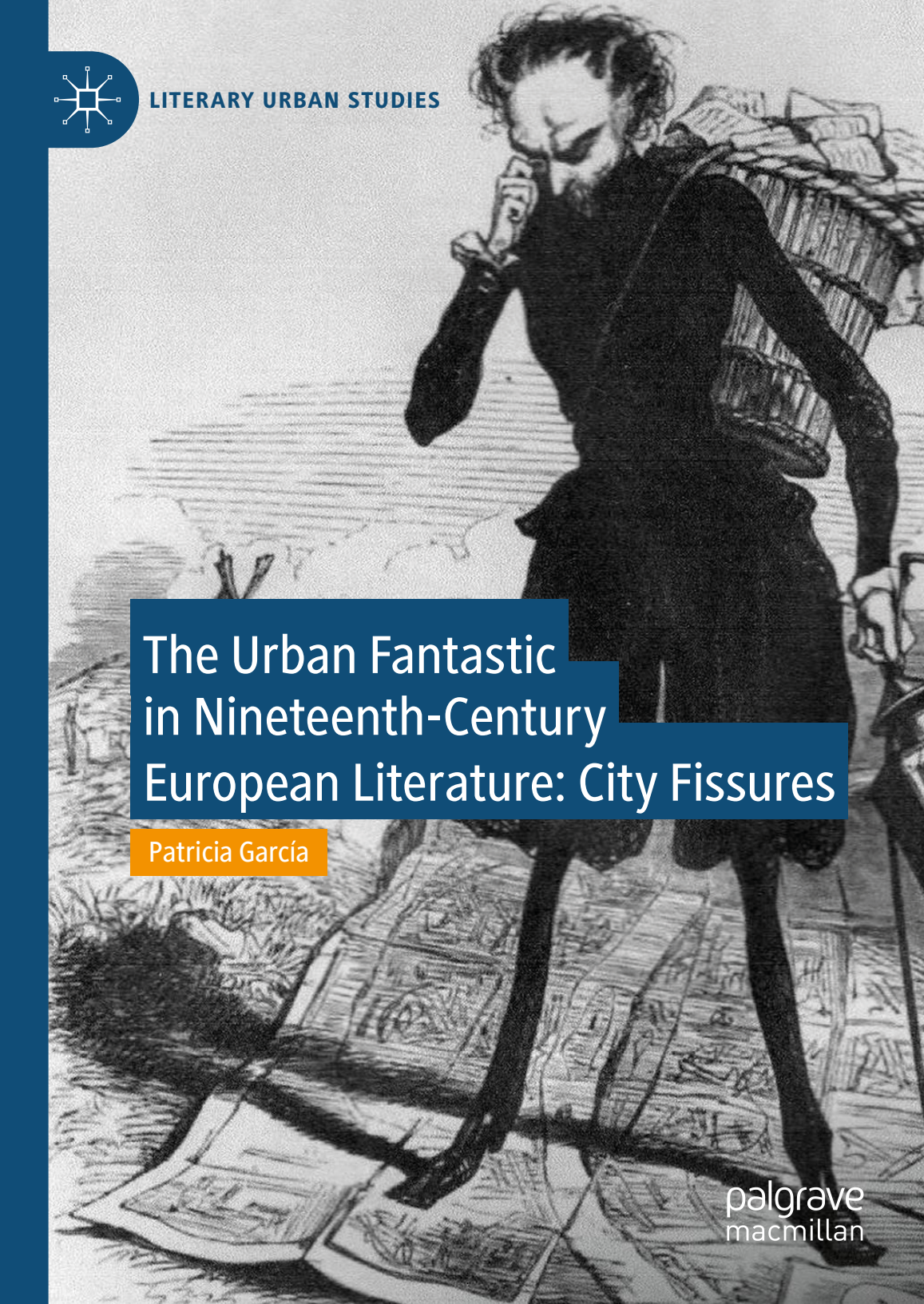
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Patricia García

The Urban Fantastic in Nineteenth-Century European Literature

City Fissures

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macmillan

Patricia García
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Madrid, Spain

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To my fellow travelers

Preface and Acknowledgments

This book has its genesis in my previous work on narrative space and the postmodern fantastic. While tracing the influence of supernatural nineteenth-century short fiction on later texts, I identified a significant number of narratives set in European cities. The urban provided more than a geographical location for these stories; it gave rise to a coherence of theme and imagery in the works of writers from different national traditions. As I studied these texts, it became clear that there was a distinct corpus of fantastic narratives with urban experience at their core. In the fantastic element were concentrated the changes, opportunities and anxieties generated by the unprecedented transformations of the modern urban environment.

There were a number of challenges throughout this research project. These included the idea of "the European city" as a comparative episteme, the definition of a manageable corpus of works with nineteenth-century European city settings, the identification of works by women authors and the aesthetic distinction of the fantastic from other narrative forms such as urban fantasy or dystopian literature. The result of my engagement with these issues is this book. Through an argument structured by theme rather than as city-specific chapters, it invites us to rethink the modern European city through short fictions of the fantastic.

I am very grateful to the editors of the Palgrave Series in Literary Urban Studies for their support and to all those colleagues who have encouraged me throughout, in particular the fellow scholars and artists at the Centre Culturel Irlandais in 2014 and at the Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies in 2018–2019. I am also thankful to the funding that supported

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I am writing this preface during the global COVID-19 lockdown and references to the supernatural and to sci-fi dystopias abound in daily news articles and broadcasts. Our urban life will be drastically changed after this global catastrophe; how exactly remains to be seen. The literature of the fantastic will no doubt reflect on these changes and will imagine new forms of living with the uncontrollable and the irrational. It has done so since its inception. The strategies used to express these uncertain times will break with some of our existing literary conventions but we can also expect significant continuities with the tropes employed in nineteenth-century narratives: revenants, doubles, spirits of place, agoraphobias, phonophobias and further uncanny expressions of the urban condition such as those that feature in this book. A reinvigorated army of literary ghosts will find their way into our cities. Some of those specters have already been occupying our urban spaces for over a hundred years. This book wishes to make them visible.

Alcalá, Spain — Patricia García

Contents

Introduction: The Modern Fantastic—A Tale of Two Cities 1

Part I Buildings: Architectural Intruders 37

Fantastic Antique Shops 43

The City's Haunted Houses 69

Part II Encounters: Urban Revenants and Other Fantastic Acquaintances 93

Female Spirits of Place 101

Fantastic Exhibitions of the Self 127

Part III Rhythms: The Fantastic on the Move 155

The Ghosts of Public Transportation 165

Cacophony and Asynchrony 189

Epilogue: Contemporary Revisitations 211

Timeline 225

Index 231

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She has directed the project "Gender and the Hispanic Fantastic" (funded by the British Academy) and has been a fellow of the Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies (2018–2019) with a EURIAS (European Institutes for Advanced Study) fellowship. She is a member of Executive Committee of the European Society of Comparative Literature, of ALUS: Association for Literary Urban Studies and of the editorial board of the academic journal *BRUMAL: Research Journal on the Fantastic*. Her most notable publications include the monograph *Space and the Postmodern Fantastic in Contemporary Literature: The Architectural Void* (2015).

She is the founder and director of *Fringe Urban Narratives: Peripheries, Identities, Intersections*, an interdisciplinary network that offers a platform for researchers and artists interested in the cultural processes of imagining and narrating urban experiences from the margins (www.urbanfringes.com).

List of Figures

Introduction: The Modern Fantastic—A Tale of Two Cities

Fig. 1 *Les trois baisers du Diable, opéra fantastique.* J. Offenbach, P. Musard. 1857. BNF 14
Fig. 2 *Les Contes d'Hoffmann, opéra fantastique.* J. Barbier. J. Offenbach/L. d'Ausbourg. 1881. BNF 15
Fig. 3 *Bec Auer, incandescence par Gaz-pétrole.* Étienne Moreau-Nélaton. 1895. BNF 17
Fig. 4 *Dicksonn … prestidigitation, hypnotisme.* Emile Levy. 1887. BNF 19
Fig. 5 *Le Diable au XIXe siècle ou les Mystères du spiritisme par le docteur Bataille.* Albert Guillaume. 1890–1900. BNF 20
Fig. 6 Metempsychosis tent at the *Fête des Invalides.* Paris, 1898. Photograph by Eugène Atget. Musée Carnavalet, Paris 21

Fantastic Antique Shops

Fig. 1 Illustration of the antiquarian scene in *La Peau de chagrin.* (Adrien Moreau. 1897. Philadelphia: George Barrie & Son) 61
Fig. 2 Illustration of the antiquarian scene in *La Peau de chagrin.* (Louis Judicis de Mirandol. 1851. National Library of Naples) 62

Rhythms: The Fantastic on the Move

Fig. 1 *Impressions et compressions de voyage.* Honoré Daumier, 1843. Musée Carnavalet, Paris. Caption. *Ah! miséricorde! nous sommes tous perdus!.—Eh! non c'est tout bonnement le convoi qui se remet en marche … du moment où la machine va en avant les voyageurs vont en arrière … c'est connu!* … [Ah, mercy! We are all done for!—No!

It is simply the train starting up again … from the moment the train goes forward, the passengers go in reverse … everybody knows that!] 156

Fig. 2 *Les Trains de plaisir*. Honoré Daumier, 1864. Musée Carnavalet, Paris. Caption: *Quand après dix assauts infructueux on arrive enfin à conquérir une place dans un wagon on éprouve un premier et bien vif plaisir.* [When after ten unsuccessful attempts one finally gains a place in the car one experiences an initial and very great joy.] 158

The Ghosts of Public Transportation

Fig. 1 *The Ghostly Passengers in the Ghost of a Mail.* Hablot K. Browne, "Phiz", 1837. Philip V. Allingham, *Victorian Web.* http://www.victorianweb.org/art/illustration/phiz/pickwick/38.html 172

Introduction: The Modern Fantastic—A Tale of Two Cities

Never has the fantastic flourished, as sinister and terrifying, as in modern life! […] the fantastic surrounds us; worse, it invades, suffocates and obsesses us

—"The Magic Lantern", Jean Lorrain

The devil Flammèche is sent to earth by Satan to report back on human life. To do so, the chosen destination must be Paris, the metropolis that embodies the true modern spirit. This is the frame story of *Le Diable à Paris*, a series of poems, sketches and essays on modern urban life published in two volumes during the mid-nineteenth century (Lavallée et al. 1845–1846). Flammèche, however, is too idle and too distracted by his infatuation with Mademoiselle Brinda upon his arrival to Paris to carry out his task alone. He thus asks local writers for help. His appeal is immediately successful and authors such as Honoré de Balzac, George Sand, Alfred de Musset, Charles Nodier and Gérard de Nerval send him texts describing everyday life in the French capital. The cover, a beautiful engraving by Paul Gavarni, shows Flammèche looking down on the map of Paris with these texts by the famed writers in a basket on his back. Through these writings, audacious Flammèche will not only complete his assignment, he will also gain an understanding of a space completely alien to him: the modern city.

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With its fantastic motif of the devil's arrival in Paris, this frame tale reminds us that the urban experience is always mediated by storytelling. On its streets we are narrators, characters and readers simultaneously, sketching plots, encountering character types and attaching significance to particular sites and settings. We are constantly imagining the city into life, our imaginaries molded by the fictions we have read and watched and by other texts to which we are consciously or unconsciously exposed.

Major intellectual figures of urban history studies have shown and continue to underscore that no city is independent of its narrative; our material experience of the urban environment is mediated by fictional discourses. Walter Benjamin (1927–1940), Philippe Hamon (1992) and David Harvey (2005), among others, have discussed the emergence of the modern city, with analyses rooted in literary narratives. In doing so, they have drawn on a consistent corpus, such as the city novels of Victor Hugo, Honoré de Balzac, Charles Dickens and Gustave Flaubert, all of which dominate the modern canon of European urban literature. These novels are concerned with the changing nature of European capitals during a time of succeeding milestones in urban history. The realism of these works helped make sense of these changes by providing an articulated and coherent discourse with which readers could identify and through which they could orientate themselves in those periods of intense transformation. As Hamon argues, the realist novel is a city map, an object of exhibition and exposition of urban life: "The nineteenth century is, afterall, the century of realism in all its variations: Edmond and Jules Goncourts' impressionistic realism; Verne's encyclopedic realism; Zola's naturalistic and ethnographic realism (where the novel is a "storehouse [*magasins*] of human documents"); or Flaubert's ironic realism (where the agricultural fair is nothing but the caricature, or the provincial double, of the capital's great universal exposition)" ([1989] 1992: 11–12). The nineteenth century seems to be incontestably the "era of realism" (12).

Dicken's London, Balzac's Paris and Galdós's Madrid are associated with their realist novels. However, an aspect overlooked by urban historians and literary scholarship is that these same masters of the realist novel searched for an alternative form of expression through the urban fantastic. Celebrated supernatural novels contributed to the staging of modern urban life; our imaginaries are impregnated by the tropes from the post-revolutionary Paris of Honoré de Balzac's *La Peau de chagrin* (1831) and Alexandre Dumas's *La Femme au collier de velours* (1850), or from the Victorian London of Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890), Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886)

and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897). Fantastic short stories became particularly popular as the century advanced, aided by the lowering of printing costs and the increase in cheap periodicals circulating in the city. Although widely read in their time, these briefer forms of narrative remain an understudied aspect of our European urban literary heritage. This book, therefore, focuses in particular on short fiction to explore the way in which the modern urban experience was influenced by supernatural narratives. While the fantastic has to date rarely been considered part of the canon of "high literature", this book showcases its importance in providing alternatives to the rationalist discourses that frame canonical urban histories with the city theorized mainly from the point of view of the realist novel.

The spectacular growth in the early years of the twenty-first century in both literature and in critical studies of the fantastic provides strong indication that there has been a change in attitudes toward it. No longer can it be bemoaned that the fantastic is a marginalized form of cultural expression and of academic enquiry. There has been a clear upsurge in the number of writers, film directors, publishers, academic journals, university courses and scholarship drawing on the power of the fantastic for documenting paradigm shifts in the ways in which we understand social subversion (Jackson 1981), human responses to fear (Bozzetto 2005), the limitations of language (Erdal Jordan 1998), political discourses (Gregori 2015, 2019), space (García 2015; Punter and Mancini 2021) and gender relations (Ransom 1995; Armitt 2000; Blazan 2007; Weese 2008; Edmundson Makala 2013; Harris McCormick et al. 2019; Roas and García 2020). These academic studies share one striking feature: they show that by identifying how the impossible is articulated in narratives we can better grasp how human beings understand their social, political and cultural reality.

It is clear that the significance of the literary fantastic reaches beyond the literary domain: it invades, fractures and criticizes the historical context that it replicates. The scholarship of these past decades has provided methods and concepts for the analysis of the supernatural in its widest expressions. Drawing upon these studies, I analyze the intersections between the fantastic and the city, exploring the literary representations of the modern urban experience in the European context.

The period of literary study and urban development covered in this book begins with E.T.A. Hoffmann and ends with the rise of modernism

at the turn of the century.[1] It brings together writings from three key European traditions of the fantastic—the Anglophone, Francophone and Spanish—all of which made a contribution to the urban cultural study of the European city. These works include short stories by French writers Théophile Gautier, Alexandre Dumas, Guy de Maupassant and Jean Lorrain; Belgian authors Georges Rodenbach and Charles Flor O'Squarr; Rhoda Broughton, Sheridan Le Fanu, Charlotte Riddell, Amelia B. Edwards and Charles Dickens from Wales, Ireland and England; and from Spain, Benito Pérez Galdós, Pedro Antonio de Alarcón and Emilia Pardo Bazán. Through a transnational study of this corpus, this book examines the tropes, metaphors and urban settings that reoccur in the works of writers from across these different European cultures and considers how these tropes facilitate a critical reflection on urban transformations in the European context.

This introduction provides a definition of the fantastic and the modern city, the two key concepts at the heart of this book. It analyzes their interaction, emphasizing the city's role in shaping and promoting the fantastic across European cultures. The final section engages with the "urban dominant", a feature that I identify as common to all works in the corpus.

The Modern European City: A Conceptual Framework

"The cities have a self", writes Stephen Barber in his poetic work *Fragments of the European City* (1995: 8). There is no doubt that each city is shaped by its distinct historical, social, military, economic, climatic and cultural specificities. However, European cities are part of a collective urban

[1] Modernism provided an array of aesthetic innovations to avant-garde artists and authors experimenting with further transgressions of the conventions of realism. While an in-depth analysis of this episode in literary history is beyond the scope of this book (for the Spanish context, see "El cuento modernista" by Ana Casas 2017: 15–38), it is worth noting that many scholars writing on the relationships between urban experiences and literature build their argument on two opposing aesthetic attitudes: realism versus modernism (e.g., Pike's static city vs. the city in flux, 1981; Timms's and Kelley's the real vs. the unreal city, 1985). For the latter James Joyce's *Ulysses* and Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* are generally cited as milestones. This extended assumption in literary urban studies has overlooked the fantastic. The many literary texts of the fantastic produced throughout the nineteenth century demonstrate that this narrative form offered a different (and earlier) distortion of the realist mode of writing the city.

history that can in turn be understood as a collective identity. Building upon work by urban historians—from Walter Benjamin (2002) and Max Weber (1966) to Arnaldo Bagnasco & Patrick Le Galès (2000)—it is possible to refer to a European urban model that consists of an assemblage of cultural, architectural and historical heritage and that forms the basis of a shared European identity: "The European city came into being with Europe itself. In some sense it begot that region, historically defining European civilization […]. The history of the European city and the history of Europe are to a large extent one and the same, inextricable and well documented" (Benevolo 1995: xv).

There is an abundance of literature tracing the history of urbanization and of urban experience in Europe from a comparative perspective.[2] These studies have identified common urban patterns in the nineteenth century that consolidated a metropolitan identity across capitals in the continent. From London and Paris to Vienna, Madrid or Berlin, the Europe of the nineteenth century was a place of an unprecedented remodeling of urban space, of radical changes in demographic distribution due to wave after wave of urban migration and of major shifts in modes of cultural production. While these features shaping the modern city are not unique to the European context, Europe during the nineteenth century remained the most urbanized continent and that with the highest density of population. Clark, Owens and Smith make this argument extensively in their collective volume *City Limits:* "The physical geography of Europe should also be borne in mind as it facilitated the uniquely European character of urban development. Along with its concentrated size, the accessible topography and navigable rivers of Europe made travel between cities both easy and likely" (2010: 11).

The challenges that were common to all nineteenth-century capital cities also resulted in convergences in urban planning. The increasing agglomeration of citizens and the demands of a rapidly industrializing society revealed significant deficiencies in urban housing, infrastructure and public health services. Toward the second half of the century, most major European capitals either had introduced or were in the process of introducing energy and sewage systems, gas lighting, tramways, rail networks, public parks, wide avenues, department stores, as well as

[2] See Benevolo (1995); Hohenberg and Hollen Lees (1995); Clark (2009); Clark, Owens and Smith (2010) and especially Hall (2005: 284–324), who discusses challenges and planning goals across a number of European capitals.

administrative initiatives to improve sanitary conditions and prevent epidemics. The urban model of most capital cities was largely based on Haussmann's modernization of Paris during the 1860s, which had an enormous impact on other European urban plans, such as the Viennese Ringstrasse, the Hobrecht-Plan for Berlin and the Plan Cerdà in Barcelona. Considering these historical convergences, this book seeks to examine how writers of different cultural traditions responded to these new urban challenges through the creation of similar fantastic aesthetics.

While this is by no means the first study to bring together urbanism and fantastic literature, it is one of the few to do so from a comparative perspective. Existing critical work on the fantastic has considered the cultural capital generated by cities including Berlin, Paris, Brussels, Madrid, St. Petersburg and London (Mighall 1999; Rizzi 2002; Gibson 2013: Tang 2016; García 2017). Nonetheless, there is a dearth of comparative work that highlights conceptual confluences beyond city-specific studies or culture-specific traditions of the fantastic.[3] As a result, the boundaries in this study are not national but conceptual. The argument is structured around three dominant themes that highlight transcultural continuities in tropes, metaphors and settings. With this form of organizing my argument, I hope to persuade the reader that there is an *urban fantastic* within and across the European traditions considered here.

The term *fantastic* as used throughout this book refers to literary works that introduce into a realist text an impossible exception (a definition that, as detailed in the next section, thus excludes other forms of the supernatural, such as fantasy). The *city* as understood here is the urban setting where "all the different aspects of modern life are condensed and experienced in their most intense, complex, and alternately exhilarating and disorientating forms" (Lake 2010: 25) and by *modernity* I mean the socio-economic and cultural factors that reshaped urban industrial societies throughout the nineteenth century. While there had been earlier forms of capitalism, it was in the nineteenth century that the scale and impact of capitalist

[3] In particular, studies on both the French and on the English fantastic, the two dominant traditions, have tended not to look beyond the confines of language and country of production. This approach has often oversimplified other cultural expressions of the fantastic. For example, Marcus's otherwise excellent study mistakenly notes: "French supernatural fiction was never a particularly popular genre and almost never concentrated on ghostly dwellings; instead, French ghost stories were usually written in a romantic, subjective strain and focused on themes of doubling, necrophilia, hypnotic influence, mysticism, and dream states" (1999: 120).

modes of production, of mass migration and of urban planning were accelerated and intensified. José B. Monleón's socio-historical approach to the modern fantastic (1990) and Corinne Fournier Kiss's study on the European fantastic at the turn of the nineteenth century, oriented toward the Germanic and Slavonic traditions (2007),[4] have been instrumental in drawing attention to the relationship between supernatural literature and the cultural context of modern urban Europe.

The corpus of this book encompasses Anglophone, Francophone and Spanish literary texts of the fantastic. The transcultural nature of this research necessitated engagement with a large volume of narratives and the task of identifying relevant texts from these different traditions was a challenging one, especially as many of these texts were not part of the literary canon. Various tools were helpful in locating relevant fantastic stories that contain an "urban dominant" (see section "The Urban Dominant", pp. 23–27). I consulted contemporary periodicals—including *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*, both edited by Charles Dickens, and *Dublin University Magazine*, edited by Sheridan Le Fanu—for contributions in which the fantastic had a particular relationship with the city. In addition, national anthologies and indexes—such as David Roas's Appendix II, which lists fantastic fiction works published in Spain during the nineteenth century (2000), and Carpenter and Kolmar's annotated bibliography of Anglophone ghost stories (1998)—were very useful in the search for a representative corpus of the fantastic.

A greater challenge still was identification of relevant texts by women writers. The lack of easily available primary material from and compilations of female authors of the supernatural demonstrates that the gender factor determines even today who gets translated, anthologized or reprinted (see García 2019). The primarily male corpus upon which the existing studies of the urban fantastic draws seems to assert that there are very few female-authored narratives concerned with the experience of the European city. Much more work needs to challenge this ingrained assumption. With this book I hope to contribute to a reappraisal of the urban dimension in writings of authors such as Charlotte Riddell, Amelia Edwards, Rhoda

[4] The following passage summarizes Fournier Kiss's argument: "tout se passe néanmoins comme si le durcissement du réalisme à la fin du XIXe siècle, sensible en particulier dans la description des lieux de la modernité, n'avait finalement conduit qu'à la révélation des apories du représentable et, par là même, ouvert la voie à la pénétration du fantastique dans la ville. Le fantastique moderne est un fantastique urbain: c'est désormais chez soi, dans sa rue ou dans son appartement, que le fantastique se manifeste" (2007, 25).

Broughton and Emilia Pardo Bazán. In addition, by providing gender-sensitive readings of urban space, I add my voice to those of the still too-few scholars calling for a fresh engagement with the city from a feminist standpoint.[5]

The Fantastic: A Historical Perspective

Approaches to the Supernatural

It is perhaps because the fantastic inherently escapes logic that there is no consensus over its definition. While some scholars define the fantastic as any form of literature that deviates from realist conventions (be it science fiction or fantasy novels, fairy tales or myths), in designing the scope of this book I have employed a more narrow definition.[6] The fantastic is understood here as a specific subcategory of the supernatural. All the texts discussed in this book feature a supernatural transgression of an initially established realism. The result is an unsettling that forces us as readers to reconsider the logic and validity of the parameters that frame our perceptions of reality.

An important aspect of our understanding of our sense of the real is mediated by language and convention: we weave a shared fabric of symbolic elements with the purpose of providing orientation and a sense of predictability and reassurance. The fantastic seeks to subvert this by introducing an impossible element—a ghost, a monster, a doppelganger, for example. The Greek verb *phantazein* means "to make visible". Similarly, the word "monster" comes from the French *monstre* (closely related to the verb *montrer*, to show) and the Latin *monere* (to warn). Both are examples of a defining trait of fantastic literature: the expression of something hidden. The aesthetic representation of the impossible, the illogical and the immoral takes the shape of an imaginary creature or of an extraordinary occurrence that transgresses the boundaries of that which is by convention assumed as normal.

[5] On feminist approaches to modernist and contemporary urban space, see the classic studies by Nead 1988; Pollock 1988; Wolff 1985, and more recently Wolff 2010; Parkins 2009; Parsons 2000; Elkin 2016; Rottenberg 2013a, b, 2016 and Wells 2017.

[6] For further theoretical insight on the differentiation of non-mimetic genres, see Roas (2018: 23–44).

Some of the earliest theorists of the fantastic describe this narrative form as "the breach of the known order, the eruption of the inadmissible in the midst of the unalterable legality of everyday life" (Caillois 1965: 161) or as "a brutal intrusion of mystery in the context of real life" (Castex 1951: 1). The emphasis on the realist backdrop against which the supernatural operates in fantastic narratives is also central to contemporary theories. David Roas, for example, asserts that the fantastic tale "places us initially in a normal everyday world (our own) which is immediately assaulted by an impossible phenomenon—which is, as such, incomprehensible—that subverts the codes, the certainties, that we have designed to perceive and understand reality" (2018: 3–4).

In terms of its definition and scope, the corpus of this book is positioned within an academic tradition that predominates in Europe and that challenges the umbrella term "fantastic" often used by American scholars to refer to the "diametric reversal of the ground rules of a narrative world" (Rabkin 1976: 28–29). Castex (1951), Caillois (1965), Todorov (1970), Bessière (1974), Campra (2008), Bozzetto (2005) and Roas (2018), among others, have theorized the fantastic as a specific aesthetic form of the supernatural. They argue that it is different to other non-mimetic forms precisely because it is set in a realist world. Following their line of thought, I do not focus upon neighboring categories in this book. The supernatural element that features in the selected texts is instead problematized as a logical breach and an ontological impossibility. It is not integrated within the logic and laws of its narrative world (as in the marvelous or fantasy).[7] Urban utopias and dystopias are also excluded here, since in them the supernatural is naturalized within the text. Their critical force resides in their ability to make their central impossibility appear possible (in some cases in a very near future): "The dystopian version instead depict[s] baleful imaginary societies in which cities themselves feature as the main symbols of negative possibility, as spaces of oppression, blight, and ruin" (Latham and Hicks 2014: 163). In the fantastic as understood in this book there is no attempt to distance the storyworld from the world of the reader's lived experience. Indeed, the opposite is true. We can observe that in the corpus considered here the authors go to great lengths to reinforce to the reader that the action is situated in a recognizable,

[7] Cf. the approach to the fantastic as a generic concept for all forms of non-mimetic literature, and thus their general use of the term urban fantasy (Rabkin 1976; Hume 1984; Cornwell 1990; Attebery 1992; Armitt 1996).

realist world. This involves the deployment of an array of realist techniques, such as the explicit naming of streets featuring in the stories and the inclusion of city landmarks and itineraries familiar to the reader.

The European scholars referred to in the preceding paragraph not only described the fantastic in structural and aesthetic terms but they also identified a point in cultural history in which this narrative form emerged: the transition into the modern period. The fantastic as characterized by a realist setting in which an impossible exception irrupts consolidated during the early nineteenth century in reaction to the supreme confidence in reason that had followed from the period of the Enlightenment.

Roas (2006: 117–119) notes that in 1827 Walter Scott used the expression "a fantastic mode of writing" in a disparaging reference to the work of E. T. A. Hoffmann. A more positive use of the word *fantastique* entered French vocabulary through the translation work of Jean-Jacques Ampère. In an article published by *Le Globe* (1828), Ampère referred to the writings of E.T.A. Hoffmann as "contes fantastiques". Then when in 1830 these writings were made available to the French public, *Phantasiestücke in Callots Manier* and *Nachtstücke* (which translate as "small pieces of fantasy" and "small pieces of night" respectively) became *Contes fantastiques* (Fantastic tales). Critics have highlighted the important conceptual shift that this signaled. Bozzetto in this respect notes: "It was through the French translations of Hoffmann's tales that the modern meaning of the word *fantastic* was established. When faced with these singular tales the need for a new understanding of the old term of *fantastic* emerged" (1998: 10), and Schneider: "this is how the term fantastic (*fantastique*) became the watchword of the modern spirit" (1985: 146).

Working with this tighter definition allowed me to identify an aesthetically and historically specific corpus. Growing industrialization and scientific discoveries, increasing instability and dissatisfaction with absolutist regimes in Europe and the threat of imminent civil revolutions led to a questioning of the ideals of the Enlightenment. The supernatural provided a powerful means of such questioning. Horace Walpole's The *Castle of Otranto* (1764) and the Gothic novels by Anne Radcliffe, Jan Potocki and Charles Maturin were foundational in articulating those fears and in creating distance from dominant rationalist and positivist epistemological discourses. This was the beginning of a modern fantastic, with origins across a shared European folklore but also with aesthetic elements arising from the changing context linked to the rise of industrial capitalism.

The fantastic tales of E. T. A. Hoffmann in the nineteenth century represent a point in cultural history that was followed by an intense production of the fantastic narrative form in its short version. In France, the so-called Golden Age of the *fantastique* was the period of 1830s and 1840s, with the works of Charles Nodier, Gérard de Nerval, Prosper Merimée and Théophile Gautier. Deeply influenced by E. A. Poe's translation, the popularity of this form within the Francophone cultural sphere reached a second peak toward the end of the century, the era of Guy de Maupassant and Jean Lorrain. Similarly, in Belgium the Flemish writers Camille Lemonnier, Georges Eekhoud, Georges Rodenbach and Maurice Maeterlinck, most of whom are associated with the symbolist movement, contributed inspiring works to what later became known as *l'école belge de l'étrange*. Reaching its zenith during the second half of the nineteenth century, the ghost story in Victorian Britain remained a very popular form, with many authors such as Charles Dickens, Charlotte Riddell, Vernon Lee and Elizabeth Gaskell regularly adapting well-known formulas to different settings. In Spain the production of fantastic fiction, as distinct from traditional legends and thus set in mundane spaces, came to prominence in the later decades of the century through the work of Benito Pérez Galdós, Emilia Pardo Bazán and Pedro Antonio de Alarcón among others.

Therefore, the idea of a "modern fantastic" is tautological, since the fantastic is inherently modern. While the fantastic provides an aesthetic means of exploring timeless and life-long human concerns, such as our relationships with death, fear and evil, the next sections highlight that it was also a product of the rise of urbanism during the nineteenth century. This form of narrative engaged directly with urban anxieties, phobias and fears concerning overcrowding and isolation, plagues, movement and migration, class fragmentation and access to living spaces.

Wan Sonya Tang's statement concerning modern supernatural fiction and the Spanish capital applies equally well to other European cities: "while fantastic narratives were not alone in documenting the conflicting responses of apprehension and attraction toward the changing cityscape, they were particularly effective in doing so given that fantastic writing itself strives to canalize the numinous in order to simultaneously unsettle and delight readers. These underlying mechanics render the fantastic particularly well suited to capturing the awe-inducing quality of the modern capital" (2016: 22). For example, Rhoda Broughton's "The Truth, the Whole Truth, and Nothing but the Truth" (1868), a piece representative of a wide corpus of ghost stories set in London during the 1860s and

1870s, alludes to the density of the city and rising rental prices. Many female supernatural characters, for example the old spirit haunting Madrid in "La mujer alta" (The Tall Woman, 1882) by Pedro Antonio de Alarcón, or the elusive libertine in "L'Inconnue" (The Unknown Woman, 1891) by Jean Lorrain, embody a moral decay ascribed to modern city life from a patriarchal point of view. The fascination (and dangers) of the new railway system inspired plots including those in *Four Stories* (1861) by Amelia Edwards. In "La Princesa y el Granuja" (The Princess and the Rogue, 1877) Benito Pérez Galdós sets out a critique of consumerism and class in Madrid, while his "Una industria que vive de la muerte" (An industry that lives on death, 1865) engages with the fear of cholera epidemics.

The Modern Spirit

The fantastic and the modern European city developed in tandem throughout the same moment of history and, with this book, I argue that this joint evolution is not incidental. The emergence of the fantastic as a literary form during the nineteenth century can and should be understood in the context of the contemporaneous radical changes in the urban environment. The "happy marriage of supernaturalism and modernity", to employ Clery's expression (1995: 5), an argument also presented by Dolar (1991), took hold as a cultural revolution was unfolding in Europe's main cities. The increased availability of cultural products led to the fantastic being read and watched by larger audiences beyond the elite aristocracy. Spaces of leisure and of cultural exchange, such as coffee houses, taverns, museums, opera houses and civic art galleries, broadened access to cultural life, previously restricted to royal courts and academies. An increasingly literate middle class benefited from the lowering of printing costs and had access to serialized novels, newspapers, periodicals and literary magazines that regularly published fictions of the fantastic. Among these were *Le Globe*, *La revue de Paris*, *La Chronique* and *Revue des Deux Mondes* in France, *El Artista*, *Semanario Pintoresco Español*, *El Siglo XIX* and *El Panorama* in Spain, *The Dublin Literary Review* in Ireland and *Household Words* and *All the Year Round* in England. Many of these periodicals also played a key role in the diffusion of works of international authors in translation.

These translations took hold on fertile ground. As Castex notes in his study on the French fantastic (1951: 25–41), Hoffmann's fiction arrived in Paris at a moment in which the fantastic was already established in

French culture. Cazotte's *Le Diable amoureux* had appeared in 1772 and Nodier had published a number of fantastic texts (*Le Vampire* 1820*; Smarra ou les Démons de la nuit* 1822) that were well received by readers. On the operatic stage, shows based on supernatural motifs were particularly beloved by audiences. Operas such as *Robert le Diable* by Meyerbeer, which ran for more than 470 performances, *Les trois baisers du Diable* by Offenbach (Fig. 1)—both of them reflecting the "Faustmania" at its height—and *Les contes d'Hoffmann* (Fig. 2), also by Offenbach, made the fantastic available to audiences who had not necessarily read Hoffmann's stories in the original or in translation.[8]

The *salon littéraire* was another city space that was to be crucial in the dissemination of the fantastic. In Paris, the most famous sessions took place in the Hôtel Pimodan (on the Île Saint-Louis), in Nodier's Salon de l'Arsenal, where Hugo, Dumas and Berlioz among others met, and the Hôtel du Doyenné (located on the current Place du Carrousel, existing until Napoléon III reconstructed the Louvre): "The Doyenné seems to me like the Parisian transposition of the Berlin tavern in which Hoffmann, Chamisso, Contessa and Koreff came together. It is one of those places where the presence of these predestined people led to the emergence of the fantastic" (Schneider 1985: 206, see also 203–229). The authors who frequented these spaces recorded the events in their fictional and autobiographical writing. For example in his short story "Le Club des Hashischins", Gautier portrayed the opium-gathering sessions of the Hôtel Pimodan, where himself, Baudelaire and Dumas among others experimented with opium and its mind-bending effects;[9] Nerval dedicated part of his *Petits châteaux de Bohème* (1853) to his period living in the Doyenné with

[8] For more on the relationship between fantastic literature and nineteenth-century French opera, see Castex (1951: 58–60), Miner (1994) and Ritchey (2000). A general insight on the role of opera in building a European urban culture, in particular with *Robert le Diable*, is provided by Figes in *The Europeans* (2019, Chapter 2: A Revolution on the Stage).

[9] Gautier recalls in his foreword to *Les Fleurs du mal*: "La première fois que nous rencontrâmes Baudelaire, ce fut vers le milieu de 1849, à l'hôtel Pimodan, où nous occupions, près de Fernand Boissard, un appartement fantastique qui communiquait avec le sien par un escalier dérobé caché dans l'épaisseur du mur, et que devaient hanter les ombres des belles dames aimées jadis de Lauzun. […] C'est dans ce salon qu'avaient lieu les séances du club des haschichins (mangeurs de haschich), dont nous faisions partie et que nous avons décrites ailleurs avec leurs extases, leurs rêves et leurs hallucinations, suivis de si profonds accablements" (1868: 1).

Fig. 1 *Les trois baisers du Diable, opéra fantastique*. J. Offenbach, P. Musard. 1857. BNF

Gautier and others, and the Salon de l'Arsenal became an iconic narrative space in Dumas's fantastic novel *La Femme au collier de velours*.[10]

The literature of the fantastic bears witness to two cities colliding. While scientific positivism celebrated the city of lights—the world city to be exhibited as a model of rationalism—a proliferation of occultist cultural practices attested to a resistance to this rationalism.[11]

As the century progressed, capital cities across Europe sought to present themselves as models of rationalization, transparency and reason, as well as triumphs of scientific progress. An outstanding example of this was Paris,

[10] As well as the operas and *salons littéraries*, the list of Parisian cafés that inspired authors of the fantastic is a long one. *Les Contes cruels* by A. Villiers de l'Isle-Adam provides a notable example. See "Le Paris de Villiers de l'Isle-Adam" (Castex 1990: 21–32).

[11] This binary resembles Lehan's discussion of the Apollonian and Dionysian dimensions of urban detective fiction (1998: 84–91).

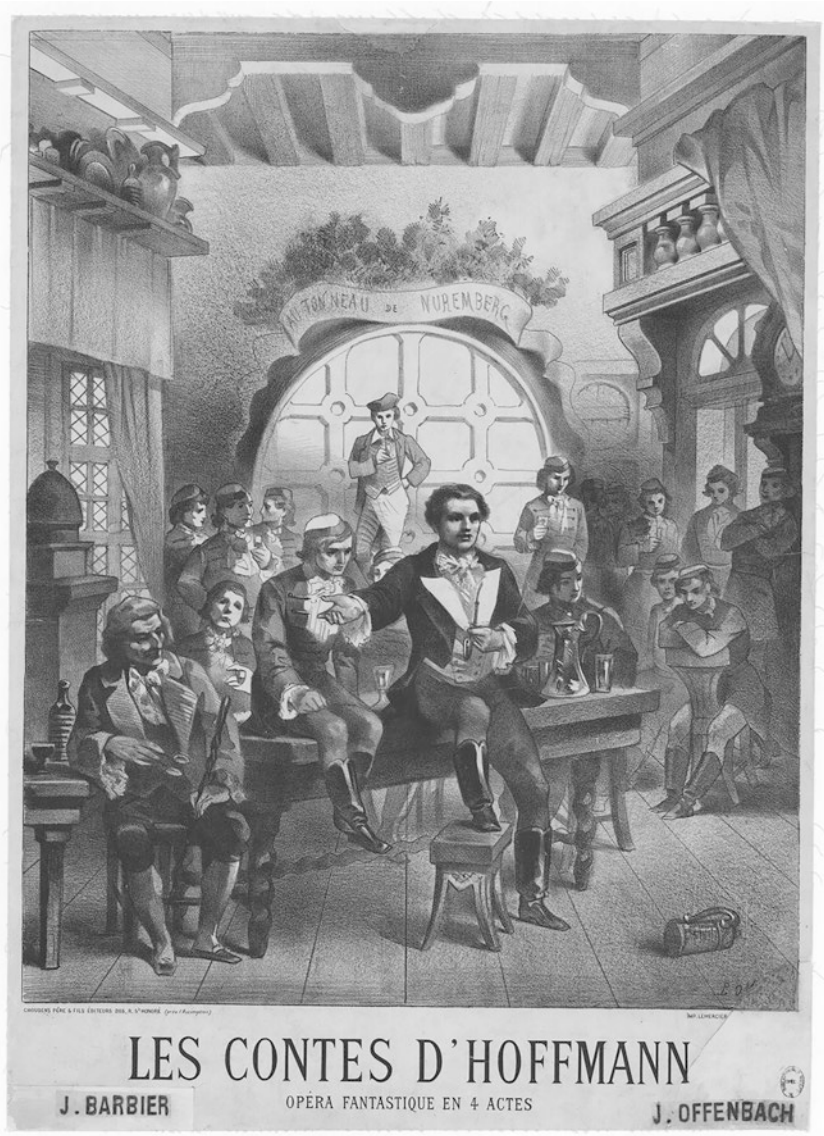

Fig. 2 *Les Contes d'Hoffmann, opéra fantastique*. J. Barbier. J. Offenbach/ L. d'Ausbourg. 1881. BNF

which came to act as a stimulus for other cities. The dramatic urban renovation works of Baron Haussmann, designed to modernize and rationalize the city of Paris, were aimed at achieving public stability and thus limiting the risk of revolt. However, Parisian urban renewal works preceded the Baron's nomination as Prefect of the Seine; from the end of the eighteenth century onward the network of sewers was progressively cleaned, the Catacombs were opened to the public in 1809 and tours were organized for the bourgeoisie with the intention of showcasing a city that was clean and structured. In 1820s all-night lighting was introduced to Parisian streets and new forms of architecture—based on iron and glass—created the impression of transparency in the city. The first Parisian bins were introduced in 1884 and formed part of a project to portray the city as a sanitized urban space. The numerous World Expositions that took place in European capitals from London to Barcelona during the second half of the nineteenth century provided the opportunity to the host cities to promote themselves as centers of modern progress.

However, the experience of urban modernity was also one of a loss of control and of anguish.[12] The unprecedented wave of internal migration from the countryside to the city, the initially disquieting sensations provoked by street gas lamps (Fig. 3), the arrival of the railway—which radically transformed the experience of movement—and the near-constant demolition and reconstruction works to which cities were subject provoked sensations far removed from the carefully controlled experience of space intended by urban planners and politicians. Gautier described Paris as:

> houses torn open with their floors suspended as if above an abyss, […] with stairs that no longer lead anywhere, their cellars refurbished, their ornamentation exposed, with their violent ruins; […] they look like the collapsed buildings, those uninhabitable architectures, of a feverishly-sketched Piranèse etching (my translation, 1855: ii).

Similar observations of the unreal and uncanny spirit of modern urbanism were recorded in other European countries, as Bown et al. highlight:

[12] On a philosophical analysis of modern anguish in relation to the urban, see Fournier Kiss (2007: 57–143).

Fig. 3 *Bec Auer, incandescence par Gaz-pétrole*. Étienne Moreau-Nélaton. 1895. BNF

> It was not simply a matter of stories and storytelling, though, for the material world [the Victorians] inhabited often seemed somehow supernatural. Disembodied voices over the telephone, the supernatural speed of the railway, near-instantaneous communication through telegraph wires: the collapsing of time and distance achieved by modern technologies that were transforming daily life was often felt to be uncanny. (2004: 1)

As illustrated by the examples given in the last section of this chapter, fantastic fiction gave voice to this "sense of living in two worlds simultaneously" (Berman 1988: 17) by capturing in narrative the tensions between the rational and irrational city.

The city was to become a cauldron of social and pseudo-scientific practices that arose out of a reluctance to surrender fully to dominant positivist discourses. London and Paris provided some of the most notable examples. In France, Lavater produced his "Essay on Physiognomy", Mesmer promoted his theories of animal magnetism and Charcot experimented on hysteria at the Salpêtrière Hospital. These new theories and practices generated considerable curiosity among the writers of the fantastic of the time, many of whom frequently underwent sessions of hypnosis and magnetism (Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, M. Schwob and Maupassant all shared a great interest in hypnosis).

The popular appeal of the fantastic was reflected in the central place it occupied in fairs and performances of the era. Magic shows promising "fantastic experiences" (Figs. 4, 5 and 6) were beloved by audiences from many different social backgrounds. Overcoming an unsteady start, the *Théatre des Soirées Fantastiques* launched by Robert-Houdin in 1845 in the Palais-Royal attracted hordes of Parisian citizens to its spectacles of conjuring and illusion: "it could be said that his creative genius—by proving through his experiments that any impossibility could be transformed into reality—extended the limits of the possible" (Berthoud in Robert-Houdin, 1851).

A further example of this modern fascination with the paranormal is the foundation of the Society for Psychical Research in London in 1882. Its Committee on Haunted Houses produced the first report that same year, followed by other landmark projects such as the Census of Hallucinations. The Society was established with a stated scientific basis to its aims of data collection and methods of enquiry:

Fig. 4 *Dicksonn … prestidigitation, hypnotisme*. Emile Levy. 1887. BNF

Fig. 5 *Le Diable au XIXe siècle ou les Mystères du spiritisme par le docteur Bataille*. Albert Guillaume. 1890–1900. BNF

Fig. 6 Metempsychosis tent at the *Fête des Invalides*. Paris, 1898. Photograph by Eugène Atget. Musée Carnavalet, Paris

> The second half of the nineteenth century was a period of intense intellectual ferment, as science-based naturalistic explanations increasingly challenged the old religious worldview. At the same time the new religion of Spiritualism led to an explosion of extravagant paranormal claims, throughout the Western world and in all strata of society. There were stories of apparitions, clairvoyant visions, precognitive dreams—the kind of miraculous events that have been reported since the earliest times – but also something new: influential mediums claiming contacts with the dead. These were all the subject of fierce debate. Could they be fully accounted for in naturalistic terms, or did they point to aspects of consciousness as yet unknown to science? ("Our History", Weaver, 2018 SPR online)

The supernatural remained an object of public debate during the nineteenth century. *Household Words* regularly published during the 1850s

ghost stories as well as essays focusing on arguments against the existence of the supernatural in the age of progress. "New Discoveries in Ghosts" by Henry Morley (1852) exemplifies the tension between the rational and the irrational that existed at the time. Morley discusses ghost-like stories that were circulating in London with the express aim of debunking these. He alleged these stories to be the products of fraud and "disordered nervous systems" (405): "Nothing supernatural, but a natural gift, imperceptible to us in its familiar, moderate, and healthy exercise, brought first under our notice when some deranged adjustment of the mind has suffered it to grow into excess—to be, if we may call it so, a mental tumour" (404–405). Referring to Carl Reichenbach's experiments in magnetism and how these affected "sensitive persons" (406), he laments that: "There are plenty of 'sensitives' to be found in our London hospitals and streets and lanes" (406).

A year later and in the same journal, Charles Dickens was to publish his own essay along the same lines, entitled "The Spirit Business", though in this case the writer adopted a distinctly mocking tone. Dickens's piece opens thus: "Persons of quality, and others, who visit the various "gifted media" now in London, or receive those supernaturally endowed ladies at their own houses, may be glad to hear how the spirit business has been doing in America" (1853: 217). With elegant ironic mastery, he sets out to ridicule the tales of mediums and séances and the stories of possession published by the American newspaper *The Spiritual Telegraph*. It will be, he declares, "a consolation" (217) for London audiences to know that "we have, out in Ohio, a little girl who writes fonography interspersed with celestial characters" (217). He then proceeds to update readers on the "explicit and important communications [that] had been received from spirits" (218).

This tension between naturalistic explanations of phenomena and the pervasiveness of paranormal beliefs in industrialized societies—in other words, between the rational and irrational city—provided fertile ground for an unprecedented production of fantastic fiction. As urban spaces associated with the supernatural imaginary were progressively being opened to the public and thus "cleared" of superstitious connotations—for example, through the tours for the bourgeoisie of the Paris Catacombs—the fantastic took hold in city literature. Gothic tropes ceased to dominate, and a fatigue with tales of remote castles and decadent mansions led to the city becoming a setting for fantastic plots.

The Urban Dominant

In seeking to isolate the generic characteristics of urban literature, Lieven Ameel asks: "When does a novel cease to be a text merely set in a city, to become a full-fledged city novel?" (2017: 234). I pose the same question here with regards to fantastic texts: what distinguishes the modern urban fantastic from other fantastic literary texts?

The texts that are discussed in this book have one element in common: that which I call "the urban dominant". This concept defines narratives that are not only set in urban environments but that also engage with urban experiences and identities. As Ameel notes, Rodenbach's words in the preface to his work *Bruges-la-Morte* ([1892] 2010) capture this very particular role of urban space as an active presence. The city, for Rodenbach is "an agency in guiding, counseling and determining the whole scope of human action" (63). It "appears in a light almost human" (63–64) and its exerted influence is "linked to all the incidents contained in the narrative" (64). It is this influence of the urban setting on the fantastic literary elements that my study explores. I aim to shed new light on the works included in the corpus of this book through a displacement of the narrative focus. While studies of the fantastic tend to prioritize the supernatural creature, here the emphasis is on the urban space occupied and transgressed by this creature. The *who* is replaced by the *where*. Instead of examining the specificities of, for instance, a ghost in a particular narrative, this research looks at the place in which the ghost is located, the metaphorical conflict that this space creates and, ultimately, the critical contribution this modern ghost makes to existing studies of the European metropolis.

In all, I identified more than sixty fantastic short stories in Spanish, English and French in which the city performs a functional and symbolic role. The reader can get an overview of this corpus in the Timeline included at the end of the book. Those texts discussed in the chapters that follow are particularly illustrative of how aspects of modern urban experience were expressed through the fantastic mode.

From this representative, though by no means complete, corpus, three types of literary cities emerged. Most of the works in the corpus were set in the capital cities of Paris, London and Madrid. A second group of texts featured less dominant cities and towns, which despite being smaller in size remained influential by dint of their cultural and commercial activity. For example, Edinburgh in "The Ghosts of the Mail" (Dickens 1837),

Dublin in "An Account of Some Strange Disturbances in Aungier Street" (Le Fanu 1853) and Bruges in "L'Heure" (Time, Rodenbach 1894). Finally, there were narratives with unidentifiable, allegorical cities. This is the case of stories such as "Le Sens du mystère" (A Sense of Mystery, Lemonnier 1898) and "La Ville" (The City, Rodenbach 1901), both of which are moral parables that call into question aspects of modern progress.

In their portrayal of urban life, the texts included in this corpus do not differ greatly from other contemporary cultural texts, including the realist city novel. They express the ambivalence and complexity of urban experience: the bewilderment provoked by newly dense population patterns and by rapid infrastructure changes, the celebration and condemnation of the anonymity provided by urban life and a nostalgia for pre-urban moral values and lifestyles. What, then, renders the fantastic distinct from other urban narrative forms? In this book I show that, with its inherent potential to transgress the codes of reality, the fantastic heightened a subversion of and liberation from the order and logic imposed by authority (for instance, urban planners such as Haussmann) and convention (for instance, the realist mode). It became "the assault of reason", to borrow Monleón's phrase (1990). The fantastic emerged from the apparently solid and rational structures of modern urbanism and presented a threat to the Cartesian order of the city. Hence, it is not surprising that a distinct feature of the works included in the corpus studied here is a tension between the two cities discussed above. The model, rational, enlightened city coexists with its dark, unexplainable counterpart.

Not Here, Not Now: The Fantastic Out of Place

Acutely conscious of a Romantic literary tradition that confined the monstrous supernatural to remote spaces, authors of the fantastic were at pains to stress how unthinkable it should have been to encounter ghosts in the modern city.

In *La Peau de chagrin*, for example, Raphaël comes across the magic skin in an antique shop in the center of Paris: "But this apparition had appeared in Paris, on the Quai Voltaire, and in the nineteenth century; the time and place made sorcery impossible" (2016). This reference to the impossibility of such an event highlights the incongruity of the fantastic manifesting in such an unexpected context, one in which the fantastic should not belong: modern Paris. A similar formulation is employed by Gautier in "Avatar": "the thing is so improbable in Paris in the nineteenth

century", [1856] (2007: 278–279). In "The Trial for Murder" the revenant, seeking to ensure that justice is done and his murdered convicted, appears "in no romantic place […] but in chambers in Piccadilly, very near to the corner of St James's Street" (Dickens [1865] 2016: 289), on a "bright autumn morning, [when] the street was sparkling and cheerful" (289). In "The Story of the Rippling Train", a deceased friend appears to the narrator in what he terms "not very ghost-like circumstances" (Mrs. Molesworth [1887] 2003: 322): "I was in London just then […] and lived in our own old town house in—Square. It was in April, a clear spring day, with no fog or half-lights about, and it was not yet four o'clock in the afternoon—not very ghost-like circumstances, you will admit" (322). As one of the protagonists of the story "The Latest Thing in Ghosts" rightly proclaims: "Modern readers must have modern ghosts" (anon. 1862).

While the short stories analyzed in this book undoubtedly share many characteristics with the Gothic tradition, the predilection for "castles, ruins, convents" as settings in which to portray "those manifestations of the wild and the barbaric which appeared to appeal to the taste of the day" (Punter 1980: 8–9) is not one of these. In the modern fantastic, the city backdrop is there to show citizens that, as Wan puts it, "the modernity of their place of residence does not preclude inexplicable happenings, and may even invite them" (Tang 2016: 27–28).

Monleón argues that at the start of the nineteenth century the locus of unreason shifted from the enclosures of castles, dungeons and tombs to the open city streets: "Unreason was definitely internalized; it constituted an ontological part of the bourgeois universe" (1990: 88). This horror deriving from the local and from the self that Natalie Prince (*chez soi, de soi, en soi*, 2008: 311–318) identifies as a trait of the fin-de-siècle psychological fantastic is also the horror of the shattering of the modern ideal, as embodied by the European modern city model. However, horror is not the only effect that the authors might seek to evoke through their fiction. The reader will find in this book plenty of examples of humor; particularly instances where the discourse of the modern is deployed to parody the generic traits of well-worn Gothic formulas.

As the century progressed, a clear awareness developed of the need for aesthetic and thematic renewal, on occasion explicitly stated:

> On the whole (though not a few instances might be quoted against me) I think that a setting so modern that the ordinary reader can judge of its naturalness for himself is preferable to anything antique. For some degree of

> actuality is the charm of the best ghost stories; not a very insistent actuality, but one strong enough to allow the reader to identify himself with the patient; while it is almost inevitable that the reader of an antique story should fall into the position of the mere spectator. (M. R. James [1924] 2011: 408)

Opportunities for renewal were to be found in fictional narratives of the modern, which often contained a skepticism with regard to the supernatural and a satirical distancing from "ignorant superstitions of the past […] henceforth destined to oblivion" ("Thurnley Abbey", Perceval Landon [1908] 2003: 473):

> Broughton, whom I saw in London two or three times about this period, made a deal of fun over the positive refusal of the workmen to remain after sundown. Even after the electric light had been put into every room, nothing would induce them to remain, though, as Broughton observed, electric light was death on ghosts. (469)

In other narratives of the time, modern progress had negative connotations. The city was associated with moral depravity, as in "La charca" (The Puddle) by Emilia Pardo Bazán. Written in the first decade of the twentieth century, "La charca" is an example of a story that calls into question the progress achieved in modern urban societies. Set in the Teatro Real of Madrid, the masked ball features as a space in which anonymity encourages debauchery. Attendees then apparently catch sight of a number of revenants amongst those hidden behind masks. While sipping on champagne, these ghostly creatures discuss the society and age in which they find themselves "as if it was for them something new and unknown" ([191?] 2003, my translation). The champagne that pools on the ground around these empty bodies incapable of absorbing or digesting food or drink reveals these guests to be unnatural. The anachronism that they represent allows for the voicing of a conservative discourse on morals and a condemnation of gender relations and modern manners:

> Ladies show their legs above the knees, and do not wear sleeves. The boys treat the girls like idiots and sluts. High-class people gather, not in palaces, but in inns and taverns. […] And, for me, the worst thing of all is the invasion of ordinariness. Say what you will about us, but we were fine

> people, at least […]. There is very little education and a lot of nonchalance.[13]

Be it a site to celebrate or condemn the complexities of city life, the urban setting was one of the most significant ruptures from previous expressions of the supernatural in literature. Rather than serving as a simple displacement of location, this change of setting allowed for a renovation of themes and rhetorical devices by creating a new form of the fantastic: a modern, urban fantastic.

* * *

This book is structured around the three thematic sections of Buildings, People and Rhythms. These refer to three axes of city life, concerning material space, human encounters and movement.

Part I: "BUILDINGS: Architectural Intruders" opens with a reflection on the formation of habit through the inhabiting of a place. It highlights the importance of architectural space in structuring everyday routines and, by extension, in producing the effect of realism in the literary text. The examination then moves to the role of fantastic buildings in disrupting this fabric of routine in the city. Cafés, operas, parks, boulevards, slums and arcades have long been features of architectures of modernity, playing a central role in realist texts. This part adds to this inventory of modern sites two locations that are prominent in fantastic fiction: the antique shop and the urban haunted house or apartment. These literary tropes represent a significant departure from the classic Gothic fantastic encountered in a place far from the confines of the known. Instead of having to travel to remote, isolated, rural spaces, in the modern text the fantastic irrupts in the most unexpected, ordinary spaces of everyday urban life.

"Le Pied de momie" (The Mummy's Foot, Gautier 1840) is the main text of the first chapter in Part I. While this short story replicates many features of the antiquarian scene in *La Peu de chagrin* (The Magic Skin, Balzac 1831), its condensed form adds touches of humor to the familiar

[13] "Las señoras enseñan la pierna hasta más arriba de la rodilla, y no usan mangas. Los muchachos tratan a las muchachas de asaúras y de golfas. Se reúne la gente de alto coturno, no en los palacios, sino en las posadas y fondas. […]. Y, para mí, lo peor de todo es la invasión de ordinariez. Nosotros seríamos lo que se quiera, pero éramos gente fina, por lo menos. […] Hay muy poca educación y mucha despreocupación."

motif of the exotic talisman. The antique shop functions as a synecdoche of what is a recurrent theme in modern urban fantastic fiction: the conflictual superposition of the contemporary and the historical, by the blurring of boundaries between past and present.

In the next chapter Rhoda Broughton's "The Truth, the Whole Truth, and Nothing but the Truth" (1868), a tale of a ghost haunting an apartment in the British capital, exposes a discrepancy between the Victorian domestic ideal and its failed realization in practice. Instead of restricting my reading of the domestic as one of a purely interior space, I pay specific attention to the interaction between the interior and exterior. This focus on dynamic spatial frames helps develop an understanding of how the domestic is defined in relation to the urban.

Part II: "ENCOUNTERS: Urban Revenants and Other Fantastic Acquaintances" is devoted to the well-known trope of encounters with strangers, and in this case encounters made possible only through the experience of dense urban living. It unveils those spirits of place that lurk on the streets, ghostly dwellers and other undocumented characters that are enmeshed in the fabric of the modern city.

Revenants become more unpredictable as the century progresses, not only by migrating from their distant and solitary Gothic *locus amoenus* to the city but also by finding their identity in the city. Infiltrating intellectual circles in the guise of educated gentlemen and as sophisticated women, attending evening parties, theaters and concert halls, strolling in parks, the dead become part of the urban fabric and, just like their human counterparts, are seen striving to become modern citizens. Chapter "Female Spirits of Place" deals with the figure of the urban revenant, beginning with the analysis of one of the earliest examples in nineteenth-century short fiction, "Ritter Gluck" (E.T.A. Hoffmann, 1809). The focus of the chapter then shifts to female supernatural figures, with "La mujer alta" (The Tall Woman, Pedro Antonio de Alarcón 1882) as a primary example. These female spirits of place are instrumentalized in the moral condemnation of subversions of prescribed gender roles in the city. The third section of the chapter engages with a particular category of female revenant: the guillotined woman in post-revolutionary France, as featured in texts such as "The Adventure of a German Student" (1824) by Washington Irving and the stories in *Les mille et un fantômes* (1849) by Alexandre Dumas. Through an eroticization of social and sexual taboos, these female spirits of place serve as symbols of gendered expressions of the corruption of modern urban life. In their liminal condition between life and death and

by bringing the past back into the present, they force the city to revisit a problematic history.

While chapter "Female Spirits of Place" focuses on the supernatural figure and its urban attributes, the following chapter, entitled "Fantastic Exhibitions of the Self", is centered on spaces of encounter. In masquerade balls, city streets, apartment interiors and shop windows are framed the complexities of social display and its effects on the individual's perception of self. My analysis of the motifs of the mask, the mirror and the showcase highlights the different means by which the poetics of the supernatural addresses the dangerous games of staging identity in the modern city. The corpus comprises "L'Inconnue" (The Unknown Woman, 1891) and "Les Trous du masque" (The Holes in the Mask, 1895) by Jean Lorrain, "L'Ami des Miroirs" (The Friend of Mirrors, Rodenbach 1899), "La máscara" (The Mask, Emilia Pardo Bazán 1899) and "La Chevelure" (The Lock of Hair, 1884) by Guy de Maupassant. The final section is dedicated to Benito Pérez Galdós's modern fairy tale "La Princesa y el Granuja" (The Princess and the Rogue, 1877), which recounts an impossible love story between a street child and a doll exhibited in a shop in central Madrid. At the heart of my reading is the motif of the display window. The window exposes the asymmetrical spheres of social and economic power, and becomes a symbol of desire, material ostentation and greed.

In Part III: "RHYTHMS: The Fantastic on the Move", I read the literary urban text as an experience and expression of conflicting tempo and beats. Since we use rhythms to orientate ourselves in the city, we expect rhythmic patterns that provide structure and predictability to our perception of everyday space. My textual analysis underscores the way in which movement organizes urban narratives and explores their transgression when these everyday rhythms are disjointed. A new form of fantastic emerges from and in the modern city, which takes city rhythms as the axis to articulate a dissonance between familiar and unfamiliar space.

Bridges, trams and railway journeys offer new venues for the supernatural. Chapter "The Ghosts of Public Transportation" is dedicated to the fantastic vehicles that traverse the modern city, as formulated by New London Bridge itself in John Hollingshead's "Pity a Poor Bridge" (1859); in Charles Dickens's ghost stories "The Ghosts of the Mail" (1837), "The Portrait-Painter's Story" (1861) and "A Narrative of Extraordinary Suffering" (1851); in Amelia B. Edwards's often misattributed *Four Stories* (1861) and famous "The Four-Fifteen Express" (1866); and finally in "La

novela en el tranvía" (The Novel on the Tram, 1871) by Benito Pérez Galdós. The protagonists of these tales are lost in the city, waiting after a constant succession of missed trains, stuck in sleepovers at strange junctions, misled by uncanny fellow travelers, frustrated by interrupted train lines, trapped in a loop or forced to take unusual routes to well-known places due to helpless and confusing references from the Bradshaw train guide.

The last chapter, entitled "Cacophony and Asynchrony", examines Rodenbach's "L'Heure" (Time 1894) and "Un Inventeur" (An Inventor 1898), foregrounding the fictional discourses on auditory obsessions and phobias that derived from the high-paced, over-stimulating urban environment. Then Benito Pérez Galdós's account on cholera in Madrid in "Una industria que vive de la muerte; episodio musical del cólera" (An industry that lives on death; a musical episode of cholera, 1865) engages with one of the most widespread urban fears by creating different soundscapes. Finally, what would happen if all these stimuli were to stop? "La Nuit" (The Night, 1887) by Guy de Maupassant addresses this scenario with stark binaries to emphasize the abrupt collision between two versions of Paris. Day and night, life and death, rational and irrational intertwine in a fantastic parable of the suspension of movement and sound in the metropolis.

The urban fantastic has retained its relevance long after the turn of the nineteenth century. From André Bely's *Petersburg* (1913) and Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis* (1915) to Marcel Aymé's collection *Le Passe-muraille* (1941), which has given the name and a statue to a Parisian square in Montmartre; from Mikhail Bulgakov's posthumous novel *The Master and Margarita* ([1928–1940] 1967) to Claude Seignolle's *La Nuit des Halles* (1984) set in Paris, Eduardo Mendoza's novel *Sin noticias de Gurb* (1990) set in pre-Olympic Barcelona and Juan José Millás short stories set in contemporary Madrid, the complexities of the urban condition have also found expression in the supernatural narratives of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In the epilogue, I consider the tropes discussed in this book in the contemporary context, assessing how they inform representations of the postmodern city in a variety of audiovisual and literary narratives of the last decades.

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PART I

Buildings: Architectural Intruders

Habit is the primary law, the essential rhythm of the human being
—Bruges-la-morte, G. Rodenbach

Introduction: Architecture and Habit(at)

"To speak of history is to speak of monuments" (1992: 3), writes Philippe Hamon in the opening paragraph of his study on the overlaps between modern architecture and literary discourse. Since for Hamon architecture is a function of memory, then every building has a story to tell. And yet these stories are not always remembrance: architecture also embodies a testimony of the living present. Hamon shows how, in nineteenth-century city narratives, architectural descriptions (what he calls "paper monuments") acquire a relevance that transcends the aesthetic expression of symbolic, political or moral power. They perform a much more simple and fundamental function, namely to organize lived space and, by so doing, to enable daily life to take place: architecture "produced, permitted, and concretized not only a concept of history (be it collective or individual) but also, the staging of everyday life and of those rituals which expose social behavior" (4).

We encounter in Hamon's statement a double proposition: lived space is both a form and a force of habit. The etymology of architecture refers to the act of crafting a habitable domain for the human being (*archetektoon*). Architecture is a human construction of everyday space by routine practices. "Inhabiting" implies both the space and the use of it:

habitat and *habit*. Hamon points to this ambivalence when he mentions the relationship between character and setting:

> the writer henceforth would always have to provide housing for his characters, to make them inhabitants; no longer would he be able to describe any of his heroes' habits (habit being routine, a way of being manipulated by space and environment) without also mentioning their habitat. (6)

Realist texts, which are the focus of Hamon's study, generate habit(at) through the mimetic portrayal of space as logically and predictably structured architectural features. These features explain, rationalize and partition city space for the characters to conduct their everyday lives. The two chapters in Part I—both dedicated to fantastic architectures—present breaches to this rationally partitioned space. In the selected corpus of fantastic fiction the city fabric is defamiliarized by means of an architectural interpolation: the supernatural buildings located in the modern city disrupt the notion of "habitat" as form and force of habit. These fantastic buildings fail to enact the everyday spatial codes that create a coherent sense of being in space, and of being in time. Architecture thus features in the analyzed narratives as a way both of dis-inhabiting and of disrupting habits. This transgressive function of narrative space resonates with Anthony Vidler's idea of the modern architectural uncanny:

> As a concept, then, the uncanny has, not unnaturally, found its metaphorical home in architecture: first in the house, haunted or not, that pretends to afford the utmost security while opening itself to the secret intrusion of terror, and then in the city, where what was once walled and intimate, the confirmation of community […] has been rendered strange by the spatial incursions of modernity. (Vidler 1992: 11)

Urban Interpolations

The spatiality of the Romantic-Gothic fantastic presents a pattern closely related to the mythical schema of the hero. In contrast with the Gothic heroine (generally in an enclosed setting), the male protagonist is often prompted to leave his comfort zone: his space of habit. In order to encounter the extraordinary, home must be left behind. The central features of the Gothic enclave—as isolated, decadent, the catalyst of supreme sensitivity—exercise their influence on the narrative spaces of foundational

texts of the fantastic. Notable narratives of this early period of the fantastic, such as *The Castle of Otranto* (Walpole 1764) and *Manuscrit trouvé a Saragosse* (Potocki 1797–1804), displace if not always the character then at least the reader to *terra incognita*: to the labyrinthine chambers and catacombs of a remote medieval castle in the first case and, in the second, to an abandoned inn in the desolate landscape of Sierra Morena.

This pattern of movement from the known into the unknown bears a close relationship to the aesthetics of the sublime, which had an enormous impact on artistic practices during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The sublime, with its mystic origins and present in the neoplatonic tradition as a cosmic communion with the deity through the overcoming of physical boundaries, has a long history that reaches from Longinus to Žižek. During the Enlightenment, Burke and Kant in particular were influenced by the notion of the sublime. Their arguments start from a distinction between the categories of beauty and the sublime. In *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1756), Burke conceives of beauty as delicate and diaphanous. The sublime, in contrast, is a dark and violent force. Whereas beauty arouses sensations of love and peace, the sublime causes terror and astonishment; thus it is a more "noble" experience precisely because of the richness of feelings it evokes. Drawing on this distinction, Kant in *Analytic of the Sublime* (1790) emphasizes the complexity of the sublime as an aesthetic, epistemological and metaphysical category. When confronted with the sublime, humans become aware of their own empirical limitations due to its associations with the transcendental, unknowable and inexplicable. The open sea and vast mountain chains, with the capacity to evoke this sense of awe, are for Kant exemplary spatial domains of the sublime. Schiller's treatises (1793–1796) contribute to the association of this Romantic topography of the sublime with wild expanses of nature: "The view of unlimited distance and incalculable heights, the wide ocean at his feet and the greater ocean above him, snatch his mind away from the narrow sphere of the real and the oppressive imprisonment of physical life" (Schiller 1985: 264).

The taste for the remote as *locus classicus* of the extraordinary experience finds numerous expressions in the literature of the fantastic of the late eighteenth and throughout the nineteenth centuries. Gothic loci such as abbeys, castles, manors and cathedrals are primarily deployed to convey an eerie atmosphere that catalyzes the sublime. With the rise of the modern city, however, a great number of fantastic tales began to invert this spatial

schema. The city was to become the space of exploration and discovery, full of gateways onto extraordinary experiences and encounters. Hamon notes: "After 1850 the Romantic tourist, whose activities consisted of traveling, visiting, watching, marvelling, wondering, defining, naming and commenting, would be replaced by comparable daily ventures of the boulevard flâneur and the exhibition-goer" (1992: 67).

As the nineteenth century progressed, many authors were to play with the reader's expectations and situate their fantastic fictions in the most mundane of urban settings (see section "Not Here, Not Now: The Fantastic Out of Place", pp. 24–27). The hero's long journey is substituted with a stroll around the metropolis undertaken by an unremarkable citizen. The Romantic idea of self-realization in remote, decaying spaces is replaced by a new idea of the urban experience as an adventure and, in line with the Gothic sublime, often as some form of epiphany.

The next two chapters present examples of unnatural architectures in the modern city. Chapter "Fantastic Antique Shops" is dedicated to the curiosity shop and chapter "The City's Haunted Houses" to the urban house or apartment. They correspond to two key spheres of modernity: the commercial domain and the domestic interior. These "phantasmagorias of the marketplace" and "phantasmagorias of the interior" (Benjamin 2002: 14) "bring the far away and the long ago" (9) into the modern city—in the form of a magic object in the first case, and in that of a specter in the second. By preserving some exotic characteristics of the oriental bazaar and by replicating the ghost story tradition, respectively, the antique shop and the haunted apartment present the city as a point of contact between traditional Gothic motifs and the modern context. Both tropes work as fissures through which the fantastic penetrates into the rational foundations of the modern city. The protagonists of the narratives analyzed in these chapters do not need to travel far to be exposed to the irrational; all that is needed is to cross one of these fantastic, urban thresholds.

Before proceeding to the chapters, I wish to illustrate this change of spatial schema with the text "Omphale ou La Tapisserie amoureuse" (1834). While retaining many aspects of the Gothic décor, this well-known short story by Théophile Gautier succinctly portrays the incursion of the fantastic into the modern, urban setting.

"Omphale" starts with a visit that the main character pays to his uncle, a nobleman living in a decadent Parisian mansion decorated in rococo style. As might be expected, the supernatural scene takes place at night.

The figure of a lady portrayed on a wall-tapestry hung in the protagonist's lodgings comes to life. The Marquise Antoinette de T., represented as Omphale with Hercules at her feet, descends from the tapestry and over the course of several evenings joins the protagonist in a series of nocturnal erotic encounters. This romantic affair with both the mythical and the noble (Omphale-the Marquise) is, of course, considered unacceptable when discovered. Upon learning of it, the protagonist's uncle removes the tapestry and sends his nephew home.

The opening passages of the story offer a detailed description of a setting that adheres to the structural and formal Romantic-Gothic conventions. Representing a decaying past, the uncle's building is poorly kept, as is his semi-abandoned garden:

> My uncle, the Chevalier de—, resided in a small mansion which looked out upon the dismal Rue de Tournelles on one side, and the equally dismal Boulevard St. Antoine upon the other. Between the Boulevard and the house itself a few ancient elm-trees, eaten alive by mosses and insects, piteously extended their skeleton arms from the depth of a species of sink surrounded by high black walls. Some emaciated flowers hung their heads languidly, like young girls in consumption, waiting for a ray of sunshine to dry their half-rotten leaves. Weeds had invaded the walks, which were almost undistinguishable, owing to the length of time that had elapsed since they were last raked. One or two goldfish floated rather than swam in a basin covered with duck-weed and half-choked by water plants. (1906: 249–250)

Gautier builds an atmosphere appropriate for the fantastic at the start of the tale. The uncle's villa constitutes a site suited to the supernatural. However, the first sentence generates a discordant note with the description that follows it. The location of this eerie house is, unexpectedly, not the remote countryside but Paris: between Rue des Tournelles and Boulevard Saint-Antoine, near today's Place de la Bastille, to be precise. Providing an urban postal address for the outlandish is, as the next chapters show, a recurring strategy of the modern fantastic.

The protagonist's erotic adventure with the Marquise Antoinette de T. ends abruptly. To avoid further scandal, the tapestry is hidden in the basement and sold with the furniture after the uncle's death. The story, however, does not end there. The final scene features another encounter between the narrator and the figure of the Marquise-Omphale. On this occasion the protagonist comes across the same magic tapestry in a space

that differs from the classic Gothic mansion but that preserves some of the exotic features of a distant, exotic past: an antique shop. The chapter that follows is dedicated to the analysis of this type of space.

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Fantastic Antique Shops

portraits of every era, in frames more or less tarnished, smiled through their yellow varnish

—"The Mummy's Foot", Théophile Gautier

just when we think that things are safely dead, fossilized, petrified, or confined to the past, they rise from their graves of natural extinction and cultural obsolescence

—W. T. J. Mitchell

A Parisian Adventure

From the Renaissance to the early modern era, antiquarianism fulfilled the empirical function of preserving, comparing and reconstructing the past. However, the increasing scientific interest in material culture at the turn of the eighteenth century prompted a change of attitude toward human history. Archeology was among those modern disciplines devoted to the study of the past that were to replace older practices of antiquarianism. The curiosity cabinet gave way to the establishment of museums—and later Great Exhibitions—with the aim of displaying history in a more systematic, didactic and utilitarian manner. According to Miller:

P. García, *The Urban Fantastic in Nineteenth-Century European Literature*, Literary Urban Studies,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-83776-1_2

> It was only toward the end of the eighteenth century that this research vocation and its related evidence-handling technologies were eventually taken over by historians. But once in possession of these tools, the historians no longer needed the antiquaries, whose untimely backward-looking led to their rapid fall in an age obsessed by the "Moderns". Meanwhile, the birth of archaeology as a discipline created another object-studying center of gravity. The antiquary fell between these chairs. (2017: 10)

The shift from antiquarianism to archeology generated a tension between the collecting of relics of the past for romantic or even commercial purposes and a systematic collection for scientific ends. Carole Jarsaillon (2018) illustrates this change with the conceptual difference between Egyptology and Egyptomania at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Egyptology concerns the study of ancient Egypt, as characterized by Champollion's deciphering of hieroglyphs in 1822 and the publication of the series *Description de l'Egypte* (1802–1829) following the Napoleonic expeditions to the country. Egyptomania, in contrast, refers to an exotic and aesthetic perspective on Egyptian history, and to the "pseudo-commercial use of Egyptianising ornamentation" in objects, furniture and architecture (2018: 359).

Antiquarianism did not disappear during the nineteenth century, however. On the contrary, there was a profusion of antiquarian spaces, cabinet rooms and curiosity shops, including the artistic representation of these, with this emergence particularly marked in modern France and Great Britain. Scott's novel *The Antiquary* (1815) and Dickens's *Old Curiosity Shop* (1841), and the paintings *The Antiquary's Cell* (Cooke 1835) and *The Antiquary* (Bonington 1829) are some well-known examples of the longstanding fascination with the practice of antiquarianism. Indeed, some of the authors who drew on antiquarianism in their writing, including Scott, were themselves antiquarian collectors.

This chapter studies the trope of the antique shop and its variations in urban narratives of the fantastic during the nineteenth century. Scholarship on Romantic antiquarianism that has explored the confluence of material practices and literary discourses has typically referenced Romantic novels, of which Scott's is the most notable. As a result, the corpus of supernatural antiquarian short fiction remains largely unstudied, with a few exceptions.[1] The trope of the city shop selling antiquities and magic items features in

[1] On the commodification and consumption of objects in narratives of the fantastic, see the section "Fantastic Fetishism" (2000: 183–194) in Janell Watson's *Literature and Material Culture from Balzac to Proust: the Collection and Consumption of Curiosities.*

fantastic narratives from Balzac's *La Peau de chagrin* and Gogol's "The Portrait" in the first half of the nineteenth century to Maupassant's "Qui Sait?" and "La Chevelure", and Wells's "The Crystal Egg" and "The Magic Shop" at the turn of it. From this varied corpus, I single out "Le Pied de momie" by Gautier as a model for understanding these narratives in terms of structural and thematic convergences. My focus is on how the shop is in dialogue with the urban. The concise evocation but interpretative richness of the antiquarian trope in Gautier's short story facilitates a reading centered on the place itself, as well as more broadly on the spatial relations that are derived from it, including spatial frames (the threshold) and spatial arrangements (the display of objects). I make a counterintuitive claim here and read the antiquarian shop as a modern trope. While the fantastic antique shop may not be typically associated with urban experience, the next sections aim to show that these modern bazaars played an important part in the literary construction of the urban fantastic.

The City as Terra Incognita

The short story "Une Aventure parisienne" by Guy de Maupassant (1881, translated as "A Parisian Adventure" or "A Parisian Affair") is an excellent example to illustrate how the extraordinary is found in the city and how the antiquarian scene is pivotal to the plot. The story is built upon an explicit contrast between the dull lives of inhabitants "from the provinces" (2004: 48) and their idealized vision of the French capital. The protagonist, an exemplary mother and honest wife from the countryside, is determined to experience the excitement that she imagines Paris offers. With this in mind, she manages to plan a trip that will enable her to pursue the much longed-for Parisian adventure that will take her away from the "monotonous chores that make for domestic happiness" (49):

> In her heart, however, there simmered an unsatisfied curiosity, and she craved the unknown. She was forever dreaming of Paris, and she read the society pages avidly. The reports of society dinners, fashion, and high life made her seethe with longing. But what disturbed her oddly, more than anything else, were the hints and innuendoes, the clever words that pulled the veil up just a little to let her glimpse the sinful passions and pleasures on the distant horizon. Living where she did, she viewed Paris as the apotheosis of glorious luxury and vice. (48)

Strolling down the disappointingly sedate boulevards where she had expected to find "an abyss of human passions" (49), she comes across a shop that catches her attention. The previous sections had described her frustrated efforts to find "the great orgies of artists and actresses" (50) but it is instead the crossing the threshold of the antique shop that marks the start of the adventure she had longed for:

> One day, as she was going along the Rue de la Chaussée d'Antin, she stopped to look into a shop full of those Japanese curios that are so brightly coloured you feel cheered by the very sight of them. She was studying the funny little ivories, the large burnished oriental vases, the strange bronzes, when she overheard the proprietor inside the shop very respectfully showing a large pot-bellied grotesque to a bald-headed little man with a grey stubble. He said there was only one of its kind. (50)

The shop, embodying in its displayed objects the exoticism and eroticism of other lives, is a synecdoche of the Paris the protagonist had dreamed of. In this antiquarian scene she meets Jean Varin, a writer who becomes the subject of her sought-after urban love affair. Although this short story is written in the realist mode, containing no elements that are unnatural or inexplicable, the urban antique shop nonetheless functions for the protagonist as a portal into the extraordinary, albeit only for a brief moment of time. There is a bitter twist in the tale at the end when she realizes that the city has nothing to offer except for disappointingly predictable vice ("I wanted to know what … vice was like, and … well, it's not much fun", 57).

* * *

Scholars have repeatedly highlighted the relationship between antiquarianism and the great voyages of discovery. Exploring the world, in particular through journeys to the Orient, was a way of compiling and contrasting a catalogue of the human past. In the corpus of modern fantastic fiction discussed in this chapter, the great voyage of discovery takes place upon crossing the threshold of the shop. The antique shop situated in the metropolis represents the modern inversion of the *terra incognita* spatial scheme performed by nineteenth-century narratives, as discussed in the introduction to Part I. It offers an entry into different temporal and spatial realities without having to leave the city. This journey reflects the pursuit of Romantic antiquarians "to fashion excursions around and in the material and conceptual gaps in the historical record evoked by antiquities" (Heringman 2014: 16).

As public museums and governmental institutions in the European metropolis began to take over the study of the past, the antique shops in the narratives of the fantastic that follow were to offer a space of reminiscence and resistance. They embodied a Romantic perspective of a past that preceded the civilized gaze of modern subjects "who conceive of themselves as separate from and superior to the objects of their study" (Colla 2007: 4). They also offered a symbolic resistance to dominant epistemological discourses by means of a magic talisman found within its walls, an object imported from remote lands to the modern city and endowed with irrational powers.

The nineteenth-century antique shop in literature illustrates a tension between three colliding worldviews. The antique shop in the modern era is, firstly, a relic of the eighteenth-century interest in natural history and in the pursuit of knowledge through the classification of the material human past. Secondly, its arrangement is consistent with a sentimental approach deriving from the Romantic aesthetic movement. Heringman argues that:

> one of the salient features of Romantic antiquarianism is the unique way in which it advanced Enlightenment ideals of scientific history while incorporating more fully the aesthetics of the sublime and of sentimental identification, producing new forms of historical empathy. Precisely in its refusal to distinguish between text and material culture, Romantic antiquarianism functions as a historiographical mode that exists simultaneously as science and art, history and literature. It offers multiple avenues for exploring Romantic subjectivities in their relation to material culture. (2014: 17)

Thirdly, the antique shop embodies the "phantasmagorias of the marketplace" of modern capitalism (Benjamin 2002: 14) and the veneration of antiquities as fetishized commodities. This aspect, particularly marked in "Le Pied de momie" (discussed below), will be revisited in chapter "Fantastic Exhibitions of the Self".

Modern Anachronisms: "Le Pied de momie" (Gautier, 1840)

First published in 1840 in the French literary magazine *Le Musée des familles*, "Le Pied de momie" (The Mummy's Foot) is not as well-known as some of Gautier's other works of fantastic fiction, such as "Omphale: Histoire rococo" (1834) or "La Morte amoureuse" (1836). Nonetheless

this concise piece is illustrative of the literary incursion of the supernatural into the city via the antique shop. The storyline draws from the traditional trope of the animated object, the trip back in time and the female revenant who returns to accomplish a particular deed. In this case the talisman is a mummified foot of an Egyptian princess, now for sale in a *magasin de bric-à-brac* in modern Paris. This object is purchased by the narrator and brought home to be used as an ornamental paperweight. Offended, the princess appears to recover her embalmed foot. As a recompense for returning the foot, the narrator requests to be granted her royal hand in marriage. The princess therefore takes the narrator with her on a journey to ancient Egypt to meet her father, the Pharaoh, who does not approve of their marriage. The adventure ends with the narrator suddenly waking up in his Parisian apartment. This denouement that seemingly restores normality is soon disrupted by the presence of yet another magical object: a pendant left behind by the thoughtful princess, for the narrator to use as a paperweight in lieu of her reclaimed foot.

Despite its classic plot structure, "Le Pied de momie" presents several unconventional elements that come to the fore when the focus is placed on narrative spaces. Instead of prioritizing the magical item, which is already highlighted in the title of the story, my analysis draws attention to the space in which this object is located, its significance in the narrative and, more broadly, for the modern urban fantastic. Four domains are considered in the next sections: the urban location of the shop, the rhetorical construction of the shop interior, the characterization of the antique dealer and the motif of restitution, this last involving returning the relic found in the shop to the time, space and body to which it rightly belongs.

Location: Urban Thresholds

The opening passages of "Le Pied de momie" situate us immediately in the city. While strolling around the streets of Paris, the protagonist enters a shop that he notices in passing. This space that contains the magic object that will catalyze the supernatural adventure is, paradoxically, remarkable only for being unremarkable. Consider the initial paragraph of "Le Pied de momie" in contrast with the beginning of "La Cafetière" (The Coffee Pot, 1831), Gautier's first published fantastic story:

> I had entered, in an idle mood, the shop of one of those curiosity venders who are called *marchands de bric-à-brac* in that Parisian *argot* which is so perfectly unintelligible elsewhere in France. ("The Mummy's Foot" [1840] 1906: 221)

* * *

> Last year I was invited, together with two artist friends of mine, Arrigo Cohic and Pedrino Borgnioli, to spend a few days on an estate in southern Normandy.
>
> The fickle weather, which had seemed extremely promising when we set off, suddenly changed and it rained so heavily that the hollowed out tracks we were walking on became more like the bed of a torrential river.
>
> We were sinking into sludge up to our knees and a thick layer of slimy earth had attached itself to the soles of our boots, its weight slowing our progress so much that we did not arrive at our destination until an hour after sunset.
>
> We were exhausted and our host could see that we were straining to contain our yawns and keep our eyes open, so as soon as we had had supper, he led each of us to our own room. ("The Coffee Pot" [1831] 1995: 19)

The two beginnings offer diametrically different transitions into the fantastic occurrence. "La Cafetière" employs tropes of the supernatural as classically situated in *terra incognita*: the narrator taking up an invitation to visit a remote country house (*une terre au fond de la Normandie*, in the French original); the long, arduous journey; his arrival after dark and the premonitory gloomy weather that sets the scene for the manifestation of the supernatural at night (in this case, objects and portraits coming alive). All these classic elements of haunted-house tales contrast with the way the fantastic is presented in "Le Pied de momie". The initial spatial schema of *travelling abroad* in "La Cafetière" is replaced by casual strolling and the similarly casual entering into the Parisian shop in "Le Pied de momie". The purpose-led trip is substituted by an aimless wandering; the figure of the adventurer is replaced by that of the urban stroller.[2]

[2] Jessy Neau (2014) notes in her analysis of this short story the relevance of the idleness (*par désœuvrement*) of the initial scene, which identifies the protagonist as an urban-type character: the prototypical Parisian flâneur or dandy. Neau extends this gender-focused observation to other texts of the nineteenth-century fantastic: "this narrator is not intended

With a direct appeal to the reader, the second paragraph of "Le Pied de momie" emphasizes the proliferation of antique shops in Paris, resulting from the modern fashion for acquiring artifacts for one's own home:

> You have doubtless glanced occasionally through the windows of some of these shops, which have become so numerous now that it is fashionable to buy antiquated furniture, and that every petty stockbroker thinks he must have his *chambre au moyen âge*. (1906: 221)

Adopting a mocking tone, the third paragraph refers to the bourgeois practice of purchasing forged antiquities and compares modern antiquaries with the artist's atelier and the alchemist's laboratory, in which "the most manifestly ancient thing is dust" (221).

The Interior

Following this introductory reflection on the fashion for antique shops in modern Paris, the narrative goes into great detail about the inside space of the antiquary. Before this point, several discursive features had reinforced the fact that the narrator is in a domain in which he feels at home: for example, the use of the possessive ("The warehouse of my bric-à-brac dealer was a veritable Capharnaum", 222), his familiarity with the "Parisian *argot*" (221) and with the streets and shops.

These known city codes are subverted as soon as the narrator enters the shop, in a scene that marks the start of his trip into the fantastic, without leaving the city. The first thing that he notes is the disordered display of eclectic objects. Enhancing the effect of disorientation, the items form a fragmented, juxtaposed accumulation in which different periods of time are intermingled. This description extends over several paragraphs, at each instance reiterating the chaotic, random layout. The first of these provides an example of the rhetorical strategies employed to describe this inventory:

to be distinguished by his individuality. The intention is to reference a type of character that recurs in Gautier's tales and even more generally in the French fantastic fiction of this period: a young Parisian bachelor, part-dandy, part-artist, living a bohemian life" (2014: 84). On the predominant figure of the male bachelor and the invisibility of female characters in nineteenth-century fantastic fictions, see also Nathalie Prince's study *Les célibataires du fantastique* (2002).

> All ages and all nations seemed to have made their rendezvous there. An Etruscan lamp of red clay stood upon a Boule cabinet, with ebony panels, brightly striped by lines of inlaid brass; a duchess of the court of Louis XV nonchalantly extended her fawn-like feet under a massive table of the time of Louis XIII, with heavy spiral supports of oak, and carven designs of chimeras and foliage intermingled. (222)

Janell Watson mentions that the bibelot was "the quintessential object of modern material culture" (2000: 2). In her comprehensive study on the proliferation of objects without use-value in French nineteenth-century fiction, she shows how the bibelot performed "a massive semantic and spatial reorganization of the world of goods" (2) during the rise of industrial capitalism. Drawing on Watson's work to develop a Marxist reading of "Le Pied de momie" (2004), Jutta Fortin regards this disarray of objects as a paradigmatic representation of the modern bibelot: "Since the objects are sold isolated from their original context, they are no longer identifiable in terms of their utility or purpose. Only as they are purchased are they assigned their function" (262).

Beyond these important materialist perspectives provided by Watson and Fortin, when the focus is placed on the distribution of the objects, further interpretations are suggested by this commercial interior space. It is not only what is for sale that matters but also how it is displayed. The profusion of items arranged in a chaotic manner follows the conventions of Romantic antiquary interiors.[3]

The chaos of the shop interior in "Le Pied de momie" is not due to mere neglect. It displays a type of disorder that presents history in a nonlinear manner. Immediately upon entering the shop, the protagonist has a sense of encountering various discourses of the past "side by side" (222) on its shelves. This is crafted with the repetitive use of a totalizing and all-encompassing *tous* ("all" and "every" in the English translation): "All ages and all nations seemed to have made their rendezvous there" (222), "portraits of every era, in frames more or less tarnished, smiled through

[3] Rosemary Hill summarizes the quintessential antiquarian scene in her analysis of Edward William Cooke's painting *The Antiquary Cell* (1835): "Armor, carved wood, (usually dark or darkened oak) and papers were the staples of the Romantic interior, along with stained glass, which Cooke does not show, and, sometimes, tapestry. Beyond that, details might vary; what mattered was the impression of profusion, mystery, and disorder" (Hill 2014: 8).

their yellow varnish" (223). This subversion of a museum-like taxonomic order presents visual information in a non-hierarchical way, hence the overwhelming disorientation. Part and whole, fragment and unity, decorative object and relic are juxtaposed against each other in the shop. The effect is an ensemble of deconstructed spatial hierarchies and temporalities that are apprehended through a list of shapes, fabric and colors. To express this, the narrator outlines an inventory of what he sees without a systematic arrangement. Later texts of the fantastic, most notably "El Aleph" (1949) by Jorge Luis Borges, reproduce a similar narrative inventory when describing infinite spaces. Struggling to describe the point in a basement where all temporal realities and spatial materialities are condensed (an aleph), the narrator of Borges's story expresses the limitations of language to capture what he sees:

> […] the central problem—the enumeration, even partial enumeration, of infinity—is irresolvable. In that unbounded moment, I saw millions of delightful and horrible acts; none amazed me so much as the fact that all occupied the same point, without superposition and without transparency. What my eyes saw was *simultaneous;* what I shall write is *successive*, because language is successive. Something of it, though, I will capture. ("The Aleph" 1999: 282–283, emphasis added)

A similar conflict between the absolute and the singular was presented in "Le Pied de momie" a century earlier. The historical juxtaposition is specifically framed as the antinomy between eternity and temporariness: Ancient Egypt—associated by the protagonist with the eternal—is interpolated in modern Paris. Gautier's story crafts the idea of the infinite as being materially reproduced by the profusion of objects in the confined space of the antique shop. History is presented to the viewer as an unstructured narrative. The different epochs and human milestones result in a collapse of linearity and of man-made chronology. The effect of timelessness is reinforced by the situating of the conflict in the plot around a mummy and ancient Egypt, both symbols of an eternal temporal suspension: "The Dream of Egypt was Eternity. Her odors have the solidity of granite and endure as long" (231), "At last we found ourselves in a hall so vast, so enormous, so immeasurable, that the eye could not reach its limits" (241).

The Antique Dealer

The antique shop commercializes artifacts for the modern consumer while also preserving a Romantic aura of an exotic past, as cultivated by the paradigmatic lover of days-gone-by: the antiquarian. In the passage immediately after the description of the items in the shop, the antique dealer catches the protagonist's attention. The vaguely-sketched character of the protagonist contrasts with the singular figure of the shopkeeper. His features, "Oriental or Jewish", avoid a specific geo-temporal situatedness: "This strange old man had an aspect so thoroughly rabbinical and cabalistic that he would have been burnt on the mere testimony of his face three centuries ago" (224). The protagonist laughingly remarks that the dealer behaves as if he were a contemporary of the Pharaohs. The antiquarian voices his fear over the protagonist's intention of using the princess's embalmed foot as a paperweight, and thus of using an ancient relic for contemporary purposes: "The foot of the Princess Hermonthis to be used for a paper-weight! […] Old Pharaoh will not be well pleased. He loved his daughter, the dear man!" (227). A pivotal figure linking modern Paris and Ancient Egypt, this character delivers the supernatural warning that, should the protagonist decide to leave the shop with the magical object, he might upset the Gods by infringing divine order. By contravening this alert, the conflict is triggered.

Restitutions: Subverting of the Enlightenment Project

From a feminist Marxist perspective, this relic is not just an antique. Fortin (2004) highlights how the female body fragment in Gautier's story can be read as a merchandized fetish item. According to her analysis, the princess's foot represents the process of modern alienation, as a part of her being is expropriated and made available for sale. It embodies sexual-commercial values and portrays "the simultaneous fetishization of objects, on the one hand, and the objectification of humans—notably of women—on the other" (258). The narrator in "Le Pied de momie" refers to this foot as an "acquisition" (229, 230), an "embellishment" (230), a possession that needs to be put to "profitable use as soon as possible" (229). When the mutilated Princess Hermonthis attempts to regain her full bodily integrity, her severed foot states: "You know well that I do not belong to myself any longer. I have been bought and paid for" (237). The

protagonist is then urged to restore the lost connection between the item and its source.

Beyond being the part of a body, the mummy's foot is essentially an item out of place. This relic brought to life facilitates the intrusion of the past into the present. Its anachronism cuts across chronological and taxonomical order: a symbolic resistance to the understanding and exhibition of history as championed by the Enlightenment project. This aspect was earlier suggested in the description of the antique shop of the initial scenes, where the selection of antiques and the chaotic arrangement of objects created a contrast between the shop and the museum, as two opposing narratives of the past. The logical, visual exhibition of history prioritized by the museum is a spectacle of control. It offers a classified and explanatory official narrative of the past; in other words, a coherent chronological discourse validated by political power structures. The antique shop obliterates this chronology. The juxtaposition of the different temporal realities embodied by the antiquities on display offers fragmented and subjective approaches to the notion of human history. This image of fragmentation reappears in the scene in which the protagonist brings the ancient foot home to decorate his apartment:

> I placed the foot of the divine Princess Hermonthis upon a heap of papers scribbled over with verses, in themselves an undecipherable mosaic work of erasures; articles freshly begun; letters forgotten, and posted in the table drawer instead of the letter-box, an error to which absent-minded people are peculiarly liable. The effect was charming, bizarre, and romantic. (229–230)

The intrusion of Ancient Egypt into modern Paris echoes the Romantic interest in Egypt and lends itself to an interpretation that resists the "colonial Enlightenment narrative" (see Colla 2007: 1–23). The mummified foot is described as "a work of the best era of art" (226); its frivolous use as a paperweight is therefore anachronistic as well as sacrilegious. The ancient past has been turned into a commodity that can be purchased and installed in somebody's modern living room. The antiquarian reiterates several times that this is going to upset the Ancient Pharaohs. The expropriated mummy's foot needs to be returned urgently to the time and space to which it belongs, namely Ancient Egypt.

This fantastic motif of the restitution of a relic can be explained with reference to the modern rise of Egyptology. The first quarter of the nineteenth century saw an explosion of interest in Egypt, as attested to by the

publication of Vivant Denon's *Voyage dans la Haute et la Basse Égypte* in 1802 and of the volumes on the Napoleonic expedition (1810–1830), as well as by the proliferation of galleries dedicated to the region, such as the Egyptian Sculpture Gallery in the British Museum and the Louvre's Department of Egyptian Antiquities. These museums were designed to assert a colonial narrative in which the host city—the European metropolis—was portrayed as the only entity capable of conserving the exotic past: "As an assemblage, these objects form an abstract image of the globe with London at its center. This room is thus also a pedagogical space, creating for metropolitan audiences a material inventory of the stuff of the Empire and its abstract concept" (Colla 2007: 5).

The scientific study of the past accompanied by the formation of national museums sat alongside the abusive European acquisition of material custody. This appropriation, notably of Egypt, was conducted in the name of true science and conservation:

> They argue the legitimacy of colonial archaeology and artifact acquisition in terms of conserving objects which, if left in situ, would surely have been lost or destroyed. These are narratives in which great men—from Champollion and Karl Richard Lepsius to Gaston Maspero and Howard Carter—figure large, saving monuments from throngs of fellaheen and deciphering their secrets back home in London, Paris, and Berlin. (11–12)

If, as Colla puts it, "the values of preservation and acquisition serve as unambiguous, desirable indices of modernity and civilization" (14), Gautier's story seems to suggest that the artifacts of the past should be preserved in the places where they culturally and historically belong, which in this case is not the modern European metropolis. This aspect is illustrated both by the Princess's visit to Paris and by the narrator's time-travel to Ancient Egypt. Upon arriving in Paris, the Egyptian royal demands the restoration of her foot to its rightful home. The narrator, in a "royally gallant, troubadour tone" (238) promptly admits to his unfair appropriation and accesses to this restitution: "I never retained anybody's foot unjustly. Even though you have not got the five louis which it cost me, I present it to you gladly. I should feel unutterably wretched to think that I were the cause of so amiable a person as the Princess Hermonthis being lame" (237–238). Upon reaching ancient Egypt, the Princess's father immediately turns down the narrator's request to marry his daughter, presenting as his argument the insurmountable difference between the two realities:

> "What country do you come from, and what is your age?"
>
> "I am a Frenchman, I am twenty-seven years old, venerable Pharaoh."
>
> "Twenty-seven years old, and he wishes to espouse the Princess Hermonthis who is thirty centuries old!" cried out at once all the Thrones and the Circles of Nations. […]" "If you were even only two thousand years old," replied the ancient king, "I would willingly give you the princess, but the disproportion is too great; and, besides, we must give our daughters husbands who will last well." (244)

The protagonist returns to Paris in what seems to be the end of a hallucination and wakes up alone in his apartment. However, in a final twist the ending disrupts this apparent restoration of linear time. Another fantastic object lingers after the dream is over: a small idol-figure of green paste that the narrator finds in the place of his Egyptian paperweight confirms that the adventure had indeed occurred. The appearance of this object reiterates the fantastic intrusion of Ancient Egypt into modern Paris. As Mitchell notes in his essay on antiquarianism entitled "Romanticism and the Life of Things", "just when we think that things are safely dead, fossilized, petrified, or confined to the past, they rise from their graves of natural extinction and cultural obsolescence" (2001: 183). Once again in the form of an anachronistic item, a fragment of a distant past unexpectedly returns to the modern cityscape.

Reading in Reverse: The Antiquarian Scene in *La Peau de chagrin* (Balzac, 1831)

Gautier's "Le Pied de momie" provides a useful interpretative framework to highlight the famous antiquary scene in Balzac's novel *La Peau de chagrin*. This form of unusual retrospective reading clashes with traditional comparative literature scholarship, which seeks out influences between literary works that succeed one another in time, typically by stating how work A influenced work B. I would certainly not be the first critic to contend that Gautier's short story was marked by Balzac's novel, as attested to by Gautier's analogous depiction of the antique shop. Instead of repeating this argument I aim to provide a reading that looks for the relationship between these two works in an inverted order, thus revisiting Balzac's well-known text with the model of analysis provided by Gautier's antique shop in the previous section. Similar to the subversion of chronology provoked by the antique shop in modern Paris, this type of "rewriting", to

employ the term used by César Domínguez (2015: 10), generates literary meanings that obliterate the boundaries of linear time. It does so by highlighting the importance of work B for the interpretation of work A.[4] The intertextual crossovers between Gautier's short story and Balzac's novel are structural and symbolic, particularly in the act of entering the antique shop and in the positioning of the objects in the shop's interior. Taking Gautier's short story as a starting point illuminates the relevance of certain passages of Balzac's novel in relation to the supernatural intrusion into the urban fabric.

City Ramblings

La Peau de chagrin (The Wild Ass's Skin), one of Balzac's earliest texts and later to be included in his monumental *La Comédie humaine*, tells the story of Raphaël de Valentin who, after losing the last of his money gambling, intends to commit suicide by drowning in the Seine. During what was to be his final walk through the streets of Paris, an antique shop catches his attention. Upon observing Raphaël perusing the various objects assembled in the shop's interior, the mysterious shopkeeper offers Raphaël a skin of *chagrin*, the word denoting both an animal (wild ass) and an emotion (sorrow). This talisman, he promises, will fulfill all its owner's wishes and thus put an end to Raphaël's miseries. However, each new wish will also cause the skin to shrink, with a corresponding shortening of the life of its owner.

La Peau de chagrin is one of the most important examples of Balzac's incursions into the fantastic, alongside "L'Élixir de la longue vie" (1830) and *Melmoth réconcilié* (1835).[5] The scene of the antique shop, which takes up most of the first part of the novel (entitled *Le talisman*) evokes "a constellation of great European works of the fantastic, plotted as a chart of interlocking references" (Bayard 1978: 34). The magic skin recalls the

[4] Examples and benefits of this reverse reading are provided by Domínguez, Saussy and Villanueva in *Introducing Comparative Literature: New Trends and Applications* (2015). Note the title of this volume in its Spanish translation (2016): *Lo que Borges enseñó a Cervantes* (What Borges Taught Cervantes). This alludes to Borges's essay on Kafka ("Kafka and his Precursors" 1951), in which the Argentinean author contends that Kafka's literature provides an interpretative framework essential to understanding the work of his predecessors.

[5] For a panoramic perspective on this subject, see *L'Œuvre fantastique de Balzac* (Amblard, 1972).

wish-making pattern present in, for example, *1001 Nights*; reminiscences of Walter Scott's *The Antiquary* are reflected in the description of the shop's chaotic interior and the Faustian pact brings us back to Goethe as well as to Maturin's *Meltmoth the Wanderer* (1821), to which Balzac wrote a follow-up in 1835. Critics have explored Balzac's use of the fantastic in a contemporary setting as an aesthetic strategy for breaking with the rational discourse of the Enlightenment.

The novel offers different interpretative registers. It provides a realistic depiction of the Restoration and the July Monarchy in post-Revolutionary France, while also being a tale of the supernatural that crafts an allegory of moral corruption in modern bourgeois French society. It also works as a fable of human fear of mortality. These three dimensions converge in the motif of the talisman that grants the owner's wishes at the expense of his life. This magical object warns of the dangers of succumbing to material greed. The story presents a critique of the socio-political climate in which selfish luxury reigns, rendered explicitly in the scene of the feast and through the character of the rich and beautiful Foedora. It is not my intention here to duplicate arguments formulated in the abundant existing scholarship on the variety of themes and influences present in *La Peau de chagrin*. Neither is my focus the wild ass skin. Instead, as with "Le Pied de momie", the reading offered here is spatial, prioritizing the meanings derived from the place in which the talisman is located.

The urban location of the antique shop in *La Peau de chagrin* is given with very specific geographical referents situating it in the Paris of the 1830s.[6] In the path he takes on what is intended to be his last walk through the city before committing suicide, Raphaël draws a map of the major city landmarks. After losing his money in the Palais-Royal, he takes the Rue Saint-Honoré, passing the Tuileries Palace and the Pont Royal, followed by the Louvre and Quai Voltaire.

As mentioned, Gautier's protagonist in "Le Pied de momie" enters the shop *par désœuvrement*, and so too does Raphaël, "an idler seeking to kill time" (2016). Balzac's protagonist is also a flâneur in modern Paris, albeit a less enthusiastic one than Gautier's narrator. Mirroring the character's

[6] David F. Bell, for example, draws on Balzac's fascination with mesmerism and argues that "the wild ass's skin may not be a wholly fantastic object, but, rather, an invitation to wonder, to think past the limitations of a restrictive view of nature imposed by a rationalist consensus severely limiting the types of phenomena actively investigated" (2017: 65). See also Goran Blix's "The Occult Roots of Realism: Balzac, Mesmer and Second Sight" (2007) and Robert Darnton's *Mesmerism and the End of the Enlightenment* (1968).

low mood, Raphaël's trajectory in the city is equated with a grayness that erases the distinctive elements of the monuments he observes: "When the shops came to an end, he reviewed the Louvre, the Institute, the towers of Notre Dame, of the Palais, the Pont des Arts; all these public monuments seemed to have taken their tone from the heavy gray sky". During this ramble, the shop of a dealer in antiquities draws Raphaël's attention and he feels compelled to enter. In doing so, Raphaël accesses an unnatural space that will change the course of his life, "a space transformed from ordinary into extraordinary, set off from the banality of the street outside" (Bell 2017: 57). As in "Le Pied de momie", this fantastic journey takes place within the boundaries of the city, started simply by his entering the shop.

The Interval

This shop is from the outset portrayed as a liminal space in the prelude to Raphaël's death, as he is "thinking to give a treat to his senses, and to spend the *interval* till nightfall in bargaining over curiosities" (emphasis mine). The images of temporal totality and non-chronological history appear in the disorganized placement of items: "The beginnings of the world and the events of yesterday were mingled with grotesque cheerfulness". As in "Le Pied de momie", superimposed singularity and totality are emphasized by the reiteration of the word "every" (*tous* in the French original): "the place presented a confused picture in which every achievement, human and divine, was mingled"; "Every land of earth seemed to have contributed some stray fragment of its learning, some example of its art". The chaotic arrangement of antiques merges and juxtaposes "the illusions composing a panorama of the past" (*les fantasmagories de ce panorama du passé* in the French original).

The experience of temporal distortion was captured in the motif of the severed foot in Gautier's "Le Pied de momie". In *La Peau de chagrin* it is instead the lack of definition that is used to portray a diffused conception of temporal frames. Through the chiaroscuro of his descriptions, Balzac depicts the interior of the shop as a suspension in time: "This extraordinary combination was rendered yet more bizarre by the accidents of lighting, by a multitude of confused reflections of various hues, by the sharp contrast of blacks and whites".[7] This evocation of the shop's interior

[7] See Bayard (1978: 127–132) for a symbolic reading of the use of light in Balzac's work.

lighting in the creation of an atmosphere of uncanny indefiniteness was to be central to various illustrations and theatrical adaptations of the novel (Figs. 1 and 2).

Although the interior of the shop is portrayed as a total space, capturing the past from many angles, it is also, paradoxically, imperfect and inconclusive. This is reflected in the allusion to sensorial perceptions that are truncated, the "broken cries" and "unfinished dramas" that seem to emerge from the light and dark. Further reinforcing this aspect, the passage of ekphrasis likens the spectacle of the shop to an undefined sketch composed with an immense pallet such that only a Romantic artist could apprehend:

> Shapes and colors and projects all lived again for him, but his mind received no clear and perfect conception. It was the poet's task to complete the sketches of the great master, who had scornfully mingled on his palette the hues of the numberless vicissitudes of human life.

Grounding oneself in this accumulation of the past, among these diffused spatial references, is impossible. These interior descriptions are followed by an existential vertigo provoked by the confrontation with the "immensity of time and space" and the "illimitable abyss of the past" suggested by the objects on display within the antique shop. Raphaël is overtaken by the sensation of being uprooted from his temporal context, "completely torn away from the present" (*déracinés du present* in the French original).

The features of the antique dealer echo those of the space over which he reigns. He is both too young and too old, both God and Devil in having witnessed all possible expressions of human suffering: "The wisdom and the moral codes of every people seemed gathered up in his passive face, just as all the productions of the globe had been heaped up in his dusty showrooms. He seemed to possess the tranquil luminous vision of some god before whom all things are open, or the haughty power of a man who knows all things". Like the antique shop, this ghostly figure, who "might have issued from some sarcophagus hard by", embodies a suspension of linear time.

While the journey back in time is a specific part of the plot in "Le Pied de momie", in *La Peau de chagrin* this element remains metaphorical. Raphaël travels across temporal layers in his observation of the antiques on the shelves. In both texts, the moment of entering the shop marks the beginning of the central conflict in the story and in both cases the

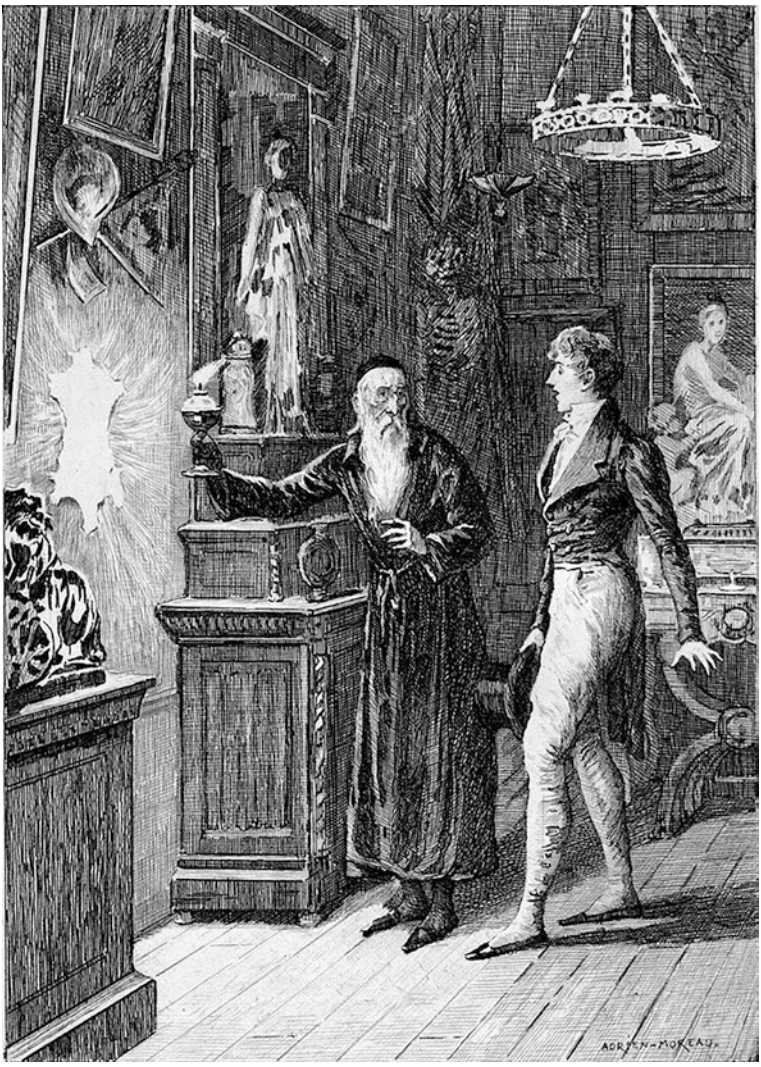

Fig. 1 Illustration of the antiquarian scene in *La Peau de chagrin*. (Adrien Moreau. 1897. Philadelphia: George Barrie & Son)

CHAQUE PIÈCE, 20 CENTIMES.

THÉATRE CONTEMPORAIN ILLUSTRÉ

MICHEL LÉVY FRÈRES, ÉDITEURS,

44

(35

LA PEAU DE CHAGRIN

DRAME FANTASTIQUE EN CINQ ACTES ET SEPT TABLEAUX DONT UN PROLOGUE ET UN ÉPILOGUE

Tiré du roman de H. DE BALZAC

PAR

M. LOUIS JUDICIS

REPRÉSENTÉ POUR LA PREMIÈRE FOIS, À PARIS, SUR LE THÉATRE DE L'AMBIGU-COMIQUE, LE 6 SEPTEMBRE 1851.

DISTRIBUTION DE LA PIÈCE

RAPHAEL	MM. ARNAULT.	UN DOMESTIQUE	M. LANGLOIS.
RASTIGNAC	BONNEVAL.	UN GARÇON DE RESTAURANT	
JOB	DE PRÉVILLE.	FIEDORA	Mmes LUCIE MARINE.
AMILCAR	DUBOSTEL.	PAULINE	ELISA DESCHAMPS.
DE RANCY	F. FOUQUE.	SIMONNE	SULTAN.
LE COMMIS DE JOB	CRAIN.	MADAME GAUDIN	LEBRUN.
FOUGEROL	HENRYELLE.	ELPHRASIE	DARCIER.
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UN NOTAIRE	LAYTOUR.		

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PROLOGUE

PREMIER TABLEAU

LA FEMME SANS CŒUR

Une mansarde. — Meubles d'une forme élégante, mais vieux et usés. Dans un coin, un poêle.

SCÈNE PREMIERE.

PAULINE. Elle entre, portant entre ses mains du linge qu'elle place dans le tiroir de la commode. S'il savait que j'ai veillé toute la nuit pour repriser et raccommoder sa pauvre garde-robe... il se fâcherait... Mais, bah!... un savant... toujours distrait... il ne s'aperçoit de rien... il y a plaisir à l'obliger... Et puis, ce lui donne pas de la reconnaissance?... Ne m'a-t-il pas appris la musique, le dessin, la grammaire... enfin, tout ce que je sais?... Grâce à lui, je serai bientôt en état de donner des leçons à mon tour... Alors, nous aurons une domestique, et ma pauvre mère ne sera plus seule pour tenir cet hôtel où elle ne fait de fatigue. (Regardant par la fenêtre.) Comme la pluie tombe!... le ciel est pris pour toute la journée!... Où peut-il être par un temps pareil?... Ah! ciel cette femme, sans doute; chez cette cantatrice que son ami, M. de Rastignac, lui a fait connaître... une coquette... une grande dame riche et orgueilleuse, qui, après l'avoir rendu fou, le fera mourir de désespoir!... Oh! cette femme!... je la hais!... Elle est bien heureuse, elle. (Essuyant une larme.) A quoi vais-je penser?... Mon Dieu! que cette pensée m'inquiète!... il va rentrer mouillé jusqu'aux os, tremblant la fièvre... car il est trop économe pour prendre une voiture... (Pleurant tranquillement.) Econome!... pauvre garçon! et pas de feu!... pas de feu au mois de décembre!... (Prêtant l'oreille.) J'entends du bruit... c'est lui... (S'essuyant.) O mon Dieu! comme il est pâle!

Fig. 2 Illustration of the antiquarian scene in *La Peau de chagrin*. (Louis Judicis de Mirandol. 1851. National Library of Naples)

protagonists have to deal with the consequences of purchasing a magic item they find therein. The threshold of the antique shop both distinguishes the rational, exterior urban space from and connects it to the fantastic domain in the interior. *La Peau de chagrin* renders this spatial dichotomy between inside-supernatural and outside-real explicitly as Raphaël sets foot in the shop: "He had left the real behind, and had climbed gradually up to an ideal world; he had attained to the enchanted palace of ecstasy". The fantastic penetrates into the modern city via the antique shop, a space in which the exotic past is enmeshed with the urban present. It functions as a domain out of sync with the modern setting that frames it. Raphaël remarks on the impossible location of this shop, "in Paris, on the Quai Voltaire, and in the nineteenth century; the time and place made sorcery impossible". The narrator of "Le Pied de momie" tries to resolve the anachronistic conflict by restoring the embalmed foot to the Egyptian princess. Raphaël, on the other hand, falls victim to the inexorable passing of time and succumbs to the lethal curse of the wild ass skin.

* * *

This chapter has sought to highlight the importance of the trope of the antique shop in generating a modern form of the fantastic that is situated in the city. These shops are a portal into the extraordinary, a fissure in the rational cityscape. They introduce the supernatural into the urban context by means of an anachronism: the talisman from another era, from a distant land. In both Gautier's short story and Balzac's novel, the magic object triggers a subversion of chronological time. In "Le Pied de momie" the message is that continuity is an illusion. The return across time of the embalmed foot to its rightful owner challenges the idea of modern temporality as progressive and linear. *La Peau de chagrin*, by associating the penalty of a shrinking lifespan with the magic object, draws instead on the anguish of temporal acceleration to portray the pulse of modernity itself. Balzac's novel undoubtedly makes for more complex reading, with multifold interpretative dimensions and an overarching moral message. Gautier's brief adventure nonetheless explores the potential of the fantastic talisman beyond being a symbol of greed and free will. It does so by situating the conflict around the ancient mummy's foot in contemporary Paris and by placing the story's emphasis on the object's restitution. Gautier's seemingly simple piece subverts the narrative on the material past of enlightened colonialism that is overtly present in the hegemonic spaces of historical display, such as the modern museum.

Further nineteenth-century European fantastic narratives present similar structural features to those noted in the antiquarian scene of "Le Pied de momie". In the last scenes of Maupassant's famous short story "Qui Sait?" (1890), the narrator finds the furniture that had mysteriously disappeared from his apartment in an antiquary located in Rouen. The description of this antique shop reproduces the allusions to temporal transcendence identified in the previous sections:

> Oh! the singular caves in these tall houses, in these grand houses, full, from their cellar to the attic, with objects of all kinds, whose existence seemed to have come to an end, having survived their natural owners, their century, their time, their fashions, to be bought, as curiosities, by the new generations. (2000: 343, my translation)[8]

In "La Chevelure" (The Lock of Hair, Maupassant 1884), addressed later in chapter "Fantastic Exhibitions of the Self", it is in an antique shop that the protagonist encounters the magical item that is to change his quiet, comfortable, bourgeois life. The casual manner in which the threshold-crossing into the antique shop occurs corresponds with the characterization of the idling protagonist. Once again the primary character is a male flâneur, wandering around in Paris on a sunny morning, browsing the shops with the vague interest of a stroller, when he suddenly notices a piece of furniture in the shop of an antique dealer. This narrator, who is writing the manuscript while sectioned in a mental asylum, starts the tale by revealing that his passion for antiques arose from an obsessive need to possess the past. The magic object in this case is a lock of hair—the motif of the fragment and the gendered part of the female body reflecting the fetishizing dimension noted in Gautier's story of the mummy's foot.

Examples of magic antique shops are also to be found in the fictional London of the turn of the century. In H. G. Wells's famous short story "The Crystal Egg" (1897) the encounter with the object of the title, which contains an alien miniature world, is preceded in the narrative by two motifs outlined in "Le Pied de momie": the specification of the urban location of this shop ("a little and very grimy-looking shop near Seven Dials, over which, in weather-worn yellow lettering, the name of 'C. Cave,

[8] "Oh! les singulières cavernes en ces hautes maisons, en ces grandes maisons, pleines, de caves aux greniers, d'objets de toute nature, dont l'existence semblait finie, qui survivaient à leurs naturels possesseurs, à leur siècle, à leur temps, à leurs modes, pour être achetés, comme curiosités, par les nouvelles générations."

Naturalist and Dealer in Antiquities'", [1897] 2004: 64) and the description of the eclectic collection of objects for sale in the shop window ("some elephant tusks and an imperfect set of chessmen, beads and weapons, a box of eyes, two skulls of tigers and one human, several moth-eaten stuffed monkeys", 64). In another of Wells's short stories of antiquaries, "The Magic Shop" (1903), the shop selling magical toys is located in "a modest-sized frontage in Regent Street, between the picture shop and the place where the chicks run about just out of patent incubators" (2004: 260). The elusive nature of this shop is emphasized at the start of the narrative, as it moves uncannily from Circus to Oxford Street and then to Holborn until finally it vanishes from the city: "always over the way and a little inaccessible it had been, with something of the mirage in its position" (260).

Set in Bruges, "L'Heure" by Rodenbach, analyzed in chapter "Cacophony and Asynchrony", begins with the trope of the discovery of the relic in a random market, *par hasard* (2003: 116), a discovery that occurs during the character's slow convalescent strolls following an illness. Obsessed with the synchronizing of all the clocks in Bruges, the protagonist is captivated by a Flemish clock. The text reproduces many of the devices identified thus far: the coincidental discovery of the object, the juxtaposition of temporal dimensions in the haphazard display of antiquities ("like a rearrangement of the centuries", 116, my translation) and the immediate attraction toward this object that is to change the course of the protagonist's life: "It is among these ruins of things—where one might happen upon a surprise: old furniture, antique jewelry, old lace, overlooked but of precious artistic value—that Van Hulst discovered the Flemish clock that he was to immediately covet" (117).

In the structures of the literary fantastic, the trope of the antique shop thus offers a radical alteration of the prototypical journey toward the unknown. *Terra incognita* is brought to the heart of the modern city via the antique shop. This space of the unexpected is a metaphor for that which Hamon calls "a hermeneutic adventure" (1992: 53)[9] and Benjamin "the phenomenon of the boundary" in the modern city:

[9] On the modern antiquary Hamon writes: "Such structures enabled face-to-face encounters with other cultures whose architectural objects had to be identified, qualified, described, and resuscitated […]. Voyagers, who had previously journeyed about the various bookshelves in their libraries, considered each stop on their tour an opportunity for decoding inscriptions" (1992: 53).

> Nowhere, unless perhaps in dreams, can the phenomenon of the boundary be experienced in a more originary way than in cities. To know them means to understand those lines that, running alongside railroad crossings and across privately owned lots, within the park and along the riverbank, function as limits; it means to know these confines, together with the enclaves of the various districts. As threshold, the boundary stretches across streets; a new precinct begins like a *step into the void*-as though one had unexpectedly cleared a low step on a flight of stairs. (Benjamin 2002: 88, emphasis added)

In the introduction to Part I, I referred to the role of architecture in providing temporal and spatial predictability. The antique shop, "a strange, fantastic warp in the fabric of modernity" (Bell 2017: 58), disrupts this impression of stability. The act of entering the fantastic antique shop, a pivotal scene in the plots of the narratives analyzed here, is the very "step into the void" that Benjamin evokes.

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The City's Haunted Houses

True, I am only the ghost, and much do I deserve your pity.
Many years ago I resolved to make a sensation in this neighborhood,
and I effected my purpose chiefly by means of the noises, which most of
you know but too well.

—"A Monotonous 'Sensation'", Anonymous short story

The haunted house is the oldest and most recognizable of the buildings that feature in supernatural narratives. As Andrew Hock Soon Ng argues in his work on Gothic domestic spaces, in haunted-house fictions "the architecture's prominence exceeds its function as backdrop but is in fact the very thing that engenders terror" (2015: 1). Anthony Vidler sums up our fascination with this literary trope by highlighting how it fuses the architectural with memory and intimacy: "The house provided an especially favored site for uncanny disturbances: its apparent domesticity, its residue of family history and nostalgia, its role as the last and most intimate shelter of private comfort sharpened by contrast the terror of invasion by alien spirits" (1992: 17). Most scholarship dealing with the haunted house in fantastic narratives has focused on the building itself, analyzing the symbolic features of the house or the reasons behind its disquieting reputation. In this chapter the approach taken is to explore instead the relevance of the house's setting: its (seemingly trivial)

P. García, *The Urban Fantastic in Nineteenth-Century European Literature*, Literary Urban Studies,
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metropolitan coordinates. One of the innovative features of the ghost stories presented in the following sections is the urban situation of their haunted houses. This change of location has implications beyond that of offering a distinct, renewed aesthetics. In my readings I show that the locating of the haunting in a city building serves to unveil political discourses on material property and on relations of gender and class that reveal the domestic sphere to be a central urban concern.

The Architectural Anomaly

An early example of a sinister house situated in an urban environment is "Das öde House" (The Deserted House, Hoffmann 1817), a text that introduces many of the elements that were later to become characteristic of urban haunted-house tales. After a classically framed preamble on the mysterious and marvelous, the narrator, Theodor, joins in conversation with his friends and recounts his summer adventures, centered around an abandoned house in Berlin. Theodor's subsequent enquiries were to reveal that the building's particularity was related to a romantic betrayal and the revenge enacted by an old woman with mesmeric powers.

The dramatic mystery that drives the plot is suggested in the urban features that appear at the start of Theodor's narration. The references to Unter den Linden and the Branderburguer Tor at the start situate us in Berlin. The beginning of Theodor's adventure is narrated via his gaze on the cityscape, as he is captivated by the grandiose architectural features that define the central, upper-class neighborhood in which he finds himself. The panoramic angle dominating the descriptions of the neighborhood and avenue through which Theodor strolls shifts in the third paragraph to zoom in on the house of the title. The house—its anomalous nature identified from the outset in the title of the story (*öde*, "abandoned" or "deserted")—is presented in this paragraph as an exception to its surroundings. It "contrasted strangely with the others surrounding it" ([1817] 2006); "You can imagine how strange such a house must have looked in this street of wealth and fashion"; "An unoccupied house in this avenue was indeed an odd sight". The trope of the architectural anomaly (a vacant house) in a fashionable, sought-after area of the city is a common element in the corpus of texts analyzed in this chapter.

The opening sections of Theodor's narrative account describe the impenetrability of the house's façade, thereby quickly establishing the plot dynamic of a secret to be unveiled. As the story unfolds, it becomes evident that the façade is a reflection of a hypocritical society, "a dark secret

that seems to be hidden in the middle of the buzzing capital" (Barkhoff 2017: 47).[1] Jürgen Barkhoff reads this secret as the confirmation of a lingering pre-modern belief in the existence of the supernatural in a modern context. Along similar lines, Robert McFarland (2008), by comparing "Das öde Haus" to Poe's "The Man of the Crowd", identifies a key interpretative aspect to the story: "Whereas Poe's narrator finds a strange, illegible face in a crowd, Theodor finds an illegible façade of a building" (494). The critic regards Hoffmann's strange house as a symbol of the unreadable, as the architectural expression of the "*Er lässt sich nicht lesen*" that is personified by Poe's transient figure in the London crowd.

"Das dämonische Berlin", a radio lecture given by Walter Benjamin in 1930,[2] was devoted for the most part to Benjamin's fascination with Hoffmann's tales. McFarland draws on this broadcast to underscore the contrast between "Das öde House" and Hoffmann's last short story, "Des Vetters Eckfenster" (1822).[3] Each of these two texts exemplifies one of the two predominant models of urban perspective. Whereas the disabled cousin who features in the latter text regards the city from the distant and panoramic comfort of his corner window and relies upon "his highly-honed scientific observation and his artistic creativity to "see" the city" (McFarland 2008: 491), Theodor's participative gaze as he walks through Berlin is closer to that of a flâneur trying to create meaning in that which

[1] See Vidler's analysis (1992: 28–36) for further insight into Hoffmann's uncanny houses, with a focus on the relationships between exteriors and interiors.

[2] This program was one of a series of radio broadcasts that Benjamin had dedicated largely to the city of Berlin (1927–1933, Berliner Funkstunde and Südwestdeutscher Rundfunk). After decades of being lost or forgotten, the scripts and recordings from these broadcasts were compiled as *Walter Benjamin: Aufklärung für Kinder (und Erwachsene)* (2003).

[3] In "Des Vetters Eckfenster" (My Cousin's Corner Window), the disabled cousin, whose experience of modern Berlin is restricted to his observations from his house window, demonstrates that by watching properly the observer can distinguish the stories and identities that make up what seems at first glance to be a homogeneous crowd of people. Benjamin contrasted this story with Poe's "The Man of the Crowd" in his essay "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire", highlighting the two different perspectives on the city: "Poe's narrator watches the street from the window of a public coffeehouse, whereas the cousin is sitting at home. Poe's observer succumbs to the fascination of the scene, which finally lures him out into the whirl of the crowd. The cousin in Hoffmann's tale, looking out from his corner window, has lost the use of his legs; he would not be able to go with the crowd even if he were in the midst of it. His attitude toward the crowd is, rather, one of superiority, inspired as it is by his observation post at the window of an apartment building. From this vantage point he scrutinizes the throng; it is market day, and all the passers-by feel in their element. His opera glasses enable him to pick out individual genre scenes" ([1939] 2006: 189).

he sees and cannot decipher. He "demonstrates a different urban vision that is sensitive to the irrational, fantastic elements of the city" (491).

Hoffmann's strange building in "Das öde Haus" serves as a guiding framework for the approach taken in the readings in this chapter. The building of Hoffmann's title certainly represents a mystery to be unveiled and a story from the past to be uncovered. However, beyond merely serving as the setting of a domestic thriller, the house in "Das öde Haus" highlights the incomprehensible elements of the urban text. Urban haunted-house tales, like the fantastic antique shop narratives of the previous chapter, are presented as architectural anomalies that tear a fissure in the rational fabric of the modern cities of Berlin, Paris and London.

Victorian Haunting Formulas

The greatest number of literary urban haunted-house narratives is to be found in the British Victorian ghost stories of the mid-nineteenth century. The hauntings of this corpus are not all set in the remote countryside, as a reader familiar with the genre might expect. They are urban apparitions that reflect the pressure involved in finding accommodation in the overpriced and overcrowded Victorian London. Some examples are "The Haunter and the Haunters: Or the House and the Brain" by Edward Bulwer-Lytton (1859), "The Lawyer and the Ghost" (1837) and "A House to Let" (1858) by Charles Dickens, "An Account of Some Strange Disturbances in Aungier Street" (1853), "An Authentic Narrative of a Haunted House" (1862), "Mr Justice Harbottle" and "A Haunted House in Westminster" (1872) by Sheridan Le Fanu, "The Truth, the Whole Truth, and Nothing but the Truth" by Rhoda Broughton (1873), the novella *The Uninhabited House* (1874) and the short stories "The Old House in Vauxhall Walk", "Walnut-tree House", "Old Mrs. Jones" by Charlotte Riddell (1882a, 1882b, 1882c), and "A Monotonous 'Sensation'" (1863) and "The Story of Clifford House" (1878), both published anonymously. Many of these texts on city hauntings, including *A Christmas Carol* by Dickens, were published as part of much-loved Christmas special issues.[4]

[4] On these publications and their popular timing, Tara Moore notes: "Haunting spirits and manor-house ghosts had been 'looking up' since the 1820s when annuals relied on ghosts, but a new spate of magazines and journals of the 1850s turned to the oral tradition of

The structural and formal features of those haunted-house tales were formulaic: on this predictability depended a certain amount of their success among the readership. Their plot structure replicates classic Gothic ghost stories of rural hauntings, exemplified by tales such as Dickens's "The Mortals in the House" and "To be read at dusk":

Motivation—The first part of the story establishes the motivation for moving into an empty house that stands out from its surroundings. It is "an avoided house", "shunned by the village", "solitary", with a "sadly neglected garden", "uninhabited", ("The Mortals in the House", [1859]: 2016: 252), "ill-placed, i/ll-built, ill-planned and ill-fitted" (257), "And the natural inference was that it had the reputation of being a haunted house" (252).

The curse—The fact that the house remains uninhabited for extended periods provides a mystery that the protagonists seek to solve.

Supernatural incident—Upon taking up lodgings in the house, the characters are confronted with supernatural events, generally occurring at night.

Resolution—Some research into the history of the house—through correspondence, archival research or interviews—sheds light on the drama (typically a murder) hidden within. The resolution of this mystery brings an end to the haunting and restores normality to the building and its surroundings.

In *The Biology of Horror: Gothic Literature and Film*, Jack Morgan notes that "The familiar gothic pattern situates an aristocratic dwelling high above the vulgar village, radically exclusive, cut off from scrutiny and normal moral conventions, and immune to the ordinary reach of law" (2002: 181). Tara Moore also underscores the prevalence of rural, gentrified settings and the idealization of the country house in the prototypical Christmas ghost story (2009: 88–89). In the corpus studied in this chapter, however, the source of trouble or disorder is located in neither a distant past nor distant place but on the doorstep of ordinary urban houses. This involves new literary strategies that offer a critical commentary on certain socio-economic aspects inherently related to modern urbanism. As Robert Mighall puts it in his study on Victorian Gothic London, "It is not just a Gothic in the city, it is a Gothic *of* the city. Its terrors derive from situations peculiar to, and firmly located within, the urban experience" (1999: 30).

Christmas ghost stories as publishers sought to fill special Christmas numbers" (2009: 81, see chapter "Ghost stories at Christmas", 81–98).

My argument is that this new setting of the curse or haunting is not a mere transposition of the Gothic mystery into the urban landscape but instead represents a profound transformation of what Dickens called "the accredited ghostly circumstances" ("The Mortals in the House", 1859).

The dominance of the city element in urban haunted-house narratives is illustrated by the opening dialogue of the tale "The Haunted and the Haunters: Or the House and the Brain" (1859). Bulwery-Lytton's concise and formulaic beginning captures the structural convergences that characterize this group of stories:

> A friend of mine, who is a man of letters and a philosopher, said to me one day, as if between jest and earnest—"Fancy! since we last met, I have discovered a haunted house in the midst of London".
>
> "Really haunted?—and by what?—ghosts?"
>
> "Well, I can't answer these questions—all I know is this—six weeks ago I and my wife were in search of a furnished apartment. Passing a quiet street, we saw on the window of one of the houses a bill, 'Apartments Furnished.' The situation suited us: we entered the house—liked the rooms—engaged them by the week—and left them the third day. No power on earth could have reconciled my wife to stay longer, and I don't wonder at it." (2010: 39)

This simple passage is structured around four formulas, repeated throughout the genre, that embed the domestic within the urban discourse:

The architectural exception: "I have discovered a haunted house in the midst of London"—From the very start, the location of the house is evoked to highlight the fact that the building is an anomaly in its area.

The urban jungle: "in search of a furnished apartment"—This phrase engages with the motivation of the characters, often driven by the desperate financial situation in which they find themselves. The encounter with the haunted house is preceded by the description of the characters' search around London for accommodation they can afford, thus drawing attention to the difficult task of finding adequate lodgings in the city.

The disruption of the domestic idyll: "we entered the house—liked the rooms"—The access into the house serves as rite of passage. This act initiates the investigation into why the house has a bad reputation. Most importantly, as soon as they move into the building, the domestic expectations of the characters are disrupted by the intrusion of the supernatural.

Gender and class binomials: "[…] and left them". The departure from the haunted house marks the end of the adventure. With a strong symbolic significance, this departure goes beyond providing closure. Throughout the corpus, leaving or wanting to leave the haunted building is a recurrent motif imprinted with elements of gender and class. The differentiation between those characters who want to stay and those who are eager to leave is anchored in the binomials of male-female, rural-urban and reason-superstition.

These points are analyzed in greater detail below, in an argument constructed around Rhoda Broughton's "The Truth, the Whole Truth, and Nothing but the Truth" (1868). This short story, somewhat marginal in the canon of ghost stories, offers formal devices that recall but also rewrite, in the urban setting, earlier Gothic tales.

"The Truth" About Haunted City Houses

First published in *Temple Bar* (1868) and reprinted in *Tales for Christmas Eve* (1872) before appearing in her acclaimed volume *Twilight Stories* (1879), "The Truth, the Whole Truth, and Nothing but the Truth" ("The Truth" henceforth) is Rhoda Broughton's most well-known ghost story. It is written in the form of an epistolary exchange between two friends, Elizabeth and Cecilia. Cecilia Montresor is returning to London after some years abroad while her friend, Londoner Elizabeth de Wynt, after finding accommodation for the newly-arrived Cecilia, takes a city break at the cliffs of Dover. The Montresor family moves into the ideal lodgings that Elizabeth, after much arduous searching, has secured for them in London. Most of the action takes place in this haunted building, located at 32, - Street, May Fair, London.

The character of Elizabeth represents the urban dweller who does not believe in the supernatural ("You know my utter disbelief in ghosts" [1868] 2003: 80), whereas her friend Cecilia is portrayed as a sensitive, fragile woman, and a ghost-believer. The ending of the story features a typical twist of this genre: the characters who were skeptical of the haunting all along are proven wrong. Ralph Gordon, a friend of the family, dies suddenly after being confronted by a supernatural specter in the haunted room. Nonetheless, the resolution in this case departs from the convention, as the mystery is not ultimately resolved. The reasons for the haunting as well as the nature, shape or identity of the creature doing the

haunting are not revealed. This contrasts with the model established by other stories of hauntings, such as "Das öde House" in section "The Architectural Anomaly" (pp. 70–72), which usually feature a plot that is dedicated to discovering, unveiling and resolving the tragedy that is hidden in the house. By thus disregarding the context and character of the supernatural element, Broughton's narrative moves the focus from past events to the contemporary characters' experience and perspective of the haunting.

Location Is Everything

In the very first letter of the epistolary exchange, "The Truth" indicates the urban coordinates of the house. The lodging is located at "No. 32 – Street, May Fair" (76). This act of providing a postal address for the fantastic, as previously noted in the case of "Omphale" in the introduction to this Part I, emphasizes the ordinariness of the location of the troubled house and enhances the plausibility of the supernatural occurrence. For example, in the "The Haunted and the Haunters" the haunted house is "situated on the north side of Oxford street" ([1859] 2010: 40). Charlotte Riddell's haunted house is located in Vauxhall Walk ("The Old House in Vauxhall Walk"), "Walnut-Tree House" is "at the corner of a street leading out of Upper Kennington Lane" ([1882b] 2009: 2) and Le Fanu's troubled building in "An Account of Some Strange Disturbances" is an untenanted house in Aungier street, Dublin.

As well as providing a credible location for the haunted house, Broughton gave her story a title that stresses the veracity and accuracy of the facts to be narrated. Both the title of "The Truth, the Whole Truth and Nothing but the Truth" and the story's closing sentence, "This is a true story" (2003: 82), are in the form of an oath, a commitment and promise by one who has witnessed the supernatural event and whose testimony is truthful to the narrated events, despite the extraordinary nature of these.

This feature is also strikingly present in an earlier short story by Broughton's uncle, Sheridan Le Fanu: "An Authentic Narrative of a Haunted House". It stresses the veracity of its tale both in the title and in the preface, in which the Editor of the University Magazine claims to have deliberately omitted the location of the haunting in order to protect the house's owners:

> As a mere story the narrative is valueless: its sole claim to attention is its absolute truth. […] With the Editor's concurrence, the name of the watering-place, and some special circumstances in no essential way bearing upon the peculiar character of the story, but which might have indicated the locality, and possibly annoyed persons interested in house property here, have been suppressed by the narrator. ([1862] 1964: 419)

The story is set in a coastal town, where, following advice from his doctor, the narrator travels with his wife to take a break from the city. Le Fanu's classic ghost story is structured around the well-known trope of traveling from the known into the unknown. However, in Broughton's "The Truth" the vector of travel is reversed. Elizabeth, who finds an apartment for her friend Cecilia before traveling to the countryside to assist her son's recovery, is eager to escape the idleness of her rural retreat to return to the capital. Cecilia is also longing to return to London after "two years exiled from civilized life" (76), and it is in the city and not in the countryside where the supernatural manifests itself. This pull from the dull rural idyll toward the urban was seen earlier in the motivation of Maupassant's provincial female character (section "A Parisian Adventure", pp. 43–45). The city is imagined by the female characters as a space of adventure and possibility and a break from the monotony of the countryside. The apparition of the supernatural in this urban environment confirms these imaginings.[5]

[5] This is reflected in other short stories such as "The Story of Clifford House" (anon., 1878). The female narrator sets the scene for her account of the haunting as follows:

> I had wished so much to go to town that spring—grown tired of my lovely country home, I suppose. Tired of wide lawns and quiet, glassy ponds and streams, bordered by luscious, blooming rhododendrons; of silent, mossy avenues, glorious with the flickering light that stole through pale green beech leaves, of rose gardens with grassy paths, jewel-sprinkled with shell-like petals of white, crimson, pink, and cream-like hues; of old-fashioned rooms with narrow, mullioned windows embowered in scarlet japonica and fragrant, starry Jessamine. (2003: 2018)

After this detailed description of the joys of rural life, she formulates the key sentence that paves the way for the supernatural adventure, which takes place in London: "I suppose I had grown tired of them all, and I begged George to see about getting a nice house in town for the season" (218). In the end, the characters return to their happy rural retreat: "That is years ago now. We have spent many a pleasant month in the great metropolis since, but love our country home best of all. But we never speak of that terrible time when we learned the story of Clifford House" (238).

House Hunting: The Urban Jungle

The first letter of the correspondence in "The Truth" recounts Elizabeth's house-hunting odyssey around London:

> Well, my friend, I had no idea till yesterday how closely we were packed in this great smoky beehive, as tightly as herrings in a barrel. […] After having looked over, I verily believe, every undesirable residence in West London; after having seen nothing intermediate between what was suited to the means of a duke, and what was suited to the needs of a chimney-sweep; after having felt bed-ticking, and explored kitchen-ranges till my brain reeled under my accumulated experience, I arrived at about half-past five yesterday afternoon at 32, – Street, May Fair. (2003: 74)

These lengthy viewings bring to the fore issues related to the density of the city ("tightly as herrings in a barrel") and rising rental prices ("nothing intermediate between what was suited to the means of a duke, and what was suited to the needs of a chimney-sweep"). Elizabeth's seemingly endless property search is expressed in humorous hyperboles. These encompass referencing their friendship in terms of the mythological pair Pylades and Orestes among other exaggerated allusions to her account of the challenging mission of finding decent London accommodation for her dear friend Cecilia: "Did Pylades ever go *ventre à terre*, half over London on a day more broiling than any but an *âme damnée* could even imagine, in order that Orestes might be comfortable housed for the season?", "[…] fifty to one hundred house agents", "Failure No. 253, I don't doubt. […] Once inside, I thought I had got into a small compartment of Heaven by mistake" (74).

The desperation experienced in seeking accommodation in the British metropolis features at the start of many other urban haunted-house stories. A clear example is provided by the opening line in Charlotte Riddell's "The Old House in Vauxhall Walk", which establishes a rupture from the traditional trip to the remote countryside. "Houseless—homeless—hopeless!" ([1882b] 2009: 99) are the first words uttered by the protagonist, who is desperate to find shelter within the city, as well as from the city:

> It was a bad night to be about with such a feeling in one's heart. The rain was cold, pitiless and increasing. A damp, keen wind blew down the cross streets leading from the river. The fumes of the gas works seemed to fall with

> the rain. The roadway was muddy; the pavement greasy; the lamps burned dimly; and that dreary district of London looked its very gloomiest and worst.
>
> Certainly not an evening to be abroad without a home to go to, or a sixpence in one's pocket, yet this was the position of the young gentlemen who, without a hat, strode along Vauxhall Walk, the rain beating on his unprotected head. (99–100)

The trope of a precarious financial position that urges characters to accept lodgings is a frequent one. Many other tales evoke the financial pressure exercised by the rental market in modern London. In Riddell's *The Uninhabited House* a representative of letting agencies insists "We must not always have an uninhabited house haunting our offices" ([1874] 1971: 21), with reference to the economic burden of an untenanted (haunted) house. In "The Haunted and the Haunters" the protagonist proclaims: "I have so despaired of finding any person to take charge of it, much more a tenant, that I would willingly let it rent free for a year to anyone who would pay its rates and taxes" ([1859] 2010: 41). In "An Account of the Strange Disturbances in Aungier Street" the narrator and his cousin are students who move to the untenanted house in Dublin to save money and in "The Lawyer and the Ghost" the protagonist, a broken lawyer, can only rent a small, shabby—and haunted—room, one that is "not free from bugs" ([1837] 2016: 332). The ghost, however, is included with the price.

"A palace at the cost of a hovel"

The difficulties of finding accommodation in a hostile, overpriced London force the characters to take up the featured lodgings on account of their extraordinary cheapness. At this point, the ghost story overlaps with the detective genre and the element of mystery is heightened. This enigma will be resolved by either the demonstration that the house is not in fact haunted (as in Riddell's *The Uninhabited House*) or unveiling what it is that has caused the ghost to haunt the house.

In "The Truth" the mystery, although never settled, is still an overarching motif. The sense of something being amiss is sparked by the discrepancy between the rental price and the property's location. Why would such a cheap, centrally located house present such difficulty in being rented or in keeping long-term tenants? In this respect, Elizabeth quotes her conversation with the letting agent when viewing the house:

> Apropos, I asked, in fear and trembling, what the rent might be—'Three hundred pounds a year'. A feather would have knocked me down. I could hardly believe my ears, and made the woman repeat it several times, that there might be no mistake. *To this hour it is a mystery to me*.
>
> With that suspiciousness which is so characteristic of you, you will immediately begin to hint that there must be some terrible unaccountable smell, or some odious inexplicable noise haunting the reception-rooms. Nothing of the kind, the woman assured me, and she did not look as if she were telling stories. (2003: 75, emphasis mine)

Already settled in 32.—Street, May Fair, in her letter of response Cecilia Montresor reiterates that she and her household are still puzzled by "[t]he mystery of the rent" (76): "Here we are installed in our Paradise, and have searched high and low, in every hole and corner, for the serpent, without succeeding in catching a glimpse of his spotted tail" (76). As Elizabeth had established in her first letter, it is "a palace at the cost of a hovel" (75).

The suspicious disjunction between the ideal property type in an urban location and its low rental price is reiterated, in very similar formulations, across a number of urban haunted-house narratives. In *The Uninhabited House*, the friend who helps the narrator decipher the mystery proclaims: "If this place were in Russell Square […] I should not mind taking a twenty-one years' lease of it at forty pounds a year, even if ghosts were included in the fixtures" ([1874] 1971: 83) and in "The Story of Clifford House", "The rent was but a hundred and fifty pounds a year" ([1878] 2003: 219): "Was our house haunted? Was this the mysterious cause of the exceedingly moderate rent and the house-agent's profuse civility?" (226).

This dwelling on the dissonance between price and property represents a remarkable shift from the Gothic ghost fictions that invoke the appeal of dilapidated and gloomy country houses. In urban haunted-house tales this romanticized décor is replaced by a negative materialistic view of the property market. Such a cheap, attractive lodging in a central London area is too good to be true. This is reinforced in "The Truth" by the inclusion of very detailed descriptions praising the house's amenities:

> Two drawing-rooms as pretty as ever woman crammed with people she did not care two straws about; white curtains with rose-coloured ones underneath, festooned in the sweetest way marvellously, immorally becoming, my dear, as I ascertained entirely for your benefit, in the mirrors, of which there are about a dozen and a half; Persian mats, easy chairs, and lounges suited

> to every possible physical conformation, from the Apollo Belvedere to Miss Biffin; and a thousand of the important little trivialities that make up the sum of a woman's life: peacock fans, Japanese screens, naked boys and décolletée shepherdesses; not to speak of a family of china pugs, with blue ribbons round their necks, which ought of themselves to have added fifty pounds a year to the rent. (2003: 74–75)

Very similar lengthy descriptions on the highlights of the house are identifiable in *The Uninhabited House*, which describes River Hall "with its luxuries of heat, ease, convenience, large rooms opening one out of another, wide verandahs overlooking the Thames, staircases easy of ascent; baths, hot, cold, and shower; a sweet, pretty garden, conservatory with a door leading into from the spacious hall, all exceedingly cheap at two hundred pounds a year" (1971: 22). "So desirable a residence, within an easy distance of the West End" (60) is simply hiding something.

The language used in the above-quoted passages from Broughton's and Riddell's texts imitates typical marketing formulas. The singularity of the (haunted) house is attributed to its irrational market property price. Such a "small compartment of Heaven" ("The Truth" 2003: 74), "Paradise" (76), "Heaven upon earth" (77) is a rarity in hectic London, where a quiet and decent house to let is exceptionally hard to find: "Peace is a word that might as well be expunged from one's London dictionary" (76).

As a character in "The Story of Clifford House" suspects, there must be "A screw loose somewhere" ([1878] 2003: 219).

The Anti-Domestic

Moving into this ideal yet unexplainably affordable house is not the dream experience the characters had hoped for. The readers' expectations are, of course, met when during their stay the protagonists are terrified by supernatural occurrences. In "The Truth" these occurrences remain the stuff of servants' rumors until the final scene, which ends with the family leaving the haunted building for good. The disruption of their longed-for domestic idyll culminates in this departure.

In her book *Apartment Stories: City and Home in Nineteenth-Century Paris and London*, Sharon Marcus draws attention to the incompatibility between the Victorian domestic ideal and the rise of the modern city. Marcus argues that the ideal of home generated by British rural ideology

conflicted with the urban conditions and constraints arising from an increasing industrialized London. She indicates that a system of architectural frames to differentiate one home from another was crucial in facilitating this ideal. The notion of "home" as a safe and private "castle", a family-unit, depended on isolation from the external world, on being architecturally free-standing and secured from intrusions (1999: 84). Marcus points out that haunted-house stories performed a very important function in challenging such a model: because they "broadcast the urban deformation of the domestic ideal […] and set in motion ghosts who attacked the middle-class home's status as an insular, individuating single-family structure" (122).

With a socio-economic focus on London urban-haunted stories, Melissa Edmundson (2013) reminds us that these fictions were produced in times of important change in women's access to property, with the Married Women's Property Act in 1882 as the summit of this long struggle. Reading Riddell's urban-haunted fictions as testimonies of a capitalist, industrialized urban context, Edmundson highlights literary themes deriving from relationships perversely transformed by (mis)uses of capital. The studies of both Edmundson and Marcus emphasize that the haunting of the private, domestic sphere reflects the vices of the city, including bribery and speculation in the rental market, contested inheritances and corrupt property management and the effect of urban density on rising land costs. This shows that, despite its formulaic structure, the Victorian haunted-house story in its urban variant often reflects the socio-economic transformation of the modern city with regards to the property market.

With this cultural materialistic framework in mind, and focusing on the formal features of the urban haunted-house tales considered here, we can identify rhetorical strategies that express the loss of the domestic ideal through the fantastic. Broughton employs Manichaean imagery to depict the house in "The Truth". From being the ideal home it first promises to be, the building instead transforms into a nightmarish, "terrible, hateful, fatal house". In "Walnut-Tree House" (Riddell), the loss of the idyll is articulated by the contrast between *once* and *now*: "Originally a place of considerable pretention […] when Vauxhall Gardens were still *in nubilus*; when no South-Western Railway was planned or thought of; when London was comparatively a very small place, and its present suburbs were mere country villages—hamlets lying quite remote from the heart of the city" ([1882c] 2009: 2). The park, the fish ponds, the peace surrounding the house are all obliterated by the urban expansion of London, turning this

area into an impersonal suburb: "When rows and rows of houses, and line after line of streets, have obliterated all the familiar marks, it is impossible to cultivate a sentiment as regards property" (2). Similarly, in "The Old House in Vauxhall Walk" the homeless protagonist walks the London streets at night and highlights the decline of living standards along Vauxhall Walk: "the houses, so large and good—once inhabited by well-to-do citizens, now let out for the most part in floors to weekly tenants" (100).

These passages present the disruption of the domestic idyll as a process started by the growth of the city itself. The rapid expansion of housing contributed to the lowering of standards in rental properties, the disintegration of communities and the increasing anonymity of the city's inhabitants. Certain inhabitants—ghosts from the past—return to demand recognition and remembrance in this fast-paced milieu. The haunted house represents a past that needs to be (re)discovered and recounted, and is thus in conflict with the image of modern London as a city whose "memories are not generally the longest" ("The Truth" 76). In reference to the Victorian domestic ideal, Marcus argues that "the ideal home was required to concretize memories and to dissolve them, by acting to make men forget everything that lay outside their homes" (1999: 92). The urban-haunted houses, however, do not want Londoners to forget their story. As was the case with the trope of the antique shop, these buildings are sites of memory, embedding layers of a conflicted history that resurfaces, not through the power of magic talismans but in the form of a lurking ghost.

Hermes and Hestia-Characters

The experience of and reaction to the haunting varies greatly across the different characters of these tales, to the point that certain groupings can be distinguished. Some are thrilled by the mystery while others are instead petrified by it. Some regard it as an adventure while others experience it as a violent and traumatic invasion of their privacy. "The Truth" draws attention to class and gender binaries that are prevalent in the corpus of urban haunted-house narratives. Some character types are more sensitive and vulnerable to the supernatural. Their space of representation is mostly indoors, as opposed to the disbelievers, who are often depicted as adventurers on the move. It may come as no surprise to the reader to learn that it is the female and working-class characters who are confined within the

haunted house for the large part of the narrative, whereas male upper-class characters function as vectors coming in and out of the domestic sphere, thus connecting the private space with the cityscape.

In order to conceptualize this recurrent polarization of character types and the related dichotomies of indoors-outdoors, reason-superstition, I propose a gender-based analogy with the mythological pair of Hermes and Hestia, guided by Vernant's beautiful analysis in both his article "Hestia-Hermes: Sur l'expression religieuse" (1963) and his canonical work *Myth and Thought among the Greeks* (1983: 126–174). Vernant demonstrates that these two gods—included in the Twelve Gods carved by Pheidias at the great statue of Zeus at Olympia—represent two opposing spatial principles. Hermes, God of the threshold, is the complement of Hestia, goddess of home. While he represents spatial fluidity and movement across boundaries, she embodies reference points, spatial stability and fixity. Of the two, one enters and leaves the house at will: this is the explorer, the figure personified by the mythical Odysseus who experiences innumerable adventures, with the return home always present as a reference. Meanwhile, the other protects the hearth and is confined indoors: she is Penelope, the opposing spatial configuration of Odysseus, the figure who stays and waits faithfully.

Urban haunted-house narratives replicate this gendered division of movement and fixity. I adopt the term "Hestia-type characters" to refer to the women and domestic servants who feature in the corpus of haunted-house fiction analyzed here. In contrast, the "Hermes-type characters" of the corpus are embodied by male figures who spend most of their time in the city, at business meetings or attending social events. These are the last to realize that domestic terrors stalk their homes.

In "The Truth", Cecilia's husband is a model Hermes-type character. One of the very few things that the reader learns about him is that his presence in the house is scant, largely confined to the evenings. This characterization is similar to that vividly portrayed in "The Open Door" by Margaret Oliphant. The main female character and her sick son remain in Bentwood, where the supernatural action takes place, while the male narrator is depicted as constantly on the move from and to London:

> I was absent in London when these events began. In London an old Indian plunges back into the interests with which all his previous life has been associated, and meets old friends at every step. I had been circulating among some half-dozen of these—enjoying the return to my former life in shadow,

> though I had been so thankful in substance to throw it aside—and had missed some of my home letters. ([1882] 2006: 91–22)

Hestia-characters are mainly depicted in and defined by indoor spaces. The stability and order of the hearth, the domain that they inhabit and embody, is breached by the presence of the ghost. The supernatural thus intrudes into the space attributed to their identity, whether as females or servants. The fantastic operates as a transgression of their fundamental role of preserving order and peace in a stable home. This analytical approach explains why Hestia-characters are the first to perceive or, on occasion, be violently de-stabilized by the fantastic apparition, an experience often resulting in a physical or mental crisis. These characters are described by others or by themselves as "unsteady" ("The Truth" 2003: 78), "raving mad" (79 and 80), "having fits of madness" (80). In "The Truth", Cecilia's maid is the first to claim that the house is haunted. Another housemaid, Sarah, is then the first to see the specter, which leads to her breakdown and subsequent "remov[al] to a lunatic asylum" (80). At the other side of the Hestia-Hermes division, Cecilia's husband conforms to type as he ridicules his wife's and servants' reactions:

> The moment Henry came in, I ran to him, and told him; he pooh-poohed the whole story, laughed at me asked whether we should turn out of the prettiest house in London, at the very height of the season, because a grocer said it had a bad name. […] He derided my 'babyish fears', as he called them, to such an extent that I felt half ashamed, and yet not quite comfortable either. (78)

Women, servants, and often also children and domestic pets, are represented as sensitive, innocent and "pure" but also as fragile believers of the irrational who are more prone to experiences of the supernatural. In the tales, these are the first to witness the supernatural. Their experience is often resoundingly discredited by male figures who personify the discourse of reason and ridicule the belief in ghosts as a remnant of an uncivilized past (as did Cecilia's husband). This polarization in character types is repeated across the urban haunted-house corpus considered here. In "The Story of Clifford House" Mary, the "respectable and trustworthy servant" (2003: 224), is the first victim of the ghost in the newly rented London house, and is followed by other maids who are next to see the apparition. George warns his wife: "if you are going to listen to ignorant servants'

superstitions and run out of your house, just as we are comfortably settled in it, on account of a foolish sickly woman fainting from hearing a ghost story—I say—it is a pity you ever came into it" (226). In *The Uninhabited House* the irrational belief, instead of being condemned outright, is romanticized as a class issue: "There is a wonderful instinct in the lower classes, which enables them to comprehend, without actual knowledge, when misfortune is coming upon a house: and in this instance that instinct was not at fault" (1971: 18). The plot of *The Uninhabited House* recounts how a number of servants are the first to be affected by the spectral apparition: "the River Hall servants, one after another, had given notice to leave—indeed, to speak more accurately, they did not give notice, for they left; […] First one housemaid was taken with "the shivers"; then the cook had "the trembles"; then the coachman […]" (18). In "Old Mrs. Jones", the reaction to the haunting highlights once again the character duality of rational male versus irrational female:

> To say that Mrs. Tippens wished to leave the house when her lodgers and children began to see visions is but to say she was a woman. […] To this Mr. Tippens replied he was very sorry, but he hoped she would try and pull herself together a bit, and not be frightened by a lot of lying stories. If they only held their tongues and stayed in the house for a while, people would soon quit talking about old Mrs. Jones, and then their lodgers would remain and not give notice because a door creaked.
>
> He reminded her how he was answerable for the rent for three years, that he was not likely ever to get such cheap and convenient premises again, and he implored her, like a good girl, not to be foolish and believe the house was haunted just because a parcel of old women, with Mrs. Jubb at their head, chose to give it a bad name. (2009: 153)

This duality explains why the impact of the haunting is radically different for the characterization of the Hestia- and Hermes-figures. Whereas Hestia-characters perceive the fantastic element as a "terrible, hateful, fatal" tragedy ("The Truth" 80), Hermes-characters, confident, risk-taking and intrepid explorers, see it as an opportunity, a window into an extraordinary experience. These male figures often seek to spend time in the haunted house for the sake of adventure. The following array of male narrators illustrates this aspect:

> I felt that now was the moment to clear the matter up ("An Authentic Narrative of a Haunted House", 1964: 424)

> "You excite my curiosity", said I; "nothing I should like better than to sleep in a haunted house" ("The Haunted and the Haunters", 2010: 43), "the nocturnal adventure to which I had plighted my honour. […] I put my book into my pocket, and strolled leisurely towards the haunted house", "my curiosity was sufficiently gratified", "if we could get to the bottom of these mysteries" (58)

> "If I could rid River Hall of its ghosts […] unraveling the mystery attached to that place" (*The Uninhabited House*, 1971: 54), "I would rather sleep alone in the haunted house, than in a mansion filled from basement to garret, with the unsolved mystery of this place haunting me" (87)

In "The Truth" the final scene is constructed upon this contrast in attitude between the two types of character. Ralph Gordon, a friend of the De Wynt family and the suitor of Adela, Cecilia de Wynt's cousin, is eager to spend the night in the haunted room, much to the disapproval of the female characters. Adopting the role of an adventurous detective, Ralph seeks to demonstrate that the mystery can be explained in a logical manner. Adela, a prototypical Hestia-character embodying the conservative discourse of safety and caution, opposes Ralph Gordon's initiative:

> 'Never fear', he said, 'it would take more than a whole squadron of departed ones, with the old gentleman at their head, to send me crazy'. He was so eager, so persistent, so thoroughly in earnest, that I yielded at last, though with a certain strong reluctance, to his entreaties. Adela's blue eyes filled with tears, and she walked away hastily to the conservatory, and stood picking bits of heliotrope to hide them. Nevertheless, Ralph got his own way; it was so difficult to refuse him anything. […] 'Let me go up at once, he said, looking very happy and animated. 'I don't know when I have felt in such a good tune; a new sensation is a luxury not to be had every day of one's life'. (81)

Despite his bravery, Ralph's attitude is to prove fatal. He should have listened to the servants' rumors after all. The story ends with Ralph Gordon falling dead upon witnessing the apparition with his own eyes. This ending confirms the fact of the haunting and thus demonstrates that the fears of the Hestia-characters were justified. The belief in the supernatural, presented in a gendered light as a female frailty and flaw and associated with a backward, superstitious working class, triumphs over the discourse of reason and the *urbanitas* virtues embodied by Hermes-characters.

This type of resolution in haunted-house tales has led feminist critics, notably of the second wave, to regard the ghost story—with its emphasis on domesticity—as a narrative form favored by women authors. The works by Ellen Moers (1977), Ann Richter (1977) and Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar (1979), among others, argued that the domestic was a unifying thread of the female fantastic. These fantastic fictions, they claimed, offered metaphors of female oppression in interior spaces and gave visibility to female lives oppressed by patriarchy. Elsewhere (García 2020) I have dealt with the dangers of reading the female fantastic as a primarily domestic form. As an alternative I have suggested a mode of analysis that prioritizes narrative frames and thresholds over a focus on interior spaces, regardless of the rural or urban setting. This approach is also applicable to the city haunted-house tales considered here. These fictions undoubtedly concentrate most of the action indoors: following the well-worn Gothic formula of the cursed space, the houses in these stories carry the burden of ancestral sins. The stories rely heavily on themes associated with the private sphere, such as reclusion, invisibility, patriarchal subjugation and sorority, generally portrayed from the formulaic perspective of middle-class families. However, the trope of the haunted house situated in the city offers a wider spectrum of themes beyond those suggested by the indoor setting. In the analysis of Broughton's "The Truth" I highlighted the importance of regarding the haunted house as a set of spatial relations instead of just as interior loci. By placing the focus on how the building interacts with its frames (inside-outside, private-public, domestic-urban), a set of power relationships, class divisions and gendered spatialities are revealed. Thus, despite having its roots in Gothic rural fiction, the urban-haunted house can be understood as a motif deriving specifically from urban experience, existing in and being a product of the modern city.

A Monotonous Sensation

As with the motif of the antique shops encountered in city spaces, urban haunted-house tales bear witness to the fantastic migrating from the isolation of rural environments. The new location offers an important aesthetic renovation of the traditional Gothic tropes surely (all-too) familiar to readers. In concluding the section, I draw upon a lesser-known text that exemplifies this sense of "tradition fatigue". In its use of humor, it recalls other stories of frustrated, ridiculed and pitied apparitions in literature, for example the famous Canterville Ghost by Oscar Wilde.

The anonymous short story "A Monotonous 'Sensation'", published in *All the Year Round* in 1863, provides an interesting counterbalance to the family dramas of ghost stories. The intertextual awareness shown in this piece serves as a comical summary of the conventions identified in this chapter.

The first sentences immediately situate the narrative within the corpus of urban haunted-house tales: "A certain house at the corner of an obscure but tolerably respectable street in London was said to be troubled. The troublous signs were of the usual kind" (1863: 406). These include doors banging, silks rustlings, interior bells ringing and windows clattering "on the calmest nights" (406). The cause of these "trouble reports" (406) is hypothetically attributed to different past dramas. In the passages that follow, the focus shifts to the practical aspect of the haunting and highlights the negative effect the house's ill reputation has on its market value:

> The effect of public opinion on the marketable value of the house was practical enough. The owner of the property, who had tried to restore it to good repute by offering it for a short term of years at the low rent of nothing a quarter, with a clause that he himself would keep it in repair, could not, even on those easy conditions, find a permanent tenant, and had abandoned it in despair, so that for a long time the frontage exhibited a combination of smashed glass and accumulated dirt, that was quite sufficient to breed a collection of ghost stories, if none had been already in circulation. (407)

The property is occupied by various tenants, all of whom last only a short period of time before they are scared away by the ghost. Over time, however, its later respectable tenants grow accustomed to the ghost. A pragmatic Frenchman, for example, finds the building's troubled reputation most convenient: "he would rather pay £30 for the house with its chains and its silks than £50 for a similar establishment without such encumbrances" (407). He is succeeded by a lawyer's clerk, by an auctioneer, then a Yankee speculator and also by a "melodramatic actor accustomed himself to play ghosts and demons in sensation-pieces" (408) who "did not care sixpence what happened upon them after nightfall" (408). This progressive trivialization of the supernatural is accompanied by a parallel increase of the house value, turning it into "a very marketable property, not to be had for less than £60 per annum, and a contract on the part of the tenant to execute all substantial repairs" (408). The ghost, reacting to the first signs that the tenants were growing indifferent to his haunting, reinforces

his presence with "vigorous as ever rustling, rattling, slamming, clattering, and casting shadows without the aid of a substance" (408). In the final scene, on a Christmas evening, the specter makes an appearance to a group of young actors who are gathered in the haunted house. All his best efforts to frighten the group away are confronted with calm humor. In the end the ghost pronounces a heart-felt monologue that subverts the reader's expectations:

> True, I am only the ghost, and much do I deserve your pity. Many years ago I resolved to make a sensation in this neighborhood, and I effected my purpose chiefly by means of the noises, which most of you know but too well. But people have grown used to my rustle, accustomed to my rattle, habituated to my clatter, familiar with my ring. Even my shadow my grand effect scarcely elicits a remark. My invention has been exhausted long ago, and noisy as I may be, I cannot command attention. If any one here among you, having greatly distinguished himself in youth, thinks he can go on for ever on the strength of his early reputation, by simply repeating himself, without giving any new direction to his talent, let him take warning by me, or he will find in time that he is only a ghost. (408)

In the ghost's psychological downfall lies the twist that this haunted-house tale offers. The narrative tension is placed not on the drama contained in the house but on the ghost's feelings of failure. In the next section I discuss a similarly pathetic urban ghost that features in Charles Flor O'Squarr's "Vision" (pp. 96–99).

"A Monotonous 'Sensation'" further develops the tropes of narratives of urban haunting in order to expose their monotony, as the title indicates. In a mockery of the literary conventions of a horror tale, the specter has become one of the many elements that simply come with the house. The ending, in which the supernatural apparition expresses his frustration at being perceived as "only the ghost" (408), contrasts with the typical denouement of ghost stories. The characters do not flee the house in fright. Instead, they stay and listen calmly to him. Ghosts, as this short story seems to infer, are now part of the urban imaginary to such an extent that they have—much to their own regret—become an intrinsic element of the city. The empathetic bond that the specter of this haunted house establishes with his audience demonstrates that, while his traditional gimmickry of scares failed to grab their attention, his personal story still does. After hearing his pathos-laden speech, the young listeners return to their

homes "all edified" (408). This text thus demonstrates that the formulaic ghost story finds ways of reinventing itself in a context in which modern readers, like the audience of youngsters the ghost addresses, are too accustomed to the tricks "of the usual kind" (406).

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PART II

Encounters: Urban Revenants and Other Fantastic Acquaintances

this divine prostitution of the soul giving itself entire, all its poetry and all its charity, to the unexpected as it comes along, to the stranger as he passes

—*Les Foules,* Baudelaire

Ghosts have improved themselves over time, they have advanced with progress and while they still enter the homes of the living without invitation, at least they now don the impeccable attire of true gentlemen

—"Vision", Flor O'Squarr

Introduction: How the (Un)Dead Became Modern

The idea of the city as a space of transient and fleeting social encounters is central to sociological perspectives on modernity. Increasing migration to the metropolis, a new social diversity and enhanced physical mobility were to give rise to encounters with strangers in the anonymity of the crowd. The adventurer, the stranger, the vagabond, the flâneur, the outcast, the native, the bohemian; Charles Baudelaire, Georg Simmel and Walter Benjamin provided a cast of urban characters who were to be mapped in relation to their spatial positions and practices in the city. This identification of individual types within the crowd contributed to making of the city a legible milieu and helped reduce the vastness of urban life into classifiable categories of city personalities. Part II of this book enhances this urban tableau of literary characters by adding a range of supernatural figures that personify a past uncomfortably present in the modern city.

Modern short stories of the fantastic are peopled with apparitions lurking in city streets: the doomed souls of artists condemned to dwell in the metropolis, ghosts of femmes fatales who induce lust and perversion, mysterious strangers who unexpectedly attend masquerade balls and dinner parties, beheaded figures in post-guillotine returns to the city and dolls determined to escape from the imposed confines of their shop windows are some of the examples that are discussed in the next two chapters. The narrative functions of these fantastic characters range from the personification of guilt to the embodiment of sexual fantasies that contravene bourgeois codes of behavior, very often through a reenacting of the gendered morals that predominated in the modern city. A notable example is the ghost of the Marquis de Cazalla in "El fantasma" (The Ghost, Emilia Pardo Bazán, 1897) with whom Leonor de Carmona embarks on an erotic relationship in Madrid. This "phantom of passion and remorse" (2001) acts as a projection of Leonor's frustration in her marriage to Ramón de Cardona and allows her an escape from her tedious bourgeois existence in the Spanish capital.

The question that drives this exploration of urban encounters with the supernatural is: what makes a nineteenth-century revenant "modern"? The answer, I suggest, is twofold. These stories are modern by virtue not only of the urban location of the plots but also of the urban identity of the ghostly characters of the era. To illustrate this, in the next sections I refer to two fantastic texts which feature exemplars of this modern ghost. These narratives make specific reference to the Gothic tradition within discourses distinctly bent on being modern.

The opening passage of the ghost story "The Man of Science" (Jerome K. Jerome, 1892) provides a succinct portrayal of how ghost story patterns are subverted at the turn of the century by situating the supernatural encounter in the modern city. The narrator begins the tale by recounting the following occurrence:

> I met a man in the Strand one day that I knew very well, as I thought, though I had not seen him for years. We walked together to Charing Cross, and there we shook hands and parted. Next morning, I spoke of this meeting to a mutual friend, and then I learnt, for the first time, that the man had died six months before. ([1892] 2003: 379)

The immediately noticeable aspect of this opening passage is the anecdotal, factual tone that is adopted. The style is concise and descriptive: the

two initial lines cover that which in other ghost tales unfolds over many pages. In busy central London the narrator bumps into an old acquaintance, who—we learn—is already deceased. It is thus evident from the outset that the narrative tension will not be concentrated on the typical mystery of whether this acquaintance is indeed living or dead. Instead, as hinted at by the title, the text develops a debate on the limitations of science in explaining certain phenomena.

This supernatural encounter is experienced by a "man of science". The narrator's anecdote of what he initially classes as a coincidence gives way to a discussion with his friends on whether the dead can return to life. Two antithetical characters embody opposing views on this subject. The first, Brown, is the personification of positivism ("it seems to me that the difference between what we call the natural and the supernatural is merely the difference between frequency and rarity of occurrence", 379) whereas the second, Jephson, is a believer in "spiritualism to its fullest extent" (379). In addition, there is a third character-type, MacShaughnassy, who performs an important role, albeit one secondary to the plot. He is a humorous figure who facilitates an intertextual parody of ghost-story conventions by drawing attention to the logical inconsistencies of supernatural beliefs.

> 'You mean,' added Jephson, 'that you cannot understand why a spirit, not compelled as we are by the exigencies of society, should care to spend its evenings carrying on a laboured and childish conversation with a room full of abnormally uninteresting people.'
>
> 'Well,' answered MacShaughnassy, 'if one admits the possibility of spirits retaining any interest in the affairs of this world at all, it is certainly more reasonable to imagine them engaged upon a task such as you suggest, than to believe that they occupy themselves with the performance of mere drawing-room tricks'. (380)

Implicitly referencing the popular tradition of revenants, MacShaughnassy deploys irony to dismantle the classic story-model of spiritual contact with the dead: if revenants existed today, would they not engage in more meaningful activities than the classic table-turning of séances? In an implicit manner, this character voices pragmatically the need for a renovation of the well-worn tropes that he references.

Both the departure from and mockery of the traditional portrayal of the revenant and the trivialization of the supernatural in "Man of Science" provide a distinctive tone to this story that can be recognized as

"modern". In the opening paragraph quoted above, the classic tropes of encounters with the dead (an isolated location, a night-time setting, the motif of returning to haunt the living, a final climatic tension leading to the revelation that the figure was indeed a revenant) are subverted. The encounter is normalized by the setting in which it occurs: a busy, public, city location. The narrator randomly meets a former acquaintance and shares a pleasant walk and conversation with him; there seems to be nothing extraordinary about this. This feature distinguishes urban revenant narratives from the typical Gothic fantastic: instead of being anchored in the remote past, these stories recount the mundane present. As the narratives analyzed in chapters "Female Spirits of Place" and "Fantastic Exhibitions of the Self" show, the modern city becomes a strategic setting in which the encounter with the dead can become a more surprising and unexpected occurrence.

The second prototypical example of modern revenant features in "Vision" (1885), by Belgium writer Charles Flor O'Squarr. This text, by presenting a characterization of the apparition that is in stark opposition to the expected tropes of revenant literature, provides one of the most humorous revisions of haunted-tale tropes. In this case, we are dealing with an unsuccessful, frustrated, misguided and polite spirit: an *anti-revenant* in modern Paris.

The narrator tells the story of being haunted over a six-month period by William Perkins, a phantom from La Martinique. This ghostly being seeks out the narrator in Paris in the mistaken belief that he is Louis Vermont, who stole Perkin's fiancée from him on the Antillean Island. The narrator informs the ghost of the error: while he had indeed been to La Martinique, his name is not Louis Vermont nor did he ever meet Perkins's fiancée. What follows is a hilarious story of a haunting that sees Perkins chasing the narrator around Paris. The narrative tension is produced by the continuous refusal of the revenant to acknowledge his mistake, until realization finally comes and, apologetically, Perkins vanishes for good.

The mocking tone and intertextual references to revenant literature are set out in the initial paragraph:

> Certainly, the ghosts of today are no longer the fantastic apparitions of the past who would appear at midnight, close to the cemetery, to terrorize some old-fashioned villagers; ghosts have improved themselves over time, they have advanced with progress and while they still enter the homes of the

> living without invitation at least they now don the impeccable attire of true gentlemen. (1885: 168, my translation)[1]

This paragraph establishes the contrast between apparitions of the past (*apparitions fantastiques d'autrefois*; terror, a midnight setting, a rural cemetery) and the ghosts of the present—modern apparitions that have evolved with societal progress and that reside, genteelly, among the living in urban centers. This shift in setting recalls the dialogue between two gentlemen at the opera in Jean Lorrain's famous story "Lanterne magique" (see pp. 135–136). In this story one of the pair bemoans the disappearance of familiar supernatural motifs. He shares with his companion that he particularly misses the "décor" of the traditional fantastic, with its tombs in the moonlight, cypresses, cemeteries and those other common elements of Gothic ghost stories.

It is a modern, "improved" revenant that we encounter in the protagonist of "Vision". Revenant William Perkins is a proper gentleman, polite and well-intentioned (*de bonne foi et d'esprit*, 168). His good manners are evident from the very first encounter with the narrator. Perkin's appearance in the narrator's Parisian apartment is far from sudden and violent. He politely asks for permission to enter the room and presents his apologies for the inconvenience: "I am unwelcome, no doubt. … Sorry to bother you at this time. … Believe me that. … No, I'm really confused." His good upbringing is also reflected in the modern design of his elegant clothes (169).[2]

A central part of the comical effect is generated by the naturalization of this supernatural visit. The narrator's reaction to the ghostly visitation breaks once again with the established trope of the terrifying haunting. His attitude instead represents a modern skepticism toward the supernatural: "My dear ghost, I said, […]. Barely dead and you have already adopted ideas from the otherworld. But, my boy, we no longer practice the superstition of the fantastic. […] I am a child of the nineteenth century and I do not believe in the supernatural" (171).

[1] "Certes, les revenants ne sont plus ces apparitions fantastiques d'autrefois, surgissant au coup de minuit, dans les environs des cimetières, pour pétrifier de terreur quelque villageois attardé; les fantômes se sont perfectionnés avec le temps, ils ont marché avec le progrès, et, s'ils pénètrent encore chez les vivants sans se faire annoncer, au moins gardent-ils dans le monde la tenue irréprochable des vrais gentlemen."

[2] On fashion and the modern ghost story see Briefel (2015).

The narrator treats William Perkins with courtesy, even rejoicing in this new revenant companionship as Perkins follows him around Paris. The setting contributes to the comedy of the telling. The ghost is invited to join the narrator in his flânerie around the city, to mingle with the crowd and to accompany him at social and professional gatherings: "In the evening, William Perkins joined me at the Théâtre des Variétés, sitting next to me, in an empty chair. I was kind and recounted the first two acts that he had missed./- I'm going to the artists' ball. Don't forget to come and fetch me" (172).

"Vision" provides a quintessential modern subversion of the story of a revenant that appears to his/her victim in order to avenge some past injustice. While the plot is far from innovative, the construction of the characters and the setting most definitely are. The object of this haunting, a modern citizen and man of politics, is well versed in the traditions of the supernatural and shows neither fear nor intimidation at the sight of the ghost. The ghost, for his part, is confused, polite and lingers in the city until apologetically acknowledging his mistake. The relationship between these two characters is balanced: there is no ghost-victim asymmetry or sense of threat between the haunter and haunted. These are two modern gentlemen who resolve the misunderstanding that has arisen between them with the urbanity expected of the time.

The banalization of haunting is a crucial element that differentiates both "Man of Science" and in "Vision" from classic revenant literature. The plot structures of these two stories contradict the key Todorovian premise of the undefined occurrence that oscillates between a rational and irrational explanation.[3] From the very start of these texts the supernatural is exposed without ambiguity: the human protagonists are being visited by a ghost in an urban setting. Todorov's approach to the fantastic, as these stories show, is therefore not the definitive characterization of the genre

[3] Todorov's theory is based on the premise that the fantastic is different to other modes of the supernatural: it creates a moment of hesitation on the part of the reader, a moment between the acceptance of the supernatural as possible within the fictional universe and the denial of this possibility. In this respect, the fantastic would occupy a liminal space, identified by the reader as oscillating between a realistic and a marvellous text: "The person who experiences the event must opt for one of two possible solutions: either he is a victim of an illusion of the senses, of a product of the imagination—and laws of the world remain what they are; or else the event has indeed taken place, it is an integral part of reality—but then this reality is controlled by forces unknown to us. The fantastic occupies the duration of this uncertainty" (Todorov 1975: 25).

but rather one of the many structural models offered by some nineteenth-century narratives.

* * *

The chapters that follow see literary (un)dead figures invade modern European capitals. Perhaps in an awareness of a fatigue with tropes associated with the revenant and other fantastic acquaintances, the dead came to ape their victims in becoming modern during the nineteenth century. These extraordinary encounters with the unknown take place in the paradigmatic space of modernity: the city. By providing identifiable urban landmarks in their works of fiction, authors explored new ways of playing upon the expectations of their readers, who were accustomed to finding their phantoms in traditionally distant, nocturnal environments, as articulated by the opera-goer in Lorrain's "Lanterne magique". By virtue of being urban, the figure of the revenant, a feature of fantastic literature since its very earliest days, acquired a greater complexity of attributes, roles and interpretation.

In the following chapters I analyze this newly complex role of the revenant. Chapter "Female Spirits of Place" focuses on the case of the female revenant lurking in the city. Through their eroticizing of social and sexual taboos, female spirits of place came to serve as symbolic and (en)gendered expressions of the vices of modern urban life. Their liminal condition between life and death brought the past back into the present, thus forcing the city to revisit a problematic history. While chapter "Female Spirits of Place" focuses on this supernatural figure and its urban attributes, chapter "Fantastic Exhibitions of the Self" is centered upon the spaces of encounter. Masquerade balls, city streets, apartment interiors and shops are settings through which the complexities of social display and its effects on the individual's perception of self-identity can be explored. My analysis highlights the different means by which the fantastic exposes the dangerous game of producing and staging identities in the modern city.

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Female Spirits of Place

What evil spirit holds me here in his spell?

—"Ritter Gluck", E.T.A. Hoffmann

Some Male Referents: Hoffmann's "Ritter Gluck" (1809) and Thornbury's *Haunted London* (1859/1865)

One of the earliest nineteenth-century urban revenants is to be found in a fantastic tale by E.T.A. Hoffmann. Jürgen Barkhoff, in his study on the city of Berlin in Hoffmann's fiction, comments on the new narrative possibilities that the modern urban setting offered the members of the Serapion Brethren. They believed that "laying the scene of your story in Berlin" not only "gives an element of historical truth which helps a sluggish fancy" but "the story gains greatly in life and vigour, especially for those who know the city" (Hoffmann qtd. in Barkhoff, 2017: 46). "Ritter Gluck: Eine Erinnerung aus dem Jahre 1809" (Ritter Gluck: A Recollection from the Year 1809) is an example of "the importance of anchoring Romantic flights of the imagination in the lived reality of the contemporary city" (Barkhoff 2017: 42).

This short story—Hoffmann's first published literary work—is generally considered by critics as introducing many of what were to become the writer's characteristic themes and motifs. "Ritter Gluck" appeared in

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Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung in 1809 and was later included, as the opening story, in *Phantasiestücke in Callots Manier* (1814–1815). Hoffmann's text tells of the encounter between the narrator and a singular man in the Tiergarten in Berlin. As the story unfolds, it is revealed that this stranger is the composer Christoph Willibald Gluck, long dead by 1806. The composer, alarmed by the manner in which his works are misinterpreted in modern times, joins with the narrator in deploring the lack of appreciation for the Romantic sensibility in modern Berlin.

In the opening passages, Hoffmann carefully crafts the urban scene in which the encounter with the stranger will occur. The first paragraphs depict a lively late autumn afternoon in Berlin in which passers-by and strollers occupy the public spaces of the city:

> Usually there are still several lovely days in the late fall in Berlin. The cheerful sun breaks out of the clouds, and the moisture in the soft breezes that drift through the streets quickly evaporates. A gaudy stream of people wanders along the Lindenstrasse to the Zoological Gardens—dandies, solid citizens with their wives and adores children, all dressed in their Sunday best, clergymen, Jewesses, junior barristers, prostitutes, professors, milliners, dancers, officers, etc. Soon all the tables at Klaus's and at Weber's are occupied; the coffee steams, the dandies light their thin cigars; everyone chats […]. (1969: 3)[1]

Comparing the narrative structures of Poe's "The Man of the Crowd" with Hoffmann's "Ritter Gluck", Gisela Vitt-Maucher (1970) points out that the initial crowd-scenes serve to accentuate the extraordinary meeting that will follow. From his seat at an outdoor table, the narrator of "Ritter Gluck" observes the city while listening to a musical performance by a café ensemble.[2] His reveries are interrupted by the voice of a stranger who joins him at his table. The singular character of this stranger emerges over the passages that follow, heightening the suspense surrounding his mysterious identity. The narrator finds in him the perfect companion with whom to discuss the virtues and flaws of opera and orchestral performances and they engage in an agreeable conversation.

[1] The trope of observing the city crowd is revisited in a very different manner by Hoffmann in last short story "Des Vetters Eckfenster" (My Cousin's Corner Window 1822, see section "The Architectural Anomaly", pp. 70–72).

[2] See Henzel (1993) on the reception of Gluck's work in early nineteenth-century Berlin.

This stranger does not hide his dislike of the city ("Why did you ask me if I was a Berliner?" I began. "Because in that case I would have been obliged to leave you", 6) and as the narrative develops it becomes clear that he is a doomed artist who has been condemned to an eternity in the city of Berlin, "damned to wander here as my torment in barren space, like a departed spirit" (9), "What evil spirit holds me here in his spell?" (10).

The physical and spiritual imprisonment to which Gluck's character is subject offers different interpretations. Fetzer (1971), for example, regards Gluck's confinement to the city as an expression of creative paralysis. In this analysis, Gluck is the paradigm of the "epigonal artist" (327) who embodies "that large mass of 'nameless' individuals whose creative capacity is exhausted by emulation" (321). An autobiographical approach to this story, for instance, would read the character of Gluck as a fictional portrayal of Hoffmann's own unlucky musical career (with *Unglück*, unluck, thus used as a pun). However, the criticism effected through the fictional portrayal of Berlin provides a more interesting frame from which to interpret Gluck's condition as a prisoner of and in the German city. Hoffmann uses this story of the ghost of the celebrated composer doomed to solitude and isolation in Berlin to portray the frustration of the artist in the Berlin milieu. The character of Gluck shows that, although music survives time, this survival can be at a considerable price. Gluck's interactions with the narrator give rise to a portrayal of a Berliner society populated by mediocre charlatans, incapable of true artistic creation and appreciation: "I couldn't last through the overture, which was spewed forth prestissimo, without meaning or understanding" (9). Barkhoff's analysis highlights how Gluck "penetrates the topography of the cityscape to provide his readers with an unsettling glimpse into the dark side of bourgeois identity […] and the position of artists, minorities and other outsiders as endangered and liminal subjectivities" (2017: 46). As in many of Hoffmann's subsequent tales of the fantastic, the artist exists outside human temporal constraints. In this particular text, this transcendental quality renders him immortal. He is presented as the fantastic manifestation of an artistic spirit damned to a tortured existence in a modern society that lacks aesthetic sensibility. The artist, a creature capable of divine creation, cohabits with the living as a punishment for sharing his sublime creations with the unworthy: "I was damned to wander among the unholy like a departed spirit—formless, so that no one would recognize me until the sunflower should raise me again to the eternal" (12).

Gluck's revenant allegorizes how the past is brought to life in the present but also how the past can be misappropriated in a modern époque. Just like his misunderstood compositions, the solitary Gluck is doomed to linger on the streets of modern Berlin "haunting the shallow bourgeois entertainment culture" (47). He is the ghostly embodiment of those souls that remain alive in the city through the continuing popularity of their artistic contributions. As the subtitle succinctly puts it, he is an "Erinnerung", a recollection.

Another remembrance of a city's artistic past, where in this case the city is the British capital at a time some decades after Gluck's return to Berlin, is captured in a set of London specters by Walter Thornbury. In his *Haunted London* series (1859/1865), the author, a well-known city journalist and the first biographer of William Turner, presents a number of place-based phantoms whose stories serve to fictionalize as living memory the artistic history of the city in which they continue to live. Featuring initially in 1859 in the periodical *All the Year Round*, Thornbury's piece entitled "Haunted London: St. Martin's-Lane" was later included as a chapter in his book *Haunted London* (1865).[3] The goal of the narrator in both cases was to produce a social history of certain areas of London at a moment in which "the swifter destructions of improvement, and the inevitable necessities of modern civilisation, are rapidly remodelling London" (1865: v).[4] While the trope of London-based ghosts in the book remains mostly metaphorical, in the shorter version published in Dicken's

[3] A few years earlier *Household Words* published a similarly-themed tribute to London's spirits entitled "My London Ghosts" (Robertson 1857 vol. XV). In this work, the author commemorates the "grand ghosts" (345) of his childhood: "Isaac Newton, Francis Bacon, William Shakespeare, William Harvey, and Oliver Cromwell were my principal London ghosts, and it was by seeing them as they lived, by listening to their talk, and by musing over their thoughts that I laid the phantoms of my hallucinated childhood, and won my present measure of mental health. Diseased, indeed, must the soul be which would not be somewhat healed by the society of the sublime shades who lived upon the banks of the Thames when science, literature, and liberty flourished best in England" (349).

[4] The preface of the book shows how Thornbury retains the goal of his previous article but creates some distance from the supernatural: "This book deals not so much with the London of the ghost-stories, the scratching impostor in Cock Lane, or the apparition of Parson Ford at the Hummums, as with the London consecrated by manifold traditions—a city every street and alley of which teems with interesting associations, every paving-stone of which marks, as it were, the abiding-place of some ancient legend or biographical story; in short, this London of the present haunted by the memories of the past" (1865: v).

periodical Thornbury employs a much more literal approach to the motif of spirits of place:

> There is no post-office directory in which one can find out the addresses of London ghosts. This is an oversight. I never go out in London, but I meet my ghosts; and yet, before I can lay my hand on their bony shoulders, they whip into a cab, or up an alley, or round a turning, and are off before I can ask them for a card. Charles the First, for instance, whom only last Tuesday I met at the door of the Admiralty, carrying his head, with its peaked beard—for coolness, I suppose—under his arm; then there is old Johnson, with the scorched wig, I saw to-day, going to look for his old corner where he planned his Hebrides expedition with Boswell, at the Mitre, in Fleet-street; then Izaak Walton, with his fishing-rod, in Chancery-lane; and so on.
>
> Well, I am out now to take a note of the whereabouts of the St. Martin's-lane ghosts, and shall take the notes on my thumb-nail. (1859: 20)

This paragraph contains some of the same features noted in the analysis of "Ritter Gluck" above, especially concerning the normalization of the supernatural as part of the city and enhanced by the trope of the random encounter. This contributes to an attenuation or even elimination of the effect of horror that these specters would usually provoke. In fact, in this story the narrator goes as far as to treat these phantoms with affection: "my ghosts", "before I can ask them for a card", "carrying his head […] for coolness". In his journey around St. Martin's Lane, the narrator lists the stories of all those artists who had occupied the lodgings of this central street during the mid- to late eighteenth century. Toward the end of the story, he turns his attention to Old Slaughter's Coffee-house, and its "chief visitors" and shifts—with no transition from the past tense—to a description of himself at that very moment among these same ghosts: "There he is with the inerasable stain of soot still on his old yellow skin. He lives in Bloomsbury-square, in the house where old D'lsraeli afterwards lived. Next him is Gravelot, who keeps a drawing-school in the Strand, and did the designs for Hanmer's small Shakspeare" (1859: 24). This immersive experience into the ghostly creative past of London is maintained until the end of the piece. As a reviewer of *Haunted London* wrote: "A capital title is '*Haunted London*'—for is it not haunted, this London of ours? Haunted happily, by ghosts of memories that will not be laid" (*The Saturday Review* 1865: 427). Thornbury's exercise of ghost-mapping is a way by which to retrace London's history and to remember

its most celebrated intellectuals and artists. At the end of his chapter on St. Martin's Lane, he proclaims: "I can assure my readers that a most respectable class of ghosts haunts the artist quarter in St. Martin's Lane" (270).

While the stories of Hoffmann and Thornbury provide examples of modern, reputable, city-based ghosts, I have included them here to present a gendered contrast with the corpus analyzed in the following sections. As the texts considered below demonstrate, when the specters haunting the city are female, they are more often than not portrayed as being far from the "most respectable class of ghosts" of Thornbury's formulation. Female spirits of place tend to be characterized by moralizing gender traits. The structural and symbolic convergences found in this corpus highlight the need to treat the female revenant as a distinct category within fantastic narratives of urban revenants.

The reader will note that in the cases of the female spirits of place that will be encountered in this chapter there are no traces of the admiration that both Hoffmann and Thornbury had professed for the historical (male) figures of their ghostly tales. In the stories of female phantoms, the discursive features highlighting a cultural value brought to the city are absent. These ghosts do not have a historical persona: they have a function, subordinated to the male character with whom their encounter takes place. Nonetheless, their function is not simplistic. The seductive or repulsive presence of these female spirits takes aim at the moral corruption of modern urban life while reinforcing patriarchal expressions of sexuality.

The interaction between the female revenant and the human protagonist in the stories explored below is strikingly asymmetrical, especially in contrast to the companionable (and, indeed, intellectual) conversations between the narrator and Gluck, Thornbury's affectionate interaction with the ghosts of London. Those features in gentlemen specters are by no means replicated in the experiences of their female ghostly counterparts, as discussed below. Rarely do these phantoms engage in conversation with human characters and on the rare occasions that they do, it is with a specific agenda in mind: seduction, death or both. The following sections aim to give to these female supernatural characters a more complex voice than that provided by the literary history that created them.[5]

[5] Albeit not focused on the urban, it is worth noting that there is an increasing body of scholarship that approaches spectrality from a gendered perspective (gendered bodies, homes, violence and solidarity themes in ghosts stories). See Gordon 1997, Pedraza 2004, Blazan (ed.) 2007 and Wisker 2016.

The Uncivil Woman: "La mujer alta" (Alarcón, 1882)

"La mujer alta. Cuento de miedo" (The Tall Woman. A Horror Story, 1882) by Spanish author Pedro Antonio de Alarcón presents a very different take on Hoffmann's motif of a phantom bound to a specific place. In this case, the spirit takes the form of an old, gaunt woman who haunts the streets of Madrid. Published in 1882 in the periodical *La Ilustración artística* and included a year later in the compilation *Narraciones inverosímiles*, this text is one of the greatest examples of the Spanish nineteenth-century Gothic fantastic[6] and has featured in the most influential anthologies of the Spanish fantastic, including *El Castillo del espectro* (2002), *Cuentos fantásticos del siglo XIX* (2003) and *Cuentos españoles de terror y humor* (2009). Alarcón's story reprises familiar fantastic tropes, combining site-specific ghosts whose meaning and function are linked to a particular location with the female death figure who embodies feminized representations of moral corruption.

The story is set in Madrid in 1875 and opens in a manner common in modern fantastic tales; a framing narrative that replicates the dichotomous discourse between positivism and the supernatural:

> I don't think you'll accuse me of being a visionary. I am, let's put it this way, a modern man, not at all superstitious, and as positivist as they come, even though I may include among the positive facts all the faculties and emotions of my spirit in matters of feeling. So then with regard to extranatural, listen to what I listened to and see what I saw, although I wasn't the real hero of the bizarre tale that I'm going to relate, and tell me straight off what natural, physical, factual explanation—or however we want to phrase it—can be given to such a marvelous occurrence. (1999: 154)

Gabriel follows this preamble with the story of his friend Telesforo, a distinguished civil engineer and a man of science. Telesforo finds his rationality troubled when he comes to believe himself haunted by a solitary, ominous woman with whom he crosses paths in the city of Madrid at different stages of his life. Alarcón gives great details of the specific locations of these apparitions: the Calle Jardines (where Telesforo lives), the busy Calle de la Mondera and Calle de Peligros, the Calle del Caballero de

[6] Roas highlights the influence of E. A. Poe on Alarcón's fantastic production (2011: 140–146).

Gracia and the Calle de la Aduana. The second encounter takes place in the area of Calle del Prado, Calle del Lobo and the Plaza de las Cortes, all of which are central streets in the Spanish capital. The female revenant too is localized. "La mujer alta", who remains nameless, is incontestably from the city, as attested to by her way of dressing. Her particularly grotesque allure is enhanced by the traditional costume of a young *chulapa*, representative of the working class at the end of the century in Madrid. Her first appearances to Telesforo occur after the protagonist has indulged in some type of immoral act, such as a clandestine visit to his mistress and a ruinous visit to a gambling den ("the obscure jungle of vice, which was full of fevers and temptations", 158). In the years that follow, the appearance of the ghost is a portent of tragedy in Telesforo's life—the death of his father, of his fiancé Joaquina and ultimately his own death.

When considered in the context of the modern city, the haunting by the tall woman suggests at least two readings, both of which have notably misogynistic connotations. The first and more obvious is centered on Telesforo and the supernatural expression of his guilty conscience. The second emphasizes the character of the tall woman as an urban spirit of an unclassifiable nature. It is from her ambiguity that the fear she provokes in Telesforo stems.

The first of these interpretations, which is one frequently advanced by scholars, highlights that the tall woman represents all that which Telesforo abhors or refuses to confront: his "natural enemy" (160), "the monster through which the unreasonable forces of society destroyed his promising life" (Monleón 1990: 130). In this reading of the text, the symbolic meaning of the tall woman orbits around Telesforo: she is "the demon of my life" (1999: 165), "the specter of my cowardice", "the mocking ghost of human disappointments and shortcomings" (161). In their readings of "La mujer alta" Brigitte Leguen (1988) and Wan Sonya Tang (2016) expand upon the interconnections between the fantastic and religious sin in the increasingly secular society of fin-de-siècle Spain. From this angle, "the fantastic framework structures a religious thinking" (Leguen 1988: 212), and works as a sort of "modern-day horror film that makes short work of promiscuous teens", "a cautionary tale that steers readers away from immoral behavior" (Tang 2016: 31–32).

The disturbing effect provoked by the tall woman is not only because her appearances in Telesforo's life are intermittent and recurring but also due to her elusive, ambiguous, numinous nature. This dimension is the cornerstone of a second interpretation of this short story, which

foregrounds the gendered and urban aspects of this female spirit. Although she is clearly of Madrid, as her traditional local dress attests, the woman is portrayed throughout as a stranger, an outsider. Telesforo himself observes that she could be anything from a thief to a madwoman.

In his contribution to the theory of sociological distances in the modern city, Georg Simmel sees in the figure of the urban stranger the exemplification of modern city dynamics. The uncanny nature of the ghostly tall woman represents a game of distances to which Simmel refers thus: "The unity of nearness, and remoteness of every human relation is organized, in a way which may be most briefly formulated by saying that in the relationship to him, distance means that he who is close by far, and strangeness means that he who also is far is actually near" (2004: 73). The tall woman is an ambiguous creature who oscillates between the familiar and unfamiliar, echoing Freud's understanding of the Uncanny. The presence of the tall woman disrupts Telesforo's comfortable everyday life and leads him to depart from his habitual route through the city, to the point of forcing him to move to a new residence in another area of the city.

This ghostly apparition is depicted as a solitary female of an indiscernible identity, a characterization that subverts gendered expressions of normative behavior in the city. Using strongly dismissive terms, Alarcón refers to the figure of the tall woman as a "revolting" (165), "disgusting", "awful creature" (165, *corpulento vejestorio* in Spanish), with her "cynical stare and sickening smile" (160). On several occasions Telesforo argues that his loathing for the woman is provoked by the fact of her being an unaccompanied female at night: "a woman on the street in the small hours" (157), "a skinny woman whom destitution, vice, or some unfortunate accident might have drawn from her home" (157). In her study of female characters in Alarcón's short fiction, Colleen J. Combs notes that "Alarcón neatly rejected the evolving contemporary status of women with a retreat to the Romanticism of the supernatural to explain behavior he considered unacceptable" (1997: 109). The character of the tall woman represents a transgression of gendered morality in a society in which the city at night is not a suitable time-space for decent women. Telesforo renders explicit his aversion toward and condemnation of "solitary, nocturnal, women" (1999: 163). When trying to pinpoint her elusive identity, he takes recourse to other deviant female figures, such as the witch, the prostitute, Celestina (an ancient sorceress who used magic to facilitate clandestine sexual exchanges) as well as to a vocabulary of evil: "the cynical stare and sickening smile were those of an old woman, a witch, a sorceress, a Porccu

something that fully justified the aversion and dread that I had been made to feel all my life by women who walked the streets alone at night" (160).[7]

The tall woman who haunts the center of Madrid can therefore be understood in two different ways as a spirit of place. She is part of the city, anchored in specific traditions and on physical streets, as attested to by both her traditional dress and the identifiable local areas in which she lurks. She is also a type of Zeitgeist, embodying the gendered urban morals of the late nineteenth-century Spanish capital. As a figure representative of those females at the margins of society, the tall woman flaunts features that decent women are not supposed to enjoy or display. As opposed to being discreet, she is very noticeable and strikingly tall. She can walk the city streets alone at night, free of the vulnerabilities traditionally implied by her gender. For the male protagonist, the tall woman—by breaking with the conventions of prescribed femininity—personifies the opposite of the model female citizen. Given all these inurbane attributes, it is of little surprise that this short story is subtitled "a horror tale". The presence of the tall woman unsettles the comfortably rational male character, who feels morally judged and ultimately lethally threatened when she is near. From this angle, this female revenant can also be read as an allegory of the modern fantastic. She personifies the disruption of the familiar structures of masculine bourgeois privilege that shape the modern city.

The Beheaded Returns

A particular type of ghost appears in Parisian fictions of the fantastic throughout the nineteenth century. Stories by Washington Irving ("The Adventure of a German Student", 1824), Alexandre Dumas (*Les mille et un fantômes*, 1849 and *La Femme au collier de velours*, 1850), George Villelongue ("La Légende de la guillotine", 1887), Henri Conti ("Baiser suprême", 1889), Jean Lorrain ("Réclamation posthume", 1895) and Rubén Darío in the early twentieth century ("Cuento de Pascua", 1911) recount the deeds of decapitated figures encountered in the French capital, victims of the guillotine who return to the city seeking revenge for a

[7] This premise recalls the female vampire protagonist that features in the feminist Iranian film *A Girl Walks Alone at Night,* by Ana Lily Amirpour (2015). In the transgression of the gendered rule of caution suggested by the title, this female vampire owns the night. Far from being vulnerable to male attack, she roams the streets targeting abusive men.

lover's infidelity, for an unjust assassination, or to consummate a passion denied them in their lifetime.

There is a consistent leitmotif to be found in this corpus of nineteenth-century resurrections that critics such as Castex (1951), Baronian (1978) and Prince (2008: 8–9) have overlooked: the characters that occupy the role of revenant are more often than not female. Starting with Washington Irving's foundational short story "The Adventure of a German Student" (1824), my analysis brings together different texts that employ the motif of the female revenant in order to illustrate the gender elements of these narratives, elements that are particularly noticeable when social constructions of femininity in the urban environment are acknowledged in the analysis. The figure of the beheaded revenant draws from classic tropes of the fantastic, including the return of a lover. The female revenant is a forbidden object of desire, incarnating sinful necrophilia, and the male character's appropriation of her body has fatal consequences. However, these characters are also urban, a distinctive and essential aspect to understanding the criticism their stories bring to their contemporary social context. In the last part of this chapter I turn my attention to the socio-political dimension of this motif and highlight the role of the city as a troubled site of memory.

The Erotica of the Guillotined Character

"The Adventure of a German Student" by Washington Irving, published in *Tales of a Traveller* (1824) and later translated into French by Pétrus Borel and renamed "Gottfried Wolfgang" (1843), was to provide a model that various short stories and novels of beheadings and the guillotine would follow. Irving's text tells the story of Gottfried Wolfgang, a German student who visits Paris as the revolution breaks out and who is horrified by the spectacle of the guillotine. One (suitably Gothic) stormy evening he encounters a figure at the scaffold: a helpless and hopeless woman with a black ribbon around her neck who is in a state of distress. "Fascinated by her charms" ([1824] 1864: 48) and her "transcendent beauty" (44), Gottfried falls in love with the woman and invites her back to his lodgings. He pledges his faithful and enduring love, and a sexual encounter follows. The next morning upon waking Gottfried is horrified to find her lifeless body in the bed. He then realizes that the woman he met by the guillotine had already been a victim of that very guillotine: the collar around her neck was all that kept her decapitated head in place. Unable to come to

terms with all that has occurred, by story's end Gottfried is committed to a mental asylum.

This unnamed female revenant, "pale and disconsolate, but ravishingly beautiful" (46), is described by Gottfried Wolfgang as an innocent, vulnerable figure in need of his protection, an aspect reiterated throughout the text ("The homeless stranger confided herself implicitly to the protection of the student", 47; "how to dispose of the helpless being thus thrown upon his protection", 48). This type of revenant is consistent with the tradition of the dead bride or virgin who returns to the world of the living in order to enjoy an experience of love denied to her when still alive (see Pedraza 2004: 194–198). The fact that the revenant does not survive beyond the night of romance indicates that her state of living-death lasts for only as long it takes to find an honest man who will profess his true love for her. This is borne out by the conversation that precedes what is insinuated to be their sexual encounter:

> "Let me be everything to you, or rather let us be everything to one another. If form is necessary, form shall be observed—there is my hand. I pledge myself to you for ever."
> "For ever?" said the stranger, solemnly.
> "For ever!" repeated Wolfgang.
> The stranger clasped the hand extended to her: "Then I am yours", murmured she, and sank upon his bosom. (49)

The return to the world of the female character of "The Adventure of a German Student" is driven by a need to be loved, in this case by a stranger she encounters on the street and who before the story ends will swear his eternal love to her. Once this has been achieved and their love consummated, she finally dies, becoming "a corpse" (49).

Another story that deals with the trope of the beheaded lover—and, by extension, with a love that endures beyond the separation of death—is that of "Solange", featured in *Les mille et un fantômes*. Written by Alexandre Dumas in 1849, this volume includes several frame narratives that feature the leitmotif of a life that continues after decapitation by the guillotine. Albert Ledru, the narrator in "Solange", is a scientist who regularly conducts studies of corpses from the guillotine in order to build a case against capital punishment. The main female character, an aristocrat named Solange, is persecuted by the revolutionaries. Ledru comes upon her on the streets of Paris one evening as she is on the point of being

arrested and offers her his love and protection. As in "The Adventure of a German Student", the helpless female figure (and in this case her equally helpless father) is rescued by the gentleman-savior. Their romance does not last long and soon Solange is captured by the revolutionaries. During one of his nocturnal experiments with decapitated heads, Ledru discovers that Solange has been guillotined. Her head is amongst those in the bag delivered that evening and it calls out to him, kisses his hand and sheds two tears before finally dying. This last kiss seals the final farewell that was denied Solange when she was still alive.

The motif of the last kiss after execution by guillotine also features in "Baiser suprême" by Henri Conti (1889), a brief narrative that features a decapitated nobleman and his fiancée. With his freshly separated head between her hands, the fiancée steps onto the scaffold to give her lover a kiss in front of the mob: an act that demonstrates their love beyond death, as well as the idea of a head's (admittedly brief) ability to survive the guillotine.

The serialized novel *La Femme au collier de velours* (*The Woman with the Velvet Necklace*, sometimes also *The Woman with a Black Necklace*, 1850) owes much to the structure and theme of "The Adventure of a German Student".[8] With its episodic structure and a great number of intertextual references to fantastic literature (such as the letter to Nodier, the references to the Arsenal, the main character of Hoffmann and the allusions to Faust in the gambling scene), this text follows the model established by Irving's dramatic tale while further developing criticism of the Reign of Terror.

Young Hoffmann leaves Germany to spend some time in Paris and reassures his fiancée Antonia that he will not succumb to the temptation of gambling. Upon his arrival in Paris, he is horrified by the effects of the Revolution and witnesses the famous decapitation of Madame du Barry. In an attempt to soothe his spirit, sorely shaken by this carnage, he visits the Opera and meets a strange doctor who informs him that the ballet dancer Arsène, with whom Hoffmann has become immediately infatuated, is Danton's lover. As was the case of the female character of "The Adventure of a German Student", Arsène sports a decorative black band around her neck, though in this case the collar is adorned by a fashionable—and premonitory—jewelry charm in the shape of a mini-guillotine.

[8] See Reichart (1936), Teichmann (1955) and Murphy (1990) on the filiations and adaptations of the tales by Irving, Borel and Dumas.

Hoffmann and the dancer meet again when he is summoned by her to paint her portrait. From there, the denouement echoes that of Irving's short story: one night Hoffman comes across Arsène at the foot of the scaffold. An erotic encounter follows and then Hoffman is confronted in the morning with the truth: Arsène had lost her head the afternoon prior to their final meeting.

The scene at the foot of the guillotine, the portentous black band and the sexual consummation followed by the awful truth are some of the main parallels with Irving's text. The moment in the morning when the head falls from the body of the erstwhile revenant also symbolizes the downfall of the protagonist, as this climatic moment reveals the undeniable act of necrophilia.

Despite the intertextuality between Irving's and Dumas's stories, the two female revenants are portrayed in a very different manner. The purity and innocence of Irving's revenant or of Solange in *Les mille et un fantômes* is absent in the character of Arsène. A fiery and sensual dancer, Arsène incites folly in the men she meets, all of whom are prototypical: the revolutionary (Danton), the scientist (the doctor), and the artist (Hoffmann). She represents voluptuousness, seduction, temptation and deceit. Arsène's attributes and role contrast sharply with those of the story's other main female figure, Antonia, an angelic character who embodies tradition, religious faith and modesty. Antonia lives in Mannheim, home of German classicism. Arsène, on the contrary is metropolitan, representing the pull of French romanticism that prompts Hoffmann's "ardent desire to see Paris" ([1850] 1897: 233): "There is a voice that summons me to Paris, a voice stronger than my will" (234). One dances ecstatically while the other gently plays the harp. One is a femme fatale who triggers lust and sin; the other is the comfort of home, the perfect angel in the house. Antonia's qualities resonate in the domain of the Apollonian while Arsène belongs to the domain of the Dionysian. This is particularly marked in the two nocturnal erotic encounters between Hoffmann and Arsène: the first when she summons Hoffmann to her apartment to get her portrait painted and then the final night, after her decapitation, when their passion is consummated. During the portrait scene, Arsène chooses to pose for Hoffmann's painting in the costume of Erigone, Dionysus's lover, with distinctive Dionysian attributes such as the thyrsus and vine leaves.

The Dionysian drive culminates in the final scene between Hoffmann and (the already-beheaded) Arsène. Arsène's specter, pale, weak and cold, is revived by the wine the couple drinks at the hotel of the rue

Saint-Honoré. With a touch of the macabre, and anticipating the denouement, Dumas describes how some drops of this wine seep through the collar that is concealing Arsène's broken neck. The pair then engage in a final dance to Beethoven's *Le Désir* waltz. The tempo of the narration gradually increases over the two pages of this scene, culminating in the delirious dance. The erotic encounter between the male protagonist and the beheaded female is a dance with death. Images of hell accompany Hoffmann's surrender to temptation and madness: "Arsène rose as he struck the first chords. They seemed to envelop her whole person like a network of flame" (347), "That pirouetting creature, who had become animated by slow degrees, exerted an irresistible power of attraction over him" (348).

As had occurred with the angelic Solange and the beheaded female of "The Adventure of a German Student", this female revenant finally dies when she obtains that for which she had returned. But Arsène's resurrection differs in symbolism from those other stories. In this case the message is one of perversion, temptation and betrayal. To enhance the moral dimension of the tale, in *La Femme au collier de velours* the events following the sexual encounter are expanded upon, in comparison to the brief denouement of Irving's text. Hoffmann manages to escape Paris for Germany, where he finds out that his beloved Antonia had suffered a sudden death at the precise moment when he was painting Arsène's portrait. Antonia's death suggests a punishment for Hoffmann's double betrayal: both his gambling and the breaking of his promise to Antonia of his faithful love.

All the stories mentioned within this section share very similar plot structures: an initial urban encounter in which the male character's attraction toward the female character is made explicit, the return from the dead of the beheaded character, the consummation of their passion and the following day's revelation of the truth, leading the male character to turmoil or madness as a punishment for the necrophilic act. There are also numerous symbolic convergences, the most obvious being the black neckband. This item draws our gaze to the character's neck, its eroticizing of the female figure inseparable from the mysterious laceration that it hides. It acts as a portent that maintains the suspense until the final climatic revelation in which the most taboo of transgressions is revealed: the male profanation of the dead female body. The necklace functions as a threshold item, stitching together body and head, the realm of the living and the

domain of death, desire and the act of consummation, and ultimately, sanity and insanity.

In this separation and connection of reason and madness, that the experience is narrated from the subjective point of view is significant. In *La Femme au collier de velours* and in "The Adventure of a German Student" the protagonist is an outsider who observes the city and the historical events taking place from a cultural distance. Toward the end of both works his mental stability is called into question. Did he really spend the night with a beheaded woman? Can we trust the account given by him? Is he reliable and mentally stable? These texts represent a shift from a literary tradition where the supernatural was located in an external source (a ghost, an object) to a new fantastic in which the unknown could also emerge from or operate through the mind of the individual. This form of the fantastic, with the unreliable narrator as a recurrent trait, reflects the modern era's increasing interest in human consciousness, an interest that reached a literary apogee with the short stories of Jean Lorrain, Georges Rodenbach and Guy de Maupassant discussed in the next chapters.

The corpus of female revenant stories is also characterized by a specific geography: an urban setting composed of identifiable and verifiable historical sites. Dumas's novel, for example, offers very detailed descriptions of city life, including of the Opera as a social space and the Palais-Royal as a site of gambling and prostitution, as well as providing specific city references that allow the reader to follow the protagonist's path. However, while mapping usually serves as a form of reference, a striking characteristic of the Paris presented here is its impermanence. If memory is dependent upon the inscription or description of place, as Hamon suggests (1992: 2), then Dumas's Paris is in the process of eliminating its history. This is conveyed by drawing the reader's attention to the constant changing of street names and to the destruction of Parisian landmarks during this period: "Arsène turned into Rue Royal, which was called that time Rue de la Révolution, turned to the right into Rue Saint-Honoré, which was called Rue Honoré without the prefix" (*The Woman with a Black Necklace*, 1897: 342).

A controversial symbol of national pride, the guillotine is eroticized in these stories, foreshadowing the sexualizing overtones of its victim, the beheaded revenant. The spectacle of decapitation is portrayed as a seductive force that exercises an animal attraction on and incites animalistic behavior in the crowd. The macabre spectacle of the scaffold in revolutionary Paris is presented in the imagery of a carnal act of sexual

intercourse with death: a feast, a bacchanal, a delirious orgy, a "popular delirium" ("The Adventure of a German Student", 1864: 44). The mob is a swarm or whirlpool; it is feverish and irrational, ecstatic, lusting to satisfy its basest instincts:

> All Paris was quiet; that great volcano of human passion slumbered for a while, to gather fresh strength for the next day's eruption ("The Adventure of a German Student", 47)
>
> Issuing from that whirlwind, which burst upon him before he could fly or conceal himself, Hoffmann heard such ear-piercing, piteous shrieks as never had fallen upon his ears until that evening. (*The Woman with a Black Necklace*, 1897: 257–258)
>
> […] the tumultuous mob gathered about a scaffold, the gloomy sky and the blood (261)
>
> The vengeful and feverish crowd ("Baiser suprême", [1889] 2008: 132)

As the quotes above show, the mob too has lost its head and the city's past is forcefully washed away by the convulsions of a revolutionary France.

The Shortcomings of Mr. Guillotin

What explains the enduring popularity of the motif of the beheaded revenant, decades after the end of the French revolution? From a literary perspective, constructing a story around the female-beheaded figure allowed authors to reproduce the model of well-loved serialized dramas, with all the familiar patriarchal gender characteristics of the genre and the added punch-line of the ultimate sexual taboo of necrophilia. These texts also served as acknowledgments of earlier fantastic fiction works, as attested to by the multiple intertextual references. Reviving the dead in literature was a way of paying tribute to the international masters of the fantastic, including Irving, Hoffmann and, in Dumas's novel, also Nodier, who features in the first chapter of *La Femme au collier de velours* as the original narrator of the tale.

Beyond these literary factors, why did authors feel the need to return to this period of history when Paris was being established as the capital of modern Europe? To address this question, this corpus of literary beheaded figures is best understood as a compilation both of historical testimonies as well as of urban texts that deal with changes in how death and the past were perceived in the city.

The literary interest in this specific type of female revenant during the mid- to late nineteenth century should be understood in the context of a public debate that was taking place at the time, a debate concerning the sentiency of the head after the operation of the guillotine. Witnesses to decapitations during the Reign of Terror claimed to have seen blinking eyelids and moving lips in the heads of the (presumably) deceased. The case of Charlotte Corday in 1793, one of the most well-known examples of the phenomenon, was to augur the popular frenzy that would result from this debate. After her execution for the murder of revolutionary leader Jean-Paul Marat, the crowd allegedly saw Corday's head roar with indignation when the executioner pulled it from the basket and slapped it. This anecdote circulated as alleged proof that victims of the guillotine could experience pain even after their beheadings. "La Tête des guillotinés", an article published by French newspaper *Le Figaro* in 1885, provides an example of how questions of whether life could exist after a head was separated from its body were still being debated a century later (see Prince 2008: 118–120). The author of the article, a scientist himself, cites the success of several doctors in bringing decapitated dogs back to life by injecting fresh blood into them. He explains that this approach has not been yet successful with severed human heads and alleges that this failure is due to the time that elapses between execution and experiment. As a result, he writes, the scientific community was demanding better and more efficient governmental measures that would allow these important investigations on the limits of human life after the guillotine to be carried out.

This fascination with the survival of disembodied heads is reflected in literature. Some of the short stories include accounts of scientific experiments with beheadings, featuring the character of a doctor who seeks either understanding or to extend life, though ultimately failing to do either:

> Are you far from ignoring, continued Velpeau, that one of the most interesting questions of modern physiology is to find out if some glimmer of memory, of reflection, of real sensitivity persists in the human's brain after the section of the head? ("Le Secret de l'échafaud", Villiers de L'Isle-Adam [1883] 2008: 144, my translation)[9]

[9] "Vous êtes loin d'ignorer, reprit Velpeau, que l'une des plus intéressantes questions de la physiologie moderne est de savoir si quelque lueur de mémoire, de réflexion, de sensibilité réelle persiste dans le cerveau de l'homme après la section de la tête?"

Other texts, including "Le Soufflet de Charlotte Corday" and "Solange" (Alexandre Dumas, 1849b), "La Légende de la guillotine" (George Villelonge, 1887) or "La Tête coupée" (Carolus d'Harrans, 1905) contain further examples of the scientific discourse of the time in order to expose the limitations of this science in explaining the phenomena allegedly witnessed by the mob during decapitations.

The appearance of the beheaded woman in fantastic fictions decades after the French Revolution was a statement against the methods and ideology that reigned during the Regime of Terror; however, just as revolutions continued throughout the nineteenth century, so too did public executions. As the century advanced, public support for beheadings decreased, as they came to be perceived as anti-modern and anti-progressive. The Haussmanization of Paris, the creation of institutions such as the *Conseil d'Hygiène* to improve public health and purify public space, the displacement of the guillotine from the Place de Grêve to the more marginal Barrière Saint-Jacques and a strong critical platform formed by intellectuals against the brutality of public executions fueled a changing attitude toward the guillotine: "a close past quickly flees, it becomes incomprehensible because of its cruelty" (Castex 1990: 68, my translation). With the safety of temporal distance lessening the consequences of calling into question the principles of revolutionary Paris, these literary resurrections of the executed exposed the flaws of this spectacle of death. After all, the guillotine was perhaps not so clean, egalitarian and painless; in fiction, it was definitely not instantaneous.

Examples of female-beheaded revenants appearing in other European cities are not as prevalent as those in stories set in Paris but they do exist. An illustrative example is Wilkie Collins's "Miss Jéromette and the Clergyman" ([1875] 2003), a story of love between the narrator's brother, the clergyman, and Miss Jéromette, who—perhaps not incidentally—is a French woman. The beginning of this text replicates the conventions of revenant tales: "'Do you believe […] that the spirits of the dead can return to earth, and show themselves to the living?'" (199). The narrator tells the story of the lovers as it was confided to him by his own, now deceased, brother. It starts with the random encounter of the characters of the title in Cremorne Gardens in London. The clergyman observes that Jéromette is distressed by the attentions of another man, intervenes and offers to walk her home. Their mutual affection develops over time but Jéromette continues to show signs of loving another man, one who is not worthy of her affections. Then the narrator is called to his rectory in the West of

England and they part. Sometime later the clergyman discovers that one of his pupils at the rectory is Jéromette's beloved, now her husband, who, at the moment of this realization, had just left for London to murder his wife following her discovery of his infidelity. Having promised the clergyman to tell him if she was ever in trouble, Jéromette appears in ghostly form to the narrator on the evening after her murder: "She stood before me as I had last seen her, in her purple-merino dress, with the black-silk apron, with the white handkerchief tied loosely round her neck" (216). This climatic scene recalls the earlier tales of female revenants who return to seek justice. Jéromette's handkerchief hides the "wound in the throat" (217) that has ended her life: "She lifted her hand once more, and pointed to the handkerchief round her neck. As I looked at it, the fair white silk changed horribly in colour—the fair silk became darkened and drenched in blood" (217). Just as in Dumas's story where the detail of the black collar served to maintain the suspense until the woman was revealed to be a revenant, Jéromette's handkerchief preserves her in a liminal state between life and death. In the absence of sufficient evidence, her murderer husband evades legal justice but she keeps her promise and her spirit makes the circumstances of her death known to the narrator. Having accomplished this, she disappears forever.

The Head: Seat of Reason?

As Larissa Tracy and Jeff Massey observe, the head is "the seat of life and the seat of power. There is a sense that all human functions derive from it, and its removal marks the final end of life—in theory. The spectacle of the severed head, particularly one that refuses to remain silent, is a monstrous encounter with our mortality" (2012: 5–6). Given the genre's tradition of subverting rationality, it comes as no surprise that in narratives of the fantastic heads have rolled for a long time. Nonetheless, that there is a particular modern fascination with this trope is not coincidental. Michael Cox and R. A. Gilbert note that the figure of the returning ghost draws attention to the unsettling relationship with the past that disturbed the modern mind:

> With the shadow of change falling across virtually every area of life and thought, the receding past became a focus of anxiety, and in literature the ghost story offered a way of anchoring the past to an unsettled present by operating in a continuum of life and death. In the ghost story, obligations do not cease with death, and the past is never a closed book. What has been

> can be again, though often terribly transformed. For a progressive age (progressing to what?), the idea of a vindictive past held an especial potential for terror. (2003: ix)

While most of the guillotined figures focused upon here are (for obvious reasons) French,[10] these modern texts capture the concerns of a wider socio-cultural context. The fascination with the image of a living head functioning independently from its body emphasizes the tension between reason and that loss of rationality that was so meaningful to the Romantics. As a literary motif, the living head is a contravention of the rational and thus draws attention to the shortcomings of prevailing scientific discourses in explaining our world. This is a point made in the story of Jacquemin and his wife's biting head in "L'Impasse des Sergents". When the mayor, the police officer, the doctor and the writer (all male figures embodying different dimensions of the discourse on rationality) accompany Jacquemin to the scene of the crime that is at the center of the story, their expedition is described as an exploration of the "domain of the unknown" ([1849a] 2006: 261). This aspect is also made explicit in "The Adventure of a German Student"*:* "It was the time for wild theory and wild actions. Old prejudices and superstitions were done away; everything was under the sway of the 'Goddess of Reason'" (1864: 48). Among the texts of the fantastic corpus in Spanish, Benito Pérez Galdós's tale "¿Dónde está mi cabeza?" (Where is my head?, 1892) provides a humorous take on the association between head and rational intellect.[11] In this story of a man who suddenly realizes that his head is missing, the severed body proclaims with frustration:

> I could no longer finish my Memory-Discourse on Philosophical-Social Arithmetic; I couldn't even have the consolation of reading in the Academy the existing voluminous chapters of that important work. How could I possibly present myself to my worthy companions with such pitiful mutilation! How could I pretend that a headless body had oratory dignity and literary representation …! I was already a finished man, lost forever. ([1892] 2009: 139–140, my translation)[12]

[10] See Lasowski (1988) for an overview on the genesis of the guillotine as a trope for French nineteenth-century writers.

[11] For a better understanding of the grotesque elements that intertwine with the supernatural dimension of this tale, see Roas (2008).

[12] "Ya no podría concluir mi Discurso-memoria sobre la *Aritmética filosófico-social*; ni aun podría tener el consuelo de leer en la Academia los voluminosos capítulos ya escritos de

Finally, already in the twentieth century, "Cuento de Pascua" (Easter Tale, 1911, see Cruz Casado 1989) by the Nicaraguan author Rubén Darío presents an interesting twist to the plot structure of the beheaded female revenant. Until the final scene, the story follows most of the conventions established by Irving. In Paris, in this case in a dinner party celebration, the male narrator meets a mysterious, beautiful lady with a decorative red stripe on her neck. In an evening walk he ends in Place de la Concorde, where he sees this female figure again, "the one with a fine red ribbon, red as a wound, on her very white neck" (1967: 184, my translation). This encounter facilitates the transition to a final scene, in which he is suddenly confronted with the horrific vision of the guillotine and the decapitation of all its victims. Paralyzed, without being able to escape from the Place de la Concorde, he enumerates the sectioned heads of Medusa, Holofernes, John the Baptist, King Charles I, Mary Stuart, Louis XVI, together with all those executed across the centuries for reason of faith, crimes, ethnicity or political deeds. This point distinguishes this narrative from the previously mentioned scaffold dramas. The attention has shifted from the beheaded female figure to the executions, a mass of whispering heads that recall all the unjust executions in human history: "the heads increased, in groups, in macabre stacks, and through the spaces in between spans of blood and sepulcher passed through" (187). This vision of guillotined figures from across time superimposed in the same space culminates with a powerful analogy of the city and its past: "And you, Paris, head of the world, will you also be cut with an ax, torn from your immense body?" (187).

* * *

As shown in this section on the beheaded female revenant, the specificities and intertextual overlaps of this figure suggest that it deserves separate attention within the broader category of city monsters. From a gender perspective, the female decapitated revenant, deprived from her own head, represents a denial of women's identity as well as a desire to objectify and sexually possess the female body. From an urban point of view, the literary

aquella importante obra. ¡Cómo era posible que me presentase ante mis dignos compañeros con mutilación tan lastimosa! ¡Ni cómo pretender que un cuerpo descabezado tuviera dignidad oratoria, ni representación literaria …! ¡Imposible! Era ya hombre acabado, perdido para siempre."

deployment of this figure allows for the exploration of the idea of a collision of two cities: present and past. Whether a reproduction of the clichés of romantic serialized novels, a tribute to earlier fantastic texts or a criticism of the guillotine, the female-beheaded revenant features in contexts in which a haunting from the past clashes with a modernizing agenda. As the popularity of public decapitations began to wane, the rise of revenant literature drew attention to an uncomfortable history of killing that was still inscribed in the city of Paris, the capital of modernity. The motif of the beheaded character thus reveals the palimpsest of the modern city, as referred in the Introduction "The Modern Fantastic—A Tale of Two Cities". The rational, progressive city coexists with, is built upon and is penetrated by traces of a restless, irrational history that returns in the shape of a female headless spirit.

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Fantastic Exhibitions of the Self

the love of masks and masquerading, the hate of home, and the passion for roaming

—*Les Foules*, Baudelaire

This humanity, which hides to mingle with the crowd

—"L'Un d'eux", Jean Lorrain

The Urban Production of Identities

From department stores to great boulevards and world exhibitions, the modern city sought ways to commodify and exhibit its wealth. The increased speed and efficiency of material production led in turn to new forms of identity production, as captured by Charles Baudelaire in his portrayal of dandies and flâneurs in *The Painter of Modern Life* and in *Tableaux Parisiens*. In his work on modern literature and architecture, Philippe Hamon categorizes this phenomenon under the French term of *exposition*. His "study of the extended metaphor of expositions" (1992: 13) regards the modern urban experience as a staging of political and social performances in which the city becomes an exhibition of itself, of its potential progress and of the enacted identities of its citizens.

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The previous chapter examined the urban revenant and the modern discourse of gendered morals. This chapter continues the exploration of the theme of public encounter in fantastic fictions, this time focusing on the venues, from shops and city streets to masquerade balls. In the corpus analyzed in the following sections, the fantastic places the spotlight on the human figure to whom it occurs, a figure struggling to find a space for her/himself in the context in which s/he is living. The supernatural reveals the disintegration of a stable, unitary notion of self, exposing how identities are staged for the others. In this "fantastic of the subject" (*le fantastique du sujet*) as Natalie Prince calls it (2008: 311–318), particularly prominent at the end of the nineteenth century, "the self is no longer master of itself" (314).

One of the most famous aesthetic representations of this disjunction of identities in literature of the fantastic is the figure of the *doppelgänger*. R. L. Stevenson, for example, employs this motif in *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886). Set in Victorian London, this novella articulates the dichotomy between morally accepted and condemned in the characters of the respectable, cultivated man of science Dr Jekyll and the nocturnal, clandestine, vile Mr Hyde. Visible and secret, rational and irrational, Apollonian and Dionysian, this personality split reveals an undeniable problematic fact: "That man is not truly one, but truly two" ([1886] 2005: 76). The individual is in fact composed of both these impulses. It is in their coexistence that the problem arises, as expressed through, among other images, the prevailing motif of fog under gaslight. Blurring the sense of orientation and turning the cityscape into an indefinable gray milieu, the fog is protagonist in many narrative passages in the novella:

> It was by this time about nine in the morning, and the first *fog* of the season. A great chocolate-coloured pall lowered over heaven, but the wind was continually charging and routing these embattled *vapours*; so that as the cab crawled from street to street, Mr. Utterson beheld a marvellous number of degrees and hues of twilight; for here it would be dark like the back-end of evening; and there would be a glow of a rich, lurid brown, like the light of some strange conflagration; and here, for a moment, the *fog* would be quite broken up, and a haggard shaft of daylight would glance in between the swirling wreaths. (2015: 49, emphasis added)
>
> The *fog* still slept on the wing *above the drowned city*, where the *lamps glimmered* like carbuncles; and through the muffle and smother of these *fallen clouds*, the procession of the town's life was still rolling in through the great arteries with a sound as of a mighty wind. (53, emphasis added)

In his study on human space, the anthropologist O. F. Bollnow discerns a third spatio-temporal regime that oscillates between the classical dualism of diurnal and nocturnal regimes. Twilight spaces, he argues (2011: 204–211), are symbolized by liminal domains, such as the forest, and by transitional phenomena such as fog. In Stevenson's novella, this *thirdspace* that the motif of the fog creates enhances "the confusing multiplicity of forms" (206), the loss of tangibility and intelligibility of the city and of the individual who inhabits it. Stevenson's fog is not so much the expression of evil that obscures the rational city as is a symbol of subjects composed by coexisting, blurry categories. In his ecocritical approach to this novella, Jesse Taylor (2016) reads the split of Jekyll and Hyde as the dramatization of the toxic urban milieu. Whereas anthropogenic climate change is not my focus here, Taylor shows how the pervasiveness of the London fog in Stevenson's novella serves as a means of expressing a metaphorical relationship between toxicity, moral impurity and taboo in modern supernatural narratives: "According to the modern constitution Hyde cannot, must not, exist—and yet he exists anyway. Hyde must be endured but cannot be acknowledged. He is that which modernity exists to hide and hides to exist" (114).

As well as considering the familiar trope of the double, the short stories addressed in this chapter present varied imaginary versions of modern citizens, with their monstrous, multiple projections and reflections and many of whom ultimately—and with unfortunate consequences—clash with the social norm. The chapter lingers on the mask, the mirror and the display window, motifs that symbolize the anguish of the need for a reaffirmation of individuals in an environment designed to commodify its citizens. The selected short stories by the French authors Jean Lorrain, and Guy de Maupassant, George Rodenbach from Belgium and the Spanish Benito Pérez Galdós present different approaches to imagining how such fractured identities can be expressed in terms of narcissistic and agoraphobic behaviors and to the treatment of the voyeuristic, fetishistic and objectifying practices that commercialize desire and turn citizens into consumable objects.

Behind the Mask: The *femme-énigme* in Jean Lorrain's Masquerades

The trope of masquerade balls that summon a supernatural unwelcome or seductive guest is found across cultures in nineteenth-century fantastic tales, for example in "La Madona de Pablo Rubens" (Zorrilla 1837), "La noche de máscaras" (Ros de Olano 1840), "The Masque of Red Death" (Poe 1845), "Sous la commune" (Flor O'Squarr 1885) and "La máscara" (Pardo Bazán 1897). However, it was Jean Lorrain the writer who made of the erotica of urban masks a leitmotiv in his fantastic fiction. Enfant terrible of Decadent Paris, a scandalous, exhibitionist flamboyant public figure, Lorrain placed the themes of masking at center-stage both in literature and in real life. The cornerstone of his portrayal of Parisian life at the end of the century, the mask offers the symbolic liberation from societal conventions and the masquerade ball, a recurrent spatial trope in Lorrain's fantastic fictions, provides the perfect milieu for this purpose. In these spaces of debauchery, and under the anonymity provided by their disguise, guests meet extraordinary creatures that transgress the norms of decorum. The narrator of "Récit de l'étudiant" (The Student's Story) recounts this aspect as follows:

> How would I have loved to attend that ball! To wander, all night, liberated by the mask, mingling with, brushing by—with the certainty of never being recognized—all the luxuries, all the vices, both those that we might suspect as being present and all those that we could never imagine. (1900c: 31)[1]

Lorrain's texts featuring femme fatales at masquerade balls in the city very often fall within the boundaries of an ambiguous fantastic. They allow for a double reading that oscillates between a rational explanation (these are women in search of a libertine adventure in the city) and a supernatural one (that of dangerous revenants whose alluring features seduce the male character, leading him to death or madness). In either reading, the attributes represented by this masked figure are similar and point to an

[1] "j'aurais aimé à aller à ce bal! Oh! errer, toute une nuit, libre sous le masque, coudoyer, frôler, avec la certitude de n'être jamais reconnue, toutes les luxures, tous les vices qu'on soupçonne et tous ceux qu'on ne soupçonne pas" (all translations to Lorrain's short stories are mine, except for "The Holes in the Mask").

erotization of the unknown.[2] In my analysis of Jean Lorrain's fantastic fictions of urban masquerade balls, I will explore the theme of masking in spatial terms. Instead of placing the focus on the mask as an object (McLendon 1978–1979; Ziegler 1994, 2008), I will foreground the urban spaces in which the masking is enacted. These sites invoke a game of social appearances, voyeuristic dynamics and existential encounters in which the roles of watcher and watched are performed and suddenly subverted by the fantastic.

First published in *L'Écho de Paris* in 1888 with the title "La Dame aux lèvres rouges" (The Lady with Red Lips) and later featuring in the volume *Sonyeuse. Soirs de province. Soirs de Paris,* "L'Inconnue" (The Unknown Woman, 1891) provides a striking example of the enigmatic femme fatale combined with the voyeuristic nature of social display. This short story builds on this tradition of a suspenseful fleeting encounter with a female stranger in the city, featuring for example in Baudelaire's famous poem *À une passante* (1855), which the poet dedicated to the figure of the passer-by, as well as in a short story by Maupassant also entitled "L'Inconnue" (1886). Lorrain's "L'Inconnue" develops upon the archetype of the immoral woman through its creation of the figure of a mysterious libertine in Paris who, as revealed later in the story, enjoys watching her lovers being decapitated (an act that on occasion she has had a direct role in bringing about). The story takes place in two distinct spaces of public display: a masquerade ball and the Place de la Petite-Roquette, where the guillotine is situated. The disclosure of information in the plot—the encounter with the mysterious woman and the resolution revealing her perverse fetish for the guillotine—unfolds in two stages across these two scenes. Nonetheless, at the end of the narrative the reader remains in the dark, with the identify of this mysterious character left undefined.

The tale opens at a masquerade ball at the Opera in the French capital. Inotey, a painter and well-known Parisian personality, attends this gathering with a friend. From their loge, they observe the attendees. Among all the dominos and masks, Inotey recognizes a woman who he has met before:

[2] Ransom explains this literary interest in the femme fatale as the Decadent expression of an ancient masculine fear of being dominated: "In the last two decades of the century, the Decadent movement translated the negative concept of degeneration into an elitist aesthetic that would dominate art and literature. In its depiction of a society of effete, passive men who allowed themselves to be victimized by the chaotic, devouring, animal sexuality of the dominating, phallic woman, Decadence erected the femme fatale as dominant symbol of the decline of French civilization. Salomé, Judith, Delilah, Lilith and Herodias exemplified artistic representations of Woman." (1995: 217)

> —So, did she see you?
>
> —She … I hope not … I couldn't know for sure. … We turned our backs on the stairs, didn't we? The people going up could not see us, recognize us, no, I don't think so. (2008: 151)[3]

The tension that builds from this point on revolves around the impenetrable identity of this strange woman. The occasion of Inotey's previous encounter with her was the trial of one of her lovers, who was consequently condemned to death by guillotine. The connection between this female stranger and death is implied as the narrative unfolds.

The opera scene represents the first attempt to characterize this stranger. In his attempts to describe her to his companion, the narrator associates this woman with the promiscuous Messalina. Inotey highlights her unrestrained sexual behavior and describes her as an amalgam of temptation, obsession, hysteria and nymphomania: "there is everything in this woman: ghoul, lamia, the Greek courtesan, the barbarian queen, the lowly prostitute, the great lady of Rome" (157).

The erotic pull of this character is heightened by the mystery that surrounds her. Although the encounters between the woman and her lovers are situated in identifiable Parisian landmarks, such as the Avenue de Grande-Armée, the Place de l'Étoile, Place de la Bastille and the Faubourg Antoine, her place of residence is never disclosed. The very little information provided tells us that she is a wealthy and sophisticated femme du monde who lives in the countryside but whose identity, because of her sinister adventures in the city, must be concealed. A typical contrast is established in this manner between the rural as a domain of moral containment and the city as a space of unrestrained vice. Inotey believes this woman might have a different persona outside of urban circles and thus must behave as "an honest provincial woman, going to church and living with her family" (169).

The identification of the stranger with sexual pleasure and danger is sustained throughout the narrative. A significant detail comes in the final scene. This "woman who waits", this "lady in black" (167) with blood-red lips (as highlighted in the story's subtitle), regularly attends the executions of her lovers. She has gone as far as to rent a window in order to obtain the best view of the scaffold.

[3] "—Elle t'a donc vu?/—Elle … j'espère que non … Je ne saurais rien alors … Nous tournions bien le dos à l'escalier, n'est-ce pas? Les gens qui montaient ne pouvaient nous voir, nous reconnaître, non, n'est-ce pas …"

This climatic moment is followed by a passage that, in summarizing the different characteristics of this mysterious figure as developed throughout the narrative, provides a template of the character of the urban femme fatale:

> […] this woman is not only the strange figure encountered at night at the corner of shady streets, in the distant Grenelle, around the Abattoirs, in the basest districts of murderous Paris, robber Paris, lost Paris, she is not just this woman nor is she only the pretty virgin profile that we are on occasion amazed to see emerging from the trellised corridor of a furnished apartment in the suburbs, the shameless Messaline, broken, but not satiated, *lassa sed non satiata* […]. She is the ghoul who, devouring with kisses the head of the man who swoons and groans between her arms, is intoxicated at the thought that sooner or later the steel of the guillotine will strike this same head; […]. (2008: 167–168)[4]

This female character, and specifically her mysterious impenetrability and her nocturnal attributes, recalls another *femme-énigme*, one featuring in "Sous la commune" (1885) by Belgium author Charles Flor O'Squarr. This story recounts the encounter between the male narrator and a mysterious lady at a Carnival ball in the center of Paris. During the period of the Paris Commune, they engage in a clandestine romance, which lasts until the lady vanishes. As in the case of the female character of "L'Inconnue", the narrative suspense is woven around her elusive identity, her "black charm" and her "mysterious nocturnal indolence" ([1885] 2003: 379):

> She was like a stranger amongst this joyful crowd, which in a riotousness that was at once both rowdy and refined functioned according to the unnatural etiquette of high society. (378)
>
> I never knew, and I could never find out, whether she was a girl, a woman or a widow. (381)
>
> The mystery of where she might usually reside seemed to locate her in this lost space, more deserted than the immense desert. (385)
>
> I haven't seen her since. She has returned to her mystery. (385, my translation)[5]

[4] "[…] cette femme est non seulement la rôdeuse équivoque qu'on rencontre la nuit au coin des rues suspectes, dans les lointains Grenelle, autour des Abattoirs, dans les plus bas quartiers de Paris assassin, de Paris voleur, de Paris perdu, non seulement cette femme et le joli profil de vierge qu'on est parfois tout stupéfait de voir surgir du couloir à treillage d'un meublé de banlieue, la Messaline éhontée, brisée, mais non rassasiée, *lassa sed non satiata* […]. Elle est la goule qui, mangeant de baisers la tête de l'homme qui pâme et râle entre ses bras, se grise à la pensée qu'un jour ou l'autre l'acier de la guillotine entamera cette tête; […]."

[5] "elle semblait comme étrangère à cette foule joyeuse qui se reposait de l'étiquette guindée de la grande vie mondaine dans un tapage à la fois canaille et raffiné"/"je n'appris rien

In a further parallel with Lorrain's "L'Inconnue", a great deal of the narrative tension depends on the uncertainty that separates all that the male character knows and that which the female character hides from him. Both stories are constructed around the voyeuristic erotica between exposition and concealment embodied in the figure of the mysterious *femme-énigme* who allows (parts of) herself be seen in masquerade balls. She is, in other words, an allegory of the mask, the "blurry and disturbing face of the unknown", as one of Lorrain's characters puts it in "L'Un d'eux" (1900b: 5).

The city plays a central role in "L'Inconnue", and not merely as a setting. The urban identity of the woman reflects the Dionysian impulse of the city: a hidden, unveiled, dark side. She is moral corruption and condemnation, a scapegoat for the vices associated with the modern urban milieu. As Inotey puts it, she is "Paris the assassin, Paris the thief, Paris the lost" (2008: 167). Depraved, corrupting and blood-thirsty, the woman takes joy from the cruelest form of public exhibition: the execution of her lovers. In this final scene, Lorrain subverts the positioning of observer and observed of the opening passage. While at the Opera the mystery woman was watched by the male protagonists from their loge at the masquerade ball, in this final twist, as she peers out from the window that she regularly rents, she becomes the observer of the male figures about to die.

In noting the voyeuristic analogy between prostitution in Baudelaire's poetry and Lorrain's window motifs, Ziegler points out that "[b]y attracting the gaze, the window acts in a similar fashion to the mask, but whereas transparency misleads, the cloth barrier reveals. […] Drawing on the aesthetic principle of eroticized mystery, the seductive power of fleeting visions to arouse salacious conjecture, the fetish object is circumscribed by the window frame" (2008: 36). In "L'Inconnue" the role of observer and observed is ultimately reversed. The mysterious woman, until that point portrayed as an object of desire, is finally "unmasked" behind her window: she is the subject indulging in the spectacle of death. The evocation of Salomé is inevitable; this is a figure who seduces her lovers into danger in order to gather a (visual) collection of their heads. A fantastical

de sa vie, rien, rien, rien." "Le mystère où elle s'enfermait d'ordinaire semblait lui laisser trêve en ce coin perdu, plus désert que l'immense désert"/"Je ne l'ai pas revue. Elle est retournée à son mystère".

interpretation of this character as the impersonation of death is facilitated throughout the story.

A later short story by Jean Lorrain features a very similar character and it is indeed further developed. Published in Lorrain's celebrated collection significantly entitled *Histoires de masques*, "Lanterne Magique" (Magic Lantern 1900a) revisits the trope of the city theater as a space of social encounter with the supernatural, with two male figures watching the crowd from a balcony during the interval of a concert. In a conversation that perfectly works as a definition of the modern fantastic, the two characters argue about the relationship between modern progress and the supernatural:

> Modern science has killed the Fantastic and, with the Fantastic, Poetry, sir, which is also Fantasy: the last of the Enchanted is indeed buried and desiccated, […] this is what science has made of us […] all built to the same model, utilitarian, skeptics and engineers. Ah! The great Pan is dead, and you are one of those who killed him, yes, you, Mr. Electrician, you are one of the murderers of Fantasy with your horrible habit of explaining everything, of proving everything, […]. (1900a): 48–49, my translation)[6]

The electrician, who paradoxically defends the existence of the fantastic, expounds to the incredulous narrator that their theater is in fact surrounded by spirits:

> —[…] we walk in this modern life in the midst of the damned, specters with human heads and other horrors, […] we frequent on a daily basis ghouls and vampires […]. I could here, in this room of the Châtelet, point out to you and name more than fifteen people who are absolutely dead and whose corpses appear very lifelike. (53)[7]

[6] "—La science moderne a tué le Fantastique et avec le Fantastique la Poésie, monsieur, qui est aussi la Fantaisie: la dernière Fée est bel et bien enterrée et séchée, […] voilà l'homme que nous ont fait les progrès de la science […] tous bâtis sur le même modèle, utilitaires, sceptiques et ingénieurs. Ah! Le grand Pan est mort, et vous êtes du nombre de ceux qui l'ont tue, oui, vous, monsieur l'électricien, vous êtes un des assassins de la Fantaisie avec votre horrible manie d'expliquer tout, de tout prouver, […]."

[7] "—[…] nous marchons en pleine vie moderne au milieu de damnés, spectres à tête humaine et autres épouvantements, que nous frôlons tous les jours des goules et de vampires […]. je pourrais ici, dans cette salle du Châtelet, vous désigner et vous nommer plus de quinze personnes absolument défuntes, dont les cadavres ont l'aspect très vivant."

From the decadent tableau of the different spirits of modernity that he presents, he draws particular attention to a mysterious young woman who has not missed a single capital execution in twenty years. The myth of Salomé merges with that of the vampire in a reference to the act of being rejuvenated by the fresh blood of her lovers: "for twenty years she has worshipped the killers, and she flinches with a deep pleasure when she sees a severed head drop. She stays forever young, by the way, as if kept fresh by the sight of blood!" (57).

The ending presents the scene as merely a trivial conversation between two gentlemen. When the intermission finishes, the narrator politely breaks off his description of the ghosts and revenants surrounding them, and the attention turns back to the orchestra as the music resumes.

Some years later, Lorrain introduced another remarkable dimension to the trope of urban masquerades in "La Valse de Giselle" (The Waltz of Giselle, 1905), a story that has not received as much scholarly attention as have others of his more famous tales. This text reenacts many of the voyeuristic elements outlined in "L'Inconnue". While the plot follows the conventional storyline of love persisting beyond death through the figure of the revenant, there are noticeable references to class and to the subversion of power dynamics through the fantastic. It is no coincidence that this short story was published as part of the collection provocatively entitled *Le Crime des riches* (The crime of the rich).

The text begins by presenting a series of frame-tales that situate the stories told by the different narrators within the tradition of the masquerade: "A story of masks! I know a much more extraordinary tale" (238). As part of the various embedded narratives about female revenants, the ballet dancer Esther Eymann recalls her experience of the Opera at Carnival time some years previously. Esther and her sister Laure had attended the ball with the intention of being seen in society and thus increasing their social cachet. At the ball they encountered the Marquis d'Allieuze, a rich, old, mysterious and solitary Parisian who then invited them to join him for dinner in his hotel at the Île Saint-Louis. This figure, described as a man who preys upon young female artists, is ultimately revealed to be himself the victim of a haunting.

The initial ball scene captures the social exhibitionism of the city milieus in which the story is situated. The ballet dancers are displayed as objects to be admired in this celebrated venue frequented by the men of the

aristocracy. The description of this scene is dominated by the predatory gaze of the Marquis d'Ailleuze:

> […] his insistent dark look became an obsession with us. He always stood ten steps from us, either before or behind us, and would stare at us without uttering a word; and this silent pursuit eventually disturbed us more than a brutal attack would have. (245)
>
> He didn't neglect to give sweets to the little ones, and yet he roamed, he roamed around them, his eye fixed on their slender legs. (246)
>
> The gaze of the Marquis of Allieuze never left us. He followed us like a shadow and we felt his black stare fixed on our ankles and on our feet shod in pink. (247, my translation)[8]

The Marquis offers the sisters a considerable sum of money for a private performance of the ballet *Giselle*. Despite the mistrust that this libertine figure provokes in them, the sisters feel unable to refuse the offer. The musical allusion of the title anticipates the story's denouement. As the dance of Laure and Esther unfolds in the Marquis's apartment, the specter of his former lover is called forth. The sisters, terrified by this apparition, escape from the Marquis's apartment.

The female revenant in this case recalls, as the title suggests, the tale of Giselle, a young peasant woman deceived by a nobleman and who after her untimely death returns to the world of the living to take revenge upon him. As it is often the case in Lorrain's fantastic literature, no further explanation is offered: the parallel with the story of Giselle, which could provide some context to the Marquis's obsession, is not expanded upon. Instead, in the story's final scene the focus is on the effect that this apparition has on him. It ends with him falling into a trance while the horror-struck sisters flee. This ending enacts a role reversal, as also seen in "L'Inconnue": the Marquis is no longer presented as the predatory figure who had hunted for young dancers to use in the invocation of his beloved. Haunted by his enduring love for the "spectral ballerina" (253), he is

[8] "l'insistant regard noir finit par nous être une obsession. Il se postait toujours à dix pas de nous, soit en avant, soit en arrière, et nous dévisageait sans mot dire; et cette poursuite silencieuse nous énervait à la longue plus qu'une attaque brutale."/"il ne s'oubliait même pas à offrir des bonbons aux petites, mais rodait, prétendait-on assez souvent autour d'elles, son œil fixe attaché sur leurs jambes grêles."/"Le marquis d'Allieuze ne nous quittait pas des yeux. Il nous suivait comme une ombre et nous sentions son regard noir attaché sur nos chevilles et sur nos pieds chaussés de rose."

finally "unmasked" as a pathetic and powerless figure, lamenting a grandeur of older times, anchored to his "grand living room of a former Great House, as if haunted by elements of the past" (250). As the title of the volume *Le Crime des riches* suggests, the Marquis might ultimately be a victim of his own crime. This crime, once more, remains an enigma.

Beyond the Mask: An Unwelcome Guest

There are various historical accounts of masquerade balls being celebrated in Paris during the cholera epidemics of the early 1830s. In 1832 the *New York Mirror* published a testimony by an American correspondent visiting Paris during the epidemics who expressed his shock at how lightly the cholera outbreak was taken: "if you observed the people only, and frequented only the places of amusement and the public promenades, you might never suspect its existence" (1832: 380). The journalist reported with astonishment on the thematic presence of cholera in masquerade balls, featuring a "*cholera-waltz*, and a *cholera-galopade*, and one man, immensely tall, dressed as a personification of the Cholera itself, with skeleton armor, bloodshot eyes, and other horrible appurtenances of a walking pestilence" (380).

That same year Heinrich Heine recalled in a letter how the pandemic was mocked by citizens, some of whom donned costumes evoking the disease:

> Its arrival was officially announced on the 29th of March, and as this was the day of Mi-Carême, and there was bright sunshine and beautiful weather, the Parisians hustled and fluttered the more merrily on the Boulevards, where one could even see maskers, who, in caricatures of livid colour and sickly mien, mocked the fear of the cholera and the disease itself. That night the balls were more crowded than usual; excessive laughter almost drowned the roar of music; people grew hot in the *chahut*; a dance of anything but equivocal character; all kinds of ices and cold beverages were in great demand when all at once the merriest of the harlequins felt that his legs were becoming much too cold, and took off his mask, when, to the amazement of all, a violet-blue face became visible. It was at once seen that there was no jest in this; the laughter died away, and at once several carriages conveyed men and women from the ball to the Hôtel Dieu, the Central Hospital, where they, still arrayed in mask attire, soon died. (*French Affairs: Letters from Paris* [1832]1893: 162)

The motif of cholera outbreaks in masquerade balls was fictionalized in narratives of the fantastic, the most famous one being Poe's "The Masque of Red Death". This well-known narrative features a masked figure hiding as a guest among the crowded, gay atmosphere of a ball organized by the Prince Prospero:

> And thus, too, it happened, perhaps, that before the last echoes of the last chime had utterly sunk into silence, there were many individuals in the crowd who had found leisure to become aware of the presence of a masked figure which had arrested the attention of no single individual before. And the rumor of this new presence having spread itself whisperingly around, there arose at length from the whole company a buzz, or murmur, expressive of disapprobation and surprise—then, finally, of terror, of horror, and of disgust. ([1845] 2004: 302–303)

I will return to representations of cholera in urban fantastic fiction in chapter "Cacophony and Asynchrony". In this section, I want to draw attention to the motif of the mask and the setting of the ball as a space of public exposure. "La máscara" (The Mask, 1897), by Spanish author Emilia Pardo Bazán, falls within the aforementioned tradition of fictional masquerade balls through or at which death is summoned. In line with the texts discussed in the previous section, the scene is set with an encounter with a female stranger at a masked ball, in a reenacting of the impenetrable mystery associated with the feminine. Pardo Bazán's text transcends this erotica by putting the emphasis on the watcher rather than the watched. The male protagonist is confronted with his own death, a fact that prompts his moral transformation. In "La máscara" the presence of death at a masquerade ball is related not to a cholera epidemic but to an existential realization that will change for the better the male protagonist's behavior in society. With a lifestyle similar to that of the character of Inotey in "L'Inconnue", Jenaro is a flanêur attracted to casual encounters in the transient nature of city life: "seduced by a Madrid where the spirit of dissipation reigns and where it would seem that life has no purpose other than to allow oneself be dragged along by the current of enjoyment" (2001). It is at a ball that Jenaro meets a mysterious lady who he had never before encountered in the city's social circles. With the protagonist seduced throughout by the mystery lady's extraordinary allure and unable to decipher her identity, the climatic twist occurs when she lifts up her mask and reveals herself to be not a general figure of death but a specific personification of Jenaro's mortality.

The moralizing dimension of "La máscara" is absent in "Les Trous du masque" (The Holes in the Mask, Lorrain 1895), one of the most frequently anthologized fantastic stories of masking, which expands further on the existential confrontation with death in a masquerade ball. First published in Lorrain's collection of short fiction *Sensations et souvenirs* in 1895, this text reproduces many of the voyeuristic tropes identified in the previous texts and yet offers a distinctive take on the figure of death that lurks at these social occasions. The horror in this case does not arise from the awareness of the personification of the supernatural by the masked dead figures attending the ball. The true source of terror is the character's confrontation with his own vacant image, his own existential emptiness.

Lorrain's story is set in Paris during Mardi Gras. Waiting in his apartment of the Rue Taibout for his friend De Jakels to drive him to a mask ball, the narrator is collected by a strange carriage, in line with the tradition of ghost vehicles later discussed in chapter "The Ghosts of Public Transportation". Lorrain narrates this symbolic journey out of the city as a descent into a hostile, mysterious domain ("Into what nightmare, shadow, and mystery had I begun to descend?", 1997: 454), a transition that preempts the character's existential breakdown during and after the ball scene. The itinerary is mapped with specific spatial referents. The fiacre passes several Parisian landmarks and then approaches bridges that are increasingly strange. A constant questioning delivered in form of an inner monologue accompanies the progressive defamiliarization of the city: "Where were we traveling now, sunk into the darkness of the extraordinarily silent horse-drawn carriage, whose wheels made no noise beyond that of the horses' hooves on the wooden pavement of the streets and the macadam on the deserted avenues?" (454). This displacement to the outskirts of the city is not merely a transition between scenes. Ziegler points out that the recurring motif of the journey in Lorrain's fiction is frequently an existential rite of passage for characters who seek to escape the hypocritical nature of modern, urban society: "all the efforts made by Lorrain's characters intend their extrication from a world in which they function solely as the objects on which people make their impact" (Ziegler 1986: 321).

The strange ball at which the narrator eventually arrives is, as the reader might predict, a dance of the dead. Behind the robe and mask of those silent supernatural creatures there is "shadow and nothingness" (1997: 458). The twist in the narrative comes when the focus is displaced from

those fantastic beings to the narrator himself. When he lifts his own mask, the void behind reveals that he is one of them. In the moment of epiphany, the two objects that should serve to, respectively, reflect and conceal his identity—the mirror and the mask—show nothing more than an empty figure:

> What if I were like them, what if I too had ceased to exist, and what if beneath my mask there was nothing, only nothingness! […] I let loose an enormous shriek, because there was nothing under the mask of silvered fabric, nothing under the oval of the hood, only the hole of rounded cloth over the empty space. I was dead, and I… (458–459)

The story ends with a scene that attempts to neutralize this extraordinary experience. The protagonist is awakened by his friend De Jakels some hours later, after allegedly having lost consciousness in his room while drinking ether. Nonetheless, despite this attempt to provide a logical explanation for the supernatural, the ending subtly opens the tale to further interpretations with the mysterious final sentence: "*Il était temps*" ("at last", 459). In this story dedicated to another master of the fantastic, his contemporary Marcel Schwob, Lorrain revisits many of the conventions present in fictions of revenants and masquerade balls but stresses the existential confrontation of the individual with his empty, banal self. This encounter does not even allow the comfort of a moral purpose, as was present in Pardo Bazán's death ball in "La máscara". Lorrain thus generates a different type of horror tale, the horror deriving not from a physical source but from a metaphysical anguish. As Prince notes (2008: 10), this is heightened by the ellipsis and suspension in the final scene ("I was dead, and I …"; and the final "… at last", 1997: 459).

In his study on Lorrain's masked themes, Ziegler argues that: "the attraction of the mask is information undisclosed, the appealing feature of the narrative is *la chose inénarrable*, the unrelatable element fomenting audience conjecture, image manufacture that makes them co-creators of the story" (2008: 32). In most of his short fiction Lorrain presents the seduction of masks as due to their being a "living symbol of an unnamed mystery and foreseen enigma" ("L'Un d'eux" 1900b: 7) but in "Les Trous du masque" the enigma is dispelled. In a reversal of the mask as shield of the self, the short story reveals that there is nothing to hide. With strong connections to Poe's "William Wilson"[9], Lorrain offers a fantastic

[9] In this well-known tale by E. A. Poe, the protagonist narrates the encounters with his antagonist throughout his life. The climactic scene, in which he kills him, takes place at a

generated by an ellipsis: an empty body. This fatal epiphany finds its perfect setting in the spaces of public personal display offered by the modern city at the end of the century. When the masks fall, there is nothing behind or beyond a modern subject devoid of substance.

Mirrors: Narcissistic Pathologies

Georges Rodenbach's "L'Ami des Miroirs" (The Friend of Mirrors, 1899), from the posthumous collection *Le Rouet des brumes* (1901) of his short fiction written between 1895 and 1900, expresses similar existential concerns related to the modern construction and reproduction of identities. In this brief text, the narrator tells the strange story of his (unnamed) friend who is obsessed by mirrors. In an unidentifiable urban setting the city and the crowd take on the symbolic role of reflecting the disintegration of a cohesive self.

The story discloses how the isolation of the friend is increasing. Initially, the character is dissatisfied by the self-image that the different shop-front mirrors in the city reflect:

> I see myself in the windows, at the storefronts. … Hold on! You can't imagine how annoyed I am, how much I suffer from it. […] Mirrors lie in wait for me. They are everywhere, now, among milliners, hairdressers, even grocers and wine merchants. Ah! Those damned mirrors. *They live on reflections.* They are on the lookout for passers-by. (1914: 31, italics in the original)[10]

In this distress, he is determined to find a truthful mirror and starts a meticulous collection of such mirrors in his home. In his alternative world of "honest", "perfect" (33) reflections, he detaches himself from social life and happily remains in his self-made retreat. What the narrator sees as an effacement of his friend's sense of identity is instead experienced by the

masquerade ball in Rome. The mask and the mirror are the two vehicles that lead to the revelation that his harassing "imitation", "caricature" "this most exquisite portraiture" ([1839] 2004: 223), was nobody else but himself: "Not a thread in all his raiment—not a line in all the marked and singular lineaments of his face which was not, even in the most absolute identity, *mine own*!" (231).

[10] "[…] je me vois dans les glaces, aux devantures … Tenez! vous n'imaginez pas combien j'en suis agacé, combien j'en souffre. […] Les miroirs me guettent. Il y en a partout, maintenant, chez les modistes, les coiffeurs, les épiciers même et les marchands de vin. Ah ! ces maudits miroirs. *Ils vivent de reflets.* Ils sont à l'affût des passants."

friend as the purest form of social interaction, with his own reflections: "Not only did he regard his own reflected person as a stranger. It seemed to him that instead of being an image, this reflection offered the physical reality of a being" (36). As a result of this self-delusion, he is admitted into a mental asylum.

Moving away from the obvious motif of the double, I wish to foreground how the personality disorder is captured spatially, more specifically as a disjunction between the confined individual space—inside the apartment—and the city, a hostile, exterior space of otherness. These two domains are experienced by the character as separate and irreconcilable. The interior world of mirrors allows for the narcissistic multiplication of his image in a safe environment that cannot be disturbed by anyone else.

As J. G. Ballard and J. J. Millás were to revisit a century later in their fantastic fictions (see Epilogue), in "L'Ami des mirroirs" it is suggested that the cause of such personality disorders is rooted in the urban environment. The city lives off the superficial nature of obsessive reflections and creates uniform projections of its inhabitants. It triggers the anonymity and isolation of individuals who do not recognize themselves in these reflecting surfaces, literally so in the plot of "L'Ami des mirroirs". Pike, in his study on the modern city in literature, captures the paradox of solitude in the crowd: "The city is a highly developed form of social organization on a large scale; it is inescapably a community, however defined. Yet during the nineteenth century the literary city came more and more to express the isolation or exclusion of the individual from a community" (1981: xii). Rodenbach's story gives expression to this form of urban anonymity and to the tension between individual and the others in a juxtaposition of identities that replicate themselves as a set of mirrors, confined in a world that does not have the validating external gaze of an objective observer.

The title sets the stage for the key problematic, which is sustained throughout the narrative: Who is this friend? Is the narrator really reliable? Is this really the story of "a friend"? The protagonist in "L'Ami des mirroirs" remains unnamed throughout the whole narrative. In her study on the Narcissus myth in this text, Lowrie (1989) explores these questions and notes that the title, "the friend of mirrors" can be interpreted in three ways. The most obvious would be as a defining characteristic of this unnamed friend. The second interpretation is that of a person who uses mirrors as friends to keep him company. There is a further interpretation of the title, one that puts the focus on the narrator. This friend is then a mirror image of the narrator himself: "it is as if he had vampiristically

absorbed his 'friend's' identity, his very name, into himself" (65). With this ambiguity the dichotomy between friend and narrator, I and not-I is blurred. The title of the collection *Le Rouet des brumes* (Mist's Spinning Wheel) also refers to images of uncertainty and to non-dualistic expressions between self and other. This mist of identities converges with the motif of the fog in *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, as considered in the introduction to this chapter.

The end that this friend in "L'Ami des mirroirs" meets represents the tragic tension between individual and crowd: "See! I am no longer alone. I was too lonely. But friends, this is so strange, so different from what we are! Now I live amidst a crowd where everyone is the same as I" (1914: 37). One morning the character is found dead, after having smashed his head through a mirror. He had wanted to plunge into the mirror in order to merge with the crowd of figures he saw projected, figures that were nothing more than repeated versions of himself. This narcissistic impulse paradoxically epitomizes the character's struggle as he strives to escape his isolation when he is consequently confined in a psychiatric hospital, the ultimate normative space designed to correct any personality deviances.

A similar fate is suffered by the main character of Guy de Maupassant's "La Chevelure" (The Lock of Hair, 1884), a brief piece that synthesizes the motifs observed in the previous texts: the impenetrability of the *femme-énigme*, the fetishization of the female revenant, the dangers of social exhibition, and the irreconcilable split between self and others as expressed in the collision between domestic interior and urban exterior. Set in Paris, the story reaches us through the diary entries of a patient confined in a mental asylum. This solitary man presents a strange case of delusion under the guise of an *amour fou* for a dead woman, "an erotic and macabre madness", "A sort of necrophilia" (2000: 138–139, my translation). The character, an enthusiastic collector of relics, finds an ancient lock of hair hidden in an antique piece of furniture that he has purchased. This object invokes the resurrection of she to whom the hair had once belonged. The protagonist conducts a love affair with the seductive female revenant. The fetishistic assimilation between both objects of desire (furniture and woman) is anticipated from the outset, before the female revenant makes her apparition.[11] The owner of the manuscript describes his first days with

[11] Ransom discusses the recurrence of fetishism in the fantastic fiction of Maupassant: "the anxiety about the fatal power of the feminine is often diverted in Maupassant's *contes fantastiques* through fetishism, a characteristic that spreads out from the psycho-pathological study to inhabit many aspects of late nineteenth-century society" (1995: 191).

the acquired furniture as he might a honeymoon, contemplating the piece of furniture "with a lover's tenderness" (141). Upon the discovery of the woman's lock of hair in one of the drawers, the male character engages in an erotic and obsessive relationship with the female ghost, a seductive *femme-énigme*: "Elle, l'Invisible, l'Impalpable, l'Insaisissable, l'Immatérielle Idée" ("She, the Invisible, Impalpable, Intangible, the Immaterial Idea", 138, my translation). This delirious relationship is sustained for the duration of their confinement indoors and ends tragically as soon as they are exposed to the outside world:

> I couldn't hide my happiness any longer. I loved her so much that I never wanted to leave her. I took her with me everywhere. I walked her through the city as if she were my wife, and brought her to theatre, where we would occupy a box, as I would my mistress. … But they saw her … they guessed … they took her from me. … And I was thrown into a prison, like a criminal. They took her … oh! Misery! (145)[12]

Their forbidden romance lasts until "the city" brings it to an abrupt end. The last paragraph of his manuscript introduces the "city" in a tale that up to that point had been centered upon the interior space of the character's apartment. His world, safely detached from social engagement, collapses when this isolation is disrupted by his social exposure, as captured in the term *la ville* and the French impersonal subject *on*. The spatial becomes existential and the crossing of the threshold into the exterior prompts the breakdown of the character's integrity. As in the ending of "L'Ami des miroirs", the protagonist is brought to a psychiatric ward to correct the deviance that is the difference between how he sees himself and how he is perceived by others.

The above-mentioned mechanism of spatial detachment is present in later fantastic texts, notably in Ballard's texts discussed in the Epilogue. Also in a memorable scene in Kafka's *Metamorphosis* (1915), when Gregor Samsa looks out the window of his room, his feeling of progressive disengagement is analogous with the city he sees:

[12] "Je n'ai point su cacher mon bonheur. Je l'aimais si fort que je n'ai plus voulu la quitter. Je l'ai emportée avec moi toujours, partout. Je l'ai promenée par la ville comme ma femme, et conduite au théâtre en des loges grillées, comme ma maîtresse … Mais on l'a vue … on a deviné … on me l'a prise … Et on m'a jeté dans une prison, comme un malfaiteur. On l'a prise … oh ! Misère ! …."

> […] in truth he saw even the objects that were quite near at hand less and less clearly as the days progressed; the hospital across the way whose all too constant sight he had earlier reviled was now no longer even visible to him, and if he had not known perfectly well that he was a resident in Charlottenstrasse, a quiet but perfectly urban street, he might have imagined he was gazing out his window out to a desert in which the gray earth were indistinguishably conjoined. (2014: 67)

The urban landscape loses its defining features. What remains is an inhospitable desert, a fuzzy vision of a city that was once familiar to him, like his own self. Samsa's unexpected and unexplained metamorphosis enacts an allegorical process of depersonalization of an individual repudiated by the collective. As in the other texts discussed, inevitably the characters remain outcasts in the city, whether confined to a mental asylum, like the protagonists of Rodenbach and Maupassant, or in their own room, like Samsa.

Showcases: "La Princesa y el Granuja" (Pérez Galdós, 1877)

The final section of this chapter focuses on the motif of the display window, with the emphasis on the commodification brought about by the modern capitalist urban environment. "La Princesa y el Granuja" (The Princess and the Rogue, 1877) by Spanish author Benito Pérez Galdós is one of the best-known supernatural short stories by this author who features in the canon of nineteenth-century literature largely for his realist novels.[13] It narrates the transformation of Pacorrito Migajas, from human into toy, after he falls in love with a doll princess that he sees for sale in one of Madrid's central stores. This story, subtitled a Christmas story (*Cuento de navidad*), employs many of the conventions of fairy tales, which it then subverts by locating the narrative in the specific socio-historical context of modern Madrid.

Pacorrito Migajas (the surname in Spanish means "breadcrumbs") is seven years old, a Dickensian type of clever, noble, orphan street child who earns his little money by selling newspapers, lottery tickets and matches in Madrid. He is infatuated with a doll that he sees exhibited in a display

[13] On Benito Pérez Galdós's fantastic short fiction, see the studies by Smith (1992, 1996: 11–28), Peñate Rivero (2001) and Tang (2016). Specifically on "La Pricesa y el Granuja", Roas discusses the influence of Hoffmann in the presentation of the supernatural (2002: 231–236) and Tang provides a reading centered on social class (2014: 113–116).

window on one of the city's central avenues. In an act of bravery, he later rescues the doll from captivity and abuse at the hands of the children of a rich family. For his heroic accomplishment, the doll invites him to the extravagant ball of toys. At this nocturnal event the doll communicates to the protagonist the final condition to be met to win over her love: Pacorrito needs to become part of the wealthy world of toys and thus to give up his human life for good. Pacorrito accepts and wakes next morning in the body of a small street-urchin doll. In this faithful reproduction of himself he is kept captive behind the same display window through which he had so often gazed. Horrified by his metamorphosis, Pacorrito Migajas realizes that in his condition as a doll there can be no more sensory experiences, no possibility of reverting to his previous human state and, worst of all, no solace of eventual death.[14]

With its gruesome ending and through the fantastic motif of transformation into a doll for sale and display, this tale becomes a narrative model for the objectification of the subject in the modern city. The story captures a series of tensions between social classes (the doll princess purchased by a wealthy family and humble Pacorrito who must be content with merely contemplating her from the other side of the display window) and between freedom and servitude, symbolized by the spaces of the street and the shop, two domains divided from each other by the shop window.

"La Princesa y el Granuja" initially follows the conventional fairy tale plot of a romantic love that transcends the boundaries of social acceptance. It is also built upon the classic structure of the three tests a hero needs to overcome in order to be worthy of his beloved's hand. In this case all involved the challenge of crossing a forbidding border or threshold. The display window, symbol of modernity, is at the heart of these three border crossings. The analysis of the following sections foregrounds how the three tests with which the protagonist is faced are constructed around particular narrative spaces. At the heart of this reading is the urban motif of the display window, which confers a dark tone that leads it away from the happy ending of the classic tales. It intertwines the asymmetrical

[14] The short film *Alma* (Soul, dir. Rodrigo Blaas, 2009) presents a very similar plot line. It starts with the window gazing trope. The protagonist is a girl called Alma whose attention is captured by one of the shops in a city that seems to be Barcelona. In the shop's display window there is a doll that is identical to her. As Alma manages to enter the shop and touch the doll, she is trapped in the doll's body and becomes part of the dolls on display. The perspective shifts from Alma looking at the dolls from the street to her watching the street through the doll's eyes.

spheres of social and economic power and becomes a symbol of materialistic and sensual desire, ostentation, greed and, ultimately, objectification.

The Infatuation

Echoing the Dickensian urban tradition, Galdós's affection for the underprivileged Pacorrito is evident from the beginning. The inclusive form (*nuestro héroe*, "our hero") used by the narrator seeks to create a sympathetic connection between reader and Pacorrito. As a rogue, he is characterized by his *pillería* (roguishness, craftiness). Coming from a family of thieves, fugitives and convicts, Pacorrito has, despite his disadvantaged situation, found a way of making an independent living, making of him a hero from the outset. He is a streetwise orphan nomad, detached from goods or properties:

> He was not bothered much by the inconvenience of the residence or the demands of a landlord. His palaces were the Prado in summer and, in winter, the portals of the Panadería house. Respectful, serious and eschewing worldly pageantries, he was satisfied with any corner in which to spend the night. (2001, my translations)[15]

However, as the next paragraph shows, Pacorrito is burdened by his love for the doll princess. While the street character of the rascal represents a romanticized sense of freedom and independence, the doll princess is imprisoned behind the display window as part of a collection of "ladies dressed in expensive outfits". The features of the doll are antithetic to those of Pacorrito: while he has lively dark eyes, the doll's eyes are blue and lifeless. His face, tanned by the sun and the fresh air, contrasts with her "fine and purified skin of wax". He is poor but free to move around the city; she is the sophisticated queen of dolls, imprisoned by her own beauty and lineage in the shop.[16]

[15] "No le inquietaban gran cosa ni las molestias del domicilio ni las exigencias del casero. Sus palacios eran el Prado en verano, y en invierno los portales de la casa Panadería. Varón y sobrio y enemigo de pompas mundanas, se contentaba con un rincón cualquiera donde pasar la noche."

[16] On fantastic dolls from a gender perspective, see Raquel Velázquez Velázquez (2020).

This display window frames a sphere to which Pacorrito does not have access. The shop is located on the very popular and busy Puerta del Sol, emblem of modern commerce: "a very busy street with beautiful shops, which by day show off a thousand industrial wonders in their windows, and at night light up with the brilliant clarity of gas lamps". Pacorrito spends many nights in front of this display window, admiring his beloved doll and wondering if he will ever be able to cross this insurmountable frontier into the wealthy world of dolls to win over her love.

The Rescue

The second test involves rescuing the princess from a new confinement. She is purchased by a wealthy family whose children abuse her. Pacorrito must seek out the mansion in which she is kept captive and liberate her. At the doorstep of this mansion "where his beloved was enslaved", Pacorrito's mission is made difficult by the guardians of the threshold, in line with the mythical schema of hero narratives:

> On the porch of the big house where the car stopped, the rascal's hopeful mission was interrupted when a servant told him that if he stained the floor with his muddy feet, he would break his spine.[17]

"Our hero", as Galdós writes, manages to enter the mansion and rescues the moribund princess, who is lying torn and damaged on the floor. They escape together.

The Sacrifice

The third and final test involves a physical and existential metamorphosis. If Pacorrito wants to enter the world of toys, he will need to be transformed into an inanimate object, a sacrifice that would allow him to be with his beloved doll forever. This difficult dilemma is offered to him during a celebration held before midnight. The ball scene portrays a pompous world of toys who at night come to life and enjoy the liberties denied them during the day. In this social gathering, Pacorrito succeeds in

[17] "En el pórtico de la casa grande donde se detuvo el coche, cesaron las ilusiones del granuja, porque un criado le dijo que si manchaba el piso con sus pies enlodados, le rompería el espinazo."

demonstrating his dignity and bravery by fighting a duel with toys who humiliate him for his socially disadvantaged background. Among his adversaries are Bismark and Napoleon. Moved by his "untamed courage", the Queen of Toys declares that she will grant him her love as well luxury and noble ranking, subject to one condition. Her request leads to the climax of this tale, as Pacorrito must decide between escaping his humble origins and renouncing his freedom:

> Since it is your wish to be my husband, and therefore, Prince and lord of these doll kingdoms, I must warn you that in order to achieve this you must renounce your human personality […] Answer me. Pacorrito Migajas, son of human beings, do you want to be a doll?[18]

In this final scene, Galdós plays with the reader's expectations by subverting the prototypical fairy tale ending, in which love would transcend the hero's social, economic and even existential boundaries. We assume that the hero will be rewarded for his bravery and noble love, and a happy ending will be granted to the couple, for ever after. However, the reward of eternal life is far from joyful in "La Princesa y el Granuja". Throughout the tale, Galdós has provided hints that anticipate a tragedy. The world of toys, while luxurious and immortal, is subject to the demands of the consumer. The toys are objects of desire, designed to be purchased by buyers with the means to do so. Several references in the narrative had pointed to the toys' condition as slaves of the society of consumerism, in which "a few tough individuals decide the fate of these honest creatures, giving them over to the destructive ferocity of spoiled children". The scene of the ball exposes the dull, passive everyday existence of the toys by contrast to the "unrestrained luxury" of the very few hours during which they can be free. With magnificent dresses and miniature delicacies adapted to their size and described in detail, the ball provides the toys with an escape from their monotonous ornamental existence, where they are destined to satisfy the wishes of the wealthy. Pacorrito realizes that he does not fit in at this feast attended by military figures of the highest rank and by members of the doll aristocracy. Nonetheless, in a duel with Bismarck, he demonstrates his courage and dignity and earns the possibility of joining the world of toys.

[18] "Puesto que quieres ser mi esposo, y, por consiguiente, Príncipe y señor de estos monigotes reinos, debo advertirte que para ello es necesario que renuncies a tu personalidad humana […] Respóndeme pues. Pacorrito Migajas, hijo del hombre, ¿quieres ser muñeco?"

Tempted by the prospect of wealth and blinded by his love for the princess, Pacorrito accepts the offer of a more perfected and eternal existence and establishes his love for her "for ever and ever" (*por los siglos de los siglos*).

While the classic fairy tale would conclude with a celebration of the nobility of a persistent pursuit of love, Galdós's story portrays the pursuit as an expression of greed. The moral of the tale is evident by the end, with Pacorrito regretting his admittance into the wealthy world of dolls. The toys resume their dull existence in the display window, Pacorrito among them. The final scene describes Pacorrito captive in the shop, voiceless and alone in the dark. From the subject who watched and desired from the other side of the shop window, he has turned into the object that is observed and desired from the street, destined to satisfy a costumer's caprice. From rascal to toy, his freedom of movement has become paralysis and confinement, with his city now lying on the other side of the showcase window. As he exclaims "I am in the showcase! … Horror!" toward the end, he realizes with anguish that he has been made captive by his own desires. Prior to this metamorphosis, Pacorrito was a city character whose autonomy and identity in the streets of Madrid was maintained by his remaining on the margins of consumer society. This ending, however, shows "our hero" objectified, condemned to a monotonous, monochrome, inanimate existence, exhibited for sale in a shop window in the Spanish capital.

Galdós's tale follows the line of the spatial settings discussed in this chapter, dedicated to the well-known motifs of split identities and physical metamorphosis. While these fantastic motifs are not new, the urban places where these happen bring in a critical dimension concerning the self-perception of the modern subject. In the discussed short stories, the city ball, the street or the display window trigger a constant process of social exhibition that leads to different distortions and fractures of the image the individual has formed of their own identity.

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PART III

Rhythms: The Fantastic on the Move

[The rhythmanalyst] will come to 'listen' to a house, a street, a town as an audience listens to a symphony

—*Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life*, Henri Lefebvre

1.1 Introduction: A Fantastic of Rhythm

In the mid-nineteenth century, in reaction to the expansion of the railway network, the French artist Honoré Daumier produced a series of caricatures inspired by travel by train. *Impressions et Compressions de Voyage* (Travel Impressions and Compressions, Fig. 1) depicted overcrowded carriages on a train traveling at such a speed that its passengers fall over each other and out of the train itself. In another sketch, ironically called *Les Trains de plaisir* (Pleasure Trains, Fig. 2), passengers surge forward to access the train's already-packed carriages. With this series of lithographs, Daumier satirized the accelerating movement of goods, capital and people as well as the discomfort experienced in traveling in close contact with strangers.

A key symbol of modern progress, the railway transformed the conception of time and space for Europeans. The manner in which this transformation unfolds is traced in Orlando Figes's fascinating book *The Europeans: Three Lives and the Making of Cosmopolitan Culture*, in which he quotes William Makepeace Thackeray: "We who lived before the railway and survive the ancient world are like Father Noah and his family out of the Ark" (qtd. in Figes 2020: 64). Figes goes a step further and shows that the arrival of trains and the connecting of not only the major European

Fig. 1 *Impressions et compressions de voyage*. Honoré Daumier, 1843. Musée Carnavalet, Paris. Caption. *Ah! miséricorde! nous sommes tous perdus!.—Eh! non c'est tout bonnement le convoi qui se remet en marche … du moment où la machine va en avant les voyageurs vont en arrière … c'est connu!* … [Ah, mercy! We are all done for!—No! It is simply the train starting up again … from the moment the train goes forward, the passengers go in reverse … everybody knows that!]

metropolises but also provincial towns revolutionized the literary, musical and art market in Europe and thus was crucial to the development of a common European cultural canon.

The expansion of population generated by waves of immigration into the city, the enhancement of spatial circulation through new public transportation systems, "the new art of flânerie" as Walter Benjamin named it (2002: 833) and as practiced by individuals who were also a "strolling commodity" (367), the incremental rhythm of human encounters, commerce exchange, consumption and waste production: all these forged the city rhythms of modernity. Over the past number of decades, urban studies—as well as works on narrative space more generally—have borne

witness to a significant shift in analysis from the predominance of the visual to other sensorial perceptions of space. One of the elements in geocritical reading, argues Westphal in his referential work *La Géocritique*, is *la polysensorialityé ou l'empire des sens* (2007: 213–222): "sensoriality allows the individual to conform to the world. It contributes to the structuring and definition of space" (Westphal 2011: 133).

In urban studies, understanding cities as sensory environments has opened up new directions that prioritize non-visual input and demonstrate the importance of historicizing the experiences of touch, smell, taste and sound.[1] Georg Simmel, with his view of the modern city as a site of sensory overload and perceptual confusion, was a forerunner of this approach. In "The Metropolis and Mental Life" Simmel articulated the challenges of adapting to the phenomenon of modern urbanism in terms of a disjunction of rhythms and tempos in the incremental intensification of sensorial stimuli. "[T]he tempo and multiplicity of economic, occupational and social life" of the city, he argued, stood in "a deep contrast with the slower, more habitual, more smoothly flowing rhythm of the sensory-mental phase of small town and rural existence" ([1903] 2014: 223).

Scholarship under the so-called new mobilities turn has remarked upon the intersecting dimensions of power and discrimination that shape urban kinetic features, such as urban motion and sounds.[2] The questions of who has the agency to move, whose movements are restricted and how, and equally whose voice is heard and who remains silent (or silenced) in the city are complex ones, with answers inevitably conditioned by the identities to which they allude.

[1] Steward and Cowan (2007: 1–22) in *The City and the Senses* provide a comprehensive overview of scholarship that historicizes the senses in the urban context. See also Corbin's *Le temps, le désir et l'horreur* (1991), with a focus on urban modernity; Rodaway's *Sensuous Geographies* (1994) for the interrelation between postmodern geography and the senses; Lefebvre's *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life* (1992) for a philosophical framework on rhythm and everyday life (particularly Chapter 3 "Seen from the Window" for an emphasis on the urban, 27–37) and its revisions in the volume *Space, Difference Everyday Life*: *Reading Henri Lefebvre* (Goonewardena et al. ed. 2008: 115–189).

[2] See in particular the volume *Mobilities, Literature, Culture*, which discusses the contributions of the humanities to the new mobilities turn (Aguiar et al. 2019). On the subject of gendered mobility in the modern city, see Parkins (2009). For a critical overview of the concept of "soundscape", see Kelman (2010), whose article engages with Schafer's pioneering work on this subject and provides an overview of different (mis)interpretations of the term in recent scholarship.

Fig. 2 *Les Trains de plaisir*. Honoré Daumier, 1864. Musée Carnavalet, Paris. Caption: *Quand après dix assauts infructueux on arrive enfin à conquérir une place dans un wagon on éprouve un premier et bien vif plaisir.* [When after ten unsuccessful attempts one finally gains a place in the car one experiences an initial and very great joy.]

City sounds have in recent years also been presented in relation to a sense of belonging (e.g., belonging to a city, to a specific neighborhood). Transmedial projects on sonic urbanism, such as *Bretez* and *The Acoustic City*, bring together urban historians, musicologists and digital producers to (re)construct everyday city life in a compendium of sounds. Some recent initiatives, such as STAYHOME SOUNDS and SONYO, have also taught us that soundscapes can be a way of recording drastic changes in city life.[3] These artistic and scientific projects, ever-growing in number, underline that the social life of sound and tempo are key constituents of urban experience.

In Part III of this book I turn my attention to the idea of rhythm, arguing that rhythm is essential in configuring familiarity with urban space—an assumed familiarity that the fantastic event then transgresses. A set of distinctive sounds, such as the hiss of gas lighting at night, are associated with the modern city, as are a range of diurnal rhythms, such as the percussion of different guilds, the clamor of crowds on the street and, as the century evolved, the buzzing of traffic and of mobile forms of advertising. Before proceeding to a tentative definition of what I call "the fantastic of rhythm", I will refer to an example that illustrates the way in which sonic phenomena shape the construction of textual urban space. The reference text in this case is not a fantastic short story but instead the musical film *Love Me Tonight*, in particular its opening scene. Although dating from a period later than that studied in this book, the scene epitomizes the portrayal of the city as an enmeshment of sounds and rhythms.

Released in 1932, just a few days after sound became widespread in cinema production, this film tells of the love story between Parisian tailor Maurice and Princess Jeanette, the latter living in her family château in the suburbs of the French capital. Maurice conceals his working-class background and, masquerading as an aristocrat, wins Jeanette's love during a visit to her castle. The Princess eventually discovers Maurice's false identity, prompting him to depart in a rush for Paris by train. Nevertheless, Jeanette is determined to demonstrate that class boundaries will not deter her love. She pursues the train on her horse, ultimately succeeding in

[3] STAYHOME SOUNDS foregrounds the interconnection between sound and memory. Citizens from more than 25 countries have posted their recordings of everyday life during the COVID-19 pandemic to map this historical moment. SONYO, a large-scale project to monitor noise pollution in New York, has analyzed and represented the way in which weekly rhythmic patterns have been disrupted during the pandemic.

bringing it to a halt in a scene that leads to the reconciliation of the film's happy ending.

The opening scene portrays the city of Paris in the early hours of the morning. Different shots are accompanied by the overlapping rhythmic patterns of a number of urban sounds: the tolling of church bells followed by the sounds of a carpenter chopping wood, the snoring of a homeless drunkard, a woman sweeping, shop blinds as they open, a baby crying, a carpet being beaten clean and the ring of the shoe-maker's hammer are among other familiar city sounds. One by one, these add up to a rhythmical pattern that is sustained until the next scene. The camera then moves to Maurice's room. Awakened by this Parisian soundscape, Maurice performs the film's first musical piece, inspired by the urban rhythms he hears as he dresses:

> Lovely morning song of Paris,
> you are much too loud for me.
> It's not a sonata by Mozart.
> The song of Paris has its faults.
> It has less than a poor nanny goat's art,
> But at least it's not Viennese waltz.
> Seville has its fandango.
> Chicago has its trot.
> Buenos Aires, there is tango.
> Dresden—its gavotte.
> […]
> It has taxi horns and claxons
> to scare the Anglosaxons,
> that's the song of Paris. […]

The spectator, rather than merely seeing images of the city on the screen, experiences Paris through its overlapping rhythms. As the city awakens it creates a pattern of juxtaposed layers of sounds—a complex and loud symphony of city life. This contrasts with the other spatial domain relevant to the plot: the château. A monotonous indoor life unfolds in this quiet rural retreat, where no sound interrupts the conversations that take place between characters in the aseptic luxury of the château's spacious rooms. The final scene brings together the two spatial domains with two different rhythms. Jeanette's horse—representing the traditional milieu—follows Maurice's train—a symbol of modernity—in a sequence in which the animal's steps as they grow faster and faster are alternated with chugging of

the locomotive's rotating wheels. The binaries of pastoral-urban, traditional-modern and aristocracy-working class are symbolically superimposed in a race between the horse and the train heading to Paris. This rhythm represents the climactic moment in the plot, which is then resolved in the reconciliation of the happy denouement. These scenes from *Love Me Tonight* illustrate the different tempos that co-exist in modern urban life. The fantastic short stories analyzed in chapters "The Ghosts of Public Transportation" and "Cacophony and Asynchrony" show how this co-existence of rhythms is problematized through the supernatural event or creature.

Andreas Huyssen in his work *Miniature Metropolis* (2015) argues that the hectic tempo of modern life favored the creation of a particular literary form, namely the miniature. Building upon this argument, in this section I contend that, in the "renewed motion" that they engendered, such "fleeting and fragmentary experiences of metropolitan life" (2015: 3) favored the creation of a type of fantastic dedicated to the transgression of everyday city rhythms.

A brief overview of the most influential theories on the fantastic demonstrates that the visual has been the key perceptive sense, both structurally and thematically, in definitions of this narrative form. An early example of this is Freud's reading of "The Sandman", where the eyes take on a central symbolic position in the development of his theory of *The Uncanny* (1919) in an essay that was to become a cornerstone for subsequent theorizations of the supernatural. In early thematic approaches to the fantastic (Vax 1963; Caillois 1965), the theme of vision features both directly—for example, in the interplay between the visible and the invisible, for example with the *appearance* of some invisible creature, be it a ghost, phantom or specter, or an undefined invisible entity that haunts a space. Todorov also highlighted the "themes of vision" in fantastic literature, referring to those that provoke an alternation of perception:

> works that are linked to this thematic network [perception] constantly emphasize the problematic nature of this perception, and especially of the fundamental sense, sight ("the five senses, which are merely one sense—the faculty of seeing", as Louis Lambert put it): to the point where we might designate all of these themes as "themes of vision". (1975: 120)

Rosemary Jackson later developed her theory of the fantastic as the "Unseen of culture" (1981: 170–180). According to her, the fantastic is a

mode employed to render visible that which is irrational and excluded from cultural order: "The fantastic is, then, *made invisible* in Plato's Republic and in the tradition of high rationalism which it fostered: alongside all subversive social forces, fantasy is expelled and is registered only as an absence" (1981: 103, emphasis in original).

More recently, Simone Grossman (2006) dedicated a book to the issue of vision and the fantastic. In *Regard, peinture et fantastique au Québec*, Grossman underscores the relationship between visible, invisible, revelation and representation in some of the most recurrent fantastic imagery, such as magical or animated portraits, paintings and photographs.

To counterbalance this hegemony of the eye in the structures and themes of the fantastic, in the two chapters that follow I explore the way in which polyrhythmic phenomena are connected to the supernatural transgression. "Rhythm" is taken here to refer to the configuration of urban spatiality by means of two axes: movement patterns and sound. Chapter "The Ghosts of Public Transportation" explores the former while chapter "Cacophony and Asynchrony" focuses on the latter. There is, however, common ground between the two chapters. Soundscapes exist where space is inhabited and transited. By the same token, characters move in urban space and make use of relevant acoustic environments to orientate themselves. These perceived rhythms provide characters with guidance and clues, for example the description of a recognizable landmark through the evocation of the sound of a cathedral bell. The last short story discussed in this chapter is "La Nuit" (1887) by Guy Maupassant, a text representative of a fantastic arising from an urban experience that combines the distortion of both movement and sound.

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The Ghosts of Public Transportation

the spirits have made immense progress. Ruined castles have given place to railway stations
—"The Latest Thing in Ghosts", anonymous

Over the past few decades, a number of works have invited us to rethink urban modernity in terms of spatial relations, in a move away from a long-standing tradition that prioritized the experience of time in the definition of the modern. David Harvey presented his well-known argument for a turn to spatiality in the analysis of this historical context as follows: "The reduction of space to a contingent category is implied in the idea of progress itself. Since modernity is about the experience of progress through modernization, writings on that theme have tended to emphasize temporality, the process of *becoming*, rather than *being* in space and place" (1990: 205). Harvey references Foucault in denouncing the hegemony of time over space in the understanding of the modern and postmodern condition that dominated until the Spatial Turn: "'Space was treated as the dead, the fixed, the undialectical, the immobile' while 'time, on the contrary, was richness, fecundity, life, dialectic'" (Foucault qtd. in Harvey 1990: 205).

The studies that prioritize the categories of space over those of time converge in their evocation of themes of mobility to emphasize that "modernity is a matter of movement, of *flux*, of *change*, of

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unpredictability" (Lash and Friedman 1992: 1, emphasis in original).[1] Breaking with a tradition that provides its critical account of the nineteenth century through the experience and representation of the temporal (as seen in the theme of memory and the technique of stream of consciousness), these studies examine, for example, how the motorcar, electric tram and railway generated a new spatial awareness that was to transform urban literature (Thacker 2003; Parkins 2009). Pike in *The Image of the City in Modern Literature* (1981) views the experience of the modern as a difference in rhythms across the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He argues that the distinction between realism and modernism—which he regards as two different aesthetic attitudes toward the urban—is reflected in the antithetical models of the static versus the fluid city. The static metropolis of Balzac's Paris and Dickens's early urban novels is represented, he claims, as a stable, coherent place, via a fixed narrative perspective and with fixed spatial relationships between the components of this city. Pike demonstrates that, as the twentieth century progressed, this model was to give way to a moving, discontinuous, unstable representation of the urban, with disorienting changes of viewpoints, as best observed in the works of Joyce, Kafka and Woolf.

This chapter contributes to the mobilities turn in literary studies by illustrating how movement became a theme of the supernatural, deployed in a critique of several aspects of the idea of progress as entrenched in the very notion of urban mobility. The selected short stories date from the second half of the nineteenth century and present a variety of fantastic situations and perspectives on urban mobility, ranging from an account of urban circulation told directly by a long-suffering city bridge to stories of ghost vehicles embodying a pre-modern past; from tales of railway journeys without a destination to tram trips with uncanny passengers. All these texts challenge the idea that modern means of transportation are "the symbol of progress and development out of the past, through the present and into the future" (Lawless 2011: xxv). My analysis focuses on how this distortion of linear, progressive movement is represented in spatial

[1] It is worth noting that a large amount of this body of scholarship has typically been insensitive to issues of race, disability, gender, class and sexuality among other factors in the analysis of urban mobility. Sennet's statement in his famous work *Flesh and Stone: The Body and the City in Western Civilization* epitomizes this seemingly "neutral" framework of movement: "the modern individual is, above all, a mobile human being (1994: 255–256). Parkins's gender-oriented approach (2009) is one of the exceptions. See also Aguiar; Mathieson; Pearce (2019: 1–31).

metaphors that arise out of impossible urban experiences. Superimposition, circularity and entrapment are recurrent themes that the reader will find in the fantastic short stories of this chapter while in several of these, including the story with which I begin below, writers chose to experiment with an unfamiliar shift in perspective.

Pity a Poor Bridge

When urban mobility is studied in literature, the subject, narrator or focalizor is, generally and predictably, the modern citizen; the object is the means of transportation involved and the setting, the spaces of circulation that the city provides. The British journalist John Hollingshead, a frequent contributor to Dickens's *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*, published an original piece in the latter journal which was to invert this pattern of subject and object. "Pity a Poor Bridge" (1859)[2] was the title of Hollingshead's fantastic narrative on urban mobility, in which the speaking subject is an element of the city's infrastructure (a bridge) who complains about being unjustly objectified by those who cross it daily. It is New London Bridge itself that narrates, in the first person, its experience of the city, constituted as moving sounds with identifiable rhythms. London, rather than seen, is heard through the tempos and sounds generated by the pedestrians and different means of transportation crossing every day. The bridge offers a "personal" testimony in which it bemoans the constant wear and tear caused by those traversing since it was built in 1799:

> I have carried them on my back now for eight-and-twenty years, and my ancestors have carried them for more than eight centuries. My ancestors were the old roadways across the river Thames, known as Old London Bridge, while I am the same roadway (about one hundred feet westward of the site of the other) known as New London Bridge. (1859: 379)

[2] "Pity a Poor Bridge" was later compiled in a volume entitled *Odd Journeys in and Out of London* (Hollingshead 1860), with the leitmotiv of the twelve reprinted articles and stories captured in this title. Extolling the collection's theme of movement, the Preface starts with the following quote: "I believe that according to the English law nothing is considered a nuisance which keeps moving; and, as this book only records journeys, and so may be said to keep moving, I hope it will be looked upon according to Act of Parliament" (1860: v).

This innovative use of the narrative voice serves two purposes. Firstly, through the direct account provided by the bridge the reader is made aware of the amount of traffic circulating in mid-nineteenth-century London, with a solitary "period of comparative rest from […] miscellaneous trafficmongers […] from two o'clock to five o'clock in the early morning" (380). In its recounting of its woes, this critical piece of city infrastructure seeks recognition of what it presents as an unsustainable situation. As the bridge laments its bad state, it urges the British Government to make immediate reparations: "I, in this present scorching month of July, am having my back mended after a severe course of heavy and crowded work, and am waiting for something to turn up that may improve my prospects and condition" (379).

From the outset, the bridge-narrator describes itself as "overworked" (379) and as "the most overloaded thoroughfare in the whole world" (379). It expresses gratitude to the City Police Commissioner for taking the initiative of separating "the carriage traffic over my back into fast and slow—light and heavy" (379). This measure, it notes, is nonetheless insufficient. The bridge then enters into great detail in its inventory of the numbers and directions of subjects and objects that pass over: an "endless procession" (379) of horses, pedestrians, wagons, carts, cabs, omnibuses, dust-carts transit on a daily basis across its "overloaded back" (381). "[A]n average day of four-and-twenty hours, during the present year (1859), will witness one hundred and sixty-eight thousand persons passing across me, from either side: one hundred and seven thousand on foot, and sixty-one thousand in vehicles" (379). The Poor Bridge ends its lament with an urgent call for immediate reparations, explaining that it should be compensated for the effects of the excessive daily burden on its much-misused back:

> Taking the number of persons as well as the vehicles that pass across me in the course of the year, the delays and loss of time they suffer, and the value to them of the time they lose, I have often endeavoured to arrive at the money cost of the obstructive annoyance on my back. (381)

The first-person narrative of New London Bridge draws attention to the excessive London traffic, as well the decay of the modern infrastructure that had been built to facilitate the increase in the mobility of people and goods. Hollingshead employs a trope frequently found in supernatural fiction: he gives life and a voice to the inanimate. In this case, this strategy offers an alternative, first-hand perspective on daily life in central London

in the 1860s. In its testimony, the bridge looks for sympathy among its readers, an aspect captured in the "Poor" of the title and reiterated throughout the piece as the bridge repeatedly references its sore back. "What can I do to obtain outdoor relief? What can my guardians do to relieve me?" (382), laments the Poor Bridge. Through these mechanisms of pathos, the urgent call for action directed at the British population and at relevant authorities is effectively delivered through a usually unheard-from voice, that of a stressed modern bridge on the verge of a burnout.

Ghost Vehicles

The vast array of vehicles circulating in the literary city on a daily basis, as detailed by the Poor Bridge, was occasionally infiltrated by a supernatural conveyance. Dickens's wrote in his ghost tale "The Ghosts of the Mail" that "the ghosts of mail coaches and horses, guards, coachmen and passengers were in the habit of making journeys regularly every night" ([1836] 2016: 76) and he made of this motif the core of his tale. Included in *The Pickwick Papers* as "Chapter 49: Containing the Story of the Bagman's Uncle", this piece was later published independently and has now become one of Dickens's best-known short stories.

With this text Dickens introduces a peculiar and outdated vehicle that, despite sharing some characteristics with the rural legends of cursed coaches and carriages,[3] circulates not in the gloomy countryside but in modern Edinburgh. Delivered as a framed narrative, the plot focuses on the narrator's uncle, a debt collector obliged to travel extensively "from London to Edinburgh, from Edinburgh to Glasgow, from Glasgow back to Edinburgh, and thence to London by the smack" (54). During one of these visits to the Scottish capital, as he makes his way back to his lodgings from Canongate to the further end of Leith Walk, the uncle's attention is caught by a wasteground of old mail coaches no longer in use. He leaves the route he had taken after dining at a friend's house, "to peep between the palings at these mails—about a dozen of which, he remembered to have seen, crowded together in a very forlorn and dismantled state, inside" (59). The uncle then witnesses how these coaches come to life, complete

[3] The familiar, urban setting of "The Ghosts of the Mail" contrasts with the moors of northern England featuring in Amelia Edwards's classic "The Phantom Coach" (1864) and with the oriental setting of Rudyard Kipling's often-anthologized "The Phantom Rickshaw" (1888), where the spirit of a rejected lover haunts the narrator on a rickshaw in Simla, India.

with their corresponding ghost passengers and supernatural horse riders. He is lured into joining the coach crew in a journey in a past époque in which he is compelled to defend the honor of a lady, one of his fellow passengers. The next morning the uncle awakens in the same spot in which he had fallen asleep the previous night, "sitting in the wheelwright's yard, on the box of an old Edinburgh mail" (76) in a concluding scene that depicts the night adventure as possibly having been a dream: "He got down, and looked eagerly inside for the beautiful young lady. Alas! There was neither door nor seat to the coach. It was a mere shell" (76).

This ghostly time-travel experience in the phantom coach is preceded by descriptions of an uncanny Edinburgh, as observed during the uncle's night walk. Dickens forges an overlap of past and present through his description of the city's buildings, depicted as phantoms casting their shadow on the modern city:

> […] tall gaunt straggling houses, with time-stained fronts, and windows that seems to have shared the lot of eyes in mortals, and to have grown dim and sunken with age. Six, seven, eight storey high, were the houses; […] throwing their dark shadows over the roughly paved road, and making the dark night darker. A few oil lamps were scattered at long distances, but they only served to mark the dirty entrance to some narrow close, […]. (56–57)

The chiaroscuro portrayal of Edinburgh's historical monuments turns them into living ghosts populating the dreamy city: "the strange irregular clusters of lights piled one above the other […] gleaming from the castle walls on the one side and the Calton Hill on the other, as if they illuminated veritable castles in the air; while the old picturesque town slept heavily on, in gloom and darkness below" (58). Similarly, the old mail coaches are described as "decaying skeletons" (59), looking "chill and dismal" (59). The phantasmagorical atmosphere of a derelict history allows the lead character to mentally evoke the period in which such mail coaches were in use and thus to reflect on changes brought about by modern times. He recalls "the busy bustling people who had rattled about, years before, in the old coaches, and were now as silent and changed" (59). In this description Dickens generates two rhythmic spheres. The dozing stillness of the present-day cemetery of mail coaches is superimposed upon a vibrant past when the once-dynamic coaches brought news to all corners of the country. While these evocations are initially purely imaginary projections, in the scene that follows they become literal:

> In one instant after the clock struck two, the whole of this deserted and quiet spot had become a scene of most extraordinary life and animation. The mail coach doors were on their hinges, the lining was replaced, the ironwork was as good as new, the paint was restored, the lamps were alight; cushions and greatcoats were on every coach-box, porters were thrusting parcels into every boot, guards were stowing away letter-bags, hostlers were dashing pails of water against the renovated wheels; numbers of men were pushing about, fixing poles into every coach; passengers arrived, portmanteaus were handed up, horses were put to; in short, it was perfectly clear that every mail there, was to be off directly. (60)

As the protagonist falls asleep, his time-travel adventure starts. Passengers arrive, horses are made ready and the scenes "of most extraordinary life and animation" (60) associated with the mail coaches of the past are revived (Fig. 1).

The featuring of this classic time-travel motif suggests a degree of nostalgia for the loss of this means of transportation, its vehicles now rusting in their cemetery of sorts. The ghost vehicle does, however, serve a function beyond that of the expression of a lost past. It represents an overlap of temporal layers that, as Bertrand Westphal explores in *Geocriticism*, is intrinsic to any construction and perception of place: "This present time of space includes a past that flows according to a stratigraphic logic" (2011: 137); "Places can only be perceived in the multidimensional volume of space-time, space elevated to the level of time" (141). The Edinburgh ghost carriage transporting its passengers back in time portrays urban space as an accumulation of coexisting strata. This plurality of temporal layers recalls Italo Calvino's description of the urban in *Invisible Cities* as consisting of "relationships between the measurements of its space and the events of its past" (1997: 9). The nocturnal adventure that the uncle experiences in "The Ghosts of the Mail" synchronizes these various historical layers. The ghost carriage—a vehicle in a material and symbolic manner—interweaves a past version of the city with the present context. Westphal reminds us that "space is not *one* in a moment" (2011: 138). The phantom vehicle that crosses through époques makes this plurality visible and renders tribute to a past that still reverberates in the contemporary city.[4]

[4] This motif has featured in cinema of recent years, for example as the phantom vehicle that intertwines past and present versions of the city in Woody Allen's film *Midnight in Paris* (2012). The plot is built upon a dual setting, as in "The Ghosts of the Mail". Set in early twenty-first century Paris, a ghostly car drives through at midnight, transporting the male protagonist to the Parisian bohemia of the 1920s. By means of this phantom journey Gil Pender, a frustrated writer, accesses one of the most creative époques in Parisian history.

Fig. 1 *The Ghostly Passengers in the Ghost of a Mail.* Hablot K. Browne, "Phiz", 1837. Philip V. Allingham, *Victorian Web.* http://www.victorianweb.org/art/illustration/phiz/pickwick/38.html

The motif of the magic vehicle is repeated in "Un viaje a la eternidad" (A Trip to Eternity), published anonymously in the Spanish periodical *La Crónica* in 1845. This legend tells of a calash doomed by the sins of its owner to circulate eternally. The opening section of "Un viaje a la eternidad" sets modern Madrid in contrast with the Madrid of thirty years earlier, the era from which the legend dates. After an introductory part in which the Madrid of the present is described in terms of its broad, comfortable streets and its monumental architecture, the narrative goes back three decades. The portrayal of the city of the past is largely constructed upon negation, a listing of present-day elements missing from old Madrid, such as sidewalks, city lights and shops. The emphasis is then placed on the current fast-paced carts, contrasted with the older, slower transport system of jalopies and horse-driven carriages. This leads into the recounting of the legend, which recalls the misadventures of Santiago, the miserable owner of one of these carriages, and how he fell victim to a curse. Thirty years earlier, a strange passenger had stepped into Santiago's vehicle and demanded to be driven out of the city. During the ominous journey that followed, Santiago realized that he was being magically led against his will "Para la eternidad! Para la eternidad!" ("for eternity" and also "towards eternity", 32, my translation), as supernatural voices whispered to him, as punishment for several financially motivated murders he had committed.

From the perspective of the urban fantastic, what is remarkable in this text is not the legend of the ghost carriage that is doomed to drive for all eternity. Of particular interest is the contrast between Santiago's fate and the opening sections of the text: in other words, the fact that the legend is framed as a flashback from modern Madrid. Why does the narrator go to such great lengths to describe the contemporary Spanish capital only to then categorically state that this is not in fact the setting of the legend that he will recount? "But it is not contemporary Madrid that I should talk about now; my story goes back thirty years ago" (27). I suggest regarding the fantastic in this tale as a juxtaposition of two different tempos. The opening passages are set in a modern, fast-paced Madrid, whereas the narration of the legend offers a rhythmic pattern based on repetition ad infinitum. Both are enhanced by the contrast. Santiago's punishment is circular: he is doomed to repeat the same movement cyclically, driving his

calash for all time. This cyclicality of the curse is strikingly different from the modern scenes presented at the beginning of the tale. The very notion of modern progress implicit in "present-day Madrid" (27) is one of advancement, "following step by step in the path of Paris" (27) with the incorporation of modern infrastructure and means of transportation. A similar contrast between linear time in the modern city and a non-linear time as represented by a fantastic motif was discussed in chapter "Fantastic Antique Shops", with the motif of the antiquarian shop.

Fellow Travelers

"Ships go by steam now-a-days, and so do ghosts" (1862: 101) proclaims the narrator of the anonymous literary piece "The Latest Thing in Ghosts", in a critique of a ghost story his friend has penned, which the narrator regards as being too conventional. Instead, he has a better suggestion that will suit the taste of the modern reader: the ghost protagonist should make an apparition in a vehicle from the present era. According to the narrator, a "modern spectre" (100) "of the very newest style" (101)

> drives to a railway station in broad daylight, takes a ticket (first-class ticket; no ghost has yet been known to travel second), gets into a carriage […] borrows your Bradshaw, begs you to tell it how it can get to A-, is sorry to trouble you, but it cannot understand Bradshaw […], converses with you fluently on various subjects, and shakes hands with you affectionately at parting. (101)

Echoing the fatigue with traditional ghost story tropes encountered in chapter "The City's Haunted Houses" in the example provided by "A Monotonous 'Sensation'" (pp. 88–91), in this paragraph the narrator prescribes a new setting for the supernatural, one designed to subvert the reader's expectations. Enough of uninhabited old castles in nearby forests and the clanking of chains: "This kind of spectre doth not suit the time" (100), the narrator bemoans. If "[m]odern readers must have modern ghosts" (100), the latter should travel like their human counterparts: by railway.

This approach incorporates the tropes that reoccur in a number of ghost stories set around railway journeys into and out of capital cities, such as, for example "The Four-Fifteen Express" (1866) by writer, Egyptologist and suffragist Amelia Edwards. It tells of the ghost of a murdered man traveling on the Great East Anglian trainline between London and

Blackwater. A similar setting features in another story by Edwards, the first story of her *Four Stories* (1861),[5] as well as in its sequel written by Dickens, "The Portrait-Painter's Story" (1861). Both of these are constructed around an encounter in a railway carriage between an artist and a dead girl who is seeking to get her portrait painted for her grieving father.

These "railway ghost stories", as I suggest calling them, present structural commonalities: (1) an opening atmospheric description of the train platform before the departure from the capital, followed by a detailed account of the stops along the way; (2) a polite conversation in the train carriage between the human protagonist and the (ghost) stranger; (3) the dawning realization, as it becomes clear that s/he is invisible to others, that this travel companion is a specter, and (4) the resolution of the mystery of why the spirit is haunting that particular railway line.

The encounter with the ghostly traveler is told, as the excerpts below show, by placing a great deal of emphasis on the natural countenance of this ghost and on his or her agreeable conversation during the journey. In "The First Story" (*Four Stories*, Edwards), Mr H—a London artist who sets out for the countryside in order to paint the portrait of Lady F—meets on his train journey a young lady who requests him to remember her face for a potential future portrait: "Do you think, for example, that you could paint me from recollection?", she asks (1861: 589). The same lady reappears at dinner later that evening, but no guest other than the artist can see her. Some time later, Mr H—receives a portrait commission from Mr Wylde, who seeks to immortalize his dearly departed daughter in a painting. In the final scene, Mr H—succeeds in painting the daughter from Mr Wylde's descriptions and by recalling the features of the young lady he had met on the train: "'That is she! Surely you must have seen my child, or you never could have made so perfect a likeness!'" (590). It is then established that the date of the lady's death was the same as that of her meeting with the artist in the train carriage, in a motif that Dickens was to expand upon in his sequel "The Portrait-Painter's Story".

[5] The authorship of these four texts has been disputed. Traditionally they have been attributed to Dickens and published as part of his ghost story legacy. However, a reference recently identified by scholars in *The Letters of Charles Dickens* (Volume IX) credits the work to Amelia Edwards. Allegedly Dickens renamed and heavily edited them as director of *All the Year Round*. For more details, see the context provided by Paroissien (2009) on the original volume and Dalby's introduction to *The Phantom Coach: Collected Ghost Stories by Amelia B. Edwards* (1999).

The opening scene in Edwards's "The First Story" is particularly interesting in the way in which it narrates the train journey of the artist and the young lady out of London. As the latter joins the painter "at the first station out of London" (589), the artist notices the "remarkable blending of sweetness and sadness in her countenance" (589). Other than this odd detail, their encounter unfolds in the most conventional manner:

> He took the train for the station nearest to F-Hall, and found himself, when first starting, alone in a carriage. His solitude did not, however, continue long. At the first station out of London, a young lady entered the carriage, and took the corner opposite to him. […] at length the gentleman made the remarks usual under such circumstances, on the weather and the country, and, the ice being broken, they entered into a conversation. (589)

In the sequel "The Portrait-Painter's Story", Dickens presents the artist's first-person account of the events narrated in Edwards's ghost story. There the reader is told that Mr H—himself had written to the journal in which the story appears, requesting his version to be published to correct inconsistencies and to provide testimony "at first hand" (2016: 351). The shift to the first person is designed to reinforce the objectivity and verisimilitude of the tale, as the introductory page shows:

> On the publication of that account, Mr H—himself addressed the Editor of this journal—to his great surprise—and forwarded to him his own narrative of the occurrences in questions. […] Mr H—has himself corrected the proofs. Entering on no theory of our own towards the explanation of any part of this remarkable narrative, we have prevailed on Mr H—to present it without any introductory remarks whatever. (351)

The artist's direct account adds a great number of details to the previous narrative—for example, personal names—and seeks to correct some elements, such as geographical locations and the sequence of events. Even so, the key scenes are preserved, including the conversation between the artist and the young lady in the carriage and the supper at which she appears and is seen by the artist alone. When their encounter on the train is described, the narrative again emphasizes the unremarkable attributes of the ghost traveler:

> I took my place in the morning train from York to London. The train would stop at Doncaster, and after that at Retford junction, where I should have to

> get out in order to take the line through Lincoln to A-. […] The carriage in which I was seated had no other occupant than myself, but at Doncaster a lady got in. […] (355)
>
> It is no small advantage on a wet day and a dull long journey to have an agreeable companion, one who can converse, and whose conversation has sufficient substance in it to make one forget the length and the dreariness of the journey. In this respect I had no deficiency to complain of, the lady being decidedly and agreeably conversational. (356)

This second paragraph contains features similar to those highlighted in Part II, including the figure of the modern revenant, recognizable for his polite conversation, as with the ghostly gentlemen featuring in "Ritter Gluck" (Hoffmann) and "Vision" (O'Squarr), as well as Thornbury's "most respectable class of ghosts" in the *Haunted London* series (pp. 101–106). Note, however, the difference between the seductive femme fatales of chapter "Female Spirits of Place", and these traveling ghost-ladies, who are treated with the same courtesy that would be extended to well-educated gentlemen. The narrator of "The Portrait-Painter's Story" describes his meeting with the (dead) young lady in terms of a casual "agreeable conversation" (357) that makes the journey pass faster. The ghostly lady even asks if she may consult his Bradshaw train guide and, "not being a proficient in that difficult work" (356), then requests his assistance with it. This revisits the trope suggested earlier in "The Latest Thing in Ghosts": "[a modern ghost] borrows your Bradshaw, begs you to tell it how it can get to A-, is sorry to trouble you, but it cannot understand Bradshaw" (1862: 101). The lady is cultured, as her conversation indicates, and only one odd detail stands out—she is strangely familiar with the artist's background and experience: "There was in her manner a kind of confidential reliance when she listened to me that is not usually accorded to a stranger, and sometimes she actually seemed to refer to different circumstances with which I had been connected in times past" (356–357).

Further details on the railway line are provided in the artist's version of the story. This mapping serves to demonstrate that the layout of the train-line made the lady's appearance at the dinner party impossible: "My bewilderment at the moment almost deprived me of utterance. I knew of no railway or other means by which she could have come" (358). This scene highlights the centrality of the mobility motif in railway ghost stories. That the lady is a supernatural being is suspected precisely because of a dissonance between geographical distances defined by the British railway

network, mapped in great detail in the story to indicate the impossibility of her presence there and then. The narrator "had certainly left her in a London train, and had seen it start, and the only conceivable way in which she could have come was by going on to Peterborough and then returning by a branch to A-, a circuit of about ninety miles" (358). The railway setting also dominates the characterization of the ghost, to whom the artist refers on numerous occasions as "the lady of the railway carriage" (360, 362, 370, 371). She is identified and named only at the end of the story, once her portrait is completed for her grieving father.

Amelia Edwards's short story "The Four-Fifteen Express" (1866) provides another perspective on the supernatural traveling by train.[6] As was the case in "The Portrait-Painter's Story", the direct, first-person account of the facts enhances the veracity of the strange railway experience. Edwards describes the railway network in detail to help the reader follow the itinerary of the character's journey out of London. As in the other railway ghost stories, the protagonist's solitary journey is interrupted by a fellow traveler who joins him in the carriage:

> My voyage over, and a few days given up to business in Liverpool and London, I hastened down to Clayborough with all the delight of a schoolboy whose holidays are at hand. My way lay by the Great East Anglian line as far as Clayborough station, where I was to be met by one of the Dumbleton carriages and conveyed across the remaining nine miles of country. It was a foggy afternoon, singularly warm for the fourth of December, and I had arranged to leave London by the 4.15 express. […] Having arrived some seven minutes before the starting of the train, and, by the connivance of the guard, taken sole possession of an empty compartment, I lighted my travelling lamp, made myself particularly snug, and settled down to the undisturbed enjoyment of a book and a cigar. Great, therefore, was my disappointment when, at the last moment, a gentleman came hurrying along the platform, glanced into my carriage, opened the locked door with a private key, and stepped in. ([1866] 2007: 379)

[6] Edwards initially intended this story for "Mugby Junction", the Christmas special of *All the Year Round* published in 1866 (Vol. XVI, 1866), which included Dickens's famous ghost story "The Signalman". However, Edwards submitted a different story to this volume and instead sent "The Four-Fifteen Express" to a rival Christmas special, *Routledge's Christmas Annual*, that same year. Tropes similar to those discussed thus far are identifiable in "The Four-Fifteen Express".

This gentleman, it later transpires, is the ghost of a Mr. John Dwerrihouse. His conversation is described as cordial and entertaining:

> Loquacious, self-important, full of his pet project, and apparently unable to talk on any other subject, Mr. Dwerrihouse then went on to tell of the opposition he had encountered and the obstacles he had overcome in the cause of the Stockbridge branch. I was entertained with a multitude of local details and local grievances. (381)

In "The Four-Fifteen Express" the railway provides not only the setting for the supernatural occurrence but also the major plot line. John Dwerrihouse was an East Anglian railway director, a shareholder and the company's principal solicitor. He was ambushed and murdered during the robbery of a considerable sum of money intended to fund the construction of new East Anglian railway branch between Blackwater and Stockbridge. This railway extension was to be "a great improvement" for Stockbridge, which needed "a more direct railway communication with the metropolis to become an important centre of commerce" (381). To make this tale read as if it were a truthful account of the history of this famous British railway line, Edwards includes in the narrative the names of an array of actual train stations and provides specific, seemingly historical (albeit in reality fictitious) evidence. The tale concludes by advising those readers who might wish to know more about the murderer, Mr. Augustus Raikes, to consult "the written confession of Augustus Raikes, in the files of the "Times" for 1856" (398). A visit to the Chamber of Horrors at Madame Tussaud's is also recommended, where a wax figure of the murderer is allegedly to be found "in the midst of a select society of ladies and gentlemen of atrocious memory, dressed in the close-cut tweed suit which he wore on the evening of the murder, and holding in his hand the identical life-preserver with which he committed it" (398).

The short stories discussed in this section make similar use of the railway carriage as the locus of the modern fantastic. In each case, the supernatural makes an appearance as the protagonists leave a London station. The narrator of "The Four-Fifteen Express" describes this journey as a displacement into the unknown, with "the train [...] moving out of the station and into the faint gray of the wintry twilight beyond" (380). In these railway ghost stories, the human character meets the extraordinary fellow passenger as they travel between two urban centers or between the capital and a provincial town. As is customary in ghost stories, the spectral

passengers have lingered in the world of the living to accomplish some specific deed. However, neither their appearance nor manners give away their ghostly nature: they blend in among the fellow travelers as they take their place on one of the daily trains shuttling in or out of the capital. In addition, as in Edward's "The Four-Fifteen Express", the fantastic plots of railway ghost stories often touch upon corruption scandals associated with the modern expansion of the railway network and often also dramatize the popular fears associated with railway accidents, as in Dickens's often-anthologized "The Signalman" (1866).[7]

Mr. Lost

A little-known piece by Dickens entitled "A Narrative of Extraordinary Suffering" (1851) further illustrates how writers sought to modernize the themes of the fantastic by focusing on public transportation. In this short story the impossible occurrence is premised upon the concept of movement itself, rather than on supernatural fellow travelers or ghost carriages. Dickens's narrative presents a "fantastic of rhythm" that is literally on the move and features a traveling character who no matter how far he travels never reaches his destination. The protagonist of such misadventure is condemned to live in permanent displacement, whether moving physically through the railway network, or, as in the final scenes, trying to find his way out of London.

The plot of Dickens's short story anticipates Kafka's similarly anguished and frustrating scenarios and features a fantastic triggered by the confusing network and timetables of the British railway system. "Mr. Lost, of the Maze, Ware", "a gentleman of credit and of average ability" (1851: 361), departs from Warwickshire to London in order to complete a business transaction, despite his wife's objection to him undertaking such a journey. His nightmarish journey starts after he concludes his affairs in the metropolis and readies himself to leave for Worcester on further business. Mr. Lost's first attempt to leave the capital is halted by a barrier blocking his way. This situation is then repeated numerous times and at different points of the British railway line, "hopelessly impeding his progress!" (362).

[7] At least two historical accidents are thought to have influenced the story of "The Signalman": the Clayton Tunnel crash in 1861 and the Staplehurst rail crash in 1865, which Dickens himself experienced as a passenger (see Davies 2016: 381–382).

Echoing the general confusion of the time caused by the rapid expansion of the railway network in Britain, Mr. Lost is constantly diverted from place to place, as he keeps modifying his route in his efforts to reach Worcester—by way of Birmingham, then Gloucester, then Gloucester via Cheltenham and so on. Nonetheless his efforts are in vain: whichever direction Mr. Lost takes, he always ends up arriving at a different point than intended:

> He knew where he wanted to go, and he knew he couldn't go where he wanted. He was taken to Manchester, Bangor, Liverpool, Windermere, Dundee and Montrose, Edinburgh and Glasgow. He repeatedly found himself in the Isle of Man; believes he was, several times, all over Wales; knows he was at Kingstown and Dublin, but has only a general idea how he got there.

Mr. Lost blames some "nameless foe" (362) for this senseless loop of misdirections, "cutting off the communication between one town and another, and carrying out a system of barricade" (362) but does not seek any further logical explanation. Just as Gregor Samsa reacts by adapting to his extraordinary metamorphosis in Kafka's famous novel, Mr. Lost surrenders to this absurd experience with surprising pragmatism. He looks for other options, for other ways to reach his destination. All the alternative routes, however, are either blocked or diverted. The misadventure finishes with Mr. Lost back in London, confined to the Euston Square Hotel, incapable of leaving the building because he cannot provide any specific address for where he wishes to go. When Mrs. Lost finally arrives to fetch him, she finds him confused to the point of delirium, babbling "Bradshaw" repeatedly, in an indictment of the failure of Bradshaw's railway guide to orient him in his efforts to navigate the railway network.

"A Narrative of Extraordinary Suffering" offers a variation of fantastic literature, where the fantastic is constructed without recourse to a supernatural creature, be this the monster, the revenant, the double or any of the classic figures of fantastic fiction. The supernatural event is instead triggered by one of the most recognizable features of modernity: the railway system, constantly expanding throughout the mid-nineteenth century. The sense of fear or dread that Mr. Lost experiences thus does not derive from the intrusion of an external force but is instead produced by a process of entrapment, in that he becomes a prisoner of this sprawling network. Dickens's satirical story portrays the particular difficulties

involved in navigating Bradshaw's railroad timetable.[8] Mr. Lost's uncanny episode ("of extraordinary suffering") creates a hyperbolic projection of commuter experiences of this hugely confusing railway network. The Kafkaesque nightmare of not being able to reach his destination ultimately leads to a complete loss of spatial referents. Mr. Lost is condemned to perpetual travel between cities, "hostile towns" (362) and junctions. Having started out as a user of the railway service he transforms into the victim of it, and the reader is told that by the end "he invariably travelled against his will" (363).

Arriving and departing are the two recurrent discourses in the piece. This binary is used to build the fast pace and cyclic structure of the story but that the point of arrival is always unexpected, unintended and unwanted also invalidates its meaning. Mr. Lost always departs but never really *arrives*. This character is progressively deprived of the control of his own movements, overtaken by a sense of being "violently conducted" to places, "with none of which he had the least concern in particular" (362). His situation is described as an "imprisonment" (362) and as "torture" (362): "His face was wan, his voice much weakened, his hair scanty and grey, the whole man expressive of fatigue and endurance. It is an affecting instance of the influence of uneasiness and depression on the mind of Mr. Lost" (363). The loss of his sense of direction develops into the loss of his sense of self. Mr. Lost becomes a captive of this permanent wandering in a maze of railway dead-ends, knots and barricades, doomed to perpetual movement and, literally, condemned to never reaching a place to be.

A Maze of Stories: "La novela en el tranvía" (Pérez Galdós, 1871)

Just as Dickens did with "A Narrative of Extraordinary Suffering", in "La novela en el tranvía" (The Novel on the Tram) Benito Pérez Galdós created a fantastic text built upon movement in public transport, featuring no ghost. Published in 1871, the same year in which the first tramline in Madrid was inaugurated, the story appeared in two installments in the Spanish periodical *La Ilustración*. Whereas the character of Mr. Lost was trapped in a maze of railway lines, the protagonist of Galdós's tale is

[8] See Slater's article (1998) for further context on Mr. Lost's railway journeys, with these mapped onto the different editions of the Bradshaw's Railway Guides (1839, 1841 and 1857).

tangled up in a web of stories that become further entwined with each tram stop he passes in his journey across Madrid.

Traveling on the tramline that goes from Madrid's Calle Serrano to Barrio de las Pozas, the first-person narrator tells of the different passengers he sees throughout the journey. All these transiting citizens seem to be mysteriously related to the story of a murdered countess, each of them adding new complexity to this tale as they enter and leave the tram. The dramatic story of the countess unfolds to the narrator in installments during his trip, each tram stop bringing a new episode by means of a local newspaper or through the contributions of different strangers who get on the tram and who seem coincidentally to be related to the countess. The fantastic experience is thus provoked by the metalepsis between trip and framed story. The two different narrative levels (the tram journey and the countess's melodrama) are connected and influence each other during the tram journey. At the end of the tale, it is suggested that this extraordinary experience is a fantasy and implied that it was fabricated by the protagonist's "inner turmoil" ([1871] 2012: 46).

"La novela en el tranvía" is divided into seven parts with the one leitmotif: the unnamed protagonist sitting on a tram circulating around the Spanish capital, observing passengers get on and disembark. In this journey around the city, which mirrors that of the strolling flâneur, the narrator's friend Dionisio is the first passenger that he talks to and it is he initiates the story of the countess. Bored and neglected by her abusive husband, Dionisio recounts, the countess had found a lover in Madrid and as a result was being blackmailed by her butler. At this point in the tale, Dionisio arrives at his stop and alights from the tram but the story he has begun to tell continues throughout the protagonist's trip. The protagonist seeks to discover whether the countess was murdered and, if so, how and by whom. The plot thickens as each new passenger who enters the trams provides an additional clue that is revealed in the interval between tram stops. This strange interconnection between what is happening in the tram and the story of the countess is enhanced by metafictional elements such as an entry in a book that the character comes across in the tram.

"La novela en el tranvía" brings together two literary traditions, namely the serialized novel and tram fiction. The first of these is captured in the fragmentary and melodramatic nature of the embedded story of the countess. Galdós satirizes popular feulletonesque narratives, reproducing their language and plot structure by creating a drama in which each

installment is packed with suspense and stereotypical characters, such as the abusive count, the frustrated countess, the young lover and the vindictive butler. Galdós's text also borrows some characteristic elements of urban transport literature, as Elizabeth Amann (2014) highlights. These include the inconveniences of traveling on public transport, with the inevitable close proximity with strangers ("Indeed, we were soon so crammed together that I was hard put to know what to do with the parcel of books I had with me", 17), the fact that neither personal space nor codes of conduct are respected, the representation of the tram as a metonym of the city, the display of diverse social classes frequenting this means of transportation, the unexpected encounter with friends and acquaintances on the tram and the portrayal of public transport as a forum for indiscrete prying and gossiping about city matters, aspects that have also been remarked upon by other scholars (Gullón 1960; García Osuna 2009; Amann 2014). I suggest reorienting the focus toward the fantastic element and thus approaching the strange coincidences narrated here as stemming from the tram journey, paying particular attention to the articulation of movement, sound and narrative rhythm in the urban setting.

"La novela en el tranvía" is composed of two different rhythmic patterns, found symbolically in the two nouns of the title: the novel and the tram. "La novela" refers to the melodrama with which the character is trying to engage in a coherent manner. As mentioned above, this story is recounted following the conventions of the feuilleton, characterized by suspense-driven stratagems such as cliff-hangers at the end of each chapter and interruptions to the account by the different witnesses. The melodrama is unveiled in fits and starts, which exacerbates the character's anxiety as he struggles to resolve the mystery. Each stop brings the narrative to a halt, each time coinciding with the end of a chapter. "El tranvía", the tram, however, operates at a different rhythmic pattern. The intermittent pace of the feuilleton is set against the constant movement of passengers boarding and descending from the tram at the different stops. As a result, the discontinuity of the melodrama ("the novel") contrasts with the constant and almost dreamy rhythm of the tram journey: "the slow, monotonous motion of the vehicle produces a kind of dizziness" (30). The character remarks on the stimulating effects of this continuous circulation, "a psychological operation doubtless stimulated by the regular motion of the tram and the dull, monotonous sound of its wheels, grinding away at the iron rails" (21).

On one occasion Galdós explicitly provides a reflection on the metonymic relation between tram and world.[9] That the tram brings together different lives in a brief moment of intersection accentuates the fugitive, inexorable passing of time:

> It's strange, that brief meeting with people we have never seen before and whom we will probably never see again. When we get on the tram, someone else is usually already there; others get on afterwards; some get off, leaving us alone, and then, finally, we get off too. It's an image of human life, in which being born and dying are like those entrances and exits I've described, and which, as the generations of travellers come and go, are constantly renewing the small world of the tram. They enter and leave, they are born and die. How many have been here before us! How many will come afterwards!
>
> And to make the resemblance more complete, a tram contains a miniature world of passions. (21–22)

As this quote shows, the metaphor is both spatial and temporal. The Spanish title—"La novela en el tranvía"—itself contains an ambiguity localized in the preposition *en*, meaning both "on the tram" (that unfolds during the tram journey) and "in the tram" (within the tram, situated in it or contained by it). The tram journey, with its constant movement bringing together multiple interconnected narratives, is a parable of an intertextual process. It generates a web of stories as passengers come and go; it is a medium for encountering—and reading—the lives of strangers. Traveling in the city involves being exposed to many entangled narratives that the character can only grasp in fragments, due to the fleeting nature of the encounters. This fragmentation adds to the character's obsession with the countess's life. His tram journey is constantly frustrated by the realization that he is missing a key element needed to connect the stories he hears ("They were leaving before I could find out how the story ended", 39). His mind strives to fill in these epistemological gaps by fabricating links between the different stories as he begins "thinking about the connection between what [he] had heard from Señor Cascajares de la

[9] See Lawless (2011) for a discussion of the metonymy of the tram in other (non-fantastic) Spanish nineteenth-century works of fiction. In the corpus of short stories analyzed by Lawless the tram is employed metonymically for what she argues is a new perception of time, "a new relationship between past and present, described here as a shift from diachronic to synchronic time" (2011: xvii).

Vallina and the scene [he] had just read about in that rag, a serial doubtless translated from some ridiculous novel by Ponson du Terrail or Montépin" (26).

The supernatural here is not embodied by the intrusion of an unexpected creature: it is instead in the strange connection between these disjointed stories that nonetheless seem, coincidentally, to be intertwined. These random interconnections trigger the protagonist's mental breakdown ("My brain was horribly over-excited", 46). However, the story also lends itself to a positive reading. Walter Oliver (1973) has suggested that "La novela en el tranvía" is primarily an allegory for the creative process. Galdós indeed implies in some scenes that the tram movement is incessant, a constant movement forward with no specific destination. This lack of destination and absence of finality favors the interweaving of the multiple stories as they appear, creating imaginary nexus amongst them. As soon as the protagonist arrives at the end of the line, he takes the tram back in a resumption of his journey. In addition, when his friend Cascajares asks him for the name of the stop to which he is headed, he provides "a somewhat evasive response" (17). When he then dozes off in the tram, he dreams of being in a journey "through endless space, never arriving anywhere" (32).

In his reading of this story, Alonso J. García Osuna (2009) goes a step further in highlighting the analogy between the protagonist-narrator and the reader during the tram journey. Some passages indeed explicitly illustrate this analogy:

> I have read many novels, many of them very bad indeed, and it was I who gave that twist to a story that was silently evolving in my imagination on the flimsy basis of something a friend had told me, a few lines from a novel found on a scrap of newspaper, and an encounter on the tram with a complete stranger. (30)

In his embracing of the role of creative reader of realities, the protagonist depicts his world as fabricated from disjointed discourses that he must stitch together, with the help of nothing more than further scraps of texts and conversations and his own imagination.

"La novela en el tranvía" as a fantastic narrative is closer to Dickens's "A Narrative of Extraordinary Suffering" than to the other railway ghost stories mentioned here, since in this case the supernatural is not a presence (e.g., that of a ghost) but rather an experience that takes place in and is facilitated by modern public transportation. In contrast with the

extraordinary suffering of Dickens's Mr. Lost, however, Galdós presents this tram experience as a creative story-telling process in which we as readers are also addressed and involved. The tram journey facilitates the access to a web of stories circulating in the city. These narrative fragments of lives are woven into a storyline by the protagonist's imagination, until he cannot discern the different diegetic levels (his reality from the countess's story). "La novela en el tranvía" is thus not merely set on the tram; this means of transportation offers a vehicle through which the city can be regarded as an immaterial entity formed by a multitude of stories that intersect and juxtapose. This flux of narrative threads can be connected only by the creative input of s/he who traverses the city. The citizen becomes an active reader of urban space and, by so doing, an active creator of urban realities. The protagonist of "La novela en el tranvía" reads the city as he travels through it and, most importantly, constructs his own idea of the reality he experiences by connecting the imaginary links that he detects along the way. In order to make of the city a milieu that can be read, he forges his own version of the story. On this occasion Madrid is not invaded by ghosts but rather is taken over by a maze of narratives.

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Cacophony and Asynchrony

Look at what happens when the city stops

—*Species of Spaces*, George Perec

The Nightmares of a Regular Man

The rapid growth of the railway system in Europe, as considered in chapter "The Ghosts of Public Transportation", and the corresponding standardization of time were major symbols of modernity. The British initiative in 1840 to synchronize time with the Great Western Railway was the first recorded instance of different local mean times being synchronized and a single standard time applied. This was followed by several other European countries adopting measures that moved away from local solar time to avoid complications with train timetables. Robert Patten (2016) highlights four key aspects of the late nineteenth-century shift in temporal awareness: the synchronization and acceleration of time, the shrinking of space, the encouragement of curiosity and the consciousness of interdependence.

> First, everything speeded up: movement, cogitation, transactions production, consumption. The beginnings of the century knew time in various ways: through the sun, moon, stars, and tides; through the rhythms of the barn and farmyard; through cooking and baking and preserving; through

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> religious seasons and services and bells; and by means of timepieces, as in the expression 'six of the clock'. By the end of that century clocks had replaced most of the other chronological measures; 'o'clock' as indicated on a dial timed all events, from the arrival of a train to the hour of supper. […] Greenwich grounded spatial as well as temporal relations. And as transport speeded up, space seemed to shrink. Whereas a nearby town might be two hours away by horse, it could be reached in twenty minutes by train. (503)

The acceleration of urban life made it imperative to synchronize clocks and brought to light two interrelated aspects of the era: (1) the lingering colonial traits that assimilated the clock within the civilized control of human life and (2) the traditional discourse of progress that regarded the city as being at a further advanced stage of social and technological development than the uncivilized countryside. A short essay entitled "Horology", published anonymously in *All the Year Round* in 1869, is illustrative of these two points. The author takes us through the history of marking the course of time, via innovations including water-clocks, sand-glasses, pendulums and naval chronometers. In the seemingly irrelevant opening preamble, the narrator claims that the perfecting of watches and of time-keeping epitomizes modern times, since "we can no more imagine a state of social existence without it" (1869: 488):

> What should we do without clocks and watches? Is there anything comparable to the misery of being benighted on a country road with a watch that has stopped in one's waistcoat pocket, and not a clock within view to tell one the time? The sun has set, every minute's tramping on the dusky, murky road seems as an hour. We have a train to catch, a dinner to be in time for, or a district meeting to attend, at which it won't do to be late. (487)

This paragraph combines the scenarios of finding oneself without a functioning clock and of being stranded in a rural milieu, far from the city. The "misery" implied in such a terrible situation is in the sensation of being trapped in the countryside, and thus incapable of honoring scheduled social commitments. Our "notions [would] get muddled" (487), the author claims, were we to be without our watch, "the mainspring of civilisation" (487–488), to guide us. This passage builds sharply differing rhythms in its characterization of the urban versus the rural. In the latter, time is suspended, as expressed in the evocation of the "watch that has stopped" and, more subtly, with the choice of adjectives referring to the

dim light ("dusky, murky"). In contrast to this stagnation, the urban domain has a dynamic tempo, marked by a series of regimented activities that suggest almost frenetic movement, illustrated by the sequential use of imperative actions ("a train to catch", "a dinner to be in time for", "a district meeting to attend") and by the importance of following one's schedules as planned ("in time", "it won't do to be late").

The same tropes feature in John Hollingshead's humorous essay "Too Late" (1858). A first-person narrator opens the narrative with the confession that he is "a punctual man: nervously, fretfully, painfully punctual" (464), a Londoner with a "morbidly punctual temperament" (465). In order to "drill [him]self in the virtue of punctuality by indulging [his] imagination in the opposite vice", he calls forth "phantasms of procrastination and delay" (466) and imagines the most nightmarish consequences for not arriving on time to places and events in situations where "[his] watch must have stopped, or that the clocks in the house are not strictly regulated by the most approved standard of time" (464). Among the dreadful situations that he creates in his mind is a trip out of London where, stranded in some remote village or at a lonely rural station, it becomes impossible to return to the capital on time. Two rhythmic spheres are again evoked: the "smoke and rattle of Fleet Street" contrasting with "the enforced and unwelcome solitude of the railway station":

> How repulsive everything about the country appears now, the trees, the fields, and the golden sunset; and how I hate the stillness broken only by the cawing of those dreadful rooks in the adjoining park, whose song I would give worlds to exchange for the smoke and rattle of Fleet Street. Why did I ever venture into the treacherous precincts of the picturesque, when I should have been sipping my coffee, and reading my paper in my dingy tavern? (466)

The quietness of the countryside idyll is thus transformed into a prison that holds the narrator captive; this "regular man" (466) is deprived of his structured urban life. Both in "Horology" and in "Too Late" the obsession with controlling the temporal dimension is presented as a defining aspect of city life and glorified as an element of modern urban behavior. Transforming these imaginative scenarios into fictional plot lines, the fantastic short stories that follow explore the disintegration of the "regular man" when he finds himself in extraordinary situations in which he is denied his regimented control of time, but also of movement or sound.

The acceleration in the tempo of the city as the nineteenth century advanced was counterbalanced by efforts to control the stimuli provided by the urban environment. This chapter examines the way in which the fantastic element subverts coping strategies concerning the regularization of time and movement. In my analysis I present a type of modern fantastic that features neither ghost, monster nor living dead. The fantastic is triggered instead by an unexpected, disruptive experience of tempos. The narratives of this chapter present a fantastic that derives from an obsession with controlling, synchronizing or isolating the rhythms of the city. This obsession is caused by irregular, illogical sonic phenomena: asynchronous clock-ticking in "L'Heure" (Time, 1894) by Georges Rodenbach, invasive city noise in "Un Inventeur" (An Inventor, 1898) by the same author, the ominous hammering in "Una industria que vive de la muerte; episodio musical del cólera" (An industry that lives on death; a musical episode of cholera, 1865) by Benito Pérez Galdós and the nightmarish silent city of "La Nuit" (The Night, 1887) by Guy de Maupassant.

Chronophobia and Phonophobia: Rodenbach's "L'Heure" (1894) and "Un Inventeur" (1898)

Set in the Flemish city of Bruges, "L'Heure" appeared in *L'Illustration* in July 1894. The story is centered on a male character, Van Hulst, who is obsessed with the synchronization of clocks. Recovering after a long illness, Van Hulst builds up a vast collection of watches and clocks that he acquires in street markets and antique shops (see chapter "Fantastic Antique Shops"), establishes a private museum of clocks and sets himself to achieve perfect unison of all his timepieces with the time dictated by the tower of Bruges. Romance interferes with his singular purpose, as Van Hulst falls in love with Godelièvе, the daughter of the wealthiest antiquarian in Bruges. This unexpected passion breaks Van Hulst's regulated habits and with the ritualized maintenance of his beloved clocks. Tragically Godelièvе succumbs to a mysterious illness and one day dies, at exactly ten o'clock in the evening. At that precise moment, all the clocks in the town strike the hour together, in the synchronized symmetry that Van Hulst had been pursuing for so long. He interprets this act as the clocks' fantastical revenge for being abandoned during his romance with Godelièvе.

The second story analyzed here is "Un Inventeur" (1898), published as part of *Le Rouet des brumes* (1901). As in "L'Heure", "Un Inventeur" features a character in the grip of an obsession, in this case the control of the noise made by his neighbors. The story recounts the ordeal of Chenue, a citizen who is hypersensitive to the different types of sounds that invade his small Parisian apartment. To combat this and to achieve full sound insulation in his flat, he decides to build a "silence-machine" (*machine à silence*), combining the technologies of the telephone and the lightning rod. He is ultimately successful in his pursuit, as he does indeed succeed in blocking out the distressing sounds of daily city life; the final scene presents him in a contented state in his apartment, now invulnerable to the intrusion of sound.

Colliding Soundscapes

Despite their very different plot lines, these two short stories contain thematic and structural parallels, namely that of the protagonist character-type—a rational, positivist male figure obsessed with controlling the incontrollable—and the presence of two contrasting soundscapes. On the one hand, there is the sphere of quietness and silence, unbearable in "L'Heure" and desired in "Un Inventeur". This is represented by the muted, listless space of Bruges in "L'Heure" and by the still space that Chenue seeks to fabricate with his silence-machine in "Un Inventeur". A contrast to this soundsphere is introduced by the sound elements that penetrate and destabilize the sphere of stillness: the ticking clocks in "L'Heure" and the noisy Parisian neighbors in "Un Inventeur".

In "L'Heure" Rodenbach returns to the theme of the stagnant city that he developed in many of his works, most notably in his most famous work *Bruges-la-Morte* (1895), referred to in the Introduction to this book (p. 23).[1] This tells the story of Hugues Viane, who after the death of

[1] *Bruges-la-Morte*, a work instrumental in winning recognition for Rodenbach as a leading symbolist writer, is illustrated with photographs of deserted bridges, canals, streets and squares in Bruges. This combination of story and photography inaugurated the genre of the *récit-photo*. The novel constructs a series of analogies between character and space: the eerie resemblance between the city and Hugues, the comparison between the city and his dead partner, and between the latter and his new lover: "The demon of analogy pursued him persistently with its ironies" (137); "He strove to bring his soul into a more perfect harmony with that of Bruges, evolving new analogies" (248); "Bruges was his dead wife. His dead wife was Bruges. Both unified themselves in a parallel destiny" (88). Poe's "Ligeia" and Villiers de l'Isle-Adam's "Véra" are echoed in the fantastic reincarnation and fusion of identities in

his partner takes refuge in the town of Bruges, the capital of Western Flanders. The novel is built upon the symbiosis between a moribund Bruges and Hugues's grief, as the listless town provides the *locus amoenus* for the protagonist's state of mind. The lethargy of Bruges is contagious:

> […] a little dead town within the confines of a dead town, but more trance-like still. So perfect was the sovereignty of the stillness that the intruder unconsciously spoke low, and trod softly as if in the chamber of an invalid. (2010: 210)
>
> The contagion of the fog entered into his soul, benumbing his faculties and rendering his life almost a gray lethargy. /The influence of the town recovered its sway over him. (250)

Misty, melancholic, eternal and *ophélisée*, as Grojnowski and Bertrand describe it (1998: 38), Bruges is also a ghostly character in the short story "L'Heure". Rodenbach's use of space in these texts offers a striking contrast to the portrayals of modern capitals that feature in the other stories I have analyzed in this book. His dormant town is "the anti-modern" space, relatively untouched by the radical transformations witnessed in European capital cities during the nineteenth century. Rodenbach captures this dimension of tradition and atemporality in his depiction of the city as an object gathering ashes and dust.

Bruges imposes on its habitants its weariness, its stagnant waters, empty and silent docks and monotonous, monochrome days where time, rather than flowing forward, drifts downward like the leaves from a tree (*l'heure s'effeuille dans les rues mortes*, "L'Heure", 2003: 113). The story's opening passages inform the reader that the protagonist is recovering from a typhoid fever that had laid waste to his sense of time. The oppressive inertness of the town invades and infects Van Hulst's apartment and listless Bruges, with its painfully slow tempo, is analogous to the effects of Van Hulst's long illness:

> And no movement, no occupation permitted; nor was there any company in this empty dwelling, in this solitary life through which only the old servant passed only with her silent steps. […] And he felt alone; in the grip of the slowness, the sadness of the hour. (114, my translation)[2]

the character of Jane, a dancer with an uncanny resemblance to Hughes's deceased wife. On the supernatural elements of this work, see Bozzetto's analysis (1998: 141–151).

[2] "Et nul mouvement, nulle occupation permise; nulle compagnie non plus dans ce logis vide, dans cette solitaire vie de garçon que traversait uniquement de son pas silencieux la vieille domestique. […] Et il se sentait seul; en proie aux lenteurs, aux tristesses de l'heure."

The heavy, languid rhythm introduced at the start of "L'Heure" is punctured by the ticking of the clocks in his apartment, those "living organisms" that keep Van Hulst Company. As his obsession grows, and his collection with it, "these delicate organisms" (123) are more and more intricately described in the narrative. In the final scene, when the clocks announce—or possibly provoke—Godelièvе's death, these objects are portrayed as enraged lovers, crying out in unison and taking revenge for their abandonment by Van Hulst during his courtship of Godelièvе: "A conspiracy of abandoned mistresses whose reign, from that moment, begins again" (129).

When considering "L'Heure" from the perspective of the urban fantastic, it is obvious that Rodenbach was not seeking to portray the hectic tempo of the modern city. On the contrary, he constructed in his texts a stagnant city suspended in time. A counterpoint is provided by the supernatural motif of the clocks that come to life, in a deadened environment in which the control of time is the only means Van Hulst has of ascertaining that life still carries on. (I will return to the significance of this collision of rhythms later in this chapter.)

"Un Inventeur" is similarly constructed around juxtaposed spheres of rhythms and sounds but with an inversion of the elements. Whereas in Rodenbach's Bruges the silence and isolation is oppressive, the suffocating city element in this short story is not silence but sound. Silence is an ideal that the protagonist, Chenue, pursues in a desperate attempt to eliminate all traces of his neighbors' lives from his own: a total silence and "peaceful atmosphere" ([1898] 1914: 169), a vacuum providing a buffer from the lives of others. Chenue is physically and mentally disturbed by all the noises intrinsic to urban apartment-living, such as footsteps, laughter and the sound of moving furniture. This affliction explains Chenue's obsession with carpets and other noise-dampening devices.

Whereas in "L'Heure" illness and the city's stagnancy are described in analogous terms, in "Un Inventeur" it is hectic urban life that is sickening. Chenue has suffered from a fear of sounds since his childhood. He recalls in particular experiencing the violent ringing of the church bells when he lived in his parents' town. "This horror of noise, this sickly love of silence" (170) exacerbates when he moves to Paris. The constant presence of the other tenants builds to an unbearable cacophony. Chenue experiences sound as a physical harm inflicted upon him, a violent aggression and a violation of his body (*un mal vraiement physique*, 170; *Ils avaient l'air de marcher tout contre lui, à même sa tête*, 169).

Both short stories contain a similar change of rhythm in their structural configuration, corresponding with the point in the narratives where the characters decide to take control; of the painful invasion of sound in "Un Inventeur" and of the asymmetry of time, in the case of Van Hulst in "L'Heure". The following passage in "L'Heure" marks this turning point:

> In the midst of gloomy Bruges, in the life of a bachelor fated to live without incident, where all the days were the same color and as gray as the air of the city, what a *sudden change* in his life now that he is on the lookout, always on the lookout for some find! And the good fortune that the collector can encounter! The *unexpected meeting* that will increase his collection! Van Hulst was already becoming skillful in the art. He *had studied, searched, compared*. He could judge, at first glance, the era of a pendulum. He diagnosed their age, sorted the genuine from the counterfeit, appreciated the beauty of the style and recognised certain signatures that marked out certain watches as works of art. He now had a whole series of clocks, a collection assembled piece-by-piece. He had frequented the antique shops of Bruges. He *had even traveled* to neighboring towns to get supplies. (119, emphasis added)[3]

This passage bears witness to a significant injection of dynamism into the stale atmosphere that had characterized the preceding descriptions of both Bruges and Van Hulst's illness. With the unexpected discovery of the pendulum clock that was to mark the start of Van Hulst's collection, the sentences become shorter, actions follow in quick succession and the protagonist's enthusiasm is reinforced by the use of exclamation marks. He "even" (*même*) ventures beyond the confines of Bruges.

[3] "Au milieu de cette Bruges morose, dans cette destinée de célibataire sans incidents, où toutes les journées étaient de la même couleur et grises comme l'air de la ville, quel changement soudain que cette vie désormais à l'affût, toujours aux aguets de quelque trouvaille! Et les bonnes fortunes du collectionneur! La rencontre imprévue qui va augmenter son trésor! Van Hulst y apportait déjà une compétence. Il avait étudié, cherché, comparé. Il jugeait, à première vue, de l'époque d'une pendule. Il diagnostiquait l'âge, triait les authentiques de celles qui sont contre-façonnées, appréciait la beauté du style, connaissait certaines signatures illustrant telles horlogeries comme œuvres d'art. Il possédait aujourd'hui toute une série de pendules variées, rassemblées insensiblement. Il avait fréquenté les magasins des antiquaires de Bruges. Il avait même voyagé, pour s'approvisionner, dans des villes voisines."

There is an equally remarkable transformation of narrative rhythm in "Un Inventeur", with the change of tempo half-way through the story signaled by the sentence: "Chenue wanted finally to be his own master!" (174). The earlier long descriptions of the sounds invading the apartment are replaced by short sentences that reflect the steps Chenue undertakes in building his silence-machine. Once a passive victim, he now becomes an active inventor. He discovers, elaborates, searches, combines, captures, buys and tests as he develops the formula that will allow him to create his wonderful device. The focus on the auditory that had been center-stage in the story's first section is replaced by an accumulation of action verbs. Rodenbach thus introduces us to Chenue's new condition of obsessive scientist who, absorbed in his mission, shuts out the external world by progressively eliminating its sounds.

There are many similarities in the characterizations of the protagonists of "L'Heure" and "Un Inventeur". Both Van Hulst and Chenue suffer from a phobia that I will later argue is particularly modern: the first is chronophobic, exhibiting a hypersensibility to the passing of time and obsessed with temporal imprecision; the latter is phonophobic, with a hatred of all forms of ambient sound, even the most insignificant. The other characters in the story are very much under-developed and, as exemplified by the character of Godelièvе, their existence is that of satellite figures with the primary function of emphasizing the obsessions of the protagonist.

Chenue in "Un Inventeur" wants to create a perfect bubble that cannot be penetrated by sound. Van Hulst in "L'Heure" seeks to attain an exact symmetry of time by achieving the perfect unison of his clocks. The latter's obsession with control is rendered in the references throughout the text to "exact time" ("préoccupation de *l'heure exacte*", emphasis in original, 115, 118, 122), with variations on this phrase repeated throughout the narrative: "[…] to hear them, even if just once, strike the hour at the same moment, and at the same time as the large clock on the tower; to achieve this ideal of having unified time" (123).

Both protagonists are characterizations of the rational scientist who takes refuge in a positivist mission, in search of perfection through the development and control of technological mechanisms (the clocks/the silence-machine). Chenue "produced lines of new calculations that would lead to certainty and to an infallible result" (178). Van Hulst has a

compartmentalized and perfectly measured routine: "a punctual life" (116). Their actions are timed, scheduled and calculated with precision.

Van Hulst's obsession with the control of time is echoed in Georg Simmel's description of time and its modern systems of domination. In "Metropolis and Mental Life", the German critic declares that:

> Punctuality, calculability and exactness, which are required by the complications and extensiveness of metropolitan life, are not only most intimately connected with its capitalistic and intellectualistic character but also color the content of life and are conducive to the exclusion of those irrational, instinctive, sovereign human traits and impulses which originally seek to determine the form of life from within instead of receiving it from the outside in a general schematically precise form. (2014: 224)

In combating the "ill-afforded waste of time", this domination, according to Simmel, necessitates "reciprocal relationships being organized and coordinated in the most punctual way into a firmly fixed framework of time which transcends all subjective elements" (224). Simmel regards watches and clocks as symbols of this modern control of time: "If all the watches in Berlin suddenly went wrong in different ways even only as much as an hour, its entire economic and commercial life would be derailed for some time" (224).

As well as being fixated on obtaining perfect synchrony, Van Hulst is also obsessed with winning the affection of Godelième, a character whose premature death symbolizes the uncontrollable passing of time, "la promise de la mort" (126). The passion he experiences for Godelière is for him the acknowledgment of an unattainable ideal. It is only at Godelière's death that the precise synchronization of the clocks is achieved, and even then this is short-lived.

Cacophonies of Modernity

The two sound-spheres upon which "L'Heure" and "Un Inventeur" are constructed represent a contrast between that which the protagonists want to achieve and the reality that surrounds them. This is clearly articulated in "L'Heure", with Van Hulst's obsession with the "true time", the "official time". Yet his clocks resist his efforts to coordinate the time they display with that dictated by the clock tower of the Halles de Bruges. The

realization of the inexorable passing of time is represented by the constant ticking of the clocks and by Godelièvе's death ("The flight of time that she had been repeating for so long", 117). Most importantly, the idea of an objective time that unifies human experiences is undermined by the fact that each of the clocks in Van Hulst's collection displays a different time. Which, then, is correct and reliable? The positivist scientist-figure has tried to dominate and unify time, and has failed. Instead, what emerges is the multiplicity of experiences, a portrayal of "the variable crossroads of time" (118). This multiplicity of temporalities is skillfully communicated in the configuration of the two spheres: lifeless Bruges as contrasted with the collection of clocks that injects life and dynamism into the dreary life of the main character in this provincial "ville morte". I suggest reading the group of non-synchronous clocks as a metaphor for the diverse experiences of a town that, despite its seemingly lifeless aspect, exists in multiple, subjective temporalities.

The perspective on modernity is less subtle in "Un Inventeur". Chenue's experience in his small, noisy and crowded Parisian apartment block contributes to the portrayal of a suffocating milieu that leaves no space for the individual. Life in the apartment building is described as barbaric (171), and the lack of personal space is represented by the unbearable and constant noises in Chenue's daily life. The porous architectural boundaries referred to in the narrative reflect the challenges posed by the overpopulation of capital cities. In "these vast buildings in which we are confined like bees in a hive", sound travels easily through walls and floors: "What barbarism to bring them together, separated only by partitions where neighboring lives show through like watermarks on paper" (172). These fissures facilitate the physical invasion of sound, leading to the protagonist's existential crisis: "And on top of that, thin walls, sonorous ceilings … Chenue did not belong to himself alone" (173), "In this Parisian apartment life […] others seemed to live with him and he seemed to live with others. He was no longer master of his own life" (171).

In "Un Inventeur" Rodenbach gives expression to the challenges encountered by the individual seeking his own space in an overpopulated city, amidst "the tempo and multiplicity of economic, occupational and social life" (Simmel 2014: 223). Overwhelmed by the accumulation of urban sounds, Chenue is the embodiment of Simmel's classic metropolitan type, swamped by sonic stimuli. In order to "maintain the independence and individuality of his existence" (223) by adjusting to the

cacophony of the modern city, Chenue resorts to building a silence-machine, an insulating structure that allows him to live undisturbed and isolated, protected "against the profound disruption [arising from] the fluctuations and discontinuities of the external milieu" and "against the domination of the metropolis" (223). Van Hulst similarly personifies the logical modern individual who seeks to master time, so that "all of its activities [are] organized and coordinated in the most punctual way into a firmly fixed framework of time which transcends all subjective elements" (224). Both protagonists pursue impossible ideals: the regularization of time and full isolation from sound. Just as Van Hulst is disturbed by the clocks ticking at discordant tempos, Chenue is made deeply uncomfortable by the multiple lives that surround him.

Cholera and its Musical Metaphors: "Una industria que vive de la muerte; episodio musical del cólera" (Pérez Galdós, 1865)

In December 1865 Benito Pérez Galdós published a short story in *La Nación* that employed the language of music to describe the cholera epidemics that had devastated Madrid that same year. Entitled "Una industria que vive de la muerte; episodio musical del cólera" (An industry that lives on death; a musical episode of cholera), this story addressed one of the most widespread urban fears by deploying an extraordinary rhetorical technique; the narrative is constructed as a composition of sounds. While Galdós's extensive body of realist novels set in Madrid has long been the object of scholarship, his fantastic short fiction has largely been regarded as "experimental" or "anecdotal" (see footnote 13 in chapter "Fantastic Exhibitions of the Self"). However, this particular short story has latterly garnered a great deal of interest within the context of pandemic fiction.[4]

In an approach similar to that of Rodenbach in the two short stories analyzed above, in "Una industria que vive de la muerte" Galdós

[4] *El año Galdós,* which in 2020 celebrated the centenary of the author's death, was marked by the COVID-19 outbreak. This fateful coincidence was noted by Spanish cultural media outlets, who paid tribute to Galdós's original take on the literary representation of an epidemic in "Una industria que vive de la muerte". See for example the articles "Galdós, más allá de las estanterías" (Galdós beyond the shelves, ABC 14/02/2020), "Corona y Virus (Parte I): Un episodio musical del Cólera. Galdós, 1865" in *Historia Urbana de Madrid* (21/03/2020) and "El año Galdós, víctima del coronavirus" (The year of Galdós, coronavirus victim, El País, 07/05/2020).

composed a fantastic text with two opposing soundscapes: an initial silent, cholera-ridden version of Madrid is gradually transformed into a healthy, bustling and lively city. The plot is centered on the character of the coffin maker, the only citizen who welcomes the pandemic outbreak because his business benefits from it. Ironically, this coffin maker is the final fatal victim of the disease, an event that marks the end not only of the "funer(e)al industry" ([1865] 2003, my translation) on which he had capitalized but also of the cholera outbreak in the Spanish capital. His death is presented as a punishment for his involvement in this "damnable occupation", which owed its profitability to the death of his fellow men and women ("Fatal industry that flourishes in the shadow of death").[5] The fantastic is introduced in the story's final scene. During the coffin maker's funeral, the eerie sound of his hammer is heard, striking from inside his coffin, a supernatural noise that it is claimed can still be heard today in the neighborhood where his body rests.

The narrative comprises seven parts, in all of which sound is a distinctive element. Part I is a preamble in which the author offers a reflection on the interconnections between music and the art of narrating. Even the most mundane scenes, he argues, can be expressed and experienced in terms of sounds. He details the harmonies that can be heard in ordinary situations if one listens carefully ("Let's close our eyes and listen. So much harmony!"). Among Galdós's constellation of auditory scenes are a lovers' meeting, the rustle of silk and the act of removing one's shoes by a lover's bed. The first is described by evoking the gentle sounds of the night wind, the subtle crackling of leaves and branches and the snap of a twig as it is stepped on. Silk fabric in movement is "that harmonious fabric […] that moves the nervous system like contact with a rough and cold body, and affects our eardrum like a tearing through our brain". The two shoes as they are dropped to the floor are "two musical notes in space", "two quavers" and "an admirable duet". With this introduction, Galdós guides our imagination toward the aural, which is the primary rhetorical tool from that point onward.

His tale, as he proclaims, opens with "Lugubrious and horrifying chords, of such a gloomy tone and such an eerie effect that they would

[5] W. S. Tang (2014) offers a reading focused on the representations of the Spanish working class in the fantastic fictions of Galdós. She argues that the character of the coffin maker should be understood in the socio-economic context of nineteenth-century consumerism and the capitalistic pressures on the working class.

instill terror into the heart of even the most spirited". Part II situates us directly in cholera-ridden Madrid. Following the many deaths from the epidemic and the confinement of citizens to their homes out of fear of contagion, the city is somber and muted. The city mourns the deceased in silence: "Everything is silent in the neighborhood: one suffers noiselessly, one dies noiselessly: one heals in silence: pain, crying, despair is muted". This oppressive silence is punctuated by only one sound: a "dry, sharp, discordant noise" coming from the coffin maker's workshop. Madrid's "horrendous calm" in the face of cholera is disturbed by the coffin maker's industry: "In the midst of this quiet agitation, a dry, sharp, monotonous, rhythmic sound is heard, produced by iron striking against iron".

The oxymoronic "quiet agitation" contributes to the buildup of tension. There is a certain amount of underlying sound in the city but this remains buried, waiting to be revived at the end of the epidemics. Part III is centered on the greedy character of the coffin maker, portrayed as an opportunistic man who exploits the only industry that can benefit from the epidemic. His "monotonous, perennial percussion" and "horrendous notes" combine in a powerful *dies irae*. "That note vibrated by a piece of iron evokes continuously the idea of death—of decomposition, of earth, of tears, of funerals."

Part IV and V portray the city as the epidemic eases. As all that had been stagnant when cholera reigned is gradually reactivated, Madrid is injected with life. The city's convalescence is expressed in the arrival of movement and sound, for example in the flight and song of returning birds. Madrid, reborn, finally recovers its "bustling peace". Included in this recovery is the renewed prosperity of the city's shops and industries, reinvigorating a consumerism that testifies to the arrival of a happier time, yet that is also lethal in its own way: "the reappearance of all these items manufactured ceaselessly to satisfy whim, vanity and fashion are among the symptoms of life that announce that this big city is in good health. And this development, this awakening of the industries that feed on our lives."

Fate has it that the coffin maker is ultimately punished for his greed. It is not only his business that comes to an end as the epidemic ebbs; so too does his life. The final section of the story, which recounts the burial of the coffin maker, introduces the fantastic motif of life enduring after death, represented by the constant ring of his hammer in the closed coffin.[6]

[6] This motif recalls the endings of two well-known fantastic stories by Edgar Allan Poe: "The Tell-Tale Heart" (1843) and "The Black Cat" (1843). In the first one the heartbeat of

In her well-known work *Illness as Metaphor* (1978), Susan Sontag discusses the cultural imagery associated with cholera. While in Greek and Biblical antiquity disease was believed to have been sent from a deity, during the nineteenth century, Sontag asserts, such plagues came to be regarded as visitations from "an exotic, often primitive place" (2002: 137) because "Europe is assumed to be by rights free of disease" (136). Galdós offers yet another metaphor of cholera that, aligning with Sontag's imagery of a terrible visitation, is configured as a sonic allegory of a silence falling on the noisy city. In a closing statement, Galdós explicitly articulates this: "Cholera has been studied in its climatological influence: it has been studied economically: it has been studied in its horror, in its contagion, in its hysteria. Why shouldn't it be studied in its music? The coffin is its sound box and the hammer is its plectrum." His "musical episode of cholera" invokes the fantastic by means of colliding soundscapes in which the oppressive stillness and the regular, excruciating ringing of the coffin maker's hammer are set against the sounds of commerce and human movement in a modern city that is reawakening to life.

When Modernity Stops: "La Nuit" (Maupassant, 1887)

The three short stories analyzed so far in this chapter share a very similar sonic structure: a binary city soundscape, of sound against silence. The combination of these two spheres paves the way for the fantastic, which in all three cases relates to that which the protagonists fear the most. In "L'Heure" that fear is associated with the uncontrollable passing of time, in "Un Inventeur" the phobia is urban noise and in "Una industria que vive de la muerte" the uncanny stillness of the city is connected to the threat of cholera. The final story featuring this dual acoustic construction in the urban context is "La Nuit" (The Night) by Guy de Maupassant. The plot of this story provides an explicit example of the phenomenon that unites the narratives of this book; it constructs its modern fantastic as

a dead man concealed under the floorboards echoes ceaselessly in his murderer's conscience. The second one describes the otherworldly shrieking of a cat buried alongside a murdered wife behind a wall in a cellar. In both texts the act of murder lingers in these unearthly sounds that persist after death. In "Una industria que vive de la muerte" the continuing beating of the hammer is a reminder of the lasting consequences of the epidemic, as well as of the threat of future outbreaks.

a literal "tale of two cities" (see Introduction), confronting a rational urban version with its irrational opposite.

Published initially in the Parisian literary periodical *Gil Blas* (1887) and then in the collection *Clair de lune* (1888), "La Nuit" is constructed around the contrast between the lively, bright city of Paris and a still and lifeless version of this same city that the protagonist stumbles upon one night. Subtitled "Un cauchemar" (a nightmare), this narrative is illustrative of Maupassant's obsession with uncertainty and madness, which he frequently expressed in his fantastic short fiction.

The first-person narrator of "La Nuit", a self-confessed lover of the night as he himself states in the opening paragraphs, sets out on his usual evening walk along the Right Bank of a lively Paris. Detailed urban coordinates of his itinerary are provided as he strolls along the boulevards, by the lighted cafés, the theaters, the Champs-Élysées, passing the Arc de Triumph and then across the Seine as far as the Bois de Boulogne. After an undetermined period spent wandering in this park, on his way back he is astonished to find himself in a very different urban scene. The streets and cafés are empty. The Rue Royale, Bastille, the Place du Château-d'Eau, the Faubourg Montmartre, the Théâtre Vaudeville and the Halles are all plunged into darkness. The unnamed first-person narrator is troubled by this sudden, inexplicable stillness that has taken over Paris. He rings on door-bells and knocks on the doors of buildings but is answered by only an empty echo; his screaming fills the void of the silent city. He is trapped in this solitary state with no means of escape. The final scene describes his desperate decision to commit suicide by drowning himself in the Seine.

The City of Light and Its Reverse

"La Nuit" is offers two clearly juxtaposed images of Paris that recall Lehan's discussion of Apollonian and Dionysian city patterns (1998: 84–91). The bright, bustling Paris that the narrator leaves as he enters the Bois the Boulogne is replaced on his emergence by its opposite, a silent and dark city. The first scenes celebrate Parisian nightlife in all its light, sound and movement. The various descriptions of the narrator's itinerary indulge in a catalogue of shining avenues and spaces of joyful entertainment:

> As I went down towards the boulevards I was looking up at the black sky above me, etched out by the roofs of the street, like a river with a rolling stream of undulating, heavenly bodies flowing through it, just like a real river.

> In the evening air everything, from the planets down to the gas lamps, was brightly lit. So many lights were shinning in the sky and in the town that they seemed to illuminate the shadows. Bright nights delight me more than long days of sunshine. ([1887] 2004: 15)

The emphasis on light exhibits Paris as a magnificent city that even at night knows neither darkness nor rest. The chestnut trees were "phosphorescent" (15) with "the flecks of yellow lights" (15), accompanied by the shining of gaslights. The "cafés-concerts seemed to be burning like so many fires among the green leaves" (15); the Arc de Triomphe, a "wonderful starry avenue leading into Paris between its two rows of lights" (16). In the cafés "blazed with light", "people were laughing, going in and out, having a drink" (15). These passages, with their quick succession of actions and a flux emphasized by the moving reflection of the stars on the Seine, evoke a dynamic space.

In the second part of the short story the protagonist finds himself confronted with a drastic change. The streets and cafés are now disturbingly empty and silent. All the city landmarks are dim in the fading light. The gas lamps are extinguished. The earlier liveliness of the city is dramatically slowed down: the cars circulate silently, slowly, their tempo heavy. This Paris resembles Bruges-la-Morte in "L'Heure": somber, "so dead, so deserted" (17), immersed in an impossible stillness and darkness. This supernatural night has erased the colors from the city and has blurred the shapes of its monuments: "The whole of Paris was sleeping, in a deep, terrifying sleep" (18).

I suggest reading Maupasssant's dual city in the context of the Haussmanization of Paris. In his modernization of the French capital, which was to serve as a model for many other European cities, Haussmann sought to replicate the polis model of Classical Greece: *civitas*, *civilitas* and *humanitas*. Paris was to be seen world-wide as the modern Enlightened City; a clean, ordered well-functioning, and civilized metropolis free from revolts and plagues; the capital of modernity. And, with its great offering of nocturnal leisure activities, also the capital of culture; a city that never sleeps. In "La Nuit" Maupassant begins by reproducing this model city in order to then turn it upside down.

In his work on the history of aesthetics, the philosopher Jordi Claramonte discusses the "nocturnal alternatives" to the Enlightenment's rational paradigm (*autonomía ilustrada*, 2011: 115–129):

> It is no longer a question, as was the case in the Enlightened paradigm, of isolating [*autonomizar*] a section of *the real*, that dimension in which art is produced, distributed and discussed, in an attempt to give autonomy to a much broader section in which *ways of organizing* society are produced, distributed and discussed. Instead it is assumed that this sphere of reality, including the production of canonized Fine Arts, is already *taken over* and that art can do nothing about it. Perhaps it can *negate* it, perhaps even replace it completely with the construction of its negative, its nocturnal alternative […]. (Claramonte 2011: 116, emphasis in original).

"La Nuit" contributes to this modern aesthetics of negation by building a reverse image of the City of Lights. It does so by negating the city's modern characteristics. This dormant, decrepit version of Paris is not a return to the city of the past, still untouched by modern progress. It is instead an urban vision set in an undefined time, where the signs associated with city progress have been removed, hence the importance of the descriptions of the absence of light, noise and speed, which are viewed by the protagonist as the indications of a state of death. Even Les Halles "were deserted, not a sound, not a movement, not a cart, not a man, not a bunch of vegetables or flowers. It was empty, motionless, abandoned, dead" (20). This other Paris is constructed by the absence of familiar urban rhythms and sounds: in the original, *plus de* (*Plus personne, plus de cafés éclairés*, 300), *pas de* (*Pas un passant, pas un attarde, pas un rôdeur, pas un miaulement de chat amoureux. Rien*, 301) and *sans* (*sans écho, faible*, 301):

> There was no one there, no lights in the cafés. (17)
>
> Nothing at all, not a whisper in the town, not one gleam of light, not the faintest rustle. Nothing! Nothing! Not even the far-off wheels of a cab, nothing! (20)

This eternal night is also suggested in the metaphor of the mechanism of the character's watch first slowing down and finally stopping completely. He experiences a disconcerting "unfathomable darkness" (17), in which it is not only space that has ceased to provide orientation. As the stopped watch indicates, time is also suspended:

> But the time? What about the time? Who could tell me the time? No clock was ringing in the steeples or in the buildings. I thought: I shall open the glass on my watch and feel the hand with my fingers. I took out my watch; it was no longer working, it had stopped. (20)

Pike discusses the trope of the still city in literature in relation to Wordsworth's poem "Composed upon Westminster Bridge", "looking at the city from the outside", seeing the city from "a point of suspension in both space and time above the water of the river" (1981: 28), "lying static in sleep" (29), as a "fleeting impression". Maupassant's short story echoes this literary tradition in his contrasting cityscapes of the bustling city and the city asleep.[7] However, the urban stillness in "La Nuit" is not peaceful. The perspective from which the city is observed is markedly different to that in Wordsworth's poem. The first-person narrator of Maupassant's short story observes and experiences urban space at street-level, and not from the elevated, panoramic view facilitated by Westminster Bridge. His situation in city space plunges the protagonist of "La Nuit" into a state of anguish and confusion and brings to the fore the subjective dimension of his uncanny nocturnal experience.

The City as a State of Mind

The previous sections in this chapter noted the identification of urban space with the protagonist's psyche, for instance, the association of the lifeless city space with the grieving character in Rodenbach's *Bruges-la-Morte* and with the convalescent protagonist of "L'Heure". The dark side of Paris in "La Nuit" can also be read as a state of mind. The supernatural in this case is an experience of paralysis and disengagement from the urban milieu. When the city's visual and aural characteristics are erased, neither spatial nor temporal coordinates are available to help the character identify

[7] The motif of the still city was to reappear some decades later in René Clair's *Paris qui dort* (Paris Asleep, 1924). The film starts from a very similar premise to "La Nuit": "one evening Paris went to sleep … and the next morning". Upon waking up, the watchman of the Eiffel Tower realizes that the city has been brought to a standstill. He walks down empty avenues and observes with awe how city life has been frozen: with its wax-like citizens and stationary vehicles, immobile dogs and stopped clocks. This suspension of movement has been provoked by an ill-intentioned scientist, who has built a machine capable of paralyzing the entire city. A solitary group of citizens has been untouched by his experiment and together they succeed in bringing Paris back to life. The use of rhythm is particularly remarkable in *Paris qui dort* because it is a silent film. Nonetheless sound is evoked and imagined in the contrast between the two rhythmic patterns—still Paris and Paris in motion. The protagonists' goal is thus to restore the other city, in its hectic, loud, modern context. It is no coincidence that the Eiffel Tower, icon of modernity, is a distinctive element of the film, both in its association with the main character as well as in its visual predominance throughout the opening scenes.

where he is, leaving him stranded in a solitary space, suspended in time with no references to guide him.

The short story reproduces many tropes found in Maupassant's well-known fantastic tales such as "Le Horla", "Lui?", "Qui Sait?" and "Lettre d'un fou", all of which test the boundaries of sanity in their questioning of certainties. In the latter it is declared that "this confusing terror of the supernatural that has haunted the human being from birth is nothing other than what remains veiled from us!" (2000: 200, my translation). Maupassant states in his essay "Le Fantastique" (1883) that he has little interest in supernatural apparitions. Instead he prefers to explore the cracks in the rational mind. "It is over", he proclaims, referring to that form of the supernatural that seeks to frighten by recounting the visitations of spirits. When "doubt has penetrated people's minds", writers can then exploit the terrible effects produced by "the limits of the possible, by casting souls into hesitation, into bewilderment" (365, my translation). Many of Maupassant's characters explicitly articulate this approach to the fantastic. For example, in "Lui?": "I am not afraid of revenants; I don't believe in the supernatural. I am not afraid of the dead; I believe in the final annihilation of every being who disappears! So yes. So! … Well! I'm afraid of myself!" (2000: 115, my translation).

Maupassant is a master of this change of focus in the literature of the fantastic. In his fictional texts, the supernatural shifts from appearing in the form of an external intrusion to operating through an incursion into the uncertainties and instability of the individual's mind, with all its question marks and blind spots. What then does the city add to this poetics of uncertainty?

"La Nuit" too can be interpreted as an episode of madness. The trope of the eternal night works as an analogy for the character's mental disengagement from his surroundings. He sees himself as the only remnant of the once lively city, which is now an unfamiliar and hostile place. However, the difference between "La Nuit" and other works of supernatural fiction such as "Le Horla" or "Lui" is that it specifically refers to a detachment from the urban milieu. Put differently, in "La Nuit" the metaphor Maupassant chooses to employ in describing the suspension of rationality is the city. The decision to depict the troubled mind by narrating the paralysis of the modern city represents a type of fantastic that focuses on the experience of the individual and places the psychological dimension at the center-stage of urban experience.

This is remarkably different from the other tropes analyzed throughout this book. The ominously quiet version of Paris emerges through the muting of the soundscapes associated with modernity. This city is not the place of exotic, imported antiquarian objects seen in chapter "Fantastic Antique Shops", nor of the haunted apartments featuring in chapter "The City's Haunted Houses"; it is not the home of revenants and doubles as encountered in chapters "Female Spirits of Place" and "Fantastic Exhibitions of the Self", nor does it host circulating ghost vehicles, as seen in chapter "The Ghosts of Public Transportation". Maupassant's city is instead the expression of an absence; the absence of progress and of certainties. There are no spirits or magical objects in this fantastic text; simply a modern city stripped of its modern attributes. The rationalized concepts of urban space are called into question and their fissures reveal the contradictions that configure the logic of the modern, urban fabric. "La Nuit" literally tells a tale of two—coexisting, antagonistic—cities, each of which challenges the uniqueness of the other.

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Epilogue: Contemporary Revisitations

And this terrifying enemy surfaced, as such enemies often do, in the seemingly most innocent and unlikely of places

—Little Shop of Horrors

The modern fantastic takes place, as Corinne Fournier Kiss writes, "locally, close by, on the street, in your apartment" (2007: 25). While Fournier Kiss's study on the representation of the European city in fantastic novels focused on the turn of the nineteenth century, this present book has shown that the urban fantastic was not restricted to the later decades. There are examples of it as early as in the Berlin stories of E.T.A. Hoffmann and its presence runs through the whole century, with different cultural traditions to the fore at different stages. The reader will be able to get an overview of this temporal range of the urban fantastic by consulting the timeline that is included after this epilogue.

My other main argument concerned the importance of the setting. When considered in studies of the fantastic, urban space is most usually emphasized for the mundane effect it creates. For example, when writing about the short story "La mujer alta" by Pedro Antonio de Alarcón (pp. 107–110), Roas states that "there is nothing extraordinary about the setting of this tale, since it all takes place in an absolutely ordinary, everyday Madrid" (2002: 20). Such a claim draws attention to the important fact that the fantastic, as understood in this book, operates in a realistic setting. This realistic setting is indeed what distinguishes the fantastic from

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other non-mimetic literatures. However, by placing the focus on space instead of on the supernatural character, I have shown that the urban setting was nonetheless remarkable for two main reasons: one that concerns the aesthetic conventions of the fantastic and another that highlights the socio-historical function of this literary form.

Firstly, the locating of the fantastic in the city is often deployed in a parodying of the traditions of the genre. This is especially noticeable in the short stories "A Monotonous 'Sensation'" (anon.), which as seen in Part I of this book challenges haunted-house tropes, "Vision" (Flor O'Squarr), which Part II shows as caricaturing the figure of the revenant, and "The Latest Thing in Ghosts" (anon.), analyzed in Part III and which calls for more modern means of transportation for modern ghosts. The urban setting provided an opportunity to renew the themes and motifs of the supernatural at a point where there was an increasing fatigue with traditional Gothic tropes.

Secondly, the urban fantastic questions the rational city model within which the plots are set. Jenks remarks in relation to urban literature that "cities and the urban attitude embody the truly modern" (2004: 1). With the urban fantastic, the city is more than a setting: the city works as the possibility and condition of a type of fantastic that during the nineteenth century reflected the metropolitan experiences of modernity across different European cultures. Accordingly, this book has dealt not so much with *literary cities* as with *city experience*. Instead of contrasting representations of individual cities, throughout this research I have highlighted the convergences of Spanish, French and English fantastic narratives. With this comparative angle, within which I reference more than fifty short stories, I hope to have substantiated the thesis of an urban fantastic that arose alongside the modern city in Europe during the nineteenth century.

As a form of conclusion, this epilogue looks at those tropes identified as being present in the fantastic fiction of the past number of decades. I will not delve into the peculiarities of the so-called neofantastic or postmodern fantastic[1] but it may be remarked that in this new context there has been a reconfiguration of cultural traditions. Whereas in the nineteenth century the publication of fantastic literature was greatly dominated by the French *fantastique* and the British Victorian ghost story, the Spanish fantastic experienced a significant revival during the later decades of the twentieth

[1] On the postmodern fantastic as a phenomenon of space, see García 2015.

century.[2] Many of the examples that follow are extracted from this Spanish corpus, which I believe is not only symptomatic but also diagnostic of the urban fantastic in the contemporary context. Moreover, North American and European film industries have contributed to a great popularization of the fantastic. While the study of the city in audiovisual culture is beyond the scope of this book, the next sections consider several examples related to the urban tropes analyzed here.

Architectural Bubbles

Part I of this book explored the relevance of the urban setting for tales of magic antique shops and for haunted-house narratives. The popular horror series *Friday the 13th: The Series* (1987–1990) reproduces several of the features outlined in chapter "Fantastic Antique Shops". This television series features two cousins, Micki and Ryan, who inherit an antique store located in an unnamed city. Their uncle, an antiquarian by the name of Lewis Vendredi, lost his life after striking a deal with the devil in which he agreed to sell cursed antiques in exchange for great wealth. Each episode in the series deals with the recovery of one of these doomed objects and its eventual restitution to the basement of the shop, where it can be securely stored. In its premise, this series replicates many of the features of fantastic antiquarian tales highlighted in this book: the diabolic wish-granting object; a moralizing message alerting of the dangers should these supernatural items fall into the wrong hands; the urgency of removing the doomed objects from human reach; a mad antiquarian; a pact with the devil and the uncanny atmosphere of the antique shop interior.

This last aspect is highlighted by a spatial differentiation between the always bright, dynamic urban exterior and the dark shop interior, which is sound-tracked with suspenseful dissonant music: "I don't know, Ryan, something doesn't feel right about this place", Micki says in the opening episode when she sets foot in the store for the first time. As shown with

[2] The current intense and diverse production of the literary fantastic in Spain is due to a number of factors that have been studied thoroughly, such as the influence of magical realism and of the fantastic fiction of Jorge Luis Borges and Julio Cortázar, the surge in translations of classic international texts of the fantastic and the cultural reappraisal of the short story in Spain. For a concise overview on this rebirth of the fantastic in Spanish and Latin American cultures during the second half of the twentieth century, see García (2019: 13–16), and for a comprehensive study, *Historia de lo fantástico en la cultura española contemporánea* (dir. Roas 2017).

Gautier's "Le Pied de momie" and Balzac's *La Peau de chagrin*, the antique shop was presented as an anomaly within the city fabric where the exotic magic objects found inside would ultimately test the characters' moral integrity. This is reiterated in *Friday the 13th*, with the desire to obtain wealth and social control through the power of the purchased object as the leitmotif.

The musical film *Little Shop of Horrors* (1986) also made use of those aforementioned motifs, in this case in a New York flower shop. This unsuccessful corner store is home to an alien carnivore plant that grows and grows until it eventually devours the very person who has been caring for it. The text that crawls across the screen during the film's opening sequence draws the spectator's attention to the unexpectedness of the location where the extraordinary events are to take place: "And this terrifying enemy surfaced, as such enemies often do, in the seemingly most innocent and unlikely of places". This is followed by a shot of the city streets, with the camera then alighting on the run-down corner shop of the film's title. Like Raphaël in *La Peau de chagrin*, Seymour, the shop attendant in *Little Shop of Horrors*, seals an extraordinary pact, in this case with the ravenous plant, to which he guarantees a supply of plant food (i.e., human bodies) in return for the promise of wealth. The message is similar to the one delivered by Balzac in his tale of the magic wild ass skin: motivated by the pressures of the capitalist context, Seymour gains the social recognition he craves but his greed ultimately destroys both him and his beloved Audrey. The original finale (which was altered before the film went on general release) included an apocalyptic scene with the plant's offshoots taking over New York, penetrating the facades of buildings, devouring tram lines and thus destroying the urban icons associated with human progress, culminating in the destruction of the Statue of Liberty.

The haunted-house stories in chapter "The City's Haunted Houses" also contained moral lessons on the effects of greed. The financial difficulties involved in finding a decent rental property, and being as a result forced to accept cheaper (cursed) lodgings, tapped into the realities of an urban market shaped by speculation and corruption in the modern metropolis. Several fantastic narratives of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, such as "Trastornos de carácter" (Personality Disorders 1989) by Spanish author Juan José Millás, reiterate these concerns and emphasize in particular overcrowding and anonymity in the contemporary city. Millás's story is situated in the densely populated area of Prosperidad, in central Madrid. The narrator is alerted to the disappearance of his neighbor, Vicente Holgado.

Holgado had previously claimed to have discovered a hole in the wardrobe of his apartment that enabled him to travel across great distances in a matter of seconds. The problem was that he did not have a clear idea of the layout or connections of this network of spaces. The narrator suggests that his neighbor's disappearance could be due to Holgado having become lost in this maze, unable to find his way back to his own apartment.

The title of the short story suggests an alternative explanation: that some form of mental instability is at play. The story's opening paragraphs portray Holgado as a lonely character of an unstable nature and insinuate that his "personality disorder" originates from the urban environment. The narrator, who lives at the other side of the wall in an apartment identical to Holgado's, emphasizes at the outset the small size, impersonal features and lack of privacy of their apartment block:

> The TV, therefore, occupied pride of place in that narrow, impersonally furnished living room, at one end of which was a hole we referred to as the kitchen. His apartment was an exact replica of mine, and given that one was the prolongation of the other, they maintained a troubling mirror-image relationship. ([1989] 2012: 245)

In their efforts to feel less lonely, the narrator recounts, himself and Holgado had established a strange symmetry in their everyday lives:

> So, at night, when I was cleaning my teeth in my bathroom, separated from his by a thin partition wall, I would imagine Holgado on the other side of my mirror also brushing his teeth. And when I drew back the sheets in order to go to bed, I visualized my friend performing exactly the same movements and at the same time. If I got up to the fridge to get a glass of cold water, I imagined Vicente opening the door of his fridge just as I was opening mine. I even came to think that my dreams were a reflection of his; this was, I believe, simply a way to *alleviate the loneliness* that such apartments inflict on those who live in them for longer than a year. I have yet to meet an inhabitant of a *narrow, carpeted apartment* who has not developed *some serious personality disorder* between the first and second year of entering the kind of attenuated death that comes from *living in a box*. (246, emphasis added)

The fantastic wardrobe-network that connects these tiny apartments is a metaphorical response to the need to expand this confined living space—an urban living space so small, the narrator tells us, as to provoke a personality disorder. In his fiction, British author J. G. Ballard captured similar psycho-pathologies deriving from the urban environment. Among

Ballard's stories that contain supernatural elements, "Motel Architecture" (1978) and "The Enormous Space" (1989) best portray this aspect. The first of these features a man called Pangborn, living alone in anonymity in an unnamed city, with only television sets and other electronic appliances as company. The film *Psycho* plays on a loop on the main screen of his apartment. Pangborn's urban cocoon is violated by the intrusion of an invisible creature. Along the lines of Maupassant's "Lui" and "Le Horla", this supernatural presence turns out to be none other than Pangborn himself. It is suggested that Pangborn's psychotic disorder, expressed through the motif of the double, is prompted by a lack of human interaction. This type of seclusion is reiterated in "The Enormous Space", which is set in a suburban area composed of identical, impersonal buildings.

In both short stories, the protagonists seek to differentiate themselves from the homogeneous and oppressive uniformity of their surroundings. They do so by isolating their lives from the outside and from others: "What would once have been called the 'real' world, the quiet streets outside, the private estate of hundreds of similar solaria, made no effort to intrude itself into Pangborn's private world and he had never felt any need to defend himself against it" ("Motel Architecture" 2006a: 506). In a similar state of deliberate confinement, the protagonist of "The Enormous Space" makes the decision to "shut out the world" (2006b: 698) and never to leave his house again. Living in the suburban area of Croydon, south London, he claims that his "subversive" action "runs counter to every social value" (697) of the "tranquil air of this London suburb" (697). His regime of extreme isolation, which he experiences as most pleasant, allows him to create his own world indoors, disassociated from "that over-worked hologram called reality" (702). Soon, however, a psychotic episode irrupts in the form of a supernatural experience. The protagonist perceives his body merging with his house, as the building seemingly begins to expand.

The suburban fantastic has been given interesting cinematic expression in recent years. In the British-American film *Coherence* (2013), a dinner party of friends in a residential area is disturbed by a comet that provokes a split in their physical reality, with the result that each household is cloned into multiples. In each of these is a different version of the dinner party, each with different behavior patterns and outcomes. The dinner party attendees set out to find their alter egos in the other identical houses that form this suburbia and, ultimately, to install themselves—by force if necessary—in the happiest version.

The uncanny symmetry of the built environment is also central to the horror film *Vivarium* (2019). This Danish, Irish and Belgium co-production tells the story of a young couple looking for a place to move in together. They stumble upon Prospect Properties, which sells real estate located "near enough and far enough, just the right distance". Giving lie to the pro-diversity motto displayed on the welcome banner at its entrance, this bleak suburban development is composed of cloned, empty houses. The couple find themselves trapped in this symmetrical maze. Resigned to their captivity in these fantastic suburbs, they are then forced to raise an extraterrestrial child. Their isolation and the routine imposed upon them by this new domestic lifestyle radically alter their relationship, for the worse. Mirroring Ballard's criticism of suburban segregation, conformity and social status, *Vivarium* offers a parable of parenthood and suburban living, when domesticity, rather than being the realization of a dream, becomes the ultimate damnation.

Alien Citizens

Part II of this book considered two types of urban revenants, some portrayed in the tradition of the terrifying living dead while the characterization of others departed from this convention. The first category encompassed characters with identities built upon the repulsion or horror they provoked, such as "La mujer alta" and many of the female revenants discussed in the two chapters. In *La Nuit des Halles* (1984) Claude Seignolle introduces this classic characterization of the revenant into contemporary Paris. The stories feature a variety of urban monsters and revenants who, in the guise of prostitutes or aged citizens, are to be found on certain streets or in certain buildings, each with a history that keeps them in the living world even after death. This is the case, for example, of the ghost of the old lady in "Un Louis terreux", a character seen on the streets of Paris each day before dawn, searching for transport to rue de la Roquette, where the guillotine once stood.

In contrast to these ghoulish figures are the urban "anti-revenants" featuring in the introduction to Part II, constructed in opposition to the classic frightful or vindictive living dead. Their modern attire and failed efforts to scare their would-be victims offered a humorous take on the classic trope of the living dead. Instead of inducing horror, these anti-revenant narratives established an empathic link between the reader and the clumsy, fragile supernatural character.

Eduardo Mendoza revisits this type of vulnerable monster in his novel *Sin noticias de Gurb* (No Word from Gurb 1990). Set in pre-Olympic Barcelona, Gurb and his partner are two aliens on a mission to gather knowledge of the city. Their initial objective of exploring together what life is like among humans is disrupted as soon as they land: Gurb metamorphoses into a well-known Spanish pop singer of the 1990s and disappears. His partner—the narrator—sets out to find him. He has no word from Gurb until the very end, in a reunion where both aliens contrast their Barcelona experience during their time apart in the city.

The novel, which was initially serialized in the Spanish newspaper *El País*, is in the form of a diary written by Gurb's partner over a period of 15 days in the Catalan city. This narrator, who remains unnamed, reports back to his supervisors on what city life is like for an alien. Each diary entry recounts a new adventure, as the narrator attempts to come to grips with life in the city. Over time, his determination to adapt to the urban environment takes hold. Throughout his journey of adaptation, the character undergoes all sorts of humorous misfortunes deriving from his lack of understanding of the earthly urban context. This allows him—and us as readers—to see the incongruence of city codes through his radically different and child-like eyes.[3] The core of the novel is formed around humorous scenes based on this pathetic alien character and his failure to adapt to the hypocrisies of the city's everyday dynamics. Viewed from his inexperienced and non-judgmental perspective, the challenges that Barcelona faced in the 1990s, including corrupted cultural institutions, chaotic urban planning and voracious property speculation, are brought to the fore.

The little-known short story "Overbooking" (García Jambrina 2005) also features the arrival of monsters. The plot revolves around the return of the dead to their former cities of residence due to the lack of space for them in the Great Purgatory City, where the dead would usually find a home. These undead come back claiming their rights as citizens, including their old jobs, their old apartments and their entitlements to unemployment and retirement benefits. The supernatural aspect of these creatures is

[3] The trope of the city seen through the eyes of a non-human outsider featured in earlier fantasy writings. In addition to the frame-tale in *Le Diable à Paris* (1845–1846), discussed in the Introduction, this trope can be found in *El Diablo Cojuelo* (The Little Lame Devil, Vélez de Guevara, 1641) and its French adaptation *Le Diable boiteux* (Lesage, 1707). Both of these novels feature a human protagonist who is transported by the devil across the rooftops of Madrid. This supernatural trip allows the protagonist to gain an extraordinary perspective on the city's inhabitants and their domestic routines.

downplayed: these revenants are described as being unremarkable and as behaving like any other—human—citizens. The narrator notes, "some details aside, they weren't that different from us" ([2005] 2008: 298, my translation). The real horror lies in the practical implication of such a return, as the city residents realize the extent to which the resultant overcrowding of the city threatens the existing welfare systems and thus their privileges as legal citizens. Perhaps this tale of foreign invasion also hints at the phobia of and prejudice against immigration in contemporary urban realities.

Entangled Mobility

Nearly two centuries after the publication of Dickens's "The Ghosts of the Mail", the ghosts of public transportation appear in very different guises. Anonymous metro networks and airports have replaced the crowding of mail carriages. Short stories by José Ferrer Bermejo in *Incidente en atocha*, Juan José Millás in *Cuentos a la intemperie* (2001) and José María Merino in *Días imaginarios* (2002) feature fantastic experiences on these contemporary means of transportation. "Dejen salir" (Let the passengers out, Ferrer Bermejo 1982), for example, describes the dystopian scenario of being caught in an endless loop when trying to exit a metro station. Upon attempting to leave the central station of Sol in Madrid, the same metro station he passes through each day on his way to and from work, the protagonist finds that whatever turn he takes it brings him back to his starting point. This text offers a striking example of a type of fantastic that, echoing De Certeau, allegorizes our everyday spatial practices and addresses the effects on the individual when the transiting of urban space becomes force of habit.

The 33 micro-stories that make up the section entitled "La ciudad" in *Cuentos a la intemperie* (Millás 2001) present extraordinary encounters and coincidences on the streets, metros and taxis of contemporary Madrid. In "Oraciones metro a metro" (Incantations from metro to metro) the narrator discovers that by repeating the names of the stops on Line 4 as he travels, he can access a new dimension. This mantra of station names opens up a fold in space and time. As he journeys from stop to stop, the narrator can now skip to the end of the week or travel to other cities. For instance, it is possible to enter the metro in Pirámides, in Madrid, and exit in Saint-Sulpice, which is on Line 4 but in Paris.

"Los viajeros perdidos" (The Lost Passengers 2002) by José María Merino is similarly set in a recognizable landmark of Madrid: Barajas airport. Merino presents a scenario with which many readers will identify. The plot deals with a flight delay experienced by an ordinary man with the common Spanish name of Ramón García. This leads to a nightmare of confusing announcements and constant changes of boarding gates. The simple syntax of this short piece contributes to the sense of acceleration throughout as it becomes clear that Ramón García is not alone in his confusion; the story culminates in the description of entire groups of zombie-like passengers trapped in Barajas airport.

Further Tales of Two Cities

Part III of this book examined a type of urban fantastic configured through alterations in rhythmic patterns. The supernatural elements considered in the two chapters portrayed the urban experience as one of conflicting and colliding rhythms that the modern regularization of time and motion had failed to tame. With the fantastic motifs of the stubbornly unsynchronized clocks in "L'Heure" and the invasive sounds in "Un Inventeur", Rodenbach developed characters with the respective obsessions of perfect synchrony and the construction of impossible devices to block out urban noise. In Maupassant's "La Nuit" the ominous stillness of the nocturnal city highlighted the importance of familiar rhythms and sounds in configuring a sense of place. These experimental short fictions were all formed by two antagonistic soundscapes: two versions of the same city challenging each other.

The theme of the antagonist city was readapted in the horror film *As Above, so Below* (2014), set in the Catacombs of Paris. This film deals with a team of archeologists seeking out a certain secret stone who encounter a series of supernatural hurdles in their quest. More interesting than this well-worn premise is the symbolic use of space, namely the dual aspect of Paris. As the film's title suggests, the subterranean dimension of this city serves as a reflection of the characters' experiences above ground. The relationship between the protagonists' unprocessed, above-ground traumas and the paranormal underground is further heightened in the film poster, which features the Tour Eiffel—a key symbol of the advance of modernity—upside down, against a background of a hellish red.

Although lacking the suspense-driven characteristics of *As Above, so Below*, the short story "La casa de los dos portales" by J. M. Merino (The

House of Two Entrances 1982) had several decades earlier featured a similar doubling of urban space. The narrator recalls a strange, abandoned house of his childhood years in a neighborhood located in the Spanish city of León. One day he had ventured into this building with his friends and discovered a portal that led to a dystopian version of their city. When they passed through this portal, the children were confronted with the most dismal vision: their own houses immersed in a gloomy, decrepit loneliness, surrounded by desolate avenues. Fortunately, the portal of the magic house returned them to "the living city"—their "everyday city" (1982: 95, my translation)—where the silence of the inanimate city was replaced by the sounds of the daily bustle. To this day the experience lingers in the narrator's mind, as he confesses at the end of the tale:

> When I go out into the street after opening the only door to my house, the fear of finding myself in that immobile, corroded, infinitely sad city that accompanies the other one like an invisible shadow often takes me over. (95)[4]

This passage summarizes the intersection between the fantastic and the urban that I have sought to trace in this book. "La casa de los dos portales" tells of how the young protagonists were exposed to the obscure, unacknowledged dimensions of their everyday city. Their adventure culminates in the troublesome realization that their city is not one place alone. This vision of the city's complexity, this threat of an unknown past, the narrator notes, will haunt him for the rest of his life.

In *Invisible Cities*, Italo Calvino wrote that the city "does not tell its past, but contains it like lines of a hand" (1997: 9). With this book, I have aimed to show how the "hand lines" of the city were drawn through tales of uncanny shops, haunted apartments, frustrated revenants, ghostly carriages and trams and lurking twin cities. In manifesting as a supernatural exception within the norm, the fantastic called into question the mimetic readability of the urban that predominated in the realist mode of the nineteenth century. The urban fantastic brought and continues to bring to light a gap in reason, a fissure that pierces—in the words of poet Chantal Maillard—"the map we are used to" (2008: 8), that map we call *our city.*

To my parents, for their invisible cities

[4] "Y cuando salgo a la calle tras abrir la única puerta de mi casa, me asalta a menudo el temor de encontrarme en esa ciudad inmóvil, corroída, infinitamente triste, que acompaña a la otra como una sombra invisible."

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Timeline

This timeline provides an overview of major events in city planning and of key publications of the urban fantastic. For the sake of concision, the focus is on the urban centers of France, England and Spain. Only those literary works of the fantastic quoted in this book are listed.

Decades	*Landmark urban and cultural developments*	*Landmark publications of the urban fantastic*
1800s	The **Paris Catacombs** are opened to the public, in an attempt to modify the perception of the city's underground spaces by promoting a sense of transparency and safety. Under Napoleon Bonaparte, **cemeteries** are displaced outside city limits for health reasons, in a move that will be followed by other European countries.	E.T.A. Hoffmann publishes his first short story, "Ritter Gluck" (1809), set in Berlin and later included in *Phantasiestücke in Callots Manier* (1814–1815).
1810s	**Gas street-lighting** is introduced in London, enhancing night-time safety for city-dwellers.	"Das öde House" (Hoffmann, 1817)

(*continued*)

P. García, *The Urban Fantastic in Nineteenth-Century European Literature*, Literary Urban Studies,
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Decades	*Landmark urban and cultural developments*	*Landmark publications of the urban fantastic*
1820s	The world's first public transit system, a **horse-drawn omnibus**, begins operations in Paris. **Gas street-lighting** is introduced in Paris.	"The Adventure of a German Student" (1824) by Washington Irving provides a model for subsequent stories of female-beheaded revenants situated in Paris.
1830s	Several outbreaks of **cholera** in Europe highlight the urgent need for proper city reforms to combat contagious diseases. Parent-Duchâtelet's maps of the **distribution of prostitution** in Paris—which draw attention to the intersections of public hygiene, morals and class in the city—are a landmark in the development of urban statistical mapping. **Euston railway station** is opened. The establishment of the first railway hotels in London follows.	*Dublin University Magazine* (1833–1882), edited by Sheridan Le Fanu, launches its first volume. It will become a leading journal of gothic and fantastic fiction. *La Peau de chagrin* (Balzac, 1831) "Omphale: histoire rococo" (Gautier, 1834) Charles Dickens publishes *The Pickwick Papers* (1836), featuring ghost stories such as "The Ghosts of the Mail" and "The Lawyer and the Ghost".
1840s	The British Great Western Railway applies the first **single standard time**. The first **Public Health Act** is passed in the UK. ***Le Bon Marché*** opens in Paris, playing a formative role in the development of a culture of modern consumerism that will serve as reference for subsequent large department stores. Spain inaugurates its **first railway line**, between Barcelona and Mataró. In his depictions of overcrowded carriages and seedy railways in *Impressions et Contractions de Voyage*, **Honoré Daumier** caricatures the advances in transport.	"Le Pied de momie" (Gautier, 1840) *A Christmas Carol* (Dickens, 1843) Pétrus Borel publishes "Gottfried Wolfgang" (1843), the unacknowledged French translation of Irving's "The Adventure of a German Student". "Un viaje a la eternidad" (anon., 1845) Alexandre Dumas publishes his collection of short stories *Les mille et un fantômes* (1849).

(*continued*)

(continued)

Decades	*Landmark urban and cultural developments*	*Landmark publications of the urban fantastic*
1850s	The **Great Exhibition** held in London sets the precedent for a series of universal exhibitions that present European capitals as international models of progress and Europe as a "global village". Baron Haussmann is appointed *Préfet de la Seine* and his **redevelopment of Paris** becomes a model for the urban plans of other large European cities. The **Bois de Boulogne** and the **Bois de Vincennes** are transformed into city parks as part of the Haussmannian project to build a network of public gardens and recreational areas in Paris. The **Broad Street cholera outbreak** in London places the focus on the urgent need for further public health measures. The **Metropolitan Board of Works** is created to cope with the rapid expansion of London. The **Great Stink of London** is the culmination of decades of inadequate human waste disposal and evidences the need for a modern sewage system. The first **modern census of the city of Madrid** registers 280,000 inhabitants. This figure was to double by the end of the century.	The first issue of ***Household Words*** (1850–1859) is released followed by ***All the Year Round*** (1859–1870). Edited by Dickens, these periodicals offered journalistic and literary accounts of city life and often included ghost stories set in London. *La Femme au collier de velours* (Dumas, 1850) Charles Dickens publishes in "A Narrative of Extraordinary Suffering" (1851), a Kafkaesque parable on the confusing layout of the ever-expanding British railway network. "An Account of Some Strange Disturbances in Aungier Street" (Le Fanu, 1853) "A House to Let" (Dickens, 1858) John Hollingshead offers an unusual first-person testimony from New London Bridge in "Pity a Poor Bridge" (1859). *Haunted London* (Thornbury, 1859/1865) "The Haunter and the Haunters: Or the House and the Brain" (Bulwer-Lytton, 1859)

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Decades	*Landmark urban and cultural developments*	*Landmark publications of the urban fantastic*
1860s	The plans for the **Ensanche of Madrid** and of **Barcelona** (also known as *Plan Castro* and *Plan Cerdá* after their urban planners) are approved as part of efforts to accommodate the growth in population. ***La Petite Ceinture*** (the Little Belt) becomes the first public urban rail transport line in Paris. The first lines of the **London Underground** are built. The first of Paris's ***Expositions universelles*** is held.	"An Authentic Narrative of a Haunted House" (Le Fanu, 1862) "The Latest Thing in Ghosts" (anon. 1862) provides a template for the modernization of ghost story tropes. "The Portrait-Painter's Story" and "The Trial for Murder" (Dickens, 1861 and 1865) Amelia Edwards publishes the often misattributed *Four Stories* (1861). "The Four-Fifteen Express" by A. Edwards (1866) is one of the best-known railway stories featuring ghost passengers. "A Monotonous 'Sensation'" (anon., 1863) parodies the tropes of haunted-house narratives. "Una industria que vive de la muerte; episodio musical del cólera" (1865) by Benito Pérez Galdós provides a musical parable of the cholera epidemic in Madrid.
1870s	The **Married Women's Property Act** in the UK (followed by the Act of 1882) grants women legal ownership of their wages, property and inheritance. **Electric street-lighting** is introduced for the first time in London and Paris, replacing gas lamps. **Madrid** inaugurates its **first tramline**.	*The Uninhabited House* (Riddell, 1875) "Mr Justice Harbottle" and "A Haunted House in Westminster" (Le Fanu, 1872) "La novela en el tranvía" and "La Princesa y el Granuja" (Pérez Galdós, 1871 and 1877) "Miss Jéromette and the Clergyman" (Wilkie Collins, 1875) Rhoda Broughton publishes *Twilight Stories* (1879), which includes "The Truth, the Whole Truth, and Nothing but the Truth" (1868), a model text of urban haunted-house tropes.

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Decades	*Landmark urban and cultural developments*	*Landmark publications of the urban fantastic*
1880s	**Eugène-René Poubelle** introduces bins in Paris. Their use is made compulsory. Barcelona hosts its **World Exhibition.** Charles Booth publishes his ***Descriptive Map of London Poverty***. Further editions of city poverty maps will follow. The **Society for Psychical Research**, still active to this day, is founded in London with the aim of taking a scientific approach to supernatural phenomena. Specializing in areas such as hypnotism, apparitions and telepathy, the Society's Committee on Haunted Houses produces its first report, which will be followed by other landmark projects such as the Census of Hallucinations.	Pedro Antonio de Alarcón publishes "La mujer alta" (1882), included a year later in *Narraciones inverosímiles.* *Weird Stories* (Riddell, 1882) Maupassant publishes the essay "Le Fantastique" (1883). "La Chevelure" (Maupassant, 1884) *Les fantômes: une étude cruelle* (Flor O'Squarr, 1885) *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (Stevenson, 1886) "The Story of the Rippling Train" (Mrs. Molesworth, 1887) Guy de Maupassant's *Clair de Lune* (1887) is published, containing a number of fantastic stories such as "La Nuit".
1890s	Madrid's first **electric tram** enters into operation. The **first escalator** is installed in Harrods, London.	*The Picture of Dorian Gray* (Wilde, 1890) *Sonyeuse. Soirs de province. Soirs de Paris* (Lorrain, 1991) Benito Pérez Galdós publishes his unfinished tale "¿Dónde está mi cabeza?" (1892) "The Man of Science" (Jerome, 1892) *Sensations et souvenirs* by Jean Lorrain, which includes the famous "Les Trous du masque", is released (1895). Georges Rodenbach publishes *Bruges-la-Morte* (1892) and "L'Heure" (1894). *Dracula* (Stoker, 1897) "El fantasma" (1897) and "La máscara" (1899) are among the many fantastic short stories published by Emilia Pardo Bazán. "The Crystal Egg" (Wells, 1897) "Le Sens du mystère" (Lemonnier, 1898)

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Decades	*Landmark urban and cultural developments*	*Landmark publications of the urban fantastic*
1900s	The ***Paris Métro*** opens in time for the 1900 Universal Exposition.	*Le Rouet des brumes* (1901) is a compilation of short stories by Rodenbach published in the previous decade. *Histoires de masques* and *Le Crime des riches* (Lorrain, 1900 and 1905) "The Magic Shop" (Wells, 1903) "Cuento de Pascua" (1911) by the Nicaraguan author Rubén Darío follows in the tradition of Irving's and Dumas's fantastic city tales of female revenants. "La charca" (191?) by Emilia Pardo Bazán presents a condemnation of modern city manners, gender relations and dress codes.

Index

A
Aguiar, M., 157n2, 166n1
Airport, 219, 220
Alarcón, P. A. de, 4, 11, 12, 28, 107–110, 211
  "La mujer alta", 12, 28, 107–110, 211, 217
  "The Tall Woman", 12, 28, 107
Allen, W., 171n4
  Midnight in Paris, 171n4
Amann, E., 184
Amblard, M.-C., 57n5
Ameel, L., 23
Amirpour, A. L., 110n7
  A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night, 110n7
Anachronism, 26, 47–56, 63
  See also Time
Antiquarianism
  antiquarian, 27, 44, 45, 46, 51n3, 53, 54, 56–66, 174, 192, 209, 213
  antique dealer, 48, 53, 60, 64
Anti-revenant, 96, 217
  See also Tradition fatigue
Apollonian, 14n11, 114, 128, 204
  See also Dionysian
Architecture
  architectural anomaly, 70–72
  architectural bubbles, 213
  architectural uncanny, 38
Armitt, L., 3, 9n7
Attebery, B., 9n7

B
Bagnasco, A., 5
Ball, 26, 29, 94, 98, 99, 128, 130, 131, 133, 134, 136, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142n9, 147, 149, 150, 151
Ballard, J. G., 143, 145, 215, 216, 217
  "The Enormous Space", 216
  "Motel Architecture", 216
Balzac, H. de, 1, 2, 27, 45, 56–66, 166, 214
  La Peau de chagrin, 2, 24, 45, 56–66, 214
  The Magic Skin, 27

P. García, *The Urban Fantastic in Nineteenth-Century European Literature*, Literary Urban Studies,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-83776-1

Barcelona, 6, 16, 30, 147n14, 218
Barkhoff, J., 71, 101, 103, 104
Baronian, J-B., 111
Bayard, P., 57
Beheading, 111, 118, 119
See also Guillotine
Bell, D., 58n6, 59, 66
Bely, A., 30
Benevolo, L., 5
Benjamin, W., 2, 5, 40, 47, 65, 66, 71, 71n2, 71n3, 93, 156
Berlin, 5, 6, 13, 55, 70, 71, 71n2, 71n3, 72, 101, 102, 102n2, 103, 104, 198, 211
Berman, M., 18
Berthoud, H., 18
Bertrand, J-P., 171, 194
Bessière, I., 9
Blaas, R., 147n14
Blazan, S., 3, 106n5
Blix, G., 58n6
Bollnow, O. F., 129
Bonington, R. P., 44
Borges, J. L., 52, 57n4, 213n2
"The Aleph", 52
"Kafka and his Precursors", 57n4
Bown, N., 16
Bozzetto, R., 3, 9, 10
Bradshaw, 30, 174, 177, 181, 182, 182n8
See also Railway; Train
Bridge, 29, 140, 166, 167–169, 193n1
Broughton, R., 4, 8, 11, 26, 28, 72, 75, 76, 77, 81, 88
"The Truth, the Whole Truth, and Nothing but the Truth", 11, 28, 72, 75, 76
Bruges, 24, 65, 192, 193, 193n1, 194, 195, 196, 196n3, 198, 199
Bulgakov, M., 30
Bulwery-Lytton, E., 74
Burdett, C. (The term " Burdett, C." is not found in the text. Kindly suggest.)
Burke, E., 39

C

Caillois, R., 9, 161
Calvino, I., 171, 221
Campra, R., 9
Carpenter, L., 7
Casas, A., 4n1
Castex, P.-G., 9, 12, 13n8, 14n10, 111, 119
Catacombs, 16, 22, 220
Cazotte, J., 13
Cholera, 12, 30, 138, 139, 192, 200–203
Christmas, 72, 73, 73n4, 90, 146, 178n6
Chronophobia, 192–200
Clair, R.
Paris qui dort, 207n7
Claramonte, J., 205, 206
Clark, P., 5n2
Clery, E. J., 12
Clock, 65, 171, 190–193, 195–200, 206, 207n7, 220
See also Time; Watch
Colla, E., 47, 54, 55
Collins, W., 119
"Miss Jéromette and the Clergyman", 119
Combs, C. J., 109
Consumerism, 12, 150, 201n5, 202
Conti, H., 110, 113
"Baiser Suprême", 110, 113, 117
Cooke, E. W., 44, 51n3
Corbin, A., 157n1
Corday, C., 118, 119

Cornwell, N., 9n7
Countryside, 16, 41, 45, 72, 78, 132, 169, 175, 190, 191
  rural, 77
Cowan, A., 157n1
Cox, M., 120
Cruz Casado, A., 122
Curse, 63, 73, 74, 173, 174

D
Dandy, 49n2, 102, 127
Darío, R.
  "Cuento de Pascua", 110, 122
Darnton, R., 58n6
Daumier, H., 155–156, 158
Dickens, C., 2, 4, 7, 11, 44, 166, 167, 170, 175n5, 187
  "The Ghosts of the Mail", 23, 29, 169, 169n3, 171, 171n4, 219
  "The Lawyer and the Ghost", 72, 79
  "The Mortals in the House", 73, 74
  "A Narrative of Extraordinary Suffering", 29, 180–182, 186
  "The Portrait-Painter's Story", 29, 175–178
  "The Signalman", 178n6, 180, 180n7
  "The Spirit Business", 22
  "The Trial for Murder", 25
Dionysian, 14n11, 114, 128, 134, 204
  See also Apollonian
Dolar, M., 12
Doll, 29, 94, 146, 147, 147n14, 148, 148n16, 149–151
  See also Toy
Domesticity
  anti-domestic, 81–83
  domestic ideal, 28, 81, 82
  domestic idyll, 74, 81, 83
Domínguez, C., 57, 57n4
Dowle, J. E.
  As Above, so Below, 220
Dual city
  antagonistic city, 209
  City of Lights, 14, 204–207
  dark city, 204
  Enlightened city, 205
  still city, 207, 207n7
Dublin, 24, 76, 79, 181
Dumas, A., 4, 113n8, 120
  La Femme au collier de velours, 2, 14, 110, 113, 115–117
  Les Mille et un Fantômes, 28, 110, 112, 114
  "Le Soufflet de Charlotte Corday", 119
  "L'Impasse des Sergents", 121
  "Solange", 112, 119
  The Woman with a Black Necklace, 113, 116, 117

E
École belge de l'étrange, 11
Edinburgh, 23, 169–171, 181
Edmundson Makala, M., 3
Edwards, A., 4, 7, 175n5, 176
  "The Four-Fifteen Express", 29, 174, 178, 178n6, 179, 180
  Four Stories, 12, 29, 175
  "The Phantom Coach", 169n3
Egypt
  Egyptology, 44, 54
  Egyptomania, 44
Elkin, L., 8n5
Enlightenment, 10, 39, 47, 53–56, 58, 205
Erdal Jordan, M., 3
Exhibition, 2, 29, 47, 54, 64, 96, 99, 127–151, 200, 209
  See also Exposition; Spectacle
Exposition, 2, 127, 134
  World Exposition, 16

F
Fairy tale, 8, 29, 146, 147, 150, 151
Faust
  Faustian pact, 58
  Faustmania, 13
Female fantastic, 88
Femme-énigme, 130–138, 144, 145
Femme fatale, 114, 130–131, 177
Ferrer Bermejo, J., 219
  "Dejen salir", 219
Fetish, 53, 131, 134
  fetishism, 144n11
Fetzer, J., 103
Figes, O., 13n8, 155
Finnegan, L.
  Vivarium, 217
Fissure, 40, 63, 72, 199, 209, 221
Flâneur/flânerie, 40, 49n2, 58, 64, 71, 93, 98, 127, 139, 156, 183
Flor O'Squarr, C.-M., 4, 90, 93, 96, 130, 133, 177, 212
  "Sous la commune", 130, 133
  "Vision", 90, 93, 96–98, 177, 212
Fog, 25, 128, 129, 144, 194
  See also Mist
Fortin, J., 51, 53
Fournier Kiss, C., 7, 7n4, 211
Freud, S., 109, 161
Friedman, J., 166

G
García Jambrina, L., 218
  "Overbooking", 218
García Osuna, A. J., 184, 186
García, P., 3, 88
Gas
  gas lamp, 16, 148, 205
  gas lighting, 5, 159
Gautier, T., 4, 11, 13, 13n9, 16, 24, 27, 40, 41, 43, 45, 47–59, 63, 64, 214
  "Avatar", 24
  "The Coffee Pot", 48, 49
  "Le Pied de momie", 27, 45, 47–56, 58–60. 63, 64, 214
  "The Mummy's Foot", 27, 43, 47, 49
  "Omphale: A Rococo Story", 40
Ghost vehicle
  calash, 173, 174
  ghost carriage, 171, 173, 180
Gibson, M., 6
Gilbert, R. A., 120
Gilbert, S., 88
Goethe, J. W., 58
Gogol, N., 45
  "The Portrait", 45
Gordon, A., 101, 102
Gothic, 10, 22, 25, 27, 28, 38–40, 42, 69, 73–75, 80, 88, 94, 96, 97, 107, 111, 212
  See also Tradition fatigue
Gregori, A., 3
Grojnowski, D., 194
Grossman, S., 162
Gubar, S., 88
Guillotine, 28, 110–119, 121–123, 131–133, 217
  scaffold, 111, 113, 114, 116, 117, 122, 132 (*see also* Beheading)
Gullón, R., 184

H
Habit, 27, 37–42, 135, 169, 192, 219
Habitat, 38
Hamon, P., 2, 37, 38, 40, 65, 65n9, 116, 127
Harris McCormick, L., 3
Harvey, D., 2, 165
Haussmann/haussmanization, 6, 16, 24, 119, 205

Heine, H., 138
Henzel, C., 102n2
Heringman, N., 46, 47
Hermes, 83–88
  See also Hestia
Hestia, 83–88
  See also Hermes
Hicks, J., 9
Hill, R., 51n3
Hock Soon Ng, A., 69
Hoffmann, E. T. A., 3, 10, 12, 13, 71n1, 107, 113–115, 117, 146n13, 211
  "Das öde Haus", 71, 72
  "The Deserted House", 70
  "Des Vetters Eckfenster", 71, 71n3, 102n1
  "Ritter Gluck", 28, 101–106, 177
Hollingshead, J., 167, 167n2
  "Pity a Poor Bridge", 29, 167–174
  "Too Late", 191
"Horology", 190, 191
Hume, K., 9n7
Huyssen, A., 161
Hypnotisme, 19
  See also Magnetism; Mesmerism

I

Interpolation, 38–42
Invasion, 26, 69, 83, 196, 199, 219
Irving, W., 113n8, 114, 122
  "The Adventure of a German Student", 28, 110–113, 115–117, 121

J

Jackson, R., 3, 161
James, M. R., 26
Jarsaillon, C., 44
Jenks, C., 212
Jerome, J. K., 119, 120
  "The Man of Science", 94

K

Kafka, F., 57n4, 166, 180, 181
  Metamorphosis, 30, 145
Kant, I., 39
Kelley, D., 4n1
Kelman, A. Y., 157n2
Kipling, R.
  "The Phantom Rickshaw", 169n3
Kolmar, W., 7

L

Lake, P., 6
Landon, P., 26
  "Thurnley Abbey", 26
Lash, S., 166
Lasowski, P. W., 121n10
"The Latest Thing in Ghosts", 25, 174, 177, 212
Latham, R., 9
Lavater, J. K., 18
Lawless, G., 166, 185n9
Le Diable à Paris, 1, 218n3
Le Fanu, S., 4, 7, 77
  "An Account of Some Strange Disturbances in Aungier Street", 24, 72
  "An Authentic Narrative of a Haunted House", 72, 76, 86
  "A Haunted House in Westminster", 72
  "Mr Justice Harbottle", 72
Lefebvre, H., 155, 157n1
Le Galès, P., 5
Leguen, B., 108
Lehan, R., 14n11, 204
Lemonnier, C., 11, 24
  "Le Sens du mystère", 24
Lesange, A.-R.
  Le Diable boiteux, 218n3
Libertine, 12, 130, 131, 137

London, 2, 5, 6, 11, 16, 18, 22, 23, 25, 26, 55, 64, 71, 72, 74, 75, 77–83, 84, 85, 89, 95, 101–106, 119, 120, 129, 167–169, 174–176, 178–181, 191, 216
Lorrain, J., 1, 4, 11, 99, 116, 129–138, 140
  "The Holes in the Mask", 29, 130n1, 140
  "Lanterne magique", 97, 99, 135
  "La Valse de Giselle", 136
  "Les Trous du masque", 29, 140, 141
  "L'Inconnue", 12, 29, 131, 133, 134, 136, 137, 139
  "L'Un d'eux", 127, 134, 141
  "Récit de l'étudiant", 130
  "Réclamation posthume", 110
Lowrie, J. O., 143

M

Madrid, 2, 5, 6, 12, 23, 26, 29, 30, 94, 107–110, 139, 146, 151, 173, 174, 182, 183, 187, 200–202, 211, 214, 218n3, 219, 220
Magnetism, 18, 22
  See also Hypnotism; *Mesmerism*
Mail coach, 169–171
Maillard, C., 221
Mamoulian, R.
  Love Me Tonight, 159, 161
Mancini, C. B., 3
Marcus, S., 6n3, 81, 82
Mask
  masked ball, 26, 139
  masquerade, 29, 94, 99, 128, 130–141, 142n9
Massey, J., 120
Maturin, C., 10, 58
  Meltmoth the Wanderer, 58
Maupassant, G. de, 4, 11, 18, 29, 30, 45, 64, 77, 116, 129, 131, 144, 144n11, 146, 162, 192, 203–209, 216, 220
  "La Chevelure", 29, 45, 64, 144
  "La Nuit", 30, 162, 192, 203–209, 220
  "Le Fantastique", 208
  "Lettre d'un fou", 208
  "Lui?", 208
  "A Parisian Adventure", 43–45, 77
  "Qui Sait ?", 45, 64, 208
McFarland, R., 71
Mendoza, E., 30, 218
  Sin noticias de Gurb, 30, 218
Merino, J. M., 219, 220
  "La casa de los dos portales", 220, 221
  "Los viajeros perdidos", 220
Mesmerism, 58n6
  See also Hypnotism; Magnetism
Messalina, 132
Metempsychosis, 21
Metro, 219
Meyerbeer, G., 13
Mighall, R., 6, 73
Millás, J. J., 30, 143, 214, 219
  "Oraciones metro a metro", 219
  "Personality Disorders", 214
  "Trastornos de carácter", 214
Miller, P. N., 43
Mirror, 29, 80, 129, 141, 142n9, 142–146, 183, 215
Mist, 144
  See also Fog
Mitchell, W. J. T., 43, 56
Mobility
  gendered mobility, 157n2
  mobilities turn, 166
  new mobilities turn, 157
Moers, E., 88
Molesworth, Mrs., 25

Monleón, J. B., 7, 24, 25, 108
"A Monotonous 'Sensation,'" 69, 72, 88–91, 174, 212
Moore, T., 72n4, 73
Morgan, J., 73
Morley, H., 22

N
Neau, J., 49n2
Necklace, 115
Necrophilia, 6n3, 111, 114, 117
Neofantastic, 212
See also Postmodern fantastic
Nerval, G. de, 1, 11, 13
Nodier, C., 1, 11, 13, 113, 117
Noise, 69, 80, 140, 159n3, 192, 193, 195, 199, 201, 203, 206, 220
See also Phonophobia

O
Offenbach, J., 13–15
Oliphant, M., 84
"The Open Door", 84
Oliver, W., 186
Opera, 12, 13, 13n8, 14n10, 27, 71n3, 97, 102, 113, 116, 131, 132, 134, 136
Overpopulation, 199
overcrowding, 11, 214
Owens, J., 5
Oz, F.
Little Shop of Horrors, 211, 219

P
Pardo Bazán, E., 4, 8, 11, 26, 29, 94, 130, 139, 141
"El fantasma", 94
"La charca", 26
"La máscara", 29, 130, 139, 141
Paris, viii, 1, 2, 5, 6, 12–14, 16, 18, 21, 23, 24, 30, 41, 45, 46, 48, 50, 52–58, 63, 64, 72, 96, 98, 111–117, 119, 122, 123, 131, 133, 134, 138, 140, 144, 156, 158, 159–161, 166, 171n4, 174, 195, 204–207, 207n7, 209, 217, 219, 220
Parkins, W., 166, 166n1
Patten, R. L., 189, 190
Pedraza, P., 112
Pérez Galdós, B., 4, 11, 12, 29, 30, 121, 129, 146–151, 182–187, 192, 200–203
"¿Dónde está mi cabeza?", 121
"La novela en el tranvía", 29–30, 182–187
"La Princesa y el Granuja", 12, 29, 146–151
"The Novel on the Tram", 30, 182
"Una industria que vive de la muerte; episodio musical del cólera", 30, 192, 200–203
Phobia, 11, 30, 197, 203, 219
See also Chronophobia; Phonophobia
Phonophobia, viii, 192–200
Pike, B., 143, 166, 207
Poe, E. A., 11, 71, 71n3, 102, 107n6, 130, 139, 141, 141n9, 193n1, 202n6
"Ligeia", 193n1
"The Man of the Crowd", 71, 71n3, 102
"The Masque of the Red Death", 130, 139
"The Tell-Tale Hear", 202n6
"William Wilson", 141
Positivism, 14, 95, 107
Postmodern fantastic, vii, 212, 212n1
Potocki, J., 10, 39
Prince, N., 25, 111, 118, 128, 141, 150
Prostitute, 102, 109, 132, 217
Punter, D., 3, 25

R
Rabkin, E., 9
Railway, 12, 16, 29, 155, 166, 174, 175, 177–182, 186, 189, 191
  railway ghost stories, 175, 177–180, 186
Ransom, A., 3, 131n2, 144n11
Realism, 2, 4n1, 8, 27, 166, 213n2
Reichenbach, C., 22
Relic, 44, 47, 48, 52–54, 65, 144
Riddell, C., 4, 7, 11, 72, 76, 78, 79, 81, 82
  "The Old House in Vauxhall Walk", 72, 76, 78, 83
  "Old Mrs. Jones", 72, 86
  The Uninhabited House, 72, 79–81, 86, 87
  "Walnut-tree House", 72, 76
Rizzi, D., 6
Roas, D., viii, 3, 7, 9, 10, 107n6, 146n13, 211
Robertson, J., 104n3
Rodenbach, G., 4, 11, 23, 29, 37, 65, 116, 129, 142, 143, 146, 192–200, 207, 220
  Bruges-la-Morte, 23, 37, 193, 193n1, 205, 207
  "L'Ami des Miroirs", 29, 142, 145
  "L'Heure", 24, 30, 65, 192–200, 203, 205, 207, 220
  "Un Inventeur", 30, 192–200, 203, 220

S
Salomé, 131n2, 134, 136
Saussy, H., 57n4
Schiller, F., 39
Schneider, M., 10, 13
Schwob, M., 18, 141
Scott, W., 10, 44, 58
Seignolle, C.
  La Nuit des Halles, 30, 217
Sexuality, 106, 131n2, 166n1
Showcase
  display window, 29, 129, 146, 147, 147n14, 148, 149, 151
  shop window, 29, 65, 94, 147, 151
Simmel, G., 93, 109, 157, 198, 199
Smith, G. T., 5
Society for Psychical Research, 18
Sontag, S., 203
Soundscape, 30, 157n2, 159, 160, 162, 193–198, 201, 203, 209, 220
Space
  anti-modern space, 194
  cursed space, 88
  liminal space, 59, 98n3
  spatial frames, 28, 45
  See also Threshold
Spectacle, 18, 54, 60, 111, 116, 119, 120, 134
  See also Exhibition
Spiritualism, 21, 95
Stevenson, R. L., 2, 128, 129
  Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, 2, 128, 144
Stoker, B., 3
  Dracula, 3
"The Story of Clifford House", 72, 77n5, 80, 81, 85
Sublime, 39, 40, 47, 103, 104n3
Suburban fantastic, 216

T
Talisman, 28, 47, 48, 57, 58, 63, 83
Tang, W. S., 6, 11, 25, 108, 146n13, 201n5
Taylor, J. O., 129
Terra incognita, 39, 45–46, 49, 65

Thacker, A., 166
Thornbury, W., 101–106, 177
"Haunted London: St. Martin's-Lane", 104
Threshold, 40, 45, 46, 48–49, 63, 64, 66, 84, 88, 115, 145, 147, 149
Time
chronological time, 63
cyclicality, 174
linear time, 56, 57, 60, 174
non-chronological history, 59
synchronization, 189, 192, 198
temporal acceleration, 63
temporal totality, 59
temporal transcendence, 64
See also Anachronism; Clock, Cronophobia; Watch
Todorov, T., 9, 98, 98n3, 161
Toy, 65, 146, 147, 149–151
See also Doll
Tracy, L., 120
Tradition fatigue
anti-domestic, 81–83
anti-modern space, 194
anti-revenant, 96, 217
Train, 30, 155, 156, 159–161, 175–180, 189–191
See also Bradshaw; Railway
Tram, 29, 166, 183–187, 214, 221
Traveler, 30, 174–180

U
Underground, 220
"Un viaje a la eternidad", 173
Urban jungle, 74, 78–79

V
Vax, L., 161
Vélez de Guevara, L., 218n3
El Diablo Cojuelo, 218n3
Vernant, J-P., 84
Vidler, A., 38, 69
Villanueva, D., 57n4
Villelongue, G., 110, 119
"La Légende de la guillotine", 110, 119
Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, A., 14n10, 18, 118, 193n1
"Le Secret de l'échafaud", 118
"Véra", 193n1
Vision, 21, 45, 60, 72, 86, 122, 134, 146, 161, 162, 206, 221
Vitt-Maucher, G., 102

W
Walpole, H., 10, 39
Ward Byrkit, J.
Coherence, 216
Watch, 71n3, 190–192, 196, 198, 206
See also Clock; Time
Watson, J., 51
Weaver, Z., 21
Weber, M., 5, 102
Weese, K., 3
Wells, H. P., 45, 64, 65
"The Crystal Egg", 45, 64
"The Magic Shop", 45, 65
Wilde, O., 2, 88
The Picture of Dorian Gray, 2

Z
Ziegler, R., 131, 134, 140, 141