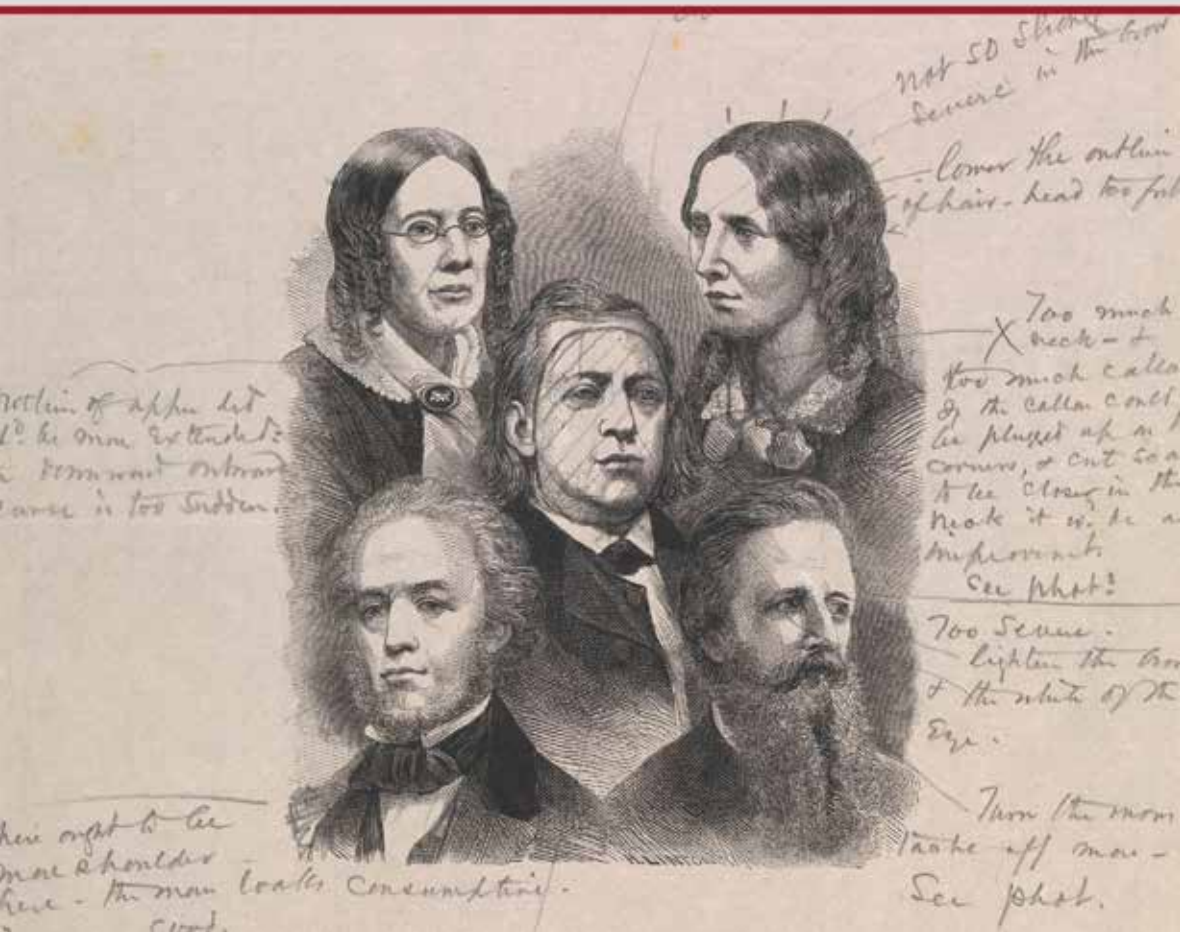
REPRESENTATIONS | HEALTH, DISABILITY, CULTURE AND SOCIETY

Articulating Bodies

The Narrative Form of Disability and Illness in Victorian Fiction

Kylee-Anne Hingston



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For my mother and my grandparents

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Introduction

Text as Body and Body as Text: How Literary Form Textually Creates the Body

In Charles Dickens's *Our Mutual Friend* (1864–65), Silas Wegg approaches a small, dimly lit shop that is crowded with the paraphernalia of taxidermy. Wegg 'stumps' with his wooden leg through the entryway and advances towards the shop's proprietor, Mr Venus. Since Wegg does not like the thought of being 'dispersed, a part of me here, and a part of me there' and would prefer 'to collect [himself] like a genteel person' (127), he has asked Venus to help provide him with a matching leg bone to complete his skeleton. During their conversation, a boy nearly absconds with a tooth in his pocket change from purchasing a stuffed canary, and Mr Venus threatens the boy, saying, 'You've no idea how small you'd come out, if I had the articulating of you' (126). In its earlier appearances in the novel, the word *articulate* and its variations indicate speech alone, but here, Venus uses it to refer to his profession as an 'Articulator of human bones' (128), relying on the word's anatomical sense: 'to reassemble (individual bones) to form a skeleton' ('Articulate'). Yet Venus's use of the word nonetheless carries connotations of speech and conveys the potential for speech to shape the body. Likewise, Wegg's prostheticized body connotes literacy to his employer Nicholas Boffin, who repeatedly calls him 'a literary man—*with* a wooden leg' (93). Distinction between body and word frequently collapses in this novel teeming with unstable bodies, hidden wills, encrypted letters, incomplete literacy, and false identity.

Of course, *Our Mutual Friend* does not stand alone in Victorian fiction representing the conjoined instability of word and body; indeed, depictions of illnesses, deaths, accidents, and characters with deformities or chronic invalidism are central to a plethora of nineteenth-century novels. In the first instalment of his 1880 essay 'Fiction, Fair and Foul,' John Ruskin minces no words in condemning such fiction's fascination with 'physical corruption' (943). He claims that, in this 'Fiction mécroyante,' a reader 'may gather into one Caina of gelid putrescence the entire product of modern infidel imagination, amusing itself with destruction of the body, and busying itself with aberration of the mind' (950). Using the language of pathology, Ruskin diagnoses the frequent appearance of decaying or aberrant bodies in the century's fiction not just as symptoms of the era's 'moral disease' (943) but even as 'medical evidence … of brain disease' in the novels' authors themselves—particularly in Wilkie Collins and Charles Dickens (949). His twenty-two-page diatribe against literary representations of disability, disease, and death epitomizes how nineteenth-century England's medicine and literature overwhelmingly conflated text and body.

The era's professionalization of medicine and its popularization of phrenology and physiology increasingly made the body a decipherable text, and medicine and literary studies often intersected as a result. Medical journals could carry literary reviews,[1] and, as Ruskin's 'Fiction, Fair and Foul' and Robert Buchanan's *The Fleshly School of Poetry* (1872) make abundantly clear, literary reviews often resembled '[medical] diagnosis' as much as '[literary] analysis' (Arata, 'Strange Cases' 172). In 'Fiction, Fair and Foul,' Ruskin's amalgamation of medical diagnosis and literary analysis at times even obscures whether he is addressing the author's physical body or body of work. The frequency with which body and text are fused in Victorian thought and rhetoric suggests to me that Victorian fiction's narrative form itself, to borrow Venus's double meaning, *articulated* bodies. As such, *Articulating Bodies* investigates the way narrative form categorized bodies and negotiated their meanings as the era's notions of disability and normalcy were developing.

1 See, for example, J.C. Bucknill's review of Tennyson's *Maud and Other Poems* in the *Asylum Journal of Mental Science*, October 1855. Although Bucknill notes the oddity of performing a literary review in a medical journal, his review is not the only one of its kind. The 1863 volume of the *Medical Critic and Psychological Journal*, for example, has two articles on psychology and sensation fiction ('Sensation Fiction,' 'Baits for Suicide').

Although nineteenth-century literary and medical theory's conflations of body and text may seem excessive, current narrative theory includes a similar correlation of body and text in using somatic terms such as *point of view*, *perspective*, and *focalization*, all of which describe the textual act of representing a character's or narrator's bodily and mental perception in narrative. In an article on focalization in Henry James's fiction, J. Hillis Miller points out that these terms metaphorically corporealize or even somaticize narrative. They falsely suggest a physicality that does not exist; they 'evade the fact that novels are made of words[,] … and elide the way the essential mode of existence of any literary fictional work is linguistic through and through' ('Focalization' 124–25). Miller challenges these metaphors that link body and text: 'No looking or bringing into focus exists in any novel, only the virtual phantasm of these as expressed in words' ('Focalization' 125). Although Miller is not writing in the service of disability studies, his troubling of the body-text association reminds me that the linguistic rendering of bodies is incorporeal. In a similar way, many disability theorists maintain that disability itself is a sociolinguistic concept—a linguistic rendering of bodies—rather than a corporeal actuality; as Lennard J. Davis puts it, 'the body is not only—or even primarily—a physical object' (*Enforcing Normalcy* 14). Likewise, my book argues that body narratives, including the social norms that define the body and its functions, are likewise textual or ideological constructions, 'virtual phantasms' of actual corporeality.

Nonetheless, disability studies also maintains the metaphorical link between body and text in its own narratological theories, even while questioning the way that this link has been used to oppress and marginalize the disabled population. Sharon L. Snyder and David T. Mitchell's theory of narrative prosthesis conflates body and language by arguing that narratives repeatedly use the disabled figure as a 'prosthetic' for plot impetus and resolution. Likewise, Ato Quayson uses the term 'aesthetic nervousness' in his book of the same name to describe moments in which 'the dominant protocols of [literary] representation' collapse in 'relation to disability' (15). Using similar conflation, Brett Smith and Andrew C. Sparkes not only claim that stories are 'projected from and inscribed into the body' but also that 'the body is a storyteller' (19). Taking this concept further, in a disability themed issue of the journal *Narrative*, Garland-Thomson writes, 'I would like to suggest that [the idea that body] shape structures story is the informing principle of disability identity' (114). In turn, Elizabeth F. Emens explains that, rather than implying that the physical differences categorized as disability provide the warrant for

that constructed label, Garland-Thomson's claim that shape structures story 'celebrates the power of bodies beyond the "norm" to create beautiful and powerful stories' (125).

These fusions of body and story exist because we fundamentally understand our bodies via social construction and narrative, and because we ultimately perceive those narratives and constructions through our bodies via the senses; as such, 'disability is a cultural phenomenon rooted in the senses' (Davis, *Enforcing Normalcy* 128), even though it is simultaneously a sociolinguistic concept. Thus, from a disability studies perspective, body and text cannot be wholly separated—and therefore *Articulating Bodies* does not try to separate them. Instead, maintaining awareness of body and text's inextricability, this book examines Victorian fiction's formal structure in addition to its thematic representations of disability, comparing what the text's 'body language' (formal techniques and structural patterns) and its thematic language (narrative content) tell us about Victorian disability. Moreover, by identifying the tangible ways in which Victorian fiction correlated body and text, *Articulating Bodies* demonstrates that disability's development was frequently dialogic, incongruously understood as both deviant and commonplace in its essence, neither immediately or irrevocably marginalizing a people, but rather struggling to negotiate the limits, capabilities, and meanings of human bodies.

My formalist analysis of Victorian fiction therefore focuses on the 'body language' of narrative form. As Quayson's *Aesthetic Nervousness* encourages critics to read disability 'within the wider discursive structure of relations among different levels of the text' (25), *Articulating Bodies* inspects both the shape of the narrative's plot (for example, the linearity of a *Bildungsroman* or the web-like network of episodic serial fiction and family chronicles) and focalization, the formal technique within the narrative that simulates physical sensation for the reader. My investigation of disability's function 'among different levels of the text' differs from Quayson's in two key ways, however. First, while his study follows 'thematic clusterings,' both to demonstrate how aesthetic nervousness transcends literary periods and representational modes[2] and to avoid 'the suggestion of evolution and change in the representation of disability' (28), this book aims to locate intersections of development between Victorian literary form and disability. Second, while Quayson considers focalization in his chapter on disability in Toni Morrison's fiction, noting how her

2 For example, one chapter argues that aesthetic nervousness functions even within the history of Robben Island in the Caribbean.

narratives 'encourage us to always be prepared to shift perspectives along with the characters' in such a way that 'the various meanings [of disability in the novel] themselves shift, dissolve, and blur into one another' (87, 88), *Articulating Bodies* dwells on focalization as a central method through which Victorian fiction constructed human corporeality.

Early narrative theorists such as Norman Friedman originally called this formal technique *point of view*, but because the name 'combined perspective with narration and thus mixed the figure who perceives with the one who narrates,' later theorists such as Gérard Genette and Mieke Bal used the more abstract (though still somatic) term *focalization* to make a distinction between narrating and perceiving (Herman and Vervaeck 31, 71). Most recently, critics such as Burkhard Niederhoff, Tatjana Jesch, and Malte Stein have argued for a distinction between the terms *perspective* and *focalization* that separates *focalization* from the subjectivity of fictitious individuals, thus making it distinctly abstract. Arguing that Genette's original use of *focalization* refers 'to knowledge and information' rather than to perspective (119), Niederhoff applies the term only to 'selections of narrative information that are not designed to render the subjective experience of a character but to create other effects such as suspense, mystery, puzzlement, etc.' (122). Jesch and Stein argue that even Niederhoff's distinction is not strong enough and instead define *perspectivization* as 'the representation of something from the subjective view of a fictive entity (narrator or character)' (65) and *focalization* as 'as the author's temporary or definitive withholding of information from the reader' which may or may not be filtered through perspective (65).

However, I assert that what Jesh and Stein call *focalization* is in fact a broader narrative technique of which focalization can be a part. Plotting necessarily requires the temporary withholding of information at points; narrative information cannot be given all at once. To make *focalization* refer to all methods of restricting knowledge in narrative proves not only confusing, since the term has referred to matters of narrative perspective since Genette first used it, but also somewhat etymologically unwarranted. The word *focalisation* entered the French language in the nineteenth century as a technical term in physics, referring to the action of focusing or to the result of that action ('Focaliser'). It derived from the term *focal*, which referred to lenses and mirrors at the time of its derivation, but by the twentieth century was used figuratively to imply a convergence of elements ('Focal, ale, aux'). Its etymological connotations are of narrowing in, of centring, rather than of leaving out. Thus, the term *focalization*

refers to how narrative limits information by narrowing access to it through an agent, be it narrator, character, or non-human object (e.g. 'Allegory' in *Bleak House*), such that the narrative result may or may not be the 'suspense, mystery, puzzlement, etc.' that Niederhoff ascribes to it. Therefore, since most focalization theory still defines it as such, I will use the term *focalization* to refer to 'the textual representation of specific (pre)existing sensory elements of the text's story world as perceived and registered … by some mind or recording device which is a member of this world' (Margolin 42).

Moreover, I would argue that the use of focalization *necessarily* evokes a sense of a perceiving body and that it is therefore central to understanding how narrative articulates bodies. In her seminal work on satellite theory, Julia Miele Rodas explains that the underlying purpose behind the freak shows and museums of deformity prevalent in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was not to ask, as P.T. Barnum did, 'What is it?' but rather to pose the 'greater and more immediate query': 'who or what am I in relation to this other creature?' (59). In narrative, authors both ask and answer a similar question for their readers through focalization: 'Who or what am I in relation to this character?' Whether readers share focalization *with* certain characters, at an ironic distance or at a personal closeness as the narrator's tone dictates, or whether they focalize *on* characters from a point external to the narrative, affects how they view their own subjectivity in relation to those characters.[3] While Miller and other narratologists may feel uncomfortable with how the terms *perception*, *point of view*, or *focalization* seem to 'suggest there are centers of perception in a narrative text that approximate human beings and that apparently think and feel as we all do' (Herman and Vervaeck 71), ultimately that is precisely what the technique *ought* to do—it acts to inform readers of what human beings are, and what they might think or feel, by textually producing a centre of perception.

Moreover, as disability theorists have noted, perception—especially visual perception—is integral to the construction of disability. Davis contends that 'Disability is a specular moment' in which a normative-bodied observer responds to the sight of non-normative bodies and behaviours with 'horror, fear, pity, compassion, and avoidance'

3 A recent study by psychologists Geoff F. Kaufman and Lisa K. Libby corroborates this argument. Their research shows that the depth at which readers identify with characters is affected by focal distance (that is, first-person vs third-person description) as well as by the timing with which the character's marginal characteristics (such as race, gender, or sexuality) are revealed.

(*Enforcing Normalcy* 12). Likewise, Rosemarie Garland-Thomson describes staring as an 'interactive process' through which 'identity emerges' (*Staring* 10). Elsewhere, she explains that 'staring constitutes disability identity by manifesting the power relations between the subject positions of disabled and able-bodied' ('The Politics of Staring' 57). Herein, then, lies narrative articulation of body: through focalization, narrators convey the bodies and minds of those through whom they are focalizing, of those who are being perceived, and occasionally even of the 'narratees, implied audiences, and flesh and blood readers' (Phelan 51) and of the narrators themselves. Therefore, because this argument focuses on how fiction creates bodies through focalization—of characters, but also of readers and even non-character narrators—*Articulating Bodies* deliberately avoids referring to narrators as *he* or *she*, unless the stories deliberately gender them. To assign a gendered pronoun, even a neutral *s/he*, to a narrator is to assign it a body, one that the text itself may not have given.

Since focalization articulates bodies in fiction, it is not a coincidence that nineteenth-century novels are known for having multiple and many-layered focalizations. In fact, Henry James's aesthetic grievance concerning the 'large loose baggy monsters' of Victorian fiction is ultimately with their focalization: he valorizes narratives streamlined through a single centre of consciousness or through a consistent variation between consciousness and 'scenic conditions' ('Preface' xvi), whereas focalization varies widely in Victorian novels. According to James, those multiple focalizations and multiple plots create pictures 'without composition' and generate stories 'cheated of [their] indispensable centre[s]' ('Preface' x). Of course, Victorianists have since argued that 'the ostensibly casual form' of these novels actually possesses 'formal structures and strategies' that reflect the contemporary concerns of the era (G. Levine 14–15). Indeed, formalist scholars of Victorian fiction have already established that this kind of narrative structure indicates cultural insecurity born from radical transitions in religion, science, and industry. George Levine argues that 'the Victorian novel is one of the most obvious symptoms of these transformations' and that its structure 'reflect[s] a deep sense of instability everywhere, not only in class relations' (16–17). J. Hillis Miller likewise claims that 'the new metaphysical situation' wrought by scientific and historical challenges to Christianity caused Victorian fiction 'to take the form of an incomplete self-generating structure … [that] often presupposes a concept of society not as a web of commensurate elements supported by some creative principle outside itself, but as a pattern of incommensurate elements' (*Victorian Fiction* 33–34). He notes that this pattern

has a distinct 'play of sameness and difference' that creates 'its own immanent basis for meaning' (*Victorian Fiction* 34).

Articulating Bodies argues that the 'play of sameness and difference' informs the basis for the meanings of the body and disability in the Victorian era, and that the irreconcilable tension of bodily 'sameness and difference' in fiction dwells in the discord between thematic and formal patterns. In the Victorian multi-plot novel, multiple perspectives and focalizations linguistically shape numerous identities with differing bodies and contrasting social and economic classes; this structure parallels the era's rhetoric that combined somaticism with textuality as well as with civic, national, and social identity. However, as Caroline Levine notes, 'Forms will often fail to impose their order when they run up against other forms that disrupt their logic and frustrate their organizing ends, producing aleatory and sometimes contradictory effects' (*Forms* 7). As the following chapters show, the various formal structures and thematic patterns in Victorian fiction collide to create conflicting ideas of disability, suggesting an abiding ambivalence in disability's development as a concept despite increased medicalization by the turn of the century.[4] Overall, Victorian fictional depictions of the disabled or diseased body structurally and thematically encode the Victorian sense of instability, and the body's connection with social identity manifests itself in the Victorian novel's narrative structure.

To examine this manifestation of body and identity in Victorian narrative structure, *Articulating Bodies* analyses the shape of the narrative in question, measures to what extent the narrative's form engages in conventions of its genre(s), and considers the role played by disability and the body in creating that shape and in fulfilling those conventions. In ascertaining narrative shape, I not only assess whether or not the tale is told in linear progression or whether its ending is open or closed; I also use Rick Altman's concept of *following*, which he articulates in *A Theory of Narrative*. Altman's narrative theory maps narrative structure by the character or characters on or through whom the narrative focuses; therefore, *following* relates to reader subjectivity and the place of the body in a parallel way to focalization. Surveying a multitude of stories from several centuries and regions, Altman argues that Western narratives always take one of three forms based on the number of

4 Similarly, in *Aesthetic Nervousness*, Quayson argues that such ambivalence regarding disability pervades all literary texts and so suggests that 'the social treatment of disability has historically been multifaceted and sometimes even contradictory' (14).

characters or groups of characters that the narratives follow: *single-focus narratives*, which follow single characters and emphasize the importance of the individual;[5] *dual-focus narratives*, which follow two characters or two groups of characters and emphasize social order and boundaries;[6] and *multiple-focus narratives*, which follow several seemingly unrelated characters or groups of characters and emphasize interconnectedness and external social forces.[7] As Altman explains, the three following patterns lend themselves to certain genres: for example, *Bildungsromane* are most effectively told as single-focus stories, whereas pastoral stories and melodramas tend to be dual-focus. Thus, I at times combine Altman's narrative theory with genre theory to demonstrate how structure, genre, focalization, and theme overlap and collide to produce conflicting Victorian concepts about whether and to what extent bodies produce or reflect individual morality, social corruption, personal psychology, Christian spirituality, and criminality.

To consider the structural conventions of genres as part of form, and to trace the nineteenth century's development of the formal articulation of the body, *Articulating Bodies* examines texts from across the nineteenth century, covering genres of fiction that typically rely upon disabled or diseased characters—the Gothic, social problem, sensation, sentimental religious, fairy tale, and detective genres. By tracing the patterns of focalization and narrative structure across six decades of the nineteenth century and across six genres, *Articulating Bodies* demonstrates that, as fiction's form developed from the massive hybrid novels of the early decades of the nineteenth century to the case-study length of *fin-de-siècle* mysteries, disability became increasingly medicalized, moving from the position of spectacle to specimen. In her history of nineteenth-century physiognomy, Sharrona Pearl finds a Victorian self-consciousness of this shift as early as 1855 (38–39), when *Punch*'s 'Progress in Waxworks' satirically argues that Madame Tussaud's renaming of the wax model criminal display from the 'Chamber of Horrors' to the 'Chamber of

5 Altman provides Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) as an example (160): the novel follows its heroine Elizabeth Bennet, stressing the importance of her thoughts and actions.

6 Altman uses the twelfth-century *The Song of Roland* as the main example, noting how the text moves back and forth spatially between the French and the Saracen forces (32).

7 Altman explains how George Eliot's *Middlemarch*, though it begins with a focus on Dorothea, 'spins out to a much broader following-pattern' that provides the stories of disparate characters, making the novel multiple-focus (272–73).

Comparative Physiognomy' means that 'the horrible no longer affords any attraction' to the average viewer, who now 'demands the scientific' ('Progress' 67). This shift also implies an altered mode of looking: viewers no longer 'gape with morbid interest' but instead scrutinize 'for the purpose of studying the lineaments of those villains, with a view to proper precaution against gentlemen of similar aspect' ('Progress' 67). Formerly objects of freakish spectacle inspiring horror, the wax figures under their new name become a scientifically authorized method of viewing and categorizing the other. Likewise, in Victorian fiction, the mode of looking at corporeal difference in fiction becomes increasingly scientific. Notably, however, the mid-century fiction I examine tends to focalize *through* disabled characters more than the earlier or later fiction does, displacing those characters from the objectification that the spectacle and specimen positions engender, potentially because this fiction is the chronological hinge between the Gothic spectacles of anomaly on the one end and the neo-Gothic medical specimens of abnormality on the other.

The works covered in *Articulating Bodies* each address somatic concerns specific to their time and to their genre. Prompted by Ruskin's identification of Victor Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris* (1831) as the *urtext* of fiction on deviant bodies, my first chapter argues that Hugo's pre-Victorian Gothic historical novel and its early English translations set a precedent for investigating the disabled body through the dialogic conflict between focalization and narrative form in Victorian fiction. With its monstrous yet humane hero, the novel responds to late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century scientific and philosophical theories that challenged the division between human and animal, using hybridity in form to do so. Like Ruskin, current critics have noted that Charles Dickens's *Bleak House* (1852–53) takes up *Notre-Dame de Paris*'s 'loose, decentralized, and structurally uneven' novelistic form as well as its 'obsess[ion] with "otherness"' (Zarifopol-Johnston, *To Kill a Text* 15, 16). However, like the other Condition-of-England novels popular from the late 1830s to the early '50s, *Bleak House* responds to the class disparity caused by industrialism and explores the differences and connections between the bodies of divergent classes to do so. By examining how *Bleak House* extends the dialogic conflict established in Hugo's *Notre-Dame* between external focalization on the disabled body and internal focalization through non-normative bodies, *Articulating Bodies*'s second chapter upends literary critics' conventional interpretation of disability in *Bleak House* as a symbol of social corruption, showing how the novel destabilizes that metaphorization when one of the novel's narrators reveals her identity as a person with a disability.

Moving from social to scientific concerns, the third chapter focuses on the most popular genre of fiction in the 1860s, sensation novels; it argues that sensation fiction used the disabled body to explore the cultural anxiety aroused by nascent psychology's challenges to the traditional belief in the soul as an entity separate from the body. Applying my methodology to two novels by the masters (if not inventors) of the genre, Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Aurora Floyd* (1862–63) and Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone* (1868), Chapter Three suggests that the form and focalization of these two major sensation novels reveal the anxiety with which Victorians were determining the body's connection to identity. Mid-Victorian Christian sentimental fiction was likewise invested in understanding this connection and therefore mapped the religious soul on the body. Though the heyday of Christian sentimental fiction may be said to have occurred in the 1850s or '60s, I focus on Charlotte Yonge's *The Pillars of the House* (1870–73) and Ellice Hopkins's *Rose Turquand* (1876), because their emphasis on incarnation theology demonstrates distinctly how Victorian Christianity connected spiritual identity to the physical body.

The 1860s and '70s also saw the emergence of the Victorian literary fairy tale, which placed child protagonists in fantasy settings to depict their moral, psychological, and physical development. These fantasy *Bildungsromane*, such as George MacDonald's *Princess and the Goblin* and Charles Kingsley's *Water-babies*, were often democratic in impulse, suggesting that behaviour and action rather than heredity and class determined heroism. In *The Little Lame Prince* (1874), Dinah Mulock Craik explores how the body affects an individual's development; she brings her disabled child hero to maturity (and relative normalcy) using magical prostheses—yet these prostheses also serve to remind readers of the instability of all bodies, including their own. Responding to fears about bodily and identity instabilities, the *fin-de-siècle* mysteries of Robert Louis Stevenson's novella *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886) and Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes story 'The Adventure of the Crooked Man' (1893) return to the Gothicism of Hugo's novel, but this time with a modern attention to degeneration theory and the developing sciences of neurology and criminology, the latter of which pathologized the criminal body and criminalized the disabled body. This survey of novels and stories reveals that as the understanding of the human body and of disability transformed according to changing social and scientific frames, Victorian fiction across genres and across time consistently both constructed and destabilized the notion of physical normalcy through the dialogue between narrative shape and focalization.

Negotiating Victorian Disability

Throughout the nineteenth century, the concept of the human body—where it begins and ends, how it connects to one's identity or soul, what it represents socially and culturally—was continually being negotiated in response to rapid changes in industry, technology, medicine, in social and economic class structures, and in religious doctrine and practice. Among these changes was the development of medical and social statistics which, Lennard J. Davis argues, produced the notion of 'normal' as the 'standard, regular, [or] usual' in terms of bodies and behaviour, therefore simultaneously producing disability through the concept that 'the majority of the population must or should somehow be part of the norm' (*Enforcing Normalcy* 24–25, 29). However, to assume that Victorians always categorized the body in terms of the normal/deviant binary is too simplistic. As Ruskin's distress over 'Fiction mécroyante' makes clear ('Fiction, Fair and Foul' 950), Victorians were very aware of and anxious about the malleability of bodies, and much of the developing concept of the disability in the era surrounds that very instability of the body and of its signification.

Of course, in the nineteenth century, the term *disability* or *disabled* rarely applied to physical or mental qualities as it does now. Instead, Victorians would more commonly have referred to such characteristics as *afflictions*. Moreover, bodies that would perhaps not be considered disabled today could well have been so in the nineteenth century, and vice versa. Therefore, in my use of the term *disability* in this book, I carry the current theoretical understanding that disability is not characterized by physicality, but rather by the social, cultural, and environmental conditions—conditions such as stigma, the cultural dread of dependence, or inaccessible architecture, for example—that shape the experience of that physicality to make it a disability. When studying Victorian disability then, one must consider what kinds of bodies would have been limited by Victorian social and environmental factors. For example, in Western society today, where eyeglasses signify fashion as much as a medical corrective, most near-sightedness causes few disabling limitations. However, it could disable a person in mid-nineteenth-century England, where eyeglasses could be prohibitively expensive and bore potential stigma for those who wore them. In Charlotte Yonge's *The Daisy Chain* (1856), for example, the May family bars daughter Ethel from using spectacles, since wearing them would 'make [her] one' (14)—that is, a spectacle—and her mother keeps her from holding the baby for fear she would hurt it 'because [she is] so blind' (15). Thus, even when the impairment seems minor—or even

when the impairment caused by physical difference is wholly social, as in the case of Esther Summerson's facial scars in *Bleak House*—the Victorian environment could transform it into a disability.

Moreover, the line dividing the physically 'normal' from the physically 'abnormal' was more fluid for Victorians than for those in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries relying on the medical model. For example, in her letters, Christina Rossetti continually reshapes her body's identity across relative categories of health and normalcy, at some points declaring herself 'strong enough not to call myself an invalid' (1: 278), at others calling herself an 'invalid inmate' (1: 392), and at still others claiming the identity of only 'semi-invalidism' (2: 154; 2: 160). Indeed, in the nineteenth century, the term *invalid* applied to many types of bodies, not just those with prolonged or chronic illness: for example, it could refer to someone with a cold, as in *Wives and Daughters* (1864–66); a woman in pregnancy, as in *East Lynne* (1861); a person requiring crutches due to a lamed foot, as in *The Pillars of the House* (1870–73); or a soldier removed from active duty due to injury or illness ('Invalid'). As Karen Bourrier notes, 'The lack of distinction in Victorian culture between illness and disability would seem to suggest the appropriateness of looking at representations of, for example, a clubfoot and a tubercular knee together, since the Victorians themselves would have done so' (*Measure of Manliness* 16). Therefore, to accommodate the breadth and fluidity of Victorian body categorization, I have chosen in this book not to focus on distinct disabilities, but rather to consider *all* bodies, remaining conscious of the texts' depictions of them as deviant or normal.

Significantly, analysing the body in Victorian literature according to these terms discloses that recent modes of understanding disability proposed by disability studies scholars and activists would not have been wholly unfamiliar in the nineteenth century. For example, Davis's spectrum view of the body, which he calls *dismodernism*, argues for 'a malleable view of the human body and identity' in which 'difference is what all of us have in common' (*Bending* 26). More recently, Jennifer Sarrett rejects the hierarchical modes of considering disabilities in terms of spectrums or levels and instead proposes 'a sphere of humanity' that 'recognizes a diverse range of abilities and capabilities within one person' and builds itself 'around the interconnected traits of interdependence, individuality, and … human diversity' (n. pag.). However, as my book illustrates, several Victorian authors who addressed the body's connection to identity and investigated identity's tie to corporeality already saw difference, interconnectedness, and interdependency as common denominators of humanity.

Despite disability's centrality to Victorian fiction, disability studies did not take its clear place in Victorian studies until the mid-2000s, even though such works as Davis's *Enforcing Normalcy* (1995), Rosemarie Garland-Thomson's *Extraordinary Bodies* (1997), and David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder's *Narrative Prosthesis* (2000) had by then firmly established disability studies approaches to literature and culture. Instead, works analysing the significance of body, disease, and medicine in Victorian culture generally used a Foucauldian lens to see how narratives of the diseased body 'helped shape Victorian thought' (Vrettos 3). This scholarship uncovered Victorian cultural concepts of the body and of disease that were encoded in popular novels, medical texts, and sanitation reform.[8] Some addressed the relationship between narrative form and bodies, such as Athena Vrettos's *Somatic Fictions* (1995), Miriam Bailin's *The Sickroom in Victorian Fiction* (1994), and Cynthia Davis's *Bodily and Narrative Form* (2000). However, while Vrettos's and Bailin's arguments are similar to that made in *Narrative Prosthesis*, in which Mitchell and Snyder show how disability is repeatedly used to incite and then resolve narrative, their monographs focus on how pathology oppressed Victorian women in particular; therefore, in not considering the oppressive effects of pathologization on bodies in general, their arguments unconsciously subscribe to the bias that sees health as inherently positive and sickness and disability as inherently negative.

Similarly, Cynthia Davis centres her narratological analysis on the narrator and doctor's shared role as 'detached observers' (3) and on narrative impulse towards closure as mimicking the closed body-system (4) without considering the marginalization implicated by the adoption of that pathologizing viewpoint in the novels she examines. More recently, Erika Wright's *Reading for Health* (2016) argues that health is a 'persistent, if often overlooked' (15) thematic and formal defining feature of the nineteenth-century novel and traces narrative patterns of disease prevention in mid-Victorian domestic realism; however, Wright leaves disability and disability studies largely out of her book. Without a disability studies perspective, these works (quite unintentionally) suggest an ableist standpoint that presumes that the healthy and non-disabled body is the norm, unquestioningly associating health with stability and order, and illness and disability with

8 See, for example, Peter Melville Logan's *Nerves and Narratives* (1997), Pamela Gilbert's *Disease, Desire, and the Body in Victorian Women's Popular Novels* (1997), *Mapping the Social Body* (2004), *The Citizen's Body* (2006), and *Cholera and Nation* (2008).

instability and disorder. Nonetheless, by historicizing the era's somatic rhetoric and examining its literature's use of disease and illness as metaphors for disjointed personal and social identity, these books have provided valuable stepping stones from which to analyse the role of medicine and the body in nineteenth-century British literature.

Disability studies approaches to Victorian literature and culture specifically began to appear in the early 2000s with chapters in cross-disciplinary disability-centred texts such as *Enabling the Humanities* (2002)[9] and *The Body and Physical Difference* (2002),[10] as well as with monographs such as Mark Jackson's *The Borderland of Imbecility* (2000) and David Wright's *Mental Disability in Victorian England* (2001). But by mid-decade, the publication of Maria Frawley's *Invalidism and Identity in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (2004), Stoddard Holmes's *Fictions of Afflictions* (2004), and Julia Miele Rodas's 'Tiny Tim, Blind Bertha, and the Resistance of Miss Mowcher: Charles Dickens and the Uses of Disability' (2004) established disability studies as a new and vital facet of Victorian studies. By using theories of disability to analyse the creation of the subjective identity of the invalid (Frawley), the use of disability to elicit emotion in melodrama and courtship plots (Stoddard Holmes, *Fictions of Affliction*), and the formation of able-bodied identities in relation to others' disabilities (Rodas, 'Tiny Tim'), these scholars discuss the construction of disability as an identity in the Victorian era and look for the spaces where these constructions and the borders between ability and disability break down. Moreover, Rodas's 'Mainstreaming Disability Studies?', published in 2006 in *Victorian Literature and Culture*, created awareness by delineating the marginalization and neglect that disability scholarship faces within Victorian studies, and by calling on Victorianists to establish disability's centrality to Victorian studies.

Since these seminal works, Victorian studies has seen the publication of many disability studies articles, some in journal issues devoted to disability and the body in the Victorian era,[11] as well as further monographs. Primarily, these works focus on disability's social

9 Martha Stoddard Holmes's 'The Twin Structure: Disabled Women in Victorian Courtship Plots.'

10 Cindy LaCom's '"It Is More than Lame": Female Disability, Sexuality, and the Maternal in the Nineteenth-Century Novel' and Maria Frawley's '"A Prisoner to the Couch": Harriet Martineau, Invalidism, and Self Representation.'

11 See, for example, the autumn 2009 issue of *Victorian Review*, guest edited by Christopher Keep and Jennifer Esmail, and the summer 2008 issue of *Nineteenth-Century Gender Studies*, guest edited by Mark Mossman and Stoddard Holmes.

construction and thus analyse Victorian textual, fictional, or pictorial representations of disability to uncover how the Victorians understood it. These studies tend either to indicate the negative ways in which disability is constructed through representations or to perform what Mitchell and Snyder call 'transgressive reappropriation,' in which the critic searches for 'transgressive narrative space for disability' where 'the derided object embraces its deviance as value' (35). For example, Patrick McDonagh argues that Dickens negatively uses Barnaby Rudge's cognitive disability 'as a cipher for the impoverished English working classes of the 1830s and 1840s' ('*Barnaby Rudge*: "Idiocy" and Paternalism' 412), whereas Kate Flint and Mossman argue that Collins's representations of abnormal bodies 'show that there is no clear dividing line between the disabled and the normal-bodied' (Flint 156) and thus 'lead to a transformative re-construction of [the] body' (Mossman 486). Frawley and Alex Tankard, in contrast, take an identity politics approach to disability, showing how Victorian invalids (Frawley) and consumptives (Tankard) claimed, adapted, and used their identities as physically aberrant to gain agency. Similarly, a trio of books published on the topic of the Victorian freak show, Marlene Tromp's *Victorian Freaks* (2008), Lilian Craton's *The Victorian Freakshow* (2009), and Nadja Durbach's *Spectacle of Deformity* (2010), challenge assumptions that equate freaks with abnormality; they instead reveal how Victorian freaks, in reality and in literature, 'were classified as able-bodied' working members of society (Durbach 19), 'had a place within normative middle-class culture that went beyond serving as a foil for it' (Craton 4), and 'threatened to undermine definitions of normalcy' (Tromp and Valerius 1).

Within the last decade, a number of methodologies and theoretical frameworks have been applied to Victorian disability studies. Several scholars perform materialist analyses of disability in literature to consider 'how the material aspects of social categories such as race, gender, class, and—in particular—disability play out in the material world' (Garland-Thomson, 'Foreword' x–xi). Vanessa Warne, for example, uses a materialist approach to provide cultural and historical readings of blindness in literature, such as in her 2010 article 'Clearing the Streets,' which 'acknowledges the presence of disabled people and … recognizes disability and the city as interdependent' (208). Esmail uses a similar approach in her book *Reading Victorian Deafness* (2013), which provides a complex and thorough examination of the cultural meaning and lived experience of deafness in the Victorian era by closely analysing fiction and non-fiction narratives about deaf signers, poetry written by deaf poets, the manualist vs oralist deaf education

debates, and prosthetic devices for the deaf. In addition to materialist methodology, gender, queer, and postcolonial theories shape Victorian disability scholarship. For example, *Victorian Freaks* includes queer theory readings of disability in *The Law and The Lady* (1874–75) and *Our Mutual Friend* (1864–65) as well as several postcolonial readings of imperialism and disability in travelling freak shows. More recently, Karen Bourrier's study of masculinity and Victorian disability, *The Measure of Manliness* (2015), illuminates a pattern in Victorian novels of pairing disabled men of feeling with reserved strong men, focalizing through the disabled character. Bourrier argues that this pattern shows how disability influenced the 'ideals of what it meant to be a man in the Victorian era and beyond' (3).

Thus far, readings of disability in Victorian literature have been primarily thematic rather than formalist, though several employ formalist techniques to support their arguments.[12] I am not alone, however, in identifying the intersection of corporeality and textuality as vital to understanding Victorian disability. In 'Affect and Prosthesis in Braddon and Dickens,' Christine Ferguson adroitly argues that disability studies of Victorian literature 'must be supplemented with a consideration of how specific physical and mental capabilities are normativized at the imagined site of connection between body and word' (1–2). Ferguson asks, 'what types of bodies does or should literature require of both its readers and characters?' (2), and seeks to understand 'fiction's construction of the body' or, as she calls it, 'somatic epistemology' (1). To explore somatic epistemology, Ferguson analyses how two Victorian narratives, Charles Dickens's 'Doctor Marigold' (1865) and Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *The Trail of the Serpent* (1861), link speech and the body at the site of sign language. Like Ferguson, I aim to uncover how fiction constructs the physicality of both its readers and its characters; however, I do so through a distinctly formalist approach. Therefore, *Articulating Bodies* looks beyond representations of disabled characters and investigates the linguistic production of bodies through focalization and narrative structure; it considers the somatic language surrounding character representation, and it analyses the focalization of all bodies that create meaning in the text, including those of narrators and readers.

12 See, for example, Bourrier's discussion of focalization in *The Measure of Manliness*, Esmail's readings of deaf poetry in '"Perchance My Hand May Touch the Lyre"' and *Reading Victorian Deafness*, and Stoddard Holmes's work on what she calls the 'twin structure' of Victorian courtship plots in 'The Twin Structure.'

In this formalist approach to disability, I build on the narratological work of disability theorists Mitchell and Snyder, who consider the placement of disability in narrative trajectory and argue that disability frequently provides narrative impetus by acting as the disorder that plot must resolve. But by adding close reading at the level of focalization to that done at the level of narrative shape and generic conventions, my narratological approach considers both the macro *and* the micro of Victorian representations of disability. Caroline Levine encourages such a methodology—which she refers to as 'strategic formalism'—that 'links literary forms to social forms' ('Strategic Formalism' 647) to reveal how 'literary forms participate in a destabilizing relation to social formations, often colliding with social hierarchies rather than reflecting or foreshadowing them' (626); these collisions, she argues, 'trouble and remake political relationships in surprising, aleatory, and often confusingly disorderly ways' (626). Levine's suggested methodology thus 'puts an emphasis on social *dis*organization, exploring the many ways in which multiple forms of order, sometimes the results of the same powerful ideological formation, may unsettle one another' (*Forms* 17).[13] By comparing the thematic implications of disability in Victorian fiction to the literary forms that shape those themes, *Articulating Bodies* uncovers surprising collisions between the social forms apparent in the novel's themes of the body and the novel's narrative structural way of articulating bodies. In these collisions, Victorian fiction marginalizes disability and disease, placing upon them the weight of symbolizing social and physical deviance, while it simultaneously positions disability and disease as ordinary parts of the body's normal instability, eroding the normal vs abnormal and healthy vs ill binaries that it also upholds. These moments of irresolvable conflict therefore lie at the heart of this book.

13 C. Levine does note, however, that the unsettling that occurs from colliding forms 'is not always better than order' and may even 'produce pain and injustice as troubling as any consolidation of power' (*Forms* 17).

CHAPTER ONE

Grotesque Bodies: Hybridity and Focalization in Victor Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris*

A month after the publication of Victor Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris* (1821), an unnamed reviewer for the politically conservative Parisian newspaper *Le Figaro* wrote that, if novelistic unity is what you want, 'n'en cherchez pas dans l'oeuvre de M. Hugo' (Review 2). What one finds in the novel instead, the reviewer insists, is 'a frightening phantasmagoria or a show of simple-minded fools, a circle of witches, a mystery, a nightmare, a deed without name'[1] that leaves readers 'stunned, dazed, confused … as in a dream or attack of vertigo' (2).[2] The reviewer lists two main grievances: first, Hugo's blending of medieval history with melodrama and, second, the novel's multiple focalizations, of which he claims there are 'no end' (2).[3] But to an anonymous reviewer for the more liberal *Journal des débats politiques et littéraires*, *Notre-Dame de Paris*'s multiple focalizations prove Hugo's artistry: the reviewer describes how Hugo's 'scrutinizing glance' reveals a 'profound knowledge' of 'the crowd, the mob, of men who are vain, empty, glorious, beggars, vagabonds, scholars, sensualists; … of the heart of a young woman and the core of a mother, of the boiling passions of a delirious mind,' all of which Hugo 'manipulates

1 'C'est une effroyable fantasmagorie ou un concert de bienheureux; une ronde de sorcières, un mystère, un cauchemar, une œuvre sans nom.'

2 'lorsque vous arrivez à la fin, étourdi, ébloui, confus, vous voyez tout tourner autour de vous comme dans un rêve ou un vertige.'

3 'D'unité de cette sorte, n'en cherchez pas dans l'œuvre de M. Hugo; l'un vous nommerait la Esmeralda; l'autre Claude Frollo; un troisième l'église Notre-Dame; un autre peut-être, le monstre Quasimodo; ce serait n'en pas finir.'

according to his will throughout' ('Oeuvres' 4).[4] Both reviewers are right. Hugo's novel does not contain formal unity—but this lack of unity crucially underpins its artistic purpose; indeed, as I will argue, the disunity not only contributes to its aesthetic and political aims, but also suggests how the novel 'thinks,' as Nancy Armstrong might say, about disability.

In *Notre-Dame de Paris*, disability overtly functions as both grotesque and tragic spectacle. The novel opens with the celebrations of Epiphany 1482 in Paris and then follows the interconnecting stories of a dramatist-turned-vagabond, a disreputable knight, a virgin gypsy girl, a lecherous priest, a debauched young student, an insane hermitess, and—the most-remembered character of the novel—in the words of his mockers, a 'hunchbacked … bandy-legged … one-eyed … deaf' bell-ringer, Quasimodo (45). Quasimodo, raised by the priest Claude Frollo, lives entirely in Notre-Dame Cathedral as its bell-ringer. At the Epiphany festival that opens the novel, a crowd elects him the Pope of Fools due to his grotesque appearance. Claude Frollo lusts after the gypsy Esmeralda, who falls in love with the heartless knight, Phoebus, but marries (in name only) the dramatist Gringoire. Frollo then schemes to have Esmeralda arrested and sentenced to be hanged for witchcraft and the attempted murder of Phoebus (neither of which she committed). In an iconic scene, repeated in stage adaptations, movie versions, and countless parodies, Quasimodo—with shouts of 'Sanctuary! Sanctuary!'—rescues Esmeralda and takes her to the cathedral.[5] Esmeralda escapes the cathedral and then discovers that she is the long-lost daughter of Sister Gudule, the hermitess: when Esmeralda was a baby, gypsies stole her and left Quasimodo in her place. However, in the very moment Esmeralda and her mother reunite, she is recaptured by knights and later executed due to more of Frollo's scheming. While watching her execution from the towers of the cathedral, Quasimodo realizes that Frollo orchestrated Esmeralda's death and so pushes him off the tower to his death. The novel resumes two years in the future, inside a crypt where readers find Esmeralda's

4 'Mais style et magie de l'art, facilité, souplesse et abondance pour tout dire, regard scrutateur pour tout démêler, connaissance profond de la foule, de la cohue, de l'homme vain, vide, glorieux, mendiant, vagabond, savant, sensuel; … coeur de jeune fille, entrailles de mère, bouillonnement dans un cerveau viril de passions poussées au délire, l'auteur possède et manie à son gré tout cela.'

5 Charles Laughton's hallmark performance of this scene in the 1939 *Hunchback of Notre Dame* cemented it in our cultural consciousness and provided the foundation on which the latter parodies were based.

corpse wrapped in Quasimodo's skeleton, which disintegrates when touched. The intertwining multiple plots of *Notre-Dame* are thus framed by Quasimodo's disabled body, in the opening as an emblem of Gothic grotesquery and in the closing as one of melodramatic tragedy.

Understandably, Ruskin blames *Notre-Dame de Paris* for the Victorian British literary obsession with disfigured and diseased bodies, calling Hugo's novel 'the effectual head of the whole cretinous school' ('Fiction, Fair and Foul' 949). Ruskin is right: the wild success of *Notre-Dame de Paris* in the English-speaking world—evidenced by four editions of three English translations by 1840,[6] several popular stage adaptations, including *Esmeralda; or, The Deformed of Notre Dame* (1834) and *Quasimodo; or, The Gipsey Girl of Notre Dame* (1836), both of which opened in London long before Hugo's own operatic stage version (Swydzky 471), and the 1833 adoption of the term *Quasimodo* to refer to an ugly person[7]—testifies to the novel's impact on the English imagination within its first decade of publication. But Ruskin's identification of Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris* as the *urtext* of body-focused fiction further implies that this impact resonated in the Victorian conceptualization of the disabled body's place in fiction. In this chapter, I investigate the novel's structural method of representing bodily difference and reflect on its importance in determining Victorian fiction's representations of disability. Ultimately, I argue that *Notre-Dame de Paris* set a precedent in Victorian fiction for investigating the disabled body through narrative form and focalization.

In claiming that Hugo's novel affected the shape of the Victorian novel, I follow the path of Ian Duncan, who suggests that Hugo's novel provides 'the generative prototype of what would become a distinctively Victorian kind of fiction' (11), one influenced by contemporary philosophical and scientific debates that destabilized human identity. Duncan argues that this instability of human identity materialized in what he calls 'the sublime strain of fiction' by means of 'a grotesque or monstrous deformation of realist norms of human nature' (17). He contends that *Notre-Dame de Paris* and the 'sublime' Victorian novels that follow it are 'premised upon the deformation, mutation

6 Ian Duncan counts four translations, but he mistakenly deems the 1840 Charles Daly single-volume edition a new translation, when it is merely an uncredited reproduction of William Hazlitt's. Kenneth Ward Hooker and John Sturrock likewise claim four translations before 1839 (30, 11), but neither lists titles or publishers.

7 This phrase appears in *The Oriental Observer*'s translation of Pierre-François Ladvocat's *Le Livre Des Cent-et-Un* in its September 7, 1833 issue.

or dissolution of the human' (11), both thematically and formally. He explains that Hugo's novel marks 'the rise of a modern kind of fiction that is … formally *inhuman*,' bred by the 'changing demographies [*sic*] of readership and modes of literary production': 'a mass reading public' and the 'shapeless infinitude' of serial mechanized production (Duncan 17). As such, the 'overcrowded, tumultuous, polyglot' Victorian environment manifests in the 'excessive internal heterogeneity' of the era's multi-character, multi-plot novel form (Duncan 16–17). *Articulating Bodies* takes Duncan's argument as foundation for its formalist readings of nineteenth-century disability narratives in general, analysing the 'indefinite' and 'heterogeneous' form of Victorian novels (Duncan 16) to uncover how Victorian narrative structure articulates bodies. In this chapter, I argue that Hugo uses authorial, external focalization (that is, narrative focused through a perspective outside the narrative action) to portray the disabled body as inherently deviant and different; however, through strategic internal focalization through characters within the narrative, the novel also destabilizes the boundaries between normativity and disability. Moreover, its overall structure, which hybridizes disparate genres, enables the dialogic conflict of these two opposing voices. *Notre-Dame* thus provides a structural prototype whereby Victorian novels approached bodies deemed deviant.

In making this argument, this chapter primarily uses Frederic Shoberl's 1833 English translation, which helped to popularize the novel in Britain, referring to Hugo's original French only for necessary clarifications.[8] At the urging of an early review by *The Literary Gazette* (Review 713), Shoberl's translation slightly bowdlerized Hugo's original, cutting a few blasphemies (such as the two expurgated from the Cour des Miracles scene discussed below) and overtly sexual references 'which, though not startling to our continental neighbours, would offend the severer taste of the English reader' (Shoberl xiii–xiv). Nonetheless, I chose it as the base text for this analysis rather than William Hazlitt's less popular *Notre-Dame: A Tale of the 'Ancien Régime'* (1833) or Foster and Hextall's serialized *La Esmeralda, or, The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1839).[9] Shoberl's more affordable and

8 I use the Garnier Frères 1844 edition for the French. This edition includes the February 1831 *ΑΝΑΓΚΗ* preface, the October 1832 note added to the text, and the three 'missing' chapters, 'Impopularité,' 'Abbas Beati Martini,' and 'Ceci Tuera Cela,' added in 1832, none of which were included in the Hazlitt, Shoberl, or *The Novelist* translations.

9 This unsigned translation was published in six parts in Foster and Hextall's *The Novelist: A Collection of the Standard Novels*.

illustrated edition was aimed at a wider audience than Hazlitt's expensive and essentially unillustrated one,[10] and at a more educated audience than the Foster and Hextall pennyblood edition.[11] Most importantly, Shoberl's translation gave the story its standard English name—*The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*—recentring the multi-plot novel on the deformity of a single character rather than on the cathedral's looming presence. Kenneth Ward Hooker argues that this change in title reflects publisher Richard Bentley's 'knowledge of English taste' as well as his wisdom in broadening the novel's audience: 'For the antiquaries [attracted to Hazlitt's subtitle, *A Tale of the 'Ancien Regime'*] were outnumbered perhaps a hundred to one by the readers who were just looking for a good story: and these latter were certain to concentrate their attention on the human (or monstrous) characters anyway' (35). The edition's affordability, popular retitling, and minor censorship to accommodate English prudery, as well as its positive reviews and reprintings,[12] lead me to believe that Shoberl's translation was the most influential edition in popularizing Hugo's novel in England.

Hybridity, Disability, and the 'Modern' Novel

In the 'Preface to Cromwell,' his 1827 manifesto of art and literature, Hugo claims that the ideal modern literature employs a realism that 'results from the wholly natural combination of two types, the sublime and the grotesque, which meet in the drama, as they meet in life and in creation' (373). Modern literature, he explains, represents the culmination of the aesthetics of the ode and the epic, which focused only on the sublime. Accordingly, drama, *the* literature of the modern period, includes the grotesque; drama 'is the grotesque in conjunction with the sublime, the soul within the body; it is tragedy beneath comedy' (403). Lennard J. Davis argues that before the nineteenth century, 'the grotesque as a visual form was inversely related to the concept of the ideal' and thus 'permeated culture and signified the norm'; in

10 This edition contained a single picture of Hugo, but no illustrations of the plot itself.

11 See Marie Léger-St-Jean's Price *One Penny: A Database of Cheap Literature* and Louis James's *Fiction for the Working Man 1830–1850* for information on Foster and Hextall's *The Novelist* series, which published *La Esmeralda*.

12 For example, in 1856 Thomas Hodgson published as number 151 in the Parlour Library Series an uncredited direct replication of Bentley's first edition of the Shoberl translation, excluding the illustrations and the 'Sketch of the Life and Writings of Victor Hugo.'

contrast, the modern concept of disability 'was formulated as by definition excluded from culture, society, the norm' (*Enforcing Normalcy* 25). However, Hugo's concept of the grotesque indicates a transition between these two modes of conceptualizing the corporeally different: in the 'Preface,' the grotesque is both abnormal and, as a part of nature, normal. I argue that in his aesthetic theory and in *Notre-Dame de Paris*, the disabled body functions in a formally similar way.

The grotesque, Hugo clarifies, represents 'the deformed, the ugly' (374), 'the body,' 'comedy,' 'evil,' and 'darkness,' whereas the sublime represents 'the soul,' 'tragedy,' 'good,' and 'light' (363, 403). However, according to Hugo, in superior modern literature, the beautiful and the ugly are paradoxically distinct but connected, separate but mingled, contrary but harmonious, and capable of 'fruitful union,' unlike the purely sublime arts of the ancient Greeks (364). He suggests that, since 'the grotesque is one of the supreme beauties of the drama' (375), the grotesque itself can be the sublime. Moreover, he insists that 'true poetry, complete poetry' (373), like nature, 'mingl[es] in its creations but without confounding them darkness and light, the grotesque and the sublime' (362–63). At a basic level, *Notre-Dame de Paris* exhibits Hugo's ideal of the 'fruitful union' of grotesque and sublime. That is to say, Quasimodo and Esmeralda allegorically represent the grotesque and the sublime, respectively, and Quasimodo manifests Hugo's theory regarding the sublimity of the grotesque: at his first appearance in the text, he reveals his 'sublimely monstrous grimace' to the crowd at the festival of Fools (43), and at the famous moment when Quasimodo saves Esmeralda from the gallows, he is 'really beautiful' (311). As such, the novel constitutes a 'breaking down of surface oppositions' of the grotesque and the sublime (Masters-Wicks 59).

However, Hugo simultaneously sustains the paradoxical concepts of grotesque and sublime throughout the hybrid generic conventions that he employs in the novel's form. According to Victor Brombert, hybridity—that is, a 'mixture … and processes of becoming'—is the key element of the grotesque in Hugo's aesthetic theory (51), since Hugo claims that 'to be incomplete is the best way to be harmonious' ('Preface' 363). Brombert and many other critics see *Notre-Dame* as ultimately a hybrid text that combines conventions of melodrama and the Gothic (most obviously, flat characters such as a lecherous priest and a beautiful virgin), with lengthy philosophical asides contemplating Parisian architecture and medieval history. Opposing the critics who try to unify the novel's melodramatic plot with its '"art-historical" context,' Zarifopol-Johnston argues that *Notre-Dame*'s 'structure is not one of unity-in-diversity but of willed diversity, of mixture' ('The

Cathedral in the Book' 22, 29). She also argues that the cathedral—which Hugo describes as a hybrid of architectural styles and eras—and Quasimodo (whose name, the narrator points out, literally translates to 'almost' or 'incomplete')[13] echo the novel's hybrid aesthetic ('The Cathedral in the Book' 25).

The novel's form is likewise hybrid, since it 'allows plot, character, theme, history, melodrama, rhetoric and scene to appear as separate and distinct building blocks' while also 'us[ing] a poetic process to weave all of them together into a complex tissue of signifying relations' (Chaitin 39). That is, the novel's hybrid form holds the genres as both separate (as 'distinct building blocks') and connected (as 'a complex tissue'). Similarly, in 'Preface to Cromwell,' Hugo divides the grotesque from the sublime but simultaneously unites the two as inseparable: he depicts the grotesque as 'the body' and the sublime as 'the soul,' but also insists, 'All things are connected' ('Preface' 363). Because Hugo's theory of aesthetics simultaneously divides and unites the grotesque and the sublime, *Notre-Dame*'s form is likewise divided (into multiple plots, into philosophical treatises, into melodrama, into comedy, and so on) but single as a 'complex tissue of signifying relations' (Chaitin 39).

Combining genres also causes the novel to be 'incomplete' and thus 'harmonious' by removing conventional closures. Isabel Roche notes that, while the novel employs conventions of melodrama—the long-lost child and the changeling motif, for example—those motifs do not act to 'reinforce ethical truths' of good and evil as they would in traditional melodrama (7), but instead 'most often yield instability and uncertainty' (38): for example, Esmeralda and Sister Gudule's 'recognition scene' ends in their tragic deaths rather than in the happy mother-daughter reunion that melodramatic convention promises (38–39). Similarly, Myriam Roman spots an unfulfilled fairy tale in the novel, in which Esmeralda 'restera Cendrillon,' and the beast, Quasimodo, 'ne se transformera pas en prince' (371). That nearly all the subsequent adaptations of *Notre-Dame*, even Hugo's own opera

13 Hugo refers to the Italian *quasi*, meaning 'almost, nearly' ('Quasi') and *modo*, meaning 'way' or 'manner' ('Modo'), when he writes that Claude Frollo 'baptized his adopted child and named him Quasimodo, either to commemorate the day on which he had found him [Quasimodo Sunday], or to express the incomplete and scarcely finished state of the poor little creature' (138–39). Quasimodo Sunday, however, gets its name from the opening words of the Introit prayer scheduled for the second Sunday after Easter, *Quasi modo geniti infantes*, 'as [if only] newborn babes' ('Quasimodo Sunday').

staging, alter the ending to fulfil the generic conventions of melodrama and romance—usually these endings give Phoebus a change of heart and marry him off to Esmeralda—emphasizes just how 'incomplete' the novel seems due to its hybrid mixture of plots and genres.[14]

Hugo's final chapters further accentuate the arrested (or perverted) development of the genres combined in the novel. The last two chapters' titles imply a comedic ending: 'Mariage de Phoebus' and 'Mariage de Quasimodo,' recalling Pierre Beaumarchais's comic play (1778) and Mozart's comic opera (1786), *Le Mariage de Figaro*. However, the content of the chapters denies those endings. In the former, the narrator describes Gringoire's several career changes, calling them 'silly pursuits' (464) or 'folies' in the original French (482), a term with comic connotations ('*Folies*. C.2.c'). Gringoire's final *folie*, the narrator tells us, is choosing to write tragedies, which Gringoire punningly describes as 'coming to a tragic end' (464). The narrator then ends the chapter by joking, 'Phoebus de Chateaupers likewise "came to a tragic end": he married' (464). The final chapter, 'Quasimodo's Marriage,' is a tragedy with the title of a comedy: it depicts men finding in a crypt what is presumably Esmeralda's skeleton (identified only by her necklace and shreds of dress) wrapped in the embrace of what is presumably Quasimodo's (identified only by its crooked spine, sunken head, and uneven legs). Therefore, in these two chapters, Hugo both provides *and* denies the endings required to make the novel either a tragedy or a comedy. Duncan refers to this fragmentary nonfulfillment of conventions as 'Hugo's audacious refusal to close the gaps' and argues that *Notre-Dame*'s hybrid, 'monstrous' form reflects what was beginning to be seen as humanity's nearly monstrous, non-human state (17, 11).

As the novel's form proves simultaneously incomplete and harmonious, divided but single, so does the novel's understanding of disability, which is likewise in a hybrid 'process of becoming' (Brombert 51). If one were to base a reading of disability in *Notre-Dame* solely on Hugo's claim that 'to be incomplete is the best way to be harmonious,' one might be tempted to argue that, since the novel depicts disability as a state of being incomplete—Hugo refers to Quasimodo's body as 'un corps manqué' (42), literally both 'a spoiled body' and 'a body lacking something'—the novel must privilege the disabled body as being 'the best way to be harmonious.' But Hugo's simultaneous division and

14 For more on how the adaptations reinforce norms by following the 'domestic melodrama' trajectory, see Lissette Lopez Szwydky's 'Victor Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris* on the Nineteenth-Century London Stage.'

conflation of the sublime and the grotesque are more telling. This simultaneity implies that two conflicting ideas can coexist within a single aesthetic or piece of art, in the same way that Mikhail Bakhtin argued many years later that an 'utterance' from a single speaker can contain 'mixed within it two utterances, two speech manners, two styles, two "languages," two semantic and axiological belief systems'—a narrative technique he calls 'hybrid construction' (304). *Notre-Dame*'s hybrid structure, combining melodrama, Gothicism, history, philosophy, poetry, and epic, is likewise heteroglossic, as are the themes that the structure conveys. For example, Jeffrey Spires contends that *Notre-Dame de Paris* is both linear, with 'clearly-defined temporal progression' in the melodramatic plot (40), and cyclical, with repetitions of history indicated in the political plot and digressions (42); he reads the novel's hybrid form as indicating both a desire for political progression and a 'conservative nostalgia for circularity' (44).

The frequent digressions on architecture in the novel reveal a similar tension, one that is deeply tied to the body and to Gothicism. Here I briefly return to Ruskin, this time to his essay *On the Nature of Gothic Architecture* (1854). To Ruskin, the appeal of the Gothic lies in its emphasis on individuality and imagination, and he exhorts those who see Gothic architecture as flawed to 'examine once more those ugly goblins, and formless monsters, and stern statues' and see in them 'signs of the life and liberty of every workman who struck the stone; a freedom of thought, and rank in scale of being, such as no laws, no charters, no charities can secure' (9). Ironically, the very characteristics of architecture that he praises as supporting the ideals of democracy—variation, formlessness, changeability—he disparages in 'Fiction, Fair and Foul' as repugnant in fictional human bodies.

Like Ruskin, Hugo also expresses contradictory impulses towards and away from the Gothic aesthetic in *Notre-Dame*. In a lengthy description of Notre-Dame Cathedral as it stood in 1833, Hugo's narrator denigrates the refurbishments made after the medieval era in which the cathedral last manifested its supposedly pristine Gothic state. The narrator describes the building in terms of physical disability, as a 'disfigure[d] Gothic architecture' (101), as bearing 'injuries,' 'warts,' 'mutilations,' and 'wrinkles' caused by 'time,' 'revolutions,' and 'the fashions' (101); to renovate the cathedral is to 'amputate' it and 'cover the wound with [a] large plaster of lead' (101). Surprisingly, however, the narrator also speaks of the cathedral's nineteenth-century state using terminology of the Gothic aesthetic with which Hugo praised modern art in the 'Preface to Cromwell': the renovations are 'more and more silly and grotesque' (101) and, in its present state, the cathedral

'is not what may be called a complete building' (102) but is 'a transition edifice' (103), whose body, like a Frankenstein's monster of plaster and stone, has 'the head of one [epoch], the limbs of another, the trunk of a third, and something of them all' (104), 'blended, combined, amalgamated' (104). The narrator here derides in architecture the novel's very form—hybrid, grotesque, transitional, and unfinished. Brombert argues that the drive towards historical preservation one sees in these detailed depictions of Parisian architecture reveals a politically '"conservative" impulse' (56). I argue instead that we can vividly sense in them a heteroglossia that conveys opposing voices—regarding politics, aesthetics, and the human body all at once. This fluctuating incongruity, visible in form and theme, characterizes how *Notre-Dame de Paris*—and the Victorian novels that followed it—encode disability as a negotiation of what normalcy and difference are and may become.

Hugo develops this negotiation of disability not only at the macro level of plot structure and generic conventions, but also at the micro level through focalization, with which he both distinguishes and blends the subject and the other. By shifting between internal and external focalization, *Notre-Dame de Paris* both establishes and destabilizes the division between self and other that relies on classifying the disabled body as distinctly deviant. Notably, the novel very rarely focalizes through Quasimodo, its most disabled character; instead, it shifts between authoritative external focalization that interprets the bodies of characters (particularly that of Quasimodo) as signs of wickedness or innocence, and internal character focalization that perceives through those bodies (particularly Gringoire's, Phoebus's, and Frollo's). Strikingly, Hugo stresses readerly identification with the focalizer; however, he also denies readerly subjectivity through moments of focalization in which the perceiver is unable to categorize his or her surroundings. In addition, as I demonstrate below, Shoberl's translation often intensifies English readers' experience of focalization by translating the vague French pronoun *on* as either 'you' or the imperative voice rather than in the nearer English equivalents, either 'one' or the passive voice. The novel's shifts in focalization create ambiguity about disability and somatic interpretation, reflecting the era's developing and conflicted understanding of disability.

Focalization: Externally Authoritative or Internally Ambiguous

Hugo uses focalization in *Notre-Dame* to challenge the reader's perception of subjectivity by directly calling for them to share the focalization of the novels' characters. Within the first pages of *Notre-Dame*, the narrator invites the reader to share the perspective of a crowd of medieval spectators celebrating Epiphany in Paris's Palace of Justice on January 6, 1482: 'If it is agreeable to the reader, we will endeavour to retrace in our imagination the impressions of which he [the reader] would have felt with us on crossing the threshold of the great hall' (3).[15] Shoberl's translation of the imagined impressions especially stresses the embodied state of his readers: 'In the first place, how one's ears are stunned with the noise!—how one's eyes are dazzled!' he writes (3), whereas Hugo's text reads, 'Et d'abord, bourdonnement dans les oreilles, éblouissement dans les yeux' (7). Shoberl's choice to translate the impersonal French (*les oreilles/yeux*) with a more personal and emphatic 'one's ears/eyes' with exclamation points moves the language a step closer to personalization and thus acts to attach even further the anglophone reader to the textually configured body—or the body created, as Hugo puts it, 'par la pensée' (7).[16] Either way, Hugo's invitation to the reader to focalize as a spectator of events immediately signals the structural importance of focalization to the novel and its thematic purposes, in particular its relation to the reader's subjectivity.

Moreover, Hugo frequently calls on the reader's participation in focalization, writing 'Qu'on se figure' six times and 'Qu'on se représante' four times, as well as phrases such as 'Qu'on rêve, si l'on peut' (44) or 'Qu'on arrange ces choses comme on pourra' (230). Shoberl tends to translate these phrases in the imperative, telling readers to 'Imagine such an object, if you can' (43); he even calls directly on the reader, saying, 'The reader must reconcile these things as well as he can' (201). At times, Hugo, too, directly addresses 'le lecteur' and uses the imperative; in the chapter 'Paris à Vol D'oiseau,' or 'Bird's Eye View of Paris,' he charges readers to 'reconstruisez-le [Paris] dans votre pensée, regardez le jour à travers cette haie surprenante d'aiguilles … et assistez à l'éveil des carillons' (127–28), or, as

15 'Si le lecteur y consent, nous essaierons de retrouver par la pensée l'impression qu'il eût éprouvée avec nous en franchissant le seuil de cette grand-salle' (7).

16 Hazlitt's translation personalizes this even further, saying 'our ears' and 'our eyes' (I.12).

Shoberl translates, 'build up and put together again in imagination the Paris of the fifteenth century; look at the light through that surprising host of steeples … and listen to the awaking of the bells' (127–28). By continually hailing the reader's capacity to imagine, to see, and to hear, Hugo not only creates a textual, perceiving body for his readers, but he also repeatedly aligns his readers with the focalized perceptions that the narrator adopts.

However, as Roman notes, throughout the novel, the narrator's focal perceptions shift between external focalization, in which the narrator describes 'from behind'[17]—meaning the perspective comes from outside characters' bodies and minds, and outside the story itself—and internal focalization, in which the narrative is perceived through characters *within* the story (2). By placing the reader's body in the text as analysed above, especially so early and repeatedly throughout the text, the narrator encourages the reader to adopt the perspective of each character through whom the narrator focalizes—even when that character's beliefs and attitudes are morally flawed, as they frequently are, since the narrator internally focalizes most frequently through the novel's most despicable characters: the self-interested playboy Phoebus, the lecherous priest Claude Frollo, and the pontificating dramatist Pierre Gringoire. I argue that as the focalization shifts between external and internal, so does the text's position shift concerning the interpretability of the body: typically, the novel's externally focalized narration frequently insists on authoritative categorization and explanation of bodies (in particular of deviant bodies), whereas internally focalized narration often ambiguously denies the authority of somatic interpretation and the stability of division between abnormal and normal.

Two chapters of *Notre-Dame* especially exemplify this tension inherent in the novel's use of focalization: 'Bird's Eye View of Paris' and 'Coup d'Oeil Impartial Sur l'Ancienne Magistrature'[18] or 'The Ancient Administration of Justice.' Hugo's chapter titles distinctly highlight the importance of perspective and of the focal view that

17 She uses the phrase 'par derrière,' which Genette applies to zero focalization (what is often called 'omniscient narration') in particular rather than to external (Niederhoff 115). Like Roman, I will be using the term *external focalization* in Mieke Bal's sense, which includes both *external* and *zero* focalization in Genette's theory, in spite of Niederhoff's disapproval of Bal's usage. For further discussion of the term *focalization*, see my Introduction.

18 This translates as 'An Impartial Glance at the Ancient Administration of Justice.'

readers share. The first, 'Bird's Eye View,' is one of Hugo's historical and architectural treatises on medieval Paris. The chapter describes the cityscape of fifteenth-century Paris as seen from the roof of Notre-Dame Cathedral. Notably, the narrator refers to the shape of medieval Paris's three main districts, 'the City, the University, and the Ville' (109), as the city's 'physiognomy' (108),[19] applying a specifically eighteenth- and nineteenth-century science of reading bodies and faces to the imagined sight of fifteenth-century Paris. Having called on readers to share this imagined perspective from the top of the cathedral, the narrator describes the physical response the sight would inspire:

> The spectator, on arriving breathless at that elevation, was dazzled by the chaos of roofs, chimneys, streets, bridges, belfries, towers, and steeples. All burst at once upon the eye the carved gable, the sharp roof, the turret[,] … the stone pyramid of the eleventh century, the slated obelisk of the fifteenth, the round and naked keep of the castle, the square and embroidered tower of the church, the great and the small, the massive and the light. The eye was long bewildered amidst this labyrinth of heights and depths in which there was nothing but had its originality, its reason, its genius. (112)

In this passage, readers share an internal focalization with the imagined spectator, and rather than easily interpreting Paris's physiognomy, the imagined reader is passively acted upon by it, 'dazzled by the chaos' and 'long bewildered' by the simultaneity and multitudinous differences in shape and time (round vs square, great vs small, eleventh vs fifteenth century). However, the narrator continues by resituating the spectator's eye as active, saying, 'the eye began to reduce this tumult of edifices to some kind of order' (112). At this point, the narrator then shifts to a bodiless external focalization and delineates the architectural character of each district within the city, reading their buildings as 'the hieroglyphics of the feudal system' (113). Thus, the narrative oscillates between embodied bewilderment (including bewilderment about bodies) in internal focalization and disembodied authority in external focalization.

The oscillation between confused internal focalization and authoritative external focalization manifests itself allegorically in 'The Ancient Administration of Justice,' the chapter in which Quasimodo

19 In Hugo's French, 'leur physionomie' (111).

is tried for attempting to kidnap Esmeralda. The allegory undermines the presumed authority of external focalization by having Master Florian, the deaf judge who 'hears' Quasimodo's case, represent the authority of the novel's external focalization while Quasimodo represents the confusion of the novel's internally focalized perspective. The chapter opens by focalizing through the narrator, who claims here to know less than the characters being described. The narrator invites readers to speculate about the reasons for the 'dogged ill-humour' of Messire d'Estouteville, the court provost, and offers a 'gloomy' sky, a tight belt, the sight of 'ragamuffins,' or foreknowledge of a coming pay cut as options (156). However, the narrator concludes that 'The reader has his choice; for our own parts we are inclined to believe that he was in an ill-humour merely because he was in an ill-humour' (156), joking that 'judges in general arrange matters so that the days on which they have to perform their judicial functions are their days of ill-humour, that they may be sure to have somebody on whom they can conveniently vent it in the name of the king, of the law, and of justice' (157). The narrator here openly reveals a predisposition to consider the medieval judicial system unjust, rendering the 'impartial glance' in the chapter's French title ironic.

Florian (the deaf judge) also lacks impartiality—and in depicting him the narrator mocks the link between impartiality and the inability to see found in the often-blindfolded Roman goddess, Justicia:[20] Florian 'threw back his head and half closed his eyes, to give himself a look of the more majesty and impartiality, so that at that moment he was both deaf and blind—a two-fold condition without which there is no perfect judge' (160). What keeps Florian from being just and impartial is not his deafness, however, but rather his pretence of hearing and his assumption of authority based on the context of how *he* perceives the trial. To assert his control, Florian denies his body—not only by pretending to be hearing, but also by closing his eyes during the case—and thus denies his own confusion regarding the trial. During the trial, Florian asks several questions, which Quasimodo, who is also deaf, does not answer because he cannot hear them. Pretending that he has heard answers, Florian asks the clerk if he has 'taken down the prisoner's answers thus far' (160). This provokes from the audience laughter 'so vehement, so loud, so contagious, so universal,

20 According to Jacques de Ville, images of Justicia as blindfolded first appeared in the late fifteenth century; they and subsequent images of blindfolds and justice in the sixteenth century could refer either to the impartiality of justice or the foolishness of judges (351–52).

that neither of the deaf men could help noticing it' (160). Denying his deafness and confusion to maintain authority, Florian assumes that a disrespectful response from Quasimodo has caused the laughter and so charges him with contempt of justice.

Quasimodo, in contrast, refrains from judgement; as the narrator notes, he 'alone preserved his gravity, for this very sufficient reason, that he had not the least notion of what was passing around him' (161). Quasimodo does not deny his body (in part because his low social position and people's responses to his extreme physical difference mean that he cannot), and as such he is aware of and accepts his own confusion and his inability to understand the bodies of those around him. However, his confusion breeds further confusion: when Quasimodo later realizes that d'Estouteville has asked him questions, he gives inappropriate answers—his name, occupation, and age—to answer the question of what brought him to court. D'Estouteville, unaware of the deafness of both parties, interprets these answers as further impertinence and adds to the bell-ringer's sentence.

What this scene depicts, then, is the failure of the judge's and provost's authoritative and disembodied (from the denial of deafness) perspective to interpret and control Quasimodo, whose perspective is confused and embodied. Thus, the allegory implies that both the externally and internally focalized perspectives are faulty. Ironically, while this situation would seem to undermine the authority of the narrator's frequent external focalization and thus privilege the internal focalization's somatic confusion, the narrator maintains throughout the chapter that its judgements of the court's injustice and ineptitude prove true. Moreover, the narrator repeatedly makes externally focalized statements in the chapter that authoritatively interpret and categorize bodies: for example, 'Every hunchback holds his head erect, every stammerer is fond of making speeches, every deaf person talks in a low tone' (160). Thus, the chapter preserves the conservative and progressive voices in dialogue with each other by means of the novel's hybrid structure.

To understand the bearing of these conflicting voices and their manifestation within the novel's focalization on the concept of disability as abnormality, we must return to Rodas's question, 'Who am I in relation to this other creature?' and consider how focalization answers it. In *Notre-Dame*, the dramatist Gringoire quite literally asks, 'Who am I in relation to others?' as he stumbles upon a conglomeration of bodies in the Cour des Miracles, home to Paris's vagabonds. As the focalization switches between an external perspective and Gringoire's internal point of view in this scene, readers are left with

an ambiguous answer to this question that both reaffirms and destabilizes human subjectivity and normalcy. While the narrative focuses through Gringoire's perspective, he is chased into the court by three disabled figures whom the narrator describes as 'a cripple in a bowl, who was hopping along upon both hands' (71), a 'living tripod' whose crutches and wooden legs 'gave him the appearance of a walking scaffold' (71), and 'a little blind man' with a seeing-eye dog (72). As they near the Cour des Miracles, these three are then joined by a crowd of people who were 'halt, and lame, and blind, … one-armed and one-eyed, and lepers with their hideous sores' (72). Sharing Gringoire's perspective, readers also share the sense of being surrounded by an 'irresistible tide' of corporeally and, as the novel here implies, morally deviant bodies (73). For a short moment, the narrative shifts to an external focalization *on* Gringoire rather than *through* him, as, at this point, 'the tripod' drops his crutches to run 'on two … goodly legs' (73) and the beggar with the bowl 'stand[s] bolt upright upon his feet' to jam his bowl on Gringoire's head while the blind man 'stares him in the face with a pair of flaming eyes' (73). This external focalization puts readers in a position of power: rather than sharing Gringoire's experience by means of focalization, they view him being overpowered by those he formerly believed were his physical inferiors. In this position of external focalization, the narrative leads readers to interpret those deviant bodies as malingering mendicants playing at disability.

But Hugo does not allow readers to hold that certainty of interpretation for long. The narrator quickly returns to focalizing through Gringoire, who glibly pretends to interpret those bodies through gospel narrative, saying that the Cour des Miracles is aptly named since it hosts 'blind who see, and lame who run' (73).[21] But with this return to internal focalization comes a return to confusion and an inability to interpret the bodies of others or self:

> All was bustle, confusion, uproar … The limits between races and species seemed to be done away with in this city, as in a pandemonium. Men, women, brutes, age, sex, health, disease, all seemed to be in common among these people. They were jumbled, huddled together, laid upon one another; each there partook of every thing … It was like

21 The reference here is Luke 7:22. Shoberl ends the sentence here, but Hugo's original has Gringoire ask, 'mais où est le Sauveur?' (77). Hazlitt's translation keeps the reference to the Saviour (I.187), as does Hextall and Forster's (415). Presumably it was too blasphemous for Shoberl's intended audience.

> a new world, unknown, unheard of, deformed, creeping, crawling, fantastic. (74)

This dissolving of boundaries, creating commonality between disparate things, calls to mind Hugo's concept of the union between the grotesque and sublime in which, he says, 'All things are connected' ('Preface' 363). Without the divisions and frames imposed in the normative world, not only is Gringoire unable to distinguish between bodies, sexes, or even species, but he also loses track of his selfhood even as he loses control over his body and mind. Dragged by the three beggars who first accosted him, he is 'deafened' by the noise of the place; he finds himself unable 'to recollect whether it was Saturday or not' and 'doubting every thing, floating between what he saw and what he felt' (74–75). This state of doubt prompts him to ask the vital—or, as Hugo puts it, 'insoluble'—question, 'If I am, can this be? If this is, can I be?' (75).[22]

But this state of internally focalized confusion does not last; the narrator, using external focalization, and the language of miasma, diagnoses Gringoire's confusion as caused by bodily weakness. According to the narrator, 'a fume, a vapour' that emitted from Gringoire's 'poetic brain' and 'his empty stomach' prevented him from viewing the Cour des Miracles in 'reality' and caused him to '[dilate] things into chimeras and men into phantoms' (75). Then, returning to internal focalization, the narrator tells us that 'Reality burst upon Gringoire, paining his eyes, treading upon his toes,' so that he 'could not help perceiving that he was not walking in the Styx, but in the mud; that he was not elbowed by demons, but by robbers; that his soul was not in danger, but merely his life' (75). The narrator places mistaken interpretation within Gringoire's body and depicts reality as an external (and unquestionable) entity that acts upon it and that therefore parallels the function of the authoritative external focalization. In saying that 'upon examining the scene more closely and more coolly [Gringoire] fell from the witches' sabbath down to the tavern' (75), the narrator implies that misinterpretation can be resolved through the intensive scrutiny that can occur only when the fogging 'vapours' of the mind and stomach disappear. At this point, Gringoire's now-whole body can distinguish health and illness in the conglomerate bodies of the Cour des Miracles; for example, he witnesses, and understands that he witnesses, an older beggar

22 'Si je suis, cela est-il? si cela est, suis-je?' (Hugo 78).

teaching a younger to imitate epilepsy by sucking on soap to create a foaming at the mouth. By implying that Gringoire needs a healthy body to comprehend his surroundings, the externally focalized narration frames the Cour des Miracles scene in a way that implies that disability or physical disorder inevitably provokes confusion and that corporeal health brings a restoration of order.

However, the subsequent dialogue between Gringoire and the 'king' of 'the Vagabonds,' Clopin Trouillefou, suggests that the normative divisions with which the authoritative external focalization categorizes the world are arbitrary. Saying, 'Call me your majesty, or comrade, or what thou wilt' (78),[23] Clopin rejects the social divisions by which Gringoire wishes to understand him. Likewise, he dismisses the moral divisions between what his people in 'the realm of Slang'[24] call themselves and what they are called in the 'the gibberish of those who call themselves honest people' (78). The vagrants call themselves, in Shoberl's translation, 'prig,' 'cadger,' and 'stroller'—all terms denoting transient peddling and connoting petty thieving[25]—or in Hugo's French, 'capon,'[26] 'franc-mitou,'[27] and 'rifodé'[28] (81–82)—all terms that connote lying. To Clopin, these terms prove no different from the names that the so-called 'honest people' give them: 'thief,' 'beggar,' and 'vagrant' (78). The slipperiness of signifiers and the rejection of 'honest' class categories within the Cour des Miracles maintain the lack of divisions that originally caused Gringoire (and the readers focalizing along with him) to question self-identity. Instead, in the Cour des Miracles, the categories through which to make sense of the world are simply 'honest citizens' or 'vagabonds' (78), and Gringoire soon finds that to survive there he must accept that method of categorization and reshape his former identity as an author to fit it. Thus, he argues that since 'Aesop was a vagabond, Homer a beggar, [and] Mercury a thief' (79), he too may be 'a subject of the kingdom of Cant' and a vagabond (81).

23 The original French, as well as the Hazlitt and Foster and Hextall translations, includes 'Monseigneur' (i.e. 'Bishop') among the titles possible (Hugo 84), but Shoberl does not.

24 'le royaume d'argot' (81).

25 Prig, though it now denotes self-righteousness, was a name for tinkers and thieves in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries ('Prig. n3.').

26 A beggar covered in fake wounds ('Capon').

27 A beggar who mimics a disease or wounds to make charitable people feel sorry for them ('Franc-mitou').

28 Beggars who claim public charity under the pretence of having been victims of fires ('Rifodé').

Overall, Gringoire's interaction with the Cour des Miracles shows that the categories through which one divides 'self' from 'other' or 'normal' from 'abnormal' are arbitrary and negotiable, and that the body is unstable, both as a source of identity and as an interpreter of information. Yet, as the external focalization implies, the interaction simultaneously insists on a division between health and illness, or normalcy and abnormality. The focalization shifts between the internal perspective of the confused Gringoire and the external position of an authoritative narrator ultimately reveal the dialogic tension regarding the disabled body in this novel. On the one hand, the brief external, authoritative focalization indicates a belief in or desire for control, stabilization, and comprehension of deviant bodies. On the other, internal focalization emphasizes general corporeal instability and implies that embodiment necessarily entails confusion.

Reading Quasimodo: Interpretation or Empathy?

The focalization in the Cour des Miracles scene also illuminates the novel's ultimate representation of disability, Quasimodo. Throughout the novel, the narrative that externally focalizes *on* Quasimodo depicts him as embodying alterity—corporeal, emotional, mental, and social difference—and as worthy of either contempt or pity. However, rare but vital internal focalization *through* Quasimodo instead aligns readers subjectively with him via empathy. I argue that internal focalization in Hugo's novel and in Victorian novels more generally causes reader identification with the focalizing characters to create empathy between reader and character. Rebecca N. Mitchell's *Victorian Lessons in Empathy and Difference*, however, convincingly argues that Victorian novels primarily teach empathy through characters learning that they *cannot* understand the interiority of others—that is, through learning that others are always different from themselves and thus 'ultimately unknowable' (ix). This, R. Mitchell argues, 'paradoxically, lead[s] to an enhanced sense of that individual' (2). On the surface, it may seem that R. Mitchell's and my own arguments contradict one another, in that R. Mitchell contends that the recognition of others' unknowability produces empathy between characters, while I argue that identifying with the disabled subject through sharing his or her internal focalization produces readerly empathy. However, our arguments align in the following way. Explaining that a fictional character is 'finite and knowable' to readers (because readers can understand his or her interiority through focalization), R. Mitchell argues that

'empathetic extension occurs only through the appreciation of the limits of self' (2) and that 'the alterity of the human other is infinite and permanent' (x). Similarly, I suggest that focalization in Victorian novels often works to make readers aware 'of the limits of self' and of the 'infinite and permanent' alterity of all humans and that, in the case of *Notre-Dame*, this empathetic awareness emerges from internal focalization through Quasimodo.

Readers' introduction to Quasimodo, like Gringoire's introduction to the Cour des Miracles, begins with sensory confusion. Here, a crowd at the Festival of Fools chooses a 'Pope of Fools' from a bevy of people pulling faces. Hugo describes this crowd as a carnivalesque blurring of bodies and social divisions and calls on readers to 'imagine' the sight, which breaks the boundaries between 'geometric figure[s],' 'human expression[s], from rage to lechery,' and 'all ages,' as well as between 'religious phantasmagorias' and 'brute [animal] profiles,' 'grotesque' statuary, carnival masks, and living people. The scene represents 'a human kaleidoscope' that levels 'any distinctions of ranks and persons' (41). Without these typical distinctions, individuals become parts of bodies by means of synecdoche, and those bodies become uninterpretable, inarticulate signs: 'every mouth was a cry, every eye a flash, every face a contortion, every individual a posture: all was howling and roaring' (41).

But when the narrator introduces Quasimodo, the disorder and deviance of the crowd are projected onto his body, which both defies and inspires description. The narrator claims to 'not attempt to give the reader any idea of' Quasimodo's face, but goes on to describe each part of it, from the 'tetrahedron nose' to his 'right [eye] completely overwhelmed and buried by an enormous wen' and his 'forked chin' (43). In calling on readers to 'Imagine such an object, *if you can*' (43; emphasis added), the narrator places Quasimodo's body beyond the interpretation and imagination of his embodied readers; by describing the body after declaring description impossible, however, the narrator gives further authority to external focalization. The narrator then continues in external focalization, listing the bell-ringer's deformities—a 'hump' on his back and a 'protuberance in front,' bow legs, and 'immense' hands and feet—and perceiving 'with all this deformity … a formidable air of strength, agility, and courage' (43–44). The narrator next reports the crowd's reaction to the deformities, but with an authoritative distance that mocks their superstition. For example, in describing the scholars' shouted warning to 'Let breeding women take care of themselves!'—presumably to prevent causing the deformity of their unborn babies

by looking at Quasimodo[29]—the narrator adds, 'The women *actually* covered their faces' (44; emphasis added). This distance dismisses the superstitious medieval readings of the body and privileges the narrator's authoritative interpretation of Quasimodo's body.

When using this external focalization to describe Quasimodo's body, the narrator often employs architectural figurative language, linking Quasimodo to the Gothic and to the grotesque cathedral that houses him. In her essay 'The Drifting Language of Architectural Accessibility in Victor Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris*,' Essaka Joshua brilliantly argues that 'for Hugo not only does the disabled body symbolize the cathedral but also the cathedral symbolizes the disabled body' as 'unique, complex, and beautiful' (n. pag.). Joshua's close reading of Hugo's lengthy somatic descriptions of the cathedral's architecture supports her reading well. For example, she argues that while the cathedral is itself a disabled body with plastered wounds, it also serves as a prosthesis for Quasimodo, providing him with a voice via the bells.

However, I argue that Hugo's union of disability and architecture, and of Quasimodo and the cathedral, is more ambiguous and less affirmative than Joshua suggests and that the novel expresses that ambiguity through its focalization. Specifically, the narrator uses external focalization to render Quasimodo's body interpretable by reading Quasimodo's body and soul as architecture; that is, the narrator combines architecture and body in external focalization to hypothesize Quasimodo's interiority *rather* than focalizing internally through Quasimodo so that readers could textually share that interiority. As such, this external focalization, along with the alignment of disabled body and architecture, separates readers' self-identity from that of Quasimodo. The title of the chapter in which Hugo explores the bell-ringer's symbiotic relationship with the cathedral clearly indicates this distinction: 'Immanis Pecoris Custos, Immanior Ipse'[30] (that is, 'Of a monstrous flock, a more monstrous shepherd'), implying that Quasimodo, as the shepherd of both the Gothic cathedral's towers and its grotesque figures, is even more monstrous than the statuary—and implicitly less than human.

29 Here is another example of Shoberl's bowdlerization. The original French says, '"Gare les femmes grosses!" criaient les écoliers. "Ou qui ont envie de l'être," reprenait Joannes' (45). Hazlitt translates this as follows: '"All ye pregnant women, get out of the way!" cried the scholars. "And all that want to be so," added Joannes' (I.104). Shoberl, however, omits Joannes's slightly bawdy comment.

30 In Shoberl's text, the chapter is simply called 'The Bell-Ringer of Notre-Dame.'

Quasimodo's body and mind, the narrator claims, 'appear to be moulded by the cathedral' (140). While acknowledging that 'It would be difficult to determine the state of that soul, what folds it had contracted, what form it had assumed, under its knotty covering, during this wild and savage life' (140), the narrator uses architectural language to describe the supposedly indeterminate 'state of that soul,' repeating the pattern above, which suggests that corporeal deviance both defies and inspires description. Fusing the focal perspective of narrator and audience, the narrator says:

> If then we were to attempt to penetrate through this thick and obdurate bark to the soul of Quasimodo; … if we were enabled to hold a torch behind these un-transparent organs, to explore the gloomy interior of this opaque being, to illumine its obscure corners and its unmeaning cul-de-sacs, and to throw all at once a brilliant light upon the spirit enchained at the bottom of this den; we should doubtless find the wretch in some miserable attitude, stunted and rickety. (141)

The narrator's conclusion, 'It is certain that the spirit pines in a misshapen form' (141) or, in Hugo's French, 'Il est certain que l'esprit s'atrophie dans un corps manqué'[31] (142), uses the external authoritative voice to imply that physical deviance, by indicating moral deviance, makes bodies legible.

Primarily using external focalization, the narrator goes on to describe Quasimodo's mental state, implying it is warped by the bell-ringer's bent body; according to the narrator, 'impressions of objects underwent a considerable refraction' as they entered Quasimodo's mind, and 'the ideas which entered it came out quite twisted' (141). Two brief sentences within this description convey Quasimodo's point of view—'He received scarcely a single direct perception' and 'The exterior world appeared to him at a greater distance than it does to us' (141)—but they are not sustained enough to be considered focalization; moreover, the second sentence separates readers' subjectivity from Quasimodo's by including the 'us' that keeps the reader aligned with the narrator's authoritative voice. The narrator does momentarily support readers' sympathy by focalizing through Quasimodo to suggest that the bell-ringer's maliciousness was caused socially rather than physiognomically, saying, 'From his earliest intercourse with men he had felt, and afterwards he had seen, himself despised, rejected,

31 Here, *manqué* carries the meaning of 'not functioning,' as well as that of 'missing' ('Manqué').

cast off; … he found nothing but hatred around him' (142). However, this passage arouses pity from readers rather than empathy, and thus it distances readers from the character.

Due to the lack of internal focalization through Quasimodo, his mental and emotional interiority most frequently comes to readers via an external focalization that interprets the excesses of his body. In the chapters that focus on Quasimodo's story, particularly 'The Bell-Ringer of Notre-Dame,' 'The Pillory,' and 'The Bells,'[32] readers understand his character primarily through external interpretation of his body. The narrator conveys Quasimodo's 'delight' through his foaming 'at the mouth,' running 'backward and forward,' 'trembling from head to foot,' and from his 'flashing' eye (143–44); his despair through his 'clos[ing] his only eye' and 'dropp[ing] his head upon his breast' (189); and his 'bitterness, disappointment, and deep despondency' through a smile (192). But in the chapter describing Quasimodo's torture on the pillory, while the narrator first uses external focalization to produce a distancing sympathy for Quasimodo, it also complements the external focalization with a rare and extremely significant section of internal focalization that produces readerly empathy and alignment. Whereas internal focalization in the scene of the Cour des Miracles produces instability of corporeal interpretation by denying subjectivity to both readers and focalizer, in the scene of the pillory, interior focalization produces instability of corporeal interpretation by subjectively aligning readers with the disabled other, Quasimodo.

First, the narrator undermines the spectators' pitiless reaction to the sight of Quasimodo's torture by comparing the crowd to a 'mischievous urchin' in a 'state of primitive ignorance, of moral and intellectual minority' (190). Then, in external focalization, the narrator depicts the interaction between Claude Frollo and Quasimodo, interpreting their bodies to portray their interiority, but in a non-authoritative way: Quasimodo's 'strange smile, full of ineffable meekness, kindness, tenderness' that became 'more expressive, more distinct, more radiant' the closer Claude came to him only shows that he '*seemed* to be anticipating the arrival of a deliverer' (191; emphasis added). Likewise, Frollo's eyes are 'cast down' and he uses his spurs in an about-turn on his mule only '*as if* in a hurry to escape a humiliating appeal' (192; emphasis added). Quasimodo's subsequent smile of 'bitterness, disappointment and deep despondency' and the description of his cry 'like the roaring of a wild beast' (192) produce a sympathy that

32 'Immanis Pecoris Custos, Immanior Ipse,' 'Une Larme Pour Une Goutte D'eau' [A Tear for a Drop of Water], and 'Les Cloches' in Hugo's original text.

further separates Quasimodo from the readers' humanity and personhood. The narrator informs readers that, physically, Quasimodo 'was still more grotesque and repulsive than pitiable' (192), but readerly sympathy increases as the crowd (which the narrator has previously taught readers to despise as 'mischievous urchin[s]') continues to torture him, hurling stones and insults.

At this point, the narrator switches to internal focalization through Quasimodo to describe Esmeralda's approach. Whereas external narration could easily have identified the woman as Esmeralda, the narrator instead adopts Quasimodo's perspective, calling her a 'young female, in strange garb' and 'the Bohemian whom he had attempted to carry off the preceding night' (193). Here, the internal focalization causes readers to experience Quasimodo's subjectivity at the very moment when he seems most separate from humanity. The internal focalization continues as Quasimodo believes Esmeralda is there 'to give him her blow as well as the rest'; it is followed by the brief external focalization of Esmeralda bringing water to his lips while Quasimodo nearly sheds a tear in response, and then returns again to internal focalization as 'he forgets to drink' due to his astonishment at her compassion (193). In this scene, through such alternating focalization, readers both empathetically share identity with the disabled other *and* witness an act of compassion between two marginalized others, since Esmeralda, as a gypsy and vagabond, is nearly as ostracized as Quasimodo. Empathy here conjoins the grotesque and the sublime: the narrator, adopting the crowd's perspective, says, 'Under any circumstances it would have been a touching sight to see this girl, so fresh, so pure, so lovely, and at the same time so weak, humanely hastening to the relief of so much distress, deformity, and malice. On a pillory, this sight was sublime' (194). Witnessing this act of empathy between the two marginalized characters then alters the crowd's interpretation of Quasimodo's body and of his presence on the pillory: 'The populace themselves were moved by it, and began clapping their hands and shouting, "Huzza! huzza!"' (194). Nancy Armstrong describes a similar 'breakdown of the difference between subject and other' that occurs in Henry MacKenzie's *The Man of Feeling* (1771), in a scene in which a grieving madwoman gives the hero a ring, provoking the hero to cry; this breakdown between subject and other, Armstrong argues, 'accompanies the breakdown between spectator and spectacle of grief' (16). In focalizing through Quasimodo and the crowd during this scene of empathy, *Notre-Dame* likewise breaks down the barrier between subject and other and between spectator and spectacle.

Similar patterns of focalization remove the barrier in two other vital scenes: first, Quasimodo's rescue of Esmeralda, and second, Esmeralda's execution and Frollo's death. In the first instance, Hugo narrates Esmeralda's approach to the gallows alternately in external focalization and brief internal focalization through Phoebus and Esmeralda, to register the one's selfish shame at seeing his forgotten lover about to be hanged and the other's passionate joy at seeing the lover she is accused of murdering still alive. From here, the narrator's focus, like a tracking shot in a film, pulls back from Esmeralda's point of view to show the wider context, and in external focalization notes a hitherto unobserved 'strange-looking spectator, who had till then been watching all that passed, with attitude so motionless, head so outstretched, visage so deformed, that … he might have been taken for one of [the cathedral's] stone monsters' (309–10). Pretending not to know that the 'strange-looking spectator' is Quasimodo, the narrator uses external focalization[33] to describe him swinging from the cathedral pillar to the cart holding Esmeralda, knocking out the guards, and then swinging back to the church with Esmeralda. The unnamed 'spectator' cries out, 'Sanctuary! sanctuary!' (310), but in describing the response of the crowd who watches, the narrator calls him by name: '"Sanctuary! sanctuary!" repeated the mob, and the clapping of ten thousand hands caused Quasimodo's only eye to sparkle with joy and exultation' (310). Hugo separates Quasimodo's cry and the crowd's response with a sentence that brings the reader's body into the text and focalization, saying that had it been night, 'on eût pu tout voir à la lumière d'un seul éclair' (336).[34] The narrator's reintroduction of Quasimodo's name in the scene signals the empathy shared between the crowd and Quasimodo, each of whom played both spectator and spectacle in this scene, and in turn the empathy shared between them and the reader, breaking down the barrier between self and other.

The narrator continues in external focalization to interpret Quasimodo's body but, as in the pillory scene, without the

33 In this case, in taking a perspective outside the text that knows *less* than those within, the focalization is external in Genette's sense as well as Bal's.

34 Or, 'one/we/you could have seen all of this in a flash of lightning.' I use the French above because Shoberl and Hazlitt's English translations do not convey the embodied reader here as strongly as Hugo's original French. Instead of following his usual pattern of highlighting reader presence in the text when Hugo does, Shoberl uncharacteristically translates this part as, 'This was all done with the rapidity of lightning' (310). Hazlitt translates it in the passive, saying, 'the whole might have been seen by the glare of a single flash of lightning' (III.34).

authority that the external focalizing narrator claims at other times: Quasimodo's hairy and sunken head only *'appeared to be* … like that of the lion,' and his gingerly handling of Esmeralda was only *'as if* he was fearful of bruising or disturbing her' and *'as though* he dared not touch her even with his breath' (311; emphasis added).[35] The narrator again stresses the empathy between crowd and Quasimodo, breaking down barriers between self and other; the crowd interprets Quasimodo's body as he handles Esmeralda, but does so in empathy, even though the external focalization of the action denigrates that body by using the word 'cyclop' (or *gnome*, in Hugo's French): 'His cyclop eye bent down upon her, shed over her a flood of tenderness, of pity, of grief, and was suddenly raised flashing lightning. At this sight the women laughed and cried; the crowd stamped with enthusiasm, for at that moment Quasimodo was really beautiful' (311). At this point, the narrator adopts Quasimodo's focalization and reveals that his selfhood here aligns with the crowd's reading of his body:

> he felt himself august and strong; he looked in the face that society from which he was banished, and from which he had made so signal a conquest; that human justice from which he had snatched its victim; those judges, those executioners, all that force of the King's, which he, the meanest of the mean, had foiled with the force of God! (311)

Fascinatingly, Hugo again comments, as he did in the pillory scene, on the shared marginalization of Esmeralda and Quasimodo, calling their relationship 'the two extreme miseries of Nature and society meeting and assisting each other' (311). The narrator then closes the chapter by alternating between the mob's perspective of Quasimodo's triumphant display of Esmeralda and the non-authoritative external focalization that uses *'as if'* and *'seems'* to qualify its interpretations. In this scene, as in the scene on the pillory, internal focalization through both the crowd and Quasimodo collapses the distinction between self and disabled other, and between the sublime and grotesque.

In the scenes between Quasimodo and Esmeralda in the cathedral following the rescue, internal focalization through Esmeralda reinstates the differences between them as she hears, sees, and reacts to Quasimodo's physicality, while focalization through Quasimodo makes this division ambiguous. As in the narrator's first description of Quasimodo, Esmeralda inventories the bell-ringer's body, 'from his

35 Hugo's original French likewise emphasizes uncertainty with words such as 'semblaient' and 'paraissait' (336).

knock-knees to his hunchback, from his hunchback to his only eye,' both seeing his physicality as uninterpretable, since 'She could not conceive how a creature so awkwardly put together could exist,' and yet reading 'an air of such sadness and gentleness' within it (329). Quasimodo's conversation with her likewise reiterates their difference via his disability; he says, 'Yes, I am deaf … It is terrible, is it not?—while you—you are so beautiful!' (329). Focalizing through Esmeralda, the narrator blames Quasimodo's body for the division between them; the narrator notes that 'She would frequently reproach herself for not feeling sufficient gratitude to blind her to his imperfections; but decidedly she could not accustom herself to the poor bell-ringer. He was too hideous' (333). Although this comment places the fault of the division on the disabled body rather than on the social structure that devalues it, the internal focalization through Quasimodo on Esmeralda, and on Phoebus shortly after this, denaturalizes the distinction between normative and disabled bodies in two ways.

First, in focalizing through Quasimodo, the narrator depicts an alternate but valid way of reading bodies from that of the authoritative external focalization—a way that is based in Quasimodo's deafness. Without hearing, Quasimodo's primary method of receiving communication is by reading bodily expression. When he sees Esmeralda's body respond to the sight of Phoebus, he reads it as the 'expression of a shipwrecked person who is making signals of distress to a distant vessel sailing gaily along in the sunshine' (334). Using this focalization, the narrator also recognizes the limitations of somatic interpretation, not just that of the deaf Quasimodo, but of the normative body as well; watching Phoebus and his other lover, Fleur-de-Lys, Quasimodo feels relief that since he can only just make out the two in the dark, Esmeralda will not be able to see them at all from her distance. Second, when the narrator reports Quasimodo's thoughts about his physical difference when he sees 'the handsome captain' Phoebus, these thoughts are placed in a social context that highlights how the source of Quasimodo's suffering is not his body, but rather human reaction to his body: 'He thought of the miserable portion which Providence had allotted to him; that woman, love, and its pleasures, would be for ever passing before his eyes, but that he should never do more than witness the felicity of others' (337). Therefore, although internal focalization through Esmeralda in these chapters stresses the differences between the normative self and the disabled other, internal focalization through Quasimodo reveals the socially constructed nature of this boundary and undermines its power.

The final and most intense internal focalization through Quasimodo occurs when Esmeralda and Frollo die. Here, the narrator alternates among external focalization, internal focalization through Quasimodo, and internal focalization through Frollo; doing so increases readerly empathy with Quasimodo, the supposed other, while simultaneously emphasizing the fragility of all bodies. Of the three perspectives, the narrator not only gives the most space to Quasimodo's but also privileges and emotionally aligns readers with this perspective. The first three pages of the chapter in which Esmeralda and Frollo die follow Quasimodo, primarily focalizing through his perspective, as he searches the cathedral for Esmeralda and contemplates Frollo's role in her disappearance, his love for the gypsy and for the priest 'clash[ing] together in his heart' (458). When Quasimodo finds Claude Frollo watching the execution, the narrator suddenly switches from internal to external focalization, pulling back to provide the visual and aural context of the tower's view of Paris at dawn. This act distances readers from Quasimodo's perspective, telling us of what he and Frollo do not notice: the sound of the blacksmith's hammer and of the bird's song, the sight of smoke from chimneys and of silver water surrounding islands. However, it also effectively places the internal perspective in relief, highlighting the empathetic union between readers and Quasimodo.

After the four paragraphs narrated in external focalization, the narrator returns to Quasimodo's perspective for the emotional climax of the novel in which the bell-ringer slowly realizes that the gibbet and soldiers around it are for Esmeralda's execution and then watches her being hanged upon it. While adopting Quasimodo's physical perspective so deeply, the narrator describes Frollo's response to Esmeralda's death thus: 'a demon laugh, a laugh such as one only who has ceased to be human is capable of, *burst forth upon* the livid face of the priest' (460; emphasis added).[36] Significantly, because the narrator focalizes here through Quasimodo, readers *see* the laugh rather than hear it, which the narrator emphasizes by reiterating, 'Quasimodo heard not this laugh, but he saw it' (460). At this sight, Quasimodo pushes the priest off the tower, and the narrator immediately changes to Frollo's perspective to depict the fall. In focalizing through Frollo, the narrator stresses the physicality of the descent, the 'eager hands,' the 'perspiration [as it] trickled from his bald brow, the blood [as it] oozed from

36 'Au moment où c'était le plus effroyable, un rire de démon, un rire qu'on ne peut avoir que lorsqu'on n'est plus homme, éclata sur le visage livide du prêtre' (478–79).

his fingers' ends,' the weight of his body bending the gutter, 'his hair standing erect' from vertigo, and 'his arms becoming weaker and weaker, and his body heavier and heavier' (461–62). This internal focalization through Frollo discloses the instability of even the normative body. The narrator returns to focalizing through Quasimodo as he watches Esmeralda's 'last convulsive agonies of death' and then looks at the remains of Frollo below.

Each of these three scenes, the pillory, Esmeralda's rescue, and her hanging—the three main dramatic high points of the novel—remove the distinction between self and other through internal focalization by aligning readers' subjectivity with that of the character whose disability the narrator's external focalization regularly reads as indicating ultimate alterity. However, the last chapter, which depicts the skeletons of the gypsy and the bell-ringer, reinstates the division between self and other through external focalization that emphasizes and then eradicates Quasimodo's physical difference, first by again cataloguing the physical deformity one last time in his bones and then by describing how those bones turn to dust (466).

Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris* formulates the narrative mode, the conflicted form and focalization, through which much Victorian fiction expresses its anxieties about the human body and identity. As *Notre-Dame*'s hybrid form prevents the novel from fulfilling the conventions of its multiple genres, keeping it incomplete even as it finishes, so it displaces anxieties and fears about identity on to the disabled body while also implying that all bodies, even normative ones, are hybrid, developing, shifting things. The novel insists that there is beauty in hybridity, in the incomplete, and in the ugly: it holds beauty and ugliness, normalcy and abnormality, as both distinct and indistinguishable from one another. In doing so, it shows disability as continuously changing in definition. Moreover, the novel's shifts in focalization cause ambiguity about disability and somatic interpretation, primarily through the empathetic erasure of the division between self and other. Azar Nafisi writes that, thematically, 'empathy is at the heart of the novel' as a genre (224). I would argue that empathy lies at the heart of Victorian novels' *form* as well—that the focalization techniques which Victorian narrators adopt fundamentally create empathy between readers and characters of different genders, classes, and bodies. Undoubtedly, empathy drives the Condition-of-England novels published after *Notre-Dame*, and, as the next chapter on Dickens's *Bleak House* will argue, focalization affects how such novels depict disability as part of the country's social condition.

CHAPTER TWO

Social Bodies: Dickens and the Disabled Narrator in *Bleak House*

'One by assassination … One by starvation, with phthisis … One by chagrin … One by sorrow … One by insanity … One by paralysis,' lists John Ruskin, detailing some of *Bleak House*'s 'nine deaths (or left for death's [*sic*], in the drop scene),' as he complains about fiction's obsession with dying, ill, and disabled bodies ('Fiction, Fair and Foul' 945). Ruskin reads these deaths and the many disabled and grotesque characters as not just the unmistakable 'medical evidence' of 'brain disease' in Dickens and other authors (164), but also the results of industrialization and its concomitant social disruptions. Indeed, since 'Fiction, Fair and Foul,' critics have taken for granted that the many disabled, diseased, and dying bodies in *Bleak House* signify a morally diseased society. Numerous critics have considered the role of the disabled or ill body in *Bleak House* as a symbol of social disorder,[1] but analysing the narrative form used to depict these bodies reveals a more complex and open-ended model of disability than previously acknowledged. By closely reading how the text interprets and conveys bodies via focalization, this chapter instigates a rereading of corporeal difference in *Bleak House* and exposes how critics have unintentionally reproduced the ableist interpretations of bodies suggested through external focalization of the novel's

1 In particular, see Helena Michie's 'Scarring, Disfigurement, and Female Identity in *Bleak House* and *Our Mutual Friend*'; Graham Benton's 'A Study of Illness and Contagion in *Bleak House*'; Mary Burgan's 'Contagion and Culture'; Pamela Gilbert's *Mapping the Victorian Social Body* and *The Citizen's Body*; and Rachel Carroll's 'Queer Beauty: Illness, Illegitimacy and Visibility in Dickens's *Bleak House* and its 2005 BBC Adaptation.'

disembodied narrator without considering the internal focalization through those who experience disability.

Though Ruskin viewed Dickens as Hugo's successor in focusing fiction on aberrant bodies, Dickens inherited more from Hugo than the theme of corporeal deviance: he also employs and adapts Hugo's method of interrogating the interpretation and categorization of those bodies through novel form. As Hugo makes bodily difference fundamental to *Notre-Dame de Paris*, peopling it with peripheral characters such as the deaf judge and 'crippled' mendicants and placing Quasimodo at the heart of both the novel and the cathedral, Dickens likewise situates deviant bodies at both the margins and centre of *Bleak House*. Multiple characters with bodies deemed deviant due to conditions such as deafness, illness, epilepsy, senility, invalidism, asthma, gout, paralysis, injuries, and disfigurations populate the margins of this multi-plotted novel and, perhaps most remarkably, Dickens makes corporeal difference central to *Bleak House* by revealing exactly midway through the novel the disfiguring facial scars of Esther Summerson, one of the novel's two narrators. Crucially, the revelation of Esther's disability implies that Dickens narrates fully half of *Bleak House* through the perspective of a disabled character, whereas Hugo only rarely focalizes through his central disabled character in *Notre-Dame*.

Moreover, by splitting the duties of narration between Esther and a disembodied third-person voice, Dickens throws into relief the dissimilarities between external and internal focalization and their articulation of disability. *Bleak House*'s disembodied narrator most frequently uses external focalization, with very occasional internal focalization through characters and sometimes objects.[2] Esther, however, primarily focalizes internally through her character-self, but also at times externally through her narrating-self, as I explain further below. Through the divided narrations and focalization, Dickens investigates the connections between body and identity, producing simultaneous yet conflicting notions of disability. While *Bleak House*'s externally focalized third-person narration usually marginalizes disability and illness by making them symbolize social deviance through humour and sentimentality, when the novel focalizes through the disabled narrator, Esther, as she experiences illness and the social stigma of facial scarring, *Bleak House* repositions disability and disease as ordinary aspects of the body's

2 Many critics choose to refer to *Bleak House*'s third-person narrator using the masculine pronoun *he* and argue that the narrator represents a masculine view; however, I do not, since the text conveys no tangible evidence of this narrator's gender or embodiedness.

normal instability and uses humour to criticize sentimental metaphorization of disability. As Tom Coogan and Rebecca Mallet note, humour studies' and disability studies' shared concerns with norms and incongruity indicate 'productive junctures between disability and humour' (247). This chapter explores these junctures by examining the shifts of what counts as the incongruity or norms that humour identifies when the focalizer is a person with a disability.

Reviewing the experience of disability through Esther's perspective also provides a lens through which to reassess the disembodied narrator's representations of the disabled body, revealing that even this narrator constructs disability more complexly in characters such as Phil Squod and Esther Jellyby than simply equating corporeal difference to social disorder, as most scholars reading the novel have done. Additionally, this chapter argues that the novel's dual-narrator structure, like *Notre-Dame de Paris*, hybridizes linearity and nonlinearity, beauty and ugliness, and its hybrid form enables the novel to convey conflicting narratives of disability and bodily difference, but that the novel's intentionally unfinished state (the final line is a sentence fragment and a dash) rejects the aesthetic that aligns linearity with cure. Therefore, while *Bleak House* constructs disability as a spectacle signifying social disorder when focalizing externally in the third-person narration, it also undermines that association when focalizing through the perspectives of characters with disability, whose perspective ends the novel.

Externally Focalizing on the Social Body

That Ruskin and so many other readers of *Bleak House* interpret disability and illness in the novel as symbolizing the moral decay Dickens critiques is unsurprising. The two characters Ruskin identifies as distinct examples of the 'Hermes-like deformity' and 'grossness' springing from Dickens's diseased mind ('Fiction, Fair and Foul' 949) certainly signify the greed and stagnation of Victorian society: Krook, an illiterate hoarder who spontaneously combusts from a mixture of alcohol and internal temperature, and Smallweed, a miserly family's aged, deaf, and paralytic patriarch who, though dependant on others for most of his mobility, abuses his senile, deaf wife. Moreover, as foundational works of disability literary theory have demonstrated, the disabled body frequently 'becomes a repository for social anxieties' in literature and art (Garland-Thomson, *Extraordinary Bodies* 6). This common narrative strategy of using disability to 'lend a "tangible" body

to textual abstractions' is what Mitchell and Snyder call the 'materiality of metaphor' (47). Mitchell and Snyder argue that such narratives 'turn signs of cultural deviance into textually marked bodies' (54)—in this case, a corrupt economic and social system becomes manifest in the Smallweeds' paralysed, deaf, weak, and senile bodies and in Krook's corpulent, alcoholic one. But rather than demonstrating *that* Dickens connects disabled bodies to social disorder, my purpose here is to show *how* Dickens creates that moral connection and metaphorical reading of bodies through the external focalization of the disembodied narrator, and later *how* he dissembles it through Esther's narration and Phil Squod's intradiegetic narration.

First, to demonstrate how Dickens uses humour and external focalization to critique social disorder through the disabled body, I will closely examine the disembodied narrator's depictions of the Smallweed family and Guster, a law-stationer's epileptic servant who was raised in a Tooting baby farm.[3] While Krook's alcoholism and eccentricity certainly metaphorize social disorder, that he is introduced to readers through Esther rather than by the disembodied narrator, and that Guster and the Smallweeds have more distinct impairments, makes the latter characters' depictions more salient for this argument. In particular, Dickens uses Guster's epileptic 'fits' to critique Victorian England's ineffectual guardianship of the poor and the Smallweed family's multiple disabilities to condemn the English credit and debt economy.[4]

Notably, the disembodied third-person narrator depicts Guster's epilepsy in an authoritative external perspective to make it function as a comedic part of Dickens's biting satire. Before introducing Guster, the narrator externally focalizes to describe her employer, Snagsby the law-stationer, and his establishment; the chapter begins with an overhead view of Chancery Lane, zooming in on the Snagsbys' home and shop in Cook's Court, Cursitor Street. With near-omniscience, the narrator provides a short history of the shop and the Snagsbys, establishing an authoritative perspective with absolute phrases such as 'Peffer is *never* seen' or 'Guster … is *always* at work' (179, 180; emphasis added). Using this authoritative external focalization, the third-person narrator directly links Guster's epilepsy to her economic

3 In 1849, Dickens had written an article for *The Examiner* about Drouet's infamous Tooting Baby Farm, where many children died of cholera due to neglect (Dickens, 'The Tooting Cholera Cases' 40).

4 For more on Dickens's critique of the credit and debit economy, see Suzanne Daly's 'Belligerent Instruments.'

and social position as a workhouse orphan and impoverished servant. In one sentence, the narrator supplies readers with knowledge of her upbringing ('farmed or contracted for … by an amiable benefactor of his species resident at Tooting'), her wages ('fifty shillings per annum'), and her chronic illness ('fits') (180). The next sentence directly links her economic and social inferiority with her illness, saying that she 'goes cheap with this unaccountable drawback of fits' and that, due to her fear of returning to the workhouse, she divides her time solely between having fits and working (180).

Using the same facetious tone with which it lampoons workhouses and baby farms, the narrator describes the seizures as Guster being 'found with her head in the pail, or the sink, or the copper, or the dinner' (180); notably, this description's passive construction presents the seizures as observed by others rather than, through internal focalization, as experienced by Guster. When adopting Guster's focalization very briefly, the narrator creates an ironic distance from that perspective through exaggerative language, using phrases such as 'Temple of plenty and splendour' or 'prospect of unequalled beauty' to describe her surroundings; these exaggerations undermine the worth of Guster's perspective and privilege the authority of the narrator's own view, which recognizes that the objects of the flowery descriptors are simply a 'little drawing-room upstairs' and the view of Cook's Court and a sheriff's yard. Thus, the focal perspective the narrator employs to describe Guster's disability creates a distinct divide between readers, who adopt the narrator's normative perspective, and Guster, who is marked as different by her disability and the humour with which the narrator describes it. Since humour ultimately relies on the subversion of norms to function, it always acts as 'a commentary on order' in which 'appropriate and non-appropriate behaviours and ideas are demarcated' (Powell 55). In the case of Guster, the primary targets of Dickens's humour are the proprietors of baby farms and the society that allows such institutions to exist; but to reach those targets Dickens relies on the presumed abnormality of Guster's epilepsy to highlight non-normativity, to demarcate the non-appropriate behaviours of these institutions. Likewise, Dickens combines humour and the disembodied narrator's external focalization to critique England's dissipated aristocracy via Sir Leicester's gout, 'a demon of the patrician order' in which Sir Leicester takes pride (270), and England's mercenary legal system via Vholes's 'impaired' digestion (603).

Dickens similarly uses external third-person narration and humour to condemn the Smallweeds' corporeal differences and greed. As in the description of Guster, the chapter introducing the Smallweeds

begins with the disembodied narrator authoritatively providing an encompassing view, this time of 'a rather ill-favoured and ill-savoured neighbourhood' known as 'Mount Pleasant,' zooming in to the Smallweeds' particular street, and then, with near-omniscience, offering a brief history of 'several generations' of Smallweeds. In this history, the narrator humorously insists that behaviourally, physically, and inherently, these generations of Smallweeds have always been adult-like. To paint them as such, Dickens draws on the evolutionary theories found in Robert Chambers's *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* (1844) and Charles Lyell's *Principles of Geology* (1830), comparing the generations of Smallweeds to 'old monkeys with something depressing on their mind' (342) and dating Judy Smallweed 'from the remotest periods' of 'a perfectly geological age' (348). John Morreall argues that, since what makes people laugh is 'something odd, abnormal or out of place, which we enjoy in some way' (66), incongruity is the foundation of humour. Added to the family's strange eternal adulthood is the further incongruity of Grandmother Smallweed's senility, which sent her 'into a childish state' that makes her the family's 'only child' (341), and of Grandfather Smallweed's disability, 'a helpless condition as to his lower, and nearly so as to his upper, limbs' (86). The humour additionally lies in the contrast of both husband and wife's physical helplessness to their power as usurers, which Dickens emphasizes by making the one's dementia visible through irrational outbursts about money or interest percentages and by having the other's invalid chair, from which he cannot move without assistance, hold a drawer 'reported to contain property to a fabulous amount' (343)—that is, the money gained from his usury.

To highlight the absurdity of Smallweed's unfair dominance over his debtors, the narrator exaggerates his physical helplessness by comparing him to inanimate objects manipulated by others—'a broken puppet,' 'a mere clothes-bag with a skull-cap,' 'a great bottle' to be 'shaken up,' or 'a great bolster' to be 'poked and punched' (33). That Dickens intends readers to make this association between the Smallweeds' disabilities and their social evil as moneylenders proves abundantly clear through the contrast between their bodies and the body of their debtor Trooper George. The narrator, focalizing externally on the bodies, notes:

> A special contrast Mr. George makes to the Smallweed family … It is a broadsword to an oyster-knife. His developed figure, and their stunted forms; his large manner … and their little narrow pinched ways … are in the strongest and the strangest opposition. (349)

The narrator here creates the distinct binaries of good versus evil, physical strength versus weakness, and health versus disability, punitively accentuating the latter halves of the binary via humour.

As the disembodied narrator uses external focalization and comedy to associate disease and disability with social disorder, so it occasionally combines external focalization with pathos for similar effect. For example, after the comical scene in which Reverend Chadband lectures the street-sweeper Jo, the narrator again relies on Guster and her seizures to critique misguided charity, this time through pathos. The narrator here changes tone to indirectly address Jo in authoritative, prophetic language, arguing that 'if the Chadbands, removing their own persons from the light [of God], would but show it thee in simple reverence … thou [Jo] might learn from it yet!' (417). Externally focalizing, the narrator then depicts the 'charitable Guster' acting out this prophecy, significantly while 'warding off a fit,' by offering Jo her supper, her sympathy, and a pat on the shoulder—the first physical affection ever given to him (417). The oncoming fit and the narrator's repeated reference to the Tooting baby farm reiterate the previously established connection between disability and the institutions that fail to aid those in need, but this time evoking pathetic sadness rather than humour. This instance is a thread of a larger web that the disembodied narrator weaves through half the novel—one linking disability, illness, and death to the 'national irresponsibility toward the neglected or abandoned' and England's 'moribund institutions such as Chancery and the aristocracy' through the Chancery's fogs and mists, which become the miasma infecting both Tom-all-Alone and Chesney Wold with fever (Axton 33).[5]

Smallpox and the Esther Industry: Critical Readings of Esther's Facial Scarring

The authority with which the disembodied third-person narrator connects disease and disability with social corruption through comedy, pathos, and external focalization makes it no wonder that most critics (including Ruskin) read *all* the novel's diseased and disabled

5 Sir Leicester's stroke, which began as an 'unusual slowness in his speech' mixed with 'inarticulate sounds' on discovering his wife's infidelity (784) and which leaves him 'invalided, bent, and almost blind' (928), also fits this web as critiquing through pathos and pathology the social system that so unfairly and extremely condemns sexual transgression in women.

characters as 'a physical manifestation and consequence of society's sickness' (Gurney 79). Michael Gurney argues that 'the society of *Bleak House* is itself diseased' and that, as author, 'Dickens adopts the posture of social pathologist' (79). Brian Cheadle lumps together *Bleak House*'s many ill and disabled characters—'from Caddy's deaf baby to Phil Squod'—as 'figures in the novel … whose lives have been stunted' and whose bodies take part in Dickens's critique of 'excess' and of 'economic imperium' (40–41). Similarly, Katherine Cummings interprets the epileptic Guster, feverish Jo, and lame Phil as 'signs (that things have) gone seriously astray' (188). John Kucich believes that Prince and Caddy Turveydrop's marriage is a 'grotesque parod[y]' of Esther and Allan Woodcourt's and that through it, Dickens critiques marriage as a happy ending since 'the Turveydrops' marriage yields a deaf-mute child' (101). Donna Budd believes this same child to be 'the final victim, sign, and terrible solution to its grandmother's verbal transgressions' (206), those of writing innumerable ineffective letters advancing unnecessary social causes while neglecting her family. Jasmine Yong Hall additionally suggests that 'Caddy's deaf and dumb child, Esther's namesake, might also be taken as a sign of Esther's repression' (190), a rather absurd claim since Esther tells readers that Caddy learns 'innumerable deaf and dumb arts' (i.e. sign language) to allow the child to communicate rather than repress communication (Dickens 933).

But the character in *Bleak House* whose disability and disease has most frequently been reduced by critics to a metaphor of social injustice or psychological distress is the second narrator, Esther Summerson. At almost the exact halfway point in the novel, in the tenth of its twenty instalments, Esther catches smallpox by nursing a homeless boy, Jo, and her own maid, Charley. When Esther falls ill from the contagion, she experiences sore throat, temporary blindness, fevered hallucinations, and facial disfigurement. Most critics have interpreted Esther's sickness and scars as similarly representative of psychological and social transgression, either hers or the world's, but these are incomplete readings at best and misinterpretations at worst of how Esther's illness and disability function in the text. Instead, I argue, the method of introducing Esther's disease and scarring, and the focalization used to portray it, reveal how disability and its interpretations are socially constructed. Moreover, the humour that corresponds to disability in Esther's narration, unlike that in the disembodied narrator's, critiques those who perceive aberrant bodies as inherently abnormal.

In studies of *Bleak House*, Esther Summerson has generated a critical industry devoted to interpreting her narration, her identity, and

her body, all of which remain elusive in the text.[6] As a narrator, she is coy, at times pointedly reticent and at others elaborate with details and facts: she hides her 'self' in her narrative even as she displays it. Additionally, Dickens ties the elusiveness of Esther's narration and identity to her equally ambiguous body: she tells us, 'It seems so curious to me to be obliged to write all this about myself! As if this narrative were the narrative of *my* life! But my little body will soon fall into the background now' (73–74). Of course, as Helena Michie points out, 'Esther's "little body" reminds us of its presence just as she relegates it to the "background"' (203). The narrative is and is not the narrative of her life, and her body is both present and erased within it. Many scholars therefore attempt to pin down Esther's elusive 'self' into a visible, corporeal embodiment through her experience of smallpox and the scarring it leaves behind.

Such critics most often tend to interpret Esther's illness and scars as signs of her illegitimacy and her hidden psychology, as 'the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual sin' (Zwerdling 49), and as a way to shift the shame of that illegitimacy solely onto her mother (Jaffe, '*David Copperfield* and *Bleak House*' 173). One critic, John O. Jordan, even feels that Esther may have intentionally contracted smallpox from an 'unconscious wish to protect her mother' by eliminating their likeness (18), so that 'by destroying her face, Esther in effect destroys herself' (53). Critics similarly interpret Esther's temporary blindness as the corporeal manifestation of her psychology, 'her inability, or her unwillingness, to "see"' (Frank 72), or her 'mental blindness' in 'over-reliance on the rational and factual' rather than on the imagination (Winslow 7). Other critics, however, choose to interpret Esther's smallpox as a symbol on an even grander scale. Pamela Gilbert reads Esther's illness allegorically, with Jo representing the uncontrolled individuals threatening to harm the stability of the social body as represented by Esther (*Citizens' Body* 148). Katherine Montwieler states that Esther's scars are 'the sign of her (and humanity's) mortality' (253). Cheryl Kinney and Theresa Kenney argue that Esther's scars mark her as a Christ-like 'scapegoat' bearing the 'selfishness and greed' of 'English society' (275). Other critics argue

6 See, for example, James H. Broderick and John E. Grant's 'The Identity of Esther Summerson'; William Axton's 'The Trouble with Esther'; Alex Zwerdling's 'Esther Summerson Rehabilitated'; Valerie Kennedy's '*Bleak House*: More Trouble with Esther?'; Patricia R. Eldredge's 'The Lost Self of Esther Summerson'; Jasmine Yong Hall's 'What's Troubling about Esther?'; and Timothy Peltason's 'The Esther Problem,' among many, many others.

that Esther's disease and scarring are analogies for narrative development—with Esther's fevered hallucinations paralleling a narrative drive to reinstate order (Bailin 81), or, as Graham Benton argues, with her scars as a 'pre-verbal signifier' of disease (78) in a novel that is 'a document searching for a cure' (70). While the disembodied narrator of *Bleak House* clearly aligns disabled bodies with social disorder through external focalization, I would argue that in the case of Esther, the *critics* rely on Esther's scarring to embody the social and narratological deviances present in the novel; in other words, they read a 'materiality of metaphor' in Esther's body that is not there.[7]

Many critics—including those who argue that her facial disfigurement is symbolic—argue that Esther's smallpox scars disappear at the end of the novel, or even never existed, since her husband Alan Woodcourt asks her, 'don't you know that you are prettier than you ever were?', and Esther responds in an ambiguous and unfinished sentence that closes the novel with a dash: 'they can very well do without much beauty in me—even supposing—' (935). Even supposing what? That she were beautiful? That her scars were gone? Dickens intentionally leaves this question only hinted at and completely unanswered—not just in the letterpress, but also in the author-approved illustrations by Phiz (Hablot K. Browne), which hide Esther's face from view in every illustration depicting her after her illness. But in spite of absolutely no textual evidence in the novel that the scars do not remain, the dominant critical response to the open ending, however, is to presume narrative closure through cure. Gillian West speculates that the disfiguration of Esther's face must be only the temporary result of 'erysipelas of the face' from typhus—an argument made possible by the fact that Dickens never once names the disease that affects Jo, Charley, and Esther[8]—since, 'if the scars had been the pitting of smallpox, [Woodcourt's compliment] would be an untruth' (30).

7 Of course, previous literary representations of smallpox frequently used materiality of metaphor. As David Shuttleton explains, smallpox regularly carried connotations of sexual excess (120) and 'wayward femininity' (11) in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century literature, and as such, 'the woman scarred by smallpox functioned as a dreaded but ubiquitous sign of subjective and social disruption' (117).

8 Nor, as Mary Carpenter notes, does Dickens name any of the diseases in the novel (92). Explaining that 'Vaccination was not universal, nor did it infallibly protect against smallpox' since regular revaccination was required, Carpenter repudiates West's claim that, due to their economic and social position, Esther and Ada would undoubtedly have been vaccinated and therefore could not have contracted smallpox (93).

In contrast, Kucich believes that the scars remain and suggests that the doctor indeed does tell 'a well-meaning matrimonial lie, but a lie nevertheless, one that may conceivably conceal disappointment with Esther's looks and failure to contain his interest' (101). One of Dickens's contemporaries also felt that the plot proved far too unrealistic when Esther 'marries a young doctor in spite of the smallpox, and … *he* is quite satisfied with the arrangement' ('*Bleak House*' 278). Most modern critics, however, believe that by the novel's end the scars have somehow 'magically' disappeared (Zwerdling 49)—perhaps 'through the agency of love' (Davis, 'Constructing Normalcy' 11) or simply by miracle (Salotto 333). However, there is absolutely no textual evidence in *Bleak House* that the scars have disappeared. Woodcourt neither says that Esther no longer has scars nor that her complexion is clear. Furthermore, the disembodied narrator provides corroborating evidence that the scars are permanent when it reports Jenny telling Woodcourt, 'And that young lady that was such a pretty dear, caught [Jo's] illness, lost her beautiful looks, and wouldn't hardly be known for the same young lady now' (688).

Strangely, it has been easier for critics to assume that the scars have disappeared through cure, that Esther merely *imagines* her face permanently disfigured, or that her husband either lies about her beauty or 'see[s] inner beauty and prefer[s] it to outer' (Kinney and Kenney 273), than it is for them to imagine that Dickens actually meant that scars *can* be beautiful. These critics' arguments all share two assumptions: first, that a scarred face cannot be a beautiful one to a Victorian audience, and second, that the novel's conclusion must come through cure and resolution. Many Victorians would have shared the first assumption, as advertisements, poems, and narratives of the preceding century testify (Shuttleworth 115), and as Peter Sköld's statistical analysis of smallpox and marriage in nineteenth-century Sweden suggests;[9] however, beauty and smallpox scarring were not wholly antithetical in Victorian thought. William H. Ainsworth's immensely popular novel *Jack Sheppard* (1839–40) notes that smallpox 'sometimes spares more than it destroys, and imparts an expression to be sought for in vain in

9 From examining the records of men and women born in 1750–1825 in five Swedish parishes, Sköld found that those who had been infected by smallpox married much later than the uninfected, with the women in particular more likely to wed later and to a partner who had likewise been infected, and that both infected men and women were more likely to remain unmarried than the uninfected. Sköld concludes that this implies that smallpox scars impeded beauty and therefore affected the scarred men and women's eligibility.

the smoothest complexion,' and leaves 'pitted cheeks, which we would not exchange for dimples and a satin skin' (160).[10]

The second assumption likewise has literary precedent: disability studies scholars such as Lennard J. Davis and Mitchell and Snyder have shown the ubiquity of medical cure as narrative's 'quick fix' to provide narrative resolution (Davis, *Bending* 99). However, both assumptions markedly counter *Bleak House*'s narratological construction as a hybrid text. According to Hugo's aesthetic model, the main qualities of the modern hybrid text are the 'harmony of contraries' ('Preface' 373)—that is, the simultaneous mingling and separation of the grotesque and sublime (i.e. the ugly and beautiful)—and *incompletion*, which he argues 'is the best way to be harmonious' ('Preface' 363). Esther's narration contributes to this harmony through incompletion by providing an unfinished final sentence and by mingling supposed ugliness and beauty. As J. Hillis Miller points out, 'Allan tells Esther that the disfiguration of her face … has made her "prettier than [she] ever [was]"' (*Charles Dickens* 223). Hence, Esther's 'former beauty' has not been 'restored' as some critics believe. Her face is not beautiful because the scars are gone, nor is it so 'in spite of' those scars; rather, in a radical move, the novel suggests that Esther's scarred face *is* beautiful.

Focalization, Form, and the Fractured Self

Recognizing that the smallpox scars remain at the end of the novel forces us to rethink the common critical interpretations of Esther's experience of illness and scarring as the culmination of her struggle with selfhood brought on by her traumatic childhood and her liminal social place as an illegitimate child. Most critics argue that her encounter with disease wholly shifts that selfhood, unquestionably altering her identity and narration, giving to her a 'new face and self' (Michie 207) or even making her 'no longer fully her self' (Bailin 104). But in first-person narration, the self is *always* both divided and simultaneously whole. As narratologist Seymour Chatman explains, first-person narration encompasses 'two separate narrative beings moving under the same name': the same pronoun *I* is split into a past self, 'the character, who inhabits story-time-and-space,' and a present

10 Later in the century, in *On the Face of the Waters* (1896), Flora Annie Steele also creates a heroine whose smallpox scars 'enhanced, rather than detracted from her beauty' (100).

self, 'the narrator, who previously inhabited discourse-time-and-space' (194). Moreover, according to the final chapter of *Bleak House*, Esther narrates her portion of the story several years after her marriage to Woodcourt. Thus, Esther-as-narrator is already scarred when she starts telling her story and therefore tells her story from whatever position of selfhood that disease and scarring would have given her. It is simply that readers do not *know* this until she first describes her illness to us at the halfway point of the novel. By delaying the disability of one of his two narrators for the first half of the novel, Dickens doubly emphasizes the sociality of disability. It is only in *knowing* of Esther's scarring and illness that readers work to interpret and understand her selfhood in relation to her atypical face.

Moreover, the delayed revelation of Esther's scarring unsettles the symbolic interpretations of corporeal difference that Dickens has established through the disembodied narrator. William Axton argues that the moment of Esther's illness, along with Krook's spontaneous combustion, is one of two '"keystone" episode[s]' through which Dickens 'locks into place the thematic and aesthetic concerns' of *Bleak House* ('"Keystone" Structure' 34). He, like so many other scholars, sees her fever and scarring as manifesting both 'the psychological hurt she has suffered since childhood' and 'the sense of moral taint' caused by her illegitimacy (44)—and, like many other scholars, he feels that Esther's illness solidifies the novel's system of metaphor that links physical disease to 'moral pestilence' (46). However, I argue that by adopting the focalization of a character with disability at this 'keystone' point in the narrative and by revealing that fully half of the novel has been narrated *by* a character experiencing bodily difference, Dickens does not *confirm* the system of metaphor linking moral and physical 'pestilence': instead, I suggest, he counters it, implying that the disabled body is not representative of social disorder but rather is marginalized by the social norms that interpret that body as abnormal.

This implication occurs largely through the interaction between the internal focalization through Esther-as-character while she experiences illness and disability and the external focalization through Esther-as-narrator on illness and disability. In first-person narration, when the narrative describes 'the thoughts of the narrating I about the experiencing I,' which occurs in the present tense as opposed to the past, the focalization is through the narrator (Herman and Verveak 79). Phelan explains that 'shifts in focalization between the narrating-I and the experiencing-I are indicators of self-consciousness' (61). Esther's narrative includes repeated present-tense interjections that give the narrating-I's perception of story events—and the shifts of

focalization between her narrator-self and her character-self *do* reveal a self-conscious narration. However, Phelan contends that the first-person narrator's self-consciousness is due to his or her 'aware[ness] of the distance between his [or her] current and former self' and 'of himself constructing the story of how he [or she] moved from one place to the other' (61) and so perceives the narrative trajectory of first-person narration as necessarily linear, moving 'from one place to the other.' Esther's story is frequently seen this way, as a *Bildungsroman* or, as the title of Esther's first chapter puts it, 'A Progress.' Thus, critics generally read the incident of Esther's illness and hallucinations as a nonlinear disorder to be overcome through recovered health as a part of her linear journey. Yet, as I have suggested above, the hybridity of the novel's form and the permanence of Esther's scarring resist narrative linearity.

Moreover, through the shifts between external and internal focalization in Esther's first-person narration of her illness, Dickens further resists the linearity of narrative progress and challenges the symbolism that associates somatic deviance and social corruption. When Esther internally focalizes her physical and psychological encounter with sickness through the perceptions of the experiencing-I, she depicts her self-identity as being at once linear and nonlinear. At first, she expresses a linear distinction between the sick self and the former healthy self, saying, 'I seemed to have crossed a dark lake, and to have left all my experiences, mingled together by the great distance, on the healthy shore' (543). But in spite of this separation, she also feels that her diseased self intermingles with her previously healthy identities. She says of her fever-induced hallucinations, 'At once a child, an elder girl, and the little woman I had been so happy as, I was not only oppressed by cares and difficulties adapted to each station, but by the great perplexity of endlessly trying to reconcile them' (543). Thus, in illness she experiences identity in a nonlinear way.

However, after describing these moments of simultaneously disjointed yet fluid subjectivity through internal focalization, the narrative focalizes externally through her narrating-I. She says, 'I suppose that few who have not been in such a condition can quite understand what I mean, or what painful unrest arose from this source' (543), imposing linear order back onto the narrative by emphasizing a presumed difference between healthy and unhealthy persons. This distinction parallels that provided by the disembodied narrator's external focalization on disease and disability—but, notably, with less authority and more hesitancy in the assertions. Focalizing externally through her narrating-I, Esther introduces her hallucinatory events

with such phrases as 'I am almost afraid to hint' or 'Dare I hint' (544) and concludes them by saying, 'Perhaps the less I say of these sick experiences, the less tedious and the more intelligible I shall be' (544). At this moment of external focalization, Esther-as-narrator seems to suggest that illness is incomprehensible to the well, displacing nonlinearity and disjointed identity onto illness alone. Moreover, the narration returns to internal focalization through Esther's experiencing-I when the nonlinear delirium and fever pass and the illness follows a seemingly linear path—that is, when Esther thinks she is dying and then when she realizes she is recovering.

It may seem as though, in this scene, both the internal and external focalization equate nonlinearity with disease and linearity with health. Miriam Bailin certainly interprets Esther's illness in this way, arguing that 'the narrative structure [of Dickens's novel] is … an attempt to dispel the nightmare of convergence and stasis which the delirium dramatizes' (93–94). But this argument presumes that the nonlinearity expressed in Esther's delirium is ultimately unwanted and that the narrative undoubtedly seeks to 'dispel' it—just as the other critics presume that Esther's scars are unwanted and that the ending provides a cure to dispel them. However, although Esther-as-character finds the unrest of fevered delirium an 'inexplicable agony and misery' and so desires its end, Esther-as-narrator, a person with socially disabling facial scars, 'do[es] not recall [her feverish experiences] to make others unhappy' nor is she 'the least unhappy in remembering them' (544). As narrator, Esther does not seek a cure or explanation for her hallucinations; instead, in inquiry, she seeks to 'kn[o]w more' about them and thus 'alleviate their intensity' (544). Additionally, the hesitant language with which Esther-as-narrator frames the experience of her past illness expresses a fear of eliding sickness and health or disability and ability, a fear that her social experience as a person with disability has in part conditioned in her, as I will explain below.

Dickens's delay in revealing Esther's illness and scarring also forces readers to perform anew with Esther-as-narrator what Garland-Thomson calls 'the rituals of public face-work' (*Staring* 104)—that is the facial recognition and interpretation of facial expressions in conversation. Garland-Thomson explains that the 'illegibility' of atypical faces may cause an 'interpretive crisis [that] quickly can become an etiquette disaster as both members of the face-working dyad accumulate uneasiness and mutual embarrassment' (*Staring* 105). Indeed, in the hesitancy and awkwardness with which Esther describes her experience of smallpox, as something she is 'almost afraid to hint at' (544), she pre-enacts with readers the awkward face-work that they will later

read Esther-as-character repeatedly perform at each unveiling of her scarred face to friends and acquaintances.

With each meeting, Esther must 'come out' as atypically faced—which she does dramatically with the use of her veil—and then negotiate the various social responses to her scars.[11] Though Jarndyce's, Ada's, and Richard's responses to the sight of her face indicate that their social interactions with her will remain relatively unchanged by her scarring, others' reactions—especially those of Guppy and Skimpole—suggest that her anxiety about coming out is not unfounded. Truly, although most critics interpret Esther's smallpox and scarring as wholly altering her selfhood by physically manifesting her psychological confusion and illegitimate birth, those two humorous unveilings indicate that what changes more dramatically is her social environment.

Whereas the disembodied narrator uses external focalization and humour to marginalize disability and critique social corruption, Esther narrates these two episodes of coming out by focalizing through her perspective both as narrator and as character, and she uses humour to critique the ableist responses that seek to either find meaning in her illness and scarring or socially exclude her because of her disfigurement. Because humour relies on subverting norms to function, the key to understanding Esther's use of humour in relation to disability is 'recognizing that different individuals, groups and societies recognize different norms and rules' (Powell 53). After Esther's experience of smallpox, once she has looked in the mirror and adapted to her altered face until it 'became more familiar' (559), her norms include her facial scars. The incongruity that produces humour in the 'coming out' episodes with Skimpole and Guppy, then, is their inability to perceive the scars as normal or acceptable.

Esther opens the interview with Skimpole focalizing through her perspective as-character to criticize Skimpole's abuse of Richard's kindness. Esther then adopts Skimpole's voice in mixed free-indirect and indirect speech to report his reaction to her illness and scarring:

> He was charmed to see me; said he had been shedding delicious tears of joy and sympathy, at intervals for six weeks, on my account; … began to understand the mixture of good and evil in the world now; felt that he appreciated health the more when somebody else was ill;

11 For a more in-depth discussion of the intersection of queer theory and disability studies, see Mark Sherry's 'Overlaps and Contradictions between Queer Theory and Disability Studies' or Ellen Samuels's 'My Body, My Closet: Invisible Disability and the Limits of Coming Out.'

> didn't know but what it might be in the scheme of things that A should squint to make B happier in looking straight; or that C should carry a wooden leg, to make D better satisfied with his flesh and blood in a silk stocking. (577)

Because both the narrator and focalizer here are disabled, the aesthetic theory that illness and disability promote the privilege and happiness of the normatively bodied appears ridiculous as well as disrespectful. Through the free-indirect speech that blends Esther's voice with Skimpole's, readers sense both the pomposity of Skimpole's words and the irreverence with which Esther dismisses them.

Esther's narration of Guppy's response to her scars likewise combines humour and internal focalization to criticize the social exclusion of people with bodies deemed deviant. Furthermore, the episodes in which Guppy responds to Esther's scars act as a direct counterpoint to the romance narrative with Woodcourt. While the internal focalization through Esther-as-character initially presents her disease and scars as formal obstacles in the romance plot between her and Dr Woodcourt, the focalization through both Esther-as-character and Esther-as-narrator during the scenes in which Guppy responds to her scars replays the romance plot ironically, undermining its ideological interpretation of disease as obstacle. When Esther writes, 'What should I have suffered, if I had had to write to [Woodcourt], and tell him that the poor face he had known as mine was quite gone from me, and that I freely released him from his bondage to one whom he had never seen!' (557), the thought that scars bar Esther from romance seems quite tragic. However, it becomes comic when replayed in the Guppy courtship plot. Internally focalizing the first instance of face-work with Guppy after her scarring through Esther-as-character, Esther says that she 'could hardly have believed that anybody could in a moment have turned so red, or changed so much, as Mr. Guppy did when [she] now put up [her] veil' (598). Guppy's loss of composure, his unsolicited withdrawal of a proposal that Esther had already turned down, and the legalese in which he insists that withdrawal be affirmed, 'Though no witnesses are present' (599), of course give rise to laughter for their social awkwardness; however, they also comically highlight how the presumed 'inferiority' of Esther's scars is socially determined rather than inherent.[12]

12 Earlier in the novel, while recuperating at Chesney Wold, Esther refers to her scarring as an 'inferiority,' which she compares to the illiteracy of a villager (562).

In addition, the entire interaction discloses the moral ambiguity of social exclusion on the basis of physical difference. First, it does so through the sense of shame that Esther-as-character and as-narrator recognize in Guppy, noting that 'he looked ashamed' and that she 'must do Mr. Guppy the further justice of saying that he had looked more and more ashamed' (601). Second, it does so through Guppy's inability to admit openly that Esther's scars provide the motive for his awkwardness and retracted proposal—the first of which he blames on an imaginary 'something bronchial' and the latter on his 'arrangements in life, combined with circumstances over which [he has] no control' (namely, Esther's illness and perceived loss of beauty) (599). The humour indicates that culpability belongs to Guppy in this situation, no matter how much he insists the blame lies with the body—whether his 'something bronchial' or Esther's scars. Moreover, when he renews his proposal to Esther, as one 'willing to overlook the circumstances over which none of us have had any control,' his and his mother's eccentricity work to demarcate as inappropriate Guppy's supposed 'magnanimous behaviour' of tolerating physical disfiguration (918). The censure here of 'overlooking' disfigurement rather than accepting it is exceptionally compelling when compared to Esther's earlier, character-focalized conviction that Jarndyce's proposal showed 'that his generosity rose above my disfigurement' (667). By later implying that Guppy is *not* 'magnanimous' for being willing to marry Esther in spite of her scarring, this scene shows that neither Jarndyce nor Woodcourt is particularly generous for doing the same.[13] Indeed, the scene even highlights that Jarndyce only offers his hand in marriage *after* he can assume she is otherwise off the marriage market due to her scars in addition to her illegitimacy. Esther recognizes this, saying that, in his proposal letter, 'he did not hint to me that when I had been better looking he had had this same proceeding in his thoughts and had refrained from it … But I knew it' (667). In effect, the courtship of Guppy both gives a reason for why Esther should feel her scars to be an 'obstacle' to the romance trajectory with Woodcourt and reveals the absurdity that they ever would be an obstacle.

So, while most critics interpret Esther's smallpox and scarring as wholly altering her selfhood by physically manifesting her psychological confusion and illegitimate birth, the humorous encounters analysed above indicate that what changes is her social environment

13 Phiz's accompanying illustration of this scene, captioned 'Magnanimous Conduct of Mr. Guppy,' delightfully stresses Guppy's 'magnanimity' by placing an ironic, glowing halo over his head.

and *not* her interior selfhood. As Cynthia Northcutt Malone says, 'even before Esther loses her beauty, the text calls attention to an irremediable division within the "self" … Esther's illness only intensifies this sense of loss and absence of identity' (111). And although Malone claims that Esther's scarred face 'is the face that points to the loss of identity' (112), Esther-as-character has several intense experiences of disconnection and loss of identity *before* she bears the scars. While Anna Neill argues that these episodes are 'the symptoms of epilepsy' (805), informed by Dickens's experience of seizures as a child and reflected in neurologist John Hughlings Jackson's later work on the 'dreamy states' of epileptic seizures (806), there is not enough textual evidence in *Bleak House* to suggest that Dickens is pathologizing these disorienting experiences. For example, near the opening of the novel, internally focalizing through Esther-as-character, Esther describes falling asleep with Caddy lying against her knee:

> I began to lose the identity of the sleeper resting on me. Now it was Ada; now, one of my old Reading friends … Now, it was the little mad woman worn out with curtsying and smiling; now, someone in authority at Bleak House. Lastly, it was no one, and I was no one. (94)

Focalizing internally, Esther here conveys a lack of identity coupled with a wholly normal physical state: falling asleep and dreaming. Moreover, even using external focalization, Esther distinctly associates her disjointed identity with a time and place that immediately precedes her exposure to smallpox. She says:

> I had no thought, that night—none, I am quite sure—of what was soon to happen to me. But I have always remembered since, … [that] I had for a moment an undefinable impression of myself as being something different from what I then was. I know it was then, and there, that I had it. I have ever since connected the feeling with that spot and time. (484–85)

Here, Esther the narrator, whose scarring supposedly 'points to a loss of identity' (Malone 112), deliberately connects her feeling of dissociation from self to a spot and time before she had undergone any physical change and consciously insists that the dissociation occurred with 'no thought' of her future encounter with disease. Strangely, Lawrence Frank quotes this same passage to argue that Esther's illness is 'the natural consequence' of her psychological state (71). But that is illogical: are then Jo's and Charley's experiences of disease 'the

natural consequence' of Esther's psychological state as well? Esther's pre-established identity confusion causes her delirium's focus, not the disease itself. In the same way, Charley's delirium concentrates on her siblings and the death of her father (495) and Jo's concerns his transience and the command given to him to 'move on' (486).

Certainly, each of their major concerns—illegitimacy and poverty—are due to the social system in which they are as trapped as the case of *Jarndyce* vs *Jarndyce* is trapped in the Chancery. However, *Bleak House* is not, as Benton calls it, 'a document in search for a cure' (70)—it is not even in search of a resolution. The novel does not provide a cure for Esther's scars, as I have already argued, nor does it provide one for society. *Jarndyce* vs *Jarndyce*, the *true* overarching symbol of societal disorder in *Bleak House*, is neither resolved nor cured. It is, as the solicitor Kenge puts it, 'checked—brought up suddenly' (923), discontinued but unfinished, like the last sentence of the novel.

Likewise, just as the novel ends on an unresolved dash, Esther's identity does not reach a resolved state. Chiara Briganti notes that 'The indeterminate ending of *Bleak House* reflects the ever-provisional identity that Esther reaches' (225); but, in my view, this transitional identity is not a state that Esther 'reaches.' Rather, her selfhood (as narrating, facially scarred) has been so since the novel's opening: as both nonlinearity and linearity exist in the novel's form, so they dwell together in Esther's body and identity, both before and after her experience of illness and disablement. Similarly, while first-person narration assembles a linear narrative 'of how [the narrator] moved from one place to the other' (Phelan 61), it simultaneously involves a nonlinear interconnection of the narrator's present selfhood to its past selves, an interconnection that Dickens stresses through the repeated interjections of external focalization through Esther-as-narrator.

'Shape Structures Story': The Disabled Narrator

Esther's story counters the disembodied narrator's metaphorization of disability as social critique by demystifying corporeal difference and portraying that difference's lived reality. In showing that lived reality, Esther's perspective also reveals that bodies are social—not because they manifest social anxieties or morality, with good and evil appearing through the body in terms of health and illness as Ruskin and the critics would have it, but rather because they are the vessels through which social interaction takes place and because they are primarily understood through social interaction. Notably, the disembodied

third-person narrator also includes the perspective of a character with disability that, like Esther's scarring, challenges the simple equation of corporeal difference to social disorder. The perspective is that of Phil Squod, Trooper George's close friend and assistant at the shooting gallery. When the disembodied narrator first externally focalizes *on* Phil, that focalization suggests that deviant bodies represent social disorder—as it does with Guster and Smallweed. However, the disembodied narrator later includes Phil's perspective, which contradicts that narrator's earlier interpretation of Phil's body and dissembles the materiality of metaphor in which disability symbolizes social disorder.

Using external focalization, the disembodied third-person narrator introduces Phil in the seventh instalment of *Bleak House*, calling him 'a little grotesque man' with 'a large head,' 'a face all crushed together,' a blue-marked cheek, only one eyebrow, hands that are 'notched, and seamed, and crumpled all over,' and 'a curious way of limping round the gallery with his shoulder against the wall' (357). Significantly, in this description, the narrator repeatedly uses a syntax that lacks the authority with which it depicts Guster and the Smallweeds. This syntax shifts the focus of somatic interpretation onto Phil's disabled body. Rather than saying, for example, 'I (or we) perceive blue and speckled marks on his cheek and therefore presume the man has been scarred by gunpowder explosions from his current employment,' or more assertively, 'Phil's blue and speckled cheeks were given him by gunpowder explosions,' the narrator says that Phil 'appears, from a certain blue and speckled appearance that one of his cheeks presents, to have been blown up, in the way of business, at some odd time or times' (357). This syntactical structure implies that Phil's body, rather than any person's perception or knowledge, provides the source of meaning about him. This syntax makes the narrator's judgement of Phil's body—that it is 'grotesque' and has a 'very singular and rather sinister appearance' (357)—seem produced by Phil's physicality rather than from a cultural or social source outside it.

Moreover, the narrator avoids the responsibility of omniscience by using the hesitant words 'appears' and 'seems': Phil '*appears* … to have been blown up,' he '*appears* to be very strong,' 'it *appears* that he is lame,' and 'Everything *seems* to have happened to his hands that could possibly take place' (357; emphasis added). This denial of omniscience not only allows room for errors, but also emphasizes that errors are likely. Likewise, these words emphasize that Phil's body is being *interpreted*—by readers as well as by the narrator. The wording implies that though the body is a source of meaning for the narrator and readers, this meaning is not incontrovertible and in fact requires an agent (and

perhaps a context) to decipher it. By using this means of introducing Phil, Dickens makes readers pointedly aware that they are reading the character based on his body; thus, it is all the more notable that those readings are not entirely correct.[14]

In Phil's second appearance in the novel, the narrator more overtly suggests a lack of omniscience. Rather than commenting on the meaning of Phil's body as it 'appears' or 'seems,' the narrator here merely records Phil's actions, such as 'sidl[ing]' around the gallery to prepare breakfast before eating it from a plate on his knees (420). The narrator interprets this latter act by listing three possible readings without offering judgement or informing readers which one is correct: 'Either in humility, or to hide his blackened hands, or because it is his natural manner of eating' (420). Dickens immediately follows this uncertainty in narration with Phil's assertive self-history and own interpretation of his body. Phil's intradiegetic narrative—that is, the story he tells within the story of *Bleak House*—reveals the interpretive deficiencies in the narrator's introduction, which overlays Phil's corporeal difference with metaphors of social evil, and instead depicts disability as a social interaction rather than a physical fact.

Prompted by questions from George, Phil narrates several episodes of his life to explain what led him to the shooting gallery and what gave him his many scars. He says that even before circumstances altered his body, his looks were 'nothing to boast of,' but that while he worked as a tinker's apprentice and then as a tinker, his looks worsened when the fire 'spile[d] [*sic*] [his] complexion, and sing[ed his] hair off,' and when hot metal and 'turn-ups' with the tinker 'mark[ed]' him (422). Phil goes on to explain that, while working at a gas works, he was further burned and then thrown out of a window by an explosion (422). While the narrator's earlier ambiguous phrasing that Phil 'appears … to have been blown up, in the way of business, at some odd time or times' still applies (Phil's markings have all occurred through his dangerous occupations), without Phil's interpolated narrative of his past, readers would most likely have misinterpreted his scars as resulting from his current work at the shooting gallery, or, as George

14 Elaine Auyoung's brilliant essay 'Standing Outside *Bleak House*' argues that Dickens uses such syntax and related techniques to 'expose the degree to which readers are caught between knowing that there exists a fuller scene and being unable to determine what that scene is really like' (187). Auyoung also notes several moments of 'filling in the blanks' (193) for readers or characters, which shows 'the obvious ethical importance of prompting readers to recognize the limits of how much they can really know' (192).

first did, as resulting from battle wounds. Because Phil's scarring and altered mobility originate in his working-class occupations, they have the potential to symbolize working-class exploitation, as is the case with the Smallweeds' and Guster's disabilities. However, Phil's description of his experience emphasizes the social (mis)interpretations of and prejudices against his disability, as well as his own delight in the abilities and appearance of his supposedly deficient body.

Perhaps more important than George's original misreading of Phil's body is George's mis*telling* of it, which prompts Phil to intercede with corrections. When describing his tinkering career, Phil explains that he lost the extra income that came from boarding other tinkers: he was 'too ill-looking, and their wives complained' about him (422). George tries to say that Phil 'would pass muster in a crowd,' but Phil disagrees, lists as proof the various ways his body has been marked, and adds, 'I am ugly enough to be made a show on!' (422). After recounting the tales of his scarring up to the point of being blown out of the window, Phil asks if George remembers meeting him shortly thereafter. George begins to tell the story, saying, 'You were walking along in the sun' (422), but Phil interrupts with a correction: 'Crawling, guv'ner, again a wall—' (422). While George, as a non-disabled narrator, uses the word that makes most sense to him to describe perambulation, Phil's correction forces him (and readers) to renegotiate his (and their) concept of bodily movement to include Phil's mobility. Therefore, George alters his description and says, 'True, Phil—shouldering your way on—,' whereupon Phil adds, 'And hobbling with a couple of sticks' (423). Through his several interruptions, Phil rejects George's well-meant attempts to normalize or elide his physicality; instead, he asserts his physical difference as a significant and acceptable aspect of his identity. Using the disabled character Jenny Wren from Dickens's *Our Mutual Friend* as an example of self-constructed identity, Melissa Free argues that 'the gallery of freaks who populate the fiction of the nineteenth century should also be read for their capacity to construct themselves' (262). Self-construction is exactly what Phil's narrative performs: the disembodied narrator insufficiently constructs Phil's identity in introducing him, and George insufficiently describes Phil's physicality, but through his own intradiegetic narrative, Phil assertively builds his own identity based on both his corporeality and his social experiences.

Moreover, contributing to the aesthetic hybridity of *Bleak House*, Phil describes his twisted body as manifesting both ugliness and beauty. He tells George, 'My beauty was queer, wery [*sic*] queer' (422). When finished telling his life story, he jokes that the clients at the shooting

gallery could use him as a target or for boxing practice, adding, 'They can't spoil *my* beauty. *I'm* all right,' before he quickly sidles around the room, pantomiming shooting and boxing, and then 'makes a butt at [George] with his head, intended to express devotion to his service' (423). Thus, Phil claims an irrevocable beauty for his body, in spite of how that body may be changed or disfigured. Although his use of the word 'beauty' is tinged with irony, and although he qualifies it with the word 'queer' in recognition that his body does not fit conventional aesthetic boundaries, Phil nevertheless asserts his beauty as much as he does his ugliness. Discussing the use of beauty in stories, Lori Hope Lefkovitz notes that 'the only way that the narrative can effectively persuade us of the hero's and heroine's exceptional characters is to insist upon their exceptional beauty, a beauty so exceptional that it cannot be described' (8). She also claims that 'the ugly and the ordinary,' unlike beauty, 'are imaginable and describable' (202). Yet Phil details his injuries and physical scarring *and* maintains that his body holds indefinable (though queer) beauty.

Indeed, Lefkovitz's belief that the ugly and the ordinary are describable while beauty is not parallels the cultural construct of disability. Mitchell and Snyder write, 'Whereas the "able" body has no definitional core (it poses as transparently "average" or normal), the disabled body surfaces as any body capable of being narrated as "outside the norm"' (49). Antithetically, whereas Lefkovitz argues that beauty's rhetoric, in working 'to undermine description itself' (202), provides symbolic potency, Mitchell and Snyder contend that the culturally defined physicality of disability as being 'outside the norm' invests the disabled body with metaphorical meaning. However, when Phil's self-narrative combines the indescribability of his beauty with the physicality of his disabilities, it undermines the disembodied narrator's earlier attempt to invest his body with the materiality of metaphor. Of course, the page following Phil's intradiagetic story reintroduces Grandfather Smallweed, bringing with him the somatic symbolism equating his aberrant body with social deviance. Nonetheless, interpretations of Phil's disabled body—such as the narrator's original implication that it is 'sinister' or various critics' assertions that it symbolizes the disorder of the novel's social world—falter when confronted with his own affirmation of its beauty.

This affirmation is symbolically confirmed by means of the beauty that Phil's body produces. In the places where Phil lives and works, his body leaves behind expressive physical imprints: grease and friction stains around George's gallery and polished shine on the metal at Chesney Wold. These marks express how Phil uses his body to

construct his own story. In the article 'Shape Structures Story: Fresh and Feisty Stories about Disability,' Garland-Thomson argues that although our culture 'would prefer to believe that story is independent from [bodily] shape' and 'would even prefer to go so far as to claim that story structures [bodily] shape'—that is, that our identities control and shape our bodies—in reality, the opposite is true; instead, 'disability insists that shape structures story' (114).[15] To explain, she describes the dance movements of her colleagues at the annual dance for the Society for Disability Studies: 'Some of us lunge around; others glide smoothly on wheels; crutches prop some of us and stomp to the rhythm … [and o]ur shapes, in all their uncontained variation, structure our stories' (120–21).

Bleak House most vividly illustrates the principle of shape structuring story through Phil. His disabled body, which requires the support of walls for its mobility, produces a circular story with erratic outbursts of veering linearity. The narrator first describes Phil's movements thus: 'He has a curious way of limping round the gallery with his shoulder against the wall and tacking off at objects he wants to lay hold of instead of going straight to them, which has left a smear all round the four walls, conventionally called "Phil's mark"' (357–58). Cummings may call this mark 'an implicit remark upon the original "stain" [i.e. Esther's illegitimacy] and perverse turns of the narrative—a twisted plot' (188), and the narrator's choice of the word 'smear' may connote negative uncleanliness, but when conjoined with Phil's self-narrative and with his actions of goodness, kindness, and loyalty, the significance of the smear and of Phil's movement shifts. Rather than signifying the illegitimacy of someone else or the 'perverse' deviance of narrative, Phil's mark signifies his own love and loyalty and the beauty that, as Hugo suggests in his aesthetic theory, also abides in the ugly or grotesque.

Phil's last appearance in the novel—during which the disembodied narrator indicates that Phil now works at Chesney Wold polishing 'anything in the way of a stable-yard that will take a polish' and 'leading a life of friction' similar to that of his body around the walls of the gallery (929)—emphasizes the beauty produced by that nonlinearity in body and narrative. While, as Montwieler correctly

15 Elizabeth F. Emens explains in a response to Garland-Thomson's article that the claim 'shape structures story' is meant to 'celebrat[e] the power of bodies beyond the "norm" to create beautiful and powerful stories' (125) rather than to imply that corporeal difference is the root of the socially constructed label 'disability.'

argues, 'Dickens does not encourage us to read bodies allegorically' but rather 'gently goads us to arrive at understanding through our bodies, contending that in their proximity to disease, to death, and to suffering—lies their beauty' (240),[16] Phil's final appearance also highlights the beauty in his disabled body's proximity to productive work, to rural life, and to restfulness (qualities generally not associated with disease, death, suffering, or disability).

Notably, the narrative pattern of Phil's final scene replicates his introduction by beginning with externally focalized physical description followed by the revelation of his name; however, the narrator markedly alters the tone in describing Phil's body this time. Instead of 'a little grotesque man' who appears 'sinister' (357), Phil is called 'a little lame man,' 'A busy lame man,' 'A shaggy little damaged man' (929). Although this description perhaps infantilizes Phil's diminutive size, the change of tone and association from 'smear[ing]' (358) to 'polishing' (929) shows how Phil's self-narration and his body's 'stories,' like Esther's narration, challenge the dominance of somatic symbols of social evil in the novel.

With this description of his occupation at Chesney Wold, and with the sentence, 'He answers to the name of Phil' (929), Phil Squod fades from *Bleak House* for good. Alexander Woloch tells us that the 'strange significance of minor characters … resides largely in the way that the character disappears, and in the tension or relief that results from this vanishing' (38). Phil's disappearance yields emotional relief for readers in that the story provides him with a presumably stable, happy resolution, including the domestic reunion of Trooper George with his mother, Mrs Rouncewell, and the backdrop of rural peace. Yet a tension remains: with his disappearance, in which he keeps verbally silent, Phil is firmly placed within the role of minor character, pushed to the margins of the novel and of Chesney Wold. Nonetheless, in spite of being a minor character in the novel, Phil claims the identity of disability along with unconventional beauty and the role of hero in his earlier self-narrative. By making himself central to his own story, as well as by adopting a militaristic identity for his physical body (whistling 'The Girl I Left Behind Me' [528], calling George 'commander,' and offering himself as a sacrifice for target practice), Phil constructs himself as a hero in two senses, as 'distinguished by extraordinary valour and martial achievements' and as 'he in whom the interest of the story or plot is centred' ('Hero').

16 Ironically, not many pages later, Montwieler interprets Esther's physical blindness as a metaphor for social blindness (243).

In this heroism, Phil differs from *Bleak House*'s other disabled narrator, Esther Summerson, who overtly denies her beauty, often veils her facial scars, and outright rejects the role of heroine—even though she proves to be the major focus of both plot and discourse in the novel, as the order of events to most dramatically reveal details of Esther's birth and romance suggests. Phil's self-narrative demonstrates how a marginalized, disabled narrator distinguishes his own identity through body and narrative; it establishes the principle that 'shape structures story' and demonstrates the beauty in ugliness. Phil's story illustrates how to read past Esther's ambiguity; it supports the elements of her narrative that challenge the marginalization of disability found in the disembodied narrator's association of physical, social, and moral deviance. By introducing the scarred and wounded Phil Squod first with somatic misinterpretations and then with Phil's more complete self-narrative in the chapters *before* the novel reveals Esther's smallpox and scars, Dickens shows both how bodies shape stories and how those stories can be misread.

While many of Charles Dickens's novels and non-fiction works depict people with disabilities, *Bleak House* makes disability central to its plot, symbolism, and narrative form. Critics have long interpreted disability in the novel as wholly symbolic of social, psychological, and moral deviance, but doing so oversimplifies the Victorians' understanding of disability. Instead, Dickens's treatment of disability in the novel is neither wholly realistic nor wholly caricaturized. By dividing the narration of the story between a disembodied third-person narrator and an embodied first-person one whose bodily difference remains hidden until halfway through the novel, Dickens transforms the hybridity of Hugo's formal method of interrogating society and disability. Like Hugo, Dickens uses authoritative, external focalization to portray the disabled body as inherently deviant and to make it a spectacle invested with metaphorical meaning to represent the social body.

However, where Hugo uses strategic internal focalization to destabilize the boundaries between normativity and disability, Dickens uses the self-narrative of disabled characters Esther and Phil to challenge the metaphorization of corporeal deviance. Their self-narratives present disability's lived reality, showing instead that interpretations of bodies are determined through social interaction rather than being inherent to their physicality. Yet Phil's and Esther's narratives also display how one's physicality can shape one's narrative. As such, *Bleak House*'s overall structure, like Phil's mark and Esther's unfinished final sentence, hybridizes linearity and nonlinearity, beauty and ugliness,

and its hybrid form enables the novel to convey conflicting narratives of disability and bodily difference. The similarly hybrid genre of novels analysed in the following chapter likewise centres on the body: blending the Gothic novel and domestic realism, this genre garnered the name 'sensation fiction' for the way its melodramatic thrills played upon the bodily sensations of the reader. And, like *Bleak House*, the novels of this genre provoked the disgust of Ruskin and other contemporary critics with their focus on the spectacles of disabled, deformed, and deviant bodies. However, unlike *Bleak House*, the two novels that I examine in the next chapter construct their representations of disability by engaging directly with Victorian medical, psychological, and scientific theories that interpreted those bodies as specimen rather than as spectacles.

CHAPTER THREE

Sensing Bodies: Negotiating the Body and Identity in Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Aurora Floyd* and Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone*

In a scathing thirty-four-page 1863 review of twenty-four novels from a new popular genre, philosopher and literary critic Henry Mansel recorded the physical sensations these novels produced: the stories 'carry the whole nervous system by steam,' he says, and they may even have the unintentional effect of producing a 'sensation in the palate and throat which is the premonitory symptom of nausea' (487). His disgust responds to the genre's blend of scandalous plots (bigamy, murder, suicide, forgery, adultery, lunacy, illegitimate birth, conspiracies, and secret wills) with domestic characters and settings (respectable families from middle-class homes). In addition to listing the stories' effects on the individual reader's body, Mansel argues that the novels also reflect the health of the social body:

> Regarding these works merely as an efflorescence, as an eruption indicative of the state of health of the body in which they appear, the existence of an impure or a silly crop of novels, and the fact that they are eagerly read, are by no means favourable symptoms of the conditions of the body of society. (512)

Known as 'sensation fiction,' this genre caused a sensation in the literary and medical worlds alike. An 1863 article in the *Medical Critic and Psychological Journal* described the genre as a biological, psychological, and social problem, resulting from 'a strong desire for "sensations"' found in 'the nature of the human mind' of people whose

time is insufficiently occupied ('Sensation Novels' 515).[1] A month later, a second article in the same journal suggested that the novels' 'morbid exaggeration of feeling' and 'tendency to confound vice and virtue' could lead to increased suicide in England ('Baits for Suicide' 594); thus, the article exhorted, 'it is well that we should mark to what these principles may lead, and what are the patterns held up for imitation' (597). These and other Victorian responses to sensation fiction explicitly linked morality and psychology to the body—in particular, to the bodily and mental sensations that such novels produced.

Just as sensation fiction supposedly produced physical sensations in the reader, so bodily instability was the genre's structural and thematic lodestone. Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White* (1859–60), the novel that spurred the trend of sensation fiction,[2] manifests this bodily focus in the extreme. Multiple characters narrate the novel's events to produce sensations of suspense, fear, or desire in readers as they recreate the unstable bodily and mental states of the focalizers. Most memorably, when narrator Walter Hartright feels 'every drop of blood in [his] body … brought to a stop by the touch of a hand laid lightly and suddenly on [his] shoulder' (63), the first-person narration and focalization encourage readers to share the thrill of that touch. Certainly, Margaret Oliphant felt this was so; her review states that 'Few readers will be able to resist the mysterious thrill of this sudden touch. The sensation is distinct and indisputable. The silent woman lays her hand upon our shoulder as well as upon that of Mr. Walter Hartright' (571).

Additionally, the body of nearly every character in the novel is diseased, disabled, or deviant in some way, and these bodily deviances often advance the sensational plot. The titular character, Anne Catherick, who never outgrew her childhood 'defects of intellect' (99), and her half-sister, Laura, each break out from an asylum in which they were wrongly incarcerated for madness. The hypochondriac invalid Mr Fairlie, Laura's guardian and the novel's comic relief, never leaves his bedroom. The lawyer Mr Gilmore is struck by apoplexy before he can

1 The author argues that men satiate this desire with the novels and values of 'Muscular Christianity' offered by authors such as Charles Kingsley and Thomas Hughes, whereas women choose sensation fiction.

2 Collins's *Woman in White*, Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* (1861–62), and Mrs Henry [Ellen] Wood's *East Lynne* (1861) have long been heralded as the inaugural sensation novels. However, critics now argue that novels bearing the generic features of sensation novels began appearing in the early 1850s and that the popularity of these three novels merely solidified the genre's conventions and confirmed its cultural influence (see Beller).

help Laura and Marian escape the villains, an obese Italian count and an English baronet with a red scar on his right hand. The two amateur detective figures, Hartright and Marian, are temporarily debilitated by disease (tropical fever and typhus, respectively). The hero's ostensible sidekick, Pesca, while not 'a dwarf,' is 'the smallest human being … out[side] of a show-room' (52). Finally, the Italian count is undone by 'a man with a scar on his left cheek' (565). Neither unique to *The Woman in White*, nor to novels by Collins, disabled and diseased bodies saturate sensation fiction.

Sensation fiction's multitudinous depictions of disability make the genre a critical focus of disability scholarship in Victorian studies. Much of this scholarship concentrates on Collins's fiction in particular, and reasonably so: according to Ruskin, if *Notre-Dame de Paris* stood as the 'effectual head of the whole cretinous school' of body-focused novels ('Fiction, Fair and Foul' 949), Collins's *Poor Miss Finch* (1872) was its culmination. But what makes Collins so compelling is not so much the grotesquery that troubles Ruskin; rather, it is the sincere complexity with which he treats the physical and social experiences of the disabled characters he creates.[3] While critics acknowledge that Collins at times uses melodramatic or comedic stereotypes of disability, they also agree that he consistently 'fractures the binary' of abnormality and normalcy, and of disability and ability (Mossman 487). Indeed, as Mossman and Stoddard Holmes point out in their chapter 'Disability in Victorian Sensation Fiction,' the genre as a whole deploys disabilities to 'disrupt a host of such binaries' (494), and this disruption makes disability 'central to the very poetics of sensation fiction' (493).

That poetics of sensation are centrally concerned with 'identity and its loss,' as Jonathan Loesberg notes, explaining that sensation fiction structures narrative as 'an inevitable sequence' of events that leads to 'a loss of social identity' and so the genre explores identity 'in its legal and class aspects rather than in its psychological aspect' (117). However, I additionally argue that sensation fiction explores identity in its *physiological* aspect and that it does so to investigate the connection among the physiological, the psychological, and the social. Nascent Victorian psychology sought to understand the mind physiologically, to determine the mind's relation to the body. For example, the 'science' of phrenology, developed by Franz Joseph Gall and Johann

3 Collins himself identified as corporeally deviant, complaining of gout in the eyes and of a skull deformity (Peters 19–20); his experience may inform his portrayals of disability.

Gaspar Spurzheim at the turn of the nineteenth century, assessed personality by measuring bumps in the skull. Likewise, physiognomy, which determined personality by reading facial features, was popularized when cheap English translations of Johann Caspar Lavater's *Physiognomische* (1775–78) became widely accessible during the nineteenth century (Pearl 12). These sciences (and pseudo-sciences) destabilized traditional beliefs in the soul as an entity separate from the body (Stiles, 'Victorian Psychology' 761), producing an anxiety about bodily identity to which sensation fiction responded.

As such, in sensation fiction, bodies in general function both as spectacle, exhibitions of physical instability provoking sensational thrills, and as specimens, case studies probing the source of identity. The genre's preoccupation with the shifting sensations and states of the body—those belonging to both characters and readers—unites with its obsessive anxiety over the instability of identity.[4] Again, *The Woman in White* provides an overt example of this dual anxiety: Laura Fairlie's identity and ailing body are swapped for those of the intellectually disabled Anne Catherick, and after Laura's escape from the asylum, Walter, Laura, and Marian assume false identities to hide from Count Fosco while they work to restore Laura's health and legal identity. This connection between the body and identity in sensation fiction explains why, as Mossman and Stoddard Holmes note, sensation novelists 'tended not simply to deposit a disabled character in the plot to create a sensational charge, but, rather, to investigate disabled subjectivity' ('Disability in Victorian Sensation Fiction' 499).

Many studies of disability and sensation fiction examine how disability functions in the sensation plot,[5] but several also concentrate on disabled subjectivity, perspective, and/or the textual, linguistic construction of the body. Christine Ferguson, examining how sensation fiction constructs the body textually (1), argues that Braddon's use of signing characters in *The Trail of the Serpent* (1861) 'destabilize[s] emergent assessments about the role of the body in producing, sensing, and interpreting meaning' (8) that had divided the 'Victorian reading body into a seeing-feeling dyad' (5). Similarly, Jennifer Esmail considers deaf and signing characters in Collins's *Hide and Seek* (1854)

4 I make a similar argument in my article '"Skins to Jump Into": The Slipperiness of Identity and the Body in Wilkie Collins's *No Name*.'

5 See Casey Cothran's 'Mysterious Bodies: Deception and Detection in Wilkie Collins's *The Law and the Lady* and *The Moonstone*'; Wagner's 'Difference and Deformity in Wilkie Collins's Sensation Novels'; and Stoddard Holmes's 'Queering the Marriage Plot: Wilkie Collins's *The Law and the Lady*.'

to investigate the *oral* base of Victorian fiction's textual representation, noting that the stories not only 'meditate on disability but also on language itself: its various forms, its fraught embodiment' ('"I Listened with My Eyes"' 993). As Ferguson and Esmail show, Collins's and Braddon's sensation novels collapse language and the body together through their representations of signing. In addition, Mossman's 'Representations of the Abnormal Body in *The Moonstone*' concentrates on the relation between form and disability in sensation fiction, arguing that the novel's multiple narrators create a 'kind of shivering ambivalence' about 'the binary of the normal and the abnormal' similar to that of the Shivering Sand around which the novel's mystery circles (494). While my argument also focuses on perspective, form, and disability, it argues more broadly that mid-Victorian sensation fiction uses the disabled body to explore cultural anxiety surrounding the body's connection to identity—to the soul, the mind, and self.

Notably, Victorians themselves would not have used the term *identity* in this sense, as a notion of the self that is shaped by one's cultural environment or innate psychology. Instead, the term *self* would have covered that concept. Moreover, it often included the body as part of that self-identity, as *Bleak House*'s Esther demonstrates when she refers to her self-identity before she gained her smallpox scars as 'my old self' (682). *Soul* and *mind*, the other two terms I include here, formed a key part of Victorian psychology's debates on the construction of self. As Tyson Stolte explains, the faculty and associationist factions of psychology during the Victorian era disputed whether material 'sensations' or God were 'the source of the mind' ('"What Is Natural in Me"' 59); faculty psychologists argued for an innate, immaterial soul that responded to its environment and circumstances, whereas associationist psychologists declared that the mind was primarily, if not wholly, material. Like faculty psychology, phrenology and physiognomy implied that the self was innate; but, like associationism, they 'threatened to reduce mind to brain alone—to offer a dangerously materialist view of the self' ('"What Is Natural in Me"' 65). These debates about psychology and the nature of mind were therefore, at base, deeply about the body—about whether the mind was wholly body, or was predicated on an immaterial soul that dwelt in the body, or whether that immaterial soul or material mind made itself visible on the external, visible body.[6] Applying my methodology to two central works of sensation

6 Stolte also finds evidence of the debates regarding 'physiological psychology' in *Bleak House*, particularly in the novel's obsession with decomposing corpses and with contagion ('"Putrefaction Generally"').

fiction, Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Aurora Floyd* (1862–63) and Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone* (1868), I suggest that the form and focalization of these two major novels enact the anxiety with which Victorians were determining the body's connection to identity and illustrate how that connection threatened established views of normalcy.

In *Aurora Floyd*, focalization through an authoritative external perspective provides 'correct' interpretations of bodies which have previously been misinterpreted by physiognomy, phrenology, and lineage. In particular, the narrator uses external focalization on disabled villains to manifest how identity appears in bodies, as well as to place quasi-eugenic value on the identities of those with healthy bodies. However, two instances of focalization through the cognitively and physically disabled groom Stephen Hargraves briefly unsettle the novel's essentialist position on the body's relationship to the mind by suggesting the social construction of his disability and by recognizing inherent value in his mental processes. By contrast, *The Moonstone*, lacking authoritative external focalization due to its multiple first-person narrators, uses plot to reveal misinterpretations of disabled bodies, in particular that of Rosanna Spearman. In addition, internally focalized interactions between normate narrators and disabled characters in the novel often cause the narrators to recognize the instability of their own identities and bodies, and thus of normalcy.[7] However, the overall narrative structure works to control deviance through linearity, which imposes normalcy as a stable, final result.

The 'Physiological Telegraph': Genre, Form, and the Body in *Aurora Floyd*

A third of the way into Braddon's *Aurora Floyd*, two pairs of lovers marry after a *Midsummer Night's Dream*-like mismatching sorts itself out. First both Talbot Bulstrode and John Mellish fall in love with Aurora, while both she and her cousin Lucy love Talbot. Then Talbot breaks his engagement with Aurora when she refuses to tell him where she spent an unaccounted-for year between running away from school

7 Garland-Thomson uses the term *normate* to designate 'the veiled subject position of cultural self, the figure outlined by the array of deviant others whose marked bodies shore up the normate's boundaries' (8). This term works particularly well when discussing *The Moonstone*'s narrators because the normate narrators frequently rely on disabled figures to situate themselves as normal.

and returning home to her father. (Readers do not learn until much later in the novel that Aurora left school to elope with her father's groom, James Conyers, returning home after discovering vague but unforgivable vices in her husband.) Following her recovery from a heartbreak-induced illness, Aurora happily marries John, who respects her right to privacy about her past, and then proceeds to match up Talbot and Lucy, who likewise marry. At this point, the novel's narrator suggests that the 'two heroines being married, the reader versed in the physiology of novel writing may conclude that my story is done, that the green curtain is ready to fall upon the last act of the play' (222).

However, the narrator rejects the 'physiology' of the typical romance novel, arguing that 'real life-drama' does not 'always end upon the altar-steps' and adding that a novelist wishing to depict reality would not allocate 'three volumes to the description of a courtship of six weeks duration' and then 'reserve for himself only half a page in which to tell us the events of two-thirds of a lifetime' (222). The physiology of *this* novel, readers can presume, will be different—and it is: the next two-thirds of the novel shift from this romance plot to one of blackmail, murder, and mystery that was only foreshadowed in the first third. In those following chapters, Aurora discovers that her secret first husband, James Conyers, is still alive and that her current husband has hired him as a horse trainer. When Conyers is later murdered, Aurora becomes a suspect. However, Talbot and Aurora's long-lost uncle, Captain Samuel Prodder, capture the groom, Hargraves, holding the money with which Aurora had bribed Conyers. This discovery, along with other evidence found by the detective Joseph Grimstone, implicates Hargraves as Conyers's murderer, and he is hanged by the end of the novel.

Of course, the reader versed in the *physicality* of the novel would also have recognized that the story was not yet finished when the couples married. Since this passage comes just over midway through the May 1862 instalment in *Temple Bar*, the serial reader would have seen the next chapter immediately below and would have expected more instalments yet to come (237). Likewise, the reader of the three-volume novel would have only just hit page 20 in the second of three volumes in the 1863 Tinsley Brothers edition.[8] The difference, however, between knowledge of the novel's physiology and its physicality makes the difference between knowing how the novel functions and knowing how it appears: the physical appearance of a book gives only a minor

8 The page references to the novel throughout this chapter, however, come from Richard Nemesvari and Lisa Surridge's Broadview Press edition.

indication of the plot's contents. This key difference parallels how *Aurora Floyd* responds to the almost fatalistic connection between body and mind as established by nascent Victorian psychology and parallels how the novel portrays the readability of identity in the body.

In *Aurora Floyd*, the narrator alternates between an authoritative external narrative viewpoint (similar to that of Hugo in *Notre-Dame de Paris*) and the much less authoritative internal focalization of characters. Especially in the first half of the novel, the narrator's asides frequently include meditations on genre, often using terms of body and perspective, as in the example above. In addition, the narrator refers to genre in externally focalized descriptions of or deliberations about characters' bodies. Internally focalized narration often depicts characters repeatedly misinterpreting their own narratives or placing them in inappropriate genres. For example, once he becomes a 'visitor in the house of his [romantic] rival,' Talbot feels that what should have been the 'tragedy' of his doomed relationship with Aurora ends as 'a pitiful farce' (213). John, after marrying Aurora, 'had come to play his humble part in some sweet domestic drama of love and confidence' but soon 'found himself involved in a tragedy—a horrible mystery of hatred, secrecy; and murder' (369). These narrative misreadings parallel the internally focalized misreadings of *bodies* that occur in the texts. In melding genre and the body, Braddon thus teaches the audience how to read the body—that is, the structure—of this novel's nascent genre and how to interpret the novels' bodies: the romantic, aristocratic bodies of Talbot and Lucy; the disabled, working-class bodies of Conyers and his murderer, Stephen the 'Softy' Hargraves;[9] and the excessively robust bodies of John and Aurora.

Internally focalized misreadings of bodies and external focalization and digressions from the narrative dismiss phrenology, physiognomy, and aristocratic lineage as effective or reliable methods of reading the body. However, through the authoritative external focalization and the internal focalization of characters deemed 'perceptive' or 'intuitive,' the novel also asserts a subtle, almost proto-eugenic understanding of the body-mind connection in which identity expresses itself visually on the body and dwells fundamentally in the body. Of course, Francis Galton did not coin the term 'eugenics' until 1883, but he began developing his ideas regarding heredity and human breeding as

9 The volume publications of *Aurora Floyd* consistently place quotations around the words *softy* and *fond* in reference to Hargraves's cognitive disability, but the *Temple Bar*'s serialization uses the quotations sporadically. I thank Dr Nemsevari for providing me with this information.

early as 1865, and similar notions 'informed medical and lay discussions concerning the choice of marital partner' by early nineteenth century (Waller 458). The novel calls this body-mind connection *nature*, a term Braddon uses 70 times to refer to a person's characteristics or to human nature in general. *Aurora Floyd* asserts this link most strongly through the novel's disabled villains, Hargraves and Conyers, stereotypically aligning deviant behaviour with deviant bodies in spite of refuting that same alignment in its heroine. However, two significant moments of internal focalization through Hargraves that occur directly at the novel's midpoint challenge this stereotype, suggesting that while Victorians negotiated the meaning of all bodies by assigning meaning to disabled bodies, that meaning remained unstable.

In the Victorian era, ideas of lineage that judged bodies on the inherited nobility of their blood and behaviour were being reshaped into biological, proto-eugenic concepts of heredity stressing health and morality. Related to and informing this reshaping development were the so-called sciences of phrenology and physiognomy, controversial but popular methods of reading the body to assess personality. Jeanne Fahnestock traces the influence of Victorians' growing interest in physiognomy from the 1830s to the 1860s in fiction's increasing descriptions of faces and bodies (334); by the 1860s, Fahnestock notes, 'the reader is often given a virtual inventory of the heroine's features' (328). In *Aurora Floyd*, readers receive a 'virtual inventory' of most characters' faces and bodies—making them specimens for other characters and readers to examine—but the physiognomic meanings of physical features, provided via internal focalization of characters viewing those bodies, are often rejected and proven to be wrong.

The first misread body, that of Aurora's mother, is misinterpreted by those judging both her physiognomy and her lineage. The narrator adopts the voices of Archibald Floyd's 'neighbouring gentry' in free indirect discourse to list her rumoured lower-class origins as a 'factory girl,' 'an actress,' 'an equestrian,' and—switching to the narrator's own voice and focalization—something worse 'which I dare not even set down here' (48). Returning to focalize through the neighbours' perspective, the narrator describes her physiognomy, saying that 'the Kentish damsels scrupulously ignored Eliza's wonderful eyes, and were sternly critical with her low forehead, doubtful nose, and rather wide mouth' (49). An 1854 article in *The Athenaeum* identified the 'better type of physiognomy' appearing in the portraits of 'the present day' as progressing in this way: 'the face grows more oval, the forehead higher and fuller, the lips smaller and firmer, the nose nobler and straighter' ('The Historical Portrait Gallery' 717–18).

Thus, physiognomically, Eliza's features would have implied a working-class and degenerate character, and the neighbours read them that way, claiming that 'everything' at Floyd's home 'had degenerated' since she arrived (50). By mid-century, Victorian theories of progress and evolution increasingly included the idea that degeneration was an inevitable by-product of progress (Pick 20), and that as some species, races, or individuals advanced in intelligence or strength, others would supposedly degenerate, taking evolutionary steps backward. Although, according to this theory, Eliza's working-class identity as an actress and daughter of a merchant sea captain supports her neighbours' physiognomic reading of her face, the novel works to undo this connection. Eliza's presumed degeneracy is belied by her 'stately figure and graceful movements' (50), and by her 'work to reform [the] evil habits' of poor cottagers by inculcating in them such middle-class values as cleanliness and sobriety (58). This latter characteristic in particular identifies her as a figure of progress rather than degeneration.

Eliza's misread body anticipates in microcosm the central physiognomically misinterpreted body, the heroine Aurora's. Just as the Floyds' neighbours find degeneracy in Aurora's mother, so does Talbot in Aurora. Focalizing through Talbot (and adopting his voice in free indirect discourse), the narrator aligns her features—'a low forehead, a nose that deviated from the line of beauty, and a wide mouth'—with the fact that in birth 'she was a nobody' (78). Then, recording Talbot's thoughts in direct discourse, the narrator records for a second time Talbot's dislike of her 'snub nose two sizes too small for her face' and her degenerate, unfeminine 'taste for horse-flesh' (80). Finding Aurora's beauty 'barbarous, intoxicating, dangerous, and maddening' (78)—a reaction that corresponds with the physiognomic interpretation of her wide mouth and snub nose as passionate[10]—but motivated by his belief that animals' intuitive affection for her must indicate 'some higher attributes in this girl than we can perceive' (95), he proposes marriage. However, Talbot's lack of perceptive ability causes him to interpret her actions—her refusal to explain the missing year of her life (during which she eloped with her

10 Alexander Walker's *Physiognomy Founded on Physiology* (1834) explains that the mouth is 'the organ … of animal passion or propensity' (240), that 'large lips' imply desire, and wide lips the permanence of desire (247), and that when 'both lips are considerably developed, a character both actively and passively voluptuous exists' (252). 'The short or upturned nose,' Walker claims indicates not only 'rapid emotions' (257), but often marks a person as 'impudent, indelicate, or filthy' (260).

groom James Conyers)—as reflecting a sexually damaged and deviant body, which he equates with readable text: 'the past life of my wife must be a white unblemished page, which all the world may be free to read' (157).

While 'all the world' may not be free to read Aurora's past life, the novel asks readers to read her body and to understand her essential goodness. As Adam Taylor astutely puts it, 'Reading *Aurora Floyd* … is really about reading Aurora Floyd' (15). The reader's task is not an easy one. Her sensual physiognomy, which aligns with her passionate and rash behaviour, means that readers of the novel may potentially believe that Aurora murdered Conyers. Surridge and Nemesvari note that the first volume edition of *Aurora Floyd* removes ambiguities present in the *Temple Bar* serialization that suggest Aurora may have been the murderer (34). Taylor argues that, in the early editions of the novel, 'Braddon compels the serial reader to determine whether or not Aurora is capable of such a crime' (15), adding that the heroine's physiognomy would suggest she is. But noting the incongruity between James Conyers's 'physical perfection' (Braddon 387) and his moral degeneracy, and highlighting the aside in which the narrator refers to phrenology as a 'horrible fatalism' in which not 'too much credence' should be placed (Braddon 369), Taylor argues that 'Braddon forwards a sense of identity that is capable of change and misinterpretation, de-essentializing behavior and disconnecting it from the readable body' (18). While Braddon's rejection of physiognomy in the novel does confirm that 'identity … is capable of change and misinterpretation,' I argue that the novel does not, as Taylor claims, 'de-essentialize behaviour and disconnect it from the readable body.' Instead, authoritative external focalization and narratorial digressions often overtly provide *correct* interpretations of bodies, including Aurora's, explicitly repudiating physiognomy and phrenology as methods of reading identity but nonetheless connecting identity to the body.

Significantly, the narrative makes the body's connection to identity clear through the very character that most distinctly challenges physiognomical readings: Conyers. Shortly after introducing him, the narrator calls on readers to focalize on Conyers, twice commanding, 'Look at him' (241). Describing Conyers's body, in spite of its injured leg, as 'the very perfection of physical beauty; faultless in proportion, as if each line in his face and form had been measured by the sculptor's rule, and carved by the sculptor's chisel,' and his face as currently having 'a dreamy, semi-sentimental expression, which might lead you to suppose the man was musing upon the beauty of the summer sunset,' the narrator subsequently explains that the man's interior

thoughts do not match his body's beauty; Conyers is thinking only of money (241). The narrator then mocks the reader's poor somatic interpretation:

> You give him credit for thoughts to match with his dark, violet-hued eyes, and the exquisite modelling of his mouth and chin; you give him a mind as æsthetically perfect as his face and figure, and you recoil on discovering what a vulgar every-day sword may lurk under that beautiful scabbard. (241–42)

But Conyers's description nevertheless suggests that correct somatic interpretation is possible. For one thing, the narrator adds that this very disbelief indicates that 'there is something anomalous in this outward beauty and inward ugliness' (242). In addition, the narrator notes that Conyers's beauty 'is rather a sensual type of beauty, this splendour of form and colour, unallied to any special charm of expression' (241). His 'charm of expression' is implicitly something materially visible, something the novel repeatedly refers to as *nature*.

In fact, shortly before denigrating phrenology as a 'horrible fatalism' (369), the narrator exclaims, 'Had [Conyers] lived for ever, I do not think he would have lived long enough to become that which it was not *in his nature* to be' (368; emphasis added)—that is, to be repentant of his immorality. This aside suggests that although phrenology and physiognomy could not directly predict Conyers's identity, his identity was nonetheless attached to that body by 'Nature,' whom the narrator accuses of 'ignorantly enshrining [Conyers's wicked soul] in her most perfectly fashioned clay' (368). Despite disregarding the scientific predeterminism of phrenology and physiognomy, the novel thus represents identity as 'nature,' which manifests itself on the body. Using scientific and technological language in an earlier scene, the narrator explicitly comments on the 'subtle links between spirit and matter,' describing how Conyers's 'discontent of mind' travelled by 'that physiological telegraph, the spinal marrow, to the remotest stations on the human railway' to manifest itself in shifting 'his poor lame leg wearily from one position to the other' (310). Thus, while Conyers's personality does not present itself in his physiognomy—that is, in his particular body shape and facial features—it nonetheless writes itself on his body. Indeed, in presenting the body's relationship to identity this way, as 'a fluid exchange between surface and depth, inside and outside' (W. Cohen xii), *Aurora Floyd* depicts bodily materiality and interior identity as permeable and interrelated.

Reading Disability and Reading Health

How, then, does disability function in *Aurora Floyd* as a means of 'writing' identity on the body through 'fluid exchange between surface and depth'? Importantly, the three principal disabilities in the novel, Talbot's and Conyers's lamed legs[11] and Hargraves's cognitive disability,[12] were all acquired when the men were adults, and are thus less likely (in Victorian terms) to signal inborn identity. However, these acquired disabilities nonetheless function as *part* of identity. Notably, although both Talbot's and Conyers's mobility is affected by their lamed legs, the novel repeatedly uses Conyers's reduced mobility to emphasize his innate laziness and inactivity, whereas Talbot's signals active heroism. In authoritative external focalization on Talbot, the narrator explains that Talbot's stiff leg 'added to the distinction of his appearance, and, coupled with the glittering orders on the breast of his uniform, told of deeds of prowess lately done,' where in anyone else it would have 'seemed a blemish' (77).[13] Therefore, while Talbot 'mount[s a horse] as quickly as his stiff leg would allow him' (111) or 'leap[s] from the vehicle, heedless of his stiff leg' (130), Conyers merely 'limp[s] slowly away' (241), or '[takes] his stick and limp[s] out of the cottage, still smoking' (255). In fact, the novel refers to Conyers's perambulation as 'limping' nine separate times, and the only other creature who 'limps' in the novel is Aurora's partially blind old mastiff, Bow-wow (192). This emphasis on Conyers's limp as opposed to Talbot's activity implies that while similar bodily injuries in the novel can suggest opposite qualities (corruption versus heroism), those qualities of identity are nonetheless embedded in and expressed through the body.

Likewise, Hargraves's mental disability functions less as a *sign* of his degeneracy than as a complementary *part* of it. As Patrick McDonagh puts it, 'Even if his "fondness" may not be congenital,

11 Talbot received his wound in the Crimean War, while Conyers received his through an accident while jockeying in a horserace. As I will explain later, Braddon significantly removed all references to Talbot's wounded leg in the stereotyped edition (Nemesvari and Surridge 36–37).

12 Hargraves's paleness and cognitive disability are acquired from a fall. His 'humpback,' however, may be congenital; the story never explains—and strangely introduces the feature long after Hargrave is first physically described.

13 The novel also later compares Talbot to Admiral Nelson; though comparing their passionate romances, the novel here indirectly reinforces the disabled military hero image (136).

Hargraves' degeneracy is innate' (*Idiocy* 241). McDonagh and Taylor agree that '[Hargraves's] mental weakness becomes an explicit marker, along with his repulsive appearance, of his fundamental degeneracy' (McDonagh, *Idiocy* 248). However, Taylor argues that Braddon nonetheless attempts to disavow physiognomic interpretation by implying that since he had formerly been the 'favourite groom' of John's father before the accident, his 'threatening personality is not innate' and thus 'did not function as accurate indicators of his moral character' (22). But this argument does not bear scrutiny; Conyers was also formerly a favourite groom of Aurora's, yet he remained clearly degenerate throughout. Instead, I would argue, Hargraves's 'squat, broad-shouldered' body, 'pale, haggard face,' 'bushy, sandy eyebrows, … sinister-looking eyes' (189), 'shaggy tufts of red hair,' and 'big splay feet' (190) appear dangerous (while Captain Prodder's and John's broad shoulders, Talbot's pallor, and John's reddish hair do not) simply because his *nature* is construed as dangerous.

Hargraves distinctly recalls Hugo's Quasimodo with his similar hunchback, red hair, bushy brows, broad body, and splayed feet, and even in the architectural language used to describe them, such as the 'penthouse' formed by Hargraves's eyebrows (189), the 'dark corners of his poor shattered mind' (308), and his 'ugly leering face [that] … looked like one of the hideous decorations of a Gothic building' (403). However, unlike the deaf bell-ringer, Hargraves lacks humanity and tenderness, inspires little or no sympathy, and remains wholly villainous. Thus, McDonagh writes, 'Hargraves is very much a type … But Hargraves is also a new type: the degenerate, "softy" criminal, unrestrained' (242). While *Aurora Floyd* may explicitly refute the direct reading of identity by means of physiognomy, the novel thus nonetheless insists on identity's expression in the body.

Moreover, the novel uses Hargraves to imply that a person's innate nature can be recognized instinctually. Again using an authoritative external focalization, the narrator claims that even though 'we have no right to take objection to a man because he has an ugly glitter in his eyes, and shaggy tufts of red hair meeting on the bridge of his nose, and big splay feet, which seem made to crush and destroy whatever comes in their way' (189), the 'feeling of repugnance' that Hargraves inspires in Aurora is natural and correct, as is the reader's own 'when any creature inspires [him or her] with this instinctive, unreasoning abhorrence':

> Nature cannot lie; and it is nature which has planted that shuddering terror in your breast; an instinct of self-preservation rather than of

> cowardly fear, which, at the first sight of some fellow-creature, tells you more plainly than words can speak, 'That man is my enemy!' (191–92)

Although Victorian physiognomy's scientific rhetoric included 'individual instinct in observation' as empirical evidence (Pearl 6), the novel separates instinct from scientific perception and instead correlates it with innate, natural powers, making instinct itself a material, biological part of identity. For example, in explaining why Talbot abandoned Aurora rather than trusting her implicitly as John did, the narrator says, 'while the proud Cornishman's strength of brain lay in the reflective faculties, the Yorkshireman's acute intellect was strongest in its power of perception' (197). The narrator thus ties John's ability to recognize Aurora's true character to his body, to his innate bodily 'power of perception.'

Furthermore, John's 'power of perception' is part of his characterization as healthy, and in the novel, health always indicates strength of character. In introducing John, Braddon refers to the 'muscular Christianity school' (103) of novelists, who were known for their masculine, muscular heroes; the narrator notes that 'Rev. Charles Kingsley would have delighted in this big, hearty, broad-chested young Englishman, with brown hair brushed away from an open forehead, and a thick auburn moustache bordering a mouth for ever ready to expand into a laugh' (103–04). John's broad and healthy body, his open forehead and expansive mouth here suggest a personality equally as open and large. Not coincidentally, the primary occupation of John's thoughts and time (other than Aurora) is the breeding of racehorses. Thus, while *Aurora Floyd* rejects physiognomy, phrenology, and aristocratic lineage as means of judging bodies, it instead centres on health and physical strength (possessed by Eliza, Aurora, and John), rather than social status or class, as the mark of good breeding.

The narrator's comparison of the debauched Conyers to the healthy John emphasizes this biological materiality of good breeding. Describing John as 'broad-shouldered and stalwart' with 'open blue eyes beaming honest sunshine,' the narrator explains that he is 'made beautiful by the easy grace which is the peculiar property of the man who has been born a gentleman' (331–32). By contrast, Conyers is 'handsomer than his master … with every feature moulded to the highest type of positive beauty, and yet every inch of him a boor,' as borne out by his unclean appearance and posture, 'his dingy hands,' and 'dingy chin,' 'his elbows bursting half out of the frayed sleeves of his shabby shooting-jacket,' and his 'attitude of indifferent insolence' (332). This passage distinctly implies a physical embodiment

of predetermined identity, one which might seem to suggest class as the predetermining factor of bodily identity, with John as the natural gentleman and Conyers as the working-class ne'er-do-well. However, the narrator indicates that nature predetermines class mobility, remarking that Napoleon, a lawyer's son, was able to make 'himself emperor of France' whereas Louis-Phillippe, a duke's son, was unable to hold the throne as king (331). Following this logic, the novel recognizes the innate health and vigour of Aurora's sailor uncle, Captain Prodder, whose 'broad-shouldered and rather bull-necked' (296) appearance and 'pleasant twinkle in his black eyes' (297) communicates his positive working-class character and foreshadow his welcome as family at Mellish Park. Similarly, Aurora's vivid health fits her to be a gentleman's wife, her working-class maternal heritage in no way preventing her from fulfilling this role.

In fact, using authoritative external focalization, the narrator implies that Aurora's physicality, her 'nature' and particularly her 'vitality,' give her a 'palpable superiority' that 'set her above her fellows' (72). John's and Aurora's health and strength thus identify them both as *naturally* superior, in Braddon's proto-eugenic sense, as able to endure and survive the challenges of blackmail, bigamy, and suspicion of murder. Hence, Aurora recovers from her fever after her broken engagement because of her 'superb constitution' and 'wonderful vitality in the system' (161), and John 'slept and snored' despite being tormented by the secrets Aurora keeps about Conyers, precisely because 'he is not a hero' but rather 'is stout and strongly built, with a fine broad chest, and unromantically robust health' (337–38). Talbot, however, *is* a hero—a Crimean War hero who, John complains, seems to have 'walked out of a three-volume novel' (172). While Talbot's 'pride of birth' (74) causes him to choose as wife Lucy, Aurora's weak and pale cousin, since she fits his ideal of who should 'become the mother of a noble race, and … rear sons who should do honour to the name of Bulstrode' (74), the novel makes it clear that John's and Aurora's 'vitality' and 'robust health' makes theirs the hereditarily superior match. Laurie Garrison notes how Aurora's mate selection 'is embedded within a process of developing maturity' since it improves from Conyers, to Talbot, to John (154), and the selection culminates in the birth of a boy who, the narrator explains, is 'wonderfully like' his mother (Braddon 548). Indeed, the novel's closing tableau of Aurora as a mother signifies not only her domesticity but also successful eugenics, which the newly installed 'loose-boxes for brood mares' doubly indicate (549).

The linear progression of Aurora's choices in mates, in stressing physical health and wholeness as superior to disability and illness,

correlates with how *Aurora Floyd*'s narrative structure expunges disability. Mitchell and Snyder argue that narratives relying on disability as a metaphor tend to follow the same pattern of narrative prosthesis: first, the narrative exposes 'a deviance or marked difference' as the impetus for story (53); the narrative then brings this deviance 'to the center of the story' (53); and, finally, the action of the story 'rehabilitates or fixes the deviance' through cure, death, or removal (53–54). In the case of *Aurora Floyd*, Aurora's mysterious past instigates the narrative and represents the deviance that threatens social stability. Conyers and Hargraves then appear as direct embodiments of this threat. With their disabled bodies and antisocial behaviour, Conyers and Hargraves make deviance the overt focus of the narrative's latter part. *Aurora Floyd* concludes with the domestication of Aurora's sexuality through motherhood, but only after Hargraves has been hanged for the murder of Conyers, removing both physical representations of deviance from the text. By following this pattern of narrative prosthesis, removing disability and deviance through death and privileging John's and Aurora's healthy bodies, *Aurora Floyd* divides bodies into the categories of abnormal and normal, shifting abnormality from Aurora's mixed-class heritage and degenerate tastes to place it upon the disabled bodies which are controlled by removal.

However, the novel does not wholly unambiguously identify the disabled body as deviant or the healthy body as non-deviant. As I mentioned above, the serialized version and Tinsley Brothers' edition of *Aurora Floyd* include 'twelve references' to Talbot's impaired mobility 'spread over the first twelve chapters' (Surridge and Nemesvari 36). Significantly, the majority of the first twelve chapters focalize through Talbot; therefore, the first third of the narrative is told almost exclusively through the perspective of a character with a disability. Moreover, Talbot primarily focalizes *on* Aurora and on *her* body as sexually and perhaps even racially deviant. Noting the repeated comparisons of Aurora to 'Cleopatra, Semiramide, an Eastern empress and a sultana,' Laurie Garrison argues that Aurora's physical features mark not only her potential evolutionary degeneracy, but also participate in 'a larger debate about interbreeding with other races, which was an element in the controversy involved in the application of evolutionary theory to humans' (146–47). Contrasting Talbot's perceiving, injured body to Aurora's observed, racialized, and sexualized deviant one, the opening chapters of the novel present his disabled body as the *normal* one—different only in its signification of military valour.

But this ambiguity is complicated by the abrupt abandonment of all references to Talbot's leg and by the timing of the last reference

to it. Surridge and Nemesvari suggest that Braddon removes Talbot's disability in the stereotyped edition of the novel to make a clearer distinction between Talbot and Conyers, to prevent an association between the two, or 'even the "Softy [Hargraves]," in the reader's mind' (36–37), but the last allusion to Talbot's injury occurs several chapters before Conyers arrives. It appears in the chapter 'Steeve Hargraves, "The Softy,"' which introduces Hargraves's more severe disability and in which Aurora's deviance peaks when, with 'her cheeks white with rage, her eyes flashing fury, and her black hair tumbling about her shoulders' (193), she beats Hargraves for kicking her dog. Earlier in this chapter, the narrator briefly refers to Talbot's injury when calling him Lucy's 'dark knight, with the severe gray eyes and the stiff leg' (183), recalling its association with the military and nobility. But outside of this reference, Talbot's body is absent from the chapter: only Lucy, Aurora, John, and John's servants are present in the scenes described. Compared to Aurora's and Hargraves's overwhelmingly deviant bodies here, Talbot's injury lacks significance; its meaning becomes so minor that it no longer *needs* to be mentioned.[14] *Aurora Floyd* here complicates the significance of disability by normalizing it in Talbot and exaggerating it in Hargraves. Moreover, the fact that Braddon *did* ultimately fully remove Talbot's disability from the novel in later editions suggests her discomfort with the ambiguity and shifting meaning of disability.

Nonetheless, not even Hargraves offers a wholly uncomplicated signification of disability in the novel. When briefly focalizing through Hargraves, the narrator generally supports the concept of his innate degeneracy. For example, when he first takes Conyers's message to Aurora, the narrator tells readers that the 'half-witted creature saw some feeling of hate and fury in her face beyond her contemptuous hatred of himself, and took a savage pleasure in tormenting her' (257). However, when focalizing through Hargraves in a later chapter, the narrator suggests the disabling social consequences of bodily difference. While Hargraves 'stare[s] wonderingly at [Conyers's] handsome face' (315), imagining having his 'classical head' and 'perfect profile,'

14 Its loss of significance may also be tied to a shift in the public consciousness regarding military bodies: while the one-armed and one-eyed Lord Nelson was the icon of the Coalition Wars at the turn of the century, the icon of the Crimean War in which Talbot gained his wound was the nurse Florence Nightingale, who 'projected [the] image of the middle-class woman, trained in care of the sick, who brought order, cleanliness, and discipline' (Boschma 1176).

he thinks, 'I shouldn't have been ashamed of myself then. I shouldn't have crept into dark corners to hide myself, and think why I wasn't like other people' (315–16). *Aurora Floyd*'s narrator does not overtly suggest that Hargraves's wickedness developed in response to the poor treatment received on account of his corporeal difference, as the narrator in *Notre-Dame de Paris* does of Quasimodo's, but it nonetheless acknowledges here the unjust social environment of those whose bodily and mental differences are deemed extreme and so opens the possibility of interpreting Hargraves's behaviour as socially caused rather than biologically determined.

In the following chapter, a second significant focalization through Hargraves challenges the alignment of his cognitive disability with his degeneracy. Focalizing through Hargraves to describe Mellish Park's lawns, woods, and buildings, the narrator notes that the groom 'felt that those things were beautiful' and that though 'he only understood a few straggling syllables here and there' of the 'language' that beauty spoke, it was more than what Conyers understood, to whom it was 'a meaningless jargon' (323–24). While this passage emphasizes Hargraves's slowness to perceive, it nonetheless reveals the worth of the sensations he experiences. As though to counterbalance the ambiguity this scene provides, the chapter also describes Hargraves as 'hump-backed' for the first time (318), giving him a newly added physical disability that further aligns him with Quasimodo and the generic red-headed, hunchbacked criminal.[15] Correlating with the novel's structural demonization and elimination of disability, the focalization through Hargraves emphasizes his mental slowness and animalistic intellect. But by indicating the social factor of Hargraves's disability and describing his elevated response to nature, these two passages of focalization briefly destabilize how *Aurora Floyd* uses disability to indicate the link between body and mind.

Overall, the form and focalization of *Aurora Floyd* indicate that Victorians were grappling with what bodies *meant*—with what bodies suggested about the internal character of the person inhabiting them, with how that character manifested itself in the material body, and, importantly, with how disability, sickness, and health formed part of that manifestation. *Aurora Floyd* connects internal character and the material body not with the simple claim of 'crooked soul, crooked

15 Think, for example, of Miss Pole's imaginary thief in Elizabeth Gaskell's *Cranford* (1853): he was 'short and broad' with 'a hump [that] sprouted out on his shoulder,' 'red hair—which deepened into carroty,' and 'a cast in the eye—a decided squint' (114).

body' that Hugo's narrator makes about Quasimodo; instead, *Aurora Floyd*'s authoritative narrator claims that the 'links between spirit and matter that tell us we are mortal' are 'subtle' and that the body is merely a 'physiological telegraph' or 'human railway' through which biological and psychological 'nature' carries its message (310). The subtlety with which internal nature supposedly marks the body allows Braddon to confer value on Aurora's sexually and socially deviant body, reshaping that deviance positively into health and robust vigour, and it allows her to devalue Conyers's and Lucy's bodies as not demonstrating that hardiness, reshaping their classical beauty into laziness and insipidity, respectively. That subtlety also complicates the function of disability in the novel as a repository for deviance. To shift Aurora's deviance onto Conyers's and Hargraves's disabled bodies, Braddon needed to assert their pre-existing degenerate natures and to erase Talbot's disability from the text altogether.

Destabilizing Normalcy: Focalization, Identity, and the Body in *The Moonstone*

Like *Aurora Floyd*, Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone* confronts the materiality of identity and tests the readability of the body, and just as characters in *Aurora Floyd* often misread bodies, so do characters in *The Moonstone*. By using normate characters as the primary narrators and focalizers of *The Moonstone*, Collins interrogates how the normalized gaze constructs and interprets disability—and how that gaze often misconstrues the motives and meanings of those deemed disabled. Indeed, the plot's mystery is perpetuated by people's inability to correctly read bodies and behaviour in general. When the Moonstone is stolen, detective Sergeant Cuff interprets the silence of its owner, Rachel, as indicating her guilt, assuming that Rosanna, the disabled housemaid and reformed thief, assisted her. Rachel's silence, however, is actually inspired by her own misinterpretation of another body: having seen her lover, Franklin Blake, take the gem from its hiding place, but not having recognized that he was acting under the influence of opium, Rachel keeps silent rather than publicize the fact that her lover is a thief. Similarly, Rosanna's silence and strange behaviour are motivated by her desire to protect Blake, whom she too loves; but because the detectives misread her disabled body as asexual, they misinterpret her actions. Finally, the guilt of the true thief, Godfrey Ablewhite, is hidden by his beautiful body, his 'beautiful red and white colour,' his 'smooth round face, shaved bare as your hand,' his 'head

of lovely long flaxen hair' (66–67), and by his persona as a religious philanthropist, until Sergeant Cuff finds him murdered by the group of Brahmin Indians who first owned the Moonstone.

Unlike Braddon's novel, however, *The Moonstone* has no single external narrative voice to provide authoritative interpretations of all these misread bodies. Instead, readers are limited to multiple, often conflicting, first-person accounts of events. One narrator, Miss Clack, explains to her readers, 'we see with nobody's eyes, we hear with nobody's ears, we feel with nobody's hearts, but our own' (236); although Collins intends us to read this claim with irony to mock Clack's evangelical closed-mindedness, this line also captures the effect of dividing the novel's narrative among multiple first-person narratives. In reading the narratives of house steward Gabriel Betteredge, young lover Franklin Blake, busybody Miss Clack, lawyer Mr Bruff, detective Sergeant Cuff, doctor's assistant Ezra Jennings, and thief-turned-housemaid Rosanna Spearman, readers see events unfold with the narrators' eyes, hear with *their* ears, and feel with *their* hearts alone, never witnessing the events from the external point of view of an external narrator. However, the extra level of access that readers have via their own eyes, ears, and hearts, as well as those of each narrator, allows readers to additionally observe the complications and ambiguities in each narrator's presumptions about what bodies may imply about identity. Unlike Braddon, who uses characters' misinterpretations of bodies merely to stress a different kind of connection between body and mind from that proffered by physiognomy and phrenology, Collins thus uses the narrators' misinterpretations of bodies to suggest that while bodies and selfhood may be connected, that connection is primarily socially constructed rather than biologically determined.

To further investigate the social process of reading identity in bodies, *The Moonstone* depicts interactions between normate and disabled characters who stare at or are stared at by one another: in these interactions, either the normate narrator negotiates how to interpret the disabled character and body or the disabled narrator negotiates their response to being interpreted. Disability studies critics identify staring interactions as moments that actually produce disability, since 'staring registers the perception of difference and gives meaning to impairment by marking it as aberrant,' which 'thus creates disability as a state of absolute difference rather than simply one more variation in human form' (Garland-Thomson, 'The Politics of Staring' 56–57). In *The Moonstone*, these moments of staring tend to indicate that the link between body and identity is minor, tenuous, and unstable, and that bodies and identities themselves are likewise unstable.

In addition, the two main narrators, the non-disabled Gabriel Betteredge and Franklin Blake, increasingly experience physical, psychological, and emotional instability as the plot develops, permitting a level of empathetic identification between them and the text's main disabled characters, Rosanna Spearman and Ezra Jennings. However, while Betteredge's and Blake's focalization shows a growing empathy with the disabled subject and thus breaks down the normal/abnormal binary, the narrative structure does not sustain that ambiguity, since it is dominated by normate narrators and a normate editor (Blake). Moreover, when the narrative disorder resolves and relative stability is restored, Rosanna's and Jennings's disabled bodies are erased from the text via their deaths and replaced by the physical sheets of paper that hold their narration. Such a conclusion suggests that the normate narrator's identification with the disabled character is short-lived, and that normalcy's power is ultimately reinstated by means of a conventional removal of abnormal bodies and the assumption of normative narrative control.

Collins drives the mystery plot of the novel's first half by having *The Moonstone*'s amateur and professional detectives read the housemaid Rosanna's disability and ugliness as inherently asexual and non-romantic,[16] and in doing so, he also suggests that the body's connection to identity is socially rather than biologically predetermined. Because Rosanna's love for Blake, the accidental jewel thief, seems both unthinkable and insignificant to them, Betteredge and Cuff cannot decipher her behaviour as being motivated by sexual and romantic desire—even after they both know she loves Blake. Notably, Betteredge's narration only partially hides this misinterpretation, beginning from the reader's introduction to Rosanna.

Readers first see Rosanna through the eyes of Betteredge, who has already informed them that she had been a thief before being rescued from a reformatory, is 'plain' with 'one shoulder bigger than the other,' and is disliked by the other house staff for her reserved and solitary character (35). Defining her as criminal and disabled, but also as having a ladylike bearing (35), Betteredge casts Rosanna in the role of spectacle as a pitiable cripple, and he sustains that pity when readers

16 This 'polarization, in the cultural imagination, between sex and disability' remains, as the introduction of *Sex and Disability* points out (McGruer and Mallow 23), even though increasingly 'people with disabilities are claiming a sexual culture based on different conceptions of the erotic body, new sexual temporalities, and a variety of gender and sexed identities' (Siebers, 'A Sexual Culture' 47).

first see her through his eyes. There, readers find her sitting alone in the 'loneliest and ugliest little bay,' wearing a cloak that, he claims, 'she always wore to hide her deformed shoulder as much as might be' (36), and crying over her 'past life' (37). Her body, past, and isolation provide the typical ingredients of the melodramatic disabled figure whose physical and emotional excess, Stoddard Holmes explains, functions to incite dramatic feelings and 'moral development' in others (*Fictions of Affliction* 37). Moreover, Betteredge clearly intends Rosanna to *play* the melodramatic disabled figure in his version of the story, since he closes the narrative's first direct interaction with her by suggesting that readers should 'read on' to 'be as sorry for Rosanna Spearman as [he] was' (40). According to Mossman, 'The message here is clear and the communication to the reader is plain: Betteredge is telling the reader that Rosanna must be pitied because she is physically different and pathetically so—she is female, poor, alone, and most of all, deformed' (488). I argue, however, that while Betteredge may be 'telling the reader' to interpret Rosanna thus, the reader's first sight of her also supplies a two-layered misinterpretation of her body.

The first, most obvious, misinterpretation is that of Betteredge viewing Rosanna's body as asexual. After instructing readers to read her disabled body as pitiable for its poverty and solitude, Betteredge reports a 'sudden change in the girl's face,' newly covered in a 'complexion of a beautiful red' and 'brightened all over with a kind of speechless and breathless surprise,' when she first sees Franklin Blake appear on the scene (39). Although as experiencing-characters Betteredge and Blake find her behaviour and body here 'quite unaccountable' (39),[17] Betteredge-as-narrator intentionally provides those physiognomic details to signal her romantic and sexual desire to readers. Readers familiar with the conventions of melodrama would undoubtedly recognize Rosanna's potential status as female disabled victim, a trope that commonly included 'the pathos of unrequited sexual longing' (Stoddard Holmes, *Fictions of Affliction* 39) and often paired the disabled unrequited lover against a beautiful, non-disabled requited one—here, Rachel Verinder. Even Betteredge's and Blake's inability to recognize Rosanna's desire signals the conventions of melodrama, which would often 'overdetermine the disabled woman's

17 Refer to Chapter Two above for my explanation of the difference between the character-I and the narrator-I in first-person narration. The key difference is that the former 'I' experiences events as they happen, and the latter reflects on and reports them from a future time.

unfitness for marriage by characterizing her as hopelessly alienated from normal life and her desire [as] invisible to the nondisabled' (Stoddard Holmes, *Fictions of Affliction* 39). Thus, the misinterpretation *itself* acts as a sign for reading Rosanna's disabled body: her deformity renders her both impossibly sexual and perpetually asexual, making her a tragic victim according to melodramatic convention.

However, within these conventions lies the second misinterpretation of Rosanna: that as a disabled woman, she is necessarily a passive victim or a villain. This interpretive error likewise delays the mystery's solution. Because Cuff and Betteridge categorize Rosanna as a victim, calling her 'poor thing' eight separate times, they mistakenly believe that her suspect behaviour implicates her as 'simply an instrument in the hands of another person' (129), namely Rachel Verinder. In contrast, Blake, wholly unaware of Rosanna's desire, chooses to interpret her body and background in such a way as to make her the villain and thief rather than believing that Rachel, whom he loves, is the guilty party (127).

Rosanna's letter of confession, however, belies her role as passive victim or wicked villain. She acts through her own motivations of love to protect Blake, whom she knew was the Moonstone's thief. She claims an essential equality with her so-called social betters, arguing that in servant's clothing Rachel would not have differed from her (318) and that, in being the Moonstone's thief, Blake 'had let [him] self down to [her] level' (323). Furthermore, she revels in her power over Blake, 'knowing that [she] held all [his] prospects in life in [her] own hands' (328). Yet she also knows that he labels her physically and socially inferior, as 'a plain girl' who is 'only a housemaid' with 'a crooked shoulder' (330–31). The social structures that render her nearly invisible to Blake, moreover, ultimately constrict her agency and her potential for equality, driving her to commit suicide. Nonetheless, her letter complicates the pity prompted by the generic conventions and social structures through which readers and characters had been interpreting her body, making Rosanna a complex character instead of a stock character of melodrama.

Collins also self-referentially and ironically signals the generic conventionality of positioning Rosanna as the lovesick disabled victim. When Penelope tells Betteredge that she suspects Rosanna is in love with Blake, Betteredge notes to his readers:

> You have heard of beautiful young ladies falling in love at first sight, and have thought it natural enough. But a housemaid out of a reformatory, with a plain face and a deformed shoulder, falling in love, at

> first sight, with a gentleman who comes on a visit to her mistress's house, match me that, in the way of absurdity, out of any story-book in Christendom, if you can! (58)

Perhaps Betteredge's obsession with *Robinson Crusoe* has prevented his reading other stories available 'in Christendom,' since the trope was certainly not unheard of. In Dickens's *The Cricket on the Hearth* (1845), for example, the blind and poor Bertha falls in love with her wealthy employer. In Dinah Mulock Craik's 1850 novel *Olive*, the 'deformed' heroine feels 'such an awe, and yet a vague attraction' to Harold Gwynne at first sight (217), falls in love with him shortly thereafter, and marries him at the novel's close. Over a century before that, Charles Perrault's fairy tale 'Riquet à la Houppe' featured an ugly and hunchbacked prince who falls in love at first sight with a beautiful but unintelligent princess.[18] Even Rosanna acknowledges her desire's similarities to generic conventions by describing Blake as 'a prince in a fairy-story' in her letter of confession (318). By evoking the 'story-book' conventions that classify Rosanna as disabled victim, and then complicating that role via her letter, Collins troubles the validity of construing body and class as the basis for actions and identity.

Significantly, Betteredge's above comment is ambiguously focalized; its present tense and imperative voice ('match me that') suggests narrator focalization, but his following sentence, 'I laughed till the tears rolled down my cheeks,' might imply that it was rendered in the free indirect discourse of his character-self. Where the previous mistake—that Rosanna's disabled body wholly removed her from sexuality and romance—was made by Betteredge-as-character, the possible focalization here through Betteredge-as-narrator indicates that even *after* the events of the novel—events that deeply unsettle the connections between body and identity—he still maintains the belief that bodies unambiguously inform behaviour. Yet the comment's conclusion, 'We will change the subject, if you please. I am sorry I drifted into writing about it' (59), reveals the narrator-I's discomfort with this belief and

18 'Riquet à la Houppe' was much better-known and beloved in the nineteenth century than now. Many books reference it, including Charlotte Yonge's *The Pillars of the House* (1870–73) and Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden* (1911); it was in many English fairy-tale collections, including one compiled by Dinah Mulock Craik, and several theatre versions were published, including one by Théodore Faullain de Banville (1884) and another by Stopford Augustus Brooke (1880).

with the cruelty of presuming that Rosanna's disability precluded romantic love, thus indicating his remnant of ambivalence concerning interpreting bodies.

Destabilizing Normalcy at the Shivering Sand

The main threat to Betteredge's sense of stability in body and identity occurs as he and Cuff uncover evidence of Rosanna's suicide at the Shivering Sand. Betteredge here deeply focalizes through his character-I, evoking his bodily sensations to heighten those of the reader: 'choking for breath, with my heart leaping as if it was like to leap out of me … I saw a look in [Cuff's] eyes which was a look of horror' (163). His realization that Rosanna has deliberately drowned herself in the quicksand comes to him through his body: '[looking at Cuff,] I saw his thought in his face. A dreadful dumb trembling crawled all over me on a sudden' (164). Remembering that his daughter, Penelope, is Rosanna's age, Betteredge recognizes that, 'tried as Rosanna was tried,' she too could have 'lived that miserable life, and died this dreadful death' (164); this recognition destabilizes the distinction he had previously made between Rosanna's abnormality and his own normalcy. Focalizing through Betteredge's volatile body in this scene, readers share his sense of disrupted physical and social identity and thus his momentary identification with Rosanna.

However, by the next day, when he sees Lucy Yolland, known as 'Limping Lucy,' Betteredge attempts to reinstate the division between abnormality and normalcy by cataloguing her deviant body and measuring it for potential sexuality: 'Bating her lame foot and her leanness[,] … the girl had some pleasing qualities in the eye of man' (190). In listing her 'drawbacks,' he implicitly connects her crutch and disabled body to her 'temper,' which 'reckoned high in the sum of her total defects' (190). In his interaction with Lucy, Betteredge asserts the supposed superiority of his own normalcy over her emotional and social deviance. He imposes class structure by insisting on the title 'Mister' when Lucy calls Blake by his name alone. He dismisses her anger with the single word, 'Pooh!' and her erratic behaviour by suggesting that, since the community expected madness from her, they simply ignored it (191). However, Lucy refuses to defer to social norms, instead wishing that the poor's revolution against the rich would begin with Blake, and withholds the letter that would solve the mystery of who stole the gem, so disturbing Betteredge's sense of stability once more: 'The detective-fever burnt up all my dignity on

the spot,' he writes as he sacrifices that dignity to pursue her for the letter (193).

Blake's portion of the narrative introduces even greater threats to the stability and connection of body and identity because Rosanna's confessional letter fundamentally challenges his self-identity. First, on meeting Lucy to receive the letter, he is preoccupied with her bodily difference and, like Betteredge, with its potential for sexuality. He notes her 'wild' looks and 'remarkably beautiful hair,' and remains 'absorbed in following the sound of the girl's crutch' as she walks on the floor above him to retrieve the letter (308). Mossman argues that in this interaction, Blake, as a '[possessor] of the normalized gaze,' marginalizes Lucy (489). However, rather than submitting to that gaze, Lucy returns and subverts it, inspecting Blake 'as if [he were] an object of interest and horror, which it quite fascinated her to see' (308). In demanding to look at him, and in making her 'strongest emotions of abhorrence and disgust' visible to him, Lucy briefly forces Blake into the subjective position of the freakish spectacle and staree.

Garland-Thomson argues that the stare is 'the manifestation of stigma in the social world,' since it acts to 'register another's social status and reflect it back to them' (*Staring* 131). Where Rosanna's original stare at Blake registered his attractiveness as a wealthy young hero, Lucy's stare challenges that status, and her questions—'Can you eat and drink?,' 'Can you sleep?,' 'do you feel no remorse?'—challenge his presumed normalcy by suggesting that he is morally depraved (309). In response, Blake presumes that Lucy is mad, an 'interpretation' that he supposes to be 'inevitable' (309). However, while Mossman believes that Blake gives his explanation of Lucy's behaviour 'with authority … speaking for the norm, for other normalized readers/bodies' (490), I would argue that the response proves more ambiguous than this. For one, Blake says, 'I *could only suppose* she was mad' (309; emphasis added), not that she was mad. Collins here specifically draws attention to the fact that this is an 'interpretation' (309) rather than concrete fact. Readers and Blake-as-narrator know more than Blake-as-character; therefore, they know that her behaviour is motivated not by madness but by love for Rosanna and a valid belief that Blake caused her suicide. This extra knowledge undermines Blake's attempt to marginalize Lucy by labelling her as insane, and it does so more firmly than Betteredge's earlier attempt to do the same.

In addition, Lucy's staring and Rosanna's memorandum force Blake to share the experience of the abnormal subject shortly before his greatest moments of physical and mental instability. Rosanna's memorandum of where she had hidden her confession letter and the thief's

paint-stained nightgown impel Blake to share her subjectivity through its first-person imperative voice (for example, 'To run my hand along the Chain … until I come to the part of it which stretches over the rocks' [310]). On opening the box to find his 'OWN NAME' written on the nightgown (314), when his nearness to the quicksand 'shook [his] nerves' (313), Blake's sense of self—of his mental and physical stability—comes undone. The inconsistency with which Blake and Betteredge narrate the position of normative observer suggests that the Shivering Sand around which the plot revolves signifies not just the novel's ambiguous stance towards the body or the novel's shifting focus and form, as Mossman claims (494); these shifting sands also signify the ground on which corporeal and social identity stands.

Here, Blake discovers via the paint-stained nightgown that he stole the Moonstone, even though he cannot recall doing so. Like Betteredge narrating his discovery of Rosanna's death, Blake focalizes this part of the narrative entirely through his character-I's body, looking from his surroundings to Betteredge and back to his name on the nightgown that implicates him as the Moonstone's thief. But as the next chapter begins—in the next week's instalment for serial readers—Blake announces that he cannot narrate the physical and mental sensations produced by the realization that he is the thief: 'I have not a word to say about my own sensations,' he writes, hypothesizing that 'the shock inflicted on me completely suspended my thinking and feeling power' (315). Here, Collins wholly separates the body from the mind: all that is left is body, not the subjective self that recognizes the sensations within it. Blake continues this removal of subjectivity by focalizing his first memory of the events *through* his narrating-I, *on* his character-I, saying, 'The first place in which I can now see myself again plainly is the plantation of firs. Betteredge and I are walking back together to the house' (315). Blake thus moves from identification with the abnormal subjectivity forced upon him by Lucy's staring and Rosanna's memorandum into a loss of subjectivity.

He regains that subjectivity and self-identity, however, through identification with a different disabled subject, Ezra Jennings, assistant of the doctor Mr Candy. Following the discovery of the paint-stained nightgown, Blake incorporates into his narrative the whole of Rosanna's confessional letter, which explains how she discovered that he was the jewel's thief and hid the nightgown to protect him. Rather than identifying with her further, however, he vacillates between pitying her for her love of him and despising her for her hatred of Rachel. He also becomes strongly drawn to another abnormal character who interrupts the letter's reading with his first

appearance, namely Jennings. Jennings's atypical body—marked by a young physique contrasted with an old-looking and haggard face, starkly piebald black and white hair, a complexion of 'gipsy darkness' (326), an opium addiction, and chronic disease—leaves him wholly isolated in a community that shuns his difference. With Jennings's arrival, Blake again becomes a starer rather than a staree, focused in 'curiosity' on Jennings's unusual features, which he is surprised to find penetrate through to his confused senses (326). Unlike the occasions of staring between normate narrator and disabled characters described earlier, the focalizing Blake, having just discovered his own abnormality, neither presumes his own normalcy nor asserts his superiority. Focalizing through his character-I as he looks at Jennings during their second meeting, Blake again lists features of the man's deviant physicality, which give 'an unfavourable impression,' but also 'ma[k]e some inscrutable appeal to [his] sympathies' (369). This appeal rests in both his otherness and his similarity to Blake in that otherness.

Yet, despite experiencing the frightening detachment between his own body and conscious self earlier by the Shivering Sand, Blake now reads Jennings's character in his body and thus reinstates the link between body and identity that the paint-stained nightgown had seemed to erase. In addition to seeing in Jennings the '*unsought self-possession*, which is a sure sign of good breeding' (370), Blake 'felt satisfied that the story which I had read in his face was … the story that it really told': Jennings 'had suffered as few men suffer; and there was the mixture of some foreign race in his English blood' (371). Here, like Braddon, Collins suggests fluidity between body and mind, in which social experience (i.e. suffering) shapes the body, and thus implies that identity can be read on the body. That Jennings's own medical research focuses on 'the intricate and delicate subject of the brain and the nervous system' (374) further anchors identity in physicality, but via the role of specimen. Even so, Jennings's studies also trouble the stability of identity through that anchoring: as his employer Mr Candy's amnestic fever substantiates, identity is as fragile as physicality. Indeed, despite having just learned from Rachel the details of how he unconsciously stole the diamond, and therefore having good reason to empathize with Mr Candy's memory loss, Blake narrates his interaction with the ill doctor from a position of power. Externally focusing on Candy's body (his 'deep flush' and confused behaviour), Blake distances himself from the doctor through pity and diagnostic looking (367). This distancing highlights Blake's discomfort with mental fragility and demonstrates the untenability of claiming normalcy in that Blake situates himself as the normate

observer of Candy's deviant body and mind despite his own experience of abnormal selfhood. Therefore, even when Collins does allow for predetermined biological connection between body and mind, he still highlights that link's fragile instability and undermines its use in delineating between normalcy and abnormality.

Linearity and Narrative Control of Deviance

Mossman similarly observes that 'the representations of the body in [*The Moonstone*] are in no way uniform and are in fact layered with resistant potentialities' (494). But he also argues that the 'overarching plot structure of the Shivering Sand is built on the principle that dynamic change and profound instability are the ultimate determinants of meaning' (494). Though 'dynamic change and profound instability' certainly provide the shaky foundations of meaning in the novel, I disagree that the Shivering Sand provides the novel's *overarching* plot structure. From prologue to epilogue, the plot is built from first-person narratives placed in a specific order to create an *overarching linearity*, even though their first-person narration highlights shifting meanings. As Betteredge explains, the purpose of that linearity is to tell 'the whole story' of the missing Moonstone, 'in the interest of truth' (21). While 'truth' undoubtedly proves slippery, the drive in the narrative's surface linear form is to provide a stable version of truth.

Likewise, Illana M. Blumberg explicitly argues that linearity dominates the narrative structure of *The Moonstone*. Noting how 'Collins extracts quotations from both *Robinson Crusoe* and Scripture but then subsumes them to a linear narrative' in the novel, she argues that he 'subverts the [nonlinear] organizing principles of anthologies and instead bolsters the ethical claims of the linear narrative over those of the text open to being excerpted' (201–02). Linearity in the novel also serves as a means of understanding and controlling the deviant body. For example, to produce the 'true' narrative of what happened the night the gem was stolen, Jennings takes the 'disconnected words' and 'fragments of sentences' from Candy's delirious ramblings (Collins 386), removes their repetitions, reorders them, and 'fill[s] up' gaps until they reveal that Candy gave Blake a dose of opium without his knowledge (387). Jennings manipulates Candy's fragmented words to provide the stability that his fevered body denies, and that manipulation offers stability to Blake by explaining the dissolved connection between his own body and consciousness on the night the gem went missing. Indeed, Jennings's textual recreation of that night's narrative

by means of filling in the gaps of Candy's delirium, and his physical recreation of that night by re-enacting the circumstances leading up to the gem's disappearance, parallel Blake's editorial work: both impose a linear narrative to produce the mystery's solution. In the novel, editorial and medical control thus prove to be much the same, and the linear drive of the narrative from disorder to order corresponds to the medical drive of cure.

Therefore, the novel unsurprisingly reaches its closing stability by removing overtly disabled bodies, following the pattern of narrative prosthesis. Rosanna's suicide removes her body, and although her letter resurrects her potent deviance, that too is put to rest by Jennings's experiment reproducing how Blake stole the gem. Lucy 'limp[s] away … at the top of her speed' after giving Blake Rosanna's letter and never returns to the story (309). Mr Candy last appears via letter only, announcing Jennings's death and sending Jennings's journals before he leaves England to see 'what some of the foreign baths and waters will do for [his health]' (461). Strikingly, unlike the portions written by the non-disabled narrators, Rosanna's, Jennings's, and Mr Candy's narratives are all written *during* the events rather than after they unfolded and without the purpose of being included in the complete narrative. They are private documents—a diary and letters—made public, in the same way that their private bodies are made objects of public speculation by their presumed aberrance. Thus, while Rosanna's and Jennings's narratives disclose the social constrictions placed on people with supposedly deviant bodies and demonstrate resistance against those constrictions, both are ultimately conscripted into a narrative that upholds normalcy.

Yet the novel simultaneously contradicts its own linear form, as Betteredge's convoluted opening suggests. Imagining storytelling as a linear path, and repeatedly slipping off-track to provide (occasionally unnecessary) backstory, Betteredge refers to his digressions as 'stopping by the way' (34). Saying that 'Persons and Things do turn up so vexatiously in this life, and will in a manner insist on being noticed' (34), Betteredge recognizes the inevitability of narrative deviation since reality resists tidy narrative organization. The plotting of that narrative follows a linear path only for Betteredge and Blake; the path of Rosanna's story would be very different, as would Rachel's. The novel's imposed linearity may create the most drama by delaying key information, but it also privileges the norm since Betteredge and Blake narrate and edit from a state of presumed normalcy and stable identities and bodies, a state which, Betteredge's closing comments suggest, will continue in the child expected by Blake and Rachel. Moreover,

the epilogue, which depicts the Moonstone's restoration to its original Brahmin owners in India, undermines both stability and linearity in its closing lines: 'So the years pass, and repeat each other; so the same events revolve in the cycles of time. What will be the next adventures of the Moonstone? Who can tell!' (472).

In their portrayal of disabled bodies, the conflicting forms and structures in sensation novels highlight the fragility and impermanence of both bodies and identities and explore the connection between the body and identity as the novels respond to the emerging science of psychology, which attempted to map the physiology of the mind. *Aurora Floyd*'s and *The Moonstone*'s structure and use of focalization show the overall uncertainty with which Victorians regarded the link between the body and identity. In *Aurora Floyd*, Braddon uses internal focalization to undermine the classism in physiognomy, phrenology, and aristocratic bloodlines, and with the narrator's authoritative external focalization and digressions, she then substitutes those methods of interpreting the body with a proto-eugenic version of the body-mind connection, one in which health signifies internal strength of character. However, in two significant passages internally focalized through Hargraves, the hunchbacked and cognitively disabled groom, the novel hints at the social construction of his disability that troubles the essentialist reading of disability the rest of the novel provides. In contrast, focalization in *The Moonstone* destabilizes the connection between identity and the body more explicitly than in *Aurora Floyd*. In *The Moonstone*, internal focalization through characters experiencing physical and mental instability reveals that fragility of normalcy and of the link between body and mind. However, the novel's forced linear form restores normalcy and erases abnormality; thus, its overall structure upholds the connection between body and identity that much of the novel destabilizes. Where sensation novels' depictions of disability were motivated by Victorian psychology's *medicalization* of the connection between body and identity, the two Christian novels in the next chapter focus on that connection's *spiritualization* through theology that interprets the body as the physical manifestation of the spirit. The novels, Ellice Hopkins's *Rose Turquand* (1876) and Charlotte Yonge's *The Pillars of The House* (1870–73), both use disability as a means of exploring Christ's Incarnation and incarnational embodiment in the Christians of their time.

CHAPTER FOUR

Sanctified Bodies: Christian Theology and Disability in Ellice Hopkins's *Rose Turquand* and Charlotte Yonge's *The Pillars of the House*

Ellice Hopkins's 1876 novel *Rose Turquand* begins with an epigraph that misquotes the third stanza of Ralph Waldo Emerson's poem 'Voluntaries.' Emerson's original verse reads:

> So nigh to grandeur is our dust,
> So near is God to man,
> When Duty whispers low, Thou must,
> The youth replies, I can.

Significantly, Hopkins changes the words *grandeur* to *glory* and *youth* to *soul*, further strengthening the poem's Christian connotations. With this change, the first two lines directly relate the human body, 'our dust,' to Christ's Incarnation, God as man. Not only does this alteration indicate how Victorians linked the body—particularly bodily frailness, as the word *dust* indicates—to Christian spirituality, it also implies that, to the Victorian Christian, the body could physically manifest the spiritual.

While Chapter Three looked at how sensation fiction maps the mind on the body, this chapter examines how mid-Victorian Christian sentimental fiction maps the spirit on the body. Comparing Ellice Hopkins's Christian religious sensation novel *Rose Turquand* (1876) to Charlotte Yonge's Christian domestic novel *The Pillars of The House, or Underwode, Under Rode* (1870–73),[1] this chapter outlines

1 'Underwode, Under Rode,' the motto of the novel's main family, the Underwoods, translates to 'Underwood, Under the Cross.'

how religion, form, and focalization interact to create discernible concepts of disability as corporealizing spirituality. Both Hopkins and Yonge wrote religious works that were enormously influential in their time—the former as a social activist in the social purity movement and the latter as a disseminator of Tractarianism—and these two novels distinctly demonstrate how narrative form and disability entwine to convey each author's respective incarnational theology. The gospel of John's description of Christ's Incarnation is a foundational source of the conflation of body and text—'the Word [i.e. God] was made flesh, and dwelt among us' (1:14)[2]—and the theology that developed from the gospel Incarnation narratives include divinity not just in the human body of Christ himself, but also in those of Christians after Christ's Resurrection, as 'members in particular' of the 'body of Christ' (I Corinthians 12:27). However, while Yonge's novel portrays incarnation as existing communally in the Church through disability, Hopkins's depicts it as the sanctification of the individual body through suffering.

These theological positions correlate substantially to the novels' overarching narrative forms, Hopkins's as a single-focus novel and Yonge's as a multiple-focus one.[3] In their use of focalization, however, each of the novels complicates the reading of disability that its narrative structure suggests. As a single-focus *Bildungsroman*, *Rose Turquand* delineates spirituality and disability as individually experienced, and in doing so ultimately privileges the able body. However, moments of internal focalization through minor characters such as Rose's aunt and cousins, rendered ironic through indirect and free indirect discourse, call into question the overall structure's individualization of illness and disability. Moreover, while the novel's rhetoric of incarnation theology primarily positions physical and psychological suffering as the individual's path to spiritual wholeness, it also sporadically paints suffering as a shared experience within the Christian community, of which ill and disabled characters figure as integral members. In contrast, *Pillars of the House*'s multiple-focus structure formulates religion and disability as communally experienced through interdependency, rather than

2 In his gospel, John equates God and language, or *Logos*, which is translated into English as 'the Word.' He describes Jesus's earthly existence as follows: 'the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us' (1:14). Hence, the word to describe the Christian belief in Jesus's divinity is *incarnation*, from the Latin *incarnatus*, that is, 'made flesh' ('Incarnate').

3 See the Introduction for a description of Altman's theory of single-focus, dual-focus, and multiple-focus following patterns.

suffering, as the locus for spiritual growth. Therefore, disabled bodies in Yonge's novel are neither privileged nor devalued, but instead are necessary components of the Church of England community. However, the lack of focalization through the neurologically atypical Theodore, and the use of his death as a structural device to close the plot, reveal a troubling ambiguity in Yonge's otherwise inclusive incarnational theology. Thus, formally, both novels incline towards the spectacle model of disability, since at key plot points in both novels disabled and ill bodies provide a spectacle of melodrama that inspires religious sentiment in focalizing characters and the reader, and ultimately reject reading disabled bodies as specimens.

Individual Incarnation and the Single-Focused Narrative: Disability and Illness in *Rose Turquand*

Ellice Hopkins was a prolific writer, but *Rose Turquand* was her only novel. Although she also wrote religious essays, devotional works, and two books of poetry, she was best known as a social activist and authored numerous pamphlets advocating social reform, especially as co-founder of the White Cross Army in 1882, which asked men to pledge not only to 'maintain the law of [sexual] purity as equally binding upon men and women' but also to 'treat all women with respect, and endeavour to protect them from wrong and degradation' (Hopkins, *The White Cross Army* 2). Her bestselling work, *True Manliness* (1884), a volume from the White Cross series, had sold over 2 million copies by her death in 1904 ('Hopkins, Ellice').

Although Hopkins considered herself a High-Church Anglican throughout her life, her theological affiliations are difficult to pin down. Sue Morgan notes that 'a complex alliance of spiritual influences combining evangelical Puritanism with Anglo-Catholic sacramentalism,' along with 'mid-century revivalism' and 'medieval mysticism,' shaped both Hopkins's personal theology and her writing ('The Power of Womanhood' 211): 'Her purity tracts combine the evangelical emphasis upon personal conversion and a life of practical service to humanity with an Anglo-Catholic incarnational theology which focused on Christ's full assumption of human nature' (Morgan, 'Faith, Sex and Purity' 17). Susan Mumm likewise argues that Hopkins incorporated Evangelical, liberal, and dissenting beliefs into her personal theology, forgoing 'many of the traditional elements of Christian theology in favour of a single-minded focus on the Incarnation' ('Defaced Image of Christ' 166). This focus on incarnation, Mumm

adds, allowed Hopkins 'to explain human suffering' as part of the process of humanity's sanctification (167).

Hopkins's theology of incarnation, disdain for liturgical rituals, and dislike of institutional religion emerge in *Rose Turquand*, particularly in the internal musings of its heroine. Strangely, however, the 'anti-individualist sentiment' and 'subjection of individual rights to the good of the community at large' that Morgan identifies in Hopkins's purity work (*Passion for Purity* 78; 'Faith, Sex and Purity' 21) do not appear in the novel. In fact, the novel rarely considers 'the community at large'; instead, it focuses on the moral and spiritual development of an individual soul, and on individual self-sacrifice on behalf of other individual souls. Indeed, Hopkins's pamphlet *The White Cross Army* (1888) refers to 'the infinite preciousness of the individual soul' (1), and, as Morgan notes, 'Themes of solitary contemplation … proliferate throughout her poetry and moral literature' (*Passion for Purity* 54). Thus, while Hopkins's social activism may have relied on a theory of the collective as Morgan argues, her personal theology—and the theology embedded in *Rose Turquand*'s narrative structure—decidedly stressed the importance of the individual through its focus on incarnation.

As a *Bildungsroman*, *Rose Turquand* follows the education of its eponymous heroine from childhood to adulthood; the novel opens with Rose as a sickly, non-religious orphan neglected by her adoptive family and ends with her as the religious, healthy wife of a medical doctor and the guardian of her severely physically disabled cousin, Charley. By moving the heroine in a linear fashion from sickly sinner to healthy saint, the *Bildungsroman* situates both religion and disability chiefly as experienced individually rather than socially, privileging health as indicative of spiritual stability. *Rose Turquand*'s form and themes thus follow the *single-focus* narrative pattern described by Rick Altman as the 'quest for identity' (129). Altman explains that single-focus narratives follow sole protagonists—'individuals who break the law, violate a taboo, or flout accepted custom' (134)—typically in this narrative pattern: protagonists realize that 'established values are inadequate' and so reject those values by moving 'into the chaotic world of non-value … where individuality can be discovered and defined' (124).

Rose is such a protagonist. As the orphaned illegitimate daughter of the bigamous union of a married French actor and an Englishwoman, Rose doubly violates taboos by standing as a reminder of her mother's sexual transgression and her father's foreignness and is therefore mistreated by her adoptive Uncle and Aunt Adair. Rose attempts to find relief in High- and Low-Church services, which she dismisses as

hypocritical and self-righteous 'theological systems of man' (33), and in Greek and linguistic studies, which she rejects since 'they gave her no answer to the questions of which her soul was full' (48). Next, Rose begins her 'quest for identity' at the chaotic ruins of a monastic chapel attached to her Uncle Adair's country home: feeling that there is 'no order, no beauty to her life,' she prays 'to the unknown Power, to show her the purpose of her life' (50). Shortly thereafter, she discovers that purpose, and her identity, in the disability of her cousin Charley Adair.

At this point, Rose's spiritual journey begins to noticeably parallel the single-focus pattern of the Christian saint's life story. According to Altman, in saints' narratives, the protagonists faced 'monsters of the unknown: demons, talking animals, ogres, giants' (130). Likewise, Rose faces 'unknown monsters' in her journey into the 'chaotic world of non-value' where she will discover and define her individuality according to the single-focus trajectory. Before her prayer for purpose, she had been haunted by the wails of an unknown creature that the narrator calls 'the Shadow' (48) or 'IT' (50), coming from the forbidden old wing of her uncle's country house. Immediately following the prayer, she enters the wing and discovers the source of the wails:

> It was a boy … so fearfully and abnormally deformed as to be like nothing human; while even what there was of the marred and twisted form, where every limb seemed writhen into shapes of pain, was ravaged by scrofula … [It was] a blot on God's sunshine, an infidel doubt of God's goodness, a crooked thing that seemed ever to ask the obstinate question, 'Why hast thou made me thus?' (51)

'It' is her cousin Charley Adair, hidden away by his parents, who are ashamed of his deformities.

On meeting Rose, Charley tells her that he is often 'wicked' and that he believes he is 'a devil' who is 'in hell with the pain' (52). This meeting with Charley depicts corporeal deviance as dehumanizing and as necessarily opposed to God. From this moment on in the novel, the 'purpose of [Rose's] life' is to nurse Charley, 'to save—this tortured life, this boy deformed in body, and, alas! still more deformed in mind, from the way he had been treated' by his parents, surgeon, and nurse (54). In this purpose, Rose discovers and defines her identity as a Christian. Notably, in his edition of *Rose Turquand*, Oliver Lovesey remarks that Rose's 'commitment to Charley's care grows from her more generalized disillusionment with the ineffective interventions of state institutions, including the church' (*Victorian Social Activists' Novels* 10). Aligning with Rose's dismissal of collective religion, the novel's single-focus pattern

thus presents a theory of Christianity that emphasizes the spiritual growth of an individual detached from society and uses the disabled body of another individual to facilitate that growth.

In its parallels to the content and form of the single-focus narratives of saints and of Christ, the novel indicates the primacy of the individual. For example, on first meeting Charley, to prove to him that she loves him, Rose kisses his scrofula wounds—tubercular abscesses that 'burst through the skin and form running sores' ('Scrofula')—'as though his wounds were the wounds of Christ himself' (Hopkins 52). This particular moment strikingly resembles the story of St Catherine of Siena, who 'applied her mouth to [her patient's] ulcer, until she was sensible of having overcome her disgust' (De Vineis 102) and drained the infected ulcer to drink its pus at the command of God (108), and then in a vision similarly applied 'her mouth to the sacred wound of the Saviour' to drink from 'the very fountain of life' (109).[4] Like Hopkins, Catherine of Siena held incarnation at the heart of her theology (Bynum 179) and 'saw the fleshliness of Christ … as the "way" or "bridge" to lead us to salvation through suffering' (175). For both Rose and St Catherine, bodily suffering—of others and of themselves—provides the route to their individuality as Christians.

Additionally, in trying to 'save' Charley, Rose studies the New Testament, particularly the incarnation-focused gospel of St John, as well as Thomas à Kempis's *Imitation of Christ* (1418–27), which focuses on 'the interior life' of the worshipper and recommends 'withdrawal from the world' (Macy 608). As Rose nurses Charley and reads these works, she finds what the narrator calls 'revelation within' (55) and a 'spiritual life, gradually awakening … within her' (64). In these and other cases, Rose's moments of spiritual self-knowledge happen when she is alone, and the narrator stresses Rose's individuality and solitude in the depictions of those moments. Hopkins does suggest that in these moments, there is a loss of self; for example, during one prayer, the narrator notes that Rose's 'individual self, through some affinity of love within, seemed to melt like a snow-flake in its sun-warmed ocean, losing itself in a great blessedness' (62). However, while there is a loss of individual self, it does not melt into community of others, but into another individual identity: that of Christ.

Rose's shared experiences with Charley, however, are depicted as spiritual struggles against evil and against his body: as 'hand to hand

4 I thank Dr Tamsin Jones for pointing out to me the similarity between St Catherine and Rose.

conflict with the demon pain, and the demoniac spirit that possessed the boy' (63). Both the narrator and Rose frame this relationship with Charley as distinctly paralleling Christ's with the sinner. Rose tells her cousin, 'God sent me, Charley' (64), implying that just as Christ was sent by God to save the world from sin, so was she sent by God to save Charley. Similarly, the narrator depicts Rose's decision to nurse Charley as a choice to 'sacrifice her young life' (62)—a sacrifice that she makes again later in the novel, when she refuses an offer of marriage from Charley's handsome new doctor, Allan Keith. The narrator, in describing Rose's choice to not marry Dr Keith, makes a direct link between this sacrifice and that of Christ, saying, 'Any moment she might have come down from the cross she had chosen, and accepted in its stead an earthly heaven' (109). By depicting her relationship with Charley as one of self-sacrifice and struggles with evil, Hopkins situates Rose with Christ and the saints' lives to construct Rose's spiritual self-identity as contingent on the disabled body.[5]

However, Rose feels that she is able to save Charley because of having suffered herself—from the cruel neglect of the Adairs and from two severe cases of brain fever caused by that neglect.[6] Rose links suffering, both her own and Charley's, with that of Christ, whom the narrator calls 'the Divine sufferer' (65). For example, in telling her aunt that she means to live with and nurse Charley, Rose says, 'God never comes to you in any helpless, suffering thing, but your heart cries out, "Crucify him! crucify him!"' (60). She thus aligns herself with Charlie by referencing the part of the gospel in which the people demand of Pontius Pilate that Jesus be crucified instead of Barabbas: 'And they cried out again, Crucify him' (Mark 15:13). Additionally, as Charley's health and spirit begin to improve under Rose's care (and implicitly under her control), Rose compares his still-deformed body with Christ's 'marred' (67), crucified body and tells Charley that his

5 This relationship reflects what Rodas calls 'satellite syndrome' in which non-disabled individuals or characters base their own identity upon their relationships with disability, in particular, with disabled persons or characters. See 'The Satellite Syndrome: Disability in Victorian Literature and Culture' and 'Tiny Tim, Blind Bertha, and the Resistance of Miss Mowcher: Charles Dickens and the Uses of Disability.'

6 Brain fever, also known as 'inflammation of the brain' and 'phrensy,' was a common diagnosis in nineteenth-century fiction and was thought to be caused by anything from 'contagion' to 'a severe shock to the system,' a broken heart, or even excessive studying (Peterson 446–49). See Audrey C. Peterson's 'Brain Fever in Nineteenth-Century Literature: Fact and Fiction' for more information.

physical suffering is the cross he must share with Christ. Moreover, notably mirroring Broad-Church 'Muscular Christianity,' in which the health of the body typically reflects the health of the spirit, Charley's spiritual growth corresponds with improved health: 'the spring of hope and happiness within him [made] his bodily state rapidly improv[e so that h]e was no longer loathsome, [and] no longer fearfully disfigured in his face' (66).

However, for Hopkins—as for Rose and Charley, whose 'unutterably fearful deformity remained' (66)—the suffering and disabled body is nonetheless wholly sanctified through its association with Christ's incarnate body. Thus, Hopkins directly links the Christian and disabled identities by arguing not only that 'through the Cross [lies] the sanctity of all suffering' (67), but also that the physical suffering of disability itself can *embody* Christ's suffering and be a *living* example of incarnation. That is to say, for Hopkins, a Christian's physical suffering is not a reminder of or metaphorical sign for Christ's crucifixion, but a re-enactment of it that incarnates divinity. Hopkins emphatically reinforces that incarnational concept at the end of the novel: several years after marrying Allan Keith and moving with Charley into his stately home, Rose answers her daughter's question, 'Mother, why, if God is so very good, did he make Cousin Charley like that?' by saying, 'it is good to be shapely and clever, and useful, and loved; but one thing is better—it is better to be like Christ, to drink of his cup and be baptized with his baptism, and render back the world's pain into the expression of a perfect love' (122). Here, Rose refers to the scripture in which Jesus implies that his disciples shall experience the suffering that he will suffer at his crucifixion (Mark 10:39) and to the verses in John's epistle that describe Christ's incarnation in his believers as 'perfect love' (I John 4:17–18).

Nonetheless, the text ultimately privileges the normate and healthy body as being spiritually superior: Rose can act to 'save' Charley's disabled body and troubled soul only because she had 'overcome' her own physical suffering of brain fever. Although Rose's illness returns before the novel's conclusion when her Aunt Adair strikes her during a quarrel, and both become ill as a result—Aunt Adair with a paralysing stroke that kills her and Rose with another bout of brain fever—the temporariness of Rose's illness and her return to health makes illness hierarchically superior to permanent disability here. Moreover, in its revulsion at and pity for Charley's bodily state, the novel implies that the disabled body does not have value in itself, but *only* in its ability to signify and embody Christ. Thus, despite the novel's valorization of disability and illness as sanctifying, the narrative's single-focus shape

creates an eschatological linear trajectory of 'cure' that likewise privileges health and physical normalcy as indicative of wholeness—both spiritual and physical.

According to Altman, 'the single-focus narrative typically transfers freedom and authority from the narrator and the divine to an individual [who is] liberated from the tyranny of prearranged categories and thus capable of personally creating value' (99). Liberated from the tyranny of 'theological systems of man,' ancient Greek scholarship, and her Aunt Adair's social-climbing mores, Rose has the individual power to create personal value through her relationship with Charley's disability. By aligning the experience of disability with the narratives of saints and of Christ, Hopkins causes Rose to find the divine within herself and inspire it in others, in particular in her cousin Charley and her eventual husband, Dr Keith. As such, *Rose Turquand* portrays disability as primarily experienced by the individual, as the expression of evil on one hand or as 'the expression of a perfect love' (122) on the other. Spirituality is likewise experienced individually as a quest for identity, in particular Rose's quest for a purposeful, Christian identity. Moreover, although disability and religion in the novel are at times affected by wider social forces, such as the norms that influence Aunt Adair's treatment of her children, the novel shapes the experience of disability and religion primarily by individual choices such as Rose's choice to stay with Charley. Thus, Hopkins's own religious belief examined above—with its focus on incarnation, its distrust of institutional religion, and its attention to personal conversion—influences the structure of her novel by focusing on the individual, which in turn shapes her portrayal of disability and spirituality as individually experienced.

Focalization and the Collective Body

While the single-focus narrative structure of *Rose Turquand* portrays an individualized experience of disability as either sinful flesh or incarnated divinity, subtleties in the novel's focalization produce alternate readings of ill or disabled bodies. With a mix of indirect and free indirect discourse focalized through minor characters, the novel employs irony to critique characters' opinions of illness and disability that (unintentionally or not) parallel the very theories of disability that its own narrative structure advances—that the experience of disability can be controlled by the individual and that it is necessarily spiritual, either sinful or divine. For example, the novel opens with external

focalization on Rose's Aunt Adair, on the strength of her body in particular, and then switches to ironic indirect and free indirect discourse internally focalized through Aunt Adair:

> [Aunt Adair] had never known the common illnesses and frailties of human flesh. She had never taken a pill in her life; she would have scorned such a concession to the weakness of mortality. Sickness of any kind, in her eyes, was not so much a misfortune as a disgrace … and a thing to be heartily ashamed of as the result of giving way, and weakly refusing to exert one's self. Every one could help being ill if he liked, except old people going to die, and those who were born sickly; and these last she would have quietly disposed of, as a mercy both to themselves and to the living. (7)

In his article on disability in *Rose Turquand*, Lovesey argues that Mrs Adair's approach to corporeal deviance represents the negative eugenic theories that counter Rose's 'gentler face of eugenics, [which] focused on the care of the sick' ('Poor Little Monstrosity' 276). Nonetheless, both Aunt Adair's and Rose's approaches to corporeal deviance, like the single-focus structure, emphasize the power of the individual in relation to disability and illness, thus locating disability's experience in the individual rather than social sphere. But here, in a humorous ironic distance from Aunt Adair's perception, the narrator highlights the absurdity of believing that personal determination can keep the body from experiencing the 'illnesses and frailties' that the narrator calls 'common'—and of thinking that disposing of sickly children is a 'mercy.' This ridicule calls into question the plot structure's implication that the choices of individuals, rather than social forces, are the main factor in the experience of illness or disability.

This satiric tone frequently recurs in the novel's early chapters, mocking the 'bright effluence of youthful strength and glow and beauty' of Aunt Adair's healthy children and commenting, 'how good it would have been for that hard proud woman … to have had one or two sickly plain children to nurse and to care for for their own sakes' (9). But what begins as light satire in early chapters takes on a dark, deeper irony when readers watch Aunt Adair parent 'one or two sickly plain children.' In a matter of pages, Uncle Adair adopts Rose who, already plain and sickly, soon suffers brain fever from the shock of discovering her mother's death. During Rose's adolescence, Aunt Adair gives birth to a sickly child, Isabel, and that child is cared for in life and mourned after her death only by Rose (30). In these cases, the 'one or two sickly plain children' do not improve Aunt Adair in

the least, nor do the later illnesses of children in her care. When her favourites, Georgy and Arabella, get scarlet fever and smallpox respectively, she works towards health and healing for both—but this experience softens her not at all. The irony in this opening later becomes outright disturbing when readers discover that Aunt Adair *did* dispose of her own sickly child, Charley—first by giving him to a surgeon to use as a 'living subject' for scientific and psychological experiments (53) and then by locking him in the unused wing of her house after that guardian's death. At this point, instead of being ridiculous, Aunt Adair's privileging of health seems inhumane and dangerous.

Moreover, the opening's ironic focalization through Aunt Adair mocks the belief that responding to corporeal deviance with euthanasia could be a 'mercy'—and yet, strangely, despite caring deeply for Charley and nursing him to relative health, even Rose and Charley's kind second doctor, Dr Keith, ultimately uphold Mrs Adair's opinion that it would have been best if Charley had died, further complicating the novel's veneration of physical suffering in disability. After saving Charley's life, Dr Keith thinks that he has not 'conferred any boon upon him, poor creature, by prolonged life in that distorted body of his' (101). Similarly, Rose 'hate[s] herself for wishing' that Charley's deformity would cause his early death, but she wishes it nonetheless (109). While Dr Keith's and Rose's wish for Charley's death is fundamentally a wish for him to be without pain, that pain is necessarily a part of his body—to wish the pain away *is* to wish his deviance away. Moreover, sentimental focalization through Rose validates Aunt Adair's belief that physically deviant lives are not worth living. This melodramatic focalization through Rose on Charley frequently devalues his lived experience—not because it has been spent in solitude due to the social stigma of the shape of his body, but rather because Rose views his body *as* misshapen. For example, when Charley tells Rose he is 'so happy' (64), the narrator focalizes through Rose and says that, 'Looking at the poor twisted frame, in such strange contradiction to these words, Rose's eyes filled with tears' (65). The presumption that his misshapen body *must* contradict his happiness depreciates Charley's lived experience and selfhood and denies him agency.

Prior to Rose's introduction to Charley, Hopkins uses similar sentimental focalization on Lucille, the disabled sister of Rose's former tutor, Mademoiselle Buisson, through Rose and Mademoiselle Buisson herself. In particular, after commenting how 'the thought of that blind and crippled girl … strengthened [Rose] like an Angel of the

Passion,' the narrator uses Rose's free indirect speech to ask, 'Was it not a pleasant thing to behold the sun? and was she not as free as air to move about, with a body at least shapely to look at?' (31). Unlike the ironic indirect speech that focalizes through Aunt Adair and distances the reader from its viewpoint, the sentimentalized free indirect speech focalized through Rose aligns the reader with her emotion. But Rose's melodramatic perspective at these points collides with the novel's repeated insistence on 'the sanctity of all suffering' that occurs through Christ (67), an insistence that Rose likewise repeats—to Charley (67), to Dr Keith (81), and, as mentioned above, to her children (122)—revealing a discomfort with physical difference that troubles the novel's pretence of lauding physical suffering as incarnational.

However, Rose's melodramatic perspective does not silence the critique of normalization that occurs in the ironic internal focalization through the Adairs and their upper-class house guests—for example, the guest Lady Grant, who 'was eyeing Rose at the side-table, having instinctively recognized her as a hopeful subject in the midst of these depressingly healthy people' (46). The irony here, most apparent in the phrase 'depressingly healthy people,' indicates foolishness in Lady Grant's desire to apply to others a narrative of cure that repeats one she has constructed for herself: as she says to Rose, 'Be persuaded [to use homeopathy], my dear, by me … I did, and you see how well and strong I am' (46). Yet Rose constructs an oddly similar narrative for herself and Charley: after this interaction with Lady Grant, and before meeting Charley, she says, 'If I could save but one life from ill [i.e. from evil], … if only one single soul were the better for my living and suffering like this, I think I could live and suffer forever' (47). Just as Lady Grant wishes to repeat her story of homeopathic health in Rose, so Rose repeats her story of suffering for the improvement of 'one single soul' in Charley when she implies that his suffering 'work[s] out an infinite good for man, as well as for the sufferer himself' (122). These moments that complicate if not contradict the driving force behind the novel's structure indicate the difficulty with which Hopkins negotiates the value of disability and physical suffering.

Hopkins wrote *Rose Turquand* during a period of invalidism following an unsuccessful surgery in 1870 (Mumm, 'Ellice Hopkins' 141), and thus perhaps this negotiation represented a personal attempt to understand her own experience. Among other books of Christian social activism, during this bout of illness Hopkins also wrote *Sick-Bed Vows and How to Keep Them* (1869), a call for convalescents to experience religious conversion, and *Christ the Consoler: A Book of Comfort*

for the Sick (1872),[7] a dialogue between 'the Voice of the Disciple' (i.e. the sick) and 'The Voice of the Consoler' (i.e. Christ) comprised chiefly of excerpts from scripture, Thomas à Kempis's *The Imitation of Christ*, and the words of various authors and poets from St Augustine to Wordsworth. *Christ the Consoler*, like *Rose Turquand*, suggests that suffering becomes a blessing to others through its connection to Christ's suffering on the cross. Unlike the novel, however, the dialogue presents the experience of disability and illness as communal.

Although 'the Voice of the Disciple' in the dialogue is written in the first-person singular, which suggests individuality, Hopkins writes a preface clarifying that the voice is meant 'to express, not the sorrow of an individual, but rather to embody, as far as possible, all the peculiar temptations and trials common to the sick' (vii). Her preface also explains that she did not put her name on the first edition for fear that the voice of the 'Disciple' would be attributed to her rather than to the collective identity of invalids (vii). The 'Disciple' does at times use the first-person plural, and in doing so emphasizes the communal experience of illness and the value that community confers, saying,

> We comfort more by our sorrows than by our words, bringing to some in the isolation of pain, a blessed sense of fellowship in love and sorrow, a sense that their trial is not an uninhabited island … For we are all members one of another, mystically united by Thy [God's] Spirit into Thy Body … And whether one member suffer through being weak and sickly in the faith, all the members suffer with it. (69)

Moreover, the 'Disciple' asserts that the weakest play a distinct role in this community: 'the members which seem to be the more feeble are necessary to the well-being of the whole body; Thou [God] by Thy wisdom setting every member in the body as it hath pleased Thee' (69). Here we see that though isolation of those physically suffering may exist, there is nonetheless a spiritual community to which they belong—one in which *all* suffer in communion *with* the sufferer.

In addition, while *Rose Turquand*'s narrative structure reinforces an individualized concept of spirituality and the body, the novel's union of spiritual development and physical suffering affirms community in corporeal difference. Moments before finding Charley, Rose meets an old man who complains of rheumatism, and she 'experience[s] the

7 Hopkins's biographer Rosa M. Barrett writes that this book was 'written in 1879.' A second edition was published in 1879, but the first edition was published by Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer in 1872 in London.

sudden fellowship she always felt for any one that could suffer' and offers as solace the reminder that there will not be pain in the afterlife (50). While an ironic focalization through the man mocks the connection between spirituality and suffering, referring to his contemplation of his inherited illness as 'settl[ing] to his own satisfaction the inherent probability of a rheumatic immortality' (50), the 'fellowship of suffering' here nonetheless establishes the subsequent connection between her and Charley, and between them both and Christ, through their physical and emotional pain. Moreover, when suffering emotionally after refusing Dr Keith's first proposal, Rose reminds herself, 'Did not the happiness and sorrows of others still remain to live for? Was she not one of a great family, the church of the living God?' (111).[8] Thus, while the formal structure and the narrative drive that it encapsulates emphasize the individual experience of religion and disability, there remains in the novel an internal consciousness of community, albeit a minor one.

Additionally, subtle challenges to the *Bildungsroman* form itself appear in the novel and threaten the narrative structure's primacy of the individual. Although she is the eponymous heroine of this novel, Rose resists being labelled as 'a heroine of romance' (84, 87) and tells Dr Keith, when he compares her to one, that he 'couldn't have offered … a greater insult' (84). This retort is, of course, a part of her flirtation with him, but it also implies a resistance to the narrative of the individual. Charley likewise resists that narrative. As Phil's body shapes his narrative in *Bleak House*, so too does Charley's; the narrator tells readers that the phrase 'growing up' could not quite 'be used of a body which seemed to grow all ways but the right' (53). Charley also defies the *Bildungsroman*'s linear progression when, by the end of the novel, he refers to Rose's four children as his 'feet,' dividing them into right foot, left foot, black stockings, and dancing boots (122). By extending his body to include those of his cousins, Charley thus situates his identity not in his individual body but rather in his role in Rose's family. Likewise, he situates himself in the village community as the business manager of the family's charitable work, which comprises 'a village hospital, a small orphanage, and a cottage home for outcast girls' (122). However, Hopkins seems uncomfortable with Charley's representation of community: at the novel's end, Charley only appears in the words of Rose and her children; he himself is silent and physically absent from

8 This speech is delivered in free indirect discourse but does not contain the ironic distancing found in many of the other instances of this mode of narrating in the novel.

the text and from the community itself since, as the narrator tells us, 'His terrible deformity made [him] sink from the sight of strangers' and stay in his 'quiet chamber' in the Keiths' home (121–22).

While the concept of the collective in *Rose Turquand* at times briefly undermines the *Bildungsroman*'s drive to cure by identifying the corporeally deviant body as an integrated, though perhaps hidden, part of Christian community, ultimately its single-focus form asserts a primacy of the individual in both faith and the body. This form, in following the tradition of the lives of Christian martyrs, positions disability and illness as individual suffering that leads to sanctification, which is in turn manifested in improved health. Nonetheless, applying a formal reading to *Rose Turquand*'s portrayal of disability and illness reveals that Victorian novelists were using form, genre, and religion to negotiate the meaning of the body—to work out which bodies had meaning, and what meanings which bodies had—and that, despite any sense of resolution the narratives offer, the resultant negotiations conflicted internally.

Communal Incarnation and the Multiple-Focus Narrative: Disability and Illness in *The Pillars of the House*

Like Ellice Hopkins, Charlotte Yonge was a prolific author, but in her case primarily of novels, devotionals, biographies, and histories. Additionally, Yonge edited *The Monthly Packet*, a family magazine that was primarily aimed at Church of England 'girls.'[9] She published *The Pillars of the House* as a monthly serial in this magazine from January 1870 to December 1873 and in volume form in 1874. Her popular novels frequently contained one or more principal characters with disabilities and as such are vital to Victorian disability scholarship.[10] However, while Victorianists often examine the role of disability in her fiction, they generally neglect to consider how her theology is integral to her understanding of disability—and, as I argue, disability is likewise integral to her theology.

9 The Victorian use of the word *girls* often included unmarried adult women as well as adolescents.

10 See, for example, Talia Schaffer's *Romance's Rival*; Karen Bourrier's *Measure of Manliness*; Martha Stoddard Holmes's 'Victorian Fictions of Interdependency'; and Clare Walker Gore's 'Disability and the Form of the Family in the Fiction of Dinah Mulock Craik and Charlotte M. Yonge.'

Unlike Hopkins, Yonge was strictly High Church—and, indeed, strictly Tractarian. Yonge's theology was deeply shaped by her parish priest and personal advisor, John Keble, author of *The Christian Year* (1827), a cycle of poems so popular that 158 editions were published by 1873. Keble was also a leading figure in the Oxford Movement, publishing the fourth of the *Tracts for the Times* (1833) that gave the movement its more common name, 'Tractarianism.' These tracts called for the restoration of certain Church practices, such as sacraments, church decoration, and ritual in worship (Knight and Mason 91); additionally, by emphasizing Apostolic succession, Church authority, the 'historic community of Christians,' and communal liturgical worship, the tracts sought to curb the individualism engendered by the Evangelical movement of the preceding generation (Chadwick 18). Many critics note that Yonge thoroughly integrates the Tractarian theology that she learned from her mentor into her writing with a distinctly vocational purpose.[11] Building on those critics' work in my reading of *The Pillars of the House*, I argue that, as a multiple-focus narrative that focalizes through many characters, the novel's narrative form itself incorporates the Tractarian emphasis of 'communitarian forms of worship' (Fraught 49) such as the liturgy, the *Book of Common Prayer*, and, above all, the sacraments. Moreover, I argue that since the novel's form expresses an incarnation theology that stresses interdependency rather than suffering as the locus for spiritual growth, disabled and ill bodies in the novel are neither privileged nor devalued, but instead are necessary and common components of an incarnational Anglican community.

Where disability functions in *Rose Turquand* as a Gothic thrill and narrative impetus, in *The Pillars of the House* and Yonge's other novels, it functions 'as part of the dailiness that is her fictional emphasis' (Stoddard Holmes, 'Victorian Fictions of Interdependency' 33). *Pillars* focuses on the Underwoods, a family of thirteen orphaned children of a Tractarian curate—all of whom are affected by disability or illness in some degree. The most overtly disabled are Geraldine, the fifth child, who walks first with a crutch and then with a cane and prosthetic foot, and Theodore, the youngest, who has cognitive disabilities and does not communicate verbally until he learns a few words in adolescence. To tell the story of this family, Yonge uses a community-based, multiple-focus narrative structure; that is, the novel contains several plot lines

11 See, for example, Susan Colón's 'Realism and Parable' and 'Realism and Reserve'; Tamara Wagner's 'Novelist with a Reserved Mission'; Gavin Budge's *Charlotte M. Yonge: Religion, Feminism and Realism*; and Virginia Bemis's 'The Sacramental Theology of Charlotte M. Yonge.'

and follows the actions and thoughts of several different characters, all of whom 'have roughly equal significance in plot' (Budge 88).

Within a single scene of the novel, the narrator will often seamlessly shift narrative perspective from an external point of view outside of the characters to an internal view through one character, and then another and another, reinforcing the equal importance of the many individuals within the community.[12] Take, for example, a paragraph describing an early scene at a family picnic:

> Meanwhile, Geraldine sat under the silvery bole of her beech-tree, looking up through its delicate light green leaves to the blue sky, not even wanting to speak, lest anything should break that perfection of enjoyment. Her father watched the little pale absorbed countenance, and as Mr. Audley [Underwood's deacon] came up, touched him to direct his attention to the child's expression … [which changed to merriment when her siblings approached, causing] Mrs. Underwood [to reprove] herself for thinking what the poor child would be if she had such fare and such air daily. (I 27)

While this passage entirely focuses *on* Geraldine, the focalization easily floats from Geraldine to Mr Underwood and to Mrs Underwood, before it returns to a view of the group as a whole.

The result of such narrative shifts is that there is no independent central figure or individual narrative thread: as Alethea Hayter notes, Yonge reported that 'she was sometimes surprised at how her characters turned out, and how one of them who was intended to be the central figure in a book she was writing could move back as the focus began to concentrate on another character' (4). These frequent shifts of perspective in effect emphasize the interdependency of each character and each plot in the narrative. As a contemporary reviewer of *Pillars* explained, 'everything depends upon everything else, so no incident however apparently unnecessary at the moment, is without its result, and no episode could well be omitted without injuring in some way the sequence of events, and depriving some subsequent effect of its cause, either remote or immediate' ('Novels of the Week' 392).[13] With

12 I do not mean to say that Yonge believed in social or economic equality, however. Yonge was a staunch conservative and often stressed the necessity of respecting social order. While individual people might be *equally important* to one another in her world view, she certainly did not consider them *equals*.

13 I first found this quotation in Cecelia Bass's chapter 'Charlotte Yonge and the Critics' (75).

its many plots following different characters, *Pillars* is a multiple-focus narrative in its own right; however, it also forms part of Yonge's larger multiple-focused project known as 'The Linked Novels,' twenty-two novels written over fifty-four years about several branches of interrelated families. There are roughly forty family names in the series, and all are linked through marriages, friendship, and church work. *Pillars* includes eighteen of those names, connecting it to seven earlier novels by Yonge and four later ones, two of which continue the Underwoods' stories. In fact, as Jane Sturrock points out, *Pillars* is the first of Yonge's novels to connect the early novels of the series together ('Women's Work' 104). Thus, *Pillars* forms a part of and creates its own intricate web of interdependent multiple-focus narratives.

This sense of interdependence effectuated by Yonge's use of multiple-focus narrative and its shifts in focalization is imbued with Tractarian theological meaning that emphasizes incarnation as communal. Altman's narrative theory posits that such focalization shifts between one character or plot and another in multiple-focus plots occur without much transition, resulting in a 'discontinuity' that obliges readers to seek other ways to find 'meaning from apparently unrelated fragments' (242). In forcing readers to connect meaning among many plots, these narratives 'posit a level of unity beyond that of single individuals' (248) and so demonstrate that 'social behaviour is in fact controlled by factors beyond the reach of any particular individual' (257).

For Yonge, the 'level of unity' that exists beyond single individuals in her novels ultimately resides in Christian fellowship, and the 'factors beyond the reach of any particular individual' are the providence of God. Noticing how rarely Yonge's narrators provide commentary, transitions, and external explanations, especially in *Pillars*, Gavin Budge argues that readers must look for associations 'through a mental effort of synthesis' that mimics the religious process that Tractarian doctrine emphasizes: discerning God's guidance of things on earth (88). Budge explains that reading Yonge's fiction requires 'actively piecing together details which gradually become significant of a larger whole, at once the character's personality and, ultimately, the relation of that personality to an intuition of a wider providential order' (87). Without using the narratological term 'multiple-focus,' what Budge describes here is how the multiple-focus format of *Pillars* creates unity outside of individuality, locating it in the 'wider providential order' of Christianity and in the community of the Church of England.[14] Budge additionally

14 Though at times in *Pillars*, Yonge criticizes Anglicans who are either 'too' Evangelical or Catholic, she makes it clear that as long as they are

argues that these narrative practices in Yonge's novels 'could be said to correspond to Tractarian doctrinal emphasis on the Incarnation,' in particular the way through which living members of the Church are 'called in their life to incarnate Christ Himself' (89).

I, in turn, would add that these techniques additionally imply that, to Yonge and Tractarians, the incarnation of Christ within his living church is communal rather than individual. In her devotional writing, Yonge frequently emphasized the Tractarian 'notion of the Church as a "body" in which all believers were linked to Christ' (Knight and Mason 91). For example, in her *Musings on 'The Christian Year' and 'Lyra Innocentium'* (1871), she frequently explicates Keble's poetic descriptions of unity through communal worship, which she describes as 'the fragments of our imperfect intermitting devotion that are gathered from thousands of altars, millions of worshippers, and all blended into one' (279). In *Pillars*, interdependence is not just a characteristic of Christianity, but rather proves integral to faith.

The title of the novel itself suggests this Pauline 'many-membered' unity:[15] the 'pillars of the house' not only refer to those who act as the main support for the Underwood family (that is, first the eldest siblings, Wilmet and Felix, and by the novel's end, younger siblings Geraldine and Clement) but also the pillars in church architecture,[16] and to the scriptural pillars—of Moses's tabernacle, of Solomon's temple, and, perhaps most importantly, the 'pillar in the temple of my God,' which Revelations describes as being made of 'Him that overcometh' upon whom God will write His 'new name' (Revelations 3:12). In a sermon on baptism, which Yonge would no doubt have read if not heard, Keble explicates the verse, saying that he who 'keeps his baptismal vow' will 'adorn and support in his measure the holy society to which he belongs, as pillars adorn and support a consecrated building' (*Village Sermons* 234).

Similarly, in a sermon called 'The Church a Spiritual Building,' Keble explicates the verses in which Peter describes individual Christians as the 'lively [i.e. living] stones' that build 'a spiritual house' of which Christ is 'the cornerstone' (I Peter 2: 4–6); there, he again refers to

'communicants'—that is, as long as they celebrate the Eucharist as part of the Anglican Church—then 'the army is all one' (II 522).

15 See Romans 12:3–5 and 1 Corinthians 12 for Paul's description of Christian unity as 'many members' but 'one body' (King James Version).

16 Tractarian poet Isaac Williams, for example, in his book-length poem *The Cathedral, or, The Catholic and Apostolic Church in England* (1843), identifies the cathedral nave's pillars as representing the 'patriarchs and prophets,' from Noah to Daniel, and the choir pillars as representing the apostles.

'pillars in the temple of God' as mentioned in Revelations, explaining that, as lively stones in the temple, Christians 'go on joined together in the unity of spirit by the doctrine of the Apostles' (*Sermons for the Saints' Days* 419–20). Thus, we see that Yonge's Tractarian concept of communal incarnation expresses itself in many layers of *The Pillars of the House*: through the title's allusion, through the multiple-focus structure that interdependently follows the many characters, and, as I will go on to show, fundamentally in the mutual dependence of characters within the novel through illness, disability, and health.

The central metaphor of *Pillars*, the Underwood family herald, exemplifies this concept of mutual dependency: the herald is a cross potent (a crutch-shaped cross) inscribed with the motto 'Underwood, Under Rood'—that is, 'Underwood, Under the Cross.' Early in the novel, the dying Anglican curate explains the significance of this motto to his sixteen-year-old son, Felix, who must financially support his mother and twelve siblings once his father dies:

> Underwood, Under rood … It was once but a sing-song to me. Now what a sermon! The load is the Cross. Bear thy cross, and thy cross will bear thee, like little Geraldine's cross potent [i.e. her crutch]—Rod and Rood, Cross and Crutch—all the same etymologically and veritably. (I 43–44)

Elizabeth Juckett interprets this motto as a 'sign both of family membership and of Christian morbidity' (126), as 'a guarantor of suffering' that obedience to the Church supposedly produces through disability and illness (127). But this interpretation clearly neglects the literal uses of cross and crutch. A crutch need not be a sign of suffering: it is literally a strengthening support for a body that needs it. A cross is not merely a symbol of faith: it is literally a heavy burden or shame. What Felix's father means is that, to a Christian, a burden is always simultaneously a support. In this way, Mr Underwood's crutch-shaped cross resymbolizes the central symbol of Christianity to offer 'a new model of wholeness and a symbol of solidarity' not unlike disability theologist Nancy Eiesland's resymbolization of the resurrected Christ as disabled (101). The cross potent attests to disability's 'dignity in relation not only to other people with disabilities, but also to able-bodied persons' (Eiesland 92) through picturing an equal and shared interdependence between weak and strong.[17] Indeed, this symbol echoes the Pauline understanding of Christian weakness and strength:

17 Of course, as Thomas Reynolds notes, 'Disability is neither the direct cause of suffering nor a concrete sign of weakness' (Ch. 1, Sec. 4, para. 19).

'Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong' (2 Corinthians 2:10).

The family's experience of disability continually demonstrates this principle of interdependence. For example, those outside of the family and Christian community believe that Theodore, who is neurologically atypical, physically weak, and unable to speak verbally, must be a burden on Felix and his family—financially, socially, and emotionally. However, Theodore simultaneously sustains his family through his musical talent, which he uses to critique his elder brother Lance's musical compositions,[18] and by his constant presence, which the family sorely misses after his death by drowning. His family sees his disability as 'an advantage' while his mother lives after her brain injury, as it keeps him with her and thus keeps her happy and occupied during her own invalidism (I 186). As such, to his family he is what his father baptized him and what Felix calls him: 'the Gift of God, the son of my right hand' (I 276), the literal translation of his given names, Theodore Benjamin.

As in the case of Theodore and his mother, the Underwood family members repeatedly uphold or nurse other family members while experiencing disability or illness of their own in what Wagner calls 'a network of care that enables while valorizing mutual dependence' ('Home Work' 114): while suffering from vague tubercular symptoms, Felix nurses Lance through sunstroke and brain fever; the invalid Mrs Underwood visits and amuses Fernando as he recovers from injuries sustained in a fire; Geraldine waits on Felix while he suffers with the unnamed illness that kills him; and so on. As Martha Stoddard Holmes explains, through this treatment of disability, Yonge 'valorize[s] the outcomes of caring interdependency over … selfish individualism' ('Victorian Fictions of Interdependency' 36). Thus, Yonge's communal incarnation theology materializes in *Pillars'* multiple-focus form and in its treatment of disability and illness.[19]

18 Theodore's disability combines with his musical genius to make him a fictional example of a savant. Though unable to communicate verbally, Theodore has perfect pitch, plays accordion, and can repeat any tune after hearing it once—even associating specific tunes to specific people and humming the tunes to call them.

19 Modern Christian disability theology, such as Eiseland's *Disabled God* (1994), Deborah Creamer's *Disability and Christian Theology* (2009), and Reynold's *Vulnerable Communion* (2008), likewise proffer visions of disability that are imbricated with incarnational theology and the fundamental 'relationality' (Creamer 96) and vulnerability of humankind (Reynolds Introduction, para. 29).

Yonge further emphasizes the interdependence of her incarnational theology and disability through *Pillars*' depictions of sacraments. As a firm follower of the Oxford Movement, Yonge understood the sacraments as that which made 'the Church a living being … [and] a community that does in very truth incarnate Christ on earth' (Bemis 131). Indeed, Yonge taught the readers of *The Monthly Packet* that baptism and communion are 'the great bond of the Universal Church' ('Preparation of Prayer Book Lessons' 45).[20] Significantly, *The Pillars of the House* frequently focuses moments of religious significance—particularly ones that stress communal interdependence—on and through disabled characters who are partaking of the sacraments. The most notable of these are Fernando's baptism and Theodore's confirmation, where he first receives the Eucharist.

Fernando, a foster child to the Underwoods, converts to Christianity while recuperating from an injury that leaves him with a permanently weak back. Fernando is baptized with Felix as his godfather, and his physical weakness frames the story of his baptism. Focalizing narrative perspective through Fernando, the narrator tells us that, having leaned on Felix to approach the font, Fernando attempts to 'stand alone' without support to make his vows, but he cannot and is forced to lean back on Felix. Following this event, in a rare moment of interjection, the narrator describes Fernando's baptism thus: 'And when that final and carefully-guarded vow of obedience was uttered, [Fernando's] pressure on [Felix's] arm seemed to show that the moral was felt of that moment's endeavour to stand alone' (I 166). Implicitly, the moral of that moment is that independence is impossible and interdependence utterly necessary.

Even when potential impediments to full participation in Christian community threaten the characters with disabilities, the Church in Yonge's story adapts to allow that participation, such as Theodore's involvement in the church choir despite his inability to verbally speak, but most especially in his confirmation and first communion. Explaining the common isolating and stigmatizing experiences that people with disabilities encounter in poorly accessible eucharistic practices, Eiesland notes, 'Someone who can take or serve communion is a real Christian subject,' and therefore those excluded from the 'corporate' experience of this rite by virtue of their disability are denied Christian subjecthood (112). At first, Theodore does meet with the kind of segregation that Eiesland describes: because he does not express

20 I first found this quotation in Bemis's article on Yonge's sacramental theology (128).

any comprehension or belief in God (despite many expressions of joy at attending the services), his brother and priest, Clement, bars his confirmation in the Church. However, because of his role in the choir whose singing he 'materially aid[ed] … by his perfectly true though wordless chant,' Theodore 'moved instinctively' in corporate motion with the choir to the altar to kneel before the bishop, and so is confirmed (II 405). When told of the mistake (as Clement sees it), the bishop insists that Theodore should not be excluded from 'his Christian privileges because of his lack of power of expression' (II 405). Furthermore, by contrasting Theodore and his elder brother Edgar, who is never confirmed and thus throughout the novel remains ambivalently placed in both family and church, Yonge here stresses the necessity of and divine presence in interdependent community.

Intellectual Disability, Focalization, and Closure

While the multiple-focus, multi-plot form of *Pillars* emphasizes the communal incarnation theology of the Oxford Movement through an egalitarian interdependence between people with and without disabilities, the novel's focalization is not wholly egalitarian. Tamara Wagner notes that in *Pillars*, 'Yonge's concept of exchangeable dependencies formed an intriguing revaluation of conflicting values' ('Home Work' 114). One such way it does so is through the shifts of focalization that contribute to the interdependence by preventing a single, central characterization focus. However, there is one sibling through whom the narrative never focalizes: Theodore. While the narrative occasionally focalizes *on* him, generally through the observations of other characters, Yonge only suggests any interior life in Theodore through the interpretation of his external physicality.[21] Indeed, his eldest sister Wilmet's observations of his physical response to music, 'a dawning of expression in the eyes that had hitherto been clear and meaningless,' provide the first clue to the family and readers that he has any interiority at all (I 202). From that point on, Theodore non-verbally

21 Nineteenth-century novels did occasionally focalize from the perspective of an intellectually disabled character: *Aurora Floyd* focalizes through Hargraves, *Little Dorrit* (1855–57) through Maggy, and *Nicholas Nickleby* (1838–39) through Smike, but all briefly. However, unlike these three characters, Theodore is non-verbal. Non-verbal focalization would perhaps have required an unconventional impressionism that would have transgressed the boundaries of mid-century domestic realism.

communicates via inarticulate humming, but readers never share his perceptions when reading of the humming. Instead, we witness it and any other signs of interiority either through his siblings or through an external focalization, such as when the narrator reports how 'his blue eyes grew fixed and round, and his soft murmuring [turned] to an angry inarticulate jabber' at seeing another child receive attention from Felix (II 231–32).

Worse, when his interiority *is* suggested, it serves primarily to emphasize qualities in the other siblings—chiefly Felix's selfless and paternal nature, or the otherworldly, childlike nature of Theodore's non-disabled twin, Stella, or the selfish, worldly nature of his older sister, Alda. For example, when Felix takes Theodore to the doctor to diagnose his developmental delays, the narrator describes Theodore's interiority to emphasize the child's emotional connection to Felix, saying, '[Theodore's] nearest approach to his natural state was when perched on his brother's knee, with his back to the strange faces, listening as Felix whistled the tunes he loved best' (I 276). The narrator quickly moves on to describe Felix's emotional reaction to the news that Theodore is unlikely to develop further intellectually, noting that 'Felix had the most of the parental instinct for the most helpless' (I 276). In a chapter focusing on how Alda's nature has worsened since staying with wealthy relatives, the narrator gives another brief look at Theodore's interiority: while Alda is shouting about her displeasure at the state of their home and about Theodore's humming, 'Theodore, knowing no more than his own name and Alda's displeasure, set up a dismal howl,' which then causes Alda to '[mutter] about asylums and proper places' (I 413). This latter example especially shows how Theodore acts more as catalyst for producing emotions in the siblings on whom the narrative currently focuses.

This lack of focalization through Theodore underscores his limited role in the novel: as Patrick McDonagh puts it, 'While a constant presence in the family, Theodore is rarely more than alluded to in passing' (224). In other words, he is ever-present, but never central. Yet I disagree with McDonagh's claim that 'Theodore has no place in the mundane world of the Underwoods' (225); a significant effect of including Theodore (along with the rest of his disabled or ill siblings) in the narrative is to emphasize disability's absolute mundanity—in both senses of the word. That Theodore does have a place in that world is regularly emphasized, such as in the contempt with which the narrator treats Alda's assertions that Theodore should be institutionalized. But I do agree with McDonagh that Theodore's most 'central moment' in the narrative only materializes with his death (224).

Furthermore, the purpose this death serves in the formal structure of the narrative ultimately reveals an ambiguity both in the concept of disability the novel portrays and in its multi-plot structure.

Despite being a multi-plot, multiple-focus text that is markedly open through its links to several novels written before and after it, *Pillars* nonetheless contains a narrative drive towards closure that is fulfilled by Theodore's death. Our first indication of this drive occurs when Geraldine finds Stella crying over her twin's inability to appreciate their family's recent return to social status and the reclamation of the family home, Vale Leston. Geraldine, who not only never sought healing for her own lame foot but eventually had it amputated to increase her mobility, responds to Stella's tears thus: 'It is not the Promised Land yet, for there you know there will be Ephphatha indeed!' (II 327). *Ephphatha*, an Aramaic word meaning 'be opened,' refers to the biblical story in which Jesus heals a deaf-mute man by sighing this word to the heavens while touching the man's ears and tongue (Mark 7:32–37). Thus, Geraldine here implies to Stella that a final eschatological conclusion—in the shape of 'The Promised Land'—must be sought after, and that the bodily state there will be one of presumed wholeness from which Theodore is currently barred. Moreover, Theodore's tragic drowning in a boating accident sentimentalizes disability and suggests death as the ultimate (and implicitly desirable) cure for intellectual disability. After Theodore drowns, people repeatedly infer that death is the best thing that 'could have been wished for that little helpless being' (II 578), and *Ephphatha* is engraved on his tombstone, indicating a closure via the 'healing' of death that Clement reads in Theodore's dead face: 'The vacancy is gone, and there is a wonderful depth in his face, as if his Ephphatha had come to the guileless lips' (II 482).

Additionally, his death 'cures' certain narrative problems by providing closure for Stella's and Felix's plots. As the twins reached adolescence, the narrator implies that 'Perhaps Stella was content the longer to be a child because each advance into life was further away from Theodore' (II 405). With Theodore gone, however, Stella is able to advance into adulthood and does so very quickly by beginning a romance with a family friend mere days after Theodore's death. Shortly before marrying, she admits that had Theodore been living, she 'could not have done it' (II 608); to close Stella's plot, Theodore therefore needed to be removed. Likewise, his removal is needed to provide closure for Felix's plot, which is one of care for his siblings. Presumably, Theodore would always require care; thus, Felix says that Theodore's death 'loosens [him] from the world' (II 507). The first

Sunday after Theodore's death, Clement preaches a sermon in which he says, 'we believe in a Chooser of the slain, bearing us, one by one, from our several posts, with longer or shorter warning, exactly when our warfare is accomplished, our individual battle is, or ought to be, won' (II 511); and in a chapter significantly titled 'The Task Over,' Felix dies a few days after walking Stella down the aisle. Theodore's death thus positions his body as melodramatic spectacle to prompt an overflow of affective feeling while also providing a sense of closure and cure.

Felix's death in turn brings closure to other siblings' stories. Witnessing his absolution before death restores Angela's faith and confirms her future role as an Anglican nun. His death also facilitates the romantic reunion of Fernando with Marilda, the Underwoods' cousin, and opens the door for Lance to marry through bequeathing to him a house and business (and by removing Felix as a would-be suitor to the woman Lance loves, Gertrude May).[22] Jane Sturrock claims that 'none of Yonge's novels could be described as "marriage novels"' since they 'rarely (arguably never) move towards marriage as resolution' (*'Heaven and Home'* 16). Likewise, Clare Walker Gore argues that the 'large families' in Yonge's 'lengthy and loosely structured' novels give Yonge room to explore non-marriage pairings between disabled and non-disabled siblings to challenge the heteronormative marriage plot (130). However, Yonge clearly *does* use marriage to resolve several subplots in her multi-plot novels and, in the case of *Pillars*, Theodore's death instigates these resolutions to allow the novel to close as a stand-alone work.

To complete Geraldine's narrative, which would have been left gaping open with the absence of her dearest brother, Felix, Yonge provides a replacement for Theodore, Felix, and Edgar (her other favourite brother, who had run away after committing forgery): Edgar's American son, Gerald. Gerald arrives in the story before Felix's death, in part to reveal the conclusion of Edgar's story, death by scalping in the American West, but his primary function is as fulfilment for Geraldine. On seeing him, Geraldine says that she feels 'as if Tedo [Theodore] were come back, with what was lacking' (II 544)—that is, with mental and verbal capabilities. While the frequent comparison between Theodore and Gerald reiterates Theodore's lack, Gerald's disabled body, which is slowly recovering from injuries sustained in the raid that killed his father, distracts Geraldine from her grief and

22 Gertrude (Daisy) May first appears in Yonge's 1854 novel *The Daisy Chain*.

keeps her occupied with his care, which the narrator implies is 'the best earthly solace' for her (II 630). Before the novel's end, Gertrude May's intellectually disabled and 'almost deformed' niece, Margaret Rivers, also dies, and the narrator describes that death as a 'scarcely to be mourned … untold blessing' (II 664–65). Thus, Theodore's and Margaret's deaths signify that while Yonge may portray disability as ubiquitous and spiritually fruitful due to the interdependency it generates, cognitive and neurological disabilities are too deviant for her narrative comfort (and perhaps for the comfort of her Victorian readers as well).

But even in the midst of the novel's closures by marriages, deaths, and the removal of Theodore's disability, narrative openness remains. The novel's final chapter, tellingly called 'Conclusion,' describes the double wedding of two Underwood siblings, Robina and Lance, and communicates the settled happiness of Geraldine and Clement in their new home in London, made even happier by Gerald's slowly improving health. Fascinatingly, this conclusion is entirely relayed to readers by means of dialogue between an Anglican priest whose blindness has ended his mission work in Australia and the Mother of an Anglican nursing sisterhood. The only external narration beyond the rare 'he/she said' tag in the whole conclusion is an explanation that the nun missed the wedding because she was nursing a town through a smallpox epidemic. This choice of narration through dialogue re-emphasizes the interdependency and interconnection of the multi-focus novel, even more so because it is narrated by characters who make appearances in an earlier Yonge novel, *The Castle-Builders* (1854). That the two speakers are a man growing increasingly debilitated in sight and a woman devoted to nursing the sick further indicates the inconclusive nature of the novel's evaluation of disability. And, as Budge points out, the 'intellectual uncertainty' (67) and 'messiness and ambiguity' (66) present in Yonge's novels are very much true to her Tractarian faith and aesthetic of Providentialism which 'attempt[ed] to represent reality, even if it did not fall neatly into cut and dried patterns' (66). Likewise, Jane Sturrock explains that Yonge refuses full closure in her novels 'because she believes that incompletion is inevitable in this world, and because she believes in completion in the next world' ('Women's Work' 101). Moreover, in an essay indicating the instability of narrative endings, in particular those of nineteenth-century novels, J. Hillis Miller notes,

> If marriage, the tying of the marriage bond, is a cessation of the story, it is also the beginning of another cycle in the endless sequence of

> generations … Death is the most enigmatic, the most open-ended ending of all. It is the best dramatization of the way an ending, in the sense of a clarifying telos, law or ground of the whole story, always recedes, escapes, vanishes. ('The Problematic of Ending' 6)

Even in Theodore's *ephphatha*, narrative openness appears through the command, 'Be opened' and in its allusion to the scripture that describes repeated tellings of the healing and the 'astonishment' at the mystery provoked by the healing (Mark 7:36–37). In addition, the other closures—Angela's choice to become a nun, Geraldine and Clement's move to London with Bernard and Gerald, Lance and Gertrude's marriage—open up further plots taken up in later novels, namely *Beechcroft at Rockstone* (1888), *The Long Vacation* (1895), and *Modern Broods* (1900). Walker Gore likewise notes the narrative openness offered by marriage-plot closure in Yonge's fiction: 'The perpetuation of the families of Yonge's chronicles ultimately depends upon procreation, which only marriage (in this context) can enable' (129). Thus, the deaths and marriages at the end of *Pillars* ultimately reopen its narrative as they close it, because, as Miller explains, 'the two motions are inextricably the same, as in the double antithetical word "articulate," which means simultaneously putting together and taking apart' ('The Problematic of Ending' 4). The conflicting simultaneous progressions of the novel's narrative form, then, work together to 'articulate' the ambiguous place of the disabled body in Victorian culture.

Both Ellice Hopkins's *Rose Turquand* and Charlotte Yonge's *The Pillars of the House* use disability and narrative form to communicate their authors' respective incarnation theologies and so map spirituality onto the disabled and ill body, though in very contrasting ways. Hopkins's single-focus novel displays an individualistic incarnation theology that interprets the physical and emotional suffering of an individual as enacting and embodying Christ's divine suffering on the cross; therefore, disability in the novel is likewise individualistic, a Gothic or melodramatic spectacle shaped by the 'suffering' individual's spiritual experience rather than by his or her social environment. In contrast, Yonge's multiple-focus novel conveys a communal incarnation theology, in which individuals are members of a collective body of Christ through Church of England worship and sacraments; therefore, disability in *Pillars* functions as part of the communal interdependency stressed by that theology. Even the presence of medicine in these novels fits the authors' respective theologies: *Rose Turquand*'s Dr Keith works individually to advance Charley's relative health, whereas in

Pillars a sisterhood of Anglican nuns work together to nurse Geraldine after her amputation to restore her to her family.

However, neither of these novels fully sustains the respective individuality or communal interdependence of their theology and portraits of disability. In *Rose Turquand*, ironic focalization through secondary characters suggests the flaws of an individualized narrative of disability, as does Charley's embeddedness in the community. In *Pillars*, a lack of focalization through the intellectually disabled Theodore distinguishes his disability from those of other characters, and the spectacle of his individual death provides the narrative closure and melodramatic catharsis necessary to conclude the novel. The following chapter focuses on an author who, like Yonge and Hopkins, frequently pairs Christian thought with disability in her novels and non-fiction: Dinah Mulock Craik. However, the narrative I focus on replaces overt Christian theology with fairy-tale magic and fairy godmothers. Blending *Bildungsroman*, fairy tale, and parable in the structure of the story, Craik's *The Little Lame Prince and His Travelling Cloak*'s hybrid form, like that of *Notre-Dame de Paris* and *Bleak House*, allows for conflicting concepts of the disabled body that defy a fixed reading.

CHAPTER FIVE

Fairy-Tale Bodies: Prostheses and Narrative Perspective in Dinah Mulock Craik's *The Little Lame Prince*

The nineteenth-century folk and fairy tale revival prompted many English translations of stories from Germany, Scandanavia, and the Middle East, as well as retellings of old British tales, and new English translations of the already popular French *contes de fées* by Madame d'Aulnoy and Charles Perrault. Fairies and fairy tales occupied the Victorian imagination, with fairy images and motifs appearing in all forms of literature and culture, from soap advertisements to realist fiction.[1] By mid-century, authors like Charles Kingsley, Lewis Carroll, and George MacDonald were developing a modern British literary fairy-tale genre that combined contemporary narrative forms, such as the *Bildungsroman* novel, with the fairy-tale structure[2] and blended modern concerns, such as child labour, nationalism, Darwinism, and technology, with fairy godmothers and magical castles.[3] Like sensation fiction, the modern fairy tale of the 1860s and 1870s was also interested in the relationship between the self or soul and the body and in responding to the scientific, technological, and medical changes that brought that relationship into question. For example, Carroll's Alice is unsure 'what [she's] going to be, from one

1 See Caroline Silver's *Strange and Secret Peoples: Fairies and the Victorian Consciousness* and Molly Clark Hillard's *Spellbound: The Fairy Tale and the Victorians* for more on the Victorian interest in fairies and fairy tales.

2 Of course, the *Bildungsroman* form was influenced by 'fairy-tales about growing up,' as Julia Prewitt Brown notes.

3 See Jennifer Schacker's *National Dreams: Remaking of Fairy Tales in Nineteenth-Century England* and Laurence Talairach-Vielmas's *Fairy Tales, Natural History and Victorian Culture* for more on the societal concerns probed in Victorian fairy tales.

moment to the next' since her body undergoes several transformations in a single day (91). With a democratic impulse, the opening of MacDonald's *The Princess and the Goblin* insists that not one's birth but one's actions determine one's identity (47)—and yet the novel writes behavioural identity on the body via evolutionary theory, since 'as [the Goblins] grew mis-shapen in body, so had they grown in knowledge and cleverness … [and] mischief' (48–49). Likewise, due to their bad behavioural choices, Kingsley's 'Doasyoulikes' physically degenerate into large-jawed and coarse-lipped people and then ultimately into language-less apes (173–75).

Several Victorian authors used the literary fairy tale genre to negotiate the changing understanding of the disabled body and identity as well. In Mary de Morgan's 1877 'Through the Fire,' for example, the crippled invalid protagonist, Jack, travels on the backs of fairies for adventures and, as a reward for using a magic wish to reunite fairy lovers rather than to cure himself, he receives from those lovers a magic silver belt that makes him 'quite strong' and 'no longer a cripple' (226). Instead of receiving cure, the intellectually disabled hero of Lucy Clifford's 1890 story 'Wooden Tony' turns into a wooden doll in a Swiss cuckoo clock as a result of his inherent connection to trees, his wish to be little and idle like the wooden toys his father carves, and the frightening magic of his father's toy dealer. But the fairy tale this chapter focuses on, Dinah Mulock Craik's *The Little Lame Prince and His Travelling Cloak: A Parable for Young and Old* (1874),[4] offers neither cure nor punishment to its disabled hero, Prince Dolor. Instead, the hybrid form of this story, combining fairy tale, *Bildungsroman*, and parable, like the hybrid forms of *Notre-Dame de Paris* and *Bleak House*, defies conventional closure and so produces a complicated and at times incongruous understanding of corporeal difference.

The Little Lame Prince's early reception history demonstrates a range of readings that the story's form produced. When first published, some reviewers suggested that it was a simple moral allegory ('Children's Books' 2; Review in *Scotsman* 1479; 'Contemporary Literature' 265), while others implied that finding the moral required careful close reading ('Current Literature' 1571; 'Books Received' 653)—though none stated what that moral was. Another claimed that the story contains no explicit moral at all beyond Dolor's moral life ('Editor's

4 Craik first published the book in Leipzig, Germany, in 1874; I will be citing from the first English edition, illustrated by John Mc. Ralston, published in 1875.

Literary Record' 289). Still others felt the story was not a moral tale but rather 'a diminutive political allegory' (Yates 213) and 'humoursome satire' (Review in *The Nonconformist* 1479). This notable textual fluidity makes the novel's titular self-description as 'parable' all the more apt. Though parables are often perceived as closed allegories, with each signifier matching a pre-determined referent, their narrativity marks them as more 'dynamic than any extended metaphorical comparison' (Steen, 'Parable'). This dynamic allows for 'disclosive potential' since the parable will necessarily contain elements 'that need not correlate with the world as it is but can creatively present genuinely new possibilities of understanding' (Parris 43). The openness of meaning in *The Little Lame Prince* suggests that it shares the indeterminacy of the parable, as does the tension between its plot structure, which relies on fairy tale and *Bildungsroman* generic conventions, and its narrative techniques, such as focalization and illustration.

The few critical studies of *The Little Lame Prince* since the twentieth century, however, tend to interpret the tale either as an allegory of female power struggle (Showalter; S. Mitchell) or as a lesson for incorporating both feminine and masculine qualities in one's character (Philipose; Richardson). Such interpretations risk reducing the prince's complicated experience of physical disability to a metaphor for gender politics, a reduction that diminishes the complexity of disability's place in Victorian consciousness, as well as the place of disabled individuals in Victorian culture. For example, Showalter's argument that all of Craik's fictional invalids represent the helplessness of unmarried women presumes that invalidism was unquestionably viewed as powerless and therefore feminine (11–12); however, Maria Frawley's *Invalidism and Identity* shows that invalidism was a potentially powerful identity adopted by many Victorians, men as well as women. Moreover, reducing Dolor's disability to a metaphor also occludes Craik's sustained interest in the social and cultural implications of physical impairments.

Because her novels so frequently focused on disability and illness, both were seen as a distinct part of Craik's oeuvre. For example, noting her 'lively predilection for cripples and invalids by which she has always been distinguished,' Henry James calls her a 'chronicler' for 'the sickly half of humanity' (Review of *A Noble Life* 846). This 'predilection' for physical difference also manifests itself in her non-fiction writing, such as her essay series 'Strolls with Invalid Children,' or her article on the Association for Promoting the General Welfare of the Blind, 'Blind!' Even her collection of retold and translated fairy tales, *The Fairy Book* (1863), reveals Craik's attention to physical difference and the social interpretations of disability. In prefacing the stories,

she reminds readers 'that in real life all beautiful people are not good, nor all ugly ones wicked' (viii), and she carries this concept of judging others by their behaviour rather than their bodies into her translations and adaptations of the stories. For example, in 'Graciosa and Percinet,' the original author, Madame d'Aulnoy, had introduced the villain—an ugly, fat, one-eyed, 'humpbacked and lame' stepmother named Grognon—thus: 'Ces sortes de monstres portent envie à toutes les belles personnes: elle haïssoit mortellement Gracieuse' (d'Aulnoy 153).[5] Instead of directly translating the French that equates Grognon's physicality with her disagreeable personality, Craik writes, 'Of course [Grognon] could not help her ugliness, and nobody would have disliked her for that, if she had not been of such an unpleasant temper that she hated everything sweet and beautiful, and especially Graciosa' (145).

Moreover, Craik was close to many members of and advocates for the disabled community: she was married to George Lillie Craik, who lost a leg in a railway injury before their marriage (S. Mitchell 14); friends with Elizabeth Gilbert, the founder of the Association for Promoting the General Welfare of the Blind; long-time roommates with Gilbert's biographer, Frances Martin; and godmother to the blind poet Philip Bourke Marston. Additionally, Craik's political and religious ideals shaped her insistence on interpreting corporeality through individual behaviour instead of interpreting an individual's identity through his or her corporeality. As her friend Frances Martin notes in her obituary, 'She was democratic. She believed in the nobility of man as man, and looked upon condition, circumstance, or birth as an accident which ought not to determine his ultimate position' (539). That Craik adopted her daughter, Dorothy, from a workhouse exemplifies her egalitarianism and counters the common Victorian convictions regarding 'bad blood, and hereditary taints of character' (S. Mitchell 17). Craik's Christianity was likewise egalitarian. She never publicly claimed any particular denomination and, in her article 'On Sisterhoods,' emphasizes interdenominational similarities and encourages religious tolerance (132–34). Craik's political and religious ethic, as well as her awareness of the social and physical conditions of disability, demands a more multifaceted reading of disability in *The Little Lame Prince*.

Using narratology and prosthetic theory to examine *The Little Lame Prince*'s representation of disability produces such a reading. While the story's narrative trajectory appears to move towards closure by eradicating Prince Dolor's disability through magical prosthetic gifts, the

5 'These kinds of monsters are envious of all beautiful people: she [Grognon] mortally detested Graciosa.'

story's narration and focalization frequently create textual instabilities that are ultimately tied to the body's role in narration and reading. This role is established in three integrated ways: through the narrator's ambiguous authority, through the letterpress's relationship to its early illustrations, and through shared focalization. By making readers aware first of the narrator's physical limitations and of their own roles as spectators, and then focalizing through the disabled hero while he is a spectator, *The Little Lame Prince* undermines its earlier use of Dolor as a sentimental spectacle meant to teach children to accept their lot in life. Readers' identification with Dolor through his focalization thus prompts empathy regarding the social circumstances of disability rather than sympathy for the physical circumstances and so places readers and the disabled character in a relationship of equality. Moreover, moments in which readers focalize with Dolor through his prosthetic gifts reveal the limitations of all bodies and cause readers to speculate on the beauty and infinite variety of physical difference.

Prostheticizing Maturity

Although the term *prosthesis* most commonly refers to artificial replacements of absent or malfunctioning body parts, it may also include media, such as the Internet or television, as a 'technological prosthesis' that, rather than correcting or replacing, 'enhanc[es] and exten[ds] … human faculties' (Cleland 75). Mitchell and Snyder expand the term theoretically to refer to how disability functions in literature as an embodiment of cultural deviance (54) that becomes 'prostheticized'—that is, restored to normalcy—through the narrative's resolution (6–7). Sarah S. Jain further argues that prostheses 'produce the disability' that they are meant to remedy because they 'assume a disabled body in need of supplementation' (33). Because the 'primary objective' of prostheses is 'to return the incomplete body to the invisible status of normative essence' (Mitchell and Snyder 8), prostheses essentially 'serve as indices of disability' (Siebers, 'Disability as Masquerade' 10). In *The Little Lame Prince*, the term *prosthesis* applies not only to the assistive devices such as the crutches used by the hero as an adult, but also to technological extensions or enhancements and to normalizing tools that both imply and erase physical difference.

The plot structures of *Bildungsromane* and fairy tales both progress towards stabilization of social order, and in *The Little Lame Prince*, the magical gifts that Dolor receives from his fairy godmother function within these plots to support his prosthetic normalization. According

to structuralist scholars of folklore, the basic arc of the fairy-tale plot begins with a lack recognized and ends with that lack fulfilled (Lüthi 4–5)—that is to say, the story begins with disorder and moves towards order. For example, *Sleeping Beauty* begins with a princess being stolen from her parents and ends with her restoration as royalty. Mitchell and Snyder's theory of *narrative prosthesis*, described in Chapter Three above, posits a similar structure for narratives with disability, in which disability is the disorder that must be 'rehabilitat[ed] or fix[ed]' in the action of the story through cure, death, or removal (53).[6] In fact, Mitchell and Snyder illustrate this structure with a fairy tale, Hans Christian Andersen's *The Steadfast Tin Soldier*, which follows a one-legged tin soldier on various adventures until he melts in a fire while gazing at a ballerina doll whom he loves unrequitedly.

As a fairy tale and as a narrative of disability, *The Little Lame Prince* follows these basic structures. A lack is acknowledged and a physical difference exposed by the second chapter: the baby prince is dropped by his nurse, his legs stop growing, and he becomes unable to stand. His people perceive this disability as a threat to the political stability of 'Nomansland,' his kingdom: they exclaim, 'A prince, and not able to stand on his own legs! What a dreadful thing! what a misfortune for the country!' (17). Further disorder develops when Dolor's father, the king, dies while the prince is still an infant. Dolor's uncle then usurps the throne, exiling the prince to a faraway tower with only a nurse as companion. Order is restored and lack fulfilled through the resolution of the story: Dolor is re-crowned king after his uncle's death, and he uses 'a wonderful pair of crutches' (158) designed to help him walk, stand, and thus be 'quite independent' (159). However, according to the principle in narrative prosthesis that, if 'disability falls too far from an acceptable norm,' narrative 'seeks to accomplish an erasure of difference all together' (Mitchell and Snyder 6–7), order is not fully restored until Dolor leaves his kingdom, abdicating the throne in favour of his non-disabled cousin.[7] Once the narrative eradicates disability, order is fully restored and the story ends.

6 Ann Schmiesing likewise notes the similarity between the fairy-tale plot and Mitchell and Snyder's narrative prosthesis in her book on disability in Grimm's collections of stories. For further discussion of disability's role in the form of the fairy tale, see Hans-Jörg Uther's entry 'Disability' in *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Folktales and Fairy Tales*.

7 This resolution of the story in which a healthy-bodied prince takes over as king exhibits latent anxiety about the possibility of Dolor producing an heir as well as Victorian anxieties about the social body of Britain, in which national 'health' was measured by the bodily health of the individual citizens within

As the fairy-tale plot establishes social stability through moving from disorder or lack to order and fulfilment, so the *Bildungsroman* plot establishes social stability by taking a single character through a normalizing educative process. It is this focus on 'childhood as a period of psychological and moral growth' that Alan Richardson claims 'most differentiates Victorian literary fairytales and fantasies from traditional fairytales' (3). In *The Little Lame Prince*, the main portion of the narrative focuses on the hero's boyhood as a period of growth into young adulthood. While Richardson argues that Craik uses the *Bildungsroman* structure to show Dolor's development from a powerless femininity to an empowered but 'soften[ed]' masculinity (15), I posit that the *Bildung* progress in Craik's text moves from perceived physical abnormality to an acceptable normalcy and that this transformation takes place through the magical prostheses given to the prince by his fairy godmother, called Stuff-and-Nonsense.

In their feminist readings of *The Little Lame Prince*, Showalter, Sally Mitchell, and Lily Philipose presuppose that the godmother and her gifts represent artistic creativity and imagination. S. Mitchell argues, 'At one level, obviously, the story is an allegory about the imagination (and, perhaps, about the writing of fiction)' (88). Philipose likewise claims that 'The cloak is nothing less than the faculty of imagination, with which the prince can overcome his physical limitations' (135). This allegorical reading of Stuff-and-Nonsense and her gifts may be possible, especially since, in 'Strolls with Invalid Children,' Craik encourages the use of imagination in reading as a way for sick children to escape the limitations of their bodies (385).[8] However, the text itself resists such direct allegorical reading. Stuff-and-Nonsense interacts with several people during Dolor's christening and therefore is not a figment of his imagination or a dream vision. Moreover, Dolor's lack of control over his gifts—his forgetting the magic words required to work the cloak and its refusal to take him to play with other boys—suggests that they exist outside him rather than as part of his imagination. In fact, the narrator's comparison of books to the 'elegant but empty dishes' from 'Barmecide's Feast,' a story in which

it. See Pamela Gilbert's *Mapping the Victorian Social Body* and *The Citizen's Body: Desire, Health, and the Social in Victorian England*.

8 Craik writes, 'our thoughts should take us out of ourselves—away from the weary body, which perhaps cannot stir from bed or sofa … The more we can shut our mind's eye on the things around us, and open it upon those which, being invisible, we can look at whenever we please, the better it will be for us all' (385).

pretend food leaves a beggar hungry, suggests that imagination may fall short of fulfilling one's needs (86–87). Even if Stuff-and-Nonsense and her cloak were direct allegorical representations of the power of imagination, they nonetheless enact a prostheticization that simultaneously indicates and compensates for Dolor's physical deviance.

Stuff-and-Nonsense's first gift to Dolor, a magical flying cloak, functions as a physical prosthesis by providing him with some independent mobility. However, it also serves the prosthetic purpose of making Dolor aware of his physical difference and of marking that difference. As Stuff-and-Nonsense gives the prince the cloak, she explains that she does so 'because [he is] different from other people' (59). Touching his legs, she tells him, 'These are not like those of other little boys' and 'your life will be quite different to most people's lives' (60). This surprises Dolor who, living alone, has compared his body and its abilities only to those of his nurse and the characters in his books. Nonetheless, from then on Dolor sees himself as 'not like other little boys,' as unable 'to do as they did, and play as they played' (61). Immediately following the gift giving, the narrator places this recognition of difference as a step in the maturing process:

> The sense of *the inevitable*, as grown-up people call it—that we cannot have things as we want them to be, but as they are, and that we must learn to bear them and make the best of them—this lesson, which everybody has to learn soon or late—came, alas! sadly soon, to the poor boy. (61)

Thus, Dolor's body and this prosthesis provide the source of his 'psychological and moral growth' (Richardson 3).

The next two magical gifts from Stuff-and-Nonsense, a pair of golden spectacles and a pair of silver ears, function as technological prostheses—that is, rather than fix a presumed defect, they attach to and extend his body, allowing him to see and hear from great distances: the pair of glasses 'fixed itself on to the bridge of his nose' (80) and the ears 'fitted so exactly over his own, that he hardly felt them, except for the difference they made in his hearing' (96). The three gifts seem like ideal playthings, allowing Dolor to venture out of his tower, each time further than the last, and to see and hear things outside of his enclosed life. But even as they prosthetically enhance his body, like the cloak, they ultimately serve to reinforce his social segregation and difference. When he uses them to watch and hear a shepherd boy play and run, the difference between the boy's legs and his own 'strike[s] him painfully' (97)—particularly because the cloak, which has previously obeyed

all of Dolor's wishes, refuses to let him play with the boy (99). After watching the shepherd run, Dolor 'understood what his godmother had meant' when she told him his legs were different, and he wonders 'why [he] was born at all, since [he] was not to grow up like other little boys' (102). Immediately following this expression of self-worthlessness, the narrator clarifies that suffering brought on by difference provides the lesson through which Dolor acquires maturity. Addressing readers directly, the narrator says, 'There is much that we do not know, and cannot understand … We have to accept it all … even though you don't as yet see the reason of it' (103). The narrator adds that Dolor's meditation on his suffering 'seemed to make him grow years older in a few minutes' (103). Thus, the magical prostheses cement Dolor's physical difference, and the exclusion it brings with it, for the purpose of advancing his progression towards adulthood and imagined normalcy.

Once Dolor has internalized and accepted this notion of his physical difference, his process of maturation occurs through work, which Craik's middle-class readers would have perceived as the normal (and valuable) experience of an adult. When the prince discovers that he is the rightful king of Nomansland, he 'fe[els] like a man' (115) and reflects that 'big boys do not always play[, n]or men neither—they work' (117). From then on, he uses the magic cloak, ears, and spectacles for work: observing the death of the putative king and then watching the resultant political unrest in his kingdom. Dolor returns to the tower frightened by the revolution to find that his nurse has left and that he is trapped there alone. Dolor feels that his fairy godmother 'had evidently left him to help himself' to reach manhood by learning independence (140). The narrator tells us that Dolor's solitude 'threw him back upon himself, and into himself—in a way that all of us have to learn when we grow up' (142).[9] In learning to do for himself, Dolor also learns to wish to be able to do for others, saying, 'Suppose I had grown a man, and had had work to do, and people to care for, and was so useful and busy that they liked me, and perhaps even forgot I was lame' (144). Thus, Dolor expresses the typical middle-class Victorian concept that work provides the ultimate normalization for the adult male.

After his nurse returns with soldiers and lords of Nomansland to retrieve him and re-crown him king, he indeed becomes 'so useful and busy that [his people] liked him' (144). His ability to be useful and busy is supplied by his material prostheses: crutches and a throne

9 Of course, the ultimate irony of this lesson is that, left in the tower, Dolor cannot escape or retrieve food and water to survive, and thus is ultimately helpless until his providential rescue.

'ingeniously contrived to hide his infirmity' (160). However, while these good works do indeed make him a well-loved king, his people never completely forget his disability: instead, Dolor's loving subjects know him by 'the sound of his crutch on the marble palace-floors' (159) and 'were almost ready to die for their *poor lame* King' (160; emphasis added). Although the people hear the sound of his crutch with affection, that sound functions as an identifier of Dolor. Therefore, because his disability remains his defining quality, despite his success as king, the narrative continues until Dolor installs as king his young, athletic cousin, who is 'tall and straight as a poplar tree' (164), and until Dolor uses the magic prosthesis of the cloak to exile himself permanently from Nomansland. This resolution, in which the able-bodied figure steps into the ruling position while the disabled figure steps aside, would be unnecessary if, as Richardson posits, the story offered male readers 'a version of growing up' that counters the notion that 'male power and privilege … come[s] only at the expense of repressing the feminine' (9–10). Were that the case, the story could have ended with Dolor as king. The actual ending privileges physical normalcy and implies that the disabled body is the text's central concern.

While Richardson is correct in saying that Dolor's gender identity is ambivalent, this ambivalence reflects Victorian gender politics less than it does Victorian anxieties about disability and sexuality. Although Jack Zipes notes that Victorian fairy tales often 'placed great emphasis on the fusion of female and male qualities' (128), the 'neutral,' 'hypermasculine,' and 'feminin[e]' characteristics of Dolor that Richardson notices (9) act to feminize the disabled male body and desexualize the disabled body (concepts that people with disabilities still encounter).[10] Stoddard Holmes explains that Victorian discomfort surrounding sexuality and disability directly correlated with anxieties about heredity (*Fictions of Affliction* 62–73). Although Dolor's is an acquired rather than congenital disability, *The Little Lame Prince* nonetheless exhibits such anxieties. Dolor's physical weakness is frequently associated with his invalid mother; in fact, his uncle suggests to Dolor's father that the child's inability to walk is a 'slight delicacy—ahem!—in the spine; something inherited, perhaps, from his dear mother' (20). However, anxiety about heredity is pacified, along with nationalistic and eugenic anxiety regarding the idea of a disabled leader, when Dolor refuses to marry and states that 'his country was

10 For a discussion of the present cultural anxieties regarding disability and sexuality see Margrit Shildrick's 'Contested Pleasures: The Sociopolitical Economy of Disability and Sexuality.'

his bride, and he desired no other' (160). Because he 'never [gives] them a Queen' (160), neither will he give them a disabled heir to the throne; instead, he has his athletic cousin replaces him 'as a fitter king' (166), displacing apprehension and restoring stability.

Embodied Narrator and Readers

Notwithstanding *The Little Lame Prince*'s normalizing narrative structure and its 'impulse towards closure'—which John Stephens would argue manifests a 'socializing, didactic … desire for fixed meanings' common in children's literature (41)—a detailed reading of the narration and focalization in the novel reveals many instabilities that keep the story open regardless of its enclosed structure. *The Little Lame Prince*'s subtitle, *A Parable for Young and Old*, may seem to indicate a closed, didactic purpose, as do the opening lines of chapter five:

> If any reader, big or little, should wonder whether there is a meaning in this story, deeper than that of an ordinary fairy tale, I will own that there is. But I have hidden it so carefully that the smaller people, and many larger folk, will never find it out, and meantime the book may be read straight on … for what interest it has, or what amusement it may bring. (69)

The narrator here seems to imply that the story contains a deliberately placed, controlled moral (and the plot structure suggests a moral demanding normalization); however, this passage also suggests that the story's meaning is complex, not only for children but for the adult audience as well, and thus denies simple didacticism. Here readers see that within the story there exists an unresolved tension between the plot structure, which supports normalcy, and the narrative voice, which promotes plurality of interpretation and hence difference, which I will show extends to bodily difference. The narration and focalization of *The Little Lame Prince* frequently create textual instabilities that keep the story open in spite of its enclosed structure; notably, these instabilities are ultimately tied to the body's role in narration and reading. This role is established in three integrated ways: through the narrator's ambiguous authority, through the letterpress's relationship to its early illustrations, and through shared focalization.

Through much of *The Little Lame Prince*, Craik uses *overt* narration, that is, narration that gives 'evaluative descriptions' and 'showcase[s] [its] own opinions' (Herman and Vervaek 87–88). Generally, scholars

of children's literature argue that the more overt the narrator's commentary, the more control the narrator has over textual interpretation (Hunt 172–74; Stephens 27; Nikolajeva 174). Granted, Craik's narrator does occasionally use an authoritative tone—or what Robin Melrose and Diana Gardner call the '"I know better" approach' (145)—in quasi-didactic asides to the audience, such as one in which she tells them that they must 'accept anything [their] parents may tell [them], even though [they] don't as yet see the reason of it' (Craik, *The Little Lame Prince* 103). However, the narrator's repeated denial of omniscience—one that I might even call an 'I-know-less' approach—demonstrates the limits of its textually created body. Whereas an 'I-know-better' narrator, like the one in George MacDonald's *Princess and the Goblin* (Melrose and Gardner 148), asks readers questions to which he immediately provides the answers, *The Little Lame Prince*'s narrator prevents complete narrative closure by asking questions and then admitting ignorance of the answers, even in the closing words of the story. Although Craik includes the typical 'happily-ever-after' fairy-tale ending in the story's final line, 'But one thing I am quite sure of, that, wherever he is, he is perfectly happy. And so, when I think of him, am I' (169),[11] she precludes closure by first asking this: 'Whither [Dolor] went, or who went with him, it is impossible to say … What he did there, or where he is now, who can tell? I cannot' (169). This question reopens Dolor's story even while closing it, indicating a continuing and irresolvable presence of disability and presumed difference.[12]

Even while holding some qualities of an omniscient narrator, such as relating unspoken thoughts and feelings and transcending 'the boundaries imposed by physical being' (Jaffe, *Vanishing Point* 6), the narrator of *The Little Lame Prince* admits limitations in her knowledge, framing her interjections with 'I cannot decide' or 'I am not sure.' Quite frequently, in mentioning these limitations, the narrator evokes her own physical being (generally through sightedness), reconstructing the very boundaries that her quasi-omniscience transcends. While I typically refer

11 For a discussion of the 'happily-ever-after' formula of folk and fairy tales as a signal of closure and return to reality, see Lüthi, 49–53. He notes that 'the formula has two faces: It has clarity of outer form, but taken as a whole it is in many ways not, or not fully, transparent' (53).

12 Similarly, Clifford's 'Wooden Tony' ends with both the removal and irresolvable presence of disability when the intellectually disabled Tony is removed from his home but eternally frozen as a wooden doll. As Karen O'Connor-Floman notes, 'The bleak ending of "Wooden Tony" might reflect a *fin-de-siecle* hopelessness, or it might more accurately suggest that there is something about the changeling story itself that is intractable, that resists naturalization' (88).

to narrators using *it*, I use *her* here because the narrator genders her textually created body by mentioning that she is called 'mamma' by her child (155). The most salient example of the narrator reconstructing boundaries via her bodily presence comes shortly before she describes Dolor's first trip on his magical cloak. The narrator says, 'Now, I don't expect anybody to believe what I am going to relate … And as seeing's believing, and I never saw it, I cannot be expected implicitly to believe it myself, except in a sort of way; and yet there is truth in it—for some people' (71–73). Roderick McGillis notes the strange conflict in this interjection, but he interprets it as an expression of the 'deeply felt suspicion of fantasy adventure' typical of Victorian children's authors; he suggests that, through this aside, Craik 'wanted to be sure that the child reader did not take this as too seriously real' (19). I would argue that, while the overt narration throughout the story does remind readers of the act of storytelling with phrases such as, 'I must leave that for another chapter' (68) or 'Stay, and I'll tell you all about it' (52), Craik does not include this tension to ensure the reader's scepticism, but rather to conjure for her narrator a physical self that acknowledges the limitations of both narrative omniscience and ability.

Moreover, in concert with the accompanying illustration from the first English edition of *The Little Lame Prince*,[13] the narrator's interjection elicits in readers an awareness of the limits of their own physicality. In this edition, the words 'And as seeing's believing, and I never saw it' appear directly below John Mc. Ralston's illustration of Dolor flying on the cloak (Figure 1). Perry Nodelman argues that, in picture books, 'the privileging of the point of view from which [the pictures] report on the events they describe' supplies readers 'with ways of understanding their own subjectivity—their selfhood or individuality' (118–19). Through the presence of illustration combined with the narrator's interjection, readers both share the narrator's point of view and are given a separate perspective through illustration that indicates their own subjectivity as limited by corporeality. Here, readers are given a visual representation that allows them to see what the narrator cannot, and proleptically so, before the narrator has even described the event. Of course, this argument works only if we presume that the audience is sighted, which the narrator certainly presumes (as well as hearing and non-disabled).

13 In 1874, Craik published what was likely a copyright edition through Tauchnitz Publishing in Leipzig to inhibit pirating in Britain and America. I thank Richard Nemesvari for informing me about the practice of publishing foreign copyright editions in the Victorian era.

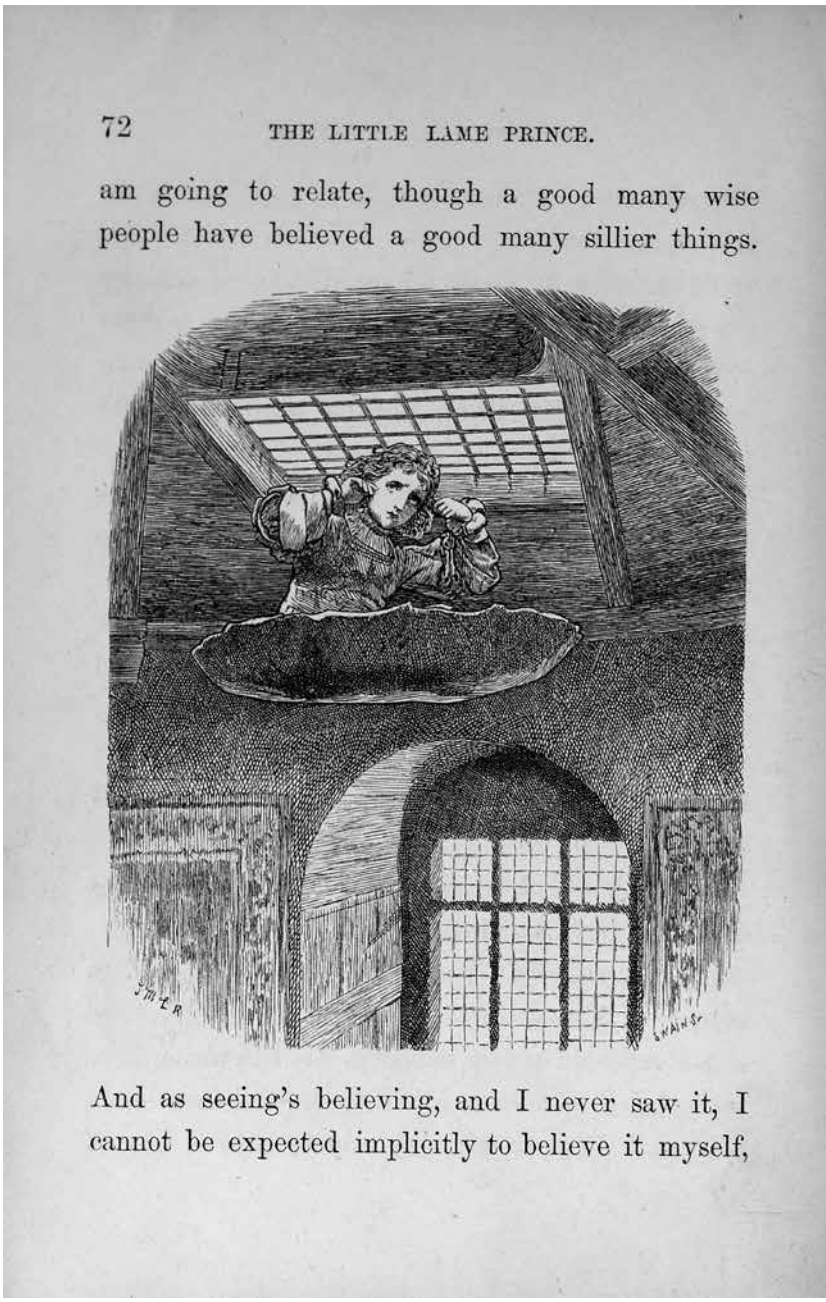


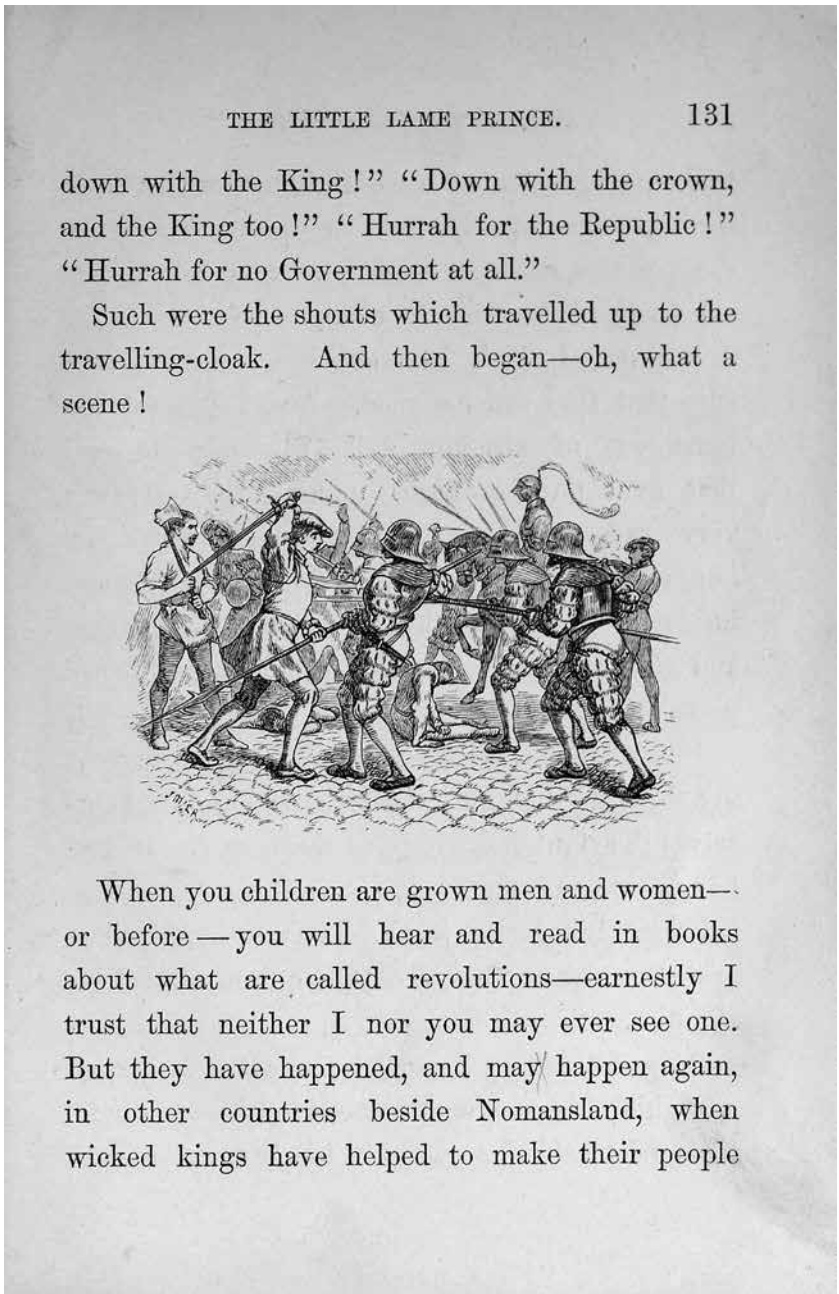
Figure 1: John Mc. Ralston, *The Little Lame Prince*, Daldy, Isbister & Co., 1875, p. 72.
Courtesy of Osborne Collection of Early Children's Books, Toronto Public Library.

However, despite readers' physical advantage of seeing what the narrator cannot, they are still limited by their bodies as the narrator is by hers, particularly since the illustration binds the readers to a ground-level sightedness that looks up to the floating prince. In this case, it is Dolor who has the more 'omniscient' point of view, one that both narrator and readers are denied. Likewise, the illustrations of the shepherd boy (100), the dying king (127), and Nomansland's revolution (131) are all ground-level, straight-ahead views, although, for Dolor, they are seen from above. Moreover, directly below the illustration of Nomansland's revolt (Figure 2), the text reads, 'you will hear and read in books about what are called revolutions—earnestly I trust that neither I nor you may ever see one' (131). Here, again, the tension between the letterpress and the illustration, which allows readers to view what the narrator trusts they will never see, reminds readers of the limitedness of their bodies and of textual representations that rely on sight and hearing.

However, consciousness of readers' restricted physicality does not rely on Ralston's illustrations alone: the narrator's voice also reminds readers of their physical limits and of her own when, without illustrative accompaniment, she explains Dolor's first view of Nomansland's capital city. First, the narrator places readers in the perspective of Dolor in the cloak high above the city, describing him looking down to it. Then, the narrator pulls the reader down to the perspective of walking through the streets of the city, saying,

> Most of us have some time or other visited a great metropolis … wandered through its network of streets … looked up at its tall rows of houses, its grand public buildings … peeped into its miserable little back alleys … An awful sight is a large city, seen any how from any where. (118–19)

The narrator then pulls the reader back up to the perception from the traveling cloak, asking the reader, 'suppose you were to see [a city] from the upper air; where, with your eyes and ears open, you could take in everything at once? What would it look like? How would you feel about it?' and adding, 'I hardly know myself. Do you?' (119). In asking these questions, the narrator places herself and her readers in Dolor's physical point of view and indicates that Dolor 'was very much bewildered—as bewildered as a blind person who is suddenly made to see' (119). In saying this, the narrator doubly reinforces the limitedness of all corporeality by implying the potential for her own and her readers' disoriented senses and by indicating that, for the



THE LITTLE LAME PRINCE. 131

down with the King!" "Down with the crown, and the King too!" "Hurrah for the Republic!" "Hurrah for no Government at all."

Such were the shouts which travelled up to the travelling-cloak. And then began—oh, what a scene!

When you children are grown men and women—or before—you will hear and read in books about what are called revolutions—earnestly I trust that neither I nor you may ever see one. But they have happened, and may happen again, in other countries beside Nomansland, when wicked kings have helped to make their people

Figure 2: John Mc. Ralston, *The Little Lame Prince*, Daldy, Isbister & Co., 1875, p. 131. Courtesy of Osborne Collection of Early Children's Books, Toronto Public Library.

blind person, sudden sightedness would be equally as incapacitating. Moreover, she never describes the city, and instead says, 'I have not seen it, and therefore cannot describe it, so we will just take it upon trust, and suppose it to be, like every other fine city, the finest city that was ever built' (121). Here the narrator indicates the limits of her physical body and includes with it readers' shared lack of perception: she has the ability to see, but has not seen *this* particular city, and they must all therefore adapt according to that limitation. Rather than hierarchically dividing bodies into 'different' and 'normal' categories as its outer structure seems to do, *The Little Lame Prince*'s narrative strategies thus engage with an equalizing concept of bodies by emphasizing the limitations of all corporeality through focalization.[14]

Focalization and Prosthesis

As the perspective given in picture books through illustration furnishes readers with subjectivities through which to engage in the narrative, focalization causes readers to 'match their own sense of selfhood with ideas of self constructed in and by the text' (Stephens 68). That is, focusing narrative through the consciousness of a character causes readers to 'internaliz[e] the perceptions and attitudes of the focalizer' (68). In the example of Dolor's first flight discussed above, the narrator focalizes through her own perception and constructs a self that is limited by corporeality. The reader matches this sense of physically limited selfhood through the illustration accompanying the narrator's comment. But the novel often focalizes through Dolor, particularly during his boyhood period of *Bildung* growth. In part, this focalization serves the didactic purpose of encouraging readers to internalize Dolor's lessons, such as the one that 'we cannot have things as we want them to be, but … must learn to bear them and make the best of them' (Craik 61). In that particular example, the narrator's interjection explains to readers how to interpret Dolor's realization of his difference, which is focalized through Dolor's perception. But there are, at times, striking contradictions between what the narrator's voice and the novel's focalization imply about Dolor's physical difference.

14 My reading here draws on Deborah Beth Creamer's 'limits model' of embodiment, which, unlike the 'medical and minority models' of disability, 'offers us the ability to think of the presence of limits as a natural and good aspect of being human that at the same time is inherently difficult and challenging' (32).

Frequently, while describing Dolor's physical body and its movement, the narrator breaks the description to pity him in an aside, for example, '—alas! he never could be [tall], with his poor little shrunken legs' (110) or 'He sprang out of bed,—not to his feet, alas! but to his poor little weak knees' (137). But when Dolor considers his body, he does not focus on his physical difference as the narrator does here or as in the sections focalized through his fairy godmother, Stuff-And-Nonsense. In fact, before he is taught to devalue his body, Dolor feels that there is nothing about him to pity; he even rejects the pity that Stuff-and-Nonsense first offers him, though he welcomes her gifts and affection (46, 48). At that time, his assertions that he does not require or deserve pity are focalized either externally (that is, outside of the narrated characters, yet not overtly through the narrator) or through Stuff-And-Nonsense, and as such could perhaps be interpretable as ironic or mistaken since, when the focalizer's and narrator's perceptions oppose each other, readers align with the narrator 'when it is obvious to readers that a focalizing character is misinterpreting an event or situation' (Stephens 68). However, while Craik does use that kind of irony when focalizing through Dolor's uncle or the courtiers, the sections focalized through Dolor contain no indications that his views are mistaken.

When Dolor *does* consider himself worthy of pity, and we are told so in narrative focalized through him, his self-pity has less to do with his physical body and the type of mobility it grants him—mobility that the narrator also describes as 'active,' quick, and 'not graceful but convenient' (65). Instead, Dolor's sense that he is pitiable surrounds the *social* consequences of having a body defined as different. When Dolor watches the shepherd boy running and playing with a dog, readers share through internal focalization Dolor's 'admiration' of their activity and his anticipation of the possibility of social interaction with them. Disappointment arises only when he is barred from that interaction (99–102); this exclusion from social contact, which comes from his godmother via the cloak, causes Dolor to view his legs as 'feeble, useless' and 'no good' to him (102). Readers' identification with Dolor through his focalization thus prompts engaged empathy regarding the *social* circumstances of disability rather than distancing sympathy for the physical ones. The shared emotions of empathy then place readers and the disabled character in a relationship of equality.

As seen above, focalization through the narrator and Stuff-And-Nonsense, in contrast, often causes a relationship of inequality between reader and disabled hero based on a pity that devalues the

disabled body. Even when the narrator *seems* to discourage readers from pitying physical difference, the power relationship remains unequal. For example, the fourth chapter ends in a description of Dolor's body that is interrupted by the narrator with a statement of pity: 'Prince Dolor darted towards [the cloak], tumbling several times on the way,—as he often did tumble, poor boy! and pick himself up again, never complaining' (67). In the next chapter, the narrator opens with the explanation that the story bears a deeper meaning than is visible on the surface, and then says:

> I return to Prince Dolor, that little lame boy *whom many may think so exceedingly to be pitied*. But if you had seen him as he sat patiently untying his wonderful cloak, … using skilfully his deft little hands … while his eyes glistened with pleasure, and energy, and eager anticipation—*if you had beheld him thus, you might have changed your opinion*. (69–70; emphasis added)

Here, to describe Dolor's actions, the narrator uses external focalization to emphasize his body, his hands and eyes, as admirable and *not* pitiable. While doing so, the narrator also emphasizes readers' bodies, saying 'if you had seen him' and 'if you had beheld him thus' (70).

But, in a narrator-focalized statement that calls directly on readers to share her perspective, the narrator adds, 'When we see people suffering or unfortunate, we feel very sorry for them; but when we see them bravely bearing their sufferings, and making the best of their misfortunes, it is quite a different feeling. We respect, we admire them' (70). The narrator's argument here reinforces dominance over those who are 'suffering or unfortunate' (i.e. the disabled), suggesting that respect for people with physical difference is predicated first on pity for presumed physical suffering and then on their ability to 'overcome' that suffering.[15] As such, the narrator contradicts its own didactic advice not to pity Dolor when she so shortly thereafter resumes referring to him as 'poor.' Thus, it seems that while

15 Ann Dowker warns critics to remember that, in Victorian novels, 'the School of Pain is not confined to disability, the treatment of which must be seen in the broader context of the ways in which misfortunes were often treated as bestowed by God for the ultimate good of the individual.' She notes that 'This emphasis on submission to the will of God applies to all characters, and applies to a whole range of circumstances: not only disability' (n. pag.). However, the narrator's aside here encourages readers to learn the lesson of enduring hardship *specifically* through Dolor's disabled body.

focalizing *through* Dolor creates an equal power relationship through readers' empathy, focalizing *on* Dolor creates an asymmetrical power dynamic based on pity.

However, as I have argued above, the text represents Dolor as suffering not in his physical experience of disability but only in his social experience of it. Moreover, as Jane Stemp notes, neither Stuff-and-Nonsense nor her magical gifts 'are intended to "cure" the prince's lameness' (n. pag.). Instead, by soothing and amusing him, they fulfil the Prince's true needs, which are social: 'they give him … freedom and love, both of which have previously been lacking' (Stemp n. pag.). I have noted above how the godmother and her gifts *create* and *reinforce* that social difference in their functions as prostheses. But while the prosthetic function of the travelling cloak, golden spectacles, and silver ears first labels and then erases difference, their actual physical work reveals how truly common difference is. This shared difference is most clear when the narrator focalizes *alongside* Dolor—that is, when she uses her overt narrative voice to describe his physical perspective, which is enhanced by his magical prostheses, and when she encourages readers to imagine that unfamiliar, prostheticized perspective as well.

This multilayered perspective inevitably disrupts normalcy and exposes the ubiquity and beauty of difference. When Dolor first uses the magic ears and spectacles together, the narrator points out how mundane the sights and sounds of the countryside seem to her and to the story's audience; she says that they are 'something [that] we listen to daily and never notice' (96) or that 'we see in myriads' (94). But, the focalizing alongside Dolor as he uses his prostheses amplifies these sounds and sights, making them unfamiliar. The 'newly amplified' sounds of Victorian technology (e.g. the stethoscope, the microphone, and industrial and railway sound pollution) led Victorian writers to convey 'the sense of careful listening to a world at large,' or, as John M. Picker calls it, 'auscultation' (13, 4, 6). When the narrator focalizes alongside Dolor as his silver ears draw out sounds, the auscultation linguistically parallels the amplified 'sounds of the visible world': 'Winds blowing, waters flowing, trees stirring, insects whirring (dear me! I am quite unconsciously writing rhyme), with the various cries of birds and beasts,—lowing cattle, bleating sheep, grunting pigs, and cackling hens,—all the infinite discords that somehow or other make a beautiful harmony' (96–97).

That these words would likely have been read aloud—due to Victorian middle-class family reading habits and to the illiteracy of many of the intended listeners, young children—further draws

attention to the audience's bodies by using onomatopoeia ('lowing,' 'bleating,' 'grunting,' and 'cackling') and by pointing out how readers would hear her words as rhyme. With this attention to sound, Craik's narrator exposes the ubiquity and beauty of difference, arguing that Dolor's prosthetic amplification uncovers 'all the infinite discords that somehow or other make a beautiful harmony' (96–97). Likewise, focalizing alongside Dolor as he examines leaves through his spectacles, the narrator exclaims:

> [H]ow wonderful [the leaves] are—every one of them a little different. I don't suppose you could ever find two leaves exactly alike, in form, colour, and size—no more than you could find two faces alike, or two characters exactly the same. The plan of this world is infinite similarity and yet infinite variety. (94)

In these moments of focalization through the magical prostheses, Craik causes readers to speculate on the beauty and infinite variety of difference—doubtlessly in bodies as well as in nature.

As a literary fairy tale, *The Little Lame Prince* employs a fantasy setting and magical circumstances to depict the moral, psychological, and physical development of its hero, Prince Dolor. In using magical prostheses to catalyse that development, and in positioning the story as an open parable as well as a fairy tale and *Bildungsroman*, Craik conveys conflicting interpretations of Prince Dolor's body. The outer structure of the novel, with its blend of *Bildungsroman* and fairy-tale shape, creates a story of disability as abnormal, restricting, and in need of compensation if not cure. Dolor's godmother and her magical gifts function prosthetically to reinforce the deviance of Dolor's body and the need to remove that deviance. However, the narration, focalization, and illustration complicate the concept of disability as different, implying at times universal corporeal limitedness and wholly pervasive physical difference. But these dialogically opposed ideas of disability are able to exist in the narrative without needing to be resolved. Critics Charles Frey and John Griffith have similarly noted the 'dual impulses' in *The Little Lame Prince*, including 'escape from and acceptance of worldly responsibilities,' 'action and rest, company and solitude, independence and dependence,' although they only briefly touch upon the duality with which it depicts disability (93–94). They argue that '*The Little Lame Prince* requires us to come at some point to the nub of its contradictions' about which 'no firm consensus will ever by [*sic*] reached … [, n]or need a consensus be reached' (93, 98). On this point, I completely agree. Just like the concepts of disability

that collide in the narrative form and structure of the novels discussed in previous chapters, those colliding in *The Little Lame Prince* are not meant to be resolved one way or the other; rather, they exhibit the complicated and ever-shifting role of the body in Victorian thought. While the following chapter's *fin-de-siècle* mysteries use scientific, medical, and legal rhetoric rather than fairy-tale discourse to investigate the disabled subject, like *The Little Lame Prince*, they convey irresolvable, conflicting ideas about the deviant body.

CHAPTER SIX

Mysterious Bodies: Solving and De-Solving Disability in the *Fin-de-Siècle* Mystery

I began this investigation of disability and narrative form in Victorian fiction with *Notre-Dame de Paris*, an early nineteenth-century novel that rarely adopts the perspective of Quasimodo, the disabled character who provides the story's impetus. Instead, the novel primarily displays Quasimodo as a spectacle: on a platform as 'The Pope of Fools,' embodying the crowd's Platonic ideal of the 'grotesque' (43); on the wheel of a pillory, jeered at while he is publicly tortured, then cheered for when Esmeralda gives him water (193–94); in the porch of the cathedral, shouting 'Sanctuary!' (310); and in the crypt, where his remains crumble (466). In this final chapter, I conclude with two late Victorian works that, like *Notre-Dame de Paris*, rarely adopt the perspective of the characters whose freakish bodies incite their narratives, but where the early Victorian Gothic novel treats the disabled body as a spectacle, the late Victorian mystery overtly makes it fully specimen by placing great faith in the professional discourses of medicine, science, and law, granting the purveyors of those discourses the authority for somatic interpretation that in previous decades had also belonged to the layman.

Indeed, by the turn of the century, the professional skill of interpreting the body often replaced the body itself as the site of spectacle in popular fiction, as Arthur Conan Doyle's novella *The Sign of Four* (1890) illustrates. In the chapter significantly titled 'Sherlock Holmes Gives a Demonstration,' Holmes deciphers a crime scene 'with something of the air of a clinical professor expounding to his class' (110), reading the signs of the disabled, criminalized body with scientific precision. From marks such as 'well-defined muddy disks' that show 'the impression of a wooden stump' and blood stains left on a rope, he can tell that the

criminal 'is a poorly educated man, small, active, with his right leg off, and wearing a wooden stump which is worn away upon the inner side,' that 'His left boot has a coarse, square-toed sole, with an iron band round the heel,' that 'He is a middle-aged man, much sunburned, and has been a convict,' and that 'there is a good deal of skin missing from the palm of his hand' (118). Then, from such evidence as 'Diminutive footmarks [that reveal] toes never fettered by boots, naked feet, [a] stone-headed wooden mace, great agility, [and] small poisoned darts' (143), Holmes deduces that the criminal's companion 'is a rather curious person' (118),[1] a member of 'the smallest race upon this earth,' the 'aborigines of the Andaman Islands' (144). As a professional, Holmes can read all this from the marks of these bodies, before even seeing them in the flesh. Here, the science of interpreting the deviant body transfers potency from bodily deviance to professional authority to the extent that the body does not even need to be present to be read.

The two late Victorian mysteries I analyse in this chapter, Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886) and Doyle's 'The Adventure of the Crooked Man' (1893) from the *Strand Magazine*'s serialization of *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*,[2] likewise grant authority to the professional discourses of law, medicine, and science. In this chapter, I pair together the late Victorian Gothic and detective story under the umbrella of 'mystery' fiction in spite of minor differences, such as the Gothic's supernatural components. Noting that Stevenson's *Jekyll and Hyde* and Doyle's *A Study in Scarlet* (1887) appeared on the literary scene only one year apart, Nils Clausson insightfully argues that 'the modern detective story' and 'the Gothic tale' do not oppose each other as critics often assume, with one privileging science, reason, and solution while the other privileges unexplained mystery (63–64). Rather, he elucidates, they remain 'close literary cousins' that both work 'to create mystery and then to give the illusion … of solving it' (78). In particular, Stevenson's *Jekyll and Hyde* and Doyle's Sherlock Homes stories both rely on scientific discourses to provide that illusion by defining, separating, and controlling deviant abnormality. As I will show, however, when the narratives focalize through the perspective of characters with freakish bodies, the 'deformed' Edward Hyde (Stevenson 35) and the 'crippled'

1 In this instance, *curious* refers to peculiarity, not inquisitiveness.

2 The *Strand* magazine published 'The Adventure of the Crooked Man' in 1893 as the twentieth story in the series *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* and republished it in the 1894 volume of Sherlock Holmes stories called *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*. I use the *Strand* version for my analysis.

Henry Wood (Doyle 28), that focalization troubles the professional authority of scientific discourse and denies the possibility of controlling deviance or separating it from imagined normalcy. Thus, the ability of the professional interpreters (i.e. detectives, lawyers, and doctors) becomes tenuous, as do the scientific ideologies of degeneration theory and criminology that inform their interpretations.

Notably, these two stories of bodily interpretation also characterize the formal changes in fiction's shape in the *fin de siècle*, further marking the increased professionalization and scientization of somatic interpretation. Where Hugo's behemoth novel and other typical Victorian 'loose baggy monsters' are structurally 'premised upon the deformation, mutation or dissolution of the human' (Duncan 11), the form and brevity of *Jekyll and Hyde* and 'The Crooked Man' are informed by the 'case study'—a legal and medical genre premised upon the control, cure, or comprehension of human aberration.[3] Yet in spite of their brevity, these narratives are far from streamlined: to function as mysteries, each story must delay readers' comprehension, and each does so through a temporally nonlinear plot made of embedded narratives. Moreover, the plotting itself is framed in a self-reflexive form typical of Victorian detection fiction, since the detective figure, like an author, works to 'to uncover the story' of the crime he or she investigates (Thoms 1).

Many scholars have examined the role of science and degenerative theory in late-century Gothic and detective fiction, showing, for example, how the two genres mark *fin-de-siècle* anxieties about, or even loss of faith in, progressivism, imperialism (Arata 'Sedulous Ape'), secure gender distinctions (Andrew Smith; Reid), and the stability of the human body (Hurley). I would suggest that, in the two stories I examine here, those anxieties are both engendered and soothed by the scientific rhetoric applied to the disabled body and that body's role in narrative structure. The rhetoric of modern science in late-century Gothic and detective fiction thoroughly conflates body and text.

3 Novels had on average become increasingly shorter by the end of the nineteenth century, in part because of the economic conditions that led to the decline of the three-volume novel, as Guinevere L. Griest explains. The three-volume novel had fallen out of popularity as people became increasingly frustrated with their fixed high prices, which led loaning libraries to ban the format by 1894. Griest notes, however, that despite the decline, the three most popular novels of 1892 were three-volume novels (168). In addition, not all late Victorian Gothic or detective works were necessarily short. For example, Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Thou Art the Man* (1894) was three volumes long.

Degeneration theory, physiognomy, forensic science, and Lombrosian criminal anthropology[4] all work, as Ronald R. Thomas puts it, 'to convert the body into a text to be read' (4). In addition, as Gregory Brophy argues, the common detective and late Victorian Gothic trope of graphology—that is, the study of handwriting to determine identity—converts text into a legible sign of the body. Comparing *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* to 'The Crooked Man' illuminates the interplay between scientific discourse about criminally deviant bodies and the narrative structure of *fin-de-siècle* mysteries, revealing the ambiguity with which Victorians understood and criminalized disability at the turn of the century. Despite *Jekyll and Hyde*'s modern Gothic, open narrative structure, the novella confirms the conservative disability stereotypes associated with late Victorian criminal anthropology and physiognomy, which placed anxieties of cultural deviance upon the disabled or deviant body. In contrast, despite the conservative drive towards closure typical of detective fiction, 'The Crooked Man' undermines those stereotypes and the supposed criminality of the disabled body. However, both texts use focalization techniques that reveal the constructed nature of normalcy and so destabilize the normal/abnormal dichotomy.

Constructing the Disabled Object: The Scientific Gaze in *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*

Critics who have previously approached Stevenson's *Jekyll and Hyde* in terms of pathology and disability tend to consider Jekyll and Hyde as a single pathologized subject. For example, Angela Smith argues that Jekyll's transformations into Hyde, and the degeneracy theory tied to them, reflect Victorian and twentieth-century constructions of epilepsy.[5] Anne Stiles argues that Stevenson's inspiration for *Jekyll and Hyde* stemmed from concurrent Victorian psychological

4 Cesare Lombroso's *Criminal Man* (1876) posited that criminals were degenerated reversions to early mankind and could be identified through atavistic physical characteristics. While Lombroso's work was not translated into English until the early twentieth century, degeneration theories had long been popularized in Britain. See Daniel Pick's *Faces of Degeneration* (1989) and Neil Davie's *Tracing the Criminal* (2005).

5 Smith's reading focuses on the movie versions rather than on Stevenson's original, but she argues that Stevenson's descriptions of the Jekyll-Hyde transformations as epileptic reappear in the film actors' seizure-like performances.

and neurological theories that would have pathologized Jekyll as 'double-brained'—that is, as experiencing dual personality due to 'a disproportionately large right brain overpowering the rational activities of the left brain' (*Brain Science* 38). Moreover, ever since the publication of Stevenson's story, common parlance has used the phrase 'Jekyll and Hyde' to label psychiatric deviances such as dissociative identity (McNally 69–70) and bipolar disorder (Mathiasen 492). The critics who do approach Hyde on his own as a pathologized subject tend to interpret that pathologization as grounded in class, gender, sexuality, and race—as embodying 'the degenerate prole, the decadent aristocrat, … the dissipated aesthete,' and the bourgeois gentleman (Arata 'Sedulous Ape' 239); the feminized man and the sexual deviant (Davidson 35; M. Williams 422); or the unassimilated colonial other (Bernhard Jackson).[6] But in what might be the first published disability studies reading of Stevenson's *Jekyll and Hyde*, 'What Makes Mr. Hyde So Scary?' Sami Schalk argues that Hyde's aberrant body, as much as his presumed evilness, generates fear in the story because it lies outside the 'controlled contexts that people with disabilities are expected to be in' (n. pag.).

Like Schalk, I identify Hyde as a disabled character—not by his atypical body, but by the repulsion that characters feel towards him. Disability resides in the social and cultural environment rather than in the body, of course, and one way in which disabling takes place is through intense looking: the gaze and the stare. As Lennard J. Davis notes, 'Disability is a specular moment' in which a normative-bodied observer responds to the sight of non-normative bodies or behaviours with 'horror, fear, pity, compassion, and avoidance'; but, he argues, 'the disabled object is produced or constructed by [these] strong feelings of repulsion' and not the other way around (*Enforcing Normalcy* 12). As 'a socially conditioned, politically generated response,' the individual's repulsion enacts that which is 'carried out on a societal level in actions such as incarceration, institutionalization, segregation, discrimination, marginalization, and so on' (13). The impulse to stare at a person is driven by the disruption of socially constructed norms; as Garland-Thomson explains, 'Because we come to expect one another to have certain kinds of bodies and behaviors, stares flare up when we glimpse people who look or act in ways that contradict our expectations' (*Staring* 5). Through the stare, disability or 'stigma' is 'manifested,' 'for

6 Emily A. Bernhard Jackson uses the Victorian science of twins and twinship to posit that Hyde, as a parasite twin to Jekyll's autosite, represents Ireland under British colonial rule (80).

it is then that people register another's social status and reflect it back to them' (131). In Stevenson's tale, the characters' responses to Hyde produce him as the disabled object through their repulsion, which has been conditioned by their expectations of normalcy. Observers of Hyde register their disgust at his body's socially defined deviances and, although many of the observers are lay people lacking professional authority, they all rely on professional discourses of degeneracy, physiognomy, and criminal anthropology to rationalize and naturalize their antisocial impulses towards Hyde. In this process, observers redirect their anxieties about instability and deviance onto the disabled figure as an identifiable other in order to defend their own sense of normalcy. The variety of observers using these discourses additionally demonstrates the transition of authoritative somatic interpretation from the public to the professional.

Although *Jekyll and Hyde* concentrates on interpreting the disabled body, it begins with a look at the normal rather than a stare at the deviant. The tale opens with a brief physiognomic reading of the mystery's detective figure, the bourgeois lawyer Mr Utterson, whom the story follows for the first two-thirds of the novella. Focalizing from a point outside the narrative, the narrator interprets Utterson's face and body, his 'rugged countenance that was never lighted by a smile' and his 'lean, long' form, telling readers that Utterson is 'loveable' in spite of his roughness because 'something eminently human beaconed from his eye' (31). Moreover, this humanity 'spoke not only in these silent symbols of the after-dinner face, but more often and loudly in the acts of [Utterson's] life' (31). According to the narrator, the 'acts' that speak this humanity include non-judgemental acceptance of friends and acquaintances, proven by the absence of even 'a shade of change in his demeanour' in spite of the acquaintances' 'misdeeds' (31). In this opening, the narrator performs an authoritative, external reading of face and physicality, proving physiognomic reading's efficacy by aligning Utterson's physical form with his actions. Crucially, this opening also provides readers with a baseline of stable physical and behavioural normalcy from which they can measure deviations. Thus, the opening lays a foundation to support characters' further somatic interpretations of the villain Edward Hyde's atypical body and of their own bodies responding to Hyde's physicality. The deviance from that normative base then incites acute attention to the non-normative body and the somatic responses to that non-normativity; that is, it incites the *stare*, what Garland-Thomson calls 'a disconcerting hi-jacking of our visual agency' (*Staring* 19), and it incites the physical actions that come with staring.

Thus the bulk of the novella focuses on the act of interpreting the villain's deviant body, on observers' 'hi-jacked' control over their own bodies, and on the scientific discourse observers use to explain this 'hi-jacking,' rather than on Hyde's actual body itself. As critics such as Julia Reid, Stephen Arata, and Robert Mighall have noticed, 'focus is hardly ever on Hyde himself, but rather on his observers' and their reactions to him (Reid 101). Indeed, before Utterson and the butler Poole discover Hyde's dead body, the main 'shilling shocker'[7] thrills arise less from Hyde's evil acts (trampling a little girl and brutally beating an elderly gentleman) than from the eerie physical responses of those who view Hyde—even those who are ignorant of his violence. For example, when Mr Enfield's story first introduces Hyde to readers (and to Mr Utterson), Enfield spends five sentences depicting Hyde trampling a little girl, but fourteen detailing how he and those around Hyde respond to his presence with sweat, nausea, paleness, and fury (33–34).

The novella especially emphasizes others' bodies rather than Hyde's by internally focalizing through characters who observe Hyde or who observe others responding to him. Rather than focalizing externally to directly depict the scene of Hyde murdering the elderly Sir Danvers Carew, for example, the narrator focalizes on and through the nameless maid who witnesses it and then faints. Doing so weaves her physiognomic interpretations into the report: the maid reads in Carew's body 'an innocent and old-world kindness' (47) and in Hyde's an 'ill-contained impatience' and 'ape-like fury' that make him 'like a madman' (48). Similarly, reporting events through second-hand witnesses such as Enfield and Poole, the latter of whom compares Hyde's behaviour and body to animals, 'a rat' (63) and 'a monkey' (64), allows further focus on and through those viewing Hyde, highlighting the physiognomic and degenerative discourse in the viewers' observations and indicating that discourse's cross-class proliferation.

Diagnosing Hyde

Markedly, while the novella focuses intently on the act of staring at Hyde, none who view Hyde's body can clearly describe it, other than to say that it is 'dwarfish' (41) and 'gives a strong feeling of deformity'

7 According to Gregory Brophy, 'Stevenson uses this phrase [to describe the story] in a letter written to his friend William H. Low on the 2nd of January, 1886' (28).

(35); in place of description, they or the narrator report their physical aversion to Hyde. While Michael Davis believes the immateriality of 'Hyde's pathology' renders it 'beyond the scope of mapping or diagnosis in physical terms' (211), I argue that the narrator as well as the focalizers nonetheless *do* diagnose and map Hyde's indescribable body—by classifying their responses to him as natural and by using the scientific discourses of physiognomy and degeneration. Focalizing through Utterson, the narrator describes Hyde as leaving 'an impression of deformity without any nameable malformation' (41); to vindicate the 'hitherto unknown disgust, loathing and fear' he feels in response to that impression, Utterson supposes that Hyde's indescribably deformed body corporealizes 'the mere radiance of a foul soul' (41–42). Like Utterson, Dr Lanyon naturalizes his repulsion by medicalizing those physical responses (goosebumps and a sunken pulse) as 'symptoms' inspired by something 'nobler … than the principle of hatred' (74)—that is, by the recognition of Hyde's deviance. Even Jekyll provides a pseudo-scientific explanation for observers' responses to Hyde in his confession, saying that their 'misgivings of flesh' indicate the instinctual responses of supposedly normal human beings, who are naturally 'commingled out of good and evil,' reacting to the physical nearness of one who, 'alone in the ranks of mankind, was pure evil' (81).

Many critics argue that these 'misgivings of flesh' signal that the otherness represented by Hyde likewise lies dormant within the normate characters. To Michael Davis, the somatic responses denote the 'fluid and unpredictable' self (212). To Reid, they reflect theories of atavism's 'contagious nature' by locating animalism in the 'primitive emotions and intuitions' of those responding to Hyde (102). Kelly Hurley similarly reads atavism in the visceral responses to the criminal body in Havelock Ellis's *The Criminal* (1890) and Lombroso's *L'uomo delinquente* (1876), which claim that the 'criminal arouses a "shock of horror" in the normal onlooker' and that even children 'were able to separate "scoundrels" from "honest men" in a set of photographs' (101). Hurley observes, 'to be wracked with the convulsions of instinct is to be animalized, thrown back into the remote species-memory still inscribed in the body' (102); in such cases, the physical reactions of Hyde's observers make them as animalized as they perceive Hyde to be. These critics correctly suggest that the fear that *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* prompts arises from the permeability of boundaries between the abnormal and normal, between Jekyll and Hyde, and between Hyde and ourselves. That is, the fear comes from the implications that deviance dwells *within* the normative. As I argued above,

that is why the bulk of the novel is devoted to describing people's responses to Hyde rather than to describing Hyde himself.

However, I also argue that the observers' responses to their own repulsion and the rationalization of their unbidden somatic reactions are embedded in physiognomic discourse—in other words, that the responses *enact* the cultural shift in modes of looking at atypical bodies from 'gap[ing] with morbid interest' to 'studying the lineaments,' as *Punch* put it ('Progress' 67). Sharrona Pearl explains that, when 'individual instinct in observation' met 'with the rhetoric of natural philosophy, classificatory power, and scientific importance' in Victorian physiognomy, it gave 'people permission to judge in a way that seemed supported by external factors' (6). From the 'tokens of a swift physical decay' that Utterson reads as the 'death-warrant written legibly' on Dr Lanyon (54), and the 'desire to kill [Hyde]' that Enfield sees in the 'sick and white' face of the doctor helping the girl whom Hyde trampled (33), to the 'odious joy' that Utterson and the Scotland Yard inspector read on Hyde's landlady's 'evil face, smoothed by hypocrisy' (48), each physiognomic interpretation of bodies in reaction to Hyde repositions the uncontrollable but normative bodies as *normal*. Each reading converts the characters' staring—the 'disconcerting hi-jacking of visual agency' (Garland-Thomson, *Staring* 19)—and their pale, sweating, fainting, sick bodies into something controllable, or at least comprehensible, via scientific discourse. Through such quasi-scientific reasoning, Hyde's observers can easily transfer onto Hyde's atypical body their own anxieties about corporeality—about the body's racial and behavioural degeneration, as Reid implies, and about the body's tenuous connection to selfhood and identity, as Michael Davis implies. Moreover, the physiognomic discourse that allows Hyde's observers to diagnose him as an evil degenerate and themselves as instinctively responding to that degeneracy naturalizes their antisocial reactions, which include murderous compulsions in many of the observers. Thus *Jekyll and Hyde* demonstrates how late Victorian science enforced normalcy through its ability to shift the discomfort of corporeal instability and the weight of disturbing misanthropy onto the disabled or deviant body.

Additionally, the novella enacts on a small scale and at the individual level how the shift of corporeal and social anxieties onto disabled bodies by means of scientific language motivated the greater emergence of eugenics and the increased institutionalization of disabled people at the turn of the century. Indeed, the era's pathologization and criminalization of aberrant bodies underlies the supposedly instinctual reactions to Hyde. As Neil Davie explains in his history of

nineteenth-century criminology, to turn 'The Criminal' into a scientific object, criminologists worked 'from the [assumption …] that criminals constituted a sub-category of the Human Race who differed from the law-abiding majority' in biological and measurable ways (17). Similarly, *fin-de-siècle* science criminalized an already pathologized group known as the 'feeble-minded'—those who occupied what historian Mark Jackson terms the 'borderland' between 'the mentally normal, on the one hand, and [those diagnosed as] idiots and imbeciles on the other' (13). According to Jackson, late Victorian scientific rhetoric of degeneration permitted an association of 'feeble-mindedness' with crime, disease, and sexual deviance, thus both producing and calming 'broad political fears about social decline,' making deviance easily 'identifiable and therefore manageable' (2). That is, Jackson argues, the feeble-minded at the turn of the century became 'a reservoir of pathology and pollution that needed to be expunged' (38).

While Hyde does not occupy the late Victorian borderland between mental normalcy and idiocy, he clearly occupies a borderland between normalcy and abnormality: between the bourgeois gentleman and the shabby proletariat (Arata, 'Sedulous Ape' 234; Reid 100), the human and the beast (Reid 100; Tyler 120; Arata, 'Sedulous Ape'), child and adult, and even at times between man and woman (Reid 100). Recall again Lennard J. Davis's argument that the individual response of repulsion to disability is 'a socially conditioned, politically generated response' that enacts marginalization occurring 'on a societal level' (13). The atavistic terms his viewers apply to him—'troglodytic' (42), 'ape' (46), 'monkey' (65), and so on—as well as the medical, diagnostic language used to explain their responses to him show how their responses enact late Victorian science's pathologization of crime, as well as its criminalization of corporeal difference. Pathologizing Hyde and his body makes him easily identifiable and ostensibly manageable, as his eventual demise indicates; therefore, like the 'feeble-minded,' he too must 'be expunged' to restore social and narrative order by restoring stable normality.

Narrative Prosthesis and the Gothic Open Ending

From the beginning to the end of Stevenson's tale, Hyde's body and the need to control or at least understand it supply the narrative drive. M. Kellen Williams notes that the characters' inability to name Hyde's deformity or describe his physicality is 'arguably the mainspring of this text's entire plot mechanism' (415); he adds that the

narrative can only 'right this disorder … by collaring the deviant body itself … which is precisely what occurs in the final climactic scene of the novel' (423). M. Williams gives a deconstructionist reading of *Jekyll and Hyde*, interpreting Jekyll as a referent and Hyde as signifying representation gone awry, 'a deviant form of mimesis,' and 'a radical degenerating of [narrative's] representational medium itself' (426). While M. Williams's reading turns body wholly into text, his observation that Hyde's elusive body creates the disorder that the narrative seeks to resolve points to Mitchell and Snyder's theory of narrative prosthesis. *Jekyll and Hyde* does indeed follow the pattern of narrative prosthesis: Hyde's indescribably deformed body and his violent, antisocial behaviour instigate the storytelling; his entanglement with Jekyll, incomprehensible to Utterson, provides the escalation of action in the story; and, finally, his death produces resolution. While the revelation that Hyde *is* Jekyll complicates that resolution, the fact that Hyde's death eradicates both Hyde and Jekyll from the text removes their intertwined behavioural and physical deviance from the narrative, thus still providing a resolution (although, as I argue below, an ambiguous one).

So far, my analysis suggests that Stevenson's narrative replicates the social construction of disability and in doing so performs the social purpose of that construction, which is to redirect anxieties, instability, and deviance onto the disabled figure as an identifiable other in order to uphold the illusion of attainable, secure normalcy. But this is not wholly the 'case'—remember: Stevenson's 'case' is a 'strange' one. While *Jekyll and Hyde*'s narrative sequence fulfils the prescriptive pattern of narrative prosthesis that eliminates social deviance by eliminating the disabled body, it also undermines that elimination through its modern Gothic open ending. As Linda Dryden notes, 'The modern Gothic, rooted as it is in urban anxiety, rarely offers [a] "moment of closure"; even when the Gothic subject has been removed or destroyed, we are left with a sense of a metropolis under threat by forces beyond human comprehension and beyond human control' (20). Mitchell and Snyder's schema of narrative prosthesis suggests that the narrative should achieve closure upon the eradication of Hyde. However, Hyde's death coincides with the story's *temporal* ending, not with the conclusion of its non-sequential plot. Instead, Hyde's death occurs two-thirds into the novel, at the end of the third-person narration, which has followed Utterson as detective figure. The plot concludes with two epistolary first-person narratives—the first from Dr Lanyon and the second from Dr Jekyll—that are unframed by any kind of explanatory third-person narration. These letters fill the gaps in Utterson's

knowledge by revealing first, in Lanyon's letter, that Jekyll is Hyde and next, in Jekyll's, how he becomes Hyde.

Thus, although Hyde's death *seems* to eradicate the social deviance concretized in the disabled body through late Victorian science and pathology, both the social deviance and disabled body return in the two doctors' final documents. There, Hyde's deviance and body are re-located within the normative Jekyll, suggesting that normalcy cannot remain fixed and deviance cannot be eradicated. While characters' physical repulsions to Hyde merely suggest that deviance might dwell in the normative, this revelation that Hyde and Jekyll are one and the same explicitly confirms that it does. Therefore, even as the final line of novel, 'I bring the life of that unhappy Henry Jekyll to an end' (93), provides a kind of narrative closure since both Hyde and Jekyll expire with it, it also leaves readers with the intense frisson of non-closure, that 'sense of … threat by forces beyond human comprehension and beyond human control' that Dryden finds in the *fin-de-siècle* Gothic (20). The final line also reminds readers that Hyde's body, as a materialization of deviance, is not quite eradicated: in its last appearance, Hyde's deviant body, not Jekyll's normative one, lies 'twitching' on the floor, the physical evidence of a 'self-destroyer,' Stevenson puns, implying both suicide and the destruction of the concept of a stable, normative selfhood (66). Instead, *Jekyll's* body and selfhood disappear, taking with them the illusion of normalcy, a disappearance that, as Andrew Smith argues, makes the 'the fragile … world inhabited by the bourgeois professional' the actual source of horror in the story, normalizing the deviant and demonizing the normative (6–7).

But while many critics who consider the formal structure of *Jekyll and Hyde* suggest that its narrative form privileges ambiguity, I argue that the novella's form reinstates the categories of normalcy and abnormality even while it upsets them. Several critics argue that, in the final letters, Gothic romance usurps the 'classic realism' of the previous third-person narrative, undermining that narrative's drive for stability and unity of self (E. Cohen 186; Davidson 33–34; M. Williams 413; Andrew Smith 39). But these critics disregard how the disunity of self already repeatedly suggests itself in the supposed 'classic realist' sections, through the reactions to Hyde analysed above and even in Utterson's and Enfield's reaction to the sight of Jekyll's face in 'an expression of such abject terror and despair, as froze the very blood of the two gentlemen below' (59). I am more inclined to agree with Stiles's argument that the *whole* novella combines Gothicism with the standard form of the Victorian scientific periodical case study (*Brain Science* 45) and that it can easily do so because degeneration

theory, Lombrosian criminology, and late Victorian neurological science *already* contain 'disturbing, Gothic undertones' that 'destabilized prevailing ideas of what it meant to be human' (*Brain Science* 10). However, I also argue that these expressions of late Victorian science regarding the instability of self do not uphold the open-endedness of *Jekyll and Hyde*'s Gothic plot, nor does the open-endedness wholly undermine the late Victorian pathologization of the deviant body.

No matter how open-ended Stevenson's narrative and late Victorian science seem, both undeniably carry a conservative impulse that divides normal from abnormal while privileging the former and rejecting the latter. Indeed, as much as *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* demonstrates how social perception constructs disability, as much as it troubles the professional rhetoric that divides normalcy from abnormality, and as much as it implies that deviance lies within the normative as well as in the non-normative, it also transfers the general instability of the human condition onto a marginalized, abnormal body and maintains a medical model of disability that seeks cure. Although Tom Tyler suggests that 'What makes Jekyll-Hyde monstrous … is not so much his mixed body as his impulse and capitulation to deviant conduct' (126), the most deviant of Jekyll-Hyde's conduct—the viciously violent murder of Sir Danvers Carew—is committed by the personality that is encased in a presumably physically deformed body. Ultimately, Hyde *is* the 'monster'; he is the embodiment of uncontrollable evil bursting out of the hypocrite Jekyll, refusing to be enclosed in Jekyll's normative, respectable body, and that embodiment is encoded by the criminalization of the non-normative body. While the horror at the heart of the text is that the potential for non-normativity dwells in all people, including the respectable bourgeois gentleman, the narrative simultaneously quells that fear by thoroughly attaching the most deviant behaviour to the most freakish body.

Even Jekyll's confession, which tenders the most subversive potential by revealing the locus of deviance within the nominally normal, nonetheless works to re-place aberrance onto the freakish body. Critics often examine the destabilizing mode of narration that Jekyll uses to tell his story, one that interweaves first- and third-person narration, confusing the subject and the other, using both *I* and *he* to refer to himself, whether that self is Hyde or Jekyll in its physical manifestation. Arata in particular notices that the 'authorial "*I*"' of the statement is often 'unattached to any self'—that is, to any embodied self—while it turns both Hyde and Jekyll into objective '*he*'s ('Sedulous Ape' 253). Jekyll's inability to verbalize his divided selfhood consistently as a distinct *I* and *he* undoubtedly troubles the

narrative's drive to separate Hyde as a distinct other, but the narrative nonetheless maintains Hyde as an other through differentiating his corporeality, no matter how vague other characters' descriptions of that corporeality are. Certainly, when Jekyll's statement focalizes through Hyde at the novella's most disturbing points—for example, following the first transformation when the knowledge of evil within him 'braced and delighted [him] like wine' (80), or during the brutal murder of Sir Danvers Carew when '[with] a transport of glee, [he] mauled the unresisting body, tasting delight from every blow' (87)—readers momentarily identify with frightening, titillating aberrance and thus briefly locate deviance in themselves even as they learn to locate it in the normative Jekyll. However, following these moments, Jekyll's statement quickly shifts to focalizing *on* Hyde, pathologizing his deviance by pathologizing his body.

By pathologizing Hyde, Jekyll re-enacts the disabling process that we saw occur in Utterson's narrative in which Hyde's observers rationalize their disgust by using scientific discourse to restore their own sense of normalcy. After describing the first transformation, saying, 'I saw for the first time the appearance of Edward Hyde' (81), Jekyll significantly pauses the narrative action to provide a Gothic-scientific theory explaining that appearance. Like Hyde's other observers, Jekyll labels Hyde's physicality as abnormal and explains that abnormality to justify his own sense of normalcy. Jekyll theorizes that Hyde's deformity corporealizes his own evil and that Hyde's small stature reflects the weakness of that hitherto un-exercised and un-exorcised evil. Likewise, within the description of Carew's murder, Jekyll pathologizes Hyde's behaviour, saying that 'no man morally sane' could have committed the crime (87), reiterating the abnormal/normal and unhealthy/well dichotomies. Moreover, when Jekyll's statement begins describing the involuntary transformations into Hyde, Jekyll refers to the concoction that transforms him back as 'medicine' (91); previously, Jekyll had only called the concoction 'drugs,' 'powders,' or a 'draught.' At this point in the narrative, however, the goal of both Hyde and Jekyll is to repress Hyde's body, even more so than his deviant behaviour, since that body is marked as that of 'a known murderer' (89); thus, that which brings about that repression becomes curative.

As Jekyll humanizes and dehumanizes Hyde in a single sentence, saying of Hyde's reflection, 'It *seemed* natural and human' (81; emphasis added), so *Jekyll and Hyde* both constructs and deconstructs the disabled subject as a deviant other. The novella's focalization through and on the normative-yet-unstable bodies of Hyde's viewers exposes how *fin-de-siècle* scientific discourse allowed a distinction between normalcy and

abnormality, between acceptable corporeal instability and deformity, both of which are created socially but supposedly founded in scientific principles. That focalization also lays bare how physiognomy and degeneration theory safely place antisocial deviancy on the disabled—and ultimately destroyed—body of Hyde. Yet, the novella's focalization in Jekyll's final letter also shows deviance as frighteningly centred in the absent normative body of Jekyll, and, more disturbingly, in ourselves as readers focalizing by means of Hyde's deviant body. The novella's narrative shape demonstrates a prosthetic drive towards removing social and physical deviance, yet it simultaneously ends inconclusively with a modern Gothic, unrelieved frisson. Analysing the story's narrative patterns, its prosthetic drive towards closure, its Gothic open ending, and its use of focalization reveals how *fin-de-siècle* Victorians were using disability and science to renegotiate the stable connection between body and identity that modernity made frighteningly tenuous.

Detecting Disability: Narrative Structure and Reading the Body in 'The Crooked Man'

Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde and 'The Crooked Man' both exhibit simultaneous conservative and radical impulses regarding disability and the interpretation of bodies. Like *Jekyll and Hyde*, 'The Crooked Man' frequently depicts characters reading bodies: Watson reads Holmes's body, Holmes reads witnesses' bodies, Watson and witnesses read the suspect's body, and Holmes, the police, the coroner, and the suspect all read the murder victim's body. Like Hyde, the story's disabled figure, Henry Wood, gives 'an indescribable impression of deformity' (29), although his features (a bent back, a dark and wrinkled face, and greying hair and beard) are otherwise quite describable. But, unlike *Jekyll and Hyde*, 'The Crooked Man' explicitly racializes degeneration and criminality in the disabled suspect, an expatriate recently returned to England from thirty years in India.[8] In doing so, the story materializes colonial anxieties in the disability of Wood, a 'materiality of metaphor' typical of narrative prosthesis (Mitchell and Snyder 47). However, the story's surprise ending blocks the customary prosthetic resolution that erases disability and social anxiety at the same time. Yet, where *Jekyll and Hyde* leaves readers

8 Some critics, such as Bernhard Jackson and Linda Dryden, interpret Hyde racially, due to his 'dusky pallor' (Stevenson 84) and his simian qualities; however, racialization is more overt in 'The Crooked Man.'

with the frisson of a Gothic open ending that suggests the continued subversion of normalcy, 'The Crooked Man' concludes conservatively, with Holmes solving the case in his typical 'Elementary!' fashion (23), suggesting a lasting restoration of normalcy, brought about through the curative powers of Holmes's medico-scientific deductions. Nonetheless, the story's plot sequence and focalization suggest the instability of the narrative closure and the constructedness of normalcy.

Despite the pervasiveness of disability in the Sherlock Holmes series, very few critics approach Doyle's treatment of atypical bodies from a disability studies perspective. Sonya Freeman Loftis considers the recent pathologization of Holmes's character as autistic, stressing the 'dangers of diagnosing' fictional characters, such as 'perpetuating several common tropes about autism,' and identifying how any diagnostic possibilities for Holmes are filtered through Watson as the 'neurotypical narrative perspective,' which places readers 'in a default neurotypical position' that inherently reads Holmes as atypical (n. pag.). Adrienne Christine Foreman, like Freeman Loftis, also examines Holmes's position as 'an early example of the disabled detective' trope (36), but does so in conjunction with the positions of the other disabled figures in the series to argue that, in the Holmes stories, 'the medical and scientific codification of abnormal bodies (i.e. the origins of disability) is used as both mark and cure of the criminal' (26). Noting how in the series Holmes treats the act of detection as a cure for his bouts of lethargy that break up his bouts of hyperactivity, Foreman argues that 'Holmes's disability requires someone else's disability' (36)—that is, the various abnormalities and social disorders each case works to solve—and that Holmes repeatedly 'creates order by using the body as a collection of signs … in order to have "scientific" proof about other things' (47). As such, disabilities in the Holmes stories continually 'are used to portray the body as a fixed sign for behavior and interactions' (49).

Other than these two studies, most critics read disability and disease in Holmes stories such as 'The Crooked Man,' *The Sign of Four*, and 'The Adventure of the Blanched Soldier' as primarily symbolic of Victorian imperialist anxieties: of the British Empire made metaphorically ill by colonial contamination (Harris) or of the 'vulnerability of the imperial body' being disturbed by colonial violence (Siddiqi 241). Certainly, imperialist anxieties were apparent in European and American bio-medical degeneration theory by the mid-nineteenth century. For example, some degenerists argued that geographical relocation caused degeneration, and that white colonialists in Africa

or India risked becoming 'tropicalized'—less fertile and more susceptible to illness—and so required 'fresh supplies of whites … to keep close ties with the homeland, to refresh their depleted energies, to restore their "type," and to repair the degeneracy acquired abroad' (Stepan 102–03). Moreover, the sciences of ethnology and criminal anthropology intertwined crime and race in their applications of degeneration theory (Gillespie and Harpham 463)—some presuming that criminals amounted to a new developing race (Pittard 107)—likewise materializing social anxieties regarding crime and/or the empire in the supposedly degenerate and foreign body.

Undoubtedly, in depicting the fatal outcome of events that took place during the so-called Indian Mutiny thirty years prior,[9] 'The Crooked Man' does indeed convey late Victorian apprehension concerning colonialism. However, as Foreman's deft reading of disability in the Holmes stories and their adaptations argues, the body's interpretability in Doyle's famous detective series overall functions to reinforce the 'medico-scientific world view in which the investigation of human bodies and their ab/normality has shifted from the domain of the supernatural to that of science' (33). Likewise, I contend that Doyle uses the authority of medical and scientific discourse to reinforce social norms by reading abnormality in disabled bodies. But rather than focusing on Holmes's role as a possibly disabled figure, like Foreman and Loftis do, I consider the representation of all bodies in 'The Crooked Man' and home in on the story's narrative structure, which ultimately expresses anxieties about the instability of all bodies (disabled, colonial, or otherwise) and threatens the legitimacy of interpreting those bodies.

Detective Fiction's Drive towards Closure and Cure

The importance of understanding narrative shape in 'The Crooked Man' manifests itself in Holmes's self-referential explanation of how Watson structures his stories. In the opening of this story, Holmes demonstrates his prowess, and reinforces his authority, as a detective by deducing various facts about Watson's domestic life (his preferred cigar type, a recent visit from a repairman, a busy day at work). But after Watson praises Holmes for his spectacular skills, Holmes returns with his infamous exclamation, 'Elementary!' and adds,

9 The terminology preferred today in India is *India's First War of Independence*.

> It is one of those instances where the reasoner can produce an effect which seems remarkable to his neighbour, because the latter has missed the one little point which is the basis of the deduction. The same may be said, my dear fellow, for the effect of some of these little sketches of yours, … depending as it does upon your retaining in your own hands some factors in the problem which are never imparted to the reader. (23)

Holmes here identifies the key formal technique of detective fiction: withholding information (particularly the story's ending) from readers.[10] As one narratologist puts it, in detective fiction, 'author, detective, and text all play a dual role, for ostensibly their purpose is to enlighten readers, while, in fact, much of the time all three aim at delaying their understanding' (Kayman 11). This withholding of information produces the narrative impetus, the instability that drives the narrative towards a stabilizing closure. Thus, scholars of genre and narrative commonly concede that the detective story is 'a paradigm case of strong closure' (Segal 154), in which endings are 'less a resolution than an erasure' (Sweeney 5).

Typically, Doyle uses focalization in the Holmes canon as a technique for withholding the information that keeps the ending secret: the stories are primarily narrated by Watson but focalized through his experiencing-I rather than his narrating-I—that is, they are told through the perspective of the character Watson, who experiences the narrative's events as they happen, rather than through the perspective of the narrator Watson, who already knows the mystery's end. Focalizing through Watson's experiencing-I, from whom information is likewise withheld (generally by Holmes), keeps readers in the proverbial dark. By indicating in Holmes's speech above how Watson creates this narrative effect, Doyle shows readers how narrative order—order as in sequence *and* as in tidiness—is contrived.

Surprisingly, Holmes indicates that in his current case, that of 'The Crooked Man,' he too is 'in the position of these same readers' from whom information is withheld; he explains, 'I hold in this hand several threads of one of the strangest cases which ever perplexed a man's brain,

10 In his memoir, *Memories and Adventures*, Doyle lays out the narrative form thus: 'The first thing is to get your idea. Having got that key idea one's next task is to conceal it and lay emphasis upon everything which can make for a different explanation. Holmes, however, can see all the fallacies of the alternatives, and arrives more or less dramatically at the true solution by steps which he can describe and justify' (116).

and yet I lack the one or two which are needful to complete my theory' (23). The case is the death of Colonel Barclay: one night, the Barclays' servants overhear a quarrel between the colonel and his wife Nancy, which ends in screams and a crash; entering through the open window, the coachman discovers the colonel 'dead in a pool of his own blood' (25), the wife unconscious, and the locked door's key missing. From his investigations at the scene, Holmes discovers evidence of an unknown third person, accompanied by an unknown animal; further investigations lead him to suspect that the person is Henry Wood. However, Holmes lacks the 'threads' that will tell him why Wood was there, what the animal was, who killed Barclay, and how. In admitting that here he too shares the narrative instability of ignorance that belongs to readers, Holmes momentarily unsettles his panoptic authority as detective. Of course, Holmes immediately reassures Watson and readers that stability and order will be restored in conventional closure when he declares, 'But I'll have [the necessary threads], Watson, I'll have them!' (23).

That conventional drive of detective stories towards closure parallels the drive towards cure in medicine. Indeed, Heather Worthington explicitly compares the narrative structures of detection and medicine: 'A case is presented; the physician/detective investigates the problem; the cause is discovered and the solution revealed: proof and procedure are essential to the fictional as well as the factual account' (134). Maria Cairney finds that Sherlock Holmes's main place of publication, the *Strand*, reinforced the era's 'medical coding' of criminality in many articles and detective stories, and contends that the 'medical coding' allowed the Holmes stories to 'perform a curative function within the *Strand*'s issues as a whole' by repeatedly producing solutions to criminal mysteries (67).

But while Michael Allen Gillespie and John Samuel Harpham argue that the repeated conventions in Holmes stories 'confirm again and again' science's ability to 'triumph over disorder and repair the fabric of a working society'(458), Christopher Pittard notes that the seriality of the Holmes stories in the magazine essentially reiterates the impossibility of closure and cure: 'The acts of intellectual cleaning performed by Sherlock Holmes are never final; they need to be performed again in another four weeks or so, [for] such is the fragility of the law' (14). Fascinatingly, Pittard unintentionally echoes Lennard J. Davis's conclusion about the narrative impulse to restore normalcy by removing disability:

> [T]he quick fix, the cure, has to be repeated endlessly, like a patent medicine, because it actually cures nothing. Novels have to tell this

> story over and over again, as do films and television, since the patient never stays cured and the disabled, cured individually, refuse to stop reappearing as a group. (Davis, *Bending* 99)

As Pittard and Davis both implicitly suggest, narrative forms that compulsorily and compulsively provide closure and enforce normalcy cannot help but also signify openness and instability. In 'The Crooked Man,' the inadequacy of law, medicine, and narrative to effectively provide the assurance of lasting cure or stability appears more vividly than in most Holmes stories, due to Holmes's unconventional placement in 'the position of these same readers' and, as I will show later, due to the story's surprise ending.

Focalizing Disability's Shifting Signification

The resolutions of most Holmes stories generally come through his multiple deductions, which are fully explained to readers only at the end.[11] Rosemary Jann argues that Holmes's deductions typically '[rely] heavily on the posited but seldom tested validity of indexical codes of body and behavior'—codes that '[construct] categories of the normative while appearing merely to interpret them,' thus creating a 'myth of rationality' (686). However, in the case of 'The Crooked Man,' Holmes makes very few deductions: only those few trivial ones about Watson's domestic life at the beginning, and a very few about the third person and a foreign animal at the scene of the crime. The myth of his deductions' reliability falls apart in 'The Crooked Man' because Holmes is in 'the same position as … readers'—that is, Holmes receives most of his evidence from other witnesses; the evidence he gleans from the crime scene is fairly limited.

The narrative's multiple embedded narrations emphasize those limits: readers gain access to the narrative through Watson, who gains it through Holmes, who gains parts of it through Major Murphy, the Barclays' servants, Nancy Barclay's friend Miss Morrison, and Wood's landlady, before they both gain the rest through Wood himself. In 'The Boscombe Valley Mystery' (1891), Holmes says that 'Circumstantial evidence is a very tricky thing … It may seem to

11 There are some exceptions, however, such as 'The Adventure of the Yellow Face' (1893), in which Holmes's deductions that the mysterious face is that of a bigamous woman's first husband are proven wrong: the face belonged to a little girl, the child of the woman and her dead first husband.

point to one thing, but if you shift your point of view a little, you may find it pointing to something very different' (403). Occupying the position of a reader, Holmes is forced to share the focalization of the characters whose narratives he reports to Watson. Thus, he, like Watson and the readers, is anchored in the points of view of those from whom the evidence comes. The 'shift' of point of view to see how evidence 'points to something different' only happens, then, when the focalization allows it to do so. Therefore, while the circumstantial evidence provided by the servants and police points to Nancy as a possible guilty party in the beginning, the evidence suddenly shifts to Wood when readers receive Miss Morrison's doubly intradiegetic narrative. Here, Watson narrates Holmes narrating Miss Morrison, who narrates events in the first person.[12] This narrative focalizes through her past self as she and Nancy encountered Wood on the day of Barclay's death, as well as through her present self as she recalls Wood's features with horror.

As Holmes delivers to Watson the narratives given to him by others in 'The Crooked Man,' one can see how the 'shift' of 'point of view' that alters the significance of circumstantial evidence can also change how the exoticized and disabled body is read. From the perspective of Miss Morrison, the foreign and disabled body designates criminality and social decay. Describing the events that preceded the colonel's death, Miss Morrison tells Holmes of walking through the dark streets of Aldershot with Nancy after a meeting at the Watt Street Mission; there, she and Nancy encountered a 'dreadful-looking creature' with 'a very dark, fearsome face,' a 'crippled wretch' named 'Henry' whom Nancy, though surprised by his appearance, spoke to and recognized (28). While Wood's 'dark face' implicitly racializes him here, and though the accompanying *Strand* illustration by Sidney Paget overtly racializes him as a foreign other by giving him a turban and juxtaposing his beard and dark skin with the British ladies' paleness and elaborate clothing (Figure 3), his English-sounding name and apparent relationship with Nancy also suggest the known and homely, complicating how Miss Morrison and, by extension, Holmes will interpret Wood's body.

Notably, other than referencing his 'dark, fearsome face,' Miss Morrison discusses Wood's body less in terms of its racial difference than of its disability and presumed criminality, poverty, and mendicancy. She says, 'He *appeared* to be deformed' (28; emphasis added),

12 A narrative is intradiegetic when it is told by a narrator within the story world.

Figure 3: Sidney Paget, 'It's Nancy!',
Strand Magazine, vol. 6, Jul. 1893, p. 28.
Courtesy of Special Collections, University of Victoria Libraries.

suggesting that he might be performing his disability in order to beg.[13] Having come from a meeting of 'the Guild of St. George, which was formed in connection with the Watt Street Chapel for the purpose of supplying the poor with cast-off clothing' (24), Miss Morrison reads

13 See Audrey Jaffe's 'Detecting the Beggar: Arthur Conan Doyle, Henry Mayhew, and "The Man with the Twisted Lip"' for further discussion of Conan Doyle and the figure of the false beggar.

Wood's physiognomy according to her context and point of view. Thus, to her, Wood's body signifies a familiar but marginal British figure: that of the 'crippled beggar' typified in works such as Henry Mayhew's *London Labour and the London Poor* (1849–61) and criminalized at the turn of the century by degeneration theory. That is, she reads his body as primarily other to her middle-class, normative body rather than as other to her race. Thus, Miss Morrison's first instinct on his approach is to control his criminality and call the police, until Nancy explains that he is a former acquaintance 'who has come down in the world' (28).

In contrast, the next person whom Holmes interviews about the case, Wood's landlady, interprets Wood's body as primarily racially and physically deviant. From the landlady, Holmes learns that the man's full name is 'Henry Wood'—a common British name—but that he is newly arrived in Aldershot, speaks a foreign language as well as English, earns his living as a 'conjurer and performer' with an exotic pet, and carries Indian rupees (29). As opposed to Miss Morrison, the landlady interprets Wood's disability as signifying the exoticism tied to his role as a performer. In describing her renter's livelihood, she notes that 'it was a wonder the man lived, seeing how twisted he was, and that he spoke in a strange tongue sometimes' (29). The word *wonder*'s freak-show connotation aligns Wood's disability and foreignness with his entertainment trade, recalling such performers as Mohammed Baux, the 'Miniature Man of India,' and Lalloo, the 'Double-bodied Hindoo Boy.'[14] Marlene Tromp explains that the 'apparent race and ethnicity of a performer could add another layer to his or her freakishness' (161); however, for the landlady, Wood's 'freakishness' adds layers to his foreignness. Miss Morrison and the landlady thus read the disabled body differently according to its context: on the streets of Aldershot near the mission for the poor, Wood's body appears as that a crippled beggar; performing in the military canteens surrounding Aldershot, it reads as that of an exotic freak.

From his interviews with Miss Morrison and Wood's landlady, Holmes deducts that Wood followed the women home and witnessed the Barclays' altercation from the window, by which he entered the room, loosing his exotic pet in the meantime; 'That is all very certain,' he assures Watson (29). But while he can conjecture the events leading to the colonel's death, Watson, readers, and, most surprisingly,

14 For extended discussions of Baux, Lalloo, freakery, and exoticism, see Nadja Durbach's *Spectacle of Deformity* and Marlene Tromp's 'Empire and the Indian Freak' in *Victorian Freaks*.

Holmes still do not know at this point why Wood was at the crime scene or what caused the colonel's death. Holmes expects that Wood will either 'clear the matter up' when he and Watson interview him or be arrested as the murderer if he does not. Informed by degeneration theory, which would assign criminality to Wood's 'tropicalized' body,[15] and primed by the context of earlier Holmes stories in which a limping 'cripple' or an invalided colonial soldier murder for revenge ('Boscombe Valley,' *The Sign of Four*) and in which Holmes briefly mentions such cases as 'the singular affair of the aluminium crutch' or 'Ricoletti of the club-foot, and his abominable wife' ('The Musgrave Ritual' 479), the late Victorian reader would very likely have imagined that, of the two projected outcomes, the latter was more likely.

Instead, Doyle provides a plot twist that overturns the reading of the exotic and disabled body as degenerate and dismantles categorical separation between normalcy and abnormality, domestic and foreign. Eyal Segal explains that in 'twisted ending[s],' readers 'discover that some crucial hypotheses considered as certain—or unconsciously assumed—are in fact mistaken' (171). Two key assumptions made by readers give this ending its twist: first, that the disabled and foreign body must be criminally degenerate, and second, that the disabled body is necessarily barred from sexual or romantic relationships. From Wood, we learn that *he* was the victim and Barclay the villain: during the so-called Indian Mutiny, Barclay purposely led Wood into the hands of rebel soldiers to remove him as a rival for Nancy's affection. Tortured by the soldiers until he became 'a wretched cripple,' enslaved by Darjeeling 'hill-folk,' and then occupied as a performing conjurer in Afghanistan and the Punjab, Wood spent several decades in India to hide himself and his acquired disability from friends. Wood explains that, homesick but with no thoughts of revenge, he travelled back to England, where he encounters Nancy and follows her home. There, he interrupts Nancy and Barclay fighting about his betrayal; Barclay dies at the sight of Wood and Nancy goes into a brain fever from shock. Fearing he will be accused of Barclay's murder, Wood rushes from the scene, accidentally leaving behind his walking stick and taking the room's key. Wood avoids criminal accusations by explaining to Holmes that Barclay died from shock; a medical inquest supports this explanation, determining that the death resulted from apoplexy.

15 Nancy Stepan uses the term *tropicalized* to describe the 'process of biological degeneration' that degeneration theorists often presumed occurred in white people living in colonized, non-white places (99).

Several modern scholars read Wood's body as 'an embodiment of all that is savage in the East, and all that must be controlled,' and as supporting 'the British feeling that colonialism was a necessity' (Raheja 421, 422) or as symbolizing the weak 'integrity of the colonial category of superior European' (Siddiqi 239). According to these arguments, Doyle's tale presents India as distinctly foreign and dangerous and Britain as a threatened but privileged domestic space. However, the surprise ending of 'The Crooked Man' alters the divisions between colonized and colonizer more complexly than this, not only making the foreign and the familiar seem indistinguishable, but also positing England as dangerous and foreign. The order of the short story confirms this complexity: after Holmes discovers the signs of a third person at the scene, a carved wood and bone club and animal prints, Barclay's imagined 'murderer' is an unknown, exotic threat to British domesticity. But at each following step, the threat becomes more and more British—not just as Wood's Britishness is revealed,[16] but also as Wood's innocence and Barclay's guilt as betrayer come to light. Thus, as Christopher Gair notes, 'it is [Wood], rather than Barclay (the apparent embodiment of the race and class markers of … white Englishness) who elicits the reader's sympathy' (n. pag.).

Moreover, the method of eliciting this sympathy through focalization, which causes readers to 'internaliz[e] the perceptions and attitudes of the focalizer' (Stephens 68), implicitly makes the foreign familiar and the domestic frighteningly unfamiliar. Having Wood narrate his story within Watson's narration to readers, rather than narrating it second-hand through Watson or Holmes, more closely focalizes the narrative through Wood's past self as he lives and travels in India. From that perspective, though he clearly states that he suffered violence at the hands of Indian soldiers and people, the psychological and social danger is unambiguously located in a British source: Barclay. Wood briefly describes being physically 'stunned' by his attack, but adds, 'the real blow was to my heart and not to my head, for … I heard enough to tell me that my comrade [Barclay] … had betrayed me' (31). Moreover, in narrating his time in India, Wood presents the foreign as familiar. His homecoming to England is not his

16 Paget's illustrations likewise increase Wood's Britishness. In illustrating Watson and Holmes's meeting with Wood, Paget removes the turban from Wood's head and places him in the darkness of the hearth to whiten his skin in contrast. However, Paget also further demonizes the foreign in illustrating Wood's kidnapping, focusing on the Indian assailants poised to attack and giving them villainous, racialized faces.

only 'return home'; he also tells of escaping slavery in the Darjeeling Himalayas to Afghanistan, where, he says, 'I wandered about for many a year, and at last came back to the Punjab, where I lived mostly among the natives, and picked up a living by the conjuring tricks that I had learned' (31). Wood's return to the Punjab, where he had first been stationed, is a type of homecoming to a domestic-though-foreign place. Thus, Wood's narrative thoroughly displaces the foreign and the domestic.[17]

Significantly, while confounding the divisions of foreign and domestic, this closing plot twist relocates criminality in the normative domestic body (that of the colonel), breaking down the physiognomic body-reading rules of *fin-de-siècle* degeneration theory. In addition, 'The Crooked Man' is not the first Holmes story to do so. In 'The Adventure of the Man with the Twisted Lip' (1891), Hugh Boone, the 'sinister cripple' arrested as the murderer of middle-class gentleman Neville St. Clair (629), turns out to have been St. Clair himself, feigning disability to make a living as a beggar. As Pittard notes, 'The story is another parody of Lombrosian thought … The "murder" in "The Man with the Twisted Lip" only exists in the minds of the police because of the distorted features of Hugh Boone' (17). These stories suggest that the Holmes series works to disturb 'the very notion that there is a coherent, healthy bourgeois ideology of "Englishness"' and to confirm that 'the official agents of law and order are too circumscribed by their own blind subscription to conventional wisdom to recognize where criminality really does—and does not—reside' (Haynsworth 471).

I would add, however, that the Holmes series also challenges where physical and social normalcy resides. In 'The Crooked Man,' the concentration on Wood's non-normative body, and on the multiple interpretations of that body, diverts readers' attention from the instability of the Barclays' presumably normative ones. 'There is nothing so unnatural as the commonplace,' says Holmes in 'A Case of Identity' (248). In 'The Crooked Man,' the Barclays' commonplace relationship, which Holmes first tells Watson makes them 'the very model of a middle-aged couple' (24), is after all an 'unnatural' one, based on the colonel's betrayal of Wood and deception of Nancy, and undermined in turn by Nancy's enduring love for Wood. As the ending reveals,

17 Catherine Wynne notes an additional element that complicates the foreign/domestic divide: 'the story's setting among an Irish regiment' (44), which reminds readers that even in the British Isles themselves lies a complicated web of colonized national identities in which 'the unfamiliar [coexists] within the familiar' (Germanà 1).

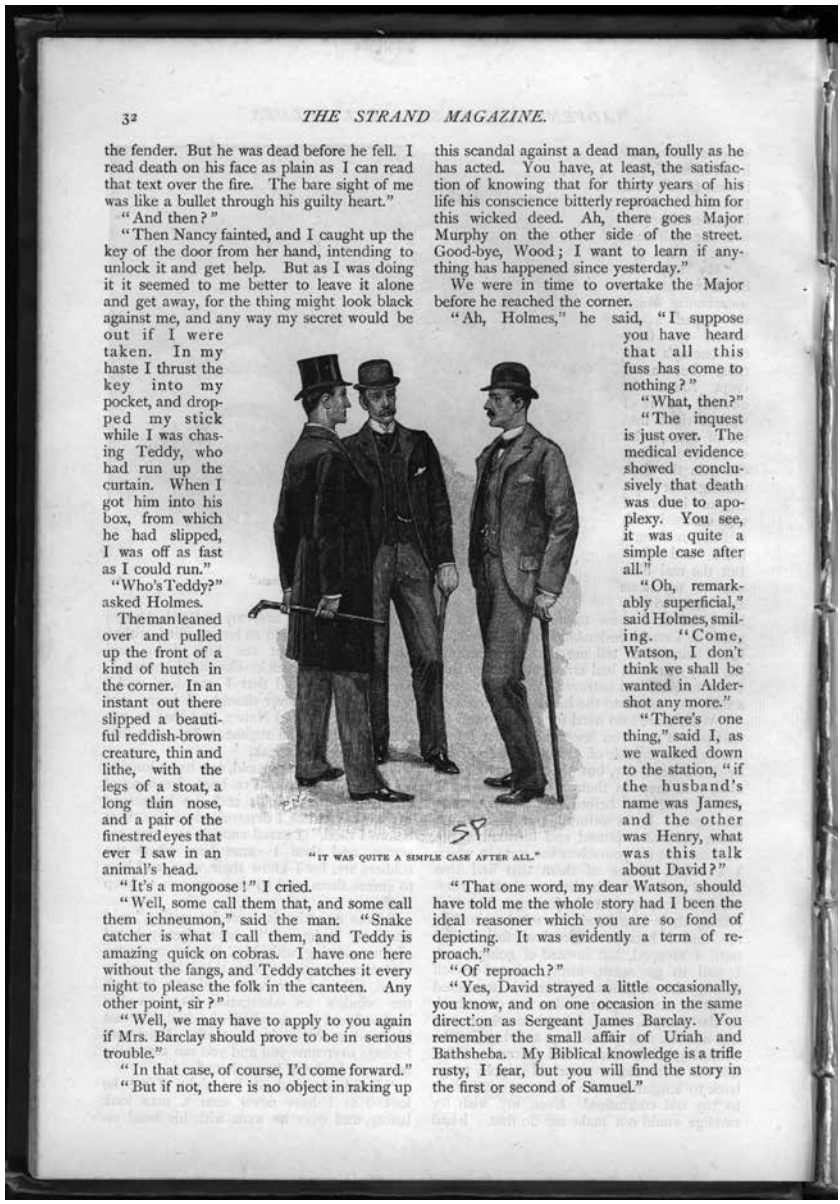
the Barclays' normative, non-disabled bodies, and their normative, domestic middle-class identity are equally as constructed and vulnerable as Wood's disabled body and foreign identity. There is nothing so unnatural, the text suggests, as the 'normal' body.

Of course, as mentioned earlier, Doyle had often deployed stereotypes of criminal degeneracy and the disabled and/or foreign body in previous Holmes stories, and in 1904, he quite overtly reaffirmed those stereotypes in 'The Adventure of the Six Napoleons.' There, Beppo the Italian, a 'sharp-featured simian man with thick eyebrows, and a very peculiar projection of the lower part of the face like the muzzle of a baboon' (487), is identifiable as a criminal mainly because he has 'such a face' (489). Contradictions like these are why many critics remain divided about whether the Holmes series is ultimately conservative or subversive, and why others argue that the series is 'complex and multivalent' (Wiltse 107). I situate myself in the latter camp, identifying Doyle's use of the disabled body in 'The Crooked Man' as both traditional in its embodiment of colonial anxieties and subversive in its repeated undermining of attempts to interpret the deviant body.

Moreover, the story's conclusion reproduces this tension between tradition and subversion. Segal explains that 'surprise endings have a double-edged potential' (171). They can produce closure if the gap in knowledge revealed at the end 'is simultaneously discovered and filled in—that is, [if] the hypothesis that turns out to have been mistaken is firmly replaced by one that counts as unambiguously correct' (171). However, if the gap 'at last remains open (or at least not unambiguously closed) following its discovery,' it results in 'a highly perceptible and provocative openness' (171). Strangely, this ending does both: it provides a *sense* of closure, yet the narrative remains relatively open. When Major Murphy announces that the results of the medical inquest prove that Barclay's death was not murder, he calls the case 'quite a simple [one] after all' (32); 'Oh, remarkably superficial,' Holmes agrees, with a smile to indicate that detective, narrator, and reader all share the joke of knowing its greater complexity as explained by Wood. Clearly, Holmes believes that the story provided by Wood is an 'unambiguously correct' explanation. Gillespie and Harpham claim that 'We can believe in Holmes, in part, because we believe in modern science and its claim that there is an answer to every question and a solution to every problem' (458). However, science did not provide the answers to the questions evoked by the 'murder' mystery (though it perhaps corroborated some); questions do linger, as I elaborate below.

Detective story surprise endings typically follow the 'fair play' convention, which 'stipulates that the final solution … should not be sprung on the reader without any prior clues' (Segal 172). Doyle does provide such clues: the colonel is often depressed, fears the dark, and does not like to be separated from Nancy; Nancy is known to be 'less obtrusively affectionate' towards Barclay than he to her (23); she and Wood have some kind of prior relationship; the corpse's face shows 'most dreadful expression of fear and horror' (26), which suggests to Holmes that the colonel may have struck his head having fainted 'from sheer fright at the sight of [Wood]' (27); and the maid overheard Nancy say the name 'David' (26). Holmes interprets this final clue as referring to the 'small affair of Uriah and Bathsheba' (32), in which King David sends Uriah to die in the front lines of a battle for Amman so that he can marry Uriah's wife, Bathsheba. The final words of 'The Crooked Man,' Holmes's glib instruction to 'find the story in the first or second of Samuel' (32) rather than explaining the story's details echoes his blasé attitude to the 'clever little deductions' that Doyle included to imbue Holmes with authority (*Memories and Adventures* 116), thus communicating a sense of closure. But should Watson or readers actually follow his instruction, they would find that Bathsheba was pregnant with David's child at the time of the murder and that the child dies as divine punishment for the murder. Holmes's gesture at closure here opens the narrative further by stimulating new questions—about the Barclays' noted childlessness and about Nancy's apparent fidelity to Wood.

Other questions about the mystery also come to mind. If the paw prints left behind by the mongoose allow Holmes to deduct the exact length of the animal, as well as its carnivorous eating habits, how do Wood's footprints only tell him that Wood 'rushed across the lawn' (26)? Holmes identifies a simple limp from footprints in 'The Boscombe Valley Mystery': would not Wood's footprints have been affected by his method of walking with his knees and back bent and with the aid of a stick, as Miss Morrison describes and Paget illustrates (see Figure 3)? Moreover, despite Holmes's and Watson's perfect satisfaction regarding the circumstances of Colonel Barclay's death, I cannot help but wonder how a man who describes his own method of mobility as 'crawling with a stick like a chimpanzee' (30) can also have said 'I dropped my stick … [and] was off as fast as I could run' (32)—especially when the letterpress account of the latter incident sits beside Paget's illustration of three men with normative bodies, Watson, Holmes, and Major Murphy, each carrying a walking stick of their own (Figure 4). While this and the other discrepancies may in part suggest



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the fender. But he was dead before he fell. I read death on his face as plain as I can read that text over the fire. The bare sight of me was like a bullet through his guilty heart."

"And then?"

"Then Nancy fainted, and I caught up the key of the door from her hand, intending to unlock it and get help. But as I was doing it it seemed to me better to leave it alone and get away, for the thing might look black against me, and any way my secret would be out if I were taken. In my haste I thrust the key into my pocket, and dropped my stick while I was chasing Teddy, who had run up the curtain. When I got him into his box, from which he had slipped, I was off as fast as I could run."

"Who's Teddy?" asked Holmes.

The man leaned over and pulled up the front of a kind of hutch in the corner. In an instant out there slipped a beautiful reddish-brown creature, thin and lithe, with the legs of a stoat, a long thin nose, and a pair of the finest red eyes that ever I saw in an animal's head.

"IT WAS QUITE A SIMPLE CASE AFTER ALL."

"It's a mongoose!" I cried.

"Well, some call them that, and some call them ichneumon," said the man. "Snake catcher is what I call them, and Teddy is amazing quick on cobras. I have one here without the fangs, and Teddy catches it every night to please the folk in the canteen. Any other point, sir?"

"Well, we may have to apply to you again if Mrs. Barclay should prove to be in serious trouble."

"In that case, of course, I'd come forward."

"But if not, there is no object in raking up this scandal against a dead man, foully as he has acted. You have, at least, the satisfaction of knowing that for thirty years of his life his conscience bitterly reproached him for this wicked deed. Ah, there goes Major Murphy on the other side of the street. Good-bye, Wood; I want to learn if anything has happened since yesterday."

We were in time to overtake the Major before he reached the corner.

"Ah, Holmes," he said, "I suppose you have heard that all this fuss has come to nothing?"

"What, then?"

"The inquest is just over. The medical evidence showed conclusively that death was due to apoplexy. You see, it was quite a simple case after all."

"Oh, remarkably superficial," said Holmes, smiling. "Come, Watson, I don't think we shall be wanted in Aldershot any more."

"There's one thing," said I, as we walked down to the station, "if the husband's name was James, and the other was Henry, what was this talk about David?"

"That one word, my dear Watson, should have told me the whole story had I been the ideal reasoner which you are so fond of depicting. It was evidently a term of reproach."

"Of reproach?"

"Yes, David strayed a little occasionally, you know, and on one occasion in the same direction as Sergeant James Barclay. You remember the small affair of Uriah and Bathsheba. My Biblical knowledge is a trifle rusty, I fear, but you will find the story in the first or second of Samuel."

Figure 4: Sidney Paget, 'It was quite a simple case after all,' *Strand Magazine*, vol. 6, Jul. 1893, p. 32.
Courtesy of Special Collections, University of Victoria Libraries.

sloppy writing on Doyle's part—the Holmes series contains a number of inconsistencies, such as Watson's first name and the location of his battle wound—they nonetheless undermine Holmes's authority as a reader of bodies and the marks they leave behind. In light of narrative closure's importance to the detective genre, these questions and the story's weak closure emphasize the joint instability of empire, body, and narrative. Moreover, they block any kind of prosthetic resolution: Wood's body in these ways remains unremoved from the narrative and resistant to interpretation. As Leslie Haynsworth notes, in Holmes's and Watson's banter about the shape of narrative, 'readers of the Holmes stories are effectively invited—even encouraged—to consider the reasons for, and ramifications of, the particular telling these tales get, and to ask why they are told in this manner' (461). Considering how this tale is told—with multiple intradiegetic narrations, with the detective adopting the narrative viewpoint of his witnesses, and with a twist ending—shows that late Victorian concerns about the control of disabled, colonial, and national bodies were deeply linked to each other and to the process of storytelling.

Both Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and Doyle's 'The Crooked Man' rely on disabled bodies to provide narrative impetus and to supply the stories' source of mystery. Both stories also rely on contemporary sciences to explain the mysteries that the stories' detectives attempt to solve. Both stories register the increased authority that professionalization conferred on science and medicine in late Victorian popular thought. However, they also display simultaneous *fin-de-siècle* anxieties about science's abilities to identify and control deviance. In *Jekyll and Hyde*, characters who view Hyde use scientific discourse to normalize their repulsion at his body and to pathologize his criminality. The novella's story removes social and physical deviance through a prosthetic closure in the death of Jekyll and Hyde, but its plotting simultaneously complicates that closure by concluding with the suggestion that, since Jekyll *is* Hyde, normalcy and a stable selfhood are illusions. However, in spite of its modern-Gothic open ending, *Jekyll and Hyde*'s conservative impulse remains because the story's most deviant actions are always committed by the character with the story's most deviant body.

In contrast, at the end of 'The Crooked Man,' readers find out that the most deviant actions were committed by the 'model' husband (24) and normative-bodied Colonel Barclay, who brutally betrays his fellow soldier and good friend, Henry Wood, during the so-called Indian Mutiny. Though Sherlock's scientific deductions in the story originally point towards the disabled Wood, 'The Crooked Man' undermines

the discourse that criminalizes and marginalizes the disabled body when it focalizes through Wood to reveal an unresolved merging of the foreign and domestic and of normalcy and deviance. Like *Jekyll and Hyde*, 'The Crooked Man' concludes with an ending that both provides and prevents closure; though at the close of the story Holmes displays his intelligence in solving the mystery of why Nancy calls the colonel 'David,' the reference to Uriah and Bathsheba reopens the mystery by the biblical tale's overall minimal resemblance to the case of Nancy, Wood, and Barclay. Ultimately, these two late Victorian mystery stories continue the Victorian pattern of contradiction in narrative structure and notions of disability that began with Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris*; moreover, the stories continue this pattern while exhibiting the contemporaneous concerns exhibited in *fin-de-siècle* science.

Afterword

'Perhaps, if truth were told, we have had a little too much of the Body,' writes Robert Buchanan in *The Fleshly School of Poetry* (1872), decrying the 'fleshliness' of poetry from D.G. Rossetti and the Pre-Raphaelites (85). 'I have no earthly objection to the Body and the Flesh in their rightful time and place, as part of great work and novel art,' he demurs. 'But Flesh, merely as the Flesh, is too much for me … I do not admire its absurd manner of considering itself the Soul' (86–87). Here, Buchanan conveys a Victorian anxiety about the shifting boundary lines between body and soul in his insistence that the two are distinct and ought to remain so. Yet the bulk of his extended pamphlet on 'fleshly' poetry uses medical rhetoric that equates poetry and nation with body. He claims that 'the seat of the cancer' that is 'fleshliness' lies 'in the Bohemian fringe of society' and requires a 'physician'—presumably himself—to 'come to put his finger in the true seat of the sore' (7). He then traces the history of fleshly disease in English poetry, calling it 'the Italian disease' (14), which was imported through 'the miasmic cloud' of 'What was absurd and unnatural in Dante, mingling with foul exhalations from the brains of his brother poets' (11), and which attacked English poets until 'the epidemic seemed to culminate' in Cowley and others who 'suffered and died, more or less under the fatal influence' (13). He lists other past diseased schools of English poetry, such as the Della Cruscan and the Spasmodic, noting that they all 'over-exert themselves and end in phthisis' (15); but he accuses 'the Fleshly school of verse-writers' of now 'diligently spreading the seeds of the disease' (33).

It was reading Buchanan's pamphlet that first set me on the path of questioning how narrative form related to the physical body. I wanted

to know what allowed Buchanan to collapse body and text so thoroughly that he could consider poetic form susceptible to disease and why the pamphlet so closely equated anxiety about literature's instability to anxiety about the body's instability. Above all, I asked, what might Victorian literary form reveal about how corporeality, especially deviant corporeality, was understood? Where Buchanan's concern with flesh and literary form centred on the body as sexual, sensual, and material, my concern as a scholar was with the body as disabled or abnormalized. Therefore, I chose to concentrate on the Victorian genre that most focused on such bodies—the novel—and to question how the body-focused subgenres within it textually encountered, assembled, disabled, or normalized bodies. The unmistakable keys to this inquiry were focalization, as the technique that textually replicates the perceiving body and supplies the lenses through which other bodies are perceived, and plot shape, as the force that drives particular bodies to particular outcomes according to narrative conventions.

By considering narrative form and the human body across multiple genres and decades of the Victorian era, *Articulating Bodies* shows the mutability of the Victorians' understanding of the human body's centrality to identity—an understanding made mutable by changes in science, technology, religion, and class. It also demonstrates how that understanding changed along with developing narrative styles: as disability became increasingly medicalized and the soul increasingly psychologized, the mode of looking at deviant bodies shifted from gaping at spectacle to scrutinizing specimen, and the shape of narratives evolved from lengthy multiple-plot novels to slim case studies. Moreover, the book illustrates that, despite this overall linear movement from spectacle to specimen in literature and culture, individual texts consistently reveal ambivalence about categorizing the body, positioning some bodies as abnormally deviant while also denying the reality or stability of normalcy. In each of the stories I have examined, bodies never remain stable entities, in spite of narrative drives and the social, medical, or scientific discourses that attempted to control and understand them.

Our Mutual Friend's Mr Venus, the 'Articulator of bones,' tells his wooden-legged friend, Mr Wegg, 'if you was brought here loose in a bag to be articulated, I'd name your smallest bones blindfold equally with your largest, as fast as I could pick 'em out, and I'd sort 'em all, and sort your wertebrae, in a manner that would equally surprise and charm you' (128). Like Venus, Victorian fiction 'articulated' bodies, picking them out and sorting them all—according to their propensity for humanity and/or monstrosity, or their capability to symbolize the

'Condition of England'; according to the rules of nascent psychological theories or theologies of incarnation; according to the *Bildungsroman*'s normalizing processes; and according to degeneration theory and the developing sciences of neurology and criminology. The manner through which fiction articulates bodies is surprising because, as Caroline Levine brings to light in her book *Forms*, 'In any given circumstance, no form operates in isolation,' and how those forms interact 'is not always predictable' (7).

In Victorian fiction, the forms that articulate bodies are the organizations of plot—hybrid, open, closed, linear, networked, multiple-focus, or single-focus—and the patterns of focalization that frame ways of perceiving—internal, external, or non-focalizing. The multiple forms acting in the Victorian novels and stories I have covered in these chapters at times cooperate, organizing bodies into the hierarchical normal/abnormal binary, and at others clash, shifting where the boundary between that binary lies, or networking bodies into webs of interdependence, or removing abnormal bodies to impose linearity and closure, or resisting closure to suggest the omnipresence of bodily difference, or indeed several of these options at once. But, in spite of knowing his 'Anatomy, till both by sight and by name [he's] perfect' (Dickens, *Our Mutual Friend* 128), Venus never can put Wegg together, and despite being 'a literary man—*with* a wooden leg' (93), Wegg can never 'collect [him]self' (128). Fundamentally, in Victorian literature and culture, the body proves too evasive for the forms and narratives—medical, scientific, or literary—that attempt to contain it.

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