

Introduction

It is in one of Henry James's less well known short stories that the modern incarnation of the ghost as a representation of psychological haunting truly comes of age. 'The Friends of the Friends' (1896) illustrates so many of the facets of how ghost-seeing became something so psychologically ghostly in the nineteenth century that it can be considered a prime example of the underlying thesis of this study: that the ghosts which really haunt us today should be considered as spectres of the self, ghosts which are less real, and at the same time more real, than the type of traditional, restless ghosts that we read about in Homer's *Odyssey* or watch on popular television shows such as *Most Haunted*.

'The Friends of the Friends' relates the narrative of a lady who discovers that both her female friend and her fiancé have had a supernatural experience known to late-Victorian contemporaries as a 'crisis apparition'. In the case of the friend, we are told that she had a vision of her father's ghost while in a foreign town and soon received a telegram of confirmation that he had unexpectedly died in England, hundreds of miles away, at the exact moment of her experience. As for the fiancé, at a similar time, he had been studying in Oxford when,

Coming back into his room while it was still distinct daylight, he found his mother standing there as if her eyes had been fixed on the door. He had had a letter from her that morning out of Wales, where she was staying with her father. At the sight of him, she smiled with extraordinary radiance and extended her arms to him, and then as he sprang forward and joyfully opened his own, she vanished from the place. He wrote to her that night, telling her what had happened; the letter had been carefully preserved. The next morning, he heard of her death.¹

Touched by this curious coincidence, the lady resolves to arrange a meeting between these two ghost-seers. It is the bitter melancholy of James's story that such a meeting of minds never takes place, 'as meetings are commonly understood'.²

¹ Henry James, *Ghost Stories of Henry James* (Ware, 2001), p.154.

² *Ibid.*

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Over the years, due to a series of accidents and bad luck, the friend and the fiancé somehow never manage to meet. For the lady, this situation becomes somewhat perverse given that she herself sees her fiancé daily and her friend frequently, and that both parties have expressed an interest in making each other's acquaintance. What makes the situation even more farcical is the fact that both of their 'sets' were strongly linked through friends of friends. The lady begins to suspect an inevitable train of events at work, linked to the shared supernatural perception of the non-friends:

one couldn't help feeling that the joke had made the situation serious, had produced on the part of each a consciousness, an awkwardness, a positive dread of the last accident of all, the only one with any freshness left, the accident that *would* bring them together.³

On the one occasion when a definite rendezvous had been arranged, the lady sabotaged the meeting through a fit of jealousy, and yet, she notes a sense of relief in her friend at the news of the fiancé's non-appearance. That night, as the friend dies suddenly of a latent heart complaint, the fiancé finally sees her for the first time. He is shocked to learn of her death the next day for as he explains to the narrator, "I saw her living. I saw her to speak to her. I saw her as I see you now."⁴ As the couple drifts apart the lady realises that her fiancé is constantly visited by the ghost of her friend, with whom he is in love, an 'inconceivable communion'⁵ which is seemingly consummated when the man takes his own life some years later.

Are we to take these two characters as doubles of each other, and their eventual meeting an integration of separate centres of self? As ghost-seers are they antipathetic in some sort of cosmic sense? Or is the author reflecting on the spectral nature of identity? What is certain, however, is that James's story echoes the experience of thousands of ordinary, sane and unimaginative people who saw ghosts and hallucinations in nineteenth-century Britain (as we shall see, one survey conducted a few years before James's story was published estimated the figure to be almost 10 per cent of the population). The type of ghosts which predominated were precisely the crisis-apparitions that appeared in 'The Friends of the Friends'; psychical phenomena that may or may not have been subjective hallucinations, but which affected people more than any ghost of popular culture, with its clanging chains and accusing glare, could ever do. This study is therefore concerned with the type of ghost

³ *Ibid.*, p.157. ⁴ *Ibid.*, p.164. ⁵ *Ibid.*, p.174.

that modern investigators tended to be the most interested in – ghosts that were classified as purposeless, in that they rarely spoke, exhibited agency or requested action on their behalf. Yet it was this type of ghost which became the standard self-representation of the death of the other, a haunting development which James articulates. In the Victorian era, with a reliable postal service and telegraph system connecting the world, news of the death of loved ones could become swiftly known and the intervention of such epistolary confirmations of ghost-seeing served to further accentuate the uncanny nature of modern communication and notions of community. The instantaneous awareness of death that ghost-seeing provided points towards the existence of a ghost-haunted psyche which can supply us with a framework with which to understand why James's 'inconceivable communion' between ghosts and ghost-seers made sense to huge numbers of believers and witnesses in an age dominated by scepticism and loss of faith. At the same time, through looking at inter-related discourses, I want to show how interpreting ghosts as if they were 'the stuff of dreams' directly led to developments in our understanding of how this haunted mind manifested itself. Despite the fact that thinking about ghost-seeing embraced areas of psychological importance from psychopathology to dream-theory, this aspect of the history of ideas has been relatively neglected. Combining these varieties of ghost-seeing experience in one study, I hope that this approach has the cumulative effect of making space for the idea of a spectral self – a subjectivity that was conflicted, hemispheric and liable to hallucinations at any given moment; a mind that was haunted by death, by the past, by fixed ideas; a consciousness frightened by its own existence; and an emotional apparatus seemingly hard-wired to see apparitions of the dead.

'Neither the sun nor death can be looked at steadily.'⁶

Hélène Cixous notes: 'The Ghost is the fiction of our relationship to death, concretized by the specter in literature.'⁷ *Spectres of the Self* focuses on and magnifies this relationship through an examination of several varieties of ghost-seeing experience between 1750 and 1920, primarily as exhibited in English culture but with forays into other Western contexts. However, such historical research is inherently problematic for the ghost is, as has been written about death, an 'incessantly receding,

⁶ François de La Rochefoucauld, *Maxims*, trans. Leonard Tancock (Harmondsworth, 1959), p.40.

⁷ Hélène Cixous, 'Fiction and Its Phantasms: A Reading of Freud's *Das Unheimliche* (The "Uncanny")', *New Literary History* 7:3 (1976), 542.

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ungraspable signified, always pointing to other signifiers, other means of representing what finally is just absent'.⁸ Even though death can be approached, it can never be experienced or authentically expressed by the living.⁹ Ghost-seeing, however, is drenched in documentable experience and meaningful expressions of this experience, and this situation offers the historian of ideas unique opportunities to explore attitudes towards death, changing epistemological frameworks and the definitions of what is 'normal', 'scientific' or 'superstitious' in any given society. If we define death as that which is and yet cannot be experienced, then seeing ghosts may be looked upon as an experience in which the living come to encounter the haunting consciousness that they will some day die.

Trying to approach the cultural history of ghost-seeing is, as Daniel Cottom has noted of spiritualism, like 'trying to nail Jello to a tree'.¹⁰ *Spectres of the Self* is therefore selective in its content: the approach I have taken bypasses the many plebeian, religious and occult varieties of ghost-seeing experience in favour of varieties primarily sourced in English bourgeois culture and connected to each other through ideas, themes and debates which made the ghost a dynamic figure in the modern age. The chief aim has been to present an interdisciplinary study that re-evaluates, reconstructs and re-interprets aspects of modern thinking about the ghostly 'other world' that was *at the same time* part of the haunted world of subjective experience.

In part, this study represents a critical development of general histories of the ghost which, with their broadly chronological outlook, failed to present ghost-seeing as an experience that was both dynamic in its representations and metaphorical in its ontologies.¹¹ Owen Davies's recent study *The Haunted: A Social History of Ghosts* (2007) is to be welcomed for changing this situation. Davies is most concerned with purposeful and memorial ghosts and makes impressive use of English

⁸ Sarah Webster Goodwin and Elisabeth Bronfen, 'Introduction', in *Death and Representation*, ed. Sarah Webster Goodwin and Elisabeth Bronfen (Baltimore and London, 1993), p.4.

⁹ For a cross-section of positions on the 'impossibility' of death see Sigmund Freud, *Civilization, Society and Religion: 'Group Psychology', 'Civilization and its Discontents' and Other Works*, ed. James Strachey (Harmondsworth, 1991), p.77; Michael Holland, ed., *The Blanchot Reader* (Oxford, 1995), p.315.

¹⁰ Daniel Cottom, *Abyss of Reason: Cultural Movements, Revelations, and Betrayals* (Oxford, 1991), p.108.

¹¹ Ronald C. Finucane, *Ghosts: Appearances of the Dead and Cultural Transformation* (Amherst, 1996); Eric Maple, *The Realm of Ghosts* (London, 1964); P.G. Maxwell-Stuart, *Ghosts: A History of Phantoms, Ghouls, and Other Spirits of the Dead* (Stroud, 2006).

folklore and popular culture in his study.¹² In contradistinction, I wish to focus on the modern conception of the ghost as reflective of the haunted nature of the self, a conception that arose in the aftermath of the impact of the phantasmagoria in the late eighteenth century, and which was primarily approached in the psychiatry, psychology and psychical research of the nineteenth century. This study has also benefited from the boom in cultural studies of the supernatural, spiritualism and psychical research that, since Janet Oppenheim's path-breaking *The Other World: Spiritualism and Psychical Research in England, 1850–1914* (1985), have steadily built upon each other in a sophisticated manner at once attuned to the questions posed by psychological modernity and the uncertain place of the irrational and the occult in contemporary thought.¹³ Finally, although like Marcellus this study passes on the 'hauntological' buck so to speak, no critical research dealing with ghosts and ghost-seeing can afford to be unaware of Jacques Derrida's *Specters of Marx* (1993), the intellectual reverberations of which are still being felt in cultural studies.¹⁴ It is on the basis of this critical framework that the present study seeks to *grab* the figure of the ghost in a manner that has not hitherto been attempted. Such a project, however, necessarily demands clear definitions.

¹² Owen Davies, *The Haunted: A Social History of Ghosts* (Basingstoke, 2007), p.132.

¹³ Logie Barrow, *Independent Spirits: Spiritualism and English Plebeians, 1850–1910* (London, 1986); Diana Basham, *The Trial of Woman: Feminism and the Occult Sciences in Victorian Literature and Society* (Basingstoke, 1992); Gillian Bennett, *Traditions of Belief: Women and the Supernatural* (Harmondsworth, 1987); Peter Buse and Andrew Stott, eds, *Ghosts: Deconstruction, Psychoanalysis, History* (Basingstoke, 1999); Joy Dixon, *Divine Feminine: Theosophy and Feminism in England* (Baltimore and London, 2001); Roger Luckhurst, *The Invention of Telepathy, 1870–1901* (Oxford, 2002); Alex Owen, *The Place of Enchantment: British Occultism and the Culture of the Modern* (Chicago and London, 2004); Alex Owen, *The Darkened Room: Women, Power and Spiritualism in Late Nineteenth-century England* (London, 1989); Lynn L. Sharp, *Secular Spirituality: Reincarnation and Spiritism in Nineteenth-century France* (Lanham, 2006); Helen Sword, *Ghostwriting Modernism* (London and Ithaca, NY, 2002); Pamela Thurschwell, *Literature, Technology, and Magical Thinking, 1880–1920* (Cambridge, 2001); Marina Warner, *Phantasmagoria: Spirit Visions, Metaphors, and Media into the Twenty-first Century* (Oxford, 2006); Alison Winter, *Mesmerized: Powers of Mind in Victorian Britain* (Chicago and London, 1998). On the influence of Janet Oppenheim see Peter Mandler, Alex Owen, Seth Koven and Susan Pedersen, 'Cultural Histories of the Old and the New: Rereading the Work of Janet Oppenheim', *Victorian Studies* 41:1 (1997), 69–105.

¹⁴ Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (New York and London, 2006); Colin Davis, 'État Présent: Hauntology, Spectres and Phantoms', *French Studies* 59:3 (2005), 373–9; Michael Sprinker, ed., *Ghostly Demarcations: A Symposium on Jacques Derrida's 'Specters of Marx'* (London, 1999).

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First a caveat: despite the ghost-grabbing intentions of this study, such tactile themes do not explicitly concern me (even more so Charles Dickens's very physical threat to shoot any 'ghost' he encountered).¹⁵ It has been decided rather to observe from a critical distance (and via the framing media of commentators, sceptics and narrators) the representations of the ghost *seen* (or imagined to be seen). This decision has been made for several reasons. Firstly, this study demonstrates the strength of a particular sense-hierarchy – current in the nineteenth century, but firmly established by a train of thinkers stretching from John Locke back to Aristotle – that equated sight with knowledge, veracity and *evidence*, and which elevated the visual sense to the position of primary interpreter of the experienced world.¹⁶ As James Joyce later put it: 'Ineluctable modality of the visible: at least that if no more, thought through my eyes ... Shut your eyes and see.'¹⁷ Neither the advent of gaslight nor electric light could banish the ghost from the visual field for the ghost-sight had long been affirmed as being an *interior* visuality in both occultist and psychological discourses. For instance, the Swedish mystic Emanuel Swedenborg maintained that:

it is the interior vision which, through the eye, takes in those things which the eye sees, and not the eye itself, although it so appears. Hence also it may be seen, how much that man is involved in the fallacies of the senses, who believes

¹⁵ See Charles Dickens, Hesba Stretton, George Augustus Sala *et al.*, *The Haunted House* (London, 2002), p.viii. Of course the threat of physical action could work both ways when it came to confronting ghosts in the nineteenth century. The magician Stuart Cumberland recorded one such dangerous episode: 'At Boston, in America, a leading light of the spiritistic cause, one Dr Bliss, drew a gun on me for interfering with the smooth working of one of the most fraudulent séances I have ever attended. In the course of a violent struggle one of my assailants had his skull cracked and I got a dislocated ankle. For some time I lay in bed under very kindly medical supervision with the dislocated ankle reposing in a pillow cradle, during which period the medium and his associates bombarded me with notes written in red ink, in which the early close of my earthly career was predicted. The final note contained the rough drawing of a coffin – studded with red nails, by the by – with the explanation that this was the sort of box in which alone I should leave my hotel.' Stuart Cumberland, *That Other World: Personal Experiences of Mystics and Their Mysticism* (London, 1918), p.79.

¹⁶ See Marita Amm, 'Might and Magic, Lust and Language – The Eye as a Metaphor in Literature: Notes on the Hierarchy of the Senses', *Documenta Ophthalmologica* 101:3 (2000), 223–32; Stuart Clark, *Vanities of the Eye: Vision in Early Modern European Culture* (Oxford, 2007). See also Max Nordau's privileging of the 'distant senses'. Max Nordau, *Degeneration* (Lincoln, NE, and London, 1993), p.503. John Ruskin wrote that 'the greatest thing a human soul ever does in this world is to *see* something, and tell what is *saw* in a plain way ... To see clearly is poetry, prophecy, and religion, – all in one.' John Ruskin, *Modern Painters*: vol. III (Boston, MA, 1890), pp.330–1.

¹⁷ James Joyce, *Ulysses*, ed. Danis Rose (London, 1998), p.37.

that it is the eye that sees, when yet it is the sight of his spirit, which is interior sight, that sees through the eye.¹⁸

While the German physician Johann Heinrich Jung-Stilling argued:

By the word ‘vision’, I understand an appearance which a person sees, without any real object being there: it therefore only exists in the imagination, and is consequently a mere dream, which is, however, regarded by him that has it, as reality. Yet visions distinguish themselves from common dreams, in this, that they are connected, and are like the reality; as also, that a person may have them waking.¹⁹

Secondly, the visual sense played a central role in the emergence of notions of modernity as a haunted project, a theme that has been stressed at length by many major studies in recent years.²⁰ By following this trend this study does not seek to pronounce a new interpretation of modernity, but rather to advance some arguments and historical examples that show how ghost-seeing is contiguous with the idea of a mind that is haunted by itself and a subjectivity that is ghost-ridden. It is intended that the topics and themes chosen will complement and converse with studies in the nineteenth-century imagination, and drive home my underlying argument of the spectral self as the true ghost in the modern age. One especially choice passage from a commentator on ghost-seeing in 1845 can perhaps help introduce the type of intellectual and metaphorical toolkit that I want to use:

The ghost which we see (the nightmare, for instance) is not without us, but within; yet not in our innermost, which were possession. Our own phantasy projects the apparition into the outer world, wherein it illudes us like a magic-lantern image (for which reason also, the ghost is before you, turn which way you will); but that which mockingly thus, as spectre, appears to us from without, has in reality its site in the medial (not the central) region of our being;

¹⁸ Cited in George Bush, *Mesmer and Swedenborg: Or, the Relation of the Developments of Mesmerism to the Doctrines and Disclosures of Swedenborg*, 2nd edn (New York, 1847), p.112.

¹⁹ Johann Heinrich Jung-Stilling, *Theory of Pneumatology, in Reply to the Question, What Ought to Be Believed or Disbelieved Concerning Presentiments, Visions, and Apparitions, According to Nature, Reason, and Scripture*, trans. Samuel Jackson (London, 1834), p.224.

²⁰ Constance Classen, *The Color of Angels: Cosmology, Gender and the Aesthetic Imagination* (London and New York, 1998); Jonathan Crary, *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle and Modern Culture* (Cambridge, MA, and London, 2001); Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, MA, and London, 1990); Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-century French Thought* (Berkeley and London, 1993). See also Maggie Humm, *Modernist Women and Visual Cultures: Virginia Woolf, Vanessa Bell, Photography and Cinema* (Edinburgh, 2002); Catherine M. Soussloff, ‘The Turn to Visual Culture: On Visual Culture and Techniques of the Observer’, *Visual Anthropology Review* 12:1 (1996), 77–83.

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and the phantasy, behind it, is a lamp, and the outward sense is as a glass before it, whereby its image is thrown out, and appears, huge and threatening, on the wall of the phenomenal.²¹

Finally, it is the underlying contention of this study that the human encounter with the ghost can be most fully examined through the rhetorical use of the visual sense: the ghostly world, the voices in this study declaim, was perceived ‘through a glass, darkly’. While it would have been perhaps more apt to use the term ‘ghost-feeling’ in certain contexts, the sheer constitutive and rhetorical depth of the visualised imaginary gazumped any terminological rival to the over-arching descriptor ‘ghost-seeing’.

The phenomenological facts of ghost-seeing, it should be borne in mind, have never really changed.²² ghost-seeing experiences, on the contrary, constantly change due to their rootedness in certain socio-cultural environments that inform and map out how the existence of the supernatural world is framed, structured, dramatised, legitimised and de-legitimised, as the case may be.²³ I take the experience of ghosts to be a psychological phenomenon which constitutes, to use the concept of Wilhelm Dilthey, an incredibly rich *Kultursystem* that can be isolated in multiple overlapping, and sometimes clashing, contexts.²⁴ Pre-nineteenth-century varieties of ghost-seeing experience worthy of examination on this basis include the post-Reformation debates surrounding the issue of ghosts (interlaced with the interrogation of ghost-belief contained in William Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*); Daniel Defoe’s peculiar balancing-act of belief and scepticism played out in his supernatural trilogy *The Political History of the Devil* (1726), *A System of Magick* (1726) and *An Essay on the History and Reality of Apparitions* (1727); and the *spectacular* arrival of public/publicised ghost-seeing with the Cock Lane manifestations in London in 1762. While subjects such as these deserve, and continue to receive, significant scholarly attention, aside from Davies’s breakthrough social history, the lack of an inter-disciplinary approach to ghost-seeing experience in the historical disciplines is noticeable. However, it should be stressed that the period under examination in this study facilitates the approach taken more so than any other, for the nineteenth century witnessed, to a quite remarkable degree, the disciplinary overlapping of

²¹ Henry Ferris, ‘Of the Nightmare’, *Dublin University Magazine* 25 (1845), 40.

²² See Michael Winkelman, ‘Spirits as Human Nature and the Fundamental Structures of Consciousness’, in *From Shaman to Scientist: Essays on Humanity’s Search for Spirits*, ed. James Houran (Lanham, 2004), pp.59–96.

²³ See Geoffrey K. Nelson, *Spiritualism and Society* (London, 1969).

²⁴ H.A. Hodges, *The Philosophy of Wilhelm Dilthey* (London, 1952), p.177.

questions and problems – a situation that has come to characterise what it means to be ‘modern’.²⁵ An oft-quoted example of this epistemological condition is the observation that William James wrote psychology texts like a novelist while his brother Henry James wrote novels like a psychologist.²⁶ Such a contemporary anecdote neatly encapsulates the disciplinary blending that was taking place in the human sciences as streams of influence and counter-influence created a situation where the ghost-seeing culture of the modern period could emerge simultaneously in a variety of locations. By taking a multi-sided view of the subject and placing contrasting experiences alongside each other this investigation merely mirrors developments that were taking place in the investigative culture of the time.

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Modern spiritualism can be traced, by and large, to the dissemination and various adaptations of animal magnetism and mesmerism in the late eighteenth century.²⁷ As an Irish commentator put it: ‘Magnetism (animal) is the charm, the “open sesame”, at which the gates of the invisible world stand open.’²⁸ In 1788 the Société exégétique et philanthropique, a Swedenborgian society based in Stockholm, sought a rapprochement with the mesmerists of Strasbourg, on the basis that the somnambulist trances and spiritualism of the Swedenborgians could be accorded and synthesised with the discoveries of animal magnetism.²⁹ The origins of modern ghost-seeing as an *investigative* culture, however, can be traced back to the romantic psychology prevalent in German letters in the first decades of the nineteenth century.³⁰ It was in the

²⁵ See, for instance, the essays contained in Dorothy Ross, ed., *Modernist Impulses in the Human Sciences, 1870–1930* (Baltimore, 1994); Mark S. Micale, ed., *The Mind of Modernism: Medicine, Psychology, and the Cultural Arts in Europe and America, 1880–1940* (Stanford, 2004); Michael S. Roth, ed., *Rediscovering History: Culture, Politics, and the Psyche* (Stanford, 1994). See also Martin Halliwell, *Romantic Science and the Experience of Self: Transatlantic Crosscurrents from William James to Oliver Sacks* (Brookfield, 1999); Tim Armstrong, *Modernism: A Cultural History* (Cambridge, 2005), p.ix.

²⁶ See Eugene Taylor, ‘Oh Those Fabulous James Boys!’, *Psychology Today* 28:2 (1995), 58.

²⁷ In their turn, these phenomena drew much of their intellectual framework and pseudo-scientific impact from the occultist theories of the early modern period regarding sympathy, influence, magnetism, harmonial philosophy, fluidic transmission and so on. See Frank Podmore, *Modern Spiritualism: A History and Criticism*: vol. I (London, 1902), pp.44–50.

²⁸ Henry Ferris [pseud. ‘Irys Herfner’], ‘German Ghosts and Ghost-seers’, *Dublin University Magazine* 17 (1841), 37.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 76. See also Robert Darnton, *Mesmerism and the End of the Enlightenment in France* (Cambridge, MA, 1968), 67.

³⁰ Indeed, it was suggested that ‘Germany and the ghost-world are geographically contiguous regions.’ Ferris, ‘German Ghosts and Ghost-seers’, 36.

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writings of Jung-Stilling, Justinus Kerner and E.T.A. Hoffmann among others that a specific discursive mode emerged which bridged the divide between medical philosophy and romantic poetics and allowed for the international transmission of a subject-network that was termed ‘the Night Side of Nature’ (from the German *Nachtseite*) – that is, the world of the unconscious, prophetic dreams, second-sight, ghost-seeing and the supernatural in general.³¹ Kerner, a physician and lyrical poet, investigated a young ghost-seer named Friederike Hauffe from 1827 until her death in 1829 and sketched out the precincts of a dynamic ‘inner life’ made evident through magnetic sleep, or ‘sleep-waking’. Kerner’s account, *Die Seherin von Prevorst* (*The Seeress of Prevorst*) (1829) was hugely influential in formatting nineteenth-century ideas about the spirit-world and the ethereal body (*Nervengeist*) which may sometimes be seen by the living. Furthermore, the historian of psychology Henri Ellenberger later accorded Kerner a role in the ‘discovery’ of the unconscious, describing his investigations as ‘a milestone in the history of dynamic psychiatry’.³²

The English-language debt to this German romantic psycho-poetic tradition was made explicit with the translation of Kerner’s work by the English authoress Catherine Crowe in 1845 and its subsequent dissemination in America, Britain and Ireland.³³ Crowe was a hugely important figure in the emergence of modern ghost-seeing culture chiefly because of her relentless calls for society to turn its attention to the unexplained phenomena in its midst and investigate them in an objective manner. Crowe’s landmark book of 1848, *The Night Side of Nature; or Ghosts and Ghost-seers*, which went through sixteen editions in six years,³⁴ was a quasi-folkloric collection of supernatural narratives heavily drawn from German sources, rhetorically somewhere in between fact and fiction (or, as Neil Wilson terms it – ‘faction’)³⁵ and designed to bring to the notice of the public the *questionable* nature of ghost-seeing experience:

³¹ On this see Uwe Henrik Peters, *Studies in German Romantic Psychiatry: Justinus Kerner as a Psychiatric Practitioner, E.T.A. Hoffmann as a Psychiatric Theorist* (London, 1990).

³² Henri F. Ellenberger, *The Discovery of the Unconscious: The History and Evolution of Dynamic Psychiatry* (New York, 1970), p.79.

³³ This tradition had been notably present in the *Dublin University Magazine* where, between 1839 and 1851, Henry Ferris authored several articles and ghost stories with German settings and influences. See Richard Hayes, ‘“The Night Side of Nature”: Henry Ferris, Writing the Dark Gods of Silence’, in *Literature and the Supernatural: Essays for the Maynooth Bicentenary*, ed. Brian Cosgrove (Dublin, 1995), pp.42–70.

³⁴ Robert Dale Owen, *Footfalls on the Boundary of Another World: With Narrative Illustrations* (London, 1860), p.4.

³⁵ Neil Wilson, *Shadows in the Attic: A Guide to British Supernatural Fiction, 1820–1950* (Boston Spa and London, 2000), p.164.