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10/12/76

THE SUPERNATURAL REFERENCE:
THE PRESENCE AND EFFECT OF
SUPERNATURAL TERROR IN ENGLISH
FICTION OF THE MID-NINETEENTH
CENTURY

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UNIVERSITY OF KEELE, 1980 - 81.

CHAPTER SIX

EDWARD BULWER-LYTTON

The mainstream of nineteenth-century fiction was fed by many tributaries, and among the techniques available to writers of what eventually emerged as the novel of social realism were the narrative patterns that had been developed in the more specialised area of supernatural terror fiction. During the three or four decades straddling the turn of the eighteenth century there is an initial movement from sensibility to sensation in literature, and a corresponding shift in emphasis from emotion to perception. The possibilities for extending the range of narrative fiction which this offered were taken up in various ways by different novelists in the mid-century, and the second part of this study examines how a number of them use and refer to the methods of supernatural fiction.

The career of Edward Bulwer-Lytton extends right through the middle decades of the century - from the 1820s to the 1870s - and his novels display a variety (some would say unevenness) which marks them as an exceptionally useful index of the literary changes; they are far more responsive to these than the work of

contemporaries informed by a more personal vision. His novels have been variously termed Rousseauistic, Byronic and Gothic, but an early and admitted model was William Godwin. Pelham (1828) took its central murder plot, and the name of the victim (Tyrrell) from Caleb Williams. The eponymous hero of Falkland (1827) is also named after a character from Godwin's novel, and its heroine, Lady Emily Mandeville, is obviously modelled on Lady Emily Melville - suffering, as she does, an early death brought on by emotional stress.

Following on his Godwinian beginnings, an important and enduring influence on much of Bulwer's output was his enthusiasm for fringe science and philosophy. In 1841 he co-operated with Sir David Brewster, author of Letters on Natural Magic (1831), on a scheme to produce The Monthly Chronicle, a magazine which would combine scientific and literary material¹. He was among the supporters of Elliotson in the row surrounding the latter's removal from his professorship. It was at about this time that Bulwer was engaged in writing Zanoni (1842), his first full-length essay into occultism, although he had introduced some supernatural material into Godolphin (1833). Twenty years later he still mined the same vein in A Strange Story (1861).

Writing of phrenology in one of his Blackwood's essays of the 1860s, later collected as Caxtoniana, Bulwer is non-committal:

Now, upon the truth of Phrenology I hazard no opinion; it is one of those vexed questions in which, not being convinced by the arguments of either side, I

am contented to observe - - - "that there is a great deal to be said on both sides".

This diffidence is evident in A Strange Story where, although the narrator points out that phrenology has been shown to rest on suspect foundations, the admirable Faber is represented as being

a believer in the main divisions of phrenology, though he did not accept all the dogmas of Gall and Spurzheim. (Ch.XLV)²

Speaking in propria persona in the preface to the novel, Bulwer discusses the question of introducing the supernatural into literature. Consideration of the question leads him directly to the phrenological divisions of the brain:

But the Writer who, whether in verse or prose, would avail himself of such sources of pity or terror as flow from the Marvellous, can only attain his object in proportion as the wonders he narrates are of a kind to excite the curiosity of the age he addresses.

In the brains of our time, the faculty of Causation is very markedly developed. (viii)
Causation, or Causality, is one of the Intellectual faculties described by Combe as follows:

This faculty looks a little further than mere sense, and takes cognizance of the relations and dependencies of phenomena. It furnishes the idea of causation, as implying more than mere juxtaposition or sequence, - and as forming an invisible bond of connection between cause and effect. It impresses

us with an irresistible conviction, that every phenomenon or change in nature is caused by something, and hence by successive steps, leads us to the First Cause of all.³

Here the phrenologist is adapting the eighteenth-century deist argument for the existence of God from the First Cause, but the gloss on causation also anticipates the progress of A Strange Story itself, in which the originally sceptical Fenwick, a follower of Condillac, is persuaded by various experiences to a belief in the supernatural and in God.

In private life Bulwer did not refrain from inflicting his interest in the fringe sciences and the occult on his fellow authors. Charles Lever has left an account of Bulwer sitting up all night to cast his horoscope⁴, while George Eliot tells an anecdote of him that might be an item of Yeatsiana:

He is quite 'caught by the spirit of the marvellous, and a little while ago, at Dickens' house, was telling of a French woman who could raise the dead, but only at great expense. "What," said Dickens, "is the cause of this expence - - - ?"

"The Perfumes!" said Bulwer.⁵

There is also some evidence that Bulwer may have been familiar with the type of disorganized perception brought on by the use of laudanum. The story was passed on to Hall Caine by Wilkie Collins.

'Why do you take it?' Hall Caine asked (Collins).

'To stimulate the brain and steady the nerves.'

'And do you think it does that?'

'Undoubtedly', replied Wilkie Collins.

Asked whether laudanum had the same stimulating effect on other people as it did on himself, Collins said

"It did on Bulwer Lytton. He told me so himself."⁶

It is interesting that Collins should be the source for this story; although details of a case which prompts the experiment carried out by Ezra Jennings at the end of The Moonstone are to be found in the book he cites - Elliotson's Human Physiology (1840), and Elliotson's authority is George Combe - there is an aside in the narrative of A Strange Story which curiously anticipates The Moonstone. When Fenwick awakes from the trance-like sleep which comes over him while reading the account of Derval's experiences in the Middle-East, he finds that the manuscript entrusted to him has disappeared. Suspected by his host, he is quite unable to explain its loss: and is driven to conjecture that

in my own trance I might have secreted it, as sleep-walkers are said to secrete things without remembrance of their acts in their waking state.

(Ch.XL)

It is tempting to see in this the germ of The Moonstone, but the alternative possibility is both more likely and more illustrative of the background against which these fictions of the 1860s were written: Bulwer was as familiar with the type of material mentioned as was Collins, and the two derived the notion in common from Elliotson's writing.

There is ample evidence of the interaction between the genuinely psychological and pseudo-scientific thought

and the fiction writers of the age. It is frequently apparent in their texts through explicit reference, and implicitly through the patterning of experience.

Bulwer, whose ability to reflect the tendencies of the time in his writing was developed to a degree that might be labelled opportunist, acts as a particularly sensitive barometer of the attitudes to perception and knowledge as they inform the supernatural fiction of the mid-nineteenth-century.

Falkland

Bulwer's first published prose fiction is radically different from the succeeding group of early novels for which he is best-known, in so far as he is known -

Pelham, Paul Clifford, or The Last Days of Pompeii.

His grandson writes in a monograph on Bulwer:

Of the ten novels published between 1827 and 1837

Falkland, the first, scarcely deserves mention.⁷

Robert Lee Wolff, in one of the few recent assessments of Bulwer, seems to have taken this to heart, speaking of Bulwer's "very first novel, Pelham"⁸, but Falkland, published the year before Pelham, is a vivid example of the literature of feeling and perception early in nineteenth-century fiction. This short work (although divided in four books, it is only about 45,000 words long) clearly demonstrates the move from eighteenth-century sensibility to nineteenth-century sensation.

Falkland, whose responses are becoming dulled by a comfortable boredom, is suddenly revived by his passion for Emily, wife of Lord Mandeville. The passion

is reciprocated by Lady Emily, but the strain of it all is too much for her and she dies; Falkland leaves for the wars where, clutching a locket of Emily's hair, he dies in the course of the novel's last sentence.

Self-consciously the novel claims an affinity with the work of Maturin, Voltaire and Shakespeare, all mentioned in the text, but its true begetter is MacKenzie's The Man of Feeling (1771). The avowed purpose of The Man of Feeling is to offer a paragon of the responsive sensibility, enabling a reader to indulge the finer emotions of tearful sympathy in a variety of affecting situation. The frequent tears are the physical and external expression of inner sentiment. Here, for instance, is the dramatically expressive meeting of Miss Atkins and her father:

Her hair had fallen on her shoulders! her look had the horrid calmness of outbreathed despair! Her father would have spoken; lip quivered, his cheek grew pale! his eyes lost the lightening of their fury! there was a reproach in them but with a mingling of pity! He turned them up to heaven - then on his daughter. - He laid his left hand on his heart - the sword dropped from his right - he burst into tears. (Ch.XXVIII)⁹

In his Laocoon Lessing had argued that in literature one can best convey emotions by describing the reaction, not the stimulus; MacKenzie makes an equivalent statement:

There were certain seasons when (Harley's) ideas were flushed to a degree much above their common

complexion. In times not credulous of inspiration, we should account for this from some natural cause; but we do not mean to account for it all; it were sufficient to describe its effects; but they were sometimes so ludicrous, as might derogate from the dignity of the sensations which produced them to describe. (Ch.XIII)

Of a kind with this, although in a vulgarised and elaborated manner, are the actions of characters in the "blue books" of the first and second decades of the nineteenth century:

Every time his eyes encountered those of the dutchess, they were detained by a kind of magnetic attraction; at such times, the lids, unknown to the gazer, became slightly contracted and a luminous moisture steamed from the balls; at other times, his eyes assumed the first look of anxiety, and the lids winked in slow and measured succession; sure symptoms these, that the heart indulges in some secret affection.¹⁰

These physiological effects result from, and are directly proportionate to, the emotion prompting them; the mental state determines the physical, rather than vice versa. In so far as Bulwer's Falkland is derived from the Gothic tradition, it is apparent in its rather hectic storyline and, as in Shelley's early novels Zastrozzi and St. Irvyne, the plot is little more than an ornamentation of the "blue book" freneticism, without the leisurely sweep of the true Gothic novel. In having a discernible plot, however, Bulwer's novel does distinguish itself from The Man of Feeling, which purports

to be incomplete. Like Harley, Falkland operates as a vehicle for feeling; the difference is that he is a man of senses rather than of sensibility. This is made explicit in the first letter of Book I.

We are the dupes and victims of our senses: while we use them to gather from external things the hoards that we store within, we cannot foresee the punishments which we prepare for ourselves. The remembrance which stings, and the hope which deceives, the passions which promise us rapture, which reward us with despair make also the feverish excitement of our minds. What rich man has not dreamt in his delirium everything that the philosophers have said? (p.4).¹¹

Much of Falkland's subsequent experience as he is delivered from his ennui is transmitted in terms of sensation, but his assumption that man is duped by such sense experience is challenged. Four letters later he is sufficiently analytical to distinguish between sense experience and a transcendental emotional reality: "I mistook, in my delirium, the delusive fabrication of my sense for the divine reality of the heart" (p.13).

When, at the moment of Emily's death, Falkland sees her wraith, it is described in language that struggles to escape from the Gothic emotionalism which hitherto had provided a fixed fictional vocabulary for such episodes. It is a scene of midnight awesomeness (the church bell has just tolled in the background) and the progress of the ensuing three or four pages is worth examining in some detail.

The episode begins after Falkland's meeting with Emily, during which he suggests to her that they run away together the next day. Alone that night

an icy thrill ran, slow and curdling, through his veins. His heart, as if with a presentiment of what was to follow, beat violently, and then stopped: life itself seemed ebbing away; cold drops stood upon his forehead; his eyelids trembled, and the balls reeled and glazed, like those of a dying man; a deadly fear gathered over him, so that his flesh quivered, and every hair in his head seemed instinct with a separate life: the very marrow of his bones crept, and his blood waxed thick and thick, as if stagnating into an ebbless and frozen substance. He started in a wild and unutterable terror. There stood, at the far end of the room, a dim and thin shape like moonlight, without outline or form; still, and indistinct, and shadowy. He gazed on, speechless and motionless; his faculties and senses seemed locked in an unnatural trance. (p.103)

For a moment he sees the wraith of Emily; later he discovers that she had in fact died at the very moment of the apparition. It is an exact counterpart to that type of apparition described by Hibbert in which the mind of one person, at a moment of particular intensity (for example, in the grip of a strong emotion, or confronting death) can affect the mind of another through sympathy:

The Imagination of a sick or dying person, who deeply longs to behold some dear and absent friend as to produce an idea vivid enough to appear like a

reality, and thus give rise to the notion of a phantasm.¹²

Hibbert's description suggests that the ghost-seer is a sensitive under the sway of a more powerful mind, an idea used by Bulwer both here, for his first fictional apparition, and thirty years later in "The Haunted and the Haunters". Of Falkland's vision, the narrator comments on its eventual disappearance in terms of a stimulus being removed - "The spell passed from his senses" - and goes on to describe Falkland's condition immediately afterwards:

Bold by nature, and sceptical by philosophy, his mind gradually recovered its original tone . . . he sought by natural causes to account for the apparition he had seen or imagined; and as he felt the blood again circulating in its accustomed courses, and the night air coming chill over his feverish frame, he smiled with a stern and scornful bitterness at the terror which had so shaken, and the fancy which had so deluded his mind. (p.104)

So far, the text has first aimed at an effect of terror in which the external details are traditional stock Gothic but the physiological details are sensationalist and rational. At this point the text rests more squarely on Falkland's philosophical attitudes as his concern moves from the delirium of fever - a state mentioned in the opening of the novel - to a dismissive scorn for the delusions of fancy. It is, in little, the history of apparition theory as we traced it in Chapter One, tending towards a subjectification

and interiorisation of the supernatural.

Next in the novel come two paragraphs of digressive speculation by the narrator, or rather by Bulwer himself, regarding the nature of our relationship with the dead and the promptings of fear. The digression begins by raising the possibility of real and autonomous spirits surrounding us:

The chill breath of the night wind that stirs the curtains of our bed may bear a message our senses receive not from lips that once have pressed kisses on our own! Why is it that at moments there creeps over us an awe, a terror, overpowering but undefined? Why is it that we shudder without a cause, and feel the warm life blood stand still in its courses?

Are the dead too near? Do unearthly wings touch us as they flit around? Has our soul any intercourse which the body shares not, though it feels, with the supernatural world - mysterious revealings - unimaginable communion - a language of dread and power, shaking to its centre the fleshly barrier that divides the spirit from its race? (pp.104,105)

The questions remain rhetorical and unanswered, and are replaced by the image of a lone individual, a pattern of the protagonist in a story of terror projecting phantoms on to a dark consciousness.

We are like children in the dark; we tremble in a shadowy and terrible void, peopled with our fancies! Life is our real night, and the first gleam of the morning, which brings us certainty, is death! (p.105)

Upon taking up the narrative once more, the text describes

Falkland's discovery the next day that Emily has died. The effect on him is given in terms of a visionary solipsism; this is neither sensational nor Gothic but can be best termed romantic, in the poetic manner of the later part of Shelley's "Alastor":

. . . . he was encompassed with the spectres of a terrible dream. All was dream. All was confusion, darkness, horror - a series and a change of torture! At one time he was hurried through the heavens in the womb of a fiery star, girt above and below and around with unextinguishable flames. Wherever he trod, as he wandered through his vast and blazing prison, the molten fire was his footing, and the breath of fire was his air. (p.107)

Succeeding this infernal vision comes one of submarine death, and the final paragraph of the section returns to the delirious individual mind.

Alike through that delirium and its more fearful awakening, through the past, through the future, through the vigils of the joyless day, and the broken dreams of the night, there was a charm upon his soul - a hell within himself; and the curse of his sentence was - never to forget! (p.109)

This is the climactic passage of the novel; all that is left to Falkland after this is to depart for the wars and death. One can see that although the props of Falkland's vision are superficially Gothic (his description of hell owing something to Beckford's Vathek) they are not the setting of his experience but equivalents by which a mental ordeal is realized. The otherworldly

landscapes are not to be read as metaphors of torment, as symbols, or as objective correlatives for a state of mind - they are certainly not objective; they serve rather as a vocabulary of individual experience, an attempt to communicate mental turmoil. Overstated and elliptical it may be, but the accuracies are those of innovation rather than of tired cliché. The tendency of Falkland is towards a record of sensation, where The Man of Feeling is a stimulus to sensibility.

This record is made up of various documents: letters from those involved, extracts from Lady Emily's journal, and straightforward narrative by Monkton, the friend and confidant of Falkland. Monkton remarks of his method of telling the story and of the objective aimed at:

In this work it has been my object to portray the progress of the passions; to chronicle a history rather by thoughts and feelings than by incidents and events; and to lay open those minuter and more subtle mazes and secrets of the human heart, which in modern writings have been so sparingly exposed. It is with this view that I have from time to time broken the thread of the narration, in order to bring forward more vividly the characters it contains.

(pp.38,39)

In fact Book I begins with a succession of letters from Falkland to Monkton, with a subsequent commentary by Monkton complementing them - a multiplicity of narrative sources which recalls The Confession of a Justified Sinner. Monkton's comment emphasises that the book is

a record of the inner life; the intimate first-person mode of the letter and journal are particularly apt for such an intention. Indeed, at the end of his opening series of letters Falkland refers to them as "confessions", and he is from the outset marked off from society - alienated - by his morbid temperament.

Eugene Aram

In his pose of acquired misanthropy Falkland foreshadows the attitude of another of Bulwer's early eponymous protagonists, Eugene Aram. In Bulwer's telling of the story Aram is a reclusive scholar living with the secret of his past crime. He and Madeline meet and fall in love. Meanwhile, Walter, searching for his reprobate father, discovers that his parent has been murdered long before and that Aram was involved in the killing; Aram is brought to trial and sent for execution while Madeline dies of a broken heart. Aram's misanthropy has its root in the circumstances of his past crime which has isolated him from his fellow-men. The first description of him, as he answers Madeline and Ellinor who have knocked on his door for assistance, reveals his state of mind through his appearance:

His hair, which was long, and of a rich and deep brown, was worn back from his face and temples, and left a broad, high, majestic forehead, utterly unrelieved and bare; and on the brow there was not a single wrinkle; it was as smooth as it might have been some fifteen years ago It was a face a physiognomist would have loved to look upon, so much

did it speak both of the refinement and the dignity of intellect. (Bk.I Ch.III)

The mention of a brow as smooth as it might have been fifteen years before harks back to the period of Aram's innocence, and the allusion to physiognomy is an ironic pointer to the hidden guilt which has preyed on Aram for over a decade, concealed by the delicacy and solitude of his way of life. The ensuing story of Aram's love for Madeline is of little general interest and of no particular relevance here; the climactic scene, however, which brings the discovery of his crime and his trial, provides a graphic representation of a conflict between truth and feeling in a courtroom setting in the manner of Caleb Williams. As Marilyn Butler points out, the case of the historical Aram haunted Godwin, and is mentioned in Caleb Williams (III,3):

In Caleb Williams Godwin's attitude to Aram is more clearcut and has to do with the objective moral issue of the proper jurisdiction of the law over the individual. His Aram is an archetypal victim guilty in law, but a man for whom the inflexible, impartial law is too stupid. As such he fits into a complex pattern of real-life analogy and becomes a significant parallel for Caleb.¹³

Bulwer makes of Aram a fatalist rather than a victim in protest against "things as they are". The final trial scene is a structural echo of Caleb Williams, while the disputed facts are reminiscent of the Confessions of the Justified Sinner. A crucial document is Aram's written confession which he hands to Walter in the condemned

cell after the trial; this wholly gives the lie to Aram's previous lengthy statement to the court, in which he has maintained the fiction of his innocence. Aram believes that he was justified in his attempt to claim innocence of the murder because of his circumstances at the time of the killing, his exemplary attitude since then, and his present love for Madeline. His attitude in Bulwer's novel is therefore approximate to an individual quasi-solipsistic morality which seeks to establish itself independently of the systematised moral code of the law, a moral equivalent to the ontological conflict in Hogg's Justified Sinner. The long confession in which Aram speaks in the first-person is largely a factual account of the progress towards murder; afterwards, however, he is driven to apostrophize:

Tell me not now of our free will - we are but the things of a never-swerving, an everlasting necessity! - pre-ordered to our doom - bound to a wheel that whirls us on till it touches the point at which we are crushed! (Bk.V, Ch.VII)

Here, Aram's knowledge of his own guilt in the eyes of others marks him off from others; he has "rushed into a dread-world", spectre-ridden, and, like Caleb Williams, is a Cain-marked solitary made a pariah by suspicion. The end of Aram's confession reveals his intention to kill himself before he can be hanged, and the conclusion of the confession coincides textually with his death. His apologia closes on a note of spiritual resignation, anticipating a release from the mortal world. This might be read as an early indication of Bulwer's involvement

with the occult, founded on the conviction that there is a hidden alternative to the life we know. The discovery of the murdered man's skeleton in Eugene Aram is a physical representation of the past occurring in the present; accusing the wrongdoer as it does, it is an equivalent of the vengeance-seeking ghost. But the accusation here springs more from the shaping force of literary convention than from any idea of a governing spiritual world capable of direct mimetic presentation, once perceived. Such a world is given greater prominence in Godolphin (1833), Zanoni (1842) and, most fully, A Strange Story (1861), one of only five novels in the last twenty years of Bulwer's life.

A Strange Story

The protagonist of this novel is a materialist doctor, a product of the medical schools of Edinburgh and Paris (a formation similar to that of Lydgate in Middlemarch). Fenwick's medical training is central to the story; although the ostensible main plot is the mutual love of Fenwick and Lilian, the motivation of the text is his progressive realization that he is wrong in his materialist rejection of the spiritual. Fenwick starts as a proponent of the type of thinking advanced by Ferriar and Hibbert (also Edinburgh graduates) but in the course of his acquaintance with a series of rivals, adversaries and friends - Dr Vigors, Sir Philip Derval, Margrave, and Dr Julius Faber - he is brought eventually to admit the existence of first the supernatural and finally the soul.

A Strange Story is a curious work. The characters are insipid, and Lilian, Fenwick's betrothed, is a typically wilting Bulwer heroine who spends most of the novel supine on a sick-bed. At the outset Mrs Colonel Poyntz does seem to be building up to a social matriarch of Trollopean proportions, but she fades away in the later chapters. Much of the action is gripping: Fenwick's bewilderment as he is wrongfully arrested for the murder of Philip Derval is very effective, while the climax in the Australian bush as Margrave, Fenwick and Ayesha attempt to distil the elixir of perpetual life is for the most part wonderfully done: a ring of small flames surrounding the cauldron, a bush-fire threatening, dawn rising, and oil for the lamps running low. Probably one of the most powerful occult scenes in fiction, and deriving no little part of its power from the fact that, unusually for such scenes, it is set out-of-doors, it is ludicrously spoilt by the apparition of a single large foot which strides (Bulwer's word) into the circle of fire. The stride of one foot, like the sound of one hand clapping, must remain a subject of conjecture.

The progress of the novel is generated by the defeat of Fenwick's scepticism and his eventual acceptance of a transcendental area of experience. At the outset an adherent of Condillac's sensationalist philosophy, he is, in the manner of Ferriar and Hibbert, writing a treatise of Human Physiology which will account for all perceived phenomena on a physiological basis. The conversion of Fenwick begins with the scene in the museum in which Sir Philip Derval demonstrates the possibility and efficacy of a trance-like visionary

state, much more intense than anything that might be induced by mesmerism. As Derval claims,

. . . . in this trance there is extraordinary cerebral activity, a projectile force given to the mind, as distinct from the soul, by which it sends forth its own emanations to a distance in spite of material obstacles (Ch.XXXI)

While in this state the brain of Margrave is revealed to Fenwick in what can only be described as a sort of moral x-ray. The brain is mapped out in phrenological wise:

I saw therein a moral world, charred and ruined, as in some fable I have read, the world of the moon is described to be; yet withal it was a brain of magnificent formation. The powers abused to evil had been originally of rare order, - imagination, and scope, the energies that dare, the faculties that discover. But the moral part of the brain had failed to dominate the mental (Ch.XXXII)

Emanating from this brain Fenwick sees three different-coloured glows: red, azure and silver. In accordance with the earlier promptings of Derval, he is led to suspect that these three lights correspond respectively to animal life, intelligence, and the soul. On emerging from the trance Fenwick attempts to recover his original philosophical position, seeking to explain what he has just seen as the effect of his own perception becoming overexcited by the powerful (and no doubt expensive) perfumes which Derval has been burning in the course of the experiment.

This vision of the brain, and the three levels of life revealed in it, delineate the planes on which the action of the novel generally moves. The protagonist Fenwick experiences a series of events in which his suffering is not (to borrow Heathcliff's phrase) "a moral teething" but rather a testing of his sceptical materialism. The curse of the dying Dr Vigors is a challenge to his conscience; the trance in the museum is a challenge to his theoretical view of the nature of man; the wrongful arrest is a challenge to his probity; and the sickness of Lilian is a challenge to the whole range of his feeling and his knowledge of himself. The final test takes place in Australia, where the over-reaching adept Margrave and the god-fearing doctor Faber severally expose Fenwick to events inexplicable by the sensationalism he has espoused. At this point in the novel Bulwer's footnotes referring to and quoting from a variety of sources threaten almost to take over the text, giving particular point to Trollope's later comment on Bulwer in his Autobiography:

He had read extensively, and was always apt to give his readers the benefit of what he knew.¹⁴

Among the benefits accruing to the reader here are a cure for snake-bite, speculation on the Apocryphal Second Book of Edras, and explanations of such Australian peculiarities as creeks, boomerangs and shining cuckoos, as well as gleanings from the writing of Hibbert, Brewster, Sir William Hamilton and others.

Although Fenwick is the first-person narrator of his story, he is not fully a confessional protagonist, being

too caught up in the theoretical debate. As a victim of circumstance he shares his condition with Lilian, who falls prey to "mental alienation", "brooding over images delusively formed within", and the recovery of her mental vigour also contributes to the movement of the novel. She, like Faber, also offers Fenwick an alternative to the transcendental modes of experience associated with Margrave and Derval. This is most strikingly apparent when Fenwick is on the point of experimenting with the power of Margrave's wand. It is suggested that this wand operates through odic force.

I continued to grasp the wand, and sought deliberately to analyze my own sensations in the context. There came over me an increased consciousness of vital power; a certain exhilaration, elasticity, vigour, such as a strong cordial may produce on a fainting man. All the forces of my frame seemed refreshed, redoubled; and as such effects on the physical system are ordinarily accompanied by correspondent effects on the mind, so I was sensible of a proud elation of spirits. (Ch.LXI)

Two familiar features are apparent immediately in this passage: the deliberate decision by Fenwick to experiment on himself as a guinea-pig, in order to analyse his own responses, and the physiological effect proceeding from the body to the mind. In the ensuing scene of Faustus-like conjuration Fenwick is on the point of summoning spirits which, it seems evident, have a real and independent existence. He is recalled from his purpose by the voice of Lilian singing and, Prospero-like, he

throws the wand into the lake. Arguing with himself as he does so, he considers whether the spirits he has felt himself to be on the point of summoning are transcendently autonomous or delusively subjective, and is still able to account for his condition in terms of a deranged perception.

. . . . I am haunted, - cheated out of my senses, unfitted for the uses of my life Out on these nightmares! and away with the thing that bewitches the brain to conceive them! (Ch.LXI)

The chapter concludes with his vowing love for Lilian "until the grave", to which Lilian replies "And beyond the grave!". Although this is couched in the tedious clichés of fictional passion it does have the additional value of referring to another motif in the novel: Lilian counters the spiritual and transcendental forces surrounding Fenwick. Her words here are resonant of the actual state of the suggestively named Margrave who, like Richards in "The Haunted and the Haunters", is preoccupied with staving off his death by preserving his youthfulness through the use of herbal elixirs.

Margrave's attempts to avoid death end in failure, and it is noticeable that other characters who have access to the recipe of the elixir also die. The only person who cheats death in any way is Lilian; having dwindled towards death for much of the novel she is revived at the moment Margrave succumbs to death.

Conclusion

Falkland was symptomatic of the transition from

eighteenth-century Gothicism to the nineteenth-century fiction in which the background of a perceptually based supernatural is evident, and, as shall be seen in later chapters, the three works by Bulwer discussed in this chapter encompass many of the features which found their way into the novels of the nineteenth-century, where they are used for specific ends. A Strange Story also marks a transition: that from the perceptually-based supernatural to the occult fiction of the late Victorian age. A Strange Story ends with an affirmation of the conventional Christian duality of body and soul. Whether the orthodoxy of the ending or the exploration of belief of the greater part of the text is more indicative of the age is a moot point, but Fenwick himself moves from an outright sceptical materialism to a direct encounter with the occult, after which his acceptance of Christianity is a comfortable compromise. In its range of experience this relatively late work by Bulwer marks the arrival of the new supernaturalism. The etymological root of "occult" points to the status of the apparitions involved: they represent a brief revelation of or contact with spirits that exist independently of humanity and generally remain "hidden". This transcendental supernatural is accessible to the adept through conjuration, which may take the form of wand-waving, as in A Strange Story, or of the table-rapping and planchette-writing which were coming in from America at about this time, as Bulwer had noticed in "The Haunted and the Haunters". His career has spanned the age of materialist supernaturalism and had lasted into the golden dawn of late Victorian occultism.

C H A P T E R S E V E N
C H A R L E S D I C K E N S

That Dickens in his early novels is indebted to the Blackwood's terror stories has been pointed out by H.P. Sucksmith¹; his study concentrates particularly on the episode of Fagin in the condemned cell, which contains many of the motifs of a Blackwood's execution tale. The action is dominated by

one dark cluster of objects in the centre of
all - the black stage, the cross-beam, the rope,
and all the hideous apparatus of death. (Ch.LII)²

This catalogue of the scaffold closes the chapter as it closes Fagin's role in the book, but Fagin is not held out as a protagonist in whose plight the reader is asked to participate imaginatively. The rhetoric of the piece presents the experience through Oliver's eyes, with Oliver's sympathy only a background factor. The condemned man is an object of attention as external as the "apparatus of death". The passage does have the immediacy of terror, as Sucksmith maintains, but it is Oliver's terror, not Fagin's. Dickens arranges it that the ordeal of the situation becomes Oliver's, and the event is turned into an awful warning rather

than an attack on the sense experience, salutary rather than disturbing. The pattern of the chapter, in which the main movement is that of Oliver being led through the gates and passages of Newgate, is that of an entrance to an arena of fear. The exit of Fagin is subsidiary, used to point a moral and round a tale, in much the same way as Micawber is sent off to Australia.

In looking at Dickens' work, it is intended to concentrate on instances in which the quasi-supernatural references and the associated narrative techniques are integrated into the larger structure of the novel containing them, in order to appreciate the purposes to which they are put. Two of Dickens' last novels, Great Expectations and Our Mutual Friend, provide an interesting contrastive study, but it is proposed to begin with Oliver Twist. There are two hangings at the climax of Oliver Twist: the institutionalized justice of Fagin's prison execution and the poetic justice of Sikes' more individual death. The death of Sikes has long been recognized as a magnificent set-piece of terror writing, and it is worth examining the terms in which Dickens achieves this.

The Death of Sikes

Oliver Twist traces the progress of its eponym through the social groupings, institutionalized or spontaneous, of his day. The immediate antecedents of the novel are the "Newgate novels" of Bulwer and Ainsworth³, but before these again is Godwin's Caleb Williams. Like Caleb Williams, Oliver Twist is based

on a pursuit, with the added feature that in Dickens' novel the hero is pursued by society in two guises: the criminal society of the London underworld and the higher right-living society represented by Mr Brownlow. The episode leading up to the death of Sikes as told in Chapters XLVIII and L is, like the enveloping main narrative, also structured on a pursuit. The circuitous itinerary followed by Sikes in the countryside north of London is a physical expression of his mental bewilderment. Apparently aimless although his wandering may be, for his main motive is to escape from the memory of Nancy's murder rather than to arrive at anywhere specific, there is a certain structural inevitability which leads him to a final confrontation with a vengeful society and his own knowledge of what he has done. Although he is racked with mental agony after the murder it would be a moral travesty ^{to} regard his sentiments as being those of remorse; his condition is rather that of the distorted awareness of a man in an extreme situation. It is a question of consciousness rather than of conscience.

The passage describing the actual murder, with its unremitting stress on the physical details of Nancy's death, is an instance of unrelieved horror. Sikes does not become accessible to the operations of terror until he leaves the room in which Nancy's corpse lies. His departure is prompted more by the need to remove himself from the grim aftermath of his violence than to escape retribution, but it is only when the immediate details of the scene are absent that his mental ordeal

begins.

Out in the countryside, the terrors that assail Sikes are more imagined than real. While in the room he had, in the fascination of horror, been unable to turn his back on the corpse; now he is dominated by the impression of a corpse endowed with the mere machinery of life constantly at his back, just out of vision. Suspicious of everyone he encounters, as he walks through the night he begins to fancy that

Every object before him, substance or shadow, still or moving, took the semblance of some fearful thing; but these fears were nothing compared to the sense that haunted him of that morning's ghastly figure following him at his heels.

The phenomena which most disturb Sikes are those which are delusions; these have no basis in external visible reality and are evidently the products of his mind.

At this point in his ordeal there occurs a very marked diversion as he comes upon a blazing farm. Sikes throws his energies completely into the attempt to extinguish the fire, but it is made clear that he does this not out of any altruistic impulse to save life or property; it is rather that he finds relief from his mental torment in strenuous physical activity. In his exertions, dangerous though they are, he is released from the memory of his deed. But, "the mad excitement over, there returned, with tenfold force, the dreadful consciousness of his crime". It is almost as if Dickens, in suddenly conjuring up the blazing

homestead, wished to emphasize the internal imaginative nature of Sikes' ordeal, although there is an echo of one of Sikes' first actions after the murder when he tried to get rid of the evidence by burning his blood-stained clothing and club. In each instance fire is a means of concealing guilt.

The fire at the farm also marks the turning-point of the fugitive's journey, for it is after it that he decides to return to London. It is at this stage that his attention becomes fastened on the dog who has followed him from the murder-room. Sikes last action in Chapter XLVIII is a vain attempt to kill the animal lest it should lead his pursuers to him. It is at this point that a peculiar, almost symbolic transference becomes apparent as the dog assumes the role of Nancy and Nancy's ghost.

Nancy and the dog are the only two creatures that have ever been close to Sikes, and it is not judging his relationship to Nancy too harshly to say that they have occupied similar places in his affections. Now the dog, who has been with him since it padded through the blood of Nancy on the floor of the murder-room, threatens to betray him, thinks Sikes, just as he believes Nancy has betrayed him. Like Nancy, the dog must be killed.

Although the dog escapes the attempt on its life it no more betrays Sikes than has Nancy. Instead, the dog arrives at Jacob's Island before him, there in order to play out its strange role as Nancy's surrogate while Sikes meets his death on the rooftop. There,

although his plight is desperate Sikes still has hopes of lowering himself to freedom until he suddenly catches sight of "The eyes again!". At this moment the identification of Sikes' two erstwhile companions becomes complete. What Sikes believes to be the phantom eyes of Nancy which have followed him in his flight are in fact those of his terrier. Dickens has already referred to it as "a white-coated, red-eyed dog", and its name (used only once in the novel) fastens on the same ocular feature: "Bull's-eye" (Ch.XV). Although it is not stated explicitly in the text, Cruikshank's illustration of the moment immediately preceding Sikes' fall confirms that the eyes seen by him are those of the dog. The parallel with Nancy is continued to the very end: like her, it makes an attempt to cling to Sikes and, like her, has its brains dashed out for its pains.

This curious progress towards an equivalence of Nancy and the dog is the more easily understood if it is borne in mind that the episode deals principally with the individual mental suffering of Sikes. As Philip Collins remarks, :

It is - - - at this point that Sikes becomes,
in a sense, a sympathetic character.⁴

Although the story is not told with Sikes himself as narrator, the events narrated are those within Sikes' experience. Bearing this in mind, it is possible to understand the merger of identity of his two attendants. The only time he is released from their quasi-supernatural presence is in the company of others, while fighting the

fire or in the thieves' den at Jacob's Island. Whenever he is solitary, be it on the highway or on the rooftops, the apparition returns to plague him and the dog is his unfailing companion. Dickens chooses not to describe the progress of Sikes' return to the city, the one time during which he and his dog are separated.

As a result, Sikes must be seen as a character undergoing the mental terrors brought on by solipsism. Unlike the clergyman in Warren's Diary of A Late Physician, he does not become the prey of a spectral dog; instead his real dog takes on a spectral dimension, becoming a familiar in both senses of the word. The rather startling transference works because of the steady concentration on Sikes. He is the only one visited by the phantom; he is the only one to see the following eyes, and at the last moment it is clear that only he, and not the baying crowd on the street below, can see the dog watching him. Dickens has given as graphic as possible a study of a suffering, even persecuted, mind driven to terror. The progress of Sikes' physical flight around London is circular, but that of his mental flight is steadily away from mankind. As Hollingsworth observes:

In the few minutes Sikes spends with the boys of the gang in their last hiding-place, he makes both boys and men conscious of the murderer's isolation from mankind.⁵

After this last encounter with the boys, his isolation is reinforced by the loss even of his name, that by which he is known to society; from then until his death the text depersonalises him, and he is referred

to as "ruffian", "murderer" (six times), "wretch", "criminal", "man" (twice), and finally "body" and "dead man". Sikes' solitude is so intense that he loses his own identity and dies accompanied only by his dog and a delusion of the supernatural. Even the rope that kills him suspends him finally in mid-air, out of reach of the society that has hunted him down.

It is the terror that is the concomitant of this solitary bewilderment that Dickens aims for primarily in the episode of Sikes' death. The often-noted sympathy with Sikes at this stage probably has less to do with a moral understanding of his plight than with a side-effect of the situation into which the text manoeuvres him. Literary terror involves a measure of identity with protagonist, and as the protagonist Sikes is steadily denuded of an identity this is supplied by the reader who enters into the terrible ending in store for him.

Great Expectations

Dickens repeated the technique of Sikes' end in a more elaborately orchestrated fashion in the pursuit and death of Carker in Dombey and Son, even to the incidental detail of making his attendants in death the dogs which sniff at the carnage on the tracks. Carker too flees across country, driven by guilt, as his mind disintegrates under the pressure; he takes no notice

of the actual objects he encountered, but with a wearisome exhausting consciousness of being

bewildered by them, and having their images all crowded in his hot brain after they were gone.

(Ch.LV)

But whereas Sikes is pursued by an animal which steadily takes on the qualities of an apparition, Carker is afflicted by a reverse process. The first intimation is of a sudden vague spiritual terror, "like an electric shock";

Some visionary terror unintelligible and inexplicable, associated with the trembling of the ground, - a rush and sweep of something through the air like Death upon its wing. (Ch.LV)

This Old Testament-style presence eventually takes on a grim mechanical reality as the visionary terror is translated into the train which runs him down.

But pursuit is not the only form of terror used by Dickens. In discussing Oliver Twist it was remarked in passing how the ordeal of "Fagin's Last Night" is less that of Fagin than that of Oliver, who has to make the entrance into the awful precincts of Newgate. This pattern of movement into a quasi-haunted area is particularly apparent in a much later work, also about an orphan: Great Expectations. Chapter VIII of this book describes Pip's visit to Satis House. In the serial publication this chapter formed a complete instalment, and as an episode it is remarkably well-shaped and self-contained.

It begins with Pip under the aegis of Pumblechook, in whose house he has passed the night before his appointment with Miss Havisham. The progressive

isolation of Pip, removed from the familiar surroundings of the forge, has already begun. As a child, Pip is a figure of vulnerable sensitivity, and the very first incident in the book has lain stress on his qualities of imagination. We find Pip fancifully reconstructing images of his parents by looking at their uncommunicative tombstones - compare that other orphan, Jane Eyre, studying Bewick's engravings at the opening of her story. It is on this occasion in the graveyard that Pip gains his "first most vivid and broad impression of the identity of things", and immediately afterwards the possibility of distorting these impressions is forcefully demonstrated when he is held upside down by the convict:

he made (the church) go head over heels before me,
and I saw the steeple under my feet. (Ch.I)

It is with a reminder of Pip's perceptual and imaginative qualities that Chapter VIII commences: "It appears" to Pip that Pumblechook is happy, and he "wonders" about the seeds and bulbs imprisoned in the store.

As the procession of two makes its way to Miss Havisham's, the isolation of her house is emphasised by its bricked-up windows and iron bars, the courtyard which keeps callers at a distance from her door, and Estella's peremptory demand that the visitors first identify themselves. Pumblechook's attempt to gain admission and his consequent rebuff by Estella represent not simply an incidental deflation of his pomposity; the incident also marks the most drastic stage in the progressive isolation of Pip as protagonist. On the threshold of Satis House, going to keep a mysterious

appointment with an old woman whom he has never met, he is removed from the last character who is known to him. As he enters the courtyard the gates are shut and locked behind. This separation from the world outside Satis House serves two purposes, both of them important for the evocation of terror. The first is to heighten Pip's vulnerability. A child, he now finds himself locked inside an unfamiliar environment and cut off from familiar people. Ahead of him lies the meeting with Miss Havisham, and the little knowledge he has of her and her eccentricities is disturbing rather than reassuring. The second effect works hand-in-hand with the first: if this is new territory for Pip, it is equally so for the reader. A new setting is introduced; it is described purely as it is seen by Pip, and because of its isolation from the outside world there are no other characters whose reactions can be compared with those of Pip. As a result, our only knowledge of the interior of Satis House is Pip's knowledge. The reader is obliged to see this episode particularly through Pip's eyes, to assent to Pip's evaluation of events, and it is noticeable that there is practically no ironic distancing here, with hardly any distinction apparent between Pip as protagonist and as narrator. Protagonist, narrator and reader are brought into an experiential collusion.

The growing eeriness of the experience is first signalled by an unusual simile:

The cold wind seemed to blow colder there than outside the gate; and it made a shrill noise

howling in and out at the open sides of the brewery, like the noise of the wind in the rigging of a ship at sea.

The lines mark the transition implicit in going through the gate: the atmosphere is different, it seems colder, the wind howls, and the vehicle of the simile is an extreme instance of isolation - Satis House is as remote from the town around it as is a ship on the ocean.

Pip's status as a passive protagonist is thrown into relief by contrast with Estella; although of the same age as his guide, she seems older and is more self-possessed than he. Nevertheless, her companionship is a welcome bulwark against the solitude of the strange house, and her sudden departure from him at the door of Miss Havisham's room is the removal of his final prop. As Estella disappears, taking with her the candle, she leaves Pip in darkness, and with nothing but the memory of Pumblechook's ringing at the outer gate to support him, he knocks on the door of the room.

Opposed to the protagonist Pip is Miss Havisham, who occupies the role of the prime agent of terror. She is not sharply defined at first: as Pip enters the room the first things to be described are the room itself and the furniture it contains, continuing the evocation of setting and atmosphere which began as the courtyard was crossed. The progress of the description then moves on to what Miss Havisham is wearing, or seems to be about to wear. In all this paragraph the only thing we are told about Miss Havisham herself is that her hair is white. The central component of the scene

is evoked by association, a circumstantial method which leaves it dominant yet imprecise and vague. Although it is not an ironic distancing, there is definite manipulation in that the order in which the text narrates the facts is not the same as the order in which they were perceived by Pip:

It was not in the first few moments that I saw these things, although I saw more of them in the first few minutes than might be supposed.

Following this instance of authorial organisation, there is a renewed insistence on the mediating consciousness of Pip. The phrase "I saw", twice used in the sentence quoted, begins each of the next three sentences. And again, Pip's perception does not steady itself on the figure of Miss Havisham, but starts from "everything" within sight and ends with her dress. All that the reader learns about Miss Havisham is that she has bright sunken eyes and is shrunk to skin and bone. Further detail is given obliquely by two comparisons, one with a fairground waxwork figure and the other with an exhumed skeleton. This latter immediately associates Miss Havisham with death; the waxwork, meanwhile, is of a dead person lying in state and is described as "ghastly", an adjective which combines fearsomeness and supernaturalism. All this reduces Pip to immobility:

Now, waxwork and skeleton seemed to have dark eyes moved and looked at me. I should have cried out, if I could.

His trance-like state has already been encountered in Villette, where Lucy is similarly affected by the

basilisk-like stare of Mme Walravens.

The strangeness of her apparel, the stopped timepieces, the ponderous intimation of her broken heart - these are all details adduced for the sake of strangeness, for enhancing the aura surrounding Miss Havisham. But looking at these phrases for their literal meanings, it can be seen that they can be read as reinforcing Miss Havisham's status as a ghost-figure. To take the metaphorical broken heart first of all: the phrase is so widespread that the metaphor now provides its primary meaning. But on a resolutely literal level, the heart is the primitive seat of life in a body, and if the heart is "broken" it follows that the owner is dead. The stopped clocks indicate that she has passed into a state where the passing present time has no relevance:

"I know nothing of the days of the week; I know nothing of the weeks of the year."

Death might be defined at the moment when time stops. Finally, her anachronistic clothing associates her specifically with revenants.

The concept is being imposed of Miss Havisham as a dead being lingering in some intermediate state of existence. She has never seen the sun since Pip was born, she announces, setting up an opposition between Pip and herself so that the notion of Pip's birth inevitably calls forth that of her death. For the literary heroine of the early and mid-nineteenth century the conclusion of her life was not so much death as marriage - "reader, I married him" - and the jilting of Miss Havisham has left her in an indeterminate limbo,

neither alive nor dead.

Later on, as Pip and Estella play cards at the behest of the old lady, her resemblance to a corpse is explicitly stated in a succession of images that moves from the idea of stopped time, through clothes, to fix on the person:

Without this arrest of everything, this standing still of all the pale decayed objects, not even the withered bridal dress on the collapsed form could have looked so like grave-clothes, or the long veil so like a shroud.

She sat up, corpse-like

"Grave-clothes", "shroud", "corpse-like": Miss Havisham is presented as a human being, but one not subject to the time-barrier of death. In this, she moves towards the condition of the supernatural.

The second part of the chapter builds upon the possibilities of this state, beginning as Pip leaves Miss Havisham. Once again, Estella acts as guide as she leads Pip back to the courtyard and daylight, and there follows a long paragraph in which attention is again drawn to Pip's sensitivity, as his timidity is ascribed to his upbringing. There is a reminder of the relativity of perception, in how small incidents may assume large proportions in the eyes of a child. The text then moves on to a description of the deserted areas surrounding the house and the brewery. Continuing the motifs from the earlier part of the chapter, there is another incidental reference to sea-imagery: the pigeon-house

had been blown crooked on its pole by some high wind, and would have made the pigeons think themselves at sea if there had been any pigeons to be rocked by it.

Pip looks over the wall into the overgrown garden where he sees Estella - or her wraith, or an hallucination. This vision of Estella appearing to go out into the sky is in marked contrast to the claustrophobia of the earlier part of the chapter. Her etherealisation is easy and graceful; the vision of Miss Havisham hanged - yanked by the neck from the ground, as it were - is a grimly grotesque parody of it. The figure of Estella seen by Pip in the garden may be unreal; that of Miss Havisham in the brewery certainly so. It is not possible to determine whether the apparition is hallucinatory or supernatural; Pip ascribes it to his fancy.

It is this brief episode in the garden and the deserted brewery that is the climax of the chapter, not the interview with Miss Havisham inside Satis House. Penzoldt remarks on a ghost-story device which he calls "the double-climax":

It does not consist of two apparitions, but of one followed by the necessary explanation. Only the knowledge of what is behind a manifestation conveys the full horror of it.⁶

In this chapter of Great Expectations the process works in reverse. Here, we do not have the supernatural manifestation, or manifestations, being intensified by subsequent additional factual details; instead, the

"real" events are reflected and intensified by the supernatural incidents which follow. The early encounter with Miss Havisham, itself a ghostly affair in its manner of presentation, can be seen as preparing the way for the later episode. The first section, with its accumulation of detail, supernaturalizes the figure of Miss Havisham. Once this has been done - indirectly, by positioning, allusion, and simile - the text moves on to the supernatural hanging figure which, conversely, is humanized, taking the shape of Miss Havisham. In the space of the chapter Pip has moved from the farinaceous and arithmetical mundanity of Pumblechook's store to the fantastic uncertainty of the deserted brewery. This movement is related to the overall progress of Great Expectation, both thematically and metaphorically.

This can be seen by comparing Chapter VIII to the opening chapter and noting the frequent parallels. Like the Miss Havisham episode, Chapter I tells of a frightening encounter with a stranger. The convict who springs up from among the tombstones is, like Miss Havisham, associated with death: he too is unfamiliar, and exercises a power of command - Pip, who will later have to play cards when instructed by Miss Havisham, is here sent running on errands. There is even a similarity between the relationship of Miss Havisham and Estella and of Magwitch and Compeyson: in each case the latter is used by the former to threaten Pip.

Many of the motifs noticed in Chapter VIII have already been used in the first chapter, and in much the

same sequence. The contemplation of the family tombstone which starts the book is echoed by Pip's similar reflections on the seed's imprisoned in Pumblechook's shop - this incarceration, of course, also foreshadows the confinement of Miss Havisham and Estella in Satis House, with Pip's wondering whether they "ever wanted, of a fine day to break out of those jails, and bloom". In the final three paragraphs of Chapter I the motifs come thick and fast.

As I saw him go, picking his way among the nettles, and among the brambles that bound the green mounds, he looked in my young eyes as if he were eluding the hands of the dead people, stretching up cautiously out of their graves, to get a twist upon his ankle and pull him in.

With the suggestion that the dead are about to take an active part in proceedings, the boundary between life and death is diminished in force; the nettles and brambles anticipate the overgrown and deserted garden around Satis House; and the convict's progress, once he has climbed the wall, "picking his way with his sore feet among the great stones dropped into the marshes here and there", is not unlike that of Estella in the garden and treading carefully along the empty casks, where she too is glimpsed by Pip across a wall.

As the convict moves off towards the river, Pip notices two objects. One is "the beacon by which the sailors steered - like an unhopped cask upon a pole". The cask resemblance may be incidental, but in its overall shape it obviously resembles the deserted

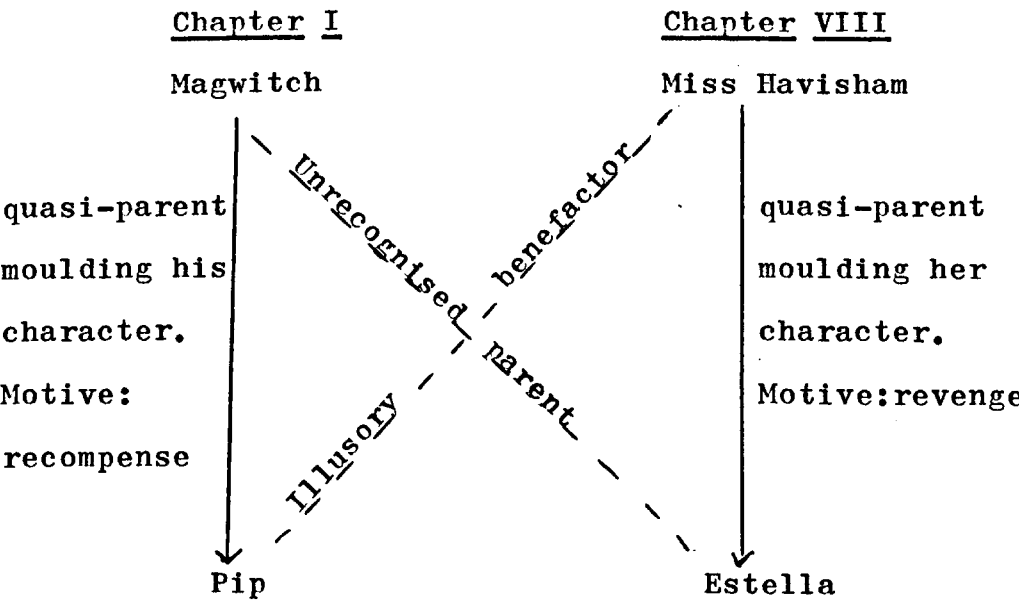
dovecot, and is also, like the dovecot, associated with the sea. The convict, however, does not head towards the beacon but towards the gibbet, and to Pip's ever active fancy he looks as if he is going back there "to hook himself up again", and soon afterwards the chapter ends with the frightened Pip making his way home.

Chapter VIII reproduces this sequence, as the figures seen by Pip culminate in the hanging Miss Havisham, and again the chapter ends with a frightened and bewildered Pip departing for home.

The significance of this repetition of motifs becomes apparent if we take account of the function of the two chapters within the narrative. They stand in similar but contrasting positions. Magwitch, the real benefactor of Pip, is introduced in Chapter I, and is the central figure in it (apart from Pip himself). Miss Havisham the supposed benefactor, is introduced in Chapter VIII, and is the central figure in it. It is as a result of this and subsequent meetings that Pip begins to attribute his sudden good fortune to her, and it is as a result of the meeting with Magwitch that the convict afterwards decides to make a gentleman of Pip. Chapter I stands at the head of the novel Great Expectations; Chapter VIII stands at the head of Pip's "great expectations", for it is directly as a result of this that Pip begins to nurse notions of improving himself, goaded on by the contempt of Estella. Pip himself considers this day the turning-point of his life, "a memorable day to me, for it made great changes in me" (Ch. IX). His steady progress towards the disorientation

in the courtyard prepares him for the unfounded dissatisfaction with his own identity and his mistaken assumptions regarding the identity of his benefactor.

The two chapters are fairly widely separated so that by the time Pip's good fortune is make known to him the impression left by the churchyard encounter has faded. But taking them together, the relationship of the four characters involved can be represented by the following diagram:



Although this diagram fails to emphasise that the novel is Pip's story and that he is the most important character, it does show the strong correspondences set up between the characters in the two chapters. Magwitch stands as parent to Pip, just as Miss Havisham does to Estella. Each quasi-parent wishes to mould the character of his or her protégé for strongly personal reasons which have to do with the balancing of past actions - Miss Havisham's motive is revenge, Magwitch's

is recompense, and both act out of a sense of injured pride. The diagram is also useful in that diagonals illustrate the incomplete relationships of the people in opposed corners. Pip's indebtedness to Miss Havisham is illusory - he believes that he knows who his benefactor is, but is mistaken. Estella's relationship to Magwitch is a real one, but is never fully known by either of the parties to it. Miss Havisham is not concerned with influencing Pip directly and is interested only in working on him through Estella, a design in which she fails, no matter which of the novels' endings is adopted (either Pip learns to live independently of Estella, or he wins her love on a free and mutual basis). Pip's last minute acknowledgement of Magwitch, and the avowal of love for his daughter, provide a brief and indirect channel between Estella and her father. The characters in the diagonally opposed corners are linked by the opposed child-figure.

The disintinguishing feature of the diagonal relationships is the problematic nature of what is known about them. Pip's first mistake is to fantasize about Miss Havisham, along the lines of a "fairy godmother" myth, and so he proceeds to construct his great expectations; Estella, meanwhile, he envelopes in a "sleeping beauty" fantasy. By discounting the earlier meeting with Magwitch, he mistakes the nature of that relationship also. Thus it is appropriate that both encounters, and particularly the second, should be presented with a reference to supernatural experience, in that Pip's bewildered reactions and disordered

perception are directly responsible for subsequent events. Pip's own fantasising is soon made comically explicit when he weaves an extravagant tale of dogs eating out of silver baskets while Miss Havisham looks on from a coach. This is Pip's little revenge on Pumblechook and his sister, but equally it demonstrates the reader's dependence on the narrator. We, as much as Pumblechook and Mrs Joe, have been obliged to accept and assent to Pip's story of what happened at Satis House; it is an account of experience rather than of events.

To see Great Expectations as the account of the hero's education, a Candide-like progress from naievety to wisdom, fails to take stock of Pip's part in bringing all that befalls him on himself. Pip's two acts - freeing Magwitch and fantasising about Miss Havisham - together trigger the events of the novel, and can be seen as transgressions in the terms of what was suggested above in Chapter 3. Pip's transgressions do not infringe any moral code, but they are certainly anti-social, acting against what his fellow-men in general would see as their interests. Succouring the convict may be aiding a person in need, but it also subverts the institutionalised justice which has sentenced Magwitch; Pip's fantasy about Miss Havisham is an indulgence of his privileged, almost solipsistic experience, as is graphically shown by the yarn he spins to his relatives, shutting others out of his private world.

The clash between Pip and the external world is

not inevitable; he could have been quite content growing up to take over the forge from Joe Gargery - indeed, the belated realisation of this is a large part of the ultimate lesson of his life.

There is, then, a certain volitional impulse in Pip which brings both his good fortune and his great expectations upon him. This is not tantamount to claiming that Pip thereafter is saddled with a burden of guilt to be expiated. In an interesting article Julian Moynahan takes the vision of the hanged figure in the brewery as proceeding from a guilt oppressed brain, a manifestation of Pip's subconscious impulse to kill Miss Havisham⁷. But his article does not take any account of the immediately preceding sight of Estella in the garden, and it overlooks the fact of Pip's expressions of rage on this occasion - tearing his hair, etc. - are directed more at Estella than at Miss Havisham. The dual vision is not an expression of Pip's suppressed desires but simply an indication of the illusory nature of the basis on which he is shortly to build his hopes for the future; those hopes are for love and power, as Moynahan suggests, but with Estella providing the love and Miss Havisham the power.

Pip sees a repeat of the apparition at the end of his association with Miss Havisham. Revisiting Satis House, he finds out from Miss Havisham how she came to foster Estella. Afterwards, he goes out into the old brewery:

A childish association revived with wonderful force and I fancied I saw Miss Havisham

hanging on the beam. So strong was the impression, that I stood under the beam shuddering from head to foot before I knew it was a fancy - though to be sure I was there in an instant. (Ch.LXIX).

Twice in this short passage it is made clear that this is a fancy of Pip's, something which he himself realises as soon as is compatible with his seeing the figure in the first place. It is, as he says, "a childish association", and recognised as such. His reaction to it marks his liberation from that particular delusion, and as he lays the ghost so is he released from the tyranny exercised over his mind by his "great expectations". And immediately after this the principal ghost-figure in the novel, her role played out, dies in the fire which consumes her clothing and leads to the wreck of her time-stopped room.

The next time Pip visits Satis House he meets not Miss Havisham but Estella. It is a Satis House peculiarly devoid of the unsettling phenomena of the earlier visits, indicating that both characters have been changed, almost reborn. The gate, once locked, now stands ajar, as if to admit freely the standards of the everyday world, and the closing sentence of the book evokes a world of clear-seeing, free of illusions and shadows:

- - - the evening mists were rising now, and in the broad expanse of tranquil light they showed me, I saw no shadow of another parting from her.

Our Mutual Friend

The reference to a supernatural extension of experience regulates the progress of Great Expectations, and the disorientation of the young Pip is accompanied by acute feelings of terror while he is at Satis House. In Our Mutual Friend, the element of fear remains almost entirely absent although the novel contains supernatural references at every level of its plot save that involving the crass society represented by the Veneerings.

As in Great Expectations the keynote of the novel is established in the opening pages of the narrative, and the first chapter contains many of the thematic threads that run through the story. Terror is present in so far as the reader is invited to identify with the predicament of Lizzie, who is cast in the role of dominated female under the strict control of her father. She displays an active imagination, seeing dreadful portents in the stain on the woodwork of the boat, but although the situation is fraught with potential terror it is never brought to the forefront. Instead the text leads us to puzzle over the mystery of their activity until we realise just what they are doing. Hexam's livelihood as a fluvial resurrectionist is thematically linked to the later events of the novel, where there are several instances of the dead or nearly-dead emerging from the Thames. The theme of reanimation is as important to this work as it is to A Tale of Two Cities, where it is also given a graphic and straightforward statement in the figure of the grave-robber Jerry Cruncher.

The cases of reanimation in Our Mutual Friend are more carefully arranged, however, and taken together afford an interesting study in graded variation. The four bodies taken from the river are those of the supposed John Harmon, Hexam himself, Riderhood, Wrayburn. The first is in fact the corpse of Radfoot, but is universally supposed to be that of Harmon to whom it offers the possibility of an alternative life. The body is so mutilated by its prolonged immersion as to be unrecognisable, with only the clothes offering any clue as to identification, and is thus bereft of both life and identity. The second in the series, Hexam, loses his life, pure and simple. Next, Riderhood narrowly escapes death by drowning, and subsequently refers to himself as having been "drownded"; believing that this gives him immunity from such a death thereafter, he emerges from the experience as great a reprobate as ever he was. His a merely physical resuscitation. Wrayburn's near-death by drowning, however, (which, like Radfoot's, is preceded by battery), leads to a moral regeneration that goes hand-in-hand with his physical recovery.

The series just outlined is concerned with "resurrections", in a literal and figurative sense, i.e. with the recovery of bodies, dead or alive, from the river. Therefore it is neither prolonged nor interrupted by the double-drowning of Headstone and Riderhood in the lock. They are outside the pattern in that it is their deaths which are described (Radfoot's and Hexam's are not), and although the text mentions the discovery

of their linked bodies there is no description of their recovery.

Instead, the series is prolonged by the scene at Wrayburn's sickbed, where the motif is subsumed into metaphor. His tenuous hold on consciousness and life is repeatedly broken and re-established as he drifts between lucidity and stupor. The agent of his recovery from the recurrent blackouts is Lizzie; Lizzie, who has already pulled him from the river after the assault by Headstone, and who right at the outset was instrumental in the retrieval of Radfoot's body.

"Lizzie," said Eugene, after a silence. "When you see me wandering away from this refuge that I have so ill-deserved, speak to me by my name and I think I shall come back."

"Yes, dear Eugene."

"There!" he exclaimed, smiling. "I should have gone then but for that."

A little while afterwards when he appeared to be sinking into insensibility, she said, in a calm loving voice: "Eugene, my dear husband". He immediately answered: "There again! You see how you can recall me!" and afterwards, when he could not speak, he still answered by a slight movement of his head upon her bosom. (Book IV, Ch.XI).

In Wrayburn's case here, we are presented with a moral recovery in terms of a sense experience.

The series that has been outlined is one of return to life and Lizzie, as the agent of its most positive expression literally, metaphorically and morally, is

herself part of another pattern: that of the young girl who, through love, regenerates her lover. There are two major instances of this in Our Mutual Friend: there is Lizzie's effect on Wrayburn, as already noted, and there is that of Bella on John Harmon. Although in the latter case the operation is less straightforward, it is their mutual love which eventually causes John to renounce his Rokesmith guise, so bringing back to life the supposedly dead Harmon. Belonging with these two instances is a third minor and humorous parallel provided by Pleasant Riderhood and Mr Venus. Mr Venus' trade surrounds him continually with the piecemeal dead, and his calling is repulsive to the sensibilities of his beloved Pleasant. A compromise is reached: the premises are cleared, and he agrees to exclude the corpses of women from his repertoire of articulation. This gently comic resolution of the difficulty is accompanied by his moral rebirth as he assists in the discomfiture of the scoundrel Wegg.

The two patterns that have been suggested - of recovery from death and of the female as life-giver - together point to the main action of Our Mutual Friend, which itself fluctuates between life and death. There are numerous features which corroborate this: Headstone's tormented declaration of love takes place by a graveyard; Sloppy is liberated by the deaths of Betty Higden and Johnny, just as Jenny Wren is by the death of her father; Venus earns a living from the dead, as do Hexam and, less successfully, Riderhood; and the dustheaps, emblematic of sterility, make rich successively old Mr

Harmon, the Boffins, and John and Bella, while Wegg nurses a vain hope that they will do as much for him. The progressive removal of the dustheaps runs concurrent with the dénouement of the various strands of the novel, a movement from death to life which finds its principal statement in the main plot as Harmon/Rokesmith returns from supposed death. The true climax of the novel is the moment at which life is 'restored' to Harmon as he recovers his identity. The story is prolonged - not without some creaking of the plot - for some time after the marriage, with Bella still kept in ignorance of who her husband really is. Ostensibly to test her, Griselda-like, the recovery of Harmon is delayed long enough for a child to be born to the couple, a final expression of resurgent life in a work which began with a corpse.

Harmon, the linchpin character of the novel, is the prime focus of the treatment of life-in-death. His is not a simple renunciation of identity; he is temporarily removed from life, assuming a quasi-spiritual status. Bella unwittingly asserts this when she says that his footsteps in the room above make of him "a haunting Secretary, stump - stump - stumping overhead in the dark, like a Ghost." (Ch.XVI, Book I). Rokesmith/Harmon's ambiguous existence is paralleled by his indeterminate social position as a lodger, an ancillary being without independence. Admitted among the Boffin's as a secretary - unpaid - he becomes even more of a cipher: neither of the family nor out of it, he hovers on the edge of Boffin's world, and of Bella's. It is only when Boffin - in the miserly pose he adopts for the improvement of

Bella - treats the secretary as a definite menial, thus assigning him a fixed place in society, that her hitherto vague and ambivalent feelings regarding Rokesmith can crystallise into love. Giving him a rank in society makes him human, and prompts human responses in her that had previously lain dormant.

The two pairs of lovers, Bella and John, Lizzie and Eugene, are linked by the similarity of their relationships. In each there is a partner to be reclaimed from social vice, be it Bella's haughty arrogance based on wealth, or Eugene Wrayburn's supercilious snobbery born of his education. Each of them wrongly imagines for a time that the contemplated marriage would be demeaning. Their partners, on the other hand, each go to considerable lengths to conceal themselves, Lizzie by taking flight, Harmon by assuming another identity.

The secret of Harmon's surrogate identity is not fully revealed to the reader until Chapter XIII of the second Book, in a long soliloquy that recaps awkwardly. Appropriately enough, the setting is next to a churchyard:

It is a sensation not to be experienced by many mortals to be looking into a churchyard on a wild windy night, and to feel that I no more hold a place among the living than these dead do, and even to know that I lie buried somewhere else, as they lie buried here. Nothing uses me to it. A spirit that was once a man could hardly feel stranger or lonelier, going unrecognised among mankind than I feel. (Ch.XIII Bk. II).

All the stock accompaniments of the supernatural are present: death, storm, night, strangeness and solitude. Although principally intended to fill in the gaps in the reader's knowledge of the protagonist, the retrospective account of Harmon's first days ashore offers some interesting features. Harmon is then a lonely wanderer removed from the reassuring bulwarks of his family. Befriended by Radfoot, he is taken into a strange environment through which Radfoot has offered to act as guide, and it is an unknown house at night-time that the attack on Harmon takes place. This attack is not primarily physical, but is directed rather at Harmon's mind, or perceptions. He is given drugged coffee, and loses the ability rationally to assimilate or respond to the world of experience. In archetypal fashion, he is reduced to a sentient passivity, seeing and hearing his assailants yet powerless to act in any way. This state of inert sentience is not exploited for terror effects; instead of leading to the climactic incident of the narrative it serves as the starting point, so that Our Mutual Friend carries on from the typical Blackwood's predicament rather than exploring it for its own sake. Harmon is thrust back into the world as a "living-dead man".

But having brought Harmon to this ambivalent state, Dickens stresses the radical nature of the process he has undergone. It would have been artistically and morally inappropriate to represent Harmon making a composed and rational decision to spy on his designated bride over such a long period of time; by presenting it

as the outcome of an unwished for but opportune occurrence - Harmon as an involuntary experimentalist - the subterfuge is rendered less calculating and more acceptable.

In noticing that Our Mutual Friend constantly refers to the supernatural while eschewing terror, it becomes apparent that a number of structural features attendant on the terror story are absent. Aside from those first hours ashore, which we hear of in retrospect, Harmon is far from being a passive protagonist in the novel. Although the central character, his function is that of a hunter, not a haunted. This, combined with the absence of an involved first-person narration (again, with the exception of the adventure with Radfoot) effectively distances the action. In so far as we witness, with Harmon, the effects of his supposed absence from, and unsuspected presence among, the other characters, we view Bella and the Boffins from the outside - yet these are the characters who are visited by the quasi-supernatural apparitions. It is Bella who is irritated by the ghostly pacing of the lodger at Wilfer's, and Mrs Boffin who is troubled by apparently seeing the faces of old Mr Harmon and the two children, after she has escorted "Rokesmith" around the Bower. Each of these incidents is provoked by Harmon's presence; he is constantly in attendance on both. Returned from the past, he moves through the book like a spectre, and through him we observe a society unwittingly disturbed by an agent outside the scope of its cognition - not an avenging presence but nevertheless one come to redress

the imbalance carried over from the lifetime of his father.

Although the greater part of Our Mutual Friend revolves around John Harmon, Bradley Headstone offers as effective a portrait of a man possessed as is to be found in any of Dickens' novels. With his personality overwhelmed and distorted by the intensity of his passion for Lizzie Hexam, Headstone is unusual in that he does not fully belong on either side of the line Dickens was accustomed to draw between his good and evil characters. Rather he is a character who is transformed by a passion, itself ambivalent, with which he is not equipped to cope. Headstone professes his passion to be love, normally a far from vicious emotion, but in him it is carried to an extreme that both he and Lizzie find frightening. In the plot-strand involving himself, Lizzie and Eugene Wrayburn he emerges as a contrastive equivalent to Eugene. His rise from poverty by dint of hard work contrasts with Eugene's well-bred fecklessness. Both of them are racked and mastered by a love for Lizzie, and both are initially given pause by considerations of social inequality, and subsequently both are rejected by her. Wrayburn's change of attitude after the fight with Headstone shows that he is capable of adapting himself for the better. This is in contrast to Headstone's more limited range of response which is the cause of his eventual destruction. Once Wrayburn has come through his ordeal he accepts and is accepted by Lizzie, the triangular pattern of force between him, Lizzie and Headstone is broken. As two of the parties

pair off, the annihilation of the third follows.

In the discussion of phrenology in Chapter One, the compartmentalised make-up of Headstone's mind was remarked upon, with its "warehouse" of received ideas. His difficulty with Lizzie arises directly from the fact that on his first meeting with her he finds that she does not accord with his preconceived notions, so that he is unable to cope. His inability to assign her a place in his concept of experience manifests itself as obsession; this obsession in turn casts him outside the social structure, at the other extreme from the world of the Podsnaps and the Veneerings, who represent an ordered and passionless community governed by politics, economics and manners on a petty scale. Ironically, they represent the ideal towards which the hapless schoolmaster originally strove.

The loss of humanity is a basic motif in Our Mutual Friend; only in Headstone's case, however, is this loss total and involuntary. His monomaniacal course of action is ended by the failure of his one attempt to switch identity voluntarily when, by disguising himself, he attempts to throw suspicion for his action on Riderhood. He has earlier attempted to shift the responsibility for his state on to Lizzie, telling her "you could draw me to good - any good"; although she comes to have little more than talismanic value for him, Headstone is appealing to her redemptive qualities which are so effective in the case of Wrayburn. Headstone therefore is in the state of a man possessed, in contrast to the cool rationality of the other characters.

At one stage he is described as being bewitched,
 more really bewitched than the miserable creatures
 of the much lamented times, who accused themselves
 of impossibilities under a contagion of horror
 and the strongly suggestive influences of torture,
 he had been ridden hard by evil spirits during
 the night that was newly gone. He had been spurred
 and whipped and heavily sweated. (Book III, Ch.XI)

The passage describes how his humanity is compromised
 by spiritual possession, while simultaneously its
 imagery makes of him a beast. In keeping with the
 central motif of the novel, there is a movement away
 from the human.

The story of Our Mutual Friend encompasses three
 main areas of activity: there is the main plot which is
 centred on the Boffin household, and the two subsidiary
 stories based respectively on the Lizzie-Wrayburn-
 Headstone triangle and on the dinner-party society of
 the Podsnaps and the Veneerings. The link between all
 three is the lawyer Mortimer. A large part of Harmon's
 story is of his oscillation between life and death,
 and this is played out in his association with the
 Boffins. But this plot is sandwiched between the two
 others which depict another pair of opposite extremes
 through which Harmon and the characters he associates
 with have to negotiate a middle course. On the one
 side is the possibility of irrational individual excess,
 and on the other the passionless restraint of society.
 These offer a contrast in both feeling and class, and
 the latter concept in particular is very much more to

the forefront of the consciousness of characters in the two enveloping plots than it is in the central plot, where it is remarkable how the Boffins and Rokesmith move through the class-levels with great facility. Thus Harmon's indeterminate status as a human being is of a piece with his indeterminate status in society, and the supernatural reference underlying the novel works in conjunction with the treatment of class which is its major preoccupation.

Conclusion

In the three novels by Dickens considered in this chapter, the use of the supernatural serves to illustrate the condition of the protagonist. Sikes and Harmon have in common their alienation from their respective communities. Each finds himself in the state of an outsider, one which is equated to that of the supernatural in that they exist on another order of being or do not share the same area of knowledge as their fellow men. Sikes finds himself an outcast because of a loss of reason and, as in a dream state, his movements are beyond conscious control. Harmon, on the other hand, has the means to control his condition and can end it whenever he so wishes. Because of this, Sikes' ordeal, unlike that of Harmon, is one of terror; his fear arises not from the vengeance of justice but from his inability to regulate his own mental experience. The plight of Pip falls midway between these two extremes. He is a victim of self-delusion and, although not in control of his state himself, the overall growth

pattern of the narrative gives promise of his eventual release.

C H A P T E R E I G H T
C H A R L O T T E B R O N T Ë

There is something of the inevitable about Pip's progress towards a release from his delusory expectations, in that the growth-pattern of the novel carries an implicit promise of arrival at a final state of knowing acceptance. Charlotte Brontë's heroines offer no such comfortable assurances in their stories. Although we follow Jane Eyre and Lucy Snowe biographically, their progress is not towards moral awareness but towards emotional fulfilment. The coincidences of the plot in Jane Eyre and the ambiguity of the ending in Villette are indicative of a fundamental irrationality in these novels, which quality is their great strength. They give a voice to those human forces which hitherto had seemed limited to poetry. In doing so Charlotte Brontë moves her protagonists to the edge of the imaginable. Hearing the cry of her name, Jane is taken by an "inexpressible feeling" that is "sharp", "strange" and "startling", with her senses roused from torpor to a lively expectancy. Villette simply refuses to commit itself to any statement, objectively verifiable or otherwise.

There is enough said. Trouble no quiet, kind heart;
 leave sunny imaginations hope. Let it be theirs to
 conceive the delight of joy born again out of great
 terror, the rapture of rescue from peril, the wondrous
 reprieve from dread, the fruition of return. (III,42)¹

This dislocation arises not from reticence but from
 disorientation; its origins are rooted in the individual
 experience which the protagonist is unable to control
 or rationalise.

Jane Eyre

The typically Brontean deictic opening of Jane Eyre makes no claim that the novel will portray a general social condition - this will be the story of Jane Eyre, no more. The abruptness of the first sentence snatches the reader into its situation without preliminary: "There was no possibility of a walk that day". It assumes that we know which day is in question, just as the remainder of the paragraph assumes our familiarity with Mrs Reed and with the condition of the protagonist. Furthermore, as a direct preparation for representing the experience of Jane, the opening chapters reproduce the movement and motifs of the supernatural terror story; they also introduce features which recur in the context of the book as a whole, so that the opening section is almost a paradigmatic statement of what follows.

The first chapter opens and closes with Jane confined. It begins with Jane and the Reed family housebound, and it ends with the pronouncement and execution of Mrs

Reed's punishment on her for the retaliation against John:

"Take her away to the red-room, and lock her in there." Four hands were immediately laid upon me, and I was borne upstairs. (I,1).²

There are significant differences between these two conditions of confinement. Having to stay indoors is a natural consequence of inclement weather, Jane herself states that she is contented to stay inside, and it is not a solitary confinement in that she has the dubious benefit of the Reeds' company. From this rather loose imprisonment there is the transition to the much more intense incarceration in the red room, into which Jane is manhandled and there locked up against her will. As if to emphasise that this repeats, with variations, the situation at the beginning of the chapter, a chapter break occurs at this point. It has no other apparent function, as the action and the narrative continue in Chapter II with no break or hiatus.

Jane finds herself consigned to the red room as a result of her first real encounter with another person, which is her squabble with John. It is a forerunner of Jane's subsequent confrontations with men - there are really only three: Brocklehurst, Rochester and St. John Rivers. All three of them inspire fear of one sort or another in Jane, be it through sanctimonious severity, uncouth passion or zealous righteousness. She trembles before each, just as she does at the prospect of "being dragged forth by the said Jack". As in her subsequent

encounters, she fights back against Jack:

He had closed with a desperate thing. I really saw in him a tyrant: a murderer. I felt a drop or two of blood from my head trickle down my neck, and was sensible of somewhat pungent suffering: These sensations for the time predominated over fear, and I received him in frantic sort. I don't very well know what I did with my hands, but he called me

"Rat! Rat!" and bellowed out aloud. (I,1)

Just what Jane did with her hands, like what song the sirens sang, will probably never be known. Desperation, fear and suffering are the feelings experienced on this occasion, and in the ensuing imprisonment in the red-room a more intense form of fear is visited on her. The graduation of terror is arranged so that each succeeding circumstance leads to an increase in its intensity, and the second chapter can be seen as a miniature terror-story in itself. Jane's isolation and confinement are again insisted upon. The awfulness of the environment is evoked by the adjectives "chill", "silent" and "solemn", and there is the added mysteriousness of Mrs Reed's occasional visits to the room to inspect the contents of a secret drawer. Allied to this, the room has associations with death on which Jane's ever-active mind is all too ready to elaborate.

The petulant self-pity of Jane's mood lasts all through the afternoon as the light fades, and not until dusk does superstition have "her hour for complete victory". Her thoughts turn to revenants:

I began to recall what I had heard of dead men, troubled in their graves by the violation of their last wishes, revisiting the earth to punish the perjured and avenge the oppressed. (I,2)

Her fears commence with thoughts of transcendently supernatural beings, but they rapidly find a focus in an objectively verifiable incident of sense-impression the gleaming of a light on the wall. Jane's terror culminates with this, and she lapses into a state of insensibility. For the reader however, the whole experience is held at a distance: the narrator both offers an immediate explanation for the phenomenon, and sets it firmly in retrospect by switching momentarily from the viewpoint of the child to that of the more mature person looking back on the event:

. . . . this streak of light was, in all likelihood, a gleam from a lantern carried by some one across the lawn. (I,2)

It is a variation of the token of survival which, as was noticed, is implicit in the first-person stories of imminent death; here, it is a token of arrival at a state of later calm and assurance. It also plays down the local effect of this episode, with a reminder that it is part of much longer sequence of events which has yet to unfold.

This initial progressive restriction of the protagonist ends with her loss of sense-perception as she falls into unconsciousness. This marks the end of a narrative preamble which has introduced, generally in

an oblique or muted form, a number of motifs which are to recur later in the novel as the primary material of Jane's experience. The isolation of Jane, here expressed concretely, is to be her general condition thereafter. Her uneasy reflections on the deathbed of Mr Reed, who has died in the red room, foreshadow the death of his wife in Chapter XXI. As she recovers consciousness she hears voices "speaking with a hollow sound, and as if muffled by a rush of wind or water; agitation, uncertainty, and all-predominating sense of terror confused my faculties". The next time Jane hears such a voice it is that which calls her back to Rochester, but it brings assurance rather than terror. On that occasion the "black spectre" of superstition is firmly quelled by Jane; when first left in the red-room,

Superstition was with me at that moment; but it was not yet her hour for complete victory . . . (I,2).

Superstition overcomes Jane later that day, but not at the more important crisis of her life. The 'red glare' of Jane's nightmare is the first instance of the fire imagery which is so important to the novel, and Jane's waking to a dim apprehension of people at her bedside anticipates her encounter with Bertha Rochester in Chapter 10, Vol.II, and her later introduction to the Rivers family. When Jane recovers consciousness it is to find herself receiving the attentions of Mr Lloyd the apothecary, whose ministrations result in Jane's eventual departure from Gateshead to embark on the experiences which constitute the main body of the novel.

The principal feature of the opening, however, is the use made of Bewick's engravings. These are referred to again subsequently: by name, when Jane returns to the dying Mrs Reed, and by imitation in her own drawings; while their elemental imagery is reproduced in the descriptions of certain crucial moments - the meeting with Rochester, the discovery of Thornfield as a burnt-down ruin - and in Jane's own paintings, from what the reader is told of them. Jane's reactions to Bewick establish her exceptional sensibility, and the Arctic regions described in the text introducing Volume II are singled out in particular:

Of these death-white realms I formed an idea of my own: shadowy, like all the half-comprehended notions that float dim through children's brains, but strangely impressive. (I,1)

Jane's imagination is not only highly receptive, but also suggestible, supplying details to compensate for inadequacies of description or comprehension. The wood-engravings stimulate Jane's imagination similarly; seven of them are picked out by Jane, each of them remarkable for being associated with solitude or supernaturalism: deserted shores, wastes of sea, a churchyard, fiends and phantoms³. These in turn call to her mind the ballads and fairy-tales told by Bessie, so that at the very outset she is surrounded with an unworldly aura and is shown as being susceptible to influences coming from the more shadowy edges of her psyche. This tendency of her character forms a striking

contrast to the way she later faces up to any dilemmas that involve rational decisions of right and wrong: Jane Eyre is not a novel of morality.

Like the imaginative formation given by Bewick, Bessie's tales figure prominently in the next pivotal episode of the novel: Jane's meeting with Rochester. After some paragraphs of close description of a winter-struck countryside, Jane hears a horse approaching. She immediately identifies the sound of the hooves for what it is, yet this does not prevent her imagination from coming into play. As in her earlier experience of quasi-supernatural terror at Gateshead, the situation finds her alone in the approaching twilight. The progress of Jane's imaginative working curiously parallels the earlier episode, in which it was stimulated first by Bewick's engravings and then by Bessie's tales. Here, the intrusion of the horse's tramp disperses gentler sounds, an effect which is compared synaesthetically to the visual effect of a picture in which

the solid mass of a crag, or the rough boles of a great oak, drawn in dark and strong on the foreground, efface the aerial distance of azure hill. . . . (I,12).

Jane then goes on to admit the enduring impression of Bessie's stories heard in childhood:

I remembered certain of Bessie's tales, wherein figured a North-of-England spirit, called a "Gytrash"; which, in the form of horse, mule, or large dog, haunted solitary ways, and sometimes came upon belated travellers . . . (I,12)

The sudden appearance of the dog momentarily lends

substance to these imaginings, but immediately afterwards they are dispelled by the sight of a human horseman. The remainder of this encounter - Rochester's fall, the assistance proffered by Jane - is narrated without a hint of anything supernatural, and Jane is shown as being completely in control of the situation throughout. The initial hint of the uncanny would scarcely merit attention were it not that, once introduced by the narration, it is taken up by the characters in talking of the incident subsequently. The first reference to it occurs when Jane goes in to meet Rochester in the drawing-room at Thornfield. Says Rochester:

"When you came on me in Hay Lane last night, I thought unaccountably of fairy tales, and had half a mind to demand whether you had bewitched my horse."
(.)

". . . you were waiting for your people when you sat on that stile?"

"For whom, sir?"

"For the men in green: it was a proper moonlight evening for them. Did I break one of your rings, that you spread that damned ice on the causeway?"

I shook my head. "The men in green all forsook England a hundred years ago," said I, speaking as seriously as he had done. (I,13)

Granted, this is largely banter, but it is in a strain which is continued by them to the end of the book, particularly when Rochester is speaking to Jane. When she saves him from being burnt to death in his bed,

practically his first words to her are

"In the name of all the elves in Christendom, is that Jane Eyre? . . .

What have you done with me, witch, sorceress?" (I,15)

At the moment of his proposal to her, he calls her "You strange - you almost unreal thing", and at the conclusion, when she returns to her blinded former master, he almost refuses to believe that she is human:

"You mocking changeling - fairy-born and human-bred!"

(III,11)

At different times she is termed "spirit", "elf", "fiend", "dream", "shade", "genius" - this list is not exhaustive, and at times Jane responds to Rochester in kind. The effect is to lend an air of the unreal to their relationship. When one of the principal characters sees a relationship in such terms, the reader tends to assent to it, at least partially. As a result the love of Jane and Rochester is placed on a special plane and becomes endowed with an almost fateful quality. Two possible reasons why Charlotte Brontë may have wished to achieve such an effect offer themselves. Firstly, conscious as she may have been of the likelihood of accusations of impropriety in her depiction of Jane's relationship with her employer, she used this mildly ethereal aura to lessen the sexual connotations; by emphasising the supernatural aspect the carnal is glossed over. This, however, is incidental. The whole tendency of Jane Eyre is towards a moment of explicit transcendental supernaturalism, and its recognition as

such. The voice which Jane hears at the critical moment in St John's wooing of her, is a cry from beyond nature. Jane herself, as is typical of her, denies the incident's supernaturalism, as we have seen, with her murmur of "Down, superstition", and her claim that "it is the work of nature". At this stage the voice need be no more than the delusive product of an imagination under stress, an appropriate psychological phenomenon used to indicate Jane's state of mind rather than to depict any reality, even a subjective one. But the concluding episode of the book reveals the voice to have been truly supernatural, and it is recognized as such by Jane. Rochester tells how he had in fact uttered Jane's name aloud at that time, and had seemed to receive an answer. Jane is at last forced to recant her first reaction to the voice, or at least radically to alter her understanding of "the work of nature":

The coincidence struck me as too awful and inexplicable to be communicated or discussed. If I told anything, my tale would be such as must necessarily make a profound impression on the mind of my bearer; and that mind, yet from its sufferings too prone to gloom, needed not the deeper shade of the supernatural. (III, 11).

So it is that Jane, for all her sound sense and plain speaking, is revealed at the end as being under the sway of two forces, one interior and irrational, the other exterior but similarly irrational: love and the supernatural. In the love-talk of Rochester the two come close to being combined.

Although references to the supernatural bracket and underpin Jane's story, the element of terror is used for a much more confined section, but also more concentratedly. After the childhood ordeals of the red-room and of the encounter with Brocklehurst, fear does not really begin to become evident until the transition is made to Thornfield. With its slight air of menace, the remote and empty house is a typical environment for terror. On Jane's first tour of the house in the company of Mrs Fairfax, the existence of a strange presence in its upper regions is hinted at. First there is a joking reference to the back apartments - "If there were a ghost in Thornfield Hall, this would be its haunt" - and then soon after comes the "curious, distinct, formal, mirthless" laugh which Jane hears, and which she describes as "tragic" and "supernatural". Grace Poole's appearance in response to Mrs Fairfax's summons provides a natural explanation of the phenomenon, but this is in accordance with the pattern already noted in the book, and also accords with the technique of the typical terror story; a first ripple of disturbance is dispelled almost immediately, but the explanation proffered is later revealed as not being the true one. The next forty pages are given over to Jane's first encounters with Rochester and with developing the darkly romantic side of his character. Then comes the second manifestation of the unknown tenant of the upper stories. This time there is an advance on the earlier simple laugh. First Jane hears a low murmur, followed by the

sound of fingers brushing over her bedroom door, and a demoniac laugh. This gradation of disquieting sounds in the night ends with a gurgle and moan, and Jane's thoughts turn of course to Grace Poole: "Is she possessed by a devil?". The infernal associations are reinforced when Jane gets up to investigate and notices a wreath of smoke and a strong smell of burning.

After Jane's rescue of Rochester by the down-to-earth expedient of sousing his burning bed with the contents of water-jugs, the separate references to the supernatural and terror cross. Jane's (and the reader's) expectations of some supernatural agency behind the incident have been raised, but as before the affair is accounted for in a fairly straightforward manner - Grace Poole is once more held to be behind it all. But before this matter-of-fact explanation is given, Rochester by his words transfers the supernatural qualities to Jane:

"In the name of all the elves in Christendom, is that Jane Eyre?" "What have you done, witch, sorceress?"

While fabricating a rational explanation for a seemingly ghostly event, Rochester supernaturalises the perfectly human emotions of gratitude of nascent love.

The third event involving Bertha Rochester is her attack on Mason. As in the two previous incidents, the first intimation of this is an aural one as Mason's anguished cry rings through the sleeping house. The attack contributes to making the mysterious agent in the upper stories more substantial and more actively malevolent. In the earlier attack only the appurtenances

of Rochester's bedroom were damaged, his person being menaced but unharmed, but the assault on Mason is driven home. As before, the earlier stages of the incident are glossed over in the narration, and it is not until the aftermath, when Jane is asked to sit with the injured man for the remainder of the night, that any hint of the supernatural or of terror is brought into play. It stems largely from the imaginings of Jane's overwrought sensibility, and the environment is all too conducive to such thoughts. As in the red-room, Jane once more hears the key turn to lock her in, and although this time she is not alone, her ready obedience to Rochester's injunction "No conversation" only isolates her farther; instead of providing solace, her companion becomes part of the disturbing situation in which she finds herself.

Here then I was in the third story, fastened into one of its mystic cells; night around me, a pale and bloody spectacle under my eyes and hands; a murderess hardly separated from me by a single door. (II,5)

The last excursion by Bertha Rochester from the top storey of the house is the first time on which Jane actually sees her. Hitherto she has been aware of her only through sound, and through the effects of her all too apparent malevolence. There is a further allusion back to Jane's time at Gateshead when her sight of the apparition is preceded by dreams of children. Bessie had said that to dream of children was a premonition of trouble, so here again Bessie's early influence on the young Jane contributes to the fear, as did her tales of

the Gytrash at the first meeting with Rochester. The transition from these dreams to waking reality finds Jane confronted by an even more frightening phenomenon: someone is in the room with her.

The gradation of effect in the arrangement of what is seen by Jane is carefully managed here. First, she sees the light of a candle; then she hears a rustling sound; and finally she sees the form of

. . . a woman, tall and large, with thick and dark hair hanging long down her back. I know not what dress she had on: it was white and straight; but whether gown, sheet or shroud, I cannot tell. (II,10)
Not until after this progressive awareness does Jane at last see the face, "fearful and ghastly".

Jane's waking here repeats that of her recovery after the episode in the red-room, and her account of this experience closes with a direct allusion to that first loss of consciousness:

... . . for the second time in my life - only the second time - I became insensible from terror. (II,10)

Although terror is the dominant effect in this section, it is not carried to the fullest possible extent. While Jane Eyre as a whole is remarkable for its general adherence to chronological order in its telling, the story of Bertha's incursion as exception. The reader shares with Rochester in Jane's account of the episode on the following day. This gives token of her emerging from the experience, and throws the emphasis on what the visitant may signify for her than on what she actually

does. It avoids making the nocturnal visitation the climax of the terror-thread in the novel, as knowledge of its meaning is held over for future explanation. This comes the next day in the interrupted wedding ceremony, and it is an explanation that proves to be even more distressing than the phenomenon itself. This is a frequent effect in ghost stories: Penzoldt terms it "the double climax":

It does not consist of two apparitions, but of one, followed by the necessary explanation. Only the knowledge of what is behind a manifestation conveys the full horror of it.⁴

At the beginning of Chapter XXV, before the date fixed for her marriage, Jane describes herself among the packed trunks in her room, about to affix the labels. She cannot bring herself to do so because of the name they bear - "Mrs Rochester! She did not exist". It is after this that Jane goes on to tell Rochester of her first sighting of the woman who is in fact Mrs Rochester, and with whom she has been sharing roof-space for some months. Bertha Rochester has practically all the characteristics of a ghost: malevolence, a tendency to make nocturnal irruptions of unpredictable frequency, her resistance to comprehension, and the ambiguity of her status - as pointed out by Jane's comments, she both exists and she does not.

The suggestion of the supernatural which surrounds Bertha is transferred to the succeeding scene in the church, even though she herself does not appear in it.

Mason and the solicitor, who are there on her behalf, are twice associated with death in the course of their brief appearance: they are first noticed by Jane in the graveyard, wandering among the green grave-mounds, and later, inside the church, they take up their position "by the vault of the Rochesters, their backs towards us, viewing through the rails the old time-stained marble tomb" (Ch.XXVI). In the building where man solemnises those three compulsions - birth, marriage, and death - they are ominously proximate to the last. When the marriage ceremony is interrupted, Rochester tells the solicitor to produce a witness or to "go to hell", and to Mason he says "The devil is in it if you cannot answer distinctly". Such terms might be used by any man at a moment of stress, but the infernal and diabolic undertone is continued afterwards when the party goes to inspect Bertha; Rochester then describes Jane as "standing at the mouth of hell, looking collectedly at the gambols of a demon".

The unnaturalness of Bertha is thus maintained to the end of this section of the narrative. She has now done her worst, in that simply by her existence she prevents the marriage of Rochester and Jane. Bertha is now known for what she is, and the terror is dissipated. While Bertha's function as an impediment to the marriage of Jane and Rochester is crucial to the plot of Jane Eyre, it is her quite separate role as the menacing, quasi-ghostly inhabitant of Thornfield that contributes most to the tone, atmosphere, and enduring impression

of the book; there is no necessary relation between the two.

The terror is generated through the careful gradation of effect in her appearances to Jane. Penzoldt writes

Many stories, especially the longer ones, contain a number of apparitions. In such cases the author usually seeks to make the last appearance of the spectre the climax of the story. Either the recognition of the supernatural as such is postponed until then or 'It' finally commits some deed of violence. The preceding manifestations cannot therefore be considered as a second, third, and fourth climax; they must be looked on as part of the exposition and as being nothing but a preparation for the finale.⁵

A feature seemingly unique to Jane Eyre is that each of Bertha's apparitions is linked to the preceding one by the duplication of some motif or circumstance. The preternatural laugh that is the sole evidence of Bertha on the first occasion is repeated before the discovery of the fire in Rochester's bedroom on the second. The dominant feature of this manifestation, however, is the physical violence offered to Rochester; violence is again to the fore on Bertha's next foray - the attack on Mason. Mason's comment on Bertha, "She sucked the blood: she said she'd drain my heart", contains a hint of vampirism which Jane takes up in recounting the nocturnal visit of Bertha to her room: she is reminded of "the foul German spectre - the Vampyre". This is

when Bertha tears the wedding-veil in two, a gesture which looks forward symbolically to Bertha's last intrusion, through her surrogates: the disruption of the wedding ceremony. The linking provided by this "chain" (see diagram on this page) serves to provide a continuity for events which are quite remote from one another in the narrative; they are interrupted by the house-party at Thornfield, the visit to Gateshead, and the story of Jane's developing relationship with Rochester.

MOTIF	Demonic laugh		Vampirism		
EPISODE	Tour	Attack	Attack	Apparition	Wedding Ceremony
IN	of	on	on	to	
NARRATIVE	Thornfield	Rochester	Mason	Jane	
MOTIF		Physical violence		Bar to marriage	

Apart from Bertha and Jane, other characters in the novel take on supernatural associations: Brocklehurst as first seen by the ten-year-old Jane certainly has something of the inhuman in his make-up, and St John Rivers is at pains to envelope himself in spirituality. And as regards the principals, there are significant differences between the supernaturalism attached to Jane and that to Bertha Mason. Jane is seen as other-than-human by her interlocutor, and practically all allusions to it are contained in dialogue, particularly with

Rochester. Bertha, however, is cast in the role of a ghost-figure by the narrative. The telling of the story is so managed as to foreground the apparent uncanniness of happenings at Thornfield, with a resultant built-in ambivalence. Jane and Rochester, who persistently see each other in supernatural terms, nevertheless remain decidedly human; Bertha, in spite of Rochester's persistent attempts to "de-supernaturalise" her by providing prosaic explanations of her actions, occupies the position of a ghost.

In one of the first conversations between Jane and Rochester the question of a morality is discussed:

"The human and fallible should not arrogate a power with which the divine and perfect alone can be safely entrusted."

"What power?"

"That of saying of any strange, unsanctioned line of action - 'Let it be right'." (I,14)

Jane here is talking about the competency to decide and fix a moral order, but her words might apply just as aptly to the manipulation of supernatural events in the book. The voice that brings Jane and Rochester together at the end, supernatural though it may be, does not terrify, because it is seen as proceeding from God as besought by Rochester. It is only when supernatural attributes are assumed by beings which are neither "divine" nor "perfect" (in short, which are not God) that they become terrifying. Such attributes are assumed by Bertha: she does not reveal herself completely to

human comprehension, she is essentially a creature of the night, she is disturbing in appearance, she is a persistent relic of a past act, haunting Rochester's life, and she seems to materialise from nothing - for Jane she comes suddenly into being, fully grown. The principal difference between Bertha and a ghost proper is that she ceases to be terrifying once she is identified for what she is, although her power - that of preventing Jane's happiness - persists.

With the cessation of Bertha's apparitions Jane's story becomes simply a rite de passage; she has to undergo a number of ordeals before achieving eventual emotional fulfilment at the conclusion. As Kathleen Tillotson says,

The master-influence of the decade is audible when Jane asserts to Rochester, "We are born to strive and to endure".⁶

The final ten chapters of Jane Eyre, after Jane has left Thornfield, focus particularly on endurance, with St John Rivers expounding the Christian attitude to suffering while Jane lives out the human reality. It is a theme which is hinted at very obliquely right at the outset of the novel in one of Bewick's engravings. Jane singles out that of "the quite solitary churchyard, with its inscribed headstone". The inscription is not given in Jane Eyre, but in fact it reads "Good times, bad times, and all times get over". At the end, the same note is struck as the novel is rounded off with St John's last letter to Jane in which he "anticipated his

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reward, his incorruptible crown". That the final section of the book is rather bleak in comparison to the impact made by the preceding section set at Thornfield is in great measure due to its being little more than a pageant of endurance, as homilectic in force as a churchyard inscription. But Bertha, consigned to a form of premature burial by her husband, emerges revenant-like from the grave to give dramatic substance to Jane's confrontation with suffering and feeling at Thornfield.

Villette

With Lucy Snowe Charlotte Brontë returns to a single first-person narrator, a device that she had not used in Shirley. As with Jane Eyre, the treatment of Lucy in the opening chapters is such as to diminish her vis à vis the other characters. Jane was shown as an unhappy and isolated child in inimical surroundings; Lucy's passivity is demonstrated through the introduction of Polly, a younger child who immediately overshadows the narrator. The precocious six-year-old succeeds in attracting to herself the attention of the other characters and of the reader, and for the first three chapters Lucy is little more than an attendant. It is as if the book is to be Polly's story, not Lucy's. R.B. Martin comments on the unusual nature of this first section,

. . . . which has frequently baffled readers who fail to see that its primary function is to establish Lucy's character, not those of Polly and John . . . 7

What is established, in fact, is the negative nature of

Lucy's character at this stage. Her story does not, indeed can not, begin to be told until she has first emerged in her allotted role of passive protagonist.

Lucy's story really begins when she takes up employment as companion to Miss Marchmont. Imprisonment was a recurrent motif in Jane Eyre; Lucy's ordeal is one of solitude, a condition akin to imprisonment in that it too involves a cutting off from society. Having left Bretton, and subsequently lost her family - this much we are to infer obliquely from an extended metaphor of storm and shipwreck - Lucy states her own case:

There remained no possibility of help from others;
to myself alone could I look. (I,4)

The Miss Marchmont episode of Lucy's story is soon over, but it is of considerable structural importance. The opening of Jane Eyre prefigures subsequent events and situations in that book; here a similar characteristic is apparent, although the Miss Marchmont chapter is anticipatory not of the main body of Villette but of its ending. The old lady's story of the death of her lover shortly before the wedding prefigures Lucy's loss of Paul Emanuel, and the banshee-voice of the wind is not heard again until Paul is drowned at sea. The sea-voyage and shipwreck metaphor by which Lucy makes known the break-up or death of her family also foreshadows Paul's death, both in its imagery, which is realised in the final chapter, and in the obliquity of its narration, implying but not stating.

Apart from the banshee-motif which brackets Lucy's

story, there are two other elements of supernatural terror in Villette. The most striking of these is the figure of the nun, eventually revealed to be a disguise assumed by the amorous aristocrat De Hamal. The way is prepared for the apparition by the legend attached to the pensionnat, according to which

something had happened on this site which, rousing fear and inflicting horror, had left to the place the inheritance of a ghost story. A vague tale went of a black and white nun, sometimes, on some night or nights of the year, seen in some parts of the vicinage. (I,12).

Lucy dismisses the tradition as "romantic rubbish", but in spite of this condemnation Charlotte Brontë does not scruple to use the ghostly nun device for her own ends later on.

Although it communicates little of worth to the novel, the figure is introduced with a careful attention to the gradation of effect. After the mention of the legend, there is one further reference to the nun before Lucy actually sees it. Obligated to learn a part for the school play, Lucy is locked into the attic. This imprisonment, reminiscent of Jane's experiences, sets Lucy's mind working in a disturbing but familiar strain:

Well was (the attic) known to be tenanted by rats, by black beetles, and by cockroaches - nay, rumour affirmed that the ghostly Nun of the garden had once been seen here. A partial darkness obscured one end, across which, as for deeper mystery, an old russet

curtain was drawn, by way of screen to a sombre band of winter cloaks, pendant each from its pin - like a malefactor from his gibbet. From among these cloaks, and behind that curtain, the nun was said to issue. (I,14)

Mystery, solitude, evil, violent death, - all are present or suggested, but on this occasion there is no apparition. When it does eventually appear, it is here in the attic, and Lucy's first reaction is to flee downstairs from the immobile figure. On her return, accompanied by Madame Beck and others, there is no sign of what she has seen.

I was left secretly and sadly to wonder, in my own mind, whether that strange thing was of this world, or of a realm beyond the grave; or whether indeed it was only the child of malady, and I of that malady the prey. (II,22)

After this, with its suggestion of a physiological cause, there is one further brief manifestation in the attic - Lucy sees a light glow there for a moment, but does not have time to ponder on it - and the remainder of the nun's appearances occur in the garden.

The first of these takes place just after Lucy has been reflecting on the solitariness of her condition: "If life be a war, it seemed my destiny to conduct it single-handed". Now, confronted by a "tall sable-robed, snowy-veiled woman", Lucy acts decisively:

I advanced one step. I stretched out my hand, for I meant to touch her. She seemed to recede. I drew nearer; her recession, still silent, became swift. (II,26)

On this occasion the nun is seen only, and remains unheard and intangible. However, Lucy's vision is later corroborated during her Sunday evening talk with M. Paul. It is he who first alludes to the apparition, with the cryptic remark "I have seen other things". He does not explain further, but takes his cigar from his mouth and throws it

amongst the shrubs, where, for a moment, it lay glowing in the gloom.

"Look at it", said he: "is not that spark like an eye watching you and me?" (III,31)

This has a double function. It refers back to the light Lucy saw briefly in the attic, which is ultimately revealed to have been De Hamal surprised in the act of smoking a cigar (almost as if the author is preparing for the Radcliffean explaining-away of the nun). Further, the idea of a watching eye is thematically central to the novel: Madame Beck watches Lucy, as does M. Paul from his room overlooking the garden. This constant observation is a reinforcement of Lucy's passivity in the role of protagonist, emphasising her subordination to others in the pensionnat. (In the world of the Bretton's and the De Bassompierre's, Lucy herself becomes a spectator, but in a way that emphasises how she is uninvolved in their activities as she watches Dr John, Polly and Ginevra with a mixture of love and longing.) Lucy has already described the nun in the following terms:

She had no face - no features: all below her brow was masked with a white cloth; but she had eyes,

and viewed me. (II,26)

For the greater part of the text the nun is established as a symbol of the surreptitious observation which oppresses Lucy, but with the explanation of the nun's appearance it is ultimately apparent that on the contrary it was a disguise adopted to escape the observation of Lucy and the other school superintendents.

But whatever the symbolic function, the figure of the nun lapses into the ludicrous soon after Paul's remark in the garden. He and Lucy hear a commotion in the tree over their heads which completely dissipates the hitherto sinister immateriality of the figure; ghosts do not need to climb trees. The conclusion to the chapter rather breaches the contract between author and reader, in depicting nature as controlling or reflecting the activities of what is ultimately revealed as a foppish young man in fancy dress:

As she went, the wind rose sobbing; the rain poured wild and cold; the whole night seemed to feel her.

(III,31)

There is the unveiling of the nun still to come, but before dealing with that it is necessary to consider a more organically integrated feature of the novel: Lucy's errand to the house of Madame Walravens is also presented in terms of a supernatural experience, although in a lower key than the nun episodes. In this, an everyday experience is heightened, as opposed to the more explicit suggestion of the supernatural where the figure of the nun is concerned. All Charlotte Brontë's ghost figures are female: Bertha, the nun, Madame Walravens, even the

Banshee (literally "fairy woman", from the Irish bean sídhe); and each of them constitutes an obstacle to the protagonist's emotional and sexual fulfilment.

Lucy's experience in the house of Madame Walravens compares with Pip's visit to Miss Havisham; in each the perception of the protagonist is placed under stress - "assaulted" would not be too strong a word - by disorientating impressions or agents.

Lucy finds herself alone in an unfamiliar environment, with the house of Madame Walravens marked off as a privileged or restricted area, cut off from the outside world. Admission is difficult until she finds her Virgil in the old priest, and once inside, due to the gloom of the approaching storm and the coloured glass of the windows, she finds it hard to make out the details of her surroundings. A picture on the wall particularly engages her attention, and as she studies it the picture seems to disappear. A variant of that most firmly established commonplace of terror fiction, the picture which becomes animate, it disappears to reveal a staircase. Down the stairs come first a sound, then a shadow, and finally a substance. But even before giving a description of what is seen, Lucy begins to question its substantiality; and continues

Well might this old square be named the quarter of the Magii - well might the three towers overlooking it own for godfathers three mystic sages of a dead and dark art. Hoar enchantment here prevailed; a spell had opened for me elf-land - that cell-like room, that vanishing picture, that arch and passage,

and stair of stone, were all parts of a fairy-tale.

(III,34)

This rather lightweight faery supernaturalism soon gives way to something more sinister with the entrance of Madame Walravens. Grotesque, unexpected, of ill-defined shape and sex, the old woman possesses a number of disturbing aspects. Her entry into the room, through the wall rather than through the door as would be expected is suggestively ghostly, and contrasts with tree-climbing exertions of the nun (the supernatural figure revealed as human). The woman is not of normal human stature or form, and she seems to have outlived the normal human span:

Her face was large, set, not upon her shoulders, but before her breast; she seemed to have no neck; I should have said there were a hundred years in her features, and more perhaps in her eyes - her malign, unfriendly eyes with thick grey brows above, and livid lids all around. How severely they viewed me, with a sort of dull displeasure. (III,34)

Once again Lucy finds herself under observation.

The unnatural status of the old lady is enhanced by the fact that at no time while she is present is she referred to by name in the narrative; instead she is "Cunégonde, the sorceress", "Malevola, the evil fairy", a "sullen Sidonia". As soon as the old woman leaves the weather is called into play, this time with more justification, as they key Lucy's state.

The clouds, ruddy a while ago, had now, through all

their blackness, turned deadly pale, as if in terror.

(III,34)

But this is the only mention of terror in the episode. Lucy, as befits the suggestion of emotional blankness in her surname, remains seemingly unmoved through it all; she is a medium for the action, utterly passive in that she describes what she perceives rather than her own reactions. At different times both Dr John and Ginevra have occasion to remark on her freedom from fear.

The climax of the scene, when the lightning and thunder break out, shows Lucy envisaging herself in a literary rather than a real-life situation, so isolated from the external world has she become, and so self-contained is the episode of her visit:

The tale of magic seemed to proceed with the due accompaniment of the elements. The wanderer, decoyed into the enchanted castle, heard rising, outside, the spell-wakened tempest. (III,34)

While she is confined to the house by this weather, Lucy has a conversation with the priest which reveals that "the picture which moved, fell away with the wall and let in phantoms" is of a young nun. So Lucy has now experienced two apparitions: one of a nun, the other of an old woman appearing from behind the portrait of a nun. And just as there is a legend attached to the nun at the pensionnat, Lucy now hears the story relating to the nun in the picture.

As these points of correspondence suggest, the two apparitions seem to be about to converge and coincide in

the episode which has the drugged Lucy wandering through the night-time festivities of Villette. It is an unusual variation of the powerless imagination motif. Stimulated by the drug, Lucy's mind is hypersensitive; although not physically imprisoned, she is isolated as, alone in the crowded streets, she sees her friends the Brettons but is unable to talk to them. At length she comes face to face with the grotesque group from the Rue des Mages: Madame Walravens, Père Silas and others in the company of Madame Beck. Again, the old lady is described in ambivalent terms: she is cadaverous and witch-like, although Lucy hastens to assure us that "she was indeed no corpse or ghost, but a harsh and hardy old woman". For once Lucy finds herself in the role of observer of Madame Beck and her associates rather than vice versa, and at the end of the chapter is able to describe her feelings:

The sight of them thus assembled did me good. I cannot say that I felt weak before them or abashed or dismayed. (III,38)

But by the opening of the following chapter, immediately afterwards, she rather retracts on this and puts Lucy once more in a subordinate position:

Fascinated as by a basilisk with three heads, I could not leave this clique: the ground near them seemed to hold my feet. (III,39)

And then it seems that Justine Marie, the dead nun of the portrait, is about to appear. The effect of the expectation on Lucy's mind is dramatic.

I called up to memory the pictured nun on the panel; present to my mind was the sad love-story; I saw in though the vision of the garret, the apparition of the alley, the strange birth of the berceau: I underwent a presentiment of discovery, a strong conviction of coming disclosure. Ah! when imagination once runs riot where do we stop? What winter tree so bare and branchless - what way-side, hedge-munching animal so humble, that Fancy, a passing cloud, and a struggling moonbeam, will not clothe it in spirituality, and make of it a phantom? (III,39)

Under the influence of Madame Walravens, not that of the figure in the garden, Lucy is at last brought to the point of a belief in the autonomous existence of ghosts. As is also, perhaps, the reader.

There are many masks in the park tonight, and as the hour wears late, so stange a feeling of revelry and mystery begins to spread abroad, that scarce would you discredit me, reader, were I to say that she is like the nun of the attic, that she wears black skirts and white head-clothes, that she looks the resurrection of the flesh, that she is a risen ghost.

All falsities - All figments! We will not deal in this gear. Let us be honest, and cut, as heretofore, from the homely web of truth. (III,39)

But the narrator has been dealing in precisely that gear, and is not quite finished doing so yet, however guileless her protestations. It is no more than the particular piece of fantasy about Justine-Marie, spun around the coincidence of a name, which has been exploded.

The mystery of the nun at the nensionnat, and the sinister power of Madame Walravens, still remain.

Lucy has consistently attempted to deny ghostly status to the nun-figure of the garden. Even at the conclusion of the Justine-Marie incident she makes a careful differentiation:

So much for Justine-Marie; so much for ghosts and mystery; not that this last was solved - this girl is certainly not my nun.

The nun is mysterious but not ghostly, maintains Lucy. This defiant distinction breaks down when Lucy returns to find the figure in her bed:

I saw stretched on my bed the old phantom - the NUN.

This final apparition takes place in a dormitory of sleeping girls, but even in this confrontation Lucy does not have the reinforcement of companions. She does not, or can not, call out. Impelled to approach it rather than flee, she discovers the practical joke. At this moment the correspondence between the spectral nun and Justine-Marie is made explicit, as the imagery from Cervantes which disposed of the one also disposes of the other.

Here again - behold the branchless tree, the unstabled Rosinante; the film of cloud, the flicker of moonlight. (III,39)

Lucy's imagination, as the transforming agency and medium, is central to Villette. As early as the second chapter, speaking of the child Polly, Lucy, in

the space of a sentence, proceeds from an assertion of her own perceptual reliability to a minor but significant piece of subjective supernaturalisation in the last word.

I, Lucy Snowe, plead guiltless of that curse, an overheated and discursive imagination; but whenever, opening a room door, I found her seated in a corner alone, her head in her pigmy hand, that room seemed to me inhabited, not haunted.

On a later occasion, as she recovers consciousness at La Terrasse after fainting in the street, Lucy admits that she has got into a "ghost-seeing" state:

I should have understood what we call a ghost, as well as I did the commonest object: which is another way of intimating that all my eye rested on struck it as spectral. (II,16)

This last sentence does not give two ways of merely saying the same thing. To understand a ghost means to accept it, to assign it a place in an ordered universe; this is not the equivalent to investing everyday objects with ghostliness. Dr John is ready to ascribe Lucy's condition to a disordered nervous system, beyond the range of his art which "just looks in and sees a chamber of torture". His advice to her is to avoid solitude. Later, after the apparition in the attic, Dr John gives his own opinion of Lucy's imagination:

I know you are not, nor ever were, subject to material terrors, fears of robbers, etc. - I am not so sure that a visitation, bearing a spectral

character, would not shake your very mind. (II,22)

And afterwards he is even more precise: "I think it is a case of spectral illusion: I fear following on from long continued mental conflict". Thus Dr John directly contradicts Lucy's own assessment of her imaginative tendencies. She is liable to experience delusions. In this particular instance he is wrong - Lucy has seen a figure that has an independent external existence - but his statement is more a general judgement on her character, based on long knowledge, and as such carries considerable weight.

So, in spite of her early disclaimers Lucy must be seen as a protagonist as susceptible to suggestion as Jane Eyre, and as isolated. Her solitude takes various forms - she is in a foreign country, for the most part friendless and left to fend for herself. On occasions her condition is intensified: her night-time arrival in Villette, the visit to the confessional, the long vacation, and the drugged night of the festival.

Loneliness is Lucy's destiny in the final pages of Villette, but the reader is implicated in the text in a radical manner. The last suggestion of the supernatural in the book is the banshee voice of the wind which, in spite of all the denials of the supernatural and the unveilings the pseudo-supernatural which have preceded it, is endowed with an unusual mediating status. The knowledge that Paul Emanuel was among the many who perished in the storm at sea is intimated to the reader by the banshee that keens around Lucy; the text is no

more explicit than this. In accepting that Paul is dead, not only is Lucy shown as susceptible to the supernatural but, the reader in an acute instance of his identification with the protagonist, bases his interpretation of the work upon it.

Conclusion

The supernatural reference in Charlotte Brontë's novels does contain an element of gratuitous ornamentation, particularly with regard to the nun-figure in Villette, but for the most part it contributes to enhancing the felt experience of the heroines. As Robert Heilman has written of Jane Eyre, the book gives

dramatic form to impulses and feelings which, because of their depth, or mysteriousness or intensity or ambiguity, or of their ignoring or transcending everyday norms of propriety, increase wonderfully the reality of the novel.⁸

These impulses and feelings characterise what Heilman terms the "new Gothic" mode of Charlotte Brontë; it is a label which claims an affinity between Jane Eyre and Villette, on the one hand, and the Radcliffean school on the other, while the epithet admits that there is an undeniable difference between the "old" and the "new". Another commentator, Margot Peters, has argued that Jane Eyre's

all-prevailing legal language . . . considerably weakens the claim that Charlotte Brontë's novel is a wild tale of romance played out in a never-never land of wicked step-mothers and Gothic dungeons.⁹

Whether or not Jane Eyre has been described in such words

by anyone other than Margot Peters, she is tilting at windmills. There are no dungeons in the novel, and there are no Gothic buildings, only the big houses which were a natural part of the nineteenth-century social structure. There are no step-mothers either, unless one counts Jane herself at the close by her marriage to Rochester; and he, although a darkly romantic figure for much of the novel, is ultimately drawn into domesticity. The values of domestic stability provide the norms against which the action of both Jane Eyre and Villette unfold, and the goals towards which Jane and Lucy aspire. It is this turning away from the exotic which distinguishes Charlotte Brontë's work from the Gothic.

CHAPTER NINE

JOSEPH SHERIDAN LE FANU

The work of Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu includes novels, novellas, short stories and poems, as well as journalism for the Dublin University Magazine. His use of the explicitly supernatural is limited to his shorter works, some examples of which were examined in Part I. Although a master of the ghost story, in his novels Le Fanu limits his use of the supernatural to referential status. Even in Uncle Silas, the sole motivating force of which is the exposure of its protagonist to fear, the story is narrated in strictly materialist terms although most of the characters are followers of Swedenborg's transcendental teaching.

Uncle Silas

Uncle Silas (1864) is the story of Maud Ruthyn's experiences in late adolescence; according to the wish expressed in her father's will, she is to go and live as the ward of her father's brother, Silas, until the time she attains her majority and comes into the estate left by her father. Maud has never yet met Silas who, in the course of a profligate youth, became suspected of the murder of a gaming adversary and ever since has

lived as a recluse at Bartram-Haugh. The intention behind Austin Ruthyn's stipulation is partly a posthumous gesture of reconciliation with his brother, partly a demonstration of his trust in Silas - who stands to inherit should Maud die before marrying. On arrival at her uncle's house, Maud finds Silas aged, sick, addicted to laudanum, a memorable mix of sanctimonious hypocrisy and sudden malevolence. Silas at first hopes to marry Maud off to his unprepossessing son, Dudley, but when it emerges that Dudley has already married in secret, Silas decides to kill her, using the same "sealed room" device that he had employed in killing his crony years before. The elaborate preparation for the murder, and Maud's escape, form the climax of the novel.

As in "Green Tea", Swedenborgianism contributes no little part to the atmosphere of Uncle Silas. The outmoded beliefs of the Swedish illuminatus offer the possibility of an added spiritual dimension to the notably remote and restricted^t social environment of the novel. Maud Ruthyn, the heroine and narrator, is surrounded by those associated with it - her painfully remote father, and both her eventual antagonist, Silas, and her friend Dr Bryerly, - while Swedenborgian concepts are foregrounded at certain moments of the novel. For instance, when Bryerly visits the corpse of Maud's father he delivers a homily on the omnipresence of spirits. Later, at a meeting at Bartram-Haugh, when Maud is beginning to be aware of the eccentricities of her uncle, she finds Dr Bryerly glancing through a book

taken from the library shelves: it is Swedenborg's Heaven and Hell. Maud herself is not presented as a Swedenborgian except in the very final paragraph which presents Maud as the retrospective narrator rather than as the protagonist of years before.

The world is a parable - the habitation of symbols - the phantoms of spiritual things immortal shown in material shape. May the blessed second-sight be mine - to recognize under these beautiful forms of earth the ANGELS who wear them; for I am sure we may walk with them if we will, and hear them speak!¹

The earnestness of Maud here is oddly out of key with her conduct in the preceding narrative; in fact, the coda tells us more about how to read the book than it does about Maud's beliefs and character. The world of the book, with its very strong and simple storyline, may be a parable and symbolic to a degree that is not approached by any of the other works considered in Part II; certainly the spiritual universe of Swedenborgianism, with its hierarchical distribution of angels, informs the topographical structure of Uncle Silas. The passage from Heaven and Hell points out that evil spirits congregate together, separate from the good, and there is an earthly correspondence to this in the location of Bartram-Haugh, which holds Silas, Dudley, Wyat the servant, Madame de la Rougierre, and Dickon. On the other hand, Silas' daughter Milly is redeemed from this society through her contact with Elverston, the home of Lady Knollys. Bryerly's text can be taken as an embedded instruction on how to read Maud's story, indicating not

just the sinister tendencies of the characters gathered around Maud at Bartram-Haugh but also, in linking them with beings of a supernatural order, the enhancement of their status. The human is constantly moving towards the ghostly, so that the ontological security of Maud's world is threatened by the challenging transcendentalism of Swedenborg and by the evil of her uncle.

With Silas in the role of the supernatural agent opposed to the protagonist Maud, the form of the narrative is decided. Just as the apparition of the ghost in the ghost story proper is held over for as long as possible, so is the introduction of Silas delayed until nearly half-way through the book - a remarkable delay considering that he is, as the title indicates, the dominant character throughout. Although he is not present in the earlier part of the novel he is kept in the foreground in several ways: letters arrive from him, the story of his past is told by Lady Knollys, and in particular his portraits impinge strikingly on Maud's consciousness. There are two of these: the large full-length one, and the miniature oval of Silas as a boy aged eight which she has had in her bedroom without knowing whom it represented. The representations ensure that Silas is present incorporeally, and the ambivalence of his status is succinctly caught when Lady Knollys, gazing down at the miniature of Silas, is described commenting

"A very singular face" - - - as one might who was looking down into a coffin.

The divisions between life and death, and between the corporeal and the spiritual, are constantly being tested

in Uncle Silas.

Le Fanu also introduces a subsidiary character who acts as surrogate for Silas in the first part of the novel. Although Madame de la Rougierre is a subsidiary character, her individuality is in no way diminished, and at her entrance into Maud's world is associated with death. As the central consciousness of the text, everything outside her direct experience tends towards otherworldliness, and the tomb of her mother in the grounds of the estate serves as a concrete reminder of death. It also serves as topic for a Swedenborgian exposition by Bryerly, after which Maud sits musing.

Leaning on my hand, I was now looking upon that solemn wood, white and shadowy in the moonlight, where, for a long time after that ramble with the visionary, I fancied the gate of death, hidden only by a strange glamour, and the dazzling land of ghosts, were situate; and I suppose these early associations gave to my reverie about my father's coming visitor a wilder and a sadder tinge. (Ch.IV).

The "visitor" of whom her father has spoken thus obliquely is his coming death, as it turns out, but Maud realises this only in retrospect. Instead, her melancholy reverie is interrupted by an all too real apparition:

On a sudden, on the grass before me, stood an odd figure - a very tall woman in grey draperies, nearly white under the moon, curtsying extraordinarily low, and rather fantastically. (Ch.IV)

When this woman begins to speak her words remain indistinct because of the intervening window-pane; we get a grotesque

parody of the Swedenborgian belief in privileged mystical communication with the spirit world.

Subsequently the governess continues in the role of a ghost. Soon after her arrival in the household the stories of the family ghosts are reactivated by her, when she complains of being disturbed by nighttime footsteps, rustling of silk, and the sounds of breathing in the corridor - sounds which Maud herself hears soon afterwards. It is all a ruse to cover Madame's own nocturnal prowling, and her surreptitious entry into Austin Ruthyn's study thirteen chapters later is described in just these auditory terms:

I had been wakened, I suppose, by a sound which I now distinctly heard, to my great terror, approaching. There was a rustling; there was a breathing. I heard a creaking upon the plank that always creaked when walked upon in the passage. (Ch. XVIII)

The incident casts Madame as a ghost or hallucination seen by Maud, and the terms in which she is evoked reproduce textually the anachronistic qualities of a ghost: just as a revenant manifests itself as an element of the past asserting itself in the present, so in the linear progress of the text a motif and its associated vocabulary from an earlier point recur at a later stage of the book.

As a consequence of having been discovered searching through her employer's desk, Madame de la Rougierre is dismissed from Knowl. As far as the motivating progress of the text is concerned she has served her purpose in initiating the supernatural terror that is to surround Maud. The next event is the sudden death of her father -

the arrival of the mysterious visitor pondered upon by Maud at the moment of Madame's arrival. The equivalence hinted at then is maintained, as the death of Ruthyn midway through the narrative foreshadows that of the Frenchwoman at the end. Alternative attitudes to death are proffered elsewhere in the novel: in the walk by the mausoleum it is a subject for melancholy but not uninspiring reflection, in the manner of eighteenth-century sensibility. For Bryerly it is a relatively unimportant threshold marking a definite accession to the spiritual world. But Maud is denied the support of a structured sensibility or a transcendental philosophy: her father's death is the occasion of a sense experience, mediated to her through sound:

. . . I was roused in an instant by a dreadful crash and a piercing scream from Mrs Rusk. Scream followed scream, wilder and more terror stricken. (Ch.XX)

To this cacophony of sound are added Maud's own shrieks and jangling call-bells from her father's room. There is an emphasis on the corporeality of the dead man, who has fallen across the inside of the door, preventing its being opened without sustained pushing by the servants. The later attack, when Madame de la Rougierre is killed in error for Maud, is similarly conveyed through sound, with Maud present as witness or sense recorder. This scene begins with the scrupulously conveyed sounds as Dudley prepares to enter the room through the trick window: "a very peculiar grating sound", with "something of the character of sawing, only more crunching, and with a faint continued rumble in it" (Ch.LXIV). Then comes

the actual killing, worth quoting at length for its modulation of the auditory range:

Madame was breathing in the deep respiration of heavy sleep. Suddenly but softly he laid, as it seemed to me, his left hand over her face, and nearly at the same instant there came a scrunching blow; an unnatural shriek, beginning small and swelling for two or three seconds into a yell such as are imagined in haunted houses, accompanied by a convulsive sound, as of the motion of running, and the arms drumming on the bed; and then another blow - and with a horrid gasp he recoiled a step or two, and stood perfectly still. I heard a horrible tremor quivering through the joints and curtains of the bedstead - the convulsions of the murdered woman. It was a dreadful sound, like the shaking of a tree and rustling of leaves. Then once more he stepped to the side of the bed, and I heard another of those horrible blows - and silence - and another - and more silence - and the diabolical surgery was ended. For a few seconds, I think, I was on the point of fainting; but a gentle stir outside the door, close to my ear, startled me, and proved that there had been a watcher posted outside. There was a little tapping at the door. (Ch.LXIV)

At the crisis of her experience Maud is reduced to the one acute sense of hearing, and the effective terror of the moment derives not so much from the intrinsic awfulness of the event as from the impression it makes on the concealed witness who is supposed the victim.

Here is one device which solves the problem of Mudford's "The Iron Shroud"; a first^{-person} narrator is able to describe her own murder and survive. Maud is a type of the sensitive corpse.

Hardly is her father buried and his will read than Maud moves into the territory of Silas. On the human and mimetic level of the story he is portrayed as a discontented recluse; on the supernatural and suggestive level he is a ghost, with Bartram-Haugh, outside which he is never seen, as his particular haunt. Before leaving, she hears from Lady Knollys the story of Silas' disgrace as a gambler in his youth, told against the background of a fierce storm (which is rendered aurally).

And so it was like the yelling of phantom hounds and hunters, and the thunder of their coursers in the air - a furious, grand, and supernatural music, which in my fancy made a suitable accompaniment to the discussion of that enigmatical person - martyr - angel - demon - Uncle Silas - with whom my fate was now so strangely linked, and whom I had begun to fear. (Ch.XXVI)

This paragraph, keying in the story of Silas at its outset, marshals the constituents of Maud's experience. The enveloping condition is composed of the metaphorical phantoms and supernatural music, while in the foreground is the figure of Uncle Silas whose enigmatical nature is caught in the successive emendations: "person - martyr - angel - demon - Uncle". At the centre of all this is Maud's perception or "fancy", and the ultimate

state towards which the text moves is there in the last word: "fear".

Maud's own progress is towards Bartram-Haugh and her Uncle Silas. The sixty-mile journey from her parental home to her uncle's is given in detail, for it is a signal that Maud is moving into an alien and unknown environment - compare Pip's first visit to Satis House. That it is a journey into danger is emphasised by the encounter with the gypsy fortune-teller who foresees trouble for Maud, and sells her a charmed pin². Thus equipped, Maud arrives by moonlight at Bartram-Haugh with its "forlorn character of desertion and decay".

Even at the moment of her arrival Maud's subordination to the unseen character who has dominated her since childhood is stressed by the fact that it is she who has to go to meet him; he does not come to the door to greet her. This detail is a significant refinement on the earlier short story version of Uncle Silas, "A Passage in the Secret History of an Irish Countess"³, at the equivalent point in which Uncle Arthur comes forward to meet Lady Margaret. Maud's confrontation with Silas marks the real start of the second part of the story. Seen for the first time in the flesh, Silas still seems to have stepped from the frame of a portrait:

. . . . the light which fell strongly upon his face and figure exhibited him with the forcible and strange relief of a finely painted Dutch portrait. For some time I saw nothing but him.

A face like marble, with a fearful monumental

look, and for an old man, singularly vivid strange eyes, the singularity of which rather grew upon me as I looked; for his eyebrows were still black, though his hair descended from his temples in long locks of the purest silver and fine as silk, nearly to his shoulders.

He rose, tall and slight, a little stooped, all in black, with an ample black velvet tunic, which was rather a gown than a coat, with loose sleeves, showing his snowy shirt some way up the arm, and a pair of wrist buttons, then quite out of fashion, which glimmered aristocratically with diamonds.

I know I can't convey in words an idea of this apparition, drawn as it seemed in black and white
 (Ch.XXXII)

This then is the Silas who is to prey on Maud for the remainder of the novel; she sees him as an apparition, venerable, bloodless, fiery-eyed.

It sometimes seemed as if the curtain opened, and I had seen a ghost.

I had seen him, but he was still an enigma and a marvel. The living face did not expound the past, any more than the portrait portended the future.

(XXXII)

The delay before the eventual attempt on Maud's life, prolonged by the attempt to foist on her a marriage to her cousin Dudley and by the exchanges with Lady Knollys, ensures that knowledge of Silas comes gradually. In his demeanour he is very like a ghost, appearing to Maud intermittently and generally at night. Because of

his age and infirm health he seems to hover between life and death, belonging fully to neither. This state is enhanced by his recourse to laudanum. Although De Quincey's Opium Eater is one of the books mentioned by name, the drug is employed here not for its disorganisation of the senses of the narrator-protagonist, but for the disconcerting effects it has on the behaviour of one person towards another.

Debilitated as he is, yet at the same time posing a threat to the well-being of Maud, Silas is a type of character that recurs in various forms throughout the novels considered in this study, and which we have already encountered archetypally in Bertha Mason - nocturnal, intermittently irrational, and functioning as a rival or antagonist to the central character of the story. Mme Walravens and Miss Havisham are other versions, seen by the narrating consciousness as unpredictable and sinister, embodying intangible forces which surround or oppose the protagonist. The type is discernible in a daylight and more restrained existence: Laura's uncle Mr Fairlie, in The Woman in White, is a pallid hypochondriac whose very inertia exposes her to acute danger. In George Eliot's Felix Holt, Mr Transome, the debilitated father of an imbecile son, is a peripheral but constant reminder to his wife of the fragility of the lives she and Harold and Jermyan have constructed for themselves; a genetic and human failure, his very existence threatens them. The final refinement of this type is Mr Casaubon, and in the series as we have traced it the demon becomes a familiar: Bertha Mason and Casaubon are each first

marriage partners to principals in their respective stories, but the relationship in the case of the former belongs more to the secret and unvisited areas of the house.

Uncle Silas, actively malevolent, exists as a function of Maud's vulnerability, a vulnerability which springs both from her susceptibility to adolescent romanticising before his portrait and actual subordination to him in his presence. Indeed, Maud's passivity at times approaches inertia; her one gesture of defiance of Silas abolishes him and ends the novel, a contrast to Jane Eyre's act of defiance which sets her story in train. Maud is much more of a medium than Jane, transmitting rather than reacting to the stimuli by which she is affected. Apart from the fact that she is the first-person narrator, the only reason why Maud is not overwhelmed by Silas is that the latter is defined by absences: as a portrait, in which his self is absent; as a corpse, in which life is absent, and as a ghost, in which the body is absent. Maud, a passive protagonist who loses the structure of her family home, finds herself in a world of vacancy, sensing but not making sense of events. Her whole experience is a flirtation with nihilism, redeemed only by the transcendental Swedenborgianism of the last paragraph.

Wylder's Hand

Le Fanu's use of a character intermediate between life and death occurs also in The House By The Churchyard

(1863) and Wylder's Hand (1864). In his short stories and novellas, such as The Watcher and Carmilla, it generally takes the form of a literal ghost or vampire, but in the novels it occurs as a motif used more obliquely. The House By The Churchyard, in some respects Le Fanu's most ambitious novel because of the scale that it encompasses, is started by the inadvertent disinterment of the damaged skull of Sturk. This incident is little more than the trigger for the story; later, the lengthy deathbed of the unconscious Sturk, and his trepanning which gives him back the power of speech momentarily in order to name his killer, form the central statement of the motif. In Wylder's Hand there is again a thrusting out from the grave, this time as a climactic revelation of the mystery. Wylder's Hand concerns the murder of Mark Wylder by Stanley Lake, and his subsequent concealment of the crime by his arranging to have letters purporting to come from Wylder posted from various addresses. The discovery of Wylder's body, obviously dead for some considerable time, raises a conflict between two sets of observed facts: his apparent actions are belied by his death.

Wylder's Hand differs markedly from Uncle Silas in that there is no central narrator-protagonist being menaced by external circumstances or by perceptual disorientation. The focus of interest in the story is thrown on the elucidation of the mystery rather than on the bewilderment or tensions it may cause in any one individual. Although the narrator is very much on the

periphery of events, he introduces the idea of concealment or distortion of reality in the very first paragraphs of the novel, with speculations on his own state of "semi-narcotic excitement", his "strange sense of unreality", and the "false notions of our value" inculcated in childhood. The first character mentioned (only incidentally) is spoken of as a phantom. He then goes on to describe the arrival of the letter which brings about his involvement with Wylder in a metaphor whose terms reproduce those of the archetypal entry into haunted house:

" and now, remembering how the breaking of that seal resembled, in my life, the breaking open of a portal through which I entered a labyrinth, or rather a catacomb, where for many days I groped and stumbled, looking for light, and was, in a manner, lost, hearing strange sounds, witnessing imperfectly strange sights, and, at last, arriving at a dreadful chamber - a sad sort of superstition steals over me." (Ch.I)⁴

This metaphor conveys the nature of the experience to be encompassed by the text rather than the progress of the narrator or protagonist. The status of De Cresseron, the narrator, is indeterminate in that he slips out of the narrative a third of the way through, leaving the rest to be told omnisciently until his reappearance at the climax. The change between involved and omniscient narrator is not used for ironic distancing, as it is, for instance, in Bleak House. The self-effacing

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protagonist in Uncle Silas and in the supernatural terror story generally is diffident in order to mediate and actualise events. De Cresseron in Wylder's Hand merely records, and as a result it is left to the arrangement of events, and their relation one to another, rather than to his consciousness, to define the story. Most obviously, the oriental ring bearing the family motto "Resurgam" - also the epitaph on Helen Burns' grave, incidentally - is twice mentioned in the early pages as a hermeneutic pointer to the later literal resurgence of Wylder's dead body, its decomposing hand pointing upwards out of the earth to accuse its murderer, still displaying the ring on its blackened finger. The larger closural pattern here is obviously akin to that of the vengeance-seeking spirit.

As a complement to the grim physicality of the resurgent decomposing body of Wylder, there are repeated suggestions of the ghostly as the narrator is disturbed by the visits of an incoherent but oracular mutterer. A version of the debilitated figure whose characteristics were noticed above in connection with Uncle Silas, the self-proclaimed Lorne has taken the name of an ancestor to whose portrait he bears a close resemblance, but is actually one Julian, a madman who, 'under the terms of a will, has a right to be kept in the house.' Fear of ridicule keeps De Cresseron silent about what he has seen, thus perpetuating his isolation as a witness of the apparently supernatural. Although De Cresseron is only present intermittently in Wylder's Hand, Lorne's

appearances in his ghost rôle are confined to those parts in which De Cresseron is present as witness. As a result Lorne as a type-figure is defined not just by his traits but by his relation to the first-person narrator.

Just prior to Lorne's first appearance, the narrator twice describes himself in terms that place him in the specific situation of a supernatural terror story protagonist:

I began to feel very like a gentleman in a ghost story, watching experimentally in a haunted chamber.
(Ch.XI)

and

I was growing uncomfortably like one of Mrs Ann Radcliffe's heroes - a nervous race of demigods.
(Ch.XII)

As a result, when Lorne does appear soon afterwards he appears to a narrator already conditioned by his own narrative, and the peculiar fear of the situation arises from De Cresseron's sense of himself as a fictional character. Rather than the situation and mode of the fiction dictating the form of the narrative, the reverse is the case.

Lorne's function in the story arises from the eventual fulfilment of his enigmatic pronouncements. By his sudden irruption into the path of Lake's horse, when he is described as "an apparition", he brings about the resolution of the mystery surrounding Wylder's disappearance. Thereafter Lorne is absent from the

text and is heard of no more. There is an obvious convergence of the predictive motto "resurgam" and the prophesying of Lorne, which meet at this point in opposition to the scheming of Lake. Whereas Lake's machinations are wholly matter-of-fact and of the material world, the motto and prophecies are given their suggestion of supernatural force by the reader's closural expectations. His preconception of the text as a closed narrative system lends a weight to the statements which has nothing to do with belief in supernatural prophecy but everything to do with the overall shaping forces of fiction. As at the end of Villette, the quasi-supernatural is given a privileged place in the operation of the text which accords with the formal expectations generated by the activity of reading. Just as a fiction implies an ending, so does a prophecy imply fulfilment.

Conclusion

The two novels by Le Fanu considered in this chapter provide a striking contrast. Uncle Silas is wholly a novel of terror, in which the suggestions of the supernatural are directed towards increasing the vulnerability of the narrator protagonist. In Wylder's Hand the centre of attention is on the external objective world rather than on the condition of a mediating narrator. The supernatural is only one of several threads woven into the book, keying the mystery which is its raison d'être. The discrepancy is not between the world perceived by the protagonist and that

perceived by others, but between two elements of general experience as perceived by all in common. The disorientation is intellectual rather than mental, and marks the emergence of the mystery novel which, at the same time, was receiving fuller treatment in the pages of Wilkie Collins.

CHAPTER TEN

WILKIE COLLINS

The Woman in White and The Moonstone, Wilkie Collins' two great successes of the 1860s, are frequently thought of as marking the appearance of the mystery novel, and the latter in particular that of the detective mystery in fiction¹. The process of fictional mystification has close affinities with that of supernatural terror, for in each the protagonist and reader participate in an epistemological bewilderment. This is early established in The Woman in White when Walter Hartright describes his reactions on meeting Marian Halcombe, whose physical grace is so markedly at odds with her facial ugliness. To see her

was to feel a sensation oddly akin to the
helpless discomfort familiar to us all in sleep,
when we recognize yet cannot reconcile the
anomalies and contradictions of a dream.²

The appeal to dream experience here offers an indication of the larger development of the book, in which the anomalies and contradictions nurtured by Glyde and Fosco involve their victims in experience that becomes as delusive as a dream. As well as this, at a crucial

moment in the narrative the visionary dream of Marian Halcombe promises a secure fulfilment in the future. This latter aspect of dream experience was brought to the fore by Collins in Armadale, where the entire text is the fulfilment of Allan Armadale's dream, which has been recorded by him with a scrupulousness worthy of any Blackwood's protagonist.

Collins' early short stories, collected together in the volume After Dark (1856), show some recognisable Blackwood's traits. "Sister Rose"³, set during the reign of terror, has much of its action dominated by the prospect of imminent execution on the guillotine. The best-known of Collins' short stories, "A Terribly Strange Bed"⁴, with its steadily descending bed canopy designed to suffocate a sleeper mechanically, is a variant of Mudford's "Iron Shroud". There is one particular echo of the earlier story; Vivenzio notes the contraction of his cell by counting the windows as they disappear one by one. In Collins' story Faulkner realises that the canopy is moving down on him as the feathers on the hat in the portrait disappear. The mental state of the protagonist is also familiar: "every one of my senses seemed to be preternaturally sharpened". Yet while his senses are highly strung, he is reduced to an almost immovable trance by the danger he is in, managing to move aside from the murderous apparatus only at the last minute. The direct combination of perception and immobility does not figure so largely in either The Woman in White or The

Moonstone, although in the latter, as shall be seen, the manipulation of the protagonist's senses is crucial to the dénouement.

Both of Collins' novels rest rather on the incontrovertibility of apparently contradictory facts, and their documentary method of narration serves to anchor events in everyday experience and to establish a strongly mimetic surface. We are not to doubt the various versions of what happens, but to reconcile them. Each book is a collection of first-person narratives in which the involved characters relate events as perceived by them. The presentation of several first-person accounts side by side enables Collins to mediate to the reader a corpus of knowledge on which judgment is invited.

The Woman in White

In The Woman in White the documentary presentation of the narrative has a thematic parallel in the text. Deeds and documents are crucial to the plot, and the climactic moment of the meeting between Walter and Laura takes place by the inscription on the tombstone recording Laura's "death". The ultimate effect aimed at in The Woman in White is one of closural resolution, with the anomalies disposed of, the dream awoken from, and the true record established. The force of this resolution is enhanced by the way in which the possibility of the supernatural is raised in the course of the novel in order to amplify the resonance of the contradictions. For instance, the villainous Count

Fosco, a character who, as far as the plot is concerned is present simply to enlarge the menace emanating from the much more run-of-the-mill villain Sir Percival Glyde, derives his sinister aura from the suggestion that he has exceptional psychic powers. There is a brief parenthetical mention of his knowledge of mesmerism, and his own account or confession of his part in the crime digresses at one stage to hymn his skill in chemistry and the knowledge it gives him.

Mind, they say, rules the world. But what rules the mind? The body. The body (follow me closely here) lies at the mercy of the most omnipotent of all potentates - the Chemist. Give me - Fosco - chemistry; and when Shakespeare has conceived Hamlet, and sits down to execute the conception - with a few grains of powder dropped into his daily food, I will reduce his mind, by the action of his body, till his pen pours out the most abject drivel 5

Fosco is no mere alchemical poisoner; indeed, in the particular instance of which he is writing his powers were used to maintain life rather than to destroy. His interest is rather in the physiological control of the mental processes.

The evil in Fosco pertains to his very mundanity, and the adept way in which he cocoons himself in an impenetrable envelope of social graces that have about them the rank air of excess. The touch of the unnatural which enhances his menacing quality is provided by his foreignness - he is indubitably alien to his environment,

and this aspect is skilfully managed by Collins to surround the Count with an impression of intimacy combined with strangeness⁶. In addition, the control exerted by him over his menagerie of pets implies what is never fully stated: an unwholesome ability to manipulate other creatures.

But while the Count keeps on this side of the factual, there is one episode in The Woman in White which makes use of a conventional supernatural device, and that is Marian's dream. This forms part of a carefully orchestrated movement midway in the novel, when Marian has moved to Blackwater Park, the home of Sir Percival and Laura in the south of England. Ample warning has been given in various ways that Laura's wedding will turn out to be damaging to her, but the nature of the threat that it poses has been left unspecified. Marian's experiences as recorded by her in her diary reveal her as a sensitive protagonist; the tenor of her observations on her arrival at the Park to await the return of the newly-married couple establishes her environment as suitably gloomy:

Eleven o'clock has just struck, in a ghostly and solemn manner A large dog has been woke, apparently by the sound of the bell, and is howling and yawning drearily, somewhere round a corner. I hear echoing footsteps in passages below, and the iron thumping of bolts and bars at the house door.⁷

Later, a visit to the grounds brings her to the shores of the lake (presumably the eponymous "black water"):

. . . . I saw that the ground on its farther side was damp and marshy, overgrown with rank grass and dismal willows. The water, which was clear enough on the open sandy side, where the sun shone, looked black and poisonous opposite to me, where it lay deeper under the shade of the spongy banks, and the rank overhanging thickets and tangled trees. The frogs were croaking, and the rats were slipping in and out of the shadowy water, like live shadows themselves⁸

As Marian remarks in her diary, the house is linked with death through the killing of the stray spaniel.

I wish my first day at Blackwater Park had not been associated with death, though it is only the death of a stray animal.⁹

Equally, it provides an association with Mrs Catherick, the mother of "the woman in white"; Anne Catherick and death are brought together ominously, with Marian established as the responsive consciousness alive to the hints and omens.

The dream of Marian also has the effect of binding the plot; events prefigured in the dream at one point later take place in fact, thus giving the work both resolution and closure. The dream belongs to a pattern extending over the greater part of the story, and is worth looking at in some detail.

It begins just after the stressful attempt to make Laura sign over her marriage portion to her husband. The Count, apparently, has intervened to postpone the

the signing until a more propitious moment, and he informs Marian of the delay. He leaves her astonished at this turn in events, and, alone, her mind immediately becomes the area of action.

I felt these impressions, but my mind seemed to share the exhaustion of my body, and I was in no condition to dwell on them with any useful reference to the doubtful present or the threatening future. I tried a second time to run out and find Laura, but my head was giddy and my knees trembled under me. . . . I passed gradually into a strange condition, which was not waking - for I knew nothing of what was going on about me, and not sleeping - for I was conscious of my own repose. In this state my fevered mind broke loose from me, while my weary body was at rest, and in a trance, or day-dream of my fancy - I know not what to call it - I saw Walter Hartright.¹⁰

In this passage preparatory to the actual dream, or series of visions, it is fully evident that the mind is undisciplined yet stimulated ("fevered"). The whole experience is presented as an assault on the mental state of Marian, and it is a mental state that exists in the peculiar no-man's-land that is the overlap between sleep and waking. The initial mention of time sequence in "doubtful present" and "threatening future" presages the import of the immediately succeeding dream-visions. Three of these show images of Walter at moments when his life is imperilled

during his sojourn in South America - events which, we later learn, actually did take place. The visionary sympathy of Marian focuses at first on events roughly contemporaneous with the events being recorded in her diary. The fourth and final image offered to her mind is of Walter "kneeling by a tomb of white marble" while "the shadow of a veiled woman rose out of the grave beneath and waited by his side".

This last clearly enacts the moment of revelation in Limmeridge churchyard when Walter, standing by the supposed grave of Laura with its white marble stone, is approached by the veiled woman who turns out to be Laura. The only witness to this meeting is Marian, present in a role analogous to that of a dreamer, and she refers back to her dream as she sees the two about to meet. Thus the prediction is fulfilled, giving a sense of completion to one aspect of the story and hinting indirectly that the remaining problems surrounding Laura will also be resolved.

The churchyard scene is only part of the fulfilment of Marian's dream. The fourth and last image is that of Walter at the grave of Laura, as he thinks, but in fact at the grave of Anne Catherick. Marian's dream of the scene is brought to an end by the entrance of Laura who announces that she has met with Anne Catherick whose name, as was remarked above, has already been associated with death through the shooting of the dog. Laura's entrance is a real event of the external world but it is placed by Marian in a

continuation of her dream state:

The strange stunned feeling which had taken possession of me still remained. But a growing conviction that the complications which had long threatened to gather about her, and to gather about me, had suddenly closed fast around us both, was now beginning to penetrate my mind.¹¹

Eventually it takes a tangible object, a brooch for which Laura had gone looking, to anchor Marian once more in reality; by concentrating on that she is able to steady the whirl and confusion of her thoughts.

There is another, much earlier, incident which also casts forward to the meeting in the churchyard. It too involves Marian, and it is narrated in the opening pages of Walter's story. Marian reads her mother's letter describing her fondness for "the little Anne Catherick", and as the passage describing her resemblance to Laura is reached Walter notices the marked similarity between Laura and "the woman in white". It is a complex moment of recognition, all the more so for its coming so early in the novel. The resemblance of Anne and Laura as children prompts an awareness of the resemblance between "the woman in white" and Laura as young women; just as the past is evoked by the letter so does the whole incident look forward to the graveyard scene. Mrs. Fairlie, with unconscious irony, terms Anne "the living likeness" of Laura in her letter; she is to end up as a dead likeness. "Ominous" is the word used to characterise the

resemblance between the two women, and there is an explicit look ahead to later events in Walter's noticing how his reactions seemed to be "like casting a shadow on the future". The episode ends with a comment by Marian that is only half-playful:

I thought that men, in the nineteenth century, were above superstition.¹²

Laura herself also has a moment which is a prevision of the churchyard scene while on her honeymoon in Rome:

. . . . we had ridden out together to the tomb of Cecilia Metella. The sky was calm and lovely - and the grand old ruin looked beautiful - and the remembrance that a husband's love had raised it in the old time to a wife's memory, made me feel more tenderly and anxiously towards my husband than I had ever felt yet. "Would you build such a tomb for me, Percival?" I asked him "If I do build you a tomb," he said, "it must be with your own money".¹³

He will indeed build a tomb for her in Limmeridge.

The train of events which begins with Walter's meeting with the fleeing Anne Catherick ushers in an element of the ghostly, as is made clear in the later conversations with the schoolboy Jacob. Anne is endowed with all the conventional attributes of a ghost or wraith figure: whiteness, appearances at night or in churchyards, and the ability to move mysteriously from place to place and to make enigmatic utterances about the future. Her letter to Laura Fairlie which is intercepted by Marian counsels against the intended

marriage to Sir Percival Glyde. The letter takes the form of an account of a dream, beginning with an appeal to scriptural authority:

Do you believe in dreams? I hope, for your own sake, that you do. See what Scripture says about dreams and their fulfilment (Gen xl.8, xli.25; Daniel iv.18-25); and take the warning I send you before it is too late.¹⁴

These two passages of the Old Testament refer to Daniel's interpretation of the Pharaoh's dream and Betteshazzar's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's. A complex system of warnings is being set up: dreams are unexpected enigmatic premonitory pronouncements that require belief and comprehension; the letter itself, conveying the burden of a dream, is similarly unexpected, enigmatic and premonitory.

The first two "epochs" of The Woman in White are underpinned by a potential supernaturalism which is established from the first mysterious night-time encounter with spectral figure of Anne Catherick. It is maintained through dreams and suggestions until the meeting by the grave, where the erstwhile "spectre" has in fact lost identity and life, while the real Laura has also lost identity and is denied life. The meeting itself, elaborately set up by Collins, is undoubtedly effective, with the reader participating in Walter's amazement. But it is a momentary effect, marking as it does the end of the second of the three epochs and also the end of the possibility of supernatural or occult agencies at work. The final epoch of the story

brings the explanation of how Laura comes to be alive to belie the inscription on the tombstone, and is mainly concerned with the pursuit and arraignment of Glyde and Count Fosco.

The possibility of the supernatural is introduced to extend the range of mimetic possibility, to shade the ordeal of Marian, Laura and Walter. In Jane Eyre the intention of the explained supernatural was to stress the imaginative development of Jane; in The Woman in White the effect is rather to mystify the reader - it offers a further extension of the factors to be considered before narrowing down to the true account of events. When the supernatural aura, with its accompanying emotion of fear - "dread" and "terror" are the feelings which are evoked by the meeting of Laura and Walter, not joy - has been disposed of, Collins still prolongs the format of an apparition story: only the reactions of Walter and Marian are described at this meeting, while Laura simply appears and acts. As a ghost figure she is an emotional blank, veiled and devoid of feeling.

The chase is the dominant thread through the third section, with Walter hunting up details of Glyde's past. The epoch is characterised by a scrupulous attention to the revelation of fact, which provides a marked counterpoint to the eerie enhancement of the earlier epochs. At the same time the blank of Laura's mind and personality is gradually filled in. For a while her mind even becomes the arena of action as

Marian and Walter turn aside from their work of detection to feed information into Laura. Kyrtle the lawyer puts the case succinctly, emphasising that as far as the hunt for redress goes, Laura offers nothing.

You explain this circumstance by entering into the state of her mind, and deducing from it a metaphysical conclusion. I don't say the conclusion is wrong - I only say that the jury will take the fact of her contradicting herself, in preference to any reason for the contradiction you can offer.¹⁵

In a very real sense Laura becomes a shadow of her former self, bereft of her name, her status, her vitality and her memory.

The most notable and extreme incident in the third epoch is the burning alive of Sir Percival Glyde in the vestry. His death, with the text's insistence on "the man, suffocating, burning, dying so near us all, so utterly beyond our reach!", shows Walter in a variant of the role in which he has already been encountered several times. At the very outset of the story he is strongly established as a rescuer figure, saving Anne Catherick from her pursuers and Professor Pesca from drowning. It is his part in these two incidents together which brings about his involvement with Laura, and eventually his love for her finds its expression in a rescue of her from a figurative death, as symbolised in the graveyard meeting.

When at last Walter and Glyde meet it is also in a graveyard, and Walter has again been acting as a rescuer -

this time unsuccessfully.

At first, I saw nothing under them but a coarse canvas cloth. The dripping of the rain on it was audible in the dreadful silence. I looked up, along the cloth; and there, at the end, stark and grim and black, in the yellow light - there, was his dead face.

So, for the first and last time, I saw him. So the Visitation of God ruled it that he and I should meet.¹⁶

This aspect of Walter is again apparent when he eventually catches up with Fosco. Walter makes an arrangement which offers the Count a chance to escape in return for a written explanation of the events surrounding the faked death of Laura.

The interview with Fosco adds to the closural pattern of the book already noted in connection with the fulfilment of the dream. Fosco is not introduced until a relatively late stage in the book, but his eventual presence is prepared for by another character encountered in the very first pages: Professor Pesca. Like Fosco, Pesca is an Italian, but outside this resemblance the relationship is one of contrast. The two are opposed in stature, manner and morality. Fosco is huge, Pesca small; Fosco is suave, Pesca effervescent; and Fosco is evil while Pesca is good. In the end it is through the brotherhood to which Pesca belongs that the Count is killed, so completing the pattern.

Both villains meet deservedly violent ends through

the activity of Walter but without his having to perform the killing himself; indeed his natural impulse is to offer them life. Nevertheless, in the third epoch of The Woman in White he is very much an avenging pursuer; the final section is a pursuit narrative in the manner of Caleb Williams but told from the side of the pursuer.

There is another point of resemblance to Caleb Williams, and that is the constant appeal to documentary evidence and the legal establishment of truth and right. Glyde's initial crime is to tamper with parish records, and it is in attempting to conceal the fraudulent details of his birth that he meets his death. The main attack on his wife consists of his forcing her to sign over her personal wealth to him. Throughout there is constant recourse to lawyers. And the story itself, of course, is set out in the form of a documentary assembly of evidence, "as the story of an offence against the laws is told in Court"¹⁷. As a result there is a constant interaction between event and verification, seen at its most striking in the graveyard scene where Walter is confronted simultaneously by the living Laura and the statement of her death engraved on her tombstone. But the effect here is rather different from that in Caleb Williams or The Justified Sinner. In those, the focus of the narrative was on the terror of an individual, and the disparity between personal experience and the facts as established by the legal process was left unresolved in order to heighten the impact. In The Woman in White the narrative moves towards the discovery and establishment of the facts;

it is in the course of and as a result of this that Glyde and Fosco are disposed of. In order to enhance the achievement, the framing of events is enlarged to encompass the possibility of the supernatural, although the possibility is raised simply to be eliminated.

"The Notting Hill Mystery"

Within two years of The Woman in White a story called "The Notting Hill Mystery" was serialised in Once a Week in 1862. This anonymous work, reprinted only once¹⁸, is almost a pastiche of Collins' novel although only a fifth of the length. It too is a strictly documentary novel, in the format of a report made by a private investigator for a Life Assurance Association following the mysterious death of a heavily insured woman. As the complicated plot is unravelled through the painstakingly assembled evidence of Mr Henderson it becomes apparent that the villain of the piece is Baron R --, a mutant of Count Fosco. Like Fosco he has interests in medical science and mesmerism, but not having Fosco's psychological acuity he has to rely exclusively on these skills; and, as in The Woman in White, the plot turns on the unknown existence of a sister. Those who join in the long-standing criticism of Collins' work that his novels are weak on character should compare them with "The Notting Hill Mystery", which is quite devoid of character; its appeal, nevertheless considerable, rests entirely on the manipulation of the plot.

This is based on the abduction in childhood of the identical twin sister of Mrs Anderton; as an adult the abducted twin is married by Baron R-- who has discovered that should Mr and Mrs Anderton predecease his wife without bearing issue then his wife, and consequently himself, would inherit a large fortune. In order to ensure that he will not be at too great a loss should his wife die first, he insures her life heavily, which is what sets the investigation afoot. The Baron's method of first disposing of Mrs Anderton makes use of the psychic sympathy which exists between her and her unrecognized sister. By mesmerising his wife the Baron is able to control Mrs Anderton; by administering poison to the one he kills the other. It is a remarkably ingenious plot, although a weak story. As in The Woman in White there is a profusion of documents (witnesses' statements, plans, diary extracts, etc.) The excerpts from the diaries of physicians attending Mrs Anderton and her sister read very differently to Warren's Passages, impressing by the impersonal tone of the account of diagnostic detail. The author is at pains to cite precedents for the sympathy between the twins, quoting the Zoist of October 1854, in which such a case was reported.

The Moonstone

The collocation of documents in these stories amounts to a form of multiple narration in which the shifts of perspective serve to break down the certainty

of personal experience. Instead of placing an isolated world of dreams or extremes, as had done the Blackwood's stories, so that there are internal contradictions in experience due to the stress on perception, the multiple narration, operating in a much lower key, presents accounts of apparently ordinary events which set up a tension with other accounts of related or parallel events. The contradictions are no longer internal. The technique is seen at its most developed in The Moonstone where the different accounts, combined with the reticence of Rachel Verinder and the action of Rosanna Spearman, cast a cloud of mystery over the disappearance of the moonstone. The novel is generated by this mystery, and once the contradictions are resolved and the gaps filled, the book ends. This method of narration is parodied on two occasions in the actual telling of the story. In Gabriel Betteredge's account of Franklin Blake's enthusiasm for German philosophy, the permutations of the Subjective and Objective points-of-view reproduce the movements of the narrative. Franklin rounds off a discussion of the mystery of the Colonel's legacy to Rachel with

There is a totally different explanation from yours, Betteredge, taking its rise in a Subjective-Objective point-of-view. From all I can see, one interpretation is just as likely to right as the other.¹⁹

Later, bemused by Rachel's stony attitude to him after the theft, Franklin seeks solace in Betteredge's sherry and a more garbled version of such ideas. Although it

is all rather weak fun poked at continental philosophy, it nevertheless points to the manipulation of narrative point-of-view within the text of The Moonstone, something that is even more firmly indicated in the pages leading up to the physiological experiment which forms the climax of the novel. There, Ezra Jennings emerges as a type of researching physician portrayed by Bulwer in A Strange Story and with antecedents as far back as Warren.

Listening to the delirious muttering of Mr Candy, his sick colleague, Mr Jennings believes that he can reconstruct an account of what happened on the night the diamond disappeared. Jennings is engaged in writing a book on the brain and the nervous system (what else?), and he remarks

It has often occurred to me in the course of my medical practice, to doubt whether we can justifiably infer - in cases of delirium - that the loss of the faculty of speaking connectedly, implies of necessity the loss of the faculty of thinking connectedly as well.

The reference of this to the disjointed narrative method of the novel is immediately apparent, and Jennings' hypothesis is borne out by the particular instance of Candy's words. As Jennings says,

. . . . after putting the broken sentences together I found the superior faculty of thinking going on, more or less connectedly, in my patient's mind, while the inferior faculty of expression was in a state of almost incomplete incapacity and confusion.

Here in little is the principle of the larger construction of the novel which holds out a similar problem of reconstruction. Ezra Jennings is eventually able to resolve both puzzles together.

The Moonstone avoids the suggestions of the supernatural which are present in The Woman in White. Again, in spite of the fragmentary construction there is a strong sense of closure. The first and last narratives are of the moonstone in India. The climax which brings the solution of the mystery is a re-enactment of the opening event which produced it, providing an element of anachronism that is akin to that of the revenant.

The diamond itself is introduced with a whiff of the mysterious because of its transmission through Colonel Herncastle, an eccentric reprobate, opium addict and chemical experimenter. In a way the occult properties attributed to the diamond in India are carried over to England when it is suggested as being behind the dissension and bad temper which mars Rachel's birthday party. Like the Colonel, Ezra Jennings is an opium-addict and experimenter, but is wholly a force for good. He emerges as a blend of archetypes: a fugitive from slander, in the style of Caleb Williams, a scholarly recluse, in the style of Eugene Aram, and an addict of opium, in the style of De Quincey's opium-eater - the last-named's Confessions is among the books brandished at Blake when Jennings wants to persuade him of the feasibility of the drug experiment (the other volumes are all straightforward text books

of physiology).

In the experiment the arena of action becomes quite explicitly the brain of Franklin Blake, who is established as being a person of natural sensitivity (a condition exacerbated by his giving up of tobacco). Jennings outlines his hypothesis of what happened on the night of the moonstone's disappearance as follows:

Under the stimulating influence (of opium), the latest and most vivid impressions left on your mind - namely, the impressions relating to the Diamond - would be likely, in your morbidly sensitive nervous condition, to become intensified in your brain, and would subordinate to themselves your judgment and your will exactly as an ordinary dream subordinates to itself your judgment and your will.

The state that Jennings is describing is in fact a mental equivalent to physical imprisonment, with the autonomous faculties of the mind subjugated to an external stimulus. The familiar references to the "impressions" and a "morbidly sensitive nervous condition" indicate the physiological basis of the experiment, and the passage which Jennings quotes verbatim from William Carpenter, who wrote on comparative and human physiology, is a more scientific statement of the retentiveness of sense-impressions as put forward by Ferriar and Hibbert:

There seems much ground for the belief, that every sensory perception which has once been recognized 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.

This is belief which had earlier been advanced as explaining apparitions and, as with revenant ghosts, the experiment in The Moonstone is characterised by a breakdown of the sequential chronology of previously received impressions, as the past actions of Blake are reproduced in the present. All the action during the experiment is centred on the brain of Blake and its reactions. Jennings takes the utmost care in readying it. He checks the books in the bedroom (among them MacKenzie's Man of Feeling) and remarks ironically that they are

all classical works . . . possessing the one great merit of wakening nobody's interest, and exciting nobody's brain.

the weather is similarly neutral:

Without professing to believe in omens, it was at least reassuring to find no direct nervous influences - no stormy or electric perturbations - in the atmosphere.

And throughout Jennings observes Blake for physiological signs of the state of his brain.

In preparation, execution and observation the experiment is carried out as nearly as possible with the rigorous methodology of a laboratory experiment. The close reporting and appeal to written authorities,

with Bruff the lawyer being asked to provide a written account of what he witnesses, perpetuate the techniques evolved by Blackwood's. But there are two significant changes from the Blackwood's stories. As in "The Notting Hill Mystery", the subject of the experiment is observed from the outside: although Blake is one of the principal narrators of The Moonstone, he does not narrate the crucial episode during which he is the centre of investigation. Furthermore, unlike the majority of the Blackwood's protagonists, he is a voluntary experimentalist.

Conclusion

Although Collins has been justly praised for the ingenuity of his plotting, it is not his sole source of strength. The introduction of a supernatural reference broadens the scope of possible experience, offering an explanation of events - but not a rational explanation. That all will ultimately be accountable in the domain of the actual, with the aid of coincidence, does not diminish the momentary power of the supernatural which is introduced for definite and limited purposes. The mental disorientation of the reader which is the inherent aim of Collins' novels is apparent in the text through the fragmented documentary narration; the world of the fiction is rife with irreconcilables, as were the worlds of the earlier confessional novels. A similar disorientation is apparent in the dream and opium-induced states (and the mesmeric influence of The Notting Hill Mystery). In The Woman in White

Fosco claimed in his 'statement' that the mind and its activities are subject to the physiological condition of the body; the mystery of The Moonstone, for all allusions to eastern mysticism, ultimately proves to be a sustained demonstration of his claim.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

GEORGE ELIOT

In the work of Wilkie Collins motifs and narrative patterns associated with the supernatural terror story are prominent, extending the range of possible experience in the fictional world. This correspondingly enhances the process of demystification in the movement of the narrative as it narrows to a state of objective certainty which is the basic motivating force of The Woman in White and The Moonstone. In George Eliot's work, however, the presence of such motifs and patterns is generally embedded into the structure of her fictions and their operation is more unobtrusive but nevertheless demonstrable. In the third of the Scenes of Clerical Life, "Janet's Repentance", the vivid experiential extension brought about by the imminence of death takes over the narrative after Dempster's accident. Like the description of Arthur Huntingdon's death in The Tenant of Wildfell Hall, it is very much in the manner of the deathbed scenes detailed by Warren in Diary of a Late Physician. Dempster's striking at the bedclothes on which he fancies he sees first powder, then black lice and a variety of animals, might be taken from "A Scholar's Deathbed", Chapter IV of the Diary, in which the dying man is spoken

of as "picking and clawing the bedclothes". Warren gives a physiological explanation, quoting Sir Charles Bell:

This proceeds from an appearance of motes or flies passing before the eyes, and is occasioned by an affection of the retina, producing in it a sensation similar to that produced by the impression of images; and what is deficient in sensation the imagination supplies: for although the resemblance betwixt those diseased affections of the retina, and the sensation conveyed to the brain may be very remote, yet, by that slight resemblance, the idea usually associated with the sensation will be excited in the mind. - Bell's Anatomy voll iii, pp 57, 58.

Two years after Bell's Anatomy of the Brain (1811) which Warren cites, Ferriar had written of the same phenomenon in his Essay Towards a Theory of Apparitions:

When the brain is partially irritated, the patient fancies that he sees spiders crawling over his bed-clothes, or person; or beholds them covering the roof and walls of his room. (p. 32)

Dempster's hallucinations are not the avenging spirits of the supernatural but the delusions of a psychological state of which the pathological condition is the equivalent of moral morbidity.

"The Lifted Veil"

Ideas "excited in the mind", to use Bell's phrase, are very much the staple of George Eliot's only overtly supernatural story, "The Lifted Veil", published in

Blackwood's in July 1859¹. Gillian Beer has already pointed out a number of parallels between "The Lifted Veil" and Middlemarch, suggesting that the narrator-protagonist of the former, Latimer, with his abnormally heightened awareness, figures forth the situation of George Eliot as novelist². The affinity to Felix Holt, the Radical is even more marked, for the condition presented supernaturally in the short story recurs in the novel in a socially realistic context; Latimer's bitter remark at the opening of "The Lifted Veil",

"it is the living only who cannot be forgiven - the living only from whom men's indulgence and reverence are held off, like the rain by the hard east wind,"

might have been spoken by Mrs Transome, and the culminating achievement of Esther at Transome Court is to bring about her forgiveness by Harold. The movement through time inherent in the appearance of a revenant figure underlies the story of Felix Holt, which begins with the return of Harold Transome to his family home. The chronological shift in "The Lifted Veil" is rather different in that it is the future rather than the past which irrupts into the present time. As one result of his foreknowledge the first-person narrator is able to describe his own death, outlining the approach of that moment which he knows will be his last and expiring finally in a series of dots If nothing else, this is a possible solution to the problem of the protagonist's death encountered by Mudford in "The Iron Shroud", another Blackwood's story but preceding

that of George Eliot by thirty years³. As well as the intermittent ability to visualize future moments of his life, Latimer is also given an insight into the unexpressed thoughts and emotions of those close to him. This dual clairvoyance, of insight and foresight, deprives Latimer of the normal emotional cushion of comfortable ignorance and renders his own existence intolerable. It is an obvious variation of the heightening of perception characteristic of the terror story, and is apparently physiological in origin, resulting from an illness suffered in youth:

Was it that my illness had wrought some happy change in my organization - given a firmer tension to my nerves - carried off some dull obstruction?

I had often read of such effects - in works of fiction at least. Nay; in genuine biographies I had read of the stabilizing or exalting influence of some diseases on the mental powers.

Apart from being unique as the only supernatural story in George Eliot's fiction, "The Lifted Veil" is also distinguished by concomitant narrative modes. Significantly, it is the only prose fiction by her to be written in the first-person, with the result of bringing the psychological responses of Latimer even more to the fore while diminishing the status of action - he is a singularly inactive hero. Furthermore, it is the only one of her works to manipulate chronological sequence; mimetic-temporal interference (as opposed to narrative temporal interference) is a sign of the supernatural,

and here the two go hand in hand to create a movement markedly different from the normal onward progression of her narratives.

The responsiveness of Latimer's personality to mental stimuli is insisted upon, with words like "sensitive" used repeatedly in describing him in the opening section of the story: "I was certainly a very sensitive child"; "my nature was of the sensitive, unpractical order"; "my vague mind, susceptible and unobservant," etc. The illness comes as an additional abuse of a sensibility already strained by the enforced study of uncongenial matter:

I was hungry for human deeds and humane motions so I was to be plentifully crammed with the mechanical powers, the elementary bodies, and the phenomena of electricity and magnetism.

This disastrously unsuitable course of study is decided upon as the result of a phrenological examination of the child Latimer by one Mr Letherall

who one day took my small head between his large hands, and pressed it here and there in an exploratory, suspicious manner - then placed each of his great thumbs on my temples, and pushed me a little way from him, and stared at me with glittering spectacles. The contemplation appeared to displease him, for he frowned sternly, and said to my father, drawing his thumbs across my eyebrows -

"The deficiency is there, sir - there; and here", he added, touching the upper sides of my head, "here is the excess. That must be brought

out, sir, and this must be laid to sleep."

George Eliot is obviously using her own first-hand experience as a subject of phrenological analysis in this passage. "The Lifted Veil" was written after the moderate rejection of phrenology recorded in the letters to Bray⁴; nevertheless, although the text presents a hostile view of Letherall and his activity, it is noticeable that the accuracy of his findings is not impugned. The damage to Latimer's "organisation" - here used in its narrow phrenological sense⁵ - does not result from the unreliability of the information yielded by phrenology, but from a misguided attempt to counter what it has revealed through an inapt education. Letherall's reading corresponds remarkably closely to what the narrator tells us of his own character. Although the text avoids stating so explicitly, the phrenological map of the brain would have it that the area just above the eyebrows, in which Letherall perceives signs of deficiency, is indicative of a person's faculties of calculation and order; the upper side of the head, the area of excess in Latimer, is associated with Ideality and Sublimity. In the broader divisions, the front of the head is revelatory of the Intellectual faculties, and the crown of the Sentiments⁶. Latimer's "sentimentality" preponderates over his intellect, as is evident from the early stages of his story which are set in Geneva. He sees himself as a solitary, very much in the manner of the earlier inhabitant, Rousseau, on whom he models himself. Latimer's exceptional sensibility brings "a fatal solitude of soul in the society of one's

fellow men".

All this contributes to the establishing of Latimer as a suitable protagonist for the moments of clairvoyance which subsequently afflict him. Although a person of exceptional sensibility, his ordeal stems ultimately from a malfunction of his physiological system. The extension of Latimer's perception, while at first causing a secret and puzzled gratification, soon exposes him to areas of knowledge which terrify by virtue of completeness. In this way the typical imbalance between stimulus and response is achieved, as Latimer is exposed to a range of stimuli far wider than normal. Equally typical of the supernatural terror story is his progressive isolation. While in no way gregarious at the outset, in the latter stages of the story an attitude of positive misanthropy is forced on him, and he becomes a recluse in his own house, keeping apart from his friends, his servants and his wife. This change in his social condition is linked to a change in his perception of his own existence:

All that was personal in me seemed to be suffering a gradual death, so that I was losing the organ through which the personal agitations and projects of others could affect me It was as if the relation between me and my fellow-men was more and more deadened, and my relation to what we call the inanimate was quickened into new life.

The climactic event of the story is an actual enactment of this figurative statement, an event in direct line of descent from the other Blackwood's stories of three

decades before: the momentary reanimation of a corpse through an experiment of blood transfusion. Henry James criticised this incident as having little connection with the visionary aberration which is central to the story⁷, but Eliot's text comments explicitly that the maid's posthumous revelation of the plot by Latimer's wife, Bertha, to kill him is of a kind with the sufferings brought on by his clairvoyance:

This scene seemed of one texture with the rest of my existence: horror was my familiar, and this new revelation was only like my old pain recurring with new circumstances.

The resuscitation of the corpse is, literally, the inanimate becoming "quickenened into new life", and its revenantal warning provokes Latimer to apostrophize on moral nature.

Great God! Is this what it is to live again to wake up with our unuttered curses rising to our lips, with our muscles ready to act out their half-committed sins?

In the generic context of the supernatural terror story Latimer stands as a conventionally passive protagonist rendered ineffective by his abnormal capabilities of perception. In the context of moral predicaments as depicted in George Eliot's fiction he anticipates, by contrast and by parallelism, a situation that recurs elsewhere in her writing without the same sensational or supernatural overtones. Maggie Tulliver's journey downstream with Stephen is for her a journey into isolation. Furthermore, it is the physical

actualization of a metaphorical statement made earlier in the novel; listening to Stephen's singing she had been "borne along by a wave too strong for her". The literal journey begins with her being reduced to a state of passivity before "this stronger presence that seemed to bear her along without any act of her own will" (Bk VI, Ch. 13). But the pervasive moral ramifications of her journey govern Maggie's perception of experience; instead of her awareness being heightened as it would be in a terror story,

Maggie was hardly conscious of having said or done anything decisive. All yielding is attended with a less vivid consciousness than resistance; it is the submergence of our own personality by another (VI, 13,).

Latimer's suffering springs from the laying bare of another's personality. Maggie on the other hand finds her own personality being dominated and enveloped by Stephen's, and in the passage just quoted the primary concern is not the sensations and perceptions of the protagonist but her diminished capacity for moral evaluation. The journey downstream is part of an extended symbolic sequence running through the book, but the isolation felt by Maggie here looks forward particularly to the resounding last sentence of the narrative proper:

The boat disappeared, but brother and sister had gone down in an embrace never to be parted, living through again in one supreme moment the days when they had clasped their little hands in love and

roamed the fields together (VII, 5.).

Here again, Maggie's personality is merged into that of another, but this time it is a union of affirmation, not of subordination, as she is liberated in a "supreme moment" of intense consciousness characteristic of descriptions of death ever since the Blackwood's stories of deathbeds and imminent executions. The isolation of her earlier journey is given a final reversal in the embrace of the drowning siblings; this physical expression of fraternal forgiveness and unity is a contrastive equivalent to the death and resuscitation in "The Lifted Veil", in which the moment of death is surrounded by hate and menace. Much of the power of the closing pages of The Mill on the Floss stems from the very direct counter it offers to the pattern of isolation associated with the terror story. The last sentence, with its syntactical conjunction of the two referred to by the terms which emphasise their consanguinity, moves through assertions of companionship and denials of separation to the final resounding "together"⁸. The togetherness has also got a temporal dimension, as a selection of days - presumable those disjunct happy days that memory tends to select from the series of mixed experiences of childhood - is compressed into "one supreme moment"; a quasi-revenant manipulation of time contrives to thrust the happiness of past life into the brief present moment of death.

Middlemarch

It is tempting to see "The Lifted Veil" as an oblique

expression of its author's own situation. At about the time of its completion, after telling the Brays and Sara Hennell that she was the author of Scenes of Clerical Life and of Adam Bede, she wrote that "(the) experience has enlightened me a good deal as to the ignorance in which we all live of each other"⁹, and soon afterwards she uses a significant image in a letter to Sara Hennell: " - - - the blundering efforts we have made towards mutual understanding have only made a new veil between us - - -"¹⁰. But whether tangentially autobiographical or not, the story retained its full meaning for her, and nearly fourteen years afterwards, discussing an eventual reprint of it with her publisher Blackwood, she wrote:

I care for the idea which it embodies, and which justifies its painfulness. A motto which I wrote on it yesterday perhaps is a sufficient indication of that idea:-

Give me no light, great heaven, but such as turns
To energy of human fellowship;
No powers save the growing heritage
That makes completer manhood,

But it will be well to put the story in harness with some other productions of mine, and not send it forth in dismal loneliness. There are many things in it which I would willingly say over again, and I shall never put them in any other form - - - ¹¹
To which we may add that there are also things in it which she has said over again, in other forms. Take another of her mottoes, that which heads Chapter 28 of Middlemarch. It refers to wedded love and sympathy; in its imagery and

meaning it might be a rewrite of the end of The Mill on the Floss:

The calendar hath not an evil day
 For souls made one by love, and even death
 Were sweetness, if it came like rolling waves
 While they two clasped each other, and foresaw
 No life apart.

The mention of foresight suggests its contrastive relevance to the marriage depicted in "The Lifted Veil", and placed as it is in Middlemarch the motto is sadly ironic, referring to a situation opposite to that which is being narrated. It precedes the return to Lowick from the Roman honeymoon which has so abruptly disillusioned Dorothea (a disillusionment she shares with Laura in The Woman in White - Rome seems to have been an inauspicious choice for honeymooners). The crucial event in Dorothea's life is her discovery of what Casaubon is really like and of the way he regards their relationship; her discovery is made in emotional and intellectual terms, but this does not conceal the affinity to the visionary affliction visited on Latimer. Although his disappointment in marriage is depicted in far more sensational terms, he shares with Dorothea an acute chagrin on becoming aware of the true nature of the marriage partner. Her first homecoming to her room at Lowick Manor is presented in a passage which forcefully suggests both a disorganisation of perception and a sense of imprisonment.

The very furniture of the room seemed to have shrunk since she saw it before: the stag in the tapestry looked more like a ghost in his ghostly blue-green

world; the volumes of polite literature looked more like immovable imitations of books.

(. . . .)

Her blooming full-pulsed youth stood there in a moral imprisonment which made itself one with the chill, colourless, narrowed landscape, with the shrunken furniture, the never-read books, and the ghostly stag in a pale fantastic world that seemed to be vanishing from the daylight.

Dorothea's dream is portrayed in terms of "a dream which the dreamer begins to suspect", a moment of unfulfilled prophecy as her preconceptions of Casaubon are demolished by experience. She has discovered that what she had expected to be a life-long companionship will, on the contrary, be an ordeal of solitude. This solitude is given physical expression in the room which she has selected to be her own at Lowick, where the environment presses in on her. The image used for disillusioned constriction (that of a ghost among the furniture) evidently has some potency for Eliot, for she has already used it when describing Lydgate. Comparing him to those who fail, the men who lose the ambitious impulses of their youth, she speaks of their ardour cooling until

one day their earlier self walked like a ghost in

its old home and made the new furniture ghastly (II,15)

The ghost is appealed to for its anachronistic quality, uniting two moments in one; it is an image for recalling the past, contemplating the present, and pondering on the future. And not only is the image recurring for the

second time; the scene of Dorothea in her room corresponds to an earlier occasion, when she had visited Lowick (this time in the supportive company of her sister and uncle) prior to her marriage. The narrative mode of this first visit is what might be termed "realistic"; enumerating the objects which she is subsequently to see transformed by her perception of them. But even at this stage the properties are attended by a familiar fancy:

- - - the furniture was all of a faded blue, and there were miniatures of ladies and gentlemen with powdered hair hanging in a group. A piece of tapestry over a door also showed a blue-green world with a pale stag in it. The chairs and tables were thin-legged and easy to upset. It was a room where one might fancy the ghost of a tight-laced lady revisiting the scene of her embroidery . . . (I, 9).

For a late-twentieth-century reader, Dorothea's inspection of her future quarters evokes Larkin's poem "Mr Bleaney", and certainly the items disposed about her room with their suggestive epithets ("faded", "pale", "thin-legged and easy to upset") capture a quality of the particular future to which Dorothea is unwittingly committing herself. But for a reader of any period the mention of a ghost, which might be passed over in this instance as a conventional and unremarkable image, is being quietly introduced as a motif to be taken up and foregrounded on the next occasion Dorothea is described visiting this room. There are rather more ghosts in the studious

account of provincial life that is Middlemarch than in the supernatural story "The Lifted Veil", and they gather around Dorothea and Casaubon in particular, marking that death-in-life which envelops the couple. Casaubon himself raises the image in his very first extended speech:

"I live too much with the dead. My mind is something like the ghost of an ancient, wandering about the world and trying mentally to construct it as it used to be . . ." (I,2).

But the ghost is not just a characterising image, used intermittently and locally in the text to inform the status of a character; its revenant associations also appear in the organisation of events. The movement through time presented perceptually in "The Lifted Veil" recurs in a moral context in Middlemarch, where the potential of actions to re-emerge and impinge on those of a later date is a significant aspect of the plot. It is an aspect which is alluded to in the scenes in Dorothea's room by the insistent presence of the miniature of Aunt Julia which hangs on the wall. The tiny portrait is weighted with a past which, in spite of all efforts to suppress it, returns in the shape of Raffles. Raffles is first encountered by Bulstrode:

And now, as if by some hideous magic, this loud red figure had risen before him in unmanageable solidity - an incorporate past which had not

entered into his imagination of chastisements (V,53)¹³. On the other hand, the dying Casaubon attempts to influence events after his death by imposing an

interdiction on Dorothea's marrying Will Ladislaw, the grand-son of Aunt Julia. This effort to control the future proves as ineffective as Bulstrode's to suppress the past.

Felix Holt, the Radical

The story-pattern based on the emergence of hidden past events, be it in Eliot's "The Lifted Veil", Bulwer's Eugene Aram or Le Fanu's Wylder's Hand, is akin to that found in the revenant ghost story - and in other forms of literature as well: Greek tragedy, for instance, as Michael Edwards has pointed out in a discussion of Felix Holt, the Radical¹². In her letters George Eliot speaks of her attempt to urge "the human sanctities through tragedy - through pity and terror as well as admiration and delights"¹³, and Edwards observes that "the Aristotelian emotions of pity and terror are appropriate to the Transome half of the story". But these emotions are not exclusively Aristotelian, and the terror associated with Mrs Transome raises some significant considerations for the purpose of this study.

Felix Holt begins with the future-looking apprehensions of Mrs Transome as she awaits the arrival of her son Harold whom she has not seen for the past fifteen years, since he was nineteen. This lapse of time is graphically represented by the standard device of a portrait of the young Harold - an image of the past which is about to be confronted by the assured man in his thirties. The temporal factor is in the very opening sentence of Chapter one. This operates on two levels; it first

situates the novel in its historical period, and it also introduces a note of expectancy by looking ahead:

On the 1st of September, in the memorable year 1832, some one was expected at Transome Court, By the end of the first chapter Mrs Transome's expectancy has given way to another feeling, one also focussed on possible future events but distinguished from expectancy by the addition of fearfulness:

No one divined what lay hidden under that outward life - a woman's keen sensibility and dread - - - - the sensibility and dread had palpitated all the faster in the prospect of her son's return; and now that she had seen him, she said to herself, in her bitter way, "It is a lucky eel that escapes skinning. The last happiness I shall ever know, will be to escape the worst misery".

The rhetorical hollowness of her reflection is filled in with particulars as the text progresses, defining its movement. Her sensibility and dread do not spring from any simple abstract opposition of happiness and misery; she has a very likely possibility in mind - the prospect of the truth of Harold's parentage coming to light. "Dread", the terrified anticipation of some future event, becomes a keynote of the novel and the word recurs insistently through its pages, particularly in the later chapters. In this first instance the dread experienced by Mrs Transome is associated with sensibility, distinguishing her as a responsive figure in the text, while the insistence on the obliviousness of others to her true inner state emphasises her isolation.

Isolated although Mrs Transome may be, there is another character who also experiences a feeling of dread. Esther, like Mrs Transome, is the victim of an earlier emotional entanglement - not her own, but that of her parents. The conclusion to Chapter XXVI highlights her situation; as the possibility of an inheritance for her is raised:

A little while ago, these problematic prospects might have set her dreaming pleasantly; but now, for some reasons that she could not have put distinctly into words, they affected her with dread.

For each, a past event causes present disquiet about possible future consequences. The linked fates of the two women converge at the climax of the novel. In Mrs Transome's case the adulterous affair with Jermyn now has a physical image in her son, whom she loves for what he is but dreads for what he represents. And Harold poses a parallel emotional dilemma for Esther as she is faced with the choice between him and Felix.

With a terrible prescience which a multitude of impressions during her stay at Transome Court had contributed to form, she saw herself in a silken bondage that arrested all motive, and was nothing better than a well-cushioned despair. (XLIX)

Esther is confronted with the necessity of making a choice while alone in her room at Transome Court one night, "looking at something not visible". The kiss she has exchanged with Felix in prison lies on her lips like a "memory", to be balanced against a foreknowledge

of what is being offered to her by Harold. The chapter has begun with Esther alone in the small drawing-room dominated by Mrs Transome's full-length portrait; "the youthful brilliancy it represented saddened Esther by its inevitable association with what she daily saw had come instead of it - a joyless, embittered age".

Esther's state of mind is described as being "highly-wrought", bringing with it a sense of remoteness from life. The troubled moment calls forth a familiar Eliot memory of childhood siblings:

Why was it, when the birds were singing, when the fields were a garden, and when we were clasping another little hand just larger than our own, there was somebody who found it hard to smile?

But Esther's detachment, unlike that of Maggie, does not lead to a succumbing to events but to a rational grappling with them. Nevertheless, she is driven to get away from "the portrait smiling with deluded brightness, unwitting of the future", remarking to herself as she does so " 'I shall soon see visions' ". Caught between before and after, her situation is materialised with an insistence on the present, and an actual figure portrayed in terms that reproduce the conventional topic of a supernatural apparition:

It was already near midnight, but with these thoughts succeeding and returning in her mind like scenes through which she was living, Esther had a more intense wakefulness than any she had known by day. All had been stillness hitherto, except the fitful wind outside. But her ears now caught a sound

within - slight, but sudden. She moved near her door, and heard the sweep of something on the matting outside. It came closer and paused. Then it began again, and seemed to sweep away from her. Then it approached, and paused as it had done before. Esther listened, wondering. The same thing happened again and again, till she could bear it no longer. She opened the door, and in the dim light of the corridor, where the glass above seemed to make a glimmering sky, she saw Mrs Transome's tall figure pacing slowly, with her cheek upon her hand. (XLIX).

The figure of Mrs Transome is conjured out of the night and, as in the opening chapter a portrait represented the past to her, here in turn she represents a possible future to Esther. Literally, were Esther to marry Harold she would become "Mrs Transome", but the ramifications are more extensive. Mrs Transome's suffering springs from an adulterous affair, a failure to reconcile emotion and matrimony. This is precisely the problem solved by Esther forced to choose between Harold and Felix - she is to be one of the "lucky eels" that escape skinning.

The passage describing the appearance of Mrs Transome is reminiscent of the omen-ridden Chapter XXV of Jane Eyre¹⁴. The nocturnal reflections of Jane on the eve of her marriage to Rochester as she eyes the trunks packed for her honeymoon journey focus on the question of her identity:

The cards of address alone remained to nail on:

they lay, four little squares, on the drawer. Mr Rochester had himself written the direction, "Mrs Rochester, - Hotel, London," on each: I could not persuade myself to affix them or to have them

affixed. Mrs Rochester! She did not exist . . .

But of course Mrs Rochester does exist, and Jane has already seen her; the incident of the previous night's intrusion into her room is related further on in the chapter. There are several points of resemblance between the two passages: Esther and Jane are both governesses; Mrs Transome, like Rochester, is married to an imbecile, a factor which mitigates the adultery, actual or intended, of each; and Mrs Transome, like Bertha Mason before her, is presented as an apparition.

The narrative mode in George Eliot's passage derives its effect from the background reference to the possibility of a ghost. It is an implicit and subdued reference; nevertheless the conventions of the fiction of the supernatural provide an enabling method and vocabulary for the scene - midnight, the alertness of Esther, the atmospheric details - which govern the impression made by Mrs Transome. Passive and silent, she functions here as an apparition rather than as a character, in that the text places her to be perceived, not to participate in dialogue or activity. Later on, in the next chapter, the scene is continued from Mrs Transome's point of view, and we are given an insight into the feelings which have brought her to this midnight pacing "like an uneasy spirit", but the local effect at the end of Chapter XLIX is carefully separated from

this continuation. Local though it is, however, the scene is^a culminating node in the progress plotted by the novel. It marks the meeting of the experiences of Esther and Mrs Transome, and the arrival at solutions to their respective crises. The supernatural tendency of the text here is slight but unmistakeable, and it is particularly supernatural in that it marks the two characters at their furthest remove from the social community which constitutes the normative world of Eliot's novels. Isolated as quasi-ghost and quasi-ghost-seer, immediately afterwards they both move back to the human world of love, forgiveness and companionship, but to do so the text has first of all to move them almost out of life, before allowing them to discover "the human sanctities".

Conclusion

To say that Mrs Transome is haunted by her past may be to indulge a cliché, but it is also an accurate pointer to the nature of the experience associated with her in Felix Holt. The inevitability of social interdependence is a cornerstone of George Eliot's work; her characters' every action is attended with consequence for others. Those occasions on which her characters are shown moving towards a state of isolation (Latimer in "The Lifted Veil", Maggie Tulliver drifting downstream, Dorothea on her return from Rome) are crucial in her fiction. At such times her writing is illuminated by reference to the motifs and patterns of those early terror stories which were motivated wholly by the

isolating or alienating sensations of the protagonist removed from normative natural social experience. These references, whether implicit or otherwise, constitute one element of Eliot's writing which takes its place among the repertory available to her. It is an enabling factor, providing a diction and a conceptual awareness for an area of experience and a patterning of events.

CHAPTER TWELVE

TOWARDS CONRAD AND MODERNISM.

Corresponding with Mrs Harriet Beecher Stowe soon after the completion of Middlemarch, George Eliot discusses attitudes to visionary experience.

Perhaps I am inclined, under the influence of the facts, physiological and psychological, which have been gathered of late years, to give larger place to the interpretation of vision-seeing as subjective than the Professor would approve. It seems difficult to limit - at least to limit with any precision - the possibility of confounding sense by impressions, derived from inward conditions, with those which are directly dependent on external stimulus. In fact, the division between within and without in this sense seems to become every year a more subtle and bewildering problem.¹

This tactfully worded expression of her own position on sensorial perception is a succinct summation of thinking on the supernatural over the previous half-century or more. The novels discussed up to now have been concerned, wholly or partly and in

various degrees of intensity, with the problematical nature of a character's relationship to the fictional world in which he moves. The area of concern is that adumbrated by George Eliot, and it found articulation by incorporating the supernatural into a solipsistically based world. This had the result of making the basis of the fiction not the supernatural or quasi-supernatural phenomena themselves but their effect on the protagonist and his response to them.

The survey of novels in which this aspect is discernible halts at the start of the 1870s. As is inevitable in such cases, there is something of the arbitrary in fixing the stopping point, but it was around 1870 that one marks a significant change in the predominant attitude to the supernatural. After the materialist-based theories in the first part of the century, there came a resurgence of transcendental occultism, with its emphasis on the esoteric manipulation of psychic states as opposed to the largely uncontrolled manifestations of the earlier supernatural. The Theosophical Society was established in the 1870s, followed by the Society for Psychical Research and The Order of the Golden Dawn; table-tapping and séances seemed to become the parlour pastime of the age. George Eliot's letter to Beecher Stowe continues:

Your experience with planchette is amazing; but that the words which you found it to have written were dictated by the spirit of Charlotte Brontë is to me (whether rightly or not) so enormously

improbable, that I could only accept it if every condition were laid bare, and every other explanation demonstrated to be improbable. The new supernaturalism of the occult was based on the group experience of the séance. The spiritual world was conceived of as having an independent and separate order of existence, and its spirits were to be encountered through the agency of a third party: the medium:

The appeal of the societies devoted to spiritualist activities rested as much on the fact that they were societies as it did on the sharing of occult and esoteric lore and doctrines. This is in the sharpest contrast to the apparition theories based on the morbid or distorted operation of the individual perception, such as those of Ferriar and Hibbert, in which the lack of a communal experience to which the subject can refer is fundamental. The centring of events on the single perception of an isolated protagonist was of prime importance for the structuring of the fiction of the supernatural, in which the dissonance between the evidence of one's sense-experience and the verifiable experience of others underpins the narrative; indeed, the motivating force of the narrative is frequently the felt need to reconcile the dissonant elements - a need that is not necessarily gratified. Spiritualist esotericism found a counterpart in fiction in the fantasies which rest on a total transformation of the laws of experience, going beyond ambiguity or suggestion to complete acceptance:

Kingsley's The Water Babies, MacDonald's Phantastes and Lilith, the stories of Lord Dunsany and W.H. Hodgson. Of writers examined earlier, only the eclectic Bulwer moved towards a depiction of spiritualism, and his A Strange Story signally fails to marry the psychological and psychic elements satisfactorily.

Although communal, the hermetic spiritualists met in secret and surrounded themselves with the mysterious; integration with the mundane world was consistently resisted. As a result, their activities offered little to novelists working in the mode of social realism which was preponderant in the nineteenth century. George Eliot's work allows us to stop at the end of the two great decades of the nineteenth-century novel, and provides an instance of the structures of supernatural stories being absorbed into her formally very different fiction. When Hardy goes on to set his characters in a world of gloomy fatalism, any appeal to an enveloping supernatural is founded on premises rather different to those with which this study has been dealing. His protagonists may be unusually sensitive to their surroundings, with sensitivity revealed either in conflict or in harmony, but the intention is to make a statement about the nature of man's relationship to the universe rather than to call it into question. Eustacia Vye on Rainbarrow², and Tess in her nocturnal walks through the woods³, are depicted in a way that suggests a radical extension of the natural world, but it is

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a suggestion that is made to the reader rather than to the character herself. The condition of man is not problematical in Hardy's work; formulating a symbolic statement of it is.

The novelist who in many respects perpetuated the technique of supernatural reference in order to articulate individual experience is Joseph Conrad. Conrad's method is the inverse of Hardy's in that he sets his characters in a moral vacuum, leaving them denuded of creed and ideals. This removal of an absolute code by which to regulate action is the moral equivalent of the perceptual chaos in which the protagonist of a supernatural story finds himself. The island in Victory is an image of this isolated condition, and Samburan serves also as the privileged arena in which Heyst is exposed to manifestations of a world which he has tried to set on a level of existence apart from himself. But the island is not merely a variation of the haunted house motif in earlier work; the narrative pattern, in which the consciousness of Heyst is influenced by Lena and assailed by the three villains, is of greater significance. Heyst is a particular embodiment of the passive consciousness; his evasion of action is countered by the remorseless sequence of events visited on him. The artistically incomplete realization of his antagonists - Jones, Ricardo and Pedro - stems from the fact that they are little more than functions of Heyst's ordeal.

In Heyst, passivity is elevated from a characteristic

to the raison d'etre. In Heart of Darkness, an earlier and more strongly drawn story based on a similar structure, Marlow as protagonist travels to an encounter with Kurtz, whose experience has removed him from the order of natural humanity. It is a story which has already proved itself to be susceptible to a number of readings - archetypal, psychological, symbolic, and others. It is not necessary to add yet another interpretation to demonstrate that, in its narrative presentation, Marlow's journey is one that takes him away, from the objectively verifiable. Indeed, his experience begins with a phrenological examination, as the company doctor takes detailed measurements of his skull while remarking that "the changes take place inside". It is an incident that Marlow remembers during the stress of the overland journey to the Central Station, and the motif is later associated with Kurtz as Marlow moves towards an increasing knowledge of and identification with him. The first physical description of Kurtz refers to his "lofty frontal bone"; later the Russian attempts to explain how Kurtz had "enlarged his mind"; and the station is surrounded by the severed heads set on poles, "symbolic of something". Although dominated by Kurtz, Marlow's assent to him is never total and, like the Belgian doctor, he never fully finds out what occurs within the skull. He can only observe the results from the exterior. Because of this the final attempt to come to grips with the mind of Kurtz is couched

in the form of a question. The much quoted passage will bear quotation once more:

I saw on that ivory face the expression of sombre pride, of ruthless power, of craven terror - of an intense and hopeless despair. Did he live again in every detail of desire, temptation, and surrender during that supreme moment of complete knowledge? He cried in a whisper at some image, at some vision - he cried out twice, a cry that was no more than a breath:

"The Horror! The horror!"⁴

The resistance to articulation in this has been anticipated in one of Marlow's irritable asides to his listeners on the Nellie, at which point his story is seen by him as being little more than a dream record. Marlow is confronted by the same problems of narration as De Quincey.

It seems to me I am trying to tell you a dream - making a vain attempt, because no relation of a dream can convey the dream-sensation, that commingling of absurdity, surprise and bewilderment in a tremor of struggling revolt, that notion of being captured by the incredible which is of the very essence of dreams . . .

The general direction of Marlow's progress is towards this state of uncertainty. "We live as we die - alone", he remarks; his steady approach to the inner station is a graphic statement of entry into solipsism. He moves to the opposite extreme of the condition represented by the companionable group on board the

yawl Nellie. The social integration of Marlow's audience is emphasised by the terms used to identify them - not their names but their roles in society: Lawyer, Director, Accountant. For Marlow, as he announces later in another of his asides, the reality is the hidden inner truth which remains hidden, and his preoccupation with the surface of things shields him from the "mysterious stillness" which watches over him. The disconcerting quality of his journey upriver is that it evokes past memories, in which the anachronistic insistence of the past comes into conflict with the waking world:

There were moments when one's past came back to one but it came in the shape of an unrestful and noisy dream, remembered with wonder among the overwhelming realities of this strange world of plants, and waters, and ~~silence~~ silence.

This past, at once familiar because experienced but strange in its manifestation, asserts itself in a present that is tangible real but inscrutable. The opposed extremes of the natural and the supernatural co-exist without synthesising, so that the presence of irreconcilables becomes part of the new mode of existence for Marlow. The fog which envelopes the steamboat just before the end of its journey is a striking image of this state. The opacity of the fog obstructs vision as would darkness; it is a white night, or darkness visible, in which the

eponymous dominant image of the story meets its opposite and black becomes white. Sense-perception is then set at naught:

The rest of the world was nowhere, as far as our eyes and ears were concerned.

Use of the fog as a key to the distortion of sense is an effect that might be traced back to the apparition on Arthur's Seat in Hogg's Confessions of a Justified Sinner, where the phenomena of the natural world contribute to a supernatural effect. Conrad also twice uses the image of the veil used by George Eliot in the title of her short story; in each case the veil is lifted or removed to grant access. The first instance is incidental, as Marlow gets his first sight of the attacking natives in the jungle "suddenly, as though a veil has been lifted from my eyes". The second and more significant instance occurs just before the reflections prompted by Kurtz's enigmatic last words as Marlow stares down at the dying man:

I was fascinated. It was as though a veil had been rent. I saw on that ivory face the expression of sombre pride, of ruthless power, of craven terror - of an intense and hopeless despair.

The value of the image of the veil is that it stands as a sort of barrier, marking the division between one order of existence and another; it is more effective as a marker than as barrier, for it is

introduced to be lifted or rent, allowing two separated areas to come into conjunction. But even here, in this last instance, the veil retains its obscuring quality through the syntax associated with it. From its positioning in the paragraph, it is not clear whether the veil that has been rent is to be conceived of as hanging between Marlow and his understanding of Kurtz, or between Kurtz and that area of knowledge he glimpses in a brief vision before death. It may even be that we are meant to infer that it is Marlow who gains an incomplete glimpse of the horrific heart of things, with Kurtz in a mediating role.

This recurrence of images which we have already encountered in works examined in earlier chapters is an indication of the nature of Marlow's experience, but is incidental to the narrative. More fundamental is the pattern given to the story by his journey, in which there is a steady progress towards a state of confrontation with the unreal and irrational. As in the basic movement of entry into a haunted house or similar arena, the voyage upriver takes Marlow into a world where the comfort of the familiar is lost to him. And as was the case with protagonists of the earlier confessional or solipsistic fiction, all that is left for him is to relate his experience. To whom? To his companions on the Nellie, an uncomprehending audience as Marlow repeatedly asserts. But the first serious attempt to convey something of

what he has undergone comes in his interview with Kurtz's fiancé. His suppression of the truth on this occasion, and the substitution of a lie for the last anguished cry of Kurtz, emphasises the particularity of Marlow's experience. Just as Pip's comic inventiveness in his account to Joe and Mrs Gargery of the visit to Miss Havisham clearly separates what happens in Satis House from the everyday world, so does Marlow's lie to the Intended point the impossibility of reconciling what he has witnessed with the mundane affairs of society. Marlow's knowledge of what he has seen remains peculiarly his own.

Like Lucy Snowe in the Quartier des Mages, Marlow finds himself in a Belgian street going to visit a strange woman in a house stilled by mourning. Just before he enters the house of the Intended, Marlow's mind conjures up a vivid apparition of the dead Kurtz:

I thought his memory was like the other memories of the dead that accumulate in every man's life - a vague impress on the brain of shadows that had fallen on it in their swift and final passage; but . . . I had a vision of him on the stretcher, opening his mouth voraciously, as if to devour all the earth with all its mankind. He lived then before me; he lived as much as he had ever lived - a shadow insatiable of splendid appearances, of frightful realities.

There are two texts at the centre of Heart of Darkness: one is the seaman's manual which Marlow picks up at a station on the journey upriver and gives to the Russian, valued for its clarity and matter-of-factness. The other is the incomplete draft of Kurtz's report to the International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs. This begins with the argument that the whites arriving in Africa "must necessarily appear to them (savages) in the nature of supernatural beings". But by the end of the story Kurtz, the white man, appears as a supernatural being to his fellow Europeans - a further instance of the reversal of opposites which characterises Marlow's experience.

This concluding chapter has dwelt upon Heart of Darkness because the story conveniently demonstrates the point towards which the tendencies examined have led. Starting with Caleb Williams and the solipsistic confessional fiction, the supernatural short stories of Blackwood's opened the way for an investigation of man as a perceiving rather than as a behavioural creature, and brought new patterns and structures to story-telling. These patterns and structures were incorporated on occasions to serve the purposes of the mainstream novels of the nineteenth century. In Heart of Darkness it can be seen how the move towards a subjectivism which was part of the modernist emphasis involved techniques previously developed by the supernatural terror stories. Lionel Trilling has isolated terror as one of the dominant features

of modern literature, and goes on to say that the idea of losing oneself up to the point of self-destruction, of surrendering oneself to experience without regard to self-interest or conventional morality, of escaping wholly from the societal bonds, is an "element" somewhere in the mind of every modern person who dares to think of what Arnold in his unaffected Victorian way called "the fulness of spiritual perfection".⁵

The destruction of the self, in which the first person narrator ceases to define himself through action and becomes primarily an intermediary negotiating between events and the reader, had been anticipated in the supernatural stories. Furthermore, the radical interference with form which is a feature of modernism had an equivalent in the ontological confusion typical of supernatural and related fiction. One of the reasons for the fragmentary quality of modernist writing is its acceptance of opposites, and the consequent concept of man as susceptible to conflicting impulses, both rational and irrational. Man is no longer an organic unit, but an arena in which rational discipline wrestles with a primal dynamism, neither ever quite overwhelming the other. The works of art which arise from and give expression to this condition are no longer organic wholes, but collocations of irreconcilables. Freud's work on dreams and the subconscious, and Nietzsche's insights

into the impulses within man, made explicit the vision of a universe without absolutes. The breakdown of the division between the natural and the supernatural in the fiction of the early nineteenth century means that it can be seen retrospectively as a precursor of the modernist moment at the latter end of the century, and there is a line of development leading towards Heart of Darkness in 1899. The departure from narratives with internal coherency and overall closure is already apparent in the solipsistic confessional novel, the tale of terror and the ghost story. When M.R. James wrote in 1923 that

The ghost story is in itself a slightly old-fashioned form,⁶

he had in mind the stories of such as E.F. Benson, Walter De La Mare, Algernon Blackwood and, of course, his own. These were the practitioners of a form derived directly from the familiar Victorian ghost-story of the later part of the nineteenth century. Much more potent were the earlier Blackwood's stories which, because of their absorption into the arterial channels of fiction, broadened the range of effect available to writers and offered a link with the fiction of the early twentieth century. It is thus possible to delineate a tradition identified not by moral criteria embodied in the fiction, but by the structure of the fiction itself.

The key-note of modernism is struck in a poem which begins in a mix of memory and desire, two

conditions which look away from the present to the past and the future respectively; the protean central identity of The Waste Land is most clearly presented as a figure who combines previsionary and sentient capabilities, breaking down the linear sequentiality of time in an access of pain:

And I Tiresias have foresuffered all.

At the end of Part One it was suggested that the supernatural reference provided novels of the mid-nineteenth century with a model of and vocabulary for pain. This quality helped to ensure their continuity into an age during which world war was to make suffering demotic on a scale not dreamt of before, and in which the certainties of belief crumbled under the evidence of the senses.

NOTES

APPENDICES

BIBLIOGRAPHY

NOTES (Introduction)

1. Night Visitors: The Rise and Fall of the English Ghost Story (1977).
2. Elegant Nightmares: The English Ghost Story from Le Fanu to Blackwood (Ohio, 1980).
Anatomy of Horror: The Masters of Occult Fiction, by Glen St. John Barclay (1978) deals with a selection of writers from Le Fanu to Dennis Wheatley.
3. The two most recent studies are Love, Mystery and Misery: Feeling in Gothic Fiction, by Coral Ann Howells (1978) and Elizabeth MacAndrew's The Gothic Tradition in Fiction (Colorado, 1980).
4. Howard Phillips Lovecraft, Supernatural Horror in Literature (1945) with an Introduction by E.F. Bleiber, (New York, 1973).
5. Oxford, 1965.
6. (New York, 1966) Translated from the German by Ulrich Weisstein.
7. New York, 1965.
8. The Metaphysical Novel in England and America: Dickens, Bulwer, Melville and Hawthorne. (California, 1978).
9. The distinction between "terror Gothic" as represented by Mrs Radcliffe, and "horror gothic" of the Monk Lewis type is most clearly delineated in Devendra P. Varma's The Gothic Flame (London, 1957).
10. See Mrs Gaskell's Life of Charlotte Brontë, and H.P. Sucksmith's Narrative Art of Charles Dickens (Oxford, 1970).
11. Biographia Literaria, ed. J. Shawcross (London, 1907) 1973. Volume 1, p. 92. Ch.VIII.
12. The Eighteenth-Century Background (London 1940) 1963. p.145.
13. Alderson's irritation on republishing his own Essay on Apparitions (see Chapter One, below) is clear evidence of this, as are the frequent references to Ferriar in periodicals of the time.

NOTES (Ch. 1 (Approaches))

1. Autobiography, Letters and Literary Remains of Mrs Piozzi, ed. A. Hayward (1861), Vol. II, p. 33.
2. ibid. p. 281
3. But v. James Rieger, "Dr. Polidori and the Genesis of Frankenstein", Studies in English Literature 1500-1900 III, 4 (Autumn, 1963) pp. 461-472. Drawing heavily on Polidori's diary and on his own conjectural interpretations of it, Rieger maintains that it is more likely that the conversations to which Mary refers actually took place between Shelley and Polidori.
4. Poetical Works (1806) pp. 194-196.
5. Ann Radcliffe inserts an oddly scientific moment into The Mysteries of Udolpho (3, VI) when the ominous glow on Bertrand's lance is attributed to an impending storm, with a footnote referring to Pierre Berthelon's work on electricity.
6. The Swiss Johann Georg Salzer had already remarked on this phenomenon thirty years previously in his Recherches sur l'origine des sentiments agréables et désagréables, but he failed to link it with electricity and his observation passed unnoticed.
7. Heaven and its Wonders and Hell, from Things Heard and Seen 1817 (1899) paragraph 446, p. 261.
8. ibid. paragraph 449, p. 262.
9. Other figures that might be named are Louis Claude de Pasqually in France, and, later in the century, Jung Stilling in Heidelberg and, of course, William Blake.
10. For a full account of Mesmer and mesmerism in Paris, see Robert Darnton, Mesmerism and the End of the Enlightenment in France (Cambridge, Mass. 1968)
11. The Moonstone, Second Period, Third Narrative.
12. See F. Kaplan, Dickens and Mesmerism: The Hidden Springs of Fiction (Princeton, 1976).
13. Quoted in Robert Lee Wolff, Strange Stories: And Other Explorations in Victorian Fiction (Boston, 1971), p. 235.
14. See Kaplan, op. cit.
15. Continued the following month in No. 7.

16. September 1837, No 263 p. 384.
17. "What is Mesmerism?"
18. Caxtoniana (1863)
19. Second Period, Second Narrative.
20. Outlines of Phrenology, Third Edition, (1824).
p. 15. In A System of Phrenology, 2 Vols. 1826
(4th Edition 1836) Combe makes the organ of Wonder
No. 18. The Outlines pamphlet is a clear and
concise exposition of the phrenological approach
in the early part of the century, and the text is
reproduced in the appendix to this study.=
21. pp. 16-17. This was the popular version of the
matter contained in The Physiognomical System of
Drs. Gall and Spurzheim: founded on an anatomical
and physiological examination of the nervous
system in general (1815).
22. Autobiography: Poetry and Truth from My Life trans.
R.O. Moon (1932). Book XIX, p. 664.
23. Combe lived by his beliefs. Before entering into
a marriage with a daughter of Mrs Siddons, the
actress, "he examined her head and took Spurzheim's
advice as to his own fitness for a married life.
'Her anterior lobe was large; her Benevolence,
Conscientiousness, Firmness, Self-Esteem and love
of approbation amply developed; whilst her
Veneration and Wonder were equally moderate with
his own'" (D.N.B.). In addition to these admirable
qualities, she possessed £15,000.
24. Edinburgh Review, No. 43, June 1815.
25. No. 88, September 1826.
26. Quoted in Robert M. Young, Mind, Brain and
Adaptation in the Nineteenth Century (1970 p. 10)
27. James Hopkinson, Memoirs of a Victorian Cabinet
Maker ed. Jocelyne Baty Goodman, (1968). pp. 51-
53.
28. See J. Millott Severn, Popular Phrenology (1913)
29. Quoted in R. Glynn Grylls, Mary Shelley, A
Biography (1938) pp. 10-11.
30. See Combe, A System of Phrenology (1836) p. 70.
31. Collected Letters ed. Griggs Vol. IV, p. 613.
32. v. Notebooks ed. Kathleen Coburn, 3, 4355.

33. Alexander Monro, The Morbid Anatomy of the Brain (1827) Vol. I, p. 141.
34. "Mares'-Nests found by the Materialists, the Owenites, and the Craniologists", Fraser's Magazine IX, 52 (April 1834) p. 429.
35. ibid., p. 430.
36. Cornhill Magazine 1861, Vol III. pp. 475,476.
37. ibid. p. 569 et seq.
38. loc. cit. p. 477.
39. ibid. p. 477.
40. See his autobiography Phases of Opinion and Experience during a Long Life (1885).
41. Gordon Haight, George Eliot: A Biography 1968 (1969). p. 51.
42. Letters ed. Haight. Vol. II, p. 23.
43. op. cit. II, p.220
44. op. cit. II, p. 233
45. op. cit. II, pp.403,404
46. "Reverence" and "reserve" would seem to correspond to the Sentiments "veneration" and "cautiousness" in orthodox terminology.
47. In Dickens and Education (1965) pp. 150-151, Philip Collins points out similarity of this passage to one describing Mr M'Choakumchild in Hard Times. The new element in the later piece is precisely the emphasis on compartmentalisation within the mind. The first syllable of Headstone's surname is not without significance.
48. One of the earliest uses of phrenology in a fictional work occurs in James Hogg's Confessions of A Justified Sinner (1824), where there is discussion of the exhumed skull of the sinner. Another occurs in a tale, "Gubbawn Seer", Number I of "Irish Popular Stories" printed in Captain Rock or the Chieftain's Gazette (1827):
 Gubbawn was a born genius, and had, no doubt, from his infancy the phrenological bump of constructiveness as well as that of causality; for, only he happened to be made a blacksmith of, he would have excelled as a lawyer. (p.5)
 Marryat's Mr. Midshipman Easy (1836) pokes fun at

phrenologists in the shape of Easy's father, whose beliefs are mocked, at first gently and then rather more severely, when he is killed by a machine he had constructed to alter the form of his head and thus improve his character.

Various incidental references are scattered through the fiction of the age. In the story which opens his "First and Last" series of tales for Blackwood's in February 1829, William Mudford writes of an executed forger and his motives:

. . . . phrenology settled it. The organ of acquisitiveness was discovered in his head, after his execution, as large as a pigeon's egg. He could not help it.

Much later, in Lever's novel A Day's Ride, A Life's Romance, so notably unsuccessful when serialised in All The Year Round, Potts contemplates an incident from his past when he had been a member of "a phrenological club" and unwittingly participated in analysing a cast of a pumpkin (Ch. XV, ATYR 3 November 1860, p. 70).

In Wylder's Hand Le Fanu refers in passing to the "organ of veneration", and Ishmael in Moby Dick dwells on the physiognomical and phrenological character of the whale. . . . The pseudo-science was so much part of the intellectual climate that, whether in allusions or foregrounded, whether mocked at or taken at face value, it probably contributed to the visualisation and interpretation of character in nineteenth-century fiction to an extent which has not yet been fully investigated.

49. e.g. Lewes Lavater (not to be confused with the physiognomist) and Dom Calmet.
50. Edwin G. Boring, Sensation and Perception in the History of Experimental Psychology (New York, 1942) p. 3.
51. See E.M. Brockbank John Ferriar (1950).
52. Coleridge rounded off his resonant paragraphs on Imagination and Fancy with a reference to a proposed essay on the uses of the Supernatural in poetry. It would have been interesting to set his literary theories alongside the physiological theories of Ferriar, and one can only regret that the essay is numbered among Coleridge's unexecuted projects.
53. Alderson was gratified that Nathan Drake did acknowledge his work in Shakespeare and his Times.
54. The full title is: Apparitions, or the Mystery of Ghosts, Hobgoblins, and Haunted Houses, Developed. Being a Collection of Entertaining Stories, Founded on Fact; And Selected for the Purpose of Eradicating

those Ridiculous Fears which the Ignorant, the Weak and the Superstitious, Are but too apt to encourage, for Want of properly examing into the causes of such absurd impositions.

55. May 1821 Vol. III No. 17. pp. 457-461.
56. v. Charles Lamb, Letters ed. Lucas, Vol II p. 408.
57. Quarterly Review April 1822, p. 110.
58. Sketches of the Philosophy of Apparitions; or An Attempt to trace such Illusions to their Physical Causes. A second, enlarged edition was published in 1825. This is the edition from which quotations are taken.
59. Hibbert's discussion of the question is mainly theoretical, but is is worth pointing out that recent experimental psychology seems to bear out his contention that nothing is totally forgotten. See A.R. Luria, The Mind of a Mnemonist.
60. Fraser's Magazine Vol. II No. 7 (August 1830), pp. 33-41.
61. The Od-force was a force which Baron von Reichenbach in the 1840s held to pervade all nature. It was exhibited by magnets, and was the force behind mesmerism; sensitive persons were believed to be particularly susceptible to its influence. It is a further late instance of transcendental science, substituting a universal force for universal fluid.
62. Blackwood's No. 17 (August 1818) p. 589-590.
63. London Magazine, March 1824, pp. 253-256. The following month's number carried an article, "The Ghost-Player's Guide" which commented: "The difficulty of personating imaginary characters has been augmented tenfold since the time of Shakespeare, when the existence of spirits was scarcely doubted and by no means disbelieved - - - Few play-goers believe, now-a-days, in the existence of ghosts". pp. 369-370.
64. Blackwood's No. 174, December 1830, p. 943.
65. Blackwood's No. 173, November 1830, p. 784.
66. Catalogues of the Libraries of Charles Dickens and William Makepeace Thackeray ed. J.H. Stonehouse (1931), quoted Kaplan, op. cit.
67. All The Year Round Vol. I, 6 August 1859, p. 346.

NOTES Ch. II (Gothic)

1. Alfred E. Longueil, "The Word 'Gothic' in Eighteenth Century Criticism", Modern Language Notes (1923), XXXVIII, pp. 453-460.
2. The Castle of Otranto, Oxford English Novels, ed. W.S. Lewis (Oxford, 1964), p. 3.
3. Vol. III, Ch. 8, The Mysteries of Udolpho, Oxford English Novels, ed. Bonamy Dobree (Oxford, 1966), p. 428.
4. Vol. III, Ch. 10, ibid. p. 468.
5. Longueil, pp. 459-460.
6. The distinction between novel and romance was blurred but nevertheless real. See Ioan Williams, ed. Novel and Romance, 1700-1800: A Documentary Record (London 1970) and Miriam Allott, Novelists on the Novel (1959).
7. An example of this type of short piece is to be found interpolated in The Mysteries of Udolpho, Vol. IV, Ch. 6. "The Provençal Tale" is the story of Sir Bevys of Lancaster and the ghost of an unburied knight seeking burial. It is the only instance of the truly supernatural in the book.
8. Literary Hours, or Sketches Critical and Narrative Second Edition, Corrected and Enlarged, 1800. p. 359.
9. See Maurice Levy, Le Roman 'Gothique' Anglais 1764-1824, (Toulouse, n.d.), pp. 443, 444.
10. Lewis himself claimed to be a follower of Mrs Radcliffe's methods, but the differences are more striking than the similarities.
11. With the exception of the posthumously published Gaston de Blondville (1826) in which the supernatural is not explained away.
12. Vol. XL (June 1770), p. 273.
13. The two last-named had such a plethora of names in real life that it is simpler to give their pen-names. "Ann of Swansea" was born Julia Ann Kemble (sister of John Kemble and Sarah Siddons)", she was for a time Mrs Ann Hatton, until it transpired that she was the victim of a bigamous marriage, and later she became Mrs Ann Curtis. "Ellen of Exter" was born Ann Marie Wright, and was successively Mrs Cox, Mrs Packham and Mrs MacKenzie.
14. The Gentleman's Magazine did deign to give a brief notice of The Mysteries of Udolpho, the only work

of fiction reviewed in that issue. The success of Mrs Radcliffe was too great to be ignored. Vol. 64, pt ii (Sept. 1794) p. 834.

15. Figures given by Robert D. Mayo, "How Long was Gothic fiction in vogue?", Modern Language Notes (January 1943), LVIII (1), pp. 58-64.
16. Mayo, loc. cit.
17. Oct., 1798, pp. 258-263.
18. Quoted in Sir Walter Scott: On Novelists and Fiction ed. Ioan Williams (London, 1968), p. 253.
19. The Popular Novel in England 1770-1800 (London, 1932) p. 262.
20. Walter Francis Wright, Sensibility in English Prose Fiction 1760-1840: A Reinterpretation (urbana, 1937).
21. op. cit. pp. 129, 130.
22. Literary Women (London, 1977).
23. Both these titles were published under the pseudonym " Gabrielli".
24. Levy, op. cit., p. 469 n.
25. See "The Reaction Against Melodramatic Sentimentality in the English Novel, 1796-1830", PMLA (1934) XLIX, pp. 98-122. Jane Austen, reading Barrett's book in 1814, identified its principal target in a letter to her sister: "It is a delightful burlesque, particularly on the Radcliffe style". Letters, ed. Chapman (London, 1952), p. 377.
26. The Gates of Horn: A Study of Five French Realists, (New York, 1963), p. 47.
27. Ch. XIV, Biographia Literaria, Everyman's Library, ed. George Watson, (London, 1956), pp. 168-169.
28. A. Dyce, "Plagiarisms of Lord Byron", Gentleman's Magazine, n.s., X, pt 1 (1818) pp. 121-122.
29. See Martha H Shackford, "The Eve of St. Agnes and The Mysteries of Udolpho", PMLA XXXVI (1921), p. 104.
30. For an assessment of this, see Robert Mayo, "The Contemporaneity of the Lyrical Ballads", PMLA (1954) LXIX, pp. 486-522. Nor was the use of the supernatural in poetry a feature peculiar to the young romantic. Crabbe, generally considered as one of the rare successful poets of the mundane and pedestrian, produced in fine ghost story in Peter Grimes (The Borough (1812)), and "Lady Barbara; or the Ghost" (Tales of the Hall (1819))

opens with a discussion of apparitions and goes on to tell the story of a widow warned against remarriage by the ghost of her husband.

31. Montague Summers, The Gothic Quest: A History of the Gothic Novel (London, 1969) p. 85.
32. ibid. p. 55.
33. Edinburgh Review (July 1821) XXXV pp. 353-362.
34. E. Birkhead, The Tale of Terror (London, 1921).
35. Eino Railo, The Haunted Castle: A Study of the Elements of English Romanticism (London, New York, 1927).
36. Mario Praz, The Romantic Agony, translated Angus Davidson (London, 1933). Second edition, London, 1970.
37. v. supra., n. 30. Also, A Gothic Bibliography, (London, 1941).
38. Devendra P. Varma, The Gothic Flame: Being a History of the Gothic Novel in England: Its Origins, Efflorescence, Disintegration, and Residuary Influences (London, 1957).
39. Coral Ann Howells, Love, Mystery, and Misery: Feeling in Gothic Fiction (London, 1978). Mention should also be made of the booklet by Brendan Hennessy, The Gothic Novel Writers and their Work, (London, 1978)
40. op. cit.
41. Cavalcade of the English Novel: From Elizabeth to George VI (New York, 1944).
42. Before Jane Austen (London, 1966) p. 265.
43. Robert D. Hume, PMLA (March, 1969). LXXXIV (2) pp. 282-290.
44. p. 658. My translation.
45. pp. 223-225
46. Vol. IV, pp. 102-104. See also Summers, The Gothic Quest, pp. 33-37, for an account of Book VII of the satiric poem The Age (1810), which similarly sums up the Gothic romance in terms of a list of elements.

47. Fiction for the Working Man 1830-1850 (London, 1963) Harmondsworth 1974. p. 83. Robert D. Mayo points out that the short Gothic tales are precedents but not models for the later Blackwood's stories in his article "The Gothic Short Story In The Magazines", Modern Language Review XXXVII, 4 (Oct. 1942).
48. loc. cit. p. 285.
49. ibid p. 286.
50. The Gothic Revival: An Essay in the History of Taste, (London, 1928, 1962) Harmondsworth 1964. p. 39.
51. Quoted in Williams (ed) op. cit. 1968, p. 114.
52. The Brontë Letters, ed. Muriel Spark p. 142.
53. op. cit. p. 268.
54. Towards a Theory of Apparitions pp. viii-ix.

NOTES Ch. III (Confessional/Solipsistic)

1. Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature (1971). p. 75. See also Frank D. McConnell, The Confessional Imagination: A Reading of Wordsworth's Prelude (1974).
2. Blackwood's No 13. (January 1823). p. 86
3. Published anonymously in London Magazine 21 (September 1821) and 22 (October 1821).
4. Blackwood's No. 23 (November 1823) p. 591. Thomson's "footman letter" anticipates Thackeray's Yellowplush Papers by the better part of a decade.
5. April 1822. p. 120.
6. London Magazine, 32 (August 1822)
7. The Life of Charles Lamb (1905) I, p. 355.
8. September 1822.
9. October and November 1824.
10. Caleb Williams Oxford English Novels, ed. David McCracken, Appendix II, p. 339. Subsequent quotations are from this edition.
11. Jane Austen and the War of Ideas (1975) p. 68.
12. v. Caleb Williams ed. McCracken, Appendix I.
13. v. Esther Salaman, The Great Confession: From Aksakov and De Quincey to Tolstoy and Proust (1973), which is concerned with the translation of experience into fiction, rather than with the formal features specific to the confessional mode. Other interesting works are Pierre Coucelle, Les Confessions de St Augustin dans la tradition litteraire: Antecedent et Posterite (Paris, 1963); William Matthews and Ralph W. Rader, Autobiography, Biography and The Novel (Los Angeles, 1973).
14. Trans. George Bull, (Harmondsworth, 1956).
15. For the confessional aspects of Defoe's work, see George A. Starr, Defoe and Spiritual Autobiography (Princeton, 1965).
16. The very popular dramatisation of the novel by George Colman the younger in 1796 accorded this pride of place in the title, The Iron Chest.
17. The edition cited is Confessions of an English Opium Eater, Penguin English Library, ed. Alethea

- Hayter (1971). This gives the original 1821 text, rather than the greatly expanded version of 1856 which is more usually reprinted. Page references to this readily available edition are given as De Quincey's text is not divided into chapters.
18. Blackwood's (Oct. 1823)
 19. y. Alethea Hayter, Opium and the Romantic Imagination (1971) p. 104. This gives a full and fascinating account of the effect of opium on literature in early half of the nineteenth century.
 20. Ferriar, p. III
 21. The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner: Written by Himself with a Detail of Curious Traditionary Facts and Other Evidence by the Editor, Oxford English Novels, ed. John Carey, 1969 (1824). This is the edition used for quotation, and page-numbers refer to it, there being no division of the text into chapters.
 22. James Hogg: A Critical Study. (1962).
 23. Ferriar, p. 27n. Hibbert, p. 440n. The phenomenon is also discussed in David Brewster's Letters on Natural Magic (1831).
 24. Ch. XVIII. The attitude expressed is that of Dousterswivel, who has earlier been mocked for his belief in the hand of glory.
 25. Poetical Works ed. E.H. Coleridge, I, p. 456. De Quincey refers to these lines and gives a description of the "spectre" in "Dream Echoes Fifty Years Later" (Blackwood's, 1845).
 26. Ferriar, p. 21n.
 27. Introduction to Ghosts and Marvels, ed. V. H. Collins, (1924), p. vi.
 28. In "The Wool Gatherer", a story included in Hogg's first book The Brownie of Bodsbeck and Other Tales (1818), one of the characters explains that different apparitions are peculiar to different people, and that "the deil and his adgents, they fash nane but the gude fock; the Cameronians, an' the prayin' ministers, an sic' like".
 29. Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus Oxford English Novels, ed M.K. Joseph, 1969 (1818).
 30. Shelley, the Pursuit (1974), p. 332. The affinity to Alastor is noticeable in the introduction of an Arab maid to each, bringing with her the possibility of human love.

N O T E S Ch. IV (Blackwood's/Le Fanu)

1. Blackwood's No 54, (August, 1821 Pt.2) pp. 103-107.
2. "English Short Fiction in the Nineteenth Century", Studies in Short Fiction 1968.
3. No. 18, Sept. 1818. pp. 648-650.
4. No. 25, April 1819. pp. 13-14.
5. No. 32, Nov. 1819.
6. No. 52, July 1821. p. 407.
7. E.A. Poe, Complete Works ed. J.A. Harrison, Vol. II. 1902 (1965), pp. 273-274.
8. Fraser's had contained a story called "Dead Alive" in April 1834, and John O'Keefe, the eighteenth-century dramatist, had written a play of the same title. Neither fits the description given by Poe.
9. No. 57, Nov. 1821. pp. 373-375.
10. No. 264, Oct. 1837. pp. 487-492.
11. No. 58, Dec. 1821. p. 583.
12. Passages from the Diary of a Late Physician Preface to the Fifth Edition. (1837) p. viii.
13. No. 170, Aug. 1830. p. 322.
14. Subsequent use of the doctor figure may be noted in Algernon Blackwood's stories of Dr. John Silence, while Stevenson's Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde is of course particularly effective.
15. No. 170, Aug. 1830. pp. 364-371.
16. No. 153, June 1829. pp. 734-741.
17. No. 124, Apr. 1827. pp. 409-416.
18. Dickens and Crime (1962) 1964. p. 39.
19. No. 162, Feb. 1830.
20. No. 191 Feb. 1832. No. 192 Mar. 1832.
21. No. 173, Nov. 1830. p. 786-793
22. No. 186, Sept 1831
23. No. 77, June 1823. p. 682.

24. No. 122, Feb. 1827. p. 199.
25. loc. cit. p. 683.
26. No. 56, Oct. 1821. pp. 262-264.
27. W.C. Phillips, Dickens, Reade and Collins; Sensation Novelists (1919).
28. "Sensational Novels", Blackwood's May 1862, pp. 574-580. The description was quickly taken up, and other reviews followed: H.L. Mansel, "Sensation Novels", Quarterly Review 113 (1863), p. 481; "What is Sensational?", All The Year Round 17, (1867) p. 221. More recent studies are W.C. Phillips, Dickens, Reade and Collins: Sensation Novelists (New York, 1919); Kathleen Tillotson, "The Lighter Reading of the Eighteen-Sixties", Introduction to The Woman In White (Boston, 1969); Elaine Showalter, "Desperate Remedies: Sensation Novels of the 1860s", Victorian Newsletter, Number 49, Spring 1976.
29. Blackwood's 173, Nov. 1830. p. 784.
30. Opium and the Romantic Imagination (1968) 1971. p. 73.
31. Blackwood's 110, Mar. 1826. p. 286.
32. p. 449.
33. All The Year Round, Christmas 1866.
34. All The Year Round, Christmas 1864.
35. All The Year Round, Christmas 1866.
36. Household Words, 1852.
37. See Annette B. Hopkins, "Dickens and Mrs Gaskell", Huntingdon Library Quarterly IX, 4 (August 1946), pp. 357-385.
38. Dublin University Magazine 1853.
39. In Ralph The Bailiff (1862).
40. London, 1928.
41. ed. V.H. Collins, 1924 and n.d. (1927?)
42. ed. John Hampden (1952)
43. 1952 (1965)

44. London Society (XVI) 1872. Reprinted in In A Glass Darkly. (1872)
45. All The Year Round, October, 1869. Reprinted in In A Glass Darkly (1872).
46. Belgravia (XIII) 1870. Reprinted in In A Glass Darkly (1872).
47. Aurora Leigh (1857). Book VII.

1. Roland Barthes, Writing Degree Zero (1956) p. 56.
2. The Supernatural in Fiction, p. 205.
3. Introduction à la littérature fantastique (Paris, 1970) p. 35.
4. Modern Fantasy: Five Studies (1975) p. 1.
5. ibid. p. 9.
6. R. Scholes and Kellogg, The Nature of Narrative (1968) p. 250.
7. ibid. pp. 250, 251.
8. J. Sutherland, Victorian Novelists and Publishers (1976) pp. 172, 173.
9. Love, Mystery and Misery. p. 7.
10. Those by Manlove and Todorov have already been mentioned. Early treatments of the subject are John A. Symonds "Caricature, the Fantastic, the Grotesque" in Essays Speculative and Suggestive (1890) and Forster's chapter "On Fantasy" in Aspects of the Novel. Two of the more recent studies are Witold Ostrowski "The Fantastic and the Realistic in Literature", Zagadnienia radzowej literatury, ix (1966) and Eric S. Rabkin The Fantastic in Literature (Princeton, 1976). W.S. Irwin, The Game of the Impossible: A Rhetoric of Fantasy (Illinois, 1976) takes 1880 as his starting point, considering Lear, Kingsby, Lewis Carroll and MacDonald as isolated precursors. These authors receive fuller treatment in Stephen Prickett's Victorian Fantasy (1979).
11. op.cit p. 41.
12. Aspects of the Novel (1927) Harmondsworth 1962. p. 111.
13. The Supernatural in Fiction p. 16.
14. ibid p. 25.
15. August, 1859.
16. Nation 9 Nov 1865. Quoted in Page, (ed), Wilkie Collins: The Critical Heritage p. 123.
17. Originally published in the Dublin University Magazine in 1853, the text is available in several anthologies of Le Fanu's work: Best Ghost Stories ed. E.F. Bleiler (New York, 1964); Madame Crowl's

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Ghost and other Tales of Mystery ed. M.R. James
(1923) New York 1971. Also in The Supernatural
Omnibus, ed. Montague Summers.

18. The Supernatural in Fiction, p. 34.

19. "Preface", Poems, (1853) p.3

1. Like Hibbert's Philosophy of Apparitions, Brewster's Letters were dedicated to Sir Walter Scott.
2. Quotations are from A Strange Story, The University Edition, (Boston, n.d.).
3. Outlines of Phrenology, p.23 (See Appendix I).
4. Lionel Stevenson, Dr Quicksilver: The Life of Charles Lever (1939). p.231.
5. Letters, III, p.418.
6. My Story, p.339-340, quoted in Hayter, Opium and the Romantic Imagination, p.257. One cannot, however, go as far as Davis, who asserts roundly that "Lytton's inspiration for A Strange Story, or at least his belief in it, obviously came from laudanum". p.231. The Life of Wilkie Collins.
7. The Earl of Lytton, Bulwer-Lytton, (1948), p.38.
8. Strange Stories: And Other Explorations in Victorian Fiction (Boston, 1971).
9. The Man of Feeling, Oxford English Novels, ed. with an Introduction by Brian Vickers, (1970). Quotations are from this edition.
10. Dalmanutha; or, the Monster of Venice, by the Author of The Mysterious Murder. (n.d.). p.13.
11. Page references are to Falkland, the First Novel Library, ed. by Herbert Van Thal with an Introduction by Park Honan (1967).
12. Philosophy of Apparitions, (2nd edn.) p.37.
13. Jane Austen and the War of Ideas (1975) pp.62,63.
14. An Autobiography (1883) 1946. p.223.

N O T E S

Ch. VII (Dickens)

1. "The Secret of Immediacy: Dickens' Debt to the Tale of Terror" in Blackwood's, Nineteenth Century Fiction Vol. 26, No.2, Sept. 1971, pp. 145-157.
2. All quotations from Dickens' novels follow the texts of the Oxford Illustrated Dickens.
3. See Keith Hollingsworth, The Newgate Novel 1830-1847: Bulwer, Ainsworth, Dickens and Thackeray (Detroit, 1963).
4. Dickens and Crime (1962) p. 263.
5. op.cit. p. 124.
6. The Supernatural in Fiction, p. 19.
7. "The Hero's Guilt: The Case of Great Expectations", Essays in Criticism, X. 1960. A similar line is followed by Karl P. Wentersdorf, "Mirror Images in Great Expectations", Nineteenth Century Fiction XXI, 3, Dec. 1966.

N O T E S

Ch. VIII (Bronte)

1. Quotations from Villette follow the text of the Penguin English Library edition, edited by Mark Lilly and with an introduction by Tony Tanner, (1979).
2. Quotations from Jane Eyre follow the text of the Oxford English Novels edition, edited by Margaret Smith (1975).
3. v. Jane W. Stedman, "Charlotte Brontë and Bewick's 'British Birds'", Brontë Society Transactions, 1966 (XV,1) pp.36-40; and Joan Stevens, "'A Sermon in Every Vignette'; Bewick and Brontë", Turnbull Library Record, March 1968, pp.12-28.
4. The Supernatural in Fiction, p. 19.
5. ibid. pp.16,17.
6. Novels of the Eighteen-Forties, 1954 (1962), p.309.
7. The Accents of Persuasion (1960), p.152.
8. "Charlotte Brontë's 'New' Gothic in Jane Eyre and Villette", From Jane Austen to Joseph Conrad (1958).
9. Charlotte Brontë: Style in the Novel (1973) p.144.

N O T E S

Ch. IX (Le Fanu)

1. Uncle Silas: A Tale of Bartram-Haugh, with an Introduction by Elizabeth Bowen (London, 1947) is the text cited.
2. There is a similar incident in Le Fanu's novella, Carmilla (1872).
3. Dublin University Magazine (November, 1838) p.502.
4. Wylder's Hand: A Novel (London, 1963), No.4 in the Gollancz series "Rare Works of Imaginative Fiction", is the text cited.

NOTES

Ch. X (Collins)

1. e.g. Dorothy Scarborough, "Introduction", Great Short Stories of Detection, Mystery and Horror (1928); R.P. Ashley, "Wilkie Collins and the Detective Story", Nineteenth Century Fiction vi (1951); V.S. Pritchett "The Roots of Detection", Books In General (1953); Julian Symons, Bloody Murder: From the Detective Story to the Crime Novel (1972).
2. Hartright's Narrative, V; p. 25 The Woman in White Oxford English Novels, ed. with an Introduction H.P. Sucksmith, 1975. Quotations are from this edition.
3. Originally published in Household Words, 7th, 14th, 21st, 28th, April 1855.
4. Household Words 24th April 1852.
5. Count Fosco's Narrative. p.560.
6. "He is the quintessence of a hecatomb of villains, not English, but foreign. 'I thought the crime too ingenious for an English villain, so I pitched upon a foreigner'". Edmund Yates, "Mr Wilkie Collins in Gloucester Place", Celebrities At Home, 3rd series (1879), reprinted in Sucksmith, Appendix C.
7. Miss Halcombe's Narrative. p.177.
8. Miss Halcombe's Narrative. p.184.
9. Miss Halcombe's Narrative. p.188.
10. Miss Halcombe's Narrative, pp.247,248.
11. Miss Halcombe's Narrative. p.250.
12. Hartright's Narrative. p.52. Geoffrey Tillotson begins his View of Victorian Literature (1978) with the remark that the nineteenth seems to have been the first century that saw itself as having a number, an awareness evident in Marian's comment.
13. Miss Halcombe's Narrative. p.234.
14. Hartright's Narrative, X. p.67.
15. Hartright's Narrative Resumed, V. p.408.
16. Hartright's Narrative Resumed, IX, p.481.

17. Preamble, p.1.
18. In Novels of Mystery from the Victorian Age,
Chosen with an Introduction by Maurice Richardson
(1945).
19. The text used is that of the Oxford World's Classics
edition (1966)

N O T E S

Ch. XI (Eliot)

1. It was to be followed the next month by Bulwer's "The House and the Brain". This is but one instance of the linking of the two writers who were Blackwood's two most important novelists during the 1860s. One of the first admiring letters George Eliot received on publishing Scenes of Clerical Life makes a favourable comparison to Bulwer (Cross, 1, 451), and one of the first letters of approbation of Adam Bede from another author was from Bulwer himself. George Eliot copied it down eagerly when it was forwarded by Blackwood, and she continued to write warmly of him subsequently in her letters.
2. "Myth and the Single Consciousness: Middlemarch and The Lifted Veil" in This Particular Web: Essays on Middlemarch ed. Ian Adam (1975).
3. For another expedient, see W.F. Harvey's "August Heat", reprinted in Best Horror Stories ed. John Keir Cross (1957). In this the narrator's journal records events which are obviously leading up to his death, the fundamental irony being that he himself remains oblivious to the significance of the circumstances he describes.
4. Haight, Letters, II, p.233
5. OED: organ, definition II c. Phrenology. One of the regions of the brain held to be the seat or material centre of particular mental faculties or tendencies.
6. See the phrenological diagram included in the appendix.
7. The Nation 25 April 1879.
8. A theme to which Eliot was to return in 1869 in the short sequence of sonnets entitled "Brother and Sister", which however ends with a sense of the loss of childhood

- - - the dire years whose awful name is Change
 Had grasped our souls still yearning in divorce,
 And pitiless shaped them in two forms that range
 Two elements which sever their life's course.

But were another childhood-world my share,
 I would be born a little sister there.
9. Haight, Letters, II, 90, fn.
10. Haight, Letters, II, p.90
11. Haight, Letters, V, p. 380

12. "George Eliot a Negative Form", Critical Quarterly XVII, 2, Summer, 1975.
13. Haight, Letters IV, p. 301
14. George Eliot's letters record her enduring interest in Charlotte Brontë's work, beginning with the well-known comment on Jane Eyre: "All self-sacrifice is good, but one would wish it to be in a somewhat nobler cause than that of a diabolical law which chains a man soul and body to a petrifying carcase" (Haight, Letters, June 1848, to Charles Bray). Of Villette she remarks "a still more wonderful book than Jane Eyre. There is something almost preternatural in its power". (Haight, Letters 15, Feb. 1853, to Mrs Bray v. also 28 March 1853 and 16 April 1857 to Sara Hennell). In 1857 she caught up on The Professor, and her Journal records that, after the publication of Scenes of Clerical Life, she and Lewes hopefully consulted Mrs Gaskell's Life of Charlotte Brontë "to see how long it was before Jane Eyre came into demand in the libraries. (Cross, Life II, II2).

N O T E S Ch. XII (Conrad/Modernism)

1. Letters, ed. Haight. V, pp.280.281
2. The Return of the Native, Book 1, Ch.2.
3. Tess of the d'Urbervilles, XIV.
4. Quotations from Heart of Darkness, Penguin Modern Classics, (Harmondsworth, 1976).
5. "On the Modern Element in Modern Literature", Beyond Culture (1961).
6. Prologue, Madame Crowl's Ghost and Other Tales of Mystery by J.S. Le Fanu, (1923) New York 1971. p.vii.

APPENDIX A

O U T L I N E S O F P H R E N O L O G Y

by George Combe.

(Combe's pamphlet, first published in 1823, gives a lucid account of the mental faculties as seen by the phrenologists. The text given here follows that of the revised third edition (1824); the discussion of some of the individual organs and faculties has been abridged where indicated.)

Phrenology is a system of Philosophy of the Human Mind, and is founded on facts ascertainable by consciousness and observation. The name is derived from φῆνῃ mind, and λόγος discourse. It treats of mental faculties or powers, but not of actions.

It is a principle of physiology which cannot be disputed, that dissection alone can give us no information concerning the functions of the bodily organs. No anatomist, by dissecting the optic nerve, could predicate that its function is to minister to Vision; or, by dissecting the tongue, could discover that it is the organ of Taste.

Metaphysicians having confined themselves chiefly to reflection on consciousness, could not discover the organs of the mind; and Anatomists, having merely dissected the brain, could not discover the functions of that organ; and hence the comparative ignorance which has hitherto prevailed regarding that interesting point in the philosophy of man, - the connection betwixt the mind and his organic constitution.

Phrenologists have endeavoured to avoid the obstacles presented by these modes of philosophizing, and have compared manifestations of mind with development of brain, in a great number of individuals. The system now taught is the result of observations thus made; and the principal points which are conceived to be established by extensive induction are the following:

1st, That the brain is the material instrument, by means of which the mind carries on intercourse with the external world.

2d, That the brain is an aggregate of parts, each of which has a special and determinate function.

3d, That the form of the brain can be ascertained by inspecting the cranium; and that the functions of the several parts may be determined by comparing their size with the power of manifesting the mental faculties. The difference between a small and large development of the larger organs, such as Consciousness, Ideality,

Benevolence, &c. amounts to an inch or upwards, and beginners should attend to such cases first.

* * * * *

The organs and their Faculties are the following:

I. Amativeness, or Physical Love. - This is an important propensity, and gives rise to the feelings which attract the sexes so strongly to each other. It is the source of that kindly interest which either sex feels in all that relates to the other; as well as of the stronger impulses of desire. These are its direct effects; but it produces others indirectly by its influence on the other powers. It acts, in many cases, as a stimulus to these, increases their activity, and brings them into a state of higher susceptibility. That love between the sexes, of which this is the origin, may be strengthened and prolonged by Adhesiveness, and other powers and sentiments brought subsequently into action. The cerebellum is the organ of this propensity, and its size is indicated by the distance betwixt the mastoid processes behind the ears, or by the general thickness of the neck from ear to ear. In the casts of Raphael, Mitchell, Mary Macinnes, and Robert Dean, in all of whom the propensity was strongly manifested, the organ is large; in Dr Hette, the feeling was rather deficient and the organ is small. - Established.

II. Philoprogenitiveness. - The chief function of this faculty is to produce the love of children, or offsprings in general; but it seems to give rise to a certain feeling of kindness, mingled with condescension, and almost compassion, for objects which are weak and helpless. In parents, the feeling is so far compulsory, as to be independent of any other qualities in the child than those of mere weakness and helplessness; and, as a proof of this, the more weak and helpless the child is, the emotion is felt the more strongly. In others, the feeling is less constrained, and more apt to be influenced by the appearance of qualities calculated to excite, at the same time, the other faculties, - such as beauty, vivacity, or intelligence. It is this chiefly which supports the mother under all the cares and troubles of rearing an helpless offspring, during nights spent in watching, and days, passed in unavailing endeavours to pacify or relieve them; and that often independent of religion, morality, or the dictates of reason. When this organ is large, and I. moderate, it gives a drooping appearance to the hind part of the head. When the faculty is strong, the individual is delighted at the sight of children, who, on the other hand, understanding its natural language, are rejoiced and flock around him when he makes his appearance. It is quite distinct from general Benevolence. In the casts of the American

Indians, the organ is deficient; in the casts of the Negroes it is large. It is larger in the casts of females in general than in males. - Established.

III. Concentrativeness. - When Dr Gall first made observations upon this organ, he was led to believe its function to be a desire of inhabiting high places, because he observed it large in animals which were fond of these situations; such as the chamois, the eagle, and the ptarmigan. Farther observations shewed it to be large in those animals and persons who seemed attached to particular places, and who disliked much change of residence. - - - -

This organ is found large in authors and orators who excel in concentration of thought; and, it has been observed large also in some actors and singers, who have the power of exercising several faculties simultaneously, so as to produce, by their combination, one harmonious and united effect; and it is probable that it is by the exercise of a similar power, that animals, such as the chamois, which are fond of heights, are enabled to maintain in action all those faculties which are necessary to preserve their position while they browse in difficult or dangerous situations, and at the same time avoid the aim of the hunter. - - - - Dr Gall stated the organ of Inhabitiveness as conjectural.

IV. Adhesiveness. - The function of this faculty is to produce friendly attachment in general; and it is stronger in women than in men. In children, it is generally shewn by attachment to animals; as dogs, rabbits, birds, or horses. It is one of the main sources of friendship and society in general. It is marked as only probable in Dr Spurzheim's works, published several years ago, but is now established.

V. Combativity. - This faculty gives a general propensity to contend, resist, or attack, without determining the modes or objects. When the organ is large and active, delight may be felt even in fighting. The organ is situate at the inferior posterior angle of the parietal bone. It may be manifested in argument as well as in war. It incites us to overcome opposition, and to encounter obstacles of every kind. In all cases of difficulty and danger, where a severe struggle is necessary to command success, this power is of eminent use, and nothing will compensate for the want of it as an active principle. It is generally large in persons who have murdered, not from premeditated purpose, but from the impulse of the moment. The organ is large in the cast of King Robert Bruce, Raggart, and Mary Macinnes. It is moderate in the Rev. Mr M., and in the casts of the Hindoo skulls it is rather small. - Established.

VI. Destructiveness. - The special faculty of this organ seems to be the propensity to destroy in general.

When it is energetic, it adds force to the whole character. It furnishes the threat of unpleasant consequences in case of disobedience, which gives weight to command. If it is found in combination with a full development of the higher faculties and sentiments, it materially aids in the production of a character fitted for great achievements. It does not necessarily lead to cruelty; on the contrary, when benevolence and the higher sentiments are strong, it may be employed, with full effect, to promote, by the exercise of a just severity, the purposes of virtue. It leads to crime only when too energetic, and when the sentiments which should counteract it are not sufficiently powerful. The organ is conspicuous in the heads of cool and deliberate murderers, and persons habitually delighting in acts of cruelty, who are also generally found to be deficient in the higher sentiments. This faculty, and the preceding, give the tendency to rage. The organ is large in the casts of Bellingham, Hussey, Nesbit, and many other murderers, and small in the casts of the Hindoos.
- Established,

VII. Constructiveness. - The name of this organ implies that it gives the special faculty to build or to construct in general, but does not determine the object to be constructed. - - - - Established.

VIII. Acquisitiveness. - This faculty produces the tendency to acquire and to possess in general, without reference to the uses to which the objects, when attained, may be applied. It takes its direction from the other faculties, and hence may lead to collecting coins, paintings, minerals, and other objects of curiosity or science, as well as money. - - - - Established.

IX. Secretiveness. - Man and animals are occasionally liable to the assaults of enemies, which may be avoided by concealment, in cases where strength is wanting to repel them by force. Nature, therefore, has implanted in both an instinctive tendency to conceal, which, according to its degree of intensity, and to the direction which it receives from the other faculties, may produce prudence, slyness, or cunning. - - - - Established.

X. Self-Esteem. - The general tendency of this faculty is to make us think highly of ourselves. This tendency appears very different in different persons, and is by no means possessed uniformly in proportion to the merit of the individual. The sentiment manifests itself in different manners, according to the peculiar combination of the other faculties with which it is conjoined; and, in general, it leads to esteem of the special propensities and sentiments which characterize the mind of the individual in whom it is powerful. Hence, if the superior sentiments and intellectual faculties are largely developed, it contributes to true dignity and greatness of mind; and the individual

esteems himself for those qualities which are really worthy of the esteem of others, - intellectual and moral excellence. - - -

XI. Love of Aprobation. - This faculty renders us attentive to the opinions which others entertain of us; and, according to the degree in which it is possessed, and the manner in which it is directed, produces the love of praise, or of fame, and also emulation, ambition or vanity. When the organ is small, indifference to the opinions of others is the consequence. - - - Established.

XII. Cautiousness. - The emotion of fear is familiar to mankind in general; and yet many celebrated metaphysicians do not treat of it as a primitive feeling. It is admitted as such in Phrenology, in consequence of numerous observations. The faculty produces doubts, hesitations, caution, circumspection, or timidity and fear, according to the degree in which it is possessed, and the other faculties with which it is combined. It is an essential ingredient in a prudent character. When Combativeness is not large, and Cautiousness, Conscientiousness, and Love of Approbation are large, the combination gives rise to bashfulness, or mauvaise honte; and many years of the most intimate acquaintance with the world, will often not suffice to remove the embarrassment thus occasioned. Many of the lower animals are remarkable for cautiousness, as the crane and the rook, and they have the corresponding portion of the brain largely developed. The organ is large in Dr Hette, and King Robert Bruce, and deficient in Mary Macinnes. - Established.

XIII. Benevolence. - It has long been a subject of debate among philosophers, whether Man is entirely selfish in all his actions, or if there is in the mind any sentiment determining him to desire the good of others as a direct object, without reference to any expectation of advantage to himself. The Phrenologists have discovered, that the desire for the happiness of others, bears a proportion to the size of a particular portion of the brain; and hence they conclude, that Benevolence is a primitive sentiment of the mind, independent of all selfish considerations. The faculty disposes to active benevolence and compassion. It also gives mildness and cheerfulness to the temper, and a charitable mode of judging of the actions and characters of others. When abused, it leads to profusion. A small development of the organ does not necessarily produce cruelty. It only leads to indifference about the welfare of others. When Benevolence is strong and Destructiveness weak in the same individual, he is apt to be too facile in his disposition. When both are vigorous, Destructiveness gives fire and energy to the mind, and Benevolence modifies and controls its improper manifestation. The organ is large in Henry IV., Jacob Jervis, Dr Hette, and Raphael; small

in John Bellingham, and in the Caribs. - Established.

XIV. Veneration. - The sentiment of Admiration has long been recognized by writers on the mind; but, in this feeling, a certain degree of wonder is implied; and it is not limited to pure and respectful reverence. The latter emotion is the result of the faculty now in question. It inspires with the sentiment of respect; and, when directed to the Supreme Being, leads to adoration. It predisposes to religious feeling, without determining the manner in which it is directed. It leads also to reverence of ancestry and of superiors in society. It is a distinguishing characteristic in the love of children towards parents. When the organ is large, and that of Self-esteem small, it gives the tendency to humility. The organ is large in Bruce and Raphael, and deficient in Dr Hette. - Established.

XV. Hope. - The function of this faculty is to produce the sentiment of hope in general. It renders the prospect of the future fair and smiling, and gives the tendency to believe and expect. - - - Established.

XVI. Ideality. - This faculty produces the sentiment of the sublime and beautiful; the feeling of exquisiteness, and the desire to invest every object with more than sublunary perfection. It inspires with rapture and enthusiasm, and prompts to embellishment. When joined with Cautiousness and Veneration large, it tends towards the serious and sublime; when combined with Hope and Wit large, and Cautiousness small, it disposes rather to gaiety and brilliancy. It is an essential requisite in the poet, orator, and artist. Without it, the productions of the mind may be solid, useful and becoming; but they must ever be deficient in grandeur of conception, and splendour of execution, and they will want the glow of fancy which enlivens and adorns every object presented to its touch. The organ is large in Raphael, Wordsworth, Haydon, and small in Haggart, Mary Macinnes, and other criminals. - Established.

Wonder. - Immediately above Ideality, a blank space appears in the cast and plates of the head: the function of this part of the brain was not ascertained when the other organs were numbered, but subsequent observations shew that it is connected with the sentiment of Wonder. Persons in whom this organ is large, are fond of novelty, and susceptible of vivid emotions of surprise. They delight in the marvellous, and are prone to entertain romantic views. When very powerful, it gives to the eyes and eye-brows an elevated cast, indicating a permanent expression of surprise. The faculty produces delight in stories of ghosts and supernatural agency. The organ is not numbered, to avoid, in the present state of the science, an alteration of the numbering of the subsequent organs. - Probable.

XVII. Conscientiousness. - Observation, by shewing that those who experience the sentiment of justice very powerfully, have a certain portion of the brain largely developed, while those in whom it is weak, have this portion small, has for ever settled the dispute among metaphysicians, whether or not there is in man a governing principle of moral rectitude and justice. This faculty produces a great effect upon the manifestations of the other powers. "Other principles of action may have more strength, but this only has authority. Its sentence makes us guilty to ourselves, and guilty in the eyes of our Maker, whatever other principle may be set in opposition to it. It is evident, therefore, that this principle has, from its nature, an authority to direct and determine with regard to our conduct; to judge, to acquit, or to condemn, and even to punish, - an authority which belongs to no other principle of the human mind" - (Reid, Essay III, ch.viii.) Bishop Butler gives an illustration of the sentiment similar to this. This faculty ought to be the fountain of all human laws. The organ is considered as ascertained. The cast of Mrs H. shows this organ very large, and Firmness small. In King Robert Bruce and Haggart, Firmness is large, and Conscientiousness small. In the Reverend Mr H. both organs are large. In the cast of the boy J.G. both organs are small. This last deficiency is indicated by the head going flat over at Cautiousness, instead of rising in a full swell over by Conscientiousness and Firmness.

XVIII. Firmness. - The special faculty of this organ is somewhat difficult of discrimination; but it seems to be perseverance, decisiveness, or firmness, - the object or purpose to be persevered in being determined by other faculties. This faculty, when not directed by the superior sentiments, leads to obstinacy and infatuation. When small, want of steadiness and determination is the result. When very large, it gives a peculiar erectness and stiffness to the gait. See the preceding organ for illustrations. - Established.

XIX. Individuality. - This faculty gives the desire to know facts and things, without determining the kind of knowledge, and without any view to the purposes to which it may be subservient. It produces a talent for observation, and a capacity for details. - - - It is established.

There are strong grounds for believing that two organs are included in Number 19. Dr Spurzheim considers the lower portion of it, including a small space betwixt the organs of Locality, to be connected with the talent for observing occurrences. The upper portion, bordering on Comparison, is large in persons who are fond of natural history. The frontal sinus is occasionally found under the lower space marked 19. In Voltaire the organs are deficient. In Fraser, who

strongly manifested Individuality, they are large. It is large in Mr Roscoe, late of Liverpool; and in a Frenchman's, No. 12 of O'Neill and Son's catalogue of Masks.

XX. Form. - The size of this organ is indicated by the width between the eyes, the different degrees of which correspond to the greater or less development of the portions of brain situate on the mesial or inner side of the orbitary plates of the frontal bone. The function of the faculty is to judge of form. It aids the portrait-painter, and all persons engaged in the imitative arts. - - - - - Established.

XXI. Size. - Persons are found who have an intuitive facility in estimating size, and in whom the powers of distinguishing form and relative position are not equally strong; and the part of the brain under No. 21 has been observed in such individuals to be large. It gives the power of perceiving and judging of perspective. Some officers in the army, in forming their companies into line, estimate the space which the men will occupy with perfect accuracy, others can never learn to judge correctly of this requisite, and the organ has been observed largely developed in the former. Locality also may conduce to this talent. In the mask of Mr F. (No. 42 of O'Neill and Son's catalogue) the organ is very deficient, and he could not perceive perspective. In Brunel, who excels in mechanics, it is large. In this cast the muscle is drawn a little down, but the organ is distinctly seen to be large, by the projection forward of the skull. - Probable.

XXII. Weight or Resistance. - - - - Persons who excel at archery and quoits, also those who find great facility in judging of momentum and resistance in mechanics, are observed to possess the parts of the brain lying near the organ of size largely developed; and hence it is conjectured that the organ of weight is situate in that direction. The organ, however, is only probable. In MacLauchlan, a weaver in Saltcoats, who spent many years in devising means to equalize the momentum of the rising and falling strokes of a pump, the organ is largely developed.

XXIII. Colouring. - - - - Observation shews, that those who have great natural powers of perceiving colours, have a large development of that portion of the brain situate under the middle of the arch of the eye-brows, enclosed by the lines 23., whilst those who cannot distinguish minute shades of colour have this portion small. The faculty of this organ is to perceive colours, and their shades, but it does not give what is called Taste in their arrangement. In the mask of a painter (No. 34 of O'Neill and Son's catalogue) the organ is large. In No. 35 the mask of Mr James

Milne, it is small, and he cannot discriminate shades. In the masks of Haydon and Wilkie, eminent painters, it is large. - The organ is now considered to be established.

XXIV. Locality or Space. - The special faculty of this organ seems to be, to give the desire of seeing, and the power of remembering localities and scenery of every description; the inclination to travel is a consequence of its activity, and it is large in the expert landscape-painter. - - - - -

XXV. Order - Many people are remarkable for the attention they pay to the arrangement of their domestic concerns, for the order in which furniture, books, clothes, &c. are kept: they are distressed to see any thing out of its place, and are acutely sensible to all the comforts of arrangement and order. Others, again, present the very opposite appearances, and are lost to all the advantages which arrangement bestows. In the first, the organ marked 25. will be found large, in the second small. Dr Spurzheim has marked it as only probable: on account of its small size, it is often difficult to observe it correctly, but it may now be considered as established. The organ is large in the mask of a Frenchman, No. 12 of O'Neill and Son's catalogue.

XXVI. Time. - The power of conceiving time, and of remembering circumstances connected by no link, but the relation in which they stand to each other in chronology, is very different in different individuals. We have a few observations in evidence of this faculty, but these are not sufficiently numerous to allow us to speak positively. The organ is marked 26. on the bust, and the special faculty seems to be the power of recollecting dates, of judging of time, and of intervals in general; but the organ is only probable.

XXVII. Number. - Many examples of mental calculators must be known to every one. Mr G. Bidder performs the most complicated arithmetical problems, with a celerity and accuracy equally astonishing. The organ which gives this power is situate under 27. on the bust, and its special faculty is calculation in general. In Mr B. it is very large. The organ is large in Humboldt, (brother of the Traveller), and who possesses the faculty in a high degree. - Established.

XXVIII. Tune. - The organ of tune bears the same relation to the ears as that of colour does to the eyes. - - - - - When the organ is fully developed, it enlarges the lateral parts of the forehead. It is found of large size in all great composers of music, as Handel, Haydn, Rossini, and in all who have flourished as eminent performers. In estimating

the practical effects of this organ, the observer should ascertain the development also of Time and Imitation. If these be deficient, Tune will produce only a love of Music, without the power of executing it; if Tune be moderate, and these organs large, the individual, without any passion for the art, may, by application, become a respectable performer. Imitation, in addition to Tune, appears requisite to a talent for singing. - Established.

XXIX. Language. - The special faculty of this organ is to enable us to acquire a knowledge of, and to give us the power of, using artificial signs or words. - - - - - The organ is established.

XXX. Comparison. - - - - - This faculty prompts us to comparison, without determining its kind; for every one must draw his analogies, and choose his similes, from his own knowledge, and from the sphere of activity of his other faculties. The activity of the faculty is very important; and people who have it large, are generally said to have much discrimination. Individuality, Language, and Comparison combined, give readiness of apprehension, and fluency of speech; but unless Causality be also great, the reasonings are not consecutive, and the views not comprehensive. - - - - - Established.

XXXI. Causality. - Individuality and Comparison take cognizance of every thing that is obvious to the senses. This faculty looks a little farther than mere sense, and takes cognizance of the relations and dependencies of phenomena. It furnishes the idea of causation, as implying something more than mere juxta-position or sequence, - and as forming an invisible bond of connection between cause and effect. It impresses us with an irresistible conviction, that every phenomenon or change in nature is caused by something, and hence, by successive steps, leads us to the First Cause of all. In looking at the actions of men, it leads us to consider the motives or moving causes from which they proceed. It induces us, on all occasions, to ask, why and wherefore is this so? It corresponds nearly to the "Relative Suggestion" of Dr Brown, - or the "Reasoning Power" of Locke, and other writers. It gives deep penetration, and the perception of logical consequence in argument. It is large in persons who possess a natural genius for metaphysics, political economy, or similar sciences. The organ is large in Franklin, Burke, Haydon, and Wordsworth. It is deficient in Fraser, No. 19, and the Frenchman, No. 12. - Established.

XXXII. Wit, or the Sentiment of the Ludicrous. --
 - - - - - Established.

XXXIII. Imitation. - Dr Gall received the first hint of the existence of the organ marked 33. on the bust, from examining the head of one of his friends, who possessed the power of imitating in a surprising degree, and was indeed a perfect actor. He found the same configuration of head in an individual in the Deaf and Dumb Institution, who, the first time he put on a mask at the carnival, imitated perfectly well all the persons who frequented the Institution. Observation afterwards multiplied examples to such an amount, that it was speedily considered as established. Persons who have the organ large, when they mention a fact or relate an anecdote, imitate the voice, look, and gesture of those they are describing, so that by its mimicry it is easily recognized. Players require the organ, and many painters have derived no inconsiderable share of their fame, from possessing it largely developed. It greatly assists constructiveness and form. It is large in Clara Fisher and Raphael, and deficient in Jacob Jervis. - Established.

* * * *

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

We have already stated, that the science of Phrenology rests on facts. By observation, then, - by comparing manifestation with development, - the phrenologists have pointed out certain primitive faculties of the mind, and have shown the effect which both the absolute and relative size of the organs has upon the power of manifesting them. In the case of most of the faculties, the observations have been so numerous, that they hold their conclusions as certain, and we have accordingly marked these Established. In regard to a few, where the observations have been more limited, the conclusions are stated as Probable; and, in one or two, where reasonable evidence is wanting, they are mentioned as only Conjectural.

Every one who merely takes an index to the organs in one hand, and a plate or cast of the head in the other, is not thereby at once qualified to decide definitively on the merits of the system; both patience and practice are necessary to enable us to become acquainted with the appearance of the development, and considerable experience, and no small degree of reflecting power, is requisite to enable us to judge correctly of the effects of the combinations of the different organs, and of the consequent character.

If we have ascertained that the system is founded in nature, we are safe to conclude that the knowledge of it cannot lead to harm. This is the proper answer to those persons who allege that it teaches fatalism and materialism, unless it can be shewn that the knowledge of truth necessarily leads to evil. No inquiry is made into the nature, essence, or substance of the mind or soul itself. Phrenology teaches a knowledge of the works of the Creator; and, as his works are wisely and perfectly made, the legitimate presumption is, that those who see danger in a knowledge of them, are mistaken in their views. Every objection that the system is dangerous, presupposes its connection with error. The answer to such an objection, therefore, is the demonstration of its truth. If it were false, human ingenuity might certainly discover and point out the evil consequences to which it would lead; but, if it be true, no human intelligence is entitled to condemn it. On its truth, therefore, its supporters take their stand.

Throughout the preceding pages, we have spoken of the organs in the singular number, but this was only for the sake of perspicuity. All the organs are double: - as we have two eyes, two ears, so we have two organs of tune, of wit, of benevolence, firmness, self-esteem; but in these three last, and in the others that are situate along the middle line of the head, the two hemispheres of the brain approach so closely, that both the organs are included in one circle, and always spoken of as single; thus we say, the organ of comparison, of benevolence, of veneration, &c.; but there are still two organs, one on each side. Every individual has all the organs, but their size and degree of activity vary in all. Strength is one quality of mind, and activity another. A mind may be very powerful, but slow; or very active, but not remarkable for vigour; or both qualities may be combined. Strength depends on the size of the organs; activity may result from constitution and exercise. Hence Phrenology affords a measure of the strength alone. It indicates whether a man is by nature fitted to think or feel strongly or feeble; but does not reveal the number of thoughts or feelings which may pass through his mind in a given time, nor the degree in which his faculties have been cultivated. There are several portions of the brain, particularly at the base, the development of which cannot be ascertained during life. The functions of these parts remain to be discovered.

If one organ be large, and the neighbouring organs small, an elevation of the skull is perceptible at the places where the large organs are situate. If a number of contiguous organs be large, no particular elevation will be perceptible; but there will be a general fullness of the corresponding part of the head. Thus, if the organ of individuality

alone be large, there will be a prominence in the middle of the forehead, as in children; but if the organs of all the knowing and reflecting faculties be large, there will be a general fulness of the forehead.

All the faculties, when active in a due degree, produce actions good - proper - or necessary. It is excess of activity which produces abuses; and it is probable that the science of Phrenology has only been discovered, in consequence of some individuals, in whom particular organs were very largely developed, yielding to the strongest propensities of their nature. The smallness of a particular organ is not the cause of a faculty producing abuses: thus, though the faculty of benevolence be but weakly manifested, from the organ being small, this does not produce cruelty; it is only accompanied with indifference to the miseries and sufferings of others. When one faculty is weak, abuses may result by another being left without proper restraint. Thus, active faculties of acquisitiveness and secretiveness, combined with a weak faculty of conscientiousness, and weak reflecting faculties, may produce theft. Powerful faculties of combativeness and destructiveness, with a weak faculty of benevolence, may produce cruel and ferocious actions. A strong faculty of benevolence, with a weak faculty of cautiousness, and weak reflecting faculties, may produce prodigality, and expose a person to be the prey of knaves.

Every faculty may be active of itself, in consequence of internal activity of the organ, or it may be excited by external means. Hence arise natural propensities to particular courses of action, and also the susceptibility of improvement by education.

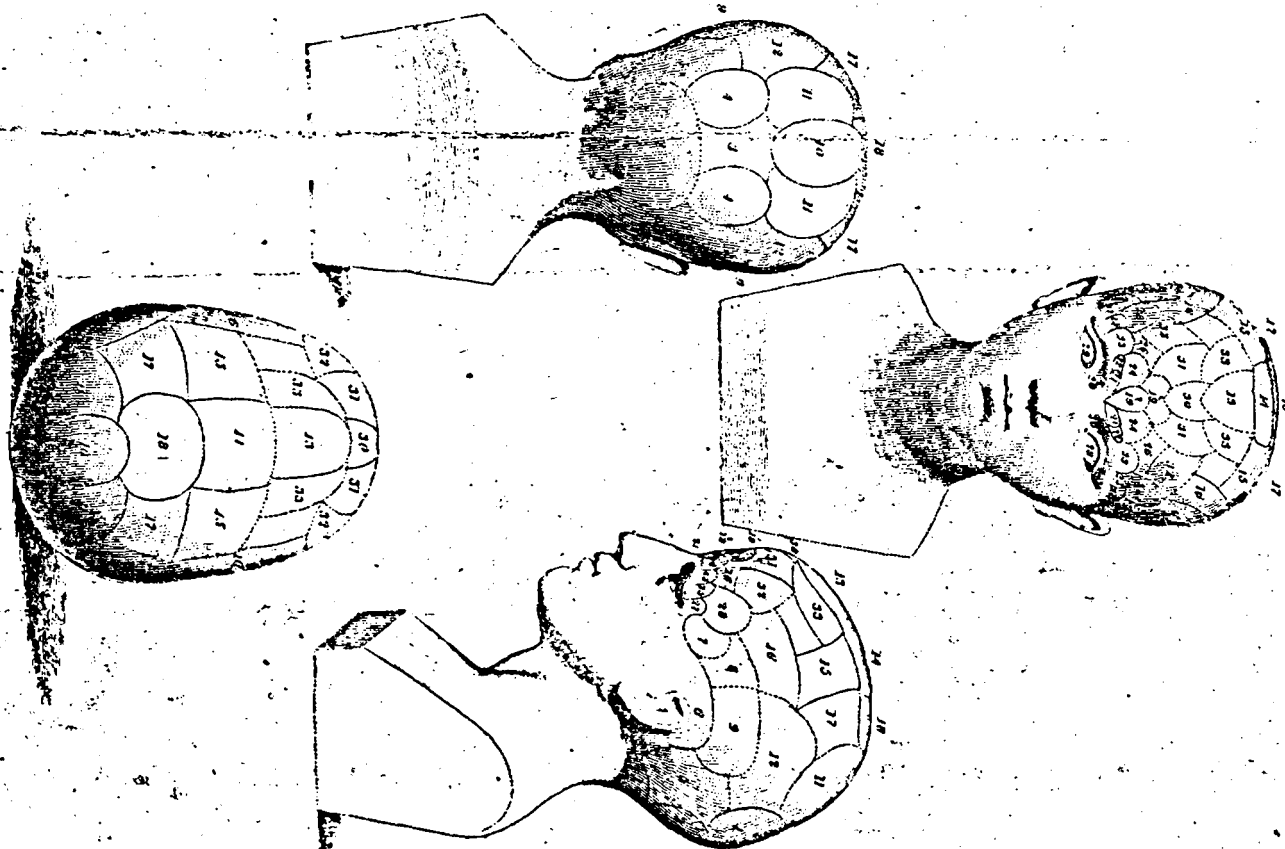
Every faculty being active, gives a desire of gratification, by engaging in actions correspondent to its nature. Thus, the faculty of tune leads to the desire of producing music. The faculty of benevolence prompts to acts of charity. Hence the foundation of particular tastes. Whatever is suited to gratify the natural desires of the faculties which are most active in any individual, is that which pleases him most, or is most suited to his taste.

The combination of the different faculties, and their relative activity, determine the particular characters of individuals. Thus, powerful faculties of firmness, conscientiousness, and produce sedate, serious, and prudent characters. Powerful faculties of hope, ideality, and love of approbation, with weak faculties of cautiousness, and weak reflecting faculties, produce gay, inconsiderate characters. Self-esteem, firmness, and little love of approbation, conscientiousness, and veneration, produce obstinate characters. Love of approbation, and benevolence, will give an obliging and attentive disposition.

When faculties of opposite kinds occur strong in the same individual, his natural tendency is to follow a course of action calculated to gratify one or several, without offending any of them. Thus, if benevolence and acquisitiveness be both large, the individual will be disposed to shew kindness by personal exertions, but not by giving money. If conscientiousness, benevolence, combativeness, and destructiveness be all vigorous, the individual will, like Don Quixote, desire to redress wrongs, and inflict vengeance on transgressors. If he is deficient in firmness and reflection, different faculties will assume the ascendancy by turns; and one hour he will be benevolent and just, and the next captious, passionate, and severe, as circumstances excite the one or other of his feelings.

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The casts mentioned in the preceding pages, may be inspected every Saturday in the Hall of the Phrenological Society, Clyde Street, Edinburgh, and also at the shops of James de Ville, 367. Strand, London, and Luke O'Neill and Son, 125. Canongate, Edinburgh, from whom also any number of them may be purchased.



NAMES OF THE PHRENOLOGICAL ORGANS, REFERRING TO THE FIGURES
INDICATING THEIR RELATIVE POSITIONS.

- | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Amativeness | 12. Cautiousness | 22. Weight. |
| 2. Philoprogeni-
tiveness | 13. Benevolence. | 23. Colouring. |
| 3. Concentrativeness | 14. Veneration. | 24. Locality. |
| 4. Adhesiveness | 15. Hope. | 25. Order. |
| 5. Combaticiveness | 16. Ideality | 26. Time. |
| 6. Destructiveness | Wonder | 27. Number. |
| 7. Constructiveness | 17. Conscientious-
ness | 28. Tune. |
| 8. Acquisitiveness | 18. Firmness | 29. Language. |
| 9. Secretiveness | 19. Individuality. | 30. Comparison. |
| 10. Self esteem | 20. Form. | 31. Causality. |
| 11. Love of appro-
bation | 21. Size. | 32. Wit. |
| | | 33. Imitation. |

APPENDIX B

THE MAN IN THE BELL

by William Maginn

Blackwood's Magazine No 57, November 1821
pp. 373-375

reprinted in (a) Tales from Blackwood Vol VI
(1859)

(b) Miscellanies: Prose and Verse
by William Maginn, ed. R.W.
Montagu. 2 Vols. 1885.

In my younger days, bell-ringing was much more in fashion among the young men of -- than it is now. Nobody, I believe, practises it there at present except the servants of the church, and the melody has been much injured in consequence. Some fifty years ago, about twenty of us who dwelt in the vicinity of the Cathedral, formed a club, which used to ring every peal that was called for; and, from continual practice and a rivalry which arose between us and a club attached to another steeple, and which tended considerably to sharpen our zeal, we became very Mozarts on our favourite instruments. But my bell-ringing practice was shortened by a singular accident, which not only stopped my performance, but made even the sound of a bell terrible to my ears.

One Sunday, I went with another into the belfry to ring for noon prayers, but the second stroke we had pulled showed us that the clapper of the bell we were at was muffled. Some one had been buried that morning, and it had been prepared, of course, to ring a mournful note. We did not know of this, but the remedy was easy. "Jack," said my companion, "step up to the loft, and cut off the hat;" for the way we had of muffling was by tying a piece of an old hat, or of cloth (the former was preferred), to one side of the clapper, which deadened every second toll. I complied, and mounting into the belfry, crept as usual into the bell, where I began to cut away. The hat had been tied on in some more complicated manner than usual, and I was perhaps three or four minutes in getting it off; during which time my companion below was hastily called away - by a message from his sweetheart, I believe - but that is not material to my story. The person who called him was a brother of the club, who, knowing that the time had come for ringing for service, and not thinking that any one was

above, began to pull. At this moment I was just getting out, when I felt the bell moving; I guessed the reason at once - it was a moment of terror; but by a hasty and almost convulsive effort, I succeeded in jumping down, and throwing myself on the flat of my back under the bell.

The room in which it was, was little more than sufficient to contain it, the bottom of the bell coming within a couple of feet of the floor of lath. At that time I certainly was not so bulky as I am now, but as I lay it was within an inch of my face. I had not laid myself down a second, when the ringing began. - It was a dreadful situation. Over me swung an immense mass of metal, one touch of which would have crushed me to pieces; the floor under me was principally composed of crazy laths, and if they gave way, I was precipitated to the distance of about fifty feet upon a loft, which would, in all probability, have sunk under the impulse of my fall, and sent me to be dashed to atoms upon the marble floor of the chancel, an hundred feet below. I remembered - for fear is quick in recollection - how a common clockwright, about a month before, had fallen, and, bursting through the floors of the steeple, driven in the ceilings of the porch, and even broken into the marble tombstone of a bishop who slept beneath. This was my first terror, but the ringing had not continued a minute, before a more awful and immediate dread came on me. The deafening sound of the bell smote into my ears with a thunder which made me fear their drums would crack: there was not a fibre of my body it did not thrill through. It entered my very soul; thought and reflection were almost utterly banished; I only retained the sensation of agonising terror. Every moment I saw the bell sweep within an inch of my face; and my eyes - I could not close them, though to look at the object was bitter as death - followed it instinctively in its oscillating progress until it came back again. It was in vain I said to myself that it could come no nearer at any future swing than it did at first; every time it descended, I endeavoured to shrink into the very floor to avoid being buried under the down-sweeping mass; and then, reflecting on the danger of pressing too weightily on my frail support, would cower up again as far as I dared.

At first my fears were mere matter of fact. I was afraid the pulleys above would give way, and let the bell plunge on me. At another time, the possibility of the clapper being shot out in some sweep, and dashing through my body, as I had seen a ramrod glide through a door, flitted across my mind. The dread also, as I have already mentioned, of the crazy floor, tormented me; but these soon gave way to fears not more unfounded, but more visionary, and of course more tremendous. The roaring of the bell confused my intellect, and my fancy soon began to teem with all sort of strange and terrifying ideas. The bell pealing above, and opening its jaws with a hideous clamour, seemed to me at one time a ravening monster, raging to devour me; at another, a whirlpool ready to suck me into its bellowing abyss. As I gazed on it, it assumed all shapes; it was a flying eagle, or

rather a roc of the Arabian story-tellers, clapping its wings and screaming over me. As I looked upward into it, it would appear sometimes to lengthen into indefinite extent, or to be twisted at the end into the spiral folds of the tail of a flying-dragon. Nor was the flaming breath or fiery glance of that fabled animal wanting to complete the picture. My eyes, inflamed, bloodshot, and glaring, invested the supposed monster with a full proportion of unholy light.

It would be endless were I to merely hint at all the fancies that possessed my mind. Every object that was hideous and roaring presented itself to my imagination. I often thought that I was in a hurricane at sea, and that the vessel in which I was embarked tossed under me with the most furious vehemence. The air, set in motion by the swinging of the bell, blew over me, nearly with the violence, and more than the thunder, of a tempest; and the floor seemed to reel under me, as under a drunken man. But the most awful of all the ideas that seized on me were drawn from the supernatural. In the vast cavern of the bell hideous faces appeared, and glared down on me with terrifying frowns, or with grinning mockery still more appalling. At last, the devil himself, accoutred as in the common description of the evil spirit, with hoof, horn, and tail, and eyes of infernal lustre, made his appearance, and called on me to curse God and worship him, who was powerful to save me. This dread suggestion he uttered with the full-toned clangour of the bell. I had him within an inch of me, and I thought on the fate of the Santon Barsisa. Strenuously and desperately I defied him and bade him begone. Reason, then, for a moment, resumed her sway, but it was only to fill me with fresh terror, just as the lightning dispels the gloom that surrounds the benighted mariner, but to show him that his vessel is driving on a rock, where she must inevitably be dashed to pieces. I found I was becoming delirious, and trembled lest reason should utterly desert me. This is at all times an agonising thought, but it smote me then with tenfold agony. I feared lest, when utterly deprived of my senses, I should rise - to do which I was every moment tempted by that strange feeling which calls on a man, whose head is dizzy from standing on the battlement of a lofty castle, to precipitate himself from it, and then death would be instant and tremendous. When I thought of this, I became desperate. I caught the floor with a grasp which drove the blood from my nails; and I yelled with the cry of despair. I called for help, I prayed, I shouted, but all the efforts of my voice were of course drowned in the bell. As it passed over my mouth, it occasionally echoed my cries, which mixed not with its own sound, but preserved their distinct character. Perhaps this was but fancy. To me, I know, they then sounded as if they were the shouting, howling, or laughing of the fiends with which my imagination had peopled the gloomy cave which swung over me.

You may accuse me of exaggerating my feelings; but

I am not. Many a scene of dread have I since passed through, but they are nothing to the self-inflicted terrors of this half hour. The ancients have doomed one of the damned, in their Tartarus, to lie under a rock, which every moment seems to be descending to annihilate him - and an awful punishment it would be. But if to this you add a clamour as loud as if ten thousand furies were howling about you - a deafening uproar banishing reason, and driving you to madness - you must allow that the bitterness of the pang was rendered more terrible. There is no man, firm as his nerves may be, who could retain his courage in this situation.

In twenty minutes the ringing was done. Half of that time passed over me without power of computation, - the other half appeared an age. When it ceased, I became gradually more quiet, but a new fear retained me. I knew that five minutes would elapse without ringing, but, at the end of that short time, the bell would be rung a second time, for five minutes more. I could not calculate time. A minute and an hour were of equal duration. I feared to rise, lest the five minutes should have elapsed, and the ringing be again commenced, in which case I should be crushed, before I could escape, against the walls or framework of the bell. I therefore still continued to lie down, cautiously shifting myself, however, with a careful gliding, so that my eye no longer looked into the hollow. This was of itself a considerable relief. The cessation of the noise had, in a great measure, the effect of stupifying me, for my attention, being no longer occupied by the chimeras I had conjured up, began to flag. All that now distressed me was the constant expectation of the second ringing, for which, however, I settled myself with a kind of stupid resolution. I closed my eyes, and clenched my teeth as firmly as it they were screwed in a vice. At last the dreaded moment came, and the first swing of the bell extorted a groan from me, as they say the most resolute victim screams at the sight of the rack, to which he is for a second time destined. After this, however, I lay silent and lethargic, without a thought. Wrapt in the defensive armour of stupidity, I defied the bell and its intonations. When it ceased, I was roused a little by the hope of escape. I did not, however, decide on this step hastily, but, putting up my hand with the utmost caution, I touched the rim. Though the ringing had ceased, it still was tremulous from the sound, and shook under my hand, which instantly recoiled as from an electric jar. A quarter of an hour probably elapsed before I again dared to make the experiment, and then I found it at rest. I determined to lose no time, fearing that I might have lain then already too long, and that the bell for evening service would catch me. This dread stimulated me, and I slipped out with the utmost rapidity, and arose. I stood, I suppose, for a minute, looking with silly wonder on the place of my imprisonment, penetrated with joy escaping, but then rushed down the stony and irregular stair with the velocity of lightning,

and arrived in the bell-ringers' room. This was the last act I had power to accomplish. I leant against the wall, motionless and deprived of thought, in which posture my companions found me, when, in the course of a couple of hours, they returned to their occupation.

They were shocked, as well they might, at the figure before them. The wind of the bell had excoriated my face, and my dim and stupified eyes were fixed with a lack-lustre gaze in my raw eye-lids. My hands were torn and bleeding; my hair dishevelled; and my clothes tattered. They spoke to me, but I gave no answer. They shook me, but I remained insensible. They then became alarmed, and hastened to remove me. He who had first gone up with me in the forenoon, met them as they carried me through the churchyard, and through him, who was shocked at having, in some measure, occasioned the accident, the cause of my misfortune was discovered. I was put to bed at home, and remained for three days delirious, but gradually recovered my senses. You may be sure the bell formed a prominent topic of my ravings, and if I heard a peal, they were instantly increased to the utmost violence. Even when the delirium abated, my sleep was continually disturbed by imagined ringings, and my dreams were haunted by the fancies which almost maddened me while in the steeple. My friends removed me to a house in the country, which was sufficiently distant from any place of worship, to save me from the apprehensions of hearing the church-going bell; for what Alexander Selkirk, in Cowper's poem, complained of as a misfortune, was then to me as a blessing. Here I recovered; but, even long after recovery, if a gale wafted the notes of a peal towards me, I started with nervous apprehension. I felt a Mohammedan hatred to all the bell tribe, and envied the subjects of the Commander of the Faithful the sonorous voice of their Muezzin. Time cured this, as it does the most of our follies; but even at the present day, if, by chance, my nerves be unstrung, some particular tones of the cathedral bell have power to surprise me into a momentary start.

THE MURDERER'S LAST NIGHT

by Thomas Doubleday

Blackwood's Magazine No. 153, June 1829
pp. 734-741

reprinted in Tales from Blackwood Vol. VII
(1859)

"Let him, to whom experience hath been allotted, think it a duty to impart it. We know not of how long a growth goodness is; nor how slow an approach even a protracted culture makes towards perfection. A life of holiness may end in an apostle. As the tree, that hath felt all the winds of heaven, strikes root in that direction whence they oftenest blow, so goodness must have known vicissitude, to know when to resist and when to bend. To know ourselves is to have endured much and long. We must trace and limn out the map of our whole nature to be sure where it is desert, and where it is fruitful - to know the 'stony ground,' - to discover which needeth the plough, and which doth not. That piety, which is built on ignorance, holds up the shield where the arrow comes not; and sleeps unmailed when the enemy is at the gate. It dismounts to pursue the Parthian; and would dig a deep trench around the tents of the Nomades. It is long ere we root out the weaknesses of our nature, or know the art to preserve the virtue we have attained. For goodness, by over earnestness, may unwittingly be changed from its own essence, as he who knoweth not the vintage shall make vinegar of wine. When we have stubbed up and consumed the first growth of our sinfulness, there ariseth a second crop from the ashes of that which was destroyed. Even as 'the flax and the barley were smitten; for the barley was in the ear, and the flax was balled: but the wheat and the rye were not smitten, for they were not grown up;' so will SELF-SATISFACTION arise, after worldly pride and vanity have been withered up. Let him who has found inward peace content himself that he is arrived at the Pillars of Hercules, beyond which there is no safe way. That self-integrity which deems itself immaculate is dangerous. Well hath it been said, 'Make no suppletories to thyself when thou art disgraced or slighted, by pleasing thyself with the supposition that thou didst deserve praise - neither do thou get theyself a private theatre and flatterers, in

whose vain noises and fantastic praises thou mayst keep up thy good opinion of thyself.' Be the act never so good, yet if it be performed rather with reference to him who does than to that which is done, there is a taint in it for which Eve is hardly answerable. It is but as a fair tower which the builder has set on an unknown quicksand, and which the floods shall damage or carry away. Oh! whosoever thou art that readest this, forget not these words, but grave them as on marble, and in golden letters. 'While the altar sends up a holy flame, have a care thou dost not suffer the birds to come and carry away the sacrifice - and let not that which began well end in thine own praise or temporal satisfaction, or a sin! ' "

* * * * *

Until my twenty-seventh year I resided in the small cathedral town of C---r in which I was born. My parents - especially my mother - were of a serious cast. She had been educated as a Quaker, but following her own notions as to religion, she in the latter part of her life became attached to the tenets of that sect known by the name of Moravians, and last of all to those which, when held in connection with the ritual of the Church of England, are termed "Evangelical;" or, in dissent from it, "Methodistical."

She was warm and fanciful in her devotional practice; for which the belief as to the palpable and plenary influence of the Holy Spirit upon the human mind, in which she was bred, may help to account. Of these aspirations I, an ardent and sensitive boy, soon learned to partake. My mind was never naturally prone to vice; and my imagination, though forward, was pure. I was brought up by my excellent parents in the practice of virtue; and I loved it. With an outward conduct thus guaranteeing inward persuasions - with professions borne out by an unquestioned and pure, if not altogether unostentatious piety of behaviour, what wonder that I soon became a distinguished votary of the peculiar principles to which I had attached myself. It is difficult for a young man to know himself looked up to - be the cause what it may - without his feelings and his conduct being affected by such homage. Nature had endowed me, if not with eloquence, at least with considerable fluency of speech; and as my natural diffidence - which at first was great - wore away, whether by extempore prayer or seasonable exhortation, the effects I produced exceeded those, the fruits of zeal, of those about me. I became admired as one more than usually gifted, and was gradually exalted into a leader. The occasional tendency to gloom and nervous irritability to which my temperament inclined me, was yet only marked enough to throw no becoming seriousness and gravity into the features of so young an apostle. It was strange to see persons of all ages and both sexes admiring at the innate seriousness of so early a preacher, and owning the sometimes really fervid earnestness of my appeals, my warnings, or my denunciations. I began more and more to feel myself in a station above

that of my fellows, and that I had now a character to sustain before the eyes of men. Young as I was, could it well have been otherwise? Let me, however, speak the truth. Spiritual pride at last crept upon me. Devotion by insensible degrees became tainted with self, and the image of God was, I fear, sometimes forgotten for that of His frail and unworthy creature. True it was, I still, without slackening, spoke comfort to the ear of suffering or repentant sin - I still exhorted the weak and strengthened the strong. I still warned the besotted in corruption that the fruits of vice, blossom as she will, are but like those of the shores of the Dead Sea, seeming gay, but only emptiness and bitter ashes. But alas! the bearer of the blessed message spoke as if the worm that bore, could add grace to the tidings be conveyed to his fellow-worm. I was got upon a precipice, but knew it not - that of self-worship and conceit - the worst creature-idolatry. It was bitterly revealed to me at last.

About the year 1790, at the Assizes for the county of which the town of C---r is the county town, was tried and convicted a wretch guilty of one of the most horrible murders upon record. He was a young man, probably (for he knew not his own years) of about twenty-two years of age - one of those wandering and unsettled creatures, who seem to be driven from place to place, they know not why. Without home, without name, without companion, without sympathy, without sense, - heartless, friendless, idealess, almost soulless! and so ignorant, as not even to seem to know whether he had ever heard of a Redeemer, or seen His written Word. It was on a stormy Christmas eve when he begged shelter in the hut of an old man, whose office it was to regulate the transit of conveyances upon the road of a great mining establishment in the neighbourhood. The old man had received him, and shared with him his humble cheer and his humble bed; for on that night the wind blew, and the sleet drove, after a manner that would have made it a crime to have turned a stranger dog to the door. The next day the poor old creature was found dead in his hut - his brains beaten out with an old iron implement which he used, and his little furniture rifled and in confusion. The wretch had murdered him for the supposed hoard of a few shillings. The snow, from which he afforded his murderer shelter, had drifted in at the door, which the miscreant, when he fled, had left open, and was frozen red with the blood of his victim. But it betrayed a footstep hard frozen in the snow and blood; and the nails of the murderer's shoe were counted, even as his days were soon to be. He was taken a few days after with a handkerchief of the old man's upon his neck. So blind is blood-guiltiness.

Up to the hour of condemnation he remained reckless as the wind - unrepenting as the flint - venomous as the blind worm. With that deep and horrible cunning which is so often united to unprincipled ignorance, he had almost involved in his fate another vagrant with whom he had chanced to consort, and to whom he had disposed of some of the blood-brought spoils. The circumstantial

evidence was so involved and interwoven, that the jury, after long and obvious hesitation as to the latter, found both guilty; and the terrible sentence of death, within forty-eight hours, was passed upon both. The culprit bore it without much outward emotion; but when taken from the dock, his companion, infuriated by despair and grief, found means to level a violent blow at the head of his miserable and selfish betrayer, which long deprived the wretch of sense and motion, and, for some time, was thought to have anticipated the executioner. Would it had done so! But let me do my duty as I ought - let me repress the horror which one scene of this dreadful drama never fails to throw over my spirit - that I may tell my story as a man - and my confession at least be clear. When the felon awoke out of the death-like trance into which this assault had thrown him, his hardihood was gone; and he was reconveyed to the cell, in which he was destined agonisingly to struggle out his last hideous and distorted hours, in a state of abject horror which cannot be described. He who felt nothing, knew nothing, had now his eyes opened with terrible clearness to one object - the livid phantasma of a strangling death. All the rest was convulsive despair and darkness. Thought shudders at it - but let me go on.

The worthy clergyman, whose particular duty it was to smooth and soften, and, if possible, illuminate the dark hours of the dying wretch, was not unwilling to admit the voluntary aid of those whom religious predispositions and natural commiseration excited to share with him in the work of piety. The task was in truth a hard one. The poor wretch, for the sake of the excitement which such intercourse naturally afforded him, and which momentarily relieved his sick and fainting spirit, groaned out half-articulate expressions of acquiescence in the appeals that were made to him; but the relief was physical merely. The grasp of the friendly hand made waver for a moment the heavy shadow of death which hung upon him - and he grasped it. The voice breathing mercy and comfort in his ear, stilled for a second the horrid echo of doom - and he listened to it. It was as the drowning man gasps at the bubble of air which he draws down with him in sinking - or as a few drops of rain to him at the stake, around whom the fire is kindled and hot. This, alas! we saw not as we ought to have done; but when the sinking wretch, at the word "mercy," laid his head upon our shoulder and groaned, we, sanguine in enthusiasm, deemed it deep repentance. When his brow seemed smooth for a space at the sound of eternal life, we thought him as "a brand snatched from the burning." In the forward pride (for pride it was) of human perfectibility, we took him - him the murderer - as it were under our tutelage and protection. We prayed with him, we read to him, we watched with him, we blessed his miserable sleeps, and met his more wretched awakings. In the presumption of our pity, we would cleanse that white, in the world's eye, which God had, for inscrutable purposes, ordained should seem to the last murky as hell. We would paint visibly upon him the

outward and visible sign of sin washed away, and mercy found. That that intended triumph may not have helped to add or to retain one feather's weight in the balance against him, let me humbly hope and trust. That I was a cause, and a great one, of this unhappy delusion, let me not deny. God forgive me, if I thought sometimes less of the soul to be saved than of him who deemed he might be one of the humble instruments of grace. It is but too true that I fain would have danced, like David, before the ark. Within and without was I assailed by those snares which, made of pride, are seen in the disguise of charity. The aspirations of my friends, the eyes of mine enemies, the wishes of the good, and the sneers of the mistrustful, were about me, and upon me; and I undertook to pass with the murderer - HIS LAST NIGHT - such a last! - but let me compose myself.

* * * * *

It was about the hour of ten, on a gusty and somewhat raw evening of September, that I was locked up alone with the murderer. It was the evening of the Sabbath. Some rain had fallen, and the sun had not been long set without doors; but for the last hour and a half the dungeon had been dark, and illuminated only by a single taper. The clergy-man of the prison, and some of my religious friends, had sat with us until the hour of locking-up, when, at the suggestion of the gaoler, they departed. I must confess their "good-night," and the sound of the heavy door, which the gaoler locked after him when he went to accompany them to the outer gate of the gaol, sounded heavily on my heart. I felt a sudden shrink within me, as their steps quickly ceased to be heard upon the stone stairs; and when the distant prison-door was finally closed, I watched the last echo. I had for a moment forgotten my companion. When I turned round he was sitting on the side of his low pallet, towards the head of it, supporting his head by his elbow against the wall, apparently in a state of half stupor. He was motionless, excepting a sort of convulsive movement, between sprawling and clutching of the fingers of the right hand, which was extended on his knee. His shrunk cheeks exhibited a deadly ashen paleness, with a slight tinge of yellow, the effect of confinement. His eyes were glassy and sunken, and seemed in part to have lost the power of gazing. They were turned with an unmeaning and vacant stare upon the window, where the last red streak of day was faintly visible, which they seemed vainly endeavouring to watch. The sense of my own situation now recoiled strongly upon me; and the sight of the wretch sitting stiffened in quiet agony (for it was no better), affected me with a faint sickness. I felt that an effort was necessary, and, with some difficulty, addressed a few cheering and consolatory phrases to the miserable creature I had undertaken to support. My words might not, - but I fear my tone was too much in unison with his feelings, such as they were. His answer was a few inarticulate mutterings, between

which the spasmodic twitching of his fingers became more apparent than before. A noise at the door seemed decidedly to rouse him; and as he turned his head with a sudden effort, I felt relieved to see the gaoler enter. He was used to such scenes; and with an air of commiseration, but in a tone which lacked none of the firmness with which he habitually spoke, he asked the unhappy man some question of his welfare, and seemed satisfied with the headshake and inarticulately muttered replies of the again drooping wretch, as if they were expected, and of course. Having directed the turnkey to place some wine and slight refreshments on the table, and to trim the light, he told me in a whisper that my friends would be at the prison, with the clergyman, at the hour of six; and bidding the miserable convict and myself, after a cheering word or two, "good-night," he departed - the door was closed - and the murderer and I were finally left together.

It was now past the hour of ten o'clock; and it became my solemn duty to take heed that the last few hours of the dying sinner passed not without such comfort to his struggling soul as human help might hold out. After reading to him some passages of the gospel, the most apposite to his trying state, and some desultory and unconnected conversation - for the poor creature at times seemed to be unable, under his load of horror, to keep his ideas connected further than as they dwelt upon his own nearing and unavoidable execution - I prevailed upon him to join in prayer. He at this time appeared to be either so much exhausted, or labouring under so much lassitude from fear and want of rest, that I found it necessary to take his arm and turn him upon his knees by the pallet-side. The hour was an awful one. No sound was heard save an occasional ejaculation between a sigh and a smothered groan from the wretched felon. The candle burned dimly; and as I turned I saw, though I scarcely noticed it at the moment, a dim insect of the moth species fluttering hurriedly round it, the sound of whose wings mournfully filled up the pauses of myself and my companion. When the nerves are strained to their uttermost, by such trifling circumstances are we affected. Here (thought I) there has been no light, at such an hour, for many years; and yet here is one whose office it seems to be to watch it! My spirit felt the necessity of some exertion; and, with an energy for which a few minutes before I had hardly dared to hope, I poured out my soul in prayer. I besought mercy upon the blood-stained creature who was grovelling beside me; I asked that repentance and peace might be vouchsafed him; I begged, for our Redeemer's sake, that his last moments might know that untasted rapture of sin forgiven, and a cleansed soul, which faith alone can bring to fallen man; I conjured him to help and aid me to call upon the name of Christ; and I bade him put off life and forget it, and to trust in that name alone; I interceded that his latter agony might be soothed, and that the leave-taking of body and soul might be in quietness and peace. But he shook and shivered, and nature clung to the miserable straw of existence which yet floated upon the wide and

dismal current of oblivion, and he groaned heavily and muttered, "No! no! no!" as if the very idea of death was unbearable, even for a moment; and "to die," even to him that must, were a thing impossible, and not to be thought of or named. And as I wrestled with the adversary that had dominion over him, he buried his shrunk and convulsed features in the covering of his miserable pallet; while his fingers twisted and writhed about, like so many scotched snakes, and his low sick moans made the very dungeon darker.

When I lifted him from his kneeling position, he obeyed my movement like a tired child, and again sat on the low pallet, in a state of motionless and unresisting torpor. The damp sweat stood on my own forehead, though not so cold as on his; and I poured myself out a small portion of wine, to ward off the exhaustion which I began to feel unusually strong upon me. I prevailed upon the poor wretch to swallow a little with me; and, as I broke a bit of bread, I thought, and spoke to him, of that last repast of Him who came to call sinners to repentance; and methought his eye grew lighter than it was. The sinking frame, exhausted and worn down by anxiety, confinement, and the poor allowance of a felon's gaol, drew a short respite from the cordial; and he listened to my words with something of self-collectedness - albeit slight tremblings might still be seen to run along his nerves at intervals; and his features collapsed, ever and anon, into that momentary vacuity of wildness which the touch of despair never fails to give. I endeavoured to improve the occasion. I exhorted him, for his soul's sake, and the relief of that which needed it too much, to make a full and unreserved confession, not only to God, who needed it not, but to man, who did. I besought him, for the good of all, and as he valued his soul's health, to detail the particulars of his crime, but his eye fell. That dark enemy, who takes care to leave in the heart just hope enough to keep despair alive, tongue-tied him, and he would not - even now, at the eleventh hour - give up the vain imagination that the case of his companion might yet be confounded with his, to the escape of both - and vain it was. It had not been felt advisable so far to make him acquainted with the truth, that this had already been sifted and decided; and I judged this to be the time. Again and again I urged confession upon him. I put it to him that this act of justice might now be done for its own sake, and for that of the cleansing from spot of his stained spirit. I told him, finally, that it could no longer prejudice him in this world, where his fate was written and sealed, for that his companion was reprieved. I knew not what I did. Whether the tone of my voice, untutored in such business, had raised a momentary hope, I know not, but the revulsion was dreadful. He stared with a vacant look of sudden horror - a look which those who never saw cannot conceive, and which (the remembrance is enough) I hope never to see again - and twisting round, rolled upon his pallet with a stifled moan that seemed tearing him in pieces. As he lay, moaning and writhing backwards and forwards, the convulsions of his legs, the twisting of his fingers,

and the shiverings that ran through his frame were terrible.

To attempt to rouse him seemed only to increase their violence, as if the very sound of the human voice was, under his dreadful circumstances, intolerable, as renewing the sense of reality to a reason already clouding, and upon the verge of temporary delirium. He was the picture of despair. As he turned his face to one side, I saw that a few, but very few hot tears had been forced from his glassy and blood-shot eyes; and in his writhings he had scratched one cheek against his iron bed-stead, the red discoloration of which contrasted sadly with the deathly pallidness of hue which his visage now showed: during his struggles, one shoe had come off, and lay unheeded on the damp stone-floor. The demon was triumphant within him; and when he groaned, the sound seemed scarcely that of a human being, so much had horror changed it. I knelt over him, - but in vain. He heard nothing - he felt nothing - he knew nothing, but that extremity of prostration to which a moment's respite would be Dives' drop of water, and yet, in such circumstances, anything but a mercy. He could not bear for a moment to think upon his own death - a moment's respite would only have added new strength to the agony: he might be dead, but could not "- die;" and in the storm of my agitation and pity, I prayed to the Almighty to relieve him at once from sufferings which seemed too horrible even to be contemplated.

How long this tempest of despair continued, I do not know. All that I can recall is, that after almost losing my own recollection under the agitation of the scene, I suddenly perceived that his moans were less loud and continuous, and that I ventured to look at him, which I had not done for some space. Nature had become exhausted, and he was sinking gradually into a stupor, which seemed between sleep and fainting. This relief did not continue long - and as soon as I saw him begin to revive again to a sense of his situation, I made a strong effort, and lifting him up, seated him again on the pallet, and, pouring out a small quantity of wine, gave it him to drink, not without a forlorn hope that even wine might be permitted to afford him some little strength to bear what remained of his misery, and collect his ideas for his last hour. After a long pause of returning recollection, the poor creature got down a little of the cordial, and as I sat by him and supported him, I began to hope that his spirits calmed. He held the glass and sipped occasionally, and appeared in some sort to listen, and to answer to the words of consolation I felt collected enough to offer. At this moment the low and distant sound of a clock was heard, distinctly striking one. The ear of despair is quick; and as he heard it, he shuddered, and in spite of a strong effort to suppress his emotion, the glass had nearly fallen from his hand. A severe nervous restlessness now rapidly grew upon him, and he eagerly drank up one or two small portions of wine, with which I supplied him. His fate was now evidently brought one degree nearer to him. He kept his gaze intently and unceasingly turned to the window of the dungeon. His

muttered replies were incoherent or unintelligible, and his sunk and weakened eye strained painfully on the grated window, as if he momentarily expected to see the first streak of the dawn of that morning, which to him was to be night. His nervous agitation gradually became horrible, and his motions stronger. He seemed not to have resolution enough to rise from his seat and go to the window, and yet to have an overpowering wish or impulse to do so. The lowest sound startled him - but with this terrible irritation, his muscular power, before debilitated, seemed to revive, and his action, which was drooping and languid, became quick and angular. I began to be seized with an undefined sense of fear and alarm. In vain I combated it; it grew upon me; and I had almost risen from my seat to try to make myself heard, and obtain, if possible, assistance. The loneliness of the goal, however, rendered this, even if attempted, almost desperate - the sense of duty, the dread of ridicule, came across me, and chained me to my seat by the miserable criminal, whose state was becoming every minute more dreadful and extraordinary.

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Let us not scorn or distrust our obscurest misgivings, for we are strangely constituted; and though the evidence for such conclusions often be in a manner unknown to ourselves, they are not the less veritable and just. Exhausted by the wearing excitement and anxiety of my situation, I had for a moment sunk into that confused absence of mind with which those who have been in similar circumstances cannot be unacquainted, when my miserable companion, with a convulsive shudder, grasped my arm suddenly. I was for a few seconds unaware of the cause of this emotion and movement, when a low indistinct sound caught my ear. It was the rumbling of a cart, mingled with two or three suppressed voices; and the cart appeared to be leaving the gate of the dismal building in which we were. It rolled slowly and heavily as if cumbrously laden, under the paved gateway; and after a few minutes, all was silent. The agonised wretch understood its import better than I did. A gust of the wildest despair came suddenly over him. He clutched with his hands whatever met his grasp. His knees worked. His frame became agitated with one continued movement, swaying backwards and forwards, almost to falling, and his inarticulate complaints became terrific. I attempted to steady him by an exertion of strength; I spoke kindly to him, but he writhed in my grasp like an adder, and as an adder was deaf - grief and fear had horrible possession: myself almost in a state of desperation - for the sight was pitiful. I at last endeavoured to awe him into a momentary quiescence, and strongly bade him at last to die like a man; but the word "Death" had to him only the effect it may be supposed to have upon a mere animal nature and understanding: how could it have any other? He tried to bear it, and could not, and uttering a stifled noise, between a yell and a moan, he grasped his own neck: his face assumed a dark-red colour, and he fell into a

state of stifled convulsion.

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When despair had wrought with him, I lifted him with difficulty from the floor on which he had fallen. His relaxed features had the hue of death, and his parched lips, from a livid blue, became of an ashy whiteness. In appearance he was dying; and in the agitation of the moment I poured a considerable portion of the wine which had been left with us into a glass, and, after wetting his temples, held it to his lips. He made an effort to swallow, and again revived to consciousness; and holding the vessel firmly in his hands, got down with difficulty and at intervals the entire draught. When he found it totally exhausted, the glass fell from his hands; but he seized and held one of mine with a grasp so firm and iron-like that the contrast startled me. He seemed to be involved in a confused whirl of sensations. He stared round the cell with a wildness of purpose that was appalling; and after a time I began to see, with deep remorse, that the wine I had unguardedly given was, as is always the case, adding keenness to his agony and strength to his despair. He half rose once or twice and listened; all was silent - when, after the pause of a minute or two, a sudden fit of desperation seemed to seize upon him. He rushed to the window, and hurriedly surveying the grates, wrenched at them with a strength demoniac and superhuman, till the iron bars shook in their imbedments.

From this period my recollections are vague and indistinct. I remember strongly remonstrating with the poor creature, and being pushed away by hands which were now bleeding profusely with the intense efforts of his awful delirium. I remember attempting to stop him, and hanging upon him, until the insane wretch clutched me by the throat, and a struggle ensued, during which I suppose I must at length have fainted or become insensible; for the contest was long, and, while consciousness remained, terrible and appalling. My fainting, I presume, saved my life, for the felon was in that state of maniacal desperation which nothing but a perfect unresistingness could have evaded.

After this, the first sensation I can recall is that of awakening out of that state of stupor into which exhaustion and agitation had thrown me. Shall I ever forget it? The anxiety of some of my friends had brought them early to the gaol; and the unusual noises which had been heard by some of its miserable inmates occasioned, I believe, the door of the cell in which we were to be unlocked before the intended hour. Keenly do I recollect the struggling again into painful consciousness, the sudden sense of cheering daylight, the sound of friendly voices, the changed room, and the strange looks of all around me. The passage was terrible to me; but I had yet more to undergo. I was recovered just in time to witness the poor wretch, whose prop and consolation I had undertaken to be, carried, exhausted and in nerveless horror, to the ignominious tree - his head drooping on his

breast, his eyes opening mechanically at intervals, and only kept from fainting and utter insensibility by the unused and fresh morning air, which breathed in his face as if in cruel mockery. I looked once, but looked no more. - Let me hasten to conclude. I was ill for many weeks, and after recovering from a nervous fever, was ordered by my physicians into the country. This was the first blessing and relief I experienced, for the idea of society was now terrible to me. I was secluded for many months. Time, however, who ameliorates all things, at length softened and wore away the sharper parts of these impressions, but to this hour I dare not dwell upon the events of that awful night. If I dream of them, although the horrors fall far short of the appalling reality, yet for the next sun I am discomposed, and can only seek for rest from that Almighty Power, who, in his inscrutable providence, thought fit I should read a lesson so hideous, but - so salutary. - Reader, farewell.

THE IRON SHROUD

by William Mudford

Blackwood's Magazine No 170, August 1830.
pp. 364 - 371

- reprinted in (a) William Mudford, Tales and Trifles from Blackwood's and other Popular Magazines (1849) 2 vols.
(b) Tales from Blackwood (Vo. XII) (1861)
(c) Great Tales of Terror, ed. Peter Haining (1972)*

The castle of the Prince of Tolfi was built on the summit of the towering and precipitous rock of Scylla, and commanded a magnificent view of Sicily in all its grandeur. Here during the wars of the Middle Ages, when the fertile plains of Italy were devastated by hostile factions, those prisoners were confined, for whose ransom a costly price was demanded. Here, too, in a dungeon, excavated deep in the solid rock, the miserable victim was immured, whom revenge pursued, - the dark, fierce, and unpitying revenge of an Italian heart.

Vivenzio - the noble and the generous, the fearless in battle, and the pride of Naples in her sunny hours of peace - the young, the brave, the proud, Vivenzio fell beneath this subtle and remorseless spirit. He was the prisoner of Tolfi, and he languished in that rock-encircled dungeon, which stood alone, and whose portals never opened twice upon a living captive.

It had the semblance of a vast cage, for the roof, and floor, and sides, were of iron, solidly wrought, and spaciouly constructed. High above there ran a range of seven grated windows, guarded with massy bars of the same metal, which admitted light and air. Save these, and the tall folding doors beneath them, which occupied the centre, no chink, or chasm, or projection, broke the smooth

* Although Mudford's story, unlike the other two, is available in recent printing, Haining's text is unreliable on several counts. The version given here follows the original 1830 text.

black surface of the walls. An iron bedstead, littered with straw, stood in one corner; and beside it a vessel with water, and a coarse dish filled with coarser food.

Even the intrepid soul of Vivenzio shrunk with dismay as he entered this abode, and heard the ponderous doors triple-locked by the silent ruffians who conducted him to it. Their silence seemed prophetic of his fate, of the living grave that had been prepared for him. His menaces and his entreaties, his indignant appeals for justice, and his impatient questioning of their intentions, were alike vain. They listened, but spoke not. Fit ministers of a crime that should have no tongue!

How dismal was the sound of their retiring steps! And, as their faint echoes died along the winding passages, a fearful presage grew within him, that never more the face, or voice, or tread of man would greet his senses. He had seen human beings for the last time! And he had looked his last upon the bright sky, and upon the smiling earth, and upon a beautiful world he loved, and whose minion he had been! Here he was to end his life - a life he had just begun to revel in. And by what means? By secret poison? or by murderous assault? No - for then it had been needless to bring him thither. Famine perhaps - a thousand deaths in one! It was terrible to think of it - but it was yet more terrible to picture long, long years of captivity in a solitude so appalling, a loneliness so dreary, that thought, for want of fellowship, would lose itself in madness, or stagnate into idiocy.

He could not hope to escape, unless he had the power, with his bare hands, of rending asunder the solid iron walls of his prison. He could not hope for liberty from the relenting mercies of his enemy. His instant death under any form of refined cruelty, was not the object of Tolfi, for he might have inflicted it, and he had not. It was too evident, therefore, he was reserved for some premeditated scheme of subtle vengeance; and what vengeance could transcend in fiendish malice either the slow death of famine or the still slower one of solitary incarceration, till the last lingering spark of life expired, or till reason fled, and nothing should remain to perish but the brute functions of the body?

It was evening when Vivenzio entered his dungeon, and the approaching shades of night wrapped it in total darkness, as he paced up and down, revolving in his mind these horrible forebodings. No tolling bell from the castle, or from any neighbouring church or convent, struck upon his ear to tell how the hours passed. Frequently he would stop and listen for some sound that might betoken the vicinity of man; but the solitude of the desert, the silence of the tomb, are not so still and deep, as the oppressive desolation by which he was encompassed. His heart sank within him, and he threw himself

dejectedly upon his couch of straw. Here sleep gradually obliterated the consciousness of misery, and bland dreams wafted his delighted spirit to scenes which were once glowing realities for him, in whose ravishing illusions he soon lost the remembrance that he was Tolfi's prisoner.

When he awoke, it was daylight; but how long he had slept he knew not. It might be early morning, or it might be sultry noon, for he could measure time by no other note of its progress than light and darkness. He had been so happy in his sleep, amid friends who loved him, and the sweeter endearments of those who loved him as friends could not, that in the first moments of waking his startled mind seemed to admit the knowledge of his situation, as if it had burst upon it for the first time, fresh in all its appalling horrors. He gazed round with an air of doubt and amazement, and took up a handful of the straw upon which he lay, as though he would ask himself what it meant. But memory, too faithful to her office, soon unveiled the melancholy past, while reason, shuddering at the task, flashed before his eyes the tremendous future. The contrast overpowered him. He remained for some time lamenting, like a truth, the bright visions that had vanished; and recoiling from the present, which clung to him as a poisoned garment.

When he grew more calm, he surveyed his gloomy dungeon. Alas! the stronger light of day only served to confirm what the gloomy indistinctness of the preceding evening had partially disclosed, the utter impossibility of escape. As, however, his eyes wandered round and round, and from place to place, he noticed two circumstances which excited his surprise and curiosity. The one, he thought, might be fancy; but the other was positive. His pitcher of water and the dish which contained his food had been removed from his side while he slept, and now stood near the door. Were he even inclined to doubt this, by supposing he had mistaken the spot where he saw them over night, he could not, for the pitcher now in his dungeon was neither of the same form nor colour as the other, while the food was changed for some other of better quality. He had been visited therefore during the night. But how had the person obtained entrance? Could he have slept so soundly that the unlocking and opening of those ponderous portals were effected without waking him? He would have said this was not possible, but that in doing so he must admit a greater difficulty, an entrance by other means, of which he was convinced there existed none. It was not intended, then, that he should be left to perish from hunger. But the secret and mysterious mode of supplying him with food, seemed to indicate he was to have no opportunity of communicating with a human being.

The other circumstance which had attracted his

notice was the disappearance, as he believed, of one of the seven grated windows that ran along the top of his prison. He felt confident that he had observed and counted them; for he was rather surprised at their number, and there was something peculiar in their form, as well as in the manner of their arrangement, at unequal distances. It was so much easier, however, to suppose he was mistaken, than that a portion of the solid iron which formed the walls could have escaped from its position, that he soon dismissed the thought from his mind.

Vivenzio partook of the food that was before him, without apprehension. It might be poisoned; but if it were, he knew he could not escape death, should such be the design of Tolfi; and the quickest death would be the speediest release.

The day passed wearily and gloomily, though not without a faint hope that, by keeping watch at night he might observe when the person came again to bring him food, which he supposed he would do in the same way as before. The mere thought of being approached by a living creature, and the opportunity it might present of learning of doom prepared, or preparing, for him, imparted some comfort. Besides, if he came alone, might he not in a furious onset overpower him? Or he might be accessible to pity, or the influence of such munificent rewards as he could bestow, if once more at liberty and master of himself. Say he were armed. The worst that could befall, if not bribe, nor prayers, nor force prevailed, was a desired blow which, though dealt in a damned cause, might work a desired end. There was no chance so desperate, but it looked lovely in Vivenzio's eyes, compared with the idea of being totally abandoned.

The night came, and Vivenzio watched. Morning came, and Vivenzio was confounded! He must have slumbered without knowing it. Sleep must have stolen over him when exhausted by fatigue, and in that interval of feverish repose he had been baffled; for there stood his replenished pitcher of water, and there his day's meal! Nor was this all. Casting his looks towards the windows of his dungeon, he counted but FIVE! Here was no deception; and he was now convinced there had been none the day before. But what did all this portend? Into what strange and mysterious den had he been cast? He gazed till his eyes ached; he could discover nothing to explain the mystery. That it was so, he knew. Why it was so, he racked his imagination in vain to conjecture. He examined the doors. A simple circumstance convinced him they had not been opened.

A wisp of straw, which he had carelessly thrown against them the preceding day, as he paced to and fro, remained where he had cast it, though it must have been displaced by the slightest motion of either of the doors. This was evidence that could not be disputed; and it followed there must be some secret machinery in the walls by which a person could enter,

He inspected them closely. They appeared to him one solid and compact mass of iron; or joined, if joined they were, with such nice art, that no mark of division was perceptible. Again and again he surveyed them - and the floor - and the roof - and that range of visionary windows, as he was now almost tempted to consider them: he could discover nothing, absolutely nothing, to relieve his doubts or satisfy his curiosity. Sometimes he fancied that altogether the dungeon had a more contracted appearance - that it looked smaller; but this he ascribed to fancy, and the impression naturally produced upon his mind by the undeniable disappearance of two of the windows.

With intense anxiety, Vivenzio looked forward to the return of night; and as it approached, he resolved that no treacherous sleep should again betray him. Instead of seeking his bed of straw, he continued to walk up and down his dungeon till day-light, straining his eyes in every direction through the darkness, to watch for any appearances that might explain these mysteries. While thus engaged, and as nearly as he could judge, (by the time that afterwards elapsed before the morning came in) about two o'clock, there was a slight tremulous motion of the floors. He stooped. The motion lasted nearly a minute; but it was so extremely gentle that he almost doubted whether it was real or only imaginary. He listened. Not a sound could be heard. Presently, however, he felt a rush of cold air blow upon him; and dashing towards the quarter whence it seemed to proceed, he stumbled over something which he judged to be the water ewer. The rush of cold air was no longer perceptible; and as Vivenzio stretched out his hands he found himself close to the walls. He remained motionless for a considerable time, but nothing occurred during the remainder of the night to excite his attention, though he continued to watch with unabated vigilance.

The first approaches of the morning were visible through the grated windows, breaking, with faint divisions of light, the darkness that still pervaded every other part, long before Vivenzio was enabled to distinguish any object in his dungeon. Instinctively and fearfully he turned his eyes, hot and inflamed with watching, towards them. There were FOUR! He could see only four; but it might be that some intervening object prevented the fifth from becoming perceptible; and he waited impatiently to ascertain if it were so. As the light strengthened, however, and penetrated every corner of the cell, other objects of amazement struck his sight. On the ground lay the broken fragments of the pitcher he had used the day before, and at a small distance from them, nearer to the wall, stood the one he had noticed the first night. It was filled with water, and beside it was his food. He was now certain, that by some mechanical contrivance, an opening was obtained through the iron wall, and that through this opening

the current of air had found entrance. But how noiseless! For had a feather almost waved at the time, he must have heard it. Again he examined that part of the wall; but both to sight and touch it appeared one even and uniform surface, while to repeated and violent blows, there was no reverberating sound indicative of hollowness.

This perplexing mystery had for a time withdrawn his thoughts from the windows; but now, directing his eyes again towards them, he saw that the fifth had disappeared in the same manner as the preceding two, without the least distinguishable alteration of external appearances. The remaining four looked as the seven had originally looked; that is, occupying at irregular distances the top of the wall on that side of the dungeon. The tall folding door, too, still seemed to stand beneath, in the centre of these four, as it had at first stood in the centre of the seven. But he could no longer doubt what on the preceding day he fancied might be the effect of visual deception. The dungeon was smaller. The roof had lowered, and the opposite ends had contracted the intermediate distance by a space equal, he thought, to that over which the three windows had extended. He was bewildered in vain imaginings to account for these things. Some frightful purpose - some devilish torture of mind or body - some unheard-of-device for producing exquisite misery, lurked, he was sure, in what had taken place.

Oppressed with this belief, and distracted more by the dreadful uncertainty of whatever fate impended, than he could be dismayed, he thought, by the knowledge of the worst, he sat ruminating, hour after hour, yielding his fears in succession to every haggard fancy. At last a horrible suspicion flashed suddenly across his mind, and he started up with a frantic air. 'Yes!' he exclaimed, looking wildly round his dungeon, and shuddering as he spoke - 'Yes! it must be so! I see it! - I feel the maddening truth like scorching flames upon my brain! Eternal God! - support me! It must be so! Yes, yes, that is to be my fate! Yon roof will descend! - these walls will hem me round - and slowly, slowly, crush me in their iron arms! Lord God! look down upon me, and in mercy strike me with instant death! Oh, fiend - oh, devil - is this your revenge?'

He dashed himself upon the ground in agony; - tears burst from him, and the sweat stood in large drops upon his face - he sobbed aloud - he tore his hair - he rolled about like one suffering intolerable anguish of body, and would have bitten the iron floor beneath him; he breathed fearful curses upon Tolfi, and the next moment passionate prayers to heaven for immediate death. Then the violence of his grief became exhausted, and he lay still, weeping as a child would weep. The twilight of departing day shed its gloom around him ere he arose from that posture of utter and hopeless sorrow. He had taken

no food. Not one drop of water had cooled the fever of his parched lips. Sleep had not visited his eyes for six-and-thirty hours. He was faint with hunger; weary with watching and with the excess of his emotions. He tasted of his food; he drank with avidity of the water; and reeling like a drunken man to his straw, cast himself upon it to brood again over the appalling image that had fastened itself upon his almost frenzied thoughts.

He slept. But his slumbers were not tranquil. He resisted, as long as he could, their approach: and when, at last, enfeebled nature yielded to their influence, he found no oblivion from his cares. Terrible dreams haunted him - ghastly visions harrowed up his imagination - he shouted and screamed, as if he already felt the dungeon's ponderous roof descending on him - he breathed hard and thick, as though writhing between its iron walls. Then would he spring up - stare wildly about him - stretch forth his hands to be sure he yet had space enough to live - and, muttering some incoherent words, sink down again, to pass through the same fierce vicissitudes of delirious sleep.

The morning of the fourth day dawned upon Vivenzio. But it was high noon before his mind shook off its stupor, or he awoke to a full consciousness of his situation. And what a fixed energy of despair sat upon his pale features, as he cast his eyes upwards, and gazed upon the THREE windows that now alone remained! The three! - there were no more! - and they seemed to number his own allotted days. Slowly and calmly he next surveyed the top and sides, and comprehended all the meaning of the diminished height of the former, as well as of the gradual approximation of the latter. The contracted dimensions of his mysterious prison were now too gross and palpable to be the juggle of his heated imagination. Still lost in wonder at the means, Vivenzio could put no cheat upon his reason, as to the end. By what horrible ingenuity it was contrived, that walls, and roof, and windows, should thus silently and imperceptibly, without noise, and without motion almost, fold, as it were, within each other, he knew not. He only knew they did so; and he vainly strove to persuade himself it was the intention of the contriver to rack the miserable wretch who might be immured there with anticipation, merely, of a fate from which in the very crisis of his agony he was to be reprieved.

Gladly would he have clung even to this possibility if his heart would have let him; but he felt a dreadful assurance of its fallacy. And what matchless inhumanity it was to doom the sufferer to such lingering torments - to lead him day by day to so

appalling a death, unsupported by the consolations of religion, unvisited by any human being, abandoned to himself, deserted of all, and denied even the sad privilege of knowing that his cruel destiny would awaken pity! Alone he was to perish! - alone he was to wait a slow coming torture, whose most exquisite pangs would be inflicted by that very solitude and that tardy coming!

'It is not death I fear', he exclaimed, 'but the death I must prepare for! Methinks, too, I could meet even that - all horrible and revolting as it is - if it might overtake me now. But where shall I find fortitude to tarry till it come! How can I outlive the three long days and nights I have to live? There is no power within me to bid the hideous spectre hence - none to make it familiar to my thoughts, or myself patient to its errand. My thoughts, rather, will flee from me, and I grow mad in looking at it. Oh! for a deep sleep to fall upon me! That so, in death's likeness, I might embrace death itself, and drink no more of the cup that is presented to me than my fainting spirit has already tasted!'

In the midst of these lamentations Vivenzio noticed that his accustomed meal, with the pitcher of water, had been conveyed, as before, into his dungeon. But this circumstance no longer excited his surprise. His mind was overwhelmed with others of a far greater magnitude. It suggested, however, a feeble hope of deliverance; and there is no hope so feeble as not to yield some support to a heart bending under despair. He resolved to watch during the ensuing night for the signs he had before observed; and, should he again feel the gentle, tremulous motion of the floor or the current of air, to seize that moment for giving audible expression to his misery. Some person must be near him and within reach of his voice, at the instant when his food was supplied; some one, perhaps, susceptible of pity. Or if not, to be told even that his apprehensions were just, and that his fate was to be what he foreboded, would be preferable to a suspense which hung upon the possibility of his worst fears being visionary.

The night came; and as the hour approached when Vivenzio imagined he might expect the signs, he stood fixed and silent as a statue. He feared to breathe, almost, lest he might lose any sound which would warn him of their coming. While thus listening, with every faculty of mind and body strained to an agony of attention, it occurred to him he should be more sensible of the motion, probably, if he stretched himself along the iron floor. He accordingly laid himself softly down, and had not been long in that position when - yes - he was certain of it - the floor moved under him! He sprang up, and in a voice suffocated nearly with emotion, called aloud. He paused - the motion ceased - he felt no stream of air - all was hushed - no voice answered to his - he burst into tears; and as he sank to the ground, in renewed anguish, exclaimed: 'Oh, my God! You alone have power

to save me now, or strengthen me for the trial you permit.'

Another morning dawned upon the wretched captive, and the fatal index of his doom met his eyes. Two windows! - and two days - and all would be over! Fresh food - fresh water! The mysterious visit had been paid, though he had implored it in vain. But how awfully was his prayer answered in what he now saw! The roof of the dungeon was within a foot of his head. The two ends were so near, that in six paces he trod the space between them. Vivenzio shuddered as he gazed, and as his steps traversed the narrowed area. But his feelings no longer vented themselves in frantic wailings. With folded arms, and clenched teeth, with eyes that were bloodshot from much watching, and fixed with a vacant glare upon the ground, with a hard quick breathing, and a hurried walk, he strode backwards and forwards in silent musing for several hours. What mind shall conceive, what tongue utter, or what pen describe the dark and terrible character of his thoughts! Like the fate that moulded them they had no similitude in the wide range of this world's agony for man. Suddenly he stopped, and his eyes were riveted upon that part of the wall which was over his bed of straw. Words are inscribed here! A human language, traced by a human hand! He rushes forwards them; but his blood freezes as he reads:

'I Ludovico Sforza, tempted by the gold of the Prince of Tolfi, spent three years in contriving and executing this accursed triumph of my art. When it was completed, the perfidious Tolfi, more devil than man, who conducted me hither one morning, to be witness, as he said, of its perfection, doomed me to be the first victim of my own pernicious skill; lest, as he declared, I should divulge the secret, or repeat the effort of my ingenuity. May God pardon him, as I hope he will me, that ministered to his unhallowed purpose! Miserable wretch, whoe'er thou art, that readest these lines, fall on thy knees, and invoke as I have done, His sustaining mercy who alone can nerve thee to meet the vengeance of Tolfi, armed with his tremendous engine, which, in a few hours must crush you, as it will the needy wretch who made it!' A deep groan burst from Vivenzio. He stood like one transfixed, with dilated eyes, expanded nostrils, and quivering lips, gazing at this fatal inscription. It was as if a voice from the sepulchre had sounded in his ears, 'Prepare!' Hope forsook him. There was his sentence, recorded in those dismal words. The future stood unveiled before him, ghastly and appalling. His brain already feels the descending horror, - his bones seem to crack and crumble in the mighty grasp of the iron walls! Unknowing what it is he does, he fumbles in his garment for some weapon of self-destruction. He clenches his throat in his convulsive gripe, as though he would strangle himself at once. He stares upon the walls, and his

warring spirit demands, 'Will they not anticipate their office if I dash my head against them?' An hysterical laugh chokes him as he exclaims, 'Why should I? He was but a man who died first in their fierce embrace; and I should be less than man not to do as much!'

The evening sun was descending, and Vivenzio beheld its golden beams streaming through one of the windows. What a thrill of joy shot through his soul at the sight! It was a precious link that united him, for the moment, with the world beyond. There was ecstasy in the thought. As he gazed, long and earnestly, it seemed as if the windows had lowered sufficiently for him to reach them. With one bound he was beneath them - with one wild spring he clung to the bars. Whether it was so contrived, purposely to madden with delight the wretch who looked, he knew not; but, at the extremity of a long vista, cut through the solid rocks, the ocean, the sky, the setting sun, olive groves, shady walks, and, in the farthest distance, delicious glimpses of magnificent Sicily, burst upon his sight. How exquisite was the cool breeze as it swept across his cheek, loaded with fragrance! He inhaled it as though it were the breath of continued life. And there was a freshness in the landscape, and in the rippling of the calm green sea, that fell upon his withering heart like dew upon the parched earth. How he gazed, and panted, and still clung to his hold! sometimes hanging by one hand, sometimes by the other, and then grasping the bars with both, as loath to quit the smiling paradise outstretched before him; till exhausted, and his hands swollen and benumbed, he dropped helpless down, and lay stunned for a considerable time by the fall.

When he recovered, the glorious vision had vanished. He was in darkness. He doubted whether it was not a dream that had passed before his sleeping fancy; but gradually his scattered thoughts returned, and with them came remembrance. Yes! he had looked once again upon the gorgeous splendour of nature! Once again his eyes had trembled beneath their veiled lids at the sun's radiance, and sought repose in the soft verdure of the olive tree, or the gentle swell of undulating waves. Oh, that he were a mariner, exposed upon those waves to the worst fury of storm and tempest; or a very wretch, loathsome with disease, plague-stricken, and his body one leprous contagion from crown to sole, hunted forth to gasp out the remnant of infectious life beneath those verdant trees, so he might shun the destiny upon whose edge he tottered!

Vain thoughts like these would steal over his mind from time to time in spite of himself; but they scarcely moved it from that stupor into which it had sunk, and which kept him, during the whole night, like one who had been drugged with opium. He was

equally insensible to the calls of hunger and of thirst, though the third day was now commencing since even a drop of water had passed his lips. He remained on the ground, sometimes sitting, sometimes lying; at intervals, sleeping heavily; and when not sleeping, silently brooding over what was to come, or taking aloud, in disordered speech, of his wrongs, of his friends, of his home, and of those he loved, with a confused mingling of all.

In this pitiable condition, the sixth and last morning dawned upon Vivenzio, if dawn it might be called - the dim obscure light which faintly struggled through the ONE SOLITARY window of his dungeon. He could hardly be said to notice the melancholy token. And yet he did notice it; for as he raised his eyes and saw the portentous sign, there was a slight convulsive distortion of his countenance. But what did attract his notice, and at the sight of which his agitation was excessive, was the change his iron bed had undergone. It was a bed no longer. It stood before him, the visible semblance of a funeral couch or bier! When he beheld this, he started from the ground; and, in raising himself suddenly struck his head against the roof, which was now so low that he could no longer stand upright. 'God's will be done!' was all he said, as he crouched his body, and placed his hand upon the bier; for such it was. The iron bedstead had been so contrived, by the mechanical art of Ludovico Sforza, that as the advancing walls came in contact with its head and feet, a pressure was produced upon concealed springs, which, when made to play, set in motion a very simple though ingeniously contrived machinery that effected the transformation. The object was, of course, to heighten, in the closing scene of this horrible drama, all the feelings of despair and anguish, which the preceding ones had aroused. For the same reason the last window was so made as to admit only a shadowy kind of gloom rather than light, that the wretched captive might be surrounded, as it were, with every seeming preparation for approaching death.

Vivenzio seated himself on his bier. Then he knelt and prayed fervently; and sometimes tears would gush from him. The air seemed thick, and he breathed with difficulty; or it might be that he fancied it was so, from the hot and narrow limits of his dungeon, which were now so diminished that he could neither stand up nor lie down at his full length. But his wasted spirits and oppressed mind no longer struggled within him. He was past hope, and fear shook him no more. Happy if thus revenge had struck its final blow; for he would have fallen beneath it almost unconscious of a pang. But such a lethargy of the soul, after such an excitement of its fiercest passions, had entered into the diabolical calculations of Tolfi; and the fell artificer of his designs had

imagined a counteracting device.

The tolling of an enormous bell struck upon the ears of Vivenzio! He started. It beat but once. The sound was so close and stunning that it seemed to shatter his very brain, while it echoed through the rocky passages like reverberating peals of thunder. This was followed by a sudden crash of the roof and walls, as if they were about to fall upon and close around him at once. Vivenzio screamed, and instinctively spread forth his arms, as though he had a giant's strength to hold them back. They had moved nearer to him, and were now motionless. Vivenzio looked up and saw the roof almost touching his head, even as he sat cowering beneath it; and he felt that a further contraction of but a few inches only must commence the frightful operation. Roused as he had been, he now gasped for breath. His body shook violently - he was bent nearly double. His hands rested upon either wall, and his feet were drawn under him to avoid the pressure in front. Thus he remained for more than an hour, when that deafening bell beat again, and again there came the crash of horrid death. But the concussion was now so great that it struck Vivenzio down. As he lay gathered up in lessened bulk, the bell beat loud and frequent - crash succeeded crash - and on, and on, and on came the mysterious engine of death, till Vivenzio's smothered groans were heard no more! He was horribly crushed by the ponderous roof and collapsing sides - and the flattened bier was his Iron Shroud.

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