THE CHILDREN OF NIGHT

VILLAINY AND MORAL INSANITY IN VICTORIAN FICTION

JOSEPH C. GARVER

PH.D.
UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH
1975
PAGE ORDER INACCURATE IN ORIGINAL
SUMMARY

This thesis examines the ideological and psychological background of villainy and madness in Victorian fiction, in contradistinction to the sociological background, which has received attention in other studies. In the first place, this obtrusive theme of the "night side" of human nature is enveloped, in both popular and classic fiction of the period, by a "fascination of repulsion", suggesting the conflict of antithetical elements of fascination and moralism. Such a self-divisive conflict is further suggested in the fantasies of sado-masochism and the rhetorical orgies of reprobation, which alternate in association with the theme of villainy. Moralism took on such a note of hysterical insistence, as, in the era of positivism and, later, Darwinism, the basis of traditional morality itself came into question. In a context of biological rather than theological anthropology, even the diabolical might be translated into the pathological, and "moral insanity" supersede villainy. The nineteenth-century antinomy of Free Will and Determinism was never more obtrusive than in the criminological context; and it was the dubious victory of positivism, as well as the breakdown of aesthetic detachment implicit in hysterical moralism, which seems to have precluded tragic depth in Victorian fictions of evil.

Underlying the literary theme of villainy, with its elements of exaggeration, fantasy, and ambivalence, then, was the ideological Angst of the epoch. The incubus of determinism, with its projection of man as a puppet of antecedent conditions, a virtual automaton, was offset only by daemonic transcendentalism; and both versions of demoniacal human nature were implicit in that favourite and typical
motif, mesmerism. The ominous duality of mesmerism, which simultaneously evoked the zombie and the super-volitional villain, was complemented by another avatar of the Zeitgeist, the Doppelgänger, implying the location of ominous duality within the self. In this internalisation of the demoniacal, pathology and moral allegory were, again simultaneously, implicit; and this fear of the self, in effect a pathology of introspection, was the most disturbing paradox of all in the century of "progress".

Another organising theme of fictional villainy, with ideological overtones, was the inheritance of evil. The mystery of heredity by which descendants were doomed to commit again their ascendants' sins was another paradox of responsibility, if not metempsychosis; another conflict of "mortal freewill" and "mortal fate"; another interfusion of Transcendence and Materialism. The "family curse" romance, which became one of the most typical plots in popular fiction, was ultimately adapted to the biological theory of degeneracy, which, in turn, correlated with Lombrosian criminology as well as with Decadent narcissism. However, the atavism of the family curse, in which the heir, in effect, reincarnated his lineal ancestor, was superseded by an infinitely more sinister form of atavism: reversion to the ancestry of the species. The final triumph of positivism was the recognition of man's animalhood and evolutionary psychogenesis; yet, this very triumph of progressivism was haunted by the nightmare of reversion; that climax of evolution the Übermensch, like Mr. Kurtz, by The Mark of the Beast.

Even in this Darwinian pathology the theme was introversion — in
Nietzschean terms, the psychic imprisonment of the bestial self — and inner duality — in the conflict of that bestial self and the higher self — and this duplex theme summarises villainy and moral insanity in Victorian fiction.
# CONTENTS

Title page .................................................. i  
Summary ..................................................... ii  
Contents ..................................................... v  
Declaration ................................................... vi  
Acknowledgements ............................................. vii  
PREFACE ..................................................... 1  
Notes ......................................................... 9  
CHAPTER I. THE FASCINATION OF REPULSION, AND THE PLEASURE OF MALEVOLENCE .................................................. 10  
Notes ......................................................... 67  
CHAPTER II. THE METAPHYSICS OF SCOUNDRELISM .................. 75  
Notes ......................................................... 142  
CHAPTER III. THE WHOLE DAEMONIC NATURE OF MAN .................. 151  
Notes ......................................................... 198  
CHAPTER IV. THE SINS OF THE FATHERS .................. 204  
Notes ......................................................... 267  
CHAPTER V. THE MARK OF THE BEAST .................. 272  
Notes ......................................................... 330  
CONCLUSION .................................................. 336  
Notes ......................................................... 349  
SELECTIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY .................................. 352
DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this Thesis embodies the results of my own special work, and that it has been composed by myself.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the planning and writing of this study, I would like to acknowledge the help of the English Departments of the Pennsylvania State University and the University of Edinburgh; in particular Paul West and P.G. Scott, and especially Geoffrey Carnall. I would also like to acknowledge the services of the Main Library of the University of Edinburgh, and the National Library of Scotland.
PREFACE

For the Zeitgeist of every age is like a sharp east wind which blows through everything.

Schopenhauer, Aphorisms (1851)^1

The mind is a different organ by night and by day.

J.S. Le Fanu, Uncle Silas(1864)^2

My intention in this study, which is titled after the subtitle of Bulwer-Lytton's typically lurid novel of villainy and madness, Lucretia (1846), is not only to examine the strictly literary significance of the multifarious "night side" of human nature in Victorian fiction. I find equally interesting the quality of exaggeration, the aura of fascination, even hysteria, surrounding this imagination of malevolence in both popular and classic fiction of the period.

My ultimate concern here is the relation of this aspect of the fictive imagination to certain ideological obsessions of the age, and the demonstration of the workings of this relationship in representative novels and tales. Although psychological realism and convincing evocation of ordinary life are major achievements in Victorian fiction, much of my material, with its criminal geniuses, cunning maniacs, and diabolical mesmerists, is patently non-realist, or fantastic.

Even George Eliot, realist and positivist par excellence, succumbs to lurid fancy in her tale "The Lifted Veil" (1859),^3 which later
furnished at least one medical man with evidence of the novelist's own neurosis. 4

"The Lifted Veil", referring to the Veil of Isis, a favourite Victorian metaphor of supernatural mystery, involves a poisoness of mesmeric beauty, and is narrated by her victim, a man plagued with "diseased participation in other people's consciousness", and prescient of his own death. Hardly convincing as a short story, "The Lifted Veil" is significant for its impression of abnormal sensibility and morbid introspection, its quality of symbolic revelation (Isis Revelata was the title of a contemporary history of mesmerism), and its sense of consternation, to borrow Auguste Comte's use of the word to denote "the most terrible sensation we are capable of ... that which we experience when any phenomenon seems to arise in violation of the familiar laws of nature." 6 William James, compulsively attracted by psychical research, later made a similar observation concerning the experience of anti-positivistic phenomena. However, James developed a rationale for the behaviour of mediumistic spirits. Such spirit "controls", he found, acted as "secondary", "sub-conscious selves" of their respective mediums, and, most significantly, were "peculiarly susceptible to a certain stratum of the Zeitgeist, and get their inspiration from it..." 7 Here, in analogy with James's correlation of sub-conscious and Zeitgeist, I propose to treat fantastic material, such as "The Lifted Veil", as unconscious allegory, as "fantasy" deriving from a sort of Victorian "collective unconscious" and reflecting, often in nightmare distortion, epochal obsessions. In that sense this study is meant to be a chapter in the history of imagination and mythopoesia in the nineteenth century.
While, in this context of ideo-linguistics and literary pathology, I am not presuming to that personal diagnosis indulged in by George Eliot's medical critic, I am suggesting that the indiscipline of imagination and breakdown of aesthetic detachment often demonstrable in Victorian fantasies of moral evil are symptomatic of the ideological Angst of an age, not only of consternation — from spiritualism to quantum physics — but of moral revolution. It was, after all, the age in which God died and the behavioural sciences were born; the age of Darwin, Marx, Nietzsche, and, finally, Freud; as well as Rudolf Virchow, the great pathologist and formidable opponent of Bismarck, whose dissection theatre had revealed no evidence of an immortal soul. "The investigator knows only material bodies", wrote Virchow in 1849. "Whatever is beyond he calls transcendent, and he regards transcendence as an aberration of the human spirit." Yet, such assertive positivism could neither resolve nor outface the disturbing anomalies and antinomies it itself fostered: Natural Selection, Physiological Psychology, Moral Insanity, Unconscious Cerebration; Determinism and Freewill, Brain and Mind, Mind and Soul. From the Doppelgänger to Freud and Breuer's Studies on Hysteria (1895), the syndrome was the contradiction, the division, the fear of the self.

Tennyson's grating poem "Despair" (1885) concerns the suicide pact enacted by a couple overcome by a sense of alienation in the "Godless gloom" of a "limitless Universe", which, with its cosmic voids and stars dying of entropy, had lately been discovered by astronomy. But the classic case of ontological breakdown in the context of positivistic science is that described by William James, in his Varieties of Religious Experience (1902), and attributed to
an unnamed Frenchman. It was only after James's death that the "Frenchman" was unmasked, and the source of the experience revealed in James's own diary. Apparently sometime in 1870, while brooding upon the ineluctable predetermination of all human action, and consequently in a "state of philosophic pessimism and general depression of spirits," James was stricken by "panic fear". He had gone into a dark room to fetch some article, 

when suddenly there fell upon me without any warning, just as if it came out of the darkness, a horrible fear of my own existence. Simultaneously there arose in my mind the image of an epileptic patient whom I had seen in the asylum, a black-haired youth with greenish skin, entirely idiotic, who used to sit all day on one of the benches, or rather shelves against the wall, with his knees drawn up against his chin, and the coarse gray undershirt, which was his only garment, drawn over them inclosing his entire figure. He sat there like a sort of sculptured Egyptian cat or Peruvian mummy, moving nothing but his black eyes and looking absolutely non-human. This image and my fear entered into a species of combination with each other. That shape am I, I felt, potentially. Nothing that I possess can defend me against that fate, if the hour for it should strike for me as it struck for him. There was such a horror of him, and such a perception of my own merely momentary discrepancy from him, that it was as if something hitherto solid within my breast gave way entirely, and I became a mass of quivering fear. After this the universe was changed for me altogether. 11

It seems to have taken James years to recover from this "vastation", to use the Swedenborgian term — for months he was unable to go into the dark alone — and he was finally able to defy the cataleptic image of absolute determinism only by a resolute, moralistic, and essentially irrational assumption of the freedom of the will, out of which came his famous Will-to-Believe. Years later, at the height of his powers and fame, delivering the Gifford Lectures at Edinburgh, James was evidently so self-confident as to refer to the despair of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, as "the sick shriekings of two dying
rats"; unless, indeed, this very vehemence had its origin in James's own lingering insecurity.

I am asserting that it is in the literary portrayal of villainy and malevolence, where both moralism and involuntary fascination were obtrusive, that this hysterical temperament of the time — rhetorically exemplified in "the sick shriekings of two dying rats" — is most prominent. Moralism understandably takes on hysterical insistence when the very basis of morality seems to be in doubt, as it was in a century of determinism. Physiological psychology, the Victorian forerunner, in part, of behaviourism, rationalised and clinically described the most demoniacal human behaviour, while undermining the assumption of free will and moral responsibility. How hold to account "an organic and irreclaimable scoundrel"? such as Herman Melville's Bland, "who did wicked deeds as the cattle browse the herbage, because wicked deeds seemed the legitimate operation of his whole infernal organisation. Phrenologically, he was without a soul."

The shift from a theological and ethical to a biological anthropology, and thus to a "physiological" aetiology of moral evil — a shift which the pseudo-science of phrenology represented — was an ideological revolution greater than that of Copernicus and Galileo, and Western civilisation is still assimilating its effects.

Its immediate consequence was ideological schizophrenia. The key metaphor of the age was mesmerism, in which man appeared dualistically; as both super-volitional projector and helpless automaton; both master and slave; cause and effect. And, while optimistic atheists such as Herbert Spencer, confident of having smashed Calvinism once and for all, forecast an ultimate, evolutionary "Evanescence of
Evil”, the age was haunted by the Darwinian nightmare of reversion to primitive type, as illustrated in the fantasy of Dr. Jekyll’s instantaneous retrogression to the "ape-like", "troglodytic" Hyde.

Characteristically, biologists and medical men usurped the direction of moral philosophy and "ethology" (a word re-introduced by J.S. Mill to denote the science of human nature) in the nineteenth century. "In this way", as one physiological psychologist exulted,

the physiological metaphysician will be enabled to determine the laws of Human Nature by the same method which has been followed in determining the laws of life; and to build up a mental science, which, founded upon the broad basis of a Scientific Ideology and a Philosophical Biology, will take its place amongst the other applied sciences as the end and complement of them all. 15

Yet, even as psychology, psychiatry, criminology, and penology acquired more and more of a "physiological" basis, the imagination of moral evil did not necessarily lose any of its luridness or, indeed, all of its hysteria. The canonisation of "Malevolence", especially as it occurred in the studies of the "mad-doctors", as Victorian psychiatrists were called (or "alienists" as they called themselves), was one singular development of "a Scientific Ideology and a Philosophical Biology." And, as well illustrated in Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes’s "medicated" novel, Elsie Venner, a Romance of Destiny (1861), which concerns a girl "innocently" maleficent, the positivistic antidote to Calvinism and hysterical moralism was no less a vitiation of literary art and tragic depth, in its replacement of character with automaton.

Increasingly, as the nineteenth century progressed, depravity came to be regarded as a species of mental pathology. Calvinist
Predestination was superseded by organic predisposition; Original Sin by the no less inescapable atavism of genetic heredity. Accordingly, novels of villainy regularly implied such quasi-biological questions as whether criminality is innate, developed, or contracted; whether it is inherited; and whether, once acquired, it is transmissible to offspring as predicted by the Lamarckian hypothesis of the inheritance of acquired characteristics.

In the following chapters these far-reaching ideological implications will necessarily be organising themes. The conflict of Necessity and Freedom in the emergence of a "Scientific Ideology"; the continuing re-definition of "human nature" in view of the darker investigations of evolutionary biology and psychiatry; the pathology and fear of the Self, and the alternating introspective and behaviouristic views of its demoniacal element; these are the epochal complexes I take to be implicit in the literary fantasies of villainy. Throughout, the unifying stylistic problem is the tension between fascination or moralism and psychological realism, while the recurrent aesthetic question is that of character and tragic responsibility in a context of mechanism and determinism.

As an appropriate frame of reference for the "biological" partiality of Victorian fiction, I have chosen the context of physiological psychology, especially the handbooks and case-histories of the alienists. Extended reference to this material will, I hope, usefully gloss the details and motifs of fictional villainy.

Throughout this study my approach is thematic and synthetic, and I make no pretense to an exhaustive analysis of any one author or

* Limitations of space have led me to exclude chapters on the daemonic in childhood - from The Fairchild Family to The Turn of the Screw - and daemonic rationalism - from Wordsworth's The Borderers to The Secret Agent.
work. In attempting to delineate the ramifications of a theme and cover the widest range with the greatest conciseness, I have had to subordinate the individual to the general. Nor do I claim that the context in which I discuss any particular work is the only significant one for that work.

The first time the title of any work appears in a chapter, it is followed by its date of first publication within parentheses, unless otherwise noted. In quotations from original sources Victorian spelling and punctuation is retained; e.g. villany and idiotcy.
NOTES TO PREFACE


12. Ibid., Lecture ii, p.56.


14. This phrase is used as a chapter heading in Herbert Spencer's *Social Statics* (London: 1855).

CHAPTER I. THE FASCINATION OF REPULSION, AND THE PLEASURE OF MALEVOLENCE

For every one can be a good man who wills it, but it always requires talent to be bad.

Søren Kierkegaard, *Either/Or* (1843)\(^1\)

I warn my "kynd friends", then, that I am going to tell a story of harrowing villainy and complicated — but, as I trust, intensely interesting — crime.

W.M. Thackeray, *Vanity Fair* (1847-48)\(^2\)

The personified principle of evil ought, properly speaking, to cause us only dread and loathing. On the contrary, the artist has often worked up his most interesting creations by the employment of this as a subject. Not in the *Paradise Lost* alone is the malign personage the real hero of the piece.

Another form in which this passion enters into Art, is in the exhibition of vicious characters and mischief-workers to excite our wrath by their crimes, and gratify it by their punishment.

Alexander Bain, *The Emotions and the Will* (1859)\(^3\)

It is suggestive that moral obliquity and deliberate evil should have been a favourite, indeed compulsive, literary theme during the Victorian period, that most self-consciously "moral" of ages. For the
Victorians were obviously "interested" — that is, titillated — by what "ought, properly speaking, to cause us only dread and loathing"; and from the popular Gothic of the transpontine drama and the shilling shocker, to the "improved" taste of epic-length narrative verse and the three-decker novel, literature was replete with "malign personages." Villainy was, in fact, the *sine qua non* of a tradition of popular fiction extending from the original Gothic novel, in its respective ancestral schools of Matthew Gregory Lewis and Ann Radcliffe, through the historical romance of Scott, the "Newgate School" of Harrison Ainsworth and Bulwer-Lytton, and the "sensation novel" of Charles Reade, J.S. Le Fanu, Wilkie Collins, and Mary Elizabeth Braddon. Beneath such standard entertainment was the disreputable underground of the "shocker" (made profitable by the introduction of the steam printing press and the growth of general literacy), the execrably printed "blood" fiction, which was, in effect, a sadomasochistic pornography, and of which the master was the indefatigably prolific G.W.M. Reynolds, probably more widely read than Dickens at the time.4

And, as is most obvious in Dickens, the effects of this sensation-alistic conception of moral evil are evident throughout classic fiction. While Bulwer-Lytton's attempt in *Eugene Aram* (1832) to make heroic criminality convincing floundered in neo-Romantic preciosity and Newgate School melodrama, Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847) compounded the Gothic fiend and the Byronic-Bulweric misanthrope in a character, Heathcliff, morally realistic despite his utter ruthlessness. George Eliot's more self-conscious kind of moral realism probed the hidden sin of domestic life, realising such types as the insinuating corrupter, in *Jermyn of Felix Holt* (1866), and two versions of the
vicious husband, the brutal Dempster of "Janet's Repentance" in Scenes of Clerical Life (1858) and the icy, subtly sadistic Grandcourt of Daniel Deronda (1876). But even her intelligent, compassionate imagination could become fixated upon an inexplicable fiend, as shown in that Gothic version of household crime, "The Lifted Veil" (1859). Moving on to Hardy's Tess of the d'Urbervilles (1891), the "destroyer", as the ruiner of innocence was termed in popular fiction, is transformed into the vacillating, sin-obsessed, but appropriately mustachioed Alec d'Urberville, who is at last fittingly knifed by his victim. The origins of Hardy's fiction in the sensation-novel pattern are obvious enough in the "mystery, entanglement, surprise, and moral obliquity" of his first published novel, Desperate Remedies (1871). Similarly, Henry James's first published fiction was "A Tragedy of Error" (1864), a tale owing as much to Dickens as to Balzac, in which a young wife hires a roguish sailor to murder her older, lame husband, only to lose her investment when her lover is unfortunately mistaken by the assassin for the detested husband.

However, ignoring for a moment classic standards, memorable Victorian villains are usually an exercise in the extravagance of maleficence, as if in fulfilment of Kierkegaard's aphorism. Wilkie Collins's magnetic but ruthless Count Fosco, in The Woman in White (1859–60), for example, who ingeniously imprisons an heiress in a lunatic asylum in order to appropriate her fortune, is a criminal genius hardly surpassed until Professor Moriarty. Yet Fosco is rivalled by Le Fanu's Uncle Silas (1864), a neurasthenic fiend, devoted to opium and Swedemborgianism, whose voice is "the tone of a glass flute that made some people hysterical ..." Unlike the polished Fosco and Silas, however, Dickens's lecherous dwarf Quilip,
who terrorises Little Nell in *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1840-41), is utterly unsubtle in the extravagant gratification of his "constitutional" lust for cruelty. An even more lurid (and absolutely humourless) personification of maleficence is the bestial madwoman in *Jane Eyre* (1847). Browning, a natural Manichaean, who once wrote to Elizabeth Barrett, in defence of duelling, "My Ba, what is Evil, in its unmistakable shape, but a thing to suppress at any price?" portrays, in *The Ring and the Book* (1868-69), a pseudo-Übermensch, a nobleman-murderer, who flaunts his prerogatives of might-right and wolfishness. Ba's own novel in verse, *Aurora Leigh* (1856), features the beautiful but serpentine Lady Waldemar, who disposes of an involuntary rival by committing her, not to a madhouse, but to a French brothel.

Female villainy, in its mimicry of angelic appearance, was especially "interesting". A prototype, with special significance in the age of the Arsenic Act and the undivorceable spouse, was the seventeenth-century poisoness celebrated in Albert Richard Smith's "arsenical" novel, *The Marchioness of Brinvilliers* (1846). Among other notorious villainesses were, of course, Becky Sharp of *Vanity Fair*, who graduates, in tribute to sensationalism, from adventuress to murderess; Miss Gwilt, the passionately feminine but enterprisingly criminal conspiratrix of Wilkie Collin's *Armadale* (1864-65); and Lucy Audley, the demure but feline anti-heroine of Miss Braddon's most famous novel, *Lady Audley's Secret* (1862). In the ironical phrase of one reader, Lady Audley was an "interesting criminal", and another sensation novelist, G.A. Lawrence, in attributing the provenience of Lady Audley and her English kinswomen to the example of Milady,
Unholy attraction is indeed evident here; and, as suggested by the introductory quotation from Alexander Bain, a prominent "associationalist" psychologist, such excitement occasioned by fictional villainy had to be compensated for in moralistic conclusions. "In the plot of an ordinary romance," he observes further, "the sinner after many doublings is caught at last"; and the executioner's branding-iron which has marred Milady's perfect shoulder is a symbol of the horrific retribution in store. Typically, sensation-novel Nemesis might arrange for the villain's hanging and heroine's wedding to be simultaneous. In guilty terror Milady is finally decapitated by the same grim figure who had branded her many years before. As for Lady Audley, she is "buried alive" in a madhouse while her erstwhile victims prosper. In short, taste and propriety required that the evil-doer, after the excitement of his wickedness, must not only be defeated and punished, but degraded and held up to general abhorrence, or reserved for an especially awful fate. Exceptionally, Count Fosco's style of wickedness exerts a fascination almost beyond the moralistic imperative, making him, in effect, "the real hero of the piece." He retains his sang-froid until finally struck down, not by legal justice, but by his murderous associates in an Italian
secret society, whose oath he had violated. However, proprieties are appeased by the gruesome burning alive, like a trapped rat, of Sir Percival Clyde, Fosco's accomplice.

Dickens knew sympathy with an evil-doer was a risky authorial experiment, and certainly none of his novels lacks an easily identifiable and detestable villain or two, who are usually instrumental in the plot, so impressively conceived — even if grotesque or even ogreish — as readily to suspend disbelief, and always gruesomely disposed of. But not many novelists possessed such power, and the convention of villainy often vitiated literary art by its encouragement of implausible characterisation and mechanical plot work. Such personification of the evil principle in a guilty and answerable character was also a convenient device to evade the thornier implications of theodicy. Hardy, of course, would react powerfully against this evasion, but Browning's "Caliban upon Setebos" (1864), a psychologically sophisticated essay on evil which deftly avoids the imputation of guilt to the Creator, sets forth, with classic irony, a monologue of villainous self-exculpation via "natural" cosmology.

"... no human eyes", in Dickens's pious words, "have ever seen more daring, gross, and shocking images of the Divine nature, than we creatures of the dust make in our own likenesses, of our own bad passions."

Pious Manichaeanism operates even in Charles Kingsley's Christian Socialist novel, Alton Locke (1850). Although the oppression and exploitation of the lower classes and the self-destructive Radicalism thereby engendered are the theme of Alton Locke, this theme of social evil is often obscured by the sensation-novel villainy of the worker-
poet Alton's rich, basilisk-eyed cousin, a black sheep in clergyman's robes, who frustrates Alton's efforts at public reforms, traduces him, and generally ruins his life. However, soon after his marriage to the girl he has stolen from Alton, the wicked cousin receives condign punishment in the form of a typhus fever contracted as a result of his patronage of the "sweated labour" businesses Alton had meant to reform. The unfaithful girl, a heartless heiress, dies of the fever also. The mills ground exceeding fine and not always slowly.

While moral evil has always been a favourite literary subject — the Elizabethan might be cited as a period equally prolific in malign personages — a peculiarly Victorian significance seems to be intimated by the sensationalistic yet moralistic fixation on "Evil, in its unmistakable shape", to repeat Browning's phrase. Doubtless the age itself, seeing the triumph of industrialism, imperialism, and the laissez-faire principle in general, was wicked enough in its luxuriant hypocrisy, perhaps fully deserving Carlyle's condemnations; but the Victorian singularity, if not monopoly, of wickedness which emerges from the fiction of the period, while implying the perpetration of vast social crime, must be carefully distinguished from social history. As in Alton Locke, it was Manichaean fairy-tale rather than social realism that tended to emerge.

To borrow the phrases of R.J. Cruikshank, it was "intimation of the sinister inside the respectable", epitomised in the "solemn, ominous" house-fronts; the "commodious and well-appointed" rooms, redolent of the "intimacies of smothered sin" — the arsenic in the cooking, the baby drowned in the bath, the mad wife locked in the attic — that sets the scene of Victorian villainy. ¹³ "No one fights ogres
now-a-days”, lamented Frances Notley, a novelist. “Within the grim castle, represented by a modern front door, women and children are still devoured, and no knight-errant goes to their rescue.”

Indubitably, such fantastic domestic villainy was the microcosm of political and economic ruthlessness. Indeed, there is an insistent theme of exploitation and malevolence in Victorian fiction of domestic life, the typical pattern being the victimisation of child, ward, dependant, wife at the hands, respectively, of parent, guardian, "benefactor", husband. For Thomas De Quincey, "This word 'guardian' kindles a fiery thrilling in my nerves." Hence, too, the outrageous hypocrisy of philanthropy and benevolence in Jane Eyre, while in Bleak House (1852-53), benefactor translates baby-farmer.

The symbolic relationship in fiction of macrocosmic and macrocosmic villainy, the exposure of the Machine, was very largely the work of one man: Dickens. The "hardening out of the world" of natural children and other inconvenient waifs, whether in parish workhouses or "twenty-pound Yorkshire schools", the custodial ruination of orphans and heirs, the condemnation of "fallen" women to either starvation or white slavery, the degradation of wives, all of these symptoms of both moral and social pathology were incorporated by Dickens into his panoramic metaphors of social injustice. But though he was a novelist of social concern, Dickens, like most of his contemporaries, was more interested in the psychology of moral insanity than in its sociology. Much to his contempt, the nascent science of society, with its statistics and tabular analyses, seemed to have produced merely the philistine optimism of Lord Macaulay. Despite his indignant depiction of cancerous public organs such as the Court of Chancery and the Circumlocution Office, Dickens enjoyed a conspiracy theory of
evil which turned on the fairy-tale locale of Mrs. Notley's "grim castle", the ogres such as Squeers and Quilp, and the evil genii such as Ralph Nickleby and the "slow torturing" Mr. Tulkinghorn.

To continue with the moral, as distinguished from the social context of villainy, it may be recapitulated that it is deliberate sensationalism and fascination, such as De Quincey indulges in his series of papers On Murder Considered as one of the Fine Arts (1827–54), that distinctively stylises the portrayal of this villainy. And the effect of this portrayal is qualified by a constant tension between fascination and moralism. In fact, Bulwer-Lytton's paradox of a spiritual murderer in Eugene Aram seemed morally ambiguous, and even though he had finally hanged the guilty Aram, he was forced to defend himself, in a later preface, from the charge of "investing murderers with interest." Indeed, morbid interest or even incitement to actual crime was charged against both "Newgate" fiction and the sensation novel, a form which one prominent alienist attributed to the "epileptic imagination". As late as 1880, Ruskin, the dean of moralistic criticism, denounced, with particular reference to Bleak House, the "gelid putrescence" of the "modern infidel imagination, amusing itself with destruction of the body, and busying itself with aberration of the mind." To be sure, Bulwer-Lytton's last Newgate novel, Lucretia; or The Children of Night (1846), which will be discussed in detail in the next chapter, had invested its murderers, including another beautiful but evil woman, with irrevocable guilt and fiendish degradation, and, what is more, indulged in a fascination of loath-someness. However, in an apologetic preface to the second edition of Lucretia, the author expounded his salutary purpose of inspiring a "moral terror", such as is "never produced, but by some evil or
destroying power, and that ... power is never to be found except in the two agencies I have named — viz., the supernatural or the criminal." 19

The hypocrisy of "moral terror", which excused the most gratuitous horror of retribution, is obvious enough, and another characteristic self-righteousness was the attribution of illicit fascination to that alien form, the "French novel". The titillating Milady has already been mentioned, and Emma Robinson's "arsenical" Madeleine Graham (1864) is introduced to sin through her surreptitious reading at boarding-school of La Dame aux camélias (1848), by Alexandre Dumas fils. It was a novel called L'âme damnée which introduced Wilkie Collins's would-be murderess, Helena Gracedieu, to "a new world inhabited entirely by unrepentant people; the magnificent women diabolically beautiful; the satanic men dead to every sense of virtue, and alive — perhaps rather dirtily alive — to the splendid fascinations of crime." 20 Nor should the malign fascination exercised in Oscar Wilde's Dorian Gray (1891) by a certain unmentionable French novel — apparently J.-K. Huysmans's A rebours (1884) — be forgotten.

In The Mystery of Edwin Drood (1870), Dickens applies the phrase "fascination of repulsion" (chap. xx) to the sinister attraction which the cathedral organist John Jasper exerts upon his frightened music pupil Rosa Bud. Like Count Fosco, like Uncle Silas, or, indeed, like Dickens himself, 21 Jasper seems to possess mesmeric powers. There is much more to be said later about the metaphoric significance of mesmerism in the nineteenth century, but for now it may be mentioned that, for the Victorians, mesmerism was, among other things, a rationalisation of the ancient superstition of the Evil Eye.

Etymologically, fascination is malefic, and Jasper's fascination
of the unwilling Rosa is clearly like that of the serpent for the dove.

Moreover in the context of "moral terror" and Manichaean imagination, this "fascination of repulsion" seems applicable also to the author himself. This is especially true of Dickens, whose vividly conceived villains increased in fascination and compulsion, for both the author and his contemporary readers, as their depravity deepened. Various critics, since Edmund Wilson's famous diagnosis of mental instability, if not schizophrenia, in "Dickens: The Two Scrooges" (1941),22 have seen implications of psychological autobiography in Dickens's fascination with wickedness. Humphry House in "The Macabre Dickens" (1955)23 recognises an element of introspection or self-projection in the vehement vitality of Dickens's villains, while R.J. Cruikshank speaks of his "mediumistic quality" through which haunting visions of crime found expression.24 In Dickens and Crime (1962), Philip Collins more cautiously documents what he calls Dickens's "attraction of repulsion"25 for criminals, a phrase applied by Dickens himself to fascination with cemeteries.26

The intention here, however, is not to psychoanalyse Dickens on the basis of the haunting visions of evil recurrent in his works. While there is arguably a morbid self-projection and emotional involvement in such visions (this seems to have been confirmed in his public readings), these implications of guilty introspection might as well be detected in such other typical figures as Bulwer-Lytton, Wilkie Collins, De Quincey, and Carlyle. For the "morbid" tone is that of an age and not simply that of any individual author. Again, the peculiarly Victorian theme is conflict between fascination and the moralistic imperative; but, moreover, an unconscious fluctuation
between macabre enthusiasm and a repugnance that must be termed hysterical.

De Quincey's "prose phantasy", Murder as one of the Fine Arts, may be taken as an illustration. The narrator of the earliest paper, a "morbidly virtuous" connoisseur of murder, thus catalogues his supreme artist, John Williams, the mallet-wielding London killer of 1811: "Mr. Williams has exalted the ideal of murder to all of us...

Like Aeschylus or Milton in poetry, like Michael Angelo in painting, he has carried his art to a point of colossal sublimity, and, as Mr. Wordsworth observes, has in a manner 'created the taste by which he is to be enjoyed.'" But in the final paper of Murder the "Postscript" written nearly thirty years later in mid-Victorian times, De Quincey's ironical gusto is superseded by a moralistic melodrama of "ultra fiendishness". The phrase is applied to Williams, who now reappears in his true colours and without any mitigations of humour or parody. The fiend is imagined hesitating over a sleeping girl, and "nothing can so frightfully expound the hellish nature of him whose baleful shadow, to speak astrologically, at this moment darkens the house of life", than his putative decision to spare her life because of the lack of time to awaken her and so fully appreciate her terror. At last the erstwhile Michael Angelo of murder dies by his own hand in a prison cell, "forced into drinking of the same cup, presented to his lips by the same accursed hands."

But the same alternation from ironic enthusiasm to professed revulsion, which distinguishes De Quincey's earlier paper from his later, may be remarked within a single work of Dickens. Quilp, for example, with his grimaces, leers, and howls, and his appetite for
boiling punch and unshelled eggs, is a compellingly vital figure, but he ends drowned in a harbour, his hideous corpse, as described in a gloating passage, toyed with by the currents among slimy hulks and piles. In Dickens's *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1843-44), the surgeon Jobling, borrowing De Quincey's conceit of aesthetic murder, fascinates the already murderously inclined Jonas Chuzzlewit with his report of an "artistic" stabbing: "I have no hesitation in saying that in an unprofessional person it could not but be considered, either as an extraordinary work of art, or the result of a still more extraordinary, happy, and favourable conjunction of circumstances." But the Dickensian rhetoric of revulsion, even more extreme than De Quincey's "Postscript", appears finally, apropos the guilty Jonas, who, "abject, crouching, and miserable ... was a greater degradation to the form he bore, than if he had been a loathsome wound from head to heel .... they turned away from him, as if he were some obscene and filthy animal, repugnant to the sight."  

Such hysterical moralism, which appears also in Bulwer-Lytton's *Lucretia* and Carlyle's *Latter-Day Pamphlet* "Model Prisons" (1850), a tirade asserting the incorrigible depravity of all convicts, is the culmination of the fascination of repulsion, the ultimate breakdown of aesthetic detachment. Often paired with cloying sentiment, as Little Nell is paired with Quilp, it suggests a fundamental ambivalence, a deep-rooted ideological unease, behind its compulsive reprobation. In Bain's terms this reprobation is an expression of that Irascible Emotion which, in art, exhibits evil-doers "to excite our wrath by their crimes, and gratify it by their punishment." It is tempting to take this hint and interpret this wrath and its gratification as
a symbolic expiation of a secret fascination with evil. At any rate, the very gratuitousness of retributive detail goes beyond the requirements of either propriety or justice, begetting, in Carlyle, cultural atavism:

The Ancient Germans, it appears, had no scruple about public executions... When a German man had done a crime deserving death, they, in solemn general assembly of the tribe, doomed him, and considered that Fate and all Nature had from the beginning doomed him, to die with ignominy. Certain crimes there were of a supreme nature; him that had perpetrated one of these, they believed to have declared himself a prince of scoundrels. Him once convicted they laid hold of, nothing doubting; - bore him, after judgment, to the deepest convenient Peatbog; plunged him in there, drove an oaken frame down over him, solemnly in the name of gods and men: "There, prince of scoundrels, that is what we have had to think of thee, on clear acquaintance; our grim good-night to thee is that! In the name of all the gods, lie there, and be our partnership with thee dissolved henceforth. It will be better for us, we imagine."29

Dickens, as a matter of principle, dispatched his scoundrels horribly, as in the foul-watery end of Quilp. Compeyson, the shadowy master-villain of Great Expectations (1860-61), as well as Bradley Headstone and Rogue Riderhood in Our Mutual Friend (1864-65), also drowned like rats. In Oliver Twist (1837-38), Bill Sikes, terrified by the spectre of his victim Nancy, slips off a roof, his escape line becoming a hangman's noose; Fagin, cringing like Dennis in Barnaby Rudge (1841), is hanged on the scaffold; Ralph in Nicholas Nickleby (1838-39) hangs himself. Jonas Chuzzlewit poisons himself with some of the evidence while en route to arraignment. Madame Defarge dies by her own pistol involuntarily; Mademoiselle Hortense in Bleak House is left for the hangman. Carker in Dombey and Son (1846-48) is ground under the wheels of a locomotive. In Little Dorrit (1855-57), the deadly parasite Rigaud is crushed in
the collapse of his host's rotten mansion. Like Captain Marryat's Snarleyyow; or The Dog Fiend (1837), finally hanged with his wicked master, not even Sikes's dog escapes the final accounting.

Dickens's tale "Hunted Down" (1859) is a perfect illustration of that literary Irascible Emotion which details with relish the destruction of a villain. It is a frenetic melodrama centring on the exposure of one Julius Slinkton, who has designs on the lives of his two nieces, for whom he professes touching solicitude. The story opens when he has already poisoned one niece and collected the insurance premium on her life, while the other is gradually sinking under his care. But she is spirited out of Slinkton's clutches and his evil plot exposed by a dedicated partnership of avengers headed by Meltham, alias Beckwith, who had been in love with the murdered girl. Slinkton takes a professional interest in Beckwith, whom he supposes to be a drunkard, plying him with drugged liquor and hoping thereby to save himself the risk of more deadly poison. But Beckwith, of course, is only feigning drunkenness, the better to collect evidence against the unsuspecting Slinkton, including Slinkton's journal in which he has rather foolishly recorded his crimes in detail. The climactic exposure scene recalls its comic predecessor, when the elder Chuzzlewit, who had feigned senility and pretended to be taken in by Pecksniff, abruptly turned on the bewildered hypocrite. Slinkton, too, at first denies his accusers, but when Beckwith reveals his true identity and vengeful purpose, the villain is staggered despite himself. Another trapped rat, he swallows his own poison and expires with a grotesque spasm. "That was the fitting end of him."
"Hunted Down" has no other raison d'être than this spectacle of evil at bay; other characters and details are merely props of the melodrama, heightening its vividness by their shadowiness. Above all, Dickens is fascinated by Slinkton's diabolical self-possession, even in the face of Beckwith's resurgence, "this sudden starting up of the thing that he had supposed to be his imbecile victim..."

But there is no greater mistake than to suppose that a man who is a calculating criminal, is, in any phase of his guilt, otherwise than true to himself, and perfectly consistent with his whole character. Such a man commits murder, and murder is the natural culmination of his course; such a man has to outface murder, and will do it with hardihood and effrontery. It is a sort of fashion to express surprise that any notorious criminal, having such crime upon his conscience, can so brave it out. Do you think that if he had it on his conscience at all, or had a conscience to have it upon, he would ever have committed the crime? Slinkton, in short, is but another type of "ultra fiendishness", a guilty monster who cannot be otherwise. Again, in Edwin Drood, Dickens refers to "the criminal intellect, which its own students perpetually misread, because they persist in trying to reconcile it with the average intellect of average men, instead of identifying it as a horrible wonder apart...".

George Orwell remarks that Dickens shows less understanding of criminals than might be expected in view of his interest in social environment. Even Edmund Wilson acknowledges in his "Two Scrooges", which claims a rich thematic complexity and compelling psychological realism for Edwin Drood, that Dickens's vision of crime and punishment cannot finally compare, either in analysis or impression, with that of his greater contemporary, Dostoyevsky. The greatest sensation novelist, a master of metaphoric synthesis, Dickens was yet unable
to transcend the lurid moralism which vitiated sensation fiction. The vitality of Dickens's ogres and fiends is unquestionable, but when he abandons the metaphor of character for its psychological analysis, the result is disappointing.

Even his most psychologically realistic murderer or would-be murderer, the self-made schoolmaster Bradley Headstone, evinces disappointing touches of what Orwell called Dickens's "always-"kept-myself-respectable" tone. Bradley's murderousness arises out of the sexual jealousy and class envy provoked by the insolence of his rival, Eugene Wrayburn, a slightly rakish young gentleman. Yet, Dickens readily dismisses Bradley's inner turmoil, which leads to attempted murder and identification with the common ruffian Rogue Riderhood, as "criminal":

The state of the man was murderous, and he knew it. More; he irritated it, with a kind of perverse pleasure akin to that which a sick man sometimes has in irritating a wound upon his body... If great criminals told the truth — which, being great criminals, they do not — they would very rarely tell of struggles against the crime. Their struggles are towards it. 33

Assuredly, there is no Raskolnikov here; and while Eugene Wrayburn is assigned a rather incongruously chivalrous role vis-à-vis the lower-class beauty Lizzie Hexam, Bradley, as if weighed down by his millstone surname, sinks to cad and outcast. Dickens, then, for all his impressionistic genius, is also representative of the "moral terror" of Victorian fiction, whereby the evil-doer is not so much a credible or comprehensible character, as a demon in an exorcism of the "night side of human nature" — a phrase used by Bulwer-Lytton in Lucretia. 34
It seems that the basic theme underlying the fantasy of crime and maleficence, with its attendant motifs of titillation, hysterical moralism, and unmentionability, was the question of the nature and etiology of moral evil per se, a pervasive concern after God's death or abdication, and the usurpation of Science. The ideological anxiety implicit in the emotionalism of Victorian authors essentially concerns moral anthropology, and the multitudinous, ubiquitous villains reflect a profound mistrust of Romantic optimism and of the later progressivist assumptions of man's innate benevolence and ultimate perfectibility. Perhaps this mistrust, or, indeed, fear, of "human nature" was the profoundest ambivalence of all in the century of "progress".

In the early nineteenth century such a reaction to progressivism may be seen in the writings of William Hazlitt, whose youthful Essay on the Principles of Human Action (1805), combining Romantic optimism and utilitarian rationalism, concluded that man is "naturally benevolent", instinctively impelled towards practical goodness and social co-operation. But in a later essay "On the Pleasure of Hating", reprinted in The Plain Speaker (1826), Hazlitt found the principle of the "natural disinterestedness of the human mind" (from the subtitle of The Principles of Human Action) superseded by a recognition "that there is a secret affinity, a hankering after evil in the human mind, and that it takes a perverse, but a fortunate delight in mischief, since it is a never-failing source of satisfaction." In the taste for Sir Walter Scott's fiction and for accounts such as Foxe's Book of Martyrs, Hazlitt remarked that "the wild beast resumes its sway within us". In this frightening zone of irrational malevolence, there were "no Jeremy Bentham Panopticons, none of Mr. Owen's impassable Parallelograms."
Hazlitt hated Calvinism; yet, the doctrines of Original Sin and Innate Depravity are implicit in his pessimistic theory of human nature. Such a reactionary theory had, in fact, been given new life by the Manichaean vigour of early nineteenth-century Evangelicalism, which armed conversion with a vision of the evil immanent in the heart. The excesses of the Romantic imagination, in its delvings into the diabolical, complemented this vision, as did, designedly, the Anti-Jacobin reaction, which might be said to culminate in Carlyle's *French Revolution* (1837). For the Reign of Terror was supposed to have finally discredited Rousseau and the Romantic theories of human and social perfectibility, and against them Carlyle invoked his sweeping, lurid vision, "Victorious Anarchy, Jacobinism, Sansculottism, French Revolution, Horrors of the French Revolution", where, licensed by the "Gospel of Jean-Jacques", "is Human Nature once more human; shudder at it whoso is of shuddering humour; yet, behold, it is human."\(^36\)

The original Gothic novel (*Schauerroman*), which, as suggested by the Marquis de Sade,\(^37\) was perhaps the most typical Revolutionary literary form, had crudely symbolised this disimprisonment of the demoniacal. Scott, the greatest single personal influence on the Victorian novel, had, in effect, rationalised the Gothic novel and, in the guise of historical romance, made it respectable. Thus, Le Fanu, accused of sensationalism, appealed to the example of Scott;\(^38\) and the background of the fascination of repulsion is epitomised in an early (1833) letter of Charlotte Brontë, recommending *Kenilworth* (1821) to a fellow schoolgirl: "Varney is certainly the personification of consummate villany; and in the delineation of his dark and profoundly artful mind, Scott exhibits a wonderful knowledge of human
nature." Mrs. Gaskell noted here that Charlotte, though innocent of the world, is yet "so accustomed to hear 'human nature' distrusted, as to receive the notion of intense and artful villany without surprise." Later, Ruskin found an example of "innate evil, unaffected by external influences", in Fairservice, a character in Rob Roy (1816).

In short, the fantasy of "intense and artful villany", directly descended from the Gothic novel, to go no further back, seemed to illustrate a new Principle of Human Action, an irrational, non-utilitarian will-to-evil. Hence the ostensibly altruistic Dr. Jekyll's frightful, introspective discovery: "This familiar that I called out of my soul, and sent forth to do his good pleasure, was a being inherently malign and villainous; his every act and thought centred on self; drinking pleasure with bestial avidity from any degree of torture to another." This was indeed an epochal obsession. In an essay "On Ethics" (1851), Schopenhauer compared human nature unfavourably with bestial, locating in the former alone a diabolical Schadenfreude, or pleasure in another's suffering. Nor was this Schadenfreude unscrutinised by science. Physiological psychology discovered a "positive pleasure, in some ill-constituted minds, in the contemplation of the unhappiness of others; and this (of which Dickens's Quilp is an impersonation) we designate as Malevolence." Or, as Bain put it, "What we have really to explain, therefore, is not the fury and vehemence of angry excitement, but the root or origin of the pleasure of malevolence, which, however we may disguise it, is a fact of the human constitution."
According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the earliest English appearance of the word *sadism* was 1888, but the syndrome was evidently familiar to Victorian authors before then. In *David Copperfield* (1849-50), the headmaster Creakle "had a delight in cutting at the boys, which was like the satisfaction of a craving appetite." De Quincey's Williams was given to the "luxurious purpose of basking and revelling in the anguish of dying despair": "Murders of mere necessity Williams was obliged to hurry: but in a murder of pure voluptuousness, entirely disinterested, where no hostile witness was to be removed, no extra booty to be gained, and no revenge to be gratified, it is clear that to hurry would be altogether to ruin." De Quincey is again carried away by fascinated repulsion, but the sober Bain also speaks of that "voluptuous excitement that by general remark goes along with the infliction of suffering upon sentient beings", Quilp again being cited as a "highly illustrative specimen."

"I have seen an accomplished young woman of considerable refinement and of a highly strung nervous temperament", remarked the Rev. Sabine Baring-Gould, an amateur anthropologist, "string flies with her needle on a piece of thread, and watch complacently their flutterings." Such "innate cruelty", as Baring-Gould called it, was supposed to be implicit, not only in crime, but in the "almost fiendish exultation of rampant boyhood at the howl of the unoffending animal victimized in sport", as well as in "the 'sensations' with which Englishwomen will sometimes gloat upon the circumstance and tale of some hideous and bloody crime."

The warning signs, then, were everywhere; in the nursery; "within the sacred precincts of domestic life"; in the Dickensian schools and workhouses; even within the physiological laboratory itself, where the malevolent impulse
manifested itself in vivisection. In The Modern Rack (1889), the anti-vivisectionist intellectual Frances Power Cobbe interpreted this "scientific" practice as a revival of mediaeval torture, a view to be partly confirmed by H.G. Wells's Dr. Moreau (1896). The Modern Rack had warned that indulgence in vivisection would turn medical students into "a set of young devils"; and the brilliant Dr. Benjulia, in Wilkie Collins's Heart and Science (1882), not only derives a cold satisfaction from the sufferings of his laboratory animals, but deliberately fosters the affliction of Carmina, the delicate heroine, in order to observe her decline in all its stages.

Swinburne, himself a notorious devotee of the Divine Marquis, as he sometimes referred to Sade, affected to pity Collins's ill-used heroines, for "the suggested or implied suffering of such poor innocent wretches, the martyrdom of perpetual terror and agony inflicted on the shattered nerves or the shaken brain of a woman or girl, is surely a cruel and a painful mainspring for a story or a plot." Nevertheless, it was a favourite one, and the first two papers of Murder as one of the Fine Arts may be read as parody of the popular taste. Schopenhauer's Zeitgeist, here the spectre of Schadenfreude, haunted both rhetoric and theme in Victorian fiction, and never more than in the reprobation of sadistic spectacle.

Gothic novels such as Lewis's The Monk (1796) had been unashamedly titillated by sadism, especially in the motif of the persecuted maiden, but the Victorian interest in flagellation, the Inquisition, penitential convents, madhouses, and vivisection was usually disguised as educational improvement, or justified as "moral terror". Historical romance, purporting to be an educational reconstruction of
the past, was a favourite guise for the recrudescence of Gothic
predilections. Scott, the author of An Apology for Tales of Terror
(1799), raked the annals of witchcraft and atrocity for usable details,
and in Marmion (1808) has Constance de Beverley, a renegade nun,
immured alive in her convent's subterranean vaults, Scott duly append-
ing a note on the archaeological evidence of such mediaeval punishment.
George Eliot wrote of the Renaissance witch-hunters that "it is hardly
an endurable task to read the story of their doings; thoroughly to
imagine them as a past reality is already a sort of torture"; but
a contemporary historian of witchcraft noted, if "we spare the reader
much that is horrible and revolting to his better feelings... we
destroy the moral and utility of history itself." Such material,
Baring-Gould agreed, "though horrible, is nevertheless full of interest
and importance as elucidating a very obscure and mysterious chapter
in the history of the Human Mind."

Scott's successors were, in fact, less scholarly and more
"voluptuous" than he, and the requirements of their narrative hardly
conceals their interest in persecution and torture. Harrison
Ainsworth's The Tower of London (1840), for example, concerns the
trial and execution of Lady Jane Grey, but features an additional
quota of persecuted women, who languish in the Tower's secret
dungeons, victims of a gaoler's extra-curricular activity. The
Gothic shadow of Victor Hugo's Nôtre-Dame de Paris (1831), translated
in 1833 by Hazlitt, falls here, and Marryat's The Phantom Ship (1839),
Ainsworth's The Lancashire Witches (1848), James Grant's Jane Seton
(1853), William Morris's narrative poem "The Haystack in the Floods"
(1858), and Mrs. Gaskell's tale "Lois the Witch" (1859) all adapt
the villainous persecution of women to the witch-hunting formula.
Such various novels as Bulwer-Lytton's *Last Days of Pompeii* (1834), Wilkie Collins's *Antonina; or The Fall of Rome* (1850), Charles Kingsley's *Hypatia* (1853), John Mason Neale's *Theodora Phranza; or The Fall of Constantinople* (1857), and Lew Wallace's *Ben Hur* (1880) also rely for "sensation" on historical atrocity, especially the victimisation of women; while Cardinal Nicholas Wiseman in *Fabiola* (1855) and Cardinal John Henry Newman in *Callista* (1856), through the female Christian martyr, turn this sensation to the service of religion. Certainly, Walter Pater's nominally Christian *Marius the Epicurean* (1885) indulges an interest in the artistic torture of the Roman decadence. By the end of the century, S.R. Crockett's *The Black Douglas* (1899) could begin in the Scotland of Waverley romance, only to translate, half-way through, to the decadent France of Huysman's *Là-bas* (1891), as a Douglas maiden is abducted to the castle of the abysmal Gilles de Rais.

However, unlike his conscious or unconscious Victorian disciples, the original Sadist had been a philosopher in the boudoir, a revolutionary taking the revolt against the ancien régime to its ultimate limits, whether in cosmology or in the intimacies of human relationship. His writings, as in *Justine; ou Les malheurs de la vertu* (1791), are treatises demonstrating that morality is unnatural and virtue vicious. His preposterous villain-heroes, evidently owing something in their conception to those of Gothic romance, exult in the punishment and degradation of virtue. Rodin in *Justine*, keeping a girls' school for the sole purpose of flogging and debasing its inmates, is "quite excited" to have at his mercy in the "chamber of correction" the innocent Julie, manacled in preparation for an
unmerited flagellation. To translate freely, "Julie had no defence other than her lovely head languishingly inclined towards her executioner, the superb hair disordered, and tears inundating the most beautiful face in the world, the gentlest ... the most affecting "Intéressante."^57

In Sade's inverted world qualities which should inspire sympathy and pity arouse instead their opposite, and it is this outrage, rather than any realisation of lasciviousness, that stimulates sensual excitement. Sade seldom characterised his victim-personae beyond a formula — "the gentlest, the most affecting" — which served to excite the orgasm of cruelty. In its formality and dryness Justine recalls both Candide (1759) and Diderot's La religieuse (1760),^58 as in its pathology it anticipates The Monk. Abstract rather than realistic, physiological rather than psychological, Sade is a vivisector rather than a pornographer. In their purest form his heroes are philosophes of the type, apocalyptically warned of by Edmund Burke, to whom human beings are merely mice in a bell-jar.^59 Thus, Rodin is convinced that anatomy will never be perfected until the bodies of children who have been tortured to death are available for study, while for another captive girl in Justine, indistinguishable from the others in Sade's teeming fantasy, "nothing less would suffice than to dissect me alive, in order to study the beating of my heart, and make observations on that organ impracticable in a cadaver."^60

Now, such cold-blooded objectivity is alien to the nineteenth century. Like Swinburne's domestic sadist Linley,^61 the Victorian villain (at least prior to the self-conscious perversion of the Decadence) "ne me pose pas en philosophe achevé". In contrast to
the scandalously immoral but essentially unconcupiscent Justine, the Victorian portrayal of the pleasure of malevolence, coloured as it was by the inevitable fascination of repulsion, was simultaneously moralistic and voluptuous. Even the most lurid "blood" or sensation novel, however much it might be censured as unimproving, was neither "naughty" in the sense of the French novel, nor blasphemous in the Sadean sense, since the proprieties were invariably observed: ordinary sexuality was never explicit, though rape, described in proper euphemism, was not unknown; lip service was paid to moral convention, or moral terror was invoked; sympathy was professed for victims; and villains were reprobated. The taboo on reference to ordinary sexual relations, which had led to the Rev. Thomas Bowdler's Family Shakespeare (1818), as well as the depreciation of the eighteenth-century novel, made Bain's "anomalous" phenomenon, of "voluptuous excitement from the infliction of pain", a useful sensation indeed.

Hence, in James Grant's First Love and Last Love: A Tale of the Indian Mutiny (1868), the associations of ravishment:

... he grasped her rudely by the shoulder, tearing all her muslin dress, and rending her bodice, and then the lovely English girl stood palpitating before them in all the ivory whiteness of her skin, bare almost to the slender waist, her glorious golden hair rolling in masses over her shoulders and delicate bosom, her blue eyes full of anguish and utter dismay, the parted lips showing her close, small teeth, and her lovely hands, the while, were crossed on her breast in prayer and entreaty ...

* In Alfred Butler's Elphinstone (1841), for example, an innocent girl is inveigled into a "gay house", i.e. a brothel, but swoons before actually being touched, the author closing the scene of her unconscious undoing with these words: "Let not the pen of man describe, for mere amusement, the terrible steps by which the most beautiful and excellent creature in all creation sinks into the most despicable, hideous and loathsome. Let nothing but imagination deal with it, and if it cannot picture it, so much the better" (vol. II, p. 205).
These interesting palpitations recall those of Rodin's victim in *Justine*, but with an additional relish of crocodilian sympathy, and with the excuse of arousing indignation at what, according to Ruskin, "we could not have known to be within the practicable compass of human guilt, but for the acts of the Indian mutineer." Grant's "moral" purpose is fulfilled in a later scene of his novel in which guilty Sepoys are blown from the mouths of cannon by British officers, a method apparently never hit upon by Sade himself.

Victorian fiction, then, could be more sadistic than Sade, its perversity deepened as well as masked by pseudo-innocence and hyperbolic sentiment. This is especially typical of the lowest form of popular fiction, of which G.W.M. Reynolds's *Wagner, the Wehr-Wolf* (c. 1846) may be taken as an example. *Wagner* displays astonishing episodic and fantastic inventiveness, far beyond Sade's, though not to compare with Charles Robert Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820), the last important Gothic novel proper, to which *Wagner* seems vaguely indebted. In motif *Wagner* ranges through lycanthropy, Rosicrucianism, the Inquisition, the Faustian bargain, Return to Nature, and banditry; in locale through the Black Forest, a tropical isle, Renaissance Florence, a Carmelite nunnery, and a Turkish harem. But Reynolds's forte was sadistic animation, however padded in maudlin sentiment, and the contrivance of fantasy to accommodate it. The nunnery in *Wagner*, of which the superior "was a tall, thin, stern-looking woman, with a sallow complexion, an imperious compression of the lips, and small grey eyes that seemed to flicker with malignity", boasts a subterranean penitentiary, into which victims disappear via a secret trap-door. An involuntary penitent here is the beautiful Countess of Arestino, accused of adultery, who is forced to witness the living
immurement of an errant nun, before being transferred to an Inquisitorial prison, where her implacable husband insists on the rack — and that her lover be present. The husband's "ears drink in those agonizing screams, as if they made a delicious melody", while "from the female's hands and feet thick clots of gore fell on the stone pavement,

For, oh! upon that rack lay stretched the fair and half-naked form of Giulia of Arestino, — its symmetry convulsing in matchless tortures — the bosom palpitating awfully with the pangs of that earthly hell — and the exquisitely modelled limbs enduring all the hideous pains of dislocation ...  64

Not even in The Monk had such gloating cruelty appeared in English. But this morbidly misplaced eroticism is also characteristic, as already mentioned, of James Grant, a three-volume novelist published by Chapman & Hall and Routledge. In his Jane Seton: or the King's Advocate, set in sixteenth-century Edinburgh, the heroine, shrinking from the admiration of the "ghastly" Lord Otterburn, is traduced by him on a charge of sorcery, and soon finds herself, on the rack, "extended, almost nude, before so many voluptuous eyes ... her beautiful arms being extended at full length above her head, revealing the exquisite rounding of her bust and waist." Otterburn himself is perplexed by this translation of his love into a malevolence which pursues every humiliation and torment of its object. "He had two existences, and two hearts — one which loved, and one which hated — one that longed to possess, and another that longed to destroy her." At her stripping and examination under torture, over which Otterburn, as King's Advocate, presides, his "agony was frightful. He could have screamed aloud; and, to prevent himself doing so, buried his fingers in his breast beneath his robe." 65 The Countess of Arestino's
"matchless tortures" had been witnessed, unwillingly, by her lover and, pleasurably, by her hater, i.e. her husband. But in the rack scene of Jane Seton, by another turn of the screw, the witnessing lover and hater are one.

Sadistic fantasy, in short, was the recurrent symptom of an unconscious ambivalence of emotion, of a self-division typical of the age. Cytherea in Hardy's Desperate Remedies, who attracts the sinister Aeneas Manston, "shrank from the hot voluptuous nature of his passion for her", and dreams that she is tied to a wall and flagellated, with a whip of bones, by Manston wearing an executioner's mask. The characteristically morbid substitution of blood for sexuality, victimisation for courtship, is especially evident in another genre of the Victorian Gothic, the vampire fantasy. This substitution, or transformation, is adumbrated in Coleridge's "Christabel" (1816), crudely realised in Malcolm Rymer's Varney the Vampire; or The Feast of Blood (c. 1846), adapted to melodrama in Dion Boucicault's play The Phantom (1852), and most subtly exploited in Le Fanu's "Carmilla" (1871).

However, the culminating vampire is Bram Stoker's Dracula (1897), a supernatural brute and parasitic sensualist, whose repellent yet seductive embrace destroys women morally as well as physically. "I did not want to hinder him", one such victim later deposes. "I suppose it is a part of the horrible curse that such is, when his touch is on the victim." Women repeatedly violated become vampires also, swelling the Count's harem: "She seemed like a nightmare of Lucy as she lay there; the pointed teeth, the bloodstained, voluptuous
which it made one shudder to see — the whole carnal and unspiritual appearance, seeming like a devilish mockery of Lucy's sweet purity." Arthur, the "pure" Lucy's erstwhile lover, must transfix with the stake this transformed, nightmare Lucy, a scene symbolic of the wedding-night trauma remarked by alienists: "The Thing in the coffin writhed... the sharp white teeth champed together till the lips were cut, and the mouth was smeared with crimson foam."

Implicit also in the vampire fantasy and complementary to its sadism was a self-yielding acquiescence, manifesting itself even in the depth of horror or terror. Translated to Dracula's Transylvanian castle, Jonathan Harker, an up-and-coming solicitor's clerk, is accosted by three blood-thirsty succubae and finds himself falling under a deadly fascination of revulsion: "There was a deliberate voluptuousness which was both thrilling and repulsive... I could feel the soft, shivering touch of the lips on the supersensitive skin of my throat, and the hard dents of two sharp teeth, just touching and pausing there. I closed my eyes in a languorous ecstacy and waited - waited with beating heart..." In Le Fanu's "Carmilla", Laura's seduction is subtler, the languorous, deathful yielding, to "the rapture of that cruelty, which yet is love", surer. Like Maud Ruthyn, the orphaned heiress held at the mercy of her fascinating but rapacious Uncle Silas, the lonesome Laura, natural prey of the vampire, is an almost acquiescent victim, "unaccountably" enthralled by the ardent caresses of the mysterious guest Carmilla, yet simultaneously feeling something "ambiguous", "something of repulsion". Declining under a malady in which "a sense of the horrible" mingle with gradually with a constant fascination, Laura does not grasp the
truth even when she awakens from her recurrent nightmare of strangulation to glimpse "Carmilla, standing, near the foot of my bed, in her white nightdress, bathed, from her chin to her feet, in one great stain of blood." 69

Perhaps the most pernicious element of this cult of the victim, of which Le Fanu, among many other Victorian novelists, was certainly a devotee, was its implicit introversion of sadistic impulse, obvious enough in the self-yielding ecstasy of the vampire fantasy. Even the high priestess of positivism, Harriet Martineau, confessed that, as a girl, "all manner of deaths at the stake and on the scaffold, I went through in imagination, in the low sense in which St. Theresa craved martyrdom; and night after night, I lay bathed in cold perspiration till I sank into a sleep of exhaustion." 70 To return to literature proper, Mrs. Browning's Aurora Leigh is a fair example of the victim sensibility, its title heroine even imagining herself in the place of the poisoness Brinvilliers undergoing judicial torture. Accomplished punisher as he is, Heathcliff, in the case of Isabella Linton, "sometimes relented, from pure lack of invention, in my experiments on what she could endure, and still creep shamefully cringing back! ... I never, in all my life, met with such an abject thing as she is." 71

The word masochism, first recorded in English in 1893, was coined by the German alienist Krafft-Ebing, after Sacher-Masoch, an Austrian novelist, whose heroes regularly surrender themselves to abasement and destruction at the hands of fiendish women. Masochism, in effect, was the inevitable complement to sadism in the context of that pathological ambivalence pervasive throughout the theme of villainy;
and both the Divine Marquis and his Austrian complement are present in spirit in "Anactoria" (1866), Swinburne's dramatic monologue in which the original Lesbian yearns to be the torturer and destroyer of a beloved maiden, if not to burn with her. In Wuthering Heights, Catherine boasts "such faith in Linton's love, that I believe I might kill him, and he wouldn't wish to retaliate"; and she and Heathcliff do, in effect, torture each other to death. But the classic simplicity of Wuthering Heights contrasts the laboured perversity and pseudo-lyricism of a novel it partly inspired, the uncompleted Lesbia Brandon (1877), by Swinburne, who had been initiated into Richard Monkton Milnes's extraordinary collections, both literary and human, and read Justine as well as Baudelaire's Les fleurs du mal (1857). Thus, in Lesbia Brandon, Denham the tutor, hopelessly yearning for the lady-wife of his employer, eases himself by mercilessly flogging her brother, who, in turn, with incestuous overtones, enjoys pain suffered for her. Denham himself would have given his life for leave to touch her, his soul for a chance of dying crushed down under her feet: an emotion of extreme tenderness, lashed to fierce insanity by the circumstances, frothed over into a passion of vehement cruelty. Deeply he desired to die by her, if that could be; and more deeply, if this could be, to destroy her: scourge her into swooning and absorb the blood with kisses; caress and lacerate her loveliness, alleviate and heighten her pains; to feel her foot upon his throat, and wound her own with his teeth; submit his body and soul for a little to her lightest will, and satiate upon hers the desperate caprice of his immeasurable desire; to inflict careful torture on limbs too tender to embrace, suck the tears off her laden eyelids, bite through her sweet and shuddering lips.

Of course, Swinburne, with his eager compounding of perversions, peculiar algolagnia, and infection of French diabolism, was an exceptional figure. Yet, he only exaggerates the tendency apparently
inherent in Victorian eroticism, and which also appears, remarkably, in Morris's "Haystack in the Floods". There, the treacherous Godmar, disappointed of "doing that I list to do/To your fair wilful body..." threatens his "wretched" captive with remand to Paris, where she stands accused of sorcery:

Do you know, Jehane, they cry for you:
Jehane the brown! Jehane the brown!
Give us Jehane to burn or drown.

... Sweet my friend,
This were indeed a piteous end
For those long fingers and long feet
And long neck, and smooth shoulders sweet;
An end that few men would forget
That saw it. 76

However, Morris's starkness is also exceptional, for the keynote, as already indicated, of Victorian sado-masochism, the cult of the victim, is crocodilian sentiment, and its key word is interesting; as, in Samuel Warren's Diary of a Late Physician (1832), that "Romance of Death", the visit to a young lady "dying — absolutely dying by inches" of consumption, is "painfully interesting". (Italics added for interesting here and in following quotations). Implicit in such interesting beauty was the imagination of its abuse and despoilment, and another "lovely sufferer" in whom Warren's Physician feels "deep interest" "was the victim of that terrible scourge of the female sex, a cancer", and must therefore re-enact the martyrdom of St. Agatha, whose breasts were torn by tongs: "And was it this innocent and beautiful being who was doomed to writhe beneath the torture and disfiguration of the operating knife? My heart ached."77 The sentiment is less frenetic but still typical in Anne Brontë's The Tenant of Wildfell Hall (1848), where the victim of an assault "looked very interesting as he lay reclining there, in his elegant
dressing-gown, with a silk handkerchief bound across his temples." The morbid tendency was noticed even by the Victorians, though in a different sense than it might appear now; by 1860, according to *The Saturday Review*, "We seem to have arrived at this point — that the most *interesting* class of womanhood is woman at her lowest degradation." "Crime and Fiction" (1890), a *Blackwood's Magazine* critique of popular taste, deplored that "the patrons of the circulating libraries prefer to be excited and *interested.*"

Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary* (1755) had defined *interest* as "to affect; to move; to touch with passion; to gain the affections: as, this is an *interesting* story." But evidently, by the turn of the eighteenth century, the word had taken on, in French as well as English, its perverse connotation of titillation. Such *interest* is explicit in the tribulations of Diderot's *Religieuse*, not to speak of *Justine*, while Mrs. Radcliffe certainly overworked the word in *The Italian* (1797), where Ellena's piteous looks "might have interested almost any heart that was not corroded by its own suffering." Even in Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* (1811) there is a hint of morbidity about the word: "Confess, Marianne, is not there something interesting to you in the flushed cheek, hollow eye, and quick pulse of a fever?" However, Shelley, in his Gothic novelette *Zastrozzi* (1810), revelled in the sadistic voluptuousness of *interest*; seized by the Inquisitorial torturers, Matilda's "dishevelled ringlets floated in negligent luxuriance over her alabaster bosom... and her symmetrical form, as borne away by the four officials, looked *interestingly lovely.*"
An early Victorian exercise in interest is De Quincey's tale "The Household Wreck" (1838), in which the chaste young wife Agnes is literally a "lamb fallen amongst wolves; trembling, fluttering fawn, whose path was inevitably to be crossed by the bloody tiger." Her "childlike innocence, the sweet feminine timidity", attracts the vicious Barratt, who, unable to seduce her, brings a false charge of larceny. Treated as a criminal and sentenced by a pitiless magistrate to ten years' hard labour, Agnes's fate was like that "of a young female Christian martyr, in the early ages of Christianity", nor does her "shrinking, trembling, fainting nature" long survive imprisonment. A parallel in the fine arts with "The Household Wreck" is Hiram Powers's sculpture The Greek Slave, which stimulated much interest at the Great Exhibition of 1851, being celebrated in a sonnet by Mrs. Browning, which Dickens printed in Household Words (26 October 1850). The Slave, a nude girl of "passionless perfection", in Mrs. Browning's phrase — though one passion, pudency, is much in evidence — is longing for the clothing and crucifix of which she has just been stripped, and pitifully striving "with enshackled hands", to cover their loss. The Greek Slave is, in fact, typical of the uses of nudity in Victorian art.

To be sure, "in the whole range of physiology, nosology, and metaphysics", as Dr. Walter Johnson put it in The Morbid Emotions of Women (1850), "there are no more interesting problems than those which are presented to us by Young Women!" from the victim "pale and hollow-cheeked, with her features acutely delicate"; the hysterical; the hypochondriac; and the consumptive; even to the Magdalen. Indeed, Queen Magdalene, whom Jane Seton is accused of
blanding with witchcraft, "was only in her sixteenth year; but over her girlish loveliness the palor of consumption was then spreading a veil more tender and enchanting." Wilkie Collins's Woman in White, pitifully shut up in the asylum after her seduction; Little Nell, the angelic but fragile child menaced by "dark and secret deeds", as well as Little Emily in *Copperfield* doomed to "Magdalenism"; Hypatia, whose terrible fate "it is not difficult to agree with Ruskin ... should for ever have been left in silence"; the dove-like victim Pompilia in *The Ring and the Book*; in *Daniel Deronda* both Mirah the fugitive Jewess and the "nervous" Gwendolen; the gallery of variously interesting heroines is interminable. Lesbia Brandon, who ends pale as Proserpine, a "living corpse", having "killed herself off by inches, with the help of eau-de-Cologne and doses of opium", is a proto-Decadent caricature of this heroine, who perhaps reaches her ultimate refinement as the mysteriously dying Milly Theale in Henry James's *The Wings of the Dove* (1902).

As Mario Praz has pointed out in *The Romantic Agony* (1933), the lineal ancestress of this interesting heroine was Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa* (1747-48), who is, as Marian Erle was to be in *Aurora Leigh*, abducted to a brothel, drugged and raped. Clarissa's relentless persecutor, Lovelace — the original "destroyer" and collateral ancestor of Alec d'Urberville — while professing his devoted love, obviously delights in staining her purity, outraging her sensibility, degrading and despoiling her in every possible way. Yet, Clarissa herself unconsciously invites this victimisation. Even before madly eloping with him, Clarissa dreams that Lovelace,
seizing upon me, carried me into a churchyard; and there, notwithstanding all my prayers and tears, and protestations of innocence, stabbed me to the heart, and then tumbled me into a deep grave ready dug, among two or three half-dissolved carcases; throwing in the dirt and earth upon me with his hands, and trampling it down with his feet.

This necrophobic vision is, of course, fulfilled, at least indirectly, although Clarissa succumbs to no physical cause, but rather to the moral effects of her outraged virginity, the loss of which, like the original Lucretia, she cannot survive. Her dissolution, after a lingering deathbed of unctuous piety, is thus, again, partly self-willed victimisation; while even Lovelace, mortally wounded by Clarissa's war-like cousin, makes an affecting end.

Not surprisingly, Sade himself paid tribute to "the immortal Richardson" and Mario Praz identifies Clarissa as the prototype of the long succession of persecuted, condemned, or moribund women who titillated the Romantic-Decadent imagination, from Shelley's "Medusa of Leonardo da Vinci" (1819) to Walter Pater's La Gioconda, who, "like the vampire ... has been dead many times, and learned the secrets of the grave..." However, in addition to the common element of delectatio morbosa, it is in its unctuous moralism and unconscious sadism that Clarissa most anticipates Victorian fiction of villainy, which in this way was more perverse than the deliberate satanism of Baudelaire and Huysmans.

Lovelace's attitude towards Clarissa, at once his "cruel" beloved and his suffering victim, as well as her own coy, masochistic revenge, adumbrates the ambivalence of the fascination of repulsion and the cult of the victim. This ambivalence, implicit in the whole sado-
masochistic syndrome generated by the theme of villainy, is specifically confirmed by the alternation of role, from predator to victim, which such _femmes fatales_ as Milady, the Marchioness of Brinvilliers, and Lady Audley undergo; as well as by the literal metamorphoses of the vampire fantasy, by which "purity" transformed to "voluptuous wantonness" (_Dracula_), that "playful, languid, beautiful girl" Carmilla to a "writhing fiend". Bulwer-Lytton's _Lucretia_ nominally recalls Livy's (and Shakespeare's) chaste heroine as well as Lucretia Borgia. As Jules Michelet implied in _La sorcière_ (1862), witchcraft was especially _interesting_ by virtue of its simultaneous intimation of temptress and victim, malignant and saint. There is a relic of this sorcerous ambiguity about Eustacia Vye in _The Return of the Native_ (1878), while Alec d'Urberville, after his own relapse from Christianity, addresses the reluctant Tess as "you temptress ... you dear damned witch." Tess herself, another "pure woman" sexually victimised, is resigned, after murdering Alec, to the further role of sacrificial victim.

Ultimately, the confusion of heroine and victim, lover and hater, seems to have had its source in a fundamental ambivalence of moral direction, an ambivalence which, for all the hysterical "voluptuousness" with which it was attended, went far beyond mere erotic sensibility. Krafft-Ebing's _Psychopathia Sexualis_ (1886) was the treatise of an epoch, not only suspicious of sexuality and fearful of "bad passions", but obsessed with the essential dangerousness of psychic energy. It was entirely characteristic that Freud, beginning with mesmerism, hysteria, and the nightmares of the unconscious, should have finally discovered in the libido itself an inherent
morbidity, an irresoluble impulse to self-destruction.

**Ellen Middleton (1844)**, a forgotten novel by Lady Georgiana Charlotte Fullerton, Roman Catholic convert and foundress of The Poor Servants of the Mother of God Incarnate, may be revived here in recapitulation of the unconscious ambivalence of Victorian fiction. Ellen Middleton, as a fifteen-year-old orphan, causes the death of a younger cousin, who accidentally falls from a balcony when Ellen, in a rage, strikes her. On coming to herself after a faint, Ellen finds that her part in the girl's death seems to be unknown. She does not confess it but continues guiltily to live with the dead cousin's parents, who act as her own foster-parents. By the time she reaches marriageable age, it is apparent that both her remaining cousins, the stern Edward Middleton and the rakish Henry Lovell, are in love with her, or at least interested by her. It is then that Ellen is thrilled by hints that the upright Edward is aware of her tormenting secret. He wordlessly presents her with a copy of *The Christian Year* in which the passages concerning guilt and remorse are underscored. Already obsessed by fantasies of expiation, Ellen avidly accepts the morose Edward as both judge and lover: "He should have stood before me with that stern commanding brow, and pronounced my sentence; and I would have knelt to him, and submitted to any penance ..." Later, in an expiatory ecstasy, she attempts to inoculate herself with hydrophobia.

The twist, however, is that the secret sharer turns out to be, not Cousin Edward at all, but Cousin Henry, who made it appear to be Edward. Long obsessed by Ellen, Henry, who had been spying on her when the cousin's death occurred, swears that "next to being loved
there is nothing like being hated ... If I could not see the woman I loved agitated by her love for me, I had rather see her tremble — shudder even — at my presence." When Ellen shrinks from him, he threateningly adds: "I must be the blessing or the curse of your life. Never shall I be indifferent to you. You have refused in ignorance, in madness ... to be my wife. You shall be my victim ..." Driven to her deathbed, in part by Henry's skillful inflammation of her guilt, Ellen is at last absolved after complete confession to a clergyman, and "had never looked so beautiful in her days of pride and health, as now, on her bed of sickness and sorrow, of penitence and peace." The ostensible moral, not only an affirmation of the Sacrament of Penance, is also similar to that of Cardinal Newman's Callista, who finally enters the peace passing all understanding, transfigured by spiritual beauty, though thrust into a cesspool by pagans. Yet, while it is similarly submerged in the gloom of religious fanaticism, Ellen Middleton does suggestively foreshadow the permutations of love and hate in Wuthering Heights, Great Expectations, Daniel Deronda, and Tess of the d'Urbervilles.

Henry Lovell's obsession with the control of another's life also illustrates another corollary of the pleasure of malevolence. Indeed, Bain had discovered a "pleasure of power", in the "control of other beings", closely associated with malevolence. "There is a great pleasure in bending the wills of other men by force, authority, terror, or persuasion." What is more, "The putting of other beings to pain is one of the ways of gratifying the sense of power ..." Perhaps even more pertinent to Victorian mores, "The headship of a family gives scope for the sentiment of power in various ways; and in some minds this is the principal enjoyment of the position." In effect,
Bain's formulation of the "pleasure of power" brings out an additional sociological perspective of villainy and sadism.

Bid your Papa Goodnight. Sweet Exhibition!
They kiss the Rod with filial submission.

So Gerard Manley Hopkins imagines the family of Thomas Hopley, a schoolmaster convicted in 1860 of the manslaughter of a mentally deficient pupil, whom he seems to have caned to death. As Forbes Winslow, a prominent alienist much given to euphemism, admitted, there were, "within the sacred precincts of domestic life, great irregularities of conduct and a fearful amount of domestic misery." Another notable alienist recorded the case of a gentleman, possessed of "high notions of parental authority, rigid notions of the total and absolute depravity of human nature", as well as one daughter; and, before being certified non compos mentis, he was in the habit of

tying this daughter to a bed-post, flogging her with the most unmerciful severity, aggravating her sufferings by the application of brine, flogging her repeatedly with a horsewhip, pulling her hair out by the roots, and compelling her to perform the meanest drudgery.

Such victimisation recalls Shelley's Beatrice Cenci,

... whom her father sometimes hales
From hall to hall by the entangled hair;
At others, pens up naked in damp cells
Where scaly reptiles crawl, and starves her there,
Till she will eat strange flesh ...

Ignoring the unspeakable implications, however, the deranged English gentleman's notions of "parental authority" and "absolute depravity" identify the Victorian context of hypocritical or hysterical moralism, where self-knowledge, in any case, was forfeit, and domestic enormities, "great irregularities of conduct", "soul murder" in effect, might be condoned. This pathology of domestic oppression is
familiar enough in classics such as Jane Eyre, David Copperfield, and The Way of all Flesh (1903; posthumous); but it was also the subject of a host of minor novels, some with very characteristic titles; thus, Sarah Stickney’s Home; or The Iron Rule (1836), James Anthony Froude’s Shadows of the Clouds (1847), Dinah Mulock’s Bread upon the Waters (1852), Holme Lee’s Gilbert Massenger (1855), the Rev. William J. Conybeare’s Perversion (1856), Frances Notley’s Beneath the Wheels (1870), and Emma Jane Worboise’s The House of Bondage (1873). Like Mrs. Clennam in Little Dorrit, the fanatical aunt of Anthony Trollope’s Linda Tressel (1867–68) holds it “good that hearts should be broken, that all the inner humanities of the living being should be, as it were, crushed on a wheel and ground into fragments ...”101

Swinburne’s only completed novel, Love’s Cross-Currents (1877), is dominated by the formidable Lady Hidhurst, who lives, vicariously, through the lives of two generations of her family, controlling and manipulating, ordaining marriages and extinguishing love affairs, as she wills. Although her control is not necessarily evil, it exemplifies that “pleasure of power” to which the “headship of a family” seemed conducive. But it is Linley in Lesbia Brandon, recalling his wife, who casually reveals an expert awareness of the more sinister possibilities of this “headship”:

I never knew such a good woman. And I never cared for any one (that is, for more than half an hour) as I did for her sister. And when her sister died I set myself to torment her. There was nothing else left me ... She was curiously fond of her boy; I used to scourge her through him ... It drew blood of both at once. She couldn’t stand it; not constantly. And I never would stand tears in my presence; she had to swallow them; and digest. I suppose they disagreed with her. Je lui faisais passer de mauvais quarts-d’heure. Et cependant je ne me pose pas en philosophe achevé; I don’t see why any one should liken me to old Cenci ... I can truly say I never outstepped the duties of a British parent, or the rights of a British husband. Never! 102
Moreover, not only was the domestic forcing-house liable to the worst perversion, whether self-conscious and deliberate as in Linley, or monomaniacal as in Mrs. Clennam, but this domestic perversion was recapitulated in various institutional paradigms, models of the warping Machine, often functioning as succedanea of the parent or husband. Thus, in Nicholas Nickleby and Jane Eyre, as in Froude's Shadows of the Clouds and Conybeare's Perversion, the schoolmaster, by malign design, acts in loco parentis. Like the Squeersian boarding-school, the madhouse was another forcing-house of perversion, where, in this case, the pleasure of power indulged itself in the manufacture of madness. The Woman in White comes first to mind; but in Charles Reade's Hard Cash (1863), a villain has his righteously disobedient son so confined in a private institution, and in Le Fanu's The Rose and the Key (1871), a mother her too independent daughter, who becomes the "patient" of a sadistic alienist. The madhouse theme persisted to the very turn of the century with Headon Hill's Caged! The Romance of a Lunatic Asylum (1900).

Stranger than any sensation novel, however, was the Incarceration of Lady Lytton Bulwer. In the Gloomy Cell of a Madhouse!, as an anonymous shilling tract (c. 1856), complete with a woodcut of the victim "in the dismal dungeon of Bedlam", is entitled. In fact, the life of Lady Rosina Bulwer-Lytton, wife of the novelist and novelist herself, did resemble that of one of her husband's heroines. When The Woman in White appeared, Lady Bulwer-Lytton wrote to Wilkie Collins, offering to disclose the identity of an even more consummate villain than Fosco: "The man is alive and constantly under my eye, in fact he is my husband." Rosina's denunciations, public and private, of her husband led him, in 1858, while standing for
parliament, to have her detained in a private asylum, from which she secured her release after four weeks. This was the "Mad House Conspiracy" fully exposed in Rosina's pseudo-memoir A Blighted Life (1886), which apparently implicates John Forster and "Mr. Humbug Dickens" in Bulwer-Lytton's "plots" against her. 104

Naturally enough, Rosina was indignant at that "despotic Law ... which now enables a Husband to lock up his Wife in a Madhouse on the certificate of two medical men, who often in haste, frequently for a bribe, certify to madness where none exists"; 105 and in this criticism she recalls the former champion of female emancipation, Mary Wollstonecraft, whose uncompleted novel The Wrongs of Woman; or Maria (1798) shows a sensitive young wife imprisoned by her husband in this way. Yet, for Rosina, as for Mary Wollstonecraft, this inequity of the lunacy laws was merely a symptom of a more profound perversion, namely, the "English slave-trade of women", 106 by which Rosina, in her novel Miriam Sedley (1851), was referring, not to the flourishing white-slave traffic, alluded to in Aurora Leigh and Uncle Silas, but to the institution of marriage itself.

According to Mary Wollstonecraft, gentlemen were first taught cruelty to the weak at public school, "where it is one of the rare sports of the boys to torment the miserable brutes that fall in their way. The transition, as they grow up, from barbarity to brutes to domestic tyranny over wives, children, and servants, is very easy." 107 In the Victorian context it was J.S. Mill, On the Subjection of Women (1869), who most forcefully analysed the domestic pathology of the pleasures of power and malevolence:
We know that the bad propensities of human nature are only kept within bounds when they are allowed no scope for their indulgence... Such being the common tendency of human nature, the almost unlimited power which present social institutions give to the man over at least one human being - the one with whom he resides, and whom he has always present - this power seeks out and evokes the latent germs of selfishness in the remotest corner of his nature... In domestic as in political tyranny, the case of absolute monsters chiefly illustrates the institution /marriage/ by showing that there is scarcely any horror which may not occur under it if the despot pleases...

Everywhere animating the eloquent logic of Mill's treatise is the vivid imagination of female suffering, the state of the wife, as he says in an especially scarifying passage, comparing unfavourably with that of the slave.

Above all, a female slave has (in Christian countries) an admitted right, and is considered under a moral obligation, to refuse to her master the last familiarity. Not so the wife: however brutal a tyrant she may unfortunately be chained to - though she may know that he hates her, though it may be his daily pleasure to torture her, and though she may find it impossible not to loathe him - he can claim from her and enforce the lowest degradation of a human being, that of being made the instrument of an animal function contrary to her inclinations. 108

Mill's argument of "absolute monsters" immediately recalls the narrator of "My Last Duchess" in Browning's Dramatic Lyrics (1842); but Madeline Bray in Nicholas Nickleby, who is to be "sold" by her unscrupulous father to an old miser — Mirah in Daniel Deronda is a fugitive from a like fate — is another victim of the common "English slave-trade of women". Poor, cowed Mmes. Quilp and Copperfield, and Anne Brontë's unfortunate Tenant of Wildfell Hall may also be recalled; and the unspeakable Jonas Chuzzlewit, having endured her quizzes during his courtship, sets himself "to conquer his wife, break her spirit, bend her temper, crush all her humours like so many nut-shells — kill her, for aught I know."109 The implacable "perversity" of the monomaniacal Trevelyan, in Anthony Trollope's He Knew He was Right
who harshly punishes his wife for an imaginary offence, because "she must be crushed in spirit ... before she can again become a pure and happy woman ... made it almost unwise in any woman to trust herself to the power of a husband." In Wilkie Collins's *Man and Wife* (1870), the portrayal of such conjugal victimisation is sensational, as well as a mission of legal reform. And, thus, in *Daniel Deronda*, Gwendolen Harleth, in succession to Mercy Pecksniff and Isabella Linton, soon after marriage makes an uncomfortable discovery of her new master's inclinations: "He delights in making the dogs and horses quail: that is half his pleasure in calling them his ... It will come to be so with me; and I shall quail."

However, in novels such as *Wuthering Heights*, *David Copperfield*, and *Daniel Deronda*, the methodical oppression and degradation of wives is but one aspect of a pervasive theme of perversion, of the "forcing" of human life; as usual, the sadistic syndrome is integral to a broader principle of thematic organisation. A significant example is the familiar one of the evil genius acting in loco parentis, deliberately deforming rather than forming character. Thus, Monks, Oliver Twist's wicked half-brother, not only suppresses the evidence of Oliver's parentage and has him slaved in the workhouse, but later fees his fosterage with Fagin, that Oliver may verily be twisted beyond rectification. Harrison Ainsworth's *Jack Sheppard* (1839) is manipulated into a life of crime ending on the gallows, by a similar evil genius, Jonathan Wild the thief-taker, who had already degraded Jack's mother and hanged his father. Henry Fielding's *Jonathan Wild* (1743) is at least not guilty of this careful perversion of children, which is a peculiarly Victorian villainy. With some anticipation of Jaggers in *Great Expectations*, Ainsworth's Wild is
privy to all Newgate secrets, cultivating a crop of crime for harvest, although his malevolence towards Jack, as well as towards Jack's mother, whom he finally drives into the madhouse, seems to go beyond mere commercial interest. Yet, the most diabolical travesty of the moral agency of parenthood must be Heathcliff's systematic brutalisation of the young women and children who fall into his power. His re-creation, by way of revenge against God, of the degradation and perversity which had originally separated Catherine from him, is the ultimate imagination of "the control of other beings".

"Now, my bonny lad, you are mine! And we'll see if one tree won't grow as crooked as another, with the same wind to twist it!" Thus Heathcliff intimates his intention respecting the infant Hareton Earnshaw, rightful heir of Wuthering Heights. This grim metaphor recalls the horticultural image, already remarked, of the forcing-house. So Brocklehurst transplants the unfortunate Jane Eyre into his "nursery of chosen plants", i.e. Lowood Institution, that Dothegirls Hall; while Wemmick, Jaggers's clerk in Great Expectations, visiting his "greenhouse", i.e. Newgate, "walked among the prisoners, much as a gardener might walk among his plants." Jaggers's client Miss Havisham actually frames her experiments in human distortion, at Satis House, with a forcing-garden overgrown with weed. The forcing-house, then, was really the metaphor of an ultimate villainy which, in Dicken's words, "reversed the order of Creation", stunting healthful growth and nurturing monstrosity.

The symbolic forcing-house recurs in Desperate Remedies, where it is attached to the mansion of the ambiguous Miss Aldolyffe, who personifies "a Lachesis or Fate" in her mysterious shaping, or
misshaping, of lives, especially that of the heroine Cytherea. Such cosmic implications of villainy occur even to the unimaginative Marian Erle, who questions, after her own "forcing" at the direction of the ruthless Lady Waldemar, whether God indeed makes

All sorts of creatures really, do you think?
Or is it that the Devil slavers them
So excellently, that we come to doubt
Who's stronger, He who makes, or he who mars? 117

Another slaver of innocence, and self-slaver, Le Fanu's Silas Ruthyn, identifies himself to his awed niece as a "sick old Prospero", but his Caliban-like son, if not his acidic pleasantry and familiarity with French literature, soon bring into question which powers he really embodies. For the ultimate ambition of the mar-er, the forcer, was the aspiration of Caliban not only, like John Fowles's Collector (1963), to overthrow Prospero and enslave Miranda, but to become Setebos. This, Heathcliff, with his satanic self-re-creation and incarnation of Nemesis to two generations of his enemies, personally accomplishes; and the same terrible accomplishment is less ostensibly encompassed in Great Expectations. It remained for Hardy, outgrowing the sensation-novel form, with its creaking machinations of omnipotent villainy, to exonerate human agency in the perversities of Fate, and expose the sportful malice of "the President of the Immortals" Himself; who, in the audacious lines of Swinburne, which Christina Rossetti veiled in her copy of Atalanta in Calydon (1855),

Smites without sword, and scourges without rod;
The supreme evil, God. 121

iii.
Ineluctably, then, despite manifold inhibitions, the theme of villainy entailed theodicy and Manichaeanism; confused chastisement and sadism; God and Devil. George Meredith's *Richard Feverel* (1859), for instance, is first tempted to mortal sin, wrath, in fact the felony of arson, after overhearing behind a hedge an argument, in "native Doric", between a tinker and a ploughman, on whether God or his adversary controls this world. For the question of moral evil, that is to say, evil perpetrated knowingly by men, inevitably brings into question cosmic design. Teleologically, evil appeared, in the nineteenth century, to be either absolute, i.e. an actual, inseparable, indispensable aspect of a monistic universe; dualistic, as in Manichaeanism; or, in a pluralistic universe, in-immanent, "a waste element", in William James's words, "to be sloughed off and negated..." Baudelaire, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Walt Whitman, in their transcendence of the mundane illusion of "evil", illustrate this first teleological category. Carlyle, who Calvinistically illustrates the second, once took Emerson "amongst all the horrors of London", including the rookeries, gin-shops, and, finally, the House of Commons, the while demanding of his guest, "Do you believe in a devil, noo?" The third category of teleological interpretation may be illustrated by Herbert Spencer, with his faith in an ultimate evanescence of evil, and, less optimistically, by William James, whose pluralism did not alleviate for him the irreducible substance behind "the lunatic's visions of horror": "Crocodiles and rattlesnakes and pythons are at this moment vessels of life as real as we are; their loathsome existence fills every minute of every day that drags its length along..."
Mechanistically, however, as J.S. Mill summed it up, evil was simply the malfunction or malformation of nature, moral evil being, by implication, a dysfunction of the human mechanism; wickedness a blot upon the brain. This mechanistic interpretation does not seem far removed from the view of William James, whose impression of natural evil, hardly less vivid than that of the monomaniacal hero of Tennyson's Maud (1855), really has little in common with the complacency of evolutionary teleology, which consoled itself, in Darwin's words, "with the full belief that the war of nature is not incessant, that no fear is felt, that death is generally prompt, and that the vigorous, the healthy, and the happy survive and multiply." But, above all preponderant, often with hysterical insistence, in both mechanistic and pluralistic conceptions of evil, as well as in Carlylean transcendentalism, was the notion of pathology, the notion of evil as "diseased, inferior, and excrementitious stuff", and, concomitantly, the conception of the daemonic as a force dissociated from cosmic purpose and bent solely on destruction. In short, in the Victorian context, especially as Carlyle used it, daemonic (from the Greek word daimon for a genius or lesser divinity) typically connoted demoniacal, in the sense of De Quincey's "ultra fiendishness". Generally, throughout this study, daemonic will be used in this sense of demoniacal.

Yet, while the Victorian imagination of the daemonic was fixated upon pathology, loathsomeness, and "ultra fiendishness", early Romantic writers had exalted the daemonic as a liberation, a principle of revolt against tyranny, whether that of men, society, or God. This exaltation was philosophical and metaphysical, as well as spiritual and emotional, drawing upon that oceanic reservoir of ideological energy turned kinetic by the outburst of the French
Revolution. In this, Sade, as well as Blake, Godwin, Shelley, and Byron, had a part, and the "Divine Marquis" has consequently figured, at least in French Existentialism, more as "the first theoretician of absolute rebellion", in the words of Albert Camus, than as an eroticist. Sade, Camus continues, is the archetype of Romantic satanism, whereby the hero, in view of the defects of the universe and the hypocrisy of God, conscientiously takes evil as his good.

For Georges Bataille, in *La littérature et le Mal* (1957), which also considers Blake, Emily Brontë, Baudelaire, Jules Michelet, Proust, Kafka, and Jean Genet, Sade is a pioneer of "le véritable Mal", distinguished from its lesser, adulterated forms by disinterestedness, intensity, and integrity.

In Part I of Goethe's *Faust* (1808), another persona of "le véritable Mal", Mephistopheles, announces himself the eternal adversary, "the Spirit that Denies":

> Part of that Part am I, once All, in primal Night, -
> Part of the Darkness which brought forth the Light;

and yet,

> Part of that Power, not understood,
  Which always wills the Bad, and always works the Good.

This ineffable antithesis is also the paradox of Blake's *Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (c. 1793), which mocks the mystic Emanuel Swedenborg's Treatise Concerning Heaven and its Wonders, and Also Concerning Hell (1758; English translation, 1778). Swedenborg had taught "that man is in freedom through the equilibrium between heaven and hell", but Blake superseded this Manichaean delusion with the principle of divine contraries:
Without Contraries is no progression. Attraction and Repulsion, Reason and Energy, Love and Hate, are necessary to Human existence. From these contraries spring what the religious call Good & Evil. Good is the passive that obeys Reason. Evil is the active springing from Energy. Good is Heaven. Evil is Hell.

And, from "The voice of the Devil", "Energy is Eternal Delight."\textsuperscript{131}

But the Romantic marriage of Heaven and Hell gave birth to the Gothic villain-hero, the Prometheus-Satan, and the Byronic outlaw, the archetype of whom was that original non-server and rebel against Omnipotence, the Miltonic Satan. "The reason", Blake noted, "Milton wrote in fetters when he wrote of Angels & God, and at liberty when of Devils & Hell, is because he was a true Poet and of the Devils party without knowing it."\textsuperscript{132} In contradistinction to Edmund Burke, Carlyle's predecessor in Anti-Jacobinism, Blake mystically exalted Liberty in his uncompleted epic \textit{The French Revolution}, at least one book of which was in proof in 1791, only to be suppressed by the publisher. However, as Georges Bataille points out, Blake's imagination of "Evil" was another union of contraries, exalting the divine excess of energy, but resolute in respect of its terror. Hence the resolution of his magnificently awesome "Tyger", in \textit{Songs of Experience} (1794), which contrasts strikingly with William James's "loathsome" crocodile. In its highest reaches the Romantic imagination was redeemed by a catharsis of awe and cosmic defiance, nor is even Byron's \textit{Manfred} (1818), that farrago of Prometheus, Faust, and Hamlet, without this redemptive resolution.

Of course, the Romantic imagination also ran to perversions of sensibility and excesses of sentiment, and Wordsworth, in his Preface to the epoch-making \textit{Lyrical Ballads} (1798), deplored, in imitation of
Goethe's classic disdain, the influx of "frantic" and "sickly" German "tragedies". In fact, William Beckford's Frenchified Vathek (1786), with its fine modulations of cynicism, and Lewis's raving Monk, partly plagiarised from the German, were alike in their dwelling upon titillating abomination. The fixation upon the diabolical and the loathsome, documented at length by Mario Praz, was a less noble offspring of the union of Heaven and Hell, obviously foreshadowing the Victorian fascination of repulsion, where, however, the same fixation is hypocritically disguised and unredeemed by Blakean irony and Byronic spirit.

That spirit is already enfeebled in Valperga (1823), a novel by Mary Shelley, wife of the poet, daughter of William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft, and creator of Frankenstein; or The Modern Prometheus (1818). In Frankenstein, which might also be subtitled The Unhappiness of Virtue, a beautiful and saintly servant-girl, who is falsely accused of an atrocious murder, universally execrated, and publicly executed, is named Justine. Valperga recalls Sade's Les cent-vingt journées de Sodome (unpublished until this century), in which, as Camus interprets it, a coterie of Sadean heroes attempt to realise absolute Liberty through their absolute subjection of a hecatomb of captives assembled, beyond hope, in an impregnable castle. As if in imitation, the interesting Beatrice, in Valperga, is abducted to a similarly "unhallowed asylum of crime", the type of Codmar's castle in "The Haystack in the Floods" or Gilles de Rais's in The Black Douglas, where she, along with another hecatomb of female victims, becomes "the slave of incarnate Evil". But even in this context of interest there was something about...
the author and mechanist of these crimes ... that might be called beautiful; but it was the beauty of the tiger, of lightning, of the cataract that destroys ... his followers worshipped him, but it was as a savage might worship the god of evil ... his eyes beamed with irresistible fire, his smile was as death.

Later, this improbable fiend, like Shelley's Zastrozzi, "calm, courageous and unrepenting", dies fighting when his infamous fortress is stormed.

Otherwise forgotten, Valperga finds a niche in the nosology of Praz's Romantic Agony; in effect, the novel represents moribund Romanticism. Yet, what was moribund in Valperga revived, as powerfully as anomalously, in a novel by the daughter of an obscure Victorian clergyman. In L'homme revolte (1951), Camus begins with Wuthering Heights, in which Heathcliff would kill everybody on earth in order to gain Cathie [sic], but he would never think of saying that murder is reasonable or theoretically defensible. He would commit it; there his theory comes to a halt. This implies powerful love and it implies character. 134

Bataille remarks in this terrible love, which suspends sensuality — even Heathcliff's cruelty is not "voluptuous" — impossibly demands the prolongation of childhood, and defies even death, the apotheosis of le véritable Mal. And J. Hillis Miller, in The Disappearance of God (1963), interprets this ineffable love as the expression of a boundless, daemonic energy, which Heathcliff and Catherine have liberated in their absolute yet innocent violation of moral and sacred law. Their reckless intrusion into this forbidden realm of "terror and immortality", between the human and the divine, destroys them, Miller observes, but makes possible the happiness of their representatives in the next generation.
But, except for *Wuthering Heights* and Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick* (1851), the titanic "Evil" of Elizabethan and early Romantic imagination did not obtain in Victorian literature. This was, in part, the triumph of radical moralism, to which the Victorians were given in place of the Romantics' theoretical daring, but it was also, again, the triumph of positivism, which translated the daemonic into the pathological, as Keats's daemonically miraculous "Lamia" (1820) translates into the physiological phenomenon of Oliver Wendell Holmes's *Elsie Venner* (1861). Typically, Thomas Mayo, a pioneering alienist, among the first to use the term "moral insanity", belittled Byronic rebels as self-deceivers who "have seduced their conscience into an alliance with their inclinations; in the daring apostrophe, 'Evil, be thou my good ...'". The pre-eminent Victorian physiologist, William Benjamin Carpenter, who treated ethology in the same context as digestion and the renal functions, also diagnosed the Satanic, or positively and wilfully evil type of Human nature, in which the highest powers are turned to the worst account ... Such men (whose portraiture is presented by our great Dramatist in the character of Iago) show us to what evil account the highest intellect and the most powerful will may be turned, when directed by the baser class of motives; and we cannot but feel that they are far more degraded in the moral scale, than those who, having never learned to control their animal propensities ... are rather to be considered as ill-conditioned automata, than as vicious men. Apparently, the Victorians either took the myth of the daemonic too literally - "... what is Evil, in its unmistakable shape", demanded Browning, "but a thing to suppress at any price?" — or caricatured it, as in the imp Quilp or the boudoir death-angel Lady Audley. Even such natural heirs of Blake as Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Swinburne - Monkton Milnes collected editions of Blake as well as of
Sade — and the Decadents could never really transcend the moralistic imperative against which they were in revolt, or shake off the fascination of repulsion, and their work is seldom free of self-conscious naughtiness and sophomoric audacity. In an otherwise laudatory review of Dorian Gray, Walter Pater regretfully found its crowning moral to be "that vice and crime make people coarse and ugly." The Victorian Faust is The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (1886), and in the revolting, asymmetrical alter ego, the only reward of his unholy aspiration, the degraded Faustus, Jekyll, recognises that "imprint of deformity and decay" left by "evil ... the lethal side of man", the same seal of the "Genius of Darkness", presumably, which Carlyle detected in the countenances of "Model Prisons", and which, in its physical or moral stamp, distinguished so many villains. So obsessed by pathology, the Victorian imagination seemed unable, for all its fascination with the subject, to deal profoundly with the mystery of moral evil, as Baudelaire or Dostoyevsky could.

In Victorian literature, for whatever positivistic and moralistic reasons, violation of moral and divine law, in Carlyle's words, "the destructive adventure of defying God and all the universe", could lead only to the squalor of the madhouse or the prison. This is the knockdown moral of Bulwer-Lytton's Lucretia, which closes horripilately in the madhouse. In the prison scene which closes Browning's The Ring and the Book, Count Guido, though he has brazened out his trial, despicably cringes before the executioner, calling on his murdered victim Pompilia to save him. Dorian Gray is subtler in its moral terror, the tell-tale disfiguration of evil being obscured by an illusion, only to be climactically revealed. In
Henry James’s *The Turn of the Screw* (1898), the same moral squalor, degradation, and unmentionability accompany evil. Even the "remarkable" Mr. Kurtz — "You can't judge Mr. Kurtz as you would an ordinary man. No, no, no!" — in the culmination of the nineteenth-century diabolical theme, Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* (1899), dwindles, ultimately, to a skeletal puppet, "hollow at the core", and raving of "horror", presumably the horror of his own inward vision. Only Heathcliff, after all, is somehow beyond morality and immune to any retribution or horror outside his own chosen hell. No wonder Charlotte Brontë, in the preface to the second edition of her dead sister's novel, affirmed a "horror of great darkness" in it, and doubted "whether it is right or advisable to create beings like Heathcliff ..."
NOTES TO CHAPTER I


5. See Thomas Hardy's prefatory note to the 1889 edition of *Desperate Remedies*.


38. See Le Fanu's preface to Uncle Silas, op.cit.


42. Included in Schopenhauer, Essays and Aphorisms.


44. Bain, p.165.


46. De Quincey, Murder, p.110.


56. Included in Elizabeth Caskell, *Right at Last and Other Tales* (London: 1860).


58. Although composed in 1760, the blatantly anticlerical *La religieuse* was not published until 1796.


61. See note 102 below.


64. G.W.M. Reynolds, *Wagner, the Wehr-Wolf* (London: n.d.), p.27.


73. Emily Brontë, chap. x, p.145.

74. Although its galley-proofs were printed in 1877, *Lesbia Brandon* was not actually published until 1952.


85. De Quincey, "The Household Wreck", Collected Writings, vol. XII, p.204.


88. James Grant, Jane Seton, p.23.


91. Sade, "Essay on the Novel".


118. Le Fanu, Uncle Silas, p.205.

119. Thomas Hardy, Tess of the d'Urbervilles (London: 1949), final paragraph.

120. See Lona Mosk Packer, Christina Rossetti (University of California: 1963), p.353.


132. Ibid., p.6.


134. Camus, p.11.


139. Stevenson, p.75.


CHAPTER II. THE METAPHYSICS OF SCOUNDRELISM

Whenever crime appears the aberration and monstrous product of a great intellect, or of a nature ordinarily virtuous, it becomes not only the subject for genius, which deals with passions, to describe; but a problem for philosophy, which deals with actions, to investigate and solve: — hence, the Macbeths and Richards, the Iagos and Othellos.

Bulwer-Lytton, Preface to *Eugene Aram* (1832)

And yet there were mysteries in human nature which pointed to some tremendous perversion of its tenencies, — to some profound, radical vice of moral constitution, native or transmitted, as you will have it, but positive, at any rate, as the leprosy, breaking out in the blood of races, guard them ever so carefully.

Oliver Wendell Holmes, *Elsie Venner* (1861)

But regarding criminals complexly and accurately, they are partly men, partly vermin; what is human in them you must punish — what is vermicular, abolish. Anything between — if you can find it — I wish you joy of, and hope you may be able to preserve it to society. Insane persons, horses, dogs, or cats become vermin when they become dangerous. I am sorry for darling Fido, but there is no question about what is to be done with him.

John Ruskin, Letter on "Madness and Crime" (1872)
On 17 March 1871, the Rector of St. Andrew's University, James Anthony Froude, addressed the university with an apologetic on "Calvinism". He remarked that, while modern "liberal thinkers" condemned Calvin's system as incredible, intolerant, and dishonourable, "the materialistic and metaphysical philosophers deny as completely as Calvinism what is popularly called Free Will.... Spinoza, from different premises, came to the same conclusion as Mr. Mill or Mr. Buckle ..." Froude himself dismissed the commendable delusion of Arminianism, on grounds of practical necessitarianism, the experienced reality of facts .... Some children are born with temperaments which make a life of innocence and purity natural and easy to them; others are born with violent passions, or even with distinct tendencies to evil inherited from their ancestors, and seemingly unconquerable ... some are born in religious families, and are carefully educated and watched over; others draw their first breath in an atmosphere of crime, and cease to inhale it only when they pass into their graves.

But though recognising the omnipotence of the demiurges, Heredity and Environment, Froude did not absolve mankind from the other cardinal principle of Calvinism eternally complementing predestination: accountability. "... a theoretical belief in an overruling will or destiny", he reminded the young men, whom he had already exhorted to duty and manliness, "was not only compatible with but seemed naturally to issue in the control of the animal appetites." Cheerfully accepting the iniquity of the human condition, even the genetic inheritance of "seemingly unconquerable" tendencies to evil (though sneering parenthetically at Darwin's attempt "to solve the problem of the origin of man, and prove his descent from an African baboon"), Froude defended the justice of God's sovereignty in ringing Greek quotations.4
This apologetic was Froude's farewell address, and in it he was apparently speaking on what he took to be the ideological crisis most immediate to his students. Indeed, this address, with its unresolved conflict of scientific fatalism and Muscular Christianity, is an exemplary statement of that antinomy of Free Will and Necessity that preoccupied the nineteenth century. Lacking the Muscular Christian counter-balance, J.S. Mill had, like William James, felt the doctrine of "Philosophical Necessity" weighing on his existence "like an incubus ... as if I was scientifically proved to be the helpless slave of antecedent circumstances." Another important aspect of this preoccupation was, as Froude implies, criminological; and the prolonged debate among jurists and alienists, sages and theologians, over the legal and moral responsibility of the criminal and the insane, may serve as an introduction to the literary philosophy of villainy.

A leading determinist in this context was the alienist Henry Maudsley, whose Responsibility in Mental Disease (1872) argued for more extensive judicial recognition of exculpation by reason of insanity. Like Froude, Maudsley quoted Spinoza on the illusiveness of free will and, by further implication, of moral choice. Adapting Calvinist predestination to biological necessitarianism, Maudsley taught that "no one can escape the tyranny of his organization; no one can elude the destiny that is innate in him, and which unconsciously and irresistibly shapes his ends, even when he believes that he is determining them with consummate foresight and skill." In characteristically mechanistic imagery, Maudsley concluded that "lunatics and criminals", in a universe devoid of the supernatural,
are as much manufactured articles as are steam-engines and calico-printing machines, only the processes of the organic manufactory are so complex that we are not able to follow them .... They are neither accidents nor anomalies in the universe, but come by law and testify to causality; and it is the business of science to find out what the causes are and by what laws they work. There is nothing accidental, nothing supernatural, in the impulse to do right or in the impulse to do wrong; both come by inheritance or by education; and science can no more rest content with the explanation which attributed one to the grace of Heaven and the other to the malice of the devil, than it could rest content with the explanation of insanity as a possession by the devil. 8

In contradistinction to Maudsley, a leading scientific exponent of man's volitional freedom and irrevocable responsibility was, paradoxically enough, William Benjamin Carpenter, whose Mental Physiology (1874) was the most comprehensive treatise of physiological psychology. Though not an alienist, Carpenter was the unchallenged Victorian authority on physiology, both comparative and medical, and in zoology was probably outrated only by T.H. Huxley and Darwin. Not creative himself, as were his greater and more positivistic Continental colleagues, Claude Bernard and Virchow, Carpenter was a systematiser of knowledge. With Huxley, he was one of the organisers of that symbolic voyage of positivism, the Challenger expedition, dispatched in 1872 under joint direction of the Admiralty and the Royal Society, with orders to circumnavigate the globe, sound the oceans, probe both the arctics and the tropics, and collect evidence, which finally included the crania of "inferior" races, to confirm the theory of evolution.

However, like Froude, Carpenter felt an overriding imperative to assert the freedom of the will, the dominion of the immaterial over the material, even at the expense of both consistency and logic.
Although he perforce expounded the interdependence of body and mind, Carpenter, who, like Maudsley, served as Professor of Medical Jurisprudence in University College, London, did not admit "physiological" extenuation of conduct. Always he reserved a moralistic principle of volition which was ultimately independent of Maudsley's "tyranny of organization". Thus, he disallowed "irresistible impulses" or "temporary insanity" in the hypothetical cases of, respectively, a girl who destroys herself after an unhappy love-affair, and a nanny who butchers her charge in a fit of ungovernable rage; for,

just as the man who commits a murder in a state of drunken frenzy is responsible for his irresponsibility, so is the suicide or the murderess, in so far as she has habitually neglected to control the wayward feelings whose strong excitement has impelled her to the commission of her crime. 9

Further implications of Carpenter's paradox of responsibility will appear later. However, the apparent irreconcilability of volition and determinism was complemented by the parallel antithesis of Idealism and Materialism. Here the locus classicus is J.S. Mill's Westminster Review essay on "Coleridge" (1840), which asserts "that every Englishman of the present day is by implication either a Benthamite or a Coleridgian ..." In the antithesis between the "utilitarian" Bentham and the "transcendental" Coleridge, Mill, himself, of course, tending to the school represented by the former, recognised the latest recapitulation of the ancient antagonism between Aristotelians and Platonists. Following Locke, Hume, and Hartley, Bentham's epistemology, said Mill, was materialistic and empirical, whereas that of Coleridge, the interpreter of Kant, "Explaining Metaphysics to the nation", in Byron's sarcasm, 10 was idealistic and ontological. While Bentham's school recognised "no Knowledge a priori;
no truths cognizable by the mind's inward light, and grounded on intuitive evidence", Coleridge claimed "for the human mind a capacity, within certain limits, of perceiving the nature and properties of "Things in themselves.""

Translated into the medical context, this antithesis of ideal and material became one of mind and body. The Kantian noumenal conception of the mind, as an effect independent of discernible cause, was adopted, influentially, by John Abercrombie, an early specialist in mental pathology. "Thinking Principle is, in its Essence", he wrote in 1830, "independent of the Body, and will survive it." Later, John Barlow, a clergyman turned psychologist the better to confute materialism, distinguished two principles in the human being; the "vegetative" or merely vital, and that of "the higher phaenomena of mental existence, which is of a perfectly distinct, and so far a superior nature, that it is able sometimes to exercise a dominion over the vital force which nullifies its action, and at all times controls and modifies it." In concluding that the "higher" principle is, or should be, predominant, and "irresistible" impulses, therefore, culpable, Barlow anticipated Carpenter, who, indeed, acknowledges his debt to both him and Abercrombie.

Physiological psychology, nevertheless, presupposed the phenomenal theory by which mentation is contingent upon the "vegetative" processes of the organism. The nineteenth-century pioneers in this were Gall and Spurzheim, the founders of the science of phrenology, which correlated the anatomy of the brain with mental qualities and behaviour. In Comte's words, Gall had laid the foundation for a "positive theory of cerebral functions." Perhaps the most
uncompromising Victorian statement of the phenomenal theory was the notorious Letters on the Laws of Man's Nature and Development (1851), by Harriet Martineau, who fortified her Comtism with phrenology and mesmerism, and H.G. Atkinson, who plays master to her disciple in the Letters. "Mind is the consequence or product of the material man, its existence depending on the action of the brain", he lectured.

Mental philosophy is, therefore, the physiology of the brain ... I observe that drunkenness and madness, idiocy, genius, sleep, dreams, murder, charity, are effects, the consequence of material conditions; absolutely and wholly so. If I pour a bottle of wine down a man's throat, he becomes drunk. If I press a splinter of bone into the brain, madness ensues. 16

The leading British phrenologist, George Combe, confirmed this physiology of behaviour in the case of a boy who suddenly evinced violent hostility towards his brother. Phrenological examination revealed a depression on the boy's skull, where a blow from the schoolmaster's ruler had driven a bone splinter into the "Organ of Destructiveness." 17

William Hazlitt, himself a philosophical psychologist, had scoffed at phrenology, 18 but Herbert Spencer, among other notables, was for a time a convert to it. In effect, the naive assurance of Harriet Martineau and Atkinson, and that of other phrenologists, anticipated the more sophisticated but no less radical determinism of Maudsley. The reaction to this early, militant positivism was also radical, as shown in that voiced, in 1854, by W. Charles Hood, resident physician at Bethlehem Hospital, who feared that his well ordered institution would be overrun if crime came to be a matter of psychopathology. He denounced this "brainular theory" by which "man would possess no more control over his actions than the paddle-wheels
of a steam-boat over the engine by which they are set in motion."

Far from mechanism, Hood insisted, the mind is "independent in its own citadel", inclining "to good or to evil, as virtuous or vicious principles predominate." But the inexorable progress of the "brainular" hypothesis may be seen in the march of psychological titles: Thomas Laycock's Mind and Brain (1860), Maudsley's Body and Mind (1870), Alexander Bain's Mind and Body (1873).

In his Physical Basis of Mind (1877), C.H. Lewes, a man of letters turned biologist, attempted to mediate between "brainular" materialism and the idealist ultimatum "that the speciality of organic phenomena proves the existence of a cause which has no community with the forces operating elsewhere." But Lewes's compromise itself tended to a sort of enlightened materialism. He could not get round the apparently irreducible dependence of sensibility upon vegetative processes. Maudsley cited a colleague's claim that he had "more than once changed the moral character of a boy by leeches to the inside of his nose", and Lewes himself mentions the case of a girl whose hepatitis rendered her unfilial, "capricious and violent". Thus could physiology supersede subtler forms of ethology.

In another attempted compromise between idealism and materialism, Lewes suggested, this time in the ontological context, that "the organism is in its objective aspect a physiological mechanism, in its subjective aspect a psychological mechanism: in both aspects it is to be radically demarcated from all inorganic mechanisms." But this image of "organic mechanism", however "radically demarcated" from the inorganic, immediately evokes the Cartesian hypothesis of biological automatism, another locus of conflict in Victorian
psychology. Lewes himself opposed Huxley's "Hypothesis that Animals are Automata" (1874), denying that either animals or idiots could be so, and claiming that even that favourite illustration of automatism, the decerebrated frog which continues to respond to stimuli and even to exhibit fairly complex behaviour, is, in fact, activated by rudimentary volition. But though Huxley himself doubted animals are anything so simple as "unconscious machines" and advised the retention of anaesthesia in vivisection, he concluded they might be "more or less conscious, sensitive automata", and, therefore, that men were also "conscious automata." 

The theory of human automatism had been encouraged by the continuing development of physiological psychology. In 1844 Thomas Laycock discovered "the Reflex Function of the Brain", and even Carpenter, soon after, acknowledged the existence of an automatic mentation occurring without, or in default of, volition. He later applied the term "unconscious cerebration", which became a catch-phrase in fiction, to this phenomenon, in which "the Cerebrum may act upon impressions transmitted to it, and may elaborate Intellectual results, such as we might have attained by the intentional direction of our minds to the subject, without any consciousness on our own parts ...". Carpenter used the term "expectant attention" to refer to a nominally abnormal state in which a limited pattern of behaviour is unconsciously stimulated by a "dominant idea" "possessing" the mind; but he also described a profoundly pathological state in which volition is so far suspended that "the individual becomes a thinking automaton, destitute of the power to withdraw his attention from any idea or feeling by which his mind may be possessed, and as
irresistibly impelled, therefore, to act in accordance with this, as the lower animals are to act in accordance with their instincts.”

The classic syndrome of such irresistible possession was monomania, in which the "thinking automaton" could be impelled by a "dominant idea" of horrific nature, and such a syndrome is itself a symptomatic metaphor of the epochal obsession: "The individual thus affected regards himself as the victim of a necessity which he cannot resist, and may be perfectly conscious ... that what he is doing will be injurious to others or to himself." Other pathological states of automatism were epilepsy, in which, in Maudsley's words, the patient becomes "an organic machine" with "no notion, no consciousness, of what he is doing", and hysteria, in which, as Freud and Breuer argued in 1893, the control of both somatic action and moral behaviour is usurped by a power outside the patient's consciousness. Freud himself was a Darwinian biologist turned alienist and, later, philosopher, and his seminal analysis of the "psychical mechanisms" of the unconscious, and of the mind's "determination through symbolism", was adumbrated in the "unconscious cerebration" and delusional "necessity" described by Victorian psychology.

Carpenter was sufficiently convinced of the existence of conscious automatism to take issue, as early as his definitive edition of Human Physiology (1853), with the standing criminal code, which, in defining irresponsibility, did not recognise "that many criminal actions are committed under the irresistible dominance of some insane impulse, the individual being at the time perfectly aware of their evil nature and of his amenableness to punishment." Yet, though admitting the irresponsibility obtaining during the period of
suspended volition, Carpenter, as already remarked, reserved the moralistic principle by insisting that this pathological suspension was, in the first place, the result of culpable neglect. The state of monomania, he found, "is one that is particularly liable to be induced in persons who habitually exercise but little Volitional control over the direction of their thoughts ..." In 1875, in a public lecture, "Is Man an Automaton?" Carpenter assured his audience that, in spite of all indication to the contrary, man was free-willed and, in the final analysis, was the architect of his own character. He challenged the audience to "take as your guiding star, as it were, in the conduct of your lives, these four words - 'I am,' 'I ought,' 'I can,' 'I will' ..." Moreover, Carpenter prefaced his last major work, the Mental Physiology, with a refutation of what his work itself generally buttressed, Huxley's hypothesis of human automatism; warning of the consequence of children being "brought up in the belief that their characters are entirely formed for them by 'heredity' and 'environments'; that they must do whatever their respective characters impel them to do; that they have no other power of resisting temptations to evil ..." 

Carlyle chose a peculiar but appropriate metaphor to express the paradox of automatism: "So strangely is Freedom, as we say, environed in Necessity; such a singular Somnambulism, of Conscious and Unconscious, of Voluntary and Involuntary, is this life of man." In fact, like monomania, epilepsy, and hysteria, the mysterious phenomenon of somnambulism figured significantly in the question of responsibility. J.M. Pagan's Medical Jurisprudence of Insanity (1840) shrewdly observed "that if an action, which is criminal, has been committed by a person during somnambulism, it is one which he
has fully meditated while his senses were awake."  

"Somnambulism! Let us but once admit this plea, and we may shut up every court of justice in the empire. A man may seduce your wife, and plead somnambulism: he may ruin your daughters, and plead somnambulism: ... he may even murder you, and plead somnambulism ..."  

However, Carpenter's theories of automatic mentation and involuntary ideomotor action provided a rationalisation for sleep-walking phenomena. In 1878, as recorded in The Asylum Journal of Mental Science, a man who had killed his infant son while dreaming he was fighting a "beast" was acquitted of all criminal charges. And even the alienist D.H. Tuke, who argued for the legal accountability of "sane" somnambulists, admitted that in somnambulism "an automaton is substituted for the true volitional self."  

Even more complicating, however, was "artificial somnambulism", otherwise known as mesmerism, animal magnetism, odylism, electobiology (or sometimes simply "biology"), Braidism, and finally, by the term coined in 1843 by James Braid, who first thoroughly rationalised the phenomenon, hypnosis. This artificially induced automatism was at first explained by the analogy of the brain with the voltaic pile, as if the organism were a chemo-electrical mechanism, "magnetically" controllable and galvanically rechargeable. "One great desideratum is an odylic battery, just as we have a galvanic battery", the ambitious mesmerist William Gregory declared in 1851. "Since chemical action gives rise to odyle, it is probably in some form of chemical action that we shall find the means of constructing such a battery, and when we shall have thus obtained the means of odylically affecting every man, a vast step will be gained."  

And, though the odylic battery continued to elude invention, the indisputable
power of mesmerism to nullify volition was widely known. Even Carpenter, who took the trouble to write a brief exposé of quack psychology, had to admit that

the mesmerised or hypnotised Somnambule may, in fact, be characterised as a conscious automaton, which by appropriate suggestions, may be made to think, feel, say, or do almost anything that its director wills it to think, feel, say, or do. 40

Mesmerism had been under suspicion ever since its founder, Franz Anton Mesmer, had been discredited by a committee, including Benjamin Franklin, Lavoisier, and Dr. Guillotin, appointed, by Louis XVI in 1784, to investigate Mesmer's miraculous practice, which had agitated Paris for some time. But however dubious its credentials, mesmerism captured the Victorian imagination. James Esdaile made startling discoveries of Mesmerism in India (1846), where he performed the most radical surgery, painlessly, upon mesmerised patients. Yet, this power could also be "perverted so as to accomplish the designs of villany .... How foolish in people to expose themselves to the machinations of the wicked, by treating Mesmerism as a fraud or a delusion!"41 Indeed, this daemonic potential of the phenomenon was only too well known. "During the present year", reported the "medical physiologist" John Hughes Bennett in 1851, "society in Edinburgh has been greatly agitated by a delusion, consisting in the supposition, that certain persons may be influenced by an external mysterious force, which is governed and directed by particular individuals." Bennett cured this "Mesmeric mania" by convincing its victims that "they can always, by summoning up a counteracting idea, set all operators and so-called 'magnetists' at defiance."

But though he could dispel the delusion, Bennett did not doubt the power of authentic mesmeric suggestion to suspend, as in monomania,
its subject's "moral liberty".\textsuperscript{42}

As a demonstration of the illusiveness of volition, mesmerism also figured in \textit{Letters on Man's Nature}, Harriet Martineau, who had already published \textit{Letters on Mesmerism} (1845), finding that mesmerism acceded well with phrenology, which identified the "organ" of the brain where each instinct and passion was localised. A striking revelation of the human automaton was the experiment of "phrenomesmerism",\textsuperscript{43} described in \textit{Letters on Man's Nature}, in which the magnetised patient automatically expresses the appropriate emotion as its phrenological organ is stimulated by the operator's touch. Indeed, so deterministically did these organs function, that, "were Destructiveness the only active organ, the individual would be nothing else than a mischievous machine."\textsuperscript{44} Given mesmerism; phrenology; and their allied science founded by J.C. Lavater, physiognomies, which identified the indelible signs in the countenance of innate moral traits; the materialistic-deterministic thesis early reached a stage of apparent completeness.

Yet, mesmerism, at the same time as it demonstrated the illusiveness of free will, also seemed, paradoxically, to exalt the volitional concentration of the mesmerist himself, who was able to project his will so as to displace or polarise that of another. In this daemonic sense mesmerism vindicated the transcendence of the will, and was so interpreted by no less an idealist than Schopenhauer, who adduced, in confirmation of his doctrine of the Will, the inexplicable emanations, in animal magnetism, of maleficium and fascinatios.\textsuperscript{45} In short, mesmeric "projection" complemented that almost mystical power attributed to human volition in reaction to deterministic psychology as later exemplified in Maudsley's \textit{Body and Will} (1883). The meta-
physical tendency is present even in Carpenter's textbook definition of "that distinct purposive intervention of the self-conscious Ego which we designate Will", and which "is something essentially different from the general resultant of the automatic activity of the Mind ...". In his Principles of Psychology (1890), William James documented the phenomenon of voluntary control over the autonomic nervous system, and other authorities throughout the century instanced the power of the will "to arrest an incipient paroxysm of angina pectoris or epilepsy", to check the ordinarily unsuppressible spasms of hydrophobia, or otherwise to obstruct involuntary organic processes, including death.

In The Emotions and the Will (1859), Bain presented a slightly ambiguous case for the will as organic function, seeing "Mind distinct from, yet allied with, Matter". But mesmerism demonstrated not only a dramatic and often ominous fluctuation between automatic activity and volitional control in the mind, but also an apparent power of mind over matter. In its most natural form such power was the basis of cerebral physiology. Carpenter, for example, thought that since matter is passive in essence and can only be activated by force, the purposive movement of organic matter must be the expression of a willed, metaphysical force operating through the nervous tissue and so vitalising the body. More spectacularly, the will's transcedence of physical or spatial limitations was revealed in the so-called "higher phenomena" of mesmerism, including clairvoyance, telepathy, and inter-personal transmission of physiological sympathy. Schopenhauer instanced an adept who could deflect a compass needle by looking at it. Even the authors of Letters on Man's Nature, who attributed Christ's miracles to mesmerism, credited the "higher
phenomena”; but, they added, so far from offering any evidence of metaphysical transcendence, “mesmerism and clairvoyance are as natural as the instinct of animals, and no more wonderful.”

In general, however, the higher phenomena served as a weapon against materialism and that "forced and unnatural association" of mesmerism and phrenology, by which mesmerism had been rendered "subservient to the interests of materialism, infidelity, and atheism.”

Professor Aytoun’s "Mrs. Nightshade" illustrated, typically, this higher-phenomenal progress: "She began a long time ago with mesmerism; from that she advanced to biology; then she took to table-turning and spiritual rappings, until she has worked herself into the belief that her mattress is stuffed with ghosts, and that a whole legion of spirits is lodged in the drawers of the side-board.”

In fact, Harriet Martineau’s positivism could hardly cope with the profusion of Victorian supernaturalism, credulously catalogued, for example, in Catherine Crowe’s Night Side of Nature (1848); and just as the rather sinister experiment of phreno-mesmerism was a device of radical materialism, the equally questionable spiritualism was a development, or degeneration, of idealism. Abercrombie, after all, had defined mind as an "Essence" independent of the body and surviving its dissolution; and Carpenter, without committing himself on the question of survival, found it necessary to mention, as an antithetical fallacy to that of materialism, the "Spiritualist Hypothesis", which unphysiologically conceived mind "as a separate Immaterial existence."

Carpenter was careful to distinguish spiritualism in its "older or Philosophical sense" from "modern spiritualism" which contacted the dead. In 1848 the Fox sisters in America had opened regular
communication with the transcendent world, with their discovery of
the "spiritual telegraph," i.e. spirit rapping. But even before
that, such privileged idealists as Swedenborg, John Wesley, and Kant
had communed with disembodied intelligences, according to the
spiritualist William Howitt, who attributed the opposition to modern
spiritualism to "the torpedo touch of Sadduceeism ... the residuum of
the atheistic and materialistic school of the French Revolution."57

When Michael Faraday, who, though he discovered the principle of
electro-magnetic induction, was sceptical of certain other invisible
powers, demonstrated experimentally that the planchette moves and the
table turns through involuntary or deliberate tactile pressure,58
he was, remarked a spiritualist, deluded, being "acted upon through
the agency of the phrenological organs of his brain, by the unseen
spirits of the air surrounding him."59

More scientifically, the Society for Psychical Research, founded
in 1882, after the example of the Cambridge Ghost Society of 1851, was
inspired by the tantalising possibility that the mind's survival of
bodily death might be empirically demonstrable.60 However, despite
its hysterical abomination of materialism, Victorian spiritualism
seemed singularly earth-bound. William Crookes, later to be knighted
for his work in physics, became convinced of the reality of spirit
phenomena through his "empirical" investigation of two of the most
famous mediums, Florence Cook and D.D. Home, who appears as "Mr.
Sludge 'the Medium'" in Browning's *Dramatis Personae* (1864). Crookes
applied the methods and conceptions of physical science to the
immaterial, finding that he could measure Home's spirit force with a
pair of weighing scales. Indeed, the spirits "materialised" to
accommodate Crookes's laboratory. Florence Cook's "control",

"Katie King", appeared, suitably barefoot and white-robed, and allowed the physicist to photograph her, collect a lock of spirit hair, and apply his ear to her bosom to ascertain a spirit heartbeat.  

Such a confusion of radical idealism and mechanism materialism had also characterised the prophet of Victorian spiritualism, Emanuel Swedenborg. The author of The Intercourse between the Soul and the Body (1769), and messiah of a new religion, had begun with mechanics and mineralogy, to which he made important contributions; progressed to physics and chemistry; and thence to biology, physiology, and psychology. Here the ordinary scientist stopped, but Swedenborg, enlightened by an endless series of visions, proceeded to elaborate a pneumatology as systematic and mechanism as were his treatises of natural science. The soul, he found, was a substance, albeit subtle and aethereal, governed by supernatural law simply derivable from natural law. It was also the battleground of eternally contending good and evil, for vice and carnality indelibly marked the soul, and evil appetites persisted beyond death. It was this intransigent, Manichaean moralism, especially the equation of carnality and depravity, which provoked Blake's Marriage of Heaven and Hell (c. 1793).  

Swedenborgianism, with its interfusion of body and soul, and mystical revelation of transcendent evil, permeated the Victorian supernatural. Thus, Catherine Crowe spoke of the "malignant passions and unquenchable desires" that "constitute the appropriate hell of the wicked"; 62 and Robert Young's The Entranced Female; or The Remarkable Disclosures of a Lady, concerning Another World (1841), in which deceased sinners are seen swilling fiery liquor and dealing playing cards of fire, is a typical imitation of the Swedenborgian
vision. Moreover, the "physical phenomena" and "materialisations" of spiritualist experiments seemed to corroborate the Swedenborgian implication that, in the favourable conditions of human sin, infernal idealities could attain objective existence.

Often spiritualism seemed to represent the tyranny of the material over the spiritual. This is implicit in Miracles and Modern Spiritualism (1875), by Alfred Russel Wallace, a discoverer, independently of Darwin, of Natural Selection, who turned to spiritualism "to account for some of those residual phenomena which Natural Selection alone will not explain." Wallace quoted a professional medium's identification of ghosts as dark-stained souls, "imprisoned spirits, chained by their own fell passions in the slavery of hopeless criminal desires", and hovering "around those that attract them as magnets draw the needle, by vicious inclinations similar to their own." And so, in that culmination of the Victorian ghost story, The Turn of the Screw (1898), based upon a story told James in 1895 by E.W. Benson, 64 Archbishop of Canterbury and, earlier, founder of the Cambridge Ghost Society, the shades of Peter Quint and his degraded paramour lurk in a sordid limbo, materialising on the invocation of precocious vice.

However, physiological psychology had also dealt with the plague of hauntings. An early treatise, Samuel Hibbert's Philosophy of Apparitions (1824), which was dedicated to Sir Walter Scott, who had seen Byron's Doppelgänger, 65 explained ghost-seeing as "spectral illusion", i.e. the stimulation of a phantom image upon the retina of the eye, by whatever psycho-physiological disorder. While
spiritualists such as Catherine Crowe, who had once been arrested for following the spirits' instructions too literally, protested that "life is reduced to a mere phantasmagoria" if "all the instances of ghost-seeing that come before us" are spectral illusion, medical men universally adopted Hibbert's principle that "a theory of apparitions is inseparably connected with the pathology of the human mind." There was some question over whether such hallucinations could be purely ideational in origin, i.e. arising wholly without external stimuli, or whether they were real sense-impressions distorted by physiological dysfunction — Dickens's Scrooge, it may be recalled, inclined to the latter theory — but there was no doubt that visionaries such as Swedenborg and Blake were mad, and after his poems were forgotten Blake retained some notability in textbooks of mental pathology.

For, while, as the Rev. John Barlow contended, spectral illusions were not in themselves evidence of insanity, failure to recognise them as illusion was. One of the singular triumphs of positivism was the apparent ease with which such illusions, when they could not be physiologically exorcised, could be rationalised, and consternation disarmed. Carpenter cited the case of a gentleman of strong mind, and a most accomplished Scholar, who was for many years subject to such phantoms, some sufficiently grotesque; and he would occasionally laugh heartily at their antics .... In other respects he was perfectly healthy ... and he would speak of his phantoms, and reason upon their appearance, being perfectly conscious that the whole was illusive.

This was invincible sanity, and a contemporary ophthalmologist confidently recommended for
those who labour under such disordered sensations, to be made acquainted with the fact, that they are merely the subjects of a peculiar disease of the internal optic apparatus .... By this means the minds of those may be calmed, who otherwise might be led to ascribe their visions to supernatural powers, or who through fear or terror might be driven to insanity. 71

Yet, this insanity from terror so casually mentioned is a discordantly horrific note in the positivistic explication; indeed, alienists were confronted with cases of "daemonomania" in which spectra figured in the most appalling madness. The association of psychopathology and ghost-seeing, in effect, the introspective aetiology of the daemonic, was one of the most striking Victorian themes, inspiring supernatural fiction from Le Fanu's *In a Glass Darkly* (1872) to *The Turn of the Screw*.

ii.

The extremes of idealism and materialism met in spiritualism and the theory of spectral illusion, and in this border zone of the daemonic the question of criminal responsibility reappears. In an era in which medical jurisprudence steadily inclined towards the presuppositions of materialism and determinism, the diagnosis of criminal insanity was all the easier when supernatural instigation was involved; and, at least since the eighteenth century, the patent insanity, if not legal irresponsibility, of persons who felt themselves urged to crime by invisible agency had been in little
doubt. James Hadfield, the would-be assassin in 1800 of George III, sincerely confessing himself urged to the deed by God, was acquitted of criminal charge.

The more puzzling problem, on which the debate on responsibility finally centred, was the sanity of evil-doers unactuated by any supernatural agency, persons who apparently suffered no intellectual impairment or "disordered sensations", saw no visions, did not rave, were perfectly coherent and rational, and yet seemed possessed by the diabolic principle. There was also the problem of those normally sane who committed crime while under the temporary grip of "uncontrollable" passion. The question was, as Forbes Winslow the veteran alienist put it in 1860, "When does violent and ungovernable passion become symptomatic of psychical disorder, and what extent of brutality, prodigality, cruelty, parsimony, revenge, and jealousy is compatible with intellectual sanity?"

In 1834 the alienist Thomas Mayo complained that dangerously aberrant conduct was often tolerated when no definitely insane symptom, such as maniacal excitement, was evident. He instanced a gentleman who practiced the most reprehensible domestic cruelties, but could be legally restrained only when "he considered himself solicited by certain voices, audible only to himself, to perform those actions which indeed flowed naturally enough from his own evil dispositions." It was to bridge this hiatus that nineteenth-century psychiatry evolved the conception of "moral insanity", a phrase used by Mayo, who drew attention to the "moral phenomena" of insanity in contradistinction to the intellectual. Mayo postulated the existence of "a class of human creatures" inherently deficient
in moral sense, and therefore as insane as those intellectually disordered. The madness of Don Quixote he exampled as madness of the intellect, and that of Caliban as madness of the heart.73

James Cowles Prichard, an ethnologist as well as alienist, whose name is usually associated with the thesis of moral insanity, defined it, influentially, in 1835, as

madness consisting in a morbid perversion of the natural feelings, affections, inclinations, temper, habits, moral dispositions, and natural impulses, without any remarkable disorder or defect of the intellect or knowing and reasoning faculties, and particularly without any insane delusion or hallucination.74

In this formulation Prichard was influenced, in turn, by Philippe Pinel, who, during the French Revolution, had freed the inmates of the Bicêtre, the French Bedlam, from their shackles and dungeons, successfully trusting their vestigial powers of reason. In his L'alienation mentale (1801; English translation, 1806), which took issue with Locke's dictum that mania cannot exist without lesion of the intellect and delirium, Pinel had described manie sans délire, or folie raisonnante, clearly anticipating Prichard's syndrome.

As a "reasoning" madness, moral insanity was also comparable to monomania, a term itself coined by Pinel's most eminent student, Jean Esquirol.75 Like the moral lunatic, the monomaniac was also free of hallucination, being, as already mentioned, the victim of a "dominant idea". But while the monomaniac might be impelled despite his will and conscience, the moral lunatic, like Quilp, constitutionally lacked conscience, and was, as it were, naturally perverted. At any rate, moral insanity, though often confused with monomania, was soon widely recognised. "That a man may be insane from disease
of the moral as well as of the intellectual faculties", conceded even the hard-headed Pagan, "is a proposition which it seems impossible to deny." Forbes Winslow described various behavioural aberrancies "in which the mind may be said to be pathologically disordered, but not invariably legally insane." 

It was the legal implication that made both moral insanity and monomania notorious. Somnambulist crime was difficult enough to excuse, and the judicial recognition in Britain of manie sans délire was achieved only after a gradual indoctrination of jurists and jurors through the testimony of alienists. The persistent antipathy to such "medical jurists" is illustrated in the controversy generated by the M'Naughton (or M'Naughten) case of 1843, which marked a turning-point in psychiatric jurisprudence. Under the delusion that the Prime Minister, Sir Robert Peel, was his persecutor, Daniel M'Naughton, a working-man, had shot and killed Peel's private secretary in mistake for Peel himself. In 1812 Bellingham, the assassin in similar circumstances of the Prime Minister Spencer Perceval, had been convicted and hanged within seven days of the crime, with no medical testimony on his sanity admitted. M'Naughton, however, on the representation of alienists, including Forbes Winslow, was found to be monomaniacal and therefore irresponsible, despite his apparent rationality, and was acquitted, though detained in psychiatric custody.

As a rule, the monomaniac was supposed, like M'Naughton, to be rational on all subjects save that of his idée fixe; monomania was therefore also known as "partial insanity". To the lay mind, however, as well as to many medical men and lawyers less inclined to
the subtleties of psychopathology, the M'Naughton verdict seemed to bring into question, not only the system of criminal justice, but the whole order of morality and society. Immediately following the trial, one James Stark, M.D., published an open letter to the Prime Minister, denouncing the "medical opinionists" who had verified "reasoning" madness and made it a shelter from justice. Rather inconsequently, Stark added that crime, whether committed by the sane or the insane, must necessarily be culpable. Another reactionary paper, "High Treason and Murder — Moral Insanity" (1850), which makes an ideological companion-piece to Carlyle's "Model Prisons" (1850), was contributed to Blackwood's Magazine by Samuel Warren, a lawyer and legal writer as well as a successful novelist. Warren, who had profited commercially from the folklore of psychopathology in his Diary of a Late Physician (1832), scoffed at "speculative medical men, professing to have made disordered intellects their peculiar study." He clinched his argument, that the theory of manie sans délire was conducive to murder and high treason, with the examples of the acquitted but "cold-blooded murderer M'Naughten", and that of Edward Oxford, found "guilty but insane" at his trial, in 1840, for the attempted assassination of the Queen. But the M'Naughton case was the clearest focus of the responsibility debate; its reverberations continued throughout the century and are still audible today.

The theory of either a moral or a reasoning insanity was indeed a sophisticated and frightening development of determinism, possessing a fascination for both proponents and opponents of the doctrine of free will. Maudsley, rehearsing the objections of moralism, admitted
that the syndrome of moral insanity seemed "simply the description of a very wicked person, and that to accept it as a description of insanity would be to confound all distinction between vice or crime and madness." Barlow, the clerical alienist, had insisted that "a man may labour under a mental delusion, and yet be a responsible agent"; and Carpenter warned against regarding "Criminality" as "but one form of Insanity ..." But Maudsley invoked the great Esquirol's dictum that "moral alienation", not mania or hallucination, is the "proper characteristic of mental derangement."

Although the workings of the "organic manufactory" of the subtler forms of "moral alienation" were obscure, Maudsley had established, at least to his own satisfaction, the congenitalness of moral imbecility and moral anaesthesia. The organic thesis of criminality, with its manifold sources in phrenology, physiognomies, and physiological psychology, was reinforced, after the triumph of Darwinism, by the biological criminology of Cesare Lombroso in Italy, who, following Maudsley and Bénédict Auguste Morel's Traité des dégénérances de l'espèce humaine (1857), classified criminals as a degenerate sub-race with distinctive physical and intellectual stigmata.* Theories of both moral insanity and Lombrosian degeneracy were incorporated in Havelock Ellis's The Criminal (1890), a culmination of the biological domination of ethology, which Ellis later revised for the Contemporary Science Series. "... if we possessed a full knowledge of every instinctive criminal", remarked Ellis, "we should always be able to put our hands on some definite organically morbid spot."

* Further implications of the theory of crime as degeneracy or biological atavism are discussed in Chapter V of this study.
Yet, the paradox of criminality as at once innate and guilty permeated Victorian criminology, and even the most intransient determinists were compelled to attest to universal accountability. "If I place a naturally good disposition under favourable circumstances, goodness is invariably the result", reasoned H.G. Atkinson in *Letters on Man's Nature*. "If I place a naturally ill-disposed person under unfavourable circumstances, evil is necessarily the result." But he is also constrained to admonish that "philosophical Necessity ... will not, as some suppose, set men loose from restraint to indulge their passions and evil desires."\(^5\)

It was this spectre of moral anarchy that Carlyle was apparently exorcising in the ritualistic vituperation of "Model Prisons". While even Carpenter, in a passage already quoted, rather tolerantly spoke of recidivistic criminals as "ill-regulated automata rather than vicious men", Carlyle righteously abominated those "abject, ape, wolf, ox, imp, and other diabolic-animal specimens of humanity" encountered in a prison tour, affirming against them "a hatred, a hostility inexorable, unaspeasable". However, Carlyle directed his main rhetorical onslaught, not against "scoundrelism" itself, but against that "general morbid sympathy, instead of hearty hatred, for scoundrels"; that "blind loquacious pruriency of indiscriminate Philanthropist! substituting itself, with much self-laudation, for the silent divinely awful sense of Right and Wrong."\(^6\)

In Dickens's *Little Dorrit* (1855–57), the metaphor of crime as disease certainly has a quite different bearing from that intended by criminologists such as Maudsley. In *Dorrit* the suave financier Mr. Merdle, foreseeing the exposure of certain secrets of his private
dealings, seems ill, and, borrowing a penknife, cuts his throat. But "the late Mr. Merdle's complaint had been, simply, Forgery and Robbery." Dickens's mordant irony looks forward to Samuel Butler's double-edged satire Erewhon (1872), which parodies the logic of both medical criminology and Carpenter's paradox of responsibility for irresponsibility, while generally mocking social Darwinism. The Looking-Glass Land Erewhonians treat physical disease as a punishable offence, prosecuting headache and consumption, respectively, as misdemeanour and felony; while respectable businessmen with attacks of, say, mendacity, or of defalcations such as Mr. Merdle's, are doctored by therapists known as "straighteners".

But on the subject of moral evil, Dickens, like his master Carlyle, was more given to semi-hysterical abomination than to subtlety; even though, like Charlotte Brontë and George Eliot, he credited phrenology; like Harriet Martineau, practiced mesmerism; and is reported to have said, in 1840, that murderers are "unfortunate wretches born with murderous propensities", the puppets of an enlarged "organ of Destructiveness", or of "predestined nature, ignorance, and want." Magwitch in Great Expectations (1860-61) is an unusually sympathetic portrait of such an environmentally manufactured "warmint", for usually Dickens's sympathy with criminals, however they became such, is eclipsed by Carlylean indignation. Thus, Rigaud in Little Dorrit, who, like Herman Melville's Bland, is "phrenologically" soulless, is not an "unfortunate wretch" but an utterly hateful one. Constitutionally conscienceless, he flaunts the unmistakable mark of Cain in his sinister physiognomy. He murders his wife for her money, and succeeds in evading conviction.
for the crime, though nearly lynched by indignant citizens. While skulking incognito in a French inn, Rigaud ironically overhears his case debated by a "philanthropic" Swiss gentleman and the commonsensical landlady. "It may have been his unfortunate destiny", the Swiss remarks, referring to Rigaud's alleged criminality.

"He may have been the child of circumstances. It is possible that he had, and has, good in him if one did but know how to find it out. Philosophical philanthropy teaches - "...

"Hold there, you and your philanthropy", cried the smiling landlady, nodding her head more than ever. "Listen then. I am a woman, I. I know nothing of philosophical philanthropy. But I know what I have seen, and what I have looked in the face, in this world here, where I find myself. And I tell you this, my friend, that there are people (men and women both, unfortunately) who have no good in them - none. That there are people who must be dealt with as enemies of the human race. That there are people who have no human heart, and who must be crushed like savage beasts and cleared out of the way. 89

To be sure, Rigaud is finally crushed by a falling beam. However, "philosophical philanthropy", if less virulently moralistic, could be no less merciless in its disposal of unreformable human material. Although he conscientiously doubted "we have any more right to judge criminals than we have to judge rats and mice, which are just as good as cats and weasels, though we think it necessary to treat them as criminals", the humane Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes also admitted "we must punish evil-doers as we extirpate vermin...". 90

The natural development of this train of "philosophical philanthropy" is the chilling rationalism of Bernard Shaw, who dispassionately recommended the expeditious extermination of all incorrigible convicts, as the first step in penal reform. 91 The criminal was indisputably guilty, whether considered in a moral or a biological sense, a
volitional or deterministic context.

But whether regarded as a disease in the culpable, Frenwhonian sense, or in the less accusatory psychiatric sense, moral insanity had been notoriously personified in Thomas Griffiths Wainewright, critic and artist, bon vivant and dandy, forger and poisoner, who died in 1847 as a convict in Australia. He had been an associate of Blake, Hazlitt, Lamb, Coleridge, and De Quincey, and, as "Janus Weathercock", a contributor of precisely mannered but perceptive criticism to the London Magazine from 1820 to 1823. He was an early appreciator of Blake, and De Quincey credited him with original comment on da Vinci, Michael Angelo, and Titian. His own works were exhibited by the Royal Academy. Yet, Wainewright was also, evidently, a conscienceless murderer, who subjected his sister-in-law to a slow miserable death by poison, dosing the young woman with small amounts of antimony to give the appearance of illness, and finally finishing her with Indian nux vomica, i.e. strychnine, after persuading or coercing her consent to the drawing of large insurance policies on her life. A likeness of his victim, Helen Abercromby, taken by Wainewright some years before her death and remarkable for its impression of sensitivity, is extant and illustrates W. Carew Hazlitt's edition of Wainewright's Essays and Criticism (1880).

In Murder as one of the Fine Arts (1827-54), De Quincey does not refer directly to Wainewright, who was suspected of various murders in addition to Helen Abercromby's, but does mention him elsewhere as an example, "remarkable for the appalling revelation which it makes of power spread through the hands of people not liable to suspicion, for purposes the most dreadful." Dickens, who saw Wainewright in
Newgate awaiting transportation after his conviction for forgery in 1837 — he was never tried for murder — modelled on him Julius Slinkton in "Hunted Down" (1859), who not only repeats Wainewright's poisoning of a young female dependant for her life insurance, but also possesses the same dandified manner and repellent but fascinating physiognomy. Two of Dickens's other "arsenical" characters, Rigaud, who insists on being recognised as a "gentleman" even in prison, and Jonas Chuzzlewit, also seem to owe something to Wainewright, who was reputed, like Slinkton, to have kept a diary in which he complacently recorded the details of his crimes, and to have worn a ring secreting crystals of the indispensable nux vomica. Most obviously, however, that fiendish duo, Gabriel Varney and Lucretia Clavering, in Bulwer-Lytton's Lucretia; or The Children of Night (1846), are elaborations of Wainewright and his wife, who was supposed to be his accomplice, especially in the murder of her half-sister Helen Abercromby, though never indicted.

Plainly Wainewright's villainy was of a type to excite the literary imagination. An early impression of him was given by Sir Thomas Noon Talfourd, jurist, littérateur, and close friend of Dickens, who detected in Wainewright's "drawings of female beauty" a voluptuousness that "trembled on the borders of the indelicate", and in his moral nature a "morbid self-esteem ... perhaps amounting to monomania ...." To W. Carew Hazlitt, whose grandfather William Hazlitt had unsuspectingly recommended Wainewright, he "was a villain of the true melodramatic stamp, but a thousand times more devilish and dangerous than any hero of melodrama." In fact, W. Carew Hazlitt, a literary scholar, was carried away by the very blackness of his subject,
he who, with his wife at his elbow — she not a whit less guilty than himself — could watch, demon-like, the convulsive tortures and dying struggles of the fair and trusting girl, who leaned on his love, and idolized his every action and word! — "the gentle girl, who had bent over his shallow page," to use his own very words, "the rich curls of her amaranthine hair!"

Apparently feeling it incumbent upon himself, as editor of Wainewright's literary remains, to rationalise his moral and aesthetic monstrosity, Hazlitt turned to phrenology, as a modern editor might dabble in Freudian or Jungian interpretation. Noting that "the heads of murderers or of persons of murderous tendencies are often of unusual dimensions, particularly at the sides, where the impulses are said to be located", Hazlitt quoted an eye-witness account of Wainewright's massive head, in which the animal propensities were largely developed, and holding an unusually large volume of brain. His eyes were deeply set in his head; he had a square solid jaw; he wore his hair long, stooped somewhat, and had a snake-like expression, which was at once repulsive and fascinating. He rarely looked you in the face. His conversation and manner were winning in the extreme; he was never intemperate, but nevertheless of grossly sensual habits, and an opium-eater. 96

Hazlitt's analysis of Wainewright was cited, for its clinical accuracy, by Havelock Ellis, for whom Wainewright presented "a perfect picture of the instinctive criminal in his most highly developed shape, fortunately a rare phenomenon." Pursuing this evidence of Wainewright's organic pathology, Ellis triumphantly found that as a young man he had been neurasthenic and hypochondriacal. 97

However, Wainewright had fascinated De Quincey by "the contrast which existed in this case between the murderer's dandy appearance and the terrific purposes with which he was always dallying." 98
Indeed, Bulwer-Lytton, in his preface to the first edition of Lucretia, had emphasised the paradox that the "sanguinary wickedness" of these exemplary villains was not the dull ferocity of brutes; - it was accompanied with instruction and culture: - nay, it seemed to me, on studying their lives, and pondering over their own letters, that through their cultivation itself we could arrive at the secret of the ruthless and atrocious pre-eminence in evil these Children of Night had attained. 99

In this paradox Bulwer-Lytton was anticipating Ruskin, who found art for art's sake "destructive both of intellectual power and moral principle", recognising the type of unwholesome aesthetic abstraction in the Mogul palaces of India, "whose marble was pallid with horror, and whose vermilion was darkened with blood..."100 Bulwer-Lytton was also, unconsciously, echoing Kierkegaard's Either/Or (1843), i.e. aesthetic/ethical. Kierkegaard himself had been involuntarily fascinated by Mozart's Don Giovanni (1787), and his persona in the second volume of Either/Or preached lengthily against the "aesthetic view of life", as manifest, not only in the blatant example of the amateuriste-auteur Nero, who would have a child murdered before its mother's face in the hope that "her despair would give passion a new expression", but also in the Byronic demand for self-realisation: "I have a bent to be a Don Juan, a Faust, or a robber chieftain; this bent I must cultivate, for the aesthetic seriousness requires that I become something definite, that I permit the germ deposited in me to develop completely."101

Kierkegaard, of course, was writing in Danish, too obscure a language for his writings to have had much direct influence on Victorian literature. He represents, however, an instructive, if
entirely independent, parallel; his *Sickness unto Death* (1849) compares peculiarly with De Quincey's "*Suspiria de Profundis*" (1845), as "The Diary of the Seducer" in *Ethere/Or* invites juxtaposition with *Murder as one of the Fine Arts*; and his antithesis of the aesthetic and the ethical anticipates Ruskin's moralistic election of the latter and the Decadents' daring option for the former, both Ruskin and his junior detractors admitting the incompatibility of the two qualities. Most significant of all in this comparison, Kierkegaard's assertion, through his analysis of aestheticism, of the essentially volitional, indeed self-realising, quality of evil, went beyond determinism, comprehended even the sadist, the dandy, and the Decadent, and thus articulated forcefully what Victorian criticism apparently could not.

In W. Carew Hazlitt's prosaic phrenological view, "the seeds which ripened in the case of Wainewright so fatally, are latent in all of us, only asking pressure to develop them." But whether regarded as morally insane or wilfully evil, Wainewright's fascination centred ultimately in his mingling of aestheticism and moral anaesthesia. His seemed the true spirit of *Murder as one of the Fine Arts*; when reproached with his heartlessness towards the interesting Helen Abercromby, he was said to have retorted that, in fact, the thickness of her ankles precluded sympathy. Alexander Gilchrist, Blake's Victorian biographer, perforce admitted that his subject had been intimate with "this spiritual voluptuary, with the greedy senses, soft coat, and tiger heart"; had admired his pictures; and had had his *Jerusalem* (c. 1820) puffed by Wainewright in the *London Magazine*. Gilchrist trusted, in propitiation of the Ruskin school, that his own recognition of Wainewright's "great talents will not be taken as
implying any bluntness of repugnance for [his] great criminality ..."105

But Swinburne delighted in the intimacy between the author of
The Marriage of Heaven and Hell and the master of "pen, palette, and
poison."106 Oscar Wilde, even more appreciative, devoted an essay
to Wainewright, comparing him with Baudelaire and Théophile Gautier,
and praising him, in the despite of Ruskin's equation of ornateness
and barbarism, as "the pioneer of Asiatic prose." In short,
Wainewright figured finally as the forerunner of the Decadence, as a
sort of proto-Dorian Gray, Wilde admiring his "antique cameo breast¬
pin, and his pale lemon-coloured kid gloves"; his taste for "Greek
gems, and Persian carpets, and Elizabethan translations of Cupid and
Psyche"; his writings "on 'La Gioconda' and early French poets and the
Italian Renaissance."107 Walter Pater, another translator of
Cupid and Psyche and admirer of the Renaissance, did, in fact, make
da Vinci's Mona Lisa, in which he detected the vampire, and Medusa,
in which he detected the "fascination of corruption", loci classici
of the Decadence.108 As a final stroke épater le bourgeois, Wilde
demonstrated in Wainewright the new truism: "There is no essential
incongruity between crime and culture."109

But the moralistic critics, though they were without Kierkagaard,
knew Lombroso, and were finally provided with the literary pathology
of his disciple Max Nordau's Degeneration (1893),* which purported to
probe the determinants of bad art as well as crime. Literary
physiology could go no further than interpreting the arabesques and
involutions of artistic style as pathological stigmata, equating

* For a further discussion of Nordau and the literary pathology of
the fin de siècle, see Chapter V of this study.
Decadence and degeneracy, and making the aesthetic sensibility itself a symptom of moral insanity and morbid automatism.

iii.

The incubus of "Philosophical Necessity" weighed heavily enough in later nineteenth-century literature, from Tennyson's gloomy image, in In Memoriam (1850), of man as a "magnetic mockery", to the determinism of Zola and Ibsen, and that literary positivism, prophesied by Taine, which became known as Naturalism. Inspired by the physiology of Claude Bernard, Taine, in fact, in L'histoire de la littérature Anglais (1863-64; English translation, 1871), concluded "Vice and virtue are products, like vitriol and sugar." Literary villainy was often the daemonic aspect of this determinism of will and spirit, this "singular Somnambulism", to repeat Carlyle's metaphor, by which the Gothic principle in Victorian fiction was embodied, alternatively, in monomaniacal automaton and super-volitional mesmerist. How typical that the epochal antitheses of freedom and necessity, mind and brain, and spirit and body should have been illustrated most vividly in fantastic evil.

In fiction, as in science, somnambulism was a motif. The American Gothic novelist Charles Brockden Brown had already utilised its "mysterious and obscure" implications in Edgar Huntley; or Memoirs of a Sleep-Walker (1799), of which the opening, dream-like scene, picturing a half-naked somnambulist by moonlight, apparently digging
a grave and convulsively weeping, strangely anticipates Angel Clare's guilty somnambulist ritual in Tess of the d'Urbervilles (1891). In another novel written a century after Edgar Huntley, Bram Stoker's Dracula (1897), a delicate young lady's sudden penchant for sleep-walking is the initial symptom of her subordination to an alien will, of her involuntary conversion to vampirism. At any rate, the dangerousness of sleep-walkers was part of popular lore. "I should be far more frightened if somebody asleep came into my room in the night, than somebody awake", remarks Georgiana, the debutante stalked by a dissembling homicidal maniac in Mrs. Henry Wood's St. Martin's Eve (1866). The recurrent implication was a latent "night side" of human nature which emerged spontaneously in sleep.

Somnambulism figures innocuously in Wilkie Collins's No Name (1862), but plays a rather sinister part in his masterpiece, The Moonstone (1868). Collins borrowed some details of The Moonstone, in connexion with Sergeant Cuff's investigation of the priceless Moonstone's nocturnal disappearance, from the notorious Road murder case of 1860, in which the child Francis Kent, sleeping in the bosom of his family, had been mysteriously removed from the house and stabbed to death. The crime had remained unsolved until 1865, when the victim's half-sister Constance, who hated her step-mother, confessed to it. According to a medical man who investigated the case, homicidal somnambulism had been proposed as the solution to this apparently motiveless murder, and this detail must have been especially suggestive to Collins, who has Franklin Blake remove the Moonstone, to the advantage of the villainous Godfrey Ablewhite, while in an opium-induced trance. Later Franklin's innocence is established.
by an experiment in deterministic psychology, in which, by means of thought-association and narcotisation, he is impelled to re-enact the "theft" of the diamond.

More grotesquely, in Collins's last novel, The Legacy of Cain (1889), the hereditary impulses of Eunice Gracedieu, who longs to be sweet and pure but who is, unknown to herself, the daughter of an executed murderess, take the form of a somnambulist assault upon her scheming foster-sister Helena. The Legacy of Cain is a feeble and confused novel, overburdened with moralism and quite lacking in the cleverness of The Moonstone.

What brought good Wilkie's genius nigh perdition?
Some demon whispered - "Wilkie! have a mission, 114
Swinburne quipped; and the painfully earnest message of The Legacy of Cain is the vindication, despite the obtrusive determinism, of moral responsibility. Thus, the organically disadvantaged Eunice, so nearly a murderess automatically, reforms by act of will, purging herself of evil impulses and so living happily ever after, while the happily endowed Helena, by the same freedom of action, goes to the bad, reads French novels, and finally attempts murder herself, not from impulse but out of calculation.

The grotesque improbability of The Legacy of Cain reflects the desperation of the attempt to exorcise the haunting vision of man as a puppet of unhuman forces, the nightmare always close beneath the surface of the Victorian consciousness. Hence, for example, the weird image of an inner yet alien dictation in the child Jane Eyre's ghastly defiance of her cruel aunt: "'What would Uncle Reed say to you, if he were alive?' was my scarcely voluntary demand. I say
scarcely voluntary, for it seemed as if my tongue pronounced words without my will consenting to their utterance; something spoke out of me over which I had no control." By the time of Dorian Gray (1891), the old theme of diabolical possession was totally rationalised:

There are moments, psychologists tell us, when the passion for sin, or for what the world calls sin, so dominates a nature that every fibre of the body, as every cell of the brain, seems to be instinct with fearful impulses. Men and women at such moments lose the freedom of their will. They move to their terrible end as automatons move. 

The sinister zombie of fiction, then, translates the automaton of physiological psychology. A suggestive form of this motif was the re-animation of the dead, such as the dangerous experiment, described in G.W.M. Reynolds's Mysteries of London (1847), of the galvanisation of a murderer's corpse, an experiment which apparently had its prototype in the galvanisation of Frankenstein's monster. A similarly grisly miracle of automatism seems to be enacted in George Eliot's "The Lifted Veil" (1859), when the corpse of a servant who had been the accomplice of her mistress, a poisoness, is resuscitated long enough to articulate the details of the mistress's guilt. "Great God! Is this what it is to live again ... to wake up with our unstilled thirst upon us, with our unuttered curses rising to our lips, with our muscles ready to act out their half-committed sins?" 

However, the most fascinating metaphor of irresistible compulsion was mesmerism. The criminal mesmerist, in effect, polarised the will of his victims, rendering them proxies of his own perversity. "At the bidding of one of these wizards", remarks a Nathaniel Hawthorne character,
the maiden, with her lover's kiss still burning on her lips, would turn from him with icy indifference; the newly made widow would dig up her buried heart out of her young husband's grave, before the sods had taken root upon it; a mother, with her babe's milk in her bosom, would thrust away her child. Human character was but soft wax in his hands; and guilt, or virtue, only the forms into which he should see fit to mould it.

Such "miraculous power of one human being over the will and passions of another",^119 to continue Hawthorne's words, is eerily evoked in Browning's short monodrama "Mesmerism" (1855),^120 and, as a theme, may be traced through nineteenth-century literature, from what is perhaps its prototype in German Romanticism, E.T.A. Hoffmann's tale "Der Magnetiseur" (1814), in which the wicked Alban "controls" the virtuous Marie, who is set free only by her death,^121 to Theo Douglas's Nemo (1900), in which a stage-magician keeps his daughter in subjection through hypnosis, by which means he also abstracts her soul in order to animate a conjuror's dummy. In Henry James^122 the theme is peculiarly identified with social vulgarity, as in his early tale "Professor Fargo" (1874),^123 a relic of whom is preserved in The Bostonians (1886), in which the "inspirational speaker", Verena Tarrant, seems, at first, to be under the mesmeric control of her father, a shabby quack.

As usual, young women, with their interesting, nervous sensibility, were the natural victims of mesmerism, a victimisation featured, to take a close sequence of examples, in William Carleton's The Evil Eye (1860), George MacDonald's The Portent (1860) and David Elginbrod (1863), Bulwer-Lytton's A Strange Story (1862), and Charles Felix's The Notting Hill Mystery (1862).^124 In Le Fanu's The Rose and the Key (1871), as in MacDonald's The Portent, the heroine is made to appear mad through mesmerism. In Rhoda Broughton's tale "The Man with the
Nose" (1873), a stranger spirits away a bride on her wedding-day by virtue of the power he had secretly acquired over her years before, when she had been "magnetised" as a parlour game. Svengali, in George Du Maurier's pastiche of fin de siècle sentimentalism, Trilby (1894), keeps the heroine in entranced thralldom for years, during which she unconsciously becomes a leading singer, until his sudden death frees her; but only to expire herself shortly after from the shock of regaining her soul.

Euphrasia, in George MacDonald's David Elginbrod, is also freed from enslavement and sexual compulsion at the cost of her life. She originally fell an easy victim to mesmeric influence, because her spirit and will had been vitiated by materialistic principles. For, "no one", as MacDonald explains in the terms of moralistic physiology, "whose will is not educated as will, can, if subjected to the influences of biology, resist the impulses roused in his passive brain by the active brain of the operator." Indeed, the absolute suspension of "moral liberty" in the victim of mesmerism was a favourite theme. Thus, in F. Marion Crawford's The Witch of Prague (1890), an entranced girl is directed to enter a chapel by night and desecrate its altar with her suicide, a diabolical intention which is foiled only by chance, so helpless is its victim. In Conan Doyle's The Parasite (1894), a sceptical professor, challenged to undergo mesmerism at the hands of a female adept, soon finds himself under the direction of an alien will which overrules his own "feebler protesting personality." He is eventually willed to throw vitriol in his fiancée's face, as he is helplessly about to do, when suddenly released from his terrible compulsion by the heart failure of the mesmerist.
Such horrific effects of irresistible compulsion characterised the later fantasies of determinism. Perhaps even more disquieting, however, is Professor Gilroy's disclosure, in The Parasite, that the villainess's mesmeric suggestion "roused something in me — something evil — something I had rather not think of." The subtlest implication of the fantasy, then, an implication apparent even in E.T.A. Hoffmann, was that the mesmerist externalised the "something evil" within, that his potency as a symbol related to the "night side" of the victim's own personality. Gilroy applies the term "double consciousness" to his own horrific mental state under mesmeric compulsion, thereby confirming an association of mesmerism and the pathology of self-division.*

A classic resolution of the popular-fiction plot of mesmeric enslavement is Ibsen's The Lady from the Sea (1888), which had its London première in 1891. Like Strindberg, Ibsen was fascinated by the vincibility of volition, and in this play an "unfathomable" influence, which estranges the second wife of a conventional country doctor, is a metaphor of the tyranny of past over present, mysterious over ordinary, supernatural over natural, in a woman's life. But this metaphor, borrowed from the folklore of the Demon Lover as well as that of mesmerism, is sustained by a psychological realism resting, in turn, on deterministic science. Ellida, the estranged wife, is ensorcelled by the memory of a magnetic but sinister Finn, a murderer in fact, with whom, ten years before, while yet a maiden, she had vowed love. Although she later disavowed this love pact, Ellida's will power is ever after vitiated by "the demonic", by "something

* Chapter III of this study deals with double personality, the Jekyll-Hyde effect, and other metaphors of self-division.
that apps — and attracts."¹²⁸ The Finn's climactic reappearance to claim her impels Ellida finally to distinguish between compulsion and freedom, and in this confrontation it is freedom, rather surprisingly, that triumphs, as Ellida, by electing to remain with her mediocre but faithful husband, breaks the uncanny spell that has bound her so long.

However, as Schopenhauer had posited, mesmeric power stood for the transcendence of Will as well as vincibility of volition; and fictional mesmerism was a fantasy of super-volition as well as automatism. Such a sinister prerogative of Will is exercised by such formidable mesmerists as Count Fosco and Dickens's Jasper. In William Carleton's *The Evil Eye*, the basilisk-eyed villain "can transfuse, by the force of strong volition, an evil influence into the body ... of another."¹²⁹ Yet, while the mesmerist had power over both body and soul, this extraordinary psychic power was, it often seemed, but a function of the grossest materialism; in effect, an exaltation of animalistic vitalism. So Carlyle described a Chartist conspirator, who glowed with "the dusky potent insatiable animalism that looked out of every feature of him: a fellow adequate to animal-magnetise most things, I did suppose ..."¹³⁰

Bulwer-Lytton, in his tale "The Haunted and the Haunters" (1859), rationalised, in the style of Harriet Martineau, the supernatural in terms of the ultra material;

whether ... tables walk of their own accord, or fiendlike shapes appear in a magic circle, or bodyless hands rise and remove material objects, or a Thing of Darkness ... freeze our blood ... these are but agencies conveyed, as by electric wires, to my brain from the brain of another ...
In this tale, accordingly, the "ghosts" are actually "eidolons", i.e. spectral illusions, conjured up, through "a power akin to mesmerism, and superior to it", at the direction of "a WILL, and a will of intense, creative, working evil." The super-volitional villain of "The Haunted and the Haunters" prefigures Margrave, in Bulwer-Lytton's *A Strange Story*, a lineal descendant of Hoffmann's Alban, who, through mesmeric concentration of the vital principle, attains superhuman strength and the power to invoke eidolons as well as reduce other persons to automatons. He thus spirits off the heroine, exercising "so demoniac an influence over a creature as pure as Lilian Ashleigh", in order to utilise her in a noxious experiment requiring virginity as an ingredient. However, Margrave, fearing death as an earth-bound materialist, attempts to distil an elixir of immortality, only to be destroyed, like Ayesha, H. Rider Haggard's *She* (1887), when the immortality projection backfires.

Bulwer-Lytton, in fact, habitually reduced science to hocus-pocus, the supernatural to the ultra material, and spirituality to a bodily condition: virginity. In "The Haunted and the Haunters", the phenomenon of "palingenesy", a function of the tyranny of the material over the immaterial, is the basis of that power "which might extend over the dead ... and compel ... a phantom of what has been most earth-stained on earth, to make itself apparent to our senses..." The absurdity of *A Strange Story* is a direct consequence of the author's utter inability to realise the diabolical or assimilate the Faust theme, but it also reflects the common Victorian confusion, and ultimate irreconcilability, of soul and body as well as responsibility and necessity — the irreconcilability always implicit in mesmerism.
and which, sentimentally, costs the life of George MacDonald's tainted Euphrasia.

Perhaps the classic mesmeric allegory, with its central metaphor of the soul as a captive maiden, and its general implication of a mutually destructive interfusion of body and soul, is Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Blithedale Romance* (1852), a novel which may be discussed in summary of the mesmeric theme. In America, Edgar Allan Poe, borrowing extensively from Hoffmann, had already exploited the horrific implications of mesmerism; and in Hawthorne's own preceding novel, *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851), a spiteful mesmerist makes the unfortunate Alice Pyncheon's life a humiliating puppetry and inadvertently causes her death. In *The Blithedale Romance*, Coverdale, the narrator, intimates the typical fear that mesmerism, if rumour were to be credited, could "annihilate" the soul, make ridiculous "the idea of man's eternal responsibility", and render immortality "impossible, and not worth acceptance."

*Blithedale* is a utopian experiment in New England, which attracts Coverdale, an inquisitive poet; Hollingsworth, a relentless philanthropist; Zenobia, a latter-day Mary Wollstonecraft; and Priscilla, a timorous refugee, an ethereal, "nervous", "ghost-child", upon whom the other three exercise their instinct of domination. The interesting Priscilla, however, though she appears to be a victim of some kind, is not a Magdalen. As her "magnetic" movements and abstracted air—as if she were accustomed to psychical commands—suggest, Priscilla is, in fact, the fugitive Veiled Lady, a "phenomenon in the mesmeric line", who had been the virtual prisoner of her exhibiter, "Professor" Westervelt, who is in the line of MacDonald's Count Halkar in *David*
Elginbrod, Henry James's Professor Fargo, and many others. But unlike the regrettably sensual Euphrasia, Priscilla's victimisation results from the very excess of "spirituality", "the gradual refining away of the physical system", in Westervelt's cynical words, "among your women ... those delicate, nervous young creatures, not uncommon in New England ...".

Some philosophers choose to glorify this habit of body by terming it spiritual; but, in my opinion, it is rather the effect of unwholesome food, bad air, lack of out-door exercise, and neglect of bathing, on the part of these damsels and their female progenitors; all resulting in a kind of hereditary dyspepsia.

This, of course, is a villainously materialistic diagnosis of spirituality as morbidity, though, in its reasoning, it is quite typical of treatises such as Walter Johnson's *Morbid Emotions of Women* (1850). Indeed, there is morbidity implicit in Priscilla's fairy-like abdication of self-guidance. At Blithedale she becomes subordinated to both Hollingsworth, who is planning, like Bentham, a prison as a model of the reformation of human nature, and Zenobia, who is, despite her idealism, passionate and self-indulgent, embodying, in the words of Westervelt, with whom she is secretly entangled, an "uncomfortable surplus of vitality." Neither of these two, who both in their respective ways dominate Priscilla, realise that their social concern is really self-projection. Finally becoming jealous of Priscilla's increasing subservience to Hollingsworth, Zenobia betrays her to Westervelt and aids in spiritting her off to recommence her slavery as the Veiled Lady. She is again on stage, entranced, Westervelt challenging any one in the audience to awaken her, when suddenly Hollingsworth vaults the stage and bids her follow him, and,
as she does, Westervelt's spell is destroyed forever.

It is Hollingsworth's increasingly monomaniacal will, however, which defeats the professional mesmerist. While Westervelt's powers are "eloquent, ingenious, plausible, with a delusional show of spirituality, yet really imbued throughout with a cold and dead materialism", Hollingsworth's philanthropy disguises a fanatical egotism, exhibiting the perversion of both Coleridgian transcendentalism and Benthamite materialism. Formerly a blacksmith, Hollingsworth is one of those who have an idol, to which they consecrate themselves high-priest, and deem it holy work to offer sacrifices of whatever is most precious, and never once seem to suspect - so cunning has the Devil been with them - that this false deity, in whose iron features, immitigable to all the rest of mankind, they see only benignity and love, is but a spectrum of the very priest himself, projected upon the surrounding darkness.

In Zenobia's exaggeration, Hollingsworth is "a monster! A cold, heartless, self-beginning and self-ending piece of mechanism", who has rescued Priscilla only to serve as his own automaton. In his turn, Hollingsworth exerts his glacial influence in a "trial" of Zenobia, ostensibly for her part in the kidnapping of Priscilla, but actually for her defiance of him. Found guilty, Zenobia, though her judge refuses to state his sentence, knows it to be death. After remarking that Priscilla, who has turned out to be her own half-sister, will make Hollingsworth "as soft and gentle a wife as the veriest Bluebeard could desire", Zenobia drowns herself, as if acknowledging the irreconcilability of the soul and the body.

Unlike Zenobia, who was tainted by her sexual connexion with
Westervelt, Priscilla, Coverdale insists, had retained her "virgin reserve" and "sanctity of soul". But it is a sterile purity that she preserves, as Zenobia bitterly says, a hollow victory for that "habit of body", virginity. Her vital principle atrophied, Priscilla is also deficient in volition and responsibility. As for Hollingsworth, the shock of Zenobia's suicide, as she perhaps intended, over-galvanises him, shattering his concentration of will. His Panopticon scheme, for which he had meant to use Zenobia's wealth, is abandoned, as is, soon afterwards, the entire Blithedale experiment in social perfectibility. Coverdale's last sight of his two surviving friends is that of the tottering, burnt-out mechanism of Hollingsworth supported by its satellite, Priscilla.

The Blithedale Romance is an essentially tragic view of that disaster of Romanticism "by which godlike benevolence has been debased into all-devouring egotism", as well as a tragedy of the irreconcilability of the vital and the spiritual. This two-fold tragedy will be followed, presently, to its Kierkegaardian consummation in the mid century, but first there is more to be said about the literary complex of determinism, always a foil to that exaltation of Will from which tragedy springs. The theory of moral insanity, that most subtle development of determinism, implied that even mesmeric volition, even the "will of intense, working, creative evil", was merely a pathological function of the "thinking automaton." Thomas Mayo, typically, admitted that vice might so "vitiate" the human will "that evil is now pursued deliberately and prepensely", and this was the condition which he and Prichard reduced to a psychiatric syndrome.
However, moral insanity was a literary as well as a psychiatric convenience. Browning's "Porphyria's Lover" (1836), for example, which appeared the year following Prichard's Treatise on Insanity, is the monologue of a sensitive murderer who artistically strangles his reluctant mistress, with her own long hair, at the ecstatic moment of her confession of love for him, as if to freeze the moment of ecstasy in eternity. In the editions of 1842 and 1849, Browning superscribed the poem "Madhouse Cell", practically adopting moral insanity as a poetic theme. In fact, among the reviews of Tennyson's Maud (1855), another monodrama of monomania, was Dr. J.C. Bucknill's in the Asylum Journal of Mental Science, complimenting the poet on his clinical exactitude. "Yet physicians have been poets, and good ones too", he wrote, "and poets the true artists of mankind have, in all ages, been our best instructors in many of the secret springs of human action, and of the maddening emotions of the soul."

To return to fiction, Miss Braddon's Lady Audley's Secret (1862) is an exemplary sensation novel serving up a stew of moral obliquity and mental derangement. Miss Braddon was an efficient commercialist, adept in exploiting the most titillating Victorian fantasies; and Lady Audley, as she is introduced, is a lovely, charmingly demure governess, apparently little more than a child herself, who captivates the elderly, widowed baronet, Sir Michael Audley, and after a brief but proper entertainment of his attentions, consents to become his Lady. Sir Michael's grown-up daughter Alicia, however, soon hates her young stepmother, and, more unaccountably, the family dog has an instinctive aversion for her. When the doting Sir Michael commissions a "pre-Raphaelite" to paint his Lady's portrait, the result is slightly disconcerting;
so like and yet so unlike; it was as if you had burned strange-coloured fires before my Lady's face, and by their influence brought out new lines and new expressions never seen in it before. The perfection of feature, the brilliancy of colouring, was there; but I suppose the painter had copied quaint mediaeval monstrosities until his brain had grown bewildered, for my Lady, in his portrait of her, had something of the aspect of a beautiful fiend.

The secret behind this portrait, or rather one of the secrets, is that its subject is a bigamist, having left her prospectless first husband to fortune-hunt in the guise of innocent governess. A second secret is that when this first husband had inadvertently reappeared, she had promptly pushed him down a ruined well in Audley Park, making sure to have killed him, though he actually survived the plunge. Lady Audley's third and even more awful secret is discovered by Sir Michael's phlegmatic but shrewd nephew, Robert Audley, a barrister, who becomes suspicious of his aunt-in-law and, urged on by the jealous Alicia, begins to trace her past life. She attempts to silence him, first by threatening him with the madhouse, then by setting fire to his hotel. But when finally cornered by the implacable, indestructible Robert Audley, who, like Lady Audley herself, is under the impression that she has murdered an inconvenient husband, the villainess unexpectedly pleads insanity.

"A madwoman!" cried Mr. Audley. "Yes, a madwoman. When you say I killed George Talboys, you say the truth. When you say that I murdered him treacherously and foully, you lie. I killed him because I AM MAD! because my intellect is a little way upon the wrong side of that narrow boundary-line between sanity and insanity; because when George Talboys goaded me, as you have goaded me; and reproached me; and threatened me; my mind, never properly balanced, utterly lost its balance; and I was mad!"

The cautious Robert Audley, since "physicians and lawyers are the confessors of this prosaic nineteenth century", consults Dr.
Mosgrave, an eminent alienist, who, after a short interview with the prisoner, is satisfied

There is latent insanity! Insanity which might never appear; or might appear only once or twice in a lifetime. It would be dementia in its worst phase, perhaps: acute mania; but its duration would be very brief, and it would only arise under extreme mental pressure. The lady is not mad; but she has the hereditary taint in her blood. She has the cunning of madness, with the prudence of intelligence. I will tell you what she is, Mr. Audley. She is dangerous!

Accordingly, to protect for the future wealthy widowers and at the same time "save the esclandre of some legal process", the erstwhile Lady Audley is discreetly removed to the Continent and committed to an asylum there, as hermetically isolated as a leprosarium, on the strength of a lettre de cachet provided by Dr. Mosgrave; "For physiology is a lie if the woman I saw ten minutes ago is a woman to be trusted at large."139

Thus, moral insanity exactly suited sensation-novel exigencies. It is typical of the popular determinism of the times that the legalistic Robert Audley, who at first imagines Lady Audley to be, like Dumas's Milady, "the demoniac incarnation of some evil principle", should accept Dr. Mosgrave's "physiology" and the corollary rationalisation of her complex behaviour of deception and conspiracy. While Milady, despite her frantic pleas, had finally been forced to kneel beneath the headsman's sword, Lady Audley suffers a hardly less horrible fate. With typical cleverness Miss Braddon has it both ways, deriving her psychology from the most mechanistic determinism, yet enjoying the full, lugubrious relish of moral terror, as the wretched young woman is consigned to her living grave.
An even more fantastic and yet more serious novel centring on moral insanity is *Elsie Venner, a Romance of Destiny*, by Oliver Wendell Holmes, like Conan Doyle a medical man turned man of letters. He was a life-long opponent of the virulent New-English infection of Calvinism, whose nocuous delusions he treated in his "medicated" novels. In *Elsie Venner*, Bernard Langdon, a handsome young medical student, is rather alarmed to find himself preferred by Elsie, a young lady of family, wealth, and beauty, but also of anomalous tastes, intense antipathies, and ungovernable passions. There are dark rumours about her. Her governess had been taken ill with suspicious symptoms; those who have crossed Elsie Venner are well advised not to accept coffee from her hands. Langdon himself is chilled by her diamond eyes, which have a fatal effect upon nervous females; for there is an "ophidian" element in Elsie's beauty, and not the least anomalous of her characteristics is a power over serpents, in particular the native rattlesnake. Nevertheless, Langdon, as a result of his medical, as opposed to theological, education, pities the deadly, serpentine girl, humanely wondering if there may not be predispositions, inherited or ingrafted, but at any rate constitutional, which shall take out certain apparently voluntary determinations from the control of the will, and leave them as free from moral responsibility as the instincts of the lower animals? Do you not think there may be a crime which is not a sin?

Unlike *Lady Audley's Secret*, *Elsie Venner* is as earnest as sensationalistic. The awful secret behind Elsie's inexplicable but "apparently voluntary" malice is an extraordinary pre-natal influence. While Lady Audley's mother had, like her daughter, ended in the madhouse, Elsie's mother, three weeks before Elsie's birth, had been struck by a rattler and had died of the effects shortly after the
delivery of the child whose being had been no less radically affected by the venom. For it was by this "unheard-of fatality" that the unfortunate Elsie congenitally acquired her ophidian instincts; her arsenical inclinations and ocular maleficium; her sinless criminality.

This "scientific" version of the Lamia myth had been pre-figured by an article in the American Journal of Insanity, reporting the case of a morally insane girl — "apparently a spiteful snake in human form!" — who, like Elsie, seemed to be cold-blooded literally. But Holmes adapted this fantastic tale, not only as a sensation romance, but as an apology for determinism yet a polemic against Calvinism. The innocently maleficient Elsie is accorded a sentimental deathbed, declining from a broken heart since Langdon cannot overcome his "aura" of repulsion at her touch. This mingling of sentiment and horror is grotesque enough; even more oddly, one of Elsie's female teachers, of whom she had been jealous with Langdon, and had stared into decline with her basilisk eyes, marries Elsie's "high-souled" father immediately after Elsie's dissolution.

Holmes exalted determinism into a kind of humanism, crediting phrenology, which he owned to be half quackery, with having "brought out that great doctrine of moral insanity, which has done more to make men charitable and soften legal and theological barbarism than any one doctrine that I can think of since the message of peace and good-will to men." Apparently never troubled by the misgivings of J.S. Mill and William James, Holmes, in the preface to the 1891 edition of Elsie Venner, recalled that he had "tried to make out a case for my poor Elsie, whom the most hardened theologian would find
it hard to blame for her inherited ophidian tastes and tendencies." But, of course, in eschewing Calvinism, Holmes imposed quite as rigid a physiological predestination, and poor Elsie herself is never more than an automaton, whom it is indeed difficult to condemn for "voluntary determinations."

However, the incubus of determinism is even more paralyzing, if unconscious, in Bulwer-Lytton's anti-humanist, morally terrorising culmination of "Newgate School" fiction, *Lucretia*. Originally, Newgate fiction implied a rudimentary social realism and sociological determinism; and novels such as Bulwer-Lytton's *Paul Clifford* (1830) and *Eugene Aram* (1832), and Harrison Ainsworth's *Rockwood* (1834) and *Jack Sheppard* (1839), portrayed highwaymen and even murderers sympathetically, as men driven to their crimes by circumstance and grievance. But even though the mitigated guilt of Eugene Aram and Jack Sheppard was expiated on the gallows, the Newgate novelists, including even the Dickens of *Oliver Twist* (1837-38) and *Barnaby Rudge* (1841), were often condemned for the encouragement to crime supposedly afforded by their implication that men are not wholly responsible for their actions.  

In *Lucretia*, however, Bulwer-Lytton hardened in the mould of mid-Victorian moralism. This novel, as he explains in his preface to the first edition, by faithfully presenting the lives of two notorious criminals of recent years, i.e. Thomas Griffiths Wainewright and his wife, is to plumb to its depths immutagible guilt, while at the same time, rather paradoxically, demonstrating the perversities of predisposition and nurture that produce such Children of Night. In fact, he carefully develops Lucretia Clavering and Gabriel Varney
from childhood, shading in plenty of foreshadowings. Varney is the illegitimate son, by an actress, of Olivier Dalibard, a cultivated Provencal poisoner as well as informer for Robespierre and later Bonaparte, who has Varney's mother guillotined in the child's presence and otherwise encourages the child's inherently evil nature. Like Wainwright, Varney's depravity is accentuated by his artistic education. In effect, his character compiles a perfect catalogue of moral insanity, including the classic traits of anaesthesia and instinctive cruelty; once he offers to burn out a canary's eyes, ostensibly to improve its singing, but really to indulge his inclination.

Lucretia, on the other hand, who is given prominence over Varney in reversal of the original relationship of the Wainwrights, is the offspring of English gentry but is from childhood "so vehement, so self-willed and sternly imperious, so obstinately bent ... so indifferently contemptuous of warning, reproof, coaxing, or punishment", that she personates the worst qualities of her class. As fate would have it, her guardian engages Olivier Dalibard, then in temporary exile after Robespierre's fall, as her tutor; Dalibard thus plays evil genius to both Varney and Lucretia. But when she later accuses Dalibard of having perverted her, he aptly responds, "Lucretia, no! — the seeds were in you! Can cultivation force from the soil that which it is against the nature of the soil to bear?" Indeed, physiological correlations of Dalibard's observation are not lacking. "In her character, what phrenologists call 'destructiveness', in the comprehensive sense of the word, was superlatively developed."

Lucretia's physiognomy, though aristocratic and beautiful, is chilling, her gaze fascinating, her teeth "dazzlingly white, but sharp and thin,
and the eye-teeth were much longer than the rest."

But Lucretia is more complex than Varney and seems to be endowed with the potential for escaping the consequences of her constitution and nurture. Her love for a virtuous gentleman is represented as a possible salvation, but again circumstance intervenes. The omniscient Dalibard, compelling Varney's assistance, manages to get Lucretia jilted as well as disinherited; in despair, she embraces perversity and marries Dalibard. After a short nuptial experience, Madame Dalibard discovers that her husband is planning to poison her to make way for a wealthier mate. With the double-crossing Varney's connivance, she betrays Dalibard to a Chouan assassin and secures, as her departed husband's most precious belonging, his arsenical _vade mecum_, a manuscript passed down from Lucretia Borgia.

Henceforth, Lucretia is utterly damned. She marries again and bears a child, but later removes the new husband with reference to the _vade mecum_, though not before he sends away their son untraceably. Varney, meanwhile, not to speak of his poisoning his benevolent uncle, has become affénger, and, pressed to cover his peculations, collaborates with Lucretia in making away with her niece, by whose death she will inherit a fortune. But hardened as they are, both Varney and Lucretia have a qualm about harming Helen Mainwaring, the niece, who is even more interesting than her original, the Wainwrights' victim, Helen Abercromby. "But in guilt there seems ever a Necessity, that urges on step after step — to the last consummation." Accordingly, the defenceless Helen becomes progressively more wan and delicate after her solicitous aunt insists upon nursing her. The insidious agents added to Helen's medicines prepare the way, in classic
technique, for the final, concentrated dose that undetectably carries off the innocent sufferer.

Necessity is so pervasive a theme in *Lucretia*, inexorably overruling all vestige of scruple and possibility of amendment, that the frightful retribution finally visited upon the Children of Night is revolting morally as well as outrageous artistically. It partakes of the righteously irascible author's inevitable outburst of hysteria rather than of the inevitable working out of a fate created by art, and is conceived on Gothic-novel precedent. In Lewis's *The Monk* (1796), a gloating Satan had finally informed the monk Ambrosio, just before dashing him from a precipice, that the lady he murdered in order to rape and murder her daughter, was his own mother. Hardly less improbably, Lucretia makes the Dickensian discovery, immediately after finishing Helen's drawn-out murder, that a dirty, illiterate youth, also murdered by her in pursuance of Helen's death, was her long-lost son, whom she had thought to be a handsome young gentleman of her acquaintance. Whether from guilt or disappointment, Lucretia collapses in the throes of insanity, with her son's blood on her robe, and is removed to a madhouse, brutally unlike the discreet establishment which receives Lady Audley, where she becomes "a subject to be dealt with unscrupulously in that living dissection-hall."

Varney, like his original, is convicted of forgery and transported for life, regretting the ironical fortune which preserved him from a quick death on the gallows.

Miss Braddon would indulge her readers with a genteelly sadistic scene of Lady Audley's commitment to her penitentiary, but Bulwer-Lytton gloats, like Lewis's Satan, over the living deaths of his
villains. While Varney is fiendishly degraded as a convict, Lucretia is shown chained in her cell, "a grisly, squalid, ferocious mockery of a human being ..."

For days, for weeks - that awful maniac will preserve obstinate, unbroken silence; but, as the eye never closes, so the hands never rest - they open and grasp, as if at some palpable object on which they close, vice-like, as a bird's talons on its prey - sometimes ... they gather up the hem of that sordid robe, and seem, for hours together, striving to rub from it a soil. Then, out from prolonged silence, without cause or warning, will ring, peal after peal (till the frame, exhausted with the effort, sinks senseless into stupor), the frightful laugh. But speech, intelligible and coherent, those lips rarely yield.

There are times, indeed, when the attendants are persuaded that her mind in part returns to her; and those times experience has taught them to watch with peculiar caution ....

It seemed, in those imperfectly lucid intervals, as if the reason only returned to guide her to destroy - only to animate the broken mechanism into the beast of prey.

Lucretia, in short, has become literally what she has been implicitly all along — an automaton powered by evil passions. This mechanistic conception, which has precluded psychological development in the Children of Night, is embarrassingly inconsistent with the moral onus which they must bear. This closing vision of Lucretia's "broken mechanism" anticipates William James's nightmare of epileptic dehumanisation, for both the thematic disintegration and hysteria of Sulzer-Lytton's novel arise out of the simultaneous unacceptability and irrefutability of determinism. And hence the unctuous apostrophe of the "prodigiously" vital but soulless Lucretia, in her "living dissection-hall":

Years have now passed since her entrance within those walls ....

No signs of decay are as yet visible. Death, as if spurning the carcass, stands inexorably afar off.
Baffler of man's law, thou, too, hast escaped with life! Not for thee is the sentence, "Blood for blood!" Thou livest — thou mayst pass the extremest boundaries of age. Live on, to wipe the blood from thy robe! — LIVE ON!

In *Lucretia* Bulwer-Lytton invited comparison with Macbeth and Othello, complacently reckoning to have distinguished "the physical awe of tragedy from the coarse horrors of melodrama." Such pretentiousness was the more blatant as he habitually mistook "ultra fiendishness" and "moral terror" for catharsis, as well as indulged a predilection for the poison-rings, daggers, faded manuscripts, and madhouse cells which are the very stuff of the said "coarse horrors." It would seem, almost by definition, that tragedy must involve flawed virtue in a protagonist who is, like Thomas Hardy's *Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), a "man of character", defiant of Fate, rather than either a paragon or a puppet of evil passion deservedly crushed by Nemesis. Bulwer-Lytton himself never faced the cosmological implications of tragedy, insisting "it is the illogical weakness of some evil natures to lay all their crimes, and the consequences of crime, upon Destiny."145

Kierkegaard, writing a few years after the publication of *Lucretia*, also posited such an error of fatalism, by which the fatalist or determinist, like the young Mill, must be eternally in despair inasmuch as his idol is Necessity, not God, i.e. Possibility, and Free Will, therefore, as impossible for him as prayer. But in the irreverent aphorism that good is the product of mediocrity, whereas evil requires genius, Kierkegaard's persona in *Either/Or* had implied a prerogative of Free Will, a transcendence of Necessity, no less antithetical to Victorian moralism. For the tragic revolt of Romantic satanism against an imperfect universe and a corrupt Deity was succeeded by, in the phrase of Kierkegaard, a "demoniac despair"
which cultivated perversity as well as revolted against the Universal, or in Carlylean language "against a blind No-God, of Necessity and Mechanism, that held [men] like a hideous World-Steambenchine, like a hideous Phalaris' Bull, imprisoned in its own iron belly ..."146 "Demoniac ideality",147 to quote another Kierkegaardian phrase, was the inevitable daemonic aspect of Coleridgian transcendentalism, counter-evoked by the Benthamite nightmare of the World-Steambenchine, and by which daemonic ideality and daemonic choice, in at least two extraordinary novels, villainy was transformed to tragedy and meta-physical revolt.

Poe's tale "Ligeia" (1838) may first be cited as illustration of such daemonic transcendentalism. Its epigraph is taken from Joseph Glanvill — "Who knoweth the mysteries of the will, with its vigor? ... Man doth not yield himself to the angels, nor unto death utterly, save only through the weakness of his feeble will" — though it is really Swedenborg and the darker tendency of German Idealism which inspires Ligeia, the beautiful, raven-haired scholar, of "a wisdom too divinely precious not to be forbidden!" whose being is suffused with the "intensity" of "gigantic volition". Nevertheless, when she is stricken with disease, this vital volition, after a convulsive struggle, is apparently vanquished, and Ligeia is borne sorrowfully to her tomb by her beloved, the narrator of the tale. He seeks solace in opium and, in due course, with the fair-haired Lady Rowena, whom he marries but grows to loathe in undying loyalty to Ligeia. Then Rowena also falls victim to disease, and her husband, by now a "bounden slave" to opium, keeps a second funeral vigil. This, however, is interrupted by nothing less than the re-animation of Rowena's corpse; and
the thing that was enshrouded advanced boldly and palpably into the middle of the apartment.... And now slowly opened the eyes of the figure which stood before me. "Here then, at least", I shrieked aloud, "can I never - can I never be mistaken - these are the full, and the black, and the wild eyes - of my lost love - of the lady - of the LADY LIGNIA." 148

The prime novel of daemonic ideality is Wuthering Heights (1847), which, in contrast to the artificial hysterics of Poe, is poignantly haunted by the fatal estrangement of body and soul, in a context of the utter irrelevance of God. The self-rending Heathcliff, a personation of unresolvable spirituality and brutality, sexual revulsion and passion, is frustrated of union with Catherine, his more than beloved, his alter ego, first by social prejudice and malice, then, irrevocably, by her death, caused by his own impossible demands and her self-division. His pursuance of the union, implicit in his original curse of the dead woman — "May she wake in torment! ... Be with me always — take any form — drive me mad!" — is an aspiration blasphemous in its despite of life and tragic in its hopelessness.

In every cloud, in every tree - filling the air at night, and caught by glimpses in every object by day, I am surrounded with her image! The most ordinary faces of men and women - my own features - mock me with a resemblance. The entire world is a dreadful collection of memoranda that she did exist, and that I have lost her!

At first, with a necrophiliac impulse in his despair, he had unearthed her newly interred coffin. But, as he desperately wrenched at its lid, Catherine's living presence had suddenly become tantalisingly sensible. "I appeared to feel the warm breath of it displacing the sleet-laden wind .... I felt her by me — I could almost see her, and yet I could not! ... And, since then, sometimes more, and sometimes less, I've been the sport of that intolerable torture", the tension
of his "cat-gut" nerves screwed up turn after turn, as he gradually possesses himself of all the vanished Catherine's "memoranda", including her daughter, a gentler Catherine, whom, in further contempt of life, he forces to live in purgatory also.

When Edgar Linton, Catherine's insipid widower — "He didn't pray for Catherine's soul to haunt him" — dies, Heathcliff not only confiscates her portrait and abducts her daughter, but also takes advantage of the opening of the Linton family grave, where his own soul, he says, is buried, to proceed with the long interrupted unscrewing of Catherine's coffin. Rapturously, he finds the face unchanged, and it is not long after this miracle that he begins to sense a "strange change approaching", forgetting to eat or sleep, forgetting even his long plotted satanic revenge, and apparently living purely by volition:

I have to remind myself to breathe - almost to remind my heart to beat! And it is like bending back a stiff spring; it is by compulsion that I do the slightest act not prompted by one thought, and by compulsion, that I notice anything alive, or dead, which is not associated with one universal idea. I have a single wish, and my whole being and faculties are yearning to attain it. They have yearned towards it so long, and so unwaveringly, that I'm convinced it will be reached - and soon - because it has devoured my existence. I am swallowed up in anticipation of its fulfilment.

As the struggle of will and spirit approaches its mysterious climax, Heathcliff takes on an "unnatural appearance of joy", "his frame shivering, not as one shivers with chill or weakness, but as a tight-stretched cord vibrates — a strong thrilling, rather than trembling."

In 1852 a fourteen-year-old girl, Elizabeth Squirrell, was entranced for ten weeks, during which her body "etherealized" and
lived without nourishment; and Heathcliff, approaching with daemonic excitement his "change", is not only disarmed of malevolence but similarly rarefied, dying of inanition yet intoxicated with spiritual sensuality: "I'm too happy, and yet I'm not happy enough. My soul's bliss kills my body, but does not satisfy itself." More frightening in his "soul's bliss" than he has ever been in his despair, others shrink from Heathcliff when, for the first and last time, he desires company. "Well, there is one who won't shrink from my company!" he remarks. "By God! she's relentless." Finally, cryptically announcing himself within arm's length of his heaven, and apparently sensing the expiration of an implicitly convened term, Heathcliff, like Faust, shuts himself up to await alone the final, catastrophic atonement, terrifically remarking, "You'll neither see nor hear anything to frighten you, if you refrain from prying." He is found with a risus sardonicus, a "frightful, life-like gaze of exultation", on his dead face.

"Th' divil's harried off his soul", old Joseph crows, "and he muh hev his carcass intuh t'barin, for ow't Aw care!" More charitable than Joseph, who gleefully sees Heathcliff's last agony, or ecstasy, as the torments of evil conscience, Nelly Dean sets it down to "disordered" nerves and fever, if not spectral illusion, in his visual fixation upon some "fancied object ... within two yards distance", though stopping short of complete insanity: "He might have had a monomania on the subject of his departed idol; but on every other point his wits were as sound as mine." Indeed, the controlled ambiguity of Heathcliff's victory, or defeat, is endlessly fascinating; his terminal unearthliness can be taken as both madness and retribution, while yet intimating an ineffable transcendence, and the wise
Nelly's explanations are as eminently sensible as utterly inadequate. Heathcliff's "queer end" is a triumph over psychological determinism as well as a marvellous transformation of that degraded form of idealism, Swedenborgianism. Wuthering Heights is truly transfigured by "the fire that for ever burns without consuming", in Swedenborgian imagery; the opium deliria and "horrors" of Poe and the German-Blackwood's school which he elaborated, are needless in a work in which the spiritual is evoked by a perfect realisation of the concrete, the tenancy of the soul by the ruins of its absence. Heathcliff had ordered his coffin to be joined, without a division, to Catherine's, warning, "if you neglect it, you shall prove, practically, that the dead are not annihilated!" It is not neglected; yet, Heathcliff "walks", according to the country people, translated to loca
demon, an epical touch, though, in the elegaic closing, Lockwood "wondered how any one could ever imagine unquiet slumbers for the sleepers in that quiet earth."

Emboldened by Heathcliff's ante-mortem dissociation from malevolence, Nelly had urged him to repent his "selfish, unchristian life" and submit to God. His unmoved response — that he is uncovetous of divine favour, and, "as to repenting of my injustices, I've done no injustice, and I repent of nothing" states frankly the antinomian unaccountability which he claims and justifies in preternatural suffering and ultimate exaltation. His titanic independence and daemonic imposition of spirit over flesh, acknowledg-
ing no Higher Will, or Necessity, is transcendental in almost a Schopenhauerian sense, so far is it beyond the "will of intense, working, creative evil" of Bulwer-Lytton's horrendous mesmerist. Like that of God Himself, Heathcliff's justification is ontological,
and in this ontological exaltation Wuthering Heights triumphs over ideological or moralistic limitation. The tragedy the novel recounts is that ecstasy and destruction are inseparable; that pathos can be born only of violation; elegaic resolution only of catastrophe.

The only nineteenth-century character, in English, comparable with Heathcliff is Ahab in Moby-Dick; or The Whale (1851),* another avatar of "demonic despair". While Heathcliff is daemonised by the cosmic irreconcilability of the vital and the spiritual, Ahab's vendetta against the albino whale, the "leviathan", which "dismasted", i.e. maimed, him, becomes a Manichaean struggle against the "visible" personification of "All that most maddens and torments ... all the subtle demonisms of life and thought; all evil ..." Reproached with blasphemy, for his hatred of a natural thing, "that simply smote thee from blindest instinct!" Ahab, like Lear, vows "I'd strike the sun if it insulted me." Yet, behind this hubris is a sense of abysmal profundity, daemonic epistemology. "All visible objects", he avouches,

are but as pasteboard masks. But in each event - in the living act, the undoubted deed - there, some unknown but still reasoning thing puts forth the mouldings of its features from behind the unreasoning mask. If man will strike, strike through the mask! How can the prisoner reach outside except by thrusting through the wall? To me, the white whale is that wall, shoved near to me. Sometimes I think there's naught beyond. But 'tis enough. He tasks me; he heaps me; I see in him outrageous strength, with an inscrutable malice sinewing it. That inscrutable thing is chiefly what I hate; and be the white whale agent, or be the white whale principal, I will wreak that hate upon him.

But Ahab, for all his intellectual decision, is confounded by the paradox of Freedom and Necessity as well as that of appearance and

---

* The context demands reference to Moby-Dick, though, again, I make no pretense to a comprehensive analysis of so complex and unusual a work.
reality, and confounded by the even more fearful paradox of his own
being; haunted, for all his masterfulness — "Who's over me? Truth
hath no confines" — by the fear of his own unconscious enslavement
by some "nameless, inscrutable, unearthly thing ... cozening hidden
lord and master ..."

Is Ahab, Ahab? Is it I, God, or who that lifts this
arm? But if the great sun move not of himself; but
is an errand-boy in heaven; nor one single star can
revolve, but by some invisible power; how then can
this one small heart beat; this one small brain think
thoughts; unless God does that beating, does that
thinking, does that living, and not I.

Nevertheless, agent or principal, he presses on the hunt of Leviathan,
unswerved by either humanity or divinity, defying cosmic determinism,
and meaning to surpass Fate by making, in himself, "the prophet and
the fulfiller one."*

Suspected, like Heathcliff, of "monomania", Ahab acknowledges,
rather, "madness maddened! That wild madness that's only calm to
comprehend itself!" Rent body and soul in his first encounter with
the white whale, Ahab had hemorrhaged spiritually, passing, from
"sudden, passionate, corporal animosity", through such ferment of
agony and despair "that his torn body and gashed soul bled into one
another; and so interfusing, made him mad." But out of this
Swedenborgian pathology, this spiritual mania, emerged the animal
magnetism of daemonic vitality. Like Hollingsworth in *Blithedale,*
Ahab is a self-charging energumen, overawing his men as if, "by some
nameless, interior volition, he would fain have shocked into them the
same fiery emotion accumulated within the Leyden jar of his own
magnetic life."

This metaphor of moral electricity culminates in the storm scene,

* This neo-Romantic paradox of God and Free Will would haunt another
daemonic ontologist, Kirilov in Dostoyevsky's *The Devils* (1871), who,
though he loves life, kills himself as deification of Self-Will and
negation of God.
when the "corpusants" turn on the mast-heads "like three gigantic wax tapers before an altar", Ahab's blood-tempered harpoon glows with a "pale, forked fire" neither earthly nor heavenly, and the ship's compasses are "turned", in the worst of all sea portents, to exact inversion of direction. While the crew cringe before this "redoubled supernaturalness", Ahab, who spurns the use of lightning rods in order to have "fair play here, though we be the weaker side", is neither daunted by the omen — "God, God is against thee, old man" — nor dismayed by this revelation of the cosmic energy, the "speechless, placeless power", which both animates and limits, tempts and forbids him. He is surely doomed; by the "fatal pride" shown in his pretense before the superstitious crew to command the elements, no less than by "infernal fatality" and by the irony which makes him, in his struggle against infernal mystery and infernal power, to partake finally of the infernal himself. Yet, again like Heathcliff, his inhumanity is ontologically justified; privileged by antinomianism and "the instinct of the knowledge of demonism in the world."

Ishmael, the enigmatic narrator of Moby-Dick, who had diagnosed Ahab's "dissembling" monomania — "Human madness is oftentimes a cunning and most feline thing" — had also insisted "all men tragically great are made so through a certain morbidness. ... all mortal greatness is but disease." But in the storm scene, when his ship is transformed into a temple of Manichaeanism, Ahab, that "grand, ungodly, godlike man", transcends the "certain morbidness" which haunted nineteenth-century fiction. Defying augury, as well as pathology and Necessity, in an almost Shakespearean context, Ahab, on the brink of doom, makes a final affirmation of Freedom before the Zoroastrian flame of the corpusants:
... I now know thee, thou clear spirit, and I now know that thy right worship is defiance .... I own thy speechless, placeless power: but to the last gasp of my earthquake life will dispute its unconditional, uninTEGRAL mastery in me. In the midst of the personified impersonal, a personality stands here. 152
NOTES TO CHAPTER II


18. William Hazlitt, "On Dr. Spurzheim's System", The Plain Speaker, op.cit.


20. Maudsley, Responsibility in Mental Disease, p.64.


23. See Carpenter, Human Physiology, pp.799-800; p.841.


27. Maudsley, Physiology and Pathology of the Mind, p.263.


30. Carpenter, Mental Physiology, p.666.


32. Carpenter, Mental Physiology, p.xliii.


44. George Combe, p.323.


47. James, *Principles of Psychology*, vol. II, p.496.


52. Schopenhauer, *Two Essays*, p.331.


56. Carpenter, Mental Physiology, p.7.


58. See Carpenter, Mental Physiology, pp.293 f.


60. For the background of psychical research, see L.S. Hearnshaw, A Short History of English Psychology (London: 1964), and A. Gauld, Founders of Psychical Research (London: 1968).


69. Barlow, pp. 11-12.

70. Carpenter, Mental Physiology, p.167.


72. Winslow, p. 641.
74. Prichard, p.16.
75. For background on Pinel and Esquirol, and early nineteenth-century psychiatry in general, see Richard Hunter and Ida Macalpine, Three Hundred Years of Psychiatry 1535-1860 (London: 1963).
76. Pagan, p.23.
77. Winslow, p.173.
80. Maudsley, Responsibility in Mental Disease, pp. 173-75.
82. Carpenter, Human Physiology, pp.795-96.
83. Maudsley, Responsibility in Mental Disease, pp.173-75.
86. Carlyle, "Model Prisons", p.45; p.49; p.57; p.66.
87. Dickens, Little Dorrit, bk. II, chap. xxv, p.710.
90. Holmes, p.226.


97. Ellis, p.17.

98. De Quincey, "Lamb", p.246.


102. Included in De Quincey, *Collected Writings*, vol. XIII.


104. Ibid., p.lxix.


113. Stapleton, p.78.


120. Included in Browning, Men and Woman (London: 1855).


122. On mesmerism in Henry James, see Martha Banta, Henry James and the Occult (Indiana University: 1972).

123. Included in Henry James, Complete Tales, vol. III.

124. Included in Novels of Mystery from the Victorian Age, ed. Maurice Richardson (London: 1945). On "Charles Felix" (the name may be pseudonymous), see Julian Symons, Bloody Murder (London: 1972), p.53.

125. Included in Rhoda Broughton, Tales for Christmas Eve (London: 1873).


132. Ibid., pp.34-35.

133. On Hoffmann's influence on Poe with respect to mesmerism and metempsychosis, see Henry A. Pochmann, German Culture in America (University of Wisconsin: 1957), pp.393-97.

134. Hawthorne, Elthedale, chap. ix, pp.70-71; chap. xi, p.95; chap. xxiii, pp.198-200; chap. xxiv, p.218.


142. On the moralistic attack on Newgate Fiction, see Hollingsworth.

143. Presumably to forestall a libel suit from Mrs. Wainewright, Bulwer-Lytton does not state the identity of his originals or portray Lucretia and Varney as husband and wife. See Hollingsworth, p.187.

144. Bulwer-Lytton later revised Lucretia to spare Helen's life, but not to alter the fate of the villains.


149. See George Combe, p.506.


151. Emily Bronte, Wuthering Heights, chap. xvi, p.139; chap. xvii, p.151; chap. xxxiii, pp.255-56; chap. xxxiv, pp.258-64, p.266.

CHAPTER III.  THE WHOLE DAEMONIC NATURE OF MAN

... who has not, occasionally, had a demon pursuing with remorseless impetuosity his every footstep, suggesting to his ever active, and often morbidly disturbed and perverted imagination, the commission of some dark deed of crime, from the contemplation of which he has at the time shrunk back with horror?

Forbes Winslow, Obscure Diseases of the Brain (1860)

Ourself behind ourself, concealed
Should startle most

Emily Dickinson, "Ghosts" (c. 1862)

In the context of deterministic villainy, both Wuthering Heights (1847) and Moby-Dick (1851), obviously, are anomalies of genius, assuming the daemonism of supernal despair and supernal transcendence rather than the fiendishness of moral insanity or fatal wickedness. More typically, as a theme of both moral terror and sensation, the daemonic was conceived as an insidious, as well as fiendish, component of the personality, ever ready, on the least faltering of moral sense and sanity, to seize control. This was the "dark lurid gulf" within the heart, in Mrs. Gaskell's words; "the portion of ourselves which we shudder at", in Hawthorne's; "the whole daemonic nature of man".
which Carlyle saw disimprisoned in the Reign of Terror. And thus, in the madhouse epilogue of Lucretia (1846), with its Dantesque descent, through narrowing and darkening corridors, to the innermost dungeon reserved for the unforgivable sinner, Bulwer-Lytton exhorted his reader to gaze on this naked evil, "and startle to see some magnified shadow of himself thrown dimly on the glass."

Indeed, this daemonic theme often appeared as inward vision, reflected, for example, In a Glass Darkly (1872), by Le Fanu; but whether introspective or behaviouristic, the conception of the daemonic was ever a reaction to progress and perfectibility; in effect, a reversion to, or persistence of, in the face of positivism and progressivism, the irrationality of Innate Depravity and Original Sin. And, notwithstanding the moral terror or cautionary element inevitably associated with serious wickedness, the persistent implication of daemonic behaviour was the familiar paradox of responsibility for irresponsibility, of evil moral and yet indeterminable to the will. Homicidal mania, such as that finally exhibited by Lucretia, and by her successor, Bertha Rochester, in Jane Eyre (1847), was, in effect, a paradigm of the virus inherent in human nature. In fact, Schopenhauer recognised in such maniacs a reduction to simplest terms of the essentially predatory, irrational, and ultimately self-destructive impulse of being; in them

the will periodically entirely withdraws itself from the government and guidance of the intellect, and consequently of motives, and thus it then appears as a blind, impetuous, destructive force of nature, and accordingly manifests itself as the desire to annihilate everything that comes in its way.
But, again, it was the medic®-ethological discipline of "psychological medicine" which approached closest to the imagination working in fiction. The influential Forbes Winslow's lengthy treatise On Obscure Diseases of the Brain, with its clinical observation, scientific rationalisation, unctuous moralism, and hyperbolic rhetoric, is not only a gloss on concepts of insanity in fiction; it is an extraordinary document of moral history. Its introspective enquiry, "into the fathomless mysteries of the inner mental life ... the terrible conceptions, that occasionally throw their dark phantasmal shade across the anxious and troubled breast ..." is equal in fascination and hysteria to the fiction of Bulwer-Lytton, who had, in fact, retained Winslow's professional services in the commitment to asylum of Lady Bulwer-Lytton.

Winslow's luridness illustrated the inability of Victorian psychiatry completely to rationalise the daemonic. Prichard had set the rationalistic ideal, following Pinel and Esquirol, and repudiating the contention of J. Heinroth, Professor of Psychological Medicine at Leipzig, that "moral depravity is the essential cause of madness"; that

Violent passions, sinful indulgences, want of mental discipline, give a preponderance to all the evil tendencies of our nature, and render them so impetuous as to destroy all power of restraint. 9

To this, Prichard opposed the theory of moral insanity. Yet, though human evil came increasingly to be considered irresponsible insanity, the alienists' language and analyses retained an orientation and emphasis reminiscent of Heinroth's school. The shamelessness of a hysterical young lady recalled to Winslow "the orthodox scriptural
doctrine of the innate corruption and natural depravity of the human heart;"; while Frichard himself described cases in which "The individual, as if actually possessed by the demon of evil, is continually indulging enmity and plotting mischief, and even murder, against some unfortunate object of his malice." 

In effect, the daemonic was translated, without wholly losing a mythic significance, into a complicated nosology of mania, epilepsy, and hysteria, including even lycanthropy and anthropophagy. The fantastic colours of this spectrum of horrors, with its central image of the bloodthirsty maniac, himself largely a nineteenth-century fabrication, pervaded psychiatric literature. Thus, a standard Manual of Psychological Medicine (1858) gave priority of place to "that most important form of mental disorder, the homicidal"; while another authority verified the existence of maniacs "impelled by a blind instinct, by a power which [they] cannot resist, by an inconceivable desire to shed blood." In short, clinical observation reflected current fantasy; neither a sensation romance nor a treatise of lunacy was complete without homicidal mania; and, even in an age of asylum reform, the defect of sanity was so feared that even non-violent forms of insanity were considered to require confinement behind walls. "In twenty-two years of life as an asylum physician", wrote Thomas Clouston in 1883, recalling his encounter with a woman kept by her relatives in furnitureless rooms with boarded windows, "I have never seen anything so completely parallel to the famous maniac scene in Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre." Yet, even Clouston was beginning to sense a new conception of insanity which would supersede the nineteenth-century notion: "I do not know how it is,
but such picturesque cases of insane would-be murderers do not seem to occur now. The fewer precautions are taken, the less need there seems to be for them."14

In the paroxysmal violence of epilepsy and other "automatic" disorders, there was a deterministic demonstration of the daemonic; a physiological analogy between the jactitation of the limbs of a man with chorea, who tries to control these motions, but is not able to do so, and the insane impulses to murder and violence which the patients are aware of, deplore, and fruitlessly try to resist ... 15

While monomania was the most remarkable phenomenon of such terrible compulsion, daemonic possession of the mind could be triggered by various physiological conditions. Pagan found the homicidal impulse in "hysterical or nervous women, or women recently delivered, hypochondriacal or epileptic patients, and young persons of either sex at the approach of puberty ..."16 "The morbid appetites and feelings of the hysterical woman and the singular longings of pregnancy", added Maudsley, "are mild examples of a perversion of the manner of feeling and desire, which may reach the outrageous form of morbid appetite exhibited by the pregnant woman who killed her husband and pickled his body in order to eat it." However, Maudsley concluded "the most desperate examples of homicidal impulses are undoubtedly met with in connexion with epilepsy."17

Despite such outrageous symptoms, maniacs were often able to dissemble their disorder, facing alienists with the difficulty of uncovering a maniac feigning sanity. The most acute in this "insane cunning" was the monomaniac, who was, of course, rational on all subjects save his idée fixe, which he might conceal with great
cleverness. Carpenter knew of an insane gentleman, violent but discreet, who, amidst the broken glass, smashed furniture, and other debris of destructive mania, spoke agreeably of science, literature, and art; while the interviewing alienist

was beginning to despair of finding out the mystery of his disorder, when it chanced that Animal Magnetism was adverted to; on which the patient began to speak of an influence which some of his relatives had acquired over him by this agency, described in the most vehement language the sufferings he endured through their means, and vowed vengeance against his persecutors with such terrible excitement, that it was obviously necessary, alike for their security and his own welfare, that he should be placed under restraint.

Prichard objected to Heinroth's moralistic theory on grounds that morally upright persons were not exempt from the most vicious or frightful madness, that there were, indisputably, "Cases of sudden propensity to murder and suicide"; these impulses to commit murder are sometimes momentary, and they occur unexpectedly. Clouston mentioned the case of a fellow medical man who began to have the urge, at dinner with his family, to use the carving knife on them, or to thrust a caustic chemical down a patient's throat: "I was terrified to apply the midwifery forceps, lest I should not be able to resist the impulses I had to drive them up through the patient's body." Even "the distinguished alienist, Morel, who, as he narrates himself, seeing a workman leaning over one of the Seine bridges, felt so strong an impulse to throw the man into the river, that he had to rush away from the spot."

Carpenter observed that such "sudden propensity" was often stimulated by a "suggesting idea", which, as in mesmerism, totally suspended volition and moral sense. Thus, Lord Castlereagh's
suicide spawned numerous imitations, and "after the trial of Henriette Cornier for child-murder ... Esquirol was consulted by numerous mothers, who were haunted by a propensity to destroy their offspring." But Carpenter's most "remarkable example of the sudden domination of a morbid impulse" was that of the impressionable attendant to the pathologist Oppenheim, who had been told, with reference to the corpse of a suicide,

"If you have any fancy to cut your throat, don't do it in such a bungling way as this; a little more to the left here, and you will cut the carotid artery." The individual to whom this dangerous advice was addressed, was a sober, steady man, with a family and a comfortable subsistence; he had never manifested the slightest tendency to suicide, and had no motive to commit it. Yet, strange to say, the sight of the corpse, and the observation made by Dr. O., suggested to his mind the idea of self-destruction; and this took such firm hold of him that he carried it into execution, fortunately, however, without duly profiting by the anatomical instructions he had received; for he did not cut the carotid, and recovered. 23

Implicit, first of all, in such clinical documents of sudden propensity and insane cunning was the epochal theme of determinism, the irresistibility of morbid impulse, which underlay psychological medicine. But also implicit was that psychic immanence, or internalisation, of the daemonic, the introspective realisation of which engulfed science in works such as Winslow's Obscure Diseases. The clinically important monomania, with its "murderous prepossessions", in Bain's phrase, 24 was really analogous to seventeenth-century satanic possession, for alienists implicitly recognised the daemonic as an element of human character, manifesting itself, mutatis mutandis, in sudden propensity, delirium, trance, alienation, and madness. In Carlyle's words, "every man ... holds confined within him a mad-man..." 25
Often this internalised daemonic was expressed as inner duality. One of Winslow's patients, "a clergyman, remarkable for sweetness of disposition, and purity of thought", was, nevertheless, "tortured by the most obscene and blasphemous suggestions", which badly interfered with his office.

It appeared as if he were under the influence of "double consciousness", or, as he had, to use his own phrase, "two selves", one (or the evil self) urging him to utter certain impure expressions, and the words - actual words - were, as he thought, plainly spoken; the second (or good self), begging and beseeching him to resist the machinations of the devil, and to refuse compliance with his horrible suggestions.

And, despite Winslow's assistance, this man, "whilst under the fearful dominion of a most horrible hallucination ... committed suicide by cutting his throat!" Not to speak of Pierre Janet's "dissociation of personality" and Eugen Bleuler's "split mind" syndrome, Winslow's demented clergyman anticipates "Anna O.," the first case-history in Freud and Breuer's Studies on Hysteria (1895), who complained "of having two selves, a real one and an evil one which forced her to behave badly ..." In effect, "double consciousness" was a clinical expression of the irreconcilable self-division, the psychic Manichaeanism, endemic in the epoch.

As early as 1838, Mayo described "double consciousness", "under which the patient lives in alternate stages, as it were of two different beings ..." In The Duality of the Mind (1844), the alienist A.L. Wigton argued that insanity is a failure of co-ordination between the cerebral hemispheres, each of which is really a separate and distinct brain in itself;
That every man is, in his own person, conscious of two volitions, and very often conflicting volitions, quite distinct from the government of the passions by the intellect; a consciousness so universal, that it enters into all figurative language on the moral feelings and sentiments, has been enlisted into the service of every religion, and forms the basis of some of them, as the Manichaean.

Wigan's "New View of Insanity" is clearly symptomatic, again, of the pathology of self-alienation and self-polarisation; and, as in the cases of Winslow's clergyman and "Anna O.", double consciousness was usually indicative of the imminent usurpation of the "evil self". Even more suggestive was the spectral externalisation of the other self, termed "deuteroscopia" by Winslow. Wigan had a patient, "a very intelligent and amiable man", who was able to place "before his eyes himself", and enjoyed joking with his double. Eventually, however, the double became pertinacious, continually interrupting and refuting his original, until he resolved not to live another year and, having put his affairs in order, blew out his brains when the clock struck twelve on New Year's Eve.

Thus, psychiatric literature documented the recurrent Doppelgänger fantasy — of which more later — as well as psychic Manichaeanism. The theory of psychic dynamics continually returned to the conception of a dualistic struggle, in which "self-control" had perpetually to be exerted in order to restrain the "mad-man" confined within. Moreover, this inner, daemonic self was also the natural, "animalistic" self; and, in diametrical opposition to Romantic theories of human nature, Victorian moralists based sanity and humanity upon the control of the natural self by conscience and duty. As Winslow put it, the moralised will is "the executive
element of mind" which restrains the passions, curbs "the animal
instincts and appetities", and subjugates "the natural tendency that
exists towards evil thoughts and vicious actions ..."32 Freud's
assumption of a universal impulse to patricide and incest, and his
eternally conflicting trinity of Ego, Super-Ego, and Id, are the
natural development of this psychology of self-division.

In this context of dualistic struggle, Heinroth's moralism,
despite the doctrine of moral insanity, was reaffirmed. For madness
was, after all, a moral evil if it was an effect of the malfeasance
of volition, a culpable surrender to the "evil self". Prichard
himself conceded that "Vices, inordinate passions, and the want of
mental discipline" conduce to both brain disease and mental disorder;
and that, "by too great indulgence and a want of moral discipline,
the passions acquire greater power, and a character is formed subject
to caprice and to violent emotions ..."33 Despite the ineluctable
paradox of determinism, in that cerebral dysfunction or lesion seemed,
indisputably, to affect self-control, there was a powerful tendency,
at least until determinism was reinforced by evolutionary biology,
to moralise psychology. In his influential treatise On Man's power
over Himself to Prevent or Control Insanity (1843), the Rev. John
Barlow insisted self-control could be forfeited only culpably; if a
man chose to yield to appetite and impulse, he "subsides more and
more into the animal .... His passions assume a delirious violence,
and he is only distinguished from the brute by the greater skill with
which he pursues their gratification."34 In the same spirit,
Carpenter observed "the habit of yielding to a natural infirmity of
temper often leads to paroxysms of ungovernable rage, which, in their
turn, pass into a state of maniacal excitement."35
Other authorities, similarly, found the genesis of madness in "the indulgence of passions to excess" — homicidal mania being prominent among those "who have been indulged in every wayward humour, who have not been taught to exercise control over their evil propensities and inclinations" — as well as in the over-feeding of children and "too ready gratification of passions, inclinations, and caprices of youth ..." For, unfortunately, "most people, and especially the young, are often only too glad to find an excuse for indulging their animal propensities, instead of endeavouring to regulate or control them." The physiological psychologist Laycock attributed both physical and moral degeneracy to "libidinous excess"; for, indeed, the sexual was among the most dangerous of the animal propensities, and Laycock warned that "the frequent gratification of an appetite may so strengthen it that it may overmaster the judgment ..." A case in point was George Victor Townley, who, in 1863, under the delusion that he "owned" his fiancée, murdered her when she broke the engagement. A medico-legal commentary on the case, co-authored by Maudsley, found the murderer's perversity attributable to a "vain, self-indulgent, and ill-regulated mind", further vitiated by "a course of French novels and gratified passions." Carpenter censured "the disciples of what has been recently termed the 'fleshly school' of Poetry" for "endeavouring to glorify the merely animal lust by vivid descriptions of its unrestrained exercise ..." The "fleshly school" label came from Robert Buchanan's attack upon Dante Gabriel Rossetti's *Poems* (1870), in which Buchanan, pseudonymously, found "so sickening a desire to reproduce the sensual mood, so careful a choice of epithet to convey
mere animal sensations, that we merely shudder at the shameless nakedness." While professing to shudder, Buchanan scoffed at the writhing succubae supposedly invoked by the "fleshly gentlemen", though this scoff seems forced in view of the disconcerting metamorphosis undergone by the most modest ladies in the throes of hysteria; Buchanan's whole review is typical of that fear of sexuality which expressed itself partly inPodsnappery, partly in hysterical revulsion. Buchanan impugned Rossetti's morals as well as his poetics, but his ultimate target seemed to be the sexual passion itself, so far was critical opinion from the spirit of the exultant Blake's "lineaments of Gratified Desire."

Rossetti, who later became addicted to whisky taken with chloral, a sedative, as well as to fleshliness, also served as an example to Ruskin, who saw in him genius "shortened by the strength of his animal passions, without any trained control, or guiding faith." In fact, indulgence in alcohol, drugs, or even green tea was another threat to self-control, and the Temperance Movement later capitalised on the daemonic consequences of this "liquid Madness", as Carlyle referred to gin, "justly named the most authentic incarnation of the Infernal Principle in our times ..." Carpenter also mentioned the artificial madness of intoxication: "When the government of the Will is completely overthrown, and the excited passions rage uncontrolled, the drunkard may be most truly said to be a madman ..." But he spoke too of the more insidious opium-eating, which, presumably, vitiated De Quincey's will, and of hashish, which inspired the Moslem Assassins as well as Baudelaire, and served Victorian girls as an aphrodisiac.

The principle of temperance was widely applied to the control of
the passions, and various techniques were prescribed to assist self-
control and enforce the total abstinence from gratification often considered necessary. Thus, by "judiciously stinting the food of man in quantity and quality, while at the same time, the brain is kept in exercise and the body fatigued, the animal instincts may be well-nigh subjugated." Animal food" was evidently conducive to the animal instincts; and, while Carpenter denounced fleshly poetry, Clouston recommended an "anti-flesh" diet for unstable adolescents. In asylums the "lowering" therapy of purgation and venesection obtained, well into mid century; and there were "surgical means ... of assisting the youth in his struggles against the temptations of the flesh." In hysterical girls deficient volition was reinforced by cold showers, electric shocks, and even, apparently, cauterisation.

Ultimately, therapeutic discipline encompassed even thought and imagination. Darwin affirmed "the highest possible stage in moral culture is when we recognize that we ought to control our thoughts"; and, concomitantly, "Whatever makes any bad action familiar to the mind, renders its performance by so much the easier." Carpenter warned against "Criminal thought", and Winslow found that self-control is, in many instances, weakened, or altogether lost, by a voluntary and criminal indulgence in a train of thought which it was the duty of the individual, in the first instance, to resolutely battle with, control, and subdue. However, knowing the insidiousness of evil thought, Carpenter warned it does not answer to be continually repeating to oneself, "I will not allow myself to think of this;" for the repetition, by fixing the attention on the very thought or feeling from which we desire to escape, gives it an additional and even overpowering intensity, as many a poor misguided but well-
intentioned sufferer has found to his cost. The real remedy is to be found in the determined effort to think of something else, and to turn into a wholesome and useful pursuit the energy which, wrongly directed, is injurious to the individual and society...

In 1878 D.H. Tuke proposed an "Auto-Prophylaxis, or Self-Prevention of Insanity", based on thought-control. His book is non-technical, being addressed to "the public at large", though containing passages, such as these "Warnings of Danger", which were hardly reassuring to the mentally unstable:

The foe is insidious, and, true to his character, loves to assail us in the dark. He comes upon us in the night... the period truly, when things are not what they seem, when all the events of life... present themselves in a weird form, and when tormenting suggestions -

"Squat like a toad, close at the ear of Eve." 54

Tuke intended his Auto-Prophylaxis especially for insomniacs, whom he considered most susceptible to nocturnal temptation. Lewis Carroll, who, like Rossetti, was afflicted with insomnia, invented his own prophylactic system, of puzzles in mental algebra, to be kept in reserve for his wakeful hours. Without such "Pillow Problems", he was distracted by the sceptical and blasphemous thoughts "which dart unbidden into the most reverent souls... which torture with their hateful presence, the fancy that would fain be pure." 55 Such "unbidden" thoughts were the subtlest manifestation of the daemonic self.
Alienists, in short, were no more successful than theologians had been in exorcising the daemonic, and its vivid conception, in moral science and psychological medicine, is documentary and ideological background of its role in fiction proper. Insane violence and irrational malevolence had, of course, already been a favourite Romantic theme, expressive of the breakdown of the neoclassical model of human nature and the old harmony of reason and passion.

Now, without going into any metaphysical subtleties about the distinction between mind and soul, experience must teach you, that there can be no crime into which madmen would not, and do not precipitate themselves; mischief is their occupation, malice their habit, murder their sport, and blasphemy their delight.

rants Maturin's Melmoth the Wanderer (1820). Even Scott is not exempt from the preoccupation with the daemonic. Lucy Ashton, for example, the gentle, melancholic heroine of The Bride of Lammermoor (1819), is unexpectedly possessed by frenzy, when she is forbidden to marry her lover, the dispossessed Master of Ravenswood, and stabs her compulsory husband in the wedding chamber. Afterwards she is discovered crouching in a corner, mouthing and waving her bloody hands "with the frantic gestures of an exulting demoniac."

The transition from frenetic Romanticism to Victorian hysteria is marked in works such as De Quincey's Murder as one of the Fine Arts (1827-54); and Samuel Warren's Diary of a Late Physician (1832), which cultivated, pseudo-clinically, the horrors of insanity — the Lancet charged that it revealed professional secrets — and was sufficiently seasonable in taste to be serialised in Blackwood's Magazine. The Physician is ghoulishly fascinated by that "subtle, almost inscrutable
disorder, *mania*, i.e., the suggestibility of the daemonic, which overtakes a young man who reads *Malmoth*, and to which a "fanciful" girl, who was in the habit of sitting up late to read "unearthlies", also falls victim: "Oh, that merciless and fiendish EPILEPSY! — how it tossed about those tender limbs! — how it distorted and convulsed those fair and handsome features!" Naturally, she must be restrained, handcuffed, scalp-plastered; and, even as the Physician visits her in the asylum,

she made a sudden and desperate plunge towards me, motioning with her lips as though she would have torn me, like a tigress its prey! ... Who can deny that this poor girl fell a victim to the pestilent effects of romance reading? 59

Warren's crocodilian *sympathy* might seem a bit thick even for Blackwood's, but such "rhetorical lingering" and anti-climax is also characteristic of Dickens's early essay in abnormal psychology, "A Madman's Manuscript", interpolated in *Pickwick Papers* (1836–37).

Yes! — a madman's! How that word would have struck to my heart, many years ago! How it would have roused the terror that used to come upon me sometimes; sending the blood hissing and tingling through the veins, till the cold dew of fear stood in large drops upon my skin, and my knees knocked together with fright! I like it now though. It's a fine name. Shew me the monarch whose angry frown was ever feared like the glare of a madman's eye.

Yet, even in this piece, Dickens introduces the inward perspective, having the madman tell his own story; how he had, for reasons of family heredity, lived in fear of madness; had been tempted by spectres, "large dusky forms with sly and jeering faces"; and, having gone mad at last, delights in the secret, daemonic power. For, so acute is his "madman's cunning", he manages to keep up all appearances, administer his estate, amass wealth, and marry, all without arousing any suspicion.
I could have screamed with ecstasy when I dined alone with some fine roaring fellow, to think how pale he would have turned, and how fast he would have run, if he had known that the dear friend who sat close to him, sharpening a bright glittering knife, was a madman with all the power, and half the will, to plunge it in his heart. Oh, it was a merry life!

Deciding to murder his wife, he inadvertently frightens her to death when he appears by her bedside with an open razor. Again no suspicion attaches to him, but his daemon has become too importunate for further concealment, and he is finally certified when, declaiming his secret, he attacks his brother-in-law. A postscript sets his madness down to "the thoughtless riot, dissipation, and debauchery of his younger days ..." 61

"A Madman's Manuscript" is interesting both as a calculated intrusion of the daemonic into the Pickwickian world, and for the technique of autobiographical insanity it pioneers — an obvious parallel is Browning's "Porphyria's Lover" (1836). The Madman's secret monarchy of madness even looks forward to that cosmic monomaniac, Captain Ahab, who, after the delirium of his dismemberment, though apparently sane, "in his hidden self, raved on. Human madness is oftentimes a cunning and most feline thing. When you think it fled, it may have but become transfigured into some still subtler form." 62 Indeed, this introspective apprehension of the "hidden self", of the "subtler" transfigurations of madness, is a crucial obsession, from Dickens to Dostoyevsky. On the crudest level, the "hidden self" was the dissembled homicidal mania beloved of sensation fiction, or, for that matter, of Victorian popular fiction of any period or level. Even in Mrs. Humphrey Ward's minor classic of religious crisis, Robert Elsmere (1888), the agnostic Squire Wendover, for all his formidable powers of rationalism, is finally reduced, by insidious hereditary insanity, to fiendish madness.
However, Mrs. Henry Wood's vintage sensation novel, *St. Martin's Eve* (1866), may serve as the model of "all the queer and horrible tales ... of people killing or injuring others in their madness, unsuspected previously." In this exemplary three-decker, a young wife, Charlotte St. John, monomaniacally magnifies the proverbial stepmother's disaffection, mistreating and once, in a sudden frenzy, nearly throttling her stepson; but her sickly, preoccupied husband fails to recognise these danger signals and, dying soon after, leaves his heir in Charlotte's care. To ensure her own child's precedence, she cunningly contrives her stepson's death by fire. Forever after, however, the murderer is haunted by her victim's dying screams, and this hallucination reaches a climax when Charlotte happens to be in France on St. Martin's Eve, on which processions of children with burning candles fill the streets, in ghastly multiplication of the dying stepson's phantom.

So far St. Martin's Eve is remarkably "clinical", but it is also sentimentalised by a romance involving a girls' school. The plot lines cross when Charlotte, madder than ever after the trauma of St. Martin's Eve, returns to her deceased husband's estate and there conceives an insane jealousy of Georgiana, a debutante fresh from school. Like Jane Eyre, Georgiana has an ominous midnight visit from the madwoman, who later lurks in the shrubbery after dark waiting for the unsuspecting girl, whom she finally attacks, displaying the usual animal-like strength, glaring eyes, and flashing teeth. Georgiana, of course, is rescued, in the nick of time, by her lover, and Charlotte is certified as a fitting denouement. There is no question of her responsibility—"nobody in their right minds would
shut the doors upon a burning child" — yet moral terror, after the Gothic model of Jane Eyre, is labouiously invoked.

The ghoulishness which alternates with the sentimentalism of St. Martin's Eve had been comically immortalised in Pickwick, when Grandmother Wardle's somnolent servant, the Fat Boy, unwontedly excited, approached her in a secluded part of the garden, and the old lady is seized with the fear that she is about to be murdered. Of course, the Fat Boy merely wants to "make your flesh creep", bearing the tale of Tupman's audacity with Rachael Wardle; yet, however absurd Mrs. Wardle's fear, it exaggerates very little a deep-rooted, Victorian conviction about "human nature" and its sudden propensities. The striking animation of otherwise ludicrous fictions such as St. Martin's Eve partakes of this unpredictable spontaneity of the daemonic.

"Our passions lie in ambush to spring upon opportunity", a Blackwood's tale warned; for often the cautionary and the sensational were intermingled. A favourite theme of fatal intemperance was the homely one of dipsomania; Mrs. Henry Wood's first novel, Danesbury House (1860), was a prize-story for the Scottish Temperance League. "The Stroller's Tale", another interpolation in Pickwick, enjoys the deathbed "horrors" of a wife-beating drunkard; and George Eliot, in "Janet's Repentance", in Scenes of Clerical Life (1857), also evokes the daemonic through delirium tremens, as her friend Harriet Beecher Stowe had done with such sensational success in depicting the awful end of Simon Legree, the proverbial villain of Uncle Tom's Cabin (1852). Like Legree, Dempster, the brutal lawyer in "Janet's Repentance", is reduced, after prolonged indulgence in bad passion and whisky, to terminal delirium as horripilating as
anything in such ostensible Temperance novels as Felicia Skene's *The Lesters* (1887) and Walter Besant's *The Demoniac* (1890). Emily Brontë, who gave Intemperance pride of place, over Rage, Vengeance, Ambition, and Fanaticism, in "Le Palais de la Mort", a devoir in composition, drew a convincing alcoholic in Hindley Earnshaw.

Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848), presumably prompted by Branwell Brontë's fatal indulgence in gin, opium, and bad passion, may be taken as a typical cautionary novel. Its heroine, Helen Graham, marries the charming but rakish Arthur Huntingdon under the delusion that she can reform him. Not long after marriage, however, she discovers the irreparable fault in his character—because of childhood indulgence he is incapable of self-restraint. This defect—as Huntingdon himself mockingly puts it, he lacks an Organ of Veneration—leads to gambling, drunkenness, adultery, and violence. Helen finally contrives to escape with her young son, who was being steadily corrupted by his father's whims; and Huntingdon soon reaches the terminal stages of moral and physical decline. When he sinks helpless, deserted by his boon companions and ridden by delirium tremens, Helen dutifully returns to nurse him. Apropos of Dempster and Nemesis, George Eliot remarked that "sometimes, while Nemesis's sword is yet unsheathed, she stretches out her left hand and grasps her victim." Grasped by the same sinistral Hand, Huntingdon expires in alternation between blasphemy and cringing terror, in presentiment of "the slow, piecemeal dissolution already invading his frame; the shroud, the coffin, the dark, lonely grave, and all the horrors of corruption." Such ghastly moralism is common in the cautionary tradition, in
which Jane Eyre, that more appealing sister of The Tenant of Wildfell Hall, may also be classed. The madwoman Bertha Rochester, a veritable fairy-tale goblin, is a magnification of the unreasoning hatred that has pursued the heroine all along — the stepmotherly cruelty of Aunt Reed, the sanctimonious sadism of Brocklehurst, the brutality of Lowood Institution. In her orgasms of frenzy, and cunning premeditation, Bertha symbolises the state in which human nature, allowed complete naturalness, must issue. Though hereditarily disposed to mental disorder, Bertha had been sane at marriage, but, unchecked, her "giant propensities ... her excesses had prematurely developed the germs of insanity ..." She is, in effect, a revenant of the guilty past of Rochester, who had become entangled with her through "the prurience, the rashness, the blindness of youth."

Rochester himself is a dynamo of passion; a potential Bothwell, as Blanche Ingram mischievously suggests. Of course, the great crisis of Jane Eyre is his impassioned appeal, following the exposure of his bigamous intention, to the reciprocal nature which he knows to smoulder under the calm exterior of the "Quakerish governess". But though drawn with consuming power to the proffered liaison, Jane righteously resolves to "hold to the principles received by me when I was sane, and not mad — as I am now." Having witnessed the ultimate effect of sensuality, in the wedding-morning revelation of Rochester's secret chamber, Jane is the more obliged to resist the "madness" within herself. In the peculiar imagery of inner duality, "Conscience, turned tyrant, held Passion by the throat ..." By this sacrifice of the impulsive self, Jane escapes the besottedness of baffled self-indulgence that afflicts Rochester. Jane Eyre is unique among great love stories in its distrust of the passionate.
There follows the antithetical interlude with St. John Rivers, who, like Hollingsworth, is "that steel engine of the Devil's contrivance, a philanthropist!" Professing selflessness, St. John has, in fact, performed a moral conjuring trick, dissimulating infernal egotism as altruistic idealism. His calculated iciness, by which he means to exploit Jane's renunciation of the passionate, is even more perverse than Rochester's combustibility; his righteous implacability more damaging than the cruder hypocrisy of Brocklehurst. Rejecting St. John, though not without protestation of admiration for his asceticism, Jane finds that Rochester has meanwhile been purged of ungovernable passion in the catastrophic conflagration of Thornfield Hall, in which Bertha, who caused the blaze, perished, and Rochester himself was maimed and blinded. So chastened, and disencumbered of his goblin mate, he is ready for domestication by the triumphantly dutiful Jane Eyre.

Jane Eyre, with its almost naturalistic focus on perverted passion, impressed contemporary reviewers as "coarse", and even George Eliot commented, a bit petulantly, that its dialogue seemed to be taken from police reports. However, another exemplary cautionary novel, Charlotte Yonge's The Heir of Redclyffe (1853), is impeccably genteel in its application of the temperance principle to the exorcism of the daemonic and the resolution of passion into civilisation. Sir Guy Morville, the orphaned young heir, is hereditarily passionate, having among his ascendants one of the murderers of Becket, as well as Dark Hugh Morville, a dissolute and bloody-handed courtier of Charles II. The fatal Morville pattern, as recapitulated by Guy's untimely deceased father, was
idleness and insubordination at first, then the reckless pursuit of pleasure, the craving for excitement, the defiance of rule and authority, till folly had become vice, and vice had led to crime.

By much conscientious effort, however, the young baronet "has got himself pretty well in hand", and his nervous mannerisms and tension testify to the constant inner struggle.

It seemed as if it was the perception that so much was kept back by a strong force, that made Guy's least token of displeasure so formidable ... it appeared as if the force of his anger might be fearful, if once it broke forth without control ...

In Guy the family "strength of will ... had been turned inward to subdue the passions themselves ...". The greatest strain on this self-control is caused by Guy's envious cousin Philip, a scion of the disinherited cadet branch of the Morvilles, which is supposed to be free of the bad passions of the Redclyffe line. Indeed, Guy's crisis occurs when Philip speciously charges that he has been living dissolutely at Oxford and causes his estrangement from his guardian. With the "hereditary demon of the Morvilles watching by his side, to take full possession of him", Guy vows to exact blood for the insult.

His colour, too, had faded to paleness, but the veins were still swollen, purple, and throbbing; and there was a stillness about him that made his wrath more than fierce, intense, almost appalling.

Yet, after hours of vengeful thought, Guy is surprised by a dazzling sunset, which "recalled him not only to himself, but to his true and better self ...". Conscious first of the wickedness of his thoughts, he gradually bests the worst self totally and forgives Philip without reserve.
The subtitle of Charlotte Yonge's first novel, Abbey Church; or Self-Control and Self-Conceit (1844), might as well be applied to Redclyffe. Guy's straightforward confrontation with his "besetting fiend" contrasts with the hypocrisy of Philip, who is in the line of St. John Rivers. Philip's further selfishness causes Guy's death; but, having won the decisive victory over himself, the moribund Guy cheerfully forgives his erstwhile traducer everything. Like his ideals Charles I and Sir Galahad, the spiritually victorious Guy is little less than a saint, whose power for good is proportionate to the defeated potential for evil.

While Charlotte Yonge put the auto-prophylaxis of insanity in terms of Christian abnegation, Charles Reade's Griffith Gaunt; or Jealousy (1865-66) is another example of the fusion of the cautionary and the sensational. Virtually a fictionalised case-history, Griffith Gaunt reflects Reade's ransacking of psychological medicine for Hard Cash (1863), his "matter-of-fact Romance" exposing the abuses of private madhouses and venal alienists. He is especially indebted to John Conolly, an acquaintance of Dickens and Bulwer-Lytton, who is burlesqued in Hard Cash as Dr. Wycherley, a mad alienist engaged in the cure of sane inmates. In Griffith Gaunt, however, the portrayal of the jealousy and passion in the married life of two strong-willed people is undermined by the mechanistic psychology mocked in Hard Cash.

Set in the eighteenth century, Griffith Gaunt is the story of a physically powerful young country squire, good-natured but possessed of dangerous passions. These are shown early in the novel when Griffith's courtship of the proud Kate Peyton is threatened by a rival:
At the thought of your playing me false, after all these years, and marrying that George Neville, my heart turns to ice, and then to fire; my head seems ready to burst, and my hands to do mad and bloody acts.

At the very sight of Neville, Kate sees Griffith's face discoloured with passion, and so strangely convulsed, that she feared at first he was in a fit or stricken with death or palsy ....

Hitherto she had but beheld the feeling of jealousy, but now she witnessed the vivid passion of jealousy writhing in every lineament of a human face. That terrible passion had transformed its victim in a moment: the ruddy, genial, kindly Griffith, with his soft brown eye, was gone; and in his place lowered a face, older, and discoloured, and convulsed, and almost demoniacal.

"How often these same passions, when unrestrained, have ruined the mind", Conolly wrote, "the wards of every lunatic asylum teach us but too well." And though Griffith recovers from this spasm, Kate humouring him with marriage, after preventing a duel with Neville, his infirmity of temper plagues their life.

Griffith's suspicions of his wife are fostered until they approach monomania by a spiteful housemaid. Finally persuading Griffith of his wife's unfaithfulness, the maid is rewarded with "An epileptic fit!" as Griffith "fell to the ground, grinding his teeth, and foaming at the mouth."73 He then gallops madly away from home; in Conolly's words again, "the angry man cannot attend, in his moments of passion, to circumstances of mitigation ...."74 However, the state of moral insanity persists, as Griffith remains away from home under a false identity, and even marries another woman. Meanwhile, as a result of his mysterious disappearance, Kate is tried for his murder. Both the cautionary moral and the clinical study are rather weakened by this sensation-novel extravagance, and a happy ending is
abruptly worked out, in which the better self, the "genial, kindly Griffith", wins over the "demoniacal" one. He is reunited with Kate, while the supernumerary wife is bestowed upon Kate's long-suffering admirer, Neville. Again, the mechanistic psychology of passion and will, as in Griffith's epileptic automatism, proved well fitted to the sensation novel, or "matter-of-fact Romance."

The cautionary tradition, represented, variously, in The Tenant of Wildfell Hall, The Heir of Redclyffe, and Griffith Gaunt, clarifies without comprehending the vehemence of Wuthering Heights, which is apparently a tragedy of passion raging to self-destruction. Wuthering Heights, first of all, inherits the Romantic vision of The Bride of Lammermoor, that folklore-steeped novel of disinheritance and doomed love; and though, in her wild girlhood, quite unlike the gentle Lucy Ashton, Catherine Earnshaw expires in the same daemonic exultation of fatal passion. After the false calm of her marriage to the dispassionate Edgar Linton, she greets the mysterious reappearance of Heathcliff with embarrassing rapture. Finally, in a scene of stark brutality, Catherine incites Heathcliff to attack her husband, when her impossible scheme of having both as lovers is thwarted by their mutual detestation.

Her following delirium and death are preceded by "senseless, wicked rages", as Nelly thinks. "There she lay dashing her head against the sofa, and grinding her teeth, so that you might fancy she would crash them to splinters." In a calmer interval Catherine hints that these paroxysms are partly feigned; but while the stolid Nelly "believed a person who could plan the turning of her fits of passion to account, beforehand, might, by exerting her will, manage to
control herself tolerably, even while under their influence", the
disintegration is irreversible. She dies after a final ecstasy of
emotional cruelty, in the stolen meeting with Heathcliff.

In that meeting Heathcliff "gnashed" and "foamed" over his dying
love and "gathered her to him with greedy jealousy", Nelly doubting
"if I were in the company of a creature of my own species ..." Later,
responding to her death,

"May she wake in torment!" he cried, with frightful
vehemence, stamping his foot, and groaning in a
sudden paroxysm of ungovernable passion....

He dashed his head against the knotted trunk;
and, lifting up his eyes, howled, not like a man,
but like a savage beast getting goaded to death with
knives and spears. 75

No wonder *Wuthering Heights* was interpreted by its reviewers as a
"science of human brutality", an uncouth cautionary tale, in which
bad passions degrade characters to bestiality. 76 However, orthodox,
moralistic psychology, of which the common-sensical Nelly is the
spokesman, accounts in its own terms for the behaviour of Catherine
and Heathcliff without really fathoming it. While Huntingdon, Guy
Morville, and Griffith Gaunt are totally explicable by this psychology,
Heathcliff's "paroxysms" never deny his transcendent self-mastery;
nor, unlike the exemplary Guy Morville, is his "preter-human self-
denial" a function of self-fear; nor, yet, can it have any other
fulfilment than self-destruction. Similarly, Catherine's "senseless,
wicked rages" reflect an unresolvable inner conflict, a fatal
incompatibility of inherent forces of her own nature, symbolised by
her two antithetical lovers.

While *Wuthering Heights* belongs to and is yet outside the
cautionary tradition, Daniel Deronda (1876) is an elaboration and fulfilment of it. Gwendolen Harleth is a study in the chastening and repentance of vanity and impetuosity, but also in the moral terror of inner duality. Indulged and spoiled by a weak mother, Gwendolen is the beauty of the family and bully of her nondescript sisters. Once, in an ominous fit of rage, she had wrung the neck of their canary. Otherwise, her self-indiscipline is shown in recurrent seizures of hysteria, and it may be recalled that "extravagance, imposture, mendacity, impudence, immodesty, viciousness, or villany", even the "fiendish crimes of a Marchioness de Brinvilliers", were attributed to the hysterical temperament. In fact, at least one prominent alienist cited Gwendolen as a definitive study of unbalanced female adolescence.

On Gwendolen's wedding-day, Grandcourt, her supercilious and amoral groom, finds her "pallid, shrieking as it seemed with terror, the Grandcourt family jewels scattered around her on the floor. Was it a fit of madness?" It is, at least, guilty anxiety, for Gwendolen has married for wealth and position, and in the knowledge that she is displacing the woman Grandcourt has ruined and now abandons with the children she bore him. The wedding-day hysteria is occasioned by a letter from the discarded woman pronouncing a malediction upon the new wearer of Grandcourt's diamonds. Nevertheless, Grandcourt compels her to put on the "poisoned jewels"; indeed, he displays a genius for inducing abject fear in the proud Gwendolen. But, though she is terrorised, her terror comes partly from within. Possessed by hate and fear, she dreams about Grandcourt's death. As she later confesses to the saintly Daniel Deronda, she is horribly fascinated by a dagger concealed in her cabinet. At last, in a
sailing accident when they are alone together, Gwendolen refuses to throw the helpless Grandcourt a life line, and he drowns.

After the accident Mrs. Grandcourt is prostrated by self-accusation, in the realisation of a nightmare come true; ironically, this is taken to be the grief of love. Fortunately, Deronda is at hand to receive the broken Gwendolen's confession of her culpable surrender to the inner daemon:

"All sorts of contrivances in my mind - but all so difficult. And I fought against them - I was terrified at them - I saw his dead face" - here her voice sank almost to a whisper close to Deronda's ear - "ever so long ago I saw it; and I wished him to be dead. And yet it terrified me. I was like two creatures. I could not speak - I wanted to kill - it was as strong as thirst - and then directly - I felt beforehand I had done something dreadful, unalterable - that would make me like an evil spirit. And it came - it came."

With the encouragement of Deronda's absolution, Gwendolen is ultimately delivered "from the worst evil in herself", but only after living "through and through again the terrible history of her temptations", until granted "that peaceful melancholy which comes from the renunciation of demands for self." In speaking the moral of Gwendolen's story, Deronda summarises the cautionary tradition at its most elevated:

Within ourselves our evil will is momentous, and sooner or later it works its way outside us - it may be in the vitiation that breeds evil acts, but also it may be in the self-abhorrence that stings us into better striving. 79
Torn between terror and terrific temptation, Gwendolen was "like two creatures"; and such metaphoric dissociation of personality, paralleling the syndrome of "double consciousness" and "deuteroscopia", was a significant nineteenth-century theme of evil, from the Doppelgänger fantasies, in German Romantic fiction, to the profound hallucinations of Ivan Karamazov. The original Doppelgänger of folklore was "rendered infinitely more appalling by being taken out of its misty highland half-light of visionary indefiniteness, and produced in frock-coat and trousers", as both Poe and Robert Louis Stevenson illustrated. A rudimentary form of such fantasy is detectable in Sir Guy Morville's visionary encounter with his daemonic alter ego, Dark Hugh, whose face in a family portrait uncannily mirrors Guy's, or in Griffith Gaunt's alternation between "genial, kindly Griffith" and that other, "almost demoniacal" being.

Indeed, throughout Victorian literature, the double-self metaphor, whether implicit or explicit, ordinary or psychopathological, was a source of depth, subtlety, and thematic symmetry. Through the Looking-Glass (1871) immortalises Tweedledum and Tweedledee, while Alice sometimes scolded herself so severely as to bring tears into her eyes; and once she remembered trying to box her own ears for having cheated herself in a game of croquet she was playing against herself, for this curious child was very fond of pretending to be two people. 81

In Robert Elsmere, the introverted scholar Langham, in very mild resemblance to Ivan Karamazov, encounters, as it were, "a spectral reproduction of himself, his true self, with whom he held a long and ghastly argument." 82 As a sensationalistic example of the hostile
mirror-image of the self, there is Miss Braddon's tale "Mystery at Fernwood" (1862), in which a bride, just brought home to her husband's ancestral estate, finds him, one day, apparently transformed into a madman who seeks her blood. Thus a family skeleton is revealed, for the madman turns out to be her loving husband's identical twin, whose existence had been secret even to the husband.

In his recent study of Victorian self-division, Masao Miyoshi traces from the "catatonia" of Gothic Romanticism a "reason-passion dualism", such as is implicit in Jane Eyre. Another of Miyoshi's examples of such symbolic dualism is "Balin and Balan", the last to be composed of Tennyson's Idylls of the King (1859-85), in which the metaphoric dissociation of personality is again in a cautionary context. Like Griffith Gaunt, Balin "the Savage" is virtuous when calm but morally insane in temper, and had been banished for three years by Arthur for a choleric deed of violence. However, the passionate Balin is usually restrained by Balan, "my brother and my better." When Balan is dispatched to put down the "demon of the woods", Balin, repentant after his exile, struggles to govern himself. He takes Lancelot as a model; and all goes well until he is demoralised by the discovery of the paragon's adultery with Guinevere. Reflecting the incipient disintegration of Arthur's court, Balin then gives way again to his "moods", which Balan warned him were "outer fiends, / Who leap at thee to tear thee", and at last plunges madly into the dark wood where Balan pursues his mission. There Balin, in a throes of rage, is mistaken by his brother for the very demon, and in the ensuing conflict they destroy each other.

* This Chapter is especially indebted to Miyoshi's analysis of the Victorian Doppelgänger.
Thus, "Balin and Balan", in its Dioscuri-like allegory of fatal self-division, implies, not only the dualism of reason and passion, but another internal locus of the daemonic as well. Again, however, both psychic Manichaeanism and its psychopathology were most appropriately represented in the fiction of villainy; either explicitly and internally, as in double consciousness, or implicitly and allegorically, as in the Doppelgänger or external self. Indeed, the double self was typical of the fantasy of evil throughout the nineteenth century; it was, perhaps, the most subtle metaphor of that daemonic, ultimately self-destroying component of human nature disimprisoned by "absolute" revolution, and never controlled by deterministic psychology or even Freudian psychic mechanics.

Apparently, Dickens's first "double" character is the narrator of "A Madman's Manuscript"; but Jonas Chuzzlewit, another murderer masquerading as respectable gentleman, is, as Lauriat Lane, Jr., has shown, a more complicated study in the dissociation of evil personality. Jonas slips out by night from home, on an errand of murder, having doffed his daytime identity with his proper clothes and donned ruffian garb. After killing Tigg Montague, a possible informer against him, Jonas is remorseless yet wracked by a strange horror, not of the corpse or the sinister wood in which Montague was murdered, but of "the dark room he had left shut up at home", i.e. his locked bedroom where, as alibi, he is supposed to be sleeping.

Dread and fear were upon him, to an extent he had never counted on, and could not manage in the least degree. He was so horribly afraid of that infernal room at home. This made him, in a gloomy, murderous mad way, not only fearful for himself, but of himself; for being, as it were, a part of the room: a something supposed to be there, yet missing from it: he invested himself with its mysterious terrors; and when
he pictured in his mind the ugly chamber, false
and quiet, false and quiet, through the dark hours
of two nights; the tumbled bed and he not in it,
though believed to be; he became in a manner his
own ghost and phantom, and was at once the haunting
spirit and the haunted man. 87

In this evocation of a self-haunted murderer, who is to destroy
himself, Dickens momentarily raised an essentially banal figure of
evil to a more interesting level, reflecting, in criminal context,
that pathology of introspection which was to be especially refined in
the late nineteenth century.

Bradley Headstone in Our Mutual Friend (1864-65) is also polarised,
and in a more realistic sense, by pretension to respectability and
proclivity to crime. Unlike the bloodless Jonas, he is an energumen
of scarcely suppressed destructive energy, "of passionate, violent,
and ungovernable selfishness", which constantly threatens his hard
won middle-class status. He rages out of control when his possessive
attentions are rejected by the lower-class beauty Lizzie Hexam, who
prefers the dishonourable intentions of Eugene Wrayburn to Bradley's
appalling intensity of desire.

The wild energy of the man, now quite let loose, was
absolutely terrible. He stopped and laid his hand
upon a piece of the coping of the burial-ground
enclosure, as if he would have dislodged the stone.

This scene of Bradley's refusal is appropriately set outside a cemetery,
and the self-rending violence with which he receives it, "bringing his
clenched hand down upon the stone with a force that laid the knuckles
raw and bleeding", 88 recalls Heathcliff's "paroxysms". Setting out,
in vicious jealousy, to murder Eugene, Bradley, like Jonas, adopts
ruffian guise, in particular, the distinctive garb of the "riverside
character" Rogue Riderhood, who is, in fact, accessory before and
after the murderous but, unknown to Bradley, not actually fatal assault
upon Eugene. Afterwards Riderhood attempts to blackmail Bradley,
who recklessly turns on him, and they fall deathlocked together into a canal. As Edmund Wilson remarked, this illiterate ruffian, the schoolmaster Bradley's criminal alter ego, whom he can never afterwards shake off, is, metaphorically, the brutish part of Bradley's own nature, and in finally destroying this brute he destroys himself.

However, Wilson centred his "Two Scrooges" argument, which infers a Scrooge-like alternation of personality in Dickens himself, on yet another diabolically dissociated personality; Jasper, in the tantalisingly unfinished **Mystery of Edwin Drood** (1870). Like Jonas and Bradley, Jasper is, in Wilson's words, a "gruesome travesty of the respectable Victorian"; like the villainous philanthropist Godfrey Ablewhite in *The Moonstone* (1868), he appears to lead two antithetical existences; one a proper, daily role of cathedral musician, and one of nocturnal debauchery in an opium den. Occasionally, as in the scene when the curate Crisply startles the apparently dozing Jasper, who "sprang from the couch in a delirious state between, sleeping and waking, and crying out: 'What is the matter? Who did it?'" the hidden existence seems to encroach upon the daily one.

Lane suggests that Jasper is torn between love for his nephew Edwin Drood, whose murder he premeditates, and lust for Rosa Bud, Edwin's betrothed. This is plausible, although Jasper's affection for his "dear boy" is difficult to distinguish from masterly hypocrisy. While Bradley's daemonic passion is patently uncontrollable, Jasper's is usually dissimulated by a façade of punctiliousness recalling honest Iago. The real "mystery" of *Edwin Drood* is the extent to which Jasper's dissimulations, with their apparent lapses, become an actual dissociation of "respectable" and "daemonic" components of his
personality. Certainly, Jasper is more than merely two-faced. His power over Rosa Bud is mesmeric; in general, his evil will works vicariously; and the hot-blooded young Neville Landless, also jealous of Edwin's possession of Rosa, becomes, as it were, the active self of the apparently passive Jasper, who employs a drug as well as telepathy to precipitate a quarrel between the "dangerously passionate" Neville and Edwin. As Wilson notes, Neville, who is, like the cautionary model Guy Morville, eventually victorious over his "tigerish" blood, may even have murdered Edwin as Jasper's involuntary proxy.

Of all Dickens's novels, _Edwin Drood_ makes the most deliberate use of the theory that, in the words of its narrator,

> in some cases of drunkenness, and in others of animal magnetism, there are two states of consciousness which never clash, but each of which pursues its separate course as though it were continuous instead of broken ...

Jasper's undoing, however, was probably to have been brought about by a fatal discontinuity of consciousness, as foreshadowed in his opium hallucinations. Wilson quotes Dickens's remark to John Forster that _Drood_ was to conclude with the murderer confessing in the third person. In this hypothetical ending, Jasper was either to have been himself mesmerised by a stronger personality, or betrayed by his own "respectable" self. The latter is strongly hinted by Dickens's explicit reference to double consciousness; and Lane argues that Jasper's resolve, to "fasten the crime of the murder of my dear dead boy upon the murderer", and "devote myself to his destruction", points ironically to such an ultimate self-incrimination. It seems to be self-projection as well as further evidence to frame Neville that
leads Jasper to record in his diary, after the deadly quarrel, fomented by himself, between Neville and Edwin: "The demoniacal passion of this Neville Landless, his strength in his fury, and his savage rage for the destruction of its object, appal me."\(^8^9\)

Yet, Jasper is essentially too limited and immittigable, too repulsively fascinating, to evoke the spiritual revelation of Dostoyevsky's psychically disintegrated but profoundly human characters. Like Le Fanu's *Uncle Silas* (1864), *Edwin Drood* is a study in the pathological breakdown of consummate hypocrisy; and, as such, Jasper, who, of all Dickens's villains, has the most dominating role in a novel, epitomises that unstable consociation of the respectable and the daemonic, which was not only typical of villainy but prevalent as a theme of conflict and self-contradiction throughout Victorian culture; as a sociological as well as psychological phenomenon. Like Silas and Godfrey Ablewhite, it is precisely as a "gruesome travesty" that Jasper is most significant. While the dissociated self was a rewarding complication of the cautionary tradition, it was also a source of gruesome fantasy, which, ultimately, seemed the only adequate expression of the psychological truth hinted therein.

It remains to survey the development of the obtrusive *Doppelgänger* fantasy, which, as already mentioned, seems to have had its immediate source in German Romanticism; the term itself, after the folk belief in the wraith, or ominous apparition of a living person, having been coined by Richter, and borrowed by Scott in *Anne of Geierstein* (1829). Ralph Tymms\(^9^0\) shows that the *Doppelgänger* became identified, especially in the tales of Hoffmann, as the external image of the hardly suppressed evil component of the
personality. Hoffmann's important contribution to the development of the Doppelgänger fantasy, Tynan emphasises, was this identification of the "evil self" with the physical double, which might be real or imaginary, supernatural or hallucinatory, but in which the double's original recognised his hostile secondary self. Hoffmann seems to anticipate the Freudian unconscious, and certainly the Doppelgänger fantasy is, as a rule, associated with psychopathology.

While Dostoyevsky has an early tale in which a government clerk is driven mad by his ubiquitously competing double, Dickens's use of the Doppelgänger remained metaphoric rather than literal. But the first proper Doppelgänger fantasy in English seems to be James Hogg's Confessions of a Justified Sinner (1824), which cleverly synthesises native Scottish diablerie and imported Germanism. Its protagonist, Wringhim, belongs to an Antinomian sect holding that "least tangible of all Christian tenets, namely, of the infallibility of the elect..." The "elect" Wringhim soon meets a stranger, Gil-Martin, who encourages his Antinomian tenet that all things are become just to the just. Disconcertingly, however, the commendable Gil-Martin bears an uncanny resemblance to Wringhim himself, a resemblance which seems to increase as their ideas grow in harmony. They collaborate in meritorious actions which, before the promulgation of his election, Wringhim had considered sin, including the murder of Wringhim's "unregenerate" brother, of whom he is jealous.

Finally, when Gil-Martin has become his identical twin in appearance, Wringhim finds himself accused of a number of acts, including the murder of his mother, of which he has no recollection. Panic-stricken, the wretch cannot decide whether he "had a second
self, who transacted business in my likeness", or "two souls, which take possession of my bodily frame by turns, the one being all unconscious of what the other performs ...". Unable to fathom the mystery, or escape the ubiquitous Gil-Martin, Wringhim hangs himself in despair, leaving behind, like Dickens's madman, the manuscript of his confessions.

Wringhim's final dilemma thus reads either as religious parable or as another pathological breakdown of hypocrisy; Gil-Martin either as literal devil or as auto-hallucination. A similar ambiguity of design characterises the next significant Doppelgänger, Poe's "William Wilson" (1839), which is the confession of a scoundrel of "unparalleled infamy", in whom the "constitutional infirmities" of an "imaginative and easily excitable temperament" led to the "wildest caprices" and the "most ungovernable passions". Yet, Wilson's vicious conduct, at preparatory school, at Eton, and at Oxford, was hindered by a mysterious classmate, who was also named William Wilson and resembled him in appearance, dress, gait, and manner. This maddeningly virtuous namesake, always whispering admonishment, caused Wilson's expulsion from Oxford, by exposing his cheating at cards, and pursued him, unshakably, to Paris, Vienna, Berlin, and Rome. At last, panic-stricken and goaded beyond endurance by this "inscrutable tyranny", Wilson drives a knife into his relentless pursuer; only to confront what seems to be a large mirror;

... and, as I stepped up to it in extremity of terror, mine own image, but with features all pale and dabbled in blood, advanced to meet me with a feeble and tottering gait .... and I could have fancied that I myself was speaking while he said:
"You have conquered, and I yield. Yet, henceforward art thou also dead — dead to the world, to Heaven and to Hope! In me didst thou exist—and, in my death, see by this image, which is thine own, how utterly thou hast murdered thyself." 93

In his Preface to Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque (1840), Poe disclaimed the influence of German Romanticism, insisting that the "terror" of his tales was not of Germany but of the soul. At any rate, "William Wilson," which betrays in its lurid allegory a fascination with psycho_pathology, reaches an early climax in the Doppelgänger theme. Late Victorian development of the theme, as in Dorian Gray (1891), was along more explicit lines of allegory where the question of hallucination is less relevant, but the epochal antinomies of soul and mind, moral phenomenon and psychological phenomenon, are typically implicit in the Doppelgänger fantasy. Indeed, Ivan Karamazov, desperately confronting his Satanic alter ego, attempts to silence him with the scoff that he is merely a figment of delirium. Various intermixtures and permutations of pathology and allegory characterise the Victorian Doppelgänger.

Rossetti, for example, experimented with/fantasy in a prose fragment, "St. Agnes of Intercession" (composed c. 1848 and first called "An Autopsychology"), in which a modern painter discovers his double in an obscure Renaissance master, and recognises his beloved in that master's St. Agnes. Similarly, in Rossetti's picture, How They Met Themselves (1851-60), two lovers encounter in terror their doubles; and the most gripping impression of the "St. Agnes" fragment, with its murky medium of brain fever and hallucination, is the mysterious sense of doom portended by the doubles. Another sinister Doppelgänger is featured in Mrs. Gaskell's tale "The Poor Clare"
(1855), an unrealised synthesis of Hoffmannesque fantasy and Victorian moralism, in which an innocent girl, the victim of an ancestral curse, is haunted by "another wicked, fearful self." This double, "seen by all, flitting about the house and gardens, always about some mischievous or detestable work", is "a ghastly resemblance, complete in likeness, so far as form and feature and minutest touch of dress could go, but with a loathsome demon soul looking out of the grey eyes, that were in turns mocking and voluptuous." This recalls, again, the psychic dissociation of hysteria.

A more successfully realised Doppelgänger appears in "Mr. Justice Harbottle", from Le Fanu's In a Glass Darkly. The corrupt Harbottle, apparently modelled on the infamous Judge Jeffries, is in the process of adding one more judicial crime to his conscience — namely, the execution of his mistress's husband, who has conveniently come before him on the capital charge of forgery — when he is mysteriously admonished that a "High Court of Appeal", "a court which sits day and night, and never rises", is reviewing his conduct on the bench. Though not a little disturbed by this cryptic hoax, Judge Harbottle proceeds in his usual way at the trial of the inconvenient husband, bullying counsel and jury, and getting his capital verdict.

Shortly after the husband's execution, however, as if also in due course, the Judge is notified of an indictment for murder lodged against him by the "Officer of the Crown Solicitor in the Kingdom of Life and Death." Indeed, on the date specified for his trial, the scoffing Judge, on his way home from the theatre, is waylaid and abducted to a nightmarish court presided over by Chief-Justice Twofold, "a dilated effigy of himself; an image of Mr. Justice Harbottle,
at least double his size, and with all his fierce colouring, and his ferocity of eye and visage, enhanced awfully." In the dock, Harbottle is helpless; nothing he "could argue, cite, or state, was permitted to retard for a moment the march of the case towards its catastrophe." Sentenced to death by his mocking Doppelgänger, Harbottle suddenly finds himself awakened from a nightmare, his carriage stopped at his doorstep. He passes the statutory calendar month between sentence and execution "in the vapours", shut up at home in precaution against assassination. But on the morning of his designated execution day, Judge Harbottle is found hanging from the great staircase of his house, obviously dead by his own hand. Among his papers is found "what purported to be 'a copy', in the old Judge's handwriting", of his indictment. "The original was nowhere."96

Le Fanu's powerful tale of an evil man condemned in the phantasmagoric courtroom of his own mind may be followed by "The Dream of Duncan Parrenness" (1884), a tale by Rudyard Kipling, who was also obsessed by the interfusion of psychopathology and spiritual disease. Duncan Parrenness is an Anglo-Indian cleric, a dissolute young man, who "had so burnt and seared my mind with the flames of a thousand bad passions and desires, that I had aged ten months for each one in the Devil's school." One night, while in his customary state of drunkenness, Duncan is confronted by a leering image, anticipating Dorian Gray's portrait; "for I saw that his face was my very own, but marked and lined and scarred with the furrows of disease and much evil living ..."97 After a flesh-creeping colloquy with "Myself", the sobered Duncan sees the phantom fade in the first light of dawn, leaving behind in his hand, as a token of repentance, a crust of dry bread.
However, the climax of the Victorian **Doppelgänger** is shared by *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886) and *Dorian Gray*. Stevenson had already experimented with the double-self theme in his melodrama *Deacon Brodie; or The Double Life* (1880), the story of an Edinburgh city councillor indicted for his nocturnal activities as a robber, and hanged on a gallows of his own design. And, with some parallel to Kipling’s "Duncan Parrenness", Stevenson’s "Markheim" (1884), immediately after murdering a pawnbroker on Christmas Day, encounters a personification of his conscience, who, by playing devil’s advocate and urging Markheim to commit another murder to make good his escape, awakens his remorse and induces him to surrender to justice. But it is *Jekyll and Hyde* wherein a Doppelgänger fantasy became, like Frankenstein and Dracula, a legend in its own right.

As its full title suggests, *Jekyll and Hyde* perpetuates the interfusion of moral insanity and spiritual sickness, psychopathology and allegory. Yet, in a way, it is a morality play recast in Calvinist melodrama, in which the monster Hyde, or Vice, springs to life out of the very soul of Jekyll, the seemingly philanthropic Everyman. Really another product of the "autopsychology" of hypocrisy, Hyde’s precipitation is catalysed by Jekyll’s Faustian alchemy; but once Hyde is projected, Jekyll expresses recognition as well as consternation, realising "this, too, was myself". Soon he is exhilarated to let slip his altruism in occasional indulgence in the Hyde persona, whose Id-like will seemed, to the deluded Jekyll, to bear "a livelier image of the spirit ..." Hyde, however, hates Jekyll, plays him obscene tricks, and is withheld from utterly undoing him only by the instinct of self-preservation.
Then, the drug that works the transformation becomes addictive, or rather the indulgences in Hyde, at first tentative, become compulsive; Jekyll "was slowly losing hold of my original and better self, and becoming slowly incorporated with my second and worse." Fearfully, he keeps Hyde suppressed for two whole months, but then withdrawal symptoms, "throes and longings, as of Hyde struggling after freedom", force further indulgence. "My devil had long been caged, he came out roaring", and perpetrates a crime "no man morally sane could have been guilty of", the cudgelling to death of an aged, venerated gentleman. Afterwards there is another period of "fearful repentance", but "the animal within me \( \text{was} \) licking the chops of memory." Jekyll himself is becoming more callous, fearing now only for the gallows and not for his soul, and taking comfort in his perfect alibi for Hyde's crimes. But one day he suddenly starts from such a sinful reverie to find himself transformed, without the agency of the drug, into Hyde. From then on, Hyde's spontaneous breakthroughs become frequent until, finally, Dr. Jekyll disappears, forever and irreversibly. When Hyde's pursuers burst into Jekyll's laboratory, they find Hyde's hideous corpse beside a vial of poison, as well as Jekyll's manuscript in which he had meticulously recorded the events of his secret existence.

Swedenborg had taught that "interior" evil may appear, by exterior, good; "hence it is that evil hath dominion over good, and subjects this to itself as a servant ..." While Le Fanu's Silas, Godfrey Ablewhite, and Jasper illustrate this inversion of transcendent hypocrisy, Hyde is, in effect, an extension into the phenomenal world of the "interior" persona. But Jekyll and Hyde is remarkable, no less for its Calvinist and Swedenborgian implications,
or its Darwinian atavism already alluded to, than for its proto-Freudian intimation of psychic struggle between daemonic impulse and self-preservation. This thematic aptitude, naturally, helps make Jekyll and Hyde so representative of its era.

While Jekyll and Hyde implies the dissociation of the respectable and the brutal, another ingenious variation on the Doppelgänger, Dorian Gray, centres on the Kierkegaardian dissociation of the ethical and the aesthetic. Although fraught with decadent overtones, Dorian Gray is really a study in the fascination of repulsion, in moral terror, rather than, as some reviewers charged, a deliberate subversion of moralism. The "new Hedonism", expounded, between puffs on an opium-flavoured cigarette, by Lord Henry Wotton, not only stands the Rev. John Barlow on his head and reverses Man's Power over Himself to Control Insanity, but seduces, almost instantaneously, the prepossessing young Dorian Gray, who has no Hebraic resistance, in the terms of Matthew Arnold's famous antithesis, to Lord Henry's attractive sophistry:

I believe that if one man were to live out his life fully and completely, were to give form to every feeling, expression to every thought, reality to every dream - I believe that the world would gain such a fresh impulse of joy that we would forget all the maladies of mediaevalism, and return to the Hellenic ideal - to something finer, richer, than the Hellenic ideal, it may be. But the bravest man amongst us is afraid of himself. The mutilation of the savage has its tragic survival in the self-denial that mars our lives. We are punished for our refusals. Every impulse that we strive to strangle broods in the mind, and poisons us. The body sins once, and has done with its sin, for action is a mode of purification. Nothing remains then but the luxury of a regret. The only way to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it. Resist it, and your soul grows sick with longing for the things it has forbidden to itself, with desire for what its monstrous laws have made monstrous and unlawful.
Like Guy Morville, Dorian is the product of passionate ancestry and family tragedy, and Lord Henry flatters his inherent narcissism, encouraging "passions that have made you afraid, thoughts that have filled you with terror, day-dreams and sleeping dreams whose mere memory might stain your cheek with shame." Indeed, in acquiescing to this evil genius, Dorian indulges his own latent self. He ungratefully deserts his good angel, the painter Basil Hallward, who is a moralist of self-restraint; but not before Hallward finishes his marvellous portrait of Dorian, a masterful portrayal of spiritual virginity, which Lord Henry, always the connoisseur, declares his finest work. But Hallward's portrait, with which he feels a mystical affinity, shows, in Swedenborgian terms, the "exterior" Dorian Gray, while Lord Henry, who delights to trace the physiological origins of spirituality, appeals to the "interior". Of course, the focus of the dual-personality theme is this portrait, which, while its original seems, like Ganymede, to enjoy eternal youth, miraculously ages, registering, vicariously, the physiognomical ravages of moral deterioration, as its original sinks deeper into vice and sin — "the rotting of a corpse in a watery grave was not so fearful." Horrified, yet fascinated, Dorian conceals the canvas Doppelgänger in a secret chamber of his townhouse.

Meanwhile, in his indefatigable pursuit of sensation and conquest of inhibition, Dorian, like Jasper, leads a nocturnal existence separate from his place in society, "creeping at dawn out of dreadful houses and slinking in disguise into the foulest dens in London." Like des Esseintes in Huysmans's *A rebours* (1884), he comes to specialise in the seduction of innocence. Like Jekyll, he makes hypocritical gestures of repentance. And finally, like William
Wilson, when utterly sunken in pollution, he attempts to destroy his conscience. In effect, he does this twice: first when he stabs Basil Hallward, after forcing Hallward to look at the transformed portrait; and later, fatally for himself, when he takes his knife to Hallward's haunted creation. Roused by a hideous shriek, Dorian's servants force their way into his sanctum, to find hinging upon the wall a splendid portrait of their master as they had last seen him, in all the wonder of his exquisite youth and beauty. Lying on the floor was a dead man, in evening dress, with a knife in his heart. He was withered, wrinkled, and loathsome of visage. It was not till they had examined the rings that they recognised who it was.

However, the neatness of metaphor cannot compensate for the pettiness of moral imagination which seriously equates aestheticism and satanism, and confuses sin and, in Wilde's own words, "what the world calls sin". As Pater noted, Dorian Gray borrows from a cautionary tradition in which vice and sin must lead to physical ugliness. Wilde's own cautionary contribution was to illustrate the danger of unrestrained aesthetic indulgence, the sensualism of the intellect; for Dorian's moral anaesthesia is linked, as in des Esseintes, with refined taste in art and décor, and epicene sensibility; while Basil Hallward is "dull". The dissociation of virtue and beauty seems to be fatal stylistically also, as phrases of cautionary melodrama — "the sordid shame of the great city"; "the hideous hunger for opium" — alternate with long passages of décadent preciousity lifted from *A rebours*. Dorian Gray is its author's own unconscious self-parody, and yet, in the same terms of self-contradiction, it is his apology, as it is the parody-cum-apology of a whole generation purportedly misled by aesthetic hedonism.
Still, for all its stylistic and thematic embarrassment, Dorian Gray perhaps best summarises the daemonic implication of dual personality. The willing self-deception of Hogg's Justified Sinner, the formal hysteria of "A Madman's Manuscript", the metapathology of "William Wilson", Rossetti's "Autopsychology", the Swedenborgian hypocrisy of Edwin Drood, the "fearful" lesson of Jekyll and Hyde, all are comprehended in the "monstrous and terrible delight" with which Dorian Gray, ensconced in his secret chamber, pores over the "hideous lines" and bloated features, the "corruption of his own soul."

Dorian Gray was not the last Doppels...
NOTES TO CHAPTER III


9. Prichard, pp.175-76.

10. Winslow, p.256.

11. Prichard, p.27.


15. Ibid., p.315.


22. Ellis, p.213.
27. Freud and Breuer, p.77.
30. Winslow, p.588.
31. Wigan, p.126.
32. Winslow, p.256.
33. Prichard, p.131, p.171.
34. Barlow, pp.24-25.
37. Andrew Combe, p.96.


48. Acton, p.28.

49. Clouston, p.548.

50. Acton, p.31.


52. Winslow, p.666.


58. See the Dictionary of National Biography entry on Samuel Warren.


68. Anne Brontë, p.332.


75. Emily Brontë, chap. xi, pp.101-102; chap. xv, p.134; chap. xvi, p.139.

77. Johnson, Morbid Emotions, p.183.
81. Lewis Carroll, Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, chap. i; The Annotated Alice, pp.32-33.
83. Included in Braddon, Ralph the Bailiff and Other Tales (London: 1862).
87. Dickens, Martin Chuzzlewit, chap. xlvii, p.802, p.804.
89. Dickens, Edwin Drood, chap. iii, p.20; chap. x, p.102, pp.108-109; chap. xvi, p.188.
90. Tymms, pp.50-55.
91. Dostoyevsky's The Double was published in 1846 but was not translated into English in the nineteenth century.


98. Stevenson, Jekyll and Hyde, p.75, pp.81-82, p.85.


100. Wilde, Dorian Gray, chap. ii, pp.29-30; chap. xi, p.179; chap. xii, p.211; chap. xiii, p.219; chap. xvi, pp.256-57; chap. xx, p.312.


CHAPTER IV. THE SINS OF THE FATHERS

For there is seldom any wrong-doing which does not carry along with it some downfall of blindly-climbing hopes, some hard entail of suffering, some quickly-satiated desire that survives, with the life in death of old paralytic vice, to see itself cursed by its woeful progeny - some tragic mark of kinship in the one brief life to the far-stretching life that went before, and to the life that is to come after, such as has raised the pity and terror of men ever since they began to discern between will and destiny.

George Eliot, *Felix Holt* (1866)

And Plutarch puts the doctrine of heredity in a shape that is both ancient and modern - "That which is engendered is made of the very substance of the generating being, so that he bears in him something which is very justly punished or recompensed for him, for this something is he." Or again - "There is between the generating being and the generated a sort of hidden identity, capable of justly committing the second to all the consequences of an action committed by the first."

Havelock Ellis, *The Criminal* (1890)

Another epochal theme associated, often mysteriously, with the daemonic as well as with the despair of fatalism, was that of the omnipotence, both biological and metaphysical, of heredity. This motif of folklore, sanctified by Scripture, and later rationalised by
Darwinism, permeated Victorian genetics, endowing it, in both its scientific and literary contexts, with the overtones of moral terror. In fact, Victorian studies of villainy and moral insanity were frequently preoccupied by the notion that evil is hereditary; that, in accordance with Lamarckian theory, acquired characteristics, both physical and moral, are inherited. The inexorable workings of the "legacy of Cain", to borrow Wilkie Collins's title, impressed the most optimistic positivists with "consternation", and the most rigid moralists with the futility of free will.

In effect, the conviction of genetic predetermination, in its tacit reassertion of the innateness of evil, encouraged reaction in both sociology and criminology, the mystery of hereditary taint persistently obscuring the environmental factor. An example of this obscuration is a letter, expressing horror at the "monstrous" conception of a "convict colony", sent in 1836 to the Governor of Van Diemen's Land, by Dr. Thomas Arnold. As a headmaster, Arnold was well aware of the corrupting influences of environment, and condemned the "Jacobinical", i.e. unrestrainedly individualistic, principle encouraged by colonial life, which caused "our West Indian colonies to be one of the worst stains in the moral history of mankind ..." But his rationality boggled at what was worse than "Jacobinism" and slavery in Van Diemen's Land: "... I am sure that no such evil can be done to mankind as by thus sowing with rotten seed, and raising up a nation morally tainted in its very origin." And the metaphor of "sowing with rotten seed" seems to confound the distinction between innate and acquired corruption, moral and lineal breed:
If they will colonize with convicts, I am satisfied
that the stain should last, not for one whole life,
but for more than one generation; that no convict or
convict's child should ever be a free citizen; and
that, even in the third generation, the offspring
should be excluded from all offices of honour or
authority in the colony.

Darwin's work, which explained not only the origin of species and
the descent of man but also the distinctive, if perpetually endangered,
superiority of particular breeds, such as the Anglo-Saxon, was but
another manifestation of the remarkable nineteenth-century obsession
with the laws and penalties of heredity. Darwin's cousin, Francis
Galton, coining the word eugenics for the science of human breed.

"Murder is a smaller crime, said Herbert Spencer, "than is the giving
to offspring infected constitutions and consequent life-long miseries."

"Maudsley speaks of a man's yielding to the tyranny of his organization",
remarked another alienist. "We might go further and say he may fall
a victim to his grandfather's excesses." Naturally, this preoccupation
with breed and generation is but another reflection of biological
ethology. However, it also suggests the confusion and insecurity of
a time when hereditary privilege was everywhere challenged by merit,
when competition was perceived to act selectively through generations,
and when, consequently, the genealogical past often appeared as an
incubus.

In The Origin of Species (1859), Darwin noted that the chief part
of the organisation of every living being is due to inheritance; and,
in The Descent of Man (1871), though optimistic about the general
direction of evolution, he conceded that vice was inherited as
regularly as virtue. One source of his negative evidence was the
case-histories of the alienists, who stressed the factor of
"hereditary predisposition". Indeed, the isolation of a "tainted"
line of descent was an important part of their diagnosis. "By the law of heredity", wrote the medical geneticist R.A. Douglas Lithgow in 1889, "all living beings tend to reproduce themselves in their offspring physically, mentally, and morbidly ... Amongst the many inscrutable designs of nature, none is more manifest than this, that physical vice, like physical feature and physical virtue, descends in line." And here "physical vice" is not merely a euphemism for the "syphilitic taint", of such grim symbolism in Ibsen's A Doll's House (1879) and Ghosts (1881). Lithgow's phrase apparently comprehends degenerative disease, such as Sir Leicester Dedlock's family heirloom of gout; insanity; as well as the "ne'er-de-wellism, profligacy, or general good-for-nothingness" which another geneticist, J.F. Nisbet, attributed to heredity. As "innumerable instances might be given as to the heredity of dipsomania, gluttony, and eroticism", Lithgow continued, "so also with the more complex passions as gambling, avarice, theft, and murder, all of which are unquestionably subject to the law of heredity."  

In fact, physiological psychology perceived no difficulty in the genetic transmission of psychic or moral traits. If thought is only a property of living matter, then, as heredity is one of the laws of life, it must therefore be also one of the laws of thought; or, in more precise terms, intellect is a function whose organ is the brain; the brain is transmissible, as is every other organ, the stomach, the lungs, and the heart; the function is transmissible with the organ; therefore intellect is transmissible with the brain. Physiological heredity involves, as a necessary consequence, psychological heredity in all its forms. In contradistinction to this phenomenal-physiological thesis, Lithgow cited Schopenhauer, who interpreted the biological conception of a
new being as the self-realisation of the noumenon, i.e. the phenomenalisation of a new (Platonic) Idea of individuality, through the energy of the parents. Schopenhauer, furthermore, believed that the procreator imparted the offspring's will or moral character, and the mother its intellect and sensibility. But though Lithgow professed to see no refutation of such ontological fancies in the empirical science of heredity, which, in any case, was supposedly unconcerned with ultimate reality, both Bain in *Mind and Body* (1873) and Maudsley in *Body and Will* (1883) had argued the physical basis of will: and Lithgow finally concluded its necessary subordination, like every other psychic quality, to the physiological mechanisms of heredity.

Yet, even in this context of materialism and physiological psychology, which quantified its operations, heredity and especially the inheritance of evil often seemed to be credited with metaphysical transcendence. The direct inheritance of "physical vice" was mysterious enough, but, according to the best physiological authorities, there were genetic processes, scarcely more rational than spiritualism or mesmerism, by which "influences", evil impressions, and immorality could be transmitted, or could affect unborn life, as in the horrendous pre-natal influence of Elsie Venner (1861). Both "influencive heredity", also known as "teleagony", by which the offspring could inherit traits from an individual merely exercising a mental influence on its mother, and "initial heredity", by which an offspring is innately affected by the moral state of its parents "when they became such", i.e. during the act of procreation, were cited by Schopenhauer as evidence of the Will's transcendence of the physical.
The most common telegenic effect was "in reproduction in the children by a second marriage of some peculiarity belonging to a former spouse." Even Carpenter verified telegy, attributing it to "the strong mental impression left by the first male parent upon the female"; it was for this reason, according to a character in Strindberg's play Creditors (1888), that the Hindus practised suttee. The mysterious prepotency of fatherhood was also demonstrated in the fact that the offspring of a Negro father and a white mother are invariably black. Goethe's novel Elective Affinities (1809) described a telegenic effect, when a married woman bears a child resembling her platonic lover, and the theme recurs, comically, in James Hogg's Justified Sinner (1824); but perhaps the most horrific telegy occurs in Ibsen's The Lady from the Sea (1888), when Ellida bears her husband a short-lived child whose eyes are those of Ellida's long-departed evil genius.

In the no less remarkable phenomenon of "initial heredity", lust, drunkenness, or other vice propagated itself through an intoxicated or lecherous procreator. Thus, illegitimate children were often congenitally defective — if not out and out villains like Gabriel Varney — as were the offspring of immature, senile, insane, or otherwise enervated parents, though "persons born before their parents had become insane are less subject to mental illness than those who are born after the malady has displayed itself." Yet another mysterious and often ominous phenomenon of heredity was atavism or reversional heredity, in which an offspring "threw back" to some grand- or great-grandparent. Sometimes intervening generations were ignored by an offspring who reincarnated a distant
ancestor. "It is quite as common to meet with Atavism in the transmission of hereditary disease as in the reproduction of 'family likenesses'"\(^{18}\), Carpenter observed, hinting at a correlation common in Victorian folklore. At any rate, the horror of hereditary insanity was intensified by the freakishly unpredictable operation of atavism, through which a "whole generation may be passed over, the inherited influence reappearing as potently as ever in the next ...\(^{19}\)

The inscrutability of this fatal latency reduced even alienists to quasi-mystical speculations. Maudsley found it "a very rare thing for all the children of an insane parent to become insane: indeed, it seems sometimes as if the child which falls victim drains off the taint for that generation, like a sort of scapegoat sent out into the wilderness, so that the other children escape."\(^{20}\) Even more mysteriously, hereditary madness, which might remain latent for generations in a family line, might also remain latent in the individual, not appearing until the age at which the ascendant had become insane. Prichard mentions a family in which father, son, and grandson had all committed suicide in their fiftieth year.

The mysterious operations of such hereditary phenomena were most significant in the genealogical context, and in their discussion of atavism and the lineal descent of physical vice, the alienists were, in effect, rationalising the "family curse" of folklore and popular literature. Thus, Maudsley outlined the "chain of events by which causes that give rise to individual degeneracy continue their morbid action through generations, and finally issue in the extinction of the family."\(^{21}\) As Maudsley uses it here, the term degeneracy signifies the negative phase of evolution in which a morbific or
even lethal factor, whether physical or moral, appears innately in an organism and is transmitted to offspring, progressively deteriorating the stock, especially in conditions of inbreeding. Such a syndrome was exhibited both in ancient aristocratic families ridden with rare hereditary disease or madness, and in the incestuous families of criminals studied by Lombroso, in which idiocy, deformity, and moral insanity were alternately inherited. "Sometimes a generation of criminals is merely one stage in the progressive degeneration of a family. Sometimes crime seems to be the method by which the degenerating organism seeks to escape from an insane taint in the parents", wrote Havelock Ellis, again striking a mysterious note. Although physical brutishness and deformity were originally considered the infallible index of moral degeneracy, a principle tirelessly substantiated by Lombroso, it was also perceived, more subtly, that hyperesthesia, precocity, and physical delicacy or effeminacy could well be symptomatic of moral deformity. Evidently, evil as an absolute quality in a pedigree could incarnate itself variously as disease, deformity, neurosis, madness, or criminality.

In large part, the principle through which the process of degeneracy acted was the Lamarckian one of the inheritance of acquired characteristics. In order to account for the inheritance of psychic acquirements, i.e., their transformation into instincts, which was an essential detail of his scheme of evolution, Darwin postulated that such acquirements actually modify nerve cells, which then give rise to "gemmules" encoding the modifications and

* Freud's theory of the innateness of psychic complexes such as the Oedipean, presumably acquired at some remote period in the history of the species, also presupposes Lamarckian heredity.
transmissible to offspring. This "pangenesis" theory of heredity was not original with Darwin, but he adopted it because it was physiologically feasible and seemed to be confirmed by the fact of hereditary insanity. In fact, this Lamarckian theory was not effectively challenged in Britain until Galton in his *Natural Inheritance* (1889) expressed scepticism, not only of teleony and "initial heredity", but also on "the obscure, unsettled, and much discussed subject of the possibility of transmitting acquired faculties..."  

However, it was the widely credited heredity of acquirements that endowed physical vice with its transcendence of generations. "No man or woman can inordinately indulge their own sexual passions without at least running the risk of finding a disposition to gratify their sensual passions at an early age inherited by their offspring." According to Lithgow,  

the protean pernicious effects of alcohol taken in excess do not, unfortunately, end with the miserable life of the poor drunkard, but are passed on to his irresponsible children as a legacy from violated nature - an indelible brand, an inherited curse - which may express itself in a distinct neuropathic predisposition capable of developing insanity, hysteria, epilepsy, impaired volition or mental instability, and of reproducing the primary vice in which it has originated. **Pangenesis is to be distinguished from modern theory in which the body or somatic cells are without genetic effect upon the primordial germ cells, the sole determiners of heredity, which are complete and unalterable in the new-born individual. Lamarckism as understood by Darwin is now discredited, except, until very recently, in the Soviet Union, where it was stubbornly upheld in accordance with Marxist theory of the perfectibility of man and the heritability of modified behaviour patterns. The basis of modern genetics was laid by the German biologist August Weismann who, in *The Germ-plasm, a Theory of Heredity* (English translation, 1893), demonstrated the continuity of the germ cells or "germ-plasm".**
Science, in short, reinforced a common Victorian version of negative Lamarckism, the popular form of which may be illustrated in Walter Besant’s Temperance novel *The Demoniac* (1890), in which a young student who has never tasted alcohol suddenly is seized with a burning, insatiable thirst for whisky, only to learn, after one of his inexplicable attacks of drunkenness, that his grandfather had been a dipsomaniac.

However, the original Lamarckian doctrine of heredity was an eminently positive one, basing evolution, not only upon the heritability of acquired characteristics, but also upon the species’ own inherent will to improvement and advancement, a concept not far from Schopenhauer’s metaphysics of heredity. In *Life and Habit* (1878), Samuel Butler, like Bernard Shaw after him, preferred, over Natural Selection, this Lamarckian urge-to-improvement as the mechanism of racial genesis. *The Way of all Flesh* (1903) can be read as a parable of this organic struggle for improvement, the triumphant Ernest Pontifex being finally in a position to transmit his improved capabilities to a fortunate progeny.

But in the main, Victorian Lamarckism added another dimension to moral terror, a definite biological implication to sin. George Combe argued God’s wisdom in so visiting the parents’ sins upon the children, for, though apparently unjust, such biological retribution tended to the amelioration of the race. Similarly, Maudsley wrote of “the law of degeneration avenging the infraction of the law of evolution: a product and a nemesis at the same moment.” Making a virtue of hereditary Necessity, Carpenter emphasised the vindicatory force of volition in such cases, citing the example of the son of a
drunkard, "who for forty years got up every morning with the strong apprehension of being unable to resist that craving, which was an essential and inherent part of his nature, inherited from the unhappy indulgence of his father." Yet, he succeeded in his self-control, thus undoing the curse; and

there is a strong physiological probability that the effect of such habitual self-discipline does not end with the Individual, but is exerted upon the Race; the emotional tendencies having so much of the character of Instincts, that the hereditary transmission of the form they have acquired may be expected in the one case as in the other.

At the same time, of course, the fatalism of heredity strongly challenged the doctrine of free will and responsibility, Elsie Venner being one of the most remarkable exhibitions of fatalism. "The basis of morals is responsibility, but heredity influences alike tendencies which are resistible and those which are irresistible", Lithgow gloomily observed, "and here we are once again met with the increasing conflict between free-will and fate, and I will only add that in this warfare, fatalism is more often triumphant than is usually admitted or imagined." Fatalistic criminologists such as Maudsley and Havelock Ellis showed that in tainted lines all development other than degeneration was precluded. For Maudsley such tainted scions were "the step-children of nature."

Such step-children of nature, incapable of self-discipline, required a eugenic discipline as well as personal or legal restraint. Like Dickens in his essay "The Ruffian" (1868), the criminologist Luke Owen Pike proposed life-long sequestration of criminals; "like consumption or other hereditary disease, the criminal disposition would in the end cease to be inherited if all who were..."
tainted with it were compelled to live and die childless." Sharing Pike's fears that "the lifeblood of posterity" was in danger of "corruption", 34 Darwin, in *The Descent of Man*, warned that the criminal class as well as degraded racial types such as the Irish could, by their indiscriminate reproduction, fatally contaminate the English race. Inevitably, then, racialism emerged from Victorian eugenics, an American expert on degeneracy pointing out that the crossing of advanced and degraded races tended "to render the superior race more liable to the action of the factors producing degeneracy", 35 while Darwin himself had confirmed the peculiar degeneracy of half-castes. 36

"But what are we to say about the marriage of the neurotic, thin, hysterical young women, with insanity in their ancestry?" 37 asked Clouston, raising the question of eugenics among the more respectable elements of society, where hysteria and other more genteel disorders were endemic. The marriage of an hysterical woman and "a man of nervous temperament" would not only produce "nervous" children, Lithgow warned,

but deeper down in the constitutions which they have inherited dwell potentialities capable of producing epilepsy, alcoholism, hypochondriasis, mania in its every form - of ringing the changes upon the whole series of nervous disorders, and perpetuating them - unless neutralised by judicious inter-marriages, from generation to generation. 38

Here also restraint and discipline were paramount, and it was lamentable that while a man will decline to marry a deformed woman, "he seldom or never hesitates to select as the mother of his children a pretty woman because her father is a confirmed drunkard, or because she has an aunt in a lunatic asylum. And having done this he is surprised to find that his son in due time turns out to be a blackguard, or that his daughter, despite the most careful training, takes to the
streets." The continence of fatal vessels was apparently the only certain measure; and one of John Ruskin's motives or excuses for declining to consummate his marriage of six years' duration to Effie Gray, later Lady Millais, seems to have been his suspicion that she harboured nervous disorder.

The eugenic problem was aggravated by the Victorian custom of cousin-marriage, it being supposed that consanguinity in breeding tends to the expression of morbid traits latent in a pedigree. According to Prichard, "the offspring of cousin-germans are very often observed to be weak and defective both in mind and body"; and Carpenter mentioned a marriage between two first cousins, both of whom exhibited mere "family idiosyncrasy", but in whose offspring this "idiosyncrasy" intensified into definite degeneracy. Misbet recommended legal prohibition of the marriage of first cousins, while D.H. Tuke, in his *Dictionary of Psychological Medicine* (1892), published genealogical charts of the transmission of disease as a guide to the "safe" marriage of first and second cousins. Yet, though inbreeding was supposed to be a sure path to degeneracy, Alfred Henry Huth, analysing ethnological data, found neither an innate horror of incest nor "any deterioration through the marriage of near kin per se ..." Darwin, who himself married his first cousin, a Wedgwood, admitted the lack of definite evidence either to vindicate or demolish the degeneracy theory, noting, in the conclusion of his *Descent of Man*, that a proposal made in 1871, to incorporate in the general census of the population a survey of consanguineous marriages, had been rejected by the "ignorant" legislators.
In effect, the Victorian attitude towards consanguineous unions was ambivalent. While brutalised peasants and slum-dwellers, as revealed by Parliamentary investigations, wallowed in unmentionable permutations of familial relationships, love between cousins was a popular fiction convention, a romance faintly flavoured with incest and, in more serious fiction, often involving conflicts between passion or family duty and eugenic principle. "I have observed that cousins — when they happen to be brought together under interesting circumstances — can remember their relationship and forget their relationship, just as it suits them", wrote Wilkie Collins. The titillating possibilities of such romance were probably also symptomatic of a claustrophobic society in which one's cousin was very likely the only eligible person of the opposite sex to be encountered on relatively easy social terms.

The question of consanguineous marriage was further complicated by the mystical consanguinity which came into being between brothers- and sisters-in-law. After 1835 marriage between them was, in fact, prohibited, a peculiarity of Victorian mores legally enforced until the Deceased Wife's Sister's Carriage Act of 1907. Apparently, the establishment of legal consanguinity between such affined persons was not only a reinforcement of the sacrament of marriage; it was also a measure to safeguard respectability in the frequent cases when a wife's unmarried sister resided with her in order to assist in the management of the household. Dickens's sister-in-law Georgina Hogarth remained with him even after his scandalous separation from his wife Catherine. In such cases, it was argued, propriety could only be maintained by a taboo on amorous feelings between the in-laws. Huth, however, who urged repeal of the 1835
law, argued that it had an opposite effect from its intention, for it induced a "false security" in such affined relationships, leading to seduction. Nevertheless, this remarkable marriage restriction, whose repeal became a cause célèbre of progressivism, was upheld by that bastion of hereditary powers, the House of Lords, and even the amending Act of 1907 retained a sanction against marriage with one's divorced wife's sister during the lifetime of such wife, a disability remaining until the Marriage Enabling Act of 1960.

Huth, who recommended that brothers- and sisters-in-law not live together in the same household in view of the temptations insinuated by the law, further recommended that "marriage between step-mothers and step-sons, or father and daughter-in-law, should be prohibited, since they must usually be of an unsuitable age for marriage, and undue influence is to be feared. For the same reason, marriage between a guardian and his ward, so long as this relationship exists, should also be prohibited."46 Like the love of cousins or passion for one's deceased wife's sister, erotic attraction between elderly men and young women was another Victorian romance which flaunted canons of eugenics and verged vaguely on the illicit and incestuous. Ruskin's senile passion in his middle age for a consumptive child, Rose La Touche, whom he introduced as "Mousey" in his Ethics of the Dust (1866), and for whose hand he repeatedly proposed, manifests the fatherly husband and "child-wife" theme sentimentalised by Dickens. Jarndyce's courtship of his ward Esther, "little Dame Durden", in Bleak House, a grotesque mixture of the avuncular and the sexual, which he finally consummates by proxy, would assuredly have come under the ban proposed by Huth.

According to Stephen Dedalus, Aquinas had classified incest as "an avarice of the emotions."47 George Combe, however, found literal
avarice implicit, to the detriment of breed, in the Victorian marriage de convenance, noting that "among the wealthy, many marriages originate in covetousness ... A woman is often married, not merely at the suggestion, but at the command, of her parents, in order that estates belonging to different branches of the same family may be united in one." 48 However, exclusiveness of caste, as well as emotional and material avarice, was also an element of inbreeding systems. Indeed, the Victorian conviction of the degeneracy of inbreeding was probably connected with nineteenth-century social change, with the breakdown of hereditary privilege. Thomas Paine had already argued that aristocracy has a tendency to deteriorate the human species. "which has a tendency to degenerate, in any small number of persons, when separated from the general stock of society, and inter-marrying constantly with each other. It defeats even its pretended end, and becomes in time the opposite of what is noble in man." 49 Blue blood, therefore, seemed sometimes to be as much taint as distinction. To Disraeli's claims, in his novel Tancred (1847), of a Jewish racial superiority preserved by inbreeding, George Eliot objected: "It appears to me that the law by which privileged classes degenerate from continual inter-marriage must act on a larger scale in deteriorating whole races." 50 At any rate, both Darwin and Galton confirmed the extincive effects of primogeniture, continued preservation of the same line of descent, and invariable marriage of men of rank with heiresses. 51
Ubiquitous and immitigable in Victorian life from the microcosm of family to the macrocosm of race, the theme of heredity was also pervasive in literature. In fiction the treatment of heredity was both formulaic and thematic; formulaic in the sense of the roman à thèse or cautionary tale illustrating either eugenically responsible renunciation, or the ghastly degeneracy to which tainted, incontinent lines were heir; and thematic in the recurrent antitheses of "mortal freewill" and metempsychotic determinism, aspiring innocence and predestined guilt. Certainly, the literary material concerned with eugenics, consanguinity, and the inheritance of evil is formidably extensive. Here, some of the forgotten novels and stories on this theme will serve to clarify its obscurer aspects and introduce the patterns to be encountered in classic fiction.

A curious relic, to begin with, is Felicia Skene's novel The Inheritance of Evil; or The Consequence of Marrying a Deceased Wife's Sister (1840), in which Elizabeth Maynard feels jealousy when she notices her fiancé in animated conversation with her younger and prettier sister Agnes; but in another instant she repelled this unworthy feeling almost with horror, for she remembered, how, in a very few days, Richard Clayton would hold for Agnes Maynard the sacred name of brother. They twain were about to be made by a most holy ordinance ONE FLESH, and from that hour her sister must be his sister also, in the sight of God and man.

Agnes, however, unwisely makes her home with the newly married couple, and her presence has an involuntary fascination for her "brother". The decline of the delicate Elizabeth, already weakened by the birth of a daughter, is accelerated by obsessive visions of herself mouldering in the coffin while Richard and Agnes celebrate incestuous
nuptials. To be sure, only a few years after her dissolution, Richard, who is undisciplined and passionate, and Agnes, whose "French education had tended sadly to falsify her sense of right and wrong", are married by an unscrupulous clergyman.

But the unnatural couple are righteously shunned by all decent people, including Richard's father, a vicar, and their lives are ruined. They have a son who proves a moral weakling and dies in dissipation, while Elizabeth's daughter also becomes an "innocent sufferer by a parent's sin", losing her mind when her fiancé's family reject her on learning the identity of her father. The author wrings the last shiver of moral terror from her revolting tale, finally envisioning the unfortunate daughter nursed by her aunt-stepmother, who

was condemned to see before her, day by day, for the remainder of her life, that melancholy spectacle - a being so young, so beautiful, with her earthly existence thus fatally destroyed, the fine mind ruined and lost, the intellect prostrate, nothing left but vacant, hopeless idiocy. 52

Plainly, it is the consequence of incest that the guilty couple have incurred, as if the union with the deceased wife's sister, by some special providence of heredity, entailed the same degeneracy.

The fanaticism of The Inheritance of Evil is typical of Felicia Skene, who wrote with similar conviction on prostitution, alcoholism, and religious deviation; but it is also typical in general of the daemonic mystery of heredity so often recapitulated in fiction:
even the fatal in-law marriage recurs in Henry James's "Romance of Certain Old Clothes" (1868),53 in which a covetous girl who makes a conquest of her sister's widower meets ghostly retribution. Other
examples of the theme of hereditary evil, from the great oblivion of fiction, include Dinah Mulock's *Olive* (1850), a didactic romance of illegitimacy and morbid parenthood, and their progeny, deformity and moral insanity; Geraldine Jewsbury's *Constance Herbert* (1855), a gloomy tale of hereditary madness and an heiress who renounces marriage, under "the dark presence that might any moment descend and overshadow her beneath its fearful wings"; Frances Browne's *The Hidden Sin* (1866); B.L. Farjeon's *A Secret Inheritance* (1887); Mary Angela Dickens's *A Valiant Ignorance* (1894), in which a scoundrel's widow notices ominous signs in their son; and Katherine Tynan's "The Picture on the Wall" (1895), in which a man, about to marry into an old family, is warned by the apparition of its founding ancestor in his terminal madness.

The incest motif, often intimated by the romance of cousins, was another association of hereditary evil. Incestuous titillations are marked, for example, in Bulwer-Lytton's *Alice*; or *The Mysteries* (1838), in which Maltravers, like Thackeray's *Henry Esmond* (1852), seems to be simultaneously in love with a mother and her daughter. Herman Melville's *Pierre*; or *The Ambiguities* (1852) is an attempted tragedy on the theme of illegitimacy and ideal incest, the fatal ambiguity between Pierre and his mysterious half-sister Isabel being a confusion of the spiritual and the physical, the mystical and the erotic. Unfortunately, this confusion is unresolved and, translated into inflated rhetoric and preciosity, is also fatal, stylistically, in *Pierre*.

In the unnaturally isolated relationships of *Wuthering Heights* (1847), the younger Catherine marries first her paternal first cousin, the defective hybrid Linton Heathcliff, who dies shortly after without consummating the union, and then her maternal first cousin, the vigorous, if degraded, Hareton Earnshaw, who seems to be the reincarnation, as well as the namesake, of the Earnshaws' founding ancestor, whose name, along with the date 1500, is inscribed above the doorway of the Heights. Eric Solomon's suggestion that Heathcliff is really the elder Catherine's natural brother as well as her foster-brother, and that he is the father of her daughter, whom he forcibly marries to his legitimate son Linton, is a literal reading of the fantasy unconsciously implicit in the inbreeding pattern of the novel. At any rate, Heathcliff assumes an uncanny alliance with the deteriorating forces of heredity, fathering in loathing the despicable Linton to serve as his instrument. Yet, his victims, the younger Catherine and the dispossessed Hareton, expiate in their suffering love the curse incurred by the first generation.

Thus, it is easy to show the continuity of hereditary formula and theme throughout both minor and classic fiction. *Bleak House* (1852-53) is Dickens's novel most concerned with the workings of heredity, though this theme is sufficiently documented throughout his works. The simple handing down of wickedness is characteristic of such Dickensian families as the Squeers, the Pecksniffs, and the Smallweeds. Like Ainsworth's *Jack Sheppard* (1839), the posthumous son of an executed felon, prenatally doomed to a life of crime by his birth in Newgate; the mental defect of *Barnaby Rudge* (1841) is apparently attributable to his mother's traumatic discovery, the day
before Barnaby's birth, that his father is a murderer. *Oliver Twist* (1837–39) is haunted by the taint of illegitimacy. Yet, however much he may have been influenced by the mystery of hereditary fatality, Dickens refused finally to accept that children justifiably bear their parents' guilt. Esther Summerson in *Bleak House* and Arthur Clennam in *Little Dorrit* (1855–57) are both apparently "children of sin", i.e., illegitimate; both are raised in the "fear and trembling" becoming such offspring by fanatical relatives who mean, indeed, to visit upon them parental sin. But Dickens, in this context humanely rational, leaves no doubt as to who the innocent sufferers are, and who the real vessels of the evil spirit.

Like Dickens, Wilkie Collins wished to be a rationalist with respect to hereditary mystery, though his tale "Mad Monkton" (1859), which Dickens declined to publish in *Household Words*, for fear of offending "among those numerous families in which there is such a taint", is a concoction of Gothic locale and cursed inheritance. But, again like Dickens, Collins was mainly interested, not in the romantic doom of aristocratic families — of which there is more to be said later — but in the more immediate hereditary effects of evil. This is the moral of *The Woman in White* (1859–60), in which Anne Catherick, the mysterious fugitive from a private madhouse, for whom Laura Fairlie the heroine is later substituted, turns out to be Laura's natural half-sister.

"The sins of the fathers shall be visited on the children." But for the fatal resemblance between the two daughters of one father, the conspiracy of which Anne had been the innocent instrument and Laura the innocent victim could never have been planned. With what unerring and terrible directness the long chain of circumstances led down from the thoughtless wrong committed by the father to the heartless injury inflicted on the child. 58
However, *Armadale* (1864-65) is Collins's novel most lengthily, intricately, and metaphysically concerned with heredity and, in particular, the question of whether "mortal freewill can conquer mortal fate" in the form of an "inherited contamination of Evil."

Collins, of course, puts this question in the melodramatic terms of a legacy of Cain, beginning the novel with the deathbed confession of a repentant murderer eager to prevent a repetition of his crime by his son. Raised in the morally "Jacobinical" climate of Barbados, the murderer's boyhood and youth were passed in idleness and self-indulgence, among people—slaves and half-castes mostly—to whom my will was law. I doubt if there was ever a young man in this world whose passions were left so entirely without control of any kind.... I see the vices which have contaminated the father, descending, and contaminating the child.... I look in on myself—and I see My Crime, ripening again for the future in self-same circumstance which sowed the seeds of it in the past; and descending, in inherited contamination of Evil, from me to my son. 59

The murderer's testament further warns that his son and that of his victim, Armadale, must never meet, lest the past re-enact itself through them.

As fantastic or absurd as it may sound, Collins's plot, with its mystical transformation of Lamarckian heredity, was meant quite seriously. Like Heathcliff, or in anticipation of Neville Landless in *Edwin Drood* (1870), Midwinter, the murderer's son, is one of Maudsley's step-children of nature. As an orphaned child he had been punished by a severe guardian, who suspected him of possessing "negro blood" as well as of harbouring his "murdering father's passions."

Aware of his "hereditary compulsion" after reading his father's testament, Midwinter, who had lived as an outcast after absconding
from his guardian, feels himself "a helpless instrument in the hands of Fate"; and his fatalistic apprehension intensifies when chance brings him into association with young Armadale, a gentleman of fortune, who is unaware of the events of the past. Brooding and introspective, Midwinter is a striking contrast with the shallow, complacent Armadale, and his character is made more interesting by his passion for Miss Gwilt, the *femme fatale* who fascinates Armadale for her own nefarious ends, but who falls in love with the dark Midwinter despite herself. This ominous passion between the gloomy young man and the female criminal, who easily passes as ten years less than her real age, yet finds it increasingly difficult to dissemble her past of prison and shame, is Collins's most ambitious study of character.

Unfortunately, it is subordinated to the hereditary curse plot. Midwinter finally exorcises his inherited temptation and guilt through submission to the Christian mystery of vicarious atonement, schooled by a clergyman mentor, as Landless is to be by Crisparkle. He finally expiates his father's sin by acting as the saviour rather than the destroyer of Armadale, whose place he takes, sensing some danger, in the fatal bedroom which the ingenious Miss Gwilt has prepared as a lethal chamber. Midwinter receives a deadly dose of poisonous vapour, but the villainess, finding her lover the unintended victim of her plot, rescues him in time, though in so doing she is destroyed by her own poison. In fact, then, *Armadale*, despite its ponderously evoked atmosphere of prophetic doom and fatalistic miracle, concludes with an optimistic view of the conflict of "mortal freewill" and "mortal fate", a moral recapitulated, rather
hysterically, in Collins's last novel, *The Legacy of Cain* (1889): "There are inherent emotional forces in humanity to which the inherited forces must submit; they are essentially *influences under control* — influences which can be encountered and forced back ..."^60

Like Dickens, who prefaced *Bleak House* with a "scientific" verification of the phenomenon of "spontaneous combustion" to which Mr. Krook falls victim, Collins appended a note to *Armadale* assuring his readers that its phenomena, including a mysterious, prophetic vision dreamed by Midwinter, had all been verified by psychological and physiological authorities. Yet, *Armadale* really represents the engulfment of positivism by that mysticism of hereditary fatality which powerfully reflected the *Angeć* of determinism. This hereditary mysticism perhaps seems the most alien of all Victorian themes today when Lamarckism is discredited and biology, for all practical purposes, dissociated from teleology, but its nineteenth-century power may be felt, not only in the inchoate literary positivism of Wilkie Collins, but in the very *locus classicus* of Naturalism.

Certainly, one of the most powerful scenes in contemporary drama was the closing scene of *Ghosts*, that prose-poem of determinism, in which Mrs. Alving must witness the inherited darkness settle upon her apparently promising son Oswald. Ibsen constructed his tragedy of passion betrayed and perverted by hypocrisy, from homely materials ready to hand in popular fiction. Mrs. Alving, who has preserved the sham respectability of her dead husband, an officer royally honoured but really a reprobate, has, moreover, raised as a housemaid Alving's natural daughter, Regina, fathered on Mrs. Alving's own maid. Haunted by these secrets, Mrs. Alving's epiphany comes
when she surprises Oswald in the act of seducing his unacknowledged half-sister, for the two appear to her as revenants from this guilty past (the French title Les revenants conveys the meaning of Ibsen's original title better than Ghosts); as representatives of their unnatural parents doomed to repeat the original degenerating sin. This compelling merging of past and present makes Regina's final lapse into whoredom and the ultimate horror of Oswald's madness inevitable.

Ghosts, with its revelations in a well-appointed drawing room of adultery, syphilis, and incest, was never allowed on a Victorian stage. But its interfusion of tragedy, fatalism, and pathology is the appropriate context to introduce the pre-eminent mid-Victorian symbolist of heredity: George Eliot. She was, first of all, a believer in the determinism of racial heredity, rejecting Disraeli's racial purism, but equally amazed at the positivist historian Henry Thomas Buckle's "strangely unphilosophical" opinion "that there is no such thing as race or hereditary transmission of qualities!" In an essay on tragedy, she maintained that the most exalted dramatic plot, from the Greeks onwards, invariably has entailed the conflict between hereditary doom and individual aspiration, and that this tragic conflict has been best expressed in the context of racial inheritance.

George Eliot applied this formula in her own dramatic poem The Spanish Gypsy (1868), which celebrates the mystical inheritance of the racial soul:

What! Shall the trick of nostrils and of lips
Descend through generations, and the soul
That moves within our frame like God in worlds -
Convulsing, urging, melting, withering -
Imprint no record, leave no documents,
Of her great history? 63
The heroine of *The Spanish Gypsy* is Fedalma, a beautiful though dark-skinned girl raised as a Spanish lady and betrothed to the gallant Don Silva. However, Fedalma renounces all, driven by irresistible emotion, when she discovers she is by blood a Gypsy princess - an identity she has felt intuitively all along - and flies to join her despised people. Don Silva vows to follow her and also turn Gypsy, but, for all his love, breed tells, and he must return, unreconciled, to his own nation. The genetic influence of the soul is only too pervasive in *The Spanish Gypsy*, eclipsing tragedy by its absolute abrogation of personal choice.

The same instinctive determinism dominates *Daniel Deronda* (1876), (excluding the story of Gwendolen Harleth), which appropriates Disraeli's mystical Jewishness. In view of the mystery surrounding his birth, Deronda, the ward of a wealthy lord, suspects himself to be the illegitimate fruit of some aristocratic indiscretion, and stoically resigns himself to bear this "entailed disadvantage" as he would congenital deformity. Meanwhile, however, he is drawn almost involuntarily to Jewish culture, to relationships with Jews, and finally to a Jewish maiden whom he rescues. Everything is thus prepared for the ultimate revelation of Deronda's own Jewishness and his pre-ordained messianic role in his people's destiny, the role which he embraces in despite of his mother, a renegade Jewess, who had wished to turn him into an ordinary English gentleman and had kept him in ignorance of his origins as well as of her own existence.

But it is remarkable that the stories of Deronda and Fedalma, in which the hereditary formula works to preordained virtue, are uninteresting, even tedious, while George Eliot's nearest achievement
of the tragedy of heredity is *Felix Holt* (1866), another study in the inheritance of evil. Like *Daniel Deronda*, in which Gwendolen's story eclipses that of the title character, *Felix Holt* combines two stories of unequal power: that of the tediously virtuous reformer Felix, and, of direct concern here, the tragic story of the Transome inheritance. Indeed, in Mrs. Transome, the regal woman haunted by the sin embodied in the person of her son, George Eliot conceived one of the most penetrating character studies in Victorian fiction. The Transomes are a newly established county family holding their lands by virtue of an old lawsuit and the supposed extinction of the line of previous claimants. But the proud Mrs. Transome's husband, upon whom the estate is currently entailed, is senile, though not from age; and their first-born son, Durfey, had been imbecile as well as addicted to expensive vices, yet, to his unloving mother's regret, "tenacious of a despicable squandering life." The Transome inheritance is thus burdened, not only in the real estate mortgaged to support Durfey's ruinous dissipations, but also in a biological mortgage drawn on their blood by the dissipations of a line of preceding heirs. The "life in death of old paralytic vice", mentioned in the author's Introduction, seems to be the terms of the debt being paid by the elder Transome.

The Transomes' second son, Harold, their only other child, had been dispatched to the Levant to make his own fortune, and his recall after a fifteen-year absence, on the overdue decease of Durfey, brilliantly sets the scene for the opening of *Felix Holt*. Having awaited the return of this favourite son with painful expectation, Mrs. Transome finds him not only no imbecile but a sharp and ruthless
man of business, without a hint of resemblance, moral or physical, to Mr. Transome. He imperturbably patronises his anxious and ironical mother, unexpectedly introduces an anomalously dark-skinned grandson begotten upon a slave, and further upsets all tradition by declaring himself a Radical in politics. Soon he challenges the administration of the estate agent Jermyn, who seems to be presuming above his station, exercising undue influence over Mrs. Transome, while her half-witted husband instinctively shrinks from him. Harold rightly suspects Jermyn of graft in his management of the burdened estate, but there is an atmosphere of even darker corruption hanging over Transome Court, a corruption which Harold by his Oedipean probing seems bound to expose. Although his mother begs him to desist from investigating Jermyn, Harold presses on with a Chancery suit against him.

But despite their spontaneous mutual antipathy and, soon, loathing, Harold Transome and Jermyn are strikingly identical, matching each other's acumen, resourcefulness, and ruthlessness. Jermyn counters Harold's impending lawsuit with a threat to dispossess the Transomes of their estate altogether, through an obscure complication of its entail by which the estate should legally have reverted to a descendant of its previous owners. Harold, however, having discovered the identity of the rightful heir, who turns out to be Esther Lyon, the lovely young ward of a Nonconformist minister, goes to her himself and, revealing her heiress-ship, wins her over, finds himself falling in love with her, and by this pleasant and profitable manoeuver negates Jermyn's threat. So foiled and with his own ruin closing upon him, Jermyn desperately seeks out his younger enemy to threaten
him with one last secret. Insolently rebuffed by him in the public room of a hotel, Jermyn demands an interview, with the biting words,

"You will repent else— for your mother's sake."

At that sound, quick as a leaping flame, Harold had struck Jermyn across the face with his whip. The brim of the hat had been a defence. Jermyn, a powerful man, had instantly thrust out his hand and clutched Harold hard by the clothes just below the throat, pushing him slightly so as to make him stagger.

By this time everybody's attention had been called to this end of the room, but both Jermyn and Harold were beyond being arrested by any consciousness of spectators.

"Let me go, you scoundrel!" said Harold, fiercely, "or I'll be the death of you."

"Do", said Jermyn, in a grating voice; "I am your father".

In the thrust by which Harold had been made to stagger backward a little, the two men had got very near the long mirror. They were both white; both had anger and hatred in their faces; the hands of both were upraised. As Harold heard the last terrible words he started at a leaping throb that went through him, and in the start turned his eyes away from Jermyn's face. He turned them on the same face in the glass with his own beside it, and saw the hated fatherhood reasserted.

In this overwhelming scene recognition boggles at the psychic no less than physical identity of father and son, who indecently mirror each other's passion of Cain. In this climax, powerful beyond the dated obsession with heredity, catharsis is realised. Afterwards there can be only repentance and renunciation, bitterest of all for the haughty Mrs. Transome, who does not long survive the revelation of her sin. Harold, now proven false in his claim to legitimacy as well as patrimony, releases Esther from their engagement— she marries Felix Holt — and leaves England to expiate his "sonship"— his own dark little son having already shown signs of innate and ungoverned bad passions. In this evocation of pathos and tragedy from the spiritual genetics of fatal destiny, Felix Holt represents
a climax in the mid-Victorian romance of heredity. However, there are other elaborations and arabesques of the theme to explore and another climax to come at the end of the century.

iii.

Another Naturalistic parallel to the mystery of hereditary fatality is afforded in Émile Zola's Rougon-Macquart series of novels, which, tracing the heredity of one family through five generations and twenty volumes, is surely the most colossal testimony to this nineteenth-century obsession. Zola, who professed to study human character with scientific objectivity, found the key to the interpretation of behaviour in the theory of hereditary predisposition, as expounded by Prosper Lucas's L'hérédité naturelle (1847-50). In his preface to the first Rougon-Macquart novel, La fortune des Rougon (1871; English translation, 1886), Zola recapitulated a theory of negative Lamarckism with vast sociological as well as psychological ramifications:

The characteristic of the Rougon-Macquart family, the group which I propose to study, is their unbridled passions, that great revolutionising element of our age, inciting to excessive self-indulgence. Physiologically speaking, these appetites are the gradual outcome of certain nervous and sanguineous modifications which manifest themselves in a race of beings, as a consequence of some previous organic lesion, and which determine the sentiments, the desires, the passions of each individual of the race according to his surroundings; in short, all those natural and instinctive manifestations of human nature, which, in their results, assume the conventional names of virtues.
and vices. Historically speaking, these appetites originate with the people, whence they spread to contemporary society, affecting all stages under the influence of that impulse, essentially modern, which is communicated to the lower classes during the progress of their social development, and they thus tell the story of the Second Empire, by the help of their individual dramas, from the perfidy of the Coup d'État to the treason of Sedan.

The Rougon-Macquarts stem from the unsanctified union of Adèle Rougon, a carrier of nervous disease, and the drunken smuggler Macquart, and the generations of their descendants, some of whom rise to positions of influence under the corrupt regime of Napoleon III, ring the changes on degeneracy and moral insanity. In Jacques Lantier in La bête humaine (1890), translated as The Monomaniac (1901), for example, the Macquart vice of alcoholism is transmuted to "an irresistible prurience for murder." In Germinal (1885) Étienne Lantier, the strike-leader, "hated brandy with the hatred of the last child of a race of drunkards, who suffered in his flesh from all those ancestors, soaked and driven mad by alcohol to such a point that the least drop had become poison to him." Various other descendants are normal or even virtuous, though by no merit of their own but merely as the fortuitous result of certain neutralising mechanisms of heredity. However vital Zola's characters seemed, they were theoretically puppets of this biological determinism.

"And what a huge fresco might be painted, what a colossal human comedy and tragedy might be written on heredity, which is the very genesis of families and societies, of the world itself!" exclaims the title character in Le Docteur Pascal (1893), the final Rougon-Macquart novel. Pascal Rougon, who thus summarises his creator's life work,

* The fortunate Pascal is by his own terms an example of "innateness, a combination in which the physical and moral characteristics of the parents are so blended that nothing of them appears manifest in the offspring." See the genealogical table prefixed to Doctor Pascal.
is one of the virtuous descendants, an altruistic medical man, who has devoted his life to the mathematical determination of "all the nervous and sanguineous accidents to which a race becomes liable after the first organic lesion ..." Pascal's model is his own tainted line. No family secrets are unknown to him, and the surviving scions, legitimate and illegitimate, from Adèle herself, the 105-year-old ancestress yet horribly alive, a paralysed inmate in an asylum, to her great-great-grandson Charles Rougon, a child feeble with "racial degeneracy", are under Pascal's scrutiny. The listless Charles is frequently taken to visit the ancient Adèle in her room, where the mummified madwoman and her latest, pathologically delicate descendant together compose a tableau vivant, as Pascal thinks, of hereditary fatality. "There was no gap, the chain of logical, implacable heredity spread out complete." One day the two are left alone by a careless attendant, and Charles, who is a hemophiliac, suddenly suffers a fatal hemorrhage. Pascal arrives to find the helpless Adèle also in her death throes from shock, while before her slumps the dead child,

divinely beautiful, with his head resting in the blood, and his fair regal hair spreading around him - similar to one of those bloodless little dauphins who are unable to bear the hateful heritage of their race, and, overcome by old age and imbecility, sink into the last sleep when only in their fifteenth year.

This bloody dissolution of the tableau vivant is not without effect upon Pascal, who, ageing and celibate, and annoyed by his detestable mother, who wishes to destroy his files on the disreputable family background, has already begun, for all his scientific detachment, "to feel himself in the awful clutches of the hereditary monster." In Zola's early, blatantly sensationalistic novel
Thérèse Raquin (1867; English, 1886), the incestuous nuptials of two cousins, who have been raised together like brother and sister, trigger murder, hideous hallucination, and suicide. Yet, Pascal's deliverance comes unexpectedly from his niece Clotilde, a member of his household, for whom, in a sudden renaissance of youth, aided by hypodermic injections of a *liqueur* distilled from animal cerebra, he becomes impassioned. They enjoy an idyllic liaison, Clotilde having rejected a suitor to become her uncle's lover.* After a brief period of concentrated happiness, Pascal succumbs to heart failure, but not before learning that Clotilde is pregnant with his child. Finally the great saga closes on the scene of a healthy birth and a joyous mother, as if the race is to regenerate itself through this consanguineous union. Yet, there is also an ironical suggestion that the beautiful, vigorous child might quite as easily be the Anti-Christ of his race as the Messiah.

Thus, in Zola's saga scientific determinism gradually fades into mystical fatalism, winding up, in the enigma of Pascal's incestuous renaissance, with an admission of the indeterminacy of heredity, and perhaps an admission also of the ultimate indeterminism of human behaviour. However, the Rougon-Macquart story, in its pseudo-science of moral Lamarckism, familial degeneration, and atavism, is also, in effect, a rationalisation of a romance plot of wide currency and importance in Victorian fiction, a plot which may be referred to

---

* Vizetelly, who frequently improved Zola's explicitness by discreet omissions in the translation, also felt compelled to make some apology, in his preface to *Doctor Pascal*, for "the most wrong and unnatural" connexion of the hero and heroine. He was urged, Vizetelly says, to translate Clotilde as Pascal's cousin, but, disapproving equally of cousin-marriage, decided to retain the original relationship, pointing out, by way of extenuation, the legality in France of Marriage between uncle and niece.
as the "family curse" formula. Obliquely reflecting the biology of "progressive degeneration" and reversion, and disposing of a distinctive array of motifs, this formula of ancestral sin and its lineal descent was pervasive as both a fantastic and a prosaic theme.

Obviously, the idea of cursed heredity long antedated any science of heredity, and it was the family curse of folk legend, in its Romantic application to aristocratic genealogy, which Scott introduced in *The Bride of Lammermoor* (1819), depicting the fall of the fey house of Ravenswood in the presaged disaster of its last heir, the victim of his race's hot blood as well as of fate. Scott, who inclined to rationalism rather than mysticism, did not germinate the theme embryonic in his novel — it is also embryonic in Gothic romance, from Horace Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* (1765) to E.T.A. Hoffmann's *The Entail* (English translation, 1826), a probable source, like *Lammermoor*, of *Wuthering Heights*. Essentially, the "family curse" theme, which seems to be a distinctively Victorian elaboration, expressed itself as a mysterious taint or doom haunting a pedigree line, usually as the consequence of its founding ancestor's crime. In fact, countless Victorian tales are set in gloomy ancestral halls wherein despondent heirs languish under the portraits of tainted ascendants, awaiting the grip of the hereditary monster. The atavistic recurrence of "family likeness", both in the moral and physical image, as revealed in portrait-gallery and yellowing family records, was another integral motif in this stylised fantasy. Often its protagonist was, apparently, a reincarnation of some fated ancestor.

Harrison Ainsworth's *Rockwood* (1834), best known for its
Newgate-style portrayal of Dick Turpin, seems to be the first full-fledged "family curse" romance in English, and is worth summarising here as a prototype. If the Ravenswoods in Lammermoor were fey, the Rookwoods are overweighted with portents of doom, including croaking rooks inhabiting an "ominous Lime-Tree", which drops a "Fatal Bough" when a Rookwood's death is nigh, as well as a human raven, the family sexton, who sings the ballad of the Rookwood doom at midnight in the crypt. This doom dates from the first Rookwood, whose wicked spirit has been reincarnated in Sir Reginald, the disinheritor of his brother Alan. Reginald's son, carrying on the tradition of moral obliquity, marries his pregnant mistress secretly, while betrothed to the "Medea" of "a line as proud and intolerant as his own." The product of this secret marriage is a son, who goes under the name Luke Bradley; but the Medean Lady Rookwood suppresses the evidence of her husband's first marriage to ensure the succession of her own son, Ranulph, a virtuous young man ignorant of his mother's schemes.

Luke, who inherits the Rookwood lawlessness and consorts with Gypsies and highwaymen, is also Ranulph's rival for the hand of their cousin Eleanor. Another twist is the discovery of the long-lost Alan Rockwood, who has been disguised as the sexton, in pursuance of vengeance against Sir Reginald's heirs. While the fierce Luke resembles his grandfather Reginald, and Alan is a creature wholly of malignity, the gentle Eleanor, visiting the haunted portrait-gallery at Rockwood Place, recognises her own face in an ill-fated ancestress. Ainaworth resolves this obsessively incestuous conflict by an extermination of the perverted family members. Luke is murdered by his jealous Gypsy mistress, while Alan and Lady
Rockwood manage to get themselves entombed alive with the ancestral corpses. Ranulph and Eleanor are then married, with the happy implication that the curse itself is finally buried, and that the family is to be renewed in this consanguineous union.

The pattern explicit in *Rockwood* is recapitulated in various novels and tales. It is rudimentary in *Wuthering Heights*, with the epigraphic relic "Hareton Barnshaw 1500"; but is rehearsed in full dress in Charlotte Yonge's *The Heir of Redclyffe* (1853), in which Sir Guy Morville inherits, with his lands and title, the appearance and passions of a wicked ancestor, as well as a latent rivalry with the cadet branch of the Morvilles disinherited centuries before. It recurs in Wilkie Collins's "Mad Monkton", the tale already mentioned, in which Monkton, the last of his race, fearing the fulfilment of an ancient curse, succumbs to madness before he is able to carry out his intention of wedding his cousin; in Henry James's *De Grey: A Romance* (1868), in which each De Grey is doomed to cause the death of his beloved; and in Margaret Oliphant's *The Secret Chamber* (1876), in which each heir of the Randolphs of Gowrie Castle must undergo, on the eve of his majority, the ordeal of confrontation with the ancestral evil spirit, a magician ascendant yet clinging to life in a secret chamber of the ancient pile. The theme reached blood-fiction level in G.W. M. Reynolds's *The Coral Island*; or *The Hereditary Curse* (1854), featuring the usual family gallery complete with magical portrait of the inevitable wicked ancestor, "he whose crimes entailed the appalling — withering curse upon his race!"; and burlesque in W.S. Gilbert's *Ruddigore*; or *The Witch's Curse* (1887), in which a portrait-gallery step down from their frames to sing a chorus of admonition, when their descendant, Sir Despard Murgatroyd, baulks at
his quota of evil deeds.

But despite its liability to burlesque, melodrama, and every extravagance, the family curse romance retained its significance in serious fiction, not least in its metaphoric representation of the past, i.e. the blue-blooded pedigree, as an incubus. The curse of Reynolds's *Coral Island* turns out to be a leprosy striking every fourth generation, and this theme of the corruption of blood is enriched with overtones of vampirism and the literal resuscitation of aged vice from young blood, such as nobles of the ancien régime reputedly indulged. Indeed, Reynolds himself was a Chartist, no doubt a reader of Paine; and the real theme of *The Coral Island* is the degeneracy of aristocratic breed. This same degeneracy, adapted to more genteel conventions, figures in *Vanity Fair* (1847-48), in which the wicked Lord Steyne, despite all comforts and privileges of rank, is haunted by a family skeleton, for his father had died mad and the behaviour of his son, in the diplomatic service, had become so eccentric that he was "gazetted to Brazil", i.e., to a certain walled-in cottage in St. John's Wood, and invested with "the order of the Strait Waistcoat": "It was the mysterious taint of the blood ... The dark mask of fate and doom was on the threshold, — the tall old threshold surmounted by coronets and carved heraldry." 72 In a complacent aside to his middle-class audience, Thackeray added that such entailed afflictions are the Damocles sword of the aristocracy, the rising meritocracy presumably being exempt from "the mysterious taint of the blood."

This entailed incubus also figures in *Bleak House* and George Meredith's *Ordeal of Richard Feverel* (1859). Even Sir Austin Feverel,
with all his mastery of eugenics and ethology, is unable to circumvent
the "Feveral Ordeal" mysteriously incumbent upon each heir of the
house, and especially impending, in its irrational evil, upon his
own son Richard; though Meredith's art resolves this metaphor of
aristocratic ordeal into a metaphor of the general human condition.
At any rate, the haunted wing at Raynham Abbey, in Richard Feverel,
parallels The Ghost's Walk at Chesney Wold, the Dedlock seat in
Bleak House, where the must of generations, emanating from the
gloomy portrait-gallery, paralyses the life of the present, and the
ghostly legend of an errant Lady Dedlock of a bygone era, who had
left her dying curse upon her husband's race, foreshadows a shocking
revelation about Sir Leicester's own consort. The interminable
lawsuit incumbent upon the Jarndyce heirs is another variation on the
theme of cursed inheritance.

However, although the family curse, in its aristocratic context,
was a metaphor of social change, it was also another metaphor of the
supersession of volition, of the tyranny of ancestral past, which
reduced the descendant's life to mere re-enactment. Thus, the
metempsychosis of atavism induced psychopathic dissociation, as the
individual will was challenged by the atavistic, racial will; as Sir
Guy Morville is challenged by his seventeenth-century alter ego, Dark
Hugh. As will be seen later, this metempsychotic determinism took
on a special Decadent significance, but an exemplary mid-century
novel of the Dead Hand of family heredity, in the typical sociological
context of egalitarian or meritocratic bias, is Nathaniel Hawthorne's
The House of the Seven Gables (1851), in which the theme is given an
American setting without altering its basic significance.
The curse on the inheritors of Hawthorne's seventeenth-century Puritan — but really nineteenth-century Gothic — mansion dates from the infamous witchcraft persecutions in Massachusetts, when a certain wealthy Colonel Pyncheon, coveting the homestead of an obscure settler named Matthew Maule, had caused Maule to be tried and executed as a wizard, after which Pyncheon had seized the homestead and founded on it his seven-gabled family seat. But on the scaffold Maule had prophesied that God would give his persecutor blood to drink, and, on the day of his housewarming, the proud Colonel was discovered dead in his great armchair, his beard and ruff soaked in blood. It was "an ugly and ominous circumstance, that Colonel Pyncheon's picture — in obedience, it was said, to a provision of his will — remained affixed to the wall of the room in which he died"; for, "the ghost of a dead progenitor — perhaps as a portion of his own punishment — is often doomed to become the Evil Genius of his family." Indeed, from that day an apoplectic malady, characterised by gurgling in the throat as if the victim were choking on a repulsive liquid, was hereditary among the Pyncheons, as were the fits of bad passion which always marked the onset of the disorder.

Still haunted by their Evil Genius, the nineteenth-century Pyncheons are a study in decline. The gloomy House of the Seven Gables is inhabited by Hepzibah Pyncheon, a withered, reclusive spinster, and her equally decayed brother Clifford, who has suffered a long imprisonment for the murder of his uncle. The central theme is illustrated even in Hepzibah's chickens, once a race of fowls the size of turkeys, whose breed has now degenerated, "in consequence of too strict a watchfulness to keep it pure", to the size of pigeons.
A more subtle study in degeneracy is Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon, who has built himself a new country-house and seems to be restoring the fortunes of the family, when he is only perpetuating the curse, in Hepzibah's words, of "this hard and grasping spirit [That] has run in our blood, these two hundred years!" In fact, underneath his professionally bland countenance Jaffrey conceals the evil facial features of the witch-hunting Colonel, whose crime of false witness he has partially re-enacted. For, as it finally transpires, Jaffrey had traduced his cousin, the innocent but ineffectual Clifford, at his trial for the murder of their uncle, Jaffrey knowing that the uncle had really died from a fit of the family malady brought on by Jaffrey's own misconduct. The only Pyncheon apparently untouched by the curse is Cousin Phoebe, a fresh, rosy-cheeked girl raised in the country far from the stagnant atmosphere of the Seven Gables, where she comes to live, like a messenger of hope, when Clifford returns from prison.

The Pyncheons have for generations been obsessed with racial pride and the handing down of family possessions and privilege, for over a century wasting their resources in a claim, based on a mysterious lost charter, to a vast tract of territory long since settled by homesteaders as stubborn in defence of their own rights as that original democrat, Matthew Maule. The explicit critic of hereditary privilege and racial exclusiveness is Holgrave, a young daguerreotypist, who lives as the penniless Hepzibah's lodger, and seems to have made the Pyncheon family history a special object of study. As he explains to the receptive Phoebe, her ancestor the Colonel had been driven to his wickedness by the
inordinate desire to plant and endow a family. To plant a family! This idea is at the bottom of most of the wrong and mischief which men do. The truth is, that, once in every half-century, at latest, a family should be merged into the great, obscure mass of humanity, and forget all about its ancestors. Human blood, in order to keep its freshness, should run in hidden streams, as the water of an aqueduct is conveyed in subterranean pipes.

The Pyncheon obsession with their past, has meant only "perpetual remorse of conscience, a constantly defeated hope, strife amongst kindred, various misery, a strange form of death, dark suspicion, unspeakable disgrace ..." The ancestral home has become both charnel-house and prison.

"There is no such unwholesome atmosphere as that of an old home, rendered poisonous by one's defunct forefathers and relatives!" poor old Clifford exclaims, his darkened mind momentarily enlightened by the exhilaration of flight, as he and Hepzibah, again threatened by the machinations of Cousin Jaffrey, flee aimlessly from the House. Their flight is abortive, but their ultimate redemption comes out of their recognition of the poisonous nature of the family heritage, and their gravitation towards Phoebe, who represents that ideal innocence of the past eulogised by Holgrave. On the other hand, Jaffrey's evil is a function of his identity with the wicked progenitor, and his greed one more manifestation of the family inheritance. His latest persecution of Clifford stems from his belief that Clifford possesses the secret of a lost family legacy, though this turns out to be only the now worthless seventeenth-century grant of frontier lands, the charter of which had been hidden behind the Colonel's fatal portrait. And when Clifford and Hepzibah sheepishly return home after their escapade, they find Holgrave and Phoebe...
waiting to tell them that Jaffrey is dead in the Colonel's armchair, the victim, fittingly, of the hereditary apoplexy.

A final thematic harmony is the not unexpected revelation that Holgrave himself is really a direct descendant of Matthew Maule, having adopted a false identity in order to live among the Pyncheons and play his part in "this long drama of wrong and retribution". In him the ancestral witchcraft has been modified to mesmerism and the magic of daguerreotypy — "making pictures out of sunshine" — and his fascination of Phoebe recalls a more malign spell which one of his ancestors had vengefully cast upon a Pyncheon daughter. However, Holgrave is a benevolent magician and his object is reconciliation rather than perpetuation of the curse. In order to warn Phoebe of the designs of the smiling Jaffrey, Holgrave takes a daguerreotype of his face in repose, which exposes Jaffrey as an atavistic image of the Colonel. The act of reconciliation which effectively extinguishes the curse is Holgrave's marriage to Phoebe, the heiress of Jaffrey's wealth, which restores with interest Matthew Maule's lost patrimony. But the House of the Seven Gables is abandoned forever.

In the opening chapter of The House of the Seven Gables, the loquacious narrator remarks the "weighty lesson ... that the act of the passing generation is the germ which may and must produce good or evil fruit, in a far distant time ..." However, this fatalism is tempered by Hawthorne's obvious interest in the psychology of deliberate evil. Jaffrey's wickedness, indeed, seems to be as much voluntary as an inescapable predisposition. Moreover, Holgrave's decision to love a Pyncheon, instead of revenging his ancestor upon
her, seems to be an assertion of free will over ancestral compulsion, a declaration for both freedom and egalitarianism. Yet, Hawthorne is irritatingly coy in his alternations between psychological realism and allegory, and generally the characters in The House of the Seven Gables lack depth. However interesting the novel is as a carefully stylised exercise in literary myth, it is certainly not a great novel, probably because of just this facile accommodation to formula.

iv.

But one theme of Hawthorne's novel requiring separate emphasis here is that of the moral and spiritual decadence of hereditary decline, which the Pyncheons illustrate by their deterioration both in parts and fortune, a theme also implicit in Vanity Fair and Bleak House. By the turn of the century, the literary imagination of genetic decadence recognised the stigmata of the syndrome in hyper-aesthesia and precocious aestheticism. Accordingly, in Huysmans's A rebours (1884), des Esseintes, the satanic aesthete, is the last scion of an exhausted and inbred line. His portrait-gallery of ancestors, ranged in order of descent, illustrate the progressive attenuation produced by their "unions consanguines". "Par un singulier phénomène d'atavisme", the effeminately evil des Esseintes is a throw-back, at least in countenance, to one of his barbaric forebears. The pathological refinement of such "racial degeneracy" is also evident, it may be recalled, in the expiration of the Rougon-Macquart saga, when the morbidly beautiful Charles Rougon succumbs
to haemophilia; while even the apparently robust burgher race of Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks* (1901) terminates in an effeminate sufferer from *pavor nocturnus* and morbid imagination, who takes no interest in the family business and chooses to discontinue living at the age of fifteen.

Yet l'effémination, les érudites hystériques, les cauchemars compliqués (intricate nightmares), and les visions nonchalantes et atroces of Huysmans's hero had all been anticipated in Edgar Allan Poe's Gothic tale of genetic decadence, "The Fall of the House of Usher" (1839), the obsessive impressionism of which is enough to explain Baudelaire's delight in Poe, and which probably, through his translation, influenced the nightmarish conceits of *A rebours*. Poe set his version of hereditary decline according to the usual formula, but with certain details uncannily exaggerated or distorted. The House of Usher, a "mansion of gloom" set in a preternaturally melancholy and sterile English countryside, is the immemorial seat of this ancient family, who are so perfectly lineal in their descent that, in persistent deficiency of collateral issue, their patrimony and name have always been transmitted directly from father to son. The ultimate products of this ominously pure line, which "had been noted, time out of mind, for a peculiar sensibility of temperament", are Roderick and his twin-sister Madeline, who live in utter seclusion in the ancestral House, and both of whom, not surprisingly, suffer from "a constitutional and a family evil". This expresses itself in Madeline as a medically baffling, cataleptical consumption, and in Roderick as acute hyperaesthesia and hypochondriasis. The cadaverous Roderick is, in fact, a prototype of the Decadent sensibility; enervated and languid, suffering aromatic agony from
the scent of flowers, wracked by vivid colours, haunted by phantasмагoria, yet devoted to abstruse studies in art and musicology, and nourishing his nightmares on the Directorium Inquisitorum and Swedenborg.

Arriving at the House of Usher, in answer to a desperate summons from his childhood friend Roderick, the narrator had been struck, not only by the ineffable desolation of the place, but also by a palpable atmosphere hanging over the House, "a pestilent and mystic vapor, dull, sluggish, faintly discernible, and leaden-hued." This "mystic vapor" is the very odour of Decadence, introducing an orchestration of motifs and sense impressions, which, together with the hypnotic prose rhythm, is calculated to an effect of allegory and fantasy. From the outside of the House the narrator notices, not only the fungous discolouration of the walls, but also "a wild inconsistency" between the, as yet, undilapidated form of the whole structure and the crumbling decay of the individual stones. As in the funereal mansion in Little Dorrit, there is also a "barely perceptible fissure" running zigzag from roof to foundations. Thus, the identification of family and dwelling-place in the phrase "House of Usher" is mystically reinforced in this architectural metaphor of the Usher genealogy with its lineal symmetry but defective scions, and its tables "fissured" throughout with the strain of pathological sensibility.

This obsessive iteration and involution of theme and symbol is appropriate in a story aiming not merely at the portrayal of the insane mind, but at the allegorisation of the terminal madness of a doomed race. The allegory is explicitly summarised in the poem "improvised" by Roderick, "The Haunted Palace", another architectural
metaphor of madness. In effect, "The Fall of the House of Usher" is the dream-vision of a deteriorating mind, and, accordingly, not only are its landscape and events phantasmagoric, but its central image is that of a morbid confusion of the material and the spiritual, a corroding interaction of physical reality and metaphysical quality. Thus, Roderick senses the vitiation of the "morale" of his existence by the "physique" of his ancestral walls, and the corruption of his will by "that silent yet importunate and terrible influence" of the House's "leaden-hued" atmosphere.

As the story unfolds, the narrator, initially rational and unsurprised, is sucked deeper and deeper into his host's labyrinth of mystical correspondences: the victory of hybrid perversion over ordinary sanity. The climactic horror of the prematurely interred Madeline's resurrection is also the climax of this suicidal victory. For, whether it is taken literally, or as a figment of Roderick's anomalous fancy, this ghastly resurrection, with its overtones of incest and vampirism, is the ultimate metaphor of unspeakable racial senescence. In Retalator and lesser tale, "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar" (1845), a moribund patient, placed in a mesmeric trance just at the moment of death, is, by this means, kept apparently alive though comatose for seven months, only to dissolve instantly into "a nearly liquid mass of loathsome — of detestable putridity", when the trance is finally lifted. Similarly, Roderick and Madeline, the unnaturally surviving heirs of a line long overdue for extinction, have repelled the narrator with their cadaverousness, but it is only when he sees the apparition of the emaciated, grave-clothed Madeline that the narrator is gripped by the full horror of the "life in death" that the Ushers represent. He flees madly, leaving the
brother and sister locked together in their last throes, and simultaneously, in fulfilment of the architectural metaphor, a storm brings down the mighty but fissured walls of the House of Usher behind him.

Though retaining that frenetic, flesh-creeping, Blackwoodsian quality peculiar to earlier romanticism, "The Fall of the House of Usher" is certainly a striking anticipation of Decadent fantasy, not least in its mysticism of psychopathology as well as genetic decadence. Developing through stories such as "Igieia" (1838), "Usher", De Quincey's "Suspiria de Profundis" (1845), Rossetti's "St. Agnes of Intercession" (c. 1848), Melville's Pierre, George Eliot's "The Lifted Veil" (1859), and Le Fanu's "Carmilla" (1871), themes such as deterioration, incest, vampirism, and metempsychosis became, in service to l'esprit décadent, precious and narcissistic. Even the "manly" H. Rider Haggard dabbled in metempsychotic fascination, in She (1887): "... this beauty, with all its awful loveliness and purity, was evil ... alas! the very diablerie of the woman, whilst it horrified and repelled, attracted me in an even greater degree ..." Aesthetes delighted in that supersession of the individual psyche entailed in the mystical atavism of race. Gazing, like des Esseintes, on his ancestral picture-gallery, Dorian Gray

used to wonder at the shallow psychology of those who conceive the ego in man as a thing simple, permanent, reliable, and of one essence. To him, man was a being with myriad lives and myriad sensations, a complex multiform creature that bore within itself strange legacies of thought and passion, and whose very flesh was tainted with the monstrous maladies of the dead.
In Ibsen’s *Rosmersholm* (1886), which had its London première in 1891, Naturalism itself became a vehicle of genetic mysticism, fatally uniting the heir of a doomed house with an illegitimate interloper who had seduced her own father.

The family curse fantasy, with its implicitly narcissistic motif of incest, eventually entered into an association with Darwinism, and it is this biological ideology, as well as what Pater called the "fascination of corruption", which distinguishes the Decadent theme of heredity. An exemplary tale is Robert Louis Stevenson’s "Olalla" (1885), in which a visitor at a decrepit Spanish residencia, owned by the female remnant of a once princely stock, falls under an anomalous fascination. In his room is the portrait of an ancestress of the family, whose beauty is "marred by a cruel, sullen, and sensual expression"; and though he realises that to love such a woman were to sign and seal one’s own sentence of degeneration, I still knew that, if she were alive, I should love her. Day after day the double knowledge of her wickedness and of my weakness grew clearer. She came to be the heroine of many day-dreams, in which her eyes led on to, and sufficiently rewarded crimes. She cast a dark shadow on my fancy, and... it was often a glad thought to me that my enchantress was safe in the grave, her wand of beauty broken, her lips closed in silence, her philtre spilt. And yet I had a half-lingering terror that she might not be dead after all, but re-arisen in the body of some descendant.

Everyday life at the residencia is mysterious enough. The household consists only of the apparently torpid Señora; her son Felipe, who is "vengeful and placable, full of starts and shyings, inconstant as a hare", but naturally cruel; and her daughter Olalla, who, however, is never to be seen. The narrator notices that he is
always locked in at night; and once, on an evening of tempestuous wind, there are strange cries, as though "some living thing, some lunatic or some wild animal, was being foully tortured." He gathers that these are the ravings of Olalla, kept out of sight because of her inherited lunacy. Yet, when he finally surprises Olalla one day, as she moves ghostlike through a corridor, she proves to be not only sane but as beautiful as the portrait of her ancestress, whose image she bears; and they are smitten with mutual love. Nevertheless, Olalla warns the narrator that he must be gone without hope. Sadly pondering his abrupt dismissal, he abstractedly cuts his wrist on a broken windowpane, and, on applying to the Señora for aid, finds her transformed into a demon by the sight of his spurting blood. "She sprang at me again and again, with bestial cries, cries that I recognised, such cries as had awakened me on the night of the wind."

After Olalla and Felipe rescue him from their daemonic mother, Olalla admits that her family, wolfish and cruel in its time of aristocratic grandeur, has become lycanthropic in its degeneracy. It is from this hateful heritage that Felipe's instability and instinctive cruelty derive, while in herself, Olalla insists, the narrator hopelessly loves a "cursed vessel of humanity":

"Have you", she said, "seen the portraits in the house of my fathers? Have you looked at my mother or at Felipe? Have your eyes never rested on that picture that hangs by your bed? She who sat for it died ages ago; and she did evil in her life. But, look again: there is my hand to the least line, there are my eyes and my hair. What is mine, then, and what am I? ... Others, ages dead, have wooed other men with my eyes; other men have heard the pleading of the same voice that now sounds in your ears. The hands of the dead are in my bosom; they move me, they pluck me, they guide me; I am a puppet at their command; and I but re-inform features and attributes that have long since been laid aside from evil in the quiet of the
grave. Is it me you love, friend? or the race that
that made me? ... The race exists; it is old, it is
ever young, it carries its eternal destiny in its
bosom; upon it, like waves upon the sea, individual
succeeds to individual, mocked with a semblance of
self-control, but they are nothing. We speak of the
soul, but the soul is in the race." 78

And Stevenson's tale closes on this note of fatal destiny, Olalla
seeking consolation in the Christian mystery of universal guilt and
expiation, as her lover sorrowfully sets on his way.

"Olalla" thus reveals, not only — in the mad Señora — the
minatory exaggeration of devouring passion, but the very acme of
mystical atavism and its utter supersession of individual aspiration.
Olalla, an unwilling temptress, is effectively dissociated between
two personae, her present self and that of her predaceous ancestress;
her past and possibly future self; while the aura of Decadence is
accentuated by the narrator's fascinated abdication of will. However,
the moralising Olalla may be contrasted with the heroine of Vernon
Lee's "Oke of Okehurst" (1890),79 the cousin-wife of a manic-depressive
squire, who daemonically embraces her atavistic destiny of destruction,
and, prior to its catastrophe, preens herself in the still preserved
dress of her fatal seventeenth-century ascendant. Yet, Decadent
fantasies such as "Olalla" and "Oke of Okehurst" are an exotic
divergence, rather than the ultimate development, of the hereditary
romance, which reappears in the novels of Thomas Hardy, culminating
powerfully in Tess of the d'Urbervilles (1891), discussed in
conclusion of this Chapter. In Hardy, fatalistic, biological, and
Decadent elements were finally integrated without either moral or
aesthetic outrage.
Like various other Victorian authors, Hardy was personally interested in family heredity, illegitimacy, and consanguinity. He seems to have broken off a secret engagement to his first cousin Tryphena Sparks, after discovering that she was, in fact, his natural niece by his illegitimate half-sister. And if illegitimacy was the Hardy family skeleton, its importance in *Desperate Remedies* (1871), Hardy's first published novel, becomes more significant. The heroine Cytherea is tricked into marrying the "voluptuous" and sinister Aeneas Manston by her employer, the imperious Miss Aldclyffe, also christened Cytherea. It is finally revealed, after Cytherea has been rescued from Manston's clutches, that he is not only the murderer of his first wife, but the illegitimate offspring of Miss Aldclyffe; the fruit of an affair with her "wild" cousin. Yet, the pattern of hidden sin and incestuous insinuation is even more complex, for it also transpires that Miss Aldclyffe and Cytherea's father had been lovers — hence the choice of his daughter's uncommon Christian name — and Miss Aldclyffe gives sufficient indication of a lesbian passion for the daughter of her deceased lover, a passion which she gratifies by proxy in marrying Cytherea to her son.

Another of Hardy's minor novels, *The Well-Beloved* (1892), * is an equally curious experiment in heredity, a concoction on the Decadent theme of reincarnation, with again an incestuous flavouring. *The Well-Beloved* is set on an isolated Cornish peninsula, practically an island, where, on his return from study in London as an artist, Jocelyn Pierston finds an incarnation of his ideal of feminine beauty, which he entitles the "Well-Beloved", in his childhood friend, Avice.

---

* The 1892 publication of this novel was by magazine serialisation. In 1897 Hardy published another version of it in volume form. The discussion here follows this later edition.
Caro. But Jocelyn's sensibility is hyperaesthetic, he prefers the phantom of the imagination to the Beloved in the flesh, and, after persuading Avice to marry him, deserts her to return to the London artistic circles.

Twenty years later, having achieved fame and fortune in his art, but still a hyperaesthetic bachelor, Jocelyn returns to the peninsula to find, that though Avice is in her grave, the Well-Beloved "had taken up her abode in the living representative of the dead ..." For Avice Caro, like many others on the peninsula, which is, in effect, one of those genetically isolated islands such as Darwin explored during the voyage of the Beagle, had married one of her cousins, and reincarnated herself in a daughter, also christened Avice, Jocelyn, who has returned to nourish his aesthetic-erotic phantoms, finds his "sense of metempsychosis" titillated by his dead love's offspring. However, "this Avice, fairer than her mother in face and form, was her inferior in soul and understanding"; so she is fickle, and rejects Jocelyn's fascinated advances in favour of a vulgar namesake of his on the peninsula.

Defeated, Jocelyn again retires to London and the consolation of the aesthetic life. Yet, after another furlough of twenty years, he returns once more to the island of the Well-Beloved, this time expecting a new incarnation of her in the flesh of the second Avice's daughter, whom he had asked to be christened Avice also. Apparently aged but little, Jocelyn pays his court, assisted by her mother, to this third Avice, who appears to be a glorification of the charm and innocence of the first, a prize worth waiting two generations for. A day is set for their wedding. But, in a reverse repetition of
the event of forty years before, Jocelyn is deserted by his young innocent. The Well-Beloved, subtitled A Sketch of a Temperament, is, indeed, a curious parable of hereditary retribution, as well as of the sterility of aestheticism. Its association of biological imagery with Decadent nuance underlines the extirpative tendency inherent in Jocelyn's spiritual temperament.

In contrast to the exoticism of The Well-Beloved, another of Hardy's minor novels, A Laodicean (1881), is a version, couched in a curious mixture of realism and melodrama, of the familiar hereditary romance. Thematically, A Laodicean, subtitled A Story of Today, is structured around the antithesis between old and new blood; between the De Stancys, an ancient family of gentry, now decadent and bankrupt, and the Powers, lineage-less and nouveau riche, who represent the new aristocracy of industrial or commercial success, and who have symbolically succeeded the De Stancys by purchasing their ancestral castle, with all its armorial lumber and portraits. Paula Power, the beautiful and forceful heiress of the Power fortune, resides in the castle, befriending the dispossessed Charlotte De Stancy, whom she invites to live on there as companion. Sadly lacking in spirit and parts, poor Charlotte is the complementary opposite of the vibrant Paula. Charlotte's countenance is a "defective reprint" of the facial features in the ancestral portraits, and her "very simplicity represents the second childhood of her line . . ."

A no less typical scion of the exhausted line is Charlotte's brother William, a captain in the Royal Horse Artillery, approaching middle age still unpromoted, and unfortunately given to venery, in the archaic sense of the word. Abetted by the mysterious and sinister
young man Will Dare, who is really his illegitimate son, De Stancy resolves to restore his family's fortunes by winning the hand of Miss Power, though Dare has to stimulate him to this strategic undertaking, by arranging for him to steal a peek at Paula exercising in her gymnasium costume. De Stancy's rival for the affections of the gymnastic chatelaine is Somerset, a young architect whom Paula hires to direct the restoration of the considerably dilapidated Stancy and Castle. The contest of De Stancy/the meritocratic and Somerset is the main business of A Laodicean, recapitulating the main thematic opposition of the novel.

But though Paula likes the talented and energetic Somerset best, De Stancy has a powerful ally in her own "prédislection d'artiste" for the De Stancys' romantic family history, and in her uneasiness at having usurped their heritage. Fascinated by their portrait-gallery, she once has the unsettling fancy that one of its cavaliers might step down from his frame at her audacious wish, for "old paintings have been said to play queer tricks in extreme cases, and the shadows this afternoon were funereal enough for anything in the shape of revenge on an intruder who embodied the antagonistic modern spirit to such an extent as she." Shortly after Paula meets De Stancy, and is struck by "a new and romantic feeling that the De Stancys had stretched out a tentacle from their genealogical tree to seize her by the hand and draw her in to their mass ..." De Stancy himself plays up to the girl's weakness, adroitly donning the armour of a famous, lovelorn ascendant, and posing, by flickering candlelight, beneath the portrait, as if in fulfilment of Paula's fantasy of reincarnation. Indeed, he seemed to possess a "Protean quality ... by means of which he could assume the shape and situation of almost
any ancestor at will ...

This mystical seduction of a "recusant usurper", at the hands of a decadent embodiment of inherited ages, is the retaliation of a disinherited line, nor can Paula be freed from her almost funereal fascination with "primogenitive renown", even when Somerset reminds her that her father the progressive industrialist had a nobler lineage, that of Newton and Watt. The success of his "illegitimate father" is further prepared by Will Dare, who traduces Somerset so effectively, with new-fangled gimmicks of telegram forgery and photographic distortion, that Paula sorrowfully refuses his company. The date of her wedding to De Stancy is set; melodramatically, the very wedding morning is reached before Dare's malicious tricks are fortuitously exposed and his true identity discovered. Meritocracy thus triumphs, Somerset, no "chevalier d'industrie", finally displacing the preux chevalier Sir William De Stancy. Yet, the De Stancy genius, always sinister in its influence on the representatives of the new aristocracy, also has a final revenge through its warped incarnation in Dare, who, as his farewell, sets fire to Stancy Castle, deliberately using the most valuable tapestries and paintings as fuel, and the great pile is reduced to smoking ruins. No less a scion of the "second childhood" of his line, Dare stands for the daemonic tendency latent in lineal decadence, while his opposite counterpart is Paula's mysterious uncle, Abner Power, an anarchist and terrorist, who represents the daemonic extreme of "the antagonistic modern spirit."

But both A Laodicean and The Well-Beloved are slight works, melodramatic or artificial, at best verging on tragicomedy, and
hardly comparable to the elegiac resolution of the hereditary theme in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. George Eliot had found the essence of tragedy in the helplessness of virtue and the dwarfing of heroism under the shadow of hereditary fatality, and *Tess* is a novel in which lyrical hope and purity are crushed by a doom of Necessity, which Hardy chose to couch in terms of the family curse formula.

The pastoralism, the sense of *Et in Arcadia Ego*, goes with the folk motif of the d'Urberville curse, though obviously *Tess* so far transcends this formula of Victorian romance as to obscure its presence: *Tess's* inherited guilt is really that of aspiring life itself, and her implacable Nemesis is no mere d'Urberville bogey but, in effect, that "blind No-God, of Necessity and Mechanism", lurking behind the pious illusion of Providence. Yet, the hereditary formula, with its familiar pattern of ancestral crime, curse, and recapitulation, and its details of portraits, omens, and ancestral burial-vault, neglected by most interpreters of the novel, is, after all, the key to Hardy's design. And it is Hardy's conception of the omnipotence of heredity, so different poetically from Zola's, which identifies *Tess* as the last great Victorian novel; never again would the Dead Hand of the past weigh so heavily, not even in Hardy's last novel, *Jude the Obscure* (1895).

*Tess* opens on the familiar theme of lineal decadence, when, at a chance meeting, an antiquary carelessly informs "plain Jack Durbeyfield", a village haggler, that he is the lineal descendant of the renowned d'Urberville, derived from Pagan d'Urberville, one of the knights of the Conqueror. Already rather shiftless, Durbeyfield, who bears the d'Urberville racial features "a little debased", as
he bears a corrupted version of their name, is utterly besotted by
this uncalled for knowledge of his grand antecedents, and soon sinks
into apathetic poverty. Thus it comes about that his comely
daughter is sent, against her better judgment, to "claim kin" with
a wealthy family called d'Urberville settled in a neighbouring
district. But, unknown to the simple Durbeyfields, who thought
"family name came by nature", these are spurious d'Urbervilles,
being the family of a nouveau riche financier who had "annexed" the
supposedly extinct d'Urberville name as the prerogative of his fortune.
And the hapless Tess, presenting herself at the soi-disant
d'Urbervilles' country-seat, in expectation of seeing "an aged and
dignified face, the sublimation of all the d'Urberville lineaments,
furrowed with incarnate memories representing in hieroglyphic the
centuries of her family's and England's history", encounters instead
the mustachioed vulgarian Alec d'Urberville, barbaric "in his contours"
and "bold rolling eye".

Again, it is the antithesis of old blood and new; here, in
reversal of A Laodicean, the victimisation of the former by the
latter. Alec's ruthless pursuit of Tess ends in the most pathetic
and tragic scene of seduction in all nineteenth-century literature,
a seduction apparently brought about by a conspiracy of circumstance
and chance, and set in The Chase, a tract of primaeval forest hung
with druidical mistletoe, evocative of the antique barbarity of the
d'Urbervilles and their founder Sir Pagan. "One may, indeed, admit
the possibility of a retribution lurking in the present catastrophe.
Doubtless some of Tess d'Urberville's mailed ancestors rollicking
home from a fray had dealt the same measure even more ruthlessly
towards peasant girls of their time." But it is indignation not moral terror that inspires this scene of "catastrophe", Promethean indignation asserting the moral inferiority of Omnipotence: "But though to visit the sins of the fathers upon the children may be a morality good enough for divinities, it is scorned by average human nature ..." Tess's disaster "was to be", in the fatalistic language of her own people, but in this fatalism lay only pathos.

The immediate consequence of this humiliation of the d'Urberville spirit, at the hands of an upstart barbarian, is an illegitimate birth and the subsequent isolation of the heroine by "an immeasurable social chasm". However, the baby, unsacramentally christened "Sorrow" when in extremis by the anguished Tess herself, is sickly in its illegitimacy, as usual, and soon dies. Afterwards Tess, with the recuperative, aspiring power of young life, slowly rallies from her depression — though retaining an ineradicable inner impression of doom — and when "a particularly fine spring came round, and the stir of germination was almost audible in the buds", she resolves to begin life anew in another district. Significantly, Tess's rally includes an explicit repudiation of her d'Urberville ancestry — "she almost hated them for the dance they had led her" — but, as Fate would have it, her new life is to begin at Talbothays Dairy, which happens to stand not far from the ancient d'Urberville seat, "near the great family vaults of her granddames and their powerful husbands."

It is at Talbothays Dairy, of course, that Tess meets the second fatal man in her life, the handsome, puritanical atheist Angel Clare, who is there as a privileged worker-guest, mastering the practical
life. Angel is another embodiment, at least in his own conceit, of "the antagonistic modern spirit" — "one of the most rebellest rozums you ever knew", in Dairymen Crick's estimate — frightening Tess with his scorn for decayed gentry and the "aristocratic principle of blood": "The only pedigrees we ought to respect are those spiritual ones of the wise and virtuous, without regard to corporeal paternity." While Tess loves him simply, Angel loves her as an incarnation of his ideal, if not as "a visionary essence of woman". It is her "supposed untraditional newness", her personation of the "fresh virginal milkmaid", that, ironically enough, enchants him. Pressed to consent to marriage, Tess, conscience-stricken, lacks the boldness to disillusion him, but confesses her unfitness indirectly by revealing herself to be of "that curiously historic worn-out family" of d'Urberville. Yet, Angel is nothing loath, after all, to wed "Mistress Teresa d'Urberville", as he immediately dubs her, not without some snobbish satisfaction.

It is apparently also this satisfaction that leads him to make the ill-omened choice of a d'Urberville manorial residence, now declined to a farmhouse, as their first home. The wedding-day is ominous enough, Tess experiencing a kind of mental impression of the d'Urberville Coach, a phantom supposedly heard only by descendants of the family, at critical moments in their lives, in retributive commemoration of an ancient crime committed by a d'Urberville in a coach-and-four. She is further unnerved to find her nuptial chamber guarded by two life-sized portraits, built immovably into the wall, representing two d'Urberville ladies as if in caricature of nobility, for their hag-like features are unforgettably impressive only of "merciless treachery" and "arrogance to the point of ferocity".
Even more ominously, Tess's "fine features were unquestionably traceable in these exaggerated forms."

Tess is impelled, largely by the psychological potency of these fateful omens, to confess fully the taint upon her chastity before entering the nuptial chamber. Angel's subsequent revulsion is the agony of an idealist deranged by this "grotesque prestidigitation" whereby his virginal milkmaid has turned into the pallid Magdalen kneeling before him. There is also a disturbing element of latent hypocrisy and inhibition in his outrage. But however that may be, Angel is soon flinging a moral in Tess's face. "Decrepit families imply decrepit wills, decrepit conduct." Tess's most fatal prestidigitation had been in the obscuration of her tainted identity: "Here was I thinking you a new-sprung child of nature; there were you, the belated seedling of an effete aristocracy." The wickedness of the ancient d'Urbervilles, and probably the theological doctrine of traducianism, are also on the mind of Angel, a divine Malgre lui; and late on his disastrous wedding-night, after he has heard his wife's confession and adamantly sent her to sleep alone in the bedroom, he irresolutely approaches its door, only to be turned back by the sinister portraits, struck again by the resemblance to Tess. The lovers are separated by the symbolic intervention of the past.

In fact, considerable play is made on Tess's atavistic character. She herself has a fear of her racial history, "of learning that I am one of a long row only — finding out that there is set down in some old book somebody just like me, and to know that I shall only act her part ..." Later, in his tardy repentance, Angel reverently recalls Tess's reincarnation of "a flash of dignity which must have
graced her granddames”; for it is her pride and delicacy of sentiment, extraordinary in her social station, that endures without complaint Angel's cruel desertion — as it had earlier caused her to refuse Alec's compensation. She is stung once to reply to Angel's reproach of social crudeness, "I am only a peasant by position, not by nature!" but quickly submits to his presumed moral superiority; and "pride, too, entered into her submission — which perhaps was a symptom of that reckless acquiescence in chance too apparent in the whole d'Urberville family ..." It is this noble, self-sacrificial recklessness that issues in Tess's reduction to desperation and, thereby, the re-entry of Alec d'Urberville into her unprotected life. Like Olalla, whose sad reflexion on the fatalism of heredity she seems to echo, Tess is an unwilling temptress, doomed to be the innocent cause of evil, as her virtue invariably brings out the worst in Alec.

As Tess's tragedy approaches "fulfilment", the pattern of hereditary omen becomes ever more insistent. The story moves inexorably to Kingsbere-sub-Greenhill, the location of the d'Urberville funeral vaults, where Tess accompanies her destitute mother, who stubbornly squats with her now fatherless children near this symbol of the family's past grandeur. There, at the door of her ancestral sepulchre, amid the effigies of the dead and their spoliated altar-tombs, Tess has the weird and apparently clinching interview with Alec, who, sham as he is, impersonates in the dusk one of the effigies in order to surprise Tess, and offers to relieve her family in exchange for her compliance. Shortly before this satanic temptation, to which Tess, in final despair, acquiesces, she had again heard the d'Urberville Coach, the legend of which Alec carelessly recounts,
unconsciously anticipating its re-enactment by Tess and himself:
"One of the family is said to have abducted some beautiful woman, who tried to escape from the coach in which he was carrying her off, and in the struggle he killed her — or she killed him — I forget which."
In the threshing scene Tess had flung her heavy worker's gauntlet into Alec's insulting face, in "recrudescence of a trick in which her armed progenitors were not unpractised." Tess's climactic murder of her ignoble seducer, in "mad grief" after being confronted in her concubinary finery by Angel, unexpectedly returned from his Brazilian exile, may also be taken as a recrudescence, an atavistic fulfilment of lineal destiny. It occurs to Angel, always the theorist, that the family tradition of the coach and murder might have arisen because the d'Urbervilles had been known to do these things ... he supposed that in the moment of mad grief of which she spoke her mind had lost its balance, and plunged her into this abyss.

Yet, the ultimate implication of this obtrusive pattern of determinism, with its culminating rationalisation of Tess's act as the "aberration" of hereditary temperament, is a sinister ambiguity, cosmic rather than human. "So does Time ruthlessly destroy his own romances." But though Tess is destroyed, her inherent nobility is not diminished. Angel's deterministic comprehension of her motivation is interesting in its inadequacy, for Tess is really impelled to her tragic act, not by the blind compulsion of heredity, but by the recognisable obligation of nobility. Like all tragedy, Tess of the d'Urbervilles is about the irreconcilability of life and honour in a treacherous universe. Tess is betrayed by the hypocrisy of society, of her lover, and even of God, who "counselled a better course than He permitted." The arabesques of the d'Urberville curse are a
subordinate ambience. The effigies of the dead d'Urbervilles only set off Tess's own threatened vitality; her nobility transcends that of her lineage, and she is delivered up to "justice" at Stonehenge, a place of sacrifice "older than the centuries; older than the d'Urbervilles!". The potent metaphor of heredity had finally been mastered to serve a truly tragic vision of life.
NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

2. Ellis, p.91.
5. Clouston, p.525.
10. Ibid., p.56.
12. Lithgow, p.28.
13. Talbot, p.46.
17. Prichard, p.122.
19. Lithgow, p.186.
22. Ellis, p.92.
25. Acton, p.4.
26. Lithgow, p.139.
31. Lithgow, pp.244-45.
33. Included in Dickens, *The Uncommercial Traveller/Reprinted Pieces*.
35. Talbot, p.102.
38. Lithgow, pp.126-27.
40. Prichard, p.124.
41. Carpenter, Human Physiology, p.905.
53. Included in James, Complete Tales, vol. I.

61. See Cross, p.235.


65. Zola's usual translator was E.A. Vizetelly, son of the publisher imprisoned for publishing Zola in England.


70. Included in James, *Complete Tales*, vol. I.

71. Included in *Tales from Blackwood's*, New Series, vol. I.


75. Included in Poe, *Complete Works*, vol. VI.


I should take up a long time if I were to enumerate the various brute-like characteristics that are at times witnessed among the insane; enough to say that some very strong facts and arguments in support of Mr. Darwin's views might be drawn from the field of morbid psychology. We may, without much difficulty, trace savagery in civilization, as we can trace animalism in savagery; and in the degeneration of insanity, in the unkindness so to say, of the human kind, there are exhibited marks denoting the elementary instincts of its composition.

Maudsley, Body and Mind (1870)

... let the weak soul end
In water, sad Lycaon in Lupum, but
The strong become a wolf forevermore!

Let me turn wolf, be whole, and sate, for once,
Wallow in what is now a wolfishness
Coerced too much by the humanity
That's half of me as well! Grow out of man,
Glut the wolf-nature ...

Browning, The Ring and the Book (1868-69)

By the end of the nineteenth century, the concept of atavism had taken on, fantastically as well as scientifically, an even more ominous significance than that entailed upon it by the "family curse" romance. In fact, three of the most suggestive Victorian monographs on
reversional heredity, "Is Disease a Reversion?" (Jackson Prize for Comparative Pathology), "Some Freaks of Atavism" (Lancet, 1882), and "Do We Progress?" (Journal of Psychology, March 1883), exist only as titles, for they are the publications of James Mortimer, M.R.C.S., the amateur anthropologist who recommends Sherlock Holmes to Sir Henry Baskerville, the heir threatened, in the style of the traditional romance, by an entailed curse. And despite the melodramatic evocation of a hobgoblin of West Country legend — "Never in the delirious dream of a disordered brain could anything more savage, more appalling, more hellish, be conceived" — the real nightmare of The Hound of the Baskervilles (1902) is the Darwinian nightmare of reversion to savagery — and bestiality.

The Hound is set in remotest Dartmoor, where "you leave your own age behind you", amidst the ruins of "the homes and the work of the prehistoric people"; and "if you were to see a skin-clad, hairy man crawl out from the low door, fitting a flint-tipped arrow on to the string of his bow, you would feel that his presence there was more natural than your own." Mortimer, a scientific head-hunter, who covets Holmes's rare dolichocephalic cranium, indefatigably excavates barrows in search of primitive skulls; yet, skulking in this primaeval wilderness is a living freak of atavism, Selden the Notting Hill Murderer, who has escaped from Dartmoor convict prison. Watson remembered the case well, for it was one in which Holmes had taken an interest on account of the peculiar ferocity of the crime and the wanton brutality which had marked all the actions of the assassin. The commutation of his death sentence had been due to some doubts as to his complete sanity, so atrocious was his conduct.
In fact, Selden's atavistic character recalls bestial even more than paleolithic ancestry. "Somewhere there, on that desolate plain, was lurking this fiendish man, hiding in a burrow like a wild beast, his heart full of malignancy against the whole race which had cast him out." Having baited a trap for him, Watson sees, by candlelight, "an evil yellow face, a terrible animal face, all seamed and scored with vile passions", and "small, cunning eyes, which peered fiercely to right and left through the darkness, like a crafty and savage animal who has heard the steps of the hunters."

On the other hand, Stapleton, the master villain of the piece, embodies a more traditional idea of atavism, reincarnating that lascivious ancestor of centuries before from whom the curse on the Baskervilles dates. Feigning an interest in the execution of the paintings in the Baskerville gallery, Holmes suddenly crooks his arm over the portrait of the infamous Sir Hugo, covering the curls and lace, and the unmistakable features of the alias Stapleton suddenly stand out from the canvas. "Yes", Holmes observes to the astonished Watson, "it is an interesting instance of a throw-back, which appears to be both physical and spiritual". To be sure, Stapleton represents what was known as "higher degeneracy", his form of atavism being even more dangerous than Selden's, because it does not preclude fiendish intelligence. A coldly efficient naturalist as well as criminal, Stapleton's moral anaesthesia is shown, not only in his plot to eliminate the remaining heirs standing between himself and the estate, but also in the indifference with which he watches a struggling heath pony sucked under in the deadly mire.

But though as vicious in his own way as Selden, Stapleton's
animality is vicarious, acting through the proxy of his phosphorescent hound, the dreadful symbol of hereditary evil. Moreover, in addition to his respectable manor residence, Stapleton has a lair amidst the most inaccessible hills, "really islands cut off on all sides by the impassable Mire, which has crawled round them in the course of years. That is where the rare plants and the butterflies are, if you have the wit to reach them"; and on one of these islands of biological isolation and retrogression, Stapleton kennels his beast, on a midden of gnawed bones. Later, flushed from his manor-house, Stapleton himself falls prey to the rapacious mire while in flight to this haven of savagery.

The Hound of the Baskervilles thus cleverly assimilates both pre-Darwinian and Darwinian conceptions of atavism, serving, therefore, as the best introduction to that daemonic transformation of the theory of evolution concomitant with Victorian theories of heredity. The crucial development here was a gradual extension of the term atavism to denote, not only the phenomenon of an individual's reversion to some particular ascendant other than parent, but also a more generalized reversion to the ancestry of the species itself. In human atavism this could mean throwing back, physically or psychically, to the type of primitive man or even, after Darwin, to the type of soulless animality from which Homo sapiens presumably evolved. Selden's leering face, half-Neanderthal, half-beast, illustrates the daemonic potentiality of this phenomenon. Stapleton's less apparent, vicarious retrogression to beast of prey exemplifies the subtler but no less daemonic phenomenon of psychic atavism. For, indeed, an evolutionary theory of psychogenesis was one of the most significant
corollaries to the Darwinian hypothesis of species origination.

Atavism was the haunting Darwinian nightmare in a century of determined progressivism, both social and biological, with

Evolution ever climbing after some ideal good
And Reversion ever dragging Evolution in the mud;5

as the soured Tennyson put it, in 1886. These less reassuring implications of the triumph of Darwinism and the ultimate biological determinism it espoused inspired a literary context embracing such diverse authors as Kipling, Zola, Nietzsche, H.G. Wells, and Conrad, not to mention the exemplary Conan Doyle. This Chapter, then, will deal with Darwinism in villainy and madness, and the daemonic paradox of aspiration and retrogression underlying it.

The most regular occurrence of human atavism in its generalised sense was in children's supposed recapitulation of the psychic phylogeny of the species.* Their instinctive cruelty and irrationality, however, while requiring rigid correction, was yet "natural" in that it was merely following ancestral lines of development. But if the child was naturally a foetal savage, those arrested children, criminals, were, unnaturally or pathologically, in the words of a contemporary criminologist, "savages still living in our midst, of the same blood and origin as ourselves, and yet unlike us in all except in our common ancestry."6 Darwin himself, pondering the inexplicable reappearance of injurious archaic traits in pedigree lines of livestock, ventured that

---

* The definitive study of the recapitulation theory of child psychology is Alexander Francis Chamberlain's The Child: A Study in the Evolution of Man (1900), which Havelock Ellis included in the Contemporary Science Series.
with mankind some of the worst dispositions, which occasionally without any assignable cause make their appearance in families, may perhaps be reversions to a savage state, from which we are not removed by very many generations. This view seems indeed to be recognised in the common expression that such men are the black sheep of the family. 7

Certainly, few Victorian biologists doubted that, in the geneticist Lithgow's words,

there exist in the bottom of the soul, buried in the depth of our being, savage instincts, nomadic tastes, unconquered and sanguinary appetites, which slumber but die not. They resemble those rudimentary organs which have outlived their functions, but which still remain as witnesses to the slow, progressive evolution of the forms of life. And these savage instincts, developed in man during the past, whilst he lived free amid the forests and streams, are from time to time recalled by heredity, as though to let us measure with the eye the length of the road over which we have travelled. 8

In this fixation upon the vestigial survival or recrudescence of savage ancestry in immaturity, criminality, and insanity, there could be no greater antithesis to earlier quasi-mythical conceptions of præmaeval innocence or noble savagery; to Archbishop Whately's argument, in Darwin's words, "that man came into the world as a civilised being, and that all savages have since undergone degradation ..." 9 In effect, the depravity of præmaeval man was the first assumption of progressivism. Biology, psychology, the nascent science of anthropology — the very spirit of the age — insisted on a development upwards from aboriginal brutality. Herbert Spencer recognised both a moral and a physical divergence between the "savage" races, notably incapable of altruism, and the "civilised" races, among whom "philanthropy organizes itself in laws, establishes numerous institutions, and dictates countless private benefactions." 10 Galton went so far as to argue that "the hereditary taint due to
the primeval barbarism of our race, and maintained by later influences, will have to be bred out of it before our descendants can rise to the position of free members of an intelligent society..."11

Above all, the phenomenon of atavism undercut the myth of progress, underscored the tenuousness of the achievement of "slow, progressive evolution". Lithgow found it necessary to invoke the horrors of the French Revolution, after Carlyle, to warn adequately of the ever-present liability to barbaric reversion.12 Lecky, the historian of rationalism, also had recourse to a theory of cultural atavism in order to account for the embarrassing backslidings of European civilisation, quoting physiological authorities on this disturbing "reappearance of opinions, modes of thought, and emotions belonging to a former stage of our intellectual history..."13 Furthermore, the pioneers of anthropology, Lubbock in The Origin of Civilisation (1870), Tylor in Primitive Culture (1871), and Frazer in The Golden Bough (1890), systematically analysed folklore and superstition as vestiges of a primaeval dark age of magic and witchcraft.

The vehemence with which the savage progenitor was repudiated by his Victorian descendants is striking. Dickens, for example, vituperated the Noble Savage as "cruel, false, thievish, murderous; addicted more or less to grease, entrails, and beastly customs; a wild animal with the questionable gift of boasting; a conceited, tiresome, monotonous humbug."14 Darwin never recovered from the astonishment which I felt on first seeing a party of Feugians on a wild and broken shore ... for the reflection at once rushed into my mind - such were our ancestors. These men were absolutely naked and bedaubed with paint, their long hair was tangled, their mouths frothed with excitement, and their expression was wild, startled, and distrustful.
They possessed hardly any arts, and like wild animals lived on what they could catch; they had no government, and were merciless to everyone not of their own small tribe. He who has seen a savage in his native land will not feel much shame, if forced to acknowledge that the blood of some more humble creature flows in his veins. 15

Nor did Darwin have any desire to rejoin his ancestors. While warning against the high reproductive rate of native British (i.e. Irish) savages, which threatened national retrogression, "as has too often occurred in the history of the world", Darwin professed satisfaction in the thought that, in happy contrast to the days of the late Roman Empire, "the civilised races have extended, and are now everywhere extending their range, so as to take the place of the lower races." This, of course, was the essence of the imperialistic ethos of "the Western nations of Europe, who now so immeasurably surpass their former savage progenitors, and stand at the summit of civilisation ..."16 Even Dickens, though far from being an apologist for imperialism, looked forward to the imminent extinction of the savage, finding the merest "gent" infinitely superior to any yelping Bushman or American Indian.

But the spectre of human reversion, whether appearing as street ruffian, Irish rioter, * or native warrior, was not easily exorcised, and it insidiously haunted this same ethos of imperialism, statements of which were often tainted with hysteria and unintentional irony. "We are too tender to savages; we are more tender to a black than to ourselves. Niggers are tigers, niggers are tigers", 27 Tennyson

* L.P. Curtis, Jr., in his book Apes and Angels (Newton Abbot: 1971), points out that in Victorian political cartoons Fenian agitators were customarily drawn with simian features. John Tenniel seems to have originated this style.
grumbled, apropos of criticism of Governor Eyre's massacre of rebellious Jamaican Negroes in 1865. The most blatant racialism came naturally to a race "who now so immeasurably surpass their former savage progenitors", and Carlyle, another of Eyre's apologists, had already settled "The Nigger Question" (1849) by the application of the "beneficent whip". Yet, another of Eyre's apologists, Charles Kingsley, also admired "Rajah" James Brooke, who conquered Sarawak in 1841. In defence of the civilising mission of Brooke, to whom among others he dedicated _Westward Ho!_ (1855), Kingsley wrote to a friend, in 1849, with wonted vehemence:

I say at once that I think he was utterly right and righteous. One tribe exterminated, if need be, to save a whole continent.... "Sacrifice of human life?" Prove that it is human life. It is beast-life. These Dyaks have put on the image of the beast, and they must take the consequence .... Do you believe in the Old Testament? Surely, then, say, what does that destruction of the Canaanites mean? If it was right, Rajah Brooke was right. If he be wrong, then Moses, Joshua, David, were wrong ... You Malays and Dyaks of Sarawak, you are the enemies of Christ, the Prince of Peace; you are beasts, all the more dangerous, because you have a semi-human cunning. I will, like David, "hate you with a perfect hatred, even as though you were my enemies." I will blast you out with grape and rockets...

Such fulminations, of course, only illustrated the unease of the civilisers themselves in the face of the ignoble savage and the evolutionary identity of humanity which he fulfilled. Spencer, though never ceasing to find the savage races abhorrent, could see their exploitation or extermination by the civilised races as evidence only of the most embarrassing reversion on the part of the superior race itself, the irony which sharpens the stories of Kipling and Conrad. In his _Principles of Ethics_ (1892), Spencer concluded, that though savagery and inhumanity had been mostly stamped out at home, "yet by
our people abroad there are still perpetrated inhuman deeds"; and in the public schools, in their systematic subjugation of the weak to the strong, Spencer, like H.G. Wells, recognised "a moral discipline not inappropriate for those who, as legislators and military officers, direct and carry out, all over the world, expeditions which have as their result to deplete pagans and fatten Christians." Indeed, in some strange, compulsive way "the dark places on the earth", in Conrad's phrase, appealed to the atavistic instincts of their civilised invaders.

Returning now to those "savages still living in our midst", that is to say, criminals, it may be re-emphasised that criminal atavism was congenital and physiological, as well as psychic. Selden's leering "animal face" was only too obvious, but by the end of the century an alienist could infallibly identify the congenital criminal by his physical stigmata of retrogression, stigmata not always obvious to the untrained observer. "Sometimes the revealing glance is found", remarked Havelock Ellis, "perhaps with a shock of horror, in a face already familiar." The Darwinian contribution to criminology, then, was this discovery of "animalism" no less than savagery in the atavism of criminality.

But, of course, the attribution of bestiality to wicked and savage men preceded Darwin. Not to mention the mythological analogues, the physiognomists and phrenologists of the early nineteenth century had described the "lines of animality" in the human face and isolated the animal propensities in the human brain. In "Model Prisons" (1850), Carlyle illustrated his tirade, on the incorrigibility of criminals, with ape- and wolf-men and other "diabolic-animal
specimens of humanity." But Darwin's theories precipitated the final surrender of anthropology to zoology; and thus, indirectly, the abdication of theology, that "disappearance of God" cited by J. Hillis Miller. In a Darwinian universe human bestiality took on a new significance, and the disappearance of the soul, certified by Virchow, and concomitant proliferation of the image of the beast, had its reflexion in an increasingly hysterical note in criminology; hence

the deliberate murderer, with steelblue eyes and square jaw and set lips, patient as a beast of prey and not less cruel, marking with calmly vindictive glance all who come to see him in his cage, biding the time for his release, resolved that his next spring shall be at once more stealthy and more deadly than his last. 22

The Victorian fascination with werewolves, vampires, and sadistic fantasy in general seems to illustrate further extremes of this Darwinian imagination. In elucidating the "natural causes" of lycanthropy, Baring-Gould made the "startling assertion" that "man, naturally, in common with other carnivora, is actuated by an impulse to kill, and by a love of destroying life."23 "Theroid degeneration",24 by which the more degraded lunatics and idiots were supposed to revert to the type of ancestral beast, was another conception of the time; Darwin himself was particularly interested in asylum cases of bestial reversion, such as the epileptic idiot who, when annoyed, "draws back his thick lips and reveals a prominent row of hideous fangs (large canines being especially noticeable), and then makes a quick and cruel clutch with his open hand at the offending person."25 Such horrors were grist to his mill, in The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals (1872), which expounded an evolutionary science of physiognomy, tracing the origin of human grimaces, sneers, and smiles
to the growls and snarls of beasts. Nor should the Darwinian significance of Count Dracula's elongated eye-teeth be neglected. "He who rejects with scorn the belief that the shape of his own canines, and their occasional great development in other men, are due to our early forefathers having been provided with these formidable weapons, will probably reveal, by sneering, the line of his descent." 26

Complementing Darwin's Origin of Species (1859) was Morel's Traité des dégénérescences de l'espèce humaine (1857), for the science of degeneracy seemed to be a negative confirmation of evolution. Although Maudsley, like Morel before him, insisted on a distinction between degeneracy and atavism, making sure that "no possible arrest of development, no degradation of human nature through generations, will bring him to the special type of monkey", 27 degeneracy was frequently equated with "regressive evolution". Maudsley himself observed that "As the nature of man has been slowly developed into that which it now is by a progressive fashioning through generations, so by a retrograde descent may it pass backwards to a lower stage..." 28

Hence, too, Darwin's interest in prognathous idiots, who "somewhat resemble the lower races of mankind"; 29 while Kingsley, an amateur naturalist, in The Water-Babies (1863), made a children's fable of "the great and jolly nation of the Doasyoulikes", who degenerated through indolence and self-indulgence to gorillas. For, in the words of Mrs. Bedonebyasyoudid,

Whatever their ancestors were, men they are; and I advise them to behave as such, and act accordingly. But let them recollect this, that there are two sides to every question, and a downhill as well as an uphill road; and, if I can turn beasts into men, I can, by the same laws of circumstance, and selection, and competition, turn men into beasts. 30
In fact, the concept of degeneracy was even congenial to the dogma of Original Sin, the Fall, and inherited degradation.  

As Morel had used it, degeneracy signified a morbid deviation from an original type, and he had shown how such pathological sub-types of human beings arise from the effects of intoxication, alcoholic and otherwise, and, to a limited extent, propagate their kind. But later, degeneracy was associated with physiological reversion in general pathology — hence Mortimer's prize essay, "Is Disease a Reversion?" Laycock, for example, linked the organic degeneracy characteristic of certain diseases with a "law of retrocession of evolution (or disvolution)", whereby the patient's physiological processes morbifically revert to those of an earlier phase of development; in brain-diseases, therefore, infantile memories, fears, and hallucinations are reproduced in the adult. But this morbid retrocession could be phylogenetic as well as ontogenetic, Laycock making an explicitly racial application of it:

The degeneration in form, due to arrest of development of the individual, or to retrocession to a lower archetype, are under the same law.... There are idiots that are literally tharoid, or like lower animals, in some particular, as to form or instinct, in virtue of this law of retrocession. Happily they cannot reproduce their kind, else a genus of anthropoid beasts would be the result. In like manner highly developed people will revert to lower ethnic forms, as to both osseous conformations and mental states.

At any rate, the concept of an organically degenerate type of human being was eminently fitted to Maudsley's deterministic theory of crime. And though he disallowed the possibility of theroid

* In 1868 in Munich, Count Chorinsky, a "degenerate" and epileptic, poisoned his wife, at the instigation of his mistress, and Morel was summoned to testify to Chorinsky's legal irresponsibility. See Max Nordau, Degeneration (London: 1895), p.16.
degeneration and usually steered clear of the ethnological implications of evolution, Maudsley applauded "the interesting researches of Morel into the formation of degenerate or morbid varieties of the human race." While Laycock traced the etiology of moral insanity to that predominance of "lower animal instincts" effected by cerebral degeneracy or, more specifically, "hereditary defect in brain nutrition", Maudsley discovered, in vice and madness, "human nature in perverse action, in retrograde metamorphosis." Following Morel, and echoing the biological nominalism of G.H. Lewes and Spencer, Maudsley maintained that "the degenerate creature itself represents a degenerate variety or morbid kind of human being .... Humanity is contained in the individual; and in these strange morbid displays we have an example of humanity undergoing retrograde resolution." And one unmistakable case of this resolution was criminal man sui generis; in Maudsley's words, "a distinct criminal class of beings ... marked by peculiar low physical and mental characteristics." However, it was Cesare Lombroso, Professor of Psychiatry and Forensic Medicine at the Royal University of Turin, the most influential criminologist of the nineteenth century, who, with a grand disregard of nice distinctions among atavism, retrogression, and degeneracy, erected a vast edifice of theory upon criminal man sui generis. In 1870, while conducting the post-mortem of a notorious brigand, Lombroso discovered in the structure of his skull "a very long series of atavistic anomalies." But this was more than a discovery; it was a revelation.

At the sight of that skull, I seemed to see all of a sudden, lighted up as a vast plain under a flaming sky, the problem of the nature of the criminal - an atavistic being who reproduces in his person the
ferocious instincts of primitive humanity and the inferior animals. Thus were explained anatomically the enormous jaws, high cheek-bones, prominent superciliary arches, solitary lines in the palms, extreme size of the orbits, handle-shaped or sessile ears found in criminals, savages, and apes, insensibility to pain, extremely acute sight, tattooing, excessive idleness, love of orgies, and the irresistible craving for evil for its own sake, the desire not only to extinguish life in the victim, but to mutilate the corpse, tear its flesh, and drink its blood.

I was further encouraged in this bold hypothesis by the results of my studies on Verseni, a criminal convicted of sadism and rape, who showed the cannibalistic instincts of primitive anthropophagists and the ferocity of beasts of prey. 37

Lombroso published his *L'uomo delinquente* in 1876, and spent the rest of his life elaborating the atavistic correspondences, physical and "cultural", of criminality. Among the "unexpected analogies" with savage tribes were the criminal's predilection for tattooing; his argot, which structurally resembled primitive languages; his pictographic writing; and his grotesque paintings and carvings. Yet, though Lombroso insisted upon interpreting crime as "atavistic regression", he also insisted upon classifying it as a degenerative disease. "The aetiology of crime, therefore, mingles with that of all kinds of degeneration: rickets, deafness, monstrosity, hairiness, and cretinism, of which crime is only a variation." 38

Like Freud, Lombroso was Master to certain devoted disciples, among them Max Nordau, a Hungarian-Jewish alienist, who most pertinently defended the Master from the charge of self-contradiction, "because he saw in criminal instincts at once degeneracy and atavism." Actually, Nordau explained, "The disease of degeneracy consists precisely in the fact that the degenerate organism has not the power to mount to the height of evolution already attained by the species, but stops on the way at an earlier or later point." 39 Thus, a
characteristic such as ferocity, healthy at one stage in the development of the species, becomes morbid when appearing atavistically in a later. Lombroso himself found the common facial asymmetry of criminals a throw-back to fish, and also suggested that the "invulnerability" and insensibility of criminals and maniacs might be reversion to the reptilian or amphibian stage, at which even amputated limbs regenerate. Nordau, too, stressed the "stupendous depth" to which a degenerate might "relapse", finding it necessary to go back to the invertebrates, even to the worms, for the origin of certain criminal stigmata.

Nevertheless, Lombroso was puzzled by various distinctively criminal traits, both physical and psychical, which apparently could not be attributed to reversion. Then "It flashed across my mind that many criminal characteristics not attributable to atavism ... were morbid characteristics common to epilepsy, mingled with others due to atavism." Epilepsy, of course, had long been taken as a model of moral insanity. Moreover, a so-called "therio-mimicry" had also been observed in epileptic throes, during which the patient bit, scratched, barked, or mewed. Lombroso interpreted this therio-mimicry as a reproduction of inherent atavistic tendencies. Here, then, was the rationalisation of zoanthropy, the maniac's delusion that he has turned into a beast; here was an instantaneous demonstration of Maudsley's "retrograde metamorphosis"; and here was the confirmation that epilepsy, a cerebral degeneracy, was also a phylogenetic phenomenon intimately linked with atavism. Lombroso went on to assert that all congenital criminals are epileptics though their epileptic symptoms are sometimes latent, and that there is an "epilepsy sui generis, a variety of epilepsy which may be called criminal."
He added, however, that although all criminals are epileptics, not all epileptics are criminals; some even, among them St. Paul, Mohammed, and Dostoyevsky, having manifested inspiration and holiness. It was this ambiguity of epilepsy, the mingling of ecstasy and horror in its "aura", and its mysterious connexion with extraordinary mental powers which led Lombroso to yet another discovery, namely, "that genius, like moral insanity, has its basis in epilepsy"; it being no less than "a form of degenerative psychosis belonging to the family of epileptic affections." Moreover, through a flexible concept of "psychic epilepsy", which was applicable to persons without the usual convulsive symptoms, Lombroso assigned the epileptic syndrome to an impressive number of modern geniuses from Napoleon to Flaubert. "It is not absurd, then", he concluded, "to see moral insanity united with genius, and by that very union made not only harmless but sometimes even useful to society."43

But few even among Lombroso's disciples agreed that this union was particularly "harmless". "A degenerate", wrote an American disciple, "may be a scientist, an able lawyer, a great artist, a poet, a mathematician, a politician, a skilled administrator, and present from a moral standpoint profound defects, strange peculiarities and surprising lapses of conduct." Such lapses, or intellectual convulsions, to use the terms of Lombroso's psychic epilepsy, recapitulated traits from a stage of development anterior to ethical inhibitions, though the "higher degenerate" often disguised his "morbid egotism" in cant. "Like Guiteau, the assassin of President Garfield, they aim at doing a 'big thing for humanity and myself', the humanity being concentrated in 'my' ideas."45
Here, perhaps, the testimony of the most famous detective of the age, a thorough Lombrosoian in theory, may be admitted. Sherlock Holmes's predecessor, Dupin, had also encountered "that monstrum horrendum, an unprincipled man of genius"; and in Professor Moriarty, the "Napoleon of crime ... a genius, a philosopher, an abstract thinker", who "at the age of twenty-one ... wrote a treatise upon the Binomial Theorem, which has had a European vogue"; Holmes described a typical case of higher degeneracy. Moriarty, who suffers from a "criminal strain" in his blood, a strain "rendered infinitely more dangerous by his extraordinary mental powers", is really a kind of reverse alter ego of Holmes himself, who is similarly driven by "strange peculiarities" and an anomalous strain in the blood.

Max Nordau, who made the detection of artistic degeneracy his special province, indefatigably exposed the moral retrogression of the "leading degenerates" of the age, including Zola, Ibsen, Wagner, Nietzsche, Tolstoy, Verlaine, and the Pre-Raphaelites. Such degenerates, psychic epileptics, who were sometimes physically normal, could most surely be identified by their "intellectual stigmata": egotism, mysticism, hyperaesthesia, emotionalism, casuistry in ethics, and Decadent taste in art. Though scoffing at pretensions of a fin de siècle malaise, Nordau saw a present danger of cultural retrogression in the cult of "Diabolism and Decadentism", and its atavistic exaltation of impulse over discipline, emotion over reason, and unconsciousness over consciousness. Shrewdly, Nordau saw through the avant-garde:

They wish to be the future. That is one of their chief pretensions. That is one of the means by which they catch the largest number of simpletons. We have, however, seen in all individual cases that it is not the future but the most forgotten, far-
away past. Degenerates lisp and stammer, instead of speaking. They utter monosyllabic cries, instead of constructing grammatically and syntactically articulated sentences. They draw and paint like children, who dirty tables and walls with mischievous hands. They compose music like that of the yellow natives of East Asia. They confound all the arts, and lead them back to the primitive forms they had before evolution differentiated them. 48

Above all the Decadents and Diabolists Nordau abominated Nietzsche, who had amused himself, in A Genealogy of Morals (1887; English, 1899), by standing on its head the accepted theory of evolutionary progress, by which, at least in Spencer's synthesis, heights of altruism and philanthropy were to accompany racial perfection. "Never until now", as Nietzsche himself put it,

was there the least doubt or hesitation, to set down "the good man" as of higher value than "the evil man" - of higher value in the sense of furtherance, utility, prosperity as regards man in general (the future of man included). What if the reverse were true? What if in the "good one" also a symptom of decline were contained, and a danger, a seduction, a poison, a narcotic by which the present might live at the expense of the future? Perhaps more comfortably, less dangerously, but also in humbler style, - more meanly? .... So that just morality were to blame, if a highest mightiness and splendour of the type of man - possible in itself - were never attained? And that, therefore, morality itself would be the danger of dangers? .... 49

In this Nietzschean paradox Nordau, of course, recognised the typical degenerate mentality, which "asserts the theoretical legitimacy of crime; seeks, with philosophically sounding fustian, to prove that 'good' and 'evil', virtue and vice, are arbitrary distinctions ..."50

In fact, Nietzsche was even more outrageous in his apparent transposition of accepted values, invoking the prehistoric Aryan conquerors, who had, in subjugating the pre-Aryan races, attained the "highest mightiness and splendour", but whose rightful inheritors were now defrauded by the Judaic-Christian "slave-revolt in morality", that
original and most pernicious prestidigitation of values.

To Nietzsche, then, degeneracy seemed to mean the opposite of what it meant to Nordau, and he professed to see the true model of evolutionary perfection in the Aryan "beast of prey, the splendid, blond beast, lustfully roving in search of spoils and victory."

Accordingly, in his view, the malaise and bad conscience of modern civilisation was nothing other than

that will to self-torture, that stemmed-back cruelty of animal man who has become internalised, who is, as it were, chased back into himself, who is encaged in the "state", to the end of being tamed, who invented bad conscience for the purpose of causing pain to himself after the more natural outlet of this will to cause pain had become obstructed...

And the only escape was metaphorically, or literally, to

step back into the innocence of the conscience of the beast of prey, as exultant monsters, which, perhaps, walk away from an abominable sequence of murder, burning down, violation, torture, with such wantonness and equanimity, as if merely some student-trick had been accomplished; with the conviction, that now for a long time again the poets will have something to celebrate and sing of.

Yet, though Nietzsche ridiculed the prosaic Darwin (to whose disciples he addressed a mocking poem) and that "reverse and perverse kind of genealogical hypothesis, the truly English kind", his Genealogy of Morals was hardly antipodal to Darwinism, especially the racial and social Darwinism behind imperialism, any more than its anti-Christianity was exactly antithetical to the Muscular Christianity of the Rev. Charles Kingsley. Nietzsche perhaps compares even more closely with Carlyle,* with whom he seemed to share, at the least, a

---

conviction of the moral superiority of might,* as well as admiration of
that supreme personage of history, the **aristos.** Nor was Nietzsche's
negative ethical scheme entirely inconsistent with evolutionary ethics.
Spencer wrote of the "negative Beneficence" of unrestricted economic
competition, and Darwin had concluded The Descent of Man (1871) with
a warning that the *laissez-faire* principle of Natural Selection must
not cease to operate in man.

Otherwise he would sink into indolence, and the more
gifted men would not be more successful in the battle
of life than the less gifted. Hence our natural rate
of increase, though leading to many and obvious evils,
must not be greatly diminished by any means. There
should be open competition for all men; and the most
able should not be prevented by laws or customs from
succeeding best and rearing the largest number of
offspring. 53

The advent of the Übertmen* was simply the inevitable fulfilment of
Darwinian eugenics, and Havelock Ellis, H.G. Wells, and Bernard Shaw
were all, at least initially, attracted by Nietzsche's profession of
the higher morality of the species.54

Another interesting comparison between Nietzsche's moral genealogy
and the more conventional conceptions of superiority and degeneracy
was in his hatred of revolution and anarchism. "Who", he wrote, as
if at last despairing,

will guarantee that modern democracy, anarchy, which
is still more modern, and especially the hankering
for la commune, the most primitive form of society, -
which is held in common by all our European socialists,
do not represent in the main an immense afterelap, and
that the conquering and gentleman race, the race of the
Aryans, is not among other things physiologically
succumbing? 55

* It is a "cheering consideration", noted Carlyle, "how strength acts
ever as the right-arm of justice; how might and right, so fright-
fully discrepant at first, are ever in the long-run one and the
In fact, on anarchism as a symptom of degeneracy, Nietzsche's opinion
curiously paralleled that of Nordau; while Lombroso also analysed
the tell-tale psycho-physiological pattern in revolutionists, anarchists,
and "presidentialicides", from Marat to Guiteau, who assassinated the
President of the United States, James Garfield, in 1881. Nietzsche,
however, abominated Jacobins and levellers for their inherent,
theoretical opposition to the Übermensch. Thus, Souvarine, the
daemonic anarchist in Germinal (1885), loathes "Darwin, that apostle
of scientific inequality, whose famous selection was only good for
aristocratic philosophers."

But at the same time, by an inevitable hybridisation of Darwinism
and Marxism, there emerged "a revolutionary idea of the struggle for
existence, the lean eating the fat, the strong people devouring the
pallid middle class." Indeed, Darwin was "severely censured",
in John Morley's words, for "revealing his zoological conclusions to
the general public at a moment when the sky of Paris was red with
the incendiary flames of the Commune." Even Virchow proposed a
ban on the teaching of Darwinism, noting its baneful alliance with
socialism and threat to public order. But the most profound
paradox of all was that by which the revolutionist, the daemonic
messiah, though coming under a Lombrosian category of higher degener-
acy, appeared as a figure of destiny rivaling the Carlylean aristos
or Nietzschean Übermensch.

Whatever the original intentions, then, of "aristocratic
philosophers", or whatever the implications of psychic epilepsy, the
Übermensch, i.e., the man aspiring to godhood, became a common feature
of socialism, nihilism, and fascism; a common property, with
respective antithesis, of altruism and elitism, progressivism and reaction, philanthropy and misanthropy. But the sinister alter ego was inescapable. In Dostoevsky's *The Devils* (1871), Kirilov can become God only by destroying himself, and Stavrogin, enigmatically nominated "Prince Ivan", to reign after the revolutionary catastrophe, dispassionately seduces a child as an experiment in self-perdition. 

"... if justice is not possible with man", Souvarine exclaims with invincible fanaticism, "then man must disappear". The crux, finally, of the century of Darwin was just this ambiguity of the Übermensch, who was either the acme of evolution or its highest degenerate; either the Messiah of the species or its Anti-Christ; either the ultimate expression of humanity, or the ultimate sophistication of the Beast. Either Holmes or Moriarty; Wagner's Siegfried and Shaw's Superman, or Dostoyevsky's Stavrogin, Conrad's Mr. Kurtz, and, finally, Thomas Mann's *Doctor Faustus* (1947), that delayed product of "Diabolism and Decadentism".

Paralleling the trend of anthropology, Victorian literature was haunted by the image of the beast, even before the publication of Darwin's books. Like Audubon, the greatest painter of wildlife of the age, Tennyson was obsessed by "Nature, red in tooth and claw,/ With ravine", and his narrator in *Maud* (1855) imagines a natural ruthlessness, a universal voracity, far more malignant than anything envisioned by Darwin himself, who saw a principle of rightness and even compassion in *Natural Selection*. But for the more subjective naturalist in *Maud*,

... nature is one with rapine, a harm no preacher can heal;  
The Mayfly is torn by the swallow, the sparrow spear'd by the shrike,  
And the whole little wood where I sit is a world of plunder and prey.
Even gloomier in this sense is the land of Cameliard, in "The Coming of Arthur" (1869), the opening Idyll, in which Tennyson pictures the natural world, only temporarily tamed by cultivation, reverting to type:

And so there grew great tracts of wilderness,
Wherein the beast was ever more and more,
But man was less and less...

while wild children, nursed at the wolf's "fierce teat",

In her foul den, there at their meat would growl,
And mock their foster-mother on four feet,
Till, straighten'd, they grew up to wolf-like men,
Worse than the wolves. 63

In fact, theroid imagery, lycanthropy, and fantasies of savagery and cannibalism were all recurrent in literature, as if in unconscious metaphor of an exaggerated, nightmarish Darwinism. "The lowest, least blessed fact one knows of", wrote Carlyle,

on which necessitous mortals have ever based themselves, seems to be the primitive one of Cannibalism: That I can devour Thee. What if such Primitive Fact were precisely the one we had (with our improved methods) to revert to, and begin anew from! 64

Carlyle's pre-Darwinian observation compares with that of a medical man in a Wilkie Collins novel published well after the triumph of Darwinism: "And does it ever strike you, when you are cutting your mutton at dinner, and your cat is catching its mouse, and your spider is suffocating its fly, that we are all, big and little together, born to one certain inheritance — the privilege of eating each other?" 65 This same stark fact of zoology confronts survivors aboard a lifeboat in Charles Reade's Foul Play (1868), so "little do we, who never pass a single day without bite or sup, know the animal, Man, in these dire extremities." 66
Carlyle found the metaphor of ferocious beast appropriate for Revolutionary behaviour, remarking, for example, about the early "gambollings" of sansculottism, "that as the grown cat, and cat species generally, is the cruelest thing known, so the merriest is precisely the kitten, or growing cat." In *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859), Dickens similarly pictured the Jacobin mob "in Wolf-procession through the streets", and his description of the blood-thirsty mob pursuing Bill Sikes was cited by Darwin in evidence of the animal component in human rage. The woodcut illustrating Chapter LX of *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1840-41) portrays a fang-mouthed Quilp framed by an inn-sign, of which the lettering MAN/BEAST (from "Accommodation for Man and Beast") is prominent. This may, in turn, suggest Poe's tale "Hop-Frog" (1849), a phantasamagoria of bestiality, anticipating Kipling in its morbidity. Hop-Frog, a Quilp-like dwarf, wronged by the bloated, simian 'king', induces him to masquerade as an ourang-outang at a court ball, thereby effecting a horrible vengeance.

Carlyle's "Primitive Fact" animated various popular Gothic publications, such as Sawney Bean, the Man-Eater of Midlothian (1851) and Sweeney Todd, the Demon Barber of Fleet Street (1848), who rendered his customers into "mutton" pies after despoiling them of their valuables. Sweeney Todd passed into Victorian folklore, while Dickens himself perpetuated the ferocious joke of cannibalism in his "Nurse's Tales" sketch, included in *The Uncommercial Traveller* (1861), in which Captain Murderer, that Bluebeard gormand, finds no better use for his tender brides than filling for "house-lamb" pie.

However, this ferocious joke persists in *Great Expectations* (1860-61), where it is comprised in a thematic pattern of "instinctive"
hostility towards the weak and helpless, the atavistic characteristic which Spencer noted in contemporary treatment of children. The novel opens with the hapless Pip's seizure by the starving convict Magwitch, who reveals anomalous appetites: "'You young dog', said the man, licking his lips, 'what fat cheeks you ha' got .... Darn Me if I couldn't eat 'em ... and if I han't half a mind to 't!'

The mysterious Young Man, who "has a secret way peculiar to himself, of getting at a boy, and at his heart, and at his liver", is simply Magwitch's other, bestial self, for he warns Pip with horribly jocular irony, "I am a keeping that young man from harming of you at the present moment, with great difficulty. I find it very hard to hold that young man off of your inside." Offering Magwitch a meat-pie in substitution, Pip watches him devour it, with sideways canine glances.

But even among his "respectable" relatives, who irrationally despise his childhood, Pip figures as a type of prey. As a lesson in gratitude to his elders, Uncle Pumblechook, at Christmas dinner, commands Pip to imagine himself, not a fortunate boy "raised by hand", but a young animal sent for market.

You would have been disposed of for so many shillings according to the market price of the article, and Dunstable the butcher would have come up to you as you lay in your straw, and he would have tucked up his frock to get a penknife from out of his waistcoat-pocket and he would have shed your blood and had your life. No bringing up by hand then. Not a bit of it!

This image of victim and devourer recurs with Estella and her vampirish mistress, Miss Havisham, who "hung upon Estella's beauty, hung upon her words, hung upon her gestures, and sat mumbling her own trembling fingers while she looked at her, as though she were devouring the beautiful creature she had reared."
But the most striking recurrence of the image is in the near virtual fulfilment of Pumblechook's vision of Pip's proper fate, when, years later, he falls into the hands of "Old Orlick", that compellingly realistic human wolf, who, always insisting that it is his victim who is the wolf, has hated Pip ever since "you was so small a wolf that I could have took your weazen betwixt this finger and thumb and chucked you away dead (as I'd thoughts o' doing, odd times, when I saw you a loitering among the pollards on a Sunday)..."  
Like another Sweeney Todd, Orlick, while waiting for the oven to heat which will receive Pip's carcase, gloats over his trussed victim, "as if his mouth watered for me."

Orlick, moreover, that eternally envious and scheming servant, has affinities with a figure of profound mythic significance in the Darwinian context: Caliban. This affinity is especially evident in this scene when Orlick boasts, in an ecstasy of malevolence, of having got a "new master", i.e., Compeyson, the forger and convict. For Caliban, the semi-rational, savage being, who apes his betters, was a figure often associated with the emerging consciousness of savage ancestry. This is apparent in Browning's fantasy of psychogenesis, *"Caliban upon Setebos"* (1864); and in *Lucretia* (1846), Gabriel Varney escapes from the convict colony, only to fall into the hands of his spiritual brethren, the Aborigines, "wild men ... things that ape our species", who torment the wretched fugitive, "a Caliban

*"We regard the Deity as good; they look upon him as evil", says Lubbock of savages, "we submit ourselves to him; they endeavour to obtain the control of him; we feel the necessity of accounting for the blessings by which we are surrounded; they think the blessings come of themselves, and attribute all evil to the interference of malignant beings"; *The Origin of Civilisation* (London: 1870), p.116.
amidst Calibans." Bulwer-Lytton's image of Calibanism parallels Dickens's "Noble Savage", while George Eliot's Grandcourt, perhaps thinking of Governor Eyre, characterises the black Jamaican as "a beastly sort of baptist Caliban." The name Caliban derived, anagrammatically, from cannibal; and finally, in Caliban: The Missing Link (1873), Daniel Wilson, whose book has more relevance for Darwin and Browning than for The Tempest, its ostensible subject, identified Caliban, "that imaginary intermediate being", with Darwin's "brute-progenitor." Nor did Wilson shrink from the ultimate proposition of Victorian psychogenetic theory, that "conscience, religion, the apprehension of truth, the belief in God and immortality, are all no more than developed or transformed animal sensations ..."

In his novelette The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym (1838), Poe had translated the ignoble savage to the realm of nightmare, conceiving a race of Negroid South Sea islanders so immitigably evil and treacherous as to be veritably beasts in the form of men. However, another contribution to this genre of Cannibal Island adventure, Herman Melville's Typee (1846), which purports to be the narrative of an American sailor's residence, or rather tacit captivity, in the Marquesas Islands, appears at first to be an old-fashioned idyll of Noble Savagery. The narrator finds the natives, reputed cannibals, to be kind hosts, refreshingly lacking in prudery, envy, and other civilised vices. The Typees assure their guest that the only cannibals in the islands are their hereditary enemies, the Happars. Yet, the Typees' deadly, irrational taboos, their abrupt and inexplicable changes from friendliness to rage, and their own furtive cannibalism, soon awaken the narrator's distrust in this apparent
Eden. Eventually he becomes haunted by the fear that he is being fattened for a horrible feast. Indeed, his rescue by an Australian vessel, amidst a shower of spears from the Typees, seems none too soon, although their ultimate intentions respecting him are never made clear.

But it is clear that *Typee* is not simply an idyll, that the Typees have an implicit kinship with the Happars, if not with Arthur Gordon Pym's fantastically treacherous savages. Later, in his tale "Benito Cereno" (1856), Melville most powerfully imagined savage malevolence, in the form of African slaves who seize control of the vessel transporting them, their ferocity made to seem the more horrible by their dissemblance of it during an inspection by the captain of another vessel. In *Moby-Dick* (1851), too, the tattooed savage reappears, a fitting symbol in that parable of predator and prey, big fish and little. Indeed, in Melville's "cannibalistic" whaling industry, where the prey is devoured by the light of his own oil, and with utensils made of his own bone, the "baptist Caliban's" place is natural, as if Ahab's vessel, the bone and tooth studded *Pequod*, were simply a gigantic Marquesan war-canoe. In *Moby-Dick*, however, cannibalism and the struggle of natural things are elaborated finally on the cosmic level, the dismembered Ahab exemplifying Carlyle's warning: "Thou shalt know that this Universe is, what it professes to be, an *infinite* one. Attempt not to swallow *it*, for thy logical digestion; be thankful, if skilfully planting down this and the other fixed pillar in the chaos, thou prevent its swallowing thee."75

Closely allied with Calibanism was the myth of lycanthropy, which, as it was revived in Victorian fiction, makes another illustration of
the emerging Darwinian consciousness. Perhaps the first nineteenth-century lycanthrope is the ghoul in Maturin's *The Albigenses* (1824), who is given to ranting the horrible metaphor: "I am a wolf within — a man outward only. Slay me, and thou wilt be satisfied of the truth. The hairs grow inward — the wolfish coat is within — the wolfish heart is within — the wolfish fangs are within."76 Maturin's Gothic conceit looks back to *The Duchess of Malfi*, but a few years later Captain Marryat interpolated a lurid werewolf tale in *The Phantom Ship* (1839). In this tale within a tale, a beautiful but fierce woman ill-treats her step-children after marrying their father, a hunter living in an isolated cottage in the Hartz Mountains. Indeed, she can barely contain the ferocity of her disposition towards the "fair and lovely" children, who, following the wedding, one by one fall prey to a mysterious white wolf. Finally one night the bereaved hunter, hurrying to the ravaged body of his daughter, beholds "not a wolf, but his wife, in her night-dress, on her hands and knees, crouching by the body ... and tearing off large pieces of the flesh and devouring them with all the avidity of a wolf."77 He shoots her on the spot and faints. Awakening, he finds the body of a white wolf lying over the remains of his child.

In its next appearance to be noted, the lycanthropic fantasy enjoyed a full length treatment in G.W.M. Reynolds's *Wagner, the Wehr-Wolf* (1846), who strikes a Faustian bargain by which he receives renewal of youth on the condition of periodical transformation into a wolf. At such times, in a paroxysm of "demonic excitement", Wagner's "handsome countenance elongates into one of savage and brute-like shape; the rich garment which he wears becomes a rough, shaggy, and wiry
skin; his body loses its human contours ..." The werewolf then
races madly cross-country, mangling any child that comes in its path.
One of the "mysteries" of Wagner is a painting ominously veiled in
black cloth, which, when finally unveiled, proves to represent, "with
the most painful and horrifying fidelity, the writhings and agonizing
throes of the human being during the process of transformation into
the lupine monster." 78

Wagner, the Wehr-Wolf makes an interesting background to the most
horrific and unforgettable human beast in Victorian fiction, the
occupant of the secret chamber at Thornfield Hall:

In the deep shade, at the further end of the room, a
figure ran backwards and forwards. What it was,
whether beast or human being, one could not, at first
sight, tell: it grovelled, seemingly, on all fours;
it snatched and growled like some strange wild animal;
but it was covered with clothing; and a quantity of
dark, grizzled hair, wild as a mane, hid its head and face.
"Good-morrow, Mrs. Poole!" said Mr. Rochester.
"How are you? and how is your charge to-day?"
"We're tolerable, sir, I thank you", replied
Grace ..." rather snappish, but not 'rageous.'
A fierce cry seemed to give the lie to her favour¬
able report: the clothed hyena rose up, and stood
tall on its hind feet. 79

Although Jane Eyre had compared her to "the foul German spectre —
the Vampyre", this "clothed hyena" clearly inclines to the lycanthropic;
like the epileptiform "mystery" in Wagner, her bestial transformation
reads as another unconscious metaphor of evolution and reversion,
another instantaneous realisation of Maudsley's "retrograde metamor¬
phosis". Dickens also used this were-creature image; in A Tale of
Two Cities, the diabolical Monsieur the Marquis resembles a "refined
tiger ... some enchanted marquis of the impenitently wicked sort, in
story, whose periodical change into tiger form was either just going
off, or just coming on.”

As the century advanced, the lycanthropic myth became consciously Darwinian, a consciousness perhaps first explicit in Baring-Could's *Book of Were-Wolves* (1865). In Stevenson's "Olalla" (1885), for instance, the lycanthropic transformation of the Señora prompts the remark: "Man has arisen; if he has sprung from the brutes, he can descend again to the same level." Jekyll's racking metamorphosis into the "ape-like" Hyde also recalls "the writhings and agonizing throes of the human being during the process of transformation into the lupine monster." Over even Walter Pater's Charles IX, the hereditarily delicate fanatic who authorised the infamous massacre of the Huguenots, "the coarse rage or rabies of the wolf, part, doubtless, of an inheritance older still, had asserted itself on that terrible night of Saint Bartholomew, at the mere sight, the scent, of blood, in the crime he had at least allowed others to commit; and it was not an unfriendly witness who recorded that, the fever once upon him, for an hour he had been less a man than a beast of prey." In short, prior to Darwin, human bestiality was an unnatural horror; in the nineteenth century it acquired a horrible naturalness.

Another interesting development is revealed in the contrast in ideological sophistication between the two most famous Victorian vampire books, Malcolm Rymer's *Varney the Vampire; or the Feast of Blood* (1846) and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897). In contradistinction to the naive bloodthirstiness and salivating titillation of *Varney*, *Dracula*, while quite as morbid in its obsession with the blood of female victims, and concomitant association of sexuality and bestiality, improves this Decadent theme with quasi-science. It is not for
nothing that Professor Van Helsing, the vampiricist who finally lays Count Dracula, "has revolutionised therapeutics by his discovery of the continuous evolution of brain-matter." As the Professor (who for all his erudition expresses himself in stage-foreigner English) explains, the Count, "he be not of man-stature as to brain. He be of child-brain in much." This degenerate retention of earlier phases of development renders him "a criminal and of criminal type. Nordau and Lombroso would so classify him, and qua criminal he is of imperfectly formed mind. Thus, in a difficulty he has to seek resource in crime."\(^8\)\(^3\)

Lombroso had traced the biological origins of crime as far back as the vegetable kingdom,\(^8\)\(^4\) finding its prototype in those predaceous plants studied by Darwin.\(^8\)\(^5\) In fact, the most unusual vampire tale of the time, H.G. Wells's "The Flowering of the Strange Orchid" (1895),\(^8\)\(^6\) features Lombroso's criminal vegetable in the form of an exotic orchid armed with chloroformic fragrance and blood-sucking tendrils. In Dracula this atavistic predacity is embodied not only in the Count himself, who is driven as any beast bound by the struggle for survival, and who, when satiated, is bloated like a monstrous leech, but also in Renfield, the "under-developed homicidal maniac", who worships Dracula as "Lord and Master", and exhibits a humbler form of the Master's retrogressive ambitions. In his asylum cell the "zoophagous" Renfield nurtures colonies of flies, which he later feeds to a smaller number of spiders, which, in turn, are fed to an even smaller number of sparrows, careful record being kept of the total number of lives thus "focused", as in a bookkeeping account. When his application for a cat is rejected, Renfield devours his sparrows alive, and nearly does the same for his alienist.
Thus, Calibanism, lycanthropy, vampirism, and zoophagy were all variations on the image of the beast, daemonic fantasies in which the Darwinian imagination was immanent. By the turn of the century, "the beast in man" had come to occupy a striking psychopathological prominence, from Nietzsche's "bestiality of idea", resultant from the caging within of the natural beast; to Freud's classic case of "The Wolf-Man". While Nietzsche anticipated D.H. Lawrence in his loathing of the repression which rendered "this insane, wretched beast of man!" Freud, who refrained from reading Nietzsche so as not to compromise his own originality, seemed to be the last of the great nineteenth-century explorers, in his intrepid and methodical penetration into the primal savagery of the unconscious. Hence, too, the psychological "Beast in the Jungle" that inspired the title of Henry James's novella (1903) and the hallucination which destroys its protagonist. Certainly, the emergence of the beast in the disintegration of personality was a theme of both Naturalism and Decadence.

But ultimately, in a movement beyond Naturalism, the animalistic passed into the diabolical. This is suggested in Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (1886), as well as by a striking variety of fantastic or grotesque tales appearing in the last decade of the nineteenth century.*

* In addition to Dracula itself, Kipling's tale "The Mark of the Beast" (1890), Zola's La bête humaine (1890), Arthur Machen's novelette The Great God Pan (1894), Frank Norris's Vandover and the Brute (1894-95), H.G. Wells's The Island of Dr. Moreau (1896), and Conrad's Heart of Darkness (1899), all to be discussed later, may be listed.
Dracula, absurd as it is with its professor who fights vampirism with crucifix and garlic as well as Lombrosian theory, also bears significant witness to this fantastic assimilation of Darwinism with the apocalyptic Mark of the Beast. Earlier Carlyle had seen the seal of the "Genius of Darkness" impressed upon the "diabolic-animal" visages in "Model Prisons", and upon Dickens's devilish Rigaud, "Nature, always true, and never working in vain, had set the mark, Beware!" Thus, in Dracula the Count's slaves are indelibly branded upon the forehead. As for the Count himself, renegade aristocrat, Lombrosian brute, and twisted genius, he is that ultimate avatar of the Beast, the anti-Übermensch, to reappear so fearsomely in Heart of Darkness (1899).

Yet, this "diabolic-animal" theme, which appeared in so extraordinary a concatenation of late nineteenth-century tales, was also, paradoxically, associated with Nietzschean glorification of ancestral savagery. Nietzsche had spoken of the "innocence of conscience" of the blond beast, and there is a kind of innocence about Richard Jefferies's fantasy of retrogression, After London; or Wild England (1885), which unfolds the fascinated vision of a Britain, as a result of some gigantic catastrophe, relapsed to the Dark Ages. London is sunken beneath a vast, pestilent swamp, and the vestiges of civilisation survive only in feudal strongholds, surrounded by wilderesses inhabited by wild men and savage cats, the progenies, respectively, of Gypsies and the English house cat. The most striking parts of After London are the early passages describing in loving detail the overgrowth of towns, roads, and fields by jungle, and the choking of canals and crumbling of dams, as Nature reclaims her own on land and water.
In Kipling, Nietzsche's innocent savagery becomes righteous savagery. Kipling celebrates primaeval warriors in his poems "In the Neolithic Age" (1892) and "The Story of Ung" (1894), but in the Jungle Books (1894-95) the warriors are beasts in fact, from Rikki-Tikki the heroic mongoose to Bagheera the purring but valiant panther. Unlike Tennyson's feral children nursed in the wolf's "foul den", Kipling's Mowgli learns a virtuous Law of the Jungle from his lupine foster-parents. Among Kipling's Biblically spoken beasts, the cowardly and despicable are soon destroyed, their own cunning invariably failing. No wonder the Jungle Books, as H.G. Wells remarked, were the most fitting schoolboy reading in the culminating era of imperialism. For in the whining tones of Tabaqui the jackal might be recognised as the voice of the degraded Indian, or other lesser breed. In fact, all the voices of Kipling's beasts are echoes, and while Bagheera, complimenting a plucky young fawn, sounds like a school prefect addressing a younger boy, the Mugger, a voracious crocodile, seems to paraphrase Nietzsche.

There is a direct descent from Kipling to Edgar Rice Burroughs's Tarzan of the Apes (1914), who, going Kipling one better, is a genuine English lord fostered by great apes in an African jungle. Another American, Jack London, was also given to the naiveté of savagery, as the titles of various of his books — The Son of the Wolf (1900), The Call of the Wild (1903), and White Fang (1906) — suggest. His protagonist in Before Adam (1906), a farrago of "atavistic nightmare", evolutionism, and reincarnation, is a simian progenitor of humanity. London's most interesting novel, The Sea-Wolf (1904), reveals its author's inchoate reading of Marx, Darwin, and Nietzsche. The "Sea-Wolf", Larsen, the captain of a seal-hunting schooner out
of San Francisco, is, in the words of his involuntary passenger Humphrey Van Weyden, a "magnificent atavism, a man so purely primitive that he was of the type that came into the world before the development of moral nature."

To continue with The Sea-Wolf, Van Weyden, its narrator, a wealthy littérateur, is rescued, after ship-wreck, by a fortunate whim of Larsen's, and detained aboard the seal-hunter to gratify his more sinister whim. Later, and rather improbably, Larsen rescues from the sea and detains another intellectual, this time a poetess, Maud Brewster, "the American Mrs. Maynell". For, Larsen himself, physically as well as intellectually powerful, and deliberately brutal, foresees interesting experimentation with his genteel prisoners. Unlike them he professes materialism and atheism, believing nothing but

that life is a mess ... like yeast, a ferment, a thing that moves and may move for a minute, an hour, a year, or a hundred years, but that in the end will cease to move. The big eat the little that they may continue to move, the strong eat the weak that they may retain their strength. The lucky eat the most and move the longest, that is all.

In the opinion of one of his crew, a pious Irishman, "'Tis the beast he is, this Wolf Larsen — the great big beast mentioned in Revelation; an' no good end will he ever come to." But the physically perfect, Scandinavian — Viking — Larsen is also an approximation of Nietzsche's blond beast; still commanding a mere schooner at his prime, he is an Übermensch disdainful of great destiny, disgusted by the eternal "pigishness" of the existential struggle, and yet exulting in the lifeinstinct.
Larsen manages his vessel with its predatory mission as a metaphor of his conception of life — the echo of Moby-Dick is appreciable. Aboard his "veritable hell-ship" only brute or psychological strength, eat-or-be-eaten behaviour, obtains. He detains the humanistic dilettante Van Weyden to serve as a foil, alternatively coercing him and inveigling him into philosophical discussions, Van Weyden always coming off worst against the self-taught Larsen's ruthless logic, "the sureness and directness of the primitive mind." In retaliation he reads Larsen "Caliban upon Setebos".

However, Van Weyden himself gradually toughens, as Larsen seems to design, under his impressment aboard the vessel, finally becoming an officer of the "hell-ship", and when Maud Brewster is picked up, acts as her protector. After many adventures he and Larsen come into direct conflict, and when Van Weyden is helplessly struggling in Larsen's powerful arms, Maud comes to his aid, stunning the Wolf with a seal-club, and thus evoking a changed Van Weyden's rapturous exaltation of primitivism: "Truly she was my woman, my mate-woman, fighting with me and for me as the mate of a cave-man would have fought, all the primitive in her aroused, forgetful of her culture, hard under the softening civilization of the only life she had ever known."94

Yet, Wolf Larsen, the "great big beast" himself, is defeated and destroyed, not by his human opponents, but by a mysterious illness which seems to develop out of the epileptiform fits of uncontrollable, almost unconscious rage punctuating his usual cool command of brutality. First it plagues him with hemicrania; then blinds and eventually paralyses before utterly extinguishing him, though he is
dangerous with a horrible dignity to the end. The success of Van Weyden and Maud, conventional hero and heroine, who become dilettantes in primitivism as they had been in art, is secondary to London's compelling fascination with the "unmoral" Larsen, a fascination which comes through despite the half-baked philosophising and other gaucheries, and gives The Sea-Wolf its interest.

Although Wolf Larsen seems to represent a force of Nature to be counteracted only by Nature, he also derives in part from that spirit of noble aggressiveness celebrated in their respectively differing ways by Kipling — whose Captain Courageous (1897) suggests the plot of The Sea-Wolf — and Nietzsche. It is this Victorian and, especially, late nineteenth-century complacency or pseudo-naivete with respect to splendid savagery which seems to have led William Golding to re-evoke the Apocalyptic Beast-head out of the natural savagery of children in Lord of the Flies (1954). In another of his remarkable neo-Victorian fantasies, The Inheritors (1955), Golding again links the savage and the diabolical, conceiving this novel as the ironic converse of a story-essay by H.G. Wells, in which it is complacently implied that mankind's idea of the daemonic is a racial memory of the higher species' prehistoric encounters with lingering Neanderthal "ogres". But in The Inheritors, the doomed Neanderthals are gentle and non-predatory, while the coming race manufactures weapons, brews alcoholic drink, worships devil-gods, and exalts itself.

However, as already emphasised, the ambivalent direction of evolution, the sinister paradox of the Übermensch, had shaped Victorian fantasy throughout the latter half of the era, and in this
context Golding's novels read as consummation, not antithesis. Like Carlyle, Kipling, for all his adulation of the aristos and vehement affirmation of the imperialistic ethos, seemed to harbour, at bottom, an abysmal negativity. His savagely ethical Jungle Books must be collocated with certain other of his beast tales which seem to be exercises in the "diabolical-animal" quite without a moral. Two such tales from Life's Handicap (1891) may be summarised here, "Bertran and Bimi" and "The Mark of the Beast".

The former tale is told in German-accented English by Hans Breitmann, a wild animal collector, who has also collected many strange experiences without being unduly affected by them. He tells of a more impressionable collaborator he had had in Malaya, Bertran, who kept an orang-outang named Bimi,

und he was child und brother and opera comique all round to Bertran. He had his room in dot house - not a cage, but a room - mit a bed und sheets, and he would go to bed und get up in the morning und smoke his cigar und eat his dinner mit Bertran, und walk mit him hand in hand, which was most horrible.

But after twelve happy years with Bimi, Bertran is attracted by a pretty girl and asks Hans's opinion of his marrying her, which Hans declines to give, "pecause it was not me dot was going to be married", but he does advise Bertran to give his bride "for wedding-present der stuff figure of Bimi". This advice is indignantly rejected; "So Bertran he was married, and he forgot clean about Bimi dot was skippin' alone on der beach mit der half of a human soul in his belly." Hans warns him again that the jealous Bimi has a murderous gleam in his eyes, but when Bimi enters the house he cunningly dissembles his rage and obsequiously fetches the girl's slippers.

One day soon after, Bertran returns home with Hans to find that neither wife nor ape answer his call. The Bedroom door is locked,
and when Hans breaks it in, they notice a hole torn in the roof thatch. "Dere was no wife dot could be seen. I tell you there was nodings in dot room dot might be a woman. Dere was stuff on der floor und dot was all. I looked at dese things und I was very sick..."

Bimi guiltily lurks outside, but after days of waiting Bertran, who has been mad ever since the bedroom door was broken in, finally entices him inside, plies him with sangaree, and then springs on him, while Hans discreetly goes for a walk. When he returns Bimi is dead and Bertran is lying above him dying, Hans being relieved at this, because "it was not nice even to minself dot I should live after I haf seen dot room mit der hole in der thatch. Und Bertran, he was her husband. Good-night, und — sleep well."96

The coy sadism of "Bertran and Bimi" makes it an appropriate companion-piece to "The Mark of the Beast", which is prefaced with the observation that the Anglican God's jurisdiction in India is doubtful, it presumably being only in His absence that the events of this story could occur. Fleete, a minor proprietor, on New Year's Day drunkenly defiles a temple of Hanuman the Monkey-god, by, among other things, marking the head of the god's effigy with his cigar-butt. "Shee that?" he slurs, "'Mark of the B_____beaht! I made it. Isn't it fine?" Fleete's companions pull him away, but not before he is embraced, without affection, by a Silver Man, a Biblically snow-white leper-priest, who pops out of a recess behind Hanuman's effigy. The Silver Man, with his facial features eaten away, his hands shrunken to fingerless paws, and his tongueless voice degenerated to a mew like an otter, is himself a symbol of retrograde metamorphosis, and the result of his embrace is soon apparent. At breakfast next morning
"Fleete bolted three chops in a most offensive manner. He ate on his right grinders only, and threw his head over his right shoulder as he snapped the meat." As the day proceeds, he terrifies horses, takes to grovelling in the earth, and his "eyes were horrible to look at. There was a green light behind them, not in them, if you understand, and the man's lower lip hung down." By evening "Fleete could not speak, he could only snarl, and his snarls were those of a wolf, not of a man. The human spirit must have been giving way all day and have died out with the twilight. We were dealing with a beast that had once been Fleete."

But "Strickland of the Police, who knows as much of natives of India as is good for any man", is equal to even this piece of native devilry. The snarling beast is tied down; then, wearing gloves, Strickland and the narrator make shift to capture the Silver Man, whose ghastly mew has been heard outside the house, answered by Fleete's anguished howls. When the leper is "comfortably" strapped to a heavy bedstead, Strickland, whose adeptness at torture suggests some previous practice, "persuades" him to revoke his spell. Thus restored to humanity, Fleete awakens as if from an ordinary bout of drunkenness — his memory of the events of New Year's Day totally obliterated — and sends his friends into hysterical laughter by complaining of a "Horrid doggy smell" in the house. "Then it struck me that we had fought for Fleete's soul with the Silver Man in that room, and had disgraced ourselves as Englishmen for ever, and I laughed and gasped and gurgled just as shamefully as Strickland ..."97 At once a parable of imperialism and bestiality, "The Mark of the Beast" exhibits that discordant element of paradox, that unintentional irony, that Kipling
was never able to control.

Kipling's "Mark of the Beast" falls somewhere between Naturalism and "Diabolism and Decadentism". On the one hand, the "diabolic-animal" was a typically Decadent creature, such as Pater's Charles IX. Even Dorian Gray "inclined to the materialistic doctrines of the Darwinismus movement in Germany, and found a curious pleasure in tracing the thoughts and passions of men to some pearly cell in the brain ..." With more elaborate luridness, Arthur Machen insisted on the greatest degradation of the soul, at the triumph of the inner animal, in *The Great God Pan* (1894). In this "horror" tale a literal "metaphysician", seeking through brain surgery to bridge the gap between ordinary perception and transcendent vision, to recapture that experience known to the ancients as "seeing the God Pan", succeeds only in reducing his subject, a young girl, through the unspeakable horror of the revealed vision, to hopeless idiocy. Nine months later she is delivered of a female infant, who grows into a beautiful but fatal woman, having intercourse with abysmal beings and, like Dorian Gray, leading various men-about-town in London to destroy themselves. Finally forced to commit suicide herself, the perishing enchantress's body rings the changes on retrograde metamorphosis, even to Nordau's "stupendous depth": "I saw the form waver from sex to sex, dividing itself from itself, and then again reunited. Then I saw the body descend to the beasts whence it ascended, and that which was on the heights go down to the depths, even to the abyss of all being." But, on the other hand, while Machen's fantasy is hampered by unspeakability, naturalistic fiction, with its physiological
psychology, deterministic design, and uninhibited objectivity, would seem the most fitting medium for the portrayal of the beast in man. The obvious title here is Zola's *La bête humaine* (1890), translated by E.A. Vizetelly as *The Monomaniac* (1901), in which Darwinian speculations on the biological origin of murder are suggested by the story of Jacques Lantier, another tainted Rougon-Macquart descendant, whose original Vizetelly saw in Jack the Ripper. The apparently epileptic Lantier is afflicted by an irresistible craving to cut the throat of attractive women, a craving, or rather lust, handed down to him, not simply from the unsanctified union of the Rougon-Macquarts, but from "that distant age when prehistoric man found shelter in the depths of caverns." As Zola himself finally asked, "In the obscure depths of the beast in man, were sexual possession and killing synonymous?"

Atavism of the most horrible sort is indeed the key to Lantier's psychology, in that total comprehension of character theoretically achievable through the naturalistic method. Out of motives of self-preservation, Lantier, who is a railway engineer, fights to restrain his gruesome appetites, though he seems to be encouraged to indulge them by his understanding of Darwinian theory. Thus justified in eliminating a rival, he plots with his mistress to murder her husband, but, fatally excited by her proximity, turns on her instead, regardless of her pleas. Recovering himself, as from an epileptic fit, over her torn body, "First he heard hoarse animal breathing, the growling of the beast of prey, the roar of a lion, then, calming down, discovered it was his own breath." Lantier escapes suspicion for this murder, only to be himself destroyed by his fireman, whose wife expresses an illicit preference for her husband's superior.
The jealous fireman challenges Lantier on the very engine, and the two fall, locked together, to be drawn under the wheels, leaving the powerful locomotive and its train-load of drunken soldiers, en route to the Prussian war, to hurl blindly down the line. *La bête humaine* closes with this transformation of the metaphor: "Driverless in the darkness, blind, deaf beast let loose among death, on it rushed, packed to the full with cannon-flesh, with soldiers now stupid with fatigue, in drunken song."101

But while Zola extended the metaphor of the beast in man over the whole of society, *Vandover and the Brute* (1894-95),* by his American disciple Frank Norris, returns to the claustral world of psychopathology. Vandover is an inane, yielding young man who inherits a comfortable income and conventional standards of behaviour from his father, but, inexplicably, underneath his bland, fastidious personality, ugly instincts rear their heads. As the fascination of dissipation beckons to some unspeakable depth, the mystery of Vandover's downward suction seems to transcend either the natural or the Naturalistic:

> It was as if he had entered into his life in the world as into some vast labyrinth, wandering on aimlessly, flinging from him one by one the threads, the clues, that might have led him again to a safe exit, going down deeper and deeper, until, when near the centre, he had suddenly felt the presence of the brute, had heard its loathsome muttering growl, had at last seen it far down at the end of a passage, dimly and in a dark shadow.

This labyrinthal brute both suggests the Nietzschean pathology of psychic incarceration and adumbrates James's powerful metaphor of "The Beast in the Jungle."

Vandover ruins a girl, who then commits suicide, thereby causing

---

*Date of composition; published posthumously in 1914.*
indirectly the death of Vandover's father also. Ostracised for his part in the girl's death, Vandover desperately plunges anew into low life, dissipates his fortune, and, the brute growing steadily stronger within him, begins to amuse his fellow debauchees with a "dog-act", the profound symptom of his lapse from humanity. "At certain intervals his mania came upon him, the strange hallucination of something four-footed, the persistent fancy that the brute in him had now grown so large, so insatiable, that it had taken everything, even to his very self, his own identity — that he had literally become the brute."102 In fact, Vandover has never had a chance against the brute from the beginning, and, though his descent to whining zoanthropy possesses a certain compelling power, Vandover and the Brute is really more of a tribute to the psychology of determinism than a convincing novel.

If Vandover represents the pessimistic triumph of the Darwinismus psychology, certain of H.G. Wells's early "science fiction" tales are even more veritably Darwinian nightmares. Two of these tales are especially pertinent here, The Time Machine (1895) and The Island of Dr. Moreau (1896), both of which deal with racial rather than individual pathology. The Time Machine, the slighter work, is mainly set in the year 800,000 A.D., by which time Homo sapiens has become differentiated into two distinct sub-species, the Eloi who inhabit the surface of the earth, and the Morlocks who, hating daylight, remain underground by day. While the Eloi, "like the Carlovingian kings, had decayed to a mere beautiful futility", the Morlocks, descendants of the nineteenth-century working classes — who had even then in mines and subways manifested a downward tendency — attend to all matters of production and economy in their mysterious underground
factories. The Eloi appear to do nothing but play with flowers ever-blooming in an everlasting sunshine, but their contribution to the symbiosis emerges after various chilling hints, for they are nothing other than the Morlocks' cattle, selected and abducted below, during the evil hours of darkness, to furnish cannibal tables, in grotesque echo of Zola's "strong people devouring the pallid middle class." Implicit also in Wells's fantasy is the insufficiency of even an aeon of time to purge mankind of its bestiality.

The Island of Dr. Moreau is an even stranger fantasy of bestiality and evolution. It begins, again, on the motif of cannibalism when the narrator, Prendick, and two companions, adrift in a lifeboat, are forced to revert to this "Primitive Fact". Prendick alone survives to be cast away on an uncharted Pacific island, where he finds an experimental biological station directed by the secretive Dr. Moreau. While Moreau is unshakably vague about the details of the research he is conducting, Prendick notices that his servants are weirdly misshapen. The physiognomy of one of them "shocked me profoundly. It was a singularly deformed one. The facial part projected, forming something dimly suggestive of a muzzle ..." The "reddish luminosity" of the creature's eyes recalls "the forgotten horrors of childhood"; his ears are pointed and furry; and when he is near, Prendick has "a nasty little sensation, a tightening of my muscles ... It's a touch ... of the diabolical, in fact."

Later, on hearing Moreau's name, "by some trick of unconscious cerebration", a phrase from the Yellow journalism of years before "came surging" into Prendick's mind: "The Moreau Horrors". Recalling that a Professor Moreau had been hounded out of Britain on the
discovery of his practice of vivisection, Prendick jumps to the conclusion that the exiled biologist is now practicing human vivisection. Acting on this misconception, Prendick forces disclosure of the real secret of the island, that Moreau is manufacturing ersatz human beings out of lower animals. He has already produced a number of "Beast People", Wolf-Men, a Leopard-Man, a Hyaena-Swine-Man, and so on, who live in a "village" under obedience to their creator. For "the possibilities of vivisection do not stop at a mere physical metamorphosis", as Moreau explains. The formation of human character is simply a technology of instinct, a grafting upon, modelling, or displacement of inherited fixed ideas. "Very much, indeed, of what we call moral education is such an artificial modification and preservation of instinct; pugnacity is trained into courageous self-sacrifice, and suppressed sexuality into religious emotion."

On the island the "metamorphosed brutes" are supposed to be governed by a "Law", a primal code of ethics, instilled by Moreau to guard their artificial humanity from reversion:

Not to go on all-Fours; that is the Law. Are we not Men?
Not to suck up Drink; that is the Law. Are we not Men?
Not to eat Flesh nor Fish; that is the Law. Are we not Men?
Not to claw Bark of Trees; that is the Law. Are we not Men?
Not to chase other Men; that is the Law. Are we not Men?

This "Law" is a travesty of Kipling's in the Jungle Books, just as Moreau himself is apparently a travesty of Kipling's God, the deity presiding endlessly over the triumph of the fit and the ugly fate of the worthy. The Beast People accordingly dread Moreau and his
laboratory, "The House of Pain", to which they must return should they lapse from the Law.

His is the House of Pain.
His is the Hand that makes.
His is the Hand that wounds.
His is the Hand that heals.

Their abject, ineluctable guilt in the face of the Law travesties that Nietzschean pathology whereby man transforms his own "irredeemable animal instincts" into rebellion against and, therefore, guilt before God, who, in turn, becomes Judge and Executioner.*

Moreau, for all his pretensions to scientific curiosity, has assumed deliberately the mantle of this pathological deity. His monomaniacal perfectionism is perpetually fretted by the failure of his material, for "the stubborn beast flesh grows, day by day, back again ... As soon as my hand is taken from them the beast begins to creep back, begins to assert itself again." Prendick, moreover, is appalled by the wantonness of Moreau's investigations; by, first, the horrible pain of the vivisection that gives birth to each Beast Man, then the creature's hopeless struggle to live by the unnatural Law, "to struggle, and blunder, and suffer; at last to die painfully"; in short, by "the unspeakable aimlessness of things upon the island."

* "In the concept of 'God'*, writes Nietzsche, sinful man "finds the ultimate antitheses to be tracked to his own and irredeemable animal instincts; by interpretation he transforms these animal instincts into a guilt against God (as enmity, insurrection, rebellion against the 'Lord', the 'Father', the Progenitor, the Beginning of the world), he yokes himself into the antithesis 'God' and 'Devil'; every Nay he pronounces upon himself, upon the nature, naturalness and actuality of his own essence, he utters as a Yea, as something existing, bodily, real, as God, as the holy God, as God the judge, as God the hangman, as another world, as eternity, as everlasting torture, as hell, as immeasurableness of punishment and guilt" (pp.116-117).
Finally the inevitable happens. Moreau had displayed particular solicitude to keep the Beast People ignorant of the taste of blood, but one day, by accident, this taste is grossly indulged, and, in an outburst of reversional frenzy, they murder Moreau and his drunken assistant, and begin to prey upon each other. Prendick alone escapes after a harrowing period of living within the competition of tooth and claw. When the island is revisited years later, nothing is found but hogs, rabbits, and some unusual rats.

But the strain of Swift as well as of Nietzsche is crossed in The Island of Dr. Moreau, which labours under a heavy imitation of Swiftian irony. While Moreau views disappointedly the "travesty of humanity" he has created — "There's something they call the Law. Sing hymns about 'all thine'. They build themselves their dens, gather fruit and pull herbs — marry even. But I can see through it all, see into their very souls, and see there nothing but the souls of beasts, beasts that perish ..." — while Moreau is merely sickened by their "mockery of a rational life", Prendick had become accustomed to the Beast People, even to accept them as human, except when the flash of a fang in a smile or the paw-like gesture of a hand recalled to him their bestial origin. But the trauma of their reversion haunts him ever after his escape from the island. Like Gulliver escaped from the Yahoos, Prendick feels insecure from bestiality even in London. "I could not persuade myself that the men and women I met were not another, still passably human, Beast People, animals half-wrought into the outward image of human souls, and that they would presently begin to revert, to show first this bestial mark and then that." In the library "the intent faces over the books
seemed but patient creatures waiting for prey." The Mark of the Beast had finally become universal.

Bernard Shaw referred to The Island of Dr. Moreau as its author's "ghastliest romance", and the tale was disturbing enough in its uncanny caricaturing of Browning's "Natural Theology in the Island"; of the Nietzschean genealogy of morals; of the whole Darwin-Kipling universe and man's place therein. Moreau himself, relentlessly torturing life towards perfection, only to be finally destroyed by the intractability of his material, was dismissed by Shaw as a "pseudo God Almighty", yet, Moreau, too, in his mad idealism, is recognisable as a caricature of that aspirant type of the waning century, canonised by Shaw as the Superman. Dr. Moreau is, indeed, the nightmare of fin de siècle evolutionism.

But the utter grotesquity of Wells's tale should protect it from being taken too seriously, and the work which must stand as the authentically terrible evocation of the superhuman aspiration yet abysmal degradation of the Darwinian-Nietzschean complex is a novelette published three years after Dr. Moreau, Conrad's Heart of Darkness. In the "remarkable" Mr. Kurtz, the Nietzschean ideal is taken at its word and turned back to the "inconceivable ceremonies" of primordial savagery whence it derived its right. Not that Kurtz is Conrad's sole exemplification of the twisted Superman. The Professor, that indefatigably ruthless perfector of the species in The Secret Agent (1907), is a caricature of the type who, like Kurtz, like Moreau, like Professor Moriarty, has invoked the limitlessness of power or intellect. The Secret Agent shows that Conrad read not only Darwin and Nietzsche, but was also a student of the ubiquitous
Lombroso, who is there invoked by name; while, of course, the saturnine irony of The Professor's Heroic pretensions is that he himself exhibits the unmistakable stigmata, both physical and intellectual, of degeneracy.

This same ironical delusion destroys Kurtz, whose story, moreover, is set in the epochal context of imperialism, thereby extending the irony to the gigantic pretension of Western civilisation itself at the height of its expansion into the territories of the "lesser breeds". Conrad's study for Heart of Darkness is a Kiplingesque story, "An Outpost of Progress" (1898), in which two European clerks stationed at a remote Congo trading post, supposedly an outpost both of commercial profit and philanthropic enlightenment, ignominiously terminate their mission in murder and suicide.

Marlow, the subtle narrator in Heart of Darkness, in accepting the captaincy of an ivory-trading vessel on the Congo, from a great "Continental concern", also imagines himself committed to the mission of bearing civilisation. But doubt is cast on this ideal even before he quits the company offices, when their medical examiner, after some routine details, requests permission to apply his calipers to Marlow's skull, explaining that he is privately compiling statistics, in the interests of science, on the cranial conformations of volunteers for the jungle stations.

"Ever any madness in your family?" he asked, in a matter-of-fact tone. I felt very annoyed. "Is that question in the interests of science, too?" "It would be", he said, without taking notice of my irritation, "interesting for science to watch the mental changes of individuals, on the spot, but..." "Are you an alienist?" I interrupted. "Every doctor should be - a little", answered that original, imperturbably. "I have a little theory which you Messieurs who go out there must
help me to prove. This is my share in the advantages my country shall reap from the possession of such a magnificent dependency. The mere wealth I leave to others. Pardon my questions, but you are the first Englishman coming under by observation..." I hastened to assure him I was not in the least typical. "If I were", said I, "I wouldn't be talking like this with you." "What you say is rather profound, and probably erroneous", he said, with a laugh. "Avoid irritation more than exposure to the sun. Adieu. How do you English say, eh? Good-bye. Ah! Good-bye. Adieu. In the tropics one must before everything keep calm." ... He lifted a warning forefinger .... "Du calme, du calme. Adieu."

Indeed, later, on the spot and rapidly disillusioned completely by predaceous ivory-traders and colonialists, Marlow soon feels his calm challenged; by these "pilgrims", i.e., the fortune-seek managers and clerks who are his passengers, and, not least, by the gesticulating cannibals who compose his crew, local savages enslaved to the alien magic of steam-gauge and boiler. The Europeans are extending the benefits of modern time — bookkeeping, artillery, penal servitude in irons — to Africa, but the natives "still belonged to the beginnings of time", and appear to be attuned instinctively to some common ancestral type of which the apparently successful newcomers are unconscious, but, all the same, to which they are related.

With growing excitement Marlow senses a glimmering of familiarity in the wild antics of the savages:

It was unearthly, and the men were - No, they were not inhuman. Well, you know, that was the worst of it - this suspicion of their not being inhuman. It would come slowly to one. They howled and leaped, and spun, and made horrid faces; but what thrilled you was just the thought of their humanity - like yours - the thought of your remote kinship with this wild and passionate uproar. Ugly, Yes, it was ugly enough; but if you were man enough you would admit to yourself that there was in you just the faintest trace of a response to the terrible frankness of that noise, a dim suspicion of there being a meaning in
it which you - you so remote from the night of first ages - could comprehend. And why not? The mind of man is capable of anything - because everything is in it, all the past as well as all the future.

Thus, Marlow's "tin-pot" steamer is another Time Machine; his perilous voyage up the serpentine river "like travelling back to the earliest beginnings of the world ... We were wanderers on a pre-historic earth, on an earth that wore the aspect of an unknown planet."

And thus, Marlow himself is also a pilgrim, though destined to return from pilgrimage, like Zarathustra, enlightened but incomprehensible. Exchanging the facile idealism of "progress" for a more terrible enlightenment, he journeys expectantly through time and space, telescoping the ages of psychogenesis, to reach that ultimate incarnation of "the night of first ages": Kurtz.

In Kurtz, whose prodigiously large shipments of ivory are bruited of the length of the great river, and for whom, according to rumour, a place is reserved on the directorate of the "Continental concern", Marlow recognises, long before reaching his remote, almost fabulous station, the proper genius of this "pre-historic earth". Kurtz, it seems, had also begun as an apostle of progress and philanthropy, a charter member of the International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs. In Europe he had "electrified large meetings", and his African plans were no less grandiose. Yet,

there was something wanting in him - some small matter which, when the pressing need arose, could not be found under his magnificent eloquence .... But the wilderness had found him out early, and had taken on him a terrible vengeance for the fantastic invasion. I think it had whispered to him things about himself which he did not know, things of which he had no conception till he took counsel with this great
solitude — and the whisper had proved irresistibly fascinating. It echoed loudly within him because he was hollow at the core ....

Kurtz's first (and only) report for the Society had been vibrant with the implication of "an exotic Immensity ruled by an august Benevolence". Observing that Europeans must appear to savages "in the nature of supernatural beings — we approach them with the might as of a deity", Kurtz concluded that "By the simple exercise of our will we can exert a power for good practically unbounded ..." But, having found his reversional vocation as a tribal daemon, and presided at "certain midnight dances ending with unspeakable rites", Kurtz scrawls a postscript on his report: "Exterminate all the brutes!"

Kurtz's initial delusions of grandeur and unboundedness are evidently the stigmata of higher degeneracy. Only too typical, after Lombroso and Nordau, are his hyperaesthesia and anaesthesia, his egomania. "He had faith — don't you see? — he had the faith. He could get himself to believe anything — anything. He would have been a splendid leader of an extreme party .... You should have heard him say 'My ivory'. Oh yes, I heard him. 'My Intended, my ivory, my station, my river, my ____' everything belonged to him." Indeed, Marlow's first sight of the storied Kurtz, after finally reaching his station with its skull-topped palisade, is that of an emaciated spectre, like "an animated image of death", haranguing an army of cowed savages from a stretcher, and gaping in "a weirdly voracious aspect, as though he had wanted to swallow all the air, all the earth, all the men before him." Yes, "Everything belonged to him — but that was a trifle. The thing was to know what he belonged to, how many powers of darkness claimed him for their own."
In his mysterious, visionary illness Kurtz displays that "psychic epilepsy" identified by Lombroso in both genius and higher degeneracy. The atavistic component of epilepsy was obvious in Jacques Lantier's throeing lapses of consciousness, during which, like Jack the Ripper, he reincarnates "the primeval male" possessed by "lust for the blood of the eviscerated female." However, psychic epilepsy, with its "intellectual convulsions", intimated an even profounder pathology of mind, at the height of volition and aspiration, lapsing to the depth of madness and retrogression. So, in The Devils, Kirilov's ecstatic delusion that he can instantaneously bridge the gap between man and God, in one supreme act of nihilism, culminates, fatally, in cataleptic insanity during which he actually bites like a beast. And Kurtz's "unpermitted" exaltation can issue only in abysmal ecstasy.

In his end Kurtz raves for days to the patient Marlow, either babbling of being awaited at railway stations by kings, or raving more eloquently of power and destiny, but finally, in one dying epiphany, expressing the whole mystery of his being: "The horror! The horror!"

This was cried in "a cry that was no more than a breath", impressing Marlow above all the previous epileptiform bombast. "After all, this was the expression of some sort of belief; it had candour, it had conviction, it had a vibrating note of revolt in its whisper, it had the appalling face of a glimpsed truth — the strange commingling of desire and hate." Thereby, Heart of Darkness is translated beyond the Lombrosian nosology, beyond the limitations of Naturalism.

* Jacobs's article (see note 105 to this Chapter) calls attention to Kurtz's epilepsy. I am also indebted to Owsei Temkin; The Falling Sickness (Johns Hopkins University: Second Edition, 1971), pp.373-82; who surveys epilepsy in the work of Dostoyevsky, Kipling, Zola, and Nietzsche.
In terms of the psychogenetic fantasy, Kurtz succumbed to "the awakening of forgotten and brutal instincts", but he has also aspired supernaturally; diabolically. "There was nothing either above or below him ..." The pact with the Beast — "A black figure stood up, strode on long black legs, waving long black arms, across the glow. It had horns — antelope horns, I think — on its head" — had been concluded; and, Faust-like, in his "abject pleading, his abject threats, the colossal scale of his vile devices, the meanness, the torment, the tempestuous anguish of his soul", Kurtz acknowledges the bargain in unholy death.

Despite its lingering overtones of moral terror, *Heart of Darkness* is the Nietzschean Faust, the Apocalypse of the nineteenth century. The search for Kurtz, beginning like that of Stanley for Livingstone, ends in an infernal revelation — ironically inconsistent with that legend of white heroism in the Dark Continent — which is never delivered in concession to European hypocrisy. Years later, belatedly spinning his yarn, Marlow is still reproaching himself for having failed to render justice to Kurtz's dying words. Resembling "a meditating Buddha" as he finishes his tale, Marlow remains the anomaly of a guru enlightened by a vision of darkness.

Yet, if *Heart of Darkness* is the nineteenth-century Apocalypse, it is also, far more disquietingly than *The Island of Dr. Moreau* — into which the concentration camp and Orwellian totalitarianism might also be read — a prophecy of the twentieth century, where Kurtz would be rendered justice. "The mind of man", to repeat Marlow's words, "is capable of anything — because everything is in it, all the past as well as all the future." Surely, Yeats's Second Coming, Mann's *Doctor Faustus*, and Golding's *Lord of the Flies* are all in *Heart of Darkness*. 
NOTES TO CHAPTER V

4. See, for example, George J. Romanes, Mental Evolution in Man (London: 1888).
7. Darwin, Descent of Man, p.137.
8. Lithgow, p.244.
9. For "the evidence that all civilised nations were once barbarous", see Darwin, Descent of Man, pp.143-45.
12. Lithgow, p.244.
21. Ellis, p.79.
27. Maudsley, Physiology and Pathology of the Mind, p.290.
28. Ibid., p.288.
29. Darwin, Descent of Man, p.36.
31. See Talbot, p.9.
35. Maudsley, Physiology and Pathology of the Mind, p.292.
36. Maudsley, Responsibility in Mental Disease, pp.29-30.
38. Ibid., p.136.
40. Lombroso, "Introduction" to Ferrero, p.xvi.
42. Ferrero, p.72.
45. Talbot, p.315, p.325.
50. Nordau, p.18.
53. Darwin, Descent of Man, p.618.
57. Ibid.
61. Tennyson, In Memoriam, 1vi; Works, p.261.
62. Tennyson, Maud, Part IV, iv; Works, p.290.
69. Included in Poe, *Works*, vol. VI.
74. Included in Herman Melville, *Piazza Tales* (New York: 1856).
78. Reynolds, p.23, p.63.
84. See Ellis, p.203.
87. Nietzsche, p.117.
95. "The Grisly Folk and Their War with Men" (1921); included *The Complete Short Stories of H.G. Wells* (London: 1927).
100. Vizetelly, Preface to Zola's *The Monomaniac*.

104. Shaw, p.229.


CONCLUSION

She is the defier of God. She is also the mother of lunacies, and the suggestress of suicides. Deep lie the roots of her power; but narrow is the nation that she rules. For she can approach only those in whom a profound nature has been upheaved by central convulsions; in whom the heart trembles and the brain rocks under conspiracies of tempest from without and tempest from within .... She carries no key; for, though coming rarely amongst men, she storms all doors at which she is permitted to enter at all. And her name is Mater Tenebrarum, — Our Lady of Darkness.

De Quincey, "Suspiria de Profundis" (1845)

The unifying theme throughout this study has been that of psychopathology and the ontological crisis precipitated by the "physiological" disproof of the existence of moral evil — and therefore of the possibility of moral being. The alternative to "moral insanity" and "conscious automatism", as Kierkegaard, Emily Brontë, Dostoyevsky, and even Henry James understood, was daemonic idealism and daemonic despair. Nietzsche preferred despair to the humanism of determinism, and Dmitri Karamazov, preferring guilt, shouts incoherent objurgations of Claude Bernard and positivist ethics when, on trial for his father's murder, he hears alienists testify to temporary insanity and irresponsibility. For, beyond the pathology of brain and mind, of positivism; beyond
the psycho-determinism, whether physiological or sociological, of Naturalism; was this mysterious Angst of being; "The Sick Soul", in William James's clinical terms, yet, a sickness beyond the reach of clinical assistance.

To recapitulate, daemonic ontology was born in the Romantic, Frankensteinian revolt against the World-Steamengine and its minions, materialism and utilitarianism; but the heritage of this metaphysical rebellion was Dostoyevskian nihilism, epileptic genius, the anti-Übermenschen. The exaltation of the self issued in horror of the self. In Romantic villainy, Mario Praz remarks, "it is the integrity of the body which is assaulted and destroyed", while in Decadent fantasy the intimacy of the soul itself is defiled. From Heathcliff to Stavrogin soul-murder was the ultimate resource of evil, but even this was merely a type of soul-suicide; of the despair of ontological possibility, as even infinite liberty was arrested in psychic imprisonment.

To follow J.S. Mill's dichotomy of all English ideology into Benthamite and Coleridgian, the root of the existential Angst was a Coleridgian pathology; a dark transcendentalism of introspection; a turning of the psyche in upon itself, in ultimate narcissism and incest, to discover, like Kurtz, the spirit of evil within. In the hopelessness of his "third prostration before the dark idol", i.e., his third relapse to the visionary power and yet slavery of opium-eating, De Quincey felt "the spirit of man flies back upon its own centre", picturing the living immurement of a nun as the only appropriate metaphor of his introverted despair. Elsewhere he speaks of a "dream-horror" in which
The dreamer finds housed within himself - occupying, as it were, some separate chamber in his brain - holding, perhaps, from that station a secret and detestable commerce with his own heart - some horrid alien nature. What if it were his own nature repeated, - still, if the duality were distinctly perceptible, even that - even this mere numerical double of his own consciousness - might be a curse too mighty to be sustained. 5

De Quincey's "frightful" image of the psychic Doppelgänger is only too typical of this "demonical introversion", in Kierkegaard's words, 6 which, developing out of Swedenborgianism and the morbid subjectivity of nascent Romanticism, underlay the disease of consciousness, from Kierkegaard's "Sickness unto Death" to Nietzsche's internal labyrinth wherein the imprisoned spirit, deprived of natural outlet, broods upon "bestiality of idea" and hatches "volitional insanity."

Looming behind the eponymous figure of Coleridge in this context was that of Swedenborg, chosen by Emerson, in imitation of Carlylean Hero-Worship, one of his Representative Men (1850). In his essay "The Poet" (1844), Emerson, the preacher of transcendentalism, intimated his intuition that beyond the "possessed and conscious intellect" is a "new energy (as of an intellect doubled on itself)," 7 common to poets and mystics. For him, Swedenborg was the principal modern exemplar of "this introverted mind." 8 Yet, even Emerson recognised the danger implicit in the "ecstasy or absence" of such transcendence, "the accompaniment of disease", and the element of terror. 9

Indeed, like Blake, whose "fancy overmastered him, until he at length confounded the 'mind's eye' with the corporeal organ", 10 Swedenborg also figured as a psychopathological genius, illustrating the "morbid introspection" 11 characteristic of such disorders of
ideality as spectral illusion, hypochondriasis, and "that anomalous
disease called decline, in which the mind is the chief agent of the
body's decay."12 "His eyes were indeed opened to see what other
people could not see", observed Maudsley, "but the gift was nowise
so singular as he imagined: every monomaniac being similarly gifted."
For, in his "interior vision" Swedenborg saw not only angels and
harmony but horrors; he was visited by a persona calling herself
"Sara Hesselia", the "Spirit of Suicide."13

Swedenborgianism, in short, was a favourite Victorian model of
Coleridgean pathology, of the daemonic degradation or exaltation to
which Romantic visions and the introversion of genius were liable.
Just as tamed tigers and leopards, remarked De Quincey, tended, in
play, to abrupt transitions to ferocity, so "the caprices, the gay
arabesques, and the lively floral luxuriations of dreams, betray a
shocking tendency to pass into finer maniacal splendours."14 Quite
as dangerous was "ecstasy or absence", which menaced De Quincey in
his nightly, "dread contest with phantoms and shadowy enemies";15
while Kierkegaard dreaded not only an unknown entity of self, but
also the power of the "fantastical", which estranges man "from himself
and therewith prevents him from returning to himself."16 Alienists
and moralists alike recognised the fearsome potential of that power
through which deluded Romantics had proposed to transform the world:
the imagination: "There is certainly no power in the mind that
requires more cautious management and stern control."17 Madness was
a "waking dream",18 evincing, like opium visions, the aberration of
the faculty of ideality, and its morbid conquest of conscious will and
conscience.
Swedenborg, however, was by no means the only clinical model of daemonic illumination, which came most often from imaginative excess and undue cultivation of sensibility. Dr. Conolly pointed to Swift's "debauchery of the mind" which indulged "fantastic images" and so prepared the way for madness; Maudsley noted the morbid delicacy of perception in De Quincey and Poe; William James condemned excessive sentiment and aesthetic emotion; and Havelock Ellis diagnosed in Heine the "extreme cerebral irritability of a nature absorbed in dreams and taken captive by visions", and in Pater the atrophy of will and hypertrophy of sensibility. Perhaps the most interesting clinical document in this context is Sir James Crichton-Browne's "The Hygienic Uses of Imagination" (1889), which detected the same "molecular thrill of the ideal" in the "coarse frenzy of the madman" and "the finefrenzy of the poet." In another remarkable paper, "On Dreamy Mental States" (1895), Crichton-Browne described, after Tennyson, "sensory epilepsy", a disorder characterised by psychic absences, "loss of control of the highest centres, reversion to "unfathomable ancestral traits", and other "intellectual auras". He added that Scott, Dickens, and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, who had all described such states, had themselves died of brain disease. At least in the medical context, then, Max Nordau's wholesale condemnation of "subjectivist", "decadent" art was orthodox.

Yet, underlying such clinical absurdity was a significance central to nineteenth-century ideology. Professor Wilson had "playfully" invented the word Hedonist to apply to De Quincey, and there is a steady and conscious progress from The Confessions of an English Opium-Eater (1821) — with its various sequels, and revision of 1856,
emphasising this progress — via Poe, Baudelaire, and the Symbolists, to Dorian Gray (1891) and even W.B. Yeats's Rosa Alchemica (1897). For, the union of moral anaesthesia, "autopsychology", and daemonic intellectual power, realised in the metaphor of the opium dream, was enshrined in the Decadence. The paralysis of the moral sense in visionary intoxication was a recurrent theme from De Quincey to Crichton-Browne. Concomitantly, Ruskin, as already noted, denounced the sensuous indulgence of artists such as Rossetti, as well as the "heartless fancy" evinced in ornate, introverted art such as the Oriental, which haunted the imagery of De Quincey's phantasmagories. With similar misgivings, Pater suppressed for years his Preface to The Renaissance (1873), lest even "that subtle and delicate sweetness belonging to a refined and comely decadence" prove too seductive for undergraduates. Indeed, a junior stylist on Renaissance themes, John Addington Symonds, the poet of "Le Jeune Homme Caressard sa Chimère" (1878), suffered acutely from sensory epilepsy, and followed the lost thread of being to the verge of the abyss ... It is one of the most terrible results of introspection that I find the weakness, vicious tendencies, morbid sensibilities, and discontent deepened and intensified by all that I have learned in study, and by all that I have lost in faith.

Like Pater before the Mona Lisa, Symonds had "aurae" of aesthetic terror in the presence of the Venus de Milo. In another "absence" he was seized, like William James, by existential panic. "The universe became without form and void of content. But self persisted, formidable in its vivid keenness, feeling the most poignant doubt about reality, ready as it seemed to find existence break as breaks a bubble round about it." He thus figures as a type of the catastrophe of both idealism and positivism, of the sickness of the
soul as well as intellect. His morally paralysing hyperaesthesia, which Crichton-Browne called a "great spiritual tragedy", was, moreover, attributable to "the fineness of his brain-structure"; in other words, to the attenuation inevitably attendant upon biological and spiritual refinement. Ruskin had already noted "the apparent connection of great success in art with subsequent national degradation", and it was only a step from this to the Decadent connection of aesthetic genius with moral and physical insanity. In fully self-conscious products of the Decadence, the debauchery of the ideal flourished; but thought as a "disease of flesh" figured with haunting power in such diverse works as The Return of the Native (1878), especially in its 1895 edition, in which the introspective nature is tragically antithetical to life; and The Wings of the Dove (1902), Milly Theale's fatal consumption being as much a disease of sensibility as of body.

It remains to retrace the evolution of this daemonic disease of consciousness. The post-Romantic Angst may be said to arise in the "chronic passion of anxiety" of the first Hedonist, who aspired to the "inner eye and power of intuition". But, as De Quincey soon discovered through opium, his chosen "physical agency" for the investigation of "that mysterious camera obscura — the sleeping mind", this interior vision, like the spectra of imaginative children, was more easily evoked than exorcised; its price was the oppression, as of an incubus, of volition and "moral sensibilities"; and its exaltation was, paradoxically, abysmal; "in the abyss of divine enjoyment thus suddenly revealed ... what an apocalypse of the world within me!" The "frieze" of visions became never-ending and involuntary; apocalyptically so, "because the state of gloom which attended these gorgeous spectacles,
amounting at least to utter darkness, as of some suicidal despondency, cannot be approached by words". The inner unboundedness was become infernal, the Opium-Eater seeming "every night to descend, not metaphorically, but literally to descend, into chasms and sunless abysses, depths below depths, from which it seemed hopeless that I could ever reascend." 34

This fantasy of psychic inhumation is also elaborated, in prefiguration of Baudelaire and Dostoyevsky, by Poe, whose most obsessive metaphor is living burial, and whose greatest poem is the abysmal "City in the Sea" 35 (final revision, 1845). His murderers and madmen are animated by "the spirit of perverseness", that "unfathomable longing of the soul to vex itself"; 36 by, in effect, the daemonic shadow of Emersonian transcendentalism. Yielding to a murderous and totally irrational impulse, the narrator of "The Tell-Tale Heart" (1843) feels both his perception and introspection "sharpened" by "nervous disease":

Above all was the sense of hearing acute. I heard all things in the heaven and in the earth. I heard many things in hell.... Presently 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. 37

Of course, like William Wilson, the narrator's ultimate victim is himself.

Son coeur est un luth suspendu;
Sitôt qu'on le touche il résonne.

Poe chose these lines of De Béranger as the epigraph of that profounder abyss of introspection, "The Fall of the House of Usher" (1839). He had already used De Béranger's metaphor in an idealising poem, "Israfel"
(1831), about the lyric angel "Whose heart-strings are a lute"; but the heart-strings of Roderick Usher, that type of degenerate sensibility, are tuned to the vibration of a soul sealed deliberately in the tomb.

Bulwer-Lytton laboured the De Quincean fancy of

some soul condemned to look evermore down into an abyss — all change to its gaze forbidden, — chasm upon chasm yawning deeper and deeper, darker and darker, endless and infinite; so that, eternally gazing, the soul became, as it were, a part of the abyss... 39

and, from Charlotte Brontë's Villette (1853) to Edwin Drood (1870), "that strangest spectre, Hypochondria ... dark as Doom, pale as Malady, and well-nigh strong as Death", haunted fiction. This daemonic hypochondriasis complemented the self-destructive introspection implicit in the Doppelgänger fantasy. Le Fanu is the mid-Victorian novelist of particular interest here. His Uncle Silas (1864) is an opium-eater whose "nightly horror or vision" is more than mere physical intoxication; and the synthesis of psychopathology and Swedenborgianism is even more remarkable in his collection In a Glass Darkly (1872), purportedly edited by an authority on "Metaphysical Medicine", Dr. Hesselius, who nominally recalls "Sara Hesselia", Swedenborg's tempting spirit.

The Swedenborgian infusion is peculiarly remarkable in "Green Tea", in which Hesselius is consulted by a reclusive, apparently neurasthenic clergyman, whose supposed over-indulgence in this opiate beverage, while pursuing, in his Biblical scholarship, studies in certain ancient pagan mysteries better left unstudied, has opened, horribly, the "interior sight". This anomalous vision reveals a leering, spectral monkey incessantly watching him with vigilant malice; eventually
interrupting his prayers, private and public, with blasphemous, evil-urging suggestions; and finally "prevailing, little by little, and drawing me more interiorly into hell." Hesselius is confident of his ability, through "iced eau-de-cologne" and other "repellants of the nervous fluid", to "dim and seal" this "inner eye", which his patient had "inadvertently" opened; but before these remedies can be applied, the sufferer, oppressed beyond endurance by his incubus, destroys himself with a razor. The symbolism of Freudian repression is anticipated here, the relentless monkey, in the mystic correspondences of beasts and mortal sins, signifying Lust, which must have stirred, namelessly, in the celibate clergyman's "degrading fascination" with pagan, i.e., priapean mysteries. But the pedantic Hesselius represents the impotence of even "Metaphysical Medicine" to deal with the sick soul and the dark powers thereby liberated.

"Green Tea" looks forward, not only to Arthur Machen's The Great God Pan (1894), in which another experiment in "transcendental medicine" lifts the veil of the inner eye, with horrid consequences; but even to Pater's Marius the Epicurean (1885), the locus classicus of Decadent sensibility, where the "belief that all the maladies of the soul might be reached through the subtle gateways of the body" is complicated by a profounder "disease of the spirit". In Marius the aberration of the ideal assimilates both racial degeneracy and cultural decadence, to fulfil that esprit décadent informing literature throughout the last quarter of the century. Marius's own hyperaesthesia, in which Havelock Ellis recognised the dead end of Coleridgian idealism, is haunted by the pavor nocturnus, the hypochondriasis, of "an age of valetudinarians" and "enervating mysticism". While his intellect
and sensibility are thus susceptible to the pagan supernatural, Marius's will is nearly paralysed by meditatio mortis, the spiritual masochism culminating in his Christian conversion and "martyrdom", though he suffers at the hands of no pagan immolator, but seems to succumb to his own nervous disorder.

In the lavish, ingenious cruelty of the amphitheatre spectacle honouring Diana of the Ephesians, the "Deity of Slaughter", of wild beasts, and of rabies, Marius had helplessly witnessed the Cyrenaicism of an empire on the eve of no "refined and comely decadence", but rather of national atavism refined only in finesse of torture. Even Marius's imperial master, the philosopher-king, indeed man-god, Marcus Aurelius, is not only powerless to avert this imminent catastrophe, but beyond caring for it. As indicated by his absent demeanour while presiding at the Dianan games, Aurelius's "sacrifice of the body to the soul", his incarnation of "that old Stoic paradox of the Imperceptibility of pain", is complete, as he calmly composes conversations with himself, awaiting the dissolution.

Of course, the crucial significance of Marius the Epicurean, in which Platonism parallels Swedenborgianism, and Apuleius, Theophile Gautier, is its subtle allegory of nineteenth-century Decadence. If Marius represents the dead end of aesthetic refinement, and Aurelius that of even godlike intellectual power, the decadent Cyrenaicism of their Rome is the prototype of the daemonic aestheticism denounced by Kierkegaard and Ruskin.
And Pater's apprehension of some mysterious catastrophe of moral insanity leading out of the introverted and rarefied mind is fulfilled in Yeats's *Rosa Alchemica*, which is obsessed with "the illusions that creep like maggots into civilisations when they begin to decline, and into minds when they begin to decay."

As in Aurelius's doomed empire, the hyperaesthetic narrator of the three tales included in *Rosa Alchemica* feels "fixed habits and principles dissolving before a power, which was *hysterica passio*... some indefinite and passionate life, which had begun to war upon our orderly and careful days, and was about to plunge the world into a night as obscure as that which followed the downfall of the classical world." Even "an absorption in the inner light", personified by the erudite, ascetic, life-hating Owen Aherne, is no refuge from this *hysterica passio*, which is cultivated by the narrator's other evil genius, the Dionysiac Michael Robartes; for the hysteria is not without but within the mystic consciousness. Like incense, phantasmagoria diffuse from every object of beauty touched by Robartes. In *The Symbolist Movement in Literature* (1899), Arthur Symons, himself another sensory epileptic, paid tribute to Yeats's "magical" imagery, which could evoke all the visionary powers of the mind, as in Swedenborgian correspondence; yet, this power of daemonic illumination was the last, attenuated blossom of Romanticism, and it is no coincidence that *The Great God Pan*, Pater's *Gaston De Latour* (1896), *Rosa Alchemica*, *The Turn of the Screw* (1898), and *Heart of Darkness* (1899) share the same decade.

Ultimately, then, Bulwer-Lytton's *Children of Night* give place to De Quincey's *Our Lady of Darkness*, as the theme of villainy is
internalised, or the conceptions, in Yeats's words, "so unbounded that no human vessel can contain them", rebound upon their conceiver.

Freud would argue, in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), that aggression and malevolence were, in the first place, the externalisation of a powerful, instinctual drive to self-destruction; and such an unconscious irony, in which murder is merely the type of suicide, is implicit in the stylistic hysteria, sado-masochism, Doppelgänger's, and other intimations of introspection in the Victorian fantasy of evil. This paradox is also evident in the daemonic aura of such ambivalent figures as the mesmerist, the Byronic rebel, and the anti-Übermensch. The crucial significance of the figure of evil was ontological; and the final elaboration of moral insanity was in the apocalypse and catastrophe of the self, the most urgent of nineteenth-century crises. In the first generation of post-catastrophic masters, Proust, Mann, Joyce, Kafka, and Lawrence, the internalisation of action, emotion, and symbol is established and uninhibited.
NOTES TO CONCLUSION


2. William James, Varieties of Religious Experience, Lectures vi and xii entitled "The Sick Soul".


9. Ibid., pp.96-97.

10. Alan Cunningham, quoted in Gilchrist, p.342.


17. Abercrombie, p.166.


35. Included in Poe, *Works*, vol. VII.


38. Included in Poe, *Works*, vol. VII.


41. Included in Le Fanu, Best Ghost Stories.


44. Pater, Marius, p.71, pp.136-37.


46. Ibid., p.294.
For practical reasons I have not undertaken to give bibliographical information on every title or author mentioned in this study. The major sources and a selection of the minor are included.

I regret that Vieda Skultan's anthology of Victorian psychiatry, *Madness and Morals* (London: 1975), appeared too late for the benefit of this study.


Barlow, John. Man's Power over Himself to Prevent or Control Insanity. London: 1843.


Brontë, Anne. The Tenant of Wildfell Hall/Agnes Gray. London: 1954


____________. Miriam Sedley. 3 vols., London: 1851.


Collins, Wilkie. **Antonina; or The Fall of Rome.** London: 1896.

----------. **Armadale.** London: 1877.

----------. **Heart and Science.** 3 vols., London: 1883.

----------. **The Legacy of Cain.** London: 1891.


----------. **The Queen of Hearts.** London: 1859.


Combe, Andrew. **Observations on Mental Derangement.** Edinburgh: 1831.


----------. **Three Short Novels.** New York: 1960.


Crichton-Browne, James. "**The Cavendish Lecture on Dreamy Mental States**, The *Lancet*, II (6 July, 13 July 1895), pp.1-5; pp.73-75.


Dalziel, Margaret. Popular Fiction 100 Years Ago. London: 1957.


-------------------. The Variation of Animals and Plants under Domestication. 2 vols., London: 1868.


Freud, Sigmund. See Breuer, Joseph.


Galton, Francis. Inquiries into Human Faculty and its Development. London: 1907.


________. *A Laodicean.* London: 1926.


________. *The House of the Seven Gables.* Ohio State University: 1965.


Lawrence, G.A. Maurice Dering; or The Quadrilateral. 2 vols., London: 1864.


---------. *The Rose and the Key.* 3 vols., London: 1871.

---------. *Uncle Silas.* London: 1893.


Maison, Margaret M. *Search your Soul, Mustace.* London: 1961.

Martineau, Harriet. See Atkinson, H.G.


----------. Responsibility in Mental Disease. London: 1874.


Packman, James. See Baker, Ernest A.


— "A Novel by Mr. Oscar Wilde", The Bookman, I (November 1891), pp.59-60.


Pochmann, Henry A. *German Culture in America.* University of Wisconsin: 1957.


Reynolds, G.W.M. *The Coral Island; or The Hereditary Curse.* London: 1854.


———. *Wagner, the Wehr-Wolf.* London: n.d.

Richardson, Maurice, ed. *Novels of Mystery from the Victorian Age.* London: 1945.

Robertson, C.L. See Maudsley, Henry.


_________. *The Two Paths*. Cppington, Kent: 1887.


Trollope, Anthony. *He Knew He was Right.* London: 1948.

Tutte, D.H. See Bucknill, J.C.


---------. *The Influence of the Mind upon the Body.* London: 1872.


---------. *Sleep—Walking and Hypnotism.* London: 1884.


Wells, H.G. **Complete Short Stories.** London: 1927.

_____. **The Island of Dr. Moreau.** London: n.d., Readers Library.


_____. **Intentions.** London: 1927.


Young, Robert. **The Entranced Female: or The Remarkable Disclosures of a Lady, Concerning Another World.** London: 1841.


