Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Nineteenth-Century Contexts

An Interdisciplinary Journal

ISSN: 0890-5495 (Print) 1477-2663 (Online) Journal homepage: http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/gncc20

Victorian Blockbuster Bodies and the Freakish Pleasure of Looking

Sharrona Pearl

To cite this article: Sharrona Pearl (2016) Victorian Blockbuster Bodies and the Freakish Pleasure of Looking, Nineteenth-Century Contexts, 38:2, 93-106, DOI: 10.1080/08905495.2016.1135366

To link to this article: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/08905495.2016.1135366

NINETEENTH-CENTURY CONTEXTS, 2016
VOL. 38, NO. 2, 93–106
http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/08905495.2016.1135366

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Victorian Blockbuster Bodies and the Freakish Pleasure of Looking

Sharrona Pearl

The Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, USA

Introduction

Let us think together about pleasure. Is everything that we enjoy pleasurable, and can there be pleasure in that which we do not enjoy? And, poignantly, when and why do we feel the need to apologize for pleasure? Pleasure has been coupled with a variety of visual practices and experiences, and, at its extremes, has been tarred with the judgmental brush of fetish.[1] There are some things, it seems, that are not okay to look at. Or, more specifically, there are some things that are not okay to enjoy looking at. We look anyway, but we need another reason to justify doing so. When it comes to the extreme, the grotesque, the voyeuristic, the freakish, the inhumane, we can look only if we have a reason, and that reason is so often tied up with power, with knowledge, with control. It is okay to look at the freak for our own education and edification, just not for our own non-knowledge-based enjoyment, not to satisfy our own desires to be shocked, to be titillated, to be reassured, to feel *anything*. Not for our own pleasure. Not anymore.

So what does it mean when we – we the academics, we the commentators, we the critiques and scholarly interlocutors – look at sites that are forbidden from the non-educational pleasure gaze? To put it another way, what kinds of audiences are scholars, and what are the implications of our looking? My interest here is the freak archive, and I seek to pivot between the audiences of the nineteenth-century freak show and today's audiences for the industry this archive has produced. But I also want to challenge us to think about our own responsibility more broadly with respect to our historical materials. Does this responsibility differ when we are dealing with fiction rather than with historical events? How does the interrogation of performance frame the genre of our materials to complicate this division? And what about (as I shall look at in this essay) historical events that have become fictionalized, memorialized in the performance and media spheres? Do performances of the past contribute to the archive of its stories, and does our relationship (and responsibility) to that archive change accordingly?

Yes. Drawing on Rosemarie Garland-Thomson's provocative work on staring, I seek to reclaim looking as a way to open up a more honest dialogue about visibility and difference.[2] Garland-Thomson teaches us that disabled objects of the gaze can circumvent the power narrative by deliberately enrolling particular kinds of looking on the part of spectators. They do so by inhabiting their difference in obvious ways, thereby illustrating the extent to which we are all visually distinct. The analysis centers on contemporary practices of looking; I am interested in employing her framework to consider how archival subjects might also inhabit the space of empowered starees. To do so, I argue, scholars must look at the same objects differently, and must look at difference differently, as a universal rather than specific category. This requires shifting the heavily policed discussions of the historical freak show as exploitative, and/or redemptive, and/or erotic, and/or transgressive, to thinking about why these categories emerged and what work they do for scholars as observers. At the heart of my discussion rests a question about how looking at freaks has been (re)framed as medical. What kind of rehabilitation of pleasure is gained in rendering looking informational, even as this framing

CONTACT Sharrona Pearl spearl@asc.upenn.edu

is itself a way to gain power? Once we can answer these questions, I suggest, we as scholars can engage with pleasure directly, and, in Garland-Thomson's terms, stare – directly – and gain a new and more honest set of answers from our starees, who may be freaks but are also people.

In particular: Joseph Merrick and Sara Baartman are perhaps the two best-known Victorian freak displays. A tremendous industry has emerged around both figures, though these industries differ in interesting and provocative ways. Their respective industries have created new audiences for their freakery, audiences that are themselves implicated in the act of looking, and perhaps gawking, and perhaps voyeuring. While Baartman's growing archive is situated more squarely in the academic realm (is looking at women, and black women, different than looking at white men?) and Merrick's straddles the worlds of entertainment, medicine, and scholarship, both depend on the engagement of a particular kind of informed pleasure for their continued development. In this essay, I will focus on the historical, historicized, and fictionalized (but are these all the same thing?) figure of Joseph Merrick, interrogating the nature of his display and enfreakment both for Victorian showgoers, newspaper readers, and hospital visitors, and for contemporary audiences for David Lynch's 1980 film *The Elephant Man*.[3] I will use the Baartman industry as a point of comparison, thinking through the differences between historicization as described by documentary and by Hollywood film, and the nature of the audiences for both.

Victorian freak shows

The literature on European and American freak shows is rich and growing. While the classic works have been based in literary and cultural studies and the history of display, later examinations have focused on the intersection between freakery and disability studies as well as freakery and history of medicine.[4] Recent scholarly innovations have turned our attention to the importance of performance as an analytic category for freakery.[5] I discuss the implications of the freakery historiography in the conclusion to this essay, thinking through the issues of audience ethics that I raise throughout my analysis. Before we consider the archival freak show audience (of which these scholars are a part), let us consider the historical one, exploring why people went to look and how their experiences were constructed.

Freak shows became popular as court entertainment in the mid-sixteenth century, steadily spreading beyond to the palace to the populace in fairgrounds and theatrical exhibits. They found their greatest popular audiences in the nineteenth century, which also marked the beginning of their decline, as the medical narrative reframed the appropriate location for human anomalies from the stage to the hospital. Harriet Ritvo has argued that anomalies helped to define the boundaries of the rules of nature. Scientistic explanations removed the mystery from freakery and established the dominance of natural knowledge in ordering the world (Ritvo 286). And, indeed, anatomists, zoologists, and medical professionals were certainly among the audiences for freak shows, using human and animal displays as data points for their remapping of the boundaries of the understandable environment (Ritvo 285). Doctors, Leonard Cassuto has claimed, took the spectacle of the freak and made it into a case, which has the effect, it seems to me, of medicalizing the performance and changing the nature of the display (326–33). According to this kind of analysis, looking at freaks was, for scientists and doctors, an exercise in gaze-transformation; unlike the plebian audiences, who looked in order to be entertained and/or titillated, doctors looked at freaks from a medical or educational point of view.

Some doctors did gaze in order to diagnose and maybe even heal. And some did not. Even within the medical community, there were numerous debates about what it meant to look at the deformed body. Lisa A. Kochanek has chronicled the debates between the two leading British medical journals, the *Lancet* and the *British Medical Journal*, around the *Lancet's* publication of medical abnormalities. While the *Lancet* claimed to be establishing clinical categories around abnormalities, the *BMJ* condemned the accompanying innovations as obscenity, marking the line between scientific and voyeuristic gazes as being very thin indeed (Kochanek 227). If we examine the language with which Joseph

Merrick's doctor and benefactor Frederick Treves initially described his second most famous patient (stage name: "The Elephant Man"), medical terminology hardly enters. Though Treves does attempt to classify Merrick's appearance, he uses colloquial – if highly vivid and highly pathos-laden – images.

According to Treves' memoir, his first reaction to Merrick was far from medical, couched as it was in horrified and outraged language. He called the blanket-covered Merrick "the thing," soon revealed to be "the most disgusting specimen of humanity that I have ever seen." Treves' reaction emphasized the extreme nature of Merrick's deformities, noting that "in the course of my profession I had come upon lamentable deformities … but at no time had I met with such a degraded or perverted version of a human being as this lone figure displayed"(3).

Treves was hardly alone in responding to Merrick with disgust, titillation, curiosity, and even a bit of fear. All these emotions and more were amongst those elicited by freak shows, which could be an overwhelming and, ultimately, profit-undermining experience. Medical language was deployed by show managers in part to structure the viewing experience and soothe discombobulated audiences, with the useful side benefit of lending educational status to the experience and scientific value to the freaks (McHold 130; van Dijck 540).

And yet, we have the complicated enjoyment best (if imperfectly) called pleasure. Mixed among the disgust, the fear, the horror, was the pleasure. For some, certainly, the pleasure came precisely from the horror, the sense of the forbidden, the unusual and unknown, the gothic intermixing of categories and kinds.[6] There was the reflexive aspect, the disgusting other being not-me, being *not* any of the viewers united together as the normal, the viewing crowd (Garland-Thomson, "Introduction"10). There was the cozy feeling of reassurance that the freakish body, the deeply abnormal, was not one's own modernized, standardized corporeal form (Petersen 291). (Though there is fear in the traces of the uncanny; as Freud has taught us, the uncanny is frightening because it is familiar, and the freaks on display put public what we fear in ourselves, even as our own possibly transgressive viewing practices might make us freaks as well.) And there was also, Franz Kafka would have us believe, a sense of awe in the face of great artistry and great endurance. The freaks that Kafka's fiction offers us, freaks based on his own engagement with the circus and burlesque entertainment, use their bodies as their canvases, displayed in the most public of ways (Blyn 140). What is the Hunger Artist if not a stirring combination of (categories that I explain below) the novelty act and the made freak? The Hunger Artist is a freak, and, as Kafka insists and shows us, an artist nonetheless.[7]

The joys of the gaze

What did freak show audiences see, and how did they look? Let us consider this question in the context of a set of case studies, concluding with our stars, Joseph Merrick and Sara Baartman. French movie critic Serge Daney has argued that in the 1980 David Lynch film *The Elephant Man*, Merrick is the subject of three distinct gazes: burlesque, modern, and classic, or, as he explains them, fun fair, hospital, and theatre (266–69). Daney's categories can be usefully modified for the Victorian freak show, during which, I claim, three similar modes of looking were being enacted, namely: the burlesque or permissible titillation, the medical/educational (as with the doctors I discussed earlier), and the theatrical. Different kinds of freaks were organized to appeal to different – if often overlapping – ways of looking and being looked at, depending on what kind of freakery they were enacting and to whom they were trying to appeal.

There were three basic categories of legitimate show freaks, with the expected duplicitous fourth. Born freaks were freaks whose condition appeared at birth; this category included conjoined twins, hairy females, midgets, and giants. Made freaks were people who manipulated their bodies in extraordinary ways, including extra-long hair and nails, tattooing, piercing, and earlobe and lip stretching. Novelty (or working) acts were those who could perform unusual and unexpected feats such as sword swallowing, fire eating, and snake charming. Made and novelty freaks align most easily with professional designations; they were performers whose choice to put their art on display is

least inflected with questions of options and agency. The fourth kind of freak show exhibit, the "gaffed freaks," were the phonies, those who appeared to be born freaks (false conjoined twins, hidden arms and legs, padded weight) but were really manipulating themselves in order to appear unusual (Bogdan 8).

The significant prevalence of gaffed freaks helped school audiences in what Clare Sears has called "the pleasures of suspicion," which, I suspect, emerged out of the feeling of superiority over other, more gullible viewers while at the same time lessening the responsibilities of compassion (Sears 182). So the crowd, despite being united against the abnormal, was itself fractured amongst believers and non-believers. Equally at play in this form of pleasure was the ever-present, if at times vanishingly small, possibility that the evidence of the eyes was indeed reliable, that the wonderous and extraordinary was also the extant. Despite the attempts by some scientists to, as Foucault has argued, medicalize the abnormal (and remove its wonder), for some freak show attendees, wonder, magic, other-worldliness and other-timeliness, were still very much on display, sometimes even heightened by the ever-present question, the lingering or even aggressive skepticism.[8]

Of course, many of the freaks were not gaffed, though there were very carefully constructed and communicated, sometimes by their own work and sometimes by their managers. In writing this, I brush against the vexing issue of agency and exploitation, which has been the subject of numerous debates in the freak show literature. At the heart of many of these debates is a methodological question about how best to study the display of human bodies. Nadja Durbach, for example, has claimed that Victorian freaks cannot be studied under the auspices of disability, as they qualified as people who could work and did work according to Victorian poor law statutes, though this categorization fits awkwardly at best for born freaks (*Spectacle* 14–19). Sadiah Qureshi's work has shown us that bodies on display should be explored through performance studies and material culture analyses to supplement the zoological and museuological frameworks. Others, including Leslie Fielder and Paul Anthony Darke, have usefully deployed disability studies to examine the social and cultural role occupied by freaks.

And the economic one. To put it baldly, freak shows were in the business of making money. That they were able to do so – and they were – in the nineteenth century was the result of a number of converging factors.[9] It was only once there was a standard physical type that exceptions could be celebrated and reviled, and could act as performative objects of comparison (Garland-Thomson, "Introduction" 12). This assertion does not ignore the compelling history of tetrology so beautifully explored by Lorraine Daston and Katherine Park. Rather, it posits that the modern standardization efforts, found in multiple realms from industry to artisanal work to writing to exercise, created not the interest in freaks, nor the framing of the exceptional body, but the collective normalized body against which exceptions were measured. The extraordinary was always of interest to some; it was the mass audience which was new.

This audience came about not only because of its physical collectivity and the accompanying comparative mindset. The nineteenth century was the time of the public pursuit of leisure across newly developed social classes, with unprecedented and often worrying mixing of groups. Also, looking itself changed status in the nineteenth century, with increased power resting in the individual's ability to make sense of the evidence of his or her own eyes due to the rising prominence of physiognomic discourse.[10] Simultaneously, vision was revealed to be fallible and manipulable, partly because of new visual and recording technologies and partly because of the rising prominence of circuses and freak shows themselves.[11] Within this contradiction lay the source of pleasure that I outlined above, that of knowing better than others and deploying vision in superior and non-naïve ways.

The freak experience was not unambiguous, as Heather McHold has pointed out (24). Mary Poovey has argued for the destabilizing power of anomalies, which bound the limits of ideological certainty (12). Freak bodies were one such problem; even as they provided non-freaks with the security of normalcy, they also raised the specter of the seen-by-others exception. Compounded with late nineteenth-century fears of degeneracy and mental deterioration, the pleasurable experience of

looking at freaks was also tinged with a kind of pain that may have either enhanced it (for some) or undermined it (for others).

Beyond the novelty, why would pained people look? Or, why did they keep looking? The freak body gave viewers permission to gawk in ways that were often highly eroticized and tantalizing, an allowable or burlesque titillation that did not absolutely cross lines of sexual transgression. Where else could Victorians look at almost naked female bodies? In what other contexts was body hair made so public, and even celebrated? Rare was the unstigmatized venue in which to observe real-life (enfreaked) couples interacting, with strong hints of their active sex lives often witnessed by proudly displayed offspring. These displays, in other settings, were highly taboo; in the freak show, they were the point. The very freakishness of the people on display provided the limit that their display would otherwise be crossing.

An aura of forbiddenness was carefully cultivated around certain exhibits to heighten the viewer's sense of titillation and excitement. Krao, a hairy young woman displayed as "the missing link" (one of many to hold that title) was highly, if carefully, eroticized for her audiences. In France, as Nadja Durbach has chronicled, her animal sexuality was explicitly heightened in her posters and pamphlets, playing on the possibilities of inter-species breeding imagined through Krao's hairiness and supposed bestiality ("The Missing Link" 144). In England, by contrast, it was Krao's human femininity and physical loveliness that sexualized her, creating a more subtly dangerous, though equally exciting, rhetoric of alternative sexual encounter.

More generally, managers deployed various techniques to frame the viewing experience. Pamphlets, distributed throughout the fairground or display site, whetted the appetites of the audiences, some of whom had come ready to view, others entirely opposed to the idea, and still others with a kind of half-curiosity that welcomed persuasion. The specific language of the spiel helped prepare audiences and set their expectations as it lured them to pay the entrance fee. The experience of paying the fee itself, and the subsequent admission ritual of passing through a darkened room, heightened the viewer's excitement and expectation.

All parts of this process were carefully constructed. The pamphlets were often photographically manipulated, either through straightforward visual tricks such as putting a giant next to a particularly short person or dressing an obese person in especially tight-fitting clothes.[12] More technical manipulations were also deployed, including retouching photographs to restore freakish features that had been medically removed.[13] These were done, of course, to enhance the extremity of the experience, to make the freaks even more dramatically different, heightening the titillation, or the scientific interest, or the drama, or all of the above. Sometimes this was done to assure the viewer how very different he or she was from the unusual, aberrant, and extreme freaks. Sometimes, however, these extreme representations were designed to emphasize, in a kind of convoluted way, the similarity of freaks to their viewers. These manipulations raise for us the tantalizing and often highly personal question: what is freakier, what creates a more powerful viewing experience: similarity or difference?

The freak show and the uncanny valley

Masahiro Mori's concept of the "uncanny valley" gives some insight into the nature of our empathetic or repulsive reactions to human avatars. Mori's research showed an intriguing curve in the reactions of people to increasingly life-like robots. Initially, humans responded with growing warmth and empathy to these incrementally more similar avatars. At a certain point, however, the similarity became uncomfortable, and people's responses changed to disgust and repulsion. Past this point, as the robots became even less distinguishable from live human beings, the curve again increased as people almost could not tell the difference between the avatars and actual humans (Mori 33–35). In short, rather similar but identifiably different is fine; overtly similar but not quite the same is problematic, and almost indistinguishable evokes a reaction almost indistinguishable from that evoked by other humans.

Mori's principle has been applied in a range of social psychology studies and has found particular purchase in recent gaming and new media research as online avatars approach the asymptotic point of almost perfect representational overlap with live humans. The principles can also be applied to Victorian freaks and the ways in which their freakery and humanity was constructed. There were numerous ways that freaks – whose difference was, by their very existence as freaks, a given – were, for display purposes, made to be similar to their audiences. For example, the numerous (and highly lucrative) freak marriages between midgets or giants or fat men and ladies were paraded as comforting signs of middle-class regularity even amongst these most unregular types. The most famous of these unions were highly celebrated at the most elite levels of society; the 29 July 1871 marriage of the "North American Giants" Martin Van Buren Bates and Anna Hanen Swan was heralded by an audience for Anna at Buckingham Palace, where she received gifts of a diamond ring and a wedding dress from none other than Queen Victorian herself. A few days following the wedding, major dignitaries (including the Prince of Wales) fêted the celebrity couple at a private reception at the Masonic Hall (Bogdan 207).

Other more subtle markers of middle-class respectability were seen in the clothing and activities of a number of the freaks. Krao, the wonderous and titillating hairy missing link, was displayed as simultaneously savage and civilized; her savagery was what enfreaked her, but it was her civilization – as a rescued and rehabilitated lovely young lady – that made her such a fascinating and appealing exhibit (Durbach, "The Missing Link" 144). The discourse of Krao's domesticization offered a kind of comfort to viewers, allowing them to feel that Krao's display had a functional and even laudable purpose, while at the same time ideally evoking precisely the right kind of empathetic reaction that rested both on Krao's similarity, and, crucially, her difference. Her hairiness, carefully deployed according to context, was part of the process of recognizable enfreakment.

Resting as it did on both the illicitness of miscegenation and the excitement of erotic human femaleness, Krao's sensual hairy body was simultaneously similar and other, allowable and forbidden. The different kinds of Krao exhibits rested on various aspects of her appeal, eliciting at times the performance/theatrical gaze and the burlesque gaze. Both of these gazes, however, were dependent on the medical/educational gaze, which ensured the difference upon which her comforting similarity could rest. The medical/educational gaze is the framework upon which the freak version of the uncanny valley rests, assuring the difference that creates the uncanniness of the similarity. Without the medical/educational rhetoric, freaks become either mere players or grotesque anomalies, at whom looking is not obviously improving.

Sara (or Saartjie) Baartman, the so-called "Hottentot Venus," illustrates the uncanny valley from the opposite perspective. This entirely human, perfectly normal woman was in every respect displayed as different, other, even inhuman, precisely because of her humanness, and especially her femaleness. Often displayed in skintight clothing to emphasize her buttocks and labia, both of which were larger than those familiar to Europeans, Baartman's nudity was allowable and allowably titillating precisely because of her supposed proximity to animals (Qureshi 236). While Krao's difference was underscored through her similarity, Baartman's similarity was underscored through her difference. Viewers were pointed to see just how human she was, even in the face of all the evidence touting her as a kind of animal. As Sadiah Qureshi has argued, part of Baartman's appeal lay in her relevance as the manifestation of a poignant political debate (Qureshi 236). For some, Baartman's seeming lack of freedom contravened the recent abolition of slavery of Britain. The contextual nature of Baartman's appeal, which continued well beyond her lifetime, reinforces the educational aspect to her display; viewers could feel good not just about the biological information that she seemed to impart, but also their engagement with pressing global cultural and social issues.

Little or no attempt was made to domesticate Baartman in the ways of some of the other colonial and exotic freaks. Doing so would have undermined the story of her show, would have made her just another missionized or civilized product of the empire. Her freak body came to be only in the context of her freak presentation, which was meaningful in difference. Her sameness, her physical female body and her speech-possessing self, were not just the minimum of relatable humanity required

to inspire empathy, they were also the maximum. Anything more would have made her just another enslaved woman, which would have made her either uncomfortably similar and different, or uninterestingly similar and not different.

Baartman's access to speech – even the click-filled, often unrecognizable Khoikhoi speech – was an important part of the rather fragile framework of her humanity, relevant not just as part of her display but also her consent to being there. Speech was, perhaps above all else, the highly porous Victorian boundary between humans and animals. Porous because Victorians were obsessed with the idea of training primates to mimic humans through dress and speech, and boundary, because they could not do so.[14] Even as Victorians entertained fantasies of Baartman's animality, they granted her the basic humanity that made her presence politically exciting and perhaps legally complicated. Her ability to speak, and therefore, supposedly (though perhaps not actually) to speak out, alleviated viewers' guilt while heightening their pleasure in looking at her on display.[15] The possibility of hearing further allowed the looking.

Joseph Merrick, the so-called "Elephant Man," did not, while on display, seem to have speech. He did not seem to have much of anything at all except a grotesque physical appearance. His apparent lack of speech allowed his managers, freak show and medical, to cast him as a not-quite-human. Merrick's doctor, Sir Frederick Treves, quite fervently wished for Merrick's imbecility (another kind of non-humanity) in favour of the ability to recognize his own terrible state. Treves' wrote about his first examination with Merrick that "I supposed that Merrick was imbecile and had been imbecile from birth … The conviction was no doubt encouraged by the hope that his intellect was the blank I imagined it to be. That he could appreciate his position was unthinkable" (Treves 8). According to the stories of Merrick's redemption, these hopes for imbecility were unfounded and the dreams of oblivion were misguided. Both the unfoundedness and the misguidedness rested on the same principle: Merrick could speak. Merrick could think. Merrick, then, was human (Ferguson 120). The inside and the outside did not match, but the appeal of the inside was so great that it mastered the seeming hopelessness of the outer shell. This appeal did not stop people from looking, or even looking at Merrick as a freak. It just meant that the context of the freakery changed to one of contrast. Which did not mean that the humanized, hospitalized Merrick was no longer subject to the burlesque and theatrical gaze, but rather that the medical/educational gaze heightened the nuances of the other two; Merrick the human medical freak was an even greater freak than Merrick the unclassifiable natural mistake.

It was uncanny. Merrick's speech, Merrick's humanity, was uncanny. The most uncanny, and thus the most uncomfortable (and thus the most interesting, and most enduring) of all: Merrick, it turned out, was indeed human, as human – well, almost as human – as every other white male. And here, perhaps lies the greatest difference in the Merrick and Baartman industries: Baartman, as a woman and as a black woman, would never come quite as close (and never be quite as uncanny) as Merrick in the uncanny valley curve. The white man was always going to be the more fertile story, precisely because of his proximity to humanity, and, in this case, his asymptotic relationship to it. The white man freak is always more human than the black woman freak. And so, the white man freak is always more freakish, more uncanny than the black woman freak.

Joseph Merrick: The Man, The Myth

It makes sense to pause here and reflect on the Joseph Merrick Story, or, more properly put, the Joseph Merrick Stories. Most readers will be familiar at least with the name "The Elephant Man" from any number of sources, including the Lynch film, the Pomerance play, the Barenaked Ladies song in which he is featured ("If I Had a Million Dollars"), the diseases to which he has lent his stage name, and the numerous books discussing his story, including the one that started it all, the memoir of his rescuer and, in many ways, new manager, Sir Fredrick Treves.[16] Merrick's stage name has wider recognition than his actual name, speaking both to the ongoing attraction of his freak side over his personal side, and the confusion around what he was actually called. Treves,

for reasons still unknown, rechristened Merrick as John, despite the fact that his first name was Joseph. As Treves' writing set the agenda for the archive of Merrick both during his lifetime and beyond, for many of Merrick's chroniclers, John he has remained.

Joseph Merrick was born on 5 August 1862 with a disfiguring condition of unchecked growths from his face and body that began to manifest sometime between the ages of 3 and 5. Upon the death of his mother when Merrick was 12, he left his unsympathetic family for an equally unsympathetic life on the streets. Unable to earn a living due to the taunts and disgust inspired by his appearance, Merrick twice found himself in the Leicester Union Workhouse. In 1884, Merrick joined the freak show to which he proved a considerable asset, attracting large crowds and making and saving money. A then young Treves, eager to make a medical name for himself, passed along his card to Merrick in hopes that Merrick would consent to an examination. Merrick held on to Treves' card through his travels to Belgium after England banned freak shows in 1886 (in response to growing distaste for the display of human types on stage rather than in hospitals). The Belgium show manager proved to be abusive and dishonest, stealing Merrick's savings and abandoning him to his fate. Merrick found his way back to London, sick and weak, and was greeted in the Liverpool station by taunts and attacks. It was only by brandishing Treves' card that Merrick escaped the hoards under police escort to Treves' hospital, the London Hospital. Through a sympathetic letter published in *The Times of London*, hospital director Richard Carr Gomm raised enough funds to guarantee Merrick's life occupancy in the hospital as well as his reception by the interested, voyeuristic, concerned, and novelty-seeking among high society. Merrick entertained a number of visitors, attended the theatre, and travelled to private and country houses until his death (either self-imposed or accidental) of asphyxiation brought about by his condition on 11 April 1890.

This is the bare bones story of how Merrick came to be exhibited not in the freak show but in the hospital. There are various narratives that have been imposed upon this story; most trenchant is the tale of Treves' dramatic rescue of the abused and suffering sideshow act whose humanity was discovered and nurtured only upon his removal from the inhumane conditions of his work. Under Treves' gentle care, Merrick flourished, demonstrating not only his ability to speak and read, but a keen intelligence, a beguiling sense of grace, and a charming personality that endeared him to his many visitors and interested admirers, including Alexandra of Denmark, the Princess of Wales, and even Queen Victoria. Treves saw first to Merrick's basic human needs: food, clothing, shelter, bathing, and overall respiratory health (which had been considerably weakened in Belgium); in so doing, Treves provided the conditions of possibility for Merrick's basic humanity to emerge and thrive.[17]

This is the version of the story that Treves himself recorded, and upon which the Lynch film was based. What draws my attention now to Merrick, aside from the richness of the Elephant Man industry, is the way his story enrolls multiple audience gazes across a variety of settings. Merrick was himself situated in the freak show, in the hospital, and in the theatre; in all three institutions, his presence was due entirely to his own physical condition. In all three institutions, his presence was doing work to support his existence in it, and in all three institutions, the work he was doing was allowing others to look at him. These three institutions allow me to interrogate the different audiences and ways of looking, and to ask if they are in fact different. And to these three I add a fourth institution with its own accompanying audience: the institution of history. Does Merrick's presence in history – also earned through his freakery, also earned through the interest looking at him generates – enroll a different kind of gaze? Are we, as historical observers, yet another manifestation of the burlesque, and the medical/educational, and the theatrical way of looking? And are we, as scholars, different kinds of audiences than other historical observers? Are our ways of looking different when we watch the film than when we read the primary sources, or the secondary scholarly sources, or look at pictures, or listen to songs, or track diagnoses? What kind of gaze is the scholarly one? Does it matter?

And the movie: David Lynch's *The Elephant Man*

Merrick's story could have been made for the movies. Reading the Treves memoir is almost like reading a script; Lynch followed Treves' narrative closely, and it is not in the narrative that the genius of the film lies. Rather, Lynch's brilliance is in co-opting his audience to occupy precisely the same space that Merrick's original audience did. Unknowingly, perhaps even unwillingly, the film's viewers – who are guided to disdain the film's freak show audience, challenge the motives of the film's hospital audience, and view with suspicion the film's theatrical audience – realize, eventually and uncomfortably, that they (we), are also audiences, and that the way we not just look but consume images of Merrick is much the same.

In the film, the audience does not even see Merrick for the first 45 minutes. Masterfully building the tension, and the fear, of what this hideous creature might look like and what the reaction to him might be, Lynch keeps Merrick tantalizingly just out of view (Bennett 147). In so doing, Lynch also builds our desire, a desire we may later regret, for consummation of vision. Lynch builds our desire for (freakish) pleasure. Lynch builds our desire to see.

In Lynch's grainy black-and-white Victorian industrial landscape, our first look is not one of compassion, or gentleness, or careful care. We are shocked, and then quickly, we are shocked no more. Not because Merrick is not shocking; he is grotesque, carefully and accurately grotesque, with hours of historical research and makeup innovation having been poured into his filmic appearance.[18] We are no longer shocked because our seeing becomes quickly habituated. We become used to the grotesque, and only partly because our looking is mediated by the distance provided by film. We identify quickly with Treves (the obvious hero, the only character we really get to know), and if he can take it, so can we. It is only in moments of new encounter, when the (lower-class) hospital nurses or street rabble see Merrick and scream, that we are reminded of our own quickly tamed reactions and forced to evaluate them.

Our first glimpse of Merrick is dark, as is the streetscape itself. Lynch's London is dark, and dangerous, and full of predators. The hospital, and the medical advances it represents, is light, optimistic, and full of hope for Merrick and other patients. The streets are the site of the working class, poor, dirty, and diseased, and the hospital, the theatre, and Treves' own drawing room are the sites of the good, the clean, the healthy (Darke 332). The sites of the rich are the sites of the ideal future rather than the addled present. Merrick provides the link between the two, the model for how the dirty can become clean, the uncivilized can become civilized, the inhuman can become human, through the progress of medicine, even as Merrick's own progress towards normalcy can only be achieved through his own death.

Lynch, like Treves, continually emphasizes Merrick's desire for impossible normalcy. Merrick's desire to sleep like other people, which he is prevented from doing by the weight of his neck, is only one of many (and perhaps the most private) of the barriers to his full-fledged humanization. A more public, if vexed, barrier revolves around the question of sex; as Treves' memoir makes clear, Merrick's genitals were unaffected by his condition. Here, the barrier was not biological, but – as with many freaks – revolved around fears of degeneration and corruption.[19] Merrick's entire existence in the hospital then, is a kind of game in which the barriers are never tested because we always know they are there. He can become *more* human, *more* civilized, *more* clean, but ultimately, and despite (or as epitomized through) the various props he acquires – a shaving set he cannot use, an art project he will not publicly display – in the logic of the film, Merrick can never become fully human. It is an open secret in which all the characters collude. It is an open secret in which we, the audience, participate. And about which we feel very uncomfortable, even as we comfort ourselves with the reassurance that it is just a movie. Our compassion is stirred and seemingly satisfied by the redemption arc of the narrative, right until the final moment when the narrative of humanity realized in life is undermined by its soothingly brutal realization only in death. We believe in the happy ending towards which the film carefully builds, and then are shocked to realize that it is precisely this happy ending in which we believe as the only real one.

Is the issue of our compassionate spectatorship more poignant in particular kinds of artistic representations? Are historically-based movies, plays, images, or novels, different than other kinds of archives? Do we have a special responsibility towards reflexivity in these kinds of narratives? This raises separate but related issues to the question of scholars' relationship to archives that also require looking, deliberately framed by the pleasure of the academic hunt and the acquisition of knowledge rather than the pleasure of looking. Or so we tell ourselves.

A comparison of the industries surrounding two star freaks, Joseph Merrick and Sara Baartman, might help shed some light on this question of looking and the way it plays out. Baartman's industry – strong as it may be – has never been commercialized in the same way. While she has been the subject of numerous scholarly articles, a series of documentaries, and an important activist effort to return her publicly displayed bones back to her native South Africa for burial, there has not (yet) been a Baartman blockbuster.[20] Or even an art-house film. The Suzan-Lori Parks play, *Venus: A Play* has had wide audiences and is used effectively as a pedagogical tool and creative model of this moment in history. It is a profoundly interpretive and highly powerful rendering, but it isn't about the historical Sara Baartman. It is about Sara Baartman the symbol, and Sara Baartman the representation. It couldn't be about her as a person, because we don't know enough. I wish we did. I think we could, if we approach the archive, and our archival practices, guided by Rosemarie Garland-Thomson's framework of staring, rather than embroiling ourselves in debates about the status of freaks. Let's step outside these debates and narrate their stories as people displayed as freaks, rather than objects of freakery and symbols of an enfreaking moment.

The question of Baartman's sexual life has been almost ignored, despite the fact that she had two children.[21] We in fact still know very little about Baartman's life history, character, and personality, and probably never will. While her eventual burial can be cast as a victory, the story of Sara Baartman is not and has never been a story of redemption. No matter who spins it.

Merrick, on the other hand, has left a different kind of legacy. Yes, there have been Merrick scholarly articles, and Merrick documentaries, and even some Merrick activism.[22] But somehow, unlike with Sara Baartman, it has become okay again to be entertained by Merrick *the historical figure*. It has become okay to speculate about his hopes, and dreams, and sexual desires in a biographical context. Unlike with the still-mostly symbolic figure of Sara Baartman, the more uncanny Merrick has been re-enfreaked, or perhaps was never un-enfreaked. Perhaps Merrick's seeming path to redemption and normalcy allowed his freak legacy – a legacy of providing pleasure to audiences – to continue without forcing subsequent generations of audiences to be implicated in his ongoing enfreakment. What they are bearing witness to, the narrative goes, is not his freakery but his escape from it. Though as Lynch so beautifully illustrates, every audience is a freak show audience, and, perhaps, every audience itself becomes enfreaked. Our compassion must collide with our discomfort to recognize our own fundamental lack of recognition of Merrick's inhumanity that is the very reason for our looking. We then must ask ourselves about our own pleasures and desires and wonder: who are the freaks, and who is drawing the lines? Or to put it another way: are these freaks really so very different from everyone else if we aren't afraid to look equally at everyone?

I don't think so.

Conclusion

As we know, the prominence of the Victorian-style freak show faded (with many lingering traces) in the twentieth century. The emergence of large-scale war and its attendant amputees and prostheses did its part to remove some of the romance, and also some of the distance, from the body of the displayed freak (Dennett 318). José van Dijck offers a more technologically driven reason, claiming that the rise of cinema changed the focus of freak shows to intervention, shifting attention from the unusual body to the ways it could be fixed. The new stars of these forms of display were not the bodies but their improvement, managed in the hands of the new subject of the gaze, the skilled and personable surgeon (van Dijck 541).

And today? Who are the stars of today's freak shows? There is no lack of medical/educational context in which to try to let ourselves off easy, despite what we know from David Lynch and the judgment we might pass on showgoers past. If the midgets in *Little People Big World* are viewed in the context of a station called "The Learning Channel," then somehow it becomes a pleasure derived from a serious undertaking rather than a mere pleasure, guilty or otherwise. If a program on *The Human Tree* is a documentary on "The Discovery Channel" then we are broadening our horizons rather than making ourselves feel comparatively normal. While the context does not make the freaks, it frames the ways in which we (allow ourselves to) experience them. The pleasure is Puritan rather than Performative, and then must not be about titillation at all. Titillation (for better or for worse, but certainly not for improvement) is *The Jerry Springer Show*, which is certainly not on "The Learning Channel."

Many (but not all) scholars' readings of Victorian freak shows are layered with discomfort, a reaction that stands in sharp contrast to the landscape of pleasure. This discomfort is partly an indictment on the past (hardly the ideal historical tool), but is also a reaction to the ways in which audiences become implicated in enfreakment (of themselves and their subjects) through the inevitable voyeurism of research. But what if Victorian freak show audiences were indulging in the same kind of pleasure to be derived from art museums, theatrical performances, dance productions, or even somewhat risky burlesque shows? And what if the scholarly audiences are indulging not (solely) in edifying research but also the same titillating erotic gaze with which they damn their historical actors? How do we make sense of the drawing of these lines?

I want to be clear that in asking these questions, I am not seeking to indict scholars for their research, precisely the same research with which I am engaged. This is not meant to be a value judgment, either on us or on history. I am pushing for a better understanding of the multiple motives behind looking, and to try to create some distance between the object of the gaze and the very act of gazing itself. Trying, at the same time, to think together about what happens if we de-entrench looking from voyeurism, pleasure from fetish. Looking, gazing, and even, in its most intense and unavoidable form, staring, as Elaine Scarry has taught us, can and maybe must be thought about as pleasure, in all its complicated and its sometimes very simple forms. Staring at beauty – certain kinds of beauty – is an allowable pleasure, except, of course, when it is not, when the beauty is contested and the staring is transgressive. But transgressions are themselves a moving target.[23] There are, and have always been, acceptable objects of the gaze, and likewise unacceptable ones. These definitions are not only deeply contextual, but also the result of specific discursive practices, the technologies of display, the sites of viewership, and the ways in which this viewership is memorialized and reimagined. And we, as scholars, have a particular responsibility as the ones currently engaged in the reimagining. Let's make freaks beautiful – or not. Let's make them people, like any other people, with all the difference and differences implied therein. Let's understand the multiple historical legacies around race and gender that get attached to and embedded in freakery, and the individual freaks themselves, and the stories we tell about them. And then, let's look again, for the first time.

Notes

1. The coupling of looking and pleasure has its origins in Freudian psychoanalysis with the term "scopophilia," literally "love of looking." Freudian scopophilia is associated with the anal stage of development. Jacques Lacan built on Freud's concept when he posited the establishment of subject formation through relations of looking. The term has endured through Laura Mulvey's now classic feminist film theory essay on the objectification of women in visual texts, particularly cinematic ones. Mulvey's work established the concept of the male gaze, linking it with spectacle and fetish. One of my goals in this work is to trouble the seemingly inextricable overlap between looking, fetish, and voyeurism. See Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema."
2. See Rosemarie Garland-Thomas, *Staring: How We Look*.
3. The Bernard Pomerance stage play *The Elephant Man* provides an important point of comparison to Lynch's film, particularly around the presentation of the title character. In the play, Joseph Merrick is styled without grotesque makeup or body prosthetics, a deliberate and fascinating choice on the part of Pomerance that raises numerous questions around the construction of fear and difference and the possibilities of habituation to extreme visual

material. The Pomerance play also deals much more explicitly with Merrick's sexuality and erotic desire, and the fear that his desire and possible procreative capacity inspired in his doctors and patrons.

4. See, for example, Leslie Fiedler and Anthony Darke.
5. See, for example, Nadja Durbach, *Spectacle of Deformity: Freak Shows and Modern British Culture* and Sadiah Qureshi.
6. Here I borrow Kelly Hurley's representation of the Victorian gothic as human bodies between species (10).
7. While "A Hunger Artist" is the most apt example of Kafka's engagement with freakery, a number of his short stories deal with characters who use their bodies as spectacular canvases, including "The Metamorphosis," "The Penal Colony," and "A Report to the Academy."
8. See especially Volume I of *The History of Sexuality*.
9. There has not yet been a comprehensive study of the economics of the Victorian freak show, which remains a fertile topic for further research. Some material dealing with the financial aspects of the freak show can be found in Bogdan.
10. For more on Victorian physiognomy, see Sharrona Pearl.
11. The manipulable nature of vision has been explored in depth by numerous scholars, including Jonathan Crary, Michael Leja, and Chris Otter. See also Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison.
12. There are, of course, numerous extant images illustrating these techniques; given that I am attempting to trouble our relationship to these historical materials, I have chosen not to show them here.
13. For example, Joseph Merrick's surgically removed "trunk" was reinserted, based on older negatives, in a series of pamphlets made in 1884 under the supervision of Sir Frederick Treves. See Jon McKenzie (25-28).
14. There was a tremendous literary outpouring of stories dealing with primates passing as humans, including Kafka's "Report to the Academy" and Wilhelm Hauff, "The Young Englishman," first published in German in 1826.
15. Baartman's agency was the subject of an 1810 England court case brought by the abolitionist Zachary Macaulay. Macaulay argued that Baartman was being kept in bondage, contravening England's recent abolition of slavery. When Baartman was interviewed by the court, she apparently said that she chose to stay in England to make money, preferring to suffer the cold and reap the financial rewards. The court ruled Baartman a free woman, unable to show that she was being kept against her will. See "Records Regarding the Hottentot Venus."
16. There have been multiple attempts to diagnose Merrick, and recent consensus has rested upon Proteus Syndrome, though for many years (and still, in some places today), neurofibromatosis was called "the Elephant Man disease," often scaring those who carried this diagnosis. For more on the psychological implications of Merrick's various diagnoses for later suffers of these two conditions, see Joan Ablon.
17. For an account of this see Ferguson and Treves.
18. The costumers and makeup artists on the film spent a great deal of time with Merrick's medical evidence to craft his representation accurately. The makeup and prosthetics used in the film were so remarkable that the Academy Awards instituted the Oscar for best makeup the following year. Lynch's decision to recreate the appearance of Joseph Merrick has been the subject of much critical commentary, particularly in contrast to the stage play of the same title by Bernard Pomerance, which presented the title character without extreme makeup or prosthesis.
19. While the Lynch film deals with sex only by implication, the Pomerance play engages explicitly with the fears of Merrick's sexual potency.
20. Baartman's skeleton, genitals, and brain were displayed in Paris at the Musée de l'Homme until 1974, when they were removed from the permanent exhibition. There had been calls for the return of her remains from the 1940s, but her case only became a cause célèbre following the publication of Stephan Jay Gould's chapter entitled "The Hottentot Venus" (291-305).
21. A recent biography does attempt to address this silence. See Clifton C. Crais and Pamela Scully.
22. Much of the Merrick activism centers around correcting Treves's use of the name John rather than Merrick's given name, Joseph. There has also been a great deal of energy put into correctly diagnosing his condition. See Ablon.
23. For more on this see Steiner.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Notes on contributor

Sharrona Pearl is Assistant Professor of Communication at the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania. A historian and theorist of medicine and the body, Pearl's first book, *About Faces: Physiognomy in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, was published by Harvard University Press in 2010. She has published widely on Victorian medicine and science, the history of photography, digital culture and body studies, and the ethics of images, which

was the focus of her edited volume *Image, Ethics, Technology* published by Routledge in 2015. Her book on face transplant surgery, *Face/On: Face Transplants and the Ethics of the Other*, is forthcoming by University of Chicago Press.

Works cited

Ablon, Joan. "The Elephant Man' as 'Self' and 'Other': The Psycho-Social Costs of Misdiagnosis." *Social Science & Medicine* 40.11 (1995): 1481–89. Print.

Bennett, Cameron. "A Representation of a Representation: The Elephant Man." *Film as Text* 43 (2009): 145–50. Print.

Blyn, Robin. "From Stage to Page: Franz Kafka, Djuna Barnes, and Modernism's Freak Fictions." *Narrative* 8. 2 (2000): 134–60. Print.

Bogdan, Robert. *Freak Show: Presenting Human Oddities for Amusement and Profit*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1988. Print.

Cassuto, Leonard. "Oliver Sacks: The P.T. Barnum of the Postmodern World." *American Quarterly* 52.2 (2000): 326–33.

Crais, Clifton C., and Pamela Scully. *Sara Baartman and the Hottentot Venus: A Ghost Story and a Biography*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2009. Print.

Crary, Jonathan. *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990. Print.

Daney, Serge. *La Maison Cinéma Et Le Monde*. Vol. 1. Paris: P.O.L., 2001. Print.

Darke, Paul Anthony. "The Elephant Man (David Lynch, Emi Films, 1980): An Analysis from a Disabled Perspective." *Disability & Society* 9.3 (1994): 327–42.

Daston, Lorraine, and Peter Galison. "The Image of Objectivity." *Representations* 40 (Fall 1992): 81–128. Print.

Daston, Lorraine, and Katharine Park. *Wonders and the Order of Nature, 1150–1750*. Cambridge, MA: Zone Books (Distr. by MIT Press), 1998. Print.

Dennett, Andrea Stulman. "The Dime Museum Freak Show Reconfigured as Talk Show." Garland-Thomas, *Freakery* 315–26. Print.

Durbach, Nadja. "The Missing Link and the Hairy Belle: Krao and the Victorian Discourses of Evolution, Imperialism, and Primitive Sexuality." Tromp 134–54. Print.

——. *Spectacle of Deformity: Freak Shows and Modern British Culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010. Print.

Ferguson, Christine C. "Elephant Talk: Language and Enfranchisement in the Merrick Case." Tromp 114–33. Print.

Fiedler, Leslie A. *Freaks: Myths and Images of the Secret Self*. 1st Touchstone ed, A Touchstone Book. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978. Print.

Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality*. 1st American ed. New York: Pantheon Books, 1978. Print.

Freud, Sigmund. *The Uncanny*. 1919. Trans. David McLintock. New York: Penguin Classics, 2003. Print.

Garland-Thomson, Rosemarie. *Staring: How We Look*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2009. Print.

——. ed. "Introduction: From Wonder to Error—a Genealogy of Freak Discourse in Modernity." *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body*. New York: NYU P, 2006. 1–22. Print.

Gerber, David A. "Interpreting the Freak Show and Freak Show." *Disability, Handicap & Society* 8.4 (1993): 435–36. Print.

Gould, Stephen Jay. *The Flamingo's Smile*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1985. Print.

Hauff, Wilhelm. "The Young Englishman." *Tales by Wilhelm Hauff*. London: Bell, 1900. 151–69. Print.

Hurley, Kelly. *The Gothic Body: Sexuality, Materialism, and Degeneration in the Fin De Siècle*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996.

Kafka, Franz. *The Penal Colony: Stories and Short Pieces*. Trans. Willa Muir and Edwin Muir. New York: Schocken Books, 1969. Print.

Kochanek, Lisa A. "Reframing the Freak: From Sideshow to Science." *Victorian Periodicals Review* 30.3 (1997): 227–43. Print.

Leja, Michael. *Looking Askance: Skepticism and American Art from Eakings to Duchamp*. Berkeley: University of California P, 2004. Print.

McHold, Heather. "Even as You and I: Freak Shows and Lay Discourse on Spectacular Deformity." Tromp 21–36. Print.

McKenzie, Jon. "Telepathy, the Elephant Man, Monstration." *Journal of Popular Culture* 28.4 (1995): 19–37. Print.

Mori, Masahiro. "The Uncanny Valley." *Energy* 7.4 (1970): 33–35. Print.

Mulvey, Laura. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." *Art after Modernism: Rethinking Representation*. Ed. Brian Wallis. New York: New York Museum of Contemporary Art, 1984. 367–74. Print.

Otter, Chris. *The Victorian Eye: A Political History of Light and Vision in Britain, 1800–1910*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2008. Print.

Parks, Suzan-Lori. *Venus: A Play*. Pittsburg: Theatre Communications Group, 1997. Print.

Pearl, Sharrona. *About Faces: Physiognomy in Nineteenth-Century Britain*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2010. Print.

Peterson, Shirley. "Freaking Feminism: The Life and Loves of a She-Devil and Nights at the Circus as Narrative Freak Shows." Garland-Thomas, *Freakery* 291–301. Print.
Pomerance, Bernard. *The Elephant Man: A Play*. 1st ed. New York: Grove Press, 1979. Print.
Poovey, Mary. *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1988. Print.
Qureshi, Sadiah. "Displaying Sara Baartman, The "Hottentot Venus"." *History of Science* 42 (2004): 233–57. Print.
"Records Regarding the Hottentot Venus." *The National Archives*: Public Records Office, 1810. Print.
Ritvo, Harriet. "Professional Scientists and Amateur Mermaids: Beating the Bounds in Nineteenth-Century Britain." *Victorian Literature and Culture* 19 (1991): 277–91. Print.
Scarry, Elaine. *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1987. Print.
Sears, Clare. "Electric Brilliancy: Cross-Dressing Law and Freak Show Displays in Nineteenth-Century San Francisco." *Women's Studies Quarterly* 36.3 (2008): 170–87. Print.
Steiner, Wendy. *The Scandal of Pleasure: Art in an Age of Fundamentalism*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1995. Print.
Treves, Frederick. *The Elephant Man and Other Reminiscences*. New York: Cassell and Co., Ltd., 1923. Print.
Tromp, Marlene, ed. *Victorian Freaks: The Social Context of Freakery in Britain*. Columbus: The Ohio State UP, 2008. Print.
van Dijck, José. "Medical Documentary: Conjoined Twins as a Mediated Spectacle." *Media, Culture & Society* 24 (2002): 4537–556. Print.