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Supervisor: Dr. Christopher Keep, *The University of Western Ontario*
A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in English
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GRAPHOMANIA:
COMPOSING SUBJECTS
IN LATE-VICTORIAN GOTHIC FICTION AND TECHNOLOGY

(Spine title: Graphomania!)

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by

Gregory Donald Brophy

Graduate Program
in
English

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

The School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
The University of Western Ontario
London, Ontario, Canada
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THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES

CERTIFICATE OF EXAMINATION

Supervisor

____
Dr. Christopher Keep

Supervisory Committee

____
Dr. Tilottama Rajan

Examiners

____
Dr. Steven Bruhm

____
Dr. Matthew Rowlinson

____
Dr. Nick Dyer-Witheford

____
Dr. Kelly Hurley

The thesis by

Gregory Donald Brophy

entitled:

Graphomania: Composing Subjects
in Late-Victorian Gothic Fiction and Technology

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

____
Chair of the Thesis Examination Board

Abstract

This dissertation explores the varied phenomena of "automatic writing" in Victorian Gothic fiction, reading the genre's fascination with the irrepressible signifying practices of the body in light of the medical, criminological and scientific discourses that underwrite the "scriptural economy" of the late nineteenth century with their own arsenal of automatic writing machines.

Though critics tend to describe Gothic as genre, the fundamental distinctiveness of Gothic inscription is derived from the pronounced and often dramatically visceral relation it enacts between script and medium. Indexical inscription constitutes the privileged mode of signifying within Gothic fiction; as such, the tradition is uniquely positioned to explore the entanglement of bodies and signs within a modern information society often misunderstood as a disembodied network of dematerialized signs.

I have titled the project *Graphomania*, and I consider the term a keyword of late-Victorian culture—one that names a distinctly Victorian pathology of compulsive writing, but that alludes also to the widespread epistemic hope that writing could render objectively the internal and subjective experiences of individuals. Asserting the centrality of representation-machines in the construction of modern bodies and subjectivities, the project draws upon the natural sciences, pseudo-sciences, technology and literature (as well as many curious hybrids of these discourses), to develop a heterogeneous conception of automatic writing. This species of writing—the trace of unconscious gestures, rather than the imprint of deliberate expression—opened up a significant gap between writing and authoring. To the trained experts produced by the Victorian age of science, this gap granted un-authorized admittance to the subject.

In a chapter devoted to Victorian graphomania and the three studies that follow (graphology in Jekyll and Hyde, retinal photography in The Beetle, and phonography in Dracula), the project is particularly interested in convergences and correspondences between graphical machines and human bodies. In this study, Victorian technology and Gothic literature emerge as twin registers of the divided self, joined in their shared strategy of externalizing conflicts traditionally understood as invisible processes, but also in the consequent tendency of each uncanny text to expose its ghostly remainders and excesses in the process of trying to contain them.

Keywords

Literature; British Literature; Victorian Novel; Nineteenth Century; Gothic; Technology; Media; Automatic Writing; Graphomania; Inscription; Graphology; Autobiography; Physiognomy; Embodiment; Index; Optics; Optogram; Psychoanalysis; Phonograph; Vampires; Horace Walpole; *The Castle of Otranto*; Robert Louis Stevenson; *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*; Richard Marsh; *The Beetle*; Bram Stoker; *Dracula*.

Acknowledgements

There's a quiet, striking moment in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, where Mina returns Seward's phonographic records to him, having patiently transcribed their contents on her typewriter. "I think that the cylinders which you gave me," she tells him gingerly, "contained more than you intended me to know." Seward's unnerving predicament is one in which graphomaniacs commonly find themselves, and these simple words stir up the feelings of dread and excitement attendant upon submitting my own writing for examination over the past few years.

I'm indebted to a number of interlocutors who have demonstrated the uncanny ability to see what I could not read in my own writing. They have patiently shown me where my work shows more, and where it tells less, than I've intended to say. Foremost among these readers has been my supervisor, Christopher Keep, whose expert guidance, kind encouragement and limitless patience have anchored this project from its beginnings. Tilottama Rajan's extreme generosity as a reader, a teacher and a thinker has been of inestimable help in the recognition and pursuit of the most expansive questions prompted by this study. Thanks to Joel Faflak, whose support, and simple presence, at many key moments has brought a rare warmth and humanity to the Ph.D. process. I'd also like to thank Chris and Tilottama, along with Călin-Andrei Mihăilescu, Michael Groden, and Victoria De Zwaan, for their assistance in securing the funding—generously provided by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the Ontario Graduate Scholarship Fund—necessary to complete this project. I'm grateful too, to the administrative staff at Western's English Department, particularly Pat Dibsdale and Leanne Trask.

I'd like to thank Cristian, Nicholas, and Jordan, who have been with me since the hazy origins of my life in academia, and with whom the pleasure and labour of friendship, analysis, and intellectual work now hardly seem separable. For their support and companionship through the peaks and valleys of postgraduate life, many thanks go to Dustin, Rebecca, Ross, Alexandra and Kathryn. Thank you to Michael, my sublime accomplice in ecstatic interpretation. And also to Megan, for the mystery and delight you find in the lives of others, and for showing me how to disclose and yield to my own essential curiosity as a teacher and as a human.

Heartfelt thanks go to my brother and sisters, for their love and friendship throughout this long process. Thanks to my mother, Anne Brophy, for encouraging a nascent appreciation of "the Word" in her young son, and for her continued support when that interest took a very different turn than we'd both expected. To Donald Brophy, whose love has made "father" the most vital and stirring word I can pronounce, and my dear son Oliver, whose own rendition has renewed that pledge with its unaccountable tenderness.

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Table of Contents

Page

Certificate of Examination ii
Abstract & Keywords iii
Acknowledgements v
Table of Contents vii
List of Figures ix

Introduction 1
Bare Writing 7
Apprehending Bodies 14

Chapter One. Graphomania and the Graphical Method 30

"The irresistible itch to write" 32
Étienne-Jules Marey and the Language of Phenomena Themselves 43
The Victorian Scriptural Economy: Subjects and Characters 50

Chapter Two. Unauthorized Autobiographies: 66
Reading and Writing by Hand in Stevenson's *Strange Case*

Hyde's Hand: The Undead Metaphor 83
Jekyll's "Guest": Handwriting Analysis in Victorian England 94

Chapter Three. Entranced: 120
Richard Marsh's *The Beetle* and Literature of the Impressionable Mind

Vital Signs: Photography and the Gothic 125
"Everything is just as wrong as it can be": The Development of the Negative 139
The Optogram: "Fleshing Out" the Negative 147

Chapter Four. "Cruelly true": 165
Media, Immediacy and Fidelity in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*

Writing to the Moment: Gender, Fidelity, Inscription 172
Graphomania: Speed, Machinery, Distraction 184
The Uncanny Return of Technology 201
The Phonographic Imagination: Indexing Bodies 214

Conclusion 228
Bibliography 234
Vita 253

List of Figures

Fig. 3.1 “Elephans Photographicus.” *Punch* 44 (1863): 249. 135

Fig. 3.2 Wilhelm Friedrich Kühne. “Retinal Photograph.” 1878. 146

Introduction

This dissertation explores the varied phenomena of "automatic writing" in Victorian Gothic fiction, reading the genre's fascination with irrepressible signifying practices of the body in light of the medical, criminological and scientific discourses that underwrite the "scriptural economy" (de Certeau) of the late nineteenth century with their own arsenal of automatic writing machines. I have titled the project *Graphomania*, and I consider the term a keyword of late-Victorian culture—one that names a distinctly Victorian pathology, but that alludes also to the widespread epistemic hope that writing was capable of rendering objectively the internal and subjective experiences of individuals.

Asserting the centrality of representation-machines in the construction of modern bodies and subjectivities, this dissertation analyzes the Gothic novel within the context of other nineteenth-century technologies of inscription, machines that embody and enact "theories of language" and of the subject (Gitelman 4). In conversation with recent studies of the body-machine complex (Kittler, Rabinbach, Seltzer), this project draws upon the natural sciences, psychology, the occult and literature (as well as many curious hybrids of these discourses), to develop a heterogeneous conception of "automatic writing," the contours of which provide a kind of exoskeleton of the modern subject. For the Victorians, graphomania named a pathological compulsion to write, and this study examines the culture's newfound fascination with this concept of "symptomatic" and indexical writing that rendered visible the invisible idiosyncrasies of a profusion of deviant bodies. This species of writing, not the imprint of deliberate expression, but the trace of unconscious gestures, opened up a significant gap between writing and authoring.

To the trained experts produced by the Victorian age of science, this gap granted unauthorized admittance to the subject. In a study of Victorian graphomania and the three Gothic readings that follow (graphology in *Jekyll and Hyde*, retinal photography in *The Beetle*, and phonography in *Dracula*), the project is particularly interested in convergences and correspondences between graphical machines and human bodies, and the uncanny capacity of the former to capture the automatic and unconscious gestures of the latter as a means of securing "direct" access to latent truths of the mind and body.

Perhaps the most cited source within recent discussions of the nineteenth century's body-machine complex is Friedrich Kittler's *Discourse Networks 1800/1900*. If discourse, in its Foucauldian acceptation, determines the preconditions of who may speak and the limits of what can be said, Kittler's analysis takes another step back to consider the technological networks responsible for the material production of these cultural communications. Kittler pursues the post-humanist trajectory traced out elliptically in the closing lines of *The Order of Things*, where Foucault imagines the concept of man "erased, like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea" (422). As unsentimental as Foucault's position may be, its organic imagery (one might even call it Romantic) grants his statement an undeniable poetic flourish. By contrast, the severity of Kittler's thought and prose methodically purges such materially imprecise imagery from his history of the human, strictly charting out the specific technologies responsible for the inscription and erasure of the subject "drowned out" by the static of physiological and psychical "noise."

This assiduous technologist perspective also serves to temper overly capacious post-structuralist theories of "writing" that tacitly endorse the neutrality of recording devices through habitual critical neglect of the historically-situated means and media of

inscription. In Kittler's reading, for example, the typewriter (the linchpin of his 1900 discourse network) produces a very particular style of writing. Its impersonal, standardized type converts the personal expression connected with handwritten script into anonymous bureaucratic information. Embodied in the operations of its composition, the typewriter presents a challenge to the holographic fallacy: the romantic notion of immediacy enabled by the uninterrupted circularity that penmanship physically suggests. The material practice of typewriting displaces the hand from the scene of discursive production, while subtracting the mind from the equation entirely (195). The automatic discourse-production made possible by the typewriter "designates the turning point at which communications technologies can no longer be related back to humans. Instead, the former have formed the latter" (211). In this dark vision of the modern technosphere, humans serve as channels for mechanical expression, not vice versa.

Kittler has noted that *Aufschreibesysteme 1800/1900*, the original German title of his *Discourse Networks*, alludes to the fearful visions of Judge Daniel Paul Schreber, the successful German judge who furnished Sigmund Freud with his case on paranoia, and who suffered from delusions that included being persecuted by a god who penetrated his body with writing (Armitage 18). Hidden away in the belly of Kittler's discourse machine (not unlike Walter Benjamin's dwarf, crouching inside Maelzel's automaton chess-player), Schreber's paranoid philosophy endows modern inscription machines with fantastic power and efficacy.[1] In the opening words of Kittler's *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*: "Media determine our situation" (xxxix). One might be tempted to characterize Kittler's position as technophobic, if not for the undeniable pleasure he takes in this submission that is the inheritance of Schreber's passivity. We find in these pages a

strange reversal of Freud's *fort / da* scenario, where satisfaction is derived from the fantasy that we are completely at the mercy of the toys we are playing with (*BPP* 12-17). This masochism marks Kittler as a gothic writer in his own right, and makes every encounter with technology a fixed match.

In the manner of his forebears Nietzsche and McLuhan, Kittler's emphatic rhetoric reproduces stylistically the power of the technologies being described with its own ballistic, aphoristic argumentation of unequivocal thought. Among English scholars of nineteenth-century technology, the measured response to Kittler's arguments has been fairly consistent, attempting to harness the ingenuity and power of his insights while reining in its rhetorical excesses. For instance, Lisa Gitelman's *Scripts, Grooves, and Writing Machines: Representing Technology in the Age of Edison* (1999) resists Kittler's determinism with "a 'thick' description of culture" (6) that takes into account the vagaries of use and consumption. Her subtle account of the pre-conditions of emergence for Edison's phonograph emphasizes the broad-based cultural negotiation of technological change over "Big Bang" theories of technology that single out individual inventors and inventions as epoch-defining polestars. Accordingly, though Gitelman's somewhat equivocal argument that "new inscriptions signal new subjectivities" may sacrifice some of the potency of Kittler's maxims, this "softer determinism" (7) advances a nuanced, decentralized understanding of technological networks that recognizes the mutually dependent forces of technology and culture, scientific innovation and popular opinion.[2]

The past decade of Victorian scholarship has produced a number of important studies of the correspondences established between nineteenth-century technologies and

bodies. First among these would be Laura Otis' *Networking: Communicating With Bodies and Machines in the Nineteenth Century* (2001). Bridging the discourses of physiology, technology, and literature, her impressive interdisciplinary study centres on the network of the telegraph (5), an object that Otis reads at once as a technological device for the electrical transmission of signals and a metaphorical device for the communication of conceptual linkages and analogies. Quoting James W. Carey, Otis announces her intention to employ the telegraph, as the Victorians did, as "a thing to think with" (2). The principle thrust of Victorian thinking on the matter, Otis argues, was devoted to establishing metaphoric correspondences between telegraphic networks and the human nervous system. This metaphor furnished many insights into the complex workings of each, but also inspired a great deal of anxiety about where 'we' end and our networks begin (10).

In what follows, I concern myself primarily with this latter consequence; perhaps the most direct means of signaling my divergent interests with regard to the human/machine networks described by Otis would be to remark that these "thing[s] to think with" were just as often employed by the Victorians as tools for the abdication of thought. I am interested here in the special lure automatic writing technologies held for the Victorian unconscious. In their enlightening history of the emergence of objectivity as a paramount scientific virtue, Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison make the compelling assertion that: "instead of freedom of will, machines offered freedom from will – from the willful interventions that had come to be seen as the most dangerous aspects of subjectivity" (123). Scientific rhetoric employs this "negative ideal" (Daston 123) of nonintervention, intending to cancel out subjectivity with objectivity in a neat equation

with no remainder. Gothic fiction, alongside the range of pseudo-sciences explored in this dissertation, turns its gaze upon the residue of this evacuated and automatized subject, divorced from the scene of inquiry, but also from herself. These uncanny discourses inhabit and investigate the space within that has been hollowed out by this newly emergent ideal of mechanical empiricism. They find the correlative production of the *objective* examiner is the *objectified* subject of examination, one whose internal life has been externalized and instrumentalized.

As Lacan suggests, self-identification is impossible without compulsive reference to external technologies of representation. The child requires the mirror's external (and essentially alienated) perspective in order to translate a sequence of fragmentary close-ups of limbs into the gestalt of the body. For their part, the Victorians were especially preoccupied with devising a variety of mirrors that could permit glimpses of internal life. They were driven to invent machines that re-enact, transcribe, and otherwise mimic hidden processes of physiology, emotion, consciousness, and the unconscious. The uncanny dimension of this mimicry arises out of the troubled relation between identification and objectification that technology instates. After the fashion of the Gothic, these machines made possible radically exteriorized practices of introspection. It is this paradoxical exteriority of the subject's interiority that prompts Zizek to return to "the fundamental Lacanian proposition that psychoanalysis is not a psychology" (*SO* 34), a disclaimer that rejects stringently subjectivized or individualized economizations of the psyche.

These techniques of externalization render technology uncanny, and make Gothic fiction a rewarding lens through which to view technology. Nineteenth-century representational

technologies engineered a phantasmagoria of the human body, materializing and projecting internal reality upon external surfaces, and putting on public display the unsettling vitality of the flesh.

Bare Writing

> Writing in blood, writing in flesh—even when the formulas are figurative, they represent a special access to the authoritative, inalienable, and immediate; the writing of flesh and blood never lies. What the writing gains in immediacy, though, it loses in denotative range, since writing that cannot lie is only barely writing. The marks traced out in earth, flesh, paper, architecture, and landscape are often not part of any language but, rather, circles, blots, a cross, a person's image, furrows, and folds. Whether stamps of authenticity or brands of shame, and however rich in symbolism, they act as pointers and labels to their material ground and not as elements in a syntactic chain that could mean something else. (154)

This crucial passage from Sedgwick's *The Coherence of Gothic Conventions* delineates Gothic as a mode of writing marked by its peculiar techniques of inscription. The semantic content of Gothic literature is inseparable from (and often secondary to) its material basis. Though critics tend to describe Gothic as genre, I argue in what follows that the fundamental distinctiveness of gothic inscription is derived from the pronounced and often dramatic relation enacted between script and medium. While genre nominates formal and stylistic criteria as paramount, characterizing Gothic as medium helps call attention to crucial questions of materiality given prominence within Gothic fiction. The

Gothic hysterically insists upon an embodied, phenomenological poetics: to "conceive" an idea, we must pass through the flesh, with all of its noise and distortions.

It is this accentuation of materiality that inspires Anne Williams's alignment of Gothic with poetic rather than novelistic traditions. "As narratives of 'otherness' distant in time and space," Williams notes that: "Gothic fictions necessarily emphasize writing rather than speech" (66). The two most common figurations of this writing within the Gothic are the fragment and the found manuscript. Both of these forms of inscription present readers with singular texts that are subject to contingency, loss, and even mortality, exploiting a contemporary fascination with architectural ruins by transposing the aura of decay to the text. Disturbing mimesis with the physical residue of the text, Gothic writers direct readings toward the apparatus that palpably brings text into texture, and writing into being.

Such conceits reveal the surprising extent to which the Gothic novel manifests anxiety over its own textual body. With the infamous introduction to his Gothic Romance *The Castle of Otranto*, Horace Walpole introduces a new kind of novel, uniquely troubled by its material existence, and nervously reiterating the Gothic trope of illegitimacy at the level of the text. While *Otranto*'s narrative concerns the violent correction of a perverted patrilineal inheritance, the novel's paratext finds Walpole himself constructing a false genealogy of the text, employing the found manuscript conceit that would become the generic standard for gothic authors seeking to confer upon their narratives the aura of authenticity. Over a century later, *Dracula*'s Jonathan Harker will sift through the "mass of material of which the record is composed" to find "there is hardly one authentic document; nothing but a mass of typewriting" (419). Most novels implicitly request a

kind of automatic reading: we open the text and the voice simply begins speaking, no questions asked. The weight of the book disappears from our hands as we drift into the fiction. By contrast, the Gothic novel resists the sublimation of the book and, consequently, often finds itself struggling with a problem that few literary texts feel they need to account for: how did this writing come to be inscribed upon this body? This is uncanny mimesis: literature trembling before its own mirror.

The uncanny quality of this textual "doubling" finds succinct expression in the "monstrous text," a peculiarly persistent metaphor within Gothic fiction that induces a hallucination of reading that reincarnates the word as flesh. In her introduction to the 1831 version of *Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley beckons her "hideous progeny" to "go forth and prosper" (358), proposing a metaphor that imagines publication not as a matter of paper and ink, but flesh and blood. We might turn as well to Stevenson's description of *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* as "a Gothic Gnome" (*Works* 66), a fantastic designation that captures something of the awkward and even unsettling position of the novella (and particularly the "shilling shocker") within literature by framing the question as one not of literary form, but of physical deformity.[3]

This analogy between text and flesh represents a figural innovation that is *also* a critical history of inscription. If, as Michel de Certeau argues, "books are only metaphors of the body," Gothic fiction stages the collapse of the literary into the corporeal. "In times of crisis," de Certeau claims, "paper is no longer enough for the law, and it writes itself again on the bodies themselves" (140). The crises most commonly introduced within Gothic narrative serve as pretexts for the reversion to an archaic scriptural economy that indelibly marks its authority through the conscription of bodies. From De Quincey's

restless nocturnal struggle under the compositor's blocks in *Suspiria de Profundis* to the harrow that inscribes its "death sentence" upon the enthusiastic commandant in Franz Kafka's "Penal Colony," the Gothic rehearses endlessly this primal scene of writing. In positioning bodies under the mechanisms of inscription and interpretation, the genre comes to terms with the gravity of writing through sympathetic consultation of the surfaces that have yielded under its weight. In other words, the Gothic has much to tell us about writing, but possibly more about the experience of *being written*.

The recurrent enactment of violent scenes of writing within Gothic narrative grants imaginative substance to the theoretical connotations of "inscription." Employed critically, the term "inscription" signals a figural strategy intended to make readers wince, by calling attention to the corporeal embodiment of cultural signs. This term disrupts the metaphysics of writing by revealing its physics, desublimating the process of writing in order to communicate the force as well as the sense of this material cultural practice. In doing so, it exposes the "will to knowledge" as a "will to power."

It is this genealogical position that grounds Friedrich A. Kittler's *Discourse Networks*, even if the author requires an interlocutor to elucidate the latent sympathies that motivate his intellectual project. In his disarming foreword to Kittler's thorny text, David E. Wellbery explains: "Whoever would look for the bonds of solidarity that orient Kittler's investigation will find them here: in its unmistakable compassion for the pathos of the body in pain" (xv). If Kittler's affinities are difficult to discern, perhaps this confusion is owing to his anti-humanist orientation: the fate of the subject is a fairly indifferent matter to him. Rather, following Nietzsche and Foucault, Kittler attends to the surface of the body, where the disparate scripts of subjection are inscribed. This body,

which constitutes the text of genealogy, is "a volume in perpetual disintegration" (Foucault, "Nietzsche" 375). This is so because the subject's composition requires the body's decomposition.

Even if, as Penelope Deutscher argues, the metaphor of inscription has become a post-structural "habit," its emphasis on the material basis of signification registers a tacit resistance to the ways in which bodies are "incorporated" into systems of meaning. Indeed, Mary Ann Doane locates the possibility of a "politics of the medium" (146) through an understanding of the medium as "a material or technical means of aesthetic expression . . . which harbors both constraints and possibilities, the second arguably emerging as a consequence of the first " (130). Recognizing this possibility for resistance forestalls the deterministic conclusions about the inevitable fate of victimized bodies as configured within Kittler's thinking.

In one enduring strain of the Gothic mode, machinery is nearly synonymous with the violence we find in Kittler's account of technology. It is an external force, the crushing weight of which looms over the subject. This gothic vision of the technosphere is articulated in Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*, where Diogenes Teufelsdröckh depicts the world as "one huge, dead, immeasurable Steam-engine, rolling on, in its dead indifference, to grind me limb from limb" (127). It is difficult not to be reminded of Carlyle's "immeasurable Steam-engine" when Charles Maturin has one of his characters write, in the midst of an institutional conspiracy against him: "I was like one who sees an enormous machine (whose operation is to crush him to atoms) put in motion, and, stupefied with horror, gazes on it with a calmness that might be mistaken for that of one who was coolly analyzing the complication of its machinery, and calculating the

resistless crush of its blow" (*Melmoth* 91). We will find the machine characterized in like manner within the writings of Karl Marx, perhaps the source that has the most profound impact on critical theories concerning Victorian attitudes towards technology. It is the "automatic system of machinery" that effectuates the objectification and alienation of labour, installing workers as "no more than the conscious limbs of the automaton" (*Grundisse* 132). The indifferent machine is cast as "something alien and exterior to" the workers, threatening to render them "superfluous" (135).

However, Maturin's *Melmoth* (along with Shelley's *Frankenstein*) helped to develop a more nuanced and troubling understanding of gothic machinery in 1820s fiction. Machinery becomes truly uncanny at the moment we recognize that its inorganic (or unfamiliar) gears and processes are already at work within us. True to the prevailing emotional tenor of the Gothic mode, each of the fictional texts discussed within this study are marked by suspicion concerning emergent technologies and techniques of writing and reading, a distrust that frequently escalates into outright paranoia. But these fears are tinged with an unmistakable technophilia. These texts betray industrial England's distinctive fascination with the awesome spectacle and power of technology, "the Victorian sense of machine beauty" that Herbert Sussman identifies as "the dominant energy of the nineteenth century" (198). As Sussman argues, this drive has too often been eclipsed by negative assessments (whose primary appeal may be that they appear more closely aligned with the prejudices of modern humanism). At root, this Victorian fascination was sustained by a deep sense of affinity with machinery. The mechanist philosophy of the human was being realized through an array of instruments that

mirrored every organ and function of the human body, suggesting in their analogical relation kinship as well as compatibility.

If nineteenth-century debate often hinged on the question of whether such technologies clarified or distorted our vision of the human, recent theories of technology have highlighted the "posthuman" hybridity of Victorian understandings of the body (Ketabgian), imagining the self as a site of constant re-invention, rather than gradual discovery. In this vein, Terry Castle's designation of the uncanny as an "invention" (understood in a broad cultural sense that encompasses, but is not limited to, technology) prompts us to explore the history and conditions of the "uncanny's" emergence, as well as imagining the possibility of its eventual disappearance.[4] This dissertation makes another step toward that work. Exploring automatism as a synonym for mechanism, it aims to situate historically and materially the experience of the uncanny in the nineteenth century. The analysis of historically-situated technologies allows us to make use of the valuable insights psychoanalysis has to offer, while resisting the notion that it is capable of delineating a stable, generalized vision of "the" subject. This kind of approach stresses the fact that these theoretical concepts emerge out of a shared social reality as well as individual psychic histories. While I investigate a number of questions typically understood to be the province of psychoanalysis, references to Freud situate his writing as a dependent variable rather than an outside authority on the culture it inhabited. Throughout, I have sought to read the dream-logic of Gothic narrative in the half-light of a culture that Carlyle felt had been cast into "magnetic sleep" ("Signs" 64) by machinery.

Apprehending Bodies

Carlyle's account of the mesmerizing powers of machinery provides an essential critique of the repetitive choreographies of bodies and minds set in motion by technological culture. One might reasonably expect a thesis on Victorian automatism to reiterate Carlyle's position on the anesthetizing effects of technology. However, one of the most striking and consistent revelations of my research has been the tendency of technological innovation to stimulate renewed consciousness of bodies. To say that technology "awakens" us to a new awareness of ourselves is perhaps insufficiently critical. We can at least remark that, in their interface with bodies, communications technologies made visible many aspects of physical existence that had theretofore gone "un-remarked," if not entirely unnoticed. Rather than simply suppressing consciousness, automatic writing technologies were often thought to *produce* the unconscious graphically.

The Victorians were attuned to many faint tremblings and pulsations that have long since stopped disturbing our minds and bodies. In *Daniel Deronda*, George Eliot describes her cultural moment as "a time when the soul of man was waking to pulses which had for centuries been beating in him unheard" (124).[5] This calibration of the social nervous system—not necessarily "more precise," but distinctly different from our own—allows for divergent qualities of feeling and makes bodies visible in unfamiliar ways. Sensitivity was as much a culturally constructed value as it was a physical experience. We can deduce a sense of the high esteem in which Victorians held sensitivity from the manner in which "insensitivity" served as an all-purpose epithet for an array of othered bodies, from criminals (Lombroso) to "idiots" (Galton), and "savages" (Felkin) to women (Ellis).[6] In the nineteenth century, one could speak of the

"nobility" of the nerves (Lombroso, qtd. in Horn 88), as if feeling were a matter of principle.

The critical commonplace of Victorian cultural "anxiety" toys with a mere caricature of the extraordinarily acute physical sensitivity cultivated within the Victorian era. Describing this period as a time of great "apprehension" brings us nearer to the truth of the matter, as it better communicates the ambivalent responses (excitement and anticipation mixed with prejudice and dread) of a cultural sensorium opening itself up to an unknown world. From the séance table to the sanitarium to the laboratory, Victorian consciousness was tuning in to the subtle influence of other bodies. Sensation fiction, with its bundle of exposed nerves trembling at the slightest stimulation, might seem the most obvious expression of this heightened sensibility, but one finds the same hypersensitivity in a text such as *The Ninth Bridgewater Treatise*, in which Charles Babbage imagines a phonographic universe where "every atom" has been "impressed with good and with ill" by even the most seemingly inconsequential of our words and actions (112).[7]

The term apprehension also conveys the perceived importance of capturing these impressions, the faith that the traces of events and emotions grant us some power over them by transmuting subjective experience into objective evidence. This desire not only to touch, but to dispassionately *understand* what one touches, brought about one of the most striking developments within this widespread attunement: the culture's systematic deployment of devices designed to feel and communicate on behalf of bodies. Within a fledgling medical establishment, graphing instruments such as the sphygmograph (or pulse-writer) and the cardiograph interrupted the contiguity of bodies in order to correct

the vagaries of manual palpation and direct auscultation performed by fallible human physicians. Telegraphs, phonographs, and other communications media interceded on behalf of distant correspondents, capturing and transmitting "sounds hitherto fugitive" (Edison, "Future" 527). In like manner, fugitive bodies were apprehended through photographic databases and other taxonomical systems that allowed the law to superimpose categories and composites of distinctive physical traces over an undifferentiated mass of individuals.[8] The criterion of understanding for the Victorians was empirical and objectively verifiable evidence. Within emergent Victorian discourses such as medicine, communications, and criminology, this evidence typically took the form of indexical inscription, the truth-value of which lay in an automatic performance that deferred mental work to mechanical notation.

In *Telling Flesh: The Substance of the Corporeal*, Vicki Kirby argues that: "we must theorise the possibility that 'nature scribbles,' that 'flesh reads'" (127). Her thesis, along with those of Gothic critics such as Kelly Hurley and Anne Williams, provides a necessary addendum to Sedgwick's theory of gothic inscription. Both critics explore the productive capacity of gothic bodies, along with their ability to disturb humanist and symbolic structures of meaning. For Kelly Hurley, the "gothicity of matter" lies in its unsettling vitality; when the Gothic lures its reader outside the sterile confines of humanist discourse, we find that bodies are "not mute and stolid, but rather clamorous and active" (33). Williams's *Art of Darkness* explores the Gothic as a revolutionary female counter-tradition to Romanticism. The representative figure of this movement is "a woman speaking to women" (7), and her manifesto could be Julia Kristeva's *Revolution in Poetic Language.* Interrupting symbolic narrative with the "non-expressive

totality" of the semiotic, gothic figures enact a hysterical "embodiment" of meaning, where symptoms "literalize" unconscious feelings (Williams 70).

Together, Hurley and Williams lend critical credence to distinctly gothic premonitions concerning the eloquence and legibility of bodies. Gothic epistemology upholds the validity of embodied experience and knowledge. Its narratives implore us to listen to the testimony of our own bodies. When the mere sight of a man makes our skin crawl, when a child's touch sends shivers up our spine, when we just have a feeling in our bones, we must not let an inability to articulate our suspicions prevent us from following our instincts. The apprehension of this deeply personal, embedded knowledge accounts only for the milder side of gothic paranoia, however. There is also the more pressing threat that others are listening to our bodies just as intently, waiting for it to betray our secrets with the telltale signs of a racing pulse, a blushing cheek, or a trembling hand.

This dissertation reads such gothic fears in light of the array of graphing machines that literalize and externalize internal phenomena (whether conceived as physiological, spiritual, or mental), thereby literally making the body present outside itself. "Reading flesh" alongside Stevenson, Marsh, Stoker and the other authors addressed within this dissertation means taking seriously "gothic paranoia," as well as its twin condition of "Victorian anxiety," thereby relinquishing two of the favourite talking points of modernity, and foils for our own incredulity. The Victorians, we must remember, also went to great lengths in realizing these theories as a legitimately scientific corporeal hermeneutic. If machinery served in early Gothic as a poignant and philosophically rich metaphor for the automatisms of the self, the resurgence of the genre a century later

would find the Gothic in explicit conversation with new technologies capable of literalizing and materializing these anxieties.

Richard Menke's *Telegraphic Realism: Victorian Fiction and Other Information Systems* (2008) provides an exceptional model for rethinking the Victorian novel as one relay point in dynamic exchange with Victorian information networks. Menke encourages readers to "think of Victorian realism itself as an exploration of the power and the limits of written textuality in an age busy producing alternatives to it" (11). Particularly captivating is Menke's examination of the indexical technologies that compel the novel to re-imagine itself as "an analog cultural form" (26). At first glance, Menke's basic orientation towards realist fiction may not seem particularly radical: "we might think of realism," he suggests, "not so much in terms of transparency as of translucence - not of a simple desire to disregard mediation but of an emphasis on the way in which mediations make certain real aspects of represented things shine through" (104). Perhaps, as Gitelman has written in her response to Menke's book, "it would be difficult […] to find readers who do not see literary realism as a sort of mediation" (163). However, it is equally difficult to think of a reader as keenly perceptive to the *material* dimension of this mediation. Menke's careful textual dissections present us with a visceral experience of technology that more strictly discursive analyses of linguistic mediation leave largely untouched. It is not only language, but bodies that interpose themselves between information and its transmission. In asking: "what was information in an *analog* epoch?" (23), Menke communicates what we might call, borrowing from Jonathan Crary, the "carnal density" (150) of fiction.

In this respect, Menke's chapter on Eliot, "Information Unveiled," resonates most strongly with the work attempted in these pages. In Menke's reading, Eliot's novella "The Lifted Veil," which relates the tortured perspective of a man besieged by unasked-for gifts of premonition and clairvoyance, reflects upon "fiction's power to capture something of the complexity of life in alienated, repeatable form" (137), giving voice to the fear that "fiction may cast our most intimate knowledge—of places, of individuals, of embodied life—as information" (147). Menke's text commits itself to a productively "analogic" (and, I would argue, frequently gothic) perspective on realism, while my study turns squarely to the Gothic, finding there a uniquely powerful perspective on the fate of embodied information within the Victorian scriptural economy. The dreadful vision of "objectified subjectivity" (137) that Menke glimpses in Eliot's novella and in the cultural moment that inspired its composition gains fullest figural and critical expression through the uncanny externalizations of gothic tropology.

In this study, Victorian technology and Gothic literature emerge as twin registers of the divided self, joined in their shared strategy of externalizing conflicts traditionally understood as invisible processes, but also in the consequent tendency of each uncanny text to expose its ghostly remainders and excesses in the process of trying to contain them. In her reading of James Hogg's *Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, Sedgwick makes the crucial observation that the novel "literalizes and externalizes, for instance as murder or demonic temptation, conflicts that are usually seen as internal" (*BM* 96). This representational strategy is quintessentially Gothic, but in the nineteenth century it was hardly understood to be the unique prerogative of fiction to invert its subjects in this manner. We find this logic just as clearly at work in Francis Galton's "Measurement of

Character." Here, Galton imagines a "great ruler" (an unwitting pun that links regal power with the ability to "measur[e] man in his entirety") questioning a duplicitous subject. This wise man "contrives, by a few minutes' questioning, temptation, and show of displeasure, to turn his character inside out" (182). With the assistance of graphical devices for the detection and recording of internal physiological processes, the hallucinogenic nightmare experienced by Poe's villain in "The Tell-Tale Heart" becomes an objective reality. The paranoid fear that private and immaterial emotions such as guilt could manifest themselves somatically and reverberate outside the confines of the body finds confirmation in instruments of modern medicine and science that prove capable of "turn[ing] … character inside out." Galton delights that, thanks to the cardiograph, "palpitations of the heart . . . cannot be shunned or repressed, and they are visible" ("Measurement" 183). It is this paradoxical desire to know subjects by objectifying them—translating private inner realities as publicly exterior ones—that marks the Victorian period as a particularly gothic age.

Galton's irrepressible palpitations echo Sedgwick's "writing that cannot lie." This is human expression stripped bare of its capacity for deferral, prevarication, or outright deception (or, as Sedgwick has it, writing that is "barely writing" at all). The graphing instruments that capture and inscribe these involuntary stirrings present us with the register of a life that writes itself, even against our own wishes. Of course, these devices were not intended for anything so idiosyncratic as personal expression; they existed to facilitate a strictly institutional dialogue between examiners and scientific subjects. Every prosthesis extends a particular thesis about the body, concretizing in its design a specific idea about what our bodies should or could be made to perform, feel, look, and sound

like. Automatic technologies of inscription suggested that the body was a volume of writing that solicited reading and needed only to be properly transcribed in order to make itself understood.

In its examination of Victorian culture's rewriting of subjects according to the principles of a newly automatized scriptural economy, this study takes a page from Anson Rabinbach's *The Human Motor: Energy, Fatigue, and the Origins of Modernity*. Rabinbach's expansive analysis of the transformative effects of the industrial supplementation of manual labour centres on the cultural work performed by the metaphor of the "human motor." This comparison helped to reify the labour of human bodies as "labour power," and defined that commodity according to "the expenditure and deployment of energy as opposed to human will, moral purpose, or even technical skill" (4). It is my contention that the emergent ways of thinking about laboring bodies described by Rabinbach had a comparable effect upon conceptions of reading and writing as well. The concepts of "will," "purpose" and "skill" upon which humanist models of labour depended prove just as crucial to humanist theories of authorship and reception. Outside the precincts of the properly literary (a space delimited by genre, gender, and a host of criteria to be explored in what follows), where writing could still be primarily be theorized as a conscious act of the will, the emergence of new scientific and communications media provoked the Victorians to consider writing as an unconscious process of the body, akin to energy. Victorian bodies came to be understood not just as sources of labor-power, but of knowledge/power as well; they were not only industrialized, but *informationalized*. If the latter term still has an inelegant ring, the

ungainly approach language makes toward this concept might signify a deficit of thinking on the matter.

If the modern factory furnishes the stage upon which we witness the conversion of human labour into mechanical energy, the transcription of bodies into information transpires within the space of the Victorian archive. It is this codification of human subjects under the mechanisms of the nineteenth-century state that constitutes Allan Sekula's primary concern within "The Body and the Archive." Interpreting the practice of archiving and circulating criminal "identification" as a technological extension of Bentham's panoptical principle of surveillance, Sekula's history of photography reconciles the practice and theory of a positivist agenda to rectify social deviance through an exhaustive empiricism of criminal bodies. Criminology's practical aspect required an intricate indexicality of bodies within the archive. The most punctilious undertaking of this encyclopedic project was Alphonse Bertillon's modern system of criminal identification, a method that found its iconic figure in the "mug shot." Sekula turns to Francis Galton's composite portraits as emblematic of criminological positivism's theoretical pole, which attempts, conversely, to discover the archive within the body. Signaled by the rise of phrenology and physiognomy, this scientific development intended to render criminality physically legible, accessing the social and genealogical histories inscribed within particular bodies to identify biologically determined traces of criminality.

All such identificatory systems depended upon the general acceptance of a systematic equivalence between bodies and signs, but it is Galton's proposal that signals the most audacious assertion of the Victorian archive. For if Bertillon deposited bodies

into an archive, Galton believed that the body *itself* was an archive, holding the secret traces of its bearer's history as well as the promise of its future. Consequently, the law had no need to mark (or stigmatize) its subjects into order to catalogue them. Through databases such as the "British Register of Distinctive Marks" that was included within 1869's Habitual Criminals Act, the state had merely to recognize and systematize the inscriptive work (such as scarring and tattooing) already being undertaken by and upon delinquent bodies (Cole 29).

My use of the term graphomania marks an attempt to isolate a strain of "archive fever" specific to the Victorians, one driven by this conviction that bodies involuntarily produced the legible signs of their identity and character (particularly when those bodies deviated from cultural norms).[9] Chapter One explores graphomania as a fundamental Victorian hypothesis, and provides the historical and theoretical framework for the project by situating the uncanny phenomenon of automatic writing in the context of the "scriptural economy" of the late-nineteenth century. This graphical system is remarkable for its unprecedented expansion of what ought to be considered as "writing." Brokered by an arsenal of mechanical recording devices, from the cardiograph, to the telegraph, to the phonograph, the Victorians discovered that a surprisingly broad range of ephemeral and invisible phenomena could be apprehended as permanent and visible inscriptions. The graphical method of scientific inquiry instates a quintessentially Victorian articulation of automatic writing, one that "recognizes" bodies are always inscribing themselves. Given the proper receptive devices, these bodies render interior states objectively legible, conscripting subjects according to the indexical logic that so strongly informs nineteenth-century discourse.

The automatic writing machines that underwrite the “graphical method” are responsible for the discursive production of the “graphomaniac,” a human body that replicates the automatic production of the machine. Unsurprisingly, the automatic function considered a virtue in the machine was held to be a grave defect in the human, whose heedless writing was a pathological disturbance of the general economy of writing. Max Nordau’s use of the term graphomaniac to describe one who cannot help but write serves as a point of departure for a broader analysis of the particular epistemological constructs and institutions responsible for producing this “insatiable writer” as a subject of knowledge.

Chapter Two nominates Stevenson’s Dr. Jekyll as an exemplary specimen of the graphomaniac, examining Stevenson’s *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde*—an autobiography overrun by automatism—as a paranoid critique of the Victorian regime of self-registration. Autobiography articulates formally each subject’s obligation within an economy of writing: to render the self as legible to others, and account for one’s life. My reading centres on the uncanny homophone of the “hand”—signifying both bodily appendage and manual inscription—as the synecdoche that links Jekyll’s body to the scriptural economy. In most cultural analyses of writing, the shift from human to mechanical activity is indicated by the disappearance or dislocation of the hand. Whether observed nostalgically (as in Heidegger’s “Parmenides”) or dispassionately (Kittler 195), this rift signals an estrangement between the writer and the written (which can no longer be read simply as a means of expressive personal communication). Contrary to these readings, I argue that, far from usurping the role of the hand in inscription, nineteenth-century technology apprehends the entire body as a writing machine.

The Victorians codified this physiological hermeneutic through physiognomy and graphology, two pseudo-sciences that, I argue, reciprocally imagine the body as legible, and handwriting as an embodied practice. Both attempt to breach the gap between "impressions" (premonition, intuition, superstition, and other irrational but instinctive gothic ways of knowing that are "felt in one's bones" rather than conceived in the mind) and "expression" as objective, legitimate epistemologies. Within Stevenson's novel, disembodiment is the prerequisite of autonomous writing, and is the prerogative of the healthy, professional males whose writing circulates through the text. By contrast, Jekyll's handwriting is encumbered by the residue of his body, which imposes its addictive needs and involuntary, repetitive gestures.

Developing the Gothic distinction between expression and inexpressible impressions introduced within the previous chapter, Chapter Three pursues the theme of embodied communication in Richard Marsh's *The Beetle*. This chapter explores trance-literature through its literalized understanding of the mind's impressionability, asking how incipient writing technologies allowed the Victorians to imagine traumatic experience visually. In *Techniques of the Observer*, Jonathan Crary argues that the nineteenth-century study of optics was distinguished by an essential revision in understandings of human vision. Geometrical theories of the phenomenon (where sight organized objects in space) gave way to physiological experimentation (where the world impressed itself upon the retina). I submit the Gothic novel as an ideal site to examine the psychological implications of this discursive shift. From Nathaniel's Hawthorne's Holgrave to George du Maurier's Svengali, the Gothic has persistently associated hypnosis with photography, a pattern that impels us to consider the contemporaneous

development of "the negative" within photographic and psychoanalytic discourse. In the "urban legend" of the optogram (the speculation that external objects can be fixed upon the retina, and even surgically extracted after death) as imagined by Marsh, we find a particularly rich popular expression of traumatic understandings of visuality. Rather than consolidating visual mastery (as one might expect technology to do), photography provides Marsh with a means of conceiving the receptive vulnerability of the perceiving subject, a thesis that haunts technological realism with the possibility that its "look" might fail to assure the dominance of the subject thereby enlightened.

My fourth chapter continues with the theme of observer as index through a reading of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* as a "retrofit" of the novelistic technique of "writing to the moment," one that mobilizes the arsenal of cutting-edge writing technologies currently at its disposal in order to present writing that is also unmistakably "of its moment." A textbook case of Victorian graphomania, Stoker's novel is propelled by a feverish obsession with providing accurate and immediate documentation. "There is throughout," Stoker promises us from the outset, "no statement of past things wherein memory may err, for all the records chosen are exactly contemporary" (29). I consider this pledge of fidelity to the reader in light of the rampant infidelity between characters in the novel. Stoker's concerns, I argue, are at once textual and sexual, and his novel offers a unique glimpse into the intersections of indexical and sexual reproduction in the Gothic.

Nascent tensions between technological and human models of faithfulness exert a strain upon Stoker's subjects, and precipitate the conspicuous infidelity that peppers his narrative. Kittler's influential interpretations of the novel in "Dracula's Legacy" and *Discourse Networks* downplay these liaisons, enlisting Mina's typewriter—the token of

her chaste commitment to take dictation from her husband—as emblematic of technology's tendency to discipline libidinal energies. My reading intends to restore the vital presence of bodies within Stoker's text by exploring the desire it betrays for unmediated, tactile experience of the other, a drive that finds technological expression in the phonographic register of the text, and gothic embodiment in the figure of the vampire. Both phonographic and vampiric techniques of inscription correspond to a gothic conception of immediacy, attained not through the absence of mediation, but the presence of bodies. The physical intimacy between signifier and signified captured by indexical recording machines subjects all communication to innuendo; as a result, the scientific authority of these technologies is subverted by the libidinal undercurrents of immediate correspondence as play between bodies. The scandal of this physical intimacy is only intensified by the "indiscriminate recording" of analog technologies. This indexical correlation between signifier and signified will be reframed as a disquietingly indeterminate relation between self and other when Mina serves as the instrumental medium of vampiric communications. Mina's mediumship indulges an enduring gothic fascination with the receptive properties and testimonial authority of impressionable bodies, but it does something more radical as well, by demonstrating how writing technologies activate and give concrete expression to the productive graphomaniacal tendencies of the human. If fidelity in Stoker's text names the mechanical refusal of any subjective or sentimental view of the subject, it also characterizes Mina's extraordinary ability to perceive herself in such a manner, transforming her body into the medium and objective correlative of the other.

From Nordau's diagnosis of "those semi-insane persons who feel a strong impulse to write" (18), to Milan Kundera's definition of graphomania as the compulsion "to impose one's self on […] a public audience of unknown readers" (127), the derogatory and disciplinary weight of the term interprets this modern phenomenon as a deluge of unsolicited intimacies forced upon readers by graphically incontinent individuals. In the Gothic novels examined here, graphomania indexes less the imposing over-extension of the self than the *intensive* mark of the other—not only inscribed upon us, but wildly composing and discomposing from within.

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[1] Benjamin. "Theses on the Philosophy of History," 253.

[2] In his own incisive reading of nineteenth-century communications technology, Richard Menke (discussed below) has similarly called for an "intermediate understanding" (9) that tempers Kittler's categorical statements concerning the cultural impact of single technologies.

[3] Stevenson uses this phrase in a letter written to his friend William H. Low on the 2nd of January, 1886.

[4] See Castle, *Female Thermometer.*

[5] Eliot's last novel, published in 1876, *Daniel Deronda* was her only narrative to feature a (relatively) contemporary setting of 1865.

[6] See *Criminal Man*, 206-211; Galton, commenting on the "discriminative faculty of idiots," remarks that: "their sense of pain is so obtuse that some of the more idiotic seem hardly to know what it is. In their dull lives, such pain as can be excited in them may literally be accepted with a welcome surprise" ("Inquiries" 28); Robert William Felkin (medical missionary, explorer, and early anthropologist, 1858-1922) studied "differences of sensibility between Europeans and Negroes" (Horn 95). Horn also notes that the 1888 Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to Torres Straits included studies of sensibility (95). For an account of women's higher tolerance for pain, see Ellis. *Man and Woman: A Study of Secondary Sexual Characteristics*.

[7] The extended quotation of this passage within both John Picker's *Victorian Soundscapes* and Richard Menke's *Telegraphic Realism* signals the affinities between my

project and those of both writers. Each understands technology as an index of cultural sensitivity, as well as a material indication of the desire to assess the interconnectedness of bodies within the phenomenal world.

[8] On the "apprehending" of criminal bodies within Victorian criminological discourse, see Leps (1992). I discuss her use of the term on pages 75-77 of this dissertation.

[9] On "archive fever," see Derrida (1995). In particular, see "Exergue," where Derrida traces the convergence of two correlative archival gestures: one is typographical, while the other (ritual circumcision) conscripts the body into the archive through a violent act of corporeal inscription.

1
Graphomania and the Graphical Method

Writing in 1872, Oliver Wendell Holmes quipped: "So many foolish persons are rushing into print, that it requires a kind of literary police to hold them back and keep them in order" (*Poet* 226). Twenty years later, in his book *Degeneration*, Max Simon Nordau would warn: "The police cannot aid us. The public prosecutor and criminal judge are not the proper protectors of society against crime committed with pen and crayon" (557-58). Each in their own fashion, Holmes and Nordau were responding to an overwhelming proliferation of writing with the invocation of a specialized branch of "literary police-work." One is mischievously playful and the other deadly serious; together they suggest both the light-hearted and heavy-handed ways in which nineteenth-century aesthetic criticism blended rather seamlessly into moral, medical, and criminological discourse.

This chapter traces the emergence of the "graphomaniac," a figure that bridges these diverse but—for the Victorians—complementary ways of talking about writing, asking what its sudden appearance in the nineteenth century reveals about incipient Victorian rationales of interpretation. Reading the graphomaniac as a broadly representative rather than culturally marginal figure, I employ this diagnosis to examine a widespread cultural tendency to imagine "graphically" an expansive spectrum of phenomena never before considered as writing. Brokered by an arsenal of mechanical recording devices, from the cardiograph, to the telegraph, to the phonograph, the Victorians discovered that a surprisingly broad range of invisible and ephemeral phenomena could be apprehended graphically. This desire to see everything "set down in writing" gives rise to a surfeit of graphing machines thought capable of grasping the

world through a diligent recording and deciphering of its traces. It is this fervent graphological faith that marks the Victorian period as the age of graphomania.

One of the central premises of this dissertation is that every alteration in the system of signs heralds a corresponding transformation of our understanding of the subject. Anticipating the three studies that follow, this chapter is particularly concerned with the interface between these new machines of inscription and human bodies that *cannot help but write*. My aim here is to forge links between the distinctly Victorian pathology of graphomania and the epistemic hope that writing might be capable of rendering objectively the internal and subjective experiences of individuals. In so doing, I identify nineteenth-century graphical technologies as part of a rethinking of how subjects and characters are made anew in the Victorian scriptural economy, the rhetoric of which is expressive rather than repressive. Foregoing the marking of deviant and criminal bodies, as delineated within most recent theories of cultural inscription, the law "merely" attends to the identifying marks that different bodies carry upon themselves, betraying their own histories. It is in the context of this new scriptural economy with its fantasies of comprehensive legibility that Nordau's graphomaniac appears, conscripted as representative of a world that, beyond merely submitting to interpretation, automatically offers itself up as a text that silently solicits our reading.

The late nineteenth century's fascination with the symptomatic value of automatic writing corresponds closely to Sedgwick's theory of Gothic inscription. This essentially indexical writing of flesh and blood, revered for its "special access to the authoritative, inalienable, and immediate" (*Coherence* 154), is considered within Sedgwick's study as a generic rather than historical phenomenon. Conversely, the preliminary sketch of the

graphomaniac that follows proceeds largely outside the generic bounds of the Gothic. It explores the broader cultural power and legitimacy held by this fantasy of unmediated or "bare" writing, primarily through examining the range of nineteenth-century graphical machines that dramatically altered the discursive production of the subject in vaunting the truth-value of indexical inscription.

"The irresistible itch to write"

Nordau's most audacious contribution to Darwinian discourse, outlined in his *Degeneration* (1892), was his extension of evolutionary theory's scope beyond the boundaries of the evolving body and into the field of culture.[1] Responding to those who understood evolution as synonymous with the progress of the human species, Nordau maintained, following men such as British zoologist Edwin Ray Lankester, that being subject to "the general laws of evolution" made humankind "as likely to degenerate as to progress" (60).[2] For Nordau, adaptation to one's environment—particularly when those surroundings resembled those of modern urban life—was just as likely to produce "regressive" traits and behavior.[3] These traits Nordau found in abundance within the modern artist. Nearly every tendency in modern art and thought, from the Pre-Raphaelites to the decadents, from Nietzsche to Zola, exhibited signs "of more or less pronounced moral insanity, imbecility, and dementia" (viii). "High culture," for Nordau, was a polite circumlocution for describing the scum that had risen to the surface of a society. These works held a symptomatic correspondence with society; they were exemplary without being exceptional.

Nordau's *Degeneration* begins with a number of questions concerning method, addressing in particular the difficulty of obtaining direct access to the artist's body, in order to properly determine the "anatomical phenomena of degeneracy" (17). For Nordau, however, it is hardly "necessary to measure the cranium of an author, or to see the lobe of a painter's ear, in order to recognize the fact that he belongs to the class of degenerates" (17). This obstacle could be circumvented by the anatomical inspection of aesthetic objects. Nordau characterized the cultural productions of the vast majority of modern artists as "intellectual stigmata" (19). Reversing the trajectory of cultural dissemination, this rhetorical move returns aesthetic "markings" to recoil upon their putative source, repositioning them upon the surface of the body. The term "stigmata" frames such markings as signs of disease and disgrace, but the analogy also has the effect of translating culture into biology. If writing is an exteriorized *part* of the body, aesthetics falls under the jurisdiction of science. Accordingly, a new criterion must replace the conventional means of reading artistic productions. These were no longer to be understood as free gestures of the mind, but as instinctive and involuntary discharges or secretions of the body. Nordau's project amounts to a systematic denial of culture through deposition of the artist's autonomy.

The surface of the body was a site heavily contested between nineteenth-century science and aesthetics, a point upon which the practices, discourses, and lines of interpretation of each camp regularly made their violent convergence. Situated at the physical threshold of the divide between self and other, between biological function and symbolic activity, this exterior, yet liminal space was typically understood as a pre-symbolic facade. For instance, Nordau's rhetorical deployment of stigmata draws upon

precedents set by anthropological consideration of the tattoo as a marker of natural difference. Darwin himself had blurred the line between bodies and material culture in his consideration of the savage's "notorious" "passion for ornament" (*DM* 574). Determining certain affinities between "the lower and barbarous races" and the "higher animals" regarding "their taste for the beautiful" (211), Darwin proposes a rather skewed analogy between the two: "as negroes and savages in many parts of the world paint their faces with red, blue, white, or black bars, — so the male mandrill of Africa appears to have acquired his deeply-furrowed and gaudily-coloured face from having been thus rendered attractive to the female" (*DM* 541). This rather superficial appraisal of surfaces seizes upon a relation of appearance while neglecting the process of these distinct phenomena of bodily decoration. Most significantly, Darwin's comparison depends upon the leveling of any distinction between biological function and symbolic activity. Natural pigmentation, it should perhaps go without saying, is not the same as the deliberate application of pigment. The latter is a performance, a reflexive and deliberate operation upon the self that incorporates the body *into* culture (if not as a 'work of art,' at least more generally or as symbolic marker). Darwin's work reverses this trajectory to rewrite culture under the sign of the body. This organicist conception of society apprehends culture as the exterior index of the body's internal workings. Nordau's stigmata participate in this practice by translating cultural expressions as symptomatic marks that index the artist's interior state: 'vital signs' that bind body and text in an uncomfortably intimate manner.

This denial of culture's relative autonomy from nature finds one of its clearest expressions in Nordau's conception of "graphomania." Diagnoses and discussions of the "condition" throughout the fin-de-siecle tended to defer to Nordau's definition of

graphomaniacs as "those semi-insane persons who feel a strong impulse to write" (18).[4] Nordau saw these tireless and tiresome scribblers, along with their "critical body-guard," as "dominat[ing] nearly the entire press" (vii). They poured out upon the page a style of "pure literary insanity" (136) characterized by "incoherence, fugitive ideation, and a tendency to idiotic punning" (171). Attributing the term to the Italian criminologist Cesare Lombroso (18), Nordau defines this type of degenerate as a being "with an insatiable desire to write, though he has nothing to write about except his own mental and moral ailments" (qtd. in "Melancholy" 765). Two aspects of this description strike me as worthy of note here. First, in his characterization of the graphomaniac's desire to write as "insatiable," Nordau recasts production as consumption. This species of writing cannot "feed" or edify the culture at large; its growth is cancerous, and threatens the general economy of writing. At the level of the individual, the incontinence of graphomania disintegrates the author's "body of work," insofar as this figure is intended to communicate a *gestalt* of the corpus as a unified whole. Charcot gave the name "les *hommes de petit papier"* to patients who would compulsively come to him with symptoms written on little scraps of paper.[5] This is what the graphomaniac presents us with: scraps and fragments, a scattered puzzle of writing that frustrates the sublimated "idea" of the body. The study of graphomania turns our attention to more deeply ambivalent experiences of Victorian self-writing that serve as "graphic" depictions of an internal struggle between autonomy and automatism. The previous century's "Man of Letters" was now being crowded out by Charcot's "*hommes de petit papier,*" a designation that seemed at once to literalize the graphic composition of the writing

subject, and to suggest that these inscriptions provided legible evidence of an internal character hidden even to its writer.

The term "mania," like hysteria, tended to function more broadly as metaphor for the uncanny aspects of culture—namely, its contagious and compulsive nature. Many exploited the elasticity of the term "mania" to diagnose widespread cultural phenomena in an attempt to come to terms with, and discipline, the century's unprecedented proliferation of writing. At the level of culture, then, this mania produces writing that is nothing more than books. It brings about the decadence of print culture: a kind of archive fever, where evolution doubles back on itself. Emblems of enlightenment such as the library—once thought of as sites for the ordered structuring of knowledge—collapse under the exhausting weight of the expansion, production, and commodification of texts. George Gissing's *New Grub Street* (1891) anticipates the bibliophobia of Borges' "Library of Babel" when the author has his alienated publishing employee Marian Yule describe the British Library as: "growing into unwieldiness, threatening to become a trackless desert of print – how intolerably it weighed upon the spirit!" (138). This exhaustive and exhausting production and consumption of writing, an "obsessive circle" that Lennard J. Davis has recently traced back to nineteenth-century print culture (106), was diagnosed in the correlative disorders of graphomania and bibliomania. We find the rapid increase in print consumption described as "mania" in Isaac Disraeli's *Curiosities of Literature*, which devotes a chapter to the recent phenomenon of "Bibliomania." Those afflicted with this condition obsessively collect the forms of knowledge (in particular, books) without grasping, or even concerning themselves with, matters of substance. [6] Disraeli imagines the public library as a madhouse, institutionalizing both text and reader

by contending that this meaningless accumulation of “enormous heap[s] of books” has infected weak minds, who imagine that they acquire knowledge when they keep it on their shelves” (9).

Disraeli’s particular concern over public libraries suggests the epidemic dimension of the problem. Graphomania is not merely a personal pathology, suffered by the few. One would almost have to extend this diagnosis to the whole of modern culture to account for the century’s unprecedented proliferation of writing. Indeed, this is precisely what Davis has done in his recent history of obsessive-compulsive disorders (2008). Davis characterizes nineteenth-century novelists as “obsessives in the cause of letters” (105), attributing their extraordinary output to a “graphomania[cal]” (107) drive that was for novelists, journalists, and critics alike a professional obligation. “The great novelists of that century,” he tells us, ”were engaged in a single-minded work project that had no precedent—the continuous, cumulative production of words” (105).

Writing from America in 1890, Oliver Wendell Holmes’ satirical poem “Cacoethes Scribendi” (the irresistible urge to write) imagines this proliferation of writing as a global and ecological concern:

> If all the trees in all the woods were men;
>
> And each and every blade of grass a pen;
>
> If every leaf on every shrub and tree
>
> Turned to a sheet of foolscap; every sea
>
> Were changed to ink, and all earth's living tribes
>
> Had nothing else to do but act as scribes,
>
> And for ten thousand ages, day and night,

> The human race should write, and write, and write,
>
> Till all the pens and paper were used up,
>
> And the huge inkstand was an empty cup,
>
> Still would the scribblers clustered round its brink
>
> Call for more pens, more paper, and more ink.[7]

Though he casts the ecological question as a purely hypothetical one (the trees are not pulped for paper, but magically transform into men), Holmes characterizes writing as a form of expenditure by imagining the world's materials translated textually. The earth is a dwindling resource, pillaged by "scribblers" who have failed to count the material costs of writing not worth the paper it has been written upon. A critique of writing as informational "pollution" would have to remain similarly metaphorical, as this ecological scenario is primarily concerned with granting figural expression to a criticism of readerly exhaustion. More than the deterioration of the earth, it was the erosion of the human body under flows of information that seemed the most pressing for critics of the excesses of nineteenth-century print culture. Questioning the necessity of this superfluous and wearying expenditure, Holmes's poem anticipates the bleak milieu inhabited by Gissing's Marian, who "exhaust[s]" herself "in the manufacture of printed stuff which no one even pretended to be more than a commodity for the day's market" (137). Thourougly dispirited and dehumanized by this process, Marian comes to see herself "not [as] a woman, but a mere machine for reading and writing" (137). Through the stifling monotony of her working hours, "she [does] her best […] to convert herself into the literary machine which it was her hope would some day be invented for construction in a less sensitive material than human tissue" (505). Nordau is similarly concerned with the

effects of printed matter on sensitive human tissue; he suggests that graphomania might be the result of print over-saturation, connecting this graphic incontinence to radical increases in the consumption of writing. He charges the increased circulation of letters and newspapers in the nineteenth century with the deterioration of the modern individual's physical constitution: writing and reading are activities that "involve an effort of the nervous system and a wearing of tissue. Every time we read or write, every human face we see, every conversation we carry on, every scene we perceive through the window of the flying express, sets in activity our sensory nerves and our brain centres" (39). Though most possess the resilience necessary to weather this barrage of modern urban experience, abnormal types such as the "hysteric" and "degenerate" exhibit a "disproportionate impressionability of their psychic centres" (25). This impressionable, susceptible nature leads to "irresistible passion for imitation," and eager submission "to all the suggestions of writers and artists" (26). Such impressionable minds find themselves locked in a vicious cycle, where immoderate reading leads to overindulgent writing, which in turn perpetuates this problem of excess for other readers.

Though it eventually came to be codified within degenerative theories of criminality and pathology, these earliest usages of graphomania found the term only facetiously employed as a specialized medical classification, employed in ironic styles that recognized the audacity of imagining literary critique as medical diagnosis. Often, it seems to have been adopted as a self-deprecating term by those who recognized in themselves a tendency towards the loquacious. For example, the subtitle of Edinburgh's 1827 journal of medical satire, *The Cheilead, or University Coterie; being violent ebullitions of graphomaniacs, affected by cacoethes scirbendi, and famæ sacra fames*,

suggests an ironic self-awareness seldom displayed by Nordau within his own work.[8] Medical discourse, we find in this self-diagnosis, is a form of writing prone to its own obsessive tendencies. George Bernard Shaw's dispassionate critique of Nordau in *The Sanity of Art* argues for a similarly reflexive reading of Nordau's *Degeneration*:

> If you want an example of echolalia [symptomatic of degeneration, according to Nordau], can you find a more shocking one than this gentleman who, when you say "mania," immediately begins to gabble Egomania, Graphomania, Megalomania, Onomatomania, Pyromania, Kleptomania, Dipsomania, Erotomania, Arithmomania, Oniomania, and is started off by the termination "phobia" with a string of Agoraphobia, Claustrophobia, Rupophobia, Iophobia, Nosophobia, Aichmophobia, Belenophobia, Cremnophobia, and Trichophobia? (80).

Critiques such as Shaw's suggest that, while the term "graphomania" purports to tell us something about aberrant practices of writing, its sudden appearance in the nineteenth century reveals more to us today about newly emergent rationales of reading.[9] The most significant changes in the nineteenth century had less to do with the sheer quantities of writing produced and consumed than the extraordinary expansion of what counted as writing in the first place. The crucial distinction between these two modern developments can be illuminated with reference to Heidegger's "Age of the World Picture." This "world picture" names something more than a visual representation of the world; it refers to a distinctly modern understanding of our world as essentially pictorial—as something that can be adequately enframed and expressed as an image. Heidegger is concerned less with pictures than with the primary tendency to visualize; it is this mentality that explains

how it is “that the world becomes a picture at all” (129). Analogously, nineteenth-century inscription technologies seek not to expand an already-existing archive of writing, but to fundamentally alter the ontological relation between writing and the phenomenal world. These technologies signaled not that the world was a surface and a subject upon and about which one might write, but that its nature was *innately* graphic.

This distinction can be further clarified through a comparison of Holmes' “Cacoethes Scribendi” with an extraordinary passage from the father of modern computing, Charles Babbage, in his *Ninth Bridgewater Treatise* (1838). Speculating upon “The Permanent Impression of Our Words and Actions on the Globe We Inhabit,” Babbage provides us with an alternate vision of global inscription. Reasoning that “the pulsations of the air, once set in motion by the human voice, cease not to exist with the sounds to which they gave rise” (109), Babbage envisions the boundless spatial and temporal ramifications of these atmospheric undulations:

> Thus considered, what a strange chaos is this wide atmosphere we breathe! Every atom, impressed with good and with ill, retains at once the motions which philosophers and sages have imparted to it, mixed and combined in ten thousand ways with all that is worthless and base. *The air itself is one vast library, on whose pages are for ever written all that man has ever said or woman whispered.* There, in their mutable but unerring characters, mixed with the earliest, as well as with the latest sighs of mortality, stand for ever recorded, vows unredeemed, promises unfulfilled, perpetuating in the united movements of each particle, the testimony of man's changeful will. But if the air we breathe is the never-failing

> historian of the sentiments we have uttered, earth, air, and ocean, are the eternal witnesses of the acts we have done. (111-112, emphasis added)

The contrast here with Holmes' "Cacoethes Scribendi" is striking: rather than a "natural world" that has been pulped for the writing materials required to satisfy an excessive human desire to write, Babbage's world is itself tirelessly engaged in interminable acts of composition (the majority of these unfolding beneath the threshold of our perception). The globe is not a blank surface placed, to its detriment, under the knife of inscription. Instead, this world is endlessly expressive, always writing and being written. The sea would hardly need to be "changed to ink," as Holmes imagines, once one realizes that "the ripple on the ocean's surface caused by a gentle breeze, or the still water which marks the more immediate track of a ponderous vessel gliding with scarcely expanded sails over its bosom, are equally indelible" (Babbage 114). Water, the image of traceless writing in the *Phaedrus* and in Derrida's model of dissemination, is here recognized as an exemplary inscriptive surface, one that visually exhibits the invisible processes of action and reaction within our atmosphere. The air as well is thick with writing: a "vast library" that recalls Borges' dizzying archival fantasy. The density of this ethereal registry accumulates constantly because *everything we do is a form of writing*. Careless words and fleeting gestures are no less "indelible" than our most deliberate attempts at self-expression; the earth bears "enduring testimony" (115) to both with equal diligence. Doubtless some forms of inscription are more readily accessible to our understanding than others, but it was the task of nineteenth-century science to radically expand the margins of the legible world.

It is this discursive revolution, I argue, that brought about a new indexical understanding of the relations between subjects and writing. Commenting on Renfield's graphomania in his reading of Stoker's *Dracula*, Mark Seltzer argues that: "maladies of energy, motive and agency were in effect understood, around 1900, as maladies of mimesis, representation, and writing" (*Serial* 74). In what follows, I explore the machines responsible for facilitating such improbable conversions of physiological and psychical activity into graphical information.

Étienne-Jules Marey and the Language of Phenomena Themselves

The Victorian period's shifting discursive paradigm was signaled by the arrival of a "new species" of scientific measuring and recording instruments that, beginning around 1800, found their way into "the cabinets of natural philosophers, betokened by a new semantic marker" (Brain, 159). Designated as writing or drawing instruments by the suffix "-graph," these machines elevated writing as the privileged means of collecting objective information about the natural world, and they were intended to produce that writing automatically. Because they were neither apprehended "by eye," nor inscribed "by hand," these mechanically produced transcriptions possessed the sheen of objectivity.[10] Ironically, we could trust them chiefly because we had no hand in them.

We find the clearest expression of the association between mechanical process and the emergent epistemological ideal of scientific objectivity in Étienne-Jules Marey's *La méthode graphique* (1874). Marey's studies of animal movement led to his development of a wide array of physiographic instruments capable of recording minute measurements of delicate and complex physical gestures. The "graphical method"

required a host of different technologies (many of them invented by Marey himself), but each technique was premised upon the replacement of human perception with mechanical observation, and consequently upon the substitution of human notation systems with "unmediated" transcription. Marey identified two principal hindrances to the development of the empirical sciences: "first, the defectiveness of our senses for discovering the truth, and, second, the inadequacy of language to express and transmit those truths that we have acquired" (i, all translations by the author). As machines for both input and output, bodies were not only inadequate (malfunctioning after a certain threshold of speed or volume had been crossed), but fundamentally untrustworthy (tending to distort results with their own inclinations and idiosyncrasies). For these reasons, Marey was fervently confident about the possibilities of this supersession of the observer's responsibilities, marveling that: "When the eye can no longer see, the ear cannot hear, and touch cannot feel, or even when our senses deceive us, these machines perform like new senses with astonishing precision" (108). In Marey's technological vision, the body is overridden rather than upgraded. Imaginatively disabled, its senses are switched off one by one as they are pressed to their limits. The role of these machines, for Marey, appears to be less supplementary than substitutive. It is better that the eye cannot see and the ear cannot hear, for this blind and deaf subject does less to interpose its own habits of perception.

Marey advises scientists to "keep for other needs the insinuations of eloquence and the flowers of language" (vi). For the purposes of scientific observation, only a hard and unflinching mechanical fidelity will serve, one that strips away the conventions of language and its symbolic embellishments. Marey's machines translate "with a clarity

that language does not possess" (i) because their inscriptions exchange literary figures for those of the human body; they "trace the curves of phenomena" alone (vi). This assertion underwrites one of the nineteenth century's most beguiling fantasies of communication: that the turn to graphical notation charted an escape from the artificial and arbitrary nature of human language and brokered direct commerce, through an unerring fidelity to bodies, with the world it described. Specifically, we find in Marey's disavowal of "the flowers of language" a desire to institute a new species of writing, one through which it finally becomes possible to distinguish the literal from the literary, or figurative.

Other physiologists proposed that the language of science, rather than standing in opposition to figural expression, promised its sublation. It occurred to Francis Galton that "poetical metaphors of ordinary language suggest many possibilities of measurement" ("Measurement" 184). Noting that two people who have "an 'inclination' to one another" tend to physically "incline or slope together when sitting side by side," he imagines hosting a dinner party where his guests' chairs have been rigged with hidden weights and pressure gauges that would determine the exact degrees of their preferences regarding each other (184). Popular expression is littered with dead metaphors that Galton was convinced science could revive. Through careful empirical study, he believed, the intuitive but indistinct truths encoded within language could be translated into genuinely useful information. Nineteenth-century physiology was driven by this desire to systematically dislodge the "scare quotes" that blocked language's access to the phenomena it struggled to describe. This distance was bridged through writing that was not linguistic in nature, but graphically replicated the body's own idiom.

For many of the inventors and proponents of these machines, it would seem, these inscriptions did not constitute a language at all. For instance, in "Some Account of the Art of Photogenic Drawing," presented to the Royal Society in 1839, William H. Fox Talbot describes his photograph of Lacock Abbey in such terms: "this building I believe to be the first that was ever yet known to *have drawn its own picture*" (46). Similarly, in Edison's comparison of his phonograph's wax cylinders with the cuneiform characters of Babylonian cylinders, he marks "the great and progressive difference that our wax cylinders speak for themselves, and will not have to wait centuries to be deciphered" ("Perfected Phonograph" 645). Of interest here is Edison's trust that the machine will keep running and be conversant with future machines and parts, but more fundamentally, this confidence that such writings "speak for themselves." Edison imagines these signs as transculturally and transhistorically legible, demonstrating his inability to recognize these markings as cultural. These cylinders will not fall prey to a future of mistranslation, because the universal orality to which they grant expression circumvents interpretation and translation (whether on the linguistic register or the conceptual).

We recognize in Marey's writings as well this faith in the machine's ability to transcribe "natural graphics" (*Méthode* iv), markings that would serve as a *lingua franca* of science. These machines underpin the conviction, identified by Foucault as a quintessentially nineteenth-century belief, "that mute gestures, that illnesses, that all the tumult around us can also speak" ("Nietzsche, Freud, Marx" 270). "More than ever," Foucault argues, "we are listening in on all this possible language, trying to intercept, beneath the words, a discourse that would be more essential" (270). For Marey, the key to unlocking this essential discourse lies in apprehending "the language of the phenomena

themselves" (*Méthode* iii). Drawing their focus upon the *langue inconnue* of involuntarily expressive human bodies, Marey's machines show us for the first time "languages issuing from matter, automatized bodies writing themselves" (Seltzer 74). The remarkably sympathetic ear of the machine does not presume to speak *on behalf of* bodies, but simply channels the *langue inconnue*, or 'unknown language' of the body (*Mouvement* 24). These bodies had been communicating with us all along, but it took the correct machine to recognize this fact.

Aided by their new amanuenses, a host of phenomena acquired a surprising coherence. If the phonograph suggested speech was merely a name for writing yet to find a properly receptive surface, photography would imply that light had simply to fall upon the correct materials to be recognized as writing. With the aid of these instruments, it was as if the sensual world had come suddenly into focus. In this graphomaniacal view, the world was always and everywhere inscribing itself upon itself. And writing-instruments provided the lens that gathered these disparate phenomena, the pinhole through which each had to pass in order to gain definition (that is, both 'focus' and 'meaning'). In turn, the "graph" metamorphosed and expanded the capacities of writing, attuning it to the spectrum of what François Dagognet, in his superb study of Marey's life-work, refers to as "nature's own expression" (63).

This attribution of ownership—and even the agency of authorship—to the closed conversation between nature and machine was a crucial step in establishing the authenticity and objectivity of these writings. The evidential and forensic values of such inscriptions hinged upon the eradication of human interference. Laying out his principles of experimental procedure, Marey insists that: "it is of immense importance that graphic

records should be *automatically* registered, in order that the phenomenon should give on paper *its own record* of duration, and of the moment of production" (*Mouvement* 3, emphasis added).

The familiar proposition that graphing instruments "spoke for themselves" appealed to a culture already saturated with writing by reasoning that the proliferation of signs need not be accompanied by the burden of interpretation. This "writing that reads itself" presents us with an intriguing paradox: media that aspire to immediacy. If this is a contradiction in terms, it is one that names an enduring modern dilemma. How does one exercise the deliberate and conscious act of writing in service of spontaneous and unself-conscious expression? Most broadly, the question has to do with how is it that we might recuperate a lost immediacy by bypassing the conventions of representation. The graphical method stands as one of the most sophisticated attempts to grapple with this quandary, attempting to short-circuit the conventions of representation, to silence language with writing, to transliterate figures of speech into those of the body.

The rhetoric of automaticity always promises that complexity must be borne in the ultimate service of simplicity. It frames technology not as the proliferation of machines, but the subtraction of the inessential (whether this be achieved by means of delegation or eradication of function). The suspension of mental faculties in particular promises to bring about a reconciliation: the creation of a mirror that allows for reflection without prompting self-consciousness and the consequent doubling effect or splitting of this awareness. This is possible only when it is the mirror that looks at you, not the other way around. Such a machine eliminates the feedback of self-consciousness by

circumventing the self, demoting the agent of self-inspection to a passive operator of machinery.

Sorting through the automatic recording instruments employed by "mechanically objective" scientific inquiry in the nineteenth century, Daston and Galison argue that "these new methods aimed at automatism" (42). The fallible examiner's deference to the automatic functioning of machinery was an essential step in the renunciation and "policing of subjectivity" (Daston 161, 147) demanded within properly objective science. However, if the rhetoric of the graphical method espoused a (highly paradoxical) "disciplined automaticity" (Daston 185) in the body of the examiner, it also incited and gave explicit representation to the automatic behaviours of bodies under examination. On the side of the examiner, then, these machines embodied a "passionate commitment to suppress the will" (Daston 143). On that of the examined, they offered a rather different picture of the subject's "freedom from will" (Daston 123), one characterized by maniacal bodily excess rather than methodical mental discipline.

The graphical method advocates the benign abdication of human judgment to mechanical registration. Guided by the "negative ideal" (Daston 123) of nonintervention, this mechanical practice is intended to subtract the distorting lens of subjective reality from the hard kernel of objective truth. The Victorian graphomaniac complicates the conservative logic of this negative ideal, asserting the productive capacity of automatic writing. The methodical examiner exemplifies the *neutralization* of subjectivity under the conditions of machinery, while the graphomaniac embodies the *production* of a new subject. One figure employs machinery to grapple with the persistent problems of "subjectified" objectivity; the other grants involuntary expression to what Richard Menke

has named "objectified subjectivity" (137). Automatic writing machines that incite and cite the automatic operations of the body broker this exposure and estrangement of the self from itself.

The semiotic register of this automatic writing is the *index*, with its promise of perfect fidelity resulting from direct commerce with natural phenomena. Charles Sanders Peirce contends that indices "direct the attention to their objects by *blind compulsion*," a phrase that captures the subtle, yet insistent theme of his index: that of force without understanding. In fact, it is difficult to find instances where Peirce's consideration of indices does not prompt him to use the term "force."[11] Acting under this influence, the index exhibits a kind of involuntary fidelity, "forced by blind fact to correspond to its object" ("Telepathy" 373). These indexical signs are not expressive, but *impressive.* That is, their communicative power is derived from their susceptibility to impressions. The footprint endows the ground with no special powers of eloquence. The object has stomped on our *representamen*, and this surface's legibility is the direct result of its vulnerability. Or, if that is too leading, its malleability—the capacity "of being really affected by that Object" ("Nomenclature" 291). Crucially, for Peirce, "it is not the mere resemblance of its Object, even in these respects which makes it a sign, but it is the actual modification of it by the Object" ("Valencies" 143). The index is vulnerable to the object, and yields involuntarily to its whim. It is this vulnerability that will be exploited by a Victorian scriptural economy that recruits the human body as the involuntary index of the individual hidden within.

The Victorian Scriptural Economy: Subjects and Characters

Operating under the logic of the index's neutral receptivity, these mechanisms of transcription and conscription underwrite a new scriptural economy. Its central rhetorical or ideological innovation is the reasoning that the stigmata they "register" are not imposed upon the subject from outside, but expressed from within. These inscriptions, apprehended by graphological techniques and technologies, were understood to express an indexical and transparent relation between objective, written characters and the internal "character" of subjects. This understanding of the Victorian "scriptural economy" is adapted from *The Practice of Everyday Life*, wherein Michel de Certeau provides an account of the intersection between bodies and the Law in modern Western culture that in turn recalls Nietzsche's *mnemotechnics*.[12] From Nietzsche, de Certeau also inherits his empathy for the flesh that has been tortured into conformity with the Law, and it is this concern that prompts his (speculative) act of remembrance. Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals* anticipates the eradication of "bad conscience" cultivated through suffering, but glances over its shoulder with a shudder. How is it that this forgetful beast was brought to account, reformed as a responsible individual? Nietzsche assures us: "the answers and methods for solving this primeval problem were not precisely gentle; perhaps indeed there was nothing more fearful and uncanny in the whole prehistory of man than his *mnemotechnics*" (61, emphasis original). If this statement seems to possess a hyperbolic ring to it, this sense is no doubt owing to the assumption that devices to aid the memory are benign. We do not flinch at the string tied round an index finger, failing to recall the long history of this binding of the body. We have long since forgotten what it means to remember.

This "fearful and uncanny" aspect of remembering, as evoked by Nietzsche, is the toll it has taken upon the bodies that have borne, or buckled under, its weight:

> Man could never do without blood, torture, and sacrifices when he felt the need to create a memory for himself; the most dreadful sacrifices and pledges (sacrifices of the first-born among them), the most repulsive mutilations (castration, for example), the cruelest rites of all the religious cults (and all religions are at the deepest level systems of cruelties)—all this has its origin in the instinct that realized that pain is the most powerful aid to mnemonics. (*Genealogy* 61)

It is this archaic—and largely forgotten—primal textuality, where wounds upon the surface of the body were the seal of sovereign violence carved into the parchment, that is unearthed within de Certeau's analysis. "Every power," he insists, "including the power of law, is written first of all on the backs of its subjects" (140). At present there may seem to be nothing but a neutral, white, unresisting space, devoid of history; de Certeau provides a palimpsest of the law, the translucence of which brings to light the force that underwrites written law. Modern states have replaced wounding with writing, markings that encourage us to imagine ourselves as subjects *of* the law, not just subject *to* its dictates. But these books, de Certeau reminds us, "are only metaphors of the body" (140). Their 'civility' is a provisional luxury. The human parchment we find beneath this screen, or 'cover-story,' is not only the embodiment of textual history, but also its present-day basis. Times of crisis tend very quickly to convince the law of the fundamental inadequacy of rules made of paper, and so "it writes itself again on the bodies themselves" (140). Of course, it is only in extraordinary cases that modern society permits the law to assert itself through explicit marking of bodies.

In the "practice of everyday life," then, what is it that renders this wounding painless and unrecognizable, thus making necessary de Certeau's critical act of transliteration? To begin with (invoking Marx and Althusser), we have been numbed. These markings are administered with the "anesthetic" of an ideological "significance" that dulls the pain by offering the consolation of meaning. "From birth to mourning after death," bodies are never subjected to *senseless* suffering. "Through all sorts of initiations (in rituals, at school, etc.), it [the law] transforms them into tables of the law, into living tableaux of rules and customs, into actors in the drama organized by a social order" (de Certeau 139). De Certeau's schema emphasizes the multiplicity of forms and rhetorics employed in everyday acts of cultural inscription. "The law" is not a monolithic, oppressive inscriptive device, imposing foreign names from outside and above and issuing directives that one can either obey or ignore at one's peril. Rather, it writes a language we participate within, our flesh giving substance to the law, as the law in turn grants significance to our newly constituted "bodies."

Readings of cultural inscription that ignore this complicity advance "repressive hypotheses" concerning the Victorian state, an approach that finds its most incisive critique in Lauren M. E. Goodlad's *Victorian Literature and the Victorian State* (2003). Goodlad marks a distinction between the genealogical project undertaken in Foucault's early work on disciplinary institutions and the concept of "governmentality"—or the organized production of governable subjects—that organizes later texts. It is Goodlad's contention that Foucault's latter, relatively unexplored notion is pertinent to the Victorianist, while the former only interposes a "distorting lens through which to peer at the modernization of Britain's idiosyncratic, self-consciously liberal, decentralized, and

'self-governing' society" (7-8). These distinctively British traits ought to complicate any attempt to directly transpose Foucault's insights into the context of nineteenth-century Victorian culture. In Goodlad's estimation, "we have yet to fully document the differences between the disciplinary subject of Foucault's Franco-oriented and presentist genealogy, and the modes of character idealized by and produced in Britain's self-consciously liberal society over the course of the nineteenth century" (x).

Goodlad's designation of Victorian Britain as a "liberal society" is chiefly intended to communicate the culture's general "antipathy toward statist interference" (viii). The reach of centralized government, many prominent Victorians believed, must be curtailed if England was "to preserve the 'self-governing' liberties of individuals and local communities" (vii-viii). Alongside this negative conception of freedom, however, Goodlad asserts that Victorian liberalism was driven by a "positive" (and in many ways contradictory) "impulse to build character and promote social betterment by collective means" (viii). Goodlad's book provides one of the most comprehensive critical studies of this uniquely Victorian concern with the formation of "character," a term that enframes individuation within a distinctly moral understanding. The prescriptive value of Goodlad's opening chapter, "Beyond the Panopticon"—particularly its call for a more careful historicizing of Victorian criticism's longstanding dialogue with Foucault—is attested to by the exemplary demonstration of method that follows: a critical reading of Victorian "pastorship" as a political configuration of governmentality.[13]

Along with Andrea Henderson's *Romantic Identities* (1996) and, in an earlier historical context, Diedre Shauna Lynch's *The Economy of Character* (1998), Goodlad's study has emerged as one of the most discerning recent historical analyses of character,

though I would temper her contention that "in its liberal meanings character was the antithesis of Foucault's disciplinary individual" (24). Rather than substituting one critical term for another, I would argue, the concept of character affords us an opportunity to rethink discipline in light of Foucault's later work on governmentality. Governmentality eschews centralized regimes of discipline, favouring instead personal techniques of self-discipline. This strategic relocation of the ostensible locus of control corresponds to what David Wayne Thomas has identified as Victorian "liberalism's distinctive commitment to rational autonomy" (ix). The Victorian pursuit of character formation was typically couched in terms of self-governance and self-improvement, strategies that Foucault would come to name "technologies of the self" in his later work.[14] In a 1982 seminar that borrows its title from this concept, Foucault identifies the "meticulous concern" of self-writing as a new experience of the self, wherein "introspection becomes more and more detailed" (28). Through this activity, a "relation developed between writing and vigilance. Attention was paid to nuances of life, mood, and reading, and the experience of oneself was intensified and widened by virtue of this act of writing" (28). This dutiful recording of the self makes the journal a model of self-surveillance; governmental structures delegate to their subjects the tasks of observation and discipline, closing down the impersonal panopticon and opening up the personal diary.

Insofar as it orients itself towards the ideal of the autonomous individual, the Victorian scriptural economy rejects the overtly oppressive connotations of the Old French "caractere" (derived from the Greek word for 'stamping tool'). This stamping tool is the heraldic device of Foucault's earlier genealogical project, the task of which is: "to expose a body totally imprinted by history and the process of history's destruction of the

body" ("Nietzsche" 367). Foucault's turn to individual (and individualizing) practices of self-writing complicates this central preoccupation with inscription, signaling a deeper recognition of the reflexive and ambivalent relations between writing, subjectivity and power.

A key figure in the history of this convergence, the graphomaniac pinpoints two basic premises of the Victorian rhetoric concerning "character." The first of these arises from the conviction that not all individuals *possess* character. The pursuit of this elusive and distinctive mark of "rational autonomy" required subjects to first identify and apprehend the *irrational automatisms* of the self. For many, it seemed the forces of culture were diametrically opposed to this project of independent character-building. John Stuart Mill's enduring preoccupation with character throughout *On Liberty* affords a representative Victorian articulation of the selective nature of this coveted designation: "A person whose desires and impulses are his own—are the expression of his own nature—is said to have a character. One whose desires and impulses are not his own, has no character, no more than a steam-engine has a character" (77).[15] The mechanical nature of Mill's "steam-engine" image is typical of a period wherein machinery served as a compelling metaphor for the cultural forces that compromised the individual's self-assertion.

The second, and more peculiar premise of Victorian character follows from the widespread belief that, not only is there "character—or the want of it—in everything, animate or inanimate" (Weston 64), but that this character takes on literal and legible forms that render as external, objective signs the private truths of the individual. The conjectural correspondences between graphological and moral character that are the focus

of this study find expression in texts such as *Curiosities of Literature*, where Isaac Disraeli decries the plight of handwriting instruction within Victorian schools, complaining that the pen is "regulated […] now too often by a mechanical process, which the present race of writing-masters seem to have contrived for their own convenience." Students "are forced in their automatic motions, as if acted on by the pressure of a steam-engine," a process that quashes the distinctive personality of signatures, so that they "all [appear] to have come from the same rolling-press" (207). Such studies of manifest character present the signature as a conflicted sign of enculturation, indexing the automatisms of culture as well as the autonomous gestures of the individual. Moreover, the belief that this struggle could be objectively rendered on the surface of the page through the involuntary but indelible traces of bodily gesture, meant individual "character" was outwardly legible, and thus accountable, to others. If the Victorians understood character to be a personal quality, it was also a publicly visible trait that indexed one's interior for any who could read the signs.

In an 1884 article on the "Measurement of Character" written for the *Fortnightly Review*, Francis Galton explores the epistemological consequences of this emergent belief in the objective reality of character: "the character which shapes our conduct is a definite and durable 'something,'" he argues, "and therefore […] it is reasonable to attempt to measure it" (181). The range of characterological projects inspired by the premise of manifest character were dependent not upon programmes of repressive inscription, but on physiologically-directed incitements to discourse. Provoking the *langue inconnue* of individuals, they sought to instigate the automatic reflexes of the body, rather than initiate conversations with subjects.

The late Victorian scriptural economy ventures the wholesale registration of bodies (from Galton's composite photography to the Society for Psychical Research's experiments with weighing and measuring spiritual manifestations), but does so under the aegis of a widespread technological "discovery" that writing emanates from things themselves (and constitutes a solicitation to be read). By contrast with the intrusive model of inscription outlined with social construction, this law depends fundamentally upon the *activity* of bodies: the subject spells out her own sentence, and the law merely takes dictation. Proper interpretation is no longer the responsibility of a subject who must learn the letter of the law. Nature, we now realize, has been writing all along, and it is the duty of the law (or culture) simply to passively record, listen, and strive to faithfully interpret what has been laid down.

In this manner, the madness of graphical method is displaced onto its necessary corollary—the figure of the graphomaniac, whose body cannot help but write. We find a striking representation of this logic of self-registration in *The Criminal*, Havelock Ellis' 1890 study of criminal anthropology and physiognomy.[16] Ellis was responsible for introducing the work of Lombroso to a wider English audience through his translation of *L'uomo di genio in rapporto alla psichiatria* (1889; Eng. Trans. *The Man of Genius*, 1891), and the content of *The Criminal* borrows much from Lombroso's *L'uomo delinquente* (1876) and *Palimsesti del Carcere* (1888). The work devotes a handful of chapters to the semiotic and aesthetic productions of criminal culture: specimens of criminal slang, philosophy, literature, and pictorial art are examined for their psychological and forensic significance. Ellis' chapter on prison inscriptions benefits from the specimens compiled within Lombroso's study, as well as British research

documented within Michael Davitt's *Leaves From a Prison Diary* (1885), and John William Horsley's *Jottings From Jail: Notes and Papers on Prison Matters* (1886). In each of these sources, criminal "character" consistently finds objective reality through impulsive graphical expression.

Ellis' own examination of prison inscriptions does not set out to mark certain bodies as different, but merely to remark upon how they inscribe *themselves* into the system. It is the subject and not the law that has revived primitive techniques of writing on the body. Observing that the "child loves to speak to himself," Ellis notes that "the negro, and especially the negress, think aloud; and if from restraint or distrust the criminal keeps silent his most private thoughts, he feels himself compelled to fix them wherever he may find himself, on the walls of his prison, or on the books that are lent to him" (*Criminal* 212). A thoroughly familiar Victorian condensation of various unresolved bodies, this amalgam combines child, negro, and criminal together in their shared tendency to automatically submit themselves for inspection. Ellis recognizes that the impulse to write in experiences of extended seclusion "is an instinct from which no individual, no matter what his degree of culture, is exempt" (211), but proposes as a general rule that "the lower the order of culture the more complete and trustworthy is the inscription as an expression of individual peculiarities" (212).

Along these lines, Lombroso discovers an atavistic throwback to the tribal warrior's hieroglyphic tradition in the modern criminal's tendency to commemorate his crimes through bodily adornment. Observing that the "tattooing on pederasts usually consists of portraits of those with whom they have had unnatural commerce, or phrases of an affectionate nature addressed to them," Lombroso notes as well a man convicted of

rape who "was covered with pictorial representations of his obscene adventures" (*Criminal* 232). Of course, such fortuitous discoveries were dependent upon the criminal's decision to represent the scene of the crime through declarations and portraiture engraved upon his body. Text and image render the body a cryptic, yet decipherable site of confession. These tales of criminal transparency, more anecdotal than statistical, represent a relatively small number of cases. Their mention within *Criminal Man* evinces a desire on the part of the examiner that the criminal's own body would bear witness to the crime, an early apprehension of the body as a textual archive of traumatic events. For Ellis, tattooing was an innately "impulsive" act; even the painful nature of these inscriptions was not enough to bring the criminal to his senses (*Criminal* 200). Lombroso as well would have us believe this was a natural tendency: those who *commit* the vilest of crimes must also commit them to *writing*.

The uncultured hold nothing back: the repression of instinct is a special prerogative of properly socialized persons. The fact that Ellis and Lombroso pinpoint members of their society with the least agency impels us to note the way in which the statement pathologizes expression, while normalizing silence for these bodies. This essential context of disenfranchisement is significantly absent from the scope of *The Criminal*'s analysis; in Ellis' narrative, the prison cell is considered less as a site of repression than one of expression.[17] In the seclusion of this room, the criminal "writes what he cannot or dare not say" (120).

In the criminal's makeshift "studio," where he suddenly finds the time and space to communicate his true self, everything comes to the surface: "His desires and lusts, his aspirations, his coarse satires and imprecations, his bitter reflections, his judgments of

life, are all recorded in these prison inscriptions on whitewashed walls, cell doors, margins of books, tin knives, and the bottoms of skilly cans and dinner tins" (213). Through his incessant writing, the prisoner collaborates in his own surveillance. The carceral gaze extends to incorporate the practice of reading, exploiting not only the enforced physical visibility of the cell, but an interior gaze that accesses truths of the subject, beyond apprehending any explicitly criminal action. Ellis' inventory of writing surfaces displays the increasing ingenuity (framed as perversity) in the criminal's understanding of what can be modified as text when one lacks any proper avenue for expression. Horsley reports that *cacoethes scribendi* is thankfully rare among artisans, labourers, and women, but "the males of the lower middle class who are unfortunately (in this respect, at any rate) a very numerous, ubiquitous, and *irrepressible body*" (*Jottings* 20). The dissemination of these criminal inscriptions demonstrate the impossibility of ever truly confining the criminal, who remains heedless of the state's benevolent attempts to inculcate restraint, the civilized art of keeping things bottled up.[18]

Of course, one could answer that the criminologist displays a similar ingenuity in interpreting these acts, upturning dinner plates and poring over walls, assigning value to them as texts worthy of study. This expansion of the scope of culturally significant writing pushes inscription beyond the bounds of "authorized" works (where consciousness, mastery, order, and deliberation are defining characteristics), into unauthorized texts (unconscious and graphomaniacal). Graphomania named writing that could not be counted as 'culture' in the most exclusive sense of the term. It instead called for different criteria, new methodologies of reading, and innovative techniques of literary police-work.

Perhaps the most charged site of graphic ingenuity and perversity was the body itself, and though Ellis' commentary concerning the encounter between the ethnographer and his tattooed subjects is brief, it is highly suggestive. "The men," he tells us, "always seemed rather ashamed of being tattooed, and wondered why the professor wished to study 'these stupidities'" (*Criminal* 200). This snapshot captures, without quite deciphering, the enigmatic and disconcerting force of the examiner's desire. Confronted with this unsolicited and unaccountable enthusiasm and attention their bodies have attracted, these men suddenly find themselves embarrassed by their own skin. To what can we ascribe the surprising modesty of these sailors and prison inmates?

What is it that has been laid bare here? If the tattooed subject suddenly finds himself searching about for a fig leaf, it is not his body that he seeks to conceal. In the professor's attentive gaze, we find a desire for "naked" writing, caught unawares. A voyeur at the periphery of the scene of writing, she steals a glance at writing that does not know it is being read. (The professor, outside the criminal networks or heterosexual exchanges for which these signs were the intended audience, intercepts the signal.) The dismissal of these markings as "stupidities" signals an attempt to render these bodily inscriptions insignificant, to resist the sense of the examiner. But these marks are indelible, and there is no possibility of retraction or revision. The sailor's anchor has been anchored in his flesh; writing and the body are bound to each other. And this is what excites the professor: neither writing nor flesh in themselves, but the scene of their entanglement—a zone of indistinction between flesh and writing, nature and culture. The professor is interested in something *more* than writing, though to the subject under

examination it feels like something less: writing that he cannot help, and that cannot help him.

"Graphomania" characterizes the exhaustive project of the Victorian scriptural economy to render all surfaces legible. The central proposition of this epistemological fantasy is the concept of "bare writing," produced by the irrepressible signifying practices of the body. The lure of Marey's *langue inconnue*, it would seem, was not simply the promise of a language that had heretofore eluded our attention, but a language that remained fundamentally *unknown to itself*. The thought of such guileless and unequivocal writing would have been irresistible to a culture at once enthralled by the expanding empire of signs, yet daunted by the operations of deliberation, distance, and deferral that threatened an endless proliferation of writing.

Over the course of the next three chapters, I turn to the Gothic as an exceptional archive of deviant and criminal subjects whose difference is increasingly understood in graphical terms. If the graphical method normalizes the process of the subject's objectification and entrusts the law to economize the erratic expressions of bodies, gothic fiction observes such operations from a distinctly paranoid and resistant position.

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[1] The second edition of Nordau's German text was translated into English by D. Appleton of New York in 1895.

[2] After reading Darwin, Bénédict Augustine Morel formulates the theory of "degeneration" in his second edition of *Traité des maladies mentales* (1860), though his ideas are equally dependent on pre-Darwinian theories of evolution such as Lamarck's.

[3] This argument had been proposed in Henry Maudsley's *Body and Will* (1883), where he cautioned: "Survival of the fittest does not mean always survival of the best in the sense of the highest organism; it means only the survival of that which is best suited to the

circumstances […] in which it is placed – the survival of a savage in a savage social medium, of a rogue among rogues, of a parasite where only a parasite can live" (237).

[4] See, for instance, Hutton 2.

[5] Clyde Partin notes that while "no specific reference to *petit papier* can be found in Charcot's works," the diagnosis "was probably transmitted via an oral tradition in his famous Tuesday Lessons." Partin traces the idea to Charcot's student Henry Meige, who describes a patient in his *Le Juif Errant a la Salpetriere* (1893) thusly: "In a voluminous batch of filthy scraps of papers that never leaves him, he shows us prescriptions from all the universities of Europe and signed by the most illustrious names."

[6] On the dilation and escalation of reading practices, and the "democracy of print" that followed a widespread growth in literacy within Victorian culture, see Altick. On the early nineteenth-century construction of "bibliomania," see Connell.

[7] Holmes's title references the seventh of Juvenal's *Satires:* "An incurable itch for scribbling [*cacoethes scribendi*] takes possession of many, and grows inveterate in their insane breast." In 1932, W.H. Auden's peculiar essay "Writing" would borrow Holmes' imagery to complain that, "More and more books are written by more and more people, most of them with little or no talent. Forests are cut down, rivers of ink absorbed, but the lust to write is still unsatisfied . . . If it were only a question of writing it wouldn't matter; but it is an index of our health. It's not only books, but our lives, that are going to pot" (Auden 312).

[8] For a similarly self-deprecating work from the field of literature, see Ireland's *Scribbleomania; or, The Printer's Devil's Polichronicon, A Sublime Poem* (1815).

[9] For an earlier critique of Nordau proceeding along the same lines as Shaw's, see George Saintsbury's 1895 review of *Degeneration's* English translation in *The Bookman*.

[10] On the rise of mechanical objectivity as a scientific virtue, see Daston and Galison.

[11] Indices also *communicate* their message with the qualities of a physical force. Often, bodies are called in to demonstrate the way in which this sign finds its strength not in the nuances of speech but the power of bodies—the pointing finger, the stomping foot, the exclamatory human figure.

[12] "The Scriptural Economy," 131-153.

[13] For Foucault's reading of "pastoral power," see "The Subject and Power" 332-336.

[14] For a recent critical account of the Victorian project of self-improvement, see Miller, *The Burdens of Perfection*.

[15] For a broader consideration of the significance of character for Mill and his contemporaries, see Collini.

[16] *The Criminal* was featured in an extremely successful Contemporary Science Series. Edited by Ellis, these books were "intended principally for the intelligent layman" (Grosskurth 114). Ellis also contributed *Man and Woman* to the series in 1894.

[17] Structural causes are not wholly absent from Ellis' study. Ellis cites Quetelet's quip that "society prepares criminals," while "the criminal is the instrument that executes them" (24). However, as his title suggests, Ellis looks first to the individual, and the chief interest of his research is the "anatomical, physiological, and psychological nature" of the criminal type (25).

[18] On the problem of discursive restraint and containment, see Stewart's *Crimes of Writing*.

2
Unauthorized Autobiographies:
Reading and Writing by Hand in Stevenson's *Strange Case*

"Nothing now is done directly, or by hand."
(Carlyle, "Signs of the Times" 64)

"la main se mène"[1]
(Nordau, *Degeneration* 65)

"my heart sinks and my hand trembles"
(Stevenson, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* 70)

In his first installment on automatic writing for 1884's *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, Frederic W.H. Myers pointed to handwriting as "a kind of summary expression of man's being" ("Telepathic" 222). This information was never Myers' primary interest; his experiments with automatic writing were chiefly intended to uncover evidence of the survival of consciousness after death. But while the spiritualist mediums he examined were reaching outward, straining to capture transmissions from beyond the grave, Myers detected their bodies were drawing upon something else, gathered from deep within. Their distracted handwriting provided an involuntary subtext that disclosed the subterranean struggles of the writer. Myers believed that the act of handwriting was "one of the best instances of an aptitude at once acquired and hereditary: of a manual dexterity which obeys limitations of idiosyncrasy as well as of will" (222). Writing gave objective expression to such internal conflicts among the individual, her ingrained habits and inherited tendencies. Laid open and exposed on the surface of the page, handwriting was nonetheless "a *deep-seated* thing," and thus "likely to have secrets to tell us" (222).

Myers' letters to Robert Louis Stevenson following the publication of *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* reveal that the two had differing opinions on the

strict mechanics of such correspondences between self and script, but the plotting of Stevenson's romance makes it abundantly clear that he too felt handwriting had "secrets to tell." If Jekyll's astonishing metamorphosis from staid gentleman to monstrous fiend provides the central attraction of Stevenson's narrative, this chapter addresses the one fixed and abiding trait that yokes the two together: their handwriting. Jekyll's experiments transform him so completely that his closest acquaintances can no longer recognize him. And yet, Hyde finds "that of my original character, one part remained to me: I could write my own hand" (87). After every other vestige of Jekyll has been either effaced or disfigured beyond recognition, this indelible trace of his individuality endures. This chapter investigates what sort of currency such holographic fantasies of the individual—dependent on transparent analogies between orthographic and moral "character"—held for the Victorians, asking how Stevenson's tale explores, exploits and troubles such associations. To this end, I situate *Jekyll and Hyde* within the broader context of late-Victorian tales of crime and detection that stage the apprehension of criminal bodies through a meticulous deciphering of their legibility. In such narratives, the authorities compulsively return to a "scene of the crime" that is suggestively rendered as a "scene of writing."

In Stevenson's romance, Jekyll's "Hyde" (i.e., both his new skin and his new signature) is apprehended by the pseudo-sciences of physiognomy and graphology, speculative modes of reading that present two reciprocal theses: one contends that the body is a kind of writing, while the other claims that writing is a kind of body. These intertwined registers form a mobius script, signified emphatically by the homologous (and ubiquitous) reference to Hyde's "hand" as both appendage and inscription. The

duplicity of this hand engenders a confusion that suggests writing has yet to properly dissociate itself from the body's clutches. In tracing the involuntary drift of this unruly member, this chapter does not limit itself to a rhetorical analysis of *Jekyll and Hyde* (a cabinet of curious hands), but employs the figure to facilitate a more general study of the body in its apprehension as the material support of writing.

A number of critics have touched upon the questions of textuality provoked by Stevenson's narrative as an invitation to reconsider the formative role of the writing-act in the construction of the subject. In these largely poststructuralist interpretations, Jekyll's character runs no deeper than the letters on the surface of the page. Drawing upon Barthes' claim concerning autobiography, that "the I which writes the text, it too, is never more than a paper-I" (161), Ronald R. Thomas relieves much of the tragedy of Hyde's demise by interpreting it as an allegory of the "death or disappearance of the author" ("Strange Voices" 75). Conversely, Jodey Castricano understands the text as an allegory of *reading*. Her interest lies in how the text resists appropriation through the staging of an "uncanny scene of transference and mutual resistance" (4). To this end, Castricano applies the Derridean trope of reading as "counter-signing . . . as one might validate a check or document" (6) to illustrate how Stevenson's text folds the reader into its pages, "put[ting her] in place of the other as a reading-effect" (4).

My sense is that the kind of sophisticated theoretical analysis offered by Castricano in particular can only be further enriched through consideration of historically-situated theories of writing, and not only those latently present in literature, but those explicitly circulating through culture. In what follows, I hope to provide a more precise estimation of the importance of writing to Stevenson's novella, chiefly by paying

particular attention to handwriting as an embodied practice of expression. Hands (and, by extension, bodies) tend to disappear in the many of the most compelling analyses of writing in *Jekyll and Hyde*. Even Castricano's "Much Ado About Handwriting" turns out to have surprisingly little to do with writing by hand, *per se*. The insistent and troubling presence of this inscribing and inscribed body frustrates incorporeal theorizations of inscription that prescribe writing as a means of emancipation from the body and the self. For instance, though Thomas has argued that *Jekyll and Hyde* "enacts the withdrawal of the articulating self from the text" (75), I maintain that Stevenson's text narrates a process not of "withdrawal" but of addiction.[2] That is to say, it is not a fantasy of dissociation and dissemination, but a nightmare brought on by the violent collision of contradictory positions and identities, each forced to inhabit a body contaminated by the other. In this sense, my argument affirms G.K. Chesterton's assertion that: "The real stab of the story is not in the discovery that the one man is two men; but in the discovery that the two men are one man" ("RLS" 67). Within Gothic narrative, estrangement is only ever the exhilarating prelude to the uncanny return of disavowed and abjected bits of the self.

Stevenson imagines the hand as the linchpin of this disagreeable union. The initial significance of this shared trait is that it allows a social deviant to exploit the cultural capital encoded within the male professional's signature. Hyde's observation that "I could write my own hand" (87), written from an estranged perspective that seems to hover just outside the bounds of a body it inhabits and impersonates, advances a radically impersonal mode of self-understanding. The subversive social mobility made possible by this counterfeit writing is represented as a kind of graphic violence, prompting Patrick

Brantlinger to contend that: “Hyde’s ability to write in Jekyll’s ‘hand’ renders him dangerous in a more insidious way than his violence” (179). As his self-alienation deepens into antagonism, however, Jekyll finds himself increasingly at the mercy of this manual, yet automatic action. As the narrrative’s many scenes of physiognomic and graphological interpretation suggest, the crucial revelation is that Hyde *cannot help* but write in his own hand. His attempts at communication are bound to, and disturbed by, his wildly expressive body: its habitual and tempestuous gestures continually disrupt his sense of autonomy.

It is this cramped and contradictory contiguity between self and signature that prompts the central irony hinted at within this chapter’s title. Though the critical treatment of Stevenson’s *Strange Case* as fictional autobiography is not without critical precedent, the novella is not an autobiography in any straightforward sense of the term.[3] Indeed, one of the more salient points of resemblance among the three novels that anchor this dissertation is that—in a representational strategy that David Punter has identified as quintessentially gothic—none offer their titular character much of an opportunity to air their case (5). If, however, these monsters never participate willingly in their narrativization, they cannot help but communicate, and gothic narrative is uniquely devoted to training its readers to recognize and decipher signs that lie outside the margins of conventional language. Neither Hyde, the Beetle, nor the Count contribute to the collaborative narratives they inhabit, but in each case their stories are transmitted by their own “telling bodies.” Reading alongside Gothic detectives such as Stevenson’s Utterson, Marsh’s Atherton, and Stoker’s Van Helsing, we find the monster’s narrative spelled out

in tracks and traces of the body, accidental markings that betray what the subject would never willingly divulge.

This chapter examines Stevenson's *Jekyll and Hyde* as a paranoid critique of modern regimes of self-registration. Autobiography articulates formally the subject's obligation within an economy of writing: to render the self as legible to others, and account for one's life. Hyde is torn by a deep-seated ambivalence towards this gesture, one hand submitting its confession while the other scratches and scrawls from the margins to which it has been exiled. Ironically, it is Hyde's very resistance to the dictates of legibility that produces his "unauthorized autobiography" and subjects him to the law. Hyde's "odd hand" (53), like and yet unlike that of Jekyll's, involuntarily produces an uncanny autobiography—an automatic movement of the body that undermines the evenhanded and autonomous gestures of the subject. Rather than the self-conscious self-representation one normally associates with the form, this "auto-bio-graph" submits to various representatives of the law writings performed automatically by the body.

If, as Jerome Hamilton Buckley claims in *The Turning Key: Autobiography and the Subjective Impulse Since 1800*, autobiography was "a comparatively new word in the 1830s" (18), by the time of *Jekyll and Hyde*'s publication the autobiographical impulse had become a significant cultural force within Victorian Britain's scriptural economy. A pervasive Victorian form, it surfaced in popular autobiographies of John Henry Newman (1864), John Stuart Mill (1873), Harriet Martineau (1877) and other prominent Victorians, but also within hybrid forms such as the fictional autobiography (Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*) and the autobiographical novel (Dickens' *David Copperfield*). Indeed, it would be difficult to overestimate the extent to which the historically coincident and

extremely popular form of the nineteenth-century *bildungsroman*—typically structured around the development of an exemplary individual within society—benefited from widespread interest in the project of autobiography.[4]

Critical response to Victorian autobiography has tended to expend much of its energies exploring this hybridity of autobiographical form—the ways in which it borrows from other genres, while troubling most generic attempts to delimit its own boundaries (Spengemann 1980, Fleischman 1983, Peterson 1986). Beginning in the late 1970s, a wave of autobiographical studies turned critical attention to the hybridity of the autobiographer herself, probing the fissures and duplicities that open up as soon as the author-subject sets pen to paper.[5] In Sidonie Smith's reading of autobiography studies' linguistic turn, "the autobiographical text becomes a narrative artifice, privileging a presence, or identity, that does not exist outside language. Given the very nature of language, embedded in the text lie alternative or deferred identities that constantly subvert any pretensions of truthfulness" (5). Paul de Man's "Autobiography as De-facement" (1979) stands as the definitive statement on the constitutive role of language in the construction of the autobiographical subject. He maintains the "specular moment" proffered within autobiography "is not primarily a situation or an event that can be located in a history, but that it is the manifestation, on the level of the referent, of a linguistic structure" (922).

The paradoxical nature of the phrase "unauthorized autobiography" signals my shared interest in the de-centred agency made so readily apparent in the act of self-writing. It does so in part by unfolding the ambivalence of the concept of autobiography, a form devoted to the articulation of the self, and the identity of the individual (Danahay).

Auto-bio-graphy names the convergence of mechanisms of selfhood, biology and writing. How then does each of these components relate to the others? The Victorian genre of self-writing tended to imagine the first of these mechanisms as the determinant factor, subordinating body and writing to the expression of its will. For their part, recent critics of Victorian autobiography have tended to foreground writing as the primary variable in the composition of the "literary self." This chapter isolates autobiography's indeterminate medial term, exploring the role *bios* plays in the inscription of Jekyll's life-narrative. If autobiography imagines an autonomous ego at the wheel (or the stylus), and the canon of autobiographical theory grants linguistic structures precedence, Gothic narrative hands the reins to the erratic and ungovernable body. This latter genre examines all that emerges from the individual, but cannot be reduced to that singularity. How does the act of writing de-compose this individual, it asks, producing something that 'I' could never grasp?

What if, for instance, the body came before the self, and it called the shots? Darwinian evolutionary theory gave scientific validity to this theory of uncanny precedence, suggesting that the body and the self did not enter the world together. Our bodies had a history; they were not our own, but the inheritance of something incalculably older and radically other, under which humankind must struggle. Maudsley's contention that post-Darwinian "man . . . is living his forefathers essentially all over again" presents us with an unmistakably Gothic vision of the subject who knows "that the vicious or virtuous ancestral quality, imbued as silent memory in his nature may leap to light on the occasion of fit stimulus" (*Organic* 267).[6]

The pseudo-science of physiognomy, which exerts such a profound fascination over the gothic imagination, offered a corporeal hermeneutic for the deciphering of legible markings of this inheritance. The "will" of our ancestors, in proper gothic fashion, has been inscribed upon our bodies. In Walpole's *Castle of Otranto*, Theodore's tattoo is revealed as the meaningful sign that returns law to the castle by proving filiation beyond doubt. Here the bodily sign is presented as legible and indisputable evidence capable of rendering unnecessary other, potentially duplicitous forms of writing. These inscriptions are aligned with a higher law, and "corroborate [Theodore's] evidence beyond a thousand parchments" (164). Physiognomy imagines this bodily marking as a natural law rather than a paternal prerogative; hence, the trace it leaves behind is just as likely to be borne as a stigma of shame as a badge of honour.

One of the first texts to offer a wide-ranging critical consideration of the conversation between Victorian literature and the cultural discourse of physiognomy was Daniel Pick's *Faces of Degeneration: A European Disorder* (1993). Pick's reading of *Jekyll and Hyde* remarks that, although the latter has "no narrative of his own," he "continually erupts in the body of the doctor" (166). This "eruption" names the focus of my inquiry in this chapter, though in my characterization of the automatic nature of autobiography I intend to shift the emphasis from corporeal inscription to the ways in which the body erupts through the various acts of writing into which Hyde is conscripted.

Because the concerns I have for these processes of conscription, or bodily registration, belong to a specific history of writing (as opposed to being intrinsic to all forms of writing), I have attempted to immerse my interpretation of Stevenson's romance within the particular understandings of writing and reading at hand within

Victorian culture, while holding in check appeals to the authority of "outside" texts of theory. It is not only that Victorian graphology is less familiar to most Victorianists than the version of "psychoanalytic graphology" introduced by Derrida in "Freud and the Scene of Writing."[7] My goal is not to arrive at the kind of interpretation of history that the latter methodology tends to provide, but to sketch out a "history of interpretation."

This reversal of the common critical trajectory of reading takes its cue from Foucault's genealogical project, as articulated within "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History." Another strength of the genealogical approach is its implicit critique of the tendency for theoretical discussions of writing to paper over concerns about the fate of the body. Stevenson's text is interested in the various ways in which, within the form of autobiography, subjects, bodies and texts are incorporated into each other. He presents Jekyll and Hyde's story as a species of "bio-text," interleaving flesh and paper, mingling blood and ink, and carefully calibrating the novella's conclusion so as to synchronize the act of putting down the pen and "pulling the plug," thereby bringing Jekyll's life and writing to an end in one gesture.

This unconscious insinuation of the body within writing—imparted here through the hand of Hyde—prompts consideration of automatic writing as a significant recurrent trope within the gothic, one that gives voice to the genre's paranoia at the level of language (that is, the fear that signs actually "follow" their referents, and that writing is a motivated, rather than arbitrary, system of signification). The intent here is not, as is usually the case with studies of graphology, to assess the validity of the method as a science.[8] I would prefer to consider its cultural significance as a hypothesis, asking what its currency within nineteenth-century popular thinking reveals about perceived

relationships between bodies and writing, particularly in light of a modern scriptural economy founded on the notion of self-registration, and the insistence that bodies write themselves through forms of "unauthorized autobiography."

Gothic characterization depends essentially upon the reading of external stigmata as reliable indices of internal qualities and tendencies, from the tattoo that reveals Theodore's true parentage in *The Castle of Otranto* (136), to the much more comprehensive legibility of the body deduced by Wilde's Basil Hallward when he states that: "Sin is a thing that writes itself across a man's face. It cannot be concealed. People talk sometimes of secret vices. There are no such things. If a wretched man has a vice, it shows itself in the lines of his mouth, the droop of his eyelids, the moulding of his hands even" (*Dorian* 181). Honouring this Gothic convention, the descriptions we receive of Hyde—for instance, that he moves "like a monkey" (64), and tends to "cry out like a rat" (62)—are clearly conversant with the animalistic associations of degeneration theory. Physiognomic readings inform many of the scenes of textual and bodily interpretation that compose the novella. While Hyde's "imprint of deformity" (79) renders his debased morality superficially evident to all, it is Utterson who recites physiognomic rhetoric to the letter, remarking of Hyde: "if I ever read Satan's signature upon a face, it is on that of your new friend" (42). Moreover, when Utterson recalls Lanyon "had his death-warrant written legibly upon his face" (55), we find that the lawyer's abilities allow him to read physical as well as spiritual health. Each is plainly legible on the body's surfaces. According to a code of reading that is distinctly Gothic, every body is visibly and determinably branded by its essential character, as well as affiliations of class, sexuality, and race.

But physiognomy presented a corporeal hermeneutic the bold promise of which was in many ways a rather conflicted one. "Close readings" of bodily fragments might yield satisfyingly unequivocal correlations between trait and tendency, but actual application of these principles to real bodies tended to reveal only the radical overdetermination of the body's semiotic productivity. The simplicity of the sign is perpetually undone by the complexity of the body. This troublesome tendency of the body disrupts the analyses of Swiss physiognomist Johann Caspar Lavater, whose *Physiognomy* was one of the most influential texts on the subject in England. Published in German in 1775, this study had gone through fifty-five editions by 1810, at least twenty of which were available in England.[9] Lavater's exhaustive work postulates a comprehensive expressivity of the body, outlining the "variety of expression [by which man] makes himself known to his fellow creatures" (*Whole Works*, 4:170). In relating his hope that "man" would some day come to realize "how many languages he speaks at once, in how many forms he exhibits himself at the same instant" (170), Lavater calls attention to the uncharted range of the body's expressive qualities. Between promise and practice, however, most examiners could discern only the cacophony of the body. Speaking "many languages . . . at once," the body stands, like the tower of Babel, as both a monument to the advancement of human knowledge, and the ruin of this pursuit. This polysemic communications machine can only produce so much weighty noise before meaning begins to collapse in upon itself.

Addressing this perplexing overdetermination of the body, Stephen Arata has written: "Degeneration touched the body, saturated and transfigured it, but the thing itself could be located nowhere" (21). Borrowing from physiognomy as degeneration theories

would, Gothic characterization is similarly troubled by this paradoxical admixture of unequivocal certainty and disconcerting ambiguity. As Anne Radcliffe remarks of the nefarious but discreet Schedoni: “There was something in his physiognomy extremely singular, and that cannot easily be defined” (*Italian* 34). Similarly, upon first meeting Count Dracula, Jonathan Harker might claim his host has “a very marked physiognomy” (48), but if we want to know what exactly these marks signify, we have another two hundred pages of reading to mull over. All is laid open to view, and yet this body’s “truth” remains fundamentally unintelligible. For Henry Maudsley, one of England’s foremost alienists, there was no doubt that “the character of every mind is written in the features, gestures, gait, and carriage of the body.” Each of these signs, he pledged, would be translated “when, if ever, the extremely fine and difficult language is fully and accurately learnt” (*LMC* 54).

The law as well held a tenuous grasp on this nebulous science of bodies. In his 1890 study *The Criminal*, Havelock Ellis acknowledges the inexact nature of the science of “modern criminal anthropology,” averring that: “the more criminal amongst us may still find consolation in the reflection that there are no unfailing criteria by which our crimes may be read upon our faces” (94). For Victorians, the “body-language” of others communicated itself forcefully, but enigmatically. Physiognomy makes of these bodies strange hieroglyphs inscribed in a foreign language. The writing is on the wall; like Belshazzar, we have only to find someone to interpret for us.[10]

Stevenson’s characters are thrown back upon such indirect strategies of interpretation because of the peculiar and oblique ways in which Hyde’s perversity communicates itself to them. Hyde’s body incites sensations that are cryptically referred

to within Gothic literature and criticism as "unspeakable." All who encounter him are marked deeply by an experience that they cannot articulate or give vent to. One of Stevenson's characters, struggling vainly to describe Mr. Hyde, speaks of "the haunting sense of unexpressed deformity with which the fugitive impressed his beholders" (49). The encounter with Hyde's body is one of unidirectional transmission: the knowledge of his strangeness creeps under our skin, but cannot find its back way out. Hyde makes a singular *impression*, peculiar in that it paralyzes one's capacity to *express* his deformity.

Derrida's characteristic attunement to the many valences of the "impression" leads us to the consideration of writing as something that is already upon us, rather than merely yet to come (as it is characteristically understood in Derrida's thought). These are the impressions we bear upon us without comprehension, a sense Derrida describes as "having been marked in advance" by an "unknowable weight that imprints itself" (30). It is this marking that Utterson grants oblique expression to when he remarks that Hyde's body gives the "impression of deformity without any nameable malformation" (41). Similarly, Jekyll's friend Richard Enfield marvels that he "can't describe" Hyde, and insists: "it's not want of memory; for I declare I can see him this moment" (36). This indelible after-image haunts the mind, a living memory buried within the viewer. Like the vampire at the mirror, Hyde has an uncanny ability to evade the traps of representation. Stevenson tells us that Hyde "had never been photographed, and the few who could describe him differed widely" (49). His body surfaces in radically subjective accounts alone, skewed testimonies provided by witnesses who bear the weight of their experience without knowing how to relieve themselves of a burden they cannot name. Though a number of critics have delineated the underlying conversations between Stevenson's text

and the physiognomic, phrenological and degeneration theories of its time, we ought to consider the novella's more radical intimations concerning bodily inscription. We might begin to account for the "unspeakable" nature of physiological signs by tracing this strange and dimly understood migration of signs from one body to another.

Jekyll's butler Poole conveys the power of this inexpressible apprehension when he attempts to substantiate his conviction that there is "something queer" about Hyde: "I don't know rightly how to say it, sir, beyond this: that you felt it in your marrow kind of cold and thin" (64). Though Arata finds the trace can be "located nowhere," Poole's testimony suggests we may have been searching the wrong body all along. The mark is already lodged within ourselves, more in us than the other who "incites" us. If the verb "to express" suggests a mode of direct conveyance (whether the content be thought or some other freight), the "impress" is its opposite—backwards, belated, indirect, these encrypted inscriptions are found upon ourselves in a mirror, and can only be read in reverse.

As his name suggests, Utterson will be the character that works most industriously to give "utterance" to Hyde's indefinably abhorrent nature. If gothic narrative is propelled and pressured by its encounter with "the unspeakable," this inexpressible kernel is given oblique form through such counter-agents (doctors, detectives, lawyers, etc.). As a lawyer, Utterson is responsible for ushering his clients into the contractual and unequivocal terms of discourse. He translates fugitive impulses into a sanctioned and binding will, codifying and giving legal force to his client's unaccountable desires. Utterson is one of the key figures responsible for the discursive work explored in Marie-Christine Leps' *Apprehending the Criminal: The Production of*

Deviance in Nineteenth-Century Discourse (1992). Her fine analysis of *Jekyll and Hyde* catches on a particularly revealing assertion of the lawyer's. Clutching at, but not quite grasping Hyde's enigma, Utterson avows: "There *is* something more, if I could find a name for it" (41). Leps develops an extraordinarily close reading of this statement that pays scrupulous (one could say lawyerly) attention to the conditions and dependencies of Utterson's statement and diligently illuminates the labour involved in the discursive production of truth.

My own attunement to the equivocal significance of the term "apprehension" owes a debt to Leps' book, primarily for the means by which her Foucauldian analysis traces the subtle links between power and knowledge in the nineteenth century's discursive construction of the criminal. In Leps' text, to apprehend is not merely to comprehend: her methodical deployment of the former verb calls attention to the vested interests in any purportedly benign act of "understanding" deviance, and underlines the arresting tendency of categorical legal distinctions derived from this enterprise. My use of the term "apprehension" further complicates this dynamic between power and knowledge by bringing *anxiety* to the fore. In many ways a commonplace of Victorian criticism, anxiety nonetheless takes on a special resonance within the Gothic. If comprehension describes mental understanding, apprehension suggests the indefinite and intractable embodied awareness cultivated within Gothic narrative.

In neglecting to account for the irresolvable gap between impression and expression, Leps exaggerates the efficacy of the law within the gothic imagination. She encourages us to read the unspeakable as merely a categorical term for that which commonly "goes without saying," a variety of discursive *a priori* (220). In Stevenson's

text, this includes the tacit negotiations through which professional men operate, voluntarily submitting to various (self-serving) bonds of secrecy entrenched as discursive laws of professional practice and social etiquette (Leps 209). This silence permeates the confidential discussions between client and barrister, but also the unsavory financial agreement struck, in the story's opening pages, between Hyde and the parents of a young girl he has assaulted (34). Listening for silence as the sound of power attunes readers to the implicit significance of such charged moments. And yet, a reading of the deliberate manipulation of silence cannot neglect the more fundamental, helpless struggle with the unspeakable that is compulsively staged within Gothic narrative. Stevenson's text vacillates between confidence and despair concerning the challenge of putting bodies into discourse, troubled by how silence distorts the said, and how the involuntary and inarticulate actions of bodies erupt within and disfigure expression. While in Leps' reading, the law "apprehends the criminal" by utilizing language to grasp the body, I have to this point concerned myself with how Stevenson's engagement with physiognomy unfurls the essential contradictions of any such bodily hermeneutic. In what follows, I will explore the correlative possibility of apprehension, considering the ways in which language finds itself in the clutches of the body. Beginning with the strangely palpable presence of the body manifest within Stevenson's "figures of speech," and turning to the animate holographic "figures of writing" that emerge in what Isaac Disraeli has named the "physiognomy of writing," I read Stevenson's text as a critically resistant statement on the conscription of bodies into language within nineteenth-century discourse.

Hyde's Hand: The Undead Metaphor

The body of Hyde presents a troubling enigma to all who behold it, and none can approach the man without betraying "a visible misgiving of the flesh" (79). The body has its doubts, then, but none can put a finger on precisely what disturbs. Jekyll's old friend Enfield is certain that Hyde "must be deformed somewhere," insisting "he gives a strong feeling of deformity, although I couldn't specify the point . . . No, sir; I can *make no hand of it*; I can't describe him" (36, emphasis mine). Enfield's indistinct apprehension has him reaching for description, but grasping only the figure of the hand. In doing so, he unwittingly chances upon the central motif of Stevenson's text. Hands, appearing everywhere in Stevenson's novella, subtly disturb the text's diegesis. By Richard Dury's count, the noun 'hand' occurs sixty-six times in Stevenson's slim volume; after 'lawyer' (regularly used to identify Jekyll's friend Utterson), hands are the most frequently evoked common nouns in the text (Dury 113). Like Hyde's foreign body, which flourishes as its host atrophies, this supplementary figure gets out of hand—the perversely disproportionate growth of one element threatens to take over the whole. Under the influence of much exercise and nourishment, the body of Hyde, at first underdeveloped (79), seems to Jekyll to have "grown in stature, as though (when I wore that form) I were conscious of a more generous tide of blood" (83). At the textual level, we might suggest that the blood-flow is channeled toward the appendage of the hand, and the effect is a kind of "hypertrophying" of the member, the excessive and disproportionate growth of the figure.

The result of this unchecked growth is the erratic proliferation of catachreses, forced figures such as the one that opens Jekyll's narrative. Here, Jekyll's description of

"the days of childhood, when I had walked with my father's hand" (85) infuses his nostalgic sentiment with a touch of the macabre. The industrious reader quickly straightens out this odd turn of phrase, reasoning that the author intends to say he walked hand-in-hand with his father, or, more figuratively, that his father's hand guided him through his youth. Perhaps it is only for a moment that one glimpses here the disembodied hand so prominently featured within gothic horror, from the *disjecta membra* of Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* to "the Thing" that acts as hand-servant to *The Addams Family*.[11] Of course, Stevenson does not send Hyde's hand creeping about in the moonlight along the outsides of windowsills. It does, however, enjoy an uncanny mobility within the text. The figure is unconstrained by any proper body. It goes everywhere, prying its way in and out of conventional, or anatomically "correct," contexts. An insistent figure of speech, the hand begins to take on a life of its own: not, in the most straightforward Gothic convention, as an emblem or prop within the narrative, but at the level of writing or representation. It is never properly sublimated by language, withering away into the placid legibility of a dead metaphor. Rather, it haunts the text as an "undead metaphor," warping figures of speech through a compulsive return that signals an insistent preoccupation with the body.

In light of this obsessive quality of the text, Lanyon's curious admission that he has "often remarked" on Jekyll's "large, firm, white and comely" hands (82) takes on the quality of a fetish. Careful readers cannot nod assent when, in dismissing the significance of the discomposure evident in Jekyll's handwritten note, Jekyll's servant asks: "But what matters hand of write?" (62). Needless to say, it matters much within this text. The mobility and malleability of the ambiguous term "hand" emerges from its homologous

denotation as appendage and inscription. When Jekyll, stranded in Soho—and, what is more troubling, stranded inside Hyde's body—panics over how Lanyon is "to be reached," he sees that he "must employ another hand" (87). Jekyll finds his solution when he remembers that "of my original character, one part remained to me: I could write my own hand" (87). In passages such as this, Stevenson's text is concerned not only with the metamorphosis, but the extension of the human body, and he imagines the hand as its principal emissary, its characters corroborating Jekyll's character. The hand is the distinguishing mark of individual identity, its seal and synecdoche. The end of Stevenson's narrative sees this principle realized absolutely, replacing Jekyll's body with "nothing but papers, and a closed door" (61). Extended and disincarnated through writing, the hand promises to facilitate discreet communication, keeping correspondents "in touch" without any touching *per se*.

From the very first page, which presents us with the dreary spectacle of Enfield and Utterson's silent "Sunday walks" (31), *Jekyll and Hyde* furnishes a poignant depiction, if not an outright indictment, of the meager pleasures of culturally sanctioned male intimacy. Its palpable anxiety about physical contact (centering on, but hardly limited to, the perplexing and unsavory congress between Jekyll and his young friend) inspires Elaine Showalter's queer reading of the novella, which designates homosexuality as the spectre that haunts the homosocial world, disciplining straight behaviour and determining the bounds of its relations. Jekyll's employment of "another hand" invites us to consider how these limits are textually managed within the novella. Throughout the history of the novel, the epistolary genre has provided the most direct opportunity to analyze the formative role of writing in inter-subjective relations. By contrast with this

mode, Stevenson's exclusively male novel of correspondence eschews the prevailing tone of intimacy and sentiment normally associated with epistolary fiction, delimiting communications with a professional rhetoric characterized by discretion and detachment.[12] The story places a premium on silence (literally in the actual and suspected cases of blackmail). The first case of blackmail, which sets Stevenson's narrative in motion, demonstrates the chilling potential for writing to obscure male violence. The private exchange of Jekyll's name, and the capital it stands as security for, sidesteps the threat of putting it in general circulation by its scandalous publication. That letters are referred to throughout the narrative as "enclosures" (68) and not disclosures suggests, in keeping with the standard rhetoric of business, the defensive and secretive tendency of writing.

Professional and authorized acts of writing serve to encrypt the secrets of Stevenson's network of male professionals; in their hands, writing is "not a guise for language but a disguise" (Saussure 30). The cultural practice of writing, as it is bound neither to spontaneity nor fidelity, allows for the sort of dissimulation required to synchronize idiosyncratic individuals within civilized society. The ambiguity of writing diffuses otherwise intolerably stark contradictions of living, while its arbitrary nature stifles or sublimates visceral, impulsive or unconscious response.

It is this alignment of writing with silence and secrecy that Martin Danahay's *A Community of One: Masculine Autobiography and Autonomy in Nineteenth-Century Britain* critiques, interpreting Stevenson's tale as an allegory of autobiographical method that provides a stark portrayal of the practice's "antisocial potential" (138). This self-centred writing requires of one "to exclude a wider social horizon and thus to evade one's

social responsibility" (138). In Danahay's view, Hyde personifies this autobiographical gesture, an intense reminiscence indulged in to the point of total immersion, where one's past overtakes life and its responsibilities. Jekyll's transformation represents the supernatural realization of the autobiographer's desire to withdraw into "his past and the freedom and exuberance of his youth" (138). However, Danahay maintains, this freedom "is not entirely innocent" (138). Hyde is one of civilization's discontents, and his intemperate pleasures are incompatible with Jekyll's world. For Danahay, autobiography is an assertion of autonomy, a socially disruptive force hedonistic in nature and monologic in form.

Victorian autobiography, according to Danahay's reading, is a text of composure and a means of concealing the self. This strategy of concealment is most explicit in his consideration of Edmund Gosse's *Father and Son*, where the autobiographical impulse is imagined as a sanctuary from the father's gaze, and associated with a calculated duplicity of the subject. "I had found a companion and a confidant in myself," writes Gosse's persona. "There was a secret in this world and it belonged to me and to a somebody who lived in the same body with me. There were two of us, and we could talk with one another" (30). Ostensibly the transcription of a life, autobiography is also the means of its encryption, a defensive act that preserves one's secrets by deepening "the inward space of the writing subject" (Danahay 145). And yet, Gosse's exposure of this encryption reveals monologism to be nothing more than the mask of a more essential duplicity between "me" and this "somebody who lived in the same body." Stevenson's dialogism tears the mask away entirely.

While I find Danahay's allegorical reading persuasive, I prefer to see the story as a tragedy in which Hyde, rather than Jekyll's circle of bachelor-friends (or even the wider society they selectively represent), is the victim. Stevenson's text is a dramatization of Jekyll's autobiography, staging its coercion and eventual, fatal emergence. To my mind, autobiography's tendency is centrifugal, not centripetal; though anchored in the self, its orientation and movement pulls the subject towards the outside. The genre is a formalized articulation of one's primary social obligations: those of rendering oneself legible to others and accounting for one's life. The act of reflection, as Jekyll describes it, requires of him that he "look around me and take stock of my progress and position in the world" (76). Autobiography is the demand of the other, calling individuals to account and conscripting bodies into the subjection of subjecthood.

Everywhere in Stevenson's novella is the problem of accountability, and most especially, the subject's relations and responsibilities to discourse. Jekyll, "wrestling against the approaches of hysteria," is ordered by his friend Lanyon (whose tone can barely disguise his disgust over the appetites of his repulsive guest) to "compose" himself (73). Perhaps Lanyon employs this word innocently, but Hyde's response, a "dreadful smile," suggests a grimly ironic appreciation of the work involved in constructing the self. As for Stevenson's readers, we have already seen this strategy of concealment fail Hyde, in the discomposure that flares up within his letter to the chemist. Against the "composure" reading (the text requested by Lanyon), I am interested in how Hyde's writing betrays his discomposure, the telling passages in which writing breaks down, de-composes, and fails to secure the distance that Stevenson's professional male friends expect it to.

Stevenson's resistance to this lure of the autonomous subject is total. In the chaotic power of Hyde's body, we find something more anarchical than the "sovereign subject," an individual's secession from the bonds of civilization. Indeed, we might turn to any one of the text's bachelors as an illustration of "the individualizing influence of modern democracy" (Wedgewood 595) that *The Contemporary Review* understood Stevenson to be commenting on. Freed from romantic attachments, unencumbered by parental obligations, and abstaining from addictive diversions, these sober-minded, single male members of the Victorian professional class share the "heartless independence" (James 170) of their author.[13] Even allegiances between members of Jekyll's fraternity are distinctly chilled by Utterson's avowed "inclination to Cain's heresy" (31). Remarkably, Utterson reads the biblical story as a paean to the virtues of discretion, of letting one's "brother go to the devil in his own way" (31). In fact, it is the second act of humanity's fall, the violent severance of the fraternal bond. Cain's plea was negligence, but his sin was murder.

By contrast with his associates, Jekyll finds himself subject first to "the perennial war among [his] members" (76). Preoccupied with the mutiny on his own hands, he cannot obtain the internal consensus that would make any coherent resistance against the outside world possible. Stevenson's tale deepens and radically de-territorializes the fantasy of autonomy beyond the prerogatives and the jurisdiction of the self-determining individual. Though its actions are typically represented as malicious, the double is not the antithesis of the individual, but merely its prosthesis, demonstrating the ease with which the drives can be dislodged from the agency of the subject.

This dis-organization of the body's independence realizes Derrida's contention that "autonomy is no more than the mask of automatism" (*Spectres* 153). Autonomy is a logic that attempts to recuperate the volatility of the drives by incorporating and domesticating these forces within the confines of the individual. It is a performance in front of the mirror, a studied rehearsal that is intended to discipline a thoroughly fragmented collection of partial objects and contradictory impulses. Hyde scandalizes the humanist fantasy of the free individual by presenting autonomy as a prerogative of the id, not the ego. Life goes on, unaccountably, without the subject's authority or consent. If autobiography generically inscribes the sovereignty of its subject, the sinister "other hand" of Hyde defaces this text, rending the mask of autonomy.

Returning to Saussure's critique of writing as "not a garment, but a disguise" of language (29), we might say that Stevenson's novella is centrally concerned with the *failure* of this disguise, as signaled incisively by the name of its protagonist. In a text renowned for its trenchant power, Jekyll's pseudonym functions as a pithy condensation of gothic paranoia, the panic brought on by the uncontrollable reversal of interior and exterior realities. This irony haunts fin-de-siècle gothic characters such as H.G. Wells' *Invisible Man* (1897). The success of his experiments only renders him more visible, bringing to light *as* surfaces deeper interiors, and making his churning insides increasingly more difficult to conceal. The attempt to free oneself from the body only brings about its uncanny, and grotesque return. A powerful personification of this paradox, Hyde's name suggests the inherent futility of concealment, threatening that every attempt to "hide" merely submits another sign or surface "hide" to be investigated.

Every concoction of a lie erects its own truth, and indeed the peculiar deformation one chooses is often judged to *be* that truth. Psychoanalysis, realizing this gothic fear as a science, mobilizes this principle in its analysis of the "dream-work," where distortion is seized upon as the key to the dreamer's desire. As Zizek explains, when subjects "seek to find the essence of dreams in their latent content … they overlook the distinction between the latent dream-thoughts and the dream work" (*SO* 14). We are looking not for "the secret *behind* the form but *the secret of this form itself*" (15). Repression, read correctly, becomes in itself a confession.

Utterson, Jekyll's friend and Hyde's nemesis, is no psychoanalyst, but his instincts regarding the cryptic signifier exploit a similar wordplay. In what is surely Utterson's most quoted line, the lawyer declares: "If he be Mr. Hyde . . . I shall be Mr. Seek" (39).[14] Utterson's pun serves to reify the "proper" name (one that, especially as a forged pseudonym without a family history, is intended to function without connotation or reference) as a verb. This deliberate and playful misunderstanding of the word refuses to grant arbitrary status to the proper name. Objectifying the name, the pun burdens the abstract "sense" or conception of the word with meaning. The static name is placed in general circulation, set into play in an unintended direction (which Utterson then intends to pursue). In both senses of the term, the name becomes a "motivated" sign: that is, set in motion, *and* no longer arbitrary. Utterson's operation on language engineers a chase scenario, expressing the aggressive, and even predatory aspect of the practice of reading.

Jekyll's pseudonym is intended as a free gesture of writing, autonomous and anonymous. We find a less "composed" variation of this gesture in Jekyll's exquisitely confused denial of Hyde: "He, I say—I cannot say I" (88). This phrase's hopeless tangle

of pronouns (a more basic displacement of the proper name) thrusts outside the self the intolerable dialogism that lies within. The name of Hyde represents a more sophisticated, composed dissociation, and the initiation of this pseudonym into the public circulation of writing convinces Jekyll of his alibi's perfect soundness: "when, by sloping my hand backward, I had supplied my double with a signature, I thought I sat beyond the reach of fate" (82). Though Utterson refers to Jekyll's act of signing for Hyde as a "forgery" (54), the hoax reverses the operation one typically associates with this crime of writing. Ordinarily, forgery impersonates an already extent sign, profiting from the unauthorized simulation of an established name. Conversely, the creation of Jekyll's pseudonym is an un-naming, a divergent rather than imitative gesture. His desire is to forge a new, uncharted name, one that lies outside any archive of public reference. To possess "character" is also to be a sign belonging to a system, and made intelligible by the other signs that compose that system.[15] Having constructed this outside term, Jekyll is no longer to be constrained as "the slave . . . of a discourse . . . in which his place is already inscribed at birth, if only by virtue of his proper name" (Lacan, "Agency" 148). Forfeiting his moral and graphological character in one stroke, Jekyll's hand strays outside the bounds of legible society.

At the same time, however, Hyde must pay his rent and perform other practical matters that require of him to deliver up an identifiable and iterable signature. How to fashion a legible sign that others may comprehend without apprehending, a "handle" that will not be mishandled? In Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* (1862), our heroine Helen Talboys (a.k.a. Lucy Graham) finds to her dismay that there are no vacancies within a vigilantly guarded symbolic realm. Her attempts to dissociate herself

from her past through the adoption of a pseudonym are denied by her relentlessly inquisitive brother-in-law, a man committed to the "old worldly wisdom" that "[t]here are some things which . . . cannot be hidden" (197)—a statement that echoes Schelling's definition of the uncanny. Robert Audley is a modern skeptic; he will not be taken in by superstitious belief "in mandrake, or in blood stains that no time can efface" (170). It is not that Robert has lost the faith entirely; his belief has merely been transposed to the discourse of forensics, a science that legitimates this abiding desire for unequivocal symbols and unanswerable judgments. If these irrefutable signs were once required to take the form of supernatural omens of guilt, modern secular faith preferred that they be termed within the thoroughly natural register of indexical traces, tracks, and prints. This is how forensic science replaces the reverent fear of an all-seeing God with the awesome power of the law's omniscience.

Directly after hearing of Robert's avowed skepticism, we find that Lady Audley's "uncommon hand" (171), which "present[s] marked peculiarities" (286) is, for Robert's purposes, as good as a signed confession. The identical hand binds together the identities of the two, refusing Lucy her death and Helen her new life by means of the graphical evidence of their sham suicide note.[16] In Stevenson's text it is Utterson who reprises Robert's role, presiding over the legal documents and financial transactions that bear Hyde's name and signature, and finding there a new name written, but with the same hand. Adapting epistolary form to the plot of a thriller, Stevenson's "case" binds together *correspondence between characters*. But it is concerned at heart with an interior correspondence: not communications between correspondents, but the correlation

between inside and out as manifest through handwriting, and grasped through graphological analysis.

Jekyll's "Guest": Handwriting Analysis in Victorian England

If the mysterious "transcendental medicine" (74) that brings about Jekyll's fantastical transformation remains, as far as hard science is concerned, a rather vague sketch (hence tending to be transplanted to a metaphorical register), the pseudoscience of graphology would have been much more familiar to Victorian readers. The first expert testimony on handwriting analysis in the British courts was recorded in 1849, in the case of the physician and philanthropist Dr. George Parkman's disappearance. Consulted everywhere from the courthouse to the séance (where the Society for Psychical Research employed handwriting analysts to determine the origin of Madame Blavatsky's written messages), the practice was intended to measure the claims of suspicious subjects against the silent testimony of their bodies. Perhaps the most culturally significant case involving handwriting analysis—that of Captain Alfred Dreyfus—occurred a few years after *Jekyll and Hyde*'s publication. In this trial, Alphonse Bertillon, Parisian records clerk and father of biometrics, had provided his infamous testimony as a self-described "handwriting expert" (entirely without credentials).[17] Two years after the publication of Stevenson's crime narrative, Hyde's pseudonymous strategy was mimicked in the correspondence of Jack the Ripper. The killer's desire to "make a name for himself" had to be tempered by obvious concerns about self-exposure, leading him to adopt the pseudonyms "Mr. Nobody" and "Mr. Nemo" in communications with the police and the public. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, donning Sherlock's deerhunter hat not for the first time in his career,

suggested to police that they publish the killer's letters in the major papers. By placing "Jack's" writing in circulation, the police would recruit the general public as deputy officers of the law—a mass mobilization of "Baker Street Irregulars" that made the populace responsible for their own surveillance.

In a text featuring a number of allegorical surnames, Stevenson's choice to christen Utterson's head clerk (and chief confidante) Mr. Guest seems a curious one. Though his title confers an established place within the household, Guest's name suggests his contribution to the narrative will introduce an unfamiliar or even foreign logic to the text. Stevenson's plot confirms the latter reading, as the character is ushered in midway through the narrative in order to perform a specialized function. Once his role as "a great student and critic of handwriting" (53) has been served, the character disappears altogether. Charles Reade's *Foul Play*, a theatrical production staged at Holborn in 1869, includes a similar cameo performance of the graphologist as "external examiner." The play features a minor, yet pivotal character by the name of Edward Undercliff. Three of the four times which this character is introduced, his appended title—"Undercliff, the expert"—emphasizes his role as the bearer of a specialized knowledge that is foreign to the other characters in the play.

This marginal but significant positioning of handwriting experts within literature mirrors the historical development of graphological practice in nineteenth-century Britain, a foreign speculative science developed primarily through theories and experiments imported from the rest of Europe. The first book-length study of handwriting analysis was published in 1622 by Camillo Baldi, an Italian doctor of medicine and philosophy.[18] However, the most broadly read text within England upon the subject was

most likely Lavater's *Physiognomy*. Lavater's analysis is understood to be a primary source for two of the earliest English texts on the subject, penned by Thomas Byerley and Isaac Disraeli.

In 1823, Byerley (writing under the pseudonym of Stephen Collett) had made his contribution to the topic with his "Characteristic Signatures." Here he claimed that: "[i]n using his pen, a man acts unconsciously, as the current of his blood impels him; and there, at all times, nature flows unrestricted and free" (370). A year later, Disraeli had devoted a chapter of the second volume of his *Curiosities of Literature* to the topic of "Autographs," arguing therein that "Nature" has prompted "every individual to have a distinct sort of writing, as she has given a countenance—a voice—and a manner. The flexibility of the muscles differs with every individual, and the hand will follow the direction of the thoughts, and the emotions and the habits of the writers" (208).

Disraeli's curiosity is not an idle one. His commentary is prompted by the recognition of a cultural transformation that signals a crisis of identity. Copybooks and other restrictive, standardized pedagogical methods of "character" formation have reduced penmanship to a "mechanical process" of anonymous reproduction: "the pupils are forced in their automatic motions, as if acted on by the pressure of a steam-engine." Stamped by an impersonal machine, individuals are rendered unrecognizable, "all appearing to have come from the same rolling-press" (207).

To his dismay, Disraeli finds the institutionally reconfigured "muscular" practice of writing has been reduced to a simulation of industrial activity. The transformation calls to mind Carlyle's analysis of the wholesale deposition within modern culture of dynamic energies by mechanical force ("Signs of the Times"), but it also suggests that one of the

most disconcerting "signs of the times" was the inability of the body to serve as a reliable cornerstone of identity and authenticity. In a period where Carlyle lamented that: "Nothing now is done directly, or by hand" ("Signs" 64), a hand capable of replicating a machine meant that even those actions performed manually were not unequivocal evidence of self-directed and autonomous activity.

In this milieu of industrialized handwriting, the hand takes on an uncertain status, positioned at the physical juncture of culture and nature. When properly trained, the hand is capable of disguising its true character, and churning out the standardized script of a writing machine. Under such conditions, manuscripture is not something that emerges from the subject in an expression of pure inwardness.[19] The body is written, then writes. Francis Galton recognizes this cultural negotiation, arguing that: "handwriting is by no means solely dependent on the balance of the muscles of the hand, causing such and such strokes to be made with greater facility than others. Handwriting is greatly modified by the fashion of the time" (*Inquiries* 88). The equivocal nature of the term 'manual' (denoting work "done by hand," but also a book of instructions—especially for operating a machine) expresses laconically this understanding of manuscript as the conflicted token of one's socialization, a mark co-signed by the self and the other. If the "manual" suggests a disciplinary mechanism behind the development of one's character(s), this fundamental education of bodies prompts a reappraisal of phenomenological models of authenticity that take the hand as their emblem.

Handwriting instruction requires the choreography of the entire body, which pivots upon the point of the stylus. In Foucault's analysis of the micro-physics of power we find this scrupulous attention to the intricacies of bodily gesture expressed in the bio-

political maxim: a "well-disciplined body forms the operational context of the slightest gesture" (*DP* 152). Proper penmanship involves "a whole routine whose rigorous code invests the body in its entirety, from the points of the feet to the tip of the index finger" (152). Foucault cites J.B. La Salle's *Conduite des écoles chrétiennes* (1783), where pupils are instructed to always "hold their bodies erect, somewhat turned and free on the left side, slightly inclined, so that, with the elbow placed on the table, the chin can be rested upon the hand, unless this were to interfere with the view; the left leg must be somewhat more forward under the table than the right" (152). The body is whittled down to this graphic extremity, a needle capable of registering the slightest disturbance or misalignment in one's fine psychomotor functions. For the discerning critic of handwriting, the entire body is laid bare in these telling gestures.

Foucault's portrait of the docile student at work provides a significant point of contrast to the spectacle of the Gothic body in the act writing, the contortions of which testify to an essential duplicity to be found within the act. The *Castle of Otranto*'s counterfeit "found manuscript" and "fictitious will" (164) establish the Gothic genre as a compendium of forgeries, one which consistently blurs the lines between production and reproduction in a manner neatly encapsulated in the polysemy of the verb "to forge."[20] Perhaps more significant, however, are instances where the victim of these forgeries is not only (falsely) implicated through simulation, but directly (and physically) entangled through anxiety, distraction, possession, addiction, and a range of other altered states. For though Walpole's second preface publicly exposes the hoax behind *Otranto*'s "editor's narrative," his private correspondence depicts another "gigantic hand in armour": one which appears to the author in dreams, and from whose dictation Walpole composes

Otranto as if in a trance. In such predicaments, the Gothic subject perpetrates upon herself a kind of sleight of hand that invalidates any simple alibi. Though Hogg's "justified sinner," Colwan, may denounce his will as a "false, and forged grant" (181), the case is not so simple. The document has been signed with his own hand (179), a fact that admits no denial. Such Gothic *doppeltexts*, or double writings, serve as astonishingly sensitive registers of irreconcilable tendencies and personalities warring within the subject. In *Dracula*, agitation or outright possession disfigures the character of Jonathan's correspondence with his fiancée. Mina finds his letters have been written one way, but read quite another, insisting: "It does not read like him, and yet it is his writing" (106). Similarly, in the context of Victorian spiritualism, mirrored writing suggests the contrary nature of alternate personalities; the contrary "inclination" of script that leans in the opposite direction is understood to express orthographically a more abstract sense of this other's divergent tendencies.

Finding Jekyll's signature attached to Hyde's cheque, Enfield is struck by the same impression of alterity. Rather than the effortless fluidity one expects in such a gesture, Jekyll's signature reveals signs of labour and artifice. As Enfield tells us, "[t]he figure was stiff" (34); the hand unwittingly communicates the body's resistance to this conventional sign of identity. Returning to Lanyon's injunction, we might say that the signature's rigidity bears witness to Hyde's struggle to "compose himself." In stating that "the whole business looked apocryphal" (34), Enfield divulges his theory that Hyde has simply forged the cheque. But the fiend's duplicity is already too essential and internalized to exculpate Jekyll from wrongdoing. His body cannot manage to return to its equilibrium, and in doing so outstretch the steady and assured hand capable of signing

a convincing pledge of identity.

Though Victorian critics of handwriting tended not to depict the body's reversion to habitual practices as addiction (they typically traced out resistances to culture along more noble lines), the pseudoscience sensitized Victorian readers to dialectical conflicts embedded within handwriting by expropriating the peculiarities of an individual's spontaneous style as a resistance to the conformity of cultural conventions. Where before there had been only writing upon a blank page, many Victorian thinkers now recognized the staging of a contest between bodies and institutions. We find this sense of conflict expressed by Henry Maudsley in a letter to handwriting expert Richard Dimsdale Stocker:

> There is one lesson which my handwriting teaches, namely, that Nature is stronger than art, heredity than acquisition. When I was at school it was resolutely and systematically changed. But this conquest of culture (if conquest it was) has been gradually effaced, until now, in age, my handwriting has reverted to the stock form, and might almost be mistaken for that of my father. If my present handwriting then reveal character, it will be a revelation of the character of my forefathers. (Stocker 8)

It is not difficult to detect a note of pride in Maudsley's self-examination. Handwriting is denounced as a lesson in subjection—one at which he has happily failed. Pedagogy has been overthrown by pedigree, and the anonymous, conventional sign has been overwritten by the family trait. Nature has triumphed over the "conquest of culture," and the hand reverts to its old alliances and affinities.

Among those who considered the subject, however, the consensus was that modern society exhibited in its script a monotonous regularity of character. Disraeli's entry on autographs traces not the vanishing of a specific individual into the throng (as Poe's unnamed narrator had in "The Man of the Crowd"), but the general disappearance of the quality of individuality from British culture.[21] Disraeli predicted that the "true physiognomy of writing will be lost among our rising generation," complaining that "it is no longer a face that we are looking on, but a beautiful mask of a single pattern" (208). In like manner, Byerley laments the rarity of truly unique, or "characteristic signatures" (374). For him, the "great mass of people in the world may be said to consist of mere negatives; of persons who act as they are desired, think as they are taught, and *write after copies set before them*; and the utmost that you can expect to discover from the handwriting of such persons is, that they have no individual character at all" (370-371, italics original). This inundation of scriptural production—the corollary of a widespread increase in literacy during the nineteenth century—can remain undifferentiated because it is understood as a collection of "mere negatives." All of this is only the noise and rattle of everyday, anonymous culture—reproduction rather than production.

Byerley's comment signals not just a reluctance to sort through this mass of writing, but also to wade through the "mass of people" responsible for its generation. His discussion of handwriting submits an exacting criterion of "individuality." This is not a designation to be indiscriminately conferred upon every person; the onus is on the subject to earn this title of distinction. In a society increasingly driven by mechanical reproduction, "the individual" becomes aligned with singularity, marked by an instinctive failure to reproduce the customary signs of culture.

Consequently, at the close of the eighteenth century, the "signature" accrues a surplus value that inspires the specialized circulation of handwriting for its own sake. Fostering reverence for the autograph as an index "of the movements of the mind as well as the pen" (Turner 47), autograph hounds such as William Upcott and Dawson Turner encouraged the collection, circulation and sale of signatures as commodities.[22] This market depended upon a distinction between two classes of writing – the stereotype of the masses, and the (rarified) autograph of the individual. Founded on this distinction that privileged the particular over and against the general, autograph collecting entailed a relatively limited conscription of names. The value of a specimen of writing was dependent upon its perceived rarity. Few truly "wrote their own hand," and hence only exceptional signs were solicited. The signatures of the great majority only confirm their anonymity. Exemplary writers are endowed with autographs; the rest merely transmit facsimiles. The term autograph names at once the body of the manuscript and the sign of authorship. Once a writer's "signature" style has been established, every pen stroke becomes a forceful assertion of his selfhood; the true individual is always writing his name, no matter what the content. (The individual is, at all times, identical only to himself.) Thus, ironically, the cult of the individual pitted one automatism against another. "Autograph-hunters" sought the autonomous gesture of one who had risen above the automatisms of culture, but also the spontaneous display of an irrepressible individuality detectable in automatic, unselfconscious gestures.[23]

Turner's autographic individual was an exemplary figure because s/he employed handwriting in a manner that muted the anonymous noise of enculturation typically produced by this standard writing prosthesis, performing gestures that registered

"movements of the mind as well as the pen." By contrast with Turner's rather cerebral vision of exemplary handwriting, the monstrous singularity of Hyde's hand resists cultivation because it exhibits the peculiarities of his body within the text. Increasing fascination with this de-sublimated understanding of handwriting would crucially alter the direction of graphological analysis towards the latter end of century. The hand, it occurred to prominent psychologists and physicians such as Havelock Ellis and Max Nordau, betrayed not only the exceptional tendencies of those who transcended the norms of society, but also those who fell below its standards of respectability and morality. Cesare Lombroso's "autograph collection," submitted by a motley crew of thieves, swindlers, and murderers, stands in stark contrast with that of William Upcott, Dawson Turner, or Poe, whose compilations were more likely to include specimens of royalty and literati. Turning their attention to "bad subjects" as well as good, graphologists analyzed and described handwriting with the aim of determining the "character, disposition, and aptitudes" (*OED*) of individuals through their orthographic tendencies and peculiarities. In this sense, graphology is a study of the ways in which the body can be incarnated in the text, incorporated into writing, and reflexively inscribed by this text (through the conviction that characters inscribed upon the page illuminate the writer's own character).

The forensic study of handwriting heightens the intrigue of Disraeli's curiosities by tracing the link between a hand and its writing, and the apprehension of this particular individual is always a demonstration of the ways in which identity can be detected within the folds of each and every subject, an inner quality testified to by subtle but unequivocal external markings. Sherlock Holmes, who advises his partner Watson to "Always look at the hands first" ("Creeping" 612) provides us with Victorian fiction's most

comprehensive fantasy concerning the "transparency" of handwriting. In "The Reigate Puzzle," Sherlock authoritatively informs those who "may not be aware . . . that the deduction of a man's age from his writing is one which has been brought to considerable accuracy by experts" (488). The detective pores over the torn corner of an incriminating handwritten note, somehow determining from this scrap not only the respective ages of the culprits, but their identities, health, disposition, and familial relation to each other. Doyle's fiction instills a paranoid relation to the law that plays upon the notion of a perfect "correspondence" between the body and the subject to produce an entirely legible criminal. One is bound to the other by way of the hand; in this member's inadvertent gestures are encoded everything short of one's DNA.

It is precisely this sort of information that Utterson expects from his "student of handwriting" when he solicits Guest's opinion on a sample of Hyde's "odd hand" (53). While the banker in Enfield's "Story of the Door" verifies only the identity of the cheque's signatory, Utterson expects Guest to assess his sanity. Presented with the rare specimen of a "murderer's autograph," Guest's grim enthusiasm for deviant writings aligns his interests with those of Lombroso and Nordau: his "eyes brightened, and he sat down at once and studied it with passion" (53). Both *presuppose* the man to be mad, but upon inspection of Hyde's handwriting, Guest definitively determines this not to be the case. The criminal's sanity is to be measured by his actions, though not by the ones readers might expect. It is not how Hyde brandishes Utterson's cane that concerns Guest, but how he wields Jekyll's pen.[24] Hyde's most emphatically violent conduct offers only the coarsest index of his inner state; it is through the slightest, unconscious motor activity

involved in handwriting that we find a more exact exterior correspondence with Hyde's intimate secrets.

George Mackenzie Bacon's *On the Writing of the Insane* (1870), a book-length study that followed an 1869 article for *The Lancet*, evinces a keen attunement to this complex embodied gesture: "The act of writing, when once the habit has been acquired, seems so easy as to be almost intuitive, and we are apt to forget what combinations are necessary to set in motion the pen which runs so glibly over the paper, and what complicated processes are involved in so simple an act" (5). For Bacon, the Medical Superintendent of the Cambridgeshire County Asylum, these unconscious processes of the body rendered "the letters of the insane [worthy of] study—as the most reliable evidence of the state of the patient's mind" (15). Graphological analysis imagines the hand operating as a variety of organic polygraph—or, as Bacon would put it, "a sort of involuntary photograph" (9)—its automatic movements providing unmediated correspondence with hidden truths of the subject's interior life. "On ordinary cases of mania," Bacon argues, "the patients' letters are odd and grotesque, exhibiting the same want of balance that their actions do" (17). Though Saussure may have understood writing as a mode of deliberation and disguise, many Victorians saw things differently. In *The Art of Judging the Character of Individuals from Their Handwriting and Style* (1875), for instance, Edward Lumley argues that: "When we speak, it is almost always under the influence of volition. It is not the same with gestures, which are frequently involuntary. It is for this reason easier to deceive by speech; while the gesture which escapes us bears the impress of truth" (2). The graphologist's true object is that of direct commerce with the body and its expressive gestures. Handwriting preserves for its reader

an archive of these movements. Graphology recognizes these traces that the body leaves in space as a material practice which implicates the body and identifies the subject: "unlike the fleeting patterns of speech, voice, and gesture, handwriting has the peculiar advantage of fossilizing that expression, leaving a visible record for leisurely, minute analysis" (Roman 172).[25] This "fossilized expression" is not merely a translation of text into image, such as a static series of hieroglyphs, but an animism of the text—the characters are alive, imbued with movement captured on the page. They form a pictography that is also a physiognomy.

Bodies are a kind of writing and writings are a kind of body. Each trace their way into each other, woven into the sort of "mobius script" depicted within Escher's "Drawing Hands." In handwriting, representation and expression constitute two sides of the same surface, and we traverse along one face of the plane only to find ourselves imperceptibly transported to the other side. In the frontispiece to Lavater's *Physiognomy*, for instance, we find the titular practice described as "reading the handwriting of nature upon the human countenance."

At the same time, we are prevented from understanding Lavater's handwriting analogy as endorsing the emaciation of the body through a theory of constitutive representation. If every text constitutes an allegory of reading, the *effects* of interpretive practices certainly extend beyond the written page. Furthermore, writing itself presents Lavater with a kind of body: "the form and exterior of a letter frequently enable us to judge whether it was written in a calm or uneasy situation, in haste or at leisure" (201). And so, in reading manuscript, the physiognomist must observe "the substance and the body of the letters" (202) as an index of the writer's own mind and body. There is no

mark that is not an imprint of the writer's self, a tracing of his character.[26] As God created "man" in His likeness, so man cannot help but create after his own image (202). It is this apprehension of the scriptive body of writing that leads Isaac Disraeli, in his *Curiosities of Literature*, to speak of "the art of judging of the characters of persons by their writing" as a "physiognomy of writing" (208). H.E. Weston, writing for *Borderland* in 1895, discusses the popular pseudo-sciences of phrenology, physiognomy and graphology as united by the overarching theory that "there is character—or the want of it—in everything, animate or inanimate" (64). Thus, it comes as no surprise that Cesare Lombroso, in his study on the handwriting of criminals, should find fingers and figures interlocked with each other upon the page. Along with a "slight tremble," "the writing of a certain type of thief—such as Cartouche—has a sort of hook and curvature to practically every letter, which reminds us of the particular configuration of their fingers" (*Criminal* 113). Hook and crook are bound together in writing—act, body, and trace. The twisted nature of crime, Lombroso insists, is more than just a moralizing figure of speech. It is a metaphor that seeps into the body, and its traces can be found in the physical "residue" of writing.

Criminal diagnostics customarily included an analysis of handwriting, ideally performed by the subject under some duress. Deviancy disguised by speech would often be brought to light through writing; subjects could be trusted to "pour out all their insanity on paper" (229). For Lombroso, a few lines of script rarely provided satisfactory results, since the criminal could "easily concentrate his attention on them, but he should be requested to write a page or two and be exhorted to make haste" (229). The criminal might write, but he was careful not to express anything. Given the correct duration and

pace, however, an "automatic" writing—unfettered by conscious reservations—would emerge. Without the self-censoring defences of conscious interference handwriting reveals a spectrum of abnormalities, from the swindler who emblematizes his trade with a screed that is "usually indecipherable and enveloped in an infinite number of arabesques," to the murderers who give themselves away with "clumsy but energetic" handwriting, as well as their vicious tendency to "cross their *t'*s with dashing strokes" (230). For Lombroso's subjects, writing can only be a sublimation of deviant desire. The dizzying textual performance of the swindler is itself intended to swindle the reader. Equally incapable of forbearing his vice, the murderer submits writing marred by "graphic" violence. The content of these enforced writings, never commented upon by Lombroso, was, in both senses of the word, immaterial. Rather, the legibility of the criminal was precisely *para-doxical*: a writing that was opposed to sense. His script was conspicuous—and therefore intelligible—because of its orthographic and morphological errancy, its tendency to stray towards illegibility. Writing itself was delinquent, failing to assume its proper denotative status. In cases of mania, Bacon suggests that the analyst's attention be guided by a similar indifference to content: "the change in the handwriting may be of great value in diagnosis, even without reference to the subject matter" (*Lancet* 117). In "the letters of the insane," manuscript becomes a symptom, "betray[ing] their mental condition when they may succeed in concealing it in conversation" (117). Forgetting what it ought to say, such writing drifts into a sick, or *ill*-literacy that unintentionally expresses what should have remained hidden.

Commenting on the rise of studies such as R. Forrer's "Handwriting of the Insane" (1888) within the discourse network of 1900, Friedrich Kittler remarks on the

graphological division of literate people into two camps: "on the one hand, those whose handwriting was a direct reflection of their unconscious and so could be evaluated physiologically or criminologically; on the other, the professional writers, who were writing machines, without handwriting" (262).[27] Properly considered and "professional" writing unswervingly finds its way to its referent. In this way it attains the status of pure content, allowing the materiality of the inscription machine to disappear into its own *equipmentality*. The mediality of inscription is once again brought to the fore when representation breaks down; the mark of illegibility carried by the spontaneous writing of the criminal is a pure sign without referent.

In like manner, whenever Jekyll writes under duress his hand inevitably serves as an uncannily transparent register of his interior state. Confiding in a letter written to Lanyon that, at the mere thought of the abject desperation of his situation, "my heart sinks and my hand trembles" (70), his aside serves as comment on the correlative movements of physiological and graphical agitation. The handwritten letter Jekyll addresses to his chemist is similarly marred by the body's intrusion, a rupture that suddenly derails his formal tone of placid indifference:

> Dr. Jekyll presents his compliments to Messrs. Maw. He assures them that their last sample is impure and quite useless for his present purpose. In the year 18--, Dr. J purchased a somewhat large quantity from Messrs. M. He now begs them to search with most sedulous care, and should any of the same quality be left, to forward it to him at once. Expense is no consideration. The importance of this to Dr. J. can hardly be exaggerated." So far the letter had run *composedly* enough;

> but here *with a certain splutter of the pen*, *the writer's emotion had broken loose*.
>
> "For God's sake," he added, "find me some of the old." (62, emphasis mine)

The requirement of self-composure makes possible a self-composition: a performance that buries the self within itself. Jekyll's formal tone briefly allows him to mask his appalling appetites, but his deepening sense of urgency overwhelms his composure as well as his pen, whose spasms give witness to his internal disorder. The pangs of addiction force Jekyll's hand, as the "certain splutter of the pen" reveals that the stylus is just as incapable as the body of sustaining the imposture of these hollow formalities. Polite conventions of correspondence are sideswiped by the sudden intrusion of the body and the interjection of its needs.[28]

Apprehending the deviant signs produced by these bodily needs, graphology emerges as a physiognomy of the letter. Thus, when Foucault speaks of the "turning of real lives into writing" (*DP* 192) under the procedure of the examination, we ought to recognize the simultaneous passage of the reverse operation that endows writing with life. Letters become ideograms: restless, unsteady, slouching on the page. Writing comes to be read as an extension of the self, the writer's physicality permeating and inhabiting the text it writes, so that each alphabetic character assumes the character of its author. In this reflexive turn, we find the writer incorporated into his own text; this writing now signifies indexically, as the imprint of the body, the history of its charged interactions with the medium.

The interleaving of physiognomy and graphology is particularly seamless in John Holt-Schooling's thought. Writing for *Nineteenth Century* in 1895, three years after his translation of Jules Crepieux-Jamin's *L'Ecriture at le Caractere* (as *Handwriting and*

Expression), Schooling explains his ontogenetic theory of physiognomy. Under Schooling's reading, bodily hermeneutics consults not the ancient palimpsest we find in Lombroso's theories (where traces of the subject's ancestry are the typical "subtext" of the criminal body), but proceeds through the "delineation of character through a reading of the body's own history" (478). Physiognomy, for Schooling, is the study of the accumulated habitual gestures which have, over time, left their imprint upon the body: "those which have been the most frequent have left their mark, it may be in definitely trained lines of thought, it may be in the deep chisel-scores of unrestrained passion" (478). The body displays an "increasing tendency towards repetition of this or that nerve-muscular contraction, or gesture, which in time cuts its mark upon the very externals of the human body" (478).

For Schooling, the "delineation" (478) of character entails tracing the history of a body that is written upon the flesh (which bears old traces beneath each new one, much like the history in wax of Freud's "Mystic Writing Pad"). In this way, one's handwritten correspondence always refers back to a prior writing, one that has been engraved inside the body through ingrained habits of movement (themselves the ripples of emotion and mentation that provoke these gestures). Handwriting inscribes in one stroke (upon the page) that which may take years to impress itself upon the body, which is a relatively less ductile surface of inscription. It provides an exteriorized trace of what is happening within the subterranean depths of the body, habits that have yet to manifest themselves as "telling" scars upon the surface of the body. The figural relation between rut and routine becomes something more than an abstract metaphor in Schooling's text: each gesture "produces a score that is constantly adding up to make a record" (478). The

physiognomist will have to wait for these furrows and creases to eventually emerge upon the surface of the body, but the advantage of the graphological method is its immediate apprehension of internal stigmata. For a reader informed by this arcane bodily literacy, writing provides at once the snapshot of a momentary gesture and the deep history of the subject imagined by Myers. A very peculiar sort of bodily movement, writing is the "only form of gesture which is permanently self-registering at the moment of its expression" (479). This act's permanence makes graphology a prosthetic corrective to vagaries of physiognomic interpretation, translating the mutability of bodies into ossified traces of legible movement. Writing, a spontaneous and "free gesture" (483), nonetheless turns itself in, so to speak, voluntarily bearing "silent witness" (487) against even the most recalcitrant of subjects. Whatever you might have to say through writing is undermined by all that your writing has to say about you.

It is this threat of betrayal at one's own hand that engenders the ambivalent relation between writing and the subject within Stevenson's novella. Writing both inscribes the 'I' and delimits it, conscripting the body into subjecthood, but also into subjection. Just as the Imago beckons to the subject from the other side of the mirror, the Ideal I is to be found in one's copy-book, its perfected character an image that testifies to one's coordination, composure, and control. But both of these images, the mirrored and the scriptural, are received by the gothic subject with the same ambivalence, the same imperfect recognition tinged with the conviction of an insurmountable asymmetry between ideality and reality.

For all of his atavistic, "savage" (41), and "troglodytic" (41) traits, his handwriting is the one aspect of Hyde's "original character" that refuses to let go (87). In

his personal correspondence with Stevenson, Myers had made a series of friendly suggestions concerning the narrative, among them the warning that this detail was not exactly in keeping with the latest research concerning multiple personalities. "Here," Myers writes, "I think you miss a point for want of familiarity of recent psycho-physical discussions. Handwriting in cases of double personality (spontaneous . . . or induced, as in hypnotic cases) is not and cannot be the same in two personalities" (qtd. in Maixner 215). Regardless of what Stevenson might have known about the studies Myers and other were performing with the SPR, his choice of "the hand" as the sole vestige of Jekyll's "character" suggests it is a deliberate and significant choice. Jekyll's discovery that he can "write [his] own hand" initiates a strange inversion of the self. The odd way in which this sinister other hand dislocates the subject from the body (i.e., the I from the hand), proudly presents the signature as a counterfeit, and the self as a forgery. This dislocation promises to secure Hyde's autonomy, but also threatens to betray his secret. From its opening pages, where Hyde presents Enfield with a cheque he is certain bears a forgery of Jekyll's hand (34), Stevenson's tale presents us with a series of scenes of reading, each centering on the problem of the written word and question of the I: who can sign it, authorize it, and bank on it.

Though it is centrally concerned with this act of "character building" (i.e., inscribing the 'I') *Jekyll and Hyde* is the work of too many hands to be considered a proper autobiography. There are, of course, those at the periphery who coax the story into being, the lines of interpretation that make their violent convergence on Hyde's body. But our concern here is the duality lodged at the reeling centre of this novella—the "white and comely" hand of the professional Jekyll, struggling against the "corded, knuckly" and

hairy member that attempts to write against its grain. This duplicitous hand marks the unstable alliance between subject and body. As the first sign of involuntary transformation (82), it is the earliest suggestion that the subject cannot control the body, that Hyde has "gained the upper hand."[29]

The page is the plane on which these two hands touch, their conflict played out graphically. The close of Stevenson's *Strange Case* finds the good doctor hastily penning his suicide note, writing to put an end to all writing. Hyde has been defacing his alter ego's books by "scrawling blasphemies" in Jekyll's "own hand" (90) and, should he awaken to find this writing in process, will most certainly destroy it. Corrupting the singularity of Jekyll's signature, the "proper" sign that functions as a guarantor of authenticity, Stevenson interrupts the organic relation between the self and its material extension in writing with the sinister introduction of Hyde's destructive hand, which scrawls its panicked opposition against Jekyll's call to accountability.

In Stevenson's novella, Jekyll will be reduced to "nothing but letters and a closed door" (70). A decade later, Stoker's *Dracula* will have Jonathan Harker dismiss the text he produces and inhabits as "nothing but a mass of typewriting" (419). This wholesale liquidation of narrative and character into writing is viewed by gothic villains such as Hyde with abject dread, a horror evoked by the intuition that the construction of the text is intimately tied to the destruction of his body. For this reason, Count Dracula will attempt to destroy the Crew of Light's vampire "dossier." Hyde's own violent antipathy to Jekyll's text signals the same sense of foreboding. The confession Jekyll's equanimity generates, so hateful to Hyde that he would "tear it in pieces" if he could (90), brings the lives of both to an end, with the termination of Jekyll's narrative and of Hyde's life

perfectly synchronized. Jekyll's description of these final moments grants a ceremonial quality to the scene, where pen and envelope come to resemble body and coffin: "Here then, as I lay down the pen and proceed to seal up my confession, I bring the life of that unhappy Henry Jekyll to an end" (91). Gazing on the fiend's body, Utterson verbalizes the significance of Hyde's death, knowing "Hyde is gone to his account" (66). The fatal directive of truth – that the self must be accounted for – brings about the death of the author in only the most literal sense, as Jekyll signs his own death sentence. This lethal equivalence of body and text fervidly resists the benign conscription imagined within physiognomic, graphological and criminological discourses of the nineteenth century. The knotted relation between flesh and writing envisioned within Stevenson's novella demonstrates that neither substance can be sublimed into the other without resorting to graphic, and graphical, violence.

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[1] "The hand guides itself": a sampling of the homophonic play littered throughout the writings of Jasno, one of Lombroso's "graphomaniacs." Nordau cites this phrase from Lombroso's *Genie ind Irsinn* 264.

[2] Thomas' reading could be said to invoke what Judith Butler has characterized as the "linguistic idealism of poststructuralism," a mode of critique that [immerses] itself in the sort of "textual play" that (falsely, in Butler's estimation and in mine) "marks the dissolution of matter as a contemporary category" (*Bodies* 27).

[3] See Thomas, 239; Danahay, 135-146.

[4] See Buckton, who reads autobiography as "a manifestation of the nineteenth-century culture of individualism as well as the literary that most directly influences the Victorian novel in its exploration of individual origins, identity, experience, and development" (2-3).

[5] See *Modern Language Notes'* 1978 special issue, edited by Rodolphe Gasché, on "Autobiography and the Problem of the Subject." Also, see Olney 1980 and Jay 1984. More recently, see Folkenflik 1993.

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[6] See also Maudsley's *Body and Will* 34.

[7] Derrida's essay closes with an appeal for "what might be called a new psychoanalytic graphology." This chapter does *not* answer that call. Derrida appropriates graphology as a term seemingly without history. Is this merely the *bricoleur* at work, placing graphology under erasure in order "to preserve as an instrument that whose truth-value he criticizes" (*WD* 284)? The "Scene of Writing" finds Derrida inscribing "graphology" upon his own Mystic Writing Pad, simply lifting the "thin transparent sheet" and beginning anew with a clean slate. But certain questions remain embedded within the history of graphology, regardless of whether or not they surface within Derrida's text. It is not only that the application of the graphological method has a history; its fundamental object of study—that is, script produced by hand as opposed to any other means—is a historically contingent technology of writing.

[8] One recent example of this tendency would be Driver, et. al. "Should We Write Off Graphology?"

[9] See Stafford 91; Stemmler 151.
[10] *Daniel* 5: 5-28.

[11] Freud's study of "The 'Uncanny'" identifies this trope of dismemberment as one of the recurrent conventions of the uncanny: "Dismembered limbs, a severed head, a hand cut off at the wrist, as in a fairy tale of Hauff's feet which dance by themselves […] all of them have something peculiarly uncanny about them, especially when, as in the last instance, they prove capable of independent activity in addition" (144-45). Freud attributes this to a castration complex—all appendages of the body become one.

[12] For further discussion of the role silence plays within professional male friendships, see Arata, 40-41. Also significant in this regard is Enfield's "Don't ask, Don't tell" policy, as explained to Utterson: "the more it looks like Queer Street, the less I ask" (35).

[13] To borrow from Henry James, who provides a most insightful contemporary assessment of Stevenson's uncommon abilities, these men "[achieve their] best effects without the aid of the ladies" (170).

[14] Considering the "id" encrypted within the "He" of Hyde's name, Utterson's stated objective betrays a strange resemblance to the Freudian maxim: "Where id was, there the ego shall be" (Freud, "Dissection" 71).

[15] See *The Psychic Life of Power*, where Butler argues that individuals "enjoy intelligibility only to the extent that they are, as it were, first established in language. The subject is the linguistic occasion for the individual to achieve and reproduce intelligibility, the linguistic condition of its existence and agency" (10–11).

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[16] This method of reading receives an ambivalent introduction into Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* as well (though it will serve as lynchpin of Robert's case against his antagonist). Here, Robert Audley, the amateur detective, remarks to his cousin upon spying Lady Audley's letter that: "I never believed in those fellows who ask you for thirteen postage stamps, and offer to tell you what you have never been able to find out for yourself; but upon my word I think that if I had never seen your aunt, I should know what she was like by this slip of paper. Yes, here it all is—the feathery, gold-shot, flaxen curls, the penciled eyebrows, the tiny straight nose, the winning childish smile, all to be guessed in these few graceful up-strokes and down-strokes" (101). The graphological depth of Robert's interpretation transforms the letter into a living portrait, and reading into a voyeuristic act.

[17] In the Dreyfus case, Bertillon advanced a theory concerning the Dreyfus documents that rivaled Gosse's *Omphalos* hypothesis for sheer incontestable ingenuity. Bertillon accused Dreyfus of "self-forgery," testifying that Dreyfus had written in a style that would resemble another writer's forgery of his handwriting, retreating to the "citadel of graphic rebuses" (Bredin 74) to which spies commonly fled.

[18] Graphologists have often made the claim that the consideration of handwriting as dating back as far as Aristotle, who notes the individuality of signs as shaped by their particular signers in his "On Interpretation": "Spoken words are the symbols of mental experience, and written words the symbol of spoken words. Just as all men have not the same speech sounds, so all men have not the same writing." However, the quotation is a fragment, and the remainder of Aristotle's sentence clarifies the centripetal force of Aristotle's argument here, towards the universality of mental experience: "but the mental experiences, which these directly symbolize, are the same for all, as also are those things of which our experiences are the images." Aristotle does not go on to discuss the significance of handwriting, choosing instead to move "inward" to the medium of thought.

[19] Phenomenology has manifest a persistent concern with the hand as the sign of internality, individuality and authenticity. In Hegel's *Phenomenology*, the idiosyncrasies made manifest in one's "particular style of 'handwriting'" are seized upon as "an expression of the inner." Set "against the multifarious externality of action and fate, this expression again stands in the position of simple externality, plays the part of an inner in relation to the externality of action and fate." (189). For Heidegger, "the typewriter veils the essence of writing and of the script. It withdraws from man the essential rank of the hand, without man's experiencing this withdrawal appropriately and recognizing that it has transformed the relation of Bring to his essence" (85).

[20] On the significance of the counterfeit within the Gothic, see Hogle, "Frankenstein."

[21] Braddon acknowledges this challenge to the handwriting expert in *Lady Audley's Secret*. Helen tries to hide behind this fact: "A resemblance between the handwriting of two women is no very uncommon circumstance now-a-days . . . I could show you the

calligraphies of half-a-dozen of my female correspondents, and defy you to discover any great differences in them" (286). Unfortunately for Helen, she does not fit this mold. Neither seems to write "the usual womanly scrawl" (171).

[22] Munby identifies John Thane's *British autography: a collection of fac-similes of the handwriting of royal and illustrious personages, with their authentic portraits*" of 1788 as the "first English book in which autographs were a major feature" (12). The book featured 269 portraits, with each subject's signature engraved at bottom. Munby notes that Thane's book "was much sought after and changed hands for as much as twenty-five pounds" (12).

[23] I borrow the term "Autograph-hunters" from Charles Robinson's "Confessions of an Autograph-Hunter."

[24] Upon arriving at the scene of the Carew murder, Utterson finds that his gift to Jekyll, "a heavy cane" (46), has been used in the fatal assault (47).

[25] This opportunity for "minute analysis" accounts for much of Walter Benjamin's fascination with graphology. Reading Benjamin's "On the Mimetic Faculty" in the light of his essay on the work of art, graphology emerges as a kind of proto-cinema. Just as cinema examines a dimension of commonplace human movement and expression that is entirely familiar to us, and yet essentially invisible to the naked eye (the camera "introduces us to unconscious optics as does psychoanalysis to unconscious impulses" (237), graphology's study of the body's unconscious movements teaches us "to recognize in handwriting images that the unconscious of the writer conceals in it" (335).

[26] "Every designer and every painter reproduces himself, more or less, in his works; you discover in them either something of his exterior or of his mind, as we shall presently show…" (Lavater, v.4, 198).

[27] For a comparable British example, see George Fielding Blandford's Lectures on the Treatment, Medical and Legal, of Insane Patients, delivered at the schools of St. George's Hospital and collected within *Insanity and its Treatment* (1886). See 351-356. See also: Holt-Schooling, "The Handwriting of Mad People" (1896).

[28] Melanie Klein's "The Role of the School in the Libidinal Development of the Child" (1923) examines this tendency for the body to insert itself into the handwriting of schoolchildren. Klein's particular interest has to do with the libidinal investment in writing, how the act functions as a substitute for the act of coitus, and principally how the 'I' stands for the erect penis and the self-sufficient individual. Freud as well intuited the libidinal charge of writing, an association that had to be repressed in order for writing to proceed: "As soon as writing, which entails making a liquid flow out of a tube onto a piece of white paper, assumes the significance of copulation, or as soon as walking becomes a symbolic substitute for treading upon the body of mother earth, both writing

and walking are stopped because they represent the performance of a forbidden sexual act" (*Inhibitions, Symptoms, and Anxiety* 90).

[29] Consulting the mirror, Jekyll finds that his entire body has been transformed overnight, but his reference to the "Babylonian finger on the wall" at Belshazzar's feast emphasizes the disembodied hand while ushering readers into another scene of interpretation, featuring writing that must be deciphered before the passing of judgment.

3
Entranced:
Richard Marsh's *The Beetle* and Literature of the Impressionable Mind

Published in 1897 and immediately enjoying a popularity that not even Bram Stoker's *Dracula* could rival, Richard Marsh's *The Beetle* takes place in contemporary London, where a hideous creature has arrived from Egypt to exact vengeance upon Paul Lessingham, a respected British politician with whom the fiend shares a scandalous history.[1] Though our narrator innocently notes that Lessingham's portfolio has never included "Foreign Affairs," the politician has found himself entangled in some mysterious indiscretion, one of those "pages in the book of every man's life […] which he would wish to keep turned down" (121), to borrow Marsh's turn of phrase. While traveling in Egypt, Lessingham is lured into the Cult of Isis by the siren-song of a beautiful woman. Drugged, seduced, and held captive in a "mesmeric stupor," he is forced to witness "orgies of nameless horrors" and sacrificial rites "too bizarre, too hideous to be true." Months pass before this dark cloud lifts, but at the first lapse of his persecutor's captivating influence, Lessingham breaks free of her clutches and flees to England. However, what happens in Cairo does not stay in Cairo, and the scorned Beetle descends upon London, exercising its hypnotic powers over each of our protagonists in turn. These acts of possession carry a charge that is as much physically and sexually invasive as it is psychic.

The Beetle's erotic association with Lessingham is the inaugural event of Marsh's narrative, but long before we learn of this tryst, our first glimpse of the Beetle establishes the polymorphous nature of its threat. This is how Robert Holt, the tale's first victim, describes his succumbing to the Beetle: "Fingers were pressed *into* my cheeks, they were

thrust *into* my mouth, they touched my staring eyes, shut my eyelids, then *opened* them again, and--horror of horrors!—the blubber lips were pressed to mine—the soul of something evil entered *into* me in the guise of a kiss" (57, emphasis added). The horror of the creature's "kiss" has everything to do with surfaces yielding to pressure, the subject giving in and giving way, its submission expressed through the continual "into" that becomes the refrain of Holt's account. Holt's enthralling description of the assault is characteristic of the novel in that it invites us to consider the homographic valences of becoming "entranced." The word is itself a double entrance, a single passage leading now into one chamber and then into another. Perhaps these two destinations are so similar in appearance that to distinguish between them—to insist, as our first narrator does, that things are "the same, yet not the same" (60)—amounts to a kind of paranoia.[2] Everything seems to be in its proper place, and yet I falter under this slight vertigo of meaning. Such reading betrays an excessive sensitivity resonating most sympathetically with the tightly wound nerves of the novel's most helpless victims. Our straining eyes begin to "see double," discerning difference where others observe only the placid consistency of an unchanging world. The representational torsion generated by these two divergent perspectives within "paranoid" gothic literature produces the doppelganger.

Within *The Beetle*, one could remark simply that the hypnotist entrances his victim by finding an entrance where none was found before. The framework of the novel could not highlight these concerns more explicitly. Its first two chapters, simply entitled "Inside" and "Outside," announce the passage from outside in as a crucial thematic concern of the text's troubled topography. Accordingly, Book One's title, "The House With the Open Window," names the breach through which we follow Robert Holt, our

first narrator, into the Beetle's world. Holt considers the door, but decides instead upon the "aperture" of a window, bypassing the accepted path, breaking and entering. This unlawful trespass emblematizes Marsh's narrative technique and prefigures his concern with the permeability of private spaces and bodies. Exploiting the eye as the central locus of his concern with the penetrability of bodies and the dissolution of subjects, Marsh vividly imagines what Jonathan Crary has described as the "carnal density of vision."[3] We find in his novel a compelling depiction of the eye as an organ of exposed vulnerability rather than veiled power. The baleful Beetle unleashes a range of menacing *trompe l'oeil* techniques (from mesmeric trance to optical illusions to cross-dressing) that form the novel's central tableaux. If the objective reality of these spectacles is questionable, their subjective and intensive power is unmistakable. In Marsh's novel, visual apprehension occurs not as the benign reception of information, but as a visceral threat that jeopardizes the coherence and autonomy of the subject.

For its thematic exploitation of such indeterminacy between the self and its others, the Gothic has often been acknowledged as a paradox of genre, the category of the uncategorizable. Kelly Hurley's *The Gothic Body: Sexuality, Materialism, and Degeneration at the Fin-de-Siècle* understands as the fundamental spectacle of Gothic narrative this representation "of the human subject undergoing dissolution," a prospect that triggers hysterical anxiety in Sartre's analysis, repression and denial in Freud's, and abjection in Kristeva's. Hurley's work aligns itself most closely with Kristeva, exploring the *jouissance* provoked by these "abhuman" bodies, and anticipating the promise they hold "of a monstrous becoming" (4). The abject threatens to break down the constitutive boundaries of the subject, and this dizzying indeterminacy of one's selfhood plunges the

"I," the pillar of the symbolic, "toward the place where meaning collapses" (*Powers* 2). Gothic literature conventionally induces this collapse through creatures such as the Beetle; figures too unstable to explicitly "symbolize" any one threat in particular, these monstrous demonstrations disrupt economies of representation. Marsh's characterization of this extraordinary being—an insect-humanoid, neither male nor female—has prompted critics to read the novel as a perpetually anxious text, the portentous symptom of a blighted cultural uncanny. Judith Halberstam's *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters* explores how the Gothic grants thought (for Halberstam, principally anxious thought) a body, making it multiple, visceral, and hideous. Figures such as *Frankenstein*'s monster and *Dracula*'s vampire are overdetermined signifiers of abjection, Gordian knots tied so that they cannot be undone through any particular reading. Halberstam contends that in "any attempt to fix monstrosity, some aspect of it escapes unread" (29).

It is this ambivalence of the text that allows Hurley to attribute the Beetle's origins in the Egyptian Cult of Isis to the repressed materials of an imperial unconscious, remarking that *The Beetle* "serves to reflect and feed into British suspicion of and contempt for Egyptians during a period of heightened British military activity in Egypt" (127). The creature accommodates as well Roger Luckhurst's understanding of the novel as "a somewhat normative allegory of the fantastic dangers of miscegenation and pre-nuptial sex, exploiting the syphilitic dangers broadcast by social purity campaigners" (162). In his introduction to *The Beetle* (2004), Julian Wolfreys provides a thorough review of the text's surprisingly modest critical reception, giving a general account of the confusions of race, species, gender, and sexuality roused by the monster and claiming

that, in the end, its "body is grotesque because it is unstable, excessive, ambiguously traced by so many fragments of identity" (19).[4] Wolfreys' survey exhibits a number of these very compelling cases made for the Beetle as an embodiment of the Freudian "return of the repressed." Incorporating as it does so many abjected materials, the abhorrent body of the Beetle becomes legible as a material index of *fin-de-siècle* cultural concerns. Understandably, critical response has been singularly drawn to this captivating figure. However, my own analysis departs from this approach in turning to the other (perhaps initially less conspicuous) bodies that populate the text. These permeable bodies and "impressionable minds" bear the physical imprint of the text upon themselves, and struggle to transmit the import and impact of their experience.

This chapter explores trance-literature through its persistent evocation of the "impressionable mind," a trope that submits writing as a privileged figure for the subject's permeability. Marsh's association of hypnosis with photography impels us to consider the contemporaneous development of "the negative" within photographic and psychoanalytic discourse. The traffic between these two registers allows Freud to remark that the unconscious resembles "a photographic apparatus" (*Interpretation* 574), while Oliver Wendell Holmes speaks of the camera as a "mirror with memory" and a "conscience" ("Stereoscope" 741). Freud's analogy recognizes the inscribed character of the subject, while Holmes' imagines the subjective nature of the scriptural. Within *The Beetle*, this chiasmus is mapped out along the lines of optical relations. The mechanics of photography allow for a reflexive understanding of the gaze that engenders the subjectivity of objects and the objectification of viewing subjects. This inverted gaze accentuates the vulnerability of perception as permeability, and haunts realism with the

intimation that its "look" may fail to guarantee the dominance of the subject thereby enlightened.

Vital Signs: Photography and the Gothic

The fundamental challenge posed by the Gothic to modern understandings of inscription derives from the genre's uncanny belief in the transubstantiation of signs and bodies, whereby the word is made flesh, and the flesh is "made word." We will address each of these conversions in turn. The first, and more familiarly gothic trajectory is manifest within Marsh's novel through the monster itself, whose affiliation with the idolatrous cult of Isis endows her with the power to animate signs. The superstitious veneration of symbols displayed by the Egyptian cult amounts to a colonialist update of the threat of Catholic iconophilia, a further disavowal of "the darkest age of Christianity" referenced within Horace Walpole's preface to his seminal gothic novel *The Castle of Otranto* (59). The larval process of metamorphosis undergone by Beetles emblematizes the fluid transformation of substances just as ably as the liquid process of photography.[5] Notably, much of the creature's horror derives from its uncanny aesthetic productions. From weaving to photogravure, the Beetle produces living texts that trigger a distressing ontological confusion by exhibiting the same fluid relation between signs and things themselves.

Marsh's novel presents us with a familiar instance of this gothic confusion when, investigating the Beetle's residence, Lessingham's fiancée Marjorie Lindon realizes the carpet upon which she is standing is either *embroidered* or *infested* with insects: "The artist had woven his undesirable subject into the warp and woof of the material with such

cunning skill that, as one continued to gaze, one began to wonder if by any possibility the creatures could be alive." Marjorie's attention is drawn next to a bundle of carpets, one of which has been adorned with the representation of a human sacrifice. Of the "naked white woman being burned" upon the altar, she remarks, "[t]here could be no doubt as to her being alive" (230). This body contorts itself "into shapes which were horribly suggestive of the agony which she was enduring," convincing Marjorie that "the artist . . . seemed to have exhausted his powers in his efforts to convey a vivid impression of the pains which were tormenting her." For Marjorie, the scene presents "as ghastly a piece of realism as one could see" (230). Though the content of the image depicted in such an unflinching manner may be upsetting in itself, it is something else that makes the realism of this scene so haunting. A revival of the living tapestry convention we find in *Otranto* and other early Gothic novels, the image is beyond lifelike; impossibly, it is *itself* animate, literally swarming with life. Such "ghastly" representations stage the collapse of realism by pushing it beyond the limits of resemblance, thereby refusing the abdication of realism to the ever-receding horizon of the real. When representation fails to keep its respectful distance through the disclaimers of fiction and the restraint of figure, it becomes gothic.

What is perhaps more surprising is the way in which modern technologies push Marsh's narrative in this gothic direction as well; through indexical replication, the "exact reproduction" becomes *too* real. Walter Benjamin touches upon this technologically-induced enchantment in his "Short History of Photography," where he remarks: "the most precise technology can give its products a magical value" (243). The monster's calling card, which features an image of an uncommon species of Beetle

"produced apparently by some process of photogravure," is so startlingly vibrant that a mere "glance" sends Paul Lessingham into fits: "As he did so, something surprising occurred. On the instant a look came on to his face which, literally, transfigured him" (114). Even Atherton, the novel's most resolutely skeptical character, finds that "the whole thing was so dexterously done that the creature seemed alive. The semblance of reality was, indeed, so vivid that it needed a second glance to be assured that it was a mere trick of the reproducer" (115). Such nervous fascination with contemporary technology reminds us that the untimeliness of gothic poesis cannot be restricted to antiquated techniques and archaic understandings of signification. Furthermore, Marsh's enlistment of this contemporary technology not only "updates" the gothic trope of the living sign, but suggests a reversal of its orientation, towards realism rather than romance. This reorientation allows the "techno-gothic" mode to address the idolatry of modern visual culture. Lessingham's "transfiguration" suggests that the modern subject is transformed in the act of looking. His body is drawn into a field of vision where signs are imbued with life, and living bodies are apprehended as signs.

The occult powers of photography are broadly attested to within nineteenth-century literature. Indeed, in Alison Chapman's reading, "early photography was often seen not as analogous to mesmerism, but one and the same operation" ("Ghost" 67). The crucial difference to be marked with Marsh's text, however, is that it disturbs the common alignment of mesmerist with photographer to be found within texts such as Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The House of Seven Gables* (in the character of Holgrave), Robert Browning's "Mesmerism," and George du Maurier's *Trilby*. In each of these texts, the intensity of concentration involved in "fixing" the photograph's subject is imagined as a

sadistic procedure, while Marsh depicts the photographic observer as passive, even masochistic. For if the "stillness of the photographic sitter" renders him "conducive to trance," so too does the receptive stance of the viewer. Just as Stevenson tells us of Hyde, Marsh's Beetle has "never been photographed" (*JH* 49), unless one counts the indelible images lodged within the minds of his witnesses.[6] In their attempts at visual apprehension, Marsh's protagonists repeatedly turn to photographic apparatuses. However, rather than functioning as the instruments of uncanny power that we see elsewhere in other photographic Gothic fiction, they serve as emblems of a traumatic and ineffable sensitivity to the external world.

The most striking incidence of this photographic receptivity occurs during Sydney Atherton's first encounter with the Beetle. Atherton writes: "I kept my glance riveted on the creature, with the idea of photographing it on my brain. I believe that if it were possible to take a retinal print—which some day it will be—you would have a perfect picture of what it was I saw" (150). With these curious words, the reader is conducted into one of *The Beetle*'s most climactic moments, in which the mysterious creature at last reveals him—or her, or it—self to our narrator. The scene treats readers to not one but two metamorphoses. There is, of course, the emergence of Atherton's antagonist from his "loose draperies," revealing a golden-green creature "six or seven inches high, and about a foot in length" (150). But in the midst of this mutation comes another just as startling. Before the reader stands Atherton, and we watch him transform himself—through a technological fantasy that enframes the gothic nightmare—into a photographic machine. Marsh's peculiar hero is a narrator less inclined to write than to be *written upon*. Departing from descriptive narrative techniques, he appeals to his own body as an archive

of the event. Yielding his "brain" and retina to the Beetle, he will passively receive the imprint of the scene upon himself. In this way, the text orchestrates an ekphrastic relation to its secret, making of the novel a caption read underneath a photograph yet to be developed.

Atherton's invocation of this visual index would seem here to privilege photographic substantiation over the testimony of language, but for Marsh's characters the appeal of the photographic metaphor lies not merely in the new model of writing it presents, but in the way the photographic process embodies a familiar sensation of being written. It is not the stylus, but the surface of inscription that these characters identify themselves with. It is this strange affinity that prompts the conversation between novelistic and photographic method beyond consideration of the mimetic possibilities of aesthetic forms, to consider changes in the subject of representation itself. How is it, Marsh asks, that we are stared back at by the world, and altered by our own instruments of perception?

It is Lacan who provides us with the most sustained theoretical attempt at grappling with these paradoxes of vision. Though psychoanalysis and the Gothic have enjoyed a long and fruitful conversation, the prevailing tenor and atmosphere of Lacan's lectures and writings has generally proven less hospitable to ghost stories than Freud's corpus, which seems most at home when drifting through dream-states inhabited by sinister shadows and menacing doubles. However, Lacan's discussion of the gaze draws upon imagery ranging from the surreal (the can of sardines that devours him with its sunlit glint) to the gothic (the anamorphically distorted skull in Hans Holbein's *Ambassadors*).[7] Lacan's reference to the gaze in his first reading seminar (*Freud's*

Papers on Technique) presents us with a kind of "haunted" house, the darkened window of which bears a distinct resemblance to the "aperture" that marks our entrance into Marsh's narrative. Lacan writes: "I can feel myself under the gaze of someone whose eyes I do not see, not even discern. All that is necessary is for something to signify to me that there may be others there. This window, if it gets a bit dark, and if I have reasons for thinking that there is someone behind it, is straight-away a gaze" (215). And here is the destitute Robert Holt, the Beetle's first victim, standing outside the villain's house on a cold and rainy night: "I saw the open window. I stared at it, conscious, as I did so, of a curious catching of the breath. It was so near to me; so very near. I had but to stretch out my hand to thrust it through the aperture" (49). Once inside this darkened window, however, Holt begins dimly to apprehend his mistake:

> I became, on a sudden, aware, that something was with me in the room. There was nothing, ostensible, to lead me to such a conviction; it may be that my faculties were unnaturally keen; but, all at once, I knew that there was something there. What was more, I had a horrible persuasion that, *though unseeing, I was seen*; that my every movement was being watched. (49, emphasis added)

By unlinking eye and gaze, Lacanian optics proposes a counter-intuitive reversal that discards commonsensical certainties concerning the presumed activity of the viewer and the passivity of the viewed: "in the scopic field, everything is articulated between two terms that act in an antinomic way—on the side of things, there is the gaze, that is to say, things look at me, and yet I see them" (*Fundamental* 109). Lacan is attracted to the paradoxical notion that the eye itself has become the blind spot of the subject, and functions less as the instrument of vision than that of its censorship. Fixation on the eye

enacts a critical displacement within the field of visuality that grants priority to the “I.” This orientation schematizes vision according to the dictates of the imaginary, an ordering of perspective dedicated to the erection and orthopedic support of the subject. Lacan rejects this emphasis, reconfiguring the coordinates of the gaze to shift attention to the seemingly subordinate principle of the objective gaze, the real upon which the imaginary order is grounded. In doing so, his concept denies any simple equivalence of vision with power. Surveillance of the world is no guarantee of the subject’s dominance. Lacan’s preferred visual trope for this reversal is the *trompe l’oeil*, the painting that lures its viewer into the frame with the promise of a certain perspectival order, only to collapse this order in upon the subject. This “trick” of the image is withheld until the viewer hits his or her mark, ensnared in the netting of the field of vision. Every picture, Lacan warns us, is such a trap.

This is also the case within the darkened windows of Lacan and Marsh: the intensity and concentration of the subject’s look results not in stricter control of the objects he examines, but in a paradoxical submission to these objects of perception. Our bodies become, in Lacan’s words, “photo-sensitive” (*Fundamental* 94). The longer one stares into the darkness, the deeper and wider it spreads, as its shadows come to life. The state of the body while under hypnosis provides a direct illustration of this point. When in a deep hypnotic trance, the subject’s pupils dilate, and tend to remain in this receptive condition, even when a bright light is shone into them.[8] It is in this posture of openness and impressionability that we are “photo-graphed” by the objects we view (*Fundamental* 106). It should come as no surprise that Lacan imagines the gaze in such photographic terms. It is not that photography merely provides an available analogy for the

unconscious. Rather, this technology makes the unconscious available. Without attributing the "discovery" of the unconscious exclusively to technology, we can say that it facilitated a new way of articulating and "imaging" the subject by giving concrete, objective expression to invisible internal psycho-physiological processes.

The conjoined history of photography and of the subject demonstrates Lacan's assertion that "the slightest alteration in the relation between men and the signifier . . . changes the whole course of history by modifying the moorings that anchor his being" *(Ecrits* 174). The gaze is not intrinsic to the subject, but arises in large part through technologies that broker the prosthetic invention of the human. Borrowing from photography, psychoanalysis and the Gothic account for this reciprocal influence of the visual relation, and point to the possibility of an inverted optics that charts the changes in the subject of representation brought about through the act of looking.

Typically, discussion of photography within Victorian culture pointedly turned away from this photographing subject, insisting that the significant work of photography was performed by the machine and not the operator. Among photography's creators, much of the rhetoric enframing photographic "description" tended to emphasize the way in which the automatic processes of the apparatus sidelined the photographer, eliminating the subjective element of previous strategies of depiction. From one point of view, the camera presented a model of vision decoupled from the body, introducing an objective mechanical eye that corrected subjective human error. Early photography texts such as Philip Henry Delamotte's *The Sunbeam* (1859) and Marcus Aurelius Root's *The Camera and the Pencil* (1864) stress the primacy of nature's inscriptions. Likewise, Oliver Wendell Holmes' "Doings of the Sunbeam" (1863) solicits the photographer's humility

in the face of nature's powers. Outlining the detailed process of making photographs, he intermittently pauses to check the presumptions of his own language: "while we make a photograph,—say, rather, while the mysterious forces which we place in condition to act work that miracle for us" (3). William H. Fox Talbot, who patented the calotype (or talbotype) process and determined a method for the development of multiple prints from a photographic negative, insists on this deferral of authorship as well, conceiving of the photographic process as one through which the object composes its own self-portrait. In "Some Account of the Art of Photogenic Drawing," presented to the Royal Society in 1839, he describes his photograph of Lacock Abbey in such terms: "this building I believe to be the first that was ever yet known to *have drawn its own picture*" (46). Talbot's The *Pencil of Nature* (1844), touted in its 1969 reprinting as the Gutenberg Bible of the photographic age, was the first book to be illustrated with mass-produced photographs, images derived from his calotype process. Talbot prefaces this work with a "Note to the Reader" informing his audience that the following plates have been "impressed by the agency of Light alone, without any aid whatever from the artist's pencil" (n. pag).[9] If the artist has refrained from tampering with the images themselves, his pencil has been doubly occupied in delineating the discursive support framing precisely what it was his viewers were intended to see. The true artistry of Holmes and Talbot emerges in their pivotal roles in promulgating the mythology of photography as a distinct language affording privileged access to things in themselves.

Certainly, many of Talbot's contemporaries resisted this myth, maintaining that even a "senseless machine" such as the camera could produce representations in which one can "clearly perceive a human mind at work" (103 Sizeranne). Sir William de

Wivelesley Abney, three-time President of the Royal Photographic Society and editor of the *Journal of the Photographic Society* from 1881 to 1894, concedes that photography "can be, and very often is, a purely mechanical production" (303). However, he maintains that many photographs obtain to his criteria for works of art; these are "productions of the hand" in which "we can see an impress of the mind" (303). Traces such as these were persistently invoked in the defence of photography's status as Art.[10] Participating in an 1899 *Magazine of Art* symposium organized around the question "Is Photography Among the Fine Arts," Robert de la Sizeranne emphasizes the photographer's "interventions" in the process—from composition to developing to printing—in order to demonstrate the means by which the artist "impresses his personality so strongly on the operations that the result is completely transfigured" (103). These impressions are evidence of the creative mind exercising its "will to art" upon a malleable reality. Within critical discussion of photography, the question as to whether it is the subject or the object that writes has remained an insistent problem. Recent attempts at tackling the issue of photographic agency have tended to insist on photography's art (or artifice), though the prevalent tone has shifted from celebration of the artistic impulse to a more skeptical, iconoclastic account of how discourse frames its object. "When we press the button of a camera," argues Walter Benn Michaels, "we are writing" (222). This "writing" translates physical, indexical marks into symbolic signs, prompting the dutiful poststructural installation of scare quotes around "the world" and scuttling myths of transparency with the opacity of semiotics. We make photographs when we "take" photographs (Lewis 5); the marks that emerge are indices of reality's production, not its retrieval.

Such are the questions that realism and its critique make possible. However, within the bounds of this questioning, the subject all too commonly escapes interrogation by posing as the *a priori* of representation.[11] The camera cannot merely be considered as another tool at the disposal of a relatively stable viewing subject, endowed with an ever-widening arsenal of representational techniques to choose from. For the tool brings about not only the extension of the subject (through the colonization or domestication of the perceptible world), but its metamorphosis as well. Consequently, genealogies of media cannot credibly organize their evolution of forms along the lines of a presumed shared genus, naming for instance the camera obscura as the primogenitor of the daguerrotype, which in its turn begat the cinema. This history of progressive invention obscures the true, miscegenous nature of machine and human lineage, a shared evolution that proceeds not along parallel lines, but as the double helix of a shared DNA strand.

It is chiefly through Atherton's imperious attitude toward science that Marsh's text represents human resistance to such technological implantations. Atherton's distinctly colonial understanding of technology imagines his inventions as extensions of the body and instruments of British imperialism. Indeed, the patent for his "System of Telegraphy at Sea" has just been purchased by the Admiralty (109). Atherton uses technology as weaponry; he is always at work on "new projectile[s]" (109) that assert his dominance, and that of the British empire. In a manner highly reminiscent of the contest staged between Dracula and Stoker's techno-savvy Crew of Light, Atherton's powers as an inventor are explicitly pitted against the Beetle's magic. In his second confrontation with the Beetle, Atherton rehearses an old chestnut of techno-colonialism, terrorizing his visitor with "a little exhibition of electricity" and a demonstration of the combustible

properties of phosphorus bromide. These displays of superior modern “firepower” leave the Beetle “prostrated on his knees,” and “salaaming in a condition of abject terror” (145). “My lord! my lord!” the creature whimpers, “I entreat you, my lord to use me as your slave!” (145). Exploiting the “shock and awe” that advanced technology instills within all such supposedly credulous and superstitious ethnic creatures, Atherton’s technological mastery countermands the Beetle’s insubordinate position.

What is it then that prevents Marsh from employing a camera to similar ends, granting Atherton visual dominion over the Beetle by “capturing” it photographically? Historically speaking, the camera would have long been available to Marsh; other novelists had put the machine to use in their narratives. In the same year as *The Beetle*’s publication, for instance, Stoker will provide Jonathan Harker with a Kodak camera (54), allowing him to chart out a photographic map of Count Dracula’s Carfax estate. However, for all of its photographic reflections on vision and memory, there are no cameras in *The Beetle*. They make no objective appearance within the novel’s mise-en-scene, existing only within the minds and bodies of characters. Photography manifests itself not as a technology but as a quality of feeling, and an embodied metaphor for the impact of experience. Producing the latent print lodged within Atherton’s retina, it is an *impression*, rather than a means of *expression* available to Marsh’s characters.

Robert Holt, the novel’s first hapless victim, imagines his psyche as a photographic surface as well. When he first finds himself outside of the Beetle’s residence, his perception takes in the scene with the startling precision of a camera-eye: “I realised, and, so to speak, mentally photographed all the little details of the house. An instant before, the world swam before my eyes. Now I saw everything, with a clearness

which, as it were, was shocking" (47).[12] Holt's "so to speak" brackets his expression as a figure of speech, subordinating photography to language as merely one of many analogies at its disposal. And yet, before long, this analogy has turned on Holt, as the photographic capacity of the psyche comes to illustrate not his determined will-to-perceive, but a helpless inability *not* to see. Holt finds that under the Beetle's trance, "every detail of my involuntary actions was projected upon my brain in a series of pictures, whose clear-cut outlines, so long as memory endures, will never fade" (71).

This internalized camera cannot be brandished as a weapon, or bandied about like the auxiliary phallus so clearly envisioned by McLuhan when he subtitles *Understanding Media* "Extensions of Man." Though the notion of a photographic memory commonly signifies a clarity of visual recollection that allows for startlingly objective control over past impressions, Holt finds to his dismay that one does not possess this ability so much as one is possessed by it. *The Beetle* coaxes us out of the bounds of realism by internalizing the terms of the photographic analogy. Marsh's writing experiment is not merely a remediation of the novel through the camera, nor are his narrators simply writers who fantasize about being photographers. In a much more integral sense, they dream of becoming *photographic*.

Front and Back view of a very Curious Animal that was seen going about loose the other day.
It has been named by Dr. Gunther "Elephans Photographicus."

FIGURE 3.1
"Elephans Photographicus." From *Punch* 44 (1863): 249.

A satirical *Punch* illustration published in 1863 offers a glimpse of such a becoming in its depiction of the "Elephans Photographicus." While this "Curious Animal" will most likely be unfamiliar to a twenty-first century audience, its descendents can today be observed, among other habitats, in the films of Terry Gilliam and Tim Burton. In films such as *Brazil* and *Sleepy Hollow*, the act of looking—extended and retooled through ocular prosthetics—transforms the seer. Through such surreal bodies a certain technique of visualization becomes itself visible, as we find ourselves looking through the magnifying glass from the other side at the contorted gaze of prying eyes, subject to effects of distortion that range from the ridiculous to the grotesque.

In the *Punch* cartoon as well, the purportedly disinterested gaze of realism facilitated by the camera eye becomes monstrous. The photographer's head has been swallowed up by the hood of the camera, locked into its Cyclops-eye through a process of prosthetic fusion. The unsettling insectoid features of this strange beast, including its delicate segmented forelegs, would almost seem to nominate the human-machine-insect hybrid as an imaginative condensation of the Beetle's twin metamorphoses. Beyond this striking homeomorphic identification, however, the image fittingly illustrates Marsh's novel in its depiction of the *fixation* of the operator's gaze. It suggests that, as irrevocably as the subject of any photograph, the operator is fixed, or stuck in position (that of taking the photograph), in her own way captured by the camera eye. Resisting alignment with the photographer's perspective, the *Punch* cartoon reverses the gaze to suggest that photography's true impact has less to do with the evolution of representational techniques than with the metamorphosis of the human body as a "viewing machine."

"Everything is just as wrong as it can be": The Development of the Negative

If photography facilitated a new photographic understanding of the human body, the daguerrotype was hardly the first optical instrument to inspire analogies with the physiology and psychology of human vision. The camera obscura had long been utilized as an illustration of the workings of the eye and mind, our internalized darkened chambers. In the seventeenth century Johannes Kepler, the German astronomer responsible for coining the term "camera obscura," used the mechanism to illustrate "how an infinity of rays from each point in the visual field is drawn into a coherent, point-to-point correspondence in the eye." Kepler argued that, like the convex glass lens of the

camera, the eye's crystalline lens and cornea refract and refocus incoming rays. These rays are received upon the "plate" or "canvas" of the retina (Lindberg 7).

The camera obscura operated upon a relatively simple optical principle deduced by the ancient Greeks: that the passage of light through a small aperture into a darkened chamber will project an inverted image on any surface facing the aperture. To find the first comprehensive scientific description of the camera obscura, our investigation returns to Cairo. It is here that the Arabian astronomer and mathematician Ibn al-Haytham (965-1039) conducted a series of experiments that convinced him of the fallacy of the ancient Greek hypothesis that the eye scanned objects by sending out tractor rays to apprehend the image. Rather, al-Haytham argued that images were impressed upon the anterior wall of the eye through light reflected into the eye, by a process that came to be modeled by the camera obscura's darkened room.

Stationed inside this chamber that essentially functioned as a giant eyeball, men of art and science cast themselves into a *mise-en-abime* of the optical situation. The darkness of the room—this eye within an eye—established a private space of contemplation. The occupants of the camera obscura were not shackled like the slaves of Plato's allegory, but entered the cave to see more clearly the exterior world. The use of the camera obscura in solar observation provides the most straightforward enactment of this logic, allowing as it does the astronomer to circumvent the paradox (the painful ramifications of which were explored by scientists such as Joseph Plateau) that one cannot see the sun as long as one is looking at it.[13]

Jonathan Crary speaks succinctly about the "operation of individuation" carried out by the camera obscura, exploring the manner in which this device facilitated the

definition of “an observer as isolated, enclosed, or autonomous within its dark confines” (29). The mechanism requires

> *askesis*, or withdrawal from the world, in order to regulate and purify one's relation to the manifold contents of the now ‘exterior’ world. Thus the camera obscura is inseparable from a certain metaphysic of interiority: it is a figure for both the observer who is nominally a free sovereign individual and a privatised subject confined in a quasi-domestic space, cut off from a public exterior world. (29)

Inside this temple of the eye, the observer found sanctuary from the troubled dynamic of visual experience. Now one could see without being seen, without being “touched” by the things one viewed.

The essential innovation of the photographic negative is that this surface apprehends not only the projection of light (as had the camera obscura), but also its inscriptive powers. These two distinct functions correspond to the paradigmatic shift that Crary identifies between the geometrical understanding of optics in circulation throughout the eighteenth century and the physiological theories that dominated nineteenth-century research on the topic. As a technology of visualization, the photograph embodies this new way of understanding the phenomenology of vision. The camera obscura had literally removed the body from the field of vision so that it could organize objects in space by way of abstract geometries. Conversely, the seat of vision in photographic visuality is materially present to the objects it sees. Perceived affinities between photographic and human perception engender a new observer, one whose body is marked by the irreducibly physical acts of “exposure” and incorporation that are the

prerequisites of vision. This exposure of the body gives rise to what Steven Shaviro has described as "a new regime of the image, one in which vision is visceral and intensive, instead of representational and extensive." (139). This subject experiences vision in a manner that would later be theorized by Maurice Merleau-Ponty as "palpation of the eye" ("Intertwining" 251-252), a cross-examination that entwines seer and seen in a visceral chiasmus. Marsh's narrative helps us to imagine this "carnal density of vision" (Crary 150), as his characters strain to grant expression to the palpable and traumatic experience of seeing.[14] Scenes such as Holt's initial victimization communicate the equivocal nature of photographic capture, a process whereby the world acts upon viewers with or without their consent, imprinting indelible images upon bodies that emulate the responsive passivity of the index.

This automatic writing, which proceeds without the inclination of the subject, challenges the integrity and autonomy of the subject's interior life. The photographic method bars the subject from the process of inscription; the images that emerge from the negative are but the traces of prior writings that she has no "hand" in. The primary shift to be recognized within the passage to photography is the movement it effectuates from a Cartesian model of consciousness (enframed within the camera obscura), to a model of the unconscious (embodied in the "negative"). The photographic process passes through a twilight zone that lengthens the shadow cast by the term "negative," accentuating the darker nuances of the word.[15] John Abbott, writing for *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* in 1870, would address this issue these connotations in his piece on "The Negative in Photography":

> The word *negative*, which the photographer applies to the first image which he obtains of the subject, whatever it may be, that he is to photograph, is rather a misnomer, inasmuch as the properties which characterize it, though striking and peculiar, do not seem very clearly to involve any idea of negation. If it had been called the *reverse*, instead of the negative, its name would have been perhaps more suggestive of its character. But the name negative is established, and must stand. (845)

Abbott objects to this name, because it is not in accordance with his vision of photography that its processes should be carried out under the sign of negativity. And yet, he acknowledges that his own "positive" image of the art will always be underwritten by the priority of this "misnomer's" indelible trace. "The name negative is established, and must stand," Abbott concludes. This false name will always cast its shadow over any true name given to photography.

If Abbott resists this undercurrent of negativity, Oliver Wendell Holmes exploits it with relish. In Holmes' view, the photographic negative is "perverse and totally depraved . . . it might almost seem as if some magic and diabolic power had wrenched all things from their proprieties, where the light of the eye was darkness, and the deepest blackness was glided with the brightest glare" ("Stereoscope" 740). In Holmes's writing, the negative emerges as a world of perversion in need of redemption: "the glass plate has the right part of the object on the left side of its picture, and the left part on its right side; its light is darkness, and its darkness is light. Everything is just as wrong as it can be, except that the relations of each wrong to the other wrongs are like the relations of the corresponding rights to each other in the original natural image. This is a *negative*

picture" (740-741). This darkness, however, is to serve as a prelude to a functional dialectic of *photo-synthesis* (if I may be permitted to play along with Holmes's rhetoric). Holmes declares: "This *negative* is now to give birth to a *positive*,—this mass of contradictions to assert its hidden truth in a perfect harmonious affirmation of the realities of Nature. Behold the process!" (741). In his own exploration of the kinship between camera and psyche, however, Freud maintains the persistence of unconscious remainders. "Not every negative," he reminds us, "necessarily becomes a positive; nor is it necessary that every unconscious mental process should turn into a conscious one" (*Introductory Lectures* 365). Freud employs the photographic analogy to demonstrate the "negative" dialectic of the psyche, a darkroom littered with the unprocessed materials that form the ground of the unconscious.[16] This photographic negative, embedded within a body waiting to be processed, emerges as a fitting emblem for Gothic writing. It develops the genre's tropes of haunted writing in the latency of the image and the automation of its inscription, an invisible presence that endures as the trace of a prior writing.

Nearly twenty years before Freud, Joseph Mortimer Granville had opened his discussion of photographic memory with the suggestion that the "subconsciousness" might be structured like a camera.[17] In an 1879 article for *The Lancet*, Granville asserts that, "although the brain is undoubtedly capable of a process analogous to instantaneous photographing, it rarely performs this function at the behest of the will" (458). "The natural and only true basis of memory," for Granville, "is a well-formed impression. It is not essential that the impression should be fully understood at the time it is made" (459). The imposition of memories upon a subject is non-consensual, a relation of force rather than knowledge. Granville characterizes this automatic "storing of impressions" as a form

of "instantaneous mental photography," a faculty that is "more commonly the agent of the subconsciousness than of the supreme consciousness" (458). This recalcitrant, subterranean machine "takes in the impressions we would gladly have effaced, while those it is desired to retain are obliterated almost as soon as they are registered" (458).

The essay's title, "Ways of Remembering," indicates its instructional tone, and Granville's advice in the cultivation of mnemonic techniques strives toward the integration of understanding and memory. However, he describes the relationship between these two functions of the mind as amounting "almost [to] antagonism," remarking that, for many, the faculty of apprehension is developed "at the cost of that of mental registration or memory," while, on the other hand, "idiots have often extraordinary powers of retention and recollection" (458). Stimuli make the most profound impression on bodies that fail to understand what they have experienced. The strength of the "idiot mind" lies precisely in its weakness. It is impressionable in more than a figural sense: easily influenced because lacking powers of discrimination, but also possessing receptive capacities unattainable to the hardened wax of a more judicious, critical mind.

Marsh's novel is similarly concerned with the possibility that different bodies are differently susceptible to external impressions. Unsurprisingly, gender is put forward as a crucial criterion of impressionability, though Holt's experience suggests that one's vocation and habits of writing may have detrimental effects as well. In an amusing turn of phrase, Sydney Atherton describes Holt as a "quilldriver," a vernacular term that Francis Grose's *Dictionary of The Vulgar Tongue* (1811) defines as "a clerk, scribe, or hackney writer." The last of these epithets for "inferior" classes of writers is the namesake of the

Hackney coach-for-hire. The implied analogy suggests that this kind of "mindless paperwork" is a task intended for bureaucratic beasts, bearing an informational burden not their own. Wolfreys' edition of *The Beetle* suggests the "pen-pusher" as an equivalent term within contemporary idiom, and the more familiar connotations of this modern expression of alienated labour also help illuminate those of the former. A contemporary of the "typewriter girl," Holt has long been trained to "take dictation," and it is no doubt this former experience that renders Holt most suggestible to the dictates of the Beetle.

Marsh devotes no small amount of energy to delineating the relative impressionability of each of his characters, but even Paul Lessingham, whose "impenetrability is proverbial" (75), nonetheless finds that the name of "Rue de Rabagas," the "dirty street" upon which he first met the Beetle, "has left an impress on the tablets of my memory which is never likely to be obliterated" (238).[18] All of Marsh's characters possess an unusually acute sense of the physicality and the traumatic force of word and thought. Sydney, witnessing the Beetle's fierce expression of hatred for Lessingham, remarks that he "should hardly have been surprised if the mere utterance of the words had seared his lips" (143). Robert Holt describes the Beetle's tone as containing "a mixture of mockery and bitterness, as if he wished his words to have the effect of corrosive sublimate, and to sear me as he uttered them" (65). Moments later, the Beetle's purported wish begins to make its effect felt, and Robert struggles to explain how the creature's "sentences, in some strange, indescribable way, seemed, as they came from his lips, to warp my limbs; to enwrap themselves about me; to confine me, tighter and tighter, within" (66). It can hardly matter that, on a rational level, Holt remains unconvinced by the creature's "wild and wanton" words (66). They nonetheless perform

their incontrovertible work directly upon his body, circumventing the mind to orchestrate immediate and visceral communication between "lips" and "limbs."

The Optogram: "Fleshing Out" the Negative

The traumatic dimension of this inscriptive memory is expressed vividly in the "urban legend" of the optogram. This optical phenomenon—unauthenticated, yet unremitting—is defined in *Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary* (1913) *as "*An image of external objects fixed on the retina by the photochemical action of light on the visual purple." C.M. Archer's fourth installment of "The Anecdote History of Photography" for *Recreative Science* (1861) stands as one of the first attempts to gather evidence supporting this theory. Archer's article devotes itself to a survey of materials that have been sensitized to receive photographic impressions. His overview considers the treatment of wood, marble, lithographic stone, and concludes with "The Human Eye and Its Similarity to the Photographic Camera." This final analogy requires no such manipulation of materials. Archer begins with the mechanics of the comparison, describing the eye's "lens and dark chamber" (350) and explaining the way in which an image "is thrown on the retina and interior of the eye, just as the image is by the lens on the plate or paper on the camera, or on the Daguerrotype plate" (351). From here, his argument continues in an interesting and speculative direction, one worthy of the fantastic fictions of Marsh and his contemporaries. Archer quotes R.W. Hackwood's 1857 article for *Notes and Queries*, which claims, on the authority of unnamed American doctors, "that the last image formed on the retina of the eye of a dying person remains impressed upon it like the image on the photograph, and that [if] the last object seen by a

murdered person was his murderer, the portrait drawn upon the eye would remain a fearful witness in death to detect him and lead to his conviction" (351). Say, for a moment, that life truly does flash before one's eyes in that final moment. It would not strain the imagination much farther to imagine that, "behind" one's eyes, death—the negative image of life—had imprinted itself.

Veronique Campion-Vincent provides a fascinating history of this piece of modern folklore in her essay, "The Tell-Tale Eye."[19] Campion-Vincent attributes its first mention to the French press in 1863, which reported the photographic experiments of an English photographer by the name of Warner. Warner had allegedly fashioned a collodian reproduction of a steer's eye, taken immediately after its death: "Examining this proof through a microscope he distinctly saw on the retina the lines of the slaughterhouse's pavement, the last object having affected the animal's vision as it was bowing its head to receive the fatal blow" (trans. Campion-Vincent 14). The article concludes with the suggestion of this phenomenon's forensic applications, surmising that "if one reproduces through photography the eyes of a murdered person, and if one operates within twenty-four hours of death, one reflects upon the retina thanks to the microscope the image of the last object presented in front of the victim's eyes" (14). In June of 1866, *Notes and Queries* cited an article from the *Memphis Bulletin* "which had asserted that the police had photographed and enlarged 'with the aid of a microscope' the retina of a murder victim and found 'perfectly delineated,' 'a pistol, the hand and part of the face of the man who committed the crime'" (Achende 474). Such reports were investigated by scientists such as Dr. Vernois of France's Society for Forensic Medicine, whose bizarre and grisly experiments were conducted upon seventeen animals, each of

which Vernois "killed […] violently when their eyes were well-lit, and then immediately photographed their retinas" (Campion-Vincent 15).[20] Franz Boll's 1876 discovery of "retinal violet" brought new physiological evidence to the hypothesis that external light imprints itself in the eye to form visual images. A year after this discovery, a professor of physiology at the University of Heidelberg by the name of Wilhelm Friedrich Kühne produced perhaps the most distinct, even iconic, photochemical retinal image (which he was the first to name an "optogram") in the dissected retina of a rabbit.[21]

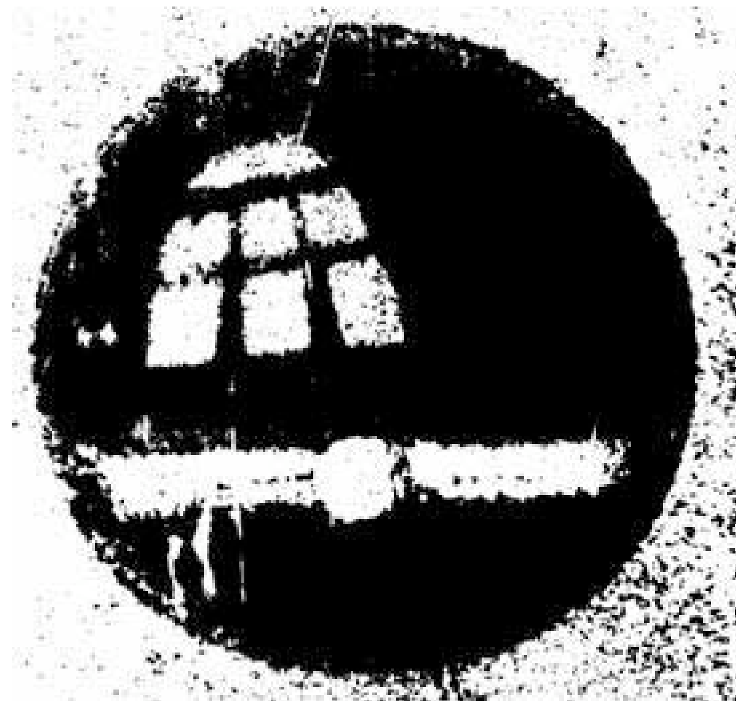

FIGURE 3.2
Wilhelm Friedrich Kühne. "Retinal Photograph." 1878.

In his 1877 address to the British Medical Association, Professor of Physiology Arthur Gamgee explained the rather grim process by which Kühne was able to obtain this elusive image:

> Kühne took a rabbit and fixed its head and one of its eyeballs at a distance of a metre and a half from an opening thirty metres [sic] square in a window shutter. The head was covered for five minutes with a black cloth, and then exposed for three minutes to a somewhat cloudy midday sky. The animal was then instantly decapitated; the eyeball which had been exposed was rapidly extirpated by the aid of yellow light, then opened, and instantly plunged into a 5 per cent. solution of alum. Two minutes after death, the second eyeball, without removal from the head, was subjected to exactly the same process as the first. (223)

Death never comes gently for these eyes: whether animal or human, the fatal tableau frozen upon its surface it is invariably a violent one. One begins to imagine, recalling Nietzsche's painful history of mnemotechnics as traumatic understanding, that its clarity has been achieved precisely through this violence.[22] Gamgee insists that a clear retinal impression is dependent on the destructive force of the visual stimuli, even before its brutal extraction: "in order to obtain an obvious picture," he advises, "the effect of light would have to be so prolonged or so intense as to destroy the balance between the destruction of the vision-purple and the power of the retinal epithelium to restore it" (223).

Seeking professional corroboration of this extraordinary theory, Archer invokes the same violence in his recounting of the tale of an American doctor who "examined the eye of a murdered man at Auburn by means of the microscope, and found impressed upon the retina the rude, worn away figure of a man, supposed to be the assassin!" (351). Archer imagines death as the rigor mortis of perception, a final cooling and hardening of this impressionable wax. And yet, the manifestation of the assassin introduces an element

of condensation to this fantasy. The image seared into the eyes of the corpse could just as easily have been that of a family member, a loved one, or vigilant physician, but the exclamatory climax of Archer's tale of murder serves to underscore the aggressive assault upon the eye, the cumulative violence of *all* inscriptions upon this vulnerable surface. Life is not ended, but emblematized by this figure. Is there such a thing as a "passing" impression, or is it that the perceiving subject passes away, that all of life adds up to this murder at the hand of the image? The dependably fatal trajectory of the optogram narrative testifies to the insupportable weight of past impressions. The basic analogy between camera and eye is scientifically sound, but the attempt to imagine the traumatic permanence of the trace through the "seen but unseeing" gaze of this dead eye pushes the theory into the realm of the Gothic.[23]

Oliver Wendell Holmes expresses the fantastic means by which technology fixates upon such passing impressions when he describes the daguerrotype as a "*mirror with a memory*" ("Stereoscope" 739, emphasis original). The phrase strikes me as an extremely evocative one, not least because it is a catachresis. To begin with, the mirror with a memory is a thoroughly useless one. Like a solar-powered flashlight, or fireproof matches, the innovation directly contradicts the essential logic of the device. This new feature is no improvement or natural evolution of the tool, but its very ruin. Holmes's striking description reminds us that the mirror's principal value was its dependable forgetfulness. Ordinarily, the mirror presents the viewer with an immaculate facade, gathering no accumulation of traces and no residue of former encounters. It is a perpetually innocent surface reflecting an eternal present. By contrast with this servile affirmation of the present moment, Holmes's mirror receives the trace and goes on

bearing it upon its own countenance, preserving a history that will not be unwritten, a slate that cannot be wiped clean. By endowing the implements of representation with a consciousness, Holmes's figure suggests a hidden reciprocity; the object also looks, the mirror is both passive instrument and active agent of reflection. This mirror is an animistic image, one that readers of the Gothic might be tempted to exhibit within the gallery of that genre's living portraits, those objects of representation that have taken on lives of their own, each burdened by their own histories. Remembering when we would forget, accumulating a visual static of past moments that fill up the field of representation and choke the present and the living, these recalcitrant objects of representation emblematize the traumatic core of gothic narrative.

Conversant with the modern myth of the optogram, Atherton's "retinal print" and Holt's mental photography (47) indicate Marsh's interest in employing photographic analogies to develop a literalized understanding of the mind's "impressionability." Five years after *The Beetle*'s publication, the retinal photograph emerges as a piece of crucial forensic evidence in Jules Verne's *The Kip Brothers* (*Les Frères Kip* 1902, English trans. 2007). An enlargement of a dead-man's photograph reveals the image of his true murderer engraved upon his retina, exonerating the Kip brothers who have been falsely accused and thereby bringing about the sort of photo-synthesis envisioned by Holmes. In Marsh's novel, however, the retinal photography theory remains firmly within the realm of speculation. Never objectively verified, this physiological negative goes unprocessed, a traumatic secret that remains lodged within the body. Though each one of Marsh's characters are convinced they have been marked by their encounters with the monstrous Beetle, they have no way of externalizing or objectifying their experience. In accordance

with Freud's negative dialectic of photography, "not every negative . . . becomes a positive" (365). As it did for Freud, technology only gives them the materials to indirectly express this inexpressibility. Photography submits these undeveloped materials that haunt the margins of the text, lying just beyond the edge of objective visible inscription.

This heightened consciousness of the body's susceptibility to external impressions inspires a fear of writing worthy of Judge Daniel Paul Schreber's paranoid neurology. A contemporary of Marsh's, Schreber is a writer known to us primarily through his readers, and the most formative of these readers is Freud. Freud had never met Schreber in person (an unprecedented situation in his case studies), but responded to Schreber's *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness* seven years after its publication, in his "Psycho-Analytic Notes Upon an Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia" (1911). Freud understood the *Memoirs* as a chronicle of Schreber's descent into paranoid psychosis. Reading the fantastic cosmology of the narrative, the unfolding of an elaborate delusion in which Schreber is persecuted sexually and neurologically by his doctor, Freud interprets this seemingly external threat as the projection of an impulse from within Schreber. This homoerotic wish would only be frustrated by the external world, so Schreber's response (rather than repress the impulse as the neurotic would) is to remodel that external world, and bypass the reality principle altogether.

Freud's intervention here, as everywhere, is to uncover the erotic subtext of psychic phenomena, a diagnosis that Sedgwick extends to the "paranoid gothic" (92) in *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*. What both of these readings obscure, however, is the primary status of writing within paranoid narrative. An

analysis of writing need not—indeed, cannot—abandon the libidinal aspect of either Marsh's or Schreber's texts. Rather, writing and bodies become indistinguishable in the gothic. In the foreclosure of the symbolic (the anti-foundational ground of the psychotic) the "literary" is invaded by the literal. Statues bleed, and portraits of the dead suddenly surge into life; bodies ward off sublimation, resisting incorporation as transparent signifiers. This is the topology and tropology of Schreber's paranoid (and quintessentially gothic) scene of inscription. As delineated within Schreber's *Memoirs*, the human soul is "contained in the nerves of the body," mental life arising out of nervous excitement provoked by "external impressions" (45). The "impression" here describes both thought and the imprint this thought makes in its collision with matter. Schreber understands God to be an omniscient being. However, this divine knowledge is gleaned not out of constant surveillance, but from a comprehensive postmortem. "After death," Schreber explains, "the nerves of human beings with all the impressions they had received during life lay bare before God's eye" (54). In the beginning was the Word, but in the end there will be a book: a history engraved upon the parchment of the body, from which the final judgment will be read.

This is not the book we are accustomed to reading. As consumers of fiction, we may enjoy a God's-eye view, which lays bare the hearts and minds of characters, but rarely do we flinch at this intrusion, let alone manifest Schreber's feverish paranoia. What is more remarkable, I think, is that readers do not seem to flinch at *making* this intrusion. Tracing the evolution of narrative technique in communicating this interiority, Dorrit Cohn's *Transparent Minds* (1978) remains an important study of this startling communion that literature customarily holds with the private lives of its characters. What

is most valuable about Cohn's work is that she allows herself to be astonished by literature, all that it is capable of and all that other readers have learned to take for granted. Narrative fiction, Cohn reminds us, "is the only literary genre, as well as the only kind of narrative, in which the unspoken thoughts, feelings, perceptions of a person other than the speaker can be portrayed" (7).

Cohn concerns herself with one trajectory of this experimentation, a venture that culminates in the Modernist novel and its eradication of any barrier between consciousness and expression. Within *The Beetle*, the problem of permeability becomes focalized around the hypnotist, whose uncanny ability to read and influence the inner thoughts of other characters renders the conventional omniscience of fictional narration suspect through a subversively analogous performance. (Put directly, it seems entirely normal when a narrator peers inside a character's mind, but disturbing when a giant hypnotic Beetle does so.) This character grants readers access to interior life, but figures the process as less a stream of consciousness than a rupture of the brain.

Menke's reading of the telepathic—or telegraphic—register of George Eliot's "The Lifted Veil" holds much in common with Cohn's text, but it may also help to trace out the divergent strategies of Modernist and Gothic introspection. While many have understood "The Lifted Veil" as an anomalous break from Eliot's committed realist style, Menke productively reads the novella as "a disenchanted account of realism" (154) that directly confronts, rather than merely straying from, her "major" works. Her narrator Latimer's "uncanny access to information" (153), obtained through the involuntary and deeply painful psychic interpenetration of his mind with those of others, serves to "highlight and defamiliarize a convention so basic that it is difficult to fully recognize it

as such: that realist fiction may without forgoing its realism pretend to give us access to something we never encounter in real life—the unspoken thoughts of others" (151).

If the Gothic "defamiliarizes" and "disenchants" the conventions of realism, it achieves these effects by way of a profound desublimation of narrative bodies. Eliot re-imagines the psychic power of the narrating voice—a power extended to any reader who picks up the book and intercepts the transmission—as physical vulnerability. She hovers at the tremulous threshold of Latimer's impressionable body; rather than the benign registering of information, each psychic transmission strikes a visceral blow against his unstable constitution.

The Beetle allows us to imagine the hypnotist as a similar allegorical figure, and a critical anamorphic lens through which the Gothic represents narrative incursions into subjective space. Recalling his encounter with the Beetle, Robert Holt surmises: "It may be that he read my story, unspoken though it was,—it is conceivable. His eyes had powers of penetration which were peculiarly their own,—that I know" (55). Trance-literature rarely takes for granted the interior perspective (how it is, for instance, that *we* read Holt's story), carefully managing "unwarranted" intrusions into the interiority of its characters. Every 'passage' is a breaching, the mind a site of dramatic penetrations and extractions facilitated by various techniques and technologies of writing.

As practiced in *The Beetle*, mindreading and mindwriting are not strictly literary activities. Consequently, Cohn's "psycho-narration," a narratological term for the rendering of interiority, would seem inadequate for our purposes here. Cohn's is a taxonomical act, uncovering an interior subcategory of literary technique, rather than exposing literature to an outside. She provides us with a careful study of the general

tendencies within modern literature, but what remains unclear is any sense of a larger context that would shape conceptions of what the literary *ought* to accomplish. In light of the Gothic, the question of how interiority communicates itself is less a narratological concern than an epistemological one. Thus, the Beetle is much more than an allegory of reading in any narrowly literary sense. Resisting the sublimation of the apparatuses of the inside, the novel questions how it is that interiority comes to be understood as the special province of the literary, and why literature would concern itself with this space in the first place.

When gothic fiction *does* present us with glimpses of pure interiority, its vision of this space is thoroughly, and often grotesquely, material. We are less likely to see the stream of consciousness than the oozing of guts or plasma. In such graphic scenes, the Gothic provides nauseating confirmation of a materialist conviction that "inside the body there is only more body" (Cohen 16). At the conclusion of Marsh's novel, for instance, the Beetle's plot is brought to an end by the convenient, if not entirely implausible, incident of a train wreck. Searching the carriage for the secret of the creature's identity, our protagonists find only the repellent residue of his insides. The reader is given a description of the substance, as well as the range of speculations it provokes among the experts:

> On the cushions and woodwork . . . were huge blotches,—stains of some sort. When first noticed they were damp, and gave out a most unpleasant smell. One of the pieces of woodwork is yet in my possession,—with the stain still on it. Experts have pronounced upon it too,—with the result that opinions are divided. Some maintain that the stain was produced by human blood, which had been

> subjected to a great heat, and, so to speak, parboiled. Others declare that it is the blood of some wild animal,—possibly of some creature of the cat species. Yet others affirm that it is not blood at all, but merely paint. While a fourth describes it as—I quote the written opinion which lies in front of me—'caused apparently by a deposit of some sort of viscid matter, probably the excretion of some variety of lizard.' (319)

Effectively "swatted" by the machinations of Marsh's plot, the crushed insect's body offers no resistance to inspection. One could only object that it yields too completely, as Marsh's act of grotesque desublimation pushes matter beyond the point of intelligibility. The Beetle's exoskeleton imposes structure, and the coherence of a body, from without. In its absence, we find there is no way of conceptualizing what lies within; none of the experts can say precisely what these stains might be.

If Marsh's depiction of human interiority never reaches such limits of abjection, it is nonetheless just as resolutely grossly material. Frankly, Marsh's characters do not possess a "depth" of character or psychological complexity that would render their interior worlds worth discovering. In composing these characters, Marsh was either incapable or uninterested in depths; he attends rather to the vulnerable physical surfaces of these admittedly stock types. While the modernist novel of consciousness accentuates the emanation of spirit, the paranoid Gothic text obsesses over the penetrability of bodies.

Marjorie Lindon is also trapped in the train carriage, and though she survives this violent impact, she suffers from another sort of trauma. Her scars are on the inside; in the literal sense if not quite the figural, they *compose* that interiority. On the final page of *The Beetle*, the reader is informed of Marjorie's compulsive writing. "Told, and re-told, and

re-told again" (322), her story traces an endless circle, each recital beginning and ending with the scene of her seduction at the hands of the Beetle. Like Atherton's internal camera, her body produces an endless stream of negatives of narrative, destined never to see the light of day. This story, transcribed countless times, has nonetheless been rescued from the brink of extinction. Marjorie's many versions "have all of them been destroyed, with one exception. That exception is herein placed before the reader" (322). This direct and singular address inscribes the scene of our reading within the margins of the text. Moreover, the presentation of this mass-produced text as manu-scripture (a sacred and auratic text, resurrected from the grave or plucked from the flames, from the brink of extinction) removes writing from general circulation in order to imagine the text as a token of direct commerce between two bodies. The hallucination of reading thereby induced transforms the surface of the paper into a palimpsest, within which the manuscript (along with all of the destroyed versions lying underneath) has been buried. This fantasy recasts fictional writing as an artifact possessing the singularity of an index, a piece of evidence "placed before the reader" that retains the direct imprint of the body writing. In this way, Marsh's text promises to sidestep the tone of epistemological ambivalence that closes Stoker's *Dracula*, where the Crew of Light's victory over the Count is undercut by Jonathan Harker's acknowledgement that nothing but a "mass of inauthentic documents" remains as testament that any of these events actually happened.

The indexical power of the photographic apparatus promises a documentary realism, but Marsh's novel stakes its claim to authenticity on the incorporation of its narrative into bodies. Sharing the curiosity displayed within Archer's "Anecdote History of Photography," Marsh experiments with the photographic propensities of other

materials, reserving its highest interest in the exploration of the human body as an impressionable surface. The truly innovative aspect of Marsh's use of photography is that he denies the camera any objective presence in the narrative. Instead, it remains lodged inside the imaginations of its protagonists, a recalcitrant machine that performs its work stubbornly within, allowing the text's narrators to gesture towards intensive experience without ever quite managing to express, externalize, or objectively account for what has been implanted. We are still waiting for a future when the body will be able to speak, and deliver itself from the burden of all it has seen. For now, all we hold as readers is this oblique text, which affords only glimpses of fragments embedded within the body, traumatic negatives of narrative. The photographic metaphor illuminates our inability to reflect, to know ourselves except in a mirror, through an other, in reverse and retrospect. It presents us with the possibility that our own processes of reflection might be as superficial as those commonly ascribed to the looking glass, our interior read only through compulsive reference to the outside.

Marsh's integration of Victorian optics and the psychophysiology of perception within *The Beetle* develops this deepening sense that the gaze radiates not from within the subject, but towards it from the objects it views. The photographic model of observation requires that we look by first being looked upon, stared at by the sun. This mutual exposure and fixation constitutes the "apprehensive dilemma" of the Gothic – namely, that in order to capture whatever is out there, one always ends up having to expose oneself to that outside. The "negative" bears witness to the impact of that inverse gaze, embodying the dimly understood influence of another that founds the shadowy substrate of our being.

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[1] The novel first appeared in serialized form within the pages of *Answers*. Bearing the title *The Peril of Paul Lessingham: The Story of A Haunted Man*, it made its debut on March 13, and was published in fifteen weekly installments. Later that same year, Marsh's story was published in volume form under his revised title.

[2] As Julian Wolfreys notes in his edition of *The Beetle*, Marsh's phrase echoes Tennyson's "the same, but not the same" (*In Memoriam* LXXXVII, 14).

[3] Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992), 150.

[4] Hurley's chapter in *The Gothic Body* stands as the most substantial engagement with the novel. Glen Cavaliero's study of *The Supernatural and English Fiction* turns briefly to Marsh's novel, attending in particular to its "enquiring, materialistic approach to preternatural phenomena," one that Cavaliero recognizes as "characteristic of its time" (50). In the context of Cavaliero's genre study, the extraordinary popularity of *The Beetle* upon its publication designates the novel as an exemplary text of a culture in transition. Featuring "little of the genuinely supernatural" (49), the tale instead ushers its readers into the traditions of the thriller and the horror story, taking its place among contemporaries of Marsh's such as Arthur Machen (50). Luckhurst's diagnosis of Victorian sexual anxiety has been mentioned above as well, though his reading concerns itself less with this allegedly conservative aspect of the text than with the narrative's more speculative engagement with hypnosis. According to Luckhurst, *The Beetle* invites rereading because it "shows the ways in which popular fiction and audiences of the time were conversant with different categories of trance" (210).

[5] The maturation of the Beetle involves a radical metamorphosis, with the larval and adult stages differing considerably in their structure and behaviour.

[6] Quoting the Abbé Moreau's description of an encounter with the accused at the trial of Campi, Havelock Ellis provides us a with a similar testament to the traumatic and inscriptive power of the criminal's body: "His repellant head was photographed on my memory […] lighting up the livid features with sinister gleam, two small piercing mobile eyes, of a ferocity which I could scarcely bear to see" (*The Criminal* 93).

[7] Both images are referred to within Lacan's *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (95; 88-89).

[8] See Breuer, *Physically Focused Hypnotherapy*.

[9] See also Joseph-Nicéphore Niépce's *Notice on the Heliograph*, 1829: "The discovery I made and have called heliography consists of the *spontaneous reproduction* of images taken through a camera obscura using action and light, with the gradation of shade from black to white" (emphasis mine).

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[10] The question as to whether photography was the work of artists or mere technicians remained a persistent one throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century, as photography maintained an uneasy relationship with the arts—and with painting in particular, understood alternately as handmaid, rival, and potential usurper to that more established art of pictorial representation. In the late 1850s articles such as "The Art of Photography" and J. Carpenter's "Photography: A Suppressed Art" peppered the pages of art journals, pressing for the legitimization of the practice through the elusive honorific of Fine Art. In 1880, Abney would write in *London's Magazine of Art*, prefacing his own argument with reference to the "constant . . . battle of words which is being waged between the devotees of photography and those whom the world at large call artists" (302). Nearly twenty years later, Fernand Khnopff would write: "within the last few months, there is not an art-review, whether illustrated or not, which does not contain various articles on the subject" of the individuality and the aesthetic limitations of the photograph. For critical discussion of this subject, see Green-Lewis on the nineteenth century's realist debate over the necessity of sharp focus and the technical avoidance of artistic flourishes within photographic practice (57).

[11] Martin Meisel's *Realizations: Narrative, Pictorial, and Theatrical Arts in Nineteenth-Century England* provides an exemplary general account of nineteenth-century vision that proceeds along these lines. Its title alludes to the production of reality, but his project lacks the reflexive turn that would consider subjects as the first aesthetic production within acts of representation.

[12] Holt's protracted process of recognition, coming as it does only gradually into focus, provides a distinctly photographic foretoken of his traumatic encounter in the Beetle's own darkroom. Climbing through the "aperture" of an open window to escape from the relentless rain, Holt finds himself suffering from "a horrible persuasion that, though unseeing, I was seen" (49).

[13] For more on Plateau's self-experimentation with the phenomenon of retinal after-images, often conducted by staring at the sun for extended periods of time in order to experience the optical "hallucinations" produced by the eye after the stimulus had been removed, see Crary 107-109.

[14] Linda Williams extends this understanding of a "carnal density of vision" to embodied cinematic experience, exploring the visceral effects of spectral filmic images in *Hard Core*.

[15] The terms "negative" and "positive" were coined by Sir John Frederick William Herschel, drawing upon an analogy between photography and electricity (*Shadows* 95). Herschel can also be credited with popularizing the term "photography" itself.

[16] Freud discusses this analogy in *On The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) as well: "we should picture the instrument which carries out our mental functions as resembling a

compound microscope or a photographic apparatus, or something of the kind" (574). See also Freud's "A Note On the Unconscious" (1912): "Unconsciousness is a regular and inevitable phase in the processes constituting our psychical activity: every psychical act begins as an unconscious one, and it may either remain so or go on developing into consciousness, according as it meets with resistance or not. . . . A rough but not inadequate analogy to this supposed relation of conscious to unconscious activity might be drawn from the field of ordinary photography. The first phase of the photograph is the 'negative': every photographic picture has to pass through the 'negative process': and some of these negatives which have held good in examination are admitted to the 'positive process' ending in the picture" (264).

[17] Five years before Granville, William Benjamin Carpenter, a prominent mental physiologist, had also employed photographic analogies to illustrate how revival of seemingly forgotten memories might transpire: "just as the invisible impression left upon the sensitive paper of the Photographer is developed into a picture by the application of particular chemical re-agents" (*Principles* 436).

[18] Two descriptions of Marjorie typify the novel's concern with degrees of nervous impressionability. The first is Sydney's: "I knew her to be, in general, the least hysterical of young women" (166). Concerning herself, Marjorie reflects: "I had never, till then, had reason to suppose that I was a coward. Nor to suspect myself of being the possessor of 'nerves.' I was as little as anyone to be frightened by shadows" (204).

[19] In its allusion to Poe's tale, Campion-Vincent's title suggests the gothic tenor of this idea. On the subject within science-fiction, see Arthur B. Evans, "Optograms and Fiction: Photo in a Dead Man's Eye." Within the cinema, see Tom Gunning, "Tracing the Individual Body: Photograph, Detectives, and Early Cinema." Within French literature, see Andrea Goulet, *Optiques: The Science of the Eye and the Birth of Modern French Fiction*.

[20] The particular photograph which prompted Vernois' experiments is described by Dr. Bourion, who sent the photograph, as an extravagant portrait of domestic strife: "This photograph, taken upon the retina of a woman murdered on 14 June 1868, represents the moment during which the murderer, after he has hit the mother, kills the child and the family's dog rushed toward the unhappy little victim" (trans. Campion-Vincent 15).

[21] According to the *OED*, Kühne coined the term in a 3 January 1877 paper for *Centralblatt für die medicinischen Wissenschaften*.

[22] "'If something is to stay in the memory it must be burned in: only that which never ceases to hurt stays in the memory'—this is a main clause of the oldest (unhappily also the most enduring) psychology on earth . . . Man could never do without blood, torture, and sacrifices when he felt the need to create a memory for himself" (Nietzsche 60-61).

[23] For further scientific consideration of the optogram in the Victorian period, see Foster, 481 and Morgan, 276.

5
"Cruelly true":
Media, Immediacy and Fidelity in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*

"Let us define our terms. A woman who writes her lover four letters a day is not a graphomaniac, she is simply a woman in love. But my friend who xeroxes his love letters so he can publish them someday - my friend is a graphomaniac."
(Milan Kundera, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* 127)

"We were struck by the fact, that in all the mass of material of which the record is composed, there is hardly one authentic document; nothing but a mass of typewriting. . ."
(Bram Stoker, *Dracula* 419)

Jonathan's post-script is the final nail in *Dracula*'s coffin. With the words quoted above, the novel itself crumbles to dust, felled by a few simple, yet devastating strokes of the typewriter. The novel's self-identification as a work of fiction in the age of mechanical reproduction signals *Dracula*'s precocious modernity; on nearly every page, Stoker works tenaciously to destroy the auratic power of the "found" manuscript so hallowed within Gothic fiction. This "master copy" is a hollow relic. The Count betrays a fatally outmoded overestimation of its powers when, having ransacked the Crew of Light's headquarters, he throws their manuscripts and phonograph cylinders in the fire.[1] He fails to understand that this gesture, far from frustrating Mina's efforts, merely presages his own fate at her hands. Because the endlessly industrious Mina has made and disseminated other copies, these masters are utterly devoid of value, except perhaps as kindling for the Count's own funeral pyre. Destroying the masters, Dracula initiates the ceremony that confirms his own obsolescence.

Mina Harker controls the narrative not by "mastering" it, but by copying it. Her crucial textual submissions are works of diligent reproduction rather than authoritative production. However, if Stoker's text is unrepentantly inauthentic—valorizing as it does

the copy over the original, and reproduction over production—it nonetheless attempts to control the channels of reproduction with tyrannical rigor. Stephen Arata has written cogently of the fears of miscegenation encoded within the novel's valuations of blood.[2] When, having succumbed to the foreign influence of the Count, Lucy's tender flesh compromises the integrity of the national body, the full weight of the empire is leveled upon her corpse in order to staunch the bleeding. In a brutal scene that Christopher Craft has memorably described as an act of "corrective penetration" (118), the band of men violently reinscribe Lucy's bond with Arthur through a ritualistic disinterment and staking that serve as grotesque sacraments of marital wedlock and consummation.

Just as the blood of many characters circulates freely through Lucy's body, so their writing flows through Mina.[3] This informational permeability invites comparison between Lucy's fold of men and Mina's "manifold" technique.[4] "Why can't they let a girl make three copies," Mina might ask, "or as many as she wants?"[5] Stoker's novel frequently connects circulation with infidelity: Van Helsing encourages the association when he suggests that his donation of blood to Lucy has made of him a bigamist, while Arthur understands the transfusion as a kind of marriage (211). Mina's commitment to the open circulation of information, particularly when manifest as a desire to reproduce the most intimate emotions of her male allies, proves just as troubling for the Crew of Light as Lucy's sexual indiscretions.

Attuning itself to the disruptive undercurrent of Mina's textual reproduction, recent criticism of *Dracula* has in many ways mirrored the narrative progression of Stoker's novel. Once upon a time, it was Lucy's body that solicited the most significant amount of critical attention. Critics were drawn to the exhilarating climax of her

desecration, after which many would promptly nod off. "Fortunately," as Geoffrey Winthrop-Young ironically noted in 1998, "the dreary days when *Dracula* was read predominantly as a twisted yarn about really strange sex are over" ("riposte"). Citing Kittler's revolutionary reading of the novel, Winthrop-Young claims: "we have come to appreciate [*Dracula*] as the 'perennially misjudged heroic epic of the final victory of technological media of the blood-sucking despots of old Europe'" ("riposte"). Sexuality has been reread as textuality, and Lucy's body has yielded to Mina's machine. And yet, if Winthrop-Young's statement serves as a fair description of the critical turn in *Dracula*'s reception, it runs the risk of reinforcing the novel's polarizing contrasts between Lucy's "feminine" body and Mina's "man's brain" (274). In Stoker's novel, both female bodies are the object of intense scrutiny, even if the text fixes a decidedly less lascivious gaze upon Mina. The subtexts of information-flow in *Dracula* are no less carnal than the "undercurrents" of bloodflow; as I will argue, the conjugal sense of fidelity channels desire into the emergent rhetoric of technological fidelity.[6]

This chapter explores the careful discipline and management of textual reproduction in Stoker's novel. The conjugal and technological definitions of fidelity are neatly synthesized in Mina's writing practices; insofar as she imagines an act of reproduction that performs a perfect echo of production, these conjoined ideals of fidelity endorse a conservative technological and sexual value that preserves the master of the text and of the home. Fidelity is a criterion of value applied to reproduction machines, and one could certainly argue that this includes women living within a patriarchal society that is deeply invested in certifying the authenticity of patrilineal inheritance. The tendency for Stoker's narrative to dramatically transpose questions of fidelity from

textual to sexual registers—culminating in the final moment where the "inauthentic" typewriter in Mina's lap is replaced by her and Jonathan's more "legitimate" infant son—should serve as a reminder that one cannot identify *Dracula* as an allegory of writing, without then tracing out the problems of gender, technology and epistemology, that intersect with cultural values of writing.[7]

But how compatible are these ideals of sexual and textual fidelity within Stoker's unfolding narrative? Ironically, while Stoker's text is at great pains to assert its indexical faithfulness to the events transcribed within its pages, it simultaneously stages the utter failure of human fidelity. The integrity of subjects is incessantly compromised, their mental borders, physical bounds and social bonds breached through scandalous intimacies with other bodies. Stoker's characters find they cannot be true to themselves or to one another. They depend instead upon the integrity of machinery, which recuperates their falseness as a deeper kind of truth. These machines unlock the graphomaniacal tendencies of our protagonists, enjoying an intimacy with the body that is barred to the subject. They are im-mediate media, already inside and operating under the threshold of consciousness. Indeed, Van Helsing's strict regimen of automatic writing requires that his subjects disable themselves (and particularly the censorial mechanisms of the ego) in order to enable their writing machines. In this sense, Bram Stoker's *Dracula* stands as the first machine-novel, the first to acknowledge the technological feedback jointly responsible for the inscription of its narrative.

Dracula is a text that flaunts this hybrid form of modern writing, taking undeniable delight in the modern cogs and wheels that turn its narrative. Every blockbuster needs a catchphrase, and critical consensus would seem to have nominated

Jonathan Harker's "nineteenth-century up-to-date with a vengeance" (67) as *Dracula*'s. Jonathan's enthusiasm is typical of a novel that is full of characters that spend an inordinate amount of their time writing about writing, in all of its guises, techniques and technologies. Contemporary reviews of the novel registered dissatisfaction with this technologized gloss of the novel. A reviewer for the *Spectator* suggested Stoker's tale "would have been all the more effective if he had chosen an earlier period. The up-to-dateness of the book -- the phonograph diaries, typewriters, and so on -- hardly fits in with the mediaeval methods which ultimately secure the victory for Count Dracula's foes" (151). Anachronism, of course, is not only one of the central tensions of Stoker's novel, but perhaps the most persistent concern of the Gothic genre. Jonathan's signature phrase encapsulates Stoker's productive exploitation of this tension, typifying a text torn between an extreme commitment to modernity and an obsessive preoccupation with the past.

Charting this tension within the novel, the first section of this chapter examines *Dracula* in light of the novelistic tradition of "writing to the moment," exploring how writing mediates the action of Stoker's narrative. The chaste nature of Mina and Jonathan's relationship (so at odds with the private sexual adventures of each) is clearly "underwritten" by their shared commitment to the purification of communications media. While this analysis of the transliteration of sex into text is informed by Foucault's work on the "putting into discourse of sex" (*HS* 12), it is especially aided by Kittler's reading of *Dracula* in "*Dracula*'s Legacy" and *Discourse Networks*—each of which plug discourse theory into the specific technologies that allow writing to reify sex and subjects as quantities of information. If epistolary form foregrounds discursive mediation between

its characters by dramatizing the act of writing, Stoker's technologized retrofit of this conceit struggles to repeal this distance through the deployment of what I have named "immediate media."

Exploring the tensions of this paradox, the second section of the chapter attempts to contextualize literary technique within the technological ecology of *Dracula*'s historical moment, examining the transformative effects of speed-culture upon the composition of the novel and the constitutions of its characters. The perceived necessity of synchronizing writing with the narrative's other acts prompts Stoker's narrators to cultivate automatic habits of writing. While the graphomania of his main characters yields an exhaustive record of events (for which the epistolary novel since Richardson has been infamous), the sheer quantity of writing produced therein is less significant than its peculiar quality. Stoker's machine novel generates a *langue inconnue* in the special sense I have intended within this dissertation: that is to say, a language that remains unknown to itself, and hidden from its own author. In Stoker's novel of possession, then, the vampire is not the only force capable of robbing the protagonists of their faculties. Jonathan seems to intuit the mesmeric power of media when, having witnessed his wife's hypnotism at Van Helsing's hands, he remarks of her spellbound voice: "I have heard her using the same tone when reading her shorthand notes" (353). Bypassing the consciousness of its narrators, the novel's array of automatic writing technologies generates not transparently objective information, but evidence of a subject voided and objectified by machinery. In *Dracula*, the familiar gothic figure of the living-dead returns as media-effect.

The graphomaniac writing produced by Stoker's body/machines brings to light the paradoxical relation between mechanical fidelity and infidelity; we find a technological (p)reiteration of the heimlich/unheimlich dynamic in the uncanny and subversive echo of Seward's "cruelly true" phonograph. The machine's unthinking loyalty to sonic phenomena inevitably amounts to a betrayal of the speaker, primarily in its leaden refusal of any subjective view of the subject. In the chapter's two final sections, I examine how the Victorian "phonographic imagination" reconfigured human and animal understandings of fidelity. This phrase is derived from Ivan Kreilkamp's "phonographic logic," a term devised to describe: "a certain logic of modernity as governed by mechanical reproduction" (211). However, if Kreilkamp's title signals his interest in the phonograph-sponsored "awareness that language might function with no clear connection to its human source" (211), this section charts out divergent phonographic intuitions that erupt within Stoker's novel and resonate elsewhere in phonographic fiction of the Victorian period. Within such texts, the phonograph models an analog experience of communication rooted in indexical relations between bodies in contact. This logic of analogical inscription has largely been neglected in studies of *Dracula* that overstress the dissociative and disembodying effects of writing-technologies. The "wonder and terror of the phonograph" (183) recognized by Kreilkamp issues not only from its ability to dislodge voices from bodies, but also from the uncanny means by which the machine *grants* a body to ephemeral sonic phenomena.

As critics have noted from the beginning in one way or another, Stoker's text is persistently disturbed by the body of its own writing. If *Dracula* frequently gives voice to an urgent desire for instantaneous and transparently legible communication, its obsessive

pursuit of this makes writing *present* in a way seldom seen in the modern novel. I have written earlier that Gothic media are distinguished by the stress they lay upon the physical dimension of acts of inscription. Instead of the eradication of physical interference, the experience of immediacy offered within the Gothic depends essentially upon the presence of bodies and the intimacy of their contiguity. Gothic signification presents itself "in the flesh," understanding physical presence as the criterion of authenticity. The Gothic hysterically insists upon an embodied, phenomenological poetics: to "conceive" an idea, we must first pass through the flesh, with all of its noise and distortions. By contrast with transcendent fantasies of technology, Stoker advances a resistant vision of communications channeled through human terminal points. Here is a novel that imagines a mode of telepathic "information processing" made possible through two punctured bodies, draining languidly into each other. This logic survives within the indexical register of the novel, where the truth of bodies is attained through touching and tracing—from the "cruelly true" (261) sound of Seward's voice on the phonograph, to the monstrous and sublime intimacy into which the vampire's mouth initiates Renfield, Lucy and Mina.

Writing to the Moment: Gender, Fidelity, Inscription

Stoker opens his novel with the question of fidelity, pledging the immediate and uncompromised faithfulness of the text to its moment. *Dracula's* prefatory note returns us to Walpole's *Castle of Otranto*, and the conventionally Gothic problem of the past's reconciliation with the present. "All needless matters," Stoker assures us, "have been eliminated, so that a history almost at variance with the possibilities of later-day belief

may stand forth as simple fact" (29). To remark that the tale of a vampire who descends upon London to ravage the locals is not "faithful" to reality must read as an understatement bordering on the absurd, and yet *Dracula* does take great pains to reconcile these fantastic events with "the facts." Stoker's acknowledgement of the novel's oscillation between fantasy and "fact" echoes Walpole's balancing of "invention" and "truth" (61) in his own narrative—though the authors have antithetical strategies for managing the uneasy relation between these two registers.

To begin with, Walpole presents his text as a found manuscript, while Stoker submits an edited typescript. The former is an auratic text imbued with its own history, rooting its authority in the past. Indeed, Walpole's second preface—which crumples up the found manuscript once its conceit has been found no longer necessary—nonetheless features another appeal to history, shielding *Otranto*'s fantastic elements behind the authority of the English canon. "The great master of nature, Shakespeare," Walpole insists, "was the model I copied" (66). Walpole retains the myth of the deferential scribe, though now it is from the text of the English literary tradition that he copies.

For Stoker, by contrast, authority is to be attained through the uncompromising faithfulness of the record to its moment. While the novel clearly departs from any mimetic criterion of writing, its text is tightly bound by the principle of fidelity. Mimesis, the artful imitation of the real world, exists within the domain of aesthetics, while Stoker's "verbatim" records (219) import technical and legal discourse. From classical aesthetics to modern cultural theory, mimesis has been understood as a distinctly human enterprise. Aristotle understood mimetic performance as derived from human instincts (*Poetics* 4.1448b), while Walter Benjamin found in the mimetic impulse an enduring and

defining human trait ("On the Mimetic Faculty").[8] If mimesis is bred in the bone, fidelity depends upon the calibration of machinery. In deferring to these apparatuses, the discourse of fidelity adopts a more stringent criterion of comprehensiveness and exactitude. This precision relies crucially upon the immediate inscription of events: "There is throughout," Stoker promises, "no statement of past things wherein memory may err, for all the records chosen are exactly contemporary" (29). Memory is the great enemy of the text: there can be no looking back, only an immersion in the moment, realized and intensified through acts of writing.

Stoker's attempt to perfectly synchronize word and act mimics Samuel Richardson's technique of "writing to the moment." Richardson had first named this device in his introduction to *History of Sir Charles Grandison* (1753),[9] but it is his earlier preface to *Clarissa* (1748) that best clarifies the emotional intent of this method. This novel is presented to the public as a series of letters abounding in "instantaneous descriptions and reflections" (5). "Much more lively and affecting," Richardson writes, "must be the style of those who write in the height of a present distress; the mind tortured by the pangs of uncertainty (the events then hidden in the womb of fate) than the dry, narrative, unanimated style of a person relating difficulties and danger surmounted, can be; the relater perfectly at ease; and if himself unmoved by his own story, not likely greatly to affect the reader" (5). Here, as in *Pamela*, Richardson's intention had been to elevate the intensity of scenes by setting writing and action in dramatic tension with each other. Richardson's chief interest seems to be with capturing the emotional fidelity of an instant, opting for the confusion of the moment over the composed outlook of recollection. Placing the writer squarely on the axis of action, as it were, destabilizes

narration by rendering it vulnerable to the world it describes. The epistolary scene of writing finds the female writing without "a room of her own." The composure one ordinarily associates with the act disappears when the door to one's study can only be locked from the outside, and when the violent plots of others are expected to interrupt writing at any moment.

Dracula retrofits the novelistic technique of "writing *to* the moment" by deploying the arsenal of writing technologies currently at its disposal in order to present writing that is also unmistakably *of* its moment. Expanding beyond the correspondence of letters, to the collection of telegrams, phonograph recordings, train schedules, newspaper clippings, and more, Stoker's archive upgrades the epistolary mode to encompass a more comprehensive documentary form. While imagining the modest beginnings of the "little oak table" that now supports his own highly sophisticated stenographic labours, Jonathan Harker gives us a glimpse of his perspective on this contrast. His haughtily modern fantasy of "old times" invites a comparison between the epistolary novel and Stoker's own "state-of-the-art" narrative technologies:

> Here I am, sitting at a little oak table where in old times possibly some fair lady sat to pen, with much thought and many blushes, her ill-spelt love-letter, and writing in my diary in short-hand all that has happened since I closed it last. It is nineteenth-century up-to-date with a vengeance. And yet, unless my senses deceive me, the old centuries had, and have, powers of their own which mere 'modernity' cannot kill. (67)

Jonathan imagines his own modernity as male, defined against an epistolary scene featuring "some fair lady," a quaint description that evokes the chivalrous tone of the

romance. The young solicitor finds himself correcting the hypothetical spelling mistakes he has supplied for his predecessor. In addition to these errors, Jonathan notes that she writes with "much thought and many blushes." Her script, then, is characterized by imprecision, hesitation, and discomposure. Jonathan's missives, by contrast, are pure speed, unencumbered by the discourse of sentiment and the excesses of emotion typically associated with the epistolary genre of the eighteenth century.[10] Even letters to his fiancée are written in shorthand: no lover's discourse, but the colorless signature of the business world. Communicating through channels better suited for the transmission of information than poetry, Jonathan and Mina's sexless, almost contractual stenographic relationship (her labour as amanuensis will promote the progress of his career) participates in the ambiguously gendered rhetoric of our contemporary "partnerships."

Jonathan's writing is an act of conscious "remediation" (Bolter and Grusin), a process "by which new media technologies refashion prior media forms" (273). Driving this remediation is Jonathan's desire to re-gender the scene of writing, thereby banishing this conspicuous (and vulnerable) female body. But Jonathan's repudiation of the "fair lady" is written in a moment of deep uncertainty and insecurity, as he finds himself in a position quite familiar to the typical epistolary heroine, fending off the advances of an amorous host with dishonorable intentions who has held him captive in his tower. Thus, the comparison he devises, though intended as a point of contrast, instead represents a projection and disavowal of the feminine role that has been thrust upon him. Trapped in this room, Jonathan is dimly aware that writing grants him some sort of power: if his neck is bared to the Count, his thoughts at least can be veiled in shorthand. Writing of his correspondence, Jonathan notes: "I understood as well as if he had spoken that I should

be careful what I wrote, for he would be able to read it" (63). Jonathan rests easy in the knowledge that he need not censor his letters to Mina, "for to her I could write in shorthand, which would puzzle the Count, if he did see it" (64).

Writing technique is understood in terms of power, and this power is imagined in distinctly gendered terms; Mina must also work to avoid the perils of female inscription, dangers realized in Lucy's example. Geoffrey Wall's "Different From Writing" delivers a plausible reading of Mina and Lucy's childhood intimacies, detecting a "specifically feminine idiom of the erotic and the confidential" (17) shaped within their adult correspondence. He cites Lucy's intimate letter to Mina: "I wish I were with you, dear, sitting by the fire, undressing, as we used to sit; and I would try to tell you what I feel" (88). Significantly, the letter's erotic undertones, imagining confession as an "undressing," are creations of Lucy's mind. Far from evincing a generalized "feminine idiom" the passage does much to explain the differences between these two women, as well as hinting at why it will be Mina and not Lucy who transcribes our story. Lucy's intercourse is consistently susceptible to innuendo; as both vampire and victim, her correspondences are invariably sensual. Letters to Mina are smudged with Lucy's tears (90), making her bodily present in her writing, and threatening that this uncontained body may erase the significant content of her writing. Spilling ink as liberally as tears, Lucy recognizes her letter is "sloppy … in more ways than one" (91). The image of both liquids upon the page intimates the foolishly sentimental style of Jonathan's "fair lady." It will be Mina's task as typist to desiccate these pages for the Crew of Light's inspection (and ours as readers as well).[11] Lucy's epistolary work is suffused with feminine sexuality (if different in tone from the kind that always stood behind the pretexts of

instruction in Richardson's novels). Her contributions to the narrative are invariably defined by a scandalous contiguity between body and writing. In the moments before her death, Lucy provides her best imitation of Mina's discursive exertions. Dutifully documenting her final moments, she tucks the letter into her bosom, somehow knowing this is the place her protectors are sure to find it (181). Mina's interactions with the men cannot be conflated under a generalized conception of the feminine, as they fail to evoke the same connotations as Lucy's. Consequently, understanding Mina's discursive position requires a careful reading of her activities, considering how these intimacies are negotiated within the text, and the scrupulous sublimation of her body's presence within her writing.

The "instrumental" role of Mina's body within *Dracula's* network enacts a recurring Victorian lesson concerning technology: every step that communications seem to take towards disembodied experience is in fact always reliant upon physical (if hidden) networks. Whether in the field of spiritual messages or telecommunications, these networks have most often been facilitated through female bodies, and Mina's experience epitomizes the careful negotiation of the burdens and scandals associated with serving as the "medium" of communications.

As the chief information processor of Stoker's narrative, Mina's discursive control is unparalleled. Training as a faithful wife and typist, Mina disciplines and domesticates her own writing practices in order to take dictation exclusively from her husband. She has "been practicing shorthand very assiduously" (86), as she explains to Lucy. If Mina fails to denounce the possibility of "pre-marital stenography" outright, it seems that, in her fantasy, this bureaucratic relationship will have to wait for its

consummation: "[w]hen we are married I shall be able to be useful to Jonathan, and if I can stenograph well enough I can take down what he wants to say in this way and write it out for him on the typewriter, at which also I am practicing very hard" (86).

This sublimation prevents Mina's discursive work from being obscured by her gender; by strong contrast with Lucy, Mina's bedroom scenes attract little in the way of "ungentlemanly" attention from the men. Seward gives us a glimpse of his perspective in one description of the newlyweds' exertions: "After lunch Harker and his wife went back to their own room, and as I passed a while ago I heard the click of the typewriter. They are hard at it" (263). The remark is made without any perceptible aspersions: the couple's conduct is unimpeachable because Mina's sexual and textual work exertions are mutually exclusive activities. Proposing the "unusual" act of "break[ing] into a lady's room," Van Helsing explains to his crew that: "All chambers are alike to the doctor" (321). The "lady journalist," we may assume, exhibits the same professional indifference to such nominally private spaces. To her, the bedroom is a writing-space just like any other.

Kittler's *Discourse Networks* casts Mina as a "discourse functionary," arguing that her "desexualization permits the most intimate diaries and perverse sexualities to be textualized" (355). Mina's journalistic objectivity is evident also in her lack of observable sentimentality towards her newly-wed husband's travel-diary: the wedding present entrusted to her as a gesture of their mutual confidence. Upon recovering from the shock of reading Jonathan's sexual escapades with the Count's daughters, Mina's thoughts immediately turn to circulating the story. "There may be a solemn duty," she imagines, "and if it come we must not shrink from it…I shall be prepared. I shall get my typewriter this very hour and begin transcribing" (216). It is through this act that Jonathan's

indiscretions with the vampresses come to be recorded not only for Mina, but broadcast to the other men as well. In each of Mina's mediated relationships, her loyalty to the men is manifest through (and hence subject to) her loyalty to the text. As such, she seeks the exposure of intimacies rather than their preservation. This desire extends new possibilities for containing her discursive promiscuity, but presents previously unimagined obstacles as well.

Mina and Jonathan's marriage obliges the couple to put their most private thoughts in circulation, with each other at the very least. Though one does not necessarily get the sense she is ready for this sort of commitment, Lucy intuits this marital obligation in a letter to Mina: "A woman ought to tell her husband everything – don't you think so, dear?" (89). Lucy's tone is uncertain, and clearly defers to Mina's much stronger convictions, but it serves as a succinct description of her friend's marital "journalism," a vocation that associates romantic fidelity with the responsibility of "telling everything." Mina's devotion to this task is relentless: "lest it should be that he should think for a moment that I kept anything from him, I still keep my journal as usual. Then if he has feared of my trust I shall show it to him, with every thought of my heart put down for his dear eyes to read" (296). Mina fears that any gap within her text could be construed as a lapse in fidelity, read as a sin of omission that would open up a chasm of silence between the two newlyweds.[12] Seward laments "that men cannot be trusted unless they are watched" (313), but Mina aims to prove to her husband that she is capable of the most vigilant self-surveillance. After her rendezvous with the Count, Mina's pen does falter, a development that has her attendant quite uneasy. Picking up the pen in her stead, Van Helsing notes that Mina "was not like herself," reasoning: "She make no entry into her

little diary, she who write so faithful at every pause. Something whisper to me that all is not well" (404). Van Helsing's observation integrates the diaristic and diagnostic. For the doctor, hovering at his patient's bedside, the cessation of writing is a matter just as grave as the interruption of his patient's vital signs.

Stoker's characters inhabit a universe composed of writing, millions of little scraps of paper held together by "the Great Recorder," a being constantly in their thoughts.[13] This divine creature's eternal occupation is writing, an act that imbues life with meaning and provides evidence that one's life has been "profitable" (104). Even heaven, it would seem, is bound by the requirements of its bureaucracy. The Recording Angel serves as an accountant, counting up sums and tabulating "ledger account[s] with a balance to profit or loss" (104). If there truly is "a Recording Angel," Jonathan knows his wife's noble and selfless acts will be "noted to her ever-lasting honour" (367). Should no such being exist, the Crew of Light always has Mina herself.

Jonathan, we know, has not exactly been an angel at the Count's castle. But he at least records his infidelities as faithfully as he can. Describing his "wicked, burning desire" that the Count's vampresses "would kiss me with those red lips," Jonathan writes: "It is not good to note this down, lest some day it should meet Mina's eyes and cause her pain, but it is the truth" (69). The merit of this painful writing is the truth it produces: inserted into discourse, sex immediately becomes symbolized as sexuality.[14] Furtive passions, once defanged, serve as useful information. Some consolation is to be found in writing's constancy—though a husband may stray from his wife, his hand never strays from the page.

The text exhibits a handful of these hesitant submissions. Lucy chastises herself for her own polygamous desires, admitted in her letter to Mina. She writes: "this is heresy, and I must not say it" (91). Initial resistances give way to, and "give up" writing. After Mina's decision to transcribe the evidence (263) is itself documented, recaptured voices cannot help but take on some of the mechanical echo of the machine through which they come to us. Insofar as one remains conscious of Stoker's narrative contrivance, Mina's mediated transmissions make deliberations about whether or not to speak ring hollow, seeming a posture or rhetorical strategy. Though formed (then reformed) as a question, the answer—that the confession will be incorporated—is always directly in front of us. As such, the machine carries out the logic of Van Helsing's "knowing" that seeks confirmation only (355). The very presence of the question on the page closes down precisely as it opens up the possibility of not writing.

Mina likewise honours her commitment to the textualization of even the most painful experiences. Even the sudden, traumatic recollection of Mina's "baptism of blood," where she is seduced and initiated into the vampire's sanguine information network, cannot derail the continuity of her documentation. Mina writes that the vampire "seized my neck and pressed my mouth to the wound, so that I must either suffocate or swallow some to the… Oh, my God! My God! What have I done?" (328). Mina's revulsion at the thought of her violation forces out her interjection: "Oh, my God! My God!" This felicitous interruption of Dracula's sexual climax leads Christopher Craft to note that "Mina's verbal ejaculation supplants the Count's liquid one" (278). This is the prophylactic of the symbolic: the inescapable propensity of language to expurgate sex in the very act of naming it. But perhaps the most striking aspect of this textual moment is

that Mina's "verbal ejaculation" is simultaneously *written*, suggesting that typing for her is an involuntary physical reaction every bit as instinctual as her cry. This peculiar graphomaniacal instinct, which Mina shares with her husband, insulates their marriage from the wayward actions of their bodies. This is why the novel comes closest to depicting the consummation of marriage in its ceremonies of writing, rituals of textual exchange and binding.[15]

It is this insistent textualization of sexual dynamics that leads Kittler to propose the typewriter as a complex emblem of Mina and Jonathan's quintessentially modern relationship. In the long shadow cast by Kittler's powerful and imposing interpretation of the novel, the typewriter has been commonly approached as the master technology, and the technology of mastery. Kittler argues that the typewriter instates a new management of bodies under the regime of the symbolic, a system organized through a "spacing" that dissociates bodies as well as characters on the page. Assimilating the male instrument of stylus, along with the female apparatus of the sewing machine, the androgynous typewriter renders obsolete the gendered metaphysics of earlier writing-systems (351). Observing her carefully managed transformation into a "discourse functionary," Kittler submits Mina's typewriter-work as evidence that the discourse network of 1900 dissolves "any sexual relation between the sexes" (*DN* 359). This is an audacious and compelling statement, but one that is simply not borne out with any consistency in Stoker's text. For if the mediation of Jonathan and Mina's relationship through the typewriter facilitates the sublimation of the narrative's libidinal undercurrents, numerous other techniques and technologies of writing pull us in precisely the opposite direction, towards an immediacy of bodies and machines.

In what follows, I will address two of these strategies at length. The first attempts to secure a *temporal immediacy* through techniques of speed-writing, while the second plays with *spatial immediacy*, primarily through the text's "phonographic logic."[16] Both techniques attempt to harness the power and truth of writing as an automatic act, emerging at the point where human and mechanical expression blend into each other. In a machine-novel such as *Dracula*, "writing to the moment" still provides glimpses of the chaotic interior life of the writing subject, but the technical apparatus of writing disrupts any fantasy of this interiority as simply human. Stoker's vision of the writer as a distracted subject, persistently (and ideally) blind to the truth of what she writes, short-circuits the autonomy of writing, making it an obsessive, mechanical process. The phonograph, on the other hand, frustrates the distancing techniques of writing. If the typewriter organizes texts and bodies through spacing, the mechanics of the phonograph (which operates through indexical touching) inspired within the Victorian consciousness an entirely different fantasy of signification—that of a system of signs that is material rather than abstract, analogical rather than digital. It is this form of palpably immediate inscription that my reading of the novel understands as figured by the phonograph and enacted by the vampire. The "writing" performed by this creature presents us with the painful and stigmatic signs of bodily contact, enigmatic symptoms of a monstrous act of reproduction that results in an uncanny attachment of the subject.

Graphomania: Speed, Machinery, Distraction

True to the informational impulses of its cultural juncture, *Dracula* is a novel that exhibits considerable impatience with the belatedness of writing, and excitement over the

imminent possibility that inscription technologies would participate in the moment, rather than merely picking up the pieces afterward. The text intends to set the act of writing in the present tense, but instead ends up underlining the tensions of presence. Friction arises out of the text's paradoxical straining towards an immediacy of media, a commitment that turns to an array of writing techniques the truth-value of which hinges upon automatic and instantaneous reproduction. When Mina presents Van Helsing with her detailed and exact transcription of all communications between the Crew of Light up until that morning, the professor can only respond by asking: "But why not up to now?" (274-275). Van Helsing's relentless desire for immediate disclosure and documentation serves to underline the Sisyphean task of writing within this uniquely obsessive text. His frantic concern with remaining technologically "present"—along with the profound labour this immediacy requires—has only become more resonant within the current age of so-called "connectivity" mapped out by cellular phones, social networking sites, instant messaging, and other codes and machines that we use to constantly "keep in touch," but that so often seem only to frustrate and obstruct possibilities for first-hand experience and direct communication.

Particularly from the digitized perspective of the twenty-first century, we tend to imagine "im-mediacy" as the disappearance of mediation: a state of instantaneous communication attained through the elimination of opaque bodies that obstruct flows of perception and information. Victorian technophiles commonly vaunted this immediacy of media. We might turn, for instance, to George Wilson's rapturous description of the telegraph in 1852. Penning what would become a much-repeated phrase in Victorian discussions of technology, he marvels at the machine's ability, "so far as the conveyance

of our thoughts is concerned," to "annihilate space and time" (36). In its relentless pursuit of *temporal* immediacy, the modern logic of Stoker's text strains toward this transparency, employing diverse writing techniques and technologies to break down the mechanics and streamline the physical act of writing by transmuting inscription into increasingly mobile and transmissible forms of information.

From the outset, the problem of "timeliness" impacts Stoker's narrative. The first detail Jonathan notes of his journey is that he "should have arrived at 6:46, but train was an hour late" (31). When a second late train leaves him waiting at the Transylvanian station, his slight setback inspires our Occidental tourist to press a general distinction between East and West. "It seems to me," the seasoned traveler notes, "that the further East you go the more unpunctual are the trains" (33). Clearly we are led to infer that it is not only the trains that are "running behind the times." Their disorder is understood to be symptomatic of a much more fundamental delay: that of the Orient's arrival at the dawn of modernity. Even with the proper technology at hand, Jonathan suggests that the East is ill-equipped for the present moment, incapable of keeping up with the pace of late nineteenth-century life. A number of critics have noted the essential role speed plays within Stoker's text, concentrating predominantly on the radical acceleration of transport and communications networks exploited by the Crew of Light.[17] My interest here is in questioning the extent to which such readings echo the dominant rhetoric of technology within the Victorian period, tending to showcase the efficacy of machines in perfect working order. *Dracula* dislodges the significance of speed from a familiar idiom of capital that strains to emphasize efficiency and productivity, in order to unmask its obsessive, repetitive, and destructive tendencies.

It is not only that these speed-machines sometimes break down, though Victorian critics of technological progress have furnished us with many examples of how they have failed us.[18] Beyond malfunctioning in ways we had failed to anticipate, however, speed-machines often *work* in ways we do not realize, their effects lost in the blur. Matthew Arnold affords a glimpse of this condition when he writes of the “strange disease of modern life / With its sick hurry” (“Scholar-Gipsy”). Max Nordau, who describes the pathological nature of modern existence in no uncertain terms, warns of “the little shocks of railway traveling, not perceived by consciousness” that “cost our brains wear and tear” (39). Though many of *Degeneration*’s conclusions are indefensible, Nordau’s concerns remind us that it is not the catastrophes of the industrial age that solicit our most careful attention, but the often devastating effects of its routine functioning. Even when operating smoothly and without incident, technology ceaselessly performs its silent work upon us, just below the threshold of our perception. Through an exploration of the emotional and psychical investments in writing within *Dracula*, we can begin to discern the affective and obsessive relation to writing within the Victorian scriptural economy. The diaries of Jonathan and Seward in particular betray the crucial psychological undercurrents running deeper than the practical effects of informational exchanges. Speed-writing represents a unique development within modern culture because it accelerates the mind rather than the body, streamlining, blurring, and disorienting the interior life that it inscribes. Within Stoker’s novel—and Victorian culture more broadly—speed is not merely a principle of acceleration, but of transformation. Beyond certain limits of the human (mental, physical, psychical), the machine takes the wheel, and one of the most compelling subtexts of Stoker’s novel of “possession” is its

underlying fascination with how bodies and minds yield to the automatisms of machinery.

One of the most compelling aspects of *Dracula*'s epistolary structure is its recognition of the mechanics of expression as a problem of speed. With the hindsight of the Modernist perspective, the narrative contrivances of diaristic and epistolary forms are often characterized as premature expressions unequal to the task of keeping pace with thought. The study of "Diary and Continuity" conducted within Dorrit Cohn's *Transparent Minds*, for instance, focuses on the incongruities of the epistolary mode, wincing as writing improbably reaches the full presence of the present. As perhaps the most familiar formulation of this coincidence of writing and presence, "writing to the moment" aspires to an unprecedented immediacy of the novel, but results in a thoroughly mediated narrative (an opaque text that goes on writing right *through* the moment). In its persistent dramatization of the scenes of composition and transmission, the epistolary conceit designates writing as the only present action of the novel. Richardson's narrators have had their hands tied, bound to the dutiful inscription of the world they inhabit. There are so many moments when Richardson's reader marvels that Pamela, even in the face of imminent danger, fails to put down the pen and act. But this act of writing is her role; her primary obligation is not to her own life, but to the *account* of that life.

Though her concerns are securely couched within the realm of literature, Cohn's history of literary innovation strangely echoes the rhetoric of technological innovation during the Victorian era. Cohn maintains: "a different form is needed to synchronize language and experience, a form whose reality model is faster and freer than a written, or even an oral record" (212). Compare this statement on the novel's future with an early

speculation on the future of the phonograph from 1878's *Nature*: "some substitute or substitutes for the clumsy mode of recording our thoughts by pen and ink, so inconsistent with the general rapidity of our time, must be close at hand" (117). The author's closing sentiment might have been snatched straight from the pages of *Transparent Minds*, a congruence that impels us to trace out the affinities between aesthetic innovation and technological inventions within a culture pressured by a dawning sense of "the general rapidity of [its] time." The accelerated pace of modern life cannot be documented with archaic writing tools. In an era of remarkable technological development, the relative belatedness of writing as a technique for the transcription of thought is almost an embarrassment; it is "clumsy" and outdated, straggling behind in clear violation of the laws of the general acceleration of culture. There remains a troubling asymmetry between industrial and informational structures at the close of the nineteenth century. Machines do not bring about writing's obsolescence; in fact, they often seem to require *more* writing.

Dracula's hybrid of technique and technology facilitates a convergence of novelistic and bureaucratic concerns, grappling with their shared**,** modern desire for an im-mediate method of registration that is no longer subject to the operations of deferral and difference that typically govern writing. Critical response to this convergence must fuse literary technique ("writing to the moment," which foregrounds the novelistic tradition) with writing technologies ("writing of its moment," which situates inscription with regard to the historically specific fantasies of immediacy circulating through Victorian culture).

Aspiring to a perfect synchronicity between the event and its inscription, experience and its representation, Stoker's characters try their hand at stenography,

phonography, telegraphy, photography, and typewriting, among other technologies. The end result of this towering stockpile of technology is that, although Stoker's prefatory note promises accuracy secured by presence, the only "exactly contemporary" act within *Dracula* is writing itself. Headnotes designating the time, location, and medium of different inscriptions incessantly interrupt a narrative within which it might otherwise be quite easy to forget that the action is being recollected at a remove, often a double withdrawal of composition and transcription. The pleasures of any imagined immediacy are denied with these interruptions, the cumbersome nature of the typewriter ushering in Stoker's explicitly mediated narrative. As such, each headnote registers both a presence and an absence, dramatizing the scenes and seams of writing that gather themselves around the incident, attempting to recapture it "verbatim." It takes an act of rigid critical circumvention to ignore the text's "hardware."

Dracula's parallel narrative and libidinal economies are defined by what Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin have identified as "our culture's contradicting imperatives for immediacy and hypermediacy" (5). In *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (2000), Bolter and Grusin have described the longing for immediacy as "the desire to get beyond the medium to the objects of representation themselves" (83). This inclination guides audiences towards immersive styles of "representation whose goal is to make the viewer forget the presence of the medium (canvas, photographic film, cinema and so on) and believe that he is in the presence of the objects of representation" (272-273). However, Bolter and Grusin argue, modern media are defined by a "double logic of immediacy and hypermediacy" (viii), with the latter logic serving to foreground the

medium in order to draw the viewer's attention (in a strategy similar to corporate branding) to the unique affordances of a particular medium platform (272).

Dracula is "nineteenth century up-to-date," but "with a vengeance"; every page is marked by a conspicuous excitement regarding its incipient modernity. Geoffrey Wall has characterized the enthusiastic manner in which Stoker's novel "contemplates its materials and methods" as "innocent [and] unironic" (15), and perhaps this is the inevitable fate of discourse concerning new media that have since grown old. But we must be careful not to let our own professedly "disenchanted" modernity blind us to what *Dracula* has to say concerning technology. Featuring prominently and conspicuously the implements and pretexts of writing, along with everything considered "exterior" to thought, this mode of fiction expresses the difficult labour involved in "coming to terms" with thought (and with the interiors of others, which we can only apprehend by drilling through their exteriors). This irreducible presence of the novel's hardware testifies to the difficulty, or impossibility, of any unmediated experience of the present moment.

We need, then, to resist the tendency to see such representations of narrative labor as simply opaque: they contribute something more than just "a rather tantalizing and somewhat wearisome form of narration," as one Victorian critic of *Dracula* had it ("Booking" 327). To borrow from Thurschwell and Price's *Literary Secretaries/ Secretarial Culture* (a collection in which Mina plays a starring role), Stoker is concerned with "the representation, self-representation and non-representation . . . of those who do write" (1). Rather than a clumsy impediment to the proper contents of the novel, these bodies and machines are the material bedrock of what surfaces, typically in a highly sublimated form, as "textuality." Stoker's novel, by contrast, is one that "shows its

work,” rendering the patient and diligent labour that brings text into being. Dracula presents writing as the indigestible, inassimilable substrate of the text. These are stories *about* writing, not ones merely told *through* its transparent medium.

In sharpening our focus from the abstract concept of “textuality” to “the representation . . . of those who do write,” we might begin with the observation that the narratological breakthrough of “writing to the moment,” depends crucially upon a characterological innovation. The fundamental difficulty this mode of narrative presents, of course, is a question of motivation: one must invent a plausible reason for anyone wanting so desperately to write so much. The pretext for all of this textuality must be found in characters for which writing is an almost involuntary reflex. If there is no text without the act of writing, the novel requires characters that are virtual ”writing machines,” for which writing is as instinctive as breathing, let alone speaking. In her moment of deepest responsibility to the Crew of Light’s shared text, Lucy Westenra becomes just such a being: “I feel I am dying of weakness, and have barely strength to write, but it must be done if I die in the doing” (178-79). The physical exertion of writing is a necessary sacrifice, warding off the possibility that her corpse will be illegible, its history unintelligible.

This cultivation of the compulsive habits of writing thought necessary to justify the very existence of the narrative is not unprecedented within the novel’s history. One and a half centuries earlier, Richardson’s Pamela had explained: “I have got such a knack of writing, that I cannot sit without a pen in hand” (367). Pamela sounds as if she is describing here a habit of nervous agitation, the kind of fidgeting one indulges in when one can neither sit still nor act out. Stoker’s text is composed through a similar agitation,

by authors who "fear to be idle" (356) and most often turn to writing and reading merely in order to soothe themselves. As Clive Leatherdale wryly notes, "The Count, it seems, has the knack of making everyone with whom he has any dealings take up their pencils" (214). It is these tiny sharpened stakes that are thrust at Dracula's heart with the most tireless determination. The primary difference to be marked between the early epistolary novel and *Dracula*, however, is the latter's institutionalization of the graphomaniacal imperative. For Stoker's narrators, the compulsion to write is an automatic reflex conditioned by professional and other external obligations. Under the discursive requirements of bureaucracy, the novel becomes so many forms to be filled out, so many papers in need of proper filing. In the administration of such texts, writing is only one task among many: one must also document and duplicate everything, a tedious, often ridiculous, but undeniably realistic part of our existence under the institutions to which we are "accountable." Leatherdale neglects to mention that most of Stoker's heroes are "pencil-pushers" of one sort or another. For the young solicitor, the aspiring "lady-journalist," and increasingly even doctors such as Seward and Van Helsing, the labours of documentation and registration would have been an essential part of the job description, an institutional imperative. Stoker's characters are only "moonlighting" as vampire-hunters, so it is perhaps not surprising that their daily habits of writing should carry over into these pursuits.

Under Van Helsing's directives, then, there is "wild work" (396), but also plenty of paperwork, to be done. The clearest reason we are given for Van Helsing's partiality towards his former student is the fact that his "case-book was ever more full than the rest" (155). Consequently, when Seward's judgment falters, Van Helsing advises him to

return to these texts, contending that: "knowledge is stronger than memory, and we should not trust the weaker" (155). In the severe distrust it places in memory, Van Helsing's pedagogical strategy is absolutely antithetical to the Socratic method, which insists upon the essential role of the subject in dynamizing knowledge as an activity always in process. Socrates criticized writing by arguing it served not as a tool of memory, but of forgetting.[19] Writing for him can only inscribe the epitaph of knowledge, marking the final resting place of a body whose spirit has fled.

Van Helsing, by contrast, would rather let thought calcify into writing. This process transforms experience into "hard fact," killing knowledge in order to preserve it. In this sense, the doctor's method begins to resemble vampirism itself, as Wicke suggests. Rosemary Jann notes Van Helsing's tendency to act "as if the very act of ordering details and writing them down verifies the experience as authentic, even if the meaning is not fully understood at the time" (278). It is not simply that Van Helsing believes everything that he reads, but that setting down a thought or experience makes it a piece of evidence, the subjective nature of which can be more easily assessed when laid bare and open to view. Writing extricates (or abjects) experience from the body, forcing it outside of the subject, where neither can contaminate the other. In the pursuit of fidelity, subjective recollection stands as the principle impediment to narrative. Van Helsing's scientific objectivity principally concerns itself with the *objectification* and automation of knowledge, turning thought into writing, and thereby purging it from the dark insides of the self.

To revise Jann's reading on one other point: is it not *precisely because* one's experience is misunderstood that its transcription remains authentic? Though commonly

understood as a means of careful attention to the particulars of the self, Jonathan's journal-keeping, in its speed and comprehensiveness, actually aspires to the kind of distracted activity most likely to keep secrets hidden even from one's own consciousness. It is clear that, for Jonathan, writing is the antidote to memory: a *pharmakon* that serves as a means of burying experience somewhere distant from the self. Handing his journal to his fiancé, Jonathan explains: "the secret is here, and I do not want to know it" (140). It is almost as if he has not written it himself. In this moment, we have to wonder if Jonathan's shorthand technique has not been a way of encrypting secrets from his own consciousness as well as his oppressor's, using these coded signs to hide Dracula from himself (particularly the ways the vampire is already buried inside Jonathan), as much as hiding himself from Dracula.

Dracula is a text composed primarily by writers who find themselves unable, for a host of reasons, to actually read what they have written. Mina's trances, from which she awakens utterly unaware of what has passed from her lips, are only the most spectacular demonstration of this principle. The interior is always a surprise to the writer, with another reader providing the critical distance required to make sense of his enigmatic text. The assumption that the subject is illegible to himself, and cannot read what he himself has written, is an essential characteristic of the rhetoric of graphomania. Van Helsing's speculations concerning Renfield further illuminate his interest in this relation between blindness and insight. It is Renfield's "very obliquity of thought and memory" that "fascinates" the doctor, who surmises: "I may gain more knowledge out of the folly of this madman that I shall from the teaching of the most wise" (295). This blind textuality forms the necessary complement to Van Helsing's incitement to transcribe

everything, no matter how seemingly insignificant. As Jonathan writes in (and of) his journal: "All, big and little, must go down; perhaps at the end the little things may teach us most" (329). Van Helsing trains his pupils in the "indiscriminate recording of all perceptions" that, for Nordau, marked Tolstoi and Wagner as consummate graphomaniacs (199). This dutiful recording of the self, prompted by Van Helsing's contention that "[n]othing is too small" (156), depends crucially on a *refusal* of one's personal perspective—if one is to catch the details that may not, at first glance, seem to be part of "the big picture."[20] Such perspective would only prejudice the writer's frames of reference and cause him or her to take on an editorial stance that, as Freud has argued, cannot be distinguished from censorial mechanisms.[21] Writing is not the mark of consciousness, but serves primarily as a technique for stemming this activity.

In foregrounding the acts of transcription, editing and circulation that constitute its text, *Dracula* dislocates truth from the hands of the author. The editor—intercessor of the "found manuscript" device—arrives on the scene in order to convince the reader that there was no "editing" consciousness in the writer, who scribbled away without second thoughts or second-guessing, without any consciousness of a second body in the room reading over her shoulder. Mina plays this role for the others, spelling out her role in facilitating the unconscious in moments such as the one in which she returns Seward's phonographic recordings, telling him: "I think that the cylinders which you gave me contained more than you intended me to know" (261). Within *Dracula*, the most direct expression is the one without direction, the letter left unsent, a stray signal intercepted by an unintended audience. The editor addresses the reader so that the writer may write

without address. It is through this intervention that we find ourselves holding an "unauthorized" text.

As a technique of distraction, writing to the moment generates many of the same effects that Elizabeth Napier has attributed to the irresistible momentum of Gothic plotting. While Napier sees the "frenetic air" of *Otranto* as "its most innovative and compelling feature" (90), she finds the most "significant consequence of the speed and fragmentation of narration in Walpole's novel is a serious reduction of emphasis on the internal lives of his characters" (92). Hollowing out the interior folds of a character simply builds up too much resistance. Instead, Walpole streamlines his characters by compelling them to act in "expected, or formulaic, ways" (92).[22] Only through such generic, conventional behavior can they "keep pace with the story he wants to tell" (92). In the minds of characters and readers alike, the Gothic instills a sense of perpetual distraction, relentlessly knocking us about from one explosive incident to another.

When critics speak of Gothic "machinery," it is invariably in response to the genre's reliance upon such external sources of motivation. This term was commonly employed by critics to dismiss the implausible nature of Gothic narrative, but in the late-nineteenth century, the *deus ex machina* device might not have pressed the limits of credibility nearly so acutely as before. (The crucial difference presented by the modern novel is that the machine replaces, rather than represents, the divine.) Given the ubiquity of mechanical processes within daily modern industrial life, it seems entirely reasonable that machines would intervene within plots; realism, in fact, would almost seem to dictate their inclusion. Mechanical disasters such as the train wreck that brings Richard Marsh's Beetle's reign of terror to an abrupt end merely parlayed the kind of common

technological fatalities to the fates of its characters.[23] Such collisions suggest a fatal incompatibility of bodies and machines, but the interpenetration of these realms is not always figured through violence. The gothic presents us with many unsettling collusions between human and machine, where the threat of the latter is converted into a promise that mechanization can sustain (a kind of) life. Having signed this pact, characters themselves take on mechanical traits, their voices developing a metallic resonance.

In granting its characters an exceptional consciousness of Gothic figuration and convention, Charles Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820) stands as an exemplary reflexive study of the genre's mechanisms.[24] Maturin's characters are deeply critical of social conventions, but also uncommonly aware of the conventional nature of the genre they inhabit. Maturin's Alonzo, finding himself in the middle of the kind of flight scenario described by Napier, addresses the mechanics at work within his story:

> I appeared to myself like a piece of mechanism wound up to perform certain functions, in which its co-operation was irresistible […] as the shortness of the time left me no opportunity for deliberation, it left me also none for choice. I was like a clock whose hands are pushed forward, and I struck the hours I was impelled to strike. When a powerful agency is thus exercised on us,–when another undertakes to think, feel, and act for us, we are delighted to transfer to him, not only our physical, but our moral responsibility. (181)

While Maturin's scene contextualizes Gothic machinery with reference to earlier philosophical arguments about human nature that commonly employed the clock as the emblem of a mechanistic universe, the forced hand of the clock also signifies the artificial compression of time within gothic narrative, as well as the suggesting the effects of that

acceleration on the subject.[25] Under the influence of another, Alonzo finds cold consolation in the thought that his circumstances have rendered him a kind of automaton-subject.

However, the awareness Maturin grants to his characters comes with a price. The conscious automaton is implicated in its own compulsions; Alonzo must admit he is "delighted" to submit to this fatalistic fantasy. Melmoth investigates the human desire to yield itself to the inhuman, the scandalous wish "to be the clock," in order that one "might have no feeling, no *motive for hurrying on the approach of time*" (146-47, emphasis original). *Melmoth's* protagonists are driven to distraction by the constant hum of machinery that administrates daily life under religious and civic institutions. The wanderer himself may be the most explicit embodiment of the living-dead, but the most sinister Faustian pact is one signed with the machine. Selling one's "soul" reads as a figure for the delegation of one's will to an external agent.

In "Signs of the Times," Carlyle had lamented the absence of internal, "Dynamical" motivation within culture (72). His was the "age of machinery" because individuals had systematically conceded their power to institutional imperatives. Maturin's Alonzo anticipates Carlyle's critique of modern institutionalized life when he remarks that: "The moment life is put beyond the reach of your will, and placed under the influence of mechanical operations, it becomes, to thinking beings, a torment insupportable" (111). However, Maturin is compelled to address as well the torment of thought, a burden that becomes less and less supportable as the individual's will is relentlessly frustrated by the crushing, mindless indifference of social and religious institutions. Wrongfully imprisoned in an asylum where, surrounded by the folly of

inmates and wardens alike, sanity becomes a "curse" (57), one character voices the "wish to become one of them, to escape the agony of consciousness" (56). The appeal of this conformity runs deeper than the lure of passivity Sedgwick finds in "paranoid gothic" writers such as Thomas De Quincey and Daniel Paul Schreber.[26] Alonzo's temptation to invite "the machine" inside stands as an early apprehension of the death drive, the desire to kill a part of ourselves in order that the rest of us might continue on—deadened, but free from pain.

Melmoth's clock concretizes an artificial experience of speed that has nothing to do with saving time. To resort to a dead metaphor, it manages only to "kill time" or, in the popular idiom of Stoker's historical moment, to "annihilate" it. The forced hand of the clock empties out the meaning of time into meaningless revolutions, much like Jonathan's circular journey to the count's castle, or Freud's circuitous path back to the red-light district in "The Uncanny." If Renfield's obsessive counting resembles the actions of the man who counted out seconds like the clock, how different is Jonathan's prison diary? He has found another way of becoming the clock, of devoting himself to recording every increment of time's passage. In captivity, as the day after day passes by, Jonathan denies his experience by "writing through" the moments. Realizing he "must do something or go mad," Jonathan devotes his nervous energy to his diary, reasoning: "I must keep writing at every chance, for I dare not stop to think" (329). Writing is speed, while thought brings one to a standstill. Jonathan's statement pathologizes the novel as the result of obsessive graphomaniacal activity, a performance that is less an antidote against insanity than an escape from the very question. Skimming swiftly along the surface of the page, Jonathan prevents himself from sinking into the depths of himself,

and giving way to this interior. Behind the frantic plotting that is so familiar within the Gothic genre, which identifies writing as necessary for the Crew of Light's survival, there remains this sense that writing is actually a means by which the living become the living-dead, refusing the primacy of experience through persistent mediatization, encrypting the moment before it has even passed.

<u>The Uncanny Return of Technology</u>

Seward's use of the phonograph is characterized by a similar desire to employ writing as a means of encrypting secrets from himself. Ostensibly obtained for professional work, Seward's phonograph entries are nonetheless referred to (by Seward as well as our copyist Mina) as a diary. By contrast with Jonathan and Mina's "journals," the term betrays the informal and personal nature of its contents. Read in light of her professed desire to "do as the lady *journal*ists do" (86), Mina's classification of her written contributions as journal entries suggests the "extroverted" tendency of her own writing. Seward's case studies fail to retain the disinterested and authoritative tone of scientific inquiry, as his recorded observations of Renfield repeatedly give way to private reflections and personal doubts.

When he cannot speak to Lucy, Seward turns to the sympathetic ear of his phonograph, into which he pours the plaintive tones of his unrequited love. For Seward, the phonograph serves as a technology of interiorization, its concave shape suggesting its discretion. The unreciprocated nature of Seward's desire for Lucy finds its technological analog in the fact that he has never imagined receiving anything back from the phonograph. In his hands, the machine remains every bit as unresponsive as Lucy. When

pressed for a demonstration of the phonograph, he sheepishly admits to Mina that, “although I have kept the diary for months past, it never once struck me how I was going to find any particular part of it in case I wanted to look it up?” (259). Seward’s was a record never intended to be played back; he had seen it as medium of storage, and not transmission. Entrusting these cylinders to Mina, he exhibits the same confusion with regard to women. In accordance with the original meaning of the term, Seward’s “secretary” is to serve as a repository of secrets (*OED*). He imagines speaking into a void, blindly placing his private thoughts into another medium of which he has little understanding. Seward thinks he has laid these feelings to rest, quietly suggesting to Mina: “No one need ever know, shall ever know.” Mina’s grave response is sympathetic, but unequivocal: “Ah, but they must!” (261). The doctor’s first bout of concern (regarding the phonograph) pothers over the difficulty of retrieval, his second (concerning Mina) over the impossibility of retraction.

Seward’s inability to decrypt his personal phonographic records belies Edison’s claim that his “wax cylinders speak for themselves and will not have to wait centuries to be deciphered” by future civilizations (“Perfected Phonograph” 645). In place of this vision of universal comprehension, Seward’s “glitch” provides us with a momentary experience of fundamental technological alienation, where even the speaker finds himself exiled from his own words and voice. Edison’s statement is typical of what Jason Camlot has identified as the Victorian “rhetoric of immediacy” (147) concerning the phonograph.[27] For Camlot, the most striking aspect of this rhetoric was its “enthusiastic willingness to embrace the phonograph as something of a transparent medium” (149). Camlot’s richly researched essay provides a wealth of cultural materials that advance this

understanding of the phonograph, including a promotional recording that captures the phonograph's "own" voice declaring: "My voice is the clearest, smoothest and most natural of any talking machine" (158 in Camlot). It is easy to imagine Victorians fascinated by the "natural" sound of machines posing as humans, but they were also curious about the many ways this technology might bring to light the unnatural aspects of the human talking machine. It is here that the darker ironies of this technological "immediacy"—ironies that were frequently acknowledged by Edison himself, as we will see—begin to assert themselves. In Stoker's techno-gothic imagination, the voice of Edison's "tongueless, toothless instrument" (Edison, in Kahn 93) is neither neutral nor transparent. A technological iteration of the Gothic collapse of distinctions between *heimlich* and *unheimlich*, the phonograph's unsettling echo blurs distinctions between fidelity and infidelity with technological reproductions that faithfully serve sonic phenomena while utterly betraying the speaker.

Wandering among the vaults under the monastery from which he is determined to make his escape, *Melmoth the Wanderer*'s Alonzo gives voice to an abiding Gothic fear when he considers with dread the possibility that he may never find the exit. He is overwhelmed by "the chance, the fear, that we may never come to light" (185). *Dracula*'s characters are just as often moved by the opposite fear, that the protective shroud of darkness will be torn away, that the labyrinth cannot not help them to "lose themselves." Freud, quoting Schelling's definition of the uncanny, interprets this term as the name for "everything . . . that ought to have remained secret and hidden but has come to light" (126). This uncanny return is inscribed within reproductive technology, the curse of recursive writing machines.

In critical readings of *Dracula*, the phonograph has often been lost within Stoker's sprawling network of writing and reading machines. *Dracula* is a novel that concerns itself with the symbolic processing of the Real, an operation best exemplified in Mina's typewritten transcriptions of Seward's phonograph cylinders. Returning to Seward after her first experience with the machine, Mina reports that the phonograph "is a wonderful machine, but it is cruelly true. It told me, in its very tones, the anguish of your heart. It was like a soul crying out to Almighty God" (261). Perhaps it is Mina's maternal instinct that impels her to hush the plaintive cry of this phonograph with her typewriter, muting its painful tones with the conviction that: "No one must hear them spoken ever again!" (261). There is no doubt that the typewriter represents the dominant register of the novel, and perhaps the prominence of the phonograph has suffered because of the way the novel encrypts (or, as Jennifer Wicke has it, vampirizes) this medium through type. And yet, if speech does occupy a lower rung on the media food-chain, it is rarely fully digested by Mina's typewriter. It is difficult not to think of the phonograph when Harker describes the Count's voice as a "harsh, metallic whisper" that emanates from some unlocatable source overhead (77). We can still hear this voice, which enters the novel in strange ways, disrupting the regularity of Mina's "clean" copy that the text requires.[28] The epistemological bent of her textual strategy is fundamentally symbolic, attempting as it does to modernize the Gothic, and revise the manuscript. This mechanical process of symbolization, as I have remarked above, is the focus of Kittler's formidable reading of Stoker's media-parable. Adopted from Foucault's conception of the *episteme,* Kittler's "shock and awe" philosophy of media constructs a history where one technology of writing is instantly and utterly overwhelmed by its successor (which

brings with it a total regime change). The gothic imagination, by contrast, is obsessed with the palimpsest: a model of textuality that hallucinates, within the placid surface of present text, the ruin of previous writings and haunting echoes of departed voices. We could turn, of course, to the example of the found manuscript, which receives its most evocatively gothic treatment in Hogg's *Confessions of A Justified Sinner*. Here, a text is buried within the text, a facsimile of the hand behind the anonymity of type. To gothicize McLuhan's dictum, every new medium is erected amongst the ruins of previous media-forms.[29]

Dracula is a text haunted by the voices within it, voices that frustrate and interrupt the process of symbolization undertaken by Mina's typewriter. The grooves of the phonograph appear to Seward as a mechanical labyrinth, a place to safely bury his secret by "engraving" it technologically. Having never considered the possibility that these thoughts might find their way back out to the surface, the sight of their resurrection inspires a dread akin to Lucy's rising from the coffin (her body's own unstable archive). Edison intuits the uncanny nature of the phonographic encounter in his own writings. Chief among the device's suggested uses was the ability to hear voices return from the grave. The phonograph is an open casket of sorts, allowing us to lovingly attend to the departed. But while the voice of another allows for a sentimental reunion, the possibility of one's own voice returning from the dead is a profoundly alienating thought:

> Your words are preserved in the tin foil and will come back upon the application of the instrument years after you are dead in exactly the same tone of voice you spoke in then . . . This tongueless, toothless instrument, without larynx or pharynx, dumb, voiceless matter, nevertheless mimics your tones, speaks with

> your voice, speaks with your words, and centuries after you have crumbled into dust will repeat again and again, to a generation that could never know you, every idle thought, every fond fancy, every vain word that you chose to whisper against this thin iron diaphragm. (qtd. in Kahn 93)

If Edison's statement offers the promise of immortality, it is perhaps the least comforting vision possible: a *doppelganger* voice that outlives its owner only to turn upon him. The subject finds itself locked out of its own life, as the sound that once resonated inside—an echo that seemed to constitutively shape that interior—returns as utterly exterior. This partial object, an uncanny automaton without tongue or teeth, nonetheless speaks. If writing in Plato's *Phaedrus* inscribed the epitaph of thought—"dead discourse" (276a)—Edison's open crypt transmits a kind of "undead" speech. Unhinged from its authorizing body, this mortifying sound sardonically and irreverently commits to posterity our most idle thoughts and careless whispers. Mina's description of the phonographic replication as "cruelly true" (261) captures perfectly Edison's apprehension of the phonograph's sadistic fidelity.

In 1878, the *Journal of Science* illustrated this machine's upsetting tendency to capture accidents of the voice in its account of an early phonograph demonstration:

> songs sung into it by Mr. Spagnoletti, Mr. Edmunds, and Mr. Preece, were reproduced with very respectable correctness; and even the breakdown of one of the singers at a high note, accompanied by a little impatient remark, was faithfully recorded, and given out again with exasperating fidelity. ("Phonograph" 252)

Having "faithfully recorded" the trio's repertoire, the phonograph manages to reproduce these songs with "respectable correctness." A human voice breaks down, but the machine

does not malfunction. In an act of "exasperating fidelity," the phonograph presents us with an unerring record of human error.

Edison's playful promotion of the phonograph often suggested the machine was as likely to betray the voice as to support it. Was the phonograph too close, and too diligent a listener, to properly bear witness to the speaker? The exactness of the machine laid bare a crucial irony within the concept of fidelity, prompting Edison to write in one moment of the "faithful recording" produced by the phonograph, and note in the next that: "This little instrument records the utterance of the human voice, and like a faithless confidante repeats every secret confided to it whenever requested to do so" ("The Phonograph" 249). The machine could be at once "faithful" and "faithless" because its loyalty to sound extended beyond (and potentially compromised) the narrow signal of the speaker. Edison's rhetoric impishly exploits the pleasure and anxiety provoked by the thought of a voice that was seemingly unfiltered, uncensored, and devoid of any capacity for discrimination: "With charming impartiality it will express itself in the divine strains of a lyric goddess or use the startling vernacular of a street Arab" (249). The phonograph did not—indeed, could not—recognize the distinctions and divisions of culture. All languages were the same to this illiterate and polyglot machine; it understood nothing of what it heard, and so was uniquely qualified to repeat everything.

Of course, the incendiary juxtaposition of "goddess" and "street Arab"—particularly when the machine-voice has been explicitly feminized as a "confidant*e*"—suggests that such recordings would only serve to more deeply entrench cultural constructions of difference. If Edison's first invocation of the "tongueless, toothless instrument" serves to highlight the foreignness lodged within the subject, this latter

experiment directs the alienating capacity of the disembodied voice against the other in a strategic manner, furnishing physical evidence that seems to corroborate the prejudices of the listener by tangibly confirming the other's difference. The phonographic register of Stoker's novel—present in Seward's cylinders, but also in Jonathan and Mina's phonetic shorthand— blurs this line between fidelity and faithlessness insofar as it serves to highlight difference within the novel's characters (playing back unacknowledged differences to the self).[30] The technological perfection of mechanical reproduction reveals that human "fidelity" and "reality" were only approximate values, indistinct principles that had to be tempered as they approached full disclosure.

Though it sometimes emerges from within Stoker's "proper" English subjects, the novel most often projects this noise upon classed and raced "others," generating an echo that denatures the language of the novel through exactness of its recording. In his professional dealings with the Count, Jonathan courteously insists: "You know and speak English thoroughly!" (51). Though he denies the exotic nature of Dracula's speech, Jonathan's private writings are suffused with oral fascination, concerned with the sound of words rather than their meaning, and convinced that these sounds tell us more than the speaker knows. Jonathan and Mina's shorthand technique records voices phonetically, and the preservation of dialect within *Dracula* is a way of alienating the speaker from his own words, highlighting his foreignness. Thus, the careful transcription of the "glitches" of dialect mark the writer's absolute fidelity to the voice, but also constitute, in their betrayal of the speaking subject, an infidelity. When mimicry tends toward mockery, Jonathan's diaries read as "cruelly true." Recording verbatim becomes an aggressive practice, passively encoding implicit critical commentary in the refusal to edit. Jonathan

may have been led astray by "phonetic spelling" (302), the external "dis-guise" of speech whose corrupting influence Saussure had warned about, but when langue and parole diverge, his text consistently chooses to follow the idiosyncrasies of the latter.[31] In the pursuit of accurate recording, the journalist always faces a dilemma: whether to remain faithful to the exact transcript, or to charitably filter out any "noise" that might interfere with the "ideal" of the speaker's intended message. Absolute fidelity is maintained at the expense of the subject.

In *Dracula*, writing swallows speech whole. Mina refrains from assimilating (or digesting) the irregularities of speech into the standardized system of "proper" language. Her devotion to "verbatim" reportage does not content itself with capturing communications "word-for-word," but burrows into the voice at a deeper level. Mina's precise technique narrows in upon components of speech ordinarily rendered invisible by type. The phonograph (and the novel's strict reproduction of its transmissions) provides an aural equivalent of Edweard Muybridge's motion studies, dissecting and preserving for minute analysis the negligible details and irregularities typically smoothed out in the "flow" of written records. Stoker shares with Muybridge a fascination with deformities and abnormalities of movement (the former being concerned with expression, the latter with locomotion); both are interested in correcting the blindness brought on by idealizations of the body. Mina makes no attempt to straighten out Van Helsing's "dis-figures" of speech; comic malapropisms such as "the milk that is spilt cries not out afterwards" (274) provide the grain of his character.

If Van Helsing's speech reveals Stoker's somewhat clinical interest in the speech of "others" (evident in the dialects of the raced and classed mouths that resonate within

his text), the faltering speech of the novel's "proper" English subjects in their more emotional moments seems calculated to imbue the protagonists with pathos. Voices are nowhere more conspicuously present in *Dracula* than when they are on the verge of breaking down. Mina transcribes Seward's floundering description of her own preventive burial service, during which the doctor stutters out: "I--I cannot go on--words--and--v-voice--fail m-me!…" (373). Wicke reads this transmission as "the immaterialization of a voice" (470), but we are witnessing precisely the opposite phenomenon here. Working from Seward's phonograph cylinders, Mina demonstrates the "minute accuracy" promised by Edison in his essay concerning "The Perfected Phonograph." According to Edison, the machine would duplicate an "unimpeachable transcript" of any conversation, reproducing not only voices, but "every break and pause, every hesitation or confident affirmation, every partial suggestion or particular explanation, infallibly set down in the wax" (648). Mina's type redoubles this transformation, its indelible imprint granting a new materiality to the voice. The text represents a voice breaking down, but also performs the breaking down of the voice, dissecting every insignificant grain and presenting it for examination. Transcribing her own struggles with the unspeakable, Mina stutters across the page: "the...the...the...Vampire. Why did I hesitate to write the word?" (395). An exemplary display of obedience to Van Helsing's counsel "to put down in record even your doubts and surmises" (156), her entry does not actually hesitate to write, but literally *writes hesitation*. Silence itself is called to account, graphically represented by Mina's ellipses. Rather than a "proper" translation from one medium to another, moments such as this one find the typewriter mimicking the phonograph by making a kind of analog-based gapless recording, where stuttering, second thoughts, and

interjections are all recorded upon the page. There is something jarring about these remnants of the voice that have survived their remediation into written text, a process that normally tends to formalize speech by flattening out the glitches of oral communication. Mina's "exasperating" commitment to absolute fidelity kindles unrest within the text; under her stewardship the novel becomes the site for a "live burial" of the voice.

Noting this strange survival of orality within *Dracula*, John M. Picker finds at the core of Stoker's tale "a distinctly late-Victorian fascination with the primacy of the voices that pulse through it" (776). Though Picker contends that "*Dracula* only nibbles at the possibilities for serious problems with the notion of a phonographic voice" (779), his reading of the novel nevertheless does an excellent job of gathering the phonographic figures that surface within this "novel of indentations" (including phonographic inscriptions, vampiric penetrations, and typewriter impressions). For Picker, the phonograph "acts as a locus of sexual anxiety and symbolism among Seward, Lucy Westenra, and Mina" (777). My aim in what follows is to explore in greater depth Dracula's techno-eroticism, through consideration of the mechanics of desire set in motion by the phonograph—a device that embodies the intimacy of communication by linking orality and touch.

Discussion of *Dracula*'s "oral fixation" has typically centered upon the figure of the vampire.[32] The erotic charge with which Stoker alights the seduction of both Jonathan and Mina has a distinctly oral character. Possessed by the "wicked, burning desire" that his three temptresses "would kiss me with those red lips," Jonathan lies recumbent as "[t]he girl went on her knees, and bent over me, simply gloating." Likewise, the spectacle of Mina's "baptism of blood" (384) holds for Seward "a terrible resemblance to

a child forcing a kitten's nose into a saucer of milk to compel it to drink" (322). If the Count has been saddled with a "child-brain" (382), he has also been cursed with an infant-mouth. Like the child, whose oral fixation is understood by Freud to be "associated, in the first instance, with the satisfaction of the need for nourishment" (*Three Essays* 182), the vampire's unquenchable thirst for blood comes from a shadowy place between need and desire. Dracula's relation to his victims vacillates between mastery and dependence, ecstasy and desperate compulsion (due to the abject hunger for the bodily fluids he craves in order to survive). If the phrase "sexual appetite" has long been interred within the graveyard of dead metaphors, Dracula's disturbing hunger revives the primal truth of this state of confusion, where "sexual activity has not yet been separated from the ingestion of food" (*Three Essays* 198).

This reading of vampirism as the monstrous perpetuation of oral desire finds its reciprocal analogy in Freud's schema of libidinal development in *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905), where he proposes that the oral phase might be considered "cannibalistic" in nature (273). The note first appears in a 1915 revision of the *Three Essays*, at the same time Freud was exploring the complex relation between desire and destruction in his "Mourning and Melancholia." Here Freud argues that the ego "wants to incorporate" its object of desire, and "it wants to do so by devouring it" (250). Anticipating Freud, Stoker imagines the mouth as primarily a site of compulsion, and only secondarily as a means of communication. The vampire's mouth transmits the "unspeakable" because *it writes without speaking*. This assertion of the priority of writing is not a playful deconstructive reversal, but the traumatic force of an incomprehensible law, one that imposes itself without concern for the subject's testimony, or even

understanding. We have not the proper mirror to read what has been inscribed on ourselves.

The Phonographic Imagination: Indexing Bodies

We find evidence of this bodily trauma in a number of different origin-stories of the phonograph, one of which has been preserved within Theodore Achille L. Du Moncel's *The Telephone, The Microphone, and The Phonograph*. Du Moncel relates the story of Edison's "accidental" discovery with the skeptical distance one ought to maintain when relating accounts by "American journals" (310):

> In the course of some experiments Mr. Edison was making with the telephone, a stylus attached to the diaphragm pierced his finger at the moment when the diaphragm began to vibrate under the influence of the voice, and the prick was enough to draw blood. It then occurred to him that if the vibrations of the diaphragm enabled the stylus to pierce the skin, they might produce on a flexible surface such distinct outlines as to represent all the undulation produced by the voice. (310)

Du Moncel concedes this to be "an ingenious story," but insists that "we would rather believe that the discovery was made in a more serious spirit" (310). This is an ingenious story, rather than a story of genius, because it confers agency upon the "accidental" operations of the machine, while representing Edison as a receptive medium that serves as the surface of experimentation. Bitten by the stylus, Edison is infected with the idea rather than inventing it. The possibilities of the machine become real through the piercing of skin and the drawing of blood, rather than dawning upon the intellect in a moment of

scientific deduction. Edison's own body serves as the prototype for the phonograph, which now must reproduce and improve upon the receptive penetrability of skin.

In their introduction and elaboration of the concept of "vampiric typewriting," Kittler and Wicke provide some of the most insightful connections between biting and writing, though their shared commitment to the typewriter as *Dracula*'s master technology obscures the vital significance of the index within Stoker's novel. Bite-marks are the record of a needle that has been dropped into a permeable surface, and may at any time return to the groove that has been cut. The Count taunts Mina with the countless times he has returned to re-open her wound: "It is not the first time, or the second, that your veins have appeased my thirst!" (327). Leaving behind a trace that serves as evidence of his victim's possession, Dracula's vampirism retains the classical definition of stigmata as brandings that identify the bearer's enslavement. In its more metaphorical sense, the "stigma" denotes an enduring trace (literal or otherwise) left by shameful bodily contact. The marks on Lucy and Mina's necks are scarlet letters, bloody inscriptions that, in accordance with the Gothic law of externalization, provide evidence of physical commerce with impure forces. The lover's adulterous kiss remains eternally upon one's throat, its irreversible mark binding two bodies together in calamitous sympathy.

The Gothic imagination has always had a special fascination with stigmata; its fictions tend to employ the needle rather than the stylus, and engrave themselves upon flesh and blood rather than paper and ink. Following in the tradition of Victorian Gothic's forensic dramas, the Count contributes no writing to Stoker's narrative, save these legible traces of his body. These signature marks remain inarticulate wounds until Van Helsing

identifies Dracula as "of a type," initiating the forensic process of symbolization that narrates a history of bodily contact. Once the Crew of Light finally learns to properly interpret these enigmatic, yet indelible markings, every other sign within the narrative begins to make sense. A more common variety of criminal might have left fingerprints, but the Count's teeth-marks serve as reliable indices to his villainous actions. Embedding signs within flesh grants them a unique material permanence and irrefutable stamp of authenticity that the body—more often than not unwillingly—corroborates.

Whenever popular *fin-de-siècle* literature borrows the phonograph to perform its writing, the results turn out to be scandalous. The stigmatic marks of the machine introduce to narrative the discourses of gossip and indiscretion. The machine commonly plays the part of Edison's "faithless confidante," inciting and affirming defamatory rumours. Robert Ganthony's comic poem "The Phonograph" (1900) finds a man recording a simulated "volley of kisses" in order to see "How a kiss would come out / In a phonograph way." When his maid walks in on the performance *in flagranti* and confusedly blurts out, "Oh, sir, how can you? What are you doing?," the man falls into a panic, upon realizing that the record will appear to testify to the seduction of his maid, rather than his new gadget. The speaker's peculiar impulse to caress the machine would seem to illustrate Picker's claim that, for nineteenth-century writers, "the phonograph seemed not only possessed, but more specifically charged with a dangerous sort of sexualized femininity" ("Aura" 772).

In fiction of the Victorian period, bodies both innocent and guilty are betrayed by their voices. In Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's "The Voice of Science," the phonograph allows Rupert Esdaile to call into question the integrity of Captain Beesly, his sister's suitor.

When his sister refuses to hear the rumors surrounding Beesly's time in India, Rupert records the names of various women with whom he has been said to have had affairs, and broadcasts them at a party. The voice of the machine immediately turns Beesly's complexion "the colour of cheese," and sends him running, without any attempt to refute these unsubstantiated claims. Doyle's title suggests the authority that the phonograph grants to scandalous discourse. The same words that have been rejected as slander from the brother are received as truth when passed through the "scientific" machine. Another of Doyle's short stories, "The Story of the Japanned Box," features a narrator by turns upset and intrigued by the mysterious female voice that emanates nightly from his master's study. After a youth squandered away in thoughtless intemperance, and curbed only by the intervention of his (now deceased) wife, this man has led an upright and ascetic existence, one whose only contradiction would seem to be the open secret of his nightly rendezvous with this "other" woman. Who is she, and how has she gained entrance to his room without ever once being observed by the staff, whose extraordinary vigilance is underwritten by their prurient curiosity? Of course, Doyle's title hints at the answer. The peculiar "Japanned Box" contains a phonographic recording of the deceased wife's voice, which recites nightly her sweet assurance that she watches over her husband still. The "kept woman" turns out only to be a preserved voice, but we are left to imagine why the master cloaks the signs of the husband's fidelity under the guise of duplicity.

Taken together, these texts suggest that the essential scandal of phonographic inscription lies in the medium itself, rather than any particular message it might convey. This analog recording machine relies fundamentally upon the intercourse of bodies for the transcription of sounds. If the phonograph detaches voices from bodies, it does so by

apprehending the voice *as* a body, capturing sonic vibrations in physical contact with the recording cylinder. Consequently, an innocent conversation can be re-read as an enigmatic moment of physical contact. The physical intimacy between signifier and signified captured by this machine subjects all communication to innuendo, transferring the concept of reproduction from a textual to an erotic register. What sort of thing would the phonograph record? Most often, we find, scenes that reproduce the logic of its functioning, by exploiting this new and extraordinary sensitivity to *touching*. Like a fingerprint left at the scene of the crime, the record is an indexical mark that invites us to trace out the body, because we know it has brushed up against this surface at some point.

Though one Victorian satirist might have insisted that: “a man prefers / Direct and labial contact,” for many, Edison’s “preposterous plan / For kissing by machinery!” (*Punch* 1888) offered tantalizing possibilities for otherwise unacceptable communication between the sexes. American writer Edward Bellamy’s “With the Eyes Shut” (1889) explores the phonograph’s ability to return the erotic quality of the voice back to reading. Bellamy’s title suggestively indicates not only the practical possibilities of reading by phonograph, but the dream state this fantasy-machine inspires. Even the most commonplace information, such as the telling of the hours upon a clock, takes on a most enchanting ring when imparted by “the strong, sweet, musical tones of a perfect mistress of the art of story-telling” (338). The phonograph translates the “arbitrary symbolism” of the clock to “the presence of this young woman in my room” (339-340). Initially startled by the voice of this “young” and “charming” woman, “who could not have been standing more than ten feet from my bed” (339), our narrator turns out the lights in order to better enjoy “the bewitching *presence* which the voice suggested” (340).

This confusion of vocal with physical presence was a familiar experience within the Victorian imagination, and the most indelible illustration of this uncertainty would have to be Victor/RCA's "His Master's Voice" trademark, an iconic image that speaks volumes about the ways this machine has reconfigured understandings of fidelity. Adapted from a painting by Francis Barraud, which depicted his brother's fox terrier peering quizzically into the brass horn of a gramophone, the charm of this enduring image depends centrally upon its playful juxtaposition of two different versions of fidelity: one animal, the other technological. Nipper, the Victor Talking Machine Company's mascot, embodies the former. The textual invocation of the "master," whose voice we suddenly hear emerging from the trumpet, confirms the message of loyalty and obedience communicated by the dog, with its renowned fidelity to "man." Taking its cue from the terrier, the gramophone is equipped with an embossing-point capable of "follow[ing sonic phenomena] with such fidelity as to retransmit to the disk . . . any property essential to producing upon the ear the same sensation as if coming direct from the original source" ("The Phonograph and Its Future" 528). Following the voice wherever it may go, the gramophone represents the technological appropriation of this devoted attention to man.

Human civilization's domestication of phonographic technology further establishes its mastery over the animal, which retains a credulous relation to the indexical sign (manipulated here to comic effect). Nipper fails to understand that his master's voice has broken from its leash—that the reverberation of the voice no longer *necessarily* heralds the appearance of the body. The fixity of the indexical trace outlasts the impermanent presence of the thing itself.

And yet, if they knew better than to be led astray by these voices, the question remains as to why the Victorians took such pleasure in divorcing sound from the other senses, and willfully surrendering themselves to the illusions such sensory deprivation could produce. Listening with his eyes closed, Bellamy's narrator knowingly submits to ontological uncertainty in order to enjoy the sensual fantasy conjured by the erotic presence of the female voice. We experience this same pleasure when Ganthony's poem enters "playback mode," and we are asked to forget what we have "seen" and simply "listen" to the encounter. Neither is Stoker's novel immune to this phonographic fascination. On her first visit to Seward's study, Mina mistakes Seward's conversation with his machine for human dialogue, but enters the room to find "He was quite alone" (258). Mina's "intense surprise" in finding "there was no one with him" (258) dramatizes the powerful consolatory functions of technology and the degree to which our monologues with technology are capable of replicating human intercourse.[33]

It seems that whenever the phonograph appeared within popular literature of the period, it was set in motion with the express purpose of exploring the novelty of the voice's extraction from the body, and exploiting the misapprehensions caused by this division. If Mina's introduction to the phonograph presents a rather quaint instance of this confusion, the voices that assail Renfield's troubled psyche provide a wretched portrayal of a body fatally bound to follow the remote influence of "his master's voice."[34] Renfield is the novel's nightmare of fidelity, embodying the point along the darker end of the spectrum where loyalty deepens into the slavery of absolute possession.

In *The Beetle*, Marsh's characters had given voice to the impression that their bodies might faithfully serve as indices to the identity and actions of their antagonist. In

Dracula, this internal conviction becomes a matter of public record. Harker interprets Renfield's actions as "a sort of index to the coming and going of the Count" (264). A week later, Seward augments Harker's term to describe Renfield's peculiar relationship with the Count when he remarks that the two are "mixed up […] in an indexy kind of way" (287). Diagnosing Renfield as "indexy" represents possession as a relation between signifier and signified. Renfield's indexical link to the Count illuminates the Gothic subtext of Charles Sanders Peirce's contention that the index is "forced by blind fact to correspond to its object" ("Telepathy" 628). Stoker and Peirce's twin texts of telepathic influence cast the involuntary fidelity of the sign as a form of hypnotic possession, suggesting that the signified acts "under the influence" of the signified. In the body of the index, an automatism, and even a certain uncanny helplessness, steals into Peirce's thought. Here the notion of a 'motivated' signifier (as opposed to Saussure's arbitrary link between signifier and signified) must be read as a conceptual euphemism, one that only dilutes the strange power under which these signs operate.

If Seward detects a "method in [Renfield's] madness" (102), the latter's feverish writing also reveals the madness of the Crew's graphical methods. Renfield's cannibal ledger, where he obsessively tabulates the mounting insect and animal lives consumed in preparation for human blood, proffers a grim parody of Seward, Mina and Jonathan's graphomaniacal exertions. This "little notebook in which he is always jotting down something" (105), like the anorexic's caloric diary, substitutes ingestion for introspection; it chronicles the abject narrative of the outside becoming inside. Seward confides to his phonographic diary his envy of Renfield's ability "to begin a new record with each day" of his life (104). For a moment at least, the deranged contents of his patient's records

appear as entirely beside the point, so long as one has “a good unselfish cause” (104) to write. Pages later, Mina begins to detect traces of this uncanny selflessness in her fiancé’s subtly disfigured writing, finding that his strangely impersonal correspondence with her has been written in a hand that “does not read like him, and yet it is his writing” (106). His signature has become the index of something other than his own self-possessed subjecthood. Indeed, as we have seen, this dispossession of authorship is precisely the point of Van Helsing’s strict regimen of graphomaniacal production. To apprehend the vampire, each of our writers must become an index, cultivating an impressionable nature that can be marked by, and legible to, others. If Seward intends that Renfield’s “unconscious cerebration […] will have to give the wall to [its] conscious brother” (102), the Crew of Light find themselves making the opposite capitulation, inciting unconscious cerebration through automatic writing techniques that decentre consciousness and make way for the other.[35]

Mina’s “baptism of blood” marks her initiation within this same unconscious network. Needless to say, blood in *Dracula* carries much more than nutrients and oxygen; it is coded with the essence of class, race, masculine vigor, and feminine sexuality.[36] Mina’s “baptism” sees the vampire’s blood finally exploited as either mesmeric fluid or electrical conduit. Under its influence, Mina becomes the “faithless confidante” of Edison’s phonographic nightmare, a double agent without loyalty to either the Count or the Crew. Lacking even the ability to discriminate, she gives way to the “street Arab” as readily as the Englishman.

As a description of Mina’s remote correspondence with the Count, the strictest etymological definition of telepathy—that of “touching at a distance”—is the most

precise; theirs is an exchange of sound and vibrations, rather than thought. Listening in on the scene, we find a portal to a place that is at once strikingly intimate and utterly impersonal (352). Sounding only like a telephone left off the hook with no one holding the other end, Mina registers sound and sense without language; she gains entrance to Dracula's coffin, but cannot pry into his mind. There is no interior, audible self—only sensations from which the Crew must deduce the Count's location. Is this because Dracula has no internal monologue that could be "overheard"? It is true that the Gothic tradition strictly disallows this interiority to its monsters. In the empty mirror of vampire folklore, we find the vampire incapable, at least in the literal sense, of self-reflection. And what do we capture when Mina is employed as the mirror? As far as the Crew of Light's cutting-edge psychotechnics can determine, Dracula is something less than a "mental child," practically a non-entity. His crypt brims with the same blankness as Renfield's "little notebook." His thoughts simply do not register: only the body speaks. As Van Helsing relates in his journal: "Mina's morning and evening hypnotic answer is unvaried. Lapping waves, rushing water, and creaking masts" (376). Mina reproduces sound without a subject, noises that have not been sculpted into the consciousness of an individual, communicating instead an oceanic feeling that—provided we read Dracula's location as something more than incidental—imparts a sense of the sublime carnal immediacy promised by the vampiric body. Though it serves the narrative by orienting the Crew of Light, this primal flood at the heart of the novel ought to disorient us as readers. The scene challenges us to discard outdated notions of fidelity premised upon the "integrity" of the body, in particular the voice as the sounding out of a subject's resonant interiority.

If Kittler's reading of *Dracula*'s "typographic logic" explores the potential, through modern media, to communicate without touching, the phonograph raises the traumatic possibility of touching without communicating. Mirroring the culture in which it was written, *Dracula*'s networks are fundamentally dependent upon the bodies of female operators, and so it is that Mina's relations with Jonathan and the Count, respectively, most clearly enact these two capacities of technology. The chaste nature of Jonathan and Mina's relationship exemplifies the disembodied communication typical of modern conceptions of immediacy, depending as it does on the streamlining, and even eradication of bodies, for the instantaneous communication of information. Stoker's vampire, on the other hand, embodies the Gothic intuition that communication is always a matter of intercourse between bodies, no matter how intercessory machines may work to sublimate that process. The spatial immediacy of the index, as *Dracula*'s gothic modes of inscription make clear (and as the phonographic valence of the text mimics), interposes the oblique (and most often painful) presence of the body.

Are humans truly capable of fidelity? Despite Mina and Jonathan's private liaisons, the novel suggests they are. However, the means by which this fidelity is maintained turn out to be more disturbing than the couple's frequent failures. On one hand, we find a faithfulness to the truth that is underwritten by technology, characterized by distraction and detachment, mechanical values that rest uneasily in the human breast. On the other hand, we witness the uncanny fidelity that is the symptom of extreme attachment and the overpowering force of one body upon another. Within Stoker's novel, it is our protagonists' capacity for fidelity that is most troubling, because neither experience is "true" to the individual: the first breaks down the self by privileging

mechanical drive over subjective will, and the automatic over the autonomous gesture. The second abdicates the will to the other, arousing the fear that the mind is not strong enough to resist being drawn to the brink of possession.

Breaching the self-imposed limits allocated by the subject, Mina's body serves as medial instrument and object of the other, dispersed within a depersonalized psychical network. It is this communion of bodies that the gothic imagination nervously approaches. Its advances are guided by a Victorian dialectic of physical expansion and retraction that oscillates between distracted and productive bodies that dilate sympathetically with nervous energy, and attentive and restrictive examiners that apprehend, codify, and institutionalize these bodies.

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[1] The indelible phrase "Crew of Light" is Christopher Craft's coinage, and was first used to name Van Helsing, Jonathan and Mina Harker, Jack Seward, Arthur Goldalming, and Quincy Morris in "'Kiss Me With Those Red Lips': Gender and Inversion in Bram Stoker's *Dracula.*" *Representations* 8 (1984): 107-33.

[2] See Arata, "The Occidental Tourist: Dracula and the Anxiety of Reverse Colonization."

[3] See Wicke 491-92; Winthrop-Young 115.

[4] "Manifold" paper was an early form of carbon paper, employed to produce a number duplicates simultaneously. Mina makes reference to her use of this technique on 262.

[5] See Lucy's letter to Mina: "Why can't they let a girl marry three men, or as many as want her, and save all this trouble?" (91).

[6] The *OED* identifies George Bartlett Prescott's *The Speaking Telephone, Talking Phonograph, and Other Novelties* (1878) as the first usage of fidelity in its technological sense, intended to communicate "the degree to which a sound or picture reproduced or transmitted by any device resembles the original."

[7] See Fleissner 64. As Fleissner has noted, Mina's typewriter-work positions her within a tense negotiation of women's cultural production (often strategically recast as

reproduction). Jonathan suggests as much on the final page of the novel, when he insists that it is Mina's child that matters, and not her text.

[8] For more on the human dimension of mimesis, see Robert Storey's *Mimesis and the Human Animal: On the Biogenetic Foundations of Literary Representation*. On the distinction between phonographic fidelity and human imitation, see Camlot. In Camlot's reading of Victorian promotional materials for the phonograph, he finds that: "The machine was presented not as a technology that has perfected the art of mimicry, but as a kind of perfectly natural mimic, written upon by nature and preserving that natural moment eternally" (156).

[9] Richardson presents *Grandison* as a compendium of: "Familiar Letters, written, as it were, to the *Moment,* while the Heart is agitated by Hopes and Fears, on Events undecided . . ." (*Grandison vi*).

[10] On the links between stenographic shorthand and male professionalization, see Price 32-47.

[11] On the vampiric tendencies of Mina's typewriting work, see Wicke.

[12] Of course, the major infidelity Coppola's film adaptation introduces into Stoker's narrative must be accompanied by Mina's discarding of the text, the dramatic scene where pages are torn away one by one, thrown into the water, and float away. Coppola had to locate a gap in the text to serve as Mina's window of opportunity. Though Mina writes nothing of these encounters, we have only to consult the record upon Mina's body to find the scarlet-tinged evidence of her assignations with the vampire.

[13] See pages 104, 221, 367.

[14] On the Victorian "process of transforming sex into discourse" (22), see Foucault, "The Incitement to Discourse" *History of Sexuality, vol. 1.* 17-35.

[15] On finding herself alone with her husband for the first time, Mina leads Jonathan directly to the bed. Here, she explains: "I took the book [Jonathan's diary] from under his pillow, and wrapped it up in white paper, and tied it with a little bit of pale blue ribbon which was round my neck, and sealed it over the knot with sealing wax, and for my seal I used my wedding ring. Then I kissed it and showed it to my husband, and told him that I would keep it so, and then it would be an outward and visible sign for us all our lives that we trusted each other, that I would never open it unless it were for his own dear sake or for the sake of some stern duty" (141).

[16] See Kreilkamp.

[17] See Winthrop-Young, who writes of "the importance of speed as the parameter most central to the Control Revolution of the nineteenth century" (116).

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[18] A writer for *Punch* commented that, "with regard to railway accidents that it is 'the pace that kills'. This is particularly the case when companies go it too fast in the pursuit of profit" ("Philosophy" 144). In 1857, *The Lancet* seconded this indictment of corporate indifference, attributing technological malfunctions to the systemic mismanagement of railway companies: "They specially maintain, in a series of by-laws, their right to slay, smash, mutilate, or cripple their unlucky passengers, and take care that this right shall not fall into abeyance for want of exercise" (43). For a thorough consideration of the Victorian railway accident, see Drinka.

[19] "If men learn this, it will implant forgetfulness in their souls; they will cease to exercise memory because they rely on that which is written, calling things to remembrance no longer from within themselves, but by means of external marks. What you have discovered is a recipe not for memory, but for reminder. And it is no true wisdom that you offer your disciples, but only its semblance" (*Phaedrus* 275a).

[20] See Ginzburg.

[21] See Freud's *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-analysis*: "It is true that ideas occur to us, but we do not allow all of them to count […] In the case of one idea we may say to ourselves": 'No, this is not relevant, it does not belong here'; in the case of another: 'this is too senseless' and of a third: 'this is totally unimportant'. And we can further observe how with objections of this sort we may smother ideas and finally expel them altogether, even before they have become quite clear" (140).

[22] Napier's assessment of the Gothic novel often sounds very like Schivelbusch's history of the locomotive, the speed of which reorganizes the lived experience of the subject according to the criteria and requirements of capital. For Schivelbusch this is a fundamentally dehumanizing process, whereby the subject is "streamlined" or conditioned for its insertion into modern capitalist existence.

[23] See Keep 141.

[24] For an extended consideration of Maturin's text as a meta-gothic work, see Eggenschwiler, "Melmoth and Wanderer: Gothic on Gothic."

[25] See the introduction to Hobbes's *Leviathan* (1651) and Descartes's *Treatise on Man* (1664). The latter asks its readers "to consider that [mental and emotional] functions (including passion, memory, and imagination) follow from the mere arrangement of the machine's organs every bit as naturally as the movements of a clock or other automaton follow from the arrangement of its counter-weights and wheels" (108).

[26] See Sedgwick, *Between Men*. 83-96.

[27] Camlot, "Early Talking Books."

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[28] This point is indebted to Ivan Kreilkamp's study of the "phonographic culture" of the Victorians. Refuting Barthes' claim that "Writing is the destruction of every voice" (qtd. in Kreilkamp, *Voice* 1), Kreilkamp maintains that 'voice persists in the discourse of print culture, where it remains as trace and residue capable of giving rise to inchoate new forms' (*Voice* 2).

[29] McLuhan: "the 'content' of any medium is always another medium" (*Understanding Media* 8).

[30] On Jonathan and Mina's use of Sir Isaac Pitman's phonetic shorthand system see Picker 777. First presented in 1837 (and still the most common form of shorthand in Britain), Pitman's system is composed of symbols that represent sounds rather than letters.

[31] See page 70 of this dissertation.

[32] See Bierman (1972); Smith (1998); Sceats (2001).

[33] E.T.A. Hoffmann's Olympia and Auguste Villiers de L'Isle-Adam's *L'Eve future* are the foremost literary examples of this erotic simulation.

[34] Ganthony parodies the phonograph alongside other audio-curiosities of the age, such as ventriloquism and spiritualism. Their placement together suggests a correspondence between these technological and ephemeral phantasms of the voice.

[35] In *Principles of Mental Physiology*, William Benjamin Carpenter uses this term to describe the ability of the unconscious mind to function "*below the plane* of consciousness, either during profound sleep, or while the attention is wholly engrossed by some entirely different train of thought" (516).

[36] Remarkably, *Dracula's* 1897 publication precedes by four years Karl Landsteiner's discovery of human blood groups. Still, the "quality" of blood is something Van Helsing seems to recognize intuitively, as his sequence of transfusions follows an identifiably racist and classist hierarchy.

Conclusion

This dissertation traces the networks Victorian culture established between bodies, machines, and novels. These networks were founded upon a cultural premise that bodies and machines share a common, yet deeply enigmatic, language that placed them in cryptic correspondence, if not direct communication, with each other. In the novels and technologies studied here, these indirect correspondences are traced via the logic of indexical marking. I have argued for the index as a privileged signifier within gothic narrative: the form routinely exploits these signs for their evidential power, and (more fundamentally) for the involuntary nature of their emergence. Peirce referred to this quality of the index as a kind of "blindness," while Marey had attempted to harness its automatic nature to forge a *langue inconnue* of the phenomenal world.

Exploring the Victorian scriptural economy's exhaustive attempts to capture this hidden language of the world through automatic writing technologies, my first chapter explored the graphomaniac as a quintessentially Victorian construction, and a projection of the culture's mingled enthusiasm and anxiety concerning the period's comprehensive expansion of what could be apprehended as writing. If the objective and mechanical process of the "graphical method" was intended to automatize and thus neutralize the examiner's input, the correlative figure of the graphomaniac, embodying the fantasy of a transparent relation between exterior and internal "character," promised a radical simplification of the problem of the subject. Capable only of composing the signs of his own discomposure, this pathological writer's output lacked the versatility of the professional author, and yet the "unauthorized" or involuntary nature of his writing held a forceful attraction for readers fascinated by the symptomatic value of inscriptions that

were no longer subject to the mediation and self-censorship that marked intentional acts of writing.

It is this unknown language—hidden even from itself—that Gothic narrative struggles to communicate to its readers. In highlighting the Victorian techniques and technologies of writing that underwrite this struggle, I have sought to situate historically Sedgwick's key observation concerning the Gothic—that it "literalizes and externalizes […] conflicts that are usually seen as internal." Late eighteenth-century Gothic (the focus of Sedgwick's study) tended to exploit a more overtly superstitious relation to the index, employing living tapestries, bleeding statues, and stigmata to demonstrate the unnerving vitality of signs. A century later, the "supernatural machinery" that had driven the Gothic novel since its inception would be re-mediated through thoroughly natural machines that literally externalized the internal, and objectified the subject.[1] If Gothic is to be distinguished, as I have argued here, by its corporeal strategies of indexical inscription, this figural tendency signals a distinctively Gothic epistemology. Late-Victorian Gothic novels are decidedly not vehicles for the transmission of othered voices, which are routinely suppressed. They are rarely interested in hearing what the monster has to say for itself. They refuse the possibility of autonomous narrative in pursuit of the body's story, one captured through a matrix of inscriptions.

Though Anne Rice will one day conduct a cordial *Interview with the Vampire*, Bram Stoker's Count will have to settle for a polygraph examination. The instrument serves as a fitting emblem for the novels at each chapter's core. Insofar as they employ the multiple-narrator formula adapted from the epistolary novel, where a number of parallel narratives are sequenced within the novel so that the text's truth can emerge from

the spectrum, *Jekyll and Hyde*, *The Beetle*, and *Dracula* are polygraphic narratives. More fundamentally, however, the polygraph symbolizes the varied adversarial tactics of indirect correspondence resorted to within a form driven by a hermeneutic of suspicion. These texts cannot simply tell the truth, but must instead detect the lie. Utterson will give voice to this interpretive impulse when he intuits that Hyde's pseudonym is a falsehood to be exposed through the graphological examination of his signature. Along with the amateur detectives who police each of these novels, Utterson turns to the involuntary indexical traces of the body to determine the hidden identity and deep "character" of his antagonist. In doing so, he upholds the fundamentally conservative project of the Victorian scriptural economy, conscripting the graphomaniac through the apprehension of his involuntary acts of self-registration. For the uncanny ways in which Hyde's writing denatures the discourse of autobiography, I have read Stevenson's text as a "paranoid critique" of modern regimes of self-registration. However, no small part of this story's terror arises from the ease in which such resistant and disruptive catachreses of the body can be re-incorporated as legible signs.

If the introduction and first chapter leave this relay of dispersal and apprehension relatively intact, observing how graphomaniacal bodies are patiently archived and codified through graphical method, the turn to the Gothic within the following chapters finds the methods of the examiner gradually absorbed into the delirium of the graphomaniacal subject. Scientific rhetoric rationalizes and economizes experimental bodies, characterizing the examiner's abdication of will as an act of restraint that neutralizes the subject. The Gothic imagination—which marks the speculative science of Atherton's optogram and the pseudo-sciences advanced by Van Helsing—radicalizes that

same body, characterizing the *will not to will* as release, exposing a body dispossessed of subjectivity and fundamentally open to the world outside itself.

Critical interpretations that stress Gothic's discursive debt to phrenological, physiognomic and degeneration theories of the period—specifically, the speculation that bodies bear the stamp of their essential character—identify only the most conservative logic of corporeal inscription imagined within the genre. Gothic characterization, I argue, theorized a radical dispersal of inscribed signs, alternately intrigued and troubled by the possibility that encounters with alterity could remotely mark *our own* bodies. In chapter three, the dawning sense of impressionability that haunts Jekyll's pursuers has been given more concrete shape in the body of the photographic negative. This impression corresponds with a historical shift towards an embodied understanding of the observer, who finds that in order to bear objective witness to the scene he must *objectify* his own body. Seeing and seen in striking moments of mutual apprehension, Marsh's observers recognize their bodies as the indexical instruments of narrative.

If *Dracula* stands as the dissertation's most thoroughly networked novel and the pinnacle of techno-gothic, it also showcases the most methodical enlistment of impressionable human bodies as media. Focalizing *Dracula* through the complex of fidelity, I have asked precisely what kind of truth might be produced through the "immediate" transcription of events the novel promises. Stoker's novel offers a number of possible answers to this question, each encoded within different technologies of writing—instruments that I broadly categorize in relation to two contradictory strategies of immediacy within modern thinking on communications. The first, touted enthusiastically by Jonathan and practiced religiously with his fiancée, strives for

temporal immediacy through the renunciation of the body. The mechanics of shorthand and typewriter abolish physical obstacles to communication and approximate the symbolic dream of communicating without touching: even sexual infidelities can now be discursively rendered as bloodless information.

The second register of immediacy, personified by the vampire and emblematized by the analog inscriptions of the phonograph, introduces the scandal of touching without communicating. Here, only the body is retained, understood not as an obstacle, but an instrument of contiguous impressionability. In a text composed by dedicated graphomaniacs, Renfield is the sole writer to be *institutionally* committed, and Seward's observation of his patient reveals his obsessive writing not to be the symptom of a personal pathology, but the index of another's influence. Through his cultivation of bodies as indices of the Count's identity and movements, Van Helsing exploits the evidential power of the index to locate and apprehend bodies. However, his experiment with human media culminates in Mina's final instrumental role as mesmerized medium, an encounter that exposes us to a more fundamentally disorienting experience of voided subjectivity absorbed into carnal immediacy with the other.

In these pages, I have considered the Victorian scriptural economy through the lens of the gothic in order to uncover the uncanny power of automatic writing technologies to transcribe the automatisms of the subject. Externalizing internal "character," these graphical machines bring on the panic of finding the self objectively rendered outside oneself. However, the more radical estrangement brought on by such technologies lies in their function as metaphor and means for the internalization of the external. In the strange tremor that mars Jekyll's signature and Jonathan's, in the

obsessive writing of Lindon and Renfield, in the carnal immediacy of Atherton's retinal print and Seward's phonograph cylinders, and in the eerie transcript of Mina's trance, the Gothic imagines bodies as impressionable media, compulsively reproducing the sign of their traumatic encounters with the other.

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[1] For early considerations of the genre's dependence on "supernatural machinery," see Walpole's preface to *Otranto*, as well as assessments of the novel by Clara Reeve (1777), Thomas Macauley (1833), and Sir Walter Scott (1881).

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Vita

Name:	Gregory Donald Brophy
Post-secondary Education:	The University of Western Ontario London, Ontario 2003-2010 Ph. D. (English) The University of Western Ontario London, Ontario 2002-2003 M.A. (English) Queen's University Kingston, Ontario 2001-2002 B.Ed. Trent University Peterborough, Ontario 1997-2001 B.A. (English)
Honours & Awards:	McIntosh Prize for Dissertation Research, Department of English (2008) Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Doctoral Fellowship (2006-2007) Ontario Graduate Scholarship, Declined (2005-2006) Ontario Graduate Scholarship (2004-2005) Ontario Graduate Scholarship (2003-2004) Ontario Graduate Scholarship. (2002-2003) President's List, Dean's List. Trent University. Bagnani Undergraduate Award (2000-2001) Helen and Barney Sandwell Scholarship (1998-1999) Hector & Geraldine Gray Scholarship (1998-1999) Binney and Smith Scholarship (1997-1998)
Related Work Experience:	*Lecturer*, Department of English, McGill University English 490: Prosthetic Gods – Cronenberg, Bodies, Machines, Winter 2010 English 276: Methods of Cultural Analysis, Winter 2010 English 359: Poetics of the Image, Winter 2009 English 359: Poetics of the Image, Winter 2008 English 279: Introduction to Film as Art, Summer 2007 English 359: Poetics of the Image, Fall 2006

Teaching Assistant, Department of Film Studies, University of Western Ontario
Film 020: Introduction to Film Studies, Fall/Winter 2003
Film 020: Introduction to Film Studies, Fall/Winter 2005

Teaching Assistant, Department of English, University of Western Ontario
English 020: Introduction to English Literature, Fall/Winter 2004

Undergraduate Teaching Assistant, Department of English, Trent University
English 205: Form and Context in Literature, Fall/Winter 2001

Publications:

"Gothic Optics and Impressionable Minds in Richard Marsh's *The Beetle*." *Monstrous Media: Technology and the Gothic, 1900/2000*. eds. Fred Botting and Catherine Spooner. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2011. Forthcoming.

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"A Miracle of Rare Device: William Basinski's Digital Romanticism." *Drawing a Blank*. Ninth Annual Graduate Conference in Comparative Literature and Theory & Criticism. University of Western Ontario. March 2007.

"Impressionable Minds: Inscribing Interiority in *The Beetle*." *The Human and Its Others*: American

Comparative Literature Association. Princeton University. March 2006.

"Prying the Object from Its Shell: Stan Brakhage's *The Act of Seeing With One's Own Eyes*." *Visible Evidence XII*. Concordia University. August 2005.

"An Unauthorized Autobiography: Decompositions of the Subject in Nineteenth-Century Gothic." *Deviance and Defiance*: Seventh Biannual Conference of the International Gothic Association. Université de Montréal. August 2005.

"Hugo Munsterberg's Technologies of Confession and Conscription." *Technology, Media, and Culture in the Space Between, 1914-1945*. McGill University, May 2005.