

"THE MALADY OF THOUGHT": EMBODIED MEMORY IN VICTORIAN PSYCHOLOGY AND THE NOVEL

Sally Shuttleworth

In his Christmas book for 1848, *The Haunted Man and the Ghost's Bargain*, Dickens takes as his protagonist a chemist, a man who has the destructive power to "uncombine" things "and to give back their component parts to fire and vapour" (246). Redlaw is a man haunted by memories, a man for whom Christmas constitutes only "More figures in the lengthening sum of recollection that we work and work at to our torment" (255). He is offered release from the torment of memory by a Phantom who holds before him the power to cancel remembrance. He will lose "no knowledge; no result of study; nothing but the intertwisted chain of feelings and associations, each in its turn dependent on, and nourished by, the banished recollections" (270). In addition he will be granted the power to destroy memory in all individuals with whom he comes into contact. The chemist accepts the bargain, only to discover, to his horror, that on his approach he transforms happy, moral beings into whining, snivelling wretches.

The uncomplaining mother starts wishing she'd never married, the merry old grandfather becomes a petulant, old wind bag. The only being he does not affect is a street urchin whom he has taken in, "A baby savage, a young monster, a child who had never been a child, a creature who might live to take the outward form of man, but who, within, would live and perish a mere beast" (272). In the end the chemist has his powers of memory restored: in place of his destructive chemistry, with its power to uncombine things, he learns a new Christian chemistry, and applies one of his chemical laws to his own personal life: "In the material world, as I have long taught, nothing can be spared; no step or atom in the wondrous structure could be lost, without a blank being made in the great universe" (322). Science, from being an image of man's presumption, now becomes the vehicle of moral resolution through an invocation of the laws of the conservation of energy.

The moral of Dickens's tale is quite clear: our very humanity is dependent on the power of memory. The urchin alone remained unharmed, the Phantom helpfully informs us, because, in his sub-human state, he was bereft of memory. He is the "perfect type" of what Redlaw had wished to be. Without memory he exists in a state of complete amorality, immune to any humanising touch. The Phantom paints an apocalyptic vision of the consequences for society of the indifference which could permit such neglect of its children. Growing up a mere beast in a "barren wilderness," the urchin and his kind are sowing seeds of evil "until regions are overspread with wickedness enough to raise the waters of another Deluge" (327). Dickens's tale gives voice to one of the central tenets of mid-Victorian social, psychological and fictional discourse: in this increasingly secular age, memory, with its assurance of a continuous

identity through time, functions as the grounding for social and personal morality. Dickens here goes even further than his contemporaries in suggesting that memory will keep at bay not only the suppressed clamours of amoral selfhood, but also the threatening, rising mass of the great unwashed. But for all its overt, insistent and sentimental morality, the tale also registers a very different message: one of fear, fear that if control is for one moment allowed to slip, the social mask, be it of angelic motherhood or benign paternity, will be torn off to reveal below an uncontrolled ferment of conflicting desires.

The tensions which lie at the heart of Dickens's story are also to be found in mid-century psychological debates; debates with which Dickens would have been familiar through his friendship with two of the leading figures in these areas, John Conolly and John Elliotson.¹ The centrality of concepts of control in Victorian psychological thought is clearly registered in John Barlow's popular text, *On Man's Power Over Himself to Prevent or Control Insanity* (1843), which made available to a wider audience some of the central tenets of Conolly's theories of "moral management" of the insane. The very title of Barlow's text highlights the interconnections between economic and psychological rhetoric in the mid-century: we find refracted here images of the self-made man, and the self-controlled actor of laissez-faire economics. The connections are further reinforced by the text's vocabulary, which focuses on the efficient channelling of force. The text makes a supreme statement of faith in the powers of self-control. It also suggests, however, that such control is very fragile, under imminent threat, not just in an unstable few, but in all of us. The difference between sanity and insanity, Barlow argues, consists entirely in "the degree of self-control exercised." Sceptics are asked to consider the thoughts and feelings that pass through their own minds: "were they all expressed and indulged, they would be as wild, and perhaps as frightful in their consequences as those of any madman" (45). Sanity is defined by the ability to exert the powers of self-control and to demonstrate the will to repress the urges of our less conscious mind.

Barlow's work draws attention to the contradictions at the centre of mid-century psychiatric and psychological writing: while stressing the importance of the will, and hence of memory, as a way of sustaining a coherent personal identity, texts were increasingly preoccupied with movements of the mind which lay outside the control of conscious memory and the will. Case studies in psychiatric texts focussed on the loss of control when the balance of mind was disturbed, frequently highlighting loss of memory as one of the primary symptoms of disturbance. The case, cited by Coleridge in *Biographia Literaria*, of the maid who started to speak Latin, Greek and Hebrew when in a state of delirium, became a model for innumerable similar cases, which were all explained by forgotten, unconsciously absorbed knowledge which had remained latent in the mind (ch. 6). Another prominent form of case involved sufferers, most frequently women, who lost their memories with the onslaught of nervous disorder, and on recovery obliterated all memory of their period of suffering.² Throughout there was

¹ John Conolly, superintendent of the Middlesex County Asylum at Hanwell from 1839, was one of the foremost proponents of the new principles of "moral management" in the treatment of the insane. John Elliotson, one of England's most eminent physicians, was forced to resign his post at University College, London due to his support of mesmerism (see Kaplan, chps. 1-3).

² See, for example, Carpenter 463.

a fascination with multi-layered selfhood. In the field of physiological psychology, we find Henry Holland formulating his theories of double consciousness in the 1830s, and William Carpenter in the 1850s outlining theories of unconscious cerebration. Mesmerism, which became popular in England in the late 1830s, reaching its height with the "mesmeric mania" of 1851, also reinforced popular interest in the hidden movements of the mind, outside conscious control.

The tension between, on one hand, this fascination with the ungoverned processes of the mind and memory and, on the other, a firm moral belief in the power of the conscious exertion of the will, is peculiarly marked in the work of William Carpenter, from his 4th and 5th editions of *Principles of Human Physiology* in 1852 and 1855, to *Principles of Mental Physiology* in 1874. Memory, he argues, is essentially automatic but it can, and indeed must, be directed by the Will. His texts register a real sense of fear as to what will happen if the Will is not ever vigilant to guard against the unhealthy eruption of undesirable, unconscious memories. The volitional direction of memory becomes, for Carpenter, both the foundation of personal identity, and the means to stem both undesirable urges, and the excesses of lunacy which arise from a deficiency of volitional control. His language, like that of Barlow, has strong economic undertones: memory is at once a Public Record Office, and an old established commercial trading house (470, 442).

Selfhood is similarly grounded in memory in the work of Henry Holland, although with less emphasis on the power of the Will. Holland, like Carpenter, distinguishes between what he calls simple memory and the art or faculty of *recollection*. The distinction is important, he argues, as it offers "one of the best marked lines of demarcation between the human intellect and that of other animals." No animals possess "this *recollective faculty* of the will. A moment's thought must make it obvious how much of the intellect and mental superiority of man depends on this single power; furnishing voluntary combinations in place of those which come unbidden and vaguely into the mind" (155). In line with the Victorian preoccupation with the exercise of self control, the defining qualities of humanity are here grounded in a union of memory and control, in the "recollective faculty of the will." Like Carpenter, however, Holland is fascinated by the realm beyond control. The individual character, he remarks, is not a unity, but fluctuates incessantly, both from pressures from outside, and the shifting balance of thoughts and emotions within. The strongest guard against insanity is to preserve through memory a sense of continuous identity and thus resist these pressures (116, 200). Dreams, and certain states of insanity, are defined by the fact that the memory fluctuates beyond the control of the will, and the sense of conscious identity is thus lost.

Holland developed, as early as 1839 in his first edition of *Medical Notes and Reflections*, his theory of the brain as a double organ, "the *double-dealing* of the mind with itself." He explored in his work what he termed "double consciousness," "where the mind passes by alternation from one state to another, each having the perception of external impressions and appropriate trains of thought, but not linked together by the ordinary gradations, or by mutual memory" (196, 198). The phenomena of dreams, somnambulism, reverie and insanity are all referred to this disruption in the unity of consciousness where mutual memory is absent.

Earlier in the century, John Haslam, in *Sound Mind* (1819) had distinguished man from animals through his power to comprehend the past and have apprehensions about the future: "Man alone can repent; he alone can retrace the facts of former commission and resolve an amelioration for the future. Thus we find that moral responsibility has its basis in the comprehension of Time" (189). By mid-century, this exercise of moral responsibility was firmly grounded in a theory of memory, but a memory which was increasingly seen to be divided, unreliable, and outside the domain of responsibility.

The moral value placed on memory in psychological thought is also central to the work of George Eliot, a novelist who, even more than Dickens, put memory at the moral centre of her fiction. In her secular philosophy of social organicism, memory supplies the emotional glue which links past and present together. It also offers, in psychological terms, a physiological grounding for morality, for the operations of what Eliot termed "that inexorable law of consequences" ("Progress" 31). In the moral, as in the physical world, all actions follow a strict sequence of cause and effect. Following work in physiological psychology by Alexander Bain, and her partner G.H. Lewes, Eliot believed that all individual choices and actions leave a physiological record in the brain, creating an internal moral structure which cannot be escaped.³ In more general terms, this philosophy emerges in a valuation of the past, as it is carried in the memory. As Maggie Tulliver demands of Stephen in *The Mill on the Floss*: "If the past is not to bind us where can duty lie? We should have no law but the inclination of the moment" (440). She renounces the amorality of her actions when she had drifted away in the boat with Stephen, a time when "memory was excluded" (430).

The Mill on the Floss (1860) is one of Eliot's strongest statements on the role of memory in furnishing the foundations of both personal and social morality. George Eliot did not write *The Mill on the Floss* uninterrupted, however. She broke off in the middle to write her macabre tale "The Lifted Veil," the story of a man with a "morbid organisation" and "diseased sensibility", who sees into the minds and thoughts of others, and has previsions of the future (295, 305).⁴ In many ways the tale can be seen as an inversion of the all the values and ideals proclaimed in Eliot's other works. The understanding of others brings, not greater social integration, but horror. There are strong parallels between this tale and Dickens's *The Haunted Man*: where one loses his memories, the other acquires a vision of the future, but both are equally cursed. Both also, crucially, encounter a figure who is resistant to their powers. The savage, inhuman child in *The Haunted Man* is paralleled by Bertha, the girl whom Latimer, despite warning previsions of the future, takes as his wife. Ostensibly Bertha seems very far removed from the street urchin, being an elegant member of the upper classes. Latimer is to learn to his cost, however, that the reason her mind alone remained closed to him was that in her cruelty, self-interest, and lack of any higher sensibilities, she too exists almost at a sub-human level.

³ See G. H. Lewes, *The Physiology of Common Life* (1859-60) and Alexander Bain, *The Senses and the Intellect* (1855) and *The Emotions and the Will* (1859). Their ideas were also available earlier in article form.

⁴ "The Lifted Veil" was first published in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, July 1859.

Eliot's tale offers an interesting reversal of Dickens's story and, more profoundly, of her own philosophy which grounds social and personal morality in the operations of memory. Latimer's future is ruined by memory; not the plaguing recollections of past misdeeds or suffering, but rather the haunting, devastating memories of his future life which destroy all contentment within the present, all hope for the future. Eliot's speculation here take off from the interest in prevision in contemporary psychological texts. Mesmerism, of course, had suggested a similar combination of powers to see both into the minds of others, and into the future. Mainstream psychological texts tended to dismiss the claims of seeing into other minds but not, interestingly, those for prevision. A.L. Wigan in *The Duality of Mind* (1844), Carpenter, Holland and Lewes all explore the phenomenon, treating it generally as an interesting example of the instability of memory and perception. Wigan, who argued that the brain itself was a dual organ, attributed the "sentiment of pre-existence" to the fact that one brain experiences on its own, and then both are subsequently conjoined.⁵ The most influential work in this area continued to be that of Henry Holland, pioneer of the notion of "double consciousness."⁶ Eliot's treatment of Latimer's "diseased sensibility" bears strong parallels to Holland's work. The phenomena of memory in its healthy state, Holland argues, are more striking under a state of disease when the fluctuations of memory are removed out of the control of will and pass into morbid associations which disorder the mind. The sense of a unified identity built up through conscious memory is shattered as doubleness of perception and feeling takes over. Eliot turns her protagonist's presentiments into another form of double consciousness:

Are you unable to give me your sympathy—you who read this? Are you unable to imagine this double consciousness at work within me, flowing on like two parallel streams which never mingle their waters and blend into a common hue? Yet you must have known something of the presentiments that spring from an insight at war with passion; and my visions were only like presentiments intensified to horror. You have known the powerlessness of ideas before the might of impulse; and my visions, when once they had passed into memory, were mere ideas—pale shadows that beckoned in vain, while my hand was grasped by the living and the loved. (307)

Although Latimer experiences a horrific vision of Bertha in the future, this insight is powerless to restrain the strength of his desire in the present. In this crucial passage, presentiments here become another form of memory, and Latimer's diseased sensibility merely a mirror of our own. Eliot here takes her tale out of the frame of the supernatural in order to highlight the fact that we all suffer from a similar form of double consciousness in our inability to make our actions and desires conform to our rational insights into future possibilities.

⁵ Wigan's work was in Lewes and Eliot's library, see Baker. Although his arguments were never fully accepted, his ideas nonetheless continued to be cited with respect throughout the century. Wigan had dedicated his text to Holland.

⁶ Holland's *Chapters on Mental Physiology* figures extensively in G. H. Lewes's *The Physiology of Common Life* which he was working on whilst Eliot wrote "The Lifted Veil."

Latimer struggles to bring his selfhood into the unitary sequence which for Carpenter and Holland defined psychological health. His ability to read and hear the thoughts of others marks a further erosion of the boundaries of his constructed identity, for, as Holland observes, our sense of identity is not innate but evolved through repetition until we obtain "that singleness in all acts of perception, volition and memory" which marks the mind in its "adult healthy state" (200). Eliot's text, however, seems to question the possibility of ever obtaining that desired state of unity. The very openness to others which, in the rest of her work, marks the moral development of character, here becomes the basis of dissolution. Without strong internal control, his sensibilities are at the mercy of others. He is unable to impose coherence, either on his perceptions or his sense of self.

The pessimism of this text is registered in its very form: it opens with a presentiment of death which is then fulfilled at the close. No concluding postscript from another figure or omniscient narrator is required; the life of the narrative is consonant with that of the narrator who expires as he writes the final line. The structure of the narrative registers the impossibility of hope: the potentiality of the future is entirely foreclosed. Latimer dwells in a world where the future holds no sense of anticipation, no space for imaginative construction or development. Far from offering the promise of the unknown, the future has become a form of horrific memory which can only be erased by death.

"The Lifted Veil" was written shortly before the publication of Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859), which was to revolutionise the understanding of memory with reference to individual identity. In Eliot's final novel *Daniel Deronda* (1876), we find her reworking many of the themes of "The Lifted Veil," but this time in the context both of inherited memory, and the more pessimistic strain of psychological thought of the 1870s. The divisions so often noted in the text, could usefully be expressed as a conflict between two different models of memory. On the one hand we have the optimistic model of organic memory associated with Daniel and his rediscovered Jewish ancestry. Presentiment here functions positively: the prophet Mordecai's vision that Daniel is their race's long-awaited leader is given physiological grounding when Daniel discovers his concealed Jewish heritage. Memory does not function here simply as a register of personal identity, but actively binds the individual to a shared, biologically-grounded history. Jewish heritage is defined as "the inborn half of memory" and Hebrew culture "an inheritance that has never ceased to quiver in millions of human frames" (II, 393-94). For Mordecai, the Jews are "a nation of whom it may be as truly said that their religion and law and moral life mingled as the stream of blood in the heart and made one growth" (II, 385). Physiologically-given memory here offers a grounding for moral and social continuity: culture is literally carried in the blood. Significantly, biological inheritance, in the Jewish section of the novel, seems to be given priority over personal memory. Mirah's memories of a dark childhood of abuse, or Daniel's early worries concerning his missing mother and illegitimacy, all seem miraculously erased by their immersion within the stream of biological memory.

Set against their history, however, we have that of Gwendolen Harleth, a rootless creature whose life seems dictated more by Darwinian chance than rooted inheritance, and who moves progressively—not towards unity—but personal disintegration. Presentiment again plays a role, but as in "The Lifted Veil," it is a

presentiment full of horror, which is to reach its fulfilment when Gwendolen sees her murderous desires externalised in the form of her drowning husband. Gwendolen's attempts to exert control over her life seem to be constantly thwarted by memories, and presentiments turned to memories, which refuse to be repressed, and she finds herself unable to hold together a sense of coherent selfhood. In her representation of Gwendolen's inner divisions, Eliot is drawing on contemporary developments in theories of nervous disorders, theories which greatly interested Lewes at that time, and formed the basis of much of their nightly reading. Gwendolen seems frequently to lack that sense of personal coherence and continuity which, Carpenter argued in *Principles of Mental Physiology* (1874), was dependent on a sense of "consciousness of agreement" between past and present states.⁷ Memory, according to Carpenter, is not on its own a sufficient grounding of identity; there must also be a recognition of a reproduced state of consciousness: "Without this recognition, we should live in the present alone; for the reproduction of past states of consciousness would affect us only like the succession of fantasies presented to us in the play of the Imagination" (454). Such a state defines Gwendolen's being when Klesmer's criticism of her musical performance shatters her sense of self: "All memories, all objects, the pieces of music displayed, the open piano—the very reflection of herself in the glass—seemed no better than the packed-up shows of a departing fair" (I, 394). As in Carpenter's image, Gwendolen loses any sense of consciousness of agreement between past and present; memories, with no critical sense of self to locate them, take on the role of mere fantasies, without order or memory. In her breakdown, following the death of her husband, Gwendolen becomes incapable of separating past, present and future, actuality and desire: the turbulence of her inner life erupts to shatter her tenuous control of surface identity. Memory, as for Latimer in "The Lifted Veil," becomes a curse, and one which leads to the fragmentation of selfhood. Although Deronda might offer a partial healing, the only words of comfort he can offer at the height of her distress, "I will not forsake you" (III, 223), are implicitly broken by his departure with Mirah for a new future in the Middle East.

Eliot in this novel was writing in full consciousness of the dramatic shifts in psychology which had occurred post-Darwin. The control of memory is still cited as both the definition of sanity, and the foundation of identity, but belief in the possibility of control has been massively eroded. As Henry Maudsley, the pre-eminent figure in post-Darwinian psychology, observed, in typically gloomy vein, in his *Responsibility in Mental Disease* (1874), "Most persons who have suffered from the malady of thought must at one period or other of their lives have had a feeling that it would not be a hard matter to become insane, that in fact something of an effort was required to preserve their sanity" (268). The emphasis on control of earlier psychological texts is here placed in a Darwinian frame of perpetual embattlement: with the mind "as with the body, to cease to strive is to begin to die" (296). The battle, for Maudsley, is not simply against internal, unruly desires, but rather against what he terms "the tyranny of organisation"—one's psychological and physiological inheritance. As he observes in his 1870 text *Body and Mind*:

⁷ Lewes notes reading this work in April 1874 (Diary, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library).

No one can escape the tyranny of his organisation; 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. (75-76)⁸

The sense of personal control so crucial to earlier psychology is here identified as an illusion: memory, in this formulation, ceases to be the grounding of individual coherence and becomes, instead, the very element which lies outside of personal control. Memory as a personal act of recollective will has been supplanted by organic memory, which frequently works against the desires of the conscious individual. In post-Darwinian psychology, memory, which for Holland had defined man's distance from animals, becomes precisely the ground on which man is linked back to the animal chain.

In Eliot's works one can see a very divided response to this shift: in the representation of Daniel and his Jewish heritage, we are given a positive representation of the workings of organic memory, which supplies a unity and continuity which Daniel's personal life lacked, and gives historical grandeur to the individual life. To set against that, however, there is the depiction of Gwendolen's fragmentation, her lack of unity, continuity and control; and also the evolutionary imagery surrounding the terrifying Grandcourt who is depicted frequently in terms of lower reptilian life. Barlow's firm belief that all psychological ills were in the power of the individual to control comes to seem, increasingly, a chimera.

The growing pessimism of late nineteenth-century psychology is strongly registered in the later novels of Thomas Hardy, who had steeped himself in the works of Darwin and Maudsley.⁹ We find in these texts a clear awareness of the ways in which psychology has been shifted outside the frame of individual life. All these works deal with what he defined in *The Return of the Native* as "the mutually destructive interdependence of spirit and flesh": individual aspiration is continually thwarted by the tyranny of physiological determinism (109). Selfhood for Hardy is ruled by the operations of organic memory on multiple levels: memories of the individual life are overlain with those of family inheritance, then race memory, and finally animal memory, all contributing to the make-up of the individual, and increasing the difficulties of pursuing a coherent course of action. The problems of control registered in mid-century psychological texts are here firmly historicised, and memory itself takes on increasingly negative connotations, as suggested in Hardy's poem, "Heredity":

I am the family face;
Flesh perishes, I live on,
Projecting trait and trace
Through time to times anon,
And leaping from place to place
Over oblivion.

⁸ Read by Lewes in February, 1871.

⁹ For an analysis of some of the aspects of Maudsley's influence on Hardy see Gallivan.

The years-heired feature that can
In curve and voice and eye
Despise the human span
Of durance—that is I;
The eternal thing in man,
That heeds no call to die. (*Poems* 162)¹⁰

Where Shakespeare's sonnets to the young man celebrate reproduction as a way of defeating the ravages of time, the family face here holds a menacing threat: a macabre, skeletal structure that dominates individual life, refusing to relinquish its control, or obey the natural cycle of life and death.

In *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891), questions of hereditary memory are placed centre stage, with the whole plot mechanism revolving around questions of hereditary descent. As Gillian Beer has shown, Darwinian ideas suffuse the text, registering both in its pessimism, but also in its attention to the physical, material qualities of life, tracing the natural exuberance and sheer "appetite for joy" experienced by Tess (ch. 8). Yet even in the depiction of Tess's vitality Hardy is at pains to show how her actions are beyond her own control, ruled by animal or ancestral memory. Tess creeps towards Angel's music like a "fascinated bird" or stealthy cat (145), caught by the workings of sexual instinct which will force her, like the other dairymaids, to "palpitate" with "hopeless passion." Lying in their beds at night, they

writhed feverishly under the oppressiveness of an emotion thrust on them by cruel Nature's law—an emotion which they had neither expected nor desired. . . . The differences which distinguished them as individuals were abstracted by this passion, and each was but portion of one organism called sex. (171)

In their interchangeability, the dairymaids register the powerful legacy of animal inheritance. The workings of ancestral or family memory are more complex, for Hardy deliberately leaves it unclear whether the imprisonment of heredity, captured in the insistent recurrence of the d'Urberville connection, functions at a physiological level, or merely as a psychological trap, controlling perception. Tess's most decisive actions are tentatively linked to the workings of heredity. When she strikes Alec across the face with her "warrior's" glove, "Fancy might have regarded the act as the recrudescence of a trick in which her armed progenitors were not unpractised" (373). Angel, on hearing that she had murdered Alec, immediately wonders "what obscure strain in the d'Urberville blood had led to this aberration" (432). In the elusive narrative, however, such suggestions are left as mere conjecture, to be filtered through his readers' own understanding of probability in the light of contemporary psychology.

Tess's sexuality, which would seem to distance her from passivity, only reinforces, finally, her powerlessness, leading directly to her extinction. Whilst it is possible to read the ending of the novel, where Angel stands with Tess's younger sister, Liza-Lu, high above the site of Tess's execution, as a suggestion of future potentiality, it

¹⁰ From *Movements of Vision* (1917).

should perhaps, more persuasively, be read as an image of perversion: Liza-Lu is "half girl, half woman—a spiritualized image of Tess": Tess, in other words, without her sexuality. Placed in a Darwinian frame, this image constitutes the negation of history: the erasure of sexuality spells the end of the human race. These implications are brought out more strongly in Hardy's following novel, *Jude the Obscure*, where Sue, the modern woman who is a bundle of nerves and has no desire to breed, is a clear example of what Maudsley termed "the intensification of the neurotic type" in late-Victorian culture (*Responsibility* 281). Her intense mental energy figures not as a form of self-determination, but rather as an example of the "tyranny of organisation." Both Tess's sexual drive, and Sue's lack of such instincts illustrate the controlling role of biological inheritance. Memory, in all its physiological and psychological forms, functions primarily in Hardy's later novels to thwart, rather than sustain, the actions of the individual will.

Hardy's *Tess* can be set beside another text of 1891, Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* which, although seemingly quite dissimilar, also offers a meditation on the interpretation of the body and mind and the role of memory, informed by nineteenth-century psychological and Darwinian theory. Wilde's text offers an outcry against the "tyranny of organisation." The workings of memory, and of historical determination, which George Eliot saw as offering a guarantee of moral structure, Wilde sees as ultimate imprisonment. The separation of body and mind which structures the novel (where the consequences of Dorian's acts are registered not on himself, but on his picture) can be seen as an attempt to escape the oppressiveness of memory and the physiological registering of history. Dorian accepts as his own the sense of internal complexity and multi-layered selfhood to be found in contemporary psychology:

He 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. (112)

The instability of selfhood which so troubled the early Victorians is for Dorian a cause for celebration. Like Tess, Dorian confronts his ancestral portraits, but rather than being overwhelmed by this legacy, and by the additional inheritance offered by his "ancestors in literature," he tries to dominate it: "There were times when it appeared to Dorian Gray that the whole of history was merely the record of his life, not as he had lived it in act and circumstance, but as his imagination created it for him, as it had been in his brain and in his passions" (113). Rather than being a mere iteration of previous history, Dorian tries to reverse the process so that, through the play of imagination, all past events become mere echoes of his own life. The text exposes, however, the impossibility of such dominion over time.

Dorian longs to live in "a world in which the past would have little or no place, or survive, at any rate, in no conscious form of obligation or regret, the remembrance even of joy having its bitterness, and the memories of pleasure their pain" (105). His

desire is to live in the eternal present without any impingement from memory. Wilde, however, is too thoroughly imbued with the nineteenth-century belief that to be without memory is to be without selfhood to allow this to happen. Living in the eternal present, Dorian would be without that sense of "conscious agreement" between past and present which for Carpenter defined selfhood, or the sense of successive order in time which for Holland differentiated human experience from that of an animal. The ending of *Dorian Gray*, where Dorian thrusts a knife into the picture which images the history of his moral corruption, and causes that historical registration to be transferred to his own body, is often read in simple moral terms. If we take seriously, however, Wilde's initial epigram, that "an ethical sympathy in an artist is an unpardonable mannerism of style," such a reading becomes difficult to sustain. Rather, we could read the ending not as an endorsement of Eliot's moral vision of the world, where all actions have inescapable consequences, but rather as Wilde's registration of despair with reference to the physiological tyranny of history—despair that we cannot control our own lives and erase the workings of memory.

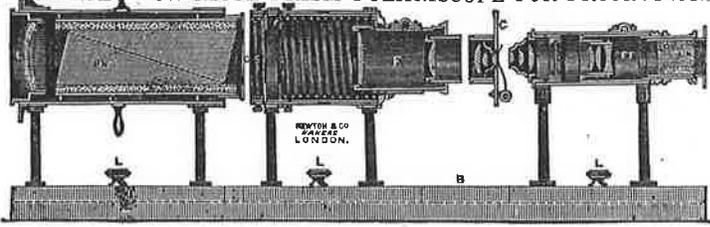
The changes in fictional representations of memory over the fifty years covered in this paper closely parallel those in the psychological domain. In the mid-century, memory was celebrated as the power which distinguished us from the animal chain: the power of volitional recollection stood as testimony to man's powers of self-control. Such spirited defences of man's power over himself (whether to rise up the economic and social ladder, or to keep insanity at bay) were, however, indelibly linked to a growing interest in the multiplicity of mind, and the waywardness of memory which could not be controlled. In the psychology and literature of the closing decades of the century, memory has been transformed: no longer is it the faculty which distinguishes us from the animal chain. Far from betokening our powers of control it comes, instead, to demonstrate both our animal inheritance, and our powerlessness in the face of physiological memory. Wilde imaginatively opens up a space where the "inexorable law of consequences" no longer operates, and selfhood can float free of the constraints of history. He is too much an heir to the Victorians, however, to sustain this vision. Dorian dies at the hand of embodied memory.

Works Cited

- Baker, William. *The George Eliot-George Henry Lewes Library. An Annotated Catalogue of their Books at Dr Williams's Library, London*. London: Garland, 1977.
- Barlow, John. *On Man's Power over Himself to Prevent or Control Insanity*. London: Pickering, 1843.
- Carpenter, William B. *Principles of Mental Physiology*. London: King, 1874.
- Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. *Biographia Literaria*. 1817. Ed. George Watson. London: Dent, 1965.
- Dickens, Charles. *The Haunted Man and the Ghost's Bargain. A Fancy for Christmas Time*. In *The Christmas Books*. Vol. 2. Ed. M. Slater. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971.
- Eliot, George. "The Progress of the Intellect." *Essays of George Eliot*. Ed. T. Pinney. New York: Columbia UP, 1963.

- . "The Lifted Veil." *The Works of George Eliot*. Cabinet Edition. Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1878-1880.
- . *The Mill on the Floss*. (1860). Ed. Sally Shuttleworth. London: Routledge, 1991.
- . *Daniel Deronda*. (1876). *The Works of George Eliot*. Cabinet edition. Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1878-80.
- Gallivan, Patricia. "Science and Art in *Jude the Obscure*." *The Novels of Thomas Hardy*. Ed. Anne Smith. London: Vision Press, 1979.
- Hardy, Thomas. *The Return of the Native*. 1878. Ed James Gindin. New York: Norton, 1969.
- . *Tess Of the d'Urbervilles*. (1891). London: Macmillan, 1957.
- . *Jude the Obscure*. (1895). London: Macmillan, 1966.
- . *Poems of Thomas Hardy. A New Selection*. Ed. T.R.M. Creighton. London: Macmillan, 1974.
- Haslam, John. *Sound Mind; or Contributions to the Natural History and Physiology of the Human Intellect*. London: Longman, 1819.
- Holland, Henry. *Chapters on Mental Physiology*. London: Longman, 1852.
- . *Medical Notes and Reflections*. London, 1839.
- Kaplan, Fred. *Dickens and Mesmerism: the Hidden Springs of Fiction*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1975.
- Maudsley, Henry. *Body and Mind: An Inquiry into their Connection and Mutual Influence, Specifically in Reference to Mental Disorders*. London: Macmillan, 1870.
- . *Responsibility in Mental Disease*. London: King. 1874.
- Wigan, A. L. *The Duality of the Mind*. London: Longman, 1844.
- Wilde, Oscar. *The Picture of Dorian Gray. Complete Works of Oscar Wilde*. Introd. Vyvyan Holland. London: Collins, 1966.

LARGE NEW NICOL PRISM POLARISCOPE FOR PROJECTION.



Gives better results than any other form of Lantern Polariscope.

For Particulars of POLARISCOPIES and MICRO-POLARISCOPIES for Screen Projection, LANTERN MICROSCOPES, OPTICAL and ELECTRIC LANTERNS, SLIDES, &c., see Catalogue, 4 Stamps.

Scientific Apparatus of every Description for Colleges, Institutions, &c.

Silver Medal Inventions Exhibition 1885.

NEWTON & CO.,
Manufacturing Opticians to the Queen and the Government, Agents by Appointment to the Science and Art Dept.
3 FLEET STREET, LONDON.