

SOUNDING BODIES AND VOICES IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY BRITISH AND
AMERICAN GOTHIC FICTION

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Cornell University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

by

Kristie Ann Schlauraff

January 2017

© 2017 Kristie Ann Schlauraff

SOUNDING BODIES AND VOICES IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY BRITISH AND
AMERICAN GOTHIC FICTION

Kristie Ann Schlauraff, Ph.D.

Cornell University 2017

When George Du Maurier's infamous mesmerist Svengali performs on his elastic penny whistle, the instrument produces a sound "more human almost than the human voice itself." The suggestion that a voice could be more, or conversely less, human calls attention to the precariousness of a category under threat in the nineteenth century. My project confronts the enigmatic nature of voices in transatlantic Gothic fiction in relation to definitions of the human, attending to figures that frustrate taxonomic classification in sonic as well as visual terms. Discussions of stethoscopic listening, physiognomy, vivisection, and mesmerism in Britain and the United States frame my chapters, underscoring a nineteenth-century preoccupation with embodiment foundational for both literary and medical knowledge. Through an analysis of bodies as soundscapes in the work of Edgar Allan Poe, Robert Louis Stevenson, and H.G. Wells, among others, my project discovers an attention to voice as a recalcitrant force that subverts scientific authority over bodies. Michel Foucault's *The Birth of the Clinic* famously establishes the authoritative gaze as rendering bodies knowable, but I contend that the audible world remained a contested and occulted space that resisted classification. Sound was central to nineteenth-century investigations of the human.

In the texts I examine, characters confront the sonic qualities of corporeal beings, which challenge them to listen in unconventional ways. Although the listening practices necessary to

interpret these qualities are often disorienting, they enable characters to recognize networks of influence that reshape the conditions of embodiment, which had become what William A. Cohen describes as the “untranscendable horizon of the human.” These connections offer the possibility of meaningful interaction yet simultaneously endanger the listener. In the unsettled realm of Gothic fiction, sound is framed as a force that can both empower and disempower bodies as it circulates within and between them. Establishing a new awareness of bodies as soundscapes in their own right, *Sounding Bodies and Voices* elucidates how Gothic works draw on nineteenth-century scientific practices to reimagine the contours of the human.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Kristie A. Schlauraff works on nineteenth-century British and American literature, the history of science, and sound studies. She is originally from Long Island, where she completed her B.A. in English and Spanish, and her M.A. in English at Stony Brook University in 2009. After teaching at Suffolk County Community College for a year, she moved to Ithaca to complete her Ph.D. in English at Cornell University. In 2016 she was awarded an Arthur J. Ennis Post-Doctoral Fellowship at Villanova University.

To my grandma and my parents – all my love always

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The constellation of interests represented in this project first came together in my second year at Cornell University when I had the opportunity to take classes related to the theme of “Sound: Culture, Theory, Practice, Politics” through the Society for the Humanities. I would first like to thank Trevor Pinch, whose course on “Science, Technology, and Medicine” led me to write what has now become the first chapter of *Sounding Bodies and Voices*. Writing that piece made me rethink my entire project and reorganize my entire committee, enabling me to produce a work that I am proud of both intellectually and personally.

My dissertation committee has been a constant source of support and encouragement since I began this project. As my chair, Shirley Samuels has consistently pushed me to be an engaged member of the academic community and take every opportunity to become a more rigorous scholar. Without her guidance and reassurance, I would never have participated in what have been some of the best experiences of my professional life thus far. Elisha Cohn’s careful attention to my work and thoughtful feedback on my many, many drafts has been invaluable in helping me shape this project. Since our first meeting to discuss my paper on Edgar Allan Poe, she has known how to elegantly rearticulate the arguments that I clumsily presented to her. Elisha’s extreme generosity has been integral to my success at Cornell, and I hope to enrich the lives of my own advisees as she has mine. I am also deeply indebted to Tom McEnaney for introducing me to the field of Sound Studies, and for inspiring me to be a better thinker and writer. Throughout our many conversations about sound, speech, listening, and voice Tom has never allowed me to shy away from the challenging questions, which has not only helped me sharpen my ideas, but also made my work immensely more interesting. Harry Shaw has pointed me towards some of the most delightful Victorian novels I have encountered, and spurred me to

bring a level of structural clarity to the project that has enabled me to underscore my most important claims.

A number of faculty members at Cornell, including Jeremy Braddock, Nick Salvato, and Roger Gilbert guided me towards my interest in sound at the early stages of my work. I am especially grateful to Andrew Galloway, who took such a candid interest in my work on Poe, encouraged me to speak to Elisha Cohn about the history of science, and helped me improve my tennis game along the way. In addition to faculty, my fellow graduate students at Cornell have been essential to this project. Thank you to the participants who critiqued my work at the English Department Roundtable, the members of my dissertation writing groups, the members of the American Reading Group, especially Jesse Goldberg and Verdie Culbreath, and the faculty and students who constituted the audience at C19 Day. Beyond Cornell, I would like to thank the many scholars who offered me their generous feedback at the Futures of American Studies Institute (2014), especially Donald Pease, the American Antiquarian Society's Center for Historic American Visual Culture Summer Seminar on The Art of Science and Technology, 1750-1900, and Dickens Universe (2014). My work has been supported by generous grants from the American Studies Department and the Society for the Humanities at Cornell University, and the Susan Tane Graduate Student Travel Grant.

A warm thanks to the members of my cohort, who provided intellectual and emotional support throughout our years together, and made my time at Cornell so wonderful. Xine Yao, thank you for being such a supportive friend and colleague. I sincerely hope that Shirley accurately predicted our long and fruitful years of collaboration as Doctors of Philosophy. Bernadette Guthrie and Mia Tootill, I will forever treasure the years when we lived only steps apart. Your constant support and friendship in all things within and beyond the realm of

academia is such a remarkable gift. Finally, I would like to thank my parents and grandma who have been a constant source of strength and laughter throughout my life. Without your unconditional love I would never have been courageous enough to pursue my Ph.D. in English.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION Bodies as Soundscapes: Listening to Gothic Fiction	1
CHAPTER I. Do You Hear What I Hear?: Stethoscopic Listening In Edgar Allan Poe’s “The Tell-Tale Heart”	18
CHAPTER II. Sonic Physiognomy in Robert Louis Stevenson’s <i>The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde</i>	46
CHAPTER III. “All the Pain in the World”: Vivisection and the Animal Voice in H.G. Wells’s <i>The Island of Doctor Moreau</i>	82
CHAPTER IV. “The Apotheosis of Voice”: Mesmerism as Mechanization in Edgar Allan Poe’s Mesmeric Tales and George Du Maurier’s <i>Trilby</i>	127
BIBLIOGRAPHY	173

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1. <i>Read this. Clairvoyance, mesmerism, and psychology combined</i> (1865).....	134
Figure 2. <i>Mechanics Hall...Worcester</i> (1871).....	136

Introduction

Bodies as Soundscapes: Listening to Gothic Fiction

In her entry on “body” in *Keywords in Sound*, Deborah Kapchan provocatively writes: “the body begins with sound. The sound of the body is the sound of the other but it is also the sound of the same... We resound together.”¹ My project proceeds from the suggestion that bodies are inherently sonic to argue that nineteenth-century British and American Gothic authors were both cognizant of bodies as soundscapes and deeply interested in how they “resound together.” Although many critics have explored the genre’s engagement with science, contending that it both “played a significant part in the popularisation of medical knowledge” and “represented the body as an *untrustworthy* source of information” as a means of questioning such knowledge, few have attended to the relationship of Gothic science to Gothic soundscapes.² Investigating the intersections between science and sound in transatlantic Gothic fiction, I challenge the prevalent critical assumption that nineteenth-century conceptions of the gaze framed bodies as knowable, arguing instead that the audible world reinforced the precariousness of the human.

Throughout my project, I demonstrate how the voice fits into a broader array of sounds attributable to bodies in the context of four contemporary scientific practices: stethoscopic listening, physiognomy, vivisection, and mesmerism. Characters involved in these practices are forced to confront the sonic qualities of corporeal beings, leading them to develop new modes of observing and interpreting bodies as soundscapes. These auditory experiences expose the often-inhuman agency of sound, which empowers or disempowers bodies as it circulates within and

¹ Deborah Kapchan, “body,” in *Keywords in Sound*, eds. David Novak and Matt Sakakeeny (Durham: Duke

² Laurence Talairach-Vielmas, “‘I Have Bottled Babes Unborn’: The Gothic, Medical Collections, and Victorian Popular Culture,” *Gothic Studies* 17, no. 1 (May 2015): 29-30; Corinna Wagner, “The Dream of a Transparent Body: Identity, Science and the Gothic Novel,” *Gothic Studies* 14, no. 1 (May 2012): 75. For more on Gothic literature and science see Barbara T. Gates, “Literature and Science,” *Victorian Literature and Culture* (1998): 485-488; Peter Katz, “Victorian Literature and Science: Introduction,” *Critical Survey* 27, no. 2 (2015): 1-3; and Sara Wasson, “Useful Darkness: Intersections between Medical Humanities and Gothic Studies,” *Gothic Studies* 17, no. 1 (May 2015): 1-12.

between them. Drawing on scientific knowledge to reimagine the contours of the human, the Gothic texts that I examine recognize sounding bodies as participating in networks of influence that disrupt understandings of embodiment as an impediment to shared experience. These works affirm the idea that “We resound together,” but also consider how dissonant bodies like Mary Shelley’s creature or Stevenson’s Edward Hyde might complicate our collective resonance. What emerges from my consideration is a consistent focus in both Britain and the United States on the voice as a recalcitrant force that undermines mounting scientific authority over bodies and restores a degree of power to those outside the scientific community. Like the body, this introduction begins with sound before considering the genre’s engagement with contemporary science.

I. Gothic Soundscapes

The authors that I study differ in their approaches to integrating science into their fiction, but they share an insistence on sensory observation that underscores the prevalent association between sensing and knowing. Whereas contemporary scientific practices overwhelmingly privileged vision in this respect, Gothic authors questioned the efficacy of depending wholly on the eye. In its treatment of sound, an aspect of the genre that has been largely overlooked by critics, Gothic fiction anticipates a field that crystalized in 1992 when Steven Feld coined the term “acoustemology,” a word that conjoins “acoustics” and “epistemology” to “theorize sound as a way of knowing.”³ His intention in creating the term was to develop a new approach to what he identifies as a central question to social theory: “is the world constituted by multiple essences, by primal substances with post facto categorical names like ‘human,’ ‘animal,’ ‘plant,’

³ Steven Feld, “acoustemology,” in *Keywords in Sound*, eds. David Novak and Matt Sakakeeny (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 12.

‘material,’ or ‘technology?’ Or is it constituted relationally by the acknowledgment of conjunctions, disjunctions, and entanglements among all copresent and historically accumulated forms?”⁴ Rather than addressing Feld’s particular question, my project considers how Gothic fiction modeled different ways of knowing through sound that challenged the scientific community’s attempts to solidify the categorical names like “human,” “animal,” and “technology” that Feld revisits over a century later. Highlighting the more frightening conjunctions and disjunctions of their accumulated forms, Gothic authors nevertheless gesture towards the idea that the world is in fact constituted relationally.

The suggestion that acoustemology is necessarily unstable, shifting, contextual, and experiential because its relationality demands “that one knows through an ongoing cumulative and interactive process of participation and reflection,” frames it in terms that were all too familiar to nineteenth-century writers fascinated by scientific knowledge.⁵ Intent on establishing their authority and expertise, the scientific community obscured its complicity in this kind of “cumulative and interactive process” of knowledge creation because they needed to provide the public with hard facts. Offering a critique of science as rendering bodies knowable, a notion implicitly tied to seeing as knowing, the Gothic texts I examine expose the unsettled nature of scientific knowledge by presenting bodies and voices that resist classification within the various systems that contemporary science strove to define. These works draw attention to sound as a way of knowing that, while often confusing, ultimately helps characters orient themselves in relation to animate and inanimate bodies.

A significant term in the context of my project is “soundscape,” a word that has received a great deal of critical attention since it first appeared in R. Murray Schafer’s foundational work

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., 13-14.

The Tuning of the World in 1977.⁶ Broadly speaking, the soundscape constitutes “any acoustic field of study” and contains “keynotes,” fundamental tones created by the geography and climate, “signals” like bells or whistles that emerge in the foreground and are consciously perceived, and, like a landscape, “soundmarks” specially noted by the community.⁷ Central to Schafer’s definition of the soundscape is its inherent changeability, an aspect that forms the basis of one of the fundamental questions of sound studies: “what is the relationship between man and the sounds of his environment and what happens when those sounds change?”⁸ This question becomes a primary focus of my first chapter, which considers how Poe’s “The Tell-Tale Heart” addresses the shifting sonic environment produced by the invention of the stethoscope, and also appears in a slightly modified form in my second chapter in relation to what I term “sonic physiognomy.”

In a recent article titled “Rethinking the Soundscape: A Critical Genealogy of a Key Term in Sound Studies,” Ari Y. Kelman points out that while Schafer’s term is widely used throughout the field, its definition is quite inconsistent. The primary problem with this, according to Kelman, is the fact that whereas Schafer intends to be prescriptive rather than descriptive, critics that take up the term generally do the opposite. “Schafer’s soundscape is not a neutral field of aural investigation at all,” he argues, “rather, it is deeply informed by Schafer’s own preferences for certain sounds over others.”⁹ At the risk of further diluting an already troubling term, this project employs a descriptive definition of the “soundscape” that draws on John Picker’s work. He argues, “it seems appropriate to steer away from a monolithic conception of a

⁶ Schafer’s work was republished as *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World* in 1993.

⁷ R. Murray Schafer, *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World* (Rochester, VT: Destiny Books, 1994), 10. See also R. Murray Schafer, “Soundscapes and Earwitnesses,” in *Hearing History: A Reader*, ed. Mark M. Smith (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2004), 3-9.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 3-4.

⁹ Ari Y. Kelman, “Rethinking the Soundscape: A Critical Genealogy of a Key Term in Sound Studies,” *The Senses and Society* 5, no. 2 (July 2010): 214.

singular Victorian soundscape toward an analysis of the experiences of particular individuals listening under specific cultural influences and with discernable motivations, if that is the word, for hearing as they did.”¹⁰ Like Picker, I treat the soundscape as a plural, individualized experience that is dependent on the listener’s motivations and techniques. While the Gothic genre shares a set of keynotes, signals, and, to a degree, soundmarks, the particular soundscape of each of these texts appears as a unique sonic environment. Relatedly, I approach sound as any sensation perceived by the ear, and focus on its emanation from two sources: the soundscapes characters inhabit and the soundscapes characters constitute as bodies.

Conceiving of bodies as soundscapes recontextualizes the voice within a larger set of sounds that collectively define the individual. One aim of this project is to demonstrate how contemplating the voice as a privileged mode of expression to the exclusion of other sounds limits our understanding of how nineteenth-century listeners experienced the audible world. As Picker aptly explains, “this was a period of unprecedented amplification, unheard-of-loudness,” and listening became both an integral and intimidating process requiring new kinds of attention and producing alternative modes of knowing.¹¹ Mladen Dolar’s discussion of “The Linguistics of the Voice” provides a productive framework for thinking about the challenges that characters face when navigating not merely the nineteenth-century soundscape, but the nineteenth-century Gothic soundscape. He explains,

we constantly inhabit the universe of voices, we are continuously bombarded by voices, we have to make our daily way through a jungle of voices, and we have to use all kinds of machetes and compasses so as not to get lost. There are the voices of other people, the voices of music, the voices of media, our own voices intermingled with the lot. All those voices are shouting, whispering, crying, caressing, threatening, imploring, seducing, commanding, pleading, praying, hypnotizing, confessing, terrorizing, declaring...¹²

¹⁰ John M. Picker, *Victorian Soundscapes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 14.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹² Mladen Dolar, “The Linguistics of the Voice,” in *Sound Studies Reader*, ed. Jonathan Sterne (New York: Routledge, 2012), 539.

The panoply of vocal actions that Dolar lists underscores the complexity of navigating the sonic world that we are compelled to engage through our constant and innate residence within it. Additionally, the list exemplifies what Dolar refers to as “the infinite shades of the voice.” In my consideration of bodies as soundscapes, the immensity of voice is compounded by the infinite shades of the body itself. The heartbeat, footfalls, respiration, pre-linguistic cries, and other sounds attributable to bodies moving through the public and private spaces of the text each possess a similarly innumerable list of descriptors. The invocation of the machete and the comparison of this world to a jungle suggest that moving through it is a violent process. Furthermore, the intermingling of our own voice “with the lot” reflects the relative ease with which sounding bodies can be overwhelmed, blurring the distinction between self and other. Dolar reinforces the complexity of the audible world when he goes on to explain, “all those voices rise over the multitude of sounds and noises, another even wilder and wider jungle: sounds of nature, sounds of machines and technology.”¹³ If we expand Dolar’s description of the voice to include the other facets of bodies as soundscapes, the audible world becomes an even more disorienting space. Setting these sounding bodies over “the multitude of sounds and noises” constituting the soundscapes they inhabit heightens the deep sense of confusion and raises questions regarding what kinds of listening practices might be used to parse the dynamic components of the audible world.

Nineteenth-century scientific practices overwhelmingly privileged seeing over hearing, but the Gothic fiction that I examine insists on a more interdependent approach to the senses that dismantles the assumption that vision is paramount. My project attends to a diverse set of listening practices employed by characters that find themselves unable to rely on sight. For

¹³ Ibid.

instance, Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart" stages an encounter in a bedroom "black as pitch" between a narrator reliant on his acute hearing and an old man represented as a cataractous eye.

Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* presents readers with a figure that defies visual description, forcing characters to use their ears to render his body legible. In confronting the sonic qualities of corporeal beings, Gothic characters are asked to listen in unconventional ways. Although the listening practices necessary to interpret these qualities are often disorienting, they enable characters to recognize networks of influence that reshape human interactions by changing the conditions of embodiment. These connections offer the possibility of meaningful interaction yet simultaneously endanger the listener by exposing interior conditions.

In thinking about how these texts model particular listening practices it is important to understand the subtle distinction between hearing and listening. Addressing a prominent mode of thinking about these terms, Jonathan Sterne describes the perceived difference as follows: hearing is a physical capability while listening has subjective intention.¹⁴ Although the actual differences between hearing and listening are far more complex, my project proceeds from the idea that listening is a more active and conscious process involving particular intentions. As Tom Rice explains, "listening is understood to involve a deliberate channeling of attention toward a sound."¹⁵ Within the Gothic texts I study this "deliberate channeling of attention" occurs both as a result of restrictions placed on characters' vision and as a response to an awareness of previously unfamiliar sounds and soundscapes.

¹⁴ Jonathan Sterne, "hearing," in *Keywords*, 69. Though this simplistic distinction functions in the context of my argument, Sterne ultimately offers a more complex definition that challenges what he calls the "audiovisual litany" and undercuts the idea that there is a "natural state of hearing." See also Jonathan Sterne, *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003).

¹⁵ Tom Rice, "listening," in *Keywords*, 99.

Throughout my analyses I also demonstrate the tension between the ear as a significant mode of observation and the ear as an object of scientific study. Nineteenth-century understandings of the ear as a sensory organ, another aspect of the body to be studied, are apparent in a small but significant semantic change that Sterne outlines as follows: before 1847 the word “auricular” was used to mean “of or pertaining to the ear.” This word carries a connotation of oral tradition and refers to the external features of the ear. After 1847 the word “aural” replaced auricular to mean “of or pertaining to the organ of hearing.” This later term carries no connotation of oral tradition and refers to the middle ear, inner ear, and nerves.¹⁶ The shift to this more clinical term not only reflects the contemplation of bodies as assemblages of separable parts, but also advances into the body by moving from the exterior auricular space to the interior aural space of the middle and inner ear. Examining the ear becomes yet another way of opening up the body and, as I demonstrate in my project, an important means of understanding and manipulating the relationships between sounding bodies. Within the texts I examine, the impetus that inspires Gothic characters to become attuned to their sonic environments, and to consider sound as a way of knowing, is often connected to contemporary science.

II. Gothic Science

In her introduction to the 1831 edition of *Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley describes a vivid dream that she had after listening to her husband Percy Bysshe Shelley and Lord Byron discuss a recent scientific experiment performed by Dr. Erasmus Darwin. She writes,

I saw—with shut eyes, but acute mental vision, —I saw the pale student of unhallowed arts kneeling beside the thing he had put together. I saw the hideous phantasm of a man stretched out, and then, on the working of some powerful engine, show signs of life, and stir with an uneasy, half vital motion. Frightful must it be; for supremely frightful would

¹⁶ Sterne, “hearing,” 68.

be the effect of any human endeavour to mock the stupendous mechanism of the Creator of the world.¹⁷

This description of what would become the most famous scene of her novel captures a sentiment shared by many nineteenth-century readers that is relevant to all of the Gothic texts I examine in this project: fear regarding how scientific possibilities might reshape the category of the human. Shelley's experience also demonstrates how the circulation of scientific knowledge through casual conversation inspired Gothic authors to imagine sciences' most dangerous implications. As she listens to her companions' explanation of how Darwin stimulated voluntary movement in a preserved piece of vermicelli, Shelley thinks "Perhaps a corpse would be re-animated; galvanism had given token of such things: perhaps the component parts of a creature might be manufactured, brought together, and endued with vital warmth."¹⁸ The "perhaps" that frames Shelley's consideration of what science might accomplish is significant because it exemplifies the blending of fiction and fact characteristic of British and American Gothic fiction following her influential work. Although the genre is notoriously difficult to define, described in the first edition of *Gothic Studies* as "quite deliberately fraudulent and shifty," *Frankenstein* marks a departure from the earlier emphasis on the supernatural in favor of a more critical engagement with science.¹⁹ This reorientation has led critics like Brian Aldiss to characterize Shelley's text as the first science fiction novel, a claim that Patrick Brantlinger helpfully qualifies by suggesting we regard the work as an early example of "cross-fertilization between the Gothic romance and science fiction."²⁰ Like Shelley's *Frankenstein*, my project marks an instance of "cross-fertilization" between distinct though related fields of study. Drawing together literature, sound

¹⁷ Mary Shelley, "Introduction to *Frankenstein*, Third Edition (1831)," in *Frankenstein*, ed. J. Paul Hunter, Second Norton Critical Edition (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2012), 168.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Jerrold E. Hogle, "Introduction: Gothic Studies Past, Present and Future," *Gothic Studies* 1, no. 1 (1999): 2.

²⁰ Brian W. Aldiss, *Billion Year Spree: The True History of Science Fiction* (New York: Schocken Books, 1976), 20-31; and Patrick Brantlinger, "The Gothic Origins of Science Fiction," *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 14, no. 1 (Autumn 1980): 32.

studies, and the history of science, I demonstrate an essential connection between Gothic fiction's representation of science and Gothic soundscapes.

Shelley's effectiveness in addressing "the mysterious fears of our nature" is apparent not only in the sustained popularity of her tale nearly two centuries after its publication, but also in the initial credence it received from scientific figures like Erasmus Darwin.²¹ In his preface to *Frankenstein*, Percy Bysshe Shelley begins by stating, "The event on which this fiction is founded has been supposed by Dr. Darwin, and some of the physiological writers of Germany, as not of impossible occurrence."²² These kinds of disclaimers about Gothic works became commonplace throughout the century, reinforcing the uncertainty about scientific knowledge both on the part of the public and on the part of the scientific community. In recognizing the possibility of the events in *Frankenstein*, the physiological writers that Percy Bysshe Shelley cites affirm the growing authority of the "unhallowed arts" over human bodies but also justify the "supremely frightful" attitude Mary Shelley associates with these kinds of human endeavors. What if Victor Frankenstein's real-life counterpart were to "[disturb], with profane fingers, the tremendous secrets of the human frame"?²³ Viewed in this light, science becomes a monstrous force that requires careful oversight rather than a virtuous mode of human advancement.

Nineteenth-century science and medicine are remarkable for their particular attention to bodies as objects, a mentality Shelley reflects in her portrayal of Victor Frankenstein's conception of the human form as an assemblage of parts. Tracing the inception of this new approach to Paris, the center of the medical revolution, historian Roy Porter underscores the circulation of scientific knowledge at an international level. "While the new French hospital

²¹ Shelley, "Introduction to *Frankenstein*," 167.

²² Percy Bysshe Shelley, preface to *Frankenstein*, by Mary Shelley (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2012), 5.

²³ Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*, ed. J. Paul Hunter, Second Norton Critical Edition (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2012), 47.

medicine was being naturalized into Britain,” he explains, “American medical students, largely from Boston, Philadelphia and New York, were sailing (or later steaming) across the Atlantic.”²⁴ This persistent exchange of scientific knowledge was facilitated not only by the movement of bodies (both living and dead), but also by the movement of voices in the form of publications like *The Lancet*. Founded by English surgeon Thomas Wakley in 1823, *The Lancet* was one of several popular journals that published articles on medicine, politics, and theater. Wakley intended to inform and entertain the public, stating “a lancet can be an arched window to let in the light or it can be a sharp surgical instrument to cut out the dross and I intend to use it in both senses.”²⁵ His desire to “let in the light” and “cut out the dross” highlights the skepticism of nineteenth-century readers, where the impulse to enlighten and inform the public is necessarily coupled with a need to verify knowledge produced by the emergent scientific community. Journals like *The Lancet*, *Blackwood’s Magazine*, and *Scientific American* importantly allowed the public to maintain a sense of authority in the midst of professionalization, giving them access to conversations about developing sciences from anatomy to physiognomy. However, the circulation of knowledge also meant that Gothic texts had a greater currency; authors like Mary Shelley, Edgar Allan Poe, and Robert Louis Stevenson were able to convincingly place their fiction alongside non-fictional writings to raise important questions about the social, political, and ethical dimensions of scientific practice.²⁶ The overwhelmingly global nature of this process requires a transatlantic attention to Gothic literature. Nineteenth-century scientific advancement

²⁴ Roy Porter, *The Greatest Benefit to Mankind: A Medical History of Humanity* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997), 319.

²⁵ “About the Lancet Medical Journal,” *The Lancet*, <http://www.thelancet.com/lancet-about>.

²⁶ Reflecting on the relationship between literature and science, Barbara Gates claims: “We are always to understand that the cultural encounter between science and society moves in both directions and that any culture can provide striking correspondences. In nineteenth-century Britain, for example, scientific hunts for missing links evolved concurrently with the sleuthing of literary detectives.” “Literature and Science,” *Victorian Literature and Culture* (1998): 485.

was not a localized process; the circulation of knowledge between Britain and the United States shaped medical and literary understandings of human bodies.

In her discussion of the interplay between Gothic studies and the medical humanities, Sara Wasson situates bodies at the heart of the genre's critical work: "Gothic literature and film has long had an interest in the way medical practice controls, classifies, and torments the body in the service of healing. Medicine itself can be seen as an incorrigibly Gothic project."²⁷ Concern over the status and treatment of the body emerged as a result of figures like French anatomist Marie-Francois-Xavier Bichat who famously urged students to "open a few bodies" rather than depend on observation alone. Commenting on Bichat's contribution to modern science, Porter explains that clinical practice previously depended on "traditional bookish teachings" but underwent a dramatic change in the nineteenth century as "the revolutionary doctors put bodies before books, prizing the hands-on experience gained through indefatigable examination of the diseased, and later of their cadavers."²⁸ In a chapter of *The Birth of the Clinic* titled "Open Up a Few Corpses," Michel Foucault links this focus on pathological anatomy to a new means of employing the gaze that highlights the perception of vision as the predominant sense. "The gaze plunges into a space that it has given itself the task of traversing," Foucault writes. "The medical eye must see the illness spread before it, horizontally and vertically in graded depth, as it penetrates into the body, as it advances into its bulk, as it circumvents or lifts its masses, as it descends into its depths."²⁹ The image of the gaze plunging and traversing as it tracks the

²⁷ Sara Wasson, "Useful Darkness: Intersections between Medical Humanities and Gothic Studies," *Gothic Studies* 17, no. 1 (May 2015): 1. For more on bodies and Gothic fiction see Corinna Wagner, "The Dream of a Transparent Body: Identity, Science and the Gothic Novel," *Gothic Studies* 14, no. 1 (May 2012): 74-91; Laurence Talairach-Vielmas, "'I Have Bottled Babes Unborn': The Gothic, Medical Collections and Victorian Popular Culture," *Gothic Studies* 17, no. 1 (May 2015): 28-42; and Kelly Hurley, *The Gothic Body: Sexuality, materialism, and degeneration at the fin de siècle* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

²⁸ Porter, *The Greatest Benefit*, 306.

²⁹ Michel Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 136.

penetrating, advancing, circumventing, lifting, and descending of disease throughout the body illustrates the extreme power attributed to the eye, and to the physician, during this period. In this estimation, the nineteenth-century medical gaze allows practitioners to invasively maneuver through the exterior and interior surfaces of the body.

Bichat's insistence on penetrating the interior, and the consequent privileging of vision, offers an important framework for thinking about the specific practices I focus on in my project. While vivisection joins dissection in its literal opening up of the body, the other practices attempt to establish systems of observation that achieve the same effect without piercing the skin. For example, stethoscopic listening provided physicians a means of discerning internal conditions through external observation using an instrument that relies on the ear rather than the eye. Mesmerism similarly enabled practitioners to locate diseases within the bodies of entranced subjects and prescribe treatment, referencing no specific sense as dominating the diagnostic process. The significance of bodies to Gothic fiction's project of critiquing both individual practitioners and the medical institution more broadly is undeniable. All of the texts I study depict, to borrow Wasson's phrase, "medicine gone wrong," using the tropes of the Gothic to critique nineteenth-century scientific practices.³⁰ However, I argue that critical attention to the treatment of Gothic bodies has obscured other lines of inquiry regarding how sound and listening shape understandings of bodies in ways that are both similar to and distinct from vision. At a moment when vision was lauded as a means of rendering bodies knowable, Gothic authors presented sound as a recalcitrant force that disrupted orderly categories like human, animal, and machine.

III. Chapter Descriptions

³⁰ Wasson, "Useful Darkness," 7.

Sounding Bodies and Voices begins with an extended consideration of what it means to listen to bodies as soundscapes, contextualizing the listening practices that characters employ within established modes of scientific observation. My first chapter reads Edgar Allan Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart" as an allegory for stethoscopic listening. Invented in 1816 by René Laennec, the stethoscope shaped a form of listening known as "mediate auscultation" that Sterne describes as "a technique of examination, a mode of constructing knowledge of patients independent of patients' knowledge of themselves."³¹ Poe's narrator does not don a stethoscope, but his acute hearing similarly enables him to access the internal soundscape of the body and construct knowledge based on aural experience. Framing the tale as part of ongoing discussions within the medical community regarding the usefulness of external observation to discern internal conditions, I demonstrate how Poe successfully incorporates scientific and literary perspectives on the heart to critique the growing emphasis on rationality and sensory observation. Unable to navigate between the conventional soundscape of the domestic space and the unconventional soundscape of the human body, the narrator's acute hearing catalyzes his moral and emotional degeneration. Ultimately, Poe's depiction of stethoscopic listening recognizes bodies as soundscapes capable of exerting a particular kind of agency.

Turning to Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, my second chapter demonstrates how characters employ what I term "sonic physiognomy" to orient themselves in relation to animate bodies inhabiting a shifting soundscape. Like stethoscopic listening, this practice depends on external observation to render internal conditions legible. I argue that Edward Hyde's inscrutable countenance forecloses the possibility of conventional physiognomic reading, leaving characters to develop an alternative method of evaluating internal

³¹ Sterne, "Mediate Auscultation, the Stethoscope, and the 'Autopsy of the Living': Medicine's Acoustic Culture," *Journal of Medical Humanities* 22.2 (2001), 127.

qualities. As the face becomes an unreliable source of knowledge, the professional men populating the work become more attuned to the sonic environment and instinctively read the sounds of bodies and voices as indicative of character. The contrast between the good Dr. Jekyll's unremarkable voice and the evil Mr. Hyde's animalistic voice illustrates the expectation that internal qualities manifest not only in physical appearance, but also in the vocal and sonic attributes of individuals. Rather than endanger listeners like the practice in "The Tell-Tale Heart," this mode of discerning internal qualities based on the sounds of the body reveals Hyde's terrifying relation to Jekyll. Hyde's appearance remains enigmatic throughout the novella, yet in destabilizing the visual world he forces characters to understand the audible world as more concrete. The conclusion of the narrative depends on the recognition of bodies as soundscapes.

While my first two chapters establish a literary attention to bodies as soundscapes, the latter half of *Sounding Bodies and Voices* considers the implications of placing those bodies in concert. Shifting from human to animal experimentation, my third chapter remains focused on the precariousness of the human in relation to scientific knowledge. Literary representations of vivisection in Wilkie Collins's *Heart and Science: A Story of the Present Time* and H.G. Wells's *The Island of Doctor Moreau* echo public concerns about the demoralization and consequent degeneration of practitioners. The vivisection debates inform my argument; pro- and anti-vivisection rhetoric depended on hierarchical conceptions of pain and speech to define humankind in contradistinction to animals. Contradicting Elaine Scarry's contention that torture is language destroying, Moreau uses the infliction of extreme pain to produce and maintain language in his animal subjects. Drawing on Scarry's work, this chapter asks: If torture brings out the animal in humans, returning them to a state "anterior to language," what does vivisection provoke in the animal? Rendering bodies, voices, and thus humanness itself malleable, *The*

Island of Doctor Moreau challenges the vertical relationship between human and animal expression. I argue that the narrator's heightened attention to the soundscape ultimately reshapes his conceptualization of language to expose its plasticity. In doing so, the text expresses a very modern sentiment relevant to the field of sound studies. As David Samuels and Thomas Porcello explain, "by acknowledging that language is one case...that overlaps with other sounded modes of signification, sound studies can enter into critical dialogue with an intellectual history that has largely emphasized language's cognitive properties at the expense of its sonic enactments."³² Wells's depiction of animal vocalizations as modes of expression that hold greater potential for conveying pain and provoking sympathy than human speech similarly accounts for sonic rather than cognitive properties.

My final chapter interrogates mesmerism, a practice that relies on voice as a means of initiating and maintaining communication with entranced subjects that are able to transcend the temporal and spatial limitations of embodiment. While scientific and medical authorities like Franz Anton Mesmer and John Elliotson failed to legitimize mesmerism as a science, I argue that it became an important metaphor for nineteenth- and early twentieth-century conceptualizations of sound and its influence. Edgar Allan Poe's "Mesmeric Revelation" and "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar," written when mesmerism still had pretensions of being a science, and George Du Maurier's *Trilby*, written after it was firmly categorized as a pseudo-science, transform subjects' bodies into objects comparable to sound technologies. In doing so, these texts shift attention to mechanical bodies like the telegraph and phonograph, underscoring attendant fears about the mechanization of the human. Additionally, these works raise questions about the agency of voices that are disembodied or re-embodied within mechanical forms. Tracking the transition of mesmerism through Poe and Du Maurier's representations, I demonstrate the

³² David Samuels and Thomas Porcello, "language," in *Keywords*, 87.

aptness of mesmeric fluid as a metaphor for sound, which similarly creates networks of influence. Whereas Poe frames these networks as frightening and tenuous connections, ultimately retreating from the comparison of mesmerized and mechanized subjects to address science, Du Maurier envisions these networks as enabling shared experience and uses the outmoded framework of mesmerism to underscore both the concerning and exciting possibilities of sonic influence.

Through its examination of Gothic representations of stethoscopic listening, physiognomy, vivisection, and mesmerism, *Sounding Bodies and Voices* provides an account of transatlantic Gothic fiction as approaching human identity through both science and sound. Moving from a consideration of what it means for authors to understand and depict bodies as soundscapes in the first two chapters, to an exploration of how “we resound together” in the final two chapters, my project exposes sound as a force that resists the authority of the scientific community and exhibits an often-inhuman agency independent of the bodies from which it emanates.

Chapter I

Do You Hear What I Hear?: Stethoscopic Listening in Edgar Allan Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart"

The significance of listening in Edgar Allan Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart" is evident in the narrator's opening description of his sensory abilities. He explains, "the disease had sharpened my senses—not destroyed—not dulled them. Above all was the sense of hearing acute. I heard all things in heaven and in earth. I heard many things in hell."³³ The character's acute hearing is often understood as symptomatic of moral insanity, a nineteenth-century condition that has featured prominently in critical readings of the text.³⁴ Yet these accounts prematurely dismiss the narrator's self-professed perception of heaven and hell without considering the broader implications of what it means for a listener to access previously unknown soundscapes. In attending to the sounds made available by the narrator's heightened senses, particularly the heartbeat, Poe's short story ultimately responds to a question that has been identified as central to the field of sound studies: "what is the relationship between man and the sounds of his environment and what happens when those sounds change?"³⁵ In the context of Poe's narrative, a shift in the sonic environment catalyzes the listener's moral and emotional degeneration. Contrasting his logical plan to kill the old man with the illogical compulsion that motivates him, the character emphasizes the integral role of his sonic environment in shaping his course of action. Intensely aware of his victim's heartbeat, he struggles to navigate between the

³³ Poe, "The Tell-Tale Heart," 317.

³⁴ See Paige Matthey Bynum, "'Observe How Healthily—How Calmly I Can Tell You the Whole Story': Moral Insanity and Edgar Allan Poe's 'The Tell-Tale Heart,'" in *Literature and Science as Modes of Expression*, ed. Frederick Amrine (Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1989), 141-152; John Cleman, "Irresistible Impulses: Edgar Allan Poe and the Insanity Defense," *American Literature* 63, no. 4 (December 1991): 623-640; and Brett Zimmerman, "'Moral Insanity' or Paranoid Schizophrenia: Poe's 'The Tell-Tale Heart,'" *Mosaic* 25, no. 2 (Spring 1992): 39-49.

³⁵ R. Murray Schafer, "Soundscapes and Earwitnesses," in *Hearing History: A Reader*, ed. Mark M. Smith (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2004), 3.

conventional soundscape of the domestic space and the unconventional soundscape made available by his acute hearing.

Drawing on John Picker's characterization of "The Tell-Tale Heart" as centrally concerned with the "inescapable aurality of modernity," this chapter reads the short story as an allegory for stethoscopic listening.³⁶ Although the narrator does not don a stethoscope, a device invented in 1816 by René Laennec, I argue that his attention to and interpretation of bodily sounds align him with the nineteenth-century medical community. Poe's character faces similar difficulties to those experienced by physicians learning to use Laennec's invention; despite his authoritative position he is not entirely certain how to understand the sounds he hears as a result of his expanded senses. In the moments when he most confidently articulates his interpretations of the soundscape, the character exhibits a disaffection increasingly associated with medical professionals.³⁷ Poe's depiction of stethoscopic listening thus affirms the well-known argument that the stethoscope contributed to nineteenth-century medicine's objectification of the body and consequent silencing of the patient's voice. However, the continued beating of the tell-tale heart that concretizes the narrator's madness and provokes his confession undercuts medical authority over the body. In spite of his logical and clinical approach, the character is haunted by the heartbeat and forced to recognize both the physical and emotional implications of its sounds.

"The Tell-Tale Heart" critiques the stethoscope as negatively shaping listeners' attitudes towards

³⁶ John Picker, "English Beat: The Stethoscopic Era's Sonic Traces," in *Sounds of Modern History: Auditory Cultures in 19th- and 20th-Century Europe*, ed. Daniel Morat (New York: Berghahn Books, 2014), 27.

³⁷ As a result of his disaffection and hyper-rationality Poe's narrator becomes a figure comparable to the mad doctor. Anne Stiles explains that during the nineteenth century scientists like John Ferguson Nisbet, Cesare Lombroso, and Francis Galton, among others, categorized genius as a form of moral insanity. I would argue that the juxtaposition of the narrator's intelligence and insanity likens him to characters like Victor Frankenstein, Henry Jekyll, and Doctor Moreau, who are similarly monomaniacal. "Literature in 'Mind': H.G. Wells and the Evolution of the Mad Scientist," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 70, no. 2 (April 2009): 317-339. For a broader discussion of the figure of the scientist in literature see Roslynn D. Haynes, *From Faust to Strangelove: Representations of the Scientist in Western Literature* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994).

their subjects, but more importantly recognizes bodies as soundscapes capable of exerting a particular kind of agency.

This chapter begins with a consideration of Edgar Allan Poe's approach to the senses, contextualizing his interest in sensory knowledge within sensualist medicine. I argue that Poe's work reflects an awareness of the medical community's interest in exploring the interior of bodies using external means of observation like stethoscopic listening. Turning more specifically to Poe's engagement with sound, the next section demonstrates how "The Tell-Tale Heart" participates in debates regarding hierarchical models of the senses. Additionally, I explore Laennec's use of metaphorical language to consider the intersection of literary and scientific understandings of the heart. Finally, I offer a close reading of the story as an allegory for stethoscopic listening, framing the narrator's mental illness as part of a broader cultural commentary on the scientific community's unprecedented authority.

I. Poe, the Senses, and "Sensualist" Medicine

Edgar Allan Poe's fascination with science consistently led him to probe the limitations of sensory knowledge. His captivation is apparent in early works like "Sonnet—To Science" where he associates scientific inquiry with "peering eyes" and metaphorizes science as a vulture, a figure that reappears in "The Tell-Tale Heart" when the narrator describes his victim's eye.³⁸ While this reference to the "peering eyes" sustains the idea that the gaze dominated nineteenth-century science, a perspective most famously articulated in Michel Foucault's *The Birth of the Clinic*, Poe's fiction advocates a more holistic approach to the senses. Throughout his corpus an intent focus on any particular sense, whether vision or hearing, results in obsessive tendencies that often prove to be characters' downfalls. In addition to cautioning against this kind of

³⁸ Edgar Allan Poe, "Sonnet—To Science," in Thompson, *The Selected Writings*, 21.

monomania, Poe manipulates and reconfigures the human sensorium to imagine the dangers of transgressing bodily limitations.³⁹ From the well-known “The Fall of the House of Usher” to the less-studied “The Colloquy of Monos and Una,” his short stories are populated by characters that variously describe their senses as “acute,” “unusually active, although eccentrically so—assuming often each other’s functions at random,” “keenly living and awake,” “bewildered...with the keenness of their perceptions,” and in the case of “The Tell-Tale Heart,” overly acute.⁴⁰ These conditions are often attributed to nervousness or disease, or framed as the product of a particular scientific practice like mesmerism. In presenting atypical sensory function as symptomatic of illness Poe inherently casts the expansion of the senses in a negative light. His fascination with altered modes of sensing, from augmentation to synesthesia, consistently leads him to depict horrific outcomes for characters that transcend the limitations of corporeality. Furthermore, he invites diagnoses like “moral insanity,” which Paige Matthey Bynum, John Cleman, and Brett Zimmerman have persuasively applied to the narrator of “The Tell-Tale Heart.” While not an unwarranted assessment, the focus on the protagonist’s mental illness has obscured other readings of the short story. Specifically, these interpretations have drawn attention away from the significance of sound in the narrative, as well as the process of sensory reeducation that the narrator undergoes as he struggles to interpret what he is hearing.

At the time Poe published “The Tell-Tale Heart” the validity of sensory knowledge remained a contested issue within the American and British medical communities, and the idea

³⁹ Walter Shear argues that the prevalent theme of bodily limitation emerges from Poe’s preoccupation with science and the problem of materiality. He writes, “Poe was one of those nineteenth-century thinkers who tried to use contemporary science to imagine the transcending of material bounds, but scientific thinking itself grounded him in materialism.” Isolated characters face a world that is “almost fiendishly physical,” and must overcome the obstacles of their environment. “Poe’s Fiction: The Hypnotic Magic of the Senses,” *The Midwest Quarterly* 47, no. 3 (Spring 2006): 276.

⁴⁰ “The Fall of the House of Usher,” in Thompson, *The Selected Writings*, 215; “The Colloquy of Monos and Una,” in Thompson, *The Selected Writings*, 283; “The Conversation of Eiros and Charmion,” in *The Complete Tales and Poems of Edgar Allan Poe* (New York: Vintage Books, 1975), 452; “Shadow—a Parable,” in Thompson, *The Selected Writings*, 135.

of reeducating sensory organs like the ear was met with skepticism. This reluctance to accept the testimony of physicians' senses marks a departure from Parisian medicine, which was tellingly characterized as "sensualist." Lilian R. Furst clarifies this term when she explains that practitioners such as René Laennec, "abandoned purely theoretical conjecture and chose instead to rely on such indications of disease as they could cull from the visible, the palpable, the audible, even the tastable and sniffable realities available."⁴¹ Recounting his engagement with science in his literary and non-literary works, Justine Murison aptly characterizes Poe as attentive and responsive to changes in the scientific landscape not only in the United States but also in Paris, the center of the medical revolution during the nineteenth century.⁴² Therefore, the author was doubtless aware of both the progressive methods of Parisian physicians and the cautious reception of sensualist medicine in his own country. Poe's consistent interest in the limitations of sensory knowledge likely drew him to the Parisian approach to interpreting the human body, an approach that was deeply impacted by the introduction of Laennec's stethoscope.

His curiosity regarding how sensualist medicine might manifest in the United States is evident in Poe's attention to contemporary publications such as doctor Robert W. Haxall's dissertation on physical signs of disease in the abdomen and thorax, which he reviewed in the October 1836 issue of the *Southern Literary Messenger*. Haxall's work was one of three dissertations awarded Harvard Medical School's prestigious Boylston Prize that year, and responded to the question: "How far are the external means of exploring the condition of the

⁴¹ Lilian R. Furst, *Between Doctors and Patients: The Changing Balance of Power* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1998), 55.

⁴² See Justine S. Murison, *The Politics of Anxiety in Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 49-50. For more on the nineteenth-century medical revolution in Paris see Porter.

internal organs useful and important in medical practice?”⁴³ Poe’s investment in sensory observation thus aligns with the medical community’s own scrutiny of the human sensorium as a definitive source of information regarding the interior of the body. All three award recipients, Haxall, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and Luther V. Bell, reference the stethoscope throughout their dissertations and gesture towards its growing significance in American medicine. The fact that Poe reviewed Haxall’s work confirms his awareness of the stethoscope, and further suggests that he may have also encountered Bell’s more expansive engagement with mediate auscultation.⁴⁴ Although he does not directly address Laennec’s device in his review, I contend that stethoscopic listening would have held a similar attraction to mesmerism for Poe because it too reconfigures the human sensorium and disrupts hierarchical understandings of the senses. The instrument also exposed what many referred to as the “language” or “signs” of the interior body, revealing a new soundscape that could be made legible to auditory observers.⁴⁵ However, as Laennec points out in his treatise, the soundscape made available by the stethoscope could only really be apprehended through experience because no set terminology existed that could perfectly represent the sounds. Turning to the role of sound in Poe’s work, the next section connects his resistance to hierarchical understandings of the senses to contemporary debates about the stethoscope. Building on this discussion, I argue that the metaphorical language Laennec uses in his treatise speaks to the common conceptualization of the heart as a literary symbol representing the seat of human emotion.

⁴³ The other winners of Harvard Medical School’s Boylston Prize in 1836 were Oliver Wendell Holmes and Luther V. Bell. Massachusetts Medical Society, *Library of Practical Medicine* (Boston: Perkins & Marvin, 1836), v.

⁴⁴ Mediate auscultation, the formal term for stethoscopic listening, means listening to the sounds of the heart, lungs, or other organs through a mediating instrument like the stethoscope. This is in contrast to immediate auscultation, which involves the physician directly pressing his ear against the patient’s body.

⁴⁵ See Luther V. Bell, “Dr. Bell’s Dissertation,” in *Library of Practical Medicine*, 11-12, 16; Furst, 59; Stanley Joel Reiser, “The Medical Influence of the Stethoscope,” *Scientific American* (1979): 148; and Tom Rice, *Hearing and the Hospital: Sound, Listening, Knowledge and Experience* (Canon Pyon, Sean Kingston Publishing, 2013).

II. “An Organ Far Less Cultivated”: Hearing the Heart in Literature and Science

Critics have acknowledged Edgar Allan Poe’s investment in the senses, yet few have seriously considered how auditory technologies like the stethoscope influenced his work. Instead, much of the critical attention has focused on vision, affirming the hierarchical arrangement of the senses that prizes the eye above all else. Writers like John Tresch, who argues that Poe’s stories stage debates about contested issues like the reliability of sight, knowledge production, and technological developments, attend to the author’s depictions of vision and visual technologies to the exclusion of the other senses.⁴⁶ In doing so, these works identify some of the key issues of Poe’s short stories only to ignore an integral component of his approach; vision sometimes takes a more dominant position in the narratives, but like most Gothic authors Poe ultimately maintains an investment in the entire sensorium. The dismissal of Poe’s use of sound in both his poetry and prose has been a recurrent trend, reinforcing what Slawomir Studniarz recently characterized as “the traditional view of Poe as the ‘jingle man,’ supposedly preoccupied with musical and metrical effects for their own sake.”⁴⁷ In addition to contemporary critics, figures like Ralph Waldo Emerson and T.S. Eliot famously disparaged the sonic components of Poe’s work. For instance, in an article in *The Hudson Review* Eliot writes “in his choice of the word which has the right *sound*, Poe is by no means careful that it should have also

⁴⁶ John Tresch, “Estrangement of Vision: Edgar Allan Poe’s Optics,” in *Observing Nature—Representing Experience: The Osmotic Dynamics of Romanticism 1800-1850*, ed. Erna Fiorentini (Berlin: Reimer, 2007): 155-186. For more on Edgar Allan Poe and vision see Barbara Cantalupo, “Poe’s Visual Tricks,” *Poe Studies* 38, no. 1-2 (2005): 53-63; Kevin J. Hayes, “Visual Culture and the Word in Edgar Allan Poe’s ‘The Man of the Crowd.’” *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 56, no. 4 (March 2002): 445-465; Laura Saltz, “‘Eyes which Behold’: Poe’s ‘Domain of Arnheim’ and the Science of Vision,” *The Edgar Allan Poe Review* 7, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 4-30; Hiroko Washizu, “The Optics of the Green Spectacles,” *The Edgar Allan Poe Review* 12, no. 2 (Fall 2011): 48-57; and James Werner, “The Detective Gaze: Edgar A. Poe, the Flaneur, and the Physiognomy of Crime,” *American Transcendental Quarterly* 15, no. 1 (March 2001): 5-21.

⁴⁷ Slawomir Studniarz, “Sonority and Semantics in ‘Annabel Lee,’” *The Edgar Allan Poe Review* 16, no. 1 (Spring 2015), 107.

the right *sense*.”⁴⁸ While poems like “The Bells” seem to affirm Eliot’s claim that Poe’s interest in the sonic qualities of words outweighs his concern with sense, his willingness to play with language and his depictions of characters struggling to come to terms with what they are hearing are representative of his participation in broader debates about auditory knowledge. In the context of “The Tell-Tale Heart,” this process of disentangling the sounds of two distinct soundscapes transforms the work into an allegory for stethoscopic listening.

The challenges that the narrator faces when confronted with the unfamiliar acoustic environment made available by his heightened hearing underscore the deep-seated apprehension of the ear as an inferior organ. This sentiment was prevalent among members of the medical community, as well as the American public. The protagonist’s reliance on hearing throughout his calm, rational relation of his crime exposes the integral role of sound in shaping his actions. In doing so, the short story not only raises questions about the validity of sensory knowledge but also frames sound as a powerful influence, suggesting the ear should not be so quickly disregarded. Throughout the narrative, the juxtaposition of the narrator’s auditory skill with the old man’s restricted sight reflects the tension between the eye and the ear at the center of nineteenth-century discussions of the stethoscope’s accuracy. Although few questioned the importance of the gaze in medical practice, the introduction of Laennec’s stethoscope provoked debates about the usefulness of auditory knowledge.⁴⁹ Picker highlights the significance of these discussions beyond the medical community when he argues that the invention not only influenced the doctor/patient relationship but also created “an environment in which newly

⁴⁸ T.S. Eliot, “From Poe to Valéry,” *The Hudson Review* 2, no. 3 (Autumn 1949): 332. Original emphasis.

⁴⁹ The name “stethoscope” comes from the Greek *stethos*, meaning breast or chest, and *skopein*, meaning to look at, observe, or view. Laennec thus suggests that his invention provides an alternative means of “seeing” the interior of the body through sound. See Reiser, 148; and *OED Online*, s.v. “stethoscope, *n.*”

amplified sound demanded attention and could become impossible to ignore.”⁵⁰ Sound becomes a significant form of influence that all individuals must attend to in their day-to-day lives.

In the context of medicine, the idea that amplified sound could overwhelm listeners was eclipsed by the concern that physicians might not be able to understand what they were hearing. Practitioners were skeptical about the stethoscope because it demanded that they reeducate their ears in order to perceive and accurately interpret the sounds of bodies. Even those who recognized the potential of stethoscopic listening expressed doubts about its viability. For instance, in his dissertation Bell admits that students may initially have trouble understanding what they hear because the ear is “an organ far less cultivated, perhaps far less exact, in communicating ideas to the sensorium than the eye.”⁵¹ Bell’s formulation of the ear as subservient to the eye reflects a hierarchical attitude towards the senses that delayed the acceptance of the stethoscope in nineteenth-century American and British medicine and persists in present-day society. In his treatise *De l’Auscultation Médiante*, published in 1819 and translated into English as early as 1821, Laennec attempts to allay physicians’ apprehensiveness by explaining that the ear simply needs to be trained to listen in a particular way. He writes: “After one or two months’ experience, the ear becomes accustomed to the sound it is in search of, and is able to discriminate it from all the others with which it may be combined, even when weaker than they are.”⁵² Framing mediate auscultation as another skill that doctors must acquire through experience, Laennec resists the notion that the ear is inherently “less cultivated” or “less exact” than the eye. Throughout his work he acknowledges the challenges of stethoscopic listening, referencing obstacles such as the “buzzing sensation often caused by the first

⁵⁰ Picker, “English Beat,” 26.

⁵¹ Bell, “Dr. Bell’s Dissertation,” 46.

⁵² René T.H. Laennec, *A Treatise on the Diseases of the Chest and on Mediate Auscultation*, trans. John Forbes, M.D. 3rd ed. (London: Thomas & George Underwood, 1829), 30.

application of the instrument” as well as “the fear, restraint, and agitation of the patient,” but maintains that all physicians are capable of learning to apply the instrument.⁵³

Although the public did not have access to the stethoscope as a device, Picker’s sense that a “stethoscopic” mode of listening became prevalent in contemporary culture supports the idea that laymen were intrigued by the prospect of learning to interpret new soundscapes.⁵⁴ Mediate auscultation is distinct from popular sciences like mesmerism and physiognomy in its reliance on an instrument, but it might nevertheless be perceived as something that could similarly be learned and applied by those outside the medical community, especially in light of René Laennec’s insistence that training the ear is a relatively easy and brief process.⁵⁵ Kirstie Blair explains that feeling and interpreting the pulse was a common game in Victorian parlors prior to Laennec’s invention, further reinforcing the notion that public, and more specifically literary interest in the rhythm of the heart would extend to its sound.⁵⁶ In Laennec’s treatise, the heart, an organ that often represents the seat of feeling in literature and that importantly serves as the focus of Poe’s short story, is noted for its particular suitability for auditory rather than visual observation.⁵⁷ Describing the heart as perceived through the stethoscope, Laennec writes that its distinct and varied sounds “enable us to study the actions of that organ even more exactly than by the dissection of living bodies. The truth of this seemingly paradoxical assertion rests on the fact, of the ear judging much more correctly of the intervals of sound, than the eye of the

⁵³ Ibid., 29.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 8.

⁵⁵ In *Practical Instruction in Animal Magnetism*, J.P.F. Deleuze explains that anyone who believes in the powers of mesmerism is capable of producing the trance state in others. In fact, his book is directed at “those who are not engaged in medicine, physiology, or physics” and states in its opening chapter, “[t]he faculty of magnetizing exists in all persons.” Deleuze’s perspective marks a sharp shift from Franz Anton Mesmer’s original assertion that only doctors were qualified to exert the mesmeric influence, demonstrating how scientific practices can be absorbed into culture as skills that anyone can learn. *Practical Instruction in Animal Magnetism*, trans. Thomas C. Hartshorn (New York: Fowler & Wells Co. Publishers, 1886).

⁵⁶ Kirstie Blair, “Proved on the Pulses: Heart Disease in Victorian Literature and Culture,” in *Victorian Poetry and the Culture of the Heart* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 23-62.

⁵⁷ For more on the heart as both a physical organ and a symbol in Victorian literature see Blair; and Athena Vrettos, *Somatic Fictions: Imagining Illness in Victorian Culture* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995).

intervals of motions corresponding to these.”⁵⁸ In addition to establishing stethoscopic listening as an incisive method of penetrating living bodies, Laennec’s statement suggests that the heart, more than other organs, most effectively communicates its condition through sound.

Acknowledging the predominance of the gaze, he nevertheless insists on the significance of the ear to medical knowledge.

Yet for Poe’s narrator the supposed legibility of the heart is muddled by its dual function as a muscle responsible for circulation and a symbol of the innermost emotions of humankind.⁵⁹

Throughout the narrative the character attempts to assume a position similar to the physician, a nineteenth-century figure increasingly noted for his disaffection and extreme rationality.

However, the acoustic space that he comes to inhabit, one strikingly similar to the soundscape made available by the stethoscope, dismantles the idea that this position is in any way advantageous. Edgar Allan Poe thus critiques the notion that the human sensorium could ever offer an objective mode of evaluation because our perceptions are inherently subjective.

Specifically, his depiction of the character as suffering a disease of the senses likens technologies such as the stethoscope to conditions that negatively disturb the normal function of the body.

The challenges of perceiving the interior soundscape of the body from a purely rational point of view become more apparent when one considers the language used to characterize the sounds of the chest and heart.

The intersection of science and literature in Poe’s works, especially in hoaxes like “The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar,” is convincing not only because of his keen attention to

⁵⁸ Laennec, *A Treatise*, 546.

⁵⁹ In their readings of “The Tell-Tale Heart” Leland S. Person and Robert M. Kachur associate the heartbeat with the narrator’s sexual desire and repression, underscoring its significance as the seat of emotion. Person suggests that the sentiments of the old man, represented by the beating heart, eventually erupt in the narrator’s heart reflecting the force of male desire. Kachur states that the conflation of the heartbeats represents the violation of physical boundaries involved in incest as well as the blurring of self and other that victims often experience. Person, “Queer Poe: The Tell-Tale Heart of His Fiction,” *Poe Studies* 41 (2008): 7-30; and Kachur, “Buried in the Bedroom: Bearing Witness to Incest in Poe’s ‘The Tell-Tale Heart’,” *Mosaic* 41, no. 1 (March 2008): 43-59.

scientific knowledge but also because of his ability to effectively blend scientific and literary language. Laennec's dependence on metaphorical and arguably unscientific language in his treatise on mediate auscultation invites exactly this kind of interdisciplinary work. When Poe's narrator initially hears the heartbeat, he describes it as "a low, dull, quick sound, such as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton."⁶⁰ The metaphorical language the protagonist employs represents an integral component of Laennec's treatise, which presents an extremely thorough overview of stethoscopic listening rife with descriptions of the sounds of the chest and heart.⁶¹ The specific language Laennec uses to describe the actions of the heart incorporates many of the words Poe's protagonist employs. However, while the former distinguishes between the "clear and rapid" sounds of diastolic motion and the "dull and prolonged" sounds of systolic motion, the narrator combines the rapid and dull sounds of the cardiac cycle evincing a lack of expertise.⁶² The comparison of the heartbeat to a watch wrapped in cotton echoes Bell's statement that percussion of the healthy chest "resembles the stifled sound of a drum enveloped with a thick woolen cloth or covering," and hearkens back to Robert Hooke's suggestion in the early-eighteenth century that discovering the inner motions of the body through sound might be similar to analyzing the internal workings of a clock.⁶³ Although somewhat imprecise, the language Poe uses throughout his narrative to describe the beating heart nevertheless aligns with descriptions of the interior soundscape of the human body generated by those in the sciences.

When describing the contraction of the auricles as "a noise resembling that of a valve, or a whip, or the lapping of a dog," Laennec takes a moment to parenthetically comment on his use

⁶⁰ Poe, "The Tell-Tale Heart," 319.

⁶¹ In his history of the stethoscope Reiser compares Laennec's treatise to Leopold Auenbrugger's brief explanation of percussion, a diagnostic technique that never gained much attention until Laennec revisited it in his own work. He writes: "As a result of his clear and vigorous presentation of this technique, which he called mediate auscultation, the stethoscope became the first instrument of any kind to be widely used by physicians to diagnose illness." "The Medical Influence," 148.

⁶² Laennec, *A Treatise*, 555.

⁶³ Bell, "Dr. Bell's Dissertation," 45; Robert Hooke quoted in Rice, *Hearing and the Hospital*, 58.

of such unscientific terminology. He states, “I make use of these trivial expressions because they appear to me to convey better than any description, an idea of the nature of the sound in question.”⁶⁴ Thus, Laennec establishes the conventional soundscapes listeners inhabit on a daily basis as significant to understanding the interior soundscape of human bodies. By comparing the unfamiliar sounds of the chest and heart to familiar sounds like “the lapping of a dog,” Laennec not only provides listeners with a point of reference, but also demystifies a soundscape that might otherwise seem quite alienating. Bell’s dissertation imitates Laennec in that it too draws on well-known sounds. For instance, he compares various sounds of the chest to “rubbing a lock of hair between the finger and thumb close to the ear,” “prolonged snoring,” and even “the buzzing of an insect.”⁶⁵ While the recognizable sounds that Laennec, Bell, and other medical professionals reference arguably helped physicians learn to use their ears to effectively diagnose patients, they also established the interior of the body as a competing soundscape that overlaps with the conventional soundscape listeners inhabit everyday.

Throughout “The Tell-Tale Heart,” the protagonist subtly exposes his perception of two competing soundscapes: the conventional soundscape of the home and the unfamiliar soundscape of the human body. Rather than use the more familiar sonic environment to decode the other, as Laennec’s work invites his readers to do, the narrator becomes overwhelmed by sound to the point that he can no longer sustain his rationality and confesses his crime to the police officers to escape the persistent beating of the heart. In probing the question of what the heart can reveal to an acute listener, not only scientifically but also emotionally, Poe’s narrative speaks to the impact of stethoscopic listening in the context of medicine as well as in nineteenth-century society more broadly. The final section of my chapter offers a close reading of “The Tell-Tale

⁶⁴ Laennec, *A Treatise*, 558.

⁶⁵ Bell, “Dr. Bell’s Dissertation,” 58, 59.

Heart” that exposes the protagonist’s liminal position as a listener who is not necessarily a physician but adopts the attitude and authority of someone in the medical community as a result of his heightened sensory abilities.

III. “The Tell-Tale Heart”: An Allegory for Stethoscopic Listening

The confrontation between the eye and the ear in “The Tell-Tale Heart” critiques the hierarchical perspective of the senses by demonstrating the keen discernment of the narrator’s hearing, yet concurrently showcases how the overwhelming nature of sound threatens mental stability. While vision features prominently in “The Tell-Tale Heart,” Poe intentionally hinders the sight of characters and readers alike by emphasizing the old man’s cataracts and setting the main action of the story in a bedroom “black as pitch with the thick darkness.”⁶⁶ By underscoring the limitations of the eye within the story and simultaneously highlighting the acute hearing of the narrator, Poe leads readers to consider the ear as the primary external means of exploring internal conditions. Hearing rather than seeing becomes the dominant mode of observation. When considered as a product of Poe’s fascination with science, the character’s hyper-rationality coupled with his attention to sound allows us to read “The Tell-Tale Heart” as an allegory for stethoscopic listening. Jonathan Sterne points to the connection between the doctor as a hyper-rational figure that eschews emotion and the new listening practice when he explains that “mediate auscultation was an artifact of a new approach to reason and the senses, in which listening moved away from the ideal of spoken exchanges between doctor and patient into the quiet, rhythmic, sonorous clarity of rationality.”⁶⁷ Poe’s narrator experiences precisely this kind

⁶⁶ Poe, “The Tell-Tale Heart,” 318.

⁶⁷ Sterne, “Mediate Auscultation,” 135.

of shift; refusing to engage the old man in dialogue, his full attention is focused on what information he can glean about his victim's body from his new listening practice.

At the start of the story the narrator immediately draws attention to his unique sensory function, characterizing himself as someone who can perceive soundscapes as diverse as heaven and hell because of his acute hearing. The proud and boastful tone that the protagonist adopts derives from these abilities and aligns him with the figure of the nineteenth-century physician. Tom Rice explains that with the advent of the stethoscope, a device that imbued listeners with the acute hearing that the narrator experiences, “the bodies of doctors came to be reconfigured as repositories of powerful auditory knowledge.”⁶⁸ Viewed in this light, the narrator becomes something more dangerous than an individual suffering from moral insanity; he precipitates the figure of the mad doctor whose genius compromises his moral and ethical sensibilities. The distinction between moral insanity and the notion of genius as mental illness warrants some attention. As Paige Matthey Bynum explains, the definition of insanity was in flux during the period Poe published his story. Whereas insanity had been considered an intellectual disorder that eliminated an individual's ability to think logically, it was being reclassified as a moral disorder that retained rationality but produced a perverted sense of right and wrong. The sufferer thus became “a victim of an ‘irresistible impulse’ forced upon the will ‘through the instrumentality of the passions.’”⁶⁹ This diagnosis suits the narrator of “The Tell-Tale Heart,” but ignores the fact that his symptoms also align with definitions of genius as a kind of “nerve disorder” prevalent among those in the sciences. Anne Stiles explains that the clinical association between genius and insanity developed in the mid-nineteenth century when thinkers like John Ferguson Nisbet, Francis Galton, Max Nordau, and later Cesare Lombroso, “argued that

⁶⁸ Rice, *Hearing and the Hospital*, 70.

⁶⁹ Bynum, “Observe How Healthily,” 142.

mankind had evolved larger brains at the expense of muscular strength, reproductive capacity, and moral sensibility.” In fact, Lombroso concluded that genius was actually a form of moral insanity and established the link to criminality that authors like H.G. Wells dramatize in their fiction.⁷⁰ Rather than accept the narrator as merely morally insane, I argue that Poe’s protagonist occupies a liminal position because of his auditory skill. The heightened senses are not a symptom of his moral insanity but a catalyst for his mental degeneration, again implying that scientific instruments like the stethoscope enable a kind of intellectual evolution that is detrimental to human qualities like empathy.⁷¹

Throughout his calm recitation of his crime the narrator’s hyper-rationality is coupled with his unsympathetic attitude towards the old man, someone he interacts with on a daily basis in the intimate setting of the home. These traits were often associated with nineteenth-century medical professionals, especially after the stethoscope was widely adopted and patient narratives were no longer integral to diagnostics. Although Laennec’s invention aimed to create physical distance between physicians and patients for reasons of hygiene and propriety, it perhaps unintentionally increased the emotional distance between them as well. The stethoscope made listening more comfortable and effective by amplifying the internal soundscape of human bodies, but it also rendered patient narratives less important since they were less reliable. Sterne explains, “the voice simply becomes one sound among many contending for the physician’s attention in the audible world. Listening here moves from a way of apprehending speech to a technique of examination, a mode of constructing knowledge of patients independent of patients’

⁷⁰ Stiles, “Literature in ‘Mind,’” 319. For more on the figure of the mad scientist see Haynes.

⁷¹ I explore the conception of intellectual evolution as detrimental to humanness further in my chapter on vivisection.

knowledge of themselves.”⁷² Limiting vocal authority by classifying the voice as “one sound among many,” the stethoscope transforms patients into objects to be examined and assessed rather than autonomous, sentient individuals. Instead of listening to patients, physicians were listening to their bodies and communicating in a language that the former neither had access to nor understood. Sterne’s assertions reflect Foucault’s claim that the nineteenth-century clinic worked to objectify the patient. Foucault illustrates this change through semantics. He writes, “the question ‘What is the matter with you?’ with which the eighteenth-century dialogue between doctor and patient began...was replaced by the other question ‘Where does it hurt?’, in which we recognize the operation of the clinic and the principle of its entire discourse.”⁷³ This transition deemphasizes the overall wellbeing of the individual in favor of a more localized attention to the physical, bodily complaints that manifest as “hurt.” Whereas “What is the matter with you?” initiates a dialogic exchange with space for both physical and emotional symptoms, “Where does it hurt?” directs the physician’s independent examination of the body.

The narrator’s listening practice in “The Tell-Tale Heart” comparably allows him to construct knowledge about his victim without the latter’s consent and forecloses empathetic interaction between the characters. In addition to accentuating the disparity between their sensory function, which situates the more perceptive and authoritative narrator as the dominant figure in the scene, Poe frames the conflict as a struggle between the eye and the ear. After assuring the reader that he does not harbor any hatred towards the old man or plan to profit from his death, the character exclaims, “I think it was his eye! yes, it was this! He had the eye of a

⁷² Sterne, “Mediate Auscultation,” 127. Elaine Scarry calls attention to how this mentality has persisted beyond the nineteenth century when she explains that many accounts of the medical setting continue to support the idea that physicians understand patient voices as unreliable compared to bodies themselves, an idea I return to in my chapter on vivisection. *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 6.

⁷³ Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic*, xviii.

vulture—a pale blue eye, with a film over it. Whenever it fell upon me, my blood ran cold; and so by degrees—very gradually—I made up my mind to take the life of the old man, and thus rid myself of the eye forever.”⁷⁴ The comparison of the eye to “that of a vulture” subtly calls attention to the internal/external dichotomy and reminds the reader of the discomfort of being the object of such a penetrating gaze. The vulture, a scavenger that feeds off the carcasses of animals, uses its beak to violently break through the skin and expose the interior of the body. Poe’s association of the vulture with science in “Sonnet—To Science” makes the bird’s presence even more significant if we consider the narrative as an allegory for stethoscopic listening because it raises questions about the comparative threat of vision and hearing as diagnostic tools. While the narrator feels vulnerable when subjected to the gaze, so much so that he is compelled to “rid [himself] of the eye forever,” the old man displays a similar vulnerability when subjected to the protagonist’s acute hearing.

The contrast between the characters’ sensory skills is best exemplified by their mutual attempts to evaluate the soundscape during their silent confrontation. The narrator intentionally carries out his plan in the cover of darkness, listening to his victim night after night as he sticks his head noiselessly through the bedroom door. His attunement to his sonic environment is evident throughout the short story, as is his sensitivity to the heart. Poe’s language is at times painfully obvious such as when the narrator describes entering the chamber after a nighttime vigil and calling the old man “by name in a *hearty* tone.”⁷⁵ However, he also includes more subtle allusions to the heart such as the “death watches in the wall.” In his footnote, G.R. Thompson explains that in addition to their symbolism as omens of death “descriptions of the rhythmic sounds of these beetles, as well as of crickets and cicadas, note how the cadences seem

⁷⁴ Poe, “The Tell-Tale Heart,” 317.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 318. Emphasis added.

to match the rhythms of one's own pulse."⁷⁶ Thus, even before he perceives the old man's heartbeat the narrator is aware of the rhythms of the acoustic space he inhabits to a greater degree than the typical listener. Furthermore, the idea that the cadences adjust to match the listener's pulse gesture towards the potential harmony between an individual and the domestic space that never materializes for the narrator. Stethoscopic listening seems to demand this discord. Throughout his treatise Laennec implies that physicians must be hyper-aware of their own bodies because their physical position could obscure their sense of hearing or interfere with the sounds of patients' bodies. Essentially, the listener must make a concerted effort to maintain the distinction between self and other.

Prior to the murder, the narrator seems capable of and enthusiastic about managing the expanded boundaries of embodiment that his sensory function enables. Each night, he cautiously thrusts his head into the bedchamber and exercises a great deal of control over the visual and sonic dimensions of the space. Again demonstrating his attention to sound, the character acknowledges that the hinges of the lantern creak and is careful to prevent them from making any noise. He explains, "I undid the lantern cautiously—oh, so cautiously—cautiously (for the hinges creaked)—I undid it just so much that a single thin ray fell upon the vulture eye. And this I did for seven long nights."⁷⁷ Through his careful attention to the sonic aspects of the lantern, the narrator prevents it from creaking for "seven long nights." Additionally, he manipulates it so that "a single thin ray" of light illuminates the old man's eye without disrupting the blackness enshrouding the rest of the chamber. Effectively, the character shines a spotlight on the eye and eerily casts it as an object unconnected to the body as a whole. He explains that he can see the eye "with perfect distinctness," but adds "but I could see nothing else of the old man's face or

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

person: for I had directed the ray as if by instinct, precisely upon the damned spot.”⁷⁸ The absence of the old man’s “face or person” from the narrator’s field of view enables him to dangerously fixate on the eye and disregard his victim’s personhood.

These experiences of utter control over his environment enhance the character’s pride, leading to his admission on the night of the crime: “Never before that night, had I *felt* the extent of my own powers—of my sagacity. I could scarcely contain my feelings of triumph.”⁷⁹ The association of his “powers” with “sagacity” affirms the connection between increased sensory perception and knowledge that nineteenth-century Parisian medicine was attempting to forge. Even now, the stethoscope continues to inspire similar sentiments in those who wield it as a diagnostic tool. Tom Rice recounts an interview with a twenty-first century medical student who explains, “I love wearing it, I love wearing it...I feel something like, not superiority, but ‘I know what’s going on and you guys don’t.’”⁸⁰ These feelings of sagacity, expressed with the same kind of excited repetition employed by Poe’s narrator, illustrate how the stethoscope impacts the physicians’ attitude. Rice compounds the association of the stethoscope with privileged knowledge, stating that the device is “a kind of visual representation or manifestation of the knowledge and status [physicians] held.”⁸¹ While relating Poe’s short story to Rice’s modern evaluation of the stethoscope may seem anachronistic, it demonstrates the persistence of the instrument as an icon of auditory knowledge and underscores the fears that accompanied its debut in nineteenth-century medicine. The newfound expertise made available by the instrument exacerbated prevalent anxieties regarding the increasing authority of the knowledgeable doctor

⁷⁸ Ibid., 319.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 318. Original emphasis.

⁸⁰ Rice, “‘The Hallmark of a Doctor’: The Stethoscope and the Making of Medical Identity,” *Journal of Material Culture* 15, no. 3 (September 2010): 293.

⁸¹ Ibid., 294.

over the unknowledgeable patient, a dynamic that plays out in the relationship between the narrator and the old man.

The implications of the narrator's acute hearing become more concrete in his analysis of the old man. When his hand slips on the tin fastening of the lantern, his victim springs up in bed and utters the only words he says throughout the entire tale: "Who's there?"⁸² After a silent standstill between the two characters, the old man lets out a groan that the narrator describes as follows:

I heard a slight groan, and I knew it was the groan of mortal terror. It was not a groan of pain or of grief—oh, no!—it was the low stifled sound that arises from the bottom of the soul when overcharged with awe. I knew the sound well. Many a night, just at midnight, when all the world slept, it has welled up from my own bosom, deepening, with its dreadful echo, the terrors that distracted me. I say I knew it well. I knew what the old man felt, and pitied him, although I chuckled at heart.⁸³

The elaborate analysis of the "slight groan" showcases the character's ability to listen to and interpret sound, employing the same comparative skills Laennec cites as integral to learning mediate auscultation. The listener uses his own experience with this particular sound as a point of reference. The repetition of the phrase "I knew" emphasizes his certainty, reinforcing the idea that he is a sane man entirely in control of his senses. Tracing the groan to "the bottom of the soul," the narrator demonstrates an intimate understanding of the old man that suggests listening to bodies can reveal more than just physiological information. While he claims to empathize, his chuckle signifies an unwillingness to succumb to these feelings. In privileging rationality over emotion, the narrator aligns himself with the increasingly prominent stereotype of the rational, disaffected man of science. He displays a greater degree of interest in his own skill and acumen than the "mortal terror" of his subject. This detachment is also evident in the character's

⁸² Poe, "The Tell-Tale Heart," 318.

⁸³ Ibid.

dismissal of the question “Who’s there?” and alternative focus on the slight and perhaps barely perceptible groan.

While the narrator efficiently deconstructs sound, the old man seems unable to interpret what he hears and therefore exerts little agency throughout the short story. His one attempt at decoding the soundscape is framed by the narrator’s analysis of the groan and perception of the heartbeat, reinforcing the comparatively limited scope of the character’s hearing. His contemplation of sound is arguably filtered through the narrator’s consciousness, but the disappearance of the personal “I” throughout the passage mitigates the protagonist’s authority by shifting to a third person perspective. The old man’s analysis of sound is described as follows:

he had been lying awake ever since the first slight noise, when he had turned in his bed. His fears had been ever since growing upon him. . . . He had been saying to himself—“It is nothing but the wind in the chimney—it is only a mouse crossing the floor,” or “it is merely a cricket which has made a single chirp.” Yes, he had been trying to comfort himself with these suppositions: but he had found all in vain.⁸⁴

The listener’s recourse to conventional domestic sounds like wind or a cricket, what Schafer might call the “keynotes” of the old man’s soundscape, demonstrates his inability to process atypical noises.⁸⁵ His guesses are full of uncertainty, replacing the narrator’s confident “I knew” with the old man’s vain attempts to allay his fears. Although his conjectures are presented as foolish in the context of the narrator’s grand scheme, this brief scene plays out a relatable experience. Upon hearing a startling noise in the dark, the old man tries to calm himself by positing rational explanations for the sound so that he can go back to sleep. This impulse tellingly demonstrates the supposed inefficiency of the ear, which is depicted as an organ that could easily confuse the sound of a madman’s finger slipping on a lantern clasp with the sound of a mouse skittering across the floor. Though the narrator’s heightened hearing presents a

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Schafer defines “keynotes” as anchors or fundamental tones of the soundscape that we tend not to listen to consciously because they are so familiar. *The Soundscape*, 3-9.

contradictory perspective where the ear is a valuable source of knowledge, the listening skills that he proudly touts as making him superior to others catalyze his descent into madness.

When the protagonist hears the heartbeat, he accesses a soundscape unfamiliar to most nineteenth-century listeners: the interior of the human body. The analysis of the groan prior to this moment showcases the character's interpretive skills, but the value of his auditory knowledge comes into question when he proves unable to distinguish between the domestic soundscape and the bodily soundscape. The failure to recognize what he alone can hear and what others can hear shapes his actions throughout the remainder of the narrative, suggesting that sound exerts a powerful influence over the listener. While the narrator identifies the blue vulture eye of his victim as the impetus for his actions, sound plays a more significant role in shaping his behavior. Upon first hearing the heartbeat he states: "It increased my fury, as the beating of a drum stimulates the soldier into courage."⁸⁶ The comparison of the heart to a military drum reframes the narrator's actions as heroic and provides insight into his unstable logic. The reader understands his action as murder, but the narrator understands it as a courageous and justified attack on an enemy. In addition to exposing the influence of sound, the figuration of the heartbeat as a drum also calls attention to the inescapable symbolism of the organ and its attachment to human emotion. Even in his treatise, Laennec occasionally comments on what the sounds of the chest and heart might indicate regarding the emotional state of the subject or listener. In doing so, he points to the inherent connection between physiological and emotional function often dramatized in literature.

The narrator's ultimate decision to murder the old man arises from his inability to move between two sonic environments and underscores his failure to remain wholly rational as he is overwhelmed by sound; he takes action because he worries the neighbor might hear the beating

⁸⁶ Poe, "The Tell-Tale Heart," 319.

of his victim's heart. Listening in the dark, the narrator explains "But the beating grew louder, louder! I thought the heart must burst. And now a new anxiety seized upon me—the sound would be heard by a neighbor! ... With a loud yell, I threw open the lantern and leaped into the room. He shrieked once—once only."⁸⁷ Although he worries that the neighbor will hear the heartbeat, the character emits a "loud yell" as he leaps into the room and causes his victim to shriek. His thorough immersion in an alternative soundscape, one made accessible by his stethoscopic listening, is apparent in the juxtaposition of his concern about the internal, bodily sounds and disregard for the external, vocal sounds in the scene. The neighbor alerts the police because of the shriek, not the sound of the beating heart.

Poe's critique of stethoscopic listening as threatening intellectual and emotional stability becomes even more apparent in the aftermath of the crime. Initially confident he will not be caught, the narrator is soon overwhelmed by a ringing in his ears that gradually becomes more distinct until he recognizes "*a low, dull, quick sound—much such a sound as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton.*"⁸⁸ Critics like Brett Zimmerman persuasively associate this moment with the narrator's moral insanity, arguing that the sound represents an auditory hallucination.⁸⁹ This tendency to dismiss the character's listening experience as symptomatic of mental illness ignores the broader valences of Poe's work. The narrator's disorientation exemplifies how changes to the nineteenth-century soundscape, as well as the addition of new soundscapes like the interior of the body, could have a deep impact on listeners. Rather than classify the latter

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 320.

⁸⁹ Zimmerman, "Moral Insanity," 41. Critics have also claimed that the narrator must hear his own heartbeat because it is impossible that he would hear the old man's heart across the room. However, in his treatise Laennec includes a section titled "Of the pulsation of the heart perceived at some distance from the chest" where he explains the longstanding belief that the heart might be heard at a distance from the patient. Citing a case where "the palpitations could be heard in the chamber adjoining that in which [the patient] slept," Laennec admits that "although it is very uncommon to meet with it in so great a degree as that just mentioned, it is very common to find it in a less degree." *A Treatise*, 575-576. Rice also references this phenomenon in *Hearing and the Hospital*.

heartbeat as an auditory hallucination, I would argue that it marks a transition from auscultation to auto-auscultation; whereas the narrator initially perceived the heart of the old man, he now perceives his own heart and is terrified by the sound. The subtle shift is indicated by the narrator's mode of listening. In the first instance he remains calm and immediately identifies the sound. At this later moment he becomes confused and has difficulty understanding what he hears.

Effectively turning his listening practice on his own body, the character models what Rice calls "auto-auscultation," an experience that physicians often find disconcerting. Rice explains that when physicians turn the stethoscope on themselves the "auditory attention or self-exposure to the workings of one's own body is often experienced as disturbing; for those with underlying health problems, listening to their own hearts or hearing their unusually loud heart sounds can become part of an immediate experience of being unwell."⁹⁰ Accompanied by a headache, pallor, and difficulty breathing, the narrator's perception of his own heart provokes both physical and mental symptoms. His control over the narrative begins to waver and his growing anxiety is represented as a profusion of dashes and exclamation points in the text. While he describes the effects of the sound in physiological terms, the narrator's condition is almost certainly tied to his emotional condition as well. He does not express remorse in his account of the murder, yet the fact that he interprets the heart as belonging to his dismembered victim suggests he is literally and figuratively haunted by what he has done. The impossibility of putting aside his own feelings interferes with his capacity to accurately interpret the soundscape, expanding on Laennec's warnings to physicians about properly positioning their bodies to avoid

⁹⁰ Rice, *Hearing and the Hospital*, 19.

distorting or changing what they hear through the stethoscope.⁹¹ The character does not struggle with his physical position, but rather with his emotional position.

The narrator's response to the heartbeat further demonstrates his struggle to distinguish between the multiple sonic environments he comes to occupy, as well as his failure to do so. Fixated on what he imagines to be the old man's heart beating from beyond the grave, the narrator tries to cover the noise by talking and making other sounds within the conventional soundscape. He admits,

I talked more quickly—more vehemently; but the noise steadily increased. I arose and argued about trifles, in a high key and with violent gesticulations; but the noise steadily increased. ...I paced the floor to and fro with heavy strides...I foamed—I raved—I swore! I swung the chair upon which I had been sitting, and grated it upon the boards, but the noise arose over all and continually increased. It grew louder—louder—*louder!* ... Was it possible they heard not?

Using what might be called “commonplace” sounds like his voice and heavy strides, the narrator desperately strives to obscure what only he can hear. The beating becomes “louder—louder—*louder!*” as he becomes increasingly panicked about the heartbeat. Regardless of whether the heart is his own or an auditory hallucination as Zimmerman suggests, the contrast between the external sounds like the chair grating on the boards and the internal sounds like the heartbeat demonstrate a failure to distinguish between the everyday soundscape and the alternative soundscape accessible through his unique sensory abilities.

IV. Conclusion

⁹¹ Laennec explains that mediate auscultation requires an awareness of patients' and physicians' bodies because different positions can impact the soundscape. For instance, he states that examiners should be careful not to stand in an “uncomfortable posture,” stoop, or turn their heads back by extending the neck because “[t]hese positions determine the blood to the head and thus obscure the sense of hearing.” Additionally, the patient needs to be placed in particular positions depending on the site of examination. *A Treatise*, 27-28.

Mediate auscultation generally takes place in the context of medical examination; the listener has specific diagnostic aims and controls auditory input by donning the stethoscope and applying it to specific sites on the body. Conversely, Edgar Allan Poe's narrator is unable to terminate his augmented hearing and consequently becomes confused and disoriented. The difference between these scenes of listening suggests that scientific modes of inquiry pose a danger when employed by those who are untrained or inexperienced. The character's listening practice is not something to be emulated because it fosters false pride and authority, contributes to his preference for logic over emotion, and compels him to commit murder. The influence of sound is further evident in the final moments of the story, when the narrator is unable to endure the persistent beating and pulls up the floorboards concealing the dismembered corpse. Despite his attempts to demonstrate his sanity, the character's erratic behavior and subsequent confession confirm his madness. He successfully eschews empathetic engagement with the old man as he analyzes the slight groan in the dark bedchamber, but is unsuccessful in suppressing his own anxieties later in the narrative. By resituating stethoscopic listening in the context of Gothic fiction, Poe both affirms the significance of auditory knowledge and levels a critique against the developing diagnostic practices being used to assess patients. Furthermore, he establishes a more nuanced depiction of moral insanity that anticipates the association of genius with mental degeneration as well as the figure of the "mad doctor" popular in late nineteenth-century literature.

Insistent that the audience "Hearken!" as he relates his story, the narrator of "The Tell-Tale Heart" not only underscores his desire to be heard but also demands that readers apply their ears to the text itself.⁹² Contemplating a question central to sound studies, Poe offers a Gothic interpretation of stethoscopic listening in order to consider what happens when the relationship

⁹² Poe, "The Tell-Tale Heart," 317.

between listeners and their sonic environment changes. In placing the narrator in a liminal position between the scientific community and the general population, Poe invites his audience to think through the implications of mediate auscultation for society. What does it mean for sound to be inescapable, and what kind of influence does it exert over human bodies? Drawing together scientific and literary knowledge, “The Tell-Tale Heart” suggests that acute hearing poses a threat to the very qualities that defined humanness in the nineteenth century. The narrator’s amorality, which arguably arises from his insistence on rationality, as well as his disaffection towards the old man, are representative of the very qualities contemporary physicians cultivated in order to establish their authority and expertise. As an instrument that placed physical and emotional distance between doctors and patients, the stethoscope exacerbated concerns over the bodies-as-objects mentality dramatized in seminal Gothic works like Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*. The critique leveled against the scientific community in Poe’s work thus participates in the larger project of Gothic fiction, which probes the limitations of scientific knowledge to expose how its advancement might be detrimental to humankind. Poe’s interest in the stethoscope is consistent with his fascination with science and the senses, and reading “The Tell-Tale Heart” as an allegory for stethoscopic listening reveals the often-overlooked significance of sound in his critical engagements with scientific knowledge.

Chapter II

Sonic Physiognomy in Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*

In his influential work *Essays on Physiognomy*, first published in English in 1789, Johann Caspar Lavater warns readers to “form no connexion with any person who has in his countenance, to thee, a disgusting trait, however small it may be, which displays itself at every motion, and seldom entirely disappears.”⁹³ This advice derives from one of the foundational premises of Lavater’s system of physiognomy, the idea that external ugliness corresponds to internal ugliness. “The morally best, the most beautiful,” Lavater writes. “The morally worst, the most deformed.”⁹⁴ The practice of reading the face to discern internal qualities originated in ancient Greece, though it was largely discredited until Lavater’s work reframed it as a “science” that became popular in both Britain and the United States in the nineteenth century. Physiognomy was never successfully established as “the science of sciences” Lavater predicted it would be, but literature continued to reflect what Graeme Tytler has called the “physiognomical atmosphere” produced by Lavater’s essays.⁹⁵ Privileging the visual, the practice aligned with the dominant association of the eye with knowledge. Michael Shortland underscores this connection in his article on Lavater’s definition of physiognomical perception: “the physiognomist is asked to look at his subjects, to gaze, contemplate, scrutinize, snatch a glance, steal a look, gloat, fasten upon, fix upon, survey, eye, gape, stare, behold.”⁹⁶ The litany of sight-related imperatives employed by Lavater promotes the scientific community’s investment in visual observation as a

⁹³ Johann Caspar Lavater, *Essays on Physiognomy*, trans. Thomas Holcroft, 17th ed. (New York: R. Worthington, 1860), 489.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 99.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 40; Graeme Tytler, *Physiognomy in the European Novel: Faces and Fortunes* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 34.

⁹⁶ Michael Shortland, “The Power of a Thousand Eyes: Johann Caspar Lavater’s Science of Physiognomical Perception,” *Criticism* 28, no. 4 (Fall 1986): 390.

definitive source of knowledge, aligning his aspiring science with the same sensualist practices that interested authors like Edgar Allan Poe. “All the knowledge we can obtain of man,” Lavater argues, “must be gained through the medium of our senses.”⁹⁷ Though this sentiment is inclusive of all senses, physiognomy relied principally on the eye and relegated the other senses to ancillary positions.

The ease of reading the countenance is seemingly apparent in Robert Louis Stevenson’s *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* where Henry Jekyll’s attempt to house the good and evil natures of humankind in “separate identities” produces two distinct bodies notable for their contrasting physiognomies.⁹⁸ The good Dr. Jekyll, “a large, well-made, smooth-faced man...with every mark of capacity and kindness,” is juxtaposed with the evil Edward Hyde, who manifests as a dwarfish and deformed creature that produces the sensation of disgust Lavater cautions against.⁹⁹ While the bodies of these men have garnered much critical attention, particularly with regards to their relationship to one another, the significance of the bodies as soundscapes in their own right has been entirely overlooked. Stevenson does not affirm the accuracy of physiognomy, at least not as a wholly visual practice. Rather, he explores how observers might discern internal qualities with their ears by attending to the sounds of bodies within both public and private spaces in London. While Hyde produces a strong physiognomic sensation in those who see him, no one is able to articulate a specific description of his features. Ultimately, Stevenson’s text offers a more stable sonic environment that compensates for the instability of vision. As external appearance becomes an unreliable source of information, sound and the human voice become more concrete, making listening a significant mode of observation.

⁹⁷ Lavater, *Essays on Physiognomy*, 7.

⁹⁸ Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, ed. Katherine Linehan, Norton Critical Editions (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2003), 49.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 19.

Characters are attuned to the soundscape they inhabit and engage in what I term “sonic physiognomy,” a system of assessment based on instinctive, affective responses to sound. While “The Tell-Tale Heart” addresses Schafer’s foundational question, “what is the relationship between man and the sounds of his environment and what happens when those sounds change?,” *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* reframes that question to ask: what is the relationship between *the sounds of man* and the sounds of his environment?¹⁰⁰ In doing so Stevenson’s work affirms the idea that external observation yields knowledge about internal qualities, but formulates bodies as soundscapes that are legible to the attentive ear instead of fully subscribing to conventional physiognomy.

This chapter begins with an investigation of the interdisciplinary appeal of Lavaterian physiognomy and an overview of how nineteenth-century works on physiognomy address the eye and the ear. I demonstrate that while voice was acknowledged as a meaningful sign of internal qualities, the role of sound remained underdeveloped by those aiming to legitimize the science or, alternatively, to provide laymen with practical instruction. Turning to Stevenson’s novella, the next two sections explore how the difficulty of reading Edward Hyde’s face prompts characters to engage in sonic rather than visual physiognomy. Ultimately, the work contradicts the notion that the eye alone is sufficient to read character and suggests that sonic physiognomy is also a valuable mode of observation.

I. Physiognomy’s Interdisciplinary Appeal

Lavaterian physiognomy endeavored to create a system of classification that would render human bodies legible, an idea that appealed to nineteenth-century British and American society. The publication history of Lavater’s essays has often been cited to demonstrate his

¹⁰⁰ Schafer, “Soundscapes and Earwitnesses,” 3.

extreme popularity. For instance, John Graham argues “the book was reprinted, abridged, summarized, pirated, parodied, imitated, and reviewed so often that it is difficult to imagine how a literate person of the time could have failed to have some general knowledge of the man and his theories.”¹⁰¹ There were at least twenty-two English editions of the text published within forty years of the original German edition. Current accounts of Lavater’s work underscore how he encouraged readers to compile evidence from sensory observation, and framed his science as comparable to well-known systems of classification like Linnaean taxonomy.¹⁰² Jeanne Fahnestock aptly comments, “No doubt physiognomy appealed to the scientific spirit of the age by promising to bring a Linnaean orderliness to the moral types of humanity on the basis of careful measurement and analysis of signs in the features.”¹⁰³ Attempting to distance physiognomy from its past associations with fortune telling and artistic technique, aspects of the science that doubtless appealed to Gothic authors, Lavater focused on its usefulness in addressing questions about the nature of humankind that were at the heart of “the scientific spirit of the age.”¹⁰⁴ His approach in structuring the essays speaks to his desire to put forth an apparently objective case for physiognomy. Lavater equitably includes coupled sections like “Of the advantages of physiognomy” and “Of the disadvantages of physiognomy,” or “Of the ease of studying physiognomy” and “Of the difficulties of physiognomy.” Though he ultimately undercuts the arguments against physiognomy, structuring his work in this way establishes a logical progression that builds an expansive case for the new science. The thoroughness of the essays, which refute common arguments against physiognomy, outline the qualities of an ideal

¹⁰¹ John Graham, “Lavater’s Physiognomy in England,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 22, no. 4 (1961): 562.

¹⁰² Sharrona Pearl, *About Faces: Physiognomy in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2010), 11; and Shortland, “The Power of a Thousand Eyes,” 388.

¹⁰³ Jeanne Fahnestock, “The Heroine of Irregular Features: Physiognomy and Conventions of Heroine Descriptions,” *Victorian Studies* 24.3 (Spring 1981): 338

¹⁰⁴ Fahnestock explains: “In the middle ages physiognomy was one of the arts of divination, in fact until 1824 fortunetelling by physiognomy was punishable as vagrancy.” “The Heroine of Irregular Features,” 334.

physiognomist, and consider the differences between male and female countenances, among other things, likely contributed to the seriousness with which many readers accepted his theories just as René Laennec's thoroughness in his treatise on the stethoscope would later impress his audience. Lavater's work, as has often been noted, is also collaborative in that he includes extracts from past and contemporary thinkers as well as illustrations by various artists including William Blake. Coupling his own theories with those of other respected men from Solomon to Immanuel Kant, Lavater strives to lend credibility to his own formulation of physiognomy and, in doing so, captures the broad interdisciplinary interest in the subject.¹⁰⁵

In addition to the structure of *Essays on Physiognomy*, the comparisons of men and animals that establish the superiority of humankind align his method with a number of nineteenth-century scientific works including later texts like Charles Darwin's *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*. The fate of physiognomy is evident in Darwin's introductory statement where he writes: "Many works have been written on Expression but a greater number on Physiognomy,—that is, on the recognition of character through the study of the permanent form of the features. With this latter subject I am not here concerned. The older treatises, which I have consulted, have been of little or no service to me."¹⁰⁶ Darwin's eschewal of physiognomy and his interest in work by men like Charles Bell and Herbert Spenser demonstrates that by 1872 the scientific community had progressed from Lavater's practice to more sophisticated methods of examining expression dependent on anatomy, physiology, neurology, and other less accessible sciences. This movement away from Lavaterian physiognomy speaks to the increasing

¹⁰⁵ Ellis Shookman argues that Lavater viewed physiological, intellectual, and moral physiognomy as integrally connected and envisioned the "true physiognomist" as "a scientist, philosopher, and theologian all at once. To him, that is, 'science' was something that now would be called interdisciplinary." "Pseudo-Science, Social Fad, Literary Wonder: Johann Caspar Lavater and the Art of Physiognomy," in *The Faces of Physiognomy: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Johann Caspara Lavater*, ed. Ellis Shookman (Columbia, South Carolina: Camden House, 1993), 5.

¹⁰⁶ Charles Darwin, *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (New York: Penguin Books, 2009), 13.

exclusivity of the scientific community as a result of professionalization, and also confirms the claims of critics like Graham, Kevin Berland, and Ellis Shookman that Lavater merely captured a “‘scientific’ flavor” that was not substantive enough to make physiognomy a legitimate scientific practice.¹⁰⁷ Yet, despite its eventual relegation to the realm of pseudo-science, the scientific flavor that Lavater achieved was enough to make it widely popular with the general public. The awareness of and interest in physiognomy beyond the realm of science not only perpetuated vision as the dominant sense, it shaped interpersonal interactions in significant ways. More specifically, physiognomy had an indelible effect on how British and American authors and their audiences understood and interpreted character.

Historical accounts of nineteenth-century physiognomy from critics like Lucy Hartley and Sharrona Pearl link the popularity of the practice to its accessibility, which imbued untrained observers with the authority to judge anyone they encountered in person and, provided there was sufficient physical description, in print.¹⁰⁸ Lavater not only contended that anyone could learn to use physiognomy, he insisted that everyone already used it on a daily basis. Even those unfamiliar with the term instinctually “estimate all things, whatever, by their physiognomy, their exterior temporary superficialities.”¹⁰⁹ Pearl elaborates on Lavater’s stance, saying: “No special training was required or even necessary. Although physiognomic skill could be honed, some were born with natural skill, and everyone was born with (variably reliable) instinct. All one really needed was the ability to see and then judge.”¹¹⁰ The subjective nature of physiognomy, which enabled the perpetuation of racial and class-based prejudice, was obscured by the efforts

¹⁰⁷ Graham, “Lavater’s Physiognomy in England,” 562; see also K.J.H. Berland, “Reading Character in the Face: Lavater, Socrates, and Physiognomy,” *Word and Image* 9, no. 3 (1993): 252-269; and Shookman, “Pseudo-Science, Social Fad.”

¹⁰⁸ See Lucy Hartley, *Physiognomy and the Meaning of Expression in Nineteenth-Century Culture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005); and Pearl, *About Faces*.

¹⁰⁹ Lavater, *Essays on Physiognomy*, 15.

¹¹⁰ Pearl, *About Faces*, 5.

of anatomists, physiologists, and physicians like Charles Bell, Alexander Walker, and Richard Brown to legitimize the practice as science. Physiognomy, like stethoscopic listening, promised access to the interior of human bodies through a system of acute sensory observation. However, the “physiognomic atmosphere” pervading Britain meant that those within and outside the scientific community felt authorized to judge others based on their instinctual responses to outward appearance.

Nineteenth-century writers not only engaged the new science in their fiction, they also demonstrated a personal fascination with both physiognomy and the related practice of phrenology, which similarly involved tactilely reading the exterior of the skull to determine the development of characteristics ranging from amateness to combativeness to language.¹¹¹ Charles Dickens, known for his vivid character descriptions, had his head “phrenologized” while visiting Worcester, Massachusetts in 1842. He not only received a 7 out of 7 in language, meaning he “has by nature astonishing command of words, copiousness and eloquence of expression, and verbal memory,” but also received the same mark in a category that “is yet without a name,” indicating that he “perceives as if by intuition, the *character* and *motives* of men from their physiognomy, conversation, &c.; [and] *naturally* understands human nature.”¹¹² The implication that authors like Dickens were natural physiognomists is evident in works like George Jabet’s pocket guide to physiognomy, a popular text in the mid-nineteenth century. Pearl argues, “for Jabet literary evidence was not just a legitimate but an indispensable source; as those who described and chronicled human behavior, authors had the greatest knowledge of human

¹¹¹ For more on Lavater’s influence on literature see Fahnestock, “The Heroine of Irregular Features”; Graham, “Lavater’s Physiognomy in England”; Tytler, “Lavater and Physiognomy in English Fiction 1790-1832,” *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 7, no. 3 (1995): 293-310; and Tytler, *Physiognomy in the European Novel*.

¹¹² O.S. Fowler, *Synopsis of Phrenology; and the Phrenological Developments: together with the character and talents of C. Dickens Esqr. as given by L.N. Fowler: with references to those pages of “Phrenology proved, illustrated, and applied,” in which will be found a full and correct delineation of the intellectual and moral character and manifestations of the above-named individual*, 20th ed. (1842). American Antiquarian Society, Massachusetts.

nature.”¹¹³ Both authors and artists occupied a privileged position because their livelihoods depended on keen observational skills. In addition to Dickens, many other literary figures in Britain and the United States had their heads phrenologized, including George Eliot, Charlotte Bronte, Walt Whitman, and Edgar Allan Poe. As is evident from this list, physiognomy was of interest to authors writing in all genres.

However, Gothic authors were especially notable for their incorporation of both physiognomy and pathognomy.¹¹⁴ Tytler claims that after the publication of Lavater’s essays “pathognomy came into its own, in the Gothic novel appropriately, where the grim psychology of villains such as La Motte in *The Romance of the Forest* (1791) and Montoni in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) and the mortal anguish of their victims are underlined by references to facial expressions.”¹¹⁵ Thus, from its inception in the late-eighteenth century, Gothic fiction was aligned with physiognomy to a greater degree than other literary genres. Bridget M. Marshall argues, “other forms of fiction use characters’ physical appearance as indicators of their inner character, but not to such a degree as in the Gothic novel where faces can be read as omens.”¹¹⁶ Graham pushes this association even further to claim that Lavaterian physiognomy is what enabled “descriptions and interpretations of the sentimental heroine and the gothic villain,” and made them effective for readers.¹¹⁷ While these critics acknowledge the connection between Gothic writing and physiognomic description, they imply that the characters were consistently

¹¹³ Pearl, *About Faces*, 54.

¹¹⁴ These practices are often conflated, though Lavater makes it clear that there is a distinction between them. Physiognomy corresponds to the knowledge of the character at rest whereas pathognomy corresponds to knowledge of the character in motion, making the latter somewhat trickier since the observer needs to be aware of possible dissimulation. Lavater claims that everyone reads the countenance pathognomically, though few read it physiognomically. Johann Caspar Lavater, *Essays on Physiognomy*, trans. Thomas Holcroft, 17th ed. (New York: R. Worthington, 1860), 11-12.

¹¹⁵ Tytler, “Lavater and Physiognomy,” 300-301.

¹¹⁶ Bridget M. Marshall, “The Face of Evil: Phrenology, Physiognomy, and the Gothic Villain,” *Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies* 6, no. 2 (Fall 2000): 161.

¹¹⁷ Graham, “Lavater’s Physiognomy in England,” 572.

legible to readers; the villains and victims appear overly determined. Gothic characters, especially in earlier works by Horace Walpole and Anne Radcliffe, undoubtedly tend towards the melodramatic. Yet, the premise of Stevenson's novella, that man is not reducible to a singular character but consists of good and bad identities residing in the same body, complicates physiognomy even while the descriptions of Jekyll and Hyde seem to affirm its validity. In an atmosphere where visual analysis is insufficient, auditory analysis becomes key to unraveling the mystery behind Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. In the next section I examine how physiognomic writings address the senses. Specifically, I demonstrate the underdeveloped treatment of the ear and sound to clarify the significance of Stevenson's intervention.

II. Physiognomy and the Senses

While Lavater gestures towards the significance of all senses, the language he employs favors sight as the source of both knowledge and power. "As certainly as eyes are in any man," Lavater writes, "so certainly are they accompanied by physiognomical sensations."¹¹⁸ The implicit connection between eyes and the accompanying "physiognomical sensations" suggests that vision is central to the practice in a way the other senses are not. His definition of "physiognomical sensation" as "those feelings which are produced at beholding certain countenances, and the conjectures concerning the qualities of the mind, which are produced by the state of such countenances, or of their portraits drawn or painted" furthers the importance of sight above hearing, tasting, smelling, or touching.¹¹⁹ In privileging sight, Lavater effectively ensured his theories would become part of ongoing discussions about the validity of sensory evidence in constructing scientific knowledge. However, the widespread circulation of his ideas

¹¹⁸ Lavater, *Essays on Physiognomy*, 31.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

and his insistence that everyone could be a physiognomist also ensured that his work would have broader consequences outside the scientific community. The cultural form of stethoscopic listening that John Picker describes as newly emerging in the nineteenth century marked an unfamiliar and often alienating engagement with the environment. Conversely, physiognomic observation transformed the familiar act of looking into a science that could comfortably be used by anyone to evaluate and judge others.

The effects of this shift were significant, particularly with regards to the understanding of personhood. Pearl explains that “many physiognomic observers reduced the observed to specific features and so reduced people to their component parts. By disembodimenting specific elements of a given person, physiognomic analysts produced a power relationship in which they were whole people and those they were considering were objects, the sum of their parts that was never assembled.”¹²⁰ As I argue in my first chapter, the potential ramifications of this kind of looking are dramatized in Poe’s “The Tell-Tale Heart” where the narrator’s fixation on the old man’s eye prevents him from viewing his victim as a whole person. Physiognomy thus produces the same kind of fracturing of the individual that stethoscopic listening would later be associated with. Furthermore, as Pearl explains, it disrupted the idea that sight-based knowledge was meaningful only for individuals and allowed the seeing public to understand observational information as communal. This facilitated discrimination against particular groups, feeding the scientific racism evident in contemporary writings by men like Linnaeus and Kant, and precipitating the work of scientists like Francis Galton and Cesare Lombroso.¹²¹ Pearl’s suggestion that people were

¹²⁰ Pearl, *About Faces*, 28.

¹²¹ Francis Galton, an English anthropologist and eugenicist, articulates his theory of eugenics in his essay “Eugenics: Its Definition, Scope, and Aims” (1904). He is also known for *Hereditary Genius* (1869) where he controversially suggested that both physical and mental traits are inherited. Cesare Lombroso, an Italian criminologist, is known for his work *Criminal Man* (1876) where he contends criminals are evolutionarily degenerate individuals who exhibit particular characteristics that mark them as more primitive than non-criminals.

scrutinized as objects whose parts were “never assembled” underscores what would seem to be one of the primary challenges of physiognomy. In addition to observing and evaluating the different features of a person, physiognomists needed to reassemble those features into a cohesive whole. Yet Lavater simplified this seemingly complex and complicated process by asserting that each part was representative of the overall character of the person, making it even easier for observers to feel assured of the snap judgments they made while traversing the bustling streets of cities like London.

In the context of physiognomy, sight thus became a powerful method of understanding the internal qualities of man that had hitherto been unreachable while hearing remained a less reliable and substantial sense. Discussing the formation of the modern self, Steven Connor explains “the sense of the insufficiency and insubstantiability of hearing makes the definition of the self through it a problem.”¹²² Although Connor’s focus is the twentieth century, this attitude towards hearing was both relevant to and bolstered by nineteenth-century sciences like physiognomy that offered the reading public information about each of the senses. Descriptions of the ear in Charles Bell’s *The Anatomy and Philosophy of Expression* (1806) and American physician James W. Redfield’s *Outlines of a New System of Physiognomy* (1849) capture its seeming unimportance to the practice as well as its essential subservience to the eye. Explaining how to interpret the proportions of the head and face, Bell states that large eyes “imply a capacity consistent with human thought, a vivacity and intelligence partaking of mind. But large pendulous ears, or projecting and sharp ears, belong to the satyr, for man is not to be perpetually

For more on the theorization of race see *The Idea of Race*, eds. Robert Bernasconi and Tommy L. Lott (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2000).

¹²² Steven Connor, “Sound and the Self,” in *Hearing History: A Reader*, ed. Mark M. Smith (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2004), 62.

watchful, or to be startled and alarmed by every noise.”¹²³ While large eyes are beneficially linked to intelligence, large ears are ascribed to satyrs, creatures that are only partly human in form. The implication that humans should not be “perpetually watchful” with regards to sound juxtaposes the usefulness of knowledge acquired through sight with the comparative uselessness of knowledge acquired through hearing. Those who are attentive to their sonic environment are framed as almost skittish in that they are “startled and alarmed by every noise.” Individuals defined by their ears are posited negatively and conceived of as less human, while individuals defined by their eyes exhibit greater intelligence, a quality that was central to nineteenth-century distinctions between humans and animals.

Redfield’s work offers a somewhat different perspective on the ear as indicative of “susceptibility of improvement,” a connection that perhaps unwittingly ties the insufficiency of the organ to an insufficiency of character.¹²⁴ Organized as a series of letters, the text pays little attention to the senses themselves even though it features an entire letter on interpreting the ear to discern internal qualities. The letter opens: “There is not a part of the body in which people differ more than in the *ear*; and as this is a very conspicuous member, except when artificially concealed, and as people are much disposed to attach some meaning to it, we may suppose that it is an important index of character.”¹²⁵ The tone of Redfield’s writing subtly suggests a personal disinterest in the ear; “people are much disposed to attach some meaning to it” because it is a “conspicuous member” and therefore “we may suppose” it is somehow important. Framing his discussion of the ear in this way, Redfield implies that public interest has led him to address a

¹²³ Charles Bell, *The Anatomy and Philosophy of Expression as Connected with the Fine Arts*, 3rd ed. (London: John Murray, 1844), 32.

¹²⁴ For a discussion literary characters as “sufficient” or “insufficient” in economic terms see Deirdre Lynch’s *The Economy of Character: Novels, Market Culture, and the Business of Inner Meaning* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

¹²⁵ James W. Redfield, *Outlines of a New System of Physiognomy: Illustrated by Numerous Engravings Indicating the Location of the Signs of Different Mental Faculties* (New York: J.S. Redfield, 1849), 43.

topic that he might not otherwise examine so extensively. Detailing the significance of the ear, Redfield argues that larger ears indicate a greater susceptibility of improvement as well as a greater docility. While not quite as negative as Bell's remarks, Redfield essentially represents those possessing large ears as flawed and weak, though with the capacity to better themselves. The opening of the subsequent letter on the eye reinforces the idea that the ear is less important, contrasting his indifference towards the ear with his regret that he cannot speak more expansively on the eye. He notes, "The language of the *eye* would in itself occupy a volume, but in this brief outline we must content ourselves with speaking of it as we have spoken of the ear."¹²⁶ Like Bell, Redfield associates large eyes with heightened intellect. "Persons with large eyes," he explains, "have very *lively* emotions, think very rapidly, and speak fast."¹²⁷ Despite their brief treatments of the ear as an object of visual analysis that can expose interior qualities, neither author is especially attentive to the act of hearing as a mode of observation. Yet the human voice is not entirely absent from nineteenth-century works on physiognomy.

Although the word "sound" almost exclusively appears in physiognomic writings to mean "health and soundness," the voice receives some attention as another expression of internal character.¹²⁸ However, rather than approaching voice as uniquely shaped by the thoughts and feelings speakers experience, the authors consider how its qualities are a product of the physiological nature of vocal production. Alexander Walker, one of the first Englishmen to expand on Lavater's work, turns to the voice by defining it as an organ constituted by the mouth, nose, cheeks, and forehead, among other things.¹²⁹ Bell similarly states, "The prominence of the nose, and of the lower part of the forehead, and the development of the cavities in the centre of

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 49.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ *OED Online*, s.v. "sound, *n.*"

¹²⁹ Alexander Walker, *Physiognomy Founded on Physiology, and Applied to Various Countries, Professions, and Individuals* (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1834), 273.

the face, are all concerned in the *voice*.”¹³⁰ The specificity regarding the parts involved in vocal production is accompanied by a pervasive vagueness regarding how the voice might be interpreted. For instance, in his own work Lavater highlights the potential significance of the voice but gives no indication of how to interpret it. “Consider the voices of men,” he writes, “their height, depth, strength, weakness; whether hollow, clear, rough, pleasant, natural, or feigned; and inquire what foreheads and tones are oftenest associated. If the student has a good ear, he will certainly acquire the knowledge of temperament, character, and what class the forehead belongs to by the voice.”¹³¹ Apart from this short mention of voice as potentially valuable to those with “a good ear,” Lavater offers no instruction regarding what the “height [and] depth,” or the “hollow, clear, rough” tones might mean.

One instance where the voice is given more credence is in American physician Richard Brown’s *An Essay on the Truth of Physiognomy: and its Application to Medicine* (1807). The essay focuses on what Brown terms “medical physiognomy,” a practice used to read diseased human bodies and thereby aid in diagnosis. He writes, “Though the state of the voice does not, perhaps, strictly speaking, fall within the province of the physiognomist, yet as it is oftentimes of the utmost importance to the physician in forming his prognosis, it must not on the present occasion, pass unnoticed.”¹³² The question of whether voice falls “within the province of the physiognomist” acknowledges its inherent difference from features like the teeth and mouth that Brown and other writers unhesitatingly include in their work. Importantly, Brown expresses no interest in the voice as the vehicle for the patient narrative. Instead, he attends to what the

¹³⁰ Bell, *The Anatomy and Philosophy*, 31.

¹³¹ Lavater, *Essays on Physiognomy*, 158.

¹³² Richard Brown, *An Essay on the Truth of Physiognomy: and its Application to Medicine* (Philadelphia: Thomas T. Stiles, 1807), 67.

qualities of the voice might reflect about physical health. The entirety of Brown's section on voice reads as follows:

Of the voice. An unusual sharpness and quickness in the voice are bad. So indeed is any change, which makes it deviate materially from its own tone and manner in health.

"A fierce answer from a mild man," says Hippocrates, "is bad," and daily experience confirms the truth of the remark.

A trembling of the voice is also an unfavorable symptom; an entire loss of it is still worse. The voice remaining natural leaves some dawnings of hope, even amid the gloom of other appearances the most alarming.¹³³

Throughout this section, the voice is indicative of a good or bad prognosis depending on whether it varies from its natural state. Brown references no particular diseases in his description, implying that sharpness, quickness, trembling, or loss of voice signal only that something is wrong. The lack of specificity undercuts the idea of voice as integral to diagnostics, again relegating sound to a supplementary role. The voice functions only as an "unfavorable symptom" that confirms something is amiss or as "the dawnings of hope" in spite of physical changes.

Collectively, the treatment of the ear and voice in these texts showcase the underdeveloped nature of sound in the context of physiognomy. Although Lavater and his followers argue that the entire body is legible to the attentive observer, their focus on sight to the detriment of the other senses excludes the possibility that bodies might also be read as dynamic soundscapes in their own right.¹³⁴ In the realm of Gothic fiction, a genre keenly attentive to sensory experience, sound plays a more expansive role in how characters understand themselves and others.¹³⁵ The significance of sound to Stevenson's understanding of human interaction is

¹³³ Ibid., 76-77.

¹³⁴ Walker directly critiques his fellow physiognomists for focusing too exclusively on the face. He claims that they "have erred in considering the head alone as the subject of their science. That science applies to the whole body." Walker's awareness of this problem underscores the tendency of physiognomic texts to superficially claim that the whole body is involved without addressing areas beyond the head in any detail. *Physiognomy Founded on Physiology*, 7.

¹³⁵ John Picker aptly argues, "Victorian self-awareness was contingent on awareness of sonic environments, and that, in turn, to understand how Victorians saw themselves, we ought to understand how they heard themselves as well." *Victorian Soundscapes*, 11.

apparent in his essay “Truth of Intercourse” where he gives equal credence to sight and hearing as modes of observation. He writes, “Pitiful is the case of the blind, who cannot read the face; pitiful that of the deaf, who cannot follow the changes of the voice.”¹³⁶ Stevenson accounts for both the eye and the ear, suggesting that not just the face but also “the changes of the voice” are significant to reading character. In what follows, I demonstrate how the difficulty of reading Edward Hyde’s countenance leads the professional men populating the novella to develop an alternative mode of observation that I term sonic physiognomy.

III. Flawed Physiognomy: Trouble Seeing Hyde

The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde chronicles the rise of Edward Hyde and the decline of Henry Jekyll, a physician who takes an experimental substance that separates his good and bad nature into distinct identities. At first, Jekyll is able to control these transformations, but Hyde grows more virulent and becomes the dominant personality. Throughout the narrative Jekyll becomes increasingly isolated from his friends, desperate to stop Hyde’s criminal activities but unable to reverse the effects of his experiment. The explicit details of the case are concealed until the final chapters, “Dr. Lanyon’s Narrative” and “Henry Jekyll’s Full Statement of the Case,” documents that emerge after respected lawyer Gabriel John Utterson and loyal butler Mr. Poole discover the dead body of Edward Hyde in Henry Jekyll’s laboratory.¹³⁷ Since the publication of Stevenson’s work in 1886, critics have variously attempted to diagnose Henry Jekyll. The character has been read as a homosexual, drug addict, hysteric, parasitic twin, and

¹³⁶ Robert Louis Stevenson, “Truth of Intercourse,” in *“Virginibus Puerisque” and Other Papers* (New York: Cosmopolitan Magazine, 191-?), 65.

¹³⁷ The discovery of Dorian Gray’s corpse at the end of Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray* echoes the discovery of Hyde’s deformed body. Like Henry Jekyll, Dorian finds a means of concealing his wickedness until the end of his life where he is described as “withered, wrinkled, and loathsome of visage.” “The Picture of Dorian Gray,” in *The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde* (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 2003), 159.

most recently a human manifestation of “limited liability,” among other things.¹³⁸ The overwhelming focus on scientific phenomena ranging from dual-brain theory to gemellology (the study of twins), points to a critical acknowledgment of Stevenson’s interest in and awareness of contemporary science.¹³⁹ However, the author’s unique depiction of physiognomy as not only a visual, but also an auditory practice has been entirely neglected. In part, this is because the understanding of the titular characters as allegorical representations of good and evil obscures the failure of conventional physiognomic reading. Recent criticism pushes against reductive readings of the text as allegory, but the physiognomy of the characters has remained a major stumbling block. A casual glance at the characters’ appearances promotes the treatment of the two personalities as precisely that: two distinct, separable identities that are easily categorized as “good” and “bad.” The upstanding professional, “Henry Jekyll, M.D., D.C.L., LL.D., F.R.S., &c.,” is so obviously good to his friends and acquaintances that he can be succinctly described in a single sentence. Jekyll’s depiction as “a large, well-made, smooth-faced man of fifty, with something of a slyish cast perhaps, but every mark of capacity and kindness” underestimates his aptitude for wickedness. This physiognomic misreading drives the plot of the novella, which

¹³⁸ See Emily A. Bernhard Jackson, “Twins, Twinship, and Robert Louis Stevenson’s Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde,” *Victorian Review* 39, no. 1 (Spring 2013): 70-86; Martin Danahy, “Dr. Jekyll’s Two Bodies,” *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 35, no. 1 (2013): 23-40; Kristen Guest, “Jekyll and Hyde, Inc.: Limited Liability, Companification, and Gothic Subjectivity,” *Victorian Literature and Culture* 44 (2016): 315-329; Debbie Harrison, “Doctors, Drugs, and Addiction: Professional Integrity in Peril at the Fin de Siècle,” *Gothic Studies* 11, no. 2 (2009): 52-62; Robert Mighall, “Diagnosing Jekyll: The Scientific Context to Dr Jekyll’s Experiment and Mr Hyde’s Embodiment,” in *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde and Other Tales of Terror* (London: Penguin, 2002), 145-161; Anne Stiles, “Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Jekyll and Hyde* and the Double Brain,” in *Popular Fiction and Brain Science in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 27-49; and Elaine Showalter, “Dr. Jekyll’s Cloest,” in *The Haunted Mind: The Supernatural in Victorian Literature*, ed. Elton E. Smith and Robert Haas (Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 1999), 67-85.

¹³⁹ In her book on Stevenson and science Julia Reid argues, “Stevenson has received little attention from scholars working in the ‘interdiscipline’ of literature and science, despite possessing suggestive credentials in the shape of his scientific background and interests.” The decade following the publication of her work has seen an increase in the number of articles on Stevenson and science. *Robert Louis Stevenson, Science, and the Fin de Siècle* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006), 4.

unravels through a series of narrators attempting to uncover the mystery of Edward Hyde but persistently unable to understand his relationship to Henry Jekyll.

The structure of the work is often compared to a case study, drawing together Gothic fiction and medical writing to create what some readers believed to be a credible account of scientific experimentation.¹⁴⁰ References to the case in well-known newspapers like *The Washington Post* in the decade after its publication demonstrate its viability as a legitimate medical experiment, as well as its popularity in both Britain and the United States. An article from 1895 titled “Dual Action of the Mind: The Theory that the Two Hemispheres of the Brain Can Act Individually Revived” cites the work of L.C. Bruce, whose own case is said to make Dr. Jekyll’s experiment seem more probable.¹⁴¹ Another article initially published in *The London Daily Mail* and then picked up by the *New York Times* in 1897, “Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde: A London Doctor’s Strange Patient—Two Girls in One,” discusses a case exhibited to the Clinical Society of London where a young girl showcases two distinct personalities with different levels of morality.¹⁴² While these articles mention Stevenson’s work only in passing, Oscar Wilde’s “The Decay of Lying: An Observation” more explicitly calls attention to the potential hazard of these too probable works of Gothic fiction when he writes, “the transformation of Dr. Jekyll

¹⁴⁰ The structure of the novella has been addressed by many critics. For Stiles, Stevenson parodies the case study “to reveal the weaknesses of late-Victorian scientific narrative, specifically, how the linearity and emotional detachment of medical case studies obscures the baroque complexity of mental pathology.” Ronald Thomas argues that the work lacks a coherent plot, which mirrors the lack of a coherent self. Instead of coming together, the various voices “fray into ‘elements’ that have less and less connection.” Conversely, Peter K. Garrett claims that the voices in the text fit together like the pieces of a puzzle. Stiles, “Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Jekyll and Hyde*,” 30; Ronald Thomas, “The Strange Voices in the Strange Case: Dr. Jekyll, Mr. Hyde, and the Voices of Modern Fiction,” in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde After One Hundred Years*, eds. William Veeder and Gordon Hirsch (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 75; Peter K. Garrett, “Cries and Voices: Reading *Jekyll and Hyde*,” in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde After One Hundred Years*, eds. William Veeder and Gordon Hirsch (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 59-72.

¹⁴¹ “Dual Action of the Mind: The Theory that the Two Hemispheres of the Brain Can Act Individually Revived,” *The Washington Post* (June 23, 1895), 17.

¹⁴² “Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde: A London Doctor’s Strange Patient—Two Girls in One,” *New York Times* (March 21, 1897), 11.

reads dangerously like an experiment out of the *Lancet*.¹⁴³ Wilde's comment calls attention to a notable feature of Victorian life related to the circulation of scientific knowledge among the general public. Laymen inhabited a precarious position of being informed enough to question the viability of an experiment like the one in Stevenson's text, but ignorant enough to be persuaded of its authenticity.

Unlike Jekyll, descriptions of Edward Hyde are not dispensed with in a single sentence, demonstrating his resistance to physiognomic reading. In fact, efforts to accurately depict Hyde appear throughout the entirety of the novella and are uniformly unsatisfying. As the narrator makes clear, "the few who could describe him differed widely, as common observers will. Only on one point were they agreed; and that was the haunting sense of unexpressed deformity with which the fugitive impressed his beholders."¹⁴⁴ Although the characters experience a strong physiognomic sensation, a "haunting sense of unexpressed deformity" common to all observers, none are able to supply a specific description of Hyde's countenance. His face, the focus of nearly all nineteenth-century writings on physiognomy, is unreadable. Instead, characters offer their own affective responses to his presence, their "sense" of him. While instinct remains central in their analyses, sight fails as an effective means of evaluation. The impossibility of description is certainly not from lack of trying. In addition to several passing references to his appearance, Mr. Enfield, Mr. Utterson, and physician Hastie Lanyon supply three key depictions of Edward Hyde. Collectively, these passages demonstrate an inability on the part of three different observers to articulate a physiognomic description that moves beyond sensation to address specific physical attributes.

¹⁴³ Oscar Wilde, "The Decay of Lying: An Observation," in *The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde* (London: Harper Collins Publishers, 2003), 1074.

¹⁴⁴ Stevenson, *The Strange Case*, 24.

Mr. Enfield's initial description of Edward Hyde affirms Lavater's assertion that "No one who is not inexhaustibly copious in language can become a physiognomist."¹⁴⁵ Framed as a failure of language rather than a failure of sight, Enfield's insufficient account of Hyde nevertheless points towards the need for alternative means of evaluating human bodies. After Enfield tells Utterson how Edward Hyde trampled a small child in the streets of London, his friend curiously asks, "What sort of a man is he to see?"¹⁴⁶ This basic question elicits a somewhat lengthy response that does not supply any concrete details about Hyde's physical appearance. Enfield states,

He is not easy to describe. There is something wrong with his appearance; something displeasing, something downright detestable. I never saw a man I so disliked, and yet I scarce know why. He must be deformed somewhere; he gives a strong feeling of deformity, although I couldn't specify the point. He's an extraordinary looking man and yet I really can name nothing out of the way. No, sir; I can make no hand of it; I can't describe him. And it's not for want of memory; for I declare I can see him this moment.¹⁴⁷

At the start of his description Enfield claims that Hyde is simply "not easy to describe." However, only a few moments later he realizes that he actually "can't describe him." This is no fault of memory but rather a more mysterious and inexplicable lack of adequate expression. Variousy characterized as "wrong," "displeasing," "detestable," and "deformed," Hyde comes off as more of an intensely negative sensation than a man. What begins as the description of another individual's appearance becomes an introspective explanation of the feelings his proximity inspires. Enfield claims he can "see" Hyde clearly in his mind; however, he cannot help Utterson form any definite image of the man. This distinction implies Enfield's sight is not sufficient to interpret the character before him, gesturing towards the need for alternative modes of observation.

¹⁴⁵ Lavater, *Essays on Physiognomy*, 65.

¹⁴⁶ Stevenson, *The Strange Case*, 11.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 11-12.

The subsequent chapter, “Search for Mr. Hyde,” details Utterson’s attempts to observe the character after hearing Enfield’s story. His motivation derives not only from personal interest, but also from his friendship with Dr. Henry Jekyll who has mysteriously left all of his possessions to Edward Hyde in the event of his death or disappearance. When the lawyer finally encounters Hyde, his first impression is captured in a brief sentence: “He was small and very plainly dressed, and the look of him, even at a distance, went somehow strongly against the watcher’s inclination.”¹⁴⁸ Like Enfield, Utterson is more attuned to his own “inclination” than Hyde’s actual physiognomy. The vague mention of Hyde’s plain dress and small stature are supplanted by the strong repulsion of the observer. Throughout their interaction, the reader receives little more than the dialogue of the two characters. It is only after Hyde has left that the lawyer attempts to make sense of what he has seen:

Mr. Hyde was pale and dwarfish, he gave an impression of deformity without any nameable malformation, he had a displeasing smile, he had borne himself to the lawyer with a sort of murderous mixture of timidity and boldness, and he spoke with a husky, whispering and somewhat broken voice; all these were points against him, but not all of these together could explain the hitherto unknown disgust, loathing and fear with which Mr. Utterson regarded him. ‘There must be something else,’ said the perplexed gentleman. ‘There *is* something more, if I could find a name for it. God bless me, the man seems hardly human! Something troglodytic, shall we say? or can it be the old story of Dr. Fell? or is it the mere radiance of a foul soul that thus transpires through, and transfigures, its clay continent?’¹⁴⁹

The physical qualities of Hyde such as his pale skin, dwarfish figure, and “displeasing smile” are overwhelmingly displaced by affective descriptors that highlight his unnamable “malformation,” “murderous mixture of timidity and boldness,” and Utterson’s “hitherto unknown disgust, loathing and fear.” In other words, the passage begins with the physical but quickly moves to the affective, capturing the observer’s physiognomic sensations rather than Hyde’s physiognomy.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 16.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 17.

The lawyer's insistence that "there must be something else" that he simply cannot name reiterates the failure of language expressed by Enfield.

The classification of Hyde as "hardly human" and "troglodytic" situates him lower in the evolutionary hierarchy than the other characters, thus demonstrating the novella's subscription to the association of immorality and criminality with ugliness. Utterson's suggestion that he and Enfield are actually seeing "the mere radiance of a foul soul that thus transpires through, and transfigures, its clay continent" epitomizes the practice of physiognomy. Hyde's soul is so exceptionally corrupt that it has morphed his physical body into a deformed, repulsive, indescribable form; the external is representative of the internal. The problem with this estimation of Hyde is his unshakable connection to the respectable Henry Jekyll. The physician admits in his statement of the case, "This, too, was myself. It seemed natural and human."¹⁵⁰ In his discussion of the excellence of man, Lavater explains "No man ceases to be a man, how low soever he may sink beneath the dignity of human nature. Not being a beast he is still capable of amendment, of approaching perfection."¹⁵¹ The capacity for improvement or "amendment" on the part of individuals like Hyde seems relevant to understanding his relationship with Henry Jekyll. Prior to his experiment, the latter conformed to social expectations, suppressed his baser desires and inclinations, and established himself as an upstanding member of the professional community. Yet, the fact that Edward Hyde emerges from within Henry Jekyll implies that internally the physician is less respectable than he appears. Stevenson's text thus poses a significant question about physiognomy even while it seems to confirm its validity: Should the astute physiognomist have been able to detect this latent immorality within Dr. Jekyll?

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 51.

¹⁵¹ Lavater, *Essays on Physiognomy*, 134.

Dr. Lanyon's assessment of Edward Hyde differs from the preceding accounts in that it is delivered with a greater degree of objectivity. His evaluation is, for the most part, clinical and detached in a way that Enfield and Utterson's are not. Lanyon therefore models a more rigorous form of physiognomic observation borne of his experience as a physician trained to understand bodies as objects. In addition to his unique perspective, Lanyon differs from the other men in that he does not actively seek Hyde but is approached because of his obligations as a doctor. When Hyde appeals to Lanyon for help he knows the latter cannot break the code of his profession. In fact, as he prepares to reveal his identity as Henry Jekyll, he prefaces his actions by saying "Lanyon, you remember your vows: what follows is under the seal of our profession."¹⁵² Unlike Enfield and Utterson's public encounters with Hyde, Lanyon's observation appropriately takes place in private under "the bright light of the consulting room." He says,

Here, at last, I had a chance of seeing him. I had never set eyes on him before, so much was certain. He was small, as I have said; I was struck besides with the shocking expression of his face, with his remarkable combination of great muscular activity and great apparent debility of constitution, and – last but not least – with the odd, subjective disturbance caused by his neighbourhood. This bore some resemblance to incipient rigor, and was accompanied by a marked sinking of the pulse. At the time, I set it down to some idiosyncratic, personal distaste, and merely wondered at the acuteness of the symptoms; but I have since had reason to believe the cause to lie much deeper in the nature of man, and to turn on some nobler hinge than the principle of hatred.¹⁵³

Whereas Enfield and Utterson seem unconcerned with the environment in which they observe Hyde, Lanyon's first thought regards "clearly seeing him" in the well-lit exam room. His subsequent statement, that he has not encountered Hyde before, "so much was certain," sets an entirely different pace within this passage than in the preceding descriptions. Rather than moving hurriedly to his affective response, the doctor takes the time to consider the creature before him as he would a patient. He observes Hyde's "remarkable combination of great muscular activity

¹⁵² Stevenson, *The Strange Case*, 46.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 44-45.

and great apparent debility of constitution,” calling attention to the physical body only to discount it as unstable and inconsistent.

The remainder of his description focuses primarily on the symptoms he experiences in Hyde’s presence. Although he does approach the affective evaluation of Enfield and Utterson, Lanyon shifts focus to his bodily rather than his emotional response. He finds himself suffering from something like “incipient rigor...accompanied by a marked sinking of the pulse.” Throughout his entire analysis of the figure before him, Lanyon maintains an air of objectivity. Even when discussing his own reaction to Hyde, the tone of his description makes it seem like Lanyon is talking about someone other than himself. He even notes the subjective nature of his reaction, initially attributing it to “idiosyncratic, personal distaste.” However, like Utterson, Lanyon makes an effort to identify the unnamable “something more” that troubles him and decides that his repulsion derives from “some nobler hinge than the principle of hatred,” some cause “much deeper in the nature of man.” His analysis begins objectively, moves towards subjectivity, and concludes by reminding the reader of Hyde’s implicit and universally perceived deformity. Despite his scientific background, Lanyon’s observational skills prove equally deficient when confronted with the enigmatic physiognomy of Edward Hyde.

While Enfield, Utterson, and Lanyon are equally unable to describe Hyde’s countenance their agreement that Hyde resembles something deformed, “troglydytic,” and “hardly human” underscores the stark contrast of his body to that of Henry Jekyll. These dichotomous bodies invite a simplistic reading of Jekyll as good and Hyde as evil. The latter’s criminal activities further support this reading. In conjunction with physiognomy, Cesare Lombroso’s famous work on criminality, *L’uomo delinquente* (1876), promoted the idea that criminals had specific physical anomalies that made them identifiable. Typically, they shared the features of “lower” creatures

like apes and primitive man. When Hyde commits his greatest crime and kills Sir Danvers Carew he conforms to these expectations; witnesses describe him attacking “with ape-like fury, he was trampling his victim under foot, and hailing down a storm of blows, under which the bones were audibly shattered and the body jumped upon the roadway.”¹⁵⁴ In addition to this vivid “ape-like” behavior, Hyde is persistently categorized as a creature, inhuman and hellish. Reflecting on Hyde in his statement of the case, Jekyll drastically revises his assertion that Hyde is a part of himself that “seemed natural and human.” As critics like Jean Fernandez and Peter K. Garrett have pointed out, Jekyll’s language works to distance him from his counterpart through his use of pronouns.¹⁵⁵ The doctor writes, “He, I say—I cannot say I. That child of Hell had nothing human; nothing lived in him but fear and hatred.”¹⁵⁶ His attempts to treat Hyde as entirely separate from his own identity demonstrates Jekyll’s growing desperation as he recognizes that Hyde is not “natural and human” but rather a “child of Hell” possessing “nothing human.” Towards the conclusion of his narrative Jekyll begins to write in the third person, associating his identity with neither Jekyll nor Hyde:

He had now seen the full deformity of the creature that shared with him some of the phenomena of consciousness, and was co-heir with him to death...he thought of Hyde, for all his energy of life, as of something not only hellish but inorganic. This was the shocking thing; that the slime of the pit seemed to utter cries and voices; that the amorphous dust gesticulated and sinned; that what was dead, and had no shape, should usurp the offices of life.¹⁵⁷

Perhaps the most condemnatory of Hyde, Jekyll depicts him as something entirely inhuman, vividly comparing him to “something not only hellish but inorganic.” Hyde becomes almost primordial in this passage, aligned with “the slime of the pit,” “the amorphous dust,” and

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 22.

¹⁵⁵ See Jean Fernandez, “‘Master’s Made Away With...’ Servant Voices and Narrational Politics in *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*,” *LIT: literature, interpretation, theory* 15, no. 4 (2004): 363-387; and Garrett, “Cries and Voices.”

¹⁵⁶ Stevenson, *The Strange Case*, 59.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 60.

something dead and shapeless. The suggestion that Hyde “seemed to utter cries and voices” is contrasted with his notable absence as a narrator. Elaine Showalter reminds readers that Hyde never has the opportunity to speak in the text, despite the multiplicity of voices.¹⁵⁸ The challenge of depicting his body results from his essential inhumanness, which reduces him to a shapeless deformity that does not adhere to the traditional expectations of the material human body. Hyde exhibits an extreme degree of the plasticity of form that serves as the impetus of Dr. Moreau’s experiments in H.G. Wells’s novel *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, a novel I discuss in the next chapter.

However, while the characters find it difficult to visually assess Hyde, they become more adept at perceiving and interpreting sonic cues. Utterson in particular, engages with the soundscape of the novella and comes to rely on his sense of hearing. Jekyll’s statement that “This was the shocking thing; that the slime of the pit seemed to utter cries and voices,” situates Hyde as an improbable sounding body. The juxtaposition of the dissatisfying visual analyses of Edward Hyde and the ultimately more fruitful sonic analyses that help the characters unravel the case demonstrates that physiognomic observation based solely on the eye can be insufficient. In the next section of this chapter I argue that the conventionally unreliable realm of sound becomes more stable and concrete in response to the instability of the realm of vision.

IV. Footfalls and Voices: Reading Bodies as Soundscapes

In an article titled “Passing Faces,” published in Dickens’s *Household Words* in 1855, Eliza Lynn Linton describes the urban environment as one navigable through the new science of physiognomy. “LIFE,” she writes, “in all its boundless power of joy and suffering—this is the

¹⁵⁸ In her reading of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* as a tale of homoerotic desire, Showalter argues that Hyde’s perspective enters the text through “his feminine behavior and in the body language of hysterical discourse.” “Dr. Jekyll’s Closet,” 74.

great picture-book to be read in London streets; these are the wild notes to be listened to.”¹⁵⁹ Accounting for both the sights and, much more succinctly, the sounds of the city, Linton provides an amusing chronicle of the various characters one might encounter when walking through the streets. She depicts a menagerie of faces from a woman resembling a cat, “elegant, stealthy, clever, caressing; who walks without noise,” to men resembling “the greyhound, lean of rib and sharp of face” or the crane “with sloping shoulders and slender legs.”¹⁶⁰ The subjective nature of Linton’s analysis is apparent in her imaginative descriptions of the internal thoughts of the passersby. For instance, she describes how a man “stalking moodily along has just lost his last farthing on the Stock Exchange. He is going home now to break the news to his wife, and to arrange for a flight across the Channel.”¹⁶¹ The wild speculation apparent in Linton’s writing captures the kind of visual evaluation practiced by the casual observer in the “physiognomic atmosphere” of nineteenth-century England. Pearl attributes the widespread appeal of this brand of physiognomy to the “increasingly illegible and confusing” nature of the city. She claims, “As part of their attempts to make sense of their city, Londoners read faces as a way to read their surroundings.”¹⁶² In the context of Stevenson’s novella, where the indescribable countenance of Edward Hyde thwarts this important mode of visual analysis, characters must develop alternative ways to make sense of their environment. Discussing what he calls “The Modern Auditory I,” Connor outlines the challenges of using sight to understand the urban landscape and argues that modernists like James Joyce and Virginia Woolf acknowledged sound as significant to interpreting the city. He claims, “The unsteadiness of the ways of looking and seeing characteristic of city life—the glance or the glimpse rather than the sustained gaze—goes along

¹⁵⁹ Eliza Lynn Linton, “Passing Faces,” *Household Words* Vol. XI (1855): 261-264.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 262.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 264.

¹⁶² Pearl, *About Faces*, 26.

with a sense of shifting and saturated space of which the plural, permeable ear can evidently make more sense than the eye.”¹⁶³ Embracing the notion of the ear as a more apt interpreter of the urban space, Stevenson’s work exhibits a proto-modern stance towards the senses where characters depend on more than just their eyes to navigate the “illegible and confusing” city streets.¹⁶⁴

Throughout *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* the sounds and voices of London greatly shape social relations between the characters and the general public. The city itself is characterized by a constant humming or growling. Effectively, London becomes another body whose blood and pulse are constituted by the human life it contains: “through the muffle and smother of these fallen clouds, the procession of the town’s life was still rolling in through the great arteries with a sound as of a mighty wind.”¹⁶⁵ This sound becomes a comforting form of connection for Utterson, who often uses it as a means of counteracting the negative sensations he experiences when alone with Dr. Jekyll or Mr. Hyde. Appropriately, London provides a consistent pulse-like sound indicative of a normally functioning body, one that is in stark contrast to Henry Jekyll’s. During one of Jekyll’s withdrawn phases, Utterson stands outside the house and thinks “perhaps, in his heart, he preferred to speak with Poole upon the doorstep and surrounded by the air and sounds of the open city, rather than to be admitted into that house of voluntary bondage, and to sit and speak with its inscrutable recluse.”¹⁶⁶ The “sounds of the open

¹⁶³ Steven Connor, “The Modern Auditory I,” in *Rewriting the Self: Histories from the Renaissance to the Present*, ed. Roy Porter (New York: Routledge, 1997), 210.

¹⁶⁴ In her introduction to *Apartment Stories* Sharon Marcus explains the role of apartments in reshaping the urban landscape into a more interactive space where public and private were not as easily separable. While London had virtually no apartment living in the nineteenth century city-dwellers “failed in practice to sustain the domestic isolation they promulgated in theory.” *Apartment Stories: City and Home in Nineteenth-Century Paris and London* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 4.

¹⁶⁵ Stevenson, *The Strange Case*, 27.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 31.

city” provide Utterson with a sense of community and align him with the public sphere rather than the isolating confinement of Jekyll’s private drawing room.

This is not to say that London is conceived of as entirely safe. In fact, the presence of Edward Hyde taints the security of the soundscape by introducing more threatening noises. After hearing Enfield’s story regarding Hyde trampling a child, Utterson dreams that he is induced to “at every street corner crush a child and leave her screaming.”¹⁶⁷ The punctuation of the placid soundscape by the child’s screams is one of many interruptions to the normalcy of the sonic environment, most of which are related to Jekyll and Hyde’s actions throughout the novella. After Sir Danver’s is murdered the newsboys “were crying themselves hoarse along the footways,” a sound that terrifies Jekyll as he listens to them from his secluded cabinet.¹⁶⁸ Already looking “deadly sick” when Utterson comes to see if he has heard the news, “the doctor shuddered. ‘They were crying it in the square,’ he said, ‘I heard them in my dining room.’”¹⁶⁹ Jekyll’s response demonstrates the ability of the human voice to traverse both public and private domain, circulating knowledge of Hyde’s foul deeds throughout London and haunting the doctor as he attempts to hide from the outside world in his dining room. Although he is able to avoid the printed accounts of Hyde’s crimes, Jekyll cannot avoid the vocal accounts of the murder. The permeable nature of sound exhibited in this scene not only demonstrates the breaking down of the public and private spheres in nineteenth-century London, but suggests that sound is less tractable than physical appearance. Just as Jekyll cannot prevent their cries from entering his home, the newsboys cannot entirely control the reach of their voices. Sound is depicted as, in Connor’s words, “omnipresent, nondirectional, and mobile.”¹⁷⁰ From this perspective, sonic

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 15.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 27.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 25.

¹⁷⁰ Connor, “Sound and the Self,” 57.

physiognomy becomes a more reliable method of evaluating character because it is more challenging to conceal the sounds of the body than to alter physical appearance.

Throughout the novella, Utterson is particularly attentive to the sound of footfalls, which enable the lawyer to identify Jekyll and Hyde based on the sounds of their bodies moving through the spaces they inhabit. During his search for Edward Hyde, Utterson waits in the streets of London in hopes of catching a glimpse of the mysterious man Enfield has failed to satisfactorily describe. Just prior to encountering Hyde the narrator provides an elaborate summary of the soundscape Utterson finds himself in:

By ten o'clock, when the shops were closed, the by-street was very solitary and, in spite of the low growl of London from all round, very silent. Small sounds carried far; domestic sounds out of the houses were clearly audible on either side of the roadway; and the rumour of the approach of any passenger preceded him by a long time. Mr. Utterson had been some minutes at his post, when he was aware of an odd, light footstep drawing near. In the course of his nightly patrols, he had long grown accustomed to the quaint effect with which the footfalls of a single person, while he is still a great way off, suddenly spring out distinct from the vast hum and clatter of the city. Yet his attention had never before been so sharply and decisively arrested; and it was with a strong, superstitious prevision of success that he withdrew into the entry of the court.¹⁷¹

Initially, this passage constructs what might be considered a normal city soundscape characterized by the “low growl of London from all round” and the silence typical of the late hour. Utterson can faintly hear the sounds of domestic life as they drift from the private sphere of the home into the public streets. Additionally, he anticipates the occasional footfalls that “spring out distinct from the vast hum and clatter of the city.” The notion that the sounds of bodies moving through the city are apparent when they are “still a great way off” demonstrates an important difference between sonic and visual physiognomy. While visual observers require proximity, sonic observers are able to begin assessing bodies outside their sightlines. The contrast between the footsteps of the passerby and the muted sounds of the city at night nicely

¹⁷¹ Stevenson, *The Strange Case*, 15-16.

captures an important difference between the “sounds of man” and the “sounds of his environment” that Schafer juxtaposes in his question.

Utterson is aware of the sounds of London, but is more attentive to the sounds of other human bodies within his sonic environment. Utterson seems to instinctively understand that the footfall can reveal a lot about the individual. Hyde’s physical deformity influences the sounds his body produces. Physiologically this makes sense; the shape, size, and movement of the body naturally produce a distinct sound. For instance, lighter or heavier treads can indicate differences in height and weight. Pace can expose internal motivations if the person is anxious and therefore hurried or at ease and therefore slower. In this case, Hyde’s footfalls function much like his appearance. Utterson’s “attention had never before been so sharply and decisively arrested; and it was with a strong, superstitious prevision of success that he withdrew into the entry of the court.” The lawyer experiences the same kind of visceral response to Hyde’s footsteps as others do to his appearance. Even before seeing Hyde he recoils from him based on the quality of his tread, withdrawing into the entry. The sharp, decisive arrest of his senses mimics the response of prey to a predatory animal. One can imagine Utterson’s ears pricking like those of a deer that senses the approach of danger. What is striking is the implication that Hyde’s internal qualities manifest not only in his malformed physiognomy but also in the sonic characteristics of his body. In this moment Utterson becomes a practitioner of sonic physiognomy. He does not detect Hyde’s stature or pace, but hears the base, deformed attributes of Hyde’s soul in his footsteps. Proponents of physiognomy argue that the interior is accessible through the exterior, scrutinizing the countenance to discern the morality of the individual. However, this scene suggests that analyzing the sounds produced by a person’s body might offer similar knowledge if those sounds are strictly locatable in the physical. Rather than focus exclusively on the most common

understanding of voice as, in Mladen Dolar's words "the bearer of an utterance, the support of a word, a sentence, a discourse, any kind of linguistic expression," Stevenson's novella invites readers to think about bodies as legible soundscapes consisting not merely of the voice but also the external and internal sounds produced as bodies move through the broader sonic environment.¹⁷²

In the climactic scene of Stevenson's text the voice becomes a significant object of analysis that leads to the discovery of Henry Jekyll's secret. No longer able to prevent himself from transforming into Edward Hyde, Jekyll has withdrawn from public life and locked himself in the laboratory. Frightened by the noises coming from his room, the servants send the head butler Mr. Poole to get Utterson. When he brings the lawyer to Jekyll's laboratory Poole begins by instructing him, "I want you to hear, and I don't want you to be heard."¹⁷³ Poole's announcement that Utterson desires to see Jekyll is answered by "a voice...from within," leading to the following exchange between the butler and the lawyer:

"Sir," [Poole] said, looking Mr. Utterson in the eyes, "was that my master's voice?"
"It seems much changed," replied the lawyer, very pale, but giving look for look.
"Changed? Well, yes, I think so," said the butler. "Have I been twenty years in this man's house, to be deceived about his voice? No, sir; master's made away with; he was made away with, eight days ago, when we heard him cry out upon the name of God; and *who's* in there instead of him, and *why* it stays there, is a thing that cries to Heaven, Mr. Utterson!"¹⁷⁴

For the servants, Jekyll's demise is signaled by a final cry, the last sound they recognize as belonging to their master before the "who" or "it" that remains locked in the laboratory replaces him. Poole's insistence that after twenty years of service he cannot be "deceived about [Jekyll's] voice" demonstrates an inherent link between vocal quality and identity. His master's voice is

¹⁷² Dolar, "The Linguistics of the Voice," 540.

¹⁷³ Stevenson, *The Strange Case*, 34. Fernandez reads this moment as a significant role reversal where the servants, who were typically expected to be silent, gain agency that undercuts the power of writing in the novella. "'Master's Made Away With...'"

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

not simply changed, as Utterson suggests, it has been fundamentally altered to become the voice of Hyde. The lawyer later argues that his friend is “plainly seized with one of those maladies that both torture and deform the sufferer; hence, for aught I know, the alteration of his voice.”¹⁷⁵ In part, Utterson is correct. The drastic physical difference between the bodies of Jekyll and Hyde would undoubtedly have some impact on the voice just as it does the footfall. However, Jekyll is not merely being “deformed” but rather “reformed” into a creature externally and internally distinct from his former, unified identity as Henry Jekyll. In fact, Hyde’s voice is similar to his appearance in that it has an animal quality that corresponds to his inhuman exterior. He speaks with a “husky, whispering and somewhat broken voice,” and the first sound he makes in Utterson’s presence apart from his footsteps is “a hissing intake of the breath” that associates him with a snake and thus Satan himself.¹⁷⁶ The sounds Hyde makes promote characterizations of him as a creature removed from the category of the human. Hyde “snarl[s] aloud into a savage laugh,” emits “a dismall screech, as of mere animal terror,” and grates his teeth “with the convulsive action of his jaws” that underscores his inherent depravity.¹⁷⁷ These vocalizations, which vastly overshadow his use of language, thoroughly validate the visual evaluations of Edward Hyde. The sonic physiognomy employed not only by Utterson, but also by Poole, aligns with the sight-based descriptions of his character provided by Enfield, Utterson, and Lanyon.

The usefulness of sonic physiognomy is rendered more apparent in the subsequent scene where Utterson listens to the footsteps in the laboratory to confirm that Jekyll is no longer there. Mirroring the initial evaluation of Hyde’s footfalls in the streets of London, the passage begins with a description of the city soundscape, the persistent hum indicative of a kind of normalcy, and moves to the sounds of the human inhabitants: “London hummed solemnly all around; but

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 36.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 17; 16.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 17; 38; 46.

nearer at hand, the stillness was only broken by the sound of the footfall moving to and fro along the cabinet floor.”¹⁷⁸ The distress of the captive is evident in his movement “to and fro,” a path that suggests he is pacing like a caged animal. The stillness of the house, contrasted with the solemn hum of the city, creates a foreboding atmosphere where the only sounding body is that of Edward Hyde. Poole drives the plot in this moment, prompting Utterson to “‘hark again, a little closer—put your heart in your ears, Mr. Utterson, and tell me, is that the doctor’s foot?’ The steps fell lightly and oddly, with a certain swing, for all they went so slowly; it was different indeed from the heavy creaking tread of Henry Jekyll.”¹⁷⁹ Essentially, Poole asks Utterson to practice a more affective form of listening, imploring him to “put [his] heart in [his] ears.” This suggestion imbues listening with the same capacity for physiognomic sensation as sight; as demonstrated in his earlier encounter with Hyde, Utterson is just as liable to experience a strong sense of disgust based on the ear as he is on the eye. The lawyer’s sonic observations produce a somewhat detailed account of the footfalls as light and odd, with a “certain swing” that distinctly contrasts the “heavy creaking tread” characteristic of Jekyll. Utterson’s familiarity with his friend’s footsteps is significant, implying sonic physiognomy is a latent skill that people practice on a daily basis. Lavater’s argument that all people practice physiognomy even if they have never heard the term is thus extended to encompass the auditory process of reading character that Stevenson depicts in his novella.

V. Conclusion

Throughout *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* the inability of characters to describe Edward Hyde’s countenance destabilizes the predominant nineteenth-century

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 38.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

conception of sight-based knowledge as inherently reliable. Enfield, Utterson, and Lanyon's attempts to provide details about the creature that inspires such vivid repulsion uniformly fail to establish an image for the reader. Instead, their affective responses frame Hyde as a physiognomic sensation that exposes a deformed and evil interior. Published when physiognomy was no longer an aspiring science, but had been absorbed into the public consciousness, Stevenson's work explores the underdeveloped role of sound in a practice that depended on external observation to reveal the internal conditions of human bodies. In addition to the soundscape of London, a city where public and private boundaries are persistently transgressed by sound, Utterson attends to bodies as soundscapes in their own right. Throughout his quest to discover the mystery of Edward Hyde's relationship to Henry Jekyll, the lawyer's sustained consideration of voices and footfalls proves to be an indispensable source of knowledge. It is Utterson's proclamation, "that's not Jekyll's voice—it's Hyde's!" that leads him to enter the laboratory, uncover the documents from Lanyon and Jekyll, and essentially expose the fateful experiment conducted by his friend.¹⁸⁰ While Stevenson reaffirms the Lavaterian claim that ugliness is indicative of immorality, he also complicates the premise that the eyes are more important to physiognomic observation than the ears. Reframing Schafer's fundamental question regarding the relationship between man and the sounds of his environment, the novella considers the relationship between the sounds of human bodies and the sonic environments they inhabit. Utterson models a listening practice that involves sifting through what Connor aptly describes as the "shifting and saturated space of which the plural, permeable ear can evidently make more sense than the eye." He moves easily between the humming, domestic sounds of the London streets and the sudden footfalls of approaching passersby, exhibiting an auditory mobility that the narrator of Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart" never attains. Whereas Poe's protagonist cannot navigate

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

between the conventional soundscape of the domestic space and the unconventional soundscape made available by his acute hearing, Stevenson's listener is able to perceive and interpret various dimensions of the complex and layered sonic environment he inhabits. Poole's affinity for listening demonstrates that like visual physiognomy, sonic physiognomy is something that is accessible to people from all classes. While physiognomy is not the primary focus of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, especially not in terms of science, it does play a significant role in shaping sensory experience throughout the novella. The characters showcase an alternative approach to physiognomic observation that depends on the recognition of bodies as dynamic soundscapes legible to the ear.

Chapter III

“All the Pain in the World”: Vivisection and the Animal Voice in H.G. Wells’s *The Island of Doctor Moreau*

The haunting screams of the child being trampled in Robert Louis Stevenson’s *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* are emblematic of Gothic fiction’s broader attention to screams of pain. Vocalizations like screams, cries, and moans are keynotes in Gothic soundscapes that not only reflect the physical and emotional suffering of those emitting these sounds but also heighten the terror experienced by those listening to them. The potency of non-speech sounds in Gothic texts is apparent in Stevenson’s novella where Gabriel John Utterson has nightmares about screaming children even though he learns about the event secondhand and never hears the victim’s actual vocalizations.¹⁸¹ In his well-known short story “The Cask of Amontillado” Edgar Allan Poe presents an even more commanding depiction of the scream as a physical force capable of influencing the listener’s entire body. The narrator describes how “a succession of loud and shrill screams, bursting suddenly from the throat of the chained form, seemed to thrust [him] violently back” as he seals Fortunato into the crypt.¹⁸² The powerful nature of these audible expressions of pain is particularly important in the context of the vivisection novel, a significant sub-genre that emerged in response to public debates in Britain and the United States regarding the dissection of living animals for physiological or pathological study. Whereas nineteenth-century literary and scientific communities accepted human screams as “expressive of pain, alarm, or other sudden emotion,” the vivisection debates raised questions

¹⁸¹ Stevenson, *The Strange Case*, 15.

¹⁸² Edgar Allan Poe, “The Cask of Amontillado,” in Thompson, *The Selected Writings*, 420.

about the significance of animal screams that writers like Wilkie Collins, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, and H.G. Wells were eager to explore.¹⁸³

Anti-vivisection advocates on both sides of the Atlantic frequently likened vivisection to torture, imbuing animal screams with the same meaning as human screams. Carrying out their experiments in what British anti-vivisectionist leader Frances Powell Cobbe terms the “torture chambers of science,” vivisectors were allegedly encouraged to “perform all operations slowly, noting each incident which may arise, and each exhibition of suffering by the animal under the knife.”¹⁸⁴ Depicting physiologists as cruel and immoral, anti-vivisection speeches and writings relentlessly focused on the unjustifiable infliction of pain, accepting the screams of experimental subjects as indicative of physical agony. The inconsistent use of anesthesia and the routine use of curare, a substance that paralyzes the subject without rendering it insensate, were highly publicized by anti-vivisection groups as proof of the barbarity of animal experimentation. Renowned physiologist and vivisection advocate Claude Bernard admitted that victims of curare might experience “the most atrocious suffering which the imagination of man can conceive,” a description that supports comparisons of vivisection and torture.¹⁸⁵ His continued use of the substance in spite of this statement underscores anti-vivisectionists’ concerns regarding both the cruelty of the practice and the demoralizing effect on the practitioner.

¹⁸³ *OED Online*, s.v. “scream, *n.*”

¹⁸⁴ Frances Power Cobbe, “Light in Dark Places,” in *Animal Welfare & Anti-Vivisection 1870-1910: Nineteenth-Century Woman’s Mission*, ed. Susan Hamilton, vol. 1 (New York: Routledge, 2004), 293; 294. Women spearheaded the majority of anti-vivisection organizations and campaigns, a fact that Susan Hamilton reminds us leads to the characterization of the movement “as relying on conservative gender scripts that consign emotion and empathy to women in order to authorize its critique of vivisection.” Susan Hamilton, “Reading and the Popular Critique of Science in the Victorian Anti-Vivisection Press: Frances Power Cobbe’s Writing for the Victoria Street Society.” *Victorian Review* 36.2 (2010): 76.

¹⁸⁵ Claude Bernard quoted in Stewart Richards, “Vicarious Suffering, Necessary Pain: Physiological Method in Late Nineteenth-century Britain,” in *Vivisection in Historical Perspective*, ed. Nicolaas A. Rupke (New York: Croom Helm, 1987), 136.

For opponents of vivisection the dubious ethics of physiologists were apparent not only in their willingness to expose animals to “atrocious suffering” regardless of their struggles and cries, but also in their claims that animal experimentation was imperative to scientific progress.¹⁸⁶ Capturing the “ends justify the means” mentality of many vivisection supporters, English physician and physiologist William Benjamin Carpenter argued that questions of ethics were inseparable from those of motive. Nicolaas Rupke summarizes Carpenter’s position as follows: “It is torture which is unethical, not painful experimentation for a beneficial purpose.”¹⁸⁷ Anti-vivisection advocates remained unconvinced, especially because scientific knowledge seemed to be consistently in a state of flux. Laura Otis explains that many antivivisectionists felt scientists had no right to kill animals if the knowledge gleaned from experimentation could be deemed worthless at a later date.¹⁸⁸ Even if animal experimentation did benefit humankind, individuals like Cobbe felt these gains came at too high a cost. “Should science...turn aside in her royal progress,” she asks, “Or should the torture of a thousand animals be held as nothing in the balance against the supreme interests of man?”¹⁸⁹

Proponents of vivisection contested the assumption that animals experience pain comparably to humans, insisting that “they [were] the only proper judges of the right or wrong of animal experimentation, not the lay public.”¹⁹⁰ In his 1889 essay tellingly called, “The Comparative Insensibility of Animals to Pain,” president of the British Medical Association

¹⁸⁶ In his chapter, “Pro-vivisection in England in the Early 1880s: Arguments and Motives,” Nicolaas A. Rupke highlights the perceived importance of vivisection when he explains that at the conclusion of the 1881 meeting of the International Medical Congress members unanimously passed a general resolution claiming experiments on living animals were necessary to the progress of science. “Pro-vivisection in England in the Early 1880s: Arguments and Motives,” in *Vivisection in Historical Perspective*, ed. Nicolaas A. Rupke (New York: Croom Helm, 1987), 191-192.

¹⁸⁷ Rupke, “Pro-vivisection in England,” 197.

¹⁸⁸ Laura Otis, “Howled Out of the Country: Wilkie Collins and H.G. Wells Retire David Ferrier,” in *Neurology and Literature, 1860-1920*, ed. Anne Stiles (New York: Palgrave, 2007), 37.

¹⁸⁹ Frances Power Cobbe, “The Rights of Man and the Claims of Brutes,” in Hamilton, *Animal Welfare*, 25.

¹⁹⁰ Rupke, “Pro-vivisection in England,” 203.

William Collier gestures towards a problem at the heart of this question: the ability of animals to express pain *in the absence of human language*. He writes, “In dealing with animals it is necessary to consider carefully what signs may be depended upon as proofs of their suffering. Certainly their struggles and cries are not always true indications.”¹⁹¹ Characterizing the cries of vivisectioned animals as potentially insignificant, Collier’s statement demonstrates that human dominion over animals extended to both their bodies and voices. Even vivisection advocates who acknowledged animal cries as indicative of pain emphasized the need to disregard these vocalizations in the name of scientific progress. Bernard explains that the physiologist becomes focused on the scientific idea to the extent that “he no longer hears the cry of the animals, he no longer sees the blood that flows, he sees only his idea and perceives only organisms concealing problems which he intends to solve. Similarly, no surgeon is stopped by the most moving cries and sobs, because he sees only his idea and the purpose of his operation.”¹⁹² Bernard’s extension of his premise to surgeries performed on humans, where physicians are indifferent to “the most moving cries and sobs” of their patients, explains nineteenth-century concerns regarding the increasing authority of scientific and medical professionals who prided themselves on their rationality and dispassion. Additionally, his comment forges a connection between the destabilization of humanness in the wake of Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution and the diminished authority of the human voice in the context of science and medicine. As Elaine Scarry explains, physicians come to view the voice as “an ‘unreliable narrator’ of bodily events... which must be bypassed as quickly as possible so that they can get around and behind it to the physical events themselves.”¹⁹³ While bodies become sites of knowledge production,

¹⁹¹ William Collier, “The Comparative Insensibility of Animals to Pain,” *The Nineteenth Century: A Monthly Review* 26, no. 152 (October 1889): 624.

¹⁹² Claude Bernard, *An Introduction to the Study of Experimental Medicine* (USA: Henry Schuman, Inc., 1949), 103.

¹⁹³ Scarry, *The Body in Pain*, 6.

voices become obstacles that “must be bypassed” or, as Bernard suggests, effectually silenced in the pursuit of the scientific idea.

Rather than silencing animal subjects, nineteenth-century literary representations of vivisection often accentuate the sonic dimensions of the practice, approaching the controversial relationship between humans and animals through sound. Characters representative of the medical community and the general public engage in different modes of listening with regards to vivisection. While the former typically disregard sound, suppressing their emotions in pursuit of knowledge as Bernard explains, the latter sympathetically imagine the victims’ pain, translating animal expression into human expression. Through an analysis of H.G. Wells’s *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, a work that employs vivisection to render bodies, voices, and thus humanness itself malleable, this chapter considers how the conflation of human and animal bodies subverts the privileged position of human speech in relation to other vocalizations. The plasticity of language within the text dismantles the vertical hierarchy of sound that situates human speech as the pinnacle of expression to alternatively suggest a horizontal spectrum shared by both humans and animals. While my analysis ostensibly concentrates on speech, I ultimately investigate the communicative effects of sound more broadly.

The equation of vivisection to torture is integral to recasting human speech as one of many effective modes of communication. Reshaping the bodies and minds of animals through vivisection to transform them into men and women, the fictional Doctor Moreau populates his island with creatures that narrator Edward Prendick can only identify as “Beast People.” While critics have generally focused on how Moreau’s experiments disrupt clear divisions between humans and animals, challenging the evolutionary hierarchy, few have considered the implications of his use of torture to produce rather than destroy human language. Turning to

Scarry's *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*, I interrogate the notion of extreme pain as language-destroying. "Physical pain does not simply resist language," Scarry argues, "but actively destroys it, bringing about an immediate reversion to a state anterior to language, to the sounds and cries a human being makes before language is learned."¹⁹⁴ If torture brings out the animal in humans, returning them to a state "anterior to language," what does vivisection provoke in the animal? Moreau's infliction of extreme pain through vivisection both produces speech in his victims and prevents regression, suggesting prolonged torture enables animals to acquire human language. Through his creation of an alternative soundscape where human speech is no longer the height of expression, Wells forces readers to confront the unsettling question of how bodies voice pain and how listeners perceive it. Sound not only becomes an instrument for the novel's ethical project, which establishes Moreau as the prototypical "mad scientist," but is also integral to the reconfiguration of the human.

This chapter begins with an overview of the vivisection debates that situates the issue of language within ongoing conversations about evolution and the definition of the category of the human. In the first two sections I demonstrate how the development of entwined hierarchies of sound, intelligence, and pain established the framework for discussions of the human/animal relationship, and explore how theories of language enacted violence on animal voices. The next section considers how Collins and Wells used vivisection to think about the trajectory of human evolution and critique the scientific community. Turning to *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, the final three sections of the chapter analyze the transformations of both the Beast People and the narrator Edward Prendick; reading Wells's depiction of vivisection as torture, I argue that the work ultimately destabilizes hierarchies of sound by exposing human and animal voices as inextricable.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 4.

I. Are Animals Numb and Dumb?: Pain, Speech, and the Vivisection Debates

The uncomfortable position of evolution is apparent in the vivisection debates, which required humankind to acknowledge its inherent animality without compromising its preeminence.¹⁹⁵ Employing the same rhetoric to make conflicting points, both anti- and pro-vivisectionists vacillated between emphasizing humankind's animal ancestry and distancing the human species from its inferior predecessors. Those against animal experimentation stressed the human/animal connection to provoke sympathy and underscore the cruelty of vivisection, but simultaneously located the ethical responsibility to protect animals in humankind's evolutionary superiority. Vivisection advocates used the human/animal connection for a more practical purpose: to justify the relevance of animal experimentation to human physiology. In doing so physiologists walked a fine line, arguing that humans were remote enough from their animal kin that experimentation was not unethical, but close enough that it would yield useful knowledge.

The fact that evolution looms over the vivisection debates makes it a provocative issue for Gothic authors because, as critics like Otis and Roslynn D. Haynes suggest, it allows them to reiterate some of the central questions of the nineteenth century regarding the human condition and the legitimacy of scientific knowledge.¹⁹⁶ My particular interest in nineteenth-century literary depictions of vivisection resides in the practice's connection to debates about the status of language. The stark divide between speaking humans and non-speaking animals in this period arose as a result of the desire to create distance between humankind (especially Caucasians) and

¹⁹⁵ Human evolution was such a controversial topic that Charles Darwin delayed addressing it until he published *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex* in 1871. In his introduction to the work, Darwin suggests his ideas regarding humans might be better received at this time because natural selection is generally accepted.

¹⁹⁶ Otis, "Howled Out of the Country"; Roslynn D. Haynes, "Wells's Debt to Huxley and the Myth of Dr. Moreau," *Cahiers Victoriens et Edouardiens: Revue du Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches Victoriennes et Edouardiennes de l'Université Paul Valéry, Montpellier* 13 (April 1981): 31-41; see also Roslynn D. Haynes, *H.G. Wells: Discoverer of the Future: The Influence of Science on His Thought* (New York: New York University Press, 1980).

“less-evolved” creatures. While these divisions are apparent in earlier writings on speech, the contrast is less drastic because prior to evolutionary theory humans were not as concerned with justifying their superiority over animals. For instance, in his well-known treatise *De Anima (On the Soul)*, Aristotle states that “voice is a kind of sound of an ensouled thing” meaning anything that is alive.¹⁹⁷ Though he later qualifies this by claiming “it is not every sound of an animal that is voice...as voice is a kind of sound *with meaning*,” the implication that *some* animal sounds could be voice demonstrates a willingness to consider what many nineteenth-century thinkers utterly denied: that animals, too, are capable of speech.¹⁹⁸ Giorgio Agamben recognizes this shift as well, stating “up until the eighteenth century, language—which would become man’s identifying characteristic par excellence—jumps across orders and classes, for it is suspected that even birds can talk.”¹⁹⁹ Evolution made this comfortable likeness between human and animal voices suddenly uncomfortable, a change deeply connected to the depiction of vivisection in Collins’s and Wells’s vivisection novels.

Although the primary focus of this chapter is speech, it is important to understand how the discourse surrounding vivisection brought together several hierarchical models intended to elevate humankind above animals. In addition to the capacity to use language, anti- and pro-vivisectionists focused on two related criteria also relevant to torture: susceptibility to pain and intelligence. While anti-vivisectionists fundamentally assumed animals could experience pain, the scientific community contradicted this idea, either claiming animals were insensitive to pain or, at the very least, significantly less sensitive than humans. Collier argues, “we have good grounds for believing that although the lower animals are sensitive to pain, they are far less

¹⁹⁷ Aristotle, *De Anima (On the Soul)*, trans. Hugh Lawson-Tancred (New York: Penguin Books, 1986), 178.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 179.

¹⁹⁹ Giorgio Agamben, *The Open: Man and Animal*, trans. Kevin Attell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 24.

sensitive than man, and that the lower we descend in the scale of animal life, the less sensitive it becomes.”²⁰⁰ Sensitivity to pain thus becomes a way of gauging humanness, not only in relation to the human/animal binary, but also within the hierarchy of humankind that emerged in response to Darwin’s theory of evolution.²⁰¹ As Robert Bernasconi and Tommy L. Lott explain in their introduction to *The Idea of Race*, the need to reconcile human diversity with monogenesis led prominent members of the increasingly authoritative scientific community to develop theories that categorized races as being more or less closely related to their animal ancestors.²⁰² Humankind was arranged on a scale that began just above primates and culminated with Caucasian males.

Susceptibility to pain was one of many characteristics deemed relative to one’s position within this hierarchy, and it was used not only as a justification for vivisection, but as a justification for crimes against humanity such as slavery. In a particularly vivid example meant to demonstrate the “extreme insensibility to pain exhibited by savages,” Collier describes an article from the *Spectator* where a New Zealand native mutilates his body in order to fit into a pair of boots.²⁰³ After discovering the boots are too small, the man “would not hesitate to chop off a toe or two, stanch the bleeding by covering the stump with a little hemp, and then force the feet into the boots.”²⁰⁴ Collier’s example depicts the New Zealander as both insensitive to pain and unintelligent in that he responds irrationally to the problem at hand; rather than attempting to find a pair of boots that fits his feet, the man violently alters his body to fit the boot. His actions

²⁰⁰ Collier, “The Comparative Insensibility,” 627.

²⁰¹ In their introduction to *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex*, James Moore and Adrian Desmond argue that one of the primary reasons Darwin wrote *The Descent of Man* was to combat racism. They claim Darwin was focused on three specific things: race, slavery, and sex. Introduction to *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex*, by Charles Darwin (New York: Penguin Books, 2004), xvii.

²⁰² Robert Bernasconi and Tommy L. Lott, introduction to *The Idea of Race*, ed. Robert Bernasconi and Tommy L. Lott (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2000), viii.

²⁰³ Collier, “The Comparative Insensibility,” 624.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

thus position him in the middle ground between highly civilized Caucasians and uncivilized animals. The self-mutilation on the part of the man implies that what might be considered cruelty against sensitive beings would go unnoticed by insensitive and unintelligent individuals like the “savage” New Zealander. In the context of vivisection this supposed insensitivity of animals to pain not only mitigated ethical considerations, it rendered animal voices unimportant. How could the screams and cries of experimental subjects be expressions of pain if animals did not feel pain?

As the example of the New Zealander demonstrates, the hierarchy of pain postulated in response to evolutionary thought was directly correlated to a hierarchy of intelligence. In a much-quoted moment from Jeremy Bentham’s *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, the British philosopher erroneously suggests these questions are separable. His famous reframing of human/animal relations identifies precisely the three human qualities relevant to my consideration of vivisection: “the question is not, Can they *reason*? nor, Can they *talk*? but, Can they *suffer*?”²⁰⁵ Bentham rightly identifies the capacity to suffer as an important intersection between humans and animals, but in positing these issues as separable he presents a perspective at odds with the contemporary awareness of these questions as wholly connected to the larger problem of evolution. In the context of the vivisection debates, which were inherently entrenched in scientific rhetoric, it was impossible to address the question “Can they *suffer*?” without first ascertaining if they could reason. The interrelation of these three qualities both simplifies and complicates the question of whether animals can speak. On the one hand, the supposed alignment of the hierarchies meant that discerning to what extent a creature could

²⁰⁵ Jeremy Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879), 311.

reason, talk, or suffer also revealed its other two attributes. On the other hand, instances of misalignment required creative explanations to maintain the superiority of humankind.

In his 1894 essay “The Province of Pain,” H.G. Wells mobilizes the nineteenth-century correlation of intelligence and pain to draw distinctions between human and animal suffering that account for the latter’s behavior in response to painful stimuli. His basic assessment is that unlike humankind, animals *cannot* reason and therefore *cannot* suffer.²⁰⁶ “The lower animals,” Wells explains, “do not feel pain because they have no intelligence to utilise the warning.”²⁰⁷

Throughout the essay Wells expands on this premise, metaphorically describing human pain as a divine force that intervenes when necessary to initiate intellectual responses that govern our actions and keep us from harm; for Wells pain is “a true guardian angel, watching over the field of our activities and, with harsh tenderness, turning us back from death. In our bodies it is certainly only located where it is needed.”²⁰⁸ In contrast, Wells claims that animals translate painful sensations into “impulses of movement” that “therefore cause no pain” but may further endanger the creature instead of tenderly turning it away from death.²⁰⁹ His explanation is representative of the elaborate approaches used to maintain firm boundaries between humans and animals. Combining religious rhetoric with “scientific” rhetoric, Wells demonstrates how the widespread desire to affirm humankind’s superiority undermined objectivity.

Implicit in Wells’s argument is the notion that if experimental subjects do not feel pain the way humans do, physiologists are not ethically culpable. These kinds of assumptions, which lead Collier to discount “the struggles and cries” of vivisected animals, reinforce the public’s

²⁰⁶ Although *The Island of Doctor Moreau* presents a damning portrait of vivisection Wells advocated the practice in his essays. I address this inconsistency later in the chapter.

²⁰⁷ H.G. Wells, “The Province of Pain,” in *H.G. Wells: Early Writings in Science and Science Fiction* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975), 195.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

apprehension towards the professionalization of science and medicine. Additionally, they illustrate the dangers of using hierarchical models to define humanness, especially in relation to intelligence. In her essay, “The Medical Profession and Its Morality,” Cobbe equates the power of the scientific community with that of the government, calling the Medical Council “a little Parliament, destined soon to dictate to the larger Senate of the kingdom, not only concerning its own interior affairs, but also concerning everything which can by possibility be represented as affecting the interests of public health.”²¹⁰ Defining itself based on knowledge and expertise, the scientific community was effectively positioning itself as more intelligent than the general public, thus licensing its authority over the bodies and voices of animals and humans alike. Regardless, animals remained more vulnerable based on their place within the evolutionary hierarchy. Not only were they too unintelligent to experience pain, they were too unintelligent to utilize language. The next section builds on Jacques Derrida’s formulation of the deprivation of language as the most offensive wrong against animals to consider how nineteenth-century theorizations of language enact violence on animal voices.

II. Hierarchies of Sound, Deprivations of Language

Anti-vivisection rhetoric focused primarily on violence against animal bodies, yet violence against animal voices was an ethical problem that began well before the nineteenth century. In *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, Jacques Derrida traces this mode of violence to Adam’s naming of the animals, an act that defines the human as an authority over all other creatures. This moment is crucial for Derrida because it establishes the animal as subject to humankind. Shifting attention from the individual animal to the category as such, he writes: “The animal is a word, it is an appellation that men have instituted, a name they have given themselves

²¹⁰ Frances Power Cobbe, “The Medical Profession and Its Morality,” in Hamilton, *Animal Welfare*, 140-141.

the right and the authority to give to the living other.”²¹¹ In doing so humans come to see animals as “things,” a mentality that physiologists adopted with respect to their experimental subjects. Human power over animals, Derrida explains, both derives from and constitutes the “essence of the human,” the essence of the “I.”²¹² Though this formulation sustains the idea of speech as integral to defining the human, it more essentially locates humanness in our dominance over animals consequent to qualities like speech, intelligence, and sensitivity to pain. Admitting the possibility that animals could utilize language would therefore mean surrendering the “essence of the human.”²¹³

Although Derrida’s consideration of the animal does not reference vivisection, his interest in the violence wrought upon them as a result of their subjection is useful for thinking about how language has consistently been used for suppression.²¹⁴ In addition to considering physical violence, he explores the problematic assumption that the animal is deprived of language and, relatedly, deprived of response or the ability to respond. He critiques Kant, Heidegger, Levinas, and Lacan, for their failure to account for the fact that humans hunt, kill, exterminate, and eat animals, make them work, and “submit them to experiments that are forbidden to be carried out on humans.”²¹⁵ Derrida’s language in this moment parallels anti-vivisectionist rhetoric; however, it also broadens the scope of their argument, resituating all violent acts against animals as ethically questionable rather than focusing exclusively on

²¹¹ Jacques Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, ed. Marie-Louise Mallet, trans. David Wills (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 23.

²¹² *Ibid.*, 93.

²¹³ Hans Aarsleff explains that in the Renaissance period two biblical moments were fundamental to the study of language: Adam naming the animals and the Babylonian confusion. Discussing language-origin theories since that time, Aarsleff demonstrates a persistent tendency to align human speech with the divine. John Locke notably counteracts theories of Adamic language, arguing against “innate notions,” but during the nineteenth century Friedrich Max Müller reinvigorated the idea that the origins of language rely on a divine factor. *From Locke to Saussure: Essays on the Study of Language and Intellectual History* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982).

²¹⁴ Though my focus in this chapter is specifically on animal bodies, we might also think about the violence wrought by American slave owners through the deprivation of literacy.

²¹⁵ Derrida, *The Animal*, 89.

vivisection. While his attention to the violence of animal experimentation is limited, language becomes a cornerstone of Derrida's work. Of all the wrongs done to animals, he cites the deprivation of language as perhaps the most offensive and longstanding:

All the philosophers we will investigate (from Aristotle to Lacan, and including Descartes, Kant, Heidegger, and Levinas), all of them say the same thing: the animal is deprived of language. Or, more precisely, of response, of a response that could be precisely and rigorously distinguished from a reaction; of the right and power to 'respond,' and hence of so many other things that would be proper to man.

Men would be first and foremost those living creatures who have given themselves the word that enables them to speak of the animal with a single voice and to designate it as the single being that remains without a response, without a word with which to respond.

That wrong was committed long ago and with long-term consequences. It derives from this word, or rather it comes together in this word *animal*, which men have given themselves as at the origin of humanity, and which they have given themselves in order to be identified, in order to be recognized, with a view to being what they say they are, namely, men, capable of replying and responding in the name of men.²¹⁶

Throughout this passage, Derrida underscores deprivation of language as a perpetual problem fueled by humankind's need to distinguish itself from the animal. Attributing this wrong to philosophers ranging from Aristotle to Levinas, he demonstrates the longevity of a mindset that resists the possibility of animals acquiring language. Humankind exerts an enormous amount of power over non-human life as a result of this deprivation, collapsing all animals into "a single being that remains without a response." Derrida's association of "this word *animal*" with "the origin of humanity" suggests that depriving the animal of language established the category of the human; therefore it constitutes a primary means of maintaining human identity. Rather than endorse this practice, Derrida classifies it as one of many violent acts committed against animals, indirectly aligning it with other abuses like vivisection. While animal experimentation is cruel because it causes extreme pain, approaching the animate body as an inanimate object, the assumption that animals are immutably without language is a greater crime because it leads

²¹⁶ Ibid., 32.

humans to dismiss animal vocalizations as unintelligible, rendering their suffering completely incommunicable. Consequently, animals are both physically and mentally disempowered in relation to humankind.²¹⁷

Whereas Derrida's work critiques the longstanding tendency to deprive animals of language, nineteenth-century texts by leading philologists like Friedrich Max Müller enact and promote this mode of violence. In his 1861 lecture "The Theoretical Stage, and the Origin of Language," Müller prefaces his discussion of the origins of speech by asserting, "Speech is a specific faculty of man. It distinguishes man from all other creatures; and if we wish to acquire more definite ideas as to the real nature of human speech, all we can do is to compare man with those animals that seem to come nearest to him, and thus to try to discover what he shares in common with these animals, and what is peculiar to him and to him alone."²¹⁸ Müller ties the problem of language to the problem of humanness, suggesting "the real nature of human speech" cannot be known until we more clearly delimit the category of the human. Although Müller grants animals a degree of intellect, he ultimately reaches a similar conclusion to the one H.G. Wells reiterates in his essays over three decades later: humankind possesses reason or "intellectual enlargement," whereas animals do not. Characterizing language as an exterior manifestation of a more fundamental interior difference between "man and brute," Müller addresses the internal/external dichotomy troubling many scientific and pseudoscientific practices, including physiognomy and mesmerism. He argues that we must "try to discover that inward power of which language is the outward sign and manifestation."²¹⁹ One of the key

²¹⁷ As will become clear later in the chapter, Moreau's attempts to endow animals with human speech seems equally disempowering since he merely elevates himself to the status of a god. The creatures remain unable to think for themselves, lacking the autonomy to significantly break free from their subjugated positions.

²¹⁸ Friedrich Max Müller, "The Theoretical Stage, and the Origin of Language," *The Origin of Language*, ed. Roy Harris (Bristol, England: Thoemmes Press, 1996), 10.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 15.

powers Müller attributes exclusively to humans is the power to name, though he provides only a brief explanation that equates naming with classification and ascribes the resultant “general idea” to humans alone. Unlike Derrida, Müller does not perceive the power to name as problematic because he shares the contemporary mindset that humankind is and should be dominant over “all other creatures.”

Published ten years after Müller’s lecture, Darwin’s *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex* offers a more generous assessment of human and animal speech involving precisely the kind of comparative work Müller prescribes. In a section titled “Language,” Darwin acknowledges speech as one of the primary distinctions between humans and animals. However, he also contradicts the idea that animals are deprived of language. Additionally, he resists the reductive theory that speech replaced less sophisticated communicative sounds, an idea Wells promotes in his essay on human evolution. Instead, Darwin situates these vocalizations as supplementary to articulate language, underscoring important similarities in human and animal communication: “The habitual use of articulate language is, however, peculiar [sic] to man; but he uses, in common with the lower animals, inarticulate cries to express his meaning, aided by gestures and the movements of the muscles of the face.”²²⁰ Throughout his discussion, Darwin treats languages as living beings with the capacity to evolve, a conception he shares with Müller. The philologist’s notion that “a struggle for life is constantly going on amongst the words and grammatical forms in each language,” is comparable to the evolutionist’s treatment of language in his own work.²²¹ In establishing language as something subject to evolution, Darwin implicitly links human and animal voices. While human language is more highly evolved, it cannot be separated from preceding forms of expression. Viewed in this light, animal speech is rendered

²²⁰ Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man*, 107.

²²¹ Friedrich Max Müller quoted in Darwin, *The Descent of Man*, 113.

different in degree, but not in kind. Darwin reinforces the connection between human and animal voices by addressing the connection between human and animal bodies. Attending to the physiological aspect of voice, he reminds readers that higher animals share the same vocal organs as humans, meaning the potential for human speech in animals is not impossible. Turning to the notion of intelligence, Darwin suggests that the only barrier to animal speech is the development of the brain. He does not entirely deprive animals of language, but maintains it is necessarily simple because of their limited intellectual abilities.

Darwin's characterization of animal language as rudimentary, an alternative theory to the utter denial of language, was not uncommon among those theorizing the origins of human speech. However, while Darwin's aim in *The Descent of Man* and *The Expression of Emotions in Man and Animals* was to elucidate the similarities that draw humankind and their animal kin closer together, philologists accentuated the differences that drive them apart. As Christine Ferguson explains, theories on the origins of language frequently tried to create space between speaking humans and non-speaking animals. She summarizes the nineteenth-century mentality by saying, "while language may have derived from animal cries, it became uniquely human, moving steadily from a state of simplicity to one of complexity and perfection."²²² Limited communication was deemed possible, but animals lacked anything approaching the complexity of human speech.

For some researchers, the restricted nature of animal speech corresponded to their restricted existences. In his 1891 article "The Simian Tongue," American zoologist R.L. Garner describes his attempts to understand simian language and recounts his successful identification of several key words used by his subjects. Arguing that monkeys are capable of reasoning, thinking,

²²² Christine Ferguson, *Language, Science and Popular Fiction in the Victorian Fin-de-Siècle: The Brutal Tongue* (Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2006), 2.

and speaking, he explains their simple language by comparing them to “savage tribes of Africa” who do not require complex language because of their simple lifestyles.²²³ Garner’s comparison demonstrates the alignment between the evolutionary hierarchy and the sonic hierarchy, which similarly breaks the culminating category of human speech into ranked subsets. Just as humankind is arrayed in a spectrum that privileges Caucasians, communicative sound is arrayed in a spectrum that privileges Indo-European languages. The alignment between the hierarchies of evolution, pain, intelligence, and speech reinforce the dominance of Caucasian males, concentrating what are viewed as the most advantageous attributes in one subset of the global population. The description of language “moving steadily” towards complexity implies it is monogenetic, causing philologists to explain linguistic diversity just as evolutionists explained racial diversity: by constructing a hierarchy.

However, nothing about Darwin’s commentary on language suggests that human speech is inherently more expressive than other vocalizations. In fact, he posits the “inarticulate sounds and gestures” that writers like Wells dismiss as more poignant modes of communication: “Our cries of pain, fear, surprise, anger, together with their appropriate actions, and the murmur of a mother to her beloved child, are more expressive than any words.”²²⁴ Darwin’s examples, which couple articulate and inarticulate vocalizations with gestures and movements, offer a broader conceptualization of language as involving not just the vocal organs, but the entire body. Consequently, discounting the “struggles and cries” of animals actually signifies the dismissal of components of our own language system that “are more expressive than any words.”

Published more than twenty years after Darwin’s *The Descent of Man*, Wells’s *The Island of Doctor Moreau* confronts the powerful suggestion that human speech is not the pinnacle of

²²³ R.L. Garner, “The Simian Tongue,” in *The Origin of Language*, ed. Roy Harris (Bristol, England: Thoemmes Press, 1996), 320.

²²⁴ Darwin, *The Descent of Man*, 107.

expression. However, the work is at odds with Wells's essays on science, which not only affirm the hierarchies of speech, intellect, and pain discussed earlier, but also support vivisection. In his 1896 essay "Human Evolution, An Artificial Process," Wells frames language as the product of "artificial evolution," a popular concept that Hans Aarsleff ties to eighteenth-century origin theories.²²⁵ In his piece, Wells speaks to the relative stagnation of human development since the Paleolithic period. He argues that any changes to humankind have been provoked not by natural evolution, but by artificial evolution shaped by the process of civilization. "The main difference is extrinsic," Wells writes, "it is a difference in the scope and nature of the circle of thought, and it arose, one may conceive, as a result of the development of *speech*. Slowly during the vast age of unpolished stone, this new and wonderful instrument of intellectual enlargement and moral suggestion, replaced inarticulate sounds and gestures."²²⁶ Associating speech, intellect, and morality, Wells begins to establish a constellation of attributes that compose humanness. His claim that speech "*replaced* inarticulate sounds and gestures" is representative of the hierarchical thinking prevalent throughout the century. Wells situates speech vertically rather than horizontally in relation to other vocalizations, distancing himself from Darwin's more liberal account by implying the uncivilized "sounds and gestures" used prior to speech are inherently less expressive. In doing so, he furthers the idea that animals lack intelligence and possess only limited communication skills.

While *The Island of Doctor Moreau* does coincide with Wells's sense that animals cannot utilize language the way that humans do (all of the animals physically and mentally regress by the conclusion of the novel), it presents a damning portrait of vivisection that contradicts the author's pro-vivisection stance. Attending to the association of vivisection with moral

²²⁵ Aarsleff, *From Locke to Saussure*, 279.

²²⁶ H.G. Wells, "Human Evolution, An Artificial Process," in *H.G. Wells: Early Writings*, 216.

degeneration, the next section draws on Otis's and Hayne's claims that Wells uses vivisection metaphorically to consider the course of human evolution, a theme prevalent in many of his works.²²⁷ I resist the idea that the anti-vivisection attitude of the text is merely a means of approaching the *human* and not the animal condition, but agree that the practice offered Wells a productive framework for thinking about how the dismissal of animal bodies and voices could have significant ramifications for humankind's moral development.

III. Vivisection and Moral Degeneration

In their vivisection novels, nineteenth-century writers like Collins and Wells suggest that one of the principle barriers to creating a stable definition of humanness is the nature of evolution, constantly driving humankind forward towards more advanced states of being. Otis points out a similar kind of frustration among anti-vivisectionists regarding scientific knowledge more broadly. "Supposedly, scientific knowledge was certain, built on established facts," she writes. "If scientists could not agree, if 'facts in support' could be offered on each side, if scientific knowledge involved *interpretation* and could be declared worthless in light of future findings, how could scientists justify killing monkeys and dogs?"²²⁸ The distrust underlying this sentiment calls attention to the deep suspicion with which many people viewed scientists, an issue at the heart of both Wells's and Collins's work.

Throughout his 1896 novel, *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, Wells uses vivisection to exacerbate the tension between concerns about the future of humankind and concerns about degeneration. The evils of vivisection are manifest in the text, where the fictional physiologist conducts experiments solely to gratify his monomaniacal desire "to find out the extreme limit of

²²⁷ See Otis, "Howled Out of the Country"; and Haynes, "Wells's Debt to Huxley," 32.

²²⁸ Otis, "Howled Out of the Country," 37. Original emphasis.

plasticity in a living shape.”²²⁹ Driven by a quest for knowledge rather than humanitarian interests, Moreau confirms anti-vivisectionist suspicions that experiments were conducted to satisfy scientific curiosity rather than generate practical knowledge. Furthermore, his unethical conduct reinforces fears that overly rational thinking within the scientific community would compromise morality. Anne Stiles argues that Wells was deeply influenced by late-Victorian issues of *Mind*, which featured discussions of genius and insanity. Throughout the nineteenth century, works like Jacques Moreau’s *Morbid Psychology* (1859), Francis Galton’s *Hereditary Genius* (1869), John Ferguson Nisbet’s *The Insanity of Genius* (1891), and Cesare Lombroso’s *Man of Genius* (translated to English 1891), among others, variously posited intellectual enlargement as detrimental to bodily and moral capacities.²³⁰ Stiles explains there were a lot of works that spoke to genius and insanity, the result of which was “the widespread belief in a ‘scientific’ relationship between genius and mental illness during the late-Victorian era—even though the volumes making this claim were surprisingly unscientific, relying primarily upon anecdotal evidence rather than experimental or statistical data.”²³¹ In light of these theories, intelligence becomes both a defining characteristic of humanness and a liability to healthy human existence.

Ultimately, these “surprisingly unscientific” accounts reposition the scientific community as a vulnerable population rather than a venerable one. The prevalent acceptance of these theories might be viewed as a means of reclaiming power from an exclusive and influential community defined by knowledge and expertise. Through her analysis of the figure of the mad scientist in Wells’s work, Stiles reminds readers “just how threatening superior intelligence seemed even at a time when it was increasingly necessary to professional success and scientific

²²⁹ H.G. Wells, *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (New York: Penguin Books, 2005), 75.

²³⁰ Hurley states that Wells named his character for Jacques-Joseph Moreau. *The Gothic Body*, 109.

²³¹ Stiles, “Literature in ‘Mind,’” 321.

progress.”²³² In order to conform to acceptable standards of humanness, individuals had to remain within a specific range, exhibiting neither too little nor too much intelligence. Overly developed intelligence became another mode of degeneration since it stripped the person of other human qualities like compassion and morality. In addressing these debates *The Island of Doctor Moreau* reveals that humanness cannot be defined by a fixed definition because the dual processes of natural and artificial evolution impact the very qualities used to gauge where we fall on the evolutionary hierarchy. Imposing an inflexible definition of humanness means that any change, whether regressive or progressive, marks degeneration from the superior position nineteenth-century humans supposedly occupied. In juxtaposing issues of genius and language, Wells exhibits an acute awareness of the fact that if intelligence could become a liability, speech might similarly be affected by the continued evolution of humankind.

Morality was another important quality both in the vivisection debates and in discussions of humanness; it was highly emphasized as setting humankind apart from animals, and as such was used as the foundation for many arguments against animal experimentation. While pro-vivisectionists like Wells viewed human superiority as justification for the practice, anti-vivisectionists like Collins and Cobbe viewed our privileged position as demanding scrupulous ethical standards. If human morality is at the heart of our evolutionary grandeur, how can we perform vivisections without lowering ourselves in relation to our animal kin? Worries regarding the moral impact of vivisection on physiologists were not confined to the anti-vivisection movement. American surgeon and Professor of Surgery at Harvard University, Henry Jacob Bigelow remarked, “Watch the students at a vivisection. It is the blood and suffering, not the science, that rivets their breathless attention. If hospital service makes young students less tender

²³² Ibid., 331.

of suffering, vivisection deadens their humanity and begets indifference to it.”²³³ Bigelow’s description of the students as attracted to “the blood and suffering” of the subject rather than the science reveals their inability to resist their baser instincts and deny their evolutionary pasts. The statement that “vivisection deadens their humanity and begets indifference to it” further separates the medical students from humankind, implying a complete lack of sympathy.

The critical danger of such indifference was that vivisectionists might extend animal experimentation to humans, a fear compounded by the notion that experimenters took pleasure in torturing their victims. Although Wells capitalizes on the conflation of human and animal bodies in *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, Wilkie Collins offers a somewhat more subtle depiction of the dehumanized vivisectionist in his 1883 novel, *Heart and Science: A Story of the Present Time*. Collins dramatizes the compromised morality of fictional vivisectionist Doctor Nathan Benjulia in an exchange with his younger brother Lemuel that emphasizes the significance of animal language to discussions of vivisection. In doing so, he establishes a connection between the vivisectionist’s dismissal of animal voices and his moral degeneration. Throughout their interaction Collins accentuates the animal-like qualities of the two men, who greet one another by “looking at each other with the suspicious curiosity of two strange cats.”²³⁴ Likewise, he underscores the human-like qualities of the animals, especially Lemuel’s pet dog, who remains in the car because he “doesn’t take kindly to scientific gentlemen in [Nathan’s] line of business.”²³⁵ The brothers’ various interpretations of animal language help to illustrate how vivisection has diminished Nathan’s humanity, imbuing him with the same indifference Bigelow attributes to the medical students. While Lemuel playfully anthropomorphizes his dog, telling

²³³ Henry Jacob Bigelow quoted in Susan E. Lederer, “The Controversy over Animal Experimentation in America, 1880-1914,” *Vivisection in Historical Perspective*, ed. Nicolaas A. Rupke (New York: Croom Helm, 1987), 244.

²³⁴ Wilkie Collins, “From *Heart and Science: A Story of the Present Time*,” *Literature and Science in the Nineteenth Century: An Anthology*, ed. Laura Otis (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 221.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*

Nathan “*Bow-wow* means, in his language, Fie upon the cruel hands that bore holes in our heads and use saws on our backs,” the vivisectionist ignores his victims’ vocalizations even when they take on eerily human qualities.²³⁶ He confesses,

My last experiments on a monkey horrified me. His cries of suffering, his gestures of entreaty were like the cries and gestures of a child. I would have given the world to put him out of his misery. But I went on. In the glorious cause I went on. My hands turned cold—my heart ached—I thought of a child I sometimes play with—I suffered—I resisted—I went on. All for Knowledge! all for knowledge!²³⁷

Benjulia’s moral derailment, evident in his persistence despite his impression he is torturing “a child [he] sometimes play[s] with,” reinforces Cobbe’s assertion that by condoning vivisection humankind risks evolutionary degeneration; maddened by his quest for knowledge, Benjulia acquires attributes that nineteenth-century readers would associate with animality as the monkey acquires attributes associated with the most innocent sect of humanity: children. While Lemuel translates his dog’s language into human speech, lending the animal a sense of morality and indignation, Nathan reflects on the monkey’s cries as a hardship he must overcome for knowledge, showcasing his lack of humanity in the face of extreme suffering. These disparate responses to animal vocalizations equally demonstrate the lack of agency on the part of the animals, whose barks and cries are either casually interpreted or summarily dismissed.

Benjulia’s dehumanization is rendered more disturbing by his outburst following his brother’s questions about the Laws of vivisection. He raves, “the roaring mob follows us with its cry of Cruelty. We pity their ignorance. Knowledge sanctifies cruelty. The old anatomist stole dead bodies for Knowledge. In that sacred cause, if I could steal a living man without being found out, I would tie him on my table, and grasp my grand discovery in days, instead of

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Ibid., 225-226.

months.”²³⁸ Although he admits vivisection is cruel, Benjulia insists that “knowledge sanctifies cruelty,” echoing the “ends justify the means” mentality of many nineteenth-century vivisection advocates. Like Bernard’s ideal physiologist, Benjulia privileges scientific progress over ethical considerations, expressing his willingness and desire to experiment on live human subjects to expedite his “grand discovery.”²³⁹ Reinforcing the relationship between vivisection and torture, Benjulia proclaims that he would not only “steal a living man,” but “would tie him on [his] table” to restrain him while he performs painful experiments against the individual’s will. Benjulia’s callousness as well as his failure to reference any practical benefit to humankind validates anti-vivisectionist accusations that “advancement of science, and not practical utility to medicine, is the true and straightforward object of all vivisection.”²⁴⁰

While Benjulia remains aware of the pain he is inflicting on his victims, choosing to deny his human instincts and persist in spite of his cold hands and aching heart, Moreau is entirely numb to the animals’ suffering. “Howled out of [England]” for performing “wantonly cruel” experiments, Moreau isolates himself on an island where he is able to pursue his interests unrestricted.²⁴¹ Even Prendick, a man with a science background, cannot help but ask, “Where is your justification for inflicting all this pain? The only thing that could excuse vivisection to me would be some application.”²⁴² Moreau’s response situates pain as a vestigial component of humankind’s animal past, suggesting the vivisectionist’s indifference to pain is a sign that he is more highly evolved. He explains, “it is just this question of pain that parts us. So long as visible

²³⁸ Ibid., 225.

²³⁹ These statements also frame human bodies as more valuable in a different sense than discussed in this chapter. For Benjulia, human bodies are more valuable than animal bodies for the purposes of scientific experimentation. Otis argues that readers are forced to recognize Benjulia’s demoralization by observing his interactions with people because Collins does not include specific scenes of vivisection or even describe the interior of the laboratory. Although he does not technically experiment on humans, Otis points out that he does casually manipulate a child’s spine in one of his interactions with her. “Howled Out of the Country,” 39.

²⁴⁰ Frances Power Cobbe, “Vivisection and Its Two-Faced Advocates (1882),” in Otis, *Literature and Science*, 215.

²⁴¹ Wells, *Moreau*, 34.

²⁴² Ibid., 73.

or audible pain turns you sick; so long as your own pains drive you...so long, I tell you, you are an animal.”²⁴³ Identifying pain as “the mark of the beast from which [humankind] came,” Moreau insists as humans continue to evolve they will become immune to it.²⁴⁴ “I have never yet heard of a useless thing that was not ground out of existence by evolution sooner or later. Did you?” he tells Prendick, “And pain gets needless.”²⁴⁵ Instead of affirming the hierarchy of pain that associates increased sensitivity with evolutionary superiority, Moreau establishes a kind of bell curve with the lowest and highest beings equally insensitive to pain. The suggestion that future definitions of humanness will be based on superior intelligence as well as indifference to the visible and audible pain of ourselves and others paints a startling picture where individuals like Doctor Moreau constitute the norm. The following three sections offer a close reading of *The Island of Doctor Moreau* that considers how the character’s experiments regarding the plasticity of the human form actually reveal the significant plasticity of language. The novel not only disrupts hierarchical models of speech, pain, and intelligence, but also presents a strong contrast to Scarry’s more recent definition of torture as language-destroying.

IV. Useless Pain: Moreau’s Flawed Creation of the Beast People

Despite his insistence that pain is “useless,” Moreau employs it as an important tool in his experiments, exposing the animals to extreme pain above and beyond that of vivisection in order to eliminate their instincts and modify their behavior. It is through this process that Moreau provokes the haunting screams of the animals, which he then transforms into rudimentary forms of human speech. After physically reshaping his victims, the physiologist mentally conditions them, using the threat of his “House of Pain” to prevent the Beast People from regressing to their

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 74-75.

²⁴⁵ Ibid., 74.

natural behaviors. In an 1895 essay titled “The Limits of Individual Plasticity,” Wells speaks to the potential for this kind of extreme transformation. He writes, “We overlook only too often the fact that a living being may also be regarded as raw material, as something plastic, something that may be shaped and altered, that this, possibly, may be added and that eliminated, and the organism as a whole developed far beyond its apparent possibilities.”²⁴⁶ Positing bodies as “raw material” that can be modified to create something better, Wells implies plasticity is virtually limitless. He adds, “the thing does not stop at a mere physical metamorphosis. In our growing science of hypnotism we find the promise of a possibility of replacing old inherent instincts by new suggestions, grafting upon or replacing the inherited fixed ideas.”²⁴⁷ The potential for these kinds of drastic modifications raises important questions regarding whose bodies, voices, and minds are being altered, who is performing the procedures, and why they are being performed at all.

Although Wells couches plasticity in positive terms in his essay, the disastrous ramifications of his character’s actions in *The Island of Doctor Moreau* demonstrate the danger of performing these kinds of experiments without adequate rules and regulations. One of Moreau’s gravest errors in judgment emerges from his failure to recognize the vivisected creatures as his responsibility. Consumed by his experiments, the physiologist never considers the possibility that the many creatures he sets loose on the island could pose a threat to him. His blind persistence is apparent in his words to Prendick:

“These creatures of mine seemed strange and uncanny to you so soon as you began to observe them, but to me, just after I make them, they seem to be indisputable human beings. It’s afterwards, as I observe them that the persuasion fades. First one animal trait, then another, creeps to the surface and stares out at me...But I will conquer yet. Each time I dip a living creature into the bath of burning pain, I say: this time I will burn out all the animal, this time I will make a rational creature of my own. After all, what is ten

²⁴⁶ H.G. Wells, “The Limits of Individual Plasticity,” in *H.G. Wells: Early Writings*, 36.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 39.

years? Man has been a hundred thousand in the making.” He thought darkly. “But I am drawing near the fastness. This puma of mine...” After a silence: “And they revert. As soon as my hand is taken from them the beast begins to creep back, begins to assert itself again...” Another long silence.²⁴⁸

Moreau appears optimistic about his eventual success, but the silent pauses at the conclusion of his statement imply he may not be as hopeful as he seems. According to Mason Harris, he has reason to be doubtful: “burning out *all* the animal is impossible because we are all animals and will carry an animal inheritance within us no matter how civilized we attempt to become.”²⁴⁹ For E.E. Snyder the inextricable nature of humans and animals is the central point of the novel, “suggesting each [the human and the beastly] always contains and involves the other.”²⁵⁰ In overlooking this connection Moreau cannot recognize the futility of his experiments; his method of eliminating the animal will never yield “indisputable human beings.” Speaking to the ramifications of vivisection, which requires physicians to treat animals as inanimate objects rather than animate bodies, Chris Danta explains that denying humankind’s inherent animality can have a destabilizing effect on human identity. Danta comments on the materialist tendencies of British physicians like Samuel Wilks, stating: “What enables him to relegate the animal to the status of the insensible is the decision to separate the human from the animal. From this point of view, the pro-vivisectionist fails to take existential responsibility for the animal life within him- or herself.”²⁵¹ In the context of Wells’s novel, this oversight limits Moreau in that he never considers the disadvantages of using pain to eliminate the animal. The effects are detrimental both to the vivisected animals and to the vivisector, who compromises his own humanity in pursuit of a scientific idea.

²⁴⁸ Wells, *Moreau*, 78.

²⁴⁹ Mason Harris, “Vivisection, the Culture of Science, and Intellectual Uncertainty in *The Island of Doctor Moreau*,” *Gothic Studies* 4, no. 2 (November 2002): 106.

²⁵⁰ E.E. Snyder, “Moreau and the Monstrous: Evolution, Religion, and the Beast on the Island,” *Preternature: Critical and Historical Studies on the Preternatural* 2, no. 2 (2013): 218.

²⁵¹ Chris Danta, “The Metaphysical Cut: Darwin and Stevenson on Vivisection,” *Victorian Review* 36, no. 2 (Fall 2010): 52.

The potential of the Beast People is hinted at through their efforts to civilize and their relationship with Montgomery, both of which Moreau discounts as insignificant. Releasing his failed creations into the jungle dens, Moreau remarks that despite their attempts to civilize, the Beast People “only sicken [him] with a sense of failure.”²⁵² While Montgomery takes pity on the creatures, inserting himself in their social structure and training several to be servants, Moreau explains, “I can see through it all, see into their very souls, and see there nothing but the souls of beasts... Yet they’re odd. Complex, like everything else alive. There is a kind of upward striving in them.”²⁵³ The assessment of the creatures’ souls as “nothing but the souls of beasts” suggests that Moreau’s experiments have not fundamentally changed his victims; exposing them to severe pain only provokes superficial alterations. Additionally, his comment renders Montgomery’s efforts futile since regression is inevitable. However, the fact that he encounters “a kind of upward striving” in the otherwise beastly souls implies that like humans, the creatures have a desire to overcome bodily and mental limitations. In Harris’s estimation, the Beast People are not the only ones that must fight against degeneration. While human beings undergo a process of social education intended to civilize them, they too struggle against their inherent animality, relying on “a kind of upward striving” to motivate them to resist their baser instincts. The shared desire to better oneself suggests that animals might be able to acquire the kinds of skills Moreau imbues them with through vivisection, but reinforces the idea that torture is not a productive mode of bringing about such change.

V. Making Sense of the Beast People: Prendick as Sonic Observer

²⁵² Wells, *Moreau*, 78.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, 79.

Although he is not an experimental subject, Edward Prendick undergoes a process of sensory modification that begins when one of Moreau's creatures pulls the nearly unconscious survivor from his dinghy. He remarks, "There's a dim half-memory of being lifted up to the gang-way and of a big round countenance, covered with freckles and surrounded with red hair, staring at me over the bulwarks. I also had a disconnected impression of a dark face with extraordinary eyes close to mine, but that I thought was a nightmare, until I met it again."²⁵⁴ In this first encounter with one of Moreau's creations, Prendick emphasizes the visually enigmatic nature of the face, which he characterizes as something from a nightmare, in contrast to the distinguishable countenance of the Captain. When he meets the creature again after regaining some of his strength, Prendick provides a more elaborate description of what he initially takes to be a "misshapen man." Noting "something dimly suggestive of a muzzle" and "as big white teeth as I had ever seen in a human mouth," he confuses human and animal characteristics and is unable to process what he sees.²⁵⁵ He explains, "I had never beheld such a repulsive and extraordinary face before, and yet—if the contradiction is credible—I experienced at the same time an odd feeling that in some way I *had* already encountered exactly the features and gestures that now amazed me."²⁵⁶ While his visual scrutiny of the Beast People reinforces his sense that there is something unnatural about them, sight ultimately fails him; experiencing only fleeting moments of familiarity, he cannot make sense of the creatures because their visual aspects do not conform to any one category within the evolutionary hierarchy. The "disconnected impression"

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 9.

²⁵⁵ Wells, *Moreau*, 13. Written ten years after Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Wells's *The Island of Doctor Moreau* employs the same language to describe the Beast People as Stevenson uses to describe the evil and twisted body of Edward Hyde. Watching the crew load Montgomery's boat in a chapter titled "The Evil Looking Boatmen," Prendick says, "there was something in their faces—I knew not what—that gave me a spasm of disgust. I looked steadily at them, and the impression did not pass though I failed to see what had occasioned it." Like Hyde, the Beast People are nearly indescribable, causing observers to focus on the "deformity" and unnaturalness of the beings. A different version of Wells's text includes the line, "It was singularly deformed." *Moreau*, 27.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 14.

of his rescuers is representative of the narrator's compromised sight throughout the novel, which leads him to become more dependent on his hearing, much like the characters in Stevenson's novella. Prendick's attention to the soundscape, specifically his descriptions of human and animal voices, underscores the role of language in defining humanness and mediating interpersonal relations. Furthermore, his vivid accounts of the sounds of vivisection elucidate the ways *The Island of Doctor Moreau* affirms and resists Scarry's claims about how torture impacts language.

While he often expresses doubt regarding his interpretations of the sounds around him, saying things like "I began to think my ears had deceived me," Prendick's sonic observations prove to be more vital than his visual observations.²⁵⁷ His apprehension regarding auditory knowledge demonstrates that like the characters in Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Prendick is not accustomed to relying on his ears to interpret the world around him. One of his earliest evaluations of the soundscape takes place on the *Ipecacuanha*. Roused from sleep by the action above deck, Prendick says, "I rubbed my eyes, and lay listening to the noise, doubtful for a little while of my whereabouts. Then came a sudden pattering of bare feet, the sound of heavy objects being thrown about, a violent creaking and rattling of chains. I heard the swish of the water as the ship was suddenly brought round."²⁵⁸ Although he is initially disoriented, Prendick uses sound to gradually determine where he is and what is happening outside of his cabin. A similar moment occurs later in the novel, when he uses the sound of the sea to escape the predatory leopard man tracking him through the jungle: "I listened rigid, and heard nothing but the whisper of the blood in my ears. I thought that my nerves were unstrung and that my imagination was tricking me, and turned resolutely towards the sound of the sea

²⁵⁷ Ibid., 50.

²⁵⁸ Ibid., 22.

again.”²⁵⁹ This passage importantly demonstrates Prendick’s ability to shift his attention to different facets of the soundscape, “turn[ing] resolutely” away from the internal sounds of his body to the external sounds of the sea. In doing so, Prendick models an ability to prioritize certain sounds over others as needed, a skill that Edgar Allan Poe’s mid-century narrator never acquired in “The Tell-Tale Heart.” Additionally, his description helps establish the inescapable nature of sound that eventually drives Prendick out of London after he returns from Moreau’s island. He explains, “When I lived in London the horror was well-nigh insupportable. I could not get away from men; their voices came through windows.”²⁶⁰ The subtle conflation of “men” and “their voices” suggests that human identity is more dependent on voice than body, an idea that persists throughout Wells’s work.

One of the main characteristics of the Beast People that persuades Prendick they are vivisected humans is the fact that they can speak. Terrified that he might be Moreau’s next victim, Prendick decides to throw his lot in with the creatures on the island. Still questioning whether the beings are humans or animals, he meets one of the crewmembers who begins to talk to him. “He was a man then,” Prendick asserts, “for he could talk.”²⁶¹ The association of language and humanness prevents the narrator from conceiving of the creatures as animals despite the many indications throughout the novel. Even after he remembers Moreau’s name from the papers and realizes he is a vivisectionist, Prendick fails to conclude that the Beast People are products of animal experimentation. His eyes fail him again when he sees the vivisected puma in Moreau’s lab and states, “I was convinced now, absolutely assured, that Moreau had been vivisecting a human being.”²⁶² Shouting at Moreau and Montgomery as he

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 45.

²⁶⁰ Ibid., 131.

²⁶¹ Ibid., 55.

²⁶² Ibid., 52.

contemplates drowning himself to escape vivisection, Prendick exclaims, “They were men—men like yourselves, whom you have infected with some bestial taint, men whom you have enslaved.”²⁶³ When the researchers attempt to calm Prendick and prevent him from agitating the Beast People, telling him in Latin that the creatures were originally animals, he retorts, “A pretty story... They talk, build houses, cook. They were men.”²⁶⁴ Prendick’s definition of “men” as individuals who “talk, build houses, [and] cook” gestures towards Wells’s theory of artificial evolution; all of these abilities constitute basic aspects of civilization and evoke scenes of domesticity. However, speech remains the major sticking point for Prendick. His disbelief continues during his conversation with Moreau. The doctor’s detailed description of his modifications is met with Prendick’s “But... These things—these animals *talk!*”²⁶⁵ While the narrator accepts the bodily changes vivisection effects, he resists the idea that animals could ever gain the ability to speak.

In an 1891 *Atlantic Monthly* article titled “Speech as a Barrier Between Man and Beast,” American linguist Edward Payson Evans admits that although animals have spoken in the sense of imitating human speech, “no animal has ever made a natural and habitual use of articulate speech for the communication of its thoughts and feelings.”²⁶⁶ Evans does not discount animal communication, stating that words are “by no means the only [symbols of thought],” but he does subscribe to the exceptionalist attitude that human language is the most perfect mode of expression.²⁶⁷ For Moreau, “the great difference between man and monkey is in the larynx,” a physiological difference that can be amended through surgery.²⁶⁸ By modifying the animal body,

²⁶³ Ibid., 66.

²⁶⁴ Ibid., 67.

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 72.

²⁶⁶ E.P. Evans, “Speech as a Barrier Between Man and Beast,” *Atlantic Monthly* 68 (1891): 299.

²⁶⁷ Ibid., 306.

²⁶⁸ Wells, *Moreau*, 73.

Moreau enables his victims to “frame delicately different sound-symbols by which thought could be sustained.”²⁶⁹ However, his accomplishments are limited. Prendick consistently describes the Beast People’s language as inelegant, to say the least. Observing three of the creatures, he says they “spoke to one another in odd guttural tones, and the man who waited for us on the beach began chattering to them excitedly—a foreign language, as I fancied.”²⁷⁰ He characterizes another creature’s speech by saying, “[his] words came thick and sloppy, and though I could hear them distinctly I could not distinguish what he said. He seemed to me to be reciting some complicated gibberish.”²⁷¹ In both instances, Prendick is unable to understand the creatures, whose “complicated gibberish” conveys little meaning to the human listener even if it is human language. Ferguson suggests these shortcomings are indicative of a flaw in Moreau’s motivations. “Language, introduced by surgery, is maintained by corporal punishment,” she explains. “Even as an implanted anatomical quality, it has no permanence without supervision and disciplinary intervention... Vocalization takes precedence over comprehension or communication.”²⁷² The ramifications of privileging vocalization over “comprehension or communication” are evident in the animals’ failure to understand Moreau’s Law, which governs their behavior. This inadequacy leaves the creatures struggling fruitlessly against regression.

The Beast People’s collective recitation of “the Law” solidifies the limitations of their linguistic abilities, distancing them from humankind in spite of their ability to talk. Prendick is compelled to participate in their ritualistic recitation, which he calls “the insanest ceremony. The voice in the dark began intoning a mad litany, line by line, and I and the rest to repeat it. As they did so, they swayed from side to side, and beat their hands upon their knees, and I followed their

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 28.

²⁷¹ Ibid., 42.

²⁷² Ferguson, *Language, Science and Popular Fiction*, 126.

example.”²⁷³ The highly performative nature of their recitation suggests that gesture and bodily movement continues to play an important role in the Beast People’s language. Ferguson comments, “language use amidst the Beastfolk is first and foremost a bodily performance rather than a hermeneutic act. This fact is underlined by the designation of the Beastfolk’s priest as the Sayer rather than the Interpreter of the Law and by the violent means through which speech is maintained in the island’s brutes.”²⁷⁴ Ferguson aptly calls attention to the designation of “the Sayer” as illustrative of the Beast People’s limitations; though they are physically able to speak or “say” the words Moreau uses to control them, the Beast People cannot complete intellectual tasks like interpretation. For McLean, the Beast People’s “sloppy” language and ultimate regression demonstrate Wells’s tentative position on the potential for animal speech. He explains: Wells explores “the possibility that animals might be *temporarily* endowed with linguistic abilities...[but] does not, in the final analysis, support the view that animals can reason through the use of language.”²⁷⁵ Heightening the comparison between the Beast People and the enslaved that Prendick draws earlier in the novel is the repetition of “Are we not Men?” at the end of each phrase of the Law, which echoes the antislavery question “Am I Not a Man and a Brother?” However, while the latter demands unequivocal affirmation that the enslaved are men and brothers, the former is less rhetorical. Observing the creatures as he participates in the saying of the law, Prendick cannot help but respond to the repeated “Are we not Men?” with “What were they all? Imagine yourself surrounded by the most horrible cripples and maniacs it is

²⁷³ Wells, *Moreau*, 58.

²⁷⁴ Ferguson, *Language, Science and Popular Fiction*, 126.

²⁷⁵ Steven McLean, “Animals, Language and Degeneration in *The Island of Doctor Moreau*,” in *H.G. Wells: Interdisciplinary Essays*, ed. Steven McLean (Newcastle, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), 31.

possible to conceive, and you may understand a little of my feelings with these grotesque caricatures of humanity about me.”²⁷⁶

Prendick’s attempts to classify the Beast People begin well before this experience, yet the recitation of the Law shapes his later understanding of them. After Moreau describes his experiments Prendick begins to perceive the horrific ramifications of the vivisectionist’s work beyond the bodily pain and fear of the animals. He imagines the Law “battl[ing] in their minds with the deep-seated ever-rebellious cravings of their natures,” positing their lives as a kind of prolonged torture that does not cease when they leave the House of Pain or even when Moreau is killed by the puma.²⁷⁷ “Before they had been beasts,” Prendick remarks, “their instincts fitly adapted to their surroundings, and happy as living things may be. Now they stumbled in the shackles of humanity, lived in a fear that never died, fretted by a law they could not understand; their mock-human existence began in an agony, was one long internal struggle, one long dread of Moreau—and for what?”²⁷⁸ The narrator’s reference to evolutionary theory, evident in the phrase “fitly adapted to their surroundings,” suggests that Moreau’s greatest crime is defying Nature. By throwing the animals into a “mock-human existence,” he condemns them to lives of struggle and torment. Worst of all, Moreau undertakes his experiments with no grander purpose than satisfying his own curiosity. Punctuating his astute observations, Prendick’s “and for what?” recalls the nineteenth-century sentiment that scientific experimentation without any practical application in mind is irresponsible and unethical. Additionally, it confirms anti-vivisectionist suspicions that physiologists were unnecessarily cruel.

Although the transformations of the animals are the primary focus of much critical work, Ferguson reminds us that Moreau’s experiments are not the only transformative force in the

²⁷⁶ Wells, *Moreau*, 59-60.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 81.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 95.

novel. Lending agency to the creatures themselves, Ferguson argues that *The Island of Doctor Moreau* is full of “animals who shriek, gibber, moan, and eventually speak with a certain eloquence, yet what they transform in this process is not themselves but the status and meaning of language.”²⁷⁹ It becomes something artificial, an idea Wells expresses in “Human Evolution: An Artificial Process,” and thus subject to erasure because it is not biologically engrained in us. I would argue the transformation of language accomplishes something more. Instead of positing language as subject to erasure the text asks readers to confront its plasticity, thus acknowledging continuity between animal expression and human speech. Juxtaposing the clumsiness of the Beast People’s speech with the eloquence of their animal cries, Wells undercuts the idea that human speech is the pinnacle of expression. Instead, he offers a similarly broad definition of language to Darwin’s that accounts not only for articulate language, but also for a range of expressions including inarticulate utterances, bodily movements, facial expressions and gestures. Momentarily putting aside the non-sonic modes of expression, the malleability of voiced language is apparent in Prendick’s description of the Beast People’s regression. He says,

It was about May when I first distinctly perceived a growing difference in their speech and carriage, a growing coarseness of articulation, a growing disinclination to talk. My Ape Man’s jabber multiplied in volume, but grew less and less comprehensible, more and more simian. Some of the others seemed altogether slipping their hold upon speech, though they still understood what I said to them at that time. Can you imagine language, once clear-cut and exact, softening and guttering, losing shape and import, becoming mere lumps of sound again?²⁸⁰

In posing this question Prendick evokes images of language being reshaped like the animal bodies Moreau uses in his experiments on plasticity. While his tone is negative, the invitation to imagine language as “softening,” “losing shape,” and becoming “lumps of sound” opens the door for positive conceptualizations of how this malleability might produce something exceptional, or

²⁷⁹ Ferguson, *Language, Science and Popular Fiction*, 116.

²⁸⁰ Wells, *Moreau*, 122.

as Wells says in his essay, something “developed far beyond its apparent possibilities.”²⁸¹

Furthermore, this image points to the evolution of language over time and the potential for change in the future.

VI. Tortured Bodies, Broken Voices: Vivisection and the Transformation of Language

Overshadowing the possibility of linguistic transformation is the unforgivable method Moreau uses to produce human speech in animals. Repeatedly dipping “living creature[s] into the bath of burning pain,” Moreau attempts to eradicate his victims’ inherent animality so he can modify their bodies and voices to meet his specifications.²⁸² In *The Body in Pain* Scarry defines torture as a process consisting of the simultaneous occurrence of three phenomena that might be extricated from one another as such: the infliction of pain in intensifying ways; the objectification of amplifying pain within the victim’s body such that it becomes visible to observers; and the transference of objectified pain to power, enabled by “an obsessive mediation of agency.”²⁸³ Moreau’s use of vivisection and hypnosis, as well as his outright infliction of pain undeniably constitute torture. He exposes the animals to increasing amounts of pain over a prolonged period of time, translating pain into power such that he becomes a deity ruling the House of Pain; as the Law makes clear “*His* is the House of Pain. / *His* is the Hand that makes. / *His* is the Hand that wounds. / *His* is the Hand that heals.”²⁸⁴ Implicit in anti-vivisectionist comparisons of vivisection and torture is the likeness of vivisectionist and torturer, an equivocation born out in Scarry’s work. True to the anti-vivisectionist’s characterization, Moreau adopts the same mindset as Claude Bernard. He explains, “the thing before you is no longer an

²⁸¹ Wells, “The Limits of Individual Plasticity,” 36.

²⁸² Wells, *Moreau*, 78.

²⁸³ Scarry, *The Body in Pain*, 28.

²⁸⁴ Wells, *Moreau*, 59.

animal, a fellow-creature, but a problem. Sympathetic pain—all I know of it I remember as a thing I used to suffer from years ago.”²⁸⁵ Scarry describes the torturer as similarly objectifying the victim. Turning to Hannah Arendt, she demonstrates how torturers shift attention to their own vulnerability by focusing on the horrible things they witness in pursuit of their job rather than the horrible things they do.²⁸⁶ We see this mentality in Nathan Benjulia’s account of his experimentation on animals. Moreau’s comparable dismissal of his actions is apparent in his conversation with Prendick after he has made him enter the laboratory to see the puma: “‘It is the puma,’ [Prendick] said, ‘still alive, but cut and mutilated as I pray I may never see living flesh again. Of all vile—’ ‘Never mind that,’ said Moreau. ‘At least spare me those youthful horrors. Montgomery used to be just the same.’”²⁸⁷ The vivisectionist’s flippant “Never mind that” distances him from Prendick, who remains compassionate towards the animal despite his scientific background. However, Montgomery’s acquired immunity casts the island as an environment that fosters dehumanization through constant exposure to the process and products of vivisection.

While not opposed to vivisection, the narrator experiences a kind of sympathetic pain in response to the puma’s cries that exposes the expressivity of the animal voice and repeatedly drives the character to action. Throughout *The Island of Doctor Moreau* torture not only provokes animal cries, it transforms them into human sobs. While all of the puma’s vocalizations cause Prendick to act, his motivations differ considerably based on the quality of the sounds. The two chapters containing Prendick’s most vivid accounts of the cries, titled “The Crying of the Puma,” and “The Crying of the Man,” frame these experiences in relation to the human/animal divide. In the first instance, Prendick’s focus is entirely on his own well-being. He says,

²⁸⁵ Ibid., 75.

²⁸⁶ Scarry, *The Body in Pain*, 58.

²⁸⁷ Wells, *Moreau*, 70.

I found myself that the cries were singularly irritating, and they grew in depth and intensity as the afternoon wore on. They were painful at first, but their constant resurgence at last altogether upset my balance. I flung aside a crib of Horace I had been reading, and began to clench my fists, to bite my lips, and pace the room. Presently I got to stopping my ears with my fingers. The emotional appeal of these yells grew upon me steadily, grew at last to such an exquisite expression of suffering that I could stand it in that confined room no longer.²⁸⁸

The description of the puma's agony is translated into Prendick's own torment as he moves from irritation to unbearable distress. The idea that the cries were "painful at first" but eventually "altogether upset [Prendick's] balance," locates pain within the narrator's body rather than the vivisected animal's. His inability to continue reading Horace and his subsequent fist clenching, lip biting, and pacing, mark a transition from intellectual to physical activity; Prendick responds to the puma's cries instinctually, underscoring the continual conflation of human and animal. The specific reference to Horace showcases Prendick's literacy, a linguistic skill that Moreau never attempts to instill in his creatures. However, it also alludes to the oral traditions reflected in recitation of The Law, making the Beast People's eventual progression to writing and reading a potentiality. "Stopping [his] ears" like a child, Prendick seems incapable of thinking rationally in the face of the inescapable voice of Moreau's victim. Despite the character's self-centered narration, he ultimately speaks to the potential of the animal's vocalizations as a means of communicating pain. While the speech of the Beast People, often characterized as gibberish or jabbering, causes Prendick to classify the creatures as unnatural and unsophisticated, the cries of the puma are characterized as "an exquisite expression of suffering." The juxtaposition of these different kinds of articulation suggests human speech is not only an inadequate determinant of humanness, but perhaps an insufficient marker of evolutionary ascendancy.

This sentiment is intensified in Prendick's later description of the sound after he has fled his room. "The crying sounded even louder out of doors," he states. "It was as if all the pain in

²⁸⁸ Ibid., 38.

the world had found a voice. Yet had I known such pain was in the next room, and had it been dumb, I believe—I have thought since—I could have stood it well enough. It is when suffering finds a voice and sets our nerve quivering that this pity comes troubling us.”²⁸⁹ The puma’s ability to give voice to “all the pain in the world” in a way that sets the narrator’s “nerves quivering” calls attention to the expression of pain as universal and not exclusively human. The animal exerts a degree of control over Prendick’s body and, eventually, his emotions using inarticulate cries; human and animal bodies are consonant rather than dissonant. The assertion that pity is dependent on sound situates voice as integral to the sympathetic and moral superiority associated with humanness. If the animal was “dumb,” a charged term in the context of vivisection, Prendick could easily overlook its extreme suffering.

Although the puma’s cries inspire sympathy, the narrator does nothing to aid the creature because he is not opposed to vivisection. Surprised that Moreau performs his experiments behind closed doors, Prendick states “surely, and especially to another scientific man, there was nothing so horrible in vivisection as to account for this secrecy.”²⁹⁰ Despite his pro-vivisection stance, the narrator’s actions in “The Crying of the Man” clarify his ethical boundaries; animal experimentation is acceptable, but human experimentation is not. Returning to the house after escaping the leopard man, Prendick is guided back by “the pitiful moaning of the puma” claiming, “It seemed to me a voice was calling me.”²⁹¹ The scene prior to Prendick’s perception of what he takes to be a sobbing man accentuates the increasingly blurred barrier between humans and animals. The character eats dinner with a “sense of animal comfort” after falling out of his hammock and being “deposited...upon all-fours on the floor.”²⁹² Prendick’s body betrays

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

²⁹⁰ Ibid., 35.

²⁹¹ Ibid., 47.

²⁹² Ibid., 50; 49.

his inherent animality, assuming both the attitude and sensation of an animal. Hearing a cry that “was not the cry of the puma,” Prendick stops eating and begins to listen through the wall:

After a long pause I resumed my meal, but with my ears still vigilant. Presently I heard something else very faint and low. I sat as if frozen in my attitude. Though it was faint and low, it moved me more profoundly than all that I had hitherto heard of the abominations behind the wall. There was no mistake this time in the quality of the dim broken sounds, no doubt at all of their source; for it was groaning, broken by sobs and gasps of anguish. It was no brute this time. It was a human being in torment! And as I realized this I rose, and in three steps had crossed the room, seized the handle of the door into the yard, and flung it open before me.²⁹³

The sounds of the transformed puma, which “moved [Prendick] more profoundly than all that [he] had hitherto heard,” compel him to enter the room rather than flee. Unwilling to defend the puma against the “abominations behind the wall,” he rushes to help “a human being in torment” without hesitation. While Prendick’s actions confirm the mentality that human life is more valuable than animal life, his description of the cries undercuts that idea that human language is more expressive. Far from the “exquisite expression of suffering” encapsulating “all the pain in the world,” the mock-human produces “broken sounds,” groans, and “gasps of anguish.” The repetition of “broken” calls to mind the process of “breaking” a torture victim, aligning the faux-human voice Moreau crafts for the puma with its ultimate surrender to his will.

Throughout her work, Scarry elucidates the ways torture impacts language, exposing the desolation wrought on body and voice by intense pain. Integral to her argument is the association between language and self. “Through his ability to project words and sounds out into his environment,” she explains, “a human being inhabits, humanizes, and makes his own a space much larger than that occupied by his body alone.”²⁹⁴ Steven Connor’s comment that voice is “my way of being me in my going out from myself” similarly illustrates how voice enables

²⁹³ Ibid., 50.

²⁹⁴ Scarry, *The Body in Pain*, 49.

humankind to inhabit and humanize the world, loosening the restrictions of corporeality.²⁹⁵

Torture undermines this important aspect of human life by destroying language and granting the torturer authority over the victim's voice. Scarry writes, "even where the torturers do not permanently eliminate the voice through mutilation or murder, they mime the work of pain by temporarily breaking off the voice, making it their own, making it speak their words, making it cry out when they want it to cry, be silent when they want its silence, turning it on and off, using its sound to abuse the one whose voice it is as well as other prisoners."²⁹⁶ The unnatural severance of voice from body dehumanizes torture victims, effectively turning them into the kind of mesmeric subject I discuss in the context of George Du Maurier's *Trilby*: subjects whose bodies and voices are entirely controlled by the torturer.²⁹⁷

If human torture is dehumanizing because it dismantles language, a key marker of humanness, what are the implications of Moreau's experiments? In the context of nineteenth-century definitions of the human, human subjects exposed to extreme pain are figured as more animalistic because they are deprived of the linguistic, moral, and intellectual characteristics that separate them from their animal kin. Conversely, Moreau's animal subjects gain human traits like speech, which they retain through repeated exposure to torture. Moreau's method is essentially to torture his subjects until they produce the sounds he wants to hear, and to repeat this process when they inevitably start to regress. Ferguson argues that Moreau's experiments ruin linguistic humanism "first, by severing language's unique association with humans," and

²⁹⁵ Steven Connor, *Dumbstruck: A Cultural History of Ventriloquism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 3-4.

²⁹⁶ Scarry, *The Body in Pain*, 54.

²⁹⁷ Moreau's victims, and torture victims in general, might also be viewed as subject to a processes of mechanization that break voices from bodies or transform bodies into sound reproduction technologies that reproduce the words of the torturer. Scarry suggests this when she comments that the "written or tape-recorded confession that can be carried away on a piece of paper or on a tape is only the most concrete exhibition of the torturer's attempt to induce sounds so they can then be broken off from their speaker." The comparison is more apt in the context of animal studies because of the longstanding association of animals with machines. *The Body in Pain*, 49.

“second, by showing language’s continual failure to exalt its speakers, to act as corollary to the intellect, or even to make sense.”²⁹⁸ Moreau breaks off the animal voice, but he replaces it with his own human voice in the form of the Law that they must repeatedly recite after they have left the House of Pain. The failures Ferguson points out are a consequence of Moreau’s use of torture; he cannot use a process that strips the individual of world, language, and self, to construct human beings.

VII. Conclusion

Depictions of vivisection in nineteenth-century Gothic fiction underscore the issue’s entwinement with evolution. Drawing together hierarchies of sound, pain, and intelligence, pro- and anti-vivisectionist rhetoric captures the urgent desire to both define the category of the human in contradistinction to the animal and establish clear guidelines regarding our ethical responsibility over our animal kin. The status of language was central in these discussions, and the deprivation of language marked another kind of violence against animals that was largely overlooked as a result of the more obvious violence of vivisection. In *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, animal experimentation provides little insight into the limits of plasticity. The fact that all of the doctor’s creations regress to their animal state suggests science cannot permanently alter produces of evolutionary development. Moreau’s failure to reshape animals into human form, both bodily and vocally, reinforces the insurmountable divide between humans and animals. However, the degeneration of the human characters in both Collins’s and Wells’s vivisection novels posits regression as the true threat to humanness, warning against the unethical behavior of the characters.

²⁹⁸ Ferguson, *Language, Science and Popular Fiction*, 121.

The unintended revelation that emerges from Moreau's experiments has to do with language. Equating human speech produced through animal torture with the animalistic "sounds and cries" produced through human torture, *The Island of Doctor Moreau* confronts the possibility that human speech is not the height of expression. Human and animal voices must be considered on a horizontal spectrum rather than in a vertical hierarchy, as Darwin implies in his influential text *The Descent of Man*. Viewed in this way, human language encapsulates not just articulate speech, but other vocal and bodily expressions that may hold greater potential than words—especially in conveying pain. Although the scream is a common sound in Gothic fiction, Collins and Wells insist that readers attend more acutely to its meaning and contextualize it within the range of vocalizations included in their novels. In attending to the power of sound throughout their works, these authors importantly showcase the aurality of the late-nineteenth century and propose models of listening that approach human and animal voices as equally significant.

Chapter IV

“The Apotheosis of Voice”: Mesmerism as Mechanization in Edgar Allan Poe’s Mesmeric Tales and George Du Maurier’s *Trilby*

When George Du Maurier's infamous mesmerist Svengali exerts his influence over Trilby, she becomes “just a singing-machine—an organ to play upon—an instrument of music—a Stradivarius—a flexible flageolet of flesh and blood—a voice, and nothing more—just the unconscious voice that Svengali sang with.”²⁹⁹ This exhaustive description of Trilby underscores her inherent lack of autonomy as a mesmeric subject, variously positing her as a phonograph or musical instrument whose vocal production depends on Svengali's manipulation of her body. Published in 1894 when mesmerism was firmly categorised as unscientific, but set in 1850s bohemian Paris when its validity as a science remained contested, *Trilby* tells the story of a young woman who is transformed from a tone-deaf artists' model to an international singing diva at the hands of the disreputable musician and mesmerist Svengali. *Trilby's* retrospective orientation towards mesmerism allows Du Maurier to reveal a significant connection between the mesmeric subject and the mechanized human. Through its persistent equation of Trilby with a “singing-machine” the novel illustrates how devices like the phonograph severed what had been considered an immutable bond between human voices and human bodies, necessitating a reconceptualization of the nature of sound that accounted for the voice's newfound independence.

Drawing on Franz Anton Mesmer’s theorization of animal magnetism, this chapter argues that mesmerism offered a significant framework for thinking about sound at a time when devices like the telephone and telegraph allowed the human voice to speak even in the absence of a human speaker. I expose the shared language of Mesmer, Edgar Allan Poe, and George Du

²⁹⁹ George Du Maurier, *Trilby* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 299.

Maurier to demonstrate how Gothic fiction approached sound through the framework of mesmerism. Poe's "Mesmeric Revelation" and "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar," written when mesmerism was an aspiring science in the United States, underscore the significance of the voice. The mesmeric subjects in these short stories exhibit alternative modes of sensing consistent with those described in nineteenth-century treatises, and convey their newly acquired knowledge through dialogue. Throughout his mesmeric tales, Poe incorporates the language used in scientific writings on mesmerism to construct fictional accounts that were perceived as factual. In doing so, Poe offers a literary perspective on the "Laws of Mesmerism" that critiques scientific knowledge by depicting voice as a recalcitrant force.

While Poe presents mesmerism as a powerful science capable of addressing metaphysical questions concerning the soul, death, and the nature of corporeality (questions that he implies should perhaps remain beyond human comprehension), Du Maurier reappropriates outmoded scientific concepts to critique the impact of sound technologies on late-Victorian society. In his 1779 "Dissertation on the Discovery of Animal Magnetism" Mesmer posits the existence of a "universally distributed and continuous fluid" affecting all animate and inanimate bodies.³⁰⁰ He insists, "that all bodies [are], like the magnet, capable of communicating this magnetic principle; that this fluid penetrate[s] everything and [can] be stored up and concentrated, like the electric fluid; that it act[s] at a distance."³⁰¹ Mesmer's theorization of the practice popularly termed "mesmerism" emphasizes the capacity of his universal fluid to facilitate communication between bodies, a characteristic underscored in Du Maurier's representation of the phenomenon.³⁰²

³⁰⁰ Franz Anton Mesmer, *Mesmerism: Being a Translation of Mesmer's Historic Mémoire sur la découverte du Magnétisme Animal to appear in English* (London: MacDonald & Co., 1948), 54.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 36.

³⁰² Although "mesmerism" has become the popular name for Mesmer's phenomenon, he originally called it "Animal Magnetism" to distinguish it from mineral magnetism. However, Victorians used these terms interchangeably. Mesmer's decision understandably caused many to confuse animal magnetism with magnets. In an effort to refute this erroneous assumption Mesmer ceased using electricity and magnets in his work after 1776. See Fred Kaplan,

Although Mesmer mentions sound only in passing, as something that communicates, propagates, and intensifies the universal fluid, the language he employs to describe animal magnetism precipitates the language used to describe sound not only in Du Maurier's novel, but also in sound studies.³⁰³ Like Mesmer's substance, sound is fluid, penetrating, and capable of constructing networks of influence that facilitate communication, but privilege certain individuals as authorities over others.

The conflation of mesmeric and sonic influence in Du Maurier's novel not only exposes the relation between the "universal fluid" and sound, but also confronts the possibility that like mesmerism, sound could be turned to nefarious purposes. Representing a "revelation of what the human voice could achieve," the mechanized Trilby is framed as a superior being capable of influencing the emotions and actions of her audience.³⁰⁴ However, her vocal evolution comes at a cost. Placed in a mesmeric trance that mutes her emotional capacity, renders her virtually unconscious, and strips her of autonomy, Trilby becomes "the apotheosis of voice and virtuosity" at the expense of her humanness. As a "singing-machine" she facilitates the shared experience of her listeners, but remains unable to participate in the unique community that convenes around her performances. Through the juxtaposition of mesmeric and sonic influence, *Trilby* demonstrates that while mesmerism eventually failed as a science, it continued to function as a metaphor integral to understanding the shifting soundscape of the late-nineteenth century.

I begin with an analysis of nineteenth-century figurations of mesmerists and their subjects, arguing that though entranced individuals were vulnerable, mesmerism offered them a degree of power by provoking changes in their sensory function and intellectual capacity.

"'The Mesmeric Mania': The Early Victorians and Animal Magnetism," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 35, no. 4 (1974), 691-702.

³⁰³ Mesmer, *Mesmerism*, 55.

³⁰⁴ Du Maurier, *Trilby*, 214-215.

Turning from mesmeric influence to sonic influence, the second section of my article clarifies the similarities between Mesmer's fluid and sound. I continue to investigate how these forms of influence impact communication between animate bodies, suggesting that the fundamental ideas behind animal magnetism offered a productive model for thinking about how sound technologies like the telephone and phonograph reshaped the relationship between bodies and voices. The final section of my article offers a close reading of Du Maurier's *Tribby*. I compare scenes of looking and listening in the novel to argue that sound facilitates communication between bodies more readily than sight, but destabilises humanness.

I. Mesmerist and Mesmerized: Power and Mesmeric Practice

While Mesmer intended to use animal magnetism to benefit humankind, claiming medicine would “reach its final stage of perfection,” it is not difficult to understand the resistance he faced given the supposed power of the mesmerist.³⁰⁵ Fred Kaplan explains that despite mesmerism's potential, it required the public to accept a significant paradigm shift, “a new theory about the nature of influence and power relationships between people, and between people and objects in their environment.”³⁰⁶ Mesmerism did necessitate a reconsideration of how animate and inanimate bodies influence one another, but it also reinforced many biases of the existing social structure. Nineteenth-century conceptualizations of the ideal mesmeric subject emphasize the vulnerability of individuals whose autonomy is already compromised; subordinate members of society are more susceptible to a practice that further moderates self-governance. In his 1843 *Practical Instruction in Animal Magnetism*, J.F.P. Deleuze explains, “magnetism generally exercises no influence upon persons in health. The same man who was insensible to it in a state

³⁰⁵ Mesmer, *Mesmerism*, 56

³⁰⁶ Kaplan, ““The Mesmeric Mania,””692.

of good health, will experience the effects of it when ill.”³⁰⁷ Deleuze's statement aligns susceptibility to mesmeric influence with physical constitution, an association that implicitly establishes nineteenth-century women as more pliant subjects. Imperfect health and nervousness, qualities that recur in most descriptions of the ideal mesmeric subject, were also closely associated with women.³⁰⁸ Recounting an experiment intended to demonstrate “that [animal magnetism] acted at a distance,” Mesmer inadvertently illustrates the danger male mesmerists posed to female subjects. He writes, “I pointed my finger at the patient at a distance of eight paces; the next instant, her body was in convulsion to the point of raising her on the bed with every appearance of pain.”³⁰⁹ The striking image of a women convulsing with pain in response to a pointed finger clarifies the extreme fear some felt towards mesmerism. Additionally, the depiction of the male mesmerist exercising unprecedented control over the female body raises questions regarding the use of animal magnetism for reprehensible purposes, an issue central to Du Maurier's depiction of the relationship between Svengali and Trilby.

The potential exploitation of mesmerism was a significant concern, especially since works like Deleuze's claimed “the faculty of magnetizing exists in all persons.”³¹⁰ Advocates of mesmerism as science generally implicated amateurs who used mesmerism as entertainment as

³⁰⁷ Deleuze, *Practical Instruction*, 24. Like Mesmer, Deleuze believed in the existence of a magnetic fluid. In the introduction to his work he writes, “I believe in the existence of a fluid, the nature of which is unknown to me; but those who deny the existence of this fluid, who compare the action of magnetism in living beings to that of attraction in inanimate bodies, or who admit a spiritual influence without a particular agent, cannot, on that account, contradict the consequences to which I shall arrive. The knowledge of the processes, and of all the conditions necessary for the efficient use of magnetism, is independent of the opinions which serve to explain the phenomena, and of which, up to the present time, none are susceptible of demonstration.” One of the major stumbling blocks Mesmer faced was the fact that he could not explain or provide evidence of the magnetic fluid. Deleuze dismisses this as unimportant. *Practical Instruction*, 18.

³⁰⁸ Alison Winter points out that the majority of the experimental subjects used by John Elliotson, a well-respected physician at the University College Hospital, were lower-class women. However, she also explains that a prevalent view of mesmerism in light of Elliotson's experiments with the O'Key sisters was that it allowed morally weak women to take advantage of weaker men. See Alison Winter, *Mesmerized: Powers of Mind in Victorian Britain* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998).

³⁰⁹ Mesmer, *Mesmerism*, 38.

³¹⁰ Deleuze, *Practical Instruction*, 32.

the primary offenders, suggesting that misuse of the practice was not a concern within professional communities. Mesmer foregrounds this argument in his own work when he states that “[physicians] alone are qualified to put [animal magnetism] into practice.”³¹¹ Harriet Martineau, a prominent British writer and journalist and a staunch advocate of mesmerism, vehemently opposes what she calls “itinerant advocates” in her 1845 *Letters on Mesmerism*. Questioning their motivations, she writes,

no man of enlarged views, of knowledge at all adequate to the power he wields, would venture upon the perilous rashness of making a public exhibition of the solemn wonders yet so new and impressive, of playing upon the brain and nerves of human beings, exhibiting for money on a stage states of mind and soul held too sacred in olden times to be elicited elsewhere than in temples, by the hands of the priests and the gods.³¹²

Mesmerism places the subject in an intensely vulnerable position not only in relation to the powerful mesmerist but all observers. Calling attention to the manipulation of the human body, specifically “the brain and nerves of human beings,” Martineau highlights the subject's loss of autonomy while in the trance state. She describes the exploitation of mesmerism as a sinful act that violates the intimate connection between mesmerist and subject by turning the “solemn wonders” of the body into a profit seeking “public exhibition.” Martineau's sentiment echoes Deleuze, who similarly states that mesmerists “ought to regard the employment of [magnetism] as a religious act, which demands the greatest self-collectedness, and the greatest purity of intention. —Hence it is a sort of profanation to magnetize for amusement.”³¹³ Ultimately, Martineau and Deleuze argue that mesmerism must be employed carefully and responsibly as a science rather than a form of entertainment.

However, locating the problem of exploitation exclusively in the realm of entertainment fails to account for the increasing authority of the scientific community over individuals' bodies.

³¹¹ Mesmer, *Mesmerism*, 57.

³¹² Harriet Martineau, *Miss Martineau's Letters on Mesmerism* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1845), 21.

³¹³ Deleuze, *Practical Instruction*, 27.

I would argue that opposition to the exhibition of mesmeric subjects was grounded in a more widespread resistance to the dehumanising effects of treating bodies as objects, a resistance that persisted in relation to the potential mechanization of human bodies. Physicians like John Elliotson who were eager to persuade sceptical colleagues of mesmerism's validity, were just as exploitative in their mesmeric experiments as “itinerant advocates,” if not more so. Alison Winter explains that the majority of Elliotson's subjects, most of whom were women, were “from a group whom Victorian physicians did not regard as individuals in the same category as themselves, and possibly not as individuals at all: their charity patients.”³¹⁴ Nineteenth-century scientists defined themselves as highly rational and dispassionate figures capable of viewing human bodies as sites of knowledge production. This persona helped physicians establish themselves as professionals, but it also led to questions regarding their willingness to exploit experimental subjects in the name of science. What emerges from Martineau and Deleuze's stipulations about the proper applications of mesmerism is the fact that regulating mesmerists to ensure “the greatest purity of intention” was virtually impossible, especially since anyone could manipulate the universal fluid.

Nineteenth-century advertisements for mesmeric demonstrations further illustrate the extreme power mesmerists exerted over subjects' bodies and voices, capturing some of the key features that were both attractive to audiences and dramatized by Gothic authors. Specifically, these documents highlight the invasive nature of mesmerism and call attention to the various ways mesmerists could manipulate entranced individuals. Like physiognomy and stethoscopic listening, mesmerism was framed as a method of exploring the internal condition of bodies through external means. For instance, an American advertisement featuring Dr. Sandborn, “One of the best Clairvoyants in the country,” boasts that he can be consulted on “ALL DISEASES

³¹⁴ Winter, *Mesmerized*, 61.

Which the Human Frame is heir to. While in the Mesmeric state, he will describe the state and position of the disease, the feelings of the patient, and Prescribe a Remedy for the same.”³¹⁵

READ THIS
CLAIRVOYANCE,
Mesmerism and Psychology Comibned.
DR. SANDBORN,
One of the best Clairvoyants in the country, has arrived in this place for a short time, and can be consulted day and evening, upon the following subjects, viz :
ALL DISEASES
Which the Human Frame is heir to. While in the Mesmeric state, he will describe the state and position of the disease, the feelings of the patient, and
Prescribe a Remedy for the same.
His experience and success in curing diseases, gives him confidence that he will receive a large share of patronage from the citizens of this place.
He is acknowledged to be one of the
BEST FORTUNE TELLERS
In the world, and will give advice in regard to all kinds of business; whether profitable to engage in or not; in the selection of partners for life; in the attainment of wealth in all kinds of speculation; fraud; lost property; sickness; journeys, &c., &c.
CALL AND SEE HIM!
His aim is to alleviate suffering; to do good, and increase the happiness of all. Therefore no one need fear to test him.
TERMS:
For Mesmeric Examinations, 50 cents.
" Fortune Telling, 50 "
" Both 75 "
Office hours from 9 A. M. till 9 P. M. His room is No. 4 Bow street, near the corner of Market street, up one flight of stairs.
DON'T FORGET THE PLACE, COR. BOW & MARKET STS.
Portsmouth Daily Chronicle Job Printing Office.

Figure 1. *Read this. Clairvoyance, mesmerism, and psychology combined* (1865). Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society.

³¹⁵ *Read this. Clairvoyance, mesmerism, and psychology combined* (1865). American Antiquarian Society, Massachusetts.

The notion that mesmerists could penetrate the interior, intimately examining bodies to discover both the “position of the disease” and the “feelings of the patient” underscores their extreme power. Like stethoscopic listening, mesmerism offered practitioners “a mode of constructing knowledge of patients independent of patients’ knowledge of themselves.”³¹⁶ Sandborn’s claim that he can understand patient’s emotions implies his access to the interior of the body is not merely physiological, but also psychological.

The vulnerability of mesmeric subjects is also apparent in Professor Hawley’s 1871 advertisement, which sheds light on the diverse tasks a mesmerist might force participants to complete. Exerting his influence over randomly selected audience members, Hawley promises the “most laughable yet convincing proof of the reality of his power.”³¹⁷ The advertisement provides a list of feats that simultaneously underscore the potential dangers of mesmerism and highlight its possible triviality. It states, “controlling...the muscles of the throat and face, the Professor causes persons to stutter, and even removes from them the control of their oral organs, rendering them temporarily dumb, and utterly unable to pronounce a single word.”³¹⁸ The idea that mesmerists could influence the muscles and mind of the subject to strip them of both bodily and vocal autonomy presents a threatening picture of the practice as capable of compromising the very characteristics that make one human. However, Hawley’s other abilities seem relatively harmless and genuinely “laughable,” as the ad states. He claims “subjects will sing, dance, repeat poems, deliver orations, and perform many other equally surprising feats. They will deliberately turn their coats *wrong side out* when impressed by the mesmerizer that they should do so.”³¹⁹

³¹⁶ Sterne, “Mediate Auscultation,” 127.

³¹⁷ *Mechanics Hall... Worcester* (1871). American Antiquarian Society, Massachusetts.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*

While these actions also showcase the mesmerist's control over his subject, they are less disconcerting than mentally incapacitating an individual to the point of speechlessness. Yet, many of these more trivial actions, such as singing, reciting poetry, and delivering orations, also involve the voice. What emerges from these advertisements is a consistent focus on the disparity

Mechanics' Hall . . Worcester.

PSYCHOLOGY
AND
MESMERISM !

Prof. HAWLEY

Will give a highly entertaining, amusing, and instructive lecture
as above,

On Friday Evening, Sept. 29, 1871,

in the course of which he will introduce many **STARTLING**
MANIFESTATIONS of the wonders of that **OCCULT**
SCIENCE known as

PSYCHOLOGY !

By this power, inherent in himself, he will so control his
subjects,

Chosen at Random from the Audience,

as to make their actions and thoughts entirely subservient to
his will.

Thus, one subject, having closed his eyes, cannot reopen them until permitted
by the Professor. Another, seated in a chair, cannot rise. Another, having
started to walk, cannot stop; while the next, wishing to proceed, but restrained
by the invisible

MESMERIC POWER

of the Professor, cannot advance a step. One subject, having his hands clasped
over his head, cannot remove them, though he exert all his strength, while
another, having raised his foot, cannot replace it on the floor. By the same power,
subjects are forced to walk backward, to rise on their tiptoes, to lean over until
their fingers touch the floor, and to perform many other acts, simple in themselves,
yet showing

THE REALITY OF THE POWER

which governs them.
Controlling next the muscles of the throat and face, the Professor causes
persons to stutter, and even removes from them the control of their vocal organs,
rendering them temporarily dumb, and utterly unable to pronounce a single word.
He also so

CONTROLS THE MIND

as to take away the memory, causing his subjects to

FORGET THEIR NAMES !

age, home, faces of friends, and all events connected with their history.
By a further effort of the will, he causes his subjects to take on a new identity,
giving most laughable yet convincing proof of the reality of his power. While
under this influence, subjects will sing, dance, repeat poems, deliver orations, and
perform many other equally surprising feats. They will deliberately turn their
coats *wrong side out*, when impressed by the mesmerizer that they should do so;
will sew up imaginary rents in their clothing, and will suffer from the cold of
winter or scorch in the heat of summer, according to the will of the Professor.
No description can do justice to the wonders of this science, and the experi-
ments here alluded to are but a title of those which the Professor is prepared
exhibit.

Of the almost miraculous

HEALING AND CURATIVE POWERS

of Mesmerism, absolute and convincing proof will be given.

IT SHOULD BE REMEMBERED

that a single word from the Professor is at any time sufficient to bring his subjects
back to their normal or natural state, and that no one need have any apprehension
of ill effects resulting from these experiments.
Former subjects have invariably declared the sensations incident to con-
trol pleasant in the extreme, and are always glad of an opportunity to be again
mesmerized.

ADMISSION . . . 25 CENTS.

Figure 2. *Mechanics Hall... Worcester* (1871).
Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society.

between the powerful mesmerist and the relatively powerless subject. Gothic representations of mesmerism capitalize on the frightening implications of surrendering one's autonomy, yet works like Edgar Allan Poe's mesmeric tales, George Eliot's *The Lifted Veil*, and George Du Maurier's *Trilby* also explore the unique power attained by those in the trance state.

Although descriptions of mesmerism often emphasize the subject's disempowerment, the mesmeric trance actually grants them a form of influence by changing their sensory function and giving them access to otherwise inaccessible knowledge. Treatises on mesmerism explain that entranced subjects no longer perceive the external world, shifting to a mode of internal perception. Deleuze makes this move from exterior to interior explicit in his discussion of somnambulists. He writes, "the external organs of sense are all, or nearly all, asleep; and yet [the mesmeric subject] experiences sensations, but by another means. There is roused in him an internal sense, which is perhaps the centre of the others, or a sort of instinct."³²⁰ The notion that "an internal sense" or "sort of instinct" is "roused" suggests this kind of sensing is latent in all individuals and simply needs to be accessed by putting the "external organs of sense" to sleep. Deleuze goes on to argue that magnetism reveals,

the two-fold existence of the *internal* and the *external* man in a single individual. They offer a direct proof of the spirituality of the soul, and an answer to all the objections raised against its immortality. They make evident the truth known to ancient sages, and so well expressed by M. de Bonald, that *man is an intelligence served by organs*.³²¹

The bodies of mesmeric subjects thus become new sites of knowledge, exposing relations between the internal and external existence of humankind not apparent in normally sensing individuals. This transformation calls attention to the importance of voice, which moves fluidly between the spatially and temporally distinct realms subjects and mesmerists inhabit even though

³²⁰ Deleuze, *Practical Instruction*, 27.

³²¹ *Ibid.*, 69. Original emphasis.

the body cannot. Furthermore, it grants subjects a degree of authority as repositories of knowledge gleaned using the “internal sense” and conveyed to observers through dialogue.

In addition to enabling mesmeric subjects to employ the “internal sense,” the trance state allegedly facilitated highly logical thinking and allowed subjects to address metaphysical questions. Martineau recounts a dialogue with a mesmeric subject who explains that mesmerism “exalts and elevates the thinking powers.”³²² In his 1841 *Facts in Mesmerism, with Reasons for a Dispassionate Inquiry into It* Chauncy Hare Townshend relates these intellectual changes to sensory changes in mesmeric subjects. He states, “separated from the usual action of the senses, the mind appears to gain juster notions, to have quite a new sense of spiritual things, and to be lifted nearer to the fountain of all good and of all truth.”³²³ While Townshend contextualizes this aspect of mesmerism within religion and spiritualism, *Trilby* links the ascendancy of the mesmeric subject to evolutionary superiority.³²⁴ In both cases, the transcendent nature of the trance state enables subjects to access alternative realms unencumbered by their physical forms. The mind and voice take precedence over the body, which assumes a role comparable to the telephone; it becomes a device that facilitates communication at a distance. In the next section I turn to Edgar Allan Poe’s mesmeric tales to investigate his portrayal of the practice as a viable, though perhaps ill-advised mode of addressing metaphysical questions. I argue that Poe’s fascination with mesmerism as science, which enabled him to convince readers on both sides of

³²² Martineau, *Miss Martineau's Letters*, 15.

³²³ Chauncy Hare Townshend, *Facts in Mesmerism, with Reasons for a Dispassionate Inquiry into It* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1841), 11.

³²⁴ Anne Stiles tracks the association between genius and insanity prevalent in nineteenth-century scientific discourse, calling attention to the threat of particular kinds of evolution to morality. The overdevelopment of the human brain was considered dangerous because, following Lamarckian thought, the development of any one organ necessarily led to the deterioration of others. Stiles writes, “One possible conclusion of rapid Lamarckian brain evolution, then, was a species of morally insane beings boasting enormous cerebrums and miniscule bodies.” “Literature in ‘Mind,’” 329. For more on *Trilby* and evolutionary theory see Christine Ferguson, “Footnotes on *Trilby*: The Human Foot as Evolutionary Icon in Late Victorian Culture,” *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 28, no. 2 (June 2006): 127-144; and Laura Vorachek, “Mesmerists and Other Meddlers: Social Darwinism, Degeneration, and Eugenics in *Trilby*,” *Victorian Literature and Culture* 37 (2009): 197-215.

the Atlantic that “The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar” was a legitimate experiment, limits his comparison of mesmerized bodies to communication devices. Poe approaches something comparable to the critique Du Maurier would later level against Victorian sound technologies, but his determination to maintain the understanding of mesmerism as the science Mesmer envisioned limits his approach.

II. The “Laws of Mesmerism” in Edgar Allan Poe

The changes to mesmeric subjects’ sensory function and intellectual capacity described by well-known theorists of mesmerism like Deleuze and Townshend gesture towards a unique form of empowerment that Poe captures in his short stories “Mesmeric Revelation” and “The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar.”³²⁵ While the former provides readers with a sense of how Poe conceptualizes the practice, the latter serves as a case study that was widely received in Britain and the United States as a legitimate scientific experiment. The reception of these works as fact rather than fiction speaks to the ability of Gothic authors to effectively draw on scientific knowledge to raise social, ethical, and political questions about the practices they depict. However, Poe’s decision to cast male subjects in all three works despite the prevalence of female subjects in nineteenth-century mesmeric demonstrations gestures towards an important difference between his and Du Maurier’s intentions. While *Trilby* is not intended to convince readers of the validity of mesmerism, using it instead as a framework to explore sonic influence, “Mesmeric Revelation” and “The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar” are explicitly concerned with mesmerism as a science that contributed to new assessments of bodies, voices, and the nature of death. I would argue that Poe’s desire to make these characters speak authoritatively

³²⁵ These works, along with “A Tale of the Ragged Mountains,” constitute what critics refer to as Poe’s “mesmeric tales.” The short stories were published in 1844 and 1845.

about metaphysical questions prompted him to include male subjects who might be taken more seriously by nineteenth-century readers, particularly since the scientific community consisted almost exclusively of men.

Poe's ambition to align his writing with scientific accounts of mesmerism is apparent in the language he employs to talk about the practice. At the start of "Mesmeric Revelation" the narrator explains what he perceives as the "laws of mesmerism and its general features."³²⁶ As Sidney E. Lind points out, the opening closely resembles the beginning of Chauncy Hare Townshend's popular 1840 book, *Facts in Mesmerism*, which similarly attempts to acknowledge and dispel the public scepticism surrounding the practice.³²⁷ "Whatever doubt may still envelope the rationale of mesmerism," Poe's narrator states, "its startling facts are now almost universally admitted."³²⁸ Boldly proclaiming the validity of the science, the narrator affirms

that man, by mere exercise of will can so impress his fellow as to cast him into an abnormal condition, of which the phenomena resemble very closely those of death, or at least resemble them more nearly than they do the phenomena of any other normal condition within our cognizance; that, while in this state, the person so impressed employs only with effort, and then feebly, the external organs of sense, yet perceives, with keenly refined perception, and through channels supposed unknown, matters beyond the scope of the physical organs.³²⁹

In addition to the likeness of the trance state to death, a prominent feature of all three of his mesmeric stories, Poe underscores how mesmerism reshapes sensory function. The "external organs of sense" are dulled as the subject accesses "channels supposed unknown" to perceive "matters beyond the scope of the physical organs." While the senses are a well-known focus of Poe's corpus, his descriptions of mesmerism specifically draw on the language used in

³²⁶ Edgar Allan Poe, "Mesmeric Revelation," *The Complete Tales and Poems of Edgar Allan Poe* (New York: Vintage Books, 1975), 88.

³²⁷ Sidney E. Lind, "Poe and Mesmerism," *PMLA* 62, no. 4 (Dec. 1947): 1077-1094. Lind argues Poe drew heavily on Townshend's book in writing "Mesmerism Revelation" and "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar"

³²⁸ Poe, "Mesmeric Revelation," 88.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*

nineteenth-century mesmeric treatises. For instance, this passage very closely resembles the moment in Townshend's treatise where he describes how the mind is "separated from the usual action of the senses."³³⁰ It also echoes Deleuze's claim that in the trance state "the external organs of sense are all, or nearly all, asleep; and yet [the mesmeric subject] experiences sensations, but by another means."³³¹ In addition to his descriptions of the mesmeric trance as reshaping the senses, Poe also addresses changes to intellectual capacity. Like Martineau's subject, the character in "Mesmeric Revelation" attests that "the mesmeric exaltation enables [him] to perceive a train of ratiocination" otherwise unavailable.³³² The close approximation of the author's language to that of actual treatises demonstrates his intention to persuade readers that the experiments in his short stories are feasible, and his particular attention to sensory and intellectual changes underscores his aim to explore mesmerism's intervention in fundamentally human questions.

Published over a year after "Mesmeric Revelation" first appeared in *Columbian Magazine*, "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar" ostensibly attempts to answer the question "to what extent, or for how long a period, the encroachments of Death might be arrested by [Mesmerism]."³³³ The narrator details his experiment with terminal patient M. Valdemar, whom he places in a mesmeric trance at the precise moment of his death. In the course of the experiment he observes changes in both the bodily and vocal constitution of Valdemar that render the strict life/death binary insufficient. Eventually, Valdemar's body ceases to function as anything but a medium, allowing his voice to persist beyond his physical extinction. The metaphorical treatment of the body as a "speaking machine" draws attention to the "unmoored"

³³⁰ Townshend, *Facts in Mesmerism*, 11.

³³¹ Deleuze, *Practical Instruction*, 68.

³³² Poe, "Mesmeric Revelation," 89.

³³³ Edgar Allan Poe, "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar," *The Complete Tales and Poems of Edgar Allan Poe* (New York: Vintage Books, 1975), 96.

voice that Jonathan Sterne associates with the proliferation of sound reproduction technologies.³³⁴ However, the dissolution of Valdemar's body and consequently his voice at the conclusion of the narrative implies that even voices emanating from devices like the telephone or phonograph remain subject to the rules of embodiment. As Valdemar's body changes his voice changes too; like Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Poe's short story conforms to a primary assumption of physiognomy: bodies and voices must align.

Much like physiognomy, mesmerism became a popular practice in the nineteenth century that appealed to the scientific spirit of the age. Readers in the United States and Britain genuinely believed the experiment carried out in "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar" was within the realm of possibility. Although the story was admittedly fictitious, Poe based it on an actual case reported by Townshend in the "Notes" to the 1844 London edition of his book and encouraged the public's perception of the work as factual. Critics like Adam Frank have attributed Poe's success in convincing his readership to the style of narration, the lack of figurative language, and the use of medical terminology common to scientific writings from the 1840s.³³⁵ In addition to these features, the text attempts to establish authority by presenting specific aims for the experiment, using credible witnesses like the doctors and medical student to substantiate events, and incorporating highly detailed descriptions of Valdemar's condition. Alison Winter explains,

When Poe's story was published in Britain, its audience took it seriously as an assertion of fact. The *Hampshire Advertiser*, for instance, reproduced the story, advising readers that it had been printed in a respectable American magazine, and leaving it to them to decide how credible it was. ...Readers were willing to consider the possibility that mesmerism could redraw the line between life and death.³³⁶

The circulation of scientific knowledge through publications like *The Lancet* in Britain and *The North American Review* in the United States offered readers access to conversations within

³³⁴ Sterne, *The Audible Past*, 1.

³³⁵ Adam Frank, "Valdemar's Tongue, Poe's Telegraphy," *ELH* 72.3 (Fall 2005): 651.

³³⁶ Winter, *Mesmerized*, 121.

increasingly exclusive professional communities. However, as discussed in my second chapter the prevalence of such articles also placed laymen in the precarious position of being informed but vulnerable to well written, factually based fiction like Poe's. The narrator's self-proclaimed aim is not only to "give the *facts*," but to correct the "garbled or exaggerated account" that has "made its way into society and [become] the source of many unpleasant misrepresentations; and, very naturally, of a great deal of disbelief."³³⁷ In her discussion of mass readership in nineteenth-century Britain, Ashley Miller provides insight into how such "garbled or exaggerated account[s]" might be generated. Miller explains that information circulated in print was often made accessible orally through practices like public readings; many working class individuals were illiterate and even those who could read might not be able to afford books or periodicals.³³⁸ Although these communication networks were important in creating shared knowledge, both Poe's narrative and its reception as fact demonstrate how such a network might leave individuals misinformed. Depicting knowledge as another "flowing agent," Poe's narrator establishes himself as an authority figure capable of providing an accurate account. Yet, the narrative provokes more questions than it answers. The curiosity regarding whether mesmerism can delay death is later replaced by the question, what is death?

The experiment performed on M. Valdemar draws together two aspects of nineteenth-century culture integral to discussions of death: the development of pathological anatomy and the introduction of technologies that severed the previously immutable tie between human bodies and voices. In *The Birth of the Clinic* Michel Foucault explains that during the nineteenth century the prevalence of pathological anatomy coupled with the maturation of the clinic necessitated a reevaluation of what it meant to die. Whereas eighteenth-century medical thought conceived of

³³⁷ Poe, "The Facts in the Case," 96.

³³⁸ Ashley Miller, "Speech Paralysis: Ingestion, Suffocation, and the Torture of Listening," *Nineteenth-Century Contexts: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 36, no. 5 (2014), 475.

death as an “absolute fact and the most relative of phenomena,” nineteenth-century medicine viewed it as a non-instantaneous process.³³⁹ Death became a multiple rather than singular event that occurs over time. Foucault explains,

it has a teeming presence that analysis may divide into time and space; gradually, here and there, each of the knots breaks, until organic life ceases, at least in its major forms, since long after the death of the individual, minuscule, partial deaths continue to dissociate the islets of life that still subsist. In natural death, the animal life is extinguished first: first sensorial extinction, then the slowing down of brain activity, the weakening of locomotion, rigidity of the muscles, and diminution of their contractility, quasi-paralysis of the intestines, and finally immobilization of the heart.³⁴⁰

Foucault provocatively suggests there is a difference between the “death of the individual” and the death of the body, the latter being a much longer process that culminates in the “immobilization of the heart.” Rather than a single death, there are a number of “partial deaths” that continue after “the animal life is extinguished” and “sensorial extinction” has occurred. Although Foucault does not directly reference the soul, his attention to the “individual” implies something other than a strictly corporeal death is taking place. Foucault helpfully provides a means of differentiating between the mesmeric trance and death based on the function of the senses. Whereas mesmerism enhances and expands the senses, death begins with “sensorial extinction” and culminates in the cessation of the brain, lungs, and heart.

Mesmeric treatises contradicted the idea of death as merely a cessation of life, instead comparing it to an altered state of being like the trance state. For instance, M. Loewe’s *Treatise on the Phenomena of Animal Magnetism* reconceptualizes death as a transformative process or “alteration of form” rather than a cessation of bodily function. In a section titled “Life and Death,” he states, “when a body in time ceases to be what it was, we cannot by any means, from that imagine an absolute death. ... That which we in general call death is nothing else but an

³³⁹ Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic*, 140.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 142.

alteration of form, effected by means of a modification of life.”³⁴¹ Edgar Allan Poe subscribes to a similar understanding of death in “Mesmeric Revelation” where the entranced Vankirk explains, “What we call ‘death,’ is but the painful metamorphosis. Our present incarnation is progressive, preparatory, temporary. Our future is perfected, ultimate, immortal.”³⁴² While these estimations of death seem optimistic, the comparison of death to the trance state raises questions about the ethics of mesmerism. Should mesmerists be authorized to induce a state commensurate with death? In approaching this question “The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar” addresses broader concerns about the increasing authority of the scientific community. Practices like pathological anatomy expanded knowledge regarding human bodies, but also enhanced the perception of medical professionals as authorities over those bodies. The tension between Valdemar’s physical and vocal transformations throughout Poe’s tale exposes the voice as a recalcitrant force that undercuts mounting scientific authority over bodies, restoring a degree of power to subjects and challenging the conception of bodies as knowable. As the experiment progresses Valdemar’s corpse becomes irrelevant in terms of sustaining life but integral to housing his voice.

After Valdemar is placed “in an unusually perfect state of mesmeric trance” the mesmerist demonstrates the extent of his influence by establishing traction.³⁴³ Additionally, he initiates dialogue to establish the successful inducement of the trance. Describing this process in her letters, Martineau explains: “It is a memorable moment when one first hears the monosyllable which tells that the true mesmeric trance has begun. ‘Are you asleep!’ ‘Yes.’ It is

³⁴¹ M. Loewe, *A Treatise on the Phenomena of Animal Magnetism; in Which The Same Are Systematically Explained According to the Laws of Nature* (London: G. Schulze, 1822), 26.

³⁴² Poe, “Mesmeric Revelation,” 93.

³⁴³ When the mesmerist influences the subject to physically mirror his movements this is called “traction.”

crossing the threshold of a new region of observation of human nature.”³⁴⁴ Shifting attention from body to voice, from seeing to hearing, Martineau’s description suggests that spectators need to engage in a different kind of sensory experience in order to pass into a “new region of observation of human nature.” Although the gaze dominated nineteenth-century science and visual evidence was increasingly privileged, mesmerism required a degree of aural observation and sonic evidence. Arguably, this reliance on sound hindered mesmerism’s aspirations to be classified as science. Initiating the very dialogue Martineau references, Poe’s narrator asks “M. Valdemar...are you asleep?”³⁴⁵ After a brief moment, “the lips moved sluggishly, and from between them, in a barely audible whisper, issued the words: ‘Yes; —asleep now Do not wake me! —let me die so!’”³⁴⁶ The response both establishes the successful inducement of the mesmeric trance and signifies the unique conditions of the experiment. Valdemar’s physical deterioration, apparent from the sluggish lips, is matched by his equally weakened voice. He is able to produce a “barely audible whisper” and asks the mesmerist to leave him asleep and let him die.

Valdemar’s request implies that even if mesmerism cannot delay death it may be able to mediate the process and provide a more peaceful end. When asked if he still sleeps, Valdemar replies, “Yes; still asleep—dying,” accentuating the progressive rather than sudden nature of death.³⁴⁷ A few minutes later, only several hours after the doctors had predicted he would die, Valdemar undergoes a drastic bodily transformation. The narrator describes this alteration in great detail:

there came a marked change over the countenance of the sleep-waker. The eyes rolled themselves slowly open, the pupils disappearing upwardly; the skin generally assumed a

³⁴⁴ Martineau, *Miss Martineau’s Letters*, 11.

³⁴⁵ Poe, “The Facts in the Case,” 100.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

cadaverous hue, resembling not so much parchment as white paper; and the circular hectic spots which, hitherto, had been strongly defined in the centre of each cheek, *went out* at once. I use this expression, because the suddenness of their departure put me in mind of nothing so much as the extinguishment of a candle by a puff of the breath. The upper lip, at the same time, writhed itself away from the teeth, which it had previously covered completely; while the lower jaw fell with an audible jerk, leaving the mouth widely extended, and disclosing in full view the swollen and blackened tongue. I presume that no member of the party then present had been unaccustomed to death-bed horrors; but so hideous beyond conception was the appearance of M. Valdemar at this moment, that there was a general shrinking back from the region of the bed. ... There was no longer the faintest sign of vitality in M. Valdemar.³⁴⁸

The marked change in Valdemar's physical appearance leaves him looking less like an invalid and more like a corpse. His eyes roll back in his head, the pallor of his skin becomes shockingly white, and the color in his cheeks is extinguished like a flame. The swelling and blackening of the tongue, which normally manifests days after expiration, is immediately apparent. Valdemar's sudden transformation leaves both characters and readers with the impression that he is dead, contradicting the model of death as slow and progressive. However, the fact that the individuals accustomed to witnessing "death-bed horrors" participate in a "general shrinking back from the region of the bed" also suggests that this is not a normal turn of events. Mesmerism produces a different manifestation of death, if this is death, which is more violent towards the body and disturbing to observers.

Instead of viewing the bodily transformation as indicative of a move from life to death, one might interpret the change as a move from man to machine. The conclusion that Valdemar is dead, which seems accurate based on his corpse-like appearance and overall lack of vitality, becomes circumspect "when a strong vibratory motion [is] observable in the tongue."³⁴⁹ The reanimation of Valdemar's tongue by an unseen force recalls Mesmer's "universal fluid" and marks a shift in the function of the body. Valdemar gains vocal agency and thus authority in the

³⁴⁸ Ibid., 101.

³⁴⁹ Ibid.

narrative, undermining the medical assessment that he has expired. Critics like Adam Frank and Anthony Enns argue that the clattering tongue is indicative of Valdemar's transformation into something akin to a telegraph or telephone.³⁵⁰ It creates a "shared psychic space of the 'ultimate body' ...by way of the broken and hollow telegraphic voice or sound heard as if 'from a vast distance.'"³⁵¹ Through his comparison of Valdemar's grotesque tongue to the clattering telegraph key, Frank calls attention to the conflicted feelings nineteenth-century listeners experienced when confronted with new communication technologies. On the one hand, the telegraph created a new kind of "liveness" by allowing events happening elsewhere to be reported in real time. On the other hand, it unnervingly enabled the voice to speak "as if 'from a vast distance'" and required users to accept the speaker's authority in the absence of their bodies.

The comparison of Valdemar's corpse to a telegraph forges a connection between scientific discourse surrounding the human body and public discourse surrounding communication technologies. Central to both discussions is an overwhelming concern with the changing nature of embodiment and the challenges of inhabiting an increasingly interconnected world. "Mesmerism," Frank explains, "offered Poe and his contemporaries a medium at once spiritual and material in which an individual's sensations or feelings could be imagined to be connected to those of others and to larger social networks."³⁵² Valdemar, suspended in a purgatorial state of existence, occupies a privileged position in this web and, like the telegraph, creates another kind of "liveness" or perhaps "deadness" as it were. The "strong vibratory motion" the other characters observe in the blackened tongue indicates Valdemar's tenuous presence in the room and contradicts the bodily signs that so clearly point towards his being

³⁵⁰ Frank, "Valdemar's Tongue"; and Anthony Enns, "Mesmerism and the Electric Age: From Poe to Edison," in *Victorian Literary Mesmerism*, ed. Martin Willis and Catherine Wynne (New York: Rodopi, 2006), 61-82.

³⁵¹ Frank, "Valdemar's Tongue," 654.

³⁵² *Ibid.*, 639.

dead. Despite the grotesqueness of “The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar,” Frank claims that “Poe’s mesmeric poetics depict at an early moment of its emergence the phenomenon that Jonathan Sterne calls telegraphic intimacy, the investment of sound telegraphy ‘with the possibility of a depth of feeling and communication that was hitherto reserved for face-to-face and written interaction.’”³⁵³ Yet, I would argue the “possibility of a depth of feeling and communication” is extinguished rather than cultivated in this instance. The metaphorical representation of Valdemar’s tongue as a telegraph key emphasizes the estrangement this kind of communication produces, and the repulsion felt by the other characters forecloses not only the possibility, but also the desire for intimacy.

The persistence of Valdemar’s voice after his physical death has also led critics like Enns to compare his body to a phonograph, which inventor Thomas A. Edison promoted as a means of preserving the voices of the dead.³⁵⁴ Whereas the telegraph, and later the telephone allowed for communication at a distance within a fixed temporality, the phonograph allowed for recording and preservation of the voice in a way that transcends temporal constraints. Apart from the anachronistic nature of this argument, the comparison falters because of the way Valdemar’s voice functions. He remains able to communicate with those in the room; there is an exchange of information through dialogue that likens his experience to telegraphic or telephonic communication rather than phonographic preservation. This relationship is further substantiated by the fact that the dissolution of Valdemar’s body is accompanied by the dissolution of his voice. The reduction of the character to a “nearly liquid mass of loathsome—of detestable putrescence,” a moment that might be read as his ultimate death, concludes both the dialogue between Valdemar and his observers as well as the short story itself. Mesmerism does not

³⁵³ Ibid.

³⁵⁴ Thomas A. Edison, “The Phonograph and Its Future,” *The North American Review* 126, no. 262 (1878): 527-536.

preserve the voice like the phonograph; like the telegraph or telephone, it briefly sustains a connection between the characters and permits them to communicate regardless of their distinct spatial and temporal positioning.

While Poe's story begins as a mesmeric experiment, it effectively becomes a séance after Valdemar's physical transformation, a change that further supports readings of the body as a sound technology. The association of the disembodied voice with the spirit world was a common response to new devices like the telephone that produced a kind of ghostliness exacerbated by later technologies like the phonograph and radio.³⁵⁵ In his chapter "A Gramophone in Every Grave," Connor charts the overlap between the supernatural and the scientific in Victorian culture. He writes, "the commerce between the disembodied and the re-embodied, the phantasmal and the mechanical, is a feature in particular of the scientific understanding of the voice, but it is apparent too in the languages and experiences of the Victorian supernatural, which coil so closely together with that work of scientific imagining and understanding."³⁵⁶ Situated at the intersection between "the disembodied and the re-embodied," "the phantasmal and the mechanical," voice problematically resists categorization. Gothic fiction, characterized by the intermingling of the scientific and the supernatural, captures this difficulty and offers representations of voice reflective of Victorians' confused perspectives. In this particular story, Poe addresses something comparable to what Connor describes as "direct voice," a popular component of late-nineteenth-century séances defined as "a voice which speaks independently of the medium's vocal organs."³⁵⁷ Published several decades before direct voice became a prevalent feature of spiritualism, "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar" captures the initial fear of the

³⁵⁵ According to Steven Connor, there was even a theory that spirits had created the telegraph first and influenced those working on it in the living world so they could use it to communicate. *Dumbstruck*.

³⁵⁶ Connor, *Dumbstruck*, 363.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 364.

disembodied voice and foreshadows later spiritualist practices revolving around oral communication with the dead. Connor explains, “spiritualism moved from the high-definition visibility of the full-figure materializations which thrilled participants in seances during the 1870s, towards more indeterminate experiences in which invocation pre dominated over materialization, and the ear over the eye.”³⁵⁸ The observers in Poe’s story similarly shift their focus from visual observations of the subject’s body to aural observations of the subject’s voice. The characters not only attend to the meaning of Valdemar’s speech, but also analyze its sonic characteristics. What differentiates Valdemar’s voice from the “direct voice” Connor describes is the fact that the former remains localizable in the vibrating tongue, never achieving full independence from the vocal organs. Mediating the exchange between Valdemar and the narrator, the patient’s body remains integral to his ability to communicate.

The suggestion that Valdemar’s body becomes a mediator, transmitting his voice from an unseen realm to his death chamber, is made more unsettling by the qualitative transformation his voice undergoes following his physical change. Responding once more to the mesmerist’s question regarding whether he is still asleep, Valdemar employs a voice that defies description.

The mesmerist states,

There issued from the distended and motionless jaws a voice – such as it would be madness in me to attempt describing. There are, indeed, two or three epithets which might be considered as applicable to it in part; I might say, for example, that the sound was harsh, and broken and hollow; but the hideous whole is indescribable, for the simple reason that no similar sounds have ever jarred upon the ear of humanity. There were two particulars, nevertheless, which I thought then, and still think, might fairly be stated as characteristic of the intonation – as well adapted to convey some idea of its unearthly peculiarity. In the first place, the voice seemed to reach our ears – at least mine – from a vast distance, or from some deep cavern within the earth. In the second place, it impressed me (I fear, indeed, that it will be impossible to make myself comprehended) as gelatinous or glutinous matters impress the sense of touch.³⁵⁹

³⁵⁸ Ibid.

³⁵⁹ Poe, “The Facts in the Case,” 101.

Much like the deformed figure of Stevenson's Edward Hyde, the deformed voice of Valdemar is most notable for the repugnant and fearful emotions it stirs in the listener. Unable to describe the voice as a whole, the narrator breaks it into a range of unpleasant sounds that are "harsh, and broken and hollow." The conceptualization of voice as sound illustrates the narrator's desperate attempt to make sense of what he is hearing irrespective of language. However, despite his efforts, the qualifying phrase "I might say" preceding his description reinforces a profound lack of certainty. The narrator's claim that "no similar sounds have ever jarred upon the ears of humanity" subtly evokes mesmerism's capacity to access unseen realms. Although the voice is horrifying, there is something exhilarating about it, especially in the context of the mesmeric experiment. The suggestion that the voice comes from "some deep cavern within the earth," posits that it might be from hell. Its "gelatinous or glutinous" quality classifies it as something neither liquid nor solid, suspended like Valdemar between two states. This idea of sound as tactile reappears with the invention of the telephone, a device similar to the telegraph in terms of enabling communication at a distance, but different in that it facilitates the flow of sound from the interior of one body to the interior of another.

Much like mesmerism, the telephone complicates stark definitions of exterior and interior, creating a new means of touching the other that, for many critics, overcomes physical separation and permits the reaching of interiority that John Durham Peters deems impossible.³⁶⁰ Connor reminds us that the telephone transmitted bodily sounds as well as the voice, and was contemplated as a medical device for diagnosis at a distance. Additionally, he suggests that the telephone was capable of transmitting the interior of one body into the inner ear of the listener,

³⁶⁰ John Durham Peters, *Speaking into the Air: A History of the Idea of Communication* (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1999).

defying spatial boundaries while maintaining physical remoteness.³⁶¹ Bell Telephone's famous slogan, "reach out and touch someone," similarly implies that the company conceptualized the device as transcending physical limitations and creating new forms of tactile interaction. In his essay "Listening," Roland Barthes makes a similar statement when he claims, "'listen to me' means *touch me, know that I exist.*"³⁶² Barthes also presents new models of the body in which the physical self is wholly concentrated in the ear or voice. He writes,

the archetypal instrument of modern listening, the telephone, collects the two partners into an ideal (and under certain circumstances, an intolerable) inter-subjectivity, because this instrument has abolished all senses except that of hearing: the order of listening which any telephonic communication inaugurates invites the Other to collect his whole body in his voice and announces that I am collecting all of myself in my ear.³⁶³

The telephone not only extends the senses, it reshapes the body and transmutes the self by displacing identity into a single object or organ. In Barthes's figuration, the listener becomes "all ears" and the speaker becomes all voice. Touching is therefore redefined as a type of transmission from mouth to ear that becomes a representational interaction of whole selves. Valdemar seems to become all tongue, dead except for the vibratory movement of that single organ. While the clattering is comparable to a telegraph key, the telephone offers a more accurate metaphor for how his body functions. Valdemar's voice passes through his corpse and into the body of the listener.

In addition to the quality of Valdemar's voice, the implications of his answers greatly disturb the narrator and doctors, cause the nurses to flee, and throw the medical student into a deep swoon from which he does not wake for nearly an hour. Valdemar, in what Roland Barthes has called "an impossible uttering," announces "*I have been sleeping—and now—now—I am*

³⁶¹ Connor, "The Modern Auditory I," 206.

³⁶² Roland Barthes, "Listening," *The Responsibility of Forms: Critical Essays on Music, Art, and Representation* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1985), 251. Original emphasis.

³⁶³ *Ibid.*, 251-252.

dead.”³⁶⁴ Valdemar’s proclamation suggests the physical transformation the characters witnessed was in fact the conversion of a living body into a corpse. The change in his voice and the great sense of distance between speaker and listener corroborate the movement of Valdemar’s internal self into another realm. However, the presence of the body, which seems to be in a state of inanimate animation, and the vibratory motion of the tongue encourage observers to continue locating the voice within the body that once housed it. It is the contradictory presence and absence of Valdemar, his simultaneous embodiment and disembodiment that make his death so problematic.

The resumption of dialogue after the initial shock of the vibrating tongue pulls focus away from mechanization and back towards a critical examination of mesmerism as a means of addressing fundamentally human questions. The mesmerist’s attempts to remove Valdemar from the trance state bring about his swift dissolution as well as a great deal of suffering. As the narrator continues to probe him for knowledge, Valdemar exclaims “For God’s sake! —quick! —quick! —put me to sleep—or, quick! —waken me—quick! —*I say to you that I am dead!*”³⁶⁵ Exposing the vulnerability of his position, Valdemar pleads with the mesmerist to put him into a more stable state. Repeating the claim “*I am dead,*” the character underscores the dangers of attempting to forestall death. Capturing Valdemar’s final moments, the narrator explains,

as I rapidly made the mesmeric passes, amid ejaculations of “dead! dead!” absolutely *bursting* from the tongue and not from the lips of the sufferer, his whole frame at once—within the space of a single minute, or less, shrunk—crumbled—absolutely *rotted* away beneath my hands. Upon the bed, before that whole company, there lay a nearly liquid mass of loathsome—of detestable putrescence.³⁶⁶

³⁶⁴ Roland Barthes, “Textual Analysis of a Tale by Edgar Allan Poe,” *Poe Studies* 10, no. 1 (June 1977): 1-12; Poe, “The Facts in the Case,” 101.

³⁶⁵ Poe, “The Facts in the Case,” 103. Original emphasis.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

The pain of Valdemar's final purgatorial moment, indicated by his emphatic vocal outburst, suggests his voice remains cognizant of his earthly body, however decomposed it may be. The sudden and immediate disintegration of Valdemar's corpse after the mesmerist releases him from the trance state further implies the mesmeric trance was simply holding the body together rather than delaying the process of putrefaction following death. Once the subject is no longer entranced he "dissolves," leaving nothing more than a "detestable putrescence." At the start of Poe's story the mesmerist claims, "in the series of experiments made hitherto, there had been a very remarkable and most unaccountable omission; —no person had as yet been mesmerized *in articulo mortis*."³⁶⁷ By the end of the story the reader cannot help but wonder if this omission was for the best. Rather than resolve the narrator's questions regarding if and for how long mesmerism can arrest death, the experiment raises concerns regarding the god-like power the mesmerist assumes when he exerts control over the process. Ultimately, mesmerizing a patient on the brink of death transforms the body into something akin to a telecommunications device; the voice overcomes spatial and temporal limitations and reaches the listener. However, as the nature of the Valdemar's embodiment changes the quality of his voice changes as well, suggesting that voice cannot remain the same if the body is altered.

Poe's "Mesmeric Revelation" and "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar" employ mesmerism as a science, testing the limitations of the practice through various experiments. Although the account of Valdemar's tongue enables readings of his body as a telegraph, Poe never fully explores the implications of the character's mechanization. Instead, he turns attention back to the ethics of the scientific experiment to demonstrate the horrific consequences of attempting to intervene in the process of death. Mesmerism raised questions about the relationship between bodies and voices that would later become relevant to thinking about sound.

³⁶⁷ Ibid., 96. Original emphasis.

Poe approaches these issues in his work, drawing on contemporary mesmeric treatises to imagine how changes in the sensory experience of subjects might impact human interactions and communication. The voice becomes a means of resisting scientific authority over the body, yet it does not become a potent form of influence in its own right. Reappropriating the outmoded language of mesmeric theory later in the century, George Du Maurier's *Trilby* expands on the latent ideas about sound technologies in Poe's short stories. Rather than approach mesmerism as a legitimate science, Du Maurier uses it as a metaphor for thinking about influence. Destabilizing the roles of mesmerist and subject, the novel equates the "universal fluid" that penetrates and compels all bodies with sound.

III. Human Voices, Mechanical Bodies

Contemplating the English landscape after social expectations prevent him from marrying Trilby and a consequent illness renders him affectless, Little Billee wonders: "Why couldn't these waves of air and water be turned into equivalent waves of sound, that he might feel them through the only channel that reached his emotions!"³⁶⁸ Despite his renown as a painter, Little Billee recognizes the capacity of "waves of sound" to exert a particular influence over human emotions. His desire for a synesthetic experience privileges sound as a fluid substance that moves through the channels of his body to awaken latent feelings in a way visual stimuli cannot. This understanding of sound aligns with the very characteristics Mesmer associates with the "universally distributed and continuous fluid" essential to animal magnetism, a comparison rendered more apparent in the context of Du Maurier's novel because of its dual concern with

³⁶⁸ Du Maurier, *Trilby*, 178.

mesmeric and sonic influence.³⁶⁹ Little Billee's frustrated exclamation also gestures towards his deep need for connection, a need that was central to discussions of how mesmerism and sound technologies might overcome the isolating nature of human corporeality.

Mesmerism's potential for facilitating the emotional connection Little Billee craves is apparent in Loewe's treatise where he explicitly links the disabling of the external senses in the trance state with a new form of communication between bodies. He claims that “shut[ting] the avenues of the organs of sense against external influence” transforms the “whole man” into “an organ of admission for the external impressions.”³⁷⁰ Exploring the potential of this state of being he writes,

if all men were in such a condition, their respective ideas would be communicated to each other by one simultaneous feeling, even without any speech or other sign; for speech and all other signs are only assistants, to obtain our perceptions by means of the usual organs of sense. Hence a person in the above state can obtain perceptions of the ideas of another, who is not in that state; but the other cannot do so, without their being indicated by the usual signs.³⁷¹

Loewe's contrast between the “simultaneous feeling” and the “usual signs” of communication like speech identifies one of the central barriers to shared experience: the isolation inherent to corporeality. Peters explains that prior to the invention of technologies like the telegraph, communication was framed as an insurmountable physiological problem irrespective of voice. Reinforcing the constraints of embodiment he writes, “my nerve endings terminate in my own brain, not yours, no central exchange exists where I can patch my sensory input into yours, nor is there any sort of ‘wireless’ contact through which to transmit my immediate experience of the

³⁶⁹ The notion that sound is 'universal' and 'continuous' like Mesmer's fluid is also evident in the contemporary rhetoric of sound studies critics like Steven Connor, who characterises sound as “omnipresent, nondirectional, and mobile,” and Edith Lecourt, who remarks that “sound reaches us from everywhere, it surrounds us, goes through us.” Connor, “Sound and the Self,” 57; Edith Lecourt quoted in Connor, “The Modern Auditory I,” 214.

³⁷⁰ Loewe, *A Treatise on the Phenomena*, 64.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 65.

world to you.”³⁷² Loewe's description of communication between mesmerised individuals presents mesmerism as a solution to the unsharable nature of human experience. In essence, the practice creates Peters's “central exchange” where “respective ideas [can] be communicated” regardless of corporeal boundaries. However, lurking behind Loewe's theorization of mesmeric communication is the ever-present threat of exploitation. The idea that subjects can “obtain perceptions of the ideas of another, who is not in that state” while “the other cannot do so” leaves observers vulnerable to mental violation.³⁷³

Little Billee's desire that the English landscape present itself as waves of sound suggests that like the mesmeric fluid, sound could facilitate particular modes of communication and emotional connection. The language that sound studies critics like Connor use to describe the human voice further underscores the shared properties of sound and Mesmer's fluid: both substances penetrate animate bodies and expose networks of influence. Connor explains,

voice comes from the inside of a body and radiates through space which is exterior to and expands beyond that body. In moving from interior to exterior, and therefore marking out the relations of interior and exterior, a voice announces and verifies the cooperation of bodies and the environments in which they have their being.³⁷⁴

Connor's description of voice as both expanding beyond the body and “marking out the relations of interior and exterior” echoes Deleuze's claim that mesmerism exposes “the two-fold existence of the *internal* and the *external* man in a single individual”; both sound and the mesmeric fluid work to disrupt the internal/external binary central to nineteenth-century understandings of embodiment. Furthermore, the idea that “voice announces and verifies the cooperation of bodies” emphasises its capacity to expose connections between individuals, a quality Mesmer associates

³⁷² Peters, *Speaking into the Air*, 4.

³⁷³ George Eliot addresses this theme in her 1859 novella *The Lifted Veil*, which features a character who is able to telepathically access others' thoughts. He becomes obsessed with his brother's fiancé Bertha because her mind is difficult to read and discovers her manipulative and dishonest nature after he eventually marries her. Bertha, suspicious that Latimer is able to gain access to her mind, plots to kill him. *The Lifted Veil* (New York: Penguin Books, 1985).

³⁷⁴ Connor, *Dumbstruck*, 6.

with his substance. However, sound does not acquire the same capacity to communicate the “simultaneous feeling” that Loewe describes until it becomes independent like the mesmeric fluid, a change brought about by the proliferation of sound technologies.

Nineteenth-century innovations like the telephone and phonograph affected human bodies in ways comparable to mesmerism: these devices reshaped sensory function, liberated human voices from human bodies, and generated new forms of communication. Peters explains that as communication shifted from being a “physical transfer or transmission” to a “quasi-physical connection across the obstacles of time and space” questions of embodiment turned to questions of disembodiment.³⁷⁵ While Peters associates this change with the development of communication technologies, mesmerism might have inspired a similar shift if not for the widespread scepticism regarding its authenticity. Viewed in this light, Martineau's contention that “it is important to society to know whether mesmerism is true” carries a bit more weight.³⁷⁶ Regardless, under both definitions of communication voice proved elusive in terms of categorization, failing to fit into the dominant visual culture associated with nineteenth-century science. Sound shared many qualities with Mesmer's universal fluid, but it differed in its emanation from material bodies.

While mesmerism inspired only those who accepted the practice to rethink the conditions of embodiment, the introduction of devices like the phonograph required society at large to develop a new understanding of the relationship between human voices and human bodies.

Jonathan Sterne explains,

Before the invention of sound-reproduction technologies, we are told, sound withered away. It existed only as it went out of existence. Once telephones, phonographs, and radios populated the world, sound lost a little of its ephemeral character. The voice

³⁷⁵ Peters, *Speaking into the Air*, 5.

³⁷⁶ Martineau, *Miss Martineau's Letters*, 3.

became a little more unmoored from the body, and people's ears could take them into the past or across vast distances.³⁷⁷

Like mesmerism, sound reproduction technologies reshaped spatial and temporal limitations, unmooring sound from the human body and allowing individuals to move “into the past or across vast distances.” Trilby's unique position as a “singing-machine” allows her to provoke precisely this kind of movement “into the past” in her audience members, who experience happy scenes of childhood while listening to her voice. Yet devices like the phonograph also introduced mechanical bodies that reinvigorated the question of what it means to be human. The problem of embodiment was complicated not only by the changing functionality of the sensory organs, but also by the possibility of disembodiment or re-embodiment within non-human forms.

Turning to electronic telecommunications, Jeffrey Sconce explains that devices like the telephone “have compelled citizens of the media age to reconsider increasingly disassociative relationships among body, mind, space, and time.”³⁷⁸ While “presence” takes different forms in relation to different mediums, Sconce outlines a recurrent mode of conceptualization that employs language reminiscent of Mesmer's explanation of animal magnetism. He writes,

fantastic conceptions of media presence...have often evoked a series of interrelated metaphors of “flow” suggesting analogies between electricity, consciousness, and information that enables fantastic forms of electronic transmutation, substitution, and exchange. In the historical reception of each electronic telecommunications medium...popular culture has consistently imagined the convergence of three “flowing” agents conceptualized in terms of their apparent liquidity:

- (1) the electricity that powers the medium
- (2) the information that occupies the medium
- (3) the consciousness of the viewer/listener³⁷⁹

Devices like the telephone are thus situated within networks of “‘flowing’ agents” that, like Mesmer's universal fluid, facilitate communication between bodies. The fact that public

³⁷⁷ Sterne, *The Audible Past*, 1.

³⁷⁸ Jeffrey Sconce, *Haunted Media: Electronic Presence from Telegraphy to Television* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 7.

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 7-8.

imagination persistently evokes this metaphor suggests the fundamental ideas behind animal magnetism, a force that connects all animate and inanimate bodies and allows them to influence one another, remain pertinent in the “media age.” Additionally, the inclusion of “the consciousness of the viewer/listener” as one of the agents implies that electronic telecommunications devices reconfigure embodiment, allowing individuals to flow in and out of their corporeal selves. Loewe's concept of “simultaneous feeling” as a mode of communication aptly captures the fluidity of thought and emotion implicated in “media presence.” The final section of my chapter considers mesmeric and sonic influence in Du Maurier's novel to argue that *Trilby* exposes the importance of mesmerism as a metaphor for sound.

IV. Mesmeric and Sonic Influence in Du Maurier's Trilby

Employing mesmerism as a metaphor for sonic influence, George Du Maurier's *Trilby* explores the ramifications of shutting down not only the external senses, but also the consciousness of the mesmeric subject. Taffy, the Laird, and the sensitive Little Billee, a group of artists affectionately termed “The Three Englishmen,” bear witness to Trilby's transformation from a tone-deaf artists' model to an international singing diva known as “La Svengali.” Du Maurier's novel endorses the curative powers of mesmerism, demonstrating its usefulness in treating the painful neuralgia in Trilby's eyes, but primarily focuses on mesmerism as a form of entertainment. On the surface, *Trilby* confronts the possibility that mesmerists will abuse their positions to exercise control over subjects and seek personal gains. Emphasising the potential for exploitation, the Laird worries that mesmerists “get you into their power, and just make you do any blessed thing they please—lie, murder, steal—anything!”³⁸⁰ Svengali's sexual desire for Trilby, who he presents as his wife “La Svengali” throughout her performances, exacerbates this

³⁸⁰ Du Maurier, *Trilby*, 52.

danger by illustrating how male mesmerists might take advantage of female subjects. However, the novel more fundamentally speaks to the seductive power of sound at the turn of the nineteenth century. La Svengali captivates and entrances audiences with her voice, expanding the scope of mesmeric influence from a single subject to a large assemblage.

The two manifestations of Trilby, one an autonomous young woman and the other a “singing-machine” controlled by Svengali, elucidate the shifting relationship between bodies and voices consequent to inventions like the phonograph. The juxtaposition of Trilby's imperfect voice, emanating from her human body, and La Svengali's otherworldly voice, emanating from a mechanical surrogate, raises questions regarding how the evolution of sound might impact humanness. The character gains an enormous degree of power because of her superior vocal ability, but compromises the qualities that make her human. While Trilby O'Ferrall is an empathetic, autonomous individual, who inspires the love and devotion of the artistic community, La Svengali is a dispassionate, unconscious machine that manipulates the emotions and actions of the audience. Using the discounted practice of mesmerism as a metaphor for influence more broadly, Du Maurier exposes how sound can similarly reshape the human sensorium and create networks of animate and inanimate bodies.

Du Maurier's depictions of sensory experience emphasise movement between exterior and interior, underscoring the idea that sights and sounds taken into the body exert a powerful influence over the individual. Populated primarily by artists, *Trilby* calls attention to the dominance of the gaze in nineteenth-century culture and considers the differences between looking and listening. The Three Englishmen in particular, who use models for many of their paintings, spend a great deal of time walking through the city and “gazing” at the sights: “they gazed and gazed, [and] each framed unto himself, mentally, a little picture of the Thames they

had just left.”³⁸¹ The gaze of the men, who physically see Paris but mentally imagine London, posits looking as a contemplative process of turning one's sight inward rather than observing what is actually present. This division between the exterior world and the interior world of the artist's imagination is further evident in the Laird's representations of toreadors, which “ceased to please (or sell) after he had been to Seville and Madrid; so he took to painting Roman cardinals and Neapolitan pifferari from the depths of his consciousness—and was so successful that he made up his mind he would never spoil his market by going to Italy!”³⁸² The Laird more successfully depicts toreadors using a studio model and “a complete toreador's kit—a bargain which he had picked up for a mere song,” than when he works from life, implying that reproductions of the human form derived “from the depths of [the artist's] consciousness” appear more authentic to buyers.³⁸³ What becomes evident in these examples is the independent nature of looking and the ability to control what one sees. Although the Three Englishmen traverse Paris together, often walking arm in arm, the phrase “each framed unto himself” reinforces the unsharable nature of embodied experience. Each character constructs his own vision of the Thames and cannot share it with the others. The artists' imposition of a London scene on the Parisian landscape demonstrates that individuals have an enormous amount of control over what they see, a fact reinforced by the Laird's need to change from toreadors to cardinals and pifferari after his paintings stop selling. When buyers are no longer interested in looking at his representations of toreadors, he must find a new subject that they want to see.

While the artistic community employs a model a looking focused on exterior appearances, Svengali's close visual scrutiny of Trilby epitomises the medical gaze Foucault famously associates with the clinic. Many characters comment on the beautiful qualities of

³⁸¹ Ibid., 196.

³⁸² Ibid., 151.

³⁸³ Ibid., 5.

Trilby's voice, but the “well-featured but sinister” Svengali is the first to recognise its true potential and examine her body not as an aesthetic object, but as a site of vocal production.³⁸⁴ His first significant evaluation of Trilby occurs when he uses mesmerism to cure the painful neuralgia in her eyes. Happy that her pain is gone, Trilby lets out the “Milk below!” cry she typically uses to signify her arrival at the artists' flat. Svengali notes, “It is a wonderful cry, matemoiselle—*wundershön!* It comes straight through the heart; it has its roots in the stomach, and blossoms into music on the lips...It is good production—c'est un cri du coeur!”³⁸⁵ Svengali traces the production of Trilby's voice through the interior of her body, moving from her stomach to her lips, straight through the heart of the listener. Taking advantage of her “pride and pleasure,” he asks to perform a more intense examination of her mouth, a request she unquestioningly accedes to. The mesmerist exclaims,

Himmel! The roof of your mouth is like the dome of the Panthéon...The entrance to your throat is like the middle porch of St. Sulpice...and not one tooth is missing—thirty-two British teeth as white as milk and as big as knuckle-bones! and your little tongue is scooped out like the leaf of a pink peony, and the bridge of your nose is like the belly of a Stradivarius—what a sounding-board! and inside your beautiful big chest the lungs are made of leather!³⁸⁶

The comparison of Trilby's anatomy to architectural details recalls the gaze of Taffy, the Laird, and Little Billee as they walk through Paris casually gazing at various landmarks. However, Svengali's gaze differs in its intense focus on the interior of the body. While the Three Englishmen turn their sight inward to imagine the Thames, Svengali extends his gaze into Trilby to imagine the lungs contained in her “beautiful big chest.” He points out the different components of her body required for vocal production, such as the roof of her mouth, throat, teeth, tongue, nose, and lungs. Although he uses metaphors like the pink peony to flatter Trilby,

³⁸⁴ Ibid., 11.

³⁸⁵ Ibid., 50.

³⁸⁶ Ibid., 50-51.

his emphasis on resonant structures like the “dome of the Panthéon” and the “belly of a Stradivarius” reveal his predominant interest in her bodily architecture. Despite the differences in these two modes of looking, both emphasize sight as an individualized process often used to advance personal and professional desires. Looking does not function like the mesmeric fluid; instead of exposing the interconnectedness of bodies, sight reinforces the isolating nature of embodiment.

Scenes of listening within the novel alternatively underscore sound's similarity to the mesmeric fluid; sound flows within and between bodies, facilitating communication and allowing individuals to share thoughts and feelings in spite of their corporeality. La Svengali's sonic influence reveals an inherent connection between sound and human emotion, a relationship underscored by Little Billee's description of the return of his feelings as “the sudden curing of a deafness that has been lasting for years.”³⁸⁷ Throughout her performance at the Cirque des Bashibazoucks, La Svengali evokes powerful emotions from her listeners, imbuing even the simplest nursery rhyme with deep significance. Her voice, which “seemed to be pouring itself out from all around,” leaves “some five or six thousand gay French people...sniffing and mopping their eyes like so many Niobes.”³⁸⁸ The image of her voice “pouring itself out” heightens its similarity to Mesmer's substance, both by calling attention to its fluid nature and suggesting it functions independently. Commentary from the crowd reinforces the idea that the musical selection is unimportant; it is the voice itself that exerts an influence. Under Svengali's control, La Svengali's body projects “every voice a mortal woman can have...and of such a quality that people who can't tell one tune from another cry with pleasure at the mere sound of it

³⁸⁷ Ibid., 213.

³⁸⁸ Ibid., 210-211; 217.

directly they hear it.”³⁸⁹ For all of the listeners, especially Little Billee, the allure of her voice seems to stem from its ability to awaken their emotions and stimulate their senses. It invokes

all the sights and scents and sounds that are the birthright of happy children, happy savages in favored climes—things within the remembrance and reach of most of us! All this, the memory and feel of it, are in Trilby's voice...and those who hear feel it all, and remember it with her. It is irresistible; it forces itself on you; no words, no pictures, could ever do the like!³⁹⁰

Through their collective sensory experience, the spellbound listeners achieve the kind of communication that Peters discounts as impossible based on the limitations of embodiment. La Svengali's voice not only reaches the listeners emotionally, it places them in a kind of mesmeric trance that makes them employ a different kind of sensing. Additionally, it actualises Loewe's vision of “all men” being in the same condition such that they communicate through “simultaneous feeling.” Sitting in the theatre listening to La Svengali, the audience mutually perceives “sights and scents and sounds” beyond the temporal and spatial situation they physically inhabit.

However, La Svengali also inspires a kind of “savagery” or “madness” in the audience, suggesting that like mesmerism, sonic influence could pose a threat to vulnerable listeners. Before attending her performance, the Three Englishmen hear accounts of how her voice “gives one cold all down the back! it drives you mad! it makes you weep hot tears by the spoonful!”³⁹¹ Another listener, the young Lord Witlow states, “she sang at Siloszech's, and all the fellows went mad and gave her their watches and diamond studs and gold scarf-pins. By gad! I never heard or saw anything like it. I don't know much about music myself...but I was mad as the rest.”³⁹² Witlow's lack of control despite his ignorance about music indicates that La Svengali's voice

³⁸⁹ Ibid., 170.

³⁹⁰ Ibid., 218.

³⁹¹ Ibid., 169.

³⁹² Ibid., 171.

impacts listeners regardless of their musical sensibilities, affecting all bodies indiscriminately. Furthermore, his association of madness with the valuable “watches and diamond studs and gold scarf-pins” the audience gives La Svengali returns to the idea of the exploitative mesmerist, demonstrating how Svengali uses Trilby to attain fame and fortune. Transforming his subject into “an unconscious Trilby of marble, who could produce wonderful sounds—just the sounds he wanted, and nothing else,” Svengali exerts a dehumanising effect on both the young woman and her captive audience.³⁹³

Why does Svengali use mesmerism to transform Trilby into a device comparable to a phonograph, shutting down her external sensory organs but also inhibiting the internal sense associated with mesmeric subjects? Drawing on William Carpenter's *The Doctrine of Human Automatism* and *Principles of Human Physiology*, Ashley Miller provides a conceptualization of voice that may account for Svengali's need to render Trilby unconscious. “Voice,” Miller argues, “is inherently *reproductive* rather than *productive*: the ear provides the original sound that the voice then reproduces. If the human voice is an instrument, it is an instrument that is played by the ear.”³⁹⁴ Miller's formulation of the human voice suggests that in order to “play” Trilby's voice, Svengali needs to control her ear, replacing her tone-deaf organ with his own. Her claim raises an important question: what does it mean for voice to be “inherently *reproductive*” in the face of sound *reproduction* technologies? For Trilby, it means that without the intervention of Svengali, she could never produce the otherworldly voice of La Svengali. When her body is mechanized, incapable of sensing or voicing anything Svengali does not permit her to, Trilby is no longer subject to the complex relation between voice and ear that Miller describes. However, as a result of his intervention she becomes a repository for Svengali's voice, which he etches into

³⁹³ Ibid., 299.

³⁹⁴ Miller, “Speech Paralysis,” 477.

her mind using his mesmeric influence. Trilby's performance of Chopin's impromptu in A flat on her death bed, as well as her final repetition of the mesmerist's phrase, "Svengali...Svengali...Svengali..." demonstrate that she retains her status as a phonograph after Svengali's death.³⁹⁵

Trilby's preservation of Svengali's voice not only reinforces her role as a sound technology, but also calls attention to the newfound capacity of the human voice to continue speaking after death. As Connor explains, technologies like the gramophone created an atmosphere in which the voices of the dead could continue to speak. The classic image of Nipper the dog listening to his master's voice emanate from the horn of the gramophone suggests the voices of the dead exert power over the living even when they emerge from mechanical bodies. Connor points out that early versions of the image appear to situate the gramophone on top of a coffin, arguing, "If the dog's attentive listening is taking place on a coffin, then this involves the unpleasant suggestion of some kind of physical connection between the machine and the deceased anatomy of the master."³⁹⁶ Like the gramophone, Trilby becomes a surrogate body that preserves the voice of Svengali and allows it to be played back to the listener. In his 1878 article, "The Phonograph and Its Future" Edison states that the device "permits of an indefinite multiplication of a record, and its preservation for all time."³⁹⁷ He explicitly claims that the eternal preservation of sound is possible "without regard to the existence or non-existence of the original source."³⁹⁸ Trilby adheres to Edison's description, faithfully preserving the voice crafted by Svengali despite his death.

³⁹⁵ Du Maurier, *Trilby*, 284.

³⁹⁶ Connor, *Dumbstruck*, 386.

³⁹⁷ Edison, "The Phonograph and Its Future," 529.

³⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 530.

V. Conclusion

Through their engagements with mesmerism, Edgar Allan Poe and George Du Maurier consider what it means for humans to be subject to influences that change the nature of their embodiment. Published in the 1840s when mesmerism's status as a "science" was still under debate, Poe's "Mesmeric Revelation" and "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar" respond to contemporary fears regarding the capacity to strip individuals' autonomy and restructure the sensorium. While the former short story serves as a treatise that establishes the laws of mesmerism, the latter offers a case study that gestures towards the relationship between mesmerism and communication technologies. The titular character's death in "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar" suggests the problem of embodiment persists beyond the grave in more ways than one. Framed as a scientific experiment and largely perceived to be legitimate, Poe's story contributes to ongoing debates regarding the medical potential of mesmerism. Figures like the respected and successful John Elliotson genuinely believed that mesmerism provided access to knowledge about the human body that was otherwise inaccessible; it opened up new methods of diagnosing and treating disease. Poe's narrator attempts to expand the scope of mesmerism even further, placing Valdemar in a mesmeric trance at the moment of his demise to determine if and for how long the practice can forestall death. In proposing this kind of experiment, Poe introduces a new source of anxiety regarding the power of mesmerists over their subjects. By assuming control over Valdemar's body, the mesmerist not only diminishes the subject's agency, he gains the god-like ability to maintain Valdemar's presence in this world or release him into the next. The only authority the mesmeric subject retains derives from his voice, which continues to function even after his lungs, heart, and other organs cease working. Although his voice seems to have moved to another realm, transformed into something never before heard by human ears,

Valdemar remains tethered to his physical form, unable to depart this world until the narrator removes him from the trance state. The dissolution of his body at the conclusion of the story, which becomes a “nearly liquid mass of loathsome—of detestable putrescence,” implies that the mesmeric agent unnaturally holds Valdemar’s material form together after his death. Though mesmerism does not effectively stave off death and decomposition, it does transform the body into a communication technology, thereby opening up channels of communication between this world and the next. The clattering of Valdemar’s tongue recalls the clattering of the telegraph key, and the uncanny sense that he is speaking from afar recalls the anxiety individuals experienced later in the nineteenth century when using the telephone in its nascent stages. In redefining Valdemar’s body as a mediator, Poe transfers the fear surrounding mesmerism to new sound technologies that similarly change the functionality of the human body. Yet his short story ultimately turns back to the scientific community without fully exploring the relationship between mesmerized and mechanized bodies.

The shifting soundscape of the late-nineteenth century, which saw the proliferation of sound technologies like the phonograph, required individuals to confront the interconnectedness of animate and inanimate bodies that emerges only tangentially in Poe’s work. The human voice was “a little more unmoored from the body,” to borrow Sterne’s words, reinvigorating discussions of embodiment as a marker of humanness. The possibility that voices could be disembodied, or re-embodied in mechanical forms, disrupted spatial and temporal restrictions fundamental to understandings of life and death. Du Maurier’s *Trilby* demonstrates that mesmerism functions as an apt metaphor for sonic influence, offering a framework for thinking about changes in sensory experience. By blurring the distinction between mesmeric subject and mechanized human, the novel elucidates key differences between the two. Unlike the mesmeric

subjects in Poe's short stories, Trilby becomes an unconscious instrument that Svengali uses to exert influence over the audience. While her manipulation of the listeners suggests the mechanized human possesses unprecedented power, surpassing that of mesmerism, the conditions of Trilby's altered state also suggest that in order to gain such abilities she must be stripped of basic human qualities. Her voice provokes a largely positive emotional response in the audience members and enables shared experience. Yet, La Svengali is excluded from the network of bodies created by her performance. Trilby has no recollection of these moments of connection when she emerges from the trance state, indicating her exclusion from the shared experiences her voice facilitates. In an atmosphere where mesmerism was mainly a form of entertainment rather than a medical tool, Du Maurier demonstrates its continued importance as a cultural phenomenon.

Du Maurier's retrospective approach to what was once a prevalent science represents a different form of critical engagement with scientific knowledge than Poe, Stevenson and Wells use in their works. Whereas the latter raise questions about contemporary scientific practices by depicting what Wasson calls "medicine gone wrong," Du Maurier mobilizes the outmoded framework of mesmerism to expose sound as a potentially dangerous agent within society at large. *Trilby* thus reveals how the "scientific spirit" of the mid-nineteenth century that sparked readers' interest in practices like stethoscopic listening, physiognomy, vivisection, and mesmerism fostered pervasive modes of thinking that could be applied to issues that were not inherently scientific. Collectively, the Gothic texts I examine in this project demonstrate a literary attention to bodies as soundscapes that exposes a significant connection between nineteenth-century debates surrounding scientific knowledge and twentieth-century debates surrounding sound.

Bibliography

- Aarsleff, Hans. *From Locke to Saussure: Essays on the Study of Language and Intellectual History*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982.
- Agamben, Giorgio. *The Open: Man and Animal*. Translated by Kevin Attell. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004.
- Aldiss, Brian W. *Billion Year Spree: The True History of Science Fiction*. New York: Schocken Books, 1976.
- Aristotle. *De Anima (On the Soul)*. Translated by Hugh Lawson-Tancred. New York: Penguin Books, 1986.
- Barthes, Roland. "Listening." In *The Responsibility of Forms: Critical Essays on Music, Art, and Representation*, 245-260. New York: Hill and Wang, 1985.
- . "Textual Analysis of a Tale by Edgar Allan Poe." *Poe Studies* 10, no. 1 (June 1977): 1-12.
- Bell, Charles. *The Anatomy and Philosophy of Expression as Connected with the Fine Arts*. 3rd ed. London: John Murray, 1844.
- Bentham, Jeremy. *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879.
- Berland, K.J.H. "Reading Character in the Face: Lavater, Socrates, and Physiognomy." *Word and Image* 9, no. 3 (1993): 252-269.
- Bernard, Claude. *An Introduction to the Study of Experimental Medicine*. USA: Henry Schuman, Inc., 1949.
- Bernasconi, Robert and Tommy L. Lott eds. *The Idea of Race*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2000.
- Bernhard Jackson, Emily A. "Twins, Twinship, and Robert Louis Stevenson's Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde." *Victorian Review* 39, no. 1 (Spring 2013): 70-86.
- Blair, Kirstie. *Victorian Poetry and the Culture of the Heart*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Brantlinger, Patrick. "The Gothic Origins of Science Fiction." *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 14, no. 1 (Autumn 1980): 30-43.
- Brown, Richard. *An Essay on the Truth of Physiognomy: and its Application to Medicine*. Philadelphia: Thomas T. Stiles, 1807.
- Bynum, Paige Matthey. "'Observe How Healthily—How Calmly I Can Tell You the Whole Story': Moral Insanity and Edgar Allan Poe's 'The Tell-Tale Heart.'" In *Literature and Science as Modes of Expression*, edited by Frederick Amrine, 141-152. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1989.
- Cantalupo, Barbara. "Poe's Visual Tricks." *Poe Studies* 38, nos. 1-2 (2005): 53-63.
- Cleman, John. "Irresistible Impulses: Edgar Allan Poe and the Insanity Defense." *American Literature* 63, no. 4 (December 1991): 623-640.
- Cobbe, Frances Power. "Light in Dark Places." In *Animal Welfare & Anti-Vivisection 1870-1910: Nineteenth-Century Woman's Mission*, edited by Susan Hamilton, vol. 1. New York: Routledge, 2004.
- . "Vivisection and Its Two-Faced Advocates (1882)." In *Literature and Science in the Nineteenth Century: An Anthology*, edited by Laura Otis, 215-220. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Cohen, William A. *Embodied: Victorian Literature and the Senses*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009.

- Collier, William. "The Comparative Insensibility of Animals to Pain." *The Nineteenth Century: A Monthly Review* 26, no. 152 (October 1889): 622-627.
- Collins, Wilkie. "From *Heart and Science: A Story of the Present Time*," In *Literature and Science in the Nineteenth Century: An Anthology*, edited by Laura Otis, 220-229. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Connor, Steven. *Dumbstruck: A Cultural History of Ventriloquism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- . "The Modern Auditory I." In *Rewriting the Self: Histories from the Renaissance to the Present*, edited by Roy Porter, 203-223. New York: Routledge, 1997.
- . "Sound and the Self." In *Hearing History: A Reader*, edited by Mark M. Smith, 54-66. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2004.
- Danahy, Martin. "Dr. Jekyll's Two Bodies." *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 35, no. 1 (2013): 23-40.
- Danta, Chris. "The Metaphysical Cut: Darwin and Stevenson on Vivisection." *Victorian Review* 36, no. 2 (Fall 2010): 51-65.
- Darwin, Charles. *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex*. New York: Penguin Books, 2004.
- Darwin, Charles. *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*. Edited by Joe Cain and Sharon Messenger. New York: Penguin Books, 2009.
- Deleuze, J.P.F. *Practical Instruction in Animal Magnetism*. Translated by Thomas C. Hartshorn. New York: Fowler & Wells Co. Publishers, 1886.
- Derrida, Jacques. *The Animal That Therefore I Am*. Edited by Marie-Louise Mallet and translated by David Wills. New York: Fordham University Press, 2008.
- Dolar, Mladen. "The Linguistics of the Voice." In *Sound Studies Reader*, edited by Jonathan Sterne, 539-554. New York: Routledge, 2012.
- "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde: A London Doctor's Strange Patient—Two Girls in One." *New York Times*, March 21, 1897.
- "Dual Action of the Mind: The Theory that the Two Hemispheres of the Brain Can Act Individually Revived." *The Washington Post*, June 23, 1895.
- Du Maurier, George. *Trilby*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Edison, Thomas A. "The Phonograph and Its Future." *The North American Review* 126, no. 262 (1878): 527-536.
- Egan, Ken Jr. "Edgar Allan Poe and the Horror of Technology." *ESQ* 48 (2002): 187-208.
- Eliot, T.S. "From Poe to Valéry." *The Hudson Review* 2, no. 3 (Autumn 1949): 327-342.
- Elliotson, John. *The Principles and Practice of Medicine*. Philadelphia: Carey and Hart, 1844.
- Enns, Anthony. "Mesmerism and the Electric Age: From Poe to Edison." In *Victorian Literary Mesmerism*, edited by Martin Willis and Catherine Wynne, 61-82. New York: Rodopi, 2006.
- Evans, E.P. "Speech as a Barrier Between Man and Beast." *Atlantic Monthly* 68 (1891): 299-312.
- Fahnestock, Jeanne. "The Heroine of Irregular Features: Physiognomy and Conventions of Heroine Descriptions." *Victorian Studies* 24.3 (Spring 1981): 325-350.
- Ferguson, Christine. "Footnotes on *Trilby*: The Human Foot as Evolutionary Icon in Late Victorian Culture." *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 28, no. 2 (June 2006): 127-144.
- . *Language, Science and Popular Fiction in the Victorian Fin-de-Siècle: The Brutal Tongue*. Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2006.

- Fernandez, Jean. "'Master's Made Away With...': Servant Voices and Narrational Politics in *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*." *LIT: literature, interpretation, theory* 15, no. 4 (2004): 363-387.
- Ferrús Vicente, Joan. "Scientific Discourse in the Works of Edgar Allan Poe." *452F. Electronic Journal of Theory of Literature and Comparative Literature* 1 (2009): 28-41.
- Foucault, Michel. *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*. Translated by A.M. Sheridan Smith. New York: Vintage Books, 1994.
- Frank, Adam. "Valdemar's Tongue, Poe's Telegraphy," *ELH* 72.3 (Fall 2005): 635-662.
- Furst, Lilian R. *Between Doctors and Patients: The Changing Balance of Power*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1998.
- Garner, R.L. "The Simian Tongue." In *The Origin of Language*, edited by Roy Harris, 314-330. Bristol, England: Thoemmes Press, 1996.
- Garrett, Peter K. "Cries and Voices: Reading *Jekyll and Hyde*." In *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde After One Hundred Years*, edited by William Veeder and Gordon Hirsch, 59-72. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988.
- Gates, Barbara. "Literature and Science." *Victorian Literature and Culture* (1998): 485-488.
- Graham, John. "Lavater's Physiognomy in England." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 22, no. 4 (1961): 561-572.
- Graham, Kevin. "Poe's THE BELLS." *The Explicator*. 62, no. 1 (2003): 9-11.
- Guest, Kristen. "Jekyll and Hyde, Inc.: Limited Liability, Companification, and Gothic Subjectivity." *Victorian Literature and Culture* 44 (2016): 315-329.
- Hamilton, Susan. "Reading and the Popular Critique of Science in the Victorian Anti-Vivisection Press: Frances Power Cobbe's Writing for the Victoria Street Society." *Victorian Review* 36.2 (2010): 66-79.
- Hardy, Sarah Boykin. "The Art of Diagnosis." *Narrative*. 6, no. 2 (May 1998): 157-173.
- Harris, Mason. "Vivisection, the Culture of Science, and Intellectual Uncertainty in *The Island of Doctor Moreau*." *Gothic Studies* 4, no. 2 (November 2002): 99-115.
- Harrison, Debbie. "Doctors, Drugs, and Addiction: Professional Integrity in Peril at the Fin de Siècle." *Gothic Studies* 11, no. 2 (2009): 52-62.
- Hartley, Lucy. *Physiognomy and the Meaning of Expression in Nineteenth-Century Culture*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Hayes, Kevin J., ed. *Edgar Allan Poe in Context*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013.
- . "Visual Culture and the Word in Edgar Allan Poe's 'The Man of the Crowd.'" *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 56, no. 4 (March 2002): 445-465.
- Haynes, Roslynn D. *From Faust to Strangelove: Representations of the Scientist in Western Literature*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994.
- . *H.G. Wells: Discoverer of the Future: The Influence of Science on His Thought*. New York: New York University Press, 1980.
- . "Wells's Debt to Huxley and the Myth of Dr. Moreau." *Cahiers Victoriens et Edouardiens: Revue du Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches Victoriennes et Edouardiennes de l'Université Paul Valéry, Montpellier* 13 (April 1981): 31-41.
- Hogle, Jerrold E. "Introduction: Gothic Studies Past, Present and Future." *Gothic Studies* 1, no. 1 (1999): 1-9.
- Holmes, Oliver Wendell. "The Stethoscope Song, A Professional Ballad." In *On Doctoring: Stories, Poems, Essays*, edited by Richard Reynolds and John Stone, 25-26. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001.

- Hurley, Kelly. *The Gothic Body: Sexuality, materialism, and degeneration at the fin de siècle*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Kachur, Robert M. "Buried in the Bedroom: Bearing Witness to Incest in Poe's 'The Tell-Tale Heart.'" *Mosaic* 41, no. 1 (March 2008): 43-59.
- Kaplan, Fred. "'The Mesmeric Mania': The Early Victorians and Animal Magnetism." *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 35, no. 4 (1974), 691-702.
- Katz, Peter. "Victorian Literature and Science: Introduction." *Critical Survey* 27, no. 2 (2015): 1-3.
- Kearns, Christopher. "Poe's Peering Eyes of Science." *The Edgar Allan Poe Review* 3, no. 2 (Fall 2002): 73-77.
- Kelman, Ari Y. "Rethinking the Soundscape: A Critical Genealogy of a Key Term in Sound Studies." *The Senses and Society* 5, no. 2 (July 2010): 212-234.
- Kirkland, James. "'The Tell-Tale Heart' as Evil Eye Event." *Southern Folklore* 56, no. 2 (1999): 135-147.
- Laennec, René T.H. *A Treatise on the Diseases of the Chest and on Mediate Auscultation*. Translated by John Forbes, M.D. 3rd ed. London: Thomas & George Underwood, 1829.
- Lavater, Johann Caspar. *Essays on Physiognomy*. Translated by Thomas Holcroft, 17th ed. New York: R. Worthington, 1860.
- Lederer, Susan E. "The Controversy over Animal Experimentation in America, 1880-1914." In *Vivisection in Historical Perspective*, edited by Nicolaas A. Rupke. New York: Croom Helm, 1987, 236-258.
- Lind, Sidney E. "Poe and Mesmerism." *PMLA* 62, no. 4 (Dec. 1947): 1077-1094.
- Linton, Eliza Lynn. "Passing Faces." *Household Words* Vol. XI (1855): 261-264.
- Loewe, M. *A Treatise on the Phenomena of Animal Magnetism; in Which The Same Are Systematically Explained According to the Laws of Nature*. London: G. Schulze, 1822.
- Lynch, Deirdre. *The Economy of Character: Novels, Market Culture, and the Business of Inner Meaning*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.
- Marcus, Sharon. *Apartment Stories: City and Home in Nineteenth-Century Paris and London*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.
- Marshall, Bridget M. "The Face of Evil: Phrenology, Physiognomy, and the Gothic Villain." *Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies* 6, no. 2 (Fall 2000): 161-172.
- Martineau, Harriet. *Miss Martineau's Letters on Mesmerism*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1845.
- Massachusetts Medical Society. *Library of Practical Medicine*. Vol. 7. Boston: Perkins & Marvin, 1836.
- McLean, Steven. "Animals, Language and Degeneration in *The Island of Doctor Moreau*." In *H.G. Wells: Interdisciplinary Essays*, edited by Steven McLean, 25-33. Newcastle, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008.
- Mesmer, Franz Anton. *Mesmerism: Being a Translation of Mesmer's Historic Mémoire sur la découverte du Magnétisme Animal to appear in English*. London: MacDonald & Co., 1948.
- Mighall, Robert. "Diagnosing Jekyll: The Scientific Context to Dr Jekyll's Experiment and Mr Hyde's Embodiment." In *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde and Other Tales of Terror*, 143-161. London: Penguin, 2002.
- Miller, Ashley. "Speech Paralysis: Ingestion, Suffocation, and the Torture of Listening." *Nineteenth-Century Contexts: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 36.5 (2014), 473-487.

- Müller, Friedrich Max. "The Theoretical Stage, and the Origin of Language." *The Origin of Language*, edited by Roy Harris, 7-41. Bristol, England: Thoemmes Press, 1996.
- Murison, Justine S. *The Politics of Anxiety in Nineteenth-Century American Literature*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- Nicolson, Malcolm. "Having the Doctor's Ear in Nineteenth-Century Edinburgh." In *Hearing History: A Reader*, edited by Mark M. Smith, 151-168. Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2004.
- Novak, David and Matt Sakakeeny, eds. *Keywords in Sound*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2015.
- Otis, Laura. "Howled Out of the Country: Wilkie Collins and H.G. Wells Retry David Ferrier." In *Neurology and Literature, 1860-1920*, edited by Anne Stiles, 27-51. New York: Palgrave, 2007.
- Pahl, Dennis. "Sounding the Sublime: Poe, Burke, and the (Non)Sense of Language." *Poe Studies* 42, no. 1 (2009): 41-60.
- Pearl, Sharrona. *About Faces: Physiognomy in Nineteenth-Century Britain*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010.
- Person, Leland S. "Queer Poe: The Tell-Tale Heart of His Fiction." *Poe Studies* 41 (2008): 7-30.
- Peters, John Durham. *Speaking into the Air: A History of the Idea of Communication*. Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1999.
- Picker, John. "English Beat: The Stethoscopic Era's Sonic Traces." In *Sounds of Modern History: Auditory Cultures in 19th- and 20th-Century Europe*, edited by Daniel Morat, 25-45. New York: Berghahn Books, 2014.
- . *Victorian Soundscapes*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Pitcher, Edward W. "The Physiognomical Meaning of Poe's 'The Tell-Tale Heart.'" *Studies in Short Fiction* 16 (1979): 231-233.
- Poe, Edgar Allan. "The Colloquy of Monos and Una." In *The Selected Writings of Edgar Allan Poe*, edited by G.R. Thompson, 279-286. Norton Critical Editions. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004.
- . "The Conversation of Eiros and Charmion." In *The Complete Tales and Poems of Edgar Allan Poe*, 452-456. New York: Vintage Books, 1975.
- . "A Dissertation on the Importance of Physical Signs in the Various Diseases of the Abdomen and Thorax. By Robert W. Haxall, M.D. of Richmond, Va. Boston: Perkins and Marvin." *Southern Literary Messenger* (October 1836): 164-166.
- . "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar." In *The Complete Tales and Poems of Edgar Allan Poe*, 96-103. New York: Vintage Books, 1975.
- . "The Fall of the House of Usher." In *The Selected Writings of Edgar Allan Poe*, edited by G.R. Thompson, 199-216. Norton Critical Editions. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004.
- . "Mesmeric Revelation." In *The Complete Tales and Poems of Edgar Allan Poe*, 88-95. New York: Vintage Books, 1975.
- . "Shadow—a Parable." In *The Selected Writings of Edgar Allan Poe*, edited by G.R. Thompson, 134-137. Norton Critical Editions. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004.
- . "Sonnet—To Science." In *The Selected Writings of Edgar Allan Poe*, edited by G.R. Thompson, 21-22. Norton Critical Editions. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004.
- . "The Tell-Tale Heart." In *The Selected Writings of Edgar Allan Poe*, edited by G.R.

- Thompson, 316-321. Norton Critical Editions. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004.
- Porter, Roy. *The Greatest Benefit to Mankind: A Medical History of Humanity*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997.
- Redfield, James W. *Outlines of a New System of Physiognomy: Illustrated by Numerous Engravings Indicating the Location of the Signs of Different Mental Faculties*. New York: J.S. Redfield, 1849.
- Reid, Julia. *Robert Louis Stevenson, Science, and the Fin de Siècle*. New York: Palgrave MacMillian, 2006.
- Reiser, Stanley Joel. "The Medical Influence of the Stethoscope." *Scientific American* (1979): 148-157.
- . "Revealing the Body's Whispers: How the Stethoscope Transformed Medicine." *Technological Medicine: The Changing World of Doctors and Patients*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Rice, Tom. "'The Hallmark of a Doctor': The Stethoscope and the Making of Medical Identity." *Journal of Material Culture* 15, no. 3 (September 2010): 287-301.
- . *Hearing and the Hospital: Sound, Listening, Knowledge and Experience*. Canon Pyon, Sean Kingston Publishing, 2013.
- Richards, Stewart. "Vicarious Suffering, Necessary Pain: Physiological Method in Late Nineteenth-century Britain." In *Vivisection in Historical Perspective*, edited Nicolaas A. Rupke, 125-148. New York: Croom Helm, 1987.
- Rupke, Nicolaas. "Pro-vivisection in England in the Early 1880s: Arguments and Motives." In *Vivisection in Historical Perspective*, edited by Nicolaas A. Rupke, 188-208. New York: Croom Helm, 1987.
- Saltz, Laura. "'Eyes which Behold': Poe's 'Domain of Arnheim' and the Science of Vision." *The Edgar Allan Poe Review* 7, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 4-30.
- Scarry, Elaine. *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.
- Schafer, R. Murray. *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World*. Rochester, VT: Destiny Books, 1994.
- . "Soundscapes and Earwitnesses." In *Hearing History: A Reader*, edited by Mark M. Smith, 3-9. Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2004.
- Sconce, Jeffrey. *Haunted Media: Electronic Presence from Telegraphy to Television*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2000.
- Shear, Walter. "Poe's Fiction: The Hypnotic Magic of the Senses." *The Midwest Quarterly* 47, no. 3 (Spring 2006): 276-289.
- Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein*, edited by J. Paul Hunter. Second Norton Critical Edition. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2012.
- Shookman, Ellis. "Pseudo-Science, Social Fad, Literary Wonder: Johann Caspar Lavater and the Art of Physiognomy." In *The Faces of Physiognomy: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Johann Caspara Lavater*, edited by Ellis Shookman, 1-24. Columbia, South Carolina: Camden House, 1993.
- Shortland, Michael. "The Power of a Thousand Eyes: Johann Caspar Lavater's Science of Physiognomical Perception." *Criticism* 28, no. 4 (Fall 1986): 379-408.
- Showalter, Elaine. "Dr. Jekyll's Cloest." In *The Haunted Mind: The Supernatural in Victorian*

- Literature*, edited by Elton E. Smith and Robert Haas, 67-85. Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 1999.
- Snyder, E.E. "Moreau and the Monstrous: Evolution, Religion, and the Beast on the Island." *Preternature: Critical and Historical Studies on the Preternatural* 2, no. 2 (2013): 213-239.
- Sterne, Jonathan. *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003.
- . "Mediate Auscultation, the Stethoscope, and the 'Autopsy of the Living': Medicine's Acoustic Culture." *Journal of Medical Humanities* 22, no. 2 (2001): 115-136.
- Stevenson, Robert Louis. *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. Edited by Katherine Linehan. Norton Critical Editions. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2003.
- . "Truth of Intercourse." In "*Virginibus Puerisque*" and *Other Papers*, 58-74. New York: Cosmopolitan Magazine, 191-?.
- Stiles, Anne. "Literature in 'Mind': H.G. Wells and the Evolution of the Mad Scientist." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 70, no. 2 (April 2009): 317-339.
- . *Popular Fiction and Brain Science in the Late Nineteenth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.
- Studniarz, Slawomir. "Sonority and Semantics in 'Annabel Lee.'" *The Edgar Allan Poe Review* 16, no. 1 (Spring 2015), 107-125.
- Talairach-Vielmas, Laurence. "'I Have Bottled Babes Unborn': The Gothic, Medical Collections and Victorian Popular Culture." *Gothic Studies* 17, no. 1 (May 2015): 28-42.
- Taylor, Jonathan. "His 'Last Jest': On Edgar Allan Poe, 'Hop-Frog,' and Laughter." *Poe Studies* 48 (2015): 58-82.
- Thomas, Ronald. "The Strange Voices in the Strange Case: Dr. Jekyll, Mr. Hyde, and the Voices of Modern Fiction." In *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde After One Hundred Years*, edited by William Veeder and Gordon Hirsch, 73-93. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988.
- Townshend, Chauncy Hare. *Facts in Mesmerism, with Reasons for a Dispassionate Inquiry into It*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1841.
- Tresch, John. "Estrangement of Vision: Edgar Allan Poe's Optics." In *Observing Nature—Representing Experience: The Osmotic Dynamics of Romanticism 1800-1850*, edited by Erna Fiorentini, 155-186. Berlin: Reimer, 2007.
- Tytler, Graeme. "Lavater and Physiognomy in English Fiction 1790-1832." *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 7, no. 3 (1995): 293-310.
- . *Physiognomy in the European Novel: Faces and Fortunes*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982.
- Vorachek, Laura. "Mesmerists and Other Meddlers: Social Darwinism, Degeneration, and Eugenics in *Trilby*." *Victorian Literature and Culture* 37 (2009): 197-215.
- Vrettos, Athena. *Somatic Fictions: Imagining Illness in Victorian Culture*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995.
- Wagner, Corinna. "The Dream of a Transparent Body: Identity, Science and the Gothic Novel." *Gothic Studies* 14, no. 1 (May 2012): 74-91.
- Walker, Alexander. *Physiognomy Founded on Physiology, and Applied to Various Countries, Professions, and Individuals*. London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1834.
- Washizu, Hiroko. "The Optics of the Green Spectacles." *The Edgar Allan Poe Review* 12, no. 2 (Fall 2011): 48-57.
- Wasson, Sara. "Useful Darkness: Intersections between Medical Humanities and Gothic

- Studies.” *Gothic Studies* 17, no. 1 (May 2015): 1-12.
- Wells, H.G. *H.G. Wells: Early Writings in Science and Science Fiction*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975.
- . *The Island of Doctor Moreau*. New York: Penguin Books, 2005.
- Werner, James V. “The Detective Gaze: Edgar A. Poe, the Flaneur, and the Physiognomy of Crime.” *American Transcendental Quarterly* 15, no. 1 (March 2001): 5-21.
- Wilde, Oscar. “The Decay of Lying: An Observation.” In *The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde, 1071-1092*. London: Harper Collins Publishers, 2003.
- . “The Picture of Dorian Gray.” In *The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde, 17-159*. London: HarperCollins Publishers, 2003.
- Wilks, Samuel. “Evolution of the Stethoscope.” *The Popular Science Monthly (1872-1895)* (1883): 488-492.
- Winter, Alison. *Mesmerized: Powers of Mind in Victorian Britain*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998.
- Witherington, Paul. “The Accomplice in ‘The Tell-Tale Heart.’” *Studies in Short Fiction* 22, no. 4 (1985): 471-475.
- Zimmerman, Brett. “‘Moral Insanity’ or Paranoid Schizophrenia: Poe’s ‘The Tell-Tale Heart.’” *Mosaic* 25, no. 2 (Spring 1992): 39-49.