The Victorian

Title of Paper: **Opium and Obsession: Alternative Causalities of Somnambulism**
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Abstract:

In the mid-eighteenth century, physicians, phrenologists, and philosophers drew upon the influential works of John Locke, David Hume, and Thomas Reid attempting to create a classification system for the mental and moral faculties of the mind. Though learning about how physicians were successful in their explanations of the ways in which the mind functions during conscious and unconscious moments is intriguing; it is more remarkable to explore how literary authors interpreted these new medical findings, particularly when Edgar Allan Poe and Wilkie Collins began publishing their work and gaining eminence within the literary field in the mid-1800s.

Poe and Collins ask: What happens to identity when a disease affects a person’s mind? More specifically, is a person still himself or herself during an episode of mental derangement? These questions lead to the exploration of identity, but they also raised questions regarding automatism, which became a new area of study after the initial research on studies of somnambulism. I explore the ways in which Poe and Collins reveal their interpretations of these questions of human agency and automatism when dealing with the mental disease of somnambulism. Rather than approaching this topic from a scientific viewpoint, I explore these questions through the literary lens of two famous works: Edgar Allan Poe’s short story “Berenice” (1835) and Wilkie Collins’ *The Moonstone* (1868). Through the analysis of the criminal behaviors invoked during a somnambulistic episode, my research concluded that these Victorian authors shed light on other, perhaps even alternative causes of somnambulism. I explore questions of motivation for criminal acts performed during an episode, as well as inquire deeper into understanding human agency and viewing the body and mind of a sleepwalker as an automaton; thus helping to fill the present gap of investigating the influence of both medical and literary texts on the public regarding the public’s understanding and perception of mental diseases, specifically somnambulism.

Keywords: Nineteenth-Century Literature; Psychology; Somnambulism; Mental Illness; Poe; Collins; Opium; Monomania; Berenice; The Moonstone; Gothic Literature

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In the mid-eighteenth century, physicians, phrenologists, and philosophers drew upon the influential works of John Locke, David Hume, and Thomas Reid attempting to create a classification system for the mental and moral faculties of the mind. Historian Robert M. Young notes the brain could not be fully appreciated until it was understood as an “organ of the mind;” but as the physicians attempted to categorize certain mental and moral faculties of human behavior, they were “confusing classification with explanation” (21). Physicians such as Joseph Gall and Benjamin Rush provided the medical field with a categorical explanation of differing mental diseases, but, what they were actually doing was providing evidence that once afflicted by a disease, it would affect “what role [the affected mind] plays in the economy of the organism and its interaction with the environment” (Young 21). In an attempt to examine and classify the differing mental and moral faculties of the mind, the evolution of self-identity became more apparent, which then later turned to an exploration of human agency.

During the mid-eighteenth century physicians such as Benjamin Rush and Joseph Gall argued against the common belief that the mind, body, and soul are inseparable. Scholar Ann Stiles comments on this topic: “by suggesting that certain parts of the brain controlled specific emotions and behaviors, localizationists contradicted the popular belief in a unified soul or mind governing human action, thus narrowing the possibility for human agency” (10). Localizationism refers to a view popularized by John Hughlings Jackson that only certain parts of the brain are affected by a particular disorder, and that specific muscle movements were localized in a specific part of the brain. Jackson’s theory was critical to further studies of the brain lobes; yet, the question of the possibility of human agency remained largely ignored. Though learning about how the Localizationists and other physicians were successful in their explanations of the ways in which the mind functions during conscious and unconscious moments is intriguing; it is more remarkable to explore how literary authors interpreted these new medical findings, particularly over the course of fifty years between when Charles Brockden Brown published Edgar Huntly: Memoirs of a Sleep-Walker in 1799, and when Edgar Allan Poe and Wilkie Collins began publishing their work and gaining eminence within the literary field in the mid-1800s. It is interesting and worth analyzing how the growth in the non-traditional Gothic genre of literature parallels the maturation of the scientific field concerning studies of the mind. As Brown was writing along side the adolescent phase of scientific studies, later authors Edgar Allan Poe and Wilkie Collins had significantly more medical research to work with, which is why I believe they chose to alter the ways in which mental diseases were portrayed in their genre of writing.

Poe and Collins address similar questions and issues that Brown and earlier authors address, but it appears that much of Poe and Collins’ work focus more on issues of human agency and identity than the earlier authors, perhaps this is because there was more published scientific research regarding these issues. Moreover, Poe and Collins ask: What happens to identity when a disease affects a person’s mind? More specifically, is a person still himself or herself during an episode of mental derangement? These questions lead to the exploration of identity, but they also raised questions regarding automatism, which became a new area of study after the initial research on studies of somnambulism. I explore the ways in which Poe and Collins reveal their interpretations of these questions of human agency and automatism when dealing with the mental disease of somnambulism. Rather than approaching this topic from a scientific viewpoint, I intend to explore these questions through the literary lens of two
famous works: Edgar Allan Poe’s short story “Berenice” (1835) and Wilkie Collins’ *The Moonstone* (1868). Through the analysis of the criminal behaviors invoked during a somnambulistic episode, my research concluded that later Victorian authors shed light on other, perhaps even alternative causes of somnambulism. I explore questions of motivation for criminal acts performed during an episode, as well as inquire deeper into understanding human agency and viewing the body and mind of a sleepwalker as an automaton; thus helping to fill the present gap of investigating the influence of both medical and literary texts on the public regarding the public’s understanding and perception of mental diseases, specifically somnambulism. Collins and Poe complicate these questions and therefore suggest a new perspective on a sleepwalker’s culpability for criminal behavior. Unlike Henry Cockton and Charles Brockden Brown’s sleepwalkers who seemingly lack conscious motivation for their actions, Collins and Poe’s sleepwalkers appear to exhibit a particular motivation prior to their episode that may explain their actions while sleepwalking. I believe this particular angle of somnambulism deserves an in-depth exploration; mostly because the reasoning and explanations Poe and Collins provide reflect modern perceptions of mental diseases and somnambulism, which likely contributed to the creation of the insanity defense plea.

The insanity defense plea was established in 1843 based on the acquittal of Daniel M’Naughten, who based on a case of mistaken identity, shot and killed the British Prime Minister’s secretary, Edward Drummond. Nine witnesses testified that M’Naughten was insane—leading to an acquittal, creating the “not guilty by reason of insanity” plea. Because M’Naughten could not tell the difference between right and wrong at the time he committed the murder, he was believe to be “insane.” However, what is interesting is the way in which Poe and Collins set up and frame the situation surrounding the sleepwalker, and the sleepwalker himself, establishing the possibility of motivation for committing a crime prior their episode of somnambulism. This relates to the M’Naughten case because questions of prior motivation were brought up during the trial, and the prosecution team question whether Daniel M’Naughten was clinically insane before he committed the murder, or if M’Naughten was experience a more “temporary moment of insanity,” which Poe describes in “Berenice,” and which can epitomize crimes committed be a sleepwalker, who otherwise, when awake exhibits “natural and normal” behaviors. Collins and Poe’s sleepwalkers are stimulated by underlying neurological disorders, but it is the way in which these underlying diseases are expressed through ancillary means of opium and monomania that sheds insight on the difficulties that arise when determining the sleepwalker’s responsibility.

In 1868 Wilkie Collins published *The Moonstone*, a detective novel that receive much praise for its extensive and exceptional research into the scientific field of neurological diseases. Collins’ novel retells the events of a precious gem, a moonstone, that is stolen from Hindu monks, gifted to a young woman for her birthday, and then suddenly goes missing. The way in which Collins frames the scene of the missing gem is crucial for investigating the criminal behavior of somnambulists, which lend itself to a new public perception of somnambulistic behaviors and motivation. Additionally, Collins provides a new way to think about the influences of neurological diseases on sleepwalkers and their possible cures. Ruth Harris states, “manifestations of the ‘unconscious’ were regarded as mere symptoms of the larger psychological malady” (47). The word ‘symptom’ corresponds to the behaviors of Collins’ somnambulist, Franklin Blake. Blake’s somnambulistic episode is actually more a symptom of a symptom. Blake decides to quit smoking tobacco, and because of this, he suffers from insomnia. During Rachel’s birthday dinner, a physician, Dr. Candy, and Blake debate over the medicinal quality of opium to cure his insomnia. Candy, determined to prove Blake wrong, secretly laces Blake’s whiskey with drops of opium. Remember that Benjamin Rush observed, “It is by forcing sleep in this manner by means of opium, that mischief is so often done by that noble remedy” (633). Rush claimed that giving opium “forces” sleep upon
the patient, and so the patient’s neurological system overreacts, as Darwin also explained, causing the patient to move about in a state of somnambulism. Because Candy gives Blake the opium, Blake sleepwalks and steals the moonstone. Thus, Blake’s sleepwalking is a mere symptom of the opium, given to reduce or appease his insomnia, itself a symptom of his quitting tobacco. However, this is not the only mental instability that causes Blake to sleepwalk. The moonstone is allegedly cursed, bringing ill fortune to whoever possesses the gem, but is not the rightful owner; Blake believes this. Rachel is the intended recipient of the gem but is unaware of the alleged curse, but Blake is bound by law to deliver the gem to his beloved Rachel. Blake’s awareness of the curse on the moonstone is, in Rush’s terminology, an “irritant.” Blake’s symptoms from quitting tobacco are heightened further by addressing Blake’s underlying mental distress—guilt for having to gift the gem to Rachel. This leads into a discussion of motivation that I will address later. But first, the underlying neurological disorders found within Poe’s short story “Berenice” need exploring.

Edgar Allan Poe’s “Berenice” was published in *The Southern Literary Messenger* in 1835. This grotesque short story was allegedly written, Poe claimed, on a “bet that I could produce nothing effective on a subject so singular, provided I treat it seriously” (Poe Museum). In this tale, the narrator Egaeus suffers from a mental disorder, monomania. And it is because of his disorder that Berenice, his cousin and bride-to-be, is violated and mutilated, but not until after being prematurely buried following a severe epileptic seizure. In 1810 French psychiatrist Jean Esquirol defined monomania as an “idée fixe,” which Jan Goldstein explains as “a single pathological preoccupation in an otherwise sound mind” (155), thus suggesting that Egaeus was sane except during sudden onsets of these manic fits, which may have had an influence on the M’Naughten case. Jonathan Elmer proposes an interesting perspective for examining “Berenice” through a linguistic reading of Egaeus and Berenice as texts. Elmer explains Poe’s use of syncope as:

[T]he act of condensing a word by dropping or eliding certain letters or sounds from its interior. Entailed by sentimentalism’s move from affect to meaning, from word to idea, from narrative to norm, is a kind of ceaseless dropping-out of the materiality of discourse. Poe's text suggests that what seems to drop out here necessarily returns from elsewhere (107).

Though Elmer provides a significant account of the linguistic meaning of syncope, he does not address the psychological meaning of syncope invoked by mental disorders directly. Poe uses linguistic play throughout "Berenice," and much criticism is dedicated to the reading of Egaeus as a text, but misses out on the neurological explanations of his mental disorder. Egaeus blacks out; he sleepwalks and commits a crime. Dayan proposes a feminist reading by stating Poe’s story is “a tale about thirty-two small, white, incredibly cathected teeth, Poe takes the mouth of a lady and turns it into the mind of a man. Her smile impresses itself on his brain, and his final pulling out of her teeth—the source of his anguish and adoration—is an extraction of identity so total and so purified of separateness that the final irradiation of teeth rattling across the floor writes out the derangement of a brain” (492). Though both Elmer and Dayan provide interesting perspectives to consider for ways to read “Berenice,” I contend that this story deserves a deeper psychological reading of the manifestations of the neurological disorder of monomania. This investigation will show that the monomaniac can behave “normally”—similar to a somnambulist as Benjamin Rush states in his lectures—and that Poe uses this disease to magnify, or at least expose the fear in the public that anything can happen to anyone at anytime, because there is not an explainable nor direct cause for mental diseases such as monomania or somnambulism. Though Eigen and Dayan provide excellent interpretations of Poe, analyzing how Poe utilizes the psychological and medical research is worth investigating to shed light on the influence to medical field had on the literary, and in
turn the possible reflecting influence on the public thereafter. Moreover, Joel Eigen also suggests a way to examine “Berenice” as portraying a psychological disorder lending itself to criminal behavior: “If the events surrounding the crime cannot sustain a defense based on either compulsion or error, the unfortunate accused must rely on a more drastic option; some form of mental distress propelled his hand or clouded his consciousness” (ix). Eigen sheds insight on the difficulties of indicting the criminal behavior of somnambulists under the law. I believe Eigen is correct, but he does not analyze deep enough to say that Poe may have been intending to make Egaeus’ “clouded consciousness,” an assertion so the public might have a better understanding of monomania and somnambulism.

When determining the motivation of a sleepwalker, we must explore a brief discussion of mens rea—the guilty mind or intentions—and actus reus—the guilty act. The ‘act’ committed is evident; however, the question of mens rea remains. Did the sleepwalker have a guilty mind or intention while awake? R.D. Mackay explains, “it is the perennial problem of trying to decide what the state of a person’s mind was at the time he performed the ‘act’ in question. As with the question of mens rea, we can never know exactly what an individual’s mental state was at any given time” (29). Because we cannot know what the sleepwalker’s state of mind during sleep or wakefulness, we must rely on other possible sources that expose motivation and that could shed light on the public’s understanding of mental diseases. Moreover, motivation while awake is a necessary issue to address when questioning the sleepwalker’s responsibility because it offers a clue into the possibility of the sleepwalker possessing guilty intentions. Franklin Blake knew that the moonstone was gifted to Rachel from her uncle out of spite for her mother, and he feels guilty giving her the gem. So, for Blake not only was he already mentally distressed about suffering withdrawals from quitting tobacco, but he also was guilty of knowing about the curse and still giving the diamond to Rachel. As stated previously, his distress and guilt are the underlying neurological symptoms that prompted Dr. Candy to give him the opium, which then led to his somnambulistic episode causing him to steal the diamond. Of course the problem of this episode is more complicated than just an accidental theft. Much like Althorpe in Brown’s “Somnambulist: A Fragment,” Blake wanted to protect his beloved; he stole the diamond during his somnambulistic trance ultimately, albeit perversely, to protect her from the curse. Joel Eigen insists “…the sleepwalker is pursuing objects to which his mind had been directed in waking moments” (132), so because Blake’s mind was directed toward the curse of the diamond while awake, as Eigen suggests, Blake pursued the moonstone in a sleepwalking trance, establishing motivation and mens rea—his guilty mind. By integrating motivation and mens rea in his story, Poe demonstrates the new non-traditional Gothic elements by including genuine mental diseases to solicit an authentic sense of fear in his readers.

However, determining motivation in the case of Poe’s narrator, Egaeus, is a bit more complicated because we are dealing with an established mental disorder. Egaeus suffers from monomania, and it is because of this disease he engages in criminal and morbid actions. Victoria Ryan states: “In dreams and in other altered states of mind, whether induced by drugs or hypnosis, conscious control seems to be relinquished, and yet the mind continues to operate” (48). Poe also provides insight into Egaeus’ mind, which moves from the shadows on the tapestry, or upon the door; to the flames in a lamp and embers within the fireplace, or the perfume of a flower near by or to monotonously repeating “some common word, until the sound, by dint of frequent repetition, ceased to convey any idea whatever to the mind” (167). As Egaeus’ monomaniacal mind shifts from one object of obsession to another, Poe emphasizes that the object itself is not of particular importance, but rather it is the desire to be obsessed with something, anything. This is how Egaeus becomes obsessed with Berenice’s teeth. To further suggest that the teeth are not necessarily the objects of his desire, but rather her teeth are just another obsessive fixation he cannot alleviate, the last sentence of the story
The Victorian

emphasizes: “thirty-two small, white and ivory substances […] scattered to and fro about the floor” (171, emphasis mine). The term “substances” suggests the teeth were merely objects of obsession during his monomaniacal fit. Additionally, as Jonathan Elmer suggests, “ideas return as substances, teeth become ideas, because words themselves are inextricably sound and sense, sentiment and substance” (107). Elmer points out that it is the ideas that are repeated in the monomaniac’s mind, it is the ideas that the monomaniac is obsessed with; it is the ideas that evoke sentiment, not the teeth themselves, but rather the idea of her teeth. Joan Dayan suitably describes them as “his source of anguish and adoration” (492). Because his obsession with her teeth is so momentous that it results in mental anguish, and because Egaeus cannot control his fixation, he simply blacks out. During this unconscious state, Egaeus mutilates Berenice’s grave and her body to obtain his object of obsession. Because Egaeus is unconscious, yet performing acts that could be deemed purposeful actions, his behavior could be viewed as a state of somnambulism. Henry Maudsey explains: “there is a purpose and there is a coordination of acts for its accomplishments but the consciousness is still asleep” (qtd. in Eigen 132). This suggests that Egaeus had a purpose, and enough coordination to dig up a grave and pull out Berenice’s teeth, while in an unconscious state. So as it seems, if the monomaniac is obsessed with a particular object of desire, then it is evident that the monomaniac would perform actions, regardless of the consequences, to obtain their fixation, which I believe irrefutably proves that Egaeus’ motivation, caused by pure obsession, was present prior to his somnambulistic trance. Even though Blake and Egaeus’ motivations are quite conclusive, this does not necessarily make them legally culpable for their actions.

R.D. Mackay opens a discussion of voluntary versus involuntary actions, which he says, “is the root of the legal notion of automatism” (22). During the early to mid-eighteenth century, physicians began investigating the cerebro-spinal axis and cerebral hemispheres in an attempt to understand how the mind developed and caused certain behavior. As stated earlier, it was a common belief in the scientific community of localizationists that mental illnesses were located in a specific part of the brain and if that part of the brain was removed or manipulated to stop functioning, then the illness would be cured. However, this hypothesis was not easy to put into practice. Ruth Harris explains the eighteenth century’s belief of mental illness as a “‘disarray’ of the system” where particular symptoms such as “uncontrollability, ‘disinhibition’, and automatism […] were characteristics of the mentally ill” (37-38). Although Harris’ treatment of automatism viewed as a symptom is useful, Victoria Ryan’s research on automatism convinces me that automatism is more than just a mere symptom of mental illness, but more so that automatism deals with deeper philosophical questions of consciousness and human agency. Ryan poses the following questions: “is the self unified or multiple? What are the limits of self-control and individual volition?” (3). These are extremely useful questions for investigating automatism and particularly the behavior of those affected by somnambulism. Ryan adds that “a potent mixture of the attempted scientific explanation for involuntary behavior and the questioning of standard notions of individual responsibility and free will contributed to the wide fascination with physiological psychology” (3). Ryan investigates questions of behavior and responsibility later in her novel when she explores the topic of automatism in the Victorian novel.

William Carpenter proposed the term ‘unconscious automatism’ in 1850 and “applied it to such things as dreaming, reverie, and hallucinations” (Harris 38); however, the theory of automatism was studied long before Carpenter coined the phrase. In the 1830’s scientists such as Marshall Hall and Johannes Muller studied the “fundamental nervous functions, with organisms reacting purposefully, although automatically, to their internal and external works” (Harris 38). For decades scholars have been grappling with the integration of science in the Victorian novel, searching for answers to questions of self-identity, responsibility, and
The Victorian consciousness, I intend to join this discussion by observing and investigating the different avenues that Gothic authors manipulated to integrate science into their fictional stories in a possible attempt to influence the public perception of somnambulism and other mental diseases. Ann Stiles claims that, “Cerebral localization trailed an odor of Gothic mystery left over from its pseudoscientific predecessor. Perhaps this is because late-Victorian cerebral localization theories, like phrenological discourse, challenged revered assumptions about the soul, the will and the nature of God” (12). It is possible that Wilkie Collins and Edgar Allan Poe intended to invoke a sense of fear into readers by using scientific theories because the mental illness they were describing are very real and very possible to affect anyone. The most obvious question to propose when discussing Collins and Poe is: Are sleepwalkers automatons? I will explore this possibility. In the eighteenth-century, the theory of automatism was defined as an unconscious person performing actions, much like sleepwalking. I believe it is necessary to explore with sufficient depth the parallels between or overlapping of automatism and somnambulism; but these parallels complicate the problems associated with these texts when determining a sleepwalker’s, or automaton’s, responsibility.

Contemporary legal defense arguments categorize automatism as producing involuntary acts through various states of unconsciousness, particularly sleepwalking. Legal scholar Emily Grant argues, “Since Shakespeare wrote Macbeth, sleepwalking has become a part of criminal law jurisprudence as a defense for various crimes. It is commonly regarded as a subset of the automatism defense based on the theory that a sleepwalker performs the criminal act involuntarily and, therefore, cannot be held liable” (998). Grant argues that a person can only be held criminally responsible only if they induce automatism, such as through willing ingestion of drugs or alcohol. Grant’s example is that if a person is cognitively aware they are susceptible to seizures, and chooses to drive a vehicle, and while driving, suffers a seizure causing an accident, the courts would find the defendant guilty. Grant’s extensive research on the topic of criminal liability and automatism expounds the same argument I propose that sleepwalking is a form of automatism. In Collins’ novel, Blake is the criminal sleepwalker. However, during his state of somnambulism, or automatism—performing unconscious and involuntary actions—his actions are guilty. He also possessed a perverse motivation for stealing the diamond, but it does not necessarily mean that he should be indicted on charges of theft. Though Blake was consciously aware of his insomnia, and his guilt about giving the moonstone to Rachel, this condition does not qualify him as a guilty sleepwalker. Blake was unaware of the opium he was given, and was unaware that sleepwalking might result. During Blake’s somnambulistic trance, he can be considered an automaton, in the sense that he was unconscious of his involuntary actions.

Alternatively, in Poe’s short story, Egaeus was consciously aware of his mental disorder, but the question is whether he has control over which objects become his obsession during a fit of monomania. Joel Eigen argues, and I agree, that Poe implies that a monomaniac does not have control over their objects of fixation; in fact, he calls a monomaniac’s behavior “blind impulse and impaired self-control” (31). This is where the complications arise in regards to responsibility. If during Egaeus’ monomaniacal fit he is acting involuntarily on “blind impulses,” but is consciously aware of his mental disorder, is he culpable for criminal actions? Is suffering from monomania the same as suffering from automatism? Ruth Harris provides an interesting simile to define automatism: “in this state subjects seem like human marionettes, dancing to the strings of the operator” (167). But who is the operator? Our unconscious desires? Perhaps. Victoria Ryan quotes Frances Power Cobbe: “is this instrument ourselves? Are we quite inseparable from this machinery of thoughts?” (48, original emphasis). Ryan argues that during a state of automatism, we are not ourselves; we are not dictated by conscious thought, but rather by some inner unconscious, perhaps ulterior motivation. The automaton is capable of “convers[ing] with others,
operating machinery, and perform complex tasks among other things” (Sarantis 1), but the most important factor is that even though the person—in a state of automatism—is capable of performing regular and habitual actions, and is doing so without conscious thought, the person is still driven by some sort of motivation.

So it seems both Blake and Egaeus can be classified as automatons, engaging in legal or illegal actions because they are without conscious thought and performing involuntary actions. This suggests there is a parallel between automatism and somnambulism, as well as overlapping characteristics. For example, in the case of Egaeus, he may have either blacked out or fallen asleep, but Poe leaves it unclear. According to Joel Eigen the only difference between automatism and somnambulism is that automatism does not always occurring during sleep, it can occur during episode of hypnosis or “menstrual distress” (132). However, because the similarity between automatism and somnambulism is so great, the two states can be interpreted as one in the same during sleep: “as evidence of man’s strictly earthbound nature, determining that people are mere machines” (Stiles 78). The scientific and medical communities provide a thorough exploration of the automaton’s responsibility and human agency, which mirror that of somnambulism; however, in the legal realm the defense of automatism or somnambulism is more complicated due to the need to establish a prior motivation for the criminal behavior.

Each portion of the legal defense of somnambulism or automatism requires an in-depth analysis of every crucial detail from the events that occurred before the alleged criminal fell asleep to the alleged criminal’s medical history (as seen in Cockton’s Sylvester Sound). For Blake and Egaeus, the question of whether they should be held responsible for their criminal behavior is not simple. Yes, each had a prior motivation before falling asleep, but they were also unconscious and performing involuntary actions during their trances. And then, does the fact that Egaeus knew he suffered from monomania, make him culpable as it would make an epileptic who suffers a seizure while driving as Grant suggests? It is difficult to answer such questions in a general sense: each individual criminal case is unique; therefore, questions of criminal responsibility, human agency, and automatism depend on a case-by-case basis and the contributing factors. In closing, I contend that Blake should not be held responsible for stealing the moonstone simply because without the opium given to him by Candy, he would have suffered another night of insomnia. As for Egaeus, he should be held legally responsible for the mutilation of Berenice because he was consciously aware of his monomania and his obsession with her teeth prior to falling asleep, suggesting he possessed guilty intentions and motivation for causing Berenice harm. By investigating Poe and Collins’ sleepwalkers and the crimes they committed, I believe that these authors included the circular discussion of scientific research on mental disorders—particularly that of somnambulism—to aid in the public’s understanding of the medical, legal and psychological issues that a sleepwalker can face when a crime is committed by a person in an unconscious state, as well as adding to the new non-traditional Gothic genre of writing that lends itself more towards the influential discourses of medicine and law in order to evoke a more realistic horror in their readers.

Works Cited


