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Preternatural Laughter: Rhetorics of Animality in the Literature of Insanity, 1798-1882

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in English

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Abstract

This project meets at the intersections of critical disability theory and critical animal studies to interrogate the rhetoricability of mad and animalized rhetors. Insofar as disability theory argues that the values inscribed on the disabled body are the product of cultural, social, and historical determinants, I ask: how is the voice of madness constructed? Whereas mad characters of the nineteenth century novel frequently shout, laugh, cry, and even speak in fully formed utterance, these voices are just as frequently absent in dialogue and undermined in their authority. Madness comes to hold a distinctly (a)rhetorical presence, as authors grappling with the mad voice inevitably betray their own presumptions about speech: what constitutes ‘speech,’ whose speech matters, and what modes of communication are to be exiled from discursive participation. By placing these representations into conversation with the concurrent medical literature produced in and around the asylum, I reveal the ways in which pathological prescriptions of embodiment are read onto and against the mad rhetor in ways that align with the supposed silence of animals. I therefore examine the ways in which “the animal” functions as a rhetorically disabling gesture against both (mad) human and non-human animals through the denigration of the body and its “sensitive materiality.” I read Mary Wollstonecraft’s *Maria; or, the Wrongs of Woman* (1798), Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* (1847), and Wilkie Collins’s *The Woman in White* (1860) and *Heart and Science* (1883), alongside the historically relevant medical literature surrounding the pathological and diagnostic frameworks of madness. By critically examining the ways in which animal and mad rhetors (de)mobilize throughout these texts, I seek to both expose rhetorical disablement at work and to re-assert the viability of the body as a valid site of rhetoricability.

Keywords

Madness; insanity; asylum literature; medicine; critical disability theory; social disability model; mad studies; animal studies; rhetoric; nineteenth-century novel; Victorian literature; British literature; Bronte, Charlotte; Wollstonecraft, Mary; Collins, Wilkie

Summary for Lay Audience

This project reads nineteenth century novels alongside the historical and social conversations surrounding insanity, exploring how people labelled mad have their voices represented in literature. By examining novels like Mary Wollstonecraft's *Maria; or, the Wrongs of Woman* (1798), Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847), and Wilkie Collins' *The Woman in White* (1860) and *Heart and Science* (1883), I reveal that people labelled mad frequently have their voice represented in animalizing and dehumanizing terms. I argue that the purpose of this kind of animalizing representation works to strip mad persons of the right to protest about their "care" by relying on the underlying assumptions of animal language—assumptions that claim animals do not possess either language or will, and that body language or embodied modes of communication are lesser than "human" speech. Each of these novels operates under the logic that by *representing* the mad as animal, the mad can (and will) be treated *like animals*. I argue, however, that whereas this is presented uncritically by Wollstonecraft and Bronte as the necessary consequence to humanism, this logic is challenged by Collins. I argue that where the villains of both novels seek to silence the mad heroine, Collins parallels his heroines with animals: these animals have "speech" represented through body language in the narrative, but suffer violence by the villains who speak over and against them in dialogue. By contrasting Collins' novels with Wollstonecraft and Bronte, I hope to expose the logic and consequences to rhetorical disablement effecting both mad and animalized rhetors, and to challenge our assumptions surrounding "meaningful" speech.

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Preternatural Laughter: Rhetorics of Animality in the Literature of Insanity

“The scripting of the dance of being is more than a metaphor; bodies, human and non-human, are taken apart and put together in processes that make self-certainty and either humanist or organicist ideology bad guides to ethics and politics, much less to personal experience.”

-Donna Haraway, *The Companion Species Manifesto*

“I’m referring ... to a horizonless and ungatherable “world” opened each time in the address of the other.... I’m referring to a world opened each time in the fragility of an appeal...”

-Diane Davis, “Rhetoricity at the End of the World”

“No body, no voice; no voice, no body.”

-Nancy Mairs, *Carnal Acts*

Introduction: Narratives of Cure and Correction

In 1839, when Robert Garinder Hill delivered a lecture against the use of mechanical restraints within the asylum, he turned to the image of Phillipe Pinel liberating the inmates of the Bicêtre from a brutalized past. Prior to Pinel, Hill argued, the asylum was a “barbarous system” of condemnation (20), the mad chained to stone walls and left to rot on straw covered floors, “[t]he mind ... left to recover its native strength and buoyancy spontaneously” (19). When, however, Pinel made the grand experiment of unchaining the Bicêtre’s inmates in 1792,

[e]verywhere the light seemed to flash upon mankind, that these unfortunate beings were still of the same race and order with themselves, and had some claim to an attempt at least at kind and feeling treatment. (20)

Inaugurated by the massive success of Pinel’s project in the French asylum—and matched by the simultaneous influence of William Tuke’s Retreat at home in York—the 19th century appeared to proponents of the asylum to be ushering in a new era of humane sentiment. Hill’s division, here marked by Pinel, of a clear delineation between the barbarisms of the past to the “humane and enlightened system” of the mid-century asylum is invoked throughout the literature on the management of the insane produced by Hill’s contemporaries (20): for John Conolly, resident physician to the Middlesex County Asylum, “the general management of deranged persons continued in every respect barbarous, in every country, and in every age, until Pinel in France and Tuke in England...” (Conolly “Treatment” 4); and for William A. F. Browne, asylum reformer and latterly the President of the Medico-Psychological Association, the mad of the past were “[r]egarded as wild beasts, [and] all maniacs indiscriminately were treated as such”

(107), in contrast to the "benevolent and rational policy which is now pursued" (135).

Andrew Wynter, physician and private practitioner, echoes Browne's formulation, that "[s]upposed to be degraded to the level of beasts, as wild beasts they were treated"

(Wynter "Lunatic Asylums" 232):

Like [animals] they were shut up in dens littered with straw, exhibited for money, and made to growl and roar for the diversion of the spectators who had paid their fee. No wonder that Bedlam should have become a word of fear—no wonder that in popular estimation the bad odour of centuries should still cling to its walls—and that the stranger, tempted by curiosity to pass beneath the shadow of its dome, should enter with sickening trepidation. (232-233)

Across these writings are reiterations of the same general paradigms: that the mad of the past were considered animal, and that in being *considered* as animal they were *necessarily treated* as animal; that with Pinel came the abolition of mechanical restraint and the inauguration of humane methods of care; and that with the end of restraint so too was ended the brutalization of the mad.

Thirty years later, in 1869, photographer Henry Clarke would produce a series of portraits from the West Riding Lunatic Asylum under the direction of its superintendent James Crichton-Browne (the son of William). The goal was to provide a new study of patient physiognomy, previously captured through illustration alone. These photographic portraits reveal a series of inmates acting as representative models of their 'afflicted' status: "Imbecility," "Consecutive Dementia", "Senile Dementia", "Simple Mania," so on and so forth, the unnamed but diagnostically titled patient sat facing the camera. A select few photographs, however, appear rather to model the various methods of restraint

practiced by the asylum. In one, “man restrained by warders” (fig. 1), a clearly bruised and battered inmate is pulled back by the warder behind him, while a pair of arms reach out from beyond the photograph to pull at his waist, apparently tethered by rope. In another, “man in restraint chair” (fig. 2), an inmate sits, hands and face clenched, visibly affixed by his neck, wrists, and head to a specially designed restraint chair. Curiously unlike the preceding portraits, neither man’s diagnosis is offered. However, like the preceding portraits, both focus on the faces of the inmate. The latter especially emphasizes the patient’s physiognomy: the neck and head restraints figuratively sever his head from his body, the dark horizontal straps contrasting his pale features. These focalized restraints are shadowed by the arch of the chair’s backing behind the man’s head, framing him.

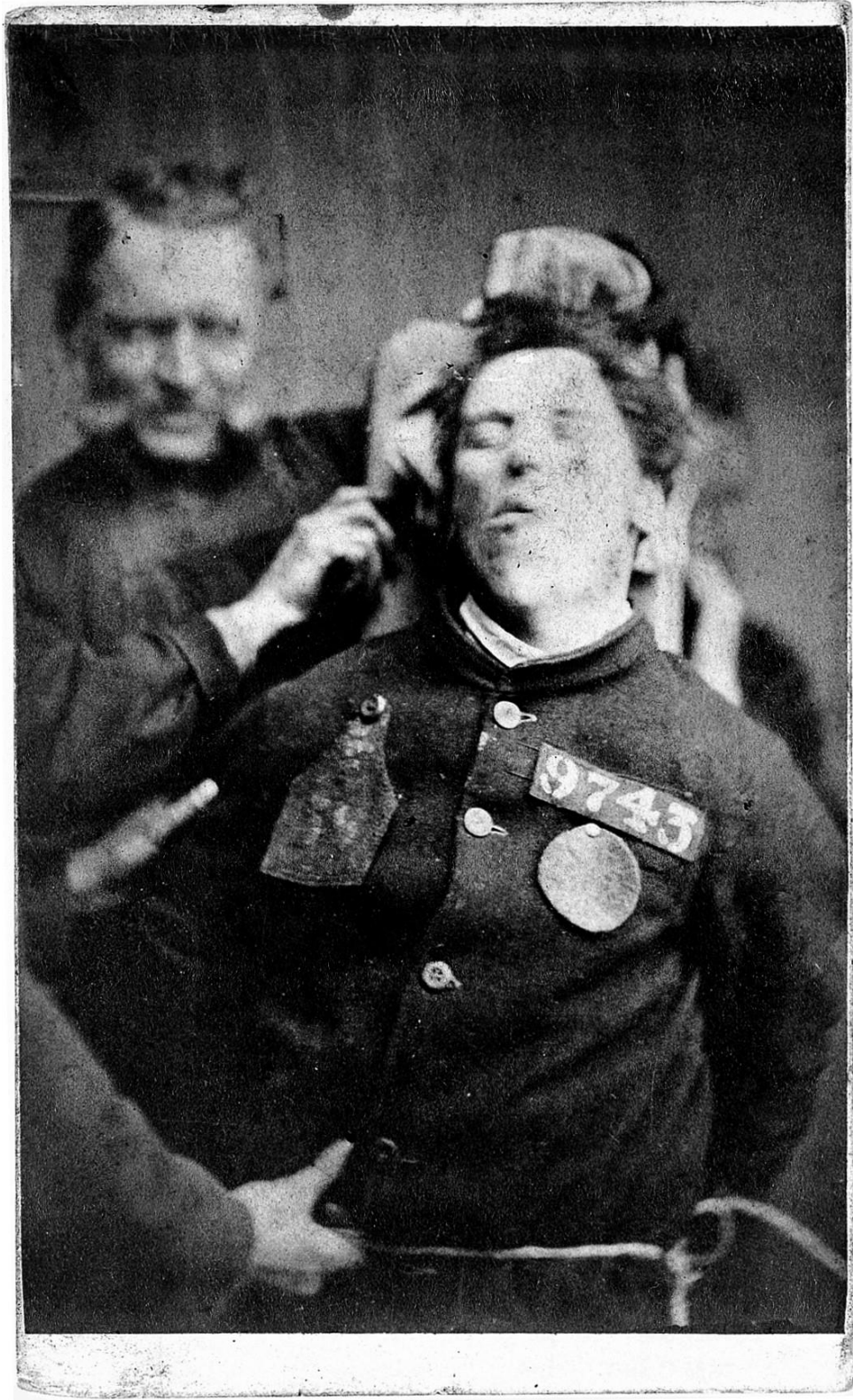


Figure 1. "Man restrained by warders."

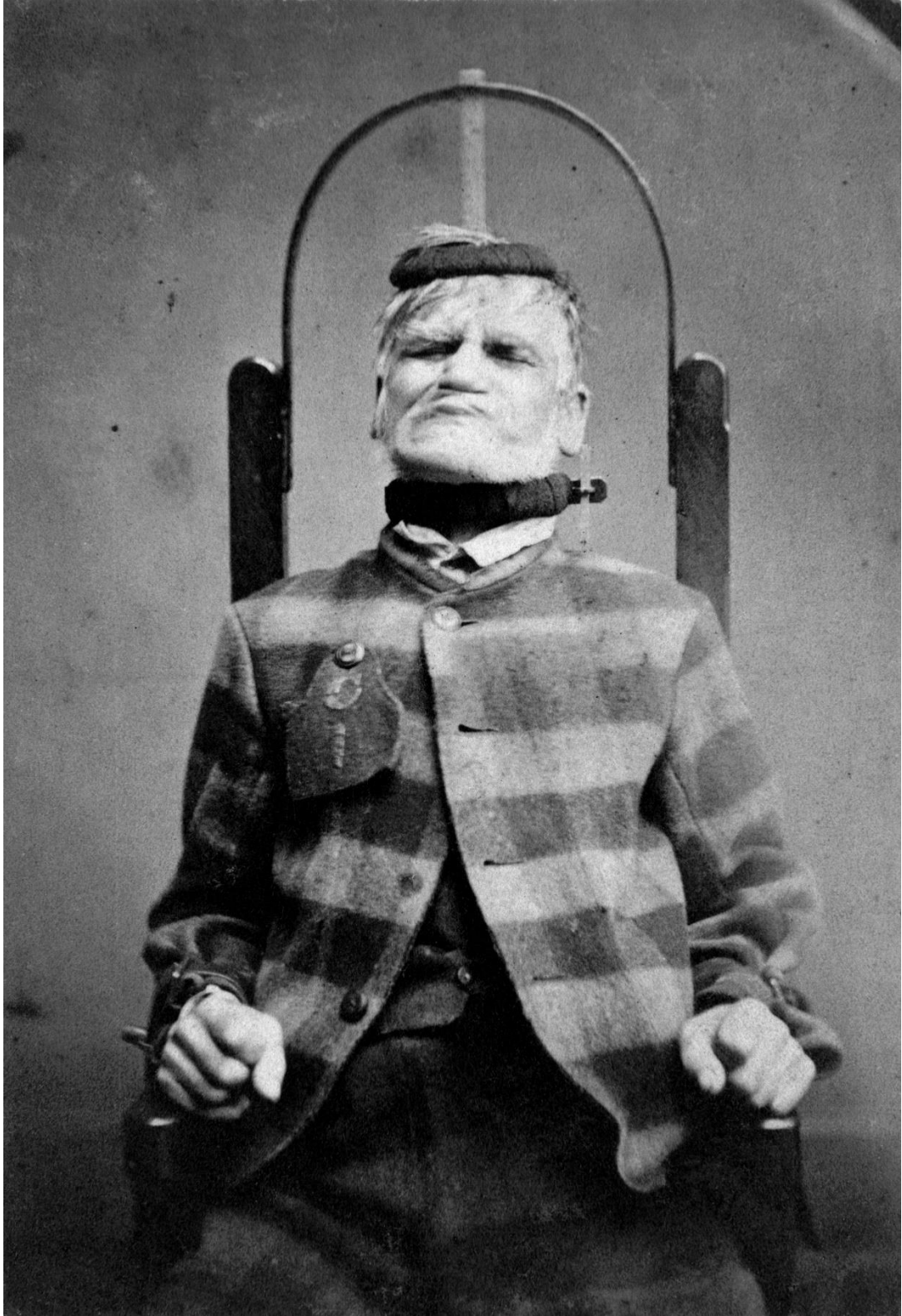


Figure 2. "Man in restraint chair."

Just as Christopher Fox warns that “[w]e should not mistake the rhetoric of discovery for discovery itself” (Fox 2), neither should we mistake the rhetoric which sought to confine cruelty to the past with the actual absence of cruelty. Insofar as the previously mentioned authors working in and writing of the asylum would latterly admit to the continued use of mechanical restraints throughout the century, so too would they admit that “the mere absence of mechanical restraint may constitute no sufficient security against the neglect, nor even the actual ill-treatment, of insane persons...” (Wynter “Restraint” 113):

When we hear, as we have too often heard of late¹, how some *poor demented creature* has had his ribs crushed in by an attendant kneeling upon him, or compressing his chest, it is hard to realise that ‘the county asylum is the most blessed manifestation of true civilization(sic) the world can present.’ (112, emphasis added)

Similarly, whereas these same men condemned the brutalities of the past as the by-product of dehumanization, they would nevertheless engage in the very same rhetoric they had otherwise impugned. Wynter’s “poor demented creature” is reiterated in his declaration that

[n]o close observer who has had extended opportunities of studying the habits of persons afflicted with non-development or loss of mind, can fail to have noticed

¹ Wynter writes that “[n]ot long since no less than three convictions were obtained in different parts of the country against the keepers of lunatics for acts of brutality and violence” (112); J. Granville, editor of Wynter’s collected volume, appends a footnote: “There have been others since this was written” (112).

how strangely like the lower animals they have a tendency to become.

(“Eccentricities” 203)

Ironically, the rhetoric of the asylum’s newly enlightened dawn speaks to the humanist foundations underlying the new discourse of insanity, built upon hierarchies of physical and cognitive development in which life progressed from an innately primitive animal origin toward the perfectibility of the human subject. Wynter would go on to explain that the tendency for the mad to “simulate” the “lower animals” (Wynter recalls patients purring, barking, and imitating “the tricks of monkeys” [203]) was a reiteration of their pathological degradation, the “non-development or retrogression of the human character” (204): “The intellectual, the *ennobling* part of man’s nature, being absent, disordered, or lost, *he sinks back* to the level of the lower animals...” (205, emphasis added). Wynter here once more echoes his predecessors: Jean-Étienne Esquirol, student of Pinel, regarded the mad as “man fallen from the high rank which places him at the head of creation” and thereby “reduced to the condition of the most stupid and vilest creature” (Esquirol 20-21); D. D. Davis, translating and introducing Pinel for the English reader in 1806, wrote that “deprived of [reason], by which man is principally distinguished from the beasts that perish... [man’s] character, as an individual of the species, is always perverted; sometimes annihilated” (Davis 1806, xvi).

The claims that England’s asylums no longer engaged in the cruelties born of dehumanization are at odds with the rhetoric of pathology which continually mobilized the animal in its delineation of the human faculties. For each of these authors, all of whom worked directly within the lunacy trade, the squalid conditions of the asylums of old were the direct product of the dehumanization of the mad, as each noted the particular

ways in which animal associations translated into animal management. *To be considered animal* is, for each, *to be degraded*, the caveat being that such management is appropriate for the animal, but not for the human. Simultaneously for each author, the demarcation between the past and present management of the insane was marked by a willingness on the part of the practitioner to humanize the inmate through curative reform; rather, such a willingness was now the very obligation of the asylum's new biopolitics. The "pretext" surrounding the carceral system of old, Hill argued, was "that insanity was deemed incurable, and the insane person a dangerous and ferocious animal" (Hill 12). If, however, the barbarism of the past was confined to the total abjection of the mad as 'incurable animals', then the present was to be marked by the curative demand for the 'return' to the human condition, for the mad to be forcibly "recovered from his savage and destructive habits" (12). Such rhetoric, however, begs the question: what is to be the condition of the unrecovered? What is the condition of the unrecoverable?

Mad and/as Animal

Throughout the literature produced in and around the asylum, the "animal" functions as a rhetorical gesture used to signal exclusion from the human community—and therefore exemption from moral consideration. Insofar as the "human" becomes the threshold for moral consideration, it behooves us to challenge those boundaries which separate human from animal. For scholars working at the intersections of critical disability theory and critical animal studies, however, the goal is not to further expand the claim of belonging to that privileged realm of "humanity": as Michael Lundblad has succinctly formulated, while it is necessary to demand inclusion so long as benefits are conferred to the human alone, "the category of "the animal" will remain problematic for

any population that can be animalized, so long as it seems natural to treat *animals* “like animals”” (Lundblad 769). Stephanie Jenkins, in “Against Performance Criteria”, argues that “[b]ecause normal human capacity is conflated with moral status”, both the animal and the disabled human other are placed in a “moral double-bind”:

The burden of proof ... falls on marginalized others to “prove” that they possess the capacities that are prerequisites for moral solicitude. This exclusive view of morality positions animal and disabled human others in competition for the extension of moral boundaries to their situation. (102)

This “moral double-bind”, as Jenkins illustrates, has traditionally pit animal rights and disability rights against one another: animal rights activists like Peter Singer who argue for the extension of rights based on intellectual capacity include non-human animals at the expense of humans with severely limited cognitive capabilities; the alternative “Species Affinity Approach”, however, “simply shifts the performance criterion from the level of the individual capacities to species-typical capacities” (99), as Jenkins argues, “mask[ing] and reify[ing] the capacities-based standard that it explicitly rejects” (100). While species affinity presumes the self-evidentiary nature of human affiliation, history has shown us how different *homo sapiens*—racialized, gendered, sexualized, queer, disabled, and other marginalized peoples—have nevertheless been argued in and out of personhood; the maintenance of a category of exclusion will always preclude a *limit* to inclusion. The goal therefore must be to deconstruct the boundaries which perpetually define the human *against* the animal—to stay with the trouble, as Haraway suggests, “to stir up potent response” (1), and to disrupt rather than settle the divide.

In terms of performance criteria, the capacity for speech has borne the weight of defining the human. Man is the speaking animal, the sole wielder of “absolutely meaningful speech” (Derrida “Signature” 15). For authors of the nineteenth century, while new bodies of knowledge produced new knowledge *of* bodies, the tendency to rely upon the capacity for speech as the expression of the human will—the *cogito* of Cartesian duality, thought confined to the body—was maintained, shifted from the realm of political philosophy to pathology. The *Chambers Encyclopedia*, under its Anthropological heading, would refashion Descartes as a matter of physiological certainty: “Many animals have voice; none, except man, have articulate speech expressive of ideas” (128). Such a formula is subsumed into the scope of the asylum: for Conolly’s *Indications of Insanity*, “the use of artificial signs” is a reflection of the “will to use them” (Conolly 52); inversely, “natural signs” (51), the gesticulations of the body and the modulations of voice by emotion, are rendered base and instinctual. Like Descartes, such language ‘speaks’ to the mechanistic structure but not the directive soul: they are animal utterances, perhaps, but not human language.

Derrida shows us, however, the slippery logic by which men like Descartes sought to fashion man’s language out of the unmaking of the animal’s, a “dissymmetrical struggle” (*TATTIA* 87) in which “Descartes appeals to a man who sees an animal that doesn’t see him” (82). The animal is sensible exteriority, reactionary impulse, the automatic response which is to say the limited response², the response that is “not really”

² “...it is no longer simply a matter of an inability, on the part of the animal, to respond to whatever is said in its presence, which could be a call, an order, a noise—to which, Descartes knew full well, the animal ‘responds’ or reacts—but of responses to questions, questioning concerning ‘what is asked of them.’ As though the animal were certainly able to respond, to react to a call or an order, to the sign of its name, for example, but certainly not able, even by means of mechanically programmed words, to respond to a

a response (8). Underscoring Descartes' machine-animals is the belief that sensory experience and embodiment—the material makings of the human/animal connection—are a lesser mode of being in the world: the animal is always “of” the world, whereas man assumes the capacity to rise above it. Such statements presume with absolute certainty, as Derrida argues, both animal deficiency and human perfectibility: “So can the human do that, purely?” (160).

Ironically, the fixity with which one declares “the animal’s reaction is not a response” is in itself a failure to respond to the animal, a failure to entertain the very concept of responding to the animal. Such a failure similarly underscores mad rhetoric. Catherine Prendergast explores the “black hole of rhetoric” which surrounds madness: “if people think you’re crazy, they don’t listen to you” (57). What Prendergast poses is not an absence in and of the mad (“mentally disabled” in Prendergast’s terms) rhetoric itself but rather an absence of attention, for the mad rhetoric to be taken *as* rhetoric. Such an absence abounds in the literature of madness. The French psychiatrist Jean-Etienne Esquirol wrote of being “assailed” with a madman’s “babble” in his run of the asylum, “but notwithstanding this torrent of words, he says nothing, thinks nothing” (Esquirol 20). As we will see is the case with Charlotte Brontë’s Bertha Mason, the absence here is not of a *lack* of words. Nor even is it a lack of thought: Esquirol has just told readers exactly what his madman thinks, the great religious fanaticism plaguing his patient’s mind. For Esquirol, however, the patient’s words fail to “bea[r] outside of itself”

question. [...] [Descartes] decid[ed] on the limit of the animal as a limit to the response...” (Derrida *TATTIA* 84)

(Prendergast 57), to have “transactional worth” in the economy of dialogue (57). They might be heard, but they remain unattended.

Madness and animality therefore intersect on the point of “rhetoricability” (56), denied the ability to have their rhetoric manifest meaningfully in conversations about responsibility. They are both, otherwise put, rhetorically disabled. As Prendergast posits that “the question of *how* one listens to the mentally ill in an age in which they have been oppressed by the effective criminalization of their condition becomes vital” (57, emphasis added), so too must we follow the question posed by Eli Clare in *Exile and Pride*: “...where does our inability lie?” (82). This project therefore takes as its starting point the concept of a *rhetorically disabling gesture*, discursive constructs and narrative frameworks which frame the (animalized, mad) rhetor as incapable of response—otherwise put, to be lacking in rhetoricability.

This project examines the literature of madness written in and around the 19th century, charted roughly along the lines of major developments in the asylum and the transition toward a discourse of “mental health,” modelling Mitchell and Snyder’s (*Narrative Prosthesis*) call to “situate[e] a discussion about disability within a literary domain while keeping watch on its social context” (9). Where Foucault argued that “[i]n the serene world of mental illness, modern man no longer communicates with the madman” (x), I seek to uncover the ways in which this silence is structured. Turning, therefore, to the advent of the modern asylum at the turn of the 19th century, I conduct my literary analysis with reference to major developments in the construction of “mental health”: the institutionalization of the asylum and its consolidation under the medical profession. Chapter 1 begins with the inauguration of “moral madness”, the subsumption

of “madness without delusion” into the discourse of insanity. Chapter 2 covers the history surrounding the 1845 Asylum Act and the physiological underpinnings of the mad manual. Chapter 3 discusses the rise of experimental medicine and the role of vivisection in the exploration of cerebral anatomy. In tracing these historical developments, I have sought to emphasize the role physiology played in the pre-Freudian history of mental health, recognizing as Kurt Danziger has that “the topics, the methodology, and the conceptual apparatus” which constructed the domain of mental health “were all to be found in the physiology of the time” (2).

By emphasizing the physiological underpinnings of mental health, I bring “the animal” to bear on 19th century conceptualizations of madness. Between the moral and medical managerial regimes of the asylum lay the appeal to the repression of man’s material-animality: both moral and medical frameworks relied upon “the animal” as a rhetorical gesture in locating the aberrant bodies and behaviors of the mad. Underscoring the role of “the animal” in the construction of disability allows for a recognition of the reciprocal violence between human and non-human animals, best demonstrated by chapter 3: David Ferrier, whose highly publicized trials surrounding his experiments on animals mark the social context of Wilkie Collins’ *Heart and Science*, began his study of experimental medicine at the West Riding Asylum at the time of Crichton-Brown and our “man in restraint chair”. The experiments for which Ferrier was later tried were conducted on animals in the hopes of mapping the brain, to discover the hitherto unfound lesions of insanity; by performing these experiments on “the most human of lower animals” (Ferrier 142), Ferrier sought to uncover the pathology which could not be previously found in his human patients. Whereas the animal rights movement marking

Collins' *Heart and Science* argued that vivisection would eventually turn toward the human subject, the human subject in fact precedes Ferrier's investigation. Human and non-human animal thus become entangled in a web of pathological desire, always already holding both in restraint.

Building from these historical and social contexts, I examine a series of novels—Mary Wollstonecraft's *Maria; or, the Wrongs of Woman* (1798), Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847), and Wilkie Collins' *The Woman in White* (1860) and *Heart and Science* (1883)—which feature mad persons whose rhetoricability is directly challenged by the narrative. I seek to uncover how and why mad rhetoric is presented as arhetorical, the conditions of and reception to their (a)rhetoricability. As I demonstrate, within each of these novels, “the animal” functions as a recurrent rhetorically disabling gesture, frequently mobilized in order to strip the mad of their voice. However, what for Chapter 1 is presented as the consequence to the humanist political argument, becomes in Chapters 2 and 3 an uncovering of the mutual rhetorical disablement of both human and non-human animals. Through my readings of Wilkie Collins, these latter chapters uncover a willingness to mobilize the animal as a rhetorical rather than arhetorical agent within the narrative: within the narrative, animals “speak” in ways that mirror the heroine, registered by the narrator but actively disabled by characters (particularly the villains) of the plot. By placing his human and non-human animals in direct conversation with one another, Collins asks that readers recognize the methods by which both are subject to a mutually disabling narrative of material denigration.

The cross-species affiliation offered by Collins stands in direct contrast to both Mary Wollstonecraft and Charlotte Brontë who, as early feminist writers, were motivated

by a desire to extricate the female body from political subjugation through deference to a purportedly equalizing humanist discourse. By situating their heroines within the context of a “human rights” based discourse, both novelists seek to uplift the heroine through the cultivation of her human will; however, such a project necessitates the subjugation of “the animal”. Where the mad of these texts are therefore explicitly framed as animal, I seek to undress how and why the mad(woman)’s abjection from the political project is achieved. In Chapter 1, I therefore argue that by rhetorically disabling the mad through gestures which align them with animals, these novels seek to underscore the lack of “responsibility” in and toward the mad: stripping the mad of the humanizing affections alternately achieved by the heroine through voice, and therefore stripping the heroine of any responsibility owed to the mad as fellow-creatures. I begin by interrogating the rights-based discourse established in Wollstonecraft’s *Vindications* which outlines the rubric for both the elevation of the “rational creature” and the subjugation of the “creature of sensation.” Reading through *Wrongs* as a didactic on the formation of the rational creature, I examine the ways in which the mad throughout the novel bear trace associations with the *Vindications*’ “creature of sensation” in ways that encourage, and are ultimately sustained by, the heroine’s conclusive disavowal of the mad.

Building on the moral framework laid out by Wollstonecraft’s novel, I then address *Jane Eyre* from a provocation: by what authority do we, both as readers and scholars of *Jane Eyre*, believe that Bertha does not speak? By putting *Jane Eyre* into parallel with *Wrongs*, I argue that there are concurrent associations between madness and animality that work to actively strip the madwoman of her rhetoricability. Whereas Jane-as-narrator encourages readers to align with her perspective, I work to actively register

the ways in which Jane, working under the influence of her own moral education, deliberately renders Bertha both animal and abject. Through Jane's persistent reiteration of Bertha's preternaturalness, the narrative separates Bertha from human (and therefore moral) association far prior to her grand reveal, working to mitigate the audience reception *to* that reveal—and to Bertha's ultimate conclusion. For both of these novels, the heroine is able to circumvent any moral responsibility owed to the mad or their care by dehumanizing them. The active underwriting of their rhetoricability plays significantly into such a process.

In Chapter 2 I then turn to Wilkie Collins' *The Woman in White*, which centres on the *unmaking* of two women's rhetoricability and the social and legal consequences of disablement. The novel is situated within the historical context of the asylum's institutionalization and its consolidation as a medical professional domain, as well as the concurrent social context of the so-term "lunacy panic". Like Wollstonecraft's *Wrongs*, Collins makes use of "wrongful confinement" for his plot; however, whereas Wollstonecraft posits escape from the asylum as the willful act of her heroine, Collins' novels emphasize the undercutting of the will through the act of diagnosis. For both Laura Fairlie and Anne Catherick, their rhetorical authority is underwritten by the prognostic gaze which searches for evidence of madness in body and language, emphasizing the disabling effects of being declared mad.

In Chapter 3, I turn to Collins' later and lesser-appreciated novel, *Heart and Science*. Set within the context of Britain's "anti-vivisection agitation", I read the ways in which the medical response to both animal rights activism and animal experiments deprecates one's "responsibility" for and to the body. Whereas scholarship surrounding

Heart and Science has denigrated the apparently “incidental nature” of vivisection to the novel’s plot (Wiesenthal 104), I argue to the contrary: the rhetorical disablement which constitutes Carmina Graywell’s plot reveals the process by which one is made abject and therefore rendered into permissibly experimental material. Wherein Carmina’s plot is the repeated testing of her rhetorical authority against the scientific discourse of her aunt, she is rendered rhetorically disabled prior to Benjulia’s experimentation—putting her directly in parallel to the animals which Benjulia otherwise experiments upon. The novel therefore consists, in its entirety, of the social processes by which one may become excluded from medical ethics.

Rhetors, Rhetoricability, Rhetorical Disability

Rhetoric studies offered this project a terminology where “voice,” “speech”, and even “language” otherwise failed. When I began interrogating the lack of dialogue from mad characters in the 19th century novel, I originally conceived of this project in terms of “silence.” As I soon learned (and as I will unpack throughout) however, these characters were far from silent; they were, if anything, *loud*. Mad characters frequently shout, laugh, cry, and otherwise vocalize throughout novels, while nevertheless failing to register in the formal dialogue of the narrative. Mad characters could similarly speak in the fully traditional sense and still be deemed mute or non-verbal. Conversely, my desire to affiliate the mad and the animal became troubled by writing of one’s speech in the literal sense (such as a mad character talking) while alternately symbolically aligning the other’s (for example, a dog’s howl) as “speech”. What was most important, however, was not the communicative mode in and of itself but of one’s reception *to* communication. “Rhetoricability” offered an invaluable framework by which I might align all modes of

communication in terms, not of presence and absence, but of “addressivity and responsivity” (Davis 2017, 432).

While rhetoric and rhetoric studies bear their own ableist and speciesist baggage, intersectional scholarship has sought to expand the received tradition of rhetoric as simply ‘speaking and writing well’. Returning to the Aristotelian tradition, scholars (Brueggeman 2009; Walters 2014) have instead placed rhetoric within the conceptual framework of *dynamis*, of “all available means of persuasion” (Walters 31). By emphasizing the *dynamis* rather than the *ars* of rhetoric, scholars can therefore expand the range of techniques included within the realm of rhetorical persuasion: Walters includes touch and sensory experience, while Brueggeman explores the rhetoricability of sign language, both scholars turning to embodied modes of communication and meaning making. Other scholars have interrogated the assumptions underlining the rhetorical tradition, asking which persuasive arts have been excluded in the formal tradition. In “Rethinking Rhetoric through Mental Disabilities”, Cynthia Lewiecki-Wilson argues that the traditional rhetorical composition which privileges the individual voice is sustained by those liberal humanist qualities I have underscored: a distance from the material and sensing body, and an idealized abstraction of the human will. Lewiecki-Wilson challenges these values as devitalizing “the rhetoricity inherent in embodied life” (157), arguing that

...we need an expanded understanding of rhetoricity as a potential, and a broadened concept of rhetoric to include collaborative and mediated rhetorics that work with the performative rhetoric of bodies that “speak” with/out language.
(157)

Through a similar appeal to *dynamis*, Lewiecki-Wilson uses potentiality to discuss the use of facilitated communication in persons whose psychiatric and cognitive disabilities interfere with their ability to communicate. Facilitated communication—communication with the assistance of a “facilitator”, someone trained to help guide the rhetor to and through communication—challenges the value of a voice in isolation, instead laying bare the “interdependencies of embodied lives” (161). The collaborative effort of facilitated communication makes overt the relationality inherent to rhetoric in ways that parallel Lewiecki-Wilson’s argument to Krista Ratcliffe’s “Rhetorical Listening” (1999), the “active process of interpretation on the part of the audience” that grants rhetoric signification (Ratcliffe 161).

For each of these scholars—Walters, Brueggeman, Lewiecki-Wilson, and Ratcliffe—rhetoric is always already embodied and relational. Whereas the liberal humanist tradition masks these qualities in favor of an isolated individual immateriality, the rhetorics of “non-normative rhetors” demand recognition of the meaningful material interdependencies of bodies (Walters 30). Alternately moving against disabling narratives of non-normative rhetors, scholars like Prendergast have called for a greater recognition on the part of the audience and their willingness to engage—emphasizing, like Ratcliffe, that meaning is manifested through audience interactions *with* the rhetor, and not confined to the individual rhetor’s capabilities alone. Building upon studies in rhetoric and the social model of disability, therefore, I have mobilized “rhetoricability” to argue the concept of rhetorical disablement. In this study, to be “rhetorically disabled” bears dual meaning. On the one hand, to be “rhetorically disabled” is to be denied rhetoricability, the ability to produce rhetoric; to have one’s rhetoric refused, disabled.

Concurrently, to be “rhetorically disabled” is *to be disabled by rhetoric*. This latter definition recognizes the ways in which discursive constructs of voice and meaning (such as the boundary between “reaction” and “response”) actively work to produce the former iteration.

Through this concept of rhetorical disability, I illustrate how both mad and animalized rhetors are actively silenced through appeals to the liberal humanist tradition. By extending the “disabling” of rhetoric to animals, I simply build upon the call to community thus laid out, recognizing, like Jenkins, that “far from removing a human or another animal from the realm of moral concern, (inter) dependency and vulnerability are the animal--and thus human--condition" (Jenkins et al 4).

Mad or Mentally Disabled

This project borrows from numerous critical perspectives which trouble the boundaries of the human community, many of which intersect in profound and provocative ways. However, like the intersections of disability and animal studies, these intersections sometimes collide in discomforting ways. I choose to insist upon affiliation rather than segregation.

“Madness” as a term holds both historical and contemporary connotations: my use of the term is intended to evoke both.

For 19th century authors, terminology is contingent at best: the most popular manuals on psychological medicine would frequently devote sub-sections to the landscape of definitional insanity, both posing and challenging the various iterations offered by their professional predecessors and contemporaries while typically offering a new definition of their own. Generally speaking, however, there are accepted patterns of

use. “Mental disease,” “mental derangement,” or “mental alienation” would approximate what we might now call “mental disability” or “mental impairment”: as a generalized category for mental impairment, manuals on “Insanity” would include both psychological and cognitive impairment. Traditionally, insanity would be divided into melancholia, mania (latterly divided into generalized mania and “monomania”, a singular obsession or fixed idea), as well as “idiocy,” dementia, and epilepsy. This was expanded by Philippe Pinel in 1801 to include *manie sans délire*, “mania without delusion,” latterly defined as “moral insanity.” By 1858, Bucknill and Tuke would reconfigure the categories into Idiocy, Dementia (Primary and Secondary), “Delusional Insanity” (including melancholia), “Emotional Insanity” (which included “moral insanity” and “melancholia without delusion”), and Mania (Acute and Chronic). When I refer to the “literature of insanity”, therefore, I am referencing the psychological literature of the time which included all forms of “mental derangement.” Typically, however, “madness” is used in reference to psychological categories: while both “insanity” and “madness” might be used interchangeably as generalized categories of mental condition, a manual that will talk of “idiocy” as insanity, for example, will rarely refer to it as “madness.”

Throughout this project, I maintain the use of “mad” and “madness” when speaking of the characters I examine. However, what I refer to as “mad” throughout this project may similarly be termed “mentally disabled” or “psycho-socially disabled.” I have chosen to use “mad” so as to distinguish between these disability-identified positions and my own framework of rhetorical disability, and so as to make possible the connection between “mad” and “animal” as alike “rhetorically-disabled subjects.”

By situating madness within the discourse of disability, however, my use of the term may seem uncomfortably settled. In contemporary usage, “madness” evokes Mad studies, a body of scholarship led primarily by “people bearing psychiatric diagnoses” (Menziés et al. 6), a divergence from the (often) non-identifying professional and academically led anti-psychiatry movement. Accordingly, many within the Mad movement have chosen to position themselves within the “consumer/survivor/ex-patient” (c/s/x) model, emphasizing one’s history with the institution rather than the pathological prescription they have been given (I would self-identify as a consumer under this model). Whereas Mad studies does not represent a single unified perspective, it is largely positioned around the critique of the bio-medical model and the pathologizing of distress. Mad studies and mad activism arise from and address the specific history of the Mad experience in relation to the psychiatric institution, a history that shares systematic and ideological commonalities with but is distinct from the broader medical institution and disability studies (one could compare this divergence to the particularity of “Deaf studies” for example). As such, there are some within the Mad movement who do not identify with “disability”: for some, this is a resistance to placing oneself within the “well/unwell” paradigm that historically (as we see with the asylum) conscripts the patient into care; for others, there is “a fear of locating the ‘problem’ back with the individual” (Spandler and Anderson 14), of allowing for or acknowledging impairment within the mad body.

Simultaneously, however, there are those within Mad studies who *have* aligned themselves with disability (Price 2013; Lieweck-Wilson 2003), or who have otherwise recognized the potential alliances that are to be forged between these two bodies of work.

Such alliances are frequently forged through “social” or “relational” models of disability theory in opposition to “biomedical” models. For both disability theory and mad studies, a “biomedical” model approaches physical and cognitive difference in medical terms, “as an exclusively medical problem” (Kafer 5), and as both “objective fact and common sense” (5); a social or relational model of disability, however, understands disability “in relation to ‘able-bodied’ or ‘able-minded’” binaries (6), placing the individual within the context of “built environments and social patterns that exclude or stigmatize particular kinds of bodies, minds, and ways of being” (6). Under a social model, both madness and physical disability are held against what Rosemarie Garland-Thomson terms the “normate”: “the veiled subject position of the cultural self, the figure outlined by the array of deviant others whose marked bodies shore up the normate’s boundaries the social figure through which people can represent themselves as definitive human beings” (Garland-Thomson 8).

In my own project, the choice to situate madness within a disability studies framework is to emphasize the ways in which the mad *body*, alongside mind and behaviour, is diagnosed and prescribed. Under a social model of disability theory, I interrogate the ways in which madness has been conceptualized in pathological terms, modelling deviance and distress against the normate—the ideal and immaterial “human” spectre in the literature of insanity. This model allows me to interrogate “rhetoricability” in terms of prescription rather than individual pathology.

The Mad/Woman and the Savage

The uncovering of “the animal” as a recurrent disabling gesture bears significantly not only upon mad and disability studies, but for all categories of persons to

have been historically deemed less-than-fully human. The hierarchy used to order man against animal has underpinned racialized and gendered hierarchies of being as well, particularly in an era where evolutionary biology was called upon to provide race science a newly scientific “legitimacy.” Nineteenth century medicine, as we will see, makes frequent appeals to the “savage”, deferring to a “brute” subject of an aggravated animality whose civility is presumed absent. Race science sought to place persons of colour lower in the order of being by reading onto the racialized body signs of an evident animality.

Whereas the novels of this project seek to undress these hierarchies of oppression, it behooves us to question who is represented and redeemed across these texts. This is a predominantly female project: almost every mad subject discussed within the project is a *madwoman*. Similarly, with the exception of Bertha Mason (whose tricky racial positioning is later addressed), this is a predominantly *white* project: written by white authors about (and ostensibly for) white subjects. Between Bertha Mason and the unnamed “Mulatto” of *Heart and Science*, the mad-person of colour is frequently killed off, unafforded the reparative justice that is otherwise allotted to the white madwoman; when able-body/minded characters of colour appear (such as Jemima), they take on secondary and often subservient roles to the primary white protagonist. Insofar as these authors seek to unpack the legitimacy of animalized hierarchies which order the gendered subject, it is not always evident that they seek to extend this political project to the racialized subject as well. Whereas both race and gender benefit from critical animal studies, then, we must ask why those benefits have not been mutually borne.

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Chapter 1

1 Maria and Jane Eyre: Madness and the Rhetorical Animal

“A massive and sudden emergence of uncanniness, which, familiar as it might have been in an opaque and forgotten life, now harries me as radically separate, loathsome. *Not me. Not that.*”

-Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, p.2

“They have taken no account of the fact that what they call “animal” could look at them, and address them from down there, from a wholly other origin.”

-Jacques Derrida, *The Animal that Therefore I Am*, p.13

In Mary Wollstonecraft’s *Maria; or, the Wrongs of Woman* (1798), during a brief reprieve from the titular protagonist’s own isolation, Maria chances to hear of a newly interred inmate in their shared asylum. Maria listens at the door for sounds of this “lovely maniac” as airs of “a pathetic ballad of old robin gray” begin to fill the corridor of their collective space with “the most heart-melting falls and pauses” (69). For Maria, falsely imprisoned on the word of her tyrannical husband, the intonations of the new inmate’s song speak directly to her: in line with the ballad³ she sings, Maria learns that the “lovely maniac” was married to a richer, older man, and subsequently “lost her senses” during her first lying-in (70). Ballad and narrative alike therefore spark something approaching sympathy in Maria, such that the protagonist “beg[an] to pourtray(sic) to herself another victim, when,” in a pivotal moment of collapse, “the lovely warbler flew” (70): “a torrent of unconnected exclamations and questions burst from her, interrupted by fits of laughter, so horrid, that Maria shut the door, and, turning her eyes up to heaven, exclaimed—

³ “Old Robin Gray” is a Scottish ballad which tells the tale of a young woman led to marry an old man named Robin Gray. The woman narrating the ballad is in love with a man named Jamie who soon goes to sea; while her lover is away, her parents fall upon misfortune, and she is pressured to marry Robin Gray after he offers to maintain their livelihood. Jamie returns after she is already wed, and the two lovers part, with the lady promising “a gude wife aye to be” (Lindsay 477).

‘Gracious God!’” (70). Maria’s fellow feeling is jettisoned by insanity’s “interrupt[ion]”, as the identifiable refrain is replaced by an “unconnected” stream of rhetoric—exclamations and questions which are given no space but for the abject response they incite in Maria, wherein sympathy and identification give way to repulsion. Crucially, this collapse is intertwined with an animal metaphor. The “lovely maniac” transitions into the “lovely warbler” just as her rhetoric alters—when those sympathetic “falls and pauses” instead become “bursts” of passionate exclamation. The madwoman’s animalization deliberately marks her abjection. Whereas the madwoman’s recognizable refrain has Maria empathizing with her fellow inmate, when her voice “flies” into apparently irrational patterns of speech, her potential inclusion within Maria’s community is sundered. Instead, the madwoman is divided from Wollstonecraft’s liberatory project through a rhetorical gesture that likens the loss of the reasonable voice to the flight of the warbler, an abrupt animalization which marks the moment the madwoman’s voice is separated from its discursive potential—and where the madwoman is herself distanced from her own humanity.

That the “lovely maniac’s” flight from discourse and Maria’s flight from sympathy are entangled in this moment of animalization is the fundamental consequence of the political argument inherent to *Maria; or, the Wrongs of Woman* (1798). The novel, published posthumously in 1798, functions partly as a recapitulation of Wollstonecraft’s earlier *Vindications*, putting the *Rights of Women* to expediency by narrating the still-sustained *Wrongs* suffered nearly ten years later in the author’s literary career. For both texts, Wollstonecraft is driven by a desire to articulate the humanity of women that she argued was routinely denied by the social and legal mores which distinguish “between

that of a wife and a human being” (*Wrongs*⁴ 121); the degradations which the *Vindications* argued debased and dehumanized women are therefore narrativized throughout *Wrongs*. Building upon the humanist framework first outlined in her *Vindications*, *Wrongs* offers a dialogue of women that attests to their intellectual faculties, ultimately seeking to legitimize woman’s place within (through their induction to) the fellowship of “rational being[s]” (117). Echoing throughout this conversation, however, is the “poor maniac’s strain” (70)—the voices of Maria’s mad fellow inmates who are excluded from the humanizing discourse of *Wrongs*. Instead, the “horrid noises” cast about the asylum are used to mark the very parameters of Wollstonecraft’s discursive project, as the “wild tones” which “prov[e] the total absence of reason” are held in stark contrast to Maria’s own “tone of persuasion” (63). These mad voices are formally excluded from dialogic participation, from ever speaking their own narratives in the way that is afforded to Maria, Jemima, or even the brief interludes of the working women in whose homes Maria shelters; instead, like the “lovely warbler”, readers only ever encounter the mad voice through Maria’s response, cast in terms which portray them—and receive them—as pure object. Against the novel’s veneration of rational discourse, the mad voice registers only as the cast-off remnants of “human converse” (72).

Whereas scholarship has identified madness as more than a metaphorical struggle for Maria, whose own plot consists of a (perhaps not entirely) “false” imprisonment within the asylum, there is nevertheless a need to look beyond the heroine herself—to understand, rather, that Maria’s subjectification, her escape from the asylum, and her

⁴ Wollstonecraft’s works are abbreviated throughout this chapter as follows: *Maria; or, the Wrongs of Woman* (*Wrongs*); *A Vindication of the Rights of Men* (*OM*); *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (*OW*).

consequent disavowal of the passions are built of the same materials which leave her fellow inmates imprisoned, “obviously not confined without a cause” (70).

Wollstonecraft’s depiction of madness throughout the novel is the direct consequence of, and the necessary conclusion to, her own political argument: while Maria’s plot models the formation of the “rational creature”, her fellow inmates reveal the reciprocal denigration of “brute creation,” the animalized body *against* which the rational creature is to be raised. Seeking, therefore, to elevate women from the mire of political bestiality, Wollstonecraft nevertheless includes the very terms by which one might be excluded from her project. Under conditions which render the human-animal as always-already at war with itself, the novel emphasizes the animality of the madwoman’s voice so as to castigate the body-driven response: positioned by the narrative as the “wild luxuriant[ies] of noxious passions” (67), the mad voice becomes framed as the human-animal’s inability to subordinate the animal faculties and so raise herself to the level of the human. For Maria, whose rational voice is held at odds with her romantic sensibilities—conscious, on the one hand, of the cruelties of the marriage market, yet driven by desire toward irreparable suitors—the marked disavowal of the madwoman’s rhetoricability serves as an echoing reminder: by giving in to her animality, the madwoman is abjected from human identification.

The gesture by which Wollstonecraft seeks to uplift the humanity of her protagonist through contrast with a markedly animalized madwoman is, however, not borne by Wollstonecraft alone; rather, in seeking to legitimize women’s self-representation, early feminist literature is repeatedly led into confrontation with the double-bind of the rhetorically able-subject. Early feminist writers like Wollstonecraft

sought to distance themselves from cultural assumptions of the (gendered) body through deference to an immaterial humanist framework, positing that women, like men, possessed the same moral faculties independent of their physicality; yet, insofar as these faculties demand utterance, the subject is necessarily confronted by and must grapple with the body-which-speaks. Novels like *Maria* therefore expose which forms of utterance are to be rendered rhetorically (in)valid under the rational framework, where the madwoman's expulsion lays bare the derision of too-bodily articulations.

From Wollstonecraft's "lovely warbler", then, comes Bertha Mason, Charlotte Brontë's iconic madwoman in the attic, whose "preternatural laughter" precedes her introduction to the text and encompasses her configuration throughout (Brontë 107). Like Wollstonecraft's *Maria*, Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) bases its heroine's inclusion in the discourse of rights upon a model of the rhetorically-able human. Jane's subjectification, the process by which the heroine seeks to establish herself both socially and politically as a rightful subject, is predicated on her coming-into-language, a novel-length project of self-legitimization which Suzanne Shumway argues "rests upon a valorization of, as well as an investment in, language and its powers" (Shumway 161). Like *Maria*, Jane strives to articulate her subject status through discourse between herself and others, establishing herself increasingly as a *speaking* subject; and, like *Maria*, Jane's process of rhetorical (and subsequently social and political) elevation is one which is grounded in the rhetorical *degradation* of both the mad and the animal (moreover the mad-as-animal). In consequence, Bertha Mason functions as the counter-rhetor to Jane. Bertha's voice is emphasized—her vocalizations forming the most significant mode through which readers are granted access to her character—while simultaneously divested of meaning,

registered purely in nonverbal terms and presented as that which necessarily excludes her from discursive participation. So too like Maria, the echoes of the madwoman's voice stand pitted against the protagonist's movement into and through language; the delegitimization of Bertha's rhetoric *as* rhetoric, and her subsequent disavowal from Thornfield's liberal humanism, functions as a lesson for Jane's coming to terms with the boundaries of rhetoric.

For both novels, the heroine's legitimization as a discursive subject is bound to a larger human-making project, a begging inclusion into the fellowship of "rational creatures" which reveals (if not directly maintains) the conditions for exclusion. These conditions are laid bare by the mad throughout both novels. Within these novels, mad persons speak—frequently, loudly, and disruptively—in ways that place their voice at the centre of their character; at the same time, both novels insist that these voices be registered as arhetorical, unpersuasive and devoid of meaning, through gestures of animalization. Barking shouts, snatches of bird songs, hyena cackles: the mad person's speech is explicitly animalized, drawing on bestialized assumptions of sound and meaning, ultimately in order to naturalize the exclusion of the mad from political discourse. Through these animalized gestures, readers are directed to identify the lack of rhetoricability in the mad as the reason *for* their expulsion from humanity, rather than the condition *of* their expulsion: a failure on the part of the mad to properly articulate themselves as human.

This chapter concerns itself not so much with the subject formation of these novels' heroines, but with those who are, as a result, cast aside—as with the terms of what the "outside" of discourse entails. Where the mad become entangled with the animal

in an (a)rhetorical bind, this chapter seeks to unravel the anthropo-logocentric bent of a “common civility of speech” (*Wrongs* 85). I therefore chart the ways in which voice and animality intersect at the axis of mad rhetoric, reading the representation of the mad against the heroine’s struggle for self-representation. In doing so, I argue that the framework for humanity offered by both novels implicitly underscores the double-bind of the rhetorically-able subject, a problematic landscape of rhetorical in/exclusion troubled by confrontations with non-verbal rhetors. These confrontations, far from affirming the humanity of the heroine, rather reveal the negotiability of the human subject in and of itself.

The Vindications and the Humanist Project

Before delving into *Maria; or, the Wrongs of Woman*, we must lay bare Wollstonecraft’s conceptualization of the “rational creature,” the humanist framework through which she sought to emancipate woman from her social and political fetters. The rational creature, first espoused in the *Vindications*, allowed for Wollstonecraft to assimilate the sexes on the grounds of a shared capacity to reason, distancing women from cultural assumptions surrounding the gendered body through deference to an immaterial intellectual faculty which, she argued, united the human in the hierarchy of animal creation: it was this faculty, divinely given, that Wollstonecraft argued elevated *both* man and woman from the base reality of “brute creation” (*OM* 12). When *Wrongs* therefore invokes the figure of a “rational being” (*Wrongs* 117), the narrative deliberately implicates the heroine within the scope of this humanist framework—arguing that to deny Maria’s “asserti[on] [of] the independence of mind distinctive of a rational being” (117), in the form of leaving her abusive husband, is to deny her humanity. Yet as the very

terms of the rational creature reveal—and as the narrative of *Wrongs* will, I argue, guide its readers through—such an assertion is made possible only by substituting one hierarchy for another. The gendered-other is replaced by the animalized, as one subjugated body seeks to escape its fetters through the substitute. A critical examination of the rational creature’s terms therefore reveals the denigration of the animal body necessary for the former’s liberation: terms which will liberate Maria only so as to leave the “lovely warbler” behind.

The rational creature is first outlined by Wollstonecraft in *A Vindication of the Rights of Men* (1790), in which Wollstonecraft argued for the basis of an originary rightful subject. As Wollstonecraft would declare:

There are rights which men inherit at their birth, as rational creatures, who were raised above the brute creation by their improvable faculties; and that, in receiving these, not from their forefathers but, from God, prescription can never undermine natural rights. (*OM* 12-13)

The rational creature as a “rightful” creature arises in response to Edmund Burke, whose *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790) prompted Wollstonecraft’s *Vindication* (a response penned mere weeks following Burke’s publication). Within Burke’s *Reflections*—itself a response to the recent revolutionary activity of France, and more directly to the pro-revolutionary sentiments found in such literature as Richard Price’s “A Discourse on the Love of Our Country” (1789)—the statesman argued against the abstract principle of “common rights and liberties” espoused by revolutionary

sympathizers (Price⁵ 8-9). Rights, Burke argued, were a contract drawn between a government and its people, emanating not from man himself but rather ordained *to* man *as* a citizen, in which the common man traded total liberty for governance and protection. This right to governance, moreover, Burke argued was the legacy of generations, a succession of constitutional amendments which secured both government and the duty owed to its citizens; to Burke, then, the government reflected an “entailed inheritance derived to us from our forefathers” (Burke 34), as he sought to model (or rather appeal to) the institutional framework of governance after the patriarchal pattern of the family. Thus, Burke argued, “[b]y a constitutional policy, working after the pattern of nature, we receive, we hold, we transmit our government and our privileges, in the same manner in which we enjoy and transmit our property and our lives” (34). When Wollstonecraft therefore set about drafting her response—arguing against Burke in favour of the revolution, in line with her broader Girondin sympathies—in seeking to reestablish the basis of those “positive rights” which Burke had demolished (31), she usurped Burke’s broader rhetorical appeal to the “pattern of nature” by constructing the rightful subject in terms of an originary inheritance which precedes that of the institutional legacy: rights, Wollstonecraft argued, were an inheritance derived from God, ordained to man in his condition as a “rational creature”.

It is upon this extant hierarchy of man-above-brute that Wollstonecraft sought to legitimate her rightful subject, in which “the capacity of improvement” grants man “a

⁵ Burke’s criticism of Price would urge Wollstonecraft’s response, as she was not only sympathetic to the revolution, but also a friend of Price: *Of Men* censures Burke’s “indecent familiarity and supercilious contempt” for “a member of the community whose talents and modest virtues place him high in the scale of moral excellence” (17).

natural sceptre on earth” (13), the freedom to act according to the divine mandate of achieving perfectibility through the “sovereignty of reason” (27). *Of Men* begs the question:

In what respect are we superior to the brute creation, if intellect is not allowed to be the guide of passion? Brutes hope and fear, love and hate; but, without a capacity to improve, a power of turning these passions to good or evil, they neither acquire virtue nor wisdom. –Why? Because the Creator has not given them reason. (*OM* 31)

Wollstonecraft theorized that insofar as one was willing to grant man’s superiority over “brute creation”—a monolithic abstraction—one would have to grant the supposition of a quality or condition, inherent to man himself, which granted him that very superiority; it therefore followed that to deny the *expression* of that quality or condition was to deny man’s rightful place in the order of creation. Wollstonecraft therefore established the components of which “brute creation” consisted: sensitive materiality. As she would later decry, “I discern not a trace of the image of God in either sensation or matter” (*OW* 139). Rather, “brute creation” is composed of both sensation and material, the organic components of the corporeal body acting by the influence of stimulus or “instinct”—“a congregate of sensations and passions” which “cloud the understanding, whilst they move the heart by a kind of mechanical spring...” (*OM* 30-31). Thus delineated, Wollstonecraft maintains a Cartesian distinction between body and mind, the “purely mechanical and corporeal” which “depends solely on the force of the spirits and the construction of [the] organs”, the other “incorporeal, the soul ... defined as a thinking substance” (Descartes 61). For both Descartes and Wollstonecraft, sensation is explicitly aligned with

materiality insofar as it is beholden to the corporeal, both of which to be delegated to a ‘base’ animal life. The passions, too, Descartes ascribes to the animal, in fact identifying the human in the distinct *lack* of passionate activity: “there has never been known an animal *so perfect* as to use a sign to make other animals understand something which expressed *no passion*” (60, emphasis added), a language ascribed to “pure thought and not to natural impulse” (61). Following the model of Cartesian duality, then, Wollstonecraft divides man from “brute creation” on the order of pure thought, expressed through the “improvable faculties”⁶. It is therefore always *against* this sensitive materiality which Wollstonecraft uplifts her rational creature: and it is only *through* “[t]he power of exercising [his] understanding” that man is to be “rai[sed] above” (33). Consequentially, insofar as man begins, like all animal life, at the level of brute creation, the “rational creature” becomes beholden to the condition of expressing those improvable faculties so as to elevate himself.

This conditionality through which the rational creature appears as a rightful subject is integral to Wollstonecraft’s political argument, as she would return to the subject within *A Vindication for the Rights of Women* (1792) so as to decry the fact of woman’s being “sunk below the standard” (*OW* 105). *Of Women* posits that if it is indeed

⁶ It is worth noting that Jean-Jacques Rousseau uses the same terms when delineating between “man and beast” (Rousseau 96), and that Wollstonecraft may be deliberately invoking Rousseau in co-opting them. In *The Second Discourse*, Rousseau identifies “the faculty of improvement” as that which “draws [man] out of his original condition, in which his days would slide away insensibly in peace and innocence”; Rousseau, critiquing the social contract in which liberty is traded for governance, therefore identifies the improvable faculties, elsewhere “perfectibility” (96), as that which “renders [man] both his own and nature’s tyrant” (96). Wollstonecraft contends with Rousseau, that “citizen of Geneva” (*OW* 93), throughout her *oeuvre*: whereas she clearly agrees with Rousseau’s human-animal distinction, she finds his (arguably ironic) degenerative conclusion distasteful, and his gender politics (with which she more directly contends in *OW*) abhorrent.

the “improvable faculties” which raise the human categorically above the animal, then woman’s being routinely denied the ability to both exercise and express her intellectual faculties necessarily degrades her to—or rather, she is to be kept at—the level of brute creation. It is crucial that we recognize the conditionality of the rational creature, as Wollstonecraft herself repeatedly draws attention to the ways in which those faculties must necessarily be exerted: man is not already risen but is rather granted “a capacity to rise” (OW 82). For Wollstonecraft, under the terms thus laid out by the rational creature’s framework, man is always-already animal (or at the level of “brute creation”) and is risen only by the exercise of the reasoning or improvable faculties; the goal, then, becomes the elevation of human self through the demonstration of those so-termed faculties, “to *obtain* a character as a human being” (OW 76-77, emphasis added). When she therefore declares the intent of the second *Vindications* to be the “consider[ation] [of] women in the grand light of human creatures, who, in common with men, are placed on this earth to unfold their faculties” (75), she sets the terms for her project as the very delineation of those (de)humanizing faculties which (wo)man must unfold: arguing for the necessity of those faculties which grant women the ability to, along with men, “r[i]se” in “the scale of animal being” (75), whilst simultaneously deriding those faculties which align women with the “mere animal” (77).

In the scale of those faculties, *Of Women* primarily takes issue with the cult of sensibility—the cultural emphasis of a highly charged emotional life which, under the terms of Wollstonecraft’s humanism, necessarily venerated the very sensitive materiality from which (wo)man should be led so as to obtain that human character. Yet the problem was not so much the appearance of sensibility itself, but that only half the human

population was being taught how to *manage* their senses. As Wollstonecraft argued, men, “in their youth”, are given the “noble structures” upon which “to sharpen their faculties” (135): education, a profession, and a view of future prospects. Granted thus the skills in which to exercise his reason and so improve himself, man gains “the capacity to rise above the state in which sensation produced brutal ease⁷” (82); yet, comparatively, women were not only denied these opportunities, but, as Wollstonecraft lamented, “writers have insisted that it is inconsistent ... with [women’s] sexual character” (128). Responding primarily to an architecture of literature, from John Milton’s *Paradise Lost* to Rousseau’s *Emile*, Wollstonecraft identifies a “false system of education” (74), sustained largely by the arts, which espoused women’s *natural* character to be that of feeling, and as such antithetical to reason and to those faculties deemed rational. Through this “false education,” woman would be encouraged to cultivate rather than subordinate her sensitive material: to “unfol[d]” rather than “examin[e]” the impressions left upon them by sense (202). “Novels, music, poetry, and gallantry” conspired to inflame the passions and school women toward models of pleasure—to excite both herself and the men around her—ultimately, Wollstonecraft argued, rendering women “creatures of sensation” (137), whose

overstretched sensibility naturally relaxes the other powers of the mind, and prevents intellect from attaining the sovereignty which it ought to attain to render a rational creature useful to others, and content with its own station: for the

⁷ The excerpt here taken comes after a lengthy condemnation of Rousseau’s “false hypothesis” that “nature is preferable to civilization” (*OW* 81)—thus “brutal ease” is an ironic invocation of Rousseau’s savage man existing in insensible peace (see fn.3).

exercise of the understanding, as life advances, is the only method pointed out by nature to calm the passions. (137)

As opposed to the education afforded to men, in which the mind learns to subordinate the body to reason, women “have seldom sufficient serious employment to *silence* their feelings” (153). Instead, “prevent[ing]” the regulation of the body which “ought” to be achieved in the progression of human development, the body is presented as actively usurping the rightful sovereignty of mind. The passions take on an increasingly insistent quality throughout Wollstonecraft’s rhetoric, as woman is encouraged to be led by the “influence of”—gradually becoming “totally dependent on” (98), and ultimately “prey of” (136)—“the senses” (75); as this dependence grows, women becomes unable to “calm”, to “silence”, to “restrain” the “tumultuous passion[s]” (96).

The problem with such schooling is for Wollstonecraft not merely social but pathological, as she argued that the cult of sensibility produced both moral as well as physical dis-ease. In defining the latter, the *Vindications* mobilizes a rhetoric of health to decry the body of the “creature of sensation” as aberrant. Much of the language Wollstonecraft uses in her depictions of the “creature of sensation” appears inspired by, if not borrowed directly from, John Brown’s⁸ *Elements of Medicine* (1788). Published by Joseph Johnson, under whom Wollstonecraft worked as editor, Brown’s *Elements of Medicine* conceives of the body as a framework of vital powers motivated by stimulation, or “excitability” (Brown 4); disease, in Brown’s theory, therefore corresponded directly

⁸ Credit goes to Kimiyo Ogawa identifying this source. Ogawa, Kimiyo. “An Organic Body Politic: Wollstonecraft’s Historical and Moral View of the Origin and Progress of the French Revolution and John Brown’s Idea of Health”. *Liberating Medicine, 1720-1835*, Pickering & Chatto Publishers, 2000, pp. 69-82.

to the “degree of stimulus” exacted upon the body (50), as either excess or insufficient stimulus would reflect in the organic functions. Under Brown’s model, the “exercise of the senses, when excessive, produce debility” (127); the passions are portrayed as an “exhausting” influence, that when sustained over long periods of time renders the body vulnerable to disease⁹. This exhausting influence reads upon Wollstonecraft’s rendition of the “overstretched sensibility” as a reciprocal “relax[ation]” of the body’s mental faculties. Whereas Wollstonecraft occasionally laments the “indolence and inactivity”—“which we falsely call delicacy” (112, fn.7)—of decorous restraint (read alternatively as the insufficiency of stimulation), Wollstonecraft is primarily concerned with the *excess* of unsustainable excitement occasioned by sensibility:

Ever restless and anxious, their over exercised sensibility not only renders them uncomfortable themselves, but troublesome ... to others¹⁰. All their thoughts turn on things calculated to excite emotion; and feeling, when they should reason, their conduct is unstable, and their opinions are wavering ... by contradictory emotions. By fits and starts they are warm in many pursuits; yet this warmth, never concentrated into perseverance, soon exhausts itself; exhaled by its own

⁹ Whereas Brown is a likely source for Wollstonecraft, it should be noted that he is not the only one to conceive of either insanity or disease in general under the terms of an economy of sensation. We see similar expression in Andrew Harper’s *A Treatise on the Real Cause and Cure of Insanity*, for example: “...every pleasing idea requires a painful one, and every painful idea a pleasing one, in reciprocal proportion to their extremities, to bring to the equilibrium of mental or rational mediocrity. Either of these extremes constitute a degree of mental irritation...” (31).

¹⁰ Whereas the phrase is likely an invocation of William Penn on jealousy, the notion of being “troublesome to themselves and others” nevertheless reads directly onto the debates surrounding the liberty of the mad (which I discuss in detail in my later chapter on Wilkie Collins’ *The Woman in White*). James Cowles Prichard, discussed later in this chapter, speaks of raving madness as that which “require[s] personal coercion and even strict confinement ... in order to prevent mischief to themselves and others” (Prichard 279).

heat, or meeting with some other fleeting passion, to which reason has never given any specific gravity, neutrality ensues. Miserable, indeed, must be that being whose cultivation of mind has only tended to inflame its passions! (136)

It is deliberate that Wollstonecraft's "creature of sensation"—that "lovely trembler" made "fragile in every sense of the word" (138)—reads through the terms of both madness and animality. By mobilizing a rhetoric of pathology, particularly that of mental physiology, in order to deride her creature of sensation, Wollstonecraft seeks to elicit the affective response produced by the pathological framework. As John Monro, physician to the Bethlem¹¹ Asylum, described insanity as that condition in which all those faculties "which distinguishes a man from a brute" appear to be "totally obliterated" (6), so too does Wollstonecraft's "lovely trembler" pervert Wollstonecraft's hierarchy of the normative human condition in her failure to subordinate her faculties to reason, positioned instead as the (re)iteration of the animal faculties. The absence of the rational faculties therefore registers as an unreasonable excess in the sensitive materiality: agitation, fitfulness, excitation and exhaustion, "[t]he passions thus pampered, whilst the judgement is left unformed, what can be expected to ensue?—Undoubtedly, a mixture of madness and folly!" (136).

Insofar as Wollstonecraft registers the "creature of sensation" as unrestrained animality, then, the "rational creature" arises as an early directive for moral management: "to subjugate the passions, [and] discipline the intellect" (Haslam 101), or, in Wollstonecraft's terms, to "restrain th[e] tumultuous passion[s], and to prove that it

¹¹ Wollstonecraft visited the Bethlem Royal Hospital (or "Bedlam" as it was colloquially known), as Charles Reid Jr. cites, "while researching her novel" (1156, fn. 268).

should not be allowed to dethrone *superior* powers, or to usurp the sceptre which the understanding should ever coolly wield..." (OW 96, emphasis added). Toward the end of the eighteenth century, proponents of moral management were beginning to hold greater acclaim as a response to madness. Men such as William Tuke, Phillippe Pinel, and William Battie argued for "management" over medicine (Battie 68), to remove the patient from the exciting influences which occasioned their madness and, through regimen and routine, redirect the sensitive body toward its proper state. Advocates for moral management declared the process to be a more humane response to insanity; yet, while the movement signalled to its proponents a significant turn away from a dehumanizing past marked by fetters and iron, the animalization of the mad was nevertheless maintained in the physiological division between the human and animal faculties, the latter of which was to be governed rather than guarded. Moreover, moral management held the assumption that madness could be cured through the exertion of—and therefore arose out of a deficiency in—the individual will: as the Reverend John Barlow would latterly argue, "these morbid impulses ... are far more under the control of the person so tempted, than many suppose" (Barlow 99). For Wollstonecraft, madness provided an appropriate language through which she might disentangle woman's subjecthood from pervasive notions of the gendered body. Identifying through the literature of insanity a condemnation of the unrestrained passions which paralleled her own¹², Wollstonecraft envisioned the gendered education of sensibility as a maddening influence against one's willful exertion of reasonability, a deviation from the normative

¹² "It has been already observed, that people of great warmth of imagination, acuteness of sensibility, and violence of passions, are the most predisposed to insanity." (Pinel 16)

script intended for the development of the human. It was therefore necessary for both men and women to subjugate the animating influences of the body to the rational governance of the mind. In tandem with her pathological prescription, however, the terms of Wollstonecraft's humanism necessarily place the onus on the individual to achieve their own humanity—"for how can a rational being be ennobled by any thing that is not obtained by its *own* exertions?" (OW 125 emphasis original). Under these same terms, the mad, as "creatures of sensation", consequentially become objects of scorn.

Maria and the (Rational-)Creature(-of-Sensation)

In the "Author's Preface" to *Wrongs*, Wollstonecraft declares the novel to be her attempt "to pourtray(sic) passions": "the sentiments", she writes, "I have embodied" (59). That Wollstonecraft then derides the typical romance heroine as an "immaculate" goddess of unerring wisdom, moreover, establishes quite clearly the heroine she would therefore offer up to her readers: Maria is rendered a "creature of sensation", embodying those qualities which Wollstonecraft derides throughout the *Vindications*, and which routinely lead her heroine into crises. *Wrongs* therefore narrativizes the political argument of the *Vindications*, positioning itself as a didactic through which the (largely female¹³) readership learns through the follies of the heroine. For both heroine and reader, in order for Maria to elevate herself to the level of a rational creature, Maria must interrogate and so expose the influence of the passions which have led her astray. This

¹³ According to Mary Poovey, the use of the sentimental novel genre was Wollstonecraft's deliberate attempt to catch a female readership (Poovey 95).

interrogation is felicitated through the asylum, where Maria's fellow mad inmates are mobilized as figures of abjection.

In *Powers of Horror*, Julia Kristeva describes the abject as that which “draws me toward the place where meaning collapses” (2), the figure who threatens the binary opposition between subject and object, self and other. The animal therefore functions powerfully for Kristeva as a vehicle for abjection, marked critically by its assured distinction between “the speaking being” (12). Insofar as man is, like Wollstonecraft's rational creature, defined by his introduction into the symbolic order, the very presence of the animal—of animality—threatens, if not that very order itself, then man's assured distinction. “The abject confronts us,” Kristeva argues, “with those fragile states where man strays on the territories of *animal*” (12, emphasis original). If, as Kristeva argues, it is through disavowal—rejection, separation, abjection—that the subject sures its territories, then Maria's disavowal of the mad passions is her attempt to place herself within the comfort of the symbolic order marked by the “rational being.” Maria is led—as is the reader, who is carried through Maria's affective response—to reconcile the passions as the productive force behind such “disjointed souls” (72), registering through the mad “the grand source of human corruption” (72). Where her own passions seek to keep her within the asylum, it is only through the marked disavowal of mad identification that Maria finally escapes, a radical expulsion of her sensitive materiality figured in leaving the asylum behind. The asylum therefore becomes the major rhetorical structure of the novel, the framework through whose terms the rational creature is laid bare.

Wrongs opens *in media res* with the titular protagonist, Maria, lamenting her situation: entrapped in an asylum on the word of her husband, mourning her separation

from her newborn daughter, and pleading assistance from her attendant, the stalwart Jemima, under whose watch she is to be carefully guarded. Though Jemima acknowledges Maria to be lucid, she has been warned of Maria's supposed mischief and to keep distant; nevertheless, Jemima gradually softens to Maria, and the two build a careful confidence. Jemima begins bringing Maria books from the asylum's circulating library, through which Maria learns of another inmate, Henry Darnford, whose trace notes left behind in the books' marginalia appeal to Maria's sense of political justice. Felicitated with Jemima's help, Maria and Darnford begin a correspondence and, eventually, a romance. It is to Darnford, then, that Maria eventually shares the story of her imprisonment, written in the form of a memoir addressed to her daughter: a "school[ing] in misery" which "only a mother" could write (94). Maria tells of her childhood, growing up under the "absolute authority" of her wrathful father (95), and of her eager projection onto the only suitor available to her, George Venables. Quick to marry, Venables soon after reveals himself to be a libertine, having married Maria for her dowry and subsequently wasting the fortune on gambling, booze, and ready money schemes. Maria, gradually embittered to the man she is now bound, attempts to maintain a semblance of decorum in spite of his "tyranny and infidelities" (120); but when Venables attempts to prostitute Maria, she finally declares her intent to separate and flees from home. Venables pursues Maria, first seeking recompense for a fractured ego, then hounding her for the fortune left by a sympathetic uncle. It is after a long and arduous flight from home to home that Maria is eventually captured and placed in the asylum, a private madhouse run by a corrupt owner. Returning then to the present narrative, Jemima tells Maria that the owner has fled and that they might chance an escape; Maria,

however, is hesitant to leave without Darnford. The three make plans to reconcile outside. Venables, learning of both his wife's recent escape as well as her new romance, sues Darnford for adultery. The novel remained unfinished prior to Wollstonecraft's death, and so stops short on a court episode in which Maria pleads Darnford's case unsuccessfully to an unsympathetic judge.

Insofar as the novel was never formally completed, the final note on which it is intended to end remains tenuous. The novel was published by William Godwin in 1798, in a collection of Wollstonecraft's unfinished legacies titled *Posthumous Works*. Godwin, in his capacity as editor and archivist of his late wife's life works, appended "some scattered heads for the continuation of the story" written by Wollstonecraft prior to her death (147), including four possible outlines for the novel's conclusion. These outlines follow similarly patterned trajectories: Maria is left economically destitute following the trial; Darnford impregnates Maria but ultimately proves "unfaithful" to her and absconds (147); and, suffering a miscarriage, Maria attempts suicide¹⁴. Included alongside these "scattered heads" is a page long draft in which Maria, during her suicide attempt, is brought back from the brink by the sound of her daughter returned—a reunion brought about by Jemima in secret—upon whose life Maria resolves to live. Whether this final resolution is the intended consequence of the potential "Suicide" ending is unclear: Godwin, in his capacity as editor, declares the fragment to be a "deviat[ion] from the preceding hints" (147), suggesting that we must imagine "Suicide" to then splinter into its

¹⁴ Biographical readings generally recognize the parallels between Darnford and Maria's romance (and Maria's subsequent suicidal tendencies) with that of Wollstonecraft and Gilbert Imlay (see for ex: Rajan 2010; Poovey).

own two possible trajectories—one circumvented and one fulfilled. Yet, in spite of the novel’s unfinished middle, dedicated mostly to bracketed notes, the appended final page is comparatively finished, suggesting that Wollstonecraft had rather definitely decided upon Maria’s conclusion. Rather, if we read the novel as an instruction in moral management toward becoming a “rational creature”, the novel concludes on a final, decisive “struggle” in which Maria finally resolves to subjugate her sensitive materiality (148). The excerpt we are given shows Maria suffering under the “violen[ce]” of her sensitive materiality (147), both memory and imagination bearing down upon her with “frightful velocity” (147)—a phrase which circles to the beginning of the novel, where Maria’s recollections bear upon her “with frightful velocity” and, crucially, “threate[n] to fire her brain, and make her a fit companion” to the asylum (61). When Maria is pulled from her “stupor” (147), her “whole frame ... convulse[s] with emotion” (148). Maria’s attempted suicide is directly linked in this brief moment to an excess of sensibility which reads directly onto her physiology—and what follows becomes “the agonizing struggle of her soul¹⁵” (148). Culminating in a (fairly ridiculous) internal battle between mind and body, Maria sits in silence for “five minutes”, arms crossed and head thrown back, before declaring “[t]he conflict ... over” (148). She will live. Such is the will of the rational creature, apparently.

This conclusive “struggle” reconciles the major conflict throughout the novel between Maria’s sensitive materiality and rational faculties: summarized by Janet Todd,

¹⁵ There are debates as to the particularities of Wollstonecraft’s faith, but the concept of the “soul” as man’s moral faculty is central to her political argument; we should read this less in terms of the Christian “sin” of suicide and more as a struggle to maintain that faculty.

“Maria was to have learned ... that she cannot indulge her sensibility to the limit of easeful death, for she must sacrifice her own immediate desire to a controlling duty” (19). The suggested ending for the novel therefore culminates rather definitively on the succession of the rational faculties; in turn, what conspires previously can be read as the struggle to reconcile “[s]ensibility cultivated to excess” (Todd 19). Mary Poovey and Claudia Johnson have, in their respective¹⁶ analyses, addressed the ways in which *Wrongs* critiques the “delusoriness” (Johnson 61) of romantic expectations through the heroine’s pattern of sentimentality—the likes of which not only bring her into the asylum, but which eventually suffer her to *stay* while in its throngs. In placing Maria’s passions at the centre of her downfall, therefore, the narrative registers the unmaking of its heroine through her reliance upon her sensitive materiality. As with the “creature of sensation” derided by the *Vindications*, Maria’s romantic sensibilities are the product of her youth, cultivated in the childhood of a “young and ardent mind” suffering from want of both “employment” and “amusement” (96), consequentially “volatized” by the “pleasure” of bounding liberty after hours spent in the home “without daring to utter a word” (96). Denied the exercise of her improvable faculties at home, Maria is unable to suppress the feelings which animate her; when, therefore, she receives a schooling in romantic expectations from her uncle, she understands it only through the passions they elicit—the

¹⁶ It is worth noting that, while Johnson draws upon and expands Poovey’s summation of Maria’s “delusoriness”, the two scholars argue radically differing points. For Poovey, the “delusoriness” of the novel is not entirely Maria’s own: rather, Poovey reads the novel as buying into the very sentimentality it attempts to critique, arguing that the novel was Wollstonecraft’s attempt to mobilize a gendered politics of feeling that fails to bring its politics to their logical conclusion—the abolition of the marriage contract altogether. Johnson, on the other hand, celebrates the novel as a proto-lesbian fiction, a gradual turning away from the structure of the heterosexual plot in favour of solidarity with the womanly body. If we are to buy Johnson’s argument, however, it must be said that the emancipatory potential of woman’s “body” is bound to her *able*-bodiedness—the lovely maniac achieves no such liberation.

“animated pictures of his own feelings” which “imprinted the sentiments strongly on [her] heart, and animated my imagination” (97). Feeling rather than understanding her uncle’s advice, Maria begins cultivating her sensibility—a “romantic character” (97)—under whose terms she would “form an ideal picture of life” (97). When she is therefore finally introduced to a potential suitor, she is swayed by what Johnson terms “the logic of sentimentality” (Johnson 61), investing Venables with the character of virtuous homage when he acts merely under the compulsions of the heterosexual plot “inspired by her erotic presence” (Johnson 63)¹⁷. Venables’ spendthrift attitude, an economical flippancy which renders them precarious in their marriage, is read as the mark of “benevolence”¹⁸ when he gives a guinea to Maria’s charitable endeavour during their courtship (*Wrongs* 102); and his utterances of “unmeaning passion” (98), compliments paid “[w]ithout any fixed design” (98), Maria ascribes with “a meaning naturally suggested by the romantic turn of [her] thoughts” (98-99). Under the delusions of romance, Maria is inclined to read Venables with all the “disinterestedness, fortitude, generosity, dignity, and humanity, with which [she] had invested the hero [she] dubbed” (*Wrongs* 99)—an “insane projection” as Johnson so aptly terms (Johnson 62). Yet whereas Maria’s inability to view Venables with the calm rationale of experience may be attributed to the folly of youth (as is the stance she takes when relating her history through the memoir), she nevertheless repeats this plot in the asylum, reimagining the chivalric hero through

¹⁷ As Wollstonecraft derides, “it is their [women’s] persons, not their virtues, that procure them this homage” (*OW* 176); clarified by Johnson, “[it is] the general tendency of the sentimental tradition to posit heteroerotic love as the basis for (men’s) moral behaviour” (Johnson 63). The body begets compulsion, and sentimentality translates this compulsion as morality.

¹⁸ Johnson provides a more in-depth exploration of the guinea purchase and the “concealed logic” of heterosexual sentiment that lay beneath Venables’ action (Johnson 62-63).

Darnford with all the colourings afforded to him by republican masculinity¹⁹. First learning of Darnford through his traces in Milton and Dryden (notably, both authors chastised within *Of Women*²⁰), Maria once more leans on the erotic ideal enflamed by her imagination, as “fancy, treacherous fancy, began to sketch a character, congenial with her own, from these shadowy outlines” (68). Catching only brief glimpses of Darnford through the window of her room, Maria turns to Rousseau’s *Heloise* so as to envision in Darnford the model of “Saint Preux, or of an ideal lover far superior” (71), building from the form of his broad back, glanced at a distance, a more substantial heroic figure; and, once finally gleaned, Darnford’s appearance affords Maria “a statue” upon which to “enshrine” her imaginings of “all the qualities of a hero’s mind” (78)²¹.

As Poovey notes, “[r]ather shrewdly, Venables remains silent throughout their courtship, for his attraction lies precisely in the imaginative opportunity he presents” (99). Maria’s romances are sustained through the barriers surrounding discourse between herself and her suitor, such that the idealized version she holds within her imagination is not to be broken by reality—at least not until far too late. For Venables, this silence is largely maintained by his absence: his appearances in Maria’s hometown are brief, such that in his absence Maria’s “colouring ... became more vivid” (99), ruminating on his character through the ardour of emotive fancy. Similarly, his most heroic gesture—the

¹⁹ See Poovey and Johnson for a detailed comparison of the “chivalric” versus “republican” heroisms of the two suitors.

²⁰ See: *OW* p.87-88 (for Milton), p.172 (for Dryden).

²¹ Poovey’s major criticism of the novel—that it succumbs to the very sentimentality it criticizes—centres on a “narrative ambivalence” that “does not underscore the similarity of Maria’s two falls” (Poovey 99). Yet, (bearing in mind that Maria has the benefit of retrospect with Venables) this criticism seems to me to be at odds with the direct mirroring of Maria’s hero-worship I have thus far presented.

guinea—is secretive, an under the table exchange signified by “putting his finger to his mouth, to enjoin [her] in silence” (102). Yet for Darnford, who marks a far more discursive presence in the text, his ‘silence’ is rather sustained by his recitation of Maria’s sentiments, “perfectly in unison with Maria’s mode of thinking” (68). Darnford echoes Maria’s political rhetoric in ways that conveniently disguise his licentiousness, as Johnson notes the ways in which “shared political sympathies make [his] remarkably obnoxious account fall on ears that have been too ‘fascinated’ to hear” (65): like Venables, Darnford too reveals impulsive spending habits and a disdain for proper “commerce” (76); so too like her former husband, Darnford directly reveals a history of “vulgarity” (74), of sexual promiscuity and abandonment, as well as unmeaning professions of “love” to “stupid” women (75). But, as Johnson argues, “republican discourse about masculinity has cloaked libertine grossness in the drapery of frankness, selfishness in inservility, impulsiveness in decision, and gallantry in generosity” such that “Maria is taken in, just as she was earlier duped by the seeming virtue of chivalric sentimentality” (65). So too like Venables is Darnford’s romance heightened by concealment; both imprisoned in the asylum, the two correspond only in snatches, broken by Jemima’s interruptions. In the brief interludes in which they are afforded converse “a few moments” only, before he returns to his own cell, Maria is left with the “task of weighing his words” against the passions they inspire, “recollecting his tones of voice, and feeling them reverberate on her heart” (77).

Whereas scholarship has focused on the political exasperations of Maria’s romances, the narrative draws a marked emphasis to Maria’s bodily response as central to the novel’s bodily politics. Rendered a creature of sensation, Maria is compelled forward

by the passions which cloud her judgement, “feeling” her suitors’ words rather than reasoning with them. She does not merely regard Venables with virtue—she “tremble[s] with emotion” (102). Darnford’s words are sweet—but only “sweet they seemed to her attentive ear” (71). Whereas her mind is uninformed in her youth, within the asylum she once more finds her intellectual faculties “soften[ed]” (77), in turn “nourish[ing] romantic wishes” (77), the decayed corpus of reason fertilizing her sensitive materiality. Maria’s romantic imagination is routinely matched with a physical response that is often expressed in terms of excitability, sensibility translating into stimulation and propelling Maria forward. Her romance with Darnford is particularly clouded by erotic desire, as Darnford’s presence both “animate[s]” Maria as it “warm[s]” her (138); and Darnford, speaking sentiments with “passion suffused . . . cheeks” (137), is “not absolutely impartial” when he begs Maria to forgo her marriage contract and loosen “her charming sensibility” (137). It is not without irony, then, that the two lovers’ passionate embrace is registered as an “eloquent” discourse (79): the body becomes an expressive, affective force, persuading both he and Maria in their mutual conduct.

In order to properly castigate the passions—to discredit the viability of such “silent discourse” (79), lest readers be swept into the same sentimentality as Maria—the narrative turns to the asylum, against whose terms the “creature of sensation” is properly derided. The asylum itself is largely figured as a gothic tenement: an “abod[e] of horror” (61), Wollstonecraft draws scenes of a Bedlam deserted by the living, instead figured as a “prison of vexed spirits” (69). Through this crumbling architecture of stone “fall[en] to decay” (62), the “disordered court” of the asylum’s corpus is brought into relief by its “terrific inhabitants” (61). These fellow mad with whom Maria shares space are largely

absent from the text (none, save for one, are afforded dialogue amidst the intertwining narratives), yet their brief visitations are generally marked by the same textual gestures: a mad inmate will have their presence initially marked through vociferation, utterances which disturb or disrupt Maria's narrative. These utterances, moreover, are largely denied a verbal register: when they *are* verbal in their "sallies" or "s[o]ng[s]" (73), they are registered in the passive voice without dialogue; more frequently, when they are *not* verbal, they are described in terms of physical expression, as in "groans and shrieks" (61) or "fits of laughter" (70). In both their verbal or nonverbal states, however, these utterances are consistently and repeatedly framed as the impulse of passion: "gestures of unrestrained passion" (73); "phrenz[ies] [of] their restless passions" (67); "uproar[s] of the passions" which "burs[t] out" of the confines of the body²². The absence of the dialogic register and the marked presence of the physical intertwine so as to portray the mad as succumbing to an eruptive materiality. As the body supersedes the voice, the mad become necessarily, by the terms of the narrative, distanced from discourse: against (rather in spite of) the prevalence of these utterances, Maria figures herself "shut out from human intercourse..." (69).

Whereas Maria rejects the possibility of discourse between herself and the mad, she nevertheless feels "compelled to observe" these "uproar[s]": the "yells of men possessed²³" inflicting, for example, a "pause" which has her "wonder [she] felt so

²² In parallel, Maria twice suffers a "suffocation of voice" under the eruption of passions (63, 94).

²³ There is no serious (to say sustained) effort on Wollstonecraft's part to entertain the notion of madness as spiritual possession. Whether or not we believe possession was ever seriously entertained, it did however continue to be a rousing metaphor for the apparently "ungoverned" actions of the insane. See Prichard: "The individual, *as if actually possessed by the demon of evil*, is continually indulging enmity..." (Prichard 21)

happy, in a tomb of living death” (79). These disruptions place the consequence of “unrestrained passions” at the forefront of the action in an effort to disrupt the sentimental narrative which has overtaken Maria: we see, for instance, an exaggerated tonal dissonance between the “horror ... whispered along the walls” and Maria’s joyful circumscription that “still the world contained not three happier beings” while in the midst of her romance with Darnford (79). This gesture of interruption appears to work against Poovey’s major criticism of the novel: if we allow that the narrative voice is sometimes swept along by the same sentimental thrall as Maria, the activity of the mad interruption works to disrupt that very thrall, encouraging readers to hold Maria’s sentimental actions (repeatedly mirroring her past romantic follies) against the asylum. Along these same lines of disruption, the few confrontations which do occur between Maria and her fellow inmates actively work to rewrite the sentimental narrative surrounding the passions: whereas Maria, under the delusions of romance, is motivated into idyllic reception, the passions once registered in the body of the mad are rendered horrific. Upon meeting the eye of one of her fellow inmates, Maria “shr[i]nk[s] back with more horror and affright, than if she had stumbled over a mangled corpse²⁴” (67). As with her terror at the “flight” of the lovely warbler, when Maria meets the “eye of rage, glaring on her, *yet unfaithful to its office*” (67, emphasis added), she centers her repulsion on the identification of a body acting without reason: just as the lovely maniac’s shift from reasonable overture to unreasonable mirth has Maria repelled by “horr[or]” (70), the tonal register of the inmate’s eye suggests his passionate response is divorced from

²⁴ “...refuse and corpses *show me* what I permanently thrust aside in order to live” (Kristeva 3, emphasis original).

rationale, and it is the fact of his rage being “yet unfaithful” to reason rather than the fact of rage itself which frightens Maria.

In terms akin to Kristeva’s corpse, the madman’s corpus “show[s] [Maria] what [she] permanently thrust[s] aside in order to live” (Kristeva 3): the border at which “‘I’ is expelled” (4). Whereas Maria begins these confrontations with her fellow inmates in sympathy—compelled, as she is, to “trace the mazes of misery” while “in the midst of wretches” (72)—the signification of their acting on the passions without reason repels her, away from sympathy and away from identification. The inmates are presented as abject, “disturb[ing] identify, system, order” (Kristeva 4). By allowing the passions to become exalted as the supreme faculty, the “creature of sensation”, here embodied by the mad, disturbs the very foundations of the “rational creature”; when confronted with the deviation of the normative script between body and mind, Maria responds with horror. It is however through the contemplation of that horror that the narrative locates the human:

...sometimes, from her window, she turned her eyes from the gloomy walls, in which she pined life away, on the poor wretches who strayed along the walks, and contemplated on *the most terrific of ruins—that of a human soul*. What is the view of the fallen column, the mouldering arch, of the most exquisite workmanship, when compared with this living memento of the fragility, the instability, of reason, and the wild luxuriancy of noxious passions? (67)

Rendered as “noxious”, the passions are represented as a corrupting influence, a destruction beholden to physiology. Under the same terms in which Pinel read madness as “a total ruin of their distinguished birth-right as rational beings” (Pinel 9), Wollstonecraft’s rational creature is sundered through the “luxuriat[ion]” of those

passions, becoming a ruin of the “human soul”, a mausoleum in which the rational creature is buried beneath its sensitive materiality. In tandem, however, the narrative erects the corpus of the human out of that ruin, imagined as a “memento” of what once was. The “fallen column”, “the mouldering arch”, and the mad alike each become material excess whose narrative value lay in their trace remnants.

Maria’s formation as a “rational creature” therefore depends upon her resolution to cast aside (in Kristevian terms, her disavowal of) the mad as abject—quite literally, in fact. Following Maria’s memoir, upon return to the present-day narrative, Maria awakens to the asylum in disarray: the owner has left (following, apparently, a confrontation with Darnford) and Jemima prepares Maria to take flight. Maria, however, refuses to leave without Darnford. “In an agitation of spirit” (139), she is persuaded only with the knowledge that Darnford will be released two days hence, writing a letter pleading him to join them in the Adelphi, “or she would return to him” (139). Torn between the asylum and liberty, Maria begins to follow Jemima’s charge; as Jemima crosses the garden gate, however, Maria is stopped by an inmate who grabs her arm.

‘Who are you? What are you?’ for the form was scarcely human. ‘If you are made of flesh and blood,’ his ghastly eyes glared on her, ‘do not stop me!’

‘Woman,’ interrupted a sepulchral voice, ‘what have I to do with thee?’ –Still he grasped her hand, muttering a curse.

‘No, no; you have nothing to do with me,’ she exclaimed, ‘this is a moment of life and death!’ (139)

The inmate is granted a “scarcely human” form that Maria struggles to reconcile with his humanity; rather, rendered “[a] being, with a visage that would have suited one possessed

by a devil” (139), this final inmate is depicted with all the signification of brutish creation that the narrative has so far vilified. Speaking with a “sepulchral voice”, his possessive actions reflect upon both him as well as Maria, as his grasp of her arm—a markedly physical link—begs her to stay within the bounds of the asylum. In order to cross that threshold, Maria must break off from him and all that he (to her) represents. In this moment, the narrative finally grants the mad a voice in the frame of dialogue: “What have I to do with thee?”

The answer, Maria determines, is “nothing.” *Not me. Not that.*

Charlotte Brontë and moral madness

Almost fifty years after the publication of *Wrongs*, Charlotte Brontë published *Jane Eyre* (1847). The novel, summarized by Q. D. Leavis as “the moral and emotional growth of a passionate, badly managed child into a woman” (Leavis 28, qtd. in Showalter 112), bears striking similarities to Wollstonecraft’s *Wrongs*: tracing the growth of the heroine Jane from “bad animal” to speaking subject (Brontë 9), the novel enacts a coming to terms with the human-subject through the framework of moral management; and, like Maria, Jane’s subjectification is held in direct correlation to the abjection of the maddened-other, Bertha Mason. Unlike Wollstonecraft’s “lovely warbler”, however, who exists as barely a footnote in the scholarly conversation surrounding *Wrongs*, Brontë’s Bertha Mason is something of a cultural icon. From Gilbert and Gubar’s *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979), to Bolt and Rodas’ *The Madwoman and the Blindman*, scholars working between psychoanalysis to critical disability theory have sought to reason the function of Bertha’s madness in the novel: Bertha is sexual repression, Bertha is the dark double, Bertha is feminine release. Concurrently, the notion that *Bertha does not speak*

persists. In Shumway's Bakhtinian reading, Bertha "reject[s] language" (Shumway 159); for Judith Pike, tracing disability throughout Brontë's works, Bertha is a "mute" (Pike 122); most damning, Laurence Lerner, compiling together "Bertha and [her] Critics", concludes that she is nothing more than "a minor character ... who does not speak a single word" (280). Lerner's reading is faithful in the sense that readers never bear witness to a Bertha granted dialogue—there is no "she says" in which Bertha herself speaks in the present tense, in full bodied utterance, and which (most importantly) elicits verbal response. There is no dialogue *with* Bertha. Yet, to say that she *does not speak* is inherently false, a fact made clear by her brother, Richard Mason: "[S]he said she'd drain my heart..." (Brontë 213, emphasis added). Through what authority, then, do we accept the notion that Bertha, unlike Jane, *does not speak*?

Let me be clear: it is not that Bertha does not speak, it is that her voice is deemed illegitimate. In being *deemed* illegitimate, it is so *rendered* illegitimate (remembering, always, that *Jane Eyre* is an "autobiography" narrated through the lens of its heroine). Render as a transitive, "to reproduce or represent" and "to cause to be or become", but in which the animal exists in the periphery. To render fat—to extract, melt down, reconstruct the carcass. The *function* of this rendering is to naturalize the violence directed against Bertha. The *result* of this rendering is that, despite indirect references to Bertha's voice throughout the novel, Bertha is dialogically disappeared to the point of criticism, as scholarship reiterates the "fact" of her voicelessness in increasingly pathological terms. The remaining work of this chapter, then, is to uncover that rendering. For what Bertha "is", insofar as she is rendered by the novel, is the diegetic excess of the human-making process. The abject "*not that*".

It becomes apparent that Bertha's 'unspeech' is born of precisely the same model from which the lovely warbler flies, from which Maria's fellow inmates are similarly absented from the writing of woman's political self. In correspondence with her publisher, Brontë responded to some early criticisms of the novel, particularly to those who had balked at Bertha's depiction. Brontë relented that indeed "the character is shocking, but", she continued, "I know that it is but too natural":

There is a phase of insanity which may be called *moral madness*, in which all that is good or even human seems to disappear from the mind and a fiend-nature replaces it. The sole aim and desire of the being thus possessed is to exasperate, to molest, to destroy, and preternatural ingenuity and energy are often exercised to that dreadful end. The aspect in such cases, assimilates with the disposition; all seems demonized. It is true that profound pity ought to be the only sentiment elicited by the view of such degradation, and equally true is it that I have not sufficiently dwelt on that feeling; I have erred in making horror too predominant.

(Letter to W. S. Williams, 4 January 1848)

Whereas Brontë relents to her critics on her failure to elicit pity, that such a being is nevertheless *degraded* remains uncontested. For Brontë, as for Wollstonecraft, the figure of the "morally mad" is signified through abjection, rendered through such terms as we have just seen iterated throughout *Maria*: the mad figure becomes "possessed", as the body, no longer governed by the divine-faculty of the mind, moves instead under the direction of a "preternatural" edict; under such terms which locate 'the human' within the immaterial lexicon of *mind*, *thought*, and *soul*, such a "being" is received as a "degradation," a marked lowering of the human in the scale of (by returning the body to)

that base materiality of “brute creation.” Against that privileged rational creature who takes on the subject position of “I”, such a being evokes (if not pity, then) horror and revulsion—*repulsion*, most significantly, as that which is “disappear[ed]” forms a nearly insurmountable distance.

This repulsion is, once more, figured through utterance. Like the echoes of Maria’s asylum, Bertha’s presence in the novel is explicitly vocal, marked through the “savage,” “sharp,” “shrilly sound[s]” that “r[u]n” through the ends of Thornfield (205). So too like Wollstonecraft’s mad, these “sound[s]” are divorced from speech through animal metaphor. Hyena laughter, shrieking calls, sounds of dog fights and tiger bites: Bertha’s rhetoric is framed as animalized utterance so as to “disappear” the human, the marked disavowal of the madwoman’s speech *as such* interwoven with (rather, framed against) Jane’s movement along the lines of Cartesian duality, in which “talk[ing] ... is but a more animated and audible thinking” (Brontë 451). Against Jane’s ever-increasing articulation as a human subject, Bertha’s voice is comparatively repressed; by rendering Bertha’s voice through the terms of animality, Bertha is herself distanced from the “human” as a political subject and all that it entails. What forms the central preoccupation for *Jane Eyre*, then, is precisely the uncovering of those parameters.

Jane Eyre and the Autobiographical Animal

When Jane becomes governess of Thornfield Hall she is ordered to speak: “I am disposed to be gregarious and communicative to-night,” Rochester says, “and that is why I sent for you: the fire and the chandelier were not sufficient company for me; nor would Pilot have been, for *none of these can talk*” (Brontë 132, emphasis added). If the command renders us uneasy (as it does Jane, who responds with a “not ... very

complacent smile” [132]), it is because Rochester’s call for speech is, fundamentally, an order to perform. Rochester commands Jane—and we must remember (again as Jane herself does) that it *is* a command, from a superior to his paid subordinate, whom he both sends for and compels to, as he says, “therefore speak” (132)—under the assumption that Jane will, in speaking therefore, reveal “herself” to Rochester. If Jane is an enigma, a “puzzl[ing]” company to be around (132), then speaking *with* her will allow Rochester to “draw [her] out” (132). Therefore speak, and in speaking Jane becomes drawn: in the sense of sketched, delineated, a picture more fully revealed; but also, significantly, to be extracted, more viscerally, *disembowelled*²⁵.

Notably, this drawing—this disembowelment—precludes the animal. By commanding Jane to speak, Rochester invokes the Cartesian operation which searches for the “thought hidden in a body” (Descartes 61). Rochester therefore begins his command by listing the things which “can[not] talk”, against which Jane herself is to be ordered: the fire, the chandelier, and Pilot (the dog), all of which are illuminating *objects* “these”, but not, in Rochester’s determination, particularly apt conversational partners. Deliberately framing this operation against the animal—moreover the animal-as-object—Rochester sets the terms for where thought is *not*. Not in *that*, that which does not *speak*. Somewhere within and against the (animal) body, however, there *is* a “Jane”—therefore speak.

²⁵ From the Oxford English Dictionary: “Drawn, adj. 5. Disembowelled.” The OED sources *The Natural History and Antiquities of Selbourne* (1798): “My specimen, when drawn and stuffed with pepper, weighed only four ounces and a quarter.”

Through Jane—Jane taking on the position of the “autobiographical animal” (Derrida 49)—the novel seeks to uncover those rhetorical parameters; in proper logocentric fashion, this process begins by delineating the boundaries for exclusion. The novel begins with Jane a “heterogeneous thing” (15), a being set apart from those around her: orphaned by her parents and brought in by her late uncle, Jane is an outcast from the Reeds family, “a discord in Gateshead Hall” (15). Whatever disruption Jane might represent as an outlier of the closed-family unit—“unconnected”, after her uncle’s death, to “any tie” (16)—Jane herself figures this discord as a matter of temperament: that “had [she] been a sanguine, brilliant, careless, exacting, handsome, romping child—though equally dependent and friendless—” her presence “would have [been] endured ... more complacently” and “fellow-feeling” extended. Jane sees herself in these conditions as having “no appeal” (10): neither appealing in form, nor capable of formal appeal. “[U]ntil [she] can speak pleasantly, [she is to] remain silent” (7). A being of “undeveloped understanding and imperfect feelings” (9), Jane’s precarity in the household is matched by an equally precarious voice of “awkward diffidence” (11), unable to speak herself (in)to authority.

Jane begins the novel a precarious subject, then, whose first major conflict is presented as a schooling in the boundaries of in/ex-clusion. When John Reed, the eldest son and “young Master” of the house (12), strikes Jane in the head with a book, it is Jane’s reaction which is policed. Inaugurated by an “instinctiv[e]... cry” (11), Jane “receiv[es] [John] in [a] frantic sort” (11), compelled into a flurry of action which is narrated under the terms of madness. Jane speaks words she had “never thought thus” to speak aloud (11), and strikes without “very well know[ing] what [she] did with [her]

hands” (11). This reaction (the reaction which is not a response²⁶) in Jane’s recollection, brings her “*out of [her]self*” (12, emphasis original). Rather, like the inmates of *Wrongs*, Jane’s passionate reaction (“such a picture of passion!” [11]) is figured as a usurpation of the faculties, working *outside of* or *against* Jane “herself”. Jane speaks “suddenly and without at all deliberating [her] words” (27), as “[her] tongue pronounced words without [her] will consenting to their utterance” (27): set starkly against the will, there is “something” otherwise which “sp[eaks] out of [her]” and “over which [she] had no control” (27). This passionate being which is *other than Jane* is therefore figured as animal: she is a “rat” (11), a “mad cat” (12), a doubly rendered abjection under the properly determined human, in which the irrational excess of animality reacts (but does not respond) to the world around it.

Jane’s rendering here is as much pathological as it is political. Jane’s unruly body is said to speak out against her will: in her “unutterable wretchedness of mind” (20), Jane has physical expression “draw[n] from [her]” (20), and, in doing so, “she” is displaced as a being “out” of itself. In being so “out” of herself, Jane is similarly sent out of the society of the Reeds and into the confinement of the red room. The lesson is thus firmly given: “Become passionate and rude, [and] Missis will send you away” (13). Jane’s interpellation as a subject is therefore explicitly registered through and guided by the model of moral management, a boundary keeping project in which Jane is put at odds with the “bad animal” of her body (9). The early vestiges of moral management that we earlier read in Wollstonecraft had, by Brontë’s time, become both widely popularized and

²⁶ In Derrida’s quoting Descartes, “never ... do these automatons *respond*” (82, Derrida’s italics).

institutionally²⁷ enforced; against these historical developments, insanity came increasingly to be defined in terms of self-control. Through the literature of men like James Cowles Prichard, “moral madness” emerged as the expression of the body’s “want of self-government” (Prichard 19). Just as Maria must learn to temper her passions, then, so too is Jane’s education framed as the subjugation of the body to the governance of her mind. Jane’s inauguration into Lowood is paralleled by her earlier confrontation with John Reed, as Jane’s body (after being put on display and forcefully ousted from her peers) again threatens to burst forth in an excess of stimulation, her “sensations” beginning to “r[i]se, stifling [her] breath and constricting [her] throat” (Brontë 67). Unlike her earlier confrontation, however, Jane is able to “maste[r] the rising hysteria” (67). In so “mastering” her body, Jane begins her formal education as a subject. Her development at Lowood is subsequently tracked along two lines of development: the sketching of a cottage, and the conjugation of *being*:

...I toiled hard, and my success was proportionate to my efforts; my memory, not naturally tenacious, improved with practice; exercise sharpened my wits; in a few weeks I was promoted to a higher class; in less than two months I was allowed to commence French and drawing. I learned the first two tenses of the verb Être, and sketched my first cottage ... on the same day. (74)

²⁷ Between Wollstonecraft and Brontë were a series of significant developments in the institutionalized response to insanity, most notably the County Asylums Acts of 1808 and 1828, and the Lunacy Act of 1845. The County Asylums Acts encouraged counties to provide public asylums for pauper lunatics. I speak at length of the Lunacy Act and the broader development of the asylum in my following chapter on *The Woman in White*.

Jane comes into being through language; in language “Jane” dwells²⁸. Jane’s coming-into-language, however, is deliberately framed as a mastering over her body through a concerted effort of will, the exercise and improvement of her rational faculties as the *preliminary* to her subjecthood.

What dwells outside the cottage?

Mad, Bad, Embruted Bertha

Insofar as readers bear witness to Jane’s articulation as a subject through her internalized narrative, readers simultaneously bear witness to Bertha’s deconstruction. The fact of Jane’s narration plays a pivotal role in Bertha’s abjection, as it is *through* Jane that all of which she has learned to “master” is then read *onto* Bertha. This fact stands rather at odds with Sally Shuttleworth’s determination that Jane represents a more modern, sympathetic conceptualization of madness, or that (crucially) “[n]owhere does [Jane] endorse Rochester’s statements of disgust” (Shuttleworth 1996, 168). For Shuttleworth, whose phenomenal *Charlotte Brontë and Victorian Psychology* (1996) traces the underpinnings of emergent Victorian psychological theories throughout Brontë’s works, Jane’s narrative “suggest[s] a more searching, interrogative attitude” toward the social and psychic boundaries of self and sanity (166): Jane, through the model of moral management, learns to conceptualize of (in)sanity as a temporal state, to be regulated if not “cured” through self-control, which (according to Shuttleworth) puts her at odds with the barbarous history of Bedlam. Comparatively,

²⁸ “Language is the house of Being. In its home man dwells.” Martin Heidegger, *Letter on Humanism*, 193.

The system at Thornfield represents the vestiges of a prior era, when the ‘animal’ insane were kept hidden and mechanically restrained (as Bertha is after each outbreak) and no attempt was made at cure or recuperation. ‘Nature’ was given free rein, but the inmates were in consequence cast out from the ranks of humanity. (160)

For Shuttleworth, Rochester’s “utter disgust at his animal wife” is a remnant of an “old school of thought,” whereas Jane, with her sympathy and pity, “belongs to the new” (Shuttleworth 2008, xx): “[w]hilst earlier theorists had tended to emphasize the animal nature of the insane, the moral managers now stressed their membership of a common humanity” (Shuttleworth 1996, 34). Yet, as we have thus far determined—and as Shuttleworth herself relents—the rhetoric of animality surrounding the mad was not done away with by the introduction of moral management, but merely shifted to a new “register” (166). Rather, by posting madness as a reflection of internal governance, the moral management model sets the parameters for humanity on ability: humanity becomes the *goal* of the curative model, the normative state to which the mad patient must necessarily return through the display of performance criteria. Whereas Jane “sympathetically” reconciles Bertha as one who “*cannot help* being mad” (301, emphasis added), she inadvertently reveals her determination of Bertha as one who always already *failed* at being human.

This determination moreover *precedes* Rochester, as it is through Jane’s interlocution that Bertha’s voice is marked as (non-human) animal. In fact, this determination precedes Bertha herself. Bertha’s first iteration in the novel is “a curious laugh; distinct, formal, [and] mirthless” which echoes across Thornfield Hall (Brontë

107), and which Jane renders both “tragic” and “as preternatural as any [she] had ever heard” (107). Whereas Jane is led to attribute the laughter to Grace Poole, she nevertheless continues to interrogate the body behind it, *constructing* the body behind it through her very interrogation.

Just as she invokes the phrase in her letter to W. S. Williams, Brontë’s use of “preternatural” ties madness²⁹ and animality together in the form of aberrant behaviour read outside the bounds of the ‘natural’. This “preternatural” affect, prior to Bertha’s laughter, is twice invoked in the narrative. In the first instance, within the red-room, Jane endeavours to settle her emotions, “fearful lest any sign of violent grief might waken a preternatural voice to comfort [her]” (17). In the second, Jane comes across Pilot³⁰ running by himself in the woods, and “half-expect[s]” Pilot to turn and “look up, with strange pretercanine eyes” (112)—but that the appearance of Rochester, “the man, the human being, broke the spell at once” (112). In both instances, preternaturality is invoked in the midst of Jane’s confrontation with an imagined animality which disrupts the normative boundaries of the human, particularly disturbing for her in conjecturing the possibility of an animalized *response* (as opposed to a reaction). Struggling to suppress her own “bad animal[ity]”, Jane’s terror in the red-room is manifest in the “preternatural” voice which might seek to comfort her; similarly Pilot, the dog without its master, frightens Jane with the possibility that he (“it”) might *look back*. Significantly in terms of the latter, Jane explicitly evokes the order which is restored by the presence of “the

²⁹ William Battie refers to madness as a “preternatural state of Sensation” (6).

³⁰ Pilot appear to deliberately invoke the Brontë sister’s idol, Lord George Gordon Byron. Pilot is the same breed as Byron’s cherished dog Boatswain, a Newfoundland retriever.

human being”, Rochester’s appearance placing Pilot-the-animal once more within the proper boundaries of belonging and robbing the “spell” which might allow him (“it”) to *look up*. In this moment the “natural” is properly bounded by mastery, whereas the prior incantation of preternaturality threatens to explode those very divisions.

Against Bertha, then, Jane delegates the boundaries of syntactic normativity from which Bertha is deliberately excluded, placing Bertha’s “preternatural laughter” outside the natural. Following this initial prescription, Jane is repeatedly confronted with the echoes of Bertha’s vocalizations (utterances which are vocal and physically descriptive, but always dialogically inert, much in the way we earlier read through *Wrongs*), and each time Jane determines that these sounds are markedly unnatural. One night Jane is awoken to the sounds of a “vague murmur, peculiar and lugubrious” which she settles by attributing to Pilot (147); her sleep is however once more broken by the “gurgle[s] and moan[s]” of a “demoniac laugh” (147)—and “Pilot cannot laugh” (154). These “unnatural sound[s]” Jane struggles once more to place, questioning whether they belong to Grace Poole, and whether Grace is herself “possessed with a devil” (148). Whereas Jane initially attributes the laughter to an animal, the markedly human register of laughter disrupts that boundary; yet, reflecting that it might come from Grace, Jane nevertheless determines there is something other-than-human within the laughter through the mark of possession. While Jane’s conjecture is disrupted first by a fire, then by the cast of visitors placed at Thornfield, she nevertheless returns ere long to the sound of a cry—“Good God! What a cry!” (205). The “savage,” “sharp,” “shrilly sound” which pierces the night air brings Jane once more into a similar line of questioning:

[W]hatever being uttered that fearful shriek, could not soon repeat it: not the widest-winged condor on the Andes could, twice in succession, send out such a yell from the cloud shrouding his eyrie. The thing delivering such utterance must rest ere it could repeat the effort. (206)

Likening Bertha's cry to the shriek of a (notably South American) bird, Jane once more places Bertha's syntax within the realm of the animal whilst simultaneously denaturalizing its presence. Through twice given depersonalized pronouns (both a "being" and a "thing"), Jane reinforces the notion that she perceives the body-which-cries (the body which she has not yet born witness to) as other than human. Jane's most insistent question is, in fact, "what" this voice might belong to: "What creature was it, that ... uttered the voice, now of a mocking demon, and anon of a carrion-seeking bird of prey?" (210).

Prior to Bertha's 'grand' reveal, Jane and Bertha confront each other through the veil scene; Jane looks at Bertha for the first time, and Bertha, significantly, looks back. Far from dialogic, however, Jane's telling of the event is registered through her own terror at the being before her. Significantly, in fact, the veil scene is entirely *devoid* of the utterance through which Jane has so far positioned Bertha as abject. Yet, coming quite literally face to face with the rhetor behind those shrieks, Jane continues to question Bertha's placement in the human-animal binary. Recollecting the events of the night to Rochester, Jane struggles to define the woman she saw (and who saw her): "It *seemed* a woman, sir, tall and large, with thick and dark hair hanging long down her back" (283). Whereas Jane recognizes the human frame of Bertha, she confronts with uneasy disdain the possibility of her humanity. Parallel to her previous conjecture of Grace Poole,

wherein Jane posits the “creature” who shrieked to be “masked in an ordinary woman’s face and shape” (210), here Jane shifts uneasily between the gendered and impersonal pronouns, from “it” to “she” and back, struggling to define between “creature” and “woman”. Significantly, when Jane looks upon Bertha through the reflection of the mirror she maintains the use of “it” throughout, from her taxonomy of Bertha’s face (“oh, sir, I never saw a face like it! It was a discoloured face—it was a savage face” [283]) to Bertha’s movements (“It drew aside the window-curtain... it retreated to the door...” [284]): “it” becomes a body divorced from subjectivity which seems to move against or without a governing will.

When Jane looks at Bertha, the taxonomy she offers is one directly implicated in the (de)moralization of Bertha’s body. Patricia McKee draws out the implications of Bertha’s ambiguous³¹ racialization within this passage, as Jane’s description of Bertha’s “fearful[ly] blackened” lineaments, “purple” face, and “swollen” features build upon caricatures of the black body. The work of this racialization, McKee argues, is “embedded in Jane’s claims of freedom and of discipline” (67). McKee quotes Richard Dyer, who argues that whereas “black people can be reduced (in white culture) to their bodies and thus to race, [whereas] white people are something else that is realised in and yet is not reducible to the corporeal, or racial” (Dyer 14, qtd. in McKee 68). Jane’s “reduc[tion]” of Bertha to a taxonomy of racialized traits, explicitly distanced from the gendered pronoun of the subject, works to emphasize both the material body and the

³¹ Bertha’s racial ambiguity as a “Creole” is historicized and explored in detail by Sue Thomas (“The Tropical Extravagance of Bertha Mason”). Thomas, like McKee, regards the ‘work’ of Bertha’s racialization as less a matter of “biological blackness” (McKee 70) and more the ideological inscription of race theory.

cultural values ascribed to it: Bertha's "savage" body "assign[s] her grades of cultural, emotional, and intellectual development[s] deemed primitive on Victorian scales of civilization..." (70). Shuttleworth, however, notes that Jane's descriptions simultaneously read against common physiological descriptions of insanity: Thomas Graham's *Domestic Medicine*, the Brontë's household almanac, defines madness in the physiology of a "peculiar appearance of the eyes, protruding and wild", and the "thick furrow" of the brow (Shuttleworth 2008, 477 n. 283). Between race and madness, however, is the shared inscription of the demoralized body and a spirit "savaged".

Far prior to Bertha's grand unveiling in the attic scene, Jane's narrative actively works to preclude Bertha from moral consideration. Jane's interrogative attitude towards Bertha's humanity does not merely precede Bertha's formal introduction: it positions her, framing and so guiding Bertha's eventual reception. The function of Jane's rendering throughout these moments is in fact directly parallel to Rochester, who, as he begins leading the disrupted wedding party to bear witness to his secreted wife, provides a pre-emptive narrative framework:

I invite you all to come up to the house and visit Mrs. Poole's patient, and *my wife!*—You shall see what sort of a being I was cheated into espousing, and judge whether or not I had a right to break compact, and seek sympathy with something at least human. (292)

Before letting the wedding party meet Bertha, Rochester inscribes Bertha with all the moral signification of her materiality. Rochester positions Bertha as a threat not only in and of herself but a threat to others—particularly to himself—through the guise of moral contagion established through the hereditary taint of both madness and race: "Bertha

Mason is mad; and she came from a mad family:--idiots and maniacs through three generations! Her mother, the Creole, was both a mad woman and a drunkard!" (292). This "being" is then deliberately juxtaposed with Jane's self-apparent humanity, as Rochester begs his right to "seek sympathy with something *at least human*". The inverse corollary is that that sympathy could not otherwise have been directed toward the inhuman Bertha.

Multiple scholars have drawn the connection between the attic scene to the Victorian historical context of the human public spectacle, focusing on Rochester's narrative as he both leads toward and "uncovers" the room by "lift[ing] the hangings from the wall" (292). Christopher Gabbard directly compares the scene to the pseudo-scientific displays of the medical establishment, wherein "spectacular, extraordinary bod[ies] [were] displayed at the public 'clinic' where theatregoers could participate in scientific and medical anatomizing" (97). Just as Wollstonecraft toured Bedlam in preparation for her novel, visitors could pay to "gawk at the lunatics" housed in public asylums (98); and, like Rochester's declarative of Bertha's madness, visitors would be encouraged to read the patients body as an exemplary of material knowledge, the embodiment of their pathology. Alternatively, Sussanah Mintz compares Rochester to a freak-show "barker" (139). Mintz writes

pulling aside the curtain to an astonished audience on this 'strange wild animal ... covered in clothing', a 'clothed hyena' with 'hind feet.' Such language exactly replicates the kind of advertising that compelled Victorian spectators to exhibitions of human oddities... (139)

Both Gabbard and Mintz highlight the ways in which the theatricality of the attic scene works to place Bertha within the scope of spectacle. For both the freak show and the medical spectacle (which in historical development merely transition³² from the former to the latter), the reception of the body is governed by its presentation; and, in true Barnum fashion, Rochester's barking "challenge[s] [his] audienc[e] not only to classify and explain what they s[ee], but to relate the performance to themselves..." (Thomson 58). Looking at the "enfreaked³³" body as an object of knowledge reinforces the subject position of the spectator in turn. Thus Bertha's body, first traced through and inscribed with the material signifiers of both race and madness, is unveiled *against* that "something at least human".

Jane resumes her narration as the crowd enters the room. As with the veil scene, the species ambiguity through which Jane earlier failed to inscribe Bertha's voice is once more read upon her body, as she fails to discern "at first sight" whether the "figure" she sees is "beast or human being" (293): "[I]t grovelled, seemingly, on all fours; it snatched and growled like some strange wild animal; but it was covered with clothing; and a quantity of dark, grizzled hair, wild as a man, hid its head and face" (293). Whereas the "cloth[ing]" of the "hyena³⁴" confuses Jane's configuration, she nevertheless maintains

³² Citing the stripping down of medical evaluations, group examinations, and surgical screenings in amphitheatres, Eli Clare writes that "[t]oday's freakdom happens in hospitals and doctor's offices" (Clare 104). Historically contextualized, Rosemarie Garland Thomson writes that "the narratives of pathology derived from [freaked] bodies built reputations at the Royal Society and the Academie des Sciences" (57).

³³ "Enfreakment" is a term originally coined by David Hevey and cited in Rosemarie Garland Thompson (16).

³⁴ The hyena bears both sexual and racialized significance as a metaphor. The spotted hyena, native to sub-Saharan Africa, has a 'pseudo-penis' which has been mislabelled as "hermaphroditic" in early western historical accounts (see: Glickman, *The Spotted Hyena from Aristotle to the Lion King*). The female hyena is the dominant actor in copulation, and dens tend to be matriarchal. For Victorians who read 'hysteria' as a

the body as animal as it “stood tall on its hind feet” (293). Jane delegates Bertha’s actions to the realm of animal behaviour, twice iterated here as “wild”; similarly, in being confronted with the apparent wife of Rochester, Jane once more struggles to reconcile Bertha’s subject position as either “she” or “it”. Curiously, however, in both scenes, Bertha takes the gendered pronoun when she *looks back*: when “she thrust up her candle close to [Jane’s] face” in the veil scene (284), and when “she sees [Rochester]” and “gaze[s] wildly at her visitors” (293). In strange parallel to Pilot’s “pretercanine eyes”, the recognition of Bertha’s gaze disrupts the species narrative as a humanizing gesture—that in *looking back* Bertha might subsequently *address* her audience. Yet so too with Pilot, Rochester’s presence breaks the spell: “*That*”, he declares, “is *my wife*” (293, emphasis original).

Between Jane and Rochester, Bertha is framed as abject through reference to her animality, the effect of which is to divorce Bertha from the capacity for response—and, consequentially, outside the obligations owed to the human subject. Gayatri Spivak illustriously articulated the ways in which *Jane Eyre* plays upon the boundaries of the human subject against its colonial-other; for Spivak, Bertha’s “function” in the novel is “to render indeterminate the boundary between human and animal *and thereby to weaken her entitlement* under the spirit if not the letter of the Law” (Spivak 249, emphasis added). In Spivak’s terms of the imperial “not-yet-human Other” (247), the spiritual mission of the text follows the injunction: “*make* the heathen into a human so that he can be treated as an end in himself” (248); this mission Spivak ties to the “soul making”

distinctly feminine madness characterized particularly through sexual aggression (see Shuttleworth), we can perhaps see why the hyena would appeal to Brontë as an apt metaphor for Bertha.

project of the Christian imperial economy (248), most credibly bound to St. John's role in the novel. Such a project would also be in keeping with the moral management imperative to *make* the mad into a human *once more*—and yet this imperative does not seem to align with the tangible conditions of Bertha's care at Thornfield. Bertha's sequestering in the attic certainly, at least, does not follow the directives of the Brontë almanac: Graham³⁵ not only prescribed “constant exercise and change of place” for the cure of the morally mad (384), but “assiduous kindness” and (most emphatically) “consoling conversation” (385). Between both Jane and Rochester, however, Bertha is regarded as “singularly *incapable* of being led to anything higher” (306, emphasis added)—she “cannot help” her madness (301), and helplessly Thornfield responds in kind. Rather, the imperative followed by the text appears to be: *keep* Bertha animal.

Rochester declares the right to master over Bertha under the pathological directive which declares her no-longer-human, and this mastery includes (in fact centres on) her voice. That Bertha's shutting up follows as a matter “of course” of the mad pronouncement marks her transition: “since the medical men had pronounced her mad, she had, of course, been shut up...” (309). In being declared mad, Bertha's madness is given in place of her voice—she is “shut up” in terms of confinement as well as robbed of her rhetoricability. Rochester, in relaying the necessity of Bertha's sequestering, inadvertently reveals her capacity for voice:

³⁵ Whereas we can directly source Graham's *Domestic Medicine* to the Brontë household, Graham is not alone in his prescription. Moral management or otherwise, it would be difficult to find a treatise for insanity which did not advocate for the patient's removal from the “exciting” influences which occasioned their madness. See: Prichard (280-282); Battie (68-70); Pinel (63).

One night I had been awakened by her yells [M]y ears filled with the curses the maniac still shrieked out; wherein she momentarily mingled my name with such a tone of demon-hate, with such language!—no professed harlot ever had a fouler vocabulary than she: though two rooms off, I heard every word—the thin partitions of the West-India house opposing but slight obstruction to her wolfish cries. (308)

Though “foul”, Bertha nevertheless maintains (even in her supposed paroxysms) a capacity for the verbal, possessing a “vocabulary” of “word[s]”. This aligns with what we already know of Bertha, revealed in that altercation between herself and her brother, that she does in fact bear the capacity “to say”: “she *said* she’d drain my heart” (213). I emphasize this as a crucial matter of distinction against other disability theoretical perspectives surrounding *Jane Eyre* (such as Gabbard or Pike) which place Bertha within the realm of the nonverbal: it is rather, as I say, not that Bertha *does not* speak, but that she is not attended. This non-attention is the formal directive surrounding Bertha’s management. Grace Poole, we are told, has been given the express terms to keep Bertha quiet: “”Too much noise, Grace ... Remember directions!” (107). Similarly, when Richard Mason speaks his sister’s words, Rochester seeks to quiet him: “Come, be silent, Richard, and never mind her gibberish: don’t repeat it” (212). Rochester’s directive is here a double³⁶ silencing as Bertha’s words are first reduced to “gibberish” in an attempt

³⁶ Whereas I speak of the two-fold silencing measure against Bertha, Sue Thomas writes at length of the ways in which Richard is similarly (though to a significantly lesser degree than his sister) denigrated by similar rhetorical gestures throughout the novel: Thomas reveals a compelling connection between Jane and Rochester’s framing of Richard as dog-like (Thomas 5-6).

to divest the spoken word of its meaning, then subsequently denied re-iteration (and therefore potential reception) in the injunction to not repeat her words.

The work of the animalized rhetoric surrounding Bertha is therefore to combine the explicit directive with the implicit: that while Bertha cannot be forcibly (to say entirely) “shut up”, she can nevertheless be rendered arhetorical. Under the basis that the animal (such as Pilot) “cannot speak”, both Rochester and Jane position Bertha as animal so as to deny her voice its persuasive affect. Jane’s interpellation of Bertha’s voice as animal and therefore arhetorical sets the groundwork for what is latterly established by Bertha’s body (as framed by Rochester), both working to situate Bertha as a body incapable of response.

Let us push back against that mastery. At the novel’s climax, in what Gabbard astutely calls a “catastrophically unsuccessful episode of caregiving” (100), Bertha escapes to the roof of Thornfield as the manor is set ablaze, from which she speaks, “standing, wavering her arms, above the battlements, and shouting out till they could hear her a mile off” (428). In this moment Bertha engages in a final speech act where, far from being secreted away in the obscured attic, she stands above her entrapment and shouts “[un]till” she is heard—and heard she is, for Jane learns of the events not from Rochester but from a bystander at a local inn who “saw her and heard her...” (428). While Bertha does not entirely escape the mad framework (identified by the local as a “lunatic” [426] and assigned the blame for the fire), she nevertheless succeeds at reclaiming, briefly, her rhetoricity: her voice is granted persuasive affect such that it compels others into action.

Bertha’s “vociferation” (Gabbard 95) is once more echoed by Pilot, who similarly is granted a “speech act” which, though decidedly nonverbal in this instance, nevertheless

instigates its own moment of care and response. At Pilot's introduction, wherein Mesrour (the Orientalized horse) tumbles with Rochester in tow, Pilot

seeing his master in a predicament, and hearing the horse groan, barked till the evening hills echoed with the sound; which was deep in proportion to his magnitude. He snuffed round the prostrate group, and then he ran up to [Jane]; it was all he could do,--there was no other help at hand to summon. [Jane] obeyed him, and walked down to the traveler... (112)

How must one read this scene if not as a rhetorical utterance (as Jane does, insofar as she both recognizes the call for help and responds to—*obeys*—it)? Curiously, Pilot's cry here is both a call for and response to a moment of interspecies empathy, seeing both Rochester in danger while simultaneously responding to the call of another animal in the form of Mesrour's groans. Whereas we have seen the animal granted only the "cry of nature" (Rousseau 101), the mechanical bent of Descartes wound-up machines which speak through instinct alone, here Pilot's utterances are not directed from the body but toward another, instigated by the other, asking for help not for himself but for man and horse alike. There is similarly another scene in which Pilot 'speaks', and this is of joy and recognition: when Jane returns from Moorfield to the burnt down Thornfield, "Pilot pricked up his ears ... then he jumped up with a yelp and a whine, and bounded toward [her]" (433). In both of these scenes Pilot barks not for himself but for an implied interlocutor—in both instances, Jane—who responds to, is called into action by, the utterance. Simultaneously, both of these scenes revolve around Pilot recognizing Jane as another to whom he *may* speak, marking his utterance as a social act.

Far from the meaninglessness which is ascribed to Bertha's animalized utterance, Pilot's "speech" is granted the dignity of response. Against the assertions of an apparently objective animal silence, then, we instead bear witness to an imposed silence, borne against rather than through the materiality of the body. Our work comes from disentangling the terms human and animal from the biases of the text, to question not only what defines the human in opposition to the animal, but who is granted the ability to define them as such.

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Chapter 2

2 Speaking for Herself: Shutting Up *The Woman in White*

When Nina, Laura Fairlie's "little Italian greyhound" (92), first makes her appearance in the novel she is presented as an unattended rhetor. Nina's body language is expressed in terms of persuasive affect, she "press[es] against [Laura's] dress impatiently for notice and encouragement" while the two walk the grounds of the estate (92). The act of this translation, whereby Nina's actions are registered under persuasive terms, works to formally recognize Nina as a rhetor; her body language becomes aligned with rhetorical gesture, her actions 'speaking' to both her own intent as well as the desired effect from the audience she begs, hoping to persuade a response from the companion she presses against. When Laura therefore fails to attend to Nina's rhetoric, Laura's inattention is explicitly marked as a missed opportunity for dialogue: Nina's rhetoric goes, as the narrator describes, "unheeded" (92), a word that suggests the heard but nevertheless disregarded voice. This moment is brief but significant as it sets the precedent for Nina's subsequent appearance within the narrative. Insofar as Nina's body language is written in rhetorical terms during her introduction, readers must attune to the ways in which she goes similarly "unheeded" when they encounter her next—for Nina gives one of the first testimonies spoken against Sir Percival Glyde.

Percival, the major villain of *The Woman in White*, is introduced by way of the Fairlie family's lawyer as a man of unblemished reputation. "Not a whisper," Mr. Gilmore assures, "has ever reached me, or my family, against him" (83). The fact of this discourse allows Percival to continue his courting of Laura unabated against the aroused suspicions of Walter Hartright; no evidence, as Gilmore assures, can be found that would

undermine the baron's character. When, however, during a quiet moment inside, Percival reaches toward Nina and calls out to her—"Come, Nina . . . we remember each other, don't we?" (134)—Nina's reaction directly refutes Gilmore's claim: Nina "looked up at him sharply, shrank away from his outstretched hand, whined, shivered, and hid itself under a sofa" (134). In response to Percival's entreaty, Nina's actions clearly indicate remembrance: the open hand must echo the clenched fist of the baron's violent streak (as readers later discover³⁷), one which Percival inflicts upon both human- and non-human-animal alike. Nina's retreat is yet more than physical—it is rhetorical, as her shrinking from the outstretched hand rejects the offered discourse of both Percival and Gilmore. Rather, articulated through her whines and shivers, Nina's body language speaks against Percival's apparently established character. Not wholly silent, Nina's body language is accompanied by her "bark[s]" and "snap[s]" as Percival (the only character to comprehend her response, knowing to what she responds) quickly retreats and Nina, in turn, necessarily addresses the present company; nevertheless, these utterances fail to register, formally, as complaint. It is in fact not Percival but Nina herself whose character suffers from the interaction, as Gilmore denounces her actions to be that of a "cross-grained" nature—"as pet-dogs usually are" (134). As before, then, so too in this scene does Nina continue to go "unheeded" by those whose notice she begs.

These interactions with Nina "speak" to a recurrent preoccupation throughout the novel with rhetoric and authority, as *The Woman in White* demonstrates how Percival's character is maintained: not, as Gilmore suggests, through the *absence* of testimony, but

³⁷ Marian recalls in passing that Percival "beat one of [his] spaniels" (222).

from the ways in which embodied models of rhetoric go unheeded, barred from “reach[ing]” the level of approved discourse. For especially embodied rhetors, the body articulates meaning; but when the body comes to be constructed as antithetical to discourse, animality itself becomes arhetorical. As we see with Nina, the rhetoricability which she is shown to possess—her capacity for persuasive discourse, held in the affect of her body language through which she entreats her audience into action—is negated through deference to the very fact of her being animal. Nina, who depends entirely upon the articulations of her body for cross-species communication, has her word instead translated into an affliction *of* the body, of the “cross-grained” nature seemingly bred into her bones. “Pet” becomes a signifier used to disable her word, as Gilmore redirects the problematic object of her testimony away from Percival and toward herself, toward Nina’s very physiology, asserting that her word is nothing more than the affect of her animality. In doing so, Nina is effectively silenced, and Percival’s reputation remains intact.

Instead of considering Nina’s presence in the text to be an invocation of “the silliest of folk wisdom” (Miller 114), I argue that Nina marks a vital throughline in the novel’s exploration of the shared condition between its disabled human- and non-human-animal rhetors. Collins demonstrates through this animal interaction the discrepancy between rhetorical *presence* and rhetorical *attendance*, as Nina’s rhetoricability, revealed in the narration, is unheeded in deference to her animality. By emphasizing the ways in which Nina’s animality frames her silence, Collins primes his readers to revisit this shared condition in the novel’s heroines: for the discourse used to silence Nina is the very same which disables Anne Catherick, the titular woman in white. When a young Anne

threatens discourse which would unseat Percival's authority, he responds by stripping her of her own rhetorical authority: by "shut[ting] her up" in an asylum (105), the sociopolitical effects of which work to actively deny Anne her persuasive power. Where her audience learns of her being in the asylum, madness and its latent associations with animality work to translate Anne's words into "cross-grained" evocations of irrepressible instinct, and her repeated efforts to warn against Percival continue—like Nina—unheeded. This same condition is thereafter visited upon Laura who, once forcibly interchanged with Anne, similarly shares in the disabling effects of being pronounced mad. Where "pet" functionally redirects the problem of Nina's testimony away from Percival and toward her body, so too does "madness" work the same, as the "cross-grained" nature of these problematic bodies is used to dissolve their rhetorical authority—so as to uphold the authority of Percival.

This chapter examines this thematic alignment between mad and animal subjects as it persists throughout *The Woman in White*, as the novel reveals their shared status as rhetorically disabled subjects. Between Laura, Anne, and the cast of creaturely companions that litter the novel—from Nina to the Count's many mice, as well as the dogs, canaries, horses and cows lining the novel's thematic backdrop—*The Woman in White* explores the violence of subjugation through the model of the spoken-for subject. Where voicelessness is tied to violence, the novel mobilizes animals as a vehicle for alternative models of rhetorical expression, questioning how their (il)legitimacy as rhetors reads back against the human: animality is, as the novel reveals, positioned as antithetical to discourse, a denigration used to speak for and ultimately silence especially-embodied rhetors; yet, through narrative articulation, readers are shown the ways in

which the body speaks both truthfully and persuasively to power. I interrogate the affective register of “animality,” its appearance and attendance, as it manifests in the discrepant spaces between text and narrative; in doing so, I argue that these discrepancies work to demonstrate and ultimately deconstruct the ways in which animality is used to negate rhetoricability. In doing so, I offer a new reading of *The Woman in White* which seeks to bridge the cross-species connections between human and animal rhetors that are severed by an antagonism toward the body’s machinations.

Through this work, I seek to expand upon the conversation currently surrounding Wilkie Collins and disability. Kylee-Anne Hingston, writing on Collins’ *The Moonstone* (1868), argues that Collins makes use of the Moonstone’s multiple narrator’s and their “misinterpretations of bodies” in order to “suggest that while bodies and selfhood may be connected, that connection is primarily socially constructed rather than biologically determined” (Hingston 97). Hingston’s work speaks to the renewed interest surrounding Collins’ work in the field of disability studies, as recent scholarship has found in Collins’ novels a recurrent interest in investigating the negotiated meanings between body and world. Such work has been tied to Collins’ other novels which feature overt reference to physical difference in their main characters: deafness in *Hide and Seek*, blindness in *Poor Miss Finch*, hunches and limps in *The Moonstone*, and so forth, with a decided focus on Collins’ interest in the portrayal of the visibly “bodily afflicted” (Halliday, quoted in Flint 153). This interest is contextualized by Collins’ close following of the medical literature of his day, a historical framework keenly laid out by Jenny Bourne Taylor’s landmark *In the Secret Theatre of the Home* (1990), as Taylor traces throughout Collins’ letters and novels the scope of his interest in emergent Victorian models of medicine. What arises

from the current scholarly discussion surrounding Collins and disability is a recognition of the author's investment in the structures of social hierarchy, as new bodies of knowledge increasingly destabilized the boundaries of gender, race, class—the body itself and the terms which sought to encompass it. Alternative models of embodiment, such as his deaf and blind heroines, allowed Collins to interrogate the social dimensions of the body, the ways in which these heroines come to be defined by the discourse surrounding them; simultaneously, these disabled heroines offered new models for rhetorical expression, as Jennifer Esmail regards the deaf-mute Madonna of *Hide and Seek*, “[c]reating a deaf character allowed ... Collins to mediate not only on disability but also on language itself: its various forms, its fraught embodiment, and its materialized textuality” (993).

Whereas the vitality of this discussion has amplified Collins' place within Victorian disability studies, *The Woman in White*'s status in this conversation is fraught. Clare Walker Gore, for instance, argues that while the novel features “unusual bodies”—notably Marian's striking masculinity and Count Fosco's similarly striking size—Walker argues that it “does not prominently feature disabled characters” (Gore 79), a sentiment reflected in the general reluctance to include *The Woman in White* in collections that work with Collins and disability (Flint 2003; Hingston 2019; Logan 2019). Conversely, when madness is brought to bear upon the novel, disability studies as an appropriate framework appears to disappear in favor of an emphasis on the psychoanalytic. Rooted, perhaps, in Taylor's own psychoanalytic reading of the asylum as an echo of the larger domestic sphere of control—a reading built on emphasizing the moral management model of the early century—scholarship has been reluctant to re-trace the mad *body*

throughout *The Woman in White*, to recognize and reconsider madness as an embodied and subsequently disabling mode of life. There is a need, then, to articulate the physicality of madness—to say that Anne and Laura are, in fact, disabled characters—as the terms and conditions under which their bodies are asked to be read forms the major plot of the novel.

I conduct this work by situating Collins' novel within the historical and cultural context of mid-century psycho-physiological models of insanity, an inter-relational framework whose latter component plays fundamentally into how the mad body was to be constructed and received, both within the asylum and throughout the larger Victorian social sphere. Whereas scholarship generally situates *The Woman in White* within the politics of “wrongful confinement” and the circulation of the so-called lunacy panic of 1858, a critical disability framework regards the ways in which the novel interrogates, instead, the pathological backbone of confinement itself. Within the mad physiology of mid-century medicine, “animality” features predominantly as a theoretical conceptualization of the ways in which the human-animal body has gone awry, made manifest in the mad patient's inability to exert the (socially determined) necessary voluntary suppression over their faculties—otherwise put, to speak and behave in too animated, often read as too ‘animal’, a fashion. Under these terms the human-animal body becomes inherently suspect, the expressions of the body relegated to a re-surfacing of the animal impulse. Psychological manuals suggest reading the mad patient's rhetoric against their body, that the alienist might find trace evidence of an unsuppressed animality through conversation, where words and body are held at odds. When characters of *The Woman in White* are labelled “mad” they bear the signification of animality, and it

is through this layered process of signification that they are rendered rhetorically disabled. Having his characters work through the social significations of both madness and animality as they come to be reflexively applied against the novel's heroines—that most significant encounter, the initial meeting between Anne and Walter on the moonlit road, initiating this very process—Collins' *The Woman in White* carries readers through the various articulations of the body under duress.

Laura, Anne, and the Asylum

The plot of the novel follows Walter Hartright's efforts at reconstructing the history and identity of Laura Fairlie after a disastrous marriage strips her of both. Walter, working as an art instructor for Laura and her half-sister Marian, quickly falls in love with Laura; while his affections are returned, however, Laura reveals that she has been promised by her father to a baron named Sir Percival Glyde. Percival arrives at the family estate and shows himself to be both charming and reputable, to both Walter and Laura's chagrin, and the engagement progresses relatively unimpeded until a mysterious letter arrives, warning Laura of a duplicitous baron who seeks to ruin her. Insofar as Walter, prior to his establishment at the Fairlie's, had previously chanced upon Anne Catherick—a woman dressed all in white, bearing a startling resemblance to Laura, recently escaped from an asylum and nervous of an unnamed baron—the letter speaks to a connection between Percival and Anne, and their shared mysterious past throws the baron's apparently good name into doubt. While suspicions are aroused, however, the marriage nevertheless proceeds—Laura and Percival are soon wed, and Walter journeys overseas. Once secure in his marriage, Percival reveals himself to be a despot in debt who schemes after Laura's purse, and when Laura refuses to sign over her estate, he conspires to rob

her by force. With the help of Count Fosco—a shrewd Italian man, versed in chemical experiments and harboring a penchant for both pets and pastries—Percival constructs a plot to swap the identities of Laura and Anne, the latter of whom had been placed in the asylum for harboring a “Secret” that would undo Percival’s title. Percival, through Count Fosco, re-captures Anne, and Anne ultimately suffers a heart attack while under the Count’s roof, where she is then buried as the late “Lady Glyde”; Laura, meanwhile, is transported to London under false pretenses and returned to the Asylum as “Anne.” Laura eventually escapes the asylum with the help of Marian, but finds she is unable to reclaim either name or estate, having officially been declared dead and refused formal recognition by her willfully ignorant uncle. A returned Walter therefore seeks to reconstruct the events leading up to and surrounding Laura’s capture, aiming meanwhile to uncover the mysterious past of Anne and Percival, hoping that the two narratives combined will serve to unmask the baron and re-instate Laura in the court of public opinion³⁸.

The plot functions according to the premise that Laura may not “speak for herself” (451). Laura is at first unable to recollect the events surrounding her placement within the asylum (the likely side-effects of her being drugged and kept in a prolonged

³⁸ That it is through this informal court that Walter seeks to re-instate Laura is significant. According to John Sutherland, Collins had planned an elaborate courtroom drama for the narrative revelation (Sutherland 654), but had scrapped this initial idea, either for lack of time or lack of proofs. Collins, by way of Walter, circumvents the issue of “proofs” by having Walter fail to obtain the necessary documents altogether (Collins 535), relieving him of the ‘burden’ of courtly appeal. This aside, as the novel opens with a denigration of the “machinery of the Law” and the “Court of Justice” (5)—multiple failures which are suffered by the mad-women characters throughout the novel—it seems far more likely that Collins realized a novel-long critique of “justice” could not (or rather should not) be resolved through its formal machinations.

“state of partially-suspended consciousness” [626], though Natalie Huffels³⁹ makes the case for a traumatic reading), so that “the chance of appealing to her recollection of persons and events with which no impostor could be familiar, was proved ... to be hopeless” (443). This gap in memory constitutes the major crisis of the novel, as Walter must thereby track down both evidence and witness to the capture; the narrative is therefore presented as a series of fragments from different individuals (from Walter and Marian, as well as a housekeeper, a cook, a doctor, a servant, and a tombstone), whose collected testimonies align to reconstruct the chain of events. But what is offered as justification for novel form—what Collins calls “an experiment ... [never] been hitherto tried in fiction” (644)—is fundamentally ideological, as the novel questions the importance of what it means to speak as well as to be spoken for. Rather than consider Laura’s inability to “speak for herself” the result of a gap in memory, I argue we should instead regard it as rhetorical disablement—the product of Laura (un)learning the authority of her voice after a lengthy study in debilitation. For Laura, and for the novel writ large, speech and power are fundamentally intertwined.

Power, as it is explored throughout the novel, is bound to one’s ability to speak: to speak for and of oneself, and to speak for and over the other. Wherein Percival’s plot centres on his control over the discourse surrounding his character, the novel interrogates precisely how both “speech” and “ability” are determined, as well as how these determinations maintain Percival’s authority—and to what cost. The asylum plays an

³⁹ Huffels argues that Laura’s gaps in memory are a form of “double consciousness”, a mid-Victorian conceptualization of the psyche and early trauma theory, where the mind disassociates as a “protective mechanism to deal with the over stimulation of emotional excitement” (Huffels 47).

integral role in this interrogation, as it is there that Percival is able to “shut up” both Anne and Laura in order to protect himself. The double meaning of “shut up,” whereby the silencing effects are intertwined with the carceral, is insisted upon by the narrative. “Shut up” is repeated throughout the novel in reference to both Anne and Laura’s placement in the asylum (100, 105, 284, 337, 550), and it is the silencing effects of the asylum with which Percival is primarily invested, a motivation which is explicitly addressed by the novel’s close. As is revealed by the elder Mrs. Catherick’s letter, Percival’s imprisonment of Anne is driven by a desire to strip her word of its authoritative power—specifically, of her ability to unseat *his* own authority. When a young Anne overhears knowledge of her mother’s and Percival’s shared “Secret” (being that Percival had illegitimately written himself into his baronetcy by means of an unattended marriage registrar, a feat undertaken by the help of Mrs. Catherick), Anne threatens to “let out [his] Secret” and “ruin [him] for life” (549). Whether the young Anne truly knows the details⁴⁰ of the “Secret” or, as Mrs. Catherick assures “she had merely repeated, like a parrot, the words she had heard me say” (550), is indeterminable; despite (or in spite of) this, both Mrs. Catherick and Percival recognize that Anne holds the ability to let loose the mere fact of there *being* a secret in and of itself. Whereas Mrs. Catherick’s identification of Anne with a “parrot” seeks to divert meaning from her daughter’s words by animalizing her rhetoric,

⁴⁰ John Sutherland notes that the manuscript of *The Woman in White* had Anne in full possession of the Secret, but that “Collins on second thoughts [sic] evidently realized that it would be implausible that, if she knew, this babbling madwoman could keep it to herself” (Sutherland 652). As my chapter will lay out, this need not necessarily be the case; and, as far as Mrs. Catherick goes, her insistence that Anne did not actually know the details is just as likely to be self-preservation from a woman already demonstrated to be a liar (Mrs. Catherick adamantly refuses to entertain Walter’s accusations of adultery, which are later confirmed—Anne is the product of Mrs. Catherick’s affair with Laura’s father, thus their striking resemblance).

Percival determines that Anne must be not only symbolically but *systematically* silenced altogether through the asylum's effects: "It ended ... in his insisting on securing his own safety *by shutting her up*" (550).

For both Anne and Laura, the consequence of their placement in the asylum is largely rhetorical, a disabling of their rhetoricability under the terms of pathology. By placing both women within the asylum system, Percival guarantees that, regardless of their status within or without the asylum (both having escaped its walls but not its terms), their word is undone through deference to their supposed madness. When Laura is therefore rendered unable to "speak for herself" (451), she suffers from the explicitly intended consequence of her placement in the asylum, outlined by Anne's history and revisited upon Laura as an effective measure of protection: Percival places Anne as well as Laura in the asylum in order to maintain his character, understanding that the asylum provides both carceral as well as rhetorical constraints. Where rhetorical disablement therefore functions as the driving mechanism of the plot, the novel details *how* it is measured out by first addressing the ways in which the asylum patient is interred in rhetorical denial, and by then reverberating the asylum's pronouncement throughout Anne and Laura's social interactions outside the asylum, ultimately revealing the disabling effects of being pronounced mad.

While Laura's inability to recall her capture is of some import, Walter soon reveals that it is her time spent within the asylum itself, the time spent following the initial capture event, which destabilizes her capacity for speech:

From that date ... she had been under restraint; her identity with Anne Catherick systematically asserted, and her sanity, from first to last, practically denied.

Faculties less delicately balanced, constitutions less tenderly organized, must have suffered under such an ordeal as this. (436)

As opposed to Taylor's reading of *The Woman in White's* asylum as a largely "uncontroversial" figure (Taylor 104), Walter directly identifies the institution as the direct source of her disablement, where restraint—which we must assume to be physical⁴¹ as well as psychological and metaphorical—has a profound impact upon Laura's capabilities. Laura's time spent within the asylum renders her "unfit to bear the trial" of testimony (Collins 436), both in the sense that she cannot remember the precise details leading to her capture, but, more importantly, that she is now both perceived and presented as an unreliable rhetor. When Walter and Marian attempt to question Laura surrounding her capture, her rhetoric is directly marked as having drastically changed to the point of regression: "She spoke as a child might have spoken; she showed⁴² [Walter] her thoughts as a child might have shown them" (436). While her memory clouds and her features are said to bear new marks of sorrow, it is altogether her rhetoricability which suffers most: Laura struggles to speak, her words cutting off in "mute helplessness" as

⁴¹ This is the only reference to "restraint" made within the asylum in the novel, and though we have small glimpses of the asylum's interior, *The Woman in White* does not ultimately provide details as to which form(s) of "restraint" Laura/Anne received. Though traditional histories of the asylum tend to portray the mid-Victorian era as having gradually moved away from restraint, the reality is that only the form and classification of "restraint" itself changes over time. Chemical restraint, for instance, grows in proportion to the asylum's medical narrative: attendants frequently made use of hydrarg, morphine sulfate, quinine, narcotics, and even THC (Ranney 1858), less often for their curative properties and more for their sedative qualities in quelling unruly patients. However, as Robert Gardiner Hill reveals, by mid-century traditional forms of physical restraint were still known to be in use: Hill, advocating for "total abolition" of restraint, qualifies strong-dresses, chainable boots, and collars as tolerable methods (Hill 76, 80). Photographs of the West Riding Asylum by H. Clarke circa 1869 further document the continued use of physical restraints.

⁴² That Laura's "regression" is aligned with her "showing" her thoughts as the counterpart to "sp[eeaking]" them suggests that she has begun using gesticulation, a deprecation for embodied language that I touch upon later in this chapter.

she attempts to articulate herself to Walter (488); more tellingly, however, is that Laura struggles to be *heard*, as she begs not to be treated “like a child” only for Walter to do exactly that (489), promising to sell her drawings only to pocket her “valueless sketches” and lie to her about the source of her allowance (490).

The process by which Laura comes to be disabled is shown in detail, in contrast to the relatively little detail that readers are otherwise given of the asylum’s interior. Walter outright identifies the “systematic” assertion of “Anne’s” identity as a contributing cause toward Laura’s debilitation, though it is rather the broader systematic denial of Laura’s word which schools her into silence:

Look at your own name on your own clothes, and don’t worry us all any more about being Lady Glyde. She’s dead and buried; and you’re alive and hearty. Do look at your clothes now! There it is, in good marking ink; and there you will find it on all your old things, which we have kept in the house—Anne Catherick, as plain as print! (436)

Laura’s first night in the asylum, after she awakens “suddenly in a strange place” to find herself called Anne Catherick’s name and clothed in her dress (436), is spent in discourse with a nurse—or rather, being schooled into proper discourse by the nurse. The nurse charged with “Anne’s” care is given the task of correcting “Anne’s” words—with ‘correcting’ Laura’s assertion that she is, in fact, Lady Glyde—and she does so in deference to the physical letter of “Anne’s” clothing. For Taylor, the nurse’s “care” reads as an example of moral instruction (Taylor X), as the narrative identifies that she “not at all irritably or unkindly” goes about correcting her charge (436); rather than sedate or physically restrain “Anne”, the nurse is set to the task of gently correcting her morality,

as her “worry[ing]” remark seeks to place “Anne” back in the social realm by inciting compassion for others. But it is *rhetoric* in its most literal sense which takes the forefront of this moral instruction: Laura’s words are set in direct contrast to the nurse’s, where both tone and meaning must be corrected through patient example and a firm rejection of the patient’s word. By identifying the asylum with rhetorical instruction, then, readers can presume that the “restraint” which Walter earlier references is not to be found (merely) in shackles and bars but in a barring of words, as Laura’s stay in the asylum is spent having her word broken down and her persuasive capabilities denied. That such instruction is explicitly marked in Anne Catherick’s own course at the asylum, whose first night is similarly spent “quiet[ing] her” (551)—after she, like Laura, begins by asserting the truth of her condition, that she has been placed in the asylum “for knowing [Percival’s] secret” (551)—must therefore be regarded as a deliberate effort to align the asylum with rhetorical constraint.

In placing the asylum and its rhetorical instruction at the centre of his novel—and at the centre of Laura’s as well as Anne’s disablement—Collins brings *The Woman in White* deliberately into conversation with mid-Victorian concerns surrounding the asylum’s praxis of care, charging the institution with not only maintaining but altogether *producing* that which it claims to rectify. For, as the asylum sought to rebrand its image in the wake of medical professionalization, it shaped how the body was to be read and, in turn, how the mad were to be heard. Where scholarship has traditionally read Collins’ asylum as an extension of the larger frameworks of domestic and/or patriarchal control—as one amongst the “broader institutions of middle-class common sense—the law and the family” (Taylor 104)—the deliberate *centering* of the asylum in terms of Laura’s

disability asks that we read it at the forefront, as an entangled presence whose systematic and cultural reverberations reverberate throughout the larger structure of the plot. This entanglement moreover is one deliberately rooted in the body, in bodily articulation and social reception, and whereas I begin this chapter with the rhetorical foundations of the asylum's disabling structure, the asylum itself is grounded in a particular perception of patient physiology. Rather, in direct contrast to Taylor's reading of *The Woman in White's* "domesticated, feminized insanity" (101), the asylum of both the novel and of the mid-Victorian era harkens to an insanity that is fundamentally animalized, rooted in physiological foundations which regarded the animal machinations of the human-animal body with disdain. This charge is therefore best served by a brief detour into the context which surrounds *The Woman in White*, where Collins as social historian writes into and deconstructs through his novel the shifting and newly emerging frameworks of the body that penetrate social politics.

Pathologies of a Panic

As scholarship (notably Taylor as well as Peter McCandless) early identifies, Collins wrote *The Woman in White* in 1859 amidst a "lunacy panic" in Britain—press-sponsored endemics of what McCandless deems "outbursts of public rage" against the asylum (McCandless 84). These "outbursts" (and we must note the denigration of 'outburst' as an animalistic impulse, sudden and irrepressible) are framed as a response to stories of 'wrongfully confined' patients—the apparently sane who remained held in the asylum against their will, often at the behest of relatives who benefitted from their internment. Collins himself later attributed one such story, that of the Marquise de

Douhalt⁴³, as an early inspiration for plot points of the novel. Yet, while the spectre of “sane people confined in lunatic asylums”—the “ghosts of newspaper raising”, as asylum advocate John Charles Bucknill⁴⁴ responded (“The Newspaper Attack” 149)—offers a sensational story, it is by and large a simplification, a reduction of legitimate concerns surrounding the asylum and its rapidly evolving and expanding institutional presence, a domain which asked Victorians to reconfigure the ways in which they interacted with the world under increasingly pathological terms. By mid-century the Victorian asylum had worked to reclassify itself as a medical rather than moral institution. Under the new order of the asylum, insanity increasingly came to be understood through an emphasis on interior pathology—as the manifestation of “brain disease”—to be contained and cured through the specialized knowledge of the alienist. Rather than an isolated response to “wrongful confinement,” the “panic” is therefore best understood as a growing dis-ease with the internalization and professionalization of insanity, as both the number of

⁴³ The Marquis’ story and its clear antecedent for plot elements of *The Woman in White* is described in detail by Sutherland’s appendix to the Oxford edition of the novel (“Appendix B”), is initially identified by Clyde K. Hyder (“Wilkie Collins and *The Woman in White*”, *PMLA* 1939), and is referenced by Collins’ major biographers, Kenneth Robinson and Catherine Peters. Briefly told, the story as it is originally recounted by Maurice Mejan in *Recueil des Causes Celebres* (a compellation of French crime history which Collins found in a Paris bookstall), follows the Marquis de Douhault, an heiress who, on travelling to confront her brother’s unlawful seizure of assets, finds herself drugged and transported to the Salpetriere, where she awakens to find herself called by the name “Blainville.” She was unable to legally reclaim her identity.

⁴⁴ Editor of *The Asylum Journal* and co-founder of the Medical Officers Association for Asylums, Bucknill declared the lunacy panic to be a “foolish and unjustifiable outcry.” Bucknill, “The Newspaper Attack on Private Lunatic Asylums,” *The Journal of Mental Science* Vol. 5, No. 27 (Oct. 1858): 152. A pattern is formed whereby the public outcry in response to sensationalized stories of medical practice leads to new legislation (and often increased bureaucratic oversight) within the profession, leading in turn to a professional outcry against public “hysterics”. Within this call-and-response, the animal (either animal-itself or animal-instinct) is often used as metaphor to devalue this public outcry, a rhetorical gesture especially favoured by Bucknill: “[The public] have opened their sweet melodious voices upon the poor mad doctor; and a scratch pack it was, indeed, with every intonation of threatening cry, from the noble bay of the hound, to the small yap of the cur” (146). Collins appears to be highly invested in this pattern—I cover the same historical/rhetorical patterning in my next chapter on *Heart and Science*.

asylums and iterations of insanity appeared to grow exponentially⁴⁵ throughout the era. Especially of note is the way the word “panic” itself treats public response to medicine as pathological in and of itself, demanding sedation through either legislation or literature—the latter modelled throughout Bucknill’s work as editor for *The Asylum Journal* in a deliberate effort to stave off the former. Just as the *Asylum Journal*’s pathologization of public outcry sought to mediate on the proper models of behaviour and response, the asylum sought to articulate the clear boundaries of belonging for aberrant bodies.

Properly situated, the “panic” circa 1858 grows out of changes enacted by the Lunatics Law and County Asylums Acts of 1845, two laws which consolidated the medical professionalization of the asylum. Under the 1845 Acts the asylum became a mandatory feature of the English landscape: each county was required to provide an asylum for the insane poor, funded by the county’s coffers; every asylum was to then fall under the general purview of the Lunacy Commission, a central body whose role was to ensure the asylum’s maintenance and compliance with industry standard. This Lunacy Commission, composed of three medical and three legal professionals (all salaried), as well as five laymen (volunteered), was tasked with ensuring that “every safe and proper precaution has been taken to thoroughly examine, in the minutest particular, the mental condition of every ... fit subject to be deprived of their civil rights” (Winslow “Lunacy Legislation” 530). While the Commission was spearheaded as a philanthropic campaign for the welfare of the asylum’s charges (as a task force intended to ensure each asylum follow standard protocol), their actual function was conditioned by the simultaneous

mandate that every asylum have a chief medical officer, a resident physician under whose care the asylum's charges (now "patients") were to be placed—and under whose authority rest their civil rights. Under the new medical direction, patients no longer had right of access to the courts to appeal their detention in the asylum: the medical officer who certified their insanity must also clear patients of it, discharging patients upon cure; if patients wished to contest the medical officer they had to appeal to the Commission, a relatively small group of men tasked with a magnitude of asylum inmates. Therefore, whereas McCandless argues that the panic represented "a conflict between the medical and legal professions and their outlooks on insanity" (McCandless 85), properly told the two were always already interwoven, and it is in fact that very entanglement to which the "panic" objected.

The shift from "ward" to "patient" outlined by the language of the Lunatics Act echoed the institution's internal reclassification under the domain of mental health as "hospitals for the treatment of a form of brain disorder" (Winslow "Lunacy Legislation" 528), a reverberation of the larger trend whereby insanity came increasingly to be conceptualized in terms of pathology. Whereas the definition of insanity's various forms, from madness and melancholia to idiocy and epilepsy⁴⁶, would be reconfigured throughout the era, the pathological conceptualization of insanity would form the central tenet as to how one was to approach and understand mental and social distress: as

⁴⁶ "Idiocy" was understood as distinct from madness, but nevertheless included in most manuals of psychological medicine and, more importantly, formed a not-insignificant number of asylum patients. The 1844 Metropolitan Commissioner's report includes 598 "Idiots" (comparable to the 696 "Suicidal" and 278 "Homicidal" patients); similarly, epileptics formed the largest "insane" population within the report, at 951 patients (184).

Bucknill elsewhere argued, “whatever definition [be] adopted,” those professionally involved with insanity should “regard *disease* as an essential condition” (Bucknill 1879⁴⁷ 88). Rather than social or moral duress—the tenets of the former “moral model” through which Taylor articulates her reading—the medical model of the asylum emphasized the internalized disorder of the brain’s organic functions as the seat of insanity. In light of this new framework, the asylum’s medicalization was ushered in by a rising optimism toward the possibility of curing insanity, “as curable as any other severe disease” (“The Lunacy Law” 242), while advocates stressed the “curative advantages” of early induction to the asylum (530). As the century progressed and anatomical study became foundational to medical practice, the hope was that new developments in both physiological knowledge and technique would ‘solve’ the problem of insanity by locating it within the body: materialism was becoming less heretical⁴⁸ and more axiomatic, as theories of insanity became increasingly tied to “the disordered action of the Brain” (Carpenter 548); and the “main object of resident in an asylum” as it came to be represented throughout medical literature shifted toward an emphasis on “the cure of the disease” (Bucknill “The Newspaper Attack” 152).

The near ubiquitous assertion that insanity be regarded as a “disease”, however, ran contrary to the asylum’s failure to obtain the objectively determinable evidence

⁴⁷ *The Manual of Psychological Medicine*, which Bucknill co-authored with Daniel Hack Tuke, was revised numerous times throughout the century. It was first published in 1858, contemporary to Collins. I quote the 1878 version, which retains this excerpt from the ’58. Bucknill was apparently no more confident in the certainty of diagnostic criteria by the late century than he had been 20 years earlier.

⁴⁸ Less, not to say fully. Carpenter’s *Principles of Human Physiology*, after a lengthy exposition of the cerebrum, attempts to offset the apparent materialism of his research with an appeal to religion: “[W]e cannot but feel that there is something beyond and above all this” (549).

through which it could declare insanity as such⁴⁹. “Mental disease” was rather a broad categorization of *both* psycho-physiological *as well as* social disturbances assembled under the broad banner of insanity, the parameters of which appeared to be ever expanding. Where this physiological ambiguity made the possibility of *cure* a far-reaching prospect, it made the task of *declaring* equally as tenuous. Bucknill, ever the advocate, argued that a precise knowledge of neither body nor disease was required in order to cure insanity: “the physician does not pretend to make the animal machine, but only to set it to rights when it may be somewhat out of repair” (“Prospectus” 1). Others, however, were less confident, as William A. F. Browne (another prominent officer advocating for the medical reformation of the asylum) conceded “the task of declaring [insanity]” to be an “exceedingly embarrassing, and, to a great degree, arbitrary” process (Browne 8).

If professional opinion was divided as to the declaration of insanity, public opinion was more-so, as the court cases which enflamed the so-called press “panic” made this arbitrary process increasingly visible. Throughout 1852, *The Lancet* followed the story of Catherine Cummings, a widow of means whose daughters pushed, through the Lunacy Commission, for a declaration of insanity so as to instate their power of attorney over her estate (Cummings had racked up a series of debts in, it seems, religious zeal). When the case was brought to court, a number of prominent medical officers associated

⁴⁹ The question of “objective” evidence in the case of insanity is a lengthy discussion which this chapter addresses but has not the time to fully flesh out. For a more detailed discussion on the subject of medical evidence and insanity in the 19th century see Scull (1993); Porter (2002); Melling and Forsythe (2006).

with the asylum were called upon to render a verdict, but, as *The Lancet* opined, the results were hardly promising:

The medical evidence adduced was of the most conflicting character. Not only were the opinions of different physicians of eminence [including Dr.'s Forbes Winslow and John Connolly] in diametrical opposition as to the sanity of the object of the commission; but, what is more surprising, the opinions of the medical witnesses on the two sides were widely at variance as to the abstract value of certain symptoms as evidence of insanity. (“Mesmeric Humbug and Insanity” 112)

According to *The Lancet*, the medical examiners differed not only on their opinion as to whether or not the accused was insane, but also as to what symptoms she apparently demonstrated and, subsequently, which mode of insanity she could reasonably be declared to possess: “[o]n the one side... the object of the commission is a [declared] monomaniac, by others that she is an imbecile; on the other side we hear no less uncompromising testimony of her perfect sanity” (“Mrs. Cumming’s Case” 199). For *The Lancet*—whose journalistic motive was, as Sally Frampton has argued, “expos[ing] and dissect[ing] the profession” for the sake of public education (Frampton 313)—Cumming’s case “afford[ed] many topics of novelty and importance to the medical profession” (“Mesmeric Humbug” 112), as it alerted the public of the ambiguity involved in diagnosis. Insofar as the asylum’s curative narrative stressed “proper classification” in order to treat mental disease (Hill 49), the optics of a case like Cummings were hardly encouraging; rather, the fact that multiple medical professionals could pronounce the same person differently (in)sane, when held against the fact that but one professional was

needed to secure all of the asylum's patients—remembering that, once certified, the patient forfeited their civil rights—aggravated anxieties that the autonomy given over to the mad-doctor was therefore placed in capable hands.

A popularly proposed solution to the existing lunacy legislation was that each patient undergo a juridical trial before committal—as Winslow argued a rather “impracticable”(sic) solution given the number of admissions (Winslow “Lunacy Legislation” 530), but one which nevertheless mirrored the de facto process of investigation already undertaken by the alienist. Bucknill's *Manual of Psychological Medicine* explains the ways in which the alienist must first make himself familiar with a patient's personal history prior to their examination, building a ‘case’ for the patient's character—based on the patient's own word when available⁵⁰, but also on the word of the proposed patient's family, or even “friends and neighbours, whose evidence” Bucknill argued would be the “more truthful” for it lacked the “bias of feeling” involved in familial relationships (Bucknill & Tuke 1858, 274)—in order to track the “contrast” between the “former self” and the newly apparent “morbid change[s]” expressed either by the patient or those around them (274). These changes might be found in the exaggeration of personal peculiarities, though the degree of separation between “eccentric enthusiasm” and pathology was, as Browne admitted, “a line, a terra incognita, in fact, which does not exist” (Browne 8)⁵¹. For Bucknill, the line was to be drawn

⁵⁰ It was not uncommon for patients to self-admit (nor is seeking relief from mental distress contemptible); it was also not uncommon for prospective patients to deny any distress once faced with the prospect of the asylum. Winslow makes the case for the former (“The Mission of the Psychologist” 613); Bucknill's *Manual* offers suggestions on how to circumvent the latter (275-6).

⁵¹ Browne is echoed by A. J. Sutherland in *The Asylum Journal*: “[E]ccentricities and passion run so imperceptibly into insanity, that it is very difficult to say where one ends, and the other begins.” (22)

depending on whether those eccentricities fell in line with a patient's personal history⁵² (Bucknill & Tulke 1858, 318); accordingly, the pronouncement of insanity often fell to whether or not the patient's expressions could be deemed justifiable. More often, however, the arbitrary delineation between eccentricity and insanity was more often the expression of social norms: from "peculiarities of dress" (akin to Anne's fixation on the colour white) and "obscenity" from the mouths of women (279), to "indecorous conduct toward the opposite sex" in men (311), the case files Bucknill evidences in his *Manual* often exemplify both class as well as gendered constructs of proper behavior and belonging. For Cummings, her failure to adhere to both gendered *and* class obligations, as her spending of her estate reneged against her familial duty to provide for her two daughters following her husband's death, is ostensibly what garnered her ultimate certification of insanity. By and large, however, where insanity is construed as a "perversion of the *natural* feelings" (Prichard 16), what is 'natural' is generally socially rather than physiologically determined. The investigatory process therefore begins as a largely discursive examination—a trial by peers—as the alienist comes to understand the discourse surrounding the patient, informed by a knowledge of how that person is received by the world around them, as well as the social obligations and familial duties by which they are governed. For Bucknill this discursive process must *necessarily* precede the explicit medical examination process, as "[a]lthough we have not yet

⁵² Bucknill gives the example of religious fervor between two men, one born to zealotry and one not; whereas the former's beliefs can be attributed to his social surroundings, the latter holds no logical *apropos* (318-9).

introduced the physician to his patient, we have, nevertheless, engaged his attention in matters which will greatly assist his judgement” (Bucknill & Tuke 275).

It is only following this process of inquiry that pathology is then read *onto* the patient’s body. If, by the word of others, the patient had been said to have changed to a great degree, then the alienist was next to consult the patient themselves in order to “obser[ve] the[ir] conduct and conversation” (A. J. Sutherland 22). Suggested by Sutherland’s use of the word “observation”, the intent was not to engage the patient at the level of their word but rather to examine *how* it was expressed. Roy Porter has described this mid-century physiological trend as the shift from “listening to looking” (Porter 161), as expressions of complaint were translated into secondary manifestations of the ill brain by the alienist who increasingly looked inward to patient physiology rather than attending *to* the words of the patient themselves. Largely based on a desire to situate the admittedly social processes of behavior within the somatic framework that medical advocates had so adamantly endorsed, psychological manuals began moving toward an emphasis on pseudo-scientific readings of patient physiology—largely their physiognomy—when detailing conversations with the insane. Echoed by the rise in asylum photography, such as Dr. Hugh Welch Diamond’s *Physiognomy of Insanity* (“with brief medical notes”)—a series of photographic portraits, taken by Diamond, of patients incarcerated during his time as physician at the Surrey County Asylum—the mid-century desire to trace the bodily manifestations of insanity increasingly compelled the alienist to *look* at his patients, whose face and features would hopefully articulate their interior duress in ways the distress call apparently could not.

Listening to Looking

This transition from “listening to looking” is explicitly marked out by *The Woman in White*—it is, in fact, the foundational premise of the novel, as Collins interrogates the ways in which the newly formed discourse of psycho-physiology, by constructing the ways in which the body was read, manipulated the reception of the mad voice. For both Anne and Laura, their rhetoricability is disabled through an emphasis on bodily perception, one which reads animation as both internalized and pathological rather than as a means of communicating social distress. By placing the asylum at the centre of both women’s plots, the novel emphasizes the ways in which the signified “mad” woman has her rhetoricability disabled under the pathological domain. Earlier we interrogated the rhetorical instruction that takes place during Laura’s time at the asylum, as Laura’s inability to speak back to the nurse sets the precedent for her later inability to “speak for herself” (Collins 451), forming the major crisis of the novel. Both her internment and her rhetorical instruction begin, however, with the physiological examination upon which the nurse’s authority is predicated.

Laura, falsely believing herself to be on the way to London to reconcile with Marian after the two had been separated by illness (Marian having suffered a typhoid fever after a balcony escapade), is instead brought to a secluded home under the direction of Count Fosco. It is there, as she waits in a confused state, that she is attended to by a medical examiner. Like the “not at all unkindly” nurse, the medical examiner is “perfectly civil” (434), and later explicitly exculpated from any knowledge of Percival’s

plot (440)—Collins thereby distances his argument from bad-faith actors⁵³, but rather acknowledges that the system itself is culpable, as it is through its very terms that Laura is disabled. Following Bucknill’s process of investigation, the medical examination begins not with Laura but with Fosco and Percival, upon whose word the examiner necessarily acts. Earlier in the novel through the plot of Marian’s illness, readers are shown Fosco’s medical literacy: the count is not only familiar with medical terminology and its manifestations, as he is able to diagnose Marian much to the doctor’s chagrin, but appears also to be cognizant of the contemporary medical discourse taking place in London (370). When he therefore presents Laura to the asylum’s medical examiner, he makes ample use of medical rhetoric in order to induce the examiner’s reception of Laura as the insane “Anne”. “Anne”—as Laura is thereafter introduced—is a woman suffering from a “mental malady” in the form of an “insane hatred and distrust of Sir Percival Glyde” (425). What began in her mind as eccentricity latterly evolves into a “marked delusion” (425):

The unfortunate woman’s last idea in connection with Sir Percival, was the idea of annoying and distressing him, and of elevating herself, as she supposed, in the estimation of the patients and nurses, by assuming the character of his deceased wife; the scheme of this personation having evidently occurred to her, after ... she had observed the extraordinary accidental likeness between the deceased lady herself. (425)

⁵³ A common defence of the asylum ruled that its abuses—such as the kind the Lunacy Commission was designed to prevent—were the result of bad-faith actors, attendants and owners.

Fosco traces “Anne’s” condition back to an “insane hatred” of Percival, a routing of the delusion from its emotional progenitor that renders his narrative congruent with psychological evaluations (Carpenter 661⁵⁴), and which necessarily leads the discourse in the direction of pathology by invoking its terms. “Anne’s” malady, the first mark of her condition, begins with social indiscretion: her hatred of Sir Percival goes directly against his otherwise “established” character (83), and is therefore marked as an “insane ... distrust” (425), a clinical “error of perception” (Carpenter 654). Having established a logical precedent for the initial idea which formulates “Anne’s” identity crisis, Fosco then intimates the necessity of the asylum—“Anne’s” dislike of Percival, initially a mere malady of discontent, has segued into the formation of a “marked delusion”, wherein “Anne” has forgotten the initial scheme and now fully believes herself to be Lady Glyde. Fosco follows this patient history with “the necessary order and certificates” as well as a “letter of explanations and instructions, signed by Sir Percival Glyde” (Collins 428), following in perfect order the asylum’s judicial process; just as with the name stamped on her clothes, then, “Anne’s” identity is thereby signed by the mark of official discourse.

Having been thus introduced to “Anne”, the medical examiner has been primed to receive “Anne” as an already-established madwoman, whose identity and relation mark the very source of her malady. It is only hereafter that the examiner then consults the patient herself. In this process “no names” are given (434), nor is the notion of madness explicitly addressed in her company, a likely indication that he follows Bucknill’s cautionary prudence so as avoid alerting the patient into secrecy (though whether an

⁵⁴ “...delusions rise from emotion” (Carpenter 661)

alerted Laura could have possibly spoken her way into the truth is doubtful—from the minute Fosco presented her as mad she had already been condemned). What is telling about their interaction is that none of the questions the examiner thereafter asks “Anne” are brought up; rather, the conversation held between the two is recounted by Laura only in the form of his asking “odd questions about herself, *and by looking at her, while he asked them, in a strange manner*” (434, emphasis added). The questions are not intended for actual discourse but rather prompts for physiological indications of “Anne’s” insanity; the questions themselves are therefore unrepeated, but the fact of his “looking” while they converse is explicitly marked. It is likely that the fact of her confusion, her “frightened” and “uneasy” state (434)—at being received into an unfamiliar home, without the expected arrival of Marian, and being subject to the interview of strangers for no apparent purpose—is read by the examiner as a positive indication of insanity. Her disordered state, perfectly in line with the reality of her situation, when instead positioned by the discourse he has been given by Fosco, might be read by the examiner an “emotional disturbance” (Carpenter 655). As the examination progresses so too does her anxiety (Collins 435), a fact which condemns her body to be read all the more under the terms of pathology. The evidence of “Anne’s” aberrant physiology culminates with her fainting spell (induced, likely, by drugs), giving the examiner ample grounds for her committal, perfectly in line with the history he has been told.

Laura is therefore received into the rhetorical structure of the asylum, as both body and word are embedded in institutional mistrust. The plot which follows involves reclaiming the two, as Walter fights to reveal Percival’s crimes and re-establish Laura’s rightful identity, both *as* Laura and *as* sane. The discourse which precedes Laura’s

examination is explicitly marked out—overtly emphasized, in fact—as well as the physiological interpretation which follows on its heels. Readers, then, in the midst of the novel are subjected to the processes by which the “mad” patient is so declared. Yet while Laura has her identity restored by the novel’s end, Anne’s fate is not granted a similar return to rhetoricability. Scholarship, at least, appears to unequivocally reproduce the asylum’s verdict: Anne is, in Sutherland’s words, a “babbling madwoman” (Sutherland 652). I wish, however, to suggest that the two women are mirrored by more than their visual likeness. Rather, Anne’s examination is a novel-long process that is reli(e)ved by the explicit conditions of Laura’s own, which asks that we re-read Anne’s apparent madness reflexively through the knowledge gained by Laura’s subjugation. Just as Laura’s disability is *produced*, so too is Anne’s.

Anne is first introduced without the explicit signification of insanity. When Walter travels to Limmeridge House on his way to begin his new occupation as drawing master he is approached by a woman wearing white and begging direction to London; the two converse for a short time before she is able to hail a cab and subsequently drive off into the night. It is only after she has departed that Walter learns of her apparent madness, as a man—the Asylum director—overtakes him asking after a woman, dressed all in white, and recently “escaped from [his] Asylum” (Collins 28). At this time Walter assures readers that “the idea of absolute insanity had ... never occurred to [him], in connexion (sic) with her” (28): “I had seen nothing in her language or her actions, to justify it at the time; and, even with the new light thrown on her by the words which the stranger had addressed to the policeman, I could see nothing to justify it now” (28). According to Walter, Anne’s madness was not apparent through their discourse or from

her behavior. Nevertheless, once the very notion of madness is applied to her character, Walter begins questioning his own perception. Despite his reassurances, Walter begins to examine Anne for traces of madness.

Arguably, this examination begins in retrospect. Ann Cvetkovich makes a compelling argument for the ways in which Walter manipulates the narrative of *The Woman in White*, suggesting that Walter's presentation of a "disinterested" narrative—conducted through the collected testimonies of others in order to, as he claims, "present the truth always in its most direct and most intelligible aspect" (Collins 5)—disguises the ways in which Walter benefits, socially and materially, from its production. The chain of events in which the fragments of the story are, after all, deliberately skewed in favor of a narrative rather than chronological presentation already suggests some amount of manipulation. In this sense, Cvetkovich's argument draws from Taylor's demonstration of *The Woman in White*'s psychoanalytic structuring, where "individual utterance gains meaning from the way it has been placed in the chain" (Taylor 100)⁵⁵. Cvetkovich goes on to argue that the novel's "most sensational moments" (Cvetkovich 25)—such as Walter's meeting with Anne, or of his discovery of the likeness between Anne and Laura—are moments (re)constructed in retrospect, "mediated and in part produced by a textual understanding of the event" in terms of its significance to later events (34).

⁵⁵ Taylor's foundational argument is one of order: Walter's restructuring of events, through his piecing together of the testimonies, is meant to reflect the novel's larger theme of re-stabilizing the structure of the home. Taylor is reiterated by Pamela Perkins and Mary Donaghy in "Narrative Strategies in *The Woman in White*", who argue that Walter "manipulat[es] the narrative" in order to defend "what he believes" to be the "enduring social order" (392). Cvetkovich's argument, in turn, suggests that Walter manipulates the narrative in order to discreetly place *himself* within the social order by shifting attention away from his social transgressions, ultimately aligning himself as the rightful patriarch of Limmeridge.

Cvetkovich suggests that Walter already bears the knowledge of how these events ultimately turn out—that Anne has escaped an asylum, or that she and Laura are related—and so emphasizes the sensational aspects of a moment in order to elicit an emotional response from the reader (which, for her argument, construes his marriage to Laura as the circumstance of feeling and deliberately disguises the social transgression that would be otherwise apparent).

The notion that the text acts retroactively upon a foreshadowed knowledge is a useful tool for interrogating Anne's madness. Readers know that Laura's placement in the asylum is a plot of mistaken identity—her "madness" is fundamentally tied up to her being misidentified as "Anne", and so the question of Laura *truly* being mad is never really raised. Yet for Anne, who very much sits at the boundary of the asylum's lines—as Percival later declares, "just mad enough to be shut up, and just sane enough to ruin me..." (Collins 337)—there seems to be little in the way of social redress. However, where Laura's internment at the asylum critically examines the mad investigation process in ways that are overtly laid bare to readers, a reflexive approach to the text reveals that so too does Anne's. I suggest that we read Walter's depiction of Anne in similar terms—not, as Cvetkovich ultimately concludes, as a means of disguising his material advantage, but for the ways in which Walter's initial response to the signification of 'madness' takes the reader through a process of examination that ultimately reflects the asylum's own, guiding readers through a directed reading of the body that makes them culpable for the very plot which is later inflicted against Laura. For while Walter assures readers that he had felt "nothing to justify" the pronouncement of madness in Anne at the moment of their

meeting, his recollection of the event nevertheless emphasizes her physiology in terms which undermine her words.

When Anne first appears, Walter immediately engages in a physiognomic recollection of her features which, like his earlier assertion that he had “seen nothing in her language or actions to justify” a pronunciation of madness, betrays a retroactive reading: Anne’s face is paradoxically “colourless” and “youthful,” with eyes both “grave” and “wistfully-attentive”, and “nervous, uncertain lips” (20), a combination of both aged and youthful traits⁵⁶ that disorders her features. With an equal attention to her voice, Walter suggests that there is a similar “something wanting” in her rhetoric (51): Anne speaks “quietly and rapidly, [yet] without the least fretfulness or impatience” (21), such that Walter is unable to account for the energy behind her words. This same energy is suspect when Walter pries too closely, as Anne’s “earnestness and agitation” are read by a bewildered Walter as “unnecessary” (21), or similarly unaccountable in their passion. Most tellingly, when the conversation becomes cemented around locating the aforementioned cab which will drive her to safety, Walter combines psyche with physiology, stating that the idea of the cab had taken “full possession of her mind” with an omniscient confidence that declares “she could think and talk of nothing else” (26). Though Anne is otherwise “quiet and self-controlled” (21), the singular idea—monomania, in antiquated terms—renders her, as Carpenter would classify, “incapable of fixing [her] attention” elsewhere (Carpenter 653). Anne is deliberately characterized

⁵⁶ Anne’s aged countenance appears to be drawn from Bucknill’s manual: “Insanity anticipates the effects of years, and prematurely impresses upon the human face the strong characteristics of habitual emotion. In the youthful insane, the facial lines of anger and pride, sorrow and fear, are more deeply cut than in sane persons of advanced years...” (Bucknill & Tuke 1858, 286).

through disordered traits that betray Walter's declaration that he had found "nothing to justify" the claim of madness; rather, like Cvetkovich's suggestion that Walter emphasizes the sensation of moments so as to build upon the uncanny—banking on the eventual return that he knows is soon to come—Walter's introduction of Anne is already ruptured by his later discovery of her "madness."

Most tellingly, Walter's assurance that he had seen "nothing to justify" is effaced by his declaration that "[t]here was nothing wild, nothing immodest in her manner" (Collins 21)—a pre-emptive assurance that implies the possibility of the animalized frenzy that it denies. Where the distinct lack of "wildness" is explicitly marked out during their initial interaction, Walter gives over to the inverse during her return; when Anne next appears, now bearing the full signification of her escape from the asylum, Walter's implication that she might return to the asylum sets her affright. Anne is thus articulated:

A most extraordinary and startling change passed over her. Her face, at all ordinary times so touching to look at, in its nervous sensitiveness, weakness, and uncertainty, became suddenly darkened by an expression of maniacally intense hatred and fear, which communicated a wild, unnatural force to every feature. Her eyes dilated in the dim evening light, like the eyes of a wild animal. (104)

In this moment, Walter's physiological recollection directly invokes the terms of the mad manual. For Bucknill, conversations with a patient were a strategy for observation, in which a patient's lack of self-control was to be read in the "expressional impress of strong animal propensities" (289). As Bucknill sought to trace the physiology of a patient's conversation, he would make use of a rhetoric of animality in order to describe the expressions of insanity in and on the body. A patient who displayed manic behaviour

would be described in terms of “wildness” (Bucknill & Tuke 300) or as showing a “preternatural activity” in their features (364), terms that joined the *animated* with the *animalized*. For physiognomic expression, Bucknill declared that “the facial indications of powerful and unrestrained instincts” could be recognized through a marked “degrad[ation] and brutali[zation] [of] the human face” (289), such as in the “furrowed countenance” and “wild eye” (Bucknill “The Diagnosis of Insanity” 1856, 149). Where for Bucknill humanity required a certain distance from embodied expression as a measure of self-control, the ‘disease’ of insanity brought the patient back into the body in ways that invoked a slippage of species; Bucknill especially condemned the frequent use of gesticulation in his patients, a degradation of sign language that Bucknill conceptualized as a “retur[n] to the state of the child or the savage” (Bucknill “Diagnosis of Insanity” 1855, 243)⁵⁷.

Walter’s recollection of Anne articulates her features in ways that directly harken to the “brutalized” patient of Bucknill’s manual, as “wildness” is repeatedly invoked as a sign to be sought after in the strange woman—either in its absence as testament to her self-possession, or through its presence as indicative of a lost sanity (and subsequent humanity). In the “maniacally intense” moment of Anne’s possessive thought, Anne’s features are deliberately juxtaposed—her initial frailty exaggerated against the preternatural force which supposedly takes over—and Walter overtly aligns her “dilated” eyes with animality. The mad idea which previously took “possession” of her mind is now fully animalized, giving way to a “darkening” of her features which brutalizes her

⁵⁷ Bucknill was certainly not alone in his disdain of gesticulation. For a lengthy discussion on the history of oppression surrounding sign language see: Lenard Davis, *Enforcing Normalcy* (1995).

physiognomy. These features align to suggest an imbalance in her physiology—a slippage of the self-possessive humanized features to the instability of animalized ones—that is meant, in the terms of the asylum, to reflect their interior counterpart in the imbalance of the psyche, one that is most clearly upset by the possessive thought; those moments when Anne becomes “agitat[ed]” (21) in mind are therefore paralleled by an equal animation in the body, as the mad thought supposedly reveals itself through Anne’s physiology. Whereas their prior interaction is marked by a veiling of the explicit pronouncement of madness and its underlying pathology, Anne’s return—now beset by the asylum’s pronouncement—is signified by a marked shift in Walter’s narration, as he now fully imbues Anne with its terms.

That these terms are overtly animalized is an explicit feature of the asylum’s negative physiology. For both Anne and Laura, the production of their disability inherently depends upon a reading of the body that views “animal machinations” with antagonism, as madness’s configuration becomes interwoven with assumptions of the “wild” animal machinations latent in the human-animal subject. Anne’s “possessive idea” is therefore better understood as the repressed animality of her body given expression, a negation of the self-possessed human in the formulations of mad manuals. Filtered throughout Bucknill’s *Manual* are the ways in which sanity—and in turn “humanity”—are recognized largely as performative criteria, expressed through man’s ability to exert and to express control over the “instinctual” or animalistic faculties latent in the human-animal body. Bucknill’s formulation is echoed by William Carpenter, whom Collins’

quotes in his later novel *The Moonstone*⁵⁸, as Carpenter argued that “physical perfection” lay in the development of reasonable self-control, in “the supreme domination of the Will, to which all the ‘automatic’ functions [are] subject[ed]” (439); if, for Carpenter, humans *dominate* the Will, animals are in contrast “*dominated*” by the Will and lack the ability for repression (431). For both Carpenter and Bucknill, self-control becomes the measure of man’s sanity and, in turn, humanity, the mark of his difference from (and hierarchical elevation above) the animal-other in his ability to exert control over the body. In this formulation animality comes to be marked on the body as a negative, always latent and necessarily suppressed in the sane individual. The sane man is therefore to be measured by his ability to speak over or *against* the expressions of his body, the animal machinations of the body always fundamentally at odds with the regulatory mind. Within the psychological manual “animality” functions as a rhetorical gesture, applied by the alienist, to reflexively locate insanity within patient pathology by characterizing it within a disrupted balance between the human-animal machine—within embodied, which is to say *too* bodied, behavior.

Count Fosco’s Pets

Where the abject animality of the human-animal body is called upon as a determinant for its subjugation, the mad and the animal are necessarily put into conversation with one another—for the violence inflicted upon the mad is born of a violence always already inflicted upon the animal. *The Woman in White* gives a platform

⁵⁸ Credit goes to Huffels for identifying this source (Huffels 48)

to this conversation by repeatedly aligning its mad heroines with animal subjects throughout the novel. This alignment functions through the model of repetition and return. I have argued so far that Anne's diagnostic criteria being returned upon Laura later in the novel works to undo the strength of conviction against the former, that by repeating the same framework of physiological investigation readers are forced to reconcile with the fact that both women fundamentally share in the same discursive and disabling structures; I would now argue that this same gesture of return is articulated through the animals of the novel, whose very bodies model the foundations of violence (re-)visited upon the mad.

This return is primarily articulated through the model of the asylum's paternalistic "duty" toward the mad. Walter, upon first learning of Anne's escape, immediately questions whether he has "cast loose on the wide world of London an unfortunate creature, whose actions it was [his] duty, and every man's duty, mercifully to control?" (Collins 28-29). In doing so, Walter directly invokes the asylum's claim toward its "duty to control" the mad ("The Lunacy Law" 242). Wherein the asylum conceptualizes the mad as having lost their ability to exert self-control, it subsequently followed that the mad could "never be pronounced harmless" (Bucknill "The Accumulation of Chronic Lunatics" 197), a formulation which regards "self-control" and "violence" as diametric opposites. It was therefore posited that the duty of the asylum was to "exercise that modicum of guidance and control, without which no lunatic is otherwise than dangerous..." (197). For Walter's early investigation of Anne, as for the asylum, animality is regarded as inherently dangerous, a natural violence borne by the body that is suppressed only through self-control; because Anne allegedly lacks the ability of self-

restraint, Walter subsequently regards her with suspicion. Notably, Anne's humanity is absented from Walter's narration at the very moment of his begging the question of her escape: he positions her as an "unfortunate creature" he has potentially "cast loose" upon the "wide world of London", a simultaneous invocation of her abjection from, as well as the potential harm suffered by⁵⁹, the human sphere. Similarly, when Walter later taxonomizes Anne's wild expression, he regards with wary suspicion her hand wringing as a sign of her potential to inflict harm, likening the twisting of her towel to "a living creature that she could kill" (104). In this preliminary investigation, then, it is the animalized body which harbors the potential for violence, whereas the asylum posits itself as the safeguard; "duty" becomes framed as the obligation toward (human) society, to protect both it and the (animalized) patient by bringing the latter under control. "Duty" is therefore repeatedly invoked in regards to Anne's proffered liberty: first by Walter, and second by Percival, who "had done his duty to that unhappy young woman ... in restoring her to medical care" (132)—with the ominous rejoinder that "he was now only anxious to do his duty towards Miss Fairlie ... in the same ... way⁶⁰" (132).

However, when next the claim of "duty" reappears in the text, this formulation is subverted—rather, its implications unpacked—as it is the very call itself which serves to inflict violence *upon* the animalized body. Marian, on a brief respite from the "stifled" atmosphere of Blackwater Park (206), comes across a "black and white spaniel" (208),

⁵⁹ A common thread of Bucknill's arguments for the internment of the insane was that, while the asylum protected the insane from society (i.e., the workhouse), it simultaneously protected society from suffering the company of the insane ("The Custody of the Insane Poor" 462; "The Accumulation of Chronic Lunatics" 195).

⁶⁰ During this moment of foreshadowing, Percival appeals to the medical certificates used to document Anne's stay as proof of her insanity—a tactic returned upon Laura, as I earlier demonstrate.

crouched and bleeding on the floor of a boathouse. Hoping to find relief for the dog's suffering she brings it inside, whereupon Margaret Porcher, the housemaid, tells her that "[t]hat's Baxter's doings, that is" (208):

'Baxter's the keeper; and when he finds strange dogs hunting about, he takes and shoots 'em. It's keeper's dooty, miss. I think that dog will die. Here's where he's been shot, ain't it? That's Baxter's doings, that is. Baxter's doings, miss, and Baxter's dooty.' (209)

Margaret's dual invocation of the groundskeeper's "dooty"—repeated a third time upon her exit—cannot fail to recall Walter's initial questioning of his "duty" toward Anne, as both its repetition and irregular spelling emphasize its place in Margaret's speech.

Margaret, moreover, aligns the violence inflicted upon the dog with the groundskeeper's systematic function in the household economy, the course of action necessarily required by him as "keeper" of the grounds, in ways that parallel the asylum attendant's duty toward the mad. Where Walter questions whether he had "let [Anne] loose" upon London, Margaret similarly identifies the vague criteria upon which the groundskeeper is meant to act—the finding of "strange dogs hunting about". In this instance, the aberrant behavior of the dog—its "strangeness"—is likened both to its supposed potential for violence (in the form of its "hunting", the suggestion that its wanderings may necessarily lead to the death of the plantation's stock), as well as its being out of place on the grounds; the "duty" of the keeper, then, is to protect the order of the grounds by removing the dog. That's "Baxter's doings and Baxter's dooty" (209), as Margaret gleefully justifies.

Crucially, however, the spaniel, during its brief textual appearance, has its bodily rhetoric articulated in ways which work to deliberately destabilize that very call to duty—for if an antagonism towards the animal machinations implicitly underscores its directed violence, Collins writes empathetic consideration back onto the animal body. Like Nina, the spaniel has its body written in terms of persuasive affect, in ways that help to articulate a clear discrepancy between the officially spoken discourse granted by Margaret and the discourse of the living (though dying) subject. While Margaret, with a “chuckle of satisfaction” (208), happily attests to the work of the groundskeeper as a job well done, her “cheerful[ness]” (208) stands in direct, nearly grotesque, contrast to the clear suffering of the spaniel. That suffering is written in decidedly *audible* terms, as Marian’s first indication of another being within the boathouse is her hearing a “low, thick, sobbing breath” (208); similarly, when Marian first makes contact with the spaniel, it “moan[s] feebly when [she] looked at it and called to it” (208). Like Nina, whose barks and growls clearly communicate a response toward Percival’s advances, Mrs. Catherick’s unnamed spaniel communicates its own sorrow to Marian through “moans” and “cr[ies]” (211), vocal gestures that beg relief to its suffering. Although Marian’s “attend[ence]” comes far too late for the dog (210), readers nevertheless bear witness to the tragedy of the situation, borne through the macabre juxtaposition of the “spots of blood on its glossy white side” (208). When, therefore, Margaret speaks of duty while “grinning ear to ear” (209)—speaking a discourse that abjects the life from the body of which she speaks, framing the dog only as an aberration on the grounds, to be dealt with through due process—the dog’s bodily rhetoric demands a reconciliation with the *effects* of that very duty.

The little black and white spaniel is the second in a series of canine companions whose narrative trajectory directly models the two heroines—this chapter, after all, began with Nina, as the little greyhound’s suffered abuse telegraphs Laura’s forthcoming marriage. In the same vein, readers can identify an affiliation between Mrs. Catherick’s dog and her daughter, her two wayward wards whose wanderings onto the Blackwater estate culminate in their tragic ends—for Anne’s kidnapping by Fosco, the circumstance leading to her death, is the result of her trespassing that very same boathouse ground in her desire to aid Laura. (Readers might also recognize Mrs. Catherick’s failure to protect both, a lapse in parental guidance as she wanders ahead of her charges and stakes her own livelihood on those she leaves behind.) So too is the fatal end eventually suffered by Anne first read upon the dog, whose death comes upon it with a “startling suddenness” (211), an abrupt death evocative of Anne’s later heart attack. Most important, however, is that very call to “duty” which allows violence to be inflicted upon both, and which underscores their *shared* positionality; it is not that either Nina or the spaniel are ‘merely’ metaphorical extensions of the true violence suffered by Laura and Anne, but rather that the violence inflicted upon these dogs sets the very terms of violence itself. For both Anne and the spaniel, “duty” functions explicitly as a call to bodily subjugation—implicitly as a call to violence—as the groundskeeper and Anne’s keeper’s alike reference their obligation to remove the aberrant body; but while the claim of “duty” is initially and explicitly positioned as the promise of care, its return upon the dog demonstrates the violence always implicit in it.

Repeatedly throughout the novel, then, readers are made to bear witness to moments in which the asylum’s discourse of animal denigration, used to subjugate the

mad, is extrapolated onto the animal body itself in direct violence. Walter's initial call to duty toward Anne is unpacked against the spaniel, the violence inflicted upon which is, in Margaret's terms, self-evident, bound to the grounds-keepers duty to protect the lands against "strange dogs". For Nina, deference to her "cross-grained" nature functions as a negation of her rhetoricability in ways that directly parallel the later internment of Laura ("Anne", whose "insane... distrust" is borne of her "mental malady"), as the testimonies 'spoken' against Percival are deflected by physiological assumptions. Animal and madwoman read against each other, as the terms for their subjugation reflect throughout these textual repetitions.

Nowhere in the novel, however, is the triangulation of animal and mad-woman so manifold as it is within the Fosco household; here, under the novel's most violent patriarch—the Count—the novel revels in the ways in which the discourse of (self-) control masks bodily subjugation. Whereas Percival's violence is explicitly visible, the Count's violence is discreet, borne through a tacit manipulation of discourse—a manipulation so pervasive, and so persuasive, that he is able to win, in spite of themselves, the affections of characters and critics alike. Marian, against her inherent distrust, finds the Count nevertheless to be "impossible to resist" (240); similarly, Margaret Oliphant's influential review found the count to be "more interesting, and seizes on our sympathies more warmly than any other character in the book" (Oliphant 567):

The manner in which he despises and overawes and controls the violent and weak Sir Percival—the absolute but flattering sway he exercises over his wife, the way

in which he pervades the whole surrounding atmosphere with his deep “ringing voice,” his snatches of song, his caresses to his pets—is quite masterly. (567)

Oliphant’s playfully affectionate regard for the Count is offset by her clear recognition that the Count maintains his “master[y]” precisely through the terms she finds endearing; just as Oliphant eagerly identifies Fosco with his “big bass voice” (Collins 320)—a marked audibility of the Count’s character, reiterated by Marian, upon whose first recollection remarks that she “can [still] hear his voice, as if he was speaking at this moment” (220)—Oliphant recognizes that his “master[y]” is dependent upon his rhetorical savvy (Oliphant 567). Indeed, each iteration of the Count’s character which Oliphant attributes to his ability to “seize on [her]” (his control, his sway, his pervasion) are all reiterations of the same quality: the Count snatches upon the affections of both her and Marian, just as he exercises control over the cast of characters, through his ability to manipulate rhetoric. This is in fact one of the very first things we learn about the Count, as Marian introduces him through “his command of ... language” (221):

...as for fluency, there are very few born Englishmen who can talk with as few stoppages and repetitions as the Count. He may construct his sentences, more or less, in the foreign way; but I have never yet heard him use a wrong expression, or hesitate for a moment in his choice of word. (221-2)

Marian regards the Count as one whose speech is practiced, as a rhetor whose careful consideration of word and expression is always directed toward a purpose. Wherefore the Count is later revealed to be a spy, it should, perhaps, be no surprise that that purpose is subterfuge. As the Count is otherwise “noiseless” (222), his “light and easy” movements are held in stark contrast to his remarkably large size, so that the overt *noise* he manages

with his voice emphasizes Fosco as one who speaks—and speaks loudly—deliberately, often as a means of masking his or his wife’s actions (on one occasion, for example, the Count obnoxiously pounds at a piano to distract Marian while the Madam purloins a letter). Yet this subterfuge extends also to the relationship between himself and his charges—his wife and pets—whose affections he loudly proclaims as a deliberate means of deflection against their conditions.

Madame Eleanor Fosco, formerly something of a magpie (or a talker of “pretentious nonsense” according to Marian [218]), sees herself changed in her marriage to the model of subservience, a “civil, silent, unobtrusive woman” (219), who, as counterpart to her husband, “sits speechless in corners” (218). In direct contrast to her husband’s “large, bold, and firmly regular” discourse (342), Madame “sits for hours together without saying a word” (218). Though Marian jokingly ponders whether this change is a “reform[ation] or deterior[ation]” in Eleanor’s character (219), she quickly adjoins with a recognition that Madame exists in a “state of suppression” (219), cognizant that Madame’s newly “speechless” behaviour is the result of an active constraint put upon her voice (218). This constraint is one which, moreover, is directly attributed to her status as wife—a recognition garnered by Marian when she realizes that “if he had married *me*, I should . . . have held my tongue when he looked at me, as she holds hers” (219). When later Eleanor is called upon to sign as witness to a contract between Laura and Percival, Fosco refuses for her under the following terms:

...circumstances may happen in the future which may oblige Percival, or his representatives, to appeal to the two witnesses; in which case it is certainly desirable that those witnesses should represent two opinions which are perfectly

independent the one of the other. This cannot be if my wife signs as well as myself, because we have but one opinion between us, *and that opinion is mine.*

(246, emphasis added)

These terms are repeated when later, as Marian (factitiously) offers the notably silent Eleanor the opportunity to engage in debate, Eleanor responds only that she “wait[s] to be instructed” (236). Within the Fosco marriage, Eleanor—Madame Fosco—functions not as a rhetor but as an echo, a voice only to be heard in the refrain of Fosco’s own. Each declaration Madame appears to make of her own volition, in moments of uncharacteristic conversation (258, 299), is tempered by the knowledge that she makes them only with her husband’s explicit “permission” (299). Throughout their marriage, Fosco takes on the dominant rhetorical position, the formal iteration (“my opinion”), and Eleanor (“my wife”) speaks only re-iteration. Eleanor’s constraint, then, is that while she can literally ‘speak’, she is functionally rhetorically disabled.

The apparent affection between the Fosco’s may well temper responses to Madame’s subservience, were it not the deliberate function of that very affection. Whereas Oliphant regards Fosco’s control over his wife to be “absolute but flattering,” this formulation is perhaps better read in the reverse—the flattery and admiration for his wife which the Count loudly and frequently declares is a rhetorical gesture, the function of which is to disguise the absolute control he maintains through direct violence. As Marian reveals: “[t]he rod of iron with which he rules her never appears in company—it is a private rod, and is always kept up-stairs” (225). In the private confines of the bedroom (and we cannot avoid the implications of sexual violence), the Count brutalizes

his wife; “in public”, however, as Marian acutely observes (224), the Count lays excessive admiration upon his wife:

He bows to her; he habitually addresses her as ‘my angel;’ he carries his canaries to pay her little visits on his fingers, and to sing to her; he kisses her hand, when she gives him his cigarettes; he presents her with sugar-plums, in return, which he puts into her mouth playfully, from a box in his pocket. (225)

Whereas the violence which sustains Eleanor’s subjugation is carried out behind closed doors, the Count asks that the public regard Madame’s subjugation as the consequence of care through overt and excessive displays of affection. This ask is not passive—it is the explicit function of the Count’s creating a discourse surrounding his wife, a rhetorical gesture of affectionate appeal that seeks to persuade his audience into registering his marital relationship—and in particular the body of his wife—under specific terms. That “mellifluous voice” masks the far more “persuasive hand” (242).

Nor is this gesture limited to Fosco’s marriage. It is not a coincidence that Marian relates Eleanor’s subjugation to the “mute submissive inquiry which we are all familiar with in the eyes of a faithful dog” (219); rather, Fosco’s “tam[ing]” (219) of Eleanor places her in a similar position to the Count’s many pets. Like Eleanor, the Count excessively proclaims the affection of the animals he keeps on his person, asking that their bodies—as they engage in displays of obedience—be read under the terms of endearment. This positioning is drawn out within Marian’s own index of the Count’s affections to Eleanor, as wife and pet subtly interchange: canaries are passed onto wifely fingers, both of which are told to perform their loyalty to the master in the snatches of songs and rolling of cigarettes. As with Eleanor, the Count keeps his pets close to his

person, “smiles at them, and kisses them, and calls them by all sorts of endearing name” (223); and, so too as with Eleanor, when the canaries vocalize, their rhetoric is conditioned by the express terms of the master:

‘Come out on my little finger, my pret-pret-pretties! Come out, and hop up-stairs! One, two, three—and up! Three, two, one—and down! One, two, three—twit-twit-tweet!’ The birds burst into their usual ecstasy of singing, and the Count chirruped and whistled at them in return, as if he was a bird himself. (272)

In Marian’s initial recollection, the canaries—“pretty little trained creatures” (222)—sing “as if they would burst their throats with delight” (222), as she regards the canaries with the same tone of affection given over to Eleanor (whether it is Eleanor or Marian who is “icily jealous” is hard to say [224]). Yet, when next readers witness the canaries and their song in action, the Count’s management is place at the forefront, wherein the canaries’ song is deliberately framed as a direct echo of the Count’s own chirruping “twit-twit-tweet” (272). The affection which Marian initially regards as borne of the canaries’ song itself is instead a reading-onto their bodies, conditioned by the discourse through which the Count anticipates their rhetoric.

Against wife and pet, the Count speaks a discourse of self-control and animalistic denigration that allows him to assert that his speaking-for the subjugated is the result of an affectionate benevolence, borne of that same paternalistic “duty” to bring bodies under the yoke as we previously saw from the alienist. However, this discourse is, as I have argued, a rhetorical gesture which shifts the matter of their silence away from their bars and toward their bodies, asserting that their disablement is necessary for their

humanization, rather than the result of their animalization. In conversation with Percival, the Count lays out his apparent beliefs thusly:

“Human ingenuity ... has only discovered two ways in which a man can manage a woman. One way is to knock her down—a method largely adopted by the brutal lower orders of the people, but utterly abhorrent to the refined and educated classes above them. The other way ... is never to accept a provocation at a woman’s hands. It holds with animals, it holds with children, and it holds with women, who are nothing but children grown up. Quiet resolution is the one quality the animals, the children, and the women all fail in.” (330)

Within this most insidious speech, the Count draws a hierarchical order of humanity that equates silence with self-control; through the concept of “quiet resolution” which allows man to withdraw from provocation, he places both man and silence above the “lower orders”. Fosco’s equation of the child-woman with the animal, as with his denigration of both the “brutal lower orders” and physical violence, is itself an echo of the racially charged anthropocentrism previously encountered in Bucknill’s disdain for gesticulation; in these formulations, man maintains his distance “above” the animal-others by symbolically distancing himself from the body through gestures of self-control. Yet his speech begins with a lie; readers already have encountered the “rod of iron” through which the Count *truly* begets his wife’s silence, so that his “utter abhorren[ce]” rings hollow. Rather, like the very act of proclaiming himself above others, his aspersion of violence is a performative gesture intended to reconstruct the discourse surrounding both him and his charges.

I say what other people only think; and when all the rest of the world is in a conspiracy to accept the mask for the true face, mine is the rash hand that tears away the plump pasteboard, and shows the bare bones beneath. (239)

Fosco claims to speak to an objective reality of the body, using the language of physiognomy to distinguish between “mask” and the “true face”, yet he actually does precisely the opposite; by building up the very pasteboard of discourse, Fosco conceals the “bare bones” and, more importantly, asserts his right to speak for them.

“Mind, they say, rules the world. But what rules the mind? The body” (617):

Fosco’s “rule” over his subjects depends upon his representation of their bodies, his framing and “exhibiting [of] the[ir] docility” (314). The Count’s discourse of affection works to rhetorically disable both wife and pet, shaping the ways in which their bodies are to be read and functionally mitigating their rhetoricability. As a result of the Count’s direct manipulation of discourse, both Madame’s “pinched lips” (219) and the birds’ “clipped wings” (227) are registered as the marks of a willing subservience rather than physical subjugation. For Fosco’s pets in particular, the animals he keeps are so bound to the discourse of his person that it is nearly impossible to distance the actual animal from the loving affection he so frequently espouses. Reading against the Count’s discourse of affection, however, one might recognize that the Count keeps only caged creatures. Though the mice are cleverly trained to crawl and couch on the Count’s shoulders with all the apparent charm of filial piety, there are sly references to their more fugitive tendencies: on one occasion, a mouse escapes the pockets of the Count (leading him to the discovery of the spaniel’s left-behind bloodstain on the boathouse floors, as violence once more begets violence); in another, less overt, manner, the Count light-heartedly

chastises his mice for “gnaw[ing] at the bars of [their] cage” (235)⁶¹, inadvertently drawing attention both to confinement and resistance. These cages might be literal, the bars of “smartly painted wires” (601), or they might be metaphorical—the rod of iron, the clipped wings—but always the threat of physical violence lies beneath the discourse of affection.

Such discrepancies within the Fosco household are crucial for reading against the Count, as they return upon Anne in Fosco’s final “confession” (627), the strategies of silence and subjection resurfacing once more against the madwoman. When Walter begs a confessional narrative from the Count, ultimately to prove Laura’s identity by securing the details of date surrounding her and Anne’s exchange, the Count pens a narrative that is just as manipulative as his spoken discourse. Fosco recounts the moment of Anne’s capture—finding her as she sneaks into Blackwater Park, in her attempt to warn Laura of Percival once more—detailing his bringing her to his secure cottage in Cumberland under false pretenses; the Count here makes special note of his ability to keep Anne calm in the transition, noting his clever use of his “intensely paternal” qualities (623), compounded by his assurances that he means to keep her safe from the “danger” of Sir Percival (623). Practicing his manipulative rhetoric, Fosco is able to bring Anne willingly into his cottage through the pretense of care, malevolence portrayed as benevolence. Once upon the cottage, however, Anne becomes alarmed:

⁶¹ In line with Taylor’s “moral management” reading of the novel’s asylum structure, the Count’s ribbery at the “truly wise and good Mouse” is its own asylum lesson (235). The jest arises out of a debate on crime and concealment, and the Mouse here functions for the Count as a parable in the way of moral instruction for both Laura and, by extension, Anne: be both wise and good, and do not resist your confines.

...perhaps, I underrated the keenness of the lower instincts in persons of weak intellect.... When I took her into the drawing-room—when she saw no one present but Madame Fosco, who was a stranger to her—she exhibited the most violent agitation: if she had scented danger in the air, as a dog scents the presence of some creature unseen, her alarm could not have displayed itself more suddenly and causelessly. (624)

However just this alarm may be, Fosco instead represents Anne in such a way as to minimize her voice, portraying her resistance as both “sudden” and, more importantly, “causeless” (624), that latter term working double to alleviate Fosco of responsibility. Fosco is ultimately concerned with representing *himself* as “comparatively innocent” in the crimes of the novel (628), always downplaying the extent of his involvement and uplifting his own “virtuous[ness]” (628); Oliphant writes that “it is impossible to treat him as his crimes deserve” (Oliphant 566), yet she herself seems to recognize that this is the consequence of the Count’s artful guise, that “an innocent man could never have been invested with such a combination of gifts” (566). For Anne’s death—the plot of which was concocted not by Percival but by the Count himself—Fosco manipulates the readerly response throughout his confessional, shifting the ‘blame’ of her death toward her own person. The Count, known to be a practiced rhetor of the mad manual’s terminology, here invokes its language in order to sublimate Anne’s response: Anne’s alarm becomes framed as a “most violent agitation” (624), an indictment of *response* rather than situation. Fairly enough does he recognize that her agitation will cause *her* harm, but it is not for her own well-being that the Count worries; he depends upon keeping Anne alive just long enough to set Laura in her place, so that the “violence” of her agitation reads as

an upset to his plans. Even when acknowledging his own fault in “underrat[ing]” her abilities, Fosco relies on that same animalistic denigration (previously used to degrade wife and pet) in order to portray Anne’s disability and duress as the consequence of her own inferior body. Fosco demands, repeatedly, that Anne be read as a person of “weak intellect” (624), upholding the foundational narrative of Anne’s madness that justifies her entrapment: “weak intellect” denigrates both body and mind, asserting that her psyche is physiologically fragile. Simultaneously, however, the Count attributes her suspicion upon arrival to a preternatural sensibility, a “scent[ing]” out of danger while explicitly likening her to a dog. When he “underrates” her, then, he attributes this to a failure on his part to acknowledge the “keenness” of the “lower instincts”, a contradictory derogation that seeks to belittle Anne even while testifying to her abilities.

The Count’s representation of Anne works to undermine her response, a disabling of her rhetoric that seeks to strip her of its persuasive potential; by animalizing Anne, the Count attempts to assert his own place as master—of voice, body, and situation—counting her one among his many creaturely charges. Usurping that same discourse of affection, the Count therefore presents Anne’s death in the following terms:

If Anne Catherick had not died when she did, what should I have done? I should, in that case, have assisted worn-out Nature in finding permanent repose. I should have opened the doors of the Prison of Life, and have extended to the captive (incurably inflicted in mind and body both) a happy release. (628)

As much as the asylum championed its curative narrative, the “incurables”—the chronically or perpetually insane—were nevertheless to remain interred merely to be “eased to the tomb” (Winslow 1857, 621). Both the “incurable” and the “animal” are

equally positioned in bodily squalor, forfeit of either autonomy or affection. The value of the human patient is therefore found in the possibility of the cure and their subsequent return to the affiliative “order”; the animal body, inversely, is objectionable and occasion for chains, and the incurable equally as forfeit. It is difficult not to read Winslow in Fosco’s speech, as he reiterates the physician’s duty toward the mad primarily as a kind of safe-guarding over the abject life. As the Count represents the situation, Anne’s “captivity” is to be found in relation to her body, and *not* the literal captivity of his cottage. “Life” itself, according to the Count, is a “Prison” for the inhuman Anne, her “incurable” body (rather than her situation) presented as miserable in and of itself—and only within the body itself, therefore, can a “happy release” be found, (if) not in cure, (then) but in death.

The greatest tragedy of Anne’s death is her own recognition of her rhetorical disablement. The discourse through which the Count represents Anne’s body to those around her works to excise Anne from conversation, both implicitly and explicitly; whereas the Count implicitly undermines her response, Anne is also expressly forbidden from accessing discourse under the terms of her so-called care. Hester Pinhorn, a cook at the cottage, when providing supplementary testimony surrounding the death of “Lady Glyde”, recalls that those within the Cumberland cottage are refused communication with Anne: “[The doctor] forbid us to talk to her, or to let her talk to us, in case she was that way disposed; saying that she must be kept quiet before all things...” (411). Both doctor and Count (the former operating under the latter’s terms) portray Anne’s silence as a quality of care, asking that she “not be disturbed” (410), positing that silence might hold restorative qualities. Yet it is the very fact of that silence which grounds her disturbance.

Hester, while noting that she was forbid from talking to “Lady Glyde,” follows with the rejoinder that her charge “did not seem to want to talk whenever I saw her” (411); this, however, is contradicted by her own former statement, just prior, that “[Anne] seemed to want sadly to speak to somebody” (410). Hester imagines a direct recipient for Anne’s words—the “somebody ... who was absent from her somewhere” whose name she fails to catch (410). Whether this is Laura, in a final act of warning, or possibly her idolized Mrs. Fairlie, is difficult to say; in either case, Anne desperately calls out to an imagined other, invoking a rhetorical appeal to which there is no audience who might act upon her call. We might extend this wish further, imagining that the “somebody” Anne wished to speak to might have been *anybody*, a sad want for her words to find purchase. Anne’s last living act is to look about her, “forlorn” for that audience (411), and to utter one final appeal, itself lost in unintelligibility, heard only as “a sort of half cry” (411).

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Chapter 3

3 “Taking the words out of their mouths”: Rhetoric and Disability in *Heart and Science*

When Carmina Graywell is introduced to readers of *Heart and Science*, she is placed within a cross-species encounter that sets the terms of engagement for the novel. Recently orphaned, walking the London streets alongside her old nurse Teresa to meet her newly appointed guardians, Carmina is approached by a similarly orphaned “poor creature”—“one of the starved and vagabond dogs of London” (57). Instantiating a creaturely affiliation that will persist across *Heart and Science*, Carmina and the dog meet in fellow feeling. The dog, we are told, is guided by a “mysterious insight” (57), perhaps in recognition of their shared outcast status; that feeling is reciprocated, for while Teresa shuns the dog, Carmina’s “gentle heart gave its pity to this lost and hungry fellow creature” (57). The dog approaches, starved (be it for food or for companionship), and begging a response; Carmina reciprocates, understanding that she must “buy that poor dog something to eat” (57). In the very act of approaching Carmina, the dog articulates itself, persuading its audience into both affiliation and action—and persuasive it is, for Carmina responds. The tragedy of the situation is that Carmina’s body speaks as well; that when the thought of feeding the dog stops her suddenly in her tracks, Carmina’s abrupt movement is miscommunicated as hostility by the dog who has lived a life “ignorant of kindness” (57). The dog “flees in terror” into the open road where it is struck and killed by a passing cab, and Carmina is similarly struck senseless: “Helpless and speechless, she trembled piteously” (57).

Directly in contrast to the speechlessness which follows, this exchange between heroine and animal demands to be read as articulate: it shows disparate bodies drawn into

a dialogue that is hinged by animality. When the dog approaches, it uses its body to intervene in the conversation that had previously engrossed the two women. A verbal dialogue is supplanted by an embodied one, as thereafter Teresa's words fall short of bearing any consequence on the scene; she attempts to curse the dog away, but her words are paid no mind by either dog or heroine. Instead, formal discourse gives way to the articulation of bodies, whereby heroine and animal are brought together under the rhetorical situation that arises out of the exigency of the body. This moment is crucial for the text, insofar as it lays out the terms by which Carmina's plot is deeply interwoven with the animal; she and the dog are two rhetors subject to the same disabling process. Taking care to situate both human and animal within the terms of a cross-species rhetoricability, the novel thereafter demonstrates how the violence imposed on each is connected, bound, as we shall see, to rhetorical precarity—for following this dialogue, the tragic conclusion signals to an overlapping condition. "Helpless and speechless," preceding the enunciation of either subject, reads across both. For the dog, "helpless and speechless" marks the conditions necessary for its violent end; isolated and "ignorant of kindness", the dog's schooling into an understanding of the body's rhetoricability herds it into the open road, where it is then trod beneath the wheels of progress. This narrative trajectory, mapped out by the dog, foreshadows Carmina's own; instantiated by those overlapping signifiers, whereupon Carmina is herself rendered "helpless and speechless" at the sight of the dog's death, she is thereafter placed within a pathological framework which, too, schools her on the boundaries between body and voice, ultimately leaving her without either.

After falling faint at the sight of the dog, Carmina is brought home to the Gallilees, where her “sensitive temperament” becomes suspect (67), and subsequently pathologized, by the medical apparatus. Carmina is granted a number of diagnoses throughout the novel that attempt to account for “hysterical disturbance[s]” which manifest as episodes of social withdrawal and physical collapse (280), and which altogether place the heroine within physiological narratives of neuroses: she is said at points to suffer from “nervous fever” (167), “nervous derangement” (246), “nervous hysteria” (255), and a “serious derangement of the stomach⁶², sir” (271). While none of these are ever truly granted full confirmation (the source of her disease deliberately obfuscated by Collins, who wishes to both diagnose and cure without contradiction), Carmina’s narrative becomes increasingly entangled with that of diagnosis. She gradually declines in both health and mood over the course of the text, becoming increasingly despondent, and when, at the novel’s climax, she falls “insensible” (250), it appears to be the result of illness, an inflammation of the brain that has festered in private, brought about by the shock of a startling revelation. Falling ill, Carmina is then left to the devices of Benjulia, the villain vivisector who wishes to use Carmina to uncover the root of cerebral pathology, reading in her case the perfect progression of a physiological hysteria. It seems apparent that that which ‘disables’ Carmina is illness. Critics of the novel, at least, regard the progression of physical illness as the root of Carmina’s disablement: it is

⁶² This last diagnosis is given by Mr. Null, the bumbling doctor whose maltreatment allows for Benjulia to “experiment” by charting the decline of Carmina’s health. Whether Collins was aware or not, there was serious considerations of the connection between gut health and mental distress (see Murray, William, *A Treatise on Emotional Disorders of the Sympathetic System of Nerves*, 1868). It is unclear whether Null believes Carmina’s stomach disorder to be the cause or symptom of her mental distress, nor if her vomiting is itself a symptom of her distress or (more likely) caused by the administration of an emetic by Null.

“brain fever” which “imperils Carmina’s life and delivers her into the mad scientist’s clutches” (Murphey 379), a summary reiterated by nearly⁶³ every review given of *Heart and Science*. Yet, by describing Carmina through the terms of somatic insanity, critical scholarship has reproduced the very crisis implicitly denounced by the novel: by over investing in the plot of illness, scholarship ignores the role of discourse in her disablement.

Reading against the pathological narrative, I ask that we instead recognize the ways in which Carmina, once she enters the Gallilee household, enters an environment actively hostile to the body’s rhetoricability. Mrs. Gallilee, the de facto head of the Gallilee household, has “starved her imagination” (67) for the sake of a scientific career, hoping that through it she might match her sister’s noble status. Under her direction, the Gallilee household is governed by a scientific schooling which privileges the verbal recitation of empirical fact, and which denounces both sentiment and affective expression. When the sensitive Carmina is introduced to—and affectionately received by—the family, however, she threatens to destabilize the order set by Mrs. Gallilee. Where Carmina’s feeling body represents a figurative decline of Mrs. Gallilee’s scientific authority in the household, the stakes are raised (or rather, literalized) by the budding romance between Carmina and the prodigal son, Ovid, which threatens to usurp Mrs. Gallilee’s financial footing; whereas Mrs. Gallilee had erroneously believed herself

⁶³ Jessica Straley notes the “pathetic debility” of Carmina (361), but proposes an alternative source of that debilitation: “...Carmina’s real malady is not brain disease but lovesickness” (364). To the best of my knowledge, whereas critics propose different *cures*, the apparent fact of Carmina’s *brain disease* is rarely (if ever) contested. Aside from Straley, Chris Wiesenthal’s chapter on Collins in *Figuring Madness* (1997) might be considered an exception insofar as it proposes both a Freudian tracing of the disease as well as cure.

entitled to her late brother's estate, Carmina is instead to become sole inheritor, under the condition that she both marry and produce an heir. Mrs. Gallilee, whose authority depends upon the subjugation of Carmina's autonomy, therefore enacts an estrangement upon her niece's rhetorical authority. Carmina's rhetoric is repeatedly put under duress, first questioned then outright quieted, as her aunt increasingly isolates her in the hopes of separating the young lovers. Carmina's voice and body—the two avenues of rhetorical expression available to her—are placed under continual constraint, as she is barred from society, refused dialogue, and tightly policed within the home. These aggressions build to a final confrontation following an intercepted letter, following which Carmina, “voiceless and tearless” (250), succumbs to her supposed illness: a state of total withdrawal.

The pathological narrative which insists upon a somatic basis for insanity presumes that illness, located within the individual and solved through medical intervention, is the source of Carmina's disablement; reading against this narrative however reveals the ways in which Carmina is disabled, not by her own body, but by the discourse network that surrounds her. Under the label of somatic insanity, Carmina's body is interpreted in accord with a script that reads affect as symptomatic. What is initially marked in the heroine as a sensitive nature is translated post-diagnosis into confirmation of mental illness (neuroses by late-century terms), as both excitability and despondency become the apparent manifestations of an inflamed brain, and where agitation and nervousness act as the hallmarks of hysteria. This translation, however, is directed by those who seek to lay claim to—and directly profit from Carmina's body-as-object, and who therefore turn her body's rhetoricability, its expressions and persuasive ability, into symptoms that demand confinement. Carmina is repeatedly instructed in a

reading of her body that excludes her from dialogic participation--in particular, from that dialogue centred *on her* body, as she is directed in both expression and autonomous activity. Carmina's response, then, is a recognition of her rhetorical status: finding herself without a voice for her body, she turns inward, withdrawing from the dialogue that has already been denied of her.

It is here, restricted not merely in speech but in the direct barring of *speaking back*, that the novel constructs a throughline between human and animal; for it is only once Carmina is fully denied rhetoricability that she "take[s] her place, alongside the *other animals*, in [Benjulia's] note-book of experiments" (280, emphasis added), the vivisector finally entering the Gallilee household proper. This vivisection plot has been traditionally disparaged by criticism of the novel, famously derided by Algernon Charles Swinburne as that which brought "Wilkie's genius nigh perdition" (Farmer 8). Following Swinburne's lead, many reviewers of the novel have levied charges of political nuisance, considering the anti-vivisection plot to be a polemic exercise, a critical distraction which detracts from the apparently otherwise apolitical household drama. Whereas readers are "threatened [with] anti-vivisection" by the novel's preface, as one such review claims (Farmer 330), the majority of the plot *qua* plot takes place in the home, and the vivisector (according to another) is "only remotely connected with the plot" at large (Farmer 332), brought into the narrative proper only by the novel's climax⁶⁴. Such reviews generally

⁶⁴ These contemporary critiques of Collins' (provided by Farmer's appendices to the Broadview edition of *Heart and Science*) are echoed by Dougald B. Maceachen's mid-century review, wherein he argues that *Heart and Science* failed to "blend... purpose and story" (Maceachen 123). Most recently, Laura Otis' argues that the novel is "a propagandistic story that rises above its demonization of experimentalists only in a few reflective moments" (Otis 28). While Otis' claim that "[a]lmost no one has ever thought that *Heart*

coalesce on the point that Collins “has hampered himself by trying to write with a purpose” (*Athenaeum* 538, qtd. in Farmer 330). However, *Heart and Science* is far from the first of Collins’ novels to thread its plot with social and political critique, much less is it his first committed to confronting the politics of Victorian medicine. As Jenny Bourne Taylor (1988) has aptly demonstrated, Collins’ mid- to late-century novels are intimately tied to the rapid developments in Victorian psychology and mad medicine. Similarly, recent scholarship has seen renewed interest in Collins’ “disability” novels—*Poor Miss Finch* and *Hide and Seek*—and in the ways in which disability functions for Collins as a catalyst for social critique (Sparks 2002; Brophy 2019). Yet *Heart and Science* stands apart in Collins’ *oeuvre* as the singular work to generate such critical disdain, to the point where scholarship has confidently claimed that “[t]he bandwagon politics of *Heart and Science* has guaranteed [it’s] place among Collins’s less critically engaged later works” (Straley 350). Overall, the message sent by such a body of review is that animal politics—medical or otherwise—stand completely outside the world of the human, and that to devote one’s time to its expression is nothing but bad literature.

Heart and Science directly confronts such a line of thinking by revealing the ways in which the madwoman and the animal are tethered by a common disability, born not of themselves but of the discourse which surrounds them. Where Benjulia’s notebook collapses the difference between human and animal under the experimental project, vivisection finds its object in those without voice; the *corpora vilia*⁶⁵, the body fit only to

and Science is a good novel” might be a stretch far (37), the general scholarly consensus does appear to be that the “political” material stands separate from the novel *qua* novel.

⁶⁵ *Corpora vilia* (sing. *Corpus vile*), literally “worthless body”; “something felt to be of so little value that it may be experimented with or upon without concern for loss or damage” (Merriam-Webster). Recognition

be experimented upon, is a cross-species crisis of the rhetorically disabled. As such, whereas Benjulia's "vivisection" of Carmina only begins in earnest at the novel's climax, the two plots are threaded throughout the novel by an emphasis on rhetorical disablement that both precedes and informs Carmina's collapse. Encounters with Benjulia are marked by the rhetorical disability of anesthetized animals whose ability to protest through both voice and body has been directly mitigated so that Benjulia may operate freely. These encounters run directly parallel to Carmina's plot and the mitigation of her own voice, a plot in which she is barred letters and society, and in which her rhetoricability is set in confrontation with that of her aunt's. Between the two, emphasis is deliberately drawn to the ways in which the barring of rhetoricability necessarily precedes vivisection in action. This narrative which weaves together the vivisected animal with the voiceless woman is punctuated by the remaining cast's own rhetorical exigencies: from Ovid's exhaustive approach to his patients wherein he "takes the words out of their mouths" (67); to the "incurably stupid" Zoe's refusal to be schooled into proper expression (65); to Mrs. Gallilee's desire to be a part of the scientific *conversazione* (126); the novel is fundamentally preoccupied with what it means to speak and be heard. Thus, while criticism has traditionally labelled *Heart and Science* an "anti-vivisection" novel, it is far more apt to consider it a novel about rhetoric.

Taking therefore the disablement of rhetoricability (not silence *per se*, but rather the denial of persuasive affect in particular voices, a crucial distinction made for those

of the *corpora vilia* as "status" is brought up throughout the vivisection debate, such as in one London physician's letter to the *Standard*: "I think we, as medical men, should not attempt to conceal from the public the debt of gratitude they owe to the "corpora vilia"—for such there are, and will be, as long as the healing art exists and progresses." (*Standard* 1882; quoted in French 327).

who continue to speak but are nevertheless “unheard”) as the prerequisite condition for the *corpora vilia*, Wilkie Collins draws upon a discourse of vivisection advocacy that sought to disable the rhetorical body in order to speak for it. Out of the cry of the animal arose a responsive backlash, driven by those already invested in vivisection, that sought to redress the rhetoric of the animal-body, producing a pathology of protest—both animal and human—which directs attention inward, into the autonomous reactions of the body and away from the social contexts to which it responds. It is this pathology of protest which drives the novel, as Collins places Carmina’s supposed illness in direct dialogue with animals whose own protests have been rendered inarticulate. For both the human and the animal, the gradual degradation of their rhetoricability is explicitly tied to their placement in the vivisector’s notebook. Insofar as the novel is written and directly frames itself as a response to vivisection in medical practice, scholars and critics have exhaustively read the novel as an anti-vivisection polemic; but whereas the novel directly responds not merely to the *act* of vivisection but to the discourse which surrounds and *sustains* it, there remains a crucial gap for a criticism which addresses the novel’s more comprehensive biopolitical plot. Highlighting the ways in which rhetorical authority determine bodily autonomy, the novel interrogates the voices of vivisection, revealing a disabling process that reaches across species boundaries. This chapter therefore charts the ways in which heroine and animal in *Heart and Science* suffer a parallel rhetorical disablement--one which is not only revealed through but imaginatively repaired by the novel’s own confrontation with embodied rhetoricability.

Dissent and Distress in the Vivisection Controversy

When Collins began publishing *Heart and Science* in 1882, serializing the novel in *Belgravia* magazine, he deliberately entered into dialogue with the “vivisection controversy.” By the 1870s, the subject of vivisection—the dissection of live animals—in British medicine had gradually come to form a prominent press circuit, as both public and professional forums fervently debated the ethics involved in animal experimentation. Medical experimentation involving animals emerged from a political and social network of professional enterprise that, as Richard D. French reveals, operated out of the public eye (French 1975). However, following a series of highly publicized trials and subsequent legislative reforms enacted by a growing front for animal welfare, the subject of vivisection came to take on an increasingly larger public presence. Print publications of both medical and popular press tackled the subject, pamphlets began circulating, treatises were written, and altogether the formerly professional affair became the subject of national inquiry. With its rising currency in the press as well as the inherently polemic nature of the debate, the “controversy” subsequently came to be divided not only by subject but by rhetoric, as both sides began to develop speaking styles that, in many cases, reflected their ethical stance. Anti-vivisection activists were—and generally continue to be—charged with a “sensational style” (*B.M.J* 662, qtd. in French 329), as they tended to mobilize feeling and sympathy with animal subjects to levy charges of cruelty against vivisectionists. Pro-vivisection argument, on the other hand, often drew upon metaphors of the body, pathologizing protest in order to assert professional authority over both subject and word. The difference in rhetorical presentation of each side implicitly reveals the values as well as assumptions inherent to each, yet whereas discussion of anti-

vivisection's sentimentalization has tended to drive criticism of animal advocacy (as well as Collins' own work), the ways in which pro-vivisection literature mobilizes its own rhetorical devices—often in order to infringe upon rhetoric itself—are less often discussed.

These rhetorical divisions, with a particular emphasis on the latter's construction of protest and pathology, form a fundamental preoccupation in Collins' novel, situating *Heart and Science* within a broader category of biopolitical discourse than traditional criticism has granted. It is no question that the novel is an 'anti-vivisection' novel of sorts, as Collins' preface (which I later discuss) takes care to state. Yet how and where the novel responds to the subject remains somewhat contentious amongst scholars. Laura Otis, for instance, regards the novel as a direct "retrial" of David Ferrier⁶⁶ (Otis 2007), whose trial and acquittal marked a significant loss for anti-vivisection; Sara Murphey traces further back, arguing that the novel attempts to redress the "weaknesses" of the Cruelty to Animals Act of 1876 (Murphey 2014). Still others have framed the novel within that "sensational" legacy of anti-vivisection rhetoric (Sparks 2002; Straley 2010), reading in the title a binary opposition that, they argue, persists throughout the novel. In most cases, criticism surrounding *Heart and Science* generally reads it as an extension of

⁶⁶ David Ferrier was a physician and experimentalist, made prominent in the vivisection controversy for conducting a live demonstration of his cerebral research on a monkey at the International Medical Congress of 1881. Ferrier was charged for having failed to acquire the proper licensing, and the trial (through which he was acquitted) was highly publicized throughout British press, as anti-vivisectionists hoped to campaign through it for total abolition. Because Ferrier is directly quoted by Collins in both novel and preface, scholars (such as Otis) have frequently tied the novel directly to the man, or else figured him prominently in its supplementary material (Farmer's Broadview edition includes Ferrier in both introduction and appendixes); and because Benjulia's plot makes use of a monkey for his experiments, he is often read as an analogous figure. I do not, however, believe Benjulia is meant to be a direct depiction of any figure within the controversy—either Ferrier, Bernard, or as one critic of Collins time suggests, M. de Cyon (*Pall Mall Budget* 1883, quoted in Farmer 331)—but rather a composite illustration of "the vivisector" in general.

the anti-vivisection rhetoric which precedes the novel: either it mobilizes the inadequacies of the Act in order to push for total abolition, or else reiterates the sensational style which, by 1882, had become a clichéd representation of anti-vivisection rhetoric. However, rather than privileging one binary opposite, the novel examines how those rhetorical binaries are constructed, as *Heart and Science* mobilizes the rhetorical strategies of vivisection discourse in order to demonstrate their biopolitical effect, ultimately revealing the violence which occurs at its borders—for within the discourse of vivisection there is an argument about what it means to speak. By drawing upon the ways in which the novel responds not to the act of vivisection itself but to the rhetorical constructions which surround and *sustain* vivisection—and which ultimately precede and extend beyond the constraints of medical experimentation—this chapter will address a crucial gap in scholarly criticism of *Heart and Science*.

In order to trace that history, therefore, I model Carmina's own—by beginning with a dog.

The dog is illustrated: presumably it was once a real, living subject, but of its history the illustration bears little trace. What is present is all we know of the dog. Sketched in black and white, no more than just the head of the dog is shown—and even that head is barely visible, for the centre of the illustration is its mouth. The mouth is held wide, wide—impossibly wide—open, head pulled back and eyes out of frame; the eye of the viewer, meanwhile, is drawn to the centre of the illustration, past the tongue and teeth and down the black hole of its throat. That which holds open the mouth of the dog is what guides the eye of the viewer: an apparatus made of metal bars. The dog's head is placed on a riveted plank, out of which those bars protrude. There is a corkscrew turn which sets

the bars further or closer apart. Just above those bars the dog's teeth too are barred, visible but inert, held in place by pieces of rope. These bars, horizontal and vertical, four in total, create a literal framework out of that open mouth. That framework holds the dog in place, its mouth open but rendered inarticulate, and it is through that very framework that the body is asked to be read.

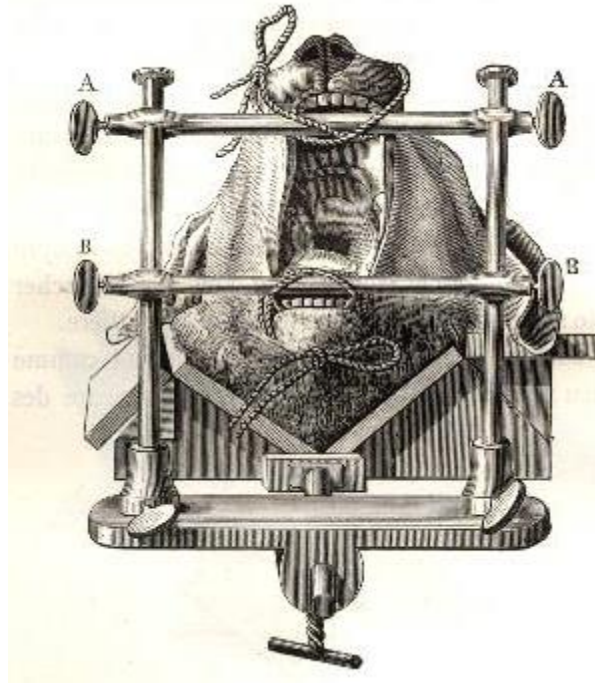


Figure 3. From Bernard's *Leçons*, 137.

This dog—this illustration of a dog, its conception and later repurposing, as well as the original life it invokes—tethers the politics of *Heart and Science*, acting as a pervasive metaphor for the violence to which the novel responds. That violence is not found in the act of vivisection itself, but in the framework which supports it, the medical apparatus which bars the mouth in order to access the body. This illustration works as more than metaphor, however, as tracing the discourse which surrounds the illustration's (re)production and (re)signification, as an historical artefact within the author's

periphery, establishes the voices of vivisection modelled throughout the novel. Originally part of an instructive manual on experimental medicine, the illustration was lifted and repurposed by Frances Power Cobbe, woman of letters and leading figure of the anti-vivisection movement, before it was then sent along to Collins in preparation for his new novel. From manual to pamphlet, divided by more than the subject of vivisection itself, a comparison of the competing frameworks presenting the animal reveals distinct rhetorical models—a modelling not only of one’s response to the animal under vivisection, but of *response* itself. It is this rhetorical politicking, more than the direct act of vivisection itself, which forms *Heart and Science*’s topic. If underlying the novel is an understanding that rhetorical obstruction is the primary mode of violence facing both human and animal throughout the discourse of vivisection, *Heart and Science* takes not the body but the bars surrounding it, instructing readers in the process of building the apparatus which holds the *corpora vilia* in place. A dismantling of that apparatus begins, here, by outlining its structure.

In its original context, the illustration comes from French physiologist Claude Bernard’s *Leçons de Physiologie Opératoire* (1879), a manual on the methodology of experimental research in the medical sciences. Born of Bernard’s lecture materials, collected during his time as professor of medicine at the College de France, the *Leçons* provided prospective students of medicine with an overview of the techniques and procedures required to perform experiments for the purpose of research—a practice that, while seeing increased traction within the medical profession, was somewhat

contentious⁶⁷. Whereas medicine had long depended on the observations of anatomy and the symptomatological progression of disease, experimental research (which involved the active participation of the experimenter, who would introduce a foreign element into a controlled environment and thereby draw knowledge of the base and influenced changes of state) allowed for a more intimate knowledge of the body's interior machinations. Rather than charting the mere progression of disease, medical science and experimental research sought to chart the operations of the healthy body; this knowledge, Bernard elsewhere⁶⁸ argued, would set medicine onto "its permanent scientific path" (Bernard 1865, 1). Insofar as observational medicine held the practitioner at a certain distance from the body (intervening only through disease), Bernard argued that a medicine so conceived "can lead only to doubtful utility; it is the negation of active medicine, i.e., of real and scientific therapeutics" (19). A fervent advocate for experimental research, Bernard emphasized the utility of a scientific foundation above all else. Experimental research, he argued, would build a body of knowledge that would contribute to a greater understanding not only of the origin and progression of disease but also of the normative functions of the animal machinations; and zoological vivisection, that "most delicate and

⁶⁷ This contention was largely, though not entirely, a British phenomenon; according to French, "continental researchers had few qualms about animal experimentation" (French 39). This difference in continental attitudes often led to xenophobic arguments against vivisection that claimed the practice was a breach of proper British medical ethics from 'outside' influences. Cobbe, for instance, argued that "[o]ur English vivisectionists study in the schools of the Continent" (Cobbe 1882, 8). Steve Farmer makes the argument that a wariness of this xenophobia, as well as a desire to show his progressive moral "hardening", is precisely why Collins situates the otherwise ambiguously racialized Benjulia as an Oxford-educated practitioner (Collins 102, footnote 1). For further reading on vivisection and nationalism see: French, 1975; Rupke, 1990.

⁶⁸ Bernard had published a treatise on experimental research entitled *An Introduction to the Study of Experimental Medicine* in 1865. Whereas the *Lecons* detailed the methodology of experimentation for students, the *Introduction* outlined its philosophical premise for the general profession, as well as addressing a number of counter arguments that had been brought to bear upon the subject.

difficult branch of biological investigation,” Bernard also declared to be “the most fruitful and perhaps the most immediately useful...” (14).

What the cadaver⁶⁹ had done for anatomical research, the animal promised for experimental research. By operating on live animal subjects, researchers like Bernard could begin to map out the organic functions of parts like the liver, kidneys, or even that most darkened field of pathological exploration, the brain. Before vivisection, however, the animal must be restrained either chemically or physically—for (it begs stating) no animal willingly consents to the knife. Bernard favored physical restraint, eschewing the introduction of chemical elements into a tenuously controlled environment; instead, he opted to fashion, or else make use of already pre-existing, apparatuses that worked to restrain various parts on various animals. The instruction for the construction and application of these apparatuses were thus included in a chapter of the *Leçons* dedicated to the subject of restraint, for students whose own research subjects would require subduing. These devices were specially designed depending on the both the body of the animal as well as the part’s desired, so that the *Leçons* becomes a veritable menagerie: not only dogs but horses, rabbits, cats, mice, and pigs line the pages, each revealing new ways in which the physiologist hoped for a time to keep the animal body intact and the human body safe from bucks and bites. For that previously illustrated dog’s restraint, Bernard emphasized the necessity of restraining the mouth when it was otherwise necessary to have it open; for, as he warned, “*il ne suffit pas de la museler*” (136).

⁶⁹ “After dissecting cadavers, then, we must necessarily dissect living beings, to uncover the inner or hidden parts of the organisms and see them work...” (Bernard 1865, 99)

This warning becomes particularly auspicious when held against the anti-vivisection movement, for the ways in which the public confronted the open-mouthed animal would bear heavily upon the profession, when the cries of the animal set off a chain reaction of human protest. In 1874, during a conference held in Norwich by the British Medical Association, attending French physiologist Eugene Magnan gave a talk on the adverse effects of alcohol on the brain; following his talk, Magnan attempted to conduct a live demonstration by injecting absinthe into the thigh of a dog in order to induce an epileptic fit. However, as Steve Farmer aptly summarizes, “[t]he cries of pain from the dog led to cries of anger from some in the audience” (Farmer 13). An inquiry was called as to whether Magnan had violated Martin’s Act⁷⁰, a small piece of legislative protection against ‘unwarranted’ animal cruelty; yet whereas Magnan fled safely back to France, and whereas the remaining trial on his associates proved the inefficacy of current legislation to protect animals from the warrant of the medical profession, the ripple effect of the dog’s cries ushered in a new wave of British anti-vivisection sentiment. Building off the momentum of Magnan’s trial, animal welfare advocates⁷¹ began pushing for new legislation that would counterbalance the growing popularity of animal experimentation in science, ultimately succeeding in enacting the replacement of Martin’s Act with the far more substantial Cruelty to Animals Act 1876. Under the new 1876 Act, not only were

⁷⁰ Martin’s Act, alternatively titled “An Act to Prevent the Cruel and Improper Treatment of Cattle” or “The Cruel Treatment of Cattle Act 1822”, was the first and only piece of animal welfare legislation (later amended in ’35, and again in ’49). As its title suggests, the act only applied to a small handful of animals—cattle, horses, and sheep—and only sought to prosecute “unnecessary” suffering. Thus, those involved in Magnan’s trial were able to successfully argue for the necessity of experimental research resulting in pain.

⁷¹ The shift from larger, more generalized animal welfare advocacy groups such as the R.S.P.C.A to specifically anti-vivisection groups (like Cobbe’s Society) is outlined by French.

far more animals protected by law than its previous iterations—vivisection was now expressly codified, as the Act introduced a bureaucratic body that oversaw all experimental research on animals, and which set the terms of experimentation itself⁷².

The rhetoricability of the animal—the cry of the dog in particular—posited then for vivisection a real, tangible threat to a previously uninhibited professional expansion. It therefore became necessary (at least according to those who rejected the Act⁷³) to quiet the protests of both human and animal rebellion, insofar as the latter informed the former; anti-vivisection protests, it was argued, were being falsely mobilized by a call to action spoken by an animal under physical duress, and so it bequeathed advocates of vivisection to quiet that call. Thus arose a new literature that sought to strip the animal’s voice of its rhetoricability in order to check its persuasiveness. Scripting the parameters for meaningful dialogue in a way that excludes body language through a privileging of the verbal, the animal body is read throughout the literature of pro-vivisection argument as a rhetorically abject site, whose articulations are unconsciously expelled and, in doing so, reaffirm the borders of rhetoric for the human.

⁷² Under the Act, the experiment must be: “performed with a view to the advancement by new discovery of physiological knowledge . . . Useful for saving or prolonging life or alleviating suffering”; and “performed by a person holding . . . license” from the newly installed House Secretary. Furthermore, the animal under experiment must be “under the influence of some anaesthetic of sufficient power to prevent the animal feeling pain” (Cruelty to Animals Ch. 77, sections 3.1, 3.2, 3.3), alongside further qualifications outlined by the Act.

⁷³ Neither science nor animal advocacy should be taken to be ubiquitous terms for the pro/anti-vivisection debate, nor should either side of the debate be understood as cohesive wholes. Just as animal advocacy could be split on the Act (with many regarding the legislation as a victory, while others strove for total abolition), and just as science itself had its factions (with some scientists, largely those who opposed experimental research, disavowing vivisection) there were those who practiced vivisection that were unbothered by, or at least respected the necessity of, the Act.

This kind of rhetorical modelling is best laid out by a text published concurrently with *Heart and Science*, which draws upon a language of bodily reaction to redress political response. Following another legal battle (that of Ferrier in 1881), one author—“Philanthropos”⁷⁴—took it upon himself to address the public, to quell “a dust-cloud of words” and “sweeping charges” (1), to “silence ... prepossessions” and “quietly see the thing which *is*, not that which he hopes, or fears, or thinks may be” (1, emphasis original). Positioning itself as an ethical deliberation on the subject of cruelty, the text argues that debate must be informed by a precision of language and an exactitude of knowledge, so that “we shall insist ... upon knowing exactly what we mean ... for every word used” (2). Insofar as the Act demanded recourse for animal “pain” and “suffering”, Philanthropos’ argument functions as a dissection of those very signifiers whose signification he felt had been misconstrued; the book thus investigates the meaning attributed to each, in order to (dis)prove whether or not they may be rightly applied against the animal body.

In order to do so, the author tethers physical sensation to articulation, qualifying the terms of the former through the sophistication of the latter. Whereas the cry of the animal had been taken to signify “pain”, Philanthropos states that “even cries do not prove that pain is really felt” (7). Rather, he argued that pain was a matter of discourse, both between the body and mind as well as between self and other. Arguing that pain is

⁷⁴ Philanthropos is attributed by Halkett & Laing as the pseudonym of one Francis Heatherley. However, French questions the attribution, citing no other material nor reference to a Heatherley within the controversy. French posits that the book was instead written by George Yeo, member of the Physiological Society and associate of Ferrier, insofar as the book would have been copasetic with Yeo’s involvement in Ferrier’s demonstration and subsequent trial. (French 197-8)

an “analogy” (4), measured by one’s own experience held against the expression of another’s (4), Philanthropos builds a dialogic history of human experience, whereby “constantly comparing experiences, there has grown up an average standard of human sensibility” (4). This history is explicitly human, so much so that for Philanthropos the term “pain” comes to be an expression tightly wound: “All that we know about Pain is derived from human experience” (4). The ability to extend that experience onto another, he argued, depended upon “common nature” (4), a comparison of the sensibility between self and the expressed sensibility of the other; for the animal, however, “the community of nature from which we argued with men has sunk ... the comparison of experiences by which we corrected our conclusions, is impossible” (5). Philanthropos explicitly elevates conscious, verbal articulation--it is not only what allows for the sign to take shape in the linguistic community, it furthermore acts as the highest signification for both *registering* and responding to physical agitation. Conscious thought is that which, Philanthropos argues, enables one to both feel sensation and express, to himself and others, that same sensation. The question he posits is therefore not one of nerve response, but of the “impression” made on the “consciousness” (12):

Therefore, though an animal’s nerves may display as much *irritability* as man’s, it is impossible that it can have as much *feeling* as he has, for the simple reason that it has not as much stuff to make them both out of. (13)

The ability to “make” something out of the sensation of pain constitutes suffering, according to Philanthropos. This qualification sought to address the moral outrage of anti-vivisectors who rioted against the infliction of undue suffering upon animals. One can only “suffer”, he argued, if they are able to *conceptualize* pain to a heightened

intellectual degree; that conceptualization, however, can only be expressed in terms legible to man. The text presents itself as a mediation on the basis of sense and nerve response, but it is in the parameters of *response* that Philanthropos is truly invested. Where therefore the conscious conceptualization of the pain experience determines suffering, and where verbal articulation, between those “who can be questioned, and can tell us what they have felt, and not felt” (11), determines pain itself, dialogue is elevated as the crucial component in both determining and substantiating valued life experience. That dialogue is simultaneously qualified by the very same parameters which elevate it.

What Philanthropos’ text demonstrates are the ways in which certain modes of dialogue could be excised through a deferral to pathology. The mitigation between “reaction” and “response” that drives Philanthropos’ excision of the animal from rhetorical participation therefore extends, at the text’s conclusion, to the human—locating unrest in bodily reaction, mitigated by the trained professional’s readerly response. Whereas Philanthropos interrogates the rhetorical properties of the animal response, he ends his argument by referring to the “agitation” of anti-vivisection (107), signalling the concurrent necessity to qualify the protest of man as well. It was, after all, not the animal cry itself which disrupted vivisection at the professional level but those who had mobilized in response to it. Whereas restraint could be applied to the individual animal on the experimenter’s table, the mass unrest toward vivisection demanded far larger bars. Philanthropos is but one example of a rhetorical modelling of ethics under medical terminology, applied by professionals seeking to limit the terms of engagement; relying upon the same rhetoric which both defines and sustains the medical professional’s authority, pro-vivisection discourse utilized pathology to redress the terms of debate.

This rhetoric model persists throughout pro-vivisection literature. Looking to John Simon, for example, who during the International Medical Congress of 1881 took the opportunity of its opening address to target the rhetoric of anti-vivisection itself, we see the same appropriation of medical terminology against protest modelled by Philanthropos. A pathologist and public health official, Simon grounded his talk from the position of “State Medicine,” holding the view that “the Body-Politic will concern itself with the health-interests of the people” (Simon 4), a concern that involved “suppress[ing] all kinds of nuisance...” (5). The nuisance to which Simon explicitly refers was the Act and its advocates, those “mere screamers and agitation mongers who, happy in their hysterics or their hire, go about day by day calumniating our profession, and trying to stir up against it the prejudices and passions of the ignorant...” (22-23). When conjuring the rhetoric of anti-vivisection protest, Simon deliberately frames it in terms of bodily agitation and reflexive response in order to draw direct parallel with the rhetoric of the animal, tying both to bodily reflexive action. The “agitation” that anti-vivisection dealt was advertised by its “mere scream”; likened to the animal cry as noise that reproduced the agitation of one body in another, both could be said to have set off a chain reaction of nerve response. In direct contrast to the unconscious reflexes of those “mere screamers,” Simon emphasized the conscious deliberation of the medical professional, as one who knew the purpose behind, and could thus bear, the noise of the body:

Where I see my way to acquire, at that painful cost, the kind of exact knowledge which, either in itself or in contribution to our common stock, will promote the cure or prevention of disease in the race to which the animal belongs, or, in the animal kingdom generally, or (above all) in the race of man, I no more flinch

from what then seems to me a professional duty, though a painful one, than I would, in the days before chloroform, have shrunk from the cries of a child whom I had to cut for stone. (20)

In constructing this metaphor, Simon likens the anti-vivisectionist to the parent who begs to alleviate the suffering of the child, failing to understand the greater purpose to which the surgeon acts (21). Simon therefore argued that just as neither parent nor child may interfere in the operations of the physician, neither should the public enter into the discourse of professional concern. Just as it was the duty of the professional to bear the cries of the child, so too must the professional rely solely on “the voice of the experimenter’s own conscience” (20).

Simon’s argument highlights the major rhetorical divisions between pro- and anti-vivisection literature, insofar as they came to be characterized by the former. The signifiers called upon by both Simon and Philanthropos to dispute the authority of both animal and advocate were deliberately those of pathologized physical and mental duress, and this pathology runs throughout pro-vivisection literature. In an article written for *The Standard*, a London physician laments scientific obstruction by the “hysterical agitation” of “sentimentalists” (quoted in French 327). Another article, this time for the *Contemporary Review*, likens anti-vivisection protest to a “clamour” (Lowe 716); this epithet is reinstated by “The Vivisection Clamour,” a letter by the editor of *The Popular Science Review* in which he bemoans the “shockingly violent and unreasonable” unrest of the “very noisy crowd” surrounding anti-vivisection, whose protests he likens to “babbling” (Lawson 398). In referencing unreason and agitation, anti-vivisection rhetoric was directly linked to the animal’s; but what was supposedly naturally present in the

“lower order” of animal becomes pathological in the human. Driven by a nervous reaction to witnessing the bodily duress of the animal, the anti-vivisector’s emotional agitation becomes likened to hysterics, their verbal protest translated (by opposing press) into mad babble.

In direct contrast to the pathology of unrest, pro-vivisection literature characterized itself through a stoic silence, built off conscious deliberation and a deference to scientific knowledge. As Simon praises the physician’s refusal to shrink from the cries of the child, Bernard outlines the ideal man of science as one who bears the productions of the body in silence:

A physiologist is not a man of fashion, he is a man of science, absorbed by the scientific idea which he pursues: he no longer hears the cry of animals, he no longer sees the blood that flows, he sees only his idea... (Bernard 1865, 103)⁷⁵

In the writings of both Simon and Bernard, the vivisector posits that one necessarily becomes deafened to the body upon which he operates; substituting in its place the scientific body of knowledge, it is *that* body alone to which the man of science necessarily defers. This deference informs the dialogue held between men of science, so that Simon’s surgeon echoes Bernard, who writes that “a man of science should attend only to the opinion of men of science who understand him” (Simon 103). That this conversation was held between *men* is itself an overt signifier of belonging within that

⁷⁵ Bernard’s man of science whose investment in the “Idea” allows for the negation of feeling is elsewhere reiterated in a Report to the Royal Commission on the subject of vivisection: “...the physiologist or investigator [cannot] be expected to devote time and thought to inquiring what this animal will feel while he is doing the experiment. His whole attention is only directed in the making [of] the experiment, how to do it quickly, and to learn...” (qtd. in French 104).

discourse, as anti-vivisection was conversely characterized as the misinformed pursuit of “old maids”⁷⁶ (de Cyon, 506). As with hysterical agitation, the feminization of anti-vivisection presupposed bodily difference implied mental distance, drawing upon sexist presumptions of unreason to discount the discourse of opposition. In direct contrast to the mass unrest of this feminine agitation, the “man of science” becomes something of a gendered caricature heralded throughout pro-vivisection literature as that which one must aspire toward: unmoved by feeling and inattentive towards all else, “men of science must not halt on the road; they must climb ever higher and strive toward perfection; they must always seek, as long as they see anything to be found” (Bernard 1865, 232).

The vivisector thus creates the terms by which one may enter the debate, accordingly limiting the very terms of engagement to those who speak, or otherwise defer to, a language of science. That language, as revealed by Bernard, “should bear on facts alone and never on words” (183). The deprecation of the outside ‘word’ is inherent to the organization of science as a particular kind of reading which understands the body in mechanistic terms; extending that reading onto moral philosophy, pro-vivisection literature capitalizes on the value of professional language to limit participation in a

⁷⁶ “Is it necessary to repeat that women—or rather, old maids—form the numerous contingent of this group? Let my adversaries contradict me, if they can show me among the leaders of the agitation one young girl, rich, beautiful, and beloved, or some young wife who has found in her home the full satisfaction of her affections!” (E. de Cyon 506, qtd. in French 249). Though the anti-vivisection movement was distinctly characterized as a “women’s” movement (in large part owing to the prominence of women like Cobbe), it was at the same time decidedly “un-ladylike and unfeminine” (*Home Chronicler* 1878, 150-151; cited in French 248). Paradoxically, it was a feminizing behaviour for those men involved: R. H. Hutton was ridiculed in a two-pronged attack by Charles Darwin for being “a kind of female Miss Cobbe” (qtd. in Elston 264). There is a parallel conversation to be had about women and anti-vivisection that this chapter has not the space to properly dedicate, but that bears recognition as just one facet of many that worked to exclude participation in dialogue. For his own part, that Collins makes Carmina exactly that which de Cyon suggests *cannot* be found within the movement—or that Mrs. Galilee seems, conversely, to hold those derogatory qualities—seems to be a deliberate choice. For further reading on women and anti-vivisection see: Elston, 1990; Hamilton, 1991.

dialogue surrounding access to the body of the other. In structuring the debate through a framework of pathology, agitation and unrest become explicitly tied to the medical narrative—cured through, or else sublimated by, medical intervention. Under the terms given by the medical narrative, protest, understood as a mechanistic or reflexive response, is unconscious and unreasonable, whereas the authority of the medical professional is driven by conscious reason. Both body language and emotional appeal are taken to be rhetorical abjections, utterances that are merely expelled from the body and distanced from the apparent objectivity of scientific prose. Yet, as Alan G. Gross argues in *The Rhetoric of Science*, this objectivity is in itself “a carefully crafted rhetorical invention, a nonrational appeal to the authority of reason; scientific reports are the product of verbal choices designed to capitalize on the attractiveness of an enterprise that embodies a convenient myth, a myth in which, apparently, reason has subjugated the passions” (Gross 15). Part of the work of anti-vivisection protest, then, involved efforts to distance the body from that mythological framework.

“Bernard’s Martyrs” is one such attempt by Frances Power Cobbe, forerunner of the anti-vivisection movement, to recontextualize the body of the animal, affording that necessary distance from the medical framework by presenting the same body under competing terms. If pro-vivisection literature sought to obscure the affect of the body by directing attention to the interior machinations, Cobbe conversely sought a return to the contextual violence informing the body’s response. Taking illustrations and quotations directly from the works of Bernard (and, despite the title, M. de Cyon), Cobbe reproduced select passages which gave detailed accounts of the act of vivisection, writing that “it may prove quite sufficient” for her purposes “to reproduce a literal translation of

the descriptive text accompanying each...” (17). Illustrations reveal recognizable animals with their bodies restrained and organs operatively revealed, followed by descriptive passages outlining the procedure which directly produced the illustration. Thus on page 6, for example, readers are shown the head of a rabbit, its skull opened to exposed nerves, with the following page recounting the experiment in detail:

Now holding the head of the animal very firmly, the blade of the knife is directed backwards and downwards and pressed hard in the direction against the base of the skull. The nerve is then generally cut behind the Gasserian ganglion, which is announced by a violent cry of agony (*einen heftigen Schmer-zensschrei*) of the animal.

Not content to simply reproduce, however, Cobbe then framed these excisions with a comparative framework of revitalized sensation; pages were spliced with quotations taken from medical professionals speaking against vivisection (a deliberate attempt to show the divide within the profession and refute the ‘inside/outside’ parameters of debate), often inundated with the very language opposed by the vivisector. Illustrations of vivisection are thus paired with talks of “horror” and “torture” (6); of “protracted cruelties” (8); of “excruciating agony” and “mutilated dogs” (9); and of “unspeakable sufferings” (16); in an effort to transcribe the “agony” felt by the animal onto the body of those who bear witness.

Within her reproductions and framings of select passages, Cobbe implicitly reveals a set of animal responses to experimentation in a way that demand they be read as protest, while simultaneously highlighting the lengths to which the vivisector went to garner their silence. These passages regain their subversive potential by eliminating the

textual distance between voice and experiment. Whereas the vivisector asks for the animal utterance to be linked to its interior machinations, Cobbe exposes the function of the oppressive outward framework—both the rhetorical as well as the direct apparatus—which works to strip the cry of its persuasions, and is precisely that to which the cry responds. As with the above reproduction of the animal in experiment, the cry of the animal is placed in direct relation to the experiment. Shortening the distance between passage and illustration, Cobbe reproduces the image of a rabbit within a stove, taken from Bernard’s *Leçons sur la Chaleur Animale* (1876), alongside an account of the device in action originally provided nine pages later. Severing that distance, Cobbe shows the body directly contained within the apparatus, directly re-affiliating it with its response:

At first the creature is a little agitated. Soon the respiration and circulation are quickened. The animal opens its mouth and breaths hard. Soon it becomes impossible to count its pantings; at last it falls into convulsions, and dies generally uttering a cry. (Cobbe 13)

Like the “violent cry of agony”, the cry uttered by the rabbit punctuates the experiment, drawing an explicit relationship between voice and environment. Far from a reflexive response, the cry of both appears to be the last recourse of the animal in distress, building upward from a series of gradual agitations provoked by the vivisector’s actions. This cry is then followed by a series of excerpts which demonstrate the direct mitigation of animal protest preceding the experiment:

...when they are dogs which have strayed and been brought to the laboratory, they are either intimidated... or they are enraged, defiant, and standing on the defensive....

We have only to throw a running knot over the dog's neck, either directly or by the aid of a long pole, and then draw it tight either round the leg of a table or by hanging it over a door until it be half strangled.

In this way the half-asphyxiated animal falls into a state of helplessness and complete insensibility, and we must then muzzle him rapidly and tie his forepaws... (13)

Instructing his students on the restraint of the animal who refuses to participate in experimentation, Bernard inadvertently reveals the protests of the animal; situating these excerpts among a series of cries (and their mitigations), Cobbe reverses the dynamic so as to highlight that very protest in action. Whereas the vivisector explicitly ties the cries to the reflexive response of nerve agitation (which, when presented to the laymen, follows an ambiguously disembodied 'experiment'), the excerpts provided by Cobbe enlarge the rhetorical situation: these articulations both precede and punctuate the experiment, speaking to a contextual whole as opposed to a highly localized interior response. Simultaneously, Cobbe reveals that Bernard's ability to "no longer hear the cry of animals" is neither a stoic deference to his scientific pursuit, nor a lack in quality of the animal's rhetoric, but rather the direct result of operative restraint. Taking a passage from the *Leçons*, Cobbe quotes Bernard:

To stop the cries of the animals without hindering respiration, the windpipe is first dissected and then a hole made into it. ... Many other physiologists have tried ...

to stifle the cries of the animals in order to avoid the complaints of persons living in the neighborhood of laboratories. Dupuytren used to cut the recurrent laryngeal nerves so as to render the animal dumb, and I have often done the same operation for the same purpose... (Cobbe 14)

These reproductions, centred around the cry of the animal, reveal a series of contradictions surrounding the ways in which voice is framed within the literature of vivisection advocacy. This voice, and specifically its rhetorical function as a form of protest and address, must be mitigated in order for vivisection to function—either in terms of subduing the animal, or else its advocate response.

Rhetoric in the House of Science

Upon request by the author (as fellow member of Cobbe’s Victoria Street Society⁷⁷), Cobbe sent to Collins a number of her pamphlets written on the subject of vivisection in preparation for his forthcoming novel. Writing a letter in response, Collins thanks Cobbe for her contributions, but writes that his own novel “must not allude directly to the detestable cruelties revealed in ‘Bernard’s Martyrs’” (*Letters* 21 Nov. 1882). Insofar as Cobbe’s pamphlet functions as a testimonial against the vivisector’s practice by revealing the act itself in detail, it demands a witnessing of the animal directly under experiment, asking that readers “do not refuse to look at these pictures⁷⁸” (4). Collins, however, felt that such visceral illustration would not take to the novel form:

⁷⁷ A strictly anti-vivisection animal welfare society, founded by Cobbe in response to other societies’ (namely the R.S.P.C.A.’s) temperate acceptance of the 1876 Act.

⁷⁸ Continuing: “If you cannot bear to look at them, what must the suffering be to the animals who undergo the cruelties they represent?” (4).

“my audience ... would close the book” (*Letters*). However, whereas Cobbe’s pamphlet is explicitly tied to the revelation of the act, it nevertheless implicitly revealed those actions which precede and directly inform vivisection—that mitigation of protest found in the barring of the animal’s voice. It is this preliminary violence which, as I argue, comes to form the basis of *Heart and Science*’s own revelatory project, as the novel’s central theme is rhetorical obstruction. Distancing his argument from the (by then) popular tactics⁷⁹ employed by Cobbe and others, Collins thus prefaces his novel for readers: “The *outside* of the laboratory is a necessary object in my landscape—but I never once open the door and invite you to look in” (Collins 38, emphasis added). Instead, directly marking the exterior of the vivisector’s practice, *Heart and Science* takes up the strategies of rhetorical excision this chapter has so far revealed, centering *Heart and Science* on the violence which precedes the *corpora vilia*’s introduction to the vivisector’s laboratory.

The novel follows Ovid Vere, a young surgeon working to the point of exhaustion, and Carmina Graywell, his recently orphaned cousin. The two quickly form a romance before Ovid is sent to Canada to recover his health, after which Carmina is left to the devices of her aunt, Mrs. Gallilee. A selfish and spendthrift woman who had erroneously believed herself to be inheriting her brother’s estate, working under the new knowledge that Carmina is set to inherit once she marries and births an heir, Mrs. Gallilee conspires to break up the romance and isolate her niece. Mrs. Gallilee closely monitors

⁷⁹ Cobbe was not the first, nor the only, anti-vivisector to repurpose the illustrations of vivisection for counter-cause. An 1877 issue of the *Saturday Review* reads: “In various parts of London blank walls are just now placarded with sensational illustrations of the alleged horrors of vivisection, and appeals to popular passion.” (*Saturday Review* 540-541, qtd. in French 256).

Carmina, with the help of Miss Minerva (the house governess who harbors feelings for Ovid in secret), constructing a series of plots to put Carmina in bad favor with those around her. As these plots fail, Mrs. Gallilee becomes increasingly brazen, and the abuse she directs toward Carmina, in turn, becomes increasingly direct. Faced with her aunt's aggression, Carmina is pushed to a state of nervous collapse, after which she is put under the care of Nathan Benjulia. An older colleague of Ovid's, Benjulia seeks to land a grand scientific discovery, the hopes of which have driven him to a secluded laboratory where he performs experiments on live animals. Benjulia mistreats Carmina, hoping that by watching the progression of her ill-health he might gain access to the secrets of cerebral pathology which have thus far eluded him within animal experiment. Fortunately, Ovid, who has "discovered" in Canada (in the form of a manuscript left to him by a dying man) the cure to Carmina's illness, returns just in time to unseat Benjulia and save Carmina; and Benjulia, despairing that Ovid had beat him to discovery, commits suicide. The novel ends with the lovers wed and happily reconciled around the remaining family, while Mrs. Gallilee, unseated by her schemes, continues to host scientific conversazione's alone, "At Home to Science" (327).

Rhetoric is the central theme of the novel, with rhetorical obstruction functioning as the central antagonistic force. As such, *Heart and Science* works to lay bare the strategies deployed by the pro-vivisectionist's discourse, as the dual antagonists—Mrs. Gallilee and Benjulia—conspire to disable the rhetorical authority of those bodies they seek to claim. Where, as I shall soon demonstrate, that obstruction is laid bare by the plot, the antagonists too come to embody the values of the "man of science" in terms expressed by pro-vivisection literature. For both Mrs. Gallilee and Benjulia, science is a

singular-pathed conversation, spoken between those who share the same language, and who regard the expressions of the body as abject excretions under the hierarchical verbal order. Insofar as the vivisector constructs the boundaries of language to privilege those who speak, and to ensure that those who cannot articulate verbally will always already be excluded from conversation, the novel reveals in particular the parallels between pathology and the animal's rhetorical abjection. For the body as a rhetorical site is not only devalued but denied under the terms presented by those who explicitly seek to benefit from such. The novel therefore constructs a throughline between Carmina and Mrs. Gallilee's plot and Benjulia's; where Mrs. Gallilee's plot reveals the antagonism that precedes Benjulia's involvement, Carmina is put in direct parallel with (or rather, seen as the precursor to) the animals already within Benjulia's laboratory, as alike anaesthetised rhetors in different stages of a disabling process.

The novel itself opens with a dual preface, the work of which is to place *Heart and Science* in direct conversation with the discursive forum surrounding the vivisection controversy. "To Readers in General" and "To Readers in Particular" are thus developed in a way as to highlight rhetoric as both the form and function of the novel's address. While distancing his argument from Cobbe's, Collins nevertheless borrows a similar tactic of hers, as "To Readers in General" pulls voices of both artistic as well as intellectual merit in forming the opinion of the novel. Citing not only Shakespeare and Sir Walter Scott but Michael Faraday (an experimentalist of a different sort), the preface argues that art and science need not be in direct opposition, so long as they are guided by Faraday's principle: "Humility" (38). This citational practice is again modelled at the first preface's end, as Collins thanks the "assistance rendered to me" by both Cobbe and

Surgeon General Charles Alexander Gordon (as well as a Mrs. H. M. Gordon⁸⁰) (38). As with Cobbe, Collins cites a medical professional directly involved with the anti-vivisection movement in order to collapse the apparent professional boundary demarcating the “interior” of the debate. At the same time, both Cobbe and Gordon represent differing approaches to antivivisection literature: Cobbe’s attacks were largely moral (and often highly religious), whereas Gordon represented a kind of positivist medical literature that attempted to debate the value of evidence gained from vivisection experiments⁸¹. Collins, drawing upon both, furnishes the novel with both professional and lay voices built of differing perspectives, altogether working toward “temperate advocacy to a good cause” (38). That cause, however, is more than an anti-vivisection polemic. Invoked both by the preface as well as the very literature it models itself after, intertextuality comes to form a key component in *Heart and Science*’s formulation. Situating itself as one voice among many, directly contrasted by the one-sided monologue in which the author “...refus[es] to get up in the pulpit and preach, or to invade the platform and lecture...” (37), the preface marks out conscientious dialogue as necessary both to the novel’s creation as well as its consumption by the reader.

⁸⁰ Unfortunately for Mrs. Gordon, Farmer notes that she “remains unidentified” (Collins 41, n.10), though her relation to the Surgeon General Gordon is a likely presumption.

⁸¹ Collins thanks Gordon for his “Remarks on Experimental Pharmacology” in a letter dated July 13th, 1882 (Collins 371; Appendix D). French, in listing the various approaches to antivivisection argument, writes that “[d]ebates over the historical evidence pro and con vivisection resulted in a huge but largely sterile literature” (310), and notes Gordon’s “Remarks” as an example. I have been unable to gain access to a copy of “Remarks”; however, referencing both French’s claim, as well as Gordon’s later publication of “New Theory and Old Practice” (1886) which appears to construct a similar line of argument, it seems reasonable to infer that what Collins ‘got’ out of the work was a modelling of his protagonist’s conclusion—that scientific discovery could be possible without vivisection.

That dialogic atmosphere is then paralleled by the second preface, “To Readers in Particular,” against which Collins’ models the novel’s rhetorical politics. Where the former preface situates the novel within the literature of anti-vivisection, the second preface deliberately calls upon pro-vivisection literature; in doing so, the two prefaces work together to establish the discursive forum as a whole. Whereas the former models the multivocal community of dialogue necessary to anti-vivisection literature, however, the second signals to a univocality that marks the novel’s crisis. “To Readers in Particular” thus opens by calling upon the “competent authority” to which Collins’ applied in writing the novel (39). This authority, Collins writes, was not only that of an “eminent London surgeon” (39) to whom Collins applied for advice (likely Collins’ own family doctor and friend Francis Carr Beard) but, more importantly for the novel’s argument, the authority of contemporary scientific literature. It is that authoritative word which takes precedence throughout the second preface. Whereas the former preface’s reference to Gordon would have already established a connection with “factual” information, the second preface finds it necessary to emphasize the direct *word* of scientific literature. In corroborating the novel’s “discovery” of Carmina’s cure, therefore, Collins directly cites the word of Ferrier: “We cannot even be sure, whether many of the changes discovered are the cause or the result of the Disease, or whether the two are the conjoint results of a common cause” (quoted in Collins 39). What is revealed in this quotation is nothing but uncertainty—in Collins’ words, “plenty of elbow room for discovery” (39)—but an otherwise ambiguous reference to the state of cerebral pathology is given over to direct citation. That citation is followed, as Collins says, by a “long list of books consulted, and of newspapers and magazines mutilated for ‘cuttings’” (39). In this

ironic appropriation of physiological terminology, the word of scientific literature is elevated in order to emphasize its political power. Those “cuttings” therefore find their way into the speech of Mrs. Gallilee, whose “learned side” is pulled directly from contemporary sources: a *Times* article as well as *Chamber’s Encyclopedia*, which “she has been sily looking into” (39).

Calling upon the scientific literature of the day in order to furnish the jargon of Mrs. Gallilee, the preface signals both the foundational premise as well as the critique of *Heart and Science*: highlighting the discrepancy between multi- and univocality, the latter preface isolates scientific prose as a distinct rhetorical gesture, where the utterance of science in and of itself is used to signify authority over discourse. This rhetorical gesture informs the reciprocal rhetorical *disabling* which marks the plot of the novel: the ways in which one form of rhetoric devalues the rhetorical authority of others. This process, built from the language of vivisection advocacy, becomes the major underlying antagonistic force of the novel; the villains of *Heart and Science* are marked by rhetorical gestures which directly invoke the language of vivisection, and Carmina’s rhetoric is, in turn, rendered precarious, a progression from speech into silence which culminates in her being made *corpora vilia*. The ways in which vivisection is therefore reliant upon the boundaries of rhetoric are implicitly underscored by the preface, which takes care to demonstrate two differing approaches to dialogue while explicitly situating the novel within contemporary discourse. Yet insofar as the prefaces list these sources and signals to the exigency, of rhetorical authority brought about by the vivisection controversy, scholars and critics alike have both overestimated their scientific value and subsequently deprecated the preface’s role in establishing a vital throughline within the text. In the

Broadview edition to the novel, Steve Farmer writes that the reference to Helmholtz' conversation in the *Times* "as well as much of the other scientific language that Collins employs in the novel, serves little to no function" (Collins 42, n.14); Farmer rounds this note off by calling upon Collins' biographer, Kenneth Robinson, who apparently "agrees", citing Robinson as saying that this "immersion in scientific literature of his day" did little more than "enable him to sprinkle his pages with the current jargon of science" (42, n.14). That the particulars of neither Helmholtz' theory of "sonorous vibrations" nor Chambers' definition of "Matter" *matter* in the scope of the novel is, to both Farmer and Robinson's credit, a fair assessment—but it misses the point. Using jargon in the same format in which it is deployed throughout the novel, Collins draws explicit connection between the utterance of scientific rhetoric and its authoritative appeal.

It is, after all, telling that it is Mrs. Gallilee who is situated in the preface, for she is the novel's clearest modelling of scientific rhetoric's authoritative currency. Mrs. Gallilee is first introduced by way of a minor character's (Sir Richard, who disappears thereafter) recollection of her qualities: "jealous, envious, money-loving" and "too old to learn" (48); immediately upon her first appearance in the novel proper, she gives "a little lecture on acoustics, delivered with the sweetest condescension" (59), when an usher attempts to seat her. These two depictions of Mrs. Gallilee form a composite portrait of her character and her relationship to science: of an envious woman attempting to remake her image through rhetorical appeal. Mrs. Gallilee is besotted by social status and sibling rivalry: "[Her sister] Susan, ranking second in age, ranked second also in beauty; and yet, in the race for a husband, Susan won the prize" (71). Feeling usurped in status by the

younger sister's marriage to a Nobleman, Mrs. Gallilee finds she must match her sister by other means. She therefore assumes an affectation of scientific learning: "From the horrid day when Susan became Lady Northlake, Maria became a serious woman. All her earthly interest centered now in the cultivation of her intellect. She started on that glorious career, which associated her with the march of science" (71). For Mrs. Gallilee, science is rhetorical, a spoken gesture designed to impress upon others the significance of her station. Insofar as her "associat[ion]" with science affords a new kind of authority which parallels the social capital of nobility, she becomes deeply invested in claiming belonging to the scientific community. She hosts *conversazioni* and attends lectures, her peripheral participation in discourse allowing her access to the collective identity: "We were an immense audience to-night, to hear the Professor..." (126). Her "distinctions" similarly involve inserting herself into conversation, associating her name with science by way of funding the research of others: "That book is one of my distinctions—a presentation copy from the author" (111). Crucially, through the utterance of jargon, Mrs. Gallilee signals herself as rhetor of a specialized lexicon, one inaccessible to those without time, knowledge, or resource. This kind of rhetorical gesture borrows from the injury of her sister's nobility, which "asserted itself in keeping her sister at the full distance, implied by never forgetting her title" (75). Like the distance implied by the iteration of her sister's class, Mrs. Gallilee similarly asserts distance between herself and others through the utterance of science, where jargon is akin to the evocation of title; by speaking a technical terminology, Mrs. Gallilee marks herself as part of an exclusive conversation, in which her participation flags her status above those who fail to speak the same.

Mrs. Gallilee is thus marked from the outset as a character deeply invested in the relationship between rhetoric and authority; what is signalled by the preface and traced through her introduction becomes her primary function in the plot, as thereafter her character largely works to (re)enforce the borders of dialogue, to guard and maintain the terms by which she speaks her own status. Whereas this maintenance is latterly revealed through her manipulation of Carmina (a plot largely undertaken through suggestive small-talk and coercive conversations), it is shadowed by the conditions of the Gallilee household prior to Carmina's entrance, establishing the threshold of rhetorical oppression to which Carmina is soon to enter. By the direction of Mrs. Gallilee—whose authority is granted by a husband terrified of “what [his] wife might say” (265), and who therefore extricates himself from any possibility of conversation—the rhetoric of the household is tightly regulated so that it conforms to the mother's “own protoplastic point of view” (136). Under these conditions, the qualities claimed through science—reason, rationality, and normative nomenclature—are privileged; verbal utterance is granted authority only insofar as it conforms to the scriptures of science. In tandem, sensation and sentimentality are routinely disparaged; language which bespeaks the body as anything other than a mechanical site of reaction is flat-out rejected. These competing models, whereby the body and verbal utterance are considered to be opposite ends of an hierarchical ordering of rhetoric, are reflected in the two Gallilee daughters' rhetorical education. Maria, the eldest daughter “named after her mother” (63), takes also after her mother in her education: “[s]he called everybody ‘dear,’ [and] she knew to a nicety how much oxygen she wanted in the composition of her native air” (63-64). The “successful new product” of the Gallilee household (63), Maria mirrors her mother's ability to recall empirical

information, as well as the social signification that recollection seems to bear—a “most highly-prized reward” when asked “to display her knowledge ... for the benefit of unfortunate persons of the lower rank whose education had been imperfectly carried out” (104). Meanwhile, the younger daughter Zo—the comparatively “unsuccessful product” (64)—must continually be reminded “not to talk slang” (85), and her inability to reproduce the same encyclopedic knowledge as her sister is a continual source of frustration (113). Similarly, when Zo reacts to words with body language instead of dialogue, she is sharply reprimanded and tasked with response:

Zo took her father’s hand once more, and rubbed her head against it like a cat. This new method of expressing filial affection seemed to interest Mr. Gallilee. “Does your head itch, my dear?” he asked. The idea was new to Zo. She brightened, and looked at her father with a sly smile. “Why do you do it?” Miss Minerva asked sharply. Zo clouded over again, and answered, “I don’t know.”

(65)

Unlike Maria, Zo struggles to put her actions into words; instead, she relies on her body as a rhetorical site, expressing herself by and through it. Under the household order, however, this mode of expression is subordinate to the verbal, and her inability to translate one rhetorical mode to another marks her as a comparative failure. The two daughters therefore reveal, and are contrasted by their ability to uphold, the household rhetorical education; whereas Maria excels at verbal recollection and rote recitation, and therefore becomes the mother’s model of proper behaviour (111), Zo’s frequent punishments reinforce which forms of rhetoric are to be excised from the household dialogue.

Zo's rhetorical transgressions not only reveal the hostility of the Gallilee order toward embodied rhetoricability and its bare life associations (the "cat-like" response and the evocation of her name, set against the qualified life demonstrated by Maria)—it marks a precedent for the pathologization of those modes of rhetoric which resist the verbal order. For Zo is regarded as "[i]ncurably stupid, or incurably perverse—the friends of the family were not quite sure which" (65). Zo is placed within a hierarchy which privileges a qualified verbal communication, and which regards alterity as failure. That failure, notably, is then directly located in the "incurably" deviant brain, a cerebral pathology which declares there must be a deficiency in either the intellectual or moral discipline of the body for Zo to behave (and more importantly, express) as she does. Prior to Carmina's introduction into the household, then, readers are shown directly the ways in which the body's rhetoricability becomes translated into disability under a verbal hierarchy. Whereas the body is for Zo a mode of joyous expression and connection, her surrounding framework demands its repression and produces disability out of her refusal. These disabling frameworks which surround characters then follow them outside the text; paralleling Carmina, Zo too suffers a scholarly disablement, as Catherine Peters references Zo's writing—its "blots" and "spelling" (cited in Farmer 161)—in order to label her "dyslexic" (Peters 399). Crucially, however, is that Collins sees fit to mediate: "Whether she might have been over-crammed with useless knowledge, was not a question in connection with the subject which occurred to anybody" (64). Attention is deliberately drawn to the *production* of disability within the household, a direct causal relation formed between Zo's "perverse" brain to its antecedent. Using the two daughters

to reveal the household rhetorical education, Zo's frustrations demonstrate its disabling effects—thus setting the stage for Carmina's own.

With the situation of the Gallilee household thusly laid out, Carmina's introduction to the family presents a distinct threat to Mrs. Gallilee's authority. Economically, Carmina's status as sole inheritor to her father's estate throws off the luxurious spending habits of Mrs. Gallilee, who had erroneously believed herself to be inheriting a portion of her brother's fortune (74); moreover, as the appointed guardian of Carmina and therefore allotted a certain amount of her inheritance in lieu of her care, the budding romance between Carmina and Ovid threatens what small claim remains. Just as troubling, however, is that Carmina brings with her into the household a rhetorical model that directly confronts Mrs. Gallilee's own. For Carmina, from her very introduction, speaks bodily. Whereas the children are demanded to explain their actions through words, Carmina's "sensitive face" is said to "express ... vividly" whatever "feeling of the moment might be" (86). Rather than negated, the body is instead reintroduced as a rhetorical site. These expressions, moreover, usurp the hierarchy of spoken language, as Carmina's body language dominates dialogue in more than one instance: a conversation between Ovid and Mrs. Gallilee is "stopped" with a "sweet smile" (68); a "warning gesture" is enough to "clos[e] Teresa's lips" (107). Carmina's body language not only surmounts but altogether sublimates the spoken, as her gestures and glances persuade the other household members into affiliations that transgress the household order. When Mrs. Gallilee attempts to sever the friendship between Carmina and Minerva by betraying the latter's affections for Ovid, wordless correspondence acts as their reconciliation: "In silence, Carmina held out her hand. In silence, Miss Minerva took her hand and kissed it"

(178). Similarly, when Mrs. Gallilee questions the meaning behind Carmina's words, Carmina rejects the verbal conversation altogether, rising "without another word—and walk[ing] out of the room" (115). Carmina's outright refusal to participate under the terms of Mrs. Gallilee's dialogue reveals that which is most troubling to her aunt; it is not simply that Carmina's body speaks but that, with and through it, she speaks *back*.

This lattermost capacity to not only speak otherwise but *against* the word of the aunt is revealed through Carmina's foremost transgression, her romance with Ovid. Under the terms presented by Robert Graywell's will, Carmina's inheritance hinges upon her potential for marriage and reproduction: "if Carmina never marries, or if she leaves no children" (81), then "the whole of the money goes to Mrs. Gallilee" (81). Mrs. Gallilee benefits directly from removing Carmina from the marriage market, and so influences Carmina into persuading Ovid to leave for Canada—hoping thus to sever the budding romance between the two by having her niece speak that farewell, a performative gesture that ensures Carmina follow her aunt's wishes. Obliging, Carmina therefore entreats Ovid: "'You must go away to another climate,' she said; 'and your mother tells me I must persuade you to do it'" (121). Whereas the words of the mother are set to persuade Ovid of his journey, however, Carmina's expressive body betrays her own emotions and becomes its own persuasive force. Ovid reads in her body language the fear she holds toward her aunt, her tears and her silence "embitter[ing] [him] against his mother" (121); so too do her glances and gestures alternately persuade Ovid to first stay then to leave, a declaration that he will take his voyage after all only once the lovers reconcile. What follows is "silence between them; long, happy silence" (122). Within this scene Mrs. Gallilee's words are not only ineffectual but antagonistic, contravening

directly against her wishes for her son; and Carmina, through the expression of bodily rhetoricability, directly undermines her aunt's authority.

This “resolute side in the character of her niece” (111), in which Carmina exercises a rhetorical authority that is counter to the will of her aunt, is early regarded by Mrs. Gallilee as “a potential difficulty, in managing Carmina, which she had not foreseen” (111). When Ovid leaves for Canada, however, Carmina is made vulnerable. What follows therefore on the heels of Ovid's departure is a concerted effort by Mrs. Gallilee to subordinate both body and word under pathology, robbing Carmina of her rhetorical authority and subsequently sundering her bodily autonomy. This constitutes the majority of what I hereafter refer to as the “pathological plot”, which begins with Carmina's introduction to the household, but which is enacted in full following Ovid's departure. Whereas Carmina's body presents a distinct threat to Mrs. Gallilee so long as it continues to provide Carmina with avenues for persuasive expression, Mrs. Gallilee works to unsubstantiate that avenue. What is initially marked as a “sensitive” character is translated, through terms directly modelled by Mrs. Gallilee, into pathological deviance, Carmina's failure to comply regarded as sick rather than subversive. By first schooling Carmina into the proper boundaries of dialogue, Mrs. Gallilee reveals under what terms one is allowed to speak within the household. So long as Carmina resists those terms, she, subject to a framework that (as we have seen with Zo) seeks to cure deviation from the hierarchical order, is considered ill. Prior to the direct manifestation of any illness, the plot works to lay bare the *process* by which that pathology is brought about—and how it works to deliver Carmina unto the vivisector's table.

This process begins by a modelling of the normate, as Mrs. Gallilee uses rhetorical gestures to frame dialogue within the scope of scientific discourse, strategically deploying jargon as the markers of correct boundary and behaviour. When, for example, Mrs. Gallilee wishes for her niece to persuade Ovid's journey, she calls Carmina into her boudoir, where the aunt is found reading a book of "Geographical Botany" (111). The conversation thus directly opens into Mrs. Gallilee's knowledge of natural history before cutting abruptly—"but, I forget; you are not like Maria; you don't care about these things" (111). Invoking the name of the successful rhetorical prodigy, Mrs. Gallilee draws deliberate contrast between the younger Maria and Carmina. This contrast is then elevated by the "Curiosities of Coprolites": calling upon the nature of the book, Mrs. Gallilee is able to accredit herself ("That book is one of my distinctions") and the society she belongs to ("What a man! What a field for investigation!"), before then asking Carmina about her "own reading" in bad faith (112); Carmina's answer of "poetry" is met with a dismissal that again shifts the conversation (112). In a similar vein, when the topic of music is broached, Mrs. Gallilee promptly cuts off Carmina's delight by way of response to a letter—"From the Professor!" (112). Making a quick detour to scientific aside, Mrs. Gallilee re-asserts her own authority—"At last, the Professor owns that I am right" (113)—before then referencing corrective behaviour: "I have asked Miss Minerva to join us. What is keeping her, I wonder? ... I suppose Zoe has been behaving badly again" (113). Marking herself first as the correct opinion and then drawing an aside to corrective behaviour, Mrs. Gallilee's use of jargon sets the boundaries for rhetorical engagement; these markers, in which she draws an arena around her own scope of knowledge, sequester off those avenues in which Carmina traditionally finds expression.

Art and poetry, arenas circumscribed by sensitivity and subjective feeling, are rejected as plausible rhetorical landscapes; instead, discourse is dominated by the singular voice of scientific objectivity, the declarative of correct opinion against which all individual will is subordinate.

This scene marks the consistent patterning behind Mrs. Gallilee's rhetoric, a pattern in which she uses jargon in order to mark her voice as authoritative, excising all other dialogue without its markers. Later, once Carmina has after all persuaded Ovid to leave, Mrs. Gallilee attempts to stifle conversation and thus accelerate his departure (or else cement it, for Ovid has at this point waffled consistently on his prospective voyage). In order to do so, she greets her son with a paragraphed lecture on "Interspatial Regions" before promptly concluding on the surety of his going away (126). That surety is then followed by her talking over both Carmina—"I agree with her beforehand, whatever she has said" (126)—and Ovid, who is told he "must not write letters; his mother would write" (127). Scientific discourse here again becomes the framework for formal dialogue, whereas the limited conversation which follows is presented as an aside, a symbolic representation of a lack in which direct quotation fails to manifest against Mrs. Gallilee's overbearing voice. That conversation which follows involves the direction of both word and action under her orders, the culmination of which is ironically laid out by her previous lecture: a "terrific emptiness" whose violent incursions produce "no sound" (126). Under the terms presented by Mrs. Gallilee, dialogue is superseded by a monologue that privileges the singular authority of scientific reason.

Using the same scientific modelling through which she asserts her own authority over conversation, Mrs. Gallilee de-authorizes Carmina's by deferring to pathology.

During that same boudoir scene, after having established herself as expert of botany and coprolites, Mrs. Gallilee constructs a natural history of the Gallilee household, in which the healthy environment has been disrupted by the introduction of an alien element:

“If Ovid had not seen you, he would now be on the health-giving sea.... You are the innocent cause of his obstinate indifference, his now deplorably and dangerous disregard of the duty which he owes himself. He refuses to listen to his mother, he sets the opinion of his skilled medical colleague at defiance.” (114)

Mrs. Gallilee marks out Carmina’s very presence as a disruption against Ovid’s health, signalling her body as in itself a contaminating influence (for it is not her actions but the mere sight of her that sets him astray). That health, moreover, is linked to his ability to adhere to the word of Mrs. Gallilee, which is once again placed parallel to that of scientific opinion. Mrs. Gallilee’s word is deliberately made to signify healthy behaviour, its conservation necessary for the well-being of the household, so that insubordination becomes pathologically deviant. Ovid is not ill merely because he is exhausted, but because he “refuses to listen to his mother.” Mrs. Gallilee then asks that she speak through Carmina—that Ovid, who will not listen to the mother, might listen to her words when spoken by Carmina—to which Carmina assents with hesitation; but when Mrs. Gallilee “accuse[s] [Carmina] of deceit” (115), Carmina abruptly leaves the room. What is (as I earlier argue) a reflection of her autonomy--a refusal to participate in hostile dialogue—is however called into question by the terms of her aunt’s discourse:

“Is she in a passion?”

“She didn’t bang the door,” the governess quietly remarked.

“I am not joking, Miss Minerva.”

“I am not joking either, madam.” (115)

The severity of Mrs. Gallilee’s questioning (quietly mitigated by the governess who is sympathetic to Carmina’s response) is a direct mirror of the aunt’s initial introduction to Carmina’s “sensitive temperament” (67). When, during that initial confrontation, Mrs. Gallilee is faced with the prospect of Carmina’s fainting in a “childish fright at seeing a dog run over” (67), she quickly begins interrogating the situation, placing Carmina’s behaviour against what she considers normative response: “Why, if she must faint when the hot room had not overpowered anyone else, had she failed to recover in the usual way?” (67). This examination, however, grows out of an early hostility to the disruption which Carmina’s presence brings, particularly in regards to the son, who “certainly answered when his mother spoke to him, but always briefly, and in the same absent tone” (67). Carmina’s behaviour not only disrupts the normative behavioural response to which Mrs. Gallilee is accustomed in herself (having “emptied her heart of any tenderness of feeling” [67], and thus regarding Carmina’s sensitivity as a child-like stage of emotional development), it also disrupts the hierarchy of household dialogue. In the same vein as Carmina’s later response, quickly contained when Mrs. Gallilee sublimates its subversive potential under reference of hysterics, the possibility that Carmina is pathologically unwell allows Mrs. Gallilee to question the legitimacy of this disruption, and thus reassert her own authority over the situation.

Preceding the resurgence of Carmina’s apparent illness, Mrs. Gallilee attacks Carmina’s rhetorical authority and bodily autonomy by tying both to a narrative of agitation. When Carmina and Miss Minerva are having a late night conversation—a conversation in which the two attempt to reconcile the bad blood between them, built on

their shared loved of Ovid (which Minerva has so far concealed, but which Mrs. Gallilee has depended upon in order to use the governess against her niece)—their dialogue is disturbed by the entrance of Mrs. Gallilee to the room: “What are you doing here, when you ought to be in your bed? [...] No more gossip! [...] Do you hear me? Go to bed!” (165). Her insistence that Carmina “ought to be in ... bed” is a paltry deferral to correct bed-time behaviour; it is clear that what disturbs her more is the correspondence and potential affiliation between the two young women, but through reference to a normative night-time ritual Mrs. Gallilee is able to mark Carmina’s discourse as disruptive both in body and behaviour. What follows thereafter is a direct dispute between two competing rhetors, a climactic confrontation in which each assumes the rhetoric of the other in order to assert her own authority. Carmina, taking on the word of the aunt, declares her autonomy: “Am I a child, or a servant? ... I shall go to bed early or late as I please” (165); in turn, Mrs. Gallilee “seiz[es] [Carmina] by the arm, and force[s] [her] to [her] feet” (165). Carmina, who attempts to appeal to her aunt using her very own rhetorical framework, is instead denied dialogue altogether; Mrs. Gallilee does not respond to her word and instead forcibly and bodily moves her, refusing Carmina the legitimacy of both body *and* word while reasserting her own. Carmina, in turn, is rendered “prostrate” (166), and it is from this moment that the pathological plot Mrs. Gallilee so demands is granted an authority outside her own opinion.

The family doctor Mr. Null, whose competency is in all other regards called to question (if not outright ridiculed), pronounces that Carmina has “narrowly escaped a

nervous fever” following the events of the previous night (167)⁸². Mrs. Gallilee is able thereafter to use Carmina’s illness as a “ready excuse” to extricate her niece from society: whereas Mrs. Gallilee had without reason previously refused an invitation for Carmina to join Lady Northlake in Scotland (156), “Carmina’s illness was [now] the ready excuse which presented itself in Mrs. Gallilee’s reply” when her relation sends a rejoinder (179); the fresh air which Mr. Null prescribes to Carmina is administered by carriage rides, policed by Mrs. Gallilee’s own maid who is to report if Carmina “communicates with any person while [they] are out” (202); and Minerva, hoping to converse in private using medicine as excuse, is instructed by Mrs. Gallilee that it is “*my* business to give Carmina her medicine” (emphasis in original, 210). That the medicine has no positive effect in Carmina’s health is unsurprising, for what plagues the girl is not illness but an oppressive atmosphere. Emptying the rhetorical landscape of avenues for the body to find expression, Mrs. Gallilee robs Carmina of a significant mode of address, and in doing so alienates Carmina from her bodily rhetoricability. From the night of their confrontation, then, Carmina’s mental health begins to decline, as she confides to Minerva that “the least thing makes me cry; and I put off doing what I ought to do, and want to do, without knowing why” (197). Her dejection, taken outside of the pathological narrative, reads as

⁸² In fact, it stands to mention that while Mr. Null’s treatment of Carmina is recognized overtly by the plot as ineffectual (Benjulia allowing him to continue his treatment knowing that Carmina will continue to decline, with Ovid calling Null an “incompetent man” [306]), his earlier diagnosis of Carmina’s “nervous fever” is nevertheless readily reproduced in scholarship which claims Carmina has encephalitis. Benjulia does not provide a diagnosis but instead symptoms, “simulated paralysis” (280), or “partial catalepsy” (254), which is nothing more than a translation of Carmina’s withdrawn state into medical terminology. Indeed, the novel is careful never to provide a single overt diagnosis for Carmina’s state, and even earlier points fun of cerebral pathology’s problem with definitions: “We called it hysteria, not knowing what else it was” (100). Ironically, Benjulia remarks that Mr. Null’s treatment will be ineffectual because it treats the symptom and not the cause (255)—in turn, the plot pretends, and scholarship has so bought, that the cause is biological. As I argue, however, it remains rhetorical.

an entirely appropriate response to the conditions imposed upon her by Mrs. Gallilee. Whereas conversation with others is a vitalizing influence for Carmina—speaking to Minerva makes her “feel like [herself] again” (171), and writing to Ovid is “a relief” (171)—her aunt uses pathology as a pretext for isolation, pushing Carmina further into the framework which has declared her body deviant, disorderly, and distressed. Carmina, having thus been subject to a gradual process of rhetorical disablement, initiated from the moment she entered a household already hostile to her mode of rhetorical address, is thereby further disabled when she is denied access to an audience.

This pathological plot is brought to a head by a final confrontation, parallel to their earlier dispute, in which Mrs. Gallilee again directly calls to question the authority of Carmina’s word. Carmina, having had Mrs. Gallilee’s plot revealed to her by Minerva, anxious to flee the house and join Ovid, writes a letter exposing her aunt’s mistreatment; the letter, however, is intercepted and brought directly to Mrs. Gallilee, who then confronts Carmina: “Do you know this letter?” (249). Carmina both declares her authorship (“The letter is mine”) and questions her aunt’s infringement (“How did you come by it?”), asserting her right to rhetorical autonomy—her right to having her word, fully expressed in all its persuasive effect, delivered to its intended audience. Mrs. Gallilee, however, refusing that right, refuses also to engage: “How dare you ask me?” (249). The insult of Mrs. Gallilee’s interception, announced in full by Carmina’s remonstrance (“How dare *you* steal my letter?”), lay precisely in that refusal, that continuous and repeated denial of her niece’s word, further impugned by her remonstrance that Carmina dare to speak back—for the letter is not only a manifestation of Carmina’s voice but a direct confrontation of the aunt’s own word, a detailed history

of her abuse and an expression of Carmina's right to move outside the reach of her influence. When Carmina claims the letter in full defiance of her aunt, therefore, Mrs. Gallilee responds with disavowal—of Carmina's right of expression, and of her very birthright, declaring her niece an "impudent bastard"⁸³ (249). The effect on Carmina is immediate: "Rigid, immovable, there she sat; voiceless and tearless; insensible even to touch; her arms hanging; her clenched hands resting on either side of her" (250).

This scene is generally regarded as the moment in which Carmina's illness materializes in full: the shock delivered by her aunt's false revelation kindles Carmina's encephalitis, a cerebral inflammation which causes her health to rapidly decline. Following this confrontation, Carmina becomes withdrawn, alternately sitting in "sulky silence" (298), or becoming "fretful, and hard to please" (280); in these latter states she speaks of "delusions" (280), the dreams which haunt her as she intermittently falls in and out of consciousness. However, asking that we once again step outside the pathological narrative, the letter scene should instead be read as the culmination of Carmina's rhetorical disablement, the final confrontation of her word against her aunt's, after which Carmina withdraws from the rhetorical situation altogether. Carmina's ability to speak of and for herself has thus far been continually contested, her authority over both word and body repeatedly denied. First isolated from her current social network, then latterly her familial; without relation and without the ability to relay and relate, both Carmina's

⁸³ The culmination of one of the novel's sub-plots: following a rumor told to her by Benjulia, Mrs. Gallilee believes Carmina to be the product of an adulterous affair between Carmina's mother and a family friend (a rumor later shown to be false). Mrs. Gallilee had hoped the rumor would strip Carmina of her right to inheritance, though the family lawyer (Mr. Mool) clarifies that even if it were true it would not; both the hope and the insult, however, remain with Mrs. Gallilee up to this moment.

subjective authority and persuasive affect are stripped away until all that remains is a passive object, the body laid bare, finally, to the experiments of the vivisector—for it is from this moment that Benjulia enters his experimentation in earnest.

The plot engaged between Mrs. Gallilee and Carmina thus functions as an extended metaphor of—or rather sustained mediation upon—the rhetorical politics of the vivisection controversy, in which the biopolitical debate over voice functions as a necessary precursor to medical experimentation. Where access to Carmina's body is the goal, and where Carmina's rhetoricability (insofar as it manifests through both spoken and body language) complicates said access, Mrs. Gallilee enacts a sustained discourse which works to strip the latter in pursuit of the former. Using strategies borrowed from contemporary physiological literature, Collins has his antagonist construct boundaries and barriers around proper rhetorical function; these boundaries maintain the current authority built upon a verbal order which can only ever speak itself, constructing a hierarchy of rhetoric which places non-verbal modes lower in order. Insofar as body language is delegitimized against the authoritative word, Carmina becomes unable to speak against that which infringes upon her autonomy, her body and language bound together in mutual address. The result of this discourse is the production of disability.

The Vivisector's Laboratory

That the letter scene is the moment at which the two plots coalesce—the household drama between Mrs. Gallilee and Carmina joining the vivisection plot surrounding Benjulia—marks the novel's thesis: vivisection depends upon the disabling of rhetoric. In being subjected to her aunt's abuse, Carmina's rhetorical authority and subsequent bodily autonomy are degraded and denied. Once she has withdrawn totally

from the rhetorical situation, where her words no longer carry the ability to persuade or otherwise meaningfully manifest, she is placed within the realm of Benjulia's experiments. Carmina's plot thus functions as an unfolding of the *corpora-vilia*-making process, the conditions by which the (human-)animal body is rendered fit for nothing but experimentation, and which leads Carmina herself to the vivisector's notebook. Whereas the household drama takes up the majority of the novel's formal action, Carmina's plot is mirrored throughout the novel by Benjulia's, throughout which is a cast of animals whose own rhetoricability is subject to attack. Where first the novel draws explicit parallel between Carmina and animals through a shared bodily rhetoricability, the animal voice gradually recedes from the novel in tandem with Carmina's own; and if Carmina enters the vivisector's notebook at the moment of her rhetorical disablement, then the vivisector's laboratory is defined by a marked absence of animal rhetoric. These anaesthetised animals, whose voices either escape in spite of, or else are made known through a lack that is directly in contrast to, the vivisector's own marked rhetoric, stand to remind readers of the ways in which human and animal are equally precarious under common cause. Focusing our attention to the rhetorical politics at play within the novel, we come to understand that both Carmina and the vivisected animal belong to an overlapping class of biopolitical exclusion which resists species boundaries, as one class connected under the condition of rhetorical disablement.

Collins draws deliberate attention to this overlapping condition by mirroring Carmina with animals throughout the text. Carmina's own introduction, with which this chapter began, places her in direct conversation with the stray dog whose own "helpless and speechless" situation leads to its death; the two become threaded as thereafter her

own rhetorical plot begins, setting her on her own fatal trajectory. That stray is, however, directly followed by another dog: Tinker, the household lapdog. From stray to pet, the familial status of these two dogs reflects Carmina's own, as she is lead from the London streets into the home of her new relations. At the same time, while the stray segues into Carmina's supposed illness, so too does Tinker arrive at a moment crucial to Carmina's plot: the reading of the Will. Mrs. Gallilee is joined by Mr. Mool (the family lawyer) and Ovid in the drawing room, as Mr. Mool reads the terms of Robert Graywell's legacy. After Mrs. Gallilee has learned she will not inherit, she asks they rush over the remainder of the will in favour of her duties as guardian:

“We may, I think, pass over that ... and get to the part of it which relates to Carmina and me. Don't think I am impatient; I am only desirous—”

The growling of a dog in the conservatory interrupted her. “That tiresome creature!” she said sharply; “I shall be obliged to get rid of him!” (77)

Preceding the revelation of Carmina's inheritance status (which instantiates Mrs. Gallilee's abuse), the reading of the will is interrupted by the barks of Tinker, who Mrs. Gallilee then threatens to “get rid of” (77). The parallel between Mrs. Gallilee's relations with Carmina and with Tinker is readily apparent—the disruptive creature whose discourse interrupts Mrs. Gallilee in both footing and fortune is directly threatened with removal. Like Carmina's, Tinker's bodily rhetoric directly confronts and contradicts Mrs. Gallilee's word. Mrs. Gallilee levies niceties in the hopes of disguising her impatience, yet, in being interrupted by Tinker, her sentence is cut off, ironically preventing her from falsifying her claim—she is, after all, *only* desirous. Like Carmina's future letter, Tinker's “word” holds the potential (through its disruption) to reveal to others that which

Mrs. Gallilee attempts to disguise. Simultaneously, the ways in which Tinker's body language, too, functions as a rhetorical site that stands in direct relief to Mrs. Gallilee's word is a comparison made explicit by the text: whereas Mrs. Gallilee threatens that "his temper is not to be trusted" (77), Tinker's manner as he enters the room "completely refuted her aspersion on his temper" (78), as he "salute[s] the company briskly with his tail" (78). Later on rejoined by his ability to "express[...] reproachful surprise" at Ovid's unintentional neglect (78), the text draws explicit attention to the dog's ability to affectively affiliate himself with, and to disrupt the dialogue of, those around him through expressions of the body. Yet whereas Tinker's bodily rhetoricability is made apparent, Mrs. Gallilee's contestation of that rhetoricability, as well as her threats of removal, stand as a reminder of the underlying politics with which the novel is primarily concerned: Carmina's alignment with the animal is not (only) that shared bodily rhetoricability, but that that rhetoricability is under attack by a sustained discourse of isolation and denial that leads toward the vivisector's table.

If Tinker, however, expresses himself through body and voice—in doing so demonstrating the animal's capacity for a bodily rhetoricability that mirrors the heroine's own—he is visibly contrasted by the animals which surround the vivisector. The Gallilee family (excluding Mrs. Gallilee who chooses to attend a lecture) visit a "zoological garden" for a day trip, host to a variety of animals as well as an impassioned species debate, brought upon by "the monkey-house" (104). When the family run into Benjulia, who has come to collect "a sick monkey in the gardens, in a room all by himself" (99), they follow after the doctor to the pavilion in which the monkeys are kept. Teresa, unfamiliar with the prospect of either zoo or zoological inquiry, looks upon the pavilion

in a mixture of wonder and disgust: “Are they all monkeys in that big place? . . . How do they like it, I wonder?” (104). The question is taken up by Maria, who answers with the dutiful recitation of encyclopedic knowledge which marks her character:

“The monkeys are kept in large and airy cages . . . and the temperature is regulated with the utmost care. I shall be happy to point out to you the difference between the monkey and the ape. You are not perhaps aware that the members of the latter family are called ‘Simiadae,’ and are without tails and cheek-pouches?” (104)

Maria is able to reproduce the facts of the monkey habitat and the differential markers of species, drawing attention to the body as a site of knowledge, but fails to recognize them under the terms of rhetorical expression with which Teresa’s question is fundamentally concerned; she can speak of the conditions of their cage and their characteristics, but not of them as empathetic creatures. Teresa, quickly overwhelmed and soon impassioned, calls Maria’s morals to question:

“You will allow me to remind you,” [Maria] said, “that intelligent curiosity leads us to study the habits of animals that are new to us. We place them in a cage—”
Teresa lost *her* temper.

“You’re an animal that’s new to me,” cried the irate duenna. “I never in all my life met with such a child before. If you please, madam governess, put this girl into a cage. My intelligent curiosity wants to study a monkey that’s new to me.”
(105)

Teresa reminds Maria that she too is an animal, and that, by using the very hierarchy of intellectual inquiry which grounds both her knowledge and the prospect of the zoo, she might also be permissibly caged. The zoo therefore allows for *Heart and Science* to call

to question the very concept of the ‘animal’, simultaneously highlighting the liberties which the human-animal, using intelligence as a precept, takes with his fellow creatures; the argument here presented, without directly invoking vivisection itself, stands parallel to the vivisection debate as it calls to question the morality of “intelligent curiosity” as justification for imprisonment. More important, however, is that what is made clear through Teresa and Maria’s conversation is that the monkeys within the “zoological” domain fail to manifest as rhetors. Already-imprisoned, the monkeys of the pavilion stand in direct contrast to Tinker, who is talked about but nevertheless able to speak for himself (a textual disruption which allows for his bodily rhetoricability to contradict the word of Mrs. Gallilee); the monkeys, despite having their interiority directly invoked by Teresa, fail to (or rather, are refused the ability to) manifest both textually and within Maria’s response, the latter of which has totally divorced the (monkey’s) body from its rhetorical implications.

Among these already silent monkeys, then, is Benjulia’s “sick monkey”, sequestered in a room apart from the rest. The monkey, Minerva conjectures, must have “a disease of the brain” for Benjulia to be interested in its care (99); for “brains and nerves are Benjulia’s diseases” (97), a dedication to cerebral pathology that has seen the doctor secreted away from active practice in favor of a “mania for experiments in chemistry” (97). But whereas we know where Benjulia’s interest in the monkey lie, we do not have the facts of its illness; the monkey, like the rest of its kind housed in the pavilion, cannot speak for itself. In fact, it has been *rendered unable*, as when the monkey finally appears in the text Benjulia calmly assures a nearby worker that “he can’t bite anybody, after what I’ve done to him” (109). Attesting to that rendering is the

monkey's "state of stupor" (109), a thinly veiled reference to Benjulia's application of anaesthetic⁸⁴. While the facts of the monkey's supposed illness are left intentionally unclear—the monkey has been isolated from others, but whether for infectious or behavioural concerns is information that is not provided—what *is* clearly provided is that rendering process by which Benjulia refuses the monkey the right to protest—to bite—its movement. The monkey thus exists in a disabled state, directly produced by the conditions which surround it: the zoological framework which translates the rhetorical animal into an object of intellectual curiosity; secluded and socially isolated from its peers; and then physically sedated by the vivisector himself, these conditions all precede and directly inform the vivisector's introduction to the text as one appearing concurrently with a network of rhetorical disability.

Against these animals whose rhetoric is *markedly* absent⁸⁵ is Benjulia. First introduced by way of a "deep bass voice" that interrupts a conversation between Zo and Teresa, Benjulia is defined by his own rhetorical peculiarities—particularly, his aversion to rhetoric. The man "wait[s] to be spoken to" (99), and his "way of talking" is both direct and "indifferent" to an "inhuman" degree (131); though he will engage others with "form purely for form's sake" (103), he is quick to leave a conversation, and defines himself as one who "hates noise" (132). Altogether, Benjulia's disdain for dialogue is defined by a foreboding silence which suggests "[t]he whole man ... to be shut up in

⁸⁴ Likely ether.

⁸⁵ I draw emphasis here on the "marked" absence of their rhetoric, insofar as the novel allows for animals such as Tinker to rhetorically manifest (i.e., to be presented with rhetoricability by the narrator); the contrast between Tinker and the monkeys is not a fault of the animal (i.e., to say the monkey "cannot" or "could not" manifest) but a deliberate emphasis given by the author, as Collins draws attention to how their rhetorical presence in the novel directly coincides with their relationship to the vivisector.

himself" (101). As a type, then, Benjulia's rhetorical reticence appears to be pulled directly from the voice of vivisection literature: echoes of Philanthropos read across Benjulia's "customary preciseness of language" and disdain for "smooth sentences" (183), as do his repeated invocations of the dictionary for correction (103; 246); and his reluctance to hear arguments against vivisection, as with his secretive nature, evoke Simon's call that the man of science "attend" only to those "who understand him" (Simon 103). Rhetoric, for Benjulia, is a clear marker of one's place in the scientific community, and where "a man who talks as [he] [does] is a man set above [others] by Knowledge" (190), his reluctant participation in dialogue is a reflection of the hierarchical ordering by which he operates.

Highlighting Benjulia's aversion to dialogue in his introduction, the novel thereafter characterizes the vivisector's estate through a similarly oppressive silence. The vivisector's laboratory, set amongst a barren field in which "[no [other] dwellings, and no living creatures appeared" (129), is defined by its "solitude": "No watch-dog barked; no servant appeared on the look-out for a visitor" (130). Like the monkey's singular room, Benjulia's isolated estate emphasizes the socially secluded situation sustaining vivisection; no one but Benjulia has access to the laboratory, and it is purposelessly situated far from others. As such, Benjulia guarantees that he will not have to engage in conversation with others on the topic of his research, a reluctance to speak about vivisection that is addressed at multiple instances throughout his narrative: he warns Ovid to "[k]eep off [the] subject" (133), and threatens his brother Lemuel, upon the latter finding his laboratory, that "I'll be the death of you, if you tell any living creature what I am doing" (184). However, escaping from the laboratory is evidence of the animal

within, as “low and faint, there rose through the sweet woodland melody a moaning cry” (130): “It paused; it was repeated; it stopped” (130). Again like the monkey, the creature which cries has only its condition to emphasize, secluded and otherwise unheard; the reader is given access to this expression only insofar as it reveals its oppression, a rhetorical gesture that goes otherwise unheard by the owner of the estate. The cry which escapes then becomes trace evidence, like the blood on Benjulia’s cane⁸⁶, of vitality, a rhetoricability which is being barred; and, when asked about the cry, Benjulia skirts the conversation, altogether denying the rhetorical situation by questioning the very legitimacy of its *as* rhetorical expression:

“I mean I heard a moaning—”

“Where?”

“In the building behind your house.”

“You heard the wind in the trees.” (134)

Both the deauthorization of the animal’s rhetoric, as well as Benjulia’s subsequent refusal to entertain the topic of vivisection, illustrate the vivisector’s withdrawal from—his refusal to entertain—the rhetorical situation.

Benjulia’s career necessitates that withdrawal. In a harrowing account given to his brother, Benjulia recalls his experimentation upon the sick monkey:

⁸⁶ Benjulia’s cane--his support--bears the “dry stains of blood” during Ovid’s visit (133), and Ovid questions whether Benjulia had last “washed his hands” and “forgotten the handle wanted washing too” (133). During Lemuel’s visit to Benjulia, “the spots of blood which Ovid had once seen on Benjulia’s stick, were on his hands now” (185). Benjulia’s apparently clean hands are a source of interest to Carmina after their first interaction (123), and their progressive dirtying reads (if nothing else) as an indication of the doctor’s growing impatience with his experiments: “What’s the use of washing ... when I am going back to my work?” (185)

My last experiments on a monkey horrified me. His cries of suffering, his gestures of entreaty were like the cries and gestures of a child. I would have given the world to put him out of his misery. But I went on. In the glorious cause I went on. My hands turned cold—my heart ached—I thought of a child I sometimes play with—I suffered—I resisted—I went on. All for Knowledge! (191)

In his evocation of Zo, scholars have typically turned to this passage as a reflection of the vivisector's moral hardening as well as his potential redemption (Maceachen 24; Shumaker 105), found in the trace remainders of feeling expressed prior to his persistence. What is otherwise clear, however, is that this account reveals the rhetoricability of the monkey throughout the operation—the first account of the monkey clearly marked as rhetor, expressed in its death throes. Benjulia identifies both the cries and the bodily articulations of the monkey as rhetorical, the persuasive expression and entreaty of its voice and gestures as a call for response from the vivisector who, nevertheless, persists. That persistence is not a flaw but a feature of the vivisector who, in order to experiment, depends upon his ability to deny engagement with the animal's rhetoric, to perceive the body as object and refuse its rhetorical expression. Benjulia therefore is clearly marked as Bernard's man of science, the one who "no longer hears" (Bernard 1865, 103). Though Benjulia hears the monkey's rhetoric, his refusal to attend to it marks his professional deafening; yet, bound to the fact of the "no longer" which evidences a prior hearing, that monkey's rhetoricability is nevertheless laid bare.

Through Benjulia and his (disabled and disabling) response to the animal's rhetoric, Collins establishes a throughline of rhetorical disablement between monkey and madwoman, an explicitly bound relationship made evident by the vivisector's initial

introduction: “One of the monkeys has got brain disease; and they fancy I might like to see the beast before they kill him. Have you been thinking lately of that patient we lost?” (99). Benjulia’s abrupt transition from the animal subject to a human one is not only an inadvertent revelation of his intent (the desire to operate on the animal to reveal the pathology of the human), but a recognition that the two subjects are, within the text, bound to the same sentencing structure. Though Benjulia insists upon a pathological framework that he nevertheless implicitly denounces--“We called it hysteria, not knowing what else it was” (100)—his plot throughout the novel reveals that what truly connects monkey and madwoman under the category of *corpora vilia* is their being rhetorically disabled, a refusal to attend to their rhetoricability perpetrated by those who seek to claim the body-made-object.

In constructing parallel narratives of rhetorical disablement between Carmina and the animals surrounding Benjulia, *Heart and Science* reads vivisection under the terms by which it operates, regarding the practice not as a progressively defined experimental science, nor as a mere lapse of human-animal relations complicated by evolving species boundaries, but as posing a fundamentally rhetorical dilemma. Where the body’s expressions are translated into mechanistic pathological terms, those who depend upon the body to communicate are rendered rhetorically disabled, unable to speak back to the medical profession. Thus, Benjulia’s initial introduction to the text mirrors his re-introduction to Carmina’s bedside, as the vivisector appears—in both—at the moment of rhetorical collapse. But where the novel regards the problem surrounding these rhetors as a lack of attention, insofar as both animal and madwoman have been denied audience, it provides glimpses of possible reparative potential, found not only in the textual

manifestation of the animal's rhetoricability (glimpses which show the animal, like Carmina, *has* a rhetoric that is attacked rather than absent), but through Ovid.

Ovid is introduced to the story as a young doctor with "abrupt" manners, whose customary response to his patients is to "tak[e] the words out of their mouths" (67). As such, his narrative begins by identifying a habitual practice of the medical profession that is paralleled by Ovid's exhausted state of health: a disabling condition for both patient and practitioner. Yet, through his romance with Carmina, he comes to develop a "patient attention" (67)—the ability to listen as she speaks. The rhetorical attendance which Benjulia necessarily rejects is, throughout Ovid's narrative, therefore nourished, as his own plot revolves around developing this "patient attention." Whereas Ovid's journey to Canada allows for Mrs. Gallilee's schemes to unfold, it nevertheless allows him to further his empathetic education: Ovid comes across a dying man in Canada who recounts his own narrative, and, in doing so, illustrates to Ovid the necessity of dialogue. The man, a "mulatto" living in Montreal (159), tells Ovid of his marriage to a woman, ending in her suicide and his internment in an asylum (160). When, on his deathbed, he bequeaths to Ovid his life-work in the form of a "manuscript" (160), Ovid finds within "a problem in the treatment of disease, which has thus far been the despair of medical men throughout the whole civilised world" (160). The manuscript later claims "a new light on the nature and treatment of brain disease" (308), an enlightenment brought about through the man's interactions with two "hysterically affected" young women (308), but which must also be informed through his own experience with madness; for while Ovid, having learned from the manuscript, sets about concocting a new tincture upon his return to London in order

to save Carmina, what is most evidently gained from the reading is the value of a talking “cure”.

Ovid’s return to Canada brings about a return in Carmina’s voice, as “[s]ilent towards all other friends, she was able to speak to Ovid” (303). Carmina’s ability to speak is framed as a question of authority, as she herself asks of Ovid whether he will “let [her] say, what [she] wants to say” (303)—a question which allows her, once answered, to claim a sense of “rest” (303). Insofar as Carmina’s disablement is grounded in her rhetorical isolation and denial, Ovid’s curative method seeks to uplift the authority of her voice; first by granting her the freedom to speak her mind, he next brings her back into dialogue. Zo—who I earlier identified as her own mirror of Carmina, both fluent rhetors of the body—“tests” Carmina’s mental capacities through her own slipshod speech, as Carmina fills in the blanks of the excitable child’s missing dialogue; but they also affirm her abilities as interlocutor, where her responses to Zo are eagerly declared to be positive contributions, met with both verbal and bodily joy from the singing and dancing child. Ovid, while monitoring, keeps himself out of the conversation, allowing the two girls the space to find their voices returned in the absence of Mrs. Gallilee’s abuse.

If Ovid’s interactions with Carmina demonstrate the growth of his “patient attention,” they simultaneously reveal his determination to uplift the mad voice in conversations of cerebral pathology. Where he therefore ensures Carmina has a space in dialogue, so too does he ensure the Montreal man remain as a rhetorical participant in the circulation of his manuscript⁸⁷. Though the man forbids mention of his name (316), he

⁸⁷ There are, however, problematic colonial associations with Ovid’s adventure that must be addressed. As I earlier mentioned (see fn. 67), vivisection was commonly portrayed as a continental influence. The

acts as co-author to the book (published under Ovid's), with a preface that maintains the circumstances which led to the book's creation. These circumstances, including the mention of a "melancholy deathbed" (318), necessarily involve the original author's mad experiences, both of the young girls he treated and of his own. The publication and therefore circulation of the patient's voice is therefore, through the act of co-authorship, granted in its full authority as always-already part of a continual dialogue surrounding madness. The manuscript thereafter becomes praxis for Ovid, as his care for Carmina is centered on the (re)introduction of the rhetorically disabled into the rhetorical situation.

As Carmina's narrative ends in both conversation and cure, she is once more, for a final time, mirrored by an animal subject—and how could it end but with another dog? With Carmina cured and Ovid's publication having usurped the vivisector's claim to fame, Benjulia burns his laboratory down before committing suicide. First, however, freeing those who could be freed, the vivisector's laboratory reveals the rhetors whose lives also became bound to Benjulia's ego: the "death shrieks of the others had told their fate" (323), the last gasps of their rhetorical appeal met only with a "[s]ilence, horrible silence, [as] all that answered" (323). If those who could not be saved end in a permanent, fatal silencing, however, hope remains for the living: a dog, having escaped the fires of Benjulia's suicidal demolition, reaches the hand of a nearby servant, whereupon "[a] persuasive tongue, gently licking it, pleaded for a word of welcome" (324). Just as Tinker is shown to express his own rhetoricability through the articulated

solution to this foreign influence, according to Collins' novel, is to be found in colonial extraction: Ovid travels to one of Britain's colonies to find the cure (notably from a benevolent man of colour who willfully surrenders his findings before dying peacefully) and brings it home to be enjoyed by the British subject(s).

body, the dog's escape from the laboratory allows for his reintroduction into rhetoricability, where his gesture is not only recognized as rhetorical by the text (in all its persuasive intent), but delivered, finally, to an audience capable of receiving it.

Liberation for the dog, just as with Carmina, therefore begins with the restitution of rhetoricability.

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Conclusion

4 Disquieting Narratives

“I should think that my letters could never have been read by them: certainly they could not have been read with due attention.”

--Perceval, p.213

“The voices are still real, they still intend certain meanings; it was he that was in error in his understanding of them.”

--Bateson on Perceval, p.xvi

Whereas this project has overwhelmingly responded to literature written *about* the mad, I wish to end with a text written *by* the mad. In January 1831, a gentleman named John Thomas Perceval was placed in an insane asylum in Bristol at the behest of his family. There he spent fourteen months; thereafter he spent the months between November 1831 to May 1833, a time in which he “considered [him]self to be of sane mind” (Perceval 1961⁸⁸ 3), living at relative liberty, before being once more placed in an asylum in Paris. In 1838, after his full release (and against the wishes of his family), Perceval published a recollection of these years spent within the psychiatric institution. The memoir, *A Narrative of the Treatment Experienced by a Gentleman, During a State of Mental Derangement; Designed to explain the causes and the nature of insanity, and to expose the injudicious conduct pursued towards many unfortunate sufferers under that calamity*, is a lengthy diatribe: the narrative rebels against the institution in which Perceval was placed, against Perceval’s friends and family who refused to release him, as

⁸⁸ To avoid confusion between Bateson’s *Perceval’s Narrative* and Perceval’s *Narrative*, I hereafter distinguish the two texts through date. In general, Bateson’s version was used for textual evidence, whereas Perceval’s 1840 edition is used to illustrate Bateson’s editorializations.

well as against the voices which he routinely heard, “guid[ing] [him] in [his] actions” (29).

In 1961, English anthropologist Gregory Bateson re-published Perceval’s two volume memoir as a single, condensed volume titled *Perceval’s Narrative: A Patient’s Account of His Psychosis, 1830-1831*. In Bateson’s introduction to the newly revised narrative, Bateson explains that he worked “to give the reader everything pertinent to an understanding of John Perceval, his psychosis, and his narration of the steps by which he believed that his recovery was achieved” (Bateson xxi). Bateson’s self-professed interest in Perceval’s writings lay in their “relevance and importance for modern psychiatry” (vi)—the “view of the psychotic process” which Bateson believed the narrative afforded to the reader (xiv). Perceval’s autobiography thus becomes translated into a patient record, valued as a case study of the diseased mind once subsumed under the overarching narrative of psychosis. Whatever fails to signify according to this new narrative structure is therefore to be expunged: in thus condensing *Perceval’s Narrative*, Bateson omits “a long invective Preface” of 26 pages (xx), “a confused two-page Introduction” (xx), content deemed “contentious and repetitive” (xxi), and some of Perceval’s later “ineffectual appeals” to local magistrates (xxii).

The “confus[ion]” which occasioned Bateson’s omission of Perceval’s narrative is purportedly the confusion of dates and places. Presumably these two sentences could have been appended with a brief note of correction (as Bateson includes in his own bibliographic note [xx]), allowing for Perceval’s formal introduction to the text to remain intact. The larger confusion apparently lay in Perceval’s vitriol against the institution itself. Perceval’s introduction establishes the basis for the narrative’s publication as a

threefold manifesto: a “reform of the law” (Perceval 1840 iii), “a reform in the management of lunatic asylums” (iii), and

to teach the wretched and affectionate relations of a deranged person, what may be his necessities, and how to conduct themselves toward him, so that they may avoid the errors which were unfortunately committed by the author’s own family.

(iii-iv)

The lattermost call to action is included in Bateson’s edition as an epigraph to the text (Bateson xxiii), which aligns with Bateson’s reading: Bateson’s interest, as he demonstrates throughout the Preface, lie primarily in Perceval’s psychosexual childhood development and his familial relations. Accordingly, Bateson’s editorializations are conducted so as to provide readers “everything pertinent to an understanding of John Perceval, his psychosis, and his narration of the steps by which he believed his recovery was achieved” (xxi), as well as “the material relevant to his relations with his family” (xxi)—in short, to present Perceval as a case study of delusion. Perceval, however, represents the text as an expose of “inhumane and cruel treatment” and the “unnatural, irreligious, and degrading circumstances” to which he was subject under the care of the asylum (Perceval 1840 2). Perceval’s Preface speaks of seeking to effect change through appeals to authority, but that he holds “no appeal” (v):

How was a man confessing himself to have been a lunatic, mistrusted doubtless, in some degree, even by those who knew him best, to obtain credence from Ministers, from authorities, from strangers, whose characters for sound judgement were at stake, and whose ears were prejudiced like those of all the world—by

those utterly false but general presumptions, that lunacy is an unfathomable mystery—a subject too delicate to be handled, that none but lunatic doctors know how to deal with it; that a lunatic’s word is not to be believed; that a LUNATIC ONLY COMPLAINS AGAINST TREATMENT WHICH—HOWEVER CRUEL—WAS NECESSARY! (viii)

Recognizing himself the ways in which the mad diagnosis enacts a loss of rhetoricability, such that his appeals to the local magistrates go unheeded, Perceval represents his narrative as a “prov[ing] [of] his case” so as to enact reform (viii). It is not then originally conceived as *Perceval’s Narrative*, but as *A Narrative of the treatment experienced*.

For both Perceval and Bateson, the discourse which precedes the narrative shapes the meaning of the text. Bateson, in his editorialization, rejects the very premise of the narrative: the “bitter protest” with which Perceval frames (and indeed occasions) his text is instead reduced to a “sufficient sample” (Bateson xxi), and *Perceval’s Narrative* is appended with a narrative of Bateson’s own. By excising Perceval’s affective register and framing the narrative through the discourse of medicine, Bateson seeks to guide readers toward reading Perceval through a markedly psychoanalytic lens, and in doing so shifts readerly attention away from the Perceval’s directed reading of the institution itself toward the individual at hand.

The repression of the madman’s “contentious and repetitive” rhetoric reads by now as an all too familiar register. Bateson’s editorialization is therefore (perhaps unsurprisingly at this point in our discussion) paralleled by the very conditions of Perceval’s time spent within the asylum. Under the psychiatric gaze which sought to

“evaluate [Perceval’s] psychosis” (xix), Perceval’s letters were “subjected for inspection” (Perceval 211), read and suppressed at the asylum physician’s disposal and “weighed as proof of [his] mind” (223). In being thus situated, Perceval was placed in a double-bind: not in the sense of Bateson’s prognosis⁸⁹, but of a doubly-bound silence. Perceval’s words and his actions were read as confirmations of illness, “[his] anger at being confined, and at [his] treatment” read as “proof of [his] madness” (211), and “justifi[cations]” of “[his] continued confinement” (213); in a letter from his mother, she begged that if Perceval could but “make up [his] mind to remain quietly in [his] present situation” he would be released (229). Yet, simultaneously, silence too was condemnation. “The first symptoms of my derangement were,” Perceval recalls, “that I gazed silently on the medical men who came to me...” (120):

...from that moment to the end of my confinement, men acted as though my body, soul, and spirit were fairly given up to their control, to work their mischief and folly upon. My silence, I suppose, gave consent. (120)

In both utterance and in silence, it seems, Perceval failed to speak his sanity to those charged with his care.

Where is that failure located? Throughout the narrative, Perceval attempts to draw attention to the failures of his keepers in entertaining dialogue with the declared mad. On

⁸⁹ Bateson developed a “double-bind” theory of schizophrenia, arguing that schizophrenia was the result of two conflicting directions (often received in childhood) which the mind failed to reconcile. This theory informs Bateson’s psychoanalytic introduction to the narrative, which he consolidates around a particularly Puritan guilt manifested in the psyche (x).

more than one occasion, Perceval charges his keepers with withholding information: that he was “never told” the reasons for his treatments and “never asked” after his wants or needs (120). In one episode, Perceval’s testimony reveals this silence to be a self-sustaining prescription on the part of his attendants, producing the very ‘symptoms’ they would then punish: having twice wet his bed while “overcome by fear whilst waiting for my keepers, who came to take me to the cold bath in reality, but as I imagined to my eternal doom” (93), Perceval recalls being taken to “a kind of outhouse” and chained to a straw bed (94), and while he is cognizant of his surroundings and of his removal, he is denied explanation *for* that removal, and subsequently “left to my own meditations” (94). Here, both the physiological symptom of bed wetting and the psychological symptoms—the terror which precedes, and the conjectures of “a lunatic left to [his] lunatic imagination to supply [him] with a reason” afterward (95)—are bolstered by the asylum’s refusal to communicate with Perceval. The lack which is perceived in Perceval’s capacity for response is therefore manifest in the asylum’s responsibility *to* Perceval.

The asylum’s refusal to engage in dialogue with the mad rhetor is, in part, a declaration of inaccessibility: that the mad rhetor will not or cannot understand, and that to communicate with madness is madness in and of itself. This inaccessibility is, however, a denial. Ludwig Wittgenstein wrote that

‘I cannot know what is going on in him’ is above all a picture. It is the convincing expression of a conviction. It does not give the reasons for the conviction. They are not readily accessible.

If a lion could talk, we would not understand him. (qtd. in Meijer 44)

Eva Meijer, reading Wittgenstein, emphasizes the ways in which it is the conviction which determines the failure of dialogue (45). In the conviction that the other is totally inaccessible, that inaccessibility is (re)produced: Perceval's keepers are convinced he is incommunicable, so they do not communicate; in not communicating, they feed his paranoid imagination. This failure to communicate similarly reproduces the silence in the inmate, who actively perceives the ways in which their word remains unattended. Perceval recalls another patient "who, [he] observed, seldom or never spoke" (101), who nevertheless converses with Perceval when overhearing of their shared distress. Conversing with a third patient on the abuses levied by the attendants, the formerly silent patient interjects by

...declar[ing] that when he first came to the asylum, whilst sitting one evening in the parlour wherein we were, he rang the bell, or called for a candle for another gentleman, when the servant came up, and, grossly insulting him, turned him, too, out of the room, and sent him to bed; since which, says he, I have never opened my mouth, except when absolutely necessary. (102)

Between Perceval and his fellow inmates, silence is in part a mute resignation. Rhetoric is, fundamentally, an appeal: it is not surprising that one who has had that appeal routinely dismissed, derided, or denied may stop initiating the call.

We have seen that silence manifest in the literary reproductions of madness. Carmina Graywell, whose rhetoricability is repeatedly called into question by her authoritative and oppressive aunt, ultimately shuts down, closing in on herself in an arhetorical bind. Like Perceval's fellow inmate, the mad-person recognizes their rhetoric

is being actively refused, and so reproduces that silence in turn. So too have we seen that refusal in action—the assertion of silence where there is sound—in Bertha Mason, whose language is gestured but whose meaning is denied. And, as with the framing of Perceval's narrative as a case study, we have seen the effect of discourse on rhetoricability, the framing of the mad voice *as* mad so as to change its meaning—to challenge its authority. In these ways, the literary depiction of madness offers readers insight into the processes of rhetorical disablement effected onto the mad-person, whose plot becomes centered on their ability (or lack thereof) to claim rhetoricability.

However, while Perceval's narrative affords readers a glimpse of both institution and individual, it also presents us with the trouble involved in attending to mad dialogue. Perceval's largest grievance is ostensibly that against his family: for placing him in the asylum, for failing to write and visit, and for failing to collect him sooner. On one occasion, however, Perceval is given the occasion to respond to one of his mother's letters, in which he records the following:

...I at length wrote to my mother to this effect: 'that I was so happy where I was; that I loved the people so about me; that I longed to come to E—, and to bring Herminet Herbert with me,' and I alluded to my spiritual friend, Mr. Waldony. I wrote with great perplexity, and opposition from many of the spirits.

Unfortunately, my family were too willing to believe this silly rhapsody, although there were a few words that might have afforded them a clue to the truth; and I was informed, when released, that the contents of that letter greatly influenced them in rejecting the complaints I made, when I began really to appreciate my situation. (132)

Whereas Perceval rebels against his family's (and the asylum's) refusal to believe his words, he similarly rebels against their refusal to *disbelieve* him. This lack of "attention" to his words Perceval repeatedly condemns (229), as he "fault[s]" his family members for their failure to ascertain his true meaning against that which he has expressed.

Unfortunately for Perceval, his family members do not have the insight of an omniscient narrator. Throughout this project (if I may be allowed a brief detour), animals have acted as textual companions to the madperson's plot, alternately "speaking" to one's capacity to entertain alternate modes of rhetoricability. The rhetoricability of these animals, however, is necessarily circumscribed by the omniscient narrator who mitigates readerly access: we, as readers, are explicitly told what the animal rhetor is attempting to convey, a translation not necessarily accessible to the diegetic cast.

On the one hand, reducing the difficulties of communication down to the will to engage threatens a return to that immaterial "will to speak." Catherine Prendergast opened her discussion on the "rhetorical black hole" of schizophrenia with a recognition of the fact that she and her friend Barbara were nevertheless unable to "broker a shared understanding of it" (Prendergast 45): "Her comment[s] offered me schizophrenia in a way I could understand it. In short, it was to *my* mind an index of sanity..." (45). When engaging with these mad rhetors, I have always already sought to make a kind of sense of them. By condensing mad rhetorics to the purely social interactions which inform them, I threaten to veil the rhetoric of which I cannot make sense: it may be that I have prostheticized, to use Mitchell and Snyder's concept, effecting an "erasure of difference", or at least placed madness in "an acceptable *degree* of difference" (7). This is itself a silencing gesture, is it not? The poet John Clare, in his own internment in the asylum,

wrote of psychiatry as a kind of editorializing, envisioned in a disablement both physical and rhetorical:

...they have cut off my head, and picked out all the letters of the alphabet—all the vowels and consonants—and brought them out through the ears; and then they want me to write poetry! I can't do it. (qtd in Porter 158)

Have I not picked out all these letters and built a prosthetic of the missing space?

On the other hand, that conviction that the other with whom we speak—mad or animal—is purely inaccessible *ensures* that meaning is never garnered. As Derrida argues, we have allowed ourselves to believe that we understand each other perfectly in ways that we have otherwise necessarily denied between human and animal—but meaning between two persons (able-body/minded and otherwise) is in itself already formed by gaps. Though we can never fully realize the meaning of the other, we nevertheless assume the gaps in order to communicate. These novels have shown, however, the ways in which meaning between persons is circumscribed by assertions of insurmountable difference. Just as the diagnosis frames our reception to mad rhetoric, so too does the certainty that *I cannot know or they cannot mean*.

I hope that what I have articulated throughout this project, rather than any assertion of perfect clarity, is instead a call to patient attention. Here, I learn from Agnes Trzak, who argues that “[a]ttributing meaning through interpreting symbols is the essence of any communicative practice—within our own species and beyond” (Trzak 76). No dialogue is ever purely and utterly communicable—the goal is to nevertheless insist on community.

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