THE GHOST AND THE CORPSE:
FIGURING THE MIND / BRAIN COMPLEX AT THE TURN OF THE
TWENTIETH CENTURY

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Acknowledgements

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my father, Randall Kamerbeek. If you could see me now …

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INTRODUCTION

In 1910, the year that his brother William died, Henry James published an essay entitled "Is There Life After Death?" that takes up the titular question in the ruminative, clause-laden style that characterizes his late prose. Though Henry, perhaps wisely, does not finally offer an answer to the question, he is not satisfied with what he understands as the biological reduction of life to "the rigor of our physical basis" (205):

> Whatever we may begin with we almost inevitably go on…to more or less resigned acceptance of the grim fact that "science" takes no account of the soul as however nobly thinking and feeling creatures, we are abjectly and inveterately shut up in our material organs...we are even at our highest flights of personality, our furthest reachings out of the mind, of the very stuff of the abject actual, and that the sublimest idea we can form and the noblest hope and affection we can cherish are but flowers sprouting in that eminently and infinitely diggable soil. (205-6)

The passage poetically echoes a critique that William presented in his lecture "Religion and Neurology"—which became the first section of *The Varieties of Religious Experience*—of what he calls "medical materialism," the "too simple-minded system of thought" that undermines our "more exalted soul-flights by calling them 'nothing but' expressions of our organic disposition" (15). Henry adapts the

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argument to his particular variety of religious experience, that of the creative literary

imagination, which puts him "in communication with *sources*" beyond his

comprehension (224). While he isn't convinced that they confirm an afterlife, Henry

finds it hard to believe that the sources of artistic inspiration could be located in "the

poor, palpable, ponderable, probeable, laboratory-brain" (206).

Exactly a century later, the "laboratory-brain" has a less gloomy, less

cadaverous connotation—aided by brain imaging technologies, the brain is studied

alive and appears pulsing with explanation, lit up in vibrant color—and, in some

circles, the neuroscientific purview indeed encompasses the literary imagination. In a

2010 article written for *The New York Times*, Patricia Cohen reports that a certain

direction of interdisciplinary scholarship promises to provide "a revitalizing lift" to

troubled humanities departments: "Zealous enthusiasm for the politically charged and

frequently arcane theories that energized departments in the 1970s, '80s and early

'90s—Marxism, structuralism, psychoanalysis—has faded. Since then a new

generation of scholars have been casting about for The Next Big Thing. The brain

may be it." Cohen interviews members of a collaborative research team comprised of

scientists and literary scholars who have been considering the role of narrative fiction

in cognitive evolution and using brain imaging to investigate the neurological activity

generated by reading literary texts. In 2009, professors Melissa Littlefield of the

University of Illinois and Jenell Johnson of Louisiana State University issued a call

for submissions to an edited collection on the subject of "The Neuroscientific Turn in

the Humanities and Social Sciences," claiming that "neurology has become the latest theoretical tool for analyzing society and culture."[1]

Of course, any proposed "turn" across several academic fields is bound to meet resistance. Firstly, it rustles the ire of those skeptical of a proliferation of "turns" in the supposedly purposeless wake of the passing generation of scholars; the notion that humanities departments need "revitalizing" makes them susceptible to the allure of trends. For those who oppose this particular course of study, however, the danger is that the interdisciplinary effort effectively erases one of the disciplines by replacing the study of literature with the science of the study of literature, and voiding what might be called the "soul" of literary study, if such an antiquated phrase didn't threaten to buttress the proponents' case. Without going so far as to cite the hypothetical disapproval of the ghost of Henry James, this dissertation intervenes in order to unfold a continuum of the concerns of "the Neuroscientific Turn" back to the previous turn of the century. While the relevant technologies and metaphors applied to the understanding of the mind and brain have evolved, brain imaging is an advancement of the kind of "medical materialism" discussed by William James, and the wariness about its implications for the study of literature is latent in Henry's lamentation about the "laboratory-brain." The history behind "the Neuroscientific Turn" is an irremovable appendix to its premises, and *The Ghost and the Corpse* proposes not only that the turn-of-the-century writers and filmmakers discussed in these chapters *already* respond either directly or indirectly to these issues, but that

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[1] The call for papers can be found at *H-Net: Humanities and Social Sciences Online*: http://www.h-net.org/announce/show.cgi?ID=170108

they *continue* to speak to them. After all, one might argue that however we might attempt to "revitalize" the study of the humanities, we do so by receiving and decoding new messages from the dead—or at least by extrapolating new meanings from the textual corpus they have left behind.

This dissertation investigates the relays between science and art in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries by tracing the influence of debates about the relationship of the mind and the brain into the arenas of literature and early cinema. The path of scientific and medical discourse began to fork near the turn of the twentieth century—while neurologists and "psychophysicians" probed the material space of the brain and the invisible network of the nervous system, psychologists and psychoanalysts began to map the virtual space of the mind. Questions about the situation of the mind and the brain, and the relationship of each to the outside world, presented both new possibilities and new pathologies. I have named this set of questions "the mind/brain complex"—to encompass a range of interconnected psychological and neurological concerns, but also to indicate a nexus of distinctly modern anxieties about materiality and immateriality.

I engage a diverse selection of texts—including the private letters and public fictions of Henry James, the psychology of William James, the memoirs of Daniel Paul Schreber, the correspondence and case studies of Sigmund Freud, the films of the Edison Film Company, and the novels of Edward Bellamy—ranging roughly from 1880-1910, a tumultuous period in the science of the mind. In the broadest terms, this dissertation is comprised of three case studies that approach fin de siècle psychology

and neurology at particular points of tension: 1) the relationship between conventional psychology and the experimental work of the Society for Psychical Research, which explored the occult realms of telepathy and the paranormal; 2) the paradigmatic shift in the treatment of mental disorder from the organic bases of neuroanatomy to the psychic space of Freudian psychoanalysis; and 3) the neurological problem of the body's ability to absorb the shocking pace of modern life engendered by technological innovation, which resulted in the widespread diagnosis of nervous exhaustion or "neurasthenia."

I set out to locate the mind/brain complex within the broader context of a fin de siècle *zeitgeist* that was, due to new media of telecommunication, particularly fascinated with unseen unifying forces. The projects of psychical research, psychoanalysis, and neurology shared an intimate metaphorical relationship to the concomitantly developed technologies of the telegraph and the telephone. The processes of transmitting and decoding information that arrives from a distant source by electric current helped to shape the scientific and popular understanding of the invisible traffic of thoughts and nervous impulses, as well as the possibility of spirits communicating from the ether. Undertaking a science of thinking that tracked the origins and paths of thought beyond the moorings of the anatomy led both William James and Freud to consider the possibility of telepathy, of *reading* minds. Furthermore, in generating new psychological *fields*—sharing ideas in communities of like and open minds—James, Freud, and their cohort both directly and indirectly

confronted the concept of the zeitgeist itself by adumbrating the boundaries of spheres of inquiry and influence.

I argue that these concerns about the limits of the human body and mind correspond with concerns about the limits of the literary text, the psychoanalytic case study, and the film frame. This dissertation demonstrates the ways in which the writers, psychoanalysts, and filmmakers it approaches figure the mind/brain complex in order to come to terms with their respective mediums—they sketch the shape of the zeitgeist, they "figure it out" with metaphor. Perhaps unsurprisingly, in the oeuvre of Henry James and Freud there appears to be a correlation between writing about consciousness and self-conscious writing, a preoccupation with the figure of the author in the text. Both James and Freud continually come back to haunt their own bodies of work, rereading and revising themselves to better condition their reception. The result is a proliferation of versions—such as James's exhaustively prefaced New York Editions to his fiction and Freud's copious footnoted additions to his theory—and an accumulation of "paratextual" material to read beside the text. Similarly, the cinema, like psychoanalysis, originates in the 1890s and begins with self-reflection. As Freud first mined his own mind for dreams to interpret, the cinema debuted with experimental exercises in its own capability, from the Lumiére brothers' straight demonstration of documented durations—it hardly mattered what the pictures were if they were moving—to Georges Méliès' cut-up "trick films," which could make celluloid bodies appear and disappear. In the period before conventional narrative

film, the story the cinema tells is about itself, and what it might mean to animate the image.

Each of my chapters addresses the "afterlife" of posthumous interpretation—how individual subjects become objects of study, how individual bodies give way to literary archives, psychological cases, and film stock. In answering the question of *where to look*, which archive to consult, the competing diagnostic practices of psychology and neurology model opposed modes of seeing and reading. The brain can represent the material archive, containing answers readable by dissection, or the "haunted house" of the human organism, the machine (per the philosopher Gilbert Ryle's famous critique of Cartesian dualism) where the elusive ghost of consciousness is situated. I propose that the figures of the ghost and the corpse—the representative bodies of psychic and anatomical space—emerge as metaphors for the material and immaterial detritus of works of art.

I sift through this detritus with a methodology that strives to combine close reading of the text with an intimate biographical proximity to the author. Maintaining that lives inevitably reverberate in works and works in lives, I open the private envelope and read writers' letters. The practice of correspondence is a venerable form of telecommunication—an act of transmission and reception that engenders points of contact between minds—and the surviving archive of letters is a material trace of the zeitgeist.[2] When the intimacy of reading letters is unavailable or impossible, as is the

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[2] About the same time that I began working on this project, the University of Nebraska Press began publishing *The Complete Letters of Henry James,* edited by Pierre A. Walker and Greg W. Zacharias. The total work will include over ten

case with two of the subjects of my third chapter—the assassin Leon Czolgosz and a

Coney Island elephant named Topsy, whose electrocutions became material for two

Edison Film Company films—I attempt to reconstruct the social landscape of their

stories by consulting journalistic and social scientific accounts and by exploring the

sites where the fatal events took place. By moving back and forth from life to work, I

aim to draw out the thematic tensions of my chapters—closeness and distance,

presence and absence, the somatic and the semantic—and to explore the vibrating

spaces between brothers, between colleagues, between correspondents, between

doctor and patient, between spectator and screen, between writer and reader.

This project has no tidy origin story, but it may have begun with the

suggestion, made by one of my professors, that "ghosts are good for thinking." The

first chapter, "The Letter and the Spirit: Henry James, William James, and Their

Mediums," pursues this idea in the work of brothers William and Henry James,

eminent figures in psychology and literary modernism, respectively. I frame the

chapter with a reading of their letters to one another across the Atlantic, an exchange

that models the interdisciplinary and transatlantic crosscurrents of late-nineteenth and

early-twentieth-century thought. In the years that William headed the American

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thousand letters that the editors estimate will fill a staggering one hundred and forty
volumes. In a review of the first published edition of the letters, *Guardian* critic Alan
Hollinghurst writes: "The textual editing of the letters is fantastically thorough, every
blot, deletion, insertion, and misspelling being lucidly presented in the text itself and
further described in endnotes to each letter; for the reader this evokes the dash and
spontaneity of James's pen, and for the scholar it clarifies every possible ambiguity
caused by that dash." These editions ensure that, well over a century after his death,
scholars will continue the work of critical and editorial revision that James himself
began during his lifetime.

Society for Psychical Research, investigating spirit mediums who claimed to speak with the dead, Henry was writing ghost stories that were often about writers. Rather than marking a literal resemblance between William and Henry's ghosts, I maintain that Henry's contact (at a distance) with psychical research helps him theorize the spectral effects of writing and reading.

The ghosts that materialize in Henry's short fiction signal the tensions of embodiment and disembodiment that shadow the author's personal and professional life. The novellas *The Aspern Papers* and *The Turn of the Screw* bookend a tumultuous decade (1888-1898) in James's relationship to the public, during which he endured a failed attempt to write for the theater and witnessed the spectacle of the celebrity author turn to scandal with the trial of Oscar Wilde. They also exemplify the two thematic obsessions in his writing with which the chapter is concerned: 1) the efforts of zealous scholars and biographers to sift through a dead author's literary remains and private archives and 2) the haunted practice of writing and reading letters. Reading these texts and a selection of lesser-known short stories published between them—including "The Private Life," in which the celebrity author literally splits into two bodies representing the public and the private self, and "The Real Right Thing," wherein a dead author's ghost appears to disapprove of a would-be biographer's meddling—I explore how James's stories of writers and specters constitute a sustained meditation on the afterlife of the author and the text. In another story of the 1890s, "The Death of the Lion," a newly renowned author jokes with a journalist about the merits of dying; the journalist advises the writer to be "as dead as

[he] can" and the author replies, "'Don't I meet that condition in having just published a book?'" (131). While each publication marks a figurative death of the author, the writer's actual death leaves the work in the waiting hands of scholars like the narrator of *The Aspern Papers,* who, in proposing that he speaks for "those who are dead and gone and can't, poor darlings, speak for themselves," echoes the claims of the spirit mediums William studied (50).

Deciding to write about Henry James is like opening a creaky door into a haunted house of literary criticism and in order to comfortably position oneself, there has to be a bit of exorcising. Certainly my interest in the relationship between ghosts and letters owes a debt to theorists like Jacques Derrida and Shoshanna Felman. However, the first critical move that was crucial to the chapter was to recognize James's own literary theory embedded in his tales—one of the most remarkable things about reading James is the degree to which his writing seems to anticipate future readings, even future theories of reading. The second was to identify that theory's proximity to William's psychical research. Given Henry's role in bringing psychology to bear on fiction, it is remarkable how little scholarly attention has been paid to his brother William's influence on his writing. While their lives diverge, they frequently *correspond*. Each brother's professional interest in ghosts is rooted in concerns about a consciousness "discorporated" and the endless decoding and recoding of information circulating in a virtual elsewhere.

The second chapter, "The Corpse, the Case, and the Archive: A Paranoid Reading of Schreber's Memoirs and the Origins of Freudian Thought," investigates

the case of the German judge Daniel Paul Schreber, whose painstaking elaboration of his paranoid schizophrenic delusions was published in 1903 as *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness.* Though he never saw the judge as a patient, Freud based his 1911 case study of paranoia on his reading of the memoirs, and the continued examination of Schreber follows the trajectory of a century of psychoanalysis from Freud to Lacan to the anti-psychoanalysis of Deleuze and Guattari. I situate Schreber on the fault-line of an etiological shift from a physical to a psychic basis—his body was treated by psychophysicians who preferred cadavers to living patients; his text was treated by psychoanalysts he never met. I first explore how the treatment Schreber received as a psychiatric patient is refracted in the memoirs and then how the contexts of Freud's case study point to the private tensions that attend the founding of the psychoanalytic discipline.

It was Schreber's obsession with his nerves that lead me to read him, and here I attempt to both theorize and historicize the function of the nervous in the memoirs. Within the fantastic cosmology presented in the text, "the human soul is contained in the nerves" (45) and Schreber's exceptional nervous force has drawn the attention of a malicious God who "is only nerve" (46) and who records Schreber's thoughts, assaults his body, and plans to turn him into a woman through nervous emanations the judge calls "divine rays." Though the schizophrenic disorder is characterized by the projection of the psychic state onto external reality, I show how the content of the judge's narrative draws upon his situation as an object of neuropathological inquiry. This is evidenced, for example, by the figure of Schreber's God, who not only

subjects him to constant surveillance via a legion of minions who take notes in a decidedly clinical fashion, but is said to be "accustomed to dealing only with corpses" (127). As a neuroanatomist who believed that all mental phenomena could be traced back to an organic basis, the judge's initial doctor, Emil Paul Flechsig—who assumes a central role in the memoirs—was likewise accustomed to dealing with corpses, through the dissection of the post-mortem "laboratory-brain."[3] *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness* continually sutures the author's delusion to the circumstances of medical examination.

In the second half of the chapter, I examine Freud's study of paranoia in concert with his private correspondence, in order to locate the concepts that Freud brings to his reading of Schreber and his writing of the case. In *Archive Fever*, Jacques Derrida asserts that the elaboration of the psyche as a virtual archive is "the very relevance of psychoanalysis, if it has one" (65). I am interested in how Freud's commitment to the virtual archive makes the origins of ideas more difficult to locate, and how the material archive of Freud's letters became a source of controversy regarding the origins of psychoanalysis. Working backward from the so-called "Freud Wars" of the 1980s, I pursue, in both public and private writings, the parallel histories of Freud's theory of paranoia and the theory of psychoanalysis itself. I argue that Freud uses the Schreber case to deflect the anxiety of influence and intimacy he

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[3] The contemporary researcher cannot help but be struck by the swinging medico-historical pendulum. Due to the particular impact innovations in "brain mapping" have had on the study of schizophrenia, contemporary science has largely abandoned the psychogenic etiology pioneered by Freud and pursued for decades after, and concluded that schizophrenia is, as Flechsig had suspected, a brain disorder with an organic / biological basis.

felt with regard to his fraught relationships with colleagues Wilhelm Fliess, Sandor Ferenczi, and Carl Jung. By establishing a psychoanalytic circle—wherein ideas *circulate* through collaboration—Freud invites a kind of trouble with others that resonates with the paranoiac's protests against inundation with alien thought.

The third chapter, **"The Anarchist and the Elephant: Electrocution, Exhibition, and the Edison Film Company,"** tracks how the mind/brain complex is reanimated by the invention of cinema. I illuminate the circuit that links cinema, electricity, and neurology by focusing on two Edison Film Company films that take electrocution as their subject—1901's *Execution of Czolgosz* and 1903's *Electrocuting an Elephant.* The former film reenacts the death by electric chair of Leon Czolgosz, who fatally shot President McKinley at the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo. The latter records the actual death of Topsy, a Coney Island elephant that had killed three men. Though neurologists initially implicated the cinema in the deleterious agitation of the nervous system caused by the traumatic speed of technological innovations, Walter Benjamin later recognized the cinematic mechanism as representative of a crucial strategy and function of art in the modern (or neuromodern) mode—shock absorption through distraction and representation. I argue that the morbid subgenre of the electrocution film serves as a literalization of the kinds of "shocking" spectacle that marked the early cinema, while demonstrating technological mastery over the forces of animation and de-animation represented by the cinema and the lethal application of electricity.

My work bridges the divide in early cinema scholarship between historical and theoretical approaches. Other film theorists and historians have considered *Execution of Czolgosz* and *Electrocuting an Elephant* together, perhaps most recently and significantly Mary Ann Doane, who details the role of the electric "event" in *The Emergence of Cinematic Time*. My research extends extant scholarship on electrocution and cinema by moving beyond the films' frames. Following the example of Tom Gunning's elucidation of the "cinema of attractions" as a category that should be considered apart from post-Griffiths narrative cinema and situated in the context of other turn-of-the-century technologies and popular spectacles, my analysis includes the venues of the world's fair and the amusement park. The early cinema borrows from the attitudes of these venues (where many early films were screened), acting as both an exhibition of new technology and a popular amusement that, much like the roller coaster at Coney Island, rehearses the rhythms of shock and absorption. I also scrutinize questions of how and why the particular bodies of the anarchist and the elephant become test cases for filmed electrocution. *Execution of Czolgosz* advances (and makes more spectacular) the symbolic aims of the execution of Czolgosz with regard to the anarchist menace—identifying and eliminating an individual body that stands in for an invisible threat and providing a counter-shock to the shock of the assassination. Even before Topsy's sacrifice to the cinema, animals played an integral role in the history of both film technology (in the protocinematic motion studies of Muybridge and Marey) and the use of electricity as lethal force (this was not Edison's first time experimenting with shock); understood to have

corresponding parts without a corresponding soul, the animal body becomes an ideal surrogate for the human body and a symbol of "animus," the ineffable electric spark of life.

I conclude with an epilogue, "On Location: Matter, Memory, Media," that follows the mind/brain complex into the late twentieth century, using the story of the Bradbury Building, built in Los Angeles in 1893, as its point of departure. The building was designed by architect George Wyman, a committed spiritualist who is said to have taken the job on advice communicated to him by his dead brother via a planchette board (a precursor to the ouija board). Wyman modeled the Bradbury on a structure described in Edward Bellamy's socialist utopian science fiction novel *Looking Backward*, written in 1888 but set mainly in the year 2000. Throughout the twentieth century, the Bradbury Building was featured in a number of Hollywood films, perhaps most famously serving as the home of "genetic designer" J.F. Sebastian in Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner*.

I pair *Looking Backward* with one of Bellamy's earlier science fictions, *Dr. Heidenhoff's Process,* in which the titular procedure involves the surgical removal of unwanted memories, and read those texts next *Blade Runner*'s "posthuman" brand of film noir. These speculative fictions provide an impetus for looking forward, as an epilogue is meant to do, to contemporary conversations regarding cognitive science and artificial intelligence. At the same time, the epilogue is concerned with looking backward—by linking Bellamy and *Blade Runner* to the major figures of the preceding chapters, and by focusing on the question of memory in relation to organic,

digital, and paper archives. While Bellamy's Dr. Heidenhoff extracts memories from his patients, *Blade Runner*'s Tyrell Corporation implants harvested memories into its android "replicants."   I assert that the problem of artificial intelligence presented in Scott's film rephrases the question of the laboratory brain for the turn of the twenty-first century, and that, seen through the lens of the mind/brain complex, *Blade Runner*'s replicants bear more of a resemblance to Henry James's spectral revenants than it might seem.

THE LETTER AND THE SPIRIT:
Henry James, William James, and Their Mediums

The one difficulty is that to open that general door into the limbo of old letters, charged with their exquisite ghostly appeal, is almost to sink into depths of concession.

<div align="right">

Henry James, *Notes of a Son and Brother*

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It is like the log carried first by William and Henry, then by William, Henry and John, then by Henry and John, then by John and Peter, and so on. All real units of experience overlap… My present field of consciousness is a centre surrounded by a fringe that shades insensibly into a subconscious more. I use three separate terms here to describe this fact: but I might as well use three hundred, for the fact is all shades and no boundaries. Which part is properly in my consciousness, which out? If I name what is out, it has already come in.

<div align="right">

William James, *A Pluralistic Universe*

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Between Brothers, In Private

Between brothers, in private, the matter of spirits was a joke. On Halloween 1890, Henry James stood in for his brother William at a meeting of the Society for Psychical Research (SPR) in London. Henry read William's report, entitled "A

Record of Observations of Certain Phenomena of Trance," on the Boston spirit medium Leonora Piper, whom his brother had been studying since 1885. In a letter a few days prior, William writes that the idea of Henry reading the paper is "the most comical thing [he] had heard of...Tis the most beautiful and devoted brotherly act I ever knew, and I hope it may be the beginning of a new career on your part of psychic apostolicism" (Skrupskelis and Berkeley 245-46). While William was an enthusiastic (if skeptical) pioneer of psychical research, Henry claimed to have a "general aversion" to Mrs. Piper's "species."

In his reply, Henry playfully describes the event in the language of performance: "It was a week ago today that I read you at the S.P.R.… You were very easy & interesting to read, & were altogether the 'feature' of the entertainment. It was a full house—& [William's colleague and cofounder of the SPR Frederic] Myers was rayonnant" (247). Certainly drama was on the novelist's mind; in the same letter, Henry recounts the preparations for his initial foray into the theater, a production of *The American*, which would premiere the following January: "It consumes much time & infinite 'nerve power'; especially if taken seriously (all & *only* for the dream of gold—MUCH GOLD) as I take it, immersing myself in it practically up to the eyes, & really *doing* it myself, to the smallest detail" (247). Working for the first time with the actors who would serve as the incarnate conduit for his words, Henry's phrasing connects the performativity of line reading and the complications of authorship with the manifold mediations of his own reading of his brother's paper (speaking for the

psychologist who speaks for the medium who speaks for the dead).   The novelist has

been "coaching" his lead actor, he writes,

> with truly psychical intensity, *acting,* intonating everything *for* him &
>
> showing him simply *how!* The authorship (in any sense worthy of the
>
> name) of a play only *begins* when it is written, & I see that one's
>
> creation of it doesn't terminate till one has gone with it every inch of
>
> the way to the rise of the curtain on the 1st night. (I will tell you *when*
>
> to pray for me). (247)

A few years later in January 1895, as Henry dealt with the opening night

jitters at the premiere of his first original play *Guy Domville,* he wrote to William

asking for "psychical intervention." Henry was so nervous about how he would be

received that he avoided the theater for the majority of the premiere. Instead, he went

to see Oscar Wilde's *The Ideal Husband* and bristled at the way the dandified icon so

comfortably (and successfully) inhabited his public persona. Arriving at his play in

time to answer the crowd's call for the author, Henry was escorted onto the stage and

met by a mixed chorus of cheers and boos. Leon Edel, whose "psychobiography" of

James has dominated readings of the novelist's life for over fifty years, ascribes

traumatic significance to James's in-person encounter with an aggressively

disapproving public. Edel's chapters trace a direct trajectory from "The Dramatic

Years" to "The Treacherous Years," giving us a disheartened Henry who retreats

from the public stage to a private house in rural Rye and the private style that

characterizes his later prose. With attention to what converges here in the letters

between brothers—Henry's attempts at writing for the theater, William's work with the Society for Psychical Research—we can loosen the ties of Edel's reading and locate a more immediate psychological influence on Henry's life and work during the haunted dramatic years.

Perhaps more than any other writer of his time, Henry James understood the relationship between writing and ghosts. J. Hillis Miller offers this "double hypothesis": "1) All James's stories and novels are ghost stories, 2) the ghost stories proper are really, obliquely, about the act of literature" (299). Essentially, his writing is always about ghosts and his ghosts are always about writing. There are apparitions in the work of Henry James at various stages of his literary life, but the majority of James's ghost stories materialize in the 1890s, during the period of his dramatic experiment and the height of William's involvement with the SPR, of which he served as president in 1894-5. The emergence of the spectral in Henry's short fiction signals the tensions of embodiment and disembodiment that shadow the author's personal and professional life, tensions stirred by a new public investment in the private lives of writers and exacerbated by James's famous failure to match the likes of Wilde as a box office draw. Henry deploys the figure of the ghost in order to navigate the shifting borders and multiplying mediations of the writer's public and private selves.

Meanwhile, the bulk of William's psychological and philosophical work is an effort to resolve or at least reformulate questions about inner and outer worlds; he did not really believe in ghosts either, but he was committed to the possibility that

consciousness was not coterminous with the body. Though a number of William's

colleagues derided what they considered the pseudo-scientific or occult branch of his

research, the older brother's interest in the spectral refracts an attempt to bridge the

gap between the biological determinism of modernizing science and the mystifying

idealisms of Swedenborg and American transcendentalism subscribed to by his

father, Henry James Sr. William's thinking, in conversation with his radical

contemporaries like Henri Bergson, sketches a map of the route from intractable

Cartesian dualism to the fluid subject-object relations of the phenomenology of

Edmund Husserl. In order to recuperate the significance of the invisible without

recourse to metaphysics (to demonstrate a scientific invisible), the new field of

psychology attempted to occupy a space in between science and philosophy, the

closed brain and the open mind.[4] Tzvetan Todorov's claim that nineteenth-century

literature of the fantastic was "the bad conscience of the positivist era" is equally

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[4] Of course, these problems, for both scientists and philosophers, are still without a
solution. In his book on Gilles Deleuze, *Organs Without Bodies* (2003), Slavoj Zizek
contends that there are "two apparently opposite reductions discernible in today's
science: the materialist reduction of our experience to neuronal processes in
Neurosciences and the virtualization of reality itself in Quantum Physics" (25).
Though James seems pretty far-flung from a figure like Deleuze, they can be
connected by their mutual affinity for the thinking of Henri Bergson. In letters to
Bergson, James wrote that the Frenchman's radical thought "inflicts an irrecoverable
death-wound upon Intellectualism," "brings the old into a most agreeable
liquefaction," and effects a "conclusive demolition of object and subject in
perception." (6/13/1907, 12/14/1902). The ideas that excited William are the same
ideas that prompted Deleuze to revitalize Bergson's half-forgotten name; Bergson
championed mutability, flux, and flow and formulated a theory of virtuality that
seems almost prescient. Notably, Bergson also served as president of the Society for
Psychical Research in 1913. Regardless of the merits of hunting for ghosts, it may
have been the relationship between "virtuality" and "spectrality" that prompted James
and Bergson to pursue psychical research.

applicable to psychical research's rejection of what it took to be the epistemic crutch

of hard evidence that eschews shadows and doubts. James and his cohort were

working at a pivot point in the history of the debate over mind and matter and their

hesitation to cede ghosts to literature reflects the agitations of modernity, which

reanimated potentialities formerly dead to science just as they animated potential

futures.

In order to follow the relays, the exchanges, the correspondence between

literary and psychological practice at the turn of the twentieth century, this chapter

takes its cue from a particular exchange culled from the correspondence of the James

brothers. It is a ready method and, as popular avatars of their respective fields, the

two would seem a ready pair for its application. But the work is not undertaken

without metacritical hesitation at a couple of points—between brothers, in private.

What does it mean to move back and forth from life to work and from Henry to

William? Though there is no shortage of critical and historical work on the James

brothers, there is a tendency to follow a narrative, again after Edel, of foundational

(and psychosexual) antagonism.[5] As Henry writes in *A Small Boy and Others*,

William occupied "a place in the world to which [he] couldn't at all aspire" (9); he

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[5] This is not an indictment of Edel, whose massive labor is truly invaluable to James
studies, but rather an interrogation of the way in which biographical praxis is
implicated in hegemonic readings. In an introduction to his edition of James's
notebooks, Edel writes 'When I inspected the coffin-shaped box and lifted its neatly
carpentered lid, I saw that it contained the residue of James's personal papers which
death had prevented him from destroying" (ix). In making the link between
biographical research and exhumation explicit, Edel's language could come straight
out of one of James's tales. Furthermore, many James critics have noted the degree
to which Edel lorded over James's private textual corpus (with the permission of
Henry's literary estate) for years, thwarting hopeful researchers at every turn.

"played with boys who curse and swear" whereas Henry found all boys "difficult to

play with" (271-72). George Santayana called William James the model for the

"normal practical masculine American" (49) and, in light of such descriptions, it's

both convenient and seductive to see the James brothers as opposed archetypes—

Henry is not often remembered as normal nor practical nor masculine nor American.

However, this study aims to avoid reductive readings of the James brothers as either

synechdochal incarnations of the discourses named "literature" and "psychology" or

as opposed archetypes, a fraternal binary with an ocean of difference to match the

literal ocean between them.[6] Whereas Rebecca West's famous remark that "one of

the James brothers grew up to write fiction as though it were philosophy and the other

to write philosophy as though it were fiction" (qtd. in Richardson 305) merely

transposes the generic arrangement, we can read in Henry and William's relationship

a series of exchanges and shifting positions—instances when the coin-sides

coincide—that models the interdisciplinary and transatlantic cross-currents of late

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[6] Also lost in the dyadic formulation is the fact that the Jameses had five children, not
two. Henry and William's sister Alice was a talented writer with a morbid wit whose
only creative outlet was a diary of the tortured years before she succumbed to breast
cancer. If Virginia Woolf could write of the untapped gifts of Shakespeare's
hypothetical sister, Henry James's sister fared no better. Caught up in the fin de
siècle panic over nervous illness, Alice spent much of her life in bed. Though the
example of Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Kate Chopin, and even Woolf herself prove
that women writers could overcome struggles with mental illness and patronizing
medical treatment, one wonders how many more remained silent. The contents of
Alice's diaries were another concern of Henry's in his letter-burning phase, and he
scoured their pages for overheard gossip and sensitive information (about him), the
"echoes" and "reverberations" of which could harm his reputation. The other two
James brothers, Bob and Wilkie, fought as teenagers in the Civil War under the
command of Robert Gould Shaw, and were wounded. William and Henry were kept
out of the war by their parents (though they did not object too strenuously), their
minds deemed too promising to risk their bodies.

nineteenth and early twentieth century thought.

The moments in which the James brothers read each other, speak for each other, and stand in for each other indicate their constant contact despite the distance and difference between them, and reveal each to be a sort of spectral presence occupying a corner of the other's mind, a friendly (if often a rival) ghost. While Henry claimed difficulty reading William's scientific and philosophical papers, he extolled their merits and even wrote that reading William's pragmatism brought him to the realization that he had "unconsciously pragmatised" all his life. Judith Ryan contends that William's ideas were "almost osmotically absorbed by his brother" (225). On the other hand, William was a fiercely unabashed critic of Henry's writing, often complaining that it was too oblique, prolix, or (ironically) too psychological. As we will see, however, though William's reproach is in keeping with his lifelong loathing of needless abstraction and convolution, it amounts to something of a double standard. In his philosophical and psychological texts, William champions flux and plurality; according to Alfred North Whitehead, "his intellectual life was one protest against the dismissal of experience in the interest of system" (qtd. in Griffin 27). He saw a tendency toward facile, totalizing systems as a blight on the philosophical discipline, but apparently preferred their literary equivalent to his brother's ambiguities.

Henry did write for (or perhaps write over) William, radically editing versions of his brother's letters for publication in his pair of memoirs *A Small Boy and Others*

and *Notes of a Son and Brother.*[7] The memoirs wander between biography and autobiography; Henry initially intended to write about his brother, but placed himself, as observer, at the center of both texts. The positioning of the subject expressed in each compellingly vague title—as a son, a brother, among others—acknowledges that there is no "I" but in relation. Consider Henry reading William's paper to the SPR, giving voice (breath, spirit) to his absent brother—the novelist ventriloquizes the psychologist, hinting at the degree to which reading is itself a kind of "channeling" or "mediumship."[8] In their work as well as their lives they are transmitters and receivers, and each brother's professional interest in ghosts is rooted in concerns about a consciousness "discorporated" and an etheric "out there" where information circulates and is subject to endless decoding and recoding. This particular situation (or these particular situations) between brothers speaks to Jacques Derrida's concept of *hauntology* and a kind of restaging of Hamlet's existential crossroads as the intersection "to be *and* not to be"—"What happens between two, and between all 'twos' one likes...can only talk with or about some ghost" (*Specters* xviii).

The critic also lingers at the threshold of public and private texts that sets the scene of analysis, fixed (to borrow James's favorite word for the effect of seeing and

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[7] It is notable that Henry places private letters at the center of his autobiographical narratives – their inclusion points to a recoverable, revisitable, authentic history while Henry's silent editing simultaneously problematizes that authenticity.

[8] Another instance of Henry reading one of William's letters is likewise compelling. When their father died in 1882, the brothers were haunting each other's houses. William was in London on a vacation designed to ease his "nervousness" (and perhaps take some needed time away from his wife).   He remained at Henry's house while Henry traveled to Boston to be with their ailing father. Henry Sr. died while the second son was en route, but Henry read a letter from William to their father at his gravesite. Henry stayed on at William's house to manage the will and family affairs.

being seen by ghosts) by an uncanny feeling. Henry has already imagined us sifting through the remains of his textual corpus and reading *against his will* (both desire and document) in the hope that the life helps to unlock the work. This kind of posthumous encounter with private lives is one of his personal obsessions as well as one of the preoccupations of the tales of his "dramatic" and "treacherous" periods, beginning with 1888's *The Aspern Papers* and recurring (a thematic revenant) throughout the 1890s. The stories present us with young journalists hoping to make their own name by attaching themselves parasitically to dead or dying literary celebrities, or zealous scholars ransacking a body of work in search of the elusive unifying thread, the "figure in the carpet," as one of the stories would have it. The narrator of *The Aspern Papers* defends the critical enterprise by claiming that he speaks for "those who are dead and gone and can't, poor darlings, speak for themselves" (50).   This type of claim to the voices of the dead, especially given Henry's challenge to its veracity, is echoed in the séances of William's medium Mrs. Piper.

There is a nervous didacticism in the tales, a way to condition the treatment of his own body of work by embedding warnings in his literary remains—in the textual afterlife, Henry can reiterate his reproofs for future generations of readers and critics. In 1899's "The Real Right Thing," James actually summons his fictional dead author's ghost to stay the biographer's prying hand.   However, the real-life author could not count on the second chances of an afterlife; Henry spent a good deal of his later years, in the words of Ian Hamilton, "readying himself for posthumous

inspection" (218). This included not only exhaustively editing and prefacing his body of work—embalming his corpus—with the New York Editions, but also sacrificing forty years worth of private correspondence to a bonfire in 1909, after being invited by the widow of Lord Byron's grandson to inspect a particularly scandalous archive of the poet's letters. Soon after, he wrote to his literary executor, William's son Henry III, that his "sole wish" is "to frustrate as utterly as possible the post-mortem exploiter" (qtd. in Salmon 86). Of course the challenge of frustration is precisely what sets the critic seeking, moving back and forth from work to life on a kind of erotically charged epistemological mission—to uncover, to expose. In her recent article in *The Henry James Review,* novelist Kathryn Kramer wonders why James's life has proven such an inexhaustible mine for critics and fiction-writers alike (she herself has written a novel with James as a character), suggesting that Henry's "self-protective measures seem practically designed to invite imaginations to insinuate themselves into the interstices" (197).

There is more going on, however, than Henry using his stories as a shield for his reputation. These tales are an extended and measured meditation on the insides and outsides of textuality—James seems to theorize or deconstruct *avant la lettre* our efforts to synthesize Henry James and "Henry James." The tales anticipate the Derridian claim that when we encounter a literary text, the writer of the text, much like a ghost, is an "absent presence." A literary body of work serves as the spectral body of the writing subject—representing it, speaking for it in its absence and, of course, after its death. Henry was uneasy with being publicly "spoken for" (he was

an obstinately "single" man), and in addition to destroying the letters he received, he began to sanitize the ones he sent in anticipation of invaders bearing quotation marks like surgical gloves to transplant his words into a foreign body. As John J. McDermott writes in his introduction to a volume of Henry and William's letters, "Everything they wrote seems to be intended some day for the light of day" (xix).

Thus the critical assumption that letters and notebooks provide access to the writer behind the fiction risks the critical error of overlooking the degree to which James carefully authored his private self. If he was going to be made to speak after his death, he was going to craft much of the script, leaving as little as possible to usurping voices. James has revised himself to counter the critic's attempt to read him—he writes us in and reads us back. This dynamic renders James's writing "autobiographical" in the sense described by Paul de Man, wherein the autobiographical is not a genre but "a figure of reading...an alignment between the two subjects involved in the process of reading in which they determine each other by mutual reflexive substitution" (921). When we read James's private writings and his writings about privacy each by the light of the other, we are straddling text and context in a manner that makes James the ultimate ghost in the haunted house of literary criticism. But this is precisely the dilemma at the heart of his stories—the inadequacy of a hermetic hermeneutics to account for the traffic of interpretative bodies to which both author and text are subjected.

Extant studies that cite the influence of the SPR on James's fiction are predominately interested in revealing sympathies of description between the ghost

stories and the body of scientific record produced by psychical researchers.[9] They

marshal evidence to show "James's awareness of psychical narratives," that he had

read and was influenced by specific texts and cases. Although we know better than to

take him by the letter, Henry made quite clear his distaste for the ghosts of the

psychical study, at least for the purposes of telling a good story, in the New York

Edition Preface to *The Turn of the Screw*:

> The new type indeed, the more modern 'psychical' case, washed clean
>
> of all queerness as by exposure to a flowing laboratory tap, and
>
> equipped with credentials vouching for this—the new type clearly
>
> promised little, for the more it was respectably certified the less it
>
> seemed of a nature to rouse the dear old sacred terror...recorded and
>
> attested "ghosts" are...as little expressive, as little dramatic, above all
>
> as little continuous and conscious and responsive, as is consistent with
>
> their taking the trouble—and an immense trouble they find it, we
>
> gather—to appear at all. (xxx)

Rather than marking a literal resemblance between William and Henry's ghosts, I

contend that James's contact (at a distance) with psychical research materializes the

logic of the absent (mediated) presence of writing. Thereby Henry's personal

proximity to William and William's work leads him to incorporate the spectral effects

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[9] See Francis X. Roellinger's "Psychical Research and *The Turn of the Screw*" or
Peter Beidler's *Ghosts, Demons and Henry James*. Martha Banta's *Henry James and
the Occult* discusses the relationship between psychical research and Henry's concept
of the artistic "extension of consciousness," but stops short of recognizing the
author's ghosts as the ghosts of writing and reading.

of writing and reading into his published ghost tales. Ultimately, Henry's ghosts of

the 1890s are a metaphor for metaphor—the thing that *carries over*, in the sense of

the remainder but also in the sense of a link—the trace that traces the line from

immaterial to material, from private to public, from body to body of work, from

William to Henry.

The Trans-Missive and the Post-Script

It is in his capacity as master of letters that James turns out to be a master of ghosts.

> Shoshana Felman, "Turning the Screw of Interpretation"

*Between rhetoric and the psycho-physical relation, within each one and from one to
the other, there is only translation, metaphor, 'transfers,' transpositions,' analogical
conversions and above all transfers of transfers: uber, meta, tele…"*

> Jacques Derrida, "Telepathy"

*Have you heard the one about the envelope that was mailed without a stamp?...Never
mind, you'll never get it.*

> Anonymous

These shifty conditions call for a limber methodology. As Eric Savoy has

suggested, James's tales provide "crucial points of reference for the mapping of

playful textuality against monumental work in structuralism's transition to

deconstruction" (227). James's tales of writers, readers, and ghosts magnify the

question of reading and specifically the question of how the act of reading produces

readings beyond the author's control. On this question, in my reading, James appears

torn—while he decidedly attempts to hang on to a notion of "monumental work," his

tales also provide a potential prototype for the deconstructionist reading of writing as marked by ceaseless iterability and the mutual contamination of presence and absence. Deconstruction, and particularly the work of Jacques Derrida, shares James's affinity for tropes of the letter and the spirit. In two slippery and elliptical works—*The Post Card* (1980) and its supplement, "Telepathy"—Derrida engages questions that help illuminate a point of entry into the experience of reading James and the theoretical dimensions of his stories.[10]

The text of *The Post Card* is presented in the form of a private correspondence, prefaced this way: "You might consider them, if you really wish to, as the remainders of a recently destroyed correspondence" (3). The obliquity of the method resists reading by presenting the text as both incomplete and intended for someone other than the reader. Derrida, like James, understands that the practice of letter-writing is emblematically trans-missive—after the letter is addressed and posted, its message is given over to unseen circulations. What's more, every letter corresponds to it phantom double, it calls for a response, and the author can only burn his half, the other is subject to the interpretive filter of the reader and the *a posteriori* of posterity. In this way, the postal enacts what Derrida calls the "essential drift" of writing. His stated aim for *The Post Card* is to sketch "a history and technology of the *courrier* [post], to some general theory of the *envoi* [dispatches, "sendings"] and

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[10] *The Post Card's* anecdotal point of departure is a post card discovered by Derrida at Oxford's Bodleian library that features an image of Socrates and Plato which reverses their traditional role; the figure depicted speaking is labeled "Plato" and the figure writes, takes dictation, is labeled "Socrates." The philosopher and the writer exchange positions.

of everything which by means of some telecommunication allegedly *destines* itself"

(3). All communication, under Derrida's ongoing critique of the "metaphysics of

presence," is telecommunication, and subject to a series of posts—"sites of passage or

of relay among others, stases, moments or effects of restance [remainder]"—between

sender and receiver (27). The trouble is that as soon as a message is addressed and

committed to the postal system, its failure to arrive is invited: "there is postal

maneuvering, relays, delay, anticipation, destination, telecommunicating network, the

possibility, and therefore the fatal necessity of going astray" (66).

Without overstating the link between the writer known as "The Master" and

the literary theoretical line that exploded mastery, James courts something like the

letter's "fatal necessity of going astray" in his ghost stories. Whereas Derrida

chooses the post card in particular because it is "half-private, half-public," the

traditional epistle's formalities of folding and sealing, unsealing and unfolding, propel

the Jamesian narrative mode. In proposing a "postal unconscious" at work in *The

Turn of the Screw*, Mark Seltzer asserts that "once it becomes possible to write on

sheets of paper that can be folded back on themselves…once it becomes possible for

the handwritten and folded sheet of paper to be inserted in an envelope, sealed, and

posted, the technical conditions of interiority and privacy are in place" ("Postal" 203).

The epistolary figures the epistemological—the stories hint that what they know,

what they have to tell, is written on a piece of paper, sealed in an envelope, locked in

a drawer—and the urge to unlock and unfold drives the narrators and the plots; it's a

formal and thematic device we might call "manuscrypting." Of course, the Jamesian

narrators either don't ever get at the letters or if they do, they do not find the answers

they sought inside. Despite the ostensible intimacy, inspecting the author's private

papers paradoxically brings us closer to the distance constitutive of writing and

reading.

It's a hermeneutic turn of the screw,[11] a Jamesian "reading trap"—not unlike

the one so deftly elaborated by Shoshana Felman in her essay "Madness and the Risks

of Practice"—the text anticipates and resists the critic's attempt to master it. Felman

is writing about James's most famous and most discussed ghost story, *The Turn of the

Screw* (and writing about writing about it). In that story, which begins with the

retrieval of a secret manuscript, the screw-turning occurs in the frame narrative

between storyteller and listener, making the tale spookier by putting children in the

path of an amorphous evil. Though James describes the metaphor in his New York

Edition preface as a gothically playful tightening of his carefully crafted textual

mechanism, I propose it is more fruitful to think of James giving the screw a left turn,

loosening it, in the way that the story is designed to adumbrate the troubling

ambiguities of representation. The loosened screws make clear that meaning is

something *done to* the text to fix it temporarily in place, something brought to or

---

[11] Surveying the abundant critical material on James, it is notable just how many
critics are drawn to this emblematically Jamesian phrase "a turn of the screw" in
describing an element of their particular project. The referent of the titular phrase is
something like a method, a mood, or a narrative effect rather than any particular
recognizable event in the story, so it helps the critic name a specific Jamesian mode.
But the curious echolalia of critical readers of James (which resonates here, of course)
opens a creaky door into the haunted house of James scholarship. Working on a
writer so exhaustively studied makes one feel not unlike a more prosaic kind of spirit
medium, channeling countless preceding voices. There's an anxiety of influence to it,
a feeling of someone having been there first.

transferred rather than something inside the story waiting to be excavated by the deepest digger. James sets the trap for the critic by opening up the interpretative space rather than sealing it tight. *The Turn of the Screw* is a tale of the titillating tortures of reading, which accounts for its tortuous and torturous critical history.

As Douglas, the frame narrator, warns us, "the story won't tell…not in any literal, vulgar way" (3), not by the letter. For Felman, "the literal is vulgar because it stops the movement constitutive of meaning, because it blocks and interrupts the endless process of metaphorical substitution" (107). Of course, the frame of the narrative, its prologue, is the story's prime mediation, the envelope that stands between the letter and its reading. Getting to the original manuscript and the story's unfolding proves so elaborate that James's framing device approaches metafiction. The story is "in a locked drawer" and Douglas will need to "write to [his] man and enclose the key" and he "could send down the packet as he finds it" (2). The narrator implores Douglas to do so "by the first post" and while the "others resented postponement," he is "charmed" by the suspense. The manuscript written by the infamous governess "in an old faded ink" will not arrive "till the second post." Even though the manuscript does arrive to the gathering, it never arrives to the text, which is relayed by the narrator "from an exact transcript of [his] own made much later" (4). After going to such lengths to distance the text from the original, James closes the frame with a baiting intimacy, as Douglas reads "with a fine clearness that was like a rendering to the ear of the beauty of the author's hand" (6).

However, this fantasy of unmediated translation from writing to reading is thoroughly destabilized. The text the reader is presented with, what the narrator promises he "shall presently give" us—the "us" now implicitly a public readership—is a version or a subversion of the original, it gathers authors as it changes hands. Before Douglas begins to read, he is asked "What's your title?"   Though he replies "I haven't one," the narrator answers "Oh, *I* have!" (6). The possessive pronouns give the title to the tellers rather than to the story. The narrator does not divulge his title within the tale—has he named the story "The Turn of the Screw"? According to the prologue, Douglas has claimed that the presence of children in a ghost story "gives the effect another turn of the screw" (1). The phrase migrates across the several layers of the story, from title page to frame and even into the story proper—the governess describes her ordeal with the phantoms of Bly as "only another turn of the screw of ordinary human virtue" (77). This curious propagation calls attention to the tale's trail through its postal and literary relays.[12] Thus the text methodically "goes astray" and while the prologue models the scene of reading, the frame opens but doesn't close—the text ends with the death of the child Miles, without returning to Douglas and the narrator for symmetry, dénouement, or closure.

Within the governess's tale, whether the ghosts are "real" or hallucinated, they emanate from letters. For her part, the governess herself is as certain of them as she is of her writing: one apparition is "as definite as a picture in a frame" and "I saw him

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[12] James's tale is itself a borrowed one – although *The Turn of the Screw* was not published until 1898, James sketched the story in a notebook entry on January 12, 1895, exactly one week after the *Guy Domville* premiere, after hearing a similar one told by Edward White Benson, the Archbishop of Canterbury.

as I can see the letters that I form on this page" (16). As Seltzer claims, the story's

"pathologization of reading and writing takes the form of an unremitting reading

between the lines which takes the form, in turn, of seeing ghosts" (202). The servant

Mrs. Grose, a potential witness and corroborator, never sees the ghosts—but she can't

read. We discover her illiteracy when the first sign of trouble and the potential

corruption of the children comes in the form of a letter announcing Miles's expulsion

from school. As the apparitions identified as Peter Quint and Miss Jessel begin to

appear throughout the grounds at Bly, in the governess's view, seeing evil becomes a

matter of "unsealing" innocent eyes: "my eyes *were* sealed" (51), "my eyes unsealed"

(57), Mrs. Grose's eyes "were hopelessly sealed" (69), Miles "caught with his sealed

eyes the direction of my words" (84).[13] The governess's final and fatal confrontation

with Miles concerns whether or not he had intercepted her letter to his uncle. Here is

their exchange:

> 'You opened the letter?'
>
> 'I opened it.' …
>
> 'And you found nothing!'—I let my elation out.
>
> He gave the most mournful, thoughtful little headshake. 'Nothing.'
>
> 'Nothing, nothing!' I almost shouted in my joy.
>
> 'Nothing, nothing,' he sadly repeated.

---

[13] An extended discussion of the governess's insistence on "sealing" is taken up by
Susan J. Navarette in her book *The Shape of Fear: Horror and the Fin de Siécle
Culture of Decadence* (110-139).

I kissed his forehead; it was drenched. 'So what have you done with

it?'

'I've burnt it.' (82)

Nothing—in fact an emphatic, doubly echoed "nothing"—is inside the letter, the text

disavows the literal. The empty letter, nonetheless burned, operates in the manner of

the Derridean trace, which is not a trace of past presence but a reminder that presence

was never available. In and out of *The Turn of the Screw*, James consistently equates

reading letters with seeing ghosts.

Turning again to Derrida, we find him looking through Freud's letters and

thinking about psychical research. He had intended the essay "Telepathy" to be

published in *The Post Card*; a footnote tells us it "should have appeared" but the

primary sources "had become inaccessible to [him], materially speaking at least, by a

semblance of accident" (423). Given that the subject of the essay is the erasure of

telepathy from the history of Freudian psychoanalysis, the irony feels like an

intentional demonstration of the necessary failure of the message to arrive. Derrida

investigates the hidden import of telepathy and the occult to psychoanalytic theory,

claiming that it operates as a crypt or a parasite—a "foreign body" stowed away in

the history of Freudian psychoanalysis.[14] The term telepathy—"feeling at a

distance"—was coined by William James's friend and colleague Frederic Myers,

cofounder of the SPR. Derrida suggests that it is "difficult to imagine a theory of what

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[14] Nicholas Royle points out in *Telepathy and Literature* that Maria Torok was
thinking the same thing (or a similar thing) at around the same time, writing of
telepathy as a crypt inside the body of psychoanalysis in her "Afterword" to *The
Wolf-Man's Magic Word* (25).

37

they still call the unconscious without a theory of telepathy… they can neither be confused nor dissociated" (15). Psychologists and psychoanalysts beginning to establish virtual topographies of the mind at the turn of the twentieth century struggled with questions of localization that weren't so easily contained by a psychophysical logic. *Where* is consciousness? *In* my mind—what happens to the whole notion of *in* when it comes to the mind? Do thoughts come *from* somewhere?

Myers proffered a theory of what he called "the subliminal self" that undeniably anticipates the Freudian unconscious. In his terms, our behaviors and desires are motivated by covert transactions between our subliminal and supraliminal selves, "messages communicated from one stratum to another stratum of the same personality" (88). There is always a transmission or a translation from *an other* inside, an elsewhere within the subject. Derrida confesses that he always "feel[s] like laughing" when he writes "my 'unconscious'… with a possessive mark," as if such a thing could be said to belong to someone (16).   Telepathy extends this mode of communication beyond the limits of an atomized or isolated consciousness to, in the definition James supplies in his own essay titled "Telepathy," "the reception of the mind of an impression not traceable to any of the ordinarily recognized channels of sense" (*Psychical Research* 119). For Freud, telepathy is "the physical equivalent of the psychic act," essentially a metaphor for the transmission of information or thought that emanates from a place wholly other.

Derrida delivers his lecture on telepathy in an attempt to read the thoughts of Freud, whose own lectures on telepathy "were never delivered but remained as

writings." As in *The Post Card,* the interception of the remainders of private correspondence reopens the case, as Derrida tracks the traces of Freud's ideas on telepathy into postcards and letters addressed to colleagues Wilhelm Fliess and Ernest Jones. Between colleagues, in writing, the subject of telepathy was private. Freud writes that his "conversion to telepathy is my private affair like my Jewishness, my passion for smoking, and many other things" (qtd. in Derrida "Telepathy" 33). Though, as Derrida puts it, "one can imagine that between their thought of the unconscious and the scientific experimentation of others who verify psychic transference from a distance, a meeting point is not excluded" (460), Freud deemed the association with occult thinking too dangerous to the fragile credibility of psychoanalytic praxis. According to Ernest Jones, telepathy "always perplexed [Freud] to the point of distraction" (qtd. in Royle 85); it literalizes or materializes the psychoanalytic practice of reading minds ("the physical equivalent of the psychic act") and it reopens all of Freud's cases, disrupting the psychoanalytic system he is still elaborating.

The psychical researcher Hereward Carrington claimed that Freud wrote in a 1921 letter, "If I had my life to live over again, I should devote myself to psychical research rather than psychoanalysis" (Jones *Life and Work Vol. 3* 419), a claim Freud denied. While he guarded his private feelings about telepathy, he qualified his public statements on the matter. His paper entitled "Dreams and Telepathy" begins with the conspicuous disclaimer "you will learn nothing from this paper of mine about the enigma of telepathy; indeed you will not even gather whether I believe in the

existence of 'telepathy' or not" (qtd. in Gay 444). Derrida is not satisfied with this

schism between what Freud wrote, officially, and what he may have thought. So he

questions the published Freud's lack of sympathy with the private letters; in Nicholas

Royle's words, "Telepathy" "unsettles, dislocates, and transforms distinctions

between a public and private discourse" ("Remains" 365) in order to draw out the

relationship between psychoanalysis and psychical research. Rather than merely

explain, excuse, or criticize Freud's refusal to publicly acknowledge his conversion to

telepathy, Derrida attempts to sympathize or telepathize with him, writing for and

writing as the psychoanalyst—if he can't get at what Freud "really thought" about

telepathy, he'll have to read his mind. For Derrida-as-Freud, telepathy is "a

terrifying telephone…with the telepathic transfer, one could not be sure of being able

to cut…or isolate the lines" (19). "So fort! So da!," how did it get here from there?

Derrida admits the distance between himself and his subject, Freud—"there is

only 'tele-analysis'…you and me, our tele-analysis has lasted for such a long time,

years and years, 'the session continues'"—and the translator's note tells us that

"session" comes from the French "séance," which "has the sense of 'meeting' and

'performance'—as well as perhaps playing, here, on the more specifically 'occult'

English usage" (9, 39). In effect, it is the psychoanalyst's second life, "over again,"

activated by critical inquiry and interpretation that promises intimacy with other

minds and new resonances for the voices of the dead. The contents of private letters

and private thoughts conjure a spectral Freud—a speculative, private alternative to the

official published edition. This is precisely what James anticipates and dramatizes in

his tales of ghosts and authors. For Royle (who translated "Telepathy" into English and is thereby a crucial post in between us and Derrida's "envoi"), literature puts telepathy in writing; the literary text itself approaches the telepathic when it operates "as reading-machine, as reading effect, that is as always in advance including, foreseeing, its addressee" (*Telepathy and Literature* 26). [15] Under this definition, Henry and William both wrote with telepathy in mind.

The Medium and the Message

And all this might be, may be, and with good help
Of a little lying shall be: so, Sludge lies!
Why, he's at worst your poet who sings how Greeks
That never were, in Troy which never was,
Did this or the other impossible great thing!…
All as the author wants it. Such a scribe
You pay and praise for putting life in stones,
Fire into fog, making the past your world.
There's plenty of "How did you contrive to grasp
The thread which led you through this labyrinth?
How build such solid fabric out of air?
How on so slight foundation found this tale?
Biography, narrative?" or, in other words,
"How many lies did it require to make
The portly truth you here present us with?"…

"Now, don't sir! Don't expose me!"

Robert Browning, "Mr. Sludge, the Medium"[16]

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[15] Royle is interested in thinking the telepathic in literature as an alternative to conceptions of "omniscience" and "point of view." In his *Telepathy and Literature*, Royle does briefly discuss Henry James and *The Turn of the Screw*, but he does not address the figure of William.

[16] Portions of this Browning poem serve as an epigraph to A.S. Byatt's novel *Possession*, which is about literary biographers uncovering their subjects' lives

Prefacing a series of letters which deal with William's psychical research,

editors Ignas Skrupskelis and Elizabeth Berkeley provide this curious note: "It was

probably his wife who pushed William James to study spiritualism and spend tedious

hours with mediums, most of whom were frauds and charlatans" (200). By every

account, it seems true that William's wife, Alice Gibbens James, did initially bring

Leonora Piper to her husband's attention. In William's own words, "I remember

playing the *esprit fort* on that occasion before my feminine relatives, and seeking to

explain by simple considerations the marvelous character of the facts which they

brought back. This did not, however, prevent me from going myself a few days later,

in company with my wife, to get a direct personal impression" (*Essays* 80).[17] Even if

we allow that Alice did indeed "push" William to go see Mrs. Piper, it does not seem

likely that that push had enough momentum to keep James occupied with psychical

research for the rest of his life. Instead, there seems to be an impulse to revise

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through private letters and journals. The duplicitous figure of "Mr. Sludge" in the
poem was a thinly-veiled indictment of real-life spirit medium Daniel Dunglas Home,
whose séances Browning and his wife Elizabeth Barrett had attended. Because
Elizabeth was convinced as to the veracity of Home's performance, Robert waited
until after her death to publish this screed. As we will see, Browning continues to
come up in this study, as the model for Clare Vawdrey in Henry's "The Private Life"
and the author of the poem "Abt Vogler," which serves as code or key in the spirit
medium's "cross correspondence" experiment.

[17] This narrative of rational husbands being goaded into spiritualist practice by their
superstitious wives is not exclusive to William and Alice James. The most prominent
example might be the well-documented claim that Mary Todd Lincoln arranged
séances in the White House. The president's participation therein is a matter of
speculation, but certain scholars suggest that the death of the Lincolns' son Willie
may have led him to pursue supernatural possibilities. In 1885, the year that Alice
Gibbens James brought William to see Leonora Piper, the Jameses lost their son,
Herman, to whooping cough.

James's life so as to excuse his interest in psychical research. However, we do not have to believe that Mrs. Piper talked to ghosts in order to draw a straight line from psychical research to James's serious contributions to modern conceptions of consciousness.

Of course, this impulse to marginalize the occult strain of certain scientific thinkers is not isolated in the case of James or Freud. Though a thorough disentangling of nineteenth-century science and spiritualism is beyond the purview of this work, I offer a few relevant examples. Chemist and physicist William Crookes was nearly ejected from the Royal Society for his allegiance to spiritualism; his work with cathode rays by a method known as spectroscopy or spectral analysis (note the ghost in the terms) would contribute to the development of teletechnologies. Scientist and spiritualist Alfred Russel Wallace developed a theory of natural selection independently of Charles Darwin and forced Darwin to publish his findings before he had planned. Though there is nothing supernatural about the two scientists working through similar ideas at the same time, it no doubt highlights the degree to which minds are not hermetically sealed—no theory is the product of solitary genius alone.[18] In fact, etymology renders the notion of a collective consciousness redundant; "consciousness" originally indicated "knowing, or sharing the knowledge of anything, together with another."[19] While Freud kept his reconsideration of psychical

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[18] Sometimes spiritualist Mark Twain suggests, in his essay "Mental Telegraphy," that two authors writing on the same subject simultaneously is potential proof of the transmission of ideas from mind to mind.
[19] *Oxford English Dictionary*. An example from Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* – "Where two, or more men, know of one and the same fact, they are said to be

research private, psychical researchers were instrumental in transporting Freudian ideas to a wider public—Myers was the first to publish Freud in England and James reviewed him for American journals as early as 1894. The tendency of facile historical narrative to localize an idea within a single representative mind relegates figures like Wallace and Myers to a sort of shadow history.

William corresponded voraciously with European as well as American psychologists, endeavoring to establish a true *field* of psychological thinking. In a sense, the whole of James's work was a response to what he considered the toxic effect of atomized or calcified thought, the stiffening that often accompanies ratiocination's rigor. He characterized pragmatism as a method that "unstiffens all our theories, limbers them up and sets each one to work" (*Pragmatism* 25). His determination to remain radically open to all types of information and phenomenon is what led him to sittings with Mrs. Piper, as well what kept him in touch with more terrestrial messages. Psychical research arose out of the broader context of fin de siécle interest in new modes of transmission and communication; we can situate the exhibition of psychic media at the intersection of psychology and media technology. Jean-Martin Charcot's experiments with so-called hysterics at the Salpêtriére hospital, the nascent talking cure of psychoanalysis, and the wireless telegraph station all depend on decoding information transmitted from distant inner or outer sources

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Conscious of it one to another." (1664). Of course, this particular definition has long been obsolete in English usage, but in the spirit of this study, dead meanings are never truly "gone."

and registered on/through bodies, media, or bodies qua media.[20] In effect, William's

investigation of the possibilities of a consciousness not only engaged with an outer

world but potentially liberated from the body altogether is like a "wireless" version of

Freudian psychoanalysis; whereas Freud probes the surface of talk for traces of

submerged strata of motivation, the psychical researcher tunes in to messages

transmitted from an etheric beyond.

In mapping virtual spaces, the psychologist tracks the traces the invisible

world leaves on the visible world.   Diagnostics becomes a substrate of

hermeneutics—manifest signs and symptoms require reading and interpretation. The

hysterics examined by Charcot presented a surplus of symptoms that made the body

into a cipher without a key; something was happening to them with no localizable

somatic cause.[21] Though it is important not to conflate those who suffered from very

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[20] Rudyard Kipling, whose sister was a medium and participated with Leonora Piper
in the cross-correspondence study (to be discussed later), wrote a short story called
"Wireless" (1902) in which an unlettered pharmacy employee goes into a trance state
during a demonstration of the new telegraphic technology and appears to be receiving
lines of Keats's poetry. Also, Henry James published *In the Cage*, a novella about a
lonely female telegraph operator who imagines herself forming intimate bonds with a
male customer via the messages he sends and receives, in 1898, the same year as
Turn of the Screw.
[21] While William worked to elucidate the vexed relationship between mind and body,
both he and Henry privately battled indeterminate illnesses throughout their lives. In
one letter, Henry even facetiously claims that "I have invented for my comfort a
theory that this degenerescence of mine is the result of Alice and Willy getting better
and locating some of their diseases on me – so as to propitiate the fates by not turning
the poor, homeless infirmities out of the family" (Edel *Letters Vol. 1* 157-58). In
Henry's writing, there are scattered mentions of what he refers to as "the obscure
hurt," some manner of injury sustained while helping to put out a fire when he was
eighteen. Henry claims the ailment plagued him for the whole of his life and kept
him from fighting in the Civil War. Henry also struggled with constipation, in later
years subscribing to Fletcherism, a regimen of thorough chewing that was said to

real (if nebulous) psychological conditions with some of the willful scammers who posed as spirit media, the Salpêtriére and the séance have a lot in common. The staid scientific projects of both were often overwhelmed by the alternately morbid and titillating theatrical spectacle of twitching and gyrating bodies, far more often than not female bodies, "possessed" by unseen forces. Notably, a number of hysterics and mediums were also actors, so while the more demonstrative subjects provide more analyzable visual evidence, they also activate anxieties as to whether symptoms are "authentic" or performed.

The history of spiritualism is inextricably bound to questions of gender, performance, and communications technology. The Fox sisters of Hydesville, New York—arguably the first American celebrity mediums—relayed their messages by way of a series of knocks or raps simulating Morse Code. As spirit mediums materialized (there were also known as "materializers") at a startling rate all over the United States and Europe, messages were communicated in a number of ways, the most common being through the voice or the pen (in automatic writing). Jeffrey Sconce maintains that women posing as mediums were able to "use the idea of the spiritual telegraph to imagine social and political possibilities beyond the immediate

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ameliorate gastrointestinal difficulty. Tim Armstrong has creatively connected Henry's Fletcherite practice to the ruminations of his New York Edition, as the works are "chewed over" and edited to eliminate waste. Meanwhile, the younger William suffered severe bouts of what was then known as neurasthenia or nervous exhaustion (a fin de siècle cousin of hysteria that in William's case was likely depression) and had to will himself into the icon of rugged American activity he would become. The pragmatist tenets that would characterize so much of William's philosophical thought were initially a way out of his troubled mind. In the brothers' correspondence, portions of letters describing the intimate details of their condition are marked off as private, not to be shown around the family as the bulk of the letter may be.

material restrictions placed on their bodies" (26). However, a number of psychologists pathologized spiritualism as a version of hysteria; one doctor defined the diagnosis he called "Mediomania" as "a disordered nervous action principally affecting women in periods of social transition, and rooted in dysfunction in the genitor or venerio-pathological history" (qtd. in Luckhurst 96). At the same time that women may have used spiritualist practice as a way past their bodies, they risked being identified as out of their minds.

It is precisely the patriarchal assumption that female bodies are sensitive, passive, and merely reproductive that engenders the female medium's access to a voice of authority (she can "speak for herself" only by pretending not to). James and his colleagues had to decide whether the spirit medium was an active agent or a passive vessel. If spirit communication was genuine, the medium is its material channel and her own consciousness is no asset but rather an impediment to the clarity of the message. Frederic Myers suggested that "the admixture seen in most trance utterances of elements which come from the sensitive's own mind with elements inspired from without" (249) and that the medium's brain "is used as something between a typewriter and a calculating machine" (201). Richard Hodgson, to whom James delegated full-time observation of Mrs. Piper described the medium as "a delicate protoplasmic machine who must be protected from injurious handling after so much patient tuning" (*Proceedings* 407); the female medium is figured more like an animate technology than a living organism.

On the other hand, if the messages are the medium's own invention, she is either a theatrical charlatan or a trendy new breed of hysteric. In her biographical tribute *The Life and Work of Mrs. Piper*, Leonora's daughter Alta Piper notes, in what she must she must have construed as her mother's defense, that "it has been aptly said of Mrs. Piper that could she of her own accord impersonate, with such striking realism, the many and diverse personalities which have from time to time manifested in her sittings, she would indeed be the greatest actress the world has ever known" (17). Like many other mediums, Mrs. Piper's body in séance would be inhabited by a "spirit control"—an intermediary defined by David Ray Griffin as "something like a master of ceremonies, introducing and describing other purported deceased personalities and then either relaying their messages or allowing them to communicate thru the medium's body" (52). Her primary spirit control, who called himself Phinuit, spoke in a gruff voice, increasing the scene's resemblance to a kind of gender-bending stage performance as a male consciousness (if a discorporated consciousness can be so gendered) inhabits a female body. James himself believed that "a will to personate" may have been a factor in Mrs. Piper's trances, but the proliferation of "false passwords" in the messages kept him from declaring the whole business to be an elaborate fraud.

The presence of the spirit control contributes another relay, filter, channel, or post through which the message must travel, and solidifies further the technological metaphor—per Kittler, "there is no difference between occult and technological media" (229). The traffic of minds and bodies involved in spirit media dilute the

message with a kind of static or noise, the nonsense from which sense is extricated by the careful interpreter. The process of sifting through a barrage of information in order to pick out the originally intended (and thereby meaningful) message is akin to a kind of virtual telecommunication. In fact, the proliferation of telephonic analogies provides one documented "meeting point" between psychoanalytic thought and psychical research. For Freud, the analyst "must adjust himself to the patient just as a telephone receiver is adjusted to the transmitting microphone" ("Wild Psychoanalysis" 360); he elides the obfuscations of third-party mediation by imagining himself to be both medium and interpreter.   The metaphorical emphasis here is on listening with the objective precision of a recording device, making an automatic record that can be parsed at a later date. To the psychical researcher, the telephone suits spiritualism's fantasy of talking to people who are "not there," but while the analogy helps to buttress the credibility of communication in absentia, it concomitantly qualifies the expectations of clear transmission on account of technological mediation and places the onus of interpretation on the receiver.

Here the metaphor of the telephone is deployed by the historian of psychical research H.F. Saltmarsh in 1938:

> The medium may be likened to a telephone with a loudspeaker to
> which the sitter listens and through which he may speak to the
> control.…Occasionally the sitter may catch fragments of conversations
> going on between the control and the communicators, also the

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communicators may sometimes oust the control, and speak directly

through the telephone. (17)

In one transcription from James's sessions with Mrs. Piper, the comparison even

makes its way into the medium's own message. After his own sudden death,

Hodgson himself returned to talk to James via Mrs. Piper, and through the "Hodgson

control" the medium attempts to allay concerns about the source of information by

deflecting them onto the limitations of teletechnological mediation:

> WJ: I wish that what you say could grow more continuous...you are
>
> curiously fragmentary.
>
> RH: You must not expect…that I could talk over the lines and talk as
>
> coherently as in the body.…You must put the pieces together and
>
> make a whole out of it.…I want you to understand one thing, that in
>
> the act of communicating it is like trying to give a conversation over
>
> the telephone, that the things that you want to say the most slip from
>
> you...(*Psychical Research* 336)[22]

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[22] Promises were made among members of the SPR to attempt to contact colleagues
from the other side. Axel Munthe, the doctor who attended the death of Frederic
Myers, recorded the scene in his memoirs: "William James told me of the solemn
pact between him and his friend that whichever of them was to die first should send a
message to the other as he passed over into the unknown they both believed in the
possibility of such a communication. He was so overcome with grief that he could not
enter the room, he sank down on a chair by the open door, his note-book on his knees,
pen in hand, ready to take down the message with his usual methodical exactitude"
(372). The medium Jane Revere Burke (descendant of historical messenger Paul
Revere) published a book called *Let Us In* (1924), which purported to be a
transcription of messages received from William James.

Out of body, dislocated, the sense of Hodgson's message is subject to dispersal; therefore, the injunction is for James to pluck enough material evidence from the stream of consciousness to make meaning.

For James and Myers, extending the field of psychology to include the paranormal ("para" uncannily indicating both "alongside" and "beyond"), answering phone calls from the dead is a matter of casting a wider network. In the view of fledgling psychology, ordinary conscious experience is already a matter of delimiting the field of information. Postulating a subliminal self, Myers proposes that "our habitual or empirical consciousness may consist of a mere selection from a multitude of thoughts and sensations" (qtd. in Thurschwell 18). What sets higher organisms apart from the lower organisms are our "organs of selection," so that response is contingent, depending on interpretation—less automatic, more indeterminate.[23] Of course, a prominent method of getting at the greater pool of thoughts unavailable to waking consciousness was "automatic writing," the notion that with practice, you could bypass the filter of consciousness and put the subliminal self on paper. James's experiments with automatic writing, specifically with his psychology student Gertrude Stein, represent his most direct influence on literary modernism. However, James and Myers did not stop at plumbing psychological depth, they were intent on

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[23] In *Matter and Memory,* Henri Bergson argues that the human body is concerned exclusively with action and equipped with the same motor reflexes as a simple organism; the difference is memory, which creates a temporal zone of indeterminacy between signal and response that allows for agency. The analogy he provides for the role of the brain in this transaction is that of a "central telephonic exchange" that chooses either to put the call from the external world through or put it on hold. The zone of indeterminacy grants higher forms of consciousness the agency to interpret or process the information coming in from outside.

exploring the possibilities of extension. James contends that "there is a continuum of cosmic consciousness, against which our individuality builds accidental fences" (*Psychical Research* 374). He understands our own experience of consciousness— that which is present to us—as filtered, mediated, an *edition*. The occult situation of mind-reading parallels the quotidian processes of the mind reading.

The mediation is compounded in the exercise of describing consciousness in writing. Despite his repeated claims that Henry's writing would benefit by being made clearer and more direct, William consistently struggled to make his language adequate to his philosophy of action.[24] As Jill Kress argues in *The Figure of Consciousness*, the psychologist consistently had recourse to metaphor—and particularly natural metaphors like his famous "stream of consciousness"—to bridge the chasm between language and experience. In *The Principles of Psychology,* James contends that "the psychologist must not only have his mental states in their absolute veritableness, he must report them and write about them, name them, classify and compare them and trace their relations to other things. Whilst alive they are their own property: it is only post-mortem that they become his prey" (189). The psychologist can only come to terms (as in terminations, resting places) with mental states when they are dead and dissectible. However, if words are the corpses of consciousness,

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[24] William's trouble with language complicates another conventional James brothers dyad – that of speaker and writer, with the Plato-via-Derrida baggage of presence and absence. Whereas Henry rarely and reluctantly committed to public appearances, the majority of William's psychological and philosophical writings were written to be delivered as lectures and his "presence"—that is, charisma, comportment – in the lecture hall and in the classroom contributed as much to the renown he accrued in his lifetime as his books.

William endeavored to unsettle them, to animate them. He argues that although the mind, by necessity, arrives at a substantive end—a thinkable thought—the conscious stream is characterized by "feelings of relation, psychic overtones, halos, suffusions, or fringes about the terms" (269). Paraphrasing Henri Bergson, for example, James maintains that "reality always is...an endosmosis or conflux of the same with the different—they compenetrate and telescope" (*Pluralistic Universe* 257). The syntax here is consistently compounded as if to demonstrate the struggle to language to contain ideas and fix experience. Kress maintains that in William's descriptions, "consciousness becomes like language itself …fluid and unpredictable" (28). She picks out words—like "halo" and "fringe," along with "echo," "penumbra," and "shadow"—that have a spectral "lingering quality," that "leave a trail." This is the word made ectoplasm.

Psychical Research most profoundly intersects with the literary practice of close reading in what were known as the "Cross-Correspondence" studies, conducted beginning in 1901, with Mrs. Piper joining a team of participating mediums stationed across the globe in 1906. The goal of the studies was to transcribe and subsequently analyze messages channeled by multiple spirit mediums in separate locales in order to determine whether the various transmissions could be shown to correspond. If they could, this would be evidence of bona fide spirit communication with a common source, here including dead psychical researchers Myers and Hodgson. The project became incredibly elaborate, occupying years of research and covering countless pages of documentation (the society's prolific textual output counters the expectation

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for flights of fancy with piles of sober scientific records of data, replacing stories with reports). Purportedly due to the limits of their mediums—one posthumous Myers likened "the difficulty of sending a message" to "dictating feebly to a reluctant and somewhat obtuse secretary" (qtd. in Blum 285)—the bits of significance were encrypted within a clutter of white noise and nonsense; spirit mediums are the unreliable narrators of the afterlife. What's more, each psychic reader has their own version of the posthumous Myers, demarcated in SPR documents as Myers$_p$ (indicating Mrs. Piper's Myers), Myers$_v$, and so on—a subscript for the subliminal. Beyond the challenge of muddled channels, as Roger Luckhurst points out, Myers' ghost "seemed intent on turning the discipline towards a form of literary hermeneutics" (265). The communiqués were rife with Latin phrases, anagrams, and literary allusion (in the most significant instance, a repetition of words and themes from Robert Browning's poem "Abt Vogler"); in the process of decoding, psychical research becomes literary research.

It is not surprising that the prime progenitors of the detective story, Edgar Allan Poe and Arthur Conan Doyle, were also deeply interested in ghosts (Doyle wrote a two-volume history of spiritualism). Psychical researchers were not credulous; in fact they were more like professional debunkers or detectives working with new kinds of evidence. Richard Hodgson had made his name by exposing spirit mediums as fraudulent and James was not convinced by any supposed psychic phenomenon apart from Mrs. Piper's sittings.   They operate in a constellation of epistemological quandaries—how do we know how Mrs. Piper is able to know what

she appears to know? Hodgson reported that "the skeptical theory of her success is that she keeps a sort of detective bureau open upon the world at large" (qtd. in Beidler 157) and he actually hired detectives to find out whether Piper had hired detectives. Of course, the key to Piper's fame was her ability to produce personal information about both her living visitors and her unearthly visitants. In the case of the Hodgson control, William and his colleagues could attempt to verify the afterlife with evidence from the life, evidence found in private documents. Not only does this resonate with Henry's concerns about textual remains and the circulations of private information, but the author himself served as de facto psychical researcher in one instance of cross-correspondence. When one psychical researcher noted the anagrams "rats, star, arts" and remembered having seen something similar among Hodgson's papers, his request for confirmation was answered by Henry James, who was an executor of Hodgson's estate. While he wouldn't be caught dead at a séance, Henry knew well what was ghostly about an archive of private papers.

Appearing Acts

"But I see ghosts everywhere…"
<div align="right">Henry James to Francis Boott, 10/11/1895</div>

Responding to Henry's novel *The Golden Bowl* in a 1905 letter, William is frustrated with his brother's literary abstractions. He typically tempers his criticism with the assurance that Henry has succeeded in accomplishing his artistic goals, but wonders whether a little directness might not bring him to a wider public. He has a

solution:

> Your methods and my ideals seem the reverse, the one of the other—
> and yet I have to admit your extreme success in this book. But why
> won't you, just to please Brother, sit down and write a new book, with
> no twilight or mustiness in the plot, with great vigor and decisiveness
> in the action, no fencing in the dialogue, no psychological
> commentaries, and absolute straightness in the style? Publish it in my
> name, I will acknowledge it, and give you half the proceeds.
> (Skrupskelis and Berkeley 463)

Two elements of this advice are particularly evocative. The call for "straightness," a prompt to "come out and say it" to the author whose elliptical aesthetic coupled with his missing sex life make him a model subject for queer theory, reminds us of the stakes of privacy for Henry and the significant freight that his writings about it carry. Equally suggestive is the notion that the brothers would split the authorship of this hypothetical novel, with Henry as its private source and William as its public representative. Henry had pursued a version of this concept in his 1892 quasi-ghost story "The Private Life," in which a celebrity author ostensibly has two bodies—one for writing and one for socializing.

William's suggestion of divided authorship, like Henry's solicitation of "psychical intervention," is a particularly telling joke. William's interest in split, multiplying, and hidden selves is both an integral part of his "mainstream" psychological work and a gateway to his risky investment in psychical research. In

his landmark *Principles of Psychology*, William notes that social relations beget

multiple personalities: "a man has as many social selves as there are individuals who

recognize him and carry an image of him in their mind" (294). This is the normal

consequence of reputation and an individual's circulation in various publics, typically

a matter of willful presentation and performance. However, in 1889, after reading

the studies of "hysterical trances" conducted by Charcot's student Pierre Janet, James

found that the notion of a divided self had more profound implications to the study of

pathological and paranormal conditions. In an article entitled "The Hidden Self,"

published in *Scribner's* in 1890 (the year *Principles* was published as well as the year

Henry read for him at the SPR), William maintains that "this simultaneous

coexistence of the different personages into which one human being may be split is

the *great* thesis of M. Janet's book" (*Essays in Psychology* 258). He connects Janet's

work with hysterics to his own work with Mrs. Piper, though he doesn't mention her

by name—"there are trances which obey another type. I know a non-hysterical

woman who, in her trances, knows facts which altogether transcend her *possible*

normal consciousness, facts about the lives of people whom she never saw or heard of

before" (268). Ultimately, James concludes that "*a comparative study of trances and*

subconscious states is...of the most urgent importance for the comprehension of our

nature" (268).

One of Janet's patient's, Leonie, possesses three separate "consciounesses"

that are designated Leonie 1, 2, and 3; while Leonie 1 carries a cogent conversation,

Leonie 2 can make use of her hand and conduct a separate conversation in writing.

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In stories of the early 1890s like "The Private Life" and "The Death of the Lion," Henry investigates the implications of the author's "writing self" apart from the public incarnation that meets the exigencies of sociality. Though he may have never read him directly, Janet's influence found Henry through the filter of his brother's work, which he read avidly. The tales are a lighthearted amalgam of normal and abnormal psychology's theories of selfhood, Henry's particular brand of proto-literary-theorizing, and his personal trepidations regarding the theatrical world and the literary market. While William relates Janet's experiments to Mrs. Piper, Henry applies the situation of the divided self to his own medium, writing. The frictions of staying private while going public generate a species of ghost-effect that appears in Henry's tales of the lives and deaths of celebrated authors.

In 1895, just a few months after the trouble at the *Guy Domville* premiere, London was absorbed in the scandals of the Wilde trial, a public spectacle that seems to crystallize the whole of James's anxieties with regard to the threatened threshold of privacy. Wilde was grossly embodied by the proceedings and reporting of the trial and the prosecution drew a straight line from his body to his body of work, indicting double meanings as a signal of double lives. Of course, Henry always "went out" but never "came out"; he was invested in being seen, but appears terrified of being exposed—a term that was in the late nineteenth century gaining its double edge. Above all else, though, James was invested in being read but ambivalent about being interpreted or being read *into*—as if the practice of reading amounted to an attempt to close the transitive circuit that the writing subject has opened by tracking the work's

object back into the author's consciousness. The specter of Wilde and his trial, with its systematic method of "outing" via critical reading, joins the crowd of ghosts detectably looming over James's 1890s short oeuvre.

James's dramatic experiment brings together author, text, and audience in the same public space, present and embodied. In writing for the theater, his words are animated by the actors' bodies and voices and his audience is transplanted from the private spaces of the novel-reader into the public space of the auditorium. Opening night at the theater took his words off the page and into the open air; James himself would also be present and thus able to watch the drama of the public reception of his work enacted on the faces of the audience members and be called on stage after the curtain to stand as a kind of living signature of the work. Colm Tóibín's 2004 novel about James, *The Master*, begins in 1895 with the circumstances surrounding the premiere of *Guy Domville* and imagines the novelist's mix of apprehension and delight at the prospect of trading writerly insulation for a touch of presence: "Reading was as silent and solitary and private as writing. Now, he would hear people in the audience hold their breath, cry out, fall silent" (10) and brave "a life in which he wrote for voices and movement and an immediacy that through all his life up to now he had believed he would never experience" (12).

Out in public, the conditions of celebrity necessarily split or double the private writing self, spawning a version or image of the self that the public engages with in the absence of the writer's physical body. The Oxford English Dictionary notes that the word "celebrity" was first used to refer to a person rather than the state of being

famous in 1849, six years after James's birth; fame became irrevocably attached to the famous person's body. This is nowhere more evident than in the meteoric rise in the popularity of authors' national and international lecture tours, beginning perhaps with Charles Dickens' American tours of the 1850s and '60s and continuing on in this country with the franchise that was Mark Twain. Audiences crowded lecture halls in an effort to undo the ghostly effects of literary celebrity by reattaching the writing subject's split selves, seeing a body reunified with its disseminated image and name. In this way, we can see the celebrity appearance as the inverse of the appearance of the ghost; instead of spotting the spirit loosed from the familiar body, we apprehend the missing body previously divorced from the entity that circulates publicly by way of writing and reputation. The language with which we describe each is markedly similar—a glimpse of either a celebrity or a ghost is commonly referred to as a "sighting," and an "apparition," much like a celebrity, relies on intermittent "appearances" for the confirmation of its "reality" (we might even say that the ghost exists solely in the space of performance and relies on an audience, however small, to grant it its ghostly status).

The mutating celebrity culture did not just generate interest in the authors' public appearances but in their private lives as well. James consistently railed against such encroachment; in his notebooks he cites the "invasion, the impudence and shamelessness, of the newspaper and the interviewer, the *devouring* publicity of life" (qtd. in Salmon 14).   Writing for *MacMillan's* in 1893, James maligned the book of Flaubert's letters published after his death and authorized by the French novelist's

niece, Caroline Commanville:

> He kept clear all his life of vulgarity and publicity and newspaperism
>
> only to be dragged after his death into the middle of the marketplace,
>
> where the electric light beats fiercest. Mme. Commanville's
>
> publication hands him over to the Philistines with every weakness
>
> exposed, every mystery dispelled, every secret betrayed ... we may ask
>
> ourselves if the time has not come when it may well cease to be a
>
> leading feature of our homage to a distinguished man that we shall
>
> sacrifice him with sanguinary rites on the altar of our curiosity ... poor
>
> Flaubert has been turned inside out. (*Literary Criticism* 296-7)

The author's body is figuratively exhumed in order to absorb the violence done to his

reputation. In 1890, Samuel D. Warren and Louis D. Brandeis published "The Right

to Privacy" in *The Harvard Law Review*, addressing the publication of private papers

and the legalities of intellectual property. The authors argue that "the principle which

protects personal writings...against publication in any form, is in reality not the

principle of private property, but that of inviolate personality" (qtd. in Salmon 83). In

effect, the right to privacy seeks to undo some of the discorporating effects of

publication and literary celebrity by reintegrating the author's body. According to

Richard Salmon, "the text exists in a state of originary privacy, in which it forms an

extension of the 'personality' of its author...Privacy is thus the deepest, most integral

form of property conceivable: it constitutes a state of self-possession which unites

proprietor and property within the same body" (83). Private writing becomes a repository or container of selfhood, a supplemental second body.

James addresses the conditions of celebrity directly in "The Private Life," which was, according to James, inspired by his impression upon meeting Robert Browning, who seemed to him to be too curiously ordinary to have been the same man who penned such extraordinary verse. In order to justify the disparity between the public man and the private genius, James literally splits his fictional literary master Clare Vawdrey into two distinct bodies—a private, writing body and a public body charged with standing in for the author in social situations. Edel connects the genesis of the story to the tumult of the author's experience breaking with the theater: "Henry's little fantasy about [Browning] was also a fantasy about himself; it reflected the dichotomy which he envisaged in his own life: his dedication to art and to privacy; his eagerness at this moment to set this aside and seek the worldliness and publicity of the stage" (368).

The story invites the reader to an assemblage of London's artistic elite vacationing in the Swiss Alps. Certain members of the party are certified celebrities; they are "the people ... people tried to get" (92). Speaking of the actress Blanche Adney, the unnamed narrator (a writer less celebrated than his companions) remarks that "in society she was like the model off the pedestal ... she was the picture walking about" (99). The effect of the celebrity "in person" is here equated with witnessing an inanimate thing become animated, the image come to life. Adney's fame displaces her physical body and she becomes a two dimensional image. This is the inverted

ghost-effect of the celebrity sighting, only when the actress is re-embodied is the uncanny effect produced. The spectrality of reputation has an even more adverse effect on the painter Mellifont. The narrator of the story tells us that

> when he was talked about, I had always had a sense of our speaking of the dead, it had the mark of that peculiar accumulation of relish. His reputation was a kind of gilded obelisk, as if he had been buried beneath it; the body of legend and reminiscence of which he was to be the subject had crystallised in advance. (97)

Mellifont is virtually esteemed out of existence. His reputation has been given so much weight that "the body of legend" it has birthed becomes more substantial than Mellifont's actual body and, in effect, replaces it. By the logic of this reversal, the painter's body becomes the ghost that haunts his reputation.

Mellifont is the quasi-complement to the split Vawdrey. His talents as host, raconteur, and all-around public performer are so vast that they seem to leave no room for a private self; whereas Vawdrey is double, Mellifont is not even whole. James continually figures the tensions between public and private selves as a sort of economy. For Vawdrey, his two selves are "members of a firm, and one of them would never be able to carry on the business without the other" (112). This is a practical matter, a business arrangement—in order to survive the writer must understand his work as both private art and public commodity. On the contrary, Mellifont expends so much vitality in public that it is assumed he has none left to himself. The narrator claims he has "secretly pitied [Mellifont] for the perfection of

his performance, had wondered what blank face such a mask had to cover ... how utter a blank mustn't it take to repair such a plenitude of presence" (110).

After discussing these curious conditions, the narrator and Adney resolve to seek out the private bodies (or lack thereof) of Vawdrey and Mellifont. They plot and snoop like amused dilettante detectives motivated by the kind of celebrity fascination born of a desire for both intimacy and exposure.   In Julie Rivkin's words, the two display

> a prurient interest in getting behind the public self-representation of the tale's assembled celebrities to the truths of their private lives. Moreover, while the goal of both questers is aesthetic fulfillment, the locus of what they seek -- invariably behind bedroom doors -- makes the aesthetic quest indistinguishable from the erotic one. Their conjoined search for a hidden body or script behind the social costume or public performance leads them instead to the tale's phantoms. (28)

In the case of the painter, the quest for the missing body is to no avail. He is ostensibly never alone, appearing to vanish in the absence of company as if he were an apparition projected by the eyes of his admirers. He seems to signify for James the dangers of the embodiment his venture into the theater might entail. The story is rife with references to the stage, but they appear particularly often with regard to the performer Mellifont. Conversing with the painter as he sketches the landscape, the narrator observes that "we could no more have left him than we could have quitted the theatre till the play was over" (116). Bearing witness to Mellifont's ghostly

disappearance, Adney tells the narrator "the stage was as bare as your hand" (114). In describing the painter's hosting prowess, the narrator tells us that the artist lends their social encounters "a tone," "a vocabulary," and "a style," as if he scripted them himself. But then we are told that Mellifont "*was* a style" (98). He is not the artist but the artwork, the ghostly double that is the text circulating publicly apart from its author. Tellingly, the landscape sketch Mellifont gives to Adney as a present bears no signature.

Meanwhile, Vawdrey "disappoints everyone who looks in him for the genius that created the pages they adore" (109). Upon meeting the writer himself "in person," his reader is reluctant to transfer his version of Vawdrey onto the writer's actual body. When she hears about Vawdrey's split condition, Adney is overcome with what she calls "an insane desire to see the author" (112)—there must be more to uncover, a self secreted away in private chambers. After discovering the private Vawdrey, the true author, the narrator notes that "It looked like the author of Vawdrey's admirable works. It looked infinitely more like him than our friend does himself" (107). This is the fantasy of the body of work incarnate, the wished-for "truer" self that can better represents the image that text and reputation evoke. James's supernatural fable allows him to thematize (by literalizing) the split selves of psychology refracted by literary praxis.

"The Death of the Lion," published two years later in 1894, conjures no proper ghosts, but expands James's examination of the travails of literary celebrity. The story takes a longer view than "The Private Life," following the author Neil

Paraday from the relative obscurity of solely critical acclaim to a short period of fame

abbreviated by death. James is interested in the fate of the text in the wake of its

author's death, but he is also interested in the fate of the author. Paraday's actual

death is prefigured by a figurative one occasioned by his newfound publicity. The

title of the collection within which "The Death of the Lion" appears is *Terminations*

and the story is emblematic of James's prescient obsession with something like the

author's death knell as announced by Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault.[25]

Paradoxically, the increased attention to the author himself effectively consumes his

authority over the work, removes him from the privileged position as the localized

center of signification.

The unnamed narrator is a struggling writer hoping to make a name for

himself by attaching his to a literary celebrity. Trying to convince his editor, Mr.

Pinhorn (a doubly piercing moniker), that Paraday is a subject that merits coverage

(interesting how journalistic discourse makes connotative bedfellows of "coverage"

and "exposure"), the editor takes Paraday's inviolate seclusion and relative privacy as

cause for their interruption:

> My allusion to the sequestered manner in which Mr. Paraday
>
> lived...was, I could divine, very much what had made Mr. Pinhorn
>
> nibble. It struck him as inconsistent with the success of his paper that
>
> any one should be so sequestered as that. And then was not an

---

[25]Notably, with regard to the history of the author's function, in *Ghostwriting Modernism*, Helen Sword argues that spirit media play a part in the destabilization of authorial voice, identity and meaning that is central to literary modernism.

immediate exposure of everything just what the public wanted? Mr.

Pinhorn effectually called me to order by reminding me of the

promptness with which I had met Miss Braby at Liverpool on her

return from her fiasco in the States. Hadn't we published, while its

freshness and flavour were unimpaired, Miss Braby's own version of

that great international episode? I felt somewhat uneasy at this

lumping of the actress and the author…" (357-8)

Notably, the consuming desire for "immediate exposure" of the public figure brings

the social significance of the author into what the narrator (and, I argue, James with

him) considers a dangerous proximity to that of the actress. For Pinhorn, the writer

should not be left to toil in secret, but should be called up to the stage of public

consumption.

The conversation between journalist and editor plays out figuratively on the

writer's body, as the narrator suggests that he "should lay [his] lean hands on" the

author, "for he hasn't been touched." Pinhorn agrees, asking "where" they might

touch him; the journalist responds emphatically, "Under the fifth rib!" (357).

The allusion here, missed by Pinhorn, is to the biblical story of Joab, King David's

nephew and captain, who kills his enemy Abner with a blow in that precise location.

The narrator undertakes his task with the knowledge that journalistic intrusion will

"kill" the author. When the narrator visits Paraday, the dialogue revisits this playful

intercourse between authorship and mortality. After Paraday jokes about his failing

health, the journalist quips: "'Dead—*passé encore;* there's nothing so safe. One

never knows what a living artist may do—one has mourned so many. However, one must make the worst of it; you must be as dead as you can.'" To which the author responds "'Don't I meet that condition in having just published a book'" (362). Repartee shifts the discussion from literal to figurative death; when the creative act of writing is over, the life of the work belongs to its reception.

Before the narrator can submit a piece suitable to his editor, his designs for ushering Paraday into the public consciousness are usurped by the aptly named Mr. Morrow, a publishing magnate more interested in cultivating a marketable persona out of the stuff of Paraday's personal life than a substantive treatment of his oeuvre. James establishes Morrow as an ominous harbinger of the future of the literary industry—his gloves are "violently new" and his glasses "suggested the electric headlights of some monstrous modern ship"; overall, "his momentum was irresistible" (364). Morrow's efforts do bring Paraday public renown, and soon the narrator watches with mixed feelings as the author is absorbed into the world of high society and publicly private appearances, paraded around by his new benefactress, the wealthy Mrs. Wimbush (in naming Paraday, James may have prepared him for this parodic parade). The journalist remarks that Paraday's "book sold but moderately...but he circulated in person in a manner that the libraries might well have envied" (370). This transposition of body and text has the author himself embodied, objectified, and passed around like a copy of his book. He *is* a copy of his book—its analog commodity in the parallel realm of social capital—subject to checking out. At the close of the story, Paraday has died and his manuscript has been lost in the traffic

between ersatz readers. Mrs. Wimbush's estate becomes a microcosm for the greater

public, and the narrator traces the provenance from Mrs. Wimbush to Lady Augusta

to the maid to Lord Dorimont to "his man" and back to the maid, concluding that the

text's various handlers "haven't the time to look over a priceless composition, they've

only time to kick it about the house" (386).

Paraday himself laments that "'No one has the faintest conception of what

I'm trying for...and not many have read three pages that I've written; but I must dine

with them first" (371). The ghostly conditions of celebrity status and their

attachment to the practice of writing are not lost on the narrator, whose pity for

Paraday is mollified by the notion that "the phantasmagoric town was probably after

all less of a battlefield than the haunted study" (371). Though at times he seems to

serve as a medium for James to voice his critique of the deleterious effects of a

burgeoning mass media, the narrator's disapproval often masks his own parasitical

desire to secure his position as Paraday's authorized interpreter. As James allows him

to recoil at the fate of the literary text in the hands of the unlettered public, he embeds

a richer irony in the critic's own interests. The narrator opposes his investment in

reading to the Morrow's superficial investment in celebrity personae, telling the

publisher, "let whoever would represent the interest in his presence...I should

represent the interest in his work—in other words in his absence" (372). However,

his claim to represent the interest in Paraday's absence (his work) slides into his

interest in literally representing the author in his physical absence. He offers himself

up to visitors as a surrogate or proxy "under bonds to see people for him when he was occupied" (373).

One such applicant for Paraday's attention is the (again) preciously named autograph seeker Miss Hurter, who has come calling because her letters to the author have gone unanswered; according to the narrator, they are "the sort of letters [that] go straight into the fire" (373). Though she declares her utmost desire is to "look straight into [Paraday's] face," the journalist suggests that the way to "perform an act of homage really sublime" is to "succeed in never seeing him at all" (376). Even though conversations with Miss Hurter reveal that her interest in Paraday is born of her passion for his writing rather than the fashion of his name, the narrator endeavors to keep the author to himself. His in-person discussions with Paraday license a fantasy of access and intimacy. When the journalist is granted the first look at the author's notes for a new manuscript, he imagines "it might have passed for a great gossiping eloquent letter," a prelude to the published work that still pulses with "the overflow into talk of an artist's amorous plan" (360). While the average reader will experience only the published manuscript—uniform, settled, essentially dead—the narrator bears ecstatic witness to author and text in living, dynamic engagement, replete with "all the freshness, the flushed fairness of the conception untouched and untried: it was Venus rising from the sea, before the airs had blown upon her. I had never been so throbbingly present at such an unveiling" (361).

Of course the manuscript is ultimately lost, the "great gossiping eloquent letter" that the narrator alleges places him so profoundly in the author's presence

never arrives. The author's story in "The Death of the Lion" is unauthorized; in fact,

in another instance of characteristically Jamesian formal complexity, the narrator's

own story was never meant for publication. He mentions early on that "these meager

notes are essentially private, so that if they see the light the insidious forces that, as

my story itself shows, make at present for publicity will simply have overmastered

my precautions" (358).   This statement suggests interception, the unseen hand of an

additional party under the sway of the vague "insidious forces of publication." But

James later provides a clue that casts a shadow over the narrator's disclaimer: in a

seemingly gratuitous formal shift, the story turns epistolary toward the end, as the

narrator includes his letters to Miss Hurter that she has "kindly allow[ed] me to

transcribe...a few of the passages in which that hateful sojourn is candidly

commemorated" (382). As Salmon has keenly observed, if the narrator did not intend

his "meager notes" for publication, it is strange that he would have solicited

permission from Miss Hurter to use them. Jamesian narrators are never facilely

reliable because Jamesian narratives themselves, and especially those that claim

"authenticity," are never facilely reliable. James's decision not to give the reader the

story straight, but rather pieced together second hand from secondary sources by

dubious proxy, reestablishes the distance from the author that his narrator seeks to

overcome.

Paper Trails and Vapor Trails

The manner of the thing may thus illustrate the author's incorrigible taste for
gradations and superpositions of effect...addicted to seeing through—one thing

through another, accordingly, and still other things through that.
<div align="right">Henry James, Preface to *What Maisie Knew*</div>

Theodora [Bosanquet, James's amanuensis], who is an active member of Society for Psychical Research and sometimes attends séances in this capacity, reflects that it would be an interesting experiment to try one day to contact the spirit of Henry James. Authentic messages from HJ about the afterlife would be well worth having, and inauthentic ones would be easy to identify, since no medium could possibly fake his style.
<div align="right">David Lodge, *Author, Author!* [another novel about James's life]</div>

In reading Henry's letters about reading William's letters after his death, the ghost of his brother appears, and speaks. Henry is writing to William's son and literary executor Henry James III, justifying the editions he has made to his brother's letters for inclusion in *Notes of a Son and Brother*:

> And when I laid my hands on the letters...I found myself again in such close relation with your Father, such a revival of relation as I hadn't known since his death, and which was a passion of tenderness for doing the best thing by him the material allowed, and which I seemed to feel him in the room and at my elbow asking me for as I worked and as he listened. It was as if he had said to me on seeing me lay my hands on the weak little relics of our common youth "Oh but you're not going to give me away, to hand me over, in my raggedness and my poor accidents, quite unhelped, unfriended, you're going to do the very best for me you *can*, aren't you…? (Edel *Letters Vol. 4* 802)

In literary terms, the representation of an absent or dead person speaking is called prosopopeia; while this is a device James utilizes in his fiction, it is curious to see him

deploy it here in defense of biographical tinkering. This passage echoes moments in James's fiction in which he appears unequivocally critical of posthumous interpreters who deign to speak for the dead. As Derek Attridge reminds us, the ghost "is also a citation, of course, or else it would not be recognized as a ghost" (175). Without equating Henry's reanimation of the very real intimacy he had with his brother to the phantom intimacy literary critics and biographers imagine they have with their subjects, the resemblance of the spirit in the letter to those in the stories is striking enough to suggest Henry's own late-in-life private "conversion" to prosopopeia's literary spirit communication.

In *The Aspern Papers,* the ruthless, manipulative literary scholar and narrator travels to Venice to locate Juliana Bordereau, a former lover of the great American poet Jeffrey Aspern, in the hopes of gaining access to her collection of the poet's letters. Working to insinuate himself into the lives of Juliana and her niece Tina,[26] he reassures himself that Aspern would authorize his aims:

> It was as if his bright ghost had returned to earth to assure me he regarded the affair as his own no less than as mine and that we should see it fraternally and fondly to a conclusion. It was as if he said: 'Poor dear, be easy with her; she has some natural prejudices; only give her time. Strange as it may appear to you she was very attractive in 1820. Meanwhile aren't we in Venice together, and what better place is there for the meeting of dear friends? (24)

---

[26] In some versions of the story, she is called "Tita."

The formulation "it was as if he said" is an exact match to Henry's letter, and here the imagined Aspern "fraternally" suggests that the narrator's efforts are not only sanctioned but welcomed with homosocial affection. In "The Real Right Thing," George Withermore , a young and unknown writer, is called upon to write the biography of the recently deceased author Ashton Doyne, to whom he was a sort of protege. Though Doyne's ghost never does speak, as Withermore examines the author's personal archive, he feels the ghost's presence in the room and at the work table in the precise manner that Henry has described William's spirit, encouraging him:

> there were moments for instance when, while he bent over his papers, the light breath of his dead host was as distinctly in his hair as his own elbows were on the table before him...He hovered and lingered, he came and went, he might almost have been, among the books and the papers, a hushed discreet librarian, doing the particular things, rendering the quiet aid, liked by men of letters. (272)

The biographer imagines the ghost not only as a supporter of his efforts but as a "mystic assistant." Both *The Aspern Papers* and the "Real Right Thing" expose the biographer's felt intimacy as delusion and point to James's ambivalence about the closeness of biographical pursuits.

Within *The Aspern Papers*, the bodies of the Bordereaux women become a sort of imagined way station for the coveted secrets of the dead writer's life.   The poet's ex-lover begins to function very much like a spirit medium connecting the

narrator to Aspern. Before discovering "the one living source of information that had lingered on into our time" he and his fellow critics had been "dealing with phantoms and dust, the mere echoes of echoes" and "had not been able to look into a single pair of eyes into which his had looked or to feel a transmitted contact in any aged hand his had touched" (4). Now Juliana's "presence seemed somehow to contain and express" Aspern's own and the narrator feels "nearer to him" than ever before (13). By a series of physical relays, the narrator imagines himself in contact with the author— the sound of her voice inspires the realization that "that individual note had been in Jeffrey Aspern's ear" (14) and he is able to touch "the hand Jeffrey Aspern had pressed" (17). In lieu of the letters, Juliana's body becomes an intimate archive unto itself, which bears traces of the living poet.

Although the narrator perceives that his proximity to the papers "made [his] life continuous, in a fashion, with the illustrious life they had touched at the other end" (25), the mediating bodies of the secluded Juliana and her niece Tina ultimately prove to be an obstacle rather than a passage to Aspern's mystified presence. When Juliana catches the narrator on the verge of a surreptitious search through her room, she accuses him of being a "publishing scoundrel." He flees the house, returning days later to find that Juliana has died and Miss Tina is now the intermediary between him and the titular papers. Before he discovers that the aunt has never shared the papers with her niece, the narrator surmises that Tina "had seen and handled all mementoes and—even though she was stupid—some esoteric knowledge had rubbed off on her" (25). When Tina hints that he would be made privy to anything he likes if

he should marry her, the narrator weighs his critical epistemophilia—he compares the sound of promised access to the papers to "the light rustle of an old unfolded love-letter" (36)—against his almost gynophobic distaste for his potential bride. He flees again only to reconsider but discover that Tina has burned the letters "one by one."

Withermore of "The Real Right Thing" is more of a well-meaning aspirant than *The Aspern Papers'* "post-mortem exploiter." He has stumbled upon an opportunity to make a name for himself by bringing the private life of a dead writer to the public. Withermore is "a hand to mouth character, with little, as yet, of any sort, to show" (267). Part of the seduction to which he falls victim is the promise of his own second body, a body of work that is, in effect, the stolen body of the dead writer. This amounts to a sort of celebrity parasitism; his fame would draw sustenance from the blood of another literary life. He could be the Boswell to Doyne's Johnson; he could produce "Withermore's Doyne."   And this is, in effect, what he begins to do— the biographical work spawns a phantom author that is explicitly the biographer's version, friendly and open to inspection. As in *The Turn of the Screw*, the ghost is as real as writing: "the other side of the table would have shown him this companion as vividly as the shaded lamplight showed him his page" (272). Despite the fact that Withermore knew the living and breathing Doyne, it is in communion with the author's archive that the young writer experiences a superior sense of intimacy:

> It had been simply dazzling...it had been Doyne himself, his company
> and contact and presence, it had been just what it was turning out, the
> possibility of an intercourse closer than that of life. Strange that death,

of the two things, should have the fewer mysteries and secrets! The

first night our young man was alone in the room it struck him his

master and he were really for the first time together. (270)

The death of Ashton Doyne licenses a degree of access to his private self that was

apparently wholly unavailable to Withermore during his lifetime.

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's influential work points out that in the late

nineteenth century, "knowledge and sex became conceptually inseparable from one

another ... and epistemological pressure of any sort seems a force increasingly

saturated with sexual impulsion" (73). Biography in particular is propelled by this

impulse—to reveal and penetrate the "truth" of the life hidden behind or stowed

inside the work. James imbues Withermore's endeavors with this eroticized air:

He was learning many things he hadn't suspected—drawing many

curtains, forcing many doors, reading many riddles, going, in general,

as they said, behind almost everything. It was an occasional sharp turn

of some of the duskier of these wanderings 'behind' that he really, of a

sudden, most felt himself, in the intimate sensible way, face to face

with his friend; so that he could scarce have told, for the instant, if

their meeting occurred in the narrow passage and tight squeeze of the

past or at the hour and in the place that actually held him. Was it a

matter of '67?—or but of the other side of the table. (272)

As he delves into Doyne's personal archive, the erotic undertones of Withermore's

intimacy with his subject become more explicit. James describes the biographer

waiting to conduct his nightly research "much as one of a pair of lovers might wait

for the hour of their appointment" (272). Withermore's relation to the spirit of his

subject is almost like a flirtation, with the dead author's presence at his back pushing

him further and further. However, the biographer's delusion is exploded by the

disappearance of the author's ghost. This causes him to question the enterprise; he is

ultimately interested in doing "the real right thing."   Talking with Doyne's wife (who

commissioned the work) he wonders if they are doing the author an injustice by

bringing him to the public: "We lay him bare. We serve him up." When the ghost

returns to stoically guard the threshold of his former study, they believe they have the

answer and they decide to leave the writer's legacy inviolate.

The message in each story appears clear: the foiling of the narrator of *The*

Aspern Papers and the second thoughts of George Withermore amount to moral

lessons and happy endings. As Hamilton contends, the "legendary authors" of

James's tales serve as "objects of awed and baffled scrutiny and in each story, there is

a strangely intense savouring of the thwartedness of those who would wish to

penetrate and / or appropriate the Master's mysteries, to solve him and explain him"

(210). However, James's own conception of the biographical impulse is more

ambiguous than some of his vehement protests in print would initially suggest. In an

essay on George Sand, he writes:

> There are secrets for privacy and silence; let them only be cultivated
>
> on the part of the hunted creature with even half the method with
>
> which the love of sport—or call it the historic sense—is cultivated on

the part of the investigator ... Then the cunning of the inquirer,

envenomed with resistance, will exceed in subtlety and ferocity

anything we today conceive, and the pale fore-warned victim, with

every track covered, every paper burned and every letter unanswered,

will, in the tower of art, the invulnerable granite, stand, without a sally,

the siege of all the years. (qtd. in Hamilton 214)

The passage has a particular "come and get me" relish to it, indicative of what

Salmon calls the "simultaneous urge towards incitement and resistance" (94) that

characterizes James's writings on privacy. Ever mindful of being read, James edits

his personal archive so that the meddling investigator is met with the kinds of gaps,

obstacles, and erasures that mark his most challenging literary productions.

The Aspern Papers is a story about an archive and, as James discusses in the

preface to The New York Edition, it is based on a true story—that of Jane Clairmont,

who lived in Venice with her niece and kept a collection of her correspondence with

Percy Shelley—the same story that later contributed to the destruction of a good

portion of "The James Papers." But the author reminds us that the stuff of his

experience is the rawest of materials, "the bare facts of intimation...nine tenths of the

artist's interest in them is that of what he shall add to them and how he shall turn

them" (viii). James characteristically insists that the story is his work, not his life, but

both the Aspern Papers and *The Aspern Papers* (complete with the revision and

prefatory apparatus of The New York Edition) emphasize the work's own continuing

life. The meticulous editions find James visiting stories past, returning and

attempting to mediate critical interpretation of his body of work by asserting himself as its authorized model reader. The prefaces of The New York Editions serve as a preemptive tactic by which James can attempt to set the terms and establish the frame of posthumous inquiry into his work.

The "real right thing" with regard to the relationship between the life and the work is not as determined, as unambiguous as Withermore decides. Whereas Jamesian ghosts are typically the hallmark of indeterminacy, here the author wields the ghost as a blunt instrument, a proscriptive agent that appears to "tell," "in a literal and vulgar way."   Perhaps the title's conspicuous "real" opens up an avenue of interpretation through which the story's overt didacticism begins to unravel. The wording seems superfluous, unless "the real right thing" is meant to supplant a more obvious, implicit "right thing."[27] Within the story, phrasing takes on a double quality—when Withermore is questioning the ethics of biography, he wonders "What warrant had he ever received from Ashton Doyne himself for so direct and, as it were, so familiar an approach? Great was the art of biography, but there were lives and lives, there were subjects and subjects?" The situation is relative—there is more than one way to write and read "lives" and "subjects" (269). The double "r"s of the title may be a signal, as alliterative pairs reappear at a crucial moment in the text. As Withermore works, we learn that "there were times of dipping deep into some of Doyne's secrets, when it was particularly pleasant to be able to hold that Doyne

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[27] In 1892, James published a story called "The Real Thing," about an artist struggling with the models hired to pose for him. The story unfolds with irony, as the artist's experiment with using actual aristocrats—as opposed to actors—to pose as aristocrats ultimately fails.

desired him, as it were, to know them." As the biographer projects a spirit for Doyne that invites his exploring eyes, James's language flaunts couples like "digging deep" and "particularly pleasant" to highlight the intruder's fantasy that "Doyne desired him," with the "d" and "p" even further urging the digger "deep."

The consonant pairs smuggle a layer of complexity into the tale's ostensibly simple admonition and open a pair of intertextual passageways. In another story of literary celebrity, 1896's "The Figure in the Carpet," the narrator is a scholar who meets the subject of one of his recent articles, the novelist Hugh Vereker. The author confides in the narrator that he has woven his texts together with a central idea—a "figure in the carpet" that no scholar had yet discerned. The author tells the narrator it is "naturally the thing for the critic to look for. It strikes me,' [he] added, smiling 'even as the thing for the critic to find" (579). His body of work is a shell that protects the secret. Fishing for clues as to what shape the figure might take, the narrator asks, facetiously, if it's a preference for the letter "p."[28] Though the narrator is frustrated in his attempts to discover the elusive figure, his fellow critic George Corvick and Corvick's lover, the novelist Gwendolyn Erme (whose novel is notably titled *Deep Down*), optimistically join the search. While abroad in India, Corvick sends a cable claiming that he has found it out. Erme cables back imploring him to write, but worries that "Perhaps it won't go in a letter if it's 'immense'." The narrator replies, "Perhaps not if it's immense bosh. If he has hold of something that can't be

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[28] Eric Savoy has provocatively suggested that we might take that guess seriously, as an encoded reference to the penis / phallus and James's conflation of textual and sexual knowledge.

got into a letter he hasn't hold of *the* thing. Vereker's own statement to me was exactly that the 'figure' *would* fit into a letter" (593). The letter arrives but without the figure inside, and Corvick is soon killed in a honeymoon "dogcart" accident before the narrator can get him to relay it.

James thwarts the critics' attempts to make the figure materialize, to take the figurative literally and make it into a "thing" that can be isolated it in either letters (characters) or letters (missives). There are no solutions, only readings that keep meaning moving, across texts and across the borders of public and private writing. Tracking this matter of letters further, there is a remarkable instance of alliteration in Henry's only non-fictional consideration of the question that so compelled his brother—that of the soul's survival. Henry's essay—simply entitled "Is There Life After Death?"—appeared in the collection *In After Days: Thoughts on the Future Life* in 1910, the same year that William died. Henry remains unconvinced by spirit mediumship, claiming that he "can only treat here as absolutely not established the value of those personal signs that ostensibly come to us through the trance medium. These often make, I grant, for attention and wonder and interest—but for interest above all in the medium and in the trance" (211). However, he joins his brother in the refusal to concede "the grim view" of psychophysics, that

> as however nobly thinking and feeling creatures, we are abjectly and
> inveterately shut up in our material organs...we are even at our highest
> flights of personality, our furthest reachings out of the mind, of the
> very stuff of the abject actual, and that the sublimest idea we can form

and the noblest hope and affection we can cherish are but flowers

sprouting in that eminently and infinitely diggable soil. (205-6)

William did not settle on the idea of a soul (he did not seem to settle on any idea), but he doggedly worked to loosen the grip of what he called "medical materialism" and what Henry calls "the rigor of our physical basis" (205), which reduces consciousness to the byproduct of "the poor, palpable, ponderable, probeable, laboratory-brain" (206).

The almost absurdly protracted string of alliterative adjectives here, in addition to signaling the "preference for the letter 'p'" alluded to by the narrator of "The Figure in the Carpet," calls attention to language as a "material organ" in its own right. This is Henry's own "interest above all in the medium." As his encounters with psychical research colored his theories of writing, his theories of writing color his attempt at psychical research. The psychophysical view does to consciousness what the literal does to language—localizes it, determines it, sentences it to death. The spirit is exorcised from the letter and words and bodies become terminal cases. The essay is bisected—Henry is of two minds—and in the more optimistic second section, he increasingly considers the possibility of the soul's extension in terms of his art:

> As more or less of [an artist] myself, for instance, I deal with being, I
>
> invoke and evoke, I figure and represent, I seize and fix, as many
>
> phases and aspects and conceptions of it as my infirm hand allows me
>
> strength for; and in so doing I find myself...in communication with

> *sources*; sources to which I owe the apprehension of far more and far
>
> other combinations than observation and experience, in their ordinary
>
> sense, have given me the pattern of. (224)

James argues that a "cultivated" life, exemplified by that of the artist, is marked by an "accumulation of the very treasure itself of consciousness" (221), which does not by any means ensure an afterlife, but points toward a "more" and an "other" that makes that afterlife seem more probable. Thereby, James takes up a hopeful, if agnostic position: "it isn't really a question of belief...on the other hand it is a question of desire" (232)—the desire, as he finally expresses it, to "reach beyond the laboratory-brain" (233). Henry's answer to the question posed by his title "Is There Life After Death" would seem to be a qualified "yes"—"yes, but not literally"—only through writing as medium can he imagine his own ghost.

THE CORPSE, THE CASE, AND THE ARCHIVE:
A Paranoid Reading of Schreber's Memoirs and the Origins of Freudian Thought

In June of 1968, Leon Edel published an essay in *The Atlantic Monthly* called "The Deathbed Notes of Henry James," in which he discusses the delirious messages James dictated to his amanuensis Theodora Bosanquet in the wake of a stroke in 1915. Edel had been in possession of copies of these dictations for almost thirty years, but the originals had been destroyed. Per Edel: "when the James family papers were given to Harvard, this manuscript was not included. I learned that the executor had ordered it destroyed along with certain other papers. He felt it was too tragic a record of a mind in disintegration" (103). Edel had planned to include the document in his epic biography, but when he learned of the intention of another scholar (who had discovered the letters in Bosanquet's own papers) to publish it, he moved to bring them forth first in the periodical. "If I am to be anticipated," Edel writes, "it seems to me I may as well anticipate myself" (103).

The most significant were a pair of letters dictated to Bosanquet in immediate succession, each addressed to a "brother and sister," one signed with his own name, the other signed "Napoleone." The content of the first letter suggests it is intended for his brother William, who had died six years previous, and William's wife, Alice. The neurological disturbance disorients Henry so that he either sends his letter back into the past or forward into the afterlife. James's channeling of Napoleon has since garnered much more popular attention and, as literary parlor lore, it's on par with Nietzsche's desperate embrace with the horse. The critic John Farrell cites both

writers' late-life delusions as examples of "the dominant figures of modern culture" exhibiting "a strange susceptibility to delusions of grandeur and fears of persecution upon imaginary grounds—in other words, paranoia" (1). Of course, even in his "right mind" James was obsessed with the fate of his published work and his private archive—and certain that the former will be misread and the latter ransacked by "publishing scoundrels"—to a degree that approached paranoia. This strange story and a brief account of its telling begin the chapter here in order to frame how the circumstances of documentation direct the archival "afterlife" toward the concerns of scholarly priority and intellectual property, as well as to bring James's ghosts— normally just literary devices—closer to the apparitions of a truly haunted mad imagination.

Coup de Flechsig / Pickled Brains

If there were such a thing as inspiration from a higher realm, it might well be that the neurotic temperament would furnish the chief condition of the requisite receptivity.
William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*

To press on a little further into President Schreber's delusion we shall proceed by taking up his document again. Besides, we haven't got anything else.
Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: Book III: The Psychoses*

While Henry James haunted his writing with ghosts in an attempt to elude in perpetuity posthumous interventions, the German Judge Daniel Paul Schreber— writing his memoirs from the Sonnenstein Asylum—hoped the publication of his book would lead to the dissection of his body, and the questions raised in his text would be answered by his corpse:
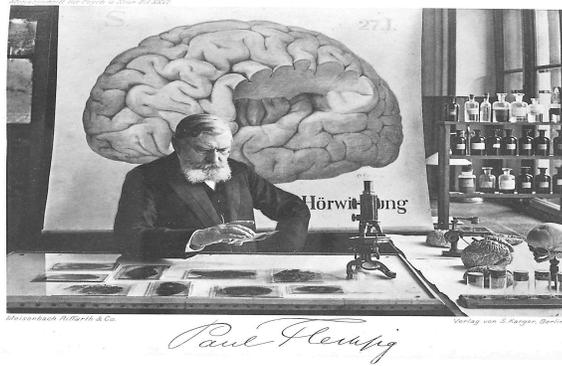
> I can do no more than offer my person as object of scientific
>
> observation for the judgment of experts. My main motive in
>
> publishing this book is to invite this. Short of this I can only hope that
>
> at some future time such peculiarities of my nervous system will be
>
> discovered by dissection of my body, which will provide stringent
>
> proof. I am informed that it is extremely difficult to make such
>
> observations on the living body. (251)

Born in Leipzig in 1841, the son of renowned physician and author Daniel Gottlieb

Moritz Schreber, Judge Schreber suffered from paranoid delusions and was diagnosed

with dementia praecox, which would soon be renamed schizophrenia. Schreber

himself contended that his was a nervous illness and not a mental illness; the

painstaking elaboration of his nervous condition in his memoirs would be vindicated

by the physical evidence of postmortem examination. After death, his body would

become legible—the dissected corpse an open book that corroborates his story.

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[29] Dr. Paul Flechsig at work.

Memoirs of My Nervous Illness was published in 1903 by the Leipzig house of Oswald Mutze, which was known to Walter Benjamin as a purveyor of "the most ludicrous products of spiritist literature" (and had issued Carl Jung's doctoral dissertation the previous year). The publisher's blurb on the original edition claimed the memoirs would interest "all educated persons interested in questions relating to the hereafter" (qtd. in Lothane 319). However, for the judge (who was the nearly exact contemporary of William James), the psychophysical emphasis on the postmortem "laboratory-brain"—which the James brothers regard as the enemy of the soul and, I argue, Henry aligns metaphorically with a mode of reading that localizes and fixes meaning—is the very condition of commitment to the psychiatric institution. Schreber was initially placed in the care of the eminent psychophysician Emil Paul Flechsig who, the most readily accessible photograph shows us, worked at a desk in front of a sizable map of the anatomy of the brain and flanked by a shelf upon which sit the pickled brains of former patients. In the mad world of Schreber's writing,which has been allegorized and diagnosed by myriad psychoanalytic interpreters, the postmortem figure is not the ghost but the corpse, or better yet the cadaver—the form of the corpse plus content—usable, under examination, "palpable" and "probeable."

To a certain extent, the schizophrenic text defies summary—the summarizer risking empathy or importing foreign order—and this explains why Schreber's story is *mentioned* far more frequently than it is read closely. The memoirs were written during the second of Schreber's three stints of hospitalization, which began in 1893

after his promotion to the position of presiding judge of the Saxon supreme court. He began to suffer from insomnia, agitation, and delusion, including a particularly vivid fantasy of what it would feel like to be a woman "succumbing" to intercourse. After committing himself to Flechsig's care, his condition worsened significantly, and he began to fully inhabit the schizophrenic cosmology detailed in the text. Schreber believes his exceptional nervous force has allowed him insight into the true nature of reality. In the opening pages of the memoirs, he explains that "the human soul is contained in the nerves" (45) and that "God is only nerve" (46). The world revealed to Schreber is apocalyptic; he suspects that he may be the only remaining human being, as the people he encounters in the asylum are mere simulacra he calls "fleetingly-improvised men," a kind of shadow-people who operate as God's mindless minions. The power of his nerves has drawn the undivided attention of God, who deploys "divine rays"—conduits for nervous energy—to invade Schreber's body and mind. Under the influence of the rays, the judge suffers incessant surveillance—the monitoring and documenting of his every waking thought—and persecution, including systematic assaults (Schreber calls them "miracles") on his bodily organs. The end result of these tribulations will be the judge's "unmanning"; when Schreber is fully transformed into a woman (a process that may take centuries), he will be inseminated by God and give birth to a new human race.

We begin by investigating what it meant to be the object of psychiatric and neuropathological inquiry in the 1890s, the years just before and during the founding of the psychoanalytic movement. The first section of this chapter demonstrates that

the judge's life and legacy chart a shift in the relationship between etiology and the mind/brain complex—his body was treated by psychophysicians who preferred cadavers to living patients; his text was treated by psychoanalysts he never met. In other words, what changes is the prevailing notion of *where to look* for answers, which archive—body or text—to consult in pursuing the origins and causes of mental illness. In life, Schreber was seen and not read; the neuroanatomist Flechsig had invested his career in the notion that all mental illness could be traced back to purely physical causes. While schizophrenic disorder may indeed have an organic basis, the memoirs consistently document the fact that the content of Schreber's delusion refracts the reality outside his brain.

The second section tracks Schreber's textual afterlife. As Henry James, aided by his contact with psychical research, comes to see reading and writing as haunted and interminable, Schreber writes in part to prepare himself and his doctors for postmortem examination. Though no autopsy would be performed on the judge's body when he died in 1911, that same year Freud published his canonical case study of Schreber, cumbersomely titled *Psychoanalytic Remarks on an Autobiographically Described Case of Paranoia*. The paranoiac and the psychoanalyst—both suspicious of coincidence (especially the psychoanalyst, like Freud, smitten with a numerological interest in fatal dates)[30] might note that as soon as he dies (and on Good Friday, no less), as soon as he is a corpse, Schreber is a case, as if he is transubstantiated, the flesh made word. Throughout the twentieth century, the

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[30] Notably, it was Freud's correspondent and confidant Wilhelm Fliess—who will figure prominently in this chapter—who introduced him to numerology.

Schreber case was opened and reopened at each substantial shift in psychoanalytic thinking. Initially, it was Freud's attempt to define paranoia—approaching Schreber's text *as he would* a patient—while demonstrating that his theories would stretch to cover psychosis as well as neurosis. Then the judge figures prominently in both Lacan's "return to Freud" and Deleuze and Guattari's "anti-Oedipal" departure from him. The versions and editions of Schreber that issue from disparate strands of twentieth-century scholarship reveal the Schreber case to be a perpetually refillable theoretical container—constantly changing hands, shifting contents, and accruing the baggage of Freudian and anti-Freudian squabbling.

The third and fourth sections arrive at Freud's published analysis of the memoirs through a thorough examination of the context of its composition. By linking Freud's Schreber to the private origins of psychoanalysis in the 1890s and the agitated state of the field at the time he was writing in 1910, we can locate the concepts Freud *brings to* his reading and writing of the case, and undo the analyst's carefully crafted rhetorical pretense that his case study operates within the boundaries of hermeneutics. Furthermore, tracking not just the history of the relationships and tensions that influence the case, but also the history of that history as it has unfolded in a century of contentious Freud scholarship, what emerges is a Jamesian tale of plundered archives, betrayed colleagues, and scandalous new editions of old correspondence. The effort to establish a psychoanalytic *circle*, an intellectual community dependent upon the circulation of thought through collegial correspondence and collaboration and based on the mind-reading work of analysis,

proves to stir concerns about *where ideas come from* in a manner that echoes the

paranoiac's perceived inundation with alien thought and general confusion of the

boundaries of inner and outer realities. As the focus shifts from a physical to a

psychic basis, analysis is no longer performed at the material site where scalpel meets

tissue but at the theoretical site where ideas meet ideas. Sources become much more

difficult to locate, in terms of the etiology of mental disorders but also in terms of

authorship.

Though Dr. Flechsig may look into Schreber's brain for the material locus of

his illness, the judge's expressed symptoms seem to draw heavily on external sources.

Schreber himself felt the proof of his nervous illness was written all over his body,

but even if his felt transformations were not readily evident to the agents of medicine,

they must at least allow that it was not "all in his head." After conducting a little bit

of research, the judge is disappointed to find that "science seems to deny any reality

background for hallucinations, judging from what I have read for instance in

Kraepelin" (223). He refers here to Emil Kraepelin, the renowned psychiatrist and

student of Flechsig's who first identified the condition he called dementia praecox,

which was afterward renamed schizophrenia by Eugen Bleuler.[31] Schreber claims

that his hallucinations are not "altogether unfounded in objective reality or…lacking

all external cause" (224). Indeed, upon further inspection, we can see how Schreber's

text sutures the author's bizarre erotico-religious cosmology to his situation under

medical examination.

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[31] Bleuler was an important mentor to Carl Jung.

In *The Birth of the Clinic*, Michel Foucault fleshes out nineteenth-century medicine's "reorganization in depth" (xviii)—the move "from the symptomatic surface to the tissual surface" made possible by the space opened up by the carved and studied paths (the pathology) of the dissectible cadaver (135).   The possibilities of the scalpel lend the medical gaze a penetrating edge, which begins "to draw the dotted outline of the future autopsy" on the living body (162). It's what's inside that counts. The patient becomes the unfortunate host to demonstrable anomalies; disease announces itself through the medium of the patient's body and the surgeon opens the body to make the disease readable. Foucault suggests that "history" gives way to "geography," as the patient's narrative version of the problem is a prelude to the more pointed question "*where* does it hurt." Unfortunately for the patients in some cases, their diseases will remain a mystery until it's too late. When it's too late for the patient, it's time for the doctor to get to work; the patient's dead end is the psychophysician's point of departure—only when the teeming work of organic life sits still can its working be investigated. In Foucault's words, "that which hides and envelops, the curtain of night over truth, is, paradoxically, life; and death, on the contrary, opens up to the light of day the black coffer of the body...19th century medicine was haunted by that absolute eye that cadaverizes life and rediscovers in the corpse the frail, broken nervure of life" (166). For the purposes of physicians like Paul Flechsig, the living body is *archiving* the disease and becomes truly useful only in the afterlife of the material body, when we can open the corporeal envelope.

Flechsig's appointment at Leipzig in 1882 both indicated and advanced the

prevailing movement toward the "laboratory-brain."[32] He was "convinced that the

brain as an organ fully covers mental phenomena" (qtd. in Lothane 199). Flechsig's

contribution to late nineteenth-century brain science was significant; his career-

making research was on the localization of nervous diseases and he read and was read

by the young Freud, still working within the confines of conventional neurology.

Flechsig's most influential work, the lecture and monograph *Brain and Soul*, was first

delivered in 1894, while Schreber was under his care at the asylum. Flechsig's claim

that the brain is the anatomical seat of the soul is echoed by his patient in the

memoirs, with Schreber adjusting the address to accommodate his own system: "Not

even the soul is purely spiritual, but rests on a material substrate, the Nerves" (244).

Unfortunately for Schreber, though, Flechsig was a brain anatomist with no real

psychiatric experience, accustomed to the examination of organs and not persons.

Flechsig wrote that dissection was "the most direct way to penetrate to the knowledge

of the lawful relations between mental illnesses and brain anomalies" (qtd. in Santner

71) and he even developed his own autopsy technique, which came to be known as

"Coup de Flechsig" ("Flechsig's cut"). He was primarily interested in two kinds of

patients: those whose conditions he could cure or dramatically improve within six

months or those who were near death and thus dissection. Thus it is not a

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[32] In the 21st century (and dating back at least to the "decade of the brain" in the
1990s), scientific attention is again focused on the localization of disorders in the
material brain, as advancements in neuro-imaging technology allow the study of the
living brain to replace the laboratory brain. As noted in the introduction, these
developments have had a particular impact on the study of schizophrenia.

coincidence, or the sole result of his paranoid trouble, that Schreber is mortified, subject to a process of *mortification*. In his dealings with his aggressive God, he is to remain silent and still, as God "was accustomed to dealing only with corpses" and "thus arose the almost monstrous demand that I should behave continually as if I myself were a corpse" (127).

As psychiatry and psychophysics addressed themselves to the judge's delusion, so the delusion responds to treatment (though not necessarily "responds to treatment" in the manner of the optimistic contemporary connotation, rather the delusion responds not by abating but by shifting shape).   Both Schreber's commitment to the psychiatric institution and his submission for publication become shades of his relationship to (kneeling before / grappling with) God. Though the judge was only in Flechsig's care for a small portion of his institutionalization, it was the formative period of his delusion, so that every doctor becomes Flechsig, and every Flechsig is a sort of god and father. The looming figures of God the Father and God the Doctor merge with God the Lover (and God the Reader) in a porous trinity of authority that morphs into a monstrous entity, evoking monstrous emotions. If the neurotic paranoiac doesn't believe in accidents and the psychotic schizophrenic, as Freud tells us, conflates "words and things," the paranoid schizophrenic would be sure to notice the debt to this trinity inscribed into the judge's name—Daniel (the patrimonial) Paul (Flechsig) Schreber (an "i" short of "schreiber," "writer" in German). Furthermore, Flechsig is not far from "fleisch" (flesh), thus the meeting of

Flechsig and Schreber aptly occurs in the shadow of the scalpel, which performs a kind of "fleshwriting."

While the memoirs hold up a cracked mirror to the judge's immediate institutional environs, Schreber's isolation of the nervous basis of his disease also situates him within his socio-historical moment. Working through a cultural etiology of sick ideas, Max Nordau, the sociologist and alarmist of fin de siècle degeneration, worried that an entire generation of men were getting nervous and effeminate. Reactionary as he was, Nordau knew that hysterical symptoms were also historical symptoms: "In the persecution mania, the invalid of former days complained of the wickedness and knavery of magicians and witches; today he grumbles because his imaginary enemies send electric streams through his nerves" (qtd. in Gilman 134). The twentieth-century paranoiac often fears radar, electricity, invisible technologies of surveillance; he literalizes the unseen energies that systematically torment him. Viktor Tausk, a former judge (like Schreber) who became a promising member of Freud's circle, was the first member of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society to devote himself to the psychoses. Tausk committed suicide in 1919, but his influential "On the Origin of the Influencing Machine in Schizophrenia" was posthumously published in 1933. He was the first to point out that the mechanisms of paranoid delusion lent themselves to paranoid delusions of mechanism—the early-twentieth-century influencing machine is comprised of "boxes, cranks, levers, wheels, buttons, wires, batteries, and the like" (186). Even when the persecutory agent is Schreber's God, God becomes a kind of technology.

Clinical observation both diagnoses and reinforces paranoid delusions of surveillance and examination. As Friedrich Kittler proposes, on Dr. Flechsig's shift "souls become nerve information systems" (295). Given his treatment (both as a patient and, as we will see, as a child), it is not surprising that Schreber's paranoid vision creates a monster both organic and mechanical. Mark S. Roberts approaches Schreber as a suffering cyborg created by "the contexts of techno culture," which "begin to mesh with the very fibers of his being" (35). In Schreber's own words:

> I see the rays which are both the carriers of the voices and of the poison of corpses to be unloaded on my body, as long drawn out filaments approaching my head …stretching sometimes towards my head, sometimes withdrawing from it…it is presumably a phenomenon like telephoning, the filaments of rays spun out towards my head act like telephone wires. (229)

The neurotheological system is a direct line to God, a kind of station-to-station, physical-to-metaphysical "schizophonic" telecommunications system. The patient, treated and inspected like a short-circuiting machine, begins to imagine himself to be one.

Another aspect of Schreber's versatile nerves serves to reinforce the link between his actual and delusional environments. In the judge's nervous system, the nerves not only channel information but also "receive and retain mental impressions" that archive an individual's thoughts and memories: "the sum total of recollections is as it were inscribed on each single nerve of intellect" (45). This imprint survives the

body's death and what is written there is read by God and utilized "to determine whether [the nerves] were worthy of being received into the realms of heaven" (54). This sort of documentation mirrors the psychiatric hospital's clipboards and notations. Later, Schreber seems to make this link clearer, in describing what he calls "The Writing-Down-System": "Books or other notes are kept in which for years have been written-down all my thoughts....I cannot say with certainty who does the writing down. As I cannot imagine God's omnipotence lacks all intelligence, I presume that the writing-down is done by creatures given human shape" (119). Clinical observation transcribes symptoms, behaviors, lives; as the institutional other is always taking notes, interactions in the asylum always produce writing. The note-takers in the memoirs—the "fleetingly-improvised men" whose "hands are led automatically" when they take dictation—report back to God, who assesses the information. In Lacan's words: "Schreber's God knows things only on their surface, he sees only what he sees. As to what is inside he doesn't understand a thing, but since everything is written down somewhere, on little cards, by what is called the writing-down-system, he will ultimately, at the end of this totalization, be totally informed" (128).

By recording his thoughts himself, Schreber is able to develop a counter "writing-down-system," his own competing *organization* of the story of his life. He claims to have "started this work without publication in mind"; what became the memoirs began as note-taking. For an educated and very literate man of the nineteenth century, there is nothing unusual about taking up the private pen. Perhaps

as for so many of the fin de siècle's nervously afflicted, writing serves as a kind of therapy. As Schreber's chattering nerves were in reality the oppressive cacophony of schizophrenia, documenting the voices he hears becomes a means for exerting control over the chaos of comings and goings. At the same time, the documentary status of the memoirs, written with the aid of Schreber's personal archive of notes, frustrates any expectations of autobiographical intimacy by establishing a distance between the (healthier) author of the memoirs and the author of the notes. Though the judge never changes his story or questions the veracity of his recorded experience, at times he assumes an almost journalistic attitude toward his own material, writing in/as both the first and third person. Recovering his own thoughts is archival work and the written-down archive testifies with a presence unavailable to his unaided memory.

Speaking from different moments and with different purposes, the memoirs are a heterogeneous text in structure as well as subject matter and they read like an edition of documents assembled by Schreber into his own version of a case history. After all, far from disputing that he is ill, Schreber's title labels what follows not as the story of his life, but of his disease. The text sways between modes of public and private writing and different modulations of Schreber's voice—in addition to the memoirs proper, the judge includes correspondence, his legal appeal against involuntary commitment to the asylum, and an appendix addressing ancillary issues raised by the text, such as what might happen to the soul during cremation. Schreber begins with the inside-out literary genre of the "open letter," here addressed to

Flechsig.[33] He hopes Flechsig will not take it personally; he is not accusing his

doctor of anything beyond "the mild reproach...that you, like so many doctors, could

not completely resist the temptation of using a patient in your care as an object for

scientific experiments apart from the real purpose of cure" (34). The polite decorum

here is out of sync with the hellish tribulations Schreber endures at the hands of the

version of Flechsig that dominates the memoirs. But *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness*

is not the *found* jottings of a compelling lunatic, a kind of proto "outsider art," but

rather the former judge's attempt not only to rationally explain his circumstances but

to change them.

Schreber uses the memoirs to make a case for himself, to serve as a medico-

legal document submitted as evidence justifying his release from the asylum. Guido

Weber was Schreber's psychiatrist for the better part of his institutionalization and the

doctor who presided over his hearing. He testified at the hearing that the judge's

willingness to publish is itself a symptom of madness, since a sane man would keep

his sick thoughts to himself:

> When one looks at the content of his writings...the abundance of
>
> indiscretions...the unembarrassed detailing of the most doubtful and
>
> aesthetically impossible situations and events, the use of the most
>
> offensive vulgar words…one finds it quite incomprehensible that a
>
> man...could propose an action which would compromise him so

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[33] The connotation of "address" here comes into an interesting light in relationship to Jacques Derrida's postcard "envoi"—the letter is addressed to Flechsig in that it names him and speaks to him, but it is not, of course, "addressed" in the more quotidian postal sense; the message may never arrive at its destination.

severely in the eyes of the public were not his whole attitude

pathological. (283)

There is little doubt that the most offensive "aesthetically impossible situation"

recounted in "unembarrassed detail" to which Weber refers is the experience of

becoming a woman. For Schreber, this is the only pleasurable phase of his dealings

with god, marked by what he calls "soul voluptuousness." Eschewing the genital

location and limitation of male sexuality, he explains that "soul-voluptuousness" is

"felt by human beings only as a general bodily well-being without real sexual

excitement" (120).[34]

In both the memoirs proper and in the hearing, the judge acknowledges that

the circumstances of his nervous illness are both difficult to communicate and

difficult to understand. Yet fully convinced of the reality of these circumstances, he

states his case plainly and confidently. Schreber defends his occasional cross-dressing

by arguing, with a lawyer's subtle rhetoric, for a more fluid understanding of gender:

"I would like to meet the man who, forced with the choice of either becoming a

demented human being in a male habitus or a spirited woman, would not prefer the

latter" (149). Under this construction, maleness is simply a habitus—one terminal—

for the expression of the man in question's personality, and he does not choose

between norm and deviation, nor even between genders per se, but between happiness

and madness. Even if one were not convinced by the pathetic appeal, Schreber is

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[34] With regard to a progressive notion of gender identification, it is tempting to situate
Schreber ahead of Freud. Not only does the judge hardly seem repressed, as Freud
will suggest, but he appears to question whether, in fact, anatomy is destiny.

willing to provide visual evidence: "anybody who sees me standing in front of a mirror with the upper part of my body naked would get the undoubted impression of a female trunk, especially when the illusion is strengthened by some feminine adornments" (207).[35] Nonetheless, Schreber's family agreed with Weber and attempted to secure and destroy as many copies of the memoirs as they could.[36] But as fantastic and prototypically psychotic as the memoirs are, the judge's plan succeeded—he was released; he wrote his way out by making the argument that religious beliefs, however singular, were not grounds for commitment to the asylum.

The Judgment of God: Critics, Doctors, Words, Things

Bear in mind that a god resides in your body.
                         Epigraph to Daniel Gottlieb Moritz Schreber's *Book of Health*

At the moment when criticism (be it aesthetic, literary, philosophical, etc.) allegedly protects the meaning of a thought or the value of a work against psychomedical reductions, it comes to the same result…through the opposite path: it creates an example. That is to say, a case.
                         Jacques Derrida, "La Parole Soufflée"

Because the memoirs describe not just an alien but a parallel universe, a number of theorists have read Schreber as a rebel critic of clinical psychiatric practice and even the fin de siècle episteme itself, as if Schreber's nightmare was allegorical and his questions were rhetorical, as if the memoirs were all elaborate invective. For

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[35] The necessary presence of the mirror here is curious; the witness cannot just see him naked but must see him seeing himself naked. The scenario is ripe for Lacanian intervention.

[36] Incidentally, Schreber's relative who undertook the disposal of the memoirs was named Carl Jung.
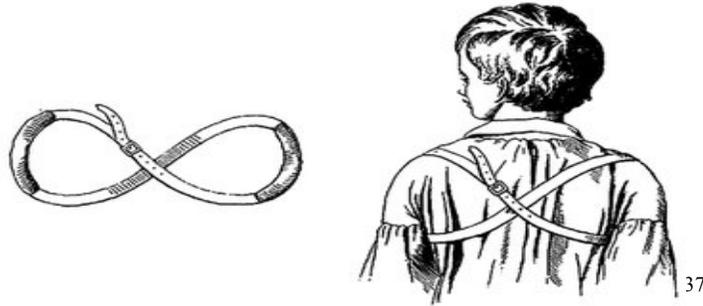
instance, Daniel B. Smith suggests that "Schreber used the language of [neurologists] in a way and to an extent that has come to seem like parody, and that was certainly, if unintentionally, subversive" (202). Anthony Wilden claims that "a moment's consideration of the text"—just a moment—"reveals that whereas, as a madman, Schreber is oscillating between the poles of various double-binds, as a psychologist-philosopher, he is desperately trying to metacommunicate about …the Manicheistic ideology of his culture" (295). If we grant that Schreber "does" these things, is it a naïve question to ask *which* Schreber does them? Schreber the author or Schreber the author function? Flechsig's Schreber (the cadaver) or Freud's Schreber (the case)?

The politics of reading Schreber get complicated. In his provocative analysis of Schreber's writing in *Crowds and Power,* Elias Canetti figures the judge as not (or not just) a victim but an author of tyranny, drawing a straight line from *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness* to the particular psychological bent that fosters fascism. Canetti's stance here is in compelling contrast to Deleuze and Guattari's reading of Schreber in *Anti-Oedipus*. As Foucault shows in his elucidating preface, "the major enemy, the strategic adversary" of *Anti-Oedipus* is fascism, "and not only historical fascism…but

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[37] This illustration is taken from one of Mortiz Schreber's orthopedic manuals. The strap's resemblance to the infinity symbol is interesting, given the permanent goals of Moritz's program.

the fascism in us all, in our heads and in our everyday behavior" (xiv-xv). To Deleuze and Guattari, Schreber is a model of resistance to "oedipalization" and, by extension, fascism. Louis Sass's reading of the memoirs is sympathetic to Schreber without being celebratory; he finds the judge tormented by an "inner panopticism," a kind of "fascism in the head" that is symptomatic of his schizophrenia (256). A different oppressor emerges from different strains of critical thinking about the memoirs— alternately the father, the doctor, the illness, and Schreber himself.

When we approach Schreber, we risk treating him as Flechsig did, as an object for the advancement of our own ends. Derrida has warned that "Evil, pollution, resides in the critical or the clinical: it is to have one's speech and body become works, objects which can be offered up to the furtive haste of the commentator because they are supine" ("La Parole Souflée" 183). Even in theory, we *operate on* Schreber and he takes it all lying down. Schreber scholar Han Israels is suspicious of his colleagues: "the great diversity of the latent insights of genius that have been ascribed to Schreber must…give some cause for doubt" (xiv). The facile reading of madness-as-really-wisdom provides an opportunity for bravura decoding, an x-ray vision of what Schreber "really meant," because the literary products of the judge's troubled or diseased brain are malleable enough to accommodate countless and renewable historical and ideological purviews. Equipping Schreber with a savant's clairvoyance allows writers to read themselves into the text, as if the voices in the judge's head belonged to the philosophers and literary critics of the future.

While Schreber's memoir appears to be remarkably idiosyncratic and creative, the clinical wisdom of his caretakers dictated that symptomatic particularities are mere variables within a monolithic psychosis. In the report he delivered to the court hearing Schreber's appeal, Dr. Weber (the judge's attending physician) proposes that "as colorful and inexhaustible the individual variations of cases of mental illness may be...the basic characteristics of the forms of mental illness are repeated with almost surprising, monotonous regularity" (317). The challenge is to attempt to locate Schreber without pinning him down, to not shackle him to diagnosis so that everything he writes is mere symptom nor to liberate him from it so that his sickness is nothing more than unrecognized genius. We ought to strive for a method that is *case-sensitive*.

Of course, discussion of the origin of mental disorders (discussion of origins and of courses), particularly from a psychoanlytic vantage point, inevitably leads to the patient's parents; we begin by looking for beginnings. After Freud and Lacan, the meatiest work on Schreber came out of archival intervention into Moritz Schreber's role in Daniel's illness, beginning with W.G. Niederland's *Schreber: Father and Son* and taking a more radical turn with Morton Schatzman's *Soul Murder*. The work of the critics and historians who have excavated the context of the Schreber case, where he was (in Flechsig's asylum) and where he was coming from (Moritz's household), seems to supply clues to deciphering how the judge's delusions were shaped, if not generated. In her popular books on child abuse, the psychologist Alice Miller, who left the field of psychoanalysis and became a critic of its tenets, cites Moritz Schreber

as an exemplar of what she calls "poisonous pedagogy" in parenting.[38] Niederland

makes the strangely phrased pronouncement that at the Schreber household, "there

was always castration in the air," so that the young Schreber couldn't help but draw it

in as breath. Moritz Schreber's interests were pedagogy and "physical culture,"

including a rigorous orthopedics. To note that orthopedics, by etymology, is the

practice of "straightening children," seems to add an unduly sinister note to the

connotation, but Moritz ostensibly took it quite literally. His was a program

involving ominous-looking devices, complete with straps and buckles, for fixing

children's posture. The illustrations of how to implement the devices included in

Moritz's works were reproduced by Schatzman in order to demonstrate the

disciplinary nightmare the young Schreber witnessed and was possibly subjected to

(Schatzman claims Moritz likely tested his methods on his own children). Niederland

and Schatzman convincingly argue that some of the content of Schreber's delusions,

particularly the "miracles" performed on his body, can be traced directly to his

father's orthopedic prescriptions.

Moritz began *The Book of Health* with the epigraph, taken from the poet

Friedrich Rückert, "bear in mind that a god resides in your body." The judge has

clearly inherited some of his father's terminology—Schreber père even refers at one

point to "the pure rays of the concept of God" and claims that "the nerves are thread-

like structures" and the nervous system is "the connecting link between mind and

body" and "the miracle of all miracles." (qtd. in Lothane 17**).** Moritz focused on

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[38] Alice Miller is one of the few allies of Jeffrey Masson, who we will meet in the
next section, and appears briefly in Janet Malcolm's *In the Freud Archives.*

internalization by repetition and habituation—ideally the child comes to "sublimate"

his trained responses into acts of free will. He writes that "the compulsion to believe

that comes from the outside is the death of true religiosity" (qtd. in Santner 89). The

trick is to teach them so completely that they cease to believe they have been taught at

all. Moritz aimed to accomplish that by locking the child into a pattern, a regimen, a

total program of behavior (one of his books on physical culture is entitled *The*

Pangymnastikon) monitored by a father out in the world and a god inside the body.

This mixture of authoritarianism and psychological conditioning has drawn Moritz's

ideas into both favorable and critical discussions of fascism. His 1936 biographer

emphasizes and celebrates Mortiz's significance to the ideological continuum that

culminates in Hitler's assumption of power.[39] As much as the machinations of

Schreber's delusional system borrow from Flechsig's techniques, the judge's father is

the ideological forebear of his god.

But this was never the case for Freud. To Freud, Schreber's text reads like a

dream. The millennial *Interpretation of Dreams* (so conscious of ushering in a new

paradigm for a new century that the publication date was printed as 1900 even though

it was issued in 1899) had made his name and earned him enough recognition and

influence to turn his theory into an intercontinental movement. The experience of

writing *The Interpretation of Dreams* had brought Freud into contact with a number

of the concepts he would work out in the Schreber case. Freud suggests that "the

verbal malformations in dreams greatly resemble those which are familiar in

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[39] Niederland refers to Moritz's biographer only as "Ritter."

paranoia" (338) and that "words are treated in dreams as though they were concrete

things" (330). This same confusion of words and things is also endemic to the

waking world of the schizophrenic.

Taking some liberties with degree, we might say that *The Interpretation of*

Dreams is Freud's own memoirs of his nervous illness, a case study of the author's

sleeping self.[40] Though Freud insists that he remains "a man of science and not a

poet," and a man of science doesn't normally reveal "to the public gaze …the

intimacies of [his] mental life," in the beginning, Freud had to mine his own mind for

raw material; as he writes, "the only dreams open to my choice were my own" (xxiii-

xxiv). This move from a private archive to the public scene is apropos of the founding

text of psychoanalysis, as Freud had been working out the notions that would become

psychoanalysis in private notebooks and letters for years, rehearsing for the

discipline, the practice, and the community that would take shape in the future. Freud

notes that certain dimensions of the dreams discussed are left out of the public record:

"Naturally, however, I have been unable to resist the temptation of taking some of the

edge off some of my indiscretions by omissions and substitutions" (xxiv). His writing

and rhetoric here in the preface to *The Interpretation of Dreams* consciously mirror

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[40] Even before *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud was sensitive to the manner in
which his writings on mental processes had taken on the qualities of a literary
narrative. In 1895's *Studies on Hysteria*, he confesses: "Like other neuropathologists,
I was trained to employ local diagnoses…and it still strikes me myself as strange that
the case histories I write should read like short stories and that, as one might say, they
lack the serious stamp of science" (qtd.. in Sulloway 59).

the unconscious operations of the psyche he sets out to describe in the analyses that follow.

However, if Freud and Schreber's texts share a generic function, Freud is not willing to submit to an examination in the manner of the judge nor to conduct an examination in the manner of Flechsig. While the psychophysician searches for the organic basis of disease with the scalpel, the analyst sifts through talk and plumbs narrated histories. Freud wants to listen or read where Flechsig wants to dissect.[41] Dispensing with the physical evidence, Freud is left with language as his working material—the talking cure testimony of his patients and the metaphorical speculation of the writing he produces from it. Metaphor becomes the channel that facilitates the shift from brain to mind. But what happens when Freud reads instead of listening, treating Schreber as a text instead of a patient? The story written down provides the analyst with a psychotic who sits still, and Freud is able to consolidate the chatter of Schreber's voice and his voices into dead letters with surface and depth that he can penetrate like a cadaver. To a certain extent, the psychoanalyst is like the dissecting clinician or the x-ray technician, hustling past the immediate exterior, the skin of

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[41] When he officially distanced himself from the conventional neurological practice he had been trained in, Freud vowed not to fall back on that foundation in elaborating the tenets of psychoanalysis. He writes in *The Interpretation of Dreams:* "I shall carefully avoid the temptation to determine psychical locality in any anatomical fashion" (574). However, Frank J. Sulloway's *Freud: Biologist of the Mind* argues that Freud does exactly that and the whole of psychoanalysis amounts to a "crypto-biology" that carries the residue of psychophysics he intends to leave behind. As Derrida contends in *Archive Fever* and elsewhere, though Freudian psychoanalysis points toward the virtual or spectral archive of the unconscious, which documents psychic events that leave no trace on the body, Freud's metaphors (such as the Mystic Writing Pad as memory) seek out the material impression.

significance. The Freudian method already tends to subvert the primacy of primary sources, as Freud prescribes in the Schreber study, "taking the example as the real substance, the quotation or the corroboration as the source" (27), because "it is not infrequently the case in the memoirs that a passing note on a delusional theory contains the clue we seeks as to the genesis and thus the significance of the delusion" (24). Following this line of thinking, it is no surprise that Freud elects to forego Schreber's own in-person testimony—the judge has already transcribed it, the case arrives with one layer already peeled.

Besides, Freud didn't like dealing directly with psychotics and didn't treat them, admitting in a letter to Hungarian psychoanalyst István Hollós: "Finally I confessed to myself that I do not like these sick people, that I am angry at them to feel them so far from me and all that is human" (qtd. in Gay 537). The Schreber case would be a theoretical solution to how psychosis fit into psychoanalysis, a solution Freud could work out by reading, without in-person clinical engagement. As Schreber never sought Freud's diagnosis, Freud never sought Schreber's consent (he admits he is not certain if the judge is alive or dead at the time of publication). However, because "the patient publicly announced his fantasy...he has therefore given us the right to concern ourselves with this fantasy" (33). In his introduction, Freud even craftily cites a passage from Schreber's introduction to the memoirs that claims the scientific cause is worth the risk of offense to living persons (as we will see, this is not the only time Freud deploys the madman's words to defend his own positions with a studied irony that verges on haughtiness).

In his concern with permission, Freud appears a little sheepish about allowing the text to stand in for the patient; in addition to the ethics of the method, he later endeavors to justify its efficacy. Prefacing his *Psychoanalytic Remarks,* Freud claims that "the psychoanalytic investigation of paranoia would not be possible at all if the patients were not peculiar in betraying, albeit in distorted form, precisely that which other neurotics hide away as a secret…[Paranoiacs] in any case say only what they wish to say" (3).[42] So Freud is willing to take Schreber's word for it—as he deems honesty and transparency to be symptoms of paranoia, "precisely with respect to this disorder a written account or published case history may serve as a substitute for personal acquaintance with the patient" (3). Thus, Freud is content not to wander from the material at hand, limiting his case study to a close(d) reading of the memoir. But not that close. He alerts the reader that he "purposely restricted [himself] to a minimum of interpretation," as if he has strapped his analytical imagination into one of Moritz's restraining devices in order to produce an ortho-hermeneutic reading. Besides, Freud "can trust that any reader with psychoanalytic training will have derived more from the material communicated here than I have explicitly stated" (68). There is a coquetry to the tone of the relationship he establishes with his reader, evident here in the coy implication that there is more to the case than he has written into the study or that he has intentionally obfuscated or encoded a more comprehensive reading. Also embedded in Freud's proviso is the even cagier

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[42] Freud's reference to "other neurotics" here is curious in that it concerns the psychotic Schreber. Because he is a paranoid schizophrenic (Freud preferred the term "paraphrenic"), discussion of Schreber's text and condition is split by those interested in his paranoia and those interested in his schizophrenia.

suggestion that anyone trained in the psychoanalytic field can make the inferential

step (or that the field's founder "trusts" that they can), even as the Schreber essay is

the first case-length treatment of the psychoses, thereby the requisite "psychoanalytic

training" would be unfolding just as the reader reads that sentence.

As he declines to work from secondary sources and archival materials,

declines to look into any reality for Schreber outside of the fantasy presented in the

text, Freud completely misses the heavy footprint Moritz Schreber's life and work

leave on the case. Freud is aware of Moritz's stature—and his books would still have

been readily available in 1910—yet he considers the father's position only insofar as

"such a father was certainly not unpredisposed to be transfigured into a God in the

tender memory of his son" (40). This notion ignores the kind of God who presides

over Schreber's delusion and the kind of doctor (without speculating what kind of

father he was) who presided over the judge's childhood. Freud instead traces

Schreber's paranoia to the redirection of a surge of homosexual desire the judge felt

toward Flechsig. By a series of inversions and projections, the paranoid mechanism

converts "the one proposition 'I (a man) love him (a man)," to the more digestible

conclusion "He hates (persecutes) me, which will entitle me to hate him" (53). The

psychic turmoil of unwelcome desire becomes the ceaseless torment of delusions of

persecution.

Even though he doesn't investigate the father, Freud admits to thinking and

working his way back to "the familiar ground of the father complex," psychoanalytic

theory's etiological home base. The concept of the father complex comes with its

own father complex, as Freud has installed himself at the head of the table and indulges in both filial affection and antagonism with his intellectual progeny. It's also a rather ingenious way to anticipate criticism and incorporate critics within psychoanalytic theory—those rebel sons have already been diagnosed, their refusal of the father complex a symptom of their own father complex. In the most complete and compelling recent work on Schreber, 1997's *My Own Private Germany,* Eric Santner reminds us that "Schreber is always, at some level, still Freud's Schreber, one cannot read Schreber except in some sort of dialogue with Freud" (17). When we read Schreber, there is Freud's voice in our head; the reading is irremediably split— schizoid. Writing after Niederland and before Schatzman, Deleuze and Guattari attack the (Freudian) idea that "we must necessarily discover Schreber's daddy beneath his superior God" (14). The vigilant Freudian might be tempted to point out just how oedipal *Anti-Oedipus* is, but they do so at the risk of revealing Freudian thought as a "totalizing system," the paranoid model that swallows and incorporates its opposition. Deleuze and Guattari propose that "the schizophrenic out for a walk" is a healthier model patient than the "neurotic on the couch" (2), because the schizophrenic is up and outside, with his "own system of co-ordinates for situating himself at his disposal," scrambling any codes that might attempt to define his program (15).[43]

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[43] Certain critics bristle at Deleuze and Guattari's approach, suggesting that in treating Schreber, they meet incoherence with incoherence. For instance, Farrell assures us that quoted passages from *Anti-Oedipus* are "not a joke" and remarks, rather scathingly, that they "have admirably succeeded in capturing his literary style, that unique combination of bodily exhibitionism, proliferating technicality, dogmatic certitude upon the most tenuous matters, and uninhibited fancy" (202). Though I find this to be a glib dismissal of Deleuze and Guttari's contribution, I am ultimately

Schreber was never on Freud's couch, but he was in bed with Flechsig and Weber rather than out for a walk.

It would be prudent to pause here and get clinical, remaining cautious in approaching the psychotic text, by clarifying the boundaries that have been established in service of distinguishing between neuroses and psychoses. In the simplest terms, Schreber's psychosis is marked by the inability to distinguish between inner and outer realities. Where the neurotic represses, the psychotic, in Lacanian terms, forecloses—the crucial difference being that the foreclosed does not return in the manner of the repressed. The foreclosed returns from the *outside.* Thereby the judge experiences elements of his psyche as external realities. For instance, Schreber admits that perhaps Flechsig himself is not responsible for some of the alleged transgressions; he is visited by an agent or a double of Flechsig he calls a "tested soul." He understands that the Flechsig that tortures him isn't the real Flechsig, but doesn't understand that he isn't real. Furthermore, Schreber perceives Flechsig's "contact with [his] nerves, even while [they] were separated in space"—the doctor's persistent influence on the judge's attitude and imagination manifests as a sort of tele-presence (34). Part of what so captivates his psychoanalytic interpreters is that Schreber materializes or literalizes his psychic processes and emanations—he is incapable of metaphor. The schizophrenic suffers a breakdown in the strata of consciousness. Subconscious equations surface and seep into reality; Schreber's

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uncomfortable with their symbolic appropriation of Schreber and the introduction of a kind of liberatory schizophrenia.

"tested souls" and "fleetingly-improvised" people are the quasi-incarnate

hallucinations of an overpopulated psychic unreality (93).

The judge suffers in a very real way from the literal-mindedness (or perhaps

"literal-brainedness") that Henry James could not suffer, a condition of the

"laboratory-brain." Whereas James plans to haunt the future readings of his work,

when Schreber writes back to the gods and doctors, he is offering himself as a

cadaver. Schreber understands communication with the divine rays in a manner

analogous to the spirit mediums studied by William James, transposing the spirit into

the psychophysical media of the nerves, where the transmitted messages are

"inscribed"—the judge is not *spoken through* but *written on*. As Santner posits, "We

might say that Flechsig's brain science is the theory and Schreber's delusions are the

practice of the same traumatic collapse of the symbolic dimension of subjectivity,"

because "within Flechsig's paradigm, effects of symbolic meaning are produced

directly by biochemical processes; no gap separates them" (75). Schreber is not able

to recognize himself as the "I" that thinks; he is alienated from his own thinking. His

thoughts are constantly occupied by other voices that subject him to a kind of torture

they call "compulsive thinking"—the rays demand that he produce thoughts so that

they can be documented for review. It is an almost bureaucratic phantasmagoria that,

as Santner has suggested, anticipates "the Kafkan world of semihuman copyists,

secretaries" (75). In Schreber's mind, the goal of these sinister secretaries is total

depletion: "It was believed that my store of thoughts could be exhausted by being

written down, so that eventually the time would come when new ideas could no

longer appear in me" (122). He feels something of himself being drained, converted to information collected in God's archive.

Schreber's struggle with compulsive thinking also consisted of what he refers to as "the system of not finishing a sentence" whereby the rays test him with "unfinished ideas, or only fragments of ideas" and his nerves are supposed "to supplement to make up the sense" (172). According to Lacanian Dany Nobus, "the meaning of words no longer shifts, but solidifies to the point where it becomes petrified on the level of code itself" (17). In establishing the diagnosis of dementia praecox, Kraepelin distinguishes between psychotic and non-psychotic paranoia by contending that the psychotic exhibits echolalia and echopraxis, the mechanical repetition of words and gestures heard and observed. Left alone with his monstrous ideas (and Schreber's god is something of an "idea monster"), Schreber finds that certain habitual behaviors mollify the strain of "having to think continuously" and he develops a kind of therapeutic regimen to counter his tortured thoughts. By playing the piano or counting or the rote recitation of poetry, he is able to come as close as possible to an automated repetition that quiets his mind.

The work of another literary schizophrenic (and favorite of Deleuze and Guattari) can perhaps speak indirectly to Schreber's experience with an insight born of empathy. Antonin Artaud—who was a patient at the Henri Rouselle clinic at the Sainte-Anne Asylum in Paris when the young Jacan Lacan was the clinic's director—

knew that the schizophrenic experiences the body as parts. [44] There is a

malfunctioning of what Husserl called the "passive synthesis" of the embodied self.

For example, Artaud writes that when he feels cold, it is sometimes difficult for him

to announce, "it is cold." Though he knows what he's *supposed* to say—knows it like

an actor (and he was one) knows his lines or like Schreber knows to complete the

rays' sentences; there is no easy relationship, no automatic subconscious connection,

between the body that feels that it is cold and the "I" that says so. In one of his earlier

writings, Artaud discusses the potential role of the nerves in mediating this missing

link, and his descriptive insistence on the import of the nervous is strikingly similar, if

more poetic and optimistic, to Schreber's:

> One must have been deprived of life, of the nervous irradiation of
>
> existence, of the conscious wholeness of the nerves, in order not to
>
> realize that the sense and science of all thought is hidden in the
>
> nervous vitality of the marrow...above all else there is the wholeness of
>
> the nerves. A wholeness that includes all of consciousness and the
>
> secret pathways of the mind in the flesh. ("The Situation of the Flesh"
>
> 110)

For Artaud, who consistently railed against an alleged duality of mind and body, the

nerves provide a third term, a sort of compromise of embodied thinking. [45] While

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[44] Remarkably, late in his life Artaud literally dispensed with "the name of the
father"—his father, Artaud—and began to answer to Antonin Nalpas, his Greek
mother's maiden name.
[45] In her introduction to Artaud's *Selected Writings*, Susan Sontag maintains that
"Artaud's commitment to the magical value of words explains his refusal of

Schreber was persecuted organ by organ by the meticulously described "miracles,"

Artuad claimed to suffer "from the mind as organ" (59), and both men recognize the

invisible network of the nerves as, for better or worse, a unifying thread between what

they think and how they feel.[46]

In a 1947 radio play, Artaud ventured to imagine what Schreber could not,

namely what it would be like "To Have Done With the Judgment of God." It is here

that Artaud, whose own body would soon succumb to rectal cancer, proposes a

disarticulation of the body, the "body without organs" that Deleuze and Guattari

would later famously elaborate. Like a Schreber for the wireless age (and it is no

accident that his play was intended for the radio), Artaud prescribes unplugging from

the brain as machine: "When you will have made him a body without organs, then

you will have delivered him from all his automatic reactions and restored him to his

true freedom" (571). However, Deleuze and Guattari show that, beyond his vision of

the body gone virtual, the message Artaud intends to transmit over the airwaves

concerns is an indictment of psychiatry.[47] They argue (and Schreber's memoirs

corroborate the evidence) that "the judgment of God" is that "from which medical

doctors benefit and on which they base their power" (*A Thousand Plateaus* 159).

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metaphor. He demands that language directly express the physical human being. The person of the poet appears in a state beyond nakedness: flayed." This assessment resonates with Schreber's hope that his memoirs will lead to the opening up of his body in autopsy.

[46] Writing to his own doctor, Artaud describes a delusion that unmistakably recalls the "miracles" performed on Schreber's body: "you have seen the hordes of demons which afflict me night and day… you have seen what filthy erotic manipulations they are constantly performing on me" (423).

[47] The play was actually never broadcast; it was deemed too controversial, too strange, and too scatological.

While an anti-psychiatric bent needs to be extrapolated sub-textually from the judge's memoirs, in an essay on Vincent Van Gogh, Artaud writes of his clinical treatment with open loathing, condemning the whole of psychiatry as "no better than a den of apes…who possess nothing to mitigate the most appalling states of anguish…but a ridiculous terminology" (483). Later in the same essay, he both praises the specific insights of the paranoid and indicts the psychiatrist's failure to recognize them: "It is a tendency of lofty natures…to believe that nothing is ever due to chance and that everything bad that happens is the result of an ill will that is conscious, intelligent, and concerted / which psychiatrists never believe / which geniuses always believe" (495). Certainly this was how Schreber felt as well, though he justifies and forgives others' inability to apprehend his predicament by constructing a narrative in which no one else can see what his uniquely superhuman nerves reveal to him. However, when it comes to the public and private circumstances of Freud's involvement with the Schreber case, the distance between the analyst's beliefs and that of his textual-proxy analysand shrinks upon close inspection. David Trotter has asked, "Could it be that the future [of psychoanalysis] depended on the proliferation rather than the overcoming of paranoia?" (55). The second half of this chapter pursues that question.

Beside Themselves: Paranoia, (-)Paths, and Passages[48]

Now for bisexuality!...I am accustoming myself to the idea of regarding every sexual act as a process in which four persons are involved.

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[48] The word paranoia is derived from the Greek *para* (beside) and *noos* (mind).

I am only Schreber, nothing but Schreber.
                                    Letter from Freud to Sándor Ferenczi, 12/3/1910

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In November 1895, the month Schreber pinpoints as the crystallization of his delusional system, Freud was gradually dissolving his relationship with his former mentor Josef Breuer, with whom he had published *Studies on Hysteria* earlier that year. He was also establishing a confidence and an intimacy in writing with Berlin nose and throat specialist Wilhelm Fliess (who had initially sought Freud out on Breuer's advice). Within the correspondence, later published under the apt title *The Origins of Psychoanalysis,* the reader finds the first use of the word "psychoanalysis" and Freud's first documented experiment with interpreting his own dreams, as well as the seed of the paranoia theory that he would bring to his reading of the Schreber

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[49] Freud and Wilhelm Fliess in the 1890s. In a review of Jeffrey Masson's edition of the Freud/Fliess correspondence, Harry Trosman writes of this image: "There is a photograph in the book in which Freud and Fliess look like twins. They are posed side-by-side, their heads in three-quarter view turned to the same side, with similar expressions on their faces, each looking like the alter ego of the other" (3244).

case. Freud found in Fliess a sounding board, a test audience, or as he himself put it:

"I am so immensely glad that you are giving me the gift of the Other, a critic and reader—and one of your quality at that. I cannot write entirely without an audience, but do not at all mind writing only for you" (139). The affection here is typical and while the Fliess correspondence serves as an incubator for early psychoanalytic theory, the theory in turn provides a vessel for a friendship. It was very much a friendship comprised of letters—a "long-distance relationship," a sympathy bordering on telepathy—sporadically punctuated by meetings that Freud called "congresses." Psychoanalysis begins with these love letters laid upon the altar of "the alter," as Freud called Fliess, "the only other."

The relationship represented a dream of collaboration, with psychology and biology working together. Freud suggested they split the assignment in terms of the psychic and the material: "you take the biological, I the psychological." Fliess would supply the body, the grounding, something for Freud's esoteric theories to stick to— their collaborative project, later aborted, was to be called the *Project for a Scientific Psychology*. Freud's break from Breuer and turn toward Fliess hinged on the etiological importance of sexuality. His insistence on sexuality troubled Breuer but found a welcoming ear with Fliess, whose own idiosyncratic theories included a correlation between the nose and the genitals and a twenty-three day male menstrual cycle. As far-flung as Fliess's science seems, Freud was invested in it, at least for the mutual encouragement that marks the early correspondence. Furthermore, there is an affinity in the way the two men were thinking about etiology, focusing on complex

displacements and agreeing that the locus of the problem is not where we might initially think it is or where it presents itself.

The story of the Freud-Fliess correspondence and its published editions helps to illuminate the paranoia at work in the text and context of Freud's Schreber. We will begin to unpack the letters by working backward in time, arriving at the 1890s via a detour through the 1980s and the controversial figure of Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson. Masson edited a 1985 version of the Freud-Fliess correspondence that brought to light a number of letters excluded from the earlier collection. However, he first came to infamy a year earlier with the publication of his polemic *The Assault on Truth: Freud's Suppression of the Seduction Theory*, which *The New York Times* declared a "Watergate of the psyche," according to a cover blurb on the 1985 paperback edition. Masson claims Freud's disavowal of his seduction theory—that neuroses were the result of real parental abuse—was a willful misrepresentation of his personal beliefs, intended to cover up the mistreatment of Emma Eckstein, a patient who Freud referred to Fliess for surgery to treat what Fliess called "nasal reflex neurosis." The surgery—involving anesthetizing the nose with cocaine and cauterizing it—was badly botched by Fliess, resulting in the near-death and permanent disfigurement of Eckstein. Masson argues that the patient Irma in Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams* is really Eckstein and that the Freudian method that emerges in the wake of the incident is tantamount to the studied suppression of the facts. *The Assault on Truth* counter-assaults the significance of fantasy to pathogenesis, which is the very foundation of Freudian psychoanalysis.

Masson has much to unravel and he revels in the unraveling. The publisher does not try to hide the fact that, in the words on the back cover, "J.M. Masson was fired from his position as projects director of the Sigmund Freud Archives, shortly after suggesting that Freud had intentionally suppressed a key finding." Masson's research is suppressed by the mainstream Freudian community; he is made into a pariah and made out to be a confidence man and a traitor. His cardinal sin is in revealing and sensationalizing aspects of the Freud-Fliess correspondence that had been suppressed, or at least censored. The content of those letters, in Masson's reading, points to Freud's suppression of what his patients are really suppressing. Like Freud's father complex, Masson's conspiracy theory becomes exclusive and total—he understands the resistance to his work in the Freudian community as an extension of Freud's suppression of the seduction theory. Add ambition, political intrigue, and conspiracy to the milieu of psychoanalysis—the raison d'etre of which is the insistence that meanings are concealed by facades of the ordinary and that there is always a deeper hidden truth—and paranoia abounds.[50]

In his seminar on the psychoses, Lacan contends that "the discursive products characteristic of the register of paranoia usually blossom into literary productions, in

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[50] Masson's digging also got him interested in the Schreber case, and he delivered a conference paper featuring the revelation that amid Freud's things he had found an article written by Flechsig in which he discusses castrating a few of his psychotic patients. Masson takes this as further evidence of Freud's eschewal of the scars of real events in patients' lives in favor of the spectral archive of psychic events. Like Niederland and Schatzman, Masson comes bearing excavated evidence—if castration was "in the air" in his childhood home, it was very real at Flechsig's asylum, and this is evidence difficult to ignore in the case of a patient who believes he is being turned into a woman by God.

the sense in which literary simply means sheets of paper covered with writing" (77).

Thus paranoia produces an archive, and, as we have seen, an archive, in turn,

produces paranoia by threatening to turn private writings into collectible artifacts.

Meanwhile, Derrida tells us in *Archive Fever* that psychoanalysis "aspires to be a

general science of the archive, of everything that can happen to the economy of

memory and to its substrates, traces, documents, in their supposedly psychical or

techno-prosthetic forms" (34). Derrida's book is subtitled *A Freudian Impression* and

was initially delivered as a lecture in 1994 at the exiled Freud's former home in

Hampstead, London, now the Freud Museum. Derrida addresses the site, which

marks the "institutional passage from the private to the public," "when a

house…becomes a museum" (3). He sets out to interrogate the intersection of the

concept of the archive (memory, storage) and the particular psychoanalytic itch for

origins. Pursuing the virtual archive—the psychic record, the other history of what

didn't happen, the real effects of fantasy—is "the very relevance of psychoanalysis, if

it has one" (65). Masson attempts to prove (by a preponderance of *evidence*) that

Freudian privileging of the virtual archive is a dead end and a decoy, and that the

passages crucial to the true origins of psychoanalysis can be uncovered in the actual

archives themselves.

In her book *In the Freud Archive*, journalist Janet Malcolm proposes that

Masson's infiltration of the titular repository is "a feat reminiscent of the (failed)

scheme of the narrator of Henry James's *The Aspern Papers"* (25). Masson is another

Jamesian "publishing scoundrel" and insatiable epistemophile. In his introduction to

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the Freud-Fliess correspondence, he writes of "the considerable pleasure to be experienced in the kind of detective work that compiling these letters involved," as they "reveal so dramatically Freud's innermost thoughts" (x). Like James, Freud's obsession with the relationship of his letters to his legacy led him to become a fierce guardian of his private archive, wary of posterity. Also like James, he set his letters on fire, once in 1885 (before he was famous) and again in 1908, not long before beginning to work on the Schreber case. In the former instance, he wrote to his then fiancée Martha, "let the biographers labor and toil, we won't make it too easy for them" (xv). In his later years, Freud took a particularly keen interest in the fate of the Fliess letters, asking Fliess's widow to help him "assure their protection against any future use" (Masson *Complete Letters* 5). He confessed to colleague and confidant Marie Bonaparte that he was unable to locate them: "I do not know to this day whether I destroyed them or only hid them ingeniously...our correspondence was the most intimate you can imagine. It would have been highly embarrassing to have it fall into the hands of strangers" (7). Aside from the intimacies of the relationship, Freud told Bonaparte that the letters contained the private history of theory, "all the hunches and false paths connected with the birth of analysis" (8). He knew there lay dormant somewhere in the archive—lost or hidden—another story, an-other story, the crucial origin story of psychoanalysis-in-the-making.

Malcolm's book, which was assembled form a series of essays published in *The New Yorker* and led to a lawsuit filed by Masson against the magazine, turns the scholarly esoterica of the Masson controversy into a highbrow entertainment, a lurid

tale of intrigue and betrayal. While the censure of Masson's work by the psychoanalytic community at large is ample enough conflict for periodical prose, *In the Freud Archives* quickly gets personal. Malcolm introduces us to Kurt Eissler— secretary of the Freud Archive, keeper of the papers. Eissler is the consummate Freudian, committed to the preservation of both Freudian thought and material Freudiana. Eissler was impressed with and charmed by Masson and not only allowed him the unprecedented access to materials that led to Masson's edition of the Fliess letters, but arranged for Masson to succeed him as secretary of the archive. When Eissler felt the seismic vibrations from the papers Masson began delivering at conferences, he understood for the first time the thrust of the work Masson was preparing to publish. Deeply offended, Eissler severed his relationship with Masson and withdrew his offer of succession.

The Jamesian echoes proliferate, as Malcolm's book presents Masson as not just a scoundrel but a seducer who establishes an intimacy with Eissler in order to exchange it for an intimacy with the archive, in much the same fashion as the narrator of *The Aspern Papers* courts Miss Tina. In fact, in chastising himself for letting Masson near the papers, Eissler tells Malcolm he is at a loss in justifying his actions, but fears "the homosexual explanation" (73). Another iconoclastic archival raider who entered the Freudian fray is the autodidact outsider Peter Swales, who claims to be "the only person who has ever really understood Freud" (113). Swales's controversial essays, initially "privately published" and marked by rigorously documented archival sleuthing, suggest that Freud had an affair with his sister-in-law

and that he fantasized about murdering Fliess. Malcolm quotes Eissler referring to

Swales as both "paranoid" and "schizophrenic" and channeling Henry James's

didactic ghosts: "I think it is a far greater injustice that Swales may publish whatever

he wants about Freud and that Freud cannot defend himself and prove he is being

maligned" (117). Defending Freud's honor against ambitious letter-raiders was

nothing new for Eissler. He devoted an entire book to rebutting and discrediting Paul

Roazen's 1969 archival exposé *Brother Animal*, which uses "suppressed"

correspondence and personal interviews to link Freud's attitudes and actions to the

suicide of Viktor Tausk (the former judge and pioneering student of schizophrenia).

The marriage of sensationalism and a certain kind of paranoia makes epistemophilia

increasingly tawdry, giving rise to a sort of "archive porn" of accumulating

connections and suggestive lacunae.

   In parsing the narrative of trust and betrayal that marks the Masson

controversy, both the key players and third-party observers return to Freud and Fliess.

Analyst Leonard Shengold suggests that "Eissler may have been attracted to Jeff in

somewhat the way Freud was attracted to Fliess" (Malcolm 83). While Masson is

Fliess in this equation, he casts himself differently: "Eissler did to me what Freud did

to Ferenczi" (148). Remarkably, Masson claims that an impetus for his book came

from reading and speaking with Fliess's son Robert, who proposed that all neuroses

stem from actual parental sexual abuse. Masson is not willing to follow Fliess (fils) to

such an extreme—he tells Malcolm he finds Fliess a little too paranoid. For his part,

Eissler identifies Fliess as "the prototype of the scientist whose efforts are hampered

by his paranoid tendencies," but a paranoid tendency or a paranoid reading leads one to fixate on the notion that it is *Eiss*ler who picks up where Fl*iess* left off. While Masson may resemble Fliess-the-risktaker or even Fliess-the-crackpot, Eissler is the Fliess who feels betrayed and left behind, a victim of his own errant affections. Malcolm's story becomes crowded with ghosts—all the players in the current crisis are revenant versions of the original trauma. The legacy of allegiances and squabbles, readings and reputations, insiders and outsiders, sycophants and iconoclasts, creates a paranoid present situation in which there are incarnations and iterations, Freuds and Fliesses, everywhere.

Still working backward in the etiological vein, we arrive at the events and relationships in the years surrounding the 1911 publication of the Schreber case, over a decade after the dissolution of Freud's friendship to Fliess. As Santner has deftly demonstrated, the discipline of psychoanalysis was in a "state of emergency," in the sense of both *emergence* and *crisis*, during this period. In laying down its laws, psychoanalysis had to come to terms with itself—that is, to ratify its foundational concepts and official terminology, as well as to establish the limits of its interest and purview. While Freud was comfortable speaking for or *as* psychoanalysis, as progenitor, his ambition that the theory become a field led to frictions of collaboration haunted by the specter of Fliess. At the opening of the final section of *Psychoanalytic Remarks*, Freud acknowledges his colleagues' significance to the case in a curious manner. Addressing the relationship between the paranoid character's delusion of persecution and his suppressed homosexual wishes, Freud admits to the reader that he

is "inclined to mistrust [his] own experience in the matter" and has thus "joined with [his] friends C.G. Jung in Zurich and S[andor] Ferenczi in Budapest" to help him sort it out (50). The history of Freud's involvement with Schreber overlaps with the history of two of his most promising, intimate, and ultimately disappointing collegial relationships.

It was Jung who initially brought Schreber to Freud's attention, recommending the memoirs to him in 1908 and it was in writing to Jung that year that Freud identifies the source of the theory of paranoia he commits to Schreber's case, directly attributing it to his personal experience with Fliess: "My one-time friend Fliess developed a dreadful case of paranoia after throwing off his affection for me…. I owe this idea to him, that is, to his behavior" (McGuire 157). As Jung brings a copy of Schreber to Freud, Freud sees a copy of Fliess in Schreber. Though he does not see any of Fliess in the virile and gentile Jung, it is remarkable that Freud courts intimacy with Jung in part by bonding over paranoia and its supposed grounding in homosexual attachment. As Freud dipped further into "the wonderful Schreber," who he wryly suggests "ought to have been made a professor of psychiatry and director of a mental hospital," the memoirs became a recurring subject in their correspondence (311). Between Freud and Jung, what Schreber calls the "basic language" of the memoirs becomes an inside joke, a coded way to deprecate themselves—in one letter, Freud refers to his work as "fleetingly improvised"—but more often to disparage their less brilliant associates. While the analysts may admire certain of Schreber's insights, their identification with him is mostly for sport and as Freud's biographer Peter Gay

suggests, "there's something a little callous about Freud and his correspondents

trading comical Schreberisms," as "Schreber had undergone appalling mental

anguish" (280). In his response after having read Freud's Schreber, Jung is curiously

entertained—he finds the study "uproariously funny but brilliantly written as well,"

favoring its cleverness and artfulness over its accuracy as individual diagnosis or its

insight into the mechanism of paranoia (407).[51] The insensitivity of the

correspondence directs our attention to the degree to which Schreber's condition is

only part of what Freud is working on in the Schreber case—writing on the memoirs

provides him with an opportunity (as do all of his official psychoanalytic

publications) to define and expand the parameters of the psychoanalytic field, but also

to position himself relative to the associate minds and personalities that follow or

cross his path.[52]

Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen has provocatively referred to Freud's Schreber study

as "an open letter" to Jung, hinting that the published work is written with a

metacommunicative élan that secretly gestures to Jung as it addresses its larger

audience. Borch-Jacobsen goes on to argue that "the entire thesis on paranoia in [the

Schreber case] is summed up in the parenthesis of the Freud-Jung correspondence"

(79). The theses are in parentheses—the bracketed second conversation, the

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[51] The discovery of questionable comic relief in the memoirs is a recurrent theme in
the history of the Schreber case. For instance, Lacan makes sure to note in his
seminar, "I am describing the problem for you in a humorous manner, but there is
nothing funny about it since it's the delusional text of a sick man" (67).
[52] According to Sander Gilman, who reads Schreber's memoir as derivative of the
anti-Semitic literature of the period, the combination of Jung and Schreber "provided
a context in which Freud could consciously move away from the Jewishness and
homoeroticism associated with Fliess and Adler" (142).

typographically subordinate voice, the text *beside itself.* In privileging that voice, psychoanalysis is arguably the discourse of the parenthesis, listening for the *aside* or the surfeit of explanation. Going along with Borch-Jacobsen's claim, the following parenthetical formulation in a letter from Freud to Jung has interesting implications: "I am unable to judge [the Schreber essay's] objective worth as was possible with earlier papers, because in working on it I have had to fight off complexes within myself (fliess)" (380). Not only does Freud admit that his work on the Schreber case is too personal for accurate professional self-assessment, but the parenthetical names a "complex within him"—by implication the complex that struggles with paranoia and homosexual attachment—"fliess." As the lowercase "f" here is not a typical shortcut of Freud's correspondence, he arguably refers not to the proper man, his former friend, but to the pattern of behavior, the persisting set of issues that first surfaced in his dealings with Dr. Fliess. Freud appears alternately acutely aware and blithely oblivious to a kind of dangerous proximity to Schreber (perhaps this is what keeps him from seeking to meet him in person), a blurred border between the theory of delusion and the delusion of theory.

Evidence of Freud's own neuroses is documented by the various biographical accounts of his fainting spells, which occurred twice in the presence of Jung, once collapsing into his Swiss colleague's arms.[53] The first incident occurred in 1909 on the eve of a trip to America, in the company of both Jung and Ferenczi, to lecture at Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts, as the guest of the prominent

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[53] The incidents are first related in Ernest Jones's biography and corroborated with elaboration by Jung in his own autobiography.

American psychologist G. Stanley Hall (Freud would also meet William James on the trip, a year before James's death). The second episode took place in Munich in 1912, as Freud's relationship with Jung was beginning to deteriorate. Jung had been gradually distancing himself from Freud's dogmatic insistence on the sexual etiology of neurosis—he asks in a letter to Freud: "Are there not hysterical symptoms which…are predominately conditioned by a sublimation or by a nonsexual complex (profession, job, etc.)?" (qtd. in Borch-Jacobsen 74). Jung identified more mundane and egoistic sources of neuroses such as professional rivalry and jealousy, and argued that a homosocial rather than homosexual pathogenesis would help make psychoanalysis more palatable to wider audiences, especially in the United States. During the 1912 meeting in Munich, Freud was in the midst of complaining that he had not been sufficiently cited in some of Jung's work when he lost consciousness. Freud's neurotic trouble arises around the terms of his personal and professional relationship to Jung and culminates at a moment of tension that heralds their impending split. "It is understandable," Gay maintains, "why one might see Jung as simply another Fliess," as "Freud's involvement with Jung appears like a new edition of earlier fateful friendships" (242).[54]

In between the episodes with Jung, Freud was reading and writing Schreber while on a trip to Italy with Sándor Ferenczi in 1910, writing to Ferenczi that year

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[54] Gay goes on to complicate the simple equation of Jung and Fliess, citing the difference in age, intimacy, and Freud's station as important variances in the two relationships. Jung was much younger than Freud and never dropped the formal "Herr Professor" from their correspondence. Also, Freud saw in Jung an ally who could help stabilize the reputation of psychoanalysis whereas allegiance with Fliess's polarizing theories could only threaten the acceptance of psychoanalytic doctrine.

that "I am only Schreber, nothing but Schreber" (Brabant, Falzeder, and Giampieri-Deutsch 239). Ferenczi was perhaps the member of the Freudian circle with the most controversial and occult beliefs and methods. Pamela Thurschwell writes that "Ferenczi's late theories and practice radically problematize the question of whose desires speak through the subject" (151) and that his "final thoughts on psychic and physical invasion have been read as the ghost story of psychoanalysis" (171). He believed, for instance, that he was being analyzed telepathically by an ex-patient of his. Ferenczi's diary connects paranoia to this kind of psychic sensitivity; he claims that "paranoids experience a particular form of psychic and physical permeability" and they are "able through their special situation to experience a part of that immaterial reality which remains inaccessible to us materialists" (33)[55]

Ferenczi aspired to a radical openness in his relationship with Freud, the eschewal of any personal boundaries and "the eradication of lies from private and public life" (13). He not only proposed but embraced the notion that "one constantly vacillates back and forth between homosexual (public, communal) and (exclusive, private) heterosexual interests" (167). The statement not only echoes Fliess's theory of innate bisexuality, but—with the provocative parenthetical assertion of a public/homo and private/hetero—describes community and collegiality as "homosexual interests." In 1910, he was excited to explore the subject of paranoia

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[55] Illustrating the degree to which Ferenczi's work has been maligned, Thurschwell cites a footnote to William McGuire's edition of *The Freud / Jung Letters* in which Ferenczi is referred to as a "Hungarian ventriloquist." As there is no record of Ferenczi practicing ventriloquism, this must be a sarcastic slight to his contribution to psychoanalysis (115).

alongside his mentor; the Schreber study was initially to be a collaboration between Freud and Ferenczi. However, problems quickly arose around both the personal and professional terms of the partnership. Ferenczi had hoped for a greater share of the authorship of the piece and objected to being relegated to taking dictation. Though Ferenczi complains of being denied a more active role in the work, Freud complained to Jung that Ferenczi was "too passive and receptive…like a woman, and I really haven't got enough homosexuality in me to accept him as one" (353). Later in the same letter Freud mentions that "a number of scientific notions I brought with me have combined to form a paper on paranoia (353). As we know that his "scientific notions" on paranoia stemmed from his personal experience with Fliess, the convergence of the failure of a planned collaboration and the acknowledged problematic homoerotic element to the sharing of ideas casts the shadow of Fliess over Freud's experience with Ferenczi in Italy and his reading of Schreber (who felt himself becoming "like a woman").

This connection is made explicit in an exchange of letters between Freud and Ferenczi following the Italian trip. Ferenczi is apologetic for bringing personal tension to their professional relationship, but still hopeful that Freud will allow their friendship to grow more intimate. He acknowledges that Freud cannot "dispense completely with [his] justified distrust of people (even of friends—after the *Fliess* case)" (219). Freud responds this way:

> Not only have you noticed that I *no longer* have any need for that full
> opening of my personality, but you have also understood it and

correctly returned to its traumatic cause. Why did you thus make a

point of it? This need has been extinguished in me since Fliess's case,

with the overcoming of which you just saw me occupied. A piece of

homosexual charge has been withdrawn and utilized for the

enlargement of my own ego. I have succeeded where the paranoiac

fails. (221)

Freud admits that his foray into paranoia with Schreber was in part a means to

"overcome" the trauma of his bad terms with Fliess (it is interesting that both men

refer to the Fliess "case," as if there were no meaningful distinction between personal

and professional experience). Furthermore, Freud concludes that the writing of the

Schreber case—the formulation of the theory of paranoia—has worked to stave off

his own paranoia. Having thus "succeeded," he claims not to be interested in a

successor to Fliess and thereby not interested in a relationship, personal or

professional, on Ferenczi's terms. In a later letter, as he is preparing the Schreber case

for publication, Freud writes to Ferenczi instructing him to publish on paranoia before

his own study comes out: "In regards paranoia, it would be better for you to make

yourself independent of me" (236).

As we have seen, at the time of the Italian trip, Freud was establishing a

partnership in letters with Jung, but he was also enduring a break with another crucial

member of his circle, Alfred Adler. In a letter to Ferenczi, Freud writes that Adler is

"paranoid," "a little Fliess Redivivus" (as Fliess is "dead to him") who is "always

claiming priority" (qtd. in Gay 274). If Fliess was a revenant of the so-called "Freud

Wars" begun by Masson in the 1980s, it was not without precedent. Freud seems to

see Fliess everywhere, carrying him into the future as an idea or a symbol, almost like

a Schreberian "tested soul" for the analyst well-versed in metaphor. The specter of

Fliess animates and reanimates the Freudian circle—as positions are exchanged and

personal significance circulates among Freud's satellite associates, the relationship

and break between Freud and Fliess remains at the center. After all, Fliess was not

only Freud's most intimate friend, but the one for whom Freud had first *written it

down*—both the groundwork for the psychoanalytic theory generally and the theory of

paranoia in particular.[56] If Fliess is the *locus*, the etiological site where all the fraught

feelings Freud has for his colleagues began, Schreber becomes the key *term,* the

definitive case in which the rationalized and analytically bona fide solution to those

feelings can be deposited.

Fresh Brains: Trouble with Other Ideas

I can put this point briefly: Everything that happens is in reference to me… When I read a book...one thinks the ideas in [it] are my own.
<div align="right">Daniel Paul Schreber</div>

I really am a kind of Midas, though not a Midas of gold.
<div align="right">Letter from Freud to Fliess, 1/12/1895</div>

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[56] While Freud and Fliess cling to each other's letters as a buoy of reassurance and sanity, in the darkest days of his illness Schreber "believed the whole of mankind to have perished, so that there was no purpose in writing notes" (80). The paranoid schizophrenic is the Last Man on Earth, bereft of correspondents—according to Lacan the "continued existence of discourse" for the marooned Cruesoe is "analogous to what is going on in the insane" (209).

In service of delineating the difference between neurosis and psychosis in the seminars, Lacan refers to the case of a patient analyzed by Ernst Kris. The patient is a scientist and a scholar who comes to Kris complaining of an inability to publish scholarly articles. The patient suspects himself of plagiarism—he has frequent discussions with a more prolific colleague whom he deems brilliant and any time he has committed an idea to paper, he discovers a published work that presents a version of that idea and assumes he must have read it before the book and mistaken his own idea for an original one. Kris reads the work the patient believes himself to be plagiarizing and determines that he is not, in fact, a plagiarist but subconsciously wishes he were one. Kris claims the wish stems from the patient's father complex—he wishes there were a figure in his life whose ideas were good enough to steal.

After hearing Kris's interpretation, the patient falls silent for a while and then relays a peculiar anecdote: "The other day, on leaving, I went into such and such street...and I sought out a place where I could find the dish I am particularly fond of, fresh brains" (qtd. in Lacan 60). For Lacan, the remark is a coded rejection of Kris's analysis; he is "acting out." By noting his appetite for fresh brains, the patient is signaling to the analyst that he does not want to recognize the originality of his ideas. The analyst errs in telling the patient that he is not *really* a plagiarist when it is not any objective reality that is at stake, but the patient's fantasy. Kris slips into the analyst's bad habit of countertransference—by testing the reality of the patient's claim, he has decided that the problem is treated by the patient coming around to his own way of seeing things.

For Lacan, who published his dissertation on paranoia in 1932 and sent a copy to Freud, "the question...of who speaks must dominate the whole subject of paranoia" (23). As Lacan returns to Freud and Freud's Schreber, he knows that the paranoid delusion is an inability to identify the sources of your thinking, a confusion of originality. While Freud notes that in reading the memoirs, "we are struck by the curious mixture of banality and cleverness, of borrowed and original elements" (13), the question of where ideas come from is more pressing and more painful for the psychotic than an anxiety of influence. When Schreber thinks a familiar thought, the monitoring, recording rays are almost annoyed that he is repeating himself, announcing "we have already got this" (122). The schizophrenic echo chamber subjects Schreber to a kind of agony of repetition, reminding him that these thoughts have already been noted, recorded, written down. Schreber's failure to recognize an other, exterior reality leads him to apprehend both a direct impact of his thinking registered in the world as well as the presence of alien voices colonizing his thought. Within the memoirs, italics and quotation marks demarcate the "basic language"—a foreign language generated by his own mind: "the words which the voices that speak to me always applied…expressions which would have never occurred to me" (49). In approaching Schreber (from a distance) via Fliess (or approaching Fliess via Schreber), Freud—who noted in *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* that paranoia can be understood as "a delusion of reference" (255), an improper citation—is sensitive to the way in which the problem of locating the origins of thought invites paranoia into the psychoanalytic circle.

Freud referred to the provenance of intellectual property as "priority," an apt

term as it was indeed of urgent concern to him. He playfully suggested that he limited

his reading to benefit his writing—for example, avoiding Nietzsche so as not to find

out that ideas he took to be his own were previously recorded by the mad philosopher.

Within his milieu, Freud appears to have taken the matter of priority with alternating

gravity and levity, a situation that may have depended on what he stood to gain from

the free exchange of ideas. While he was known to have lamented a lack of

acknowledgment in his cohort's publications and he spurned the intellectual advances

of the freethinking Ferenczi, even after his difficulty with Fliess, Freud occasionally

came to his colleagues with an open mind. Not long after his introduction to Jung,

Freud proposed in a letter to the Swiss analyst "a kind of intellectual communism, in

which neither party takes anxious note of what he has given and what received" (qtd.

in Borch-Jacobsen 60). This proposal was made specifically "in regard to Dem[entia]

Pr[aecox]," as Jung's clinical psychiatric experience can help Freud extend his theory

beyond neurosis. In a letter to Karl Abraham written just after the Schreber study was

completed, Freud remarks that after returning to Vienna from Italy, he discovered that

certain of his ideas on "the riddle of paranoia" had already been established in print

by Abraham. He is facetiously blunt about how will proceed: "naturally I shall have

to plagiarize you extensively in my work" (qtd. in Eissler 153).

Perhaps the cavalier jocularity of his comments to Jung and Abraham betray a

kind of nervous laughter; Freud knows that the sharing of ideas produces both work

and anxiety. It was an issue with priority that ultimately severed Freud's relationship

to Fliess. The relationship strained gradually over the first few years of the twentieth

century and letters between the two men become sparse around the publication of *The

Interpretation of Dreams*. It is as if Freud traded his relationship with Fliess for his

reputation; now that he had found his public audience, he felt less of a need for a

private one. Tension between Freud and Fliess first came to a boil during their last

"congress," in Achensee in 1900.[57] Freud included a primary account of some of the

trouble at Achensee in a section of his 1901 *Pscyhopathology of Everyday Life*

entitled "Forgetting of Impressions." Somewhat ironically, he dates the argument a

year after it occurred (but perhaps like with *The Interpretation of Dreams*, he is

always ahead of himself). Freud writes:

> One day in the summer of 1901 I remarked to a friend with whom I
>
> used at that time to have a lively exchange of scientific ideas: "These
>
> problems of the neuroses are only to be solved if we base ourselves
>
> wholly and completely on the assumption of the original bisexuality of
>
> the individual." To which he replied: "That's what I told you two and
>
> a half years ago at Br. [Breslau] when we went for that evening walk.
>
> But you wouldn't have it then." It is painful to be requested in this way
>
> to surrender one's own originality. I could not recall any such
>
> conversation or this pronouncement of my friend's. One of us must

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[57] In "Freud, Fliess, and Fratricide: The Role of Fliess in Freud's Conception of
Paranoia," Peter Swales goes so far as to speculate that Fliess feared that Freud would
murder him on a walk by pushing him off of a mountain, and that Freud had indeed
fantasized about doing just that.

have been mistaken and on the *"cui prodest"* [who benefits] principle

it must have been myself. (143-44)

His temporary amnesia with regard to the provenance of the bisexuality theory

becomes an example of "the parapraxis of forgetting" in *The Psychopathology of

Everyday Life.* While, as we will see, the attribution of the bisexuality theory will

become an increasingly vitriolic point of contention for Fliess, here Freud is able to

situate his error under the umbrella of "everyday life." Ingeniously, if not entirely

ingenuously, his vigilant self-analysis turns his own unoriginal theory of bisexuality

into an original theory of plagiarism. Thereby critiques of Freud's appropriation of

other people's ideas often cite his own published admissions and, like Henry James,

Freud's body of work anticipates and incorporates its critics.

The most significant piece of evidence *in writing* of the genesis of enmity

between the two comes in a letter of September 1901. Freud is offended at Fliess's

remark that "'the reader of thoughts' merely reads his own thoughts into other

people" (450), which Freud took to undermine his life's work. Of course, we can

read Fliess's thoughts only in quotation marks as registered through Freud's letters.

We only have the response, half of a correspondence, from which to reconstitute the

narrative. Ostensibly, Fliess became disenchanted with the degree to which Freud

veered from what Fliess deemed proper scientific methods. Letters between the two

grew sparse over the next year and in 1902, fifteen years of intimate correspondence

came to an end. When Fliess stops writing back, Freud attributes the end of the

friendship to Fliess's bouts of paranoia and later looked to turn this very personal

experience into theory. Recalling Freud's comment to Jung regarding Fliess's role in

the development of Freud's theory of paranoia—"I owe this idea to him… that is, to

his behavior"—the formulation of the sentence exhibits a bitter wit, clarifying that

Fliess's influence derived from his neuroses and not from any borrowed insight.

When Fliess did again write to Freud in 1904, the matter was professional and

the tone was not amicable. Fliess had encountered the book *Sex and Character,*

which had become something of a sensation after its twenty-three-year-old Viennese

author, Otto Weininger, took his own life (in the house where Beethoven had died)

shortly after its publication. Fliess thought he recognized in Weininger's book his

own theory of innate bisexuality—the same theory that had led to his tussle with

Freud over priority at Achensee.   Knowing that an acquaintance of Weininger's—

Hermann Swoboda—was a student and patient of Freud's, Fliess begins to suspect he

has once again been plagiarized. The exchange between Freud and Fliess regarding

Weininger's book was excluded from *The Origins of Psychoanalysis* and only

published in Masson's version in 1985. Fliess writes confrontationally: "I have no

doubt…that Weininger obtained knowledge of my ideas through you and that there

was an abuse of other people's property on his part…what do you know about it?"

(qtd. in Sulloway 225). Freud's response admits a discussion with Swoboda about

bisexuality (the patient confessed to sexual fantasies of both "prevailing and

succumbing...now incubus, now succubus") and the potential relay of that

conversation to Weininger (qtd. in Eissler 168). However, Freud argues that the ideas

discussed do not originate with Fliess and abound in the published literature of the

field. Furthermore, he claims, ideas cannot be patented and "once they have been let loose, they go their own way" (466).

Fliess's ire is not mitigated by Freud's reasoning. To make matters worse, that same year Swoboda himself published a book, entitled *The Periods of the Human Organism*, on the subject of biological and psychological periodicity, the other cornerstone of the theory Fliess had been developing in the years of his correspondence with Freud.[58] The incident reached its public conclusion in 1906, when both Fliess and his friend Richard Pfennig published accusations of plagiarism aimed at both Weininger and Swoboda and naming Freud as their abettor. In an irrevocable breach of confidence that precluded any future opportunity to repair the relationship, Fliess included his letters to and from Freud as evidence in his case for priority. If Fliess is indeed paranoid, as it comforted Freud to suppose, it would be because he cannot account for a *zeitgeist*, an innocent exchange of ideas—a fixation with Freud causes him to see his former friend directing the traffic of thought. The suggestion that Freud is the mastermind of Weininger and Swoboda's transgressions is the obverse of his claim that the psychoanalytic method is tantamount to mere "thought-reading." Whether Freud is attributing his own thoughts to others or attributing others' thoughts to himself, Fliess perceives the expanding psychoanalytic field as a public reiteration of their private conversations and correspondence.

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[58] In his book *Freud and His Early Circle*, Vincent Brome (another psychoanalytic historian that Kurt Eissler condemned as a peddler of scandal) claims that Swoboda's book was "inspired by his inheritance" of his friend Weininger's library and archive of papers (11). Again the arrival of the archive into "the wrong hands" begets treachery.

This is the dizzying economy of paranoid associations Freud reads into the memoirs. He sees in Schreber a homosexual fixation with Flechsig (stemming from the judge's father complex) reminiscent of Fliess's homosexual fixation with him, yet somehow he interprets the activation of his feelings about Fliess in solving the Schreber case as working out rather than exercising his own paranoiac tendency. Though Freud's Schreber purports to translate the madness of "Schreber's Schreber's" into a new kind of scientific reasoning, the study has a shaggy-dog ramble to it, marked by unkept promises, dead ends, and unpursued lines of inquiry. Freud claims "a dose of good faith" is required to find method in Schreber's madness; it's an arch prescription, lending his critical reading a clinical sense while acknowledging how far the venture veers from scientific praxis—the psychoanalytic / theoretical approach admits a placebo effect in the predisposition that is "good faith."[59] The *Psychoanalytic Remarks* are alternately playful and apologetic (constantly offering qualifying asides to future readers) and ultimately self-conscious, neurotic, and a little paranoid.

At the very least, Freud frequently assumes a defensive posture. After first suggesting that the judge's condition can be traced back to a surge of homosexual libido, he asks the reader to allow him to "pause for a moment" in order to anchor himself against an inevitable "flood of remonstration and objection" (33). "Anybody acquainted with the psychiatry of today," he adds, "has to be ready for the worst" (33). What follows is a series of rhetorical questions: "Is it not an irresponsible

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[59] In prescribing ways of reading the Schreber case, Freud persists with the pharmacological metaphor, later proposing a "good dose of tact and restraint."

slight, an indiscretion, an act of calumny to accuse an ethically so elevated man as the

retired President Judge Schreber of homosexuality?....But surely at no point is it

expressly said that the feared transformation into a woman was to be of benefit to

Flechsig?" (33-34). These questions are at once the self-conscious neurotic's version

of the voices in the psychotic's head (substituting imagination for delusion) and the

strategic rhetorical assumption and subsequent subsumption of those critical voices.

Freud's neurotic sensitivity signals both awareness and agitation—like paranoia it is a

nervousness that demands alertness and anticipation. In his Schreber study, Freud is

always thinking of other people.

Of course, the proposal of a kinship between Freud and Schreber and the

suggestion of an eroding boundary between the mentally ill and those who treat them

do not originate here.[60] As soon as Freud was reading the memoirs, he was making

fun of those notions by comically identifying with the psychotic and he reasserts them

at the close of the Schreber case with another uneasy joke. He reassures his reader

"that I had developed my theory of paranoia before I became acquainted with the

contents of Schreber's book" (66). In admitting that he brought a fully "developed"

theory of paranoia to his reading of the memoirs, Schreber becomes a mere

application, an instance, an example to codify the significations of his illness so that

they don't escape definition. Freud is not interested in whether or not the judge's

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[60] In fact, a critical identification with and affinity for Schreber just begins with
Freud. Though they mean to unseat Freud as the authority on Schreber, Deleuze and
Guattari likewise read Schreber as an oracular harbinger of their own schizoid
revolution. In his essay "The Din of the Celestial Birds or Why I Crave to Become a
Woman," the philosopher Alphonso Lingis actually writes in the first person as
Schreber.

condition inspired his theory of paranoia, but rather in demonstrating that Schreber's

delusions are not themselves a theory of paranoia that can claim priority over his

own. When Freud points to the paranoiac's tendency to disclose what the neurotic

would hide, he betrays another source of his reticence to deal with psychotic

patients—what's important is not so much that the paranoid says everything he means

to, but that he doesn't say anything he doesn't mean to, leaving the analyst with

nothing to analyze.   And what troubles him is not that Schreber says what he

(Schreber) means to say but that he says what he (Freud) means to say—the memoirs

not only foreground the patient's psychosexual drama but elevate it to the level of the

cosmic. He continues: "As I neither fear criticism nor shy away from self-criticism, I

have no motive for avoiding mention of a similarity that may damage our libido

theory in the judgment of many readers" (66). The astute reader might notice that

Schreber's delusions appear to be identical to "endopsychic perceptions of the

processes…of paranoia" and that the judge's divine rays are "in fact nothing more

than the libidinal investments, concretely represented and projected outwards, and so

lend a striking conformity with our theory" (66). The trials the judge is put through

by his god are simply reified version of the trials he is put through by his mind (he

sees a corpse where Freud sees a ghost), thus Freud's reading seems to merely

translate the memoirs into psychoanalytic terms.

Freud's tone is playfully self-conscious and almost mock paranoid—he

knows he is no real danger of being accused of borrowing his theories of mental

illness from the mentally ill. Besides, if called upon to do so, he is prepared to prove

his innocence: "I am able, however, to call on a friend and expert in the field [he is likely referring to Ferenczi] to bear witness that I developed the theory of paranoia before the contents of Schreber's book came to my notice" (66). Ultimately it "remains for the future to decide whether there is more delusion in my theory than I should like to admit, or whether there is more truth in Schreber's delusion than other people are as yet prepared to believe"(66). "The future" has taken the question seriously, opting in certain cases for the truth in Schreber's delusion and in others for the delusion in Freud's theory. Lacan writes of the memoirs:

> We also find in the very text of the delusion a truth that isn't hidden, as it is in the neuroses, but made well and truly explicit and virtually theorized. The delusion presents it—one can't even say from the moment one has the key to it, but as soon as one takes it for what it is, a double, perfectly legible, of what is explored by theoretical investigation. (28)

Lacan reiterates Freud's claim that whereas the neurotic denies, obfuscates, and represses, the psychotic confounds analysis by telling it not what it wants to hear but what it wants to say. Delusion, or this delusion, is the virtual double of theory.

As Freud worried that the elaboration of his theory was making him paranoid, Schreber's supposed that his illness was making him a theorist. The judge fully understands the direct correlation between his illness and the discursive traffic in his head; however, rather than identifying his "nervousness" as the generative source of the extra voices, he believes that his unique nervous condition allows him to tune in

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to a frequency beyond normal human perception. He writes in the memoirs that "apart from normal human language there is also a kind of nerve-language of which, as a rule, the healthy human being is not aware" (69). Forced by the torture of "compulsive thinking" to consider "the causal relation of every happening," Schreber has gradually developed a "deeper insight." As David Trotter has argued, "the paranoiac is an interpreter…who displaces the love he has withdrawn from the world into hermeneutic activity," he suffers from a ceaseless compulsion to interpretation and is "condemned…to meaning and value" (63). With accident and coincidence precluded by delusion, the material world becomes cluttered, infested with potential meanings.

Freud's tongue-in-cheek reference to his own originality deflects his own worry that the totalizing psychoanalytic system, his method of interpreting the world, might be dangerously akin to Schreber's sick cosmology. In describing the paranoiac in *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, Freud might as well be describing the psychoanalytic theorist: "A striking and generally observed feature of the behavior of paranoiacs is that they attach the greatest significance to the minor details of other people's behavior which we ordinarily neglect, interpret them and make them the basis of far-reaching conclusions" (255). He knows that the paranoiac projects his inner life onto the outer world—"he projects outwards a motivation I look for within" (257)—but with Fliess on his mind while undertaking Schreber, an echo of the accusation that "the reader of thoughts' merely reads his own thoughts into other people" may be betrayed in his attitude. Finally, as Freud and Schreber share a

paranoid trouble with other people's ideas, both the *Psychoanalytic Remarks* and

Memoirs of my Nervous Illness set out to change minds, to *write* their own thoughts

into other people. Each author appears obstinate before a potentially skeptical

audience—while Schreber must be rhetorically persuasive in order to emerge from

institutionalization, Freud has to be likewise convincing in order to establish an

institution. As he told the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society in 1908, "the reformer, as

long as he is alone, is considered a paranoiac…the fact that he has followers protects

an individual against being declared ill" (qtd. in Swales 316).

THE ANARCHIST AND THE ELEPHANT:
Electrocution, Exhibition, and the Edison Film Company

When Sigmund Freud visited the United States in 1909, he and his traveling

companions—including Carl Jung, Sándor Ferenczi, and Ernest Jones—toured New

York the day before heading to Clark University in Massachusetts, where Freud

would deliver a series of lectures and meet an ailing William James. Though it was a

turbulent time for Freud and his circle—he fainted the night before embarking—they

nevertheless took in some of New York's more turbulent recreational attractions,

spending the afternoon at Coney Island and the evening at the movies. It is tempting

to imagine, as Norman Klein does in his novella *Freud in Coney Island*, the

interpreter of dreams walking through Dreamland, one of Coney Island's three

amusement parks, the entrance of which was marked "Creation" and featured a statue

of a giant nude woman standing at the mouth of a massive tunnel. The would-be

amused are born through her; it's a fantasy of recreation as procreation. "I have often

wondered," says Klein's fictional Freud, "if the shape of Coney Island's parks

resembles my model of the mind. By that I mean does real space reproduce

unconscious space" (22).

As for the cinema, Jones recounts their trip this way: "Ferenczi in his boyish

way was very excited at it, but Freud was only quietly amused; it was the first film

they had seen" (*Life and Work Vol. 2* 62).[61] Despite the parallel histories of

psychoanalysis and cinema (both could be said to "premiere" in 1895, develop in the

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[61] In fact, Jones is wrong about this; writing home to his family from Rome in 1907,
Freud reported having seen some "cinematographic performances."

first decade of the twentieth century, and achieve a more codified articulation in the second), Freud had little interest in exploring the ways in which cinema might illuminate the psyche. Though psychologists, like William James's Harvard colleague Hugo Munsterberg, were among the first to publish serious studies of cinema, early film addressed itself more to the body than to the mind. Thomas Edison and the other technological innovators who developed the early cinema were working in a much more immediate mode than the narrative filmmakers who would follow. There was little time for psychological subtlety; any ideas projected into the pictures had to switch on like a light bulb. Like the amusements at Coney Island, the cinema intervenes in the turn-of-the century discourse of mind and brain in a manner that works on the nerves.

Plugged In / Turned On—The Nervous System

But as if the magic lantern threw the nerves in patterns on a screen
T.S. Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"

On September 6, 1901, inside the "Temple of Music" at the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, President William McKinley was shot twice—once in the chest and once abdomen—at close range by Leon Czolgosz, a former factory worker from Cleveland with anarchist affiliations. An Edison Film Company crew, on hand to document McKinley's Buffalo appearance and the buffet of spectacles offered at the exposition, trained its camera on the scene outside the building, as word of the shooting sent a wave of panic through the gathering throng. Weeks later, with the

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president dead and his assassin sentenced to die in the electric chair at Auburn Prison

(near Buffalo), Edison sent his cameramen to record the event of the execution.

Unable to gain admission to the prison, the crew filmed the exterior of the facility.

Undaunted by their inability to film Czolgosz's actual death, Edison production

personnel staged the execution with actors at the company studio in New York City.

Four shots—two consisting of "actuality" footage taken on location and two

consisting of the dramatic reenactment—were spliced together and packaged as

Execution of Czolgosz, with Panorama of Auburn Prison.

A little over a year later, in January of 1903, Edison would release another

filmed electrocution, though this time there would be no trouble capturing the "live"

event. Topsy, a four-ton African-born elephant imported for display among the

assorted attractions at Coney Island's Luna Park, had killed three men (including an

abusive handler who fed her lit cigarettes) and was deemed too dangerous to keep on

site. Suspecting that the spectacle of silencing the deadly beast could potentially

produce more interest than her presence had, Coney Island executives commissioned

the Thomas A. Edison, Inc. to construct a device that could generate enough power to

kill the elephant by electrocution. Ever the consummate mogul, Edison dispatched a

film crew along with the elaborate contraption. The resulting film, *Electrocuting an

Elephant*, depicts Topsy being escorted toward the camera and strapped into the lethal

apparatus. Smoke appears at the elephant's feet, she topples to the ground, and the

camera lingers long enough to capture the animal convulsing before its expiration.

Execution of Czolgosz and *Electrocuting an Elephant*, along with the figure

Edison himself, mark a provocative intersection of the burgeoning (and emblematically modern) technologies of electricity and cinema. Speculation regarding the potential of both electricity and film is charged with an equal measure of wonder and anxiety. The apocryphal accounts of cinema's premiere public screening, at which spectators supposedly fled Paris' Grand Café to avoid being struck by the projected images of the Lumiére Brothers' *Arrival of the Train at La Ciotat Station*, are anticipated by ambivalent imaginings of the animating capability of electricity, which date back at least to Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. In the mythical register, electrical animation carries the Promethean warning and a coming-to-life is always haunted by the coming of death. In the terms of this dissertation, the cinema ostensibly "flickers" between the metaphorical figures of the ghost and the corpse, animating its ghostly afterimage from a sequence of still frames.

Of course, early filmgoers did not really fear for their lives and the legend of panic at the Grand Café was propagated in order to attract audiences rather than keep them away. The real concern regarding spectator's bodies was not immediate and fatal impact but a gradual, deleterious impact on the nerves resulting from the shock of moving images and sudden cuts. What neurologists identified as cinema's exacerbation of the traumatic speed (of transportation, of information) engendered by electric technologies, Walter Benjamin later recognized as a crucial strategy and function of art in the modern (or neuromodern) mode—absorption through distraction and representation. Electrocution films were not only a literalization of the kinds of "shocking" spectacle that characterized the sensational and exhibitionist tenor of early

cinema, they also provided an opportunity for the demonstration of mutual mastery of the technologies of animation and de-animation represented by cinema and the lethal application of electricity.

In his seminal and ongoing formulation of what he calls the "cinema of attractions," Tom Gunning argues that early film is crucially not an infant or primitive version of Hollywood, but a distinct form with its own intentions, rules, and stakes. Rather than the voyeuristic diegetic absorption constitutive of classic cinema, early films display a more exhibitionist tendency, confronting the spectator with "sudden bursts of presence" and "ruptures of stability" ("Now You See It, Now You Don't" 6). Though the influence of narrative drama and comedy would soon take permanent hold of the film industry (as evidenced by the brief currency of the term "photoplay" in the 1910s), the early cinema was a technology and a popular spectacle understood in relation to other technologies and other popular spectacles. Following Gunning, I aim to give the early cinema a critical *situation* by highlighting the import of seeing these films in the context of the realm of turn-of-the-century attractions—specifically the fairgrounds and amusement parks that often served as venues for their screening. The story of the anarchist and the elephant ends (and continues to end) with the cinematic record of their deaths, but film is just one crucial part of the framework. The early cinema, as Mary Ann Doane suggests, "seems to play out the extremely intricate imbrication of anxiety and reassurance associated with modern technology" ("Technology's Body" 535); like the roller coasters at Topsy's Coney Island, it participates in a peculiar alchemy that turns the threat into thrill by rehearsing the

rhythms of shock and absorption.

This chapter considers how and why Czolgosz and Topsy have been framed—this is not to propose a conspiracy, but to take seriously the implication of that antiquated underworld lingo. They have been identified and terminally trapped inside the limits of these narratives of technological demonstration, which fuse the legal system (or a carnival parody of it) to the physiological system by public trial and execution. In order to discover what the frames of these two films hope to contain by staging the potential and potential threat of cinematic and electrical technologies, we begin by tracking how early cinema and electricity contribute to the fin-de-siècle cult and culture of nerves and alternately serve as both cause and cure in the diagnosis and treatment of nervousness. Then, working outward from the morbid frames of the electrocution films, we will explore the circumstances surrounding them, visiting the scenes of the crimes that warranted spectacular execution and situating the idealized city of the world's fair at Buffalo and the sensual carnival of the amusement park at Coney Island as part of the nervous condition of early twentieth-century America. Finally, we will investigate why the particular bodies of the criminal and animal become material test cases and ideal screens for the instantiation of being shocked to death as a picturable reality.

Long before the advent of cinema, electricity was making the world "nervous"—nervous in the sense of anxious about this mysterious invisible force that pulsed through the surrounding ether, but also nervous in the sense of connected, networked by telecommunication technologies. If Marshall McLuhan could claim in

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the 1960s that "after more than a century of electric technology, we have extended our central nervous system in a global embrace" (3), he was not the first to notice the commerce between the nervous and the electric; understanding media and understanding neurology had long been concomitant projects.[62] By the middle of the nineteenth century, a character in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The House of Seven Gables* could argue that "by means of electricity, the world of matter has become a great nerve, vibrating thousands of miles in a breathless point of time" (264).   The electrical telegraph gives the national body a nervous system (to join the railroad's circulatory system) that relays information to its remote parts. Coming to terms with the invisible networks of both electricity and neurology involved a kind of symbiotic semantic circuitry by which each is constituted in the scientific and popular imaginations by a metaphorical relationship to the other.

Of course, debates about the parameters of neurology involve questions about the situation of the mind and the brain, and the relationship of each to the outside world. The nervous system is the physiological complex that mediates inner and outer worlds—activating the signals and relays by which matter comes to mind and an impulse becomes an idea, translating noumena into phenomena. Susan Buck-Morss reminds us that while the nervous system consists of localizable anatomical units, as system it "is not contained within the body's limits. The circuit from sense

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[62] The invention of the telegraph activated this specific nervous condition, marked by Samuel Morse's famously ominous first telegraphed transmission, "What hath God wrought?" Marshall McLuhan notes that the advent of telegraphic communication coincides with the publication of Soren Kierkegaard's *The Concept of Dread* (1844). For McLuhan, "to put one's nerves outside…is to initiate a situation—if not a concept—of dread" (252).

perception to motor response begins and ends in the world" (12). In this sense, our

nervous systems are as much a part of the world as a part of the body; we are all

extended, "networked." The province of the nerves functions as either a compromise

between the mind and the brain or a third term. Friedrich Nietzsche enthusiastically

claimed, "The stimulation of a nerve is first translated into an image: first metaphor!"

(116). We might construe the space of the electrical synapse as a metaphor for

metaphor—the spark that jumps the gap.[63]

    Even before electrical systems constituted figurative bodies, scientists were

investigating the electrical systems of actual bodies. In the late eighteenth century,

Luigi Galvani determined from a series of experiments with frog legs that nerves

communicated with muscles through what he called "animal electricity."[64] With the

application of the ingenuity supplied by the likes of Edison ("the *wizard* of Menlo

Park") a century later, the ghostly powers of electricity could be exorcised and then

exercised, colonized as an extension of human agency. However, as the ostensible

erosion of corporeal borders occasioned by innovations such as the telegraph or the

light switch engendered the projection of the nervous system onto the bustling

phenomenal world, it also seemed to allow that world, and the attendant dangers of its

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[63] It was in 1891 that Wilhelm von Waldeyer first proposed the neuron theory of the organization of the nervous system, which revealed that information was communicated by neurons across synaptic gaps. Von Waldeyer was building on the research of joint Nobel Prize winners (and rivals) Camillo Golgi and Santiago Ramón y Cajal.

[64] Galvani's nephew, Giovanni Aldini, a professor and entertainer, demonstrated "animal electricity" in front of a live audience by applying electric current to severed sheep's heads, causing the eyelids and tongue to move. Remarkably, on occasion Aldini was able to procure the bodies of recently executed criminals and repeat the same trick.

intense kinetic sensations, to permeate the body.

During the latter part of the nineteenth century, the neurologist George Miller Beard diagnosed American culture at large with what he called "neurasthenia" or nervous exhaustion, a condition brought on by the body's inability to accommodate the accelerated pace of industrialized urban life. He posited a sort of nervous economy in which the demands of modern living were depleting the over-stimulated and over-stressed neurasthenic's finite reserve of nervous energy. The threat of neurasthenia had a profound influence on fin de siècle culture, as evidenced by sociological studies like Max Nordau's *Degeneration*, literary works such as Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper*, and the general social investment in recuperating the enervated body exemplified by an emphasis on the importance of recreation (sports, amusements, parks, amusement parks, etc.). However, even for the self-proclaimed expert diagnostician, nervousness was hard to read—Beard remarked that neurasthenia "has been the Central Africa of medicine" (qtd. in Rabinbach 153). The list of potential symptoms Beard provides in his *American Nervousness* is extensive (a catch-all catalog including both "insomnia" and "drowsiness") and the symptoms themselves are "largely of a subjective character" and may appear "trifling and unreal" as they do not "appeal directly to the senses of the scientific observer" who "can only know of their existence through the statements of the patient, or through his conduct" (26). The evidence is dismissed by skeptics as immaterial, hearsay—without proof written on the body, neurasthenia is relegated to the realm of psychology alongside degraded diagnoses like hysteria and hypochondria.

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Thus, "nervousness" is hard to locate—that is, easy to detect but difficult to stabilize—it won't settle down. The term itself seems agitated or restless, interminable, discursively versatile—traversing semantic as well as somatic registers. Peter Melville Logan argues that not only is the nervous body the "inscribable body, one that is too easily written upon by the impressions of its day-to-day experience" (209) but nervousness is a condition that "produces narration" (219), often the effusive prattling dismissed as hysterical speech. In popular discourse, nerves are a part of the body, but also an abstract character trait (as in "that took a lot of nerve")—and nervousness is paradoxically yoked to a *lack* of "nerve" by lexical convention. Within the vernacular, then, the nerves operate as both disease and cure.[65]

The linguistic formulation of nerve as both problem and solution parallels the compelling trajectory of Beard's relationship to Edison and electricity. In his earlier writings, Beard singled out Edison and his inventions for their contribution to neurological distress. However, Beard shared with Edison a knack for tenacious self-promotion—fellow neurologist Edward C. Spitzka called him "the P.T. Barnum of medicine"—and the two later worked together to develop "electrical therapies." In his *American Nervousness*, Beard drew on the inventor's innovations in elucidating the functioning of the nervous system:

> Edison's electric light is now sufficiently advanced…to give us the
>
> best possible illustration of the effects of modern civilization on the
>
> nervous system…The force in the nervous system can be increased or

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[65] This paradox is akin to the "pharmakon" in Derrida's deconstruction of Plato in "Plato's Pharmacy."

diminished by good or evil influences…but nonetheless it is limited;

and there comes a period…when the amount of force is insufficient to

keep all the lamps actively burning. (qtd. in Nye 164)

As Carolyn Thomas de la Peña points out, Beard's understanding of electricity as

both cause of and cure for neurasthenia paved the way for a host of turn-of-the

century gadgets—electrical belts, collars, and harnesses—that aimed to make the

body adequate to electricity by "plugging it in." According to de la Peña, these

products "offered a kind of informal modern homeopathy: by using machines and

electricity to infuse bodies with small doses of 'modernity' over time, many provided

patients with resistance to 'diseases' they believe it caused" (6). The nervous patient

can ward off shock by electric inoculation.

By the time Freud published *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* in 1920, the

traumas of mechanized war diagnosed as shell shock had cast the shadow of

nervousness over the most ostensibly healthy bodies. For Freud, "the terrible war

which has just ended gave rise to a great number of [traumatic neuroses], but at least

put an end to the temptation to attribute the cause of the disorder to organic lesions of

the nervous system" (10). He attributes etiological significance "not to the effects of

mechanical violence but to fright and the threat to life" (35). Protection against shock

is not afforded by any physical barrier but by anxiety itself. Anxiety is a rehearsal for

trauma linked to Freud's discussion of the child's "fort / da" game, in which the child

"compensates" for his inability to control his mother's disappearance and return by

staging it with a game involving a wooden reel and string. The process is inoculative,

as the nervousness that is anxious and attuned to the exigencies and contingencies of the modern world (anxious *because* it is attuned) prevents the development of traumatic neurosis. When those suffering from psychic trauma return to the traumatic event in their minds, they do so "to master the stimulus retrospectively, by developing the anxiety whose omission was the cause" (37). Freud's move away from the mechanics of the brain and toward a mechanics of the mind calls for a self-conscious and vigilant nervousness to mediate the transaction between external and internal spaces.

Benjamin imports Freud's theory of psychic trauma into his oft-cited analysis of shock as a transformative element of modern urban life and a "formal principle" in film. The exigencies of the traffic of the modern city require an attention comparable to the battlefield:

> At dangerous intersections, nervous impulses flow through [modern man] in rapid succession, like the energy from a battery. Baudelaire speaks of a man who plunges into the crowd as into a reservoir of electric energy….Thus technology has subjected the human sensorium to a complex kind of training. There came a day when a new and urgent need for stimuli was met by the film. In a film, perception in the form of shocks was established as a formal principle.
> ("Baudelaire" 175)

The nervousness of the fin de siècle crowd weds anxiety and receptivity, demanding a

subject "tuned in" or even "plugged" in to proximate bodies.[66] Shock is no longer

simply the threat of the battlefield or the railway, but a new relationship to time,

speed, and space suffered by the factory worker during the week and then sought out

on the weekend at the movie theater or amusement park. Benjamin sees film as an

artistic mobilization of the nervous reflex of the stimulated body: "the film is the art

form that is in keeping with the increased threat to his life which modern man has to

face. Man's need to expose himself to shock effects is his adjustment to the dangers

threatening him" ("Work of Art" 250). Benjamin names this counter-shock tactic

innervation, the process, in Buck-Morss's words, of "a mimetic reception of the

external world, one that is empowering, in contrast to a defensive mimetic adaptation

that protects at the price of paralyzing the organism, robbing it of its capacity of

imagination, and therefore of active response" (17).[67] Shock is projected onto film

and the camera trains the nerves by rehearsing for the situation at dangerous

intersections.

The first filmmakers were scientists, entrepreneurs, and magicians; they were

not artists. As Gunning informs us, "early audiences went to exhibitions to see

machines demonstrated, rather than to view films. It was the Cinématographe, the

Biograph, or the Vitascope that was advertised on the variety bills in which they

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[66] What was known as the "wire panic" of 1889 illustrates the link between anxiety
and connectivity. John Feeks, a Western Union lineman in Manhattan assigned to cut
dead wires from a dense network of telegraph lines, was electrocuted by a live wire.
He hung suspended from the web of lines over a crowded street.
[67] "Though Benjamin fashions his own definition of "innervation," the term
originated with nineteenth century neurology, designating the process by which
"nerve-force" is supplied to organs and muscles. Freud used it to describe a
psychosomatic dynamic.

premiered, not *Le Dejeuner de Bebe* or *The Black Diamond Express*" ("Cinema of

Attractions" 58). Early film's most significant precursor, the proto-cinematic

technology of "chronophotography" developed by Etienne-Jules Marey and

Eadweard Muybridge, served the staid scientific purpose of studying motion,

particularly human and animal bodies in motion. As Lisa Cartwright suggests, "with

the rise of physiology...the body was reconfigured as a system, a network of functions

taking place across organs and sites" (47), and the cinema as medico-scientific

implement addresses itself to physiology as photography had to anatomy. Where the

photograph aids in an autopsy of the instant, film's paradoxical performance of

capturing motion holds the promise of vivisection. The undead instant of cinema—

what Andre Bazin called "change mummified"—gives the image duration and allows

both scientific and popular audiences to witness not only form, but function.

Experiments with film often consisted of filming experiments. If early cinema

was thought to upset the nervous system, it was deployed to observe it as well. In

Screening the Body, Cartwright traces the intersections of early neurology and visual

culture from the serial photography Jean-Martin Charcot employed to study hysterics

at Paris's Salpêtriére hospital to the filming of seizures in the "epilepsy biographs" of

William Spratling and Walter Greenough Chase. The nervous excitement and

agitation associated with the reception of early cinema is frequently reflected in the

way bodies behave on screen, even outside of the subgenre of the medical film.

According to Jonathan Auerbach, "volition and animation are often at odds" in the

early cinema, creating "a peculiar kind of affect, suggesting how neither filmmakers

nor viewers nor bodies on screen quite knew what to make of or do with themselves"
(11). Early cinema actors jerk and sputter for comedic effect—as Chaplin would do
after them—as if the cinematic record illuminated how cuts and splices were already
inherent in embodied experience. Perhaps the Edison Film Company's version of the
Lumiéres' first metaphor for film as speeding train is 1894's *Edison Kinetoscope
Record of a Sneeze*, which figures animation as involuntary spasmodic motion or
nervous tic—the cinema sneezing to life.[68]

The confluence of science and popular entertainment at the site of the nervous
body is symptomatic of a dilemma the early cinema shared with a number of other
fledgling modern technologies—whether to edify or to amuse. This was also the
dilemma faced by the engineers of the great world's fairs of the late nineteenth and
early twentieth centuries; their solution was to divide the fairgrounds into the
exposition proper and the midway. The cinema borrowed from both of the fair's
supposedly opposed modes—early film subjects included exposition fare like

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[68] If early film was popularly understood to "work on" the nerves, some of its earliest
theorists and critics conceived of the cinema as a model of the mind. Henri Bergson,
unconvinced of the cinema's revolutionary potential, argued that film gives us what
we already have. Bergson claimed that the cinema elucidated the operation of human
perception, that "the mechanism of our ordinary knowledge is of a cinematographical
kind…a kind of cinematograph inside us" (*Creative Evolution* 332). The first major
work of film theory was Hugo Munsterberg's 1913 *The Photoplay: A Psychological
Study*. Munsterberg, a German psychologist who came to Harvard University at the
urging of William James, contended that the filmic apparatus demonstrates the
psychological apparatus—they are analogue technologies. He claims that the cinema
organizes its visual field in a manner akin to subjective experience: "the photoplay
tells us the human story by overcoming the forms of the outer world, namely, space,
time, and causality, and by adjusting the events to the forms of the inner world,
namely attention, memory, imagination, and emotion" (173). For instance, "the
close-up has objectified in our world of perception our mental act of attention," and
the flashback is the "objectivation of our memory function" (88, 95).

ethnography, current events, and technological demonstrations as well as more commercial entertainments such as boxing, burlesque, and vaudevillian comedy. However, for both the cinema and the fair, the interchange between the carnival and the ideal is more significant than the difference. Gunning contends that "the midway with its overt commercialism and open courting of visual fascination tended to desublimate the pretensions of the official exposition and bare its devices" ("Object Lesson" 431-2). Early film operates under (and screens) an identical tension. While magician-turned-filmmaker Georges Méliès saw his new profession as nothing more than a high-tech version of his old one; as an opportunity to get his magic tricks down to a science, the cinema lends scientific exposition a measure of stage magic's panache. The electrocution films—part science experiment, part snuff—take advantage of this dynamic by activating a nervous circuit between turning on the device and turning on the spectator.

The Pan

They have staged electricity at Buffalo this summer, and they call it the Pan-American Exposition.

The Atlantic Monthly

Every great achievement in art, in science, in commerce communicates to the universal human spirit a salutary shock which in ever-widening circles spreads to regions the most remote and obscure, to break at last in lingering ripples on the ultimate shores of space and time. Out of a good source evil cannot flow, out of the light darkness cannot be born.

Secretary of State John Hay, speech at the Pan-American Exposition

The lesson of Chicago's Columbian Exposition of 1893 was that a successful fair had to be equal parts museum and carnival, engaging both the minds and the bodies of its patrons. While architect Daniel Burnham's "White City" offered paeans of progress (and products), Sol Bloom's Midway Plaisance catered to the crowd's interest in fun and games. This is not to suggest that the relationship between the exposition's loftier aims and its earthier ones is either neatly dichotomous or a consequence of mere proximity. Though those who thought the fair's function was to edify and those who thought it was to entertain initially stood firm, the benefits of fluidity and exchange became soon became apparent, as the flow of foot traffic might seep from the Ferris Wheel to the Arts Palace. The Columbian Exposition proved the boundaries between the museum and the carnival to be increasingly porous and The Pan-American Exposition would build on Chicago's model. While Buffalo's 400-foot Electric Tower, illuminated by 35,000 bulbs powered by nearby Niagara Falls, functions as technological exhibit and exhibitionist spectacle (phallic monument and monumental phallus), the Midway's "Streets of Cairo" attraction, with its popular

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"hootchy-kootchy" belly-dancers, is both ethnography posing as titillation and titillation posing as ethnography (perhaps what the strip-tease truly reveals is their interdependence). Even as the erosion of these boundaries is allowed or even sponsored by exposition engineers, the ideological topography of the fairground is ultimately in service of an official and conservative vision—that the built environment can condition behavior and that courting carnival disorder within the limits of the fairground serves order without. As Terry Eagleton reminds readers of Bakhtin, "carnival, after all, is a licensed affair in every sense, a permissible rupture of hegemony" (148). In part, the exposition is an imposition of corporate-sponsored values and colonialist doctrine.

Perhaps an ideal "way in" to a discussion of the efforts of the Pan's planners to shepherd visitors to the fair through their unified and coherent vision is to start at their ideal way in, the main entrance. According to lead architect John Carrere, "every inducement is here offered the visitor to travel along the Park line to the Bridge, rather than in other directions, so that it can be said that this Exposition has but one entrance...this important feature having been determined, the scheme developed gradually on very simple lines. The main axis had to be north and south." These axes were designed to direct not only the feet but the eyes; the buildings were laid out in such a way as to arrange literal "points of view" and specific lines of sight or "vistas" to steer the spectator's gaze.[69] This is the function of tourism, another

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[69] David Nye points out that nearby Niagara Falls, established as a series of carefully constructed viewpoints, was a watershed of American tourist iconography and "the desire to see, recognize, and visually appropriate a site" as well as a site which

burgeoning American industry, and it was not just what the tourist saw but in what

sequence. While McKinley himself remarked that "expositions are the timekeepers

of progress…they record the world's advancement," each individual fair makes

manifest a spatial telos as the fairgoer moves through a narrative of progress.

This is made explicit by the color scheme at Buffalo, where the engineers of

the fair set out to broaden Burnham's palette and construct a "Rainbow City."

Though this move reflects the fair's emphasis on "Pan-America" and gestures at

inclusion, it also endorses McKinley's expansionist (and colonialist) foreign policy

and dictates a kind of eugenic spectrum. In the words of C.Y. Turner, the Pan's

"Director of Color":

> As we enter the grounds from the Park through the forecourt...we
>
> would come upon the elementary conditions, that is, the earliest state
>
> of man suggested on one side, and primitive nature on the other. I
>
> concluded that the strongest primary colors should be applied here,
>
> and that as we advance up the grounds the colors should be more
>
> refined and less contrasting, and that the Tower, which is to suggest
>
> the triumph of man's achievement, should be the lightest and most
>
> delicate in color. ("Visual Culture at the Pan-American Exposition")

To some, the polychromatic scheme took some getting used to; Joe Mitchell Chapple,

wrote in *National Magazine*, "the gorgeous yellow of the band stand and the orange

of the stately pillars are rather disappointing, as one recalls the pure white and the

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presented an opportunity for the harnessing of electrical power (*Narratives and Spaces* 16).

brilliant glare of the 'White City'" (330). The visual message moved from loud to clear, and exhibition space was allotted to reflect the ideological program—the Midway's marginal and "low" attractions featured ethnographic installments such as The Filipino Village, which showcased the newest inhabitants of expanding Pan-America (annexed in the Spanish-American War), while the apex of the exposition was the centralized and ethereal Electric Tower, a skyward-tending monument to technological progress. As world's fair historian Robert Rydell maintains, the layout betrays an "intense drive to organize experience" toward the "synthesis of progress and white supremacy that suffused the blueprints of future perfection offered by the fairs" (4).

In this way, the fairground is an idealized city, a transitory and microcosmic projection of and advertisement for a particularly present future, a trial world. It occupies a liminal station between the idea and its manifestation—the exhibition *takes place* but leaves nothing more than a spectral residue. The outlines of the buildings at the center of the Rainbow City are traced in electric light and illuminated by night. The display of electrical power was a focal point of the Buffalo fair; spectators could even ride electric streetcars from one attraction to the next. But the spectacular and metaphorical import of electricity stole the show from its practical uses. This was the spectacle of the idea itself; Edison's light bulb had already become the predominant metaphor for ideation and inventiveness, making visible the spectrum of possibility. Electricity is the medium par excellence of what Nye calls "the technological sublime"; a spectacular illumination confronts the spectator with

"both extreme magnitude and irresistible power" (*American Technological Sublime*
151). An electrified landscape presents a simplified and abstracted pattern, a visual
text that isolates and highlights certain aspects of the actual and leaves others in the
dark, thereby serving as both spectacle and tour guide.

In the elaborate construction of points of view, the Pan's planners are not
unlike cameramen. Even to those present, there was something cinematic about the
experience; fairgoer and journalist Hartley Davis's claimed in *Munsey's Magazine*
that exposition spectators "are glutted with seeing things, their brains have been
rolled into picture films, thousands of feet long" (116). Edison intended to capitalize
on this cinematic potential of the fair as a staging of "current events;" altogether the
Edison Film Company would make eighteen films of the exposition (and ten more
concerning the president's assassination and funeral).[70] He made good on film's
growing reputation as a "visual newspaper," bringing Buffalo to the nickelodeon and
to those not fortunate enough to attend in person by filming the grounds and
recording what would be McKinley's last speech, which aptly celebrated "the genius
of the inventor." Perhaps the single greatest invention of the genius inventor Edison
was invention itself, or at least a way to market it. Edison sold ideas—his incredible
tally of 1,093 patents reveals not only a prolific mind but also a savvy understanding
of the fetishization of novelty.[71] The exposition provided Edison with the

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[70] All films are available on the Library of Congress' "American Memory" web page:
<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/d?papr:0:./temp/~ammem_jKh2:>
[71] Edison called his Menlo Park laboratory an "invention factory" and set out with his
team to come up with "a minor invention every ten days and a big thing every six
months or so" (qtd. in Essig 21).

opportunity to make news by filming his own electric spectacles.

The film of the "Electric Tower," *Pan-American Exposition by Night*, features a slow pan over the tower as a time-lapse trick turns day into night and reveals the luminescence of Edison's vision. The pan was a relatively rare technique in 1901 but its deployment seems almost demanded here, if not by the breadth of the spectacle than by the fact that the exposition was known simply as "The Pan" in popular parlance. The resulting spectacle marries cinematic and electric innovations while animating a postcard picture of the exposition's simulacra city. The camera's sweeping gesture reiterates the spatial narrative of the guided tour and invokes the carnival's spirit of inclusion while maintaining the official vision of the museum. The pan technique also instantiates a cinematic correlative to the exposition's project of celebrating colonial expansion. It was at the 1893 Columbian Exposition that Frederick Jackson Turner announced the closing of the American frontier; eight years later, film and exposition herald a push past the static frame. The pan surveys a landscape so as to accumulate, appropriate, and incorporate it. It mobilizes the frame, leaving behind what's already been recorded. According to Bazin, the film screen becomes something other than a frame something more, since "the picture frame polarizes space inwards" and "what the screen shows us seems to be part of something prolonged indefinitely into the universe." Whereas "a frame is centripetal, the screen [is] centrifugal," pointing to a "picturable world beyond [it] on all sides" (166). Any space is recordable—the act of recording itself, and a little later the act of panning itself, are as much the subjects of early film as the landscapes they pan and

record.

Describing what he calls the "exhibitionary complex," Tony Bennett details how public exhibitions manage to participate in a kind of Foucauldian panopticism despite the obstacle of free-roaming masses. The complex involves a visual transaction, "to see and be seen, to survey yet always be under surveillance" (84).[72] To make it official, designers of the Pan-American Exposition posted a "Short Sermon to Sightseers" asking them to "please remember when you get inside the gates you are part of the show" (qtd. in Walker 1678). The transaction that occurs when the gates are opened to the ideal world of the exposition is recorded by the exchange of looks between camera and subject in the Edison film of the scene outside the scene of the crime at Buffalo. Titled *The Mob Outside the Temple of Music at the Pan-American Exposition*, the film pans over a sea of hatted heads turned toward the site of the tragic event. A few of the onlookers turn and face the camera, as if to recognize that they have wandered inside the spectacle. The actuality film registers the contingencies and emergencies of the unfolding present; the camera sees what the meticulous planners of the exposition could not foresee.

Fred Nobody and the Current Event

But after Czolgosz was dead, the physicians were unable to find anything abnormal in his brain, and therefore he was not crazy and it was all right to kill him…. We know precious little more of the topography of the brain than we do of the topography of Mars….We know, regarding Czolgosz's brain that somewhere in it were

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[72] Lieven de Cauter notes that Bentham wrote the *The Panopticon or the Inspection House* in 1787, the same year that the painter Robert Barker patented his panorama (2).

tangles….And yet the whole country is satisfied with the "moral responsibility," whatever that may mean, of Czolgosz, simply on the strength of what we do not know about his brain.

Henry Holt, "The Treatment of Anarchism"

Leon F. Czolgosz
After arrest, Sept., 1901

[73]

Although the legacy of McKinley's presidency is marked by a push toward colonial expansion, he campaigned on a platform of immobility (dubbed "the Front Porch campaign")—not only would economic policy hold fast despite an oncoming recession, but McKinley himself wouldn't leave his home in Canton, Ohio. Obstinacy was his trademark. Thus, despite the warnings of several of the president's top advisors that crowd control could present a problem, McKinley insisted upon greeting the public at the Temple of Music. At the turn of the twentieth century, the combination of urban industrial overcrowding and political unrest imbued public assembly with a volatile potential energy that, when activated, authorities feared could turn a crowd into a mob in an instant. The term "mob" itself is a shortening of "mobile" or "mobility" and this is precisely what the crowd represented—a

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[73] "Leon F. Czolgosz. After arrest, Sept., 1901."

movement, a threat to stabilization, anarchy. In 1886, Chicago was rocked by the

grim events at the McCormick reaper factory—what would come to be known as the

"Haymarket Riot"—when a pipe bomb was thrown into a line of policeman

attempting to disperse a labor rally organized by local anarchists. In the wake of the

incident, seven anarchists were sentenced to die, though none of them was charged

with throwing the bomb or shooting a policeman. If the law could not identify the

criminal, it could criminalize the identified anarchist. [74] As Chris Vials suggests, the

figure of the anarchist at the turn of the century signified "the mob made flesh" and

that "defining the contours of the anarchist was the attempt to read the frightening and

faceless urban crowd" ("The Despotism of the Popular").

Czolgosz, who gave the police the name "Fred Nieman" upon his arrest

("Nieman" means "Nobody" in German), emerged undetected from the crowd at the

Pan-American Exposition. Nobody from out of nowhere—the mob threat remains

invisible until a gun fires or a bomb goes off.   The assassination fed the fear that the

anarchist menace constituted a pernicious invisible network that was not localizable,

as Jeffory Clymer puts it "generally everywhere, specifically nowhere" (53).

Dynamite was the de facto symbol of anarchist terror in the late nineteenth century.

The writer of an 1893 *New York Times* article entitled "Anarchists and Dynamite"

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[74] German-American activist Johann Most published a pamphlet in 1885 entitled *The
Science of Revolutionary Warfare: A Handbook on the Use and Production of
Nitroglycerine, Dynamite, Gun Cottom, Mercury Fulminate, Bombs, Fuses, Poisons,
etc., etc.* Most inspired the New York City Court of Appeals in 1891 to make it a
misdemeanor to simply identify oneself as an anarchist in public. There is a legal
parallel here with the Oscar Wilde trial and the policing of a specific "type" of
person. Efforts to criminalize categories of people rather than specific actions were a
sinister byproduct of late-nineteenth-century social science.

claims that "dynamite is the main support of anarchism" and anarchists are "skulking sneaks" "who light fuses and run away." The anarchist panic helped spark the culture of shock and emergency that technological innovation both abetted and abated.[75] Describing the frenzied aftermath of the shooting at Buffalo, historian Eric Rauchway notes that "even as the electric wire sought out Roosevelt and jolted him from his insignificance, an electric ambulance whisked President McKinley away from the Temple of Music" (11). The rush to restore order answers the alarm. Though the people in *The Mob Outside the Temple of Music* appear stunned and immobile, its titular identification of "the mob" signals the fear that crowds are always unstable.

In 1895, French social psychologist Gustave LeBon's popular study, *The Crowd*, adumbrated what we might call in contemporary parlance "the mob mentality." LeBon's anatomical metaphors highlight the discursive bridges from biological organ to social organization: "the psychological crowd is a provisional being formed of heterogeneous elements, which for a moment are combined, exactly as the cells which constitute a living body form by their reunion a new being which displays characteristics very different from those possessed by each of the cells singular" (47). The individual members of the crowd undergo their own "re-organization" marked by "the disappearance of brain activity" and exhibit behavior "more under the influence of the spinal cord than of the brain" (56). For LeBon, the crowd is a kind of organic anarchy, a monstrous organism with brainless human appendages.

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[75] Among Edison's first experiments were a stock ticker and a fire alarm system.

In Czolgosz's fatal act, the capitalist fantasy of the world's fair is confronted by the anarchist fantasy of social solidarity. The autodidact Czolgosz probably did not read Le Bon's contemporary Émile Durkheim's 1893 *The Division of Labor in Society,* which proposes "anomie" as a social condition marked by a lack of "organic solidarity"—the alienated industrial worker (and Czolgosz was one) "is no longer the living cell of a living organism …he is no more than a lifeless cog which an external force sets in motion" (306-7). However, Czolgosz's favorite book was Edward Bellamy's 1888 utopian socialist science fiction novel *Looking Backward*, whose enlightened scientist Dr. Barton laments "the reduction of life to a round of bodily functions" that marred late-nineteenth-century industrial life (209). In an essay called "The Religion of Solidarity," Bellamy lauds a "passion for losing ourselves in others or for absorbing them into ourselves" (266). Though he led an increasingly solitary life, Czolgosz claimed he acted out of a longing for community; his last words from the electric chair begin "I killed the president because he was the enemy of the good people—the good working people."

Czolgosz acted alone. Though he had attended several meetings and lectures in the years leading up to the assassination, he was never accepted by the radical community. In fact, he was so awkwardly blunt in asking about the locations of "secret meetings," that some thought he was a spy. Nonetheless, in the aftermath of the assassination the increasingly sensational fin de siècle press exploited the possibility that Czolgosz was an expendable gunman in service of a growing

conspiratorial network.[76] A September 8th headline in *The New York Times* read "Assassin Known as a Rabid Anarchist" and on the same day in Czolgosz's hometown *Cleveland Plain Dealer,* an article entitled "Emma Goldman Set Me on Fire!" linked the killer to the nation's most well known and outspoken champion of anarchism.[77] Newspapers mobilized fears of the potential threat lurking in the heterogeneous immigrant (both of the above-mentioned articles note Czolgosz's Polish ancestry) masses that powered the American industrial and imperial machine. As with the "colonization" of electricity, the extension of borders incorporates dangerous elements into bodies human and national.

The anarchist's body needs to be identified and arrested, made a site for the staging of a narrative of a recuperation of the national body through the ritual reassertion of legal and technological order. Czolgosz's execution would be an exhibition on the fate of anarchy and the lethal application of electricity. His legal trial, however, was something of sham. His guilty plea was disregarded by the judge, who insisted a plea of not-guilty be submitted. Questions of the potential mitigation of responsibility for reasons of mental health were quickly discarded. The official report of the doctors that examined him in prison stated:

> He has false beliefs, the result of false teaching and not the result of
> disease. He is not to be classed as degenerate, because we do not find
> the stigmata of degeneration, his skull is symmetrical, he ears do not

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[76] In fact, Gunning locates "the sensational press" in the milieu of "attractions" in "Now You See It, Now You Don't."
[77] Goldman was arrested in connection with the assassination and subsequently released.

protrude, nor are they of abnormal size, and his palate not highly

arched. Psychically he has not a history of cruelty, or of perverted

tastes and habits. He is the product of Anarchy, sane and responsible.

(qtd. in Briggs 246)

Though neurologists were clamoring for a thorough postmortem examination of

Czolgosz's brain, Auburn's Warden Mead secured permission to dispose of the body

from Czolgosz's family and ordered the remains destroyed by quicklime and sulfuric

acid. He intended to ensure that Czolgosz, in Rauchway's words, "would not become

a martyr either to anarchism or psychology" (88).

The expediency with which Czolgosz's trial and remains were dispatched was

likely motivated in part by the trial of another presidential assassin, Charles Guiteau,

who shot James Garfield at a Washington, D.C., train station in 1881. The

circumstances of the preceding assassination and trial prefigure the crucible of

electric emergency and criminal responsibility that manifested twenty years later. It

was initially believed that Garfield would survive the wound, and he likely would

have if not for doctors' errors in attempting to remove the bullet. As the president

convalesced, telegraphed updates of his medical condition were posted in major urban

stations and Alexander Graham Bell fashioned an electrical "induction balance" to

help locate the bullet in the president's body. Electricity and tele-technology assumed

a crucial role in absorbing the shock of the assassination. The makeshift metal

detector assisted in the medical operation while the daily wires provided a reassuring

pulse of information as to the health of the national body qua presidential body.[78]

Described by his prosecutors as an egomaniacally disgruntled office seeker, Guiteau was in all likelihood a paranoid schizophrenic. His trial was also a public trial of the insanity defense (or "insanity dodge" to its detractors). Guiteau himself imagined his brain as electrically charged; he dabbled in theology and he described the composition of his lectures this way: "I weave the discourse out of my brain as cotton is woven into fabric—when I compose my brain is in a white heat and my mind works like lightning" (qtd. in Rosenberg 34). The defendant was a spectacle in court, prone to wild gesticulation and repeated verbal outbursts. During the testimony of a medical witness for the prosecution, he reportedly shouted "those experts hang a man and examine his brain afterwards" (qtd. in Rosenberg 211). The protest was not just mere raving—the question of a criminal's psychological state as material evidence divided the medical community. George Miller Beard was among the most outspoken opponents of Guiteau's execution; he petitioned President Arthur and wrote a polemical tract comparing the assassin's legal treatment to the Salem Witch trials:

> Both trials were the result of ignorance of the nervous system in
> disease—that of Guiteau, ignorance of insanity; the Salem trials,
> ignorance of insanity, hysteria, trance, and allied states, more complex
> phenomena than those of insanity alone, but all referable to the

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[78] Bell and company were unable to isolate the location of the bullet because they had failed to consider the fact that Garfield's bed had a metal bedframe. For more on electric media and the Garfield, assassination, see Richard Menke's "Media in America 1881: Garfield, Guiteau, Bell, Whitman."

nervous system. Had these phenomena been understood, there would

have been no trials of witches in Salem, and no trial of Guiteau in

Washington. (*Salem* 28)

 Beard diagnosed Guiteau with a "defective nervous organization" and "a brain

monstrosity"; the assassin was a natural disaster and therefore the Garfield

assassination was "a horrible accident, as though he had been crushed in a railway

collision, or suffocated in a burning theater" (*Salem* 107).

Though Czolgosz was not given a legitimate legal defense, he had a number

of defenders in the burgeoning and intersecting fields of neurology, social

psychology, and criminology. In his introduction to *The Manner of Man That Kills*

(in which Czolgosz is one of three case studies), L. Vernon Briggs argues that

civilized society can prevent crimes like the McKinley assassination through a deeper

understanding of the nature and proper nurture of psychopathology. Briggs makes

the liberal case: "Society has punished the person it created. The original fault was

the fault of society" (7). Briggs' study actually moves backwards through the places

Czolgosz lived and worked, interviewing his family and associates to demonstrate

social psychology's narrative of conditioning in reverse. As the new social science

works to liberate forensic pathology from its physical frame, speculation about what

went wrong in Czolgosz's mind had to move beyond the contours of his brain. For

neurologist and criminologist J. Sanderson Christison, mental illness is a problem of

"physiologic-psychology"; he writes that "insanity has no more to do with the brain

than the character of a newspaper has to do with its mechanics" (15). Christison

suggests that Czolgosz may have suffered from epilepsy, which he defines as "a more or less transient and spasmodic affection of the psychic functions" (1). Briggs' associate Walter Channing contended that in cases of criminal psychopathology, "the crime sometimes is in the nature of an explosion, which for the time being relieves mental tension" (2). The assassin's brain is figured as short-circuited and subject to sudden shocks (a modernized version of Guiteau's inner lightning) and a violent outburst may be the only way the sufferer can conceive of purging the violence in their mind.

But the qualifications of a handful of social and medical scientists were not enough to influence the legal decision. As Michel Foucault has made clear, the spectacle of public execution reinscribes law and order at the expense of the transgressive body. It is not a demonstration of the balancing of the scales of justice, but rather an "emphatic affirmation" of the imbalance of power that "gives force to law" (*Discipline and Punish* 49-50). The message sent to spectators of public executions was twofold: to ensure the private citizen that the state would exercise all of its power to eliminate threats to order and to remind them of their fate should they themselves pose such a threat. In Czolgosz's case, the public needed little convincing. A vast majority of Americans were in favor of the assassin's execution; some even preferred that he be lynched. Although the scaffold had given way to the "cleaner" and more "civilized" electric chair and executions had abandoned the visibility of the scaffold's town square locale, residue of the ritual work of public display was manifest in 1901, as seen in this brief article from the September 21 *New*

York Times entitled "Want to See Czolgosz Die": "In the belief that Czolgosz will be executed in Auburn Prison, more than 100 persons have already made application to Warden Mead to witness the execution. The applications are by telegraph, telephone, and mail. The first application was received one hour after the President's death. Every mail adds to the number." Though only twenty-six witnesses were ultimately admitted to Auburn Prison, Edison's cinematic reenactment substituted the nickelodeon for the scaffold and slaked the general public's desire for visual evidence of the execution.

In light of the fact that the murder of McKinley was a violent disruption, a short-circuiting of the elaborate network of technological spectacle designed for display at Buffalo, Czolgosz's execution by the still-somewhat-nascent apparatus of the electric chair and its cinematic reenactment seems to realize early cinema's project of absorption on multiple fronts. Indeed, as Jonathan Auerbach argues: "In a single unbroken circuit, the power of the state to punish President McKinley's killer by electrocution merges with the power of the genius inventor Edison to harness electricity, which in turn merges with the power of his corporation's filmmakers to represent such spectacles" (39). It was hoped that electrocution could painlessly transport the guilty soul from this life to the next like information through a telegraph. Beard did not live to see the electric chair in use, but his former collaborator A.D. Rockwell touted electrocution's efficiency and humaneness, claiming "the translation from life to death is quicker than thought, and with a mathematical impossibility of pain" (232). Mark Seltzer posits that a concept of efficient electrocution is latent in

the invention of the electric switch, which "promises to reconnect the interrupted

links, between conception and execution, agency and expression," suggesting "an

identity between signal and act and an identity between communication and

execution—'execution' in its several senses" (11). The electric chair itself (initially

designed by Buffalo dentist Alfred Southwick) puts the condemned in a civilized

posture and "turns him off" like a light, in Tim Armstrong's terms, "silently and

invisibly absorbing the individual into a scientific and technological system" (34).

The history of the electric chair is freighted with anxiety. The first legal and

lethal application of electricity was delayed by the public dispute between the Edison

Company and the Westinghouse Company, neither of which wanted their generators

used in the execution. Ultimately Westinghouse's AC current was used and Edison

exploited his victory for commercial purposes, asking consumers if they want the

executioner's current in their homes. The electrocution was conducted in 1890 at the

same site as the Czolgosz execution, Auburn Prison.[79] It did not go as planned.

Convicted axe murderer William Kemmler survived the initial current (though he was

likely unconscious) and had to be subjected to a second.[80] Shock was not so easily

regulated: *The New York Times* account of its debut bore the headings "Far Worse

Than Hanging" and "Kemmler's Death Proves an Awful Spectacle." Rather than

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[79] Notably, Alexis de Tocqueville visited Auburn prison in 1831.
[80] Tim Armstrong notes that the failure of the first attempt could have been caused by power drained by lights used to signal that the system was working. The electrocution also dimmed the lights at the prison, signaling, in Armstrong's words, how "death becomes part of a total system whose purpose is general: industrial and domestic as well as disciplinary; and used, above all, for the conveying of information" (35).

assuage apprehensions about modern man's interventions in the electrical realm, the

Kemmler incident exacerbated them. The mistake was not repeated and by 1893,

public faith in the apparatus was sufficient enough for it to be featured among the

technological marvels at the Columbia Exposition. Whether or not the chaos of the

electric chair's inauspicious beginnings haunted those presiding at Auburn Prison a

little over a decade later, the execution of Czolgosz (and *The Execution of Czolgosz*)

provided an opportunity for the staging of both anarchy and the electric chair under

control.

  Execution of Czolgosz's opening panorama of Auburn Prison (sold separately

or along with the reenactment, per the buyer's wishes), as critics have noted, both

performs the Foucaultian gesture of the camera as instrument of surveillance and

recalls the celebratory tone of *Pan-American Exposition By Night*.[81] The

acknowledged disjunction between the exterior "actuality" footage and the staged

interior scenes (the film was marketed as a "realistic imitation") marks the

filmmakers' failure to capture the real event but points to cinema's potential to access

it through representation. The pan of the exterior of the prison was shot the morning

of the execution, as if an aura of authentic "actuality" is conferred not just by

shooting the space of the event but by shooting the time of the event as well. While

the exterior shot amounts to a representation of the literal barriers of representing the

execution, the dissolve to reenactment employs cinema's new means of getting the

spectator inside. This splicing of "fact" and "fiction" emphasizes the comforts of

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[81] See Auerbach, *Body Shots* and Miriam Hansen, *Babel and Babylon*.

imposing narrative order on "real life" contingencies. In a sense, *Execution of Czolgosz* is true to the scene of filmmaking if not to the scene of death; its progress from the location of the newsworthy event to the studio duplicates the actual movements of the Edison team. If the theatrical portion of the film is in service of its "authentic" shots, it is clearly not subordinate to them; the "fact" is likewise in service of the "fiction," which supplies by proxy the appropriate narrative end for those unable to witness the execution in person.

Inside the simulated prison, guards approach Czolgosz's cell, retrieve him, and escort him down the hallway. Then the film cuts to a shot of its avenging hero— the lethal instrument of the electric chair. The importance of the machine-under-control helps explain why, within the early cinema's typically limited economy of shots, the camera does not simply follow Czolgosz from his cell to the death chamber or the film does not cut to the chamber as the prisoner is being led in. The final scene instead lingers on the spectacle of the chair itself, as an assemblage of official personnel examine it meticulously, occasionally performing careful gestures of tightening and tinkering. Of course, as the technicians inspect the device, the camera does as well. According to Auerbach, "facing one another, movie camera and electric chair become mirror images, so that a new technology proclaimed to reproduce life uncannily serves to register the process of dying" (39). After being strapped to the machine and shocked into a convulsion, Czolgosz is effectively de-animated, in a reversal of the cinematic capacity to bring pictures to life. The warden's nodded confirmation of Czolgosz's death is addressed to the camera, positioning the film as

185

official document and the spectator as official witness. This move dramatizes the camera's implication in the network of inspection—the visual evidence supplied by *Execution of Czolgosz* endorses both the electric chair and the law itself as reliable and efficient technologies. While the shocking display at the center of the film locates it within the cinema of attractions, its participation in the mechanisms of state power reveal the degree to which the film charges the aesthetics of attraction with a more grave project.

In addition to the films of the exposition and *Execution of Czolgosz,* the Edison Film Company also shot seven films of the president's funeral cortege from Buffalo to Washington and ultimately to Canton.[82] Of course, the respective bodies of the assassin and the martyred president (and the Edison Company indeed also made another 1901 film titled *The Martyred Presidents*) are given a very different cinematic treatment. While Czolgosz's body is destroyed and its cinematic double preserved in the moment of execution, the tour of the body of the slain president is documented with ceremonial reverence. Taken in sequence, the Edison films of the assassination, funeral, and execution trace a narrative arc from anxiety to reassurance, shock to absorption. The havoc of the crowd seen in *The Mob Outside the Temple of Music* becomes the reassuring spectacle of orderly procession. In the three-part *President McKinley's Funeral Cortege at Washington D.C.*, after a long line of military personnel and the carriage containing the casket pass by the camera, the film cuts to an aerial pan of the public waiting in line outside the Capitol rotunda to view

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[82] All are available at the Library of Congress website: <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query>

the body, according to an Edison Film Company catalog, "a most perfect and interesting picture is secured as an ending to the film."[83]

Parks and Wreck

With the urban industrial environment pathologized as a neurological hazard, recreational spaces became sites for the rehabilitation of the enervated body and spirit, a chance to re-create oneself by replenishing the vital forces sapped by the work day and the general tumult of the urban experience. In New York City, Frederick Law Olmstead's Central Park interrupted the cityscape with a pastoral sanctuary equipped with the curative powers of nature (Donna Haraway calls it a "prophylactic dose of nature"). However, as the turn of the century approached, New Yorkers began to eschew the centrality of Central Park for the more kinetic and tawdry charms of a new breed of park emerging out on the margins of the metropole in Coney Island. As an alternative to the comparatively sober practices of recreational retreat, the immediate sensory feast of the amusement park can stimulate even the overstimulated. This does not mean, however, that the amusement park abandoned the project of recuperating the nervous subject. Coney impresario George Tilyou actively promoted his enterprise's restorative potential. In an advertisement designed to attract visitors to the park, Tilyou claims that "those who desire and need rest from the cares and anxieties of their daily avocations can here derive a great

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[83] Quoted on the Library of Congress website: <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?papr:17:./temp/~ammem_yrXO::>

benefit" (qtd. in Pilat and Ranson 133). Journalist Julian Ralph called Coney New

York's "homeopathic sanitarium" and its "extra lung." This is what we might call the

work of play in the age of mechanical reproduction—the injection of mechanization

into recreation is a dose of industrial grade "hair of the dog."

Opponents of this prescription argued that it was not a benefit but a threat to

the park patron's nervous well-being, if not his general corporeal integrity. In a

caustic critique of the amusement park in *The Atlantic Monthly* in 1907, Rollin Lynde

Hartt catalogs the attendant ironies of a weekend getaway to Coney Island:

> what more ludicrous and what more sad than the spectacle of vast
>
> hordes of people rushing to the Oceanside, to escape the city's din and
>
> crowds and nervous strain, and…courting worse din, denser crowds,
>
> and an infinitely more devastating nervous strain inside an enclosure
>
> whence the ocean cannot possibly be seen?…"Never tell me again the
>
> Americans are a nervous people!" They are, though, and yonder
>
> amazing institution proves it. Manhattanitis, with its numerous
>
> congeners, isn't merely a disease, it's an obsession. It doesn't ask
>
> relief, it only asks aggravation. The sole treatment that it welcomes is
>
> the counter-irritant—powerful, drastic, and like in kind to itself. ("The
>
> Amusement Park" 677)

Hartt rightly recognizes the amusement-seeker's willingness to subject himself to the

pseudo-perils of what he calls Coney Island's "whirling death-traps" and "mad

cyclonic bugaboos" as the very symptom of nervousness rather than the absence of it.

He resists the Benjaminian notion that the anesthetizing effects of shock can be countered by incorporation.

Though Benjamin generally identifies innervation as a potentially productive force, he implicates the amusement park in his critique of industrial labor's relation to recreation. Leisure time and leisure space become mere extensions of work time and work space; work essentially devours play: "what the Fun Fair achieves with its Dodgem cars and other similar amusements is nothing but a taste of the drill to which the unskilled laborer is subjected in the factory" ("Baudelaire" 176). For Horkheimer and Adorno as well, "amusement…is the prolongation of work…what happens at work, in the factory, or in the office can only be escaped from by approximation to it in one's leisure time" (136). The Frankfurt School's theoretical line intersects with Eagleton's assessment, via Bakhtin, of carnival as the practice of licensed distraction ultimately in service of the forces it purports to subvert. The mechanical carnival makes flesh accustomed to contact with the machine, and the reveler always returns to work.

Essentially the world's fair midway liberated from the official agenda of the exposition, the amusement park is a marketplace of desire and diversion. Though his formulation of the death drive was more than a decade away, Freud could have seen in the attractions at Coney a staged collision of Eros and Thanatos, a site suited for both the indulgence of sensual pleasure and the rehearsal of bodily trauma. As Bennett writes of an English amusement park designed in the Coney Island fashion, "In its constructed separateness from the outside world, materially bracketed by the

enclosing walls, the Pleasure Beach engenders expectations of untrammeled pleasures which the ideological coding operative within it can only partly contain" (245). Architect and theorist Rem Koolhaas goes so far as to suggest that Coney Island is "a clitoral appendage at the mouth of New York's natural harbor," the locus of pleasure and stimulation in the anatomy of the metropolis. As the buckles burst on Victorian decorum, recreational space became increasingly sexually charged, earning its nickname "Sodom by the Sea." Certain attractions—such as a pavilion floor equipped with air jets under a metal grating designed propel women's skirts upward and the Love Nest, which sent a cart-built-for-two through a series of unlit and publicly private tunnels—overtly appealed to patrons more prurient interests. An advertisement for the Cannon Coaster, which appeared in 1900, asked the prospective rider to "imagine...the excitement, the wild thrill of delight, that you will experience when you are shot from the cannon's mouth on to the slide beyond: Will she throw her arms around your neck and yell? Well, I guess, yes!" The roller coaster refigures the threat of collision as the promise of a more agreeable collision or even the threat of death with the promise of a "little death," converting nervous energy into sexual energy.

From its beginnings, the park has invited excess; to journalist James Huneker, New York is "the dumping ground of the cosmos" (158) and Coney Island is its first resort and a last resort, a reservoir for the overflow of people in New York City. Coney Island's situation at the geographical margins has always been central to its practical and symbolic functions. For the contemporary subway-rider, Coney Island

is the end-of-the-line, the limit, the terminus. It is where one who wants to see

exactly how far one can go ends up; the park maps the limits of experience and

contorts the possible. Thus, the amusement park welcomed spectacular

experimentation, often including encounters (like Topsy's fatal one) between

technology and biology. Koolhaas designates Coney Island as both the "laboratory"

wherein "the strategies and mechanisms that later shape Manhattan are tested" and

"an incubator for Manhattan's incipient themes and infant mythology" (32). Indeed,

one popular experimental attraction was in fact the Infant Incubator, the inventor and

proprietor of which was remarkably named Dr. Martin Couney.[84]

Part of what Coney Island consumers consumed was a fantasy of recreational

anarchy, the temporary suspension of expected patterns of technological operation as

well as civilized behavior in favor of disorientation and dysfunction. The amusement

park was littered with trick chairs and trick benches that in John Kasson's words,

"mocked the world of productive devices by being intentionally counterproductive,

systematically frustrating those who would expect them to fulfill their apparent

functions" (72). A certain degree of counterproductivity is embedded in the very logic

of the amusement park "ride" as well; having arrived at precisely the same spot from

which she departed, the rider gains nothing beyond the raw sensory experience of the

ride. The ride approaches a kind of technological degree zero—empty of content or

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[84] The amusement park's contortions of the possible are embodied by the human
spectacles of the freak show, which arrived at Coney Island in 1880. The freakshow
notably played on the border separating the human and the animal (including the
"Dog-Faced Boy," "Lionel, the Lion-Faced Man," and "The Four-Legged Woman,"
among others) and the capacity of electricity to permeate the human body—
"Electricia" is listed among the cast of the 1928 "Sideshow Circus."

containing only itself. It's an informal formal exercise that conveys a carnival parody of modern conveyance, free from the linearity of tracks or the responsibility of destination.

The most conspicuous ride at the amusement park is, of course, the roller coaster. Debuted at Coney in 1884, the roller coaster, along with that other prominent icon of the amusement park landscape, the Ferris Wheel (designed for the Chicago Exposition), was first and foremost a rideable feat of engineering. If the screams of riders of early roller coasters (such as the aptly named "Gravity Pleasure Railway") signaled the simultaneously frightening and titillating kinesthetic experience engendered by technological innovation, the visible sturdiness of the machine's manifold mechanisms, the soothing aural ebbs that follow the manic aural flows of the gears, and the quotidian monotony of waiting in line, all assure the anxious spectator of the triumph of American ingenuity over chaos. But once on the coaster, the rider tenders his body to the disorienting effects of the ride. As Bill Brown argues, the function of what he calls "the pleasure machine" is to "reduce the self to an agentless sensorium" and produce "the dehumanized, fully embodied subject, the subject that is all body" (46).

In this way, the pleasure machine dramatizes the sensory experience of bodily abandon and impending collision minus the mortal consequences of impact. In the words of one nineteenth-century rider, it offers "all the sensations of being carried away by a cyclone, without the attendant sacrifice of life and limb" (qtd. in Brown 46). The more morbid elements of the pleasure derived from the machine seem

inextricably bound to turn-of-the-century popular culture's curious appetite for staged

disaster, as evidenced by W.G. Crush's county fair demonstrations of head-on train

collisions and Edison's 1904 film *The Railroad Smashup*. In fact, one of the earliest

incarnations of the roller coaster, the "Leap-Frog Railway," made its kinship to such

entertainments quite explicit. The ride sent two cars "each filled with as many as

forty people, toward one another on the same set of tracks," only to send one car up a

set of curved rails over the roof of the other car at the last second (Kasson 78). "Leap-

Frog Railway" conditions the rider to the rhythm of anxiety and reassurance.

The roller coaster did not have sole dominion over the amusement park's

fascination with disaster, which also materialized in the staging of live reenactments

of a number of natural catastrophes, including the eruption of Mount Vesuvius,

Pennsylvania's Johnstown Flood, and even an attraction called "Fire and Flames," for

which a four-story building was set ablaze and actors playing building residents leapt

out of windows into safety nets. As Kasson points out, the staging of these events

activates "a horrible delight in the apprehension that devastating tragedy had both

historically and contemporaneously intruded suddenly in daily affairs, even in

modern technological America" (72). In juxtaposing the simulation of natural and

mechanical disasters, the organization of the amusement park aims to naturalize

technological failure; situating the roller coaster next to Vesuvius, Coney Island

constructs a narrative of the evolution of catastrophe. For Brown, "disaster

[becomes] the privileged mode for effecting the recreational sublime," as "the serial

reproduction of disastrous destruction marks the moment when the amusement

industry routinizes the aleatory" (118). However, the ritual rehearsal of disaster did not prepare the parks for actual catastrophe. The demise of Dreamland is a surreal instance of electric disaster. In 1911, the park was destroyed by a fire that began with a short-circuited lighting system at an attraction uncannily called Hell Gate. During the conflagration, many of Dreamland's trained animals were killed, but a few— elephants, gorillas, lions—ran amok (some on fire) in and out of the park grounds. The fire department from Midget City (a permanent half-scale community that was one of Dreamland's most popular attractions) aided in the attempt to extinguish the blaze.

Autopsy - Seeing the Elephant

Elephant n.1. a remarkable or astonishing sight or sights…
Phrase: See the elephant,
 1. to see or experience all that one can endure…
 2 a. to gain worldly experience or to learn a hard lesson from experience; lose one's innocence
<div align="right">

Random House Historical Dictionary of American Slang[85]
</div>

I will Remember What I Was
6600 volts, 1500 Looked On
> Lee Deigaard, *Topsy's Mutoscope Peepshow* tribute at the Coney Island Museum,
> with the epigraph, "That we may remember as elephants do."

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[85] Quoted in T.J. Lustig's "Seeing the Elephant: Constructing Culture in Britain and the United States After Jumbo." Lustig maintains that the sequence of definitions for 'elephant "is a condensed narrative of...disenchantment."

When the writer James Agee died, his last letter was discovered on the mantle of his house, addressed to his friend Father James Flye. In it, Agee sketches an idea ("Almost nobody I've described it to likes this idea, except me") for a movie about the plight of circus elephants in America. The plot moves from fable to fact—"what happened; a matter of record; when elephants were brought among civilized men" (230)—details the sad fates of a few historical animals. There is Old Bet (shot by religious zealots), Mary (hanged on a railroad derrick in Tennessee for killing three men), and Jumbo, the most famous elephant of all, hit by a train (231). The story of Jumbo uncannily anticipates Topsy's fatal encounter with modern technology as well as the cinema's "primal scene" of threatening, thrilling locomotion. In the early 1880s, Edison began calling his massive new electric dynamos "Jumbos"; one had been shipped to Europe on the same boat that took the elephant from London to New York. As Topsy's living image is preserved in the Edison film, Jumbo's lifeless body was stuffed by taxidermist Carl Akeley and taken on the road for exhibition by P.T.

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[86] This is Jumbo the elephant, after being hit by a train.

Barnum.[87] The same year that Jumbo was killed, construction was completed on

Coney Island's Elephantine Colossus or Elephant Hotel—both the hotel and Jumbo's

remains perished by fire (1896 and 1975, respectively). In 1903, the year Topsy was

electrocuted, technicians installed a quarter million electric lights at Luna Park to

attract evening visitors with their stunning display, as well as their promise of safety.

The bizarre spectacle of Topsy's electrocution was not without precedent. At

the Pan-American Exposition, renowned animal trainer and showman Frank Bostock

was knocked unconscious by an African elephant named Jumbo II. Bostock decided

to execute the elephant by hanging in the exposition's stadium and sell tickets at fifty

cents apiece. Pan officials objected not to the event but to the method of execution.

According to historian Mark Goldman, hanging "was simply not in accord with the

ideals of the Pan-American...they had, however, no objection to electrocution" (19).

On November, 9, 1901, less than two weeks after the electrocution of Leon Czolgosz

and the exact same day *Execution of Czolgosz* was copyrighted by Thomas Edison,

over 7,000 people gathered to witness the death of Jumbo II. The elephant survived

the current, tickets were refunded, and Bostock decided to let the animal live.

Animals play an integral role in the history of both film technology and the

use of electricity as lethal force. Both Marey and Muybridge employed animals as

their prime model for illustrating motion, as evidenced by the titles of their major

works—Marey's *Animal Mechanism* and Muybridge's *Animals in Motion*.

Describing Muybridge's serial images, Akira Lippitt writes:

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[87] For more on Akeley, see Donna Haraway's "Teddy Bear Patriarchy" in *Primate Visions.*

> In sequence after sequence, the photographer's animals pushed against
> the cryogenic frames of a fixated medium until they seemed to surpass
> the limits and enter the interstices, creating the semblance of motion—
> persistence of vision...What is remarkable in Muybridge's work…is
> the relentless and obsessive manner in which the themes of animal and
> motion are brought into contact—as if the figure of the animal had
> always been destined to serve as a symbol of movement itself.
> (*Electric Animal* 185)

Muybridge even named one of his proto-cinematic innovations the "zoopraxiscope,"
a technology designed for looking at animals. When his later work took on the
human body, Muybridge presented it as "the human animal," photographing his
subjects nude and exhibiting them at public lectures after his animal studies to
suggest a Darwinian trajectory. Thus the evolutionary model of the development of
cinematic technology begins with the animal that the fantasy of animation takes as its
object.

The first published "historical" treatment of motion picture technology,
History of the Kinetograph, Kinetoscope, and Kineto-Photograph, written by the
Edison Film Company's own W.K.L. Dickson (along with his wife) in 1895, depicts
the early New Jersey film "laboratory" as crowded with all kinds of animal subjects
for film experimentation, some borrowed from P.T. Barnum's circus. In an eerily
prophetic passage intended to be humorous, Dickson describes a bored bourgeois
spectator able to engage with "the thrilling dramas of jungle and forest" without

"embrowning the delicate cuticle on their patrician countenances":

> All the kingdoms of the world, with their wealth of color, outline and
> sound, shall be brought into the elastic scope of individual requirement
> at the *wave of a nineteenth century wand*…the tawny flash of the
> savage eyes, the *lightning* play of the vigorous muscles…the roar of
> the great cats, the grinding of fangs, *the scream of the dying elephant*.
> (33, my emphasis)

A later passage in reference to colleague Fred Ott being induced by ground tobacco
and black pepper to sneeze on film carries a similarly unintended resonance, as
Dickson facetiously remarks, "science hath her martyrs as well as religion" (41).

In fact, Edison's abuse of animals for the purposes of scientific
experimentation predates both Topsy and the cinema. According to Matthew
Josephson's 1959 *Edison: A Biography,* "on any day in 1887" at the inventor's West
Orange laboratory,

> One might have found Edison and his assistants occupied in certain
> cruel and lugubrious experiments: the electrocution of stray cats and
> dogs by means of high-tension currents. In the presence of newspaper
> reporters and other invited guests, Edison…would edge a little dog
> onto a sheet of tin to which were attached wires from an A/C generator
> supplying current at 1,000 volts...the feline and canine pets of the West
> Orange neighborhood were executed in such numbers that the local
> animal population stood in danger of being decimated. (347)

The animal body is a test case, a working out of the potential of the technologies of both electricity and film to impact the human body. Of course, in working out his dualistic model, Descartes notoriously decided that the animal was itself a sort of technology—a meat machine. Under this model, the animal body as object of medico-scientific intervention is the ideal surrogate for the human body. They are like us—as John Berger reminds us, in all likelihood, "the first metaphor was animal" (5). They have corresponding parts without corresponding souls.

When the Cartesian ontological division is complicated by theories of evolution, the animal becomes a sort of prototype, a present history. Donna Haraway contends that animals are granted a "special status as natural objects that can show people their origin, and therefore pre-rational, pre-management, pre-cultural essence" (*Simians, Cyborgs, and Women* 11). While the animal body helped to elucidate biological and physiological questions, animal being remains a philosophical wilderness. The animal becomes a third term that upsets the Cartesian binary, occupying a space somewhere in between mind human and nature, technology and subjectivity. They are on the move, disappearing from the epistemological frame as they do from the chronophotographic frame. In Lippitt's words, "animals are exemplary vehicles with which to mediate between the corporeality of the brain and the ideality of the mind" (6). Of course, the elephant in particular has a sophisticated relationship to mourning and memory, according to both science and myth.[88]

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[88] Incidentally, Jeffrey Masson abandoned psychoanalytic history and theory in favor of researching the emotional life of animals. In 1995, along with Susan McCarthy, he published a book titled *When Elephants Weep*. In an interview with Powells.com,

Along with children, animals in early cinema often functioned to cushion the

blow of violent images. In the same year that the Edison Company released the

controversial *Corbett-Courtney Fight*, which exploited the burgeoning popularity of

boxing at the turn of the century, they also made *The Boxing Cats*, featuring

vaudeville veteran Harry Welton overseeing a pair of animals fitted with miniature

boxing gloves and pitted against one another in a miniature ring.   Charles Musser

argues that such films worked to undo the tension surrounding the discussion of early

film's moral standing by "displaying physical violence induced in the most

domesticated of subjects" (43).[89] However, Topsy would seem to have more in

common with Leon Czolgosz than with Harry Welton's boxing cats. Though, as

astute critics have noted, Topsy's name suggests Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (and

thereby situates the captured African animal in the contexts of race and empire), it

also evokes the amusement park's innocuous version of anarchy; in the words of one

turn-of-the-century journalist, "Coney Island is only another name for Topsy-

Turvydom" (Huneker 162). The anarchist and the elephant are similarly figured in a

liminal space between human and animal; while the newspapers presented Czolgosz

as inhuman, Topsy's execution is an anthropomorphic exhibition. The elephant is

shown being led to her death under the control of authorities just as the prison guards

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Masson explains the shift in subject matter this way: "I'd written a whole series of
books about psychiatry, and nobody bought them. Nobody liked them. Nobody.
Psychiatrists hated them, and they were much too abstruse for the general public. It
was very hard to make a living, and I thought, 'As long as I'm not making a living, I
may as well write about something I really love: animals."
[89] Films like *Li'l Train Robbery*, which parodied the incredibly popular *The Great
Train Robbery* and *Scrap in Black and White*, which featured two boys (one black
and one white) boxing, used children to the same effect.

escort Czolgosz from cell to death chamber. [90] Lisa Cartwright suggests that Topsy's execution is a means of "carrying out a fantasy of discipline and corporal punishment through observation" (46).

This taxonomic and ontological ambiguity licenses the interventions of both scientific and legal disciplines. Influential criminologist Cesare Lombroso described criminal activity in Darwinian terms as a kind of atavism or vestigial animality. In this schema, Czolgosz's violent eruption (whether attributed to psychological or neurological pathology) is aligned with Topsy's rampage. The detention and execution of both the anarchist with the unpronounceable Eastern European surname and the African elephant attest to civilization's dominion over more primitive forces.[91] Containment of the threat posed by Czolgosz and Topsy depends on the ability to identify the organic locus of that threat by scientific means. Thus each is subject to posthumous inspection; just as interest abounded in securing parts of Czolgosz's brain after his execution, *The New York Times* reports that Topsy's dissection began "as soon as the electrodes were removed" and her organs were sent to a Prof. McClure of Princeton University.[92]

Of course, the crucial difference between *Execution of Czolgosz* and

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[90] If Topsy's lethal outburst and subsequent ritual execution align her with Czolgosz, the elephant is also, of course, the symbol of McKinley's republican party. The origin of the elephant as GOP symbol is identified as an 1874 cartoon by Thomas Nast.

[91] As a female, Topsy was not susceptible to musth, the hormonal surge that causes aggressive behavior in male elephants (the name itself seems to suggest an uncontrollable urge). This was likely the cause of the rampage of the elephant George Orwell shoots in his famous essay on the tribulations of imperialism.

[92] "Coney Elephant Killed," Jan. 5, 1903. Incidentally, part of the assassin Charles Guiteau's brain remains on display at the Mutter Museum in Philadelphia.

Electrocuting an Elephant is that the latter film records an actual death. The

authenticity of the footage of Topsy's death ensures that it is imbued not only with

the quality of the shocking attraction but with that of the scientific document, one that

can be revisited in service of the lessons that can be gleaned from the collision of

animal and electrical force. As Cartwright points out, however, the film does not

only invite the inspection of professionals: it "functioned as a means for lay-audience

participation in the 'scientific' pleasure of conducting visual analysis and thereby

vicariously exerting control over a living being's life and death' (18). This type of

"audience participation" recalls *Execution of Czolgosz's* appeal to the spectator as

official witness, but the spectator witnesses something quite different. If the

cinematic recreation of Czolgosz's death exploited a certain kind of morbid shock

value, it arguably aspires to participate in a narrative of national catharsis. Although

Topsy's backstory licenses her execution, *Electrocuting an Elephant* is what Doane

calls "pure event"—the unmitigated shock of the picture of (electric) death itself. [93]

At the flip of a switch, the application of electricity to the elephant dramatizes

the threat of shock transferred, projected onto the inhuman body. Topsy absorbs the

deadly current and the cinema ostensibly absorbs the life of the animal, preserving it

in its own ghostly archive of living images. As we watch the spectacular corpse on

the ground, a man suddenly appears in the frame's background in the manner of a

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[93] After showing *Electrocuting an Elephant* at an academic conference, I was asked if
there was any sort of public backlash or outrage at the Edison Company for building
the lethal device or filming the execution. Surprisingly, I have found no evidence to
that effect, though the ASPCA did intervene to prevent Topsy's owners from hanging
her, which was the initial plan.

Mélies trick film. Lipitt poetically argues that the figure's jump cut materialization is an accidental symbol of the consumption of Topsy's life force by man. She is again colonized; her failure as performer licenses her incorporation into a body of scientific knowledge. The elephant, as test case for the viability of electrocution as legal (and lethal) practice and film subject, is condemned to a life of dying. Subjected to scientific and cinematic examination, the sacrificial animal body serves as a metaphor for "animus," the ineffable electrical spark of life—the elephant is, in Lippitt's words "reducible to pure force, animus, electricity" (*Electric Animal* 248). As Topsy topples, the mysterious properties of animality, electricity, death, and cinema collapse onto one another.

EPILOGUE
ON LOCATION: MEDIA, MATTER, MEMORY

Ghosts of the Future

In Edward Bellamy's short story "The Old Folks Party," published the year the author died of tuberculosis in 1898—also the year that Henry James published *The Turn of the Screw*—a group of bored and privileged young people are discussing what they should do for entertainment that evening. A young man suggests they dress up as the people they will be in fifty years; a young woman responds: "'You mean a sort of ghost party,' said she finally; 'ghosts of the future instead of ghosts of the past.' 'That's it exactly,' answered he. 'Ghosts of the future are the only sort worth heeding'" (qtd. in Khanna 42). Judging by the subjects of his fictions, this may well have been Bellamy's motto. The titular procedure in his first novel, *Dr. Heidenhoff's Process* (1880), involves the surgical removal of especially painful memories, those deleterious ghosts of the past. And his literary legacy is staked to the ironically titled *Looking Backward*, a socialist utopian science fiction novel written in 1888 but set mainly in the imagined future of the year 2000. However, this epilogue takes as its point of departure the story of one of Bellamy's nineteenth-century readers who deemed a particular ghost of the past worth heeding.

The reader in question is George Wyman, an architect born in Dayton, Ohio, who moved to Los Angeles in 1891 following doctor's advice that the climate would mollify symptoms of pneumonia. Though he was just an apprentice and had never designed a building, mining millionaire Lewis Bradbury appointed Wyman to draw

up the plans for a rather ambitious structure. According to an account given in 1953

by Wyman's daughter to the architecture critic Esther McCoy, Wyman was uncertain

about taking on Bradbury's project. In need of counsel, he and his wife—both

spiritualists—consulted their planchette board (a precursor to the ouija board).[94]

They allegedly received the following message from a spirit who first identifies

himself as the architect's younger brother, Mark Wyman, who had died six years

earlier at the age of twelve: "Take the Bradbury Building and you will

be...successful" (the last word appearing upside down). Wyman's grandson, the

science fiction writer Forrest J Ackerman, has corroborated the story and claimed to

have inherited the original transcription of the ethereal message.[95]

McCoy reports that Wyman was "passionately devoted" to *Looking Backward*

and thus approached the project looking both to the dead and to the future depicted in

Bellamy's novel. The Bradbury Building, completed in 1893, was inspired by (or

inspirited by) a ghost and based on a book. In drawing up the plans, Wyman looked to

Bellamy's description of a twentieth-century retail store: "a vast hall full of light,

received not alone from the windows on all sides, but from the dome, the point of

which was a hundred feet above" (80). The building features a spectacular atrium

that fills with sunlight and shadow, letting the outside in. According to Edward

Dimendberg, author of *Film Noir and the Spaces of Modernity*, the atrium makes the

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[94] One thing that distinguishes the planchette and ouija boards from the work of a
spirit medium like Leonora Piper is that in the case of the former, the restless spirit is
not eager to speak, but to write.

[95] Ackerman is sometimes credited with coining the abbreviated term "sci-fi."
Coincidentally, Ackerman was a friend and colleague of the writer Ray Bradbury (no
relation to Lewis Bradbury).

site "an uncomfortable hybrid between an interior and exterior realm" (224). In the twentieth century, the Bradbury Building's ornate interior has become a sort of Hollywood icon, perhaps most famously serving as the home of "genetic designer" J.F. Sebastian in Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner*.[96] Bellamy set his fiction forward in time, Wyman built on that vision, and Hollywood has kept on projecting it.

The Bradbury Building is a kind of "haunted house" hosting the ghost of fin de siècle anxieties, a site where spiritualism has *taken place.* An epilogue is one of literature's formal time machines, and to track the Bradbury's history from its nineteenth-century origins in Wyman's spiritualism and Bellamy's socio-political dream (the whole of *Looking Backward* is arguably a hopeful epilogue to capitalism) to *Blade Runner*'s Los Angeles 2019 is to time-travel from utopia to dystopia, and from the ghost to the machine, without leaving the building. I use the Bradbury—its origin story and its appearance on film—as a vehicle with which to move between nineteenth-century neurology and the "posthuman" terrain of artificial intelligence. The nineteenth-century ghosts animated by literature, spiritualism, and parapsychology figured a means for coming to terms with the psychological problem of memory, the spectral presence of the past projected by the "mind's eye." However, the evolution of technological media in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries would rephrase questions of matter and memory—first the developments of photography and film effectively reproduce images of the dead ("there" they are) and

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[96] Today the Bradbury houses the headquarters of the Los Angeles Police Department's Internal Affairs Division, as well as a cellphone store and a *Subway* restaurant.

then the computer makes memory a matter of storage space, albeit virtual and digitally encoded. What follows is a reluctant conclusion—posing the rhetorical question "where does it end?"—that begins with *Blade Runner* and looks backward to Bellamy's late-nineteenth century and the preceding chapters, intersecting at several points with the people and ideas that constitute the body of this dissertation, in order to turn this work toward the current century and the postmodern version of the mind/brain complex.

        Blade Runner is a film with a rather busy afterlife. The success of the film with the "cult" of sci-fi enthusiasts, combined with Scott's dissatisfaction with compromises he made with the studio, has led to a remarkable proliferation of versions. Seven different editions of the film have been screened, including the initial U.S. Theatrical and International Cut and later the 1992 Director's Cut and 25th anniversary Final Cut in 2007. The cutting and re-cutting make Scott out to be a finicky surgeon or even a cinematic version of the perfectionist Henry James of the New York Editions. The accumulation of versions spurs fan interest in authenticity and in seeking out origins so that the film's followers ultimately do the work of blade runners in the film—they become special agents charged with identifying copies (androids called replicants) masquerading as the real thing.

        However, the quest for the authentic *Blade Runner* clashes with the film's pastiche mode. Los Angeles 2019 is something of a polytopia. The bazaar crowd in one of the street scenes is comprised of punks, midgets, and Hare Krishnas, among others. The cityscape displays a pronounced multiculturalism—denizens

communicate in "cityspeak," which is defined for us as "a mishmash of Japanese, Spanish, German, what have you"—most notably the Asian influence apparent in storefront characters and cuisine. Scott's L.A. is also a collage of elements of the city in cinema history, marrying the futuristic ubiquity of neon advertisements and sci-fi aircraft with film noir's perpetual rain. The neo-noir film projects the conventions of a specific cinematic moment onto its fictional future with genre-bending effect. Our hero, the former blade runner Rick Deckard, expresses a world-weary viewpoint— borrowed from the Bogart who played both Raymond Chandler's Marlowe and Dashiell Hammett's Spade—in a noir-style voiceover (which Scott removed from the later versions of the film). Though Deckard's voiceover narrates his thoughts in the diegetic present without anticipating any future action, the past tense of the narration imbues the film with a kind of composite time. The film noir convention of voiceover, while a direct descendant of any number of venerable dramatic and literary framing devices, is characterized by its own brand of hopelessness. It's over before it started, the outcome has been determined and the action of the film is post-mortem. Even though Deckard announces he has retired, there is no way out; when tapped to track down rogue replicants he first protests ("I don't work here anymore") and then relents ("no choice, huh?"), recapitulating the familiar "one last job" scenario of the hardboiled protagonist. Deckard is soon paired with Rachael, a dark-haired replicant who vamps and smokes and shoots a pistol while wearing a fur coat—another classic type, though she proves to be more of a "femme fated" than a femme fatale.

Blade Runner employs sci-fi speculation to test the question of identity and memory, while updating the very human fatalism of film noir for a "posthuman" future. Writing about artificial intelligence in the early 1980s, *Blade Runner* director Ridley Scott and screenwriters Hampton Fancher and David Peoples enter the heady discussion surrounding the so-called "Chinese Room" thought experiment, which was proposed by the philosopher John Searle as a counter to Alan Turing's "Turing Test" of 1950. In the Turing Test, an interrogator engages at a distance with a person and a computer and attempts to determine through a series of questions which is which. If the interrogator cannot guess which one is man and which machine, Turing argues we must conclude that the machine is intelligent. Searle summarizes his counter-scenario concisely thus:

> Imagine a native English speaker who knows no Chinese locked in a room full of boxes of Chinese symbols (a data base) together with a book of instructions for manipulating the symbols (the program). Imagine that people outside the room send in other Chinese symbols which, unknown to the person in the room, are questions in Chinese (the input). And imagine that by following the instructions in the program the man in the room is able to pass out Chinese symbols which are correct answers to the questions (the output). The program enables the person in the room to pass the Turing Test for understanding Chinese but he does not understand a word of Chinese. (90)

Searle concludes that "programs are not constitutive of nor sufficient for minds," an artificial intelligence is not akin to that of the human mind.[97] The debate is an analog to the James brothers' objection to medical materialism, with the computer program replacing the laboratory brain; Searle maintains that the mind must be constituted by something other than, something *more* than an organic information technology.[98]

The film opens with an interview between two ostensible men, one a blade runner and the other the replicant Leon Kowalski. The blade runner administers the Voight-Kampff Empathy Test, which, like the Turing Test, is designed to determine whether its subject is human or a computer. The replicants, used as laborers in the "off-world colonies," are banned from earth, so their presence alone is illegal. When the interrogator asks Leon to tell him about his mother, he stands up, draws a gun and answers "Let me tell you about my mother" before firing. Though this exchange is almost comically Freudian, the Voight-Kampff test itself is not a Freudian enterprise—the linguistic, psychoanalytic content is just a prompt and the test

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[97] The Bradbury Building also served as The Pacific All-Risk insurance company in Billy Wilder's defining film noir, 1944's *Double Indemnity.* In Nino Frank's "A New Kind of Detective Story," the 1946 article that gave film noir its name, Frank distinguishes the noir detective from earlier models in that the precursor "is only a thinking machine." In the vein of Poe's Dupin, he can figure everything out because everything can be figured out and in the epistemological framework Poe establishes at the outset of "Murders in the Rue Morgue," a finely honed analytical mind can identify the inevitable pattern in any puzzling set of circumstances (which leads, in that story, to the deduction that a shaved orangutan committed the titular crime). Poe's elaboration of the assertion that "to calculate is not in itself to analyze" is remarkably, presciently sympathetic to John Searle's thesis on artificial intelligence.
[98] Debates about the merits of the Turing Test continue to this day. Since 1991, the annual Loebner Prize competition (underwritten by inventor Hugh Loebner) awards $100,000 and a gold medal to the computer programmer who can write a program that passes the Turing Test.

ultimately measures a physical response to the interview in the manner of a polygraph. The blade runners are trained to operate under a binary code—to simply identify whether they are addressing a replicant, a criminal by type, or not. However, the film consistently courts the spectator's empathy for the machines over their corporate makers.

Rachael, for instance, has been "living" in ignorance of the fact that she is a replicant. She is employed as an assistant to Tyrell, the villainous inventor and corporate magnate responsible for building the replicants, who has secretly subjected her to an experiment. After Deckard determines through the Voight-Kampff that she is a replicant, Tyrell explains that Rachael has been given second-hand memories culled from his niece, memories with a Freudian flavoring—she recalls seeing spiders hatch out her childhood window and eat their mother. The implantation of a collection of recollections simulates an identity in order to regulate replicant behavior; according to Tyrell, "If we give them a past, we can create a cushion or a pillow for their emotions and consequently we can control them better." The ethics of the experiment notably bother the usually jaded Deckard, who exclaims: "Memories! You're talking about memories!" Just before learning of the counterfeit memories, Deckard asks about Rachael, "How can it not know what it is?"; after learning of them, he tells us in voiceover, "Tyrell really did a job on Rachael. Right down to a snapshot of a mother she never had, a daughter she never was. Replicants weren't supposed to have feelings. Neither were blade runners. What the hell was happening

to me?" Even though she does not pass the Voight-Kampff Empathy Test, Deckard's pronouns in reference to Rachael shift; he is surprised by his own empathy.[99]

The Bradbury Building, which notably neighbors a movie theater in the film, serves as the expansive home and workshop of J.F. Sebastian, who designs replicants for the Tyrell Corporation. Sebastian suffers from Methuselah Syndrome, which he describes as "accelerated decrepitude." During a scene in which the engineer hosts two of the rogue replicants—the leader, Roy Batty, and Pris, the sexualized "pleasure model—Sebastian and Batty are playing chess, a game, most 1980s moviegoers would know, historically used for measuring the human brain against a computer program. While they play, Pris petitions Sebastian's empathy with venerable Cartesian logic: "We're not computers, we're physical...I think therefore I am." Batty supports her effort to convince Sebastian that they're not so different by citing the replicants' pre-programmed four-year lifespan, an android version of accelerated decrepitude.

The renegade replicants have been looking for what constitutes their history— "morphology, longevity, incept dates." Just before tracking down Sebastian, Batty and Kowalski visit Hannibal Chew, who works for Tyrell making replicant eyes. The film is repeatedly fixated on eyes. In addition to their prominence here, we first see a

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[99] The revelation of Rachael's synthetic origin has an interesting impact on her burgeoning romance with Deckard. In an uneasy love scene, Deckard tells her to "Say 'kiss me'" and she complies "kiss me" as if he's programming her (input for putting out). One notable variation between the versions of the film is the Final Cut's suggestion that Deckard himself is a replicant, which would undo some of the novelty of the human-replicant sexual pairing, although in this scenario, Deckard would not know he is a replicant in the scene.

closeup of one of Kowalski's eyes projected on a video screen for the benefit of the blade runner administering the Voight-Kampff Test in the opening scene (as he tells us, he's looking for "fluctuation of the pupil, involuntary dilation of the iris"), and on separate occasions, both Batty and Kowalski attempt to gouge out a human's eyes at the height of violent confrontations. The attempt is successful in a scene dense with allusions (perhaps most notably to the monster hunting Victor Frankenstein), as Batty confronts Tyrell himself, whose eyes are suggestively supplemented with enormous glasses. The eye in the film operates as a visual pun on the "I"; of course, the eye is the window to the "I" (and the window is a metaphor for the camera's "I"). The administrator of the Voight-Kampff Test focuses on the eye in order to seek out a soul or lack thereof, and the replicants' attacks on the eyes of their combatants seem tantamount to a symbolic rejection of this correlation. When Batty says to Chew, "If only you could see what I've seen with your eyes," he posits an "I" that is not guaranteed by humanity. Having been places and having seen things, Batty implicitly claims to have ironically realized the Tyrell Corporation's replicant marketing tagline, "more human than human"—the copy is superior to the original, having taken on a life of its own.

The climactic showdown between Batty and Deckard is set in the vast expanse of the Bradbury Building, stylistically augmented by Scott to evoke the darkness and wetness of film noir, with rain pouring through the atrium. Throughout the scene, the film insists that Batty is something more than a machine, as he howls like a feral animal, naked and covered in blood. Nearing his fated expiration, Batty is

emphatically depicted as more human than human (even overtly Christlike, as he

pierces his hand with a nail and saves Deckard's life just before dying). Scott and his

screenwriters imbue the scene with a heavy-handed tragic tone—Batty delivers a

maudlin soliloquy, again referring to the things he has seen ("things you people

wouldn't believe") and finally releasing into the sky a white dove, which must be

intended to indicate that there was something *in* him, some life force, that transcends

his programming.[100]

The film weaves the thematic thread of replication through various

reproductive media, taking care to show us, for instance, that both Rachael and

Kowalski have a particular attachment to photographs, the visual evidence that

corroborates their ersatz memories. There are several scenes interspersed throughout

the film wherein we see Deckard replaying audio and video recordings of Kowalski's

Voight-Kampff Test. While the ubiquity of advertisements—including animated

billboards with geisha-like spokesmodels—provide *Blade Runner* with an apt

corporate dystopian backdrop, one ad, which is prominent in the background of

Batty's death scene, seems particularly conspicuous. When the action moves to the

Bradbury rooftop, we see a billboard for TDK, a data storage media company that, in

the 1980s, was one of the most popular makers of blank cassette tapes. If the replicant

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[100] In the 1982 cut of the film, the dove flies off into a blue sky, despite the fact it has been dark and raining throughout the scene. Some have interpreted the new sky as a symbolic gesture toward the continuation of Batty's soul, while others have dismissed it as an error in continuity on the part of the filmmakers. In the 2007 *Final Cut*, Scott replaced the blue sky with a computer-generated night.

"brain" is designed only to register and replay Tyrell's program, there appears to be a ghost in the recording device.

Ghosts of the Past

In order to relocate the problem of memory in nineteenth-century science and literature, we return to Edward Bellamy, whose writings, I argue, contribute not only to *Blade Runner*'s architectural backdrop via the Bradbury Building, but to its thematic architecture. While the contribution of George Wyman's deceased brother to the building of the Bradbury is fairly unexpected (though spiritualism in America was thriving in the 1890s), the citation of *Looking Backward* as a source is less surprising. At the time, Edward Bellamy was one of the most read and discussed authors in America. "Bellamy Clubs" (later called "Nationalist Clubs") were popular among leftist intellectuals of the 1890s and featured members such as Charlotte Perkins Gilman—perhaps the most visible representative, in the contemporary university, of what could be called a "neurasthenic literature"—as well as Henry James's longtime friend William Dean Howells. Writing for *The Atlantic Monthly* in 1935, John Dewey designated *Looking Backward* as second only to the translation of *Das Kapital* in a list of the most influential books published since 1885. As discussed in chapter three, Bellamy's influence turned to anarchy in the errant young mind of Leon Czolgosz, inspiring him to strike out against the forces that he perceived to be hindering the socio-political advances described in *Looking Backward.* Though Bellamy is only vaguely remembered in our time, his fiction had an arguably

unparalleled material effect on his moment—the ideas in his books spurred actions in the world—whether through the bullet that felled McKinley or, via Wyman, the architecture of downtown Los Angeles.

While it would be difficult to underestimate the influence of the ideas contained in Bellamy's texts on popular political discussion, he is a bit artless as a writer. He resorts to the "it was all a dream / or was it?" device in both of the novels to be discussed here, and he typically treats his characters and plots as mere vessels for his message. Fiction serves as a place to put his ideas. Bellamy practically admits as much in his explanation of "How I Came to Write *Looking Backward,*" which was published in *The Naturalist* in 1889 and reappeared in a 1977 special edition of *Science Fiction Studies* featuring "Documents in the History of Science Fiction."[101] He understands his purpose in terms of establishing a space for idealism: "There was no thought of contriving a house which practical man might live in, but merely of hanging in mid-air, far out of reach of the sordid and material world of the present, a cloud-palace for an ideal humanity" (qtd. in Pfaelzer 54). Given this description of the intention of *Looking Backward*, it becomes clearer how a spiritualism like Wyman's is amenable to the "no place" of utopian fiction. Bellamy's is a markedly different "house of fiction" than the one James proposed in his New York Edition preface to *Portrait of a Lady*, through the windows of which the "watcher-artists" apprehend "the human scene." James's innovative aim was to build the house around

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[101] The popularity of *Looking Backward* did not persist through the twentieth century and by 1977, the text needs to be located on a timeline by genre scholars who are invested in preserving and archiving a particular history.

the inner life, the consciousness of his subjects; Bellamy's plots stretch and contort in order to meet his speculative premises and his characters generally lack the sophisticated self-consciousness of James's.

In fact, Bellamy's characters are often literally rendered unconscious so that their author can get them to where his stories go. In *Looking Backward*, the protagonist, Julian West—just before the frontier would be pronounced closed, we look "West"-ward to the future—is a man of means who falls asleep in Boston in 1887 and wakes up in a socialist utopia in the year 2000. The story opens with enough description of West's nineteenth-century situation to provide a foil for the dream of a reality he wakes up to. The reader learns that he has plans to marry the beautiful and rich Edith Bartlett when the construction of their house is finished, but striking workers delay its completion. As in his article explaining the origins of the novel, Bellamy is committed to an architectural metaphor—the notion of the socio-political as built environment—so here the labor dispute halts the building of a dream house.[102]

Julian West suffers from insomnia and fears that his inability to rest will lead to a "nervous disorder." His house happens to be outfitted with a hermetically sealed underground sleeping chamber—says West of the enclosure, "when I had entered it and closed the door, I was surrounded by the silence of the tomb" (14). He enlists the help of a Dr. Pillsbury—"a doctor by courtesy only, what was called in those days an 'irregular' or 'quack' doctor…he called himself a 'Professor of Animal Magnetism'"

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[102] Of course, the 1880s were a tumultuous time in terms of class conflict in the United States; Bellamy was writing just two years after the Haymarket affair.

(15)—to induce sleep by mesmerism. The late-nineteenth-century vogue of pseudo-science and liminal states of consciousness provides Bellamy with a provocatively topical means to transport West to his utopian vision: his house burns to the ground that night, so West is presumed dead and thus slumbers undisturbed (not even disturbed by the aging process) until he is discovered over a century later.

West is awakened by the magnanimous Dr. Leete, who sees to the softening of the shock of time-travel and subsequently walks West (and the reader) through twentieth-century Boston and the manifold ways in which the social, political, and technological paradigm has shifted during his epic slumber. The expository dialogue between Leete and West makes up the bulk of the novel. As a tourist in his own city, West finds that "the mental image of the old city was so fresh and strong that it did not yield to the impression of the actual city, but contended with it…there was nothing I saw which was not blurred in this way, like the faces of a composite photograph" (61). Later, when West dreams that it was all a dream and he is back in the 1887 he had left, he sees on the faces of his acquaintance "the ideal, the possible face" of the future "superimposed on each of those brutish masks" "like a wavering translucent spirit" (266). This experience of a simultaneous past and present, of matter plus the ghost of memory, signals for Bellamy a kind of vision related to composite photography and its dubious cousin, spirit photography.

The photograph became a site that attracted both materialists and spiritualists aiming to produce or fabricate visual evidence. The Victorian polymath and original eugenicist (in fact, "eugenics" is his own term) Francis Galton developed a technique

of composite photography for use in criminology and the identification of social types and genetic predispositions through physical characteristics. With the composite photograph, the abstraction of statistics is made manifest in faces whose images are captured and read for a physiological correlation on which to base a criminal identity ("identity" connoting both personality and a sameness or recurrence). Meanwhile, the potential for double exposure welcomed a cavalcade of spiritualist hoaxers led by the infamous William Mumler, who even conjured up the ghost of Abraham Lincoln, posing behind his widow with spectral hands placed reassuringly on her shoulders, in one of his tampered-with images. However bogus both sorts of images are, the composite photograph and the spirit photograph provide apt metaphors for the time-traveler's special kind of angst. West laments, "There was no place for me anywhere. I was neither dead nor properly alive" (242); being both here and there means being neither here nor there. The problem of the undead is a problem of location, an ontological homelessness, and West's undead feeling is the result of time travel's accentuation of the irreconcilability of the present and the passing moment. Meanwhile, the superimposition of remembered images brings the work of the psyche into relief against a more immediate perception, splitting West's vision into a composite of what the mind sees and what the brain sees.

West's doubled vision is not just confined to the cityscape. As it turns out, millenial Boston has a second Edith, Dr. Leete's daughter and the great-granddaughter and namesake of West's fiancée Edith Bartlett. Edith Leete has been reading West's letters, love letters written to her great-grandmother, and falling into

what she thought was impossible love for their author. In turn, West feels that the

young Edith seems to provide a material channel for the spirit of his lost betrothed:

"It was as if from her eyes Edith Bartlett looked into mine" and "my love…had been

reembodied for my consolation" (247). This is a more romantically innocent, if no

less eerie, version of how James's narrator in *The Aspern Papers* (published in the

same year as *Looking Backward*) hoped to access the soul of the dead poet through

his ex-lover and his literary archive. As West goes ahead with this strange affair,

there emerges a composite lover like the composite Boston he perceived in the

streets: "When…I folded the lovely girl in my arms the two Ediths were blended in

my thought, nor have they ever since been clearly distinguished" (247-8). Already

seduced by the intimacy of reading letters, Edith not only consents to but facilitates

this morbid romance: "What if I were to tell you that I have sometimes thought that

her spirit lives in me …so you see you need not trouble to love me at all, if only you

are true to her" (248). Edith Leete sees herself as West sees her—as a twenty-first

century edition of Edith Bartlett. From a post-Freudian perspective, this invitation to a

complicated sexual situation, in which West might love the present woman's body

and the other woman's ghost at the same time, looks less sentimental and more

neurotic. Edith's willingness to act as a mere vessel—he would make love through

her rather than with her—is further evidence of the open channel between spirit

mediumship and female sexuality. Under the auspices of facilitating the spiritual

reunion of ill-fated lovers, she can preserve her Victorian morals. At the same time,

West's eagerness to transfer his lost love onto a present "object" recalls Freud's

diagnosis of Schreber as well as his personal history with Wilhelm Fliess and his subsequent colleagues. Of course, Freudian readings can frequently be traced back to Freud's reading (he practiced analysis on literary characters almost as often as on patients), and though Bellamy had not read Freud, Freud had read Bellamy.

Peter Swales, the rogue Freudian scholar and archival raider who suggested that Freud had entertained the idea of murdering Fliess at Achensee, unearthed a letter that Freud wrote to his sister-in-law Minna Bernays in 1889 in which he instructs Minna that if she's curious about how he treats his patient Anna von Lieben (referred to in the casework by the pseudonym "Frau Cäcilie M."), she should consult Bellamy's novel *Dr. Heidenhoff's Process*.[103] The story's protagonist, Henry Burr, is in love with a woman who is tortured by an amorous transgression in her past—"with what lilies of virgin innocence would she fain have rewarded her lover! but her lilies were yellow, their fragrance stale" (83-4). The woman is Madeline Brand and her surname could allude to the brand of memory, as her sins are collected for recollection as if seared in the very substance of her brain. When Henry asks Madeline to marry him, there appears on her countenance "the ghost of a smile, which only brought out the sadness of her face, as a taper in a crypt reveals its gloom" (78) and recognizing her reluctance, he is disappointed—"he had hoped to take in his at the altar a hand a little less like that of a dead person" (79). She thinks of loving him "as a disembodied spirit might think of what it might have done when living"

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[103] Swales discusses the letter in "Freud, His Teacher, and the Birth of Psychoanalysis" and claims that the "amazing catch to [Bellamy's] story" is of very special interest to students of Freud.

(82). Whereas Julian West's being-out-of-time burdens him with an uncanny undead

uneasiness, Madeline's inability to escape time via memory makes her the ghost of

her own embodied self, struggling to remember—as if it were opposed to

"dismember"—to re-embody. She cannot wholly inhabit the present because

memory's accumulated record of impressions scatters her into pieces: "her memory,

like a ditch from a distant morass, emptied its vile stream of recollections into her

heart, poisoning all the issues of life" (86).

Recognizing Madeline's poisoned memory as the only obstacle to a felicitous

union, Henry considers a novel solution. He overhears talk of the titular doctor's

experimental methods and seeks his counsel. Heidenhoff describes his medical

intervention as the "the extirpation of thought processes," made possible by the

establishment of "the great fact of the physical basis of the intellect" (101) and "the

discovery that different classes of sensations and ideas are localized in the brain"

(104). The doctor deems "it only a question of time when science shall have so

accurately located the various departments of thought…that the mental physician will

be able to extract a specific recollection from the memory as readily as a dentist pulls

a tooth" (101). Heidenhoff can find the material, "diseased" memory like a file in a

cabinet and destroy it by application of electric current from a galvanic battery.

Heidenhoff justifies his practice with an eccentric view of the relationship

between memory, identity, and morality. He confesses he is "fond of speculating

what sort of a world, morally speaking, we should have if there were no memory"

(119). He believes that "memory is the principle of moral degeneration," that the

recollection of wicked acts leads to the further distribution of those acts. Chronic

guilt is a waste of emotional energy since "the gulf between the man of this instant

and the man of the last is just as impassable as that between the baby and the man,"

thus "the man who is punished [for a crime] is other from the man that did the act"

(123). Heidenhoff's philosophy of identity runs counter to the likes of Galton and his

notion of the subject's (or suspect's) composition—whereas for Galton the recurrence

of physical characteristics detected by composite photographs marks a generalized

criminal identity that could implicate any number of individuals, for the fictional

doctor "justice demands identity [meaning here that the punished person of the

present would have to be identical to the past self that committed the crime];

similarity, however close, will not answer" (124).

Essentially, Heidenhoff does not believe in identity, which would require

stability over time. In 1880, Bellamy has given Heidenhoff a theory of selfhood that

the contemporary critic would likely identify as postmodern. The doctor removes

memories for the same reason that Tyrell implants them—because the presence of

memory begets a false sense of identity, a misrecognition of an authentic self in the

past that influences present and future action. According to Heidenhoff, while "acts

merely express the character," "the recollection of those acts is what impresses the

character, and gives it a tendency in a particular direction" (119). Such a statement

bears a striking resemblance to Gilles Deleuze's suggestion that,

> We start with atomic parts, but these atomic parts have transitions,
>
> passages, 'tendencies,' which circulate from one to another. These

tendencies give rise to *habits.* Isn't this the answer to the question 'what are we?' We are habits, nothing but habits, the habit of saying 'I." Perhaps, there is no more striking answer to the problem of the Self. (*Empiricism and Subjectivity* x)

In recognizing the apparent self as nothing but a version, subject to constant and instant re-authoring, Heidenhoff's formulation anticipates a "postmodern" or "posthuman" "I."

Given the year 1880 and the neurological application of electricity, Bellamy likely drew on real doctors like George Beard in his depiction of Heidenhoff. However, as Bellamy notes Heidenhoff's heavy German accent and the "charts of the brain and nervous system" in his office, he evokes the figure of Daniel Paul Schreber's doctor, Paul Flechsig. Heidenhoff even describes the matter of the brain in a manner that recalls (or anticipates) both Flechsig and Schreber: "certain ones of the millions of nerve corpuscles or fibers in the gray substance of the brain, record certain classes of sensation and the ideas directly connected with them" (96). Schreber, too, under the influence of Flechsig, understood the nerves to "receive and retain mental impressions," and while Schreber describes the "inscription" of "the sum total of recollections" on some nervous stratum, Heidenhoff speaks of a "mysterious and infinitesimal hieroglyphics" written into the brain's corpuscles or fibers. These corpuscles "constitute the memory, the record of life, so that when any particular fiber or group of fibers is destroyed certain memories or classes of memories are destroyed" (96).

The therapeutic ends of his "extirpation of thought processes"—a kind of surgical catharsis—are likely what reminded Freud of his own work. However, Heidenhoff has no interest in thinking about thought apart from its anatomical basis. He is, in one sense, a fictionalized nineteenth-century neurological materialist like Flechsig, committed to discovering the local organic sources of psychological trouble. But the philosophy of his process differs fundamentally from that of Flechsig and his "cadaverizing" ilk, who diagnose post-mortem patients whose fates have already been determined. Not only does he figure the neuroanatomy as a sort of biographical record etched by the impressions of memory, but he prescribes a purging of the archive. Heidenhoff literally discards the neurological material, opening the brain up to make room for new habits, new thoughts, new selves unencumbered by the past. *Dr. Heidenhoff's Process* is a science fiction fantasy of autobiographical editing and revision, the ultimate purging of the archive.[104]

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[104] Even within the story, Dr. Heidenhoff's process proves to be a fantasy, as Henry wakes to discover it was all a dream—induced by "sleeping powder" and inspired by a book on electricity he read before bed—and Madeline has taken her own life.

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