

The Apothecary's Chest

The Apothecary's Chest:
Magic, Art and Medication

Edited by

Konstantina Georganta, Fabienne Collignon
and Anne-Marie Millim

**CAMBRIDGE
SCHOLARS**

P U B L I S H I N G

The Apothecary's Chest: Magic, Art and Medication,
Edited by Konstantina Georganta, Fabienne Collignon and Anne-Marie Millim

This book first published 2009

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

12 Back Chapman Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2XX, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2009 by Konstantina Georganta, Fabienne Collignon and Anne-Marie Millim
and contributors

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system,
or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or
otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN (10): 1-4438-0494-0, ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-0494-3

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Illustrations	vii
Acknowledgments	ix
Introduction	xi
Konstantina Georganta, Fabienne Collignon and Anne-Marie Millim	
1. The Phrenological Dreamer: The Popular Medical and Fictional Writing of Robert Macnish (1802-1837)	1
Megan Coyer	
2. Animal Magic: Conjury and Power in Colonial Taxidermy	13
John Miller	
3. A Wizard/Witch's Duel: Gender Power Struggles and the Occult in Surrealism	23
Rachel Grew	
4. Old Spells, Magic Herbs and Frightening Creatures: The <i>curandera</i> in Rudolfo Anaya's <i>Bless Me, Ultima</i>	41
João de Mancelos	
5. The Rising Gorge: Poison, Hamlet, and Sin	49
Christa Mahalik	
6. Prescription Narratives: Rereading Joseph Cornell's <i>Pharmacy</i> Series as a "Modernist Antidote"	59
Catriona McAra	
7. Theatres of Memory and Restraint: Matthew Barney Among the Neo-Platonists	71
Corin Depper	

8. The Popular use of “Precious” Stones Medicinally in Early Modern Scotland	83
Tom Blaen	
9. Theodora, “the pills” and the Saints: Female Practices Toward Drug Prescription, Rearrangements of Male Therapeutic Power	97
Athena Peglidou	
10. “I will put none of these diseases upon thee (...) for I am the Lord that healeth thee”: Christ as a Pharmacist and Healer in Iconography and Literature of late Medieval and Early Modern Times.....	107
Jacek Kowzan	
11. Magic, Mysticism, and Medicine: The Medical Career of John Webster (1611-1982).....	119
Lindsey Fitzharris	
12. “They Go by Their Dreams”: Myth-Making and Rationality in the Initiation of the Shaman Quesalid	129
Harry Whitehead	
13. From Mere Bellies to the Bad Shaman: Roles of the Contemporary Poet.....	145
Bill Herbert	
List of Contributors	163

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1. The okapi diorama from the Akeley Hall of African Mammals in The American Museum of Natural History. Photo by Charles Coles and Thane Bierwert.
2. Victor Brauner: *Le Surréaliste*, 1947 oil on canvas, 60 x 40.
3. Remedios Varo: *Witch Going to the Sabbath*, 1957 mixed media on paper, 55 x 332.
4. Leonor Fini: *La Vie Ideal*, 1950, 92 x 65.
5. Max Ernst: *Where They Drink the Wolves*, 1932, pencil on paper, 15.8 x 11.8.
6. Max Ernst: Plate two of the 'Thursday' or 'Blackness' section of *Une Semaine de Bonté*, 1934.
7. Max Ernst: *C'est la Vie – Marchand D'Ucel*, 1931, pencil and ink on paper, 29.4 x 22.1.
8. Frontispiece for Basile Valentin's *L'Azoth* in *Les Douze Clefs de Philosophie*, 1624.
9. Remedios Varo: *The Hermit*, 1956, oil on masonite with mother of pearl, 35 x 14⁷/₈ inches.
10. Remedios Varo: *Solar Music*, 1955, oil on masonite, 35 ³/₄ x 24 inches.
11. Diagram of the composition of Menstrual, Luna and Sol from pseudo-Llull's *Eiusdem Compendium Animae Transmutatonis*, 1566, p. 172.
12. Joseph Cornell, *Untitled (Pharmacy)*, ca.1941, box construction, 35.5 x 30.6 x 11.1cm.
13. Joseph Cornell, *Nouveaux Contes de Feés (The New Fairy Tales)*

(Poison Box), 1948, painted wood box with glass front, Victorian paper images, cardboard boxes covered in French text, wood slats, mirror, and velvet, 32.2 x 26 x 14.9cm.

14. Christ as Pharmacist (1647). Martin von Wagner Museum.

15. Christ as the Man of Sorrows. German Pharmacy Museum, Heidelberg.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

‘The Apothecary’s Chest: Magic, Art & Medication’ was a one-day symposium held at the University of Glasgow on November 24, 2007. We would like to thank the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) for their generous financial support and the Faculty of Arts and Department of English Literature at the University of Glasgow for their assistance. Many warm thanks are also due to Dr. Vassiliki Kolocotroni, Director of the Graduate School for the Arts and Humanities, for her enthusiasm and valuable advice. Last, but not least, we would like to send a special thanks to all our speakers who helped materialize the concept of ‘The Apothecary’s Chest’ and our two keynote speakers, Dr. Lauren Kassell and Professor Bill Herbert. We would also like to thank Ioannis Georgantas for his help in the virtual and visual dissemination of the project.

INTRODUCTION

‘The Apothecary’s Chest: Magic, Art & Medication’ was a one-day symposium held at the University of Glasgow on November 24, 2007. The symposium called for a discussion on the evolution of the notions of mysticism, knowledge and superstition in the way they are intertwined in both science and the literary imagination in the figure of healers such as the apothecary, the alchemist, the shaman. There were three main areas of interest. The first involved traditional perceptions of physicians, who combined knowledge and superstition and thus bordered, in their practices, on the sphere of the occult. The second theme, evolving from the first, proposed an inquiry of the overlapping interests and processes of science, magic and prophecy, as well as of the implications and consequences of a privileged access to medical knowledge, while the third subject of discussion concentrated on the development of the symbolism of the healer in literature, history, philosophy of science, anthropology, theology, film and art.

The twelve papers included in this volume, papers presented by doctoral candidates and young scholars from across a range of geographical regions and disciplines, result in a collection of approaches to an investigative field explored, among others, by Lauren Kassell, a keynote speaker of this event, whose work is concerned with the politics of medicine in early modern culture—and which, subjected to rigorous scrutiny in her extraordinarily vivid accounts, yields up its hidden properties and underworlds. This, indeed, forms one element of thought and research followed over the course of the symposium with topics ranging from mystical traits of mundane materials to the origins of the occult and gender struggles.

The thirteenth and final essay included in the volume, Professor Bill Herbert’s ‘From Mere Bellies to the Bad Shaman’, is an exploration of the modern role of the contemporary poet in the form of an extended conversation initiated at the closing of the conference, when Professor Herbert was asked to combine a poetry reading with a few observations on the relationship between the poet and the shaman. Herbert discusses the parallel vocations as poet and academic resembling ‘the relationship between that modern shaman, the alternative practitioner, and the medical doctor: two adjacent sets of methodologies and ideologies which only

coincide for the healers in the patient, and, for the writers, in a pentad of concerns -- critics, students, texts, readers, writers'.

Megan Coyer's article, which opens the volume, investigates the work of Robert Macnish, Scottish physician and poet, whose career, according to Coyer, "exemplifies" the contemporary "high level of integration between the scientific and literary communities." The focus of this piece is composed by Macnish's popular medical publication, *The Philosophy of Sleep* (1830), as well as by a number of his poems, writings in which he engages with nightmares and the phenomena of spectral illusions, subjective occurrences whose origins lie, so thinks Macnish, inside the physical body, the site of emergence of, and perpetual haunting by, spirits. As such, this paper is concerned with the phrenological explanations, the corporeal signs, of these alleged supernatural experiences, emanating not from outwith, but from within.

In his paper, titled "Animal Magic: Conjury and Power in Colonial Taxidermy," John Miller studies two texts, the life-like, but lifeless, arrangement of animals in the African Hall of Mammals in the American Museum of Natural History in New York, and A. R. Wallace's 1869 publication *The Malay Archipelago*; in these presentations, suggests Miller, animals are interpreted as machines, as displays speaking of Empire, and whose simulation of life, effectuated through the magic of technology, articulates a trenchant comment on imperial developments, on its lethal claims and propagations.

Rachel's Grew article on gender power struggles and the occult in Surrealism explores the relationship between Surrealism and mysticism in the ways in which male and female Surrealist artists use mystical figures, such as the alchemist, magician, shaman and witch, as gendered expressions of creative power. By first addressing the affinity between Surrealist painters and alchemists in its cryptic iconography, as attested in the work of Max Ernst and the writings of André Breton, as well as the dichotomy between the *femme fatale* and the *femme enfant*, she creates the background on which female and male Surrealist artists overlap in their representations of the powerful wizard/witch. She compares a variety of magical characters and the iconography that surrounds them to demonstrate the power struggle between men and women for both artistic and procreative autonomy. That struggle, she argues, did not begin with the rise of a more socially and sexually independent woman but stretches back to the original alchemists themselves, which renders the Surrealists their modern heirs.

João de Mancelos analyses the figure of the *curandera* in the Southwest of the United States, a female healer utilising the curative

properties of plants, and acting as an intermediary personage, an individual able to bridge, through, for example, her capacity to temporarily transform into an animal, the perceived differences, the disparities, between humanity and its environment. The focus, of this paper, is Rudolfo Anaya's 1972 novel *Bless Me, Ultima*, the premise of a study of Mexican-American folklore, of its the holistic perspectives and magic realist fictions.

Christa Mahalik's paper discusses the conceptualization of sin as a disease corrupting the human mind and body. Mahalik draws attention to the Hellenistic origins of the "seven sins," which correspond to the "seven virtues" of Christianity. The Middle Ages, and Western thought since then, were characterized by the metaphorical representation of sin as an infectious illness leading to moral and physical decay. In Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, sin is a poison the characters must try and resist in order to evade the current of fatal relationships that threatens to suck them in. This play presents an abstract concept as a tangible substance, accentuating the superstition at work in the pre-Enlightenment world.

Similarly, Catriona McAra's paper deals with the physical representation of a mental concept. McAra's reading of Joseph Cornell's *Pharmacy* (ca. 1941) as an artistic attempt to captivate and encapsulate time, emphasises the healing value of the individual's control over memory. By depositing everyday objects into medical bottles, the artist seems to suggest that personal recollections can be stored in a repository of memory, which can be opened to supply to the subjectively anticipated need for re-visitation of the past. *Pharmacy* embodies a gesture of artistic self-medication, which is fundamentally diaristic in nature. The present self preserves the memories the future self might need; thus establishing a self-catering system of curing the spiritual disease of modern disconnectedness and anonymity.

Corin Depper's analysis of artist Matthew Barney's "studiously hermetic" work accentuates the analogies of contemporary installation art to the Neo-Platonic relationship between space and thought. Camillo's *Theatre of Memory* of 1550 can be seen as the ancestral inspiration for Barney's performances. The *Theatres* serve as physical containers for meaning; architectural designs offering a platform for the productive tension between the concrete and the imagined. Like the *Theatres*, Barney's transfiguration of the Guggenheim Museum implies a simultaneous openness and closedness which playfully explores the interactions of the corporeal and the metaphysical. Depper juxtaposes early modern ways of processing and materializing ideas with contemporary efforts to expand the limits of the knowable.

Tom Blaen's article on the popular use of 'precious' stones in early modern Scotland explores the unusual use of precious stones in medicine, magic and lay religion in the Highlands of Scotland during the early modern period, practices which in both their number and recording seem distinct from those found elsewhere in Britain. Stones are here not only commonly found in popular medical practice but also have unusually strong magical and religious connotations, their use being, in addition, far more widespread than in England and Wales. Such stones, Blaen argues, used to have a vibrant tradition for various medical and animal husbandry remedies and were sometimes held by the local Laird or community leader or found in the cabinets of practicing empirics. This could often lead to allegations of witchcraft and magic. In addition, many of these stones had important religious connections, often to saints, yet were unusually present in firmly Protestant communities. Blaen offers a speculative possible explanation for that culture of belief surrounding stones, suggesting that the notions and practices are more historically rooted than would have previously been thought.

Athena Peglidou's article on female practices of drug prescription explores the attitudes of female depressive patients toward psychotropic medication, 'the pills' as they refer to, and its meanings. By using ethnographic data from an urban context in north-western Greece Peglidou's analysis maps out psychotropic medication as the most common and most ambivalent of psychiatric treatments. Drug is represented in everyday experience either as *pharmaki*, poison in Greek, a substance that can kill or drive mad, or as *pharmako*, a remedy that can cure. Exposing the pills or talking about them can stigmatize the sufferer and, in addition, women's submission to medical knowledge and masculinity isn't proportional to the compliance to the physician's prescription. Very often women contradict medical power by negotiating or even by rejecting medication. The invocation of supernatural cosmology, namely of the divine figures of saints who are considered apt to control the psyche's fortune in an Orthodox context, is analysed as an empowering practice in the asymmetrical gender relations in the particular medical encounter. Peglidou discusses in more detail the case of Theodora in her ability to negotiate her submission to therapeutic authorities.

Jaček Kowzan examines the interpretation of Christ as a physician and apothecary, and traces its occurrence, and modifications, in biblical sources, in prayers and meditation books, but also in oil paintings and poems; the culture under inspection, here, is that of Christianity, of its recurring motifs, the sacraments of healing, the restoration of corporeal and spiritual health, at the hands of Christ, appearing as a pharmacist,

behind scales, the potions arranged on a counter.

In her essay on the seventeenth-century reformer John Webster, Lindsey Fitzharris argues that Webster, because of his “eclecticism,” his interests in emerging modern scientific thought, but also his continued adherence to, and influence by, alchemical literature and methods, functions as a case in point, and in flesh, of the continuities between scientific and magical perspectives; Fitzharris’ work, based on a close reading of Webster’s major publications, formulates the need for a rapprochement of chemistry with alchemy, and for a broader understanding of John Webster’s character and contributions.

Interpreting the topic from an anthropological standpoint, Harry Whitehead analyses the difference between the three versions of a narrative conceived by Quesalid, a twentieth-century Kwakiuth shaman from Canada. Levi-Strauss took particular interest in these accounts and consolidated their relevance for anthropological criticism. The three versions display a gradual movement from the portrayal of shamanism as a supernatural calling to a more sceptical and scientific veracity. Whitehead identifies the pressure of the Western rationalism as the cause of Quesalid’s self-conscious reappraisal of his function as a healer.

THE PHRENOLOGICAL DREAMER: THE POPULAR MEDICAL AND FICTIONAL WRITING OF ROBERT MACNISH (1802–1837)

MEGAN COYER

Robert Macnish (1802–1837) was both a literary man and a physician, and his work provides an illuminating picture of the connections between medical science, phrenology, and literature during the Romantic period in Scotland. The diagnostic methodology of the physician in early nineteenth-century Britain was defined by a balancing act between the patient's narrative and the physical signs of the body.¹ Similarly, the phrenologist physically examined the subject's head for bumps and then verified their assessment by comparing it to the subject's narrative account of their personality and life history.² The tension between subjective narrative evidence and objective physical signs is a consistent theme in Romantic literature. Perhaps the most prominent example of this tension in Scottish Romantic literature is James Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824). The definitive boundaries of Scottish Romanticism are currently under scholarly debate, and I use the term "Scottish Romanticism" in this article in reference to Scottish writing loosely between the years 1780 and 1830.³ Macnish's position as a practicing physician, phrenologist, and Romantic writer is unique in its

¹ Janis McLarren Caldwell. *Literature and Medicine in Nineteenth-Century Britain*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995: 7-8.

² For a critical discussion of the methodology and history of phrenology, see Roger Cooter. *The Cultural Meaning of Popular Science: Phrenology and the Organization of Consent in Nineteenth-Century Britain*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984; David de Giustino, *Conquest of Mind: Phrenology and Victorian Social Thought*. London: Croom Helm; Totowa, New Jersey: Rowan and Littlefield, 1975; David Stack. *Queen Victoria's Skull: George Combe and the Mid-Victorian Mind*. London and New York: Hambledon Continuum Press, 2008.

³ For further discussion of the issues surrounding the definition of Scottish Romanticism, see Leith Davis, Ian Duncan, and Janet Sorensen, eds. *Scotland and the Borders of Romanticism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

interdisciplinary richness, and his extensive connections with more canonical figures, such as William Blackwood, Archibald Constable, D.M. Moir, John Wilson, James Hogg, and George Combe, make him a figure of critical importance to the development of a coherent picture of Scottish Romantic science and literature.⁴ This article will focus on Macnish's role in the dually literary and scientific debate on the validity of physiological explanations of the phenomena of the nightmare and the spectral illusion.

During his lifetime, Macnish published three popular medical texts, *The Anatomy of Drunkenness* (1827), *The Philosophy of Sleep* (1830) and *An Introduction to Phrenology* (1836), and he also regularly published both prose and poetry in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country*, and various annuals. Today, Macnish is best known as the author of *The Philosophy of Sleep* (1830). The extensive revision of the original text for the 1834 edition reveals Macnish's growing adherence to phrenological science and his correspondingly growing distaste for superstitious explanations of what he considered to be natural events, such as nightmares and spectral illusions, which he believed were closely linked phenomena. In both the 1830 and 1834 editions, Macnish writes:

The illusions which occur, are perhaps the most extraordinary phenomena of night-mare, and so strongly are they often impressed upon the mind, that even on awaking, we find it impossible not to believe them real. . . . I have no doubt that most of the current ghost stories have had their origin in this source.⁵

However, in the 1834 edition, Macnish includes a chapter specifically devoted to spectral illusions, in which he explains the phenomena more thoroughly as follows:

The brain, in a certain state, perceives external bodies; and any cause which induces that state, gives rise to a like perception, independently of the usual cause—the presence of external bodies themselves. The chief of these internal causes is inflammation of the brain; and when the organs of the perceptive faculties are so excited—put into a state similar to that which follows actual impressions from without—the result is a series of false

⁴ For biographical information on Macnish and a partial collection of his creative literary works, see Moir, *The Modern Pythagorean; A Series of Tales, Essays, and Sketches, by the late Robert Macnish, LL.D. with the Author's Life by his friend D.M. Moir*, 2 vols. Edinburgh: Blackwood; London: T. Cadell, 1838.

⁵ Robert Macnish. *The Philosophy of Sleep*. Glasgow: McPhun, 1830: 132-3; Robert Macnish. *The Philosophy of Sleep*. Glasgow: McPhun, 1834: 141-2.

images or sounds, which are often so vivid as to be mistaken for realities. During sleep, the perceptive organs seem to be peculiarly susceptible of such excitement.⁶

However, at the beginning of Macnish's literary career, he objected to the complete rationalization of the supernatural, at least so far as in the realm of creative literature.

Following his successful examination before the College of Surgeons at the University of Glasgow, at the age of eighteen, Macnish served as the assistant to a country doctor in Caithness, where, according to his biographer, Moir, the grand natural scenery and local superstitions enlisted his sympathies "on the side of olden time."⁷ In "The Bard's Register. No. IV. Ghosts and Dreams," an essay published in the Glaswegian periodical, *The Emmet*, in 1824, Macnish declares himself to be "a firm believer in ghosts."⁸ Moir believes that this essay was written "under the hallucination"⁹ of the impressions gained during Macnish's time in the Highlands. However, Macnish's essay reveals an enlightened, rather than naïve, view of the supernatural:

I am none of your vulgar believers in ghost stories. I am perfectly satisfied that ninety-nine out of a hundred of such tales, are mere fictions, fabricated by ignorance and credulity. The superstitious clown, who fancies he sees a ghost in a wreath of snow, or a streak of moonlight, or a curl of gossamer, has my pity, as well as that of him who professed to deny *in toto*, all unearthly appearances. At the same time, although fools and the ignorant may tend to bring such belief into discredit and contempt, I will, by no means, with such a cloud of evidence before me, give way to the opinion which regards apparitions as an idle chimera. That such forms have revisited the earth in former days we have the testimony of the scripture, and also of Cicero and many of antiquity. The belief, indeed, is innate and inherent in human nature, whatever reasoning and philosophy may do to displace it.¹⁰

Macnish makes an enlightened choice to believe in apparitions but not in vulgar ghost stories. However, his explicitly stated position at this point is drastically different from his later position. The cases he cites at this time

⁶ Robert Macnish, *The Philosophy of Sleep*. Glasgow: McPhun, 1834: 243.

⁷ Moir, 1838, vol.1: 28.

⁸ Robert Macnish, "The Bard's Register. No. IV. Ghosts and Dreams." *The Emmet* 2. No. 51. 20 March 1824: 289 – 299 (290).

⁹ Moir, *The Modern Pythagorean*, vol. 1: 29.

¹⁰ Macnish, "The Bard's Register. No. IV. Ghosts and Dreams.": 295.

as being “in favour of the influence of supernatural agency”¹¹ are the same cases he will later use, in the chapters on the “Prophetic Power of Dreams” in both the 1830 and 1834 editions of *The Philosophy of Sleep*, to illustrate the natural mental principles that lead to the deceptively visionary aspects of some dreams.¹² Also, his appeal to the authority of scripture is interesting since later in his career he will systematically remove scriptural references from the first edition of his *The Philosophy of Sleep*,¹³ and, in correspondence, lament the necessary puffing of religious doctrine in the second edition of George Combe’s *The Constitution of Man Considered in Relation to External Objects* (1828).¹⁴ Additionally, his alignment to the authority of antiquity is in direct opposition to his future promotion of the science of phrenology, as many phrenologists, particularly those taught by Combe, believed that their system would progressively reform the false superstructures of the past, which had no basis in the true philosophy of the human mind.

Macnish does not explicitly state his utilization of phrenological doctrine in the 1830 edition, but in the 1834 edition, Macnish declares that the phrenological system is the only way to account for “dreaming, idiocy, spectral illusions, monomania, and partial genius.”¹⁵ Phrenologists took a

¹¹ Ibid.: 297.

¹² Macnish, 1830: 101-123; Macnish, 1834: 110-132.

¹³ In a letter to Moir, dated 9 April 1833, Macnish writes in regards to the new edition of *The Philosophy of Sleep*: “All the cant and Scriptural quotations must be eradicated, to say nothing of the nonsense about “The Sleep of the Soul.” This eradication I shall much more than supply by valuable scientific matter and additional cases. As the Book stands I am somewhat ashamed of it, and must do my best to make it do its author more credit.” National Library of Scotland (henceforth NLS), Acc. 9856, No. 50.

¹⁴ In a letter to Combe, dated 27 March 1835, Macnish writes: “In a work of science when an attempt is made to reconcile things with scripture I fear that even the greatest talent must be often unsuccessful. You try to get over the difficulty by supposing that where Revelation appears inconsistent with scientific facts it has been wrongly interpreted, but I fear this is not mending the matter. Many things, whose just interpretation cannot be denied, go woefully against what is indicated by science – such as the creation of the world in six days, the age of the Antediluvians, the arrestment of the sun by Joshua, &c. Your work, in my humble opinion, is faultless except where it hits upon this subject, & I almost regret that you touched upon it at all. I can conceive that something of the kind is necessary for the purpose of quieting the prejudices of the weak & ignorant, but the very necessity for such a proceeding is disagreeable lamentable & shows that the public mind has many prejudices to get quit of.” NLS, MS. 7235: 182-5.

¹⁵ Macnish, 1834: ix.

particular interest in the phenomena of spectral illusion, as the ability of a person to have a perceptual delusion whilst maintaining rational judgment was used as evidence for the plurality of organs in the brain. A series of articles in the *Phrenological Journal and Miscellany of Edinburgh*,¹⁶ from which Macnish draws numerous illustrations for his 1834 edition, connect particular aspects of spectral illusion, such as the color or size of the illusion, to particular perceptive organs.¹⁷ The absolute faith in visual signifier, necessary to the practice of phrenology, perhaps lead phrenologists to objectively define ways in which perception can be misleading. An understanding of diseased perception would lead to an increased confidence in healthy perception. However, in 1824, Macnish is unconstrained by phrenology and appears to be primarily aligned with the Romantic literary response to the explained supernatural,¹⁸ as he writes:

It is cold and desolate to suppose the earth merely the habitation of material beings. It were more consonant to beauty and perfection to imagine it brightened over with the presence of a thousand spirits, which float like sunshine over its bosom—those spirits of which poetry, from the earliest ages, has delighted to sing, and the very belief in whose existence flings, as it were, a halo of immortality over nature.¹⁹

¹⁶ *The Phrenological Journal and Miscellany of Edinburgh* (henceforth *Phrenological Journal*) was published quarterly in Edinburgh between December 1823 and October 1847.

¹⁷ For example see, “Dr. Hibbert on the Philosophy of Apparitions”. *Phrenological Journal* 1 No. 4. 1824: 541-555; “Apparitions”. *Phrenological Journal* 2. No. 5. 1824: 111-3; “Observations on Spectral Illusion, and other Illusive Perceptions of the Knowing Organs when in morbid Excitement, illustrated by a recent Case”. *Phrenological Journal* 2. No. 6. 1825: 290-308; “A Case of Spectral Illusion”. *Phrenological Journal* 5. No. 18. 1828: 210-3; “Additional Case of Spectral Illusion, with accompanying Pain in the Organs of Form, Size, Weight, Colouring, Order, Number, and Individuality”. *Phrenological Journal* 5. No. 18. 1828: 319-32; “Case of Spectral Illusions. To the Editor of the Phrenological Journal”. *Phrenological Journal* 7. No. 28. 1832: 162-5.

¹⁸ Similar sentiments are expressed in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*. For example, see J. H. Merivale. “Phantasmagoriana; Tales of the Dead, Principally Translated from the French.” *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 3. No. 17. August 1818: 589-596, esp. 595; John Wilson. “Some Remarks on the Use of the Preternatural in Works of Fiction.” *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 3. No. 18. September 1818: 648-640. Contemporary critics identify *Blackwood's* as the definitive literary magazine of Romantic-era Scotland (*Scotland and the Borders of Romanticism*: 13).

¹⁹ Macnish, “The Bard's Register. No. IV. Ghosts and Dreams.”: 293.

Macnish's poem "Ane Flicht Through Faery Lande, Onne Ane Famous Steed, Ycelpt the 'Nicht-Mare,'" first published in *The Emmet* in September 1823,²⁰ utilizes the nightmare as a premise to explain a visitation to fairy-land. As Moir points out in his biography:

Our author, after the manner of the Ettrick Shepherd, and other recognized authorities on the superstitions of the dark ages, has adopted something like the antique spelling to be found in the chartularies.²¹

The poem does not define the nightmare as an actual visitation to fairy-land or as a purely physiological event; however, the nightmare does fit with Macnish's description of the phenomena in *The Philosophy of Sleep*. This evidences a balance between objective, physiological justification and imaginative belief at the beginning of his literary career. In the first edition, Macnish cites the four conditions of a nightmare to be as follows: (1) Active state of memory and imagination; (2) Impaired state of respiratory functions; (3) Torpor in powers of volition; (4) Judgment more or less awake.²² The opening of the poem emphasizes the incompleteness of the narrator's sleep and his ability to judge and reflect upon his situation:

I wals ne awake; I wals ne asleep.
But ynnne ane confusion strange and deep;
I could ne telle, sae strange wals my hedde,
Quhether I wals alive or dedde;
Quhether this wals the realme of blysse,
Or the warlde of wretchedness;
Quhere could I be—alacke and welle
I thoctt againe, but I could ne telle! (ll. 5-12)

Macnish describes the transition into nightmare from a near waking state in *The Philosophy of Sleep*, as the nightmare steals "upon us like a thief at a period when we are all but awake, and aware of its approach."²³ The continued awareness and ability to pass judgment on the experience differentiates the nightmare from a merely disagreeable dream and reveals

²⁰ Robert Macnish. "Ane Flicht Through Faery Lande, Onne Ane Famous Steed, Ycelpt the 'Nicht-Mare.'" *The Emmet* 1. No. 25. 20 September 1823: 291-3. Line citations in text.

²¹ Moir, 1838, vol.1: 206.

²² Macnish, 1830: 124.

²³ *Ibid.*: 129-130.

the nightmare to be a “painful bodily affection”²⁴ rather than a mere vision of the mind. The oppression of the narrator’s volition is shown later in the poem as the fairies drag him “through the regionis of space:”

Some pulled mie before, some pushid mie behinde –
Some grippit my limbs quhile wythe shouts of lauchter
They movit mie on like ane lambe to the slauchter. (ll. 65-67)

This description resonates with the description of the loss of volitional power in *The Philosophy of Sleep*, as “the individual never feels himself a free agent; on the contrary, he is spell-bound by some enchantment, and remains an unresisting victim for malice to work its will upon.”²⁵ The impairment of respiratory function is emphasized at the close of the poem, when the narrator forces himself to awaken by kicking the “gylded ayre:”

At lengthe I fand e my breathe departe,
Ane deep oppression cam owre my heart;
My brain grew dizzy—my eyne grewe dimme,
Ane sweat broke onne euiry limbe,
My bosomme heavit wythe deidlye dreade,
Vapouris floated arounde my hedde; (ll. 82-87)

The physicality of this description—the clear delineation of the visceral sensations that accompany and may be the cause of the terrifying vision—looks forward to much of Macnish’s later prose fiction, as he works to amplify the terror of the supernatural experience by providing the reader with the precise details necessary to sympathetically engage with the terror of the narrator.

In *The Philosophy of Sleep*, the imagination is said to be in an active state during the nightmare; and thus, the closing lines appropriately delineate the narrator as having been actively taken on a ride: ‘And instead of rydyng the clouds of the ayre / I hadde onlie beene rydyng the grimme Nicht Mare.’ (ll. 98-99) This ride may have been caused by physiological disturbance, i.e. oppressed respiration, but this physicality in no way demotes the role of the imagination. Jennifer Ford, in her erudite treatment of the dreaming medical imagination writes:

The imagination interprets and translates physical sensations into emotional turmoil and into the language of morbid day-dreams. It is able to interpret such sensations for two primary reasons. First, it is a physical,

²⁴ Ibid.: 137.

²⁵ Ibid.: 127.

medical faculty, and so is well placed to interpret physical sensation; second, since the language of dreams is one of images and sensations (*CN* III 4406), the imagination readily exercises its 'strange Self-power' of interpretation when the gastric and other visceral organs are diseased. To translate and transmute bodily sensations into dreams necessitates that the imagination be an active power.²⁶

In *The Philosophy of Sleep*, Macnish emphasizes the connection between the physical suffering of the body and the imagery of dreams:

We have already seen that in ordinary sleep, particular states of the body are apt to induce visions . . . If causes comparatively so trivial, are capable of producing such trains of ideas, it is easily conceivable that a sense of suffocation, like that which occurs in night-mare, may give birth to all the horrid phantoms seen in that distressing affection. The physical suffering in such a case; exalts the imagination to its utmost pitch, fills it with spectres and chimeras, and plants an immoveable weight of malignant fiend upon our bosom to crash us into agony.²⁷

Therefore, although Macnish claims to be a firm believer in the possibility of communication occurring between the spiritual and material world during sleep in *The Emmet*, his poem, "Ane Flicht Through Faery-Lande," reveals that even at this early point in his career, he grounds supernatural experience in the physical body. It is in fact the imagination that connects the physical world to the seemingly immaterial world of fairy-land.

Interestingly, the poem is dedicated to "The Ettrick Shepherd", and this most probably indicates a connection with James Hogg's poem "The Pilgrims of the Sun" (1815), which was republished with notes in *The Poetical Works of James Hogg* in 1822, just one year prior to the publication of Macnish's poem. Hogg's poem includes a similar visionary journey, and in his notes to the text, he writes that "the erratic pilgrimage is given merely as a dream or vision of a person in a long trance."²⁸ Macnish's 1823 dedication of "Ane Flicht Through Faery-Lande" may indicate his approval of and desire to imitate Hogg's utilization of the dream as an imaginative premise to a possibly supernatural journey. However, when Macnish republishes the poem in *Fraser's Magazine* in November 1831, the dedication is removed. This is most probably a

²⁶ Jennifer Ford. *Coleridge on Dreaming: Romanticism, Dreams, and Medical Imagination*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998: 198.

²⁷ Macnish, 1830: 140.

²⁸ James Hogg. *The Poetical Works of James Hogg, in Four Volumes*. Vol. 2. Edinburgh: Constable, 1822: 344.

response to the inherent irreconcilability of Macnish's increasingly phrenologically based theory of sleep and dreaming with Hogg's portrayal of an assertively anachronistic insistence on the soul's separate existence from the body during sleep through his persona as the superstitious shepherd. Hogg appears to delineate his personal theory of sleep and dreaming in the mock-philosophical introduction to the tale, "On the Separate Existence of the Soul," first published in *Fraser's Magazine* in December 1831. He writes in regards to Spinoza's materialist doctrine:

It destroyed all the fine fairy visions which I had so long entertained of the soul's separate existence . . . in deep sleep, in trances, and all the other standing stills of the corporeal functions, it is well known I have always maintained that the soul roams at large, and by that means views scenes and draws conclusions predictive of future events.²⁹

Hogg continues to evoke the imaginative potential of "fine fairy visions" long after Macnish, who after the publication of the *The Philosophy of Sleep* in 1830, appears to value scientific progress over the inspiration to be derived from a belief in unexplainable and immaterial phenomena.

Macnish's increasingly scientific approach to supernatural experience illustrates the struggle of Scottish Romantic writers to reconcile the continuing drive towards rationalism and scientific progress, as fueled by the Scottish Enlightenment of the eighteenth-century, and their desire for poetic inspiration. For Macnish, reconciliation was to be found in the dually physical and literary imagination, and increasingly, he derived inspiration, not from unexplainable wonders, but rather from the wondrous ability of science to explain the mysterious connections between the mind and the body.

Works Cited

- Anonymous. "Additional Case of Spectral Illusion, with accompanying Pain in the Organs of Form, Size, Weight, Colouring, Order, Number, and Individuality." *Phrenological Journal* 5. No. 18. 1828: 319-32.
- . "A Case of Spectral Illusion." *Phrenological Journal* 5. No. 18. 1828: 210-3.
- . "Apparitions." *Phrenological Journal* 2. No. 5. 1824: 111-3.
- . "Case of Spectral Illusions. To the Editor of the Phrenological

²⁹ James Hogg. "On the Separate Existence of the Soul". In *James Hogg: Selected Stories and Sketches*. Ed. by Douglas Mack. Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1982: 180.

- Journal." *Phrenological Journal* 7. No. 28. 1832: 162-5.
- "Dr. Hibbert on the Philosophy of Apparitions." *Phrenological Journal* 1. No. 4. 1824: 541-555.
 - "Observations on Spectral Illusion, and other Illusive Perceptions of the Knowing Organs when in morbid Excitement, illustrated by a recent Case." *Phrenological Journal* 2. No. 6. 1825: 290-308.
- Caldwell, Janis McLarren. *Literature and Medicine in Nineteenth-Century Britain*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Cooter, Roger. *The Cultural Meaning of Popular Science: Phrenology and the Organization of Consent in Nineteenth-Century Britain*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.
- Davis, Leith, Ian Duncan, and Janet Sorensen, eds. *Scotland and the Borders of Romanticism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- de Giustino, David. *Conquest of Mind: Phrenology and Victorian Social Thought*. London: Croom Helm; Totowa, New Jersey: Rowan and Littlefield, 1975.
- Ford, Jennifer. *Coleridge on Dreaming: Romanticism, Dreams, and Medical Imagination*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Hogg, James. *The Poetical Works of James Hogg, in Four Volumes*. 4 vols. Edinburgh: Constable, 1822.
- Mack, Douglas, ed. *James Hogg: Selected Stories and Sketches*. Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1982.
- Macnish, Robert and D. M. Moir. Correspondence dated 9 April 1833. NLS, Edinburgh.
- Macnish, Robert and George Combe. Correspondence dated 27 March 1835. NLS, Edinburgh.
- Macnish, Robert. "The Bard's Register. No. IV. Ghosts and Dreams." *The Emmet* 2. No. 51. 20 March 1824: 289-299.
- "Ane Flicht Through Faery Lande Onne Ane Famous Steede Yclept the 'Nicht-Mare'." *Fraser's Magazine* 4. No. 21. November 1831: 401-2.
 - "Ane Flicht Through Faery Lande, Onne Ane Famous Steed, Yclept the 'Nicht-Mare'." *The Emmet* 1. No. 25. 20 September 1823: 291-3.
 - *The Philosophy of Sleep*. Glasgow: McPhun, 1830.
 - *The Philosophy of Sleep*. Glasgow: McPhun, 1834.
- Merivale, J. H. "Phantasmagoriana; Tales of the Dead, Principally Translated from the French." *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 3. No. 17. August 1818: 589-596.
- Moir, D. M. *The Modern Pythagorean; A Series of Tales, Essays, and Sketches, by the late Robert MacNish, LL.D. with the Author's Life by his friend D.M. Moir*, 2 vols. Edinburgh: Blackwood; London: T.

Cadell, 1838.

Stack, David. *Queen Victoria's Skull: George Combe and the Mid-Victorian Mind*. London and New York: Hambledon Continuum Press, 2008.

Wilson, John. "Some Remarks on the Use of the Preternatural in Works of Fiction." *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 3. No. 18. September 1818: 648-650.

ANIMAL MAGIC: CONJURY AND POWER IN COLONIAL TAXIDERMY

JOHN MILLER

In a chapter titled “The Animals: Territory and Metamorphoses” from his *Simulacra and Simulation*, Jean Baudrillard considers a confession that he suggests science requires of animals, a confession that, he writes “in the final moment”, is of “rationality:”

Animals must be made to say that they are not animals, that bestiality, savagery -with what the terms imply of unintelligibility, radical strangeness to reason- do not exist, but on the contrary the most bestial behaviours, the most singular, the most abnormal are resolved in science, in physiological mechanisms, in cerebral connections etc. Bestiality and its principle of uncertainty must be killed in animals... Everywhere bestiality must yield to reflex animality, exorcising an order of the indecipherable, of the savage, of which, precisely in their silence, animals have remained the incarnation for us.¹

As Baudrillard argues later in the essay, “[i]n a world bent on doing nothing but making one speak, in a world assembled under the hegemony of signs and discourse, their [the animals’] silence weighs more and more heavily on our organisation of meaning.”² The effect of science is to make wordless bodies eloquent with reflexes, mechanisms and behaviours, to produce a body of knowledge that stands in for the unknowable embodiment of animal consciousness. As it assembles *them* into an “organisation of meaning,” science also announces their availability for what Baudrillard describes as the “industrial organisation of death,”³ specifically in Baudrillard’s essay through their incarceration in the

¹ Jean Baudrillard. *Simulacra and Simulation*. trans. Sheila Faria Glaser. Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1994: 129-30.

² Ibid.: 137.

³ Ibid.: 131.

factories of twentieth century agri-business. From incarnations of silence, in danger of slipping “behind the horizon of truth,”⁴ animals thus take their place in a machine of profitability. And in a return to the Cartesian model of animals as unfeeling automata, animals are also here themselves machines, incarnations of reason that can be incorporated into a wider scheme: a sequence of truths, veterinary, zoological and behavioural, that support a set of procedures and banish an indecipherable animal alterity.

This essay considers Baudrillard’s themes of truth, silence, incarnation and death in relation to colonial taxidermy, but with the addition of a further ingredient: magic. It explores the significance of taxidermised exotica with relation to two “texts” that consider different arenas of taxidermy, and in different historical periods, firstly, through a reading of the African Hall of Mammals that opened in 1936 in the American Museum of Natural History in New York and secondly, in a passage from the British naturalist A. R. Wallace’s 1869 narrative *The Malay Archipelago* in which he describes a moment in his long experience on the front line of taxidermy, collecting skins in distant territories then largely unknown in the West. Just as intensive farming resolves and interpolates animals into rationalised systems of management, so taxidermy in the process of fabricating animals new bodies, causes them, in a sense, to speak their rationality, to declare themselves part of a simultaneously expanding and increasingly refined taxonomy that in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was intimately connected with the development and administration of Empire. Naturalists often provided the first contact of western nations with potential colonies and the act of collecting and classifying natural history specimens is often read, in the words of the historian John M. Mackenzie, as “both an impulse towards and a symptom of the developing yearning to order and classify human affairs through imperialism”.⁵ The manufacture and traffic of stuffed exotica provided, then, a potent symbolisation of imperial might, as well as a vital resource for academic zoologists. It was also, particularly from the 1870s, a profitable business for entrepreneurs and a favourite hobby for schoolboys with hints on the preservation of specimens commonly featuring in the pages of Victorian Britain’s numerous magazines for boys.

Taxidermic technologies developed rapidly, especially in regard to the interior of the specimens. Hemp fibre was replaced as a stuffing by the more stable wood fibre and then by clay, although an alternative technique

⁴ Ibid.: 137.

⁵ John M. Mackenzie. *The Empire of Nature: Hunting, Conservation and British Imperialism*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988: 36.