The New Romantic Unconscious:

Thomas De Quincey and Cognitive Science

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Abstract

This dissertation examines Thomas De Quincey's notion of the unconscious in the light of modern cognitive science and nineteenth-century science. Literary criticism of the last few decades has shown that De Quincey's life and work are seemingly ideal for psychoanalytic readings. His interest in dreams, the changes opium caused in his dreaming and waking states, and the profuse concern about his own childhood resonate with psychoanalytic themes. Accordingly, this approach is widespread (explicitly and implicitly) in the critical reception of De Quincey's work. My thesis challenges Freudian theories as the default methodology in order to understand De Quincey's oeuvre. It follows the growing interest in combining the history of science with modern cognitive science in literary studies. This application of cognitive theories in a historically informed reading has been called cognitive historicism. Early nineteenth-century physiology and cognitive psychology both provide an alternative approach to the unconscious. They argue in favour of an embodied productive unconscious faculty, the cognitive unconscious, which does not stand in the same kind of opposition to consciousness as the Freudian unconscious. The cognitive unconscious relies on a very different set of premises than psychoanalysis. Whereas the latter considers the unconscious to be driven by sexual and instinctive impulses that act according to the pleasure principle or defence mechanisms, the cognitive unconscious executes complex, rational, and in many ways beneficial mental processes. This productive unconscious is a substantial element in De Quincey's notion of the mind and informs a number of his works, from the autobiographical writings to his theories of language and literature. With a cognitive historicist methodology, I attempt to show that De Quincey was taking part in the nineteenth-century discourse about the mind/body relationship, in which various exponents postulated productive unconscious processes. The cognitive approach to the unconscious can help us understand that debate as well as De Quincey's work because they both discuss issues that are highly relevant in cognitive science today. Via the theoretical framework provided by cognitive psychology, my thesis delineates the cognitive unconscious in De Quincey's writings and how this notion of the mind reflects the historical advances in science during his lifetime.

Keywords

Thomas De Quincey, nineteenth century, psychology in literature, subconscious, unconscious, cognitive unconscious, cognitive psychology, physiology, mind and brain, dreams, opium.

Mots clés

Thomas De Quincey, 19e siècle, la psychologie en littérature, subconscient, inconscient, inconscient cognitif, psychologie cognitive, physiologie, esprit et cerveau, rêves, opium.

To Moni

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Basil and Luis showed great patience while their daddy was away, working in Neuchâtel or that faraway place called Canada. Basil's curiosity about what Thomas De Quincey was doing, when I occasionally told him that I was writing about that man, was always a pleasure. I left the bit about opium out and focused on dreaming instead, which satisfied his interest. Thomas was at times almost part of the family it seems, as when Basil was having one of the fights three year olds have with their best friends. During such a ramble, they were both threatening to get grown-ups to help them. Already having me in his line of defense, Basil continued his military tactics and audaciously announced that he would go and get Thomas De Quincey!

Last, but foremost, Moni deserves my sincere gratitude for always supporting me beyond measure throughout this long project, for taking such good care of our boys while running her own business, and for keeping the family life up when I was diving into my papers.

List of Abbreviations

Thomas De Quincey

"A"	"Appendix" to the *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* (1822). Ed. Grevel Lindop. *WTDQ*. Vol. 2. 80-87.
"AM"	"Animal Magnetism" (1834). Eds. Grevel Lindop, Robert Morrison, and Barry Symonds. *WTDQ*. Vol. 9. 358-79.
C	*Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* (1821). Ed. Grevel Lindop. *WTDQ*. Vol. 2. 1-76.
"K"	"On the Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth" (1823). Ed. Frederick Burwick. *WTDQ*. Vol. 3. 150-54.
Life	Japp, Alexander Hay, ed. *Thomas De Quincey: His Life and Writings*. London: Hogg, 1890.
Memorials	Japp, Alexander Hay, ed. *De Quincey Memorials*. London: Heinemann, 1891.
S	*Suspiria de Profundis* (1845). Ed. Frederick Burwick. *WTDQ*. Vol. 15. 126-204.
"Sketches"	"Sketches of Life and Manners; from the Autobiography of an English Opium-Eater" (1834-38). Ed. Alina Clej. *WTDQ*. Vol. 10. 3-233.
"St."	"Style [No. I-IV]" (1840-41). Ed. Grevel Lindop. *WTDQ*. Vol. 12. 3-84.
WTDQ	*The Works of Thomas De Quincey*. Gen. ed. Grevel Lindop. 21 vols. London: Pickering and Chatto, 2000-03.

Let us break down the barriers between science and the humanities.

J. Allan Hobson[1]

> Experimental results from an ever-widening range of psychological functions tell the same story, that what we are conscious of is a relatively small proportion of what we know and that we are the unwitting beneficiaries of a mind that is, in a sense, only partly our own.
>
> Jonathan Miller[1]

INTRODUCTION

While having lunch with a senior faculty member at Queen's University, Kingston, during my research stay in 2012, I briefly explained my project. Upon hearing that I was working on a nineteenth-century author's notion of the unconscious, she interjected in anticipatory conclusion that my approach must be philosophical, and that I must be applying Freud's psychoanalytical theories. Her comment nicely illustrates two points that are relevant in contrast to my work. First, it shows how common it still is to think about the unconscious in psychoanalytic terms. Second, psychoanalysis was as a matter of course portrayed as a philosophical concept of mind. The point is that Freud's theories often are still considered to be psychological tools—in the scientific sense—to understand the mind. They are, however, indeed more philosophical than scientific constructs. Taking this as my point of departure, the aim of my research is to show what science has to tell us about the unconscious, how it can help us to understand literature, and how literature partakes in scientific discourses. So I tried my best to explain to my lunchtime collocutor that I am not approaching De Quincey from a philosophical but from a scientific perspective, and that my tool is not psychoanalysis but cognitive science, which she then accepted with the hesitation and scepticism that such approaches at times still foster in the humanities.

Despite its waning relevance in the scientific discourse since the 1970s, the psychoanalytic concept of the repressive and instinct driven unconscious as it was postulated by Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) and significantly adapted and expanded by Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961), Alfred Adler (1870-1937), and Jacques Lacan (1901-1981), is still the most readily available understanding of the unconscious today to the general public, in popular culture, and in the humanities, in particular literary criticism. A lack of an alternative theory, together with psychoanalysis' rather literal sex appeal due to its ability to answer the question of our innermost secrets and its tantalising comprehensiveness have allowed psychoanalysis to pervade our thought and culture. The frequent capitalisation of *unconscious* or the italics used for the definite article to refer to the Freudian concept indicate the hegemony this theory has exerted, which also underlies many histories of the unconscious.

Most historical accounts of unconscious mentation are teleological. They purpose to trace the historical line that finally and logically leads to the wisdom of the grand master, Freud's psychoanalysis. Some titles indicate this endpoint more or less overtly: *The Discovery of the Unconscious: The History and Evolution of Dynamic Psychiatry* (Ellenberger, 1970), *The Unconscious before Freud* (Whyte, 1979), *"Dieses wahre innere Afrika:" Texte zur Entdeckung des Unbewußten vor Freud* (Lütkehaus, 1989).[2] These works are nevertheless useful for an investigation that seeks to unravel the history of the unconscious because they point the reader to discourses, authors, and texts that dealt with the unconscious before it became a generally acknowledged idea. However, in their ideological endeavour, these authors' perspectives are often biased by the assumption that any mention of the unconscious conforms to or at least foreshadows what Freud began to theorise at the end of the nineteenth century. More recent work that engages with notions of the unconscious is more carefully balanced in this respect. Elke Völmicke, for example, is aware of this problem in her *Das Unbewusste im Deutschen Idealismus* (2005).[3] She argues that the hunt for "psychoanalytical

seeds" (11) distorts a historical analysis because it predefines the meaning of the subject under discussion.[4] Similarly Angus Nicholls and Martin Liebscher draw attention to this issue in the introduction to their recent collection of essays *Thinking the Unconscious: Nineteenth-Century German Thought* (2010). This thesis shares their scepticism in regard to such a teleological understanding of the unconscious and the almost unquestioned authority of psychoanalysis.

The Romantic Unconscious?

De Quincey lived in a time of radical change concerning the notion of subjectivity, consciousness, and the unconscious. This discourse was taking place in literature, philosophy and science. Jean-Jacques Rousseau is considered one of the most influential writers in terms of a new "subjectivism of modern moral understanding" (C. Taylor, *Sources* 361) during the Romantic period. Due to his writings a more internal apprehension of the individual became the norm. The two most influential philosophers who discussed the problem of the unconscious before it became more generally acknowledged, were Gottfried Willhelm von Leibniz and Immanuel Kant, who opposed John Locke's scepticism about the existence of mental processes that elude awareness.[5] Around the same time, science and in particular physiology provided a functional map of the nervous system and the brain that suggested an active and unconsciously operating mind. While literature and philosophy have been widely accepted as major influences on Romantic thought, it is necessary to emphasize that the "scientific culture" no less "seeped readily into the philosophical and literary discourses of the age" (Richardson, "Unconscious" 350). These three strands contributed to the emerging notion of the unconscious, which became one of the major topoi in Romantic literature.

This more acute awareness of the individual and the questionings about the formation of the self, which were arising and needed answers, have long been considered a vital aspect of Romantic literature. Georges Poulet notes that "Romanticism is first of all a rediscovery of

the mysteries of the world, a more vivid sentiment of the wonders of nature, a more acute consciousness of the enigmas of the self" (3). Around the same time as Poulet, Morse Peckham argues that with this heightened awareness of the self, the idea of an unconscious mental realm developed. He lists "the unconscious mind" as a "profoundly important idea" (13) to any theory of Romanticism. In his view, "Romantic subjectivism, the artist watching his powers develop and novelty emerging from his unconscious mind" (14) is central to this literary movement. In other words, "truth can only be apprehended intuitively, imaginatively, spontaneously, with the whole personality, from the deep sources of the fountains that are within" (13). Romantic thought has become indelibly linked with these ideas and is generally conceived of as the birthplace of a more acute sense of the self and the notion of an unconscious mental realm. Charles Taylor argues that identity moved away from the notion of providence and away from a Cartesian sense of selfhood. His notion of "expressivism" challenges the primacy of reason and emphasizes the creative faculty, leaving room for an "inner impulse of nature" (*Sources* 411). Similarly, Henri F. Ellenberger locates an "interest … for all manifestations of the unconscious" (200) during the Romantic period, and Catherine Belsey adds that "in some of the texts of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries … the unconscious is *for the first time* produced in discourse" (58).

In keeping with these claims concerning the Romantic movement in literature, critics have established the relevance of the unconscious in De Quincey, who was involved in the same endeavour of self-analysis and disclosure of the unconscious as other Romantic writers, most notably his early idols William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Like Coleridge and Wordsworth, De Quincey was interested in psychological issues such as memory, the effects of opium on mentation, dreams, different states of consciousness, and, of course, the unconscious. Jonathan Bate argues that "De Quincey's most characteristic work represents an extension and intensification of the Wordsworthian and Coleridgean quest into

the dark inward 'hiding places' of the imagination" (137). Similarly, Jonathan Wordsworth writes that "Few writers have been more preoccupied by the inner depths of the mind than De Quincey and Wordsworth" (228). "[B]oth would agree" he continues, "that the power was dark, unaccountable in its working" and "both have the wish to track the power of association back to its source" (231). De Quincey, Wordsworth, and Coleridge shared similar views about the hidden processes of the mind and tried to trace the interior sources of memories, feelings and emotions.

This said, the critical reception of the Romantic notion of the unconscious is steeped in psychoanalysis. On the one hand, Romantic authors are analysed through a psychoanalytic lens and, on the other hand, they are viewed as forerunners of Freudian ideas. Ellenberger, for example, believes that "many of the concepts that are considered characteristic of Freud's psychoanalysis and Jung's analytic psychology permeated the work of Romantic psychiatrists" (887). The section entitled "Models of the Mind: The Romantic Unconscious" in Joel Black's essay "Scientific Models" is representative of this psychoanalytical approach towards Romantic literature. He generally asserts that "during the Romantic period … the role and range of unconscious operations in human life and artistic creation became widely recognized" (130) and that "the most significant human science inaugurated by Romantic writers may well have been psychology" (129). It is clear from his examples and the numerous references to Freud, Jung, and Lacan that he specifically has psychoanalysis in mind when he refers to "the mind's dark side" (130). Black finally states explicitly that "Some of the most striking insights into the unconscious that were later developed in psychoanalytic theory can be found in the Romantic's imaginative writings" (132). Black also points out that Romantic authors served as examples to the founders of psychoanalysis. All three analysts named above refer to Romantic texts in order to prove or exemplify the validity of their theories. While this is certainly true, it is a false conclusion to take it as a

confirmation that the work of authors such as Wordsworth, Coleridge, and De Quincey is representative of psychoanalytic theories.

De Quincey is a prime example for this attribution of Freudian elements. His notion of the unconscious has received abundant attention from literary scholars, mostly in Freudian terms. In fact, his works (and De Quincey himself) have so often been psychoanalysed, as it were, that one could easily think that there is not much left to say about his dreams and his notion of the unconscious. His childhood, the relationship to his sister and his mother, his memories, and his dreams have frequently been pathologised. The focus on psychoanalytical moments in De Quincey's oeuvre, in particular the *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* (1821, rev. 1856) and *Suspiria de Profundis* (1845), is arguably due to two main factors. First, his writing lends itself to psychoanalytical readings because his opium addiction distorted out of measure everything that was happening in his mind, which renders his childhood memories abnormal in a way. Second, the relevance he attributes to his childhood experience in terms of personal development, as well as his abundant dream narratives, chime with Freudian themes. De Quincey has been considered a forerunner of Freud for decades now. Charles L. Proudfit provides one of the earliest detailed accounts of the similarities between their writings. In "Thomas De Quincey and Sigmund Freud: Sons, Fathers, Dreamers—Precursors of Psychoanalytic Developmental Psychology" (1985), he argues that De Quincey is "among the important contributors to the knowledge of human psychology in the light of contemporary psychoanalytic understanding of dreams and early childhood development" (88–89). After tracing analogies between the lives of the opium-eater and the founder of psychoanalysis, Proudfit considers similarities of thought in their notions of the impossibility of forgetting, the ongoing influence of developmental stages in childhood, and, of course, dreams.

This idea of De Quincey being a precursor of Freud has become a commonplace. David Ellis argues, for example, that De Quincey's description how forgotten incidents of his

childhood are revived in dreams, "take[s] us straight into the early world of Freudian analysis" in that it "allude[s] to the phenomenon of repression (why is it that De Quincey could not remember these incidents when he was awake?), and at least glance[s] at the famous problem of how we can possibly be asked to remember, for therapeutic purposes, episodes of which we were unaware when they took place" (xvi).[6] Commenting on the same passage, Daniel O'Quinn comments that De Quincey's explanation "resonates which [sic] Freud's theorization of trauma in 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle'" (O'Quinn). Similarly, Barry Milligan believes that De Quincey "anticipated some of the most influential insights of Sigmund Freud, who argued several generations later that recurrent patterns in dreams originate in unresolved conflicts from the individual's early development" (*Confessions* xviii). Finally, Frederick Burwick argues along the same line that in *Suspiria*, De Quincey uses a similar model as Freud's gatekeeper, which represses ideas and stops them from moving from the id to the ego: "De Quincey … becomes dedicated to exposing the selves lurking in the shadows beyond the light of waking consciousness, the keepers of memories that he has ceased consciously to remember, of fears or desires that his conscious mind cannot, or will not, admit" (*Knowledge* 18). De Quincey's observations on memories and dreams have often been associated with psychoanalysis and considered as early instances of Freudian theories.

Joel Faflak adds a more thorough and more radical discussion of De Quincey in the light of psychoanalysis in his recent study *Romantic Psychoanalysis: The Burden of the Mystery* (2008). Arguing that criticism is always "implicitly psychoanalytical, always engaged in the (im)possible task of remembering, repeating, and working through to some understanding of a past" (5), he endeavours to provide "a psychological history of psychoanalysis as it emerges in Romanticism" (4) unrelated to the historical, scientific, and cultural background of the time. Faflak reads De Quincey's (as well as Wordsworth's,

Coleridge's, and Keats's) work as instances of psychoanalysis (not theories of the unconscious), the search for the traumatic instantiation of identity. The dream section of the *Confessions*, for example, is a case of "narrative free-association" in Faflak's view, who supports his argument with De Quincey's explanatory note saying that he jotted down these dreams as they came to his mind without channelling them in any way.[7] De Quincey is eventually not able to "*theorize* the unconscious" but "remains the unwilling spectator of its determinism" (164). *Suspiria*, also "resituates the dream, the unconscious, repetition, trauma and the primal scene within an aesthetic metapsychology, an interpretation of dreams … that is literary and aesthetic rather than scientific" (174). "The telling of the unconscious" Faflak argues, "becomes the alpha and the omega of his project in a way that De Quincey does not entirely anticipate" (168). The *Confessions* and *Suspiria* are thus considered De Quincey's own talking-cure, which eventually fails because he cannot overcome the separation between analyst and analysand.

In another strand of psychoanalytic criticism De Quincey is put on the couch and psychoanalysed. The main target of this approach is the recurrence of his sister Elizabeth's death and the loss of other young female figures, such as Catharine Wordsworth and Ann of Oxford Street, in his writings. The insistence with which memories of them return in the *Confessions* and *Suspiria* supposedly reveals De Quincey's repressed sexual and incestuous desires and his guilt, which latently manifest themselves in his dreams. Charles Rzepka, for example, argues that "Young Thomas's guilt and fear," described in the scene of his intrusion into the room where Elizabeth is lying on her deathbed, "seem clearly related to what Freud would call the child's 'latent' desire for sexual possession of the mother-surrogate." The kiss at the end of this scene "then, seems to be motivated by the desire to take sexual possession of the girl" (*Sacramental* 117). Melissa Knox finds such sexual and incestuous allusions everywhere. Like Rzepka, she argues that they stem from the conflict produced by "his

feelings for his mother and sister" (317). The "worm" that is "gnawing" at De Quincey's "heart" (*S* 145) after he sneaked into the bedchamber with his dead sister represents "an image of an excited phallus" (318). Knox further suggests that—in allusion to "The Daughter of Lebanon," in which the evangelist touches the head of a young prostitute—De Quincey "may have wanted to touch" Elizabeth's head. It "is not inconceivable" she continues unerringly, "that such a conscious desire could have fronted an unconscious wish to touch her genitals, the 'head' indicating a displacement upwards" (323). In the same hypothetical and oblique way, De Quincey's description of his problems sleeping when he and a young orphaned girl found shelter in a lawyer's house in London contains implicit sexual content. He describes his "*dog-sleep*" of these nights as follows: "I could hear myself moaning … and, about this time, a hideous sensation began to haunt me as soon as I fell into a slumber, … viz. a sort of twitching (I know not where, but apparently about the region of the stomach), which compelled me violently to throw out my feet for the sake of relieving it" (*C* 22). Knox concludes in front of this evidence: "Taken out of context, minus the 'hideous' and the sleep, this could describe an orgasm" (328). Such Freudian readings are often led by conjectures and assumptions, as is the Freudian interpretation of dreams.

John Barrell also explores De Quincey's writings from the viewpoint of his sister's death, which he considers as a Freudian primal scene, "with this crucial difference, that it is the body of the dead Elizabeth or her surrogates which seems to occupy the mother's sexual place" (35). Barrell argues that a vast range of De Quincey's oeuvre—not only his autobiographical writings but also his fiction, as well as the historical, political, and scientific essays—contain "developments and mutations of two related stories … concerning the death of Elizabeth" (87). The author's inability to save Elizabeth from death and an incestuous desire for her fill his writing with guilt. In his reconstruction of De Quincey's "myth of his own childhood" Barrell distinguishes "narratives of trauma and narratives of reparation" (22),

though the latter are never successful. In a historicist fashion, he then extends this source of De Quincey's guilt and anxieties to the power structures of society and the imperialist attitude towards the Orient to depict a psychobiography full of repressed guilt, anxieties, sexual desires, and violence.

While some similarities between De Quincey's and Freud's works doubtlessly exist, the explanations of the phenomena they share do not always overlap in such a crystal clear way as psychoanalytic criticism suggests. Reading De Quincey, I realised that pathological states are not as widely sown as they have been harvested by critics and that, on the contrary, he has a lot to say about the way the mind works in terms of information processing rather than repression, displacement, or trauma. More recently, critics have drawn attention to the flaws and short-sightedness of Freudian readings. Daniel Sanjiv Roberts regrets that psychoanalysis persists in De Quincey criticism because "attempts to pathologize De Quincey as an incest-ridden or paedophilic writer … tend only to distance his work from those of his contemporaries" ("Mix(ing)" 36). Similarly, Megan Vaughan observes that "those working with psychoanalytic theory often have ready-made answers for many of the questions we might like to ask … and run the risk of closing off as much as they illuminate" (54).[8] The focus on psychoanalysis in criticism over several decades, in my view, has prevented literary analysis from advancing to more sound psychological readings of De Quincey. Frank Tallis's assertion that the "upper mind was considered rational while the lower mind was considered irrational" (11) by the opium-eater and his contemporaries reflects the ruling assumption of psychoanalytic critics, which is restrictive if not plainly wrong. De Quincey's 1845 lament, in his role as a literary critic, that "we must have a good psychology; whereas, at present, we have none at all" (*WTDQ* 15: 224) is of concern to the literary critic today. De Quincey's time provided "a good psychology" and he applied it in his discussion of Wordsworth's poetry. Similarly, we have such "a good psychology" available and we would do well to use it.

The Cognitive Unconscious and Cognitive Historicism

This "good psychology" has its beginning in the cognitive revolution, which has strongly and unchangeably affected the way in which we conceive of the brain and the mind. Amongst many other things, the cognitive revolution has changed the discourse about the unconscious. Today, psychologists are looking for alternative routes to investigate that mental realm, which seemed unapproachable by experimental psychology for such a long time. George A. Miller, who was influential in bringing cognitive research into psychology, remembers that before psychology could take part in the cognitive revolution, it had to be freed from the shackles of behaviourism, which denied the mind and hence the unconscious in general. In 1913, John B. Watson wrote in his behaviourism manifesto that the "consideration of the mind-body problem affects neither the type of problem selected nor the formulation of the solution of that problem" and further urged "never [to] use the terms consciousness, mental states, mind, content, introspectively verifiable, imagery, and the like" (166). He defined psychology as the study of behaviour and could therefore eliminate states of mind as the objects of investigation. As James S. Uleman puts it in the introduction to the collection of essays *The New Unconscious*, in allusion to which I have entitled my thesis, behaviourists were "avoiding analyses of internal processes altogether and treating the mind in some ways as a black box" (5). In other words, "consciousness was nonexistent, epiphenomenal, or irrelevant to behavior" (Kihlstrom, "Cognitive" 1445). Accordingly, Miller describes the "cognitive revolution in psychology" as "a counter-revolution" that sought to bring "cognition" and "the mind back into experimental psychology" (141). Thanks to advances in the various fields of cognitive science, psychologists have found new ways to conceptualise the mind and later the unconscious.

After decades during which behaviourism ruled psychological research, the major paradigm shift brought about by the cognitive revolution also created renewed interest in the

unconscious mental activities outside the field of psychoanalysis. The unconscious today is no longer reduced to a source of pathological contents, but has the status of an active and positively productive mental realm. Scientists still have a long way before explaining all the mental processes of which one is not aware, not to mention those of which one actually is aware. However, important steps have been taken to move on from the behaviourist denial and the misleading psychoanalytic notion of unconscious mentation to a more sound scientific analysis of the mind. This new cognitive notion of the unconscious has developed from a "marginal theme" to a "legitimate and important object of research" (Mies 204). Relevant for this study is that it enabled the conception of the unconscious as something very different than what Freud led us to believe for over a century.

The beginning of the new, non-Freudian unconscious dates back to 1987, when John F. Kihlstrom published the seminal essay, "The Cognitive Unconscious." For the first time, research from different areas within cognitive psychology was gathered and evaluated in order to explain what is now variously called the cognitive, psychological, productive, or the new unconscious.[9] Kihlstrom's first definition of this concept proposes "mental structures and processes that, operating outside phenomenal awareness, nevertheless influence conscious experience, thought, and action" (1445). The main feature of the cognitive unconscious—which also is the capital difference from the psychoanalytic—is the productive nature of unconscious contents and processes; in this view consciousness, though still an important aspect of the human personality, "is not necessary for complex psychological functioning" (1450). Kihlstrom's theory has since been adopted and elaborated by many scientists. Uleman states that "Unconscious processes seem to be capable of doing many things that were, not so long ago, thought of as requiring mental resources and conscious processes" (3). Perrig and Wippich more specifically maintain that unconscious mentation plays a crucial role "in each form of information processing, which includes so-called higher forms of dealing with the

external and the internal world (such as thought, imagination, and memory)."[10] Scott Barry Kaufman more emphatically asserts that a "great deal of research has demonstrated the sophisticated and intelligent nature of the cognitive unconscious" (444). In a nutshell, for Freud the unconscious is an abyss, for the cognitive psychologist it is a well.[11]

Although many unresolved questions remain regarding the unconscious, it has switched positions with consciousness. The latter used to be taken for granted from the moment philosophers began to ponder these questions, whereas over the former always loomed a big question mark. The great split occurred with Descartes, who thought that nothing could exist outside of consciousness. The concept of the unconscious was for him wholly inconceivable. Even when it had gained acknowledgment in psychological circles and become a common idea in popular culture, the unconscious, even that of Freud, was still a mystery to solve in comparison to consciousness, which in turn was simply taken for granted. Today, neuroscientists assume that similar brain activities take place in conscious and unconscious mental processes. Thus, the brain is active even when that activity is not consciously registered. Even scientists of consciousness, such as Antonio Damasio, admit that the largest part of mental activity consists of "nonconscious, internal and unrevealed" processes and consciousness only is a "narrow window" (177). Damasio defines all contents within the "dispositional space" as implicit: "The *dispositional* space is that in which dispositions hold the knowledge base as well as the devices for the reconstruction of that knowledge in recall. It is the source of images in the process of imagination and reasoning and is also used to generate movement" (143). Dispositions are "abstract records of potentialities:" "Our memories of things, of properties of things, of people and places, of events and relationships, of skills, of life-management processes—in short all of our memories, inherited from evolution and available at birth or acquired through learning thereafter—exist in our brains in dispositional form, waiting to become explicit images or

actions. *Our knowledge base is implicit, encrypted, and unconscious*" (144). There is general agreement today that "the 'unconscious mind' is the rule, not the exception" (Bargh and Morsella 78).[12]

There have been attempts to reconcile this modern notion of the unconscious with Freudian theories.[13] Kihlstrom, Barnhard, and Tataryn explain that "much contemporary research on unconscious mental life is dismissed on the grounds that Freud had said it all before and that our carefully designed and painstakingly executed experimental work is either trivial or merely a gloss on the clinical insights of the Master" (789). Psychologists resist this reconciliation for two reasons. First, the cognitive unconscious is based on entirely different premises than Freud's theories. As Kihlstrom says, "this is not your psychoanalyst's unconscious" ("Psychological" 595). Cognitive psychologists emphasise that "much of this research would have been done had Freud (or Janet, for that matter) never lived," and that it "evolved independently of psychodynamic theory" (Kihlstrom, Barnhardt, and Tataryn 789). In other words, it is only necessary to refer to Freudian theories in order to distinguish the cognitive from the psychoanalytic unconscious.[14] Second, Freud's main tenets have been shown to be untenable under scientific scrutiny. J. Allan Hobson and Robert McCarley first proposed an alternative to Freud's views on dreams in 1977, which Hobson has continually adapted to include the most recent neuroscientific insights into states of dreaming. In a more recent commentary, he maintains that "both the wish fulfilment and the guardian of sleep ideas that Freud concocted are just plain wrong!" ("The Ghost" 951). Yacov Rofé, in turn, finds "little empirical justification for maintaining the psychoanalytic concept of repression" (63). He concludes that "the Freudian notion of repression cannot be used as a scientific psychological concept, as its empirical status precludes this possibility" (76). Under the light of these objections it is unquestionable that a reconciliation is not just difficult but impracticable.

While this new notion of the unconscious has reached a relatively large general audience thanks to popular science books—such as Timothy D. Wilson's *Strangers to Ourselves: Discovering the Adaptive Unconscious*, Malcolm Gladwell's *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking*, Gerd Gigerenzer's *Gut Feelings: Short Cuts to Better Decision Making*, and Leonard Mlodinow's *Subliminal: How Your Unconscious Mind Rules Your Behavior*—it has still not yet attained the recognition that it deserves among literary critics, who seem to be lagging behind the general intellectual public in this respect. This state of affairs is lamentable because the cognitive unconscious allows the literary critic to engage with the emergence of the idea of the unconscious in the Romantic period under completely different premises than has been the case heretofore. Cognitive literary criticism provides the tools to integrate the findings from cognitive psychology into literary studies, which can be done synchronically or diachronically. The most popular works that combine cognitive research with literary studies are synchronic, i.e. "approaching literature and literary language in a systematic manner without any overriding regard to matters of time, place, and social context" (Richardson, *Neural* 2). Researchers such as Mark Turner (*Reading Minds: The Study of English in the Age of Cognitive Science*, 1991; *The Literary Mind*, 1996), Patrick Colm Hogan (*The Mind and Its Stories: Narrative Universals and Human Emotion*, 2003), Reuven Tsur (*Toward a Theory of Cognitive Poetics*, 1992), and David S. Miall (*Literary Reading: Empirical and Theoretical Studies*, 2006) try to explain the role of the human brain as we know it today in our appreciation of and fascination for literary language and literature (in its broadest sense). They are after "literary universals" (Richardson, "Cognitive" 549) that are shared across time, distance and cultures.

Alan Richardson, however, detects a neglect of historical and cultural specificity in this synchronic approach and proposes cognitive historicism as an antidote, as it were. As the name indicates, cognitive historicism is interested in "the diachronic aspect of literary

studies" ("Cognitive" 549), i.e. "specific authors, works, issues, or motifs in terms of their historical, social and cultural contexts" (*Neural* 2). In Tony E. Jackson's terms this means a move from "metalevel discussions of large issues" to "working examples of practical interpretation" (162). Richardson—whose approach is part of a more general historicist movement in criticism since the 1980s—calls for more "practical interpretation" that deals with authors in their historical and cultural context, and that considers the science of the mind in the respective period as well as the one available now. Critics are asked to "rethink … the history of literature and culture from a cognitive standpoint," or in other words, to produce "cognitively informed interpretive readings of literary texts that at the same time fully acknowledge their historical specificity" (Richardson and Steen, "Literature" 2, 5). The nineteenth century offers a vast field for cognitive historicist studies because of the burgeoning scientific and medical advances and in particular the brain-mind debate of that time. Scientific issues serve as a context, just as other political, social, or economical contexts have been used in historicist studies. The cognitive historicist approach to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century literature allows a change of focus. The cognitive paradigm makes possible new readings of texts without taking them out of their historical and social contexts. On the contrary, it considers historical and social contexts that have previously been neglected and thus adds a valuable new dimension.

The cognitive historicist approach is particularly well suited to investigate nineteenth-century notions of the unconscious. The change of perspective brought about by cognitive research indeed calls for a revaluation of the unconscious in literature. In 2005, Uleman correctly observed that the "psychoanalytic unconscious is, to most laypeople and those in the arts and humanities, the only unconscious" (2). Freud even continues to cast his shadow on scientists. Psychologists who research the unconscious often still feel obliged to distance themselves from the psychoanalytic unconscious, which illustrates the juggernaut they are

opposing. This difficulty of promoting an unconscious other than the psychoanalytic in the arts and humanities, and especially in literary studies, is considerably bigger. The cognitive unconscious offers a fascinating alternative and I hope that my project will be a contribution to its acceptance in literary studies.

By using the cognitive concept of unconscious mentation, the aim is not to apply it in the same teleological fashion typical of psychoanalytic readings, which leads to a conclusion that is rather imposed than deducted. The aim is, on the contrary, to use it as a foil in order to understand and analyse historical notions and implications from a novel point of view. Research on the cognitive unconscious takes us back in time in some ways precisely because its insights are not completely new.[15] The nineteenth-century unconscious, much like the cognitive unconscious, is one of productivity and of high complexity. The modern theory of the productive unconscious can help us detect, explain, and understand notions of unconscious thought and behaviour during the nineteenth century, even if the parallels remain necessarily imperfect and partial at times; it enables us to draw these qualities to the fore and tell an old story in a new way, or maybe even to turn them into a new story.

In "Romanticism, the Unconscious, and the Brain," Richardson provides a wide-ranging overview of the unconsciously active brain. Taking into account the works of Romantic literary figures and scientists in Britain, France, and Germany, he convincingly shows how they "participate … in a nascent neuroscientific approach to unconscious mental life currently enjoying a major revival" (361). In *British Romanticism and the Science of the Mind*, he repeatedly returns to unconscious mental action in discussions of Romantic brain scientists, Wordsworth's notion of language, unconscious behaviour in Austen, and Keats's remarks on the imagination, for example. In chapter two he displays in a more detailed fashion how this cognitive notion of the unconscious informs Coleridge's dream account of "Kubla Khan," even though the latter repeatedly stresses the primacy of the mind over the

body. At the heart of Richardson's research is the embodied and brain-based notion of the active mind, an idea that was rapidly gaining acceptance in the early nineteenth century. Overall, he points to a rich and varied pre-Freudian tradition that shares many assumptions with modern cognitive science. Vanessa L. Ryan's recent book, *Thinking without Thinking in the Victorian Novel*, engages with theories of mind that proclaim productive unconscious processes in the mutual exchange between science and literature in the second half of the nineteenth century. She makes extensive use of the physiologist William B. Carpenter's theory of unconscious cerebration. He similarly to but more explicitly than the earlier scientists discussed by Richardson engages with unconscious mental processes, akin to the modern cognitive unconscious. Richardson's and Ryan's works show that these early instances of the productive unconscious considerably shape nineteenth-century literature and thus need to be taken seriously. My work on De Quincey, who defies the classical definition as a Romantic or a Victorian author, follows in these footsteps, covering the time of transition between the two periods.

Even though over the last decade cognitive historicism has successfully staked its claim in literary criticism, it still meets considerable resistance from some scholars who dismiss cognitive science as reductionist with nothing to offer to literary criticism. They usually view the cognitive approach to literature with the "suspicion, hostility, or (perhaps worst) indifference that a novel critical field may sometimes provoke" (Richardson and Steen, "Reframing" 151). Many a humanistic mind feels the threat of reductionism without seeing the manifold possibilities of new connections of understanding that are opening up if we allow scientific knowledge to interact with literary and historical interpretation. Using a scientific approach does not necessarily yield reductionist results. It depends on how a critical approach is applied rather than on the approach *per se*. Elaborating "the relationship between cognitive literary theory and criticism and the larger theoretical issues of the relationship of

literary texts to their cultural and historical contexts" (162), Ellen Spolsky convincingly shows how insights from the cognitive sciences enrich our notion of literary texts and historical periods. Far from providing reductionist readings, cognitive historicism has the potential to broaden our understanding of literary works and periods by inserting "the universals of human cognitive processing" (168) into the equation. The resistance is even more adamant when one attempts to discuss what has long been seen as Freudian territory without recourse to Freud. Although the cognitive unconscious has little to nothing in common with psychoanalytic theories, some scholars believe that it is impossible to reach an understanding of the unconscious without integrating Freud's theories. Yet a large number of scientists over the last three decades have shown that not only is it possible but that doing so provides more plausible theories of the unconscious; there is no reason why the same should not apply to literary studies.

The proposition that De Quincey's "psychological insights … anticipate several of Freud's major discoveries" (Proudfit 89) has, on the one hand, turned into something of a commonplace assertion and, on the other hand, still leaves many questions—such as the historical context—unanswered. The restriction to psychoanalysis in De Quincey criticism until the turn of the millennium may come from the lack of an alternative psychological approach in literary criticism. With the cognitive revolution in literary criticism, however, it is somewhat surprising that the Freudian hegemony has persisted over the last decade. Looking at De Quincey's writings from a perspective that is historicist and that engages with modern cognitive theories of mental processes opens up new vistas. In the case of the English opium-eater, probably one of the most frequently pathologised authors of his day, this means revaluating his major autobiographical writings as well as situating his notion of language and his literary criticism, for example, within a psychological framework that accounts for complex, productive, and beneficial unconscious processes.

De Quincey's Cognitive Unconscious

Elizabeth Quincey's death at age eight is generally considered the primal scene that accounts for her brother's repressed sexual, incestuous, and racist attitudes in psychoanalytic readings. Rather than giving another psychological interpretation of the events in 1792, I would like to show how De Quincey's literary rendition of them can invite the critic to perform a cognitive reading of his work. Remembering these events, De Quincey lays particular stress on the qualities of Elizabeth's cranium and her brain in relation to her mental powers. He remembers, for example, that "my sister was noticed as a prodigy," which "showed itself in an extraordinary expansion of the understanding; her grasp of intellect was large and comprehensive, in a degree which astonished people in a child of eight years old." This effect stemmed from the "child's brain," which Dr Charles White described after a post-mortem examination as "'the most beautiful' he had ever seen" ("Sketches" 11). De Quincey cherishes "the sweet temple of her brain" (*S* 142) in *Suspiria* and declares that "the premature expansion of the intellect" stands in connection with the changes in the brain brought about by Elizabeth's presumed cause of death, hydrocephalus.[16] These elements are constitutive of the apostrophe to his dead sister: "For thou, dear, noble Elizabeth, around whose ample brow, as often as thy sweet countenance rises upon the darkness, I fancy a tiara of light or a gleaming aureola in token of thy premature intellectual grandeur—thou whose head, for its superb developments, was the astonishment of science" (*S* 139). In cognitive terms, the narration of this fateful episode in De Quincey's life—rather than the events themselves—can arguably be read as a sign of his curiosity about the possible interactions between the body/brain and the mind, which was a major issue in scientific treatises at the time he composed *Suspiria*. I do not think of it as an "anti-sentimental substance of morbid anatomy" intruding on an otherwise "sentimental account" (Burwick, *Knowledge* 18), but as an attempt to understand the scene in cognitive terms and as a sign of his interest in the brain and its

physiology. I suggest, in an admittedly playful inversion of psychoanalytic readings, that his accounts of Elizabeth's death constitute a cognitive primal scene for the literary critic.

This study explores De Quincey's role in and contribution to the evolution of the idea of the cognitive unconscious. He did not discover or invent it. Any such claims would be acutely reductive and oversimplify the unconscious's complex history. However, he is interesting in several respects. For one, he lived and wrote during the period when the unconscious turned from a vague notion into an explicit concept. During his career as a writer, he addressed it again and again, explicitly or implicitly, until it became a regular motif. By the 1860s, the concept of the unconscious was a popular, common place idea (Klein 22; Whyte 169–70), to which De Quincey had considerably contributed. Hence, this is not an attempt to rewrite his (inner) life but to analyse his notion of the unconscious with the help of modern cognitive theories, to lay open connections to other nineteenth-century discourses (cultural, medical, and scientific), and to consider his originality of expression in this area.

De Quincey is at the very centre of a movement that was carried out in various fields—literature, philosophy, medicine, physiology, and the so-called pseudo-sciences—and eventually resulted in the general recognition of automatic, unconscious mental action explained by physical laws. He was in an intellectual environment that produced theories of unconscious processes that bear conceptual similarities to the modern cognitive unconscious. Rather than presenting the historical development of the notion of the unconscious, this study gives a detailed snapshot of a nineteenth-century writer through the lens of twenty-first century psychology. De Quincey is possibly anticipating certain aspects of cognitive theories of the unconscious but mainly "sharing some analogous presuppositions, aims, and attitudes" (Richardson, *British* 90). As Lancelot Law Whyte explains, when looking back in time, the "aim is not to project our ideas into the past, or to dazzle ourselves with the prescience of early thinkers as wise as we are, but to recognize where they knew more" (viii). After all, it

was De Quincey's work that made me look for alternative notions of the unconscious. He definitely knew more than I did at the outset of this project and here I want to share the old dreamer's insights with other critics. This case study ideally invites literary scholars to extend the research to other authors and movements and maybe will even incite cognitive psychologists to enlarge their scope of historical interest to other sources pointing towards the modern cognitive unconscious than they have considered so far.

My argument begins with De Quincey's coinage of *subconscious*, which was also the starting point of my curiosity and my scepticism regarding psychoanalytic readings. It then moves to his notion of language more generally and situates De Quincey in the brain science of the early- to mid-nineteenth century, which culminates in a new reading of the *Confessions* and *Suspiria*. Part one focuses on De Quincey's notion of language. Chapter one highlights his stress on the necessity of linguistic innovation to enable intellectual progress, moving from a consideration of De Quincey's own motivation, or need, to create new words to his most prominent coinage: *subconscious*. With over three hundred coinages or word extensions, De Quincey must be considered a very prolific linguistic innovator, which reflects his conviction that neologisms are indispensible to formulate his own experience and reflections. The chapter, then, delineates in detail De Quincey's role in the emergence and proliferation of the term *subconscious* in the first half of the nineteenth century and provides a brief history of its usage from the late-nineteenth century until today in order to strip *subconscious* of its modern connotations.

Chapter two discusses the underlying meaning of the various instances of *subconscious* in De Quincey's works in more detail. He brought the term into print in 1834 and used it ten times until 1856. This coinage has received relatively little critical attention to date, despite the close attention paid to De Quincey's notion of the unconscious in criticism. De Quincey's *subconscious* shows close analogies to the productive notion of the cognitive

unconscious. I analyse and explain the meaning of the various instances of the term alongside theories of the cognitive unconscious, in particular the categories of implicit thought, automaticity, implicit perception, and implicit motivation. This productive unconscious is also at work, according to De Quincey, in the production of language. Although his theory of language has received some attention, "Style [I.-IV.]" (1840-1) represent a fairly neglected set of texts. While the four instalments of "Style" are hard to summarise and lack a coherent structure, they contain an implicit argument about the role of productive unconscious processes in thought and language. Consequently, one can only partially decide matters of style and language consciously, which is a surprising finding given that De Quincey was a very self-conscious and deliberate writer. "Style" delineates, however, a theory of language that matches De Quincey's use of *subconscious* in that it proposes an unconscious faculty at work in the production of language that—like the cognitive psychologists' conception—conducts rational, intelligent, and complex processes. The implicit and explicit connections De Quincey draws between language and the body lead into the second part of the thesis.

In part two, I consider the contemporary scientific context and probe the possibilities of interactions with and influences on De Quincey, focusing on the body and in particular the nerves and the brain. After a brief introduction to the connections between literary and scientific discourses in the nineteenth century, chapter four discusses animal magnetism and physiology in relation to the dissolution of the mind/body dichotomy and the growing notion of unconscious processes. Animal magnetism is an early form of hypnotism that was highly popular in continental Europe in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century. It is considered one of the earliest forms of access to the unconscious and has received attention by historical psychologists, although it was belittled as a pseudo-science at the time and neglected by historians of science until the 1970s. Physiological research in the nineteenth century advanced rapidly, leading to the following discoveries: the acknowledgement of the active

nature of the brain; the connection between the mind and the brain, and later the dependence of mental functions on the cerebrum; the development of precise knowledge about the nervous pathways; the adoption of this knowledge to formulate the first mechanistic theory of reflex action; and finally, the adoption of reflex action to brain activity, which led to the first cognitive theory of unconscious processes. These theories were widely disseminated and discussed in the nineteenth century and had a large impact on the popular notion of mental processes. Mid-nineteenth-century psychophysiology eventually produced the first explicit theory of a brain-based productive unconscious.

Chapter five explores how animal magnetism helped to establish the corporeality of mental processes and how this specific feature of animal magnetism attracted De Quincey's attention. The comparative analysis of De Quincey's 1821 *Confessions* and his essay "Animal Magnetism" (1834) shows that his descriptions of the effects of opium and the reports of magnetic séances contain striking similarities and corroborate the thesis that he envisaged an embodied mind. The last chapter analyses how De Quincey's descriptions of mental processes and in particular the unconscious reflect the physiological investigations of his contemporaries. This chapter further develops the argument that he envisions the mind as an embodied product that depends on and influences the physical processes of the body. This theoretical background allows for new readings of De Quincey's major works; it invites us to rethink his notion of dreams and the famous palimpsest metaphor, which are amongst the prime targets of psychoanalytic critics. De Quincey argues along the very same lines as physiologists and even applies this line of thought in his literary criticism, the effects of art, and the way readers respond to poetry, which takes us back to his coinage of *subconscious*.

Part One
Language

> The true and appropriate expression of reverence to a language is … by taking earnest pains to write it with accuracy, practically to display its beauty, and to make its powers available for commensurate ends.
>
> Thomas De Quincey[1]

CHAPTER ONE

The Need for Neologisms and the Emergence of *Subconscious*

New ideas and concepts require new terms. Until the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, when psychology as a discipline did not exist yet, it was the philosophers' task of describing mental phenomena and in particular the growing notion of the unconscious mind. However, by the early nineteenth century scientists engaging with the human body and its relation to the mind and creative writers were also taking keen interest in mental phenomena that elude awareness. Authors such as Coleridge, Wordsworth, Thomas Carlyle, and De Quincey were among the first to find the words to voice observations on the workings of the mind. Given the need for new terms, these authors account for a large number of English neologisms during that period.[2] De Quincey is one of the most prolific contributors of new terms and definitions, and a range of his neologisms have become words of daily usage, including *pathologically*, *aesthetically*, *post-natal*, and *picnicker*. While coining new words and phrases often seems to have been a pleasurable and playful activity for De Quincey, he also considered it a necessity for the ideational development of a society.

Some of De Quincey's neologisms display his interest in psychological issues and reveal his larger project of exploring the hidden powers of the mind. The most interesting if not most famous of these coinages, is *subconscious*, which has become a very popular term of

everyday usage.[3] From its earliest usage to the present day, *subconscious* has been applied in various contexts and carries a range of similar but distinct definitions. It became popular in the second half of the nineteenth century, mostly due to psychiatric writings in France and the United States. Although it is often used to refer to psychoanalysis, *subconscious* was only briefly used in the works of Freud and his followers. A historical sketch of the coinage, specification, and the subsequent popularisation of the term is necessary to prevent any possible misconception of its earliest usage due to the manifold connotations it carries today.

De Quincey's Neologisms

According to De Quincey's account in the first part of "A Sketch from Childhood" (1851), his attention to words and language was already well developed when he was a young boy. He cultivated it in an attempt to avoid angering his eldest brother William, "a boy of fiery nature" who "naturally despised" (*WTDQ* 17: 73, 76) his younger brother. De Quincey tells the story of the "feud" (*WTDQ* 17: 83) between the De Quincey brothers and a group of boys in Manchester. He and William ended up having skirmishes every day on their way through Manchester to their guardian Reverend Samuel Hall.[4] De Quincey, who was reluctant to fight, still obeyed his "brother's military commands with the utmost docility" (*WTDQ* 17: 85). At the same time he showed great "scrupulosity about the exact value and position of his [brother's] words" (*WTDQ* 17: 92). This led William, the "commander-in-chief" (*WTDQ* 17: 84) of the two-man Quincey troop, to accuse young Thomas of "what he called 'pettifogulising'—that is, to plead some little technical quillet, distinction, or verbal demur, in bar of my orders, under some colourable pretence that, according to their literal construction, they really did not admit of being fulfilled, or perhaps that they admitted it too much as being capable of fulfilment in two senses, either of them a practicable sense" (*WTDQ* 17: 91). This account is not surprising. The definition of "pettifogulising" in this passage illustrates De

Quincey's obsession with verbal accuracy and how he notoriously analyses, comments, and coins words in his own and other authors' writings.

De Quincey uses various synonyms and phrases with slightly different meanings for the first part of his definition of *pettifogulising*. He moves from a quibble, the "quillet," to a "distinction" and finally—as William considered it—the actual objection, the "demur." The second part is less repetitive. It broadens the scope and adds clause after clause in order to cover all possible schemes of evasion that "pettifogulising" covers: the mention of pretension, the focus on the literal understanding of the orders, and the various ways in which this understanding can prevent a straightforward execution of the orders. It is very likely that De Quincey first practised this verbal skill—which eventually led in his published writings to abundant footnotes, parenthetical remarks, and subordinate clauses that engage with the exact meaning of words—as a young boy in the attempt to get out of the daily war without drawing his brother's wrath. Ironically, William's neologism apparently inspired De Quincey, who became a zealous neologist later in his life.[5]

In retrospect, De Quincey does not justify his tendency to overanalyse with the wish to avoid his brother's commands. Whereas William saw schemes of disobedience in Thomas's "pettifogulising," his little brother was just eager to execute all orders with "mere excess of sincerity," as he claims sixty years later:

> And thus far there was great injustice in my brother's reproach; true it was that my eye was preternaturally keen for flaws of language, not from pedantic exaction of superfluous accuracy, but, on the contrary, from too conscientious a wish to escape the mistakes which language not rigorous is apt to occasion. So far from seeking to "pettifogulise," or to find evasions for any purpose in a trickster's minute tortuosities of construction, exactly in the opposite direction from mere excess of sincerity, most unwillingly I

> found, in almost everybody's words, an unintentional opening left for double interpretations. (*WTDQ* 17: 92)

This passage describes a young boy who had a remarkable awareness of the inaccuracies of language and the ambiguous usage of words. While De Quincey is often pedantic, this account of his somewhat naïve but sincere attempt to follow William's orders to the letter shows his general tendency to avoid the pitfalls of language in his published writings. Furthermore, he repeatedly dissects other author's texts, pointing out the lack of logic and cogency or justifying the choice of grammatical construction and terminology. This scrutiny and the profound consciousness of language's limits remained with him for the rest of his life and is characteristic of his writing.

Thirty years after De Quincey was accused of being a pettifoguliser, Richard Woodhouse noted in his 1821 *Cause Book* that:

> The Opium-Eater appears to have read a great deal, & to have thought much more. I was astonished at the depth & *reality*, if I may so call it, of his knowledge. He seems to have passed no thing that occurred in the course of his Study unreflected on, or unremembered. His conversation appeared like the elaboration of a mine of results: … his opinions were the fruits of his own reflections on what had come before him, & had not been taken up from others. (5–6)

In a later entry Woodhouse adds that De Quincey would "*overlay* <u>*every*</u> topic with rich discussion, & valuable information & reflection, thrown in *quasi ex abundanti*" (13). The image Woodhouse depicts here is that of a man who is ever widening his horizon and manages to phrase his knowledge and opinions in astonishingly captivating ways. What had been fodder for criticism at age seven eventually turned into a cause for praise. It is not simply the accumulation of knowledge—De Quincey is well known to have been a

bibliophile and to have devoured books from an early age—that impresses Woodhouse, but also the extensive and elaborate formation of the latter's own opinion and his ability to communicate it so effectively. Taking nothing for granted, De Quincey seems to have an opinion about any- and everything; or at least he manages to present himself in this way. Woodhouse's account provides the sense of an "unresting intellect" (*WTDQ* 17: 56) who strives to acquire, analyse, and synthesise knowledge. De Quincey's linguistic proficiency, which partly consists in his particular talent of coining new terms and extending the meanings of old ones, enables him to reproduce and expand this knowledge in the precise and captivating manner Woodhouse describes.

De Quincey enjoyed discussions with friends and acquaintances enormously. Even though writing at times proved to be a laborious and painful process he considered language a vast playground. Accordingly, there is a good deal of playfulness in his attitude toward neologisms, which he often consciously displays. In "The Vision of Sudden Death" (1849), the follow-up to "The English Mail-Coach" (1849), De Quincey calls chariot driving "the diphrelatic art" (*WTDQ* 16: 435) and jocularly adds: "Excuse, reader, a word too elegant to be pedantic. And also take this remark from me, as a *gage d'amitié*—that no word ever was or *can* be pedantic which, by supporting a distinction, supports the accuracy of logic; or which fills up a chasm for the understanding" (*WTDQ* 16: 435). The tone throughout the passage is humorous and so is his coinage of "diphrelatic." De Quincey describes his own unfruitful attempt to learn this art from a one-eyed mail-coachman, whom he calls "Cyclops *diphrélates*" (*WTDQ* 16: 435), a derivation from the Greek word for charioteer, hence "diphrelatic art." The "*gage d'amitié*,"[6] the well-meaning advice to the reader, which has nothing to do with the story as such, follows in the same jocular vein. At the same time it contains a good deal of sincerity and reflects De Quincey's stance towards language. He

repeatedly alludes to the necessity of coining words in order to overcome the "mistakes" and "double interpretations" (*WTDQ* 17: 92) he spotted as a child.

In his defence against William's accusations of pettifogulising, De Quincey insists in a more serious tone on the indispensability of paying attention to the limitations of language in order to overcome them. The "single-eyed servant of truth" is most likely to "insist upon the limitation of expressions too wide or vague, and upon the decisive election between meanings potentially double" (*WTDQ* 17: 92). De Quincey found it indispensable to coin terms because precise language is the only way for a society to advance intellectually and to reach "truth." Johann Gottfried Herder also theorised the central role of language in intellectual progress.[7] Lancelot Law Whyte, who traces the history of the concept of the unconscious all the way back to the second century, argues along a similar line that "a decisive phase in the social development of man" (43) is mirrored by developments in language and, more specifically, "*the first usage of a word* in a language marks a significant moment in the development of religious, philosophical, or scientific ideas" (66 emphasis added). While not every neologism is significant in such a way, De Quincey's *subconscious* arguably marks such a moment. He himself maintains that while a "high civilisation is an indispensable condition for developing the full powers of a language" (*WTDQ* 17: 58), language in turn contains and displays "the full powers of" the intellect. Put differently, language is an integral part of a civilisation's intellectual progress and hence paying attention to language is a meritorious skill. Unspecific expressions need specification, which in turn calls for coinages that render language more precise. This means that neologisms are not mere sport of the bibliophile word acrobat; they are imperative for intellectual progress.

"On the Present Stage of the English Language" (1850) contains De Quincey's most emphatic plea for neologisms. Reiterating several points made in previous articles on language, style, and neologisms, he argues that far from being "an infirmity of caprice,"

neologisms are "a mere necessity," notably for the "unresting intellect:" "New ideas, new aspects of old ideas, new relations of objects to each other, or to man—the subject who contemplates those objects—absolutely insist on new words" (*WTDQ* 17: 56). Without neologisms the "unresting intellect" is not able to think beyond already existing concepts. Alongside "coinages" of new words De Quincey stresses the importance of more general linguistic "innovation, in which no process of coinage whatever is manifested, but perhaps a simple restoration of old words" or "an extension and emancipation of terms" (*WTDQ* 17: 56–57). De Quincey's suggestion here bears a self-reflexive element that is acutely present in the case of *subconscious*, which makes the notion of an unconscious mental realm explicit. Not only was De Quincey an "unresting intellect" in conversation, as described by Woodhouse, but his own neologisms show that he equally pushed the limits language imposes on the articulation—and consequently the conception—of ideas, such as that of the unconscious.

The need for neologisms cannot be considered a *carte blanche* for boundless lexical innovation, though. At the same time that he is keen on specifying, enlarging, and renewing the English language, De Quincey opposes the distortion and disfigurement of language. While journalists are constantly "seeking distinctions through novelties of diction" ("St." 11), De Quincey argues that "good writing" and "fluent reading" demand an "unwordy diction" ("St." 77).[8] Capricious additions of words to a language do not clarify but obscure the possibilities of expression. De Quincey believes that language develops naturally and that new vocabulary should follow the same rules. While "a few insulated words have been continually nourished by authors; that is, transferred to other uses, or formed by thoughtful composition and decomposition, or by skilful alterations of form and inflexion," language is not "consciously 'invented'" (*WTDQ* 11: 330). De Quincey argues that it develops according to three "modes of instinct:" "abbreviation," "*onomatopoeia*," and—most commonly—

"distinction" (*WTDQ* 11: 331). Hence, to achieve "purity and simplicity," a coinage should grow through a process of derivation from "that which preceded" (*WTDQ* 3: 155). Freely quoting Coleridge, with whom he shared a similar interest in language and who also coined a large number of words, De Quincey adds that "the best explanation of a word is often that which is suggested by its derivation" (*WTDQ* 3: 155), which is why he expresses the need for an etymological dictionary that would "record the exact succession of [each word's] meanings" (*WTDQ* 3: 155).[9] If one keeps track of the precise development of a language one also keeps track of the history of ideas, i.e. the record shows when an idea becomes substantive. As humorous as some of De Quincey's coinages are, these comments show how serious he is in principle when it comes to the usage and expansion of language.

De Quincey illustrates these ideas in "On the English Notices of Kant" (1823). Defending Kant against accusations of using a "'barbarous' … nomenclature" (*WTDQ* 3: 91), he explains the necessity of these designations: "When Kant assigned the names, he created the ideas; i.e. he drew them within the consciousness" (*WTDQ* 3: 93). His "scheme of philosophy would have been incommunicable" (*WTDQ* 5: 171) without linguistic specification, the restoration of old words, and reminting of synonyms. This endeavour not only enhanced Kant's "system" but "human thought" (*WTDQ* 3: 92) in general. The lack of neologisms would consequently indicate a lack of ideational progress or a preliminary stage of this progress, which De Quincey describes as an "insensible *clinamen*" (*WTDQ* 3: 91), a mere inclination. Similarly, one could argue that *subconscious* "drew" the unconscious "within the consciousness." On the same grounds, De Quincey defends the English language against accusations of vernacularity in the negative sense and of being a "'bastard' language" or a "'hybrid' language." He establishes that what others consider impurities are a "fortunate inheritance of collateral wealth" (*WTDQ* 11: 325);[10] thanks to the national vernacular "some leading ideas in the *Paradise Lost*—ideas essential to the very integrity of the fable" can be

expressed. Elsewhere, De Quincey explains more specifically that the term *sin* cannot be properly translated into Greek or Latin because there was neither the concept nor the word for it in "Pagan ages" (*WTDQ* 17: 15). Again, the lack of terminology indicates the lack or underdeveloped stage of a mental concept. De Quincey keeps returning to the issue of neologisms because he believes in their value as indicators of the advancement of ideas in a society. Only when a thought can be verbalised can the concept be said to exist.[11] His own coinage of *subconscious* arguably helped to turn a "*clinamen*" into a more solid concept.

The *OED* confirms the notion of De Quincey as an "unresting intellect." Approximately 150 neologisms (author of first quotation in entry) and over 400 extensions of a meaning (author of first quotation in additional sense of a word) are listed under De Quincey's name.[12] De Quincey's extensive knowledge of Greek and Latin was, of course, an enormous fund for his linguistic endeavour to analyse and widen the English language according to the rules he describes. Many neologisms (e.g. macrobiotics, focalize, picnicker, post-natal) and word extensions (e.g. bivouac, cometary, many-sided, revaluation, spidery) have become frequently used words. De Quincey was an acute observer of his own writing and displays a high degree of awareness concerning the coinage of terms not only in theory but also in practice. In terms of neologisms and particular meanings of words and phrases De Quincey's acuity is conspicuous. His writing is full of remarks on the use of words and phrases, which demonstrate his constant striving for accurateness, expressiveness, and stylistic excellence.

While De Quincey often draws attention to his own coinages, innovations, restorations and extensions of words in different ways, some of his neologisms go surprisingly unnoticed. At times he explicitly calls attention to a coinage, habitually humbly asking "if I may be allowed such a coinage" (*WTDQ* 3: 91) but occasionally "boast[ing] to have introduced the word" (*WTDQ* 11: 330);[13] sometimes he points out the etymology as in the example of

"diphrelatic;" in other cases the novel character of the word is subtly foregrounded with italics or quotation marks; and last, there is a range of coinages and extensions for which he gives a specific source, be it "the man of Kentuck" ("Sketches" 31), jail jargon, or a friend such as Coleridge or John Wilson.[14] Although not every neologism is indicated, De Quincey frequently comments on his own linguistic innovations, *involutes* and *palimpsest* being the best known. This attention to his own coinages stands in stark contrast to the occasional absence of commentaries. The most astonishing of these is *subconscious*, which represents the growing notion of a concept that was steadily taking shape in the nineteenth century.

On the Origin and Distribution of the Term *Subconscious*

The European history of the term *subconscious* is difficult to trace. Etymological dictionaries and primary sources document the term emerging during the nineteenth century in Britain, France (*subconscient*) and Germany (*unterbewusst*). Britain was the pioneer. Even before the term was used in Germany and France, Coleridge and De Quincey employed it. Until the rise of institutional psychology in the second half of the century, instances of the word are scarce. The emergence of the German term has not been clearly established. The etymological dictionary of the German language, *Duden: Herkunftswörterbuch*, only refers to nineteenth-century psychology in general as the source of the term, without mentioning a specific date or author ("Bewusst"). This information implies that the term was used in the second half of the century, when psychology emerged as a discipline. This assumption is further backed by an entry in the *Deutsches Wörterbuch von Jacob Grimm und Wilhelm Grimm* (1854-1961), which refers to two philosophers, Wilhelm Windelband and Raoul Richter, who were both writing in the late nineteenth century ("Unterbewuszt"1926). The first occurrence of the French equivalent is more clearly established by Henry F. Ellenberger. The psychologist Pierre Janet claimed credit for coining the French equivalent, *subconscient*, in his work on hysteria and polypsychism, *L'Automatisme Psychologique* (1889).

In the English-speaking world, the coinage received attention from commentators as early as 1860. It was picked up and attributed to De Quincey by the Australian journalist Daniel Deniehy. In an obituary for De Quincey in *The Southern Cross*, he claims that "the word is DE QUINCEY'S own" (5).[15] During the following two years, the British Philological Society published the third part of their *Alphabetical List of English Words*.[16] "Subconscious, adj." and "Subconsciously, adv." (Coleridge and Furnivall 111) are both attributed to De Quincey (along with almost another one hundred entries that refer to him). The *OED* lists De Quincey as the first author of the adjective *subconscious* (1834) and of the adverb *subconsciously* (1844). *Subconsciousness* (1806) is attributed to Coleridge.[17] De Quincey also used the term in 1845, which is predated by yet another instance by an unknown author in a book review in 1841 ("The Bishop"). The current knowledge of first usage is as follows: *subconsciousness*, Coleridge (1806); *subconscious* (adj.), De Quincey (1834); *subconsciously*, De Quincey (1844).

In 1973, Kathleen Coburn first mentioned Coleridge's notebook entry (dated between October and November 1806) that contains "subconsciousness" (*Notebooks* 2.1: 2915). Coburn and Frederick Burwick interpret Coleridge's precedence as the source for De Quincey's coinage of the adjectival and the adverbial forms *subconscious* and *subconsciously*. However, this remains a speculation in a case that is more complex. The cited instance in Coleridge's notebook is a *hapax legomenon* from the time before De Quincey knew him personally. They met for the first time in August 1807 in Bridgewater; soon after that De Quincey became a frequent visitor when Coleridge was preparing his lecture series for the Royal Institution. Opium and dreams were recurrent topics in their numerous discussions around that time (Morrison, *Biography* 122; Coleridge, *Notebooks* 2.2: 3166). Although Coburn does not directly state that Coleridge introduced the term *subconscious* to De Quincey, she presents their frequent discussions as a possible source. Probably referring to

Coleridge's report that he "pleaded with flowing tears" (Gillman 251) that De Quincey should stay away from opium, Coburn suggests directly following her discussion of *subconscious*: "As Coleridge tried desperately to dissuade De Quincey from opium-taking, it is very likely the subject of dreams with their shiftings of consciousness was discussed between them" (21). Instead of *subconscious*, Coleridge could have been using any other of the terms he used over and over to denote the hidden mechanisms in the brain. While Coburn tentatively suggests this history of the term's transmission, Burwick establishes it as a fact.

Burwick comments repeatedly on the coinage and usage of *subconscious* in De Quincey. His opinion on the source of the term changes over time, moving from De Quincey to Coleridge as the originator. In *Mimesis and Its Romantic Reflections* (2001) he merely states that "De Quincey in his endeavor to map this terrain was the first to use the word 'subconscious'" (37). In *Knowledge and Power* (2001), however, Burwick acknowledges Coleridge's precedence. Finally, in "De Quincey as Autobiographer" (2009), he similarly argues in condensed form that "De Quincey appropriated from Coleridge such key terms 'subconscious' and 'idem in alio'" (126). However, his conclusion takes an assumption for a fact and does not do full justice to the case. While Coleridge was definitely first with the term *subconsciousness*, De Quincey may well have coined the adjective *subconscious* himself.

The crucial point is that De Quincey was moving in a circle in the Lake District that was obsessed with the question of consciousness, its various degrees and ways to express it. De Quincey was in daily contact with Wordsworth and Coleridge during his stay at Allan Bank from October 1808 to February 1809. After a few months in London to see Wordsworth's *The Convention of Cintra* through the press, De Quincey returned to the Lake District and settled in Dove Cottage. For the following two years, De Quincey was on intimate terms with Wordsworth, who "called in regularly at Dove Cottage" (*Biography* 152) and even allowed De Quincey to read the manuscript of *The Prelude*. Although the

relationship with both poets deteriorated in later years, Wordsworth and Coleridge highly valued De Quincey as an interlocutor and his opinion in times of mutual intimacy (Coleridge, *Letters* 48–49; Wordsworth and Wordsworth 195). Ralph Waldo Emerson further relates that De Quincey accused Wordsworth of appropriating "whatever another says, so entirely, as to be angry if the originator claimed any part of it" (qtd. in *Biography* 175). The influence probably more than once went from De Quincey to Wordsworth or Coleridge and not exclusively the other way around, as one is commonly led to believe in representations of De Quincey as a minor figure.

The idea of the unconscious and the terms used in the Lake District circle were so close to the boiling point that it is difficult to keep them clearly apart. Coleridge, Wordsworth, and De Quincey were all seeking to name the unconscious power of the mind with terms like "depths of Being below, & radicative of, all Consciousness," "*below* his own Consciousness" (Coleridge, *Notebooks* 1.1: 6, 1554), "Under-Powers," "under soul," "under sense," "underpresence," "underconsciousness" (W. Wordsworth 1.1: 164, 3: 540, 7: 712; 2.13: 80), "semi-conscious," "under consciousness," "half-unconscious," "under-power," and "under-sense" ("Sketches" 168, 178; *WTDQ* 11: 234, 11: 504, 16: 409). *Subconscious* is only another form of Coleridge's "*below* … Consciousness," Wordsworth's "underconsciousness," and De Quincey's own "under consciousness." Coburn correctly points out that Coleridge's first use of *subconsciousness* was not "a chance or isolated application of a prefix to an accepted word" (*Notebooks* 2.2: 2915). At the same time, the singular use indicates that he did not consider it a better term than, or in any way distinct from, the others. Similarly, de Selincourt points out that "Wordsworth needed these words to express his profound consciousness of that mysterious life which lies deep down below our ordinary, everyday experience, and whence we draw our power" (319), which equally applies to De Quincey.[18] These coinages are doubtless a clear sign of the growing notion of an active mental realm that eludes

awareness and consequently control. Generally, however, there is no systematised usage of these words in any of the authors and their frequent changes indicate a non-distinctive referencing.

De Quincey was certainly aware of Coleridge's and Wordsworth's coinages and probably participated in discussions regarding those issues. Wordsworth's denominations are all from *The Prelude*, and whereas De Quincey's knowledge of Coleridge's notebook entries cannot be traced, De Quincey is known to have read *The Prelude* in manuscript form in 1810. He possibly even possessed a copy of it (*Biography* 152). However, the most outstanding convergence—"underconsciousness," which is equivalent to *subconsciousness* despite the different prefixes—appears only in the C Stage manuscript (1818-20), which as far as we know De Quincey had not read. All his references to this poem in the essays on Wordsworth are from the 1805 version (*WTDQ* 11: 42–43, 81). This leaves room for speculation about the direction of the influence, which could have gone the other way with Wordsworth adopting the term from De Quincey. Just around the time of composition of the C Stage manuscript of Wordsworth's autobiographical poem, Westmorland politics and De Quincey's work for the *Westmorland Gazette* brought them closer again (*Biography* 185–86, 188). Considering Wordsworth's and Coleridge's interest in De Quincey's advice and the latter's own bent for coining words should caution us to take the outlined version of a linear transmission and adoption for granted. The search for direct adoption of terms can be helpful and often enough writers—including De Quincey—even indicate it in their writing. However, in this case the question of linear precedence and adoption, as presented by Coburn and Burwick, is not completely satisfactory.

I suggest a more dynamic model of exchange with De Quincey as an equal participant possibly the originator of the term, even if not the first one. The concept as well as the morphological basis existed in various forms before De Quincey employed *subconscious* and,

in fact, before Coleridge's and Wordsworth's variations of these terms.[19] After all, De Quincey argues that linguistic innovation is not the task of the solitary scholar: "Social gatherings, social activity, social pleasure—these are the parents of language" (*WTDQ* 11: 331). Ellenberger suggests in his discussion of the history of the unconscious that "No creative mind ever works alone" (353) when developing a new concept. Whyte describes a dynamic model that would probably do more justice to the actual events in this case: "Ideas are not discovered once and for all and passed on like museum objects. They are part of the life of thought and must come to life, be kept alive, and be made productive in the processes of human minds and the activities of individuals" (15). De Quincey himself describes the emergence and growth of an idea in a similar vein:

> no complex or very important truth was ever yet transferred in full development from one mind to another: truth of that character is not a piece of furniture to be shifted; it is a seed which must be grown, and pass through the several stages of growth. No doctrine of importance can be transferred in a matured shape into any man's understanding from without: it must arise by an act of genesis within the understanding itself. (*WTDQ* 3: 97)

Before a concept or an idea becomes widely known and commonly understood, it repeatedly has to pass through a similar process in various minds. The "seed" of *subconscious* may stem from the Lake District. It may even have passed "through the several stages of growth" there. De Quincey's consistent use and elaboration of the term, however, suggests that it had its own "act of genesis within the understanding itself" of the opium-eater.

Elsewhere, De Quincey argues in similar terms that "something like order and connexion was dimly descried; philosophic suspicion began to stir; observation was steadily applied; reasoning and disputation ran their circle; and at last a science was matured … . Thus it is with *all* topics of general interest" (*WTDQ* 11: 322–23). And thus it was in the case of

subconscious, which is further corroborated by the fact that De Quincey started to use *subconscious* only when he was no longer on such intimate terms with Coleridge and Wordsworth. Coleridge, Wordsworth, and De Quincey are three remarkable thinkers, who shared a mutual interest in psychological phenomena, particularly in regard to unconscious processes. At the same time they also had their differences, personal and ideological. This resulted in a melting pot of ideas and terms to express them, and each contributed to the coinage of a new linguistic currency to express the psychological idea of the unconscious. In such a dynamic model, De Quincey significantly contributed to the coinage. Furthermore, he played the crucial role in its distribution and popularisation. He was the first author to bring it into print and thus make it known to a larger public; he made it both "conceivable" and "topical" (15) in Whyte's terms. While he may have been drawing on some points from his early idols, De Quincey contributed vitally to the public recognition of unconscious processes and, specifically, of the term *subconscious*, by using it repeatedly and thereby assigning it a specific meaning.

Contexts and Definitions

Subconscious has been used in a variety of contexts and has consequently acquired a range of definitions. The meaning and relevance of the term has been considerably reshaped from its first use in 1806 to the present. It is necessary to differentiate the meaning of *subconscious* in De Quincey's work from the clinical psychiatric model, developed in the late nineteenth century, and its modern connotations that were developed after that. Stripping it from its later connotations allows for a more accurate definition of De Quincey's usage of the term and establishes its relevance in the nineteenth century. Today the most common connotation of *subconscious* is found in self-help literature, which defines it as a mental power that can be consciously manipulated in order to overcome almost anything that hinders a person from leading a fulfilling life. This is strongly attached to New Age, self-help, and autosuggestion

practices and literature. From as early as the 1920s, *subconscious* was used to describe a hidden mental force that can be trained through conscious conditioning in order to live better. The various offshoots of this popular notion usually blend bits and pieces of psychoanalytic theories, spiritualism and mythological beliefs under the cover term *subconscious*.[20]

Before this modern movement, *subconscious* had a brief encounter with clinical psychology. Pierre Janet used *subconscious* in his seminal work *L'Automatisme Psychologique* (1889) to designate a part of the personality that has been split off in patients suffering from hysteria or polypsychism (Ellenberger 413n82; Kihlstrom, "Psychological" 584–85). He considered "subconscious fixed ideas" mainly as "pathogenic," the result of a "traumatic or frightening event" (Ellenberger 372–73). In this context *subconscious* has a very restricted use for "the singular features … in one particular neurosis" (Ellenberger 800). Janet's concept of the subconscious is the most well-known instance of the term in clinical psychology, clearly applying it to the particular context of mental aberration. Although it is limited to the "*mentally disordered and exempted the 'healthy' from these phenomena*," Janet considered it to be "intelligent," "based on reasoning," and "purposeful" (Crabtree, "Transition" 576). The split-off mental processes are not driven by "primitive sexual and aggressive ideas and impulses" nor are the "mental processes necessarily irrational, imagistic, or in any other way qualitatively different from conscious ones" (Kihlstrom, "Psychological" 585). As such, Janet's notion of the subconscious contrasts with the psychoanalytical unconscious, presenting a rational unconscious with similar qualities to those assigned by cognitive psychologists to the unconscious today.

Janet, who thought that he was the first to use that term, coined it in order to differentiate his discoveries from the fast growing theories of the unconscious in the late nineteenth century. Ellenberger assumes that he "had coined it … to show that he used a psychological approach quite distinct from the metaphysical concept of the unconscious of

[Eduard] Von Hartmann, which was so fashionable at that time" (413n82). Von Hartmann's highly popular *Philosophy of the Unconscious* (1884 based on the ninth German edition, first German edition 1868) is considered a "miscellany" (Klein 26)—a hodge-podge of different theories, ideas and approaches—by various commentators. He was strongly influenced by German idealist philosophy, especially by Hegel and Schopenhauer (Klein 26). Using scientific methods for some deductions but also indulging in unscientific, popular claims, von Hartmann attributed an unconscious principal to humans, "unconscious clairvoyance" (Klein 28) to certain animals, and believed in a very general fashion that "the universe is ruled by the unconscious" (Kihlstrom, "Rediscovery" 126). Such a vague theory lacks any usefulness because it only makes sense to talk of the unconscious in psychological terms in reference to internal cognitive contents and processes that inform one's thoughts, behaviour, beliefs, or decision making. In other words, von Hartmann's concept includes a range of instances that are irrelevant—such as the obscure unconscious power that rules the universe—because these phenomena are not considered part of human cognition and have no psychological impact. Hence Janet's coinage was an attempt to provide clinical psychiatry with a more specific and precise terminology than the popular and only partly scientific explanations associated with von Hartmann's *unconscious*.

At a congress in 1909 Janet tried to establish the subconscious as a clinical concept distinguished from the philosophical concept of the unconscious (Ellenberger 800). Despite the wide acceptance of his theories, the term lost its initial clarity because it began to be used in too many different ways. Morton Prince was one of the most influential propagators of Janet's thought and published a series of lectures in 1914. In *The Unconscious: The Fundamentals of Human Personality Normal and Abnormal*, Prince divides "the Subconscious into two parts, namely the Unconscious and the Coconscious" (1). Like Janet, he considers the subconscious to be "of considerable complexity and equivalent to logical

processes of reasoning, volition, and purposive intelligence" (188). Although Prince supported Janet's theories, he devised his own terminology, using *subconscious* in a broader sense and *co-conscious* in a manner equivalent to Janet's *subconscious* (150). Joseph Jastrow addresses a wholly different phenomenon under the same term in *The Subconscious* (1906). In his research, *subconscious* denotes "traces of sensory effect too slight to make any registry in consciousness [that] could none the less influence judgment" (724), i.e. subliminal perception.[21] Prince's and Jastrow's works confirm Bernhard Hart's observation, that the "word *subconscious* has been used by various authors to denote facts belonging to altogether different categories" (370). Due to these disparities, no single definition of the term within the early twentieth-century context persisted.

In addition to this confusion amongst scholars using the term *subconscious*, the burgeoning psychoanalytic movement rejected it. Freud, who occasionally used the term before the turn of the century, invalidated it altogether in 1900 and again in 1915 and 1926 (Laplanche and Pontalis 430). He considered "the term 'subconsciousness' as incorrect and misleading" and asserted that the "only trustworthy antithesis is between conscious and unconscious" (Freud 14: 170, 20: 198). Carl Gustav Jung, who established his own school of analytical psychology after splitting with Freud, first used the term in his theory of analytical psychology. It seems that he was using it and, at the same time, distancing his theories from it. Jung used *subconscious* to refer to the concept of the personal unconscious. In the third edition of *Das Unbewusste im Normalen und Kranken Seelenleben* (1926, trans. 1928), which subsequently formed the first part of *Two Essays on Analytical Psychology*, he defines the personal unconscious and notes: "I also speak [of it] as the 'subconscious,' in contrast to the absolute or collective unconscious" (*Two Essays* [1928] 67n2).[22] The fact that "Jung spent a term studying with Pierre Janet" (Douglas 28) might suggest a source for his usage of *subconscious* in early versions of his work. In subsequent, heavily revised editions he simply

drops the subclause containing the equation of the personal unconscious with "the 'subconscious.'"

It turns out, however, that Jung had already delimited his theory from the term subconscious—ten years before he was still making the distinction above in 1926—in the first version of "The Relations between the Ego and the Unconscious" (1916), which subsequently formed the second part of *Two Essays on Analytical Psychology*. There he argues that his terminology of the personal and the collective unconscious requires "a distinction of quite a different character from that between 'preconscious' and 'unconscious' or 'subconscious' and 'unconscious'" (*Two Essays* [1977] 272). This means that he was still using the term in one essay, while he was already dismissing it in another one. The German text reveals that "subconscious" and "unconscious" are given in English in the original: "eine Unterscheidung, die einen andern Charakter trägt, als die Differenzierung von 'Vorbewusstem' und 'Unbewusstem' oder von 'Subconscious' und 'Unconscious' (*Zwei Schriften* 148). This issue of translation suggests that Jung made this distinction in reaction to a specific Anglo-Saxon usage, although he does not mention to which of the concurring definitions he alludes. Possibly, he was not referring to the same concept when using "unterbewusst" in one and rejecting "Subconscious" in the other essay. Jung's case nicely displays some of the confusion that is bound to arise in an attempt to come to terms with the developing concepts expressed by the term *subconscious*. At any rate, in the theories of dynamic psychiatry *subconscious* initially played a minor role and eventually was entirely replaced by other terms.[23]

In the 1970s and 80s, *subconscious* briefly returned into the scientific discourse. Ernest R. Hilgard occasionally used it in his theory of neodissociation, which is based on the work of Janet but altered to fit modern findings. He investigated in particular the occurrence of two distinct consciousnesses during hypnotic states. *Subconsicous* was not used as a key

term by Hilgard, though. Kihlstrom followed Hilgard in this terminology in his early work on the cognitive unconscious in "Conscious, Subconscious, Unconscious: a Cognitive Perspective" (1984) and "The Cognitive Unconscious" (1987). Looking at the specific "alteration in phenomenal awareness" ("Cognitive" 1449) brought about by hypnotism, he labelled the mental representations that occur during a hypnotic trance "a category of subconscious declarative knowledge" ("Cognitive" 1451), i.e. a specific category of the cognitive unconscious. In more recent work on the cognitive unconscious Kihlstrom has changed the categorisation and has no longer referred to hypnotism nor has he used *subconscious* in this context.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, before *subconscious* entered psychologists' jargon and was assigned specific functions in different theories, it had a much broader sense. It served to introduce the psychological dimension that *unconscious*, which still mainly implied unawareness akin to "not known" or "not knowable" (Williams 321), did not yet generally encompass. The following examples from De Quincey's *Confessions* illustrate this usage of *unconscious*, which today would be rendered as *not conscious* or *not aware*. De Quincey wonders on a night walk about a murderer who was reported to roam the area and imagines that the two "might at every instant be unconsciously approaching each other through the darkness" (*C* 32). Similarly, the druggist who first sold him the "panacea" (*C* 43) is described as an "unconscious minister of celestial pleasures!" (*C* 42). In both these cases, *unconscious* has no psychological dimension; it simply describes a lack of awareness equalling a lack of knowledge. It does not entail the principle of influence on thoughts, behaviour and actions, which was only introduced by the term *subconscious*. It is difficult to establish the exact moment when *unconscious* was first used in a psychological sense, which certainly overlapped with the introduction of *subconscious*. The latter was arguably necessary, though, to mark the difference between mere knowledge/awareness and the more

psychological connotation. While *unconscious* eventually acquired this psychological notion and superseded *subconscious*, the latter initially served to introduce the new concept that encompassed the developing notion of a hidden, active, and influential mind; hence the need for this neologism in De Quincey's time.

Coleridge's use of "subconsciousness" in the 1806 notebook entry clearly contains this additional notion of an active mind. It is the visionary account of personified memory, apparently in a struggle against herself and her destiny:

> Memory, a wan misery-Eyed Female, still gazing with snatches of the eye at present forms to annihilate the one thought into which her Being had been absorbed—… She fed on bitter fruits from the Tree of Life—& often she attempted to tear off from her forehead a seal, which Eternity had placed there; and instantly she found in her Hand a hideous phantom of her own visage, with that seal on its forehead; and as she stood horror-struck beholding the phantom-head so wan & supernatural, which she seemed to hold before her eyes with right hand too *numb* to feel or be felt/itself belonging to the eye alone … (i.e. the vision enriched by subconsciousness of palpability by influent recollections of Touch). (*Notebooks* 2.1: 2915)

This passage depicts a personal vision that contains all the dreadful auguries and horror that can accompany dreams. Memory appears in the shape of an ill-looking, nervous, and miserable "Female" who attempts to hold onto the visible present against "the one thought,"—i.e. the past or memories, which are the very qualities epitomised by her name and are therefore at the core of her "Being"—which seems to threaten her. Even the Tree of Life, usually attributed with healing powers, only yields "bitter fruits." Being "absorbed" by the past and the inability to get hold of more than mere "snatches" of the present illustrate that she has no control, and the confrontation with herself in form of a mask, makes her recognise

her own eternal enslavement to herself, to memory, that is impressed in the form of an immoveable seal, a "stigma" (*Notebooks* 2.2: 2915), as Coburn aptly suggests.

The truth of her feelings and anxieties brought to her via the senses is physically manifested despite the "supernatural" nature of the "phantom-head." The senses convey to her the presence and reality of that mask and therefore the reality of her miserable fate: first and foremost sight, "the vision;" and second—despite the numbness—the remnants of the tactile sense, the "subconsciousness of palpability" or "influent recollections of Touch." The juxtaposition of the two variant expressions of the same thought provide an explicit definition: "subconsciousness" is defined as "influent recollections," memories (in this case of a tactile feeling—"palpability" or "Touch") that exert an influence of some kind. The last point is crucial and has been the core of any definition over the centuries and in all languages.

Thus, in Coleridge's notebook of 1806, *subconsciousness* already contains the same specific connotation as De Quincey's first use of *subconscious* in "The Caesars," where he argues that the "Emperor Hadrian had already taken a solitary step in the improvement of human nature; and not, we may believe, without some sub-conscious influence received directly or indirectly from Christianity" (*WTDQ* 9: 81). From this short excerpt it is clear that their usages significantly differ in other points, though. Coleridge's vision is clearly personal and self-referential. Although Coburn observes that it is "not stated to be a dream" (21), she suggests that "Memory bears a suspicious resemblance here to the persecuting hags of Coleridge's dreams, and indeed the various images and phrases weave an intensely personal fabric" (*Notebooks* 2.2: 2915). The "tumultuousness" of De Quincey's dreams could also magnify into "deep-seated anxiety and gloomy melancholy" and "a sense of eternity and infinity that drove [him] into an oppression as of madness" (*C* 22, 66, 71) under the influence of opium. However, his usage of *subconscious* is never self-referential or connected with dreams, from which it keeps altogether clear.

Furthermore, Coleridge's account contains a strong spiritual element. While the "Tree of Life" provides religious connotations, the seal of eternity and the "supernatural" element of the "phantom-head" are mystical components. This tone does not only apply to the overall account of the "misery-Eyed Female." Specifically the definition of "subconsciousness" contains a similar spiritual aspect: the tactile recollections are "influent," which—as a poetical rendering of influential—is imbued with celestial or mystical overtones. De Quincey's numerous instances of *subconscious* do not imply such an element but rather describe a singular psychological phenomenon in a sober and straightforward way. He neither uses *subconscious* self-referentially to describe dreams or visions, nor does he imbue it with any spiritual or supernatural power. Though he is probably not doing so consciously (no pun intended), De Quincey marks the term off from Coleridge's usage and gives it a more psychological, as opposed to mystical, connotation.

Conclusion

This brief sketch of the changing contexts in which *subconscious* has been used from the late nineteenth century to the present illustrates the variety with which scientists, philosophers, psychoanalysts, and representatives of New Age movements have employed the term. Today, it is almost as impossible to talk about the subconscious as it is to talk about the unconscious, both of which conjure up a number of different theories if the concept is not specified. *Subconscious* became mainly a popular term with loose boundaries and no clear meaning as a consequence of this inconsistency of definition and usage; the lack of one unified, prevalent theory (as Freud in some measure managed to establish for the term *unconscious*); Freud's and Jung's repeated rejection of the term; and the hegemonic rise of psychoanalysis. As motley as the picture may seem, one point connects all of the theories that were termed subconscious. From Janet to Prince, Jastrow and the New Age writings, they all share the underlying assumption that subconscious processes contain some kind of complex and

rational element that is akin to conscious mental processes. As such, they contain in varying degrees and different ways the very notion of De Quincey's *subconscious* and the cognitive unconscious.

De Quincey repeatedly uses it in a specific context and implicitly attributes a specific meaning to the term. His usage of *subconscious* between 1834 and 1853 gives shape to a mental realm that is conspicuously different from the unconscious processes of dreams and opium visions. The nature of the psychological insights described by *subconscious* in De Quincey's writings suggests why he does not associate it with his dreams. He describes mental processes that are essentially productive and positive, which stands in contradiction to the distortion of dreams. It seems that De Quincey—though strangely neither drawing attention to the coinage, nor providing an explicit definition at any time—uses *subconscious* consistently to denote this productive psychological concept. The pattern that emerges from the ten instances of *subconscious* in De Quincey's work contains striking parallels to the cognitive psychologist's notion of the unconscious, "mental structures and processes" that specifically include "complex psychological functioning" (Kihlstrom, "Cognitive" 1445, 1450).

Translations across cultures and through time are always needed since there simply isn't any other way to think except by starting where you are.

Ellen Spolsky[1]

CHAPTER TWO

De Quincey's *Subconscious* and the Cognitive Unconscious

Subconscious is one of the crucial terms in the attempts to name the unconscious faculty of the mind in the early nineteenth century. Yet the coinage, its first appearance in print, and its early usage have received little critical attention. On the one hand, this may be partly due to the lack of clarity and the poorly defined popular usage of *subconscious* today, which obfuscates the historical relevance and necessity of the term as it emerged almost two hundred years ago. On the other hand, the first occurrences of the term are hard to fit into the prevalent literary theories of the unconscious, which are largely defined according to psychoanalysis. The received notion of the Romantic tradition is distinctly Freudian. The coinage and first usage of *subconscious*, however, provide evidence against this position and are better understood from a cognitive perspective. Historically, De Quincey's *subconscious* represents what Alan Richardson calls the "emergent sense of the brain's awesome complexity and capacity" (*Neural* 37). In "Romanticism, the Unconscious, and the Brain," Richardson discusses "romantic-era brain science" in relation to "literary and theoretical formulations of the unconscious mind" (350). He provides a detailed overview of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century scientific and literary texts that discuss the unconsciously active mind and which underlie De Quincey's usage of *subconscious*. Following the "scattered calls" (349)

from historians of psychology, he does not expound modern cognitive models of the unconscious in detail. I, however, am interested in how specific modern theories of the cognitive unconscious can help sharpen our awareness of this pre-Freudian tradition and determine the frequently implicit meaning of nineteenth-century accounts.

Cognitive theories of the twenty-first century reinforce the historical notion of unconscious processes and they provide a foil to map De Quincey's usage of *subconscious*. From a modern perspective, De Quincey's *subconscious* consistently denotes the same unconscious processes and contents that cognitive psychologists are investigating today. They postulate an unconscious that executes complex, rational, and productive processes. Reading De Quincey's use of *subconscious* (and other passages on mental processes) alongside recent theories of the cognitive unconscious reveals a range of analogies that force us to reconsider his notion of the mind. He is arguably the first author to conceptualise the productive notion of unconscious processes consistently with one single, specific term: *subconscious*.

Although critics have referred to the coinage of this word, it has not received much attention.[2] In most cases, De Quincey's role is noted as an interesting but minor detail. However, he not only coined the adjectival and the adverbial form, but also brought the term into print (1834), and used it continuously until 1856. The term appears eight times in his published writings, once in a posthumously published article, and once in a letter to his eldest daughter Margaret.[3] Three factors have prevented a wider recognition of De Quincey's contribution to the English language and to the understanding of the mind regarding the concept of unconscious psychological processes. *Subconscious* neither occurs in his canonical writings nor in his explicit discussions of the mind. Furthermore, the exact number of occurrences in his writings may have eluded scholars, possibly due to the point mentioned above. Last, *subconscious* is today often used interchangeably with *unconscious* and its coinage may, therefore, not have aroused more attention than an appreciative nod in De

Quincey's direction. The extent of implications regarding De Quincey's notion of the mind—and hence his autobiographical and more overtly psychological writings—has been drastically underestimated.

Burwick discusses De Quincey's *subconscious* in some detail, in particular in connection to his literary criticism. He claims that when "De Quincey in 1823 first used the term 'subconscious,' … it was not a casual or incidental reference. It was a term indispensable to his 'psychological criticism,'" a term that formulated "the relationship between the 'subconscious' and the 'conscious,' between the 'literature of power' and the 'literature of knowledge'" (*Knowledge* 153). Burwick's argument relies on the Masson edition of De Quincey's works that gives no date and an abbreviated title for the essay that contains "sub-consciously," and the *OED* entry that assigns De Quincey's first usage of *subconscious* to the wrong year and the wrong essay. Burwick quotes from both these essays: "On Languages" (1823), which discusses the "literature of power;" and "On the Present Stage of the English Language" (1850), which contains "sub-consciously" (see *Knowledge* 2). He seems to be aware that De Quincey's first usage of *subconscious* was not in the piece that treats the "literature of power," yet his discussion in chapter seven strongly suggests this and the argument partly relies on this fact. Quoting from Masson's edition, which does not contain any information on the date and place of publication for the latter essay, Burwick probably assumes that the two essays stand in closer proximity than they actually do. The information from these sources indeed suggests the proximity he assigns to "subconscious" and "literature of power." In a later publication, which relies on the new collected edition of De Quincey's works, he still maintains that De Quincey "appropriated" *subconscious* in his role as "literary critic" ("Autobiographer" 126). However, the instance of *subconscious* that Burwick uses to establish the connection to De Quincey's "literature of power" or his role as a "literary critic" stems from 1850, not from 1823. Burwick is right when he argues that De

Quincey relies on the dichotomy of conscious and unconscious processes in his discussions of literature; however, in 1823 De Quincey has not yet used *subconscious* and the first occurrence is not in this context.

Even though the concept is crucial to his understanding of literature, De Quincey did not coin *subconscious* primarily for his literary criticism; that is, De Quincey discusses literature in terms of unconscious and conscious processes, but until 1840 he does not make use of *subconscious* in this context. The implications of the term are thematically much broader than this and address a form of cognition that stands apart from regular thought in that it does not involve the thinker's awareness. This is the context that brought forth the adjective "sub-conscious" (*WTDQ* 9: 81) in 1834. De Quincey's *subconscious* provides crucial information as to his notion of productive unconscious processes. He made the concept, as well as the word, crucial to his understanding of psychological processes, and he subsequently applied this term *inter alia* to his discussions of language, literature, and art. The issue is of importance because De Quincey's *subconscious* represents a key concept in the historical development of the study of the mind and unconscious mental processes that was almost completely obliterated by Freud's psychoanalysis. The psychoanalytic approach focuses on the irrational, the innate sexual drives, wish fulfilment, and the symbolic instantiation of repressed childhood experiences in a model of universal stages of development, for which De Quincey's revisiting of Elizabeth's death has been continuously used as a prime example. It is mainly a theory of mental aberration that often leads to mental illnesses—such as neuroses—and postulates that "unconscious or 'primary' processes are intellectually quite primitive" (Rey 523). However, psychoanalysis does not explain and cannot account for the early nineteenth-century use of *subconscious*, particularly in the writings of De Quincey, whose understanding of unconscious processes and, in particular, his usage of *subconscious* are surprisingly at odds with the psychoanalytic model.

The ten instances of *subconscious* in De Quincey's writings describe an alternative to the generally received notion of the psychoanalytic unconscious that questions a long line of criticism and compels us to revalue his theory of the mind. His use of *subconscious* is much closer to the late twentieth- and twenty-first century cognitive psychologists' notion of productive unconscious processes. Cognitive psychology provides the best theoretical tools for an analysis and interpretation of *subconscious* in De Quincey's writings with its postulation of complex and rational processes that are not part of conscious reflection. Unlike psychoanalysis, cognitive psychology establishes unconscious processes as a vital part of normal, everyday cognition. The shift away from the psychoanalytic to the cognitive theories of unconscious processes is indispensable in a discussion of De Quincey's coinage and his subsequent usage of *subconscious*, because they do not fit into the psychoanalytic box.

In "Unconscious Processes" (2013) Kihlstrom reviews recent research and establishes the following categories within the concept of the cognitive unconscious: automaticity, implicit perception, implicit memory, implicit thought, implicit learning, implicit emotion, and implicit motivation, *implicit* being the established term to denominate unconscious mental processes and contents in cognitive research. They are all part of the cognitive unconscious and stipulate a form of complex and rational cognition, as opposed to the lower level mechanisms of Freudian theories. Research on these categories varies considerably. While automaticity, implicit memory and implicit perception are firmly approved in the scientific community, the other categories have "not been established with the rigor that characterizes research in the domains of perception and memory" ("Unconscious" 183). This is partly due to the comparatively recent interest in these domains and the subsequent lack of sufficient studies, though of course this does not mean that we should dismiss them. A comparison of current research and De Quincey's usage of *subconscious* shows that twenty-

first-century and nineteenth-century theories about the contingencies of unconscious processes partly move along analogous lines.

Four of these categories—implicit thought, automaticity, implicit perception, and implicit motivation—are relevant for De Quincey's ten instances of *subconscious*. Four instances, including the first appearance in print, fit the model of implicit thought, "ideas that are not, themselves, properly construed as percepts or memories" but "internally generated by the subject, albeit outside of conscious awareness" ("Unconscious" 181). Three of De Quincey's uses of *subconscious* in discussions of prose and poetic style mirror the category of automaticity, processes that are "inevitably evoked by the appearance of certain stimuli, are incorrigibly executed once set in motion, … and do not interfere with conscious mental activities" ("Unconscious" 177). Two instances are best explained with the category of implicit perception, "the influence of events in the current stimulus environment that cannot be consciously perceived" ("Unconscious" 179). And finally, one instance, the last one chronologically in a letter to his daughter Margaret when De Quincey was seventy-one, matches the concept of implicit motivation, in which "the subject's experience, thought, and action is affected by a motive (or goal), in the absence of conscious awareness of that motive" ("Unconscious" 182). The aim is not to argue for a direct correlation of the twenty-first century empirical theories with De Quincey's deductions based on introspection and observations of people's behaviour. There are, however, conceptual similarities, which help to formulate an adequate and precise definition of the way in which De Quincey uses the term *subconscious*.

Implicit Thought: "A Great Idea As Yet Unknown"

One of De Quincey's notions of *subconscious* describes the unconscious processing of complex information, which can be as, or even more, efficient than its conscious counterpart and generates unconscious mental contents, comparable to Kihlstrom's category of implicit

thought. Four instances of *subconscious* in De Quincey's writings imply that actions and beliefs can be influenced by mental contents that are generated and remain active outside of phenomenal awareness. The variety of contexts in which these four instances appear—the historical series of essays "The Caesars" (1832-34), the review of Kantian ideas in the June 1836 instalment of "Autobiography of an English Opium-Eater," the book length publication on *The Logic of Political Economy* (1844), and the article "The Works of Alexander Pope" (1848)—suggests that De Quincey considered such unconscious mental contents as a universal component of mental life.

Cognitive psychologists consider implicit thought as a vital influence on conscious thought, behaviour, and decision making. Kihlstrom defines it in general terms as "a mental representation … that influences ongoing experience, thought, and action in the absence of conscious awareness of that thought" ("Psychological" 589). This means that the unconscious does not only store and process contents such as memories and percepts, but it can independently produce new content or "mental representation[s]," which "may consist of ideas, beliefs, or images" (Kihlstrom, Mulvaney, Tobias, and Tobis 34). In other words, we are not only ignorant of how the brain processes information, but "we do not always know *what* we think and know" (Dorfman, Shames, and Kihlstrom 286). There are occasions when such unconscious contents reach consciousness, which is popularly known as intuition.

Intuition is not a chance or random process but emerges from unconscious processing of information. Kenneth Bowers defines intuition as "sensitivity and responsiveness to information that is not consciously represented, but which nevertheless guides inquiry toward productive and sometimes profound insights" ("Unconsciously" 256). Kihlstrom proposes a more detailed account of the various stages of this process. He argues that implicit thought "may underlie the phenomena of intuition, incubation, and insight in problem solving" ("Psychological" 589). In this context intuition defines the moment "when the thought is

unconscious" ("Psychological" 589) and a gut feeling, as it were, hints at the existence of said thought.

Incubation, in turn, "may be thought of as the process by which the transformation from unconscious influence to conscious access takes place" ("Psychological" 589). The essential elements in the process of incubation are "cues contained in the original statement of the problem, inferences generated by the subject's initial work on the problem, and new contextual cues processed during the ostensibly dormant period" (Dorfman, Shames, and Kihlstrom 271). The mere passage of time or new information that stands in some relation to the intuition can have incubative effects. De Quincey uses the verb *to incubate* on several occasions to refer to a process of mentation. While in some instances he means conscious pondering on something, he also uses it occasionally in our modern sense to refer to the unconscious processing of information. This notion is acutely present in his coinage of *incubator*: "the Hebrew, by introducing himself to the secret places of the human heart, and sitting there as incubator over the awful germs of the spiritualities that connect man with the unseen worlds, has perpetuated himself as a power in the human system" (*WTDQ* 17: 59). At first, the "incubator" seems to be conscious and active, as indeed the definition in the *OED*—"One who sits brooding"—suggests. However, the "incubator" is situated in "the human heart" and is a "power in the human system." The incubation issuing from him is an internal unconscious process that affects the ways in which "man" consciously considers his relationship with the "unseen worlds." Similarly, De Quincey argues in *Suspiria* that his early encounters with religion, grief, death and his own sufferance from ague and the ensuing "sweet caresses of female tenderness" "pressed with a gracious power of incubation upon my predispositions" (*S* 160). De Quincey uses "incubation" to argue that childhood experiences remain active as unconscious mental contents, which are further processed in absence of awareness and bear influence on the way one thinks and acts.

The last stage, insight, "occurs when the unconscious thought emerges into consciousness" ("Psychological" 589), which often happens in unexpected situations and specifically when one is not pondering the problem underlying the insight. The phenomena of intuition, which everybody probably has experienced at some point, are not chance flashes of inspiration or the result of a sixth sense, as it were. Instead, they "may well be the result of extensive unconscious thought" (Dijksterhuis and Nordgren 106). Thus, intuition, incubation, and insight describe the various stages that turn an unconscious mental representation into a conscious one, which often culminates in the well-known eureka-effect.

Even if there is no intuitive awareness of unconscious mental contents and no insight emerges from implicit thought, the latter still exerts considerable influence. One line of research into unconscious thought focuses on processes rather than contents. Ap Dijksterhuis and Loran F. Nordgren argue that "decision making, impression formation, attitude formation and change, problem solving, and creativity" (95) heavily rely on unconscious thought. Their unconscious thought theory (UTT) asserts that whereas simple decisions are better made consciously, the more complex the issue the better the outcome is if taken unconsciously. The implication is that conscious thought has a constrained capacity as opposed to unconscious thought, which has a larger capacity. While Scott Barry Kaufman proposes that "complex decisions will benefit from tacit processing" (454), Pawel Lewicki, Thomas Hill, and Maria Czyzewska maintain that "our nonconscious information-processing system appears to be incomparably more able to process formally complex knowledge structures, faster and 'smarter' overall than our ability to think and identify meanings of stimuli in a consciously controlled manner" (801). In this view, implicit thought is not simply the unconscious counterpart of conscious thought, but differs in respect to its capacity and the modes of processing information.

De Quincey's definition of *intuition* does not signify the same kind of gut feeling as our modern notion of the term. In some ways his usage of the term fits implicit thought as the superior processing of information as opposed to the limited capacity of conscious thought, although this is probably not what he had in mind in the first place. Bowers explains that intuition "was originally a philosophical concept implying the immediate grasping of an object or idea without any apparent conscious reasoning" ("Intuition" 613), which is most likely the source for De Quincey's definition of the term. In "Elements of Rhetoric" (1828) he argues that the "discursive faculty" is "fragmentary" and "arguing limitation," and that all the necessary "intermediate notices [equal] so many bars" (*WTDQ* 6: 168). The conscious "discursive faculty" can only proceed in steps, each of which depends on the previous ones. He defines intuition, on the other hand, as a superior mode of cognition, which has the capacity to process information simultaneously and holistically. An "*intuition* is any knowledge whatsoever, sensuous or intellectual, which is apprehended *immediately*" (*WTDQ* 6: 168). De Quincey concludes that "God must not proceed by steps, and the fragmentary knowledge of accretion; … God must *see,* he must *intuit,* so to speak; and all truth must reach him simultaneously" (*WTDQ* 6: 168).[4] These are almost the same elements we find in philosophical definitions of intuition. John Locke, for example, also distinguishes "*intuitive and demonstrative Knowledge*." While "the Mind is at no pains of proving or examining" intuitive knowledge, demonstrative knowledge requires "a Progression by steps and degrees, before the Mind can in this way arrive at Certainty" (Bk 4 Ch 2 § 5, 1, 4). These explanations are very close to De Quincey's and Locke even uses the same case of vision to exemplify the immediacy of intuition.

This philosophical notion, however, also bears some semblance with UTT. Cognitive psychologists argue that conscious scrutiny can only process a limited amount of data and is slower due to the sequential procedures of logic. In Kaufman's terms, the "*rational system* is

analytic, logical, abstract, experienced actively and consciously, is slower to process information, and requires justification via logic and evidence" (454). As Dijksterhuis and Nordgren maintain, implicit thought has more capacity, works "aschematically," "naturally weights the relative importance of various attributes" and is "better under very complex circumstances" (97, 99, 103). Although UTT requires a passage of time to take effect, the result is that of De Quincey's divine intuition. Thus, his definition of intuition resembles the argumentative line of implicit thought, in that it can be at once more efficient and more accurate.

In the *Confessions* and "The Vision of Sudden Death" (1849) he attributes this kind of information processing to himself. In opium trances and dreams, and the state of terror aroused by the threat of a mail-coach collision, De Quincey discerns the workings of the intuitive faculty. In the *Confessions* he claims to possess "an inner eye and power of intuition for the vision and the mysteries of our human nature" (*C* 13). One of the noteworthy effects of opium on the mind is the recovery of seemingly forgotten scenes from the past. They appear "in dreams like intuitions;" there is no conscious process and no "discursive" element in these recoveries of "incidents of childhood" and "scenes of later years" (*C* 67). Furthermore, the "evanescent circumstances" and all "accompanying feelings" are not single elements that construct the memories but are part of a holistic unit so that De Quincey "*recognised* them instantaneously" (*C* 67). This observation leads into the account of the near-death experience of his mother. At the verge of drowning, she "saw in a moment her whole life, in its minutest incidents, arrayed before her simultaneously as in a mirror; and she had a faculty developed as suddenly for comprehending the whole and every part" (*C* 67). Like God in "Elements of Rhetoric," De Quincey in his opium dreams and his mother in her near-death experience "*intuit*;" everything reaches them "simultaneously" and an understanding that is not possible to reach via conscious reflection is established.

Similarly, experiencing the events that almost ended in a fatal collision of the fast moving mail-coach and the gig with two lovers in the dead of the night, De Quincey explains that "All this, and if the separate links of the anticipation had been a thousand times more, I saw—not discursively or by effort—but as by one flash of horrid intuition" (*WTDQ* 16: 439). Revising this essay, De Quincey changes this to "horrid *simultaneous* intuition" (*WTDQ* 16: 746 emphasis added), in accord with the definition in "Elements of Rhetoric" and the *Confessions*. These passages reflect some components of UTT. There are the same elements of effortless simultaneity and instantaneousness as opposed to the effortful discursive faculty, which remains by nature fragmentary and posits limitations to the understanding. Even though De Quincey's definition of intuition does not exactly match our modern notion of the term and was surely influenced by the philosophical concept, he uses it in a way that contributes to the diversity of his understanding of what we now call implicit thought.

The first instance of *subconscious* in print also suggests the cognitive category of implicit thought. It appeared in the fourth instalment of "The Caesars," a series of six *Blackwood's* essays that were published between 1832 and 1834, and is defined within the context of Christian influence.[5] Given that it is the first occurrence of the term, it is presented in a peculiarly unobtrusive way. The article begins with a discussion of Hadrian but *subconscious* appears in the second half, which is concerned with Marcus Aurelius. De Quincey discusses Marcus's reluctance to visit the spectacles in the circus and the amphitheatre because of their "cruel exhibitions" (*WTDQ* 9: 80). In a long footnote De Quincey attributes this reluctance to the implicit influence of Christianity, which, "without expressly affirming, every where *indirectly supposes and presumes* the infinite value and dignity of man as a creature" (*WTDQ* 9: 80 emphasis added). The Christian doctrine had spread far enough that "some *obscure sense* of this" could reach "those in high stations" (*WTDQ* 9: 81 emphasis added). In an abrupt return to Hadrian, who reigned over the Roman

empire twenty years before Marcus and only figures at the beginning of the article, De Quincey similarly explains: "The Emperor Hadrian had already taken a solitary step in the improvement of human nature; and not, we may believe, without some *sub-conscious influence* received directly or indirectly from Christianity" (*WTDQ* 9: 81 emphasis added).[6] The comment on Hadrian contains the same idea as the much longer argument on Marcus but introduces the new vocabulary to refer to it in a more precise and specific way.

Marcus and Hadrian were influenced by Christianity, though not consciously. In the first case, a whole range of phrases—"without expressly affirming," "indirectly supposes and presumes," and "obscure sense"—is used to express the unconscious nature of the influence. All of this is compressed into one single word a few lines down: "sub-conscious." The meaning of "sub-conscious" in this passage is clear from the context. Hadrian effected a change in favour of a more humane society, which was partly prompted by the implicit influence of the spreading Christian doctrine. Hadrian was not aware of the influence of Christianity on his decision-making, which leaves the connection between cause and effect, influence and action, in the dark for him. The same two elements that constitute the argument about Marcus, the indirect supposition and "obscure sense," define "sub-conscious." In more general terms these are: first, a presence or mental content—a thought—that is strong enough to influence mentation, beliefs and actions; and second, the lack of conscious awareness of that mental content.

The brevity of the aside on Hadrian—and the leading up to the very same point in more detailed terms—force De Quincey to find a more concise but equally expressive way of phrasing his idea, which eventually results in the coinage of "sub-conscious." It is placed in the middle of a footnote that spreads over two pages and takes up the space of an entire page of the magazine in the original publication in *Blackwood's*. Except for the first couple of sentences, the footnote consists of one single paragraph, in the middle of which the remark on

Hadrian is set. Thematically as well as visually this passage is out of place. To add to the obscurity, "sub-conscious" (*WTDQ* 9: 81) is not indicated by quotation marks, italics, or any comment, as one might expect from De Quincey. In the light of his usual attention to his coinages, it stands out as a startlingly unpretentious first occurrence of such an eminent word, which could hardly be used in a more casual way for the first time.[7] This first instance of *subconscious* in print matches Kihlstrom's definition of implicit thought. It denotes a complex processing of ideas, beliefs, and moral standards that takes place on an unconscious level. In terms of awareness this means that Hadrian and Marcus were aware of Christianity; however, they were not aware of the impact the Christian doctrines had on their minds and on the consequent decisions.

In the 1848 article "The Works of Alexander Pope," De Quincey makes a similar argument about the influence of Christianity but more directly establishes that implicit thought is not simply an alternative to conscious deliberation; it has qualities that its conscious counterpart lacks. He argues that Pope's "subconscious perceptions" of Christianity stand in opposition to and are more "faithful" than "the explicit commentaries of his understanding" (*WTDQ* 16: 358). As in "The Caesars," De Quincey opposes the direct and conscious reflections on Christianity to its unconscious—or implicit—counterpart. The additional dimension in the comment on Pope is the superiority of implicit as opposed to conscious thought. This distinction, which De Quincey repeatedly makes in his writing, resembles the cognitive psychologists' assertion that the unconscious executes a certain kind of complex processes more effectively than deliberate thought. Implicit thought, so the argument of De Quincey and cognitive psychologists goes, can—under certain circumstances—provide more accurate information about the environment and one's own mental life.

Similarly, implicit thought appears to be the defining concept in De Quincey's argument on the history of ideas in an article on Immanuel Kant, published in 1836. He praises Kant's adoption of the term *category* despite it being "false in theory" and "useless in practice" ("Sketches" 168) when previously applied by other philosophers. Paraphrasing Kant's own explanation, De Quincey argues that Aristotle was on to something that he could not quite grasp. Therefore, Kant chose the term *category* although it was an old "wreck" of Aristotelian philosophy and a "useless piece of scholastic lumber" ("Sketches" 167, 168):

> He did so for a remarkable reason: he felt, according to his own explanation, that Aristotle had been *groping*—the German word expressive of his blind procedure is *herumtappen*—groping in the dark, but under a semi-conscious instinct of truth. Here is a most remarkable case or situation of the human intellect, happening alike to individuals and to entire generations—in the situation of yearning or craving, as it were, for a great idea as yet unknown, but dimly and uneasily prefigured. Sometimes the very brink, as it may be called, of such an idea is approached; sometimes it is even imperfectly discovered; but with marks in the very midst of its imperfections, which serve as indications to a person coming better armed for ascertaining the sub-conscious thought which had governed their tentative motions. ("Sketches" 168)

Kant did not choose the term *category* out of negligence but for a specific reason. In the Aristotelian categories he perceived the germ of "a great idea" on the verge of discovery. Kant, as opposed to Aristotle, was well aware of the shortcomings of—and the necessary emendation to—the idea of the categories. De Quincey uses two different gradations or qualities of consciousness in this passage: "semi-conscious" and "sub-conscious." Whereas the former describes someone's partial awareness, the latter describes the amount of influence

exerted on someone. A closer look at the agents in each sentence further elicits the different connotations. In the first example Aristotle is the agent. He is acting "under a semi-conscious instinct of truth;" he is the one directing his efforts into a certain chosen direction. In the second instance the "sub-conscious thought" takes over the active part. It acts upon people and "their tentative motions" are "governed" by it. On the one hand, "Aristotle had been *groping*" and the "semi-conscious instinct of truth" is secondary. On the other hand, "sub-conscious thought … had governed" and is paramount. The latter constitutes an unavoidable influence, whereas the former denotes a certain amount of awareness and effort, a conscious pursuit of something of which one is dimly aware.

De Quincey's "sub-conscious thought" virtually coincides with Kihlstrom's implicit thought. They both denote an influence exerted by mental contents and complex processes of reasoning outside of conscious awareness that nevertheless bear a strong influence on our conscious ideas, beliefs, and decisions. It can arguably be matched with the psychological notion of incubation, an implicit thought that develops due to internal "inferences" and new "cues" (Dorfman, Shames, and Kihlstrom 271), the state of being "influenced and informed by considerations that are not explicitly represented in conscious awareness" (Bowers, "Unconsciously" 256). "[S]emi-conscious," in turn, delineates the intuitive stage of implicit thought, the "feeling that a decision, judgment, or solution is correct, in the absence of supporting evidence" (Bowers, "Intuition" 613). Various phrases in the passage on Aristotle's vain attempt to present a satisfying theory of categories, such as "dimly and uneasily prefigured," "the very brink," and "imperfectly discovered," indicate the intuitive aspect of the ideational endeavour shared by Aristotle and Kant.

The same unconscious processing of ideas can also take place in the other direction, i.e. not resulting in a feeling that something is positively correct but that something does not quite make sense. De Quincey illustrates such an instance in *The Logic of Political Economy*,

an investigation into "the doctrine of value" (*Biography* 331) based on David Ricardo's *On the Principles of Political Economy and Taxation* (1817). Commenting on Ricardo's argument about the "inverse profit-wage relation" (Hollander 243) and the correlation of value and quantity, De Quincey addresses various counter-arguments. The "final evasion," De Quincey maintains, is "likely to move sub-consciously in the thoughts of a student" (*WTDQ* 14: 292). Just as Aristotle intuitively felt that something is right, this student feels that something is wrong, a feeling that originates from rational but unconscious thinking processes. In the last case, the thought is not logically correct according to De Quincey, who argues that "it is better to deepen and strengthen [it] until it becomes generally visible—than to leave it behind as a rankling perplexity" (*WTDQ* 14: 292). The result here, as in the previous examples, is essentially a thought that was "internally generated by the subject, albeit outside of conscious awareness" ("Unconscious" 181), as Kihlstrom argues.

All four instances of *subconscious* denote the same influence exerted by mental contents that provoke complex processes of reasoning outside of our conscious world but that nevertheless influence our conscious ideas, beliefs, and decisions. Such a thought can develop and eventually reach partial or full consciousness. In the examples above, neither Aristotle nor the "student" reach that last stage where they are fully conscious of what has been developing unconsciously. De Quincey, however, does so in his most famous piece of literary criticism, which he justly—and more aptly than he might have thought himself—calls "psychological criticism" ("K" 153).

In "On the Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth" (1823), De Quincey's observation on perspective vision, which closely mirrors Kihlstrom's definition of automatic inference in visual perception, leads him to the conclusion that "intuitive knowledge" stands above "mere understanding" ("K" 150).[8] He then explains his own bemusement by the effect of the scene mentioned in the title and how he eventually solved it. The knocking at the gate after the

murder of Duncan "reflected back upon the murder a peculiar awfulness" ("K" 150), for which De Quincey could not account. While his "understanding said positively that it [the knocking scene] could *not* produce any effect … [he] felt that it did" ("K" 151). De Quincey could only make sense of the knocking scene many years after he had first come across it. The real-life Ratcliffe Highway murders in 1811, in which the murderer, like Macbeth, was surprised by a knock at the door while he was still inside the house, furnished the relevant clue to solve the mystery. First, the attention is directed to the murderer and his "great storm of passion,—jealousy, ambition, vengeance, hatred" ("K" 152) are isolated. The knocking then releases this "complete suspension and pause in ordinary human concerns;" it is a reminder, for both the perpetrator and the audience, of "the goings-on of the world" ("K" 153). De Quincey concludes that this reassertion of the quotidian "first makes us profoundly sensible of the awful parenthesis that had suspended" it and allows a glimpse into "the hell within" ("K" 153, 152) the murderer.

De Quincey's intuition and the delayed *dénouement* is an instance of implicit thought, in particular of the cognitive concept of intuition, incubation, and insight. The first step is the unconscious differentiation between "problems that [are] soluble and those that are not" ("Unconscious" 181). Accordingly De Quincey only "felt" that the knocking scene had an effect, that there is a "soluble" problem. The actual solution often occurs at some later stage, while the problem remains active—it incubates—on an unconscious level: "the unconscious solution gathers strength during the incubation phase, and emerges fully into consciousness as an insight" ("Unconscious" 181). In other words, the murder of Duncan remained present as "unconscious mental *content,* which influence[s] experience, thought, and action outside of phenomenal awareness" ("Unconscious" 177). This also has the effect of "sensitizing" De Quincey "to encounters with additional clues" (Dorfman, Shames, and Kihlstrom 274). Thus, the Ratcliffe murders finally drew the riddle back into consciousness and furnished De

Quincey with the necessary trigger to find the solution to his long-lasting befuddlement. While activation can be autonomous, i.e. it happens only internally after the passage of some time, the Ratcliffe murders are a typical "*interactive activation*," which means that new "environmental cues … make contact with primed knowledge structures" (Dorfman, Shames, and Kihlstrom 281–82).

De Quincey's account of how he solved the riddle of the knocking scene illustrates that "intuition and incubation reflect unconscious processing in problem solving, and that insight reflects the emergence of the solution into phenomenal awareness" (Dorfman, Shames, and Kihlstrom 259). According to De Quincey, there could be no other way to solve the problem than by relying on "intuitive knowledge" ("K" 150), which he here applies in our modern sense. "On the Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth" is a plea that "one should give more weight to the unconscious intuitive feeling than to the conscious pluses and minuses" because intuitions are not accidental but "the summary judgments the unconscious provides when it is ready to decide" (Dijksterhuis and Nordgren 107, 106). The crucial point in these four instances of *subconscious* and the various passages from other works by De Quincey is that both he and cognitive psychologists delineate an unconscious that does not only store and reproduce mental contents. It further processes them on a complex level and vitally contributes to one's conscious ideas, beliefs, and actions. The psychoanalytic impulse-driven models do not account for these mental processes.

Automaticity: "The Idiot Is Not Aware That His Eyes Ever Gave Such Evidence"

Three instances of De Quincey's *subconscious* that are related to style are closer to the concept of automaticity than implicit thought. Whereas implicit thought denominates the processing of complex information and unconscious mental contents, automaticity explicitly names processes that "are inevitably evoked by the appearance of certain stimuli, are

incorrigibly executed once set in motion, consume little or no cognitive resources, and do not interfere with conscious mental activities" ("Unconscious" 177).[9] Furthermore, while an implicit thought can gain strength and become conscious, automatic processes "are unconscious in the strict sense of the term: They are not available to conscious awareness nor amenable to conscious control" (Kihlstrom, "Automaticity" 157). As the name of the concept suggests, these processes are triggered automatically by sensory stimuli, immediate, and beyond the reach of both control and awareness. The introductory argument in "On the Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth" illustrates De Quincey's recognition of such automatic processes and the three instances of *subconscious*, which are all related to style, contain the same elements as the modern concept of automaticity.

Kihlstrom's definition of automatic inference in visual perception is a typical example of automaticity. He notes that we "are not consciously aware of making these inferences, but they are simply necessary for conscious perception to occur" ("Unconscious" 177). Shepard and Levitin specifically address the role of such inferences in perspective vision: "Our perceptual machinery automatically makes the inference to three-dimensional objects on the basis of perceptual cues that are present in the two-dimensional pattern on the retina" (504–05).[10] They argue that unconscious inference is indispensable "to construct a three-dimensional representation" (505) and—in agreement with Kihlstrom—"to make sense of the real world" (506). Automatic, implicit, or unconscious inference as it is variously called, bears considerably on the way we perceive the world around us and how we react to sensory stimuli.

Automatic inference is De Quincey's starting point in "On the Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth." While his argument on "intuitive knowledge" and "mere understanding" bears some crucial links to implicit thought, the brief introductory anecdote on perspective vision is closer to the concept of automaticity and specifically to automatic inference in visual

perception. De Quincey argues that an observer who does not know about the law of perspective in visual arts could never draw houses alongside a street accurately the way they are perceived. Because awareness of the automatic inference that creates the three-dimensional representation is lacking, the observer cannot know "why a line which is known and can be proved to be a horizontal line, should not *appear* a horizontal line" ("K" 150–51) on a drawing. While Kihlstrom soberly explains that we "are not consciously aware of making these inferences," De Quincey bluntly asserts that "the idiot is not aware that his eyes ever gave such evidence" ("K" 151). In a final punning sentence, he drives the point home: "He [the observer] does not know that he has seen (and therefore *quoad* his consciousness has *not* seen) that which he *has* seen every day of his life" ("K" 151). This quotation contains the crucial element of automatic processes, namely the lack of awareness of automatic inference in perception: "consciousness has *not* seen." The impression of the eyes is processed to represent three-dimensional space without conscious interference, i.e. subconsciously.

De Quincey attributes similar automatic processes to the reception of literary texts, specifically in matters of style. The three passages that contain *subconscious* in a way that correlates to a large extent with the modern psychological concept of automaticity all deal with unconscious mental reactions provoked by the style of a written text. De Quincey argues that the style of a poem or other piece of writing all too often eludes conscious appreciation: "whilst the finest models of style exist, and sub-consciously operate effectively as sources of delight, the *conscious* valuation of style is least perfectly developed" (*WTDQ* 17: 57).[11] Style is a crucial element for the impact of a written text and can create positive effects. However, readers are not aware of the process that leads to their delight because these "models of style" are processed automatically; they operate "sub-consciously." In Kihlstrom's terms, they "do not interfere with other ongoing mental activities" ("Psychological" 586), such as the conscious processing of the meaning of a text for example. Hence the readers do not know

how these "models of style" affect them and how the stylistic "sources of delight" work on them.

Because style operates "sub-consciously," not only is the "*conscious* valuation of style" limited but so is the conscious analysis, as De Quincey argues elsewhere in the same terms. This observation results in De Quincey's somewhat frustrated comment that "Every man who has studied and meditated the difficulties of style must have had a sub-conscious sense of a bar in his way at a particular point of the road thwarting his free movement" ("St." 46). This time, "sub-conscious" does not refer to style but a "sense of a bar" that hinders further investigation. Because there is no awareness of how style provokes the effects it rouses in a reader, there is no awareness of the thing to be analysed. Hence not only the workings of style but also the obstacle that prevents a cogent and thorough analysis—the "bar"—is "sub-conscious." The ensuing effects are consequently the only way to approach style, whereas the actual process that produces these effects remains unknown. As with any other automatic processes, the ones underlying the effects of style "can be known only by inference" ("Unconscious" 177). Style can only be gauged through its effects, "by inference," and accordingly resists conscious analysis at a certain point. De Quincey and Kihlstrom are both arguing that one can only gather from the resulting effect that some kind of process must have taken place. Consequently, the process cannot be observed or analysed; one can only assume that it did take place and draw indirect conclusions.

This notion of style is wonderfully applied in a commentary on John Dryden's poem "Under Mr Milton's Picture, before his Paradise Lost."[12] De Quincey argues that the automatic and unconscious response to the poem's style obliterates its logical inaccuracy. According to Dryden's poem, Milton is a superior epic poet to Homer and Virgil because he combines the outstanding qualities of the two other poets, namely "loftiness of thought" and "majesty" (*WTDQ* 18: 31). However, there is apparently an irregularity in the factual

premises. In typically De Quinceyan fashion the logic of the argument is dissected, which results in the conclusion that A and B, the values of Homer and Virgil, are equal. The whole deduction is based on the fact that A and B must be different but complementary, which—not being the case—consequently undoes the whole argument.

However, the "out-line and tendency of the thought," that is "the form," are irreproachable:

> the mould, the set of channels, into which the metal of the thought is meant to run, really has the felicity which it appears to have: the form is perfect; and it is merely in the matter, in the accidental filling up of the mould, that a fault has been committed. Had the Virgilian point of excellence been loveliness instead of majesty, or any word whatever suggesting the common antithesis of sublimity and beauty; or had it been power on the one side, matched against grace on the other, the true lurking tendency of the thought would have been developed, and the sub-conscious purpose of the epigram would have fulfilled itself to the letter. (*WTDQ* 18: 32)

The "mould," "the set of channels," or "the form" is "perfect." Thanks to this stylistic perfection the fault in the "matter," the "filling up," is only secondary and of minor consequence. Even with the gap in the logical setup, the meaning of Dryden's hexastich is crystal clear because it is so cogently presented. The poem is correctly understood and appreciated because of its stylistic superiority, which triggers an automatic cognitive process that leads to an understanding of what is only imperfectly argued. The perfect form transmits the meaning, "the sub-conscious purpose of the epigram," that crumbles upon closer logical scrutiny. The reader understands the poem despite, and without necessarily being aware of, the gap in its logic. In other words, the style of the poem catalyses automatic processes that override the logical inaccuracy of the poem. The cognitive process that leads to the correct

understanding of the poem, namely Milton's superiority, is "inevitably evoked," "executed," and does "not interfere with conscious mental activities" ("Unconscious" 177), such as logical deduction in this case.

The example from "On the Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth" shows De Quincey's conviction that awareness of mental processes is limited. It also illustrates that he knew about the usefulness and necessity of this being so. In relation to style these circumstances understandably lead to some frustration for a writer who engages so thoroughly in the composition of his texts and De Quincey never stopped investigating how he could create texts that are stylistically powerful and, inversely, how literature affects the reader. It is not surprising that De Quincey should apply *subconscious* to matters of style. His definition of "literature of power" in "On Languages" (1823) and "The Works of Alexander Pope" (1848) partly relies on automatic processes and implicit thought. In the series of essays "Style" (1840-41), from which one of the above examples is taken, he argues that even in composition style eludes conscious control to a large extent. He also knew, however, that this relegation of stylistic matters to the unconscious, as it were, is not necessarily negative because it can turn implicit thoughts explicit. His thoughts on the topic of composition are similarly related to categories of the cognitive unconscious.

Implicit Perception: "Few Are the Eyes That Ever Would Have Perceived It"

The third category, which applies to two instances of De Quincey's *subconscious*, is implicit perception. It "refers to the influence of events in the current stimulus environment that cannot be consciously perceived" ("Unconscious" 179). As opposed to implicit thought and implicit memory, implicit perception is about currently available stimuli, and whereas in automaticity stimuli that trigger an automatic process are usually available to consciousness (such as a literary text in De Quincey's examples), implicit perception deals with stimuli of which the observer is not aware. In other words, the mind unconsciously processes the visual

input even if it has not been consciously taken in. Subliminal perception, which denotes the processing of a visual stimulus that "is presented at an intensity, or for a duration, that is below the threshold for conscious perception" ("Unconscious" 179), is the most often referred to subcategory of, and is sometimes equated with, implicit perception. Allen and Reber's discussion of implicit perception, for example, exclusively discusses subliminal perception. However, the implications of this category are larger.

Pathological states such as blindsight (blind regions in the visual field), left visual-spatial neglect (the inability to perceive the whole left side of the visual field), and prosopagnosia (the inability to recognise faces) indicate that implicit perception is in no way restricted to subliminal stimuli and cast further doubt upon "the assumption that high-level mental processes require explicit, conscious processing" (Augusto 125). In all these cases the stimuli are supraliminal in terms of intensity and duration, but they are still "not represented in conscious awareness" ("Unconscious" 179). Experiments have shown, though, that these stimuli are nevertheless processed and can influence conscious thought and action, which is also the case in people who do not suffer from any pathological states.

According to Arien Mack and Irvin Rock, who investigate inattentional blindness, one vital component of perceiving an object consciously is the amount of attention that the object attracts: "there seems to be *no conscious perception without attention*" (ix). This means that mental processing of visual stimuli takes place before the latter enter conscious awareness and does not necessarily result in conscious perception. The amount of attention determines whether such a processed stimulus eventually turns into a conscious percept. De Quincey describes impressions that are processed but not consciously perceived in *Suspiria* and he uses *subconscious* in "On Wordsworth's Poetry" (1845) and the undated "Pope and Didactic Poetry" to designate such implicit perception.

In the discussion of the funeral service of his sister Elizabeth, De Quincey discusses how auditory stimuli are unconsciously processed and stored, and can be revived: "Still it is a fact, that this pertinacious life of memory for things that simply touch the ear *without touching the consciousness*, does in fact beset me. Said but once, said but softly, not marked at all, words revive before me in darkness and solitude" (*S* 153 emphasis added). De Quincey's description of unconscious sensual perception contains the main elements of Kihlstrom's definition: "influence of events in the current stimulus environment that cannot be consciously perceived" ("Unconscious" 179). As Mack and Rock point out, implicit perception largely depends on the degree of attention directed to a stimulus. De Quincey similarly argues that the "passages in the funeral service" that he remembers "had escaped my notice at the time" (*S* 153): "I made an effort to attend, but I sank back continually into my own solitary darkness, and *I heard little consciously*" (*S* 146 emphasis added). All passages nevertheless "must have struck on my ear" (*S* 153). In De Quincey's view, these implicit perceptions remain unconscious, which means that they are not consciously apprehensible but they can resurface. Unconsciously perceived sensual impressions are unconsciously processed and stored until a trigger revives them and turns them into conscious thoughts.[13]

The level of attention or awareness is also one of the main points in De Quincey's discussion of Wordsworth's poetry. He argues that Wordsworth's "earlier poems which are all short" are "scintillating with … truth" (*WTDQ* 15: 237) because of the poet's power to perceive with greater awareness than others, as it were. The greatest achievement is not the revelation of absolute novelties but the drawing of attention to "an impression very feebly acknowledged" (*WTDQ* 15: 237). Wordsworth has the ability to describe in his poetry what other people equally process but do not consciously perceive: "He sees the same objects, neither more nor fewer, but he sees them engraved in lines far stronger and more determinate:

and the difference in the strength made the whole difference between consciousness and subconsciousness" (*WTDQ* 15: 238). De Quincey's "sees" and "strength" translate into "processes" and "attention" in the psychologists' terminology. The "same objects" are seen, which means that they are implicitly processed, registered, and encoded by every observer. It then depends on the "strength"—the "attention"—that an object receives from an observer, whether or not these objects are consciously perceived. De Quincey's description points towards the elements of Mack and Rock's argument that "attention is captured at a late stage of processing, and … it is the engagement of attention by an implicitly perceived stimulus that accounts for its explicit or conscious perception" (194–95). Attention, in other words, determines which objects within the field of vision turn into conscious percepts and which of them remain unconscious. In cognitive terms, Wordsworth has a heightened degree of attention—this "process that brings a stimulus into consciousness" (Mack and Rock, 25)—and is therefore aware of visual data that would otherwise remain implicit, that is, in the realm of "subconsciousness."[14]

De Quincey's description of the process by which Wordsworth transforms visual stimuli into consciously perceived images contains the central points of implicit perception: the perceiving subjects are not conscious of all the sense impressions. De Quincey also argues the second central point, namely that these impressions can nevertheless influence our conscious life. Wordsworth's short poems do not contain "absolute novelty" but "truths unsunned … and obscure," "old linements of truth long slumbering in the mind" (*WTDQ* 15: 238). Wordsworth, in other words, draws attention to mental content that is active but lacks conscious representation. He describes the "mysterious office which the mind so often within its own shadowy realms executes for itself" (*WTDQ* 15: 238). Though being unconscious, implicit perception is not without effects.

De Quincey makes the same use of *subconscious* in relation to conscious perception, as opposed to implicit perception, in "Pope and Didactic Poetry." He argues that a cornerstone of poetry and art in general is the possibility of drawing one's awareness to things that would not interest the observer in real life—such as a "Morland farmyard, a Flemish tavern, or a clean kitchen in an unpretending house seen by ruddy fire-light reflected from pewter ware;" they gain interest only through their artistic representation: "The very fact of seeing an object framed as it were, insulated, suddenly *relieved* to the steady consciousness, which all one's life has been seen *un*framed, *not* called into relief, but depressed into the universal level of subconsciousness, awakens a pleasurable sense of surprise" (*WTDQ* 21: 89). Even though all "stimuli are extensively processed," "there is no explicit perceptual object prior to the engagement of attention" (Mack and Rock 194, 227). To draw the attention to something that has been implicitly perceived all along and thus brings the implicit perceptions into consciousness is what makes poetry and art outstanding in De Quincey's opinion. His musings on the effects of poetry rely on the cognitive processes of perception and the interplay of conscious and unconscious mental contents. *Subconscious* once more serves to signify the cognitive unconscious faculty that executes complex and rational processes prior to conscious awareness.

Implicit Motivation: "Consciously Seeking, Oftener Perhaps Subconsciously"

The last instance of *subconscious* occurs in a private letter De Quincey wrote to his eldest daughter Margaret in 1856. In response to Margaret and Florence's regret at the lack of formal language instruction in their youth, De Quincey voices his belief that "subterraneously" (*Life* 400), or "subconsciously" (*Life* 400–01), they were seeking something different. In this case, *subconscious* is arguably best understood alongside the cognitive psychologists' concept of implicit motivation, i.e. the influence of "a motive (or goal), in the absence of conscious awareness of that motive" ("Unconscious" 182). Kihlstrom

cautions that the concept of implicit motivation bears some unresolved methodological difficulties because two different tests are necessary to evaluate conscious and implicit motives. This raises the question of whether the two tests are assessing exactly the same phenomena. Oliver Schultheiss is confident though, that the "resurgence of interest in the assessment of implicit motives" assures a high "Reliability of … implicit motive measures" (610). Although the analogous nature of implicit motivation to implicit memory, perception, and thought is supported by a range of scientists, research in this area is not as far advanced as it is in implicit memory and perception.

Kihlstrom further points out that the concept of implicit motives "threatens to send us into Freudian territory." The crucial difference, however, is that "most contemporary research on unconscious motivation shies away from the primitive sexual and aggressive instincts of classical psychodynamic theory" ("Unconscious" 182). Answering claims that modern research grew out of and has the same basis as the Freudian theories, Kihlstrom comments that "behavioral theory" furnished the first clues for cognitive scientists' research in implicit emotion and motivation and that the "only way this research can be claimed by psychoanalysis is to abandon whatever it was that is uniquely Freudian in the Freudian theory of unconscious mental life" ("Q and A" 237). The attempt to reconcile the cognitive notion of implicit motivation and emotion with Freudian theories means to remove all the constitutive elements of psychoanalysis. Research in implicit motivation relies on "the basis of sophisticated models of information processing and learning" (Schultheiss 625). While Freud's theories assume universal stages of child development connected to sexual and other innate impulses, cognitive psychologists focus on data relating to the actual child-parent relationship.

Allen and Reber state the somewhat paradoxical situation that the conative unconscious, which includes implicit emotion and motivation, "is simultaneously the most

widely believed by both laypersons and professionals, yet the most weakly supported by objective evidence" (318). There has been substantial research on implicit motives for five decades, however, and it provides a strong conceptual model, even if the methodology needs more elaboration. Scientists have focused on "achievement, affiliation, and power motives" (Schultheiss 603). The achievement motive describes the "*capacity to derive satisfaction from the autonomous mastery of challenging tasks*" (Schultheiss 603), while the affiliation motive is defined as the "capacity to derive satisfaction from establishing, maintaining, and restoring positive relationships with others" (Schultheiss 605). People in the latter group usually "excel at tasks that … bring them social approval" (Schultheiss 606). The power motive is defined as the "*capacity to derive pleasure from having physical, mental, or emotional impact on other individuals or groups of individuals*" (Schultheiss 606). These three categories, particularly the achievement and the affiliation motive, provide a conceptual framework to explain the meaning of *subconscious* in De Quincey's letter in the light of the historical and social background.

In his letter, De Quincey addresses Margaret and Florence's concern about grammar, which they had expressed "Some years ago" (*Life* 399).[15] De Quincey did not sympathise with these regrets at the time and still does not when writing the letter. Instead, he explains to Margaret why he believes that instruction in English grammar is unnecessary: "daily communication with persons belonging to good society," or—more condescendingly formulated—"rattling away 'hitty-missy,'" is the best way to learn correct English. "[G]rammar as a practical and usable thing," he tells Margaret, "grammar you had, and in all conscience enough." He is left to wonder rhetorically "What more, then, was it, my dear girls, that you were subterraneously seeking?" (*Life* 400), indicating in this question that his daughters were not aware of their true goal. De Quincey then speculates that his daughters' true object was the wider field of general grammar—"*universal* (what is sometimes called

philosophic) grammar" (*Life* 399) in De Quincey's terms—i.e. not questions about the practical usage but the theoretical underpinnings concerning the origins and general principles of grammar, and "grammar in terms of analogies among languages, as a tool … to determine a doctrine of correctness" (Mitchell). Because vernacular variations had no authority in establishing linguistic correctness, grammatical analogies across languages were used as indicators for correctness and to speculate why certain constructions had developed in a language.

In a playful and affectionate tone that is typical of De Quincey's letters to his daughters he reasons thus:

> Shall I guess? I believe that—I fancy that—I suggest that you were both seeking by a metaphysical instinct, sometimes were consciously seeking, oftener perhaps subconsciously (and confounding it with your kindred but subordinate study of *English* grammar), were both seeking the fine and subtle threads of philosophical grammar. (*Life* 400–01)

De Quincey's assumption in some measure accounts for Margaret and Florence's "motivational state independent of [their] conscious awareness of that state" ("Psychological" 591). Although De Quincey as much as guesses at Margaret and Florence's true object, he fails to see (or articulate) the actual underlying motivation. He realises that there is a "subterraneous" desire that goes beyond the mere competence in English and that his daughters are not, or only partially, aware of their actual goal; they are guided by implicit motivation. However, De Quincey's speculation does not quite explain his daughters' "non-conscious dispositions to experience specific types of incentives as rewarding" (Schultheiss et al. 972). It does not specify why the incentive of linguistic knowledge is gratifying to Margaret and Florence.

Schultheiss's categories of "achievement" and "social affiliation" (Schultheiss, 604) provide some useful suggestions for the case of the De Quincey daughters; they shed some light on what Margaret and Florence were striving for, and what De Quincey—though not saying so in the letter—may have felt to be moving them. The two implicit motives accurately tie in with their experience. The De Quincey daughters grew up at an early age, having to take responsibility and care for the family, which meant fulfilling high "demands for independence" (Schultheiss 604) and performing tasks on their own that were unquestionably "above what the child is ready to master" (Schultheiss 604). These are typical developmental precursors of the achievement motive. After her mother's death in 1837, for example, nineteen-year-old Margaret took care of the household and according to a friend of the family showed a "high character, … energy, decision, and premature business capacity" (*Life* 249). This can account for Margaret and Florence's striving to solve challenging tasks independently, in other words, understanding universal grammar as De Quincey presumes.

The affiliation motive serves to explain more precisely why the challenging task chosen was grammar. Having contact with well-educated, literary people through their father may have incited Margaret and Florence to seek more learning, particularly given that in "achievement contexts, affiliation-motivated individuals excel at tasks that … bring them social approval" (Schultheiss 606). While his children in their younger years often accompanied De Quincey when he met friends with whom he discussed literary and philosophical topics, they later provided substantial support in keeping up correspondences with friends and publishers and in meeting deadlines for articles, for example. William Hallam Bonner's collection of letters, *De Quincey at Work*, shows the extent to which De Quincey's daughters took care of their father's correspondence and were involved in his literary affairs. Apart from the business related letters, Margaret's and Florence's correspondence about the first American edition of De Quincey's works also illustrates the

amiable friendship that they had developed with the American publisher, James Thomas Fields, and his wife. Being so strongly involved in their father's affairs, his literary circles were to some extent also theirs, which may have resulted in their implicit motivation to acquire more knowledge that would give them a better footing in this social circle.

Thus, the issue was in all likelihood not just about grammar. Linda Mitchell observes that "battles were fought in the name of grammar, but often battles were really about other issues like correctness, gender, politics, religion, and class" (Mitchell). Although Mitchell refers to the grammarians' explicit "power to create, assign, and reinforce identities for marginal social groups, such as foreigners, women, and the middle class," the same battles were fought less explicitly on other levels, as Margaret and Florence's case illustrates. Their motivation probably stemmed from more than the simple want of linguistic knowledge, but had more to do with their social situation, for which we arguably find an answer in the concept of implicit motivation. Grammar may have been a way for Margaret and Florence to have more social power in a patriarchal society that did not duly acknowledge their work or did not take their endeavours seriously.

The overlapping of the conscious goals and the implicit motives is not a coincidence. Schultheiss and his colleagues argue that "*between-systems synergy* can occur when goal strivings provide opportunity fields for the satisfaction of implicit motivational needs or when implicit motives contribute to goal enactment" (985). In other words, if the fulfillment of a conscious goal also serves the gratification of an implicit motive, or if an implicit motivation enhances the chances to reach a conscious goal, the two systems can interact. Furthermore, "implicit motives aid goal progress and benefit from it not only within a given motivational domain …, but also across motivational domains" (Schultheiss et al. 973). A conscious achievement goal, for example, can serve an implicit affiliation motive. In the present case, the conscious achievement goal to know more about English grammar interacts with the

implicit affiliation motive to successfully integrate into highly educated circles. While the exact nature of these interactions is still a matter of debate, the grammar war in the De Quincey family may serve as an example.

The historical, social, and personal circumstances of this case lend themselves to a psychological reading in terms of implicit motivation. Whatever the true motives were, De Quincey sensed that some wish, desire, or motive of which Margaret and Florence were not aware made them strive for a better command and knowledge in grammatical matters and he used the term *subconscious* to describe this. This letter shows how much De Quincey naturalised the term within the twenty-two years he had been using it. It was familiar enough to him by 1856 to be used in a private, informal letter to his daughter Margaret.

Conclusion

Arguably, De Quincey needed the time between 1834 and 1856 to feel that kind of familiarity with the new term that he introduced to the English reading public. From a larger perspective, a longer duration of implicit considerations was necessary before 1834 to prepare for the explicit emergence of *subconscious*. In the article on Kant's adoption of Aristotle's terminology, De Quincey opens up the discussion and contemplates in more general terms the emergence of intellectual ideas—that "most remarkable case or situation of the human intellect" ("Sketches" 168). The partial and imperfect discovery through various stages of maturation is a necessary step in "all topics of general interest" (*WTDQ* 11: 322–23). This maturation, De Quincey argues, depends on the passage of time—possibly even over "entire generations" ("Sketches" 168). Before an idea is fully developed and can reach its entire measure, it needs to have a "semi-conscious" presence; it has to be "dimly and uneasily prefigured" and "imperfectly discovered" ("Sketches" 168).

The ongoing process of discovery of the unconscious, in which De Quincey takes part, is in many ways the same as the process he describes here. He also had a "semi-conscious

instinct of truth" and was governed by "sub-conscious thought," which enabled him to develop the "idea" of an unconscious power. His "unresting intellect" was arguably still "groping." At the same time, he was also linguistically "better armed" to label the "prefigured," "imperfectly discovered," and "as yet unknown" unconscious mental realm. De Quincey's discussion of Kant and Aristotle gains interest because it epitomises De Quincey's own position in respect to the developing concept of the unconscious. It bears a strong self-reflexive element and nicely illustrates his own endeavour to explore and name mental processes and contents that elude awareness. De Quincey is similarly "groping" in this very passage, trying to articulate the idea of hidden influence that is oblivious: the "sub-conscious" influence.

The big question that De Quincey indirectly addresses in this and in other passages, and that cognitive psychologists now explicitly try to answer, "is whether we can sensibly ask whether the percepts, memories, and thoughts that would be represented by the output layer, normally in consciousness, can be inaccessible to phenomenal awareness yet nonetheless influence the person's ongoing experience, thought, and action" ("Unconscious" 178). The conscious and implicit elements are essentially the same; they only differ in terms of availability to conscious awareness. This brings us back to the question of whether the cognitive unconscious is "routinized and inflexible in a word, stupid," or "sophisticated, flexible, and adaptive in a word, intelligent" (Allen and Reber 314). The contexts of De Quincey's usage of *subconscious* strongly suggest the latter. His notion of the unconscious, like that of contemporary psychology, is "reality bound and rational" (Kihlstrom, Barnhardt, and Tataryn 789). The cognitive approach towards De Quincey's use of *subconscious* is indispensable in this investigation, which also forcefully confirms modern psychologists' view that the roots of the productive unconscious reach back into the early nineteenth century. De Quincey had a very clear sense that the unconscious is "equipped to efficiently process

complex information" (Lewicki, Hill, and Czyzewska 801) and coined *subconscious* to name these phenomena.

[T]here is a deep natural necessity for thought—our kind of thought—to involve language.

Daniel Dennett[1]

CHAPTER THREE

Style and the Revelatory Power of Language

De Quincey was positively obsessed with language and was a highly self-conscious writer. He not only minutely analysed the idiosyncrasies of language and other writers' texts, but also his own writings. Many of his published articles deal explicitly with various aspects of oral or written language. Moreover, in his literary criticism De Quincey constantly keeps an eye on diction and considers the style of authors as vital as their ideas. While De Quincey's theory of literature has received abundant attention, his thoughts on style have been less thoroughly discussed.[2] In his theory of style language and thought are intimately connected, which bears crucial implications for his notion of the unconscious. Composition eludes total control, which is an essential factor in engendering ideas for De Quincey. A close reading of pertinent passages in the four *Blackwood's* instalments of "Style" (1840-41) reveals that in some cases he conceives of language as a necessary element in the ideational and emotional realisation of thought. In line with other Romantic theories, language for De Quincey is more than a representation of conscious ideas; it has an "expressive dimension" (C. Taylor, *Human* 219). At the same time, he does not reduce this function of language to the expression of feelings and emotions. De Quincey argues that language is crucial in order to overcome the epistemological problem of thinking about, talking about, and knowing rational and complex unconscious thoughts.

De Quincey's famous coinage of the term "involutes" in *Suspiria* to refer to an indivisible conglomerate of thoughts, feelings, and experience exemplifies the close relationship he establishes between language and thought. Before he had coined this term to designate complex mental constructs, he had been using it repeatedly to refer to an intricate and obscure style of writing. References in various texts between 1823 and 1840 to "involution" in connection to style are merely used to point out the incapability of a writer to compose clear and accessible texts. But in other instances from the first instalment of "Style," De Quincey takes the explanation for the stylistic "involution" a step further. Verbal obscurity, which can still be a sign of bad writing, may also illustrate the intricate nature of the argument, the thought of the author. Consequently it can arise from the unmediated transmission of one's thoughts onto paper, still largely a failure on the part of the author. In the last instalment of "Style," however, De Quincey explains that obscurity is at times inevitable because a thought does not always allow one to clarify one's ideas; in this case style represents the complexity of thought. Accordingly, De Quincey moves from the "involution" of written texts to mental "involutes" because the complexity of the former is at times determined by the latter. His adoption of a term that he had first used in relation to writing to his discussion of mental phenomena is a logical semantic shift.

This argument about the dependence on language to turn internal unconscious thoughts external further aligns language with dreams. Language is a recurrent element in De Quincey's dreams, though it mostly remains symbolic and mysterious. Language in dreams has to be deciphered, which can only be done through the partly discursive and conscious articulation of dreams through language. De Quincey believes that we need language to become fully conscious of dreams. This means that while for him language and dreams share the important task of accessing unconscious mental contents, that is, "the world within me" (*C* 43), language is in all cases decisive to externalise what is internal. This revelatory, or

expressive, function of language is based on its musical qualities, such as rhythm and cadence, which in turn are embodied experiences.

De Quincey's discussion of language overlaps in many points with other Romantic theories, which are united in their opposition to Neo-Classical concepts of language. Despite the many ruptures between Neo-Classical and Romantic theories of language the split is not radical. David Wellbery argues that the "relationship of Romanticism to rhetoric should be conceived less as the abandonment of a tradition than as its transformation" (186), and William Keach points out that "Locke's account of language … was still the most influential force in British Romantic thinking about the topic" (97). In the case of style representing thought, however, there is indeed a marked change from Locke's "designative view of language" (Spencer 248), which held that "language is 'the dress of thought'" (Stone 47). In other words, language has no connection with thought in neoclassic theories—it is merely designative—and style is no more than an ornate embellishment. De Quincey argues the contrary, that style and content cannot be separated. While De Quincey in "Style" names Wordsworth as the source for the concept of style incarnating thought, it is not strictly Wordsworthian in origin. Johann Gottfried Herder was one of the "original figures in this expressive-constitutive line of thought" (C. Taylor, *Human* 10), which affirms the connection and interdependence of thought and language. Peter Michelsen even argues that Jean Paul Richter, whose writings De Quincey greatly admired, is the more likely source for De Quincey's phrase "*incarnation* of thoughts" ("St." 73), despite De Quincey's reference to Wordsworth (Michelsen 746). It reverberates in many early nineteenth-century discussions on language and is one of the main arguments in De Quincey's essays on "Style."

In his case, the perpetuation and extension of this discussion is of interest because it further illustrates his preoccupation with language and the importance he attributes to it in the formation of ideas, and—most importantly—because it supports his conviction of productive

unconscious processes. De Quincey establishes language as a means not only to formulate but also to bring forth dormant material, what Charles Taylor calls the "expressive dimension" (*Human* 219) of language. For De Quincey, language is not simply the vehicle to transport meaning; it can be the embodiment of thought and can therefore have a constitutive role. This means that the formation of an idea depends on accurate linguistic formulation, which not only communicates the idea, but is an integral part of its evolution: "our thoughts are realised through language" (Spencer 249). Language is one way for the unconscious to take shape and one can only recognise one's inner world through language. In this light, De Quincey's theory of style turns out to be a theory of the unconscious, specifically of the productive unconscious.

Language as a Means to Access the "World Within"

Unconscious processes are the crucial element in De Quincey's definition of "Literature with a capital 'L'" (Bate 150) and in his discussion of style. The distinction between "literature" and "anti-literature" in "On Languages" (1823) or "literature of power" and "literature of knowledge" in a later version of the argument in "The Works of Alexander Pope" (1848) is his most famous and thoroughly debated discussion about language. De Quincey's notion of language in "Style" relies in some respects on the same premises about unconscious mental processes as his argument about the "literature of power." In the four instalments of "Style," however, he gives the argument a different direction. While "literature of power" addresses the role of language in terms of its effects on the reader, "Style" investigates the role of language in drawing forth the author's dormant ideas as part of the process of formulating things—it attributes to language an expressive role. "Style" discusses the connection between unconscious mentation and the composition of texts, the conscious manifestation through writing of what Kihlstrom calls implicit thought. For De Quincey, language, and specifically style, has intuitive qualities in the cognitive sense of the term. Via the manner of expression,

i.e. style, language becomes a productive means to engender and elaborate unconscious ideas. Careful expression through language—not a kind of associative stream-of-consciousness or free writing—is a way to elicit what otherwise remains inaccessible.

De Quincey draws from various sources to build his own ideas about the workings and function of language and he refers in particular to Coleridge and Wordsworth. According to Jonathan Bate, the series of articles "Letters to a Young Man Whose Education Has Been Neglected" (1823) can be "regarded as De Quincey's revisionary rewriting of the *Biographia*" (138). More specifically, the discussion of literature in the third letter, "On Languages," draws on Coleridge's and Wordsworth's theories in various parts of the argument. In his "philosophical use of the word" (*WTDQ* 3: 69) literature, for example, De Quincey "is clearly in the same territory as that of Coleridge in his celebrated fourteenth chapter" (142), as Bate argues. De Quincey himself refers to Wordsworth for the distinction between knowledge and power, on which his own argument is based: "For which distinction, as for most of the sound criticism on poetry, or any subject connected with it that I have ever met with, I must acknowledge my obligation to many years' conversation with Mr. Wordsworth" (*WTDQ* 3: 70n). The same is true for the discussion in "Style." Some passages are reminiscent of Coleridgean ideas, such as "the ideal of a complete interpenetration of matter and form in the work of art" (C. Taylor, *Sources* 379). From Woodhouse's journal we know that De Quincey discussed and shared Wordsworth's conviction that "thoughts & words had some necessary, immediate, & close correlation to each other" (27). In "Style," De Quincey also acknowledges Wordsworth's precedence for the phrase "*incarnation* of thoughts" ("St." 73), which is the culmination of his own argument. There is no doubt about the debt De Quincey has towards the two most famous of the Lake poets.

This debt to other authors led to the classification of De Quincey as a mere "popularizing scholar" (161) by Albert Goldman and as a lesser disciple to Wordsworth and

Coleridge by D. D. Devlin and John Beer, for example. However, rather than being a mere copyist, De Quincey is an original theorist, whose profound interest in unconscious processes leads him away from his numerous sources into new territory. He significantly extends their ideas and makes his own original contributions to the understanding of literature. Bate suggests that De Quincey's argument is his own because he furnishes a "remarkable fusion of Wordsworth and Coleridge" (144). On the one hand he "quoted" various ideas, but on the other hand he also "reinforced" and extended them, and helped them to reach a prominence that allowed them "to be held all through the nineteenth century" (Müller 752–53). Burwick even argues that as "a critic of prose style, De Quincey surpassed even the great critics who were his contemporaries" (*Selected Essays* xlviii). Despite the numerous debts to Wordsworth, Coleridge, and other late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century writers he deserves his own place for his theories of language, literature, and style. Apart from being an original literary critic and prose theorist, De Quincey contributed a concept of unconscious mental processes that are linked to the reception and the production of language. In other words, his writings on literature and language are inherently psychological and contain arguments about the workings of the mind and the unconscious.

De Quincey's well-known differentiation between literature that communicates power and literature that communicates knowledge in "On Languages" and "The Works of Alexander Pope" is mainly concerned with the unconscious response of readers to literary works.[3] In "On Languages," he explains that "*power*" is the "true antithesis to knowledge" (*WTDQ* 3: 70). Literature that communicates power, he continues, can elicit unconscious reactions and perpetuate unconscious processes and ideas akin to the modern psychological concepts of automaticity and implicit thought. The three instances of *subconscious* related to style—one of which stems from "Style"—are all about automatic mental responses to a

written text. Similarly, De Quincey argues in "On Languages," that the literature of power is characterised by the way it affects the reader:

> All, that is literature, seeks to communicate power; all, that is not literature, to communicate knowledge. Now, if it be asked what is meant by communicating power, I in my turn would ask by what name a man would designate the case in which I should be made to feel vividly; and with a vital consciousness, emotions which ordinary life rarely or never supplies occasions for exciting, and which had previously lain unawakened, and hardly within the dawn of consciousness—as myriads of modes of feeling are at this moment in every human mind for want of a poet to organize them?—I say, when these inert and sleeping forms *are* organized—when these possibilities *are* actualized,—is this conscious and living possession of mine *power*, or what is it? (*WTDQ* 3: 71)

De Quincey defines "literature" as writing that affects the reader in a way that arouses previously present but unconscious mental contents. The reader is "made to feel vividly; and with a vital consciousness" that which "had previously lain unawakened, and hardly within the dawn of consciousness." Poets have the power to "organize" these "inert and sleeping forms" that are not accessible to the reader without the appropriate trigger. The main steps in this response theory and the attribution of awareness overlap with those of automaticity. The reader is conscious of the text and the effect, the perceptual input and the ensuing emotional impact. The process itself that brings forth the emotions is the thing that eludes conscious awareness; this automatic process, as Kihlstrom puts it, is "not available to conscious awareness nor amenable to conscious control" ("Automaticity" 157) and "can be known only by inference" ("Unconscious" 177). It is only through the emotional impact that the reader

can know that some unconscious process must have taken place. Literature of power, then, is defined through the effect it has on the reader via an unconsciously executed mental process.

The proposition that "literature is the direct and adequate antithesis of books of knowledge" (*WTDQ* 3: 69) leads Bate to conclude that to De Quincey's "literature" is "writing which must be judged according to the criterion of significant form, that is to say, on the basis of aesthetic more than cognitive effect" (142). While the claim about "the criterion of significant form," i.e. the relevance of style, is certainly true, the "aesthetic" does not preclude the "cognitive effect;" the two cannot be separated. In fact, an aesthetic object triggers unconscious cognitive processes. The implication that literature has distinct cognitive effects is one of De Quincey's central points. His definition of "literature" argues in favour of "unawakened" "emotions," "vital consciousness," "sleeping forms" and their mental organisation—alongside cognitive theories of unconscious processes. The "aesthetic" and the "cognitive effect" cannot be opposed but must be merged; in De Quincey's thoughts on literature they belong together.

A brief look at "The Works of Alexander Pope" shows that twenty-five years later De Quincey was still arguing along the same line. Most critics follow Sigmund K. Proctor's proposition that between 1823 and 1848, De Quincey's distinction between "literature of knowledge" and "literature of power" shifts from the affective and psychological to the ethical. Considering De Quincey's interest in the effects of literature on the "*moral* capacities of man" (*WTDQ* 16: 337), Charles Rzepka for example points out that "the leading virtue" of literature of power is a "movement or shift in the soul's moral perspective" (*Sacramental* 71). Rather than shifting towards a more moral understanding at the expense of the psychological dimension, the former is added but depends on the latter. While there is indeed a shift to a more ethical argument, the moral change through literature can only take place if literature moves the reader psychologically. Burwick therefore correctly points out that the

psychological ground, particularly the implications regarding unconscious processes, persists: "De Quincey in 1848, no less than in 1823, was interested in how literature works on consciousness, how it reaches into the subconscious to stir changes in thought, feeling, and perception" (*Knowledge* 1). Within the scope of the cognitive unconscious, however, a slight shift in psychological terms has taken place.

While in 1823 the focus is on immediate, automatic responses, in 1848 De Quincey broadens the scope to argue in favour of more complex mental structures that keep reverberating, i.e. implicit thought: "And of this let every one be assured—that he owes to the impassioned books which he has read, many a thousand more of emotions than he can consciously trace back to them. Dim by their origination, these emotions yet arise in him, and mould him through life like the forgotten incidents of childhood" (*WTDQ* 16: 339–40). In 1848 De Quincey argues, as he did twenty-five years earlier, that "all literature, properly so called" (*WTDQ* 16: 339), affects readers unconsciously. However, he also stresses the ongoing influence of cognitive structures that perpetuate mental processes. As difficult as it is to settle the argument about the prevalence of automaticity and implicit thought in psychology, as difficult is it to draw a clear line in De Quincey's contributions on this matter. The quotation above seems to conflate elements from automaticity, implicit emotion, implicit memory, and implicit thought, which indicates that one cannot always keep these categories strictly apart and apply them one-to-one. The crucial point is that De Quincey's theory goes beyond a momentary, automatic reaction but includes processes and contents that are "internally generated" ("Unconscious" 181) and continue influencing a person's beliefs, thoughts, and actions. In this sense, I tentatively define "power" in De Quincey's discussions of literature as a concept to explain the catalysing of cognitive processes without awareness.

The four installments of "Style" contain a similar argument about the mediation, as it were, of language between conscious and unconscious cognition, although a shift from

reception to the articulation of language takes place. De Quincey does not provide one focused section that considers this issue as it is the case in the discussion about "literature of power" but includes comments scattered throughout the four instalments. An analysis that culminates in a fully-fledged theory of De Quincey's writings on literature and style is not the aim here and, indeed, De Quincey himself does not present such a complete theory. According to Wellbery, this was not the "aim of Romantic rhetorical theory" (191). Hence, De Quincey's goal is not "to establish rules governing the attainment of communicative influence, but to expose the operations that, prior to artfulness and yet exemplified in all art, are constitutive of human experience" (191). Early attempts to ascribe more coherence and system to De Quincey's comments on style than they contain, or to map his theory of literature onto that of style, have proven unsatisfactory.[4] De Quincey's commentaries on prose composition cannot be taken as a coherent whole because, as Burwick explains, the "essay itself, as De Quincey defines it, is a rhetorical act, based upon paradox and developed with polemic skill." Therefore, "we must keep in mind that De Quincey attempted only an informal commentary" (*Selected Essays* xi). De Quincey's medium of communication by definition defies a coherent theory.

Two more factors contribute to the lack of coherence in the case of "Style." One was De Quincey's inability to restrict himself to the editorial limits of magazine articles. Grevel Lindop explains that the composition of this series caused "inordinate trouble" for De Quincey. He produced an "enormous footage of material" with several versions of some passages and an overall length that far exceeded publishable dimensions. For De Quincey, who thought that "the history of style involved the entire history of civilisation" ("St." 3), as Lindop puts it, the subject was almost inexhaustible. This resulted in rewriting, cutting, and freely rearranging over a considerable period of time, which left De Quincey with a feeling that there might be "some discontinuity" ("St." 4). The incompleteness and "discontinuity," as

De Quincey describes it, are arguably not only due to the nature of the medium, the essay as "a rhetorical act," and De Quincey's trouble with composition, but also to the elusive nature of the topic. P. W. K. Stone reminds us that the "Romantic theory of composition could not, by its very nature, receive precise formulation" (126) because the "Romantic critics are … positively hostile to any conception of poetry as an 'art' which is learnt and practised according to established principles" (120). De Quincey's difficulties organising his material and his subsequent fears of "some discontinuity" may well be the result of the inherent difficulty that his undertaking presents. After all, De Quincey argues that the art of style cannot be "learnt and practised," as Stone puts it. Pinning down a theory that depends on elusive unconscious processes proved harder than De Quincey might have thought at the outset of the project.

De Quincey nevertheless manages to include, scattered over the four instalments of "Style," a progressive argument that consolidates the notion of language as an integral part of thought and that implicitly relies on unconscious processes. Despite the inconsistency in the various definitions of style, De Quincey "has created a means to examine the interrelationships of thought and emotion and of form and content in more perceptive detail than had previously been possible" (Burwick, *Selected Essays* xlviii). It is this symbiosis of "form and content" that explicitly addresses the supposed dichotomy of language and thought, which is at the centre of the following analysis. Various passages that deal with the way language and thought interact and depend on each other reveal implications about the mental faculty. The recurrent equation of style and thought shows strong affinities to the intuitive, unconscious mentation of cognitive theories.

"Style No. I" begins with a list of three points of the British "national character" that—though no cause for shame—"trouble the uniformity of our feelings" ("St." 4), according to De Quincey. Number three is the principle that sets the "matter above the

manner, the substance above the external show" ("St." 6), which De Quincey finds especially lamentable when it comes to language. To regard the content of a book, for example, as paramount and distinct from the style in which it is written, means to neglect a vital part of the text. De Quincey argues in favour of the intricate entanglement of style and content, which must be considered as a unity. In the public opinion, however, the unity of "matter" and "manner" ("St." 6) is dismissed even though "Nobody can be insensible to these effects." To account for this paradox, De Quincey specifies that "to feel is not to feel consciously." This feeling first manifests itself as an "unwilling and mysterious sense" ("St." 7). The ambiguity of the formulation here suggests that not only are people reluctant to avow this convergence, but also that the said "sense" is transfiguratively attributed to a reluctance to manifest itself. Although everybody appreciates the style of a book and is affected by it, this appreciation is by definition not a conscious operation. De Quincey repeats here in different words part of his argument on the literature of power, namely that the effects of style upon the reader take place without awareness. Appreciating language and especially appreciating style is mainly an unconscious process.

After the initial regret about the insufficient attention paid to the style of a written work, De Quincey shifts the focus to the unconscious process that characterises the production of language. In order to theorise how style is at times inextricably connected to content, De Quincey elaborates the distinction between those cases in which style is a vital part of the effect and meaning of a text and those in which style is merely a separate ornate extra, which is how it is generally seen. At the end of the first issue of "Style," he defines two separate fields, "*organology*" and "*mechanology*:"

> The word *style* has with us a twofold meaning; one sense, the narrow one, expressing the mere *synthesis onomaton*, the syntaxis or combination of words into sentences; the other of far wider extent, and expressing all

> possible relations that can arise between thoughts and words—the total effect of a writer, as derived from manner. Style may be viewed as an *organic* thing and as a *mechanic* thing. By organic, we mean that which, being acted upon, reacts—and which propagates the communicated power without loss. By mechanic, that which, being impressed with motion, cannot throw it back without loss, and therefore soon comes to an end. The human body is an elaborate system of organs: it is sustained by organs. But the human body is exercised as a machine, and, as such, may be viewed in the arts of riding, dancing, leaping &c., subject to the laws of motion and equilibrium. Now the use of words is an organic thing, in so far as language is connected with thoughts, and modified by thoughts. It is a mechanic thing, in so far as words in combination determine or modify each other. The science of style, as an organ of thought, of style in relation to the ideas and feelings, might be called the *organology* of style. The science of style, considered as a machine, in which words act upon words, and through a particular grammar, might be called the *mechanology* of style. ("St." 24–25)

This passage focuses on the intriguing interconnection that De Quincey establishes between thought and language. Again he distinguishes form from content but this time in order to fuse them anew and to consolidate his argument about their interrelation. According to this definition, language does not merely represent but embodies ideas, if the writer is capable of adopting such a dialectical style in which language is not merely a passive carrier of meaning but plays an active part in establishing it.

Language becomes an integral part of mental action. Ideas are not self-sufficient, but depend on the act and manner of articulation, which in turn constitutes a vital part of the very ideas articulated. In Taylor's words, "Expressive meaning cannot be fully separated from the

medium, because it is only manifest in it" (*Human* 221). In this sense, style is not only the mere "combination of words into sentences," but the amalgamation "between thoughts and words" ("St." 24). Organology is not restricted to abstract ideas. It includes "ideas *and feelings*" ("St." 25 emphasis added), which foregrounds the author and justifies De Quincey's claim that organology is most acutely at work in subjective writing, as he points out later in "Style." When style becomes an active agent in the process of communication, when it, "being acted upon, reacts," a synergy takes place. It culminates in style representing—in terminology analogous to that with which De Quincey discusses the cognitive effects of literature—"power without loss" ("St." 25), a catalyst of thoughts and feelings. What De Quincey proposes here is a dialectical theory of language, in which language is not only a passive medium of a message or simply ornamental, but also a fundamental element in the formation and articulation of what we think. As "an organ of thought" ("St." 25), style is a form of thinking in itself, cognition through expression.[5] De Quincey's terminology to discuss style, "*organology*" and "organ of thought," adds an additional dimension to this passage. He establishes—in particular for his contemporary readers—an inevitable association to the brain science and phrenology of the early nineteenth century. This connection is not coincidental but crucially informs his theory of how language and thought interact, to which I will return later in this chapter.

In "Style No. III" De Quincey further works out the difference between organology and mechanology and implicitly carries on the argument about unconscious mental processes. On the one hand, De Quincey proposes a "mechanic system" that allows the writer to avoid the common "faults" and "*friction* of style" ("St." 47). On the other hand, he adds that the organic system "will defy art to control it" ("St." 48). In short, mechanology can be analysed and taught according to a set of rules, whereas organology cannot be acquired via conscious deliberation:

> The modes of human feeling are inexhaustible; the forms by which feeling connects itself with thought are indefeasibly natural; the channels through which both impress themselves upon language are infinite. All these are imperturbable by human art: they are past the reach of mechanism: … And so of style: in that sense, under which we all have an interest in its free movement, it will for ever remain free. ("St." 47–48)

De Quincey here moves smoothly from "human feeling" via "thought" to "language" and declares the "organic" ("St." 25) processes that lead from one to the next as inscrutable, although he is arguably closing in on them in this very passage. The tone is elevated along a range of negatives—"inexhaustible," "indefeasibly natural," "infinite," and "imperturbable"—until it reaches the climactic declaration of freedom that hyperbolically concerns "all." De Quincey affirms the impossibility to know, let alone understand, the processes that lead to the expressive articulation, as well as the capricious independence of mentation and its transformation into language.

In this context, De Quincey describes the difficulties of investigating matters of style, claiming that the freedom of style restricts the freedom of the writer. The inability to come to grips with the study of style is not a result of a lack of things to see. There is too much to see, which paradoxically results in blindness, the opposite of Milton's "darkness visible," as it were. Infinity remains inapprehensible because there is no orientation, categorisation, or any other mode of etymological order that would enable the observer to scrutinise what he sees. It is the abundance of "modes of human feeling," "forms" of connection with thought, and "channels" ("St." 47) of communication—or "all possible relations" ("St." 24) as De Quincey puts it in the previous passage on organology—that make it seemingly impossible to get hold of their principles or systems.

Control over composition is consequently even more restricted than knowledge of one's own thoughts, entirely "past the reach of mechanism" ("St." 47). Similarly, "Herder thinks language is always to a certain extent beyond our individual control" but vital in "ordering, separating, and connecting our concepts and thoughts" (Spencer 248). As opposed to the cognitive categories of implicit thought and intuition, De Quincey here specifically refers to conscious control. While this is not or only partially possible, intuitively the principles of organology can be applied. As the unconscious thought theory argues, the unconscious is more powerful than conscious thought when a lot of information has to be processed, and it also takes into consideration information of which one is not aware. The unconscious processing of ideas, Kihlstrom's implicit thought, enables the writer to access the "human feeling," "forms," and "channels" and create impassioned prose or literature of power that affects the reader in ways that in turn remain unconscious. In other words, mental processes that result in organological style are intuitive, unconscious, rational and uncontrollable, which describes an active and independently acting mind—the productive or cognitive unconscious—*par excellence*.

The recurrent notion of feeling in the discussion of style—such as the inclusion of feelings in the definition of organology and in the three elements that render organic style impenetrable ("St." 25, 47)—prepares for the next step in "Style No. IV." De Quincey establishes the degree of subjectivity of a given text as one of the variables that determines the significance of style: "in what proportion the thoughts are subjective, in that same proportion does their very essence become identical with the expression, and the style become confluent with the matter" ("St." 74). The more subjective a text is, the more it relies on the style of communication.[6] To this end, De Quincey distinguishes "*objective* knowledge" ("St." 66) and "*subjective* science" ("St." 67), with "science" here referring to knowledge or knowledge acquired through study without the modern notion of systematic research through

trustworthy and accredited methods.[7] The former deals with things that exist outside the mind, as in "philosophy, chemistry, physiology, astronomy, geology" ("St." 66–67). Similar to his theory of power and knowledge in literature, texts that communicate "*objective* knowledge" are not dependant on style because they transmit only facts and, therefore, "the matter transcends and oppresses the manner" ("St." 71). The "*subjective* science," however, draws everything "from the mind itself" ("St." 67), as in theology, geometry, metaphysics, or logic. The prevailing notion here and in most of the relevant passages is that of subjectivity of feeling, as De Quincey uses it in his discussion of literature of power, the poetry of Wordsworth, and the example that immediately follows his definition of "*subjective* science."[8]

The *ne plus ultra* of subjectivity—when a text is about the author's "peculiar feelings" and "his own way of viewing things," and the author's style "*is* the matter"—is "meditative poetry" ("St." 71):

> the problem before the writer is—to project his own inner mind; to bring out consciously what yet lurks by involution in many unanalysed feelings; in short, to pass through a prism, and radiate into distinct elements, what previously had been even to himself but dim and confused ideas, intermixed with each other. Now, in such cases, the skill with which detention or conscious arrest is given to the evanescent, external projection to what is internal, outline to what is fluxionary, and body to what is vague—all this depends entirely on the command over language, as the one sole means of embodying ideas. And, in such cases, the style, or, in the largest sense, *manner,* is confluent with the matter. ("St." 71)

This is the culmination of De Quincey's argument about the correlation of style and thought in this series of essays. The emphatic statement about the complete convergence of "*manner*"

and "matter," language and thought, contributes to our understanding of De Quincey's theory of cognition. The formulation in this passage clearly suggests the productive unconscious to the modern reader, or the subconscious in De Quincey's terms. If something has to be brought out "consciously" it is unconscious until the moment of expression. The "unanalysed feelings" and "dim and confused ideas" are at least indirectly present. They are never completely absent as the list of attributes shows. The ideas are "evanescent," "internal," "fluxionary," and "vague," but not wholly out of reach. The phrases "detention" and "conscious arrest" further indicate the reluctance of unconscious material to move into the realm of consciousness.

The metaphor of the prism to disentangle "what yet lurks by involution" ("St." 71) illustrates that normally such a separation does not take place; however, it is possible. This implies that what eventually reaches consciousness is not identical with the unconscious "unanalysed feelings;" or as Spencer makes the case regarding Herder, "through articulating our inner sensations, those sensations are themselves transformed" (Spencer 249). The prismatic transformation contains the idea of a whole that makes sense as such and does not readily show its distinct parts. There is, furthermore, the implication of the hidden potential, that of the rainbow colours, whereas usually only a clear white light can be perceived. The act of expression enables the author to disentangle "what yet lurks by involution in many unanalysed feelings" ("St." 71) and is the fountain of potential riches stashed in the catacombs of the mind. Taylor argues that Herder's work implicitly contains the idea that "the development of new modes of expression enables us to have new feelings, more powerful or more refined, and certainly more self-aware. In being able to express our feelings, we give them a reflective dimension that transforms them" ("Herder" 98). Although the transformative element is more pronounced in Taylor's reading of Herder, the prismatic transformation also

contains this notion. Most attributes in this quotation can be applied to De Quincey's argument above.

The whole project of turning the internal external depends on language: "Through language we can bring to explicit awareness what we formerly only had an implicit sense of" (*Human* 256–57).[9] De Quincey makes the same point in similar terms about Kant's choice of terminology: "When Kant assigned the names, he created the ideas; i.e. he drew them within the consciousness" (*WTDQ* 3: 93). Burke's rhetoric is also assigned the power to manifest the unconscious. The dynamic "motion" of language, as opposed to the static representation of thought, is the crux:

> Motion propagated motion, and life threw off life. The very violence of a projectile, as thrown by *him*, caused it to rebound in fresh forms, fresh angles, splintering, coruscating, which gave out thoughts as new (and that would at the beginning have been as startling) to himself as they are to his reader. (*WTDQ* 16: 219)

The implied argument in "Style" that thoughts retained in expressive language are new to the writer himself is here explicitly stated. Burke, as De Quincey strikingly puts it elsewhere, is "thinking in and by his figures" (*WTDQ* 6: 177). In the definition of "meditative poetry" and the passage on Burke language is again—and even more acutely than in the previous examples—not solely a way to communicate but part of the thing communicated; it is "the one sole means" ("St." 71).

Burke is not only of interest as the object of De Quincey's commentaries, but also as a theorist who attributes a similar power to words and who posits a similar lack of control over language. In the last part of *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, Burke discusses the effects and power of words. He argues that they are more powerful than visual images because of the multi-layered resonance they can have.

In language, Burke argues, we can "make such *combinations* as we cannot possibly do otherwise" (158). He is particularly interested in the representation of ideas that cannot be conceived of or transmitted through images but that are "not presentable but by language" (159). His distinction of "clear expression" and "strong expression" (159) evokes De Quincey's distinction of mechanology and organology in that the "former regards the understanding; the latter belongs to the passions" (159–60), i.e. "what yet lurks by involution in many unanalysed feelings" ("St." 71). Only by adopting "those modes of speech that mark a strong and lively feeling in himself" (160)—when "feeling connects itself with thought" ("St." 47)—can the author voice more than the mere representational meaning of single words and achieve more profound insights through "that union of affecting words" (155). Thus, Burke also considers language a necessary tool to conceptualise ideas that go beyond the mere representation of "simple ideas" (149) and at the same time serves as an ideal example for De Quincey.

While the unconscious must be captured through and retained in language because "reflective consciousness only comes to exist in its expression" (*Human* 229), the necessary "command over language" remains out of conscious reach. The image of the "projectile" in the account of Burke nicely illustrates the lack of control. It is impossible to predict how it would "rebound," "splinter," and "coruscat[e]." The freedom of style becomes the logic prerequisite if it is to represent something the writer cannot access consciously. If language is to embody unconscious material part of it must equally be "past conscious reach." Richard Woodhouse's report of the table talk at a dinner of 8 December 1821 touches upon the same issue of the independent power of the mind. He reports De Quincey's belief that many people share similar thoughts, though the way they utter their thoughts differs: "the principal difference in the writings of men was to be traced to the mode in which *their minds lead them* to embody, or he should rather say to incarnate their thoughts in language" (Woodhouse 28

emphasis added). The "command over language, as the one sole means of embodying ideas" ("St." 71) depends on "the mode their minds lead them." While the independently and hence unconsciously acting mind is often implied, it is here explicitly depicted as the agent that directs the process of expression. Hence, "in cases of genuine articulation, we only know afterwards what we are trying to identify" (*Human* 258). Style, and therefore language, become "confluent with the matter" or—in the better-known Wordsworthian phrase—the "*incarnation* of thought" ("St." 73).

Modern cognitive theories of how language and thought interact vary to a large extent. Andy Clark distinguishes, similar to De Quincey's account of mechanic and organic style, the role of language as "a medium for expressing ideas" (165) from its role as a "resource which complements" (167) thought. He calls the latter the "supra-communicative" dimension, which is a tool to enhance and transform thoughts. It does not only carry the meaning of our "inner code" (165) but elicits "concepts, strategies and learning trajectories which are simply not available" (173) in any other way. In some cases thoughts seem to depend on language. Clark speculates whether there is "a species of thought which is not just reflected in, or extended by, our use of words but is directly dependent upon language for its very existence" (177). Interestingly, Clark—like De Quincey—uses poetry as a primary example: "In constructing a poem, we do not simply use words to express thoughts. Rather, it is often the properties of the words (their structure and cadence) which determine the thoughts that the poem comes to express" (176). This observation leads him to the conclusion that the "supra-communicative" level of language is most pertinent in "second-order cognitive dynamics", i.e. "self-evaluation" or "self-criticism" (177). The same argument is part of De Quincey's outline of the role of language. In his discussion of the "subjective science" ("St." 67) and "meditative poetry" ("St." 71), he explains that the more cognition is concerned with its own internal contents the more thought and language are in a productive interplay. Language helps give

shape to and articulate thoughts, which results—in Clark's terms—in "linguistic formulations" that import "genuine novelties onto our cognitive horizons" (180).

Neurophysiological research is helpful to understand how implicit thought and language possibly interact, which reveals further connections between De Quincey's and modern theories. Antonio and Hanna Damasio argue that three different brain structures are involved in processing language: first, "a large collection of neural systems … represents nonlanguage interactions between the body and its environment, as mediated by varied sensory and motor systems—that is to say, anything that a person does, perceives, thinks or feels while acting in the world;" second, "a smaller number of neural systems … represent phonemes, phoneme combinations and syntactic rules for combining words;" and third, a "set of structures … mediates between the first two" (89). This tripartite division of brain structures tentatively captures De Quincey's theory of style, in which he proposes that thoughts and language are mediated and result in new combinations and concepts. De Quincey argues that language is necessary to externalise "what yet lurks by involution," ideas that are "intermixed with each other" ("St." 71). Similarly, the neuroscientific argument asserts that records of internal and external objects are held in the "brain's many 'convergence' regions," in which neuron impulses from various regions of the brain converge and cause activation of other brain regions. "The essential properties of the entities and processes in any interaction are thus represented in an *interwoven* fashion" (Damasio and Damasio 91 emphasis added), they are "intermixed" and lurk "by involution" ("St." 71). Furthermore, Damasio and Damasio think that the simultaneous categorization "along many different dimensions" makes the "symbolic representation such as metaphor" (91) possible. It is the prerequisite for Burke's "thinking in and by his figures" (*WTDQ* 6: 177), which results in "linguistic formulations [that] are seen as novel both in content and in structure" (Clark 180).

De Quincey's discussion of the connection between thoughts and language represents his notion of the nature and contents of the unconscious. Even though he does not put it explicitly in his discussion of style, it becomes clear—in particular in connection with his usage of *subconscious*—that his conception of unconscious contents hardly differs from conscious mental contents. The unconscious is not a realm of the repressed and distorted that becomes manifest in disguise, but the realm of the unrealised and unmeditated that can arise to consciousness, in this case through language. De Quincey provides language as an alternative means to externalise the internal or to manifest the unconscious, in cases where intuition and insight do not readily provide access to what one knows without knowing.

From "Involution" to "Involutes:" The Semantic Shift from Language to Thought

The apex of De Quincey's argument on the convergence of style and thought and the inherent implications about the independently acting mind takes us to his theory of involutes—the associationistic constructs that combine various thoughts into one mental representation—which he develops in *Suspiria* (1845) and "A Sketch from Childhood No. VI" (1852). Between 1821 and 1840, De Quincey repeatedly describes stylistic obscurity as *involution*. Until the last instalment of "Style," in which *involution* for the first time explicitly refers to the mind, the term had mainly been used to describe overly complicated formulations as purely a matter of style. This move that bridges language and thought terminologically, as it were, begins to show long before 1841 and eventually leads to the coinage of *involutes*. Situating this change within a comparison of other instances of *involution* in De Quincey's corpus illustrates that the step from involution in style to involution of mind and later to mental involutes is easily and logically made. The term De Quincey had been using over years to discuss language, turns out to be the perfect basis for his coinage of *involutes*.

The history of the changing meaning of involution nicely illustrates how language and thought interweave in De Quincey's thinking. Rzepka also traces De Quincey's idea from

literature of power in "On Languages," to involution in "Style," and involutes in *Suspiria* (*Sacramental* 71). However, he only considers the last instance of "involution" in "Style," which clearly refers to the mind, and hence does not explain the move from involution in language to mental involutes. "Style" contains the key to the shift from the linguistic to the mental concept: if style is the "*incarnation* of thought" ("St." 73), stylistic involution must stem from mental involution. De Quincey's discovery runs inversely. His observation about stylistic involution leads him to the concept of mental involutes.

The first record of De Quincey's discussion of "involution" is not to be found in his own writing, but in Woodhouse's *Cause Book*. De Quincey seems to have briefly outlined different kinds of style at the dinner of 8 December 1821. He explained what he later termed mechanology in the following way: "Style, in strictness, applied to the grammar & syntax of a sentence, to the order & connection of words, to the existence or absence of *involution* in the Sentence, & to the general intelligibility, music, ability, grace, elegance, vulgarity, or obscurity of the written or spoken matter, so far as depended upon the wording" (Woodhouse 29 emphasis added). This is the first of many instances of "involution" used to describe a defective style, which obscures the intelligibility of a text with circumstantial and cumbersome formulations.

In 1823 De Quincey makes the general point that the "construction, synthesis, composition, arrangement, and involution of words" can "obstruct the reader" (*WTDQ* 3: 25), applying "involution" to the mechanic aspect of language. At the same time—hinting towards his notion of organology—he argues that in Richter's case, "verbal obscurities are not due to this (mechanic) involution, but the necessary result and product of his style of thinking" (*WTDQ* 3: 24). It is from Richter's "lyrical style of connexion, and the prodigious fund of knowledge on which he draws for his illustrations and his images, that his obscurity arises" (*WTDQ* 3: 24). His style is not the result of a lack of attention to verbal clarity. It stems from

the mediation of his thought in language, which—in order to be accurate—must have a certain amount of complexity and a number of "verbal obscurities." While De Quincey clearly outlines some connection between thought and style here, "involution" is strictly applied to the mechanology of a text.

The same applies to various other passages. In "Elements of Rhetoric," for example, De Quincey considers "German rhetoric" as "a nonentity" because of its "enormous parenthetic involutions" (*WTDQ* 6: 182). Two years later, he complains in "Kant in his Miscellaneous Essays" about the "German prolixity and involution" (*WTDQ* 7: 52) and Kant's own "tortuous involution" (*WTDQ* 7: 61) of style. Eventually, in "Style [No. I]" *involution* is used three times ("St." 15, 21, 26). Two instances come just before and after the passage that describes the mechanology/organology dichotomy. In line with the previous examples, these instances describe a wordy, awkward, and poorly organised style, either as "the cumbrous involution of parts within parts" or the laudable "absence of all cumbrous involution" ("St." 21, 26). In all these examples involution describes a lack of clarity that stems from the authors' failure to disentangle their writing, which results in an obstruction to the understanding.

Early on in "Style [No. I]," De Quincey explains one cause of an involuted style, which he calls "the periodic involution." The "decomplex intercalations," which are the consequence of hurried composition, can be avoided by careful rewriting. The result is not equal to but foreshadows the expressive dimension in organology:

> Every man who has had any experience in writing, knows how natural it is for hurry and fulness of matter to discharge itself by vast sentences, involving clause within clause *ad infinitum*—how difficult it is, and how much a work of time, to break up this huge fasciculus of cycle and epicycle into a graceful succession of sentences, long intermingled with short, each

> modifying the other, and arising musically by links of spontaneous connexion. ("St." 15)

The initial discharge is often a necessary first step in composition but it must be followed by careful, considerate, and time-consuming revision. Paradoxically, this process results in "links of *spontaneous* connexion" (emphasis added) that are revealing to the reader as much as to the author. This "spontaneous" outcome contrasts with the elaborate work of the writer, the extended effort to reshape the language so as to present the argument in the clearest possible way. How can something so elaborate produce a "spontaneous" result? This paradox is resolved, though, because the disentangling of the "fasciculus" of language goes hand in hand with the disentangling of thoughts. The "links of spontaneous connexion" are not artificial because it is through the interaction of the thought and language that they are established in the process of writing and revising.

A proper representation of thought through style bears the mark of revision; otherwise it remains unintelligible and too "cumbrous" for the reader. Only the author who "revises" achieves the proper articulation of his thoughts, as opposed to stream-of-consciousness writing or free writing. The fault De Quincey perceives in Jeremy Taylor's work is that the latter "writes like one who never revises" (*WTDQ* 6: 172). Whereas De Quincey often complained about the pressure to write hurriedly, his publisher William Tait tells a different story: "As to *hurry*, or rapidity of writing, I … can only say that he has always told me that he composes *very slowly*; that his language costs him a great deal of attention; that he studies the connection of every sentence with its neighbours" (qtd. in Morrison, *Biography* 303). In a brief undated note from *Brevia* De Quincey—"In a more candid mood" (*Biography* 303) as Morrison puts it—approves of slow writing as a sign of quality: "Instead of being any compliment it is the most profound insult, the idea one can write something rapidly. It is no homage to the writer; it is villainous insensibility to the written" (*WTDQ* 21: 147). De

Quincey painstakingly revised his texts in an attempt to provide as clear and accurate an argument as the scope of language would allow him and to attain the prized expressiveness of organology. In this sense, the passage on the "spontaneous connexion" ("St." 15) lies in between the reductionist mechanology and the expressive organology.[10]

In "On the Present Stage of the English Language," the essay he begins with a discussion of neologisms, De Quincey elaborates his previous notions of style. He widens the discussion, as most critics agree, by adding a third, additional definition, which hovers somewhere between the two other modes of style. The reductionist and largely unelaborated mechanology from the essay "Style" is taken further than the mere "combination of words into sentences" ("St." 24) to include the functions of "brighten[ing] the *intelligibility*" and "regenerat[ing] the normal *power* and impressiveness of a subject" (*WTDQ* 17: 66). It still is explicitly considered "the *dress* of thought" (*WTDQ* 17: 67) in these cases, but is nevertheless compared to "the original *discovery* of truth" (*WTDQ* 17: 66). While this definition of style is still distinct from the notion of organology, the scope is much wider than that of mechanology. It is not only a means to keep clear from obstructions to the understanding but actually a tool to actively further understanding and bears a clear connection to thought.

This new distinction explains why De Quincey effects the leap from involution in writing to involutes in thinking. The extended discussion of style and how thoughts should be ideally represented in language eventually leads to the conclusion that involution is not only a stylistic but also a mental concept. Language cannot be clearer than thought, but it can have the power to articulate it. Hence, De Quincey applies "involution" in his discussion of "meditative poetry" to the author's "own inner mind" ("St." 71). Indeed, in this passage from "Style" "involution" comes for the first time with the same meaning as "*involutes*" in *Suspiria*, which marks the change of sense. Bringing "out consciously what yet lurks by involution" means to resolve and disentangle this involution, which in turn results in a

representation of the "unanalysed feelings" ("St." 71), the convergence of manner and matter. De Quincey explicitly formulates this equation in an undated note from *Brevia*: "Style is the disentangling of thoughts or ideas reciprocally involved in each other" (*WTDQ* 21: 144). This formulation combines the interweaving of language and thought and reduces it effectively to its very essence. It suggests his concept of "*involutes*" and relates it to style. The crucial implications are that "thoughts or ideas" that are "reciprocally involved," i.e. involutes, can be separated and that the means to achieve this—"the one sole means" ("St." 71)—is "style."

Language fulfils the role of the prism and presents the spectral parts of the "inner mind" ("St." 71). De Quincey defines "*involutes*" in *Suspiria* as "perplexed combinations of *concrete* objects, … compound experiences incapable of being disentangled" (*S* 142). It seems that by definition, involutes cannot be taken apart and broken up into their distinct elements, which would allow an analysis. However, this definition is set between two passages in which De Quincey does take apart an involute. Explaining how he snuck into Elizabeth's room, where she lay on her deathbed, De Quincey interrupts the scene most effectively and somewhat disturbingly just before he turns around to look at his dead sister. In this interlude he discusses the involutes and—as he explains how summer "had connected itself with death not merely as a mode of antagonism, but also through intricate relations to Scriptural scenery and events" (*S* 143)—he describes different parts of the involute related to his sister's death.[11]

In his essays on style De Quincey takes the crucial step toward his terminology of unconscious mental constructs. The word with which De Quincey first discusses language becomes a word to talk about the mind, which seems to be a logical continuation considering the proximity of the two in De Quincey's thinking. The close affinity of language and mental processes leads De Quincey to adopt quite naturally a critical term in his discussion of the mind. Just as the involution of style can be avoided through rewriting, mental involutes can be

disentangled through rethinking and reworking. As revision can resolve involution in writing, introspection—which by definition must be retrospection and therefore a kind of rewriting—can resolve mental involutes. Rewriting his life turns into self-disclosure and plays a vital part in gaining insight into his own mind because it enables him to draw forth unconscious material and to disentangle the involutes. De Quincey is not simply recording, inventing, or reinscribing his past; he is revealing it to himself through the act of composition.

Language, Dreams, Music, and the Body

The assertion that language can constitute an "external projection to what is internal" ("St." 71) inevitably brings to mind the same argument De Quincey makes about dreams. At the same time, dreams are dependent on language and every transposition of a dream into spoken or written words is a kind of translation. Composition does not only reveal the past, it also reveals dreams. Language has this power because despite its evident discursive nature it is intuitive, i.e. not amenable to conscious control but nevertheless rational, in its most expressive mode of organology. Passages from *Suspiria* and "The Vision of Sudden Death" indicate that the expressiveness in language relies on musical elements such as rhythm, cadence, and pace, as various authors had argued in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. According to Alan Richardson, these "extrasemantic properties of speech" (*British* 80) render language an embodied experience. De Quincey implicitly makes the same point in "Style" and argues in favour of language as being embodied and thus acquiring its expressive power.

In the *Confessions*, dreams have the power to unveil unconscious mental contents, which contain all the things unremembered but not forgotten. Anticipating the palimpsest metaphor in *Suspiria*, De Quincey states in the *Confessions* that

> there is no such thing as *forgetting* possible to the mind; a thousand accidents may, and will interpose a veil between our present consciousness

> and the secret inscriptions on the mind; accidents of the same sort will also rend away this veil; but alike, whether veiled or unveiled, the inscription remains for ever; just as the stars seem to withdraw before the common light of day, whereas, in fact, we all know that it is the light which is drawn over them as a veil—and that they are waiting to be revealed when the obscuring daylight shall have withdrawn. (*C* 67)[12]

Like language, dreams reveal and thus bring into consciousness "the secret inscriptions on the mind." It is not so much a question of "*forgetting*," but of conscious material withdrawing into the unconscious or turning implicit, in the modern psychological terminology. Dreams can bring this unconscious content back into consciousness. The abundance of light, i.e. consciousness, is the "veil" that causes obscurity. This rhetorical paradox is similar to De Quincey's point that the sheer abundance of "feelings," "forms," and "channels" ("St." 47) hinders the writer from having conscious control over organic style. Consciousness stands in its own way and bars the path, until the "daylight shall leave" and reveal the starry sky of the unconscious. In such "dreams like intuitions" one encounters "the whole and every part" (*C* 67) simultaneously. While dreams reveal "the whole and every part," they often remain mysterious and hieroglyphic. Language, however, disentangles "what yet lurks by involution" (*C* 71) and furnishes a more accessible and more understandable rendition of unconscious contents.

Dreams, in other words, depend on language. As much as language is revelatory, revelatory dreams are essentially captured and shaped through language. It is a crucial part of the externalisation of dreams. Whereas dreams depend on language to be comprehensible, language can function on its own because it is self-articulating. The equation of the two is inadequate because they are not commensurate means to externalise unconscious contents. The traffic goes both ways, though: as language has the ability to externalise dreams, dreams

in some cases have the ability to internalise language. Dreams often contain a kind of language in the form of signs and symbols that appear, or dream figures that speak. *Suspiria* provides some elements that illustrate the kind of interaction that takes place between language and dreams and that corroborate the primal role of language. Dream visions depend on language, in order to disclose some of their contents.

Suspiria, the highly praised embodiment of De Quincey's striving for impassioned prose, specifically addresses this dream/language interplay and the role assigned to language in dreams. In a letter to Professor Lushington, De Quincey writes that "These final 'Confessions' [i.e. *Suspiria de Profundis*] are the *ne plus ultra*, as regards the feeling and the power to express it, which I can ever hope to attain" (*Life* 254). The "feeling" and the "power" of expression—both in their quality of being unconscious—are the foundations of organology. In the "Introductory Notice" to *Suspiria*, De Quincey claims that this "power to express" is also present in his dreams: "the imagery of my dreams … translated every thing into their own language" (*S* 132). In some cases this language is explicit and clear. The "Dark Interpreter," that (occasionally distorting) mirror of the self, speaks directly to De Quincey at times. His "leading function" is "to recall" and "to place before you … commentaries, … pointing the moral or deciphering the mystery" (*S* 185n). The Dark Interpreter does not only unveil symbols but can actually whisper and say things directly. He reveals the meaning and interpretation of the imagery and symbols of dreams. In this case, expressive language is internalised and fulfils its function within the dream. The unconscious becomes tangible without De Quincey expressing it verbally. This, however, is the exception.

The language of Levana is of a different, more mysterious nature and more representative of language in dreams in general. Her language is symbolic and therefore not directly apprehensible. In "Levana and our Ladies of Sorrow," De Quincey specifically addresses the symbolic nature of language in dreams and the role of the dreamer as translator.

> Mighty phantoms like these disdain the infirmities of language. They may utter voices through the organs of man when they dwell in human hearts, but amongst themselves is no voice nor sound—eternal silence reigns in *their* kingdoms. *They* spoke not as they talked with Levana. *They* whispered not. *They* sang not. Though oftentimes methought they might have sung; for I upon earth had heard their mysteries oftentimes deciphered by harp and timbrel, by dulcimer and organ. Like God, whose servants they are, they utter their pleasure, not by sounds that perish, or by words that go astray, but by signs in heaven—by changes on earth—by pulses in secret rivers—heraldries painted on darkness—and hieroglyphics written on the tablets of the brain. *They* wheeled in mazes; *I* spelled the steps. *They* telegraphed from afar; *I* read the signals. *They* conspired together; and on the mirrors of darkness *my* eye traced the plots. *Theirs* were the symbols,—*mine* are the words. (*S* 179)

In his encounters with Levana and the three sisters of sorrow, De Quincey becomes the Dark Interpreter and his understanding depends on language. He is not simply the receiver of legible messages because the "phantoms" do not engage in the "infirmities of language." Everything remains to be translated from "signs," "pulses," "heraldries," and "hieroglyphics." De Quincey has to "spell"—contemplate, decipher, and utter—the phantoms' sudden and frantic movements and piece together their schemes from codified, mirrored messages; his "are the words," which are necessary to understand the "symbols." Without language dreams remain out of reach and cannot be externalised and become part of conscious experience. The symbolic messages in dreams and visions evoke "the solemn remembrances that lie hidden below," but they are furthermore of a "half-sportive interlusory" (*WTDQ* 19: 18) nature. There is no constancy in them and no fixed meaning. The dreamer's conclusion leaves us

with the realisation that language, though it can be part of dreams, often is the necessary tool to externalise dreams. The dream-language is such that the dreamer must decipher it to get hold of the dream, which must be done through language. The dreamer relies on his own "words," which are not to be found in the dream itself. They have a similar function in the disclosure of dreams as they have in the disclosure of thoughts.[13]

The question remains: In what respect does language have revelatory powers akin to those of dreams and opium visions? How can an apparently discursive means attain an intuitive result as De Quincey argues the case for organology? The only audible element of Levana, i.e. music, points to the solution of this question, which De Quincey does not address directly. Musical elements in language are the key. M. H. Abrams mentions that after Herder, "music came to be regarded as the art that is most purely expressive" (93). Hans Aarsleff adds that for Condillac "language in the beginning was a total union of poetry and music" (379), but the two were separated due to language having "to serve the needs of practical experience and rational thought" (380). The attempt to restore or draw forth the musical element in language can, therefore, be seen as an attempt to recover "the original expressiveness of the first poetic language" (380). Richardson, finally, broadens the scope and points out that thinkers as various as Condillac, Herder, Rousseau, Darwin, Cabanis, and Reid believed that "rhythm is a 'natural' aspect of speech, closely related to its highly emotive character" (*British* 79). These accounts of the late eighteenth-century belief that language, rhythm (or more generally music), and expressiveness are intertwined and partly define human communication explain De Quincey's interest in musical variation and harmony in composition. Aarsleff's comment particularly brings to mind De Quincey's distinction between knowledge and power, or that between mechanology and organology. The Romantics believed that the expressive dimension of language is defined by its musical quality, and expressiveness is one of the key functions of De Quincey's organology.

De Quincey also shows great interest in the rhythmic, musical, and harmonious elements of language, which stems from this belief that it thus carries more meaning than the mere sum of the words. Lance Snyder—focusing on De Quincey's literature of power—suggests that the "cadence and cumulative movement [of language] can go beyond signification and virtually embody the rhythms of unconscious thought, or memory" (694). Therefore, De Quincey "models his own artistry in prose after the polyphonic variations in music" (695). The comment on music as an "intellectual … pleasure" (*C* 48) in the *Confessions* and the complaint about Jeremy Taylor's failure to try "the effect upon his ear of his periods as musical wholes" (*WTDQ* 6: 172) confirm this point. Musicality is crucial because it is a part of language that reaches the human being directly; it can speak to the intellect at the same time as it stirs us at an intuitive level. Musical elements in language therefore give it the expressive dimension that can get further than the mere meaning of words and reveal more to the writer himself than is consciously accessible.

There is ample evidence in De Quincey's comments on his own writing that his ideal was to compose texts with a high degree of musicality in order to achieve the expressiveness that allows the articulation of unconscious thought and triggers cognitive responses in the reader. His painstaking effort to imbue the texts with a certain cadence in order to let the "succession of sentences … aris[e] musically" ("St." 15) is conspicuously exemplified by his insistence that an accent be placed on "crownèd" (*WTDQ* 16: 442) in the last paragraph of "The Vision of Sudden Death." In one of the surviving manuscripts, De Quincey specifies in a footnote that "It is important to the rhythmus that this {↗ word *crowned*} should be read, and therefore should be printed, as a dissyllable—crownéd" (MS VSD E qtd. in *WTDQ* 16: 481).[14] Similarly, in the preface to the first volume of *Selections Grave and Gay* (1853), he reminds the reader of the "difficulty" in turning his "world of dreams" into written accounts because "a single false note, a single word in a wrong key, ruins the whole music" (*WTDQ*

20: 16). In another instance, De Quincey enlightens the critic who complains about the lack of brevity in *Suspiria* that the "true object" consists of the "wandering *musical* variations upon the theme" (*S* 135 emphasis added). De Quincey also informs the reader that the "Dream Fugue" should be viewed "as an attempt to wrestle with the utmost efforts of *music* in dealing with a colossal form of impassioned horror" (*WTDQ* 16: 430 emphasis added). Musicality shapes language in a way that enables the internal to become external; it carries meaning beyond the mere signification of words. The opium-eater uses rhythm and cadence, the interplay of short and long sentences, the choice of words that combine sound and meaning, and the careful placing of caesuras in his prose because of their expressive power.

Two manuscript passages related to *Suspiria*, that ultimately did not make it into print, further show just how close musical variation and unity align language with the unconscious: "Music:—I am satisfied [that] M. ‹is› involves a far greater mystery than we are aware of. It is y^t. universal language which binds together all creatures and {↗ binds them} by a far ‹gr› profounder part of their nature y^n any thing merely intellectual ever could" (Berg MS21689B qtd. in *WTDQ* 15: 565). The "intellectual" has to give way once more, this time to music, which acts as "y^t universal language" on our unconscious feelings and passions and touches upon the very core of being human. The second manuscript fragment is interesting because "music" is given as a discarded variant for "sighs," the very theme of *Suspiria*: "musing on the frailty of gener^{ations} and hearing thy ever sad steps to ‹music› {↗ sighs} of intercession and pity exhaling from their graves, suddenly raisest thy face to" (Harvard fMS Eng 974 qtd. in *WTDQ* 15: 546). "[M]usic" stems from the same depth as "sighs." It embodies what is not in the conscious realm, but at the same time it is the very embodiment of the self. In the following brief phrase, De Quincey brings it all together. In order to feel the "rapture of life," one must be open to "every deep note that sighs upwards from the Delphic caves of human life" (*S* 188). The music is represented by the "note," which "sighs upwards" and thus relates

in the oracular language of "the Delphic caves" "the vision of life" (*S* 188). Musical elements create the unity, the harmony, or the intuitive part in language.

This "organic" ("St." 25) aspect of language found in the musical, "extrasemantic properties of speech" (Richardson, *British* 80) is emotive and expressive because it communicates with and through the body. While Taylor omits the role of the body in his philosophical considerations of expressive language, Richardson includes it in his argument. He argues that "Wordsworth's generation inherited a thoroughly naturalistic approach, … increasingly grounding linguistic behaviour in human physiology rather than a disembodied mind." Various eighteenth-century authors sought "the origins of language in human physiology," elements of which later became part of the more sophisticated and artificial language of reason. Herder in particular posits "the dependence of language on physiology" (*British* 76), or, as Spencer puts it, "thought, language and the senses are all intertwined" (247). Not only was language considered to go beyond mere designation. It was also considered to be connected to the body through the organs and the senses.

In particular rhythm and cadence, which were core components of De Quincey's stylistic striving, were tied to the embodied experience of language. Wellbery comments on Wordsworth's and Friedrich Schlegel's conceptions of poetry: "the spontaneity of organic [corporeal] self-organization is the source of rhythmical song" (200) and "Rhythm," in turn, "introduces into the fury of uncontrolled passion a law of regularity" (201). Richardson draws a more immediate connection to the early Romantic discourse of the body: "Particularly for a poet who, like Wordsworth, composed out loud … the emphasis on extrasemantic, 'natural' features of language in post-Enlightenment linguistic and neuroscientific theory would be instantly appealing" (*British* 79). The idea here is that "Meter allows the rhythmic, passionate character of 'natural language' to flow into articulate language" (*British* 80). The numerous comments on the musical aspects of other writers' and, particularly, his own prose indicate

that De Quincey was thinking—and maybe implicitly so—the same way. He was interested in the musicality of language for the same reason that Wordsworth was interested in its "extrasemantic properties" (Richardson, *British* 80). He was striving to endow his "impassioned prose" with a certain cadence and rhythm, with the "universal language" of "Music" (Berg MS21689B qtd. in *WTDQ* 15: 565), that reaches the reader on an embodied unconscious level.

Modern theories have come to similar conclusions and bridge the gaps between language, music, and the body. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's early theoretical work shows how the embodied experience of the world shapes universal metaphors, or as they put it in an afterword, "primary metaphors arise from universal primary experiences" (259). In his more recent work, Johnson moves beyond the mere "bodily interactions with our environment" and instead takes into account the "deep, visceral origins of meaning" (x) that "the cognitive neurosciences" (xi) laid open. He argues that music has an expressive dimension because it is "bodily and felt;" its meaning, like the extrasemantic properties of language, consists of "patterns of neural activation that result from the ongoing interaction of organism and environment" (242, 242–43). Various cognitive and neuroscientific studies corroborate these claims about the embodied nature of language and music. While Raymond Gibbs confirms that "embodied activity is an essential part of the grounding for thought and language" (88), Aniruddh Patel suggests that language and music are "two systems that perform remarkably similar interpretive feats, converting complex acoustic sequences into perceptually discrete elements (such as words or chords) organized into hierarchical structures that convey rich meanings" (3). Although they appear to be "dramatically different," language and music show "deep connections in terms of cognitive and neural processing" (86). These scholars present modern scientific theories that explain and validate De Quincey's obsession with rhythm in his prose.

"Style [No. I]" contains passages that establish these connections between language, the body, and music at times implicitly and in some instances in an enticingly clear fashion. One function of the body in linguistic articulation is explicitly stated in De Quincey's discussion of local names. De Quincey illustrates the intuitive character of language with the general fitness of "local names:" "they are not inventions of any active faculty, but mere passive depositions from a real impression upon the mind" ("St." 10). Local names develop in accordance to the place, people, and circumstances without any deliberate—and therefore artificial—act of invention.[15] The passivity in De Quincey's passage only applies to conscious reasoning, while the mind actively receives, reworks, and processes data "from a real impression." *Impression* arguably does not designate a figurative or metaphorical concept but relates to sensory impressions. What people see, hear, feel, and smell leaves a mark on the mind that silently reverberates below the threshold of consciousness. The "passive depositions" are unconscious sensory inputs; in Kihlstrom's terms they are "unconscious mental *contents*" ("Unconscious" 177) that are processed and affect people's choice of local names without their awareness. The "impression" that reverberates and determines the nomenclature of natural features of a landscape is embodied.

The most compelling but possibly waylaying instance of the body in De Quincey's discussion of style is the very terminology with which he defines the expressive dimension of language: "organic" and "organology" ("St." 25). It is waylaying because in the critical discourse on Romantic literature, *organic* is "freighted with metaphysical import" (Richardson, *British* 70). While De Quincey may have had in mind Coleridge's "organic form," which "shapes as it develops itself from within" (*Lectures* 495), there was also a tradition in which the term referred to "the body and its material organization" rather than the Coleridgean notion of the "transcendent psyche" (Richardson, *British* 70). Lisa Ann Robertson further argues that "British organicism—including Coleridge's—takes its origin

from Darwin" (86, see also 87, 216). *Organic* can therefore be taken to describe the role of the body in the composition or reception of style as "an *organic* thing" ("St." 24). *Organology* bears even more explicit connotations to the body and in particular to the brain. When De Quincey applied the term in 1840, it had been in use for the comparatively short period of about twenty-five years. Before he adopted it to discuss stylistic matters, it was restricted to anatomical and physiological treatises. In Franz Joseph Gall's craniology, which later became famous under the denomination of phrenology, organology refers to the division of the brain into different areas, each of which is responsible for certain character traits or mental tasks. This connotation is supported by and supports the formulation of style as "an organ of thought," which could come straight from a phrenological treatise. Phrenology was widespread in the public discourse in the early nineteenth century and while De Quincey largely agreed with William Hamilton in dismissing phrenological theories, he showed some curiosity and interest on occasions (*WTDQ* 5: 321–26, 11: 249) and has some slight references to it in his works. He was well aware of the intrinsic connotation that he provokes with the choice of terminology here. It not only renders the proposed connection between language and thought much more acute for the contemporary reader, but also ties them to the physical organ, the brain, establishing the latter by implication as the material origin of thoughts and language. The recent coinage of the term in a strictly brain-related context suggests that De Quincey's "*organology*" refers to the body rather than to a metaphysical concept.

There is one more tentative agreement between De Quincey's musing on style and Gall's phrenology. We have seen that De Quincey considers "manner" and "matter," or style and content, as two inseparable components of language. Gall argues that form and function, i.e. anatomy and physiology, are also inseparable: "anatomy and physiology will in this way be blended together one with the other, that the knowledge of the nervous system will attain

its highest degree of perfection" (qtd. in Clarke and Jacyna 225). Just as language can only reach its "highest degree of perfection" in the combination of content and form, the physical architecture of the brain and the cerebral processes must be understood in their unison. Nineteen years before he published the first instalment of "Style," De Quincey in his *Confessions* discussed music in relation to the mental reaction that points at once towards his later work on style and explicitly takes into account the active contribution of the mind. Style, as "an *organic* thing" ("St." 24), and music are both expressive because they combine "*matter*" and "*form*" (*C* 48).

In the account of his regular opera visits he explains that the pleasurable effects of music are not due to mere reception of sensory impressions. People wrongly assume that "it is by the ear they communicate with music, and, therefore, that they are purely passive to its effects." De Quincey proposes the contrary: "it is by the re-action of the mind upon the notices of the ear, (the *matter* coming by the senses, the *form* from the mind) that the pleasure is constructed." It is tempting to read this passage in the context of early-nineteenth century discussions about the brain as the seat of the mind and as an active, physical organ of thought that processes data from sensory impressions. The mental "re-action" is automatic and unconscious. Thus, the voice of the singer and the sound of the instruments are the "*matter*," which is equivalent to the contents of a text. The manner in which they are perceived depends on the "*form*," which comes from the mind. In the cases of music as of language, one depends on the other and the mediation is through unconscious processes. De Quincey employs here the same elements he will later develop in his stylistic theories: form, matter, ideas, mental activity/reaction, and language. The discussion in the *Confessions* closes with the latter: "all that class of ideas, which can be available in such a case, has a language of representative feelings" (*C* 48). This is indeed the most intriguing confluence. The expressiveness of music is described as a kind of language.

Language and unconscious cognition are closer in De Quincey's thought than it seems at first and maybe even closer than he himself recognised. The linking element is music, or the musical elements of a language. Language, ideas, and music are inextricably connected: the ideas in music, which are apprehended intuitively, are considered a kind of language in the *Confessions* and in "Style" language is considered as a form of ideas. To complete this triangular relationship music is repeatedly brought into connection with language. There is also a fourth entity: the body. Nervous pathways, the brain, and their role in conscious but particularly in unconscious thought had become a widely believed concept by the time De Quincey started to write. Unconscious processes are indispensable in the externalisation of ideas and meanings through language and these processes are inextricably connected to the body via the senses and the active brain.

Conclusion

Ten years after the publication of "Style," De Quincey returned to the same issues with similar arguments and formulations. The all-encompassing organology remains largely the same in "On the Present Stage of the English Language," with the power to disentangle the mental involution, the involutes:

> There arises a case entirely different, where style cannot be regarded as the *dress* or alien covering, but where style becomes the *incarnation* of the thoughts. … Imagery is sometimes not the mere alien apparelling of a thought, and of a nature to be detached from the thought, but is the co-efficient that, being superadded to something else, absolutely *makes* the thought. (*WTDQ* 17: 67)

Style is raised to the same level as thought and language as the main driving force in the production of ideas. De Quincey repeats the same basic argument almost in the same words. He uses the same dress/incarnation dichotomy and insists that the combination of style and

"something else," presumably matter, creates a new entity. Style is not only a representation or embellishment but "*makes* the thought;" it constitutes and produces thought. This markedly differs from Coleridge's definition of the "best part of human language," which "is derived from reflection on the acts of the mind itself. It is formed by a voluntary appropriation of fixed symbols to internal acts, to processes and results of imagination" (*Biographia* 2: 54). De Quincey's "best part of human language," as it were, does not come from conscious "reflection" and "voluntary appropriation." The "internal acts" are not consciously denoted by but expressed through language.

Despite the general lack of unity and argumentative coherence within the four instalments of "Style"—Proctor places them among De Quincey's "most freely discursive … writings (which is saying a great deal)" (187)—they provide important insights into the mechanisms and convergences between language and thought. Although there are inconsistencies in other respects, the concept of organology and its dependence on unconscious processes is consistently developed and remains uniform. De Quincey moves from the initial definition of the convergence of style and matter as "*organology*" ("St." 25) to the unconscious and "free movement of style" ("St." 48), and finally to the explicit argument that language can produce an "external projection to what is internal" ("St." 71). From this point of view, "Style" contains a clearly visible progression of argument regarding the unconscious.

The focus on the role of language in mental processes reveals a number of crucial points. Language is one channel through which unconscious mental material—thoughts, and in particular feelings—manifests itself. Dreams, opium visions, and mesmeric trances are other such channels, although they partly depend on language. However, language markedly differs in that it is a conscious performance. At the same time, it paradoxically remains elusive in its revelatory function. The seeming control of the writer over style is only partial.

De Quincey proposes in many instances a highly intellectual unconscious realm, in which logical thinking takes place. If language is as much a physically determined, mental construct as feelings and ideas, and if we ascribe some kind of reasoning process to the unconscious, then one can assume that it can also be contained in what seems a reasoned process: language.

The convergence of matter and form is not only a question of language. Although it is essentially used in this context, its portents draw much wider circles. It is as applicable to the workings of the mind in more general terms as it is to the theory of style or the effects of music. Language, and specifically style, have intuitive qualities and as such they function according to rational and logical rules. They help us to understand and act in accordance with the myriads of sensory impressions that we receive every day. De Quincey's comments on place names, organology, and music manifest a material conception of cognition and a physical element in language. The products of the mind—feelings, ideas, beliefs—depend on the interaction of physical sense impressions with the physical organ of thought, the brain.

Part Two
The Body

> [T]he human mind is none other than this unconscious principle of intelligence individualized, become cognisant thereby of its own workings in the cerebrum, and deriving its ideas from its own constructive or material changes in the organ of mind.
>
> Thomas Laycock[1]

CHAPTER FOUR

Animal Magnetism, Physiology, and the Embodied Unconscious

The allusions to the body and in particular to the brain in "Style" ("organology") and the dream scene of Levana ("hieroglyphics written on the tablets of the brain") are by no means accidental. In the first half of the nineteenth century, physiological research into the nature and function of the nervous system and the brain was about to change the understanding of the role of the body and its relation to the mind, which was a highly contested topic.[2] The most famous dispute is the vitality debate in the mid-1810s between John Abernathy and Sir William Lawrence.[3] Despite some fierce criticism, theories such as phrenology and animal magnetism appealed to a wide audience amongst writers, scientists, and the general public.[4] Questions addressed the functions of the nerves and the brain; the role of the body, i.e. the physical organisation, in mental action; and, of course, the idea of the soul that was endangered by the embodied self. These debates also had implications for and a considerable impact on the conceptualisation of unconscious processes and contents.

Taylor and Shuttleworth argue that phrenology and associationism were the two most important "intellectual traditions in developing specific concepts of unconscious processes"

(67). While these "traditions" had a considerable impact on the changing conception of unconscious processes, two other movements can possibly claim the same or maybe an even bigger share in this advancement. I argue that animal magnetism and physiology were among the main factors in the growing notion of unconscious processes (a point De Quincey makes in his essay on William Hamilton). These two theories heavily influenced the conception of the interaction between the body and the mind, and of unconscious mental action. In the first half of the nineteenth century these theories significantly contributed to the growing conviction that the body and the mind interact in significant ways, and they opened the way to more cogent assumptions about embodied unconscious mental functions.

De Quincey was not only aware of but also participated in these debates, even if his involvement and contributions often remain indirect. While he published an article on animal magnetism in 1834, in the case of physiology explicit sources from De Quincey's pen are scarce. His engagement with animal magnetism and the more indirect repercussions of physiological theories in his work nevertheless indicate that he pursued conceptually and theoretically similar issues that addressed the body/mind relationship and unconscious processes, and that he adopted certain ideas and theories. The permeable boundaries between scientific and literary discourses in the nineteenth century favoured an exchange from which both sides profited.

Literature and Science in De Quincey's Time

In 1824, De Quincey argued that a fundamental change in culture leading toward specialisation and stratification was taking place, anticipating C. P. Snow's famous argument. De Quincey contemplated this development toward "extreme subdivision" (*WTDQ* 3: 184) in all strands of science and industry. In "Notes from the Pocket-Book of a Late Opium-Eater: No V.," he asserts that "we are of necessity more profound than our ancestors; but, for the same reason, less comprehensive than they." He regards it as an unstoppable and necessary

evolution: "generally, I think it is better for the interest of knowledge that the scholar should aim at profundity, and better for the interests of the individual that he should aim at comprehensiveness" (*WTDQ* 3: 185). The scholar has to give up his ideal state of "comprehensiveness" for the benefit of humanity or at least the advancement of science. De Quincey's estimation is accurate enough, although a clear division did not take place until the later decades of the nineteenth century.

Even if it is misleading to regard science and the humanities in the early nineteenth century as homogeneous (Bowler and Morus 368), they did share similar modes of discourse. George Elder Davie observes that in Scotland in particular, where De Quincey spent most of his life from 1830 onwards, scientists "long continued to look on the academical philosophers not as obscurantists but as allies … in the 1815-40 period, when the scientific subjects—chemistry, geology, physiology, etc.—were beginning to develop." Quoting L. J. Saunders, Davie continues that "the philosophical tradition was now spreading out into exposition and research in the physical and natural sciences" (21). Accordingly, David Knight suggests that the nineteenth century deserves the label "Age of Science" (5); despite ground-breaking reformations in the scientific community, scientific treatises were not restricted to a small specialised readership of experts within a field but still addressed to a large public, and an exchange of ideas between the literary and the scientific communities persisted well into the century.

Needless to say, De Quincey aimed at comprehensiveness. This stems in part from his natural curiosity in numerous subjects. Furthermore, it crucially helped him to produce articles and commodify his knowledge in the magazines of his day, which served as a hub for a wide variety of topics. The mutual interchange, the sharing of certain modes of discourse, and the simultaneous advances in various scientific fields, which created a vibrant atmosphere, is best captured in the magazines. *Blackwood's*, one of the magazines to which

De Quincey contributed throughout his writing career, is a prime example of this shared discourse, in which a literary review was likely to be followed by a scientific review or vice versa. Morrison notes that "*Blackwood's* was new. Its format established an innovative pattern for magazines by gradually removing all formal departments, and mixing together fiction, reviews, correspondence, poetry, and essays," which De Quincey "praised" in later years ("William" 34, 35). "De Quincey was happy enough," Grevel Lindop asserts, "to live in that prelapsarian age when metaphysics, astronomy, classical studies and reviews of the latest poetry could sit side by side in a magazine aimed at all educated readers" (53).

In this diversified magazine context, gentlemen philosophers and men and women of letters could contribute to scientific discussions. By 1817, "science and its popularization had become a well-established periodical habit of British culture" (Christie 126). This "popularization" had a significant impact on the proliferation of scientific ideas: "science was omnipresent, and general periodicals probably played a far greater role than books in shaping the public understanding of new scientific discoveries, theories, and practices" (Dawson, Noakes, and Topham 1–2). De Quincey occasionally took part in this discourse. Apart from the *Confessions*, in which he professes to correct some erroneous views of "the learned" (*C* 43) on the composition and effects of opium, he also examined medical issues, history, mesmerism, geology, economics and astronomy in his writings.

The Royal Institution, established just before the turn of the century in 1799, is exemplary of the common ground between scientific, literary and philosophical disciplines. The Friday evening lectures and even more so the Christmas lectures for children were not restricted to scientists but specifically aimed to attract a larger public. Figures such as Humphry Davy or Michael Faraday "carefully presented and vividly explained" (Holmes 454) scientific topics in spectacular and popular lectures, using artificial volcanoes with potassium or throwing fire irons to an electromagnet overhead (Bowler and Morus 370–72;

Knight 134). The Royal Institution also hosted lecturers from other fields, as for example Coleridge's series on poetry in 1808. Just before his own university examination turmoil, De Quincey assisted Coleridge with various practical matters in preparing these lectures and enjoyed the company of his idol (Morrison, *Biography* 131). On this occasion, De Quincey also met Humphry Davy, who was "on his road to a meeting of the Royal Society" ("Sketches" 198), in Coleridge's temporary abode at 348 Strand in London. These public lectures show how the Royal Institution contributed to the popularisation of science and the maintenance of a common ground with culture and the arts, of which De Quincey was a first-hand witness.

Another aspect of the common ground between literature and science is that natural philosophers consciously shaped themselves in the image of poets to gain authority (Fulford, *Romanticism* 3). Up until the late nineteenth century, scientists customarily borrowed literary quotations in order to give their ideas more authority by linking them with the well-established literary discourse. On the other hand, poets and fiction writers started to adopt ideas and discursive elements from scientific writing (Otis xxiii; Taylor and Shuttleworth xv). Again, the periodical press was important in that it facilitated the adoption of authorial elements from the other discourse. In the magazines, "Novelists, essayists, politicians, and scientists alike found … a common ground for such borrowings" (Dawson, Noakes, and Topham 2). The exchange of ideas was further enhanced due to the many personal acquaintances that existed between writers and scientists.[5] During his time in Edinburgh and Glasgow, "where the worlds of what we would now classify as science, scholarship, literature, and journalism thoroughly interpenetrated each other" (Lindop 56), many of De Quincey's acquaintances were engaged in scientific endeavours, such as Robert Chambers, John Pringle Nichol, William Hamilton, and John Campbell Colquhoun. In a way it was still partly the world of men of letters and natural philosophers, terms with fuzzy boundaries and

seemingly interchangeable occupations at times. Throughout De Quincey's lifetime a thriving exchange between these fields took place, with the separation looming but not becoming effective until after his death in 1859.

The study of the mind has a special place within this development of science as a separate discourse. Bowler and Morus argue that the study of the mind and mental processes belonged to the realm of philosophy rather than that of science well into the nineteenth century (301). It is true that a distinctly philosophical strand persisted, which depended on introspection, the analysis of the philosopher's own mind. This certainly concurs with De Quincey's views, whose insights into the workings of the mind, memory, and the unconscious stem to a large extent from introspection and self-reflection. Despite often correct and meaningful insights, it was more difficult for the contemplative philosopher to achieve scientific validity, though, because "human perception, thought, and behaviour—were inherently subjective" (Otis 325). However, in the light of the work done by physiologists, which began in the eighteenth century, Bowler and Morus's assertion is not quite accurate. Peretz Lavie and J. Allan Hobson more cogently argue that, at that time, physiology and philosophy, which were both concerned with mental phenomena, "developed side by side and greatly influenced each other" (230).

John Abercrombie's comments in *Inquiries Concerning the Intellectual Powers and the Investigation of Truth* (1st ed. 1830) on that matter illustrate that the philosophical and the scientific approaches to mental phenomena were gradually entering into a fruitful exchange. He first states the problem, noting that the "chief hindrance to the cultivation of the science [of the mind] … arises from the difficulty of procuring the facts for the only field in which the mental philosopher can pursue his researches with perfect confidence is his own mind" (2). Abercrombie then points out, however, that the "study of phenomena of mind" is undergoing drastic changes through the application of "physical science," specifically referring to

physiology: "Mental manifestations are greatly modified by the condition of those bodily organs by which the mind holds intercourse with external things, especially the brain" (1, 2, 2–3). The science of mind was gradually combining the philosophical and the scientific discourse to form a more comprehensive approach to mental phenomena. Again, De Quincey shows acute awareness of this development: "Whereas psychology is but in part a subjective science; in some proportion it is also *objective*, depending on multiplied experience, or on multiplied records of experience" ("St." 67). Due to the partial status as a "subjective science" and the "difficulty of procuring the facts," psychology did not yet form a distinct section in the 1854 split up of the British Association for the Advancement of Science (BAAS). It lagged behind because the purely philosophical, subjective approach remained distinctive, until it eventually merged with that of physiologists, which was crucial for the formation of psychology as a scientific discipline (Boring 45).

The nature of the connection between brain and mind was a widely discussed topic in the first half of the nineteenth century in both literature and in science. G. S. Rousseau notes that "diverse thinkers, male and female, English and Scottish, with or without a university education, from widely varying backgrounds, responded to the new theories of brain" ("Brainomania" 167). The issue is vital for the Romantic period, when a distinctive turn inwards brought it to the foreground in literary works. De Quincey himself, for example, claimed throughout his writing career that mental phenomena have a material basis. His experience with altered states of consciousness and with his opium addiction fostered in him the conviction that the mind is not driven by a divine or mystical exterior power, but that it relies on physical laws, i.e. the body. At the same time, advances in science—again physiology has the biggest claim here—were made to explain the origin of mental processes. By 1834, when for example Peter Mark Roget still wholly denied a connection between matter and mind and tried to preserve the idea of an immaterial agent independent of the

brain, science was already moving in another direction. Early materialist theories had already paved the way for future works that merged the mental and physical realms. According to Lisa Ann Robertson, this debate "was initiated by [Joseph] Priestley's edition of [David] Hartley's theory" (68) in 1775. In the nineteenth century, mesmerism and physiology significantly expanded earlier theories and contributed to the conception of the embodied mind and of embodied unconscious processes.

Animal Magnetism from Franz Anton Mesmer to John Elliotson

Animal magnetism moved through various stages of recognition. In hindsight, the most important feature of the mesmeric doctrines is the connection it drew between the body and the mind, and the implications about mental activity that eludes conscious awareness. Connecting the physical and mental realms is something animal magnetism—or mesmerism, as it was also called after its founder, Franz Anton Mesmer (1734-1815)—had been doing from its earliest days in the 1770s. His proposition of a "principle affecting the nerves" (*Mémoire* iii) claims that a magnetic fluid affects the nervous system.[6] In Graham Richards's terminology this is an instance of "physiomorphic assimilation of a novel physical phenomenon" (271), i.e. the appropriation of a phenomenon of the outside physical world to explain the inner mental world. In this case, Mesmer imposed Newton's law of attraction on humans and thus attempted to provide a physical explanation for mental and physiological phenomena. Animal magnetism furthermore attracted much attention because it impressively revealed the existence of a mental realm that is not accessible otherwise. The state of artificial somnambulism, in particular as it was developed after Mesmer, "revealed a second or alternate consciousness within us that could be tapped in the somnambulistic state and led to the idea that we all possess a potent hidden mental world that affects our lives" (Crabtree, "Automatism" 51). Despite the lack of a satisfactory scientific explanation, animal magnetism made the unconscious a more tangible phenomenon.

Mesmer was born in Konstanz, Germany, and studied medicine in Vienna, Austria. In 1766 he presented his dissertation, in which he argues that the movements of the planets and the changing celestial gravities have an impact on the human body, similar to the sea tides altered by the position of the moon. In 1773, Mesmer applied mineral magnets in treating a patient, in order to provoke an analogous tidal effect in the body, which had already been done by his mentor Maximilian Hell. Mesmer soon replaced this initial theory that assigns healing powers to mineral magnets with the obscure and poorly defined theory of an intangible magnetic fluid. This "*fluido nerveo*" permeates the human body and exerts its power over the "animal body" (Mesmer, *Magnetkur* 10, 3); hence the designation animal magnetism.[7] Jonathan Miller assumes that animal magnetism was "so-called because it was associated with the soul or *anima*" (4) but in fact the contrary is the case. Mesmer's theory is based on the association of the gravitational or magnetic powers with the body: "I called this property of the animal body … *gravitatem* or *magnetismum animalem*" (*Magnetkur* 4).[8] The aim of the magnetic cure, which mostly provoked a convulsive crisis or at times a sleep-like trance, of which patients were unconscious and did not remember anything, was to remove obstructions in the flow of the magnetic fluid and to restore the disrupted "harmony of the nerves" (*Magnetkur* 11).[9] In fact, Mesmer's practice was similar to that of the slowly waning religious exorcism. Ellenberger argues that "animal magnetism evolved historically out of the old practice of exorcism … and Mesmer's crisis was induced in exactly the same way as [Johann Joseph] Gassner's" (111) exorcism. Mesmer seems to have understood this connection. After all, he was the one to proclaim that the exorcism practiced by Gassner had nothing to do with supernatural powers but with a material substance in our body and argued that Gassner was inadvertently applying animal magnetism (Ellenberger 56–57). The crucial move was that Mesmer—"being a son of the Enlightenment" (Ellenberger 62)—was replacing devils and demons with a physical law that regulates mental and bodily disorders.

In Austria, his theories met with indifference or strong opposition from orthodox scientific circles. Miller ascribes this to Mesmer's "unorthodox procedures" and the patients' often "unseemly behaviour" (5). Subsequently, for reasons that are not wholly clear (see Ellenberger 61), he moved to Paris to practice and propagate animal magnetism. Although it was not of the same order as in Austria, his work remained highly controversial and was deemed unscientific by many contemporaries. After his rejection in Austria, Mesmer avoided medical and scientific circles, and set up a dogmatically organised practice. Ellenberger describes Mesmer as a "fundamentally egocentric and suspicious man, moody, despotic, greedy and at times even dishonest" (65). He "jealously guarded the details of his technique" (J. Miller 7), did not accept any changes to his theories, and took it as a breach of confidence if a follower tried to advance the theory or practice of animal magnetism. Even though "Mesmer had the credentials of an orthodox physician, he certainly adopted many of the features of a quack" (Lanska and Lanska 314). Miller aptly describes how Mesmer enclosed himself in an air of mysticism:

> from his dress and his demeanor in the magnetic salon, it seems clear that he was happy to project the image of a magus. Clothed in a robe embroidered with Rosicrucian alchemical symbols, he stalked the darkened rooms to the accompaniment of a glass harmonica and actively encouraged his clients to luxuriate in their convulsive crises. (7)

Robert Darnton more conclusively states that "Everything in Mesmer's indoor clinic was designed to produce a crisis in the patient" (8). These character traits—coupled with his mystic pretensions and the lack of scientific rigour that would have allowed an open discourse—bolstered the strong scepticism of his detractors.

Mesmer's magnetic healing methods had long been table talk at the French court. In 1784 two commissions were appointed by the French King, Louis XVI, to investigate

Mesmer's theory of animal magnetism. One consisted of members of the *Académie royale des sciences* and physicians of the *Faculté de Paris*, and the other of members of the *Société royale de médécine*. The commissions comprised such eminent figures as Benjamin Franklin and Antoine-Laurent Lavoisier. Their report invalidated Mesmer's theories despite the fact that unusual phenomena were observed and that some people apparently were cured of illnesses. All the reactions of the participants in this investigation were brushed aside with recourse to the "imagination" (qtd. in Ellenberger 65), a "placebo effect" as Miller puts it (6). While the technique of animal magnetism or the apparent results were basically ignored, the whole investigation was centred around its theory and the final negative verdict was based on the lack of proof of the existence of the magnetic fluid. Despite this setback, animal magnetism remained popular. The effects on Mesmer were more serious than the consequences for the animal magnetism movement. He felt badly treated from all sides: firstly, of course, by the commissions that made the investigations on animal magnetism; secondly, by scholars and scientists; and thirdly, by his disciples, who rebelled against his hieratic theories. The death-blow was his failure at a public demonstration where Prince Henry of Prussia was present. Mesmer finally left Paris in 1785.

Neither Mesmer nor the royal commissions can be blamed for the result of the investigation because they were dealing with a phenomenon for which science was simply not ready. As Kihlstrom emphatically puts it, "The sad fact is that 18th-century science had no idea what to do with the mind" ("Mesmer" 415). No subsequent attempt to come to terms with mesmerism in the following decades could give a wholly satisfactory explanation, which—to do justice to Mesmer—was probably not within the realm of possibility considering the knowledge of the human body in this period. This may account for Mesmer's own comments on his difficulties to explain animal magnetism. He admits that "my subject of investigation eludes any positive expression" and explains that animal magnetism should be

viewed like "an *artificial* sixth sense" (*Précis* 24).[10] An investigation conducted by men of science to evaluate a theory that concerned an issue solely approachable at this time in philosophical terms was bound to result in an unsatisfactory outcome.

Amand-Marie-Jacques de Chastenet, the Marquis de Puységur, replaced Mesmer as the leading proponent of animal magnetism and fundamentally changed some crucial aspects in its theory and practice. According to Charles Richet, who considered those circumstances a hundred years after they had taken place, "Mesmer is no doubt the initiator of magnetism, but not its true founder" (qtd. in Ellenberger 71). Whereas Mesmer provoked crises in the form of convulsions in the patients, Puységur was the first to put them into a magnetic sleep, which he called a "perfect crisis" (Ellenberger 71). This state of sleeping wakefulness—due to the similarity to somnambulism it was soon called artificial somnambulism—was a landmark in the development of animal magnetism and equivalent to the hypnotic sleep, as it is still known today. His first patient, the peasant Victor Race, showed during the magnetic sleep a higher degree of perceptiveness, an unusual capacity of memory, and "a far brighter mind than in his normal condition" (Ellenberger 71). The recognition of the power of the magnetiser's will and the "rapport" between the magnetiser and the magnetised was an important shift towards a more psychological notion of animal magnetism; however, Puységur's doctrine, which he summarised in the two words "*Believe* and *want*" (qtd. in Ellenberger 72), did not help to discard the supernatural and therefore suspicious popular image.

Whereas animal magnetism remained quite popular in Germany and France around the turn of the century, it did not gain a foothold in Britain. In France, followers hailed animal magnetism for the medical practice—in the last stage, *clairvoyance*, patients could supposedly tell their ailments and the respective cure—while it was endorsed for its idealist connotations in Germany—Schelling regarded it as a means to communicate with the "World

Soul." Outside these two countries, orthodox scientific circles still categorically rejected its theory and practice, not least because of the disrepute brought about by quacks and their stage demonstrations. Animal magnetism had an especially difficult lot in Britain, where it met with great scepticism or, simply, indifference. The initial wave of interest was brought to Britain in 1785 with the translation of the first French report by William Godwin, who found it particularly instructive in its dismissal of mesmerism "as an imposture" (xv). In 1787, Dr. de Mainauduc established the first practice in London. The interest, however, had already waned by 1790. In the British eyes it lacked practical ends, a reason De Quincey and others saw for its failure to thrive on the island. Additionally, mesmerism "threatened a mayhem of religious enthusiasm," "sexual debauch" and "political subversion" (Porter 27). Fulford further explains that animal magnetism "was linked inextricably with France and its revolution" ("Conducting" 57–58), which accounts for its dismissal on political grounds. The chemist and Mineralogist Richard Chenevix tried to revive animal magnetism in London in the late 1820s and published some articles in medical magazines. This drew the attention of some influential medical men, including the physician John Elliotson, one of the most fervent defenders of mesmerism ten years later. Chenevix's death only one year after his arrival in London prevented a lasting impact, negative or positive (Gauld, *History* 197–99).

At the same time as Chenevix failed to popularise animal magnetism in Britain, the undiminished interest in France compelled the royal commissions to revaluate their first report. A new investigation was commissioned and the second report was made public in 1831. It drew a much more positive picture of animal magnetism and for the first time it was valued by an established and authoritative entity. By 1833, this report had reached a larger public in Britain via the translation by John Campbell Colquhoun, a Scottish "writer on animal magnetism" (Gauld, "Colquhoun"), as the *DNB* labels him. His translation comprises a history and general introduction to animal magnetism and served as the basis for De

Quincey's 1834 *Tait's* article on the topic. Although Alan Gauld argues that Colquhoun's translation had no great impact, it marks the beginning of a renewed debate that was not to stop until the arrival of Baron de Dupotet in England in 1837.[11]

This French magnetiser came to London and passed his knowledge on to English practitioners, first and foremost to the above-mentioned John Elliotson, who eventually became the main advocate of mesmerism—"the single Englishman most responsible for the spread of mesmerism in England" (Kaplan 696)—and even performed operations while his patients were in a state of magnetic sleep. He was wholly committed to the practice of mesmerism and gained wide notoriety for his public experiments, which caused enough opposition from the powers that be for Elliotson to resign his prestigious position at the University College Hospital, London.[12] Due to his interest in phrenology and physiology, he believed that "the brain is evidently the organ of mind" (130n). Animal magnetism, which he considered "as a physical force acting on the body's machinery, manifest not only in the body but in the mind as well" (Winter, *Mesmerized* 62), served in his eyes to corroborate phrenological and physiological theories. Applying mesmerism to various cerebral organs according to the phrenological theory, he believed he had witnessed the "most astonishing and beautiful experiments that all physiology affords" and even wished "that Gall could have lived to see this day" (Engledue 28, 29). Animal magnetism formed part of his conviction that the mind is an embodied phenomenon, which is also reflected in the title of the journal he founded in 1843: *Zoist: A Journal of Cerebral Physiology and Mesmerism*.

Several years later, mesmerism was all the rage in medical treatments, bogus stage demonstrations, or satirical as well as serious accounts. It became part of everyday life in Britain and had famous literary figures such as Charles Dickens and Harriet Martineau amongst its followers. The 1830s were ideal for a scientific theory such as animal magnetism because the "scientific and the metaphysical mind had not been separated" (Kaplan 693),

which favoured the diffusion of such an elusive phenomenon. This was true for the study of the mind, much more so than for any other discipline. Despite those seemingly ideal circumstances, mesmerism was not accepted by the established medical or scientific societies. The decisive change in this highly ambiguous science only occurred between 1840 and 1850. When the Scottish surgeon James Braid took up animal magnetism after witnessing mesmeric demonstrations, he dismissed all theories that proclaimed a magnetic force or fluid and claimed that all mesmeric phenomena depend on the "physical and psychical condition of the patient" (19) and that they were "entirely attributable to the mechanical pressure operating on an excited state of the nervous system" (99). He was eager to combine the radical findings of animal magnetism with the scientific physiology of his time. This approach carried the psychological notion further and brought in more established physiological considerations. He called the new science "Neuro-Hypnotism," a state of "nervous sleep" (13), which finally made its way into scientific circles and has survived until today as hypnotism.

Throughout the nineteenth century animal magnetism was mainly popular in non-elite contexts and found its place in popular medicine. Mesmerism, better than any other discipline, shows that the "line between winning a reputation as a discoverer of truth, and languishing in obscurity or, again, gaining notoriety as a charlatan or quack, was narrow and shifting" (Fulford, *Romanticism* 3). Phrenology shared a similar lot. Both are today considered pseudo-sciences. However, as Knight puts it, such knowledge is only possible "after the event" (71). If the aim is to understand theories and their impact within the historical and social context, it does not matter whether the theory turned out to be correct. Many so-called pseudo-sciences enjoyed the support of illustrious men of letters, scientists and medical doctors at the time and they are of interest today in their function as "rhetorical and social constructs of a particular era" (Fulford, *Romanticism* 4). Mesmerism was never

admitted into the illustrious circle of sciences, but it was still part of the scientific discourse in the mid-nineteenth century.

The immediate effects of animal magnetism within the medical and psychological fields in Britain mainly concern the affirmation of the mind/body connection, which was also attested by people who did not support animal magnetism in other respects. Godwin, for example, valued the first French report because it "seems to throw new light" on "the influence of the imagination upon the animal frame" (xvii). Dugald Stewart, whom Hunter and Macalpine consider as "the first philosopher who recognised the scientific potential of mesmerism" (641), also drew attention to this aspect as a noteworthy point of investigation for future researchers. He considered "the details connected … with the practice of animal magnetism,—as inestimable *data* for extending our knowledge of the laws which regulate the connection between the human mind, and our bodily organization" (207–08). And even if Stewart was used by some reviewers to undermine mesmeric theories, he valued "the general conclusions … with respect to the *physical effects* of the principle of Imitation and the faculty of Imagination" (221 emphasis added).

Despite its many shortcomings, the deep and lasting impact of animal magnetism on the future theories of the mind and psychology can hardly be overstated. Ellenberger asserts that from "1784 to about 1880, artificial somnambulism was the chief method of gaining access into the unconscious mind" (112). In his view, animal magnetism—via Gassner, Mesmer, Puységur, and Braid—"provided the decisive impulse toward the elaboration of dynamic psychiatry" (53). Indeed, many genealogies move via the French schools of hypnotism towards Freud's theories. This is only one way of evaluating the influence of animal magnetism, though, and various historians of psychology give it credit for influencing experimental psychology. Edwin G. Boring considers mesmerism an important discovery for psychology and even as the "beginning of the experimental psychology of motivation" (116).

Leslie Hearnshaw argues that two important movements in the nineteenth century "brought about the breakdown of the barriers separating medicine and psychology, namely the discovery of the unconscious mind and the theory of evolution" (*Shaping* 150). The "discovery of the unconscious" and its influence on behaviour, thought, and memory was most effectively demonstrated through the mesmeric practice and later hypnosis, which caused "the doctrine of the unconscious mind [to] cease to be merely a philosophical abstraction" (*Shaping* 151). Richards lists mesmerism along with physiognomy and phrenology as having "the best claim to being directly ancestral to Psychology as a would-be scientific discipline, distinct in some measure at least, from philosophy or physiology, as it emerged in the mid-nineteenth century" (249).

There is a third area to which animal magnetism contributed in the nineteenth century, which offers yet another genealogy. In Miller's account, animal magnetism plays a crucial role in the nineteenth-century development of the first theory of the productive unconscious. He presents this alternative line of descent that leads to the modern cognitive understanding of the unconscious and laments that the

> role of hypnosis in developing this distinctively *enabling* view of the Unconscious has been regrettably overshadowed by its contribution to the more widely recognized Freudian Unconscious. In fact the modern notion of the Unconscious is so closely identified with the one that figures in psychoanalytic theory that whatever celebrity Mesmer and his successors now enjoy is almost entirely the result of their being seen as antecedents of Freud. (28)

The theories of unconscious processes of the physiologists William B. Carpenter and Thomas Laycock, and of the philosopher William Hamilton, who were all directly influenced by mesmerism, propose "an altogether productive institution, actively generating the processes

which are integral to memory, perception, and behavior" (28–29). Miller even argues that without the decades in which behaviourism swept the mind and consciousness off the agenda of psychologists, cognitive psychology might not have needed a revolution given that the productive, automatised, and enabling unconscious had already been a matter of investigation in the second half of the nineteenth century—partly as a result of the notorious mesmeric practices of this period.

Finally, the long disputed practice of animal magnetism has been vindicated in the twentieth century for the paths it opened to the study of the mind. Although the theory behind the practice was finally proven to be humbug, it had a great impact on the development of psychological ideas. With its theory of a magnetic fluid, mesmerism established a connection between the thinking organ, the brain, and the behaviour, thoughts and feelings of people. Bowler and Morus argue that it "offered to turn the science of mind into a physical science" (386), at a time when growing empirical approaches began "translating philosophical questions into psychological ones, and psychological questions into matters for physiological investigation" (Winter, *Mesmerized* 27). Researchers in physiology around the mid-nineteenth century were considerably influenced by the facts presented by mesmerists. People like Braid, Laycock and Carpenter found valuable incentives and support for their own theories. They were highly intrigued by the mesmeric demonstrations they witnessed and, with some cautionary scepticism, used that material for their own psychophysiological research that extended to theories of cognition and especially the affirmation of unconscious processes. It is not surprising in this context that one of the first books containing *psychophysiology* in the title was on the connection between mesmerism and physiology: *Psycho-Physiology, Viewed in its Connection with Mysteries of Animal Magnetism and other Kindred Phenomena* (1839).[13] Mesmerism proved an indispensable showcase of studies for physiologists and psychophysiologists in particular.

Physiology and the Science of the Mind

Even before the mid-nineteenth century engaged in psychophysiological studies—the combination of the philosophy of mind and mechanical physiology—the nervous system exerted a vast fascination upon physiologists because of "its intimate association with the phenomena of mind" (Clarke and Jacyna 4). Karl M. Figlio argues that the physiology of the late eighteenth and nineteenth century was focused on two kinds of inquiry that "represented the poles of the famous Cartesian mind/body dualism:" it became the "common matrix" that bridged the philosophical study of the soul and the physiological study of the structure and function of the organic body (177). In particular the work on the connection of the nerves with the brain, pioneered in the mid-eighteenth century by Hartley, was developed towards a brain-based psychology around the turn of the century with Erasmus Darwin and Charles Bell in England, and Franz Joseph Gall and François Magendie in Austria and France respectively. Marshall Hall, Thomas Laycock, and William B. Carpenter decisively extended their precursors' research from the 1830s onwards. Together, these scientists are responsible for "many neuroscientific concepts" that are still valid today, though in "modified forms" (Clarke and Jacyna 1). They provided the first scientific basis for an active mind that is dependent on the brain. Conscious volition lost its role as the exclusive source for human action. Unconscious processes—biological, material processes primarily related to the nervous system—were to become essential to theories of perception, thought, and behaviour due to physiological research.

Physiologists were the first to point out that the brain is the seat of mental action or "the soul" in the words of early accounts. According to Rousseau, Thomas Willis was the "first scientist clearly and loudly to posit that the seat of the soul is strictly limited to the brain, nowhere else" in the seventeenth century. He considers Willis's work as a "paradigmatic leap" that "bewildered scientists for over a century" ("Nerves" 144, 148, 149).

Indeed, a century after Willis, physiology had gained important insights, especially into the organisation of the nervous system and the brain, but the claim remained almost the same, even if *soul* was gradually replaced with *mind*; the brain turned from the seat of the soul to being the seat of mental action. Priestley, for example, claimed in 1777 that "as the mind is affected in consequence of the affections of the body and brain, so the body is liable to be reciprocally affected by the affections of the mind" (28).[14] Gall and Spurzheim held in 1809 that "all intellectual phenomena are based on the brain" (273).[15] In 1816, the eminent French physiologist Magendie likewise considered "the phenomena that form part of the intellect of man" as "the result of the action of the brain that are not to be distinguished in any way from other phenomena that depend on organic actions" (170).[16] What they all had in common was the belief that the brain, as a part of the nervous system, is inextricably linked with mental action.

The elaborations on the connection between the body and the mind of Bell, whom Rousseau considers as "possibly the most distinguished neuroanatomist of the Romantic epoch" and as "the most important brain theorist in Britain" ("Brainomania" 163, 184n9), mark a higher degree of acceptance of such doctrines, which he displayed without any idealistic pretensions. Unlike the more radical materialist Priestley, Bell was cautious in his phrasings and took great care to avoid being associated with materialist theories. Accordingly, his work begins with a note explaining that he is not searching "the seat of the soul" but merely "investigat[ing] the structure of the brain, as we examine the structure of the eye and ear" (*Idea* 3). Richardson notes that he was an exception in that he could "advance a conception of the embodied mind … without provoking ideological attacks" (*British* 29). Bell's interest is purely scientific when he explains that "the operation of the senses in rousing the faculties of the mind, and the exercises of the mind over the moving parts of the body, is through the brain and nerves" (*Idea* 15). He further stresses "the extensive influence of the

corporeal on the intellectual part of man" (*Anatomy* 83). The crux is that the body can have "a control over" (*Anatomy* 85) the mind; it can actually be in control of the intellectual faculties. Even Bell, who kept a vitalist belief despite of all his findings that suggest a materialist creed, defined the "cerebrum … as the grand organ by which the mind is united to the body" (*Idea* 27). The brain was widely accepted as the "organ of thought" (*WTDQ* 3: 180), as De Quincey puts it in 1823, among many scientists irrespective of their religious belief, but also a larger reading public as De Quincey's quotation illustrates.

The advances in physiology were received and interpreted in different ways. The physician Peter Mark Roget and the publisher Robert Chambers illustrate two extremes. Roget, who became Fullerian Professor of Physiology at the Royal Institution in 1834, held on to a rigid dualism and, acknowledging the anatomical and physiological findings of his time, saw no significant advance in the "real subject to be explained," namely "how the affections of a material substance can influence and be influenced by an immaterial agent" (563). Perhaps Roget should have read De Quincey, because he concludes that "the intellectual operations of which we are conscious bear no conceivable analogy with any of the configurations or actions of a material substance" (565).[17] Chambers, a close friend of De Quincey, held the opposite opinion. In his anonymously published *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* (1844), he asserts that "mental action" belongs "into the category of natural things" (331):

> Its old metaphysical character vanishes in a moment, and the distinction usually taken between physical and moral is annulled, as only an error in terms. This view agrees with what all observation teaches, that mental phenomena flow directly from the brain. They are seen to be dependent on naturally constituted and naturally conditioned organs, and thus obedient, like all other organic phenomena, to law. (332)

Chambers's account in general, and particularly his graphic description of "mental phenomena" that "flow" from the brain, are purely materialistic. Though writing in the 1840s, Chambers published *Vestiges* anonymously because he feared that his own publishing business might suffer if it was known that he had authored such a radically materialistic book. The controversy around the publication of *Vestiges* further illustrates a point made earlier about accessibility of scientific knowledge to the reading public. Dawson, Noakes, and Topham argue that the case of *Vestiges* shows that "the Victorian reading public now had access to a vast array of printed material in which conflicting views of science were expounded," which forced the "new professional scientists" to address the public through the channels of "general periodicals" (17). People who were not physiologists such as Chambers took up scientific topics and significantly helped to diffuse them amongst the reading public as well as cultural and literary movements. The anatomy and new role of the brain had become a widespread topic.

From Reflex Action to Unconscious Cerebration

Physiology not only established the brain as the active originator of mentation. The application of the mechanical concept of reflex action, automatic muscular movements triggered by an external stimulus such as the involuntary knee jerk, to the brain, also led to more sophisticated theories according to which mentation is not exclusively conscious. Departing from previous theories depending on the soul, Hall founded the first purely mechanical concept of reflex action. Roger Smith explains the "particular historical significance" of the first mechanical reflex concept with its categorisation of "a unit of purposive behaviour in terms of existing physical structures instead of in terms of a directing mental agency" (83–84). A certain kind of behaviour or action now had to be considered as automatic—destitute of any influence of the will because the brain is not involved in such actions—but nevertheless purposive. The application of Hall's reflex action to the brain in

turn allowed mid-nineteenth-century physiologists to establish the theory of a productive unconscious. In Laycock's view, consciousness ceased to be the central aspect of mental cognition. Although Laycock's contributions to physiology have almost been forgotten, Kurt Danziger considers him "the most original mind" (122) among the mid nineteenth-century psychophysiologists.

Physiology in the nineteenth century made some key contributions to the understanding, and eventually led to an appreciation, of automatic and unconscious mental processes—including complex, reasoned ones—as a helpful and necessary part of the physical organisation. Laycock was the first to establish a rational unconscious power on the grounds of physiological research in his theory of the reflex action of the brain. While Hall, whose theory remained stuck in his dualistic belief, "was a fierce opponent against mesmerism" (Boring 121), Laycock, like other contemporary physiologists such as Braid and Carpenter, took a great interest in it. This openness to mesmeric phenomena plays a crucial role in the formation of Laycock's theories. In fact, animal magnetism was the trigger for his theory of reflex action of the brain, as Smith affirms: mesmerism "was a major stimulus to the development of physiological psychology and the reflex concept in particular" (85). Laycock's ground-breaking conclusion thus fulfils De Quincey's prediction that animal magnetism "opens nothing less than a new world to the prospects of Psychology, and, generally speaking, to the knowledge of the human mind" ("AM" 379). As De Quincey prophesied in 1834, mesmerism sparked the interest of physiologists that led to the revolutionary theory of productive unconscious processes by Laycock and Carpenter.

The discovery of the reflex action, the automatic nervous response to a sensory stimulus, is the most essential physiological finding of the nineteenth century and eventually allowed for the emergence of psychophysiology, a branch that would today be classified as neuroscience or cognitive psychology. The most "rudimentary concepts" (Clarke and Jacyna

103) of reflex action date back to Willis and René Descartes. In the middle of the eighteenth century, Robert Whytt was the first who "grasped fully the mechanism and significance of reflex action" and located it "throughout the brain and spinal cord" (Fulton and Wilson 265). The essential point in Whytt's theory is that not every reflex passes through the brain; they can also go via the spinal cord before they are sent back to the muscles. He was the first to propose a theory in which not all movements originate in the brain, as it was commonly believed. However, in Whytt's theory these processes are "dependent on the soul" (Clarke and Jacyna 104), which controls all involuntary actions. He believed in a "sentient principle," an "all-pervading immaterial soul or life-force" (Clarke and Jacyna 104) that spreads throughout the whole nervous system (peripheral nerves, spinal cord, and brain), and which accounts for all the phenomena of life. Whytt's theory failed to give a purely mechanical explanation and was still firmly grounded in Cartesian dualism. This model of reflex action remained uncontested until the 1830s.

Marshall Hall changed this crucially by proposing a mechanistic theory, which proved to have "a greater long-term effect on Psychological theory than any other single neurological idea" (Richards 359). His research built on the Bell-Magendie law, which differentiated two kinds of nerves on their functional basis, the motor and the sensory nerves. In other words, "incoming and outgoing pathways of the nervous system are separate morphological entities" (Fulton and Wilson 257). In *Idea of a New Anatomy of the Brain*, a private monograph published in 1811 only for the perusal of a group of select friends, Bell first pointed out that not all nerves in the human body fulfil the same tasks: "the nerves of sense, the nerves of motion, and the vital nerves, are distinct through their whole course" (*Idea* 6). Magendie independently came to the same conclusion and completed Bell's research by clearly assigning motion and sensation to distinct nerves. Bell's and Magendie's research "elucidated the sensory and motor path traversed by reflex activity, and in addition the existence of motor

and sensory tracts in the spinal cord" (Clarke and Jacyna 112). Hall took up these findings and concluded that the sensory impressions that provoke a reflex do not necessarily have to pass through the brain but can have their origin in the spinal marrow, which by definition excludes mental interference in such actions. Hall's application of the Bell-Magendie law opened the door to a purely mechanistic model of reflex action that eventually excluded any conscious or volitional behaviour.

In 1832, Hall presented his reflex theory to the Zoological Society of London, which he substantiated a year later in a communication to the Royal Society. Being the first to use the substantive form, "*the reflex*" ("Reflex" 658) in a physiological context, he proved that "there is a property of the sentient and motor system of nerves which is independent of sensation and volition" ("Brief Account" 191). This stands in opposition to Bell's theory that through "the nerves of sense, the *sensorium* receives impressions, but the will is expressed through the medium of the nerves of motion" (*Idea* 35–36). According to Hall, not all motor nerves are dependent on the will. His division of the nervous system into three distinct functional units enabled him to claim that "the reflex function exists in the medulla independently of the brain" ("Reflex" 650). Consequently, "sensory nerves exist that do not produce sensations and … motor nerves exist that do not merely mediate volitional acts. So reflex acts do not require a nervous arc from muscle to brain and then from brain to muscle" (Bennett and Hacker 25). Hall's demonstration of a body moving only due to external stimuli of the reflex action "independently of the brain" had far reaching implications. A body could move without the influence of volition, the will, or an animistic soul.

Whytt's insistence on the soul as the guiding force was completely overcome by Hall's theory, which did not go uncontested, even though he upheld "a strict dualism between the physiological and the moral level" (Danziger 120). While the mind could work on the body in Hall's system, the body could not work on the mind. The implications of his theory of

reflex action nevertheless aroused the suspicion of some vitalists who preferred Whytt's sentient principle over a purely mechanistic explanation of biological processes. Although the mind can generally exert its power over the body, Hall's reflex theory describes cases in which the body moves without any mental interference. The exclusion of the will and the consequential loss of control and volition was a considerable threat to their notion of being that rested on immaterial principles. In retrospect, however, Hall's dualism—ironically due to the "inhibitory effects of theological prejudices" (Clarke and Jacyna 129)—restricted him from perceiving the possibilities that his theory opened up. Because of the clear division between the physical and the mental, Hall insisted on the "irrelevance [of the excito-motory acts] to psychology" (Clarke and Jacyna 146). In this crucial regard, his notion of reflex action was deficient. Laycock, who took Hall's research as a starting point, finally combined these realms. Even though Hall never discusses the unconscious, "the issue could not but surface in any attempted integration of his model into Psychology" (Richards 361). Indeed, his reflex action was the crucial factor to the conception of embodied unconscious mental action.

Richards notes that the "work of Bell and Hall, taken in conjunction with the contemporary research and debates on brain function triggered by phrenology, was ineluctably rendering the division between the philosophically based 'Science of Mind' project and the increasingly experimental and materialist sciences of the body difficult to sustain" (361). Laycock eventually dissolved this division altogether. For him, Hall's theory did not go far enough and so he simply turned one of the fundamental points on its head:

> There are … numerous observations which, when compared, serve to extend the two [Bell's and Hall's] great doctrines above alluded to far beyond their original limits; placing on the one hand the sensorial fibres under the power of the will; on the other applying the laws of the excito-motory system to

> the phenomena, not of the spinal cord only and its prolongations, but to the brain also, and the diffused nervous system. (*Treatise* 85–86)

Laycock was the first to clearly articulate the abolishment of the dualistic barrier that Hall rigidly upheld. He thus contested Hall's refutation of a psychical component in reflex actions on the ground that the separation between the functional units of "the cerebral, or the sentient and voluntary" and "the true spinal, or the excito-motory, that is reflex" (Clarke and Jacyna 118) is invalid because, in fact, the former is a development of the latter. As a consequence, Laycock no longer considered reflex actions to be restricted to the excito-motor system but also attributed them to the brain. Reflex, volition, and consciousness were no longer attributed to clearly discrete parts of the nervous system and inversely, the cerebrum was no longer seen as exclusively obeying the orders of the will and of consciousness. The research of Bell, Magendie and Hall finally made Laycock's theory of the reflex action possible, a theory not restricted to the body but which includes cerebral reflexes that affect the brain and consequently thoughts and ideas. The result is unconscious embodied cognition.

Instead of claiming that the soul controls organic phenomena that cannot be traced to a conscious volitional act, Laycock tried to establish the organic body as the basis for mental action. He firmly believed in the "materiality of what is called the soul" and that "the mind is the result of organisation" (qtd. in Clarke and Jacyna 141).[18] This view was justified by his proto-evolutionary idea that the cerebrum developed out of more basic nervous structures and accordingly shared many of the same properties: "the cranial ganglia, although the organ of consciousness are subject to the same laws as those which govern the other ganglia" (*Treatise* 170). The cranial ganglia function in the same way as the spinal ganglia of other vertebrates as well as that of articulata. Laycock concluded that the human brain had developed out of lower forms of life. Thus he belongs to the many vanguard thinkers who hinted at evolutionary processes before Charles Darwin. Whereas Hall denied a connection between the

nervous reflex action and the cerebrum, Laycock explicitly connected the theory of the reflex action to the brain. This was a major step toward the establishment of psychophysiology.

These ideas were first published in 1838 and 1839 in reaction to the mesmeric experiments of Elliotson. Mesmerism played a significant role in conceptualising psychophysiological theories. It was the starting point for Laycock's and other researchers' investigations because in that kind of altered state of mind the unconscious mental powers were more acutely revealed: "somnambulism, psychotic dissociation, and drug and hypnotic trances … all suggested that many 'complex' mental events happened automatically, without conscious control and sometimes without consciousness" (Smith 85). The key was to find the rational, physiological explanation for these phenomena. Laycock visited Elliotson's famous and contested presentations of mesmerism in 1837, with the intention of unravelling the seemingly mysterious effects according to "known general laws and organisation" (Laycock, "Contributions" 187). After having observed some of "the most spectacular examples of automatic, unconscious and yet purposive behaviour" (Smith 85) displayed in mesmeric shows, Laycock concluded that there "is an internal or mental stimulus derived from the brain corresponding to the excitant of reflex movements derived from without" ("Analytical Essay" 78). Laycock's first proposition of his theory in the articles discussing Elliotson's demonstrations and in the *Treatise on the Nervous Diseases of Women* (1840) went mostly unnoticed. The lack of focus and the "awkwardness, characteristic of its author" (Danziger 122) may account for this lack of immediate recognition.

In 1844 Laycock finally presented his paper "On the Reflex Function of the Brain" (published in 1845) at a meeting of the BAAS. Although he never explicitly talks of the unconscious in this article, it is strongly implied (Hearnshaw, *History* 23). Laycock argues that "Motor phenomena, when purely reflex, are of course altogether independent of sensation, or perception, *or volition, or consciousness*. The mind has no part whatever in their

causation or course" ("Reflex" 299). The ground shaking argument, however, is that the brain, "although the organ of consciousness, [is] subject to the laws of reflex action" ("Reflex" 298). The implication of his theory is that "consciousness is coincident to, and not a precursor of, most acts; therefore consciousness of an action can be excluded as a potential cause of that action" (Leff 390). Laycock's theory displaces consciousness from the central position it typically occupies in terms of mental cognition. To say that the "object of all the purely reflex physiological acts is the conservation of the individual, or of the race" ("Reflex" 300) implies that humankind has not managed to thrive and survive due to conscious reasoning. The unconscious is the driving force on which the success of the human race relies. Laycock radically annulled Descartes' *cogito ergo sum*.

By 1860, Laycock could state that "No general fact is so well established by the experience of mankind, or so universally accepted as a guide in the affairs of life, as that of unconscious mental life and action" (*Mind and Brain* 1: 161). Carpenter, who began to research and write on unconscious processes after Laycock had first published his physiological account "On the Reflex Function of the Brain," also has a significant share in establishing the acceptance of this "unconscious mental life and action." Although Laycock claimed and eventually was granted precedence for the concept of reflex action of the brain, Carpenter's work was more popular just after the middle of the century.[19] In the fourth edition of his *Principles of Human Physiology* (1853), Carpenter coined the phrase that was to be used to refer to the reflex action of the brain in public and scientific discourse: "*Unconscious Cerebration*" (791).[20] This edition of Carpenter's book was the first to contain a section on physiological psychology, which he extended into a book in 1874.

Carpenter's book takes us beyond the period covered by this study; however, the later pronouncements are helpful in that they decisively show the parallels between the theory of reflex action of the brain and the modern cognitive unconscious. In the light of Kihlstrom's

categories in "Unconscious Processes," Laycock's and Carpenter's explanations and examples of unconscious processes are closest to automaticity and implicit thought. Carpenter explains that "automatic changes may take place in the Cerebrum, without any consciousness on our own parts" (832). This lack of awareness of the process is also stipulated by Kihlstrom: automatic processes "are not available to conscious awareness nor amenable to conscious control" ("Automaticity" 157). Furthermore, knowledge of such an automatic process can only be attained indirectly, "by inference" ("Unconscious" 177), or in Carpenter's terms, through "the results of which … we are at last made conscious" (832). The observation that "On the one hand, … we have consciousness; on the other, unconscious yet *intelligent* action" (Laycock, "Further Researches" 157 emphasis added) sounds more like an instance of implicit thought. The changes in the brain that "constitute, in part, at least, the phenomena of thought" ("Further Researches" 161) are not necessarily provoked by external stimuli. The brain itself is also one of the "*excitors* of reflex actions" ("Reflex" 305), which means that the processes are "internally generated" (Kihlstrom, "Unconscious" 181), just like implicit thoughts. It is difficult to keep automaticity and implicit thought clearly apart, both in modern research and in nineteenth-century treatises. The crucial point is that even though the denomination "reflex action" seems to restrict this theory to automaticity, its impact is broader and includes implicit thought and other categories of the cognitive unconscious. Given that Laycock's (and Carpenter's) research would now probably be dubbed cognitive neuroscience or cognitive psychology, I argue that we can tentatively call their discovery "the nineteenth-century cognitive unconscious," in allusion to Kihlstrom's 1987 seminal essay "The Cognitive Unconscious."

William Hamilton's Philosophical Contribution

One of the major non-physiological influences on Laycock and Carpenter was the Scottish philosopher William Hamilton, who most explicitly expressed a theory of productive

unconscious processes among nineteenth-century philosophers. He is of interest in this context because he comes to the same conclusions about unconscious mental phenomena as Laycock, but on a philosophical basis. Laycock "was heavily indebted to his predecessor's thought." More particularly, he "was greatly impressed by Hamilton's doctrine of subconscious mental activity, and incorporated it into his thought unchanged, quoting much of Hamilton verbatim" (Hoeldtke 60, 62) in his psychophysiological treatises, as did Carpenter.[21] Though Hamilton refused to consider the physiological component in his psychological inquiries, he was fascinated by mesmerism, which triggered his interest in and furnished ample evidence in favour of unconscious processes.

While the general trend towards psychophysiology was to consider psychological and physiological questions together, Hamilton kept them strictly apart. He considered phrenological theories, for example, to be flawed. Physiology was nevertheless of interest to Hamilton. His father, William Hamilton, and his grandfather, Thomas Hamilton, were both Professor of Anatomy at the University of Glasgow. Hamilton himself also made numerous "physiological and anatomical inquiries," which "commenced in connection with phrenology" (Veitch 116) in order to refute its theories. These morbid experiments included putting wires through the heads of living animals in order to observe how the destruction of certain brain areas affected their behaviour. Hamilton also conducted extensive measurements of skulls and brains, and even published some of his results (see Hamilton 404–44). Although George Sidney Brett correctly points out that Hamilton was not "progressing toward that union of physical and metaphysical ideas for which he was so well equipped" (28), Peretz Lavie and Allan Hobson argue that the "early exposure to physiology and medicine greatly influenced his later philosophical thinking and writing" (233).

It was a wholly different case with animal magnetism. Hamilton, a "believer of Mesmerism" (W. Lang 9) before it became notorious in Britain, was highly intrigued by that

magnetic method, which was so popular in Germany and France. Mesmerism was a source of inspiration and an example for his philosophical theories. Before the mid-century psychophysiologists, he saw the potential of animal magnetism to reveal fundamental patterns of mental phenomena. As Laycock and Carpenter did later, Hamilton observed altered states of mind as a way to investigate mental processes: "in madness, in fever, in somnambulism and other abnormal states the mind betrays capacities and extensive systems of knowledge of which it was at other times wholly unconscious" (Hamilton 340–41). However, "Hamilton did not rigidly adhere to the notion that subconscious activity was only evident in certain extraordinary states of mind. There were also consciously-experienced, common phenomena that fit well with the concept of a mind that existed beyond awareness" (Hoeldtke 61). Just as with Laycock and Carpenter, abnormal or altered states of mind were only the starting point for theories about normal and everyday unconscious processes.

In two of his lectures as a Professor of Logic and Metaphysics at Edinburgh, to which Hamilton was appointed in 1836, he specifically addresses unconscious mental activity. In lecture seventeen, Hamilton tries to answer the question of "Whether the mind … is always in a state of conscious activity" (Hamilton 312). The terminology is somewhat misleading because it suggests that the issue is about one's awareness of mental activity. Hamilton's examples suggest otherwise, though. He does not try to prove that one is always aware of mental activity, but that the mind is constantly active, even if one is not aware of it. His observations on dreams and somnambulism lead Hamilton to conclude that "the mind is never either inactive or wholly unconscious of its activity" (319). The mind is conscious of its own activity even if the person is not. It is constantly active and traces of its activity will most likely remain stored, even if people who dream or somnambulise are not aware of it when fully awake. Similarly, in the state of somnambulism, in which "various mental faculties are usually in a higher degree of power," the "patient has recollections of what he has wholly

forgotten" (319). The somnambulising patient may remember more than in a waking state, which proves the constant activity of the mind. It also proves the existence of unconscious mental processes and even separates "mind" from consciousness. This phenomenon is further developed under the second category of "mental latency" (339), discussed in the following lecture.

Lecture eighteen is more pertinent in establishing a doctrine of unconscious mental processes: "The question I refer to is, Whether the mind exerts energies, and is the subject of modifications, of neither of which it is conscious" (338). Hamilton first attempts to show that "the mind may, and does, contain far more latent furniture than consciousness informs us it possesses" (339). He distinguishes "three degrees of this mental latency" (339): first, "acquired habits" (339); second, "certain systems of knowledge, or certain habits of action" (339–40); and third, "ordinary, mental modifications" of which one has no knowledge or consciousness. The first category contains such skills as "a science, or language" (339) that can be consciously applied while the underlying knowledge is not consciously present in their execution. The second refers to "systems" and "habits" that are, unlike the acquired habits of the first category, only revealed "in certain extraordinary exaltations" (340) of the mental powers such as madness, delirium, fever or somnambulism. Under such circumstances, people can develop unprecedented talent for music, poetry, or drawing; remember lengthy passages from books; or suddenly speak in a foreign language of which they have no knowledge in their normal, unexcited state of mind. Hamilton explains that these unknown abilities—such as a language that is only spoken in infancy—are acquired earlier in a person's life, are forgotten, and eventually resurface in states of mental "exaltation."[22] These examples illustrate that under particular circumstances a "mental modification," i.e. cognitive processes, can take place, even if one is not aware of it.

In the third degree of mental latency Hamilton moves from these "abnormal states" (340) to address the same question about the normal states of mind: "Are there, in ordinary, mental modifications,—i.e. mental activities and passivities, of which we are unconscious, but which manifest their existence by effects of which we are conscious?" (347). The unconscious nature of such "mental activities" and the indirect manifestation through their "effects," like Laycock's and Carpenter's theories, parallel the cognitive unconscious. Before Hamilton turns to a discussion of examples, he answers the initial question positively and adds: "I do not hesitate to maintain, that what we are conscious of is constructed out of what we are not conscious of,—that our whole knowledge, in fact, is made up of the unknown and the incognisable" (348). Like Laycock a few years later, Hamilton displaces the primacy of consciousness and argues that conscious knowledge is the result of unconscious processing.

Modern commentators praise Hamilton for his vast erudition and his influence on the developing science of psychology. For Hearnshaw, that "most learned of Scottish philosophers" (*Shaping* 153) made a valuable philosophical contribution to psychology, in particular (and ironically) to the evolving psychophysiology of the mid-nineteenth century. Hamilton shared the same opinion with and his work served as an important backdrop for the mid-century psychophysiologists. He postulated a rational, active, and unconsciously working mind, which he repeatedly illustrated with examples of altered states of mind. De Quincey's experience with altered states of mind also provided him with a fund of examples of unconscious processes. Some passages on "mental latency" are very close to De Quincey's thoughts on this topic in the *Confessions* and *Suspiria*. This is not only due to their common observations, but also due to their close friendship.

De Quincey's Social Life and His Knowledge of Scientific Theories

De Quincey's friendship with Hamilton is a good example of his prodigious social life in Edinburgh. Jonathan Wordsworth observes that De Quincey "was truly alone, and despite the

later devotion of Peggy Simpson (his wife), there is a sense in which he continued to be so" (220). Although the *Confessions* and *Suspiria* tell the stylised and dramatised story of a solitary, there is also a sense in which De Quincey was not "truly alone." Morrison corrects the solitary image, which previous biographers, critics and De Quincey himself had depicted. De Quincey's complaints about his solitude often "were clearly intended to convince his publishers that he was focused solely on work, but … De Quincey was socializing far more than he liked to let on" (*Biography* 312). This is not to say that De Quincey did not believe in the power of solitude; however, he also enjoyed a social life, which had a great impact on his thought and writing.

In "Sketches of Life and Manners," De Quincey describes the conviviality he enjoyed "as a literary aspirant" in London: "The next persons of eminence whom I saw were … Sir Humphry Davy, Professor Wilson, Mr Godwin, Mrs Siddons, Lady Hamilton, Mrs Hannah More and her sisters, Walking Stewart, Dr Beddoes, Mr Abernethy, Charles Lamb, Mr Hazlitt, Dr Parr, and others" ("Sketches" 196). During his various periods in London, De Quincey was already moving in social circles that brought together scientists, philosophers, and men and women of letters, which provided access to various scientific theories of the period. This did not change in Edinburgh. On the contrary, De Quincey spent much time dining out and meeting people, and thereby engaging with knowledge from various fields. When De Quincey "rejoined the circle to which he had been welcomed when in Edinburgh before," he "made many new friends, among them Mrs. Crowe, … in whose house in Darnaway Street, he spent many a pleasant evening" (Hogg 55). Up until the late 1840s, De Quincey "socialized often at the home of Catherine Crowe" (*Biography* 356), which was something of a social hub in the 1830s and 40s. David Masson remembers Crowe's dinners as "pleasant little supper-parties" at which "one was always sure to meet … in the easiest and friendliest fashion, from half-a-dozen to ten or twelve of the men and women best worth

knowing, on literary or other grounds, among the residents in Edinburgh or the last week's arrivals" (124–25). De Quincey, for example, met John Pringle Nichol, Professor of Astronomy at the University of Glasgow, at one of Crowe's parties and Robert Chambers was amongst her frequent visitors, too (*Biography* 312; Masson 125). Lindop is right in observing that "De Quincey's contact with academic Scotland was more important for the nature of his work than has generally been recognized" (56).[23] Of particular importance is the intellectual exchange with Hamilton and Chambers, two of De Quincey's closest friends. Thanks to their acquaintance he was as close to the current knowledge on mesmerism and physiology as he could possibly be with Edinburgh being "a center of experimentation on these subjects" (Lavie and Hobson 237).

One of De Quincey's foremost contacts with "academic Scotland" was Hamilton. When John Wilson first told him about Hamilton, that "monster of erudition" immediately kindled De Quincey's "curiosity," his "respect" for Hamilton's "extraordinary attainments," and his "deep interest" in Hamilton's "pretensions" (*WTDQ* 17: 149–50). On the occasion of De Quincey's first visit to Edinburgh in 1815, Wilson introduced the two men and from that moment onward there was genuine fondness and soon a deep friendship between them. Thomas Hamilton, William's brother and author of *Cyril Thornton* (1827), William Hamilton, as well as their wives became very close friends of De Quincey, who often visited them together with his children after having moved to Edinburgh in 1827.[24] The proximity of their lodgings in Edinburgh favoured frequent and long visits. To some extent, Hamilton perhaps even replaced Wordsworth and Coleridge, the faded stars of earlier years, for in "speaking of Sir William Hamilton and his metaphysics [De Quincey's] strain rose to nearly its highest mood" (Masson 127).[25] Indeed, the two men shared a range of interests on which many a night "the two philosophers discoursed till the small hours of the morning" (Veitch 135). Mesmerism, unconscious processes, literature, and philosophy were amongst the interests

Hamilton and De Quincey shared. They further had in common their conviction that extraordinary states of mind—Hamilton through observation and De Quincey from his opium experience—render cognitive processes more explicit rather than exciting a different kind of mental action.

In an 1852 *Hogg's Instructor* sketch, De Quincey describes Hamilton as having

> a pancyclopaedic acquaintance with every section of knowledge that could furnish keys for unlocking man's inner nature. Already, in 1814, I conceive that he must have been studying physiology upon principles of investigation suggested by himself. In 1820, 1827, and the following years, up to 1832, on revisiting Edinburgh, I found him master of all the knowledge that France and Germany had then accumulated upon animal magnetism, which he justly conceived to hide within itself shy secrets as to 'the dark foundations' of our human nature, such as cannot now be lawfully neglected. (*WTDQ* 17: 153)

De Quincey and Hamilton were both fascinated by the possibility of "unlocking man's inner nature," and this must have been the largest and most encompassing common interest. To share the undertaking of bringing light to "the dark foundations" with a likeminded and similarly learned man, whom De Quincey even describes as a "polyhistor of a higher class" (*WTDQ* 17: 153), surely was a bright spot in De Quincey's otherwise difficult situation in Edinburgh. It is interesting but no coincidence that the two items De Quincey deems most important in an investigation into the "dark foundations" of human nature, and that he deems worthy of mention, are physiology and mesmerism. Personally he might have put opium on top of the list, but he was acutely aware of the importance these fields of research had in answering psychological questions. Apart from opium, the field that De Quincey and

Hamilton deemed most important in their attempt to unlock the hidden chambers of the mind was animal magnetism.

Mesmerism was their topic of choice. Thomas Carlyle remembers that "animal magnetism and the German revival of it" was "habitually occupying" Hamilton and "frequently turned up" (Veitch 13) in conversation. Robert Pearce Gillies tells a similar anecdote about De Quincey's first visit to Edinburgh in 1815. The "doctrines of dreams, of warnings, of second-sight, and mesmerism" (2: 220) were among the topics on which De Quincey repeatedly conversed whenever they met. This did not change in the much longer and more intense Edinburgh period from 1827 onward, when many discussions circled around this topic (*Biography* 257; *Memorials* 2: 57). De Quincey and Hamilton habitually conversed on animal magnetism and it is likely that De Quincey was present at one of the "frequent experiments at his [Hamilton's] house in mesmerism" (Veitch 118). When De Quincey "spent many an evening discussing knotty points of philosophy with Hamilton" (Hogg 55), mesmerism was a recurrent topic.

The impulse to write an article on animal magnetism stems at least indirectly from Hamilton, through whom De Quincey knew Colquhoun. This connection is crucial because De Quincey's article, "Animal Magnetism" (1834), is based on Colquhoun's *Report*, which introduced the second French investigation on animal magnetism in Britain. Colquhoun was a regular visitor and good friend of Hamilton's, too, and their friendship was likewise characterised by a "constant and affectionate intimacy" (Veitch 118). Various letters indicate that De Quincey and Colquhoun met on several occasions. In a short undated note from Hamilton, De Quincey was invited to join Hamilton and Colquhoun on "some negus" (*Memorials* 2: 57). In a letter to Southey written in January 1827, De Quincey describes Colquhoun as "a clever man who was educated at Göttingen" (Symonds 319).[26] In yet another letter from early 1828, De Quincey writes to William Blackwood: "Fonk, I learn from Mr.

Colquhoun, was pardoned" (Symonds 329). Although references are scarce and allusive, they clearly indicate that De Quincey personally knew Colquhoun.

He also provided De Quincey and Hamilton with the latest publications on mesmerism. Colquhoun, whose interest in magnetism was aroused during his studies in Germany, continued to receive "the latest French and German publications" from "a medical friend" (Gauld, "Colquhoun"). In the first letter quoted above, Hamilton further informs De Quincey that he would send "the book from Colquhoun to-night" (*Memorials* 2: 57). Japp's dating between 1831 and 1837 suggests that Hamilton was referring to Colquhoun's *Report*, which is not possible, though. Barry Symonds's analysis of watermarks and addresses (Symonds 343–44) and the incomplete date on the letter—"Sunday Night, Dec. 23."—indicate that the letter was most probably written in 1827 and definitely before 1833.[27] This means that De Quincey was reading up on animal magnetism—probably original German publications—before 1830.[28] While De Quincey surely knew about animal magnetism from its first short-lived period of interest in Britain in the late eighteenth century and Coleridge's continual though sceptical interest, Hamilton and Colquhoun were crucial to De Quincey's interest in the topic, which in turn was formative to his understanding of the mind and unconscious processes.

There is less evidence for De Quincey's interest in physiology; however, his friendship with Chambers, who was profoundly interested in the topic and knew some of the foremost physiologists of that time, provides a tentative connection. If the surviving correspondence with Hamilton is scarce, correspondence with Chambers is almost nonexistent. Far from indicating a lack of intimacy, however, it suggests that their many visits made a written correspondence unnecessary. While Chambers declined De Quincey's offer to write for his magazine, they became friends and De Quincey "used to spend many Sundays" (E. Priestley 58) with the Chambers family. A letter from De Quincey attests that they

remained in touch until the 1850s.[29] Chambers was interested in phrenology and was on intimate terms with George Combe, the author of *Elements of Phrenology* (1824), who in turn worked with Elliotson in London. He was also acquainted with Carpenter, who assisted him with the later editions of *Vestiges*, and was further fascinated by mesmerism. Chambers even had a "brief but striking experience" with animal magnetism in 1844, when he was himself the subject of a mesmeric experiment (Winter, *Mesmerized* 6, 225). Chambers was another Edinburgh friend with whom De Quincey could discuss mental phenomena and the most recent popular and scientific theories in phrenology, mesmerism, and physiology. As one of the "keys for unlocking man's inner nature" (*WTDQ* 17: 153), as De Quincey puts it in the sketch of Hamilton, physiology was most likely to be a topic of discussion with Chambers.

Conclusion

Mesmeric, physiological, and philosophical investigations in the nineteenth century were all concerned with similar issues; animal magnetism and physiology were the main areas of investigation to establish a discourse on unconscious mental processes. While, on the one hand, the popular mesmeric doctrines provided a spectacular way to access unconscious contents and trigger unconscious processes, it remained dubious because of its low scientific status. Physiological research, on the other hand, was firmly established in the scientific community and its insights were more highly regarded, but it could not compete with mesmerism in terms of popularity and did not have the same dazzling proofs of an unconscious realm. Researchers in both areas complemented and adopted elements from one another to support their own research. De Quincey participated in this discourse. His contribution in the vibrant and diversified magazine context was allied with, drew from, and expanded theories on unconscious processes in other fields. In the 1848 "Final Memorials of Charles Lamb" De Quincey hints at his knowledge of various scientific advances: "how could geology be treated otherwise than childishly by one who should rely upon the encyclopaedias

of 1800? or comparative Physiology by the most ingenious of men unacquainted with Marshall Hall, and with the apocalyptic glimpses of secrets unfolding under the hands of Professor Owen?" (*WTDQ* 16: 377). The large and tightly knit social network in which De Quincey was moving in Edinburgh suggests that he knew more people and was acquainted with more scientific theories than we can gather from historical or literary sources. This is not to say that he simply adopted these theories. It shows, however, that he was part of a larger scientific and cultural movement that was about to change the way people conceived of mental processes and their intricate relationship with the body. He crucially contributed to the development and promulgation of a model of productive unconscious processes that rely on bodily processes and that are attracting widespread interest today.

It will save many of our readers a world of trouble, if, at the outset of this paper, we recall to their recollection an article on Animal Magnetism, which appeared in a former number of this Magazine, from the able, and on this subject—at once psychological and physiological—the congenial pen of Mr De Quincey.

Christian Isobel Johnstone[1]

CHAPTER FIVE

Mesmeric and Opium-Induced States of Mind

In the 1830s, when De Quincey wrote his article on animal magnetism, the debate about its respectability as a scientific approach to explore the mind was just about to gain momentum. With "Animal Magnetism" (*Tait's* 1834), "a fine reflective essay" (315n) in Richard Holmes's words, De Quincey took part in the debate on the mesmeric phenomena, which was rekindled partly due to Colquhoun's translation of the second French report and the subsequent responses in the magazines. It was one of the few supportive articles in a fierce and controversial public debate before the movement became more popular in Britain. On the one hand, his article can be seen as an act of sensationalist and performative writing that lacks critical distance. Explicit allusions to various scientific 'miracles' and the implicit imitation of a passage from Charles Lyell's *Principles of Geology* sets mesmerism alongside more established scientific discourses. On the other hand, a discursive close reading of De Quincey's article alongside his *Confessions* and Colquhoun's *Report of the Experiments on Animal Magnetism* shows that De Quincey truly endorsed mesmerism because of its affinity to opium. Various passages in the *Confessions* contain many of the same arguments and

descriptions of mental phenomena as Colquhoun's *Report* and De Quincey's "Animal Magnetism," both written more than ten years later. For De Quincey, mesmerism, like opium, was so intriguing because of its power to induce altered states of consciousness and to access the unconscious.

Animal Magnetism in British Magazines after 1820

A brief overview of articles dealing with animal magnetism in the late 1820s and early 30s illustrates the disinterest and scepticism that was prevalent in British magazines. Richard Chenevix' two articles in the *London Medical and Physical Journal* of 1829 defend animal magnetism as a medical remedy to which everybody can have access. His statement that he "remained an unbeliever" (220) until he witnessed a demonstration by Abbé Faria in France nicely illustrates the fact that it was indeed a question of belief rather than scientific truth, which it actually remained even in the heyday of mesmerism. Chenevix argues that the British national character was responsible for the scepticism and opposition animal magnetism faced in Britain. Whereas the love of mysticism in Germany allowed mesmerism to flourish, the "repugnance of English minds to the supernatural in science has prevented them even from bestowing a thought upon the subject" (228). The fact that Chenevix' article was published in a medical journal might suggest a higher degree of acceptance among a scientific readership than was actually the case. For their own opinion on the subject the editors refer to an article from the November 1826 issue of the journal, in which they utter their "Decidedly sceptical" attitude towards those "tricks of charlatans" ("Dr. Dupau" 463). Mesmerism is only given some space in the journal "to take an occasional glance at the passing follies, of the day" ("Dr. Dupau" 470–71). In a footnote to Chenevix' article, they "candidly confess" that they still need to be converted to this "system of juggling imposition" (219), which depicts mesmerism in a playful and condescending way as a manipulative deception. Chenevix'

second article was no more successful in convincing the public and the editors of the *London Medical and Physical Journal*.

Ridicule or indifference dominated the public debate over mesmerism. In an article for *Fraser's Magazine* one year later, John Aitken Carlyle, younger brother of Thomas Carlyle, left no doubt about his attitude, which is representative of the British in general. He puts it somewhat diplomatically but highly ironically in the epigraph, with a quote by a French commentator on mesmerism: "In fact, whoever battles against animal magnetism is wrong; because even if it is not true, at least it is amusing" (673).[2] The ironic tone persists in the first paragraph, which advises people to "enjoy pleasantly and comfortably all the fantastic tricks" (673), while the rest of the article is astonishingly unbiased. Examples and quotations from the works on animal magnetism are given without any further comments. Carlyle only looks "from afar" and with "quiet scepticism" at the magnetisers' "doings and pretensions" (673). He neither critically engages with the topic, nor takes it altogether seriously. Chenevix and Carlyle agree on one point, though, namely that in terms of animal magnetism "Great Britain presents nothing but a *tabula rasa*" (680). Carlyle's prediction at the end of his article, that "magnetic ware … seems gone never to return" (684), looks like a reasonable prediction at that time; however, it was to be proven wrong by Colquhoun's publication *inter alia*.

Colquhoun's *Report* enlivened the debate and provoked cautious enthusiasm as well as outright hostility. A glance at some reviews of his book shows the extent to which opinions differed at that time and allows us to situate De Quincey's contribution within this public debate. *The Monthly Review* praises the seriousness and scientific rigour with which the members of the royal French commissions performed the renewed inquiry. The reader is warned that "he will be called on for a very considerable share of fortitude to risk all the dangers by which his credulity is about to be assailed" ("Book Review" 296). The commentator credits the sound basis of evidence and even denies the "liberty to doubt" (302)

given such a convincing documentation. Despite the very positive tone and the affirmation of facts, a certain amount of scepticism remains: "Let us humbly and diligently inquire, but not decide" (302). Paradoxically, one can neither "doubt" the evidence nor "decide" in favour of "a subject so mysterious" (302). On the other side of the spectrum are hostile and ridiculing responses to Colquhoun's publication. The reviewer in the *Foreign Quarterly*, Lord B. Percival, opens the discussion with the comment that "Absurdities and comets move in eccentric orbits" (413) and fears that his "readers are getting tired of these scenes of never-varying stolidity" (438). He considers the evidence in favour of animal magnetism to be "weak and inconclusive" (441) and finds the committee's "reasoning was as clumsy as their credulity was gross" (433). This review is written to ridicule animal magnetism and insult its followers. The commentator in *The Monthly Review* is part of a minority in his careful praise, whereas Percival is conspicuously hard in his judgement. Together they illustrate the range of response to animal magnetism, from cautious acceptance to fierce opposition.

Medical journals published less biased responses but nevertheless kept a critical distance. *The Lancet* (founded in 1823 by Thomas Wakley) and the *Edinburgh Medical and Surgical Journal* published fairly balanced reviews of Colquhoun's book. The commentators in both journals simply present the facts as they find them in the translation of the French report and refrain from articulating their personal opinion. The *Edinburgh Medical and Surgical Journal* purposefully presents nothing but the facts "to afford our readers the means of judging for themselves in regard to the miraculous powers claimed for this remedial agent" ("Mr Colquhoun" 156). In *The Lancet*, the reviewer remarks that this journal formerly added to the "opprobrium" ("Animal Magnetism" 175) that animal magnetism had to endure. This comes less as a surprise, considering that Wakley's hope when he founded *The Lancet* was that "the age of *'Mental Delusion'* had passed, and that mystery and concealment will no longer be encouraged" (Wakley 2). Animal magnetism was a prime example of "that mystery

and concealment" to Wakley, who was one of its fierce opponents and publicly tried to prove that Elliotson's experiments were an act of imposture. Accordingly, the *Lancet* agrees neither with Colquhoun's views nor with the French Academy's conclusions. They simply do not want to be "so unphilosophical, or so illiberal" as to deny the simple "statement of facts" ("Animal Magnetism" 175). Without ever opposing the French report, the tone of these articles and, in particular, the editorial notes still reveal a strong scepticism, not to say disbelief.

The publication history of De Quincey's "Animal Magnetism" further illustrates the ambiguous response to mesmerism and the publishers' caution in dealing with this topic. The first mention of this article is in a letter to William Blackwood. On 11 May 1833 De Quincey informs Blackwood that he wishes "to write an Art. on Mr. Colquhon's [sic] Animal Magnetism, with regard to which I have some curious details" (MS 4717 13–14). However, De Quincey finally published the article in *Tait's*, almost a year later. In an undated letter De Quincey asks William Tait about his "*present* way of viewing the subject of Animal Magnetism, on which (encouraged by two former conversations) I am writing a sheet" (Axon 345). Two factors can explain the delay and the change from *Blackwood's* to *Tait's*. First, the relationship between De Quincey and William Blackwood "appears to have soured" (*Biography* 274) in the spring of 1833. Blackwood's death in the following year, after which his sons Robert and Alexander took over the magazine, further alienated De Quincey from *Blackwood's* during this period.

Second, the attitudes towards animal magnetism of the respective editors and the magazine contexts were decisive. Articles published between 1837 and 1851 in the two magazines back this assumption. *Blackwood's* published a highly satirical article on animal magnetism in 1837, supposedly written by a member of the "Metropolitan Joint Stock Medical, Scientific, and Literary Association" (White 385). With the name of the society the

author caricatures the fast growth in number of scientific associations in the 1830s. After many quite plausible examples of mesmeric phenomena—at least they are not less plausible than many serious claims—the author swerves into accounts of "an ass … put in 'rapport' with a gentleman" (392) and a gun "that shivered into a thousand pieces" (392) under the eyes of the magnetiser. The most ludicrous episode is that of a man whose amputated limbs supposedly grew back during the magnetic séance. Imitating a dancer, he then "placed his right foot on his own shoulder, and spun round for more than a minute at that height, holding his left leg in a horizontal position all the time" (391). The comic tone and the exaggerated report reveal the joke of this article, which is obviously a hoax. Nevertheless, the *London Medical and Surgical Journal* reprinted the article seemingly with serious intentions. The editors deem it an "admirable account" and only indicate that it should be read with "all that interest that the subject demands" ("Animal Magnetism in London" 805). It is not entirely clear whether they perpetuate the hoax or are victims of it themselves. In any case it indicates the thin line between seriousness and satire when it came to the subject of mesmerism and serves as an example of the ambiguous nature of the debate to which physicians, scientists, people who thought they were scientists, reviewers, and impostors all contributed.

Much later, in 1851, another article consolidates *Blackwood's* line on the topic. Although the authors of the article had already "dropped with [their] whole weight into the scale adverse to mesmerism" (Eagles and Ferrier 81) the editor feels the need to add a postscript to make the point even clearer. The only questions he deems worthy of investigation in regard to mesmerism are: "*first*, how is the mesmeric prostration to be accounted for? and *secondly*, how is it to be disposed of?" (83). He explains that all effects of magnetism, which by the time had become undeniable, stem from "the weakness or infatuation of human nature itself" (84) and are signs of "a *physique* and a *morale* greatly below the average" (85). This is "the correct and scientific explanation of the phenomena"

(85).[3] Animal magnetism never stood a chance in *Blackwood's*. *Tait's*, however, remained fairly positive about, or at least open to, the miraculous facts in regard to mesmerism. In an article of 1838, Christian Isobel Johnstone—the primary editor and "working genius" (Bertram 30) of the magazine—refers to the 1834 article "from the able, and on this subject—at once psychological and physiological—the congenial pen of Mr De Quincey" (460). After a balanced presentation of facts she concludes her article sceptically and even with "total unbelief" (467), but there is no sense of ridicule or hostility as in the articles in *Blackwood's*. This offers an explanation for the reason, which remained "unknown" ("AM" 359eds.n) so far, why *Blackwood's* rejected De Quincey's article and how the latter came to propose it to and publish it in *Tait's*.

One difficulty for animal magnetism in Britain was that it "remained progressive and reformist" (Willis and Wynne 7). "A central issue raised by Mesmer's work for *Blackwood's*," Duncan Kelly explains, was "whether it could explain the motive force of revolutionary politics" (139). Accordingly, one would assume the liberal *Tait's* to be more willing to publish a positive article on mesmerism than the conservative *Blackwood's*. To De Quincey the difference was in all likelihood a small one. Recent research consolidates the notion that he was not as bound to one magazine for its politics or to a certain line of thinking as some of his articles suggest. Morrison analyses, for example, how the *Confessions* were to be published in *Blackwood's* but were finally printed in the *London Magazine*, the liberal nemesis of *Blackwood's*. He concludes that "at the heart of [De Quincey's] politics is ambivalence" ("Radical Energies" 77). Barry Milligan similarly asserts that De Quincey is not "the High Tory mouthpiece" ("Brunonianism" 58) that critics often have presented. In terms of De Quincey's politics and publishing practice the case of animal magnetism is not extraordinary, nor is his interest in a "progressive and reformist" movement. For De Quincey the implications of mesmerism for the mental faculties clearly overrode political

considerations. He realised that mesmerism had the capacity to demonstrate impressively the power of unconscious processes. It promised insights into the workings of the mind that De Quincey—provoked and driven by opium—had himself been experiencing, seeking to describe, and trying to understand.

De Quincey's "Animal Magnetism," the *Confessions*, and Colquhoun's *Report*

De Quincey's article stands out as by far the most positive and supportive response to Colquhoun's *Report* and differs from most reviews in other respects, too. De Quincey does not mention Colquhoun in the title of his article. He refers to him only four times and quotations have no source indication. De Quincey also expresses his personal opinion and puts his own comments on the subject into focus. But then, his article is more than a review. As mentioned in the letter to William Blackwood, the aim is to expound some "curious details" (MS 4717 13–14). De Quincey, who is not shy to stake an extreme or controversial claim in his articles, takes a firm stand in this debate on mesmerism and draws his own conclusions. This stands for his intellectual courage to follow his own inclinations even if they are not popular, which he attributes to his "spirit of fierce (perhaps foolish) independence" ("Sketches" 161). Morrison and Daniel Sanjiv Roberts both argue that De Quincey's decision to learn German was "brave and prescient" (*Biography* 111), "a rare, difficult, and courageous one" (*Revisionary* 161), and so is his discussion of prostitutes in the *Confessions*, his interest in political economy, and the article on mesmerism. It does not simply treat Colquhoun's work, but the larger phenomenon of animal magnetism as such and especially its implications about mental processes. De Quincey was likely to show such a keen interest in mesmerism not because of its medical uses, but because it offered the possibility "to open up many new and most important views … in the whole philosophy of the human mind" (Colquhoun viii). He was a fervent defender of this disputed practice and

believed that it would disclose new ways to understand the workings of the mind, "the prospects of Psychology" ("AM" 379) in his own terms.

De Quincey establishes animal magnetism as a fact—not a mere hypothesis—and claims its position amongst other sciences. De Quincey knew that even some of the more established sciences were fighting for recognition and acceptance, and he exploited this in his article. Geology was also making seemingly impossible claims in the first half of the nineteenth century. Uniformitarianism, which proclaimed slow and gradual changes over a long timespan, was gradually replacing Catastrophism, according to which the earth was affected by abrupt and large-scale transformations. This new theory demonstrated that the earth was much older than earlier models suggested. The geologist James Hutton first pronounced uniformitarian ideas, but the most popular advocate was Charles Lyell, Hutton's student. His *Principles of Geology* (1830-33) was first published in three volumes just as De Quincey was writing "Animal Magnetism." Lyell's work was so popular that volumes one and two were reissued in a second revised edition alongside the first edition of the third volume in 1832-33. One year later the third edition in four volumes had already appeared. Lyell's theories contained some provocative ideas, but he was careful not to snub the orthodoxies. Although on a somewhat different level than mesmerism, this new geology was challenging long established assumptions about the natural world. In particular the proclamation of deep time undermined the biblical account of creation, which was still the main resource to calculate the age of the earth.[4] Lyell, who was very conscious of the dangers of opposing the powers that be too openly, "tactfully held his peace" (Hearnshaw, *History* 32).

A close reading of "Animal Magnetism" alongside passages from Charles Lyell's *Principles of Geology*, Colquhoun's *Report*, and De Quincey's *Confessions* reveals a range of common issues. First, De Quincey indirectly connects mesmerism with contemporary theories

of geology, which underlines its scientific value and places it in the vicinity of evolutionary thought. Second, he considers mesmerism as an objective, scientific approach that confirms the conclusions about the workings of the mind that he reaches through introspection in the *Confessions*. Third, opium and animal magnetism share various effects that elicit otherwise unconscious processes. Mesmerism corroborated De Quincey's notion of the mind as an active organ with a physical basis and his conviction that a vast number of mental processes are beyond the reach of consciousness. This is evident from the verbal, argumentative and content-related analogies between his article, Lyell's *Principles of Geology*, Colquhoun's *Report* as well as De Quincey's own *Confessions*.

Distancing animal magnetism from its founder and the first French report, De Quincey feels confident to detail the second French report, the final validation of mesmerism. He concurs with Colquhoun in taking great caution to distinguish the actual practice from its founder Mesmer because it was largely due to the latter's behaviour that animal magnetism was stigmatised and ridiculed. Mesmer lacked the "caution and scientific scepticism" ("AM" 360) to save himself and his theory from public contempt. De Quincey is convinced that Mesmer discovered "extraordinary truths" ("AM" 360) and that one needs to separate the results of his discovery from Mesmer's person. Furthermore, he deems the first report of the Royal Academy insufficient because it assessed Mesmer's explanation of animal magnetism instead of the phenomenon itself. This is what the second investigation put at the centre of attention. De Quincey hyperbolically emphasises that the new report had already been "sifted, probed, vexed, tormented by a jealous, nay, hostile party of scientific antagonists" and "the most incredulous and vigilant opponents" ("AM" 366) in order to increase the credibility of its results.

The "attempt to explain through comprehensive theory the cause and the behavior of the phenomena" (Kaplan 692) was the main reason for the vehement controversy around

mesmerism, even amongst its followers. In his article, however, De Quincey does not take a stand in that discussion. He is less interested in the explanation of the phenomenon—and even less in the different schools of mesmerism—than in the nature of the effects themselves. Before he moves on to a description of the different stages of the mesmeric trance, he delivers an exalted appeal in favour of animal magnetism:

> *Appalling*, we have called the case; for it relates not merely to nature, to physical truth, but to our own *human* nature—to that part and section of physical truth with which chiefly we are concerned; and we are bold to affirm, that not the first solar eclipse visible to man, not the original, and as yet enigmatic earthquake, when the steadfast earth was first perceived to rock like the waters beneath his feet,—not the sudden treachery and desertion of the mariner's compass at a critical point in the first voyage of Columbus, when an ancient law of nature, by suddenly giving way, seemed to argue an entrance within some new system of natural forces and laws, or, possibly, of utter lawlessness,—the anarchy of chaos and old night,—not any, or all of these cases, are fitted to excite awe so profound, or a thrill of horror so startling as the sudden transfiguration of parts in the human system. ("AM" 368)

De Quincey here takes in and accepts animal magnetism like no other reviewer. One reason for his veneration is that it affects "our own *human* nature." It promises answers to questions that he had been asking himself for a long time, and which are central to much of his writing. De Quincey drops all reserve and scepticism in a display of his talent for writing "impassioned prose" at its best. In this passage he pulls together different images and juxtaposes great natural powers and their effects on the human imagination in one sentence, which joins all the elements in one long breath. It is a passage of restless prose; its cadence is

controlled by the use of anaphora, interspersed with fast-paced explanatory remarks and carefully placed caesuras. Some connections are left ambiguous, which results in a complex and somewhat disturbing or at least puzzling but logically connected argument about the power of mesmerism, which seems to reside in every one of us. Although somewhat vague in content, this passage is crystal clear in effect. The reader is captivated and drawn into De Quincey's prose and, so am I tempted to describe it, mesmerised. In fact, various contemporaries of De Quincey describe his rhetorical skills in just such a manner.

With the affirmation that animal magnetism is part of the "physical truth," De Quincey leaves no doubt about the material origin of the phenomena, but at the same time this notion is expanded so as to leave purely medical questions insufficient. The comparisons he draws further support his point. The solar eclipse and the earthquake are mighty natural forces, which people in ancient times explained in supernatural or religious terms. Eventually, however, these questions turned, without losing their force or apocalyptic threat, from being a matter of belief to a matter of science. The presumably magnetic variation of the compass that Columbus noted on his voyage to America is a more sophisticated example.[5] It is subtler in its immediate effect but at the same time more portentous in terms of conceptual consequences. It comprises the at first seemingly miraculous effect of a natural magnetic force and brings us closer to the phenomenon that De Quincey tries to contextualise in this passage. The variation of the compass on Columbus' voyage, a magnetic phenomenon, "*seemed* to argue" (emphasis added) the annihilation of known natural laws. Although it initially raised doubts about the existing theory of the earth's magnetic field, it only introduced an extension or modification to a known natural law.

Lyell's *Principles of Geology* also introduced—with the same rhetorical and argumentative turn—a "new system of natural forces and laws" ("AM" 368). After an historical outline of geological research in the first four chapters of volume one, Lyell begins

chapter five with "Causes which Have Retarded the Progress of Geology" (85). He explains that "Many appearances, which for a long time were regarded as indicating mysterious and extraordinary agency, are finally recognized as the necessary result of the laws now governing the material world" (85). This almost sounds like the opening for a vindication of animal magnetism. The similarities are not merely rhetorical, though. One passage at the beginning of chapter five shows particularly striking parallels to De Quincey's encomium of mesmerism. Showing full understanding for previous theories of geological change and their value as a product of their time, Lyell explains the need for new theories and their radical departure from former notions:

> In an early stage of advancement, when a great number of natural appearances are unintelligible, an eclipse, an earthquake, a flood, or the approach of a comet, with many other occurrences afterwards found to belong to the regular course of events, are regarded as prodigies. The same delusion prevails as to moral phenomena, and many of these are ascribed to the intervention of demons, ghosts, witches, and other immaterial and supernatural agents. By degrees, many of the enigmas of the moral and physical world are explained, and, instead of being due to extrinsic and irregular causes, they are found to depend on fixed and invariable laws. (86)

Both De Quincey's and Lyell's passages use the solar eclipse and the earthquake as examples of phenomena that were initially claimed to rely on supernatural forces but were eventually explained scientifically. Lyell's "demons, ghosts, witches, and other immaterial and supernatural agents" have their equivalent in De Quincey's passage in the form of the reference to Milton's "chaos and old night." The opposite pair of "extrinsic and irregular causes" and "fixed and invariable laws" is found in De Quincey as "utter lawlessness" and "natural forces and laws." And finally, Lyell extends his argument and claims that the same

laws that govern natural phenomena also apply to "moral," i.e. mental phenomena, "our own *human* nature" in De Quincey's words.[6]

The analogies in these passages are striking and suggest that De Quincey had Lyell's *Principles of Geology* in mind when writing his article. Lyell's work was widely available and De Quincey drops some hints of his knowledge of the new geological theories in his later writings. If De Quincey did not know that specific passage from *Principles of Geology*, which is unlikely, this concurrence even more clearly demonstrates that geology and mesmerism, regardless of their status today, fought the same battle for recognition. Taylor and Shuttleworth also point out that "Victorian psychologists" "were acutely aware that, just as apparently solid rock formations are actually in a continual flux, so the very substance as well as the contents of the brain are undergoing constant transformation" (71). On this meta-level of the discourse, geology and mesmerism were grappling with the same issues, and De Quincey's argument shows a close affinity to Lyell's passage about the respectability of recent research. With these argumentative parallels he positions animal magnetism alongside a more established science, and stresses the scientific and, above all, material basis of mesmerism.

Animal magnetism, just like the cutting edge theories in geology, either introduces a "new system of natural forces and laws" or opens a door to "utter lawlessness" ("AM" 368). In either case, it seems to surpass all momentary possibilities of categorisation and to exceed the human imagination. At the thought of the potential "lawlessness" De Quincey resorts to the image of "the anarchy of chaos and old night" ("AM" 368), with which he invokes Milton's "ancestors of Nature," the rulers of "Eternal anarchy" (Milton 2: 895–96). Animal magnetism, however, is not anarchical, inexplicable chaos to De Quincey. It follows natural laws just like an earthquake, a solar eclipse or variations in nautical navigation. But if the threat of lawlessness instils the horror expressed through the "anarchy of chaos and old night"

that surrounds hell in *Paradise Lost*, then the analogous physical "system of natural forces and laws," which accounts for the power of the mind, similarly but positively imparts a sublime reverence for the marvels of animal magnetism. In other Miltonic words, animal magnetism provides access to a "new world" (Milton 2: 867), except that for De Quincey the expedition is not spatial but mental to "the world within" (*C* 43). De Quincey uses the Miltonic cultural authority in order to reinforce his own argument and to emphasise the sublimity of mesmerism. Use of literary quotes is typical of De Quincey, and is very common in texts on mesmerism and other scientific topics at that time. By incorporating and embedding Milton's diction in his own writing almost as his own words, the vigorous account becomes even more provocative.

Before turning to actual cases described in the report, De Quincey introduces the various stages that can occur in the course of a magnetic séance. Colquhoun also presents this classification of six stages, which he adopted from a German book on mesmerism by Karl Alexander Ferdinand Kluge (Kluge 108–13). Despite the difficulty of categorising the various degrees of the magnetic treatment, it was of course in the interest of the magnetisers to establish a valid list of symptoms. Varying lists were circulating amongst magnetists. The following are the names for each stage as given by Colquhoun, to each of which he adds a short description: waking; half-sleep, or imperfect crisis; magnetic sleep; perfect crisis or simple somnambulism; self-intuition, lucidity or lucid vision; and universal lucidity (Colquhoun 88-89). De Quincey adopts this list of stages but makes some decisive changes. He adds comments and slightly modifies or extends the descriptions in some cases in order to bring in his personal experience of altered states of mind under the influence of opium. De Quincey has something to say because he recognises the stages described by magnetisers from his own opium debauches and reveries.[7]

As noted but not elaborated by the editors of *The Works of Thomas De Quincey* there is a remarkable resemblance between De Quincey's descriptions of magnetic stages and his opium experience. His descriptions of half-sleep, magnetic sleep, perfect crisis, self-intuition, and lucid vision notably reflect arguments and phrases in the *Confessions*. The common points concern the mind as an independent agent, an internalised consciousness that renders possible a more acute "*self-contemplation*" and "*self-intuition*" ("AM" 369) and lastly the declaredly mystic or transcendent feelings of the opium-eater and the mesmerised person. In a number of examples the phraseology is almost the same and descriptions of the mesmeric trance seem to draw on De Quincey's mental states under the influence of opium. There is no indication that De Quincey used any other source that could account for the points where he departs from Colquhoun's text. Surprisingly, there are also parallels between the *Confessions* and Colquhoun's *Report*. This complex set of analogous phrasings between De Quincey's and Colquhoun's description of stages as well as passages in the *Confessions* explains De Quincey's enthusiasm for mesmerism. More than that, the closeness of certain passages in these three texts suggests that Colquhoun and De Quincey are describing very similar phenomena triggered by different catalysts. First, animal magnetism and opium are different tools to the same end, namely the elucidation of unconscious mental processes and contents; and second, mesmerism confirmed De Quincey's insights into the unconscious mind drawn from his own opium experience.

De Quincey, unlike Colquhoun, detects in the second stage, or "imperfect crisis," "the presence of some new and disturbing agency" ("AM" 369) much like the "marvellous agency" (*C* 74) of opium that often governed the actions of his mind. The "new and disturbing agency" is that active part of the mind that usually eludes awareness and conscious control but here the unconscious suddenly becomes partially conscious. During this mesmeric half-sleep one grows aware of the active agent that De Quincey had long descried in himself,

and whose power is usually only indirectly detectable through its effects. This addition creates the first link between the mind-expansion induced by opium and that brought about by animal magnetism. In this second stage "the sensibility is now untuned, as it were, for its ordinary action" and "preparations are now obscurely making for introverting or throwing inwards the ordinary action of the senses" ("AM" 369). It remains a fragmentary awareness during that transitional state to magnetic sleep.

In the fourth stage, in which the "throwing inwards" of the senses is carried further, the parallels with the *Confessions* become more incisive. In this "*simple*" or "magnetic *somnambulism*" "the patient awakes, as it were, within himself, and his consciousness returns. … he is again placed in a very peculiar connection with the external world" (Colquhoun 88-89). Along the same lines, De Quincey asserts that the patient "wakens, as it were, but to a world within himself; and his connexion is restored with the external world; but, as will be seen, by some new and inexplicable process" ("AM" 369). Both descriptions contain the waking of the mesmerised person "within himself," the recovery of consciousness, and the new, peculiar connection to the external world. De Quincey's memory of his very first opium experience is also marked by a vehement disclosure of the inner self: "Heavens! what a revulsion! what an upheaving, from its lowest depths, of the inner spirit! what an apocalypse of the world within me" (*C* 43). De Quincey's first fix clearly had an epiphanic effect on him, which caused a positive sense of disturbance and accounts for the exalted description. Unlike the slow and controlled transition into this state in a magnetic séance, opium works in a sudden manner. The revelation of the "world within"—the unconscious mental realm—which opium laid open in just one moment, was a promise to De Quincey that the hidden power of the mind might be unlocked. Mesmerism carried the same promise.

Although a different, more charged language is used in the *Confessions*, the descriptions are composed of the same basic elements. There is the recovery of consciousness

with a peculiar sense of one's own mind. The turn inwards is described with exactly the same phrase in all three texts, as the "world within," except that the first opium fix was accompanied by a revelation of apocalyptic magnitude. The "revulsion" and "upheaving" in the *Confessions* denotes a more acute feeling of suddenness and strength. The new sense of the external world is part of De Quincey's opium experience, too, in the form of "positive effects which had opened before me" (*C* 43). The similarity between all three texts is striking. They have in common the fascination and the idiom for the display of unconscious processes provoked by different agents. The three versions of this state of mind—in the *Confessions,* Colquhoun's *Report*, and De Quincey's review of the latter—point towards the sharing of the same larger discourse on the science of the mind and, in particular the growing notion of the unconscious mind.

The inward journey continues after stage four the same way it continues for De Quincey during his following opium ventures. In the description of the fifth stage, De Quincey's article is full of superlatives:

> But in the *fifth* stage, new powers are developed—new faculties, without parallel, analogy, or the dimmest prefiguration in any previous condition of human nature as known to philosophy. The patient now suddenly emerges into a state of intellectual light, which may be called the faculty of *self-contemplation*, or perhaps better (as Mr. Colquhoun has named it) of *self-intuition*. ("AM" 369)

This passage has no parallel in Colquhoun except for the term attributed to him and is presumably De Quincey's own. De Quincey first writes of "*self-contemplation*," implying an active and attentive mode of consideration, but then includes Colquhoun's "*self-intuition*," a more passive variant. The latter denotes an automatic and unconscious mode of apprehension. It is the immediate insight not executed by the will, but by the undirected perception.

Colquhoun's term is not offered as unequivocally "better" but "perhaps better." De Quincey obviously wants both terms in his description, thus juxtaposing a more active and a purely automatic way to insight.

In the *Confessions* De Quincey claims to possess exactly these mental faculties, both the active "*self-contemplation*" and the more passive "*self-intuition*" with the aim to seek and gather self-knowledge. Colquhoun's description of the fifth stage as a kind of "*self-intuition,*" "a clear knowledge of [one's] own internal mental and bodily state" (89) is very close to the passage in the *Confessions* in which De Quincey "boasteth himself to be a philosopher" (*C* 12). He claims to possess superb "*analytic* functions" (*C* 12)—the equivalent of the "intellectual light" or "*self-contemplation*" ("AM" 369)—as well as "such a constitution of the *moral* [i.e. mental] faculties, as shall give him an inner eye and power of intuition for the vision and the mysteries of our human nature" (*C* 13)—the equivalent of "*self-intuition*" ("AM" 369). He further asserts that opium draws forth revelations in "dreams like intuitions" (*C* 67). De Quincey only needs to add "*self-contemplation*" to Colquhoun's "*self-intuition*" in order to cover the faculties he describes in the *Confessions*. It seems that he is substantially adding his own ideas to the reviewed material from the *Report*. Central to his opium *Confessions* and his approval of mesmerism is the possibility of insight into the "human nature" (*C* 13; "AM" 368).[8]

In the last stage, universal lucidity, the similarities between "Animal Magnetism" and the *Confessions* are more elusive. In fact, De Quincey does not go into any detail about what can be accomplished in this stage and cautions that the effects remain "mere matter of conjecture" ("AM" 370). However, in two passages from the *Confessions* that are less concerned with the immediate effects or actions of opium but rather describe the feelings of the opium-eater, associations readily suggest themselves. This time De Quincey's description is again very close to Colquhoun's, except for some rhetorical flourishes: "the *clairvoyance*,

or faculty of unobstructed vision, is carried still further, surmounting all impediments of space and time, and extending to all objects, near or remote, without distinction" ("AM" 370). Like the magnetised person, the opium-eater "feels that the diviner part of his nature is *paramount*; that is, the moral affections are in a state of cloudless serenity; and over all is the great light of the majestic intellect" (*C* 45 emphasis added).

In an account of an opium reverie De Quincey illustrates this state of pure mental peacefulness but not without forestalling charges of mysticism, which he readily accepts. Sitting all night at a window overlooking Liverpool and the sea beyond, he describes having felt himself

> at a distance, and aloof from the uproar of life; as if the tumult, the fever, and the strife, were suspended; a respite granted from the secret burthens of the heart; a sabbath of repose; a resting of human labours. Here were the hopes which blossom in the paths of life, reconciled with the peace which is in the grave; motions of the intellect as unwearied as the heavens, yet for all anxieties a halcyon calm: a tranquillity that seemed no product of inertia, but as if resulting from mighty and equal antagonisms; infinite activities, infinite repose. (*C* 51)

The mind of the opium-eater is above the bustle of life and lingers in a powerful, restorative state of activity and calmness that extends over everything he sees and he feels. In a kind of omnipresent state—maybe a version of "universal lucidity"—the "hopes … of life" and the "peace … in the grave" are brought together and conciliated in an all-encompassing sensation of "infinite activities, infinite repose." The slow cadence of this passage conveys the serenity through its many short clauses. The combination of fragmentary sentences, and the lack of active verbs reflects the "everlasting but gentle agitation" (*C* 51) of the opium-eater's mind and the ocean he beholds. Animal magnetism and opium both have the potential to provide

that state of "unobstructed vision," of "majestic intellect." It is characterised by "antagonisms," which result in a calm state of concentrative attention. This attention extends to all visible, audible, and tactile objects; however, it always returns to and centres on the self.

The strong likeness of some passages in all three of the works suggests that De Quincey's conception of the mind is reflected in the six stages of animal magnetism. Had the chronological order of the texts been different, De Quincey might be said to have borrowed and expanded parts from Colquhoun's work on animal magnetism for his *Confessions*. A peculiar difference, however, is the fact that a magnetised person cannot remember anything after waking up from the magnetic sleep. All descriptions of magnetic states have to be made by an external observer. De Quincey, on the other hand, has a much better and clearer memory of his revelatory opium experiences. It is definitely not the medical application of animal magnetism that is central in De Quincey's esteem. Instead of focusing on the healing powers, De Quincey prizes the more abstract ramifications of the phenomenon. His fascination centres on the insights one can gain about the limits of introspection, the possibility of overcoming them, and eventually the hidden power of the mind. In several places, De Quincey's rendering of the six stages of animal magnetism contains some embellishments. These are not only due to the fact that he is a prose poet rendering a factual account more imaginative. They also indicate De Quincey's departure from mere description (and the resulting medical applications) to muse about the implications on the workings of the mind. He seems to sense a momentousness that reaches beyond the facts as reported in the book. He senses the possibility of the unconscious mind.

Beyond the mystical surface of things he sees the promise of reaching a deeper consciousness and a way to overcome the obstacles that prevent access to unconscious contents and processes. De Quincey's unrestrained fascination for a technique that allows access to "a new mode of consciousness" ("AM" 371)—possibly even a mode that can bring

the unconscious into consciousness—is not surprising. The crux, as it were, is the "world within me" (*C* 43) which is at last proven in a scientific context. The active unconscious mind that bears so much more power than one usually is aware of is at the heart of animal magnetism for De Quincey, for the obvious reason that it is central to so much of his own work. Through mesmerism, these phenomena could, for the first time, be observed from the outside and be described other than through introspection, dreams, or opium reveries, all three of which are inherently private and subjective. It is as if mesmerism had opened an external window to the mind.

A peculiar account of De Quincey talking about an internal window to the mind is given by John Taylor. The opium dream that De Quincey discussed with Taylor around the time of the *Confessions*, exemplifies the analogous effects of mesmerism and opium or, more particularly in this case, the hopes attached to them for a more profound knowledge of the unconscious self:

> De Quincey has a Figure to express what must take place before the Mind can so act on itself as to conceive itself, in one of his Opium Dreams, where he conceives the Brain so to have protruded itself as to be to itself an Object of conscious Observation: as if the Eye could be so projected from itself as to be able to see itself—And to a Dreamer only can such a State of Things appear for a Moment possible. (Chilcott 138)

This truly wonderful version of the disclosure of the inner life and its inherent difficulties is neither a poetic rendering of the "upheaving" or "apocalypse" (*C* 43), nor is it really comparable with "*self-intuition*" ("AM" 369). Instead of a revelation it describes an analysis of "the Brain," the organ of thought that is the hiding place of the things we do not know about ourselves. The "inner eye" of the *Confessions* reverberates in this account, but it is not the "inner eye" looking at the brain. The eye is only used as a proxy to render the whole

image more palpable. The brain is "to itself an Object of conscious Observation"—as if one and the same brain could reveal its hidden chambers to itself—which remains as impossible as squaring the circle, except maybe in the opium induced, phantasmagoric visions of dreams. The act of rendering the unconscious conscious is a similarly paradoxical undertaking and only possible in an altered state of mind, be it induced by opium or animal magnetism. And of course, in the case of the latter all the insights gained during a magnetic sleep are lost again after the magnetised person returns to normal consciousness. But even if mesmerism only temporarily allows one's brain "to be to itself an Object of conscious Observation," at least it provides the possibility to observe this process in other people.

The Effects of Opium and Animal Magnetism in Real Life

Reminiscences of contemporaries, in fact, depict De Quincey and his opium eating, either directly or indirectly, in mesmeric terms. Already during De Quincey's first visit to Edinburgh he was known (and later notoriously so) to "set two snuff-boxes on the table" from one of which "every now and then" he swallowed an opium pill (A. Lang 98). Robert Pearce Gillies was fascinated by De Quincey's rhetorical abilities, which had a mesmeric effect on the listener. He thought that there are "two spheres or worlds" and his belief was that a poet should be "moving in a separate world" (216, 219). Although Gillies wrongly thought that De Quincey had not yet "published a single line," he honoured him because De Quincey "neither spoke nor acted in the every-day world" (218, 219), which Gillies partly ascribed to opium:

> His voice was extraordinary; it came as if from dream-land; but it was the most musical and impressive of voices. … the most remarkable trait of De Quincey's character was the power he possessed of easily changing the tone of ordinary thought and conversation into that of his own dream-land, till his auditors, with wonder, found themselves moving pleasantly along with

> him in a sphere of which they might have heard and read, perhaps, but which had ever appeared to them inaccessible, and far, far away! (219–20)

Gillies here foregrounds De Quincey's capacity to be and to carry the listener into another "sphere." The musicality and tone of voice, together with some inexplicable characteristic—explicable only in Gillies's metaphoric description as coming from "dream-land"—have a truly mesmeric effect, both on the speaker and the audience. Not only does the voice or "conversation" change, but also the very "tone of ordinary thought."

In 1889, *The Hawke's Bay Herald* published a brief review of a book by an "American called Dr. Wright," which contains a similar account of De Quincey's rhetorical gift. Again, he had just swallowed "a pill of opium as large as a small hickory nut:"

> a strange light seemed to glow through his eyes and illumine his face. He began to talk with a voice that seemed to flow out of the Unknown—low, mellifluous; ceaseless, filling one with awe. We listened almost breathless, and soon found ourselves sitting on the floor at his feet, looking into his transfigured face, like entranced children. (qtd. in "An Evening With De Quincey")

Just like in Gillies's account, De Quincey's voice comes from some remote place, "out of the Unknown," and the listeners *find themselves* following him. At the same time as De Quincey is "transfigured" his audience is "entranced." As suggested in the stylistic analysis of De Quincey's eulogy of mesmerism, his written prose also had the same capacity to mesmerise his readers. Gillies's observation about the change of "tone of ordinary thought" and Wright's description of it as "mellifluous," equally apply to De Quincey's description of animal magnetism and beautifully capture the effect. The passages from Gillies and Wright (and they are not the only contemporaries to describe De Quincey's skills as an interlocutor in this way) sound as if they were capturing a magnetiser and a magnetised person at the same time,

someone who is existing in a concentrative, imaginary mood while at the same time captivating the listeners and carrying them into another state of mind.

Hamilton, who was crucial in raising De Quincey's interest in this matter and must have seen him take his opium pills many times during their long friendship, draws an overt analogy between mesmeric effects and De Quincey's opium induced frame of mind. William Lang's *Mesmerism; its History, Phenomena, and Practice: with Reports of Cases developed in Scotland* (1843) contains some reminiscences of the magnetiser Patrick Edward Dove, including his discussion on the nature of mesmeric trances with Hamilton, who refers to De Quincey in the course of their conversation.[9] Dove points out the similarity of an early stage in the course of a magnetic séance with the normal state of passing from waking to sleeping. The only difference, he claims, is the duration of this transitory state. Whereas under normal circumstances "the mind and body [are] rather crossing [this] state," they are "existing in it" (W. Lang 27) in a magnetic trance; the magnetised person remains continuously in that condition. Preliminary to this somewhat paradoxical continuous state of fading away, Dove observes "a state of fixed abstraction, … a state in which the vigilant power of attention is roused to a deeper pitch of intensity than usual, … a sort of ultra-vigilant contemplative state," which marks the onset of "the reactive power of transfiguration" (W. Lang 28). Hamilton is reported to have likened this description with the effects of opium.

The comparison does not draw on Hamilton's own experience, although he also made some experiments with narcotics (Veitch 180–82), but refers to his notice of the changing attitude of the "opium eater." Dove reports Hamilton's response in the following words:

> it reminded him very much of the primary effect of opium in producing a state of rapt and fixed concentrative abstraction, afterwards followed by the reactive flow of brilliant radiative imagination, so characteristic of the mental labours of the opium eater; a remark perhaps induced by his personal

> observation of its effects on Mr. De Quincy [sic], the celebrated English opium-eater, with whose opinion, moreover, I am well aware it coincides. (W. Lang 28)

This report of Hamilton's comparison with the "celebrated English opium-eater" is a powerful first-hand confirmation of the correspondence between opium induced and mesmeric states of mind. It not only establishes a connection with opium but with the very opium-eater under discussion. Hamilton's comments are insightful in that they touch upon the very core issue, namely De Quincey's fascination with and belief in mesmerism because—like opium—it opens the gates to the "world within." Furthermore, De Quincey is mentioned as concurring with this view on the subject. This account confirms the affinity between the texts on opium and on animal magnetism, which De Quincey may have, at least in part, consciously established. Last but not least, Dove's knowledge of De Quincey's opinion in this matter suggests that they knew each other and that De Quincey was better acquainted with mesmerism and mesmerisers than has been known so far.

Edward Dove's report allows one last comparison with the *Confessions*. The qualities of the mesmeric stage described by Dove are exactly the points De Quincey emphasises in his distinction between the effects of opium and the intoxication of alcohol. De Quincey argues that opium is not the cause of "inactivity or torpor" (*C* 50), but rather introduces a state of intellectual serenity and concentration. While the effects of wine are "acute," opium gives a "chronic pleasure" (*C* 44)—"existing" (W. Lang 27) in the twilight zone of wakefulness and sleep. Whereas wine "unsettles and clouds the judgment," opium "communicates serenity and equipoise to all the faculties, active or passive" (*C* 44)—"fixed abstraction" and "vigilant power of attention" (W. Lang 28). And when wine "leads a man to the brink of absurdity and extravagance" and disperses the "intellectual energies," opium "seems to compose what had been agitated, and to concentrate what had been distracted" (*C* 45)—"a sort of ultra-vigilant

contemplative state" (W. Lang 28). De Quincey's opium confessions are replete with phrases that echo accounts of mesmerism—as well as the other way around. This is not De Quincey fashioning his opium debauches in mesmeric jargon. The sheer concurrence of effects results in the startling correspondence of accounts.

Conclusion

The degree to which De Quincey was ready to endorse animal magnetism at a time when it was rejected by most commentators is astounding. Almost every "fact" in the French report is adopted without hesitation. It is possible that the tone of this article and De Quincey's own role as a wholehearted follower of the mesmeric doctrines were aimed at sensationalism. Frederick Burwick considers it a "journalistic ploy" ("De Quincey and Animal Magnetism" 35). However, this does not fully explain the fascination and complete acceptance displayed in "Animal Magnetism." Burwick's own reference to mesmeric moments in other works confirms that mesmerism contained profound truth in De Quincey's eyes, even in its more fantastic accounts. Based on his reading of *Walladmor, Klosterheim, Suspiria*, and *The English Mail-Coach*, Burwick concludes:

> Even if he is always the journalist, always conscious of the effect that he wants to work upon the reader, it is nevertheless true that his narrative focus is upon the character or persona who becomes captive to a dream-state which takes control of his thoughts, distorts his perception of time and space, and seems to give him moments of prophetic revelation. ("De Quincey and Animal Magnetism" 35)

Indeed, if the dreams and dream-visions De Quincey experienced and rendered into fictitious and autobiographic accounts are true, are part of his real life, which they undeniably are, then he is likely not just to be wearing a sensationalist mask when he speaks of "extraordinary truths" ("AM" 360) in relation to animal magnetism. Burwick's analysis of De Quincey's

fiction and autobiographic essays also highlights the role of animal magnetism as a paradigm for his own artistry. His writing can be dazzling, captivating, addictive, and take the reader into "dream-land" (Gillies 219) and the "Unknown" ("An Evening With De Quincey"), a quality praised as much then as today. De Quincey is a prose mesmerist, whose aim as a writer is to transfer the ordinary into the extraordinary while showing the extraordinary to be ordinary, to render the evident fantastical while expounding the evident in the fantastical, and to show the unbelievable to be true while displaying how unbelievable the true can be.

Indeed, "the romance of absolute fiction is oftentimes less wonderful, and less startling to our previous expectations than the romance of real human life" ("AM" 359). After decades of opium addiction nothing was too startling, extraordinary, or shocking for De Quincey to be possibly true. Maybe this is why there is hardly any scepticism in his review, despite the seemingly fantastical stories. Although many accounts of mesmerised people remained inexplicable and sounded illusory, De Quincey believed in the phenomenon, but while the mesmeric cure for all kinds of ailments and diseases was central in most treatises, De Quincey had a different, more ambitious aim. The "primary purpose," he explains, "is, to push into further development a discovery which opens nothing less than a new world to the prospects of Psychology, and, generally speaking, to the knowledge of the human mind" (*WTDQ* 379). In the nineteenth century, Hamilton, Laycock, and Carpenter fulfilled De Quincey's prediction faster than even he himself might have thought possible. The question that naturally arises in this investigation of mesmerism and De Quincey is whether he was ever magnetised himself. Did he ever have an external record that described and possibly verified his introspective opium reveries? It remains unanswerable but open to conjecture. Once more, Hamilton is pivotal. The private demonstrations of animal magnetism at his home took place in the 1820s and 30s, the time of intimacy with and frequent visits from De

Quincey. While it is almost certain that De Quincey witnessed some of these demonstrations, it remains a tantalising possibility that he himself also underwent a séance.

> The human body is not the dress or apparel of the human spirit; far more mysterious is the mode of their union. Call the two elements A and B: then it is impossible to point out A as existing aloof from B, or *vice versa*. A exists in and through B. B exists in and through A.
>
> Thomas De Quincey[1]

CHAPTER SIX

The Brain-Mind in the *Confessions*, *Suspiria*, and Literary Criticism

De Quincey's most famous autobiographical accounts treat his opium addiction, dreams, and memory in a way that highlights the role of the body in mental processes and defines the unconscious in relation to the physical frame, in particular the nerves and the brain. In some of his first written records, he discusses the connection between the body and the mind. In the 1803 diary, at the age of seventeen, he ponders the body/mind interaction explicitly: "The intimate connection, which {tear} body and the mind, has never (to my knowledge) been sufficiently enlarged on in theory or insisted on in practise. To shew the ultimate cause of this … would <in> be very difficult though not (I think) impossible" (*WTDQ* 1: 12). Three years later, De Quincey jotted down a list entitled "Constituents of Happiness." The first of these constituents is a "capacity of thinking—i.e. of abstraction and reverie" (*WTDQ* 1: 72), a faculty he doubtlessly had and continued to cultivate throughout his life. "Health and vigor" (*WTDQ* 1: 72), the seventh item on the list, was not within his reach, partly at least because he did not possess what he lists under the eighth article: "mastery … over all appetites" (*WTDQ* 1: 73).[2] The order of these constituents of happiness indicates that mental labours clearly have

priority over physical health, as item number nine affirms: "A vast predominance of *contemplation* varied with only so much of *action* as the feelings may prompt by way of relief and invigoration to the faculty of contemplation" (*WTDQ* 1: 73).[3] Despite the stress on "thinking" and "*contemplation*," the last entry repeats the observation in the 1803 diary, that the body and the mind are not separate but in some ways are dependent on each other. At that point, De Quincey could not foresee how essential physical exercise would eventually become to soothe his mind. He eventually elaborated the body/mind connection in his writing, mainly in reference to his personal experience. His awareness of a mutual interchange and dependence between the body and the mind grew more acute with his opium addiction, which forcefully demonstrated the effect of a material substance on the mind. He often represented the brain as the organ of thought and the active and unconsciously operating originator of mental phenomena, a fast growing but still contested view at the beginning of the nineteenth century for its materialist connotations.

The feasibility of demonstrating this "intimate connection" was a matter of scientific investigation around the time De Quincey was writing these lines. The interdependence of body and mind, the role of the senses in unconscious processes, and the active brain-mind are all to be found in nineteenth-century neuroscientific theories. Anatomical and especially physiological research into the functions of the brain had significant consequences on literary representations of the mind, as Alan Richardson points out: "With the emergence of the literary movement now called Romanticism … the brain begins to feature not simply as a cognate for mind but as a term that captures the mind's complexity within a finite compass, its productivity and its near if not perfect identity with the body" (*British* 146). The changing role of the brain in science also causes a semantic shift in literature. Through the highly permeable boundaries between science and literature, the brain's new role as an active agent begins to show in literary texts, too, and De Quincey posits the brain at the very centre of

some of his ideas on dreams, memory, and complex unconscious mental processes in literary composition and reception.

These issues are closely connected to another major Romantic topos that is also undergoing a significant reconfiguration in literary studies: imagination. Rethinking, or more punningly, "reimagining the Romantic imagination" (Richardson, "Reimagining" 399) as embodied has been done by various scholars, such as Alexander M. Schlutz, Richard Sha, Alan Richardson, and Lisa Ann Robertson. These critics discuss how the Romantic imagination was not—or not only—that idealising, transcendental mental faculty to escape historical contingencies, as critics from the 1980s onwards have argued. In particular for Coleridge, Schlutz argues, the "philosophical assumption" of the embodied mind had become "ethically troubling" (215). However, despite his fear "of being confined to a body and enslaved by a volition that he himself is unable to control" (232), which his opium addiction so forcefully brought to light, Coleridge at times argues in favour of "the mutual interpenetration of … the empirical and the transcendent" (245). Sha further suggests that "the imagination was never simply on the side of the immateriality of consciousness" and adds that "Developments in animal magnetism, medical electricity, and brain dissection helped to bring the imagination under the domain of empirical science" (198–99, 217). With this we have arguably arrived at the mid-nineteenth-century psychophysiology. There is one crucial difference, though: while Sha provides the contemporary physiological theories of "the imagination's ability to cause material changes to the body" (209), I am interested in explanations that account for the opposite causality. How do embodied processes and brain activities account for the imagination?

Referring to modern cognitive theories of the default network of the brain, cognitive activity that is constantly running in the background, i.e. unconsciously, Richardson argues that imagination "seems to be involved in a wider network of imaginative activities, and many

of the specific links now studied empirically had been theorized or represented or both within Romantic-era literary theory and practice" ("Reimagining" 389). Robertson also uses modern cognitive science, in particular the theory of enaction, to address the congruity between various Romantic theories of cognition and the seemingly transcendental imagination of Wordsworth and Coleridge. She claims that "the theories [of imagination] of these two poets are based on the concept of embodied cognition, which is a central tenet of materialist theories of mind in the Romantic period" (6). Laycock and Carpenter in fact implicitly provide a physiological theory of the imagination, even if they do not label it such. The same applies to De Quincey, who is not commonly associated with the canonical Romantic poets in addressing the imagination and, indeed, does not explicitly do so. However, it emerges in implicit terms in his embodied notion of cognition, dreams, memory, and poetry, which thus not only calls for a revaluation of the unconscious but also confirms the role of the body in the Romantic imagination.

Considering De Quincey's writing on the mind and the body in the light of physiological advances made by his contemporaries reveals some important parallels that point towards modern cognitive theories of the unconscious. Clearly, the effects of opium helped to shape De Quincey's understanding of the mind and the unconscious. He repeatedly discusses the unconscious in connection with the processing of external impressions via the senses, and his observations often rely directly on the state of his nervous system. In the *Confessions*, the brain occupies a central position regarding cognition and dreams, like it does in the work of Charles Bell and Thomas Laycock. Their theories and the twentieth- and twenty-first-century neuroscientific dream research by Allan Hobson and his colleagues enable us to approach De Quincey's observations on dreams from a corporeal point of view, which contradicts the predominant psychoanalytic interpretation of dreams.

The embodied, brain-based unconscious is acutely present in the famous account of "The Palimpsest." Published in 1845, this account of the brain ties De Quincey with the first explicit theories of unconscious processes by Laycock and William B. Carpenter. Furthermore, some of his literary criticism of the 1840s implicitly relies on these theories. The mid-century psychophysiology sheds new light on De Quincey's later pronouncements on the composition and the effects of literature. In short, from his earliest writings to his autobiography and literary criticism of the 1840s, De Quincey assigns the body an essential role in cognitive processes and thereby describes a rational and productive unconscious agency, which opposes the standard Freudian readings of his oeuvre and aligns him with the late-twentieth- and twenty-first-century theories of the cognitive unconscious.

Embodied Cognition

In 1968, Alethea Hayter observed that De Quincey "had an absorbed curiosity about the extremes of mental experience, and when the effects, *even the physical effects*, of his opium habit brought him to these extremes, his curiosity overpowered every other feeling" (243–44 emphasis added). Hayter nicely portrays De Quincey's urge for self-analysis. Though the body is given credit here, it is mentioned as an oddity and not discussed in more detail. In fact, until the 1990s De Quincey critics almost completely neglected and even discarded the body. Considering Romanticism as a "transcendentalizing, idealist literary movement" (Richardson, "Body" 2), they considered De Quincey's prose as idealised accounts that elide the contingency of historical reality, of the author, and of his body. The mind is, in this reading, depicted as a purely self-sustaining power that—though drawing on the author's past—transcends physical, historical, and temporal reality. In Vincent De Luca's view, De Quincey's prose is "marked by pervasive transcendental concerns" and his autobiographical account is "a vision of ideality virtually unencumbered by the compromises imposed by embodiment in the tangible forms of daily life" (ix, 15). Charles Rzepka argues along the

same lines that "the self of the autobiographer becomes an informed, reflective consciousness and power of evocation" and "the true self is predominantly a mind or consciousness represented in what *it* makes of the world it perceives" ("The Body" 143, 143–44). While the narrator is "a disembodied textual power," opium turns "the embodied self, the historicized subject of torment enclosed by the world, inside out, in a figurative topology of transcendence whereby the world itself will be turned, correspondingly, outside in" (*Sacramental* 13, 179). The externalisation of embodiment and personal history render these categories irrelevant and the internalisation of the world obliterates its status as part of physical reality.

The narrator, the body, and the world are all dissolved entities that only exist in an idealised textuality of transcendence. Through such an approach critics portray an autobiographer detached from historical and corporeal reality, eliding "embodiment," "daily life," "the world," and the "historicized subject," points that I consider crucial to understanding De Quincey's works. Robert Maniquis already in 1984 eloquently shows how De Luca's attempt to isolate De Quincey's "autonomous imagination" results in "opaque" and even "completely invisible" (141) readings. While Maniquis criticises the disregard of the "historical and political discourse" (146), I am more concerned about the masking of the body in such transcendent interpretations. In light of De Quincey's diary entries, these idealised readings, which neglect the embodied self of the autobiographer, seem untenable. After all, the mere perception "of the world" is strictly speaking bound to nervous, sensory processes that make a detachment from the body as De Luca and Rzepka propose it impossible. The very embodiment of thought and behaviour is part of De Quincey's theories of mind and must be considered as a historical vantage point and a reality that pervades much of his life and work. The opium-eater was well aware of the body's role as an interactive player in perception and cognition and treated the subject repeatedly in his writing.

More recently, critics have started to take the body in De Quincey's work into account. Sharon Ruston describes him as "a writer whose body is explicitly involved in his intellectual and sensual experience of the outside world" ("Introduction" 267). Paul Youngquist deals in detail with the body in De Quincey's work but is mainly interested in the way it interferes with the idea of a transcendental realm, without tying it to contemporary or modern theories of perception and cognition. In his tantalising discussion of De Quincey's third instalment of "Gallery of the German Prose Classics" on Kant, he shows how De Quincey underwrites Kant's transcendental philosophy with an account of the philosopher's own concern with physical routine and hygiene by "testing critical philosophy against the imperatives of flesh" (*Monstrosities* 197n4). Youngquist asserts that in the *Confessions*, "Cognition occurs materially for [De Quincey], the effect as much of incorporation as of sensation." Opium indeed "produces the highest pleasures of cognition" ("Crazy Body" 351, 352), which shows De Quincey's assertion that "Not the opium-eater, but the opium, is the true hero of the tale" (*C* 74) in a different light. In Youngquist's reading, the effects of opium imply that mentation is conditioned by and depends on the body.

The "Appendix" to the 1822 edition of his *Confessions* shows that De Quincey grew acutely aware of the bodily processes that affect the mind through the use of opium, which had an impact on his approaches to the workings of the mind. He considers his own "crazy body" "the very ideal of a base, crazy, despicable human system" and bitingly admits: "I hate it and make it the object of my bitter ridicule and contempt" ("A" 87, 81, 86). Despite the hatred of his own body because of its frailty and its often negative impact on his mental labours, De Quincey accepted—or could simply not deny—the role of the body in cognition. What is implied in the *Confessions*, namely the influence of the mind on the body and that of the body on the mind, is explicitly elaborated in the "Appendix." While the former influence was better established because the mind had long been considered the seat of volition, the

will, and/or the soul, the latter notion was still contested in 1822. Most of the examples in the "Appendix" are connected to De Quincey's opium habit, especially the ones considering the influence of the body on the mind. The appendix is to a large extent a discussion of the effects of opium and opium withdrawal, and its severe consequences on the bodily system and the mind. What the two kinds of interactions (mind/body and body/mind) have in common, though, is the lack of volition, control, and in some cases even awareness; they operate outside of consciousness.

De Quincey explains, for instance, how mental processes are prone to cause bodily pains. Because of his awareness of the impact the mind can have on the body and how the latter's reactions can easily grow out of control, De Quincey refrains from expounding an especially "tormenting class" ("A" 84) of sufferings. Doing "this with minuteness enough to make the review of any use—would be indeed '*infandum renovare dolorem*'" ("A" 84), "to revive an unspeakable grief" (*WTDQ* 2: 339n13). As in the case of a hypochondriac, thinking of and imagining the illness might produce, or in De Quincey's case, reproduce it. He tries to avoid the fate of "the self-observing valetudinarian" who "aggravate[s] and sustain[s], by calling into distinct consciousness, every symptom that would else perhaps—under a different direction given to the thoughts—become evanescent" ("A" 86). The hypochondriac worsens his state by analysing and categorising any possible symptoms because they so enter "distinct consciousness." This is a case in which consciousness does not further self-knowledge but causes corporeal illness. In the summer of 1813, De Quincey was struggling with depression and subsequently "suffered much in bodily health from distress of mind connected with a very melancholy event" (*C* 53), the death of Catharine Wordsworth, which drove him daily into the arms of opium. This shows how a mental affliction can have consequences on the physical constitution.

More pertinent to my argument and still an issue of debate in the nineteenth century is De Quincey's account of the influence of the body on the mind. In this case the bodily condition dictates the course thoughts will or will not take. It governs them without any possibility of recourse to conscious considerations. In other words, the corporeal constitution defines mental processes that remain out of reach of volition. According to Franz Joseph Gall and Johann Gaspar Spurzheim, amongst others, the most simple and evident proof that "volition and thought are inseparable from their material condition" are "a few grains of opium" (273).[4] De Quincey, of course, was well aware of the effect of opium on "volition and thought," and he is a wonderful (or at times rather dreadful) example of these effects. In his case it is more than just "a few grains," though. The consequences of the withdrawal of opium are unexpectedly powerful:

> I protest to you that I have a greater influx of thoughts in one hour at present than in a whole year under the reign of opium. It seems as though all the thoughts which had been frozen up for a decad[e] of years by opium, had now, according to the old fable been thawed at once—such a multitude stream in upon me from all quarters. Yet such is my impatience and hideous irritability—that, for one which I detain and write down, 50 escape me. ("A" 83)

If the body changes, thoughts change as well; the addicted body freezes the mind. Unleashed by abstinence from opium, thoughts capriciously rush into and out of the mind without the possibility of conscious intervention. The will and volition are eclipsed and lose their hold on thoughts that come and go seemingly of their own accord. It is not the thoughts or any other mental faculty that are decisive, but the condition of the body. The state of the nervous system determines the "influx of thoughts," and consciousness is reduced to merely becoming an

observer. The impact of abstinence on the body powerfully affects the mind and results in an uncontrollable mental frenzy.

Opium is at the very heart of the concurrence between the opium-eater's self-experience and the physiologists' experiments. The drug is De Quincey's teacher, as it was the teacher of many a scientist, the difference being that in De Quincey's case many observations stem from self-analysis, which he carried out with "scientific attention" (*WTDQ* 15: 251), as he explains elsewhere. The same list of symptoms described in the 1822 "Appendix" is also in the work of Hall—the physical symptoms—and the work of Laycock—the mental symptoms. Hall "considers that this reflex function is capable of exaltation by certain agents, such as opium and strychnine" ("Abstract" 210), just like Laycock, who relies on evidence gathered from "the action of narcotics circulating with the blood through the brain" ("Reflex" 303–04). Hall further explains the "effects of dentition, of alvine irritation, and of hydrophobia, of sneezing, coughing, vomiting, tenesmus, &c. &c." ("Abstract" 210) with recourse to reflex action. Laycock uses the extended reflex action of the brain to account for "associations and trains of ideas" ("Reflex" 303). Together they cover all of De Quincey's symptoms listed in the "Appendix" ("A" 82–83) and they reach these conclusions using the same means. The "Appendix" reads more like a scientific treatise than an autobiographical account at times. The gap between the scientists and De Quincey is much narrower than one would expect and Laycock in fact relies on De Quincey's *Confessions*, which he quotes to illustrate the effects of opium ("Further Researches" 185).

De Quincey's definition of the body as the place where madness and lunacy originate is an extreme case of embodied cognition that is tied to his opium experience. In "Madness" (1823), he describes the brain as the "organ of thought" (*WTDQ* 3: 180). However, he also believes that, especially in relation to mental illness, the digestive organs are somehow connected to the brain. He concludes that madness is largely a visceral phenomenon: "all

madness, or nearly all, takes its rise in some part of the apparatus connected with the digestive organs, most probably the liver" (*WTDQ* 3: 180). This claim is based on his "own long experience, and latterly my own experiments … under the use of opium" (*WTDQ* 3: 181). The term "experiments" shows how De Quincey borrows a scientific discourse to ensure the validity of his observations, or inversely, how he takes part in and adds to this discourse. From these experiments he draws the conclusion that "the brain and the stomach-apparatus through their reciprocal action and reaction jointly make up the compound organ of thought" (*WTDQ* 3: 180). Richardson draws attention to similar ideas in Darwin, Cabanis, and Gall, who all argue in favour of some sort of "internal impressions" that "remain largely unconscious, although they have an 'extensive' and usually unnoticed effect on cognition" (*British* 18). While not exactly the same, De Quincey's ideas connecting the brain with the "digestive organs" is resonant with these theories. The bodily constitution does not simply have an influence on the mental constitution, it is physically linked or even part of the "organ of thought" and cognition.

De Quincey may have drawn on the scientists Richardson mentions, but he mainly relies on his own experience. He was obsessed with the condition of his stomach due to the constant disturbance opium caused in this region of the body. Morrison notes that once De Quincey "was habituated to the drug … his addiction began to inflict various pains, the most severe of which was chronic constipation" (*Biography* 164).[5] Constipation and more generally dyspepsia are amongst his most common complaints. In a letter dated 26 August 1823, De Quincey names the latter as the cause for delays: "the omission, as well as so many other defects of due energy conducting the Mag. which I could point out, arise from dyspepsy. Dyspepsy is the ruin of most things: empires, expeditions, and everything else" (*De Quincey at Work* 107). During one of his most intense opium crises and the ensuing nervous irritations in 1844, the awareness of corporeal influence on the mind verging on madness

grew even more acute: "Lunacy causes misery; the border is sometimes crossed, and too often that is the order of succession. But also misery, and above all physical misery, working by means of intellectual remembrances and persecution of thoughts, no doubt sometimes inversely causes lunacy" (*Life* 243). The "physical misery" causes mental derangements through "intellectual" means and "thoughts," which defines truly embodied cognition. Mentation depends on and can be unconsciously controlled by physiological processes. De Quincey's opium experience confirmed that body and mind are not separate entities. On the contrary, many processes, which often lack awareness and are not controllable, take place and have their origin in the body as well as in the mind.

These examples show the insufficiency of the critical current that postulates an idealised, disembodied mind and confirm more recent criticism that takes into account the body and its influence on mentation. However, they not only align De Quincey with the growing notion of an embodied mind; they further pave the way for a discussion of an embodied unconscious and confirm the relevance of nineteenth-century physiological research to an understanding of his work. The interaction between the body and the mind usually takes place unconsciously. De Quincey's awareness of these interactions is in many cases pathological due to the extreme sensibility caused by his opium consumption and withdrawal. His frequently painful experience of the body fostered a notion of the unconscious that is not a philosophical construct but a physical reality. The bodily constitution eclipses intellectual control and thus exemplifies how the body imposes unconscious mental processes. De Quincey is not the only one to elaborate these issues in nineteenth-century Britain. He was part of and helped shape the discourse on the body and the mind, conducting "experiments" (*WTDQ* 3: 181) with opium and observing the effect on his physical and mental state, in many ways similar to the work done by scientists. His notion of

unconscious embodied cognition is firmly embedded in scientific advances of his time and essential to understand his discussion of dreams.

The Physiology of Dreams

The growing interest in the embodied experience of De Quincey is represented in two recent anthologies that provide literary and scientific texts alongside each other. Laura Otis includes De Quincey's *Confessions* in *Literature and Science in the Nineteenth Century* as a case study of "how a substance taken into the body could transform the mind" and "how changes to the body could alter one's perceptions" (326). The anthologised extract from the *Confessions* features in the section on "The Relationship between Mind and Body" along with texts by Hall (reflex function), Laycock (reflex function of the brain), and Carpenter (unconscious cerebration). Jenny Bourne Taylor and Sally Shuttleworth's collection, *Embodied Selves: An Anthology of Psychological Texts*, features De Quincey in their chapter on memory. Apart from the corporeality in De Quincey's work, his inclusion in these anthologies attests to his originality in what are usually considered scientific domains and further highlights the parallel interests and exchanges between literary and scientific texts. De Quincey was not an isolated writer who relied solely on his own experience and creativity. Amongst many other things, he was interested in scientific advances, incorporated them—consciously or not—in his writing, and contributed to a prolific discourse on the interaction and interdependence of the mind and the body.

In relation to dreaming, again, the conception of the active mind-brain was a crucial step. People began to argue on physiological grounds that—contrary to Locke and in agreement with the philosophical positions of Leibniz and Kant—the brain remains active during sleep. As early as 1769, Denis Diderot addressed issues in *Le Rêve de d'Alembert* that were to become central to Romantic theories of brain and mind: "the brain's activity during sleep," "unconscious mental and bodily behaviors," "the fragility of a unified self," and "the

potential of connected discourse in the absence of conscious volition" (Richardson, "Dreaming" 12). Due to the controversial assertions about the brain and the body, *Le Rêve* was not published until 1830 and indeed these topics remained disputed in the early nineteenth century.

Anne Stiles, Stanley Finger, and John Bulevich discuss John William Polidori's work, which "weighs in on central neurological debates of the Romantic era surrounding sleep, dreams, and trance states" (790). In his little discussed 1815 M.D. thesis, Polidori hopes to demonstrate that "the mind of the somnambulist remains active," and "he felt that the brain must be involved somehow" (795). Moreover, he consistently stresses the purposeful and complex nature of these actions during sleep. The assertion that Polidori was "True to his Scottish medical training" (795) in his attempt to demonstrate the active brain in parasomnias and dreams illustrates that a scientific, physiological discourse was being established in these matters. As a consequence, dreams were no longer exclusively considered to be triggered by internal and external impressions, that is, a mere reaction to a stimulus; the active brain-mind can actively generate them. From this point of view, dreams supported the radical and controversial implication that there are mental activities that allow no recourse to the conscious self or transcendent soul. While De Quincey is less interested in parasomnias, the implications of his dream accounts are largely the same.

While critics have started to acknowledge the body in De Quincey's work, I propose to take this further by comparing specific scientific writings with De Quincey's essays to show in more detail how ideas of the embodied mind are part of his work and how they connect to the larger discourse on the active brain-mind in the first half of the nineteenth century. De Quincey's widely read articles and, in particular, his autobiographical accounts fostered the promulgation of some of these pertinent nineteenth-century ideas advanced by physiologists. Bell and Laycock provide an insightful foil to understanding De Quincey's

notion of dreams in relation to brain functions.[6] Twenty-first-century cognitive neuroscientists, such as Hobson, further provide a modern theory that also accounts for dreams with recourse to the brain-mind. Just like De Quincey's ideas on cognition, his notion of dreams often has little in common with idealised, transcendental, or Freudian theories; dreams are described as "part of my physical economy" (*C* 66), i.e. the result of embodied, physiological processes parallel in some respects to his contemporary physiologists' and to modern neuroscientists' theories of brain functions and dreams.

Bell's work contains a contemporary physiological theory of the senses, the nerves, and the brain that accounts for the unconscious processes leading to the dream sequences introspectively observed by De Quincey. The role of the senses in "rousing the faculties of the mind" (*Idea* 15) is a major issue in Bell's work and figures prominently in De Quincey's description of his dreams in the *Confessions*. Some of his observations exemplify Bell's theories. Introducing the changes that opium caused in his dreams, De Quincey first informs the reader how visual phenomena, taking place in a waking state, are gradually transposed into his dreams. De Quincey possesses a "power of painting … upon the darkness, all sorts of phantoms," which considerably grows under the influence of opium. He traces this power back to "exalted states of irritability" and describes it "simply [as] a mechanic affection of the eye" (*C* 66).[7] Where De Quincey attributes these visual effects to some sort of nervous reactions, Bell provides the detailed physiological explanation. An irritation of the eye can result in visual effects because, as Bell argues, the nerves of each organ have specific tasks. Pressure on a visual nerve does not result in a perception of pressure but of light: "when the needle pierces the eye, the patient has the sensation of a spark of fire before the eye" and when "the eye-ball is pressed on the side, we perceive various coloured light" (*Idea* 10–11, 11). This, however, is only the first step.

De Quincey's mere visual effects turn into whole dream sequences, a process that is also explicable with recourse to Bell's physiological treatise. De Quincey's phantoms easily grow out of control until "at night, when I lay awake in bed, vast processions passed along in mournful pomp; friezes of never-ending stories." What begins as a nervous irritation of the eye turns into whole "stories" and "processions," until they are finally transposed into dreams and "a theatre … lighted up within my *brain*" (*C* 66 emphasis added). Bell likewise explains how the brain is involved in the processes De Quincey describes. While an impression is made on the nerves, Bell believes that the actual sensation takes place "in the brain more than in the external organ of sense" (*Idea* 11). Once the nervous system, which includes the sense organs and the brain, is activated by "excitement from without," "the organs can be put in exercise by the mind, and be made to minister to the memory and imagination" (*Idea* 13). The brain receives and unfolds the sensual impressions, reworks and frames them in a story. Through the interaction between the brain and the nerves, these visions grow autonomously and, in De Quincey's account, are transposed into the dreams of the opium-eater.

These processes that turn De Quincey's hypnagogic imagery into dreams are due to the vastly increased excitability of his brain: "whatsoever I happened to call up and to trace by a voluntary act upon the darkness was very apt to transfer itself to my dreams." Opium drastically changes the brain functions and thus literally affects the "chemistry of my dreams" (*C* 66), as De Quincey puts it, which in turn causes his visual perceptiveness to grow exuberantly. The basis for some of his fanciful dreams is a nervous reaction of the eyes, which triggers sensory impressions that the brain, in turn, capriciously ricochets and eventually turns into a dream sequence. The reference to "irritability" (*C* 66, 82, 83) and "chemistry" (*C* 66) in relation to these mental phenomena is hardly accidental. Both terms are strongly associated with the science of the mind in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, which arguably informed De Quincey's autobiographical reflections.[8] The

Confessions promulgate radically new ideas on the interaction between the body and the mind, as well as the role of the nerves and the brain. This alignment of the *Confessions* with Bell's work suggests that De Quincey's notion of dreams is embedded in the scientific context of his time and is distinctly non-Freudian.

Further support for a physiological reading of De Quincey's dreams comes from Laycock, who also advances a brain-based theory of dreams, a physiological approach that explains them as a special type of reflex action of the brain. The senses, the nerves, and the brain again play a fundamental role. Dreams depend, according to Laycock, on "combined involuntary sensations or ideas which are excited secondarily by stimuli from without" ("Analytical Essay" 59). In other words, dormant sensory impressions and ideas are revived and new ones are created by reflex actions. Thus, "in dreamy sleep" "*ideagenous* changes," i.e. changes in the brain that produce ideas, still take place and can "become objects of perception" (*Treatise* 319). In "Sleep, Dreaming, and Insanity," Laycock is more specific: "The suggestion of dreams may therefore be dependent upon internal or external impressions, or upon both combined. The internal impressions may either be *ideas*, or trains of ideas, excited by the intestine changes in the hemispherical ganglia, or *sensations* excited by impressions derived from the viscera and sensorial nerves" (478). This claim also relies on his theory of reflex action, in that automatic functions of the nervous system and the brain can trigger sensations and ideas. For Laycock, the possibility of remembering minute details from one's life in dreams and near-death experiences, which De Quincey repeatedly discusses in his work, further reveals the "significance of those minute mysterious changes in the material organ which constitute the physical basis of dreams" (491). Laycock even quotes the "English opium-eater" because the *Confessions* contain "an instance in which this most remarkable psychological phenomenon was fully developed" (490).

Although the theories of Bell and Laycock discussed above account for the underlying mechanisms of dreams, they do not explain the bizarre and distorted nature of dream sequences such as those De Quincey records in the *Confessions*. His dreams present "nightly spectacles of more than earthly splendour," which at times turn into "insufferable splendour that fretted my heart." In particular the "sense of space, and in the end, the sense of time, were both powerfully affected" (*C* 66). The distortion of time is conspicuously present in De Quincey's oriental dreams, in which he sometimes feels as if he "was fixed, for centuries, at the summit, or in secret rooms" of pagodas or "buried, for a thousand years, in stone coffins" (*C* 71). Similarly, space expands with the "power of endless growth and self-reproduction" (*C* 68) in his architectural dreams. Although De Quincey often recognises places and people, the loss of orientation is also typical: "Somewhere, I knew not where—somehow, I knew not how—by some beings, I knew not whom" (*C* 73). These characteristics of De Quincey's dreams lend themselves to a Freudian interpretation, in which the "distortion in the dream is … an act of censorship;" repressed wishes and desires surface in altered and distorted shapes in dreams "owing to the repugnance felt for the topic of the dream or for the wish derived from it" (Freud 4: 160). I argue, however, that this aspect of De Quincey's dreams can be read in a different way, which depends on the physiology of the brain.

Laycock takes his discussion further and provides a physiological explanation for the typical dream bizarreness. In his view, ideas in dreams are "resuscitated … and perfectly incongruous, because the comparing and judging organs … are paralysed" (*Treatise* 319). The "comparing and judging organs" are more thoroughly explained in *Mind and Brain*: "During the waking conscious state, all the external senses instinctively co-operate in verification without the knowledge of the individual, and so place him in fitting relation with the external world" (2: 101). The interplay between the senses, and the specific regulation of every sensory impression by the relevant organ automatically produce a coherent and unified

conception of the "external world" outside of awareness. In sleep, however, "the impressions … are not co-ordinated;" in other words, the "impressions themselves excite ideagenic changes" with "no correct knowledge of the external world," and consequently "false thoughts will arise" (2: 101). This lack of coordination and reference to the "external world" causes the distortion in dreams. Again, Laycock addresses the exact role of the brain more directly in "Sleep, Dreaming, and Insanity," concluding that there is an "altered condition in the functions of the cerebrum" (474) in dreaming sleep. Certain "portions of the brain" are paralysed or their "normal mode of action is disturbed" (468). Laycock quotes again from De Quincey's *Confessions*, this time to illustrate how "in dreaming … all our fundamental ideas [of time and space] become *infinite*" (493). For Laycock, the brain's altered and incomplete processing of external and internal impressions is responsible for the bizarre nature of dreams.

While Freud acknowledges that the brain and the mind are in some way connected, he never addresses this relationship in detail and sheds doubt over theories of partial or inadequate brain function as the origin of dream bizarreness. In his view the origin and mechanism of dreaming is primarily mental, not physiological. This approach had dominated dream interpretation until the 1970s. In 1977, Hobson and Robert McCarley first published an article that—after almost a century of Freudian hegemony—stakes a claim for a modern physiological dream theory, which further helps us to understand De Quincey's *Confessions* and his contribution to embodied dream theories in the first half of the nineteenth century. Like Laycock, they argue that dreams have their origin in the physical structure of the brain, and that the dreaming brain is active in different ways than the waking brain. In fact, Peter Lavie and Hobson refer to Laycock's work as anticipatory of recent dream theories (237). Of course the modern insights are informed by a much more detailed knowledge of the brain and its processes than any nineteenth-century theory could be. Nevertheless, the nineteenth- and the late twentieth-century scientists share the basic premise that dreams have their origin in

the brain, and both explain the random and chaotic nature of dreams—as it is depicted in the *Confessions*—with the altered activity of certain brain areas.

In Hobson and McCarley's Activation-Synthesis Model dreaming is "physiologically determined and shaped by a brain stem neuronal mechanism" (1335). Similar to Laycock's claim that dreams are essentially aroused by reflex actions of the brain, Hobson and McCarley point out that the "*stimuli for the dream imagery*" are generated by a "random or reflex process" (1346, 1347), which is "spontaneous, automatic, [and] physiologically determined" (Hobson, *Dream Life* 150). More generally, they consider "dreaming as the psychological manifestation of a fundamental brain function" (*Dream Life* 143). Though more detailed and complex, Hobson and McCarley's Activation-Synthesis Model situates the origin of dreams in brain processes, as Laycock's theories did over a century before them.

Even the explanations modern neuroscience provides to account for the distortion of time, space, and memories in dreams are contained in rudimentary form in Laycock. Hobson, Pace-Schott, and Stickgold's explanation for the "bizarre cognition of dreaming characterized by incongruities and discontinuities of dream characters, loci, and actions" involves the "chaotic nature of the pontine autoactivation process," "the absence of frontal cortical monitoring," and "failures of aminergic neuromodulation" (842). In other words, specific areas are deactivated or do not function in their ordinary manner during dreams. Both the modern and the nineteenth-century models suggest that certain brain areas are not functioning in the same way they do in waking consciousness. Within the scope of the specific brain activities during sleep, "the brain makes the best of a bad job in fabricating dreams from the relatively noisy information sent up to it from the brain stem" (Hobson, "Activation" 8). This purely physiological account of dreams explains the distortion, exuberance, and seemingly random occurrence of memories and percepts in the De Quincey's dreams. Although Hobson and his colleagues can go into more detail about the specific areas and their functions, the

brain-based theory of dreams was already available in De Quincey's time, and the opium-eater himself points out the physiological basis of dreaming by calling it "part of my physical economy" (*C* 66).

The role of opium in deepening dreams through its effects on the body is quite accurately described in the *Confessions*. Opium enhances dreams because it produces alterations in brain functions similar to those observed in REM-sleep, the sleep phase most closely associated with dreaming. Laycock assigns the similar impairment of cognition that he observes in dreams to "nervine irritants" such as "opium" (*Mind and Brain* 2: 101). The nightly visions in sleep are in fact "analogous of trance, delirium, and ecstasy" (*Treatise* 319). Hobson equally suggests that they "may be a functional delirium, much like the psychosis associated with alcohol and drug abuse" ("A Model for Madness?" 21). Hence, the "bizarreness" is "a function of the brain's own change in chemical state" and, contrary to Freud's theories, "dreaming is a natural and normal kind of delirium, rather than a model of neurosis" (*Dream Life* 165). Laycock and Hobson thus confirm De Quincey's notion that opium enhances the dream sceneries and his accounts of their chaotic and distorted nature.

Hobson further explicitly refers to De Quincey in order to show that the, at times startling, extent of bizarreness and disorientation in dreams does not stem from psychological triggers but is mainly caused by physiological ones. The opium-eater at least implicitly claims so himself. In *The Dream Drugstore*, Hobson discusses "the common ground" of dreams and drugs. He partly relies on "self-experimenters" who left "adequate records" of their addiction, in particular on "the very few who were scientifically rigorous enough to describe their experience in a way that was useful to a person like me who was interested in understanding the possible mechanisms underlying the phenomenon" (xiii). De Quincey is amongst these "very few." His *Confessions* serve as a prime example to "understand the collaboration of long years of opium abuse with the autocreativity of the dreaming brain via an analysis of the

indeed fierce chemistry of dreams" (280). Hobson is here playfully alluding to De Quincey's use of the phrase "chemistry of … dreams," assuming that De Quincey uses it metaphorically while he is himself literally investigating *Chemically Altered States of Consciousness*, as the subtitle of his book explicitly states. As I have argued above, the reference to chemistry in relation to changes opium induces in dreams is not strictly metaphorical in De Quincey.

Hobson explains that in the "pharmacologically sustained state of delirium" of De Quincey's addiction the sleep-wake cycle is upset, which results in a great exaggeration of dreams and the occurrence of hypnagogic imagery. While De Quincey claims in the *Confessions* that opium is "the true hero of the tale" (*C* 74), he revises his argument in *Suspiria*, claiming that the "*Opium Confessions* were written with some slight secondary purpose of exposing this specific power of opium upon the faculty of dreaming, but much more with the purpose of displaying the faculty itself" (*S* 131). De Quincey's seeming indecision as to whether opium or the dreaming faculty is at the heart of his autobiography makes sense if we consider that "every drug that has potent transformative effects on consciousness interacts with the brain's own consciousness-altering chemicals" (*Dream Drugstore* x). Dreams and opium are both heroes of De Quincey's tale because they underlie the same physiological processes, which lead to altered states of consciousness and thus expose unconscious processes. I would even suggest that De Quincey may have changed his mind between 1821 and 1845 because by then he had a better knowledge of the brain and its physiology. He knew that opium artificially enhances the natural dreaming processes that reside in everybody.

What is the meaning of dreams if they are "intrinsically bizarre" due to changes in brain activities and "not bowdlerized translations of forbidden wishes" (*Dream Life* 152)? Is there a meaning at all? Hobson's answer is yes, but it is not a meaning that needs interpretation. For Freud, dreams are psychologically motivated; that is, the psychological

dimension is the cause of dreams and of their bizarre form, which disguises the true meaning because this contains potentially harmful contents from the impulsive and instinctual id. Hence, dreams need to be interpreted in order to reveal this hidden layer. Hobson does not deny the psychological dimension of dreams, but he inverses cause and effect, as it were. Because physiological processes that take place in everybody's brain during sleep are responsible for the occurrence and for the formal features of dreams, the bizarreness of dream plots and images is not psychologically motivated. Hence, the meaning of dreams does not have to be interpreted.[9] On the contrary, "dreams, rather than disguising our emotions, reveal our affective repertoires emphatically and graphically" (*Dream Life* 165). The meaning lies in their emotional charge in connection to the past, present, and future life of the dreamer, which is readily observable through introspection. In this sense, dream plots are "highly salient and highly informative about how we contextualize our emotional states" (*Dream Life* 165). In short, dreams have a strong psychological dimension, but it is not their underlying cause and it is not disguised. They reveal more than they hide: "through dreams we can see ourselves in a glass clearly" (*Dream Life* 165).

This meaning of dreams does not yet account for their function. Cognitive neuroscientists argue that "Much evidence now indicates that sleep has a function in memory reorganization and consolidation and thus in the enhancement of waking cognitive function" (Fosse et al. 1). Robert Stickgold and his colleagues caution that present dream theories are not ready to furnish a comprehensive explanation for the function of dreams. They provide, however, some key aspects. Dreaming is nowadays considered to be part of "a multilevel system of sleep-dependent learning and memory reprocessing" (1052). Research has shown that episodic memory, i.e. "memory of an event, recalled as an integrated whole, with the actual waking event … replayed in one's mind" (1055), is almost completely absent in dreams. Instead, the specific brain activation during dreams suggests

that "Emotions may play a central role in the functioning of the brain-mind during dreaming" (1056). The function of dreams is linked to emotional memory consolidation in which dreams represent "the conscious awareness of complex brain systems involved in the reprocessing of emotional memories during sleep" (1056). In Hobson's terms, dreams can be considered as "Emotionally salient memory reinforcement" (*Dream Life* 240); memories are being reordered and the links to the respective emotions reinforced. In other words, dreaming activates past memories and connects them with presently relevant events and emotions of one's life; it is part of the learning process that takes place during sleep.

Does this turn dream analysis into a boring task? Many over-creative psychoanalysts might think so. In my view, it opens fascinating new possibilities for reading De Quincey's dream narratives. The critic is no longer under pressure to find yet another dark sexual secret from De Quincey's traumatic childhood that can be brought to light in (i.e. read into) the imagery and symbolism of his dreams. Instead, the dreams can be read in a way to understand, for example, the explicit (and explicitly remembered) trauma of De Quincey's childhood. The recurrent grief for Elizabeth may be taken at face value, even if it is pathological in its extent and duration and intensified by opium. The incessant revisiting of Elizabeth's death in De Quincey's dream is the logical result of the connection between dreams and emotions, and of the effects of opium, which are similar to those of dreams. Her death is an emotionally salient memory—call it traumatic, though not in a Freudian sense—that is repeatedly tied to De Quincey's dreams in emotionally trying times, which, indeed, are not lacking.

Discussing the nature of his dreams in *Suspiria*, De Quincey also seems to consider them in such a way. He says in the "Introductory Notice," for example, that "Some of the phenomena developed in my dream-scenery, undoubtedly, *do but repeat* the experiences of childhood; and others seem likely to have been growths and fructifications from seeds at that

time sown" (*S* 134 emphasis added). Dreams are not mysterious messages from an independent censoring unconscious but repetitions of "the experiences of childhood." Similarly, the dark interpreter is most of the time "a faithful representative of myself" (*S* 185). Referring to his dream-legend of "Levana and our Ladies of Sorrow," De Quincey further explains that "There is no great wonder that a vision, which occupied my waking thoughts in those years, should re-appear in my dreams. It was in fact a legend recurring in sleep, most of which I had myself silently written or sculptured in my daylight reveries" (*S* 182). The dream of Levana thus reproduces in part what De Quincey "sculptured" himself. It is the product of his own waking imagination transformed into dreams, and not the product of a Freudian gatekeeper.

De Quincey's own opinion on the role or meaning of dreams, though he never is absolutely clear about it, is arguably closer to Hobson than to Freud. De Quincey explains that "though a child's feelings are spoken of, it is not the child who speaks. I decipher what the child only felt in cipher" (*S* 149). He is not analysing or interpreting hidden messages from the id here, but is engaging in an autobiographical analysis of his childhood feelings, which the young Thomas was not aware of simply because he was less introspective and did not have the experience to understand: "I the child had the feelings, I the man decipher them" (*S* 150). Alina Clej, who otherwise argues that there are many Freudian moments in De Quincey's work, shares my analysis on the point of dream interpretation: "Unlike Freud's 'translation' of dreams, De Quincey's reproduction fails to produce a specific meaning. In contrast to Freud," she continues, "De Quincey does not take into account the various disguises assumed by the unconscious, but appears to aim instead at a literal translation" (107). He recognises the emotional salience and the relevance of memories in dreams, but he does not imply that they are the result of a repressing or disguising unconscious part of the self, even when he describes the bizarre, symbolic, and chaotic nature of dreams.

Certain mystical overtones persist at times, however. In the "Introductory Notice," De Quincey discusses the dreaming faculty in curiously ambivalent terms, alluding to the inherently physiological aspects and, at the same time, adding to his account a spiritual dimension:

> The machinery for dreaming planted in the human brain was not planted for nothing. That faculty, in alliance with the mystery of darkness, is the one great tube through which man communicates with the shadowy. And the dreaming organ, in connexion with the heart, the eye, and the ear, compose the magnificent apparatus which forces the infinite into the chambers of a human brain, and throws dark reflections from eternities below all life upon the mirrors of the sleeping mind. (*S* 130)

De Quincey here—as some scientists did, too—combines the notion of the embodied mind with a sense of spirituality that goes beyond the worldly body. Richardson detects "a distinctly (if faintly) neurobiological flavor" ("Unconscious" 352) in this passage. In my view, the "machinery for dreaming," "human brain," "dreaming organ," and the mention of "the heart, the eye, and the ear" allude more than "faintly" to the brain-based, physiological basis of dreams—particularly if considered in connection with the passages from the *Confessions* discussed above. With "the mystery of darkness," "the infinite" and "dark reflections from eternities," which can be sensed in dreams, De Quincey moves beyond the personal and psychological realms, though, and includes a more mysterious and spiritual notion of dreams. He seems to be establishing some sort of embodied connection to the divine through dreams, which does not invalidate but coexists with the references to the body.

For Clej, this passage furthermore anticipates "Freud's explanation of the dream process." She argues that "'the shadowy' could be seen to include both a Freudian and a Jungian sense of the unconscious" and that "the idea that this submerged world can 'force' its

way or be forced into a conscious zone of the mind parallels Freud's view of the dream, in which a repressed content is said to break through the barriers of censorship" (91). In my reading, the "shadowy" has no Freudian connotations but simply stands for the unseen or invisible, that of which one is not conscious. Kant already used darkness metaphorically to refer to "sensuous intuitions and sensations of which we are not conscious" (247), unconscious contents without any notion of repression. If these dreams *force* themselves on the mind, it only means that there is no choice on the dreamer's part, which does not imply repression. It represents the incontrollable randomness of dreams, similar to the "influx of thoughts" that "stream in … from all quarters" ("A" 83) as a symptom of opium withdrawal. Furthermore, De Quincey does not mention an independent unconscious agent responsible for withholding, furnishing, or distorting dreams.

De Quincey's and Bell's passages reflect the same involuntary execution of processes set in motion by a sensory stimulus that was to become the fundamental point in Laycock's reflex action, which he applies to dreams as well. The latter takes De Quincey's argument about the role of the nerves in the phenomena of dreams to its logical conclusion. All three authors describe physiological processes that account for the occurrence of dreams, partly anticipating what neuroscientists began to develop in the late twentieth century. The opium-eater's account of how a nervous irritation results in powerful dream imagery and the specific characteristics of dreams he describes in the *Confessions* are best explained with recourse to Bell's and Laycock's treatises and bear similarities to elements of modern neurobiological dream theory. It is not necessary to look for the secret meaning of dreams in De Quincey's narratives. The brain fulfils a range of functions quite naturally out of reach of consciousness; these functions are physiologically triggered and productive; and finally, dreams are indeed psychological events but not psychologically motivated.

Just as De Quincey's autobiographical accounts of opium addiction and dreams help Laycock and Hobson to understand the nature of dreams, their work inversely helps us to understand the opium-eater's writings. It helps in particular, to realise that there is much to understand even without assuming that the author's repressed psychology waits to be unearthed by the critic, and hence without resorting to speculations about repressed lust, guilt, and fears. The critical focus could shift, for example, to De Quincey's marvellous descriptions of the amazing autocreativity innate to the human brain. His autobiographical accounts can further be understood as examples that stress the role of dreams in reviving, reinforcing, and connecting emotionally salient memories. This approach is not only based on a theoretical construct but historically embedded and thus avoids isolating De Quincey—or any other author for that matter—from the cultural and scientific context. In "The Palimpsest," De Quincey addresses this brain function, which he deems a fundamental human capacity and essential to dreaming.

Embodied Unconscious Memory in "The Palimpsest"

By the 1840s De Quincey no longer felt the need to draw special attention to the brain as the "organ of thought," but quite naturally used the term *brain* to denote his mental faculty. In a letter dated 1841 he explains to Alexander Blackwood the consequences of his inability to access all the necessary books: "I have been obliged to spin all out of my own *brain*, or at least out of mere *recollections* of past reading" (MS 4055 147 emphasis added). In 1842, he similarly expounds his situation and the lack of resources that left him "without books or any one resourse [sic] but my own *brain* and *memory*" (MS 4060 248 emphasis added). Both passages—apart from quite naturally assuming the brain as the thinking organ—specifically relate it to "recollections" and "memory." These letters were written two and three years respectively before De Quincey set out to compose *Suspiria*. They indicate that the brain was firmly established as the physical *locus* in the body that stores memories and recollections, the

very notion De Quincey so memorably carves out in "The Palimpsest." The comparison of the brain with a palimpsest is one of De Quincey's most famous passages on the power of the mind and its unconscious processes.[10] I argue that it contains a psychophysiological argument about how thought and mental representations are unconsciously stored and reproduced as the result of changes in the corporeal organisation of the nerves and the brain, as physiologists argued around the time of publication of *Suspiria*.

Critical readings of the unconscious in De Quincey's work in general, but particularly in "The Palimpsest," have been almost exclusively psychoanalytic. Considering De Quincey's palimpsest as a proto-psychoanalytic text has become somewhat of a commonplace, which has too often been uncritically repeated. Eugene Stelzig, for example, claims that De Quincey is "clearly a forerunner of psychoanalysis." He believes that the section on the palimpsest "anticipates Freud's view of the subconscious"—note the inappropriate use of "subconscious"—and sees in "Levana and Our Ladies of Sorrow" "Jung's archetypal mapping of the psyche" (231). Patrick Bridgwater only alludes to the psychoanalytic value of the palimpsest metaphor in a cryptic parenthetical note that goes without further comment: "(cf. the Jungian collective unconscious)" (83). In both cases, the remarks are not elaborated or explained. Such allusions that go without context or comment do not contain much critical value because they neither do justice to the literary text, nor to the psychoanalytic theory they allude to. They demonstrate, however, how common it has become to think of De Quincey and his work in psychoanalytic terms.

More substantial and critical discussions have compared De Quincey's palimpsest with Freud's metaphor of the mystic writing-pad, though opinions differ. While Josephine McDonagh considers De Quincey's palimpsest within "a wider tradition of psychological models" such as the "Empiricist's *tabula rasa* and Freud's Mystic Writing-Pad" (209), Sarah Dillon discusses the metaphor of the palimpsest within cultural and literary criticism and

argues that the "palimpsest does not conform structurally to a psychoanalysis of surface and depth" (251). Joel Faflak—interested more broadly in "the scene of Romantic psychoanalysis" (5)—looks at its "power of the mind to reproject or retell its own narratives" and the "potent model of psychoanalysis it suggests, for De Quincey is not so intent on the brain's neurology" (186). Even Richardson (who is very "intent on the brain's neurology") finds it "difficult, perhaps perverse, not to think of Freud" in relation to the palimpsest. The psychoanalytic juggernaut being so big, "The Palimpsest" is strongly attached to this critical tradition. Even if it proves to be "difficult," it is necessary to change the way we think about the unconscious in De Quincey's work because, upon closer scrutiny, the "brain's neurology" is a central element.

My reading opposes this psychoanalytic hegemony and posits "The Palimpsest" within the contemporary physiological discourse of the mid-nineteenth century. The parallels seem more elusive at first than in other cases because De Quincey's literary endeavour in *Suspiria* is not primarily a presentation of facts but a rendition of them into "impassioned prose" (*WTDQ* 20: 16). This gives him the liberty to combine different discourses, voices, and moods, and to depart from absolute facts and the naked truth into embellishments that veil the roots of an argument. The physiology of the body is nevertheless essential. De Quincey's reminder in the "Introductory Notice" provides a good reason to contest the psychoanalytic readings:

> The true object in my 'Opium Confessions' is not the naked physiological theme—on the contrary, *that* is the ugly pole, the murderous spear, the halbert—but those wandering musical variations upon the theme—those parasitical thoughts, feelings, digressions, which climb up with bells and blossoms round about the arid stock; ramble away from it at times with perhaps too rank a luxuriance; but at the same time, by the eternal interest

> attached to the subjects of these digressions, no matter what were the execution, spread a glory over incidents that for themselves would be—less than nothing. (*S* 135)

The body and its processes, the influence of the nervous system on cognition, and the brain as the thinking organ are not the main subject of his essay. They are, however, the requisite starting point from which De Quincey departs upon a more poetical quest of the self. The "naked *physiological* theme" (emphasis added)—a phrase De Quincey uses as a metonymy for the objective, verifiable reality—persists as the basis of the "wandering musical variations." The body represents the factual and is the "ugly" but necessary "pole" on which the "thoughts, feelings, digressions" flourish. They are "parasitical" and thus dependent on this physiological reality. De Quincey refrains from a detailed dissection of his life as he refrains from a detailed dissection of the brain and the nervous system. However, just as De Quincey's own life is the rudiment of his impassioned dream narrative in *Suspiria*, so is the brain and its physiology the rudiment of his account of "The Palimpsest."

Seen in this light, this section of *Suspiria* turns out to be a representation of embodied, brain-based mentation, entailing all the connotations of the unconscious corporeal influence exerted by the cerebrum. Whereas *mind* never occurs in the description of the palimpsest, De Quincey consistently refers to the *brain*. This is not a coincidence. The reason for De Quincey's conspicuous consistency in denominating the physical organ of thought lies, arguably, in the validity that brain science had gained by 1845 when *Suspiria* was published. Furthermore, De Quincey had just passed yet another violent opium crisis in 1844, which forcefully reminded him of the corporeal aspect of his physical and mental sufferings. In a letter he reports, for example, that he had to walk "a thousand miles" within ninety days, in order to be "in his right mind" (*Life* 243).[11] Physical exertion was essential for his mental sanity. After closing "The Affliction of Childhood" with the "Oxford dreams" (*S* 170), in

which—having "now first tampered with opium" (*S* 169)—everything from his sister Jane's "moaning in bed" (*S* 169) to the funeral service of Elizabeth "was bound up into unity" (*S* 170), De Quincey introduces the new section with a factual, almost scientific description of "a *Palimpsest*" (*S* 171).

This abrupt change of topic makes sense within the narrative when De Quincey finally compares the human brain with a reinscribed vellum:

> What else than a natural and mighty palimpsest is the human brain? Such a palimpsest is my brain; such a palimpsest, O reader! is yours. Everlasting layers of ideas, images, feelings, have fallen upon your brain softly as light. Each succession has seemed to bury all that went before. And yet in reality not one has been extinguished. And if, in the vellum palimpsest, lying amongst the other *diplomata* of human archives or libraries, there is any thing fantastic or which moves to laughter, as oftentimes there is in the grotesque collisions of those successive themes, having no natural connexion, which by pure accident have consecutively occupied the roll, yet, in our own heaven-created palimpsest, the deep memorial palimpsest of the brain, there are not and cannot be such incoherencies. The fleeting accidents of a man's life, and its external shows, may indeed be irrelate and incongruous; but the organizing principles which fuse into harmony, and gather about fixed predetermined centres, whatever heterogeneous elements life may have accumulated from without, will not permit the grandeur of human unity greatly to be violated, or its ultimate repose to be troubled in the retrospect from dying moments, or from other great convulsions. (*S* 175)

De Quincey stresses the fact that he is specifically referring to the organ of thought, the brain, by repeating the term three times within the first three sentences. Consequently, the

palimpsestic functions are inherently physical, just like the retrieval of the old texts on a palimpsest. There are no "grotesque collisions" or "incoherencies" because "organizing principles" process "and gather about fixed predetermined centres" the "elements life may have accumulated from without." In the context of the palimpsest and its stark focus on the brain, I read the "organizing principles" as the physical organisation of the human body, a very common trope at that time.[12] The "fixed predetermined centres" denote the nervous centres (the brain being the largest of these), and the "elements … from without" clearly refer to sensory impressions. In other words, the brain automatically organises the myriads of impressions that daily reach us via the nervous pathways from the senses. The hidden layers are not being repressed but organised, which is the core difference between the psychoanalytic and the cognitive unconscious.

De Quincey here provides a metaphor that—while it heavily relies on the senses, nerves, and the brain—essentially mirrors Coleridge's notion of the imagination as an "esemplastic power" (*Biographia* 1: 295). Just as Coleridge considers the imagination "in terms of its basic ability to organise sensory perception into a cohesive picture of reality" (Robertson 192), De Quincey proposes the palimpsest as a metaphor for the brain's capacity to provide a cohesive, though mostly unconscious, picture of memory. However, even when Coleridge implicitly bespeaks "his understanding of the mind as embodied" (Robertson 231), he keeps distancing himself from materialist influences to his *philosophy* of mind. Not so De Quincey, who does not seem to fear "the fissures and vicissitudes of an embodied self" (Schlutz 13) in the way Coleridge does. Despite the physical torments and nightmares that he shares with Coleridge, he does not dismiss the body as a threat to his subjectivity, but explicitly proposes the brain, the very physical organ of thought, as the warrant for "the grandeur of human unity" (*S* 175).

This materialist reading is justified by De Quincey's list of triggers that provoke the resurrection of old layers, which are all related to the body and affect the brain: "the struggle of gradual suffocation," "fever," and "the searchings of opium" can reveal "the endless strata" that have long passed into "forgetfulness" (*S* 176). The example of near-death by drowning as De Quincey's mother experienced it, "the retrospect from dying moments" (*S* 175), reveals the layers of the palimpsest. A "mighty theatre expanded within her brain" and a "light … poured celestial visions upon the brain so that her consciousness became omnipresent at one moment to every feature in the infinite review." This revelation, which sounds like an account of mesmeric phenomena, relies on sensory impressions, and again explicitly draws attention to the processes as being embodied through the continual reference to the brain. De Quincey's mother experienced "a blow [that] seemed to strike her" and "phosphoric radiance [that] sprang forth from her eyeballs," both due to irritations of the nervous system. They are the signal, "a blazing rocket sent up from the brain," which exposes "the whole depths of the theatre." A strong physical stimulus that affects the nervous system, "some potent convulsion of the system," activates the brain and functions as a catalyst to reveal the "depths of the theatre" (*S* 176). These triggers indicate that "the system" is the body, the same "human system" ("A" 81) De Quincey fiercely condemns in the 1822 "Appendix" to his *Confessions*, and which can suddenly "wheel back into its earliest elementary stage" (*S* 176). This sustained reference to the body, sensory impressions, and the continual use of *brain* rather than *mind* signify the essential role of the physical frame in mental processes.

The list of triggers indeed suggests the need of extraordinary events to activate the cerebral processes De Quincey describes here. The larger context in *Suspiria* also implies that De Quincey's model of mental processes concerns exclusively the incessant revisiting of traumatic memories. It is important to note, however, that the processes explained through the metaphor of the reinscribed vellum, the inscription of sense impressions, their organisation,

their indelibility, and the "possibility of resurrection" (*S* 176), are amongst the very core functions of every human brain. De Quincey, probably aware of the negative, or pathological, implications, adds in a footnote that "naturally and *without violent agencies*, the human brain is by tendency a palimpsest" (*S* 177 emphasis added). Furthermore, it was common in the nineteenth century to observe abnormal, pathological cases in order to gain insight into non-deviant cases that did not transgress the given norm. The palimpsest is not a metaphor for the pathologically repressing, traumatised mind, as it is often considered in psychoanalytic readings, but for the human mind in general. In addition to the metaphorical level, "The Palimpsest" describes how physiological triggers, changes in the physical organisation that is, are communicated to the brain and thus revive mental representations acquired earlier in life, implicit memories in the cognitive psychologist's terminology.

In an unpublished fragment, De Quincey lays further stress on the role of the nervous system in the act of memory. He wrote *Suspiria* while he was fighting his "third prostration before the dark idol" (*S* 132), which caused great physical and mental "misery" (*Life* 242), mainly in the form of nervous irritation, which were probably withdrawal symptoms: "Now, understand how in some nervous derangements this horror really takes place. Some things that had sunk into utter forgetfulness, others that had faded in visionary power—all rise as gory phantoms from the dust" (*WTDQ* 15: 584).[13] More lucidly than ever before, De Quincey realised that opium was the ultimate cause. In the journal entry of 25 December 1844 De Quincey states that "This night … has first solemnly revealed itself to me that I am and have long been under a curse" (*Life* 245). Looking back at this period a little later, he remembers his realisation "that laudanum might be the secret key to all this wretchedness, not utterable to any human ear, which for ever I endured" (*Life* 242) and—finally fully understanding Coleridge's loss of all hope—De Quincey "returned obstinately to the belief that laudanum was at the root of all this unimaginable hell" (*Life* 244). The lateness of this insight is startling

but understandable in the light of the self-betrayal that characterises addiction. Morrison points out that De Quincey must have known this for a long time and the late "epiphany … betrays just how often he must have lied to himself" (*Biography* 336). In any case, De Quincey finally, though only temporarily, faced the real material cause of his "nervous suffering" (*Life* 245) and of his "dire reactions of frantic nervousness" (*Life* 247), which accounts for a deeper and more acute sense of the corporeality of mental processes that he displays in "The Palimpsest."

What it ultimately comes to is the impossibility of forgetting anything that reaches the brain, a conclusion De Quincey already states in the *Confessions*: "there is no such thing as *forgetting* possible" (*C* 67). Sensory impressions, emotions, and memories are retained in the brain even if they are not consciously remembered. Laycock came to the same conclusions on physiological grounds and he published them—which is an intriguing coincidence—in the very year De Quincey published *Suspiria*. Even the phrasing is almost interchangeable in some places: "ideas may be *inscribed*," Laycock argues, "and require only sensory impressions to rouse *them*" ("Reflex" 303 first emphasis added) from the "substrata [that] may be dormant for a lengthened period" ("Reflex" 308). As in "The Palimpsest," ideas are "inscribed" and De Quincey's "strata" (*S* 156) are "substrata" in Laycock. Carpenter was to make the same claim in more approachable and less technical terms than Laycock in 1853:

> There seems much ground for the belief, that *every* sensory impression which has been once recognized by the perceptive consciousness, is registered so to speak in the Cerebrum, and may be reproduced at some subsequent time, although there may be no consciousness of its existence in the mind during the whole intermediate period. Instances are of very frequent occurrence, in which ideas come up before the mind during delirium or dreaming, and are expressed at the time or are subsequently

> remembered, although the individual cannot himself retrace them as having ever before been present to his consciousness; they being yet proved to have been so at some long antecedent period. (781–82)

This physiologists' account contains many of De Quincey's points: the indelibility of memories; the brain as the physical repository of memories; the lack of consciousness between the impression and the remembrance; the impossibility of recognising certain memories as "parts of [one's] past experience" (*C* 67), as De Quincey puts it in the *Confessions*; and finally, the altered states of mind like delirium (which includes fever and opium trances in Carpenter) and dreaming to revive unconscious memories.

De Quincey's opium addiction turns out to be "revelation and destruction, simultaneously deepening and obliterating the self" (*Biography* 339). The "revelation" and "deepening" of "the self" is evidently informed by physiological accounts of the body and cognition, and places De Quincey amongst the vanguard thinkers on unconscious processes of his time and, somewhat ironically, of ours—given that almost for a century the body was denied in psychology. The body is at the very centre of De Quincey's definition of mental processes, as it is in the accounts of contemporary physiologists and cognitive science today. Considering this evidence, I argue that De Quincey was actually reflecting contemporary physiological theories of mind rather than foreshadowing later psychoanalytic ones. The psychophysiological, productive unconscious is a crucial—and so far neglected—component of De Quincey's notion of mental action. This compels us to reconsider his notion of mentation and the unconscious not as metaphysical or purely psychic but within the ambit of embodied cognition.

De Quincey's Literary Criticism and Laycock's Reflex Function

This notion of the productive unconscious is not restricted to De Quincey's deliberate musings on the workings of the mind. The same ideas are an essential part of De Quincey's

theory of literature. His literary criticism heavily relies on the same premises and reflects Laycock's proposition of "reflex functions of the brain" ("Reflex" 311). These "reflex functions" describe rational unconscious processes, much like the modern notion of automaticity and implicit thought. In chapters two and three I have already discussed some passages from De Quincey's literary criticism and his distinction between literature of knowledge and literature of power in the light of the cognitive unconscious; here I focus on the contemporary scientific context and particularly on Laycock, whose reflex action anticipates the modern concept to some extent. De Quincey's later literary criticism on Wordsworth and Pope bears conceptual and rhetorical affinities with Laycock's theory of the productive unconscious. The mechanisms De Quincey describes to account for the effects of poetry closely mirror his own notions of the subconscious, involutes, the palimpsest, and Laycock's thesis of processes that provoke mental and physical reactions without conscious intervention. The connection between De Quincey's and Laycock's ideas is highlighted by their shared basic assumption of a physical process that leads to novel ideas: the reflex.

De Quincey most likely knew to some extent about the physiological theories in circulation at the time. He refers directly to Hall's reflex theory, rhetorically asking how physiology could be "treated otherwise than childishly … by the most ingenious of men unacquainted with Marshall Hall" (*WTDQ* 16: 377). There is also the possibility that De Quincey had actually read or heard about Laycock's work. Until his publication of "On the Reflex Function of the Brain" in 1845, Laycock's research and especially the implications on conscious and unconscious cognition went hardly noticed. This was partly due to the fact that his work was often formulated "with an awkwardness, characteristic of its author" (Danziger 122), and because the reflex action of the brain was only implied or briefly mentioned in his work before 1845. However, De Quincey knew Hamilton, was fascinated by mesmerism, and read widely. This may have led him to Laycock's work, which began with his commentaries

on John Elliotson's mesmeric shows. Hamilton (and Colquhoun) followed these developments and might have informed De Quincey. Although this remains speculation, the evidence in the following discussion suggests that the opium-eater knew more about these theories than we can prove with certainty.

In 1845, De Quincey writes that "before that [absolute and philosophic criticism] can exist, we must have a good psychology; whereas, at present, we have none at all" (*WTDQ* 15: 224). De Quincey's lament about the lack of a valid psychological approach to literature is a mindfully chosen rhetorical device to set up his own psychologically informed criticism of Wordsworth's poetry. He does actually apply a psychological model by elaborating upon what he first applied in his "specimen of psychological criticism" ("K" 153) in 1823. This psychology—in 1823 as well as in 1845 and 1848—is embedded in physiological processes and considers the sensory and nervous system as an integral part of unconscious mental phenomena crucial for the aesthetic experience of literature. The discussions in "On Wordsworth's Poetry" (*Tait's* 1845) and "The Works of Alexander Pope" (*North British Review* 1848) on the dichotomy of conscious and unconscious reactions to literature and the role of the nervous system contain striking parallels to Laycock's theory of the reflex action of the brain.

In "On Wordsworth's Poetry," De Quincey discusses the poet's power to bring to light the "mysterious office which the mind so often within its own shadowy realm executes for itself" (*WTDQ* 15: 238). According to De Quincey, Wordsworth's poetry illustrates the manifold processes triggered and unconsciously effected by sensory stimuli, which Laycock calls "ideagenous changes" ("Reflex" 303). Powerful poems do not impose new ideas and feelings but cause productive unconscious mental processes, or reflex actions in Laycock's terminology, that reveal the unseen and simultaneously unravel the secret organisation ever-present in the palimpsest of the brain. While Laycock argues that "ideas may be inscribed,

and require only sensory impressions to rouse *them*" ("Reflex" 303), De Quincey attributes to poetry the means to draw this "slumbering" (*WTDQ* 15: 238) or "dormant" ("Reflex" 308) material into consciousness and to "unveil a connection between objects always before regarded as irrelate and independent" (*WTDQ* 15: 238). This is not a conscious act of the will but an unconscious act of the brain. As in the case of the palimpsest, consciousness is a question of strength. The effect of physical triggers on the "endless strata" of the palimpsest is that the latter "revive in strength" (*S* 176). Similarly, in "On Wordsworth's Poetry," De Quincey explains that "the difference in the strength made the whole difference between consciousness and subconsciousness" (*WTDQ* 15: 238). These parallels suggest that De Quincey applies the same notion of unconscious processes in "The Palimpsest" and in "On Wordsworth's Poetry." The analogy of the reinscribed vellum is arguably a version of his own concept of the subconscious and, in extension, of Laycock's reflex action, and poetry has the power to reveal these mental processes.

Wordsworth's subtle integration of the "joyous" and the "sad" (*WTDQ* 15: 230) in his poetry, which mirrors De Quincey's own notion of involutes, illustrates the latter's argument about the "mysterious office" and the seemingly "irrelate and independent" (*WTDQ* 15: 238) connections described above. De Quincey argues that Wordsworth "does not willingly deal with a passion in its direct aspect, or presenting an unmodified contour, but in forms more complex and oblique, and when passing under the shadow of some secondary passion" (*WTDQ* 15: 228). Wordsworth, like De Quincey, senses and imitates the natural tendency of the mind to connect seemingly unrelated feelings such as the joyous and the sad, which are by definition in a state of "reciprocal entanglement" (*WTDQ* 15: 230). In the *Confessions* De Quincey refers to his flight from grammar school, which had a similar effect, concluding that "So blended and intertwisted in this life are occasions of laughter and of tears" (*C* 16). Introducing a dream on Catharine Wordsworth and Ann of Oxford Street, he further explains

that "wherever two thoughts stand related to each other by a law of antagonism, and exist, as it were, by mutual repulsion, they are apt to suggest each other" (*C* 72). Finally, he labels these observations as "*involutes*" in *Suspiria*: "far more of our deepest thoughts and feelings pass to us through perplexed combinations of *concrete* objects, pass to us as *involutes* (if I may coin that word) in compound experiences incapable of being disentangled, than ever reach us *directly*, and in their own abstract shapes" (*S* 142). Wordsworth's combination of sad and joyous feelings is therefore not an artificial device to enrich his poetry in De Quincey's opinion. On the contrary, he believes that the association of "secondary passions" is an essential element of the mental machinery that works beyond conscious awareness.

I suggest that the "secondary passions," which De Quincey opposes to the "direct aspect" (*WTDQ* 15: 228) in order to describe the "reciprocal entanglement" (*WTDQ* 15: 230) of elements that "stand related to each other by a law of antagonism" (*C* 72) in poetry, are akin to Laycock's reflex action. In De Quincey's suggestive reading of "We Are Seven," the child who lost one of her siblings but radiates a "fulness of life" is "brought into connexion with the *reflex* shadows of the grave: and if she herself has *not*, the reader *has*, the gloom of that contemplation obliquely irradiated, and raised in relief upon his imagination, even by her. Death and its sunny antipole are forced into connexion" (*WTDQ* 15: 228 first emphasis added). The connection of "Death and its sunny antipole" is established by "reflex shadows." Laycock argues along the same line from the physiologist's point of view, believing that associations stem from the "ideagenic substrata" and that "the true explanation of the association of ideas is to be found in the doctrine of the reflex functions of the brain" ("Reflex" 311). Certain ideas have the power to evoke reflexes in the physical structure of the brain and thus bring forth new ideas and establish connections to other mental contents. These ideas move beyond the mere response to external stimuli underlying automaticity, but reflect the notion of implicit thought. The tendency of the mind to produce such "secondary

passions" or "reflex functions" is likewise present in Wordsworth's poetry and literary theory, De Quincey's prose, and Laycock's scientific treatise. They were all seeking to account for mental processes that elude consciousness within their respective field and eventually drew similar conclusions.

In the essay on Pope, the same ideas persist but the verbal affinities are even more acute. The function and role of poetry or the literature of power in general is to draw attention to such processes and even to provoke them in the reader. The lack of such effects renders Pope's "'didactic' poetry" (*WTDQ* 16: 359) defective. The mere term, didactic poetry, is a "contradictio in adjecto," a contradiction in terms, because "No poetry can have the function of teaching" (*WTDQ* 16: 359). Pope's attempt to speak to the rational understanding through poetry fails because it does not incite the mind of the reader on an unconscious level; it speaks directly to the understanding and cannot reach the "ideagenous substrata" that would result in "associations and trains of ideas" ("Reflex" 303). Poetry and art in general "can teach only as nature teaches, as forests teach, as the sea teaches, as infancy teaches, viz., by deep impulse, by hieroglyphic suggestion. Their teaching is not direct or explicit, but lurking, implicit, masked in deep incarnations" (*WTDQ* 16: 359–60). Accordingly, the abstract has to be made concrete in poetry and has to be communicated indirectly; it is the felt experience, what comes to us through the senses and has the power to create mental and physical reflexes, that can be successfully communicated in poetry. In other words, the teachings of poetry take place on an embodied unconscious level.

These passages also contain verbal affinities and readily suggest a connection with David Hartley's theory of association. Hartley was common reading in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century and part of the general knowledge among educated people. John Hayden argues that people knew about associationist ideas "from simply breathing the intellectual air of the times" (102n23). Hartley was highly influential in terms of theoretical

implications of the role of the body in cognition and, in particular, in setting the tone and establishing the diction to discuss mental phenomena in relation to brain science—even decades after the publication of his *Observations on Man*. Wordsworth most likely adopted ideas from Hartley in his poetry, and De Quincey describes the *Observations on Man* as a "specimen almost unique of elaborate theorizing, and a monument of absolute beauty, in the perfection of its *dialectic* ability" (*WTDQ* 10: 297).[14] Although he seems to base his praise more on the aesthetic and argumentative elegance of the work, rather than the content-related aspects, he was definitely acquainted with it.[15]

However, in two crucial points the imaginative or unconscious mental faculty portrayed by Wordsworth, De Quincey, and Laycock differs from Hartley's associationism. First, they propose a more active and more sophisticatedly working, or creative, mind than the one proposed by Hartley. In his theory, the mind only passively registers experiences so that the single parts of trains of ideas are mere "copies of former impressions" (57). Second, associations are linear in a temporal sense, depending on the order of succession in which they were first established. In Hartley's words, "the associated trains of ideas" are usually brought up "in the proper order" (376). In contrast, the mind as discussed by Wordsworth, De Quincey, and Laycock actively processes impressions, does not store and retrieve them in a linear fashion, and produces new mental contents in a creative act. Most discussions of association contain some Hartleyan vibratiuncles. It is difficult to say how much De Quincey, or Laycock for that matter, was referring back to Hartley in 1845, who does not even figure in the author index of *Mind and Brain*. Hartley occupies a crucial position in the history of brain science and the way the mind processes information, areas that would not have been discussed in the way they were by the mid-nineteenth century without his seminal theories; De Quincey and Laycock were doubtless among his heirs. However, the new, active

conception of the brain a hundred years after *Observations on Man* crucially differed from his passive theory of association.[16]

The unconsciously active and creative brain is the prerequisite in De Quincey's explanation of the effects of literature. He argues that "he [the reader] owes to the impassioned books which he has read, many a thousand more of emotions than he can consciously trace back to them. Dim by their origination, these emotions yet arise in him, and mould him through life like the forgotten incidents of childhood" (*WTDQ* 16: 339–40). This passage lends itself to a Freudian reading with its reference to "emotions" and "childhood." However, one may also read it in relation to the psychophysiological palimpsest and Laycock's "substrata" that "may lie dormant for a lengthened period from the want of a reagent, and appear extinct, but will reappear so soon as the impressions adapted to their action are received" ("Reflex" 308). Ideas and sensory impressions, "ideagenic and kinetic substrata" ("Reflex" 308), that have accumulated in the brain wait to be triggered or themselves trigger new thoughts and combinations without revealing themselves. This has nothing to do with a repressed or otherwise split self; these processes are part of the self and are inherently productive and beneficial.

Accordingly, De Quincey defines the impact of his favourite example, *Paradise Lost*:

> The great moral, for instance, the last result of the Paradise Lost, is once formally announced: but it teaches itself only by diffusing its lesson through the entire poem in the total succession of events and purposes: and even this succession teaches it only when the whole is gathered into unity by a *reflex act of meditation*; just as the pulsation of the physical heart can exist only when all the parts in an animal system are locked into one organization. (*WTDQ* 16: 360 emphasis added)

The steps to understanding are clearly delineated in this passage. The poem contains a formal announcement of the "great moral," and illustrates it in successive events which then need to be brought into unity by the reader through an unconscious mental performance, a "reflex act of meditation." The final step necessary to fully appreciate poetry is not explicit in the text but has to come from within the reader, whose mind reacts and digests what it perceives in order to present, in an act of creation, the unity and meaning of the work. De Quincey's "reflex act of meditation" is analogous to Laycock's "reflex action of the brain" and Kihlstrom's implicit thought. Impressions and ideas are brought into connection and create new ideas by rational reasoning that does not require consciousness. Unsurprisingly, the notion of "organization" De Quincey evokes is that of the body, the interplay of the nerves, muscles, and organs to form a unity that can only function as such. Like the "pulsation of the physical heart," the "reflex act of meditation" "can exist only when all the parts in an animal system are locked into one organization." The same unity is necessary between the nerves, the senses, and the brain to affect the "substrata," the "palimpsest," the "*involutes*," or "subconsciousness," which turn out to be all similar bundles of thoughts, memories, and feelings that are and remain active on an unconscious level, at times can reach consciousness, and create new mental contents. Accordingly, Pope is trying to achieve an effect with his didactic poetry that is contradictory to the nature of poetry *per se*, as De Quincey himself repeatedly insists. Conscious, discursive reasoning is opposed to unconscious, intuitive understanding.

In another, undated piece, "Pope and Didactic Poetry," De Quincey establishes the immediate connection between this notion of "reflex" and "subconsciousness." He differentiates two aspects of poetry: "one derived from the direct experience of life, the other from the reflex experience of it" (*WTDQ* 21: 88). While didactic poetry tries to teach (unsuccessfully) via "direct experience," good poetry (and art in general) affects the reader through "reflex experience," which presents an object "to the steady consciousness, which all

one's life has been seen unframed, *not* called into relief but depressed into the universal level of subconsciousness" (*WTDQ* 21: 89). The occurrence of "subconsciousness" and "reflex experience" within the same passage suggests that they represent elements of one and the same theory. The power of poetry and art is to provoke the "reflex experience," a mental reaction to something on the level of "subconsciousness." It is called into "relief," but what exactly and why it is moving is neither part of the poem nor of the reader's conscious thought.[17]

Ralph D. Ellis, who is working at the intersection of philosophy and neuroscience, similarly argues that art does not merely produce an emotional reaction to the imagery presented, but "lends itself to use by the viewer to open up the unfolding of the progression of a variety of possible emotions so that we can explore them, understand them, and be guided into deeper and deeper levels of their meanings" (168). He believes that there is an inherent motivation "to intensify the degree of consciousness we experience" (170). It is this increase of consciousness of emotions that we carry inside of us and that are triggered by art, which is also central for De Quincey: "I should be made to feel vividly, and with a vital consciousness, emotions which ordinary life rarely or never supplies occasions for exciting, and which had previously lain unawakened, and hardly within the dawn of consciousness" ("Sketches" 71). Art is not the cause for the ensuing emotions but provides the opportunity to feel them.

De Quincey's dismissal of didactic poetry goes hand in hand with Ellis's claim that we first feel "concepts," the holistic impression of an artwork, and only in a second stage understand "specific details" (175) that lead up to it. Didactic poetry provides the details, which can only rationally lead to the concept, instead of presenting an emotional concept that provokes a more holistic reaction, just as "nature," "forests," "the sea," "infancy" teach by "deep impulse" (*WTDQ* 16: 359–60). Like De Quincey, Ellis points out the difference between "*experiencing*" and "*intellectually acknowledging* the felt senses involved" (179).

Antonio and Hanna Damasio further explain the cognitive processes of the felt experience: the "brain does not merely represent aspects of external reality; it also records how the body explores the world and reacts to it" and in "addition to storing information about experiences with objects, the brain also categorizes the information so that related events and concepts … can be reactivated together" (91). The felt experience in connection with the multi-dimensional categorisation in the brain enable the activation of processes that result in what we feel in art and literature.

Frederick Burwick argues that one should "disencumber that rubric [De Quincey's 'psychological criticism'] of all its Freudian, Jungian, Lacanian accretions, and … reclaim those assumptions pervasive during the very period of history that saw the rise of experimental psychology as a scientific discipline" (*Knowledge* 143). I agree with his claim for the need to replace psychoanalytical with contemporary theories of the mind and concepts related to the unconscious. His indication of Aristotle, Locke, Hume, and Hartley, however, does not represent the developing field of psychology as a scientific discipline, and eventually he returns to Freud because he thinks that it "was not until Freud … that the concept of an *Unbewußtsein* acquired more extensive definition" (*Knowledge* 150). Bell, Hall, Carpenter, and Laycock are De Quincey's contemporaries and represent the nineteenth-century physiology that provides the key elements to the study of unconscious phenomena and the way the mind unconsciously stores, activates and produces ideas, feelings, and experiences on the basis of changes in the physical organisation. In this light, De Quincey's literary criticism, ironically enough, seems to be more firmly based on a "good psychology" (*WTDQ* 15: 224) than he was aware of himself. While critics hold that there is a shift "from the affective to the ethical" (Bate 149) in De Quincey's return to the literature of power in "The Works of Alexander Pope," it must also be acknowledged that there is further a distinct move towards the psycho(physio)logical.

Conclusion

Not even two decades into the second half of the nineteenth century, De Quincey's theories of memory and unconsciousness had become commonplace. In 1865, the Irish historian William Edward Hartpole Lecky notes that "it is now fully established that a multitude of events which are so completely forgotten that the statement of them calls up no reminiscences, may nevertheless be, so to speak, embedded in the memory, and may be reproduced with intense vividness under certain physical conditions" (102). Lecky states this in a footnote to explain the stronghold religious doctrines have when they are taught to young persons and thus become indelible "conceptions of childhood" (101). The mention of the "physical conditions" indicates that Lecky is referring to the psychophysiologist's unconscious. He explains that this phenomenon, which contains exactly the same elements as De Quincey's palimpsest, "is termed by psychologists 'latent consciousness,' and by physiologists 'unconscious cerebration' or the 'reflex action of the brain'" (101–02). These are the definitions of Hamilton, Carpenter, and Laycock respectively. De Quincey's subconscious would seamlessly fit into this list. Evidently, De Quincey is at the very centre of a movement that was carried out in various fields—medicine, physiology, philosophy, so-called pseudo-sciences, and literature—and eventually resulted in the general recognition of automatic, unconscious mental action that can be explained by physical laws.

This new psychophysiology established that the mind does not only exert influence on the body, but that the converse is equally true, even on the cerebral level. As a consequence, consciousness ceased to be the defining element of mentation and the unconscious became a more acute element in psychological research. The same applies to De Quincey's theories of mind. Dreams, the palimpsest, and involutes all have in common the lack of consciousness. They are further inextricably tied to the body; physical mechanisms instantiate mental reactions, which is evident in physiological as well as literary texts. A parallel development of

the same idea took place (physiologically determined and productive unconscious processes), based on the same evidence (opium, dreams, and altered states of mind), but within two different fields (literature and science), as it often happens in history.

Reading De Quincey and the physiologists' works alongside each other draws our awareness to three points: first, many scientific findings were equally discussed and at times possibly prefigured by men and women of letters; second, such parallel developments are always a product of their time and arise out of a broader context scintillating with that idea; third, scientists and literary authors were aware, used, and adapted ideas from the other field. They were writing against the same cultural background, which is reflected in the work of various fields, as the common interest in mesmerism impressively confirms. After a drought of almost a hundred years, scientists started again to investigate the productive unconscious. They have acknowledged the existence of similar theories in the works of Hamilton, Laycock, and Carpenter, which overlap with the literary endeavours of De Quincey. He can be considered as one of the early advocates of the cognitive unconscious: productive unconscious mental action that depends on the physical frame, the neurobiological processes of the body.

As a master of the English language, Mr. de Quincey's reputation will long survive. His … mind seems to have united the two qualities not often found together, of logical precision and poetic fancy.

Hawke's Bay Herald[1]

EPILOGUE

The coinage and continual usage of *subconscious* epitomise De Quincey's lasting interest in cognitive processes that elude awareness but nevertheless influence conscious mentation. They also illustrate his own call for neologisms as a necessity for the intellectual progress of a society. When De Quincey introduced the term to the reading public in 1834, it marked a moment of exposition, denotation, and signification in the ideation of the unconscious that had been underway in various fields, and he continued indirectly promoting the concept of unconscious processes in his published writings. Rather than representing a counter-agent to consciousness, De Quincey pervasively presents the unconscious as a basis for consciousness because it executes a similar set of functions: productive cognitive processes. Cognitive psychologists have been investigating the unconscious for several decades now and have developed "a coherent research paradigm that is tightly woven into the fabric of modern scientific psychology" (Kihlstrom, Barnhardt, and Tataryn 789). Their work provides a theoretical framework that enables the literary critic to analyse and understand nineteenth-century notions of the productive unconscious like the ones in De Quincey's work: it performs rational complex thoughts, executes automatically triggered responses to environmental stimuli, processes sensory impressions, categorises and stores memories, and directs our efforts to achieve certain objectives. These ideas are fundamental to De Quincey's

theories of language and literature, as well as to his notion of mind, memory, and dreams. For De Quincey, language is a kind of channel for the unconscious to manifest consciously. Although it is scattered over a series of articles published in the course of two years ("Style [I.-IV.]"), he brings forward a coherent argument about the interplay of language and implicit thought, which results in the explicit articulation of internal mental contents. Similarly, literature can provoke cognitive processes that arouse previously unconscious contents and further provoke the generation of new ones, a theory De Quincey first presented in 1823 and substantiated in various critical essays.

Animal Magnetism and contemporary findings in physiology were crucial factors in De Quincey's investigations into the unconscious. While he explicitly articulates his fascination with mesmerism, which turns out to have similar effects as opium, physiology is less overtly present in his work. However, reading the *Confessions* and *Suspiria* alongside contemporary physiological treatises reveals an astounding set of parallels. On the one hand, his opium experiences provided incisive proof that mind and body are not acting separately, but that the mind is in fact embodied. On the other hand, physiologists were simultaneously arguing in favour of the embodied mind and tracking unconscious brain processes, which De Quincey seems to have picked up and worked into his own theory of mind and memory. His discussion of dreams and the famous passage on the palimpsest reverberate with theories of the embodied active mind found in physiological works. Thus, the modern cognitive unconscious is not wholly new; a similar notion of unconscious processes was part of the scientific, literary, and cultural discourse throughout the nineteenth century, of which De Quincey is a representative exponent and significant innovator.

The literary influence of De Quincey's work "cannot be overestimated" (Schäfer 342).[2] The impact is evident in authors such as Edgar Allan Poe, Alfred du Musset, Charles Dickens, Charles Baudelaire, Fitz Hugh Ludlow, George Orwell, W. S. Burroughs, and

others, and has often been acknowledged by the authors themselves (*Biography* 397–98; Schäfer 324). Robert Morrison splits this influence into two main areas, "terror and detective fiction" and "the literature of addiction" (*Biography* 397). Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone* displays marks of De Quincey's work in both these areas. It also inherited the notion of productive unconscious processes, more specifically, implicit memory as it is described in "The Palimpsest." *The Moonstone* is one of the first detective novels and opium plays a major role, though the reader does not find out until the *dénouement*. It is about a large diamond, the moonstone, that Rachel Verinder inherits on her eighteenth birthday. The same night the precious stone disappears. Ezra Jennings, the medical assistant to the Verinder's family doctor, finds out that Franklin Blake, a friend of the family and suitor of Rachel unknowingly stole the diamond in a narcotic trance. After having been secretly administered laudanum, Franklin's worries about Rachel and the diamond unconsciously incite him to sneak to Rachel's room and to take the moonstone to ensure its safety. Similar to a post-hypnotic amnesia, Franklin has no memories of these events. As Vanessa L. Ryan aptly puts it, "to discover the diamond" at the end of the novel "is to discover the unconscious" (*Thinking* 39).

Jennings, himself an opium addict who describes symptoms and mental states in his journal that clearly draw from De Quincey's *Confessions*, proposes to replicate all the details of that night to prove Franklin's innocence. He asserts that "it is *physiologically* certain that we should arrive at exactly the same result" (Collins 157 emphasis added). His theory relies on three sources that are familiar to us by now: Thomas De Quincey, William B. Carpenter, and John Elliotson. Relying on these three authors, Jennings believes that opium does not necessarily stupefy but can also excite the mind; that all sensory impressions and thoughts are registered as implicit memories in the brain even if one has no conscious recollection of them; and that opium has the power to revive these memories. Collins insists in the preface that the "course of thought and actions" is "what it would most probably have been in real life" (vii),

which also applies to "the physiological experiment … in the closing scenes" (vii–viii). Relying on "books" and "living authorities" he stresses the scientific validity of this experiment and assures that he "so shaped the story as to make it grow out of what actually would have happened" (viii). Collins obviously draws from the books mentioned in the story, along with De Quincey's work. It would be interesting to know who the "living authorities" were, though by 1868 the effects of opium and the physiological theory of the unconscious were widely known.[3]

The ninth edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1875-89) bears witness to the scientific status of the unconscious and De Quincey's impact on the psychological discourse of the later nineteenth century. The ninth is the first edition that features an article on "Psychology," which contains a subsection entitled "Subconsciousness," the term De Quincey brought into print in 1834.[4] The author of the article, James Ward, asserts that "one more topic of a general kind calling for attention" is "the hypothesis of unconscious mental modifications, as it has been unfortunately termed,—the hypothesis of subconsciousness, as we may style it to avoid this contradiction in terms." Ward replaces William Hamilton's "unconscious mental modifications" with De Quincey's "subconsciousness" to discuss "presentations of less than a certain assignable intensity" (47). Ward mainly refers to subliminal perception, sensory impressions of low intensity, though at one point he specifically talks about "impressions *and ideas*" (48 emphasis added). Hence, subconsciousness for Ward includes the cognitive processing and storing of complex and rational mental content, such as thoughts.

Ward's discussion of subconsciousness also entails the influence on conscious life, in which he draws on another De Quinceyan term: "Subconscious presentations may tell on conscious life—as sunshine or mist tells on a landscape or *the underlying writing on a palimpsest*—although lacking either the differences of intensity or the individual distinctness

requisite to make them definite features" (48 emphasis added). Ward does not go as far as De Quincey with the metaphor of the palimpsest, since he is convinced—unlike Laycock, Carpenter, and of course De Quincey himself—that "the hypothesis of subconsciousness does not commit us to the assumption that all presentations are by their very nature imperishable: … many, we may well suppose, lapse into complete oblivion and from that there is no recall" (48). Two points are striking in this *Encyclopaedia Britannica* entry. First, "Subconsciousness" was introduced at the same time as "Psychology," which attests that some form of unconscious mental life had become a matter of debate along with the formation of psychology as a scientific and academic discipline. Second, the references to "subconsciousness" and "palimpsest" indicate that De Quincey had a remarkable influence on the psychological discourse of the second half of the nineteenth century.

Probably as a reaction to Eduard von Hartmann's overarching and overgeneralising understanding of the unconscious, William James warned in 1890 that the distinction "*between the unconscious and the conscious being of the mental state* … is the sovereign means for believing what one likes in psychology, and of turning what might become a science into a tumbling-ground for whimsies" (166). Looking back at the excesses in psychoanalysis, one can sympathise with James's warning. Over a hundred years after James, Kihlstrom is confident that the *a priori* denial of an unconscious—even of this great figure in psychology—is no longer valid: "The unconscious is not, as William James feared it would be, merely a 'tumbling-ground for whimsies;' rather, it is an empirical fact of mind, and can be studied by the conventional techniques of psychological science" ("Rediscovery" 128).

What is the status of the unconscious in literary criticism then? Psychoanalysis is not waning but critics by now at least seem to feel the need to justify, as it were, their theoretical approach. Joel Faflak sceptically observes that "Richardson's approach [cognitive historicism] suggests that methodologies such as psychoanalysis have taken us so far, but that

now neuroscience or cognitive science will get us that much farther in understanding the complexities of how Romantic discourse and culture come to understand the subject and her cognitions" (21). Psychoanalysis has surely "taken us so far," though it seems that often enough it has led us astray, in particular with De Quincey. He can, of course, still be read in psychoanalytic terms. The question is, though, whether it makes sense to use a critical theory that is seriously flawed or whether we had better stake new claims that might leave certain issues unanswered but provide a foundation for further investigation. It is too early to judge whether cognitive science "will get us that much farther." However, it opens up new possibilities to understand the present, which in turn allows us to look at the past from a new perspective. Only the future will show the validity of contemporary claims in cognitive science and about the cognitive unconscious. For the time being, it is the soundest theory we have.

My aim has been to point out a possible road towards the unconscious in the humanities that parts from the well-known Freudian unconscious, which is "hot and wet," full of "lust and anger," "hallucinatory, primitive, and irrational" (Kihlstrom, Barnhardt, and Tataryn 789). Psychoanalytic concepts such as repression and symbolic displacement do not furnish the theoretical framework to discuss a range of vital aspects of unconscious mentation, which cognitive psychology, focusing on a more mundane but by no means less exciting unconscious mental space, can do. In cultural terms, Kihlstrom and his colleagues argue that "this situation is regrettable" because there might not be "too many novels written or too many movies made about semantic priming effects" (789). However, they relativise this statement, pointing out that "the plot lines of both *Spellbound* and *The Manchurian Candidate* rely on implicit memory" (789). Collins's *The Moonstone* is another example. Kihlstrom and his colleagues conclude that "a nonpsychoanalytic formulation of the

psychological unconscious still can be pretty interesting, even to artists, writers, and other nonpsychologists" (789).

This conclusion is retrospectively valid. De Quincey engages with the "nonpsychoanalytic formulation of the psychological unconscious" *avant la lettre*, as it were, and he weaves it into writings of various contexts: the workings of the mind, memory, dreams, and his theories of language and literature. I believe it is no exaggeration to claim that De Quincey was a prose poet who was deeply fascinated by and contributed "to the prospects of Psychology" ("AM" 379). Broadening the scope of this investigation into the cognitive unconscious in nineteenth-century literature is a fruitful endeavour. The unconscious was growing from an implied notion to a scientifically valid theory, physiology and psychology were taking vast strides, and Freud had not yet appeared on the scene. Authors ranging from William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, John Keats, Percy Bysshe Shelley, to Thomas Carlyle, Charles Dickens, George Eliot, Wilkie Collins, and Robert Louis Stevenson await continued rediscovery.

Appendix A

Subconscious / *-ly* / *-ness* in De Quincey's Works and Letters

"The Caesars. Chap. IV," *Blackwood's*, 1834.	The Emperor Hadrian had already taken a solitary step in the improvement of human nature; and not, we may believe, without some sub-conscious influence received directly or indirectly from Christianity. (*WTDQ* 9: 81)
"Autobiography of an English Opium-Eater: The German Language and Philosophy," *Tait's*, 1836.	Why, then, being aware that even in idea they were false, besides being practically unsuitable, did Kant adopt or borrow a name laden with this superfetation of reproach—all that is false in theory superadded to all that is useless in practice? He did so for a remarkable reason: he felt, according to his own explanation, that Aristotle had been groping—the German word expressive of his blind procedure is *herumtappen*—groping in the dark, but under a semi-conscious instinct of truth. Here is a most remarkable case or situation of the human intellect, happening alike to individuals and to entire generations—in the situation of yearning or craving, as it were, for a great idea as yet unknown, but dimly and uneasily prefigured. Sometimes the very brink, as it may be called, of such an idea is approached; sometimes it is even imperfectly discovered; but with marks in the very midst of its imperfections, which serve as indications to a person coming better armed for ascertaining the sub-conscious thought which had governed their tentative motions. ("Sketches" 168)
"Style No. III," *Blackwood's*, 1840.	Every man who has studied and meditated the difficulties of style must have had a sub-conscious sense of a bar in his way at a particular point of the road thwarting his free movement. ("St." 46)
The Logic of Political Economy, 1844.	But there is still a final evasion likely to move sub-consciously in the thoughts of a student, which it is better to deepen and strengthen until it becomes generally visible—than to leave it behind as a rankling perplexity. (*WTDQ* 14: 292)
"On Wordsworth's Poetry," *Tait's*, 1845.	He sees the same objects, neither more nor fewer, but he sees them engraved in lines far stronger and more determinate: and the difference in the strength makes the whole difference between consciousness and subconsciousness. (*WTDQ* 15: 238)
"On the Present Stage of the English Language," *Hogg's Instructor*, 1850.	In no country, except one, is such a preface more requisite than in England, where it is strange enough that, whilst the finest models of style exist, and sub-consciously operate effectively as sources of delight, the *conscious* valuation of style is least perfectly developed. (*WTDQ* 17: 57)

"The Works of Alexander Pope," *North British Review*, 1848.	Pope therefore, wheresoever his heart speaks loudly, shows how deep had been his early impressions from Christianity. That is shown in his intimacy with Crashaw, in his Eloisa, in his Messiah, in his adaptation to Christian purposes of the Dying Adrian, &c. It is remarkable also, that Pope betrays, in all places where he has occasion to *argue* about Christianity, how much grander and more faithful to that great theme were the subconscious perceptions of his heart than the explicit commentaries of his understanding. He, like so many others, was unable to read or interpret the testimonies of his own heart, which is a deep over which diviner agencies brood than are legible to the intellect. The cipher written on his heaven-visited heart was deeper than his understanding could interpret. (*WTDQ* 16: 358)
"Table Talk: Dryden's Hexastich," *Hogg's Instructor*, 1853.	Exceedingly striking it is, that a thought should have prospered for 170 years, which, on the slightest steadiness of examination, turns out to be no thought at all, but mere blank vacuity. There is, however, this justification of the case, that the mould, the set of channels, into which the metal of the thought is meant to run, really has the felicity which it appears to have: the form is perfect; and it is merely in the matter, in the accidental filling up of the mould, that a fault has been committed. Had the Virgilian point of excellence been loveliness instead of majesty, or any word whatever suggesting the common antithesis of sublimity and beauty; or had it been power on the one side, matched against grace on the other, the true lurking tendency of the thought would have been developed, and the sub-conscious purpose of the epigram would have fulfilled itself to the letter. (*WTDQ* 18: 32)
Letter to Margaret, 1856.	Shall I guess? I believe that—I fancy that—I suggest that you were both seeking by a metaphysical instinct, sometimes were consciously seeking, oftener perhaps subconsciously (and confounding it with your kindred but subordinate study of *English* grammar), were both seeking the fine and subtle threads of philosophical grammar, that subject which was first taught to grow and prosper in an English atmosphere by Harris. (*Life* 400–01)
"Pope and Didactic Poetry," Undated.	The very fact of seeing an object framed as it were, insulated, suddenly *relieved* to the steady consciousness, which all one's life has been seen *un*framed, *not* called into relief, but depressed into the universal level of subconsciousness, awakens a pleasurable sense of surprise. (*WTDQ* 21: 89)

Appendix B

The Six Stages of Animal Magnetism in Colquhoun and De Quincey

Colquhoun	De Quincey
The *first* degree presents no remarkable phenomena. The intellect and the senses still retain their usual powers and susceptibilities. For this reason, this first degree has been denominated the degree of *waking*.	The *first* stage is not very determinately or characteristically marked.
In the *second* degree, most of the senses still remain in a state of activity. That of vision only is impaired; the eye withdrawing itself gradually from the power of the will. This second degree, in which the sensibility is partially disturbed, is by some magnetisers called the *half-sleep*, or the *imperfect crisis*.	The *second* begins to indicate the presence of some new and disturbing agency; the sensibility is now untuned, as it were, for its ordinary action; the eye gradually withdraws itself from the power of the will; and preparations are now obscurely making for introverting or throwing inwards the ordinary action of the senses.
In the *third* degree, the whole of the organs, through the medium of which our correspondence with the external world is carried on (the senses) refuse to perform their respective functions, and the patient is placed in that unconscious state of existence, which is called the *magnetic sleep*.	In the *third* stage this process is so far accomplished, that the commerce maintained by the senses with the external world, is entirely suspended; and there now takes place what is called the *magnetic sleep*.
In the *fourth* degree, the patient awakes, as it were, within himself, and his consciousness returns. He is in a state which can neither be properly called sleeping nor waking, but which appears to be something between the two. When in this state, he is again placed in a very peculiar connection with the external world. This fourth degree has been distinguished in the writings of the animal magnetisers, by the name of the *perfect crisis*, or *simple somnambulism*.	The *fourth* restores the patient to consciousness; he wakens, as it were, but to a world within himself; and his connexion is restored with the external world; but, as will be seen, by some new and inexplicable process, carried on by vicarious organs. This, in opposition to the second stage, which is sometimes called the imperfect crisis, is considered the perfect crisis, or the stage of magnetic *somnambulism*. Thus far the patient attains no powers which are in an absolute sense new; they are new only as regards the means. Old ends are now accomplished by new machinery; and by machinery which seems irrelevant and preposterous.
In the *fifth* degree, the patient is placed in what is called the state of *self-intuition*. When	But in the *fifth* stage, new powers are developed—new faculties, without parallel,

in this situation he is said to obtain a clear knowledge of his own internal mental and bodily state, is enabled to calculate, with accuracy, the phenomena of disease which will naturally and inevitably occur, and to determine what are their most appropriate and effectual remedies. He is also said to possess the same power of internal inspection with regard to other persons who have been placed in magnetic connection with him. From this fifth degree all the subsequent magnetic states are comprehended under the denomination of *lucidity*, or *lucid vision*, (Fr. *Clairvoyance*; Germ. *Hellsehen*.)	analogy, or the dimmest prefiguration in any previous condition of human nature as known to philosophy. The patient now suddenly emerges into a state of intellectual light, which may be called the faculty of *self-contemplation*, or perhaps better (as Mr. Colquhoun has named it) of *self-intuition*. In France, this state is called *Clairvoyance*; and in Germany, by an expression of the same import, *Hellsehen*. The patient now obtains a clear unobstructed view of his own internal condition, both bodily and mental; he finds himself endowed with a new skill for pointing out the nature and phenomena of any malady which afflicts him, and for directing its proper medical treatment; {footnote} a prophetic power arises within him for determining as to the day, and even as to the hour, the recurrences of his own complaint; and finally this faculty extends itself to the cases of others, with whom the patient is brought into magnetic sympathy. [footnote:] It is in this point only, the least marvellous of the whole, that we have seen reason to distrust the French report. The patients prescribed for themselves; and, generally speaking, they were non-medical persons. But still, they only rang the changes upon those common remedies in French practice, which, no doubt, had sometimes been discussed in their presence by medical attendants, or which, at all events, having been often administered to themselves, and recurred to by name in conversation with all about them, could not but have left upon their memories materials sufficient for the purpose of self-prescription.
In the *sixth* degree, the *lucid vision*, which the patient possessed in the former degree, extends to all objects, near and at a distance, in space and time; hence it has been called the degree of *universal lucidity*.	Beyond this stage there is still a higher, the *sixth* and last, in which the *clairvoyance*, or faculty of unobstructed vision, is carried still further, surmounting all impediments of space and time, and extending to all objects, near or remote, without distinction. What are the ultimate ascents attainable in this stage at present is mere matter of conjecture.

Notes

[1] "RE: Thomas De Quincey, Dreams, and Opium."

INTRODUCTION

[1] "Going Unconscious," 34.

[2] *"This True Inner Africa:" Texts on the Discovery of the Unconscious before Freud*

[3] *The Unconscious in German Idealism*

[4] "psychoanalytische Keime"

[5] Refuting Locke's point that it is hardly possible to show that a man can be thinking without being conscious thereof, Leibniz introduced the term *apperception* in order to differentiate conscious from unconscious perception, the *petites perceptions*. In *New Essays on Human Understanding* he maintains that "Every impression has an effect, but the effects are not always noticeable. … All our undeliberated actions result from a conjunction of minute perceptions; and even our customs and passions, which have so much influence when we do deliberate, come from the same source" (Bk 2, Ch 1, § 15). Kant takes up Leibniz's cue and similarly discusses the existence of unconscious mental processes in *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*. He distinguishes between clear (*klare*) and obscure (*dunkele*) representations and claims that the "field of sensuous intuitions and sensations of which we are not conscious … is immense. Clear representations, on the other hand, contain only infinitely few points of this field which lie open to consciousness; so that as it were only a few places on the vast *map* of our mind are *illuminated*" (247).

[6] The necessary counterquestion to why De Quincey cannot remember those childhood episodes when awake is, of course, why do they return with such a clarity in his dreams, which are supposed to be obscure and disguised.

[7] Robert Morrison has shown that for the dream accounts in the *Confessions* De Quincey was "conflating different versions of them in order to produce the most famous passage in his work" ("Dating the Dream Finale" 242). The fact that these accounts of his dreams were modified and crafted by De Quincey for literary purposes undermines the notion of free-association proposed by Faflak.

[8] Nancy Easterlin and Beth Lau make the same point concerning the critical approach towards Wordsworth.

[9] Various elements of the cognitive unconscious had been around in the scientific discourse earlier than 1987 (see for example Gregory Bateson), but Kihlstrom brought these elements together for the first time and provided an initial attempt to conceptualise them.

[10] "bei jeder Form der Informationsverarbeitung, also auch bei sogenannt höheren Formen der Auseinandersetzung mit der Aussen- und der Innenwelt (wie Denken, Vorstellen oder Erinnern)"

[11] These statements have a further implication. Indirectly they confirm that the unconscious, in whatever form one chooses to look at it, is not simply a myth or an invention. Until the 1970s, this question was continually brought to the fore, which D. B. Klein puts right in the title of his book: *The Unconscious: Invention or Discovery?*. He also shows that this question dates back to William James, who dismissed any concept of the unconscious in empirical psychology. As a reply to Eduard von Hartmann's very popular (and often speculative) postulation of the unconscious, James devoted a section in his *Principles of Psychology* to ten 'proofs' of the unconscious, each followed by a negative 'reply.' The late-

twentieth-century cognitive science not only provided a new approach to the unconscious but also convincingly established its existence as a fact. Nevertheless, some scholars, such as Nicholls and Liebscher "remain open" to the possibility that the unconscious is merely a construct, asking rhetorically whether one can "in fact assume the ontological existence of '*the* unconscious'?" (2).

[12] Consciousness has become the mysterious entity. Already in 1972 Bateson remarked that "Today we think of consciousness as mysterious, and of the computational methods of the unconscious, e.g., primary process, as continually active, necessary, and all-embracing" (135–36). The challenge of cognitive scientists is to understand the role of consciousness. Despite the advances made in the field, the picture they can draw of the human mind remains incomplete. The unconscious, on the other hand, has been demystified to a certain extent in the last decades, due to the acceptance of cognitive structures and processes that mostly work beyond the reach of awareness. Consciousness seems to be the less clearly defined concept, at the moment, than unconsciousness.

[13] See for example Bettina Davou and Soren R. Ekstrom.

[14] In the nonfictional historical account, *Hidden Minds: A History of the Unconscious*, the novelist Frank Tallis argues that the cognitive and the Freudian unconscious are not fundamentally different. They both have in common, Tallis says, the assumption that the unconscious is fundamentally underrated, which is a flagrant oversimplification. Such a comparison fails to take into account the elementary differences underlying the two approaches to the unconscious.

[15] See for example Kihlstrom, "The Cognitive Unconscious;" Peter Lavie and J. Allan Hobson; Jonathan Miller; and Timothy D. Wilson.

[16] It turns out that Elizabeth did not suffer from hydrocephalus but that "it was most probably cerebrospinal meningitis" (Morrison, *Biography* 14).

CHAPTER ONE: The Need for Neologisms and the Emergence of *Subconscious*

[1] "On the Present Stage of the English Language," *WTDQ*, 17: 63.

[2] Neologism is here applied in a broad sense and is not differentiated from a coinage or an ad-hoc formation. The terms are used interchangeably.

[3] If the reference is not to a specific occurrence and if not otherwise stated, *subconscious* stands for all the grammatical forms of the term (subconscious adj./n., subconsciously, and subconsciousness).

[4] When William returned home from public school, he "exploded back into the Greenhay nursery." After William had left home again to become a pupil of the distinguished painter Philip James de Loutherbourg, it felt like "a liberation from tyranny" for De Quincey. This "tyranny" left such a deep mark that when William died of typhus in 1797, "Thomas was glad to be free of him" (Morrison, *Biography* 21, 25, 29).

[5] The *OED* (2005 update) lists "pettifogulize" and "pettifogulizer" as nonce-words, i.e. a word only used "on one specific occasion or in one specific text or writer's works" (*OED*). The word stems from *to pettifog*, which also carries the extended meaning of "to wrangle or quibble about petty points" in the extended sense. Whether it was William's linguistic playfulness, ingenuity or inadequacy that brought forth *pettifogulise* and *pettifoguliser* we do not know.

[6] 'pledge of friendship' (*WTDQ* 16: 585 n27)

[7] Although there is no detailed discussion of Herder's work in De Quincey's writings, he knew him and his ideas. In 1823 De Quincey translated passages on the life of Herder and included the following passage in the introductory paragraphs:

> Upon the whole, the best notion I can give of Herder to the English reader, is to say that he is the German Coleridge; having the same all-grasping erudition, the same spirit of universal research, the same occasional superficiality and inaccuracy, the same indeterminateness of object, the same obscure and fanciful mysticism (schwärmerey), the same plethoric fulness [sic] of thought, the same fine sense of the beautiful—and (I think) the same incapacity for dealing with simple and austere grandeur. (*WTDQ* 3: 115)

[8] It is somewhat ironic that De Quincey, whose writing at times is anything but "unwordy," should call for this, thereby coining the very word to describe it.

[9] See James C. McKusick for a discussion of Coleridge's etymological interest and his "crucial role in the origin of the *OED*" (5).

[10] In the nineteenth century, the proclamation of language as part of the national identity became very popular in Europe and actually served as "grounds for the formation of new nation-states" (Oakes 23). The question of nationality may have influenced De Quincey's comparative analyses of languages. However, the following discussion focuses on the implications between ideas, concepts, and language.

[11] The philosopher and cognitive scientist Daniel Dennett, partly quoting a conference participant, puts this idea in the following terms: "'Thoughts are not the sort of thing you can grasp like an apple …'—but words and sentences *are* things you can grasp like an apple. They are *manipulanda*" (290). This idea is not only relevant for De Quincey's notion of neologisms but that of language in general, which he develops in the four instalments of "Style."

[12] The exact numbers are difficult to establish since the *OED* search engine cannot strictly separate the two search modes. One also has to keep in mind that these numbers are subject to change when new evidence for the first occurrence of a word is found.

[13] Mention of his own neologisms: "Wherever law and intellectual order prevail, they *debarbarise* (if I may be allowed such a coinage) what in its elements might be barbarous" (*WTDQ* 3: 91); "Now of men and women generally, parodying that [Hartley's] terminology, we ought to say—not that they are governed by passions, or are at all capable of passions, but of *passiuncles*" ("Sketches" 45); "Within half-an-hour he returned; looking more lugubrious than ever—more grim—more grimy (if *grime* yields any such adjective)—a little more rusty—rather more *patinous*, if numismatists will lend me that word" (*WTDQ* 16: 299); "far more of our deepest feelings pass to us as through perplexed combinations of *concrete* objects, pass to us as *involutes* (if I may coin that word) in compound experiences incapable of being disentangled, than ever reach us *directly*, and in their own abstract shapes" (*S* 142); "Too much worldly experience indisposes men to the playfulness and the *toyfulness* (if we may invent that word) of childhood" (*WTDQ* 21: 52).

[14] Mention of a specific source of a coinage or word extension: "I still find it difficult to form any judgment of an author so 'many-sided' (to borrow a German expression)" (*WTDQ* 3: 115); "For, generally, a sunrise and a sunset, ought to be seen from the valley or horizontally,—not, as the man of Kentuck expressed it, *slantindicularly*" ("Sketches" 31); "Every fortnight, or so, I took care that he should receive a 'refresher,' as lawyers call it—a new and revised brief—memorialising my pretensions and expectations" (*WTDQ* 17: 102); "I have always looked upon this fine of five or seven shillings (for wax that you do not absolutely need) as a sort of inaugural *honorarium* entrance-money, what in jails used to be known as *smart* money" (*WTDQ* 2: 191); "*Interpenetration*:—this word is from the mint of

Mr. Coleridge" (*WTDQ* 3: 22); "Alcibiades, who might (chronologically speaking) have been the son of Pericles, was too unsteady, and (according to Mr Coleridge's coinage) 'unreliable;' or, perhaps, in more correct English, too '*unrelyuponable*'" ("St." 56); "Professor Wilson coined the English word *Hedonist*, which he sometimes applied in playful reproach to myself and others" (*WTDQ* 2: 251).

A combination of different kinds of references:

> Thus Mr Coleridge introduced the fine word *ancestral*, in lieu of the lumbering word *ancestorial*, about the year 1798. Milton introduced the indispensable word *sensuous*. Daniel, the truly philosophic poet and historian, introduced the splendid *class* of words with the affix of *inter*, to denote reciprocation, *e. g. interpenetrate*, to express mutual or interchangeable penetration; a form of composition which is deeply beneficial to the language, and has been extensively adopted by Coleridge. We ourselves may boast to have introduced the word *orchestric*, which we regard with parental pride, as a word expressive of that artificial and pompous music which attends, for instance, the elaborate hexameter verse of Rome and Greece, in comparison with the simpler rhyme of the more exclusively accentual metres in modern languages; or expressive of any organised music, in opposition to the natural warbling of the woods. (*WTDQ* 11: 330)

[15] It is curious that a journalist in Australia should be one of the first to make this claim. Unfortunately there is no source indication, which might further illuminate the history and reception of the term *subconscious*.

[16] This dictionary is the precursor of the *OED*. Herbert Coleridge, grandson of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, was one of the editors.

[17] Dates and entries have been corrected in the new online edition (December 2010 and June 2012); "subconscious" has been specified (1834 instead of 1832-34) and "subconsciously" was initially changed from the wrong 1823 to 1851 in 2010. In 2012 De Quincey's 1844 instance of "subconsciously" was further added. The first change, which is still kept as the second quotation, is surprisingly still incorrect. The relevant essay was published in 1850. The initial confusion probably arose due to a lack of precision when attributing the word to the respective essay. It is not to be found in "On Languages" (1823) but "On the Present Stage of the English Language" (1850), which is undated and referred to as "Language" in Masson's 1889-90 edition of De Quincey's works. The mistake has been copied by many scholars (for example Chapple; Coburn; Burwick, *Knowledge*; and Tambling) and is also reprinted in the notes of volume fifteen of *The Works of Thomas De Quincey* (2000-03).

[18] De Selincourt further argues that the "relation of this conception to the subconscious or subliminal self of the modern psychologist is obvious" (319). Although he is absolutely right in a general sense, the terms "subconscious," "subliminal," and "modern psychologist" leave a lot of space for interpretation. Even without knowing what de Selincourt was referring to, it shows the generalised and rather unspecific terminology that was mainly drawing from Freud but not specifically referring to him.

[19] Even before any of the instances discussed, Erasmus Darwin puts forth his concept of the unconscious mind. As early as 1794, he presents his view of the hidden mental realm, which is conspicuously similar to that of the cognitive psychologist. What he terms "INTUITIVE ANALOGY" is defined as "an act of reasoning of which we are unconscious except from its effects in preserving the congruity of our ideas, and bears the same relation to the sensorial power of volition, that irritative ideas, of which we are inconscious except by their

effects, do to the sensorial power of irritation" (196). It is of special interest from the cognitive point of view because Darwin (like De Quincey) presents an unconscious faculty that is governed by "reasoning." Darwin's usage of "inconscious" shows his attempt of coining the necessary terminology for the notion of the psychological unconscious.

[20] See for example Joseph Murphy, Erhard F. Freitag, and Hugh B. Sanders. Sanders, for example, claims that "Contrary to a popular myth, your thought process is the only thing in this life that you do have complete control over," that "you can instruct your mind" through positive affirmations of one's goal, and thus achieve "all of your dreams" (19).

[21] Jastrow's most famous example is the duck-rabbit picture, which he used to show that perception is not just the representation of sensual perception but involves mental processes. For a brief commentary see http://socrates.berkeley.edu/~kihlstrm/JastrowDuck.htm.

[22] "Das persönliche Unbewusste, das ich etwa auch als das 'Unterbewusste' bezeichne (im Gegensatz zum absolut oder kollektiv Unbewussten)" (*Das Unbewusste* 96n13).

[23] Despite the psychoanalysts' explicit distancing from the term *subconscious*, it is often used to refer to psychoanalytic theories in popular usage and occasionally by scholars. In Peter Gay's words, the use of *subconscious* to refer to psychoanalytic theories "was, and remains, a common and telling mistake" (*A Life* 453n): "When it is employed to say something 'Freudian,' it is proof that the writer has not read his Freud" (*Freud Reader* 576n1).

CHAPTER TWO: De Quincey's *Subconscious* and the Cognitive Unconscious

[1] "Cognitive Literary Historicism: A Response to Adler and Gross," 172.

[2] See Coburn; Burwick, *Knowledge* and "Autobiographer;" John A. V. Chapple; and Jeremy Tambling.

[3] See appendix for a full list of the relevant passages and bibliographical details.

[4] The verb *to intuit* is De Quincey's coinage.

[5] There was gap of almost a year and a half between the first and the second set of three instalments. The reason for this is not entirely clear but it seems to have been a combination of difficulties. De Quincey was under dire financial pressures (even by his standards) and the relationship with Blackwood was worsening. At the same time, De Quincey put a good deal of effort into a long-term collaboration with *Tait's*, the newly established, radical "chief Scottish rival" (*WTDQ* 9: 303) of *Blackwood's*. The fourth instalment was published in June 1834, only five months after the publication of "Animal Magnetism" in *Tait's*.

[6] Although exaggerated by Gibbon, the reign from Trajan to Marcus Aurelius "was something of a golden age for both Rome and its empire and therefore too for Roman Christianity" (Green 60).

[7] This strongly contrasts the innovative nature of the word and the usually heightened awareness of the author. It poses a riddle as to why De Quincey refrains from a comment. It is possible that he had been using the term for some time and De Quincey therefore did not—very unlike himself—realise the momentousness of its first appearance in print.

[8] In the introductory comments De Quincey discusses examples of perspective vision and the paradoxical phenomenon of not seeing what one sees. Although they make sense in this context as instances of the cognitive unconscious, they are arguably not representing exactly the same phenomena. The example of perspective vision may be viewed in the category of automaticity and the second example in the category of implicit perception.

[9] The distinction between implicit thought and automaticity is not always easy; cognitive psychologists and social psychologists disagree as to the prevalence of the concepts. Whereas unconscious mental contents—implicit thought for example—are being investigated in cognitive psychology alongside unconscious mental processes, social psychology has a stark

focus on processes. Automaticity is the prevalent theory in social psychology and accounts for almost all social interactions. Bargh and Morsella propose an "automatic perception-behavior link" (76), which determines "most of a person's everyday life" (Bargh and Chartrand 462). In this theory, behaviour is determined by the stimulus environment and conscious or controlled processes only occupy a marginal role as opposed to automatic processes: "the entire environment-perception-behavior sequence is automatic, with no role played by conscious choice in producing the behaviour" (Bargh and Chartrand 466). Cognitive psychologists agree, on the one hand, that "automatic processes play some role, under some conditions, in social cognition and behaviour," but on the other hand, they are critical of a theory that "permits us to bypass the will." Accordingly, cognitive psychologists "have maintained a distinction between automatic and controlled [i.e. conscious] processes" (Kihlstrom, "Automaticity" 164, 173, 159) and critically investigate a wider range of implicit processes and contents.

[10] Their examples discuss two-dimensional drawings. However, they clarify that eventually "all images end up entering our retinas as two-dimensional images" (Shepard and Levitin 506).

[11] It is worth noting that in the formulation of the discrepancy between the subconscious and the conscious recognition of style, De Quincey highlights the latter with italics whereas the former goes, once more, unnoticed.

[12] Dryden's hexastich discussed in the article:

> Three poets, in three distant ages born,
>
> Greece, Italy, and England did adorn.
>
> The first, in loftiness of thought surpassed;
>
> The next, in majesty; in both, the last.

The force of nature could no farther go;

To make a third, she joined the former two.

[13] Nineteenth-century physiologist Thomas Laycock—similar to De Quincey and cognitive psychologists—observes that "the impression is one thing, and the change induced in the sensory ganglia another—the two being as distinct as cause and effect; … the impressions may reach the ganglia, and the changes may be induced by them, yet the latter may not become objects of consciousness, *as sensations*" ("Sleep" 463–4). De Quincey's example of the funeral service and Laycock's version of the same phenomenon illustrate that often implicit perception seems to go hand in hand with implicit memory because the effects of implicit perception can become manifest only much later, which implies that some kind of memory effect plays into it. Kihlstrom specifies the distinction according to the awareness or the lack thereof during the perceptive act: "in implicit memory the subject is aware of the prime when it is presented but subsequently forgets it; in implicit perception the subject is never aware of the prime at all" ("Unconscious" 179). While this differentiation makes sense and is necessary on an experimental basis, authors like De Quincey remind us that the actual lived experience is probably more complex than current experimental research is able to define it.

[14] In isolation, De Quincey's punning sentence, "He [man] does not know that he has seen (and therefore *quoad* his consciousness has *not* seen) that which he *has* seen every day of his life" ("K" 151), concisely states the visual phenomena discussed here. It closely mirrors Kihlstrom and his colleagues' description of implicit perception: "the subjects are perceiving yet they are unaware of what they are perceiving" (Kihlstrom, Mulvaney, Tobias, and Tobis 34). In the context of "On the Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth," however, it clearly pertains to automaticity.

[15] There is no other source that sheds more light on Margaret and Florence's concerns. Why De Quincey felt the need to return to the issue in 1856 can therefore not be known.

CHAPTER THREE: Style and the Revelatory Power of Language

[1] "Reflections on Language and Mind," 290.

[2] For discussions of De Quincey's theory of literature, see for example Bate; Burwick, *Knowledge*; Devlin; Fulford, "De Quincey's Literature of Power;" McGrath; Proctor; and Snyder.

[3] Terminologically De Quincey moves from the radical opposition between "literature" and "anti-literature" (*WTDQ* 3: 71) in "On Languages," which is part of his "Letters to a Young Man whose Education has been Neglected" series, to "a better definition of literature, as in a sharper distinction of the two functions which it fulfills" (*WTDQ* 16: 336) in "The Works of Alexander Pope." In the later essay De Quincey points out that knowledge and power "may blend and often *do* so" (*WTDQ* 16: 336). In McGrath's terms, literature in De Quincey's discussions of the term often fulfils two functions simultaneously but to varying degrees: "Every literary text is thus an economy of knowledge and power" (McGrath 847). It is therefore questionable in how far the difference in phrasing reflects a difference of concepts as, for example, Bate argues. The first mention of "literature of *knowledge*" and "literature of *power*" (*WTDQ* 3: 369) is in a letter to John Wilson dated around a year before the publication of "On Languages." Given the initial terminology in the letter to John Wilson to which he returns in the 1848 article on Pope, conceptually the two distinctions do not seem to differ as much as Bate argues.

[4] Proctor's *Thomas De Quincey's Theory of Literature* shows the difficulty of integrating De Quincey's comments on style in an encompassing theory. It remains an incomplete and contradictory picture if one does not want to stretch the interpretation of certain passages so

they correspond to others. Although Proctor is aware of this, at times he still attempts to do exactly that and combines De Quincey's comments on style with his theory of literature, (192, 212). Despite some caution, Proctor argues that "it would seem that we would be justified in saying that the function of style … is either knowledge or power" (209), indicating an unassertive tenacity to read all of De Quincey's comments on prose writing as one system and acknowledging at the same time the disputable nature of his argument with the double conditional. René Wellek's assessment is unforgiving. He claims that De Quincey "was, on critical questions, a strictly occasional writer who wrote, over a long period of years, miscellaneous articles with specific purposes, in special moods, with little unity beyond that of his temperament and style" (249). The latter point is not entirely false; however, Wellek also bases his severe criticism on the assumption that De Quincey's collected commentaries on prose composition should be taken as a coherent whole. Lois Peters Agnew corrects these views. She presents De Quincey's theories of rhetoric and style within the larger context of "British rhetorical history" and believes that his "fusion of rhetoric and Romanticism" is a valuable contribution, not despite but because of their lack of unity and their "unresolved conflicts" (1, 4, 141).

[5] The choice of terminology and the leading up through this passage can arguably be considered an instance of "organology" itself. De Quincey skips back and forth between definitions and examples of mechanology and organology. He keeps adding and modifying both alternatively, as if each step in the differentiation has to be accomplished through expression before the next one can be taken, until he can finally present the terminology he deems appropriate: "*organology*" and "*mechanology*."

[6] Just as power and knowledge "may blend and often *do* so" (*WTDQ* 16: 336) in De Quincey's discussion of literature, organology and mechanology are not two strictly separated modes of style.

[7] In the 1856 version of the *Confessions*, De Quincey exchanges the term "science" (*C* 50) with "philosophic speculation" (*WTDQ* 2: 228), which arguably reflects the changing understanding of the term in the second half of the century.

[8] Proctor argues that De Quincey fails to make a clear distinction between two modes of subjectivity, namely "the subjectivity of discursive thinking and the subjectivity of individual feeling" (208). He admits that the latter could only be a function of the former but insists that the distinction is relevant for a coherent theory. This is where his attempt fails, though, and not only in respect to subjectivity. The urgency to bring everything within the scope of one theory with a fixed terminology, which was arguably not De Quincey's aim and which is forestalled for different reasons, invalidates some of Proctor's claims. Since a coherent theory is not the aim here, this distinction is not vital at this point.

[9] "On the Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth" illustrates that unconscious thought can reach consciousness without the intermediate step of expression, too. It seems that language plays a larger role in the emotional realisation as opposed to the ideational realisation.

[10] Clark also touches on the subject of revisions and argues that the final shape of a text "does not spring fully developed from inner cogitations. Instead, it is the product of a sustained and iterated sequence of *interactions* between my brain and a variety of external props" (173), i.e. drafts, notes and the like.

[11] Morrison argues the same case and points out that De Quincey "adopts a similar strategy in 'The Mail-Coach,' though on a far more elaborate scale" (*Confessions* xxviii) to disentangle the involute of the collision he witnessed.

[12] Samuel Warren gives an account of a dinner in 1827, at which De Quincey expounded the same opinion on this issue:

> "Is such a thing as *forgetting* possible to the human mind?" asked Mr De Quincey—"Does the mind ever actually lose anything for ever? Is not every impression it has once received reproducible? How often a thing is suddenly recollected that had happened many, many years before, but never been thought of since till that moment!—Possibly a suddenly-developed power of recollecting every act of a man's life may constitute the Great Book to be opened before him in the judgment day." (497)

[13] It is important to note here that this disclosure through language does not entail the notion of dream interpretation, as I argue in chapter six. In this respect, the dream of Levana is further special because it actually originates in De Quincey's conscious musings (see pp. 226-27).

[14] This essay is furthermore exemplary of the importance De Quincey attributes to revisions. Morrison stresses that De Quincey excessively revised this essay: "The extant manuscript material provides remarkable evidence of how meticulously he laboured at the process of revision" (*WTDQ* 16: 403). The comment on "crownéd" shows that he—at least partly—did it to ensure the rhythm of his prose.

[15] De Quincey is drawing on his earlier observations that the Lake dialect is based on Danish, a point he first made in articles forthe *Westmoreland Gazette* between 13 November 1819 and 8 January 1820. Particularly "all the *words* peculiar to the Lake District, at least, and most of the names attached to imperishable objects (as mountains, lakes, tarns, etc.) are pure Danish" (*WTDQ* 1: 294). Apart from the proper names of "the ancient features of the scenery" (*WTDQ* 1: 307), this also includes the "*Appellatives* of topography (i.e. the general

terms of classification under which we arrange the various elements of natural scenery)" (*WTDQ* 1: 308). All these names have grown out of the centuries-old associations and "impressions" of people living in this region.

CHAPTER FOUR: Animal Magnetism, Physiology, and the Embodied Unconscious

[1] "Further Researches into the Functions of the Brain," 183.

[2] Unless otherwise stated, *physiology* refers to the functioning of the nervous system and the brain.

[3] Lawrence eventually lost his position at the Royal College of Surgeons due to the unapologetic materialism in his lectures that were published in 1816. See Ruston, *Shelley and Vitality* for a detailed account of the controversy.

[4] I use *scientist* to include natural philosophers and men of science despite the danger of anachronism. Whereas the natural philosopher or man of science around 1800 engaged in various kinds of disciplines across boundaries that did not even exist yet, the scientist that emerged in the nineteenth century grew more and more specialised. The coinage of *scientist* by William Whewell in 1833 accounts for this change. The problem remains to some extent even after 1833 because the boundaries of the word *scientist* were not properly established until well into the second half of the century.

[5] The close connections between Coleridge, Wordsworth, Keats, and Shelley with various natural philosophers or scientists has received considerable attention in the last years and strongly influenced the recent critical reception of their literary works. See for ex. Richardson, *British*; Robertson; and Ruston, *Shelley*.

[6] "principe agissant sur les nerfs"

[7] "thierischen Körper"

[8] "Diese Eigenschaft des animalischen Körpers … nannte ich *gravitatem* oder *magnetismum animalem*."

[9] "Harmonie der Nerven"

[10] "l'objet que je traite, échappe à l'expression positive;" "un sixieme sens *artificiel*"

[11] Gauld only mentions that "it received a long, and not wholly unfavourable, review in the *Quarterly Review*, 1838, Vol. 61. pp. 273-301" (*History* 215).

[12] See chapter three in Winter, *Mesmerized* for an account of Elliotson's experiments and the ensuing controversy.

[13] The *OED* features this book as the first known instance of the term. There was at least one more book nineteen years prior that already featured *psychophysiology* in its title. Various magazines of the 1820s refer to Edward Smith Pearson's *General Principles of Psycho-Physiology* (1820). The term seems not to have been widely used for another one or two decades, though.

[14] Priestley paid for his outspoken views with exile in America. This was mainly due to his political convictions. However, his materialist publications played a crucial role in the formation of the fierce opposition he faced at home.

[15] "tous les phénomènes intellectuels sont basés sur le cerveau"

[16] "Quels que soient le nombre et la diversité des phénomènes qui appartiennent à l'intelligence de l'homme, quelque différens qu'ils paraissent des autres phénomènes de la vie, et quoiqu'ils soient évidemment sous la dépendance de l'âme, il est indispensable de les considérer comme le résultat de l'action du cerveau, et de ne les distinguer ainsi en aucune manière des autres phénomènes qui dépendent des actions d'organe."

[17] Publishing his book in a series entitled "The Bridgewater Treatises on the Power Wisdom and Goodness of God as Manifested in the Creation," commissioned by the "well-

meaning 8th Earl of Bridgewater" (Holmes 451), might arguably account for Roget's decided anti-materialist creed. Just a year before Roget's *Animal and Vegetable Physiology*, however, Bell also published a book in this series (*The Hand: Its Mechanism and Vital Endowments as Evincing Design* [1833]), despite his opposite belief in the connection between brain and mind. The issues concerning religion, materialism, and vitalism are not as straight-forward as they might seem and defy clear-cut distinctions as, in fact, it is the case with De Quincey.

[18] A diary entry dated 1841 shows that he had no particular religious belief to prevent him from thinking freely about the implications of physiological processes on the mind: "In religion I am still undecided except that I hope by the blessing of the God of my fathers to do good while I live" (qtd. in Cope 175). The reference to "the God of my fathers," which implies that he had no God of his own, and the wish to do well in this life rather than aspiring to a place in the extramundane realm after death, illustrate that he was free of religious constraints in his physiological work. Commentators agree that his exposure to the tradition of *Naturphilosophie* during his time in Germany was formative in his conviction that the body and the soul are coextensive rather than separate (Clarke and Jacyna 141; Danziger 124; Leff), a view that can also be found in the works of English materialists such as Priestley.

[19] See the appendix in volume two of Laycock's *Mind and Brain* for his claim for precedence.

[20] There seems to be some confusion about the date of publication of this edition: Hearnshaw and Danziger say that it was 1852 (Hearnshaw, *History* 19; Danziger 121). Winter and various entries in the online Worldcat library catalogue suggest 1853 (Winter, "Construction" 41). Vanessa L. Ryan, oddly enough, even dates the fourth edition 1854 ("Reading" 626n; *Thinking* 17).

[21] See *Mind and Brain* (1: 160-80, 2: 35-45).

[22] This is very similar to De Quincey's argument about the impossibility of forgetting.

[23] Lindop also argues that Nichol's research in astronomy and E. L. Lushington's in Greek literature and palaeography had an immediate impact on some of De Quincey's most memorable passages in *Suspiria*.

[24] Despite the friendship, Thomas Hamilton "On one occasion … indiscreetly discussed De Quincey's hardships with Dora Wordsworth, whose longstanding antipathy now approached callousness" (*Biography* 279).

[25] The fact that De Quincey's library contained a copy of Hamilton's lectures (Nisbet 45), which was published in the year De Quincey died, suggests that De Quincey's interest in Hamilton's ideas was unabated or that he was still in touch with someone of the Hamiltons.

[26] De Quincey tried to convince Southey to become a contributor to Gillies's new magazine, *The Foreign Quarterly Review*. De Quincey himself, Hamilton and Colquhoun were all confirmed contributors. Interestingly enough, Southey was the only one who actually published something in *The Foreign Quarterly Review*, a single article in the first issue, July 1827.

[27] The only years around that time, in which 23 December was a Sunday, are 1827, 1832, and 1838.

[28] From the auction list containing De Quincey's books that were sold after his death, we know that he also owned a copy of Colquhoun's 1836 publication *Isis Revelata: An Inquiry into the Origin, Progress, and the Present State of Animal Magnetism* (Nisbet 40).

[29] The letter is quoted by one of Chambers's daughters, Eliza Priestley (58–9). Although the letter does not indicate the year of composition, De Quincey's mention of the birth of his grandchild temporally situates it after September 1854.

CHAPTER FIVE: Mesmeric and Opium-Induced States of Mind

[1] "Animal Magnetism," 460.

[2] "En vérité, ceux qui s'acharnent contre le Magnétisme ont bien tort; car s'il n'est pas vrai, il est au moins bien plaisant."

[3] This article becomes even more interesting in the present context because the fierce postscript was written by De Quincey's close friend John Wilson.

[4] De Quincey discusses this controversy in various essays. He was especially interested in defending the compatibility of deep time with the scripture. See for example "Age of the Earth," a translation of Kant's "Die Frage, ob die Erde veralte, physicalisch erwogen," which was published in *Tait's* only two months before "Animal Magnetism." Lord Rosse's insights into the nature and expansion of the Orion Nebula, which were popularised by De Quincey's friend John Pringle Nichol, further indicated that the biblical account of time cannot be taken literally and questioned the centrality of humankind, which De Quincey discusses in "System of the Heavens as revealed by Lord Rosse's Telescopes" (*Tait's* 1846). De Quincey repeatedly questioned literal readings of the Bible to make space for science, rather than the other way around. In a "Postscript" to the article on the Orion Nebula, De Quincey even "becomes afraid that some readers may give such an interpretation to a few playful expressions upon the age of our earth, &c., as to class him with those whose geology, cosmology, &c., for purposes of attack, or insinuation against the Scriptures" (*WTDQ* 15: 417).

[5] The editors of *The Works of Thomas De Quincey* note that "De Quincey presumably refers to the fact that on Columbus's first voyage to America (3 August 1492 to 15 March 1493) there were sometimes marked variations in the readings of the compasses, though these variations do not seem to have been associated with any 'critical point' in the journey"

(*WTDQ* 9: 578n39). These variations were not due to changes in the magnetic field of the earth as De Quincey suggests. They stemmed from the wrong assumption that the position of the northern pole star, which Columbus used as a control point, is fixed, while it actually rotates around the celestial pole.

[6] After all, it was Mesmer, who helped dispel demons, ghosts and witches when he explained Gassner's practice of exorcisms in material terms. Incidentally, thirty-four years after De Quincey's and Lyell's scientific vindication of animal magnetism and uniformitarian theories of geological transformation respectively, Laycock opens an essay on his theory of reflex action of the brain with the same trope:

> It is this ignorance as to their nature and origin which infects the theories constructed to explain them with mysticism; for the word mystic, although in its primary meaning synonymous with mysterious, is now practically used to indicate, in science, something hidden or "occult" as to cause, and distinct from ordinary phenomena—in religion, something sacredly remote from human knowledge and comprehension. The occult in science is often, for obvious reasons, conjoined with the mystic in religion. The cerebro-mental condition of mystics of all sorts and degrees belongs to that section of our new chapter which is devoted to medical psychology; it is the so-called facts of the mysticisms that we have to examine, in their relations to the influence of the nervous system and *vis nervosa* in nutrition, and to the vital powers. ("Contributions" 187)

[7] See appendix B for Colquhoun's and De Quincey's exact descriptions of these stages.

[8] In a footnote De Quincey briefly addresses the claim that (non-medical) patients can prescribe their own medical treatment in this stage of mesmerism, which he deems the only

untrustworthy point in the French report. He cogently explains that the patients "which, no doubt, had sometimes been discussed in their presence by medical attendants, or which, at all events, having been often administered to themselves, and recurred to by name in conversation with all about them, could not but have left upon their memories materials sufficient for the purpose of self-prescription" ("AM" 370). The example De Quincey mentions reflects the cognitive category of implicit memory, which is commonly observed in hypnotic states. People are able to remember things they do not usually recollect in the normal waking state. Hamilton and Laycock provide similar examples and De Quincey's account of the palimpsest heavily relies on these effects of implicit memory.

[9] Dove organised the first public demonstrations of animal magnetism in Scotland in 1839 (W. Lang 9; Gauld, *History* 216).

CHAPTER SIX: The Brain-Mind in the *Confessions*, *Suspiria*, and Literary Criticism

[1] "On the Present Stage of the English Language," *WTDQ*, 17: 67.

[2] Given that De Quincey lived to 74 despite the ocean of opium he consumed, he seems to have been harder than a coffin nail. However, even before he became an opium-eater, he had a frail constitution and fought against recurrent bodily pains. While opium assuaged the physical pains at certain times, his large appetite for it eventually rendered them more acute and, at times, unbearable.

[3] The passage has been adapted from the original manuscript transcription in *The Works of Thomas De Quincey*: "A <g> vast predominance of *contempl*$^{n.}$ {↗ varied} with only so much of *action* as the feelings may {↗ prompt} by way of relief and invigor$^{n.}$ to y^{e} <p> faculty of contempl$^{n.}$" (*WTDQ* 1: 73).

[4] "quelques grains d'opium suffisent déjà pour nous démontrer que dans cette vie la volonté et la pensée sont inséparables de leurs conditions matérielles"

Julien Offray de La Mettrie made a similar claim sixty years earlier (c.f. Richardson, "Unconscious" 356) and so did Erasmus Darwin in *Zoonomia*.

[5] At some point in 1842, De Quincey's constipation was so bad that the had to ask Blackwood to provide him with laxatives. They made De Quincey's situation much better initially, "though soon the laxatives began to work so well that he had the opposite problem" (*Biography* 325), which De Quincey describes with both gravity and humour: "In the whole system of houses, to which this house is attached, there exists but one *templum Cloacinae*. Now imagine the fiend driving a man thither thro' 8 and 10 hours successively. Such a man becomes himself a public nuisance, and is in some danger of being removed by assassination" (qtd. in *Biography* 325).

[6] See Richardson's "Romanticism, the Unconscious, and the Brain" and Lavie and Hobson's "Origin of Dreams" for earlier scientific texts that discuss the role of the active brain in dreams.

[7] De Quincey repeats this point in *Suspiria*: "The faculty of shaping images in the distance out of slight elements, and grouping them after the yearnings of the heart, *aided by a slight defect in my eyes*, grew upon me at this time" (*S* 148 emphasis added).

[8] Humphry Davy, known for his nitrous oxide experiments in which Coleridge and Southey participated, for example, holds that sensations and ideas depend on "irritable fibres" and suggests that "irritability might be considered as a chemical change" (qtd. in Robertson 93).

[9] Even Freud acknowledges this, arguing that defining dreams as a "physical process" turns them into "something wholly insusceptible of interpretation" (Freud 4:).

[10] The *OED* defines palimpsest as a "parchment or other writing surface on which the original text has been effaced or partially erased, and then overwritten by another; a

manuscript in which later writing has been superimposed on earlier (effaced) writing." De Quincey's analogy is based on the possibility of recovering earlier, only partially erased writings, which became possible in the nineteenth century by chemical means.

[11] De Quincey is probably euphemising things to some extent here. In all likelihood, the number of opium crises he went through is higher. Similarly, his account of the physical exercise must be taken with some caution. Even if De Quincey may be "wandering" a little here, the 1844 crisis and the need of physical exercise are true.

[12] The idea of organization goes at least back to La Mettrie (see Richardson, "Unconscious" 356) and is present in the work of Joseph Priestley, Erasmus Darwin, John Thelwall, William Lawrence, Charles Bell, Robert Chambers, and Thomas Laycock to name but a few. Thelwall applied it in 1793 to explain how a material substance, including the organic human body, could acquire life. He defines "a perfect organization of the animal substance" (12) as the prerequisite for life, and "Specific Organization" as "That perfect harmony of organized parts, by which the animal frame is rendered so far susceptible of the proper stimuli, as to have its function, or any of them, induced upon such stimuli being applied" (33). The notion of the organisation was subsequently applied to the nervous system and the brain, and became one defining principle of mental action. Bell considers the "organized body" (*Anatomy* 82) as the connection between the spirit and the material world. Chambers later argues brain-specifically that the superiority of human intelligence as opposed to that of monkeys is due to the "superior mental organization (a brain five times heavier)" (320). Finally, Laycock's elaboration of his own earlier research was published under the title *Mind and Brain: or, the Correlations of Consciousness and Organisation*. De Quincey occasionally refers to the role of organisation in mental phenomena. In *Confessions* he describes the effect of opium on "the mental faculties" as introducing "the most exquisite

order, legislation, and harmony" (*WTDQ* 2: 44). Animal magnetism likewise creates "an organization the most exquisite" (*WTDQ* 9: 369) between the bodily organs.

[13] Original transcription: "Now, underst[d] how in ‹cal› some nervous derangements this horror really takes place. Some things that had sunk into utter forgetfulness, others that had faded in‹to› visionary power—all rise as gory phantoms from the dust" (*WTDQ* 15: 584).

[14] See for example John Hayden and Duncan Wu for Hartley's influence on Wordsworth.

[15] Alluding to Hartley's vibratiuncles, De Quincey also coined the playful term *passiuncles* in connection to people who are not "capable of great passions" (*WTDQ* 10: 45).

[16] Additionally, Hartley's associationism was almost the only scientific context considered in literary criticism for several decades. As a result some words cause distinctly Hartleyan associations, as it were, in the critics' mind. Even if the recent critical "revaluation of Romantic-era brain science" has partly replaced the "pseudo-scientific garden of Hartleyan vibratiuncles" (Richardson, "Reimagining" 387), it still occupies a prominent position in literary criticism, a position that it does not have in Laycock's theories.

[17] In "Sketches of Life and Manners [February 1841]," De Quincey uses a similar phrase to describe the causes of his depression: "spirits radically vitiated, chiefly through the direct mechanical depression caused by one important organ deranged; and, secondly, by a reflex effect of depression through my own thoughts, in estimating my prospects" (*WTDQ* 11: 290). While the effects of the "important organ," the digestive tract, are the main cause for his low spirits, a "reflex effect" activated by the sheer thought of his future prospects causes "ideagenous changes" ("Reflex" 303) and further deepens his depression.

EPILOGUE

[1] "Thomas de Quincey."

[2] "einen nicht zu überschätzenden"

[3] See Vanessa L. Ryan, *Thinking without Thinking*, and Jenny Bourne Taylor, "Obscure Recesses: Locating the Victorian Unconscious."

[4] "Psychology" is listed in the eighth edition, too, but simply refers to the entry on "Metaphysics."

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