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Cases in Physics

Canons for a science as physics are rather boring. It is the cases that makes both the experimentalist and theorists dream of new features of reality that are hiding in plain sight. The cases can be either a singularity, something that lies totally outside the canon, or just a deviation from the canon that can hint to a "hidden sector" in the canon. In the first case there is a need to build a brand new canon while in the second case a simple extension of the canon is sufficient.

There is a holistic side of human knowledge that asks all cases to be explained in the frame of one canon. Hence the cases are the ones that drive the existence of the canon. The Rutherford atom, quark colors are some of the cases where a new canon was required. On the other hand we are facing a variety of cases that might become in a short time part of the canon or even a new canon. Looking back in history and in today's present I will try to give an overview on how the cases are evolving into canons and then how these canons are radiating in other subjects that are more, or less, related to physics. The rise of probability, detection and the 'unity of design' between the 18th and the 19th centuries.

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The Rise of Probability, Detection and the 'Unity of Design' between the 18th and the 19th Centuries

In his seminal *The Emergence of Probability* (1975), Ian Hacking related the emergence of the concept of probability, in the 17th century, to the emergence of the concept of evidence or inductive evidence. According to the scholar, in the Renaissance the concept of evidence was associated with the testimony of an individual or with the authority of a written source, but the idea that objects could provide forms of evidence was not clearly stated until the *Logic* of Port Royal was published in 1662. This concept, which was a fundamental pre-requisite for the emergence of detection, started to circulate in the course of the 18th century thanks to a new epistemological attitude. As Hacking argued, this new attention for the "internal evidence of things" was first and foremost a child of the so-called "low sciences", such as alchemy, geology, astrology and medicine, while the "high sciences" - such as optics, astronomy and mechanics - aimed at achieving demonstration.

In my paper I intend to explore the cultural relevance of this new investigative paradigm - which focussed on the "internal evidence of things" - both in the nascent field of criminology, as is shown by the chapter Cesare Beccaria devoted to "Clues and forms of judgements" in *Of Crimes and Punishments* (1764), and in 18th-century literature, which provides occasional but fascinating examples of detection, such as a famous scene in Beaumarchais's *The Barber of Seville* (1775).

Moreover, I also intend to explore the influence the concept of "inductive evidence" had on the development of the so-called "unity of design" - a narrative technique that characterises the plots of various late 18th-century novels, where each component is strictly functional to the development of the plot, which thus has a strong internal coherence. This technique was theorised both by Horace Walpole - in his preface to the second edition (1765) of *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) - and by the English Jacobin writers, whose 'romans à thèse' had a political message to convey. Examples range from Thomas Holcroft's preface to *Alwyn* (1780) to William Godwin's 1832 preface to *Caleb Williams* (1794), where the author claimed he had conceived the plot of his novel starting from the

ending, that is to say according to an inductive process. This technique was subsequently praised by Poe in his “Philosophy of Composition” (1846), where Godwin is explicitly mentioned. Moreover, the Dupin trilogy testifies to Poe’s interest in the theory of probability, as is shown by “The Mystery of Marie Rogêt” (1842-3), where this theory bridges the gap between fact and fiction.

In conclusion, in my paper I will focus on the concepts of evidence and probability and on the role they played in the evolution of criminology and ‘criminography’ in order to argue that these apparently disparate cultural phenomena are actually multifarious aspects of an imposing ‘paradigm shift’ that took place in the conceptual framework of the modern age.

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Mesmerism: From an Ambiguous Physical and Medical Canon to Psychology

Mesmer, an Austrian doctor, in the second half of XVIII century tried to build a universal theory of magnetism able to account for many different phenomena both in the physical and in the biological world, including a general explanation of illness, and its cure. Mesmerism was attacked by the scientific establishment and mesmeric cures were declared a simple product of imagination. Nonetheless, mesmerism continued along the XIX century in different forms, opening the way for the studies on hypnotism, which had a far reaching importance for the beginning of modern psychology and the rise of psychoanalysis.

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Case, Experimental Sciences and Clinical Psychopathology

To play “roulette”, a game based on guessing where the little marble is going to drop on the spinning wheel, even for just one bet, is the least expensive way to lose money. According to probability theory, in this game the house keeps away only 1 out of 37 of the amount that should be given to the winner. In other words, if we compare roulette with other games of chance, the house edge is very low, as it ranges between 1.5% and 3%. And yet many people try and ruin themselves financially, by placing their chips on ‘rouge’ when the ball lands on ‘noir’ for ten consecutive times. Unfortunately, “roulette” has no memory of its own previous spins, therefore – once again according to the theory of probability – there is no reason to expect good winnings any more than anyone can deny that the sun rises every morning, or that a table might ‘fly’ through the window. The best way of playing “roulette” is to follow the advice of old ‘croupiers’, who recommend that one should wait for the little ball to stop on ‘rouge’ for thirty consecutive times (probability: less than $1 / 1.000.000.000$), before placing the lowest possible chip on ‘rouge’.

Over the last two centuries, experimental inductive sciences, such as physics, chemistry and physiology, have reached the same conclusion, after many experimental trials aiming at asking “questions” to nature: certainty is a failed enterprise, i.e. it is unachievable, whereas in deductive fields studies, for example logic and geometry, certainty is considered a successful enterprise, unless one makes a mortifying mistake, like arguing, apodictically, that “if all men are mortal and if Bill is mortal, then Bill (i.e. my dog) is a man”.

As regards clinical pathology, the argument is similar to that of the theory of probability as well as that of the experimental inductive sciences: namely there is no absolute certainty of finding a

correct diagnosis for a ‘case’ to be ‘banished’, even if the medical activity may be considered, much more than a scientific performance, an artistic one, in the sense of the Greek verb ‘poièò’. As for the idea of ‘canon’, it seems to me that such a notion is, quite unfortunately, rather distant from the notion of ‘case’ in modern pathology, unless one puts together these two notions into an artistic or a detective activity. The great Harold Bloom, in his book *The Western Canon* tries to collocate Sigmund Freud among the twenty-six best writers of all times. He puts Freud at the beginning of the so-called “Chaotic Age” and he saves the father of psychoanalysis in terms of a Shakespearian reading, albeit in my opinion with no great success.

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Mr Sherlock Holmes and Dr John Watson: interfacing science and fiction in the Sacred Canon

The cases of Sherlock Holmes form a particular kind of “canon” which lies midway between literature and science and between scientific and religious belief. The corpus of such “cases” has actually been labelled “the Canon” or “the Sacred Canon” by fans and scholars, and such a definition reflects its multi-layered nature. It is, in fact, a literary product, but its contents are based on scientific evidence and methodology; moreover, it has encouraged a common feeling of veneration and almost metaphysical expectation from the readers, not to mention the unprecedented production of apocryphal works.

I am convinced that Mr Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson do embody the true essence of a fruitful interface between science and fiction. Watson is a “doctor”, that is a scientist, while Holmes is simply called “mister”: he has no titles of any sort, being just an unofficial detective, and his importance lies in the fact that he provides the matter for narration. However, in the course of the 4 novels and 56 stories which form the Canon, we see a gradual role exchange: the doctor moves towards fiction (as the narrator of the stories), while mister Holmes moves towards science (as the inventor of a new branch, namely the “Science of Deduction”). While Watson represents *mythos* (he likes romance and chooses *affabulation* as his own style), Holmes embodies *logos* (his reasoning follows the scientific rules of *abduction*), and that accounts for the two of them being in constant contrast about the way of relating the cases.

By giving some examples from Arthur Conan Doyle’s texts, I shall try to make a comparative analysis of Watson and Holmes both on the ground of their specific function in the tales, and in the light of the following superb intuition by Stephen Hoffmann: “a doctor is in essence a literary critic”.

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Science, Numbers, Deductions and Predictability: A Cross Talk between Biometry and Biophysics

The availability of high-throughput data is posing, within a new conceptual framework, an old unsolved problem: the biological (genetic) determinants of an observed phenotypes. This is a classic challenge in biometry: what can we infer from observed quantitative measurements on the “hidden” causal factors? One of the widely used methods is the so called “structural and functional

relationships” that consists in the reconstruction of the network of interaction among these factors. I will discuss the feasibility of this approach for the discovery of “causal” relationships among variables in a biological and biophysical context as well as some extensions arising from “synthetic biology” experiments. Finally I will discuss some similarity among this approach and detective activities as the interpretation of signs and biological traces.

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Models and Reality, Some Considerations about Relativism in Sciences

The historical analysis of the inner developments of scientific theories seems to highlight the existence of theories, relating to a same topic or phenomenon, which are technically equivalent but are formulated in very different ways. Taking in account, as examples, the special relativity theory and the foundation geometry theories, we attempt to propose the epistemological thesis of relativism in sciences and the reasons for preferring a theory rather than another.

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The Detective Stories Paradigm from the Black Holes to Complexity Researches

In this communication I will propose a parallel between the modern research in relativistic astrophysics and for complex systems evolution founded on "scientific" paradigms, and the detective stories based on a sort of indications paradigm. But in the two cases how it is possible, if it is, to pass from indications to the proof, from the suspicion to the truth without any reasonable doubt?

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Pathology in London Streets: Cases in James Parkinson’s Essay on the Shaking Palsy (1817)

James Parkinson’s *Essay on the Shaking Palsy* (1817) is an intervention in the typology and naming of a cluster of symptoms. Prior to its publication, the abnormalities it identifies were thought to differently patterned, and to result from several medical conditions. In the *Essay*, Parkinson sets out six cases that manifest disorders of movement which he believes recur together and are caused by a single condition, which he calls the shaking palsy. Each case individually illustrates a part of the spectrum of disorders that characterizes this palsy, yet when summed together, the cases fail to encompass all the phenomena Parkinson claims typify the condition. What is particularly striking is that the *Essay* places descriptions of strangers from the streets – who are closely and individually observed – alongside those from his own clinical practice.’

Prior to *An Essay on The Shaking Palsy*, clinical case reports almost invariably arose from domestic, enclosed settings in which the sick were tended to and treated: private houses, inns, dispensaries, hospitals and apothecaries’ shops. In the *Essay*, three cases arise from observations

made of men in the street, two of whom are ‘casually met with’ and questioned, the third being a gentleman ‘only seen at a distance’. This talk will enquire into Parkinson’s attempt to forge canonical knowledge by combining a locus for the observation of the eccentric, ‘grotesque’ and marginal – represented by street life - with the more conventional clinical observational locus of an apothecary’s practice.

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Detective Fiction as the Paradise of the “Non-Hegemonic” Sciences

Well-known are the statements of the famous French forensic scientist, Edmond Locard (1877-1966), about the importance of Sherlock Holmes’ methods on the development of criminal investigation in real life. He even wrote an essay entitled “The police method of Sherlock Holmes”, where he stresses the importance of Holmes empiric attention to fingerprints, to almost invisible hair and to all kind of scraps of things left in the scene of the crime and which provide detectives with factual evidence.

In 1929, Régis Messac published the impressive and lengthy [extenso] book *Le “Detéctive Novel” et l’ Influence de la Pensée Scientifique*, where he engages in a detailed study on the relationship between the development of (positivistic) sciences and the emergence of the modern genre of detective fiction. Nevertheless, his definition of “detective fiction” is rather limited, since he only takes into account those narratives where investigation is based on deductive and logical methods.

In this paper, I intend to study the role of the non-hegemonic sciences in the detective methods (*i.e. not derived* from the Galileo’s mathematics paradigm, or what, in a happy formulation of Fernando Pessoa – dating from his earlier English fragments – we might call “Microsophie: The Science of the Minute” (as, for instance, graphology). In this sense, I follow Carlo Ginzburg theories about the “paradigma indiciário” (“evidence paradigm”), which emphasize the role of Medicine’s approach to clinical cases as a model for detective fiction and also the importance of “abduction”, instead of “deduction”. Therefore, I will focus mainly on the presence of Medicine and doctors (in literal and metaphoric sense) in this popular type of narratives.

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Out of the Case

In the world of Sherlock Holmes, “case” means “a question or problem, a matter”, or, even better, “a situation that requires investigation”. But it can also mean “(pulled) out of the suitcase, out of the trunk,” which is synonymous of things found. By playing on the double meaning, we refer here to the work of the archaeo-collector, who finds relics and artefacts, and follows their historiographical, literary, scientific, socio-economic, and cultural tracks. Maybe with a little luck, but just a little... And that is a wonderful thing with items ranging from first editions, pictures, objects, etc., to writings in the author’s hand: Watson or Conan Doyle, depending on the fundamentalist hypotheses or not. But what if you came across an autograph finding in the hand of Sherlock Holmes? And above all if, by applying a scientific method, you could prove that it is in the hand of the REAL

Sherlock Holmes? Crazy? No: we can savour all this without the help of phrenology. And for the first time in Italy!

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19th Century American Asylums: 'Moral Treatment' and the Case of Married Women

One of E. A. Poe's lesser known short stories provides the cue to introducing the subject of the so-called "moral treatment" used in nineteenth-century American asylums, which was based on a new "soothing system" that would abolish all punishments and confinements of the insane. It is my intention to make a brief excursus into the changing facets of madness in the United States, according to the cultural and medical perception of it, to new and old methods of restraints and therapies, and to social and gender discrimination.

The case of Elizabeth Packard, a sane woman committed by her husband to a madhouse, outlines the dramatic situation of many married women of that period who had no legal rights of their own. Her journal is a document denouncing the many physical and moral abuses endured by her and several other women treated as maniacs. Since ancient times hysteria has been considered an exclusively female disease connected to her generative organ. Labelled as incurably insane, or as possessed by demons (according to the times), a mentally ill woman had often been subject to much erroneous treatment and to false diagnoses until psychiatry emerged as a new discipline towards the end of the eighteenth century.

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The Case and the Canon in Laboratory Life

Daily life in the laboratory can be described as a chain of events in which humans, objects, instruments, and institutional settings cross paths unremittingly. Historians of science have developed quite sophisticated tools in order to reconstruct laboratory life. Reconstructions reveal tensions between "case" and "canon", tensions by studying which we may try to improve our understanding of scientific practice. The paper will analyze a key episode in the life of William Thomson (later Lord Kelvin), when his involvement in the laying of the first telegraph cable across the Atlantic put considerable pressure on the laboratory he had established at the University of Glasgow, on the kind of physics he was practicing, and on the reputation he was building as a leading "natural philosopher" of the Victorian age. The paper will consider the intertwining of "case" and "canon" both within laboratory practice and in reputation building, not eschewing the element of contingency affecting both.

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Numerology and Classification: "The Book of Creation" and "The Canon of Changes" (Sefer Yezirah and Yi jing)

It is well known that different kinds of classification and numerology (such as symbolical and non-mathematical operations with numbers and geometrical structures) play an extremely important role in various systems of the Jewish mystical tradition (i.e. Kabbalah). This aspect of the Kabbalistic mysticism has been the subject of a number of scholarly researches (among which Gershom Scholem's works), but studies in the field of typology of the Kabbalistic numerology and classifications are extremely rare.

Nevertheless, there is another great cultural tradition which pays great attention to numerology. I refer to the Chinese tradition, partially based on the "Canon of Changes" (*Yi jing*) and partially on various cosmological and cosmogonical concepts of different origin. It is thus quite natural and desirable to try to compare Jewish and Chinese numerological traditions in their structural as well as in their ideological aspects.

Of course, such a fundamental problem cannot be solved in this brief communication. I shall therefore just try to compare some essentials of the Chinese cosmological classifications with the material of such important texts of the Kabbalistic tradition as *Sefer Yezirah – The Book of Creation*.

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The Dialectic Relationship between Case and Canon as a Driving Force of the Advancement of Medicine and Science

Medical practice has always tried to develop categories in which to classify the cases that drew doctors' notice, on the basis of philosophical principles (for instance the Aristotelian tradition of the four elements) or of similarities between the symptoms, so as to reach a diagnosis and consequently identify a possible cure. This process of classification brings about the formation of a *rule*, or Canon, one of the most ancient examples of which is Avicenna's (Àli al-Husayn Ibn Sina) famous *al-Qanun fi al-tibb* (translated in Latin by Gherardo da Cremona, with the title *Canon Medicinae*)

This process of classification and thus of forced simplification (reductionist approach) has been hugely successful in the in the history of medicine, however set against it is the happening of cases that represent the exception to the rule and which in a certain way invalidate the Canon, showing up its incompleteness.

In order to make up for these discrepancies, the parameters for the classification of cases have been continuously reviewed and refined and new categories and sub categories in which to pigeon hole them have been created; and in order to accomplish this refining it has been necessary to constantly introduce newer investigative instruments and methods (anatomy, microbiology, molecular biology, genetics, nuclear medicine, imaging techniques, to quote just a chronological list of the main investigative branches of natural sciences that have helped medical investigation). The exponential increase of the complexity of knowledge in the medical and scientific fields, brought on by this process of continuous refinement has made the creation of new instruments for the interpretation of data necessary, such as algorithms which proceeding by stages help the physician in the identification of the possible disease on the basis of the absence/presence of symptoms, or,

more recently, bioinformatics instruments for the management of data obtained by means of high throughput investigative techniques, such as the analysis of gene expression or of DNA sequence.

The dialectic process by which a new Case invalidates the Canon until the latter is updated so as to include the new case represents, then, a powerful drive for the development of science and medicine. In the case of medicine this process, continuing, through successive passages, virtually endlessly, tends towards the formulation of a Canon containing all Cases. However, the conclusion of this continuing growth of the Canon will coincide with its negation, which is to say with the recognition that there is no Canon with which to classify all pathologies, but that every Case is a freestanding *unicum*, unlike all others. This is due to the fact that pathologies, like all phenotypic traits, result from the interaction of environmental agents, genetics and epigenetics of the individual, and of chance, in a combination of these agents that is practically unique and unrepeatable. The goal of modern medicine is that of treating every Case as an actual singularity, without having to forcibly pigeonhole it in a Canon, and proposing for it a customised cure. In a similar perspective the Canon will have a residual usefulness in speeding up diagnoses.

The relationship between Case and Canon, as already stated, is applicable not only to medicine, but also to basic scientific research, for instance, in studies on genetics or on molecular biology. In our laboratory we are carrying out studies on human longevity, and on the basis of the dialectical model proposed, centenarians are posed as Case, as opposed to the canon of an average life span of around about 80 years.

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Three Body Problem: Moriarty, the Dynamics of an Asteroid and Poincaré

“The Dynamics of an Asteroid” is the celebrated work of mathematics by Professor Moriarty but very little is known about its contents. Sherlock Holmes only described it as “a book which ascends to such rarefied heights of pure mathematics that it is said that there was no man in the scientific press capable of criticising it”. Reconstruction of its contents is attempted by examining mathematics of celestial mechanics in the late 19th century. The Three Body Problem is the topic of prize-winning essay by Henri Poincaré which contains a pioneering concept led to the Chaos Theory.

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The Canon of Integrability, the Scandal of Chaos, the Information Era: A Quick Trip View from Mechanicism to Complexity

Science was born from the observation of sky and founded on the harmony of spheres. The core of modern science, mechanics, was based on the search of hidden symmetries which mask the underlying circular or rectilinear motions (integrability). The universe appeared as a gigantic clock with erratic behaviours confined to ensembles of anarchic atoms. The ubiquity of chaos discovered by Poicaré marked a discontinuity and required the probabilistic view to be introduced for any physical system. It took several decades and computer experiments to pervade the scientific community while the information content appeared to be a crucial issue.

The long persistence of ordered structures and the changes due to instabilities and noise allow self organization and the evolutionary improvements based on information coding. This is the environment in which complex self replicating structures emerge and progress and the discontinuity from inert matter to the life is likely to occur.

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Cesare Lombroso and the "Ospedale de' pazzi"

Texts taken from the *Diario di San Benedetto in Pesaro*

***CESARE LOMBROSO ACCEPTS TO RUN TEMPORARILY THE
PROVINCIAL MENTAL ASYLUM OF PESARO:***

" ... in July 1871 the provincial council of Pesaro asked Lombroso to take over the running of the asylum.

Lombroso decided to go to Pesaro *transiently*, reorganise it and then return to Pavia after a year. "
(G.F. Lombroso)

[Lombroso] reorganised the asylum on the basis of the English open-door system, trying to create for the inmates an environment with all the amenities so as to console them and sweeten their lives, stimulating their activities, giving free expression to their artistic and poetic tendencies.

But above all he created " *an asylum journal that was the first in Italy to give relatives news of the patients and to offer the latter an arena to display their best literary products.* "
(G.F.L.)

Lombroso believed in the need for a direct link between the asylum and the families of the mentally disturbed. Too often did it happen that not having any news of an interned relative they ceased to care about him or her.

To avoid this situation and above all to "*keep busy some patients with singular skills, in literature and printing*" he arranged to publish the bulletin entitled

Diario dell' Ospizio di San Benedetto in Pesaro,

printed and "edited all by the patients" (carried out exclusively by the well-off patients, the poorer ones being almost illiterate).

"There are autobiographical pieces that are strangely eloquent. Among the publications there was also an innate willingness " *to diffuse more precise and more noble ideas about the moral conditions of the inmates and to open the eyes of the public who often consider the mentally deranged as wild beasts* ".

The *Diario*, which first came out every two weeks, then every month, had a front page with health news which gave details of any variations in the condition of the patients, indicated with their initials and bed number.

Then inside the paper there were the contributions of the inmates (poems, plays, observations about fellow patients, philosophical, political and historical discussions, etc.), descriptions of walks, of parties, of Carnival and of other events; in addition space was given over to autobiographies of the patient (collected by the doctors) and notes about the most extravagant of the inmates.

The language used was plain and simple, so it could be understood by those with a lower level of education.

Gina Lombroso wrote that " ... the extraordinary qualities of those madmen almost compelled him to go back to those studies on ' genius and folly ' that for eight years had been completely replaced by those on criminals, pellagra, etc...."

The madmen of Pesaro offered him the most wonderful documentation that could possibly be afforded about the close relationship between illness and genius, and he collected all the material in a short book called ' Genio e Follia ' which was published in Milan in 1873."

***SINGULARLY GIFTED MENTAL PATIENTS:
LITERATI AND PRINTERS***

***DIARY:
" hopes of an interneee "***

" Eight years have passed since I last saw my family, my home town. I feel would be overwhelmed to see any of them now.

I have only a vague memory of everything, of the town, of the people, a fact that does not do great honour to my family. I think I can still see, in my mind, the house where I lived for many years, the villa we had near V., the main square of the town, the back-streets, I remember perfectly my close friends and relatives, the wonderful days of youth that were spent peacefully in my house; tears fill my eyes when I picture it all.

Now if I could return to my family, I would behave well and leave behind the vice that they reproach me for as the sole cause of my illness. "

R. D. n. 14 (1872)

" Contravoluntariness "

Acting against one's will is a terrible thing, and I can speak of it, alas, from experience, since it deprived me of any wordly pleasure, and transformed my sweet and satisfying former life into a bitter and tormenting weight.

This is what it comes down to.

For man to really live in this world, to eat and sleep is not enough, he must give a strong direction to his own faculties; he must have a reason for existing; his occupations must really satisfy him; rather than stray painfully and miserably from the path, insensitive to all sweetness in life, it would be better to die a thousand deaths, or lose all consciousness of oneself.

And this, in fact, is what happened to me, who was used to a sweet and quiet life, when I suddenly saw myself sucked into a turmoil of violent pains; disturbed by such oddness, my brain refused to continue as it had in the past; no longer could I think freely about my own affairs, and out of this was born the *contravoluntariness* or the malfunctioning of man's natural will, the impossibility to do or to act, as if the individual were bound by some material force.

I have not sufficient command over myself, to give the direction I would like to my actions; from this is born the dismay, the heartbreak, the tedium of life.

At first I began to feel a vague restlessness, a weight that tormented me; this force then grew, became more violent, more demanding, removing all pleasure and forcing me to spend hours amid the most anxious tedium. I can no longer sleep at night; I mostly fall asleep at around one or two o'clock; and for me the day is nothing but a tormenting apprehension, because I absolutely don't know what to do with myself, where to bury my head, which direction to give to my thoughts, all because of this contravoluntariness.

People talk of domestic happiness, contentment of the soul, the satisfactions of one's love, affection between people; but I can feel none of this, I anxiously count the hours of the day, and I put all my effort into trying to become the least bored possible.

So I pray for a violent reaction in my brain, and that they would let me see my family again.

A beneficial attack might do me much good, a violent emotion in my soul ruined me, and another emotion, of a different kind, might do me good.

I haven't seen my family for so many years, and the kind Director understands what a terrible and shameful thing this is; I am certain that if I have committed some strange act, it was the outcome of misfortune, not my character, which is still in fine shape; and they should take this into account too.

L. M. n. 110.

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Canonicity and the Psycho-Analytic Case History

Psycho-analysis is a field in which certain case histories have been accorded canonical status in the fullest sense of that term. All of the case histories that Freud wrote up as single cases are canonical in that 1) they are considered to be "important, significant and uniquely worthy of study" (OED); and 2) they are held by psycho-analysts to instantiate general and fundamental principles which may be applied to other cases. Yet how movable is the psycho-analytic canon of case histories? How far is it capable of generating new hierarchies? Can it undergo what F.R. Leavis in another context called "revaluation"? This paper will address these questions by considering the fate of two famous psycho-analytic case histories: Bertha Pappenheim and Sabina Spielrein. It has long been known that the account given of Breuer's treatment of Bertha Pappenheim ("Anna O") in *Studies in*

Hysteria (1895) is incomplete and in certain crucial respects false. Ernest Jones attempted to fill in some of the details in the first volume (1953) of his official biography of Freud though significant additional data – some of it at variance with Jones' account – have since been provided by, among others, Henri Ellenberger (1972) and Zvi Lothane (1998). The additional material has changed our understanding of Anna O's symptoms, the treatment she received, as well as its outcome. But what has its effect been on the canonicity of the Anna O case history? The case of Sabina Spielrein was less well-known until the publication of Aldo Carotenuto's book in 1984 (*A Secret Symmetry: Sabina Spielrein Between Jung and Freud*). Since then Spielrein's analysis (and her own record of it) has been credited with anticipating the findings of psycho-analytic writing after the second world war. This is a different kind of canonicity but one which sheds a powerful light on the peculiarities of the psycho-analytic canon.

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From the Case to the Canon: Reclaiming the Insanity of Poetry in Victorian Literary Biography

Artists and writers of all kinds (but particularly poets) have come to expect, as in Philip Larkin's glum prediction in his poem 'Posterity', a posthumous biographical dissection using '[t]hat crummy textbook stuff from Freshman Psych.' This tendency has mostly followed a rather diffuse Freudian influence: as the psychiatrist and writer Anthony Storr has argued, "many ideas and concepts originally derived from psychoanalysis have become so incorporated into intellectual discourse that biographers automatically employ them without realizing whence they came." In some cases, such as Dianne Wood-Middlebrook's biography of the poet Anne Sexton, a more specific alignment of the biographer with the psychiatrist is evident, one so close that both the techniques and materials of the latter (i.e. transcripts of analysis sessions) have been incorporated into the written Life.

But what were the origins of this pathological curiosity? How and when did the 'lives of the poets', in particular, turn towards the case history? Is it possible to trace a nineteenth-century genealogy of later expectations and interpretative habits? This paper seeks to address these questions by examining the pre-history of psychobiography in Victorian Lives of English poets, in particular the cluster of biographies in the mid-Victorian period on those writers who had been understood in various ways as mad: William Blake, in Alexander and Anne Gilchrist's *Pictor Ignotus* (1864); Percy Bysshe Shelley, in a succession of biographies by Edward John Trelawny (1858), Thomas Jefferson Hogg (also 1858), and J. A. Symonds (1878); John Clare, in the early lives by Frederick Martin (1865) and J. L. Cherry (1872).

Looking in particular detail at *Pictor Ignotus*, the paper will examine how such biographies defended their subjects from the rhetoric of insanity and mental degeneration deployed by earlier critics. In the early decades of the nineteenth century, critics such as Francis Jeffrey in the *Edinburgh Review*, and various writers in the *Quarterly Review* and the other Tory press, had polemically dismissed Romantic poets (including the little-known Blake) by equating them with psychiatric patients. The phrase 'fit for Bedlam' and elaborate conceits of diagnosis and confinement occur frequently in these reviews. The reviewers also aligned their critical expertise with that of medical case studies of 'alienist' patients just then beginning to appear in the public sphere (such as John Haslam's 1810 publication of the delusions of James Tilly Matthews). The paper will show how later biographies were clearly intent on breaking the suggested connections between cases of poetry and cases of mental pathology, but also used the examples of literary singularity previously identified as deviance, as identifiers of Romantic genius and the proper signifiers of canonical greatness.

In doing so biographers perpetuated, in more or less subtle ways, constructions of Romantic writers as figures of enticing irrationality, and subsequently acted as powerful narratives of cultural

diagnosis and division, and yet more influential templates for the notion of the pathology of literary creativity. The canon may have absorbed the case, but from this point onwards was always traced by its shadow.

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Reading the Body of Narrative: Seeking Scientific Evidence in Early Nineteenth-Century Criminography

As I have argued elsewhere, there are strong associations between medicine and crime, between the doctor and the detective. Both figures use their specialised diagnostic gaze to read bodies, diseased, deceptive or dead; both have perfected the art—the science—of reading clues and writing from them a coherent narrative of cause and solution—more often in the case of the fictional detective than the factual doctor, perhaps. At the centre of factual and fictional crime narratives concerned with murder lies the body of the victim which is, by its very nature, silent. In the twenty-first century the medical discipline, the science, of forensic pathology has numerous ways of reading the dead body in order to unlock its secrets and make it speak of its mode of death and of the living body which inflicted it. The victim's body, then, becomes a scientific narrative which, read properly, can provide clues as to the identity of the murderer. As in a detective novel, the forensic pathologist collects the physical evidence—the clues—in order to catch the criminal. And forensic pathology has been popularised by the fiction of Patricia Cornwell and Kathy Reichs, and in the numerous television series that feature pathologists working with the police—or sometimes on their own—to track down killers.

But in the early nineteenth century no such science was available—or was in its infancy—and tracing or identifying the criminal relied on witnesses or confession, on physiological marks of criminality or of guilt, on circumstantial evidence, methods that were increasingly seen to be ineffectual and unreliable. Attention here was very much focused on the criminal rather than his or her victim. The cause of death was written on the body of the victim, but those other narratives, concerned with the identity of the murderer, were largely illegible. Nonetheless, the criminography of the time suggests that there were attempts to decipher these narratives, to make the dead body speak of its killer and to write the narrative of cause and solution. In this paper I read the body of early nineteenth-century crime narrative, seeking those first fumbling attempts at a science of bodily investigation that could connect victim to murderer. I will draw on short stories from periodicals such as *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* and *Burton's Gentleman's Magazine*, articles on medical jurisprudence, Samuel Warren's 'Who is the Murderer?' and 'The Mystery of Murder and its Defence', and on the tales of Edgar Allan Poe.