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by Anna Neill

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THE PRIMITIVE MIND OF *SILAS MARNER*

BY ANNA NEILL

In a chapter of *Phantoms in the Brain*, V. S. Ramachandran puts one of the yet unsolved mysteries of neuroscience back into the context of a two-century-old debate about religiosity, creativity, and evolution.¹ Having described how electrical storms in the limbic system provoke emotional charges that might be experienced as religious rapture, he then looks at a case history in which mystical experience coincided with an extraordinary expansion of memory to speculate on the possibility of a neural correlation between spiritual transcendence and certain savant phenomena. Such miracles of the mind, he proposes, should be interpreted within an evolutionary framework that can explain the development of compensatory mechanisms and specialized talents. He concludes, however, with an observation about creative genius, pointing out that this represents expanded areas of general intelligence, rather than extraordinary, isolated acts of mental brilliance. The source of this intense creative activity remains as obscure to scientists in the twenty-first century as it did to Charles Darwin's colleague, Alfred Russell Wallace, who attributed it finally to God. In an odd way, the uncertainty of Ramachandran's closing remarks is in keeping with the broad intellectual contours of Victorian debate about evolution. Ramachandran's surrendering of scientific ground to the unknown, heightened by a tip-of-the-hat to William Shakespeare and the mystery of his unrivaled gift for metaphor, implicitly invites other disciplinary modes of investigation, including art and literary criticism, to help make sense of some of the most obscure and extraordinary products of the mind.

Ramachandran's cluster of speculations about mysticism, creativity, and scientific knowledge revisits Victorian discussion not just of the physiological substrate of mental life and the substitution of evolutionary biology for divine intervention but also of the relationship of the known to the unknown. Having praised the "clearness and honesty" of Darwin's *The Origin of Species*, George Eliot went on to say that "development theory and all other explanations of processes by which things came to be, produce a feeble impression compared with the mystery that lies under the processes."² What sounds uncharacteristi-

cally mystical probably expresses a passion for the unknown as it is navigated by the imagination, much like the capacity for “mental vision” that George Henry Lewes identifies in his literary criticism as the source of both scientific aptitude and artistic greatness. Such vision, for Lewes, originates in the general capacity of mind to transform sense perceptions, via the agency of inference, reasoning, and imagination, into knowledge about that which lies beyond the senses.³ In science, this projection moves across much greater distances than ordinary inference can travel. The artist’s exceptional strength of mind, on the other hand, reveals itself in his or her power to gather the “numerous relations of things present to the mind” and form images beyond the promptings of sense impressions while nonetheless remaining true to the originating force of these impressions.⁴ Hence, both scientific and aesthetic vision represent superior knowledge and powerful imagination so as to supply “the energy of sense where sense cannot reach.”⁵ Intuition and foresight, understood as the capacity of great artists and exact scientists to see beyond immediate relations and to reason beyond local experience, are a vital part of coming to know and communicate things as they really are. The at once intuitive and intellectual work of the exceptional mind, in other words, is essential to the accurate representation of reality.

This perhaps explains how George Eliot is able to incorporate prophecy and other forms of spiritual vision into the realist fabric of her novels. Although her narrators are sometimes skeptical of their more spiritually-oriented characters, the narrative voice seldom directly condemns expressions of spiritual rapture, and in *Daniel Deronda* prophecy or second sight is actually a feature of the narrative architecture, as the “manifold openings” with which the narrator accounts for the power of prophetic vision mimic the narrative recognition of manifold relations among characters and events that Lewes identifies as the property of an exceptional mind.⁶ However, *Silas Marner*, a very different kind of novel, might be read as a story about the problem of representing a consciousness with little-to-no capacity for imaginative reach and where the unknown shapes and dominates nearly all cognitive events. Not only the cataleptic Silas but indeed all the characters that belong to his world are limited to the “perpetual, urgent, companionship of their own griefs and discontents,” and “the ever trodden round of their own petty history[ies].”⁷ A mind that encounters the world through such a narrow window will, as Eliot describes it elsewhere, “exalt feeling above intellect” and will have, in religious life especially, a “sense of truthfulness [that] is misty and confused.”⁸ The problem,

then, is how to bring together the primitive subject matter of the novel—the darkened regions of consciousness—with the exceptional narrative intuition and intellect that can illuminate narrow mental and social landscapes, and perhaps, in so doing, discover dynamism and complexity in a world that has all but lost them.

Silas Marner, Eliot wrote to her publisher, was “a story which came *across* my other plans by a sudden inspiration.”⁹ This acknowledgment of a debt to the mysterious workings of the creative mind might be said to find its negative imprint in the strange vacuity of mind that characterizes catalepsy—the condition afflicting the novel’s central character. In what seems, at least provisionally, like a formal endorsement of the miraculous/vacuous dyad, the plot of the novel is driven by the sudden, inexplicable appearances and disappearances of people as well as precious objects. These are mysteries whose natural cause is only sometimes apparent to the narrator and a few skeptical characters on the periphery of the narrative. Thus, even though this narrative describes social life in thoroughly organic terms, its very structure respects the force of the mystical. The novel, that is to say, reflects the operation of what Eliot’s narrator identifies as a primitive mental state, in which “vagueness and mystery” (S, 9) or simply a “fearful blank” deliver incomplete or fantastic meaning (S, 22). Eliot argued that artistic form is high or low depending, like the form of an organism, on the level of complexity of parts that are bound into an “indissoluble whole.”¹⁰ The narrative’s focus on the retreat of an extremely complex organism—a human being—to its most primitive structure, suggests precisely the reverse process. Such organic and narrative dissolution, as it takes place pathologically and figuratively in catalepsy, is a withdrawal of the mind into the unknown.

Silas’s catalepsy seems to befuddle both narrative realism and medical science. We are offered no rational explanation for the attacks that render him as incapable of psychological as of physical movement. The possibility that they are the result of divine inspiration, however, is immediately removed by Silas’s honest testimony that he had no vision from God; indeed, there was no mental content to the episodes whatsoever. The story apparently sides neither with scientific enlightenment nor with Protestant awakening. Instead, it provides a bare-bones depiction of a sudden, inexplicable suspension of the inner life, “a mysterious rigidity and suspension of consciousness” (S, 9) that only the rudest-minded of its characters interpret as signifying either divine or demonic influence. We cannot credit these primitive interpreters—neither the fiercely judgmental members of the isolated

Lantern Yard community nor the benignly superstitious Raveloe villagers—with any special knowledge of the condition. And yet with no Tertius Lydgate in the novel to speculate on the minute behavior of nervous pathways and so begin to explain this strange condition of emotional and physiological arrest, it is hard to see how catalepsy can have any currency in the narrative economies of psychological and social realism either. In Eliot's other novels, it is the growth and flexibility of minds as well as the subtle interactions among them that brings the subjective state into relationship with its larger environments, creating new social possibilities through what the narrator of *Middlemarch* calls “unhistoric acts.”¹¹ *Silas Marner*, on the other hand, puts the blank mind of catalepsy at the heart of a world unchangingly shaped by tradition, superstition, and the tendency to describe that which is unknown as “dark to the last” (S, 169).

I. ACCOUNTING FOR CATALEPSY: NATURALIZING THE
SUPERNATURAL

The absence of medical commentary on Silas's condition is perhaps especially striking given how long trance phenomena have featured in the dialogue between faith and science. Both in Catholic mysticism and in Protestant revivalism, the death-like trance testifies to a direct intuitional experience of God where the soul is so absorbed in the divine that it fails to animate the body. For Protestant reformers, catalepsy, along with epileptic seizures, speaking in tongues, trance, visions, and clairvoyance, signified the “indwelling” or “witness” of the Spirit, as eighteenth-century Protestant evangelists characterized it. Numerous eighteenth- and nineteenth-century published accounts, particularly in the United States, of deep trance or apparent death in which the subject was shown the horrors of hell and the glories of heaven provided textual support for this experience of Spirit. In *Memoirs of the Reverend William Tennent*, for example, an apparently dead man revived after several days, and reported that in what seemed like a much briefer period of “unspeakable rapture,” he found himself “in another state of existence, under the direction of a superior being.”¹² In the account given of her experience during a five-hour trance, Sarah Alley recalled that she was led by a heavenly guide to see the burning lake and then to heaven, where she saw Christ surrounded by angels. In another episode, she was commanded by Christ to return to the world and teach sinners to repent.¹³ A poem called *The Prodigal Daughter* depicts a young woman guilty of swearing, whoring, Sabbath breaking, and attempted murder who falls into a swoon from which

she apparently cannot be revived, and only a cry from her coffin frees her from the fate of being buried alive. When she is restored to life, she reports on the flight her soul took through heaven and hell, and she is restored to grace and repentance.¹⁴ In each of these episodes, the cataleptic attack marks the moment of spiritual transformation as that in which the mind withdraws from its physical environment and finds union with God.

Such testimonies to immediate religious experience were supposed to contrast with the spiritual lethargy of High Church formalism. They were challenged, however, by naturalizing discourses that identified ecstatic states as symptoms of physiological disorder. From Richard Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1620), which interpreted such states as symptoms of religious melancholy, to scientific skepticism about animal magnetism and the trance medium in the 1850s, medical philosophy and later physiological psychology endeavored to naturalize religious experience and to strip trance phenomena of their supernatural content. Even within the revivalist movements themselves, such phenomena might be explained naturalistically, if only to point more indirectly to the presence of Spirit. Ann Taves has shown that moderate reformists like Jonathan Edwards, John Wesley, George Whitefield, and James Robe drew upon the naturalistic explanations made by anti-enthusiasts in order to distinguish true religious experience from its enthusiastic counterfeit.¹⁵ Along with scientific skepticism and religious naturalism, some revivalist movements themselves advocated a measured interpretation of spiritual ecstasies. Rapture, in itself, was no guarantee of divine influence. It might be merely a symptom of physiological disorders or a naturally enhanced state of mind. John Wesley, for instance, cautioned that the Witness of the Spirit should be complemented by the fruits of experience.¹⁶ Prophetic episodes, this suggested, might well signify divine inspiration but they were also indicative of a condition of mind physiologically triggered by the saturation of consciousness with an idea of transcendence. Spiritual experience, however genuine it may or may not be, as an early twentieth-century historian of spirituality put it, should nonetheless be described as an "abrupt seizure" which "temporarily disorganizes and may permanently injure the nervous system of the self."¹⁷

Such skepticism about the influence of supernatural forces on the body apparently point to the grand story of the arrival of modern secular consciousness: the disenchantment of the world that gradually took place in Europe from the seventeenth century on, only stubbornly resisted by the counter-Enlightenment enthusiasm of Protestant

radicals and spiritualists who refuse to recognize that all phenomena are finally reducible to nature's laws. This somewhat cartoonish description of opposing sides in a multi-century culture war has been helpfully complicated, however, by several recent cultural histories of magic and the marvelous. In their account of the emergence of an "anti-marvelous," Lorraine Daston and Katherine Park describe the subjection of wonders and miracles to natural-scientific and political discipline in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In part, they argue, this was achieved by a "collapse of the art-nature opposition in the study of nature" in Francis Bacon, René Descartes, and their followers.¹⁸ In different ways, these early figures of enlightenment appropriated the culture of wonder for the wonders of nature, thus extending the territories of natural history and philosophy into those of magic and miracle, rather than simply discarding the latter as so much rubble from the ruins of a pre-modern worldview. Along similar lines, Simon During has shown that the idea of modernity, evacuated of enchantment, and banishing spirituality to the physiology of the inner life, is itself a construct for the modern project of creating and shaping interiorized subjects.¹⁹ With these cautions in mind, the naturalization of trance phenomena might be interpreted not simply as a feature of the scientific-positivist march into Enlightenment but more subtly as investigating an interstice between the known and the unknown. In studies of cataleptic trance, the unknown might then be deployed in conjunction with the known to illuminate the recesses of the primitive mind.

The relationship between natural and supernatural explanations for the visions and insights that often accompany trance states receives what is probably its first thorough exploration in Meric Casaubon's *A Treatise Concerning Enthusiasme* (1655). Casaubon suggests that natural causes can be identified for ecstatic experience without denying the truth and reality of supernatural influences or their possible manifestation in the prophetic content of that experience.²⁰ Yet he distinguishes the sudden alienation of mind and the strange raptures it provokes from the "true divination," and the "highest gift of God . . . [in] sound reason" (*T*, 62). God's immediate presence is less probably felt in the strange phenomena generated by most varieties of enthusiasm than in that "sound reason and discerning spirit [that] is a perpetual kind of divination" (*T*, 63). Hence the likely explanation for the former lies in those natural causes, ordinary or extraordinary, which remain obscure to us. We can conjecture, however, that "[m]any natural things, by some natural foregoing signes, may be known, felt or

discerned by [such] men or creatures, that have a natural disposition or sympathy, whether constant or temporary, to those things or their signes, though unknown unto others that have not they be altogether unknown” (*T*, 55–56). Casaubon argues that ecstatic prophecy, in its natural form, is of the same class of phenomena as the sensitivity of animals who can anticipate storms well in advance of the human senses. Prophecy can be attributed to the power of an exaggerated natural sense, or sympathy. In this way, apparently supernatural phenomena are subjected to both known and unknown natural laws, which are in turn of God’s making.

Casaubon identified enthusiastic “divinatory fits” as “incidental” to the natural diseases of, among others, melancholy, mania, and hysteria (*T*, 36). Such conditions, however, render the patients especially vulnerable to demonic possession, and natural causes are “not wholly sufficient to produce this effect” (*T*, 42). Nearly two centuries later, Robert Macnish’s *Philosophy of Sleep* identifies almost exactly the same physiological origins for divinatory trance, adding that medical science has not been able to fully account for all manifestations of trance phenomena:

The remote causes of trance are hidden in much obscurity; and generally we are unable to trace the affection to any external circumstance. It has been known to follow a fit of terror. Sometimes it ensues after hysteria, epilepsy, or other spasmodic diseases. . . . Nervous and hypochondriac patients are the most subject of its attacks; but sometimes it occurs when there is no disposition of the kind, and when the person is in a state of the most seeming good health.²¹

The possibility of malign supernatural influence that Casaubon concedes is replaced not by an understanding of the physiological origins of trance but by a gap in medical knowledge—a cause unknown. Since, with the symptoms of catalepsy, the apparently suspended activity of the heart and lungs during the trance must be “more apparent than real,” continuing to support life at a level below that which our senses can detect, the causes of such trance cannot be uncovered by current technologies of observation.²² In keeping with the larger theme of his study, Macnish does suggest that the clairvoyant content of some trance experiences might be attributed to the same mental cause as that of apparently prophetic dreams. If the mind is not in a state of torpor, as it usually is during a trance, it might be in a condition analogous to the state of dreaming, and thus call up memories of impressions that the conscious mind has long-since forgotten. Yet most of the accounts

of catalepsy—stories of people who apparently return to life moments before burial, or of others who can fall into a trance at will—while they might be related to prior conditions, like hysteria, remain for the most part “astonishing and inexplicable.”²³

In his *Observations on Trance or Human Hibernation* (1850), James Braid is more ambitious than Macnish about discovering the natural origins of suspended animation. He recommends that scientific men suspend their skepticism about the extraordinary accounts of the fakirs who survive voluntary burial for days or weeks, and rather than dismissing such accounts as fraudulent, instead “endeavour to arrive at a satisfactory solution of the phenomena on physiological principles.”²⁴ Like both Casaubon and Macnish, Braid suggests that catalepsy is linked to hysteria, and thus that it can be brought about by shock or terror as well as by religious enthusiasm. More specifically, however, and in the interests of distancing his own practice of hypnotizing his patients from the occult strains of mesmerism, he suggests that by a combination of suppressed respiration and the fixing of the mind on a single object, the human body can reduce all its vital functions to the same condition of those of hibernating animals. “The unfortunate extravagance of the Mesmerists,” who claim gifts of clairvoyance, thus making “a mockery of the human understanding and all the known laws of physical science” has compromised that genuine study of the remarkable phenomena of trance, one of whose pathological manifestations is catalepsy.²⁵ The “wonderful exaltation of the natural faculties” that can occur in the trance state—the suspension of vital activity, the remarkable heightening of memory, the extreme vividness of imagination, and even the intensification of reasoning power—are “only exaggerations or exaltations of functions or faculties which are possessed by all of us in a less degree in the ordinary or waking condition.”²⁶ Such states and the phenomena that sometimes accompany them are particularly likely to be triggered by powerful religious experiences, as in the case of the Hindu fakirs, because the subject is so isolated from the external world and so intensely concentrated on the internal world that the senses barely respond to external stimuli.

Braid insists that “unlimited skepticism” about the remarkable instances of human hibernation is as “equally the child of imbecility as implicit credulity.”²⁷ Neither superstitious nor narrow-mindedly skeptical, science should make incomplete knowledge about the human mind and body valid to the investigation and treatment of disease. Yet the problem remains of what exactly to do with phenomena that remain so far outside the orbit of current medical knowledge that, if

they do not point to the influence of the supernatural, they do seem to highlight science's feeble grasp of the operations of nature. Even as late as 1896, in an account of some instances of premature burial, we are told that "of all the various forms of suspended animation, trance and catalepsy" are described as "the least understood . . . ; the laws which control them . . . appear to be as insoluble as those which govern life itself."²⁸ The radical differences of opinion over modern instances of catalepsy even within medical academies, these authors go on to say, "are sufficient to show that all the culture and the scientific instincts of the present age have not quite inaugurated the 'reign of law' nor established finally that 'miracles do not happen.'"²⁹

This argument might be seen less to authenticate religious experience at the expense of scientific inquiry than to gesture to the skeptical core of evolutionary science itself. Our interpretation of nature, our imposition of laws upon all its vagaries, William Benjamin Carpenter insists, must in turn be understood in terms of the "mental processes, by which are formed those fundamental conceptions of matter and force, cause and effect, law and order."³⁰ These conceptions are representations framed by the mind, and as such they are formed out of a combination of the impressions made upon the senses by external objects and common-sense views that are "the generalized experiences of the human race."³¹ Such cultural banking of knowledge is what enables inquiry to proceed beyond the gathering of empirical data. Common sense, "one of our most valuable instruments of scientific inquiry; affording in many instances the best, and sometimes the only, basis for a rational conclusion," is thus an instrument of progressive evolution: "The intellectual intuitions of any one generation are the embodied experiences of the previous race."³² By this reasoning, catalepsy will be understood by a future generation of educated men who are able to grasp the as yet impenetrable natural laws that encompass its strange manifestations. At present, it is accessible to science only through the agency of an "uncommon sense."³³ Citing Braid's study of the fakirs, Carpenter observes that those who have some medical knowledge of self-hypnosis, or of the experiments that have been conducted on mammals underwater, or of how an organism might survive in the soil temperature of certain regions of India, can observe how Braid's Hindu devotees surrender voluntarily to a death-like torpor and survival burial for days or weeks on end without either offending that acquired intuition that refuses to believe such a feat is possible, or resorting to supernatural explanation.³⁴

Yet even as scientific method, “that trained and organized common sense” is transforming the basis of belief in religious inquiry, substituting the evolutionary principle of continuity for supernatural cataclysms and interruptions, Carpenter’s psychology points out that the mind can tend to self-deception. Under the influence of a mental prepossession, a subject may actually produce sensations, as the higher mental states exercise a downward influence on the sensorium. The prepossessed mind thus “dwells on its own imaginings” producing hallucinations and revelations, which, as long as the common sense is suspended, seem unquestionably real. Contemporary testimony to the supernatural phenomena of table-turning and other miracles of the séance as well as the ancient faith in dreams, visions and trances can be attributed to this tendency of the mind to prepossession or “ideational states.” Even the mind of the scientific observer, he suggests, is vulnerable to the seduction of its own idolatrous prejudices: “We are liable to be affected by our prepossessions at every stage of our mental activity from our primary reception of impressions from without to the highest exercise of our reasoning powers.”³⁵

Carpenter’s warning resembles Bacon’s: that we should be wary of the idols of the mind both in the objects and in the subject of scientific inquiry. If the physical structure of the brain evolves under the guidance of common sense, this suggests, then it is difficult not to conclude that it might come under the equally powerful influence of ancestral idols; it might, in other words, become more primitive rather than more scientific. This possibility in turn suspends the conjectural history that puts nomadic societies at one end of the human evolutionary chain and European civilization at the other, and suggests that the primitive is a condition of mind whose features appear in the very evolutionary pathways that should overcome them. This deracializing of the savage invokes Herbert Spencer’s theory of dissolution as natural tendency reversing that of evolution. For Spencer, evolution consists of the movement of systems into increasing specialization, stabilization, and heterogeneity. Its counter-tendency is to be found in dissolution, which tends toward homogenization, instability, and disintegration (illustrated, for example, in the death of organisms, the breakup of complex molecules, and the disintegration of societies under the pressure of social unrest).³⁶ Put in the context of mental science, the theory of dissolution pulls the figure of the primitive out of the remote past and into the present tense of scientific modernity.

Dissolution might therefore have the power to bring the primitive characters and the modern narrator of *Silas Marner* into the same

temporal and mental orbit, thus threatening the integrity of realist narrative itself. We have already seen how, in resisting natural, as well as supernatural, explanations for catalepsy, the novel refuses to elevate science over spirit. It is therefore not quite “a secular fable demythologizing . . . puritan allegory,” as one critic has suggested.³⁷ Rather, *Silas Marner* might be said to confound all modes of interpretation through the agency of mental dissolution as Silas’s mind becomes entirely disconnected from the surrounding world. In the pathology of catalepsy, the organism retreats to its most primitive condition as only the automatic elements of the nervous system are able to function, enabling just the minimal interaction with the environment necessary to immediate survival. This evacuation of mind, including the functions of memory, thought, and will, from the physical body results in a state of social as well as physiological arrest, since there are no longer any available channels of sympathy through which human subjects can interact. Unable to penetrate Silas’s consciousness, the narrator cannot bring subjective and social realities into sympathetic dialogue and her characters are correspondingly incapable of the kind of emotional growth achieved by a Dorothea or a Gwendolyn.

There is, of course, some such growth in the novel. The Raveloe community becomes kinder and more accepting, in step with the emotional development of its central characters: an outsider becomes gradually more open to his neighbors and a self-absorbed member of the gentry learns to appreciate how his decisions impact the emotional lives of all those around him. On the other hand, the village characters are never reformed in their belief in the agency of the supernatural; their faith that Silas’s condition consists of a marvelous wandering of the soul from the body is paired at the end of the story with their confidence that his “strange history” is infused with “blessing” (S, 171). Silas assumes he has witnessed a miracle when his lost gold apparently returns in the form of a little girl. Even when the thief is discovered and the gold restored, he attributes its reappearance to a “wonderful” (S, 157) divine agency. Each instance demonstrates the kind of perceptual error that, in *Daniel Deronda*, Eliot attributes to an ignorance of evolutionary principles or “the true bond between events and false conceit of means whereby sequences may be compelled—like that falsity of eyesight which overlooks the gradations of distance, seeing that which is afar off as if it were within a step or a grasp” (D, 194). The narrator of *Silas Marner*, who remains steadily skeptical of miracles, does not commit this error. She understands and brings to narrative light the multitude of psychological and circumstantial events that

deliver Eppie to Silas's door, as well as the power of sympathetic love to restore an all but dead man to active social life. Yet she has no explanation for Silas's catalepsy that can substitute for that of divine or satanic agency. Whatever it is that causes Silas's catalepsy remains a mystery, and that mystery is as arresting of narrative realism as it is of physical and mental activity.

II. CATALEPSY AND THE FAILURE OF SYMPATHY

For Eliot, the creation and interpretation of true relations between things is linked to the biological and moral functions of sympathy. Her essay "Notes on Form in Art" argues that poetic form is not a fixed frame for holding emotional content but an organic response to the emotional rhythms as they adjust to the conditions of their environment. This organic sympathy "by which no part can suffer increase or diminution without a participation of all the other parts in the effect produced and a consequent modification of the organism as a whole" expresses the Darwinian principles of variety and selection, although the latter is artistic rather than natural selection. The highest and most complex forms are those that demonstrate "the most varied relations within a wholeness which again has the most varied relations with all other phenomena," and from which the artist discriminates tones, rhythms, and sequences that best match the human passions she seeks to represent.³⁸ This act of discrimination is the discovery of a difference, the identification of a particular object or part while continuing to respect that object's intrinsic and extrinsic relations with other bodies. In place of the anti-scientific and preposterous dualism that Eliot ridicules in her essay on "Silly Novels by Lady Novelists," which declares that the gifted lady artist can see more in the "soul of man" than merely an evolved polypus, she substitutes the dynamic force of form-as-difference.³⁹ The truer forms of fiction reflect the most subtle variations in the highest form of organism, in which the interactive force of sympathy creates continual modifications of the whole.

Thus, apart from the "divine beauty of [exceptional] form" the narrator of *Adam Bede* declares, there is "that other beauty too, which lies in no secret of proportion, but in the secret of deep human sympathy" with its "faithful representing of commonplace things."⁴⁰ Taking her inspiration from the subjects of Dutch realist art, the narrator who aspires to represent this commonplace world "should have a fibre of sympathy connecting [her] with that vulgar citizen who weighs out [her] sugar in a vilely assorted cravat and waistcoat," with the "common

labourer” and the “perhaps too corpulent” clergyman of her own parish.⁴¹ The narrator’s attention to the “monotonous homely existence” of ordinary, local lives is faithful because both she and they belong to the same social totality whose future rests on the manifold relationships and minute transformations that characterize organic life in general.⁴² Despite the novel’s tenderness towards its Methodist heroine, Dinah, this sympathy, whose active agency can bring narrator and characters into the same evolving social orbit, contrasts with a revealed religion whose passive voice separates world, mind, and soul from a remote agent of change: “I felt a great movement in my soul, and I trembled as if I was shaken by a strong spirit entering into my weak body. And . . . I spoke the words that were given to me abundantly. . . . And many wept over their sins and have since been joined to the Lord.”⁴³

Silas Marner describes a human being who is forced to live without either the nourishing influence of sympathy or any more autocratic guide. Unlike Dinah, Silas is not called away by God to village life from the intensely isolated religious community of Lantern Yard, but rather banished from the latter by the apparent evidence of God’s disfavor. Once his fellow members, directed by the deceitful William Dane, interpret his cataleptic attacks as a “visitation of Satan” rather than a sign of God’s favor, Silas loses what little capacity he had for independent thought and spontaneous sympathy (*S*, 11). His “old narrow pathway” (*S*, 17) of thought is unable to distinguish human passions from divine action, so that instead of blaming Dane for his misfortunes, or objecting to the archaic system of drawing lots as an instrument of justice, or speculating more generally that the forms of religion might be manipulated to human advantage, he loses trust in both God and man and blames an “unpropitious deity” even as he withdraws from society altogether (*S*, 16). Unable to sever religious form from feeling by “an act of reflection” (*S*, 13) he is as empty of the evolved capacities for reason and independent judgment as the “spinning insect” whose unquestioning life his resembles (*S*, 17). The primitive condition of his mind before his exile, shaped as it was by the primitive life of an isolated community, is now further reduced to “utter bewilderment” (*S*, 17).

Silas’s cataleptic attacks bear no particular relationship to this change. They are apparently as frequent at Lantern Yard as they are at Raveloe, and so they cannot be identified as a natural consequence of increased isolation any more than they can be attributed to supernatural agency. The effect of this almost complete severance of sympathetic attachment to any other living being does however create another kind of

de-animation, as solitude makes Silas increasingly less like a human being and more like a thing. His “face and figure shrank and bent themselves into a constant mechanical relation to the objects of his life, so that he produced the same sort of impression as a handle or a crooked tube, which has no meaning standing apart” (S, 20). What seems like fetishism is in fact reduction to an even more primitive state: to the non-organic thing itself. In the love of objects, on the other hand, the fetishistic investing of them with animate qualities, he shows “that the sap of affection was not all gone” (S, 20). He sees in the favorite pot that he breaks “an expression of willing helpfulness” (S, 20) and in the coins that he is yet to earn “the unborn children” that he longs for (S, 21). Yet excepting these expressions of primitive feeling, Silas is at the very lowest place in the hierarchy of sensibilities that the novel sets up, from “the subtle and varied pains” (S, 29) of the highly cultured, to the simple egotistic preoccupations of ruder minds, to the “unresenting” dog who will bear its masters blows because it sees no alternative, to the unquestioning insect, and finally to the inanimate object itself (S, 31). Once his human affection is reduced to its smallest dimensions in fetishism, he becomes himself de-animated and his gold “gather[s] his power of loving together into a hard isolation like its own” (S, 40).

This metaphorical link to catalepsy is perhaps the closest we get to an explanation of the latter’s strange manifestations. The almost total arrest of the nervous system and the reduction of mental activity to the point that even the breath is barely detectible is like the way that isolation and the disappearance of the affections cause the organism to shrivel into something that is barely alive. At the level of plot, however, the narrative fails to provide an adequate source for the attacks. The grown Eppie continues to be on the watch in case “one of her father’s strange attacks should come on,” the only clue being that emotional strain may be a precipitating factor (S, 169). Other than providing William Dane with an opportunity to betray Silas at the beginning of the novel, the attacks do little to advance the story, which could easily substitute Silas’s near-sightedness as the cause of his obliviousness to Eppie’s arrival. If, on the other hand, Silas’s catalepsy is a physiological metaphor for arrested social growth, then the mental dissolution that characterizes it has leaked into narrative as another kind of de-animation. Catalepsy is not, in this case, an organic metaphor; it is not a figure that expresses the dynamic relationship between psychological and social phenomena. The cataleptic trance does not appear to have any formal relationship to those conditions of mind and social states

shaped either by compassion, in the case of Silas's integration into the Raveloe community, or by moral cowardice, as in the case of Cass. The best function it can serve in the novel is in the much older literary mode of allegory. Yet allegory is what elsewhere the novel gently dismisses along with revealed religion, as the narrator observes that it is only in the "old days [that] there were angels who came and took men by the hand and led them away from the city of destruction" (S, 123). The novel is no more a *Pilgrim's Progress* for modern times than it is a positivist account of the origins of unusual mental or spiritual phenomena. Using Eliot's own criteria for aesthetic judgment, it might be said that this story about catalepsy is itself barely a living thing.

III. EVOLUTION, PROPHECY, AND TRANCE

Catalepsy thus represents the same anomaly for realist narrative that it does for medical science. This is particularly striking given the naturalization of miracle and mystery that the novel otherwise achieves. Even in the opening paragraph, we anticipate an intellectual gap between narrator and characters as we learn the story is to be set in "old times" and in a world limited to the contrast between direct experience and "a region of vagueness and mystery" (S, 5). The fairytale frame could not be more different from the opening narrative plunge into the complex psychologies of *Daniel Deronda*, where the question "was she beautiful or not beautiful?" (D, 3), with all that it suggests about the relationship of form to the activity of the mind, belongs both to Daniel and to the narrator. In *Silas Marner*, on the other hand, the narrator knows what most of the characters do not: namely that natural causes can be assigned to extraordinary events. She knows that Silas's confusion of Eppie's hair with the lost gold is an effect of his lingering mental bent towards the objects of his miserly passion, and that the miraculous transformation of inanimate object into living child is only the effect of a mind so disinherited from reason that it "confus[es] thought and feeling" (S, 116). And she sides with the skeptical farrier, who refuses to accept the existence of ghostly phenomena, as she ironically describes the apparition of Silas at the Rainbow. In addition, spectral phenomena are psychologically naturalized in Godfrey, as the sudden appearance of Silas and Eppie at the Red House, again described as an "apparition from the dead" (S, 108), to the audience of dancers who witness it becomes for Godfrey "an apparition from that hidden life which lies, like a dark by-street, behind the goodly ornamented façade" (S, 108). Godfrey's

willed forgetting and Silas's involuntary disconnection from his past provide discoverable psychological causes for the apparent mysteries in the Raveloe world. However much the causes of strange events may be dark to the characters, the property of the mind's vagueness and mystery, to the narrator they can be explained in terms of the greater laws that need not be interrupted by miracle, for they demonstrate the "orderly sequence by which the seed brings forth a crop after its own kind" (*S*, 70).

The obscure etiology and opaque narrative meaning of catalepsy is also remarkable when one considers how trance states and their clairvoyant contents are represented in *Daniel Deronda*. In that novel, the gift of second sight is given, if not a physiological, then an evolutionary-psychological explanation, when the narrator suggests that there may be those "whose natures have manifold openings . . . where there may be a greater and more miscellaneous inrush than through a narrow beadle-watched portal." This abundance of sensible impressions feeds the "seed-like growth" of "yearnings, conceptions . . . [and] conclusions" that then express themselves in the coercive form of the vision. Such a predisposition to intuitive knowledge cannot be understood apart from evolutionary forces, since it is itself a feature of what the narrator calls "inevitable kinship," and greater and lesser forms of the visionary can be found just as greater and lesser forms of mammalian life are bound together by evolutionary ties or "great mental or social types" are related to "specimens whose insignificance is both ugly and noxious" (*D*, 404). Mordecai's spiritual loneliness, unlike Silas's, drives his yearning to transmit the spiritual contents of his mind to some younger kindred soul. His "expectant faith in a prophecy" (*D*, 405) is not just the spiritual equivalent of a belief in the evolutionary progress of the racial type but the very fusion of the two in a nationalist vision of the man who will lead his people to the homeland:

Tracing reasons in [him]self for the rebuffs he has met with and the hindrances that beset him, he imagined a man who would have all the elements necessary for sympathy with him, but in an embodiment unlike his own: he must be a Jew, intellectually cultured, morally fervid—in all this a nature ready to be plished from Mordecai's; but his face and frame must be beautiful and strong, he must have been used to all the refinements of social life his voice must flow with a full and easy current, his circumstances must be free from sordid need: he must glorify the possibilities of the Jew, not sit and wander as Mordecai did. (*D*, 405)

Mordecai is a perpetrator as well as a victim of cultural stereotyping if not of a eugenicist fantasy wherein the “noble types of the human form” promise to reinvigorate the race with pride and heroism (*D*, 405). Inevitably, in the combined contexts of race and national destiny, Eliot’s evolutionism takes on this troublesome meaning. At the same time, she is able to unite evolutionary biology with national prophecy as the vision of a miraculous restoration to Judea comes into contact with the principle of continuity and transformation through descent.⁴⁴ Hence the passion that Mordecai expresses is both like but also “something more than a grandiose transfiguration of . . . parental love” (*D*, 455). Meanwhile, Deronda’s own search for his biological and cultural parentage, accompanied by feelings of dread in the first half of the novel, is increasingly infused with “dreamy constructions” of his ancestry once first Mirah and then Mordecai come to be central in his life (*D*, 532). The final book but one of the novel, “The Mother and Son,” opens with a quotation from part 1 of Robert Browning’s *Paracelsus*, which contextualizes the reunion of biological mother and child, and Daniel’s subsequent discovery of his Jewish identity in the spirit of messianic revelation discovered through trance: “If some mortal, born too soon / Were laid away in some great trance . . . / . . . till dawned his true time’s advent . . .” (*D*, 529).

Mordecai himself is thrown into a cataleptic fit by the force of his spirit. At the club of The Philosophers, the only public place where he is comfortable since its familiarity enables him to resist the pressures of the outer world that “narrow the inner vision,” he gives free rein to his enthusiastic spirit (*D*, 444). Here, even as he argues with his skeptical fellow Jews about tradition, prophecy, and racial destiny, he becomes less and less aware of what is immediately around him, until finally his chin sinks on his breast and he is unable to respond to the pleasantries and farewells of the other men. He becomes “rapt and motionless” (*D*, 460). Both his gift of prophecy and his tendency to become insensible to his surroundings are doubled, or perhaps inverted, in the narrower mind of Gwendolyn, who is susceptible to “fits of spiritual dread,” experiencing any events that compromise her mastery over her environment as so terrifying that she is immobilized by them (*D*, 52). When her performance as the awakening statue of Hermione is interrupted by the accidental opening of a moving panel upon which appears a “dead face [and] fleeing figure” (*D*, 49), Gwendolyn continues to look like a statue, but one now “into which a soul of fear had entered: her pallid lips were parted; her eyes, usually narrowed under their long lashes, were dilated and fixed” (*D*, 49). Such trance-

like moments of physiological arrest and psychological withdrawal from the immediate environment, which Gwendolyn thinks back on as “a brief remembered madness,” temporarily check her arrogance, ambition and contempt for those around her as she becomes frozen in horrified premonition (*D*, 51). Later in the novel, these cataleptic states become charged with Protestant revelation. Convinced that she is responsible for Grandcourt’s death, Gwendolyn confesses to Deronda a terrible ecstatic awakening to her own sin, declaring “it was not my own knowledge, it was God’s that had entered into me” (*D*, 593) and that “[i]t was all like a writing of fire within me” (*D*, 596).

Yet it is not through submission to the spirit alone that Gwendolyn is humbled. Having always been afraid of anything that presented an “existence aloof” (*D*, 52) from her own petty ambitions, she experiences the discovery of Deronda’s mission to the East as a shrinking of her own life before the enormity of national destinies and their gradual shaping through “the slow urgency of growing generations” (*D*, 689). At this moment, Gwendolyn’s still-egotistic assumption that confession of her sin will somehow bind Deronda to her is overwhelmed as the evolutionary destiny of the species enters her consciousness. This is the “sort of crisis,” the narrator tells us, in which apocalyptic vision, a “rolling, fiery visitation,” takes form as “something else than a private consolation” (*D*, 689). For Gwendolyn, as for Mordecai, the private spiritual ecstasy that arrests all other activity in the mind is tied to the evolutionary energy whose indifference to the individual ego is as dreadful to her as it is inspiring to Deronda. The narrative voice itself, linking single histories to one another and to the larger evolutionary story of the human mind’s overcoming of selfish passions, inhabits both the minor divinatory and the fully clairvoyant states that both inflict and enlarge the minds of its major characters. This is the voice that can describe the evolution of second sight, that links poetic fervor with “a mind . . . which thrills from the near to the distant, and back again from the distant to the near,” and that can both discern the way its characters experience dread in relation to the unknown and anticipate how they will grow in their efforts to embrace it (*D*, 175). In addition to present-tense omniscience, in other words, it supplies the voice and vision of evolution and prophecy. It manifests the strength of the superior mind that Lewes identified in the capacity to intuit beyond the local, the immediate, and the sensible.

In *Daniel Deronda*, then, the temporary arrest of the faculties can be seen as a physiological expression of this reconciliation of visionary and evolutionary expression. The mental and formal dissolution

in *Silas Marner*, on the other hand, points to loss of historical consciousness, a confidence that “the world’s the same as it used to be,” and the assigning of difference to the dark and unknown (S, 171). We have seen that the ordering consciousness of the narrative does not penetrate the mind of the cataleptic Silas or record in his character what Richard Menke, describing how Lewes’s physiological psychology influences Eliot’s prose, has described as “the hidden flows and pulses of the body . . . [and] subtle possibilities of feeling.”⁴⁵ Yet it is not just that psychological narrative balks at the anomaly of catalepsy and its dissolving of the interior state. For indeed there are no characters representing “the subtle and varied pains springing from the higher sensibility that accompanies higher culture” (S, 29). Instead, the narrator describes “ruder minds,” condemned to absorption in their own private suffering (S, 29). Among these characters, even those who experience remorse do not do so with Gwendolyn’s intensity. Nor do they experience, as she does, a sudden awareness of an evolving universe of events indifferent to her needs and the resulting near-destruction of the organizing relationship of self to world. Godfrey Cass is so dulled by the monotony of his environment that his potential for finer thoughts is reduced to self-absorbed reflections on his own petty history. Such stagnancy then seems to be reinforced by the narrator herself, who resists invading the “privacy of Godfrey’s bitter memory” (S, 29). To do this would be to dissect the fluid emotions of entrapment and guilt that are so important to the psychological development of characters like Gwendolyn or Arthur Donnithorne in *Adam Bede*.

IV. CONCLUSION: SCIENCE AND THE PRIMITIVE MIND

Silas Marner therefore seems to consign to the unknown what *Daniel Deronda* brings into the light of evolutionary psychology. Yet it might still be possible to find a positivist interpretation of Silas’s fits by employing a radical physiology—one that does not hierarchize mental events, like Carpenter does, from the most primitive sensations to the most sophisticated exercise of the rational will. Sally Shuttleworth has argued that the novel challenges the confidence of mid-Victorian psychology in both the fundamental unity of mind and the reflection of this unity in social progress and cohesion.⁴⁶ She links this recognition of mental and historical discontinuity to Lewes’s controversial claim in *The Physiology of Common Life* that there is no executive center to consciousness, and his removal of the rational actor from the dynamic interplay between organism and environment.

Continuous identity and the logic of character that depends upon it, Shuttleworth argues, may be frail in *Silas Marner* because the novel experiments with the possibility of liberating human physiology from the higher operations of the mind. By this reasoning, catalepsy could be classified as physiological metamorphosis, rather than mental dissolution. In his discussion of the relationship between life and death, Lewes expands the territory of organic life so as to include even death, refusing to distinguish between the two as between a “negative and a positive” or “a darkness which shrouds up a light.”⁴⁷ Instead, he argues, death is the collapse of the organic unity that constitutes life, but a life which is in turn constituted by a little more wasting than repair of cellular material, and thus by a steady metamorphosis whose properties include decomposition and death slightly more than they do composition and growth. Conversely, when a whole organism is dead, some of its parts may remain living, as in the case of a head rolling on a scaffold, whose features may continue to contract. That “death is indissolubly linked with all that has constituted life” suggests that, rather than representing something beyond the laws of organic transformation, death signifies only that “certain forms of existence are completed, and certain others are commenced.”⁴⁸ By analogy, the arrest of certain mental functions during the cataleptic state would point to a change in direction in the evolution of the organism rather than to the reversal of the evolutionary process.

Yet elsewhere for Lewes, as for Eliot, the distinction between higher and ruder minds is epistemologically crucial. In a discussion of the developmental conditions under which supernatural causes are invoked to explain the unknown, Lewes uses the term “primitive mental state” to describe the refusal to admit scientific methodology into inquiry about the world, or to set aside the authority of sacred texts in favor of verification through experience.⁴⁹ Such ignorance, he argues, also perpetuates an imperfect Christian ethics, since the latter continues to be rooted in superstition and tradition.⁵⁰ In Eliot’s 1855 essay on “Evangelical Teaching,” which asserts the moral dangers of both ecclesiastical dogma and a belief in direct inspiration, she asserts the hierarchy of mental processes and the alliance between intellect and feeling that is so central to her moral philosophy. Moral behavior demands that the subject allow religious impulses to be guided by intellect rather than an enthusiastic exaltation of feeling. Hence the “highest moral habit, the constant preference of truth, both theoretically and practically, pre-eminently demands the co-operation of the intellect with the impulses . . . [something which] is indicated by the fact

that it is only found in anything like completeness in the highest class of minds.”⁵¹ Such moral “completeness” is analogous to the broader prediction Lewes makes about the eventual triumph of science over theology and superstition:

Nowadays, among the cultivated minds of Europe, it is only in the less-explored regions of research, where argument is made to do duty for observation that the supernatural and metempirical explanations hold their ground. When science has fairly mastered the principles of moral relations as it has mastered the principles of physical relations, all Knowledge will be incorporated in a homogenous doctrine rivaling that of the old theologies in its comprehensiveness, and surpassing it in the authority of its credentials.⁵²

Lewes’s dream of universal scientific knowledge expanding into all realms of human experience, moral as well as physical, relies on both the exhaustion of unexplored phenomena and the extinction of uncultivated minds. In *Problems of Life and Mind*, this historicized and teleological model of knowledge is more aggressively united with imperialist ideology as “the intellect of the explorer distinguishes and classifies” where the “axe of the colonist clears the way.”⁵³ Together they illuminate the ancestral landscape inhabited by the superstitious, idolatrous “savages and semi-cultivated nations” of the current day.⁵⁴ Yet Lewes’s primitive is also figured in the excessively religious or fanciful minds of those who fail to test the intuitions and conclusions that the rational and abstracting mind always generates beyond the data of sense perception. Once more linking the work of the scientific observer with that of the artist and critic, he uses the example of a spectator at the theater who should properly recognize at once the idealizing nature of the play and its capacity to avoid falsifications that are inconsistent with that ideal. This critic figure thus recognizes that reality is partly reflected through and partly symbolized in the mind. The test of true knowledge is to verify symbolic and abstract thought by testing its correspondence to the presentation of feeling, which is all that the mind directly experiences of external reality. Hence, despite the physical basis of mind, which exists in reality, the work of that mind, and the symbolic power that it must muster in order to grasp any piece of reality larger than the fragments delivered by the senses, suggests that any knowledge of it can only be acquired through the higher processes of the intellect and the symbolic forms it produces. This is also the relationship between art and reality. Art promises access to the real, but only through a representative, not an actual,

world. The veracity of the representation is then tested aesthetically in the emotions it is capable of stimulating.⁵⁵

In *Silas Marner*, this higher capacity of the mind to unite thought and feeling has been lost. Such dissolution is manifest in the superstition of the Raveloe villagers, in Silas's catalepsy and analogous social withdrawal, and in Godfrey's excessive attention to his own needs and subsequent suffering. "A man of genius," Lewes insists, "is one whose sympathies are unusually wide." He embraces the thoughts and feelings of all those around him, and out of these "greet[s] the dawning of a new idea upon his soul."⁵⁶ Eliot identifies genuine sympathy as an expression of an advanced state in which truth is discernible through forms that demonstrate "piety towards the present and the visible" rather than in "the remote, the vague, and the unknown."⁵⁷ Not only are the characters in *Silas Marner* incapable of such sympathy, but the narrator too finds herself so intellectually remote from her subjects that she cannot provide them with a future true to human potential in the way that other parts of the story are true to human suffering. Gwendolyn's reformation under the influence of the greater narratives she resists suggests that present and visible sympathy can be linked to national spiritual destiny, so making the prophetic projection into the unknown a journey into the known. Where there is dissolution rather than evolution of the organism, however, there is less to be seen and said. In *Silas Marner*, the narrator's access to the realities of the present and of the future is so reduced that she is effectively drawn back into the primitive world from which she seemed at first so removed. And there she wanders through the territory of the dark and the unknown, where she encounters only the shrinking of human nature and the cavities of the dissolving mind.

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NOTES

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¹ See V. S. Ramachandran, *Phantoms in the Brain: Probing the Mysteries of the Human Mind* (New York: Harper Collins, 1998), 174–98.

² George Eliot to Mme. Eugène Bodichon, 5 December 1859, in *The George Eliot Letters*, ed. Gordon S. Haight 9 vol. (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1954–1978), 3:227.

³ See George Henry Lewes, "Mental Vision," in *Literary Criticism of George Henry Lewes*, ed. Alice R. Kaminsky (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1964), 3–9.

⁴ Lewes, "On Cognition, Art and Science," in *Literary Criticism*, 14.

⁵ Lewes, "On Cognition," 15.

⁶ George Eliot, *Daniel Deronda* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1988), 404. Hereafter abbreviated *D* and cited parenthetically by page number.

⁷ Eliot, *Silas Marner* (Ann Arbor: Ann Arbor Media Group, 2004), 29. Hereafter abbreviated *S* and cited parenthetically by page number.

⁸ Eliot, "Evangelical Teaching: Dr. Cumming," in *George Eliot: Selected Essays, Poems, and Other Writings* ed. A. S. Byatt and Nicholas Warren (London: Penguin, 1990), 44.

⁹ Eliot to John Blackwood, London, 12 January 1861, in *George Eliot Letters*, 371.

¹⁰ Eliot, "Notes on Form in Art," in *Selected Essays*, 234.

¹¹ George Eliot, *Middlemarch* (London: Penguin, 1994), 838.

¹² William Tennent, *Memoirs of the Life of Reverend William Tennent* (Poughkeepsie: Paraclete and Sheldon Potter, 1815), 17.

¹³ See Sarah Alley, *Account of a Trance or Vision of Sarah Alley* (New York: Joseph Rakestraw, 1807), 5–8. Other contemporary accounts of encounters with Christ during a state of suspended consciousness include George De Benneville, *The Life and Trance of Dr. George De Benneville* (Norristown, PA: printed by David Sower, 1815); Samuel L. Mitchell, *Devotional Somnium or A collection of prayers and exhortations uttered by Miss Rachel Baker in the city of New York* (Sangerfield, NY: printed for the proprietor by Van Wrinkle and Wiley, 1816); and Charles William Twort, *The Vision of Judgment or the Return of Joanna from her Trance* (London: printed by Charles W. Twort, 1829).

¹⁴ See Isaiah Thomas, *The Prodigal Daughter; or, A Strange and Wonderful Relation* (Boston: Thomas's printing office, 1771).

¹⁵ See Ann Taves, *Fits, Trances and Visions: Experiencing Religion and Explaining Experience from Wesley to James* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1999), 25–46.

¹⁶ Taves, 53.

¹⁷ Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism: A Study in the Nature and Development of Spiritual Consciousness* (London: Methuen, 1914), 448.

¹⁸ Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature, 1150–1750* (New York: Zone Books, 1998), 260.

¹⁹ Simon During, *Modern Enchantments: The Cultural Power of Secular Magic* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 2002), 62.

²⁰ See Meric Casaubon, *A Treatise Concerning Enthusiasme*, ed. Paul J. Korshin (1656; repr., Gainesville: Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, 1970), 82–83. Hereafter abbreviated *T* and cited parenthetically by page number.

²¹ Robert Macnish, *The Philosophy of Sleep* (New York: D. Appleton, 1834), 202–3.

²² Macnish, 202.

²³ Macnish, 205.

²⁴ James Braid, *Observations on Trance or Human Hibernation* (London: John Churchill, 1850), vi.

²⁵ Braid, 36.

²⁶ Braid, 43.

²⁷ Braid, 56.

²⁸ William Tebb and Edward Perry Vollum, *Premature Burial and How it May Be Prevented with special reference to Trance, Catalepsy and other forms of Suspended Animation* (London: S. Sonnenschein & Co., 1896), 23.

²⁹ Tebb and Vollum, 25.

³⁰ William Benjamin Carpenter, "Man the Interpreter of Nature," in his *Nature and Man: Essays Scientific and Philosophical* (London: K. Paul, Trench & Co., 1888), 187.

³¹ Carpenter, "Nature and Law," in his *Nature and Man*, 369.

³² Carpenter, "Man the Interpreter of Nature," 194, 197.

³³ Carpenter, "The Psychology of Belief," in his *Nature and Man*, 228.

³⁴ See Carpenter, "The Psychology of Belief," 223.

³⁵ Carpenter, "On the Fallacies of Testimony in Relation to the Supernatural," in his *Nature and Man*, 239, 246, 249, 243.

³⁶ See Herbert Spencer, *First Principles* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1912), 253–61.

³⁷ Patrick Winden, *Silas Marner: Memory and Salvation* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1992), 31.

³⁸ Eliot, "Form in Art," 234, 232.

³⁹ Eliot, "Silly Novels by Lady Novelists," in *Selected Essays*, 148.

⁴⁰ Eliot, *Adam Bede* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press), 178.

⁴¹ Eliot, *Adam Bede*, 179.

⁴² Eliot, *Adam Bede*, 177.

⁴³ Eliot, *Adam Bede*, 91.

⁴⁴ Pamela Thurschwell makes a similar point in her account of the penetration of realist narrative by prophecy in *Daniel Deronda*. See Thurschwell, "George Eliot's Prophecies: Coercive Second Sight and Everyday Thought Reading," in *The Victorian Supernatural*, ed. Nicola Brown, Carolyn Burdett, and Thurschwell (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2004), 87–105, esp. 94.

⁴⁵ Richard Menke, "Fiction as Vivisection: G. H. Lewes and George Eliot," *ELH* 67 (2000): 642.

⁴⁶ Sally Shuttleworth, "Fairy Tale or Science?: Physiological Psychology in *Silas Marner*," in *Languages of Nature: Critical Essays on Science and Literature*, ed. L. J. Jordanova (New Brunswick: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1986), 244–88.

⁴⁷ Lewes, *The Physiology of Common Life*, 2 vol. (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1875), 2:371.

⁴⁸ Lewes, *Physiology*, 2:371.

⁴⁹ Lewes, "On the Dread and Dislike of Science" in *Versatile Victorian: Selected Writings of George Henry Lewes*, ed. Rosemary Ashton (London: Bristol Classical Press, 1992), 322.

⁵⁰ See Lewes, "Dread and Dislike of Science," 322–23.

⁵¹ Eliot, "Evangelical Teaching," in *Selected Essays*, 44.

⁵² Lewes, "Dread and Dislike of Science," 326.

⁵³ Lewes, *Problems of Life and Mind: First Series, the Foundation of a Creed*, 2 vol. (Boston: Houghton, Osgood, 1875–1880), 2:121.

⁵⁴ Lewes, *Problems of Life and Mind*, 2:122.

⁵⁵ See Lewes, *Problems of Life and Mind*, 2:116–19.

⁵⁶ Lewes, *Problems of Life and Mind*, 2:122.

⁵⁷ Eliot, "Worldliness and Other-Worldliness: The Poet Young," in *Selected Essays*, 213.

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