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SOUNDS OF TERROR: HEARING GHOSTS IN VICTORIAN FICTION

by

MELISSA MCLEOD

Under the direction of Michael Galchinsky

ABSTRACT

"Sounds of Terror" explores the interrelations between discourses of sound and the ghostly in Victorian novels and short stories. Narrative techniques used by Charles Dickens, George Eliot, Henry James, and Charlotte Mew are historically and culturally situated through their use of or reactions against acoustic technology. Since ghost stories and novels with gothic elements rely for their terrifying effects on tropes of liminality, my study consists of an analysis of an important yet largely unacknowledged species of these tropes: auditory metaphors. Many critics have examined the visual metaphors that appear in nineteenth-century fiction, but, until recently, aural representations have remained critically ignored. The aural itself represents the liminal or the numinous since sounds are less identifiable than visuals because of their ephemeral nature. My study shows that the significance of auditory symbols becomes increasingly intensified as the century progresses. Through analyses of Charles Dickens's David Copperfield, George

Eliot's Daniel Deronda, and short stories by Henry James ("The Altar of the Dead" and "In the Cage") and Charlotte Mew ("Passed" and "A White Night"), I argue that Victorian writers using gothic modes employ auditory metaphors and symbolism as an alternative to frightening visual images—what could be heard or not heard proved terrifying and dreadful.

INDEX WORDS: Victorian fiction, Sound, Acoustics, Technology, Ghosts, Gothic, Haunting, Helmholtz, Freud, Voice

SOUNDS OF TERROR: HEARING GHOST IN VICTORIAN FICTION

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MELISSA MCLEOD

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2007

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2007

SOUNDS OF TERROR: HEARING GHOSTS IN VICTORIAN FICTION

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Georgia State University
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DEDICATION

To Thomas Wallace McLeod, whose spirit haunts every line of every page—

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There is an inherent irony in the attempt to write acknowledgements for a work that analyzes artful expression. The many hours spent thinking and writing about beautiful language produced by skilled writers only highlights the inadequacy of one's own ability to express—particularly an expression of heartfelt thanks. Surely, anyone who tries must, in her own estimation, fall short since words cannot possibly convey deeply personal gratitude. Therefore, I will avoid the clichéd metaphor that compares writing a dissertation to a journey or the shopworn expression of it as a life-enhancing experience, even though those things are true. I will instead thank those who helped and supported me in simple language, secure in the knowledge that language will simply fail.

First, I'd like to thank my mother, Sandra Burrows McLeod, who taught me, through example, to be independent and to place value in my own ideas. Her assertion that the only answer to an unasked question or to an unattempted endeavor will be "no" is perhaps one of the truest and greatest lessons I ever learned. This work stands as a testament to her tremendous love, faith, and encouragement.

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Introduction: Gothic Sound

Ghosts are big entertainment business in current American culture. Just a cursory look at recent titles of films and television shows illustrates the popularity of ghosts and haunting: “Medium,” “Ghost Whisperer,” “Sixth Sense,” “The Others.” Even some gritty dramas that apparently have nothing to do with the occult include ghosts. A good example is “Rescue Me.” This television show is about the lives of a group of New York City firefighters, the more experienced of which were on duty during the terrorist attacks of September 11th. The protagonist, Tommy, and his firefighter best friend, Danny, were in one of the World Trade Center towers where Danny dies. Danny’s ghost haunts Tommy; his bloody spirit shows up unexpectedly in Tommy’s private spaces—his home or his truck. But, more than that, Tommy is haunted by victims who die during his calls to duty. The show’s writers’ make explicit the fact that all of these ghosts are related to the events of 9/11, which continue to haunt Tommy, affecting his psyche and his relationships.

One could argue that the terrorist attacks created a fear-based culture in America, and, if this is the case, then “Rescue Me” and the other shows dealing with ghosts are popular culture’s response to the fear that continues to haunt the American psyche. Victorian England saw much less dramatic and spectacular events than the violent terror attacks in New York, Washington, and Pennsylvania. Nevertheless, they experienced several paradigm-shifting events that produced the kind of fear and dread Americans (and Britons) experience now: Charles Lyell’s publication of Principles of Geology (1830-33), the 1848 revolutions on the continent, and the publication of Darwin’s Origin of the Species (1859) are among the most important in terms of the fear generated. Lyell’s

discovery of fossils threw doubt on the Bible's authority, the revolutions produced middle class fear of contamination from a violent underclass uprising, and Darwin's evolution theory called Christian providence into question.

However, temporally interspersed among these major historical events, other technological and scientific advances were being made that generated excitement as well as the low hum of generalized fear. As in American culture, with the proliferation of electronic and mobile technologies, Victorians experienced an explosion of visual and aural technologies: the microscope made visible the invisible and the stethoscope made the inaudible audible. After mid-century Victorians saw electric light and heard recorded sound on the phonograph; they communicated at a distance through the telephone and listened to disks on the gramophone. While many Victorians were enthusiastic about these new technologies, the new ways of seeing and hearing the world must have been disorienting—and disorientation, because it introduces deviations from what is known and, perhaps, comfortable, often proves to be a great anxiety-producer for individuals and cultures.

1. Ghostly Genre

Just as American film and television responded with cultural output that voiced popular fear and anxiety with tropes of haunting and ghostliness, Victorian cultural production, too, echoed society's dread in popular and literary material. Many writers addressed the public mood with the ghost story, which emerged in the 1850s and was popularized by Charles Dickens in Household Words. Writers of varying generic affinities published ghost stories and other supernatural tales—even writers normally associated with realism such as Elizabeth Gaskell, George Eliot, and Henry James. This

genre gained new ground in the latter part of the century and into the new one, with the advent of New Woman fiction, degeneration fiction, and the nascent modernist movement. The ghost story is important because of its liminal generic position, which mirrors its subject matter. It occupies the space between oral story-telling and the novel as well as the space between the gothic romance and the realistic novel. This generic position parallels the content: ghosts are necessarily liminal beings. Both the ghost story and ghosts are by definition not "this" or "that," neither here nor there.

In fact, ghosts' permeability allows them to infiltrate even realist novels. The result is a Victorian gothic mode designed to evoke a vague sense of dread and anxiety in the circumstances of everyday life. Inherent in this mode are various techniques writers use to evoke a feeling of haunting—for characters in the novels and novel readers. Julian Wolfreys argues, "The act of haunting is effective because it displaces us in those places where we feel most secure, most notably in our homes, in the domestic scene, as that place where we apparently confirm our identity, our sense of being, where we feel most at home with ourselves" (5). Novels can afford more diffuse and therefore more subtle uses of haunting because they have the time and space for the displacement that is a central function of haunting. Home and subjectivity become dispersed or displaced, in part, because of the decentering effects Victorian science and technology exact on subjects, but also because of the way representation works in the novel form. Clare Hanson asserts, "Within the novel, images function metonymically […]. Each image as it appears resumes something of what has preceded it in the text" (23). As a result of the accumulation of images rather than replacing one for another as in metaphorical

representation, the novel's mode of representation may take varying directions depending on the author's intention, creating gaps through which the gothic seeps.

In form and content the short story and novel seem diametrically opposed. In general, the sonnet-like short story covers a relatively limited moment in time and tells the story from a limited number of points of view. The Victorian novel, on the other hand, covers a great amount of time and usually includes several points of view. Hanson wonders, "Could it be that the *structure* of a short story […] is significantly unlike the *grammar* of a novel narrative, which depends on order, incidence and sequence in a way that the short story does not?" (27). Henry James would certainly answer affirmatively. Hanson's insight is particularly relevant in terms of gothic elements and how they support or disrupt generic grammar and narrative logic. In the instance of the ghost story, because ghosts occupy two worlds ("this" one and the "other" one or the "world beyond") and exist simultaneously in both the past and the present, both time and space are disrupted and thereby narrative logic.

While gothic elements and modes add an additional level of disorder to an already unruly form in the short story, the narrative order of the novel would seem to resist the ghostly and the gothic. However, the metonymic displacement novels enact create the conditions of possibility for the gothic liminality we see at the heart of the ghost story. Wolfreys approaches the issue of the liminal when he argues that "haunting remains in place as a powerful force of displacement, as that disfiguring of the present, as the trace of non-identity within identity, and through signs of alterity, otherness, abjection or revenance" (1). Textual haunting and displacement leave in the novel the trace, which informs its formal properties: the trace leaves a gap, a place for the liminal to exist. Often

writers, therefore, create characters with fragmented or liminal subject positions that echo "non-identity, alterity, otherness, abjection, or revenance."

Since ghost stories and novels with gothic elements rely for their terrifying effects on tropes of liminality, my study will consist of an analysis of an important yet largely unacknowledged species of these tropes: auditory metaphors.[1] Many critics have examined the visual metaphors that appear in nineteenth-century fiction,[2] but, until recently, aural representations have remained critically ignored.[3] The aural itself represents the liminal or the numinous; sounds are less identifiable than visuals because of their ephemeral nature. The significance of auditory symbols becomes increasingly intensified as the century progresses. Through analyses of Charles Dickens's David Copperfield, George Eliot's Daniel Deronda, and short stories Henry James and Charlotte Mew, I argue that Victorian writers using gothic modes employ auditory metaphors and symbolism as an alternative to frightening visual images—what could be heard or not heard proved terrifying and dreadful.

2. Sound, Ghosts, and Haunting

Ghosts and haunting share a connection with sound since all are ephemeral phenomena, resulting from the role absence plays in their structures. In the case of sound, often we can identify where a sound originates, but just as often we cannot because the sound may come from a distance. So, the producer of a sound may very well be absent when the sound is perceived by a listener. Moreover, sound dissipates upon its perception. In other words, as soon as a listener hears a sound, that sound no longer materially exists. Nevertheless sound is always around us. In is a sense we cannot escape hearing, unlike vision, which we may choose to shut off by closing our eyes. As R.

Murray Schafer puts it in his influential interdisciplinary study on acoustics, The Tuning of the World, "The sense of hearing cannot be closed off at will. There are no earlids. When we go to sleep, our perception of sound is the last door to close and it is also the first to open when we awaken" (11). Sound is present insofar as it signifies, but it is simultaneously absent since it dissipates upon its production or upon the hearer's receiving it. Sound itself, then, is both absent and present.

Ghosts, too, are simultaneously present and absent. In fact, their very existence depends upon their absence; they essentially remain as a trace, presenting themselves by haunting structures and characters. The ghostly manifests itself in various forms depending upon the conditions of possibility. One way to consider this is through Julian Wolfreys's assertion that

> The 'architecture' of every form, everything we understand as 'reality', whether it be that of the house, the town, the novel, subjectivity or being, is traced by a double, an incorporeal phantom or phantasm, or a 'gap', [...] within the structures we mistakenly believe to be unities, complete, whole, and undifferentiated. (6)

The "double" or "gap," the trace of the phantom or the ghostly, results from the anxiety regarding the impossibility of true unity in those structures. By virtue of its inherent absence, haunting plays a prominent role in narrative because artists must create formal means to approximate an expression of what remains veiled or silent. Absence and ghostly haunting, therefore, underpin the structural connection between genre (novel and ghost story) and voice, sound, and silence.

3. Science, Technology, and the Ghostly

The ghost stories and ghostly novels that I examine present an epistemology that combines a mystical mindset with science. However, this is not an irrational mode of thought; it contains a logic all its own. And by using science to help create this alternate logic, Dickens, Eliot, James, and Mew, create haunting effects using a realistic frame. Rather than explaining away the supernatural, as in Radcliffean gothic novels, these writers construct, what I will call, gothic logic, in which science becomes an instrumental discourse.

Gothic logic does not substitute rational explanations for unexplainable events; it contains a logic of its own, outside the familiar. This is how all ghost stories operate as Julia Briggs explains:

> Ghost stories commonly provide an alternative structure of cause and effect, in which the supernatural is not explained away but offers its own pseudo-explanation according to some kind of spiritual law of action and reaction: an unburied corpse, a murder victim or some other secret apparently buried safely in the past returns to haunt the perpetrator [. . .]. (123)

The new sciences of the nineteenth century provided a different "law of action" for the ghost story that exploited Victorian anxiety over new science and technology. Science is often important in the nineteenth-century ghostly narratives because it presents a mode of thinking that emphasizes proven laws of cause and effect, which may remain mysterious to a layperson. Moreover, because science contains it own system of cause and effect

outside the metaphysical, for some Victorians, particularly for those who were in the throes of religious doubt, science would have seemed very frightening indeed.

Science, itself, then, produced a gothic logic—a rationality that produced fear and dread by demonstrating undeniable truth through empiricism rather than truth as a mandate in the Word of God. The paradoxical relationship between rationality and irrationality/science and religion created a cultural climate ideal for the ghost story as a literary genre and novels interested in ghostly elements. As I will show, these authors use gothic logic to create a unified discourse that demonstrates the interdependence of rational and irrational modes of thought.

New technologies and industries introduced new sounds to the Victorians. They experienced a world "alive with the screech and roar of the railway and the clang of industry, with the babble, bustle, and music of city streets, and with the crackle and squawk of acoustic vibrations on wires and wax" (Picker 4).[4] These new sounds inspired a new curiosity about sound and hearing, which led to a blossoming of scientific research into acoustics.

Indeed, acoustic science in the nineteenth century influenced Victorian scientific and literary production at least as much work on the visual. Gillian Beer notes that as early as 1855, with Hermann Helmholtz's treatise, "Accommodation," the eye's prominence began to be questioned in some Victorian scientific circles, even though it had been, as Beer says, "traditionally represented as the ultimate argument for a designed universe, and the microscope and telescope seemed only to extend its authority" (Beer, "Invisible Tidings" 90). In "Accommodation," however, Helmholtz shows that the eye is flawed structurally, and that it was not at all a perfect mechanism. This insight lead

Helmholtz to write his influential work on acoustics, On the Sensations of Tone as a Physiological Basis for the Theory of Music (1863). His research lead him to conclude that the ear was actually physically superior to the eye in its functions and therefore able to make finer distinctions. Gradually, within scientific and literary circles, according to Beer, "the ear became the chosen arbiter of refined discriminations" (91).

Prior to Helmholtz's publications, Charles Babbage's work in natural theology explored the influence of the human voice in the natural world. In his Ninth Bridgewater Treatise: A Fragment (1837), Babbage attempts to reconcile the spiritual with the scientific. His work argued a theory that we might recognize today as "intelligent design"; occurrences in biological science such as the introduction of new species can be understood as the result of a complicated set of mathematical equations designed by God. But, it is Babbage's chapter on acoustics, "On the Permanent Impression of Our Words and Actions on the Globe We Inhabit," that is relevant for my purposes. He asserts that the atomic make up of voices leaves an imprint on the atmosphere, and, while only God or a future species of man capable of superhuman mathematics can access these voices, in theory they remain accessible. Babbage's work is important because it emphasizes the wider influence of voice and sound in terms ethics and morality.

4. Sound and Sympathy: Dickens, Eliot, James, and Mew

My first chapter analyzes the influence of Babbage's theory on Charles Dickens's David Copperfield. While many of Dickens's novels would be appropriate choices for examining the connection between sound and the ghostly,[5] I use Copperfield because of its autobiographical nature. Autobiographical fiction, a genre that requires personal revelation shrouded in and tempered by imagination, carries with it a heavier ethical

burden than straight fiction. It has the potential to affect wider society since its content is already in the atmosphere, like the continual reverberation of ghosts.

Using Babbage's theory as a metaphor, Dickens infuses David Copperfield with a gothic tone through the audible natural world that contains the sound of ghosts through wind and water. David's middle-class morality and sense of ethical responsibility for his father's ghost reflects the sense that autobiography bears a heavier ethical weight than other genres. According to Barry Westburg, Dickens believed that the confessional act of autobiography was "the ultimate human act" because revealing the secret of the self "transposes everything that is inside and secret to the outside, strips away all the masks […] and makes possible genuine imaginative human community" (110). Dickens's choice of genre, then, echoes the novel's subject-matter since part of Dickens's project entails garnering sympathy for David's position as an orphan. Because of this liminal subject position, David is particularly sensitive to the external sounds of the natural world and is influenced by them through his gothic imagination, which hears the ghostly in the wind and water of storms.

In chapter two, I take up Picker's demonstration of Helmholtz's influence on George Eliot in Daniel Deronda, and extend his findings to illustrate the gothic elements in the novel. Helmholtz's research showed that sound has the ability affect material changes in matter at a distance through sympathetic vibration or resonance.[6] This theory dovetailed with Eliot's literary concern with sympathy in human relations. The physical nature of sympathetic vibration appeals to Eliot because it materializes the moral and emotional connections between people. Moreover, it allows her to use the effects of sound on the body as a way to exploit gothic fear and ghostliness.[7]

Eliot uses sound and electricity to show that Gwendolen Harleth's and Daniel Deronda's receptive natures render them hyper-sensitive to the feelings of others, which they both find fearful because of the emotional violence that occurs when a medium-like, liminal subjectivity is unable to effectively filter out the feelings of others. Gwendolen, as a woman trapped in a society that offers her few options for creating a meaningful life, and Daniel, as a Jew and an adoptee, occupy liminal subject positions, leaving open a gap for sound and electricity to deliver the emotions of others. Eliot endorses the sympathetic resonance they share, suggesting that through it they create the conditions for human sympathy that extend far beyond the small world they inhabit.

Chapter three examines Henry James's interest in sympathy and fascination with ghostly absence through two short stories, "The Altar of the Dead" and "In the Cage." Both toy with the ghost story genre, as does "The Turn of the Screw" but with more subtly than in that work. Through music ("The Altar of the Dead") and telegraphy ("In the Cage"), James illustrates how absence provides the connection between sound and ghosts. His medium-like protagonists channel information primarily through silence or what is left unsaid. While James advocates an appreciation of absence, he cautions against relying on it exclusively since it may inhibit properly sympathetic relationships with others. In other words, the ghostly needs both absence and presence to exist, so privileging one over the other is perilous if the ghostly is to be honored and engaged. And, in fact, James suggests that the ghostly should indeed be explored for its positive literary and ethical implications.

Hermann Helmholtz's sympathetic vibration provides both George Eliot and Henry James with a metaphor for psychological and emotional connections between

people. Because Henry James was influenced by Eliot, we might well assume that he, like Eliot, would have been familiar with Helmholtz's work on acoustics, which was highly popular and widely-read in both England and America. The concept of "sympathy" between people—the moral, ethical, and artistic imperatives dictated by acknowledging and understanding sympathy—pervades both authors' work.

Both Eliot and James use representations of sound to explore the ramifications of a haunted consciousness. Eliot's Gwendolen Harleth and James's Stransom are characters with highly-attuned sensibilities and are particularly vulnerable to "the quickness of hearing" (Deronda 388). This sensitiveness to sound symbolizes receptivity to other unseen or absent yet present phenomena such as ghosts or spirits. Their highly-strung, sensitive temperaments render sound—especially its manifestation in sympathetic vibration—an amenable phenomenon for Eliot's and James's characters because of its close association with sympathetic consciousnesses, the kind of consciousness that can access the ghostly.[8]

They differ, however, in their choice of acoustic metaphors. Eliot is drawn to the fairly recent findings by Helmholtz, whose work deals with music but also with the physiological aspects of hearing; she also uses electricity, which she relates to the mechanics of hearing in that both require touch before either can be apprehended or perceived. James, on the other hand, uses the more overtly ethereal aspects of music and the telegraph to make his points regarding the ghostly. Absence, which is at the heart of music and telegraphy, is a more abstract way to understand ghostliness than Eliot's instruments. James's work speaks to the trajectory that leads to an exploration of the internal functions of sound rather than the external acoustic science used by Dickens and

Eliot. This trajectory ultimately leads to Mew who focuses on the inner voice in her writing.

My fourth chapter is a study of the *fin de siècle* writer, Charlotte Mew. While Mew is known primarily for her poetry, her short fiction and prose provide a means for understanding how some late Victorian and modernist writers reacted to the influx of acoustic technology in that period. I argue that Mew represents a backlash to the increased speed at which these technologies moved everyday life. As part of this backlash, Mew rejects dealing with sound technology, opting for a focus on the aesthetic expression of sound and voice. Rather than the external sounds of the natural, musical, or industrial world explored by Dickens, Eliot, and James, Mew is interested in the internal sounds of the psyche, the inner voice and how it expresses itself outwardly.

Mew does engage a new kind of science to help her make her point, however. In her stories "Passed" (1894) and "A White Night," (1903) she uses the new Freudian psychology to explore issues surrounding vocal expression. The protagonists of both stories objectify unnamed women of marginalized subject positions through their voices, emphasizing their powerlessness as aesthetic objects. Both narrators abandon these women, heedless of their cries and screams, rejecting the notion of sympathy through sound exhibited by Dickens, Eliot, and James. The ghostly in Mew is, therefore, more nefarious and dangerous than in the previous authors' conceptions. The voice that haunts is isolated and narcissistic, oblivious to the conditions of others.

Notes

[1] For an overall discussion of the gothic, see Punter and Haggerty; for the Victorian gothic, see Milbank, Robbins and Wolfreys, Schmitt, and Wolfreys. For the ghost story, see Briggs, Dickerson, and Sullivan.

[2] For the most influential, see Armstrong's Fiction in the Age of Photography, Crary's Techniques of the Observer, and Flint's The Victorians and the Visual Imagination.

[3] See Connor's Dumbstruck: A Cultural History of Ventriloquism and Picker's Victorian Soundscapes.

[4] My study is heavily influenced by Picker's Victorian Soundscapes, but it differs significantly in my exploration of the connections between science and technology and the ghostly and gothic fear. Picker's work is a cultural study of acoustics while mine makes connections between the findings of cultural studies and genre.

[5] Bleak House, Great Expectations, and A Tale of Two Cities would all work well.

[6] Sympathetic vibration occurs "when sound waves at a particular pitch from one source can cause distant materials—strings, bells, and glass are among the most receptive—to sound at that same pitch" (Picker 86). This phenomenon can be demonstrated by singing into a piano while holding down a key just enough to raise the damper, but not enough to sound the note. The note will echo from the piano once the singing has ceased.

[7] This has significant resonances with the field of cultural phenomenology, most especially in the Eliot chapter, but also, to a lesser extent, in my readings of Dickens and James. Cultural phenomenology is a study of somatic effects, recognizing them as culturally and historically situated. See Connor, "Making an Issue," Clucas, and Trotter. Clucas explains that "What a cultural phenomenology *might* be (or become) is an

investigation of what is not intended (or *attended* to) in culture: to make the givenness and obviousness of culture conspicuous by aesthetic presentations of the 'co-haunting' of the concrete and consciousness" (27). Clucas's idea of "co-haunting" gets to the heart of my project, which demonstrates the haunting effects of material world. For an explicit application of cultural phenomenology, see Cohen.

[8] In the case of James's ghost stories, this medium is the psychically sensitive protagonist who either voluntarily or involuntarily has the ability to access the ghostly. In Henry James and the Ghostly, T.J. Lustig addresses the issue of James's protagonists possessing medium-like consciousnesses when he notes that James believed "it was only through the medium of a fictional consciousness […] that ghosts could be represented effectively" (2).

Chapter I

Hearing Ghosts in Dickens's David Copperfield

1. "One vast library": Charles Babbage, the Uncanny, and Autobiography

Charles Dickens took the hearing sense very seriously. In fact, he took all the senses seriously insofar as they helped to further his literary projects; he found sensory material useful as metaphors for conveying a wide variety of emotions, characters, and settings throughout his fiction.[1] In David Copperfield, the sense of hearing figures prominently because it embodies the gothic/ghostly aspects of the novel and because it helps concretize the ethereal theories of Charles Babbage, theories that Dickens used as connective tissue between the material world and the ephemeral world in Copperfield.

Babbage's Ninth Bridgewater Treatise: A Fragment (1837), clearly made a strong impression on Dickens, since over three decades later, he cites ideas from the chapter on sound and voice in an 1869 Birmingham speech.[2] He encourages the working-class audience of the Birmingham and Midland Institute to continue their self-improvement projects because those efforts will expand and generate energy into larger society. He explains how this process works:

> It was suggested by Mr. Babbage, in his Ninth Bridgewater Treatise, that a mere spoken word—a mere syllable thrown into the air—may go on reverberating through illimitable space for ever and ever, seeing that there is no rim against which it can strike: no boundary at which it can possibly arrive. Similarly it may be said—not as an ingenious speculation, but as a steadfast and absolute fact—that human calculation cannot limit the

> influence of one atom of wholesome knowledge patiently acquired, modestly possessed, and faithfully used. (569)

"Wholesome" knowledge, then, reverberates through the atmosphere the same way words do or the same way a stone, a breeze, or a drop of water sends ripples across a pond.

Babbage asserts that the earth and its atmosphere, including air, wind and water, record all human deeds and words. He uses writing as a metaphor in the case of air: "The air itself is one vast library, on whose pages are for ever written all that man has ever said or woman whispered" (112). Babbage conceived of the earth's atmosphere as an aural archive to be read and heard repeatedly, or as John Picker puts it, as a "phonograph" and "the repository for voices from all time" (16). Babbage asserted that the essence of these voices survives their material aurality. The motion produced by sound waves maintains the voice's integrity at the atomic level even though it is no longer audible:

> The pulsations of the air, once set in motion by the human voice, cease not to exist with the sounds to which they gave rise. Strong and audible as they may be in the immediate neighbourhood of the speaker, and at the immediate moment of utterance, their quickly attenuated force soon becomes inaudible to human ears. The motions they have impressed on the particles of one portion of our atmosphere, are communicated to constantly increasing numbers, but the total quantity of motion measured in the same direction received no addition. Each atom loses as much as it gives, and regains again from other atoms a portion of those motions which they in turn give up. (108-09)

Similarly, according the Babbage, human action and interaction impresses the atmosphere and acts like the atoms in motion described above, being constantly rejuvenated through the energy of other atoms. As he puts it, "earth, air, and ocean, are the eternal witnesses of the acts we have done," and to them "The same principle of the equality of action and reaction applies […]: whatever movement is communicated to any of their particles, is transmitted to all around it" (112-13). Actions, then, like sounds, are stored in the atmosphere.

If sounds and actions remain in the earth's atmosphere, then autobiographical fiction would be the genre best suited for Dickens to explore the implications of Babbage's theory. Autobiographical fiction ostensibly records actual sounds and actions that, according to Babbage, remain continually available. Using Babbage's idea as a jumping off point, Dickens shows that the formal aspects of autobiographical fiction emphasize the metonymic relationship between sound and ghosts, highlighting the idea that both exist in the atmosphere as energy after their material demise. It serves as a generic umbrella that covers the uncanny, ghostliness, and the orphan condition since autobiographical fiction creates an uncanny doppelganger—the self being written about by an apparently different self. Orphans and ghosts share with the doppelganger a liminal subject position, rendering them essentially homeless and free-floating. Therefore, Dickens uses the wind and water associated with storms (where past voices, sounds, and actions are stored) in David Copperfield to evoke ghostly memory and gothic terror. Storms and violent weather bring characters a barrage of voices and actions contained within the earth's atmosphere, which produces powerful emotions. Scenes involving

wind and storms function as either reminders of things past, barometers of things felt, symbols for uncontrollable forces, or a combination of these.

Babbage's Treatise marks an early interest by nineteenth-century scientists in wave physics. It represents a cultural and intellectual current that gives rise to acoustic research such as those later investigations conducted by Helmholtz and Tyndall.[3] Wave physics allows Babbage to develop his theory of what John Picker calls "aural permanence" (17): even though a sound may not be audible, Babbage asserted, neither it nor the consequences of its existence ever die out. The invisibility of light and sound waves that these scientists worked with and found captivating in their profound effects can be compared to the absent presence of ghosts. Sound waves reverberate like a ghost's energy—invisible yet perceptible.

John Picker and Robert Douglas-Fairhurst have noted recently the influence of Charles Babbage's writing on Charles Dickens's novels. Picker examines the function of sound in Dombey and Son, using "aural permance" as a "framework for understanding Dickens's development as an author, performer, and publishing innovator" (17). Douglas-Fairhurst focuses on Babbage's theory of air as a repository for knowledge and points out the similarities in Dickens's and Babbage's work regarding the influence of air, particularly in terms of Victorian social theory that emphasizes "the web of affinities joining material and moral influence" (100). Both critics discuss the influence of Babbage on later acoustic research in the period. Neither, however, considers Babbage's aural concepts in connection with the Victorian gothic or the Victorian ghost story. I argue that if we couple Babbage's assertion that both sound and voice are contained within the earth's atmosphere forever, we may better understand how Dickens's gothic

imagination might have been captured. Inspiration in the form of wind, the sound of winds, and the sound of voices encompass both Babbage's acoustic theory and Romanticism, resulting in the quintessentially Victorian gothic trope—the ghost. Dickens employs this trope to embody the past and to convey fear of that past.

The perpetuation of sound, its connection to ghosts, and the accessibility of the past and the future expressed in Babbage's work and translated by Dickens's into his autobiographical fiction, all point to autobiography itself as ghostly genre**.** The subject of autobiography is itself the absent yet present figure. The author writing from the present point of view, looks to the past and represents a character that is simultaneously himself and no longer himself. The subject of the past is an uncanny doppelganger, which results from the splitting action of the text—the act of writing the autobiography splits the subject creating the double.[4] Kevin Ohi makes the point this way: "The intervention of writing—the very fact that autobiography has to pass through writing—dictates […] that 'my life' has to mean something different than 'my life,' that the remembered self will be ineluctably alienated from the narrating self" (438). Similarly, Barry Westburg argues, "One manufactures a self in the very act of looking for it in its origins. In the act of retrospection that produces autobiography we create the fiction of ourselves. The same goes for David Copperfield" (34). If a memory haunts a subject it is because the event actually happened to the double—the other self. Memory, or re-membering, is an attempt to reconcile the self and the double, creating a whole subject. However, autobiography highlights the impossibility of this reconciliation and throws the entire notion of a unified subject into question.

2. "The dead all lying in their graves": Romanticism, Ghosts, and the Gothic

Babbage's pseudo-scientific theories contain some of the qualities usually associated with literary Romanticism, particularly the idea that memory haunts, except that for Babbage the return of the familiar is literal: in his formulation voices in the air come back to repeat themselves. For Dickens, these past voices, or memories, soften rough edges because, as James E. Marlow puts it, "an awareness of the past dissolves the tyranny of the present, creates a reality that is more vital and rich in interconnections than that which fits only this instant of time" (23). "Vital and rich interconnections" that exist through a concept of time as expansive are precisely what Babbage argues for in his Treatise. The ability to hear and be receptive to the sounds and voices of the natural world reflects the ability to be emotionally affected by memory.

A good example of this connection between sound and memory occurs in the chapter called "Absence" in which David travels to the continent in order to mourn Dora's death. David finally lets his grief loose only when he is moved by the valley village he comes across in Switzerland. Here, he experiences the Wordsworthian moment (or "spot of time") when the sublime quality of the natural world pervades his psyche through his senses thereby changing his perspective. While the sight of the town's "forests of dark fir," "craggy steeps," and "bright ice" help to bring the "softening influence" David seeks, the sounds of the small town affect David even more strongly (759). He hears the mountain stream, which "roared away among the trees," and the "shepherd voices" seemed to him "not earthly music" (759). With these sounds "great Nature spoke" to him (759).

The sound of nature's voice resonates throughout Wordsworth's The Prelude, which, like David Copperfield, is autobiographical. And, very often, again as in Copperfield, nature's voice announces itself through the hearing sense. For instance, as a child playing among the crags, Wordsworth recounts "With what strange utterance did the loud dry wind/Blow through my ears!" (1. 337-338). Breezes and winds often carry these sounds because Wordsworth uses them as metaphors for the inspiring breath of the Holy Spirit (in the 1850 version). It is this breath that animates the Romantic symbol of the Aeolian harp, which, as I will show in the next chapter, interested researchers in Victorian acoustic theory because of its bodily effects. For my purposes here, however, I want to point out how the initial wind that inspires the instrument (whether that instrument is the harp or more explicitly the poet's mind)—these invisible "visitations"—may be cast easily as ghostly (1. 96). An example of a ghostly, "anxious visitation" (1. 312) occurs when Wordsworth hears "Low breathings coming after me, and sounds/Of undistinguishable motion, steps/Almost as silent as the turf they trod" (1. 323-25). Dickens emphasizes and, in his ghost stories,[5] literalizes the phantom-like essence of memory, refashioning Wordsworth's poetic commentary on recollection.

Dickens distances himself from the Wordsworthian notion of nature as necessarily always a path to *Bildung*. To Dickens, the "visitations" brought on by nature do not always produce a soothing perspective, leading to understanding and morality. To the contrary, nature and its "visitations" occasionally bring about the destruction of people and property or stir emotions of rage and fear, which impede moral edification rather than fostering it. The "Absence" chapter is the only instance in David Copperfield where nature affects David in the tradition of Wordsworth, and even here he breaks with the

Romantic convention of the Swiss experience as a return to the sublime or the gothic. The mid-Victorian preoccupation with the gothic residing at home rather than an exotic, foreign place accounts for this difference. David achieves *Bildung* once he learns through emotional and ethical discipline to tame the ghosts that haunt him and that are manifest in nature.

We are alerted to the prominence of ghosts and the ghostly in David Copperfield from the beginning of the novel (indeed the second paragraph) and the beginning of David's life. The sage women in the village announce that because he is born at midnight, he will be "privileged to see ghosts and spirits" although he ironically denies having this capability. David's denial is ironic because while he may not see the ghost of his dead father "his first childish associations" are "with his white gravestone in the churchyard." He feels pity for his father's spirit, since the doors of his house are "bolted and locked against it" (4). A discussion of David's father between Betsey Trotwood and his mother, Clara, seems to invoke his spirit, which manifests itself through the wind: "the evening wind made such a disturbance just now, among some tall old elm-trees at the bottom of the garden, that neither my mother nor Miss Betsey could forbear glancing that way" (7). While Clara and Betsey turn toward the windy "disturbance," they nevertheless seem to ignore the intemperate weather. For David this neglect amounts to their denial of the possibility that the wind contains the senior David Copperfield's spirit. The young David clearly recognizes that the wind through which the elms can "whisper secrets" and then fall "into a violent flurry" contains his father's ghost (7). His father's ghost is roused by David's childhood fear of Betsey—this strange, gruff woman—and his ire at hearing his father demeaned by her.

To reinforce the notion of haunting Dickens uses Blunderstone Rookery itself as a haunted house. As Barry Westburg and David Thiele have observed, David is frightened of half the house. One part represents the comforts of home, including his mother's and Peggoty's love and care of him; the other part represents the outside world, which threatens to upset the life David shares with his family. In one parlor David, Clara, and Peggoty spend their evenings together comfortably, but in the other, "not so comfortably" (15). In fact, this more formal parlor represents death itself, for there mourners gathered during his father's funeral "having their black cloaks put on" (15). Moreover, in this parlor Clara read to David and Peggoty the story of Lazarus, and David was "so frightened that they are afterward obliged to take me out of bed, and show me the quiet churchyard out of the bedroom window, with the dead all lying in their graves at rest" (15). Even Blunderstone's garden performs double duty in representing both life and death. As Thiele asserts, the Rookery, which he calls David's "original Gothic space," "is full of emptiness, already a partial ruin even in its quaint trimness—vacant rook nests, pigeon house, and kennel" (204). At the same time, however, these empty dwellings house "a very preserve of butterflies" (16) and the Edenic garden contains trees with "fruit clusters […], riper and richer than fruit has ever been since" (16).

The bifurcated nature of Blunderstone achieves two overlapping goals: first, it signifies the beginning of many doubles that resound in the novel, in this case architectural doubles.[6] Doubling also applies to the mechanics of the ghost story as a genre. Julia Briggs explains that telling ghost stories by a fireside highlights a "particular aspect of the ghost story which depends upon a tension between the cosy familiar world of life ([. . .] home and the domestic) and the mysterious and unknowable world of death

([. . .] uncanny)" (127). Blunderstone reflects the manifold, often contradictory, instincts children struggle to reconcile with their environments.

Second, the split character of Blunderstone echoes David's split self. The adult David who authors his story from a distance amidst his happy family aligns himself with domestic life; his doppelganger—the character he creates—associates with the "unknowable world of death." The logical mode of ghost stories seeks to exploit the "unknowable," and readers of David Copperfield often struggle to determine what young David knows and to what extent he knows it. But if we consider the epistemology of the ghost story, determining the reality of what David understands as a child is a moot point. As Briggs explains, the ghost story eschews rational explanation for its supernatural elements, using instead

> a kind of imaginative logic in which the normal laws of cause and effect are suspended in favour of what Freud termed 'animistic' ways of thinking, in which thought itself is a mode of power, in which wishes or fears can actually benefit or do harm—ways of thinking that are characteristic of very small children who haven't yet defined their own limits, but which western educational traditions have taught us to reject or leave behind. (123-24)

The child David employs this "imaginative logic" as a defense mechanism to combat his sense of abandonment, a result of never having known his father. That is, he uses his imagination to build on the stories Clara, Peggoty, and Betsey provide by supplying himself with intimate knowledge of his father through the belief that his spirit exists in the sound of the wind.

David continues to experience the "unknowable world of death" upon the loss of his mother, Clara. He recalls the day he was informed of her death at Mr. Creakle's school through his senses: "I smell the fog that hung about the place; I see the hoar-frost, ghostly, through it" (116). The memory is at once concrete and ethereal—concrete in that David recalls the specific sensations and ethereal in that those sensations take on a ghostly quality. Once he is delivered to the funeral home in Yarmouth, David conveys his memory of the experience in strikingly concrete sonic tones. Coming from the nearby workshop, he hears "a regular sound of hammering that kept a kind of tune: RAT—tat-tat, RAT—tat-tat, without any variation" (119). This sound is the dominant epistemological marker in the chapter. Because sound itself is ephemeral in its invisibility and its diffuseness, while, at the same time, material in its bodily effects, Dickens can use the sound of a pounding hammer to emphasize the ephemeral yet material nature of memory and knowledge. The hammering noise resounds each time David learns a new fact regarding the circumstances of his family's demise:

> '[…] I knew your father before you. He was five foot nine and a half, and he lays in five and twen-ty foot of ground.'
>
> 'RAT—tat-tat, RAT—tat-tat, RAT—tat-tat,' across the yard.
>
> 'He lays in five and twen-ty foot of ground, if he lays in a fraction,' said Mr. Omer, pleasantly. 'It was either his request or her direction, I forget which.'
>
> 'Do you know how my little brother is, sir?' I inquired.
>
> Mr. Omer shook his head.
>
> 'RAT—tat-tat, RAT—tat-tat, RAT—tat-tat.'

> ‘He is in his mother’s arms,’ said he.

The adult, narrating David allows the reader to infer, along with David, that the sound’s source is the construction of his mother’s coffin. The knowledge this sound reveals seems for David paradoxically both intuitive and logical. In actuality, the hammering could be for another purpose altogether, or if it is a coffin, it could be for someone else’s loved one. The fact that the coffin is out of sight—that its construction is heard and not seen—only adds to the mysterious nature of “unknowable death.” And, yet, David knows a coffin is being built and it is Clara’s. He recognizes the paradoxical nature of his understanding:

> I can’t say how I knew it was my dear, dear mother’s coffin that they went to look at. I had never heard one making; I had never seen one that I know of; but it came into my mind what the noise was, while it was going on; and when the young man entered, I am sure I knew what he had been doing. (121).

Just as his sensory recollection of the day is simultaneously concrete and ephemeral, David’s initial knowledge of his mother’s death is grounded in hard logic as well as ghostly intuition.

3. “I hear the roar of many voices”: Time and Memory

The complicated epistemological relationship between logic and intuition play into Charles Babbage’s concept of time. For Babbage, time functions similarly to motion in terms of its wave effects and its duration. Following this logic he asserted that because human speech and action remain in the earthly, material yet invisible realm, a supernatural comprehension of mathematics would allow man to trace any speech or act

back to its origin. Moreover, "such a being would be able clearly to trace its future but inevitable path" (111). This access to past voices and events along with the ability to foresee their future fate apparently rejects the idea of time as a linear concept. Babbage's ideas on the cyclical nature of time are evident in David Copperfield. As Rosemarie Bodenheimer notes, in Copperfield, "The past is always present, both in the plot and in the proleptic retrospctions, in which what purports to be memory acts simultaneously as prediction" (223). Dickens's subtle manipulation of narrative time in the novel is achieved through a distancing technique that the writing Copperfield exercises in relation to the younger version of himself—the one who experiences past events.

The past is brought to David Copperfield so strongly by his double and his memory that Dickens uses the present tense at various points to emphasize the close proximity of the feelings associated with a particular past event to his present emotional life.[7] Dickens's "retrospect" chapters illustrate this technique. From the outset, all four of the "retrospect" chapters (18, 42, 53, 64) either explicitly or implicitly invoke the spectral mode to announce the level of immediacy surrounding the memory, which corresponds to its relative importance in the narrative. What is important about all of the retrospective chapters is that they all involve David's sexuality. The phantom "I" that is his doppelganger allows David to distance himself from the sexual nature of his present self and place his "undisciplined heart" and the fickle side of his psyche at the feet of his double.

Chapter 18 anticipates David's need to gain control of his "undisciplined heart." The chapter describes his early crushes, the first of which involves a description of his first sexual experience**.** The opening of the chapter expresses the experience of childhood

in ghostly language and terms of invisibility: “My school-days! The silent gliding on of my existence—the unseen, unfelt progress of my life—from childhood to youth!” (248). Dickens makes the point here that while the inner life of a child may be invisible to the adult world, David’s own budding sexuality is necessarily a major preoccupation for the boy. This early observation by the adult David becomes ironic a few paragraphs later when he tells us that “At home, in my own room, I am sometimes moved to cry out, ‘Oh, Miss Shephard!’ in a transport of love” (249). The description of what is likely David’s first masturbatory exercise is in the present tense, which emphasizes the immediacy and the importance of the memory; however, Dickens distances the man writing (the adult Copperfield as well as Dickens himself) from the boy he writes about by characterizing the boy’s sexual experience in ghostly terms, stressing the separateness of the boy’s subjectivity from the man’s.

Dickens’s technique in the second “retrospect,” like the first, links the importance of the memory to ghostliness: “Once again, let me pause upon a memorable period of my life. Let me stand aside, to see the phantoms of those days go by me, accompanying the shadow of myself, in dim procession” (581). This opening passage points toward the dream-like state through which David remembers his wedding to Dora, the subject-matter of the chapter. The writing Copperfield distances himself even further from his younger subject by referring to that character as the “shadow” of himself—a mere outline with little substance. Dickens repeatedly aligns this shadowy figure with characterizations of the episode as dream-like: the marriage day occurs as “a more or less incoherent dream” (586); he makes a speech in a “dreamy fashion” (587); and “Nothing is real” (584). This dreaminess has the effect of presenting David as though he is in an altered state, and,

therefore, not entirely responsible for his actions. Young Copperfield, then, is somewhat absolved by the mature Copperfield of his emotional and sexual recklessness. Just as the first retrospect predicts David's future habit of ignoring signs that indicate a misplaced affection, the second predicts the folly of his relationship with Dora. Importantly, the second retrospect also predicts the future role Agnes will play with regard to David's marriage by highlighting Dora's affection for her. It is, in fact, Agnes's hand Dora grasps during the marriage ceremony and in the carriage afterward.

In the third retrospect Dora gives Agnes permission to marry David upon her death, making clear to the reader that Dora understands the unacknowledged love between them; before Dora makes her request, however, Dickens must establish the way David and readers should remember Dora. Our future feelings are set up at the beginning of the chapter, which is written in the present tense in order to simulate the feeling that the events are happening now, all the while relating a past story. David's tender affection for Dora's memory is revealed by his opening apostrophe to Dora's ghost: "Oh, my child-wife, there is a figure in the moving crowd before my memory, quiet and still, saying in its innocent love and childish beauty, Stop to think of me—turn to look upon the Little Blossom, as it flutters to the ground!" (710). David's memory of Dora's ghostly "quiet and still" figure accurately characterizes her as she appears at the end of her life rather than the animated, spoiled behavior she exhibits for the majority of her short life. Dickens wants Dora remembered by David and his readers as a calm, phantom figure—one who is capable of measured thoughtfulness.

The last retrospect, the conclusion of the novel, is really no retrospect at all in any traditional sense but, rather, is an accounting of present conditions and future events: "I

see myself, with Agnes at my side, journeying along the road of life. I see our children and our friends around us; and I hear the roar of many voices, not indifferent to me as I travel on" (818). Interestingly, David not only sees but also *hears* the people of his past as well as of his present. He calls up the voices of Mrs. Steerforth and Rosa Dartle when he describes their past, present, and future aspects: "Let me hear what they say" David implores (819). The scene has Mrs. Steerforth continually learning of Steerforth's death, of Rosa continually asserting her superior love for him, and then comforting the old woman. David says that it is "thus I leave them; thus I always find them; thus they wear their time away, from year to year" (819). The event happens over and over again as a sort of Nietzschean eternal return.

The melding of the past, present, and future in these "retrospects" calls into question arguments regarding the "teleological hermeneutics" critics often attribute to the novel (Bodenheimer 215). David Copperfield circumvents temporal and narrative linearity, and the retrospect chapters illustrate the extent of Dickens's interest in applying Babbage's theories on the circularity of time and "aural permanence." These theories enable Dickens to solidly link the uncanny to memory as well as to the voices of ghosts, all of which remain accessible throughout eternity. David and his doppelganger have reconciled by the time of this "retrospect." Westburg notes that by the end of the novel, through the realization of Agnes as his destiny, "the significance of [David's] life seizes the narrator at the moment when he and the hero are for once unequivocally the same person" (37). The adult Copperfield has married the proper woman, Agnes, which, as the reader is aware, has been his future all along. His heart, in other words, has finally been disciplined, his sexuality tamed.

4. "Undisciplined heart": Orphans, Ghosts, and Desire

David's acquired discipline represents the primary *Bildung* in the novel, and part of this education is a result of learning survival strategies, especially after Clara's death Obtaining food and shelter, however, are merely metaphors for David's need to satiate the hunger produced by his feelings of rejection and to fill the void left by his sense of abandonment. Even before Clara's passive assent to Murdstone's desire to send him to Salem House, David feels rejected by his mother. Murdstone's very presence disturbs David's tenuously content life with her. When Peggoty explains that Murdstone has married Clara, David says, "I trembled, and turned white. Something—I don't know what, or how—connected with the grave in the churchyard, and the raising of the dead, seemed to strike me like an unwholesome wind" (41). The fact that David's automatic reaction recalls his father's ghost suggests an attempt to displace his own revulsion of the idea on to a slighted spirit.

Aside from the obvious implication of his dead father's spiritual unrest upon the news of his wife's upcoming nuptials, the passage's significance lies in the manner in which his father-ghost affects David. When he receives the intelligence that an invisible "something" associated with his father "seemed to strike [him] like an unwholesome wind" indicates a kind of violence—that David's intense response occurs because of the violent reaction of his father's spirit. The wind that is David's father's spirit and until now had been the object of pity has become "unwholesome," capable of exacting a blow, or, to use a more precise definition from the OED, "to cause (a person) to be overwhelmed or seized *with* (terror, amazement, grief)." This second definition conveys the gothic terror that Dickens occasionally intends with his use of ghosts, and if we

couple it the first (as a hit or blow), then the wind becomes a tool of gothic violence. Moreover, the sense of the wind as "unwholesome" or "noxious; hurtful" connotes unhealthy, even poisonous, air (OED). Add to this suggestion of contamination the implication that the ghost harbors nefarious intention through violent action, then we begin to see that the feelings David displaces result from his subject position as an orphan.

Even though David has not yet lost his mother, which will make his orphanhood complete, he nevertheless already displays the psychology of an orphan through manifestations of his sense of abandonment. His intense, emotional, yet detached reaction to Murdstone as his mother's husband demonstrates what Hochman and Wachs call the orphan condition, which they define as a profound sense of rejection, abandonment, and loss. Dickens's orphans resonate so strongly with readers because loss is a part of the human condition and orphanhood is the "ultimate reach of our ineluctable sense of loss" (14). Hochman and Wochs go on to assert that while the orphan condition causes "a virtually insatiable craving for the warmth and the shelter that have been lost, […] It also involves rage at the parents who are felt to have withdrawn their sheltering attention and love" (14). David's unconscious strategy of placing with his father's ghost his violent feelings regarding Clara's marriage allows David to express the rage described by Hochman and Wachs without claiming responsibility.[8] David's rage transfers easily to his father because he identifies closely with him: both have been abandoned and rejected. The pity David feels for his father because the Blunderstone's doors are "locked and bolted against him" makes room for the rage and desire inherent in his orphan condition.

The orphan condition at the heart of David's subjectivity helps to account for the emphasis on ghosts in David Copperfield. The desire for lost love and comfort combined with rage over abandonment often accurately describes the ghostly condition as well as the orphan condition. Moreover, both the orphan and the ghost occupy liminal subject positions since neither belongs anywhere: like his father's ghost, David is barred from the family home by Murdstone, and much of the early part of the novel entails his search for a place to belong. This sense of "disinheritance, placelessness, and declassing" that Hochman and Wachs assert characterizes the orphan condition, I would argue, applies equally to the ghosts in the novel (16).

While both David and his father's ghost lose their home and Clara and are thereby disinherited and homeless, the father continues to live on in the son. Even in his absence the father's presence can still be felt through David's orphan imagination—the "animistic imagination" that Julia Briggs explains marks the logic of the ghost story and that accounted for David's aural knowledge of his mother's coffin. David inherits his father's characteristics in more concrete ways as well. His marriage to Dora replicates his father's marriage to Clara, and the young David inherits his father's love of books. As Goldie Gorgentaler notes in Dickens and Heredity, the gravestone David fixates on as a child to maintain the presence of his lost father (just as Pip does later in Great Expectations) suggests "a type of ghostly immortality conferred by the inherited material coursing through the veins of the living offspring of dead parents" (64). But it is the sense of loss and homelessness that David inherits from his father, which resounds most strongly in David throughout his life and connects the orphan with the ghost.

As we have already seen, the orphan is connected to the ghost in David Copperfield through the uncanny figure of the doppelganger—the homeless orphan is the double of the supposedly stable subject that becomes the adult writer, David Copperfield. But, we can take this doubling further. As Hochman and Wachs explain, "The abandoned child continues to occupy his ostensibly adult self, haunting that self with archaic memories and desires, and forcing it into a position of estrangement" (20). This "estrangement" reveals the difficulty of producing a coherent, unified identity; the writing David and his double never can fully reconcile any more than the supernatural elements of a ghost story can be reconciled to its realist mode. However, Dickens's project in David Copperfield is this attempt at reconciliation in order to support the concept of a unified, coherent subject. David's desire to control his "undisciplined heart" is achieved through his marriage to Agnes; his recognition of her as his proper companion demonstrates the success of this attempt at reconciliation.

Once David and Agnes recognize their love for one another, not only has the adult David's heart been disciplined, but that of his doppelganger has as well. He acknowledges that the orphan still exists, but that his alliance with Agnes alleviates the sense of abandonment inherent in the orphan condition: "Long miles of road then opened out before my mind; and toiling on, I saw a ragged way-worn boy forsaken and neglected, who should come to call even the heart now beating against mine, his own" (807). The novel suggests that to complete the unification of his identity David must also satiate the orphan doppelganger's craving for love and comfort to keep those haunting memories and desires at bay.

Emily's character represents the dangers that may befall one who lacks David's work ethic and moral fortitude when attempting to reconcile the orphan and the adult she becomes. Emily, along with her cousin Ham, had been adopted by Dan Peggotty as little children and he raised them lovingly as his own; unfortunately, the stable home Mr. Peggoty provides cannot amerliorate Emily's orphan condition. Like David, Emily never knew her father; unlike David she never had access to his burial place since he had been a fisherman who died at sea; therefore, "where her father's grave was no one knew, except that it was somewhere in the depths of the sea" (34). The narrative suggests that her father's ambiguous resting place impedes Emily's capacity to quench the cravings resulting from her orphanhood. Dickens emphasizes the stark contrast of David's father's burial place through his description of that grave to Emily: "my father's grave was in the churchyard near our house, and shaded by a tree, beneath the bough of which I had walked and heard the birds sing many a pleasant morning" (34). The implication here is that sense of loss and abandonment associated with Emily's orphan condition is more severe than David's, who at least had access to his father because of the access he had to his grave. Singing birds and shading trees surround the Copperfield grave, while the roar of the open ocean surrounds Emily's father's resting place. While Emily has access to her father's grave through the water that Babbage argues contains past voice and action, that access is diffuse, lacking a particular spot. Her access, therefore, is less complete than David's to his father's resting place.

Emily, subconsciously, tries to reach that resting place by courting danger. Dickens foreshadows Emily's future perilous escapade with Steerforth through the scene in which she nearly falls in the ocean running along a thin piece of timber. For David, the

most striking aspect of the scene is her "look that I have never forgotten, directed far out to sea" (35). He attributes Emily's risky behavior to her absent father:

> Is it possible, among the possibilities of hidden things, that in the sudden rashness of the child and her wild look so far off, there was any merciful attraction of her into danger, any tempting her towards him permitted on the part of her dead father, that her life might have a change of ending that day. (35-36)

Like his own ghost-father, in his manifestation as the "unwholesome wind," David portrays Emily's "dead father" as a ghostly menacing figure through the psychological effects of his absence on his daughter. The "unwholesome wind" that implicates David's father in violence plays a role in the death of Emily's father also. He dies in a storm—in a torrent of wind and water—and tempts Emily to the water at her peril; she, consequently, fears wind and water yet craves to be near it. Emily's propensity for risk results from the ambivalent relationship she has to the sea, resulting from her limited access to her father, and directly impacts her profound sense of loss and insecurity.

Emily's great need for security is the strongest component of the orphan condition that haunts her psyche, and this craving shapes her desire to "be a lady." This is not an entirely selfish desire, however. Emily fears the sea because of the toll it takes on her and the men in her life; it took her father from her, and she fears that it could take her uncle and cousin—for their own sakes as well as her sense of emotional security. Emily expresses her dread of the ocean as a waking dream: "I wake when it blows, and tremble to think of uncle Dan and Ham, and believe I hear 'em crying out for help" (35). Her anxiety is rooted strongly in reality, however. Earlier she says, "I have seen it very cruel

to some of our men. I have seen it tear a boat as big as our house all to pieces" (35). So, while she wants the social mobility afforded the middle class for the increased respect from society, she wants financial security for the safety of her adoptive family. She explains to David that if she were a lady with all the implied benefits of that class, then she, Dan, Ham, and Mrs. Gummidge "wouldn't mind […] when there come stormy weather" (35). Moreover, in this hypothetical, Emily would use her ladyship to help others of her previous class when they became imperiled by storms: "we'd help 'em with money when they come to any hurt" (35). This respect and security would quiet the fear and rage that results from her orphan condition and, in Emily's case, is figuratively and literally produced by the wind and the sea.

Like David, Emily is unable to reconcile her orphan psychology to her adult self. (Although David comes closer to unification through his marriage to Agnes.) She attempts to satisfy her need for security by succumbing to the advances of charismatic Steerforth, whom she hopes will make her a lady, but who ultimately abandons her. Dickens implies that rather then taking up with Steerforth, if Emily had David's work ethic and his moral compass, that if she had tried some gender appropriate work to help the family's finances, then she may have been able to quiet the cravings of her orphan condition more constructively.

However, Dickens has mercy on Emily. Rather than having her story end in tragedy, he has her shipped off to Australia with Mr. Peggoty, Martha, Mrs. Gummidge, and the Micawbers. Emily never marries. Instead, she channels her fears and insecurities into caring for Mr. Peggoty and others in the community. This moment in the narrative highlights Dickens's ambivalence in his treatment of Emily as having the potential to

become a unified subject. If, on the one hand, reconciliation of the orphan and the adult occurs because of a proper marriage like David's, then Emily must fail altogether. On the other hand, if Emily's attention to others' needs rather than her own could be considered a form of disciplining her heart, or taming her sexuality, then one could argue that she may some time in the future fuse the orphan with the woman she becomes.

5. "Listening to the wind and water": Bodily Memory

Both Emily and David are haunted by their orphan conditions through the figures of their absent fathers, made manifest through the wind and the ocean. Dickens's use of these symbols as mediums through which the spirits of their fathers communicate owes much to Babbage's theory that the wind and ocean waters store human speech and action for time immemorial. In his Treatise Babbage explains,

> The track of every canoe, of every vessel which has yet disturbed the surface of the ocean […] remains for ever registered in the future movement of all succeeding particles which may occupy its place […] the waters, and the more solid materials of the globe, bear equally enduring testimony of the acts we have committed. (37-38)

These father-ghosts, and all of the other ghosts in David Copperfield, exist to provide "testimony" of the past. Besides the testimony itself, they provide access to it since mortal human beings are incapable of obtaining it on their own, and the means of that access come through sound, wind, and water.

The nature of sound with its combination of materiality and ethereality works in conjunction with these natural forces since sound, wind, and water all use wave phenomenon to transmit words or actions. For instance, David tells us that "the

reverberations of the bells [that foreshadow Dora's death] had hummed through the rusty armour of the Black Prince hanging up within, and, motes upon the deep of Time, had lost themselves in air, as circles do in water" (690).[9] Dickens associates sound waves, produced by the bells, with ripples of water, which also transfer motion through waves, because both phenomena illustrate Babbage's theory that the energy produced by motion never diminishes.[10]

The apex of Dickens's treatment of the connection between sound, wind, and water occurs in his chapter, "Tempest." Dickens foreshadows the violence produced by the storm at Yarmouth with David's first stay there as a child on the Peggoty boat-house. During that stay, the floating house seems exotic and vaguely dangerous to David. He associates the uniqueness of this living situation with the ocean setting: "To hear the wind getting up out at sea, to know that the fog was creeping over the desolate flat outside, and to look at the fire and think that there was no other house near but this one, and this one a boat, was like an enchantment" (32). The frighteningly gothic description of the scene—the unsettled weather, the "creeping" fog, the "desolation" of the landscape—contains for young David mystery and "enchantment" rather than the impending sense of doom he would later feel on his way from London to Yarmouth in "Tempest." Even hearing the possible threat of a coming storm does not shake his feeling of security and "enchantment." Just as he falls asleep, he remembers, "I heard the wind howling out at sea and coming on across the flat so fiercely, that I had a lazy apprehension of the great deep rising in the night" (33). His comfort level stems from the security he feels in the bosom of the Peggoty family, with the sweet-natured Dan Peggoty as its head. But this comfort level lulls David into a false sense of security where the ocean is concerned.

Through the storm that occurs much later, Dickens fulfills the reader's expectations of the sea's terrifying destruction elicited by the gothic and ghostly descriptions of the Yarmouth houseboat.

In the beginning of the chapter, "Tempest," David implicitly refers to the earlier Yarmouth scene when he stresses the importance of the coming incident, which "throw[s] its fore-cast shadow even on the incidents of my childish days" (730). Conventional literary wisdom dictates that earlier events foreshadow later ones: here, however, the later event, the tempest, recasts David's "enchanted" childhood memory of Yarmouth in a dark shadow. This passage highlights the circular structure of the novel, wherein the past is always present, or as Bodenheimer puts it, "in which what purports to be memory acts simultaneously as prediction." The "circles of water" metaphor that Dickens uses to represent particles or atoms "lost upon the deep of Time" echoes the novel's circularity as a whole, maintaining Babbage's theory of the self-rejuvenating energy inherent in the atoms that make up air and water. While the storm David encounters as an adult shifts the perception of the previous Yarmouth scene, the tempest also gathers strength and importance from his childhood experiences with Ham, Emily, and Steerforth. The incidents circle back upon one another accumulating meaning from each other, an action following Babbage's theory which asserts that an action "remains for ever registered in the future movement of all succeeding particles which may occupy its place."[11]

Because ocean waves behave similarly to sound waves, Dickens chooses to emphasize sounds associated with the storm, including wind and water. In fact, the chapter's framing consists of those sounds; that is, David primarily perceives through his hearing sense the terror invoked by the tempest. The wind accompanying the storm

receives much of David's attention in the narrative. On the road to Yarmouth from London, both the coachman and David note the ominous sky, and David explains that "There had been a wind all day; and it was rising then, with an extraordinary great sound" (732). The "great sound" of the wind announces its dangerous potential, solidifying for the reader that the "indelible" event to which David refers will have a great deal to do with this wind and the storm that is sure to come with it (730). By the time David arrives at the beach and joins the townspeople who are commiserating and comforting one another, the storm is in full force. The intensity of the tempest diminishes the usefulness of vision in Dickens's rendering of the event. The ocean "confounded" David, with its "blinding wind," and the water itself made an "awful noise," a "hoarse roar," and "shivered and shook the beach with a booming sound" (734).

Because of sound's powerful effects on the body, Dickens highlights the corporeality of the storm's aural stimuli, which also allows him to emphasize the gothic using sonic terms. Examples of yoking together sound, the body, and the gothic are often found in connection with various stages of sleep or sleeplessness. For instance, after his arrival, David falls asleep by the fire of the dining room at his inn. He says he falls into

> a dull slumber […] without losing my consciousness, either of the uproar out of doors or of the place in which I was. Both became overshadowed by a new and indefinable horror; and when I awoke—or rather when I shook off the lethargy that bound me in my chair—my whole frame thrilled with objectless and unintelligible fear. (736)

The "new and indefinable horror" seems to be brought on by the "uproar" because upon rising David "listened to the awful noises" (736). He is finally driven to bed by the

"steady ticking" of a clock (736). Along with these examples of sonic discourse, Dickens choice of the word "thrilled" to describe the effect of fear on David's body speaks to his investment in aurality and its connection to Babbage's theories. The OED offers a definition of "thrill" that Victorians would have been familiar with: "The vibrating or quivering of anything tangible or visible; acute tremulousness, as of a sound." David's body registers fear through sound waves, which require the ear's vibratory action for their existence; that vibration or quiver spreads throughout his body, similar to the circles of water ripples that increase and expand with a stimulus such as a stone or a wind.

Once David gets to bed, he lies awake, unable to sleep "with every sense refined" (736). Although he says all his senses are heightened, David suggests that his hearing sense perceives more than the others, including his vision. He says,

> For hours I lay there, listening to the wind and water; imagining, now, that I heard shrieks out at sea; now, that I distinctly heard the firing of signal guns; and now, the fall of houses in the town. I got up, several times and looked out; but could see nothing […]. (736)

The wind and water stir his imagination, eliciting the sounds of "shrieks" and other frightful noises produced by the forces of the storm. David's sight is useless to him because of the dark, a classic gothic trope designed to induce fear. His hearing, on the other hand, is heightened and his imagination powers are active.

David's old feelings rooted in his orphanhood come to him through the wind and water. The sounds of the storm bombard David with the voices and deeds of the past, and, in this case of the tempest, they bring back Steerforth's past destructive actions. David has a vague recognition of this phenomenon, connecting it to memory: "Something

within me, faintly answering to the storm without, tossed up the depths of my memory, and made a tumult in them" (735). David's memory, then, resonates with the storm since both are "tossed," contain "depths," and create a "tumult." In other words, the violent storm outside represents the raging storm inside David's psyche. The last paragraph of the chapter, in which David sees the perished Steerforth washed up on shore, suggests David's divided subjectivity. Ironically and dramatically, Steerforth's body washes up at precisely the point where David had spent his childhood with Emily and Ham:

> And on that part of [the shore] where [Emily] and I had looked for shells, two children—on that part of it where some lighter fragments of the old boat, blown down last night, had been scattered by the wind—among the ruins of the home he had wronged—I saw him lying with his head upon his arm, as I had often seen him lie at school. (740)

Steerforth's seduction of Emily and subsequent abandonment of her, which brings such dishonor to her and the Peggoty family comes back to haunt David. To demonstrate the extent of the destructiveness Steerforth brings to the family, Dickens uses Babbage's ideas by having the wind scatter bits of the old boat the Peggoty family lived on and that David had found so exotic as a child. Steerforth's actions are written on the wind. Because of his selfish behavior, the family itself is scattered, battered, and in "ruins."

David's childhood impression of the Peggoty dwelling with his gothic descriptions that emphasized the wind and sea echo loudly in the storm's tragic conclusion, which results in the deaths of both Steerforth and Ham. His childhood presentiments turn out to be more accurate than he could have known. And, because of the subsequent tempest and its tragic outcome, David's childhood memories undergo

revision. It is this capacity for a readjustment in perspective that Dickens finds so attractive in the theories of Charles Babbage. Dickens finds something very optimistic in the notion that if only we could find a way to actually access words and deeds from the past, we might actually be able to revise them substantially through a shift in perspective. This is the promise of writing in general and autobiographical fiction in particular. By combining Babbage's natural philosophy with autobiographic fiction, a genre that requires significant reflection, shifts in perspective, and a willingness to revise actual events based on the needs of the narrative, Dickens creates a work that reflects an ultimately optimistic view of the power of writing.

Dickens amplifies Babbage's scientific theory through the prominent role of sound in David Copperfield. Sounds evoke memory, the ghostly, and, yet, for all that ethereality, etches themselves indelibly on the body. Babbage's theories are precursors to acoustic researchers such as Hermann Helmholtz, whose science George Eliot and Henry James draw upon in their own fiction. Eliot's Daniel Deronda echoes Dickens's interest in the role of Romantic literary theory with regard to sound and its connection to gothic and ghostly themes and expands on the literary implications of the bodily effects of sound.

Notes

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[1] See William A. Cohen's "Interiors: Sex and the Body in Dickens." He exposes and examines the sensory material in terms of sexuality in David Copperfield. He also includes a select list of Victorian criticism that utilizes cultural phenomenology.

[2] We know that Dickens appreciated Babbage through his letters to Babbage, the fact that he invokes Babbage's arguments in speeches, and his attendance at Babbage's regularly-held gatherings at his home. See Douglas-Fairhurst pp. 96-100.

[3] See Douglas-Fairhurst, pp. 98-99. Douglas-Fairhurst notes the similarity in language used by Helmholtz and Babbage, comparing passages from the former's "On the Physiological Causes of Harmony in Music" and the Treatise.

[4] For an excellent discussion of the uncanny and haunting in Victorian gothic, see Julian Wolfreys's Victorian Hauntings: Spectrality, Gothic, the Uncanny and Literature, which includes a chapter on Dickens's comic-gothic. Wolfreys employs Derridean concepts and techniques in his reading of the Victorian gothic and its relationship to doubleness and haunting. He notes, "As we argue, after Derrida, what returns is never simply a repetition that recalls an anterior origin or presence, but is always an iterable supplement: repetition with a difference. There is, then, an apparently circular or, more precisely, a folding and unfolding motion which in the act of appearing to complete itself moves us somewhere else, to that what we come to read on so many occasions is a figure, to borrow Tennyson's words, of *the same, but not the same*" (19).

[5] Along with "A Christmas Carol," "The Haunted Man" is an excellent example of a Dickens ghost story in which memory plays a very prominent role.

[6] David Thiele demonstrates that the Wickfield house is a double of Blunderstone Rookery and that both houses share architectural Gothic features while, at the same time, invoke the generic gothic mode.

[7] William T. Lankford also observes Dickens's use of the present tense in the "Retrospect" chapters because "memory literally makes past and present simultaneous in his experience" (454).

[8] This example undermines their thesis regarding David Copperfield. They assert that the novel is so concerned with affirming the bourgeois values, work ethic, and discipline that those concerns "make for hollowness in David's characterization because it filters out elements of rage and desire that are implicit in David himself and are native to the orphan condition" (56). They acknowledge that incidents such as David biting Murdstone exhibit rage but that "the novel […] does not sustain a consistent and consecutive sense of the emergence of this firm and rigorous David" (61). The example I cite here, however, supports their overall thesis regarding the orphan condition in Dickens and slightly refutes, or at least nuances, their claim regarding David's character. Dickens tries to show a certain amount of rage continues to haunt David throughout his life but that it need not control his psyche or his actions.

[9] Robert Douglas-Fairhurst cites examples from Bleak House, "Master Humphrey's Clock," and Great Expectations to show Babbage's influence on Dickens's work. John Picker demonstrates how Babbage's theories work in Dombey and Son.

[10] "No motion impressed by natural causes, or by human agency, is ever obliterated. The ripple on the ocean's surface caused by a gentle breeze, or the still water which marks the more immediate track of a ponderous vessel gliding with scarcely expanded sails over its bosom, are equally indelible. The momentary waves raised by the passing breeze, apparently born but to die on the spot which saw their birth, leave behind them an endless progeny, which, reviving with diminished energy in other seas, visiting a thousand

shores, reflected from each and perhaps again partially concentrated, will pursue their ceaseless course till ocean be itself annihilated" (Ninth Bridewater Treatise 114).

[11] Interest in the ocean's wave action—one wave picking up part of the previous wave, blending with it, and eventually replacing it—has a long literary tradition, often connected to the cycle of life as in Shakespeare's sonnet 60, "Like as the waves make toward the pebbled shore." Babbage, however, gives this metaphor added caché because of the scientific discourse (however amateurish) he employs. It also is worth noting that Matthew Arnold's "Dover Beach" (which he writes in 1851 as Copperfield is being published) takes up this theme in specifically aural terms.

Chapter II

Sound Theory and Gothic Logic in George Eliot's Daniel Deronda

> Thy functions are ethereal,
> As if within thee dwelt a glancing mind,
> Organ of vision! And a Spirit aerial
> Informs the cell of Hearing, dark and blind;
> Intricate labyrinth, more dread for thought
> To enter than oracular cave;
> Strict passage, through which sighs are brought,
> And whispers for the heart, their slave;
> And shrieks, that revel in abuse
> Of shivering flesh;
> ("On the Power of Sound" William Wordsworth, 1828)

1. "Nevous piano": Helmholtz, Sound and the Gothic

George Eliot writes in an 1840 letter that she has "just been delighted" by Wordsworth's "Power of Sound" (*GEL*, I 68). Like Dickens, Eliot was a student and lover of the Romantics, especially Wordsworth, and she inherited the Romantic awe of sublimity in nature and their fascination with the intrinsic mystery of perception. More specifically, she inherited their interest in an organic approach to literary production. Coleridge and Wordsworth synthesize images of vision and hearing in order to reinforce the concept of a natural, organic poetry, and George Eliot modifies their organicist theory based on nineteenth-century discoveries in science and physiology, especially those by Hermann Helmholtz, the German physiologist and physicist who was popularized in England by John Tyndall (114).[1] Wordsworth's meditation on the dreadful, terrifying nature of hearing in this poem serves as an entry to George Eliot's representations of sound and hearing, which she uses liberally throughout her writing.

The lines above from Wordsworth's poem are addressed to the ear. Written late in his career, they exemplify a growing appreciation for the role of sound and its material connection to the body as well its mysterious, invisible, and ephemeral nature, which

transcends the body and materiality. Even though the ear is a part of the body its "functions are ethereal." A "Spirit aerial" provides the ear with information, which is "dark and blind" but paradoxically an "Organ of vision." It shares the epistemological functions of the eye, but differs because of the non-materiality of the data it interprets. The object of the eye's gaze is concrete and may be apprehended by touch; by contrast, what the ear perceives is "ethereal" and spirit-like precisely because it cannot be touched. Indeed, it can be understood only by the mysterious workings of the "intricate labyrinth" that is the ear.

The last few lines of Wordsworth's poem illustrate this mind/body connection: the ear is a "Strict passage, through which sighs are brought,/And whispers for the heart, their slave;/And shrieks, that revel in abuse/Of shivering flesh […]." The last of the sounds strikes at the heart of the kind of terror represented in eighteenth-century Gothic novels. These novels dealt with affective emotion, or sensation, which was "linked to the grotesque, the sublime, and the supernatural" (Beer, Romance 56). We can see Wordsworth employing this technique in his poem on sound: a "shriek," a cry of profound fear, can affect the hearer physically by making the flesh crawl. But he adds a component of violence, indicating that the anthropomorphized shriek takes pleasure, or "revels," in the cruelty ("abuse") it inflicts on the flesh. The ear itself is a conduit or a medium for this gothic activity.

Eliot takes up the Gothic in several of her works.[2] While the Gothic may seem diametrically opposed to the rationalism prevalent in the nineteenth century and the concomitant realistic fiction that Eliot espouses, they are indeed inextricably intertwined. Daniel Cottom argues that readers can clearly discern that George Eliot uses something

like romance ("an antithetical art") and that we can "distinguish it from Eliot's own realism, but in thus distinguishing them one also must note that each seems necessary to the articulation of the other as the argument between them is played out in every aspect of her narratives" (357). In Daniel Deronda, romance takes the form of gothicism; the relationship between Eliot's gothicism and her realism in this novel can be understood through nineteenth-century scientific and acoustic theories. These theories provide Eliot with a logic that she applies to gothic narrative elements—a gothic logic— resulting in a gothic that enhances the realistic aspects of the novel rather than competing with them.

Eliot's gothic logic develops more fully Dickens's use of the ghostly through his simultaneous use of logic and intuition. Gothic logic does not necessarily substitute rational explanations for unexplainable events; it contains a logic of its own, outside realistic frames of reference. The new sciences of the nineteenth century provided the model for it because as scientific discoveries increased, perceptions of reality as stable decreased proportionally. According to George Levine, "As all [Eliot's] scientist friends knew and were preaching, reality had become inaccessible to mere common sense. Without abandoning 'realism,' she increasingly allied it, not with a simple empiricism, certainly not with materialism, but with what we might call a Positivist idealism" (3). Eliot's idealism acknowledges the role of subjective modes of perception for understanding reality—that how an individual *feels* about the world is as important as perceiving that world objectively. While Eliot rejected subjectivism as a way to apprehend the nature of the world, she believed that, in combination with positivism, it was a necessary tool for understanding human values such as consciousness and

morality.[3] Her idealism amounts to "intuition," or a "sensation of feeling" as Levine puts it (8).

Eliot believed that realism and idealism were not incompatible and actually complemented one another, which allowed her to formulate a system of reasoning based on emotion. This system accounts for the "feeling intellect" Da Sousa Correa detects in Daniel Deronda (187). She asserts that Eliot's notion of a "feeling intellect is pervasively elaborated in Daniel Deronda so as thoroughly to unsettle our assumption about distinctions between rational and irrational modes of thought" (187). George Eliot develops gothic logic to conjoin rational and irrational discourses under the auspices of scientific thinking, creating a unified discourse that allows irrational elements to inform rationality—and idealism to inform realism.

Gothic logic helps us to understand George Eliot's use of the Romantic tradition in her realist fiction. In Daniel Deronda, Eliot combines gothic literary techniques used by earlier gothic novelists and Romantic poets that trumpet the irrational, the otherworldly, and the sensational with realist literary techniques that emphasize the rational, the real, and the worldly. Nineteenth-century acoustic theory as articulated by Helmholtz provides Eliot with the tools necessary to marry these literary and philosophical impulses. She combines Romantic and Victorian conceptions of acoustics and sound to formulate a theory of the individual consciousness and societal interconnections predicated on the notion of the "invisible," the unspeakable, or the ghostly, a theory that derives its narrative energy from the Gothic. This theory's various manifestations in Eliot's Daniel Deronda include ethereal representations of speech and technology; through these ghostly depictions she argues that interpersonal and societal

relations are often fraught with dread and terror, but that the fear associated with these sensations provides an opportunity to engage in more productive, sympathetic relationships.

Sympathy plays a central role in Eliot's social and religious philosophy as well as her fiction. It is the foundation upon which morality can evolve and function within an individual and within a society. Eliot suggests that fear can be used as a tool to acquire a greater degree of sympathy because it heightens the physical, psychical, and spiritual senses. This acute state of awareness serves as a warning system to potential emotional threats to oneself or to others. Eliot traces the trajectory of fear to sympathy most thoroughly through Daniel and Gwendolen. Early on, Daniel understands the relationship between fear and sympathy; for instance, he fears the conditions and fate of his biological mother and because of that fear takes a particular interest in the fate of Mirah and Gwendolen. Gwendolen's fear crystallizes into a sense of isolation, a terrifying sense of her own lack of agency, and a general dread of the randomness of the universe. Her fears manifest in the conditions upon which she marries, the marriage itself, and the demise of her tyrannical, oppressive husband. Gwendolen's struggle is to understand the relationship between fear and sympathy and, through that understanding, find her place in the world.

George Eliot's emphasis on fear helps to explain the gothic elements in this essentially realist novel. The tension between two seemingly paradoxical literary techniques has been one cause of some critics' assertions that the book lacks unity between the "Jewish half" and the "English half." [4] The Jewish sections are full of metaphysical debate and speculation on faith and prescience, particularly the narrative

tracing Daniel's process of coming to know his true Jewish heritage. The Gwendolen sections, on the other hand, are a devastatingly realistic and complex portrayal of a spirited, flawed young English woman trapped in an unhappy marriage to a tyrant of a husband, who squashes her every attempt at a meaningful life for herself and silences her attempts at self-expression.[5] Rather than split halves, however, the sections are bound through scientific theory, which underpins the unity of the novel.[6]

Eliot's novel of a spoiled, spirited, young woman of good English breeding and her intimate emotional connection with a sensitive, equally well-bred Englishman who turns out to be Jewish illustrates the various manifestations of silence and its consequences. In particular the novel highlights the gaps in speech and conversation, the stilted social interactions these absences can cause but also the opportunities for significant emotional ties that can be forged because of the effort entailed in finding common ground without the benefit of open verbal exchange. Even the supposed transparency of communication implied by conversation is suspect in Daniel Deronda since much of the "action" occurs within the silences between characters. As Gillian Beer notes in George Eliot, "The silence in which so much of Daniel Deronda takes place is a terrifying seal over the crowded and various discourses of the text" (214).

Among these "various discourses" is the discourse of physicality. Eliot often relates the import of highly emotional scenes in terms of their affect on the body. One such scene, which occurs early in the novel, is the Hermione tableau scene. This scene serves as a microcosm for several of the novel's themes and the techniques Eliot uses to amplify those themes. In it, Gwendolen performs a *tableau vivante* of the Shakespearean Hermione who is awakened by the sound of a flute. Gwendolen's Hermione is awakened

by the “thunderous chord” of a piano revealing “the picture of the dead face and the fleeing figure” that had earlier been covered over by a movable panel in the wainscotting of the room (49). This picture had a negative physical affect on Gwendolen earlier when upon the sight of it she “shuddered silently” (20). However, it takes the accompanying sound of the piano to bring home the terrifying power of the picture for Gwendolen, which highlights her sensitivity to sound and sets the gothic and sonic tone of the novel. Gwendolen’s fear of a dead man’s face is realized by Grandcourt’s drowning. The sound of the piano reveals the unexplainable intuition Gwendolen has regarding this picture, which represents the gothic part of gothic logic. But her feeling about it makes sense upon reflection and given the outcome of the narrative. Her “hysteria,” then, is actually quite reasonable.

Gothic logic underpins Gwendolen’s reaction to this frightening picture because it incorporates Eliot’s understanding of Helmholtz’s acoustic theory of “sympathetic vibration.” Helmholtz’s originality lay in his assertion that hearing is a physiological form of sympathetic vibration or resonance. When sound waves pass over the ear’s “tiny hair-like receptors,” the immaterial and invisible is made audible. John Picker explains that “Helmholtz set forth a resonance theory of hearing that was both revolutionary and elemental: it posited that hearing, a form of sensory excitation by the external stimuli of sound waves, is nothing less than a bodily form of sympathetic vibration, and the ear a kind of microscopic Aeolian harp wired to the brain” (87). This theory of acoustics connects the sense of touch to the sense of hearing, just as Wordsworth illustrated in “On the Power of Sound” with his acoustic “image” of the shriek’s violent touch of the flesh.

Alison Byerly notes that Shelley's Defense of Poetry concisely encapsulates the whole of the Romantic movement's emphasis on sound and music. In David Copperfield, Dickens used wind on the Aeolian harp's strings as the breath of inspiration to signify ghostliness and memory. For my purposes here, Shelley's metaphor of the Aeolian harp for poetic imagination is useful for understanding Eliot's more material connections between touch, hearing, and voice. The Aeolian harp provides a way of expressing the imagination as femininely passive or submissive since the strings vibrate to the touch of the wind, emitting its music. In Shelley, as in Eliot, the material is necessary for the ideal to exist. The materiality of the strings can be equated to the materiality of the body, both of which must be acted upon by an invisible or spiritual force like wind, sound, or, as I will show later, electricity, in order to function. However, Shelley argues (as do Coleridge and Wordsworth) that for the ideal to issue from the poet, he must be equipped with sympathetic imagination. Only through sympathy will the strings vibrate properly or will the poet be able to accurately interpret the vibrations of those sounds.

George Eliot connects touch, hearing, and voice in Daniel Deronda through Gwendolen's gothic heroine-like sensitivity to all of these. In the Hermione scene, the violent sound of the piano coupled with the terrifying and prescient vision of death and flight causes her to emit a "piercing cry" (49). While she is able to maintain her posture in the tableau, her expression reveals a response to this sonic stimulus "that was terrifying in its terror" (49). However, her mother's touch finally causes Gwendolen to succumb to her innate sense of terror: this touch has the "effect of an electric charge" so that she collapses to her knees, "trembling, but mute" (49). Gwendolen's violent and terrifying reaction in this scene epitomizes Helmholtz's theory of hearing as a physiological

manifestation of sympathetic vibration in which touch combines with sound to produce psychic and physical responses to the audible. These responses can be particularly visceral because, as R. Muarray Shafer notes, "touch is the most personal of the senses. Hearing and touch meet where the lower frequencies of audible sound pass over to tactile vibrations […]. Hearing is a way of touching at a distance […]" (11). Wordsworth, Helmholtz, and Eliot all emphasize the tactile quality of hearing: Wordsworth offers a poetic image of it through the ear as medium, Helmholtz theorizes hearing in his representation of the ear as "a nervous piano" (Sensations of Tone 190), and Eliot fictionalizes the phenomenon through Gwendolen's capacity for sensitive, sympathetic resonance.

George Eliot's later work shows the extent to which she became interested in theories of sound. She had always been interested in music and its affect on consciousness and relationships, but this preoccupation usually manifested in musical references: Maggie Tulliver's sensitivity to music, particularly Stephen Guest's singing, in The Mill on the Floss and Dinah's melodic voice from the pulpit in Adam Bede are metaphors for those characters' psyches and invisible lives of the mind. Musical references also abound in Middlemarch and Daniel Deronda. However, in those works, Eliot's use of music becomes more complex because her investigation of sound and hearing deepens and expands those references. In other words, Eliot becomes keenly aware of the effects of acoustics in general—not just music—on psychology and identity, conceptions of the ideal and the real, and the material and the spiritual.

2. "Let thy chief terror be of thine own soul": Fear, Sexuality, and Sympathetic Vibration

In Daniel Deronda, George Eliot most fully explores acoustics through the characterizations of Daniel and Gwendolen. Eliot first establishes the gothic through her portrayal of Gwendolen; her susceptibility to sound and terror as exemplified in the Hermione scene helps establish her gothic heroine credentials and sets up Gwendolen's classic gothic heroine's sense of the sublime. In a sense, Eliot takes up Jane Austen's ironic portrayal of Catherine Moreland's gothic fantasy and inverts it, by combining the Radcliffean heroine's sense of awe in nature and the Wordsworthian sense of terror in natural settings to create a character given to "fits of spiritual dread" (52). The narrator explains that the sense of terror Gwendolen displays in her tableau had occurred before, but only when she was alone, without witnesses. After her embarrassing public moment, Gwendolen recalled "her tremor on suddenly feeling herself alone, when […] she was walking without companionship and there came some rapid change in the light" (52). This "dread" amounts to a vague existential angst bound up in a fear of being alone in the vastness of the universe, a fear of the randomness of that universe, and the subsequent feeling of having no control over her fate:

> Solitude in any wide scene impressed her with an undefined feeling of immeasurable existence aloof from her, in the midst of which she was helplessly incapable of asserting herself. The little astronomy taught her at school used sometimes to set her imagination at work in a way that made her tremble […]. (52)

The Hermione scene is unique in her experience because she usually loses her fear and dread when she is surrounded by others; it is a particularly disconcerting experience for her precisely because it occurs in the presence of an audience. In the past, "With human ears and eyes about her, she had always […] recovered her confidence, and felt the possibility of winning empire" (52). Gwendolen had always been able to conquer her fear by summoning an affirmative reflection of herself through others' perceptions. However, this scene marks the end of Gwendolen's ability to vanquish dread and terror by brandishing her body as a weapon. Eliot uses the scene as a point of departure in Gwendolen's previous experience and to presage her spiritual education, the examination of which is one of the novel's major tasks.

The narrator indicates early on that Gwendolen's spiritually bereft position, which manifests in a fear of her own insignificance is, in part, the result of never having being rooted in a particular place. As in much of Eliot's work, Daniel Deronda deals with the influence of community (or lack of community) and how it manifests in a subject's sense of belonging; however, here, Eliot deals with these issues in the negative. Indeed, a profound sense of homelessness pervades the novel and underpins both Daniel's and Gwendolen's plots. This theme is most obvious in the Jewish sections, but it also plays a large part in Gwendolen's psyche and provides one explanation for her deep sense of fear and dread. In chapter three of the first book the narrator muses,

> Pity that Offendene was not the home of Miss Harleth's childhood, or endeared to her by family memories! A human life, I think, should be well rooted in some spot of a native land, where it may get the love of tender kinship for the face of earth, for the labours men go forth to, for the

> sounds and accents that haunt it, for whatever will give that early home a familiar unmistakable difference amidst the future widening of knowledge. (16)

The narrator connects the nourishment provided by "a native land" not to its concrete visual components but rather to its immaterial "sounds and accents." Eliot uses the concept of sound here because she wants to highlight the way a subject internalizes "home."

Like Dickens's, Eliot's conception of home "haunts" by way of the sounds associated with it through memory.[7] Because sound itself is fixed in memory but ethereal in reality, its dual nature helps subjects form conceptions of a moral life filled with complexity. Karen Mann provides insight into sound's contribution to morality through her assertion that in Eliot music and sound function as a medium rather than as a limit. She notes, "That medium transforms the relationship between self and world from a mechanical relationship into a vital one, because it incarnates a twofold capacity: the power of mind to hear the living world speaking to a human being, and the subsequent power of mind to answer that external voice" (61). The stability provided by home allows its inhabitants to become attuned to the tones of "that external voice," to recognize the relationship between the individual's internal voice and the voice of the "living world." The fluid interaction between the voice of the subject and the voice of society results from a core, rooted identity, which sprouts from a particular place.

Because Gwendolen has not had the benefit of a fixed familial space to nurture her innate, budding sympathy, it finds expression through fear. We should be reminded here of Dickens's orphans, David and Emily, and how the homeless aspects of their

subjectivities profoundly effect their psyches, aligning their orphan conditions with fear and ghosts. Gwendolen's emotional growth is stunted and her sensitive nature turns inward, transforming into narcissistic anxiety over her place in the world, rather than blossoming into sympathetic concern for others. Since she moved around Europe as a child and was schooled abroad, away from her mother and sisters, Gwendolen was denied a stable environment "in which affection can take root" (16). An example of Gwendolen's shortcomings regarding her affections is her attitudes toward love and marriage.

Gwendolen's conception of love and marriage has little to do with sentimentality and everything to do with freedom and agency. While Gwendolen asserts that she "never saw a married woman who had her own way," this is not the fault of men only (57). That Gwendolen, when married, "should not do as other women do," testifies to her perceived superior strength of will, unique among women who generally lead "stupid" lives because "they never do what they like" (57). Gwendolen feels certain that her marriage to Grandcourt will provide "The brilliant position she had longed for, the imagined freedom she would create for herself in marriage" (262). Her certainty comes from a sort of wishful thinking encouraged by Grandcourt's deceptively quiet style. His imminently measured way of speaking and the fact that he "behaves perfectly" (264) toward her and her family while courting leads Gwendolen to think of him "as a man over whom she was going to have indefinite power" (265). Her feelings for Grandcourt are of little consequence to Gwendolen, only that he not be dull: "her loving him having never been a question with her, any agreeableness he had was so much gain" (265). The primary reason for the insignificance of the question is because the question is no longer an issue

for Gwendolen by the time she accepts Grandcourt—she has already decided that she is incapable of love.

Gwendolen concludes that her capacity for loving is marred during the painful episode in which her cousin, Rex Gascgoine, declares himself to her. When he confesses his love, Gwendolen's reaction is "passionately averse to this volunteered love" (67). Yet, she fears her own reaction. "Sobbing bitterly," she confesses to her mother, "I shall never love anybody. I can't love people. I hate them" (68). Gwendolen's fear of her inability to love springs from the same source as her fear of solitude and isolation. Just as she felt "incapable of asserting herself" before the immensity of the universe, she feels incapable of returning love and dreads the agency-constraining consequences of surrendering to it. Like her fear of her place in the universe, Gwendolen fears love because it requires relinquishing control; but, just as she actually desires significance in the wider world, she also desires to love.

We can see this subconscious desire through her acknowledgement of Rex's feelings; indeed, her awareness of his devastation over her crushing response to his declaration of love elicits familiar feelings of dread and isolation in Gwendolen. After the encounter, Gwendolen asks her mother, "what can become of my life? There is nothing worth living for!" (67, 68). Besides the emotional and psychological issues surrounding her capacity for loving, she knows that as a woman in upper-class English society her "worth" is tied to her marriage—that her life can "become" something only if she makes the right match. Gwendolen fears that her reaction to Rex's love will not change with a change in suitor. She, therefore, resigns herself to marrying a man she finds agreeable rather than one she loves.

Eliot's narrator suggests that the homeless state of Gwendolen's psyche, which suppresses her ability to love deeply, combined with her intensely passionate nature, results in heightened emotion pulsing just below the skin: this electric emotional life resonates through her body manifesting in a sensitivity to touch. When Rex reveals his love for Gwendolen, she "objected, with a sort of physical repulsion, to being directly made love to" (57). She finds being "adored" at a distance preferable to the reality of open courtship because this ritual represents the potential loss of her independence as an unmarried young woman. As the narrator puts it, "there was a certain fierceness of maidenhood in her" (57). While this comment along with other veiled references Eliot provides could be construed as a fear of the physical act of sex, her position as a Helmholtzian "nervous piano," a resonating subject sensitive to invisible touch, suggests that rather than frigid Victorian female dread, Gwendolen's fear stems from the dearth of positive intimate, familial relationships on which she might model a marriage. In other words, she shrinks not so much from sexual contact but more from the emotional intimacy implied in the sex act because she had no early knowledge or guidance on how to relate to another on intimate terms. She has not yet learned to hear "the living world." This knowledge gap is the result of her geographic and psychological homelessness.

Eliot dramatizes this emotional alienation and its relation to touch in her descriptions of Gwendolen's reaction to Rex's intimate expression: Gwendolen's "perception that poor Rex wanted to be tender made her curl up and harden like a sea-anemone at the touch of a finger" (66). This simile highlights Gwendolen's need for a defense mechanism as protection from intimacy. It is an ironic comparison since the sea-anemone, which according to the Oxford English Dictionary was also called an "Animal

flower," remains fixed to rock formations in the ocean whereas Gwendolen floats along a current from location to location. George Eliot intends to evoke Gwendolen's feeling of being cornered or trapped—perhaps dragged down into the depths—by Rex's "tenderness."

Eliot suggests that Gwendolen's homeless emotional state is aggravated early in her life due to the absence of a stable male authority figure. And although she provides very few details regarding these childhood experiences, Eliot includes strategic clues with vaguely menacing rhetoric. For instance, Gwendolen's father died when she was still too young to remember him, and Mrs. Davilow remarried a man that Gwendolen found "unlovable" (17). A later reference to the stepfather's unscrupulous character comes in a remark by the narrator who notes, "he had carried off his wife's jewellery and disposed of it" (233).[8] This small revelation gives some credence to Gwendolen's aversion to him as substantial.

An even more telling revelation about her stepfather is Gwendolen's description of her thoughts and feelings in the boat with Grandcourt just before he drowns. Sitting in the boat with Grandcourt, "full of rage" at being forced to make the trip, Gwendolen recalls to Daniel that she "did not like [her] father-in-law to come home" (596). She is associating her feelings about her stepfather with her feelings about the man whom we have witnessed emotionally terrorizing Gwendolen throughout the novel. Guilt by association is not unqualified proof of abusive behavior by Mr. Davilow, but it is certainly suggestive.

At the very least, we can assume that her stepfather did not provide the kind of fatherly affection and guidance Gwendolen craves. The absence of an effective authority

figure (her mother is too timid and fearful of Gwendolen's moods to provide parental stability) and a fixed, rooted home-life hinders Gwendolen's ability to form strong emotional bonds. She perceives them as a restriction on her agency. While she unconsciously craves an authority figure, Gwendolen never considers Grandcourt in this respect. Her attraction to him, beyond the fact he is "not disgusting," is that he offers material stability for her as well as her mother and sisters (264). But, importantly, she believes that she can have both the stability he offers *and* the freedom she desires. Her hopes for attaining both through her marriage to Grandcourt are dashed through Lydia Glasher's letter.

Gwendolen's violent emotional reaction to Lydia's cutting letter, which accompanies Grandcourt's family diamonds, marks the beginning of Gwendolen's spiritual and moral paradigm shift. To emphasize the terrifying nature of a dramatic, sudden shift in perception, George Eliot utilizes gothic techniques and highlights Gwendolen's gothic sensibilities. Her receipt of the diamonds and the letter is not enough to elicit Gwendolen's terror. But when Grandcourt enters the room "the sight of him brought a new nervous shock, and Gwendolen screamed again and again with hysterical violence" (303). While in this instance the sense of sight rather than sound elicits her terror, it is the sight of a man who uses silence and linguistic vagueness as a tool of control or, depending on the circumstances, as a weapon. As Andrew Dowling points out, Grandcourt performs the "type of brutality that is primarily conveyed through silence" (323). Lydia Glasher's letter serves as the violent blow to Gwendolen and inscribes her as "the guilty and terrified Gothic heroine who must now accept her inheritance and make the penance for her sin" (Gates 712). Grandcourt does not need to deliver this blow

himself. Grandcourt is aware Gwendolen possesses the knowledge of his illicit family and marries him anyway, yet he says nothing. He thereby implicates her in his tawdriness, in effect, through silence.

The letter from Lydia Glasher seals Gwendolen's fate as an imprisoned Gothic heroine under the control of a man who desires power for power's sake. As the narrator points out, "With the reading of that letter had begun her husband's empire of fear" (364). Grandcourt rules his empire through skillful establishment of mastery—the very thing Gwendolen believes she will attain over Grandcourt in marriage. His mastery comes from Gwendolen's (and readers') perception that he is capable of anything, including violence, if he feels his control is threatened. Indeed, when Gwendolen resists wearing the diamonds, she imagines, "that white hand of his capable […] of clinging round her neck and threatening to throttle her" (366). Grandcourt is able to establish his authority very quickly and effectively: "Already, in seven short weeks […] her husband had gained a mastery which she could no more resist that she could have resisted the benumbing effect from the touch of a torpedo" (363). The phallic symbol of the torpedo, which, ironically, through its explosive destruction has a "benumbing effect" on Gwendolen, suggests that any physical sensation Gwendolen might be susceptible to is deadened in her sexual relations with her husband. Unlike the sea-anemone, which responded to touch because of its sensitivity, Gwendolen is insensitive to Grandcourt's marital touch. The Gothic heroine's great fear of sexual violation by her captor is realized for Gwendolen, but she has consented.

Her violation as well as her compliance is symbolized by the Grandcourt family diamonds. Instead of the "righteousness" bestowed on the heroines in "silly novels,"

(Pinney 302), the diamonds Gwendolen inherits mark the "trace of demon ancestry" the narrator attributes to her (55). Just after their marriage, Grandcourt and Gwendolen attend a weekend gathering at Hugo Mallinger's Diplow estate where Grandcourt forces Gwendolen to wear the diamonds not only as a "crown," but also "on her neck, in her ears, in her hair" (348). Grandcourt brands her with the diamonds as he himself "fasten[s] them as he would" in order to show her that he has the power to maintain his mastery over her body; nearly every part of Gwendolen's upper body is inscribed with the shameful, humiliating mark (366). However, Gwendolen is able to keep her composure with her head held high. On this occasion Daniel perceives that she receives "greetings with what seemed a proud cold quietude and a superficial smile" and that "there seemed to be at work within her the same demonic force that had possessed her when she took him in her resolute glance and turned away a loser from the gaming-table" (348). Gwendolen was similarly in trouble at that time, the time Daniel first saw her; she was running from Grandcourt after finding out about Lydia Glasher when Daniel first sees her gambling at Leubronn.

Daniel's retrieval of Gwendolen's lost turquoise necklace at Leubronn sets in motion Gwendolen's new understanding of the possibilities of mastery. Over time, Gwendolen comes to hear in Daniel's voice the "sounds and accents" of the home that Eliot's narrator laments has been denied her. Daniel represents for Gwendolen that "external voice," as Karen Mann characterizes it, and comes to represent for Gwendolen the moral Symbolic Order. Through Daniel's influence, Gwendolen fine-tunes her ability to "hear the living world speaking" and begins to develop ways to "answer that external voice." She does this by coming to terms with her psychological homelessness through

the recognition of her spiritual, emotional emptiness. Eliot's emphasis on Gwendolen's physicality throws into high relief Daniel's more ethereal methods of dealing with his own sense of homelessness.

3. "Dwelling place of lost souls": Symapthy, Telepathy, and Science

Just as the novel traces Gwendolen's painful spiritual maturation, it also traces Daniel's search for a satisfying way of making his way in the material world and of finding a home— and his counsel to Gwendolen is a step on this journey. Daniel's spiritual and ethical mentorship of Gwendolen prefigures his future vocation as medium in the struggle for a Jewish state, a Jewish man raised as an English aristocrat, and, therefore, a man with a foot in both worlds. To highlight Daniel's position between two worlds, Eliot often surrounds him in ghostly language. For example, in a description of Daniel's internal struggle to find an appropriate vocation that could incorporate his deep mystical tendencies, Eliot combines his propensity for intellectualism with his emotional nature through metaphors of ghostliness:

> He was ceasing to care for knowledge—he had no ambition for practice—unless they could both be gathered up into one current with his emotions; and he dreaded, as if it were a dwelling-place of lost souls, that dead anatomy of culture which turns the universe into a mere ceaseless answer to queries, and knows, not everything, but everything else about everything. (308)

This "dwelling-place of lost souls" represents the deadening quality of high-bred English culture in which both Daniel and Gwendolen reside—the place against which she unconsciously rebels and the one in which he feels threatens his own actualization.

A few sentences later the narrator articulates Daniel's longing to be "an organic part of social life, instead of roaming in it like a yearning disembodied spirit, stirred with a vague social passion, but without fixed local habitation to render fellowship real" (308). Daniel, like a ghost, is of this world and otherworldly at the same time. Like a ghost, he is in search of a home, and his sense of homelessness figures into his subjectivity as a Jew as well as an adoptee. For Daniel, both of these subject positions entail an outward search for a kind of familial or spiritual community that seems unavailable because his double identity occupies more than one world.

At this point in the narrative, Daniel knows that he is adopted, but he has no idea that he is Jewish. However, it is at this point that he is drawn to a synagogue at Frankfort in an attempt to understand the Jewish faith for the sake of a deepening understanding of Mirah, the Jewish girl he saves from suicide and for whom he has a growing affection. Daniel is deeply moved by his experience there, mostly because of what he hears:

> The Hebrew liturgy, like others, has its transitions of litany, lyric, proclamation, dry statement and blessing; but this evening all were one for Deronda: the chant of the *Chazan's* or Reader's grand wide-ranging voice with its passage from monotony to sudden cries, the outburst of sweet boys' voices from the little quire, the devotional swaying of men's bodies backwards and forwards, the very commonness of the building and shabbiness of the scene where a national faith, which had penetrated the thinking of half the world, and moulded the splendid forms of that world's religion, was finding a remote, obscure echo—all were blent for him as one expression of a binding history, tragic and yet glorious. (310)

The sounds to which Daniel reacts most deeply are the *voices* associated with the Jewish ritual. The "chant," the "wide-ranging voice," the "cries," and the voices of the "sweet boys" form a web of interconnected but distinct sounds that combine to create cultural, racial, and religious memory. George Eliot's evocation of memory here is most evident in her use of the word "echo" to describe how Daniel absorbs what he hears. Because echoes continue to perpetuate a sound even after the original one has died out, they connote an ephemeral, ghostly trace—or as Wordsworth puts it, a "Spirit aerial." What Dickens implies, Eliot makes explicit: ghosts represent the spiritual manifestation of memory through their liminal existences.

The "remote, obscure echo" of those "splendid forms" that make up the whole of Judaism and that haunts Daniel suggests the incarnation of a racial and cultural past struggling for a future through Daniel's consciousness. Karen Mann stresses the public/private dichotomy the synagogue scene enacts when she notes, "The public character of the ritual […] connects [Daniel's] private ordeal with a larger social group, allowing each to get beyond self by means of the very intensity of that sense of self" (76). However, Daniel is not yet ready to open himself to the possibility that the scene he sonically witnesses is an integral part of his identity—the identity Mordecai mysteriously intuits upon their first meeting. He has no objective, rational evidence for Mordecai's assertion, yet Daniel experiences this intensely personal connection to the Jewish faith through its religious ritual. Both Mordecai's and Daniel's prescient intuitions reflect Eliot's gothic logic because the narrative begins to show that Daniel may indeed be Jewish—these intuitions make sense. Indeed, Daniel is so deeply affected that "He wonders at the strength of his own feeling; it seemed beyond the occasion—what one

might imagine to be a divine influx in the darkness, before there was any vision to interpret" (310). In this analogy, the visual sense is a useless tool for understanding the ghostly or the spiritual.

Daniel is "in the dark," so to speak, without any rational explanation for his feeling, resulting in a sense of alienation. Rather than feeling a sense of community after the incident, Daniel feels isolated:

> But with the cessation of the devotional sounds and the movement of many indifferent faces and vulgar figures before him there darted into his mind the frigid idea that he had probably been alone in his feeling, and perhaps the only person in the congregation for whom the service was more than a dull routine. (311)

This chilling result highlights Eliot's exploration of the problem presented by the irrational and the uncanny in relation to the rational and the verifiable. The split between phenomena and noumena extends to issues of subjectivity. Eliot brings Daniel back to earth by undercutting his idealism and having him question its validity, despite the scene's obvious foreshadowing function—Daniel's "true" identity is eventually revealed. But, as Da Sousa Correa points out, Eliot shows that "The resurrection of inherited racial memory does not preclude personal fragmentation" (175). In fact, this example illustrates that uncanny experiences may actually perpetuate fragmentation if the irrational and the rational continue to be perceived as irreconcilable.

Just as Dickens's was concerned with the role of epistemology in a unified subject in David Copperfield, Eliot seeks to understand various aspects of epistemology in order to explore philosophical questions surrounding the possibility of reconciling the

fragmented self. One of the book's projects is to assert the rationality of that which cannot be explained because the nature of unexplained (not unexplainable) phenomena gets at the heart of evolutionary science, physiology, and psychology—discourses that Eliot uses throughout her fiction, including Daniel Deronda. In this text, though, Eliot utilizes discourses of the gothic and the supernatural alongside those of science, echoing the tension between the gothic and the realistic strains that permeates all aspects of the novel including theme, characterization, structure, and genre. These discourses coalesce under the umbrella of gothic logic.

A meeting place for the rational and irrational strands of gothic logic resides in Eliot's conception of "sympathy." Sympathy involves an individual's ability to enter into another's feelings to the extent that he or she can actually feel and thereby understand the other's emotions. However, sympathy, itself, presents the possibility of a violent or vampiric emotional action. As Marc Redfield notes, sympathy enacts an aesthetic process of substitution, which results in a gothic metaphorical structure. This conception of sympathy's capacity to appropriate another's emotion can be traced to the Romantic tradition back to Edmund Burke's The Sublime and the Beautiful:

> For sympathy must be considered as a sort of substitution, by which we are put in the place of another man, and affected in many respects as he is affected. […] It is by this principle chiefly that painting, and other affecting arts, transfuse their passions from one breast to another, and are often capable of grafting a delight on wretchedness, misery, and death itself. (40-41)

Burke's classic text on gothic aesthetics points to an important component of those sensibilities: namely, the appropriation of another's emotional life and, consequently, the possibility of appropriating his or her subject position.[9]

Sympathy hovers in the interstices of nineteenth-century gothic and realist techniques. It contains the capacity for an extreme form of mimesis, which, pushed to its limits, ultimately breaks down the representation of experience and creates, instead, affective gothic or sensational experiences among characters within the text and between the text and the reader. Redfield discusses the realist/gothic dialectic contained in sympathy through the terms "natural" and "unnatural." He argues that

> By the very fact that it is a substitutive process, sympathy incorporates an unnatural, technical element into its naturalness, thereby ensuring that a certain violence will always qualify sympathy's occurrence. Sympathy seizes and dis-places: through an unnatural excess of naturalness […] sympathy destabilizes and threatens to destroy the subject it defines. (137)

This "violence" can be as subtle as a shift in perception resulting from a pregnant pause, a silent, telling facial expression, or a kind deed. Gwendolen, as a subject of Daniel's sympathy, suffers an intense identity crisis while under his instruction. His sympathy is a vehicle for her transformation from a self-absorbed girl to a spiritually-aware woman, a painful transformation precipitated upon Daniel's first act of sympathy toward Gwendolen—his return of her pawned necklace.

Daniel's highly attuned sympathy for others, his ability to detect unarticulated pain, helps to account for Eliot's use of ghostly language in her representation of him. His ghostliness coupled with his sympathetic nature, in part, explains the "unnatural

element" in Daniel Deronda. Daniel demonstrates this capability most often in his private exchanges with Gwendolen. In one encounter at a social event (the circumstances under which most of their encounters take place), while in a vulnerable state, she displays "such an appealing look of sadness, so utterly different from the chill effort of her recognition at table, that his speech was checked" (352). Gwendolen's frosty demeanor during dinner was an effort to maintain her poise before Grandcourt, who has an uncanny ability to detect her "unnatural" feelings for Daniel even though he has neither the imagination nor the sympathy to understand their nature. It never occurs to Grandcourt that Daniel supplies much-needed guidance to Gwendolen. He sees the relationship as only an inappropriate flirtation. His behavior-reading skills, then, are the opposite of sympathy since they are limited in scope and register only immoral or nefarious motives.

By contrast, Daniel's sympathetic capacity registers his profound morality, which the narrator articulates in this passage:

> For what was an appreciable space of time to both, though observation of others could not have measured it, they looked at each other—she seeming to take the deep rest of confession, he with an answering depth of sympathy that neutralized other feelings. (352)

The "depth of sympathy" Daniel possesses eliminates any impropriety in his relations with Gwendolen. In fact, the narrator underscores this by noting that Gwendolen's "feelings had turned […] this man […] into a priest" (369).[10] He sees her as a woman in distress, and the desire to help her with the existential crisis he intuits supercedes the romantic and sexual desire he harbors for her. We could read this as such a heightened

level of sympathetic ability as to be "unnatural." As in her portrayal of Dorthea Brooke, Eliot portrays Daniel as so close to perfection as to be otherworldly.

Sympathy is closely connected to telepathy, which was a growing Victorian preoccupation. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the word "telepathy" first appeared in 1882 and was coined by F.W.H Myers. Myers was a co-founder of the Society for Psychical Research along with Edmund Gurney, and both men were friends of George Eliot and George Henry Lewes. They defined "telepathy" as a term "to cover all cases of impression received at a distance without the normal operation of the recognized sense organs" (Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research, I. ii. 147, qtd. in Royle). Even though the word "telepathy" is not in use during Eliot's lifetime, it clearly owes its conceptual existence to sympathy, which has its roots in Romanticism. Nicholas Royle argues that "the historical appearance of 'telepathy' could be viewed as the inevitable outcome, or hyperbolization, of the importance accorded to 'sympathy' in Romanticism" (5). He explains that the two terms become interchangeable as the century progresses so that "telepathy" "comes to stand in for what a few years earlier had been designated 'sympathetic clairvoyance'" (5).

While she was highly suspicious of spiritualism in general,[11] Eliot clearly found the idea of telepathy intriguing as she reveals in an 1852 letter to George Combe:

> We get impatient of phenomena which do not link on to our previous knowledge, and of which the laws are so latent as to forbid even the formation of a hypothesis concerning them. This and the great mass of loose statement and credulity which surround the whole subject of mesmerism repel many minds from it which are anything but bigoted or

> unenlightened. But indications of clair-voyance witnessed by a competent observer are of thrilling interest and give me a restless desire to get at more extensive and satisfactory evidence. (*GEL*, VIII 45)

The fact that Eliot mildly disparages otherwise open-minded people who resist clairvoyance reflects her assertion that rational and irrational forces can function together to apprehend phenomena. Eliot views the rationalist denial of this possibility as narrow-minded because it dismisses her philosophy on gothic logic's role in science. She identifies mesmerism and clairvoyance as phenomena for which people have no frame of reference; their "laws" are "latent," hindering the "formation of a hypothesis." This language sounds very much like that of a scientist attempting to understand some natural system or organism.

Scientific discourse often accompanies moments in the novel that suggest instances of extraordinary psychic phenomena such as telepathy or clairvoyance. Sympathetic clairvoyance or telepathy is the metaphysical version of sympathetic vibration that so affected Gwendolen physically and the psychic phenomenon that accounts for many of the "coincidences" in the novel. Along with sympathetic vibration, sympathetic clairvoyance is a nexus of the scientific, acoustic, and supernatural discourses we have observed in the text.

One striking example of the interjection of scientific discourse in scenes that involve telepathic or clairvoyant activities is Eliot's description of Mordecai on Blackfriars Bridge as he recognizes Daniel rowing down the river toward him. The narrator notes that on seeing Daniel from the bridge Mordecai's "inward prophecy was fulfilled" (422). To describe his elation over this discovery, Eliot likens Mordecai to an

excited scientist: “His exultation was not widely different from that of the experimenter, bending over the first stirrings of change that correspond to what in the fervour of concentrated prevision his thought has foreshadowed” (422). Here Eliot connects the scientist’s process to the unexplainable powers of mind. Similarly, in her epigram to the first chapter of the book, which sets the tone for the rest of the novel, Eliot likens science to Poetry because they both require “the make-believe of a beginning.” In other words, both are creative processes starting from a seemingly arbitrary point or hypothesis—a “what would happen if…” moment followed through upon the scientist’s or artist’s conviction of its validity. Science and telepathy share this quality of conviction—or faith. My assertion that the scientist’s passionate faith in his hypothesis amounts to conviction or certainty is similar to George Levine’s, who points out that this idea of hypothesis is necessary for the narrative to connect Gwendolen’s and Mordecai’s plotlines because it highlights the role of imagination and sympathy: “Without the intense energies of feeling that allow us to experience an absent object as though it were present, there would be no science. Without faith there could be no science” (25).

Eliot’s argument is that faith in that which falls outside common experience is an essential component for an ethical life; it is also an important ingredient in gothic logic. Daniel Deronda continually exhibits this quality. His reception of Mordecai’s belief in him as his long-waited-for spiritual descendant reflects Eliot’s views on the virtues of accepting gothic logic. Daniel does not simply decide that Mordecai is “liable to hallucinations of thought” nor does he assume that he is a “monomaniac” (423). In fact, the narrator points out that Daniel’s “nature was too large, too ready to conceive regions beyond his own experience, to rest at once in the easy explanation, ‘madness,’ whenever

a consciousness showed some fullness and conviction where his own was blank" (424). Daniel's ability to "conceive regions beyond his own experience" harkens back to Eliot's letter of 1852 that expresses her interest in mesmerism and implies the necessity of faith in "phenomena which do not link on to our previous knowledge" for fuller, more rounded human experience. Faith in the validity of another's experiences and feelings has as its core the capacity for sympathy.

Because of the close connection between sympathy/telepathy and listening/hearing, Eliot uses the hearing sense to emphasize the profound feeling between Mordecai and Daniel. Shortly after the scene on the bridge, Daniel and Mordecai go to the Cohen's bookstore where Mordecai works. During the ensuing exchange, Eliot asks readers to visualize the two men as they view each other:

> In ten minutes the two men, with as intense a consciousness as if they had been two undeclared lovers, felt themselves alone in the small gas-lit book-shop and turned face to face, each baring his head from an instinctive feeling that they wished to see each other more fully. (424)

This scene recalls the one between Daniel and Gwendolen when she silently "confesses" to him with a look; however, the description of this meeting between Daniel and Mordecai contains a more intense erotic charge than the one between him and Gwendolen because the attraction between Daniel and Gwendolen is obvious and needs no emphasis. Indeed, to overplay their attraction would detract from the subtlety Eliot strives for in depicting their relationship. She can afford, however, a stronger hand when describing Daniel's and Mordecai's interaction since she needs to convince the reader that Mordecai is worth Daniel's curiosity and attention. Showing the two men visually or

"face to face," eying each other, as it were, helps Eliot establish their fascination for one another.

However, Daniel's more profound reaction to Mordecai is registered in how Daniel hears him and his openness to what he hears. In the same paragraph as the "undeclared lovers" description, Eliot likens Mordecai to a dying mother who sees her son for the last time; she portrays the moment as one in which "the flickering power of gladness leaps out as she says, "My boy!" (425). Eliot goes on to make a point about the nature of spiritual descendence: "the sense of spiritual perpetuation in another resembles that maternal transference of self" (425). It is important that the visual representation of the mother/Mordecai image is less a factor in the "transference" than the words this figure speaks. The subject of this spiritual transmission is inscribed not by the name of the father but rather through the naming by the mother.

Using the same narrative structure in the next paragraph, Eliot first describes Daniel visually to highlight the stark contrast of his youth, health, and good looks to that of the consumptive, prematurely aging Mordecai. She then depicts the invisible "more exquisite quality of Deronda's nature," which is his "keenly perceptive sympathetic emotiveness" (425). Eliot explains that while Daniel does not completely trust in Mordecai's faith that he is the one Mordecai has been waiting for, he nevertheless "felt a […] profound sensibility to a cry from the depths of another soul" (425). Again, Daniel is moved by what he hears, even if in this case the cry is metaphorical (later the cries he reacts to from Gwendolen are all too literal). Karen Mann discusses the importance of cries in Eliot's fiction, pointing out that they are often "intended more as an expression of feeling than as directed speech. The relative helplessness of the caller adds a poignancy

and urgency to the call" (75). The gaze can pierce, but a piercing cry is much more likely to result in "shivering flesh" as Wordsworth puts it. And, if one is particularly receptive to cries as Deronda is, then the impulse to end the sufferer's torment that causes the cry is all the more imperative.

4. "That Electric Discharge": Ancestry and Electric Reception

Daniel responds to the cries of helpless individuals through his wide capacity to be receptive to their feelings and his aversion to judging them. Eliot praises Daniel's "receptiveness" calling it "a rare and massive power, like fortitude" (425). Receptiveness is a precursor to sympathy, for to feel another's emotions requires an openness for those emotions to seep into the receiver's consciousness. It is the receptive quality of sympathy that aligns it with the hearing sense. Receptiveness does not lend itself easily to regulation or censorship in the same way that hearing is not readily shut off. Unwelcome or frightening visions can be mitigated by turning away or closing one's eyes, but it is much more difficult to stop one's ears. Similarly, one cannot always choose the emotions to be received nor can one choose the individual with whom the emotions originated. This leaves a receiver vulnerable and allows for the possibility of an unintentional violence similar to the violence discussed earlier as a consequence of sympathy, except instead of the violence being done to the object of sympathy, the violation is perpetuated against the receptive consciousness taking in the waves of another's feelings.[12]

Receptivity, sympathy, and telepathy represent for Eliot modes of communication that do not rely on the visual for the apprehension of messages; instead, those messages are transmitted through the invisible forces at work in those communicative pathways. These forces are like sound waves in that they travel invisibly and, according to

Helmholtz, can be understood only with training. Helmholtz asserted that sensations had to be interpreted—like language. He explains his position in Science and Culture in machinic terms, arguing that "nerve fibers and telegraph wires are equally striking examples to illustrate the doctrine that the same causes may under different conditions, produce different results" (qtd. in Otis 44). This is the case because neither the nerve nor the wire determines the meaning of the external stimuli; indeed that skill is left up to the brain or the telegrapher. So, the analytic and interpretive abilities of "people were limited by the sensitivity of their instruments" (Otis 42). Since people have varying degrees of sympathetic capacities, they will necessarily vary in their ability to understand others. For Eliot, those who seek to hone their sympathetic skills (as Daniel teaches Gwendolen) and connect with others' feelings ultimately enhance their moral lives. But, this path requires receptiveness or conduits to receive those invisible messages. Eliot expresses a metonymic relationship between sympathy and nervous systems, both of which exist within a network of relationships.

Both literary and scientific writers in the nineteenth-century use various forms of web and connection metaphors in their work, in large part because of the relatively new communications and transportation technologies such as the telegraph and the railways. These technologies infiltrated the culture to such a great extent that they became useful rhetorical figures for relating difficult concepts to laypeople. The imminently clear consequences of these technologies—quicker travel times and message transmission—made for an effective metaphor on both literal and abstract levels. Laura Otis explains,

> By facilitating communications, these growing networks increased people's awareness of their connections to others. If people could see

> themselves as cross-points in a social network instead of as isolated particles, they might overcome their intrinsic selfishness and develop the higher moral quality of sympathy. In Eliot's eyes, one fostered sympathy through knowledge and experience of others, and England's new communications networks offered both. (81)

Web metaphors offered an easily accessible vehicle that aptly captured the importance George Eliot places on various forms of communication and how communication functions in society.[13]

For example, Eliot argues in "The Influence of Rationalism" that superstitious beliefs become edged out by new communications technologies, which create "new highways for events and ideas" and with which "the interests, the affections, and the habits of the multitude are inextricably interwoven" (Pinney 402). She comments on the societal impulses that result, on the one hand, in the duping of superstitious believers by swindlers involved in commercial spiritualism and, on the other, the powerful interpersonal effects of modern communication and transportation technology:

> No séances at a guinea a head for the sake of being pinched by 'Mary Jane' can annihilate railways, steamships, and electric telegraphs, which are demonstrating the interdependence of all human interests, and making self-interest a duct for sympathy. (Pinney 402)

George Eliot suggests here that a personal desire for communication that results in commercial exploitation cannot compete with the very real communicative effects of technological advances. She suggests they provide a channel through which sympathy

may travel as a result of exposure to different kinds of people and less familiar ways of life.

The idea of channels, conduits, or paths through which sympathy travels corresponds to the kinds of media necessary for electricity to travel. In fact, George Eliot occasionally uses electricity in Deronda as a metaphor to highlight particularly dynamic or intense expressions of emotion and sympathetic resonance. A good example is Gwendolen's reaction to her mother's touch, which "had the effect of an electric charge," after her scare during the Hermione *tableau vivante* (49). We noted earlier in this chapter that in this scene, the electric shock Gwendolen suffered was in part due to the combination of the strong sound of the piano and the vision of the dead face picture.

Similarly, after a speech from Daniel regarding the importance of acquiring wider sympathy in order to move "beyond the small drama of personal desires," Gwendolen "looked startled and thrilled as by an electric shock" (387). As in the Hermione scene, Gwendolen's electric experience is a result of what she hears. The narrator says that Daniel delivers his speech with "a touch of indignant severity," a tone which Gwendolen would find foreign in her discourse with Deronda (387). Eliot wants not only the content of Daniel's advice to shock Gwendolen, but also the way she hears it: the "half-indignant remonstrance that vibrated in Deronda's voice" made her feel like a child "shaken out of its wailings into awe" (387-88). Daniel's chastisement of Gwendolen resonated in his voice through a vibration, which hung in the air like a ghostly "third presence" that "had arrested them" (388). This vocal vibration can be characterized as Helmholtz's sympathetic vibration, which would account for Gwendolen's keen reception of it, given her highly-tuned sensitivity to touch and sound.

Daniel is also susceptible to the power of electric charge, with much less volatility than Gwendolen though with no less emotion. His experience when he meets Joseph Kalonymos to collect his dead grandfather's papers suggests the sublimity and awe consistent with an adoptee when confronted with a representative or symbol of his biological ancestry. After Daniel's profound disappointment in his mother's reception and subsequent rejection of him, meeting his grandfather's best friend "wrought strongly on Deronda's imaginative susceptibility" because, through his mother, he knew his grandfather's attitude toward Judaism was consistent with Mordecai's and his own (616). He also came to Kalonymos with the knowledge that his grandfather longed for progeny to carry on his faith and mission. So to be "in the presence of one linked still in zealous friendship with the grandfather whose hope had yearned towards him when he was unborn, and who though dead was yet to speak with him in those written memorials" was like "touching the electric chain of his own ancestry" (616-17). Through the figure of Kalonymos and the chest containing Charisi's family papers, Daniel feels such a profound sense of belonging—of having found his spiritual home—that the emotion comes to him as electricity. The whole of his heritage is available to him through the penetrating effects of the electric medium.

Both electricity and sympathetic vibration share the quality of invisibility coupled with physiological sensation in George Eliot's rendering—electricity is detected through the sense of touch while sympathetic vibration results in the hearing sense through touch. The "electric chain" that Daniel touches refers to the accumulation of material experience gathered up in his Jewish lineage and passed down to him—as the shock of static electricity passes from person to person with their bodies as conduits.

This scientific and genealogical discourse that Eliot uses to express the force of Daniel's newfound knowledge of his racial and cultural ancestry finds its power in the very materiality of those discourses. William Baker explains that part and parcel of the evolutionary philosophy shared by thinkers such as Herbert Spencer, George Henry Lewes, as well as George Eliot, is the belief that "the organism itself is the product of history and has become part of the history of the race" (Baker 67). Past, present, and future, then, are bound together because "sense data which man experiences are intimately related to the past as well as the present" (Baker 66). Evolutionary thought prompts Eliot to use a similar circular structure of time in Daniel Deronda as Dickens, under the influence of Charles Babbage, used in David Copperfield. Daniel's previous ignorance of his race, therefore, contributed to the indeterminacy of his future—his vocation settled on only after he discovers his Jewishness. Because he was cut off from his hereditary past, his present could not be shaped by it adequately, to say nothing of his future. He always, however, had an unconscious access to it through what Lewes called in Problems of Life and Mind "inherited intuitions" (qtd. in Baker 67).

Daniel describes to Mordecai the paradox inherent in the structure of an adoptee's identity—that of an absent presence which takes the form of an existential intuition. He explains that the ghost of his past is ever-present—exists as a preternatural "knowing"—but requires an external stimulus to make itself known. He likens this feeling to that of a

> stolen offspring of some mountain tribe brought up in a city of the plain, or one with an inherited genius for painting, and born blind—the ancestral life would lie within them as a dim longing for unknown objects and sensations, and the spell-bound habit of their inherited frames would be

> like a cunningly-wrought musical instrument, never played on, but quivering throughout in uneasy mysterious moanings of its intricate structure that, under the right touch, gives music. (642)

This analogy represents a microcosm of some of the themes we have observed in the text: the material yet ethereal nature of acoustics as embodied in sympathetic vibration and the role of heredity in identity formation. The body acts as a receptacle for cultural experience as well as racial identity. Its "quivering" is like the vibration that creates sound, but until the right note is struck, the body, or the "inherited frame," can emit only "mysterious moanings"—ghostly, ephemeral sounds. We should recall Daniel's experience at the synagogue where he was so affected by the sounds of the Jewish liturgy and where he heard the chants, cries, and music in terms of ghosts and echoes—traces of an ancestry that continues to reverberate. Daniel's language highlights the subject position of many adoptees: when completely severed from their pasts prior to consciousness they are always already constructing an identity founded on the trace of an absent one and straining to hear its dim sounds.

George Eliot stresses that Daniel Deronda's double identity makes him particularly susceptible to intense sympathy. Since part of sympathy's function is to bridge gaps between people, she can use it as a psychological tool to bridge gaps between identities within the same character as well. Daniel's sympathetic attitude toward Mordecai and Mirah reflect that fact that he hears in them the voices of his heredity. In "Adoption in Silas Marner and Daniel Deronda," Marianne Novy explains that Eliot is concerned with how "sympathy brings what is distant close" and goes on to point out, "the strangers to whom sympathy brings Daniel close are in some ways already close to

him without his knowledge" (50). This telepathic knowledge is fairly obvious in terms of the Jewish characters given his Jewish origin. It is perhaps less obvious in the case of Daniel's sympathy for Gwendolen Harleth.

5. "I saw my wish outside me": Foreknowlege and the Future

Daniel feels compelled to save Gwendolen's spiritual life; in terms of the narrative saving Gwendolen is the sympathetic act he could not perform for his mother. Gwendolen and Alcharisi are similar in that they are both strong-willed, independent women, and the implicit suggestion in the text is that Daniel is drawn to Gwendolen because his mother's voice resonates through Gwendolen's spirit. Daniel subconsciously recognizes this unknown voice due to the web-like connections between ancestry, sympathy, and telepathy. While Gwedolen aspires to Alcharisi's power to make her own choices, eschewing societal conventions, she has not the practical or psychological tools to take the kinds of bold steps Daniel's mother has. As Gillian Beer puts it in Darwin's Plots, Gwendolen, unlike Alcharisi who possesses great artistic talent, "enters the feminist challenge to her prescribed lot without any sort of theoretical or practical *consciousness*. She is eventually liberated by her frantic unconscious" (211). Her proclivity for fear and dread is her "frantic unconscious" manifesting prescient or telepathic capabilities—a capability that she shares with Daniel and that brings them together as kindred spirits.

For example, we need only return to the Hermione tableau scene in which Gwendolen dissolves into "prophetic hysteria" at the sight of the picture of the dead face. Her prophesy is the drowning death of Grandcourt. When she tells Daniel the story of the boating accident, Gwendolen several times speaks of seeing Grandcourt's "dead face"

(590, 592). But, she also tells him “ever so long ago I saw it” (592). Her comment seems to suggest that she understands the prophetic meaning of the picture. However, this remark comes in the middle of her excited, disjointed utterances, which Eliot represents with dashes punctuating Gwendolen’s speeches so that it is difficult at first to determine how much she comprehends in her distraught state. But, then, in the same speech, she explains, “I felt beforehand I had done something dreadful, unalterable—that would make me like an evil spirit. And it came—it came” (592). Gwendolen confesses to Daniel that she knew Grandcourt would die before it happened and did nothing to stop it. In fact, her inaction probably precipitated his death, since she froze and neglected to throw the rope that could have saved him. Strangely, “it came” even though she felt that she had already committed the act—“it came” because, as she says, “I saw my wish outside me” (596). Past, present, and future become intertwined and confused as does Gwendolen’s narrative of events, which are infused with fear and terror.

The discourse of fear surrounding Gwendolen’s character emerges as a quality of a physiological and psychological faculty. It activates her prescience and her intuition, even if subconsciously. In fact, “fear is raised into consciousness and becomes for Gwendolen […] a mode of heightened apprehension, which can include prescience and freedom as well as obliterative terror” (Beer, Darwin’s Plots 216). Daniel wisely recognizes this trait in her and advises Gwendolen to “Take your fear into a safeguard. It is like the quickness of hearing” (388). Fear becomes an epistemological tool—a sixth sense for perceiving the world; it is like hearing in that both vibrate through Gwendolen’s body.

George Eliot uses Gwendoln's fear to invoke the Romantic literary convention of the sensitive gothic heroine, while Daniel's liminal subject position allows her to raise the specter of ghostliness. Through Hermann Helmholtz's acoustic science, especially sympathetic vibration, both of these techniques enable Eliot to marry the Romantic gothic tradition to Victorian rationalism, creating gothic logic to enhance her realist project. Eliot redefines the notion of realism by engaging in rational and irrational modes of discourse, anchoring the material in the body, while, at the same time, transcending it through the ephemeral trace of sound.

Notes

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[1] See also Alison Byerly's Realism, Representation, and the Arts in Nineteenth-Century Literature for a discussion of Wordsworth's and Coleridge's influence on Victorian writers in their use of hearing, especially music.

[2] "The Lifted Veil," The Mill on the Floss, as well as Daniel Deronda.

[3] See also Benard J. Paris's "George Eliot's Religion of Humanity" for a discussion of her views on positivism and subjectivism, religion and morality, especially in terms of her reading of Feuerbach.

[4] See F.R. Leavis's The Great Tradition. London: Chatto and Windus, 1948.

[5] Henry James found Eliot's portrayal of Grandcourt so convincing that he writes in a review of Daniel Deronda, "I can't imagine a more consummate representation of the most detestable kind of Englishman—the Englishman who thinks it low to articulate" (175).

[6] See Sally Shuttleworth's George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Science and Gillian Beer's Darwin's Plots for excellent discussions of George Eliot's work and science, generally, and science as a unifying principle in Daniel Deronda particularly.

[7] This concept is evident in Bleak House also.

[8] While Mr. Davilow's action would have been legal given England's property laws in the mid-nineteenth century, the narrative subtly denounces his behavior.

[9] This is the violence Wordsworth's poem on sound suggests as well as Coleridge's "Eolian Harp," Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind," and Keats' "Ode to a Nightingale."

[10] The relationship between Gwendolen and Daniel along with the inclusion of Grandcourt as an abusive husband represents an evolution of the similarly triangulated characters in "Janet's Repentance."

[11] Eliot refers to "spirit-rapping" as "odious trickery" (GEL, III 359).

[12] This is precisely the issue that George Eliot explores in "The Lifted Veil." In that story, Eliot recounts Latimer's painful nature of his relationship that occurs as a consequence of his telepathic abilities. Latimer has the ability to read minds, but he does not have the ability to choose the minds he reads. Others' thoughts simply come upon him "like a ringing in the ears not to be got rid of" or "like a preternaturally heightened sense of hearing, making audible to one a roar of sound where others find perfect stillness" (18). Latimer is receptive or sensitive to the thoughts of others, and his involuntary telepathy proves to emotionally and physically excruciating, leading to his death.

[13] See Laura Otis's Networking: Communicating with Bodies and Machines in the Nineteenth Century for an interesting discussion on webs in Middlemarch.

Chapter III

Haunting Sound Structures in Henry James's "The Altar of the Dead" and "In the Cage"

1. "The indispensable medium": Music and Technology

"The treatment by 'scene,' regularly, quite rhythmically recurs; the intervals between, the massing of the elements to a different effect and by a quite other law, remain, in this fashion, all preparative, just as the scenic occasions in themselves become, at a given moment, illustrative, each of the agents, true to its function, taking up the theme from the other very much as the fiddles, in an orchestra, may take it up from the cornets and flutes, or the wind-instruments take it up from the violins." (Preface to "In the Cage" xxi).

Henry James's comment on "scenes" in "In the Cage" is striking in its use of the extended musical metaphor. James employs a variety of metaphors in his criticism to describe the "organic" development of writing—he is particularly fond of gardening. The end of the above passage utilizes this cultivation metaphor: "the scenic passages are *wholly* and logically scenic, having for their rule of beauty the principle 'conduct,' the organic development, of a scene—the entire succession of values that flower and bear fruit on ground solidly laid for them" (158). James often mixes his metaphors in his Prefaces as well as the fiction itself. Rather than leading, though, to a muddy impression, the mixture adds texture to descriptions of how composition elements function together.

The music metaphor, however, dominates in this instance, emphasizing the lateral movement of development in fiction rather than the vertical movement the gardening metaphor suggests. The "scenes" are handed off from one set of instruments to another, "taking up the theme" from the previous instruments and marking it with a unique quality derived from the sound created by the peculiarities of those instruments. What makes James's use of this metaphor especially interesting is that, while music plays little or no role in "In the Cage," sound figures prominently through telegraphic technology. Conversely, the Preface to James's "The Altar of the Dead," a story in which music

registers the intensity of the themes involving loss, James employs the gardening metaphor instead of the music one.

This juxtaposition indicates that James believed both sound-producing technology and music phenomena consists of a shared structure, that they are underwritten by the same conceptual framework. That framework encompasses the lateral movement James elicits in his music passage but includes a mediating element born of "the intervals between." The gaps and silences that exist between the forces that James describes as musical instruments creates a triangulation, which applies to his conception of form as well as acoustic technology and music. The formal properties in James's "In the Cage" and "The Altar of the Dead" parallel the triangular structure of technology and music.

Mediums constitute an integral part of music and telegraphic technology, which share a tripartite structure that also includes a receiver and a producer. One-to-one communication is disrupted because the medium must translate or interpret what is being communicated. This disruption causes anxiety for the producer, the receiver, or both because meaning is mediated or translated by a third term, interrupting the direct interpretive and ideological work of the receiver. In turn, this anxiety produces the haunting or ghostly effect for the reader that hovers around and outside the triangular structure and can be accessed only by or through the medium.

In Henry James and the Ghostly, T.J. Lustig describes the structure of James's fiction as circular within which the central character's mediating function occurs. However, a triangular structure would be more accurate.[1] Lustig's circle-image is not entirely wrong because the three points on the triangle exists in shifting relation to one another. They shift in importance depending on a shift in perspective, but the same three

points remain consistent. This formulation suggests a Hegelian dialectic that elicits a third term, which mediates the energies of the binary. It is this synthesis that manifests as the central haunted consciousness—the mediums— in James's ghostly fiction.

In "The Altar of the Dead," James uses aural and musical language in order to emphasize the haunting nature of gaps and silence in aesthetics and ethical human relations. The main character, Stransom, creates an altar of candles to honor dead loved ones and feels close to them in their absence. An unnamed woman also frequents the church, utilizing Stransom's altar; they come to realize they both shared an intimate acquaintance with an old friend who wronged Stransom and is now dead. The woman chooses to honor her late lover, Acton Hague, on Stransom's altar—an act he cannot abide because he vows, "no flame could ever rise on any altar" of his (108). The fervor with which Stransom and his woman friend cling to the physical absence of their dead symbolizes their struggle over interpretive acts and how appropriate interpretive strategies mirror ethical modes of human interaction.

Like Stransom, the unnamed telegraphist in "In the Cage" creates and interprets meaning through aural signals. The telegraph machine's clicking sounds and the cage housing the machine together create the ghostly atmosphere in which the telegraphist transcribes, sends, and receives messages. The telegraph also becomes a metaphor the heard, the unheard, and missed communication in "In the Cage." The narrative turns on garbled messages and lost telegrams between an aristocratic couple conducting an illicit affair. Only the telegraphist has the power to rectify the misunderstandings, and as she does so, she surreptitiously interjects herself into their private affairs through the communication technology she manages. Finally, though, her fantasy life regarding

Captain Everard and Lady Bradeen gives way to her ordinary, working-class life and that she is forever doomed to share with her dull, stolid fiancé, Mr. Mudge.

James positions both the telegraphist and Stransom as medium-like figures, able to contact that which is not present through their use of auditory tools: music, in the case of Stransom and communication technology, in the case of the telegraphist. Their abilities as mediums, the fact that they can access the ghostly, casts them as the sensitive, sympathetic protagonist that James so highly values in his fiction in general. He uses mediums to represent this figure in these shorter pieces in order to exploit the ghost story genre, revising it for his own purposes. Ghosts, technology, and music all require absence to function, and mediums, who must be sympathetic and sensitive as channels for the otherworldly, necessarily have a great respect for the concept of absence.

2. "The Others": Psychical Research and the Ghost Story

His interest in mediums and ghosts suggests that James harbored an interest in the occult and spiritualism; in fact, Martha Banta attributes James's interest in the ghostly to the cultural influence of psychical research (111). James began writing ghost stories again in the 1890s, starting with "Sir Edmund Orme" (1891) after a fifteen-year hiatus from "The Ghostly Rental" (1876). Published three years before The Turn of the Screw (1898), "The Altar of the Dead" represents James's re-thinking of the ghost story, culminating in the former story's psychological depth. Henry's brother, William James, thought psychical research important, not necessarily to prove the existence of disembodied spirits inhabiting the material world, but because of how it could inform his developing theories of psychology, resulting in his Principles of Psychology in 1890.

William believed so much in psychical research's importance that he helped set up the American branch of the Society for Psychical Research in 1884.

Henry James did not share his brother's enthusiasm for psychical research proper, but he appreciated the possibilities it opened up for his art. James's only religion was a "religion of consciousness" (Banta 4). Indeed, Henry James was a secular man who repudiated for himself any organized religion. Instead, he believed in the ability of art to expand the powers of human consciousness; insofar as psychical research could help him illuminate these powers, he considered it artistically helpful. James was not above using whatever cultural phenomena he believed would further his literary aims. As John Carlos Rowe has shown in The Other Henry James, James's "religion of consciousness" places an "emphasis on the inextricable relation of consciousness and experience" (1). Moreover, "his understanding of moral value as a consequence of social acts (rather than idealist principles)" testifies to James's keen sensitivity to the impact of individual psyches acting in the material world (Rowe 1).

Like other writers of the 1880s and 1890s such as Bram Stoker, George de Maurier, Conan Doyle, and Robert Louis Stevenson, James participated in a literary movement influenced by the psychological and cultural implications of psychical research.[2] As Banta notes, "the advent of psychical research reopened to writers of the supernatural tale the possibility of viewing the uncanny as an actual, if strange, form of reality" (33). James enthusiastically embraces this literary shift, subtle as it is. The difference between "The Ghostly Rental" and "Sir Edmund Orme" amounts to a lighter touch in the latter work, avoiding the obviousness James succumbs to at the end of "The

Ghostly Rental" with the inclusion of a "real" ghost. Banta explains this shift by analyzing the connection between psychical research and literary supernaturalism:

> Psychical research made two changes in the literary situation: first, it gave new definitions for what supernaturalism is—extending its dimensions and clarifying its qualities, thus making it, in a sense, new material altogether; secondly, it offered up these new definitions in a new form—the psychological case study of the so-called haunted or supernaturally-attuned consciousness. What the artist would do with these changes was up to him. (33)

In most cases, James chose to draw those changes inward as much as possible. He was most acutely concerned with characters' psychological reactions to the supernatural (real or imagined) and how those internal, psychic reactions translated to social interactions, specifically the choices characters make regarding interpersonal relations. The presentation of these concerns pervade James's fiction, from the early phase on, so the cultural influence of psychical research and spiritualism simply provided a means by which he could adapt the tools used in his already finely-tuned psychological realist fiction to narratives based on the supernatural or the occult.

It is difficult to argue that any spectral effects ever actually appear in "The Altar of the Dead," perhaps making it difficult to argue that "Altar" belongs in the category of James's "ghost stories." Banta classes "Altar" along with "The Beast in the Jungle" as variations on the "occult," which "stresses the hidden qualities of knowledge or influence that extend past the range of ordinary understanding" (52). I agree with Banta's assertion that "Altar" and "Beast" are very peculiar in the Jamesian canon in that "in each, a man

and a woman seek meaning in terms of inner lives so hidden from the daylight view and yet so powerful in their shaping influences that their stories may rightly be called variations on the 'occult'" (52). I would argue, however, that if ghost stories are "those fictions in which apparitions appear (or are thought to appear)," then we must categorize "Altar" as a ghost story as well (51). Banta's parenthetical contains the operative idea. Apparitions must be "thought" to appear by someone, although Banta does not make clear who that someone is, whether that someone is the character(s), the reader, or both. I believe the case can be made that the main character, Stransom, so intensely *feels* the presence (as well as the absence) of his dead loved ones that they indeed, in a sense, "appear." While his dead fiancé, Mary Antrim, does appear to him in visual form in one instance (or he thinks she does), Stransom's dead most often manifest their presences aurally.

3. "Playing with the silence": The Role of Music

To further emphasize the acoustic nature of haunting, James employs musical references in "The Altar of the Dead," references he often employs in much of his fiction. James is very precise in his use of aural images and allusions, and he intends for them to amplify important details of character or scene. For instance, in the case of The Portrait of a Lady, Laura F. Hodges shows that in the scene in which Isabel Archer first meets Madam Merle, James initially has Merle playing Beethoven but changes to Schubert because the latter performer was "most appreciated in his day for his private performances among friends" (4). This choice is particularly ironic given Madame Merle's subsequent "private performances," the nefarious nature of which readers and Isabel discover simultaneously. Because both composers wrote pieces lacking in clear

tonal focus and are characterized by a movement from obscurity and dissonance to lightness and harmony, "the compositions of both would seem to be appropriate choices for characterizing Madame Merle, insofar as her identity and motives are initially obscure but ultimately revealed clearly to Isabel and the reader" (Hodges 4). James's change from Beethoven to Schubert, then, illustrates the care he took in choosing these musical allusions and figures of speech.

As in Portrait, music plays a very important role in "Altar" by providing an aesthetic context to understand the various threads of the story. Music seems to be the one artistic luxury (besides his altar) that Stransom allows himself. We are told, in fact, that Stransom "had a great love of music" (109). Moreover, his friendship with the authoress begins after a chance meeting at a concert of Beethoven and Schumann at which they "talked in the pauses" (110). James chooses this pair of composers deliberately to illustrate both Stransom's and the authoress' characters in light of the aesthetic and ideological conflicts those artists represent. Both composers, however, share a concern with the inability of language to describe or interpret music. James recognized that music would serve as an effective trope to use in a ghost story because of its relation with the ineffable and the ephemeral. As Alisa Clapp-Itnyre shows in Angelic Airs, Subversive Songs, "music was accorded immense power in the nineteenth century because it was defined as issuing from and transporting its auditors to a spiritual world" (3). This spiritual world often involved, not the Christian concept of connecting with the divine, but rather the psychical researcher's concept of communicating with the spectral.

In Music in Other Words: Victorian Conversations, Ruth Solie uses Beethoven's Ninth Symphony as a representative piece for examining the struggle among nineteenth-

century aesthetic ideologies as well as wider cultural, political, and religious ideologies. Solie argues that Beethoven's Ninth could be used to support a variety of ideologies besides musical or aesthetic because

> In a disturbed world, with political, social, and religious mores constantly shifting beneath the feet like sand, Beethoven's masterpiece stood firm as a source of secure knowledge, despite the evident fact that every commentator divined from the piece whatever message was necessary to his own quietude. (41)

An aesthetically versatile work of art like Beethoven's Ninth can be called upon to reinforce various views on religion and morality that resulted from the intense questioning of religious or moral assumptions "because the arts themselves tended during the nineteenth century to be viewed religiously and became, for some, a substitute for religious orthodoxies they considered outworn" (29). James certainly believed that art should serve as an ethical and moral compass, and this belief system contributed a great deal to his aesthetic ideology. James's secular nature encouraged him to use art as a system of morality and ethics, culminating in his "religion of consciousness."

Schumann's role in the artistic interpretive struggle as framed by Solie lies in his refutation of the critics who treated Beethoven's piece as religious teleology or romantic ideality. A few critics, including Schumann argued for studying music analytically, and they balked at interpretive strategies that made grand claims for the symbolism of a composition without discussing the technicalities of the music itself. Even more importantly, Schumann wrote criticism for several years in a music journal he helped found in which he developed a new method in music criticism, more precise than other

music theory in its sensitivity to historical considerations.[3] Moreover, Schumann was an advocate of the fusion between music and literature (as was Beethoven). Indeed, literary characteristics can be found in many of his works such as poetics, narrative, epic, and allegory. Like James's concern in "The Altar of the Dead" with the replication of musical expression through language, Schumann, too, is interested in the possibilities and limitations of attempting to describe musical processes with words. Of particular interest for the purposes here, most of his "ballad-type works [ballads involve a narrative] [. . .] take the preservation of memory as their poetic theme," and, in some cases, "the sharing of the narrative voice by solo voices and chorus alike [. . .] underlines the fact that memory is at once an individual and a communal affair" ("Robert Schumann: The Late Styles"). Memory, or lack of memory regarding the dead, is the *donnée* of James's story.[4]

James uses Beethoven and Schumann because they represent different ideological imperatives prominent in the nineteenth century: Beethoven, the symbolic, Romantic, ideal and Schumann, Romanticism's descendant, but one interested in examining art systematically and analytically. But James also uses these particular composers because they both wrote moodpieces or reveries. These types of pieces were initially subordinate to a larger work but become more independent in the nineteenth century, with composers like Beethoven, and become "ubiquitous" with Schumann. The musical reverie is important because its formation resembles that of the ghost story, which resulted from its break with the Romantic, gothic novel. Similarly, as Marshall Brown points out, "Historically the reverie emerged from within classical form and only gradually emancipated itself" (697). This trajectory can be compared to the ghost story form, which is "emancipated" from its ancestor, the gothic novel.

Schumann's Piano Quartet provides a good example of the correlation between the reverie and ghost story forms and their shared themes involving consciousness. Brown describes the end of the piece in ghostly terms by explaining that the last note can be played only by manipulating the body of the cello. This note is not readily available or accessible because it does not exist on the musical scale. As Brown puts it, the cellist "plays a note which, ordinarily, does not exist, an ethereal fundamental whose entry into musical reality initiates the striking *prise de conscience* with which the reverie concludes" (695).[5] Just as the cellist must tune his instrument in order to call forth a note that exists only on another musical plane, a finely-tuned consciousness was required in many of James's ghost stories for a character to have access to "the Others" as James called his ghosts (99). Martha Banta recognizes this characteristic of James's ghost stories as of the utmost importance: "One of the aspects of the ghostly that most intrigued James, and one that he made frequent use of in his ghost stories, was the way apparitions tend to appear only to that rare person sensitive enough, imaginative enough, to be capable of seeing the ghostly" (119). Stransom in "The Altar of the Dead" is such a character, largely because of the combination of his willingness to honor his dead in an appropriate fashion and the role art occupies in his observance of their absence.

The fervor with which Stransom and the nameless woman whom he befriends cling to the physical absence of their dead symbolizes their struggle over interpretive acts and how correct interpretive strategies affect or mirror ethical modes of human interaction. Stransom's view of aesthetics roughly corresponds to Beethoven-like, Romantic idealization of the ineffable, while the authoress's strategy has more in common with the analytic aesthetics of Schumann, although both Beethoven and

Schumann appreciated and used aesthetic concepts of absence just as Stransom and the authoress do.

4. Echoes, Ethics, and "multiplied meanings"

My reading of "The Altar of the Dead" challenges readings such as John Auchard's, which, while acknowledging silence and absence as positive forces in some of James's work, reads the ghostly absences in "The Altar of the Dead" as essentially Stransom's "morbid withdrawal" from life (39). However, Auchard fails to connect the passionate dedication Stransom and his authoress devote to their Dead with the freedom this act entails—freedom from conventional restraints upon meanings in relationships and thereby freedom from conventional interpretive acts. By focusing on the altar as a representation of either the visual arts or written text, critics have largely ignored James's abundant use of auditory and musical terminology to explore the artistic component of the altar. The auditory references make the connection between art and ethics particularly salient in terms of deconstructionist attitudes toward presence. I want to show that Stransom opens up the possibility for freeplay through his intention that his altar contains "multiplied meanings" by offering those meanings through the productive use of absence ("Altar" 120).

James seeks to explode this absence/presence binary through language that calls into question this either/or proposition. For instance, early in the story, readers learn that Stransom lost the love of his life, Mary Antrim, just after setting their wedding date. Years later (Stransom is fifty-five when the story begins), the narrator explains that Stransom's life is "still ruled by a pale ghost, still ordered by a sovereign presence" (97). This seeming contradiction—the absent quality inherent in the ghostly and an

individual's actions being dictated by that absence as if it were present—sets the tone and theme for the rest of the story. James will play with readers' assumptions regarding the importance of presence in areas such as art and religion and create a haunting tone through language containing ambiguities and contradictions.

James produces this trace of ghostly meaning by layering his techniques. In addition to mixed constructions designed to maintain his theme of absence's importance, James uses aural metonyms because absence is constitutive of the aural. He especially exploits echoes' metonymic relationships to the dead and absence in the story. Just as his references to particular musicians early in the story helps to establish a mood, James sets up a haunting atmosphere through the multiple uses of the echo. In nature, echoes occur when a reverberation or repetition of sound waves have been reflected from a surface. An echo is also a technical term in music used for various purposes, but the most important for my purposes are in symphonic works and operas. In symphonies, including some by Beethoven, "echo effects occur […] where the sounds of nature and mysterious 'night' noises are suggested," and in operas they are used to "portray magical or supernatural events" (New Grove). In "Altar," the essence of echoes is the remnant of a sound that is no longer present used to convey a mysterious, mystical, or supernatural mood; in other words, they represent both absence *and* presence— a ghostly Derridean "trace." This definition of echo in James's story "echoes" the musical one, and the natural one in that absence is an essential part of its existence and provides an ephemeral, spirit-like quality to the story. The association of echoes with the absence of people in "The Altar of the Dead" is apparent through Stransom's psychological connection to the entities as portrayed through James's narration. Stransom considers his dead loved ones,

like Mary Antrim, remnants of a presence or the remaining vibration of an absent sound—a Romantic, idealistic echo of Beethoven.

We see James's layering technique in the scene in which Stransom meets by chance an old friend and his new wife in front of a jeweler's shop when the narrator characterizes an invitation from the new Mrs. Creston's as having been "scream[ed]…to all the echoes" (101). Both the sentence-level mixed construction and the metonymic echo share the same purpose here—that is, to stress the dependence presence has on absence and to provide a glimpse of how the collapsing of this binary functions in Stransom's psyche. Stransom is mortified by the idea of his friend remarrying upon the death of Mrs. Creston, a woman for whom Stransom had a great deal of affection. And, since Stransom perceives Creston's new wife's invitation as grossly improper, James has him hear it as a scream in order to highlight the intensity of Stransom's offended consciousness. Screams are a continual sound in a "high note." In other words, unlike echoes (or music), there is no break in the sound, no absence. In this same scene, the narrator describes the precious gems as laughing "in flashes like high notes of sound" (100). The connotation of James's use of the word "sound" here is negative because if absence were present within the "high notes," a tune would be discernable. The lack of absence renders the sound uni-tonal, lacking in nuance and variation. Echoes, on the other hand, represent the absence of sound while at the same time re-presenting the sound, producing James's desired spectral quality.

Just like echoes, Stransom's dead existed temporally but now only a trace of their materiality remains. Stransom's ambiguous relationship with non-presence is perhaps most clearly indicated in the scene in which Stransom first enters the church where he

finally creates his altar to his Dead. Stransom reflects as he sits in the church that the altar before him provides a satisfactory manifestation of the "shrine he had erected in his mind" (104). We learn that this shrine "had begun in vague likeness to church pomps, but the echo had ended by growing more distinct than the sound" (104-05). With the vision of the altar in front of him, "the sound now rang out, the type blazed at him with all its fires and with a mystery of radiance in which endless meanings could glow" (105). Unlike the "sound" from the gems at the jewelers, sound, in this instance, is connotatively positive in that it explicitly conveys a message that Stransom welcomes and is open to hearing. The echo then dies out with an actualized vision (or sound) of the possibilities Stransom foresees for his own Dead. An ambiguity begins to emerge here regarding the role of presence and absence, sound and silence. The echo's "distinctiveness" seems to contradict the positive quality inherent in its absence—specifically the quality that associates it with Stransom's ghosts. The fact that it becomes distinct perpetuates its demise ("the echo had ended"). Put another way, the echo is transformed into full-fledged sound by becoming distinct; this transformation indicates the trajectory of the metonymic echo from absence to presence, which implies that the altar renders his ghosts more present than the limits of the echo allowed.

Acton Hague is the primary "gap" or absence on Stransom's altar. Stransom and Hague had been extraordinarily close friends. Hague had been "the only man with whom he had ever been intimate; the friend, almost adored…the subject, later, of his passionate loyalty" (103). However, Hague and Stransom had some great quarrel in which Stransom was wronged, and their friendship ceased. Nevertheless, Hague "had been the nearest of [Stransom's] friends and his deposition from this eminence had practically left

it without an occupant"—just as Stransom never married after the death of his beloved Mary Antrim (103). The fact that Stransom "tried" to erase Hague's memory indicates that he did so without much success, which highlights Hague's importance in Stransom's life. Therefore, Hague's exclusion from the altar represents a gap that is incongruous with Stransom's ethical system of which an essential element is the honoring of his Dead in their "conscious absence" (98). Stransom does away with the conventional "center" by replacing it with that which is considered absent—his dead loved ones. And, while privileging absence opens up the possibility of freeplay, Stransom goes astray within his own ethical/religious system by allowing *too much* presence for his absent idols because they take up so much of his psychic energy. The culmination of the break in his system is his disavowal of Acton.

Conversely, the authoress engages fully with Hague's memory; indeed, her "Dead are only One" (113), and that One is Hague. The importance of including Hague for the authoress corresponds to the analytic aesthetics we saw earlier in Schumann, who valued systematic interpretations and who would value including a central common figure in a work of art such as the altar. The authoress positions Hague as the center of the altar and her life, but this limits the possibility of "multiplied meanings." And while Stransom tried to forget Hague and excluded him from his altar, the authoress had dedicated Stransom's altar, which she used for her own worship, to only Hague. Hague's centrality renders her worship and interpretive methods unethical, just as Stransom's exclusion of Hague compromises his ethical stance. As a consequence of their inability to come to a consensus on the ethical and artistic appropriateness of Hague's role on the altar, a break

occurs in the relationship. This break represents a battle of artistic and interpretive strategies.

Ultimately, both Stransom and the authoress use centrality or presence as the controlling element in their respective systems. But this metaphysical tendency is ethically unsound in the terms of the story. Nevertheless, the authoress's flawed ethical stance remains superior to Stransom's because she exhibits a much better sense of how to use and appreciate absence than Stransom. Stransom seems to believe that remaining silent about Hague amounts to a kind of forgiveness. However, Stransom reconsiders this in light of how completely the authoress absolves Hague: "Stransom considered that he had forgiven him; but how little he had achieved the miracle that she had achieved! His forgiveness was *silence*, but hers was mere unuttered *sound*" (italics mine, 124). The distinction to be made here is the one between "silence" and "unuttered sound." In the terms of the story, "silence" contains a negative connotation because it implies forgetting, which amounts to an obliteration of the spirit of the Dead. An "unuttered sound," however, is very different. Indeed, it recalls Schumann's Piano Quartet and the ghostly note the cellist (as medium) may access only through special manipulation of the instrument. Like the note that exists on another plane, the "unuttered sound" exists; it simply has not been expressed. This non-expression does not imply forgetting, like Stransom's silence, but, rather, an internal, personal remembrance for the authoress.

At this point Stransom begins to recognize the distinct difference between his and the authoress's moral and aesthetic approaches to absence and presence/forgetting and remembering. Furthermore, it seems that he even begins to sense superiority in her approach; after all, he marvels at "the miracle she had achieved." Here, then, a slow

process of synthesis begins to take shape—a third term resulting from the Romantic idealism of the Beethoven-like approach in combination with the technical, systematic approach of Schumann Stransom and the authoress employ respectively. Stransom's inclusion of the authoress in his life combined with her appreciation for absence adds the necessary element (absence) for sound and presence to achieve a positive connotation. Even though it remains "unuttered," sound exemplifies presence, specifically Hague's presence for the authoress. But the fact that the sound remains unuttered or absent speaks to the purpose of the mixed construction we have seen before. The effect is de-centering and haunting for the reader and reflects the unstable subject positioning of the characters. Stransom has created his physical altar as a work of art, but his progress toward cultivating actualized human interactions remains static because of Hague's conspicuous absence and Stransom's continual reliance on silence instead of sound. Ultimately, Stransom's fixation on the altar is misguided, not because of a morbid, life-negating world-view, but because the altar lacks the important component of sympathy for Hague. This sympathy is attainable through aesthetics, which will, in turn, lead to the forgiveness required for a valid ethical system.

Stransom sees that perhaps his moral stance regarding Hague's inclusion on the altar is, in reality, specious, once he loses the authoress's companionship. He realizes how important she had become to him, and her absence precipitates the realization of the actual reason his altar "ceased to exist" (128). Indeed, he understands that "it was essentially in his own soul the revival [Stransom's renewed desire for human relations as exemplified through his relationship with the authoress] had taken place, and that in the air of this soul [the candles that represent his dead] were now unable to breathe" (128).

The power to nullify the altar's aesthetic and ethical principles did not lie with the authoress alone; the irreconcilable aesthetic cross purposes at which Stransom and the authoress found themselves ruined the impact of the aesthetic and moral qualities of the altar, running the risk of suffocating Stransom's ghosts.

James is even more explicit a couple of sentences later. Stransom realizes that it was "[his and the authoress's] common presence, that had made the indispensable medium" (128). "Medium" here means both the materials used in artistic expression as well as the ability to communicate with spirits of the dead. The dual connotation of "medium" serves to highlight the interconnectedness of the ethical and aesthetic functions of the altar and serves as a nod to psychical research; most importantly, it makes explicit the third term in the triangular structure in which music functions. The medium in James's schema is the sympathy created by Stransom and the authoress' "common presence." Stransom's individual consciousness alone is not enough to provide full access to his Dead once he becomes involved with the woman.

Once her aesthetic and moral influence is felt, she becomes a necessary component to the "medium" that together they create. Their creation of new aesthetics and ethics results from their synthesis of the Beethoven/Schumann dichotomy. In the next sentence, Stransom understands that "if anything was wrong everything was—her silence spoiled the tune" (128). In this instance, like the "high notes of sound" by the jewels, James expresses the ambiguities inherent in silence. In the case of the "jewels" example, silence is missing, causing auditory dissonance. However, the authoress's silence is too ever-present, and here James expresses the incongruity in specifically musical terminology. The absence that Stransom depends on and the presence that the authoress

depends on are both necessary qualities for good art and sound ethics. Together, Stransom and the authoress possess the psychic leanings essential to the project of "multiplied meanings," and together they provide the necessary elements to function as a single medium. However, the extremity with which each holds to their positions constitutes their individual flaws.

Further evidence of James's connection between art and morality in this story becomes evident through what I call the "conversion" of Stransom and the authoress to each other's position regarding the appropriateness of lighting a candle for Hague on their shared altar. Toward the end of the tale Stransom begins to recognize the moral imperative of Hague's representative inclusion on his altar. However, Stransom's ethical awakening occurs only after he experiences an aesthetic dissonance in his altar, which is borne out of the authoress' absence from his life and who has become yet another ghostly trace to him. Stransom then begins to detect an asymmetrical quality in the altar's "composition," a result of the authoress' missing consciousness. Stransom understands that he needs her way of thinking as well as his own for the formation of single consciousness with mediating qualities.

Stransom's startling realization is the narrative turn in the story and contains a great deal of artistic language; it is, therefore, necessary to quote the passage in full:

> There came a day when, for simple exhaustion, if symmetry should demand just one he was ready so far to meet symmetry. Symmetry was harmony, and the idea of harmony began to haunt him; he said to himself that harmony was of course everything. He took, in fancy, his composition to pieces, redistributing it into other lines, making other

> juxtapositions and contrasts. He shifted this and that candle, he made the spaces different, he effaced the disfigurement of a possible gap. There were subtle and complex relations, a scheme of cross-reference, and moments in which he seemed to catch a glimpse of the void so sensible to the woman who wandered in exile or sat where he had seen her with the portrait of Acton Hague. Finally, in this way, he arrived at a conception of the total, the ideal, which left a clear opportunity for just another figure. "Just one more—to round it off; just one more, just one," continued to hum in his head. (130)

The process James describes is no less than an artistic revisionary process. The passage is full of artistic language such as, "symmetry," "composition," "subtle and complex relations," and "a scheme of cross-reference" to point out some of the most obvious. However, the most interesting artistic term for the purpose here is "harmony." Like the echo, James uses this term as a double-entendre to represent both the technical term in music, which specifically means the simultaneous combination of notes in a chord, and in terms of personal relations, an agreement in feeling or accord. At the moment of his revisionary process, Stransom gives up his ethical and aesthetic resistance and begins a conversion process toward the authoress's view that a candle must be included to honor Hague and complete the composition and maintain its symmetry.

But, just as Stransom has converted to the authoress's view, she finds him at his altar, ready to make her "confession" (133). By the "sweetest of miracles," Hague's former lover is ready to forsake her effort to have his candle included on Stransom's altar. Before, it seemed that without the pious and artistic inclusion of Hague, the only

element Stransom and his writer friend had in common, the candle "composition" lacked the artistic quality that makes a work of art valid (130). But, it was really only necessary that they come to a place where they could sympathize with each other's needs and desires in terms of the altar and Hague's inclusion or exclusion. The sympathy they develop for each other is precisely what makes art successfully sacred and ethical. Whether "one more" candle is included on behalf of Hague or Stransom (if we read the end of the story as Stransom's death) proves immaterial since the "symmetry" of the composition becomes a reality through their shared understanding (130).

Both Stransom and the authoress appreciate the mix of absence and presence as an aesthetic principle, however imperfectly both use it. The freeplay invited by their acceptance of absence as a part of life opens the possibility for the "multiplied meanings" to actualize. And through this aesthetic actuality both Stransom and the authoress are able to integrate ethical integrity into their aesthetics. In effect, together they achieve Helmholtz's and Eliot's sympathetic vibration.

5. "Apparitions" and Ghostly Functions

At first blush "In the Cage" (1898) appears to have nothing to do with the ghostly or even the occult. In fact, James's story of a London female telegraphist's fantasy life involving the private affairs of a young aristocratic couple involved in an elicit affair and her subsequent actual involvement might be tempting for some to read as James's tentative foray into naturalism. It is one of the few works James wrote about the working class, and, at its end, the anonymous heroine resumes her proper place with her working-class, commodity-driven fiancé, Mr. Mudge.[6]

Several critics, however, have pointed out elements in "Cage" that have much in common with James's ghost stories. As far as I can tell, the first critic to note the commonality is Janet Gabler-Hover in her reading of "In the Cage" and its relationship to determinism and the concept of chance and opportunity. She argues that the telegraphist's psychic vampirism combined with the supposed appearance of "apparitions" and "ghosts" in the tale qualify it as a ghost story according to Martha Banta's categorical delineations (265-68). John Carlos Rowe in The Other Henry James opens his chapter, "Spectral Mechanics: Gender, Sexuality, and Work in *In the Cage*," by showing that the governess in The Turn of the Screw shares with the telegraphist of "Cage" a relationship to "scenes of writing" that takes into account similarities in their gender and social status as well as their common function for the aristocrats as invisible but also influential and the problems this paradox produces.[7] More recently, without going so far as to categorize "Cage" as strictly a ghost story, Jill Galvan has pointed out its ghostly or occultist elements by connecting telegraphy as a woman's occupation with the services of a "spirit medium"—also an activity in which primarily women engaged (298).[8]

While I do not argue that "Cage" should be considered a ghost story proper in the Jamesian canon as I do in the case of "The Altar and the Dead," it does seem that, like "Altar," "In the Cage" contains some strikingly occultist elements mentioned by the critics above that place it in a unique position within James's fiction, a generically liminal position similar to "Altar" but on a broader scale in its various tropes, themes, and threads that can be identified with The Turn of the Screw in its interrogation of gender and work, with The Ambassadors in its investigation of deceptive forms of communication, and with The Portrait of a Lady in its focus on an imaginative feminine

consciousness to name but a few. Its shorter length, however, aligns it with the economic mastery James privileges in his short occult or ghost fiction such as “Altar,” “The Beast in the Jungle,” and “The Jolly Corner.” Moreover, its association with the ghostly seems most evident when we consider the telegraphist’s well-acknowledged role as a medium within the story. Richard Menke articulates a common reading of the telegraphist’s occupation as a kind of human interface:

> The lovers use the telegraph for secret, virtually instantaneous communication. Yet by reading and interpreting the messages of Captain Everard and Lady Bradeen, the unnamed telegraphist interposes a level of mediation, a layer that intermingles the materiality of communication, the content of her subjectivity, and the social structures of bureaucracy, class, and gender. (975)

However, it is through the “materiality of communication,” specifically the structure of telegraphy, that her particular subjectivity and the “social structures” are defined. Furthermore, those definitions develop various shadings depending on the quality of the light James sheds on them.

For instance, the telegraphist resents the aristocratic lovers and, and the same time, longs for inclusion in their lives. She, therefore, romanticizes them, especially Captain Everard, placing them in a sphere outside hers, while at the same time fancying that she can penetrate their lives through her ability to enter into their most private, albeit abbreviated, communications, raising her own working-class status to theirs. As Galvan puts it,

> […] in spiritualizing the moneyed class and envisioning her power to experience their thoughts, the telegrapher has hit upon a way to relieve the toxic potency of her resentment; to spin out a dream of an ethereal unity surpassing worldly disparities; and most importantly, to indulge her conviction that, economic vicissitudes aside, she partakes in just that sort of lofty consciousness befitting a lady. (301).

The telegraphist's position as a medium within that structure, though, is never in question. It is, in particular, the triangulated structure of the technology that creates the mediating position she holds and thereby creates the anxiety in all three of the principles, contributing to the haunting effect of the story. In fact, the telegraphist's function is similar to that of Stransom and the authoress in "Altar," for, like them, the telegraphist is able to communicate with or access those not present through acoustic signs.

6. "The Sounder": Haunting Technology

Over time, the increasing dominance of the aural in British culture became associated with sexuality since, through technology, sexuality could be expressed at a distance and out of sight. Telegraphy plays a role in this shift. The telegraph began as a form of visual communication: the semaphore telegraph invented by Claude Chappe in Paris in 1794 communicated messages from towers equipped with flags that were maneuvered in standardized motions, which relayed the letters of the alphabet. Two operators manned the stations; one transcribed incoming messages, while the other transmitted outgoing ones.[9] By contrast, the electric telegraph, invented by Samuel Morse in 1837, became a technology operated by aurally "reading" the signals transmitted by the click of the needle or the lever. The machine had originally been designed as a visual

technology, and the telegraph companies fought (and actually regulated against) what became known as "sound-reading." Simply put, technicians found that it was more efficient to transcribe messages by listening to the sounds the machine made as transmissions came through instead of visually translating the dots and dashes that were recorded on paper, the Morse code.[10]

In Charles Dickens in Cyberspace, Jay Clayton argues that this historical shift from the dominance of processing data visually to acoustically represents a more general cultural debate that took place in the nineteenth century over the appropriate form of data processing—visual or aural. He goes on to point out that this struggle problematizes the dominant critical position of the visual that theorists such as Fredrich Kittler and N. Katherine Hayle argue ushers in modernity in the latter part of the nineteenth century with technologies like the typewriter and film. Indeed, Clayton asserts that many mid-century texts deal with sonic technologies, exhibiting the struggle between vision and acoustics in epistemology schema. These texts

> explicitly associate an engagement with acoustic technology with other forms of deviance, political, social, and sexual—but chiefly sexual. The physical connection between distant interlocutors seems to elicit thoughts of relationships that escape the increasing dominance of modern visual modes of surveillance and control. (53)

Furthermore, in "In the Cage," as Jennifer Wicke phrases it, "in a reversal of the panoptical strategy," "the sounder," together with its operator, generates and transmits information, in a sense, regulating knowledge, commerce, subjective and sexual relations. In The Tuning of the World, R. Murray Schafer addresses the connection between

hearing and sexuality. He explains that hearing meets touch, the "most personal of the senses," (11) when sound waves pass over the ear's corti. According to Schafer, "Listening to beautiful sounds, for instance the sounds of music, is like the tongue of a lover in your ear" (12). In this way, the ear can be considered an erotic organ. An exploration of the sexual nature of hearing is part of Eliot's project in Daniel Deronda as well, although her characters are in close proximity.

We can see how this association of the aural and the sexual play out in "Cage" if we consider that the entire plot revolves around two elicit love-triangles (real or imagined): the first includes Lady Bradeen, her lover, Captain Everard, and her husband, Lord Bradeen (who never materializes as a character); the second is Lady Bradeen, Everard, and the telegraphist, once she inserts herself into their melodrama by breaking their "code" and rectifying Lady Bradeen's confusion while she composes a message to Everard, creating her own melodrama based on the "ha'penny" novels with which she amuses herself during her break at Cocker's grocery where she works in the telegraph office with the "sounder."

Like Clayton's, my argument highlights the importance of acoustics in Victorian epistemology; however, mine picks up John Carlos Rowe's insight that "telegraphic communication depends on the cooperative labor of sender, technician, and receiver—a triad that drastically changes the transactional, intersubjective model for writing and speech" (173). Furthermore, social and individual anxiety results from the implicit understanding that "the telegraphist's interpretations at the sounder serve as [a] wild card in the process of social communication" (Rowe 158). A certain degree of power is conferred on the telegraphist as the point in the triad at which interpretation takes place.

James, however, undermines this perceived power by exposing the telegraphist's faulty ethical choices resulting from the psychic vampirism Gabler-Hover identifies.[11] He, nonetheless, maintains that her position as a medium in the triad creates fear because of her association with sound, and the power to imbue fear or dread in others, while a seemingly negative quality, provides her with a tool with which she can gain a level of dominance, adding a layer to the subjective split echoed in the structure of technology.

Similar to the disembodying effects of music, specifically the metonymic association of echoes with ghosts in "The Altar of the Dead," sound technology in "In the Cage" produces the feeling of connection with distant "others" and the "expansion of […] consciousness" ("Cage" 178). This perception of the extension of the self is a result of the telegraph's ability to minimize the distance between individuals while at the same time enlarging their somatic communicative experiences. Clayton explains,

> The signal produced by a machine at one location was produced again by a machine at a distance. Hence there is no intrinsic reason why the experience should not have been one of thrilling dislocation, like the disembodied sense of 'thereness' felt by many in cyberspace. The way in which sound seemed to consolidate and intensify sensory experiences, could have the effect of splitting the subject […] but the impression was one not of diminishment but superabundance. (76)

The "superabundance" Clayton describes is expressed by the telegraphist's view that "there were more impressions to be gathered and really […] more life to be led" (178). Her work with the sounder allows the telegraphist to live vicariously through her aristocratic customers, to experience the ways upper-class "London could amuse itself"

and to hear its “wondrous world-music” (“Cage” 186). The sounder’s dominating presence in the story prompts Menke to note, “the sounder comes synedochically to stand for the whole [telegraph] apparatus and metonymically to represent the encaged telegraphist who operates it” (983-84). Her mediating occupation allows her to bridge her lower, working-class position with that of the moneyed class she serves.

James hints at the fact that the telegraphist’s current social status is one of diminishment, that she indeed belongs in the upper-class but because of some vague misfortune, her family, consisting of her mother and sister, had left them “suddenly bereft, betrayed, overwhelmed” (176). Just as David Copperfield’s and Daniel Deronda’s subject positions as an orphan and an adoptee fragment their identities, the ambiguous nature of the telegraphist’s “true” position in society contributes to the subjective split that the technology of the sounder sediments. Moreover, the “double life” as a medium or sounder that she leads and that is “a queer extension of her experience,” (“Cage” 186) “reproduces” as Clayton puts it, “the oddness of the telegraph in its very structure. To be with the sender and receiver at the same instant, to feel physically present at two ends of a communication circuit—such was the way many nineteenth-century subjects experienced the ‘sounder’” (78). This structure of telegraph technology that Clayton identifies echoes the tripartite structure of music I outlined earlier. The subject, or the third term in the structure, is “here” in the present, but can also access the distant others, the ones that are “there” in a distant place. This triad, the triangular structure of technology and music, is what makes both seem ghostly, apparitional, ephemeral, and disembodying.

7. "The purchasing medium": Economy and Sexuality

Henry James noted that Wilkie Collins, through his sensational fiction, "introduced into fiction those most mysterious of mysteries, the mysteries that are at our own doors. […] And there is no doubt that these were infinitely more terrible" ("Miss Braddon"). In his Preface to "In the Cage," he explains that the scene and mechanics of the telegraph office in his story recalls "one of the commonest and most taken-for-granted of London impressions," so common, in fact, that one need only walk to "the office nearest one's own door" (Blackmur 154). "Cage" contains the local, "terrible mystery" of the telegraph office. The danger is that the person operating the sounder and "count[ing] words as numberless as the sands of the sea" ("Cage" 174) is a person of imagination, a critic of messages who is able "to appreciate, to appropriate, to take intellectual possession, to establish in fine a relation with the criticised thing and make it one's own" (Blackmur 155). James's comment here suggests the psychic vampirism that Gabler-Hover associates with the telegrapher and that helps to categorize "In the Cage" as a ghost story; he links "critics" to telegraphers ("considerably tutored young officials") as consumers of a "range of experience otherwise to closed them," which emphasizes the vicarious nature of their activities (Blackmur 154).

In "The Altar of the Dead," James used the protagonists' artistic abilities to define them as mediums, as channels through which absence could be transformed into presence, and he used echoes as a trope to exemplify the connection between art and the ghostly. Similarly, in "Cage," James employs artistic engagement in the form of criticism to expose absence as a force and those who understand and access it as mediums. In this story sound signifies this paradigm. And, as in "Altar," James collapses the familiar

binary conception of absence and presence. The very mechanics of the sounder itself, like music, utilizes absence to convey meaning: the sounder's clicks denoting various letters would be indiscernible if not for the empty space between them. To underscore this detail, the sounder itself, in the story, is inaudible.

The reader never is privy to the actual workings of the sounder; it exists as a general overall presence that exploits absence. Because the sounder is situated in "the innermost cell of captivity, a cage within the cage, fenced off from the rest by a frame of ground glass," the actual experience of telegraphy as alienating for the consumer is replicated fictionally for the reader (180). Jennifer Wicke asserts that because James places front and center the historical and social functions of telegraphy, the chasm its operations form preclude reading it as an "entirely textual *mise-en-abyme*, where the questions of production do not enter and take center stage" (151). Perhaps not entirely. But James certainly intends, with the somewhat mysterious positioning of the sounder, to imply a foreclosed site of production in order to explore the technology's reification, imbuing it with a magical, supernatural quality for late nineteenth-century readers, while at the same time allowing the body of the telegraphist to "represent telegraphy not just as a mode of communication but also as a social practice, a medium of discourse come to life, an information exchange rendered no longer transparent" (Menke 976). James accomplishes this defamiliarization of telegraphy, not in spite of it being an old technology gradually being replaced by the telephone in 1898, but precisely because of its approaching obsolescence. At the heart of many ghost stories exists nostalgia for lost, decrepit, or degrading structures—most often houses—and, as Geoffrey Gilbert notes, the "material conditions" are difficult "to separate from the phenomena—the ghosts—

themselves" (239).[12] Like the houses Gilbert's essay focuses on, technological structures elicit ghostly nostalgia and create haunting effects.

Technology, materiality, and desire are enmeshed in a web of otherworldliness and expressed through the working-class consciousness of the telegraphist who loathes most of her betters yet longs to be included in their company. She characterizes the aristocrats, specifically the beautiful Lady Bradeen, as "apparitions," suggesting a visual apprehension of their presence. To support the dominance of Lady Bradeen's appearance the telegraphist describes her after she has frequented the telegraph office several times and has identified her as Everard's lover: "But, gracious, how handsome *was* her ladyship" (211). However, when she first encounters Everard, it is not the vision of his appearance that she is left with but a "vague sweet sound and an immense impression" (182). While during that first meeting, without seeing him the way she had seen Lady Bradeen in terms of his physical presence, she "had taken him in; she knew everything; she had made up her mind" (183). The telegraphist feels Everard's impression in much the same way that Stransom feels the presence of his dead, because of the quality of her imagination, and, like Stransom accessing his ghosts through echoes, it is through sound that James has her "take him in."

The "expansion of her consciousness," the distinction of her "imaginative life," allows the telegraphist an escape from the "torment" of her occupation and allows her to access the absent (178). The nature of the couple's situation, their affair and their management of it through the telegraph office, which the narrative designates as its nexus, the place where arrangements are made and communicated, amounts to a "complicated game" for the telegraphist that emits a "fine soundless pulse" that lingers

even after they depart (183). The “soundless pulse” that is their lives serves as a metonym for their lingering presence—the essence of ghosts. James makes this association explicit by remarking that even once they are gone, “their presence continued and abode with her” (183). Moreover, through the presence of one she can access the other. Because of her intimate contact with their correspondences, however cryptic and abbreviated, she has the sensation, in one peculiarly sexualized scene, that “She was with the absent through her ladyship and with her ladyship through the absent” (211).

In this scene, the telegraphist admires Lady Bradeen’s beauty and feels closer to Everard by appreciating the physicality of his object of desire; in addition, her estimation of his worth rises because of it: “what an added price it gave him that the air of intimacy he threw out should have flowed originally from such a source!” (211). The telegraphist channels Everard’s desire for Lady Bradeen so effectively that she intuits she can read in the woman’s face the missing phrases that round out the messages he sends. She stares intensely “straight through the cage at the eyes and lips that must so often have been so near his own—looked at them with a strange passion that for an instant had the result of filling out some of the gaps, supplying the missing answers, in his correspondence” (211). As the medium in the telegraphic triad, she fancies that she fills in the blanks with unarticulated sounds to round out and create meaning. But, this is only possible because of her role as the third in an imagined love-triangle: she believes she can interpret his meaning because of the “strange passion” for Lady Bradeen that she feels through him—a vicarious *ménage a trois* of sexual desire and discourse.

The musical discourse in “The Altar of the Dead” revolved around absence and emphasized the freedom of artistic interpretation resulting in manifold meanings.

Likewise, in “In the Cage,” James relies on absence to establish the multiplicity inherent in language and to stress the necessity of an imaginative consciousness capable of creating meaning. In “Altar,” Stransom and the authoress fall short individually but together succeed, if too late. The heroine in “Cage” also falls short. James implies that her failings are a result of the overreaching, imaginative leaps the telegraphist must make in order to survive a dull, unimaginative job. James also suggests that she “reads” too discursively into messages and speech because of the telegraphic discourse that necessarily depends on absence for its meaning. With the invention of the telegraph, a paratactic discourse had to be developed that could economically communicate thought. This mode of discourse serves two purposes: besides keeping the number of words at a minimum to reduce cost, Rowe explains that “such parataxis in telegrams depersonalizes and even disguises the message, responding to the new public conditions of discourse required by the telegram” (160). With the connective tissue removed from this discourse, interpreters of these tranmissions must supply those connections themselves.

The telegraphist transfers this occupational skill (which, according to the rules of her trade, is prohibited) to her social interactions with senders and receivers of the telegrams. As innocent an exchange about the weather between the telegraphist and Everard, therefore, helps feed “her fancy that no form of intercourse so transcendent and distilled had ever been established on earth. Everything, so far as they chose to consider it so, might mean almost anything” (205). This private assignation of referents to signs, this “coded” form of discourse, where “everything can mean almost anything” is precisely the way telegraphy functions. Everard and Lady Bradeen are so concerned with their code

being broken that they use as many numbers in their messages as they do words, but they have an understanding about their meaning.

The telegraphist shares no such understanding with Everard; a conversation about the weather is probably just that for him. But, because she knows about his intimate relationship with Lady Bradeen through her point in the telegraphic triad, the telegraphist assumes he is aware of her knowledge and that they therefore share an intimacy of their own. Ironically, "their unuttered reference" presents itself as evidence to the telegraphist that he understands she shares his secret (205). She speculates that since he must be aware that she knows and continues to come to her for his telegraph needs that he finds her "a comfort": "Every time he handed in a telegram it was an addition to her knowledge: what did his constant smile mean to mark if it didn't mean to mark that?" (205). At every turn, she takes the lack of allusion to her knowledge of the affair as affirming his acceptance of her acquiring the information.[13]

The telegraphist's "affair" with Everard, however, really consists of a one-sided infatuation that she fantasizes is mutual based on their shared knowledge. When she reveals her feelings in the course of the story, Everard's response amounts to a muddled expression of his immersion in the commodity culture James explores in the story. His (mis)understanding of the telegraphist's exhortations in the park where she by "chance" runs into Everard results in "his putting down redundant money" later at the telegraph office (242). This "redundancy" can be read as an alignment with the sex trade because of her gender in combination with her public occupation. Galvan explains that "The fact of the telegrapher's publicized body made it easier to view her along a continuum with the prostitute, effectively debasing her to a lower class position than her profession in and of

itself should have earned her" (297).[14] More likely, though, Everard's attempt is to render a payment for what he perceives as a threat of blackmail from the telegraphist who could expose his affair with Lady Bradeen. Either reading emphasizes the prominent role of the characters' sexual forays; the sounder's effects "telegraph" throughout the narrative, leading to the paratactic dialogue between the telegraphist and Everard and the subsequent sexual confusion that ensues.

James intertwines the economy of language suggested by abbreviated telegraphic discourse with commodification, exchange and sexuality. One reason the telegraphist finds Everard attractive is because she feels they communicate deeply using very few words on account of, in part, his social and economic position that she has spiritualized. By contrast, Mr. Mudge, her staid, pragmatic, tradesman fiancé, is verbose, subjecting the telegraphist to "daily deadly flourishy letter[s]" (178). Moreover, he exhibits a decided lack of spontaneity and an abundance of accounting concerns with his compulsive planning of their vacation, which he "handled […] as a Syndicate handles a Chinese or other Loan" (215). The heroine's position as a telegraphic medium allows her to appreciate an economy of language—fewer words cost less, increasing the worth of the included words. This concept of the increased value of words corresponds to James's principle of economic mastery in short fiction. Both the telegraphic form and the short story form require brevity as well as richness in meaning. This material fact leads to a psychic or spiritual assumption that less language—telegraphic discourse (and short stories) that includes gaps and silences—is more potent and thereby worth more than verbosity or loquaciousness.

Silence, in fact, is worth more than words in the story—materially and emotionally. Silence "costs" nothing. But, if it is given the kind of great significance the telegraphist imagines Everard's silences contain, then they are worth, like the time she spends with him in the park, "a little hoard of gold" (220). And, leaving her own feelings largely inarticulate, she risks nothing emotionally. But, the ultimate worthy or expensive silence is a secret. The telegraphist is perfectly aware of the worth of the secret she possesses regarding the relationship between Everard and Lady Bradeen because of scenes from her "ha'penny novels." The narrator expresses her feeling of excitement with the possibility of such a scene by explaining, "She quite thrilled herself with thinking what, with such a lot of material, a bad girl would do" (207). The language that the telegraphist goes on to imagine herself using in this novelistic "scene" registers the sexual charge inherent in the exchange of money for information: "'I know too much about a certain person now not to put it to you—excuse my being so lurid—that it's quite worth your while to buy me off. Come therefore: buy me!"' (207). Her imaginary words to Everard conflate the acts of blackmail and prostitution highlighting the connection between sex and telegraphic language that culminates in valuable information.

The telegraphist cannot maintain this kind of fantasy life, however, because "*she* was not a bad girl" (207). But a more significant reason is that she has not a solid conception of how the purchase should be made. The heroine experiences "an unreadiness to name […] the purchasing medium. It wouldn't certainly be anything so gross as money, and the matter accordingly remained rather vague […]" (207). In the telegraphist's mind, not only would the exchange of money for her silence be immoral, but to insert such a materiality into their ephemeral exchanges would diminish their value

and demean their spiritual significance. On the other hand, she cannot quite conceive of offering herself for purchase, even though her exhortation to "buy me" seems to suggest just that. The implication is two-fold: she wants to exact some vague thing from him in exchange for her silence. While at the same time, again, without putting language to it, wants that something to be his affection. The logical extension of purchasing his affection might include a sexual relationship. In this case, then, Everard is the sexually exploited party and thereby the prostitute who sells himself to buy the telegraphist's silence. So, the "purchasing medium" becomes personified in the telegraphist as well as the mode of exchange to keep her discreet. She becomes the unnamable purchasing agent rather than Everard; or, at least the question of whether it is the telegraphist or Everard remains open.

James implies, however, that the spiritual power she possesses through her work with sound and silence is impeded by the materiality of the world she inhabits. As Galvan concludes, "While her telegraphic channeling of messages echoes the occult exploits of the séance medium, she herself is hemmed in all around by unheavenly forces, the forces of erotic and commercial desire" (305). The telegraphist finally realizes that her role in the love triangle, the touchstone she sees herself as, must be amended, like the telegrams she corrects. When the danger of the entire affair is imminent, and Everard comes to her for the telegram that threatens to expose his affair with Lady Bradeen, he speaks to her "as if she had been some strange young woman" (247). She understands then the limits of her importance in the telegraphic triad: "she felt how much she had missed in the gaps and blanks and absent answers—how much she had to dispense with: it was now black darkness save for the little wild red flare" (247)—the final favor she can perform is by finding the lost telegram, an act that brings her back to earth.

In “The Altar of the Dead,” Stransom bases his ethical and artistic decisions on his interpretation of sound and silence. Like the telegraphist, he must “altar” his choices in light of earthly concerns, specifically his relationship with the authoress and the implications of ethical social interactions. Both Stransom and the telegraphist privilege absence and silence over sound and presence but come understand to that both must be used appropriately for sound social relations. This shift in understanding through mediating consciousnesses relies on the aural for its manifestation: specifically music in “Altar” and telegraphy in “Cage.”

James purposely rejects the use of explicit ghosts to elucidate his ghostly themes because in these tales he wants to highlight the ephemeral nature of sound and how it resembles consciousness in its haunting quality. “Real” ghosts lack the sophistication necessary to portray psychological reactions to the uncanny. The “appearance” of ghosts diminishes the potency of the suspense created by assumed existence through acoustic signs. Even in The Turn of the Screw (1898), published the same year as “In the Cage,” Quint and Miss Jessel appear only fleetingly, and arguably, they may not appear at all depending on how one reads the reliability of the governess. The more obvious state of the supernatural in that novella is contingent upon its status as a romance, or a “fairy-tale pure and simple” as James called it in his Preface (Blackmur 171). Both “The Altar of the Dead” and “In the Cage” lean more toward the realist end of James’s realism/romance continuum, but, nonetheless share enough romantic, ghostly qualities to render them ghostly tales.

Notes

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[1] Lustig argues that James's fiction and his Prefaces, especially the famous Preface to The American with its discussion of the distinction between romance and realism, suggest a "'revolution' which connected the real and the romantic in a circuit of meaning" (58). This "revolution" and its subsequent "circuit" implies a circular or "rotary movement" in James's work that allows the familiar to appear strange and the unknown to be known and that this motion related to his conception of consciousness, which also engages the familiar and the fantastic (2).

Besides romance and realism, James also uses the "explosive principle" and "economic mastery" to discuss genre. These terms come from Preface XVIII in the New York Edition and cover several works of short fiction, including "Daisy Miller." James uses them to describe the lush, rich quality writers seek and pour into longer works. "Economic mastery" is achieved when this richness is retained, but achieved by restraint, eliminating erroneous material, and finally arriving at a shorter piece, which is worth "a higher price than twenty other clustered loosenesses" (Blackmur 278).

[2] Unlike the writers listed here, James also used social realism to explore the artistic possibilities of spiritualism and psychical research. The Bostonians (1885-86) exploits spiritualism's potential for financial and psychological fraud, female subjection, and vampiric possession. It is a sometimes acerbic commentary on the culture surrounding spiritualism.

[3] Schumann helped found the Neue Leipziger Zeitschrift für Musik in 1834. He took over controlling interest of the music journal in 1835 and edited it until he sold his interest in 1844.

[4] "The sense of the state of the dead is but part of the sense of the state of the living; and congruously with that, life is cheated to almost the same degree of the finest homage (precisely this our possible friendships and intimacies)" (Preface to "Altar" [Blackmur 244-255]).

[5] In "Altar" this "grip of consciousness" manifests in Stransom's death—a realization of the death drive.

[6] This assertion could be augmented by Janet Gabler-Hover's reading of the end as the telegraphist's contemplation of suicide as she stares into Paddington Canal while a policeman maintains surveillance over her actions although Gabler-Hover rightly describes this as a "quintessential Victorian scene" (267).

[7] John Carlos Rowe, "[…] if some ghost haunts this ghost story as definitely as the specters of Quint and Jessel trouble its companion for 1898, then the telegraphist has helped Lady Bradeen and Captain Everard produce it. In short, the telegraphist would be no different from the governess, imagining her independence and yet still reproducing the distant authority of the dominant ideology" (162).

[8] Richard Menke also argues for the telegraphist as a sort of medium. At least she "interposes a level of mediation, a layer that intermingles the materiality of communication, the content of her subjectivity, and the social structures of bureaucracy, class, and gender" (975). While his main argument involves telegraphy's relationship to realism and realist narrative techniques, his essay suggests the otherworldliness early Victorians attributed to the telegraph by noting authors Charles Briggs and Augustus Maverick writing in 1858 of the history of the first attempt for a transatlantic cable use

supernatural language to describe this technology such as a "spiritual force" and "new realizations of human powers and possibilities" (977).

[9] See Jay Clayton, pp. 58-59; Gerard J. Holzmann and Björn Pehrson, The Early History of Data Networks.

[10] Menke, 983. Clayton, 65. See also Lewis Coe's The Telegraph: A History of Morse's Invention and Its Predecessors in the United States.

[11] Psychic vampires conduct "a mysterious process whereby certain persons are able to steal other people's vitality without even touching them. [. . .] Moreover, they are the least detectable vampires of all, as the vitality-stealing process is invariably an unconscious and involuntary act" (Frost 17 qtd. in Gabler-Hover 266).

[12] James's "The Jolly Corner" is an excellent example of the interconnectedness of houses and ghosts. Gilbert uses this story to illustrate his thesis.

[13] This rationale recalls the governess' reasoning in "The Turn of the Screw" for the existence of the ghosts, and Miles' and Flora's complicity.

[14] See also Savoy and Nixon.

Chapter IV

Charlotte Mew's Voice

And in the glass, last night, I saw a ghost behind my chair—
Yet why remember it, when one can still go moderately gay--?
[…]
Then utter silence and the empty world—the room—the bed—
The corpse! No, not quite dead, while this cries out in me,
("Madeleine in Church")

1. Between Two Worlds and the "Cri de Coeur"

We have seen that Henry James uses the ghost tangentially and figuratively in his later ghost stories. The ghosts in Charlotte Mew's gothic fiction lie even deeper; her ghosts are the voices trapped in the unconscious, which Freud began awakening in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. By uncovering buried desires, individuals and society at large released the sound of hidden voices, and interpreting these exhumed voices became the cultural work of many artists. Charlotte Mew was one of the writers who breathed life into them by resurrecting supposedly dead literary tropes such as the eighteenth-century gothic novel's live burial. She used the old fear of live burial in conjunction with the inarticulate voice that resisted it —manifest in cries, screams, and moans—to represent a modern psychological and aesthetic sensibility.

Charlotte Mew's life and art straddled two worlds: the world of Victorian social and artistic conservatism and modernism's more freespirited, if inward, view of the world, one deeply engaged with Freud's discovery of the unconscious. The scant scholarly work on Mew has echoed the difficulty of placing her squarely in a literary period or movement. Angela Leighton calls her "one of the last Victorians" because of the obvious influence of Emily Bronte and Christina Rossetti on Mew's poetry. (266). Leighton argues, "Untouched, in life, by the sexual and political emancipations of the twentieth century or, in her art, by the obvious thematic freedoms of modernism, she

remained imaginatively tied to the symbols of a past age" (266). This analysis is an oversimplification of Mew's life and work. While she employed the Victorian poetic themes of desolation and renunciation, Mew injected them with her unique voice.[1] Nelljean McConeghey Rice asserts that Mew's poetry should be read alongside T.S. Eliot's poetry and James Joyce's fiction to gain an appreciation of Mew's modern sense of alienation represented in content as well as form. And John Newton, editor of Mew's Complete Poems (2000), argues in his Preface that neither T.S. Eliot nor D.H. Lawrence "can match her bald and stark directness in the representation of the intransigent facts, particularly the facts of human isolation, of the often insurmountable divisions and distances between human beings" (xi).

Mew demonstrates the literary qualities outlined by Newton in her unpublished 1895 story "A Wedding Day." This story achieves a particularly modern, interior voice with its mix of direct and free indirect discourse:

> She rises to prepare the meal. Her pots and pans beam tenderly upon her, but she does not note them. She has heard a distant sound of footsteps. They pause, and stagger—she must not banish them by motion, and stands still, listening. Perhaps the fairy bridesmaids are coming back. "Dearest heart, indeed they come!" This, too, is useless. Mark her gesture, courteous but imperative. You wronged her. She had quite forgotten the Bride. She was not even thinking of the little feet that might soon be starting from eternity to meet her; […] (224)

The omniscient narrator addresses the reader, challenges her reading strategies and corrects them. This is an early example of the kind of highly self-conscious aesthetics the

modernists used to demonstrate "isolation" and "insurmountable divisions" in human relations. The voice sounds very similar to Virginia Woolf in To the Lighthouse, The Waves and her short story "The Lady in the Mirror."

Mew's modern sensibility is accompanied by her affinity for both the Decadent and New Woman movements—literary and cultural movements often at odds with one another even though both advocated shifting away from Victorian conventions.[2] The debates within Decadence and the New Woman movement on gender and other issues served Mew well since conflicting impulses went to the heart of her own personality. In fact, cultural and personal conflict epitomizes Charlotte Mew's life and work: for instance, she rejected Victorian enthusiasm for science, commerce, and "progress," harboring a deep suspicion of all three (tending more to the John Ruskin and William Morris end of that continuum). Yet, her writing demonstrates a penchant for cutting-edge, modernist techniques in form and subject-matter.

Mew actively avoided the scandal that often went along with being associated with the Decadents and the New Women. Her first story, "Passed," was published in the second issue of The Yellow Book (July, 1894.)[3] After the Wilde trials in 1895, and because of its connection with Beardsley, The Yellow Book came to be associated with Decadence and sexual deviance. Mew quietly refused to be associated with the periodical and began submitting her stories to Temple Bar, shying away from The Yellow Book crowd, thereby distancing herself from the threat of open homosexuality. This is not to say that Mew was averse to homosexuality. Indeed, Charlotte Mew was likely a lesbian who fell in love with Ella D'Arcy, a regular Yellow Book contributor and, later, with the novelist May Sinclair. But Mew always maintained a typically Victorian code of public

sexual conduct, which did not allow for scandals. As Mew's biographer puts it, Charlotte was a "free spirit who clung to gentility and normalness" (50). Mew's sexual conflicts spread into issues regarding sanity and aesthetics in her poetry and fiction as I will show through an analysis of "Passed" and "A White Night."

The unnamed female narrator in "Passed" (1894) seems to have divided impulses when she decides to go for a walk in a poor section of London to observe its "romantic view" (65) and then goes on to describe the city scene in far from romantic terms; in fact, she evokes the sounds, smells, and sights of unmitigated squalor. Then, stopping in a church, the narrator is waylaid by a young woman and prevailed upon to come to her home to provide some kind of help, the nature of which is left vague. In the room, the narrator discovers a dead woman on the bed. This encounter with death brings on a hallucinatory, dream-like state wherein the narrator's loved ones take on zombie forms. The horrific scene ends when she comes back to her senses in the squalid room of the girl, shaken into consciousness by her cries. The narrator eventually flees the room without helping her. Months later, in the "human mart" of western London, the narrator sees the same woman, who now appears to be a prostitute, with a man who holds a case bearing the seal that she saw on a torn letter in the girl's room. The narrative implies that the dead woman committed suicide because of this letter's writer and that the narrator failed to save the girl from prostitution and perhaps from the same fate as the dead woman.

Mew's gothic short story "A White Night" (1903) is tale of ritualistic barbarity inflicted upon an unnamed woman and observed by three English tourists in an ancient Spanish church: Cameron, the narrator, his sister Ella, and Ella's new husband King. Ella

and King are honeymooning in Spain and since Cameron has been working there, Ella, an adventurous New Woman, calls on him to show them the less-traveled interior of the country. The group becomes accidentally locked in the empty church around nightfall. The trio, then, silently witnesses the live burial of a screaming woman (probably a nun although Mew never makes this explicit) dressed in white during a midnight ceremony for the dead performed by chanting monks. In Cameron's recounting of the story he emphasizes the aesthetic qualities of the experience; Ella, however, expresses a real-life understanding of what happened by acknowledging that an actual woman died.

Both "A White Night" and "Passed" encompass issues that will continue to pervade Mew's writing such as the idea of the unconscious and the plight of marginalized figures such as the poor and the insane. The stories also address the themes of death and aesthetics that run throughout Mew's work. Death is the prevailing theme in most of her writing, however, and images of death and dying run through nearly all Charlotte Mew's poetry and fiction, which we see in "Passing" and "A White Night." We also see in these stories Mew's interest in connecting death and sex. To that end, she often uses graves and other forms of entombment as symbols of sexual and social conventions that silence such as the nun's burial in the stone floor of the church in "A White Night" and the bed as a form of grave in "Passing." But as Dennis Denisoff argues, "Mew's critique of social discrimination does not shift toward an inquiry into or celebration of a harmonious existence beyond, but retains a focus on the seemingly unseverable relation between the dead and the living" (132). Mew shares with Dickens, Eliot, and James this close connection between the living and the dead that they are all examining through their various iterations of the gothic.

Moreover, like the authors discussed so far, Mew makes use of varying forms of sound and silence to demonstrate this connection. However, while Dickens, Eliot, and James tend to focus on exterior sounds and acoustic technologies and the ways in which those sounds and technologies affect the body and mind, Charlotte Mew focuses on the effects of interior sounds and voices. Rather than taking an interest in technology, Mew often utilizes Freudian psychology to explore her ideas regarding sound and voice, and she connects her interest in the aural to her overall theme of giving voice to those who are silenced. Mew often represents these themes through marginalized characters in short stories and speakers in poetry who express fear and desire, expressions which are often manifest in auditory symbols including voices and screams. She uses these symbols as an expression of the *cri de coeur*—the instance in which emotion distills into a few words or an inarticulate utterance.[4] In both "Passed" and "A White Night," Mew uses narrators who dehumanize an unnamed woman by framing her as an erotic and aesthetic object primarily through her voice.

2. "Phantoms of despair": Freud's "Talking Cure" and the Voice

Mew's description of the narrator's walk includes language that emphasizes the conditions of the poor, focusing particular attention on the sounds associated with their urban environment. She notes also how the architecture displays the circumstances of the poor and the lower classes. In the neighborhood through which she passes, a "partially demolished prison" stands as well as a church "newly built by an infallible architect" (65).[5] Close by these seemingly opposed structures "a row of cramped houses, with the unpardonable bow window, projecting squalor into prominence, came into view" (65). Since the architectural intention of the bow window design was primarily a stage on

which middle- and upper-class club men were to be seen from the street,[6] the original intention of the element has been perverted because of the decay of the neighborhood—with the poor, in their squalor, appearing in those august windows.

Now, instead of men of leisure smoking cigars and drinking brandy looking on the world outside, "Through spattered panes faces of diseased and dirty children leered into the street" (65). Worse yet, the narrator can hear the sounds of the poor through the open window. The children's "wails and maddening requirements sent out the mother's cry. It was thrown back to her, mingled with her children's screams, from the pitiless walls" (65-66). The cries and screams of the poor echo off the walls of their surroundings, amplifying their conditions. The narrator hazards a speculation on the quality that most renders these people pitiful. She surmises that these dwelling places are mere "travesties […] of the grand place called home" (66). It is not that the poor lost happy, secure homes that makes the situation tragic because they never have had the luxury of knowing what a proper conception of "home" really is to begin with. According to the narrator, "Theirs was not the desolation of something lost, but of something that had never been" (66). The poor families' material conditions reflect their want of warm familial life. The idea of longing for material and emotional comforts—whether they were lost or had never existed— runs as a theme throughout the story.

Along with the voices of the poor, urban sounds of commercialism frame the narrator's walk through the London neighborhood. Contrasting with the romantic vision of a girl with the face of a "medieval saint," the narrator describes the noise of an active marketplace: "Hawkers in a neighbouring alley were calling, and the monotonous ting-ting of the muffin-bell made an audible background to the picture" (66). The narrator

hears the "hawkers" just after she hears that the harshness of the girl's voice and dialect betray her lower- or working-class status. The sound of the girl's voice and the noise emanating from the street vendors together shake the narrator's illusion of the scene as romantic.

The narrator is further inundated with the cultural reality of women as aesthetic commodities as she passes a shop window with a "large chromo of a girl at prayer. Her eyes turned upwards, presumably to heaven, left the gazer in no state to dwell on the elaborately bared breasts below. […] This personification of pseudo-purity was sensually diverting, and consequently marketable" (67). Here Mew is commenting on the misuse of religion to sell what is sensual; the marketability of the spiritually ecstatic image raises the specter of prostitution and foreshadows the end of the story. This passage also highlights the problem free-spirited, middle-class women faced at the *fin de siecle* of being confused with prostitutes when in public. Sally Ledger points out that

> Very often the feminist New Women were as keen as religious reformers to exclude prostitutes from the city landscape. […] The New Woman […] wanted the streets of the metropolis to herself, free of the constraints imposed by the impropriety associated with the appearance of unaccompanied women in the public spaces of the city. To enter the public domain, the New Woman had to confront and avoid the label 'public woman,' which at the *fin de siecle* was synonymous with 'streetwalker.' (154)

This New Woman attitude may, in part, account for Mew's aversion to the kind of sexual controversy the Yellow Book inspired. The picture and the prostitute at the end of the

story together represent the all-too-present potential of the narrator (since she has no name she could really be any woman) to become a "fallen woman."

Like much of Dickens's fiction, in "Passed," the urban sounds and sights associated with commercialism jar the narrator, forcing the real world of the marketplace on her. Mew comments on this explicitly in her prose. She suggests that while urban noise may frighten the listener, the sounds of the natural world more effectively capture that which is otherworldly, gothic, and ghostly. In a 1913 essay called "Men and Trees," Mew presents an extended meditation on the consequences of abandoning ancient forms of religion with the symbol of the tree at the center of her argument. For Mew, trees literally and figuratively serve to demonstrate the flaws of Victorian progress. They also enable her to point out the hypocrisy in European and American attitudes regarding religions other than Christianity. After addressing the practice of human sacrifice in Druidical culture, Mew points out,

> These, of course, are the darker superstitions; civilization, brightly conscious of having abolished the devils with the gods, and replaced them all by the Culte du Moi, murmurs 'shocking!' and hurries on; but there is not much doubt that human sacrifices are still being offered by American and European syndicates to the sacred tree of civilization, the rubber-tree. Civilization demands speed, speed demands rubber, and rubber, coated with blood and slime, turns quickly into gold. (395)

In many sections like the one quoted above, Mew's essay reads like a twenty-first-century treatise on the ecological perils of oil consumption.

The essay also articulates some of Mew's views on spirituality, which was outside the mainstream.[7] She argues that pagan "tree-worship" still exists within different forms of medieval Christianity practiced in Celtic Brittany, where she spent some time and on which she published a loving 1901 essay, "Notes on a Brittany Convent." In "Men and Trees," Mew emphasizes the importance of sound and voice in the practice of religion. She argues that "Religion is like music, one must have an ear for it; some people have none at all; but given the ear it is all significant and wonderful, from the old plain-song to a rhapsodie of Brahms. The form changes with our shifting emotions and ideas; here and there a tune gets lost, or goes out of fashion" (396). Religion, like music, is a universal human impulse, and the varying forms it takes is simply convention or "fashion."

Later in the essay Mew connects trees and voices through examples such as in the "Dream of the Rood" where the tree states its case and in her rendition of Joan of Arc's story where her inquisitors are concerned with Joan's aural connection with the natural world: "There was always the mystery of the Voices, to which when they had stupefied the child of another world and burned a saint, they were no nearer" (400). Joan's persecutors symbolize, for Mew, contemporary cultural attitudes. As she puts it disparagingly, "We have not much use for anything but machinery and science and democracy, the three-headed monster who has kicked the effete trio of the troupe, the sisters Wonder and Beauty and Stillness, out of the show" (399). The natural world and ancient perspectives on that world hold the key to true spirituality, even if that spirituality manifests itself in fearful, gothic forms. According to Mew, the sounds of the marketplace take individuals farther away from their core selves, while the voices

associated with nature bring us closer to reality[8]—and that reality has everything to do with what occurs in the conscious and unconscious mind.

The mysteries of the mind were of great importance to Charlotte Mew in her life and writing. Her "asylum poems" ("On the Asylum Road," "Ken" and "In Nunhead Cemetery")[9] are dramatic monologues that explore the thoughts of an insane mind. These poems are clearly influenced by Robert Browning's Madhouse Cells, but Mew has the benefit of Freud's work just about the time she begins to write fiction and well into the time she starts writing poetry. Mew's interest in insanity stems from her family history. Her brother, Henry, and her sister, Freda, both were what we would recognize now as schizophrenic, and both were institutionalized. Charlotte was greatly affected by the threat of insanity—so much so that she and her sister Anne agreed between themselves to never marry. The mental illness that ran in the Mew family coupled with the interest in eugenics at the *fin de siecle* provided Mew with the raw material and the incentive to explore issues of insanity and psychology in her writing. In fact, it is likely that Mew had access to Freud's and Breuer's ideas in Studies in Hysteria around the time she was writing "Passed." They published an early version of it in Vienna in 1893, and later that year F.W.H. Myers of the Society for Psychical Research commented on it in that organization's proceedings. Because by this time Mew had become part of Henry Harland's Yellow Book salon crowd that gathered on Saturday nights, she could easily have heard about the new "talking cure" and ideas on hysteria from this circle.

The narrator's horrific fantasy of her family as the living dead gestures toward Freud's and Breuer's Studies in Hysteria, where they develop the "talking cure" as a treatment for hysteria in the patient known as Anna O. Like the narrator experiences,

Anna suffered with horrifying hallucinations, which included images of death or, sometimes, cord-like objects such as hair and wires turning into black snakes. Breuer referred to these hallucinatory episodes as "absences" since Anna did not recall them afterward—her conscious mind was absent. We might say, then, that Anna became a ghost of herself, if we consider James's formulation. The episode that most resembles the narrator's fantasy is the episode which was "filled with terrifying figures, death's heads and skeletons" (66). After seeing the dead woman on the bed, Mew's narrator imagines that "the images of those I loved crept round me, with stark yet well-known features, their limbs borrowing death's rigid outline, as they mocked my recognition of them with soundless semblances of mirth" (71). Death and decay figure prominently in both cases. In Mew's story, the vision of the zombies is terrifying enough, but that they mock her with silent laughter suggests their rejection of her—their muteness solidifying her insignificance.

This mute condition reflects the importance of articulation in both the Anna O. case and Mew's "Passed." Breuer reports that Anna's "mind was relieved when, shaking with fear and horror, she had reproduced these frightful images and given verbal utterance to them" (68). Talking about her dreams and hallucinations calmed Anna, easing her anxious state.[10] Mew's narrator seems to long for just this kind of help: after an unsuccessful attempt to mutter a prayer, "the partially relinquished horror was renewing dominance" (72). The narrator suggests that her inability to speak (pray) allows the horror to take control again. The next sentence clarifies this: "Speech of any incoherence or futility would have brought mental power of resistance." The act of speaking or hearing another speak, then, might stave off the ensuing slide into insanity.

The passive construction of the sentence, however, begs the question as to whose speech might engender this "resistance." The passage that follows indicates that speech or sound from anyone—whether it come from the narrator or from another person—might quiet the terrifying turmoil in her mind. The narrator's experience of silence leads to fear that she may be going insane because, as she tells us, "My mind was fast losing landmarks amid the continued quiet of the living and the awful stillness of the dead. There was no sound, even of savage guidance, I should not then have welcomed with glad response" (72). Her loss of the sonic "landmarks" necessary to distinguish between the world of the living and the world of the dead suggests a loss of grip on reality. Not only does sound have the power to inject fear and terror in a subject as in David Copperfield and Daniel Deronda, at the end of the century, sound also has the power to quell the demons of fear.

Silence and soundlessness mark the narrator's initial encounter with the girl who implores her to help. The narrator finds her in the baroque church on a chair "flung face downwards across the seat" (67). The woman's body language clearly suggests that she is in distress, and the narrator uses this image to comment on the inability of language to express extreme states of emotion: "Does speech convey intensity of anguish? Its supreme expression is in form. Here was human agony set forth in meagre lines, voiceless, but articulate to the soul." (67-68). While the narrator herself craves speech during her zombie fantasy, an alleviation of symptoms such as Breuer's and Freud's "talking cure" provides, the possibility of this catharsis seems unavailable to the destitute girl because of her marginalized position.

The girl's dominant characteristic is that she almost never speaks; she emits mostly inarticulate sounds such as cries, screams, and moans, expressions of a *cri de coeur*. For instance, when the women finally arrive at the room where the narrator discovers the dead woman on the bed, the girl lets out "a cry of exhaustion or relief, at the same time falling into a similar attitude to that she had taken in the dim church. Her entire frame became shaken with tearless agony or terror" (69). After this breakdown, the girl "began partly to call or moan […], wildly, and then with heartbreaking weariness, 'to stop, to stay'" (69). Later, when the narrator tries to leave, abandoning the women, the girl begs her to stay: "She seized my throbbing arm and cried in a whisper, low and hoarse, but strongly audible: 'For God's sake, stay here with me.'" (73). The manner in which the girl expresses herself is more important than the words she uses. Mew lingers over the descriptions of the way the girl sounds, and spends little ink on what she actually says because the sound of the cry itself supplies the impression of despair Mew attempts to relate. This is the narrator's story. It really has much less to do with the fate of the girl and more to do with the girl's effects on the narrator as an aesthetic object.

The narrator's aesthetic objectification begins at the church and then devolves into an erotic attraction once she arrives at the woman's room and after the ecstatic *cri de coeur* described above. The young girl's "meagre lines" expressed "human agony," and "anguish" can be expressed only through "form." Her attitude toward this emotional woman oscillates between revulsion and erotic attraction; once the narrator hears the first outburst she is repulsed. She finds the woman's agony "sickening to watch" (69). However, the girl's aural distress also seems to strike the narrator as erotic. The woman's emotional turmoil leaves her so exhausted that she "lay like a broken piece of mechanism

in [the narrator's] arms" (69). From this perspective, the narrator describes the smell of the girl's hair:

> Her dark hair had come unfastened and fell about my shoulder. A faint white streak of it stole through the brown. […] I remember noticing, as it was swept with her involuntary motions across my face, a faint fragrance which kept recurring like a subtle and seductive sprite, hiding itself with fairy cunning in the tangled maze. (69-70)[11]

The blatant homoeroticism of this description helps to account for the inverse reaction of revulsion that the narrator simultaneously feels.[12] This ambivalence echoes the magnetic yet repulsive effects of the voice in "A White Night."

3. Excessive Voice

Because Cameron fetishizes a female voice to the point of allowing her death so that he can continue to hear her scream, "A White Night" lends itself to a Lacanian reading. While Lacan added both the gaze and the voice to Freud's list of partial objects, the gaze has received most of the critical attention. But, Mew seems to anticipate Lacan in her understanding of the power of a woman's voice for the male subject.[13] Mew's anticipation of Lacan is grounded in her understanding of Freud's conception of sexuality as socially constructed, which Lacan takes up and emphasizes in his re-working of Freudian concepts.

Lacan, after Freud, asserts that human sexuality is not based in the knowledge of the desired object—that only after the loss of that object does it present itself to the subject as desirable. Because desire is shot through with loss or absence, Freud is lead to write that the "Sexual instinct itself is unfavorable to the realization of complete

satisfaction"; Mew's either repressed or unacknowledged homosexuality and her probable celibacy would have provided her with a very personal connection to the idea of the impossibility of resolving desire (qtd. in Mitchell & Rose 6). Furthermore, the loss inherent in desire that Mew recognizes offers us another way to think about the ghostly elements in her work. The voice functions in "A White Night" as an object of loss, emphasizing the role of absence in desire, sound, and the ghostly.

Moreover, Mew's use of the nun's voice serves her overall project of articulating the feeling of entombment many women experienced at the *fin de siecle* as a result of the conventional social expectations that continued to be placed on women. Charlotte Mew's *cri de coeur*—the moment logos and speech break down, giving way to an unmediated emotional expression—functions through the voice as a signifier of loss or an *object a* to use Lacan's term. Cameron fetishizes the nun through her voice as an object of loss, which relegates her to the status of fantasy. He validates his projections by constructing a narrative from his point of view; however, by the end of the story Ella challenges Cameron's version and implicitly suggests that his motives are less than noble. Through Ella's challenge, Mew contrasts the nun's nonsensical utterances, her *cri de coeur*, with Ella's assertive, uncompromising speech. Ella's irrepressible voice provides an alternate discourse to woman-as-fantasy, thereby disrupting and subverting the dominance of masculine authority and the psychic structures that support it.

By having Cameron narrate, Mew subverts a traditional element of the female gothic in which the story is told from the point of view of a victimized heroine.[14] Moreover, Cameron does nothing to stop the monks, reversing another element of the female gothic: the dangerous oppressor as exotic foreigner. Even though the monks fit

this bill, Mew shows that Cameron is the real oppressor; his acquiescence makes him complicit in the woman's annihilation. But, Cameron not only does nothing, he watches and listens to the scene with fascination, relishing its horrific exoticism and making himself believe that the woman "wants it." Unlike in conventional female gothic stories, Mew's oppressive monster is not an Italian or a ghost; indeed the oppressor explicitly is an English brother, husband, or father. Having Cameron narrate the story also highlights the power of masculine speech to relegate women to roles that serve masculine interests—both social and psychic.

The auditory references "appear" almost as soon as the party reaches the church. Cameron says that they observe "a group of peasant women coming out from vespers," and that the women "chattered" on their way, while "an aged creature shuffling painfully [. . .] behind the rest still muttering her *Madre purisima,/madre castisima,/Ruega por nosostros* in a kind of automatic drone" (123). This passage represents a microcosm of how the voice will operate in more overt and extreme ways throughout the rest of the story. The term "chattered" here indicates a polyphonous noise generally associated with the feminine, undecipherable to the male subject. The "chatter" seems informal and secular in nature, while the old woman's "drone" remains caught up in her religious ritual, which includes the continuation of her prayer. And since the prayer consists of words (logos), Cameron can recount it in his narration. Cameron unsexes the old woman by calling her a "creature," allowing him to associate her with the monks. Like them, she remains fixated on her parochial ritual, which includes text, and she performs her ritual in an "automatic drone." Mew complicates the old woman's gender, characterizing her as androgynous. She has Cameron conflate the noise or "chatter" of the female voice with

the emission of discernable text of the male voice. Mladen Dolar notes in her essay "The Object Voice" that "the voice beyond sense is self-evidently equated with femininity, whereas the text, the instance of signification, is in this simple paradigmatic opposition on the side of masculinity" (17). The figure of the old woman, however, demonstrates how this "simple paradigmatic opposition" might not always fit neatly. Cameron's creative conflation, which creates a person with no gender, actually serves to highlight the nun's femininity through her inarticulate voice. Mew shows how the nun's voice and the problem of feminine signification contribute to Cameron's romantic fantasy of her gruesome circumstances.

In The Acoustic Mirror, Kaja Silverman describes the voice as "the site of perhaps the most radical of all subjective divisions—the division between meaning and materiality (44). In other words, the voice has the capacity for conveying meaning but its materiality cannot be substantiated since it is produced by the body but only understood outside the body. The fact that the subject functions both as speaker and listener means that the voice itself acts as a destabilizing factor for subjectivity. As Silverman explains,

> The simultaneity of these two actions [vocal/auditory system] makes it difficult to situate the voice, to know whether it is "outside" or "inside." The boundary separating exteriority from interiority is blurred by this aural undecidability—by the replication within the former arena of something which seems to have its inception within the latter Rosolato refers to this replication as an "acoustic mirror." (79-80)

Mladen Dolar discusses this "replication" as a remainder, stressing that the voice as excess makes it an exemplary *objet á*: "It is not a function of the signifier, since it

represents precisely the nonsignifying remainder, something resistant to the signifying operations, a leftover heterogeneous in relation to the structural logic which includes it" (10). Dolar's description is particularly appropriate when examining the feminine voice—and even more apt when we look at the feminine voice when it is beyond sense.

Silverman's and Dolar's discussions of voice help explain Cameron's confusion. Because the nun's only expressions are cries and screams, Cameron never can be sure of their motivation since they lack the power to signify. Nonetheless, Cameron wants to believe he can understand the meaning of her cries—that her voice indeed signifies—in order to leave his own capacity for signification intact. To this end, Cameron engages in some convoluted psychic gymnastics to convince himself that the nun does not want to be saved. He explains that "[p]ossibly I had caught the trick of her quiescence, acquiescence, and I went no further than she went; I waited—waited with her, as it were, to see it through" (130). When the nun's fate becomes clear, Cameron claims, "If she had swayed, or given any hint of wavering, of an appeal to God or man, I must have answered it magnetically" (133). Cameron goes even further in his attempt to believe the nun acted out of agency: "It was she who had the key to what I might have done but didn't do" (133). Finally, he decides that, even though she has no idea anyone else is in the church, they have had a meeting of the minds—that he is sure of her desires: "Make of it what you will—we were inexplicably *en rapport*" (133). Cameron bases his perceptions, in some part, on what he can see, but in a larger part, on what he cannot hear—vocal signification.

Even though Mew disabuses the reader of the accuracy of Cameron's senses and reveals Cameron's supposed omniscient knowledge as illusory, Mew initially establishes

Cameron as authoritative by asserting his familiarity with the people and the terrain of this exotic land. Cameron has been in Spain for over a year, and when Ella and King arrive, it is his responsibility to "show them round" (119). Later he restrains King from saving the doomed nun because he "knew something of the place and people" and that "any movement [. . .] would probably prove more than rash" (131).

But, Mew means to demonstrate the shakiness of Cameron's sensory perspective in order to warn the reader of his unreliability. For instance, he could not discern the nun's age: "It [her face] was of striking beauty, but its age? One couldn't say" (128); he could not make out the characteristics of the tomb in which she was buried, only that the loosened stone "disclosed a cavity, the depth of which I wasn't near enough to see" (132). He was not always able to hear the monks clearly: "Here and there I caught the words or sense of a response. The prayers for the most part were unintelligible" (130). Most importantly, though, Cameron's perception finally becomes suspect to himself. At last he "saw what King had all along been looking at, the sheer, unpicturesque barbarity" (135). While Cameron's visual perception is important to the story, it is his auditory sense that acts as the primary tool of projection, rendering the nun's voice his object of loss.

Cameron romanticizes the nun's cries by emphasizing the exteriority and excess of her voice. He says that her cries "were not her own—they were outside herself"; his evidence for this view is that "there was no discomposure in her carriage, nor [. . .] in her face" (127). Cameron's attempt to disavow the nun's vocal expression of distress and lack of control testifies to his projection onto the nun of his own fear of lack and insufficiency. He simply cannot accept the lack of signification her voice entails because

this would allow for the possibility of his own outside voice lacking in signification. If this is the case then Cameron's narrative is suspect to the reader and to himself. In other words, the "intensity" of his "illusion" may not after all be "reality" (137). This "nonsensical" feminine voice in relation to male logic and subjectivity is precisely what Mew wants to explore through the nun.

The nun's screams stand out for Cameron the against the monks' droning chant. This chanting had continued for some time, so the nun's outbursts, which were filled with inflection and expression, albeit inhuman expression, stood out against the monotony of the chanting. He says that "[h]er screams were changing into little cries or moans, like those of a spent animal, from whom the momentary pressure of attack has been removed. They broke from her at intervals, unnoticed, unsuppressed" (128). Juxtaposed to the nun's animalistic, non-symbolic vocalizations are the monks' chant, whose "measured cadences" become increasingly associated with logos. The nun's voice introduces dissonance and "discord" to the monks "music […] of the mind" (126). While we could read this scene as a rebellious act on the part of the nun, (Cameron does periodically refer to her in terms of rebelliousness) Cameron's and the monks' logocentric, cerebral music effectively overpower the nun's visceral cries.

Just as George Eliot and Henry James use music to convey haunting effects in their works, Charlotte Mew likewise employs music, but rather than the ghostly haunting Eliot and James seek to achieve, she strives for unmitigated terror. In Daniel Deronda, Eliot used music from Jewish religious ritual to emphasize the ghostly, mystical quality of memory; by contrast, and more in line with James's notion of separating music of the head from music of the heart, Mew's religious music highlights the privileging of the

Word over feeling and emotion. Through the monks' action of silencing the nun, Mew suggests that the dominance and power of the Church to silence dissenting voices is terrifying. But, the Church, itself, is a metaphor for the cultural power of logos, and this is the domain of males. Women do not "really count" because they are considered to exist in the realm of inarticulate feeling.

Mladen Dolar's short history of the Catholic Church's attitudes on music and voice provides a context for the conflict Mew lays out. Throughout the history of sacral music the problem of its power had to be dealt with, and the role of the voice played a large part in the debates. The issue came down to pure vocal activity versus logos. Dolar says that the history of music in the church is the history of the relationship between words and music: "music, in particular the voice, shouldn't stray from words, which endow it with sense; as soon as it departs from its textual anchorage, the voice becomes senseless and threatening, all the more so because of its seductive and intoxicating powers" (17). Although music can be a sublime way to worship that glorifies God, it must remain simple in its melodies.

As a result, battles have been waged by Popes throughout history against polyphony because as Dolar says, "when several voices sing at the same time and follow their own melodic lines, the text becomes unintelligible" (22). Cameron recounts a scene in which bells are used in the nun's death ritual. Bells emit a single tone, without changes. Each time the bells "clang," a ritualistic prayer is performed:

> Loudly and unexpectedly above his unctuous monotone a bell clanged out three times. An *Ave* followed, after which two bells together, this time muffled sounded out again three times. The priest proceeded with a

> *Miserere*, during which they rang the bells alternately, and there was something curiously suggestive and determinate about this part of the performance. The real action had, one felt, begun. (130)

Though several bells together can produce melody, in this case, it seems clear that we are to be reminded of the monotonous tolling of the death bell. In any case, like the old woman's drone, the drone here is closely associated with the Word of God--logos.

Before this scene, Cameron has perceived that a death ritual is underway. He observes the priest nullifying the nun's visual sense as well as her vocal capacities: "He touched her eyes and closed them; then her mouth, and made a feint closing of that," (130). This symbolic action assures the monks that no unarticulated female cry or scream will disturb the ceremony, which is grounded in the presence of the articulated text. The priest's action in this scene is important, because as Dolar points out, "there is a dimension of the voice that runs counter to self-transparency, sense, and presence: the voice against the logos, the voice as the other of logos, its radical alterity" (24). However, the monks' ritual does not eliminate the threat posed by patriarchy; it merely inverts the threat because another dimension of the voice and one that resists signification or logos is silence.

The nun's ceased utterances—her silence—plays as important a role in Cameron's fantasy as her voice. We can see silence functioning in Mew's story as a living presence, almost as another character in some instances. Cameron endows the silence with some sort of referent. He says, "when we paused the silence seemed alert, expectant, ready to repel the recurrence of unholy clamour" (124). Here, silence has a definitive personality. Cameron further provides anthropomorphic qualities to silence:

> the soundlessness again impressed itself unpleasantly—it was intense, unnatural, acute.
>
> And then it stirred.
>
> The break in it was vague but positive; it might have been that, scarcely audible, the wind outside was rising, and yet not precisely that. I barely caught, and couldn't localize the sound. (125)

We should note here that the silence "stirred," not the sound that he could not discern. At one point the nun's cries "broke from her in intervals, unnoticed, unsuppressed, and now on silence, for the monks had ceased their chanting" (128). So, in this case, the cries act as the objects used to fill the void created by silence. In other words, the woman's voice stands in for the object of loss, which is the loss of signification that disappears with the monks' logocentric chanting.

As the monks concluded their ritual and began receding while "reciting quietly the '*De Profundis'*," Cameron notes, "I felt that I was missing something" (134). At first he attributes the lack entirely to the chanting. This would make sense because he would miss the textual "drone" that had not ceased since the monks arrived. However, he then he understands "quite suddenly and certainly I missed—the scream. In place of it there was this '*De Profundis'* and her silence. Out of her deep I realized it, dreamily, of course she would not call" (134). Really, then, it is the nun's silence, the elimination of her voice, that made the whole affair "a rather splendid crime" (137).

Mew recognizes woman's nonexistence for the male subject and uses Ella's character to provide a resistant discourse. Ella is horrified by Cameron's "temporary detachment," as he euphemistically refers to his role in the nun's death. And, Ella shows

that she is quite aware of Cameron's illusory "reality": "'Oh, for you,' she says with a touch of bitterness, 'it was a spectacle. The woman didn't really count" (137). However, what is particularly disturbing is Cameron's affirmation of Ella's accusation. He acknowledges and accepts Ella's indictment of his character, but justifies it by saying, "the woman didn't really count. She saw herself she didn't. That's precisely what she made me see" (138). This ending certainly seems pessimistic in terms of our hopes for Cameron's character and patriarchal discourse in general; however, Mew wants us to take solace in the fact that Ella knows the truth and can offer an alternative discourse.

Ella serves as a remedy for what Diane Hoeveler calls "gothic feminism," wherein women writers and their female characters are "complicit in constructing limited roles and self-destructive poses of femininity for [. . .] their readers to embrace" (244). In the "female gothic" the primary role was woman as helpless victim. However, later in the nineteenth century with the New Woman movement, writers like Mew began abandoning this paradigm. Ultimately, Mew's sacrificial nun gives her life not for Cameron's spectatorship or his auditory fascination, but so that Ella can tell the story as a disruptive, subversive woman who sees the truth—that the foreign, gothic oppressors in the female writers' imagination were inspired by their real-life, everyday brothers.

Through Charlotte Mew's "Passed" and "A White Night," we can hear the voices of Ann Radcliffe, Monk Lewis, Samuel Coleridge, and, perhaps more directly, Sheridan LeFanu. In these stories, Mew adopts a gothic that is less an uncanny experience, as we have seen in David Copperfield, Daniel Deronda, "The Altar of the Dead," and "In the Cage," and more a terror-gothic associated with the Romantic period (whether the author is a Romantic writer like Coleridge and Lewis or a sometimes anachronistic Romantic

writer like LeFanu.) Mew intends through her horrifying and disturbing scenes to drive the point home that apathy to fellow human beings is as destructive as actively harming them—that objectifying the marginalized through aesthetics, whether they are the poor, the insane, or women—serves only to marginalize them further. Charlotte Mew tells truth to power through her gothic: the bourgeois habit of romanticizing the other essentially destroys it and, with it, a part of ourselves.

Notes

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[1] Mary Davidow characterizes her poetry this way: "Intensity and compression, a deceptive surface simplicity, a tortured restlessness of spirit, a rare individual treatment of the metrical arrangement approaching the organic rhythm of the human emotions underlying the poetic content, and a multitude of private allusions characterize much of her poetry" (262).

[2] See Dowling, p. 435.

[3] Six drawings by Aubrey Beardsley and Henry James's story, "The Coxson Fund," also appeared in this number, putting Mew in very good company. Like Mew, James never again published in The Yellow Book after the Wilde trials, in keeping with his well-known aversion to scandal.

[4] This term comes from Syndey Cockerell: Davidow includes a letter from Mew to Cockerell that discusses the "cri de coeur," in which Mew includes "I use your phrase." This letter indicates that the concept was central to Mew's work and could ruin a poem or story if not used appropriately: "it seems to me that in the 'cri de coeur' […] one either

has or has not the person, and if the author is not right here he is wrong past mending" (323).

[5] This is probably the Clerkenwell House of Detention, which was demolished around 1893 when Mew would have been writing "Passed." The church is the Church of the Holy Redeemer in Clerkenwell. The "infallible architect" is John Dando Sedding, who rejects building the Catholic church in the popular gothic style of the time, opting for a baroque design. Mew's characterization of the church's builder as "infallible" is sarcastic since she admired the gothic style and later references in the story also gently mock the church.

[6] See Dillon's essay on Victorian interior architecture.

[7] Mew's religious beliefs are not known after the Anglo-Catholic phase she went through in her late teens. This affinity for Catholicism gives way to religious doubt in general according to Fitzgerald (37). But Mew continued throughout her life to be fascinated with Catholic ritual and the themes of renunciation and guilt pervade her writing.

[8] In "Men and Trees," Mew makes this explicit when she says, "Everything happens in the market-place. Where else? But the market-place is not real: the real things are happening in the forest still" (399).

[9] Nunhead Cemetery is where Mew's schizophrenic brother was buried.

[10] Anna herself coined the term "talking cure" when she realized relating her dreams and hallucinations helped to alleviate her symptoms.

[11] Mew often uses the image of a woman's hair as an erotic symbol in her poetry. For example, see "The Farmer's Bride," "Fame," and "Madeline in Church."

[12] This is a good example of Mew's literary Decadence because it shows clearly the irresistible attraction to that which is considered by conventional society disgusting.

[13] In Lacanian psychoanalytic theory the male subject is always already defined by lack, and he projects his profound sense of lack onto woman in order to form a cohesive male subject. For the male subject, the function of any *object á* associated with woman is to support the phallocentric symbolic system. See Mitchell and Rose p. 48.

[14] The female gothic is exemplified by Ann Radcliffe's novels of the eighteenth century. Generally, they involve a heroine who is imprisoned by a dastardly foreign count or prince and swindled out of her fortune. The heroine has several episodes of supernatural experiences that are eventually explained away, and, in the end, her fortune is restored and resumes her rightful, often aristocratic, place in society.

Afterword

While the stories we have examined by Charlotte Mew are not proper ghost stories, we can hear the ghostly voice of Mew through them. She is, herself, a ghostly literary figure, occupying as she does various time periods and literary movements. Both she and her work are impossible to fix, to nail down; they are ethereal. At once a Romantic, a Victorian, an Aesthete, a Decadent, and a Modernist, Mew's writing reflects the major concerns of all of these cultural and literary categories. Perhaps, however, Arthur Symons's famous mission statement of the Decadent movement is most apt for Mew: "To fix the last fine shade, the quintessence of things; to fix it fleetingly; to be a disembodied voice, and yet the voice of a human soul: that is the ideal of Decadence" (141). In a sense we can say that Mew hears the voices of Charles Babbage and Charles Dickens and echoes them to achieve her "disembodied voice." Because she longs for the sounds of the natural world and hears voices of the past in forests, Babbage's theory of "aural permanence" may have resonated with Mew.

Mew's position as the "disembodied voice" Symons advocates reflects the ghostly subject position she occupies in her life and her work. Situated between and hovering among genres, literary movements, and cultural ideologies, Mew should remind us of the sensitive, medium-like protagonists who has access to absent voices we saw in Dickens, Eliot, and James. Mediums, like scientists, engage in gothic logic. That is, their disciplines generate a form of rationality that is anchored in the irrational, and this combination of energies forms a separate epistemology and thereby a separate discourse—one that involves the ghostly in its very structure. Ghostliness consists of the gap or trace left by a former presence; this gap allows for liminality, which is at the heart

of gothic logic, of the ghostly, and of subject positions that exist outside cultural conventions such as orphans, adoptees, Jews, and homosexuals. The acoustic technology that abounded during the period offered a way to examine liminality through the hearing sense.

Mew's and James's positions in history, unlike Dickens or Eliot, give them the acoustic advantage of the pervasiveness of the telephone, the gramophone, and other sounds unique to the time. It should not surprise us, then, that James and Mew are, in some respects, the quietest of the authors studied here. The music and clicking of the "sounder" in "The Altar of the Dead" and "In the Cage" are probably the loudest of Jamesian metaphors, making these stories probably the noisiest of James's fiction. The infiltration of voice from the phonograph, gramophone, and telephone seem to have affected James and Mew in the negative. They choose to deal with the inarticulate, with what goes unsaid, or remains silent more so than Dickens and Eliot, who display more enthusiasm for the sounds of their age.

Having said that, it is certainly significant that Freud's "talking cure" takes hold during a time filled with technology-created sound and voice; Freud's answer to psychological ills amounted to conversation between people, in person, one-on-one, while maintaining an emotional distance. But, we can trace Freud's voice back to Babbage, who believed in the power of an almighty being to access and interpret the voices contained in the earth's atmosphere. Freud, too, believed hidden voices could be accessed and interpreted: while Babbage thought that being was God, Freud believed it was the psychoanalyst. Helmholtz's sounds are also evident in Freudian thought. He writes in an 1883 letter that Helmholtz "is one of my idols" (qtd. in Picker 107). Picker

clarifies Freud's philosophical connection to George Eliot, Helmholtz and Alexander Bell (on whom Helmholtz also had great influence):

> Freud put into practice what Helmholtz, Eliot, and Bell had made possible with their physiological, literary, and technological experiments: a new depth and type of analysis of voice derived from principles of sympathetic reception and reconstruction but paradoxically premised on precisely the kind of clinical distance and separateness the telephone afforded. (108)

The ghosts of these writers haunt contemporary society with their cautious enthusiasm of communication technology that brings people closer together, while, at the same time, isolating us from one another. We should listen.

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