one is conversant with

separated from Breuer, with whom he had written *Studies on Hysteria* ('An Autobiographical Study' (1925), in *SE*, XX, 1-74 (p. 48)).

⁵ Thomas Mann, 'Freud and the Future', in *Essays of Three Decades*, trans. by H. T. Lowe-Porter (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971), pp. 411-28 (pp. 412-13).

the works of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, Mann writes, 'he must needs have been filled with a sense of recognition and familiarity when first ... he entered the realms of psychoanalysis and looked about him' ('Freud and the Future', p. 417). Describing the word-picture that Mann creates in the above passage, of Freud as solitary, battling pioneer, Richard Webster writes that it is 'a deeply impressive one. As a representation of the character of Freud's intellectual achievement it is, however, almost entirely false. For ... this myth of the hero was one which Freud himself consciously created, sometimes by destroying or suppressing the evidence which might conflict with it'.⁶

Freud's own 1914 discussion of the possible relevance of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche to his work is interesting in many ways, not least because it conveys much about Freud's assumptions about his own originality and how this attitude affected his working habits. As far as I discover, the passage that Freud describes is in Volume II of *The World as Will and Representation*. Schopenhauer's examples of 'a distressing piece of reality' are, 'things that powerfully prejudice our interests, wound our pride, or interfere with our wishes'. He writes that the mind naturally opposes these thoughts, in terms of creating a 'resistance on the part of the will to allow what is contrary to it to come under examination of the intellect'.⁷ In the extreme form of this mental tendency, Schopenhauer writes, there is 'a violent "casting out of one's mind" of something', which necessitates the putting back into the mind of something else to fill the gap, a process which naturally leads to mental illness (*The World as Will*, II, 401). In these ideas Freud recognized a prefiguration of his theory of repression. However, Schopenhauer's description of the mind's processes could also be seen in some sense to describe Freud's early attitude to the issue of originality. Freud betrays himself in the above passage. The language he uses in explaining that he has not read Nietzsche, ('I have denied myself the very great pleasure [*Genuß*]',⁸ seen here in a strange chance conjunction with Schopenhauer's definition of reality, starts to suggest very basic motives behind Freud's reading behaviour. I think it possible that Freud here overstates the pleasure he would gain from the perusal of Nietzsche, in order to try to hide the greater pleasure he feels in the idea of being original, a pleasure he cannot lightly relinquish.⁹

Freud's early master Charcot taught that, in Freud's own words 'the greatest satisfaction a man could have was to see something new – that is, to recognize it as new; and he remarked

⁶ Richard Webster, *Why Freud Was Wrong: Sin, Science and Psychoanalysis* (London: Fontana, 1996), p. 13.

⁷ Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation* (1819), trans. by E. F. J. Payne, 2 vols (New York: Dover Publications, 1966), II, 400.

⁸ Sigmund Freud, 'Zur Geschichte der Psychoanalytischen Bewegung' (1914), in *Gesammelte Werke, Werke aus den Jahren 1913-1917*, 18 vols (London: Imago, 1940-52; Frankfurt Am Maim, 1868), X, 53.

⁹ There is a possibility that Freud's contact with the ideas of Schopenhauer may have been established rather earlier than he claims in his autobiographical accounts. Frank J. Sulloway comments that Freud, as a student, was for five years a member of a Reading Society, which discussed the works of Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and Wagner (*Freud, Biologist of the Mind: Beyond the Psychoanalytic Legend* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992), p. 468).

again and again on the difficulty and value of this kind of “seeing”.¹⁰ In the 1890s, Freud’s letters to Wilhelm Fliess revealed a scholar who had taken this to heart. Paul Roazen, to whose invaluable section on ‘Priorities’ in his *Freud and his Followers* I am indebted, testifies that at that time, ‘Freud had written that “I do not want to read, because it stirs up too many thoughts and stints me of the satisfaction of discovery”’, and that later in his career

To a pupil in 1909 Freud wrote that he was ‘really very ignorant about my predecessors. If we ever meet up above they will certainly greet me ill as a plagiarist. But ... it is such a pleasure to investigate the thing itself instead of reading the literature about it.’¹¹

The thought of the possibility of being deprived of this pleasure, this satisfaction, was enough to prompt symptoms of anxiety. He wrote to Fliess in 1898, ‘I opened a recently published book by Janet, *Hystérie et idées fixes*, with a pounding heart and put it aside again with my pulse calmed. He has no inkling of the key.’¹² The extent of the forces behind this anxiety, springing from a deep-seated need for fame, can be seen in a letter to Freud’s fiancée, also cited by Roazen, but from which I will quote at more length:

[Breuer] told me he had discovered that hidden under the surface of timidity there lay in me an extremely daring and fearless human being. I had always thought so, but never dared tell anyone. I have often felt as though I had inherited all the defiance and all the passions with which our ancestors defended their Temple and could gladly sacrifice my life for one great moment in history. And at the same time I always felt so helpless and incapable of expressing these ardent passions even by a word or a poem. So I have always restrained myself, and it is this, I think, which people must see in me.¹³

But, as I would like to suggest in this Introduction, in the 1890s at least, Freud did not restrain his thirst for fame and priority as much as he would perhaps have wanted. His lack of reading was a symptom. A fore-echo of Freud’s extraordinarily topsy-turvy words in his description of the discovery of Schopenhauer’s knowledge of repression, ‘once again I owe the chance of making a discovery to my not being well-read’ can be seen in an episode of academic plagiarism which Roazen describes:

In the course of illustrating the human ‘tendency to forget what is disagreeable’ [in *The*

¹⁰ Sigmund Freud, ‘Charcot’ (1893), in *SE*, III, 7-23 (p. 12).

¹¹ Paul Roazen, *Freud and his Followers* (London: Allen Lane, 1976), p. 212.

¹² Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 10 March 1898, in *The Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 1887-1904*, trans. and ed. by Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985), pp. 301-02 (p. 302). Hereafter, *Freud-Fliess*. Masson’s note to Freud’s account of this reading experience is interesting: ‘Presumably a reference to Pierre Janet, *Névroses et idées fixes* ... There is almost no mention of sexuality, which may be what Freud is referring to. Further on, however, Janet ... describes the seduction of a seven-year-old girl and explains the suicide attempts and hysterical attacks in a fourteen-year-old as due to attempted rape.’ (*Freud-Fliess*, p. 302 n.) First, then, Freud is inaccurate in citing the name of Janet’s book, and secondly, it appears that he may not have read far enough to see that in fact Janet did have, in his terms, some sort of ‘inkling of the key’ of sexual trauma. As elsewhere, a combination of Freud’s wishful thinking that he should not be prefigured, and his over-impatience to ascertain this, show through in his rather careless reading behaviour.

¹³ Sigmund Freud to Martha Bernays, 2 February 1886, in *Letters of Sigmund Freud*, pp. 200-04 (pp. 202-03).

Psychopathology of Everyday Life], Freud later cited how he had forgotten in 1900 to acknowledge Fliess's notion of the role of repressed bisexuality in neurosis. 'It is painful', Freud admitted, 'to be requested in this way to surrender one's originality'. (Roazen, p. 108)

This was by no means the only time that this sort of event occurred in Freud's career. His theory that sexuality was at the root of the neuroses was, he later realised, triggered by utterances made by Charcot, Breuer and Chrobak, a gynaecologist.¹⁴ What I would like to emphasize about the above passage, however, is that in it Freud gives the impression that he has started his career with the assumption that one is original until proved otherwise. This explains much about the fact that, especially in the 1890s, in his self-proclaimed period of isolation, he preferred not to read. His natural inclination was not to face what might be the reality about the priority of his ideas, which, to paraphrase Schopenhauer, would have prejudiced his interests, wounded his pride, and interfered with his wishes. Indeed, the picture may be a little more complex than this. In an article entitled 'Freud's library and his Private Reading', Edward Timms discusses Freud's suggestion, made in his interpretation of *Gradiva*, for example, that it was not until the mid 1900s that he recognized the possibility of parallels between literature and psychoanalysis. Timms points out that Freud was in fact, from childhood, an avid reader of literature. Therefore, he writes, 'we must assume that as a reader he passed through a kind of "latency period", during which the formative reading experiences of his childhood became obscured by his commitment to medical science' and became 'no longer fully conscious', that is, inaccessible to his intellectual memory on some level.¹⁵ Indeed, Roazen points out that in a very late work, 'Analysis Terminable and Interminable' (1937), Freud wrote, 'I can never be certain, in view of the wide extent of my reading in early years, whether what I took for a new creation might not be an effect of cryptomnesia'.¹⁶ Cryptomnesia, literally, hidden or secret memory, is an interesting word, suggestive of the crypts – underground vaults or passages, whose name springs from the same root.¹⁷ This late admission of wide reading in youth, put against Freud's self-reported 'ignorance of my predecessors' in 1909, is rather startling, and, juxtaposed with the word cryptomnesia, raises interesting, though unanswerable questions about the nature of the history of Freud's ideas; for 'hidden' and 'secret' things can be made so

¹⁴ Freud recounts this incident in 'On the History of the Psychoanalytic Movement' – 'But these three identical opinions, which I had heard without understanding, had lain dormant in my mind for years, until one day they awoke in the form of an apparently original discovery' ('On the History', p. 13). As he later revealed in his 'Autobiographical Study', Freud realized in the very process of writing his 1914 retrospective that this theory had been suggested to him by Charcot, Breuer and Chrobak. In his 1925 work he adds to his account – 'Nor was I then aware that in deriving hysteria from sexuality I was going back to the very beginnings of medicine and following up a thought of Plato's. It was not until later that I learnt this from an essay by Havelock Ellis' ('Autobiographical Study', p. 24). Having admitted all this, he still writes of the importance of sexuality, on the same page, as 'my surprising discovery'.

¹⁵ Edward Timms, 'Freud's library and his Private Reading', in *Freud in Exile: Psychoanalysis and its Vicissitudes*, ed. by Edward Timms and Naomi Segal (London: Yale University Press, 1988), pp. 65-79 (p. 72).

¹⁶ 'Analysis Terminable and Interminable' (1937), in *SE*, XXIII, 209-53 (p. 245); cited in Roazen, p. 210.

¹⁷ See *Oxford English Dictionary*, ed. by J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner, 2nd edn, 20 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), IV, 95. Hereafter, *OED*.

consciously or by unconscious processes. A convenient degree of responsibility is taken from the mind that unconsciously represses memories, hence I think Freud's insistence on this unconscious process to explain the appearance of various nineteenth-century sources in his work. Conscious hiding is a different matter; and the fact that Freud undertook a large amount of destruction of his notes and papers twice in his life does not put him in a favourable light when one considers this possibility.

Schopenhauer, in *The World as Will and Representation*, describes the process that a healthy mind undergoes after it has, by necessity, overcome the natural inclination to ignore an unfavourable reality:

Every new adverse event must be assimilated by the intellect, in other words, must receive a place in the system of truths connected with our will and its interests, whatever it may have to displace that is more satisfactory. As soon as this is done, it pains us much less; but this operation itself is often very painful, and in most cases takes place only slowly and with reluctance. (*The World as Will*, II, 400)

Freud's embrace, it is true, in his analysis of *Gradiva*, of the creations of the artist in relation to psychoanalysis seems entirely warm and generous. He not only finds a place for writers of fiction in the system of Freudian theory, but asserts that psychoanalysis has much to learn from them:

But creative writers are valuable allies and their evidence is to be prized highly, for they are apt to know a whole host of things between heaven and earth of which our philosophy has not yet let us dream. In their knowledge of the mind they are far in advance of us everyday people, for they draw upon sources which we have not yet opened up for science. ('Jensen's "Gradiva"', p. 8)¹⁸

The creative writer, Freud continues in this essay, 'has from time immemorial been the precursor of science, and so too of scientific psychology ... Thus the creative writer cannot evade the psychiatrist nor the psychiatrist the creative writer' (p. 44). Thomas Mann, thirty years later, summed up his view from his vantage point in history by saying, 'the close relation between literature and psychoanalysis has been known for a long time to both sides' ('Freud and the Future', p. 412). The picture, however, is a little more complicated, for the admiration psychoanalysis had for literature (under which head Mann seems to include the philosophy of

¹⁸ It is interesting that Freud paraphrases *Hamlet* here. Ernest Jones testifies that Freud was a keen reader of Shakespeare, and had started reading his works from the age of eight (Ernest Jones, *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud, Volume I: The Formative Years and the Great Discoveries, 1856-1900*, 13th edn, 3 vols (New York: Basic Books, 1960), I, 21). This may have been another writer whose effects on Freud's thinking and imagination could have been operative, though unconscious. Freud was fond of quoting from literature to support his argument, particularly the works of Goethe. See *Totem and Taboo* (1913), in which a passage from Goethe's *Faust* is used to illustrate the idea of inheritance (in *SE*, XIII, vii-162 (p. 158)), and *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), in which Freud uses Goethe's phraseology to describe the driving nature of the repressed instinct's search for some sort of satisfaction (in *SE*, XVIII, 1-64 (p. 42). Hereafter, *Beyond*). If these are ideas with which he was familiar from his early reading, there is the very real possibility that they had in fact gone to inform his scientific and imaginative thought, his way of seeing certain of the mind's processes, and, having formed a tally with his theories, were then consciously used as support, as if discovered after such theories were conceived.

Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and others) was actually rather more conditional than it appeared to be. In 1914, as we have seen, helped by a combination of his growing fame, the slow revelation of the number of his predecessors and also, no doubt, by the fact that he had developed a contempt for the sort of petty prize-grabbing academic behaviour that he had seen among his followers,¹⁹ Freud wrote of his gladness to forsake claims to priority ‘in the many instances in which laborious psycho-analytic investigation can merely confirm the truths which the philosopher recognized by intuition’. This idea of intuition is key to Freud’s acceptance of the philosopher’s views. Its counterpart in the artistic world is revealed by Freud in his 1912 Postscript to the Second Edition of his essay on *Gradiva*:

In the five years that have passed since this study was completed, psycho-analytic research has summoned up the courage to approach the creations of imaginative writers with yet another purpose in view. It no longer merely seeks in them for confirmations of the findings it has made from unpoetic, neurotic human beings; it also demands to know the material of impressions and memories from which the author has built the work, and the methods and processes by which he has converted this material into a work of art. It has turned out that these questions can be most easily answered in the case of writers who (like our Wilhelm Jensen, who died in 1911) were in the habit of giving themselves over to their imagination in a simple-minded joy in creating. (‘Jensen’s “Gradiva”’, p. 94)

In Freud’s view, creativity, coming from the depths of the artistic mind, will support and sustain analytic theory; it will reveal the unconscious, at the same time as employing some censorship of it. This indeed was a theory that he developed in many commentaries on art and literature. However, Jensen’s understanding of the unconscious mind’s processes may not just have been a matter of intuition, of ‘simple-minded joy in creating’. Just after the essay on *Gradiva* was published, in 1907, Freud wrote to Jung that when Jensen had written to him, in response to the publication of the article, ‘he suggested the agreement [with psychoanalysis] could be ascribed to poetic intuition, and partly perhaps to his early medical studies’.²⁰ Jensen’s text, then, was a mixed product of art and science. However, Freud overlooks this element which its writer believes is a contribution to the formation of *Gradiva*, adopting, it must be said, rather a patronising tone in doing so, writing of ‘our Wilhelm Jensen’ and his ‘simple-minded joy’.

In this thesis I will be looking at three Victorian writers whose works were, like Jensen’s, more than a simple-minded joy in creating, whose fiction was in part a product of its environment, an environment which was permeated with scientific theories on the mind and body. George Henry Lewes, in *The Principles of Success in Literature* (1865) gives some idea of the nineteenth-century view of what went into a work of art, in a description of the nature of genius. This description, in some sense, encompasses mental processes that are hidden (which tallies with Freud’s view of creativity), but Lewes, having quoted Ruskin on the ‘vast

¹⁹ In ‘On the History of the Psychoanalytic Movement’, written in the aftermath of Freud’s split with Alfred Adler and Jung, Freud wrote of the early days of the Vienna Psycho-Analytic Society, ‘nor was I able to stifle the disputes about priority for which there were so many opportunities’ (‘On the History’, p. 25).

²⁰ Sigmund Freud to C. G. Jung, 26 May 1907 in *Letters of Sigmund Freud*, pp. 252-54 (p. 253).

storehouses' of memory which contribute to artistic production, portrays the mind of the artist as a realm of almost endless possibility, fed by countless memories:

Genius is rarely able to give any account of its own processes. But those who have had ample opportunities of intimately knowing the growth of works in the minds of artists, will bear me out in saying that a vivid memory supplies the elements from a thousand different sources, most of which are quite beyond the power of localisation – the experience of yesterday being strangely intermingled with the dim suggestions of early years, the tones heard in childhood sounding through the diapason of sorrowing maturity; and all these kaleidoscopic fragments are recomposed into images that seem to have a corresponding reality of their own.²¹

Accepting the difficulty of defining what makes genius, and that the work of some of the writers I will examine is more complex than that of others, these words bear as much relevance to the working activities of the mind of Sigmund Freud as they do to those of Sheridan Le Fanu, Wilkie Collins and George Eliot. It is perhaps worth registering here the opinion of Henri Ellenberger, who writes: 'No doubt Freud could have been one of the world's foremost writers'.²² We have seen the relevance of Lewes's view of creativity to Freud in his patchy remembrances of ideas which he had originally claimed as his, but which proved to be inspired by utterances from Charcot, Fliess, and others. The products of the minds of the fiction writers I have chosen to consider, and the authenticities of the 'corresponding realit[ies]' that they create are very varied; this is partly why I am bringing them together in this thesis, to suggest that not only do Le Fanu, Collins and Eliot, although quite disparate writers, all draw, consciously and unconsciously from endless sources in their environment, but that a few of these sources are the same as, or connected with, those that Freud would later use, consciously or unconsciously, from which to form his theories. It is clear that what will arise from this process are prefigurations, in the literature I will examine, of certain aspects of Freudian theories and models of the mind. Before examining the nature of this undertaking, which is by no means a straightforward one, I will need to set out the parameters of what I believe is being prefigured in Victorian literary texts; in other words, on which 'Freudian theories and models of the mind' I will be concentrating, and why.

Sigmund Freud's Writing: Moving Towards a Sphere of Focus

A survey of the most eminent Freudian critics is an instructive lesson in how studies on the precursors of Freud can develop. Criticism examining Freud's sources has tended to produce such tomes as Frank J. Sulloway's 1979 book, *Freud: Biologist of the Mind* and Henri Ellenberger's *The Discovery of the Unconscious* (1970). A rather more recent work examining a wide range of influences on Freud, including Western religious thought, in conjunction with a

²¹ George Henry Lewes, *The Principles of Success in Literature* (1865) (London: Walter Scott, n. d.), pp. 77-78.

²² Henri Ellenberger, *The Discovery of the Unconscious: The History and Evolution of Dynamic Psychiatry* (New York: Basic Books, 1970), p. 467.

close critical appraisal of the minutiae of Freud's theories, is Richard Webster's 1995 publication, *Why Freud was Wrong*, also a very long book. Ellenberger's comprehensive work, which surveys dynamic psychiatry from the ancient world to the intellectual and therapeutic descendants of Freud, follows up possible 'influences' on psychoanalysis from cultural movements to Freud's immediate teachers. And although the latter are discussed in some detail, it is rather the former which Ellenberger takes pains to give a picture of, for his thesis is based on the idea that the figure of Freud had much less to do with the emergence of psychoanalysis than cultural circumstance. A much-quoted passage (the first part of which neatly captures the myth with which Thomas Mann so obviously identified Freud) condenses and emphasizes the main points of Ellenberger's argument:

A rapid glance at the Freudian legend reveals two main features. The first is the theme of the solitary hero struggling against a host of enemies, suffering 'the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune' but triumphing in the end. The legend considerably exaggerates the extent and role of anti-Semitism, of the hostility of the academic world, and of alleged Victorian prejudices. The second feature of the Freudian legend is the blotting out of the greatest part of the scientific and cultural context in which psychoanalysis developed, hence the theme of the absolute originality of the achievements, in which the hero is credited with the achievements of his predecessors, associates, disciples, rivals, and contemporaries.

The legend discarded, we are permitted to see the facts in a different light. Freud is shown as having an average career of the contemporary academic man in central Europe, a career whose beginnings were only slightly hampered by anti-Semitism, and with no more setbacks than many others ... Much of what is credited to Freud was diffuse current lore, and his role was to crystallize these ideas and give them an original shape. (*The Discovery of the Unconscious*, pp. 547-48)²³

The section of Ellenberger's book on 'Freud's sources' (pp. 534-46), because of his interest in a mixture of immediate influence and cultural sweep is, in essence, an impressive and wide-

²³ It is worth citing the opinion of another, rather more vehement critic of Freud at this juncture, as he provides an interesting extreme of what Ellenberger is saying here, and of what Sulloway writes about Freud's destruction of his sources, quoted a little later in this introduction. The work of Frederick Crews is the measure of the most radical feeling about Freud along these lines. It is also interesting as it is much more recent than Ellenberger's work, and so can take in what other radical critics have written. In *Memory Wars: Freud's Legacy in Dispute*, Crews enumerates the tradition from which his criticism springs, then provides a picture of Freud that forms a counterpart to the one Ellenberger paints: 'Since the 1970s, a rapidly growing number of independent scholars - including among others Henri Ellenberger, Paul Roazen, Frank Cioffi, Frank J. Sulloway, Peter J. Swales, E. M. Thornton, Morton Schatzman, Han Israëls, and Phyllis Grosskurth - have been showing us a different Freud, darker but far more interesting than the canonical one. According to their revisionist view, our would-be Prometheus was highly cultivated, sophisticated, and endowed with extraordinary literary power, sardonic wit, and charm, but he was also quite lacking in the empirical and ethical scruples that we would hope to find in any responsible scientist, to say nothing of a major one.'

'Now we are beginning to discern a notably willful and opportunistic Freud who appears to have thrown together his magisterial-looking claims from various unacknowledged sources - some of them more folkloric than scientific - while passing them off as sober inferences from the data of his clinical practice. Once having arrived at those claims, we see, he adhered to them with a blind, combative stubbornness - though not without willingness to expand the system on an ad hoc basis to encompass newly perceived difficulties. And he promoted that conceptually overstuffed system by means of devious rhetorical maneuvers that disarmed criticism without obliging Freud himself to take the criticism into material account. Through all his conduct, at least from the 1890s onward, runs a note of existential daring and high disdain that could hardly be more remote from ordinary scientific prudence. Fiercely believing in his general vision yet stooping to low tricks in defense of it, this Freud is a saturnine self-dramatizer who defies us to see through his bravado and provides us with tantalizing autobiographical clues for doing so' (Frederick Crews, et al., *Memory Wars: Freud's Legacy in Dispute* (London: Granta

ranging list, including such elements as the events of Freud's own life, his masters and contemporaries, patients and disciples, Romantic psychiatry, the French moralists of the seventeenth century, Ibsen, the great writers, 'the Greek Tragedians, Shakespeare, Goethe, and Schiller' (p. 540), Jewish mysticism, positivism, Darwin and Marx. 'However,' Ellenberger writes at the end of his survey, 'the closest approach to psychoanalysis is to be found in the philosophers of the unconscious, Carus, von Hartmann, and particularly Schopenhauer and Nietzsche' (p. 542).

Ellenberger's bewildering list (and I have not enumerated all the elements in it) has been supplemented by other critics, who have most notably mentioned Immanuel Kant as a precursor of Freud.²⁴ The field of criticism covering prefigurations of Freud is a mass of valid and alluring investigative possibilities, and to attempt either to follow up all of these proposed precursors, or indeed one or two of them in great detail and with relevance to all of Freud's *oeuvre* would simply be folly in a thesis concerning, first and foremost, Victorian literary texts. A largely different critical approach is required. While reserving the option of including wider sources which I believe form interesting connections between the nineteenth century and Freud, and which shed illumination on the ways that Victorian fiction prefigures his theories and models of the mind, my emphasis in this thesis will also take inspiration from the approaches of the 1960s critics Peter Amacher and Ola Andersson. These commentators, who write in the tradition of Maria Dorer (1932) and Siegfried Bernfeld (1944), but benefit from a certain amount of primary material first published in 1950 that their predecessors did not have,²⁵ have distinguished themselves and formed the foundations for a great number of later appraisals of Freud, by concentrating in detail on a relatively short period of his career. Andersson looks at Freud's works from 1886 to 1896, and Amacher examines his early neurological education. The results of such a methodical and specific approach can be seen in Ellenberger's account of the progress of critical thought regarding Freud's neurological career:

The first historians of psychoanalysis divided Freud's scientific career into a prepsychoanalytic and a psychoanalytic period. They considered Freud as a neurologist who left his first vocation to found a new psychology. It was later recognized that a knowledge of the first period is necessary for a full understanding of the origin of psychoanalysis. An even closer examination of the facts reveals a definite line of evolution throughout the prepsychoanalytic period. (p. 474)²⁶

Books, 1997), pp. 35-36).

²⁴ Ola Andersson is one of these (see *Studies in the prehistory of Psychoanalysis: The etiology of psychoneuroses and some related themes in Sigmund Freud's scientific writings and letters, 1886-1896* (Stockholm: Scandanavian University Books, 1962), pp. 195-97.

²⁵ The Fliess papers, which I will discuss in detail later.

²⁶ Although Andersson's title starts 'Studies in the prehistory of Psychoanalysis' she makes clear that this sectioning between these different phases of Freud's career is essentially erased with the progress of her work. She writes that in the decades following 1896, the ideas that Freud had developed up until this time 'were to become of central importance in the development of psychoanalysis. Though, indeed, they soon lost their significance in the specific form that they had been given ... they reappeared in new variants ... Although it is beyond the scope of the following investigations to inquire into these later developments, the study of the prehistory and first emergence of these ideas in Freud's writings has been undertaken on

Ernest Jones, whose place in Freud's circle gives him a very different outlook from Ellenberger, and whose historical position (1953) means that he wrote before Andersson and Amacher, also acknowledged that a line could be traced through Freud's early work to the end of his career. Jones writes, 'in Freud's theory of the mind at about the turn of the century there were permanent elements to which he adhered all his life' (Jones, I, 365).

Of special interest in this thesis will be evidence of Freud's developing philosophy of mind which had hardened into lasting theoretical mainstays by 1900: his work of the 1890s. This was a period in Freud's life, as we have already seen, in which he portrayed himself as being intellectually alone, and, leaving aside the many debates on the validity of this claim,²⁷ it is nevertheless true that at this time Freud's work was, more perhaps than at any subsequent time, a product of his relative solitude, unmixed with the work of any followers, and produced before others could inform him of his predecessors.²⁸ The 1890s, in some ways, were a time of great change and development in Freud's thought (and we can learn much from his mistakes and false starts), yet held certain stable elements, part of whose immediate sources are relatively easily traced. They form, in my belief, and in the belief of many critics, a very interesting link between nineteenth-century theories of neurology, biology and psychophysics, and later Freudian theory. They contain many of the themes that I will discuss in Victorian literary texts, namely, those of the origin of symptoms, force and the economy of the mind, the association of ideas and the workings of memory.

Peter Amacher, in concluding his study of the influence of Freud's neurological education on his later, more famous works, writes:

A comprehensive account of the development of Freud's thought must consider the influence on it of his neurological education. When he began the psychoanalytic phase of his career, if one wishes to separate it from the neurological phase, he had a rather complete scheme of how the nervous system and its mental concomitants functioned ... It has been pointed out that this scheme shaped theories that Freud held to throughout his career, such as that of dreams as wish-fulfillment processes and that of infantile sources of excitation. It is unlikely that Freud was influenced by the ideas of his teachers in these early but crucial theories and not in the wider development of psychoanalysis.²⁹

Amacher builds to the conclusion that Freud's wish-fulfillment theory and that of the infantile sources of sexuality arise from what he learnt from his masters. He does this through looking at how he followed their ideas from the rather primitive theory of reflex function postulated by the

account of their later historical influence' (Andersson, pp. 2-3).

²⁷ Whether he was actually alone is a constant matter of critical debate, the consensus of critics such as Ellenberger and Sulloway being that Freud exaggerated his solitude at this time. Ellenberger suggests that Freud's belief that he was alone was in fact a symptom of a 'creative illness' which he suffered in the 1890s (*The Discovery of the Unconscious*, p. 449). Sulloway argues that the concept of his own isolation was essential to Freud's self-belief and status, and that in fact 'Freud never stopped feeling isolated, no matter how famous he later became' (Sulloway, p. 478).

²⁸ Freud's collaboration with Breuer in the early to mid-1900s, and his rather intense friendship with Fliess which inspired him intellectually, are exceptions to this solitude, but importantly, they are more traceable, finite, and simple than relations with his followers from the mid-1900s onward.

²⁹ Peter Amacher, *Freud's Neurological Education and its Influence on Psychoanalytic Theory*,

mechanist Ernst Brücke, Freud's teacher, through the work of 'the great Meynert' on brain anatomy and neurology,³⁰ to the dynamics and processes of the experience of satisfaction, which Meynert and Sigmund Exner³¹ wrote about and which inspired these particularly 'Freudian' ideas on sexuality and wish fulfilment. The last connection that Amacher makes is in a sense the least important (although worthy of note) because the idea of the 'experience of satisfaction' leads to so many other 'Freudian' theories, from the mechanics of the pleasure principle to issues concerned with the development of intellectual thought and other characteristics of civilized life. The processes involved in 'the experience of satisfaction' are also dynamic factors in certain Victorian texts that I will discuss in the course of this thesis, most notably those of George Eliot. It is in a sense in exploring missing links, the middle ground, of this sort, that we most fully appreciate the possibility of the existence of a continuum between Victorian thought and Freudian theory.

Certain critics believe that there are more links between nineteenth- and twentieth-century psychological thought than those who perpetuate and have perpetuated the Freudian legend (including, of course, Freud himself) have allowed to become known. Frank J. Sulloway describes how 'twice in his life, in 1885 and again in 1907, [Freud] completely destroyed all his manuscripts, private diaries, notes, and correspondence' (Sulloway, p. 7),³² partly, it seems, in order (as he writes to his fiancée in 1885) to foil the intentions of future biographers, and others who will be interested in his career – 'I couldn't have matured or died without worrying about who would get hold of those old papers'.³³ Although Freud describes the contents of what he has destroyed as 'my thoughts and feelings about the world in general and about myself in particular' which 'have been found unworthy of further existence', his inventory itemises documents whose nature is more intellectual than personal³⁴ - 'I have destroyed all my notes of the past fourteen years, as well as letters, scientific excerpts, and the manuscripts of my papers' (*Letters of Sigmund Freud*, pp. 141, 140). The fact that scientific excerpts are purged is especially telling. Sulloway describes the result of such destruction on the Freudian legend:

Monograph 16, *Psychological Issues*, IV (New York: International Universities Press, 1965), 84.

³⁰ Freud cited in Amacher, p. 21. Theodor Meynert is described in these terms in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (in *SE*, IV & V, ix-629 (p. 437). Hereafter, *Interpretation*). Freud worked in Meynert's clinic for five months in the early 1880s, after leaving Brücke's laboratory.

³¹ Exner was an assistant, senior to Freud, in Brücke's laboratory, where Freud worked from 1876-1882.

³² In the mid-teens of the twentieth century, Freud wrote his metapsychological papers. We have five of them. However, in his introduction to these papers in *SE*, XIV, 105-07, Strachey points out that this is not the complete set: 'We also learn from Dr. Jones ... that seven more papers were added to the series ... the whole collection of twelve being completed by August 9 [1915]. These further seven papers, however, were never published by Freud and it seems probable that at some later date he destroyed them, for no trace of them has been found and indeed their very existence was unknown or forgotten until Dr. Jones came to examine Freud's letters.' (pp. 105-06) These two purgings, in 1885 and 1907, seem not to be the only occasions on which Freud destroyed his papers. And if we consider the papers that have not been destroyed, there are some, according to Crews, that have been locked away, some until the twenty-second century, by 'a jealously secretive psychoanalytic establishment, whose leaders have been ... fearful of open historical judgement' (Crews, et al., p. 36).

³³ Sigmund Freud to Martha Bernays, 28 April 1885, in *Letters of Sigmund Freud*, pp. 140-42 (p. 141), cited in Sulloway, p. 7.

³⁴ That Freud obviously saw them as personal is interesting in itself, signifying some sort of inability to

A major result of Freud's systematic destruction of his past was that, until relatively recently, psychoanalysis appeared even to his closest followers to have sprung full-blown from his own head 'like Athena from the head of Zeus' (Erikson 1957: 80) ... In actual fact, Freud extracted many conclusions from his analyses, both of himself and of his patients, that he had already become convinced of from other, and now obliterated, sources of evidence. Biology, as a key source of these hypothetico-deductive inspirations, subsequently became a special target of analytic obliteration. (Sulloway, p. 8)

Apart from the mid-twentieth-century critical interest in Freud's neurological education and publications (an interest that continues to inspire publications, one of the most recent being Valerie Greenberg's *Freud and his Aphasia Book*, which examines the text and possible sources of Freud's 1891 monograph, *On Aphasia*), the other major 'relatively recent' event in Freudian scholarship to which Sulloway seems to refer here was the emergence of the Fliess papers, which were published for the first time in 1950. These, with Freud's already published neurological papers (which, as we have seen, tended to be dismissed as prepsychoanalytic), provide the best link we have between the Victorians and Freud. I will examine the Fliess papers, or at least what I believe is their most important element, below, in the context of a small introduction to Freud's neurological papers of the 1890s.

Before I continue, however, it is worth mentioning here one symptomatic account of an event in Freud's life which occurred before the 1890s began, recounted in 'An Autobiographical Study', which may help illustrate my aim in this project. After Freud's time with Charcot (in the winter of 1885-86) he explored the therapeutic possibilities of hypnosis:

With the idea of perfecting my hypnotic technique, I made a journey to Nancy in the summer of 1889 and spent several weeks there ... I was a spectator of Bernheim's astonishing experiments upon his hospital patients, and *I received the profoundest impression of the possibility that there could be powerful mental processes which nevertheless remained hidden from the consciousness of men.* ('An Autobiographical Study', p. 17, my emphasis)³⁵

The impression is given here of a discovery made, a realization dawning, in the mind of Freud. An important step in his own intellectual journey, doubtless, but it is nevertheless true that the knowledge of hidden mental processes had been evident for some time in the work of Victorian physiologists and psychologists, in nineteenth-century encyclopaedias, literature and periodicals. It is true that Freud here does not claim originality for his profound impression, but originality is not really the point here, neither is it relevant whether this was indeed the first time Freud had an inkling that unconscious mental processes did occur. What it is sometimes possible to assert is that, on occasions, Freud's intellectual growth, his dawning realizations, provide a sort of echo of steps in thought already taken in Victorian Britain. This is especially the case with the development of his ideas about memory, as I shall argue in Chapter 3. This

separate his work from his personality.

³⁵ Unless I claim responsibility for emphasis, it should be understood to be the author's.

strange echoing process illustrates, I believe, the disadvantage of Freud's destruction of evidence which may have shown sources and influences which reached back into the Victorian period. Freud's claims for the originality of his discoveries, in consequence of the gap he created between himself and his predecessors, became in a sense the ghosts in his work and his autobiography, of discoveries made earlier in the history of psychological thought, and, if we are to believe some critics, those made through his earlier reading and learning. In my next section I will consider something of what is known about the latter, in a selected survey of Freud's education and its possible impact on his early work. However, it is my general aim in this thesis to go some way towards examining the former – to chart certain elements in the history of Victorian psychological ideas, their manifestations in a limited range of literary texts, and their later reappearance in Freud's works. In this way it is my hope to be able to add to the existing criticism that attempts to close the breach that Freud so laboriously created.

Freud's Work of the 1890s: Possible Sources in his Education and Early Career

It was not only Arthur Schopenhauer who prefigured in some way the Freudian theory of repression, introduced around 1894 as *Abwehr* (defence) and which became, both as *Abwehr* and *Verdrängung* (repression), the keynote to the theories of the aetiology of the neuroses. Sulloway notes that Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776-1841) 'wrote of ideas being "repressed" (*verdrängt*) from consciousness by other opposing ideas, and conceived of mental operations in terms of "forces" possessing specific "quantities"' (Sulloway, p. 67). Ola Andersson's *Studies in the prehistory of Psychoanalysis* testifies to the fact that it would have been mandatory for Freud to study Herbartian psychology in the course of his education:

Nowhere does Herbartianism seem to have been so well established as the dominant school of psychology as in Austria, where, since the middle of the century, the school system had been imbued with Herbartian ideas, primarily through the influence of Franz Exner. Consequently, Austrian students were most likely to have become acquainted with Herbartian psychology during their school days not as one of several schools of psychology but as a well-established semi-official psychology. This meant, moreover, that psychological discussion in Austria among educators, psychologists, psychiatrists, physiologists and neurologists was almost invariably conducted in terms of Herbartian psychology ... During his last school years Freud got his first instruction in psychology according to G. A. Lindner's textbook. A study of the version of Herbartianism presented in that book, makes it possible to state the ideas characteristic of Herbartianism with which Freud had been acquainted before starting his medical studies and his scientific work. (Andersson, pp. 11-12)

Andersson then goes on to examine the contents of this textbook in detail. She concludes that Herbart is not followed to the letter, that his 'metaphysical framework' and 'abstruse mathematical calculations were ... omitted. What remains of Herbartian psychology, however, is the basic idea of the book: the conception of psychic phenomena as manifestations of a "Vorstellungsmechanik", a dynamic interaction of ideas' (Andersson, p. 13). This dynamic model included such elements as inhibition ("Hemmung"), attention ("Aufmerksamkeit"),

the repression of an idea under the threshold of consciousness (“Verdrängung oder Sinken der Vorstellungen unter die Schwelle des Bewusstseins”) and the ascent of ideas over the threshold of consciousness (“Aufsteigen der Vorstellungen über die Schwelle des Bewusstseins”) (Andersson, p. 13). Andersson believes that this model of the psyche, instilled in Freud at such a young age, and continued by his university study, informed his later conception of the processes of the mind. In his work of the early 1890s, ‘the ideas which are shut off from consciousness are designated as “gehemmt” or “verdrängt”. In Herbartian psychology these two terms referred to two different ways of describing the conditions during which ideas, previously conscious, disappear from consciousness’ (Andersson, p. 116). It was from this middle ground in Freud’s work, it is possible to suggest, that the 1894 concept of *Abwehr* arose.

Lindner’s textbook added something to Herbart’s psychology, however, an element which, according to Andersson would later be introduced into the scheme in any case by Herbart’s descendants - the concept of the association of ideas.³⁶ This was a doctrine which formed a fundamental building-block for substantial parts of Freud’s work, including theories involving dreams, parapraxes (slips of the tongue or pen, symptomatic forgetting, and so on) the formation of symptoms and the processes of memory, and this list is by no means exhaustive. According to Andersson, by the late 1880s, to use association to explain psychical matters was ‘a very common approach’ (p. 71). In my second chapter, I will demonstrate that Andersson’s assertion, if anything, is actually an understatement, that this doctrine was a pervasive schema that in the nineteenth century was inseparable from the conception of the mind’s processes. The association of ideas was explicitly used in the work produced by the Freud-Breuer collaboration in the early 1890s, Andersson documents, which is a further indication of its importance to the formation of theories of the aetiology of the neuroses. In a sense, it could be argued that Herbart’s theory that ideas are repressed below the threshold of consciousness, and the doctrine of the association of ideas, combine to form something very much like Freud’s theory of repression, in which the repression of an idea means that it becomes inaccessible to associative processes in the mind. Freud therefore took into the 1890s a Herbartianism mixed with associationism that served him well. Of his 1891 monograph on aphasia (loss of speech), Freud’s translator, E. Stengel, proclaims that his idea of separating the aphasias into three groups ‘was a bold attempt at establishing a consistent psychological system based on the theory of associations applied to speech’.³⁷ In Chapter Two I will examine the impact of the framework of the association of ideas on Freud’s thinking. For now, however, I will be concentrating on certain other ideas in *On Aphasia* that Freud derived from previous thinkers, and from which he went on to form his later theories.

Freud’s *On Aphasia* is an interesting text. It is an example of a purely neurological work

³⁶ Andersson documents that many writings of those contemporary to Freud did not distinguish between the Herbartian ‘Vorstellungsmechanik’ and association, and Freud was no exception (p. 225).

³⁷ Sigmund Freud, *On Aphasia, a Critical Study* (1891), trans. by E. Stengel (London: Imago Publishing, 1953), p. xi.

by Freud, which also looks forward to his later approach to the mind. Further, in this work Freud cites and shows his obvious intellectual admiration for an English neurologist, John Hughlings Jackson, who was a disciple of the psychological and sociological philosopher Herbert Spencer, friend of George Eliot and George Henry Lewes. One of Hughlings Jackson's ideas that found its way in a changed form into Freud's 1890s work, especially the *Project for a Scientific Psychology* of 1895, is actually taken from Spencer's concept of 'dissolution'. Freud describes it thus:

In assessing the functions of the speech apparatus under pathological conditions we are adopting as a guiding principle Hughlings Jackson's doctrine that all these modes of reaction represent instances of functional retrogression³⁸ (dis-involution) of a highly organized apparatus, and therefore correspond to earlier states of its function development. This means that under all circumstances an arrangement of associations which, having been acquired later, belongs to a higher level of functioning, will be lost, while an earlier and simpler one will be preserved. From this point of view, a great number of aphasic phenomena can be explained. (*On Aphasia*, p. 87)

Freud's translator, Stengel, proposes that Freud would have come across the idea of regression, probably in Meynert's writings, before he met it in the writings of Hughlings Jackson, but 'nowhere had it been stated ... and its applications to psychopathology ... pointed out so clearly' as in the latter's work (*On Aphasia*, p. xii). Stengel, citing the work of L. Binswanger, testifies that Hughlings Jackson himself uses this concept to explain more than aphasic phenomena, that 'he also adumbrated their importance for the study of "insanity"' (p. xii). Freud also went on to use this theory to explain much more than aphasic phenomena. Strachey documents that, in the early 1900s, to provide a description of the process that leads to what Freud termed perversions, he used the metaphor of a stream of water, meeting an obstacle, and having to run back to the old dry channels, to describe regression, although he did not explicitly use the word.³⁹

By 1914, Freud had identified three kinds of regression - temporal, formal and topographical. All were a form of return to an earlier state. Temporal regression in essence was best described by the stream metaphor and was seen as a form of defence which may lead to neurosis; formal regression was a return to primitive methods of expression and representation, helping to explain dream symbolism, perhaps nearest to the aphasic retrogression; and topographical regression, which, although slightly ambiguous, seems to be the idea of force ebbing and flowing within the psychical system, a backward flow leading to hallucination and dreaming (*Interpretation*, pp. 542, 548).⁴⁰ As we shall see, the idea of a return to an earlier state is an important factor in the construction of symptoms in Victorian texts, especially those by

³⁸ The translator writes in his introduction that he has translated this word ('Rückbildung') as retrogression to distinguish it from the German word *Regression* which was not published by Freud until 1900. In an appendix to *Project for a Scientific Psychology* (1950) (in *SE*, I, 281-397; hereafter, *Project*), Strachey testifies that the word was first used, unpublished in one of the Fliess papers of May 2, 1897 ('Appendix A: Freud's use of the Concept of Regression', in *SE*, I, 344-46 (p. 344)). However, the two German words have the same meaning, according to Stengel (*On Aphasia*, p. xii n.).

³⁹ 'Appendix A', *Project for a Scientific Psychology*, p. 345.

⁴⁰ See 'Appendix A', *Project for a Scientific Psychology*, p. 346, for Strachey's account of this.

Sheridan Le Fanu. Regression, a return to ‘what is older in time ... more primitive in form’ (*Interpretation*, p. 548), is in essence a reversal of the idea of evolution, and it started in that way with Spencer, for he had in fact contrasted evolution with dissolution (in particular detail in the second edition of *First Principles* (1867)). Ellenberger links this pairing to Freud’s later most fundamental ideas about the processes that form the basis of every occurrence in the mind, ideas first explicitly theorized in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920). He writes of Freud, ‘in every psychological process he saw the presence of the two processes, Eros as a tendency to form larger units, and the death instinct Thanatos as the reverse tendency; this latter concept was very close to Spencer’s definition of evolution and dissolution’ (*The Discovery of the Unconscious*, p. 515). As we shall see in Chapter 4, the idea of Eros and the death instinct did not just affect Freud’s ideas of the individual mind, but also informed his ideas on civilization and society.

There was another idea in Hughlings Jackson’s work that would later find its way into Freud’s theories. Andersson documents that, in one of Hughlings Jackson’s papers that is referred to in *On Aphasia* there is evidence of an idea which, she writes, would later become ‘abreaction’ (a reaction in the individual to a psychic impression that diminishes in him or her the sum of excitation that impression has caused, thereby preserving health)⁴¹ in the scheme of hysteria. Hughlings Jackson writes: ‘All actions are in one sense results of restorations of nervous equilibrium by expenditure of energy’ (cited in Andersson, p. 110). Abreaction is not the only process this prefigures – it is also an early version of what would become the pleasure-unpleasure principle, later simply the pleasure principle. It is unlikely that Freud was inspired to this theory simply by the works of Hughlings Jackson, however. For, in theories concerning the action and reaction of force or energy within the psychic system, Freud had a rich heritage of nineteenth-century central European thought to draw upon. We see something of the extent of this in his *Project for a Scientific Psychology* of 1895.

Freud’s *Project*, in more than one sense at the heart of the 1890s, is a remarkable text, to which I cannot possibly do full justice in this introduction. Implications and ideas arising from it will appear throughout the thesis. In what follows, I will begin by sketching something of its historical background, and go on to outline its importance as a linking text between Victorian science and Freudian theories and models of the mind, taking into account its possible sources and its strong legacy.

In Siegfried Bernfeld’s paper ‘Freud’s Earliest Theories and the School of Helmholtz’ (1944),⁴² he traces in detail Freud’s early acquaintance with the mechanistic theories of this so-

⁴¹ This process is outlined in ‘On the Psychical Mechanism of Hysterical Phenomena: A Lecture’ (1893), in *SE*, III, 25-39 (p. 36).

⁴² Siegfried Bernfeld, ‘Freud’s Earliest Theories and the School of Helmholtz’, *The Yearbook of Psychoanalysis*, 1 (1945), 31-47. This paper was first published in *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 13 (1944), 341-62.

called school,⁴³ whose basic doctrine stated: 'No other forces than the common physical chemical ones are active within the organism' (Bernfeld, p. 37) and that, 'the sum of forces (motive forces and potential forces) remains constant in every isolated system' (p. 38). Bernfeld then writes: 'At seventy-four Freud said on a solemn occasion: "My life work was aimed at one goal only: to deduce or to guess how the psychic apparatus is constructed and what forces interplay and counteract in it."' Bernfeld goes on to comment: 'He refers here to his psychoanalytic work. But as we now see, this statement embraces all his scientific efforts, back to his first research concerning certain nerve cells of a strange and rare fish.' (p. 44) What is interesting about this paper, which notes Freud's occasional strange outdated phrases which recall the mechanistic doctrine, such as 'quantity of excitation' and 'discharge', terms that Bernfeld writes 'appear to be relics of the neurology of 1890' (p. 31), is that it was unknowingly written in response to a jigsaw with a piece missing. The evidence of the goal towards which Freud worked is spread throughout his many papers and books, as Bernfeld notes, from the later to the very earliest work. But it is especially crystallized and concentrated in one text, Freud's *Project* of 1895 (whose 'invisible ghost', Strachey writes, 'haunts the whole series of Freud's theoretical writings to the very end'),⁴⁴ a text which Bernfeld did not know existed when he wrote his paper.

Freud's text is a combination of force theory (following Helmholtz's principle of the conservation of energy) and neurology, the creation of a system comprising three different kind of neurones, (ϕ , ψ and ω) in which the release and storage of differing quantities of excitation, Q (which is 'subject to the general laws of motion' (*Project*, p. 295)) for differing lengths of time (or period), go to help explain the basic processes of mind. There are two functions of the nervous system; a primary and a secondary. The primary function is to keep the nervous system free from stimulus, to discharge excitation, 'this is the principle of neuronal inertia: that neurones tend to divest themselves of Q ' (p. 296). The secondary function is required by the needs that life inspires - hunger, respiration, sexuality, the 'endogenous stimuli':

In consequence, the nervous system is obliged to abandon its original trend to inertia (that is, to bringing the level [of $Q\eta$] to zero). It must put up with [maintaining] a store of $Q\eta$ sufficient to meet the demand for a specific action. Nevertheless, the manner in which it does this shows that the same trend persists, modified into an endeavour at least to keep the $Q\eta$ as low as possible and to guard against any increase of it - that is, to keep it constant. All the functions of the nervous system can be comprised either under the aspect of the primary function or of the secondary one imposed by the exigencies of life. (p. 297)⁴⁵

⁴³ This school consisted of Hermann Helmholtz (1821-1894), Carl Ludwig (1816-1895), Emil Du Bois-Reymond (1818-1896) and Ernst Brücke (1819-1892), in whose laboratory Freud worked for several years.

⁴⁴ 'Editor's Introduction', *Project for a Scientific Psychology*, in *SE*, I, 283-93 (p. 290).

⁴⁵ Square brackets inserted by Freud's editor. $Q\eta$ is stated at the beginning of the *Project* as meaning 'Quantity (of the intercellular order of magnitude)', as opposed to Q , which is 'Quantity (in general, or of the order of magnitude in the external world)' (*Project*, p. 294). However, this difference becomes ambiguous within the *Project*, which is in essence a rough draft. See the 'Editor's Introduction' (p. 289) on 'this enigma'. In 'Appendix C' to the *Project*, 'The Nature of Q ' (*SE*, I, 392-97), Strachey makes it clear that the Q of which he gives account is, in the strictest sense, $Q\eta$, the quantity within the system. Taking this lead, I will refer to what strictly should be $Q\eta$ as Q , as Freud also often refers to what he

Within this system, therefore, too much stimulation gives rise to pain, the discharge of excitement is felt as pleasure, and the raising of tension within the system by the endogenous stimuli, followed by its lowering through discharge, is the experience of satisfaction. The search for this satisfaction forms the basis of many of the processes of mind. Stimulus enters and is contained within the system by the three types of neurone. ϕ , which is completely permeable, is closest to the outer world, impressions entering the mind through it. ψ neurones are less permeable. 'The latter class', writes Freud, 'may, after each excitation, be in a different state from before and they thus afford a *possibility of representing memory*' (p. 299). Facilitation, a type of clearing of a pathway caused by a common store of force, or cathexis, in adjacent neurones, is the mechanism behind this – 'the facilitations between the ψ neurones constitute "*memory*", the representation of all the influences which ψ has experienced from the external world' (p. 365). Facilitation and the cathexis (the occupation by excitation) of connecting neurones allow easier transmission of Q or diversion of excitation within this system, and therein lies the possibility of an ego, part of whose role is to inhibit the strength of the primary processes, an essential concession to reality. Once this system was created, Freud was drawn into its implications for psychology far more than he intended, for, as he wrote to Fliess, 'all I was trying to do was to explain defense, but ... I had to work my way through the problem of quality, sleep, memory – in short, all of psychology'.⁴⁶ As Sulloway argues, defence is the only thing Freud does not attempt to fully explain with this system; a further section was promised to Fliess, but never sent (Sulloway, p. 124).

If we return to Bernfeld's article, therefore, having sketched out something of what he had missed, it is obvious that Freud's lifelong aim to 'deduce or to guess how the psychic apparatus is constructed and what forces interplay and counteract in it', was a large motivating factor in the creation of his model in the *Project*, in which apparatus and forces are described throughout in exactly those terms. As Freud wrote to Fliess before starting the *Project*, 'I am vexed by two intentions: to discover what form the theory of psychical functioning will take if a quantitative line of approach, a kind of economics of nervous force, is introduced into it, and, secondly, to extract from psychopathology a yield for normal psychology'.⁴⁷ What Bernfeld represents as Freud's later outdated phrases are not just relics from the neurology of 1890, but terms used in the *Project* to try and explain basic psychological processes such as pleasure, pain, satisfaction, memory, the formation of symptoms, the creation of dreams. That the *Project* was echoed in many of Freud's later works is a critically accepted fact that I will explore later, and Bernfeld's paper, written almost as if it was already published, is a testament to this; but this does not subtract from the fact that it is a remarkable condensation of Freud's early theories

defines at the beginning of the *Project* as Qrj as, simply, '*Quantität*' (quantity), and sometimes, according to Strachey, is 'inconsistent in his use of the signs' (p. 289).

⁴⁶ Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 16 August 1895, in *Freud-Fliess*, pp. 135-36 (p. 136).

into one system and worthy of great interest.

Freud's *Project* (named by his editors) was a text that returned to haunt him, and after his death reappeared without his permission. When Marie Bonaparte, student and patient, informed Freud that she had bought the Fliess papers, including the *Project*, Jones relates:

He was indignant about the story of the sale and characteristically gave his advice in the form of a Jewish anecdote. It was the one about how to cook a peacock. 'You first bury it in the earth for a week and then dig it up again.' 'And then?' 'Then you throw it away!' ... She read to him a few of the letters to demonstrate their scientific value, but he insisted that they should be destroyed. (Jones I, 289)

We may recall here Sulloway's account of Freud's purging behaviour, in order to try and hide his biological past. There is no doubt that in some ways the *Project* is a very sensitive document, and there is little wonder Freud wanted it destroyed, for its biological theme is only one reason why he may have wanted it to remain hidden.

Written at great speed, partly on a train journey back from a meeting with his then intimate friend Wilhelm Fliess, essentially as a first draft for his perusal, this text was certainly unready for publication. Because of this it displays more than Freud perhaps would have wanted, in terms of its urgent language – in other words, it displays too much of Freud's hidden agenda which re-writing would have covered over. We have come across Freud's words, in a letter to Fliess, to the effect that reading would deprive him of the satisfaction of discovery. The need for this satisfaction seems very real for Freud at this time. For in the *Project* his language tells of a strong desire to make the system work. He uses such phrases as 'the necessity of finding a place for memory calls for something further from the theory of contact-barriers' (*Project*, p. 301), and 'what would be most satisfactory, of course, would be if the mechanism we are in search of should arise out of the primitive biological part ... if so, we should have a single answer to both questions' (p. 302). These suggest a strong wish that the processes of psychology will fit into his model, rather than that they should be examined and a model created from that investigation. Richard Webster writes that questions should be asked about 'to what extent Freud's compulsive need for fame may have engendered his psychological theories, rather than, as is normally assumed, his theories generating his fame by their own profundity and intellectual acuity' (Webster, p. 34). The *Project* would only seem to intensify these questions, but, valuably, it also affords a small glimpse into the engendering process, in particular, Freud's method of venturing on assumptions based on what is the most 'satisfactory' and all-encompassing answer.

Freud's introduction of the concepts of Eros and Thanatos into *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, was originally heralded in the following terms: 'What follows is speculation, often far-fetched speculation, which the reader will consider or dismiss according to his individual predilection. It is further an attempt to follow out an idea consistently, out of curiosity to see where it will lead.' (*Beyond*, p. 24) In his editor's introduction to *Beyond the Pleasure*

⁴⁷ Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 25 May 1895, cited in 'Editor's Introduction', *Project*, p. 283.

Principle, Strachey comments that ‘what is particularly remarkable is the closeness with which some of the earlier sections of the present work follow the “Project for a Scientific Psychology”⁴⁸. He cannot have been referring to the speculative streak that runs through both, but this is also a striking similarity. Like his earlier model, built on assumptions and curiosity about how far it would run (describing it in a letter to Fliess, in the Autumn of 1895, Freud said his model in the *Project* ‘really was a machine that shortly would function on its own’),⁴⁹ having tentatively introduced this new concept of mind, Freud soon used it as the basis for his later work, finding he could not see the workings of the psyche without them. Having hypothesized, however, Freud sometimes discovered he had started a process that then came to be beyond his control. Speculative ideas, based on the construction of feasible models whose parts ‘seemed to fall into place, [whose] cogs meshed’ (*Freud-Fliess*, p. 146), became law, with their own implications. Bernfeld, who held some of the minutes of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society, testified to this trait in his work:

In 1923, heckled about some contradictions in his early papers by a young member of the Psychoanalytic Society in Vienna, Freud said: ‘This problem exists only because thirty years ago I wrote quite candidly, not foreseeing that at some future time every detail would be accepted and made sacrosanct to the last letter.’ ... Faced with the wealth of new facts which the cathartic studies daily were producing, Freud introduced a number of new concepts: repression, defense, abreaction. They were well suited to organize the new material and to integrate it into the naïve and scientific knowledge previously achieved. They have withstood the test of many years and varied research and have proved to be adjustable to new facts, applications, and development. But to Freud they were only descriptive terms. They did not explain the facts but were themselves in need of an explanation ... Psychoanalytic theories so-called, as distinct from psychoanalytic discoveries and inventions, are the sum of these various freudian efforts at scientific explanation. (Bernfeld, p. 45)

Apart from Freud’s reluctance to give the *Project* over to a psychoanalytic movement which would take it out of his hands, and examine his early ideas, and the processes of their conception, with a magnifying glass, he must also have been mindful of the fact that his draft was written under the influence of a book by his colleague Sigmund Exner, published the year before, with which Freud’s work showed similarities.

Frank Sulloway helpfully enumerates the similarities between Freud’s *Project* and Exner’s work *Entwurf zu einer physiologischen Erklärung der psychischen Erscheinungen* (‘Sketch of a Physiological Explanation of Psychological Phenomena’, 1894):

Exner’s model started from the notion of intracerebral excitation. Such excitation, he had argued, undergoes continual ‘summations’ of energy within each neurone, and the energized neurones are discharged only after attaining critical firing ‘thresholds.’ At a more general level still, this neuronal model of mind was regulated by the physiological dictates of the pleasure-unpleasure principle. Exner’s intracerebral excitation possessed the further capacity for what he called *Ausfahren von Bahnen* (a facilitation of the pattern of energy flow based upon the previous passage of energy through a given neuronal pathway). This last concept, crucial to Exner’s whole scheme, was later adopted by Freud in the *Project* under the term *Bahnung* (‘facilitation’). Freud’s concept of ‘cathexis’ (*Besetzung*), the occupying of a neurone by a quantity of energy, was in turn influenced by Exner’s general model. (p. 116)

⁴⁸ ‘Editor’s Introduction’, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, in *SE*, XVIII, pp. 3-6 (p. 6).

⁴⁹ Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 20 October 1895, in *Freud-Fliess*, pp. 146-47 (p. 146).

A quick survey of the terms and concepts in this passage tells of the heritage from which Exner's published work and Freud's unpublished one had emerged. The idea of summation was a feature in Brücke's work. Amacher quotes Freud as having written in 1927 that Brücke 'carried more weight with me than anyone else in my whole life' (Amacher, p. 9). Amacher links the theories of the three thinkers, Brücke, the 1894 theory of Exner (his assistant) and the 1895 theory of Freud (who had also worked for Brücke for a time), in his account of their use of the concept of summation. He cites a passage in an 1876 work by Brücke, in which he demonstrates the doctrine of the 'summation of stimuli' by describing the way in which food, stuck in the oesophagus, creates stimulus after stimulus. These stimuli, after a time, are 'summed', and then swallowing, a reflex movement, can be performed (Amacher, p. 15). Brücke, steeped in the economics of force theory, draws on his mechanistic heritage, in the end producing what Amacher claims is 'a variation of the reflex concept which had been part of neurology for two centuries' (p. 15). The mechanistic heritage, shared by Helmholtz and others, did not pass Victorian England by; in fact Edwin Boring writes of Helmholtz that 'in 1854 he paid his first of many visits to England. His contact with English thought was much closer than was usual in Germany, and in certain limited respects Helmholtz belongs more in the British than in the German tradition'.⁵⁰ Wilkie Collins, giving examples of the extra reading he had undertaken in order to complete *Heart and Science: A Story of the Present Time* (1883),⁵¹ mentioned Helmholtz in his introduction to the novel. Helmholtz's doctrine of the conservation of energy, which, in his own words, dictated that: 'the *quantity of force which can be brought into action in the whole of Nature is unchangeable*, and can neither be increased nor diminished'⁵² found echoes in the writings of many Victorians. In the works of each writer I will consider in this thesis there are manifestations of this all-pervasive law.

Freud's *Project* and his later *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* are, as Freud points out in both, also indebted to Gustav Fechner (1801-87), a psychophysicist who coined his own *Lustprinzip* and principle of constancy. Exner's use of the pleasure-unpleasure principle was undoubtedly inspired by Fechner also, a figure considerably admired among neurologists and psychologists at this time.⁵³ The aim underlying all mental processes in Freud's 1895 model, 'to keep the *Q̄* as low as possible and to guard against any increase of it – that is, to keep it

⁵⁰ Edwin G. Boring, *A History of Experimental Psychology*, 2nd edn (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1957), p. 300.

⁵¹ Wilkie Collins, *Heart and Science: A Story of the Present Time* (1883) (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1994). Collins writes, 'When "Mrs Galilee" wonders whether "Carmina has ever heard of the Diathermancy of Ebonite", she is thinking of proceedings at a *conversazione* in honour of Professor Helmholtz (reported in the "Times" of April 12, 1881), at which "radiant energy" was indeed converted into "sonorous vibrations"' (p. 4).

⁵² H. Helmholtz, 'On the Conservation of Force' (1862), in *Popular Lectures on Scientific Subjects, First Series*, trans. by E. Atkinson (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1884), pp. 277-317 (p. 280).

⁵³ Sulloway documents that 'Josef Breuer ... greatly admired Fechner, who, along with Goethe, was one of his two favourite authors (Jones 1953: 223). Fechner likewise exerted considerable influence upon Freud's teacher Theodor Meynert (Dorer 1932: 158-59)' (Sulloway, p. 67).

constant' (*Project*, p. 297), is his version of Fechner's principle of constancy. The pleasure principle became simply an extension of this. In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* Freud quotes Fechner in detail. Freud's comments and the passage from Fechner are worth quoting in full, as they offer an interesting insight into the nature of the legacy of the *Project*, at this time still buried, and, as Freud obviously believed, never to re-emerge:

We cannot, however, remain indifferent to the discovery that an investigator of such penetration as G. T. Fechner held a view on the subject of pleasure and unpleasure which coincides in all essentials with the one that has been forced upon us by psycho-analytic work. Fechner's statement is to be found contained in a small work, *Einige Ideen zur Schöpfungs- und Entwicklungsgeschichte der Organismen*, 1873 (Part XI, Supplement, 94), and reads as follows: 'In so far as conscious impulses always have some relation to pleasure or unpleasure, pleasure and unpleasure too can be regarded as having a psycho-physical relation to conditions of stability and instability. This provides a basis for a hypothesis into which I propose to enter in greater detail elsewhere. According to this hypothesis, every psycho-physical motion rising above the threshold of consciousness is attended by pleasure in proportion as, beyond a certain limit, it approximates to complete stability, and is attended by unpleasure in proportion as, beyond a certain limit, it deviates from complete stability'. (*Beyond*, p. 8)

Then follows one of the most famous passages in Freud's 1920 work, the definition of the pleasure principle, and its relationship with the principle of constancy:

The facts which have caused us to believe in the dominance of the pleasure principle in mental life also find expression in the hypothesis that the mental apparatus endeavours to keep the quantity of excitation present in it as low as possible or at least to keep it constant. This latter hypothesis is only another way of stating the pleasure principle; for if the work of the mental apparatus is directed towards keeping the quantity of excitation low, then anything that is calculated to increase that quantity is bound to be felt as adverse to the functioning of the apparatus, that is as unpleasurable. The pleasure principle follows from the principle of constancy: actually the latter principle was inferred from the facts which forced us to adopt the pleasure principle. (p. 9)

After the initial quotation, therefore, Fechner is squeezed out of the picture. The impression is given that Freud's psychoanalytic discoveries forced him to adopt both principles, and that 'the *discovery* that an investigator of such penetration as G. T. Fechner' (my emphasis) had written about the same principle, only adds support to his own pioneering work. However, as Ellenberger writes, 'the theories contained in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* were not all as new as they appeared to some of Freud's followers. Freud was returning ... to Fechner, who had inspired his former speculative works' (*The Discovery of the Unconscious*, p. 514). Twenty-five years before, in a text that referred to 'Fechner's law' (a different law, according to Strachey (*Project*, p. 315 n.), with no reference made to any particular text), Freud would write:

Since we have certain knowledge of a trend in psychical life towards *avoiding unpleasure*, we are tempted to identify that trend with the primary trend towards inertia. In that case *unpleasure* would have to be regarded as coinciding with a raising of the level of Qrj ... Pleasure would be the sensation of discharge. (*Project*, p. 312)

Here the pleasure-unpleasure principle undoubtedly arises from a tendency towards stability of levels of excitation within the psychical system. This, although perhaps less sophisticated, is

the same principle that Freud would later claim he was forced to adopt from his own researches, written here in a purely hypothetical, speculative text, which took immediate inspiration from a contemporary whose book contained the same principle. Added to this, Freud was already acquainted with the works of Fechner (if not through his studies, then certainly through Breuer; their joint work *Studies on Hysteria* was published in the same year as he wrote the *Project*). I have already noted the fact that Hughlings Jackson wrote on the psychic need for equilibrium. Further, as I shall discuss in my first chapter, this need for stability had been a traditional characteristic of spiritual and natural systems, and Fechner, a mystical philosopher as well as a scientist, originated his law of stability firmly in keeping with the rules he believed pertained to these systems. Difficult to avoid, in their permeation of Judaeo-Christian Western culture, the laws governing spiritual systems informed an understanding of a need for equilibrium within the systems reflected in the fiction of writers such as Sheridan Le Fanu, as well as in the *Project* and later works of Freud.

Freud's *Project*, as I have discussed, is the invisible ancestor of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. It is also a ghost-like presence in many other of his later works. This is understandable, given the *Project's* long list of themes (Jones enumerates twenty-three, twenty of which, including such elements as 'Unconscious and Preconscious', 'Urge towards Wish-Fulfillment', 'Traumas and pain as excessive stimuli' were, he writes, 'developed further in Freud's later writings, often thirty years later' (Jones, I, 392)). But, as a text that is more transparent with regard to its immediate sources and its neurological and psychophysical heritage, its later appearance is a little embarrassing for Freud, as in essence it links his latest work to nineteenth-century science. And the *Project's* legacy does extend to his latest work. In the notes to the text, Strachey helpfully provides a list of the works that can be seen to follow the *Project* (pp. 290-191 n.). In a thesis considering the prefiguration of Freudian theories and models of the mind in Victorian literature, this list is especially important, as it suggests which works contain a model of the mind comparable with Freud's *Project*, and in addition which texts are linked through the *Project* to nineteenth-century thinking. In addition, then, to concentrating on the 1890s as in some sense a link to the Victorians, in this thesis I will also take account of some of those texts that Strachey links to the *Project*, in order to begin to sketch an idea of how far these nineteenth-century ideas may have found resonance in Freud's latest works. These will be Chapter VII of *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), *The Unconscious* (1915), *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), *The Ego and the Id* (1923), and *An Outline of Psycho-Analysis* (1940; written in 1938).

I will also concentrate on texts in which the themes I have discussed in this Introduction as rooted in the nineteenth century are developed in certain directions. I have considered Eros and the death instinct in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*; this dual view of the processes that worked in nature went on to inform Freud's later work, particularly his consideration of social issues, in writings such as *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930). Similarly, the idea of

regression, goes on to underpin Freud's idea of the primitive within man, a concept explored in *The Interpretation of Dreams* which considers dreaming as a regression into 'the earliest and most obscure periods of the beginnings of the human race' (*Interpretation*, p. 549). This possibility of regression into a primitive state provides Freud with a way of explaining group behaviour in texts such as *Totem and Taboo* (1913), *The Future of an Illusion* (1927) and *Civilization and its Discontents*. In my last chapter I will examine the impact on Freud's social theories of these major ideas, common also to the Victorians (although bearing different names).

Prefigurations of Freud in Victorian Literature

In the introduction to their recent anthology of Victorian psychological writings, *Embodied Selves: An Anthology of Psychological Texts 1830-1890*, Jenny Bourne Taylor and Sally Shuttleworth provide a description of the texts that follow, in relation to Freudian theory, stating that 'although they did not directly prefigure Freud's work their writing was an important part of the intellectual context within which psychoanalytic theory arose'.⁵⁴ Although I will be attempting to, in a sense, describe a more definite relationship between the Victorians and Freud, I hope I have managed so far in this Introduction to confirm my agreement with this sentence. Ten years earlier, Bourne Taylor, in a discussion on the nature of nineteenth-century discourses on unconscious mental processes in Collins's *The Moonstone*, writes that they 'do not straightforwardly prefigure later Freudian or Jungian psychoanalytic models, though they might contribute to their formation'.⁵⁵ I also believe this to be the case. My thesis is not about *straightforward* prefigurations in Victorian literature of Freudian theories and models of the mind; if these existed the already popular arena of scholarship about Victorian psychology would be awash with publications tracing them.

'Prefiguration', the 'representation beforehand by a figure or a type' (*OED*, XII, 347), is rather a problematic term, apt in many ways to describe what my project intends to identify in the work of certain Victorian writers, but also limited and in need of clarification. It is difficult to find a term that captures an anticipation, yet communicates a partial, unabsolute quality. Prefiguration, which suggests the idea of shadowy models, figures or types that will be realized and made substantial in the future, is adequate for this purpose. However, this definition, in a sense, also belies the findings of this thesis, setting Freud up as it does as a watershed or a standard by which all previous ideas are measured. Freud himself encouraged this state of things; we have seen the way in which works whose ideas he echoes in his own theories are then claimed as supporting texts for psychoanalysis. This is the way that the situation is commonly perceived, therefore, and as such is the most accessible point, though rather

⁵⁴ Jenny Bourne Taylor and Sally Shuttleworth, eds., *Embodied Selves: An Anthology of Psychological Texts, 1830-1890* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 67.

⁵⁵ Jenny Bourne Taylor, *In the Secret Theatre of Home: Wilkie Collins, sensation narrative, and nineteenth-century psychology* (London: Routledge, 1988), p. 176.

unsatisfactory, from which to start. Beginning in this position, it is inevitable that my own view will take on something of the idea of Freud as an end-point. That nineteenth-century scientific theories, and the fiction that they informed, are complete and valid in themselves, can often be seen in the fact that they are not only echoed in Freud's work, but, in certain cases, represent an *advance* on Freud's ideas. My thesis, therefore, will contain deliberately placed pockets of discussion on such advances. Chapter 3 is an example of this; I will suggest that Victorian ideas on the reliability of memory, which rendered Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone* rather ambiguous in its key issues of testimony and the reproduction of past scenes, provide a commentary on Freud's abandoned seduction theory, which foundered on the realization that memory of past events is not an absolute faculty. These Victorian ideas also offer an explanation of Freud's own unreliable remembrance of this rather shameful incident in his career. In this way, the Victorians would seem to provide a commentary on Freud's own methodologies and behaviour, decades before time. This sort of insight, providing as it does a counterattack to the presumption that Freud was a watershed, cannot be separated from my consideration of prefigurations of Freudian theories and models of the mind, as it serves as an antidote to the problems inherent in the term 'prefiguration'. In tracing the extent to which Freud echoed the writings of his predecessors, yet, especially in his early career, was consumed by the wish that he should be original, commentary on behaviour arising from such an awkward juxtaposition is helpful. It is all the better if it is made by the very people that Freudian mythology attempted to separate from Freud himself: his ancestors.

Owing to the less than straightforward nature of the prefigurations I will be discussing, I hope I have made it clear that it is not the most 'Freudian' aspects of psychoanalysis that I will be tracing back into Victorian psychology. I do not claim to have found strong precursors of dream theory, the Oedipus complex, all the mechanisms and vagaries of repression, and I certainly have not found any strong parallel in Victorian England with the therapeutic techniques of psychoanalysis. I have found no real evidence to suggest that the Victorians, like Freud, believed that all psychological illness sprang from sexual life. These Freudian theories are the development of a number of logical lines. My contention, however, is that these lines, at an earlier stage, also passed through the Victorian period. It is possible, therefore, to see certain elements (theories of the aetiology of symptoms, force in closed systems, the association of ideas, the processes of memory, the dynamics and influences which shape society) that Freud, unknowingly or otherwise, inherited from his forefathers, and went on to shape in his own fashion. In certain of his texts, especially those of the 1890s, we can see intermediate stages in this process; in the papers that form the descendants of his *Project* of 1895 we can see something of the progress of the line which has passed through the nineteenth century as it reaches its logical conclusion (within the frame of psychoanalysis) in Freud's late work. As Taylor indicates in her mention of Jung, Freud's thinking was only one strand that reached back into Victorian thought, his conclusions were by no means a final result; the realm of psychology

has progressed since, but it is beyond the realm of this thesis (although a tempting prospect) to examine the outcome of other lines. And, of course, the Victorians provided their own conclusions, their own outcomes, and by no means agreed with each other. There will be occasions in this thesis when, starting out with similar raw materials, it is obvious that different conclusions are drawn by certain Victorian thinkers, and by Freud. This is especially the case when I come to examine ideas that each held about the progress of society. What is important, however, is to identify the middle ground, the link, from which the Victorians and psychoanalysis then diverged.

In my survey of key theories and models in Freud's work that find their roots in nineteenth-century thought, I have already indicated something of how the individual authors that I will consider in this thesis incorporate certain ideational threads into their fiction, threads that would later be taken up by psychoanalysis. For the rest of this Introduction I will try to convey more clearly why it is that I have chosen to concentrate on the works of Sheridan Le Fanu, Wilkie Collins and George Eliot, as sites for the expression of concepts and models that would be assimilated into Freudian theory.

One reason I have chosen to focus this investigation on Le Fanu, Collins and Eliot is because their joint operation within this thesis will, I feel, provide an idea of how Freud could be prefigured by writers over a wide span of years, with differing interests, who displayed varied levels of engagement with the psychological theories of their day. The fictional texts that this thesis will consider were published from the late 1830s (in the case of Le Fanu) to the 1880s (in the case of Collins), and therefore convey an idea of how thought about the mind, and the possibility of unconscious mental processes, progressed in this time. The longevity of the careers of each of these writers, which all lasted in excess of twenty years (in the case of Collins and Le Fanu, in excess of thirty) means the consideration of their work provides an overall picture, not only of the development of psychological thought (with which they all engaged in differing degrees), but of the spread and popularization within Victorian culture of ideas that Freud would later use in his work.

Inevitably in a study which attempts to assess something of the engagement of writers with their intellectual environment, I will, where possible, consider what is known of their reading habits, as I have done, and will continue to do, with Freud. This is essential, in order to establish the common ground between the Victorians and Freud. Of the writers I have chosen, however, there are varied amounts of knowledge about what they read, and when. Although Collins and Eliot, who I will consider in Chapters Two, Three and Four, demonstrably show a lively interest in psychological theories that were contemporary to them, there is meagre evidence of such enthusiasm in the biography of Sheridan Le Fanu, about whose life, and whose reading habits, relatively little is known. My consideration of Le Fanu, therefore, in Chapter One, rather than emphasizing specific psychological theories, traceable to his reading, discusses

his inheritance of certain spiritual, scientific and literary traditions of Western thought, an inheritance which, I shall argue, he shared with Freud. Of the three writers I will consider, Le Fanu conforms most closely to Freud's picture of the artist who seems to produce psychologically accurate pictures (as psychoanalysis would later have seen them) from a 'simple-minded joy in creating'. Just as Jensen's creativity could be said to be informed by his medical studies, however, Le Fanu's prefiguration of certain aspects of psychoanalysis, as I will try to show, is less because of intuition than the fact that he and Freud shared this broad common ground.

In common with Collins, Le Fanu takes an interest in symptoms. Chapters One and Two will consider the production of these as a result of an inability to remain within, or master, certain systems on which psychoanalytic theory was later built. Here, the prefiguration of Freudian models of the mind is particularly evident, as I consider Le Fanu's portrayal of the need for equilibrium within the personal, the natural and the universal system, and Collins's exploration of the advantages and especially the disadvantages to the individual, of the model of the association of ideas. Collins's manipulation and interrogation of this aspect of psychology that others, such as Freud, unquestioningly accepted and used as foundation for theory, also extends to memory, especially with regard to testimony. His understanding of the implications of the fallibility of memory speaks, I believe, for Collins's interest in contemporary psychological debate, which was, around the time *The Moonstone* was written, concerned with this issue. I will examine this debate, and its possible impact on Collins's 1868 novel, in Chapter 3.

My final chapter, on George Eliot, will consider the works of a writer who not only maintained a constant engagement with current scientific, psychological and social theories but, it could be argued, helped to contribute to such ideas. Her relationship with the philosopher and psychologist George Henry Lewes was an intellectual partnership which could not help but variously inform her fiction. I shall also emphasize the influence on her work of Eliot's relationship with Herbert Spencer, whose ideas on the direction of motion of the early 1860s and whose rich and complex vision of evolution and dissolution of 1867 impacted on characterization and social vision within her novels. On the death of Lewes, Eliot edited, and in places rewrote, the last series of his *Problems of Life and Mind* (1874-79). That she felt able to do so speaks for her embedded knowledge and understanding of the latest psychological and social theories; more importantly for my purposes in this Introduction, however, it fundamentally belies the idea of the artist who prefigures psychoanalysis through simple intuition. To take just one example, Eliot employed the concept of the inheritance of acquired characteristics in *Daniel Deronda* (1876), an idea which was being widely debated around this time, and would be prominent in the last series of Lewes's *Problems*, which she edited. This idea later formed a foundation for Freud's theories of society and his conception of the id. Although Eliot used this theory creatively, a writer who self-confessedly sought 'to make

certain ideas thoroughly incarnate' in her fiction⁵⁶ was here clearly guided more by her conscious engagement with the idea of the inheritance of acquired characteristics than by the intuitive recognition of eternal truths, that psychoanalysis would prefer to assign to those authors who prefigured its 'findings'.

Of the three writers I will consider in this thesis, Eliot seems to be the only one who read and spoke German. Lewes often cited German scientific discoveries in his work, and their library contained many German works of literature and science. This fact raises issues about whether being a German speaker would put Eliot's mindset closer to other contemporary and later German speakers, including Freud himself; further, whether a project charting specifically English and Irish prefigurations of a German speaker is a feasible one. Here is an occasion on which I become aware that what I am dealing with is not a straightforward prefiguration of Freudian theory in Victorian thought. Part of what distorts it is the effect of translation (Strachey rightly compares this process to a blurred reflection)⁵⁷ and the fact that I have, in general, read Freud in English cannot help. If all the writers I was studying read German, and if Freud did not read English, and had not been consulted in the translation of his work by Strachey (although this does not render Strachey's translation definitive, as I shall discuss in my first chapter), then it would certainly be my task to read Freud, and any German speakers that may have informed the writers I consider, in the original. However, in my defence it is worth pointing out that in this project the ideas that I trace from the Victorians to Freud are relatively broad ones, which, rather than staying within the confines of any particular borders, spread across European psychological thought. Freud never limited himself to German-speaking countries, as we can see from his early visit to Charcot in Paris, by which he was most inspired. He read the works of Dickens and Eliot (See Jones, I, 174), and was impressed, as I have discussed, by such English thinkers as Hughlings Jackson. The question of whether Eliot's mindset is placed nearer Freud's by her German reading can be countered by the question of whether Freud's mindset is placed nearer those of the Victorian writers I will consider by his knowledge of English. Finally, on the issue of whether it is feasible to consider these Victorian fiction writers as anticipators of psychoanalysis, it is important to point out here that each of them have been subjected to psychoanalytic criticism at one time or another.⁵⁸ My intention in this thesis is to consider why they attract such interpretations, to suggest that this may not be because Freud's theories are universally applicable to literature, as a product of the infinitely psychoanalysable human mind, but that literature, as a product of an intellectual and cultural context which formed the acknowledged or unacknowledged ancestry of psychoanalysis, may

⁵⁶ George Eliot to Frederic Harrison, 15 August [1866], in *The George Eliot Letters*, ed. by Gordon S. Haight, 9 vols (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954-78), IV, 300-02 (p. 300).

⁵⁷ See his dedication to the *Standard Edition* (SE, I, v).

⁵⁸ I will discuss Freudian interpretations of Collins and Eliot in Chapters Three and Four. For a discussion of Freudian interpretations of Le Fanu's 'Green Tea' (1869), see Jack Sullivan, *Elegant Nightmares: The English Ghost Story From Le Fanu to Blackwood* (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1980), pp. 17-18.

indicate where the roots of Freud's theories lie.

Before I begin Chapter One, it would perhaps be of interest to ask a rather mischievous question, inspired by an account that Freud gives of a turning-point in his own life. In 'An Autobiographical Study' he recounts how 'it was hearing Goethe's beautiful essay on Nature read out aloud at a popular lecture ... just before I left school that decided me to become a medical student' ('An Autobiographical Study', p. 8). An editor's note records how 'according to Pestalozzi (1956) the real author of the essay (written in 1780) was G. C. Tobler, a Swiss writer. Goethe came across it half a century later, and, by a paramnesia, included it among his own works' (p. 8 n.). In his turn, what ideas and concepts originating with other writers, perhaps from different countries, may Freud have included, however inadvertently, under the umbrella of his own name?

Chapter 1

Tormenting Secrets: Symptoms as Problems of Economy
in the Fiction of Sheridan Le Fanu¹

What would you say, by the way, if I told you that the whole of my brand-new primal history of hysteria was already well-known and had been published a hundred times over – several centuries ago? Do you remember how I always said that the mediaeval theory of possession, held by the ecclesiastical courts, was identical with our theory of a foreign body and a splitting of consciousness? ... Some time soon I must delve into the literature of the subject. (Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 17 January 1897)²

The Soul, 'die Seele' and the Psyche

There are few, including Freud's most loyal supporters, who would claim that Freud discovered unconscious mental processes.³ Some, however, assert that he was the first to discern a structure according to which they operated. Malcolm Bowie writes of Jacques Lacan, 'for Lacan, as for many writers, Freud's essential insight was not – clearly not – that the unconscious exists, but that it has structure, that this structure affects in innumerable ways what humans say and do'.⁴ In this thesis I shall endeavour to demonstrate that what Bowie describes as Freud's essential insight was in fact implicitly understood by the writers I will consider,

¹ In *Studies on Hysteria* (1895), Breuer and Freud write of the release of a memory's 'affect' (its force, in essence its symptom-causing potential), through the subject's proportionate reaction to it; that in some cases, 'speaking is itself the adequate reflex, when, for instance, it is a lamentation or giving utterance to a *tormenting secret*, e. g. a confession' (Josef Breuer and Sigmund Freud, *Studies on Hysteria*, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. and ed. by James Strachey and others, 24 vols (London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1953-74), II, 8, emphasis mine). *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works* will hereafter be referenced as *SE*.

² Letter 56, Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 17 January 1897, in *SE*, I, 242.

³ See 'Editor's Introduction' to 'The Unconscious', in *SE*, XIV, 161-65. Strachey acknowledges the influence on Freud of Herbartian psychology, and writes that 'a recognition of the existence of unconscious mental processes played an essential part in Herbart's system' (p. 162).

⁴ Malcolm Bowie, *Freud, Proust and Lacan: Theory as Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 102. Bowie concludes the sentence, 'and that in thus betraying itself it becomes accessible to analysis'. This last element in Freud's tripartite 'insight' carries equal weight, I believe, with the other two; Bowie then expands on this point, writing that the unconscious is 'endlessly voluble and self-revealing: in our dreams, forgettings, misrememberings, slips of tongue or pen, jokes, symptoms, verbal and physical mannerisms, it insists on being heard. The psychical energy by which repression takes place, and is maintained, is met and challenged by another energy which seeks ... to propel the repressed contents of the unconscious into the preconscious-conscious domain. The unending dialectic that this conflict produces exercises a special fascination upon Lacan' (p. 102). This explanation adds to my feeling that by 'analysis' Lacan does not exclusively mean psychoanalytic techniques, that I am justified in using Bowie's statement in a more concise form, and in doing so do not omit any essential proviso.

many years before psychoanalysis began.⁵ In the work of each the possibility that there exists a structure of an unnamed latent source, or resource, is discernible through the manifestations of what the mid-Victorians called ‘unconscious cerebration’, or ‘unconscious mental processes’,⁶ that arise from it.

⁵ Though also believing that Freud’s predecessors had conceived of unconscious mental processes, Strachey describes how, in his view, Freud’s work went beyond their theories: ‘What he did ... was ... to clothe the metaphysical entity in flesh and blood. He showed for the first time what the unconscious was like, how it worked, how it differed from other parts of the mind, and what were its reciprocal relations with them’ (‘Editor’s Introduction’ to ‘The Unconscious’, p. 164). My argument is that the Victorians had begun to inch their way towards this sort of conception of unconscious mental processes; that they had begun to clothe the metaphysical entity, to discern how parts of it worked and interacted with other parts of the mind, many years before Freud.

⁶ A thesis by itself could be written on the prefiguration of Freud’s concept of the unconscious. I will try to avoid too much comment on this area alone, partly because of the amount of criticism already written on the subject, by commentators such as Henri Ellenberger and before him, Lancelot Law Whyte, who in *The Unconscious Before Freud* (New York: Basic Books, 1960) asserts, ‘the available surveys suggest that *Unbewusstsein* and *bewusstlos* (in meanings close to those now current) were first used by E. Platner in 1776, and these or similar terms were made popular by Goethe, Schiller, and Schelling between 1780 and 1820. The word “unconscious” as an adjective (with the same meaning) appears in English in 1751, and more frequently after 1800, for example, in the writings of Wordsworth and Coleridge. By 1850 both adjective and noun were extensively used in Germany, and were moderately common in England’ (Whyte, p. 66). This should suggest how the word was used in England in the Victorian period; I have only come across ‘unconscious’ as an adjective in all the texts I have read, and have no interest in asserting that the Victorians used the term as a noun. Freud himself used ‘unconscious’ as a noun (*das Unbewusste*) but also as an adjective (*unbewusst*); in 1933, towards the end of his career, he wrote: ‘The oldest and best meaning of the word “unconscious” is the descriptive one; we call a psychical process unconscious whose existence we are obliged to assume – for some such reason as that we infer it from its effects – , but of which we know nothing.’ (‘Lecture XXXI: The Dissection of the Psychical Personality’, in *SE*, XXII, 57-80 (p. 70)) Jenny Bourne Taylor makes a valid point that the Victorians’ idea of the unconscious is nearer what Freud called the ‘preconscious’. Writing that her use of the term ‘unconscious’ ‘should not be confused with the later development of the concept by Freud’, she continues: ‘Although there are some correspondences between some aspects of the earlier theories and psychoanalytic development, the mid-nineteenth-century “unconscious”, if anything, comes nearer to Freud’s notion of the “preconscious” than to his idea of the unconscious proper; the crucial difference being that for Freud the unconscious itself was constructed by the transformation of sexual drives through a process of repression that was itself unconscious.’ (Jenny Bourne Taylor, *In the Secret Theatre of Home: Wilkie Collins, sensation narrative, and nineteenth-century psychology* (London: Routledge, 1988), p. 256 n.) Bourne Taylor rightly identifies the mechanism of repression as a key difference between Freudian and Victorian concepts of the mind; however, her argument needs the additional emphasis that the preconscious is still unconscious. Freud describes how these two entities relate to each other: ‘A consideration of these dynamic relations permits us now to distinguish two kinds of unconscious – one which is easily, under frequently occurring circumstances, transformed into something conscious, and another with which this transformation is difficult and takes place only subject to a considerable expenditure of effort or possibly never at all ... We call the unconscious which is only latent, and thus easily becomes conscious, the “preconscious” and retain the term “unconscious” for the other ... Once again: the preconscious is also unconscious in the purely descriptive sense, but we do not give it that name, except in talking loosely or when we have to make a defence of the existence in mental life of unconscious processes in general’ (‘Lecture XXXI’, p. 71).

This idea of differing degrees of latency recalls the work of Sir William Hamilton, one-time Professor of Logic and Metaphysics at Edinburgh University, who in his *Lectures on Metaphysics and Logic* (1859) distinguished three degrees of mental latency. The third and deepest degree was conceived of in response to the fact that ‘in madness, in fever, in somnambulism, and other abnormal states, the mind should betray capacities and extensive systems of knowledge, of which it was at other times wholly unconscious’ (*Lectures on Metaphysics and Logic* (1859), ed. by H. C. Mansel and John Keith, 7th edn, 4 vols (London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1865), I, 340-41. Whether the material existing in this degree of mental latency could be said to ‘easily’ and ‘frequently’ reach consciousness is a matter for debate, but I would argue that Hamilton’s third degree, though not perhaps as deep as Freud’s unconscious proper, nevertheless seems deeper and less accessible than the Freudian preconscious.

Although it will mostly be the case, especially in the more obviously phenomenological fictions of Sheridan Le Fanu and Wilkie Collins, that the symptoms arising out of the structure of the mind, including an area or areas whose contents could be described as ‘unconscious’, are revealed, rather than the structure itself, it occasionally happens that an actual spatial model of the thinking apparatus is described. Consider the following two passages. The first is in Le Fanu’s *Uncle Silas* (1864), and the second is from *The Ego and the Id* (1923):

How marvellously lie our anxieties, in filmy layers, one over the other! Take away that which has lain on the upper surface for so long – the care of cares – the only one, as it seemed to you, between your soul and the radiance of Heaven – and straight you will find a new stratum there. As physical science tells us no fluid is without its skin, so does it seem with this fine medium of the soul, and these successive films of care that form upon its surface on mere contact with the upper air and light.⁷

We have said that the consciousness is the *surface* of the mental apparatus; that is, we have ascribed it as a function to a system which is spatially the first one reached from the external world – and spatially not only in the functional sense but, on this occasion, also in the sense of anatomical dissection. Our investigations too must take this perceiving surface as a starting-point.⁸

In both these passages there is a sense of structure, and, importantly, a reference to another form of more established science with which to support it – Le Fanu refers to physical science, Freud to neurobiological dissection. An aim of this thesis, particularly in the earlier chapters, on Le Fanu and Collins, will be to investigate some of the ideas about such structures and systems which circulated in the nineteenth century, some inspired by older sciences, which may also have contributed towards the formation of Freudian models of the mind.

These structures and systems are often only discernible in the details of their workings. Later in this chapter I will examine a particular characteristic, that of the necessity of attaining a state of equilibrium, in some nineteenth- and pre-nineteenth-century micro- and macrocosms (of mind, body, and spiritual universe) which were discussed and described in the philosophical and scientific climate within which Le Fanu and Freud read and wrote. Then I shall go on to discuss some manifestations by which we get a sense of these systems in the work of these two figures. In Le Fanu’s fiction this almost invariably means a malfunction of the system, manifested in symptoms, which, often dramatically and sometimes horrifically, affect the behaviour of his characters. This is particularly the case in his short stories, which by the end of his career offer certain parallels with Freud’s early case histories. Of particular significance in the present section, and throughout this chapter, will be the question of what it was that filled and powered

⁷ Sheridan Le Fanu, *Uncle Silas* (1864), ed. by W. J. McCormack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), p. 348.

⁸ Sigmund Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, in *SE*, XIX, 3-66 (p. 19). An editorial note rightly points out that Freud is referring to an assertion made in his earlier work *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, (in *SE*, XVIII, 1-64 (p. 26). Hereafter, *Beyond*). Freud cannot resist calling for the support of the discipline of biological anatomy here, it should be noted, simply because on this occasion the model fits with it. He held a relationship with biology (explored expertly by Frank J. Sulloway in *Freud, Biologist of the Mind: Beyond the Psychoanalytic Legend* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992)) which was

the models, large and small, in the works of Le Fanu and Freud; what was the circulatory material or the dynamic force within them, a debate that was only furthered, not settled, by Freud, who never determined ‘the nature of *Q*’.⁹

It may not immediately be apparent where the common ground lies between Sigmund Freud and Sheridan Le Fanu. The Anglo-Irish Le Fanu is traditionally portrayed as a reclusive yet prolific writer, whose rather unassuming career, from 1838-1873, produced an array of gothic and ghost stories, often written purely for money, some of which his own biographer has described as ‘poor’.¹⁰ Unlike Wilkie Collins, Le Fanu did not endeavour to self-consciously display his knowledge of the science of mind within his work, and showed little interest in using the latest technical terms (except, perhaps, for ironic effect). In the above two passages we see something of this – it cannot be denied that a structure is depicted in each, but surely these descriptions are of different faculties. Where Freud uses the language of mental apparatus and consciousness, Le Fanu writes, rather archaically it might seem, of a ‘soul’. My general contention in this chapter is that the distance between the systems of Le Fanu and Freud is not as great as may first appear, owing to their common inheritance of European scientific, philosophical, spiritual and literary traditions. More specifically, if we take into consideration the viewpoint of Bruno Bettelheim, in *Freud and Man’s Soul* (1982), the gap between Le Fanu and Freud begins to narrow:

In his work and in his writings, Freud often spoke of the soul – of its nature and structure, its development, its attributes, how it reveals itself in all we do and dream. Unfortunately, nobody who reads him in English could guess this, because nearly all his many references to the soul, and to matters pertaining to the soul, have been excised in translation.¹¹

Bettelheim’s assertion is that, due to Strachey’s over-technical translation of Freud’s work, those who read him in English remain unaware of his frequent references to the soul (*die Seele*). He writes that Freud used the idea of the soul ‘especially in crucial passages where he is attempting to provide a broad view of his system’, and more specifically:

In various places, Freud spoke about ‘the structure of the soul’ and ‘the organization of the soul’ (*die Struktur des seelischen Apparats* and *die seelische Organisation*). In the translation, these terms are almost always rendered as ‘mental apparatus’ or ‘mental organization.’ Such substitutions are particularly misleading because in German the words *Seele* and *seelisch* have even more exclusively spiritual meanings than the word ‘soul’ has in present-day American usage. (p. 71)

Indeed, we find this is the case in the very passage, from *The Ego and the Id*, which I have

patchy and ambivalent.

⁹ This is a phrase which forms the title of Appendix C to *Project for a Scientific Psychology* (in *SE*, I, 392-97) which discusses the nature and theoretical development of the force within the mental apparatus from its appearance in the *Project* to the end of Freud’s career.

¹⁰ W. J. McCormack, *Sheridan Le Fanu and Victorian Ireland* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), p. 199.

reproduced above as an example of Freud's description of the structure of the psychical apparatus; where Strachey translates 'of the mental apparatus', it is in fact the case that Freud has written 'des seelischen Apparats', which literally translates as 'of the apparatus of the soul'.¹²

Freud (as Bettelheim points out) knew well the etymological basis for the word *Psychoanalyse* (psychoanalysis). Bettelheim renders an opening statement from a 1905 article by Freud thus, "Psyche" is a Greek word and its German translation is "soul" (Bettelheim, p. 73) (Strachey renders the last word 'mind'); even at the end of his life, in *An Outline of Psychoanalysis*, Freud referred to 'our psyche (the life of the soul)' (*Seelenleben*).¹³ The word 'psyche', the *Oxford English Dictionary* tells us, precisely translates from Greek into English as 'breath', and describes 'the animating principle in man and other living beings, the source of all vital activities ... the soul or spirit'.¹⁴ This description encompasses much, suggesting rather than defining; this is an obscurity that Freud also seemed to inherit, and, according to Bettelheim, understood and utilized:

Nowhere in his writings does Freud give us a precise definition of the term 'soul.' I suspect that he chose the term *because* of its inexactitude, its emotional resonance. Its ambiguity speaks for the ambiguity of the psyche itself, which reflects many different, warring levels of consciousness simultaneously. To have attempted a clinical definition of such a term ... would have robbed it of its value as an expression of Freud's thinking. (Bettelheim, p. 77)

He continues, with an interesting qualification of the use of this word by a thinker who was, after all, fundamentally an atheist, 'when Freud speaks of the soul he is talking not about a religious phenomenon but about a psychological concept; it too is a metaphor' (p. 77). This may be so, but it is worth considering the possibility that Freud may have inherited more than he realized from a theistic heritage, and that to use terms such as *die Seele* only draws attention to this. In his psychoanalytic rewriting of a history of what was originally recorded by Church Authorities as an encounter with the devil in 'A Seventeenth-Century Demonological Neurosis' (1923), and in his jubilant letters to Fliess of 1897 about how the possession of centuries ago was 'identical with' the hysteria which he aspired to cure, Freud was in fact appropriating an

¹¹ Bruno Bettelheim, *Freud and Man's Soul* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991), p. 4.

¹² Sigmund Freud, *Das Ich und das Es* (Wien: Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag, 1923), p. 18.

¹³ Translated by Bettelheim, p. 75. Taken from *An Outline of Psycho-Analysis* (1940). Strachey, as Bettelheim points out, renders *Seelenleben* as 'mental life' (*An Outline of Psycho-Analysis* (1940), in *SE*, XXIII, 139-207 (p. 144). Hereafter, *Outline*).

¹⁴ *Oxford English Dictionary*, ed. by J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner, 2nd edn, 20 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), XII, 756. Hereafter, *OED*. As Helen Small points out, in *Love's Madness: Medicine, the Novel, and Female Insanity, 1800-1865* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), "Psychiatry", "psychiatric", "psychiatrics", "psychopathy", and "psychopathology" all enter the [English] language from German in the late 1840s' (p. 22); those who understood the root of these words may have seen no reason to drop the terminology of the soul in favour of more technical terms that could have been said to simply be a tautology. Small's description of the introduction of these terms forms an illustration of her point about how medical professionals began at this time to couch their science in technical terms in order to assume a greater authority; for such as Le Fanu, this language-based power-seeking would have had

already constructed model and ascribing to it his own terminology.¹⁵

In considering the career of Le Fanu we see something of an illustration of this. Spanning as it did some thirty-five years, it demonstrates a change that seems to illuminate the process of translation which Freud went on to apply to traditional systems of European thought and belief. The developments visible in Le Fanu's career are part of a larger heritage which treated the same mental symptoms in different ways according to the prevalent cultural trend. G. H. Lewes, writing at the end of the 1870s, expresses it thus:

Hippocrates, a great observer, whose vision was little blurred by mists of metaphysics, saw in mental maladies abnormal brain-action; and his immediate successors sought in abnormal conditions of the organism for the direct causation of all the forms of insanity. But during the reign of theologians and metaphysicians this scientific standpoint was deserted, and mental maladies passed from the hands of physicians into the hands of priests: exorcism and prayers took the place of hygiene and prescriptions. The theologian regarded insanity as demoniacal possession. The metaphysician regarded it as a spiritual perversion, and sometimes as a want of harmony between the soul and its 'instrument.' ... The existence of a cerebral disease, which demands the physician's care, is now the universal belief. Mental maladies have taken their place beside bodily maladies, and have become a subject of natural science, to be studied on the same method as all other sciences.¹⁶

In 1838, when Le Fanu first started writing stories for the *Dublin University Magazine*, he presented them as extracts 'from the Legacy of the late Francis Purcell, P. P. of Drumcoolagh', a Roman Catholic Priest with an enthusiasm for stories of mystery and the supernatural. In doing this he was in fact writing within the tradition of such clerical investigators as Augustine Calmet, a French Catholic monk whose century-old gathered reports on supernatural events were translated and edited in 1850 by Rev. Henry Christmas as *The Phantom World, or the Philosophy of Spirits, Apparitions, &c.*¹⁷ Purcell's 'editor' writes of him that he was simply a scribe, attempting to record 'those harmless fragments of a picturesque superstition, which it is our object to preserve' and that having compared Purcell's accounts with original family documents, he has found 'that whatever of supernatural occurred in the story, so far from having been exaggerated by him, had been rather softened down, and, wherever it could be attempted,

little attraction.

¹⁵ In his paper on the seventeenth-century demonological neurosis, and in an early paper on Charcot, it is obvious that Freud sees the duty of psychoanalysis as replacing the language of demon possession with that of symptom and neurosis. He writes of Charcot's interest in witchcraft and superstition, that in order for him to get to the fundamental truth that the splitting of consciousness was a key to the formation of hysteria, 'it would only have been a matter of exchanging the religious terminology of that dark and superstitious age for the scientific language of to-day' ('Charcot' (1893), in *SE*, III, 7-23 (p. 20)).

¹⁶ George Henry Lewes, *Problems of Life and Mind, Third Series, Problem the First: The Study of Psychology: Its Object, Scope and Method* (London: Trübner & Co., Ludgate Hill, 1879), pp. 35-36. Hereafter, *Problems*, 3rd Series, I.

¹⁷ Augustine Calmet, *The Phantom World, or, The Philosophy of Spirits, Apparitions, &c.*, ed. and intro. by Rev. Henry Christmas, 2 vols (London: Richard Bentley, 1850). Fred Kaplan testifies that Dickens had a copy of this (Fred Kaplan, *Dickens and Mesmerism: The Hidden Springs of Fiction* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), p. 4n.); Robert Tracy, the editor of a recent edition of *In a Glass Darkly* (1872) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), maintains that Le Fanu adapted one of Calmet's accounts in order to write 'Carmilla' (1871-72), the last story in the collection, and that he probably would have consulted this edition in order to do so (*In a Glass Darkly*, p. 346 n.).

accounted for'.¹⁸ Also symptomatic of this sort of flirting relationship with the idea of the supernatural which cannot accept it wholeheartedly yet cannot completely relinquish it, Calmet's editor qualifies and rationalizes the papers he has spent so much time preparing for publication, the necessity for preserving his clerical integrity and a decade's advance on Father Purcell's scientific knowledge causing an irresistible urge to the following explanation:

Not a few cases of demoniacal possession are capable of being resolved into cataleptic trance, a state very similar to that produced by mesmerism ... Not a few of the most remarkable cases of supposed *modern* possession are to be accounted for by involuntary or natural mesmerism ... And here, to avoid misconception, or rather misrepresentation, let me at once observe, that I speak thus of *modern* and *recorded* cases only, accepting *literally* all related in the New Testament, and not presuming to say that similar cases *might* not occur now. Calmet, however, may be supposed to have collected all the most remarkable of modern times, and I am compelled to say I believe not one of them.¹⁹

Notwithstanding this blow to his authenticity, Christmas proclaims Calmet, in the spirit of Purcell's editor, to be 'a man of naturally cool, calm judgment, pious and truthful, and possessed of singular learning' (Christmas, p. xi). His work may go, Christmas says, 'to illustrate many physical facts' (p. x), in other words to support modern scientific laws. In his feverish privileging of the forces of mesmerism in the creation of symptoms, and his attempts to separate out instances of possession in the gospels from modern accounts of the same phenomenon, Christmas betrays the fact that he, like Calmet, and like the gospel writers, is of his time, and is simply replacing the previous agent of the demon with whatever potentially pathogenic energy happens to be culturally prevalent. His theistic faith only serves as a complication, forming for him an additional force for which it is necessary to find a place within the already charged system of the universe.

At the end of Le Fanu's career, the character framing his narratives had changed; in the place of the priest is the 'philosophic physician',²⁰ Dr. Hesselius of *In a Glass Darkly* (1872) who, like Purcell, collects secret histories. As we shall see, however, the ambiguity surrounding the phenomena experienced by the characters in each of these stories remains as strong as it did in the early stages of his career: there seems to be a shift from a Christian supernatural vision, comprising external avenging or aggressive agents which, for lack of explanation, are presumed to be evil or ghostly, to a picture of individual psychology completed by external ghostly symptoms, which in their turn could lean towards an explanation of a haunting personal guilt, but this shift is actually rather illusory. It is perhaps the case that the only thing guiding our view of events within these stories is the framer of the narrative, who in each case operates

¹⁸ Sheridan Le Fanu, 'A Chapter in the History of a Tyrone Family, Being a Tenth Extract from the Legacy of the Late Francis Purcell, P. P. of Drumcoolagh' (1839), in *The Oxford Book of Gothic Tales*, ed. by Chris Baldick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 102-32 (p. 105).

¹⁹ Henry Christmas, 'Introduction', in Calmet, *The Phantom World*, I, v-xvii (pp. vii, viii).

²⁰ Rev. Jennings of 'Green Tea' describes him thus ('Green Tea' (1869), in *In a Glass Darkly*, pp. 5-40 (p. 28)). Elsewhere he is termed 'a medical philosopher' (p. 8).

through the barrier of posthumous editing.²¹ Further, Le Fanu's remarkably repetitive method of writing and rewriting enables us to see especially clearly that through the changing, interpreting voice (Purcell, Hesselius, beset narrator, or reader), which defines the force that originates and fuels the symptoms according to his or her own current agenda, the narrative that this voice interprets remains remarkably similar over a number of years, and indeed in many cases, across the traverse of the Irish Sea.²² Purcell's 'Passage in the Secret History of an Irish Countess' (1838) is later rewritten, first as 'The Murdered Cousin' in 1851, then in novel form as *Uncle Silas* (1864), 'A Chapter in the History of a Tyrone Family' (1839) becomes *The Wyvern Mystery* (1869) (Varma, p. vii).²³

In *In a Glass Darkly*, the second story, entitled 'The Familiar', is in essence a reprint, with minor revisions, of 'The Watcher' which was published in Le Fanu's 1851 anthology, *Ghost Stories and Tales of Mystery*.²⁴ It becomes obvious, when surveying the changes made by Le Fanu over his career, that the titles of these stories may encourage an assigning of a particular interpretation: in particular the change from 'The Watcher' to 'The Familiar' implies a narrowing of the gap between evil visitant and victim, from outside surveyor to intimate.²⁵ It is Le Fanu's choice of the title of *In A Glass Darkly* for the anthology in which 'The Familiar' appears, however, that is the most leading framing technique that he uses, and is the more intriguing because this phrase bears no direct reference to any of the stories in particular; it is at once a central commentary and a throwaway. Especially when starkly compared to Le Fanu's 1851 anthology title, *Ghost Stories and Tales of Mystery*, it can be seen in essence as a suggestion that the unfortunate haunted subjects contained in the later stories are, in beholding what seems most alien to them, actually seeing a dim reflection of their inner selves. But, it is in considering the progress of 'The Watcher' to 'The Familiar' that we realize that the system that Le Fanu describes has in essence remained unchanged underneath different labels. The later story is prefixed by what is almost a superfluous 'diagnosis', 'necessarily conjectural' because Hesselius could not examine the patient, now dead (p. 42). If Captain Barton were not dead, Hesselius claims, he could ascribe his condition, which Barton himself believes is due to a supernatural 'scheme of vengeance' (p. 75), to one of three causes. Either Barton is a visionary, he has become morbidly oversensitive to influences and spiritual realities from which he should

²¹ In the case of Hesselius the remove is even greater - he has been translated, and as the anthology goes on he is, after an initial embarrassment (which I will later discuss), gradually faded from the histories.

²² Devendra P. Varma identifies Le Fanu's way of rewriting thus - 'Le Fanu's individual method was to attempt and refurbish a tale several times, generally inaugurating it as a short-story, then blowing it into a larger format, and subsequently elaborating it in a three-decker novel' ('Musings on The Life and Works of Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, a Forgotten Creator of Ghosts', in Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, *Ghost Stories and Tales of Mystery* (1851) (New York: Arno Press, 1977), pp. i-xvii (p. vii).

²³ It was with the writing of each full-length novel that the setting changed from Ireland to England, a shift of context which had much to do with Le Fanu's publisher, Richard Bentley, and what was perceived as likely to sell (see *Sheridan Le Fanu and Victorian Ireland*, p. 140).

²⁴ Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, 'The Watcher' (1851), in *Ghost Stories and Tales of Mystery*, pp. 9-60.

²⁵ Indeed, in an 1870 essay entitled 'Unconscious Cerebration: A Psychological Study' (*Macmillan's Magazine*, 23 (November 1870), 24-37), Frances Power Cobbe calls the unconscious mind 'our Familiar'

be protected, or there is a vibratory disturbance of his cerebral circulation that gives rise to illusions (pp. 41-42). In these explanations, Hesselius begins to sound remarkably like Rev. Henry Christmas when faced with the phenomena recorded by Calmet. With his over-technical language, his references to his own obscurely numbered metaphysical papers, and his further comments that have to be omitted since they contain 'a great deal which is of interest only to a scientific physician' it is Hesselius, in contrast to Barton's own interpretation (c. 1794) who appears outdated. Indeed, Hesselius's commentary is in the end only a scientific veneer on the real narrative, enclosed within his, which is written by a representative of the theistic tradition, 'the Rev. Thomas Herbert' (p. 42). For in this and the 1851 version, what causes Barton's torment is guilt. The figure that stalks him is a shrunken version of a sailor whose daughter Barton ruined, and who died of a broken heart. After her death, Barton mistreated the sailor who died as a result. In the earlier edition, instead of Hesselius's preface, there is a simple epigram at the head of the story: 'How long wilt thou not depart from me? Thou terrifiest me through visions: so that my soul chooseth strangling rather than my life.' ('The Watcher', p. 9) This quotation is paraphrased from a passage in *Job* (7. 12-21),²⁶ which is also used in a meditation attached to a letter in Richardson's *Clarissa*, in which the heroine is urged to repentance by her uncle. In the Bible passage, and more so in Richardson's novel, it functions as a simple expression of the terrors of having committed sin; it is the lament of the sufferer of a haunting guilt, the symbol and symptom of which, in Le Fanu's story, is the evil spirit.²⁷ Later we will see how this springs from Le Fanu's awareness of the possibility of a universal system, a concept which was also part of Freud's heritage.

The passing of twenty years in Le Fanu's career has only served to introduce additional

(p. 27).

²⁶ The passage from *Job* appears (in the *Authorised King James Version*): 'Am I a sea, or a whale, that thou settest a watch over me? When I say, My bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint; Then though scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions: So that my soul chooseth strangling, *and* death rather than my life. I loathe *it*; I would not live alway: let me alone, for my days *are* vanity. What *is* man, that thou shouldest magnify him? and that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him? And *that* thou shouldest visit him every morning, *and* try him every moment? How long wilt thou not depart from me, nor let me alone till I swallow down my spittle? I have sinned; what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men? why hast thou set me as a mark against thee, so that I am a burden to myself? And why dost thou not pardon my transgression, and take away mine iniquity? for now shall I sleep in the dust; and thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I *shall* not *be*.' I have quoted the section I think most relevant; Le Fanu takes both halves of the phrase from this passage, but inverts them, putting the phrase which occurs second first. The reference to being watched at the beginning of this passage, from which the epigram to 'The Watcher' is taken, is particularly interesting.

²⁷ The section appears in *Clarissa* thus: 'I have sinned! What shall I do unto Thee, O Thou Preserver of men! Why hast Thou set me as a mark against Thee; so that I am a burden to myself! When I say, My bed shall comfort me; My couch shall ease my complaint; Then Thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions./ So that my soul chooseth strangling and death rather than life' (Samuel Richardson, *Clarissa, or The History of a Young Lady* (1747-48), ed. by John Butt, 4 vols (London: Dent, 1968), IV, 101). The noteworthy element in this rendering is the featuring of beds and dreams; in Le Fanu's work it is often in bed that the haunted subject meets his or her tormentor, usually unsure whether what he or she has witnessed (for example, in 'Carmilla' a black cat in her room, in 'Squire Toby's Will' (1868) a dog climbing over his bedclothes) is a dream or a waking experience. Frequently, it is also the case that the bedroom is the scene of death for many of Le Fanu's protagonists (see 'The Watcher' and 'Green Tea').

options for the explanation of phenomena (thereby adding ambiguity); new ways of describing old concepts. In the end, all that Hesselius's various explanations of Barton's plight do is encourage us to strip away the superfluous material from them and accept, if we want, the option that most neatly fits the overall picture, which includes Barton's crime and punishment:

Others, again, owe their sufferings to a mixed condition. The interior sense, it is true, is opened; but it has been and continues open by the action of disease. This form of disease may, in one sense, be compared to the loss of the scarf-skin, and a consequent exposure of surfaces for whose excessive sensitiveness, nature has provided a muffling. The loss of this covering is attended by an habitual impassability, by influences against which we were intended to be guarded. (pp. 41-42)

The loss of the 'scarf-skin', the reason for which is in this instance unexplained (in contrast to the development of 'interior vision' in the story before it, 'Green Tea', attributed to the abuse of the substance in the title ('Green Tea', p. 39)) makes us conscious of those things of which we should remain unconscious in order to avoid distress.²⁸ Fundamentally arising from the common Victorian conceptions of conscious (knowing) and unconscious (unknowing), this aetiology of symptoms yet prefigures Freud's apt phrase, 'they would not have become symptoms if they had not forced their way into consciousness'.²⁹ In Barton's case what is slowly forced on him is the extent of his crime, and the depth of his guilt which he had always done his best to forget. It is this episode of his life which, we are told, 'of all others, he hated to remember' (p. 50). The forming in Barton of a firm connection between his haunting and his past happens gradually, suggesting that the guilty incident is kept far from his consciousness; at first it is simply a 'vag[ue] and instincti[ve]' linking (p. 50). It is with the passing of time, and increased hauntings, that he becomes 'deeply and horribly convinced' of the systemic connection between his sin and the retribution he is experiencing (p. 60). Because of his unwillingness to remember, to class this memory with the others in his psyche, Barton lays

²⁸ James Sully, in *Illusions: A Psychological Study* (1881) 4th edn (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., Ltd, 1905) provides, in the experiences of students of optics, a practical example of the phenomenon that Barton suffers, of becoming *too* conscious, 'when a sensation arises in the mind, it may, under certain circumstances, go unattended to. In that case there is no perception. The sensation floats in the dim outer regions of consciousness as a vague feeling, the real nature and history of which are unknown. This remark applies not only to the undefined bodily sensations that are always oscillating about the threshold of obscure consciousness, but to the higher sensations connected with the special organs of perception. The student in optics soon makes the startling discovery that his field of vision has all through his life been haunted with weird shapes which have never troubled the serenity of his mind just because they have never been distinctly attended to' (pp. 20-21). Barton has ignored a whole sphere of existence because of his former attitude, 'the callous scepticism of a confirmed infidel' ('The Familiar', p. 45); now what was visible if he had cared to look is forced upon his vision.

²⁹ Sigmund Freud, 'Lecture XVIII: Fixation to Traumas – The Unconscious', (1916-17) in *SE*, XVI, 273-85 (p. 278). Hamilton provides a psychical extension to Sully's description of the sensation which 'floats in the dim outer regions of consciousness', sheds light on Barton's sudden consciousness of the consequences of his crime, and portrays a structure that bears similarities to that within which Freud is obviously working in the phrase I have quoted, when he writes, 'the sphere of our conscious modifications is only a small circle in the centre of a far wider sphere of action and passion, of which we are only conscious through its effects' (*Lectures on Metaphysics*, I, 349). This is a suggestive comment, which helps pave the way for Freud's vision of the creation of symptoms and other mental phenomena that are our only clue to the existence of the unconscious.

himself open to its unexpected return, in the same way that Dr. Sturk in Le Fanu's 1860 novel, *The House by the Churchyard*, by witnessing a murder when intoxicated, is suddenly revisited in a dream, in a way that would later attract the term 'traumatic', by 'a strange, painfully-sharp remembrance of things past'.³⁰

The idea of the scarf-skin provides something of a link for us between the old ways of seeing the workings of guilt, and the structures of psychoanalysis. It is another part of Le Fanu's vision of the structure of the mind or soul which finds later correspondence in a part of the Freudian psychical system. Dr. Hesselius's ordinarily muffled system can be seen to correspond to the binding of memories by the ego's natural processes in Freud's 1895 *Project for a Scientific Psychology*, in which hallucinations, in particular, are due to a memory's unbound state, which leaves the psychical system open to an unusual influx of the full raw force of the primary processes.³¹ Twenty-five years later, in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud writes, 'we may, I think, tentatively venture to regard the common traumatic neurosis as a consequence of an extensive breach being made in the protective shield against stimuli' (*Beyond*, p. 31). As in Freud's unbound system, in which 'the patient ... is obliged to *repeat* the repressed material as a contemporary experience instead of, as the physician would prefer to see, *remembering* it as something belonging to the past' (*Beyond*, p. 18), that a protective shield has not developed around Barton's memory lies in the fact that he 'hat[es] to remember' these past scenes of his life. Therefore he is forcibly and repetitively reminded of them, without his conscious consent.

Significantly, in summing up Barton's case, the clergyman narrator uses the following words; that Barton perceived himself 'as *working out* a retribution for some grievous sin of his past life' ('The Familiar', p. 81, emphasis mine). This phrase, arising from traditional biblical discourse,³² suggesting the payment of a debt, also prefigures the Freudian vision of symptom formation as a result of excess force trapped within the psychical system, which requires spending. In his *Introductory Lectures to Psychoanalysis* (1916-17), Freud describes the nature of trauma in economic terms, which find resonance in the phrase used at the end of 'The Familiar':

Indeed, the term 'traumatic' has no other sense than an economic one. We apply it to an experience which within a short period of time presents the mind with an increase of stimulus too powerful to be dealt with or *worked off* in the normal way, and this must result in permanent disturbances of the manner in which the energy operates. ('Lecture XVIII', p. 275, emphasis mine)

In his *Project* of 1895, Freud explores the process needed to cure the patient of traumas. The

³⁰ J. Sheridan Le Fanu, *The House by the Churchyard* (1863) (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1994), p. 182.

³¹ See Sigmund Freud, *Project for a Scientific Psychology* (1950), in *SE*, I, 281-397 (p. 381). Hereafter, *Project*.

³² In St. Paul's letter to the Philippians, he exhorts them to 'work out your own salvation with fear and trembling' (Philippians 2.12, *Authorised King James Version*).

memory, he writes, must be faced, mulled over, considered; by recollection it is able to be bound and forgotten.

It is now tamed and by a thought-facilitation strong enough to exercise a permanent effect and to produce an inhibiting action once more at every later repetition of the memory. The pathway leading to the release of unpleasure will then, owing to disuse, gradually increase its resistance: for facilitations are subject to gradual decay (forgetting). Only after this is [the] memory a tamed memory like any other. (*Project*, p. 382, editor's brackets)

Freud's use of the word 'tamed' ('gebändigt')³³ with regard to the binding of a previously traumatic or hallucinatory memory is interesting in considering Le Fanu's work, in which the revenants so often appear as terrifying animals.³⁴ The full working out of Barton's haunting memory, however, can only occur with his death, after which the full story of his crime, which he never verbalizes, is finally aired. Therefore, with the debt of confession owed, the memory untamed, he continues haunted.

By the time Le Fanu published 'The Familiar', in 1872, his singling out of guilt as a pathogenic agent for the creation of symptoms was, if we believe Lewes, rather outdated. In his survey of the interpretation of mental maladies, from possession to cerebral disease, from which I have already quoted, Lewes writes that whereas earlier in the nineteenth century mental aberrations were seen as 'the symptom of Vice', 'the practical absurdity of this theory has long been recognized. No one now argues with a demented patient. No one thinks of curing mania with sermons' (*Problems, 3rd Series*, I, 36). In psychoanalysis, however, a thinking frame within which repressed guilt was a major agent of neurosis, of which a type of confession to a self-proclaimed 'father confessor' (*Studies on Hysteria*, p. 282) was the cure, it is possible to see a return to these, as Lewes would have it, outdated ideas. In his assessment of what mental science has become in the 1870s, Lewes writes: 'Mental maladies have taken their place beside bodily maladies, and have become a subject of natural science, to be studied on the same method as all other sciences.' (*Problems, 3rd Series*, I, 36) Lewes's principle of approach would have been classed by Freud, in 'A Seventeenth-Century Demonological Neurosis', as 'exact science', a discipline that psychoanalysis has triumphantly disproved and overcome:

The demonological theory of those dark times has won in the end against all the somatic views of the period of 'exact' science. The states of possession correspond to our neuroses, for the explanation

³³ Sigmund Freud, *Aus den Anfängen der Psychoanalyse: Briefen an Wilhelm Fliess, Abhandlungen und Notizen aus den Jahren 1887-1902* (London: Imago Publishing Co. Ltd., 1950), p. 460.

³⁴ Jochen Achilles helpfully provides a long list of the animals that appear in Le Fanu's fiction, also stressing the untamed nature of the affects they represent: 'Animals functioning as displaced representations of hidden guilt, anger or desire are legion in Le Fanu's oeuvre. Cats ("The Mysterious Lodger", "Carmilla", "The White Cat of Drumgunniol", "Laura Silver Bell"), a gander ("The Quare Gander"), bears and rats ("An Account of Some Strange Disturbances in an Old House in Aungier Street"), monkeys ("The Haunted Baronet", "Green Tea"), a parrot and a jay ("The Fatal Bride", "The Haunted Baronet") can be considered as displaced indicators of repressed emotions.' Jochen Achilles, 'Fantasy as Psychological Necessity: Sheridan Le Fanu's Fiction', in *Gothick Origins and Innovations*, ed. by Allan Lloyd Smith and Victor Sage (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994), pp. 150-68 (p. 162).

of which we once more have recourse to psychical powers. In our eyes, the demons are bad and reprehensible wishes, derivatives of instinctual impulses that have been repudiated and repressed. We merely eliminate the projection of these mental entities into the external world which the middle ages carried out; instead, we regard them as having arisen in the patient's internal life, where they have their abode.³⁵

The implication in this passage is that there has been a long-standing disconnection, which Freud has now reconnected, between phenomena caused by evil spirits and the philosophy of mind. But it is in fact the case that there was a connection there all along, which he had missed. Freud's obvious belief is that by redefining possession in terms of psychoanalysis, he is effecting a major departure from nineteenth-century science. It is true, certainly, that psychoanalysis does turn away from an important school of thought, that which Lewes advocates. In this chapter, however, I will be discussing another tradition of thinking, that forms this long-running connection which remained unbroken throughout the nineteenth century, and partly out of which Freud's own theories emerged.

Richard Webster asserts throughout *Why Freud was Wrong* that Freud, despite his ostensible faithlessness, subscribed to a metaphysical or theological vision of the mind, because this was the legacy of European thought, and more specifically, of German Romanticism's *Naturphilosophie*, which held as 'a fundamental tenet ... that natural phenomena cannot be understood through mechanical and physical concepts alone, but that the ultimate task of the scientist was to elucidate the *spiritual* laws by which all nature was governed'.³⁶ This doctrine in its turn was 'rooted in the Judaeo-Christian tradition itself', a tradition so deeply embedded in European culture, that, Webster records, in response to the anti-metaphysical positivist movement that swept through science in the nineteenth century, many thinkers 'began to smuggle theistic views back across the frontiers of science, and secrete them in their theories in a disguised form':

Instead of abandoning the ancient occult fictions of 'soul' and 'spirit' which had constantly been invoked in order to explain the inexplicable, these nineteenth-century scientists systematically translated them into positivistic language, using concepts and terminology drawn from the physical sciences. In this way they constructed fictional entities which were no less occult than their precursors but which, since they were described in the language of science, were often treated as though they were science.

Among the many academic disciplines which succumbed to this particular form of disguised, pseudo-scientific spiritualism was psychology. (Webster, pp. 177-78)

The 'prime culprit' of this act of masking, and a true son of *Naturphilosophie*, Webster states, was a figure we have already encountered: Gustav Fechner (Webster, pp. 178, 176). The thinker whose work the avowed positivist G. H. Lewes once described as 'too mathematical for my comprehension',³⁷ was for much of his life just as much a metaphysical philosopher as a

³⁵ 'A Seventeenth-Century Demonological Neurosis' (1923), in *SE*, XIX, 67-105 (p. 72).

³⁶ Richard Webster, *Why Freud Was Wrong: Sin, Science and Psychoanalysis* (London: Fontana, 1996), p. 177.

³⁷ Letter 15, G. H. Lewes to [recipient unknown], 16 April [1864-67?] in Anthony McCobb, *George*

physicist, writing about the spiritual universe concurrently with the physical one: 'Fechner's numerous writings on supernatural phenomena cover more than half a century of his life ... These works clearly overlap in time with the publication of his major scientific publications in experimental psychology'.³⁸ These two strands of his career, unsurprisingly, were not kept separate. In an account by Henri Ellenberger, however, we get a sense of how they intertwine:

For many years Fechner had been preoccupied with the relationship between the physical and the spiritual worlds. He felt that there had to be a general law governing this relationship, and he tried to discover what mathematical formula would be the most probable one for such a law. According to his own account, that formula, which he called the psychophysical law, occurred to him suddenly on the morning of October 22, 1850, in time to enable him to mention it briefly in his book *Zend-Avesta*.³⁹ He now proceeded to devise a long series of experiments to ascertain whether this law was true, and was absorbed by this research for the following ten years. His findings were contained in the two volumes of the *Psychophysics* published in 1860, which aroused considerable interest and were the starting point of modern experimental psychology. (*The Discovery of the Unconscious*, p. 217)

Of these volumes Ellenberger elsewhere writes, 'it would be erroneous to consider the *Psychophysics* as a textbook of experimental psychology in the modern sense. A good part of it is devoted to "inner psychophysics" and is more metaphysical than psychological'.⁴⁰

It is this figure, whom Webster sums up as 'a conventional scientist only in appearance', a 'spiritual scientist' (Webster, pp. 181, 175), who is referred to by Freud in his 'Autobiographical Study', thus: 'I was always open to the ideas of G. T. Fechner and have followed that thinker upon many important points'.⁴¹ It is Fechner's principle of stability, as I have already discussed in my Introduction, that Freud used as a starting point in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, and had used as a foundation for his posthumously published *Project* of 1895. In the next section I will discuss the necessity for the attainment of equilibrium, in essence a principle of stability, in the systems that Freud and Le Fanu portray in their work. I emphasize Fechner here, and will continue to do so, because I believe he is a figure that usefully bridges the ground from which emerged Le Fanu's and Freud's ideas of mind and soul. It is useful to keep in mind Webster's opinion that Fechner was in essence a masking figure, a disguiser of theistic concepts under scientific terms, for this view, I believe, illuminates the process that I have described of Freud's transposition of Judaeo-Christian systems into psychoanalytic language. Freud, taken in by Fechner's disguise, theorizes within a much more traditionally rich framework than he realizes. Conversely, Le Fanu, as I shall discuss, displayed

Eliot's Knowledge of German Life and Letters (Salzburg: Universität Salzburg, 1982), p. 334. McCobb records in a note that Lewes's journal testifies that he read some of Fechner's work in the 1869-74 period, and that Eliot and Lewes owned three books by Fechner (p. 334 n.).

³⁸ Wolfgang G. Bringmann, Norma J. Bringmann, Norma L. Medway, 'Fechner and Psychical Research', in *G. T. Fechner and Psychology* ed. by Josef Brožek and Horst Gundlach (Leitung: W. Traxel, Passavia Universitätsverlag, 1988), 243-56 (p. 244).

³⁹ This was a spiritual work, bearing, according to Bringmann, Bringmann and Medway, 'the intriguing subtitle "On Matters of Heaven and the Beyond"' ('Fechner and Psychical Research', p. 245).

⁴⁰ Henri Ellenberger, 'Fechner and Freud', *Bulletin of the Menninger Clinic*, 20 (1956), 201-14 (p. 202).

⁴¹ Sigmund Freud, 'An Autobiographical Study' (1925), in *SE*, XX, 1-74 (p. 59).

within his fiction a familiarity with the work of a figure whose vision of a spiritual universe bore many resemblances to that which Fechner held – Emanuel Swedenborg. In his work, therefore, Le Fanu portrayed comparable spiritual systems to those which Fechner describes. He therefore appears rather less naïve than Freud, positioned within an unmasked tradition of mystical thought, with a full realization that this is the case.

For although Freud, as far as we know, only read one of the many metaphysical or spiritual books written by Gustav Fechner,⁴² it seems the case that even Fechner's most scientific books are part of a much greater plan by which he aimed to describe the universe. This is a fact of which Freud, who in 1933 described 'the struggle of the scientific spirit against the religious *Weltanschauung*',⁴³ here establishing a clear opposition between psychoanalysis and any sort of spiritual vision, seems unaware. We see something of Fechner's plan in his 1836 book, *Life After Death*. In the concluding paragraph, after discussing the whole of man's spiritual life, in its three stages (before birth, birth to death, after death) our contact with spirits good and bad, and the mechanics of how souls might see in heaven, Fechner writes:

My speculations, as laid down in this last and in the foregoing chapters, will become better established on larger and firmer grounds, and will be more generally adopted, when the science of psycho-physic, now only in its infancy, shall become aware that its subject is not an isolated theory of the relations between body and mind in the particular human and animal organisms, but a universal theory of the relations between the mental and the material principles of the universe.⁴⁴

After twenty five years, his *Elements of Psychophysics* shows signs of this early ambition, Fechner's definition of its subject appearing as, 'an exact theory of the functionally dependent relations of body and soul ... the physical and the psychological worlds', its occasional reference to the spiritual element of life amid discussions of physical forces causing his mid-twentieth-century translators to insert slightly embarrassed footnotes to explain them.⁴⁵ Even in his most technical works, then, Fechner cannot separate or omit the soul, the spiritual world.

In combining physical or natural science with theories of the soul and spirit, Fechner

⁴² According to the editor of the last volume of the *Standard Edition*, the works by Fechner that Freud cited in his published work were, *Elemente der Psychophysik (Elements of Psychophysics)* (1860), *Einige Ideen zur Schöpfungs- und Entwicklungsgeschichte der Organismen (Some Ideas on the History of Creation and Development of Organisms)* (1873), *Vorschule der Ästhetik (Primary Aesthetics)* (1876) (*SE*, XXIV, 98). However, of special interest is the fact that Freud references, in his work on jokes and wit, the *Rätselbüchlein von Dr. Mises*, which is roughly translated as 'The Little Mystery Book of Dr. Mises' (first published 1850; Freud cites the 4th edn, 1875). Dr. Mises was the name under which Fechner published his more mystical work, and wrote about his trial through illness, during which he composed poems and riddles. Freud was therefore aware of Fechner's more metaphysical publications, though he does not seem to connect them up with his scientific vision.

⁴³ Sigmund Freud, 'Lecture XXXV: The Question of a *Weltanschauung*' (1933), in *SE*, XXII, 158-82 (p. 169).

⁴⁴ Gustav Theodor Fechner, *On Life After Death* (1836), trans. by Hugo Wernecke (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, 1882), p. 95. Hereafter, *Life*.

⁴⁵ For example, 'a typical Fechner notion. God is the soul of the universe', Gustav Theodor Fechner, *Elements of Psychophysics, Volume I* (1860), trans. by Helmut Adler, ed. by Davis Howes and Edwin Boring (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), p. 2 n.

was not a lone figure. There were more thinkers within the nineteenth century, and before, who created intricate systems of the mind's relation to the universe with the aid of already established sciences, from which they took ideas and metaphors to define and explain the spirit world.⁴⁶ It was partly within this tradition, including such figures as Emanuel Swedenborg, Ernst von Feuchtersleben⁴⁷ and the immensely popular Robert Dale Owen,⁴⁸ that Freud, however unwittingly, created his own systems. Such philosophy, in addition to a strong contingent of British physiologists, such as W. B. Carpenter and Thomas Laycock, who endeavoured to reconcile theistic thinking with scientific discovery, also formed part of the context within which Le Fanu wrote his fiction.

*Settling the Equities of Eternity: The Attainment of Equilibrium in
Sheridan Le Fanu's Fiction*

Sheridan Le Fanu, as a contributor to and for some time the editor of a modest monthly periodical (*The Dublin University Magazine*), a husband and father and a man of faith, was, like the majority of Victorians, surrounded, defined, explained and influenced by various systems; systems of publishing economy and circulation in his professional life, spiritual and bodily models in his private life. Sally Shuttleworth, in *Charlotte Brontë and Victorian Psychology*,⁴⁹ gives an idea of the extent to which various systems of force and value pervaded nineteenth-century culture. 'The ideologies governing the expansion of industrial capitalism' (p. 4)

⁴⁶ Henri Ellenberger lists a number of such figures, firmly placed within the Romantic school of *Naturphilosophie* that Webster also highlights, in *The Discovery of the Unconscious: The History and Evolution of Dynamic Psychiatry* (New York: Basic Books, 1970), pp. 202-10.

⁴⁷ Feuchtersleben (1806-1849) whom Ellenberger also locates within the Romantic tradition (*The Discovery of the Unconscious*, p. 210), was, like Freud, from Vienna. In *Hysteria: The History of a Disease* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), Ilza Veith argues that he anticipates the works of Freud in his view that dreams are a return to a former state of being, and the link he makes between hysteria and pent-up sexual desire (pp. 190-93). He was extremely popular in Vienna in the mid-nineteenth century, and the titles of two works that were quickly translated into English are revealing, in a consideration of figures that straddle the worlds of science and spirit. In 1847 The Sydenham Society published *The Principles of Medical Psychology*; five years later John Churchill published *The Dietetics of the Soul*. To translate 'die seele' as soul, rather than mind, the editor explained, was a conscious decision based on the contents of the volume (Ernst von Feuchtersleben, *The Dietetics of the Soul* (1838), trans. and ed. by H. A. Ouvry, 7th edn (London: John Churchill, 1852), pp. vi-vii). Feuchtersleben's aim in this work was 'to explain how this spiritual portion of man may be protected from disease' (p. 8). Though not a mystic, like many scientists before him, Feuchtersleben saw the soul as an important component of the human system, its needs and state of health intertwined with, and perhaps indistinguishable from, those of the mind. That this may approach Freud's use of the term 'die seele' speaks for the perils arising from Freud's vague use of the term, and only suggests the more that the foundations of his thinking lay within this tradition.

⁴⁸ Robert Dale Owen was an American, whose *Footfalls on the Boundary of Another World* (London: Trübner, 1860) was first printed in this English edition from its tenth American edition. Fred Kaplan testifies that Dickens had an 'extensively annotated' copy of this book (Kaplan, p. 4). Owen cited many established English physiologists, including W. B. Carpenter, John Abercrombie, and Henry Holland, to support his argument, which suggested that known natural laws could be seen, alongside miraculous phenomena, as part of a much larger system.

⁴⁹ Sally Shuttleworth, *Charlotte Brontë and Victorian Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

encouraged a widespread use of the discourse of the control, conservation and release of energies, forces, resources. This circulating language infected all spheres of life to the extent that the discourses used in different aspects of society and individual existence interpenetrated and influenced each other. Shuttleworth's interest lies in the way that 'the discourses of political economy, medicine and psychology all converged in their preoccupation with the balanced channelling of energy within the individual body' (p. 151); this 'embodied self' (p. 6) in its turn was conceived, again within a framework of economical thought, 'both as an autonomous unit, gifted with powers of self-control, and also as a powerless material organism, caught within the operations of a wider field of force' (p. 28). This idea of what might be termed the microcosm (the individual) in an often problematical relation to the macrocosm (the universe) is one that runs throughout Le Fanu's work. It found particular resonance in Captain Barton's plight. In the following lament, there is a feeling conveyed that Barton, having relinquished his individual self-control in his irresponsible sexual behaviour, is now caught up in a structure too large and fast-moving to take any account of the preferences and emotions of the unfortunate soul within it:

'The fact is,' said Barton, 'whatever may be my uncertainty as to the authenticity of what we are taught to call revelation, of one fact I am deeply and horribly convinced, that there does exist beyond this a spiritual world – a system whose workings are generally in mercy hidden from us - a system which may be, and which is sometimes, partially and terribly revealed. I am sure – I *know*,' continued Barton, with increasing excitement, 'that there is a God – a dreadful God – and that retribution follows guilt, in ways the most mysterious and stupendous – by agencies the most inexplicable and terrific; – there is a spiritual system – great God, how I have been convinced! – a system malignant, and implacable, and omnipotent, under whose persecutions I am, and have been, suffering the torments of the damned!' ('The Familiar', p. 60)

There were plenty of opportunities for Le Fanu to contemplate, in various ways, systems large and small; cosmic, but more often, individual. At home, the mechanisms of the individual bodily economy found particular resonance. Le Fanu's wife, Susanna, was prone to nervous disorders, including 'visionary disturbances' (*Sheridan Le Fanu and Victorian Ireland*, p. 147) and in fact died in 1858 from the strain of a hysterical attack.⁵⁰ Living with and monitoring the female system which at the time was interpreted and defined by Victorian ideas of what constituted health or morbidity, would have rendered Le Fanu particularly sensitive to the necessity of establishing and maintaining a state of equilibrium. It is worth, therefore, briefly considering this system as an unusually clear example of the workings of an individual economy. It is particularly in the imbalances, tensions and crises within a system that its mechanisms and dynamics are visible. The contemplation of the female economy, therefore, seen in the nineteenth century as inherently prone to these aberrations, could be seen to have provided Le Fanu with a particularly sharp illumination of the dynamics of force within the

⁵⁰ *Sheridan Le Fanu and Victorian Ireland*, p. 147. See pp. 126-35 for an account of Susanna's illness and death.

body, which then inflected his fiction.

Victorian culture and medicine, according to Shuttleworth, viewed woman in herself as a potentially unbalanced system:

Woman, with her constant predisposition to hysteria, is a figure of radical instability. As in the social economy, surface order rests on a precarious balancing of forces, ready to be disrupted and thrown into convulsions at the slightest disturbance of equilibrium. (*Charlotte Brontë and Victorian Psychology*, p. 76)

Shuttleworth writes that in the female economy, regular menstruation was seen as an essential release, and that ‘the physiological, mental and emotional economies of womanhood were all regarded as interdependent’. This led to the belief that irregular menstruation could cause mental disorder, and that emotional strain could cause ‘menstrual obstructions which could in turn lead to insanity and death’ (p. 77). An imbalance of the forces within the system, therefore, was potentially fatal. Robert Brudenell Carter, who published a book on hysteria five years before Susanna died, wrote of emotion as a potentially pathogenic force, which must be released wherever possible:

When the more ordinary effects are produced, such as blushing, lachrymation, gesture, sobbing, &c., two or more of them frequently coincide; but when some less usual outlet has been found, the whole force is generally concentrated upon the suffering organ. The first named and most common consequences, even when not useful in themselves, seem to permit the accomplishment of a harmless explosion; the strength of which is still further diminished by the number of organs acted upon. But when, in a desperate effort to avoid the external manifestations of feeling, these outlets are wilfully closed; the imprisoned power is driven to seek another opening, and probably discovers one in a part of the system which is usually exempt from emotional influences, but which, under such circumstances, receives their entire shock, and suffers from its consequences in the highest degree.⁵¹

Ilza Veith, who proclaims this thinker’s concepts ‘so strikingly similar to those of Freud – before the latter was even born – that mere coincidence of their ideas seems scarcely credible’ (Veith, p. 199) suggests that Carter, in passages such as these, created the first theory of repression (p. 201). Although I believe, with many others (including Freud himself, as we have seen in my Introduction) that the idea of repression dated further back even than this, it is certainly true that Carter does understand something of the mechanics of repression; in a work on hysteria, however, what is striking is the similarity his theories sometimes bear to those of Freud and Breuer in their *Studies On Hysteria*, published some forty years later; in particular their idea of abreaction. The following passage from this later work is worth quoting at length:

The fading of a memory or the losing of its affect depends on various factors. The most important of these is *whether there has been an energetic reaction to the event that provokes an affect*. By ‘reaction’ we here understand the whole class of voluntary and involuntary reflexes – from tears to

⁵¹ Robert Brudenell Carter, *On the Pathology and Treatment of Hysteria* (London: Churchill, 1853), pp. 17-18.

acts of revenge – in which, as experience shows us, the affects are discharged. If this reaction takes place to a sufficient amount a large part of the affect disappears as a result ... language serves as a substitute for action; by its help, an affect can be 'abreacted' almost as effectively. In other cases speaking is itself the adequate reflex, when, for instance, it is a lamentation or giving utterance to a tormenting secret, e. g. a confession. If there is no such reaction, whether in deeds or words, or in the mildest cases in tears, any recollection of the event retains its affective tone to begin with. (*Studies on Hysteria*, p. 8)

The similarity between the call for a reaction to an event in both Carter's text and that of Freud and Breuer is clear: we respond, writes Carter, in a number of ways to occurrences that inspire emotion - muscles contract, glands secrete, in order to effect an expression of these feelings, in many different possible ways, 'but they are all alike in affording speedy and evident relief to the emotion itself, which is, so to speak, exhausted in producing them, and which appears to be correlated to its effects' (Carter, p. 6). Balance is reached between feeling and unconfined reaction; equilibrium is achieved and the system returns to a normal state.

Le Fanu, as a concerned husband, may have known the work of Carter, or work he influenced;⁵² McCormack testifies to the fact that he was uncertain, before his wife's death and afterwards, whether the right treatment was given to her (*Sheridan Le Fanu and Victorian Ireland*, pp. 129-30), an anxiety that may have been expressed in the ineffectual methods of Dr. Hesselius, later in his career. However, he certainly understood the need for the normal release of emotions, or speech, or both, in order to help prevent symptoms. Maud of *Uncle Silas*, naturally prone to straightforward emotional reactions in response to the frightening events in her life after her father's death ('At last I was relieved by long paroxysms of weeping' (*Uncle Silas*, p. 375)) suffers a classic hysterical symptom in the midst of an unpleasant conversation in which she cannot, as she feels she should do, tell her uncle the truth that he has been spoken against by a family friend, 'I had to clear my throat twice or thrice. There was a kind of spasm in my throat' (p. 304). Breuer later would write of a similar circumstance producing an identical symptom in Anna O., 'A dispute, in the course of which she suppressed a rejoinder, caused a spasm of the glottis' (*Studies on Hysteria*, p. 94). In 'Mr Justice Harbottle' in *In a Glass Darkly*, a woman servant sees an uncanny figure in the house of her master, which frightens her terribly:

Very much scared and very hysterical, Mrs Carwell ran down to her room, afraid to look over her shoulder, and got some companions about her, and wept, and talked, and drank more than one cordial, and talked and wept again, and so on, until, in those early days, it was ten o'clock, and time to go to bed.⁵³

In three of the four stories in this collection which involve revenants of some kind ('Green Tea', 'The Familiar', 'Mr Justice Harbottle', 'Carmilla'), the victims of the hauntings are men. Le

⁵² Veith writes that Carter is not a major figure in the history of thought on hysteria, 'Robert Carter belongs to that strange category of creative men whose indirect influence may have been enormous but who had so little impact upon their immediate successors that their names are scarcely known to historians' (p. 199).

Fanu seems to suggest that the sort of emotional release women can find when talking with companions spends a certain amount of dangerous force which the men store up in some way.⁵⁴ Always allowing for Le Fanu's ambiguity about the exact cause of male deaths in his fiction, they seem to be either from suicide or fright. These dramatic methods of demise may represent the final violent manifestation of this pent-up force. Carter describes the process and result of the sort of prolonged suppression of emotion which each male character in these three stories undergoes, because of the shame or embarrassment he feels at his haunting, or what he perceives to be its cause:

Even when an emotion is fairly established, its effects upon the muscular system are under the control of the will in some degree, and for a certain time; but as each of the opposing forces is liable to numerous variations of strength, so neither the degree nor the time can be exactly estimated. And if the emotion be not in its very nature transient, its influence is found to possess a cumulative character, so that after being kept down for a longer or shorter period, it often breaks forth at last with increased violence, and through more dangerous channels. (Carter, p. 20)

We can see a dangerous pressure building up in Barton's system, as he keeps his secret, which corresponds to Carter's description:

The mind thus turned in upon itself, and constantly occupied with a haunting anxiety which it dared not reveal or confide to any human breast, became daily more excited, and, of course, more vividly impressible, by a system of attack which operated through the nervous system; and in this state he was destined to sustain, with increasing frequency, the stealthy visitations of that apparition which from the first had seemed to possess so terrible a hold upon his imagination. ('The Familiar', p. 58)

Found with his features 'fixed, stern and white; the jaw ... fallen; and the sightless eyes, still open, gaz[ing] vacantly forward toward the front of the bed' (p. 80), Barton's death seems to have been caused by fear. If we consider once again the epigram to 'The Watcher', however, 'Thou terrifiest me through visions: so that my soul chooseth strangling rather than my life', it becomes possible to see this death more clearly as self-inflicted, a want of breath that this victim has fundamentally chosen in preference to his haunting. In terms of the economics of the individual body it could be suggested that Barton has died from the 'strangling' effects of a hysterical attack, brought on by a steady increase of nervous excitation within his system, a fatal

⁵³ Sheridan Le Fanu, 'Mr Justice Harbottle', in *In a Glass Darkly*, pp. 83-118 (p. 116).

⁵⁴ Laura, the heroine of 'Carmilla', the exception to this rule, finds it difficult to communicate her experiences, unlike Harbottle's servant, and unlike Maud of *Uncle Silas*. She writes, 'I write all this you suppose with composure. But far from it; I cannot think of it without agitation. Nothing but your earnest desire so repeatedly expressed, could have induced me to sit down to a task that has unstrung my nerves for months to come, and reinduced a shadow of the unspeakable horror which years after my deliverance continued to make my days and nights dreadful, and solitude insupportably terrific' ('Carmilla', in *In a Glass Darkly*, pp. 243-319 (p. 316)). The key word in this passage of course is 'unspeakable'. It is noteworthy that Laura's father, her only parent, had always discouraged her from talking in supernatural terms, to the extent that after her first adult encounter with the vampire, part of the reason why she did not tell her father was because 'I thought he would laugh at my story, and I could not bear its being treated as a jest' (p. 279).

tension which he could not release in the outlets of emotional expression or confession.⁵⁵

Le Fanu understood the mechanics of force, therefore, on an individual level, and the need to retain a state of equilibrium. He could also conceive of these concepts on a much larger scale. In *Willing to Die* (1873) his last novel, the seaside landscape is a tempestuous one. A Catholic priest, Mr Carmel, tries to use the storm he and the novel's heroine are witnessing as a theological metaphor:

You understand these awful phenomena – their causes. You remember our little talk about electricity – here it is! We know all that is but the restoration of an equilibrium. Think what it will be when God restores the moral balance, and settles the equities of eternity!⁵⁶

In the application of the laws and tendencies of the universe to those of the body, or psyche, and vice versa, Le Fanu was drawing on a strong mystical and spiritual tradition, which utilized and in turn helped define the rules of force within a number of systems, each of which could provide a model for the next. Fechner describes the process by which he felt able to theorize on this world in relation to the spiritual, this life in relation to the next, in these terms - 'a better insight into the things below would enable us better to comprehend higher things, and from their mutual connexion we should comprehend the great whole of which we only form a part' (*Life*, p. 86).

Before I go on to examine more closely the idea of cosmic equilibrium, which Le Fanu may have encountered in the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, it is important to note that the translation of natural laws seen in individual systems, to the cosmos, and vice versa, was by no means confined to the mystical tradition. In mid-nineteenth-century England there was an emphasis, in the work of certain physiologists, on the place of God in the natural world. In stark

⁵⁵ Justice Harbottle literally dies from strangling – he is found hanging from the top of his staircase, after being 'sentenced' to die on that day for the murder of a man he had wrongly condemned to death in court. Although witnesses in his household had seen various strange figures in the house on the night that he died, one of them with a noose in his hands, the verdict on his death was suicide: 'There was not the smallest sign of any struggle or resistance. There had not been heard a cry or any other noise in the slightest degree indicative of violence. There was medical evidence to show that, in his atrabilious state, it was quite on the cards that he might have made away with himself. The jury found accordingly that it was a case of suicide. But to those who were acquainted with the strange story which Judge Harbottle had related to at least two persons, the fact that the catastrophe occurred on the morning of the 10th March seemed a startling coincidence' ('Mr Justice Harbottle', pp. 117-18). This story is a good example of the ambiguity inherent in the collection of stories as a whole. Harbottle is in an 'atrabillious state' because of the ghostly trial and sentencing he has received, but its shock to his system, the fact it puts him 'among his blue devils', and forces him to 'thin[k] of retiring from the Bench' (p. 112) means that the pronouncement of murder (interestingly, made by a 'dilated effigy of himself' (p. 108)) strikes an answering chord within him, suggesting the possibility that even if the Judge had not dreamed his trial, he may have, like Barton, chosen, on some level, a deserved strangling, rather than a haunting by his own blue devils of guilt.

⁵⁶ Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, *Willing to Die* (1873) (London: Hutchinson & Co, 188-), p. 92. The pattern of the storm conforms neatly to Feuchtersleben's description of one of the effects of 'the natural law of equilibrium', 'tension is followed by relaxation'. (Ernst von Feuchtersleben, *The Principles of Medical Psychology, Being the Outline of a Course of Lectures* (1845), trans. by H. Evans Lloyd, ed. by B. G. Babington (London: The Sydenham Society, 1847), p. 167). Feuchtersleben is describing the changes in the body - an increased vitality, followed by sleep - that occur with intoxication.

and direct contrast to Freud's later attempt to separate out science and religion, there was, in the work of W. B. Carpenter and Thomas Laycock, a fundamental premise that, 'Science itself, in its highest and fullest development, is religion ... a knowledge of creation and its laws can only lead to the knowledge and love of God'.⁵⁷ This belief led to such conceptions of the interactions of micro- and macrocosms, projecting a vision of what is unknown from laws that are known, as we see here expressed in the work of Laycock:

If we examine the phenomena of creation in general, and of organisation in particular, we find that we arrive inductively at the same general law. Creation is a whole made up of an infinitesimal number of parts in relation to each other. The matter of which the earth is composed is conceivably and actually divisible into larger and smaller parts, until the mind reaches the abstract conception of an atomic or molecular division, and therewith of molecular forces. The earth itself is only a subdivision of a system, or harmonious putting together of masses - the solar system; and this, again, only a subdivision of another and more inclusive, in which solar systems play the part of a solitary planet in relation to other solar systems. And the mind can conceive combination after combination of such compound systems, until, pursuing a course wholly antagonistic to that which carries it onwards to the molecular division of matter, it reaches the conception of one grand whole, the Universe - the absolute created One - with all its parts in due relation to each other, and itself in relation to the Creator. Multiplicity of parts, therefore, necessarily implies a unity of parts, as the result of the great laws which regulate the uniformities of nature. (*Mind and Brain*, I, 386)

For W. B. Carpenter this doctrine of science, in its highest form, as religion helped him conceive of the nature of the force operating within a variety of systems of differing sizes. It is in a mid-century letter to Dr. Paget that he communicated this idea most fully:

I have been thinking much more about Mental phenomena, and have been questioning within myself whether Mental force should not be brought into the general category of the Vital Forces, on the grounds that Nervous Force excites Mental force ... and conversely Mental Force excites Nervous Force ... It seems to me impossible to deny that this correlation is as complete as those existing among the physical forces ... But if such a correlation really exists between Mental and Vital and Physical forces, that the one may even directly produce the other, may we not regard all the physical forces of the universe as the direct manifestation of the Mental force of the Deity? ... The correlation of the Mental and Vital forces is manifested on the large scale in the phenomena of life, and the direct result of the Divine agency; on a smaller and more limited scale in the mutual relations of mental and corporeal activity in man.⁵⁸

Fundamentally, then, these scientific commentators, current to Le Fanu, thought in terms of the correlations of systems, and of the forces within these systems; their belief in the dynamic existence of God meant that the ultimate force, the ultimate system, found root in the Deity, and that He was a model for the rest of creation, and creation a pattern that could be studied in order to understand Him.

This was a view that was not so far from parts of the ideology of Emanuel Swedenborg

⁵⁷ Thomas Laycock, *Mind and Brain: Or the Correlations of Consciousness and Organisation; with their Applications to Philosophy, Zoology, Physiology, Mental Pathology, and the Practice of Medicine*, 2 vols (Edinburgh: Sutherland and Knox. London: Simpkin, Marshall, and Co., 1860), I, 84.

⁵⁸ W. B. Carpenter to Dr. Paget [n.d], in W. B. Carpenter, *Nature and Man: Essays Scientific and Philosophical*, ed. and intro. by J. Estlin Carpenter (London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., 1888), pp. 52-53

(1688-1772).⁵⁹ Le Fanu, as is expertly argued by W. J. McCormack, was well acquainted with the works of Swedenborg.⁶⁰ In his Introduction to *Uncle Silas*, McCormack writes of Le Fanu's relationship with these mystical writings, 'Swedenborgianism is not so much the ideology to which Le Fanu's romance-type fiction adheres, as it is the symbolism of that ideology'.⁶¹ Here, then, Swedenborgianism is presented not as a doctrine but as a system within which Le Fanu imagines, according to which he writes. In *In a Glass Darkly*, Hesselius confesses 'I owe Swedenborg a great deal' ('Green Tea', p. 16); Rev. Jennings acquires a copy of his *Arcana Caelestia* in desperate response to his haunting, annotating the passages on evil spirits with '*Deus miseraeatur mei* - "May God compassionate me"' (p.15). These words suggest that, in his bewilderment, he has accepted Swedenborg's view of the universe, that he has fallen into a prescriptive pattern of using the mystic's works as a system according to which he will now view, be affected by, and react to, the bizarre events in his life. In a sense, this is a fictionalized (though, due to Jennings's anxiety, a rather more extreme and uncritically accepting) version of the sort of adoption of the Swedenborgian structure, to help shape his narratives, in which Le Fanu engages. Freud, too, owned one of Swedenborg's publications,⁶² perhaps acquired in response to Havelock Ellis's suggestion that the writings of J. J. Garth Wilkinson, a Swedenborgian scholar, prefigured the concept of free association.⁶³

It is often forgotten that Swedenborg himself was originally trained in the discipline of science. In J. J. Garth Wilkinson's 1846 introduction to Swedenborg's work, originally published in 1740-1, *The Economy of the Animal Kingdom, Considered Anatomically, Physically, and Philosophically*,⁶⁴ he stressed the importance of scientific knowledge in providing a basis for the thinker's later, more philosophical work:

For as his doctrines rest upon the leading facts of nature, so for some time previous to his appearance, those facts came to light one by one, and took their appointed places in the firmament of science. But for this, the mission of Swedenborg could scarcely have been accomplished. Thus the Copernican astronomy, which proved the sun to be the centre of the system, so changed the face of the heavens for man, that the revelation of the Divine Sun as the centre of the spiritual world, of Divine Love as the centre of creation, and of love or the will as the central power in the mind, became attested by a physical truth, and rested upon the widest basis of natural probability or analogy ... So again the Newtonian doctrine of gravitation or attraction became the ground for a doctrine of spiritual attraction, in which the

(pp. 52-53).

⁵⁹ Bringmann, Bringmann and Medway, in 'Fechner and Psychical Research' testify that Fechner quoted the writings of Swedenborg extensively in his spiritual works (p. 245).

⁶⁰ Indeed, McCormack writes in his chapter on *Uncle Silas*, in *Sheridan Le Fanu and Victorian Ireland*, that the novel was based on a Swedenborgian model of the mirroring of mortal life and life after death (pp. 148-94).

⁶¹ W. J. McCormack, 'Introduction', in Sheridan Le Fanu, *Uncle Silas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. vii-xx (p. xiii).

⁶² See Nolan O. C. Lewis and Carney Landis, 'Freud's Library', *Psychoanalytic Review*, 44 (1959), 327-54 (p. 352).

⁶³ See 'A Note on the Prehistory of the Technique of Analysis', in *SE XVIII*, 263-65, in which Freud gives an account of this.

⁶⁴ J. J. Garth Wilkinson, 'Introductory Remarks by the Editor', in Emanuel Swedenborg, *The Economy of the Animal Kingdom, Considered Anatomically, Physically, and Philosophically* (1740-41), trans. by Rev. Augustus Clissold, 2 vols (London: W. Newbery, 1846), I, ix-xc.

omnipresence of the Divine Love, as in the former case its centrality, was manifested ... Lastly, the Harveian doctrine of the circulation of the blood, was a pillar in the natural mind to other spiritual truths combining the former, and primarily regarding the circulation of ends, or the orderly procession of love in all things. (*Economy of the Animal Kingdom*, I, lxxix-lxxx)

Wilkinson asserts that the ‘universal truths in physics ... do not differ from the truths of philosophy, except in degree’ (I, xxv); this means that everything that exists, visible and invisible, can be speculated on, with a fair chance of accuracy:

For what sense cannot teach, we may learn from science justly founded upon sense; and what the lower sciences cannot teach, we may learn from philosophy founded upon them, which is their own higher science; and what this world’s philosophy, science and sense cannot attain to, is communicated by Revelation, which is again amenable in the same order to the threefold organism of sense, science and philosophy: the doctrine of God being similarly circumstanced to the doctrine of nature; and all being real; by no means questionable as fact, yet meant to be interrogated as respects its causes by the scientific and philosophical mind. (I, lxiv)

Le Fanu wrote in the *Dublin University Magazine*, about the sphere of interest of the novelist, that ‘whatever lies within the precincts of nature – no matter how wild, how terrible, how ludicrous – provided the conditions of human action and passion sanction it, is honestly at the disposal of the writer’;⁶⁵ the connection we find in the tradition within which he read and wrote, between visible science and invisible worlds, helps us to understand that nature for him as a writer is a vast system, including the possibilities of revenants of various permutations (a figure who is a shrunken version of his living self,⁶⁶ the ghost of a hand),⁶⁷ haunting animals, in short, what could be termed the fantastic.

The idea expressed in meteorological terms in *Willing to Die*, of the necessity for retaining equilibrium within a system, was, as I have mentioned, self-confessedly used as ‘Fechner’s “principle of the tendency towards stability”’ by Freud to introduce his argument in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (*Beyond*, p. 9), and was also used much earlier, in his *Project for a Scientific Psychology*. It can be said to inform the whole of his fundamentally economic view of the psyche, whose health, as we have seen in his early theory of abreaction, depends on an ability to react in proportionate force to any stimulus it encounters. Fechner’s law, which Freud dates to 1873, was an expression of a much more widespread understanding, which had permeated all walks of philosophy and science. Herbert Spencer, in his *First Principles* (1862)

⁶⁵ *Dublin University Magazine*, 60 (October 1862), 483, cited in *Sheridan Le Fanu and Victorian Ireland*, p. 202.

⁶⁶ Barton asks of his doctor, “‘is there any disease, in all the range of human maladies, which would have the effect of perceptibly contracting the stature, and the whole frame – causing the man to shrink in all his proportions, and yet to preserve his exact resemblance to himself in every particular – with the one exception, his height and bulk; any disease, mark – no matter how rare – how little believed in, generally – which could possibly result in producing such an effect?’” The narrator continues, ‘the physician replied with a smile, and a very decided negative’ (*The Familiar*, p. 54). Barton enquires, notably, about ‘all the range of human maladies’; this is the visible science that is only a part of the vast system of whose existence Barton is eventually forced to become convinced.

⁶⁷ See *The House by the Churchyard*, Chapter 12 (pp. 56-62).

wrote about a process which he termed equilibration: 'In all cases ... there is a progress toward equilibration. That universal co-existence of antagonist forces ... necessitates the ultimate establishment of a balance.'⁶⁸

Interestingly, Spencer's idea that, as the antagonist forces react against each other, 'every motion being motion under resistance, is continually suffering deductions; and these unceasing deductions finally result in the cessation of the motion' (*First Principles*, pp. 441-42) finds an echo in McCormack's account of Le Fanu's symbolic systems, that 'the Swedenborgian world, and indeed other symbolic systems in his fiction ... strive towards the reconciliation of opposites by a process of osmosis' (*Sheridan Le Fanu and Victorian Ireland*, p. 247). For Spencer's equilibration, and Fechner's 1873 principle, were both anticipated, a century earlier, by the writings of Swedenborg, in a volume which Maud Ruthyn's Uncle Silas owns, *Heaven and Hell*.⁶⁹ In a chapter on 'The Equilibrium of Heaven and Hell' he writes:

Unless the Lord ruled both the heavens and the hells there could be no equilibrium, and if there were no equilibrium, neither heaven nor hell could exist; for all things in the universe, whether in the natural or the spiritual world, endure by equilibrium. That this is the fact every rational man may perceive, because if there were a preponderance on one part, and no resistance on the other, it is plain to see that both must perish. Thus the spiritual world would perish if good did not re-act against evil, and continually restrain its insurrection; and unless the Divine alone did this, both heaven and hell would perish, and with them the whole human race.⁷⁰

Firmly placed within this metaphysical tradition, then, we find the appearance of Fechner's as-yet-unnamed law, as early as 1836. His discussion of heavenly justice in *Life after Death*, which is like a fore-echo of Mr Carmel's theological vision, contains the seed of the later law:

But among the spirits hereafter there will be no misjudging; what was weighed amiss here will be set right above, and will be outweighed by an addition to the other side of the balance. For heavenly justice shall finally overcome all injustice of the earth. (*Life*, p. 45)

In the narratives of *In a Glass Darkly*, and certain other short stories by Le Fanu, the premature visitation of spirits to earth means that judgement is enacted here, before time. Captain Barton's fate neatly mirrors that of the victim of his seduction, who suffers terribly as a result of her father's fury. That the epigram to 'The Watcher' had appeared in Richardson's *Clarissa*, intended as a lament by a ruined woman, only serves to emphasize that in this case the fate of the seducer is balanced exactly with the distress of the seduced. Justice Harbottle, who has wrongly condemned an innocent man to death, is himself found hanging from a noose. In *The Evil Guest* (1851), the protagonist, Richard Marston, kills his cousin for money. Eventually, after suffering the terrors of being haunted by his victim, Marston is found, his

⁶⁸ Herbert Spencer, *First Principles* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1862), p. 441.

⁶⁹ As McCormack points out, it is 'the only Swedenborgian text which is named' in the novel (*Sheridan Le Fanu and Victorian Ireland*, p. 177).

⁷⁰ Emanuel Swedenborg, *Heaven and its Wonders, and Hell, from things Heard and Seen* (1758)

throat slit horrifically. As his clergyman friend turns away, distressed from viewing the body, 'it seemed to him as if a soft solemn voice whispered in his ear the mystic words, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed"'.⁷¹ Jochen Achilles calls this sort of exact justice 'a mirror technique', and describes its effect in 'Squire Toby's Will' on the relationships between father (the squire) and son (Charles):

Weary of Squire Toby's violence, Charles once almost kills his father, strangling him to death with a cravat. At the end of the story it is Charles who throttles himself to death with his own cravat. He revokes the rebellion against his father and converts it into an act of auto-aggression. It is as if Charles substituted his father's identity for his own. (Achilles, p. 162).

A similar idea of balance can be seen in Freud's *Project*, in what he calls the 'surprising' conclusion, gleaned from analysis, 'that for every compulsion there is a corresponding *repression*, that for every excessive intrusion into consciousness there is a corresponding *amnesia*' (*Project*, p. 350). This should be anything but surprising, however; it is but the natural characteristic of a system, of whatever size, that, if it obeys mechanistic theories of the conservation of force, it holds a certain constant energy within itself. We have seen Helmholtz express this law thus: 'the *quantity of force which can be brought into action in the whole of Nature is unchangeable*, and can neither be increased nor diminished'.⁷² Fechner understood this in 1836. It found its place within his conception of the system of the universe in *Life after Death*:

Conscious energy is in fact never produced afresh, nor can it be absolutely destroyed. Similar to the body with which it is connected, it may change its place, form, and activity, in time and space. When it sinks to-day in one place, it will rise in another place, tomorrow. (*Life*, p. 74)⁷³

In 'Carmilla' this rule of the conservation of force might also seem to underpin the events of the story, after all, the satiating of the vampire means the weakening of the victim: 'She used to gloat on me with increasing ardour the more my strength and spirits waned.' ('Carmilla', p. 281) It is in 'Carmilla', however, that we see the effects of what could have been seen as a morbid aberration to which force-filled systems could be vulnerable. Carmilla, the vampire, literally drains the microcosm (the individual of blood) and the macrocosm (the aristocratic

(London: Swedenborg Society, 1937), pp. 491-92.

⁷¹ Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, 'The Evil Guest' (1851), in *Ghost Stories and Tales of Mystery*, pp. 136-304 (p. 301).

⁷² H. Helmholtz, 'On the Conservation of Force' (1862), in *Popular Lectures on Scientific Subjects, First Series*, trans. by E. Atkinson (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1884), pp. 277-317 (p. 280).

⁷³ This principle found its way into Le Fanu's work in small ways as well as great; the world of *Uncle Silas* seems (especially if we take into account the view of McCormack who believes that, according to Swedenborgian doctrine, Silas can only be introduced to Maud after the death of her father, as he is his alter ego) a macrocosm of contained energies, manifested in the tendency which it displays for each character to emerge and then, often, to sink to make way for the next. Doctor Bryerley in *Uncle Silas*, last seen at Knowl, 'emerges' at Bartram-Haugh ('Doctor Bryerley emerges' is the title of Chapter 37; Chapter 44 is named 'A Friend Arises').

family of heirs, society of population) due to a lack within her own system that must constantly and repetitively be replenished. A parasitic void or gap in the fabric of the larger system, in a sense she acts, like the suicide that begins the vampiric process, as a sort of ejection from the natural macrocosm. She is a site (in Fechner's terms) which energy sinks into, but in contrast to its behaviour in other systems, this energy is then destroyed. In her continuous need to satiate herself, to restore her own equilibrium, Carmilla unbalances other individual systems and society.⁷⁴ Her lesbianism, 'an engrossing vehemence, resembling the passion of love' towards a victim she 'husban[ds]' (p. 317) is but a manifestation of her anti-generative nature; her only reproduction, her multiplication, occurs with the creation of a state of death, rather than new life, in others (p. 318). Laura, the vampire's victim, is troubled by another sort of unproductiveness in Carmilla, a verbal one: 'I found that she exercised with respect to herself, her mother, her history, everything in fact connected with her life, plans, and people, an ever wakeful reserve' (p. 262). In perceiving that she has offended Laura with her reticence, Carmilla responds, 'think me not cruel because I obey the irresistible law of my strength and weakness':

'I live in your warm life, and you shall die – die, sweetly die – into mine. I cannot help it; as I draw near to you, you, in your turn, will draw near to others, and learn the rapture of that cruelty, which yet is love; so, for a while, seek to know no more of me and mine, but trust me with all your loving spirit' (p. 263).

In exhorting Laura to the ways of vampirism, Carmilla is encouraging her to enter a new system with its own set of laws, a medial structure between dead and living, in which energy, once it sinks, must be replenished from the resources of the living world. Hesselius's only quoted comment on the case, that it involves 'some of the profoundest arcana of our dual existence, and its intermediates' (p. 243), makes clear the transitional nature of the system within which the vampire operates, neither in life nor death, but in thrall to its own set of laws, which, above anything, require it to feed, to drain.⁷⁵ In a sense it is as if Le Fanu in 'Carmilla' is exploring the possibility of the sicknesses, the diseases of the macrocosm. Carmilla, with her urge to destroy the healthy components of society, of ancient families, so that they can then repeat the process with others, can be likened to an agent of infection, of contagion; a pathogen.

⁷⁴ An idea of the revenant, or spirit's ability to unbalance natural states is seen before Carmilla arrives; in talking of the full moon's encouragement of spiritual activity, Mademoiselle De Lafontaine, 'in right of her father, who was a German, assumed to be psychological, metaphysical, and something of a mystic', tells of her cousin, who had slept on the deck of a ship on the night of a full moon, and 'had wakened, after a dream of an old woman clawing him by the cheek, with his features horribly drawn to one side; and his countenance had never quite recovered its equilibrium' ('Carmilla', p. 251).

⁷⁵ Robert Tracy, in his editorial commentary on Hesselius's interpretation, offers a helpful illumination of the state of affairs in 'Carmilla' using Swedenborg's philosophy. He points out that 'our dual existence is, as in Swedenborg's teachings, in the spiritual and material worlds. Swedenborg describes "The world of spirits" as "a place intermediate between heaven and hell, and ... also the intermediate state of man after death". It is a kind of posthumous purgatory or testing place, where humanity is purged and the individual inclines towards heaven or hell. Hesselius seems to posit a similar state between life and death where the "undead" exist' (*In a Glass Darkly*, p. 344 n.).

This, the last tale in *In a Glass Darkly*, is the most extreme example in Le Fanu's fiction of the production of symptoms in the larger system due to a crucial and morbid imbalance of individual energies. This is the logical end-result of a process that starts when in the first story in the anthology, Dr. Hesselius directly attributes the rather less far-reaching (though personally catastrophic) symptoms of the Rev. Jennings to a disturbance of equilibrium in a bodily system of which, interestingly, 'the brain is the heart':

You know my tract on *The Cardinal Functions of the Brain*. I there, by the evidence of innumerable facts, prove, as I think, the high probability of a circulation arterial and venous in its mechanism, through the nerves. Of this system, thus considered, the brain is the heart. The fluid, which is propagated hence through one class of nerves, returns in an altered state through another, and the nature of that fluid is spiritual, though not immaterial, any more than, as I before remarked, light or electricity are so.

By various abuses, among which the habitual use of such agents as green tea is one, the fluid may be affected as to its quality, but it is more frequently disturbed as to equilibrium. This fluid being that which we have in common with spirits, a congestion found upon the masses of brain or nerve, connected with the interior sense, forms a surface unduly exposed, on which disembodied spirits may operate: communication is thus more or less effectually established. ('Green Tea', pp. 38-39)

However, the lack or attainment of stability within a system is only one of its characteristics, and in 'Green Tea' this symptom-triggering lack of equilibrium is only one possible link in an aetiological chain that results in the Rev. Jennings's haunting and suicide. In this as in so many other of his short stories, it is in Le Fanu's ambiguity, which suggests many interpretations, but fully allows none, that we see an unusual variety of aetiological possibilities which exposes different characteristics of individual and wider systems that would be hidden by the narrow focus of certainty.

In the next section I will examine 'Green Tea' as a case history. Just as case studies were necessary in Freud's work to show psychoanalytic models in action, Le Fanu's systems are best seen by the examples provided in the experiences of his characters, and especially in the symptoms produced by an abnormality or weakness in the individual which, interacting with the larger system, can spell doom to an unfortunate subject. 'Green Tea' seems to be a meeting-point where ideas from the scientific-mystical tradition that I have already discussed are especially concentrated and form a problematic, or ambiguous aspect, to physiological theories, current to Le Fanu, of the creation of symptoms. My hope is that I have outlined the way in which the world-view of the scientific-mystical tradition may have influenced Freud's conception of the psyche, however unwitting he was of this. 'Green Tea', informed by similar philosophies is, in a sense, a side-effect of this process, a text which in many different ways serves to demonstrate the extent and nature of Le Fanu's anticipation of psychoanalytic theory and therapy. In fact, it is actually in Le Fanu's portrayal of therapy, in the person of Dr Hesselius, that much of this anticipation is concentrated. That this is the case is not a departure from the spiritual tradition that I have identified as common to Le Fanu and Freud. Rather, I hope to clarify what I have already implied in my early suggestion that Hesselius is a literary

descendant of Father Purcell: that the role of the 'philosophic physician' of 'Green Tea', like that of the psychoanalyst, is simply a version of the traditional spiritual position of confessor, of 'Father'. This privileged role, however, cannot be anything but compromised by the additional mantle of 'case history narrator' that these two figures assume.

'Green Tea': A Case Study

The case study of Rev. Jennings is found, as many of Freud's early thoughts and accounts of case histories would be found in the Fliess letters, amid the papers of Dr Van Loo, of Leyden. This is Le Fanu's first and last pure case history within *In a Glass Darkly*. After this initial story, narrated throughout (after a brief preface from his editor), by Dr. Hesselius, the philosophic physician gradually disappears from the anthology. The following stories are narrated by other witnesses, and finally, with 'Carmilla', by the victim herself.⁷⁶ Hesselius, having been given free rein of interpretation in 'Green Tea', now becomes a subordinate to Laura. As the editor explains:

As I publish the case, in these volumes, simply to interest the 'laity', I shall forestall the intelligent lady, who relates it, in nothing; and, after due consideration, I have determined, therefore, to abstain from presenting any *précis* of the learned Doctor's reasoning, or extract from his statement. ('Carmilla', p. 243)

This fading-out of Hesselius, in an anthology one of whose major characteristics is a peculiarly apt meting out of justice, is entirely fitting; for in 'Green Tea' it is his voice that drowns out Jennings's tragic story, his version of the narrative that prevails; in 'Carmilla', therefore, this imbalance is rectified. Nevertheless, although it is remedied at the end of the collection, it is the case that 'Green Tea' remains an example of an imbalanced narrative, that Le Fanu, in his setting it right, obviously perceives it as such; this surely inspires questions about the case history genre as a whole.

In classing 'Green Tea' in a 'case history genre' I am not simply likening Le Fanu's short story to Freud's case studies. I am also suggesting, with many other critics, and with Freud himself, that his accounts of his patients' symptoms and treatment could approach fiction. Steven Marcus has discussed Freud's Dora case as a literary text, arguing that, 'Freud's case histories – and his works in general – are unique as pieces or kinds of writing, and it may be useful to examine one of Freud's case histories from the point of view of literary criticism'.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ The story preceding 'Carmilla', 'The Room in the Dragon Volant', is also narrated by the protagonist; however, as this text, an adventure of conspiracy, rather than the account of a haunting, proves an exception to the general theme of the collection, I am not considering it in this chapter.

⁷⁷ Steven Marcus, 'Freud and Dora: Story, History, Case History', in *In Dora's Case: Freud – Hysteria – Feminism*, ed. by Charles Bernheim and Claire Kahane (London: Virago, 1985), pp. 56-91 (p. 56). Mary Jacobus has also considered the 'literariness' of the case histories in *Studies on Hysteria*, in *Reading*

The following two comparable passages, the first from 'Green Tea', and the second from the case of 'Frau Emmy von N' in *Studies on Hysteria* only serve to confirm the existence of a case history genre within which both Freud and Le Fanu produce their narratives:

The Rev. Mr Jennings is tall and thin. He is middle-aged, and dresses with a natty, old-fashioned, high-church precision. He is naturally a little stately, but not at all stiff. His features, without being handsome, are well-formed, and their expression extremely kind, but also shy. ('Green Tea', p. 6)

This lady, when I first saw her, was lying on a sofa with her head resting on a leather cushion. She still looked young and had finely-cut features, full of character. Her face bore a strained and painful expression, her eyelids were drawn together and her eyes cast down. (*Studies on Hysteria*, p. 48)

In the same 'anthology' in which the second description appears, Freud himself acknowledged that his case histories 'read like short stories', but that the literary quality of his accounts of the aetiology and treatment of a patient's symptoms was not just appropriate, but entirely necessary:

I have not always been a psychotherapist. Like other neuropathologists, I was trained to employ local diagnoses and electro-prognosis, and it still strikes me myself as strange that the case histories I write should read like short stories and that, as one might say, they lack the serious stamp of science. I must console myself with the reflection that the nature of the subject is evidently responsible for this, rather than any preference of my own. The fact is that local diagnosis and electrical reactions lead nowhere in the study of hysteria, whereas a detailed description of mental processes such as we are accustomed to find in the works of imaginative writers enables me, with the use of a few psychological formulas, to obtain at least some kind of insight into the course of that affection. Case histories of this kind are intended to be judged like psychiatric ones; they have, however, one advantage over the latter, namely an intimate connection between the story of the patient's sufferings and the symptoms of his illness – a connection for which we still search in vain in the biographies of other psychoses. (*Studies on Hysteria*, pp. 160-61)

It is, in a sense, this firm connection between biography and symptom that eludes Hesselius, who uses Jennings's life story as an opportunity to display his powers of deduction (which cause Lady Mary to declare him a 'conjurer' ('Green Tea', p. 12)), yet ultimately fails to see the relevance of Jennings's history to his haunting, and later, to his suicide. In the following pages I shall examine the case of Mr. Jennings, in terms of its 'intimate connection between the story of the patient's sufferings and the symptoms of his illness,' a link which Le Fanu repeatedly suggests rather than confirms, but which Hesselius effectively misses, an oversight which leads to tragic results.

Rev. Jennings suffers from terrifying hallucinations of a small black monkey, who constantly watches him, sleeping and waking, and sometimes speaks to him. The monkey

Woman: Essays in Feminist Criticism (London: Methuen, 1986), pp. 197-204, suggesting that Freud saw this quality as imposed on what would be his otherwise scientific writing by his subjects, whose hysteria, in a sense, spills out into his narrative, which becomes 'a form of hysterical utterance' (p. 197). More generally, Malcolm Bowie explores Freud's literary talents in *Freud, Proust and Lacan: Theory as Fiction*, and Bruno Bettelheim, in *Freud and Man's Soul*, writes of the admiration the beauty of Freud's writing caused among his contemporaries, particularly Albert Einstein, claiming that Freud modelled his writing on Goethe. (pp. 8-9)

appears in a period in Jennings's life when he has been engaged in a great deal of study, and drinking green tea to aid him. A strictly physical view of this case can be taken from these facts. James Sully, echoing many of his colleagues, wrote in 1881, 'we must recognize the fact that most men are sometimes liable to illusion' (*Illusions*, p. 2). Citing the German doctor Wilhelm Griesinger, he writes that 'the action of poisons', as well as other causes, 'appears to predispose the central structures to an abnormal kind of activity' (*Illusions*, p. 116). Indeed, it would not even take this much to prompt the sight of illusions in a normal man:

A momentary fatigue of the nerves, a little mental excitement, a relaxation of the effort of attention by which we continually take our bearings with respect to the real world about us, will produce just the same kind of confusion of reality and phantasm which we observe in the insane ... Our luminous circle of rational perception is surrounded by a misty penumbra of illusion. (*Illusions*, pp. 2-3)

It is only a step on from this to Dr Hesselius's explanation of hauntings due to the loss of equilibrium in the nervous fluid of the subject, caused by 'various abuses'; in fact Hesselius's view of the case can be seen as simply a description of a larger system which includes Sully's viewpoint. The one difference is the possibility that the illusions in Le Fanu's world are real. By the time we get to Jennings's case history this is a truly ambiguous issue; earlier in Le Fanu's career, however, the spirit world is much more (though not fully) tangible, proofs in the form of multiple sightings being supplied, for example. Yet physical susceptibility is still a vital factor in manifestation of this spirit world. In 'An Account of Some Strange Disturbances in Aungier Street' (first published in *The Dublin University Magazine* in 1853), a medical student, staying in a house of dubious history, experiences nightly a 'dream, nightmare, or infernal illusion – which you please',⁷⁸ in which a painting of an evil-looking figure is held in front of his vision, until the morning comes. Drawing on his medical knowledge, he attempts to find a tonic that will cure this:

I will do this tonic justice, and frankly admit that the accursed portrait began to intermit its visits under its influence. What of that? Was this singular apparition – as full of character as of terror – therefore the creature of my fancy, or the invention of my poor stomach? Was it, in short, *subjective* (to borrow the technical slang of the day) and not the palpable aggression and intrusion of an external agent? That, good friend, as we will both admit, by no means follows. The evil spirit, who enthralled my senses in the shape of that portrait, may have been just as near me, just as energetic, just as malignant, though I saw him not. What means the whole moral code of revealed religion regarding the due keeping of our own bodies, soberness, temperance, etc.? here is an obvious connexion between the material and the invisible; the healthy tone of the system, and its unimpaired energy, may, for aught we can tell, guard us against influences which would otherwise render life itself terrific. The mesmerist and the electrobiologist will fail upon an average with nine patients out of ten – so may the evil spirit. Special conditions of the corporeal system are indispensable to the production of certain spiritual phenomena. The operation succeeds sometimes – sometimes fails – that is all. (pp. 364-65)

This philosophy similarly finds a place in Fechner's *Life after Death*:

⁷⁸ J. S. Le Fanu, 'An Account of Some Strange Disturbances in Aungier Street' (1853), in *Best Ghost Stories*, (New York: Dover, 1964), pp. 361-79 (p. 363).

We often wonder whence such a thought had got into our minds; some longing, or some melancholy, or happy mood will come over us we know not how or why; an inward voice persuades us to act, or exhorts us to forbear acting, though all the time we are not conscious of any motive of our own tending one way or other. This is the influence of spirits entering into us, thinking and acting into us from centres different from our own. Such effects are the more striking in certain abnormal conditions of the mind – in somnambulism or mental distraction – when the relation of mutual dependence has been decided in *their* favour, making us entirely passive under their influence, without any reaction on our own part. As long, however, as our mind is awake and in a state of health it cannot become a mere toy, without a will of its own, of the spirits that have grown into it and become a living part of it. (pp. 29-30)

This spirit world that finds its way into us includes ‘spirits opposed to each other, so that their presence in the same human mind is incompatible’ (p. 31); Swedenborg believed that, ordinarily, ‘spirits do not know at all that they are with man’.⁷⁹ Later these spirits would find their way into Freud’s concept of the unconscious, especially in the possibility of ‘the existence in us not only of a second consciousness, but of a third, fourth, perhaps of an unlimited number of states of consciousness, all unknown to us and to one another’ (‘The Unconscious’, p. 170).

Jennings’s first encounter with the monkey is symptomatic of the whole haunting. In its advanced stage, the monkey was in the habit of launching ‘a dreadful interruption’ to the vicar’s prayers by swaying mesmerically; when he was in the pulpit reading the scriptures, the monkey would squat on the Bible, blotting out the words. Likewise, then, when Jennings first notices the monkey it is at a time when ‘on the whole, existence had never been, I think, so pleasant before’ (p. 22). It serves as an interruption, in every sense disconnected from him, an alien. In this it resembles the Freudian symptoms, which, ‘give the patient himself the impression of being all-powerful guests from an alien world, immortal beings intruding into the turmoil of mortal life’, a belief that, Freud claims, proves beyond doubt the existence ‘of a special region of the mind, shut off from the rest’ (‘Lecture XVIII’, p. 278).

The perception of unconscious processes by consciousness can be likened to ‘the perception of the external world by means of the sense-organs’ (‘The Unconscious,’ p. 171). As the case of Captain Barton suggests, Jennings is certainly not alone in his feeling that his life is being intruded upon by an alien being. In ‘The Evil Guest’, Richard Marston, haunted by the cousin he has killed, uses an interesting metaphor in describing his terror: “‘it is a fear of nothing mortal, but of the immortal tenant of this body. My *mind*, sir, is beginning to play me tricks; my guide mocks and terrifies me’” (p. 279). Marston’s words, ‘immortal tenant of this body’ link his deepest fear to himself, and also recall Freud’s famous assertion about the ego, that it ‘*is not master in its own house.*’⁸⁰ Further, the understanding they give that there is a part of ourselves that is indestructible provides a fore-echo of Freud’s idea, expressed in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, of the immortality of all unconscious mental acts.⁸¹ In positing that

⁷⁹ *A Compendium of the Theological Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg*, ed. by Rev. S. M. Warren (London: Swedenborg Society, 1939), p. 609.

⁸⁰ Sigmund Freud, ‘A Difficulty in the Path of Psychoanalysis’ (1917), in *SE*, XVII, 135-44 (p. 143).

⁸¹ Freud writes, in a note, of unconscious wishes: ‘They share this character of indestructibility with all

there are such things as immortal unconscious processes, surely Freud is here simply reproducing the idea of a spirit, or soul, in scientific language.

Wilhelm Griesinger, in his *Mental Pathology and Therapeutics*, published in England in 1867, gives an account of patients who have similar symptoms to Jennings, who testifies that the monkey's voice 'comes like a singing through my head' (p. 31). Barton's and Marston's symptoms, the suffering of 'wicked appearances', also find expression in this passage. The debate that invariably takes place within each character to whom revenants appear takes into account at some level the possibility that they are suffering a 'mental seeing' or a 'mental hearing'; nineteenth-century mental scientists like Griesinger go some way to informing this constantly inconclusive discussion in Le Fanu's fiction:

In mental diseases hallucinations are almost invariably considered as realities. Still, in occasional cases, especially at the commencement, the patient admits their morbid nature. Sometimes, indeed, we hear the patients declare that they know very well that it is no ordinary hearing or seeing, it is a mental hearing – some one 'composes to him in his head,' &c., or he complains bitterly that the malice of strangers, the medicines which he has taken, &c., have caused such wicked appearances, and he expresses in his own peculiar way the idea that he is governed by something in his mind which is opposed and perfectly foreign to his *I*.⁸²

In all the characters in Le Fanu's fiction who suffer from the appearance of revenants there is something of this last idea, which especially mirrors Marston's description of the immortal tenant of his body, the guide that mocks him. Further, Griesinger's closing words reflect Freud's later theories more minutely than may appear at first. For the 'I' Griesinger describes is exactly the same term as Freud's 'ego'; both start as *Ich* in German.⁸³ Indeed, another of Bettelheim's concerns with Strachey's translation of Freud's works is that the full resonance of *Ich* is not rendered in the word 'ego',⁸⁴ that its 'intimate' and 'personal' (p. 53) connotations are lost; 'If anything, the German *Ich* is invested with stronger and deeper personal meaning than the English "I"' (p. 55), since the English 'me' is taken under the term *Ich* also. That I am not the master in my own house reflects Victorian anxieties much more deeply, and touches the heart of Le Fanu's phenomenological narratives.

The disclosure that the ego is not master in its own house, Freud asserted, is the third in a line of revelations made to mankind, which serve to knock him from his position as the centre

other mental acts which are truly unconscious, i.e. which belong to the system *Ucs.* only. These are paths which have been laid down once and for all, which never fall into disuse and which, whenever an unconscious excitation re-cathects them, are always ready to conduct the excitatory process to discharge. If I may use a simile, they are only capable of annihilation in the same sense as the ghosts in the underworld of the *Odyssey* – ghosts which awoke to new life as soon as they tasted blood.' (*The Interpretation of Dreams*, SE, IV & V, ix-629 (p. 553 n.))

⁸² W. Griesinger, *Mental Pathology and Therapeutics* (1845) (London: New Sydenham Society, 1867), p. 92.

⁸³ Wilhelm Griesinger, *Die Pathologie und Therapie der psychischen Krankheiten, für Aertze und Studirende dargestellt* (Stuttgart: Verlag von Adolph Krabbe, 1845), p. 76. Freud owned a copy of this work (Lewis and Landis, 'Freud's Library', p. 335).

⁸⁴ See Bettelheim, pp. 53-64.

of the universe. The second was Darwin's denial that man is at the pinnacle of creation. George Romanes, in his *Mental Evolution in Man*,⁸⁵ describes the effect of this disclosure in prosaic detail:

After centuries of intellectual conquest in all regions of the phenomenal universe, man has at last begun to find that he may apply in a new and most unexpected manner the adage of antiquity – *Know thyself*. For he has begun to perceive a strong probability, if not an actual certainty, that his own living nature is identical in kind with the nature of all other life, and that even the most amazing side of this his own nature – nay, the most amazing of all things within the reach of his knowledge – the human mind itself, is but the topmost inflorescence of one mighty growth, whose roots and stem and many branches are sunk in the abyss of planetary time. Therefore, with Professor Huxley we may say: - "The importance of such an inquiry is indeed intuitively manifest. Brought face to face with these blurred copies of himself, the least thoughtful of men is conscious of a certain shock, due perhaps not so much to disgust at the aspect of what looks like an insulting caricature, as to the awaking of a sudden and profound mistrust of time-honoured theories and strongly rooted prejudices regarding his own position in nature, and his relations to the wider world of life".⁸⁶

Romanes quotes from Huxley's *Evidence to Man's Place in Nature* (1863), which Le Fanu may have read, and probably would have been aware of. It is the combination of Romanes's exhortation to 'Know thyself' with the image of the ape in the mirror that is suggestive. Jennings, though he claims separation from the ape, is connected to it without his consent.

Or perhaps it is the case that, in certain subtle ways, the monkey that appears to Jennings is answering to a latent part of himself, a part that does not often see the light.⁸⁷ In mainstream writings on the appearance of hallucinations and illusions at this time, or slightly later, the impression was given, prefiguring something of Freud's notion of unconscious wishes, that patients invited their symptoms in some way. Feuchtersleben commands, 'Pronounce yourself in health, and you may become so' (*The Dietetics of the Soul*, p. 47); this was reflected later in the century by such publications as Henry Maudsley's *Natural Causes and Supernatural Seemings*, (1886), which pinpointed the state of expectation as a large factor in the appearance of hallucinations.⁸⁸ James Sully's attribution of illusion to pre-perception prefigures Freud's account in *Project for a Scientific Psychology* of the danger that wishful impulses will, from a hasty investment in what the individual thinks is reality, fuel the creation of hallucinations (*Project*, p. 319). Sully suggests that by fostering an expectation of what we think we see we meet the illusion half-way (*Illusions*, p. 28). This expectation, the pre-perception, is what Sully calls the 'passive' stage of the visual process, awaking the mental images in memory; the other 'being that of perception proper' (p. 27). The creation of an expectation behind the scenes, as it were, before its subject fully realizes what is happening, is illustrated in Le Fanu's description

⁸⁵ Freud owned a copy of this work (Lewis and Landis, 'Freud's Library', p. 354).

⁸⁶ George Romanes, *Mental Evolution in Man: Origin of Human Faculty* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench and Co., 1888), pp. 2-3.

⁸⁷ Hesselius's description of the faculty Jennings needs to see the monkey only adds to this feeling, 'I have met with, and treated, as my book shows, fifty-seven cases of this kind of vision, which I term indifferently "sublimated", "precocious", and "interior"' ('Green Tea', p. 38, emphasis mine).

⁸⁸ Henry Maudsley, *Natural Causes and Supernatural Seemings* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Co.,

of the haunting in Aungier Street:

I became somehow conscious of a sort of horrid but undefined preparation going forward in some unknown quarter, and by some unknown agency, for my torment; and, after an interval, which always seemed to me of the same length, a picture suddenly flew up to the window, where it remained fixed, as if by an electrical attraction, and my discipline of horror then commenced, to last perhaps for hours. ('Aungier Street', p. 364)

For although Jennings's haunting by the monkey was a surprise to him, there is a sense in which it has been prepared for, on a less than conscious level. Jennings himself gives the clue to this in his description of his studies, as 'not good for the mind – the Christian mind, I mean':

'Paganism is all bound together in essential unity, and, with evil sympathy, their religion involves their art, and both their manners, and the subject is a degrading fascination and the nemesis sure. God forgive me!

'I wrote a great deal; I wrote late at night. I was always thinking on the subject, walking about, wherever I was, everywhere. It thoroughly infected me.' ('Green Tea', p. 21)

Jennings's own diagnosis is encapsulated here in the mixture of the ideas of 'evil sympathy' and 'nemesis'; that is, attraction or association by likeness, and justice or balance. I have already discussed something of the latter, as one characteristic of the systems that informed Le Fanu's work. The former is also a characteristic of these systems, working to the advantage or disadvantage of the individual according to certain laws. The Swedenborgian philosophy that pervades 'Green Tea' gives an idea of these laws. Jennings himself describes the effect of the law propounded in Swedenborg's words, 'The evil spirits associated with man are, indeed, from the hells' ('Green Tea', p. 14):

As food is taken in softly at the lips, and then brought under the teeth, as the tip of the little finger caught in a mill crank will draw in the hand, and the arm, and the whole body, so the miserable mortal who has been once caught firmly by the end of the finest fibre of his nerve, is drawn in and in, by the enormous machinery of hell, until he is as I am. (p. 31)

There is a certain attraction within the system, especially strong between like and like, so that once tainted, the individual is inexorably caught up with evil. It starts with a certain gravitation towards evil, such as we see in Le Fanu's story 'Squire Toby's Will': 'It behoves us all to act promptly on our good resolutions. There is a determined gravitation towards evil, which, if left to itself, will bear down first intentions.'⁸⁹ This gravity has had its effect on Jennings's spiritual life. Now unable to pray, there is no way out for him. Swedenborg describes this process:

It is different with those who cannot be reformed and regenerated. To them also good spirits are adjoined, that they may be withheld by them as much as possible from evil; but their immediate

1886), see especially pp. 192-203.

⁸⁹ Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, 'Squire Toby's Will: A Ghost Story' (1868), in *Madam Crowl's Ghost and other Stories*, ed. by M. R. James (Ware, Wordsworth Editions, 1994), pp. 15-40 (p. 30).

conjunction is with evil spirits who communicate with hell, – from whence they have spirits of such characters as the men are themselves. (*Compendium*, p. 610)

As might be expected, Fechner provides something of a link between Swedenborg and Freud, at the same time providing a description of Jennings's plight through the laws of gravity and association:

Besides, kindred spirits will find, and associate with, each other, flying from contrary ones, if not forced to stay. The good spirits within us call other good spirits around us, and the evil spirits within us attract the evil ones. Pure spirits rejoice to come and live in a pure mind, but outward evil takes hold of the evil within us ... good spirits when they see the impossibility of reclaiming a soul from the predominant evil ones, leave it all to them, and it becomes a hell, a place full of the torment of the damned. (pp. 33-34)

Freud's theories of symptom-formation are based on the law of association, a law which I will explore in more detail in the next chapter. In Freud's *Project* of 1895, we see something similar to Fechner's system of spiritual attraction and association in the idea of the cathexis of a neurone attracting the Q in the system. The more loaded a neurone is, according to this rule, the more energy will flow towards it (*Project*, p. 319). A similar idea is found in the facilitation of paths in the nervous system - the more force passes through these paths, the easier they become to traverse (p. 301); a concept (as we shall see in the next chapter) rooted in nineteenth-century association theory, yet which also finds ancestry in theories of the gravity inherent in the spirit world.

I have not touched so far on the ancestry of ideas, common to Freud and Le Fanu, found in German romanticism, that tradition from which came Schelling's phrase, 'the eternal unconscious' (cited in Whyte, p. 125). Much has been written on *The Dublin University Magazine's* enthusiasm for German literature.⁹⁰ In Hoffman's *Der Sandmann* ('The Sandman') (1816) we find a passage which accords with Freud's view of the mind, but also provides a commentary on *In a Glass Darkly*.⁹¹ The passage is in a letter from Clara to Nathanael. Its narrative status is ambiguous as Clara is here reporting what she and her brother, Lothaire, have

⁹⁰ See Patrick O'Neill, *Ireland and Germany: A Study in Literary Relations* (New York: Peter Lang, 1985). He describes 'the days of the *Dublin University Magazine*' as 'the heyday of German literature in Ireland' (p. 92). Later he says, 'The *Dublin University Magazine*, the most important Irish literary journal for several decades after its foundation in 1833 was also the most enthusiastic Irish propagator of German literature' (p. 96).

⁹¹ We know that Freud read this story, relatively late in his career, as his essay on 'The Uncanny', in which he pronounced, 'Hoffman is the unrivalled master of the uncanny in literature' is based upon it ('The Uncanny' (1919), in *SE*, XVII, 217-256 (p. 233)). We do not know for certain that Le Fanu read Hoffman's story. A translation of 'The Sandman' (from which I am taking the passage below) was published in 1844, in a collection entitled *Tales from the German: Comprising Specimens from the most Celebrated Authors*, translated by John Oxenford and C. A. Feiling (London: Chapman and Hall, 1844), pp. 140-65. This collection included three tales by Hoffman, and, among other works, a story by Hauff entitled 'The Severed Hand', whose title may recall the narrative of the ghost of a hand in chapter 12 of *The House by the Churchyard*. One of the other tales by Hoffman in the collection, 'The Elementary Spirit', bears certain similarities to 'The Familiar': a sceptical military man is won over to belief in the spirit world by manifestations that leave him broken.

discussed, but chiefly what he has said to her, on the subject of Nathanael's haunting by the figure of the lawyer Coppelius (who is associated in his mind with the figure of the Sandman, who tears out the eyes of children). She writes afterwards, 'I find I have not been able to write down the chief part without trouble ... Lothaire's words I do not quite comprehend' ('The Sandman', p. 148). This casts the passage in a light that is problematical, the same characteristic we encounter with most explanations of phenomena in Le Fanu's fiction. This element of ambiguity is something which Le Fanu and Hoffman both display; we could say, then, that they share similar ideologies of uncertainty. Clara writes:

If there is a dark power, which with such enmity and treachery lays a thread within us, by which it holds us fast, and draws us along a path of peril and destruction, which we should not otherwise have trod; if, I say, there is such a power, it must form itself within us, or from ourselves; indeed, become identical with ourselves, for it is only in this condition that we can believe in it, and grant it the room which it requires, to accomplish its secret work. Now, if we have a mind, which is sufficiently firm, sufficiently strengthened by cheerful life, always to recognise this strange hostile operation as such, and calmly to follow the path which belongs to our inclination and calling, then will the dark power fail in its attempt to gain a power, that shall be a reflection of ourselves. Lothaire adds that it is certain, that the dark physical power, if of our own accord, we have yielded ourselves up to it, often draws within us some strange form, which the external world has thrown in our way, so that we ourselves kindle the spirit, which, as we in our strange delusion believe, speaks to us in that form. It is the phantom of our own selves, the close relationship with which, and its deep operation on our mind casts us into hell, or transports us into heaven. ('The Sandman', p. 147-48)

The image of Coppelius in Nathanael's mind, then, is a phantom of himself. The force which has entered his system has, because of a lack of some sort of strength in him, been accepted and embraced as some sort of reflection of himself. That the particular spirit that haunts Jennings also forms a reflection of him is obvious in a literal sense, 'I soon saw with tolerable distinctness the outline of a small black monkey, pushing its face forward in mimicry to meet mine' ('Green Tea', p. 23). It is in Swedenborg's description of haunting spirits, that they are 'of such characters as the men are themselves' that are being tormented, that we begin to get a fuller idea of the relation of the monkey to Jennings.

Jennings's sin is, as he perceives himself, that of seeing too much; knowing too much about the object of his study, the pagans, reading too much about their manners, looking, too long perhaps at their art, in what he himself describes as a 'degrading fascination'.⁹² That he is constantly watched by the monkey is an indication that what he is seeing is a reflection of himself, in a glass darkly.⁹³ The title of the collection is interesting in many ways, taken from 1

⁹² In Helen Stoddart's "'The Precautions of Nervous People are Infectious": Sheridan Le Fanu's Symptomatic Gothic' (*Modern Language Review*, 86 (1991), 19-34), she argues very effectively that Jennings's haunting guilt springs from a latent homosexuality. Jennings's unmarried state means that he has failed the demands of the species, crystallized at that time in Darwinism, to reproduce, to be heterosexual. This can be seen to be compounded with the sin of looking, for it may be assumed that in the art of paganism there were many sorts of sexual activity, unencumbered by lines dividing hetero- and homosexuality, depicted.

⁹³ This provides something of a foreshadowing of Freud's case, 'From the History of an Infantile Neurosis' (1918), in *SE*, XVII, 1-123. This patient, known as the Wolf-Man, dreamt of five or six white wolves in a tree outside his window that stare at him. Freud interprets this steady gaze as a reflection and

Corinthians 13. 12: 'For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then I shall know even as also I am known.'⁹⁴ This verse, especially its first phrase, is actually something of a motto within the tradition that produced phenomenological writings on heaven and hell, and manifestations of the unknown. Fechner heads one of the chapters of *Life and Death* with it. Robert Dale Owen, in his popular *Footfalls on the Boundary of Another World*, first published in an English edition in 1860, which examined supernatural and unexplained occurrences, which, he insisted, should be 'as surely embraced in the ordered economy of the world as the storm or the sunshine' (p. xii) wrote in his conclusion:

If it should finally prove that through the phenomena referred to we may reach some knowledge of our next phase of life, it will be impossible longer to deny the practical importance of studying them. Yet perhaps, as the result of that study, we ought to expect rather outlines, discerned as through a glass darkly, than any distinct filling up of the picture of our future home. (Owen, p. 374)

Interestingly, the phrase 'as through a glass, darkly' was the concluding phrase in W. B. Carpenter's 1868 lecture 'On the Unconscious Activity of the Brain', within a suggestion that what latent intuition, with practice, can see immediately, the intellect can only see dimly. It therefore classes unconscious mental processes as in some way a God-given spiritual faculty.⁹⁵ Le Fanu, however, distances himself from these different, and it must be said, hopeful, uses of the quotation, by choosing to use a version that includes the word 'in', rather than 'through', as was obviously the usual choice. Although both versions of the phrase clearly imply the studying of a mirror,⁹⁶ the use of the word 'in' suggests a claustrophobic repetition of self that prevents any sense of seeing beyond one's own image. In Le Fanu's last novel, *Willing to Die*, his heroine writes of the trials in her life in the following terms, which suggest that his choice of the word 'in' was a deliberate diversion from the usual message gleaned from the verse:

I am tired and footsore yet, though through a glass darkly, I think I can now see why it all was, and I thank God with a contrite heart for the terrors and the mercies he has shown me. I begin to discover through the mist who was the one friend who never forsook me through all those stupendous wanderings, and I long for the time when I shall close my tired eyes, all being over, and lie at the feet of my Saviour. (p. 25)

Le Fanu here shows his understanding of the meaning of 1 Corinthians 13. 12. The last image in the passage corresponds to the second half of the phrase so often used to proclaim a sense of mystery in the nineteenth century: 'then I shall see face to face'. His choice of the title *In a*

conversion of the stare with which the child, at one-and-a-half, fixed his parents when they were engaging in an afternoon 'love scene', as they thought, unobserved.

⁹⁴ *Authorised King James Version*.

⁹⁵ William B. Carpenter, 'On the Unconscious Activity of the Brain', *Proceedings of the Royal Institution*, 5 (1868), 338-45 (p. 345).

⁹⁶ In the nineteenth century 'a glass' was taken as referring to a looking-glass; recent translations of the Bible show that this is not necessarily a connection that is made today, as the word 'mirror' is frequently used instead. See *Eight Translation New Testament* (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House, 1974), p. 1252.

Glass Darkly for the volume which includes Jennings's history removes this hopeful aspect, for it creates a solipsistic world in which, in a sense, there is nowhere to go. We see ourselves face to face to begin with; there seems no room for the image of God, a God that is seemingly only the agent of vengeance in this collection, deaf to prayer. Le Fanu has made St. Paul's mirror even more reflective, in a sense. Suggestive of glories to come originally, all it becomes is a reflection of our dark selves, our dark sins.

A monkey reflected in the mirror recalls Huxley's idea of the shock and sense of insult of the modern man 'brought face to face with ... blurred copies of himself'; and it is suggestive that in some sense the monkey may symbolize Jennings's inheritance. Jennings's father, 'silent and moping ... he used to drop in, sometimes, in the dusk, when I was alone in the drawing-room, and I used to fancy there were ghosts about him' ('Green Tea', p. 12) is not unlike the monkey, who, at least at first 'looked sullen and sick' (p. 26-7), 'jaded and sulky' (p. 25). Swedenborg's view of the soul is relevant here - 'By no wise man is it doubted that the soul is from the father' (*Compendium*, p. 543). Hesselius, the Swedenborg scholar, is well aware of issues of inheritance: 'either his mother or his father - I should rather think his father, saw a ghost' ('Green Tea', p. 12). In Jennings's haunting, and its rather repetitive progress (the monkey disappears every so often; its return mimics all its other returns, 'on lifting my eyes from a book, or turning my head, I see it, as usual, looking at me, and then it remains, as before, for its appointed time' (p. 28)), there is not only an arrest but a reminder of a more primitive state, of the past. It places him in the position of his father, a ghost-seer, and encourages him to repeat his suicidal fate, by telling him to injure himself. The civilized man is mocked by mimicry and urges to crime, to degeneracy. At a time when Jennings had never been so happy, ten years after his father's death, it replaces the air of morbidity ('he used to bore my father about his dreams ... I was so afraid of him' (p. 12)) that had died with him. In all these things the monkey symbolizes what Freud would term a regression. Its gaze reminds Jennings of the sin that gave it birth. He is locked in history: his own immediate history, his father's, that of the race.

Around the same time that Freud wrote *The Ego and the Id* (1923), he wrote another paper which I have mentioned in this chapter, 'A Seventeenth-Century Demonological Neurosis' (1923), in which he concluded that the painter Christoph Haizmann invited demonic possession because he needed a father substitute. In 'Green Tea' we see something of the combination of the essence of these two papers. What keeps Jennings in a regressive state is the same thing that causes his death. Though Hesselius, in an attempt to disown the case, separates the symptom and the suicide, in beating a hasty retreat he also goes to the heart of the matter: 'If the patient do not array himself on the side of the disease, his cure is certain' ('Green Tea', p. 40). Freud would write in the same terms in *The Ego and the Id*:

In our analyses we discover that there are people in whom the faculties of self-criticism and conscience - mental activities, that is, that rank as extremely high ones - are unconscious and unconsciously produce

effects of the greatest importance ... But this new discovery ... compels us, in spite of our better critical judgement, to speak of an 'unconscious sense of guilt' ... we gradually come to see that in a great number of neuroses an unconscious sense of guilt of this kind plays a decisive economic part and puts the most powerful obstacles in the way of recovery. (*The Ego and the Id*, pp. 26-27)

This unconscious sense of guilt could be seen to be a progression of what Maud Ruthyn describes as her 'troublesome sort of conscience, which occasionally went mad, and insisted, in small things as well as great, upon sacrifices which my reason now assures me were absurd' (*Uncle Silas*, p. 335). When Maud is urged to go against her father's will and ask Silas to relinquish guardianship, she dreams of her father's face, in various forms, but 'always with the same unnatural expression of diabolical fury' (p. 167). In the morning, when the answer comes from Silas that he would not consider giving up guardianship, she is in conflict - 'grieved to the heart ... but my conscience is at rest' (p. 169). 'At rest' is exactly the phrase to use. The 'ghost' of her father is at rest with this decision as well. The guilt we see in *In a Glass Darkly* is the logical extension of that which Maud experiences.

In Maud's case, then, guilt is fundamentally connected with the will (psychical and legal) of her father. It is possible to see that it is the case with Jennings, also, that his feeling of nemesis is bound up with the issue of his father. His guilt is of an unconscious (as in the Victorian sense, unknowing) nature. It does not harm his 'pleasant' life until the haunting, not affecting his 'I', yet has obviously been preparing itself for him, behind the scenes. The monkey is primitive yet judgmental, its anger and malevolence, its need to punish, greater as time goes on. In these things it is something of a prefiguration of the Freudian super-ego, an 'observing agency' of conscience ('Lecture XXXI', p. 59), whose demands 'may become so powerful and so relentless that the ego may be paralysed, as it were, in the face of its other tasks' (*Outline*, p. 172). Jennings's inability to function as a priest could be seen as an example of this paralysis. This agency is rooted in the archaic and the inherited:

Thus in the id, which is capable of being inherited, are harboured residues of the existences of countless egos; and, when the ego forms its super-ego out of the id, it may perhaps only be reviving shapes of former egos and be bringing them to resurrection. (*The Ego and the Id*, p. 38)

The term 'resurrection' ('Auferstehung' (*Das Ich und das Es*, p. 47)) is interesting here; Freud gives the impression of a ghostly host which find a site in the conscience. According to Freudian theory, the super-ego understands what is going on in the depths of the person, because it arises from and is connected to the id. This word, *Es* in German, means, literally, 'it', which is how the monkey, 'the brute', is always referred to. The 'I' of the person, therefore, is castigated mercilessly for something of which they know little or nothing, the traffic between ego and id being unconscious. Freud describes his vision of this state of affairs:

It may be said of the id that it is totally non-moral, of the ego that it strives to be moral, and of the super-ego that it can be super-moral and then become as cruel as only the id can be. (*The Ego and the Id*, p. 54)

Fuelling this cruelty is a power that Freud attributes to 'a pure culture of the death instinct'. This death instinct, driven by which the super-ego 'often enough succeeds in driving the ego to death' (p. 53), comes to fruition in Jennings's bloody suicide. G. H. Lewes wrote in 1879, in a passage that manages to link Jennings's plight with Freud's theories, of Schüle's idea that mental maladies are "more" than cerebral diseases:

The *more* consists in conceiving the patient, not simply as one suffering from cerebral disease, but as a spiritual being, the product of former generations, so that his ancestors must be taken into account among the conditions of his psychical symptoms. (*Problems, 3rd Series, I, 37*)

But ancestry is not all. It is only 'among the conditions' which lead to Jennings's suicide. Part of the rest of the picture can be pieced together if we examine the therapeutic relationship between Hesselius and his patient. Chapter VI of Freud's late work, *An Outline of Psycho-Analysis* gives a comprehensive account of the psychoanalytic version of such a relationship, which he describes in one of his earliest works, *Studies on Hysteria*, thus:

One works to the best of one's power, as an elucidator (where ignorance has given rise to fear), as a teacher, as the representative of a freer or superior view of the world, as a father confessor who gives absolution, as it were, by a continuance of his sympathy and respect after the confession has been made. (*Studies on Hysteria*, p. 282).

Hesselius is all of these things to Jennings, who respects his work and puts his faith in him. Hesselius himself seeks 'a confession' (p. 12) from Jennings, who tells him, 'I have never told so much and so minutely before to any one' (p. 28). In his *Outline of Psycho-Analysis*, Freud describes a process that must go on in order for analysis to succeed:

The patient is not satisfied with regarding the analyst in the light of reality as a helper and adviser ... On the contrary, the patient sees in him the return, the reincarnation, of some important figure out of his childhood or past, and consequently transfers on to him feelings and reactions which undoubtedly applied to this prototype. (*Outline*, p. 174)

'The analyst', he continues, 'as a rule is put in the place of one or other of the patient's parents, his father or mother' (p. 175). In 'Green Tea', I would suggest, Jennings transfers the role of the father onto Hesselius, who describes the point at which this milestone in their relationship was reached:

As I reasoned this point with him, Mr Jennings wept. He seemed comforted. One promise I exacted, which was that should the monkey at any time return, I should be sent for immediately; and, repeating my assurance that I would give neither time nor thought to any other subject until I had thoroughly investigated his case, and that tomorrow he should hear the result, I took my leave. ('Green Tea', p. 33)

That Jennings wept when the Doctor reasoned with him, and was comforted, is a sign that he sees him as a figure of respect, a father (or a Father) figure. In securing the promise, Hesselius acts as a father towards the child. Jennings has finally relaxed, letting Hesselius take control over his life, rather than the ghost of his father. Freud writes of the therapeutic relationship:

If the patient puts the analyst in the place of his father (or mother), he is also giving him the power which his super-ego exercises over his ego, since his parents were, as we know, the origin of his super-ego. The new super-ego now has an opportunity for a sort of *after-education* of the neurotic; it can correct mistakes for which his parents were responsible in educating him. (*Outline*, p. 175)

There is immense power involved in the psychoanalytic relationship. We can also see Jennings's respect for and trust in Hesselius and his new role as the commander of his conscience, usurping the monkey, in the note that Jennings later writes to him. In it there is the tone of the child who has proudly kept his promise against the odds, and also the plaintive cry for help to the father:

'It knows everything – it knows you and is frantic and atrocious. It reviles. I send you this. It knows every word I have written – I write. *This I promised, and I therefore write*, but I fear very confused, very incoherently. I am so interrupted, disturbed.

'Ever yours, sincerely, yours

'Robert Lynder Jennings.' ('Green Tea,' p. 34, emphasis mine)

'As the child was once under a compulsion to obey its parents, so the ego submits to the categorical imperative of its super-ego' (*The Ego and the Id*, p. 48). Jennings has kept his side of the bargain. But Hesselius, unfortunately, fails in his new role as father, disappearing into the country, untraceable until late in the next day. Jennings, it seems, has miscalculated, in investing so much in the relationship. His eagerness to do this can perhaps be explained by the ancestry of the role that Hesselius has assumed; he is a descendant, as Freud rightly perceives, of the 'father confessor'. However, in contrast to those who have assumed this privileged spiritual position before him, Hesselius has neither the spiritual faith nor the full sense of a calling to a caring vocation that goes with it. The 'extremely kind' Mr. Jennings ('Green Tea', p. 6) has mistaken Hesselius (who in his conclusion to the case shows himself to be a man whose interest lies rather in the demonstration of his own ideas than in his patient's welfare) for someone like himself, a type of clergyman.

Le Fanu graphically shows us the horrific results that can occur with what is, in essence, the assumption of a position of authority, without a sense of the responsibility which should automatically accompany it. His second super-ego showing a terrible disregard for him, his 'father' deserting him, Jennings commits suicide. Hesselius leaves the house 'dejected and agitated'. Relating this terrible conclusion of his therapy to his correspondent, Van Loo, he writes that 'my memory rejects the picture with incredulity and horror' ('Green Tea', p. 37). This is a strange anticipation of Breuer's hasty exit 'in a cold sweat' from the house of Anna O.

after her transference in therapy led to her re-enactment of a phantom childbirth with his 'child', and of his later refusal to treat a patient with a similar condition, from whom he literally repeats the fleeing process.⁹⁷ Hesselius, in addition, then denies the connection between himself and Jennings, and implicates him in the failure of the case:

Poor Mr Jennings I cannot call a patient of mine, for I had not even begun to treat his case, and he had not yet given me, I am convinced, his full and unreserved confidence. If the patient do not array himself on the side of the disease, his cure is certain. (p. 40)⁹⁸

Freud, it is interesting to note was known to behave in a similar way towards his unsuccessful cases. In the case of Frau Emmy Von N., who was not cured, Freud goes so far as to add a footnote twenty years later, revealing that he had met her daughter, who 'was intending to take legal proceedings against her mother, whom she represented as a cruel and ruthless tyrant' (*Studies on Hysteria*, p. 105 n.).

Contrary to Hesselius's light tone in his conclusion, it is entirely conceivable that, had he arrived when sent for, he would have prevented Jennings's suicide, for the moment at least. In 'The Evil Guest' Richard Marston, now in an asylum, is rescued by his doctor. This incident is very interesting in a consideration of systems and structures in Le Fanu's work. Just as parts of the psyche take on roles or become agencies in Freudian models, it becomes possible to see the actual acting out of such roles in Le Fanu's fiction. In Freud's conception of the super-ego he, under certain conditions, filled the external symbol of what is usually a part of the personality with a person - the analyst (originally, of course, the figure of the parent internalized). People can represent the element that is lacking or weak in the internal organization. Similarly with Le Fanu. For we find in the plot structure of 'The Evil Guest' a type of guardian who rescues Marston from himself, a luxury that most of Le Fanu's other characters are deprived of, for one reason or another. This prefigures the Freudian metaphor of the watchman, whose job it is to prevent the overwhelming of the ego.

Marston, haunted by the cousin he has killed, now in an asylum, asks the proprietor to look after him, as he cannot trust himself to behave normally. Then he spends his first night in the building, in a room next to the doctor's. In the night he suddenly starts howling and yelling,

⁹⁷ According to Ernest Jones, this re-enactment occurred after Breuer, who had become rather too engrossed in the case, and too attached to his patient, decided that it was time to end the therapy. Confronted, in consequence, with Anna O's alarming symptoms, 'though profoundly shocked, [Breuer] managed to calm her down by hypnotizing her, and then fled the house in a cold sweat' (Ernest Jones, *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud, Volume I: The Formative Years and the Great Discoveries, 1856-1900*, 13th edn, 3 vols (New York: Basic Books, 1960), I, 225). Ten years later, Jones relates, when Freud and Breuer were preparing for the publication of *Studies on Hysteria*, 'Breuer called him into consultation over an hysterical patient. Before seeing her he described her symptoms, whereupon Freud pointed out that they were typical products of a phantasy of pregnancy. The recurrence of the old situation was too much for Breuer. Without saying a word he took up his hat and stick and hurriedly left the house' (p. 226). Breuer's repetition here of his fleeing the house of Anna O. is an interesting counterpart to Hesselius's horrified and incredulous rejection of his memory of the vision of the dead Jennings.

⁹⁸ In a sense Hesselius has mistaken the treatment for the pre-diagnosis consultation, missing the value of

and the doctor immediately enters his room. This is unusual in Le Fanu's stories, for once the victim is left alone in the bedroom with the haunter, and yelling ensues, we rarely see them alive again. But the doctor's presence in the room saves Marston:

Second after second, and minute after minute, he stood confronting this frightful slave of Satan, in the momentary expectation that he would close with and destroy him. On a sudden, however, this brief agony of suspense was terminated; a change like an awaking consciousness of realities, or rather like the withdrawal of some hideous and visible influence from within, passed over the tense and darkened features of the wretched being. ('The Evil Guest', pp. 287-88)

True to his role as watchman, when the doctor arrives, consciousness returns and unconscious forces withdraw. Freud describes the job of the censoring watchman in guarding the preconscious (*Pcs.*), that is, the portion of consciousness nearest the surface during sleep, against the onslaught of the forces of the unconscious:

For even though this critical watchman goes to rest – and we have proof that its slumbers are not deep - it also shuts the door upon the power of movement ... The position is less harmless when what brings about the displacement of forces is not the nightly relaxation in the critical censorship's output of force, but a pathological reduction in that force or a pathological intensification of the unconscious excitations while the preconscious is still cathected and the gateway to the power of movement stands open. When this is so, the watchman is overpowered, the unconscious excitations overwhelm the *Pcs.*, and thence obtain control over our speech and actions; or they forcibly bring about hallucinatory regression and direct the course of the apparatus (which was not designed for their use) by virtue of the attraction exercised by perceptions on the distribution of our psychical energy. To this state of things we give the name of psychosis. (*Interpretation*, p. 568)

In the end of the stories with watchmen who wait with the victim, it is not simply a case of the watchman leaving the room (that is, the preconscious). In 'The Familiar' the unconscious element, the watcher, changes from an owl to a servant and locks the door without turning the key. In 'Schalken the Painter' when the uncle of Rose Velderkaust steps over the threshold of the room she is in, 'the door which divided the two rooms closed violently after him, as if swung to by a strong blast of wind'.⁹⁹ This is the same overpowering energy that overcomes the watchman guarding the preconscious in the mind. After months or years of torment, the watchman fails at exactly the same time as the unconscious power rises. Freud calls this outcome 'psychosis'. The original meaning of this word, first used by Feuchtersleben in his *Principles of Medical Psychology* (p. 11) in application to a condition of the mind, was 'animation, principle of life ... give soul or life to' (*OED*, XII, 769). This definition clarifies the condition as a sheer overwhelming of the ego.

But although the original definition of the word suggests that the ego is, in psychosis, overwhelmed with soul or life, this in a sense takes us no nearer to discovering what precisely constitutes the force in the psychic system. At the end of his career, Freud explained the failure

what must have seemed to the relieved Jennings a 'talking cure'.

⁹⁹ Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, 'Schalken the Painter' (1839), in *The Mammoth Book of Victorian and Edwardian Ghost Stories*, ed. by Richard Dalby (London: Robinson, 1995), pp. 5-27 (p. 24).

of therapy thus:

We shall not be disappointed, but, on the contrary, we shall find it entirely intelligible, if we reach the conclusion that the final outcome of the struggle we have engaged in depends on *quantitative* relations – on the quota of energy we are able to mobilize in the patient to our advantage as compared with the sum of energy of the powers working against us. Here once again God is on the side of the big battalions. (*Outline*, pp. 181-82)

In this passage Freud speaks in terms of battle on a large scale, the forces of light fighting the forces of darkness. In his use of the last maxim and the words ‘once again’ he communicates that his system corresponds to other well-known systems, which can be used as metaphors, and for which Freud’s system can become a metaphor in its turn. It is because of the fact that Freud’s systems contain this potential for metaphor, that they could be blown up into schemes that encapsulated heaven and hell, good and bad. It is in this that we find the key to Freud’s prefiguration in spiritual or mystical works of the nineteenth century and before; these thinkers used schemas, inherited from Judaeo-Christian tradition, which Freud in turn used as a structure for his own thinking, filling it with a force that, as I have tried to suggest in many ways above, was essentially the same as that used in previous models. Swedenborg’s ‘nervous juice’ (*Economy of the Animal Kingdom*, I, 501) may have informed Hesselius’s nervous fluid (described as ‘spiritual, though not immaterial, any more than ... light and electricity are so’ (‘Green Tea’, p. 39)). Such circulatory material was, at the end of the nineteenth century, translated into the *Q* of Freud’s *Project for a Scientific Psychology*, a type of nervous energy. Fechner’s spirits became the wishful impulses of psychoanalysis. The latter are formed from early experiences which occur in response to the urge to satisfy the major biological needs of the subject, then the memories of these incidents are incorporated into the psyche as wishes,¹⁰⁰ in the former model, spirits that identified with some element in a subject came in from heaven or hell and stayed in the individual soul. Although Freud had no spirit or metaphysical world in his belief system, he had the outer world, the source of a wealth of exogenous stimuli which, if not met by a corresponding inner strength, can imperil the mental health of the individual.

As, by the end of his career, Sheridan Le Fanu had formed a strange ambiguity at the heart of his fiction, posing constant unanswerable questions about the origin of symptoms such as hallucinations/hauntings and the causation involved in their arrival and progress, so Freud in his turn could never be certain of what powered the model that he held to, with inevitable variations, throughout his working life. Starting as *Q* (simply, quantity), a form of energy, nervous in his *Project*, later, for example in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) it became a psychological current, synonymous with the individual’s wishes,¹⁰¹ and what Freud in 1895 had

¹⁰⁰ See Freud’s account of early satisfaction and its results for the psyche in *Project for a Scientific Psychology*, pp. 317-19, and a slightly later description of the same process in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, pp. 564-67.

¹⁰¹ See *The Interpretation of Dreams*, p. 598.

termed endogenous Q was then recast as the instincts: ‘The forces which we assume to exist behind the tensions caused by the needs of the id are called *instincts*.’ (*Outline*, p. 148)¹⁰² In Appendix C to the *Project*, entitled ‘On the Nature of Q ’, Strachey concludes that ‘we have no choice but to follow Freud in leaving the problem of Q unsolved’ (‘Appendix C’, *Project*, p. 396), and cites these suggestive words from *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*:

The indefiniteness of all our discussions on what we describe as metapsychology is of course due to the fact that we know nothing of the nature of the excitatory process that takes place in the elements of the psychical systems, and that we do not feel justified in framing any hypothesis on the subject. We are consequently operating all the time with a large unknown factor, which we are obliged to carry over into every new formula. (*Beyond*, pp. 30-31)

The nature of this ‘large unknown factor’ was not conclusively determined in the nineteenth century, a fact that is partly reflected in the ambiguous works of Sheridan Le Fanu. It was this uncertainty that Freud inherited, carrying it over from similar structures before his. For, as Strachey points out, the only thing known about Q is its characteristics (‘Appendix C’, *Project*, p. 396), and it takes its participation in a working system to witness these manifestations. As with the large unknown at the heart of Le Fanu’s system, this uncertainty allows all possibilities but none completely. A force that cannot be defined cannot be fully owned; Freud, like those before him, simply provided its conceptual framework for a short time, unable to claim it for psychoanalysis.

¹⁰² One of the major needs of the id, of course, was sexual satisfaction. Giving one or two specific examples of Freud’s thinking on this all-pervading tenet of psychoanalysis would necessarily be a hugely reductive exercise, for its importance, indeed, its virtual indispensability, in the psychical model was continually emphasized by Freud in all his writings from the mid-1890s to the end of his career. Richard Webster writes of its advantages as a force for Freud, which suggests, he argues, that this is why it was this instinct, more than any other, that powered the psychical model: ‘In the first place his whole model, as we have seen, depended on a theory of mental “energetics”. As such it could not work at all without a constantly renewable source of energy. Breuer had already written in *Studies on Hysteria* that “the sexual instinct is undoubtedly the most powerful source of persisting accretions of excitation (and consequently of neuroses)”. Freud now incorporated this view into his *Project* and, by doing so, he effectively supplied the “fuel” on which his mechanical model of mind could run.’ (Webster, p. 182) See also Sulloway, p. 91, on the necessity in Freud’s system for the sexual instinct.

Chapter 2

The Association of Ideas in the Fiction of Wilkie Collins and in Freudian Theory and Therapy

'Association's mystic power': a short survey

In this chapter I will explore the nature of the relationship between the fiction of Wilkie Collins and one major aspect of Victorian psychology, the concept of the association of ideas. John Abercrombie helpfully defined this doctrine in a text that would be much cited during the nineteenth century, *Inquiries Concerning the Intellectual Powers and the Investigation of Truth*, first published in 1830:

The principle of association is founded upon a remarkable tendency, by which two or more facts or conceptions, which have been contemplated together, or in immediate succession, become so connected in the mind, that one of them at a future time recalls the others, or introduces a train of thoughts, which, without any mental effort, follow each other in the order in which they were originally associated. This is called the association of ideas, and various phenomena of a very interesting kind are connected with it.

But, besides this tendency, by which thoughts formerly associated are brought into the mind in a particular order, there is another species of association, into which the mind passes spontaneously, by a suggestion from any subject which happens to be present to it. The thought or fact, which is thus present, suggests another which has some kind of affinity to it; this suggests a third, and so on, to the formation of a train or series which may be continued to a great length. A remarkable circumstance likewise is, that such a train may go on with very little consciousness of, or attention to it; so that the particulars of the series are scarcely remembered, or are traced only by an effort. This singular fact every one must have experienced in that state of mind which is called a reverie. It goes on for some time without effort, and with little attention; at length the attention is roused, and directed to a particular thought which is in the mind, without the person being able at first to recollect what led him to think of that subject. He then, by a voluntary effort, traces the chain of thoughts backwards, perhaps through a long series, till he arrives at a subject of which he has a distinct remembrance as having given rise to it.¹

The association of ideas is a concept which is especially pertinent to this thesis because the natural progression of the observation of its 'various phenomena', such as that a train of thought 'may go on with very little consciousness of, or attention to it', proved to be a nineteenth-century realization of the possibility of a type of mental activity which was variously termed latent, unconscious or preconscious.² His cultural and intellectual climate rich in the ideas of

¹ John Abercrombie, *Inquiries Concerning the Intellectual Powers and the Investigation of Truth* (1830), 3rd edn (Edinburgh: Waugh & Innes, 1832), pp. 102-03. Hereafter, *Intellectual Powers*.

² Robert Hoeldtke, in 'The History of Associationism and British Medical Psychology', *Medical History*, 11 (1967), 46-65, argues convincingly that thinking on the association of ideas led to theories about what

associationism, Wilkie Collins depicted in fiction many such interesting phenomena; the purest example can be found in *No Name* (1862). I will consider this fictional counterpart to the psychological anecdotes that circulated during the nineteenth century, within a sketch of the history of associationism which will span the first two sections of this chapter. There is a sense in which we can underestimate the all-pervading nature of the doctrine that, to the Victorians, was inseparable from the conception of thought; thinking processes were seen as operating according to certain rules or dynamics within this framework. The widespread discussion and illustration of this system, in nineteenth-century periodicals, poems, and works of fiction, as well as in scientific manuals, was no doubt partly due to its necessary coexistence with attractive, easily accessible metaphors, which effectively described and explained it.

Although the association of ideas was in some sense an ancient concept, considered, for example, by Aristotle,³ it started to be explored fully as a model by which to explain the processes of thinking with the rise of empiricism, beginning with the writings of Thomas Hobbes in the mid-seventeenth century. John Locke, in the fourth edition of his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1700) expanded on the concept, using helpful metaphors by which to describe the habitual patterns that thinking followed in the process of association. These customary thoughts, he writes, 'once set going continue in the same steps they have been used to, which by often treading are worn into a smooth path, and the Motion in it becomes easy and as it were Natural'.⁴ This metaphor of the path was used to describe associative thought processes throughout the nineteenth century, and was later adopted by Freud. Echoing Locke, Freud wrote in his *Project for a Scientific Psychology* of the varying amount by which certain ideas were charged with the force within the psychic system (*Q*), in terms of their ability to access 'breadth of pathway'.⁵ After Locke, thinkers like George Berkeley, David Hume and

he calls 'the subconscious mind' (p. 59).

³ See *A Source Book in the History of Psychology*, ed. by Richard J. Herrnstein, Edwin J. Boring (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965), pp. 327-30.

⁴ John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), ed. by Peter H. Nidditch, 4th edn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), p. 396.

⁵ Sigmund Freud, *Project for a Scientific Psychology* (1950), in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. and ed. by James Strachey and others, 24 vols (London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1953-74), I, 281-397 (p. 375). *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works* will hereafter be referenced as *SE*.

In reading Freud's *Project*, it is clear that he theorizes within associationist structures. His idea about breadth of pathway within neurones is simply an attempt to map association within 'a psychology that shall be a natural science' (*Project*, p. 295). The *Project* renders the weak or strong force that ideas hold into varying amounts of *Q* (which we see, in more traditional models, as thoughts that are connected to few others by association, or those that become 'easy and as it were Natural' (Locke, p. 396)), and it translates the popular associationist metaphor of the chain or path into chains of neurones connected by contact-barriers. Freud describes the principle of breadth of pathway thus: 'We may perhaps assume that not all of a neurone's pathways are equally receptive to *Q*, and we may describe this difference as *breadth of pathway* ... If we assume that with an increasing *Q* a pathway is opened which can bring its breadth into effect, then one can perceive the possibility of the passage of *Q* being fundamentally altered by an increase in the *Q* in flow. Everyday experience seems to give express support to precisely this conclusion.' (*Project*, p. 375) Therefore, the more a thought or idea has invested in it, and the more habitual it becomes, the easier the path it forges subsequently becomes to traverse; it creates what Freud calls a 'smooth passage' (p. 375); this is surely what Locke, almost two centuries previously, had described as 'a smooth path' (Locke, p. 396).

David Hartley through the eighteenth century increasingly emphasized the importance of the association of ideas on all mental activity. Hartley's work was a staple part of psychological education for such popular nineteenth-century commentators as W. B. Carpenter,⁶ and was an important framework for the philosophical thought of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. The *Biographia Literaria* (1817), a section of which was a response to Hartley's ideas, recorded the case of a servant who, in a delirium, began to speak the biblical languages that she had heard recited by a pastor who had taken her in as a child.⁷ This became one of many anecdotes which was circulated during the nineteenth century (for example, by Abercrombie and William Hamilton)⁸ as evidence of the marvels of association, of hidden or latent trains of thought in the mind that, when once the first of its ideas arises, perhaps within a state of delirium, reverie or

Freud also used the German term 'weg' (path) in 'The Aetiology of Hysteria' ('Zur Ätiologie der Hysterie') (1896) in a way that more obviously displayed its roots in associationism, with regard to the connecting paths, constructed of a chain of associations, from symptoms to a traumatic scene which acts as their source: 'As we know from Breuer, hysterical symptoms can be resolved if, starting from them, we are able to find the path [*Weg*] back to the memory of a traumatic experience. If the memory which we have uncovered does not answer our expectations, it may be that we ought to pursue the same path [*Weg*] a little further; perhaps behind the first traumatic scene there may be concealed the memory of a second ... so that the scene that was first discovered only has the significance of a connecting link in the chain of associations.' ('The Aetiology of Hysteria' in *SE*, III, 187-221 (p. 195), 'Zur Ätiologie der Hysterie' in *Gesammelte Werke, Werke aus den Jahren 1892-1899*, 18 vols (London: Imago, 1940-52, Frankfurt Am Maim, 1968), I, 425-59 (p. 430.))

This path is a constant metaphor in Freud's description of the organization of memories in the mind and of his therapeutic technique, in *Studies on Hysteria* (1895) (See *SE* II, 289-90, 292, 294, 295).

⁶ Herrnstein and Boring testify that Hartley's *Observations on Man, His Frame, His Duty, and His Expectations* (1749) 'was considered the authoritative work on the subject of association' for 'at least seventy years' (Herrnstein and Boring, p. 326). W. B. Carpenter's memoir writer in *Nature and Man* documents, 'he had been trained by his father in the principles of Hartley' (J. Estlin Carpenter, 'Introductory Memoir', in W. B. Carpenter, *Nature and Man: Essays Scientific and Philosophical* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., 1888), pp. 1-152 (p. 38)).

⁷ See Jenny Bourne Taylor and Sally Shuttleworth, *Embodied Selves: An Anthology of Psychological Texts, 1830-1890* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), pp. 73-76. It is worth mentioning Coleridge's connection with the Collins family. Catherine Peters documents that Wilkie's father, William Collins, painted Coleridge's daughter, and Coleridge would visit the house during Wilkie's childhood (he died when Wilkie was ten). Wilkie would recount one particular anecdote that he remembered from this time (concerning his mother's sensible advice to Coleridge about his opium addiction) which suggests these visits made a deep impression on the boy (Catherine Peters, *The King of Inventors: A Life of Wilkie Collins* (London: Minerva, 1992), pp. 23-24).

⁸ See *Intellectual Powers*, pp. 142-43. See also William Hamilton, *Lectures on Metaphysics and Logic* (1859), ed. by H. C. Mansel and John Keith, 7th edn, 4 vols (London: William Blackwood, 1865), I, 344-47. Hereafter, *Lectures*. Hamilton's work is based on a course of lectures given from 1836. He refers to this phenomenon, not primarily as evidence of association, but in the context of the possibility of thought on a less than conscious level. Of his three degrees of mental latency, he places it in the activities of the second: 'The second degree of latency exists when the mind contains certain systems of knowledge, or certain habits of action, which it is wholly unconscious of possessing in its ordinary state, but which are revealed to consciousness in certain extraordinary exaltations of its powers. The evidence on this point shows that the mind frequently contains whole systems of knowledge which, though in our normal state they have faded into absolute oblivion, may, in certain abnormal states, as madness, febrile delirium, somnambulism, catalepsy, &c., flash out into luminous consciousness, and even throw into the shade of unconsciousness those other systems by which they had, for a long period, been eclipsed and even extinguished. For example, there are cases in which the extinct memory of whole languages was suddenly restored, and, what is even still more remarkable, in which the faculty was exhibited of accurately repeating, in the known or unknown tongues, passages which were never within the grasp of conscious memory in the normal state.' (I, 339-40). What is especially worthy of note is that this anecdote can be used equally well to demonstrate the marvels of associationism, the construction of our ideas from 'the living chain of causes', as Coleridge puts it (cited in *Embodied Selves*, p. 77), and the idea

drug-induced intoxication, will suggest the next idea, and the next, leading to marvels of recollection in the wondering subject. Abercrombie describes the process in the following way:

We have likewise observed the remarkable manner in which persons, events, or scenes, long past, perhaps forgotten, are recalled into the mind by means of association; – trains of thought taking possession of the mind, in a manner which we often cannot account for, and bringing back facts or occurrences, which had long ceased to be objects of attention. These remarkable processes are most apt to take place, when the mind is in that passive state which we call a reverie; and they are more rarely observed, when the attention is actively exerted upon any distinct and continued subject of thought. (*Intellectual Powers*, p. 254)

Little wonder that in some of the poetry of the first half of the century there were references to ‘Association’s mystic power’ and ‘Association’s mystic chain’.⁹

Wilkie Collins creates a fictional anecdote which illustrates the process in which ‘trains of thought tak[e] possession of the mind’, and the wonder it inspires, in his first publication in *Household Words*, ‘A Terribly Strange Bed’ (1852). The bed of the title is situated in a gambling-house in Paris, and reserved for those who have broken its bank. Mr Faulkner, who has won all the house’s money, is drugged by its owners, in readiness for the descent of the canopy, which is supposed to smother him as he sleeps, but is over-drugged so that he becomes wakeful instead. Endeavouring to fall asleep, Faulkner is looking around his room attempting to allow his mind to create associations whose trains will naturally lead him to dream:

The moonlight shining into the room reminded me of a certain moonlight night in England – the night after a picnic party in a Welsh valley. Every incident of the drive homeward through lovely scenery ... came back to my remembrance, though I had never given the picnic a thought for years; though, if I had *tried* to recollect it, I could certainly have recalled little or nothing of that scene long past. Of all the wonderful faculties that help to tell us that we are immortal, which speaks the sublime truth more eloquently than memory? Here was I, in a strange house of the most suspicious character, in a situation of uncertainty, and even of peril, which might seem to make the cool exercise of my recollection almost out of the question; nevertheless remembering, quite involuntarily, places, people, conversations, minute circumstances of every kind, which I had thought forgotten for ever, which I could not possibly have recalled at will, even under the most favourable auspices. And what cause had produced in a moment the whole of this strange, complicated, mysterious effect? Nothing but some rays of moonlight shining in at my bedroom window ... I was absorbed by these past scenes and past amusements, when, in an instant, the thread on which my memories hung, snapped asunder; my attention immediately came back to present things, more vividly than ever, and I found myself, I neither knew why nor wherefore, looking hard at the picture again.¹⁰

that the mind has its latent degrees.

⁹ Erasmus Darwin (1731-1802), Canto III, ‘Progress of the Mind’, *The Temple of Nature; or, the Origin of Society: A Poem, with Philosophical Notes* (London: Johnson, 1803) VI. 355, Robert Montgomery (1807-1865), ‘Retrospect’, *Poetical Trifles: By a Youth* (Bath: Higman, 1825), III. 1. In some of the poetry of this time, association became a type of muse, as it was recognized more and more that the mechanism of memory was indebted to it. Thomas Brown, in his famous *Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind* (1820), which placed his alternative term for association, ‘suggestion’, at the heart of mental function, quoted lines from the poetry of Mark Akenside, who in his *Pleasures of Imagination*, writes of association in terms of ‘sympathy unbroken’, and that ‘by these mysterious ties, the busy power/ Of memory her ideal train preserves/ Entire; or when they would elude her watch/ Reclaims their fleeting footsteps from the waste/ Of dark oblivion’ (cited in Thomas Brown, *Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind*, 11th edn (Edinburgh: William Tait, 1838), p. 218.

¹⁰ Wilkie Collins, ‘A Terribly Strange Bed’ (1852), in *Mad Monkton and Other Stories*, ed. by Norman Page (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 1-20 (pp. 12-13).

The process depicted here (before the sudden exertion of Faulkner's attention on the disappearing picture) and in Coleridge's case of the servant, is a passive one, of the kind that early associationists such as Hartley believed dictated the mind's events. Collins's description of 'the thread on which my memories hung' suggests a gravity which, according to Robert Hoeldtke, was a major element in Hartley's model (Hoeldtke, p. 46). This gravity within the system remained as associationism developed (hence the 'effort' needed to trace the chain back in Abercrombie's definition) but, with the influence of thinkers such as Thomas Brown and William Hamilton, the mind came to be seen as more active in the processes of association.¹¹ This reached the point at which W. B. Carpenter, in 1868, would advise that the moral will could, with the development of good habits, be imposed upon the unconscious mind.¹² We see literally an absence of mind in the above passage; the place that would later be taken by unconscious mental processes is assigned to an immortal element which inspires a 'strange, complicated, mysterious' experience, akin to the marvels of poetry's 'mystic chain'. Collins's description of the involuntary return of Faulkner's memories acts as an example of the first, and theoretically older, half of Abercrombie's definition of association which I cited at the beginning of this chapter.

The second half of Abercrombie's definition shows the influence of Thomas Brown, whose *Lectures on The Philosophy of the Human Mind* asserted (and in doing so emphasized the possibility that on some level the mind had a choice in the whole associative process), that 'suggestion' would be a far better term for association (Brown, p. 216). Abercrombie takes Brown's view into account when describing this 'species of association, into which the mind passes spontaneously, by a suggestion from any subject which happens to be present to it. The thought or fact, which is thus present, suggests another ... this suggests a third, and so on'. He writes, 'in the mental process now referred to, it is probable that the term *suggestion* is much more correct than *association*, which has often been applied to it':

For in the cases which belong to this class, the facts or thoughts suggest each other, not according to any connexion or association which the mind had previously formed between them, but according to some mental impression or emotion, which by a law of our constitution proves a principle of analogy or suggestion. (*Intellectual Powers*, pp. 102, 105-06)

We are allowed to see the active workings of a fictional example of the second half of Abercrombie's definition of the association of ideas in Collins's 1862 novel, *No Name*.

¹¹ Hoeldtke gives a comprehensive account of Hamilton's background and thought, arguing that what was important in Hamilton's outlook was his acceptance of German idealism, in particular 'the Kantian emphasis on the active Ego, important both to his theory of consciousness and to his interpretation of dreams' (p. 61).

¹² This was in a lecture given on 27 March 1868 (William B. Carpenter, 'On the Unconscious Activity of the Brain', *Proceedings of the Royal Institution*, 5 (1868) 338-45 (p. 345)). Hereafter, 'On the Unconscious Activity'.

Magdalen Vanstone, stripped of what she sees as her rightful inheritance, seeks to redress her wrongs by marrying the heir to her parents' fortune, her cousin Noel Vanstone, who has never met her, under an assumed name. On visiting his house in London's Vauxhall Walk masquerading as her own governess, Miss Garth, she encounters Noel Vanstone's housekeeper, Mrs Lecount, who forms a suspicion of her true identity. Time passes and Mrs Lecount meets Magdalen again, this time masquerading, with a fictional 'family', as Susan Bygrave. This meeting forms an uneasy impression on Mrs Lecount, who is certain that Miss Bygrave, though a stranger, is familiar to her in some way. The narrator writes, 'She had got no further than this during the day; she could get no further now: the chain of thought broke'.¹³ Pondering then on the Bygraves in general, she asks, 'were the members of this small family of three, what they seemed on the surface of them?' and 'with that question on her mind, she went to bed' (*No Name*, p. 276). This question proves to be what Abercrombie calls 'some mental impression or emotion, which by a law of our constitution proves a principle of analogy or suggestion'. The narrator describes what follows:

As soon as the candle was out, the darkness seemed to communicate some inexplicable perversity to her thoughts. They wandered back from present things to past, in spite of her. They brought her old master back to life again; they revived forgotten sayings and doings in the English circle at Zurich; they veered away to the old man's death-bed at Brighton; they moved from Brighton to London; they entered the bare, comfortless room at Vauxhall Walk; they set the Aquarium back in its place on the kitchen table, and put the false Miss Garth in the chair by the side of it, shading her inflamed eyes from the light ... they revived an old doubt ... whether the threatened conspiracy had evaporated in mere words, or whether she and her master were likely to hear of it again. At this point her thoughts broke off once more, and there was a momentary blank. The next instant she started up in bed; her heart beating violently, her head whirling as if she had lost her senses. With electric suddenness, her mind pieced together its scattered multitude of thoughts, and put them before her plainly under one intelligible form. In the all-mastering agitation of the moment, she clapped her hands together, and cried out suddenly in the darkness:

"Miss Vanstone again !!!" (*No Name*, p. 276)

Although Mrs Lecount is unable calmly to trace the chain of associations backwards to their source, Collins maximizes his role of omniscient narrator on this occasion to describe the process:

She could not get sufficiently far from herself to see that her half-formed conclusions on the subject of the Bygraves, had ended in making that family objects of suspicions to her; that the association of ideas had thereupon carried her mind back to that other object of suspicion which was represented by the conspiracy against her master; and that the two ideas of those two separate subjects of distrust, coming suddenly in contact, had struck the light. (pp. 276-77)

The 'momentary blank' in the process is telling, and acts as a demonstration that a detailed tracing of associative processes must naturally allow for the possibility of links in the chain of which an individual is unaware; in William Hamilton's words, 'mental activities and passivities,

¹³ Wilkie Collins, *No Name* (1862), ed. by Virginia Blain (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 275.

of which we are unconscious, but which manifest their existence by effects of which we are conscious' (*Lectures*, I, 347). Mrs Lecount is unconscious, in contrast to the narrator, of exactly what has caused her to arrive at the 'answer' she seeks. This is suggestive of hidden links in the associative chain which are situated below consciousness, of the type that William Hamilton described in a metaphorical exploration of the possibility of a third degree of latency in the mind:

Now it sometimes happens, that we find one thought rising immediately after another in consciousness, but whose consecution we can reduce to no law of association. Now in these cases we can generally discover by an attentive observation, that these two thoughts, though not themselves associated, are each associated with certain other thoughts; so that the whole consecution would have been regular, had these intermediate thoughts come into consciousness, between the two which are not immediately associated. Suppose, for instance, that A, B, C, are three thoughts, – that A and C cannot immediately suggest each other, but that each is associated with B, so that A will naturally suggest B, and B naturally suggest C. Now it may happen, that we are conscious of A, and immediately thereafter of C. How is the anomaly to be explained? It can only be explained on the principle of latent modifications ... You are probably aware of the following fact in mechanics. If a number of billiard balls be placed in a straight row and touching each other, and if a ball be made to strike, in the line of the row, the ball at one end of the series, what will happen? The motion of the impinging ball is not divided among the whole row ... but the impetus is transmitted through the intermediate balls which remain each in its place, to the ball at the opposite end of the series, and this ball alone is impelled on. Something like this seems often to occur in the train of thought. One idea mediately suggests another into consciousness, – the suggestion passing through one or more ideas which do not themselves rise into consciousness. The awakening and awakened ideas here correspond to the ball striking and the ball struck off; while the intermediate ideas of which we are unconscious, but which carry on the suggestion, resemble the intermediate balls which remain moveless, but communicate the impulse. (*Lectures*, I, 352-53)

The examination of the phenomena of the association of ideas could not lead to anything else but the conclusion that there existed unconscious mental processes.

Later in this chapter I will discuss the ways in which Collins alludes to and manipulates the rules and structures of association to enlighten traits of character and elucidate emotion and motive in *Basil*, to suggest a scale of psychological symptomatology and to explain relationship and hence plot patterns in *The Woman in White*, and to cause disorientation, confusion and anxiety in *Armadale*. In Collins's much more straightforward fictional demonstrations of the processes of association in *No Name* and 'A Terribly Strange Bed', however, it is difficult to avoid tracing a direct connection with specific sources, the sort of associationist psychological writings that I have discussed in this section. Jenny Bourne Taylor, in *In the Secret Theatre of Home*,¹⁴ who also links Mrs Lecount's sudden revelation to Abercrombie's account of the association of ideas, sees this episode as rather an exception to Collins's general method in the novel. This method utilizes a combination of 'the uncertainty of the "how" rather than the "what" of the story' (*Secret Theatre*, p. 132), 'a narrative voice that continually undercuts the sources of its own ideological coherence' (p. 134) and a plot that 'continually resorts to chance and coincidence to reach its predestined end' (p. 148). For Bourne Taylor, then, the Lecount episode acts as the 'one moment where Collins does directly exploit internalized psychological

¹⁴ Jenny Bourne Taylor, *In the Secret Theatre of Home: Wilkie Collins, sensation narrative, and*

processes, drawing on specific developments in associationist psychology to make possible the necessary conceptual leap in order to be able to recognize masquerade' (p. 149). Here the 'how' is unusually traceable, the ideology relatively stable and straightforward, the chance and coincidence much less marked than in other parts of the novel. However, I would contest that Mrs Lecount's moment of revelation is actually rather over-explained for the discovery that it represents, and the effect that this discovery has. Faulkner's vivid experience of the marvels of the association of ideas in 'A Terribly Strange Bed' is an isolated incident, with little real purpose within the story; similarly, the 'how', *No Name's* narrator's intricate explanation of Mrs Lecount's revelation in terms of the association of ideas, is actually surplus to the requirements of the plot, for the housekeeper herself 'was quite incapable of tracing the mental process which had led her to discovery' (*No Name*, p. 276). The discovery itself does not fulfil the expectations that its dramatic emergence promises; the change of behaviour it inspires in the housekeeper immediately puts the enemy, the 'Bygraves', on guard. It is ammunition for the 'skirmish' (p. 285), possessing her of 'weapon[ry]' against Magdalen, but it is ultimately powerless to stop her gaining her purpose. Magdalen goes on, despite Lecount, to marry her master, then, much later, to come into possession of the Trust which will secure her the fortune she lost at the beginning of the story. The discovery of this Trust, like Lecount's discovery, manifests a certain 'perversity'. Like Lecount's associatively-linked thoughts, which wandered 'in spite of her', the finding of the Trust 'proved no exception to the general perversity of all lost things. Look for them, and they remain invisible. Leave them alone, and they reveal themselves!' (p. 544). Magdalen, who has taken it upon herself to reclaim the family inheritance, is not the one who finally does so. It is Norah, the sister who is, in effect, left alone by the story, who respectably and quietly marries back into the family, and who accidentally finds the Trust. 'Met and baffled successfully at every point' (p. 320), Lecount's inability to make full use of her revelation, to attain the final triumph, is therefore entirely characteristic in a novel that works to these rules, 'a story of "perversity"' (*Secret Theatre*, p. 132) in which, when the Trust is presented to Magdalen, whose life's purpose has been to find it, it is promptly torn up.

The wondrous workings of associationism in this novel and in 'A Terribly Strange Bed', are not pivotal to the plot; there is more significance in the descriptions of their processes than in their consequences. I would suggest that Collins includes them, and in more detail than is necessary for their role in the proceedings, to illustrate the fact that the marvels of memory and deduction that association enables are often uncalled-for, inherently perverse, of limited or no practical use; as Faulkner testifies, 'every incident of the drive homeward through lovely scenery ... came back to my remembrance ... though, if I had *tried* to recollect it, I could certainly have recalled little or nothing of that scene long past' ('A Terribly Strange Bed,' p. 12). These episodes are fictional counterparts to the endless anecdotes that, circulating in

orthodox scientific manuals, popular lectures, various encyclopaedias and journals, became embedded in the nineteenth-century consciousness. The imbalance that the minuteness of their description causes against the proceedings of the rest of the text in which they appear, means that these incidents actually act best as rather interruptive isolated illustrations of the laws of the association of ideas, and, as a natural consequence, of the possibility of the operation of unconscious mental processes. I also emphasize them here because they do much to demonstrate Collins's understanding of these processes, and, in their clear reflection of current associationist theories, they, quite intentionally I believe, form unusually transparent illustrations of his acquaintance with the psychological writings of his time. For, as I will explore in this chapter, Collins not only undertook what he himself called 'promiscuous reading'¹⁵ in order to write his novels, he also took pains to demonstrate that this was the case. The two episodes that I have discussed, therefore, are entirely characteristic of a writer who delighted in exhibiting his knowledge, of which current psychological theory was a part.

In my Introduction I cited the scholarship of Ola Andersson which suggested that the doctrine of the association of ideas was an element in Freud's psychological education. Freud included an account of thinking in which, like Mrs Lecount's train of thought, only selected links become conscious, in his attempt to explain ordinary thought in *Project for a Scientific Psychology*:

Thus there is in fact also an *observing process of thought* in which indications of quality are either not, or only sporadically, aroused, and which is made possible by the fact that the ego follows the passage [of association] automatically with its cathexes. This process of thought is in fact far the more frequent, without being abnormal; it is our ordinary thought, unconscious, with occasional *intrusions* into consciousness – what is known as conscious thought with unconscious intermediate links, though these can be made conscious. (*Project*, p. 373, editor's brackets)

He continues that a sudden intrusion into consciousness can be explained if the unconscious passage of Quantity 'has aroused an idea which, for other reasons, calls up indications of quality – that is, consciousness' (p. 375-76). Quality is in its essence the comparison of the thought with the purposive idea – what the mind, in thought, is searching for, although it may not be aware of its motives. It is the 'mental impression or emotion', in Abercrombie's terms, that guides the associative process, from whatever level of the psyche it originates. Mrs Lecount's explosive verbalization of the answer at which her mind has arrived would be explained in Freudian terms as a sudden influx of energy in response to the matching of what the psyche was searching for and what it has found. Freud describes the process in *The Interpretation of Dreams*: 'Under certain conditions a train of thought with a purposive cathexis is capable of attracting the attention of consciousness to itself and in that event, through the agency of consciousness, receives a "hypercathexis"'.¹⁶ This is equivalent to Collins's striking of the

¹⁵ Wilkie Collins, *Heart and Science: A Story of the Present Time* (1883) (Stroud: Alan Sutton 1990), p. 4.

¹⁶ Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), in *SE*, IV & V, ix-629 (p. 594). Hereafter,

light, and to what Carpenter described in 1855 as the result of a process that ‘most men are occasionally conscious of’, that of ‘trying to recollect some name, phrase, occurrence, &c., ... and, after vainly employing all the expedients we can think-of ... have abandoned the attempt as useless’, whereupon:

It will often occur spontaneously a little while afterwards, suddenly flashing (as it were) before the consciousness; and this although the mind has been engrossed in the mean time by some entirely-different subject of contemplation, and cannot detect any link of association whereby the result has been obtained, notwithstanding that the whole train of thought which has passed through the mind in the interval may be most distinctly remembered.¹⁷

In Freudian theory, it is often the case that speech is simultaneous with the arrival of an idea from the depths of the psyche into consciousness, hence the importance of what in his early writings Freud referred to as ‘the cathartic method’ (*Studies on Hysteria*, p. 286). Speech signals the release of the idea’s affect, or energy, which in Mrs Lecount also manifests itself in her compulsion to sit up in bed and clap her hands. It is useful to remember that Freud’s work is often just as much an attempt to explain the phenomena of thought as were the writings of the nineteenth-century associationists.

The work of Hamilton provides a useful link with Freudian theory, which, in its central concepts of dream-interpretation and the diagnosis and cure of neurosis, is essentially the search for the hidden links in the chain of association. The law of association by contiguity, or simultaneity, a law (as we have seen in Abercrombie’s definition)¹⁸ by which association was primarily defined in the nineteenth century,¹⁹ was the key in psychoanalysis to the formation of symptoms. These were often determined by an incidental factor present at the moment when

Interpretation.

¹⁷ William Benjamin Carpenter, *Principles of Human Physiology: With their Chief Applications to Psychology, Pathology, Therapeutics, Hygiène, and Forensic Medicine*, 5th edn (London: John Churchill, 1855), pp. 607-08. Hereafter, *Human Physiology*, 5th edn. This description is repeated in almost exactly the same terms in Carpenter’s lecture of 1868 (‘On the Unconscious Activity’, p. 343) and his *Principles of Mental Physiology: With their Applications to the Training and Discipline of the Mind, and the Study of its Morbid Conditions* (1874), 4th edn (Henry S. King & Co, 1876), p. 519. Hereafter, *Mental Physiology*.

¹⁸ ‘Two or more facts or conceptions, which have been contemplated together, or in immediate succession, become so connected in the mind, that one of them at a future time recalls the others’ (Abercrombie, *Intellectual Powers*, p. 102).

Freud describes association primarily by the law of contiguity in *The Interpretation of Dreams*: ‘Our perceptions are linked with one another in our memory – first and foremost according to simultaneity of occurrence. We speak of this fact as “association”’ (*Interpretation*, p. 539).

¹⁹ Hamilton describes the laws, including the law of contiguity/simultaneity, that determined which ideas were associated: ‘It has been established, that thoughts are associated, that is, are able to excite each other; - 1°, If coexistent, or immediately successive, in time; 2°, If their objects are conterminous or adjoining in space; 3°, If they hold the dependence to each other of cause and effect, or of mean and end, or of whole and part; 4°, If they stand in a relation either of contrast or of similarity; 5°, If they are the operations of the same power, or of different powers conversant about the same object; 6°, If their objects are the sign and the signified; or 7°, Even if their objects are accidentally denoted by the same sound’. Interestingly, he continues, ‘Aristotle recalled the laws of this connection to ... three, - Contiguity in time and space, Resemblance, and Contrariety’ (*Lectures*, II, 231). It seems that Contiguity has always been, therefore, a primary condition of association.

the affect, which functions as the symptom's source of power, took root in the patient.²⁰ It is by finding the hidden pathogenic idea, often by tracing it along a chain of associations, that the patient is cured. In the early years of psychoanalysis, Freud used the pressure of his hand on the patient's forehead (a technique abandoned as this physical contact was deemed unnecessary for the process) to call forth an idea from the patient. His description of this technique, in *Studies on Hysteria*, is telling in his use of terms which are taken from the heart of nineteenth-century associationism:

What emerges under the pressure of my hand is not always a 'forgotten' recollection; it is only in the rarest cases that the actual pathogenic recollections lie so easily to hand on the surface. It is much more frequent for an idea to emerge which is an intermediate link in the chain of associations between the idea from which we start and the pathogenic idea which we are in search of; or it may be an idea which forms the starting point of a new series of thoughts and recollections at the end of which the pathogenic idea will be found. ... The idea that is first provoked by the pressure may in such cases be a familiar recollection which has never been repressed. If on our way to the pathogenic idea the thread is broken off once more, it only needs a repetition of the procedure, of the pressure, to give us fresh bearings and a fresh starting-point. (*Studies on Hysteria*, pp. 271-72)

In dream symbolism the link between the manifest dream (what is dreamt) and the dream-thought (the wish behind the formation of the dream) is obscure due to the dream-work, the censorship. It is only by tracing all associations connected with the manifest dream, a method called 'free association', that an interpretation can be found. Freud describes the process:

Our procedure consists in abandoning all those purposive ideas which normally govern our reflections, in focusing our attention on a single element of the dream and in then taking note of whatever involuntary thoughts may occur to us in connection with it. We then take the next portion of the dream and repeat the process with it. We allow ourselves to be led on by our thoughts regardless of the direction in which they carry us and drift on in this way from one thing to another. But we cherish a confident belief that in the end, without any active intervention on our part, we shall arrive at the dream-thoughts from which the dream originated. (*Interpretation*, pp. 526-27)

The concept of the association of ideas, therefore, is an integral part of the theory and therapy of psychoanalysis. At all junctures it is a system that is assumed by Freud to regulate thought; it is therefore built into the structure of psychoanalysis, and employed to produce therapeutic results.

The phenomena that I have discussed in this introductory section have largely represented the marvels and benefits of associationism; my aim in this chapter is to show the

²⁰ In the *Project for a Scientific Psychology* Freud describes this process: 'Before the analysis, *A* is an excessively intense idea, which forces its way into consciousness too often, and each time gives rise to weeping. The subject does not know why he weeps at *A*; he regards it as absurd but cannot prevent it.

After the analysis, it has been discovered that there is an idea *B*, which justifiably gives rise to weeping and which justifiably recurs frequently so long as a certain complicated psychical action has not been performed against it by the subject. The effect of *B* is not absurd; it is intelligible to the subject and can even be combated by him.

B stands in a particular relation to *A*.

For there has been an occurrence which consisted of *B* + *A*. *A* was an incidental circumstance; *B* was appropriate for producing the lasting effect. The reproduction of this event in memory has now taken a form of such a kind that it is as though *A* had stepped into *B*'s place. *A* has become a substitute, a symbol for *B*' (*Project*, pp. 348-49).

intricacy of Collins's exploration of the doctrine as a whole, including, for the individual, its possible disadvantages. This exploration is not necessarily a conscious critique of the process; rather, it is often the case that Collins, like other Victorians, and like Freud, cannot separate his way of thinking about the mind from the metaphors and images inherent in associationism. What follows will be divided into three parts. The first section will examine Collins's use of factual and scientific sources in order to write his fiction. By considering a number of his novels in which he declares, in text or preface, what his research has entailed, I hope to form a picture of a writer who maintained a constant engagement with his current intellectual and cultural surroundings throughout his long career. The length of Collins's writing life in itself provides the possibility of interesting studies on the spread of psychological theories from the 1850s to the 1880s. By examining the psychological knowledge, and, consequently, the self-knowledge, of one character from each end of his career, I hope to give some idea of the growing accessibility of theories of the mind during this timespan, and Collins's awareness of this trend. In the second and third sections I will consider what Collins did with the psychological theories that he gleaned from his surroundings. In the second section I will examine the review of the associationistic model that we find in *Basil* (1852); here, as elsewhere, Collins tests this system and its effects on the individual, not all of which are beneficial under certain circumstances. In the third and final section I will consider how Collins pushes the model of associationism further, in what could be seen as a pursuit of the logical conclusions of a system that does not always function perfectly. This can result in fixed ideas, in which all paths lead to one unavoidable obsessional thought. Another by-product is the individual's constant need to associate what appears before him or her with the rest of the events in his or her life, or with an underlying narrative or hidden meaning, that may or may not exist. This leads to constant questions about the meaning of signs, and crippling worries about the link to an unseen ominous reality that a visible symptom suggests. The testing and stretching of the system that Collins undertakes reveals its pitfalls and limitations; towards the end of this chapter I will suggest that Freud, decades after Collins, viewed associationism rather less interrogatively, which may have led to a certain overestimation of what it could be expected to achieve in theory and therapy.

'Finding his materials everywhere': Basil, Mrs Farnaby and Indications of the Spread of Nineteenth-Century Psychological Knowledge

From the beginning to the end of Collins's long career his habit was to inform his reader of the extent of the research he had undertaken in order to write them, frequently locating his work under a named or unnamed authority. There is a sense in which, without factual information, 'tangible and reliable materials to work from', the writing of his fiction would not have been possible. In a note to Chapter VII of the 1854 novel *Hide and Seek*, he writes that the

very existence of the novel depended on his finding first hand information on the experiences of a deaf person:

When the idea first occurred to me of representing the character of a 'Deaf Mute' as literally as possible according to nature, I found the difficulty of getting at tangible and reliable materials to work from, much greater than I had anticipated; so much greater, indeed, that I believe my design must have been abandoned, if a lucky chance had not thrown in my way Dr Kitto's delightful little book, 'The Lost Senses'. In the first division of that work, which contains the author's interesting and touching narrative of his own sensations under the total loss of the sense of hearing, and its consequent effect on the faculties of speech, will be found my authority for most of those traits in Madonna's character which are especially and immediately connected with the deprivation from which she is represented as suffering.²¹

Almost 30 years later, in the preface to *Heart and Science: A Story of the Present Time* (1883), it is clear that Collins's need to be factually correct and to authenticate his work by citing his sources, has not changed. There seems, further, to be an added element to his usual claims of accuracy to life – an indication where steps might be taken in order to further scientific research. The novel considers the case of Carmina, a girl with hysterical catalepsy, and the search for a cure which entails a debate on the merits of vivisection (Collins lists his eminent correspondents on the subject (*Heart and Science*, p. 3)) versus a non-physiological approach to the patient's symptoms, discovered by the protagonist, Ovid Vere. In section II of his Preface – 'To Readers in Particular,' addressed to those who 'habitually anticipate inexcusable ignorance where the course of the story happens to turn on matters of fact' (p. 3), he writes about the parts of the novel devoted to psychology:

Again: a supposed discovery in connection with brain disease, which occupies a place of importance, is not (as you may suspect) the fantastic product of the author's imagination. Finding his materials everywhere, he has even contrived to make use of Professor Ferrier – writing on the 'Localisation of Cerebral Disease', and closing a confession of the present result of post-mortem examination of brains in these words: 'We cannot even be sure, whether many of the changes discovered are the cause or the result of the Disease, or whether the two are the conjoint results of a common cause.' Plenty of elbow room here for the spirit of discovery. (pp. 3-4)

Catherine Peters's assessment of Collins's research was that 'his conclusion was correct. The secrets of mental processes were not being unlocked in the laboratory, but in the observations of Charcot and his followers. Freud published his first paper on hysteria in 1888, the year before Wilkie died' (Peters, p. 401). This is a rather simplistic assessment. Charcot's later theories were based on his earlier laboratory work; indeed, in his *Lectures on the Localisation of Cerebral and Spinal Diseases*, published in England in the same year as *Heart and Science*, he speaks of his indebtedness to the vivisectionist David Ferrier.²² It was Ferrier's case of 1882, in which he was charged with cruelty and acquitted, which acted, as Peters testifies, as an

²¹ Wilkie Collins, *Hide and Seek* (1854), ed. by Catherine Peters (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 431.

²² See J. M. Charcot, *Lectures on the Localisation of Cerebral and Spinal Diseases*, trans. and ed. by W. Baugh Hadden (London: New Sydenham Society, 1883), pp. 9-10, 12, 13.

inspiration for *Heart and Science*.²³ The writing of this 'Story of the Present Time' so excited Collins that (as he wrote to William Winter) 'I went on writing week after week, without a day's interval of rest' (cited in Peters, p. 401). This may have indicated a belief that he was touching on a subject that was no longer confined to the realm of mystery, that was, increasingly, knowable, definable, and available to those who approached it, however tentatively, in 'the spirit of discovery'. Mistaken or not, Collins now believed that the secrets of the mind's symptoms and phenomena were becoming accessible; that what are described in *Basil* as 'the workings of the hidden life within us which we may experience but cannot explain',²⁴ were now within the reach of knowledge for ordinary people. Around this time there perhaps seemed to him to be a fulfilment of the prediction that Henry Morley made in 1852 in *Household Words*, the journal to which Collins made frequent contributions and on which he was for some time a member of staff. In an article entitled 'New Discoveries in Ghosts', the medically-trained Morley wrote of his belief that regarding many seemingly supernatural phenomena, 'new explanations are at hand which will reduce into a natural and credible position many other tales by which we have till recently been puzzled'.²⁵

The dream, filled with the possibility of portent or the yielding of a meaning inaccessible to waking life, was one such phenomenon. If we consider the contrasting interpretations of their dreams attempted by the dreamers in two of Collins's novels, separated by almost three decades - *Basil* (published in the same year as Morley's article) and *The Fallen Leaves* (1879) - we can gauge something of the extent of the spread of psychological knowledge and consequently self-knowledge, during this time. In the later novel, *The Fallen Leaves*, we come across a discussion of a dream that is interesting both in its significance and, conversely, its relative unimportance within the text and the plot. It is all the more noteworthy, as the novel is less a study in psychological than political phenomena (the concept of Christian Socialism). Mrs Farnaby has lost a child many years ago, and is obsessed with finding her. The young Amelius Goldenheart stumbles into her house and, in his account of the inhabitants of the Christian Socialist community in which he lives, awakens certain barely buried associations within her, and renews the hopes, which are never far from her consciousness, that her lost child may be found. The following night she has a vivid dream, repeated three times, about Goldenheart, in which he brings her daughter home. She tells him: 'I was in a room that was quite strange to me; and the door opened, and you came in leading a young girl by the hand. You said, "Be happy at last; here she is." My heart knew her instantly, though my eyes had never seen her since the first days of her life.'²⁶ In *Basil*, the protagonist undergoes a similar dreaming experience after the day in which he meets Margaret Sherwin for the first time. This encounter inspires a powerful attraction which overwhelms his intellectual faculties, to the

²³ And whether, in agreeing with Freud, Collins is therefore 'correct' (Peters, p. 401) is also a moot point.

²⁴ Wilkie Collins, *Basil* (1852), ed. by Dorothy Goldman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 29.

²⁵ 'New Discoveries in Ghosts', *Household Words* 4 (17 Jan 1852), 403-06 (p. 406).

²⁶ Wilkie Collins, *The Fallen Leaves* (1879) (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1994), p. 69.

extent that he writes of its ‘deteriorating ... effect on the exercise of my mental powers, and on my candour and sense of duty in my intercourse with home’ (*Basil*, p. 42). He experiences a dream which he records in minute detail; a dream of two women, one light, redemptive, pure, a representation of his virtuous sister Clara, his main tie with home, the other dark and sensuous, who leads Basil into the dark woods, ‘my blood burning and my breath failing me’ (p. 46), and in whose arms he forgets the light woman. In the original 1852 version, in a passage omitted in editions of the novel from 1862, Basil creates a supernatural context to this dream, a suggestion of fatality in its representation of his close relationship with Margaret, by conjecturing, in the midst of his description of her boarding of the omnibus, about the possibility that ‘invisible, inexplicable influences, constantly interchanged between us [are] earthly foretastes of that perfect spiritual communion which we are to enjoy in another world’.²⁷ Further to implying a communion in the life to come, Basil then speculates on a connection between himself and Margaret which was created before either of them were born to the present life:

It seemed as if I must have known her in some former state of being – as if I had died for her, or she for me, after living *for* each other and *with* each other in some past world; and that we were now revived and reunited again, for a new life in a new earth. But ... I cannot describe to others, except by phrases which must read like meaningless rhapsody, the mysterious attraction which drew me to her, heart and soul, the moment she appeared before my eyes.²⁸

In excising these passages on supernatural attraction, Collins diminishes Basil’s naïveté in his reading of his own dream (which is considerable, even without them), and in so doing he foregrounds more strongly the possibility of the workings of a latent faculty within him of which he is unaware.²⁹ Either side of this dream, which is striking in its sensuality (‘Her lips

²⁷ Wilkie Collins, *Basil: A Story of Modern Life* (London: James Blackwood, 1856), p. 26.

²⁸ Wilkie Collins, *Basil* (1856), p. 27.

²⁹ This foregrounding manages to do Collins more good, intellectually, than Basil. Part of Collins’s motive for the later omission of this passage was possibly a reluctance to align himself with, by 1862 a rather quaint privileging of supernaturalism over psychology. This reluctance he presumably feels despite what Jenny Bourne Taylor describes as an ambiguous relationship between narrator and author: ‘it is never clear exactly *where* narrative authority resides, nor how the figure or the text should finally be read.’ (*Secret Theatre*, p. 74). The deleting of this passage in 1862 at least gives *some* idea of how it should be read, how the author prizes his accuracy in the portrayal of psychological motives and mechanisms according to current theories. In the same year as *Basil* was written, Collins had contributed a series of articles to *The Leader* entitled *Magnetic Evenings at Home* in which he took a similar wondering, speculative tone to Basil on the mind’s unexplained processes: ‘Here was some strange influence working on the intellectual faculties, the nerves, and the whole vital principle - the question is - *how* did it work? I cannot tell! Neither can I, nor anybody else, explain several other mysteries which every human being knows to be existing within himself. I have a thinking machine about me, commonly called a “brain” - by what process is it set working? What power, when I am asleep, when my will is entirely inactive, sets this thinking machine going, going as I cannot make it go when my will is active and I am awake? I know that I have a soul – what is it? where is it? when and how, was it breathed into the breath of my life? Is Animal Magnetism the only mystery which the medical profession, and strong-minded unbelievers in general, cannot scientifically and logically explain?’ (W. W. C., ‘Magnetic evenings at home. Letter II. – to G. H. Lewes’, *The Leader*, III (14 February 1852), 160-61 (p. 161). Collins, as Peters testifies, wanted to keep these articles anonymous (Peters, p. 109); this and his later excision of the supernatural passages in *Basil* suggest that supernaturalism was something he flirted with as an explanation of certain mental phenomena (always allowing for the possibility of a source within the subject) and then cast aside when psychological explanations became increasingly popular.

were parted with a languid smile; and she drew back the long hair, which lay over her cheeks, her neck, her bosom, while I was gazing on her' (p. 45)), there is a denial by Basil of any sexual longing. He insists before the dream that his love for Margaret is nothing but a pure feeling:

It was a pure feeling towards *her*. This is truth. If I lay on my death-bed, at the present moment, and knew that, at the Judgment Day, I should be tried by the truth or falsehood of the lines just written, I could say with my last breath: So be it; let them remain. (p. 43)

After the dream, in which he gave himself, 'heart, and soul, and body, to the woman from the dark woods', this part being especially strongly marked in his memory, Basil, failing to see that the dream held its own consummation, wonderingly questions: 'Was it a warning of coming events, foreshadowed in the wild visions of sleep? ... Why had it remained incomplete, failing to show me the visionary consequences of my visionary actions?' (p. 47). Twenty-seven years later, Mrs Farnaby would have no need to rely on such questions in seeking an interpretation of her dream. Although acknowledging a superstitious pang,³⁰ she is ready with a straightforward psychological explanation:

O, you needn't remind me that there is a rational explanation of my dream. I have read it all up, in the Encyclopaedia in the library. One of the ideas of wise men is that *we think of something, consciously or unconsciously*, in the daytime, and then reproduce it in a dream. That's my case, I daresay. When you were first introduced to me, and when I heard where you had been brought up, I thought directly that *she* might have been one among the many forlorn creatures who had drifted into your Community, and that I might find her through you. Say that thought went to my bed with me – and we have the explanation of my dream. (*The Fallen Leaves* p. 69, first emphasis mine)

'We think of something, consciously or unconsciously' – up until this time, thinking was not included in Collins's writings as one of the many things that could be done unconsciously. This phrase is an important one, as it marks Collins's explicit recognition (which is so seemingly casual here as to be unconscious (unknowing), in itself) that the mind can think on more than one level. In *Basil* there is an implicit understanding of this possibility (Basil, after all, is profoundly unconscious of the instinctive side of his personality, which, nevertheless, manifests itself in his dream) but here for the first time, in *The Fallen Leaves*, Collins commits himself explicitly to the idea of unconscious thinking by verbalizing (and in the process, defining) it.

This concept of the possibility of unconscious thought had been in circulation for many years by 1879 and was expressed explicitly by a thinker who was one of those with whom Collins corresponded (on vivisection) in order to write his 1883 novel, *Heart and Science*. Frances Power Cobbe,³¹ in an article printed in *Macmillan's Magazine* in 1870, wrote:

³⁰ This pang is presented more as a forced acceptance of the possibility of what faith connected with the divine guidance that might be afforded to the Christian Amelius might achieve, rather than what a mystic fatalism could do (*The Fallen Leaves*, pp. 68-69).

³¹ In his Preface to the novel, he writes of 'the assistance rendered to me by Miss Frances Power Cobbe' in his research on vivisection, one of the story's main themes. (*Heart and Science*, p. 3).

We have got Memory, Fancy, Understanding, at all events, as faculties exercised in full by the Unconscious Brain. Now it is obvious that it would be an unusual definition of the word 'Thought' which should debar us from applying it to the above phenomena; or compel us to say that we can remember, fancy, and understand without 'thinking' of the things remembered, fancied, or understood.³²

The title of Cobbe's article was 'Unconscious Cerebration: A Psychological Study'. Akin to Hamilton's idea of 'latent mental modification', 'Unconscious Cerebration', a term which in its basic meaning could be defined as 'unconscious thinking', had been coined by William Benjamin Carpenter as early as 1853, in the fourth edition of his immensely popular *Principles of Human Physiology*.³³ The rest of this section will serve as an attempt to trace something of the emergence and spread of this concept within the psychological literature that was current in different stages of Collins's career, to explore the processes of dissemination that led to its casual mention in *The Fallen Leaves*. This will serve two main purposes; the first is to emphasize the range of literature, its generic breadth increasing over the decades from the beginning to the end of his career, that may have informed the fundamentally connected ideas on association and the mind's latent processes expressed in Collins's novels. The second purpose is to emphasize the wide understanding of the concept and the processes of unconscious cerebration in Victorian England many years before Freud. The Victorian idea of unconscious cerebration, it must be remembered, lacks the potential for almost total repression that is essential in the Freudian 'Unconscious' (denoted by a noun); however, I hope to show that the same phenomena were often cited by both the Victorians and Freud to prove the existence of unconscious mental processes, and that these processes operated according to a number of the same laws and rules, the rules of association not being the least of these. Collins, an interested Victorian, imbibing his culture's ideas, understandably and unavoidably produced literature that sometimes expressed certain theories and psychological models that Freud would later, unwittingly, take up.

The term 'Unconscious Cerebration', denoting a concept which would be directly alluded to in 1879 by Collins's Mrs Farnaby, was first used by W. B. Carpenter in 1853 to help define such phenomena as the following:

Most persons who attend to their own mental operations, are aware that when they have been occupied for some time about a particular subject, and have then transferred their attention to some other, the first, when they return to the consideration of it, may be found to present an aspect very different from that which it possessed before it was put aside; notwithstanding that the mind has since been so completely engrossed with the second subject, as not to have been consciously directed towards the first in the interval ... a development which cannot be reasonably explained in any other mode, than by attributing it to the intermediate activity of the Cerebrum, which has in this instance automatically evolved the result without our consciousness. Strange as this phenomenon may at first sight appear, it is found, when carefully considered, to be in complete harmony with all that has been affirmed ... respecting the relation of the Cerebrum to the Sensorium, and the independent action of the former; and looking at all those

³² 'Unconscious Cerebration: A Psychological Study', *Macmillan's Magazine*, 23 (November 1870), 24-37 (p. 35).

³³ Previous commentators, such as Jenny Bourne Taylor and Sally Shuttleworth, have mistakenly cited the 5th edition of 1855 as containing the first appearance of this phrase. See *Embodied Selves*, p. 393.

automatic operations by which results are evolved without any intentional direction of the Mind to them, in the light of 'reflex actions' of the Cerebrum, there is no more difficulty in comprehending that such reflex actions may proceed without our knowledge, so as to evolve *intellectual products* when their results are transmitted to the Sensorium and are thus impressed on our consciousness, than there is in understanding that impressions may excite muscular movements, through the 'reflex' power of the Spinal Cord, without the necessary intervention of Sensation.

Carpenter continues, 'it is difficult to find an appropriate term for this class of operations. They can scarcely be designated as Reasoning Processes, since "unconscious reasoning" is a contradiction in terms. The designation *Unconscious Cerebration* is perhaps less objectionable than any other.'³⁴ Carpenter was castigated for this passage by Sir William Hamilton's³⁵ disciple, Thomas Laycock, for not acknowledging his origination of the idea of 'reflex function of the brain', which, Laycock argued, was identical with 'unconscious cerebration'.³⁶ Laycock's idea, again unacknowledged, was something that Freud would also unwittingly use as a basis for his own work. Decades later, he would acknowledge the importance of the application of the principle of reflex action in all mental processes: 'the psychical apparatus must be constructed like a reflex apparatus. Reflex processes remain the model of every psychical function' (*Interpretation*, p. 538). The above passage by Carpenter would almost certainly have been known to Collins, by 1868 at least, as it is from this chapter in this edition of *Principles of Human Physiology* that Jennings takes one of the passages that persuades Franklin Blake to undergo the reconstructive experiment in *The Moonstone*.³⁷ The

³⁴ William Benjamin Carpenter, *Principles of Human Physiology: With their Chief Applications to Psychology, Pathology, Therapeutics, Hygiène, and Forensic Medicine*, 4th edn (London: John Churchill, 1853), pp. 818-19. Hereafter, *Human Physiology*, 4th edn. T. H. Huxley testified to the popularity of this work, 'the "Principles of Human Physiology" not only played a leading part in the scientific education of successive generations of medical practitioners, but was widely read by the public at large', cited in J. Estlin Carpenter, 'Introductory Memoir', in *Nature and Man*, p. 67.

³⁵ Hamilton, whose *Lectures on Metaphysics* were given from 1836, had conceived of latent mental modification before Carpenter coined the term 'unconscious cerebration'.

³⁶ Laycock, in the appendix to his 1860 work *Mind and Brain*, writes that Carpenter's claim, made in the preface to the 5th edition of *Human Physiology* of priority to this idea, 'is wholly unfounded; for the law was discovered and applied by Dr Laycock to mental physiology and pathology more than twenty years ago, under the term "reflex function of the brain," and twelve years before Dr Carpenter knew anything of it whatever. "Unconscious cerebration" is in fact only another phrase to designate reflex cerebral function' (Thomas Laycock, *Mind and Brain: or, The Correlations of Consciousness and Organisation; with their Applications to Philosophy, Zoology, Physiology, Mental Pathology, and the Practice of Medicine*, 2 vols (Edinburgh: Sutherland and Knox, 1860), II, 466). Carpenter replied by asserting that Laycock did not make it clear enough that the reflex action was unconscious (*Mental Physiology*, 4th edn, p. 516 n.). That Laycock picks out the passage (identical to that in the 5th edition of *Human Physiology*), from which I have quoted above, to cite as evidence of Carpenter's plagiarism is interesting. Laycock's most famous treatise of 1844, 'On the Reflex Function of the Brain' does not contain anything so accessible as Carpenter's anecdotal example, and it is indeed difficult to see how reflex function bears on everyday human existence; the examples that Laycock gives tend to be from the asylum, and he does not always explain exactly why he is giving them. Carpenter had a style which was described by an admirer in the following terms, 'he had the double gift of both selecting what was significant and of emphasizing its significance in connection with general principles. Whatever he took into his mind was digested and assimilated there into perfect clearness; and I suppose few scientific writers have ever so distinctly known what they meant, or expounded it with such precision, or with such a wealth of apt illustration' (Mr. Thiselton-Dyer, cited in J. Estlin Carpenter, 'Introductory Memoir', in *Nature and Man*, pp. 68-69). It was this that made his voice heard over Laycock's, and also ensured him such a wide readership.

³⁷ Wilkie Collins, *The Moonstone* (1868), ed. by J. I. M. Stewart (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966), p. 440.

phenomenon for which Carpenter needs to find a label, however, is of greater interest to us, as it was repeated again and again throughout the psychological literature that was current to Collins, and eventually found its way into the early writings of Freud. Cobbe describes it, twenty-five years later, thus:

Another and more important phase of unconscious cerebration, is that wherein we find our mental work of any kind, a calculation, an essay, a tale, a composition of music, painting, or sculpture, arrange itself in order during an interval either of sleep or wakefulness, during which we had not consciously thought of it at all. Probably no one has ever written on a subject a little complicated, or otherwise endeavoured to think out a matter any way obscure, without perceiving next day that the thing has somehow taken a new form in his mind since he laid down his pen or his pencil after his first effort ... I have said that this work is done for us either asleep or awake, but it seems to be accomplished most perfectly in the former state, when our unconsciousness of it is most complete. ('Unconscious Cerebration', p. 25)

The phenomenon of the day's work, or thoughts, being carried on into the night's dreams, an event which Mrs Farnaby has self-professedly experienced at first-hand, was later described by Carpenter in 1874, in his *Principles of Mental Physiology*:

The chief peculiarity of the state of *dreaming* appears to be, that there is an *entire* suspension of volitional control over the current of thought, which flows-on automatically, sometimes in a uniform, coherent order, but more commonly in a strangely incongruous sequence. The former is most likely to occur, when the mind simply takes-up the train of thought on which it had been engaged during the waking-hours, not long previously; and it may even happen that, in consequence of the freedom from distraction resulting from the suspension of external influences, the reasoning processes may thus be carried-on during sleep with unusual vigour and success, and the imagination may develop new and harmonious forms of beauty. (*Mental Physiology*, p. 584)

Twenty five years later Freud would elaborate on this same process in *The Interpretation of Dreams* in a description, notably in terms taken from the heart of nineteenth-century associationism, that seems to combine Carpenter's account of intellectual activity in sleep with the idea of unconscious thoughts leading to dreams which Mrs Farnaby speaks of:

The most complicated achievements of thought are possible without the assistance of consciousness – a fact which we could not fail to learn in any case from every psycho-analysis of a patient suffering from hysteria or from obsessional ideas. These dream-thoughts are certainly not in themselves inadmissible to consciousness; there may have been a number of reasons for their not having become conscious to us during the day. Becoming conscious is connected with the application of a particular psychical function, that of attention – a function which, as it seems, is only available in a specific quantity ... Now it seems that the train of thought which has thus been initiated and dropped can continue to spin itself out without attention being turned to it again, unless at some point or other it reaches a specially high degree of intensity which forces attention to it. Thus, if a train of thought is initially rejected (consciously, perhaps) by a judgement that it is wrong or that it is useless for the immediate intellectual purposes in view, the result may be that this train of thought will proceed, unobserved by consciousness, until the onset of sleep. (*Interpretation*, p. 593)³⁸

A phenomenon first described as an example of the workings of 'unconscious cerebration' in

³⁸ He continues, 'we describe a train of thought such as this as preconscious' (*Interpretation*, p. 593-94).

1853, then, finds more and more eloquent expression as the nineteenth century progresses. Freud's words here therefore act very much as a logical development (as they follow on from the writings of 1870 and then 1874 that I have traced), of Carpenter's 1853 description of thought that is possible without consciousness. Freud adds detail of description to these earlier accounts that entirely fits with them, and actually becomes useful for interpreting the dreaming behaviour of Basil and Mrs Farnaby. Basil, therefore, whose sexual passions have been aroused but who dare not admit to himself that he has developed an illicit attachment according to the habit of his older brother Ralph, to whom he feels superior in this regard, is not aware of the logical psychological conclusion of the meeting with Margaret; this appears to him for the first time in his dream. Mrs Farnaby, after so many years at the point where she understands that a natural completion of her train of thought – the fantasy of a reunion with her child – only causes pain and frustration, will have stopped short of imagining this consciously during the day. The difference between them is that Basil is unaware of the process that has occurred within him, and Mrs Farnaby, from her viewpoint towards the latter part of 'the weary old nineteenth century' (*Heart and Science*, p. 5), possesses a self-knowledge which has been gained because of a certain advantage she possesses over Basil. This advantage is simply her perusal of 'the Encyclopaedia in the Library'. Her casual mention of this communicates much about the accessibility of psychological knowledge by the 1870s.³⁹

From Collins's Preface to *Heart and Science* we glean much information about his own means and methods of research. In addition to his acquaintance with thinkers who informed him about current scientific debates,⁴⁰ he also, he informs us, looks to more commonplace sources of information:

On becoming acquainted with 'Mrs Galilee', you will find her talking – and you will sometimes even find the author talking – of scientific subjects in general. You will naturally conclude that it is 'all gross caricature'. No; it is all promiscuous reading. Let me spare you a long list of books consulted, and of newspapers and magazines mutilated for 'cuttings' – and appeal to examples once more, and for the last time.

When 'Mrs Galilee' wonders whether 'Carmina has ever heard of the Diathermancy of Ebonite', she is thinking of proceedings at a conversazione in honour of Professor Helmholtz (reported in the 'Times' of April 12, 1881) ... Again: when she contemplates taking part in a discussion on Matter, she has been slyly looking into Chambers's Encyclopaedia, and has there discovered the interesting conditions on which she can 'dispense with the idea of atoms'. (*Heart and Science*, p. 4)⁴¹

It would be a mistake to view mid-Victorian journals and encyclopaedias on certain

³⁹ *Heart and Science* is set in 1872.

⁴⁰ In *In the Secret Theatre of Home*, Jenny Bourne Taylor gives a picture of the circle in which Collins moved: 'Dickens (the close friend of Conolly and Elliotson, involved in mesmerism as well as the criminal and lunacy reform), Reade (also involved with lunacy reform, though not in the same way as Dickens), Bulwer-Lytton, Edward Pigott, George Eliot, G.H. Lewes, and Herbert Spencer were all friends or acquaintances, and this list is not exhaustive.' (p. 29)

⁴¹ In the concluding paragraph to his Preface, Collins writes, 'Past experience has shown me that you have a sharp eye for slips of the pen, and that you thoroughly enjoy convicting a novelist, by post, of having made a mistake' (*Heart and Science*, p. 4). It seems that to an extent Collins's promiscuous reading was undertaken in order to keep up with his well-informed public.

psychological subjects as vastly inferior to the scientific manuals that were also published at the time. In the rest of this section I will try to explain why this is by focussing on the subject of Mrs Farnaby's research into the continuation of waking trains of thought in the dreaming process. This phenomenon, constantly used in the mid-Victorian period as an example of the association of ideas, was also, as we have seen, cited as evidence of the mind's latent processes. In investigating something of its widespread dissemination, it will be possible to gain a picture of the way in which Collins's intellectual context abounded with certain constantly-repeated anecdotes (that even extended later into Freud's writings), which were recounted in order to demonstrate the workings of an associationistic model of mental processes. These anecdotes could be seen to have set something of a stylistic pattern which Collins's writings, or certain incidents within them (such as the phenomena of thought experienced by Faulkner and Mrs Lecount), continued.

Mrs Farnaby's 'Encyclopaedia in the Library' was likely (especially as we know it was this volume which Collins consulted for *Heart and Science*), to have been *Chambers's Encyclopædia*, which bore the subtitle *A Dictionary of Universal Knowledge for the People*. There were two mid-Victorian editions of this work, one issued in 1860-68, and the other in 1874. The entries of both, under the heading 'Dreaming', are identical.⁴² Further to being identical with each other, however, in many sections they show heavy borrowing, in phraseology and structure, from W. B. Carpenter's 1847 entry on 'Sleep' in *The Cyclopædia of Anatomy and Physiology*.⁴³ In this sense there is very little change in the information which was available from 1847 to 1874; what had changed was its accessibility by its inclusion in a 'Dictionary of Universal Knowledge' rather than in more specialized medical works such as the *Cyclopædia*. In the opening paragraph of *Chambers's* entry the main characteristics of dreaming are described:

The chief feature of this state is 'an entire *absence of voluntary control* over the current of thought, so that the principle of *suggestion* - one thought calling up another, according to the laws of association - has unlimited operation.' We seem to perform all the actions of life; we experience every kind of mental emotion, and sometimes our reasoning processes are remarkably clear and complete. Thus, when the mind, during sleep, takes up a train of thought on which it had been previously engaged during the preceding waking hours, intellectual efforts may be made during sleep which would be impossible in the waking state. Such cases, however, are not common. To name two instances (quoted by Dr Carpenter in his essay on Sleep in the *Cyclopædia of Anatomy and Physiology*): Condorcet saw, in his dreams, the

⁴² *Chambers's Encyclopædia: A Dictionary of Universal Knowledge for the People. On the Basis of the Latest Edition of the German Conversations Lexicon Illustrated by Wood Engravings and Maps*, 10 vols (London: W. & R. Chambers, 1860-1868), III, 666-68, and *Chambers's Encyclopædia: A Dictionary of Universal Knowledge for the People, Illustrated with Maps and Numerous Wood Engravings, Revised Edition* 10 vols (London: W. and R. Chambers, 1874), III, 666-68.

⁴³ W. B. Carpenter, 'Sleep', in *The Cyclopædia of Anatomy and Physiology*, ed. by Robert B. Todd, 5 vols (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, & Roberts, 1835-1859), IV (1847-49), 677-97. These similarities are too many to list; here just one or two instances will be given. Both entries speak of an 'absence of consciousness of external things', that there is in dreaming an amount 'of mental activity, of which we are more or less distinctly conscious at the time' (*Cyclopædia*, p. 687, *Chambers's*, p. 666); that generally in dreams 'all probabilities, and even possibilities of "time, place, and circumstance" are violated' (*Cyclopædia*, p. 688, *Chambers's*, p. 666); much more of what Carpenter has written is recognizably paraphrased in *Chambers's* rather than copied verbatim.

final steps of a difficult calculation which had puzzled him during the day; and Condillac states that, when engaged with his *Cours d'Etude*, he frequently developed and finished a subject in his dreams which he had broken off before retiring to rest. (*Chambers's Encyclopædia*, p. 666)

Mrs Farnaby's cogitations were, of course, perfectly possible during her waking state, and in dreaming she did not perform any marvellous feats of intellect such as are described in *Chambers's Encyclopædia*. She herself presents her experience as a commonplace one, but it is still the case that the same principle applies to Condillac and Mrs Farnaby; in the cases of both they developed and concluded trains of thought that had been 'broken off' (at least, as far as consciousness is concerned) during waking hours. In demonstrating the possibilities of creation within sleep, which could be seen as a step onward from the conclusion of thought processes in a dream, *Chambers's* cites two examples: Coleridge's composition of *Kubla Khan*, which was inspired by a line of a work which he was reading before falling asleep, and Tartini's conception of the *Devil's Sonata*, written after a dream in which the devil played the violin with marvellous skill. In both cases the dreamers woke and were spurred into action; Coleridge 'on awakening ... had so distinct a remembrance of the whole, that he seized his pen and wrote down the lines that are still preserved' (p. 666). For the dreamers in *Basil* and *The Fallen Leaves* the effects on their waking lives were no less tangible. Basil, spurred on by the 'love-images which that dream had set up ... for the worship of the senses' (*Basil*, p. 47), determines to win Margaret that day and so seals his fate; Mrs Farnaby describes to Amelius how her dream has affected her, saying, 'it has encouraged me to take you into my confidence, and ask you to help me' (*The Fallen Leaves*, p. 69), a request which leads to the tracing of her daughter.

Victorian psychological texts such as the entry in *Chambers's* commonly used stories which demonstrated the extreme of whichever process they were discussing. These theories, in turn, had been largely conceived in response to such anecdotal phenomena, or their more everyday versions arising from the same basic principle, as we have seen in Carpenter's coining of the term 'Unconscious Cerebration', when faced with a certain common psychological occurrence. Hence such stories were endlessly circulated within Collins's cultural context, regardless of any boundaries between book, journal or encyclopaedia. In fact, it was sometimes the case that each publication, of whatever kind, fed the next. As the entry in *Chambers's* indicates in its citation of an earlier essay by Carpenter, it was by no means the first (or indeed the last) publication to use the examples of Condorcet, Condillac, Coleridge and Tartini. Carpenter, in his 1847 entry in *The Cyclopædia of Anatomy and Physiology* recounts these stories, all of which, excepting that about Tartini, go on to appear in an 1851 article on 'Dreams' by Dr. Thomas Stone in *Household Words*,⁴⁴ a piece for which the writer was castigated by Dickens who thought it should be 'a little less recapitulative of the usual stories in the books'. Stone defended himself by saying that he had used well-trodden anecdotal sources only, for

⁴⁴ Dr. Thomas Stone, 'Dreams', *Household Words*, 2 (8 March 1851), 566-72 (p. 569).

reasons of authenticity.⁴⁵ Nineteen years later, Frances Power Cobbe's 1870 article on 'Unconscious Cerebration' would use all but the Tartini story to exemplify a sort of mental somnambulism 'in the realm of pure imagination', the physical counterpart of which was 'an unmistakable form of unconscious cerebration' ('Unconscious Cerebration', p. 30). Carpenter's 1874 *Principles of Mental Physiology*, a volume which quoted extensively from Cobbe's article, and like his 1855 *Principles of Human Physiology*, made use of anecdotal material published in *Household Words*,⁴⁶ recapitulated all of the four famous anecdotes (*Mental Physiology*, p. 584 n.) in a section on 'Sleep, Dreaming and Somnambulism' which in some parts was only a lightly rewritten version of his *Cyclopædia* essay.⁴⁷

In 1900, Freud wrote that 'the establishment of unconscious psychological reality' by psychoanalysis meant that now 'some of the activities whose successful performance in dreams excited astonishment are now no longer to be attributed to dreams but to unconscious thinking, which is active during the day no less than at night':

If a dream carries on the activities of the day and completes them and even brings valuable fresh ideas to light, all we need to do is to strip it of the dream disguise, which is the product of dream-work and the mark of assistance rendered by obscure forces from the depths of the mind (cf. the Devil in Tartini's sonata dream); the intellectual achievement is due to the same mental forces which produce every similar result during the daytime. We are probably inclined greatly to over-estimate the conscious character of intellectual and artistic production as well. Accounts given us by some of the most highly productive

⁴⁵ Cited in Anne Lohrli, *Household Words: 1850-59. Table of Contents, List of Contributors, and their Contributions* (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1973), p. 440.

⁴⁶ In the 1855 edition of *Principles of Human Physiology* Carpenter recounts a story told by Harriet Martineau about an idiot whose mother had died before he was two, 'and who could not have subsequently been made cognizant of anything relating to her; and who yet, when dying at the age of thirty, "suddenly turned his head, looked bright and sensible, and exclaimed in a tone never heard from him before, "Oh, my mother! how beautiful!" and sunk round again - dead' (p. 601 n.). This story is repeated in the 1874 edition of *Principles of Mental Physiology* (p. 431).

⁴⁷ Carpenter's 1847 essay, of course, relied on sources published earlier in the century, most likely *The Philosophy of Sleep* (1835) by Robert MacNish. In an alternative tracing of anecdotal evidence to the one I have explored in the body of the text, in the story of Dr. John Gregory's dreaming experience, first recorded (as far as I can tell) in Abercrombie's *Inquiries Concerning the Intellectual Powers* we see another constantly repeated example of a certain phenomenon which was later cited by Freud. In this case the anecdote is a demonstration of a 'somatic' dream (a dream inspired by the sensations of the dreamer). Abercrombie wrote, 'By the kind attention of my friend Dr. James Gregory, I have received a most interesting manuscript by his late eminent father ... In this paper, Dr. Gregory mentions of himself, that, having on one occasion, gone to bed with a vessel of hot water at his feet, he dreamt of walking up the crater of Mount Etna, and of feeling the ground warm under him ... On another occasion, he dreamt of spending a winter at Hudson's Bay, and of suffering much distress from the intense frost. He found that he had thrown off the bed-clothes in his sleep' (pp. 260-61). However, by the time the story is reprinted in Carpenter's 1847 *Cyclopaedia* entry the identity of the dreamer has changed to Dr. James Gregory himself (*Cyclopaedia*, p. 688), as it was in Dr. Stone's article in *Household Words* ('Dreams', p. 567). It seems that Stone has used Abercrombie as his source, the earlier phraseology 'gone to bed with a vessel of hot water at his feet, he dreamt of walking up the crater of Mount Etna' and 'the ground warm under him' being reproduced exactly. Carpenter's source, however, seems to be different from Stone's in this instance. The mention of the crater is gone, and the ground, instead of being simply warm, becomes 'intolerably hot' (*Cyclopaedia*, p. 688). Freud's account, taken from Robert MacNish's 1835 edition of *The Philosophy of Sleep*, shows these same changes (*Interpretation*, p. 24) and so MacNish seems to be the likely source for Carpenter. By the time the story gets to Frances Power Cobbe, it has become that of 'the lady whose hot bottle scorched her feet, and who imagined she was walking into Vesuvius' ('Unconscious Cerebration', p. 28). Having undergone these changes, the story becomes more mythical than evidential, and approaches the fictional examples of psychological phenomena that Collins creates in his fiction.

men, such as Goethe and Helmholtz, show rather that what is essential and new in their creations came to them without premeditation and as an almost ready-made whole. (*Interpretation*, p. 613)

For Freud, the 'obscure forces from the depths of the mind' which powered Tartini's composition derive from 'certain unconscious fantasies (deriving, probably, from sexual impulses)'; still, his belief that he is the first to explain such anecdotes as were circulated during the nineteenth century, or, as he terms them, 'dream-problems with which earlier writers were deeply concerned' (p. 613) in terms of an unconscious thinking, is mistaken. The unconscious cerebration described by Carpenter and Frances Power Cobbe cannot be fully likened to Freud's largely inaccessible Unconscious proper.⁴⁸ However, both concepts oppose the argument that Freud is attempting to counter in the passage in which he cites Tartini, that 'consciousness is an indispensable characteristic of what is psychical' (p. 612). Unknown to Freud, these words were prefigured by Carpenter in 1868, when he asserted that, excepting certain thinkers such as Sir William Hamilton, 'in the systems of Philosophy long prevalent in this country, *consciousness* has been almost uniformly taken as the basis of all strictly Mental activity' ('On the Unconscious Activity', p. 339).⁴⁹ Even further back, in 1859, William Hamilton himself was published as lamenting the fact that 'in Britain', notably in contrast to Germany,⁵⁰ 'succeeding philosophers have almost admitted as a self-evident truth, that there can be no modification of mind devoid of consciousness' (*Lectures* I, 362).⁵¹

⁴⁸ 'Unconscious Cerebration' was given the alternative term 'Preconscious Activity of the Soul' (see 'On the Unconscious Activity', p. 339). This is helpful, as it places the Victorian idea of unconscious mental activity nearer the Freudian Preconscious system (*Pcs.*) than the actual Unconscious (*Ucs.*).

⁴⁹ In *Principles of Mental Physiology* of 1874, Carpenter expands on his point: 'To affirm that the Cerebrum may act upon impressions transmitted to it, and may elaborate Intellectual results, such as we might have attained by the intentional direction of our minds to the subject, *without any consciousness* on our own parts, is held by many Metaphysicians, more especially in Britain, to be an altogether untenable and even a most objectionable doctrine. But this affirmation is only the Physiological expression of a doctrine which has been current among the Metaphysicians of Germany, from the time of Leibnitz to the present date, and which was systematically expounded by Sir William Hamilton, - that the Mind may undergo modifications, sometimes of very considerable importance, without being itself conscious of the process, until its *results* present themselves to the consciousness, in the new ideas, or new combinations of ideas, which the process has evolved.' (p. 515) Carpenter's mention of Germany as at the forefront of ideas about unconscious mental processes is especially interesting, as one would not gain this impression from Freud's writings.

⁵⁰ Hamilton ascribes Germany's acceptance that 'mental' does not always equal 'conscious' to its adoption of the philosophy of Leibnitz, who had been an influence on Hamilton himself: 'In Germany, the doctrine of Leibnitz was almost universally adopted. I am not aware of a philosopher of the least note, by whom it has been rejected.' (*Lectures*, I, 362) According to Henri Ellenberger, who cites Leibnitz as one of the philosophers of the unconscious before Freud, 'Leibnitz is generally credited with having coined the word "dynamic" in contradistinction to the words "static" and "cinematic". He used it in mechanics. The term was taken over and applied to psychology by Herbart'. He continues that Fechner's work also emerged from the Leibnitzian tradition. (Henri Ellenberger, *The Discovery of the Unconscious: The History and Evolution of Dynamic Psychiatry* (New York: Basic Books, 1970), p. 289). Not only did he inform the dynamic visions of two of Freud's teachers, however, Leibnitz also, according to Ellenberger 'proposed the first theory of the unconscious mind supported by purely psychological arguments' (p. 312).

⁵¹ Freud himself added a footnote to this point in 1914 which quotes the work of a writer called Du Prel, who in turn quotes Maudsley (although it is the editor, rather than Freud, who acknowledges Maudsley) as an exception to a belief in these words. Maudsley, according to the note, comments in *Psychology and Pathology of the Mind*, 1868 (first published 1867): 'It is a truth which cannot be too distinctly borne in

In their common understanding that in dreaming, as in other psychological occurrences, certain mental processes, generally inaccessible to the consciousness of the individual, come into play, Carpenter, Cobbe and Freud, by looking below the surface of consciousness, all provide, in Carpenter's words, 'the scientific elucidation of many phenomena that would otherwise remain obscure and meaningless' ('On the Unconscious Activity', p. 339). I hope I have made clear that Collins's writing, with its own consideration of unconscious processes, sought, in a small way, to add something to this process of scientific elucidation. It was primarily the phenomena and ideas that sprang from the doctrine of associationism that, for such thinkers as Carpenter, Cobbe and Hamilton, both gave rise to and continued to feed their belief that not all mental activity took place on a conscious level. Collins's work, in considering the same doctrines and ideas, provided the same conclusion. In producing the sort of fictional examples of associationism that we have encountered in Faulkner's memories, Mrs Lecount's mental detection, Basil's and Mrs Farnaby's dreams, Collins was continuing a consideration of the intricacies of this concept, and its relation to unconscious thinking, that was constantly occurring within his intellectual and cultural context.

A Mere Creature of Habit and Impulse: Basil

Basil is a young man peculiarly susceptible to experiencing the sort of phenomena of association that I have already touched on in this chapter. Late in his chronicle of the events of a year in his life, recuperating from a nervous illness, his unconsummated 'marriage' to Margaret Sherwin ruined by her infidelity with Robert Mannion, he visits her house and is confronted by a servant who asks Basil about one of a series of letters that has been sent addressed to her mistress:

Though I did not know the handwriting, still there was something in those unsteady characters which seemed familiar to me. Was it possible that I had ever seen them before? I tried to consider; but my memory was confused, my mind wearied out ... The effort was fruitless. (*Basil*, p. 223)

He returns the letter to the servant, and walks a little way:

It was very strange; but that unknown handwriting still occupied my thoughts: that wretched trifle absolutely took possession of my mind, at such a time as this; in such a position as mine was now.

I stopped wearily in the fields at a lonely spot, away from the footpath. My eyes ached at the sunlight, and I shaded them with my hand. Exactly at the same instant, the lost recollection flashed back on me so vividly that I started almost in terror. (pp. 223-24)

The realization that has come to Basil, without his willing it, is that the handwriting on the letter to Margaret is identical with that on a forgotten letter, addressed to himself, in his pocket, a

letter which, on inspection, is signed 'Robert Mannion'.⁵² Basil is unable to understand how he could not consciously have made the connection between the two letters, that he had in effect allowed Margaret to receive a letter from his rival. He asks the question, 'How had my perceptions become thus strangely blinded?' and his faculties answer for him: 'The confusion of my memory, the listless incapacity of all my faculties, answered the question but too readily, of themselves.' (p. 224) In *Basil*, Collins presents a young man who, because of the often inactive nature of his consciousness, becomes a site on which the workings of association, of what were seen in the 1850s as the lower mental faculties, are uniquely visible.

Basil's was a state of being that held great interest for commentators in and before the 1850s. This was not, in fact, because of their fascination with the phenomena of 'unconscious cerebration', but because such a state (in which the will was, in Carpenter's words of 1853, 'in abeyance' (*Human Physiology* 4th edn, p. 800)), revealed how much of our being this, the highest faculty, ordinarily controlled. On 12 March, 1852, in the same year in which *Basil* was published, W. B. Carpenter gave a lecture at the Royal Institution entitled 'On the Influence of Suggestion in Modifying and Directing Muscular Movement, Independently of Volition'. Building on an already established interest, on which he had been published several times,⁵³ he considered the role of the will in mental life, in this case its effect, or lack of it, on learned muscular movements, such as those involved in walking. He suggested that although the will, connected to the intellectual, cerebral processes, ordinarily controls the movements of such activities, if an impression made upon the nervous system is 'anywhere interrupted' in its travel upwards through the higher faculties (of sensations, ideas, emotions, intellectual processes and will) 'a "reflex" action will be the result'.⁵⁴ One such interruption may occur when the 'state of the cerebrum' is occupied, or suspended:

This the Lecturer maintained to be the true account of the mode in which the locomotive movements are maintained and guided in states of profound abstraction, when the whole attention of the individual is so

⁵² Basil does not explore why it is that his memory returns to him when he shades his eyes. I believe this may be because it acts as another example in Collins's fiction of the working of a hidden link, of which Basil, the narrator, is unaware. Basil had received the letter that has been lying forgotten in his pocket that morning, before the upsetting confrontation with his father. I would suggest that the sensation of his aching eyes acts as a reminder of the tears that he has shed, and has seen Clara shed that morning, and so carried a portion of his thoughts, of which he was unaware, back to home. Further, it may recall to him the look that his father gave him when he had made his confession of marriage to Margaret Sherwin - 'his eyes, when they met mine, had a pining, weary look, as if they had been long condemned to rest on woful and revolting objects' (p. 200). There is also a sense in which, in sheltering his eyes from the sun, Basil also recalls to memory the fact that he himself has no bodily shelter, that he has been cast from home. The conscious dwelling on the letter addressed to Margaret, combined with a preoccupation with home at a less than conscious level, has caused the sudden return of his recollection. His shock at this speaks for his ignorance of his own latent mental processes, the workings of his own mind.

⁵³ J. Estlin Carpenter lists the following articles: an article 'on Dr. Moreau's "Psychological Studies in Haschisch and on Mental Derangement"', *British and Foreign Medico-Chirurgical Review*, January 1847, 'Dr. Mayo on the Relations of Crime, Insanity, and Punishment', *British and Foreign Medico-Chirurgical Review*, July 1847, an article on Todd's "Physiology of the Nervous System", *British and Foreign Medico-Chirurgical Review*, January 1850 (*Nature and Man*, pp. 56, 57, 164).

⁵⁴ W. B. Carpenter, 'Extract of "On the Influence of Suggestion in Modifying and Directing Muscular Movement, Independently of Volition"', in *Nature and Man*, pp. 169-72 (p. 171).

completely concentrated upon his own train of thought that he does not *perceive* the objects around him, although his movements are obviously guided by the impressions which they make upon his sensorium. And he adverted to a very remarkable case, in which the functional activity of the cerebrum seemed to have been almost entirely suspended for nearly a twelvemonth, and all the actions of the individual presented the automatic characters of consensual and reflex movements. ('On the Influence', p. 171)

At times, in reading *Basil*, the autobiography charting little more than 'a twelvemonth' in the life of a young man, it may almost seem as if we are perusing the case study of the unfortunate individual to whom Carpenter refers at the end of this passage. In simply surveying his walking habits, a suspension of the intellectual activity of the cerebrum is evident. Having just met Margaret, Basil writes that, 'my ideas were in utter confusion, all my thoughts ran astray. I walked on, dreaming in full day - I had no distinct impressions, except of the stranger beauty whom I had just seen' (*Basil*, p. 32). Later in the novel, obeying a vague suspicion, he follows Margaret and Mannion to the hotel where they are to consummate their secret passion. He writes:

Still acting mechanically; still with no definite impulse that I could recognise, even if I felt it, except the instinctive resolution to follow them into the house, as I had already followed them through the street - I walked up to the door, and rang the bell. (*Basil*, p. 159)

Basil's impulses here have not reached his higher faculties. Far from 'recognis[ing]' (an intellectual activity) the motive that takes him to the door of the hotel, he cannot even feel it. The impression has remained instinctive, below the level even of sensation; it is reflex action that guides his movements. Previous to this, in the cab which follows the couple, the cabdriver offers to hail the much faster vehicle ahead. Basil 'mechanically' tells the cabman simply to follow them. He writes: 'while the words passed my lips, a strange sensation stole over me: I seemed to be speaking as the mere mouthpiece of some other voice' (p. 158). Here Basil resembles certain human automata that Carpenter described in 1853. In a useful passage about the importance of will in defining the individual as a '*free agent*' we get some sense of the root of Basil's lack of self-possession:

In the control and direction which the Will has the power of exerting over the course of the thoughts, we have the evidence of a new and independent power, which is entirely opposed in its very nature to all the automatic tendencies, and which, according as it is habitually exerted, tends to render the individual a *free agent*. And, truly, in the existence of this Power, which is capable of dominating over the very highest of those operations that we know-of as connected with corporeal states, we find a better evidence than we gain from the study of any other part of our psychical nature, that *there is* an entity, wherein Man's nobility essentially consists, which does not depend for its existence on any play of physical or vital forces, but makes these subservient to its determinations. It is, in fact, in virtue of the Will, that we are *not* mere thinking automata, mere puppets to be pulled by suggesting-strings, capable of being played-upon by every one who shall have made himself master of our springs of action. It may be freely admitted that such thinking automata *do* exist: for there are many individuals whose Will has never been called into due exercise, and who gradually almost entirely lose the power of exerting it, becoming the mere creatures of habit and impulse. (*Human Physiology*, 4th edn., p. 800)

Basil, the second son of the latest generation of 'one of the most ancient' English families

(*Basil*, p. 2), might be supposed to have been born with a degree of nobility. Collins, however, makes it clear that Basil's birthright has constituted a lack of opportunity to exercise his will, an easy situation that does not prepare him when this 'power' within him is called upon:

Thus, I entered life under the fairest auspices. Though a younger son, I knew that my father's wealth, exclusive of his landed property, secured me an independent income far beyond my wants. I had no extravagant habits; no tastes that I could not gratify as soon as formed; no cares or responsibilities of any kind. I might practise my profession or not, just as I chose. I could devote myself wholly and unreservedly to literature, knowing that, in my case, the struggle for fame could never be identical – terribly, though gloriously identical – with the struggle for bread. (*Basil*, p. 4)

In William Willis Moseley's 1838 edition of *Eleven Chapters of Nervous and Mental Complaints*, a list is given of factors that may 'cause the brain that is healthy to sink into a morbid state'.⁵⁵ Under the heading 'The absence of appropriate exercise and occupation' is the category of 'young men, whose days are entirely without the occupations of the state, church, army, navy, or business, and who find it difficult to kill their time' (Skultans, pp. 43, 44).⁵⁶ Freedom from responsibility, from occupation, makes the individual anything but Carpenter's noble 'free agent'.

Basil from the beginning proves himself the 'creature of habit and impulse' that Carpenter describes in his discussion of human automata; like these automata, though seemingly doing whatever he pleases, he is fettered into a certain pattern of action. He describes his boarding of the omnibus, after banking his father's quarterly allowance to him (itself an independent income which makes Basil anything but), as due to an 'idle impulse of the moment', something that he was in the custom of doing, having done it 'often before' as a means of 'amusement' (p. 27). Abercrombie warns of the dangers of this sort of deceptive idleness:

The mind cannot be idle, and, when it is not occupied with subjects of a useful kind, it will find a resource in those which are frivolous or hurtful, – in mere visions, waking dreams, or fictions, in which the mind,

⁵⁵ Quoted in Vieda Skultans, *Madness and Morals: Ideas on Insanity in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 1975), p. 41.

⁵⁶ Part of the morbidity inherent in this position no doubt lay in the amount of time these young men had to dwell on themselves. Michael J. Clark demonstrates in a paper detailing the history of nineteenth-century ideas on introspection that this tendency was seen by those such as Henry Maudsley as 'a *morbid egoism*', dangerous in its implications: 'Absorption in purely "subjective" states of consciousness, they argued, upset the "natural" mental balance by impairing the capacity to receive and to react to external impressions, and by withdrawing or suspending the control habitually exercised by the will and judgement over the succession of thoughts and feelings. This dethronement of reason and will in turn favoured the development of "dominant", "imperative", or obsessional ideas or trains of thought, of morbid emotional states, and of mental automatism, and thus by degrees passed over into actual mental disorder.' ("Morbid introspection", unsoundness of mind, and British psychological medicine, c.1830-c.1900', in *The Anatomy of Madness: Essays in the History of Psychiatry, Vol III, The Asylum and its Psychiatry*, ed. by W. F. Bynum, Roy Porter and Michael Shepherd, 3 vols (London: Routledge, 1988) III, 71-101 (p. 72)). The fact that Basil is a writer, who in writing his historical novel pours his 'heart's dearest sensations' and his 'mind's highest thoughts' (*Basil*, p. 41) onto the page, implicates him here, but it is his writing of the autobiography which makes up the novel would especially be seen to encourage dangerous tendencies of introspection. Ironically, this introspection does Basil no good; as I have discussed in the last section, of anyone he seems to know himself least well.

wanders from scene to scene, unrestrained by reason, probability, or truth. No habit can be more opposed to a healthy condition of the mental powers. (*Intellectual Powers*, p. 424)

Abercrombie's words, which condemn 'mere visions, waking dreams, or fictions', could in fact implicate the fiction writer, to whose vocation Basil attempts to elevate his sudden decision to board the omnibus:

It was something more than an idle impulse though. If I had at that time no other qualification for the literary career on which I was entering, I certainly had this one – an aptitude for discovering points of character in others: and its natural result, an unflinching delight in studying characters of all kinds, wherever I could meet with them. (*Basil*, p. 27).

If this intellectual attribute – the only one to recommend him as a writer – was indeed Basil's as he boarded the omnibus, it certainly leaves him on his first sighting of Margaret Sherwin. The effects of this encounter are described in a way that by-passes the higher faculties – intellect and will. Notably, the keyword in this passage is 'influence', a word that was, especially at this time, strongly linked to 'power':

Among the workings of the hidden life within us which we may experience but cannot explain, are there any more remarkable than those mysterious moral influences constantly exercised, either for attraction or repulsion, by one human being over another? In the simplest, as in the most important affairs of life, how startling, how irresistible is their power! ... How strangely and abruptly we become convinced, at a first introduction, that we shall secretly love this person and loathe that, before experience has guided us with a single fact in relation to their characters!

I have said that the two additional passengers who entered the vehicle in which I was riding, were, one of them, an elderly lady; the other, a young girl. As soon as the latter had seated herself nearly opposite to me ... I felt her influence on me directly – an influence that I cannot describe – an influence which I had never experienced in my life before, which I shall never experience again. (p. 29)

In the year in which he wrote *Basil*, Collins had already been considering issues of will and influence. In the spring of 1852 he wrote a series of articles entitled 'Magnetic Evenings at Home' in which he described a number of magnetic 'experiments' he had witnessed. In his account of these he writes of 'the sympathy between the magnetizer and the person magnetized - the limitless power of the one over the other',⁵⁷ and 'effects produced by one person standing opposite to another ... steadily exercising the whole time a strong effort of will'.⁵⁸ In these articles, power and will are linked; similarly in *Basil*. Basil, with little strength of will, is correspondingly powerless, and open to every passing influence, like the magnetized subject.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ W. W. C., 'Magnetic Evenings at Home. Letter II. - to G. H. Lewes', *The Leader*, III (14 February 1852), 160-61 (p. 161).

⁵⁸ W. W. C., 'Magnetic Evenings at Home. Letter III. - to G. H. Lewes', *The Leader*, III (21 February 1852), 183-84 (p. 184).

⁵⁹ It is worth mentioning here something about the subjects that Collins describes in his articles. Two are young women, but a man is also magnetized. This has the effect of making him laugh uproariously and then, rather unfortunately, break into an undignified and womanly fit of hysterical screaming. In all the cases of magnetism it is necessarily the case that the power is on the side of the audience and the magnetizer rather than those who in essence are making a spectacle of themselves, and the man appears more obviously than the women to be powerless, utterly lacking control of his emotional responses. It is

The effect of Margaret's influence (as, significantly, she sits 'nearly opposite' to him) is immediately to suspend Basil's intellectual activity, to take away his only asset as a writer, his 'aptitude for discovering points of character in others.' This quality the often indolent Basil⁶⁰ relinquishes in the face of the greater power of a 'mysterious moral influenc[e]', which bypasses the work of judgement and indicates, without trouble, what he should feel about those he meets. His suspension of this cerebral activity has far-reaching effects, which manifest themselves immediately:

From the time when she entered the omnibus, I have no recollection of anything more that occurred in it. I neither remember what passengers got out, or what passengers got in. My powers of observation, hitherto active enough, had now wholly deserted me. Strange! that the capricious rule of chance should sway the action of our faculties! – that a trifle should set in motion the whole complicated machinery of their exercise, and a trifle suspend it. (*Basil*, p. 30)

The beginning of this suspension of character judgement and observation is the beginning of Basil's inability to see what is before him in others, including certain hints that his downfall is approaching. Mannion later mocks him for his blindness:

'Through all that year, daily visitor as you were at North Villa, you never suspected either of us! And yet, had you been one whit less infatuated, how many warnings you might have discovered ... There were times at which every step of the way along which I was advancing was marked, faintly yet significantly, in her manner and her speech, could you only have interpreted them aright'. (pp. 247-48)

Seeing the signs, Basil fails to call up the right associations in connection with them; his examination of Margaret's features on the omnibus is symptomatic. Describing her full lips, he writes, 'to other eyes, they might have looked *too* full' (p. 30), a comment which would have set alarm bells ringing in the mind of the Victorian reader.⁶¹

His observational sense suspended, without the pressure of pecuniary worries to spur him to work, the occupation that writing had appeared to be to Basil, now reveals itself as mere amusement: 'I slowly turned over the leaves one by one, but my eye only fell mechanically on

interesting that Collins had witnessed in the reaction of this subject an example of what a man lacking his own power of will can be. In his ability to be influenced, there is a sense in which Basil's usual state is being equated with these unguarded moments in the life of a normally composed man - the magnetized subject 'had never suffered on any previous occasion' from a fit of hysterics (W. W. C., 'Magnetic Evenings at Home. Letter III. - To G. H. Lewes', pp. 183, 184).

⁶⁰ Basil left college, he relates, 'with no other reputation than a reputation for indolence and reserve' (*Basil*, p. 4); later, when describing how he should accompany Clara to evening parties more than he does, he writes: 'Sometimes I am shamed into accompanying her a little more frequently than usual; but my old indolence in these matters soon possesses me again' (p. 26).

⁶¹ An article in *Household Words*, entitled 'Faces' (X (16 September 1854), 97-101) by Edmund Ollier, expressed something of the mid-century attitude to mouths – 'It may perhaps be laid down as a general rule, that whenever one's observation is mainly, and first of all, attracted towards the lower parts of a face, that face is bad ... The mouth has its legitimate part to play, and it is a beautiful feature when well-formed; but the ethereal principle, which alone makes the human face divine, holds its chief evidence in the forehead and eyes' (pp. 100-01). Basil's portrait of his sister Clara would seem to indicate that Collins was well aware of this type of view, for in her 'The lower part of the face is rather too small for the upper' (*Basil*, p. 19).

the writing ... the fatal influence of the dark beauty remained with me still. How could I write?' (*Basil*, p. 41). In 1853, Carpenter described the willpower that is sometimes needed, in the face of a 'powerful interest' which 'tends to draw-off the attention elsewhere' to enable the scholar to continue writing:

The intellectual powers can only be kept in action upon the pre-determined subject, by a strong effort of the Will; of this effort we are conscious at the time, and feel that we need to put-forth even a greater power than that which would be required to generate a large amount of physical force through the muscular system (*Human Physiology*, 4th edn., p. 817).

This is a concentrated aspect of what Carpenter had described as 'the control and direction which the Will has the power of exerting over the course of the thoughts'; Abercrombie, in *Culture and Discipline of the Mind* (1837) writes that the individual, with the 'power' of 'mental discipline', 'can direct the thoughts to any subject' (cited in Skultans, p. 158). Without these reserves of power, developed by habit, Basil simply becomes a 'mere puppe[t] to be pulled by suggesting-strings, capable of being played-on by every one who shall have made himself master of our springs of action'; he is master neither of his mechanical muscular movements, nor his 'deteriorat[ed]' intellectual powers (*Basil*, p. 43); later he is neither master of his marital relationship nor his destiny, which, for a time, is in the hands of Mannion. In a sense, he was never master of any of these things; his actions, his education, his nuptial choice (dictated by ancestral honour), and his story should have been such as could be read in the book of family history. Consequently, he is, in Abercrombie's words on those lacking a 'well-regulated mind', 'the sport and the victim of every change that flits across the scene' (cited in Skultans, p. 157). And in this Basil is fundamentally the casualty of the system of association, which is merciless to those who cannot master it.⁶² Having no control over the direction of his thoughts, they run, without his choice, into one of two channels, towards home, or towards Margaret. Idly courting all associations, he unwittingly makes fatal, unbreakable ones. I shall

⁶² Jenny Bourne Taylor looks at *Basil* against, amongst other psychological theories, its backdrop of associationism, also arguing that Basil cannot make the right associations, which causes him to become a victim: 'Basil becomes the upper-middle-class dupe of *petit-bourgeois* sexual intrigue because his sensibility is out of line – he has no control over the codes that govern effective interpretation – and because he is unable to distinguish between different kinds of associative mechanisms' (*Secret Theatre*, p. 79). I hope to build on Bourne Taylor's outlook by focusing on specific areas of associationism in relation to *Basil*, as I have focused on his predilection to becoming, as she puts it, a 'dupe' in terms of his lack of willpower (Bourne Taylor, rather, emphasizes Basil's 'feminized' position of younger son, which leads to 'his lack of self-possession', p. 75). Although in my emphasis on Collins's use of the psychological texts and issues that surrounded him, I most nearly approach the work of Jenny Bourne Taylor of all critics, my focus, because of its need also to link to the frameworks and concepts that Freud would later adopt, is a more specific one. Whereas she keeps in frame two or three often contradictory psychological discourses (those she commonly mentions being phrenology, associationism and moral management) and discusses the way that these doctrines are interrogated, set against each other, emphasized and undercut by Collins in his novels, my frame is necessarily more limited. Because of her range, Bourne Taylor rarely has the space to engage directly and deeply with the concept of the association of ideas within Collins's work. Although she often mentions it, it is usually in partial explanation of another doctrine, or is taken as an understood underpinning of psychological thought (see for example, pp. 21, 31, 40, 55). By considering Collins's work in relation only to the doctrine of the

examine the details and implications of these two aspects of the flip-side of the marvels of association in the rest of this section.

Basil's dream of the light and dark women reflects the true dichotomy that has been created that day within his psyche, reflecting a deep recognition that he can have a true relationship with Clara, or with Margaret, but not with both. This absolute view stems from his father's exacting demands, which, on a surface, practical level, mean that he disinherits the son who has married the linen-draper's daughter, but also which have affected Basil from childhood in deeper ways. An indication of this is found in Basil's account of his father's behaviour when Basil or his brother had committed a fault in childhood:

On these occasions, we were not addressed by our Christian names; if we accidentally met him out of doors, he was sure to turn aside and avoid us; if we asked a question, it was answered in the briefest possible manner, as if we had been strangers. His whole course of conduct said, as though in so many words – You have rendered yourselves unfit to associate with your father; and he is now making you feel that unfitness as deeply as he does. We were left in this domestic purgatory for days, sometimes for weeks together. To our boyish feelings (to mine especially) there was no ignominy like it, while it lasted. (*Basil*, p. 9)

'You have rendered yourself unfit to associate with your father'; this sentiment is taken up on a psychological level later in Basil's life. On his first meeting Margaret, all homeward associations are made unavailable to him, with the consequence that he forgets that he has promised to ride with his sister, 'never had any former appointment of mine with Clara, been thus forgotten!' (p. 33). On the morning in which Basil decides to tell Margaret of his love, he leaves the house:

As I descended the steps, I glanced by accident at the dining-room window. Clara was looking after me from it ... She smiled as our eyes met – a sad, faint smile that made her look unlike herself. But it produced no impression on me then: I had no attention for anything but my approaching interview with Margaret. My life throbbed and burned within me, in that direction: it was all coldness, torpor, insensibility, in every other. (p. 53)

In contrast, occasionally when with Margaret, 'a thought of Clara put away from me all other thoughts'. The absolute nature of this associative dichotomy is reflected on all psychological levels; therefore it is no surprise to learn that, 'sometimes, in the lonely London house, I dreamed – with the strangest sleeping oblivion of my marriage ... of country rides with my sister' (p. 139-40). Basil has little control over which channel his thoughts run into. On visiting the home of which he had dreamt so longingly, he writes 'it was as if my life had run into a new channel since my last Autumn and winter at the Hall, and now refused to flow back at my bidding into its old course. Home seemed home no longer, except in name' (p. 146). When he returns to London:

After the first five minutes of my arrival, I adapted myself again to my old way of life at Mr. Sherwin's, as easily as if I had never interrupted it for a single day. Henceforth, wherever my young wife was, there,

association of ideas I aim to fill in the detail that Bourne Taylor's broad range has omitted.

and there only, would it be home for *me!* (pp. 146-47)

These opposing channels into which Basil's thoughts flow, each in use in exact proportion to which the other is disused, anticipate the mechanisms of Freud's 1895 *Project for a Scientific Psychology*. In *The Language of Psycho-Analysis*, Laplanche and Pontalis discuss Freud's depiction of the association of ideas in the *Project*. They argue that this text 'sheds light on the Freudian use of the idea of association by showing how ... the psycho-analytic discovery of the unconscious gave new meaning to those associationist assumptions upon which Freud had leaned'. They write that Freud's system was a step on from nineteenth-century associationism, and original, because in it, 'the way associations function is pictured as a circulation of energy within a "neuronal apparatus" ... At each intersection, each excitation takes one particular path in preference to another'. Facilitation, 'left by preceding excitations', is what determines which pathway is taken. This should be understood, they write, 'as a process of differential opposition: a given pathway is only facilitated in proportion as the alternative one is not'.⁶³ In reading *Basil* we encounter this sort of system, laid bare, within the individual. Basil himself is an illustration of 'differential opposition', which, far from being an original idea of Freud's in its application to the mind, was a well-known mid-century model. I have discussed the conservation of force in my Introduction and first chapter. By the early 1850s Carpenter had undertaken a large amount of work on the subject, and in 1855 discussed its simple application to the bodily system; 'it explains that relation between Emotional excitement and bodily change, which is manifested in the subsidence of the former, when it has expended itself in the production of the latter' (*Human Physiology*, 5th edn, p. 553). That Collins, as a mid-Victorian, accurately understood and thought according to the principle of the conservation of force is indicated by Basil's description of his nervous wait for an interview with his father: 'the faculties of observation are generally sharpened, in proportion as the faculties of reflection are dulled, under the influence of an absorbing suspense' (*Basil*, p. 192). This is its application on a small scale; that Collins can also conceive of its implications to the whole bodily system, in the same way that Carpenter describes above, is demonstrated by the battle of forces that Basil undergoes after his wedding. First, there is his irresistible impulse to engage in a long and strenuous horse ride immediately after the wedding, which he knows will be unconsummated for a year. Assailed by 'a wild excitement of body and mind', he writes, 'I was fit for nothing but a gallop through the rain' (*Basil*, p. 97). That this exercise lacks a calming effect for him is interesting, since it speaks for its inability to satisfy Basil in the way that his body is demanding,

⁶³ J. Laplanche and J.-B. Pontalis, *The Language of Psycho-Analysis*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (London: Karnac Books and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1988), p. 42. This principle begins to be laid out in the *Project*, pp. 298-302, but really underpins the whole system, in which it is the supreme aim that *Q* is kept constant (as the psyche cannot achieve its first aim of keeping it at zero, p. 297). Laplanche and Pontalis helpfully condense it in terms of differential opposition in a way that is implied but not specifically set out in so many words within Freud's work; it is more of an assumption that does not need to be explained.

so that when he goes to bed, he writes, 'I felt my limbs quivering, till the bed shook under me. I was possessed by a gloom and horror, caused by no thought, and producing no thought: the thinking faculty seemed paralysed within me, altogether' (*Basil*, p. 99).⁶⁴ Here the energies of body and mind are mutually exclusive; all the force in Basil's being is invested in the suffering of the former, to the detriment of the latter, which is simply unable to function. The siphoning of Basil's psychical force into one channel or another is characteristic of the larger laws which his system obeys,⁶⁵ applied to the mind in the same way that Freud in 1895 applied a principle of differential opposition, with its possibilities of application on a larger scale, to the pathways of the psyche.

Once a channel is facilitated, made easy to traverse, however, it can be difficult to escape. The essence of entrenched thinking was seen mid-century in terms of such metaphors as channels and Locke's well-trodden path. In 1860 George Henry Lewes wrote in *The Physiology of Common Life* about many of the disadvantages of the system of association, using these images:

Habits, Fixed Ideas, and what are called Automatic Actions, all depend on the tendency which a sensation has to discharge itself through the readiest channel. In learning to speak a new language, to play on a musical instrument, or to perform any unaccustomed movements, great difficulty is felt, because the channels through which each sensation has to pass have not become established; but no sooner has frequent repetition cut a pathway, than this difficulty vanishes; the actions become so automatic that they can be performed while the mind is otherwise engaged; and sometimes, if once commenced, they must continue ... The same thing is observable in the region of ideas. Old associations, old beliefs, are not to be displaced. A man may be thoroughly convinced to-day by the logic of his opponent, and yet to-morrow he will be heard uttering his old convictions, as if no one ever doubted them. His mind cannot move except in the old paths. It may be noted as the peculiar characteristic of vigorous intellects, that their thoughts are ever finding new pathways instead of moving amid old associations.⁶⁶

Similarly, Basil's less than vigorous mind, as he finds to his distress in his delirium, 'cannot move except in the old paths'. He writes, 'how often my wandering thoughts thus incessantly

⁶⁴ That Freud's *Project* is the application to the mind of established principles of force theory, principles of which Collins was also aware, becomes more evident within a consideration of the mechanisms of satisfaction, or its lack, in *Basil* and Freud's 1895 work. That Basil is profoundly suffering from a lack of satisfaction is shown in his pointed words, 'and this was my wedding-night!' In his *Project*, Freud would describe similar effects on the individual of the sort of tensions and frustrations that Basil has had on his wedding day, in more technical terms: 'The filling of the nuclear neurones in ψ will have as its result an effort to discharge, an *urgency* which is released along the motor pathway. Experience shows that here the first path to be taken is that leading to *internal change* (expression of the emotions, screaming, vascular innervation). But ... no such discharge can produce an unburdening result, since the endogenous stimulus continues to be received and the ψ tension is restored' (*Project*, p. 317). Basil has taken the temporary first path, the expression of his excitement, but this has not resulted in 'unburdening' him.

⁶⁵ The picture of forces within the individual within Carpenter's philosophy is complicated by the Will, which acts as another Force within the system, for, in circumstances where we consciously make an exertion, 'Force must be regarded as the direct expression of the manifestation of that Mental state which we call Will' (*Human Physiology*, 5th edn., p. 552). However, I would suggest that Basil offers little such complication, that because of his lack of will he functions an example of a simple system of differential opposition.

⁶⁶ George Henry Lewes, *The Physiology of Common Life*, 2 vols (London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1859-60), II, 58-59.

and desperately traced and retraced their way over their own fever track, I cannot tell' (*Basil*, p. 172). The unusual suffering that he endures in his dream is also due to the same law – the truth, about the night of the infidelity, which he is seeking 'with a burning rage of determination' throughout his delirium (p. 170), means that he has to break his dear associations.⁶⁷ It is significant that when the truth does emerge, there is the sound 'as of the heavy air being cleft asunder' (p. 173) – this could also be the sound of the final breaking of the associative chain that links his feelings of love to Margaret.⁶⁸ We get a waking reflection of this process in Basil's meditations on his forced leaving of home and his first trip to North Villa since his illness:

We are seldom able to discover under any ordinary conditions of self-knowledge, how intimately that spiritual part of us, which is undying, can attach to itself and its operations the poorest objects of the external world around us, which is perishable. In the ravelled skein, the slightest threads are the hardest to follow. In analysing the associations and sympathies which regulate the play of our passions, the simplest and homeliest are the last that we detect. It is only when the shock comes, and the mind recoils before it – when joy is changed into sorrow, or sorrow into joy – that we really discern what trifles in the outer world our noblest mental pleasures, or our severest mental pains, have made part of themselves; atoms which the whirlpool has drawn into its vortex, as greedily and as surely as the largest mass.

It was reserved for me to know this, when ... my steps turned, as of old, in the direction of North Villa ... there was hardly a spot along the entire way, which my heart had not unconsciously made beautiful and beloved to me by some association with Margaret Sherwin ... Dishonoured and ruined, it was among such associations as these – too homely to have been recognised by me in former times – that I journeyed along the well-remembered way to North Villa. (pp. 209-10)

The above passage is a consideration of the effects of association by contiguity, whose joy, and whose peril, lies in its very randomness, its accidental nature. Depending on what is present at the time that we feel certain things, or what is present in conjunction with another element, however strange, these things, according to the laws of association, are connected inside our minds forever, the later appearance of one calling up the other to consciousness.⁶⁹ Associations,

⁶⁷ S. J. Wood, in 'Sickness and Sexual Ideology in the Novel, 1850-1900' (Unpublished Ph.D Thesis, University of Leeds, 1997), writes that Basil's suffering springs from the dreamer's creation of a landscape 'where sensations, thoughts, and visions are stripped of their familiar meanings and in which the dreamer is inexorably pressed into recognising new ones. Far from being a passive mode, delirium, it seems, demands a great deal of intellectual toil' (p. 138). This accurate account of the process of Basil's delirium essentially describes the breaking of associations and the forming of new ones.

⁶⁸ Freud, in an undated insert of a letter to Wilhelm Fliess, describes how breaking associations is fundamentally a traumatic process: 'Uncoupling associations is always painful. There sets in an impoverishment in excitation (in the free store of it) - an *internal haemorrhage*, as it were - which shows itself in the other instincts and functions. This in-drawing operates inhibitingly, like a *wound*, in a manner analogous to pain' ('Draft G: Melancholia' (undated), *SE*, I, 200-06 (pp. 205-06)).

⁶⁹ Those in the market place made the most of this: *Household Words*, for which Collins first wrote in the year that *Basil* was published, was a prime example. Its aim was to be, as Dickens's 'Preliminary Word' in the first issue set forth, 'associated with the harmless laughter and the gentle tears of many hearths'. He continues, 'We know the great responsibility of such a privilege; its vast reward' ('A Preliminary Word', *Household Words*, 1 (30 March 1850), 1-2 (p. 1)). It also aspired to be associated with the words of Shakespeare; at the head of each issue was written '*Familiar in their Mouths as HOUSEHOLD WORDS.*' – Shakespeare'. The title of the journal was taken from *Henry V*, interestingly a passage in which King Harry aspires to be associated forever with St. Crispin's day because of the wonders he will do in battle on that day (*Henry V*, IV. III. 51-59). *Household Words* became a fulfilment of its title. Many years after its demise W. B. Carpenter in 1872 gave a Presidential Address to the British Association for the Advancement of Science in which he recalled attending one of its meetings, thirty six

once made, then, are hard to break. Although Basil's feelings of love for Margaret have broken away from her image, he is still her reluctant husband, she his unwilling wife, as her delirious request that they read the marriage service backwards, to unmarry themselves, shows.⁷⁰ The advantage of this is that it is harder for Basil's father to relinquish him than he envisages, for Basil at the end of the novel is back in the bosom of his family, having been forgiven by his now late father. This is an outcome that is dictated by the laws of association; for even as he tears Basil's page from the family history and declares his new role as enemy to the family, Basil's father acknowledges the potency of the link between them: 'Would to God I could tear the past from my memory, as I tear the leaf from this book!' (p. 203).

However, it is Basil's family ties that also form an unbreakable association with his rival Mannion, whose father was hanged after being convicted, with Basil's father's help, of forging a credit-note in his name. Basil's father's 'strict principles of honour' were what took him to the witness box, despite his previously friendly relationship with Mannion's father. Mannion, born, as he writes to Basil, 'with the hangman's mark on me' (p. 229), had a start in life that directly opposed Basil's; 'trusting boldly to myself to carve out my own way' (p. 230) he aimed, until giving it up as impossible, to 'live up to my birth-right position' (p. 233), attempting to battle against his father's fate, refusing Basil's father's money which was offered as assistance. He is the activity to Basil's passivity until the end of the book. He actively seduces Margaret whereas Basil waits a year for her, a marital position he describes as 'a passive one' (p. 101). It is on the night of the infidelity that we see Basil's passivity most dramatically, in an episode when he almost becomes Carpenter's 'mere puppe[t] ... capable of being played-upon by every one who shall have made himself master of our springs of action'. For Basil does not just hear the coupling of Margaret and Mannion; it is as if he, on the other side of the wall, is forced to enact a grotesque parody of it – 'I heard the waiter say, under his

years previously, in his home town of Bristol: 'I enjoyed the privilege which I hold it one of the most valuable functions of these annual assemblages to bestow: that of coming into personal relation with those distinguished men whose name are to every cultivator of science as "household words"' ('Man the Interpreter of Nature', in *Nature and Man*, pp. 185-210 (p. 185)). The use of quotation marks in the transcript of the lecture suggests a certain self-consciousness in using the phrase, as if it was a trademark.

That Collins understood the processes and dynamics of marketing is seen in Captain Wragge's advertisement campaign at the end of *No Name*: 'Stomach and sympathy, sympathy and stomach – look them both fairly in the face, when you reach the wrong side of fifty, and you will agree with me that they come to much the same thing ... [The public] can't get rid of me and my Pill – they must take us. There is not a single form of appeal in the whole range of human advertisement, which I am not making to the unfortunate public at this moment. Hire the last new novel – there I am, inside the boards of the book. Send for the last new Song – the instant you open the leaves, I drop out of it. Take a cab – I fly in at the window, in red. Buy a box of tooth-powder at the chemist's – I wrap it up for you, in blue. Show yourself at the theatre – I flutter down on you, in yellow' (*No Name*, p. 525). That Wragge understands the laws of association within the human mind is shown in his comic equation of sympathy and stomach, advertisement and self; the first association is already there – people will therefore be predisposed for the artificial association he will form in their minds with his campaign, between the welcome idea of cure and Wragge. The chain is quickly formed from sympathy to himself, a connection that inspires his fortune. As he says to Magdalen, 'Don't think me mercenary – I merely understand the age I live in' (p. 529).

⁷⁰ This in a sense is like an attempt to unravel the associative chain; for it was a service that was well-known, always read in a certain order, and therefore could become such a chain, in the manner of the excerpts of language recited by the servant in Coleridge's story.

breath, “My God! he’s dying” (*Basil*, p. 160). This could be a commentary on either Basil or Mannion. Even as Mannion ‘dies’ on the other side of the wall, Basil starts to lapse into a death-like state. The waiter revives him, and Basil writes, ‘I knew all this; and knew when the paroxysm passed, and nothing remained of it, but a shivering helplessness in every limb’ (*Basil*, p. 161). Again, the wording is ambiguous, referring to ‘the paroxysm’ rather than ‘my paroxysm’, and who the owner is of the limbs is equally unclear. While Basil recuperates vacantly after this dreadful night in which he then attempts to murder Mannion, the fate of his victim does not cross his mind until the question ‘had Mannion been taken up from the stones on which I had hurled him, a living man or a dead?’ ‘suddenly and mysteriously flashe[s]’ upon his passive consciousness (p. 179). In contrast, Mannion has been plotting against him all this time: as he writes in the letter which languishes forgotten in Basil’s pocket, ‘I am determined to pursue you’ (p. 251).

Mannion is often dubbed Basil’s double by critics, such as Peters and Bourne Taylor.⁷¹ This is a point, usually made as if it is self-explanatory, which I will attempt to elucidate and expand, by examining the associative mechanisms behind this pairing. Their relationship depends as much on Basil’s automaton-like state of being as it does on Mannion’s inability to dissociate himself from his enemy. I have discussed Basil’s inability to escape certain channels of thought; an alternative metaphor is that of the chain, a metaphor he uses in relation to the first lie he tells, to Mr Sherwin’s shopkeeper, in order to gain information about Margaret. In those words, he wrote, he forged ‘the first link in the long chain of deceit which was afterwards to fetter and degrade me’ (p. 35). In 1832, Abercrombie described how such a process could be seen as equally psychological and spiritual, in a passage which is also noteworthy in its use of the ancient dichotomy of light and dark, which Basil’s dreaming mind places of its own accord on the two women in his life:

It is striking, also, to remark, how closely the philosophy of human nature harmonizes with the declarations of the sacred writings; – where this condition of mind is traced to its true source, in the corruption of the moral feelings, and is likewise shown to involve a high degree of guilt, in that rejection of truth which is its natural consequence; – “This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov’d. But he that doeth truth, cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.”

This condition of mind presents a subject of intense interest, to every one who would study his own mental condition, either as an intellectual or a moral being. In each individual instance, it may be traced to a particular course of thought and of conduct, by which the mind went gradually more and more astray from truth and from virtue ... The first volition, by which the mind consciously wanders from truth, or the moral feelings go astray from virtue, may impart a morbid influence which shall perpetuate itself and gain strength in future volitions, until the result shall be to poison the whole intellectual and moral system. Thus, in the wondrous scheme of sequences which has been established in the economy of the human heart, one volition may impart a character to the future man, – the first downward step may be fatal. (*Intellectual Powers*, pp. 437-38)

⁷¹ Peters describes Mannion as ‘not only Basil’s pursuer but his double, Hyde to his Jekyll. The revenge plot is supported at a psychological and mythic level as Basil and Mannion repeatedly change places

Abercrombie then emphasizes the importance of examining 'our desires, attachments, and antipathies ... what is the habitual current of our thoughts; – and whether we exercise over them that control which indicates alike intellectual vigour and moral purity' (p. 439). This is where, as I hope I have made clear, Basil has made himself vulnerable. From lying, Basil follows the fatal chain, one link leading logically to the next, through deceiving his family, until he reaches the attempted murder of Mannion, this last offence committed in the same mechanistic state in which he follows the couple and enacts the infidelity:

Misery, and shame, and horror, and a vain yearning to hide myself from all human eyes, and weep out my life in secret, overcame me. Then, these subsided; and ONE THOUGHT slowly arose in their stead – arose, and cast down before it every obstacle of conscience, every principle of education, every care for the future, every remembrance of the past, every weakening influence of present misery, every repressing tie of family and home, every anxiety for good fame in this life, and every idea of the next that was to come. Before the fell poison of that Thought, all other thoughts – good or evil – died ... my Thought rose to my lips, and my speech mechanically formed it into words. I whispered softly to myself: *I will kill him when he comes out.* (pp. 161-62)

In this climactic stage in his association with Margaret Sherwin, Basil psychologically resembles the rival with whom he is beginning to realize that he is linked more strongly than he thought. With the rising of the one, all-defeating murderous thought, Basil is feeling 'that stealthy, unflagging strength of purpose which only springs from the desire of revenge' (*Basil*, p. 245) which spurred Mannion's seduction, and not only fetters, like the links in the chain, the victim to the revenger, but the revenger to his victim, in a monomaniacal obsession which, as Mannion's doctor describes, is 'connected with some fixed idea which evidently never leaves him day or night' (p. 281). Mannion speaks rightly when he tells Basil, 'we are linked together for life; I cannot leave you if I would'; the mark of his morbidity is that the association between Basil and the 'horrible joy' of his pursuit cannot be broken in him (p. 354). It is his monomania, the inability to snap this strongest associative link in his psyche, that causes Mannion to attribute his urge 'horribly and supernaturally to link [him]self to [Basil] for life' to something more than revenge, to something 'less earthly and apparent' (p. 252). Basil gains a complete insight into the exclusive nature of Mannion's monomania; in a true mirroring of his rival's psyche in his own life, he sees Mannion's threat come to pass:

The infamy with which I am determined to pursue you, shall be your own infamy that you cannot get quit of – for you shall never get quit of me, never get quit of the wife who has dishonoured you. You may leave your home, and leave England; you may make new friends, and seek new employments; years and years may pass away – and still, you shall not escape us ... My deformed face and her fatal beauty shall hunt you through the world. The terrible secret of your dishonour, and of the atrocity by which you avenged it, shall ooze out through strange channels, in vague shapes, by tortuous intangible processes; ever changing in the manner of its exposure, never remediable by your own resistance, and always directed to the same end – your isolation as a marked man, in every fresh sphere, among every new community to which you retreat. (p. 251)

during the course of the story, alternating the roles of avenger and victim, substance and shadow' (Peters,

Basil's fate, it seems, is never to make any fresh associations. His new life in Cornwall is ruined by Mannion's appearance and exposure of the violence done to him by Basil; as a result he is isolated and spurned by the previously friendly locals. Because of Mannion, he is destined, it seems, never to escape the channel he longs to quit, never to escape the chains of association forged so casually and naïvely.⁷²

On Mannion's death, Basil is correspondingly laid low, and news of his illness revives his family ties in the form of his father's forgiveness and acceptance. However, there is a sense in which Mannion's curse still applies to him. Reposing in the bosom of his family, with his 'sister of old times' (p. 343), his mind, like that of Lewes's man of habit, 'cannot move except in the old paths'; his psyche has been too injured by the association with Margaret and Mannion, which in a sense he still carries with him as an agent of restriction, to make new associations, forge new paths:

I have suffered too much; I have been wounded too sadly, to range myself with the heroes of Ambition, and fight my way upward from the ranks. The glory and the glitter which I once longed to look on as my own, would dazzle and destroy me, now. Such shocks as I have endured, leave that behind them which changes the character and the purpose of a life. The mountain-path of Action is no longer a path for *me*; my future hope pauses with my present happiness in the shadowed valley of Repose. (p. 342)

I hope I have been able to show in this section that, because of the effect of his birthright on the power and discipline of his mind, 'the mountain-path of Action' was never Basil's destined road. With a weakness that causes him to make associations without willing them and then prevented him from breaking them, the best place for him is home's 'shadowed valley of Repose'. However, in Basil's 'contentment which desires no change' (p. 341) there is the stamp of death. Basil, though still young, calls his existence 'retirement'; shunning Ralph's offers of an entry into public life, he writes that he only wishes to help those 'in the little sphere that now surrounds me' and be more deserving of his sister's love. These are the only purposes he has left: 'Let me but live to fulfil them, and life will have given to me all that I can ask!' (p. 342) Collins had more ambition: he, in direct contrast to his creation, went on to write fiction that revealed his intellect as, in Lewes's word, 'vigorous'. His fiction, especially from the beginning of the 1860s, was 'ever finding new pathways instead of moving amid old associations', creating original and quirky characters with features or traits that often connected awkwardly, or strangely. This accomplishment, which I will discuss in the next section, was only one of the ways in which Collins proved his masterful ability to manipulate and exploit the association of ideas in his characters and readers. In this manipulation, he pushed his exploration of the doctrine of the association of ideas to begin to suggest its full implications.

p. 120). Bourne Taylor calls Mannion, 'Basil's unsolicited Other' (*Secret Theatre*, p. 92).

⁷² It is worth mentioning here that Freud's idea of a pathogenic idea or complex was one cut off from the process of association by repression. In a sense, Mannion's pursuit of Basil also makes him pathogenic; the discovery of his crime and previous associations causing him to be cast out of whichever society he is integrated into. The Freudian equivalent of this casting out in the psyche is the process of repression, as

The Implications of Enchainment: The Woman in White, No Name and Armadale

In 1863, in *The North British Review*, Alexander Smith published an unsigned review of *No Name*, in which he emphasized the pull of Wilkie Collins's fiction on the reader. On reading the *Woman in White*, Smith describes how 'the passion of curiosity is appealed to at the commencement' of the novel, and that the strength of this feeling 'carries one through to the close. The reader may dislike the book, but, once started, he is certain to go on with it'.⁷³ We gain a glimpse of the mechanics behind this seduction of the reader in Smith's choice of metaphor to describe the stronger effect of *No Name*:

No Name possesses a simpler and more intense interest than *The Woman in White*, but it is a horrible and unnatural interest; the book enchains you, but you detest it while it enchains ... the repulsiveness of the matter disturbs the pleasure of the reader ... The reader is interested of course; but immediately on closing the book, he feels the unreality of the whole thing; he flings it off as he does the remembrance of a nightmare. (Cited in Page, p. 142)

In his combination of the idea of being carried along by the narrative with that of its enchainment of the reader, Smith is invoking the sort of complex metaphors of associationism that we have seen in *Basil*, and which Collins explores more fully in his novels of the 1860s. Here we see a chain which binds, but which also compels the almost involuntary reader through to the closure of the novel in an experience which is likened to a phenomenon, the nightmare, in which the individual's trains of thought are particularly unrestricted and visible. In a sense it is as if the reader is compelled to think, to exist within the book's confines, breathlessly following the plot link by link, with a fascination which implicates him in some way in its undeniable appeal to an aspect of his lower nature.⁷⁴ In this metaphor of the chain, we have a binding narrowness or constriction, a rivetting compulsion or entrapment, and an impelling sense of momentum or gravity.

All of these characteristics of the chain also represent the possible implications of associationism which can be found in *The Woman in White* (1860), *No Name* (1862), and *Armadale* (1866). In the final section of this chapter I will discuss two main, related symptom-

the mind cannot fully cast anything out.

⁷³ Alexander Smith, Unsigned Review, *North British Review*, 38 (Feb. 1863), 183-85. Cited in *Wilkie Collins: The Critical Heritage*, ed. by Norman Page (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), pp. 140-42 (pp. 141-42).

⁷⁴ Peter Brooks would see Alexander Smith's breathless yet disgusted reading of Collins's novel in terms of a reaction to 'narrative desire'. His view, in *Reading for the Plot*, is that the reading of a text is an act of desire which propels us to its end, ultimately in a search for an elusive meaning. In this he cites Freud's view, illustrated in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* by a phrase from Goethe's *Faust*, of the driving force towards perfection, with its origin in the repressed instinct, which, because what it aims for ('the repetition of a primary experience') cannot any longer be attained, can never be satisfied. It therefore 'in the poet's words "ungebändigt immer vorwärts dringt" ["presses ever forward unsubdued"]'. (Freud cited in Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), pp. 54-55). Seeing reading in terms of desire rather illuminates Smith's reaction to *No*

types, psychological conditions, or mental tendencies (depending on the degree in which they manifest themselves) that display and compound these characteristics, within these novels. Both, I believe, can be seen as logical outcomes of the effects of a misfortune or weakness within the individual, interacting with the associationistic model. As in *Basil* the system of association is merciless to those who cannot master it, those whose predispositions or circumstances have rendered them vulnerable to the full force of its laws. The first psychological condition arising from this interaction of individual with system is that of fixed or dominant ideas, which make for a one-tracked, narrow mind. These thoughts encourage their own momentum, as all impressions made upon the individual lead by association into their one obsessional thought, like a series of chains ending at one point, the equivalent of what would become the Freudian 'nodal point', which was an important element in dream interpretation and symptom analysis. The second is an anxious compulsion among Collins's characters to associate, to find hidden links, to trace an underlying narrative from a number of visible signs, a need which puts them in the same position as that which Sigmund Freud unknowingly assumed in his therapeutic practices – that of detective.⁷⁵ The difficulties which this process poses create symptoms in Collins's characters which range from repetitive questioning to anxiety attacks.

In Collins's portrayal of individuals with fixed ideas, it becomes clear that he perceived mental symptoms somewhere on a scale, or, indeed, a chain, which stretched between the completely healthy psychological subject and the dangerous monomaniac. There are few examples of either extreme in his work. Each individual is potentially capable of holding dominant thoughts, a tendency which discourages the label of morbidity. In this view of fixed ideas Collins had much in common with a later commentator with whom Freud agreed, Daniel Hack Tuke, whose paper on 'Imperative Ideas' was given and published in 1894.⁷⁶ Hack Tuke takes the words of Hughlings Jackson as a starting point: 'The slightest departures from the

Name; after finishing it, he disowns it, as if it were a sexual vice.

⁷⁵ In a sense we see the pinnacle of this theme of ordinary people reading the signs of life, searching for a hidden meaning, in the interestingly-named 'detective fever' of Betteredge in *The Moonstone* (p. 195).

It has been suggested by both sympathetic and antipathetic critics that Freud takes on a detective role. Jeffrey Masson, in *Freud, The Assault on Truth: Freud's Suppression of the Seduction Theory* (London: Faber, 1984) writes (from the former camp) that 'Freud was like a dogged detective'. Richard Webster, a rather more antipathetic commentator, writes about the roles that Freud appears to take on (of which he himself wrote, 'one works to the best of one's power, as an elucidator ... as a teacher, as the representative of a freer or superior view of the world, as a father confessor who gives absolution, as it were, by a continuance of his sympathy and respect after the confession has been made' (*Studies on Hysteria*, p. 282)). Webster has one more role to ascribe to Freud, however, 'although Freud frequently played the part of confessor, there are times when his attitude towards his patients is so overbearing and aggressive that another parallel is almost inescapable. For he sometimes sounds less like a priest and more like a prosecutor, an inquisitor or a policeman' (Richard Webster, *Why Freud Was Wrong: Sin, Science and Psychoanalysis* (London: Fontana, 1996), p. 197). Webster here adds to the detective role that Masson suggests by introducing an element of aggression in Freud's dealings with his patients, at which an urge to detection, however, is at the base.

⁷⁶ Daniel Hack Tuke (1827-1895). In 1858 he published, with J. C. Bucknill, *A Manual of Psychological Medicine*. In 1880 he became joint editor of 'Journal of Mental Science' and wrote many books, including *Illustrations of the Influence of the Mind on the Body* (1872) and *Sleep-walking and Hypnotism* (1884) (*Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. by Sidney Lee (London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1899), pp. 296-97).

standard of mental health are to be studied, and not only the cases of patients who require to be kept in asylums. Indeed, the slightest cases are the more important in a scientific investigation',⁷⁷ and emphasizes the frequency of imperative ideas amongst the unconfined population: 'I am anxious to bring into prominent relief the absolute innocuousness and sanity of a large number of imperative ideas and acts. Take a few illustrations drawn from persons among my acquaintance, some of them being well known physicians.' (Hack Tuke, p. 181) From these examples, including the lady whose three raps on the bedstead allay her night fears, and the doctor who feels the compulsion to avoid the cracks in the pavement (p. 182), we pass along the scale, through Dr. Johnson's counting mania (p. 183) to a patient who becomes particularly upset by an encounter with a certain word in every day life. In the context of a discussion of this last patient, Hack Tuke, who is informed by the work of Charcot, expresses a similar belief in the symbolic nature of symptoms to that which his contemporary, Freud, held; 'a careful analysis of imperative ideas and acts will often explain their origin'. He continues, using terms that could be applied to *The Woman in White's* Anne Catherick, or *No Name's* Magdalen Vanstone, 'a complete knowledge of her history ... unravels the mystery' (Hack Tuke, p. 189). It is not Hack Tuke's understanding of the aetiology of symptoms that interests Freud, however, but his view of imperative thoughts as something common to many people who do not necessarily suffer a hereditary taint; nor are they degenerate. In 'Obsessions and Phobias' (1895), published the year after Hack Tuke's paper, Freud writes of obsessive and phobic symptoms, 'we are not justified in regarding them as the effect of mental degeneracy, because they are found in persons no more degenerate than the majority of neurotics in general'. Emphasizing that it is the symptoms rather than the inherently morbid patient that are being treated, he continues, 'they sometimes improve, and sometimes, indeed, we even succeed in curing them'.⁷⁸ To this point is added the note: 'I am very glad to find that the authors of the most recent work on this subject express opinions very similar to mine. Cf ... Hack Tuke (1894)' (p. 74 n.) This lack of use of the terms of morbidity in viewing symptoms was Freud's obvious characteristic, continued throughout his career, and based on his view, which became stronger and stronger,⁷⁹ that we all inherently carry the seeds of neurosis, of symptom-formation. Hack Tuke was equally disinterested in pronouncing the patient morbid. Of a patient who compulsively washes, he writes, 'while admitting that this case more nearly approaches insanity than sanity, I should not dream of signing a certificate for her' (Hack Tuke, p. 189).⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Daniel Hack Tuke, 'Imperative Ideas', *Brain*, 17 (1894), 179-97 (p. 179).

⁷⁸ Sigmund Freud, 'Obsessions and Phobias' (1895), in *SE*, III, 69-84 (p. 74).

⁷⁹ In his early papers he fleetingly entertained the idea of the influence of heredity. See 'Heredity and the Aetiology of the Neuroses' (1896) for an early discussion of the subject. Freud is particularly descriptive of the inherent conflict within the psyche in his late *New Introductory Lectures*, 'Lecture XXXI: The Dissection of the Psychological Personality' (1933), in *SE*, XXII, 57-80.

⁸⁰ That Freud read Hack Tuke's article has one further interest for us. The latter, in investigating what causes imperative ideas, cites the 50-year old paper 'On the Reflex Functions of the Brain' by Thomas Laycock, generally accepted in the nineteenth century by those such as Carpenter to be a watershed in its

Thirty years before, in *All the Year Round*, in the midst of an article on the signing of certificates, of which there had recently been an over-zealousness that had called the whole system of confinement into question,⁸¹ there is an interesting passage which anticipates this acceptance of the symptom as a flaw in, rather than a definition of, a person:

There is no clear dividing-line between sickness and health of mind; unsoundness of mind is, no doubt, as various and common as unsoundness of body ... Every natural defect of temper is unsoundness ... But we do not condemn our bodies as unfit for use when there are corns on our toes, or when the sallow tinge on our cheeks supplants the hue of health ... so it is with the mind. Every man has his weak place; his twist, his hobby.⁸²

This last phrase is particularly interesting, as the condition described suggests more than anything the vagaries which are found along the continuum that we see in Collins's work. At the one end is the sort of monomania that was portrayed in the early character of Mannion in *Basil*; at the other, however, seemed simply a universal psychological foible. Humanity's characteristic, it seems, is a propensity to certain favourite ideas, to a 'hobby'. The use of this word was constantly connected with 'horse', especially in the eighteenth century;⁸³ indeed, the phrase in *All the Year Round* seems to be derivative, a loose paraphrase of a similar sentiment in Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, in which the hobby-horse features strongly.

demonstration, drawing on physiology and comparative anatomy, that actions can be performed without consciousness. I have already quoted Freud as writing that 'reflex processes remain the model of every psychical function' (*Interpretation*, p. 538). Unconscious cerebration as a concept was a natural progression of reflex action of the brain, and so in being introduced to Laycock through Tuke (assuming he had not read him before) there is a sense in which Freud was meeting his ancestor.

⁸¹ This debate is discussed in Jenny Bourne Taylor's *In the Secret Theatre of Home*, pp. 101-04, and Helen Small's *Love's Madness*, pp. 184-93.

⁸² 'M. D. and MAD', *All the Year Round* (22 February 1862), pp. 510-13 (p. 513).

⁸³ From the end of the 1860s the metaphor of the horse became associated with the unconscious mind, as W. B. Carpenter in 1868 ('On the Unconscious Activity', p. 343) and Frances Power Cobbe in 1870 ('Unconscious Cerebration', pp. 36-37) described the relationship of the conscious mind to the unconscious mind as that of rider to a horse with the potential to run away with its rider but which could be controlled. In addition Carpenter describes how it may find its way home, i.e. provide the conscious mind with the answer it seeks, if its reins are dropped ('On the Unconscious Activity', p. 343). Freud also likened the ego and id to the rider and horse, in his *New Introductory Lectures*: 'The ego's relation to the id might be compared with that of a rider to his horse. The horse supplies the locomotive energy, while the rider has the privilege of deciding on the goal and of guiding the powerful animal's movement. But only too often there arises between the ego and the id the not precisely ideal situation of the rider being obliged to guide the horse along the path by which it itself wants to go' ('Lecture XXXI', p. 77). A comparison of Carpenter's 1874 description of the relationship between 'the Automatic activity of the body, and the Volitional direction by which it is utilized and directed' is quite instructive, raising issues about how different the Freudian and Victorian agencies can really be if they are described in the same metaphors. Carpenter writes that this relationship 'may be compared to the independent locomotive power of a horse under the guidance and control of a skilful rider. It is not the rider's whip or spur that furnishes the *power*, but the nerves and muscles of the horse; and when these have been exhausted, no further action can be got out of them by the sharpest stimulation. 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. Now and then, it is true, some unusual excitement calls forth the essential independence of the equine nature; the horse takes the bit between his teeth, and runs away with his master; and it is for the time uncertain whether the independent energy of the one, or the controlling power of the other, will obtain the mastery' (*Mental Physiology*, p. 24).

Nay, if you come to that, Sir, have not the wisest men in all ages, not excepting *Solomon* himself, - have they not had their HOBBY-HORSES; - their running horses, - their coins and their cockle-shells, their drums and their trumpets, their fiddles, their pallets, - their maggots and their butterflies? - and so long as a man rides his HOBBY-HORSE peaceably and quietly along the King's highway, and neither compels you or me to get up behind him, - pray, Sir, what have either you or I to do with it?⁸⁴

It was especially in the realm of the hobby-horse, the preoccupation, that the boundaries between sanity and insanity were traditionally most frequently blurred, and it was often writers who had displayed a special interest in associationism, for example John Locke and David Hartley, who recognized this.⁸⁵ In a passage that also incorporates *All the Year Round's* idea of the 'twist,' which suggests an associative link which sits somewhat awkwardly, but cannot be separated from habits of thinking, Locke elaborates on his theory that the root of madness lay in accidental association. This, however, is 'a Weakness to which all Men are ... liable ... a Taint which ... universally infects Mankind' (Locke, p. 395):

That there are such Associations of [ideas] made by Custom in the Minds of most Men, I think no Body will question who has well consider'd himself or others; and to this, perhaps, might be justly attributed most of the Sympathies and Antipathies observable in Men, which work as strongly, and produce as regular Effects as if they were Natural, and are therefore called so, though they at first had no other Original but the accidental Connexion of two *Ideas*, which either the strength of the first Impression, or future Indulgence so united, that they always afterwards kept company together in that Man's Mind, as if they were but one *Idea* ... This wrong Connexion in our Minds of *Ideas* in themselves, loose and independent one of another, has such an influence, and is of so great force to set us awry in our Actions, as well Moral as Natural, Passions, Reasonings, and Notions themselves, that, perhaps, there is not any one thing that deserves more to be looked after. (pp. 396-97)

With the model of scale, or chain, however, that could be applied to these particular tendencies incorporated in the ideas of twist and hobby, there was always an uneasy feeling of gravity. Collins rather exploited this on certain occasions; in particular in his portrayal of the characteristic of narrowness of mind, which could range from a single-minded concentration on a mission or inquiry, or a prejudiced view, to a life-threatening pervasion of the individual's physiological systems.

Anne Catherick, the Woman in White, is ruled by fixed ideas. Walter Hartright, finding her tending the grave of Mrs Fairlie, describes her thus:

The old grateful sense of her benefactress's kindness was evidently the ruling idea still in the poor creature's mind - the narrow mind which had but too plainly opened to no other lasting impression since that first impression of her younger and happier days.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Laurence Sterne, *Tristram Shandy* (1760-67) (New York: Norton, 1980), p. 8. This book was a favourite of Freud's (see Ernest Jones, *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud, Vol I: The Formative Years and The Great Discoveries, 1856-1900*, 13th edn (New York: Basic Books, 1960), I, 16).

⁸⁵ Hartley wrote, 'it is impossible to fix precise limits, and to determine where soundness of mind ends, and madness begins' (cited in German E. Berrios, *A History of Mental Symptoms: Descriptive Psychopathology since the Nineteenth Century*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 89).

⁸⁶ Wilkie Collins, *The Woman in White* (1860), ed. by Julian Symons (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), p. 121. Hereafter *W in W*.

We have already encountered Basil's lack of associative capability. Later, it would find its place in Freudian symptomatology, in which 'a restricted capacity for association' formed, in the early 1890s, part of the basis on which neurosis (in this case, hysteria) would be diagnosed.⁸⁷ This characteristic of narrowness was also mirrored in psycho-physiological terms. Anna O., for example, suffered from a restriction of vision: 'in a bunch of flowers which gave her much pleasure she could see only one flower at a time' (*Studies on Hysteria*, p. 26). A rather better-known symptom of hysteria throughout the nineteenth century, one which I have already touched on in my first chapter, was a restriction of the throat. We see this in *Armada*, in Lydia Gwilt's physiological reaction to the knowledge that she is deceiving Midwinter, the man whom she is to marry - 'I felt a dreadful hysterical choking in the throat when he entreated me not to reveal my troubles.'⁸⁸ It is in Anne Catherick, however, that we see the possibility of a narrowness in thought perfectly mirroring a physiological, and fatal, constriction.

A consideration of Anne's symptoms is illuminating. Her speech, described again in the scene by the graveside, has a 'strange breathless rapidity of utterance' (*W in W*, p. 121), which suggests a shortness of breath, perhaps due to the heart trouble from which she later dies. In describing the symptom of shortness of breath in an anxiety attack, Freud makes an interesting comment about the term '*Angst*', usually translated as 'anxiety'. 'The name "*Angst*" - "*angustiae*", "*Enge*" - emphasizes the characteristic of restriction in breathing'.⁸⁹ Interestingly the terms Freud chooses to illustrate the narrowness of the roots '*Ang*' and '*Eng*', from which 'anxiety' also comes, mean, as the editor notes, 'narrow place' and 'straits' (p. 396 n.) These are the places that Anne could be said to inhabit, the narrow margins of life where she anxiously attempts to avoid those that seek to further confine her, but 'straits' also could be applied to her narrow round of mental activity, the associative chain along which she thinks and reacts. It is worth considering the possibility, therefore, that Anne's heart trouble could have been the constrictive condition *angina pectoris* (or *pectoralis*) which in the opinions of two commentators as far apart in time as Thomas Laycock (1838) and Sigmund Freud (1894),⁹⁰ was believed to be exacerbated by the state of the mind. Anne's heart condition deteriorates when she is anxious. Her first 'serious symptoms' (*W in W*, p. 480) appeared after the public

⁸⁷ Sigmund Freud, 'The Neuro-Psychoses of Defence' (1894) in *SE*, III, 41-68 (p. 46).

⁸⁸ Wilkie Collins, *Armada* (1866), ed. by John Sutherland (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1995), p. 490. Hereafter, *A*.

⁸⁹ Sigmund Freud, 'Lecture XXV: Anxiety' (1916-17), in *SE*, XVI, 392-411 (pp. 396-97).

⁹⁰ This complaint, although sometimes in a non-organic, more psychosomatic form, was commonly associated with anxiety attacks, as Freud mentions in his 1895 paper 'On the Grounds for Detaching a Particular Syndrome from Neurasthenia under the Description "Anxiety Neurosis"'. Top of a list of the types of anxiety attack that are known to him are those 'accompanied by disturbances of the *heart action*, such as palpitation' which with complications over time 'may end in serious weakness of the heart and which is not always easily differentiated from organic heart affection'; he then mentions in this connection, 'pseudo-angina pectoris - diagnostically a delicate subject!' (in *SE*, III, 85-117 (p. 94)). Thomas Laycock in 1838 puts the condition under the category of 'Phenomena of Certain Diseases of the Nervous System' and as being a result of hysterical 'morbid affectability'. Collins, in 1860, stands almost equidistant between Laycock, who writes of the condition that 'it appears to be hereditary' (Thomas Laycock, 'On Hysteria', *Edinburgh Medical and Surgical Journal*, 50 (1838), 302-56 (p. 325)) and Freud, who classes its 'pseudo', but nevertheless dangerous, form, among the symptoms of neurosis.

announcement of the wedding of Laura and Percival Glyde, which she wished to avert. When she returns from the last of a series of exhausting journeys to Blackwater Lake to speak to Laura, her symptoms reappear. Hartright documents, 'in this emergency, the first necessity, as Mrs Clements knew by experience, was to endeavour to quiet Anne's anxiety of mind' (p. 481). Later we shall see constrictive physiological symptoms occasioned in *Armadale's* Ozias Midwinter by extreme psychological tension. It is not, I believe, too much to relate the state of Anne's mind to the fate of her body.

Anne's 'narrow' mind lies at one end of a scale that emerges as we encounter the many different characters in the three novels that I am considering. Hartright himself, whom Marian recognizes as being capable of holding 'one fixed idea' (p. 188), is not, in fact, Anne's polar opposite. He accuses her of being obsessed with finding a cab – 'That idea of shutting herself in, and being driven away, had now got full possession of her mind. She could think and talk of nothing else' (p. 53) even in the context of his trying to get her to talk, for the third time, about Cumberland. After she does leave, Hartright, whose narrative has just described Anne, as she walks as 'looking straight forward, eagerly and yet absently', until they came near to the Methodist College, when 'her set features relaxed, and she spoke once more' (p. 52), seems to copy this pattern of absence and reawakening in his own walk:

I was still on the same side of the way; now mechanically walking forward a few paces; now stopping again absently ... I hardly knew where I was going, or what I meant to do next; I was conscious of nothing but the confusion of my own thoughts, when I was abruptly recalled to myself – awakened, I might almost say – by the sound of rapidly approaching wheels close behind me. (p. 54)

His preoccupation with Anne is such that, in a diluted version of Anne's frenzy at the name of Percival Glyde, and of Hack Tuke's patient who violently reacts to the appearance of a certain word, he irrevocably associates the term 'woman in white' with her, and starts into alertness whenever it is mentioned. 'A chance expression ... dropped' from the lips of a schoolmaster, one of whose pupils had claimed to have seen a ghost, 'forced the idea' of Anne, he says, 'back into my mind' (p. 112). This returning idea he had already banished, suspecting it might be a symptom of a disturbingly obsessive pattern of thinking, after an anonymous letter sent to Laura had suggested Anne to him:

While I was speaking, my eyes rested on the last sentence of the letter ... Those words and the doubt which had just escaped me as to the sanity of the writer of the letter, acting together on my mind, suggested an idea, which I was literally afraid to express openly, or even to encourage secretly. I began to doubt whether my own faculties were not in danger of losing their balance. It seemed almost like a monomania to be tracing back everything strange that happened, everything unexpected that was said, always to the same hidden source and the same sinister influence. (p. 105)

It is clear that, by the law of association by contiguity, Hartright's first eerie encounter with Anne, in which he perceives her as an 'extraordinary apparition,' has given rise to his 'twist, his hobby,' a fixed idea, which he calls his 'old superstition' and which ascribes to her a certain

supernatural quality; even after her death he says to Marian, 'the woman in white is a living influence in our three lives' (p. 471). Later he describes her as 'the ghostly figure which has haunted these pages, as it haunted my life', a figure whom he can only allow to exist in peace 'in the loneliness of the dead' (p. 576) after he has uncovered the secret of her paternity; an uncalled-for investigation which he undertakes solely to gratify his own psychological need to lay her to rest in his mind. These evidences of his personal 'hobbies' may not amount to monomania, but they place him, with many of Collins's characters, on a scale, at one end of which monomania is threateningly situated.

In Hartright's description of his mind as 'tracing everything strange that happened, everything unexpected that was said, always to the same hidden source and the same sinister influence' there is also the suggestion of a more sophisticated associative model in operation than that of a single chain. Carpenter, in 1874, articulated such a model, which was in fact a logical progression of the associative schema, particularly as its pattern reflected natural and man-made channel, path or chain systems, which connect and ramify: 'our ideas are ... linked together in "trains" or "series," which further inosculate with each other like the branch lines of a railway or the ramifications of an artery' (*Mental Physiology*, p. 429). In Freud's 1896 paper 'The Aetiology of Hysteria', a further development of this associative system is suggested:

If we take a case which presents several symptoms, we arrive by means of the analysis, starting from each symptom, at a series of experiences the memories of which are linked together in association. To begin with, the chains of memories lead backwards separately from one another; but ... they ramify. From a single scene two or more memories are reached at the same time, and from these again side-chains proceed whose individual links may once more be associatively connected with links belonging to the main chain. Indeed, a comparison with the genealogical tree of a family whose members have also intermarried, is not at all a bad one. ('The Aetiology of Hysteria', p. 198)

The implications and complications of this system are then explored; 'a single scene may be called up several times in the same chain', one tree may connect with another when an experience an individual has suffered 'belongs to both series ... in this way it constitutes a *nodal point*. Several such nodal points are to be found in every analysis' (pp. 198-99). In *The Interpretation of Dreams* Freud notes that those nodal points are to be found 'in normal mental life, too', where their structural role means that they 'possess a high degree of psychological significance' (*Interpretation*, p. 595). Hartright's formative experience on the road from London, a strikingly condensed incident, gave rise to many associative links (the ghost-like figure, the colour white, the distressed woman, Anne's mental state, Limmeridge and the Fairlies, the asylum) which means that, subsequently, whichever way he turns, he is reminded of the scene. This operates as the 'nodal point', in Freudian terms, or the heart, the major railway station, in a logical development of Carpenter's model.

Collins displays his dislike of the narrowness that is due to a thoughtless restriction of outlook in two of his 1850s novels. In *Hide and Seek* (1854) he writes 'from a great proposal for reform, to a small eccentricity in costume, the English are the most intolerant people in the

world' (*Hide and Seek*, p. 182). In *The Dead Secret* (1857) he laments this human tendency in terms that suggest an animal, unquestioning ignorance, 'a man is one of a flock, and his wool must be of the general colour'.⁹¹ In *No Name* he employs the scale of monomania which we have already encountered in *The Woman in White* to implicate those readers and critics whose reaction to Magdalen Vanstone is a condemnatory one. The end of the novel holds an audacious suggestion which forces the reader to examine his or her attitude to Magdalen, under the warning that if it is not accepting enough, then it is he or she that will be classed as 'narrow':

'Do I deserve my happiness?' she murmured, asking the one question at last. 'Oh, I know how the poor narrow people who have never felt and never suffered, would answer me, if I asked them what I ask you. If *they* knew my story, they would forget all the provocation, and only remember the offence – they would fasten on my sin, and pass all my suffering by. But you are not one of them? Tell me if you have any shadow of a misgiving!' (*No Name*, p. 548)

There are a number of terms in this passage that suggest that anyone who condemns Magdalen may stand dangerously near Anne Catherick's end of the scale of monomania. The word 'poor' before 'narrow people' suggests that, as in 'Poor Anne Catherick', the mental state of the harsh critic is to be pitied.⁹² The image of the critic fastening on Magdalen's sin suggests a neurotic tenacity attached to the holding of a fixed idea. But the phrase 'If *they* knew my story, they would forget all the provocation, and only remember the offence – they would fasten on my sin, and pass all my suffering by' implicates the reader most strongly, for one of the symptoms of Anne's monomania is her bad memory. She recounts to Walter some words spoken to her by Mrs Clements:

'She said, "If you are ever in trouble, Anne, come to me. I have no husband alive to say me nay, and no children to look after, and I will take care of you." Kind words, were they not? I suppose I remember them because they were kind. It's little enough I remember besides – little enough, little enough!' (*W in W*, p. 123)

Of the critics of *No Name*, Margaret Oliphant in her forgetfulness of the circumstances contributing to Magdalen's behaviour, implicated herself most strongly as a narrow reader, in a short review that bristled with irony, 'after all her endless deceptions and horrible marriage, it seems quite right to the author that she should be restored to society, and have a good husband

⁹¹ Wilkie Collins, *The Dead Secret* (1857), ed. by Ira B. Nadel (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 80.

⁹² In the Foreword to *Armadale*, Collins openly displays his thoughts about such critics, 'Readers in particular', whose over-riding characteristic is to attempt to 'narrow' fiction: 'Readers in particular will, I have some reason to suppose, be here and there disturbed – perhaps even offended – by finding that "Armadale" oversteps ... the narrow limits within which they are disposed to restrict the development of modern fiction – if they can ... Estimated by the Clap-trap morality of the present day, this may be a very daring book. Judged by the Christian morality which is of all time, it is only a book that is daring enough to speak the truth' (*A*, p. 5).

and a happy home'.⁹³ Alexander Smith, too, in his disgusted casting aside of the novel, a futile attempt to disown it, his labelling of it as 'repulsiv[e],' finds himself doubly implicated; for having self-confessedly been enchained by the book in a sort of monomaniacal, one-tracked fascination, he then, being bound by its heroine's condemnation of his disapproval, extends his entrapment within it beyond its ending, into a general state of narrow being and thinking. In this way Collins uses the discourse and the implications of the scale of monomania, a disturbing product of the association of ideas, as subtle weaponry against his 'readers in particular'.

Another aspect of the association of ideas that Collins explores in *The Woman in White* is that of the effect of hidden links in the associative chain. The detective quest of Walter Hartright (as I have already suggested) is undertaken partly in order to assuage his own psychological need. Part of this need, as I have discussed, has arisen through the workings of the processes of association which were set in motion by his first meeting with Anne, a need he eventually works through by pursuing her every connection of family, friends and history, until he finds what is in essence a missing link, the truth of her paternity. His first meeting with Marian Halcombe sets up a corresponding unease, whose cause and cure could similarly be found in the workings of association. Hartright describes the encounter thus:

The easy elegance of every movement of her limbs and body as soon as she began to advance from the far end of the room, set me in a flutter of expectation to see her face clearly. She left the window – and I said to myself, The lady is dark. She moved forward a few steps – and I said to myself, The lady is young. She approached nearer – and I said to myself (with a sense of surprise which words fail me to express), The lady is ugly!

Never was the old conventional maxim, that Nature cannot err, more flatly contradicted – never was the fair promise of a lovely figure more strangely and startlingly belied by the face and head that crowned it. The lady's complexion was almost swarthy, and the dark down on her upper lip was almost a moustache. She had a large, firm, masculine mouth and jaw; prominent, piercing, resolute brown eyes; and thick, coal-black hair, growing unusually low down on her forehead. Her expression – bright, frank, and intelligent – appeared, while she was silent, to be altogether wanting in those feminine attractions of gentleness and pliability, without which the beauty of the handsomest woman alive is beauty incomplete. To see such a face as this set on shoulders that a sculptor would have longed to model – to be charmed by the modest graces of action through which the symmetrical limbs betrayed their beauty when they moved, and then to be almost repelled by the masculine form and masculine look of the features in which the perfectly shaped figure ended – was to feel a sensation oddly akin to the helpless discomfort familiar to us all in sleep, when we recognise yet cannot reconcile the anomalies and contradictions of a dream. (*W in W*, pp. 58-59)

Hartright has approached this situation entirely unprepared. It is Laura who later reveals herself to fit Hartright's template of ideal womanhood – she is the woman 'who first gives life, light, and form to [his] shadowy conceptions of beauty' (p. 76), she is the fitting answer to the expectation shown in his thoughts on the night he met Anne Catherick, for he was 'idly wondering ... what the Cumberland young ladies would look like' when surprised by her touch on his shoulder (p. 47). Hartright's inexpressible 'sense of surprise', his feeling of anomaly, in the association of a beautiful body with an ugly head is due to his narrowness of aesthetic

⁹³ Mrs Oliphant, 'Unsigned review', *Blackwood's Magazine*, xciv (August 1863), 170, cited in Page, p. 143.

outlook as much as to Marian's appearance. However, feeling this anomaly, there is an urge to correct it, to integrate it in some way, to neutralize the dream-like contradiction, to explain.

William Hamilton described the experience of feeling the anomaly between virtually simultaneous associations in his *Lectures on Metaphysics*:

It sometimes happens that thoughts seem to follow each other immediately, between which it is impossible to detect any bond of association. If this anomaly be insoluble, the whole theory of association is overthrown. Philosophers have accordingly set themselves to account for this phænomenon. To deny the fact of the phænomenon is impossible; it must, therefore, be explained on the hypothesis of association. (II, 244)

It is by the necessity of finding an answer to this threatening anomaly that Hamilton considers the theory of missing links, illustrated admirably by the model of a row of billiard balls (of which, when struck, only the first and the last show movement) that I have discussed in connection with the mental detection of Mrs Lecount in *No Name*:

A and C are thoughts, not on any law of association suggestive of each other, and ... A and C appear to our consciousness as following each other immediately ... a thought B, associated with A and with C, and which consequently could be awakened by A, and could awaken C, has intervened ... A excited B, but ... the excitement was not strong enough to rouse B from its state of latency, though strong enough to enable it obscurely to excite C, whose latency was less, and to afford it vivacity sufficient to rise into consciousness. (II, 244)

This model works equally well as a tool with which to consider the anomaly of Marian's appearance. The head which belies the body can be integrated and explained, by recourse to a missing link. Marian herself, no doubt from experience of reactions to her, undertakes this duty by introducing this 'B' element in her make-up, which lies in her paternity:

My mother was twice married: the first time to Mr Halcombe, my father; the second time to Mr Fairlie, my half-sister's father. Except that we are both orphans, we are in every respect as unlike each other as possible. My father was a poor man, and Miss Fairlie's father was a rich man. I have got nothing, and she has a fortune. I am dark and ugly, and she is fair and pretty. Everybody thinks me crabbed and odd (with perfect justice); and everybody thinks her sweet-tempered and charming (with more justice still). In short, she is an angel; and I am – (*W in W*, pp. 60-61).

The principle here set out goes on to set a precedent for the rest of the book; in the case of the similarity between Laura and Anne, too, the father is the latent, missing link, a link which Hartright also must pursue to allay his unease. Hamilton describes the sort of relief afforded by such an acceptance of the existence of latent missing links in thought, writing that 'on this doctrine, the whole theory of association obtains an easy and natural completion' (*Lectures*, II, 245). On one level, then, it could be argued that *The Woman in White* (to paraphrase the novel's opening) is the story of a man whose resolution simply achieves the setting at rest of his own mind. As in Freudian therapy, it is the location and bringing to light of the hidden associations

that allow his symptoms to disappear.⁹⁴

Walter Hartright, however, is by no means the last character in Collins's novels to experience a sense of 'helpless discomfort' in the face of confusing and conflicting signs, an urgent need to pursue an underlying narrative. Magdalen Vanstone's question, 'Providence? ... Or chance?' (*No Name*, p. 369) is typical of this search for meaning, or rather, typical in its inquiry as to whether it is worth searching for an underlying meaning at all. *Armadale*'s Lydia Gwilt, on hearing of the death of Mr Brock, writes, 'It means something; I wish I knew what' (*A*, p. 505). The question 'What does it mean?' is one that, though not expressed exactly in those terms, haunts the pages of *Armadale*. Sometimes the answer, of course, is 'absolutely nothing.' D. A. Miller writes of the detective genre:

On one hand, the form is based on the hypothesis that *everything might count*: every character might be the culprit, and every action or speech might be belying its apparent banality or literalism by making surreptitious reference to an incriminating Truth ... Yet on the other hand, even though the criterion of total relevance is continually invoked by the text, it turns out to have a highly restricted applicability in the end. At the moment of truth, the text winnows grain from chaff, separating the relevant signifiers from the much larger number of irrelevant ones, which are now revealed to be as trivial as we originally were encouraged to suspect they might *not* be.⁹⁵

It is a fundamental result of the laws of association that, though sometimes pointing the way to an underlying truth which connects with the surface sign, they also encourage futile searches for meaning – nonsensically, sometimes ideas or thoughts are simply linked, for example, because of their simultaneous appearance before the individual. It is instructive to follow through the rest of the conditions which give rise to association (apart from by contiguity) which William Hamilton lists in his *Lectures on Metaphysics*:

If their objects are ... adjoining in space ... If they hold the dependence to each other of cause and effect, or of mean and end, or of whole and part ... If they stand in a relation either of contrast or of similarity ... If they are the operations of the same power, or of different powers conversant about the same object ... If their objects are the sign and the signified ... Even if their objects are accidentally denoted by the same sound. (II, 231)

⁹⁴ In 'The Aetiology of Hysteria' Freud talks explicitly about the relation between the ramifying systems of association to symptoms and their formation, and how their painstaking uncovering leads to the disappearance of each symptom (pp. 195-99). This process is described more succinctly, however, in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, in a passage which I have quoted in full towards the beginning of this chapter: 'Our procedure consists in abandoning all those purposive ideas which normally govern our reflections, in focusing our attention on a single element of the dream and in then taking note of whatever involuntary thoughts may occur to us in connection with it'; repeating the process with each portion of the dream 'we cherish a confident belief that in the end ... we shall arrive at the dream-thoughts from which the dream originated' (*Interpretation*, pp. 526-27). After considering the possible objections to this process, he writes: 'We might also point out in our defence that our procedure in interpreting dreams is identical with the procedure by which we resolve hysterical symptoms; and there the correctness of our method is warranted by the coincident emergence and disappearance of the symptoms' (p. 528). In his *Introductory Lectures*, he puts this point more succinctly still: 'Symptoms are never constructed from conscious processes; as soon as the unconscious processes concerned have become conscious, the symptom must disappear' ('Lecture XVIII: Fixation to Traumas – The Unconscious' (1916-17), in *SE*, XVI, 273-85 (p. 279)).

Bearing in mind all these conditions under which thoughts are associated, it might be said that what the system of association in fact does, is, like the detective genre, to 'guarantee large areas of irrelevance' (Miller, p. 34) in the mind. In *No Name* we see something of the irrelevant, arbitrary nature of the association between sign and signifier in the signal codes which Magdalen and Captain Wragge establish. It is most striking in the conversation which they have about how she should inform him if Noel Vanstone has proposed:

'Is there no other way but telling you?' she asked suddenly. 'I can control myself while he is with me – but I can't answer for what I may say or do, afterwards. Is there no other way?'

'Plenty of ways,' said the captain. 'Here is the first thing that occurs to me. Leave the blind down over the window of your room up-stairs, before he comes. I will go out on the beach, and wait there within sight of the house. When I see him come out again, I will look at the window. If he has said nothing, leave the blind down. If he has made you an offer – draw the blind up. The signal is simplicity itself; we can't misunderstand each other'. (*No Name*, p. 308)

'Plenty of ways ... Here is the first thing that occurs to me'; and so the association between signifier and signified is established. Any symbolism in it is illusory, there is no missing link by which to explain it.⁹⁶

It is in *Armadales*' Ozias Midwinter that we see distilled many of the implications of associationism that I have discussed in this section. Uncertain whether the signs in his life spring from an association with Providence or Chance, Fate or Coincidence, yet obsessively fearing that the underlying narrative is a doom-laden prediction of his future that is coming to pass, Midwinter becomes psychologically and physically restricted – *angst*-ridden, in fact. If his fears are correct, he will become the murderer of his dearest friend, if wrong, he finds himself in Walter Hartright's position, fearing the stigma of fixed ideas, the threat of monomania in his 'tracing back everything strange that happened ... always to the same hidden source and the same sinister influence.' In Freudian terms, too, whether his *angst* is neurotic or not would depend on whether or not the danger he feels is real, which involves him in further questioning.

Midwinter (whose real name is Allan Armadale) suffers from anxiety about the future, which stems from a letter written to him by his long-dead father. In it, his father reveals that he murdered the father of his closest friend, also called Allan Armadale, by locking him in a cabin

⁹⁵ D. A. Miller, *The Novel and the Police* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), p. 33.

⁹⁶ Bourne Taylor's description of Collins's novels, as 'disrupt[ing] any fixed relation between the sign and its referent' (*Secret Theatre*, p. 15) is a useful one, and the more so if we consider this disrupted relation in the context of the full implications of associationism. For though there is no hidden meaning in the arbitrary, Saussurian 'language' that Magdalen and Wragge establish between themselves (although others would be 'unconscious' of its meaning) it is often the case with Collins's work that, two elements, that may perhaps jar with each other, commonly in the physical features of his characters, may or may not be connected by a hidden link. Magdalen's 'incomprehensibly and discordantly light' eyes (*No Name*, p. 6), Captain Wragge's 'parti-coloured' ones (p. 140) Jennings's piebald hair (*The Moonstone*) Miserimus Dexter's combination of beautiful, powerful torso and powerless legs (*The Law and the Lady* (1875)) may, like Marian's appearance, be explained by hidden connections, or they may have no meaning behind them, they may be simply and nonsensically there because of their similarity or contrast with existing features, or any other number of associative conditions. There is little way of knowing for sure.

in a sinking boat, in revenge for being defrauded of a wife. Having made firm friends with Allan Armadale the younger before he reads this letter, Midwinter is devastated to read the words:

Hide yourself from him under an assumed name. Put the mountains and the seas between you; be ungrateful, be unforgiving; be all that is most repellent to your own gentler nature, rather than live under the same roof, and breathe the same air with that man. Never let the two Allan Armadales meet in this world: never, never, never! (*A*, p. 48)

Having read this letter, Midwinter cannot thereafter dissociate his relationship with his friend from its message. The association between himself and Allan, their fathers' histories, and a threatening and possibly murderous future, has been strongly established. He burns the document, with the help of Decimus Brock (who is a clergyman, the anti-fatalist voice in the novel), in an attempt to break free of fate, but finds, as Basil's father found in removing the record of his son from the family book, the mind holds on to its associations, once made. One night, Midwinter and Allan become stranded at sea, while investigating what turns out to be the very boat on which his father murdered Allan's. Allan, who is cheerful and unsuperstitious, unable to see below the surface of anything, and has no idea of the history of their fathers, dreams what Midwinter fears is a prophetic dream, gloomy and ominous.

After this, Midwinter cannot conceive of his life without associating it with the different scenes within Allan's dream. In an episode in which he encounters a view that he thinks resembles a scene from the dream, he experiences a marked sense of restriction:

For a moment his mind struggled blindly to escape the conclusion that had seized it – and struggled in vain. Here, close round him and close before him ... was the room that Allan had seen in the Second Vision of the Dream. (*A*, p. 183)

But whether Midwinter is actually fettered by destiny, or by his own restricted associative capability, in which all things find fearful reference to Allan's dream and his father's letter, is unclear. In the description of the shock that Midwinter suffers here, we certainly get *angst* in its original sense – in the phrase 'close round him and close before him' we witness the active 'restriction' from which the word descends. Freud comments - 'Anxiety [*Angst*] has an unmistakable relation to *expectation*: it is anxiety *about* something. It has a quality of *indefiniteness and lack of object*'.⁹⁷ Another editor's note, attached to 'about', reveals to us that the word Freud uses is 'vor', as Strachey translates, 'literally, "before"' ('Supplementary Remarks', p. 165 n.), which is even more helpful for understanding Midwinter's condition, in essence a superstitious dread of a destiny that may or may not have been correctly foretold. With his father's words on his heart he displays *angst* 'vor' an indefinite but threatening future with which he fears he is unavoidably associated because of his unbreakable family ties which connect him to a murderous past. In his letter, his father writes:

⁹⁷ Sigmund Freud, 'Supplementary Remarks on Anxiety' (Addendum B to 'Inhibitions, Symptoms and

I see danger in the future, begotten of the danger in the past – treachery that is the offspring of *his* treachery, and crime that is the child of *my* crime. Is the dread that now shakes me to the soul, a phantom raised by the superstition of a dying man? I look into the Book which all Christendom venerates; and the Book tells me that the sin of the father shall be visited on the child. (*A*, p. 47)

The future outlined (and it is as indistinct as that) in his father's letter is perhaps most frightening to Midwinter because it implies his involvement in a future crime. As the son of a murderer, his anxiety is that he will find himself a murderer too, and of his closest friend. Midwinter's tendency to feel this fear is portrayed as hereditary in itself, a result of unbreakable family associations - 'Say, if you like, that the inheritance of my father's heathen belief in Fate is one of the inheritances he has left to me. I won't dispute it' (p. 101). Midwinter feels doubly anxious. He feels the need to search for his hereditary 'piece of paper', his father's 'murdering passions' (p. 89) in outward omens, for he cannot find them within. This search is compounded by his father's superstitious tendency, passed down narratively (in the letter) as well as genetically. Midwinter's symptoms, therefore, go on to surpass a mental restriction; like Anne Catherick, he begins to manifest a narrow mental outlook in his physical responses. His condition is exacerbated by the fact that he has to keep his fears secret from Allan. The narrator writes of the 'cruel necessity of self-suppression' that he has to battle under daily (p. 102). Unlike Walter Hartright, who responds to the confusing signs that he encounters by taking on the job of bringing their hidden, explanatory links to light, Midwinter's plight, his constant questioning, must remain secret, by necessity consigned to darkness, which means that he manifests its symptoms.

One morning, on the day that he and Allan are to meet the Milroys, the tenants of Allan's cottage, Midwinter displays a 'strange outbreak of gaiety' in stark contrast to his 'ordinarily quiet demeanour'. In contrast to Allan's belief that he was witnessing a new side to Midwinter's character, the truth is that 'it was only a new aspect of the one ever-recurring struggle of Midwinter's life' (*A*, p. 220):

With his whole mind still possessed by the firm belief that the Fatality had taken one great step nearer to Allan and himself ... with his face still betraying what he had suffered, under the renewed conviction that his father's death-bed warning was now, in event after event, asserting its terrible claim to part him, at any sacrifice, from the one human creature whom he loved – with the fear still busy at his heart that the first mysterious Vision of Allan's Dream might be a Vision realized ... with these triple bonds, wrought by his own superstition, fettering him at that moment as they had never fettered him yet, he mercilessly spurred his resolution to the desperate effort of rivalling, in Allan's presence, the gaiety and good spirits of Allan himself. (*A*, pp. 220-21)

The chain metaphors used in this passage leave us with a striking sense of Midwinter's fettered mental state, his *angst*, in the face of the unknown (but templated) future. Later, as his false spirits reach a hysterical climax, Midwinter experiences a corresponding physiological

restriction, which recalls Anne Catherick's breathlessness – 'He leaned against a tree, sobbing and gasping for breath, and stretched out his hand in mute entreaty to Allan to give him time' (*A*, p. 225). These anxious signs anticipate Freud's account of the dynamics of *angst*, contained in his 'Supplementary Remarks on Anxiety':

The individual will have made an important advance in his capacity for self-preservation if he can foresee and expect a traumatic situation of this kind which entails helplessness, instead of simply waiting for it to happen. Let us call a situation which contains the determinant for such an expectation a danger-situation. It is in this situation that the signal of anxiety is given. The signal announces: 'I am expecting a situation of helplessness to set in', or: 'The present situation reminds me of one of the traumatic experiences I have had before. Therefore I will anticipate the trauma and behave as though it had already come, while there is yet time to turn it aside.' ('Supplementary Remarks', p. 166)⁹⁸

Midwinter's 'mute entreaty' as he weakly leans against the tree is a picture of helplessness, which augments and physically enacts Walter Hartright's 'helpless discomfort' which arises from the need to feel that everything appearing before him fits neatly into an associative structure, that it is connected to an underlying meaning. Freud, elsewhere in his 'Supplementary Remarks', uses the term 'psychical helplessness' (p. 166), a description which can be applied again and again to Midwinter who, with his 'sensitive self-tormenting nature', constantly struggles against the fear that he is a pawn of fate – "What *must* be, *will* be," he thought once more. "What have I to do with the future, and what has he?" (*A*, p. 202). This anxious search for meaning within a life that begins to him to resemble a collection of confusing signals from destiny, begins to find its way into his speech towards the end of the novel – 'What do you mean by that?' (p. 622), 'What does that mean?' (p. 626).

As Miller argues, however, at the moment of truth, the irrelevant factors drop away; in the climax of the book, Midwinter, realizing that Allan may be the victim of a murderous plot, calmly swaps places with him, putting himself at risk in the process:

Confronted by actual peril, the great nature of the man intuitively freed itself from the weaknesses that had beset it in happier and safer times. Not even the shadow of the old superstition rested on his mind now – no fatalist suspicion of himself disturbed the steady resolution that was in him. (pp. 657-58)⁹⁹

⁹⁸ This idea of anticipating a trauma and behaving as though it had already come, in an attempt to master it, is something that Collins profoundly understood, as we see in *The Moonstone*, in Franklin Blake's enactment of the passage from *Robinson Crusoe*: 'Fear of Danger is ten thousand times more terrifying than Danger itself, when apparent to the Eyes; and we find the Burthen of Anxiety greater, by much, than the Evil which we are anxious about' (*The Moonstone*, p. 110). This is taking to a more practical, demonstrative and plot-based level what in *Armada* remains symptom-based (although equally physiological as a response to danger).

⁹⁹ Although he has Midwinter calmly assign a Providential, benevolent meaning to Allan's dream at the end of the novel, Collins himself was not immune to this kind of anxious questioning when faced with visible and bewildering signs whose associations were unclear; he too felt a need to ascribe some meaning to such portents. In the appendix to the novel he recounts a startling coincidence connected with the denouement of *Armada* that on the one hand suggests some deeper reason, sets up an urge towards meaning, but on the other, cannot be assigned any specific explanation: 'Persons disposed to take the rational view [of Allan's dream] may, under these circumstances, be interested in hearing of a coincidence relating to the present story, which actually happened, and which in the matter of "extravagant improbability", sets anything of the same kind that a novelist could imagine in flat defiance.

'In November, 1865, – that is to say, when thirteen monthly parts of "Armada" had been

In contrast to Alexander Smith's view of *No Name*, in which, he wrote, 'every trifling incident is charged with an oppressive importance: if a tea-cup is broken, it has a meaning, it is a link in a chain; you are certain to hear of it afterwards' (cited in Page, p. 141), in *Armadale* the search for some great scheme behind the signs, some monumentally significant association between them, is illusory. It leads not only to what is diagnosed, at the moment of truth (also the moment when the symptoms disappear) as an unequivocally neurotic *angst*, a teetering on the borders of monomania, but it also leads to crime. For it is Lydia Gwilt's feeling that there ought to be meaning in the fact that there are two Allan Armadales ('It's almost maddening to write it down – to feel that something ought to come of it – and to find nothing come' (*A*, p. 441)) that eventually gives birth to her murderous scheme. Collins does offer a closure, an answer, the equivalent to an unveiling of the villain in the detective novel:

I once believed that [the dream] was sent to rouse your distrust of the friendless man whom you had taken as a brother to your heart. I now *know* that it came to you as a timely warning to take him closer still. (p. 677)

As Miller suggests, however, this has the effect of leaving all the once charged signs lying around, all the possibly relevant associations unfulfilled by the possible hidden links the reader and Midwinter had assigned to them. This, for Collins, is association's result. It can lead to the wonderful emergence of long-forgotten memories, to creative activity in sleep, but it also produces a series of blind alleys, the impinging on the individual of anxious memories or thoughts, a network of irrelevance crowding in upon clear thought and purpose, the confusion of meaning.

Freud's view, a deeply deterministic one, in which everything psychical is relevant, was very different:

For it is demonstrably untrue that we are being carried along a purposeless stream of ideas when, in the process of interpreting a dream, we abandon reflection and allow involuntary ideas to emerge ... No influence that we can bring to bear upon our mental processes can ever enable us to think without purposive ideas; nor am I aware of any states of psychical confusion which can do so ... It has been regarded as an unfailing sign of an association being uninfluenced by purposive ideas if the associations (or images) in question seem to be interrelated in what is described as a 'superficial' manner – by assonance, verbal ambiguity, temporal coincidence without connection in meaning, or by any association of the kind that we allow in jokes or in play upon words ... But the true explanation of this easy-going state of things is soon found. *Whenever one psychical element is linked with another by an objectionable or superficial association, there is also a legitimate and deeper link between them which is subjected to the resistance of the censorship.* (*Interpretation*, pp. 528, 530)

published; and, I may add, when more than a year and a half had elapsed since the end of the story, as it now appears, was first sketched in my note-book – a vessel lay in the Huskisson Dock, at Liverpool, which was looked after by one man who slept on board, in the capacity of shipkeeper. On a certain day in the week, this man was found dead in the deck-house. On the next day, a second man, who had taken his place, was carried dying to the Northern Hospital. On the third day, a third shipkeeper was appointed, and was found dead in the deck-house which had already proved fatal to the other two. *The name of that ship was "The Armadale".* And the proceedings at the Inquest proved that the three men had been all suffocated *by sleeping in poisoned air!* (*A*, p. 678)

For Freud, association was the key to all elements of mental processes, a way by which he would unfailingly find the pathogenic idea, the dream-thought, a system that held within it all the answers. In this he retained something of the faith in the system that was expressed by those poets who wrote of 'association's mystic power'. We see something of the intoxication and excitement that such a magically accessible system, with its promise of certain results, the revelation of a clear underlying plot which serves only to reaffirm psychoanalysis, created in him and his followers in his words in the *Introductory Lectures* of 1916-17. He comments, 'the analysis, interpretation and translation of neurotic symptoms proved so attractive to psychoanalysts that for a time they neglected the other problems of neurosis'.¹⁰⁰ To paraphrase Magdalen Vanstone's words about her narrow-minded critics, Freud and his followers fastened on the interpretation of symptoms, and passed all the other problems of neurosis by. Psychoanalysis fell into two contradictory traps that the doctrine of the association of ideas creates – the deterministic, convenient acceptance of every sign and symptom as associated with something significant, and the constant treading and re-treading of the same agreeable and gratifying path, the following of the same chain, which leads to narrow ideas. The philosopher and psychologist William James sensed these qualities in Freud. Writing to Theodore Flournoy in 1909, he related how he had recently been to an international congress at Clark University 'in order to see what Freud was like'. His verdict ran thus: 'I confess that he made on me personally the impression of a man obsessed with fixed ideas. I can make nothing in my own case with his dream theories, and obviously "symbolism" is a most dangerous method'.¹⁰¹ Freud himself was well aware of his propensity to obsession. In a letter to Wilhelm Fliess of 1895, notable for its use of a term which I have already discussed, that of the hobby-horse, he wrote, 'a man like me cannot live without a hobbyhorse, without a consuming passion, without – in Schiller's words – a tyrant. I have found one. In its service I know no limits. It is psychology.'¹⁰² But this love of hobbyhorses, combined with an utter reliance on the system of association as the source of all answers, surely must lead to warped theory and therapy. James, in his word 'dangerous', seems to recognize that Freud's obsessive nature and his use of 'symbolism' to interpret dreams is an unwise combination, for symbols are often overloaded with possible meanings, and any number of associations can be created between them and the wish-fulfilment that Freud believes drives the dream.¹⁰³ Symptoms display a similar propensity

¹⁰⁰ Sigmund Freud, 'Lecture XVII: The Sense of Symptoms' (1916-17), in *SE*, XVI, 257-72 (p. 270).

¹⁰¹ William James to Theodore Flournoy, 28 September 1909, in *The Letters of William James*, ed. by Henry James, 2 vols (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1920), II, 326-28 (p. 328).

¹⁰² Letter from Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 25 May 1895, in *The Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 1887-1904*, trans. and ed. by Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985), pp. 128-31 (p. 129).

¹⁰³ Richard Webster writes of Freud's method of interpreting dreams, 'Freud juggled with symbols ... so that even the most apparently frustrating, tragic or pessimistic dreams could be interpreted as secretly fulfilling some wish or desire of the dreamer. The English psychiatrist W. H. R. Rivers pointed to one of the most remarkable features of Freud's hermeneutic strategies early on in the development of the

to association over-load in Freudian theory and therapy, which led Freud to conclude, in *Studies on Hysteria*, ‘it is very remarkable how often a symptom is determined in several ways, is “overdetermined”’ (*Studies on Hysteria*, p. 290), but which also leaves them open to interpretation in any way that seems best to the therapist.¹⁰⁴

Concerning dreams, Freud wrote ‘their motive force *is in every instance* a wish seeking fulfilment’ (*Interpretation*, p. 533, emphasis mine); association is as favourable a system as can be found within which to substantiate this absolutist theory. Freud wrote of dream symbols, which might be seen to bear fixed meanings:

It must be confessed that the presence of symbols in dreams not only facilitates their interpretation but also makes it more difficult. As a rule the technique of interpreting according to the dreamer’s free associations leaves us in the lurch when we come to the symbolic elements in the dream-content.¹⁰⁵

Yet, he continues, that the uncovering of the associations of the dreamer are still an essential part of the interpretations of such symbols:

We are ... obliged, in dealing with those elements of the dream-content which must be recognized as symbolic, to adopt a combined technique, which on the one hand rests on the dreamer’s associations and on the other hand fills the gaps from the interpreter’s knowledge of symbols ... The uncertainties which still attach to our activities as interpreters of dreams spring in part from our incomplete knowledge, which can be progressively improved as we advance further, but in part from certain characteristics of the dream-symbols themselves. They frequently have more than one or even several meanings, and, as with Chinese script, the correct interpretation can only be arrived at on each occasion from the context. This ambiguity of the symbols links up with the characteristic of dreams for admitting of ‘over-interpretation’ – for representing in a single piece of content thoughts and wishes which are often widely divergent in their nature. (*Interpretation*, p. 353)

psychoanalytic movement. Although Rivers was sympathetic to Freud’s enterprise, he drew attention to the fact that one of Freud’s rules was that only the analyst, studying the dream as a whole, was in a position to decide whether a particular symbol in a dream should be interpreted in one way or its opposite. “Such a method,” wrote Rivers, “would reduce any other science to an absurdity, and doubts must be raised whether psychology can have methods of its own which would make it necessary to separate it from all other sciences and put it in a distinct category.” (Webster, pp. 264-65; Rivers’s comment is taken from W. H. R. Rivers, *Conflict and Dream* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1923), p. 6.)

¹⁰⁴ In *Studies on Hysteria*, in the passage that leads to his conclusion that symptoms are overdetermined, Freud provides perhaps his most detailed and extreme account of what a model of association can be developed into. Freud writes: ‘What I have in mind is an arrangement according to thought-content, the linkage made by a logical thread which reaches as far as the nucleus and tends to take an irregular and twisting path, different in every case ... the course of the logical chain would have to be indicated by a broken line which would pass along the most roundabout paths from the surface to the deepest layers and back, and yet would in general advance from the periphery to the central nucleus, touching at every intermediate halting-place – a line resembling the zig-zag line in the solution of a Knight’s Move problem, which cuts across the squares in the diagram of the chess-board ... The logical chain corresponds not only to a zig-zag, twisted line, but rather to a ramifying system of lines and more particularly to a converging one. It contains nodal points at which two or more threads meet and thereafter proceed as one; and as a rule several threads which run independently, or which are connected at various points by side-paths, debouch into the nucleus.’ It is from this rather disorientating model, never attempted in such detail again, simplified for ‘The Aetiology of Hysteria’ (which suggests that Freud realized its speculative nature) that Freud concludes that symptoms contain many different associative possibilities. He continues with the words I have cited in the text: ‘To put this in other words, it is very remarkable how often a symptom is determined in several ways, is “overdetermined”’ (*Studies on Hysteria*, pp. 289-90).

¹⁰⁵ This, and the passage below it, were first published in the fourth edition of *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1914), after James expressed his reservations to his friend.

In other words, whether the meanings of symbols are fixed to what they traditionally represent or change according to the unique associations that have been created in the individual, is a constant question which only the therapist can in essence answer. This issue is compounded by certain rules, for example that of 'antithesis'. The antithetic rule corresponds to one of the conditions, listed in Hamilton's *Lectures on Metaphysics* which can give rise to association: 'if their objects ... stand in a relation ... of contrast'. Freud describes it thus, 'dreams feel themselves at liberty ... to represent any element by its wishful contrary'; this means that 'there is no way of deciding at a first glance whether any element that admits of a contrary is present in the dream-thoughts as a positive or as a negative' (*Interpretation*, p. 318). I have already quoted Freud as asserting that 'superficial' connections between elements in dreams that are seemingly connected simply 'by assonance, verbal ambiguity, temporal coincidence without connection in meaning, or by any association of the kind that we allow in jokes or in play upon words' (*Interpretation*, p. 530) signal a much deeper and more significant connection. In this list Freud is providing his own version of Hamilton's view of the many and varied conditions under which two elements can be associated. Unlike for Hamilton, however, for Freud, the association of ideas, for a superficial or coincidental reason, or for no reason at all (other than their simultaneous appearance before the individual), is not enough; it must always signal the underlying motives and drives that he himself has conceived of and theorized upon. Freud describes the importance of the therapeutic process of free association in psychoanalysis, which he employs in conjunction with the analysis of symbol in dream interpretation, a therapy which embodies two 'basic pillars of psycho-analytic technique':

In the psycho-analysis of neuroses the fullest use is made of these two theorems – that, when conscious purposive ideas are abandoned, concealed purposive ideas assume control of the current of ideas, and that superficial associations are only substitutes by displacement for suppressed deeper ones. Indeed, these theorems have become basic pillars of psycho-analytic technique. (*Interpretation*, p. 531)

Free association, '*the* basic method of psycho-analysis' (according to Malcolm Macmillan), was subject to the risk a complete reliance on association can produce, an acceptance of all the elements that a patient offered in therapy as supremely relevant. This is, I would suggest, once more combined with a narrow, fixed agenda on the part of the therapist. A result of this, as Macmillan suggests, is that 'free association evidently *creates* its data rather than *recovers* it'.¹⁰⁶ Macmillan's argument stresses that it is 'the deterministic assumptions on which the psycho-analytic method of observation is based' which lead to the misleading results on which Freud relied. His thinking, theorizing and working according to these 'assumptions' signals what

¹⁰⁶ Malcolm Macmillan, *Freud: The Completed Arc* (Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1991), p. 549. See also pp. 114-16 for Freud's deterministic views on free association.

Macmillan calls Freud's 'naïveté' (Macmillan, p. 2).

It is Freud's naïveté in his view of the association of ideas that sets him apart from his predecessor Wilkie Collins. Collins, as I have tried to show in this chapter, explored all aspects of the associative system, its unsettling and uncomfortable implications as well as its benefits. He portrayed association's ability to come up with hidden information, yet implicitly questioned the usefulness of that information. He examined the wonderful power of the mind to make associations, but also the eternal, binding nature of those associations, once made. He displayed the possibility of unconscious cerebration in the invisible links that association's processes employ, yet also touched on how the possibility of the existence of these hidden links could become a burden to the individual who felt compelled to bring them to light. Ultimately he portrayed a world, in *Armadale*, in which association with past, future, family and friends became a fear, in which the possibility of hidden or secret links lurked beneath the surface of the life of an individual whose anxious existence was then narrowly concentrated on detecting them. In all this exploration of association's most intricate potentialities Collins displayed, above anything, the illusory nature of the belief that it was a straightforward system to be tapped at will. As I will discuss in the next chapter, in considering the related faculty of memory, he explored similarly complicated and unsettling implications.

Chapter 3

‘Fallacies of Testimony’: *The Moonstone*, Victorian theories of
Memory and Freud’s Seduction Theory

Two critical approaches to The Moonstone

This chapter concerns the process of the reconstruction, from memory, of past scenes. With this emphasis in mind, *The Moonstone* (1868) might seem a predictably ‘Freudian’ text, a rather simple example of the prefiguration of psychoanalysis in Victorian literature. Its central element a scene in which a young man enters a young unmarried woman’s bedroom at night, steals her most precious jewel and is then protected by her silence, the memory of the incident not emerging into the public sphere until much later, *The Moonstone*, unsurprisingly perhaps, has been the focus of a considerable amount of psychoanalytic interpretation. Jenny Bourne Taylor cites Albert D. Hutter’s ‘Dreams, Transformations and Literature: The Implications of Detective Fiction’ as a ‘sophisticated’ example of such an approach, which, in her words, ‘argues for extending the dream as the paradigm for the text by moving beyond a reductive reading of dreaming itself purely as a form of infantile wish-fulfilment while interpreting the novel itself as a detailed allegory of sexual repression’.¹ A rather more ‘reductive’ offering (labelled so by Hutter, in fact)² is ‘A Detective Story: Psychoanalytic Observations’ by Charles Rycroft. This essay suggests, using scant biographical evidence combined with criticism of Collins’s novels, that:

1, there were in [Collins’s] mind certain specific constellations which compelled him in his writing to give symbolic expression to an unconscious preoccupation with the primal scene; 2, dissociation between the ideal (incestuous) and the depreciated sexual objects and projection were among the defenses he used in his attempts to master anxiety; 3, he was obsessed with the idea of virginity.³

I emphasize these readings in order to show where I stand in relation to a major interpretative approach to *The Moonstone*, to help assert the contrast between my approach to the novel and psychoanalytic interpretations of it. It would also be useful at this point to locate my work in

¹ Jenny Bourne Taylor, *In the Secret Theatre of Home: Wilkie Collins, sensation narrative, and nineteenth-century psychology* (London: Routledge, 1988), p. 175.

² Albert D. Hutter, ‘Dreams, Transformations, and Literature: The Implications of Detective Fiction’, *Victorian Studies*, 19 (1975), 181-209 (p. 204 n).

³ Charles Rycroft, ‘A Detective Story: Psychoanalytic Observations’, *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 26

relation to the viewpoint of Jenny Bourne Taylor, who, like me, privileges the work of various Victorian psychologists in her criticism of the novel; in contrast to my approach, however, she chooses not to fully explore the possible prefiguration of psychoanalysis by these commentators. In her consideration of *The Moonstone*, Bourne Taylor offers valuable insights, this time in two separate critical works: her *In the Secret Theatre of Home*, and a more recent paper, 'Obscure Recesses: Locating the Victorian Unconscious'.⁴ In her 1988 work, Bourne Taylor cites psychoanalytic criticism in order to give an idea of the interpretative possibilities of this, Collins's most intriguing novel, but then positions herself in contrast to it, as I also aim to do in this chapter. She states that her intention is to discuss 'how mid-nineteenth-century discourses on the unconscious are appropriated in *The Moonstone*', and adds that these discourses 'do not straightforwardly prefigure later Freudian or Jungian psychoanalytic models, though they might contribute to their formation' (*Secret Theatre*, p. 176). In her later paper she portrays Freud's work as 'drawing on and transforming ... well-known theories of the pervasive influence of unconscious mental processes', although not simply reproducing the nineteenth-century ideas which she discusses in relation to Victorian fictional texts ('Obscure Recesses,' p. 140). In this self-location, there is a sense in which, in her interpretation of *The Moonstone* more than any other of Collins's novels (because of all of them it is this novel that most 'offers a powerful model of the Victorian unconscious mind' ('Obscure Recesses', p. 173)), Bourne Taylor is traversing a little of the ground which I cover through the rest of this thesis, although my belief is that the prefiguration of Freud by nineteenth-century discourses on unconscious mental activity is a little more straightforward and simple, a stronger connection, than Bourne Taylor allows.

In this chapter, my point of concentration, however, will be slightly different from my usual emphasis. Instead of examining, as I do elsewhere, Freud's often unwitting development of certain Victorian ideas about the latent degrees of the mind, my reading of *The Moonstone* will suggest that Collins's novel acts as the manifestation of a growing awareness about the possibility of the fallibility of memory made by some Victorians, a realization which Freud himself seemed to repeat. In both cases, separated by some 30 years, there is a movement from a point of innocence to a wiser doubting, a pattern which I believe that Freud, allowing for certain complications which I will also explore, retraced, as a symptom of his ignorance of what had gone before him. In her later essay Bourne Taylor offers an interpretation of *The Moonstone* with which I agree, and which I hope to use as something of a starting point to emphasize our common ground, before I undertake my own exploration of the novel, and the implications of its message for Freud's work of the 1890s. Bourne Taylor's argument in 'Obscure Recesses' is a development of her 1988 view that *The Moonstone* is 'a study in ambiguity', a text whose narrators serve to 'highlight the shifting and provisional nature of

(1957) 229-45 (p. 238).

⁴ Jenny Bourne Taylor, 'Obscure Recesses: Locating the Victorian Unconscious', in *Writing and*

evidence, the arbitrary and unreliable nature of memory' (*Secret Theatre*, pp. 176, 202). She discusses *The Moonstone* in terms of an 1867 essay by Frances Power Cobbe, 'The Fallacies of Memory'. The metaphors Cobbe uses in describing memory in this essay will be central to my own interpretation of *The Moonstone*.⁵ Bourne Taylor quotes the following important passage from Cobbe's argument:

Memory is for ever likened by poets and rhetoricians to an engraved tablet, treasured in the recesses of mind, and liable only to obliteration by the slow abrasion of time, or the dissolving heat of madness. We venture to affirm that such a simile is not in the remotest degree applicable to the real phenomena of the case, and that memory is neither an impression made, once for all, like an engraving on a tablet, nor yet safe for an hour from obliteration or modification, after being formed. Rather is memory a finger-mark traced on shifting sand, ever exposed to obliteration when left unrenewed; and if renewed, then modified, and made, not the same, but a fresh and different mark. Beyond the first time of recalling a place or event, it is rare to remember again actually the place or the event. We remember, not the things themselves, but the first recollection of them, and then the second and the third, always the latest recollection of them.⁶

She then goes on to apply Cobbe's idea to Collins's novel:

The Moonstone has often been read as a prototypical detective novel because it seems to be above all a story about remembering – about how the latent past might be brought to consciousness and reclaimed, about how it might be interpreted, how it might be transcribed and transmitted to future generations, how a stable and moral social identity is built ... But it is also the account of the hidden agenda which underlies this apparent coherence, and is thus equally a story about 'fallacies of memory', about what is intractable, about the silencing and erasure of hidden linking narratives, about the processes which underlie the invention of the past. ('Obscure Recesses', pp. 167-68)

More specifically, Bourne Taylor writes that 'the carefully regulated testimony of the central narrators is never completely reliable' (p. 170) and that the subsequent deaths of certain main witnesses to different events in the story (Ezra Jennings and Rosanna Spearman) render their narratives slippery and, to quote Bourne Taylor quoting Cobbe, 'not "yet safe for an hour after being formed"' (p. 171). Bourne Taylor emphasizes that what she has elsewhere described as the 'embedded chain' structure of the novel (*In the Secret Theatre*, p. 180) contributes to a warping effect 'as each narrative reinterprets the previous one' ('Obscure Recesses', p. 172), only compounding the unreliability of Franklin Blake's narrative as he relies on others' testimonies to 'reinforce his own hazy recollection of events' (p. 172). In all this she relates *The Moonstone* to Frances Power Cobbe's 1867 essay, which I will also privilege in my discussion of the novel.

Bourne Taylor's valid interpretation of *The Moonstone* in terms of false memory forms part of a much longer essay on three different writers, and it is clear that her argument would have benefited from a great deal more development which only increased space would have rendered possible. Particularly intriguing is her passing comment that Cobbe's view of memory

Victorianism, ed. by J. B. Bullen (London: Longman, 1997), pp. 137-79.

⁵ This essay, 'The Fallacies of Memory' was first published in 1866 in the American journal, the *Galaxy*.

⁶ Frances Power Cobbe, 'The Fallacies of Memory', in *Hours of Work and Play* (London: N. Trübner &

'strikingly anticipat[es] the arguments around our own "false memory syndrome"' ('Obscure Recesses', p. 155). As various critics, including Richard Webster, Frederick Crews, and Richard Ofshe and Ethan Watters argue, the damaging occurrence of various incidents of this condition in the late twentieth century find their roots in Freud's seduction theory of the 1890s, a short-lived doctrine that partly grew out of his mistaken (and, as I will show, typically nineteenth-century) belief that, once made, a memory trace was pure and indestructible.⁷ In this chapter I will try and fill in something of the gap created by Bourne Taylor's brief allusion to the history of false memory. I propose to offer my own interpretation of *The Moonstone*, not only in terms of Frances Power Cobbe's essay but also using various later works by William Carpenter, whose particular life-long interest was what he termed 'Fallacies of Testimony'. The issues of testimony are fundamentally linked to the vagaries of the processes of recounting and recalling, and also to the ideas of law and justice. As Cobbe writes, 'how large a share ... of our public justice, depends on our reliance upon the veracity of memory, it is needless to show' ('Fallacies of Memory', p. 88). With the introduction of the idea of testimony, it is possible to define more precisely the type of memory that was coming under question at this time. It was actually testimony that Cobbe and Carpenter were discussing – attempting to remember, giving an account of the past, as distinguished from the rare spontaneous revival of memory traces, which were triggered independently of the will.⁸ As Cobbe argues, 'Memory is a coy and wilful

Co., 1867), pp. 87-113, (pp. 103-04).

⁷ See Richard Webster, *Why Freud was Wrong: Sin, Science and Psychoanalysis* (London: Fontana, 1996), pp. 195-213, Frederick Crews, 'The Unknown Freud' in Frederick Crews, et al., *The Memory Wars: Freud's Legacy in Dispute* (London: Granta, 1997), pp. 33-73, Richard Ofshe and Ethan Watters, *Making Monsters: False Memories, Psychotherapy, and Sexual Hysteria* (London: André Deutsch, 1995), pp. 289-304.

⁸ Carpenter writes in *Principles of Mental Physiology*, 'the doctrine of the indelibility of Memory rests on the spontaneous revival ... of the long dormant "traces" left by such former impressions as are referable to one or other of the three following categories: – (1) States of Consciousness as to places, persons, languages, &c., which are *habitual* in early life, and which are, therefore, likely to have directed the *growth* of the Brain; (2) Modes of Thought in which the formation of Associations largely participates, and which are likely to have modified the course of its *maintenance* by Nutrition after the attainment of maturity; or (3) Single experiences of peculiar force and vividness, such as are likely to have left very decided "traces," although the circumstances of their formation were so unusual as to keep them out of ordinary Associational remembrance' (W. B. Carpenter, *Principles of Mental Physiology: With their Applications to the Training and Discipline of the Mind, and the Study of its Morbid Conditions* 4th edn (London: Henry S. King & Co, 1876), p. 454. Hereafter, *Mental Physiology*). It seems, then, that the marvels of association, whose processes are partly unconscious, remain, in some sense, sacrosanct, the deep physical traces they leave on the mind making them invulnerable to attrition. Cobbe also introduced an exception to the fallacies of memory which was based firmly on association: 'The form of memory most safe from such distortions is unquestionably the verbal memory, where the words to be remembered are arranged either in regular verse or in that special kind of rhythmical prose which answers the same purpose of keeping them in close phalanx. The reason why such words are remembered is plain. The trace they make in the memory each time they are repeated is marked precisely in the same furrow. Any divergence is not (as in the case of other errors of memory) an exaggeration or distortion, but a positive transformation, which the rhythm usually disowns, or which, if permitted by the rhythm, yet jars upon ear or sense. After the curious process of committing verses to memory has been achieved, we do not very often find ourselves betrayed by such unconscious transformation. We may lose the trace altogether, or find it broken here and there, but we rarely find a wrong word established in our minds in the place of a right one, as we find a wrong circumstance of an event or feature of a scene. The real nature of this kind of memory remains, after all efforts to elucidate it, one of the most marvellous of all the mysteries of our nature. The law of association of ideas is surely here developed to the uttermost. After the lapse of

witness, who will not be interrogated with point-blank questions, nor browbeaten by cross-examination' ('Fallacies of Memory', p. 110). She describes the unsettling practical reality of the unreliable nature of this witness in a context where its implications could be crucial, the courts of law:

In our Courts of Justice it is notorious how continually the most honest witnesses contradict one another on the simplest matter of fact, and thereby prove the inaccuracy of memory, even when acting under the pressure of conscience, alarmed by judicial oaths and the tremendous results of a trial for capital offence. (p. 96)

The notoriety attached to the testimonies given in official judicial situations would probably have also struck Collins, who had studied for a short time at Lincoln's Inn, and since then had shown a writer's interest in legal matters.⁹ How much more that witnesses to a series of events connected with an already solved mystery, giving testimony after a gap of months, may risk inaccuracy, is one of the issues that this chapter will explore. Gabriel Betteredge, the first witness, describes the scheme of narration in the novel:

I am acting under orders, and ... those orders have been given to me (as I understand) in the interests of truth. I am forbidden to tell more in this narrative than I knew myself at the time. Or, to put it plainer, I am to keep strictly within the limits of my own experience, and am not to inform you of what other persons told me – for the very sufficient reason that you are to have the information from those other persons themselves, at first hand. In this matter of the Moonstone the plan is, not to present reports, but to produce witnesses. I picture to myself a member of the family reading these pages fifty years hence. Lord! what a compliment he will feel it, to be asked to take nothing on hearsay, and to be treated in all respects like a Judge on the bench.¹⁰

twenty years, a few leading words will suggest to us line after line, perhaps hundreds of lines together, till we seem to draw out an endless coil of golden chain which has lain hidden in the deepest treasury of our minds. When we release it again, it furls up into so small a compass that we forget our very possession of it, and it may lie there, perchance, till, in extreme old age, when half our mental wealth is lost in oblivion, we may draw out once more the poem we loved long ago, and repeat, with faltering voice, the words we sang in the fresh tones of youth' ('Fallacies of Memory', pp. 107-08).

⁹ William Clarke gives an idea of Collins's interest in legal cases. He cites an episode in the 1850s in which Dickens and Collins, in Paris, found, in an old bookstall, Maurice Méjan's *Recueil des Causes Célèbres*, in Collins's own words "some dilapidated volumes of records of French crimes, a sort of French Newgate Calendar ... In them I found some of my best plots" (William M. Clarke, *The Secret Life of Wilkie Collins* (London: W. H. Allen, 1988), p. 100).

¹⁰ Wilkie Collins, *The Moonstone* (1868), ed. by J. I. M. Stewart (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966), p. 233. The 'thus far and no further' concept that we see embodied in the instructions to the narrators is also played out with regard to the texts which inform them, that provide the background to the novel. There is a nervous selectivity with regard to quotation; we see something of this in the way the Carpenter and Elliotson texts, the scientific theory behind the reconstruction, are presented to Franklin by Jennings. The first is taken entirely out of context, written on a slip of paper, the second is presented marked out with pencil so as to ensure Franklin's reading of only what he is meant to see. Similarly with Betteredge's reading of *Robinson Crusoe*; he wants to see only so much from Defoe's novel, it is simply a collection of small fragmentary quotations for him. This is illustrated most strongly when Franklin and Rachel get married and Betteredge 'applied the one infallible remedy' for intoxication, *Robinson Crusoe* (p. 518): "With those Thoughts, I considered my new Engagement, that I had a Wife" – (Observe! so had Mr Franklin!) – "one Child born" – (Observe again! that might yet be Mr Franklin's case, too!) – "and my Wife then" – What Robinson Crusoe's wife did, or did not do, "then," I felt no desire to discover. I scored the bit about the Child with my pencil, and put a morsel of paper for a mark to keep the place: "Lie you there," I said, "till the marriage of Mr Franklin and Miss Rachel is some months older – and then we'll see!" (p. 519) When the imminent arrival of the heir is announced, Betteredge produces the marked passage proudly. However, there is still the blindness to what comes after, what the wife did

It is the judge's duty to sift out the truth from the testimony of the witnesses, of course; however, around the time that Collins's novel was written, judgement too was rendered problematical by ideas on the workings of the unconscious mind. In the same year that *The Moonstone* was published, Carpenter, in his 1868 lecture on 'The Unconscious Activity of the Brain', talked of the creation of an unconscious mental context into which fitting judgements would readily adhere, 'giving a bias to our judgments, of which we may be entirely unaware'. The source of 'this kind of perversion', he argued, lies 'deep down in that stratum of the mental constitution, which represents the results of those early influences for which the individual himself is not responsible'.¹¹ We see the demonstration of Carpenter's point, in fact, in the character of Franklin Blake, the protagonist of *The Moonstone*. In trying to form a judgement as to whether he should bring the diamond into the household according to Colonel Herncastle's will, in wondering if by doing so he is 'serving his vengeance blindfold, or ... vindicating him in the character of a penitent and Christian man' (*The Moonstone*, p. 75), Franklin, in effect, becomes the sum of his education:

'From all I can see, one interpretation is just as likely to be right as the other.'

Having brought matters to this pleasant and comforting issue, Mr Franklin appeared to think that he had completed all that was required of him. He laid down flat on his back on the sand, and asked what was to be done next.

He had been so clever, and clear-headed (before he began to talk the foreign gibberish), and had so completely taken the lead in the business up to the present time, that I was quite unprepared for such a sudden change as he now exhibited in this helpless leaning upon *me*. It was not till later that I learned – by assistance of Miss Rachel, who was the first to make the discovery – that these puzzling shifts and transformations in Mr Franklin were due to the effect on him of his foreign training. At the age when we are all of us most apt to take our colouring, in the form of a reflection from the colouring of other people, he had been sent abroad, and had been passed on from one nation to another, before there was time for any one colouring more than another to settle itself on him firmly. As a consequence of this, he had come back with so many different sides to his character, all more or less jarring with each other, that he seemed to pass his life in a state of perpetual contradiction with himself ... He had his French side, and his German side, and his Italian side – the original English foundation showing through, every now and then, as much as to say, 'Here I am, sorely transmogrified, as you see, but there's something of me left at the bottom of him still.' Miss Rachel used to remark that the Italian side of him was uppermost, on those occasions when he unexpectedly gave in, and asked you in his nice sweet-tempered way to take his own responsibilities on your shoulders. You will do him no injustice, I think, if you conclude that the Italian side of him was uppermost now. (*The Moonstone*, pp. 76-77)

Commentators whom Collins respected enough to quote in his novel (in the case of Carpenter) and later to correspond with (in the case of Frances Power Cobbe)¹² were, around the year 1868,

then. According to the modern Penguin edition, edited by Angus Ross, she died. (Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), p. 298). Selective narratives therefore may encourage a certain selective blindness.

¹¹ William B. Carpenter, 'On the Unconscious Activity of the Brain' (Weekly Evening Meeting, Friday March 27, 1868), *Proceedings of the Royal Institution*, 5 (1868), 338-345 (p. 344). Hereafter, 'On the Unconscious Activity'.

¹² I have mentioned Collins's later correspondence with Cobbe in my last chapter. There is no biographical evidence to show that he knew her personally in 1868. Bourne Taylor rightly points out, however, that a certain part of *The Moonstone*'s landscape, near the shifting Shivering Sand, is named

rendering the mental landscape conditional and unstable, fundamentally vulnerable to all sorts of influences. Collins, as we can see in the above passage from the character of Franklin Blake with his 'puzzling shifts and transformations', imbibed something of this idea of psychic plasticity. Five years later, in 1873, Carpenter would elaborate on his 1868 argument to describe the effects on the individual of early influences in terms of the structure and fabric of a house, and his or her beliefs as its sometimes temporary furniture. It will be my argument that Collins, in a sense following Cobbe's lead in the use of imagery to describe the mind's processes, anticipated Carpenter's 1873 elaborate metaphorical model, for translation into a fictional landscape seemed the natural progression of doctrines that dealt with transcription and retranscription, attrition and wearing out, the mind subject to the natural processes of change that were to be found in all panoramas, internal or external. Therefore, whereas Bourne Taylor largely sees the narrative structure of the novel as the main site in which Collins offers the possibility that memories can be false or warped, I will privilege *The Moonstone's* ever-changing natural and domestic landscape as the bearer of a metaphorical richness which suggests the same irrevocable attrition of the traces of the past that Cobbe described in terms of 'a finger-mark traced on shifting sand' ('Fallacies of Memory', p. 104). This particular metaphor is explored by Bourne Taylor with regard to the novel's area of quicksand, the Shivering Sand, in which Rosanna Spearman buries herself and her crucial testimony; however, as I will show, just as there are more types of sand in Collins's novel than Bourne Taylor acknowledges, there is more breadth and depth and detail in *The Moonstone's* landscape, more metaphorical suggestiveness, than previous commentators have realized.

In all this it should be clear that my approach is opposed to 'psychoanalytic interpretations' of the novel. Far from offering a reductionist psychological light on Collins himself via Freud's ideas, in the style of Rycroft, I will in fact attempt to use Collins and the contemporaries who contributed to his intellectual context to offer an explanation of later remembering behaviour exhibited by Freud himself, which renders him, in Hans Eysenck's words, 'not what one might call a truthful witness'.¹³ Hutter's more intricate interpretation of *The Moonstone* may seem to be rather nearer my approach, in its emphasis on reconstruction and the transformation of history in its retelling. He writes about:

That restatement of the past in the language of the present which transforms the shape of a personal or collective history, which provides it with new meaning and coherence. The reconstructive act is essential to both form and content in detective stories, and it is most gripping when it is in opposition to an equally powerful sense of mystery – not merely the mystery of the crime, but of human experience more generally. Psychoanalysis undertakes a similar and broader reconstruction, and it, too, attempts to shape a personal history into its most complete and most convincing form. Reductionism occurs, as it occurs in the sterile forms of detective fiction, with an insistence on total explanation. (Hutter, p. 200)

However, the result of reconstruction, in Hutter's view, is obviously an increased proximity to

'Cobb's hole', which she believes is 'significan[t]' ('Obscure Recesses', p. 171).

¹³ Hans Eysenck, *Decline and Fall of the Freudian Empire* (London: Penguin, 1986), p. 25.

an early truth, which he defines as the wishes and drives of infancy (Hutter, pp. 190-91). He writes, 'the language of analysis, the act of retelling, alters the apparently irreversible nature of chronological time; how we remember an event and how we restate it determines for us its historical reality' (p. 190). This, I hope to show, represents a contrast to how reconstruction is viewed and how it works, in certain Victorian psychological texts, and in *The Moonstone*; the more the past is sought, is talked and written about, the more elusive it becomes. This is a move away from truth, not towards it. Hutter's description of the aim of psychoanalysis, 'to shape a personal history into its most complete and most convincing form' exposes the vulnerability of the therapeutic technique to abuse, to a dangerous loss of power in the patient, a break from any touchstone of actual reality, in favour of a 'psychic reality'. Hutter shows his awareness of this potential weak spot in his chosen discipline, in his words, immediately following, on reductionism. However, here he only serves to implicate Freud himself, for it is he, as I shall later discuss, who in his efforts at the psychoanalytic reconstruction of early scenes supposedly experienced by his patients, displayed, especially in the 1890s, 'an insistence on total explanation'. In their more uncertain, less absolutist vision, it was certain Victorians, as I hope I will make clear, who displayed a superior insight to later thinkers where the matter of the authenticity, or otherwise, of memories was concerned.

Shifting Scenes: The Landscape of The Moonstone

"First the inner hall," Betteredge wrote. 'Impossible to furnish that, sir, as it was furnished last year – to begin with.'

'Why?'

'Because there was a stuffed buzzard, Mr Jennings, in the hall last year. When the family left, the buzzard was put away with the other things. When the buzzard was put away – he burst.'

'We will except the buzzard then.'

Betteredge took a note of the exception. "'The inner hall to be furnished again, as furnished last year. A burst buzzard alone excepted.'" Please to go on, Mr Jennings.'

'The carpet to be laid down on the stairs, as before.'

'... Sorry to disappoint you sir. But that can't be done either.'

'Why not?'

'Because the man who laid that carpet down, is dead, Mr Jennings – and the like of him for reconciling together a carpet and a corner, is not to be found in all England, look where you may.' (*The Moonstone*, p. 454)

The conversation in the above passage from *The Moonstone* takes place as Ezra Jennings, the doctor's assistant, and Gabriel Betteredge, the faithful house-steward, are, after the lapse of a year, making preparations to reconstruct the scene of Franklin Blake's 'theft' of the diamond from Rachel Verinder's bedroom. The picture painted here of the changes that time imposes on a landscape, even an internal one, shielded from the elements, is symptomatic of Collins's novel. *The Moonstone's* landscape, as I will argue in this section, reproduces something of the shifting and transitory nature of Frances Power Cobbe's metaphors for the temporality of memory, which invoke the coastal landscape of sea and sand, but it also anticipates the images

used by W. B. Carpenter in his 1873 lecture about mental development and change, 'On the Psychology of Belief'.¹⁴ The opening image of Carpenter's paper is provided by Cobbe, in a seascape metaphor which illustrates the transformative process involved in the progress of collective thought. In the vast shift in thinking in present times, she writes, 'a whole mass of living thought seems steadily and slowly upheaved, and the ocean is moved to its depths' (cited in 'Psychology of Belief', p. 211). It is from this imagery of the sea that Carpenter evolves his own metaphor; our knowledge and belief is the building at risk from wave and flood:

New methods of research, new bodies of facts, new modes of interpretation, new orders of ideas, are concurring to drive onwards a flood which will bear with unprecedented force against our whole fabric of doctrine; and no edifice is safe against its undermining power, that is not firmly bedded on the solid rock of truth. ('Psychology of Belief', p. 212)¹⁵

The *Moonstone's* place is fittingly between these two related and intricate models of mind and its alterations, at a time in which, as I will suggest, the realization that memory was not an absolute faculty was fully dawning on Collins, as a thoughtful Victorian. Inherent in this realization, however, was an appreciation, consequent on even a small amount of self-awareness, that beliefs and opinions also eroded and developed in time, as a natural result of the mind's processes. This would become the subject of Carpenter's 1873 paper.

In Carpenter's lecture, thought or knowledge would resemble a fabric background in the mind, and beliefs the furniture that filled its recesses:

Our beliefs must be carefully distinguished from our knowledge; and they seem to me to bear much the same relation to it, that our furniture has to the building in which we put it. The walls (are or ought to be) solid and enduring; so is everything that deserves to be called knowledge. Each stone supports, and is supported by, the rest; and nothing but a weakness of its foundation or a decay of its material can make our fabric of thought uninhabitable. But the beliefs with which we furnish it have not the same durability. Adapted to meet our temporary needs, they may be either poor in material, or but slightly put together. A carpet wears out, and, when past shifting and patching, must be replaced by a new one; a table or chair breaks down, and, after successive repairs, is discarded as no longer serviceable.

¹⁴ W. B. Carpenter, 'On the Psychology of Belief' (The Roscoe Lecture delivered before the Literary and Philosophical Society of Liverpool, November 24, 1873), in W. B. Carpenter, *Nature and Man: Essays Scientific and Philosophical* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., 1888), pp. 211-38.

¹⁵ The connection of seascape and the building at risk from its elements may naturally have been suggested to Carpenter through his religious belief. One of the parables in St. Matthew's gospel concerns the building of houses, and the importance of the nature of their foundations: 'Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it' (*Matthew 7. 24-27, Authorised King James Version*). Both with Carpenter and Cobbe, there is a feeling that the only absolute can be God; with God Cobbe ends her 1867 essay, 'is it a hard matter to be alone in the Universe with GOD?' ('Fallacies of Memory,' p. 113). Carpenter, at the end of his 1876 paper 'On the Fallacies of Testimony in Relation to the Supernatural', accepting that there may have been distortion in the gospel narratives when miracles were described, cites Locke's declaration, 'the doctrine proves the miracles, rather than the miracles the doctrine' (cited in 'On the Fallacies of Testimony in Relation to the Supernatural' (first published in *Contemporary Review*, January 1876), in *Nature and Man*, pp. 239-60 (p. 260). Hereafter, 'Fallacies of Testimony'). God is the only foundation; the rest at this time for these two commentators seems as shifting sands.

Or perhaps our requirements change; and some article which was at first made expressly in accordance with them, proves no longer suitable to our needs; so that, finding it in our way, we wish to get rid of it. Some pieces of our furniture, again, originally of more substantial make, have become faded and old-fashioned; but they may be family heirlooms, or we may have ourselves become attached to them; and so, not liking to discard them altogether, we put them away in some dark corner, or perhaps consign them to a seldom-visited lumber-room, where they rest almost forgotten in their obscurity. But at last some ray of sunshine throws a brighter light than usual upon our dark corner; or the opening of the shutters of our lumber-room lets into it the unwonted light of day; and we then find our old sofas and four-post beds so moth-eaten and decayed, that we turn them out of our house instanter. ('Psychology of Belief', pp. 214-15)

Carpenter's elaborate metaphor of the mind as the fabric of a room and of beliefs as furniture in it, recalls William Hamilton's statement, in *Lectures on Metaphysics and Logic*, about the 'obscure recesses' of the psyche, that 'the mind may, and does, contain far more latent furniture than consciousness informs us it possesses'.¹⁶ It forms an accurate description of the process of the construction, acceptance or rejection of beliefs, religious, political, social or scientific, which took place in the collective as well as the individual Victorian mind. Carpenter shows his awareness of this in a reference to the scientific hypothesis, 'now on its trial at the bar of public opinion' that 'if adopted as a principle of construction, will give a new shape to a large part of our fabric of thought' – 'the doctrine of evolution' ('Psychology of Belief', pp. 236, 237). For it is the case that the changing mental landscape which I believe is represented in *The Moonstone*, and which is explored anecdotally, theoretically and metaphorically in Frances Power Cobbe's essay 'The Fallacies of Memory', was first perceived as unstable, shifting, uncertain, as a result of the effects of evolutionary theory. In the conclusion of Cobbe's essay we find graphic reference to this doctrine:

On our generation of mankind has come the knowledge of an isolation, such as younger races never felt, and perhaps could less have borne ... Science, as she marches round us in wider and yet wider circles, leaves ever a hard and barren track behind her, on which no flower of fancy may bloom again. And at this hour she tells, or threatens to tell us yet more – that if we would know the parents from whom we came, whose Paradise-home yet seems the cradle of our infancy, we must retrace the world's course not for six thousand years, but for ages of millenniums, and find them at last – not beautiful and calm, conversing in Eden with the sons of God – but simious-browed and dwarf of limb, struggling with the mammoth and the cave-bear in the howling wilderness of an uncultured world. ('Fallacies of Memory', p. 112)

This uncertainty inherent in a past about which we were previously so sure is simply the beginning of a history that at every turn of its recording is vulnerable to distortion. The rot starts at individual level, as the familiar famous figures of antiquity are rendered slippery by the vagaries of immediate memory:

When short, pithy sayings are universally given to certain characters, and have obtained currency, wherever the supposed speaker's name is known, we might justly assume that if historical memory be ever reliable, it would be in such a case. Yet the notorious fact is, that all sayings, and aphorisms, and war-cries, nay, all very striking and characteristic anecdotes of any kind, are precisely the doubtful bits of

¹⁶ W. Hamilton, *Lectures on Metaphysics and Logic* (1859), ed. by H. C. Mansel and John Keith, 7th edn, 4 vols (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1865), I, 339.

the story of each great man's life. ('Fallacies of Memory', p. 92)

As a result of such misinformation, 'immense fallacies have been imbedded for ages in the memory of all civilized nations' (p. 92). It is this defect of collective memory that is to Cobbe more painful than individual misrememberings:

To know that what we deem we recall so vividly is but a poor, shifting reflex – hardly of the thing itself, only of our earlier remembrance of the thing – this is sad and mournful. Almost more terrible it seems to confess the fallaciousness of the great traditions of History, and in the waste of waters, over which we are drifting, to behold the barks of past centuries no longer stretching their sails in our wake, but growing hazy and spectral in the mist of doubt, till some we deemed the richest galleons in that mighty fleet fade from our eyes, and are lost for ever in impenetrable cloud ... Must we be content to know, that only the outlines of the ancestral pictures of our house are true, and all the colours which make them beautiful, retouched and falsified? Perchance it must be so. Perchance the loneliness of human nature must needs be more impressed on us as science advances in the field of historical criticism, as in the fields of mythology and physiology. ('Fallacies of Memory', pp. 111-112, 113)

In the cases of both Carpenter and Cobbe there is a sense that, thanks to evolutionary theory, the collective internal landscape has changed, that the authenticity of the portrayal of the 'ancestral' homes that make up our view of history and the possibility of the inclusion of certain items of the 'furniture' of beliefs that fill those homes is now debatable. According to Carpenter, however, such a process, of reviewing and renewing one's mental fabric, is essential and healthy:

Every one ... who recognizes his obligation to make the best use in his power of the faculties with which he finds himself gifted, and who looks at the search for truth as his noblest object, the attainment of it as his most glorious prize, will be constantly on the watch for opportunities of *improving* his fabric of knowledge, and of perfecting its furniture of beliefs. Now in doing this, he will find that as his fabric is altered (or rather, alters itself), his furniture must be changed in accordance with it; ... Every one who has gone through a sufficiently long course of intellectual experiences, and has been accustomed to reflect upon them, must be conscious that this has often occurred to himself. He is surprised, on turning over the records of his earlier beliefs, to find how many of them he would now absolutely reject; not because they have been disproved by additional evidence, but because *he has himself grown out of them*. ('Psychology of Belief', pp. 233-34)

Jenny Bourne Taylor's description of *The Moonstone* as 'of all Collins's novels ... the clearest case of a story "in a state of contradiction with itself"' (*In the Secret Theatre*, p. 205) owes much to the fact that by 1868, Wilkie Collins himself, as a thoughtful Victorian, interested in the progress of science, had undergone something of this mental spring cleaning with regard to the concepts of psychology, the unconscious mind, and especially the nature, dynamics and reliability of memory. However, by setting his novel twenty years earlier, in 1848, I would suggest that he invited many more chronological problems than he may have realized when he began the project. It is often recorded that Collins was himself surprised by the ending of the novel; that he wrote much of it whilst dosed up with huge amounts of laudanum.¹⁷ His own

¹⁷ In 'A Note on Sources' at the end of *The Moonstone*, Stewart writes: 'Laudanum had a grip on [Collins] as he worked – to such an extent, indeed, that he seems at times to have written, or dictated,

preface to the 1871 edition of the novel tells of ‘the responsibility of ... weekly publication’ which ‘forced me ... to dry my useless tears, and to conquer my merciless pains’ (*The Moonstone*, p. 29). All this gives an impression of a story whose plot may have been decided in advance, but whose implications in a chronological, a historical sense, may have been overlooked until the immediacy of writing. I would like to suggest that it was not until Collins came to put pen to paper that he realized how much had changed in the twenty years since 1848, and that he himself was ‘surprised, on turning over the records of his earlier beliefs, to find how many of them he would now absolutely reject ... because *he ha[d] himself grown out of them*’.

We see something of the chronological struggle that Collins encountered in the part of the novel in which Jennings is giving Franklin the scientific background to his claims that it will be possible to reconstruct Franklin’s opium-induced trance and his actions whilst he was under its influence. True as usual to contemporary science, Collins provides Jennings with a copy of Elliotson’s *Human Physiology*, which was published in 1840, years before the date the novel was set. However, there is more of a problem with the extract from Carpenter: it is on a loose piece of paper, with no reference. This extract was in fact a leap into the future of psychological writing, taken from the fourth edition of Carpenter’s *Principles of Human Physiology* (1853), published after the events in the novel occurred. This extract appears in *The Moonstone* like a ghost from the future, an embarrassment of accuracy, a concession to Collins’s need to prove that respectable science backed him up, that he had done the necessary research into the theory behind the experiment. Carpenter, according to the piece of paper, asserts:

‘There seems much ground for the belief, that *every* sensory impression which has once been recognised by the perceptive consciousness, is registered (so to speak) in the brain, and may be reproduced at some subsequent time, although there may be no consciousness of its existence in the mind during the whole intermediate period.’ (*The Moonstone*, p. 440)

In contrast to Elliotson’s anecdote about the drunken porter who only remembered where he left his parcel when he was again intoxicated (similar versions of which are still being used to prove how the retrieval of memories is what is termed ‘context-dependent’),¹⁸ by 1868, Carpenter’s

while in a state of dissociated consciousness. “I was not only pleased and astonished at the finale,” he told a friend, “but did not recognize it as my own.” (p. 527) Catherine Peters also mentions this story (Catherine Peters, *The King of Inventors: A Life of Wilkie Collins* (London: Minerva, 1992), p. 303).

¹⁸ The story of the Irish Porter would come under the heading, in current psychology, of ‘context-dependent memory’. Alan Baddeley, in *Human Memory: Theory and Practice* (Hove: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1990), acknowledges the long tradition of his subject in the anecdotal observations of philosophers and psychologists by citing John Locke’s story of the man who could only remember all the steps of a dance when a certain piece of furniture was in the room (cited in Baddeley, p. 268; the story appears in John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), ed. by Peter H. Nidditch, 4th edn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), p. 399). Baddeley then describes the sort of experiments on the mechanism of retrieval that have been carried out in recent years. He writes, ‘a study carried out by a colleague ... and I was concerned with the memory capacity of deep-sea divers. In one of our experiments, we had our subjects learn lists of words either on the beach, or beneath 15 feet of water, and then recall in either the same or the opposite environment ... There was ... a very clear *context-dependency effect*: if they learnt in one environment and recalled in the other, our subjects remembered about 40% less than if learning and recall occurred in the same environment’ (p. 268). Baddeley goes on

1853 view was an oversimplification as an account of the memory, thanks to Frances Power Cobbe, who was later (after Collins's novel was published) backed by Carpenter. Even before his mention of Cobbe's theory, in his 1874 *Principles of Mental Physiology*, Carpenter presents his former view as a rather limited one. Discussing what he calls 'temporary exercises of Memory' such as those undergone by people such as lawyers and actors, who have to learn vast amounts of material, only to promptly 'forget all about it' when it is no longer needed, he writes: 'It seems, then, to admit of question, whether *everything* that passes through our Minds thus leaves its impression on their material instrument; and whether a somewhat too extensive generalization has not been erected on a rather limited basis' (*Mental Physiology*, pp. 452, 453-54). Jennings's piece of paper therefore becomes a ghost both from the future *and* from the outdated past. In truth, Collins's task was an impossibly difficult one. He was not to know which way the theory of memory was to settle; by the time *The Moonstone* was written, the statement on Jennings's piece of paper was still Carpenter's latest opinion on memory, and Cobbe's view at this time was rather a lone voice, though a clear, strong one. The fact that Carpenter's 1853 view was rendered rather limited by Cobbe should not have been a problem for a novel set twenty years before; but Collins, as he shows in the Preface to the first edition of the novel, obviously saw the premise of the reconstructive experiment as a rather progressive one, and would have found it difficult to reconcile the contemporaneity of the appeal to living authorities with a theory that was no longer valid:

Having first ascertained, not only from books, but from living authorities as well, what the result of that experiment would really have been, I have declined to avail myself of the novelist's privilege of supposing something which might have happened, and have so shaped the story as to make it grow out of what actually would have happened – which, I beg to inform my readers, is also what actually does happen, in these pages. (*The Moonstone*, p. 27)

My suggestion in this chapter is that Collins tries to overcome this problem by explicitly agreeing, and by also implicitly disagreeing, with the Carpenter of 1853. He 'hedges his bets'. In Collins's very retranscription of Carpenter's words, in fact, we see what is an example of a symptom of this tension caused by the need he feels to compromise; it is, in addition, an interesting illustration, conscious or unconscious, of Cobbe's argument. In the journey from the 4th edition of *The Principles of Human Physiology* to Jennings's slip of paper, one of Carpenter's words is changed. Where on the paper there is a description of the registration of all impressions in the 'brain', Carpenter uses the more technical term 'Cerebrum'.¹⁹ This is a

to discuss the effect of the 'internal environment' of the individual on his or her memory – 'Here again there is evidence of context-dependency. In one study Goodwin et al. (1969) looked at the effect of alcohol on a number of memory tasks. They used the same design as described in the diving study above, and found broadly the same results; what their subjects learnt when drunk, they recalled better drunk than sober, while what they learnt sober was best recalled sober.' Then, recounting what are in essence contemporary versions of the case of the Irish Porter, Baddeley writes, '[the experimenters] describe cases in which their alcoholic subjects secreted money and alcohol while drunk, but were unable to find it when sober, duly recalling its hiding place when on their next binge' (p. 271).

¹⁹ William Benjamin Carpenter, *Principles of Human Physiology: With their Chief Applications to*

small change, but it represents the sort of modification that occurs to the original memory trace, perhaps in the interest of simplicity or improvement, and which begins, according to Cobbe, by small steps, to compromise the accurate reporting of an event or a saying:

Thus, as in accordance with various laws of mind, each fresh trace varies a little from the trace beneath, sometimes magnifying and beautifying it, through the natural bias of the soul to grandeur and beauty; sometimes contracting it through languid imagination; sometimes distorting it through passion or prejudice; in all and every case the original mark is ere long essentially changed. ('The Fallacies of Memory', p. 104)

Collins was, in a sense, right to hold a position of ambiguity, to show a gesture of support to both sides of the debate if he wished to be true to the latest opinions on memory. For there were respected commentators who still agreed with Jennings's piece of paper, and continued to do so. Two years after the publication of *The Moonstone*, Henry Maudsley would reiterate the marvels of the mind's recalling powers, both in terms which recall Carpenter's argument of 1853, and which use a seascape metaphor such as Cobbe might have used, but to reach an entirely different conclusion:

In a brain that is not disorganized by injury or disease, the organic registrations are never actually forgotten, but endure while life lasts; no wave of oblivion can efface their characters. Consciousness, it is true, may be impotent to recall them; but a fever, a blow on the head, a poison in the blood, a dream, the agony of drowning, the hour of death, rending the veil between our present consciousness and these inscriptions, will sometimes call vividly back, in a momentary flash, and call back too with all the feelings of the original experience, much that seemed to have vanished from the mind for ever. In the deepest and most secret recesses of the mind, there is nothing hidden from the individual self, or from others, which may not be thus some time accidentally revealed; so that it might well be that, as De Quincey surmised, the opening of the book at the day of judgement shall be the unfolding of the everlasting scroll of memory.²⁰

Maudsley's is a fundamentally Judaeo-Christian vision – nothing is lost because all is recorded in a vast, absolutist tome, of which our own minds are analogues, which will be read at the end of time. Cobbe and Carpenter, however, though often expressing faith in a God,²¹ have, it seems, been more shaken, and even humbled by the implications which evolution may begin to suggest for our view of history. Maudsley's view would be seen by Cobbe as rendered obsolete and outdated; in her description of such a view she explicitly draws on the metaphors which the issues of evolution inspired:

Like the old geologists who counted every fossil as an accidental deposit or relic of the Flood, we persist in attributing each freshly discovered error of memory, not to Nature, but to some singular chance, or some portentous cataclysm of the human faculties. ('Fallacies of Memory', p. 88)

Psychology, Pathology, Therapeutics, Hygiène, and Forensic Medicine, 4th edn (London: John Churchill, 1853), p. 808.

²⁰ Henry Maudsley, *Body and Mind: An Inquiry into their Connection and Mutual Influence, Specially in Reference to Mental Disorders; being the Gulstonian Lectures for 1870, Delivered before the Royal*

Cobbe's is not an un-Christian view. It is simply reluctant to attribute absolute qualities to human nature. It is, indeed, due to Cobbe's extension of the Christian view that 'we are "miserable sinners," and ... our natures are fallible' that she believes that 'we should recognize the habitual mendacity of our remembrance' ('Fallacies of Memory', p. 102). Cobbe acknowledges the personal discomfort involved in relinquishing the belief that our memory is infallible, 'so painful is the idea of the fallaciousness of one of our chief faculties, that we prefer to encounter the consequences of endless mistakes rather than face the humiliating truth, which would preserve us from them all' (p. 88). However, examining the strength of memory, testing it out, is a fundamental duty:

Let us candidly admit and intelligently study the phenomena of memory, and it cannot be but that our corrected judgment of its veracity will avail us better than our present habitual blind reliance. The Present, in our lives, is ever closely bound with the Past, and the cord which unites them is all woven of strands of memory. When we know that on the soundness of that cord we often hang honour, love, faith, justice, things more precious than life itself, our reluctance to test its strength would be as senseless as that of Alpine travellers who should refuse to try the rope which is to support them over the abyss, lest perchance, in sooth, it might prove to be insecure. ('Fallacies of Memory', pp. 88-89)

I believe that in a sense we can see the appearance of various, perhaps contradictory, models of mind and memory in *The Moonstone* as a sort of testing, reviewing process by Collins, similar to the way in which Carpenter (in 1873) recommends that a person 'examine into the foundations of his knowledge ... test the goodness of its materials, and ... try the security of its construction', otherwise he may be 'liable some time or other to find his fabric of thought overthrown, and himself buried in its ruins; and even though no wave should dash, no lightning-flash should shatter, it may ultimately fall to pieces from sheer decay' ('Psychology of Belief', p. 233).

It is not just Carpenter and Cobbe who figure in Collins's ongoing, often metaphor-based, process of testing and review in *The Moonstone*. It is interesting to note that in his 1877 adaptation of *The Moonstone* for the stage,²² Collins completely avoided the debate concerning the reliability of memory with which he felt the need to struggle in the 1868 novel. He did this most obviously by condensing down the events of the plot into the space of a day, thereby rendering unnecessary any portrayal of the natural attritional results of the passing of time. In contrast to the Yorkshire coast landscape of the novel, the play's events are set in Kent, and entirely indoors. The problem of chronology is overcome by placing the story in the present. Further, the authority which is relied on to authenticate the reconstruction scene is not Elliotson or Carpenter, but George Combe, author of *A System of Phrenology* (1825), the Dr. Combe whose story of the Irish Porter (originating with Dr. Abel) Collins cites Elliotson citing in the

College of Physicians, with Appendix (London: Macmillan and Co., 1870), p. 21.

²¹ See 'Fallacies of Memory', p. 113, 'On the Unconscious Activity', p. 345.

²² Wilkie Collins, *The Moonstone: A Dramatic Story, in Three Acts. Altered from the Novel for Performance on the Stage* (London: Charles Dickens & Evans, 1877).

novel.²³ Collins's choice to drop Elliotson at this point raises questions about why this is, and, in fact, why he did not go straight to Combe in the first place. One explanation may have been the extra dimension which certain other related passages in Elliotson's book add to the landscape of *The Moonstone* and the signs and tokens which pervade the novel. These are indirect references that would have only complicated Collins's much-curtailed play. In 1868, however, inviting such complication was an inherent part of Collins's engagement with issues of memory and consciousness.

Among the extracts in Elliotson's book that Collins may have encountered is an anecdote about an Italian nobleman, a somnambulist. It is noteworthy for its resemblance to the sleep-walking experiences (especially the second) of Franklin Blake. The narrator, after dinner and games at the nobleman's house, is told by the servants that their master would sleep-walk that night: after examining him 'with a candle in my hand; he was lying on his back, and sleeping with open, staring eyes', the narrator, along with the servants, played backgammon until he arose.

He then went in and out of several rooms, approached the fire, warmed himself in an armchair, and went thence into a closet where was his wardrobe. He sought something in it, put all the things into disorder, and having set them right again, locked the door, and put the key into his pocket ... He then mounted his horse and galloped to the house door ... After some time he went ... into a parlour in which was a billiard table. He walked around it several times, and acted the motions of a player.²⁴

Elliotson's anecdote here adds to the feeling within *The Moonstone* of a certain interchangeability of the waking and dreaming states, each with its oblivion of the other. When Blake leaves Betteredge to put the diamond in the bank, Betteredge hears him depart on his horse and then 'when I turned about in the yard and found I was alone again, I felt half inclined to ask myself if I hadn't woke up from a dream' (*The Moonstone*, p. 78). The world of *The Moonstone* is a world of signs and tokens, and these signs and tokens are clues. It is no wonder that its inhabitants sometimes feel as if they live in a dream-world – they are surrounded by symbols, each reflecting the other, and the answer to the mystery. It is something the reviewers sensed, that the objects in the novels signified more than the people – 'The hero has no qualities at all ... Such an array of dummies was never got together in any book of Mr. Wilkie Collins's before',²⁵ 'As to the various characters of the romance, they are secondary to the circumstances'.²⁶ It is conceivable that Collins gained inspiration for the character of Franklin

²³ Combe's 1825 work is the second edition, first published in 1819 as *Essays in Phrenology*; there is no first edition of *A System of Phrenology*. The extract was probably based on this edition, referred to as 'Combe's famous work on Phrenology' (*The Moonstone: A Dramatic Story*, p. 36), although the passage read by Rachel supposedly verbatim, from Combe's work (p. 75) is very much more colloquial and amusing than the language Combe uses when describing the incident (George Combe, *A System of Phrenology*, 2nd edn, (Edinburgh: John Anderson, 1825), p. 400).

²⁴ John Elliotson, *Human Physiology*, 5th edn (London: Longmans, 1840), pp. 638-39.

²⁵ Unsigned Review, *Spectator* xli (25 July 1868), in *Wilkie Collins: The Critical Heritage*, ed. by Norman Page (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), pp. 171-73 (pp. 172-73).

²⁶ Geraldine Jewsbury, unsigned review, *Athenaeum*, 25 July 1868, in Page, ed., pp. 170-71 (p. 171).

Blake, with his propensity to position 'the Italian side of him[self] ... uppermost' (*The Moonstone*, p. 77), from the above passage in *Human Physiology*. What is interesting is that, apart from the foray into the closet which Franklin accomplishes in his sleep, many of the other actions of the sleeping nobleman are attributed to Franklin when he is conscious - the horse-riding, the billiard playing. However, it could be said that when awake, Franklin is actually, in a sense, sleep-walking; he is asleep to his somnolent state and his activities while in it.²⁷

Betteredge, in coming across the passage in *Robinson Crusoe* on the night of the loss of the diamond, that tells that Fear of Danger 'is ten thousand times more terrifying than Danger itself, when apparent to the Eyes; and we find the Burthen of Anxiety greater, by much, than the Evil which we are anxious about' (*The Moonstone*, p. 110), has the key to the mystery in his hands, yet does not realize it. The loss of the diamond becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, inspired by the kind of anxiety displayed by *Armada*'s Ozias Midwinter, anxiety which in seeking to take control of a situation, produces visible symptoms. Just as Betteredge unknowingly holds a clue in his hands in this way, so does the unwitting Franklin on the day before Rosanna Spearman goes missing. We have already encountered Hamilton's metaphor of the line of billiard balls which helps illustrate the action of hidden associations. Franklin Blake, therefore, in 'knocking the balls about ... trying to get this miserable business of the Diamond out of my mind' (p. 178), was in fact using as a distraction the very instruments that may have suggested to him the principles of latent memory, and the theory, established by 1848, that memories can be retrieved under certain conditions and with the revival of certain associations - with the application of the right 'billiard-ball'. In his lack of direction in his billiards-playing, in which he reflects the somnambulism of Elliotson's Italian nobleman, who 'walked round [the billiard-table] several times, and acted the motions of a player', and in the use that he makes of his cue in directing attention, as he thinks, from the heart of things (when Rosanna Spearman appears to talk to him, he 'went on knocking the balls about, to take off the awkwardness of the thing' (*The Moonstone*, p. 178)), he in fact in a strange way is drawing attention to the matters at hand. In the same self-reflexive way, in 'taking care' of the diamond, deflecting trouble away from it, as he thinks he is in giving it to Godfrey whilst in his trance, he in fact attracts a much worse calamity. By attempting to avoid, before the event, what he wrongly sees as a risk or problem - the theft of the diamond by the Indians, Rosanna's embarrassed guilt - he blindly,

²⁷ A figure called 'Dr Franklin' was cited in many articles and books on dreaming, in the first half of the century, including Abercrombie's *Inquiries* and Elliotson's *Human Physiology*. He was a man who managed to accomplish feats worthy of consciousness, when asleep - according to Abercrombie he managed to resolve political matters in his sleep that had baffled him when awake (John Abercrombie, *Inquiries Concerning the Intellectual Powers and the Investigation of Truth*, 3rd edn (Edinburgh: Waugh & Innes, 1832), p. 284), and according to Elliotson he went for a swim, fell asleep in the water and managed to keep afloat in the same position, for nearly an hour (Elliotson, p. 633). It is interesting to speculate whether this figure influenced the naming of Franklin Blake. Blake is similar to Dr. Franklin in that he 'resolved' the problem with the diamond in his sleep, by taking possession of it and giving it to Ablewhite to transfer to the bank. But with Blake there is also a sense in which he sleeps when awake; his intuition, his good sense, his powers of observation sleep. Things (such as Rosanna's infatuation) have to be revealed to him.

and unconsciously, causes the real trouble in the story, as he takes the diamond himself to keep it safe, and his apparent disregard for Rosanna sends her to her suicide in the Shivering Sand.

Much has been written about Rosanna's grave, the Shivering Sand, as an emblem of the unconscious mind. Bourne Taylor writes:

The Shivering Sand is expressive because it *absorbs* its secrets, and thus sucks energy into itself rather than transforming it through continual interaction. It conceals its own past and the pasts of others, which have to be dragged back, painfully, on a chain of submerged associations. (*Secret Theatre*, p. 198)

The idea of the Sand sucking energy into itself fits in with the way in which Franklin, even in attempting to avoid trouble, creates it by seeming to attract it. These objects, the Shivering Sand and Franklin Blake, are the two sites of attraction that rule the life of Rosanna Spearman. My interest in the Shivering Sand is in what it tells us of the change of mental fabric that had occurred in Collins since he wrote *No Name* in 1862, a novel which contains a more straightforward and absolutist view of sand:

Nothing in this world is hidden for ever. The gold which has lain for centuries unsuspected in the ground, reveals itself one day on the surface. Sand turns traitor, and betrays the footstep that has passed over it; water gives back to the tell-tale surface the body that has been drowned. Fire itself leaves the confession, in ashes, of the substance consumed in it ... Look where we will, the inevitable law of revelation is one of the laws of nature: the lasting preservation of a secret is a miracle which the world has never yet seen. (*No Name*, p. 21)

Bourne Taylor has pointed out the contrast between the Shivering Sand and *No Name's* revelatory sand (*Secret Theatre*, p. 198). However, there are two types of sand in *The Moonstone*: the Shivering Sand and the firm sand on the beach, on which footprints can be made, and indeed, on which Rosanna's footprints are discovered. I would like to suggest that *both* these types of sand indicate a change in Collins's view of the mind by the time he wrote *The Moonstone*.

'Light or heavy, whatever goes into the Shivering Sand is sucked down, and seen no more' (*The Moonstone*, p. 169), 'What the Sand gets, the Sand keeps for ever' (p. 198) – so Rosanna's fate, in direct contrast to Collins's 1862 assertion that 'nothing in this world is hidden for ever', is pronounced by Betteredge, and then Mr Yolland, when Rosanna's footprints, leading to the Shivering Sand, are found. However, it then appears that there are two escape routes for objects, or people, that enter the Sand. The first is 'a shelf of rock, about half fathom down under the sand ... If she slipped, by accident, from off the Spit, she fell in where there's foothold at the bottom, at a depth that would barely cover her to the waist' (p. 198). The second is the chain that Rosanna attaches to the rock on one end, and from which hangs, hidden in the Sand, a tin case, containing clues to the past: her confession and the stained nightshirt that Franklin wore on the night of the loss of the diamond. Both escape routes mean that retrieval is entirely possible from the Sand, if provision is made, and if *consciousness wills it*. The ledge

which saves is equivalent to Carpenter's belief, frequently expressed, as if a type of out-clause to his teachings on 'Unconscious Cerebration' that the conscious mind, the will, can somehow 'direc[t] and contro[l]' the 'course' of unconscious activity and 'strengthe[n] or repres[s] its power' ('On the Unconscious Activity', p. 345). For a scientist who believed his mission was 'to be of use as a mediator in the conflict which has now distinctly begun between science and theology'²⁸, it was important to maintain that there was some sort of effect that consciousness could create on the sometimes immoral unconscious processes, involuntary as they seemed to be:

And so in the pursuit of Truth, the more faithfully, strictly, and perseveringly we aim to disentangle ourselves from all selfish aims, all conscious prejudices, the more we shall find ourselves becoming progressively emancipated from those unconscious prejudices which cling around us as results of early misdirection and erroneous habits of thought, and which are more dangerous to our consistency than those against which we *knowingly* put ourselves upon our guard. ('On the Unconscious Activity', p. 345)

Rosanna's early life and habits ('I was put in the prison, because I was a thief. I was a thief, because my mother went on the streets when I was quite a little girl' (*The Moonstone*, p. 362)), were detrimental to her chances of finding the saving ledge in the unconscious depths, or of wanting the ledge if she had found it. Carpenter describes unconscious prejudices in his lecture as 'cling[ing] around us', 'dangerous to our consistency'. Betteredge's description of the Sand ('Patches of nasty ooze floated, yellow-white, on the dead surface of the water. Scum and slime shone faintly in certain places' (p. 161)) seems to extend Carpenter's description of the properties of unconscious prejudices into a dynamic metaphor. Even if the ledge in the Sand is caught the person who finds him or herself waist deep will still have had an experience which is not only dangerous, but oozy and slimy, necessary to scrub off afterwards.²⁹ We appreciate something of the disgust the Sand inspires in the episode in which Franklin Blake retrieves Rosanna's lost memories.

Rosanna, then, perhaps because of the pattern her life has formed for her, avoids the ledge in the Sand, hides herself for ever, and thereby renders herself fundamentally a forgotten soul. It is her knowledge of the irreversible oblivion that lies within it that draws her to the Sand in the first place:

²⁸ W. B. Carpenter to Russell Carpenter, December 1874, in J. Estlin Carpenter, 'Introductory Memoir' in *Nature and Man*, pp. 1-152 (p. 117). This letter was written in the context of a passage about the subject of 'Mental Physiology', on which W. B. Carpenter, in that year, had just published a book. It obviously troubled him deeply to think of an unconscious part of the mind that was untouchable by morality, for he continues, '[Professor Clifford's] and H.'s doctrine of human automatism pure and simple, seems to me to strike at the root of all moral responsibility' (pp. 117-18).

²⁹ Early in the novel, Collins gives us an idea of Rosanna's propensity to attract stains that won't disappear with cleaning, in her conversation with Betteredge, who has found her crying about her past. He urges her, "your past life is all sponged out. Why can't you forget it?" Her reply comes in the form of an illustration springing from a spot of grease that had stained Betteredge's coat. He writes: 'The day before, Rosanna had taken out a spot for me on the lappet of my coat, with a new composition, warranted to remove anything. The grease was gone, but there was a little dull place left on the nap of the cloth where the grease had been. The girl pointed to that place, and shook her head. "The stain is taken off,"

The tide was on the turn, and the horrid sand began to shiver. The broad brown face of it heaved slowly, and then dimpled and quivered all over. 'Do you know what it looks like to *me*?' says Rosanna, catching me by the shoulder again. 'It looks as if it had hundreds of suffocating people under it – all struggling to get to the surface, and all sinking lower and lower in the dreadful deeps! Throw a stone in, Mr Betteredge! Throw a stone in, and let's see the sand suck it down!' (*The Moonstone*, p. 58)

This is a landscape, fundamentally a mixture of flood and sand, that forms a site of condensation of Cobbe's metaphorical illustration of our loss of the events of even the recent past:

Trying to recall the past week, month, year, we shall succeed in finding certain points here and there, a few stepping-stones in the flood of time. Some of them stand out high and clearly ... Others are nearly submerged under the ever-rising current of oblivion; and others, again, lie far down where we only see them in strange glimpses by day, or weird dreams by night. But when we have made the most of our poor memorials, there remains always a waste of unmarked sands of life, hours and days unnumbered, over which the swift river eddies fast, leaving no trace behind. ('Fallacies of Memory', p. 99)

This image finds a correspondence in the life that Rosanna Spearman led, especially in the eyes of the man she most wanted to be remembered by, Franklin Blake. Ordinarily, in Betteredge's words, 'he took about as much notice of her as he took of the cat' (*The Moonstone*, p. 92); it is her strange behaviour to him after the loss of the diamond, and when she suspects him of being the culprit, that marks the stepping-stones here and there in Franklin's memory – the conversation at the billiard-table, an encounter in the shrubbery. However, Rosanna feels these encounters are unmarked still in Franklin's mind through an unfortunate series of coincidences and breakdowns of communication. Franklin, after her buried narrative is presented, is at pains to explain this:

On the Friday night, as Betteredge truly describes it, she had found me alone at the billiard-table. Her manner and language suggested to me – and would have suggested to any man, under the circumstances – that she was about to confess a guilty knowledge of the disappearance of the Diamond. For her own sake, I had purposely shown no special interest in what was coming; for her own sake, I had purposely looked at the billiard balls, instead of looking at *her* – and what had been the result? I had sent her away from me, wounded to the heart! On the Saturday again ... the same fatality still pursued us. She had once more attempted to meet me in the shrubbery walk, and she had found me there in company with Betteredge and Sergeant Cuff. In her hearing, the Sergeant, with his own underhand object in view, had appealed to my interest in Rosanna Spearman. Again for the poor creature's own sake, I had met the police-officer with a flat denial, and had declared – loudly declared, so that she might hear me too – that I felt 'no interest whatever in Rosanna Spearman.' At those words, solely designed to warn her against attempting to gain my private ear, she had turned away and left the place: cautioned of her danger, as I then believed; self-doomed to destruction, as I know now. (*The Moonstone*, pp. 379-80)

It is surely the case, however, that the gap of communication between Franklin and Rosanna exists because of her station in life – Franklin has no idea how to talk to her. Despite his protestations, he asks Betteredge to 'make it right with Rosanna' (p. 183) after the encounter in the shrubbery, rather than talking to her himself. Betteredge finds her sweeping, vacant, in a

she said. "But the place shows, Mr Betteredge – the place shows!" (*The Moonstone*, p. 57).

state particularly common to grieving servants, according to Betteredge, who describes the low-key reaction of himself and his daughter to the news of Rosanna's death thus, 'we learn to put our feelings back into ourselves, and to jog on with our duties as patiently as may be. I don't complain of this – I only notice it' (*The Moonstone*, p. 200). Rosanna, then, after her final humiliation, her final 'mortification', to use a word applied by more than one character to her reaction to Franklin's disregard,³⁰ does her sweeping 'like a creature moved by machinery', among objects she had looked on 'hundreds on hundreds of times' (pp. 186, 185). This is a short return to the scene and activity of the 'unnumbered days' of Cobbe's description, before Rosanna finishes the 'mortification' that Franklin dealt her, and goes to her death in the 'unmarked sands', which, to her eyes, contain the 'hundreds of suffocating people' that recall Cobbe's words, 'like the faces in a great crowd, our past hours have gone by, and we remember only here and there a single one' ('Fallacies of Memory', p. 99). In avoiding the stone ledge she joins the vast number of unregistered faces, entering an oblivion that, as she believes in her grief, had characterized her unnoticed, unremembered life.

However, in the narrative that she so carefully concealed with Franklin's nightshirt, Rosanna made a final attempt at marking her existence in the mind of the man she loved. The retrieval of this narrative from the Sand, another striking scene in the novel, has attracted some interesting commentaries. Hutter, allowing for certain reservations that he expresses about the reductionism of this conclusion, believes that the Sand represents 'the fear of intercourse expressed by the primal scene' and that this reading means that, if we are to take a limited view, Franklin's retrieval of Rosanna's narrative 'tells us something of Collins's deeper fears and desires, and something as well about what a reader might be responding to as he is thrilled, or fearful, or even bored by *The Moonstone*' (Hutter, pp. 204, 205). Jenny Bourne Taylor, again, nearer to my emphasis on the Victorian psychological context, writes of the Sand, as we have seen, that 'it conceals its own past and the pasts of others, which have to be dragged back, painfully, on a chain of submerged associations' (*Secret Theatre*, p. 198). Her account in this particular case, however, is not only misleading but it oversimplifies. Once, by following his own plan of retrieval, he has 'sounded' the chain with a stick, Blake writes 'I drew it up without the slightest difficulty', belying the image of a painful dragging. What is painful and laborious, in contrast, is the finding of a sufficient length of chain to pull:

In a narrow little fissure, just within reach of my forefinger, I felt the chain. Attempting, next, to follow it, by touch, in the direction of the quicksand, I found my progress stopped by a thick growth of seaweed – which had fastened itself into the fissure, no doubt, in the time that had elapsed since Rosanna Spearman had chosen her hiding-place.

It was equally impossible to pull up the seaweed, or to force my hand through it. After marking the spot indicated by the end of the stick which was placed nearest to the quicksand, I determined to pursue the search for the chain on a plan of my own. (*The Moonstone*, p. 357)

³⁰ Limping Lucy, Rosanna's intimate friend, uses this word (*The Moonstone*, p. 227), as does Rosanna herself (p. 376). Penelope says to Betteredge after Franklin has announced his lack of interest in her in

What is stopping Blake from recovering the chain of associations is, in effect, the march of time. Circumstances, like the fabric background of the mind with the effects of education, have changed, and to find the 'past', Franklin has to employ other means, more distasteful, that bring traumatic and ghostly images to his mind:

I took up the stick, and knelt on the brink of the South Spit.

In this position, my face was within a few feet of the surface of the quicksand. The sight of it so near me, still disturbed at intervals by its hideous shivering fit, shook my nerves for the moment. A horrible fancy that the dead woman might appear on the scene of her suicide, to assist my search – an unutterable dread of seeing her rise through the heavy surface of the sand, and point to the place – forced itself into my mind, and turned me cold in the warm sunlight. I own I closed my eyes at the moment when the point of the stick first entered the quicksand. (*The Moonstone*, p. 357)

Tamar Heller describes this incident as 'the phallic stick penetrating the Sand's *vagina dentata*' which leads to the 'two erotic discoveries' of the nightshirt and the confession of love.³¹ She sees Franklin's detective work as the male appropriation of female secrets; I would prefer to see it as his misappropriation of Rosanna's Memory, and her memories. In direct contrast to the image Rosanna conjures up in her letter of the happy ghost she will become if he is kind to her after her death ('if there are such things as ghosts, I believe my ghost will hear it, and tremble with the pleasure of it' (*The Moonstone*, p. 379)), the ghost that Franklin imagines her to be is dreadful and frightening, forces him to see her, and turns him cold. Because of the change in circumstance that the interval of time has created, interestingly due to the laws of nature (one of which the 'inevitable law of revelation' was said by Collins to be), it is harder to find the chain, and therefore Franklin, again going contrary to her wishes, must follow his own plan to retrieve the tin, which involves in essence interfering with Rosanna's grave with a foreign body, the stick. When he has retrieved it, 'the action of the water had so rusted the chain, that it was impossible for me to unfasten it from the hasp which attached it to the case. Putting the case between my knees, and exerting my utmost strength, I contrived to draw off the cover' (pp. 357-58). This, another change to Rosanna's vision of the intimate moments that they will share at the Shivering Sand and displaying less respect to her Memory than she may deserve, is, like the growth of the seaweed, beyond Franklin's control; he does the best he can, under the circumstances, as does Jennings when the house cannot be restored to its former condition for the reconstruction of the loss of the diamond.

However, under his control is the responsibility Franklin bears towards Rosanna to read the letter she has written him. The fact that both Bruff and Betteredge finish it before he does represents a flouting of the wishes of Rosanna, who meant only Blake to read her most personal confession of love.³² The incident at the Shivering Sand is much more than dragging a chain of

the shrubbery, 'he's been mortifying and disappointing her for weeks and weeks past' (p. 185).

³¹ Tamar Heller, *Dead Secrets: Wilkie Collins and the Female Gothic* (New Haven, Ct.: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 150.

³² This flouting of Rosanna's last wishes also occurs when Blake arrives at the Sands. He is ready to make the discovery with Betteredge, who has to remind him that his instructions are to 'do it without any

associations to the surface to find the unscathed past in the same condition in which it happened those many months before. Both Franklin and Rosanna come to the scene we find enacted at the Sand with a set of prepossessions, which means that the past retrieved, the memory, can never be a pure unspotted thing; rather it is coloured by the narrative that tells of it, and the circumstances in which it is retold. Rosanna's narrative, once retrieved from the 'unconscious memory' of the Sands, is biased and twisted. Carpenter describes the process behind the difficulty an obsessed person (such as Rosanna) faces in representing events even to him or herself in an impartial way, in an article he published in 1876, 'On the Fallacies of Testimony in Relation to the Supernatural':

Though I have hitherto spoken of 'prepossessions' as ideational states, there are very few in which the emotions do not take a share; and how strongly the influence of these may pervert the representations of actual facts, we best see in that early stage of many forms of monomania, in which there are as yet no fixed delusions, but the occurrences of daily life are wrongly interpreted by the emotional colouring they receive. ('Fallacies of Testimony', p. 249)

These emotional prepossessions affect how certain characters see things at the time of their occurrence; but their effect on the memory of past events is even more devastating:

But every form of 'prepossession' has an involuntary and unsuspected action in modifying the memorial traces of past events, even when they were originally rightly apprehended. A gradual change in our own mode of viewing them will bring us to the conviction that we always so viewed them ... To few persons of experience in life has it not happened to find their distinct impressions of past events in striking disaccordance with some contemporary narrative, as perhaps given in a letter of their own. ('Fallacies of Testimony', p. 253)

There is therefore a double risk to 'the interests of truth' in assembling a mass of narratives by those, first, who may have either an axe to grind (as in the case of Miss Clack, who also has a pecuniary interest), or an emotional interest in events (as in the case of Franklin), and then who may have to wait a year to recall past events. Betteredge's words at the beginning of the novel are symptomatic of the piece:

I am asked to tell the story of the Diamond, and, instead of that, I have been telling the story of my own self. Curious, and quite beyond me to account for. I wonder whether the gentlemen who make a business and a living out of writing books, ever find their own selves getting in the way of their subjects, like me? (*The Moonstone*, p. 45)

Collins's self-professed aim in this novel, 'to trace the influence of character on circumstances' (p. 27) is perhaps true in more ways than is immediately obvious. In *The Moonstone* it seems to be the case that the more immediate accounts (for example, those narratives, such as Miss

person being present to overlook you' (*The Moonstone*, p. 354). Betteredge leaves, with the comment that 'there's nothing in the letter against your letting out the secret afterwards' (p. 356). Here is surely a compliance with the letter, but not the spirit of, the instructions Rosanna has given. In the event, also, Betteredge, his curiosity getting the better of him, returns early to the scene.

Clack's, or Ezra Jennings's, which are taken from a journal) are actually quite highly emotionally coloured, and therefore hold a danger that their writers may 'ge[t] in the way of their subjec[t]'. Jennings's admission of the 'yearning' he has 'for a little human sympathy ... which has survived the solitude and persecution of many years; which seems to grow keener and keener, as the time comes nearer and nearer when I shall endure and feel no more', hand in hand with a fervent wish to 'see a happiness of others, which is of my making' (pp. 448, 449), suggests a worrying emotional prepossession. In the context of a consideration of the life of the forgotten Rosanna, Jennings's possible bias is particularly strongly suggested. He too, according to Mr Candy, who writes the account of his demise, had a fitting death, 'he said – not bitterly – that he would die as he had lived, forgotten and unknown ... His story is a blank'; like Rosanna, too, his grave is unmarked, the natural processes of time only hide it more and more with each passing year (pp. 515, 516). However, before he dies, Jennings feels the fundamental need, like Rosanna, to leave some sort of final proof that he has lived. Buried with his life's work, his legacy therefore is the experiment that he devises. His words to Franklin on the day that he suggests the reconstruction of the loss of the diamond to him are significant: 'this is a marked day in your life, and in mine ... I believe that the vindication of your innocence is in my hands!' (p. 431). Here Jennings places himself firmly in the centre of events. His endeavour to assure himself of at least one marked day out of the countless unnumbered ones means that his emotional investment in the experiment is high, and raises the question of whether he should indeed be the one who gives an account of 'how the venture with the opium was tried, and how it ended' (p. 446). Conversely, Bruff's narrative, which is relatively uncoloured, is achieved by 'tracing my way back along the chain of events, from one end to the other' (p. 312), after the interval of a year or more³³ and includes large sections of dialogue that could hardly have been remembered word for word.³⁴ Carpenter would link both feeling and thought as eroding agents on memories in his description of 'the entire dissimilarity of the accounts of the same occurrence or conversation, which shall be given by two or more parties concerned with it, even when the matter is fresh in their minds, and they are honestly desirous of telling the truth':

And this diversity will usually become still more pronounced with the lapse of time: the trace becoming gradually but unconsciously modified by the habitual course of thought and feeling; so that when it is so acted on after a lengthened interval as to bring up a reminiscence of the original occurrence, that reminiscence really represents, *not* the actual occurrence, but the modified trace of it. And this is the source of an enormous number of 'fallacies of testimony'. (*Mental Physiology*, p. 456)

This view indicates disaster for the aim of serving 'the interests of truth', expressed by Franklin and Bruff (whose status as a lawyer is rendered particularly interesting in view of the

³³ Where the incidents involving John Verinder's Will is concerned, it is much more than a year.

³⁴ Interestingly, Carpenter later singles out a lawyer for an example of the tricks that memory can play: 'An able lawyer told me not long since that he had had occasion to look into a deed which he ... could have sworn to contain certain clauses; and to his utter astonishment, the clauses were not to be found in it. His habitual conception of the purpose of the deed had constructed what answered to the actual memorial

implications of Cobbe's, and later Carpenter's, conception of testimony for the processes of law); it is a warning that even this 'right way of telling' the story (*The Moonstone*, p. 39) can by no means be considered failsafe.

Carpenter's view, with its idea of the modification of memory traces which is self-confessedly informed by Cobbe's work,³⁵ also leads us to consider the traces in the firm sand, the marks that do not have to be dragged up from the depths to tell their tale. There appears in *The Moonstone* to be a certain amount of ambiguity attached to these, too, reflecting Frances Power Cobbe's metaphorical description of the models that memory may or may not fit:

Memory is neither an impression made, once for all, like an engraving on a tablet, nor yet safe for an hour from obliteration or modification, after being formed. Rather is memory a finger-mark traced on shifting sand, ever exposed to obliteration when left unrenewed; and if renewed, then modified, and made, not the same, but a fresh and different mark. Beyond the first time of recalling a place or event, it is rare to remember again actually the place or the event. We remember, not the things themselves, but the first recollection of them, and then the second and the third, always the latest recollection of them. ('Fallacies of Memory', p. 104)

From *No Name's* sand which 'turns traitor, and betrays the footstep that has passed over it' we have the sand of *The Moonstone*, which is threatening to become conspirator; on which, according to the laws of nature, it rains. Consequently examining footprints in the novel becomes a matter of great urgency:

I don't even know how long it was after the Sergeant had gone to the sands, when Duffy came running back with a message for me. Sergeant Cuff had given the boy a leaf torn out of his pocket-book, on which was written in pencil, 'Send me one of Rosanna Spearman's boots, and be quick about it.' (*The Moonstone*, p. 195)

When the boot is delivered to Cuff:

He snatched the boot out of my hand, and set it in a footmark on the sand ... The mark was not yet blurred out by the rain – and the girl's boot fitted it to a hair.

The Sergeant pointed to the boot in the footmark, without saying a word. (*The Moonstone*, p. 196)

To ascertain the events of the past, the Sergeant, by putting a different boot in the mark, has changed its impression in the sand for ever, as Cobbe describes. While unrenewed, the memory, the symbol of Rosanna's last seconds on earth, was 'ever exposed to obliteration' from the rain; when renewed by Cuff the print was 'modified, and made, not the same, but a fresh and different mark', after which time both the first and the second impression which had changed it were destroyed by the elements. Both types of sand in *The Moonstone's* landscape render Rosanna Spearman ultimately a forgotten life; hidden forever by the Shivering Sand, her last

trace' ('Fallacies of Testimony', pp. 253-54).

³⁵ Carpenter, in the same paragraph as the passage I have just quoted, writes of 'Miss Cobbe, who has

footmark erased, her only memorial is a narrative which Franklin Blake misuses at first and retells later, overlaying the events that were so real to her, with his own revisionary version. Ultimately, Rosanna's experience raises issues about the transience of existence, the impossibility of true memorials, of our ability to create any record that will really capture the lasting essence of ourselves as we were at any given point in time.³⁶

The irony is that the more detection that goes on in the form of asking people to remember the events of June 1848, whether by Sergeant Cuff, Franklin Blake or Gabriel Betteredge, the more elusive and slippery the past becomes, until eventually the situation occurs where the witness, having remembered 'not the things themselves, but the first recollection of them, and then the second and third, always the latest recollection of them' 'will find himself constantly going over *precisely what he has narrated*, and no more' ('Fallacies of Memory', p. 104). This is taken to an extreme in the example of the shattered memory of Dr. Candy, whose unconscious account of the past, its path having been trodden so many times in his comatose state, becomes a reiteration of certain words and phrases over and over:

'That is what you heard at his bed-side?' I said.

'Literally and exactly what I heard,' he answered – 'except that the repetitions are not transferred here from my short-hand notes. He reiterated certain words and phrases a dozen times over, fifty times over, just as he attached more or less importance to the idea which they represented. ... Don't suppose ... that I claim to have reproduced the expressions which Mr Candy himself would have used if he had been capable of speaking connectedly. I only say that I have penetrated through the obstacle of the disconnected expression, to the thought which was underlying it connectedly all the time'. (*The Moonstone*, p. 437)³⁷

Candy's recollection is not only a reiteration: the fragments collected by Jennings have already been made into a narrative in his mind, a telling of the story, with character sketch and explanation of motive '... Mr Franklin Blake ... and agreeable ... down a peg ... medicine' (p. 436)³⁸ (which becomes in Jennings's version of the narrative 'Mr Franklin Blake is clever and agreeable, but he wants taking down a peg when he talks of medicine' (p. 437)). The dialogue is assimilated into the narrative – 'he tells me', 'I say', 'he says' (p. 436) as if a third person is being informed of who is saying what in the exchange between Candy and Blake. Candy, even unconsciously, in his delirium, is here acting the witness in the box.

However, after he has gathered Candy's gap-filled testimony, Jennings then imposes his

especially directed attention to these "Fallacies of Memory" (*Mental Physiology*, p. 457).

³⁶ The fact that Collins wrote part of *The Moonstone* while mourning the death of his mother, to whom he was very close, may have contributed to this feeling of transience within the book, as he was forced to contemplate the reality of mortality and the inadequacy of memorials, on a personal level. See Peters, pp. 291-92, for an account of the death of Collins's mother and how it affected him.

³⁷ In my last chapter I discussed what I believe is Collins's prefiguration of the Freudian 'nodal point,' an important idea, or link in the associative chain, that connected many different chains together, in the manner of a railway station connecting railway lines. Jennings's description of Candy's narrative, that he 'reiterated certain words and phrases a dozen times over, fifty times over, just as he attached more or less importance to the idea which they represented' seems to be another example of this – the same idea keeps being encountered by Candy's delirious mind as it wanders along its chains of association, exactly in proportion as it bears importance.

own narrative preferences, his own distorting footprint (however closely it seems to 'fit') on it. The implication is that when we speak of our experience of the past, give our testimony, it is then appropriated by others into their own narratives, others who perhaps have 'woven this smooth and finished texture out of the ravelled skein' (*The Moonstone*, p. 438), but helped to obliterate the traces of the past in the process. Certain key phrases are kept by them and endlessly repeated to the extent that they become that past experience, but gaps are filled, the story is 'completed':

So strong is the dramatic element in us all that few ever detail a narrative without completing it by some touches not actually true, though conscientiously believed to *explain* the truth; to supply the genuine reason for this speech or the other action, or to bring into relief the real feelings of the actors. The fact is, we can never witness any transaction without making some theory of the motives, sentiments, and purposes of the agents; and, in telling the history thereof, we inevitably work out this theory in our description. ('Fallacies of Memory', p. 107)³⁹

In a sense the incident with Doctor Candy, Franklin and the laudanum on the night of Rachel's party has been dramatized twice by the time it gets to Franklin; once by Candy himself, whose sense of its inherent drama is obvious in the very plan he concocts to publicly catch Franklin out the morning after, and once by Jennings, who had the (self-confessedly warping) job of filling in the gaps in the narrative.

Cobbe's view of memory, in the end, has the effect of applying a question mark even to the experiment that is conducted at the end of *The Moonstone*, to 'recreate' the loss of the diamond. It may seem that the experiment, witnessed as it is by so many, its result recorded as it is immediately, and its subject never having relived it before in his memory (for he cannot remember it), is the one sacred, provable exact reconstruction of the events of the past. But Collins indicates by various means that this is not necessarily the case. First, the fact that the house cannot be exactly restored to its former state of the year before means that the conditions for the experiment are not quite right. Before talking to Betteredge about the arrangements, Blake asserts that Jennings 'considered it essential to the success of the experiment, that I should see the same objects about me which had surrounded me when I was last in the house'. 'It is absolutely necessary, Mr. Blake, to replace every article of furniture in that part of the house which may now be put away' (*The Moonstone*, p. 445), Jennings tells Franklin, yet concedes the loss of the buzzard, the change of carpets and the broken cupid's wing, on discussing the arrangements with Betteredge. Like the growth of the seaweed, these are the inevitable results of the passing of time. Despite this, however, the 'right' result is achieved. Here surely is the evidence that Franklin has lapsed into the same trance, and followed exactly

³⁸ Collins's ellipses.

³⁹ A very good example of someone who, an almost constant witness (rather than a participant), 'mak[es] some theory of the motives, sentiments, and purposes' of the 'transactions' she sees is Miss Clack, who colours everything she witnesses with the tint of evangelicalism. Deeper down, adding a warping agent to this religious "prepossession", and therefore complicating her view of events still further, is an undeniable sexual desire for Godfrey Ablewhite.

the same pattern as he did the year before, through the processes of his own unconscious mind dictating which actions he should take, from memory.

What this 'memory' is made up of, though, is debatable. Franklin has spent the intervening year trying to picture how the diamond was taken, and then himself in the act of taking it. He has examined Rachel for all the details of what she saw on that night, and has talked about his own unconscious act to others, including Ezra Jennings. Is it conceivable, then, that on the night on which the experiment is conducted, he is in fact re-enacting Rachel's memories, and not replaying what actually happened? Could it be that Franklin is remembering Rachel's 'latest recollection', and these are guiding his movements under trance? It must be remembered that Rachel actually only saw a limited amount of the action that occurred on the night of her birthday. Ablewhite saw Franklin arise from his room and heard the words he spoke to himself in his anxiety about the diamond. Jennings's journal testifies that Franklin spoke the same words that Ablewhite later confesses him to have spoken the year before. However, I would like to suggest the possibility that Cobbe's theory applies here that Franklin, in replaying in his mind what he could have done, what his motives may have been, does as Cobbe describes – 'We begin by saying: "It might have happened so and so," till having realized in fancy that hypothetical case more vividly than we remember the real one, we suddenly and unconsciously substitute the fancy for the fact' ('Fallacies of Memory', p. 106); the fact that the fancy and the fact on this occasion 'fit', as Jennings's gap-filling fitted, and as Rosanna's boot fitted, does not mean that Franklin has not overlaid the actual past with a false recollection, or unconsciously remembered, as he was supposed to, part of his experience, and 'filled in' the rest.

There is no doubt that Franklin, like many of the witnesses to the experiment, was emotionally "prepossessed"; unconsciously inclined to act in a certain way, for the sake of his relationship with Rachel. Carpenter describes the effects of prepossession in his essay 'Fallacies of Testimony in Relation to the Supernatural', in which he concentrates on the phenomena of 'Supernatural Events', which include mesmeric experiences. His view of these phenomena even puts the evidence of the witnesses to the experiment in doubt:

In fact, although we are accustomed to speak of 'the evidence of our senses' as worthy of the highest credit, nothing is easier than to show that the evidence of any one sense, without the check afforded by comparison with that of another, is utterly untrustworthy ... [M]ental prepossessions ... *produce* sensations having no objective reality ... I refer to the sensations produced by *mental expectancy*, a most fertile source of self-deception. ('Fallacies of Testimony', p. 244)

Even conceding that the witnesses saw Franklin take the 'diamond' on the night of the experiment, a question-mark also hangs over Jennings's narrative of events and his interpretation of them:

I would briefly direct attention to the influence of prepossessions on those *interpretations* of our

sensational experiences, which we are prone to substitute for the statement of the experiences themselves. Of such misinterpretations, the records of science are full; the tendency is one which besets every observer, and to which the most conscientious have frequently yielded; but I do not know any more striking illustrations of it than I could narrate from my own inquiries into mesmerism, spiritualism, etc. ('Fallacies of Testimony', 247-48)

Jennings's description of Elliotson as 'one of the greatest of English physiologists' (*The Moonstone*, p. 440) is significant; an explicit compliment with an implicit question-mark, bearing in mind the ambiguity attached to the experiment. Bruff's opinion that it 'looked like a piece of trickery, akin to the trickery of mesmerism, clairvoyance, and the like' and Betteredge's original view of the proceedings as 'a conjuring trick' (*The Moonstone*, pp. 452, 453), reinforce the idea of the experiment being on a par with mesmerism and spiritualism; a supernatural event, inspired by a mesmerist, of the type that W. B. Carpenter has spent years investigating:

Circumstances have led me from a very early period to take a great interest in the question of the value of testimony, and to occupy myself a good deal in the inquiry as to what is scientifically termed its 'subjective' element ... The general result of these inquiries has been to force upon me the conviction, that as to all which concerns the 'supernatural' ... the allowance that has to be made for 'prepossession' is so large, as practically to destroy the validity of any testimony which is not submitted to the severest scrutiny according to the strictest scientific methods. ('Fallacies of Testimony', p. 242)

With the subject and every one of the witnesses to the experiment, including the scientist, who later describes the events of that night as 'my brief dream of happiness' (*The Moonstone*, p. 483), wanting the same result, it is certain that that result will be produced, from the simple force of prepossession at each stage – in Franklin, the witnesses, and the report of the experiment. Carpenter asserts, 'we are liable to be affected by our prepossessions at every stage of our mental activity, from our primary reception of impressions from without, to the highest exercise of our reasoning powers' ('Fallacies of Testimony', p. 243), and in *The Moonstone* we see the whole range of this mental activity covered at each stage in the process of the experiment.

I attach particular significance to this essay by Carpenter and emphasize its relevance to the occurrences of *The Moonstone* because I believe it represents the development of a section in Cobbe's 1867 essay, which concerns the effects of emotion on witnessing and memory. Cobbe writes:

Precisely in proportion as any event involves great interest, just so far the memory of it is liable to be obscure. The excitement of strong feelings of anger, horror, astonishment, fear, causes the exciting transaction to be involved to the spectators in a sort of mental blur, like the perceptions of a man drunk with wine. Vehement excitement, in truth, is intoxication; an intoxication often more dangerous, because less suspected, than that produced by any material stimulant ... The results on the senses ... and the subsequent distortion and partial effacement of the memory of the scene, are all parallel to the common phenomena we observe in the case of a drunken man. ('Fallacies of Memory', p. 97)

Although I am not suggesting that the emotions in *The Moonstone* reach such a pitch as Cobbe

describes here, it is worth considering Rachel's description of her feelings, hours before the experiment, against the above passage: 'I am so interested; I am so excited ... Do you wonder at the interest I take in this?' (*The Moonstone*, pp. 466-67) By the time the experiment begins and Franklin begins his walk, all those who are to witness it are in a matching state of excitement. Jennings writes of 'the breathless interest of watching him ... the unutterable triumph of seeing the first result of the experiment declare itself in the manner, and nearly at the time, which I had anticipated'. By now, Betteredge and Bruff are no longer the impartial, emotionless observers that they might have promised to be. They are now 'like two boys'; 'Mr Bruff himself was looking eagerly through a crevice ... And Betteredge, oblivious of all respect for social distinctions, was peeping over Mr Bruff's shoulder' (p. 476). There is a sense in which all the parties, Franklin *and* the observers, are intoxicated, rather like shadows of the Irish Porter, so that those witnessing the experiment are in little more of a state to testify to what they have seen than Franklin himself.

There is a strong sense in which the ambiguities and doubts that can be detected in the reconstruction of the scene of the loss of the diamond in *The Moonstone* can also be applied to Freud's early therapeutic work, which also concerned itself with the reconstruction of lost scenes. It is in the prepossession of an interested party, which is looking for and 'finds' a specific result, and in Cobbe's insight that 'allowing ourselves to dwell on imaginary contingencies till they become realities in our imagination' renders 'the successive traces of memory ... warped and distorted' ('Fallacies of Memory', p. 106), that we find the key not only to a possible reading of *The Moonstone* in terms of the fallacies of testimony and memory, but also to the birth and progress of Freud's seduction theory of the 1890s. In the final section of this chapter I will consider how the theories of Cobbe and Carpenter, and the unreliable view of memory and testimony portrayed in *The Moonstone*, could have served as a warning for the work of Freud. I will discuss how he, according to his own later version of events, entertained 'a mistaken idea ... which might have been almost fatal to the young science' of psychoanalysis⁴⁰ because he did not take this line of nineteenth-century thought into account; however, more than this I will argue that his later narratives describing the seduction theory episode demonstrate that Freud himself became subject to the fallacies of memory, the fallacies of testimony.

⁴⁰ Sigmund Freud, 'On the History of the Psychoanalytic Movement', in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. and ed. by James Strachey and others, 24 vols (London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1953-74), XIV, 1-66 (p. 17). *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works* will hereafter be referenced as *SE*.

Freud's Fallacies of Memory: the Seduction Theory and its Recall

On 21 September 1897, Sigmund Freud wrote to his friend Wilhelm Fliess, telling him of 'the great secret that has been slowly dawning on me in the last few months. I no longer believe in my *neurotica* [theory of the neuroses]'.⁴¹ This 'great secret' balanced the momentousness of the actual theory that Freud was now relinquishing, which, two years earlier, he had described to Fliess in the same terms:

Have I revealed the great clinical secret to you, either orally or in writing?

Hysteria is the consequence of a presexual *sexual shock*.

Obsessional neurosis is the consequence of a presexual *sexual pleasure*, which is later transformed into [self-] *reproach*. 'Presexual' means actually before puberty, before the release of sexual substances; the relevant events become effective only as *memories*.⁴²

As Freud wrote elsewhere, this first secret, the so-called seduction theory, meant that 'everything [went] back to the reproduction of scenes,'⁴³ and between 1895 and 1897 he dedicated himself to facilitating the reliving of scenes of early sexual trauma in his patients. The most public expression of the seduction theory occurred in 1896, in a paper, 'The Aetiology of Hysteria' read before 'Verein für Psychiatrie und Neurologie' of Vienna. Freud argued:

If we have the perseverance to press on with the analysis into early childhood, as far back as a human memory is capable of reaching, we invariably bring the patient to reproduce experiences which, on account both of their peculiar features and of their relations to the symptoms of his later illness, must be regarded as the aetiology of his neurosis for which we have been looking. These *infantile* experiences are ... *sexual* in content ... I therefore put forward the thesis that at the bottom of every case of hysteria there are *one or more occurrences of premature sexual experience*, occurrences which belong to the earliest years of childhood but which can be reproduced through the work of psycho-analysis in spite of the intervening decades. I believe that this is an important finding, the discovery of a *caput Nili* in neuropathology.⁴⁴

Yet some eighteen months later, this source of the Nile, which Freud had been so sure he had discovered, had proved illusory. Freud gave several reasons for his change of heart in the September letter to Fliess. The third, significantly, consisted of 'the certain insight that there are no indications of reality in the unconscious, so that one cannot distinguish between truth and fiction that has been cathected with affect' (*Freud-Fliess*, p. 264). Over twenty years earlier, William Carpenter had demonstrated his own knowledge of this 'insight' in a discussion of 'the reproduction of ideas which have previously only passed through the mind in Dreams'. He

⁴¹ Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 21 September 1897, in *The Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 1887-1904*, trans. and ed. by Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard, 1985), pp. 264-67 (p. 264). Hereafter, *Freud-Fliess*. The brackets inserted in this passage are the editor's. It might be as well to remind the reader that this letter, with the rest of the Fliess papers (including the *Project for a Scientific Psychology*), was first published in 1950, having been among Fliess's private papers for many years, and then bought by a follower of Freud's who ignored his pleas to burn the papers.

⁴² Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 15 October 1895, in *Freud-Fliess*, p. 144.

⁴³ Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 2 May 1897, in *Freud-Fliess*, pp. 238-40 (p. 239).

wrote, ‘almost every one has had occasion, at some time or other, to say “Did this really happen to me, or did I dream it?” – the past *mental* experience having been as complete in the one case as in the other’ (*Mental Physiology*, pp. 455-56).

That this realization took so long to dawn on Freud, who, according to his letters and his 1896 paper, had for some eighteen months been treating eighteen different patients, none of whom, by September 1897, he had cured,⁴⁵ springs from a number of different possible reasons. One was his nineteenth-century education, which dictated that his first instinct was to believe in the indelibility of memory. Some sense of this belief is given in Freud’s description of the arrangements of the memories of his patients in *Studies on Hysteria*. It is, he writes, as if they are collected in a set of files in the mind, ‘It was as though we were examining a dossier that had been kept in good order’:

These files form a quite general feature of every analysis and their contents always emerge in a chronological order which is as infallibly trustworthy as the succession of days of the week or names of the month in a mentally normal person. (*Studies on Hysteria*, p. 288)

In my introduction I discussed the critical consensus on Freud’s schooling, that it is believed that the psychological textbook that he would have used was Lindner’s *Lehrbuch*. Ernest Jones documents that this book contains the passage: ‘A result of the fusion of ideas proves that ideas which were once in consciousness and for any reason have been repressed (*verdrängt*) out of it are not lost, but in certain circumstances may return.’ (Jones, I, 374). Bearing a similarity to Carpenter’s theory of 1853, that ‘every sensory impression ... may be reproduced at some subsequent time’ which appears on Ezra Jennings’s slip of paper in *The Moonstone*, this view of memory was typical of psychological thought at this time. I have also discussed Maudsley’s view of 1870, that ‘in the deepest and most secret recesses of the mind, there is nothing hidden ... which may not be ... some time accidentally revealed’; this also concurs completely with Lindner’s textbook. In 1866, in *The Gay Science*,⁴⁶ E. S. Dallas argued for the ‘indelibility’ of memory⁴⁷ in terms that are particularly interesting in view of Freud’s seduction theory of 30 years later:

That understanding is not essential to memory we see in children who learn by heart what has no meaning to them. The meaning comes long years afterwards. But it would seem as if the process which we have all observed on such a small scale goes on continually on a much larger scale. Absolute as a photograph, the mind refuses nought. An impression once made on the sense, even unwittingly, abides for evermore ... the memory grips and appropriates what it does not understand – appropriates it mechanically, like a magpie stealing a silver spoon, without knowing what it is, or what to do with it. (Dallas, I, 213, 216)

⁴⁴ Sigmund Freud, ‘The Aetiology of Hysteria’ (1896), in *SE*, III, 187-221 (p. 202-03).

⁴⁵ The first reason Freud gives to Fliess for his rejection of the seduction theory is ‘the continual disappointment in my efforts to bring a single analysis to a real conclusion ... the absence of the complete successes on which I had counted’ (in *Freud-Fliess*, p. 264).

⁴⁶ Jenny Bourne Taylor, in *In the Secret Theatre of Home* has succeeded in emphasizing the importance of this book, especially in its view of the unconscious mind.

⁴⁷ Eneas Sweetland Dallas, *The Gay Science*, 2 vols (London: Chapman and Hall, 1866), I, 213.

Freud's work of the 1890s would project back a rather more sinister meaning to Dallas's words about the delayed knowledge of the child. In 'The Aetiology of Hysteria' he argued:

Our view then is that infantile sexual experiences are the fundamental precondition for hysteria, are, as it were, the *disposition* for it and that it is they which create the hysterical symptoms, but that they do not do so immediately, but remain without effect to begin with and only exercise a pathogenic action later, when they have been aroused after puberty in the form of unconscious memories ... the *memory* of infantile sexual experiences produces ... an enormous pathogenic effect, while the actual experience itself has none. ('The Aetiology of Hysteria', pp. 212-213)

However, even more significant is Dallas's view of memory as 'absolute'. That this adjective could be applied to memory by a thinker who saw the faculty in much the same way as it was portrayed in Lindner's *Lehrbuch* helps us understand why this early theory held such attraction for Freud as a basis for the mechanism of hysteria. In 1873 Carpenter wrote: '*Absolute* truth, no man of science can ever hope to grasp; for he knows that all human search for it must be limited by human capacity' ('On the Psychology of Belief', p. 238). Freud, who was reported as describing humankind's 'longing to be able to open all secrets with a single key',⁴⁸ and, indeed, who replaced the source of the Nile that was seduction with what he described in a letter to Fliess as 'the key of fantasy',⁴⁹ did not seem to share Carpenter's view. In the words of his early colleague, Josef Breuer, Freud was 'a man given to absolute and exclusive formulations'.⁵⁰

Dallas's view of memory as like a photograph in its absolute nature is also interesting. Frederick Crews writes, of the false memory syndrome epidemic in the United States, in the 1980s and 1990s:

The early Freud must also be awarded precedence for the cluster of ideas about memory that has landed so many of our fellow citizens in litigation and/or prison. I refer ... to the mind's ability to take snapshots of extremely early scenes and reproduce them in detail several decades later. When Lenore Terr, for example, uncritically accepts a man's 'memory' from babyhood of his sadistic mother having totally submerged him in the bathtub as he was noticing 'light gray walls all around me, a foul smell in the air' ... she may be defying what is known about brain development, but she is perfectly in key with Freud.⁵¹

Crews then quotes from an 1897 letter to Fliess in which Freud claims that a patient of his reproduced a discussion between two adults from a scene which occurred when the patient was eleven months old. Likening the experience to a medium, which because of its auditory nature

⁴⁸ Masson writes in the notes to an early letter from Freud to Fliess of 29 August 1888 (in *Freud-Fliess*, pp. 23-26), 'I have found a previously unnoticed source in *Neue freie Presse*, 6 (1904): 10' and goes on to describe the article by Th. Thomas, on "Magnetische Menschen" which contains this quotation from Freud. Masson goes on to write, 'Since such views are not found in Freud's published writings, I assume that Thomas interviewed Freud' (p. 25 n.).

⁴⁹ Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 16 January 1899, in *Freud-Fliess*, pp. 340-42 (p. 340).

⁵⁰ First translated by and cited in a paper by Paul Cranefield, 'Josef Breuer's Evaluation of His Contribution to Psycho-Analysis', *The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* 39, 319-22; cited in Frank J. Sulloway, *Freud, Biologist of the Mind: Beyond the Psychoanalytic Legend* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992), p. 85.

⁵¹ Frederick Crews, et al., *The Memory Wars: Freud's Legacy in Dispute* (London: Granta Books, 1997),

is actually more faithful in its recording than a photograph, Freud writes, 'it is as though it comes from a phonograph' (Cited in Crews, et. al., p. 212). Crews continues:

Given that Freud here accepts a 'phonographic' memory of an adult conversation recorded when the patient was presumably still struggling to say 'mama,' this passage must rank among his most credulous ever. Yet the claim being made is scarcely more inane than any number of others from the same epoch. (Crews, et. al., p. 212)

We now realize that there are limitations to the amount of impartial truth that a photograph, a young, seemingly infallible medium at the time Dallas was writing,⁵² can capture. Susan Sontag uses an interesting metaphor to describe it: 'A photograph is not only an image (as a painting is an image), an interpretation of the real; it is also a trace, something directly stencilled off the real, like a footprint' (Sontag, p. 154). A footprint, as we have seen from Rosanna Spearman's, in *The Moonstone*, is a perishable, vulnerable trace, anything but indelible. Just as the photograph has fallen out of favour as an absolute record, so the stories which found such wide circulation to prove the marvels of infallible memory were seen as limited and simplistic as the nineteenth century wore on. Dallas uses Coleridge's well-known story of the German servant-girl who recites biblical languages as a demonstration that memory is 'absolute as a photograph' (Dallas, pp. 213-15). This anecdote is perhaps the sort of 'inane' account that Crews refers to in the above passage. Freud therefore, by providing similar stories, which spring from the same principle, that a memory, created without knowledge of its meaning, cannot be destroyed, and may surface pristine, years later, is simply continuing to provide illustrative support to the principles of a popular school of nineteenth-century thought.

Dallas writes of the German servant girl that 'whole sheets of her ravings were written out, and were found to consist of sentences intelligible in themselves but having slight connection with each other' (Dallas, p. 214). *The Moonstone* would contain its own more complex alternative to this story in the delirium of Mr. Candy, during which Ezra Jennings sat by his bedside and transcribed his seemingly unconnected words. I will now discuss certain parallels which arise between this episode in *The Moonstone* and Freud's attempts in the 1890s to reconstruct his patient's 'experiences', to suggest that Collins had a rather more sophisticated insight into memory and testimony than is evident in Freud's work at this time. Freud actually started at a disadvantage to Jennings; in his letter to Fliess which tells of his relinquishment of the seduction theory, he confesses that 'the secret of childhood experiences is not disclosed even in the most confused delirium' of his patients (*Freud-Fliess*, p. 265), suggesting that his patients, in contrast to Mr Candy, actually had no scene to remember. Before his realization of this, however, Freud described his technique, in 'The Aetiology of Hysteria', thus:

It is exactly like putting together a child's picture-puzzle: after many attempts, we become absolutely

p. 212.

⁵² According to Susan Sontag, the photograph was first patented in 1841 (Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (London: Penguin, 1979), p. 85).

certain in the end which piece belongs in the empty gap; for only that one piece fills out the picture and at the same time allows its irregular edges to be fitted into the edges of the other pieces in such a manner as to leave no free space and to entail no overlapping. In the same way, the contents of the infantile scenes turn out to be indispensable supplements to the associative and logical framework of the neurosis, whose insertion makes its course of development for the first time evident, or even, as we might often say, self-evident. ('The Aetiology of Hysteria', p. 205)

The metaphor that Freud uses here, and his technique, are similar to Jennings's method of gleaning Mr Candy's lost recollection 'without the necessity of appealing to Mr Candy himself' (*The Moonstone*, p. 420). Jennings tells Franklin:

'At odds and ends of time ... I reproduced my shorthand notes in the ordinary form of writing – leaving large spaces between the broken phrases, and even the single words, as they had fallen disconnectedly from Mr Candy's lips. I then treated the result thus obtained, on something like the principle which one adopts in putting together a child's 'puzzle'. It is all confusion to begin with; but it may be all brought into order and shape, if you can only find the right way. Acting on this plan, I filled in each blank space on the paper, with what the words or phrases on either side of it suggested to me as the speaker's meaning; altering over and over again, until my additions followed naturally on the spoken words which came before them, and fitted naturally into the spoken words which came after them. The result was, that I not only occupied in this way many vacant and anxious hours, but that I arrived at something which was (as it seemed to me) a confirmation of the theory that I held' (*The Moonstone*, pp. 423-24).

This technique, which, according to Franklin, wove a 'smooth and finished texture out of the ravelled skein' (p. 438) of Candy's delirious ramblings, is self-confessedly putting words into the doctor's mouth. Jennings tells Franklin, 'don't suppose ... that I claim to have reproduced the expressions which Mr Candy himself would have used if he had been capable of speaking connectedly' (p. 437), whereas Freud speaks of becoming 'absolutely certain ... which piece belongs in the empty gap'. The attitude of the doctor's assistant to this process, which, as I have earlier discussed, represents the marking of his own footprint, his own narrative preferences onto Candy's story, a distortion of which Jennings is well aware, is in stark contrast to Freud's approach to the 'reproduction' of scenes in his patients. We have already encountered Albert D. Hutter's comment, that 'psychoanalysis ... attempts to shape a personal history into its most complete and most convincing form' (Hutter, p. 200). This is a description of the constant push in Freud's therapeutic legacy also to weave a 'smooth and finished texture out of the ravelled skein'; however, there is a sense with psychoanalysis that, simply because it is possible to create a feasible texture, because the last piece of the child's puzzle fits, that it obviously bears the deep truth which has been sought, despite, even because of, any reservations on behalf of the patient. For the scenes of which Freud went in search within the eighteen patients he was treating in 1896, not only fitted into their personal case histories, they contributed towards his great theory, his *caput Nili*, which Freud believed would bring him 'eternal fame'.⁵³ Whereas Jennings, who, contrastingly, wanted to die 'nameless' and 'unknown' (*The Moonstone*, p. 516) listened to all of Candy's ramblings, spending hours writing them down and piecing them

⁵³ Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 21 September 1897, in *Freud-Fliess*, pp. 264-67 (p. 266).

together so as to arrive at ‘something which was (as it seemed to me) a confirmation of the theory that I held’ (p. 424), Freud writes in 1896, ‘if the memory which we have uncovered does not answer our expectations, it may be that we ought to pursue the same path a little further’ to the memory of a second traumatic scene ‘which satisfies our requirements better’ (‘The Aetiology of Hysteria’, p. 195). Freud’s hunt took to an extreme Jennings’s search for Candy’s lost recollection ‘without the necessity of appealing to Mr Candy himself’. He wrote of his technique:

Before they come for analysis the patients know nothing about these scenes. They are indignant as a rule if we warn them that such scenes are going to emerge. Only the strongest compulsion of the treatment can induce them to embark on a reproduction of them. While they are recalling these infantile experiences to consciousness, they suffer under the most violent sensations, of which they are ashamed and which they try to conceal; and, even after they have gone through them once more in such a convincing manner, they still attempt to withhold belief from them, by emphasizing the fact that, unlike what happens in the case of other forgotten material, they have no feeling of remembering the scenes. (‘The Aetiology of Hysteria’, p. 204)

There is a profound sense in which Freud is disinclined to listen to his patients, imposing his own narrative on their stories in what seems like an excessive caricature of Franklin’s overlaying of Rosanna’s memories with his own, more authoritative version of the events of her life. In a letter to Fliess of 1897, Freud wrote of a particular case, in which a woman’s oral eczema and the feeling of having a full mouth led him to the solution that seemed to him to fit most comfortably, with her symptoms, but most importantly with his cherished theory, that she had been forced into scenes of fellatio with her father:

When I thrust the explanation at her, she was at first won over; then she committed the folly of questioning the old man himself, who at the very first intimation exclaimed indignantly, ‘Are you implying that I was the one?’ and swore a holy oath to his innocence.

She is now in the throes of the most vehement resistance, claims to believe him, but attests to her identification with him by having become dishonest and swearing false oaths. I have threatened to send her away and in the process convinced myself that she has already gained a good deal of certainty which she is reluctant to acknowledge.

She has never felt as well as on the day when I made the disclosure to her. In order to facilitate the work, I am hoping she will feel miserable again.⁵⁴

It may be useful to recall Cobbe’s insight here, that, ‘we begin by saying: “It might have happened so and so,” till having realized in fancy the hypothetical case more vividly than we remember the real one, we suddenly and unconsciously substitute the fancy for the fact’ (‘Fallacies of Memory’, p. 106); in Freud’s 1890s cases it seems that he is the one that says ‘it might have happened so and so’ until his patients take on his belief and reproduce scenes, with the accompanying feelings, as he describes in his paper of 1896.⁵⁵ In the above case, however,

⁵⁴ Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 3 January 1897, in *Freud-Fliess*, pp. 219-21 (pp. 220-21).

⁵⁵ Malcolm Macmillan’s *Freud Evaluated: The Completed Arc* (Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1991) is a valuable work which subjects Freud’s work to modern psychological scrutiny by considering it in the light of recent psychological experiments and trials. Macmillan writes of Freud’s claim, in his 1896

it seems that Freud does not even get this far. It is an interesting example; because it is a private letter, which he never expected to be published, Freud is displaying particularly clearly the bare bones of his therapeutic methods and aims. In his hope that his patient will 'feel miserable again' Freud shows his complete willingness to sacrifice her feelings and preferences to his larger plan.⁵⁶ In fact his narrative here has overlaid the memories of not one but two people, the father and the daughter, with whose own lives the allegations that he 'thrust' upon them most certainly did not fit. In the battle for narrative authority, however, it is Freud who is the professional, the expert, and, in contrast to Jennings's self-deprecation, which is content with an unassuming role, he fully engages with his own status and its possibilities of power. In the opening to 'The Aetiology of Hysteria' he likens himself to another type of expert, an archaeologist, in a metaphor that bears an interesting parallel to an illustration that Cobbe uses:

Imagine that an explorer arrives in a little-known region where his interest is aroused by an expanse of ruins, with remains of walls, fragments of columns, and tablets with half-effaced and unreadable inscriptions ... Together with [the inhabitants] he may start upon the ruins, clear away the rubbish, and, beginning from the visible remains, uncover what is buried. If his work is crowned with success, the discoveries are self-explanatory: the ruined walls are part of the ramparts of a palace or a treasure-house; the fragments of columns can be filled out into a temple; the numerous inscriptions, which, by good luck, may be bilingual, reveal an alphabet and a language, and, when they have been deciphered and translated, yield undreamed-of information about the events of the remote past, to commemorate which the monuments were built. *Saxa loquuntur!* ('The Aetiology of Hysteria', p. 192)⁵⁷

Cobbe, in 1867, wrote of the dangers of this sort of reconstruction:

We can never witness any transaction without making some theory of the motives, sentiments, and purposes of the agents; and, in telling the history thereof, we inevitably work out this theory in our description. Sketching on one occasion in the great temple at Baalbec, it occurred to the writer, in striving to give some idea of the splendid ruin, to endeavour to define where a certain arch had once extended. Every stone of the arch had fallen; only the marks on the walls revealed where it had been, and these marks, copied in a poor, hasty sketch, would have utterly failed to convey any impression of the fact. Quite unconsciously, a stone or two (fallen, doubtless, a thousand years ago) were replaced in the sketch; just enough, and no more, to convey the desired idea of the original arch. Then came the reflection, 'Here is precisely what we do every day in our stories. We just add a stone, just darken a shadow, just double a line, to show what we very honestly believe to be true!' How large might be the

paper, and also in *Studies on Hysteria* (1895), that he could not influence the recollections of his patients, that 'he seems not to have thought indirect, unconscious suggestive influences might be important' (p. 211). He goes on to discuss some modern studies that investigate the influence of the thoughts and expectations of a figure of authority on someone in a position of less power. He writes, 'once subjects learn what is being demanded of them, their "recollections" adapt accordingly' (p. 218). This should especially be the case if Freud, as he claimed to do in his 1896 paper, warned the patient in advance of what he expected to emerge ('The Aetiology of Hysteria', p. 204). Indeed, in *Studies on Hysteria* he writes 'we need not be afraid ... of telling the patient what we think his next connection of thought is going to be. It will do no harm' (*SE*, II, 295). Macmillan's conclusion is precisely that this practice will do harm, and warp what the patient offers the therapist.

⁵⁶ We see another example of Freud's profound unwillingness to listen to his patients for the sake of the promotion of his theories in *Studies on Hysteria*: 'Some time ago I was asked to relieve an elderly lady of her attacks of anxiety ... Her anxiety attacks, which were of a hysterical character, went back to her early girlhood and, according to her, originated from the use of a preparation of iodine intended to reduce a moderate swelling of her thyroid gland. I naturally rejected this derivation and tried to find another instead of it which would harmonize better with my views on the aetiology of the neuroses' (*Studies on Hysteria*, pp. 273-74).

⁵⁷ 'Stones talk!' ('The Aetiology of Hysteria', p. 192 n.).

falsehoods thus originated, how soon our theory would take in our memories the place of fact, there is no need to tell. ('The Fallacies of Memory', p. 107)

The fact is that Freud suggested scenes that he 'very honestly believe[d] to be true', because they fitted in with what he conceived as his momentous universal theory. We see from the 1897 case of father and daughter, described in a private letter, that the reality of his therapeutic method was subtly different from that he claimed to use in his 1896, very public, paper, in which, answering the possible objection that the doctor 'influences [the patient] by suggestion to imagine and reproduce' scenes, he claimed, 'I have never yet succeeded in forcing on a patient a scene I was expecting to find, in such a way that he seemed to be living through it with all the appropriate feelings' ('The Aetiology of Hysteria', pp. 204-05). In the letter, however, we see that not only did he force the scene upon the patient, but that even though she showed no reported signs of reliving it (unless the phrase 'won over', which surely suggests a conscious consent, refers to a reproduction) he was still convinced of its reality. As with Cobbe's own trust-based but inaccurate sketching behaviour, Freud was (in his own words, concerning the fact that he had found a sexual connection in only the eighteen cases he had examined so far), 'prepared to let my belief' of the 'universal validity of the sexual aetiology' 'run ahead of the evidential force of the observations I have so far made' ('The Aetiology of Hysteria', p. 200). These words hold a deeper truth than first appears. Freud writes:

The singling out of the sexual factor in the aetiology of hysteria springs at least from no preconceived opinion on my part ... Only the most laborious and detailed investigations have converted me, and that slowly enough, to the view I hold to-day. If you submit my assertion that the aetiology of hysteria lies in sexual life to the strictest examination, you will find that it is supported by the fact that in some eighteen cases of hysteria I have been able to discover this connection in every single symptom, and, where the circumstances allowed, to confirm it by therapeutic success. (p. 199)

By the time he wrote his letter of September 1897, however, he had still failed, despite the weight of proof he lays on these cases, 'to bring a single analysis to a real conclusion' (*Freud-Fliess*, p. 264). In an extremely comprehensive paper which tests the claims that Freud made in his 1896 paper against his contrasting narratives in his letters to Fliess and his later differing accounts of this time, Hans Israëls and Morton Schatzman write that, in contrast to two of Freud's early case history narratives, in which in claiming success he was 'lying',⁵⁸ in the case of this premature filling-in of lines in 'The Aetiology of Hysteria' his distorting of the truth was due, despite Freud's protestations to the contrary, to a 'preconceived opinion on [his] part':

⁵⁸ The two cases were Anna O., and Ernst Fleischl. 'When in the eighties Freud had presented cocaine as a medicine against morphine addiction, he had always declared that he knew a case where that therapy had been a success. Yet he had known perfectly well that the case (Ernst Fleischl) had been a catastrophe. With Anna O. Freud alleged that her treatment ended with a therapeutic success, although Freud knew that in reality the treatment had come to an end because the patient had had to be put into a mental asylum.' (Hans Israëls and Morton Schatzman, 'The Seduction Theory', *History of Psychiatry*, 4 (1993), 23-59 (p. 54.))

Here, with the seduction theory, it was not so much a matter of lying, but more, we suppose, of boasting, of announcing a result as already having been reached which he hoped to reach soon. In 1896 Freud firmly believed in the truth of the seduction theory, so firmly that he was sure of soon reaching the results that the theory predicted, and thus believed it was safe and legitimate to announce these results (Israëls and Schatzman, p. 54).

In contrast to Jeffrey Masson, who believed that Freud gave up the seduction theory because of the unpopularity it caused him, and Ernest Jones, who said that his inability to find these scenes in his own self-analysis caused Freud to abandon his doctrine,⁵⁹ Israëls and Schatzman argue that it was the lack of even one complete therapeutic success that caused Freud to give up his beloved concept. In contrast to Jennings, Freud never detected one lost recollection with his picture-puzzle method.

Even if he had enjoyed a success, however, this episode in *The Moonstone* offers one last interesting perspective on the reconstructive method that Freud used. For when Franklin suggests that Jennings's narrative can be used to clear his name, Jennings answers that it is 'quite useless' as evidence (*The Moonstone*, p. 438). For Freud to put all the burden of proof on his own reconstructions, even if they had been as successful as he had made out in the 1896 paper, was tenuous, an utter imbalance, and those that listened to 'The Aetiology of Hysteria' realized this; Richard von Krafft-Ebing, author of *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886), was one.⁶⁰ Freud's account of the reception of his paper in a letter to Fliess, with its inflated hopes for his theory contrasted with his peers' judgement of it, shows this imbalance:

A lecture on the etiology of hysteria at the psychiatric society was given an icy reception by the asses and a strange evaluation by Krafft-Ebing: 'It sounds like a scientific fairy tale.' And this, after one has demonstrated to them the solution of a more-than-thousand-year-old problem, a *caput Nili!* They can go to hell, euphemistically expressed.⁶¹

Krafft-Ebing's evaluation was anything but strange: it captured the lack of substance, of evidence, indeed (despite Freud's words), of demonstration, in Freud's paper, which concentrated only on what was feasible, what could fit. Whereas Jennings realized the entirely abstract nature of his reconstructed narrative, that it is good for nothing but providing a background to the real business, the experiment (*The Moonstone*, p. 438), Freud cannot comprehend that his abstractions, though they add up to a smooth and finished texture, fail to add up to a solution. His peers did not display the same blindness and saw sharply through his theory.

⁵⁹ See Jeffrey Masson, *Freud, The Assault on Truth: Freud's Suppression of the Seduction Theory* (London: Faber, 1984); especially Chapter 4, 'Freud's Renunciation of the Theory of Seduction', in which he writes, 'Freud suffered emotional and intellectual isolation as long as he held to the reality of seduction ... The medical community was offended by Freud ... As long as he held to the seduction theory, Freud was alone' (pp. 134, 136). Ernest Jones is cited by Israëls and Schatzman as writing of the abandonment of the theory, 'it is very possible that the decisive factor had been his own self-analysis' (Israëls and Schatzman, p. 52).

⁶⁰ Krafft-Ebing, was, according to Frank Sulloway, 'on good professional terms' with Freud – 'Freud regularly received autographed copies of Krafft-Ebing's major works' (Sulloway, p. 296).

Leopold Löwenfeld, an influential German psychologist, who corresponded with Freud, and to whose books Freud contributed, was another whose remarks at this time are interesting. He writes of the passage in Freud's 1896 paper in which Freud claims that his patients, though remembering nothing before or after their re-enactment of their scenes of seduction, had certainly experienced them:

These remarks show two things: 1. The patients were subjected to a suggestive influence coming from the person who analysed them, by which the rise of the mentioned scenes was brought quite close to their imagination. 2. These fantasy pictures that had arisen under the influence of the analysis were definitively denied recognition as memories of real events. I also have a direct experience to support this second conclusion. By chance, one of the patients with whom Freud used the analytic method came under my observation. The patient told me with certainty that the infantile sexual scene which analysis had apparently uncovered was pure fantasy and had never really happened to him. It is difficult to understand how a researcher like Freud, who normally is very critical, despite such remarks, still could maintain toward his patients that the pictures that arose in their minds were memories of real events. However, it is even still more difficult to understand that Freud thought that he could consider this assumption to be completely proven in each single case of hysteria.⁶²

It is interesting that Löwenfeld sees this episode as rather out-of-character for Freud; my suggestion is that it was simply the expression of a side of his nature that was usually invisible to the public and that he allowed to influence his scientific thinking, in the same way as Carpenter had described in his writings on prepossession. Carpenter's 1876 essay 'Fallacies of Testimony in relation to the Supernatural', which I have discussed above in relation to the authenticity of the reconstruction of the loss of the diamond in *The Moonstone*, manages to shed a light where Löwenfeld is at a loss for an explanation. Surely, Freud's behaviour, which I have detailed, of seeing what is not there, claiming success he has not had, is due to what Carpenter calls '*mental expectancy*, a most fertile source of self-deception' ('Fallacies of Testimony', p. 244); where his patients reacted to the explanations of their symptoms that Freud, in his own words, 'thrust' upon them, he took agreement or disagreement as unequivocal proof that he was correct. Carpenter would have believed that this was due to 'the influence of prepossessions on those *interpretations* of our sensational experiences, which we are prone to substitute for the statement of the experiences themselves'. Although this is a paper whose ultimate conclusion concerns supernatural phenomena, Carpenter then writes, 'of such misinterpretations, the records of science are full; the tendency is one which besets every observer, and to which the most conscientious have frequently yielded' ('Fallacies of Testimony', pp. 247-48). Freud, usually conscientious, according to Löwenfeld, most visibly yielded to his prepossessions at this time.

It is in the long-buried letter to Wilhelm Fliess of 21 September 1897, that we truly see what was behind Freud's adamant claims, his irresponsible treatment of patients, and indeed, the seeds of his recovery from this episode. We see how much in Freud's personal life was directly

⁶¹ Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 26 April 1896, in *Freud-Fliess*, pp. 183-185 (p. 184).

⁶² Löwenfeld, *Sexualleben und Nervenleiden* (Sexual Life and Nervous Disease), 2nd edn (1899), cited in Israëls and Schatzmann, pp. 43-44.

dependent on the success and acceptance of the seduction theory:

The expectation of eternal fame was so beautiful, as was that of certain wealth, complete independence, travels, and lifting the children above the severe worries that robbed me of my youth. Everything depended upon whether or not hysteria would come out right ... A little story from my collection occurs to me: 'Rebecca, take off your gown, you are no longer a bride.' (*Freud-Fliess*, p. 266)

Behind Freud's words in his 1896 paper, his willingness 'to let my belief run ahead of the evidential force of the observations I have so far made' ('The Aetiology of Hysteria', p. 200), his insistence on the continuance of therapy until a scene is found 'which satisfies our requirements' (p. 195), lies this vast ambition, expressed here in private, which bore public symptoms that caused such wonder and incredulity in his peers. We have seen in Collins's *The Moonstone* how small ambitions, the 'yearning ... for a little human sympathy', in Jennings's case (p. 448), the need to be reunited with a loved-one, become a 'bride[groom]' in fact, in Franklin's, blur and problematize the reconstruction of a scene; in Freud's seduction theory of the 1890s we see these dynamics played out on a much larger, and potentially more damaging, scale.

In fact Freud's prepossessions never changed; this was not the end of his ambition, despite his comment to Fliess in September 1897 that 'now I can once again remain quiet and modest, go on worrying and saving' (*Freud-Fliess*, p. 266). Within eighteen months, Freud had found another key, 'the key of fantasy'. According to this doctrine, what his patients remembered were their own previously repressed infantile fantasies, which, in connection with present, unsettling sexual experiences in puberty, caused shame, a remembering in the form of the generation of symptoms. This was not so far from the seduction theory, and we see its early stages in the September letter to Fliess. Freud considers it as an addendum to the words that I have already identified as having had resonance in the insights of Carpenter and Cobbe decades earlier, that fantasies or dreams can gain a mental reality which means that we can take them in memory for real incidents. Freud writes, then, that the third reason that he has relinquished his theory is 'the certain insight that there are no indications of reality in the unconscious, so that one cannot distinguish between truth and fiction that has been cathected with affect'. He then continues, 'Accordingly, there would remain the solution that the sexual fantasy invariably seizes upon the theme of the parents' (*Freud-Fliess*, pp. 264-65). A month after he wrote this letter, Freud wrote to Fliess of his theoretical progress, 'there is a comfortable feeling ... that one has only to reach into one's storerooms to take out what is needed at a particular time',⁶³ and it is clear that this new theory was, indeed, waiting, in the terms of Carpenter's 1873 metaphor, fitting perfectly into one of Freud's already existing mental recesses, in readiness to be seized upon. The new key of fantasy became the basis for Freud's later theory of infantile sexuality, and the Oedipus complex, and, in contrast to Cobbe and Carpenter's doctrine, it is no

⁶³ Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 31 October 1897, in *Freud-Fliess*, pp. 275-76 (p. 276).

less absolute a view than that which dictates that all that we experience can later be reproduced in perfect form and detail. For now Freud simply added fantasy to the memories that could be later reproduced in this way; there is no distinction drawn between fantasy and reality, therefore all mental activity became potentially reconstructible. Towards the end of his career, Freud claimed that the subject of 'preservation in the sphere of the mind ... has hardly been studied as yet'. This assertion, however, is immediately belied by the words that follow, for they closely echo Carpenter of 1853, Henry Maudsley, even Freud's own school text-books:

We have been inclined to take the ... view, that in mental life nothing which has once been formed can perish – that everything is somehow preserved and that in suitable circumstances (when, for instance, regression goes back far enough) it can once more be brought to light.⁶⁴

Freud follows this with a discussion in which he concedes that, under certain circumstances, such as when brain tissue becomes damaged, past impressions could in theory be effaced, but concludes, 'it is possible, but we know nothing about it. We can only hold fast to the fact that it is rather the rule than the exception for the past to be preserved in mental life' (*Civilization and its Discontents*, p. 72). By now this 'past' included past fantasies; this is the only difference between Freud's late view of memory and his earlier, mistaken one of the 1890s. In 1914 Freud wrote of his reaction to the realization that the seduction theory was not feasible, that to him it seemed that 'the firm ground of reality was gone' ('On the History', p. 17); instead of replacing this ground, as Cobbe and Carpenter did, with a shifting, changing, evolving one, Freud, a man 'given to absolute and exclusive formulations' had simply moved to an alternative firm ground of his own construction, which, rooted in his deterministic outlook, dictated that *all* mental experience was real.⁶⁵ As he wrote in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), the text which was created on this foundation, 'the unconscious is the true psychical reality'.⁶⁶

Where testimony fits into this new all-encompassing truth is another consideration, however. In the remaining pages of this chapter I will consider Freud as a witness to his own work, in his remembrance and reporting of the seduction theory episode, in three separate accounts, of 1914, 1925 and 1933. According to Israëls and Schatzman, it took a long time for Freud to admit publicly that he had been mistaken. Of his private confession to Fliess of September 1897, in which he wrote 'of course I shall not tell it in Dan, nor speak of it in Askelon, in the land of the Philistines' (*Freud-Fliess*, p. 265), they write:

Freud could not say aloud that he had given up his seduction theory because this would mean admitting that he had boasted of successes he had not had. Instead, Freud kept silent for eight years. In 1905 he let his readers [of *Three Essays on Sexuality*] believe that he now had revised his theory somewhat, while

⁶⁴ Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930), in *SE*, XXI, 56-145 (p. 69).

⁶⁵ This new theory also had the benefit, unlike the seduction theory, of being almost impossible to prove wrong; Freud's suggestions that, with regard to a patient's early fantasies, 'it might have happened so and so' would become, as soon as they were absorbed by the patient's mind, a mental reality, difficult to distinguish from what he or she really thought or experienced in childhood.

⁶⁶ Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), in *SE*, IV & V, ix-629 (p. 613).

only in 1914 did he start to write publicly that the theory had been a major mistake. (Israëls and Schatzman, p. 55)

In these public admissions, however, there is a definite distortion of the truth, and this is easily discernible if we set them against the claims Freud makes in his 1896 essay, in which he had written:

Before they come for analysis the patients know nothing about these scenes. They are indignant as a rule if we warn them that such scenes are going to emerge. Only the strongest compulsion of the treatment can induce them to embark on a reproduction of them ... even after they have gone through them once more in such a convincing manner, they still attempt to withhold belief from them, by emphasizing the fact that, unlike what happens in the case of other forgotten material, they have no feeling of remembering the scenes. ('The Aetiology of Hysteria', p. 204)

From 1896 to 1914 it seems as if the processes of prepossession have been at work in Freud's memory, reflecting Carpenter's words that, 'to few persons of experience in life has it not happened to find their distinct impressions of past events in striking disaccordance with some contemporary narrative, as perhaps given in a letter of their own' ('Fallacies of Testimony', 253).⁶⁷ In fact, Freud's account in 'On the History of the Psychoanalytic Movement' of 1914 does contrast starkly with the letter of January 1897, which I have discussed, in which he 'thrust the explanation' of infantile sexual seduction at one of his patients, who was, initially, 'won over':

Influenced by Charcot's view of the traumatic origin of hysteria, one was readily inclined to accept as true and aetiologically significant the statements made by patients in which they ascribed their symptoms to passive sexual experiences in the first years of childhood – to put it bluntly, to seduction. When this aetiology broke down under the weight of its own improbability and contradiction in definitely ascertainable circumstances, the result at first was helpless bewilderment. Analysis had led back to these infantile sexual traumas by the right path, and yet they were not true. ('On the History', p. 17)

Freud gives the impression here of being a passive agent – influenced by Charcot (who is mentioned in the 1896 paper as arguing that 'heredity alone' is the 'true cause of hysteria' ('Aetiology of Hysteria', 191)), the innocent duped by his patients and then left bewildered. The onus on the patient in this sorry tale would continue to characterize Freud's accounts of this time in his career, strengthening, if anything, as the years passed, as 'statements' become 'stories'. In 1925 his account of the affair ran thus:

Under the influence of the technical procedure which I used at that time, the majority of my patients reproduced from their childhood scenes in which they were sexually seduced by some grown-up person. With female patients the part of seducer was almost always assigned to their father. I believed these

⁶⁷ Cobbe describes a similar scenario: 'Let us suppose that we have narrated some little incident at an interval of half a dozen years, and, at the end of that period, we chance to look at an old letter or journal, written on the very day or two after the event occurred. Did it ever happen to us to do this without something very like a blush, and the exclamation "Good Heaven! how much I have been mistaken in telling that story!"?' ('Fallacies of Memory', p. 100).

stories, and consequently supposed that I had discovered the roots of the subsequent neurosis in these experiences of sexual seduction in childhood ... If the reader feels inclined to shake his head at my credulity, I cannot altogether blame him; though I may plead that this was at a time when I was intentionally keeping my critical faculty in abeyance so as to preserve an unprejudiced and receptive attitude towards the many novelties which were coming to my notice every day. When, however, I was at last obliged to recognize that these scenes of seduction had never taken place, and that they were only phantasies which my patients had made up or which I myself had perhaps forced on them, I was for some time completely at a loss.⁶⁸

This is a particularly interesting account, because at the end of it there breaks through something of the truth, after the initial standard story which we have seen in 1914, is recounted, slightly embellished. It is withdrawn quite swiftly, 'I do not believe even now that I forced the seduction-phantasies on my patients, that I "suggested" them' (p. 34); however, its appearance is intriguing because it highlights the contradictory feel that the actual presence of the truth gives to this paragraph. It jars with the untrustworthy patient narrative, to which Freud has obviously warmed. This retelling of the 1914 version reflects Cobbe's work on memory, in particular her view of the faculty as remembering 'not the things themselves, but the first recollection of them, and then the second and the third, always the latest recollection of them', and that with each remembering 'each fresh trace varies a little from the trace beneath, sometimes magnifying and beautifying it ... sometimes distorting it through passion or prejudice' ('Fallacies of Memory', p. 104). Freud's credulity is augmented, but in favour of an unprejudiced view (Charcot has fallen from the picture); the main change, however, also noted by Israëls and Schatzman, is the introduction of the father as the main culprit of seduction, whereas in 1896 it was:

(1) adults who did not know the child; (2) adults who took care of the child, and (3) other children. In the second category Freud had mentioned governesses, nursery maids, tutors, and – as a last possibility – 'unhappily all too often, a close relative'. 'A close relative' can be a father, but Freud had not specifically mentioned fathers. (Israëls and Schatzman, pp. 46-47)

In the 1914 account, however, we can see where the father has sprung from, and that his appearance in 1925 was a natural progression of the previous version. Freud, having described his bewilderment at having been led up the wrong path by his patients, writes:

At last came the reflection that, after all, one had no right to despair because one has been deceived in one's expectations; one must revise those expectations. If hysterical subjects trace back their symptoms to traumas that are fictitious, then the new fact which emerges is precisely that they create such scenes in *phantasy*, and this psychological reality requires to be taken into account alongside practical reality ... And now, from behind the phantasies, the whole range of a child's sexual life came to light. ('On the History', pp. 17-18)

Again the onus is on the patient – the fantasy theory triumphantly sprang from Freud's consideration of the wreck of his analyses, from his sensible assessment of what he actually had

⁶⁸ Sigmund Freud, 'An Autobiographical Study' (1925), in *SE*, XX, 1-74 (pp. 33-34).

been told. Central to Freud's fantasy theory, however, was the Oedipus complex. In 1925, then, as his narrative had developed so far as to include the evolution from the seduction theory of the doctrine of infantile sexual fantasy, the logical step occurred, which was to cast the father as seducer in these women's stories. In 1933, Freud actually included the seduction theory story in the midst of a discussion about female fantasies:

You will recall an interesting episode in the history of analytic research which caused me many distressing hours. In the period in which the main interest was directed to discovering infantile sexual traumas, almost all my women patients told me that they had been seduced by their father. I was driven to recognize in the end that these reports were untrue and so came to understand that hysterical symptoms are derived from phantasies and not from real occurrences. It was only later that I was able to recognize in this phantasy of being seduced by the father the expression of the typical Oedipus complex in women.⁶⁹

Freud's changing testimony, 'gradually but unconsciously modified by the habitual course of thought and feeling' so that the final result is '*not* the actual occurrence, but the modified trace of it' (*Mental Physiology*, p. 456), altering so as to fit comfortably with his changing mental landscape, provides a strong illustration of the theories of Francis Power Cobbe, which found metaphorical expression in *The Moonstone*, and William Carpenter, whose work was a natural progression of Cobbe's views. It acts as a demonstration of Cobbe's final conclusion, that 'to know that what we deem we recall so vividly is but a poor shifting reflex – hardly of the thing itself, only of our earlier remembrance of the thing – this is sad and mournful', but 'almost more terrible' is the corresponding realization of 'the fallaciousness of the great traditions of History' ('Fallacies of Memory', p. 111). Freud's 'latest recollection[s]' (p. 104) of the events of the seduction theory were, and are, often taken for its true history. Israëls and Schatzman believe that 'many people have got a general idea – either directly or indirectly – of what the seduction theory actually is from two Freud texts: the ... passage of 1914, and [the] passage in Freud's *Autobiographical Study* of 1925' (Israëls and Schatzman, p. 45). Richard Webster writes that 'Freud's fictional version of events has been accepted unquestioningly by countless Freud scholars' (Webster, p. 211), and that there were damaging results that had arisen from this 'distorted account of the seduction theory'. 'For it is undeniably the case that Freud's repudiation of his seduction theory has repeatedly led to real instances of sexual abuse being overlooked or denied by psychoanalysts intent on treating memories as fantasies' (p. 212). The reaction to this dismissal of memory of real events as Oedipal fantasy has been correspondingly damaging: 'This massive denial of the experience of women and children who genuinely had been victims of sexual abuse provided the essential conditions without which the recovered memory movement could never have grown and flourished in the way that it did.' (p. 512) Two important figures in this movement, Judith Herman and Jeffrey Masson, argue their case based on Freud's later version of events, '[they]

⁶⁹ Sigmund Freud, 'Lecture XXXIII: Femininity' (1933), in *SE*, XXII, 112-135 (p. 120).

imply that Freud's early patients – those he discusses in his paper “The Aetiology of Hysteria” – came to consult him burdened with memories of incest which they then spontaneously disclosed’. Webster continues:

There is no mystery about why Herman and Masson should have assumed this, because Freud himself said that this was what had happened ... It may well be that Freud had, by the time thirty years or so had elapsed, come to believe in this version of events himself. He may have ‘remembered’ this happening. But if this was Freud's memory of events then, once again, we are forced to recognise that it was a ‘false memory’. (p. 516)

Webster here, is unknowingly echoing Cobbe's work of more than a century before, and most notably a part of her argument that I have not yet ventured to discuss. I place it here because it seems to me, combined with the quite innocent, unconscious transformative processes that also occurred within Freud's memory, due to his preferences and prepossessions, to offer a possible enhancement to my existing explanation of his remembering behaviour. My suggestion here is no stronger than Israëls and Schatzman's account of Freud's altering of two case histories to imply success, and I believe that they particularly shed light on Webster's argument that Freud may well have come to believe in his ‘fictional version of events,’ with the passing of time. Cobbe writes:

Again, by this theory of memory, we obtain an available hypothesis, to account for the notorious but marvellous fact, that liars come in time to believe their own falsehoods. The warping of the original trace of the story, albeit voluntary and conscious, has, equally with unconscious dereliction, effected the end of obliterating the primary mark, and substituting a false one, which has assumed the place of a remembrance. (‘Fallacies of Memory’, p. 105)

Webster's rather self-conscious use of the modern term ‘false memory’ is first used in his preface, where it becomes clear that his acquaintance with this concept is relatively recent. Describing the process of the writing of his comprehensive and detailed account of Freud and psychoanalysis, he writes:

Only when my book was nearing completion did it gradually become apparent to me that for a number of years I had, quite inadvertently, been writing a book not only about Freud and psychoanalysis but also about the pre-history of a movement of whose existence I was barely aware – the recovered memory movement which has flourished in the United States in the last decade ... I visited America in order to find out more about this movement and I was able to talk to a number of psychiatrists, therapists, psychologists and feminists about the problem of ‘false memory’. (Webster, p. x)

What I hope I have conveyed in this chapter is that ‘false memory’ has not simply begun to be understood in the last two decades, and that it did not start with Freud either, but that in fact he was a victim to it himself. I hope that I have shown that in fact a small group of Victorian thinkers deeply considered, as they termed it, ‘the fallacies of memory’, with its attendant implications on testimony, and created elaborate metaphors by which to explain it, some of which seem to have been utilized and expanded by Wilkie Collins, who wrote *The Moonstone*

on the cusp of these new and intriguing concepts concerning the unreliability of what was often seen as an absolute faculty. I have tried to argue that these concepts were a product of the shifting mental landscape occasioned by the relatively new doctrine of evolution, and were portrayed as such by those early writers on false memory and testimony. Collins, as we have seen in the moral relativism which he advocated in Magdalen Vanstone's behaviour in *No Name*, and in his portrayal in fiction of a scale of mental health, found it difficult to imagine and create in terms of absolutes. In *The Moonstone* this philosophy extends to witnessing, remembering, giving testimony, within an ever-changing landscape whose consideration is essential to a full understanding of the novel. In *The Moonstone* the only possible model of the absolute seems to be the hard, dazzling, elusive diamond. Like the past, it can only in the end exist, in an unadulterated form, in its original setting, for there lies its proper meaning. It is the only unambiguous thing in *The Moonstone*,⁷⁰ slipping between the shifting reflexes of memory, and eventually sailing, like Cobbe's view of the past, from European eyes.⁷¹ 'You have lost sight of it in England, and ... you have lost sight of it for ever', pronounces Mr Murthwaite whose narrative ends the novel (p. 526). The ultimate message of *The Moonstone* is that there may be truth, there may be absolutes, but western civilization could not possess them. The damage caused by Freud's seduction theory and its legacy only serves to illustrate this.

⁷⁰ Betteredge neatly expresses the feeling of uncertainty and ambiguity in the novel in his description of his harnessing of a pony after the loss of the diamond, so that Franklin could deliver a telegram: 'I saw the pony harnessed myself. In the infernal network of mysteries and uncertainties that now surrounded us, I declare it was a relief to observe how well the buckles and straps understood each other! When you had seen the pony backed into the shafts of the chaise, you had seen something there was no doubt about. And that, let me tell you, was becoming a treat of the rarest kind in our household' (*The Moonstone*, p. 129).

⁷¹ At one point it had seemed likely that Godfrey Ablewhite would take the diamond to Amsterdam to divide and sell it (*The Moonstone*, p. 512). It is not allowed to get there, but instead is restored to its rightful place in India, beyond the clutches of Europe.

Chapter 4

'The Suggestions of Experience': Motive, Mission and Inheritance in George Eliot's Fiction

'Unrecognised Agents': An Introduction

In September 1839, the young Mary Ann Evans wrote to her friend Miss Lewis, describing her mental state at that time:

I have lately led so unsettled a life and have been so desultory in my employments, that my mind, never of the most highly organized genus, is more than usually chaotic, or rather it is like a stratum of conglomerated fragments that shews here a jaw and rib of some ponderous quadruped, there a delicate alto-relievo of some fernlike plant, tiny shells, and mysterious nondescripts, encrusted and united with some unvaried and uninteresting but useful stone. My mind presents just such an assemblage of disjointed specimens of history, ancient and modern, scraps of poetry picked up from Shakspeare, Cowper, Wordsworth, and Milton, newspaper topics, morsels of Addison and Bacon, Latin verbs, geometry entomology and chemistry, reviews and metaphysics, all arrested and petrified and smothered by the fast thickening every day accession of actual events, relative anxieties, and household cares and vexations.¹

This passage is a very interesting one, and worthy of discussion for a number of reasons, not the least of which is its illustration of the challenges posed by its author to a project such as mine. My thesis, which in attempting to chart prefigurations of Freudian theories and models of the mind in certain Victorian texts, has found an approach through what can be gleaned of the reading habits of the writers of these fictional works, which may reveal sources which were also common to Freud. In the case of George Eliot, whose letters, journals and essays clearly display a vast wealth of literary, philosophical and scientific reading, the challenge is not to be found in the gleaning; rather it is posed by the necessity of determining which sources to examine out of the many that, in addition to informing her work, may also have gone to contribute to the ideas embodied in psychoanalytic theory. Mary Ann Evans's self-proclaimed 'desultory' youth, flitting through assorted subjects, developed into George Eliot's mature diversity of reading, which was constantly evident in her writing. Throughout her life, Eliot benefited from what Robert Greenberg, expressing neatly the implicit assumption of the critical consensus that has sought, for many years, to chart the literary, political, philosophical, historical, mythical and scientific sources of her fictional works, calls a 'remarkably absorptive

¹ George Eliot to Maria Lewis, 4 September 1839, in *The George Eliot Letters*, ed. by Gordon S. Haight, 9 vols (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954-78), I, 29-31 (p. 29). Hereafter, *GEL*.

brain'.² Evans herself gives the impression that she possesses this attribute in her assertion that all she has read is still present and petrified in her 'chaotic' mind. However, in this passage Evans also betrays her early underestimation of the creative potential of her reading experiences. Compounding her own description, her account of the range of her reading is here embodied in an involved scientific metaphor which testifies to her understanding and absorption of the terms and concepts of geology. Even in her claim that what she has read is in essence useless in its arrested and smothered state, she reveals the dynamic creative force of other reading that she has obviously undertaken, in her casual and playful employment of its images and ideas for the effective production of an involved analogy. Her choice of a geological image with which to illustrate her conception of her own mental processes is in itself interesting, and speaks, I believe, for the fundamental suggestiveness of this science to the creative mind, implying natural processes and occurrences that would resonate within the work of a writer who understood and made use of 'the infinite symbolism that belongs to all nature'.³

By 1839 geology was a well-established science.⁴ However, it had recently seen the publication of Charles Lyell's widely-read and influential work *Principles of Geology* (1830-33). Like many of its predecessors, this book abounded with images of shells, ferns and the remains of various animals petrified in the earth's strata.⁵ In its opening page, Lyell writes:

Geology is the science which investigates the successive changes that have taken place in the organic and inorganic kingdoms of nature; it enquires into the causes of these changes, and the influence which they have exerted in modifying the surface and external structure of our planet.

By these researches into the state of the earth and its inhabitants at former periods, we acquire a more perfect knowledge of its *present* condition ... As the present condition of nations is the result of many antecedent changes, some extremely remote and others recent, some gradual, others sudden and violent, so the state of the natural world is the result of a long succession of events, and if we would enlarge our experience of the present economy of nature, we must investigate the effects of her operations in former epochs. (Lyell, I, 1)

² Robert A. Greenberg, 'Plexuses and Ganglia: Scientific Allusion in *Middlemarch*', *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 30 (1975), 33-52 (p. 33).

³ George Eliot to Sara Sophia Hennell, 10-13 May 1858, in *GEL*, II, 452-56 (p. 455). Geological ideas were not only suggestive to Eliot; Freud spoke of the mind, early in his career, in terms of a 'stratified psychical structure' (*Studies on Hysteria* (1895), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. and ed. by James Strachey and others, 24 vols (London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1953-74), II, 298-99). *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works* will hereafter be referenced as *SE*.

⁴ See Roy Porter, *The Making of Geology: Earth Science in Britain 1660-1815* (Cambridge: CUP, 1977).

⁵ There are almost too many examples to mention, but see especially Chapter XV of Volume II (Charles Lyell, *Principles of Geology, Being an Attempt to Explain the Former Changes of the Earth's Surface, by Reference to Causes now in Operation*, 3 vols (London: John Murray, 1830-33), II, 239-52, 275-76). It is true that Eliot here conceives of her mind as one *stratum*; however, as I will discuss, in later descriptions of the mind she adopts the term in the plural, and this suggests a layered structure that is useful in conceiving the character in a different way than is intended here. Her avoidance of the use of the plural term may be due to a desire not to overload her metaphor with suggestion; it is also worth mentioning that one *stratum* in geology is sometimes conceived of as having many layers (*Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd edn, ed. by J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner, 20 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), XVI, 856, hereafter, *OED*), so Evans may in fact have a stratified system in mind, although that it is not explicitly articulated as such is interesting.

Within *The Principles of Geology*, Lyell fully honours his definition of this wide-ranging science, a tracing of the origins and history of modifications in the natural world, which so inspired and supported Darwin's researches.⁶ That geology is closely related to what were then young ideas about evolution is displayed by Lyell's need to engage in a debate which considers the recent developmental ideas of Jean-Baptiste Lamarck. Evans herself, immediately prior to her choice of an extended geological metaphor, possibly provides a fleeting reference to newly-emerging ideas on the evolution of plants and animals, in her description of her mind as 'never of the most highly organized genus'. Using taxonomic terms, and here set against the opposite quality of chaos, the phrase 'highly organized genus' nevertheless also evokes the concept of which Lyell gives account.⁷ He writes that according to Lamarck's doctrine, animals and vegetables 'are gradually developed into the higher and more perfect classes by the slow, but unceasing agency of two influential principles'. The first was '*the tendency to progressive advancement* in organization, accompanied by greater dignity in instinct, intelligence, & c.', the second was '*the force of external circumstances*' (Lyell, II, 13).

Eliot's fiction would often act as a study of the influence of unceasing agencies on the individual whose character would consequently approach a 'higher and more perfect class' of being as a result of his or her experience. The urge towards 'a greater dignity in instinct, intellect, & c.', and the portrayal of the transformative effect of external circumstances on the individual would become elements in her work, and we can find the embodiment of both in such characters as Dorothea Brooke.⁸ A major factor in Lamarck's theory was the inheritance of acquired, even willed, characteristics; his, then, was a doctrine fundamentally based on the effects of experience. According to his belief, the ant-eater and woodpecker acquire longer

⁶ Gillian Beer writes in *Darwin's Plots: Evolutionary Narrative in Darwin, George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (London: Ark Paperbacks, 1985:1983) that 'two books ... accompanied [Darwin] on the voyage of the *Beagle*, when he was imaginatively at his most responsive. One of them was Lyell's *Principles of Geology*. The other ... was Milton's poems' (p. 34).

⁷ Although it would be hard to say conclusively that Eliot by 1839 had read both Lyell and Lamarck, or the account of Lamarck in *Principles of Geology*, it is worth considering Beer's account of Eliot's muted reaction to Darwin's *The Origin of Species* when she read it in 1859: 'Initially she was misled by her very familiarity with contemporary debate: she had read Lamarck and commissioned an article on his work for *The Westminster Review* in the early 1850s ... She admired the work of Lyell whose expansion of the geological time-scale had provided a necessary pre-condition for evolutionary ideas' (*Darwin's Plots*, p. 157). It is uncertain when Eliot came into contact with these writers, but her language in the passage under discussion would suggest that if she had not directly engaged with them by 1839, she would probably have read about them.

⁸ It is worth reminding the reader of Eliot's letter to Joseph Frank Payne of 25 January 1876, much quoted because of Eliot's statement within it, that her writing 'is simply a set of experiments in life', in *GEL*, VI, 216-17 (p. 216). Eliot writes, 'I become more and more timid - with less daring to adopt any formula which does not get itself clothed for me in some human figure and individual experience' (pp. 216-17). 'Embodiment' is therefore a helpful term in a consideration of evidence of how the fruits of Eliot's reading of scientific texts appear in her work. In a letter written ten years before, Eliot herself provides an alternative expression to describe the process in which theory is embodied. She writes of 'the severe effort of trying to make certain ideas thoroughly incarnate, as if they had revealed themselves to me first in the flesh and not in the spirit' (George Eliot to Frederic Harrison, 15 August [1866], in *GEL*, IV, 300-02 (p. 300)).

tongues by their 'repeated efforts' to stretch them;⁹ conversely, snakes, due to the lack of the use of their legs because of their preference for sliding, have lost these body parts (Lamarck, pp. 117-18). Therefore, with the accumulation of minute changes passed down from generation to generation, *experience becomes structure*. This very concept, which many critics have recognized as a fundamental law in Eliot's work,¹⁰ is implicit in the many metaphors that she would use in fiction to describe the effect of experience on motive, on mental processes and on character. The geological metaphor, which communicates the embedding of intellectual experience deep in the mind, is an early, and static, example of the embodiment of this concept. Even without the inclusion of Lamarck's theories, Lyell's volumes, as his definition of geology suggests, are based on a fundamental premise that the experience of the past affects the structure of the present. His description of 'those minute, incessant mutations, which every part of the earth's surface is undergoing, and by which the condition of its living inhabitants is continually made to vary'¹¹ is echoed years later by Eliot who applies this idea of the form of the surface affecting the occurrences above it, to the character of Gwendolen Harleth, whose fleeting behaviour is dictated by a solid though changeable underlying structure. Eliot writes, 'there is a great deal of unmapped country within us which would have to be taken into account in an explanation of our gusts and storms'.¹²

This final chapter will examine the definition and dynamics of experience and its consequences on individual motive and behaviour, in the fiction of George Eliot. Eliot's was a vastly creative mind that, from her youth, was profoundly enabled by scientific reading, which acted for her as intellectual experience whose dynamics could not leave her thinking unaffected.¹³ Scientific laws and images that she encountered within her reading were transformed into frameworks and metaphors which she went on to use in her fiction to describe

⁹ J. B. Lamarck, *Zoological Philosophy: An Exposition with Regard to the Natural History of Animals* (1809), trans. by Hugh Elliot (New York: Hafner, 1963), p. 120.

¹⁰ Because this idea was also important in positivist thinking and found explicit expression in the work of George Henry Lewes, many critics have commented on how the concept of experience becoming structure has informed Eliot's fiction due to its role in these major aspects of her intellectual context. Bernard Paris, in *Experiments in Life: George Eliot's Quest for Values* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1965), ably outlines this concept as a fundamental tenet of positivism: 'The positivists ... held that objects have direct contact with each other; that it is this contact which produces phenomena; and, very important, that the contact between objects results in a change in their physio-chemical properties or laws. The results of their interactions are a consequence of their laws, and their laws are, to a large degree, the embodied history of their previous interactions' (p. 29). He later goes on to discuss how this philosophy impacts on Eliot's fiction, 'each new experience modifies the experiencing subject, and each new modification is at once the product of all previous modifications and a determinant of all subsequent experiences and modifications' (p. 50). Michael Mason, in 'Middlemarch and Science: Problems of Life and Mind' (*Review of English Studies*, 22 (1971), 151-169) concentrates more exclusively on Lewes's work (in particular, the First Series of *Problems of Life and Mind, Foundations of a Creed* (1874-75)) as an expression of the idea that experience becomes structure, and 'determines what form future experience can take' (p. 166).

¹¹ Charles Lyell, *Principles of Geology, Being an Attempt to Explain the Former Changes of the Earth's Surface, by Reference to Causes now in Operation*, 3 vols (London: John Murray, 1830-33), III, 3.

¹² George Eliot, *Daniel Deronda* (1876), ed. by Barbara Hardy (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986), p. 321. Hereafter, *DD*.

¹³ In a letter written in 1849, Eliot comments on her 'chameleon' nature (George Eliot to Mr. and Mrs. Charles Bray, Geneva, 28 August [1849], in *GEL*, I, 300-03 (p. 302)).

the forces and influences which moulded her characters and explained their behaviour. Eliot's career was conducted alongside that of her partner, the philosopher and psychologist George Henry Lewes, with whom she enjoyed a close, intensely valuable intellectual relationship, which culminated in her eventual editing of his posthumous third series of the work that had formed a 'chief epoch' late in his life, *Problems of Life and Mind*.¹⁴ As Eliot's career progressed, her ideas of what constituted experience developed in pace with those of Lewes. This chapter will move to a consideration of Eliot's fully developed conceptions of experience, most effectively embodied in *Daniel Deronda* (1876), which, with *Middlemarch* (1871-72) was written concurrently with Lewes's deep engagement with his *Problems*, an absorption which dated from the late 1860s. I will examine Eliot's 1876 novel in conjunction with the definition of experience which is argued in *Problems of Life and Mind*. This definition, partly informed by the varied theories that then existed on evolution and its processes, conceives of the idea of experience as including not only individual physical and psychical events, and being the foundation for scientific research and theory,¹⁵ but also as encompassing social influences and the effects of heredity on the sentient subject. Living and working amongst these ideas, it is in Eliot's own sophisticated consideration of communal and ancestral experience in *Daniel Deronda* that we see the fullest possibility of the prefiguration of Freud's late-flowering theories on civilization and society. These are theories of which he lamented that 'in none of my previous writings have I had so strong a feeling as now that what I am describing is common knowledge'.¹⁶ There is a great deal of substance in Freud's uneasy words; not only do many of his social theories from the 1920s onwards resonate with Lamarckian assumptions of the inheritance of acquired characteristics, and concepts which seem to be a later version of Herbert Spencer's principles of evolution and dissolution, they also act as a strange echo of ideas which were expressed, particularly in the 1870s, by Lewes, Eliot and their friend, the psychologist James Sully. The voices of the latter three combined to assert a basic premise that 'man is distinctively a social being; his animal impulses are profoundly modified by social influences, and his higher faculties are evolved through social needs' (*Problems*, 3rd Series, I, 5-6).

Before my ultimate consideration of these more advanced theories of social and ancestral experience, however, I will trace the development of ideas about individual experience, and its effect on motive and deed in Eliot's work. I will emphasize the importance

¹⁴ George Eliot describes the *Problems* in these terms in a journal entry of 7 November 1873, in *The Journals of George Eliot*, ed. by Margaret Harris and Judith Johnston (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 143-44 (p. 144). Hereafter, *Journals*.

¹⁵ In *Problems of Life and Mind* the importance of an empirical approach to psychology, as well as to other sciences, was constantly emphasized. According to Lewes's fundamentally positivist approach, science found its bedrock in human experience, and in the experience of the scientist, and it had no place in attempting to theorize beyond these parameters. In the third series of the work, it is asserted that as 'sentiments are evolved from emotions, impersonal impulses from personal impulses, science [is evolved] from experience', as man increases in complexity with the advance of civilization. (George Henry Lewes, *Problems of Life and Mind, Third Series, Problem the First: The Study of Psychology: Its Object, Scope and Method* (London: Trübner & Co., 1879), p. 38. Hereafter, *Problems*, 3rd Series, I.

of experience as a psychical agent in Eliot's philosophy, by considering instances in her fiction where accumulated experience builds in the individual, in close conjunction with other natural laws, to inspire motives and wishes which carry the often unaware subject through to their inevitable fulfilment. In this sense, as Eliot's own metaphors suggest, experience affects psychical structure. This is a concept that we have seen somewhat differently expressed in Chapter Two, in the creation of the smooth paths of association by repeated patterns of thought, and one that prefigures the ideas embodied in Freud's *Project for a Scientific Psychology* of 1895. Having examined how the accumulation of experience creates motive, which, according to scientific law, tends towards a fulfilment, I shall go on to consider the nature of this fulfilment as a satisfaction of individual desire. The second half of this chapter will therefore form a consideration of how the subject, taking into account his or her personal, and in some cases, inherited, experience, seeks and attains different kinds of satisfaction.

One focus will be on the writing subject, writing being, to Eliot, a behaviour like any other, or rather, *more telling* than many others, for it contains the author's 'chief actions' and his or her 'best history'.¹⁷ Providing a continuation of my approach in the last chapter, in which I analysed Freud's witnessing and remembering behaviour, with the help of commentators who wrote decades before he did, in the next section I will use the ideas of Eliot and Lewes on the dynamics of pleasure and satisfaction to try to illuminate 'unrecognised agents', hidden motives in Freud's writing of the *Project*. My aim will be to provide, in this last chapter, a final appraisal of this work, which has been so prominent in my thesis, in the form of an explanation of why its writing was so abruptly terminated, and why it was then disowned by Freud, a riddle which has inspired hypothesis in many previous commentators. Again it is the case that, as with Collins, an investigation into how Freud was prefigured by the Victorians inevitably develops into a discussion on how these thoughtful commentators on the basic motives and forces behind human character and actions offer an appraisal of Freud's own motives and explain his behaviour. The more minutely, in fact, that the figures I consider in this thesis examine the human condition, the more effective they tend to be at describing the later activities of Freud. Hence it is that Eliot, and especially Lewes, are particularly illuminating.

Many commentators have already considered Eliot's writing in relation to her scientific reading, and also in conjunction with her relationship with Lewes.¹⁸ I have decided to focus on

¹⁶ Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930), in *SE*, XXI, 56-145 (p. 117). Hereafter, *Civilization*.

¹⁷ George Eliot to Mrs Thomas Adolphus Trollope, 19 December 1879, in *GEL*, VII, 230-31 (p. 230). Interestingly, this letter forms a response to Mrs Trollope's query about whether there will be a biography of Lewes. Eliot answers that she should read the latest volumes of *Problems of Life and Mind*, which would tell her as much about Lewes's mind as any biographical work (p. 230).

¹⁸ The sheer volume of critics (such as Bernard Paris, Sally Shuttleworth, Michael Mason, Kate Flint, Nancy Henry and many others) who have focused on Eliot's relationship with Lewes as a source of inspiration for her fiction inclines me to take the approach that specifically arguing that Lewes's ideas, to whatever extent, impacted on her work, is rather unnecessary. Shuttleworth's view is typical of the present critical consensus, and captures my own opinion: 'The intellectual association between George Eliot and Lewes was remarkably strong. Throughout their years together, they shared their reading and

the whole of *Problems of Life and Mind*, and not simply its first series (*The Foundations of a Creed*), at which many critics seem to stop.¹⁹ Commentators such as Bernard Paris and Sally Shuttleworth also take the whole of Lewes's fascinating work of the 1870s into account, and provide valuable and comprehensive commentaries on Eliot's work in the process. Paris's emphasis, however, though giving attention to Lewes's work, is at least equally weighted with a concentration on philosophical influences on Eliot, most notably that of positivism. Shuttleworth weights the scales rather more on the side of Lewes, writing that 'while Comte's ideas of the evolution of the social organism influenced George Eliot's early conceptions of social development, Lewes' theories ultimately had the more significant impact on her work' (*GE & 19th C.*, p. xi). However, her concentration on Lewes is couched in the terms of organicist theory; therefore his ideas appear as a development *out of* Comte's doctrine. Of course this is a valid and correct portrayal of how Lewes's ideas came to maturity (just as Paris's is an accurate charting of the entwining of Eliot's thoughts and the concepts of positivism). Shuttleworth's strength lies in her definition and location of Lewes within wider theory and philosophy; however, I would seek to go some way towards freeing him and Eliot from the burden of such (as Shuttleworth documents, problematic) allegiances,²⁰ and consider Eliot's fiction within a rather smaller (although, I accept, a remarkably loaded) intellectual context.

The challenge which I described at the beginning of this chapter, of providing a commentary on Eliot's work in the light of the vast and varied amount of reading that she engaged in, is evident when surveying the extensive field of criticism that already exists on her fiction. There are many valid approaches to Eliot's fiction through her reading, and it can appear that an appraisal of her writing cannot be attempted without reference to such sources of influence as positivism, as well as many others such as German philosophy and literature, classical myths and the works of Shakespeare which Eliot had portrayed in 1839 as embedded

studied each other's work. Indeed, George Eliot was so conversant with Lewes' philosophy that, in preparing the final series of *Problems of Life and Mind* for publication after Lewes' death, she substantively rewrote some of the sections on social psychology. Her changing understanding of the social and psychological implications of organicist thought was ... closely related to Lewes' own evolving social and scientific theory.' (Sally Shuttleworth, *George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Science: The Make-Believe of a Beginning* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 18. Hereafter, *GE & 19th C.*)

¹⁹ One notable example of this is Michael Mason, whose promising title '*Middlemarch* and Science: Problems of Life and Mind' belies the fact that he only considers *Middlemarch* in relation to the first two of Lewes's five volumes of the work. It is not the case that Lewes was only researching and writing these two volumes while or before *Middlemarch* was written, for we find a note in its third series, published in 1879, revealing that one of its chapters was first written in 1868 (George Henry Lewes, *Problems of Life and Mind, Third Series: Problem the Second: Mind as a Function of the Organism; Problem the Third: The Sphere of Sense and Logic of Feeling; Problem the Fourth: The Sphere of Intellect and Logic of Signs* (London: Trübner & Co., 1879), p. 142 n. Hereafter, *Problems, 3rd Series*, II.

²⁰ See in particular Shuttleworth's chapter on *Daniel Deronda* (*GE & 19th C.*, pp. 175-200), which she ends with the assertion that 'the persistent disjunction between the lives of Daniel and Gwendolen ... exposes the social inadequacy of the metaphoric reconciliation of organicism' (p. 200).

in her psyche.²¹ This is why so many other influences are balanced in criticism of Eliot by attention to the role of her circle of scientific friends. It will be my aim, however, to concentrate on this source of discussion and inspiration, accepting that this forms only a small part of Eliot's intellectual environment, but believing its influence on her 'remarkably absorptive brain', and consequently, on her work, to be sufficiently significant to warrant close examination. Often in criticism of Eliot, because of the range of her reading which commentators feel a need to address, important and immediate names such as that of James Sully ('for whom', Eliot wrote after Lewes's death, 'we had much esteem'),²² are vaguely mentioned in passing. This is a loss for Eliot scholarship, for as I shall discuss, Eliot influenced Sully as much as, or more than, his work impacted on hers. I hope to do something towards rectifying the omission of such immediate contributors to Eliot's intellectual environment, not least because certain aspects of the ideas of Sully and Spencer prefigure parts of Freudian theory.

It is at this point that I believe my approach departs from the overwhelming majority of critics, including those such as Shuttleworth and Paris, with whom I agree on many points. The general reluctance of commentators to consider how Eliot and her close circle may have prefigured or impacted on the work of Freud robs these Victorian figures of the credit that is due to them. Rosemary Ashton makes an interesting comment about Herbert Spencer in *George Eliot: A Life*. On a mock biographical profile of Spencer that Eliot had written in a letter to Sara Hennell, set a hundred years into the future, Ashton wrote: 'Spencer's reputation has not survived as prophesied here. George Eliot could not have known that Freud would live. Spencer's evolutionary psychology-cum-social science has become outmoded'.²³ In this chapter I hope to show that Ashton here has vastly oversimplified the situation. It is rather the case that Freud's profile would probably not have reached the stature that it did, had it not been for the theories of Spencer, whose concept of evolution and dissolution, as I have discussed in my Introduction, became absorbed into Freudian theory on regression and the life and death instincts. Of lesser stature, but nevertheless significant, is James Sully, whose ideas of the

²¹ Examples of approaches to her fiction through some of these aspects of Eliot's reading include Rosemary Ashton's appraisal of her work in conjunction with the German thinkers Strauss, Feuerbach, Spinoza, Kant and Goethe in *The German Idea: Four English Writers and the reception of German thought 1800-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 147-77; Felicia Bonaparte's *The Triptych and the Cross: The Central Myths of George Eliot's Poetic Imagination* (New York: New York University Press, 1979), which takes an approach to *Romola* through the vast amount of research into ancient and Christian myth and symbol which Eliot undertook in order to write the novel; Adrian Poole's discussion of *Daniel Deronda* in conjunction with Shakespeare's *A Winter's Tale* ('Hidden Affinities in *Daniel Deronda*', *Essays in Criticism*, 33 (1983), 294-311). There are, of course, many more works of criticism on many more aspects of Eliot's knowledge. I have not touched on her scholarship in English Romantic literature, or in French and Italian literature, for example, choosing to emphasize in this note those traditions which are more likely to have been common to Freud, whose culture was German-speaking, and who expressed interest in the ancient world, its myths and religions, and read and enjoyed Shakespeare. See Malcolm Bowie, *Freud, Proust and Lacan: Theory as Fiction* (Cambridge: CUP, 1987), pp. 18-37 for Freud's enthusiasm for archaeology and the ancient world. Ernest Jones testifies to Freud's admiration of Shakespeare (Ernest Jones, *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud, Volume 1: The Formative Years and the Great Discoveries, 1856-1900*, 13th edn, 3 vols (New York: Basic Books, 1960), I, 21-22).

²² George Eliot to Mrs Thomas Adolphus Trollope, 19 December 1879, p. 230.

1890s on dreaming, as I shall explore in my Conclusion, were admiringly cited by Freud in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, in editions from 1914. Spencer and Sully are figures, then, who reach from the mid-nineteenth century to establish direct or indirect contact with Freud. George Eliot, too, spanned this distance; as Ernest Jones testifies, Freud read and enjoyed *Middlemarch* and *Daniel Deronda* (Jones, I, 174). To this bridging pattern, Lewes seems to prove the exception. There is no evidence that Freud read any of his work, and his concepts, unlike Spencer's about evolution and dissolution (which inspired Hughlings Jackson, whom Freud admired) did not stand out prominently enough to be taken up by disciples who may then have introduced them into Freud's early thinking. However, in a brief critique of some recent psychoanalytic criticism on Eliot I hope to illuminate Lewes's role in the prefiguring process.

Opening his article, 'George Eliot: Proto-Psychoanalyst', Carl Rotenberg writes, 'while reading George Eliot's fiction, particularly *Daniel Deronda* (1876), I was impressed by similarities between George Eliot and Freud and began to wonder if Freud had been influenced by Eliot in some way'.²⁴ Rather symptomatically of this sort of criticism, which tends to find its approach via an easy, straight route that leads to dangers of oversimplification in any consideration of issues of influence, Rotenberg goes on to write, 'there is no evidence of their having met' (Rotenberg, p. 257). This is a comment that, in its inherent implication that there was the barest possibility of its opposite having occurred, speaks for its seeking of a single-stranded answer by a massive leap which attempts to form an immediate intellectual relationship between two figures whose paths would never have crossed. Later in the article, which considers in particular the 'therapeutic' relationship in *Daniel Deronda* between Daniel and Gwendolen Harleth,²⁵ Rotenberg considers the possible origin of Eliot's ideas about unconscious mental processes, concepts which he rightly recognizes did not originate with Freud. More leaps are evident here, however. Rotenberg traces Lewes's reading of Eduard Von Hartmann's *Philosophy of the Unconscious* (1869) into his writing of *Problems of Life and Mind*, and then reasons, 'since Lewes was working on his book with Eliot's assistance at the time she was writing *Daniel Deronda*, his ideas about unconscious thinking more than likely influenced her narrative descriptions' (p. 262). Fraught with conjecture, generalization and inaccuracy (for as I shall discuss, Eliot's understanding that processes that were not immediately conscious affected human thought and behaviour was evident years before the appearance of *The Philosophy of the Unconscious*, the writing of *Problems of Life and Mind* and *Daniel Deronda*), this is the only picture of Eliot's intellectual climate that Rotenberg offers.²⁶ It is from this that he goes on to discuss the relationship between Gwendolen and

²³ Rosemary Ashton, *George Eliot: A Life* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1997), p. 112.

²⁴ Carl T. Rotenberg, 'George Eliot: Proto-Psychoanalyst', *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 59 (1999), 257-270 (p. 257).

²⁵ Rotenberg writes that what *Daniel Deronda* 'foresees is the interpersonal and intersubjective context that evolved into the psychoanalytic treatment frame' (p. 262).

²⁶ In place of tracing the effect of Eliot's intellectual environment on her work, apart from in this one instance, Rotenberg takes an approach that is, interestingly, reminiscent of Freud's assessment of William

Daniel. Because of Gwendolen's reliance on Daniel for her healing, because also of the sexual tension that undeniably exists between them, this relationship has been the focus of most psychoanalytic criticism on Eliot, inspiring a wealth of commentary that suggests that Daniel may be seen as therapist, Gwendolen as patient.²⁷ What these commentators miss, however, is a rather more subtle prefiguration of Freud's theories by Eliot than a magical and complete anticipation of a psychoanalytic therapeutic relationship, which triumphantly renders her 'a proto-psychoanalyst'. For Gwendolen's story, as many commentators have understood, is a progression towards citizenship, away from egoistic childhood and into self-reliant altruistic adulthood.²⁸ It is less appreciated that this progress engages with current theories of the development of civilization, widely based on concepts of evolution with which Freud was familiar. Such theories were explored and elaborated on in great detail in Lewes's *Problems of Life and Mind*, particularly in the third series, which Eliot edited and, in places, rewrote. These ideas about the progress of mankind, depicting as they do the child/savage becoming, with the experience of social pleasures and pains, the adult/citizen, serve as a many-stranded link between Gwendolen's story and Freud. I will explore this link in the fourth section of this chapter.

Jensen, with which I started this thesis, in its emphasis on Eliot's intuition, rather than her cerebral activity and scientific reading. On p. 258 Rotenberg writes, 'George Eliot often portrayed the ways in which significant emotions reveal themselves in seemingly tiny, inadvertent ways, thus demonstrating her intuitive awareness of unconscious nonverbal expression and communication'. This, I would suggest, has more to do with Eliot's understanding that (as Lewes wrote in his *Physiology of Common Life*), 'a self-terminating sensation is as inconceivable as a self-terminating motion' (George Henry Lewes, *The Physiology of Common Life*, 2 vols (London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1859-60), II, 55; hereafter, *Physiology*), and that emotions often have to find their way out into some motor action simply because of the laws of force within the individual system.

²⁷ See Eugene Hollahan, 'Therapist or The Rapist? George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* as a Pre-Freudian Example of Psychoanalysis in Literature', *Journal of Evolutionary Psychology*, 5 (1984), 55-68 (pp. 64-66). Hollahan asserts that 'the relation between Gwendolen and Deronda, which determines the structure of the entire book, bears crucial resemblances to psychoanalytical transference' (p. 65). Echoing Freud's own argument that the artist realized truths which psychoanalysis was later able to confirm, Hollahan suggests that a transference relationship is portrayed in Eliot's novel because 'psychoanalysis ... is the branch of psychology most fruitful for the literary imagination ... Eliot seizes "combinations" which Freud "explains and justifies"' (p. 66).

For an example of a rather reductive approach that discusses Daniel and Gwendolen in terms of 'transference' and 'splitting and projective identification', see Meg Harris Williams and Margot Waddell, *The Chamber of Maiden Thought: Literary Origins of the Psychoanalytic Model of the Mind* (London: Tavistock/Routledge, 1991), pp. 168, 162.

A variation on this basic psychoanalytic approach, is taken by Thomas P. Wolfe, in the intelligent 'The Inward Vocation: An Essay on George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*' (*Literary Monographs*, 8 (1976), 1-46), who builds the idea of patient and therapist to suggest that Deronda becomes a 'new father' to Gwendolen, to replace the one lost in childhood (p. 31). This, an example of a vastly more subtle and convincing psychoanalytic interpretation than those of Rotenburg and Williams and Waddell, nevertheless applies Freudian theory, for example the Oedipus Complex (p. 26) to certain characters in *Daniel Deronda* without apology or any suggestion of Eliot's *anticipation* of Freud. That this is a rather risky way to approach the text can be seen in the language Wolfe is occasionally forced to use. For example, of his theory that Gwendolen's defiance is symbolized in her mind by a 'patricide', which involves 'overthrowing and replacing "the father"', he writes: 'Let us *assume* this pre-historic psychic event, and see then what sort of coherence emerges from those central and enigmatic events in Gwendolen's dramatized history' (p. 27, emphasis mine).

Part of the fascination and the prefiguring quality of Lewes's work lies in its deterministic reliance on the principles of cause and effect with regard to psychology; characteristics of a positivist bent, it is true, but also elements which eventually rendered his evolving thinking closer and closer to ideas that would later become embodied in psychoanalysis, which was a fundamentally deterministic science. We can gain some idea of Lewes's conception of the determination of human behaviour in the third series of *Problems of Life and Mind*, in a section which discusses free will:

That we are conscious of choosing does not prove that our exercise of choice is equivalent to Free Will, when this term is used to signify that mental actions can go on apart from the general system of sequences. All the massive evidence to be derived from human conduct, and from our practical interpretation of such conduct, points to the conclusion that actions, sensations, emotions, and thoughts are subject to causal determination no less rigorously than the movements of the planets or the fluctuations of the waves. (*Problems, 3rd Series, I, 102*)

This was written towards the end of Lewes's life; in a letter of 1848 we see displayed a very similar opinion but a difference of conclusion:

No doubt I am the sum total & exponent of myriads of influences which have preceeded me & my formation & nothing in this world is accidental – i.e. irrespective of any cause; and therefore in one sense the motive which affects me – which is strongest to me – which in fact *is* a motive – has been determined by a myriad of preceeding acts, - is but one link in the endless chain of causation. In this sense therefore I am a necessary product & my acts are the necessary consequences of my *being*. But within the limits of my own condition I am to all intents & purposes a Free Agent – a responsible being – a mind which from its own energy has the power of modifying its condition & of choosing between good & evil. Unless the whole universe be a bungling piece of mechanism in which every thought, every sensation, every movement however trivial has been <already> eternally foreseen & *planned* – then I *am* a moral agent – a *Free Agent*.²⁹

Such debates and discussions as we see in these two opposing conclusions over a final definition of what free will is and can be, do not detract from the fact that Lewes always held that our motives are determined by past experience, and that if we, true to human nature, choose according to these motives, our actions are also determined by our past. Eliot's fiction would display a similar philosophy, which, although deterministic, leaves enough room for debate on the definition, and therefore the existence, of free will to elude the limiting label of *absolute* determinism. As Lewes recognized in 1848, absolute determinism robs, and relieves the individual of responsibility for his or her actions. For this reason I would suggest that Eliot's approach is not so much determinism as a thorough *tracing of determinants*. It is partly the development of such an approach to the processes and products of the psyche which helps to explain something of the change that we see between 1839, when she described her mind as a

²⁸ See Paris, pp. 233-41, *GE & 19th C.*, p. 179, and Helena Granlund, *The Paradox of Self-Love: Christian Elements in George Eliot's Treatment of Egoism*, Stockholm Studies in English, 83 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1994), pp. 60-65.

²⁹ George Henry Lewes to Rev. George Crabbe, 11 January 1848, in *The Letters of George Henry Lewes*, ed. by William Baker, 2 vols (University of Victoria, Victoria, B. C., 1995), I, 158-61 (pp. 159-60).

static specimen, and the rather more dynamic metaphors that Eliot employed at the end of the 1850s. These latter are images that testified to a belief in the effects of past experience and motive on individual action.

From 1839 to 1859 Eliot became more aware of the potency of experience, not only on the individual character, but for the individual artist. It is interesting to contrast the static vision of her mind which is presented in 1839 with an account of her creative processes, also expressed in a letter, which she wrote twenty years later. On 11 August 1859 she wrote to Barbara Bodichon that 'at present my mind works with the most freedom and the keenest sense of poetry in my remotest past, and there are many strata to be worked through before I can begin to use *artistically* any material I may gather in the present'.³⁰ The year before this she had described the writing of *Adam Bede*, explaining that it contained no new portraits, 'only the suggestions of experience wrought up into new combinations'.³¹ The single stratum of 1839 has become a many-layered series of strata through which her experiences, her memories could emerge. The smothering, petrifying 'fast thickening every day accession of actual events, relative anxieties, and household cares and vexations', of twenty years earlier, which to Evans only went to stultify her knowledge, have in themselves become material rich with creative possibilities. Eliot's account of the writing of *Adam Bede*, recorded in her journal, demonstrates this. She testifies that 'the germ of "Adam Bede"' had been a story told her by her aunt during a visit, 'probably in 1839 or 40' ('History of "Adam Bede"', p. 502).³² Further, the characters of Dinah and Adam were suggested by family members: 'the character of Dinah grew out of my recollections of my aunt ... The character of Adam, and one or two incidents connected with him were suggested by my Father's early life' (pp. 502-03). The petrifying stone of family life had transformed into something rather more dynamic, material ripe for use by Eliot's creative mind.

Again the question arises, however, whether Eliot's assessment of her creative processes, as expressed to Barbara Bodichon, is a fully complete and accurate account. We recall Lewes's words, first cited in my Introduction, that 'genius is rarely able to give any account of its own processes':

A vivid memory supplies the elements from a thousand different sources, most of which are quite beyond the power of localisation – the experience of yesterday being strangely intermingled with the dim suggestions of early years, the tones heard in childhood sounding through the diapason of sorrowing maturity; and all these kaleidoscopic fragments are recomposed into images that seem to have a corresponding reality of their own.³³

³⁰ George Eliot to Mme Eugène Bodichon, 11 August [1859], in *GEL*, III, 128-29 (pp. 128-29).

³¹ 'History of "Adam Bede"' (Journal Entry for 30 November 1858), in *GEL*, II (1954), 502-05 (p. 503).

³² In a note Haight confirms this visit was in 1839 ('History of "Adam Bede"', p. 502 n.).

³³ George Henry Lewes, *The Principles of Success in Literature* (1865) (London: Walter Scott, n.d.), pp. 77-78.

Despite Eliot's belief that she cannot creatively use recent material, it is often the case that there is very little reworking of the 'experience of yesterday' in order for it to find its way into her work. In the rest of this section I will briefly consider aspects of three works published around 1859, *Adam Bede* (1859), 'The Lifted Veil' (1859) and George Henry Lewes's *The Physiology of Common Life* (1859-60). The phrases and concepts of Lewes's work, I will suggest, found immediate homes in Eliot's fertile psyche, and were used, with very little change, in her own fiction almost immediately. Certain critics would see this as a manifestation of a very intentional dialogue between Eliot and Lewes. Kate Flint writes that *The Lifted Veil* 'would have been impossible without Lewes's physiological researches, and in many respects [Eliot's] work should explicitly be seen as a dialogue with them'.³⁴ This is a valid point, but this thoughtful dialogue involving scientific issues and ethics is a separate thing, existing alongside the sort of inspirational, metaphorical relationship that Lewes's works bear to those of Eliot. Eliot embodies the laws and formulations evident in Lewes's philosophy in metaphor and in the mental processes and behaviour of individual characters. Lewes, himself a writer of fiction,³⁵ is attracted to the use of metaphor, and although Eliot tends to use a different but equivalent image for illustration of the same law or process, there are occasions when a metaphor is directly transposed into Eliot's work, and can act as a convenient shorthand for the process that Lewes has taken pains to explain in detail. These elements contribute to the artistic form and whole of Eliot's works, and the fact that she does not acknowledge this ready turn-around from these immediate suggestions of experience into creation in her letter to Mme. Bodichon may be a symptom of the fact that she is not always entirely aware of the process herself.

One of many concepts of Lewes's from *The Physiology of Common Life* that Eliot explored in the works I will discuss in this section is often linked by critics directly with *The Mill on the Floss*, because of the metaphor Lewes employs in describing it: 'The mill-wheel, at first so obtrusive in its sound, ceases at length to excite any attention. The impressions on our auditory nerves continue; but although we hear them, we cease to think about them' (*Physiology*, II, 59). Shuttleworth rightly comments that this image is used to illustrate 'Lewes's theory of the different levels of consciousness' and that 'it performs a similar function in *The Mill on the Floss* ... thus setting forth the two separate forms of history which are to govern Maggie's life and the narrative' of the novel (*GE & 19th C.*, p. 69). However, I believe that the presence of 'the mill with its booming'³⁶ does more than indicate the presence of two strata of consciousness; it contributes to a metaphorical picture of mental life that is fuller than

³⁴ Kate Flint, 'Blood, Bodies, and *The Lifted Veil*', *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 51 (1997), 455-73 (p. 458). See also Nancy Henry, 'George Eliot, George Henry Lewes, and Comparative Anatomy', in *George Eliot and Europe*, ed. by John Rignall, Warwick Studies in the European Humanities (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1997), pp. 44-63, on the dialogue between Eliot and Lewes.

³⁵ *Ranthurpe* (1847) and *Rose, Blanche, and Violet* (1848). He also wrote drama, for example *The Game of Speculation* (1848).

³⁶ George Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss* (1860), ed. by A. S. Byatt (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), p. 93.

this, including the stream as well as the mill, and helps us to see the existences of George Eliot's characters as possessing a richer consciousness than we had perhaps appreciated.

Earlier in his *Physiology*, Lewes states more explicitly the effects on consciousness of sounds which are unperceived. It is a passage worth quoting for its neat elucidation of Lewes's theory that consciousness 'more generally implies sensation than anything else' and that 'to *have a sensation*, and to be *conscious* of it, are one and the same thing; but to *have a sensation*, and to *attend* to it, are two different things' (*Physiology*, II, 49, 53):

While I am writing these lines the trees are rustling in the summer wind, the birds are twittering among the leaves, and the muffled sounds of carriages rolling over the Dresden streets reach my ear; but because the mind is occupied with trains of thought these sounds are not perceived, until one of them becomes importunate, or my relaxed attention turns towards them. Nevertheless, when unperceived, the sounds reached my ear, and excited sensory impressions: if these sensory impressions are not to be called sensations, because they were not perceived, they must have *some* name given to them, and a name which will indicate that they are affections of the sensitive organism. They were not lost; they were not altered in character because their subsequent effects were not manifest in Thought; they were not without their influence in adding to the sum of general Consciousness. It is because they were states of Sensibility that they must be called sensations. (II, 54-55)

Environment has more influence on us than we realize. The booming of the mill, though it ceases to be perceived, constantly adds 'to the sum of general Consciousness' – is an influence on the individual although the individual is only occasionally aware of it. Further, it becomes fundamentally part of his or her identity – 'Every excitement of a nerve-centre produces a sensation; the sum total of such excitements forms the general Consciousness, or sense of existence' (II, 65). The idea of perceived or unperceived sensations helping to form the individual's 'sense of existence' is, I believe, a very suggestive concept that Eliot incorporated into her work.

It is worth charting here what Lewes came to see as the logical conclusion of his theory of consciousness, a development of the idea that it 'more generally implies sensation than anything else'. In *Problems of Life and Mind* he writes of the difficulties inherent in the term 'consciousness', that it is fraught with 'ambiguity', as it means 'both Sentience in general and a particular Mode of Sentience' (*Problems*, 3rd Series, I, 90). More importantly, however, its disadvantage is that it is 'too limited' because 'it excludes many unconscious processes which are indubitably mental' (p. 91):

Consciousness is too limited a term. Experience, on the contrary, is comprehensive of all sentient facts. While there is a contradiction in speaking of 'unconscious sensations,' there is none in speaking of 'unconscious experiences;' these take their place among the mental modifications acquired through individual history. (p. 92)

Eliot proved to be the editor of this extract, for it is part of Lewes's posthumous legacy. In her early works we gain a sense of how it might be anticipated, in her consideration of childhood experience. Although in 1859, consciousness as a term seemed adequate for Eliot and Lewes's

conception of all that makes up a person's feeling of existence, there is a sense in which it strains slightly under the evidence of the modification of the individual by forgotten experience and unperceived sensation, tending towards an exploration of processes that are unconscious. In *Adam Bede* there is a description of the effects of childhood memories that bears a similarity to one of the passages in Lewes's *Physiology of Common Life*. While Lewes describes the imperceptible elements of the sum of consciousness thus:

The amount of light received from the stars may be small, but it is present. The greater glory of the sunlight may render this starlight inappreciable, but it does not render it inoperative. In like manner the amount of sensation received from some of the smaller ganglia may be inappreciable in the presence of more massive influences from other centres; but though inappreciable it cannot be inoperative – it must form an integer in the sum. (*Physiology*, II, 66)

Eliot describes the effects of the memories of childhood on the individual nature:

So much of our early gladness vanishes utterly from our memory: we can never recall the joy with which we laid our heads on our mother's bosom or rode on our father's back in childhood; doubtless that joy is wrought up into our nature, as the sunlight of long-past mornings is wrought up in the soft mellowness of the apricot; but it is gone for ever from our imagination, and we can only *believe* in the joy of childhood.³⁷

Eliot takes Lewes's metaphor of sensation as light to its logical conclusion – light is an essential factor in ripening the fruit, as past experience is necessary for the development of personality. But in the metaphor of the ripening apricot there is a sense of permanence, incorporation into structure, which the metaphor of the stars' light does not possess. In going that step further Eliot is entertaining the possibility of the effect on the individual of experience which has become, in its forgetting, unconscious. In Lewes's work of twenty years later, it is as if he returns with an attempt at an even more fitting metaphor for the action of experience on the individual, which is reminiscent of Eliot's image of the sun's effect on the apricot, yet which endows light with further modificatory power:

'I am the product of all that I have felt.' If we understand that not a sunbeam falls upon a garden wall but the wall is altered by that beam; much more is it comprehensible that not a thrill passes through the body but our Sensorium is altered by it. The alteration may be evanescent and inappreciable, or it may persist in a more or less appreciable modification. (*Problems*, 3rd Series, II, 87)

By this time, as we have seen, Lewes had adjusted his definition of experience to include the possibility of processes that are unconscious. In the same volume as we find the above passage, Lewes outlines a model of experience towards which, I believe, Eliot was already tending in 1859:

³⁷ George Eliot, *Adam Bede* (1859), ed. by Stephen Gill (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), p. 221.

While so many psychologists are inclined to limit psychical phenomena to states of Consciousness, the biological psychologist finds reason to conclude that the unconscious states play by far the greater part in mental life. As the impressions become integrated and experiences organised, there is a gradual fall from the conscious to the unconscious state, so that the perfection of mental processes, as of other organic processes, is their becoming automatic. (*Problems, 3rd Series, II, 17*)

Lewes's model here seems to have been informed by Herbert Spencer's concept of organic memory, which appeared for the first time in his *Principles of Psychology* (1855):

Memory, then, pertains to all that class of psychical states which are in the process of being organized. It continues so long as the organizing of them continues; and disappears when the organization of them is complete ... By further multiplication of experiences, the internal relations are at last automatically organized in correspondence with the external ones; and so, conscious memory passes into unconscious or organic memory.³⁸

It may therefore be possible to suggest that Eliot's portrayal of some sort of unconscious memory using the apricot metaphor may have been informed by Spencer's view of the faculty, established by the time that she wrote *Adam Bede*. In *The Physiology of Common Life* there is no such integration and organization into a solid unconscious structure; Lewes's definition of consciousness, in which all the modifications of experience remained within the realms of the conscious, continued to remain strained.

Such theories of consciousness and experience as Lewes held in the late 1850s had a theoretical potential to spell disaster for the sensitive subject, such as Latimer of 'The Lifted Veil', whose entire stream or sum of consciousness is made up not only of sensations, but sensations which are almost all of them painfully perceived. 'The Lifted Veil' is one step beyond Lewes's vision of the mind of 1859-60, the extension of his work in the form of a fictional experiment. It explores the issue of what would happen if we were not only conscious of every sensation (as Lewes asserts we are) but if we also *perceived* every sensation. Eliot's story could be seen as a symptom of the strain under which the term 'consciousness' is put in Lewes's philosophy, which accepts into itself all that the subject encounters and has encountered, knowingly or not. Her experimental extension of this idea results in a frightening vision of a miserable life, whose strange powers are significantly described in terms of the auditory sense (often used by Lewes, as we have seen, to illustrate the different levels of perception) – 'It was like a preternaturally heightened sense of hearing, making audible to one a roar of sound where others find perfect stillness.'³⁹ In the added idea that all our experiences are 'wrought up' into our nature, suggested and embodied in Eliot's metaphor of 1859,

³⁸ Herbert Spencer, *The Principles of Psychology* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1855), p. 563. It is likely that Lewes was more immediately informed by Spencer's 2nd edition of this work, which, much expanded, was published in 1870. The model of organic memory is expressed in virtually identical terms in this later edition, with more of an emphasis on structural modification, 'By further multiplication of experiences, the internal relations are at last structurally registered in harmony with the external ones; and so, conscious memory passes into unconscious or organic memory' (Herbert Spencer, *The Principles of Psychology*, 2nd edn, 2 vols (London: Williams and Norgate, 1870-72), I, 452).

crystallized in 1879 in Lewes's dictum, 'I am the product of all that I have felt', there lies extra terror for the sensitive being.

Latimer's sensitivity is profoundly compounded and complicated by the implications of Lewes's and Eliot's idea of the modifications caused by experience. His face in early adulthood bears 'the stamp of a morbid organisation, framed for passive suffering' ('The Lifted Veil', p. 262), but that his inclination to morbidity may have been partly fostered by the events of his life so far, is seen in his narrative of childhood and adolescence. He has been modified by the impressions made on him by his own sickliness in childhood and youth, as well as the deprivation of mother love in his later childhood, as surely wrought up into his nature as its joyful opposite described in *Adam Bede*. In the name of education, unwanted facts have been forced upon him ('I was glad of the running water ... I did not want to know *why* it ran' (p. 251)); hence his nature 'grew up in an uncongenial medium, which could never foster it into happy, healthy development' (p. 251). In addition to this, he is beset by his enforced experience of the thoughts and feelings of others - 'the obtrusion on my mind of the mental process going forward in first one person, and then another, with whom I happened to be in contact' (p. 261). These irretrievably become part of himself. Not only this, his own future becomes a part of his experience; visions of what will be become 'burnt into [his] memory' (p. 270), to the point that he is eventually 'living continually in [his] own solitary future' (p. 293). That he is extremely impressible is made clear early in the story. There is a sense in which his experience has, because of the susceptibilities of his nature, permanently modified his consciousness. Whereas in *Adam Bede* early feelings are forgotten, Latimer writes that in thinking of his mother 'even now ... a slight trace of sensation accompanies the remembrance of her caress' (p. 248).

It is my suggestion, however, that 'The Lifted Veil' is a study in morbidity that provides a commentary on so-called normality, raising questions about consciousness and experience in the rest of Eliot's characters. Commentators have often seen Latimer's experience as opposing, or alien to, normal consciousness. Jane Wood has emphasized the association of Latimer's 'double consciousness' with disease.⁴⁰ Beryl M. Gray has written that 'it is interesting that ['The Lifted Veil'] was completed after *The Mill on the Floss* was begun, for story and novel have opposite destinations',⁴¹ which suggests that she sees it as going against the general tide of Eliot's fiction. Her argument concludes that the phrenological images and principles Eliot employs, taken from the work of George Combe (from whom she became alienated on her association with Lewes) were diametrically opposed to Lewes's approach, and therefore the story simply seems a relic of a former friendship, contradicting Eliot's present (pp. 422-23). Gray argues convincingly for Eliot's use of Combe's work, but I believe that to see 'The Lifted

³⁹ 'The Lifted Veil' (1859), in *Silas Marner, The Lifted Veil, Brother Jacob* (London: Blackwood and Sons, 1907), pp. 245-303 (p. 267).

⁴⁰ Jane Wood, 'Scientific Rationality and Fanciful Fiction: Gendered Discourse in *The Lifted Veil*', *Women's Writing*, 3 (1996), 161-76 (pp. 164-65).

⁴¹ Beryl M. Gray, 'Pseudoscience and George Eliot's "The Lifted Veil"', *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 36 (1982), 407-23 (p. 422).

Veil' in relation to Lewes's ideas on consciousness is equally valid, and, indeed, illuminates rather than opposes the rest of Eliot's fiction.

The extent of Latimer's perception is significant if we look at it in terms of Lewes's doctrine that to '*have a sensation*, and to be *conscious* of it, are one and the same thing; but to *have a sensation*, and to *attend* to it, are two different things'. In causing Latimer to perceive what others think of him, and perceive the future, Eliot is implying that individuals with normal levels of sensitivity also have sensations pertaining to these things, are conscious of what others think, of what the future holds, but simply *do not attend to them*. Instead these sensations are not lost, but add to our general sense of existence, and influence us, hence the many cases of inarticulate feelings, subtle mood changes inexplicable to the individual and blind and obstinate behaviour in many of Eliot's characters. The laws which are exposed in 'The Lifted Veil' also explain Maggie Tulliver's remarkable sense of duty to her past; her characteristic of continually forsaking happiness to remain true to it. This repetitive behaviour suggests that the mill's booming, with which she has grown up, is so firmly a factor in her own stream of consciousness, is so 'wrought up' into her own nature, that it continually draws her back when out of earshot. Her last movements on earth testify to this:

She was driven out upon the flood: – that awful visitation of God which her father used to talk of – which had made the nightmare of her childish dreams. And with that thought there rushed in the vision of the old home – and Tom – and her mother – *they had all listened together*.

'O God, where am I? Which is the way home?' she cried out, in the dim loneliness. (*The Mill on the Floss*, p. 651, emphasis mine)

Not only would the booming of the mill be audible above Maggie's father's voice as he recounted the history of the floods, but also within the realms of sleep as she dreamed, or suffered nightmares; unperceived, yet forming part of her sense of existence. It is this action of early experience, I would suggest, that ties Maggie so closely to home, family, and the past.

Eliot's belief in the modifications caused by experience, her tracing of the determinants of behaviour and motive within her own characters, is more pervasive than may be immediately evident. Helen Small has recently pointed out the negativity and cynicism of Latimer's view, which, she argues, displays a fleeting suggestion from Eliot that (in Small's words) 'we should be loathe to see the poverty of our fellow creatures' souls'.⁴² It is worth considering the possibility that this negativity, contained within a narrative started a month before death, finishing as the writer's dying moments approach, is largely due to the narrator's bias, a product of the compounded effects of a life's wearying experience of self and others. Modifications compound and confirm those that are created before them, until a view of life is established. Although those around him are transparent to him, Latimer has his own unrecognized agents, half-admitted in his description of his feelings towards his brother, 'I am not sure that my

⁴² Helen Small, 'Introduction', in George Eliot, *The Lifted Veil, Brother Jacob* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. ix-xxxviii (p. xxix).

disposition was good enough for me to have been quite free from envy towards him'. His envious tendencies clearly contribute to the 'intense hatred' towards Alfred that grows in him as he discerns his inner thoughts (p. 262). In relationships with others, he is similarly dull to his own inner workings. Of Bertha he writes, 'to this moment I am unable to define my feeling towards her' (p. 263); for all his clairvoyance, his ability to read the minds of others, then, Latimer can get little purchase on his own. It is this that renders his narrative a symptom of his own jaundiced consciousness, even as he describes his perception of the underlying origins of the 'words and deeds' of others:

But this superadded consciousness, wearying and annoying enough when it urged on me the trivial experience of indifferent people, became an intense pain and grief when it seemed to be opening to me the souls of those who were in a close relation to me – when the rational talk, the graceful attentions, the wittily-turned phrases, and the kindly deeds, which used to make the web of their characters, were seen as if thrust asunder by a microscopic vision, that showed all the intermediate frivolities, all the suppressed egoism, all the struggling chaos of puerilities, meanness, vague capricious memories, and indolent makeshift thoughts, from which human words and deeds emerge like leaflets covering a fermenting heap. (p. 261).

Even within this inherently negative view of the mind, we see the imaginative legacy of geology – a continually-changing underlying movement affecting the structure of a visible covering layer. As a symptom of Eliot's growing understanding of the dynamic effects of experience we see the static chaos of mind that she envisaged in 1839 becoming the inherently *productive* 'struggling chaos' of twenty years later. My suggestion is that in Latimer's case what this chaos produced was bitterness that pervades his world-view. Twenty years later, Lewes provides a description of psychical prejudice which bears a strong resemblance to Latimer's portrayal of the mind. This later model combined the geological and vegetative metaphors of its predecessors of 1839 and 1859 while demonstrating the possibility of the sort of biased view of the world and of others which I have argued for in Latimer's own mind:

In the great total of collective Experience, – as in that of the individual, – absurd perversions and wild fancies take their place beside exact correspondences of feeling and fact, and truths that are unshakable; it is a shifting mass of truth and error, for ever becoming more and more sifted and organised into permanent structures of germinating fertility or of fossilised barrenness. Our mental furniture shows the *bric à brac* of prejudice beside the fashion of the hour; our opinions are made up of shadowy associations, imperfect memories, echoes of other men's voices, mingling with the reactions of our own sensibility. Thus it is that a mass of incoherent and unreasoned premisses are brought to bear on the evidence for any new opinion, as for any novel fact: this is the unrecognised standard by which the conclusion is determined. (*Problems, 3rd Series, I, 166-67*)

This passage takes a step back from Latimer's consciousness; the bias which colours his view is removed and reinserted, this time as an integral element of a full view of the determinants of thinking. In the next section I will discuss Freud's underestimation of the colouring of his own view and his consequent battles to reconcile the dynamics of motive and agenda with cognitive and theoretical thought.

At the end of the 1850s Eliot experimented with metaphor in order to explain how what Latimer terms the 'leaflets' of human behaviour are created; her engagement with Lewes's ideas helped her in this. In *Adam Bede* we come across an interesting metaphor which explores Arthur Donnithorne's motivation in not confessing to Rev. Irwin his intentions towards Hetty:

Was there a motive at work under this strange reluctance of Arthur's which had a sort of backstairs influence, not admitted to himself? Our mental business is carried on much in the same way as the business of the State: a great deal of hard work is done by agents who are not acknowledged. In a piece of machinery, too, I believe there is often a small unnoticeable wheel which has a great deal to do with the motion of the large obvious ones. Possibly, there was some such unrecognised agent secretly busy in Arthur's mind at this moment – possibly it was the fear lest he might hereafter find the fact of having made a confession to the Rector a serious annoyance, in case he should *not* be able quite to carry out his good resolutions? I dare not assert that it was not so. The human soul is a very complex thing. (p. 172)

This image of the soul as a machine, its larger workings, its manifest production determined by its smallest cogs, echoes Lewes's view of 'the organism as a mechanism – but a vital and *sensitive* mechanism' in which 'each cog is a sensation' (*Physiology*, II, 196). Eliot, however, is elaborating on Lewes's machine image in *Adam Bede*. Lewes's sensation in this model is quite clearly for Eliot here an inner sensation, an impulse, what Freud, in his *Project*, would see as an 'endogenous stimul[us]'.⁴³ As in the metaphor of the ripening apricot, outer sensation, the sight of the 'distractingly pretty' Hetty, who possesses the 'order of beauty which seems made to turn the heads not only of men, but of all intelligent mammals, even of women' (*Adam Bede*, p. 84) has become part of Arthur, has contributed to his inner need for sexual satisfaction, which in turn has created an unacknowledged motive which directly affects his behaviour. This behaviour in turn compounds and confirms the structure thus formed within the individual, for 'our deeds determine us, as much as we determine our deeds' (p. 315).

From her earliest novels, therefore, Eliot displayed a keen interest in the dynamics of motive, a complex force created and strengthened by the modifications caused by experience. The cerebral activities of writing and the conception of scientific theory do not escape the workings of motive; indeed, in the above passage we may find a fore-echo of Jones's description of Freud's writing of his *Project*, that he 'had a way of rather obstinately persisting with an idea even when he was uneasily half aware of being on a wrong track'. Jones follows this with a sentence which speaks much for the mechanics which often work behind such behaviour: 'To have to retrace one's steps is never pleasant' (Jones, I, 393). In the next section I will consider Eliot's philosophy of motive, a part of which is found in the human tendency to gravitate away from unpleasant experiences, towards pleasant ones. This philosophy, which we have seen exemplified in Arthur Donnithorne's secret motive, is embodied particularly fully in Tito Melema of *Romola* (1862-63). I shall discuss Eliot's presentation of the processes by which experience and internal sensations grow into motive and deed in some of her characters,

⁴³ Sigmund Freud, *Project for a Scientific Psychology* (1950), in *SE*, I, 281-397 (p. 297).

and the role of this end deed as a type of satisfaction, a necessary outcome of the insistence of forces within the individual. I will then consider how these dynamics might illuminate Freud's slightly puzzling abandonment of his *Project* of 1895.

The Dynamics of Motive and the Attainment of Satisfaction in Romola, Middlemarch and Project for a Scientific Psychology

On 28 September 1861, in an entry that appears between records of the extensive reading she was undertaking in order to write *Romola*, Eliot recorded, '28 ... In the evening Mr. Spencer, Mr. Pigott and Mr. Redford came. We talked with Mr. Spencer about his chapter on the Direction of Force, i. e. Line of least resistance' (*Journals*, p. 102). As Harris and Johnston rightly point out in their note for this entry, the chapter under discussion was from Spencer's work, *First Principles* (1862) and entitled 'The Direction of Motion' (*Journals*, p. 440).⁴⁴ In this chapter Spencer explores the law that 'motion ... always follows the line of greatest traction, or the line of least resistance, or the resultant of the two'.⁴⁵ Among more seemingly pertinent entries such as those charting Eliot's reading of the writings of Savaronola and the lives of the saints, one might miss the fact that the conversation Eliot had with Spencer could be classed as research for *Romola*. In the character of Tito Melema, however, we see, in addition to Eliot's ideas on experience, a realization and embodiment of Spencer's principles about the direction of motion. These same laws, though probably not gleaned from Spencer, as they were also basic to motion theory, would also shape Freud's model of the mind in his *Project for a Scientific Psychology*.

It is on remembering that 'motive' and 'motion' spring from the same Latin root, *movere*, to move (*OED*, IX, 1132, 1128) that we can begin to understand how Spencer's chapter on 'The Direction of Motion' may help to illuminate the actions of Tito Melema. That Lewes also understood the shared root of these words, and the implication of this, can be seen in *Problems of Life and Mind*, in a passage that forms an example of how, on occasion, his writings and those of Eliot can appear interchangeable. That this passage is from the third series, which Eliot edited, is perhaps a reason for this; the effect of a shared intellectual environment is a further probable contributory factor. However, it is also worth considering the possibility that by the end of his life Lewes had seen each stage of the conception and creation of all of Eliot's various experiments in life, and his own work had been impacted by them, in this case to the point where his writing can almost be an extension of Eliot's own commentary on the moral history of Gwendolen Harleth, or Tito Melema. Lewes writes:

⁴⁴ Harris and Johnston name this as chapter 9; in fact in the first edition of 1862 the chapter on the direction of motion was chapter 10. It was chapter 9 in all subsequent editions.

⁴⁵ Herbert Spencer, *First Principles* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1862), p. 289.

The actions of men are determined by motives, but the motives are determined by motors lying deep down in the mental structure, the motive or ideal impulse receiving its momentum from the general predisposition ... Feelings seemingly transient are as it were a gathering spawn, innest themselves in the organism, and are slowly, silently incubated, till they at last burst forth in full-formed act or utterance. (*Problems, 3rd Series, II, 138-39*)

Tito has escaped from slavery, having promised to do all he can to free his guardian, Baldassarre, who is still enslaved. Arriving in Florence, however, he does not keep his promise, choosing to forget Baldassarre, ultimately reasoning that he is probably dead. Eliot makes it clear that Tito's decision not to go on his saving mission does not spring at this stage from any evil motive, any active ill-wish towards his guardian, rather, that it is a decision made from the purely natural impulses of a pleasure-loving young man:

But, after all, *why* was he bound to go? What, looked at closely, was the end of all life, but to extract the utmost sum of pleasure? And was his own blooming life a promise of incomparably more pleasure, not for himself only, but for others, than the withered wintry life of a man who was past the time of keen enjoyment, and whose ideas had stiffened into barren rigidity? Those ideas had all been sown in the fresh soil of Tito's mind, and were lively germs there: that was the proper order of things – the order of Nature, which treats all maturity as a mere nidus for youth.⁴⁶

Tito's motives, conforming to the basic laws of the direction of motion, are guided by a combination of traction, the pull of the promise of pleasure in Florence, and a natural tendency to follow the line of least resistance. He is simply, through a love of ease, following the path he has started upon. Spencer testifies that, 'movement set up in any direction is itself a cause of further movement in that direction ... In the case of matter moving through space, this principle is expressed in the law of inertia' (*First Principles, p. 289*). Once settled in Florence, the thought of returning to free his guardian contradicts Tito's natural inclination and is easily dismissed.

It is the unexpected arrival of Baldassarre in Florence that makes a moral emergency for Tito, of the kind that Lewes would describe in *Problems of Life and Mind*, interestingly, again in terms of the laws of motion:

No moving body does move uniformly in a straight line; no man does love his neighbour as himself. All bodies do move in the diagonal of the parallelogram of two incident forces; and all men are trained to act rightly on emergencies by what is a kind of moral instinct, organised in previous habits of acting rightly.⁴⁷

The most striking thing about Tito's emergency is the fact that his own actions, his words, surprise him, emerge from a part of himself of which he was unaware. Standing on the steps of a church with his friends, witnessing the escape of a group of slaves, he finds himself confronted by Baldassarre:

⁴⁶ George Eliot, *Romola* (1862-63), ed. by Andrew Brown (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 111

⁴⁷ George Henry Lewes, *Problems of Life and Mind, First Series: The Foundations of a Creed*, 2 vols (London: Trübner & Co., 1874), I, 306. Hereafter, *Foundations*, I.

'This is another escaped prisoner,' said Lorenzo Tornabuoni. 'Who is he, I wonder?'
 'Some madman, surely,' said Tito.

He hardly knew how the words had come to his lips: there are moments when our passions speak and decide for us, and we seem to stand by and wonder. They carry in them an inspiration of crime, that in one instant does the work of long premeditation. (*Romola*, p. 209)

That Tito was unaware that he contained such potential for sudden betrayal speaks not for Eliot's conception of an unchanging eternal unconscious within the individual which reveals itself at such moments, but for her belief in the potency of experience to modify the deepest recesses of individual character. Just as Lewes would write that the moral instinct is 'organised in previous habits of acting rightly', Eliot writes that 'our lives make a moral tradition for our individual selves ... and to have once acted nobly seems a reason why we should always be noble' (*Romola*, p. 331). It is a process that has inspired Tito's behaviour; a process, what is more, that conforms entirely to natural laws. 'That inexorable law of human souls, that we prepare ourselves for sudden deeds by the reiterated choice of good or evil which gradually determines character' (*Romola*, p. 212) finds a foundation in the universal law which Eliot had discussed with Spencer on that night in September 1861.

That Spencer's *First Principles* is a discussion of universal laws, applicable equally to planetary movement and the circulation of the blood, is evident in the wealth of examples that he uses from all aspects of the natural world. One of the examples in his chapter on 'The Direction of Motion' may remind us of a metaphor which Eliot uses in *Romola*. Spencer describes the motion of raindrops when they make contact with the ground:

In the course they take while trickling over its surface, in every rill, in every larger stream, and in every river, we see them descending as straight as the antagonism of surrounding objects permits ... from moment to moment [the motion's] route is the resultant of the lines of greatest traction and least resistance. (*First Principles*, p. 293)

The idea of raindrops becoming incorporated into larger and larger channels of water, all of which conform to the laws of gravity and of least resistance, seems to be a suggestive one for Eliot. It speaks of large movement from small beginnings, each drop contributing to the general movement of the rest. It is an idea we see illuminating the progress that Tito makes, in his self-justificatory thoughts and his selling of Baldassarre's property, towards the betrayal of his guardian, 'the ideas which had previously been scattered and interrupted had now concentrated themselves: the little rills of selfishness had united and made a channel, so that they could never again meet with the same resistance' (*Romola*, p. 97). Spencer too describes this breaking down of resistance within a channel:

If the obstructive action of the tissues traversed, involves any reaction upon them, deducting from their obstructive power; then a subsequent motion between these two points will meet with less resistance along this channel than the previous motion met with; and will consequently take this channel still more decidedly. If so, every repetition will still further diminish the resistance offered by this route; and hence

will gradually be formed between the two a permanent line of communication, differing greatly from the surrounding tissue in respect of the ease with which force traverses it. (*First Principles*, p. 299)

By such processes, Spencer writes, reflex actions are formed (p. 299). Springing from the colloquy he holds with himself about Baldassarre, in which he articulates the words '*I believe he is dead*', and his investing of the money from his gems which would reveal him as a guilty man on his guardian's return, Tito's wish, an 'adjustment of ... desires' to his actions (*Romola*, p. 97), cannot be anything other than that Baldassarre is now dead. Therefore, when Tito sees him, his words, destroying him as a relation, as a sane being, carry out his wish; the dynamics behind this process too are described in Spencer's argument. He writes, 'probably it will be thought impossible to extend this reasoning so as to include volitions', but 'we are not without evidence that the transition from special desires to special muscular acts, conforms to the same principle':

To represent in consciousness certain of our own movements, is partially to arouse the sensations accompanying such movements ... is partially to excite the appropriate motor-nerves and all the other nerves implicated. That is to say, the volition is itself an incipient discharge along a line which previous experiences have rendered a line of least resistance. And the passing of volition into action is simply a completion of the discharge. (*First Principles*, p. 301)

Having mentally disowned and denied his guardian for all this time, then, to see him again inspires the only reaction possible, the same one that has occurred psychologically every time Baldassarre is brought to mind – a dismissal.

The laws regarding the direction of motion could hardly be seen as Spencer's own conception,⁴⁸ although, perhaps more than any of his contemporaries, he expressed them clearly and applied them widely, tracing them to numerous examples, biological and sociological, within microcosm and macrocosm alike. It was according to such laws, applied on a psychical scale, that Freud created his model of the mind in 1895. What Spencer expounds and exemplifies, Freud assumes as a basic rule of motion, which he duly builds his system upon. It is clear, however, that in doing this Freud believes that he is performing an unusual task. He writes to Fliess that he was 'vexed' by the intention 'to discover what form the theory of psychical functioning will take if a quantitative line of approach, a kind of economics of nervous force, is introduced into it'.⁴⁹ Spencer's universal application of the laws of the direction of motion, including to 'the succession of all ... nervous changes' (*First Principles*, p. 299), reveals that Freud's approach was not a novel combination of two disparate elements, as

⁴⁸ Goethe, for example, had applied the law of least resistance to human habits of thought: 'Man finds himself in the midst of effects and cannot resist inquiring into causes; taking the line of least resistance, he fixes on the nearest as the best, and this pacifies him; for this is more particularly the way of human reason' (Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, 'From *Wilhelm Meister's Journeyman Years* (1829)', in *Maxims and Reflections*, trans. by Elisabeth Stopp, ed. by Peter Hutchinson (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1998), pp. 57-107 (p. 80)).

⁴⁹ Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 25 May, 1895, cited in 'Editor's Introduction', *Project for a Scientific Psychology*, in *SE*, I, 283-93 (p. 283).

he had believed. Even before the writing of *First Principles* we see this in Lewes's doctrine that 'Habits, Fixed Ideas, and what are called Automatic Actions, all depend on the tendency which a sensation has to discharge itself through the readiest channel' (*Physiology*, II, 58). We can therefore see parts of Freud's *Project* as an unwitting extension of the work of Spencer and Lewes. As such it provides further interesting insight into the character of Tito.

The psychical system represented in *Project for a Scientific Psychology* is inherently an inert one. The 'quantity' within it, as in Spencer's system, follows the path which, resistance having been lowered by previous influxes, is easiest to traverse (*Project*, p. 300). The German term for this is *Bahnung*, which suggests a path-making process; interestingly its English translation is 'facilitation', which implies an element of ease which is not immediately present in the German term alone but is inherent in the process it describes. A preference for the easiest path is not the only characteristic of inertia displayed by the system. As I first described in my Introduction, it is, as a whole, governed by 'the principle of neuronal inertia: that neurones tend to divest themselves of Q [quantity]' (p. 296). However, because of the insistence of internal stimuli, the needs of the organism, from which it cannot escape as it would prefer but must take action to satiate, the system has to keep a store of energy in reserve. This gives rise to what would become known as the pleasure principle, expressed in 1920 thus: 'the mental apparatus endeavours to keep the quantity of excitation present in it as low as possible or at least to keep it constant'.⁵⁰ At the end of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* Freud considers the pleasure principle in relation to the life and death instincts. He concludes that, due to its tendency to guard against 'increases of stimulation' that 'would make the task of living more difficult', which renders it an unobtrusive keeper of the peace, 'the pleasure principle seems actually to serve the death instincts' (*Beyond*, p. 63). This conclusion is an interesting comment on the results of inertia; Eliot in her characterization of Tito, for all his initial vitality, portrays his natural tendency as equally destructive. She makes it clear that Tito's plan of extracting 'the utmost sum of pleasure' from life is (like the pleasure principle) based on a principle of avoidance, exemplified in his 'elastic resistance to whatever is unpleasant' (*Romola*, p. 146). This is particularly evident in his meditations after his betrayal of Baldassarre. In a passage striking for its neat elucidation of this trait in Tito, and its simultaneous demonstration of the fact that his intentions are far from actively evil, Eliot foreshadows his eventual demise by her tracing of the results of such a philosophy of life:

It was a characteristic fact in Tito's experience at this crisis, that no direct measures for ridding himself of Baldassarre ever occurred to him. All other possibilities passed through his mind, even to his own flight from Florence; but he never thought of any scheme for removing his enemy. His dread generated no active malignity, and he would still have been glad not to give pain to any mortal. He had

⁵⁰ Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920) in *SE*, XVIII, 1-64 (p. 9). In my Introduction I discussed how the pleasure principle was informed by Fechner's principle of stability. Spencer, too, proposed a universal law of stability, in the law of equilibration, which dictated that 'the tendency of every organism, disordered by some unusual influence, [is] to return to a balanced state' (*First Principles*, p. 517).

simply chosen to make life easy to himself – to carry his human lot, if possible, in such a way that it should pinch him nowhere; and the choice had, at various times, landed him in unexpected positions. The question now was ... whether all the resources of lying would save him from being crushed by the consequences of that habitual choice. (pp. 212-13)

One of the consequences of Tito's choice of an easy existence is the loss of decision-making capability, inspiring moments when his 'passions speak and decide for [him]' (p. 209). This renders his psychological workings particularly basic, to the point where he seems to have only two reactions: an attraction to pleasure, and a strong aversion to pain. His early encounter with Tessa under the plane-tree is symptomatic of the dynamics that rule his life: it is a combination of an avoidance of unpleasantness (in this case, a walk in the sun or the endurance of her tears), and the inclination which desire sets up within him. Rising to leave Tessa and to walk to the house of Romola, he is beaten back by the heat of the day:

Tito had an unconquerable aversion to anything unpleasant, even when an object very much loved and desired was on the other side of it. He had risen early ... and had been already walking in the sun: he was inclined for a siesta, and inclined all the more because little Tessa was there, and seemed to make the air softer. (*Romola*, p. 105)

With Tito the nature and subtlety of Eliot's deterministic approach is nicely illustrated. He is a character who is ruled by his impulses; but this is as a result of the flabbiness of his will. Rather as Lamarck's snake has lost its legs through their lack of use, Tito's will has shrivelled in comparison to more active aspects of his character. Lewes, in *Problems of Life and Mind*, would write, in a discussion of freedom of will:

No one supposes that our *desires* are free. Such freedom as there is consists in the conflict of desires, and the choice determined by the predominance of the most urgent; and this predominance is partly due to the strength of the immediate stimulus, and partly to the vision of possibilities and consequences which the desire awakens. It is here that Desire passes into Volition; so that however powerful a stimulus may be in exciting a desire, if it be connected in Experience with painful consequences we are thereby educated to resist the desire, or to avoid incurring the stimulus which awakens it. Because the Will is thus the abstract expression of the product of Experience, it is educable, and becomes amenable to the Moral Law. (*Problems, 3rd Series*, I, 109)

At each stage Tito has the opportunity to reverse his slide towards doom, to confess. But as Eliot writes, interestingly using a metaphor which invokes animal development, 'confession involved a change of purpose. But Tito had as little bent that way as a leopard has to lap milk when its teeth are grown' (*Romola*, p. 393). Despite the fact that he is likened to an adult leopard, Tito is rendered infantile in his uneducated responses, in his inability to exercise will in the face of the pull of pleasure and his disinclination for unpleasant experiences.

In the third series of *Problems of Life and Mind*, Lewes wrote:

Every organism shrinks from what is disturbing and disagreeable, and clings to what is in harmony with it. Action is a necessity; all that is in our power is the direction of activity, and this is momentarily guided

by neural excitations, and by sensations which are pleasurable or painful. Taught by these, the individual learns to direct his activities. (*Problems, 3rd Series, I, 39-40*)

Failing to reap the benefits of a moral education, in which unpleasure is early attached to wrongdoing through punishment, Tito's activities remain directed by his own neural excitations. The attraction to pleasure and the avoidance of unpleasure are for Freud too the fundamental pullers and pushers within the psyche, and 'unpleasure remains the only means of education' (*Project, p. 370*). In the *Project*, Freud describes the dynamics of satisfaction and pain, whose workings are dictated by early experience. The former occurs when the child, in need of food, for example, cries, and is attended to:

When the helpful person has performed the work of the specific action in the external world for the helpless one, the latter is in a position, by means of reflex contrivances, immediately to carry out in the interior of his body the activity necessary for removing the endogenous stimulus. The total event then constitutes an *experience of satisfaction*, which has the most radical results on the development of the individual's functions. (p. 318)

The legacy of this experience is a psychic connection between the feeling of need and the mnemonic trace of the object that answered to that need. The experience of pain, conversely, leads to a facilitation between the feeling of an 'inclination to discharge' (p. 320; a psychical defence mechanism which retains something of the original trend towards the flight from stimulus (p. 296)), and the trace in memory of the object that has caused this pain. Freud writes:

The residues of the two kinds of experiences [of pain and of satisfaction] which we have been discussing are affects and wishful states. These have in common the fact that they both involve a raising of $Q\ddot{r}$ tension in ψ ⁵¹ ... Both states are of the greatest importance for the passage [of quantity] in ψ , for they leave behind them motives for it which are of a compulsive kind ... the experience of pain leads to a repulsion, a disinclination to keeping the hostile mnemonic image cathected. (pp. 321-22, editor's brackets)

In the words of Harold Transome of *Felix Holt* (1866), 'a memory [is] a nasty, uneasy thing';⁵² Tito is disinclined to think of what gives him pain, that Baldassarre may yet be alive and waiting for his return. Consequently, on his return Tito's actions display the symptoms of the compulsive motive forces that reside in him. Freud writes that if the unpleasant memory is reawakened, perhaps by 'a fresh perception', then 'a state arises which is not pain but which nevertheless has a resemblance to it. It includes unpleasure and the inclination to discharge which corresponds to the experience of pain' (p. 320). It is certainly a discharging that we, and Tito, witness in his reaction to Baldassarre on the church steps. Eliot would see the encounter in terms of the economy of forces. Elsewhere in the novel she writes of such a release of unwelcome pent-up force; of Romola's need to express her anger to her husband she comments, 'she could not weigh probabilities; she must discharge her heart' (*Romola, p. 427*). Words like

⁵¹ The system which contains memories.

'current' are also frequently used in her fiction, with regard to emotional force, such as enthusiasm (*Romola*, p. 432). In *Felix Holt*, Esther Lyon's need to testify at Felix's trial is described thus:

Some of that ardour which has flashed out and illuminated all poetry and history was burning to-day in the bosom of sweet Esther Lyon. In this, at least, her woman's lot was perfect ... that her woman's passion and her reverence for rarest goodness rushed together in an undivided current. And to-day they were making one danger, one terror, one irresistible impulse for her heart. Her feelings were growing into a necessity for action, rather than a resolve to act. (p. 373)

There is a sense of discharge here too; after the deed is done Eliot writes, 'the acting out of that strong impulse had exhausted her energy' (p. 375). Such moments in Eliot's fiction reflect Lewes's doctrine in *The Physiology of Common Life* that unites sensation and motion in a common set of rules, 'a self-terminating sensation is as inconceivable as a self-terminating motion. The wave of force is propelled onwards, and for ever onwards, now in this direction, now in that' (*Physiology*, II, 55). Such forces must find a release of some kind.

Such motives must find satisfaction, to rephrase. The etymological roots of 'satisfaction' are found in two words, *satis*, enough, and *facere*, to do (*OED*, XIV, 504); it is therefore a dynamic term, entirely fitting for the sort of action in which the forces of the psyche almost irresistibly manifest themselves in the deeds of Tito and Esther Lyon. In both these characters the action undertaken is not so much a pleasure as a psychical necessity; it is noteworthy that, following this term to its roots, it is a necessary fulfilment rather than a sense of pleasure that is emphasized here too. In the rest of this chapter I will investigate *Middlemarch* and *Daniel Deronda* as complex explorations of how humanity knowingly and unknowingly seeks and attains different kinds of satisfaction, for necessary release, for pleasure, but always as an outcome of motive. *Middlemarch* at times seems to be a battleground for the desires of its characters. What satisfies one often excludes the satisfaction of another. Reverend Farebrother's words to Fred Vincy about Mary Garth, 'I am sure you know that the satisfaction of your affections stands in the way of mine',⁵³ are symptomatic of this novel, which is charged with egoistic impulses, wants and wishes, all demanding fulfilment. Rarely, however, are circumstances conducive to the gratification of these yearnings. Events rarely fit expectations. Fred Vincy's encounter with Peter Featherstone, from whom he expected to receive sufficient money to pay off his debts, is an example of this – 'What can the fitness of things mean, if not their fitness to a man's expectations? Failing this, absurdity and atheism gape behind him.' (*M*, pp. 163-64) We may think that the optimistic, pleasure-seeking Fred is an exception; after all, his too-cheerful attitude is an invitation to disappointment. However, throughout the novel we encounter characters in a similar state of firm expectation and

⁵² George Eliot, *Felix Holt: The Radical* (1866), ed. by Fred. C. Thompson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 342.

⁵³ George Eliot, *Middlemarch: A Study of Provincial Life* (1871-72), ed. by W. J. Harvey (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), p. 727. Hereafter, *M*.

misguided faith in the 'fitness of things'. These expectations demanding satisfaction display themselves in a range of symptoms. But they also impact on a wider sphere of existence than the immediate life of the individual from which they arise. In the satisfaction of Tito's motive we see damage inflicted on those around him; in the satisfaction of Esther's, the beginning of the healing of common life in Treby Magna. Similarly in *Middlemarch* and *Daniel Deronda* the manifestation of motive in its satisfaction affects the wider life. In *Problems of Life and Mind* Lewes identified two major dynamic forces within humanity in a passage which goes some way to setting up a linked dichotomy that will inform what follows:

Man is not simply an Animal Organism, he is also an unit in a Social Organism. He leads an individual life, which is also part of a collective life. Hence two classes of Motors: the personal, and the sympathetic – the egoistic and the altruistic. From these chiefly issue the Animal sentient life, and the Human intellectual and moral life. (*Foundations*, I, 109)

Although it becomes clear, on reading Eliot's fiction and Lewes's psychological writings, that these two motors are not mutually exclusive (suggested by the word 'chiefly' in the above passage, Lewes's qualifier), satisfaction will usually occur according to which of them becomes dominant in the individual. In the rest of the present section I will examine the issues of egoistic motives, in the next I will start to consider the satisfactions attendant on the altruistic impulse. That pleasure can be gleaned from altruism is often overlooked; by examining Lewes and Eliot's theories on the development of altruism, I will attempt to show that satisfaction from this source is in fact a fulfilment of both the personal and sympathetic drives, containing the possibility of a complete gratification for the individual.

In *George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Science* Shuttleworth ably explores the dynamic models of force that make up *Middlemarch*, focusing on the inhibiting labyrinth which is used as a metaphor by Eliot to illustrate the dispersal of energy. In her commentary on the relationship between Dorothea and Casaubon she speaks of the idea of the issue and effect of force and the need for free-flowing energy along wide channels (*GE & 19th C.*, pp. 157-65). However, I believe that she does not pay quite enough attention to the concept of satisfaction, and its role within the novel. Free-flowing energy has to end somewhere in action. Casaubon's psyche does resemble a series of closed corridors; he is impotent and issueless, it is true, but these personal traits can also be expressed in terms of his ability to be satisfied. Early on we perceive that this may be a problem; when Dorothea asks on the honeymoon whether the trip has satisfied him academically, he says, "Yes," ... with that peculiar pitch of voice which makes the word half a negative' (*M*, p. 231). In Chapter 29, Eliot paints a picture of Casaubon, some weeks after the wedding, making it clear that he was ill-equipped by habit of mind and physiology to enjoy the full benefits of marriage:

To know intense joy without a strong bodily frame, one must have an enthusiastic soul. Mr Casaubon

had never had a strong bodily frame, and his soul was sensitive without being enthusiastic: it was too languid to thrill out of self-consciousness into passionate delight; it went on fluttering in the swampy ground where it was hatched, thinking of its wings and never flying ... It is an uneasy lot at best, to be what we call highly taught and yet not to enjoy: to be present at this great spectacle of life and never to be liberated from a small hungry shivering self – never to be fully possessed by the glory we behold, never to have our consciousness rapturously transformed into the vividness of a thought, the ardour of a passion, the energy of an action, but always to be scholarly and uninspired, ambitious and timid, scrupulous and dim-sighted. (pp. 313-14)

Casaubon, by nature, is excitable, but that is all. There is no result, no issue, no action, simply sensitiveness, stimulation without gratification. Taken in the context of Lewes's theories on matter and force – '*A thing is what it does*' – Casaubon is an all-but-useless human being,⁵⁴ something that he himself realizes, an awareness that causes his energy to be channelled into resistance rather than enthusiasm. Eliot writes that he had 'a melancholy absence of passion in his efforts at achievement, and a passionate resistance to the confession that he had achieved nothing' (*M*, pp. 454-55). The effect is an uncharged world, such as we see in Dorothea's blue room – 'the shrunken furniture, the never-read books' (p. 307).

In frequent allusions to Casaubon's age and its symptoms (his warts, which disgust Celia, his legs, which Sir James Chettam derides), his own conception of his single state ('an affection hitherto unwasted', p. 67), and her description of his set personality ('this mental estate mapped out a quarter of a century before', p. 314), Eliot's implication is that after a life of abstinence it may be too late for him to enter into any pursuits that actively seek and achieve satisfaction. Casaubon's experience, unsurprisingly perhaps, finds resonance in Freudian theory. In his 1908 essay "'Civilized" Sexual Morality and Modern Nervous Illness' Freud writes:

In general I have not gained the impression that sexual abstinence helps to bring about energetic and self-reliant men of action or original thinkers or bold emancipators and reformers. Far more often it goes to produce well-behaved weaklings who later become lost in the great mass of people that tends to follow, unwillingly, the leads given by strong individuals.⁵⁵

This mass of 'well-behaved weaklings' could easily include Casaubon, whose marriage, after the initial disruptive honeymoon period, subsides into something that is well-behaved, and nothing else:

Inclination yearned back to its old, easier custom. And the deeper he went in domesticity the more did the sense of acquitting himself and acting with propriety predominate over any other satisfaction. Marriage, like religion and erudition, nay, like authorship itself, was fated to become an outward requirement, and Edward Casaubon was bent on fulfilling unimpeachably all requirements. (*M*, pp. 314-15)

⁵⁴ George Henry Lewes, *Problems of Life and Mind, First Series: The Foundations of a Creed*, 2 vols (London: Trübner & Co., 1875), II, 372. Hereafter, *Foundations*, II.

⁵⁵ Sigmund Freud, "'Civilized" Sexual Morality and Modern Nervous Illness' (1908), in *SE*, IX, 177-204 (p. 197).

This subsidence finds its psychological explanation in *Problems of Life and Mind*. Lewes describes how in the constant forming and reforming of neural groups within the mind, 'by frequent repetition some groups more readily fall into the old places after stimulation, and are reformed as before. They are then what we call "organised"' (*Problems, 3rd Series, II, 140*). Lewes then goes on to look at the implications this has for the individual psyche and for society:

The tendency of groups to reform in established lines is at once a source of power and a limitation ... The highly civilised social state is far less easily modified than one less organised: existing institutions which give the state its powers are obstacles to the formation of new and better institutions. Discoveries meet with the fiercest opponents in men who have definite conceptions on the subject, without flexibility of mind. (*Problems, 3rd Series, II, 141*)

It is Casaubon's inflexible tendency of conforming to existing stale social requirements which causes him to immediately dismiss the unconventional but fair proposition from Dorothea that he should give Will his rightful inheritance. Further, he is like Freud's description of the sexually abstinent weakling, in that it is the strong and flexible people, such as Will and Dorothea, that he seems most to resent, as his will reveals, so that these two fall doubly victim to his traits – those weakly conforming ones in life, and those forcefully deviant ones in death. Casaubon, on understanding that his end is approaching, reacts thus:

In such an hour the mind does not change its lifelong bias, but carries it onwards in imagination to the other side of death, gazing backward ... What was Mr Casaubon's bias his acts will give us a clue to. He held himself to be, with some private scholarly reservations, a believing Christian, as to estimates of the present and hopes of the future. But what we strive to gratify, though we may call it a distant hope, is an immediate desire; the future estate for which men drudge up city alleys exists already in their imagination and love. And Mr Casaubon's immediate desire was not for divine communion and light divested of earthly conditions; his passionate longings, poor man, clung low and mist-like in very shady places. (*M*, p. 462)

Casaubon's will, in fulfilling his desire of crushing Will Ladislaw in some sense, and giving expression to his jealousy of Will's relationship with Dorothea and his resentment of her questioning independence, loses him what above all things he worked towards in life – a lasting respected reputation. His sources of passion and therefore of satisfaction have become twisted and so his desires flow into inappropriate channels - 'the prevision of his own unending bliss could not nullify the bitter savours of irritated jealousy and vindictiveness' (p. 457). His suspicion is that Will and Dorothea represent, as well as a positive, vital, active force, a knowledge of his profound academic ineffectiveness. Unable to gain satisfaction in life, he is impelled towards it a sense that both twists the truth of the nature of the relationship between Dorothea and Will and shies from viewing the consequences. It is a perverted and shameful act which shocks his neighbours. The idea of slowly-gathered unconscious motive suddenly causing, against our better nature, actual effects that will last infinitely longer than the satisfaction gained, is a common one in Eliot's work.

Bulstrode is a study in the relations between desire, habit and consciousness, and since his move towards crime in the present day is gradual, we can chart the processes that bring desires from simply being ideas into being fulfilled. It is important to understand the mechanics and economy of Bulstrode's psyche, and Eliot takes the utmost care to present to the reader a dynamic picture of all the forces at work in him. For he is, in a sense, a picture of civilized man. Endowed with strong passions, especially those to be 'important and predominating' (p. 668) he attempts to rein them in, using religion to do this. For religion provides an alternative, a respectable channel for the instincts:

He was simply a man whose desires had been stronger than his theoretic beliefs, and who had gradually explained the gratification of his desires into satisfactory agreement with those beliefs. If this be hypocrisy, it is a process which shows itself occasionally in us all, to whatever confession we belong. (p. 667)

Freud makes a similar point to Eliot's last about hypocrisy in his *Thoughts for the Times on War and Death* (1915), written at a time when humanity was throwing off its moral mask:

Elsewhere the pressure of civilization brings in its train no pathological results, it is true, but is shown in malformations of character, and in the perpetual readiness of the inhibited instincts to break through to satisfaction at any suitable opportunity. Anyone thus compelled to act continually in accordance with precepts which are not the expression of his instinctual inclinations, is living, psychologically speaking, beyond his means, and may objectively be described as a hypocrite, whether he is clearly aware of the incongruity or not. It is undeniable that our contemporary civilization favours the production of this form of hypocrisy to an extraordinary extent. One might venture to say that it is built up on such hypocrisy, and that it would have to submit to far-reaching modifications if people were to undertake to live in accordance with psychological truth.⁵⁶

And something of the nature of the breakthrough of Bulstrode's instincts to satisfaction does actually occur, when John Raffles, a figure from the banker's guilty past, arrives with the threat to reveal the truth about Bulstrode. It is no wonder that Bulstrode finds himself a mass of strong and immoral desires at this; to reach the religious state in which we find him he had 'taken his selfish passions into discipline and clad them in severe robes, so that he had walked with them as a devout quire, till now that a terror had risen among them, and they could chant no longer, but threw out their common cries for safety' (*M*, p. 758). Again this image finds an echo in later work by Freud on the dynamics of group psychology in which he describes the effect of the loss of the group leader: 'The loss of the leader in some sense or other, the birth of misgivings about him, brings on the outbreak of panic ... the mutual ties between the members of the group disappear ... The group vanishes in dust'.⁵⁷ It is Bulstrode's lack of proper leadership by his conscious will that causes his passions to run loose, so that his past 'had risen and immersed his thoughts as if with the terrible irruption of a new sense overburthening the feeble being' (*M*, p. 667), leading to a complete unmasking of his self-preserving instinct. An

⁵⁶ Sigmund Freud, 'Thoughts for the Times on War and Death' (1915), in *SE*, XIV, 273-302 (p. 284).

⁵⁷ Sigmund Freud, 'Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego' (1921), in *SE*, XVIII, 65-143 (p. 97).

image appears of the true aim that would bring satisfaction with it – ‘Raffles dead was the image that brought release ... imperious will stirred murderous impulses towards this brute life, over which will, by itself, had no power’ (p. 761). The will of God in this situation, becomes all but powerless – ‘He knew that he ought to say, “Thy will be done”, and he said it often. But the intense desire remained that the will of God might be the death of that hated man.’ (p. 750) Desires and impulses, however, because of psychical processes that cannot be said to be conscious or direct, need little opportunity to manifest themselves, as we have seen in Casaubon’s will. A layered psyche produces different strata of moral feeling, so that:

Bulstrode shrank from a direct lie with an intensity disproportionate to the number of his more indirect misdeeds. But many of these misdeeds were like the subtle muscular movements which are not taken account of in the consciousness, though they bring about the end that we fix our mind on and desire. (pp. 739-40)

Bulstrode’s wish is fulfilled, by slow steps, and by an element of the mind that the conscious mind turns its gaze away from. We are taken through every step of Bulstrode’s psychological progress from citizen with a secret to murderer. In *Daniel Deronda*’s less straightforward killing, it is essential that the steps to Grandcourt’s death are enumerated minutely, so that Gwendolen’s guilt or otherwise can be assessed. In this novel the agents of cause, effect and cause in their turn, are even more finely linked. The method of Grandcourt’s death finds its echo in Lewes’s metaphorical style, as he expands on his doctrine that ‘nothing acts by itself’ (*Foundations*, II, 389):

We have already seen that the habit of fixing on some one or two conspicuous agents as the cause of a change, because this *addition* disturbs the existing relations, is consistent with the definition of force, “that which produces or tends to produce a change.” On this ground we say ... “The man was drowned *because* his foot slipped in crossing the plank.” No one supposes ... that the man could be drowned unless he fell into water of a certain depth of less specific gravity than his body, and there was no one at hand to assist him, or he was unable to swim; – these conditions, positive and negative, are left unspecified, being presupposed, and only the new conspicuous condition is specified as the cause. (*Foundations*, II, 393-94)

The new conspicuous condition in Grandcourt’s drowning is Gwendolen’s momentary hesitation in jumping in to rescue him. Contributing to this hesitation are a number of factors, all with an underlying motive, ‘an urgent hatred dragging her towards its satisfaction’ (*DD*, p. 866). For as Eliot writes, ‘passion is of the nature of seed, and finds nourishment within, tending to a predominance which determines all currents towards itself, and makes the whole life its tributary’ (pp. 736-37). Like Tito, Gwendolen has not undergone enough discipline, enough practice in the use of her will for her better nature, expressed later in her attempt to save Grandcourt, to immediately prevail. What Lewes would call her ‘moral instinct’ is not sufficiently developed to act in such a calamity; in addition, she has, by making immoral decisions in the past, which Eliot describes as a forsaking of her conscience (p. 867), lost a certain amount of her ability to instantaneously make the right decision.

That Eliot is aware of the sort of desires, battled with by the will, that even benevolent minds are subject to is emphasized by her explanation of the reaction of Rex, who immediately struggles 'with a tumultuary crowd of thoughts that were an offence against his better will,' when he hears of Grandcourt's death. Rex is an open, young character, also uninterested in vices, whose motive is that he blindly loves Gwendolen. Describing his triumphant feelings, Eliot asks, 'who has been quite free from egoistic escapes of the imagination picturing desirable consequences on his own future in the presence of another's misfortune, sorrow, or death?' (p. 776). Although Will Ladislaw does not consciously wish for the death of Casaubon, it is he that plants the first real seeds of suspicion about the value of Casaubon's studies in Dorothea, when he reveals that the German scholars have already drawn the conclusions her husband has been groping to find. Eliot describes the act in these terms - 'Mortals are easily tempted to pinch the life out of their neighbour's buzzing glory, and think that such killing is no murder' (*M*, p. 240).

Constantly explaining desires to kill, of which we see the whole gamut in Eliot's 1870s novels, in terms of a capability that exists within much of humanity, foreshadows Freud's later assertions on the instinctual selves that live beneath the civilized masks we wear. However, it seems that Eliot is even more extreme than Freud in her view of the effects that such wishes have on their target. Freud writes:

For strangers and for enemies we do acknowledge death, and consign them to it quite as readily and unhesitatingly as did *primaeval* man. There is, it is true, a distinction here which will be pronounced decisive so far as real life is concerned. Our unconscious does not carry out the killing; it merely thinks it and wishes it. But it would be wrong so completely to undervalue this psychical reality as compared with factual reality. It is significant and momentous enough. In our unconscious impulses we daily and hourly get rid of anyone who stands in our way, of anyone who has offended or injured us ...

And so, if we are to be judged by our unconscious wishful impulses, we ourselves are, like *primaeval* man, a gang of murderers. It is fortunate that all these wishes do not possess the potency that was attributed to them in *primaeval* times; in the cross-fire of mutual curses mankind would long since have perished, the best and wisest of men and the loveliest and fairest of women with the rest. (*Thoughts for the Times*, p. 297)

Eliot would not say, like Freud, that the death wish for others finds its primary outlet in curses which are, in effect, harmless; she believes it can act as a motor towards deeds which certain individuals, such as Bulstrode and Gwendolen, are ill-prepared to avoid carrying out. The difference in the outlook, of Eliot, along with Lewes, and Freud, in this and in many other issues pertaining to the mind, can be found in the concept of repression. Many Victorian psychologists, as I have discussed throughout this thesis, conceived of unconscious mental processes, the 'obscure recesses' of the psyche, but they omitted the element, essential to Freud's theory, of virtually absolute repression, whereby what is unconscious is, simply, 'inadmissible to consciousness'.⁵⁸ Hence Eliot's characters engage in a more conscious battle with their desires. Gwendolen's wish to kill Grandcourt, that she suddenly discovers outside herself, is recognized as her own (*DD*, p. 761). To his credit, Carl Rotenberg also

⁵⁸ Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), *SE*, IV & V, ix-629 (p. 613).

acknowledges this lack of repression in Eliot's portrayal of the mind, selecting a very important illustrative quotation from the novel (*DD*, p. 669) with which to support his point:

In the Eliot/Lewes formulation, there is often no absolute distinction between conscious and unconscious thinking; rather, there are gradations through which the two kinds of thinking can intermingle with each other: 'Fantasies moved within her like ghosts, making no break in her more acknowledged consciousness and finding no obstruction in it: dark rays doing their work invisibly in the broad light'. (Rotenberg, p. 263)

Partly unacknowledged but recognizable, this is the sort of motive or wish that we see influencing the actions of Eliot's characters, rather than the all-but-inaccessible Freudian repressed wish, whose dynamics I am now about to explore with regard to the behaviour of Freud himself. Many of the satisfactions of desire that I have discussed above have been largely unthinking processes. However, the effects of motive can be equally manifest in much more cerebral productions; thinking, judging, writing, for example. In his *Physiology of Common Life*, expressing a belief that he would more and more eloquently explore as his career progressed, Lewes writes, 'we cling to certain ideas because they are pleasant, or interest us, or because some remote pain or pleasure stimulates us'; conversely, 'we repress all other thoughts as they arise, just as we should repress movements which disturbed a pleasurable sensation' (*Physiology*, II, 217). To illustrate this principle's application to intellectual processes, Lewes turned to a contemporary thinker for whom he had great respect, Alexander Bain.⁵⁹ Bain's account of James Watt's mental processes as he was inventing the steam-engine is revealing, not least because of his connection of the highest orders of thought with the same workings of pleasure and pain by which the behaviour of the infant is guided:

'When Watt invented his "parallel motion" for the steam-engine, his intellect and observation were kept at work, going out in all directions for the chance of some suitable combination rising to view; his sense of the precise thing to be done was the constant touchstone of every contrivance occurring to him, and all the successive suggestions were arrested, or repelled, as they came near to, or disagreed with, this touchstone ... The promptitude that we display in setting aside or ignoring what is seen not to answer our present wants, is volition, pure, perennial, and unmodified; the power seen in our infant struggles for nourishment and warmth, or the riddance of acute pain ... No formal resolution of the mind ... no special intervention of the "ego," or the personality, is essential to this putting forth of the energy of retaining on the one hand, or repudiating on the other, what is felt to be clearly suitable, or clearly unsuitable, to the feelings or aims of the moment ... In all these new constructions, be they mechanical, verbal, scientific, practical, or aesthetical, the outgoings of the minds are necessarily at random; the end alone is the thing that is clear to the view, and with that there is a perception of the fitness of every passing suggestion. The volitional energy keeps up the attention, or the active search, and the moment that anything in point rises before the mind, springs upon that like a wild beast on its prey.' (Quoted in *Physiology*, II, 218-19)

This passage is very valuable, not least because of its clear message that what is being described here is an intellectual process which has at its base the simple seeking of satisfaction. It is interesting that Watt is in essence inventing a *system*; the juxtaposition of this invention and

Bain's likening of its process to 'the riddance of acute pain' looks forward to Freud's account of a night's work on his *Project for a Scientific Psychology*, as reported in a letter to Wilhelm Fliess. It also reflects Eliot's comment on her own creative processes, also in a letter, that 'when a subject has begun to grow in me I suffer terribly until it has wrought itself out – become a complete organism; and then it seems to take wing and go away from me'.⁶⁰ Freud writes:

During an industrious night last week, when I was suffering from that degree of pain which brings about the optimal condition for my mental activities, the barriers suddenly lifted, the veils dropped,⁶¹ and everything became transparent – from the details of the neuroses to the determinants of consciousness. Everything seemed to fall into place, the cogs meshed, I had the impression that the thing now really was a machine that shortly would function on its own ... Naturally, I can scarcely manage to contain my delight.⁶²

The last word is, in German, 'Vergnügen'⁶³ – 'pleasure, enjoyment, delight'.⁶⁴ Jones's translation renders the last sentence as 'naturally I don't know how to contain myself for pleasure' (Jones, I, 382). There is, as with Eliot's description, a sense of charged pain followed by the pleasure of tension released, as the creation, whether a machine-like or a bird-like entity, becomes independent of its creator.

As we have seen in Bain's description of Watt's creative processes, there is a sense in which the highest intellectual processes can be likened to very basic impulses, especially that of

⁵⁹ Alexander Bain (1818-1903), a psychologist. In the 1850s he had written a treatise composed of two volumes: *The Senses and the Intellect* (1855) and *The Emotions and the Will* (1859), which are his most famous works.

⁶⁰ George Eliot to Alexander Main, 4 November 1872, in *GEL*, V, 323-24 (p. 324).

⁶¹ Freud's image of the veils dropping can be interestingly set against a comment by Lewes in 1860, in which he writes, having discussed the nature of voluntary and involuntary action, concluding that every occurrence in the body is a reaction to sensation, in some form or another, rendering nothing voluntary: 'It is a topic on which no man will, wisely, dogmatise. The veil of mystery will never be lifted. We who stand before that veil, and speculate as to what is behind it, can but build systems; we cannot see the truth' (*Physiology*, II, 225). However, if we follow Lewes into the 1870s, his attitude has changed. In *Foundations of a Creed*, he describes the tendency of lecturers who, having offered their scientific theories to an audience, then say, "Here Science pauses. Beyond this we cannot go. Beyond this lie mysteries before which the wisest philosopher is no better than a child" – immediately a round of applause bursts forth: numerous feet stamp approval; flattered Ignorance feels at ease, and shakes its head significantly. "Ah! you see, Science is vain *there*. In spite of its proud boasts, there are mysteries it cannot penetrate!". Lewes comments, 'now surely it is no matter of exhilaration, but rather of deep regret, that we find ourselves in a universe of mystery, compelled to grope our way amid shadows ... Inaccessibility is relative, and science has answered questions which, to minds unfamiliar with its data and procedures, might seem hopelessly beyond human power' (*Foundations*, I, 22-23). Freud should not be seen as too presumptuous for seeking to draw aside the veil – his hunger to do this may have been connected with a trend towards a confidence in solving the mysteries of the universe of which Lewes's increasing boldness was a symptom.

⁶² Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 20 October 1895, in *The Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 1887-1904*, trans. and ed. by Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1985), pp. 146-47 (p. 146). Hereafter, *Freud-Fliess*.

⁶³ Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 20 October 1895, in *Aus den Anfängen der Psychoanalyse: Briefen an Wilhelm Fliess, Abhandlungen und Notizen aus den Jahren 1887-1902*, ed. by Marie Bonaparte, Anna Freud and Ernst Kris (London: Imago, 1950), pp. 139-40 (p. 140).

⁶⁴ *Langenscheidt's Condensed Muret-Sanders German Dictionary: German-English*, ed. by Heinz Messinger and others (Berlin and Munich: Langenscheidt, 1982), p. 1133.

hunger. In *The Physiology of Common Life* Lewes did make a direct connection between hunger and the need to work. Anticipating his later ideas on society he writes, 'let food be abundant and easy of access, and civilisation becomes impossible' (*Physiology*, I, 2). Bain's view, however, is more subtle, suggesting a gratification inherent in the very act of thinking. This was an idea that Lewes was to build on, as he astutely realized that any activity built on the mechanics of tension followed by gratification was liable to be vulnerable to the activity of wishes and thereby the warping of results. It is plain that he has imbibed the ideas inherent in Bain's account of Watt's search for the answer which would tally with his 'sense of the precise thing to be done', his 'touchstone', from the following passage:

Expectation is a state in which we are adapting the organism to a particular response that is dimly felt in desire, or clearly seen in thought; and hence the discomfort felt when this expectation is contradicted; the satisfaction, when it is fulfilled. The animal, expecting the appearance of its prey, is ready to spring; all its muscles are adapted to that spring. The mind expecting the emergence of a particular thought as the conclusion of its search, is also ready to spring, and will seize only such evidences as lead to that conclusion. (*Problems, 3rd Series*, II, 105)

The last sentence both reflects Bain's idea of the mind as a wild beast seizing its prey, and adds another element to Bain's vision of cognitive thought. In a progression from his 1859 doctrine that 'our philosophy, when not borrowed, is little more than the expression of our personality' (*Physiology*, II, 68), Lewes is suggesting that our putting together of an argument or theory is, far from an objective scientific process, guided by the law that 'we only see what interests us' (*Problems, 3rd Series*, II, 106). Elsewhere he expresses this even more vehemently: 'Who does not know how the wish to find some proposition true will suppress the adverse evidence and intensify the favourable evidence? *Cognition has here its impulse in desire, and judgment is the satisfaction of the impulse.*' (*Problems, 3rd Series*, II, 101)

In my Introduction I touched on the sort of language that Freud uses in the text of his hastily-written *Project for a Scientific Psychology*, as part of my explanation of why he may have wanted it to remain undiscovered. Since then, I have revealed, in my last chapter, Freud's deep-seated need for success, which contributed to his seizing of the seduction theory as a key to all neuroses, and above I have added Eliot's exploration of the fulfilment of motive in satisfaction, and Lewes's ideas on the inseparability of interest and desire from the processes of thought. We return then to Freud's language of assumption, hope and satisfaction with, it is hoped, a fuller idea of the processes that may be behind it. It will be my suggestion that Freud's own theory of cognitive thought, which emerges late in the *Project*, and bears resemblance to the ideas of Lewes and Bain on the subject, becomes an additional reason why he wished to bury his 1895 work. In the light of such passages as the following one, the later conclusions he cannot help but draw become an embarrassment:

I know nothing about the absolute magnitude of intercellular stimuli; but I will venture on the assumption that they are of a comparatively small order of magnitude and of the same order as the

resistances of the contact-barriers. This, *if it is so*, is easily understandable. *With this assumption*, the essential sameness of the ϕ and ψ neurones is *saved*, and their difference in respect of permeability is explained biologically and mechanically. (*Project*, p. 305, emphasis mine)

As Malcolm Bowie comments of such works as *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 'desire and wish-fulfilment, adamantly rejected by Freud in his public accounts of scientific procedure, adamantly return and display themselves in his writing'.⁶⁵ Bowie here is envisaging the writing that Freud intended for public reading; his *Project*, in essence a letter to a friend, though a valiant effort at a viable system that would explain all mental processes, is a private document, and therefore additionally vulnerable to the display of such motive forces. That this is so is evident in such passages as that above, as well as such phrases as 'I hope the hypothesis of a bound state of this kind will turn out to be mechanically tenable' (*Project*, p. 369) and 'the following description is still more satisfying' (p. 362); its language renders what Bowie calls 'the wishful substratum of Freud's scientific writings' more visible (Bowie, p. 17). As a private document it becomes allied to more overt expressions of what Freud hopes it will achieve, for himself ('if I succeed in this, I will be satisfied with everything else'),⁶⁶ and for psychology:

A man like me cannot live without a hobbyhorse, without a consuming passion, without – in Schiller's words – a tyrant. I have found one. In its service I know no limits. It is psychology, which has always been my distant, beckoning goal, and which now, since I have come upon the problem of neuroses, has drawn so much nearer. I am tormented by two aims: to examine what shape the theory of mental functioning takes if one introduces quantitative considerations, a sort of economics of nerve forces; and, second, to peel off from psychopathology a gain for normal psychology.

In the description of his working habits with which Freud continues, we begin to understand the practical effects of such ardent wishes for his work:

During the past weeks I have devoted every free minute to such work; have spent the hours of the night from eleven to two with such fantasizing, interpreting, and guessing, and invariably stopped only when somewhere I came up against an absurdity or when I actually and seriously overworked, so that I had no interest left in my daily medical activities.⁶⁷

In his 'fantasizing, interpreting, and guessing', which was only curbed by the sense of 'absurdity' (or by exhaustion) we gain a sense of the vocabulary which lurks behind the rather gentler hopes and assumptions which Freud allows himself in the slightly more formal, but nevertheless private, *Project*. The private nature of this document, I would suggest, is also evident in Freud's account of cognitive thought, which allows a doubt, suggests a possibility of partiality, in the process of scientific theorizing, which, as Bowie testifies above, Freud would have hesitated to display publicly.

⁶⁵ Malcolm Bowie, *Freud, Proust and Lacan: Theory as Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 17.

⁶⁶ Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 17 June 1895, in *Freud-Fliess*, pp. 132-33 (p. 132).

⁶⁷ Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 25 May 1895, in *Freud-Fliess*, pp. 128-31 (p. 129).

Freud, like Lewes and Bain before him, realized that thought found its root in primitive impulses. The process of thinking starts with 'the mechanism of psychical attention' (*Project*, p. 360), akin to the expectation which forms the beginning of thought for Lewes. On the effect of psychical attention on the mental apparatus Freud writes: 'this state has a prototype in the *experience of satisfaction* ... Tension due to craving prevails in the ego, as a consequence of which the idea of the loved object (the *wishful* idea) is cathected' (p. 361).⁶⁸ There is, then, a process of comparison, as the ego hunts its loved object among the perceptions it receives, much as the mind prepares to seize its prey in the metaphors of Lewes and Bain. This process gives rise to thought. Having admitted the early connection of thought with the experience of satisfaction, however, Freud then comes across problems in trying to argue that certain forms of thought are completely safe from the dynamics of pleasure and unpleasure. Unknowingly echoing Bain's description of Watt's thought processes, in which 'intellect and observation were kept at work, going out in all directions for the chance of some suitable combination rising to view' which fitted 'his sense of the precise thing to be done', Freud conceives of thought in terms of the following of a series of paths within the mind, 'with purposive thought it is a question of *some pathway or other* and, accordingly, those to which unpleasure attaches can be excluded; whereas with theoretical [thought] every pathway must be cognized' (p. 383). However, this latter industrious and impartial following of pathway after pathway is an untenable one, partly because of the mechanism of facilitation, by which certain pathways will be much more readily chosen than others, and partly because the dynamics of pleasure (which attracts) and unpleasure (which repels) simply cannot be kept out of a thinking process which springs out of their workings. It is in the process of the following of pathways that Freud himself conceives the failure of impartial thought: 'The errors of cognitive thought are self-evident. They are partiality, where purposive cathexes have not been avoided, and incompleteness, where every pathway has not been followed' (pp. 385-86). In another passage which seems to confirm Lewes's doctrine that 'our philosophy ... is little more than the expression of our personality', Freud more than anywhere else in his argument admits the rarity of pure, error-free cognitive thought:

Since in fact our ego always entertains purposive cathexes – often a number of them at the same time – we can now understand both the difficulty of purely cognitive thought and also the possibility, in the case of practical thought, of the most various pathways being reached at various times under various conditions by various individuals. (*Project*, p. 377)

Lewes had preceded Freud particularly eloquently in his description of the pitfalls of theoretical thought; further, at times he seems to describe the processes of Freud's own

⁶⁸ It is worth reminding the reader that the psychoanalytic term 'cathexis' (*Besetzung*) denotes 'a certain amount of psychical energy ... attached to an idea or to a group of ideas, to a part of the body, to an object, etc' (J. Laplanche and J.-B. Pontalis, *The Language of Psycho-Analysis*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (London: Karnac Books and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1988), p. 62). 'Cathected' therefore bears a similar meaning to 'loaded'.

construction of theory. In terms that could act as a description of Freud's conjectural approach to the building of his system, according to which he then went on to attempt to explain 'all of psychology',⁶⁹ Lewes writes:

Among the curious features of our mental organisation must be noted that by which on all subjects of immediate practical importance we always proceed at once to verify any conjecture we may have formed, whereas on subjects of speculative importance we are too impatient to await this control, and in our eagerness for an explanation readily accept conjectures as truths. The anticipatory rush of thought prefigures qualities and foresees consequences; instead of pausing to ascertain whether our anticipations do or do not correspond with fact, we proceed to argue and to act on them as if this mental vision were final. (*Foundations*, I, 471-72)

A more public, and gradual version of this process can be seen towards the end of Freud's career, in his construction and extension of the ideas first mooted in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* as 'far-fetched speculation' (p. 24); the forces of Eros and the death instinct. In 1920, Freud wrote of these ideas, in a rare acknowledgement of the motives behind thinking:

It may be asked whether and how far I am myself convinced of the truth of the hypotheses that have been set out in these pages. My answer would be that I am not convinced myself and that I do not seek to persuade other people to believe in them ... [P]eople are seldom impartial where ultimate things, the great problems of science and life, are concerned. Each of us is governed in such cases by deep-rooted internal prejudices, into whose hands our speculation unwittingly plays. Since we have such good grounds for being distrustful, our attitude towards the results of our own deliberations cannot well be other than one of cool benevolence. (*Beyond*, p. 59)

In 1923, though referring back to his attitude of 'benevolent curiosity', Freud introduces a new work, *The Ego and the Id*, in which 'an attempt is made to arrive at new conclusions from this conjunction'.⁷⁰ Seven years later, in *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930), the finality of Freud's mental vision of 1920 is established, as Freud bases his exploration of the drives operating within society firmly on the life and death instincts. He writes that originally 'it was only tentatively that I put forward the views I have developed here, but in the course of time they have gained such a hold upon me that I can no longer think in any other way' (*Civilization*, p. 119). Lewes's description of theoretical thought, then, is demonstrated by Freud, who in time seems to forget his public acknowledgement that deep-seated motives are rarely absent from the speculative process, founding his later theories on such tentative beginnings.

We have seen a similar pattern before, of course, in Freud's use of aspects of his *Project* as a basis (this time, an invisible one), for later work, including *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. Freud's rejection of it, therefore, is all the more intriguing. Not long after his acknowledgement that the ego very rarely lacks 'purposive cathexes' in any of its processes, the *Project* ends with very little warning, and no conclusion. Critics have argued over why Freud abandoned his

⁶⁹ Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 16 August 1895, in *Freud-Fliess*, pp. 135-36 (p. 136). Freud writes of the *Project*: 'All I was trying to do was to explain defense, but ... I had to work my way through the problem of quality, sleep, memory – in short, all of psychology.'

⁷⁰ Sigmund Freud, 'The Ego and the Id' (1923), in *SE*, XIX, pp. 3-66 (p. 12).

work. Many believe that the reason is because of its old-fashioned neurological approach. Jones writes, 'we may regard the feverish writing of the "Project" as a last desperate effort to cling to the safety of cerebral anatomy', an allegiance which was ultimately untenable (Jones, I, 384, 393). Frank Sulloway believes its rejection is to do with the fact that it was intended as an exploration of repression and failed in its aim.⁷¹ These are valid reasons, but I believe that it is worth considering the possibility that despite his best efforts, Freud suddenly realized that he had argued himself into the work; he sees a portrait of his own partial, hasty intellectual habits in his description of the 'errors of cognitive thought' and by this time can do very little about it. Beginning with words like 'satisfaction' and 'assumption', because he had only a hazy idea of where his argument would end, he displayed symptoms of partiality and wishful ideas from the first few pages, and in the last few found that he had described himself. Having theoretically and, what is more, demonstrably annihilated his own system (as it was for all to see a result of this partiality, the discharge of his 'purposive cathexes') all he could then do was dismiss it as 'a kind of madness'⁷² and try to forget it. That events would prove this impossible is a gain for commentators, such as myself, who find in the *Project* a transparency which illuminates the motives behind Freud's other work.

'Joint Pleasurable Action': Satisfaction and Society

We now turn to a consideration of the motives that lay behind Eliot's fiction. These seem to have developed with her career; or rather, as she attained a level of satisfaction in one sphere of life whose longings and tensions had previously inflected her fiction, she began to seek it more actively from another source. It was this second search for satisfaction that inspired and shaped *Middlemarch* and *Daniel Deronda*. More specifically, a certain awareness of the complexities inherent in such searches for gratification, and what they can achieve for self and others, found expression in the fictive experiences of various characters within these novels.

I have already touched upon the creative pain, akin to Freud's, which Eliot endured in order to write her fiction. In her journal entry of Sunday, 18 September 1859, however, we can discern something of what might have contributed to this inner tension, this need for a successful completion of a work: 'A volume of devotional poetry from the authoress of "Visiting my Relations", with an inscription admonishing me not to be beguiled by the love of money: *In much anxiety and doubt about my new novel*' (*Journals*, p. 80). The emphasis is Eliot's; significantly, her expression of anxiety comes directly after, and (suggesting its natural development) is separated only by a colon from the noting of an appeal to her to avoid an

⁷¹ Frank J. Sulloway, *Freud, Biologist of the Mind: Beyond the Psychoanalytic Legend* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992), pp. 123-24.

⁷² Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 29 November 1895, in *Freud-Fliess*, p. 152. Freud writes: 'I no longer understand the state of mind in which I hatched the psychology; cannot conceive how I could have inflicted it on you. I believe you are still too polite; to me it appears to have been a kind of madness.'

attachment to money. Elsewhere in the journal it becomes clear that making money is not unimportant to Eliot. On 28 November 1860, she writes, 'I have invested £2000 in East Indies Stock, and expect shortly to invest another £2000, so that with my other money, we have enough in any case to keep us from beggary' (*Journals*, p. 87). The journal entry for 18 September 1859, however, also gives a suggestion of why this might be. Not only did the appeal against a love of Mammon come from someone who wrote "Visiting my Relations", but the novel Eliot was anxious about was *The Mill on the Floss*, whose brother-sister relationship is surely partly a product of the tendency of Eliot's mind to work 'with the most freedom and the keenest sense of poetry in [her] remotest past'. Critics have commented on the likeness between the law-loving Tom Tulliver and Eliot's brother Isaac Evans,⁷³ who had, on Eliot's union with Lewes, cut off all communication with his sister. Anxieties about being cast adrift, not least financially, from her family, could be seen as one root of Eliot's need to make money at this point in her career. Interestingly, it is out of her family (in the writing of *The Mill on the Floss*) that Eliot is effectively planning to make financial capital.⁷⁴

Another journal entry of ten years later, however, reveals a more contented Eliot, although her very expression of happiness is surrounded by indications of an unease which herald a search for a new kind of satisfaction. She writes, on 31 December 1870:

The papers tell of still harder weather about Paris where our fellow-men are suffering and inflicting horrors. Am I doing anything that will add the weight of a sandgrain against the persistence of such evil? ... In my private lot I am unspeakably happy, loving and beloved. But I am doing little for others. (*Journals*, pp. 141-42)

It is not simply the news of the Franco-Prussian War that inspires such a thirst to contribute to the general good. There is a sense, in the 1870s, that Eliot has, after many years, achieved a level of personal satisfaction which comes as much from a sense of acceptance of circumstances as from success, for she writes on 1 January 1874, 'as to all my unchangeable imperfections I have resigned myself' (*Journals*, p. 144). Having reached this point, a language of benefit, value and result, with regard to the effects of her work on its readers, becomes more prominent in Eliot's journals and correspondence. On 1 January 1873, regarding *Middlemarch*, she writes

⁷³ See Kathryn Hughes's recent work, *George Eliot: The Last Victorian* (London: Fourth Estate, 1999), on this relationship and how it found its way into Eliot's work, including into the character of Tom Tulliver (p. 272).

⁷⁴ Other critics have speculated on family-based motives behind Eliot's work. Thomas P. Wolfe discusses Eliot's defiance of 'the authority of the father and the religious community for the drama of the great world' in the 1850s, and agrees with U. C. Knoepfelmacher's suggestion that the voice of the Princess Halm-Eberstein is in fact Eliot's, crying 'Had I not a rightful claim to be something more than a mere daughter and mother?' (Wolfe, pp. 40-41). He cites Eliot's (then Mary Ann Evans's) words, written in a letter after her father's death, 'what shall I be without my Father? It will seem as if a part of my moral nature were gone' (cited in Wolfe, p. 41 n.). Wolfe's argument grows from his observation that 'the parts of Eliot's fiction that carry the ethical burden – that embody doctrines of love or the "Religion of Humanity" – usually seem the most egoistical part of her work' (p. 4) and he considers the possibility that this is because she is compensating in some sense for her early defiance of her father's authority. For

'I have received many deeply affecting assurances of its influence for good on individual minds' (p. 143). On 10 November 1877 she writes 'there have been multiplied signs that the spiritual effect of "Deronda" is growing' (p. 148). That Eliot invested a great deal of hope in the 'spiritual' results of this particular novel is clear in the language she uses in replying to David Kaufmann's favourable book 'George Eliot und das Judenthum' (George Eliot and Judaism), which was written in response to it.⁷⁵ She writes: 'Hardly, since I became an author, have I had a deeper satisfaction, I may say a more heartfelt joy, than you have given me in your estimate of "Daniel Deronda".'⁷⁶ However, this is not a completely selfless satisfaction. Later in the letter there comes an indication that although Eliot's thirst to do good at this time helped others, it also seems to have answered to a deep-seated requirement in Eliot herself. She writes of his praise, 'such a response holds for an author not only what is best in "the life that now is," but the promise "of that which is to come"'. It is clear that Eliot is not here referring to any sort of religious after-life, for she elaborates, 'any instance of complete comprehension encourages one to hope that the creative prompting has foreshadowed, and will continue to satisfy, a need in other minds', whereas a 'narrow perception' of one's work 'impresses one with the sense that it must be poor perishable stuff without roots to take any lasting hold in the minds of men' (*GEL*, VI, 379). It is a sense of immortality that Eliot needs; she seeks to do good because it counteracts, in some sense, the approach of death. This is most eloquently expressed in her famous letter to Clifford Allbutt of 1868:

Never to beat and bruise one's wings against the inevitable but to throw the whole force of one's soul towards the achievement of some possible better, is the brief heading that need never be changed, however often the chapter of more special rules may have to be re-written. I use that summary every day, and could not live without repeating it to myself. *For even with the most perfect love to cheer one, there is still a past which widens more and more in the consciousness as a wasted good, and there is the visibly narrowing future.*⁷⁷

Just as the higher intellectual faculties find root in the primitive impulses which draw us to pleasure and discourage us from pain, altruism finds its source in our animal inheritance. Lewes and Eliot both deeply understood this. In *Foundations of a Creed*, Lewes wrote:

As the Aggressive Instinct springs from the Nutritive, so the Sexual Instinct springs from the Reproductive. It is the first of the sympathetic tendencies, the germ of Altruism. Love, which is the social motor, has this origin. Thus modified, the tendency to Domination becomes the love of Approbation: it is the sympathetic form of the egoistic impulse. The love of wife and children extends to relatives and friends, to the tribe, to the nation, to Humanity. (*Foundations*, I, 176)

an alternative exploration of Eliot's relationship with her father and how it shaped her fiction, see Dorothea Barrett, *Vocation and Desire: George Eliot's Heroines* (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 94-97.

⁷⁵ See William Baker, *George Eliot and Judaism* (Salzburg: Universität Salzburg, 1975), pp. 4-5, on Kaufmann's praise of *Daniel Deronda*.

⁷⁶ George Eliot to David Kaufmann, 31 May 1877, in *GEL*, VI, 378-80 (p. 378).

⁷⁷ George Eliot to Clifford Allbutt, 30 December 1868, in *GEL*, IV, 499-500 (p. 499), emphasis mine.

K. K. Collins has produced an invaluable study which compares parts of Lewes's original manuscript for the third series of *Problems of Life and Mind* with the published version, edited, and in places, rewritten, by Eliot. A section that Lewes had written on the emotions, 'The Affective States', which Collins reprints alongside Eliot's revisions in the paper's appendix, is very similar in parts to the above passage: 'The tendency to domineer here takes the modified form of desire for Approbation', 'the tenderness & sympathy felt for mate and offspring is extended to relatives, friends, & all small and helpless creatures, finally to all men and animals'.⁷⁸ Partly because of its likeness to the earlier passage, perhaps, Eliot feels the need to revise it. She writes:

Appetite is the ancestor of tyranny, but it is also the ancestor of love. The Nutritive instinct, which urged the search for prey, has ended in producing an industry and ingenuity of device which is its own delight, a conversance with the external universe which is sublimely, disinterestedly speculative; the Reproductive instinct has ended in producing the joys and heroism of devoted love, the sacred sense of duty towards offspring; and both instincts have been at work together in the creation of the sentiments which constitute our moral, religious, and æsthetic life. (*Problems, 3rd Series, II, 387*; cited in 'G. H. Lewes Revised', p. 492)

In Eliot's motives for writing, then, we can see, according to this philosophy, both the nutritive instinct, in her earlier worries about her financial state, and the reproductive instinct, in her concern for the good her work will do in individual minds, and also in her need to leave some sort of legacy. This yearning to leave an inheritance is a natural response in a woman who, alienated from her family, was, in her fifties beginning to feel herself impinged upon by the narrowing of her future.

In his fifties, Freud too began to write about the problems of society and civilization. This was an interest that had manifested its first shoots in the 1890s, in his 1898 paper 'Sexuality in the Aetiology of the Neuroses', which discussed the detrimental effects of civilization's curbing of the sexual instinct. The tentative ideas in this early paper found much more strength in the 1908 work "'Civilized" Sexual Morality and Nervous Illness', which expressed an interest in man as a social being that continued until the end of Freud's life, inspiring such works as *The Future of an Illusion* (1927) and *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930). These papers demonstrated his mature understanding that:

Individual psychology is concerned with the individual man and explores the paths by which he seeks to find satisfaction for his instinctual impulses; but only rarely and under certain exceptional conditions is individual psychology in a position to disregard the relations of this individual to others. In the individual's mental life someone else is invariably involved, as a model, as an object, as a helper, as an opponent; and so from the very first individual psychology, in this extended but entirely justifiable sense of the words, is at the same time social psychology as well. (*Group Psychology, p. 69*)

⁷⁸ Cited in K. K. Collins, 'G. H. Lewes Revised: George Eliot and the Moral Sense', *Victorian Studies*, 21 (1978), 463-92 (p. 492).

These words echo Lewes's argument, decades before, for an appropriate methodology within psychology which would take into account the idea that 'it is in the development of Civilisation that we trace the real development of Humanity. The soul of man has thus a double root, a double history'; therefore 'Human Psychology ... the science of psychical phenomena, has to seek its data in Biology, and in Sociology' (*Foundations*, I, 125, 109).

In the late 1860s and 1870s, a period which coincided with Freud's formative years, to which he traced back his later interest in what he called 'cultural problems',⁷⁹ social psychology (as Eliot described it, 'the supremely interesting element in the thinking of our time')⁸⁰ became widely debated. As with the fiction of Eliot at this time, there was increased emphasis on the good that such thinking could do. Herbert Spencer's conclusion to *The Study of Sociology* (1873), though it advocates 'letting social progress go on unhindered' (which suggests a rather passive attitude to the workings of universal laws) nevertheless argues that 'erroneous conceptions' of the way in which, and the speed at which, society develops will inhibit such progress: 'And thus, notwithstanding first appearances to the contrary, there is a very important part to be played by a true theory of social phenomena'.⁸¹ As well as its aims to contribute to the common good, however, the interest in society and civilization that was expressed in scientific writings of the 1870s frequently acted as a response to or a development of important and universal theories such as Darwin's work on heredity and natural selection.⁸² Further mid-century theories that provoked response and discussion were encapsulated in the vast and popular *Philosophie des Unbewussten*, ('Philosophy of the Unconscious', 1869), by Eduard Von Hartmann. Inspired by the philosophy expressed in Schopenhauer's *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* (*The World as Will and Idea*, 1819) which posited, among other things, that the will of the unconceived child is the force which unites the most genetically compatible parents, Hartmann developed Darwin's theory of natural selection to include an infallible 'organising Unconscious' which encourages the development of each species in a certain way. In the social sphere it is the Unconscious that has willed history to be shaped as it has been, since events are

⁷⁹ In the 1935 postscript to his 'Autobiographical Study' (1925) Freud writes of his late-flowering interest in social issues: 'this circumstance is connected with an alteration in myself, with what might be described as a phase of regressive development. My interest, after making a lifelong *détour* through the natural sciences, medicine and psychotherapy, returned to the cultural problems which had fascinated me long before, when I was a youth scarcely old enough for thinking' ('An Autobiographical Study' (1925), in *SE*, XX, 1-74 (p. 72)).

⁸⁰ George Eliot to Frederic Harrison, 10 June 1879, *GEL*, VII, 161.

⁸¹ Herbert Spencer, *The Study of Sociology* (1873) (Michigan: Ann Arbor, 1961), p. 366.

⁸² For Lewes's assessment of Darwin's theory of natural selection see *The Physical Basis of Mind, With Illustrations, Being the Second Series of Problems of Life and Mind* (London: Trübner and Co., 1877), pp. 105-12. He takes issue with Darwin's belief that only the varieties of species that are favourable are selected: 'I conceive that all variations which survive are by that fact of survival, *selections*, whether favourable or indifferent' (p. 108). Lewes would take a more causal view than Darwin, paying more attention to conditions which prompt selection (p. 110), and favouring the principle of 'Organic Affinity,' which determines the organism's suitability to its environment, to natural selection (p. 111). Far from dictating what was believed about heredity and evolution Darwin often acted as a starting-point from which theorists explored their own alternative ideas. This will become clear in my discussion of Samuel Butler's work, below.

formed by the individual strivings of people which are beyond any conscious thought and which unite to form the trends and tendencies of history.⁸³

Such theories, developing as they seem to do out of ideas about natural selection and unconscious cerebration that were in firm existence by the late 1860s, would inevitably attract attention from psychological commentators of the time. Although there is a rather neutral reference to Von Hartmann's work in a footnote in Lewes's *Problems of Life and Mind* with regard to how far-reaching the actions of the unconscious are, Lewes on the same page warns against attempting to examine 'the personified negation, a mystic Unconsciousness', preferring to place unconscious experience within the realms of objective science (*Problems, 3rd Series, I, 91 n., 91*). More direct criticism, however, can be found in *Pessimism: A History and a Criticism* (1877) by James Sully, who, only two years after his book was published, would be called upon to help Eliot edit the third, posthumous series of Lewes's *Problems of Life and Mind*. From around 1876 he paid frequent visits to The Priory, Eliot and Lewes's home.⁸⁴ Sully's 1877 work deals with certain issues that I would like to examine in relation to Eliot's psychological and social views, on the nature of individual satisfaction and on whether society can progress and improve. In certain other ways, in his own arguments about the nature of instinct and self-repression in society, Sully engages in the same debates touched on in Freud's essays on civilization and society, and as such he provides a useful link in considering the possibility of Eliot's prefiguration of Freud.

Starting with the ideas of pessimism in Greek philosophy and the Bible, and moving onto eighteenth-century literary figures, Sully then attends to Schopenhauer. Schopenhauer's view of personality depends on the idea of a structure of mind below consciousness, a region which consists of strata, or more precisely an inner layer and a kernel. Sully describes his philosophy thus:

It follows from Schopenhauer's doctrine of will that our inmost personality, our very essence, lies deeper than consciousness ... This factor cannot undergo any modification from the various influences under which we may fall in our course of development ... This fixed will or character is the real foundation of our actions, external motives being merely the special conditions for its various particular manifestations.

Yet this intelligible character of the individual is not his deepest essence or reality. The inmost kernel of our nature is the one universal will, which must be conceived as somehow distinct from, though including in itself, this substratum of intelligible character. (*Pessimism*, pp. 89-90)

The will underlying everything, Schopenhauer asserts, is 'will to live (*der Wille zum Leben*). Life is that for which everything pants and labours' (*Pessimism*, p. 92). It is not simply one's own life for which one strives: 'This ultimate reality of our being appears to manifest itself both in actions which tend to the conservation of the individual and in those which serve to prolong

⁸³ See James Sully, *Pessimism: A History and a Criticism* (London: Henry S. King & Co., 1877), pp. 106-145, for an account of Von Hartmann's philosophy. Hereafter, *Pessimism*.

the life of the species' (p. 90). This however, is only a part of the picture. What follows is what earns Schopenhauer the title of pessimist. Sully writes:

If, then, life is what we are all striving after, with this vehemence of impulse, does the end justify such earnestness of pursuit? Is that for which the will is ever craving fitted to yield it real satisfaction? This question Schopenhauer answered by an unqualified 'No.' This ardent pursuit springs out of blind instinct, not out of rational choice. Men do not seek to live because they know they can be happy: they think they can be happy because an irresistible pressure urges them to live. (pp. 92-93)

Real long-lasting satisfaction, then, is never gained by humanity. "No satisfaction is enduring, it is rather the starting-point for a new striving." Our nature is thus a perpetual striving, and may be compared in every respect with an insatiable thirst' (p. 93).

In my Introduction I discussed Freud's late realization that Schopenhauer's ideas had prefigured the psychoanalytic concept of repression. Schopenhauer foreshadowed Freud in wider ways, however; Freud himself in 1925 acknowledged 'the large extent to which psychoanalysis coincides with the philosophy of Schopenhauer', and identified, as anticipations, along with his understanding of repression, the philosopher's assertion of 'the dominance of the emotions and the supreme importance of sexuality' ('Autobiographical Study', p. 59). In Schopenhauer's description of the inner strata of the personality which do not change with experience, he had also prefigured elements of Freud's unconscious.⁸⁵ Similarly, his concept of humanity's perpetual striving finds something of an echo in Freud's views on the effects of civilization on the psyche, particularly those expressed in "Civilized" Sexual Morality and Modern Nervous Illness'. In this essay Freud describes how the sexual impulse, which under normal civilized conditions cannot be fully satiated, must therefore be channelled into other activities, or indeed neurosis. This is especially the case with single men and women, who look forward to marriage as their opportunity of satisfaction. Freud considers 'whether sexual intercourse in legal marriage can offer full compensation for the restrictions imposed before marriage', and continues, 'there is such an abundance of material supporting a reply in the negative that we can give only the briefest summary of it' (p. 194).

In the visions of both Schopenhauer and Freud, then, what above all we are striving for, sometimes with a force almost beyond conscious control, is ultimately not worth the effort – the return is much less than the investment. Sully reveals that Von Hartmann too holds a belief in

⁸⁴ See James Sully, *My Life and Friends: A Psychologist's Memories* (London: T. Fisher Unwin Ltd, 1918), pp. 164-65, for a description of an early visit, which seems to have been in about 1876, as he refers to the recent first edition of *Mind*.

⁸⁵ In 'Schopenhauer and Freud', Christopher Young and Andrew Brook discuss the ways in which Freud is anticipated by Schopenhauer: 'Schopenhauer's concept of the will contains the foundations of what in Freud became the concepts of the unconscious and the id. Schopenhauer's writings on madness anticipate Freud's theory of repression and his first theory of the aetiology of neurosis. Schopenhauer's work contains aspects of what become the theory of free association. And most importantly, Schopenhauer articulates major parts of the Freudian theory of sexuality.' They continue, 'these correspondences raise some interesting questions about Freud's denial that he even read Schopenhauer until late in life' ('Schopenhauer and Freud', *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 75 (1994), 101-118 (p. 101)).

an imbalanced psychological and social economy – ‘he argues that since the sum of pain must always exceed that of pleasure, non-existence is better than existence, and so the world the result of an act of blind folly’ (*Pessimism*, p. 131). The effect of Von Hartmann’s pessimistic colouring on the idea of society’s progress and future is equally depressing. The most we can hope for from social progress, is release from pain. The spread of knowledge only serves to highlight man’s woes:

Social and political progress ... simply improves the negative conditions of happiness, but does nothing to augment the positive pleasures of life. On the other hand, it must be remembered that the growth of intelligence and sensibility in mankind is rapidly bringing about a clearer recognition of the predominance of suffering, and this recognition, amounting, as it does, to an increase of pain, far more than outweighs the few insignificant benefits of progress. (p. 137)

After his account of the history of the philosophy of pessimism, Sully attempts to remedy the psychological and social economic imbalance portrayed by Schopenhauer and Von Hartmann by conveying his own vision of the forces and values that exist in modern civilization. In response to the assertion that the will that drives us is a constant overwhelming and unsatiated thirst, he writes, ‘any given state of society acts as a training influence for the individual will ... As members of society we are trained and disciplined by a number of ... forces’, such as ‘education, the pressure of family or public sentiment, the restraints of the law, and so on’ (p. 360). This social control is not a deadening process, muffling the individual to delight, but it brings rewards with it:

Progress, then, implies an advance in those social influences which serve to develop the individual intelligence, emotions, and will. It is continually substituting a higher for a lower kind of intelligence, supplying the external conditions of a larger, more varied, and more refined type of knowledge, sentiment, and action.

Now, so far as it does this, it clearly tends to deepen and to heighten the individual’s capacity for happiness. (p. 361)

Sully in a note lets the reader know that he is making use here of Herbert Spencer’s definition of development.⁸⁶ Spencer himself, in his discussion of the outcome of evolution, in his second

⁸⁶ Sully does not name a particular work by Spencer from which he takes this unspecified definition of development. This is symptomatic of the fact that Spencer applies the laws of development in many different works, in countless different ways. In the second edition of *First Principles* (1867) Spencer devotes four chapters to the outlining of a theory of what evolution is, even before discussing its implications (*First Principles*, 2nd edn (London: Williams and Norgate, 1867), pp. 307-96). His conclusion is that ‘*Evolution is an integration of matter and concomitant dissipation of motion; during which the matter passes from an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a definite, coherent heterogeneity; and during which the retained motion undergoes a parallel transformation*’ (*First Principles*, 2nd edn, p. 396). We can see Sully’s application of Spencer’s ideas of the increased heterogeneity and definition attendant on development in his assertion that society becomes ‘more varied, and more refined’. It is in Spencer’s wide applications of his often rather complex laws that they are most fully understood. In *First Principles* he attempted to apply the law of evolution to every aspect of physical, biological and social life, but for specific applications to psychology see also *The Principles of Psychology*, 2nd edn, from Volume I, Part III, and for his argument for the application of the laws of evolution to society see also *The Study of Sociology*, especially chapter XIV (pp. 298-323).

edition of *First Principles* (1867),⁸⁷ would suggest that progress entailed reward, defining evolution in this instance as representing ‘a gradual advance towards harmony between man’s mental nature and the conditions of his existence’. He concludes that its outcome therefore is ‘the establishment of the greatest perfection and the most complete happiness’ (*First Principles*, 2nd edn, p. 517).

In the process of his argument, Sully goes on to touch on a point later made by Freud in *Civilization and its Discontents*. Sully writes that it may be argued, although in a way that is ‘a good deal forced’, that the civilizing process he has outlined ‘necessarily involves a refinement, and consequently an attenuation, of feeling. The enjoyments of the boor, if few, are far more intense than those of the polished man’ (*Pessimism*, p. 362). This is an idea that Freud expresses in his 1930 work. In talking of the process of attempting to control our instinctual life, he weighs up the forces of desire and satisfaction and again finds civilization wanting:

Here the aim of satisfaction is not by any means relinquished; but a certain amount of protection against suffering is secured, in that non-satisfaction is not so painfully felt in the case of instincts kept in dependence as in the case of uninhibited ones. As against this, there is an undeniable diminution in the potentialities of enjoyment. The feeling of happiness derived from the satisfaction of a wild instinctual impulse untamed by the ego is incomparably more intense than that derived from sating an instinct that has been tamed. (*Civilization*, p. 79)

Sully’s sums balance much more readily than Freud’s, because of his exploration of alternative sources of gratification in society, which, far from being channels, outlets or substitutions for the desires of the inner self, become individual valued sources of delight - ‘It is needless as it is vain to try to enumerate the many new elements of gratification which advancing civilisation has already brought us’ (*Pessimism*, p. 368). He goes on to convey some of the highlights of civilized society, and under this head is the benefit of the social medium. This is made up of elements such as the moral character of its members, its laws, its knowledge, ‘the number and force of the ideas and sentiments which bind the members of the society in sympathy and co-operation’, and inherent in the definition of progress is that it causes the conditions for happiness within a civilization to increase (p. 369). He continues:

More than this, social progress is constantly providing new and larger areas of pleasurable activity for the individual. The growth of science and art means the addition of new intellectual and æsthetic interests; and political progress, by throwing open the sphere of political action to a larger and larger number of citizens, provides an additional region of agreeable and elevating activity. More especially it is to be noted that the development of mutual confidence and sympathy, which is a distinct element in social progress, renders possible more numerous and larger projects of joint pleasurable action. Whether the object be a beneficent alleviation of others’ wants, or the conjoint attainment of certain public advantages ... all unified action of these kinds supplies a wide field of pleasurable activity, the delight of which is intensified and completed by the element of sympathy. (pp. 369-70)

⁸⁷ The second edition of *First Principles* contains much more material on evolution and its implications than the first edition of 1862. Eliot records reading *First Principles* in her journal of 1867 (21 December, *Journals*, p. 131). It is likely that she was looking at this second edition, published in this year. For these reasons I will be privileging this edition in my consideration of Eliot’s 1870s fiction and its intellectual context.

In this passage we taste something of Eliot's creed, displayed throughout her work. Her belief in the pleasure found in science and art can be traced in her 1870s novels, most especially *Middlemarch*. It is the idea of sympathy, leading to social progress and joint action, that I would like to emphasize here. The figure that most immediately springs to mind with relation to this is Dorothea Brooke. Her experience of this kind of 'action' is not always wholly successful or unambiguous - however, what remains important with Dorothea is her creed of meliorism, famously expressed to Will:

'By desiring what is perfectly good, even when we don't quite know what it is and cannot do what we would, we are part of the divine power against evil – widening the skirts of light and making the struggle with darkness narrower.' (*M*, p. 427)

Sully's positive vision of social progress that is neither pessimism, nor unrealistic over-optimism, has become more and more transparently based on a certain philosophy, and in a matter of pages he names it:

Our line of reasoning provides us, then, with a practical conception which lies midway between the extremes of optimism and pessimism, and which, to use a term for which I am indebted to our first living woman-writer and thinker, George Eliot, may be appropriately styled Meliorism. By this I would understand the faith which affirms not merely our power of lessening evil – this nobody questions – but also our ability to increase the amount of positive good. It is, indeed, only this latter idea which can really stimulate and sustain human endeavour ... By recognising the possibility of happiness and the ability of each individual consciously to do something to increase the sum-total of human welfare present and future, meliorism gives us a practical creed sufficient to inspire ardent and prolonged endeavour. Lives nourished and invigorated by this ideal have been and still may be seen among us, and the appearance of but a single example proves the adequacy of the belief. (*Pessimism*, pp. 399-400)

'Ardent and prolonged endeavour', 'Lives nourished and invigorated by this ideal have been seen and still may be seen among us' - these phrases could almost be Eliot's about Dorothea. Dorothea's relation to this philosophy and the driving force behind her commitment to it is what I would like to touch on now; however, I believe that in *Daniel Deronda*, Eliot created a character who even more perfectly (if perhaps less realistically), conforms to Sully's ideals of melioristic social action, and the key to his added success, apart from the important factor of social opportunity arising from his gender, is his full and profound understanding of the dynamics of sympathy and the pleasure that can be taken in joint action.

Freud's conception of the development of civilization would suggest a necessity, rather than a delight, in such joint action as Sully and Eliot advocate. He would claim that we have no choice but to direct the forces of our impulses into civilized or cultural activity, because otherwise the fabric of society would break down: 'it seems ... that every civilization must be built up on coercion and renunciation of instinct'.⁸⁸ Elsewhere, Freud talks of 'the instinctual

⁸⁸ Sigmund Freud, *The Future of an Illusion* (1927), in *SE*, XXI, 1-56 (p. 7).

repression upon which is based all that is most precious in human civilization' (*Beyond*, p. 42), which acts as an assertion that society is built on the conflicts of the psyche. However, in his idea of the development of directed instinct from an egoistic to an altruistic standpoint, Freud's views bear comparison to Eliot and Lewes's suggestion that our most selfless impulses spring from our animal nature. In his *Thoughts for the Times on War and Death*, responding to the atrocities of the First World War, he examines what makes humanity civilized:

The influences of civilization cause an ever-increasing transformation of egoistic trends into altruistic and social ones by an admixture of erotic elements. In the last resort it may be assumed that every internal compulsion which makes itself felt in the development of human beings was originally – that is, in the *history of mankind* – only an external one. Those who are born to-day bring with them as an inherited organization some degree of tendency (disposition) towards the transformation of egoistic into social instincts, and this disposition is easily stimulated into bringing about that result. (*Thoughts for the Times*, p. 282)

Although Freud's concept of human nature, with its primal and destructive instincts constantly placing an upward pressure on the repression that restricts and silences them, could be argued to be a more pessimistic one than Eliot's melioristic standpoint, Eliot clearly shows in her novels of the 1870s that the progress from egoism to altruism is not as 'easily stimulated' as Freud implies in the above passage - the road that leads to it is not easily travelled, and consequently altruism is a hard-won quality that must be prized. Altruism is, as Sally Shuttleworth points out, a fundamental concept and aim in *Middlemarch* – it is the end of Dorothea's long process of suffering (*GE & 19th C.*, p. 170). But, and this is not emphasized enough by Shuttleworth, it is also a reward.

If we remind ourselves of Lewes's rooting of altruism within the sexual instinct, it becomes clearer that though far removed from its origins, it is nevertheless an impulse whose action in itself brings gratification;⁸⁹ in forsaking the satisfactions of egoism, Dorothea is actually embracing those of altruism. It is a survival technique which, like the highest of human achievement, finds its roots in its very proximity to the animal unthinking side of life, the 'involuntary, palpitating life' that exists in her and around her (*M*, p. 846). As she says to Will after her great crisis, 'I can hardly think how I could have borne the trouble, if that feeling had not come to me to make strength' (*M*, p. 868). In surviving in this way she is echoing, but in a melioristic way, Schopenhauer's idea of the desire that drives humanity, the thirst to live. For she says to Will of her belief, 'It is my life. I have found it out, and cannot part with it' (p. 427), a statement that bears a striking resemblance to Eliot's description of the importance to her own existence of the philosophy of striving towards a better state of things: 'I use that summary every day, and could not live without repeating it to myself'.

⁸⁹ In the light of this idea that altruism springs from the sexual instinct, Casaubon's shying away from spontaneous acts of good which are beyond the call of duty can be seen as bound up with his inability to receive satisfaction along 'normal' lines.

Lewes's *Problems of Life and Mind* contains a passage that echoes Eliot's description of the state in which we enter the world, contained in her narrative of Dorothea's personal development – 'We are all of us born in moral stupidity, taking the world as an udder to feed our supreme selves' (p. 243). In Lewes's more sociological version of this statement he shows that, just as Sully would later claim, truly civilized man finds satisfaction and contentment in deeper and higher ways than his more egoistic contemporaries and predecessors. This is an idea that is manifested in the character of Will Ladislaw, urbane and civilized man, who finds 'many different threads' (p. 239) in his appreciation of art; the fruits of intelligence and the intellect, according to Lewes, succeed in 'filling life with infinite and subtle joy ... aggrandising [man's] capacities and aims. This is man's spiritual being; who would renounce it for the comparative calm of the most fortunate brute?' (*Foundations*, I, 168). Altruism needs more intellectual effort to attain, but this very thinking is a form of gratification:

The animal life has sympathy, and is moved by sympathetic impulses, but these are never altruistic; the ends are never remote. Moral life is based on sympathy: it is feeling for others, working for others, aiding others, quite irrespective of any personal good beyond the satisfaction of the social impulse. Enlightened by the intuition of our community of weakness, we share ideally the universal sorrows. Suffering humanises. Feeling the need of mutual help, we are prompted by it to labour for others. The egoistic impulses are directed towards objects simply so far as these are the *means* of satisfying a desire. The altruistic impulses, on the contrary, have greater need of Intelligence to understand the object itself in all its relations. Hence so much immorality is sheer stupidity. (*Foundations*, I, 166-67)

In a letter to Annie Crow of 1876, Emily Davies describes an interview that she had had with George Eliot, in which the education of girls was discussed. In Davies's recounting of this conversation, Eliot's views on the subject of stupidity are neatly represented. To Eliot it clearly means that personal potential is not fulfilled, as the higher faculties are dead:

She hoped my friend would explain to the girls that the state of insensibility in which we are not alive to high and generous emotions is stupidity, and spoke of the mistake of supposing that stupidity is only intellectual, not a thing of the character – and of the consequent error of its being commonly assumed that goodness and cleverness don't go together, cleverness being taken to mean only the power of *knowing*.⁹⁰

However altruism may open up a new dimension of sensibility, however fulfilling it may be, at the time that Dorothea chooses it, it is her only choice for her psychological and moral survival. In this she is rather like the Freudian citizen, whose civilized state is a necessity, compelled by repression. Eliot makes it clear with her Prelude and Finale to the novel that Dorothea is, in a way that is severely restricted by nineteenth-century English civilization, treading in the footsteps of St. Theresa, a figure who, of all those we encounter within the pages of *Middlemarch*, demanded and attained the most fulfilment from her existence. Aiming for 'some illimitable satisfaction ... She found her epos in the reform of a religious order' (*M*, p. 25). But Dorothea's satisfaction is, unlike Theresa's, limited by 'the

⁹⁰ Emily Davies to Annie Crow, 24 September 1876, in *GEL*, VI, 285-87 (p. 287).

conditions of an imperfect social state' (p. 896) which is her medium, and, as Lewes asserts, 'an organism lives only in relation to its medium' (*Foundations*, I, 119). Freud's many accounts of the twisted and diverted paths and outlets that civilization provides for the instincts to pour into, that result in substitutive satisfactions and neurotic symptoms,⁹¹ go to construct a comparable dynamic model to the one Eliot uses to describe the passages of impulsive and ardent energy inhibited by a society that doesn't 'fit' with its members' deepest desires (selfish, selfless or mixed). This lack of fit means that those desires 'tremble off and are dispersed among hindrances, instead of centering in some long-recognizable deed' (*M*, p. 26). In Eliot's society, and in Freud's, both of which are unequal to the demands of certain individual psyches, satisfaction is constantly limitable and limited.

In such a situation, however, there is a tendency to pour one's energies into whatever structure is present. The psyche, as Freud would later suggest, has an inclination to find its satisfaction using the most convenient framework, which is all the better if it hides the fact that it is providing egoistic gratification behind an appearance of selflessness. It is the tendency that religion has to place the believer at the centre of the universe, or rather to encourage the believer in their egoistic assumption that they are at the centre of the universe, that is a contributory factor to many of the self-seeking desires (which in turn work to inspire self-seeking events) that occur in *Middlemarch*. Casaubon, 'the centre of his own world' (p. 111), believed that 'Providence, in its kindness, had supplied him with the wife he needed ... Whether Providence had taken equal care of Miss Brooke in presenting her with Mr Casaubon was an idea which could hardly occur to him' (p. 313). Rosamond Vincy, whose egoism in relation to events Eliot famously likens to a candle's effect on a scratched pier-glass, believed that she had 'a Providence of her own who had kindly made her more charming than other girls, and who seemed to have arranged Fred's illness and Mr Wrench's mistake in order to bring her and Lydgate within effective proximity' (p. 297). The word 'Providence', denoting as it does 'that which is provided' (*OED*, XII, 714) is the perfect word to use to identify the power on which both Casaubon and Rosamond rely. Religion, often a structured embodiment of this shadowy Providence, proves for Bulstrode to be the perfect 'mould' for his existing egoistic tendencies (*M*, p. 668). Eliot writes that 'the egoism which enters our theories does not affect their sincerity; rather, the more egoism is satisfied, the more robust is our belief' (p. 565), and so with Bulstrode, this constantly self-perpetuating process of affirmation creates a religion that is eventually entirely fused with egoistic wants. His prayers only go to express his underlying nature, which is fuelled by his instincts:

His belief in these moments of dread was, that if he spontaneously did something right, God would save him from the consequences of wrong-doing. *For religion can only change when the emotions which fill it*

⁹¹ In "'Civilized" Sexual Morality and Modern Nervous Illness', Freud writes: 'The dammed-up libido is now put in a position to detect one or other of the weaker spots which are seldom absent in the structure of sexual life, and there to break through and obtain substitutive satisfaction of a neurotic kind in the form of pathological symptoms' (p. 194).

are changed; and the religion of personal fear remains nearly at the level of the savage. (pp. 668-69, emphasis mine)

Dorothea, too, simply fills her religion with herself, her own girlish desires and fantasies. She starts with the disadvantage of not being able to act or think like other girls; to use Eliot's image in the Prelude to the novel, she is a cygnet amongst swans, and is therefore excluded from ordinary, petty satisfactions:

From such contentment poor Dorothea was shut out. The intensity of her religious disposition, the coercion it exercised over her life, was but one aspect of a nature altogether ardent, theoretic, and intellectually consequent ... The thing which seemed to her best, she wanted to justify by the completest knowledge; and not to live in a pretended admission of rules which were never acted on. Into this soul-hunger as yet all her youthful passion was poured. (p. 51)

Religion here is subject to disposition, only one aspect of the nature, and takes on the personality of the believer; it is, ultimately, a vehicle for the passions. For Dorothea, it was part of 'her usual eagerness for a binding theory which could bring her own life and doctrine into strict connection with that amazing past, and give the remotest sources of knowledge some bearing on her actions' (p. 112); for an ardent yet unknowingly egoistic nature, looking for meaning and a sense of inheritance, which in itself throws the present into a place towards which all things have aimed,⁹² religion is an easily found psychological shelter, an answer to the economic requirements of the psyche.

Discussing religion, 'perhaps the most important item in the psychical inventory of a civilization' (*The Future of an Illusion*, p. 14), Freud would write (echoing the work of Victorian thinkers such as Carpenter and Sully), 'what is characteristic of illusions is that they are derived from human wishes' (*The Future of an Illusion*, p. 31).⁹³ In this essay, Freud approaches religion from a different direction than Eliot, asserting that humanity created religion to answer to its various psychological and social needs, rather than that, religion being there, we can and do use it as a self-serving channel, or a self-mirroring construct. In the end, however, their views on the way forward seem to be remarkably similar. Freud writes of those that find themselves able to break free from the 'illusion' of religion:

⁹² For humanity's previous tendency to see itself at the pinnacle of creation and the centre of the universe, an assumption challenged by Darwin and Lyell, see Gillian Beer, *Darwin's Plots*, pp. 19-22, 161.

⁹³ In my last chapter I discussed Carpenter's ideas on 'Fallacies of Testimony in Relation to the Supernatural', in which expectation and wish encourage the sighting of phenomena. Interestingly Freud uses the example of spiritualists to emphasize the point that what we see in religion is only the reflex of our own minds – 'the appearance and utterances of their spirits are merely the products of their own mental activity' (*Future of an Illusion*, p. 28). This echoes James Sully's words in *Illusions: A Psychological Study*, which is a work based on the premise that we see what mental expectation, through habit, fear or desire, dictates: 'The state of awe which the surrounding circumstances of a spiritualist séance inspires produces a general readiness of mind to perceive what is strange, mysterious, and apparently miraculous' (*Illusions: A Psychological Study* (1881), 4th edn, (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1905), p. 103).

They will, it is true, find themselves in a difficult situation. They will have to admit to themselves the full extent of their helplessness and their insignificance in the machinery of the universe; they can no longer be the centre of creation, no longer the object of tender care on the part of a beneficent Providence. They will be in the same position as a child who has left the parental house where he was so warm and comfortable. But surely infantilism is destined to be surmounted. Men cannot remain children for ever; they must in the end go out into 'hostile life'. We may call this '*education to reality*'. (p. 49)

This education to reality is something that comes to many of the characters in *Middlemarch*, and especially, through the obstinate misfitting of circumstances, to Bulstrode, Rosamond (if temporarily), Lydgate and Dorothea. To Dorothea's famous waking experience, these words, and Freud's image of the quitting of the comfortable, infantile house, are particularly apt:

She opened her curtains, and looked out towards the bit of road that lay in view, with fields beyond, outside the entrance-gates. On that road there was a man with a bundle on his back and a woman carrying her baby; in the field she could see figures moving - perhaps the shepherd with his dog. Far off in the bending sky was the pearly light; and she felt the largeness of the world and the manifold wakings of men to labour and endurance. She was a part of that involuntary, palpitating life, and could neither look out on it from her luxurious shelter as a mere spectator, nor hide her eyes in selfish complaining. (*M*, p. 846)

Writing of the subject in relation to the Universe, Lewes states that 'the Object is not the *other side* of the Subject, but the *larger circle* which includes it' (*Foundations*, I, 195). This is Dorothea's realization in this waking process. Also noteworthy in this passage is the far off 'bending sky' with its pearly light – if we convert 'bending' into its Latin equivalent, we reach 'reflexive' or 'reflective'⁹⁴ – the light it is reflecting is Dorothea's own, and no matter what her personality is, has been or will progress to, the furthest point she can see will always reflect herself back to her. We see an example of this very quickly in her supreme effort to go and comfort Rosamond, which is reflected back on herself in Rosamond's sudden confession of the relation between herself and Will – it is, Eliot writes, 'a reflex of her own energy' (*M*, p. 857). Following that, Dorothea's life becomes a parable illustrating this concept, as eventually she gets her own Will, which she sees before her for the rest of her life. Springing from the same question that Lewes asks –

Is this figured Cosmos figured in Feeling through the *adaptation* of the sentient organism to the external Real, or is it simply a *subjective construction* – the figuration of Sensibility – which we illusively project outwards and receive back again in reflection? (*Foundations*, I, 184-85)

– the experience of the Middlemarchers, perfected in Dorothea, is an affirmative one. This is illuminated yet more by Lewes's further discussion, which serves to almost completely break down the barriers between self and other:

I regard the Subject in no such alienation from the Object; and regard Perception as the assimilation of the Object by the Subject, in the same way that Nutrition is the assimilation of the Medium by the Organism. Out of the general web of Existence certain threads may be detached and rewoven into a special group –

⁹⁴ *Reflexio* means 'a bending or turning back', *reflecto* is 'to bend or turn back or backwards' (Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary* (1879) (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), pp. 1547, 1546).

the Subject – and this sentient group will in so far be different from the larger group – the Object; but whatever different arrangement the threads may take on, they are always threads of the original web, they are not different threads. (*Foundations*, I, 188-89)

Notably, just as Freud, like Eliot, expounds his belief that religion is but a reflection of our deep selves, he goes on, in his discussion of the future of religion and civilization, to put forward a theory of progress that may seem to us familiar:

By withdrawing their expectations from the other world and concentrating all their liberated energies into their life on earth, [men] will probably succeed in achieving a state of things in which life will become tolerable for everyone and civilization no longer oppressive to anyone. (*The Future of an Illusion*, p. 50)

Lewes paints a more detailed picture of the way he believes things are progressing, leaving the fears and superstitions of religion behind, and moving towards a scientific knowledge (that, contrary to the view of Von Hartmann) can only be good. This is a passage from the Third Series of *Problems of Life and Mind*, and its imagery of the dawn, its language and outlook serve to pose an unanswerable question about which, of Eliot and Lewes, had the most influence in its production, for if Eliot did not write it herself, it is certain that she would have fully agreed with it:

But there are dawn-streaks of a brighter day. Mental development has, in a small minority which daily enlarges its circle, transformed these Invisible Powers into visible Properties and intelligible Relations. Fear is replaced by the desire to know. Experiment displaces intercession; for reliance on prayer is substituted obedience to ascertained laws. The hope of modifying the Invisible by ceremonies and sacrifices gives way to the hope of adapting the properties of things to our needs; and where this is impracticable the conviction teaches resignation and the effort to adapt our impulses to agencies that are inexorable. (*Problems*, 3rd Series, I, 40-41)

Logically, then, for Lewes, Freud and Eliot, it is an obvious step forward, if it is in the nature of humanity to project ourselves onto our civilization and its constructs, onto the things that we see and the people with whom we interact, that we should concentrate, in Dorothea's words, not on praying ('now I hardly ever pray', p. 427), but on broadening our horizons, and 'desiring what is perfectly good' for this earth, and using this attitude as a starting-point. For, as these writers believed, desires have a tendency to find their way to a sort of fulfilment, even if only by small contributory steps.

This principle, of the achievement of progress through small steps, is applied by Herbert Spencer to the evolution of society in a passage from *The Study of Sociology*, which is valuable in linking some of the threads within this chapter so far with what is to come. Spencer employs metaphors of geology and light that we have seen used to illustrate the modifications caused by experience, but of greater importance is his description of a dynamics of *communal* experience, and, further, his inclusion of the fruits of ancestry and inheritance within it:

As between infancy and maturity there is no shortcut by which there may be avoided the tedious process of growth and development through insensible increments: so there is no way from the lower forms of social life to the higher, but one passing through small successive modifications. If we contemplate the order of nature, we see that everywhere vast results are brought about by accumulations of minute alterations scarcely anywhere visible ... Light, falling upon a crystal, is capable of altering its molecular arrangements, but it can do this only by a repetition of impulses almost innumerable ... Similarly, before there arise in human nature and human institutions, changes having that permanence which makes them an acquired inheritance for the human race, there must go innumerable recurrences of the thoughts, and feelings, and actions, conducive to such changes. (*The Study of Sociology*, pp. 366-67)

In the next section of this chapter I will consider *Daniel Deronda* as a text profoundly informed and enabled by this sort of vision of progress, this widened definition of experience. As I shall discuss, the concept of the inheritance of acquired characteristics, organic and social, was by no means unusual by the 1870s; rather, it was a view shared by many, including Lewes and Eliot. That these two thinkers subscribed to this theory is wholly fitting; if experience becomes structure, then logically it can be inherited.⁹⁵ In *Daniel Deronda* we see the embodiment of this logical outcome of Eliot's philosophy of experience.

Binding Theories: Daniel Deronda and Ideas of Organic Memory

Daniel Deronda is a protagonist who, like Dorothea Brooke, longs to fulfil some sort of mission for humanity. His childhood and youthful experiences, leading to an 'early wakened susceptibility', have, in Eliot's language of forces, 'given a bias to his conscience, a sympathy with certain ills, and a tension of resolve in certain directions' (*DD*, p. 215). Deronda's various inclinations, not strong enough to be called drives, need to be united and defined in order to form 'a definite line of action, and compress his wandering energy' (p. 413). With Eliot's elaboration on her hero's malaise it becomes clear that it is communal experience of some kind that he is lacking. His satisfaction, the attainment of contentment, does not depend on himself alone:

But how and whence was the needed event to come? – the influence that would justify partiality, and making him what he longed to be yet was unable to make himself – an organic part of social life, instead of roaming in it like a yearning disembodied spirit, stirred with a vague social passion, but without fixed local habitation to render fellowship real? To make a little difference for the better was what he was not contented to live without; but how make it? (pp. 413-14)

There is a sense in which Deronda's experience is inadequate until he discovers his ancestry. Embracing it, he can then engage with society as he yearns to do. In *Problems of Life and Mind* there is a passage which illuminates the source of his malaise in its identification of the sort of experience that completes the subject, 'individual experiences being limited and individual spontaneity feeble, we are strengthened and enriched by assimilating the experiences of others'. It is clear that by 'others', Lewes means our ancestors as well as our peers:

A nation, a tribe, a sect is the medium of the individual mind ... The nation affects the sect, the sect the individual. Not that the individual is passive, he is only directed; he, too, reacts on the sect and nation, helping to create the social life of which he partakes. The laws of Human Nature constitute a Social Mechanism analogous to that individual Mechanism which is modified by Experience. Civilisation is the accumulation of experiences; and since it is this accumulated wealth which is the tradition of the race, we may say ... that the Past more and more dominates the Present, precisely as in the individual case it is the registered experiences which more and more determine the feelings and opinions. (*Problems, 3rd Series, I, 165-66*)

Deronda's discovery is the extent to which 'civilisation is the accumulation of experiences', how far 'the Past ... dominates the Present', and, ultimately, that it is precisely this social and ancestral experience which enables the cutting of future paths.⁹⁶

In theories of evolution we see this connection between past and future development. In this section I will discuss the ways in which *Daniel Deronda* is profoundly enabled by theories of evolution, particularly of the inheritance of acquired characteristics. In doing so I am avoiding Darwinian theory, which has already been comprehensively considered in relation to Eliot's fiction by Gillian Beer, in favour of Lamarckian and Spencerian ideas. These, I hope to show, were also extremely prevalent in Eliot's intellectual context. Often it was the case that Darwin's theories functioned as a trigger for hypotheses on the nature of inheritance; more precisely, what, of our physical and psychological make-up could be transmitted. Samuel Butler's *Unconscious Memory* (1880), though rather eccentric in style and theory, is an insight into the sort of ideas that gathered around Darwin's theories, not only because it propounded its own rather extreme alternative evolutionary theories, but because it traces the origin of ideas about the development of species to thinkers such as Erasmus Darwin and Lamarck. Butler believed his concepts had succeeded in improving on those of Charles Darwin, claiming that his thesis 'puts the backbone, as it were, into the theory of evolution'.⁹⁷ In fact, Butler's theories, shared with Professor Ewald Hering of Prague, were in essence a development of Lamarck's theories, with increased emphasis on memory in inheritance. Butler suggested that we resemble our parents because of the memories contained within each atom of ourselves:

We grow our limbs as we do, and possess the instincts we possess, because we remember having grown our limbs in this way, and having had these instincts in past generations when we were in the persons of our forefathers - each individual life adding a small (but so small, in any one lifetime, as to be hardly appreciable) amount of new experience to the general store of memory. (*Unconscious Memory, p. 82*)

We are our ancestors. In theory, the baby can say to his or her parents, 'I was you a few months ago'; Butler indefinitely extends this idea to include every living thing, so that 'each living form now on the earth must be able to claim identity with each generation of its ancestors up to the primordial cell inclusive' (p. 26). The repetition of certain patterns of growth and the inclusion

⁹⁵ Logically, in a world which had not yet benefited from the implications of the discovery of DNA.

⁹⁶ Describing Deronda's lack of direction as a young man, the narrator writes, 'it is one thing to see your road, another to cut it' (*DD, p. 414*).

of certain instincts in the sum of ourselves are not the only implications that this theory has for humanity, however. It means that we are almost never able to be original in our action or thought, 'ideas and actions seem almost to resemble matter and force in respect of the impossibility of originating or destroying them; nearly all that are, are memories of other ideas and actions, transmitted but not created, disappearing but not perishing' (pp. 256-57).⁹⁸ The key to development lies in random action, Butler's theory suggests, which then gets incorporated into the memory of the organism as ancestor of the next generation, and so evolution occurs. However, this is a very slow and haphazard method of development, and for all of us there is a history in our very atoms that we cannot escape. Butler in the following passage is describing the effects of inherited instincts on the individual, in this case a hungry one. He directly quotes from his 1878 book *Life and Habit*:

It is one against legion when a man tries to differ from his own past selves ... [they] are living him at this moment with the accumulated life of centuries. 'Do this, this, this, this, which we too have done, and found our profit in it,' cry the souls of his forefathers within him. Faint are the far ones, coming and going as the sound of bells wafted on to a high mountain; loud and clear are the near ones, urgent as an alarm of fire. (*Unconscious Memory*, pp. 28-29)

Butler's idea of the souls of the forefathers within the individual should be a familiar one to us. In my first chapter I discussed Freud's concept, expressed in *The Ego and the Id* (1923), that the experience of the ancestor is incorporated into the id of the subject: 'in the id, which is capable of being inherited, are harboured residues of the existences of countless egos'.⁹⁹ This theory, it should now be clear, is one based on the premise of acquired characteristics, echoing Lamarckian principles, but also reproducing ideas which were discussed by both eminent and more eccentric thinkers around the time that *Daniel Deronda* was written. In fact, Freud was conversant with the ideas of Butler, but particularly admired those of his acquaintance Ewald Hering, of whose lecture of 1870, '*Über das Gedächtnis als eine allgemeine Funktion der organisierten Materie*' ('On Memory as a Universal Function of Organized Matter'), *Unconscious Memory* is partly a translation, and on whose concepts Butler's work is squarely based. Freud regarded Hering's work as 'a masterpiece'.¹⁰⁰ As Laura Otis has discussed, theories of the inheritance of acquired characteristics were essential to

⁹⁷ Samuel Butler, *Unconscious Memory* (London: David Bogue, 1880), p. 82.

⁹⁸ This last idea, of memories and ideas not being able to be originated or destroyed, only being transmitted rather than created, not perishing but disappearing, recalls the concept of the immortal unconscious, which we see in Von Hartmann's philosophy, and later in Freud's – it also describes the Jewish national identity as Mordecai pictures it. Significantly, the group of Jewish thinkers that meets in the local London tavern are labelled 'Transmitters' by him.

⁹⁹ Sigmund Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, in *SE*, XIX, 3-66 (p. 38).

¹⁰⁰ 'Appendix A: Freud and Ewald Hering', 'The Unconscious' (1915), in *SE*, XIV, 205. Freud's editor quotes from a footnote which Freud wrote in the translation of a section of a book, *The Unconscious* (1923) by Israel Levine. The book was translated in 1926 by Anna Freud, but, interestingly, Freud himself translated the section on Samuel Butler. Levine mentions Hering's lecture, and Freud writes in a footnote: 'German readers, familiar with this lecture of Hering's and regarding it as a masterpiece, would not, of course, be inclined to bring into the foreground the considerations based on it by Butler' (cited in 'Appendix A', 'The Unconscious', p. 205).

Freudian theories of neurosis and regression (in which an earlier stage of development is reinstated), and Freud recognized them as such.¹⁰¹ As she points out, what was remarkable about Freud's extensive use of these ideas was that by the time they were employed as basic premises in psychoanalysis, they were no longer generally believed to be tenable (Otis, p. 355). Otis discusses a passage from *Moses and Monotheism* (1939), written at the end of Freud's life, and from which I quote, to illustrate Freud's perception that he was going against the tide of biological theory:

My position, no doubt, is made more difficult by the present attitude of biological science, which refuses to hear of the inheritance of acquired characters by succeeding generations. I must, however, in all modesty confess that nevertheless I cannot do without this factor in biological evolution.¹⁰²

In defying modern biological science, Freud is returning to the ideas inherent in Eliot's immediate intellectual context of the 1870s, of organized tendencies and ancestral memory, and also to Lamarckian theory. Indeed, as Otis testifies, Freud entertained plans to write a book on 'Lamarckism and psychoanalysis' with Sándor Ferenczi (Otis, p. 367).

Freud's 'position' in *Moses and Monotheism* is the discussion of the possibility that 'if we assume the survival of ... memory-traces in the archaic heritage, we have bridged the gulf between individual and group psychology: we can deal with peoples as we do with an individual neurotic' (p. 100). This echoes Freud's ideas on communal symptoms of more than twenty years before, in *Totem and Taboo* (1913), that 'the sense of guilt for an action has persisted for many thousands of years and has remained operative in generations which can have had no knowledge of that action'.¹⁰³ In *Daniel Deronda* we see a more positive version of this, in Deronda's 'inherited yearning – the effect of brooding, passionate thoughts in many ancestors – thoughts that seem to have been intensely present in my grandfather' (p. 819).¹⁰⁴ But just as, in

¹⁰¹ Laura Otis, 'Organic Memory and Psychoanalysis', *History of Psychiatry*, 4 (1993), 349-72 (pp. 355-56). Neurosis and regression are subjects that cover a vast area of Freudian theory. Otis looks at, among other things, Freud's views on aphasia (pp. 362-63), on sexual behaviour (pp. 364-65), on dream-formation (p. 368) and on the compulsion to repeat in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (p. 369). She concludes that Freud 'shared with nineteenth-century organic memory theorists ... the conviction that the individual was a history text' (p. 372).

¹⁰² Sigmund Freud, *Moses and Monotheism: Three Essays* (1939), in *SE*, XXIII, 1-137 (p. 100).

¹⁰³ Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo* (1913), in *SE*, XIII, vii-162 (p. 158).

¹⁰⁴ It is worth reminding the reader here of Freud's letter to Martha Bernays, in which he wrote of his own experience of the inheritance of ancestral passion, 'I have often felt as though I had inherited all the defiance and all the passions with which our ancestors defended their Temple and could gladly sacrifice my life for one great moment in history' (Sigmund Freud to Martha Bernays, 2 February 1886, in *Letters of Sigmund Freud* (1960), ed. by Ernst L. Freud, trans. by Tania Stern and James Stern (New York: Dover Publications, 1992), pp. 200-04 (p. 202). The fact that Freud had read and been impressed by *Daniel Deronda* four years earlier (Jones, I, 174, 411 n.) raises an interesting, though unanswerable, question, about the origin of this feeling, and whether, in fact, it found a part of its root in Eliot's eloquently expressed vision of the possibilities of the inheritance of past Jewish greatness by the Jew now living. This study has touched on the fact that Freud may have unwittingly, through the mechanisms of cryptomnesia, reproduced past reading in present theory. It is just as possible to suggest that such personal inspiration as Freud describes in his letter to Martha Bernays may have been triggered by an earlier identification with the character of Daniel Deronda, though by 1886 the fact that he was a source for such feeling would have been forgotten.

Freudian theory, communal inherited symptoms become manifest in the individual neurotic, Deronda has to make the choice to activate his own history. The situation is nicely summed up in *Totem and Taboo*:

Unless psychical processes were continued from one generation to another, if each generation were obliged to acquire its attitude to life anew, there would be no progress in this field and next to no development ... [T]he inheritance of psychical dispositions ... however, need to be given some sort of impetus in the life of the individual before they can be roused into actual operation.

Freud then quotes from Goethe's *Faust*, a passage which translates as, 'what thou hast inherited from thy fathers, acquire it to make it thine' (*Totem and Taboo*, pp. 158, 158 n.).

The logical result of inherited experience is the idea of a largely inaccessible unconscious area in the mind - a mainstay of Freudian theory, and a realization that reached maturity in the 1870s for Eliot and Lewes. Freud's education in inherited tendencies was approached from a different angle to Eliot and Lewes. Where they, I would suggest, incorporated inherited tendencies and memories into the structure of their existing ideas about the modifications and dynamics of experience, Freud was, according to Ernst Kris, taught about unconscious processes through the principles of organic memory, 'when older authors spoke of unconscious mental processes (as did, for instance, the physiologist Hering, who in 1884 had invited the young Freud to become his assistant), they stressed the phylogenetic, the 'racial' aspect of unconscious memory'.¹⁰⁵ It becomes clear that the inheritance of acquired characteristics goes hand in hand with ideas of a place in the mind which we are all born with, and are only vaguely or intermittently aware of, if at all, which can have an affect on consciousness in various ways, through symptoms, through a sense of yearning, or of malaise.

In what follows, I will examine *Daniel Deronda* in conjunction with Lewes's theories of inherited tendencies which were informed by his contemporaries. In a section which expands on his premise that, 'we learn by individual experiences, registrations of feeling, rendered possible by ancestral experiences' (*Foundations*, I, 239), he writes, that although he has 'argued the question in my own way', he is indebted to 'some modern physiologists, and above all Mr Herbert Spencer', who shows that 'the constant experiences of the race become *organised tendencies* which are transmitted as a heritage' (pp. 244, 245). Spencer emphasizes this heritage in terms of memories that have become organized within the individual through an accumulation of experiences, which become 'structurally registered' in the organism, 'and so, conscious memory passes into unconscious or organic memory' (*Principles of Psychology*, 2nd edn, I, 452). As memories are structurally registered, the organism can deal with more and more complex propositions, which themselves become gradually organized. Development occurs. Organization is a fundamental characteristic of evolution for Spencer, whose complex definition of the process stressed '*integration of matter*', which passes '*from an indefinite,*

incoherent homogeneity to a definite, coherent heterogeneity' (*First Principles*, 2nd edn, p. 396). Lewes shows his own fundamental understanding of the equation of organization and evolution in a passage on the development of mind which is particularly reminiscent of Spencer's work:

In its evolution we trace an increasing predominance of ... *innerness*, the combination and recombination of impressions into experiences, and of experiences into groups, which in turn become the elements of higher groups. Experiences become organised as Instincts, and generalised as Knowledge; Knowledge itself, in its highest stages, becomes organised as Intuitions and Logical Forms, which have the facility and necessity of Instinct. (*Problems*, 3rd Series, II, 89).

Elsewhere Lewes writes that 'Instinct, although in the organism it precedes Experience, is a product of what was Experience in the ancestral organisms from which the individual has inherited his structure' (*Foundations*, I, 227). If something as strong as instinct is evolved from the experiences of our ancestors, surely this is even more true of unfocussed drives and yearnings. In this way we can start to see *Daniel Deronda* as informed by the evolutionary theory of the inheritance of acquired characteristics.

Central to Eliot's portrayal of Deronda, as I have discussed, is a sense of malaise, of undefined yearning whose source is obscure. Freud's theories were based on the premise that there are forces and drives within us, of whose existence we know little, that nevertheless affect our sense of being. As Bruno Bettelheim observes, '*Das Unbehagen in der Kultur*', which has been translated as 'Civilization and its Discontents', would be better rendered as 'The Uneasiness Inherent in Culture'.¹⁰⁶ This illuminates the idea within Freud's 1930 paper that it is our inherited instincts, our drives that, inevitably lacking fulfilment in our social environment, create this unease. Such is Deronda's state before his inheritance is discovered. He shares his plight with another of Eliot's characters, Fedalma from *The Spanish Gypsy* (1868). That this poem is a consideration of the effects of inheritance, and of what we inherit from our ancestors, is seen in the fact that Lewes uses part of this poem in *Foundations of a Creed* to emphasize his points that 'like the body, the Mind is shaped through its history' and that 'Thought is an embodied process, which has its conditions in the history of the race no less than in that of the individual' (*Foundations*, I, 219, 220):

What! shall the trick of nostrils and of lips
Descend through generations, and the soul,
That moves within our frame like God in worlds,
Imprint no record, leave no documents
Of her great history? Shall men bequeath
The fancies of their palates to their sons,
And shall the shudder of restraining awe,
The slow wept tears of contrite memory,
Faith's prayerful labour, and the food divine
Of fasts ecstatic - shall these pass away
Like wind upon the waters tracklessly?

¹⁰⁵ Ernst Kris, 'Freud in the History of Science', *The Listener*, 55 (1956), 631-33 (p. 632). Kris suggests that 'there is even a slight, as it were residual, similarity between Butler and Freud himself' (p. 632).

¹⁰⁶ Bruno Bettelheim, *Freud and Man's Soul* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991), p. 99.

(quoted in *Foundations*, I, 219 n.)

The Spanish Gypsy showed Eliot's interest in the influence of family and race on the individual. Fedalma, unknowing daughter of the Gypsy King, is drawn away from her betrothed and others she is close to, because she feels a profound need, anticipated by her discovery and strange attraction to a gypsy pendant which she had played with when tiny, to honour her father once he declares himself to her. In this process issues of unconscious memory arise, simply because of the suggestion that, on a deep level, Fedalma must have remembered playing with her father's jewellery, although she cannot bring this memory to conscious recollection:

And these twisted lines -
 They seem to speak to me as writing would,
 To bring a message from the dead, dead past
 What is their secret? Are they characters?
 I never learned them; yet they stir some sense
 That once I dreamed - I have forgotten what.
 Or was it life? Perhaps I lived before
 In some strange world where first my soul was shaped,
 And all this passionate love, and joy, and pain,
 That come, I know not whence, and sway my deeds,
 Are old imperious memories, blind yet strong,
 That this world stirs within me; as this chain
 Stirs some strange certainty of visions gone,
 And all my mind is as an eye that stares
 Into the darkness painfully.¹⁰⁷

On a yet deeper level, however, Fedalma displays her inheritance, in the yearnings and instincts that sometimes possess her; a restlessness that makes her dream of flying away from her home, and an impulse that makes her dance, and, dancing, brings her to some sense of a spiritual home, a sense of 'feeling and action flowing into one':

The joy, the life
 Around, within me, were one heaven: I longed
 To blend them visibly: I longed to dance
 Before the people - be as mounting flame
 To all that burned within them! Nay, I danced;
 There was no longing: I but did the deed
 Being moved to do it ...
 Oh! I seemed new-waked
 To life in unison with a multitude -
 Feeling my soul upborne by all their souls
 Floating within their gladness! Soon I lost
 All sense of separateness: Fedalma died
 As a star dies, and melts into the light.
 I was not, but joy was, and love and triumph. (pp. 265-66)

¹⁰⁷ George Eliot, *The Spanish Gypsy* (1868), in *Collected Poems*, ed. by Lucien Jenkins (London: Skoob Books, 1989), pp. 201-456 (pp. 280-81).

That this need to dance goes deeper than longing, finding root in the rather less emotional, rather more mechanical stimulus of 'being moved', suggests, like the allied motives that I have already explored in this chapter, the operation of unconscious processes. This drive to blend her outer and inner life, the yearning to feel a union with humanity, can only be fulfilled when Fedalma unites what her father calls 'a double life fed from my heart' (p. 296) by acting according to her inherited tendencies. It is her ancestral impulses that cause her to escape home and visit the town festival, and this leads her father, a slave in chains, to notice her and later claim her for the Zincala race – 'more outcast and despised than Moor or Jew' (p. 299). Springing, I believe, partly from the same instinct that caused Eliot to portray brother-sister relations in her poetry¹⁰⁸ and in *Mill on the Floss*, that of examining her own roots, *The Spanish Gypsy* acts as a foreshadowing of *Daniel Deronda*, which, by the time she came to write it, had the extra backing of Lewes's completed inquiries into the dynamics of inheritance, and the added poignancy that enriches a work whose childless writer is meditating on the effects of death and the ways in which we may leave our legacy on this earth, rather than by living on in any illusory heaven.

Before the discovery of his true inheritance, Daniel Deronda is, like Fedalma, an incomplete, a divided person, who, like her, finds a strange resonance within himself to certain experiences and events in his life. Inspired by his discovery of the Jewess Mirah, when abroad he visits a synagogue:

[T]he very commonness of the building and shabbiness of the scene where a national faith, which had penetrated the thinking of half the world, and moulded the splendid forms of that world's religion, was finding a remote, obscure, echo – all were blent for him as one expression of a binding history, tragic and yet glorious. He wondered at the strength of his own feeling; it seemed beyond the occasion - what one might imagine to be a divine influx in the darkness, before there was any vision to interpret. (*DD*, pp. 416-17)

The image at the end of this passage is similar to that Fedalma uses when she feels something inside herself answering to her father's necklace, without knowing why - 'And all my mind is as an eye that stares/ Into the darkness painfully.' In Lewes's Third Series of *Problems of Life and Mind*, there is a description of the nature of unconsciousness, which too makes use of this metaphor of darkness:

We must fix clearly in our minds that unconscious and insentient are not equivalent terms. There is a marked antithesis between conscious and unconscious, as there is between the feeling of light and the feeling of darkness; and we have negatives to express them. Darkness is an optical feeling, which, *quâ* sensation, is as positive as that of light, but in relation to that of light it is negative. (*Problems of Life and Mind, Third Series, II, 150*)

¹⁰⁸ 'Brother and Sister' (1869) is one such poem: 'But were another childhood-world my share,/ I would be born a little sister there', in *Collected Poems*, pp. 84-90 (p. 90).

In both the cases of Fedalma and Daniel, it seems that they are straining to see their own inner kernel, their own inherited unconscious. It is certainly true that Daniel is divided according to certain strata. He is recognized as a Jew by Mirah, Mordecai, and Joseph Kalonymos, a friend of his grandfather, before he has any idea of his ancestry, but in Mordecai's words, 'our souls know each other' (*DD*, p. 633). He says one thing and does another. When Mordecai hails him as his 'prefigured friend' (p. 550), who will 'take the sacred inheritance of the Jew', Deronda protests that he is not of Mordecai's race, but in doing so reassures him otherwise by his actions:

With exquisite instinct, Deronda, before he opened his lips, placed his palm gently on Mordecai's straining hand – an act just then equal to many speeches. And after that he said, without haste, as if conscious that he might be wrong –

'Do you forget what I told you when we first saw each other? Do you remember that I said I was not of your race?'

'It can't be true,' Mordecai whispered immediately, with no sign of shock. The sympathetic hand still upon him had fortified the feeling which was stronger than those words of denial. (p. 558)

It is Daniel's 'exquisite instinct' that realizes that he is Jewish, whereas on a more conscious level he can still deny it. The realization becomes, to use a phrase of Casaubon's, *subauditum*, and, conversely, when he does receive news of his ancestry, there is a compulsion to speak out about it, fulfilling Mordecai's prophecy, 'it will be declared' (p. 559). We see his revelations to Mirah and Mordecai, an unnecessary announcement to Hans, who was already aware of his news, and the disclosure to Gwendolen that so disrupts her sense of herself and her world. He discusses his mission with his mother, with Sir Hugo, and with Joseph Kalonymos, and this use of speech is a vital element in forming the plan for his life, brought forth under necessity, in answer to the questions posed by his grandfather's friend:

It happened to Deronda at that moment, as it has often happened to others, that the need for speech made an epoch in resolve. His respect for the questioner would not let him decline to answer, and by the necessity to answer he found out the truth for himself. (p. 792)

He demonstrates the truth of Lewes's theory of language and its relation to consciousness: 'Without Language there can be no meditation; no theory; no Thought' (*Foundations*, I, 167); before his declarations, Daniel's knowledge of his ancestry and his mission was on a less than conscious level.

Deronda's relationship with Gwendolen, most of which occurs before he knows the truth about his roots and is still a divided man, is not a symptom of his division, but another way that he shows an affinity with the signs of his ancestry. He saves Gwendolen for the same reasons that he has rescued Mirah, although Mirah's rescue brings forth his motive further into the light because she creates a more obvious image of fallen womanhood: 'The agitating impression this forsaken girl was making on him stirred a fibre that lay close to his deepest interest in the fates of women – "perhaps my mother was like this one."' (p. 231) However,

although Mirah is more immediately needy, it is Gwendolen who actually approximates to the person of his mother, and this, I would suggest, is why Deronda is strangely attracted to her and fascinated by her, his inward debate on whether she was beautiful or not being a symptom of the fact that he cannot fully understand the fact that she draws him so.¹⁰⁹ Gwendolen, with her desire for power, her strange superstitious awe which acts as a deterrent from rebellion, the difficulty she has in giving love to others, finds a resonance within Deronda, because she displays similar traits to the Princess Halm-Eberstein,¹¹⁰ and although he cannot save his mother from her vices, he can and does save Gwendolen.

To Gwendolen, Deronda is, quite literally, a civilizing influence. Her appearance in the novel as 'The Spoiled Child' is significant; she is a mixture of whim and desire that is profoundly anti-social. Eliot examines where she is lacking, and it is her upbringing and lack of early habit that are to blame:

A human life, I think, should be well rooted in some spot of a native land, where it may get the love of tender kinship for the face of earth, for the labours men go forth to, for the sounds and accents that haunt it, for whatever will give that early home a familiar unmistakable difference amidst the future widening of knowledge: a spot where the definiteness of early memories may be inwrought with affection ... At five years old, mortals are not prepared to be citizens of the world, to be stimulated by abstract nouns, to soar above preference into impartiality ... The best introduction to astronomy is to think of the nightly heavens as a little lot of stars belonging to one's own homestead. (p. 50)

Gwendolen, instead of love of her native spot, has 'a native love of homage' (p. 467). Her environment as a child lacking the 'blessed persistence in which affection can take root' (p. 50), Gwendolen is stuck in her five-year-old state, as she finds as the novel progresses that she herself is not prepared to be a citizen of the world. Unlike Mirah, whose mother acts as a conscience, and who feared becoming wicked, for then 'I should lose my world of happy thoughts where my mother lived with me' (p. 254), Gwendolen is master of her ineffectual mother, and has therefore no such internalized conscience figure. Eliot constantly describes her in infantile terms - as 'girlish' (p. 477), and after her marriage, as a 'sick child' (p. 467); and this leaves her profoundly unprepared to understand the sheer magnitude of the world and its events, which included, at the time the novel is set, the catastrophe of war. Her waking and becoming a citizen, however, is of the utmost importance. In this novel, more than any of the others, there is a universal vision of humanity, and Gwendolen is part of it, whether she realizes this or not:

Could there be a slenderer, more insignificant thread in human history than this consciousness of a girl, busy with her small inferences of the way in which she could make her life pleasant? – in a time, too, when ideas were with fresh vigour making armies of themselves, and the universal kinship was declaring itself fiercely: when women on the other side of the world would not mourn for the husbands and sons

¹⁰⁹ In its inability to settle on a conclusion, Daniel's questioning is also a symptom of his profound unrest and unease, caused by his rootlessness, and his consequent lack of satisfaction.

¹¹⁰ It is significant that both Gwendolen and the Princess are haunted by the faces of those they have sinned against - the Princess by her father, whose face she hopes to replace by Daniel's by fulfilling her duty to reveal his ancestry to him (*DD*, p. 704) and Gwendolen by Grandcourt's dead face (p. 753).

who died bravely in a common cause, and men stunted of bread on our side of the world heard of that willing loss and were patient: a time when the soul of man was waking to pulses which had for centuries been beating in him unheard, until their full sum made a new life of terror or of joy.

What in the midst of that mighty drama are girls and their blind visions? They are the Yea or Nay of that good for which men are enduring and fighting. In these delicate vessels is borne onward through the ages the treasure of human affections. (pp. 159-60)

Gwendolen's story is in some senses a psychological *bildungsroman*; we chart her progress from childhood to womanhood, in the space of a year or so. Deronda is key in this process, for, quite simply, he becomes her conscience; in the Freudian terms which we encountered in Chapter 1, her super-ego. In her case, put simply, and in Freudian terms, 'love alone acts as the civilizing factor in the sense that it brings a change from egoism to altruism' (*Group Psychology*, p. 103). In her own words to Deronda, 'getting wicked was misery – being shut out for ever from knowing what you – what better lives were' (*DD*, pp. 760-61).

In Gwendolen's progress we see reflected the growth both of the individual mortal, and that of humanity. For Gwendolen follows a certain pattern in her awakening to citizenship. She does display a primitive kind of innate conscience to begin with, and this is gradually transformed. As Eliot describes, in a neat picture that sums up the infantile elements of Gwendolen's personality: 'Gwendolen's will had seemed imperious in its small girlish sway; but it was the will of a creature with a large discourse of imaginative fears: a shadow would have been enough to relax its hold.' (p. 477) Indulging to the full her love of homage, she simultaneously is victim to fears and superstitions, as when she performs in front of the small audience at Offendene, and is rendered powerless with shock when the cabinet swings open to reveal the painting of the dead face. For Gwendolen is divided into different strata, and the visitations of this sort of terror for her are at first a 'brief remembered madness, an unexplained exception from her normal life' (p. 94). Like the bow and arrows she uses to such pretty effect, now 'freed from associations of bloodshed' (p. 134), these fears are an inherited relic, dissociated from their original role. Like the other experiences we accumulate in our lifetime, and the inherited experience handed down to us, these fears are what Lewes calls '*residua*' left 'in the modifications of the structure' of the individual (*Foundations*, I, 120). Eliot gives an idea of Gwendolen's fear-filled moral instinct as an inheritance as much as material goods, when she describes her thoughts about the spiritual side of her life:

She had no permanent consciousness of other fetters, or of more spiritual restraints, having always disliked whatever was presented to her under the name of religion, in the same way that some people dislike arithmetic and accounts: it had raised no other emotion in her, no alarm, no longing; so that the question whether she believed it had not occurred to her, any more than it had occurred to her to inquire into the conditions of colonial property and banking, on which, as she had had many opportunities of knowing, the family fortune was dependent. (*DD*, p. 94)

But although she doesn't inquire into her religious instinct, which remains, like much of her, 'unmapped' it is nevertheless present in her in the form of superstition, 'which lingers in an intense personality even in spite of theory and science' (p. 321). The word 'lingers' adds to the

idea that the sort of fears and dreads that Gwendolen is prone to is an outdated symptom of the primal in her. Lewes, anticipating Freud's view that 'each individual somehow recapitulates in an abbreviated form the entire development of the human race',¹¹¹ writes, in the second series of *Problems of Life and Mind*, 'we know that the mental development of a civilised man passes through the stages which the race passed through in the course of its long history, and the psychology of the child reproduces the psychology of the savage' (*Physical Basis of Mind*, p. 87). Stuck in a state of immaturity, Gwendolen reflects the state of development in which she feels a 'forecasting tendency, germinal in animals and savages, conspicuous in the civilised man', (*Problems, 3rd Series*, I, 40) which manifests itself in her fixation on the dead face that she encounters in the painting. This corresponds to what Von Hartmann calls 'presentiment' or 'clairvoyance', one of the characteristics of the unconscious, which is displayed by animals which are ruled by instinct. After listing various examples of this presentiment, such as the fear for the chimpanzee of the poisonous snake it has never before encountered, Von Hartmann (rendered by Butler) continues, 'even among ourselves a Gretchen can often detect a Mephistopheles' (*Unconscious Memory*, p. 179). In *Daniel Deronda* Eliot likens Grandcourt, who is very dull-witted in his ideas of what others want or need, to that very figure - 'There is no escaping the fact that want of sympathy condemns us to a corresponding stupidity. Mephistopheles thrown upon real life, and obliged to manage his own plots, would inevitably make blunders.' (p. 658) It is Gwendolen's feeling of foreboding that causes her to flee Grandcourt in the first place and escape to Europe – it is at her peril that she later accepts him.

From the presentiments of children and savages, according to Lewes's developmental model, then spring 'vague and agitating images of Invisible Powers supposed to originate all visible changes' (*Problems, 3rd Series*, I, 40); this is the origin of the awe Gwendolen originally feels before what she sees as Daniel's judging eyes, which cause her to lose her luck at the casino, a feeling that is akin to 'a superstitious dread' (*DD*, p. 374) and which later inspires her feeling that her husband has 'a ghostly army at his back, that could close round her wherever she might turn', meaning that to defy him would be equivalent to defying 'the texture of her nerves and the palpitation of her heart' (p. 503). This is the origin of her terror of the furies which will descend upon her when she dreams of killing Grandcourt.

The superstitious dread she feels about Deronda however, unlike the feelings of dreaded awe she has for her husband, move towards something much more positive and transforming: 'in some mysterious way he was becoming a part of her conscience' (p. 468); 'without the aid of sacred ceremony or costume, her feelings had turned this man, only a few years older than herself, into a priest' (p. 485), so that whenever she was tempted to leave her husband 'always among the images that drove her back to submission was Deronda' (p. 665). But he is still an 'outer conscience' (p. 833) at this point, a priest who it is important to act correctly in front of,

¹¹¹ Sigmund Freud, 'Lecture XIII: The Archaic Features and Infantilism of Dreams' (1916-17), in *SE*, XV, 192-212 (p. 199).

and to behave well before if possible so one's confession may be free from vice. Eliot describes his relationship with Gwendolen as a mission:

It is hard to say how much we could forgive ourselves if we were secure from judgment by an other whose opinion is the breathing-medium of all our joy – who brings to us with close pressure and immediate sequence that judgment of the Invisible and Universal which self-flattery and the world's tolerance would easily melt and disperse. In this way our brother may be in the stead of God to us, and his opinion which has pierced even to the joints and marrow, may be our virtue in the making. That mission of Deronda to Gwendolen had begun with what she had felt to be his judgment of her at the gaming-table. He might easily have spoiled it: – much of our lives is spent in marring our own influence and turning others' belief in us into a widely concluding unbelief which they call knowledge of the world, while it is really disappointment in you or me. Deronda had not spoiled his mission. (p. 833)

Gwendolen's conscience is powered now by what Eliot describes as 'the infused action of another soul, before which we bow in complete love' (p. 840). But she has not yet become a citizen of the world; she is still at that moral stage which Freud describes as 'fear of loss of love, "social" anxiety' (*Civilization*, p. 125). The most essential part of Deronda's mission is yet to come; to leave Gwendolen on her own in the world, to make it necessary for her to internalize him as her permanent conscience. Freud describes this process, which initiates man into the civilized world:

A great change takes place only when the authority is internalized through the establishment of a super-ego. The phenomena of conscience then reach a higher stage. Actually, it is not until now that we should speak of conscience or a sense of guilt. At this point, too, the fear of being found out comes to an end; the distinction, moreover, between doing something bad and wishing to do it disappears entirely, since nothing can be hidden from the super-ego, not even thoughts. (p. 125)

Gwendolen's reliance on Deronda is an egoism which she must be shocked out of; she believes he will always be with her, 'for we are all apt to fall into this passionate egoism of imagination, not only towards our fellow-men, but towards God'. In order to be good, she felt 'she would be continually assimilating herself to some type that he would hold before her' (*DD*, p. 867). The effect of his revelation, a declaration that forces her to see with his eyes, and within his much larger boundaries, makes her see for the first time 'her horizon was but a dipping onward of an existence with which her own was revolving' (p. 876) which Eliot likens to a sudden personal experience of the war that is occurring at the time when the novel is set. Gwendolen has finally shed her blindness and stupidity; knowledge, for her, is an essential building-block in her moral self, and, having possession of all the facts, the right vision, her awaking is found in the words 'I shall live. I shall be better' (p. 879), her equivalent to Dorothea's dawn. She is now a civilized being; in Freud's words:

It is in keeping with the course of human development that external coercion gradually becomes internalized ... Such a strengthening of the super-ego is a most precious cultural asset in the psychological field. Those in whom it has taken place are turned from being opponents of civilization into being its vehicles. (*The Future of an Illusion*, p. 11)

It is the role of such a vehicle to 'make others glad that they were born' (*DD*, p. 882). This is now Gwendolen's aim.

The other part of Daniel's mission springs from his own history and the discovery of his ancestry. Here he closely follows theories of inheritance in the 1870s, that the individual was a combination of nature and nurture. Contradicting John Locke's famous statement that the infant is born as a blank sheet, Lewes creates an alternative metaphor to describe the psyche's development:

The sensitive mechanism is not a simple mechanism, and as such constant, but a variable mechanism, which has a *history*. What the Senses inscribe on it, are not merely the changes of the external world; but these characters are commingled with the characters of preceding inscriptions. The sensitive subject is no *tabula rasa*: it is not a blank sheet of paper, but a palimpsest ... the Organism brings with it inherited Experience, *i. e.*, a mode of reaction antecedent to all direct relation with external influences, which necessarily determines the results of individual Experience. (*Foundations*, I, 162)

We are not the beginning, or indeed the end, of our own lives. Deronda's life, like Mordecai's, becomes a bridge from past to future, the '*in medias res*' of the opening epigraph to the novel. Mordecai, this man who lived 'an intense life in an invisible past and future' (*DD*, p. 593) tells Daniel, 'the generations are crowding on my narrow life as a bridge: what has been and what is to be are meeting there; and the bridge is breaking' (p. 557). This view of time, in a sense a making positive and useful Schopenhauer's topsy-turvy view of the unconceived child choosing his parents, is not only inherent in the Jewish race as Eliot portrays it, but is a factor in what causes Deronda to search for his roots, and once he has found them, to embrace them. His own grandfather, Daniel Charisi, 'was satisfied with no sight, but pieced it out with what had been before and what would come after' (p. 791), desiring most of all to have 'a grandson who shall have a true Jewish heart' (p. 726). This occurs despite the preventative action of Deronda's mother, prompting Deronda to observe:

'No wonder if such facts come to reveal themselves in spite of concealments. The effects prepared by generations are likely to triumph over a contrivance which would bend them all to the satisfaction of self. Your will was strong, but my grandfather's trust which you accepted and did not fulfil ... is the expression of something stronger, with deeper, farther-spreading roots, knit into the foundations of sacredness for all men. You renounced me ... as a son ... But that stronger Something has determined that I shall be all the more the grandson whom also you willed to annihilate.' (p. 727)

Grandson to a dead grandfather, inheritor from a dying Jew, Deronda's new role is in part backward looking - he is for a time as the children that stretch their arms out to Mordecai in his vision ('the future stretches towards me the appealing arms of children' (p. 587-88)). His mission, mostly uncharted, beyond the present of the novel, will intend to rectify the past and justify all the work that has gone to make him what he is, a fulfilment of wishes. In this way, Deronda can fully said to be *in medias res*.

Deronda's embracing of his Jewishness is not only due to his nature, however; as Mordecai tells the philosophers, 'the strongest principle of growth lies in human choice. The

sons of Judah have to choose that God may again choose them' (p. 598). Deronda, in Lewes's terms, 'is not a passive recipient of external impressions, but an active co-operant' (*Foundations*, I, 162), although Deronda's *tendencies* will have inspired him to choose rightly. For the subject is a mixture of nature and nurture:

All sensations, perceptions, emotions, volitions, are partly connate, partly acquired: partly the evolved products of the accumulated experiences of ancestors, and partly of the accumulated experiences of the individual, when each of these have left *residua* in the modifications of the structure. (Lewes, *Foundations*, I, 120)

But the combination of nature and nurture leads to many subtle questions about Deronda's path to his inheritance, as Eliot is well aware. His rescue of Mirah is partly due to questions burning in him about his mother, which will be a mixture of these two influential elements of his life; his decision not to run from Mordecai's alarming claims is partly due to his deep and perhaps instinctive need of a like-minded friend, and his 'struggling conscience ... enlarged by his early habit of thinking himself imaginatively into the experience of others' (*DD*, p. 570). Eliot meant to create such complex mixtures of motive for Deronda's actions; for the exact tracing of each source of influence within us is impossible:

How much of any one mental manifestation is due to ancestral feelings registered in the modified structure inherited, and how much is due to the individual feelings and their modifications acquired through the direct relation of the Organism to its stimuli, cannot accurately be determined. It is like the wealth which a merchant acquires through his own efforts, by employing the accumulated results of the efforts of previous generations. (*Foundations*, I, 212)¹¹²

Lewes frequently uses the metaphor of a plant to illustrate the difficulty of defining the sources of growth and characteristic in the individual. The seed (or in his analogy of the oak-tree, the acorn) represents ancestral experience, the soil, atmosphere and temperature the life experiences of the individual: 'No one now supposes that the oak *is* ready formed in the acorn, lying there in miniature. The oak is quite as much in the atmosphere and soil; it really is in neither, but will be evolved from both' (*Foundations*, I, 239). Here there are implications not only for Deronda, whose ancestral experiences determine his being as much as his upbringing by Sir Hugo, but for Gwendolen too. Deronda significantly tells her, that 'once beginning to act with ... penitential, loving purpose ... there will be unexpected satisfactions – there will be newly-opening needs ... You will find your life growing like a plant' (*DD*, p. 839). It is experience of the life around her and beyond her that Gwendolen requires in order to grow; she needs, in Eliot's words to Emily

¹¹² This image of the wealth of merchants recalls little Jacob in *Daniel Deronda*, who seems to be almost all nature; this may be because he is a child, and ancestry may be the dominant influence in him still: 'Have you got a knife?' says Jacob, coming closer. His small voice was hoarse in its glibness, as if it belonged to an aged commercial soul, fatigued with bargaining through many generations.' (*DD*, p. 441). However, if little Jacob had not lived in an environment that encouraged this manifestation of his inheritance, it would not have been so strong in him. The debate continues.

Davies, to be 'alive to high and generous emotions', in order to avoid the stunting stupidity and blindness from which she was suffering in her moral immaturity.

Deronda uses an alternative image to illustrate the interaction of inherited and life experience, in a passage in which he explains to Mordecai the factors which contributed towards evolving him into the man that he has become, 'the heart and brain of a multitude':

'It is through your inspiration that I have discerned what may be my life's task. It is you who have given shape to what, I believe, was an inherited yearning – the effect of brooding, passionate thoughts in many ancestors – thoughts that seem to have been intensely present in my grandfather. Suppose the stolen offspring of some mountain tribe brought up in a city of the plain, or one with an inherited genius for painting, and born blind – the ancestral life would lie within them as a dim longing for unknown objects and sensations, and the spell-bound habit of their inherited frames would be like a cunningly-wrought musical instrument, never played on, but quivering throughout in uneasy mysterious moanings of its intricate structure that, under the right touch, gives music. Something like that, I think, has been my experience.' (p. 819)

In the place where this image finds an explanation in Lewes's *Foundation of a Creed*, what is conveyed, apart from an idea of *what* it is that is inherited, is the huge complexity of the influences on the individual organism by heredity. We get a glimpse here of what forms the musical instrument, and that it is 'cunningly-wrought' is no understatement:

Every modification of structure is the issue of many complex experiences ... each experience is not only complicated by prior experiences, its transmission is complicated by the influence of the other parent. A musical *aptitude* will be inherited, but no particular melody ... There are no innate ideas, no innate truths, no thoughts having a metempirical source – simply innate *tendencies*, congenital *aptitudes*, which cause us to respond in certain ways to certain stimuli; but if the stimuli differ in kind, or in degree, or in their *order* of presentation, the responses must proportionately differ. (*Foundations*, I, 164-65)

This passage was published before *Daniel Deronda* was written, and it seems to act as the underlying theory behind Daniel's long journey towards accepting and fulfilling his inheritance.¹¹³ His progression is, in a sense, towards creating a music inspired by the state of his race; a repetitive tune, played in different parts of the world. It is perhaps worth mentioning that Deronda's name shows a likeness to the construction 'de rondo';¹¹⁴ a rondo being a musical term meaning 'a piece of music having one principal subject, to which a return is always made after the introduction of other matter' (*OED*, XIV, 71). This suggests recurrence, a cyclical pattern, although containing a progression. There are many musical themes and episodes

¹¹³ Music was often used in the same way in which Lewes uses it here, to illustrate issues of inheritance, at this time. James Sully mentions some approaches in his essay, 'On the Nature and Limits of Musical Expression', in *Sensation and Intuition*, 1874, writing of the recent 'attempts of Mr. Spencer and Mr. Darwin to connect musical effects with a long series of ancestral experiences, human and, probably, pre-human, the results of which are now transmitted to the new-born individual as deeply organized associations' (*Sensation and Intuition: Studies in Psychology and Aesthetics* (London: Henry S. King & Co., 1874)), p. 221.

¹¹⁴ William Baker points out the most likely source for Daniel's surname, 'Ronda is in Andalusia near the centres of medieval Spanish Jewish life, Granada, Cordoba and Malaga' (*George Eliot and Judaism*, p. 182), but this musical connection may also have steered Eliot to choose this particular place-name as a basis for the surname of her protagonist.

connected with Daniel's emerging racial inheritance – Mordecai's speeches sound 'chord[s]' (p. 561); Deronda's mother, having defied her father to become a singer, suddenly, and for no apparent reason, loses her ability to stay in tune, but the most striking perhaps is the first contact Deronda has with Mirah, for it is his singing that enters her consciousness and begins her rescue. It is only to her ear 'that the low vocal sounds came with more significance than if they had been an insect-murmur amidst the sum of current noises' (p. 227), a description of an awareness that echoes Lewes's ideas of twenty years before, of those sensations which the individual perceives within the great sum of consciousness. Mirah, standing on the river bank, 'might have been an impersonation of the misery [Deronda] was unconsciously giving voice to'. His unconscious vocalization, which 'enter[s] her inner world' (p. 227) seems another example of the 'exquisite instinct' that I discussed earlier, by which Daniel, unaware, manifests his affinity with those of this race.

That Daniel is used as an instrument (like his unwilling mother before him - 'I have after all been the instrument my father wanted', p. 726) is a yearning fulfilled; his life which needed 'the complete ideal shape of that personal duty and citizenship which lay in his own thought like sculptured fragments certifying some beauty yearned after but not traceable by divination' (pp. 570-71), is made complete by duty, and he finds personal satisfaction in his union with Mirah. Another part of his fulfilment is his ability to satisfy Mordecai, for before he knows of his true inheritance he says to him 'it is my wish to meet and satisfy your wishes wherever that is possible to me' (p. 561). In Mordecai we see the purest, most energy-filled example of satisfaction that we encounter in Eliot's 1870s novels. And it is a satisfaction that springs from meliorism. In Judaism Eliot finally found a framework not just through which to discuss current scientific ideas, such as those of hereditary influences on the individual, but a pattern for active meliorism. Daniel describes Mordecai, the most fervent Jewish mind we encounter in the novel, thus: 'Mordecai is an enthusiast: I should like to keep that word for the highest order of minds – those who care supremely for grand and general benefits to mankind.' (p. 628)

Fittingly, it is in this mind of the highest order that we see most strikingly demonstrated the principle, reiterated, as I have discussed, in different parts of *Problems of Life and Mind*, that the selflessness of altruism is embedded in the animal instincts. For it becomes increasingly clear that Mordecai's longing for a better future for his people is a development of sexual desire. His yearning for another soul to join himself with is described by Eliot thus:

Reverently let it be said of this mature spiritual need that it was akin to the boy's and girl's picturing of the future beloved; but the stirrings of such young desire are feeble compared with the passionate current of an ideal life straining to embody itself, made intense by resistance to imminent dissolution. (p. 531)

Eliot's use of the word 'dissolution' here springs, I believe, from her fundamental understanding of the principles of evolution, set out by Spencer, discussed and employed by Lewes, and her

wish to apply them to Daniel's mission. Dissolution forms the antithesis to evolution in Spencer's system; within the universal process which dictates 'a differential progress towards either integration or disintegration', it forms the second half. It is the movement towards 'a diffused imperceptible state' (*First Principles*, 2nd edn, pp. 284, 285). Notable in Mordecai's reaction to his understanding that this is the process which he is undergoing, is the urgency that his need for his vision to 'embody itself' in Daniel takes on. In her portrayal of Mordecai's feelings about his approaching demise, Eliot uses the concepts of evolution and dissolution to suggest something that would later become Freudian theory: that union with another serves to counteract the approach of death.

On this occasion forming something of an echo of Spencer's tendency to apply universal processes to all forms of life, from the most primitive to the highest, Freud uses a biological phenomenon, that 'the temporary coalescence of two unicellular organisms, has a life-preserving and rejuvenating effect on both of them' (*Beyond*, p. 50), to illustrate his thoughts on what would become fundamental elements in his later theories, the life and death instincts. The urge towards a union, for the purposes of the rejuvenation of his ideals, is something of what we see in Mordecai. Interestingly, Freud cites Ewald Hering as the proponent of the idea of evolution and dissolution, in a passage which demonstrates his understanding of these opposed universal processes:

According to E. Hering's theory, two kinds of processes are constantly at work in living substance, operating in contrary directions, one constructive or assimilatory and the other destructive or dissimilatory. May we venture to recognize in these two directions taken by vital processes the activity of our two instinctual impulses, the life instincts and the death instincts? (p. 49)

Hering's theory, it hardly need be said, was also Spencer's. On this theory, as I have discussed above, entertained tentatively at first, Freud based much of his later work, incorporating it into individual and group psychology as basic governing drives.

As Freud equates the life instinct with the urge to union, the sexual instinct, Eliot in *Daniel Deronda* explicitly links Mordecai's need for his vision to be transmitted with sexual desire. This is an entirely fitting connection, for just as sexual union creates descendants, Mordecai's wish, in essence, is to create a united Israel of the future, the 'appealing arms of children' of his vision. To link this even more firmly with his biological urges, Mordecai cannot physically create descendants, aid the development and evolution of the Jewish race, to remedy his own dissolution, so he wishes to unite with Deronda, who is in essence an evolutionary agent. Mordecai's yearning, I would suggest, bears a similarity to Eliot's urge, particularly prevalent in the late 1860s and 1870s, to feel that through her writings she had done some sort of good, that her ideas could be passed through the generations, that they bore 'roots to take ... lasting hold in the minds of men', as she described it to David Kaufmann. In 1867 this need was manifested in a short poem (whose theme only serves to strengthen the link that I

have discussed between music and inheritance), 'O May I Join the Choir Invisible'. It began, 'O may I join the choir invisible/ Of those immortal dead who live again/ In minds made better by their presence'. In this possibility Eliot sees her chance of paradise: 'So to live is heaven: To make undying music in the world'.¹¹⁵ It is this wish, rooted in biological urges, that motivated Eliot's fiction and her melioristic vision, towards the end of her life, as her 'visibly narrowing future' became shorter, and her own dissolution became imminent.

Hence her enthusiastic expression of satisfaction when she received assurance from David Kaufmann that her work was not 'poor perishable stuff'. There is satisfaction too for Mordecai. The scene in which Daniel reveals his heritage and his intention to take on the mission that Mordecai has to leave behind him is very interesting in its very physical manifestation of his sense of gratification. When Mordecai first hailed Daniel as deliverer, after spotting him from Blackfriars bridge, 'obstacles, incongruities, all melted into the sense of completion with which his soul was flooded by this outward satisfaction of his longing' (*DD*, p. 550). Part of his feeling, however, was anticipation of the complete answering of his thirst; he says to Daniel - 'I was thirsty, and the water is on my lips.' (p. 561)¹¹⁶ In the scene after Deronda returns from Genoa, however, there is a sense of complete satisfaction. Deronda outlines what he means to do with the knowledge of his inheritance, and here he reveals something of his role as evolutionary agent. In his intention 'to bind our race together in spite of heresy' (p. 820) we see embodied the process of development which Spencer described in the second edition of *First Principles* as attaining a state whereby 'component matter has passed from a more diffused to a more concentrated state - has contracted' (*First Principles*, 2nd edn, p. 286). Daniel's aim, to facilitate the 'union' of the Rabbanites and the Karaites (*DD*, p. 820), as he later tells Gwendolen, to make the Jews 'a nation again, giving them a national centre, such as the English have, though they too are scattered over the face of the globe' (p. 875), is one of concentration, to encourage the contraction of a widely scattered people. This nation may attain the equivalence of what Spencer's idea of organic evolution achieves, 'the continued incorporation of matter previously spread through a wider space' (*First Principles*, 2nd edn, p. 311). Spencer himself goes on to apply these principles to societies that start, aptly, as 'wandering families', and become organized, through the greater and greater union of component elements, and united into one. In the discussion of this principle in its application to land Spencer writes that the process of aggregation which makes 'feuds into provinces, provinces into kingdoms, and finally contiguous kingdoms into a single one, slowly completes itself by destroying the original lines of demarcation' (p. 317). Mordecai could not ask for more.

The act of union which Deronda plans to undertake is an extension of those ideas which Mordecai had previously strained to embody. For Deronda says to him, 'I mean to work in your

¹¹⁵ George Eliot, 'O May I Join the Choir Invisible' (1867), in *Collected Poems*, pp. 49-50 (p. 49).

¹¹⁶ This image is a refutation of the pessimistic belief that man lives in a constant state of thirst.

spirit. Failure will not be ignoble, but it would be ignoble for me not to try' (*DD*, p. 820). Mordecai's words and physical reaction to this proof that the dissolution of his ideas will be reversed, that, as he puts it elsewhere, the 'seed of fire' will be successfully transmitted (p. 596), is extremely significant: "Even as my brother that fed at the breasts of my mother," said Mordecai, falling back in his chair with a look of exultant repose, as after some finished labour' (p. 820). This very physical image that Mordecai conjures up, his use of the word 'breasts' rather than the rather more neuter term 'breast' creating an image of actual drinking, of need satisfied, is supplemented by his own action - the falling back, the contented expression on his face.¹¹⁷ This is the climax of his altruistic search; he in a sense 'dies' here and Daniel becomes his descendant, in spirit and action. He also becomes the soul to which Mordecai's is bonded in a sort of 'marriage' - 'It has begun already - the marriage of our souls' (p. 820). In a sense what we are witnessing, after vows exchanged, is its consummation. We are also, according to the doctrine of the Cabbala, in which 'souls are born again and again in new bodies' (p. 599), witnessing a rebirth, and so the image that is invoked of the mother's breasts is additionally fitting. William Baker gives an insight into this image in Jewish tradition, in a citation of the work of Christian David Ginsburg, whose book, *The Kabbalah, its Doctrines, Development and Literature* (1863) Eliot had read in preparation for writing *Daniel Deronda*. Describing what Baker calls the 'process of the transmigration of the soul into another body' (*George Eliot and Judaism*, p. 161), Ginsburg writes that a soul that has been isolated and made weak 'chooses a companion soul of better fortune or more strength'. This stronger soul then acts as a mother, 'she carries the sickly one in her bosom & nurses her as a woman her child' (cited p. 161). Mordecai's physical reaction to Daniel's news also foreshadows a comment by Freud, when he is discussing the sexuality of children, 'when children fall asleep after being sated at the breast, they show an expression of blissful satisfaction which will be repeated later in life after the experience of a sexual orgasm'.¹¹⁸ The fulfilment of a deep and melioristic yearning, born in his inherited instinctual life, is what has taken place in Mordecai, and he can finally say, 'my soul is satisfied' (p. 821).¹¹⁹

In his death scene, however, we see something of the breakdown of the boundaries of Mordecai's ego which is to happen when he enters Daniel's soul. Freud, in *Civilization and its Discontents*, discusses the possible origin of the sort of experience Mordecai is having, for,

¹¹⁷ One of the things that Dorothea is missing in her marriage to Casaubon is 'repose': 'She was always trying to be what her husband wished, and never able to repose on his delight in what she was'. There is a sense of ceaseless striving here, 'perpetual effort', as Eliot describes it (*M*, p. 516), in contrast to the word 'repose', which seems to signal a sense of energy discharged, of satisfaction.

¹¹⁸ Sigmund Freud, 'Lecture XX: The Sexual Life of Human Beings' (1916-17), in *SE*, XVI, 303-19 (p. 313).

¹¹⁹ In *Freud's Neurological Education and its Influence on Psychoanalytic Theory*, Peter Amacher traces the image of the baby at the breast as an illustration of satisfaction in the work of Freud's teachers and then Freud himself. Freud's use of this image is therefore quite unoriginal, even within the realms of psychology. See Peter Amacher, *Freud's Neurological Education and its Influence on Psychoanalytic Theory*, Monograph 16, *Psychological Issues*, IV (International Universities Press, New York, 1965), 33-36, 38-41.

sitting between Daniel and Mirah, connected physically by touch, he is for a time silent, but looks meaningfully at them, 'as if to assure them that while this remnant of breathing-time was difficult, he felt an ocean of peace beneath him'. His final words to Daniel are, 'is it not begun? Have I not breathed my soul into you? We shall live together' (p. 882). In Freud's 1930 work, he relates how, after sending a friend of his *The Future of an Illusion*, he received a reply:

He answered that he entirely agreed with my judgement upon religion, but that he was sorry I had not properly appreciated the true source of religious sentiments. This, he says, consists in a peculiar feeling, which he himself is never without, which he finds confirmed by many others, and which he may suppose is present in millions of people. It is a feeling which he would like to call a sensation of 'eternity', a feeling as of something limitless, unbounded – as it were, 'oceanic'. (*Civilization*, p. 64)

Freud, having never felt this, finds it a difficult phenomenon to understand, but concludes that it involves the breakdown of the boundaries of the ego; he has already discussed this in *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* as an event that certain commentators believe occurs in a group – 'it is a pleasurable experience for those who are concerned, to surrender themselves so unreservedly to their passions and thus to become merged in the group and to lose the sense of the limits of their individuality' (*Group Psychology*, p. 84). In *Civilization and its Discontents*, he identifies a state of emotional life where this loss of the limits of self occurs – 'At the height of being in love the boundary between ego and object threatens to melt away. Against all the evidence of his senses, a man who is in love declares that "I" and "you" are one, and is prepared to behave as if it were a fact.' (*Civilization*, p. 66) Mordecai's feeling for Daniel, based on those animal instincts that lead us to fall in love, create above anything else a possibility of profound and eternal unity, which is confirmed by his final blessing before death: 'Slowly and with effort Ezra, pressing on their hands, raised himself and uttered in Hebrew the confession of the divine Unity, which for long generations has been on the lips of the dying Israelite' (*DD*, pp. 882-83).

In Judaism Eliot found a multi-purpose frame, within which to discuss and illustrate scientific theories of heredity¹²⁰ and the ideals of meliorism. The importance of this discovery should not be underestimated; the heritage of Judaism provided Eliot with metaphors which served her in suggesting a descriptive way into theories of the mind that approached those of psychoanalysis. One of these ideas was that of the path, a metaphor that Eliot frequently employs in her work, but in *Daniel Deronda* she uses it to suggest something new that sprang from ideas of heredity. Lewes had, in *Foundations of a Creed*, followed the idea of inherited experience to its logical end:

Descending from these preliminaries, we see that the true question Psychology has to determine concerning the origin of knowledge is whether over and above the recognised avenues of Sensibility there are other avenues, in no one respect allied to them, through which Consciousness may be affected, and

¹²⁰ William Baker writes that according to Jewish philosophy 'the fundamental laws by which all life is influenced are heredity and environment' (*George Eliot and Judaism*, p. 171).

thus revelations reach the mind which, having no sensible origin, are not amenable to the canons of sensible Experience. (*Foundations*, I, 213)

I would suggest that this is a short, and hesitant move towards the idea of an unconscious in the way that Freud would conceptualize it later in his career. Although little is made of it in Lewes's 1870s work, the acknowledgement that something inaccessible and unrelated to sensible experience may exist in the human psyche is briefly given; in *Daniel Deronda*, Mordecai's constant refrain to Daniel, 'we know not all the pathways' forms the hint, supported by the sense of complexity we encounter when we try and unravel the strings of nature and nurture, that there may be something equivalent to what Lewes glimpses, in the human frame. Mordecai's certainty that Daniel is the deliverer he takes him to be on Blackfriars bridge, cannot be easily explained, and so he resorts to this metaphor:

Man finds his pathways: at first they were foot-tracks, as those of the beast in the wilderness; now they are swift and invisible: his thought dives through the ocean, and his wishes thread the air: has he found all the pathways yet? What reaches him, stays with him, rules him: he must accept it, not knowing its pathway. (*DD*, pp. 560-61)

In the *Ego and the Id* Freud describes the evolution of the id through the experiences of generations of mankind. This is an important passage, as it illustrates the fact that organic memory theory leads to a realization that there is a part of the mind, intimated by Lewes and Eliot above, that is not formed wholly by our life experiences but that is already inherent in us when we are born. For Freud this part of the psychical apparatus was the id, 'the dark, inaccessible part of our personality',¹²¹ the 'core of our being ... which has no direct communication with the external world and is accessible even to our own knowledge only through the medium of another agency'.¹²² Freud's conception of the id, more than his previous view of the unconscious, emphasized and reiterated the importance of *inherited* material in its make-up, such as instinctual drives, or a sense of guilt which our ancestors had earned. For although the id could accept repressed wishes and memories, the life experiences of the individual, it was not constructed entirely from them:¹²³

The experiences of the ego seem at first to be lost for inheritance; but, when they have been repeated often enough and with sufficient strength in many individuals in successive generations, they transform themselves, so to say, into experiences of the id, the impressions of which are preserved by heredity. (*The Ego and the Id*, p. 38)

¹²¹ Sigmund Freud, 'Lecture XXXI: The Dissection of the Psychical Personality' (1933) in *SE*, XXII, 57-80 (p. 73).

¹²² Sigmund Freud, *An Outline of Psycho-Analysis* (1940), in *SE*, XXIII, 139-207 (p. 197).

¹²³ See Laplanche and Pontalis, entry for 'Id', pp. 197-99. In discussing the difference between the unconscious and the id, which emerged as part of Freud's 'second theory of the psychical apparatus' (p. 197), they write: 'In the last analysis, we are best able to grasp the transition from the unconscious in the first topography to the id in the second by considering the difference in the *genetic perspectives* to which

In this passage Freud's voice seems to form an echo of Spencer's, or Lewes's, in their writings on the inheritance of acquired characteristics. Through a shared common ground then, the doctrine of organic memory, which seemed for Eliot to be clarified and confirmed by the ideas and images inherent in Judaism, Eliot and Lewes approached a view of the mind that would later be propounded by psychoanalysis.

In Eliot's last book, *Impressions of Theophrastus Such* (1879), she takes on a more urgent, didactic tone to champion the cause that she explores through fiction in *Daniel Deronda* – the lack of a national centre for the Jews. In 'The Modern Hep! Hep! Hep!' she looks into the past and points out that although we have persecuted the Jews, 'their memories nevertheless are the very fountain to which the persecutors trace their most vaunted blessings', that Jewish ideas 'have determined the religion of half the world, and that the more cultivated half',¹²⁴ and that it was the Jews that gave us the word 'Amen' with which to end our prayers, and indicate a sense of positive consent (*Theophrastus*, p. 191). As Daniel Deronda says to Mirah, between Jews and Christians 'there is not really such a separation – deeper down, as Mrs Meyrick says. Our religion is chiefly a Hebrew religion' (*DD*, p. 424). The same idea is expressed in a letter to Harriet Beecher Stowe of 29 October 1876; that the roots of our religion and culture are found in Jewish history and faith, and that not to realize this is 'stupidity':

Towards the Hebrews we western people who have been reared in Christianity, have a peculiar debt and, whether we acknowledge it or not, a peculiar thoroughness of fellowship in religious and moral sentiment. Can anything be more disgusting than to hear people called 'educated' making small jokes about eating ham, and showing themselves empty of any real knowledge as to the relation of their own social and religious life to the history of the people they think themselves witty in insulting? They hardly know that Christ was a Jew ... To my feeling, this deadness to the history which has prepared half our world for us ... lies very close to the worst kind of irreligion. The best that can be said of it is, that it is a sign of the intellectual narrowness – in plain English, the stupidity, which is still the average mark of our culture.¹²⁵

We are produced from past experience, which includes that of our ancestors. In essence, according to the evolutionary idea of the inheritance of acquired characteristics, Judaism is our ancestry. Like *Deronda*, we should gain as full a knowledge as possible of the past, of our past, what has gone to make us up, in order to progress most effectively, and a step we can make towards moving forward, according to Eliot, involves acknowledging the possibility of a Jewish nation. This recognition is the polar opposite of stupidity, in her view, for she writes that a Hebrew nation would be able to 'contribute some added form of national genius' to the rest of humanity. (*Theophrastus*, p. 191).

An idea of what may arise from such genius can be found in a speech given in *Daniel Deronda* by Mordecai:

they belong', that while the unconscious 'owed its formation' to repression, the formation of the id was more of an emergence from an evolutionary process (p. 199).

¹²⁴ George Eliot, 'The Modern Hep! Hep! Hep!' (1879), in *Impressions of Theophrastus Such, Essays and Leaves from a Note-book* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Son, n. d.), pp. 168-93 (p. 174).

'The *Shemah*, wherein we briefly confess the divine Unity, is the chief devotional exercise of the Hebrew; and this made our religion the fundamental religion for the whole world; for the divine Unity embraced as its consequence the ultimate unity of mankind. See, then – the nation which has been scoffed at for its separateness, has given a binding theory to the human race ... in this way human life is tending toward the image of the Supreme Unity: for as our life becomes more spiritual by capacity of thought, and joy therein, possession tends to become more universal, being independent of gross material contact'. (*DD*, p. 802)

This idea of unity through progress is fundamental to the ideas of evolution with which Eliot was surrounded in the 1870s, but again, these concepts seem to have been rendered particularly significant to Eliot by their relevance to Judaism, their resonance within already existing Jewish thought. This should not be surprising to us, considering Eliot's self-professed need to embody theory, to render ideas 'incarnate'. In Judaism, these theories were in a sense already embodied; Eliot therefore engaged with them all the more readily. That Freud was Jewish,¹²⁶ and on reading *Daniel Deronda* professed his amazement that Eliot should know about Jewish ways that 'we speak of only among ourselves' (cited in Jones, I, 174), serves to pose an interesting question about the influences that impelled him towards adopting the idea of Eros, a unifying power which finds such resonance in Jewish mythology, but which also acts according to the characteristics of Spencer's theory of evolution and Hering's theory of the assimilatory process in nature. In 1930 Freud wrote, 'civilization is a process in the service of Eros, whose purpose is to combine single human individuals, and after that families, then races, peoples and nations, into one great unity, the unity of mankind' (*Civilization*, p. 122). This idea appears as part of his attempt to counteract the feeling that he describes, pages before, that 'what I am describing is common knowledge' (p. 117). A familiarity with the theories of evolution and social progress held by Eliot and her contemporaries proves that Freud's ideas here still have not moved out of the realm of the already-known.

¹²⁵ George Eliot to Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe, 29 October 1876, in *GEL*, VI, 301-02 (pp. 301-02).

¹²⁶ Freud was a member, for many decades, of the Viennese branch of the B'nai B'rith, 'an order which represents Jewish interests, cultural, intellectual and charitable'. Freud joined 'in 1895, and he used for many years to be a regular attendant at its meetings on alternate Tuesdays' ('Editor's Introduction', 'Address to the Society of B'nai B'rith', in *SE*, XX, 272).

Conclusion: 'A Common Fund'

Towards the end of my last chapter I considered how the psychoanalytic ideas of id and Eros may have been prefigured by Eliot and her immediate circle of scientific friends, who, theorizing within the same traditions as Freud, therefore drew comparable conclusions. Now I will turn to some implications of the ideas of evolution and organic memory, from which these conclusions developed, for Freud himself as a thinker. In this thesis I have considered texts which seem to offer a commentary on Freud, his theories and his writing and remembering behaviour, decades before his time. These are often texts about which one is inclined to feel that if Freud had read them and taken heed, he might not have encountered certain problems. The writings of Cobbe and Carpenter, and Collins's *The Moonstone*, which consider false memory and testimony, and sound a warning bell for the seduction theory, come under this category. However, this thesis has also explored subtler ways in which the premises and assumptions on which psychoanalysis would be based were displayed as complicated or problematic by Victorian thinkers and fiction writers. Collins's interrogation of the concept of the association of ideas, which revealed it as an overdeterministic model of thought processes, and the portrayal in Le Fanu's work of an ambiguous psychical or spiritual force, which found its ancestry in a religious tradition from which Freud so strenuously tried to separate himself, serve to question, not only the extent of Freud's originality, but the safety of the foundations and building-blocks of psychoanalysis. If Freud had engaged with his nineteenth-century predecessors, therefore, their ideas and discussions may have aided a more sophisticated theorizing, and instilled in him an understanding of the real history and origins of psychoanalysis. This process, however, would have entailed the sacrifice of the Freudian legend that portrays psychoanalysis as a watershed, an original creation.

As I first discussed in my Introduction, Freud's lack of reading was, as he himself admitted, due to a wish to be original, not to be 'stint[ed] ... of the satisfaction of discovery'.¹ He enjoyed his early period of 'splendid isolation', because then he 'did not have to read any publications, nor listen to any ill-informed opponents'.² It is therefore doubtful that such warning texts as I have considered in this thesis would have reached him, in a physical or a psychological sense. For Freud, as we have seen, understood and employed the concepts of organic memory and evolutionary theory, but he failed to recognize the extent of his own intellectual inheritance. To conclude this thesis, I will build on the findings of my last chapter

¹ Cited in Paul Roazen, *Freud and his Followers* (London: Allen Lane, 1976), p. 212.

² Sigmund Freud, 'On the History of the Psychoanalytic Movement', in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. and ed. by James Strachey and others, 24 vols (London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1953-74), XIV, 1-66 (p. 22). *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works* will hereafter be referenced as *SE*.

by briefly considering what ideas about evolution and the inheritance of acquired characteristics, held by Eliot's immediate circle, and the intellectual relationships within this group of friends, could suggest about Freud's prizing of what Ellenberger has identified as the 'two main features' of the Freudian legend – isolation and originality.³

'It is the great human privilege to assimilate the experiences of others', it is written in the third series of *Problems of Life and Mind*, 'our feelings are products of our personal stimulations, and of the residua of ancestral stimulations. Our knowledge is the product of our own experiences, and of the stored-up experiences of our fellows'.⁴ This statement is from a text which, although Lewes originally wrote it, was subsequently edited and revised by Eliot, who was helped by James Sully. The group of thinkers which I have considered in the last chapter could be said to have worked according to their own theories, which stressed, as Freud's did, a tendency towards unity as a characteristic of civilized society. I discussed Lewes's use of Spencer's idea of evolution in his own work, and Sully's citation of Eliot to suggest a way forward for society, Lewes's citation of Eliot's poetry to help illustrate the inheritance of acquired characteristics, Spencer's discussion with Eliot of his ideas on the direction of motion, and Eliot's use and development of the concepts of Lewes and Spencer in her fiction. There was an interdependence within this group which tended to blur the boundaries of science and literature. This blurring was partly due to the ideals of each discipline. According to Lewes, science 'postulates unity of Existence',⁵ and the aim of knowledge in Spencer's view, is to 'unit[e] ... past, present, and future histories into a whole', 'unification being ... the characteristic of developing thought of all kinds'.⁶ Literature too was a unifying medium, and as such, was perceived as a contributor to, and a symptom of, social progress. Lewes wrote in *The Principles of Success in Literature*:

Literature is at once the cause and effect of our social progress. It deepens our natural sensibilities, and strengthens by exercise our intellectual capacities. It stores up the accumulated experience of the race, connecting Past and Present into a conscious unity; and with this store it feeds successive generations, to be fed in turn by them.⁷

In *Problems of Life and Mind* we gain another sense in which these combined disciplines might contribute to 'a slow process of moral and intellectual education' which, according to Lewes, was the only way to 'reconstruc[t] society'. For this process 'a knowledge of actual and possible human motives is required, and a knowledge of psychological laws is as necessary here

³ Henri Ellenberger, *The Discovery of the Unconscious: The History and Evolution of Dynamic Psychiatry* (New York: Basic Books, 1970), p. 547.

⁴ George Henry Lewes, *Problems of Life and Mind, Third Series, Problem the First: The Study of Psychology: Its Object, Scope and Method* (London: Trübner & Co., 1879), p. 177. Hereafter, *Problems, 3rd Series*, I.

⁵ George Henry Lewes, *The Physical Basis of Mind, With Illustrations, Being the Second Series of Problems of Life and Mind* (London: Trübner and Co., 1877), p. 4.

⁶ Herbert Spencer, *First Principles*, 2nd edn (London: Williams and Norgate, 1867), pp. 278, 553.

⁷ George Henry Lewes, *The Principles of Success in Literature* (1865) (London: Walter Scott, n.d.), p. 2.

as the knowledge of physical laws in any practical or theoretic efforts to modify the external world' (*Problems, 3rd Series*, I, 46). In the last chapter we saw Eliot and Lewes's ideas of the accumulation of experience leading to motive, and Eliot's use of Spencer's laws of the direction of force for her own portrait of motive. With this issue, as with so many others I have discussed, there is a pattern of working together which approximates to Lewes's ideal of thought and theory: 'each worker brings his labours as a contribution to a common fund, not as an anarchical displacement of the labours of predecessors' (*Problems, 3rd Series*, I, 5).

This idea of the common fund forms an interesting contrast to Thomas Mann's description of Freud, which bears repeating:

Actually we know that Sigmund Freud ... trod the steep path alone and independently, as physician and natural scientist, without knowing that reinforcement and encouragement lay to his hand in literature ... By his unaided effort, without knowledge of any previous intuitive achievement, he had methodically to follow out the line of his own researches ... And we think of him as solitary – the attitude is inseparable from our earliest picture of the man.⁸

It is truer to say that Freud did not wish to know that reinforcement and encouragement lay to his hand in literature, or in any other texts, scientific or philosophical, for, in his own words in *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (1901), 'it is painful to be requested ... to surrender one's originality'. If we recall, this was Freud's comment on his forgetting that what he represented as an idea of his own, actually originated with his friend Fliess. That he had completely forgotten the conversation in which Fliess had offered this idea, Freud had put down to 'the tendency to forget what is disagreeable'. As a sort of aside to his account of this incident, Freud makes an interesting comment, 'but since then I have grown a little more tolerant when, in reading medical literature, I come across one of the few ideas with which my name can be associated, and find that my name has not been mentioned'.⁹ It is not clear whether Freud means present or past medical literature, but as he is discussing the disconcerting experience of thinking one has had an original idea and then being informed otherwise, it is likely that he means past literature. Even if it is plagiarism Freud is describing, his assumption here that he only should have the rights to a certain idea, diametrically opposes the idea of 'a common fund', and Eliot's attitude to the issue of originality, which was evident on her being asked by Sully about where the term 'meliorist' originated from: 'I don't know that I ever heard anybody use the word "meliorist" except myself. But I begin to think that there is no good invention or discovery that has not been made by more than one person'.¹⁰ Freud's thirst,

⁸ Thomas Mann, 'Freud and the Future', from *Essays of Three Decades*, trans. by H. T. Lowe-Porter (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971), pp. 411-28 (pp. 412-13).

⁹ Sigmund Freud, *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (1901), SE, VI, p. 144.

¹⁰ George Eliot to James Sully, 19 January 1877, in *The George Eliot Letters*, ed. by Gordon S. Haight, 9 vols (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954-78), VI, 333-34 (p. 333).

betrayed to Fliess, for 'eternal fame ... certain wealth, complete independence'¹¹ suggests above all that he refused to simply be a contributor to a common fund of knowledge, for such a role does not bring with it glories. We recall his panicked reading of a recent book by Janet, his contemporary, in order to check that he had not discerned 'the key',¹² as if there was only one discovery to be exclusively made by one person. In avoiding union with his fellow scientists, Freud was encouraging dissimulation, not assimilation, dissolution rather than evolution, within the fund of knowledge.

That Freud did not appreciate the 'great human privilege' of 'assimila[ting] the experiences of others' did not debar him from it, as I hope this thesis has made clear. His subscription to the theory of organic memory, whose fundamental message is that past experiences *of other people* suggest thought and action in the present, should have given him some warning of this. In his education, in his thinking, studies and simple existence within the framework of Western civilization, Freud would not have been able to help imbibing others' experience. For, as Lewes put it, 'civilisation is the accumulation of experiences', which means that 'the Past more and more dominates the Present, precisely as in the individual case it is the registered experiences which more and more determine the feelings and opinions' (*Problems, 3rd Series, I, 166*).

William Grove, whose ideas on the movement, conservation and correlation of force informed Victorian ideas of the energies within the universe and the individual, and were adopted as self-evident by psychoanalysis, wrote, in the Introductory Remarks to the Sixth Edition of his *Correlation of Physical Forces*, about the issue of originality. In the time that had lapsed between his first publication of the work, in 1846, he had discovered more and more writers whose writings, previous to his, prefigured certain parts of his system, and necessitated acknowledgement in the present edition. Commenting on this, Grove wrote:

The more extended our research becomes, the more we find that knowledge is a thing of slow progression, that the very notions which appear to ourselves new, have arisen, though perhaps in a very indirect manner, from successive modifications of traditional opinions. Each word we utter, each thought we think, has in it the vestiges, is in itself the impress, of antecedent words and thoughts. As each material form, could we rightly read it, is a book, containing in itself the past history of the world; so, different though our philosophy may now appear to be from that of our progenitors, it is but theirs added to or subtracted from, transmitted drop by drop through the filter of antecedent, as ours will be through that of subsequent, ages. The relic is to the past as is the germ to the future.¹³

Containing the history of our ancestors, we therefore cannot help reproducing the vestiges of the thoughts and theories of our intellectual forefathers; it is therefore folly to attempt to separate ourselves from them by insisting too much on our own originality.

¹¹ Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 21 September 1897, in *The Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 1887-1904*, trans. and ed. by Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard, 1985), pp. 264-67 (p. 266). Hereafter, *Freud-Fliess*.

¹² Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 10 March 1898, in *Freud-Fliess*, pp. 301-02 (p. 302).

With *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) Freud had an equivalent experience to Grove. The third edition of 1911, and the fourth edition of 1914 were much extended, for the reason that they had to incorporate all the scholarship that Freud had not originally taken into account. One of the writers whose ideas he acknowledged in this fourth edition was James Sully, whose 1893 article 'The Dream as a Revelation' prefigured Freud's idea of regression within dreaming. The note in which Sully is acknowledged is very interesting. Freud starts with an extremely combative comment, written for the second edition of 1909, in which he speaks of the 'obstinacy with which readers and critics of this book shut their eyes' to and 'overlook' the truth of his ideas. This is not an annoyance at their disagreement, more at what Freud obviously sees as an ignoring of his much-prized theories. This is followed by the section added in 1914, 'on the other hand, nothing in the literature of the subject comes so near to my hypothesis as a passage in James Sully's essay "The Dream as a Revelation"'.¹⁴ Elsewhere, Freud writes that Sully 'was more firmly convinced, perhaps, than any other psychologist that dreams have a disguised meaning' (*Interpretation*, p. 60). The passages that Freud quotes to support his argument are those that suggest that in dreams 'it is [a] temporary withdrawal of the pressure of the newer experiences which allows the overlaid strata of old experience to come to light again',¹⁵ such as Sully's comment that 'we may say that, like some palimpsest, the dream discloses beneath its worthless surface-characters traces of an old and precious communication' ('The Dream', p. 364; *Interpretation*, p. 135 n.). Sully's essay charts the results of the modifications of experience on the individual, claiming that they lead to 'changes of personality': 'when we sit down and quietly glance back over the succession of our years, we may see that by making the interval wide enough we confront what is, in a large part of its characteristic modes of consciousness, a new, a foreign personality'. Freud quotes Sully's conclusion to this idea, 'our dreams are a means of conserving these successive personalities', and introduces it thus, 'we have been able to accept entirely as our own what Sully has written' ('The Dream', p. 362; *Interpretation*, p. 591). In his original claims that his contemporaries refused to hear his voice, followed by his use of Sully's essay as nothing but a support for psychoanalysis (rather than that psychoanalysis might in some sense build on Sully's ideas) we see two manifestations of Freud's disinclination to blend in with his intellectual peers. We also find that the second half of the footnote, the citation of Sully, illuminates and explains the first half, the lack of response to Freud's work.

Sully's article was a product both of its author's early intellectual context, among the thinkers whose work I have discussed in the last chapter, and of the progress undergone in psychology from the 1870s to the 1890s. It is offered as an account which springs from 'the

¹³ W. R. Grove, *The Correlation of Physical Forces* (1846), 6th edn (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1874), p. 4.

¹⁴ Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), in *SE*, IV & V, ix-629 (p. 135 n.). Hereafter, *Interpretation*.

¹⁵ James Sully, 'The Dream as a Revelation', *The Fortnightly Review*, 53 (1893), 354-65 (p. 361). Hereafter, 'The Dream'.

modern scientific theory of dreaming' ('The Dream', p. 354), and is based on ideas of evolution and dissolution: 'according to the common hypothesis senility is the first stage of cerebral dissolution, in which, reversing the order of evolution, that which is last acquired is the first to disappear ... Sleep does for us temporarily what old age does permanently' (p. 361). Spencer's concept of evolution, which Sully had used in his description of social progress in 1877 is evident here; so is Hughlings Jackson's development of Spencer's theory into the concept of functional retrogression, which, as I have discussed in my Introduction, informed Freud's work on aphasia. Sully takes the models of the accumulation of experience and the strata of personality, and applies the laws of dissolution to them, to create a reversal, a stripping-back. He also uses the theory of the layers of consciousness that Lewes propounded in 1859-60, 'when asleep we may be said to go back to [a] primitive animal immersion in bodily sensation ... we hear the heart beat, and feel the incoming and outgoing of the breath' (p. 359). Lewes had written, that although we are conscious of these feelings, we do not attend to them, except in rare circumstances, when 'we may feel the heart beat, the intestines move, the glands secrete; anything *unusual* in their action will force itself on our attention'.¹⁶

Sully, therefore, draws on the wealth of knowledge that he and others have accumulated, in order to progress. His ideas, finding their root in the mid-nineteenth century were instantly recognized by Freud as akin to his own mechanism of regression, which represents a return to what is 'more primitive in form' (*Interpretation*, p. 548). Sully also approaches something of the fundamental Freudian idea of dreams as wish-fulfilment. Again a development of ideas of the 1860s and 1870s that I discussed in my last chapter, which trace wish and motive into action by physical laws, Sully writes that 'half-formed psychical tendencies, relieved of all restraint, work themselves out to their natural issue' in a dream, which can act as 'the expansion and complete development of a vague fugitive wish of the waking mind' ('The Dream', p. 358). Small wonder, therefore, that *The Interpretation of Dreams* did not bring Freud the reaction he was expecting on its publication in 1900; had he read current literature on dreams he would have realized that he was building on what had gone before, as Sully himself had done. I will now briefly consider something of the reception of *The Interpretation of Dreams* in Austria and Germany, and the earlier reaction to *Studies on Hysteria* (1895) in late-Victorian England. This will, I hope, make two things clear: firstly, the extent to which Freud was seen as a contributor, in his early writings at least, to the common fund of psychiatry, and, secondly, the extent to which he resisted this acceptance by his fellows.

The reaction to *The Interpretation of Dreams* was profoundly disappointing to Freud. In a telling passage from one of his letters to Fliess, he complained, 'not a leaf has stirred to reveal that the *Interpretation of Dreams* has had any impact on anyone. It was only yesterday that a rather friendly article in the feuilleton of a daily newspaper, *Wiener Fremdenblatt*, caught

¹⁶ George Henry Lewes, *The Physiology of Common Life*, 2 vols (London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1859-60), II, 66.

me by surprise'.¹⁷ Evidently it was not friendly articles that Freud was expecting, or, indeed, content with. It is hard to know what proof of 'impact' he wished for. Until the 1960s it was traditionally believed that *The Interpretation of Dreams* was ignored or castigated by his fellows. Freud himself gave this impression in his accounts of his time of 'isolation', which, according to him, had lasted from the mid-1890s to the mid-1900s: 'my writings were not reviewed in the medical journals, or, if as an exception they were reviewed, they were dismissed with expressions of scornful or pitying superiority' ('On the History', pp. 22-23). More recently, however, the actual reviews of Freud's work have been carefully examined, and studies have appeared to suggest that Freud's words in 'On the History of the Psychoanalytic Movement' were rather exaggerated.¹⁸ Norman Kiell documents that Freud expected (as he wrote to Fliess) a 'storm' to occur on the publication of *The Interpretation of Dreams*, and that this then became 'a self-fulfilling prophecy'.¹⁹ Freud took umbrage against what were often respectful, muted words from a relatively small number of critics: 'he [was] cool to words of praise he receive[d], he translate[d] silences (lack of interest or knowledge, often enough) into furious disapproval' (Kiell, p. 89). There were words of praise in many of the reviews. Freud's book was described as a 'significant contribution to the solution of emotional problems'.²⁰ Frank J. Sulloway records that Paul Näcke, 'a psychiatrist of international reputation and a veteran reviewer in the German-speaking medical world', wrote in 1901 that '*the book is psychologically the most profound that dream psychology has produced thus far*' (cited in Sulloway, pp. 450-51: Näcke's emphasis). The psychologist William Stern's review of 1901 commented that it contained 'extraordinarily rich material of very exactly recorded dreams, which must be highly welcome to every worker in this field' (cited in Sulloway, p. 450). In these phrases, however, describing a contribution, the presence of other workers in the field of dream theory, which is presented as the context out of which *The Interpretation of Dreams* emerged, and which might yet better him (note Näcke's words 'thus far') we begin to see why Freud felt that his book had failed to create an impact, that he was being ignored. His work was being taken here as a contribution to the common fund, and this did not satisfy him. This was not the way to 'eternal fame' and 'complete independence'.

The Interpretation of Dreams did not initially generate much interest abroad; it was translated thirteen years after its first publication. *Studies on Hysteria*, however, perhaps because of the greater interest in this field, provoked quite a swift response in Britain. Again

¹⁷ Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 11 March 1900, in *Freud-Fliess*, pp. 402-04 (pp. 402-03).

¹⁸ See *The Discovery of the Unconscious*, pp. 783-84 and Frank J. Sulloway, *Freud, Biologist of the Mind: Beyond the Psychoanalytic Legend* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992), pp. 448-64, for comments specifically on the reception of *The Interpretation of Dreams*, and Hannah S. Decker, 'The Medical Reception of Psychoanalysis in Germany, 1894-1907: Three Brief Studies', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 45 (1971), 461-81 for an idea of the reception of other early works by Freud by contemporaries such as Leopold Löwenfeld, who was very encouraging, frequently agreeing with his arguments and ideas (pp. 467-73).

¹⁹ Norman Kiell, *Freud Without Hindsight: Reviews of his Work (1893-1939)* (Madison: International Universities Press, 1988), p. 88.

²⁰ Review by Friedrich Eckstein (1900), *Arbeiter Zeitung*, in Kiell, pp. 128-32 (p. 132).

Freud's contribution to an already existing field was emphasized. In *Brain* of 1896 there was a long review of *Studies on Hysteria* by J. Michell Clarke, which describes the book as 'an original and valuable contribution to the theory of hysteria',²¹ and describes the theories and case studies of Breuer and Freud in great detail. Other figures, such as Pierre Janet (Clarke, p. 414) are brought into the discussion, to support or offer alternatives to points in Breuer and Freud's book. In 1898 the English sexologist Havelock Ellis published a complimentary article in *The Alienist and Neurologist*, 'Hysteria in Relation to the Sexual Emotions', which conducted a historical survey of ideas on the sexual aetiology of hysteria, including the work of Charcot, and then moving on to favourably consider Freud and Breuer's *Studies on Hysteria* in some detail, before concluding that it 'cannot be regarded as a final and complete account' of hysteria.²² Clarke's article of 1896 could be seen to be rather on the cusp of the start of Freud's period of isolation,²³ but Ellis's, published as it is in 1898, serves more definitely to belie Freud's words in his 'Autobiographical Study' of 1925, that 'for more than ten years after my separation from Breuer I had no followers. I was completely isolated ... abroad no notice was taken of me'.²⁴ In contrast to this picture of isolation is a letter from Freud to Fliess, describing the article:

Something pleasant about which I had meant to write you yesterday was sent to me – from Gibraltar from a Mr. Havelock Ellis, an author who concerns himself with the topic of sex and is obviously a highly intelligent man because his paper ... begins with Plato and ends with Freud; he agrees a great deal with the latter and gives *Studies on Hysteria*, as well as later papers, their due in a very sensible manner.²⁵

Ellis's is an article that failed to find its way into Freudian myth, disregarded, like Clark's, as a form of 'notice'.²⁶ Freud's account of this period in 'On the History of the Psychoanalytic Movement' makes particularly clear the reasons for this. Again strikingly illustrating the dynamics of false testimony that Cobbe and Carpenter elucidated in the 1860s and 1870s, Freud insists on his role at this time as a 'lonely discoverer[r]' ('On the History', p. 23). He traces, in this account, the start of his isolation as his presentation of the paper which I discussed in Chapter Three, 'The Aetiology of Hysteria'. Freud describes 'the silence which my communications met with, the void which formed itself about me' as a result of this paper, 'I understood that from now onwards I was one of those who have "disturbed the sleep of the

²¹ J. Michell Clarke, 'Reviews and Abstracts', *Brain*, 19 (1896), 401-14 (p. 401).

²² Havelock Ellis, 'Hysteria in Relation to the Sexual Emotions', *The Alienist and Neurologist*, 19 (1898), 599-615 (p. 614). The part of the article which deals with *Studies on Hysteria* is pp. 609-14.

²³ This seems to have started in 1896 for a combination of two reasons; the separation from Breuer which Freud describes below (see Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, February 13, 1896, in *Freud-Fliess*, pp. 172-73), and the reactions of Freud's peers to 'The Aetiology of Hysteria' (1896) that I discussed in Chapter Three, which caused Freud offence.

²⁴ Sigmund Freud, 'An Autobiographical Study' (1925), in *SE*, XX, 1-74 (p. 48).

²⁵ Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 3 January 1899, in *Freud-Fliess*, pp. 338-39 (p. 338).

²⁶ Interestingly, Freud does mention this article, earlier in 'An Autobiographical Study' (p. 24), but does not connect it with his period of isolation. It is Freud's editor who has to provide the date of Ellis's article (p. 24 n).

world”, as Hebbel says, and that I could not reckon upon objectivity and tolerance’ (pp. 21-22). But objectivity and tolerance are exactly what he received from Havelock Ellis, who quotes at length from this very paper in his article (Ellis, p. 613). The world was already awake, aware and active. However, it was not in Freud’s interest to acknowledge this, for it did not fit with his role as lonely discoverer. He writes of this time in his life in quite remarkable terms:

I pictured the future as follows: – I should probably succeed in maintaining myself by means of the therapeutic success of the new procedure, but science would ignore me entirely during my lifetime; some decades later, someone else would infallibly come upon the same things – for which the time was not now ripe – would achieve recognition for them and bring me honour as a forerunner whose failure had been inevitable. Meanwhile, like Robinson Crusoe, I settled down as comfortably as possible on my desert island. (p. 22)

Such isolation was Freud’s choice, not that of his contemporaries, who accepted him as a contributor to their established disciplines at home and abroad. But Freud did not want colleagues; as he betrayed in his ‘Autobiographical Study’, he wanted ‘followers’. In the above passage he takes care to assert that he was ahead of his age; if this were really true, there would be no call for a ‘History of the Psychoanalytic Movement’, ‘An Autobiographical Study’; there would have been minimal interest in Freud and his theories. The isolation would have continued, because, as Lewes pointed out, one cannot be truly original, and be heard. In *Foundations of a Creed*, he wrote, reflecting the context in which he lived, thought and worked:

The laws of intellectual progress are to be read in History, not in the individual experience. We breathe the social air: since what we think, greatly depends on what others have thought. The paradox of to-day becomes the commonplace of to-morrow. The truths which required many generations to discover and establish, are now declared to be innate. Even discovery has its law, and is only an individual product inasmuch as the individual voice articulates what has been more or less inarticulate in the general thought. The great thinker is the secretary of his age. If his quick-glancing mind outrun the swiftest of his contemporaries, he will not be listened to: the prophet must find disciples. If he outrun the majority of his contemporaries, he will have but a small circle of influence, for all originality is estrangement.²⁷

Freud attempted to suggest his own estrangement from his intellectual context, which, he tried to assert, was unripe for him, but he did not run as much ahead of his contemporaries as he hoped. The extent to which his ideas eventually permeated Western culture does not prove his originality, rather it identifies him the more strongly as the secretary of his age.

Frank J. Sulloway writes, at the beginning of his impressive chapter on ‘The Myth of the Hero in the Psychoanalytic Movement’ that, ‘the traditional account of Freud’s achievements has acquired its mythological proportions at the expense of historical context. Indeed, historical “decontextualization” is a prerequisite for good myths, which invariably seek to deny history’ (Sulloway, p. 445). I have sought in this thesis to do something to recontextualize Freud, to counter the traditional psychoanalytic denial of history, particularly

²⁷ George Henry Lewes, *Problems of Life and Mind, First Series: The Foundations of a Creed*, 2 vols (London: Trübner & Co., 1874), I, 174.

that of the extent to which Freud's theories were a progression of British nineteenth-century psychology, a rich discipline which was reflected and discussed in the literature of the time. Lewes argued that 'literature ... stores up the accumulated experience of the race'. In this thesis I have tried to explore something of the embodiment of scientific and cultural experience in certain Victorian texts, and then, inevitably, in psychoanalysis. The three fiction writers I have discussed were not chosen for any traits that set them apart from their peers, rather they were chosen because of their existence and operation within the 'common fund' of their time, which impacted in different ways on each author's work. This fund could not help but be a conscious or unconscious influence on Freud's theories and models of the mind. Ideas of evolution and organic memory, used as frameworks for psychoanalytic theory, served in the Victorian period to emphasize and deepen the truth that Freud insisted on ignoring: the past forms us, we emerge from our ancestors.

Bibliography

This bibliography will be divided into three parts:

- i. Works of literature
- ii. Other primary sources
- iii. Secondary material

Works of literature

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