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Body Language: Pain in Victorian Literature

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For my sisters

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ABSTRACT

"Body Language: Pain in Victorian Literature" argues that Victorian authors use the readable sign system of the body and pain to emphasize their characters' physical features to the reader. As characters physically manifest emotions or experience violence, their appearances change, and these differences depend on physical descriptions. Marks on the body give it texture and depth, creating a layering that encourages the reader to envision and remember it. Character interactions, particularly when they read others' somatic signs and experience or cause brutality, further flesh out characters, emphasizing their physical presences in the reader's mind. The somatic sign system depends upon both alterations to the body and character interchanges in which other characters view a somatic sign. Yet this sign system is often disrupted; some forms of physical change confuse or deflect legibility. Extensive facial mutilation may prevent the physical manifestation of emotion. Bruises caused by an attack reveal more about the attacker's state of mind than the victim. Even strongly manifested emotions that cause a rapid decline in health, indicate as much about the character's relationships with others as his or her own personal feelings. I examine moments in which characters experience or show marks of previously experienced pain because I find that pain, which is difficult to express verbally because it has no referential content, is readily conveyed by descriptions of how it affects the body.

INTRODUCTION
ENVISIONING THE VICTORIAN BODY

"They were fair-haired girls, very like each other, of whom I have before my mind's eye a distinct portrait, which I fear I shall not be able to draw in any such manner as will make it distinct to others" (*The Small House at Allington* 55).

In *The Small House at Allington*, Anthony Trollope admits, through the narrator, that he struggles to describe two sisters so that the reader can picture the two characters as he does. In doing so, he acknowledges two larger, connected problems: that of a writer's representing bodies in language, and that of readers' imagining the bodies that the writer describes. In this project, I address how writers present bodies so readers can mentally picture them. I argue that Victorian authors accomplish this feat by complementing initial physical descriptions, which often provide few concrete details of characters' bodies, with descriptions of characters' features as they shift or alter. Often, the alterations are not merely physical but also signify the characters' mental states, adding a deeper meaning to the changes. The modifications may be as small as a change in expression or as extreme as the ravaging effects of illness. I find that characters are most detailed and most visible when experiencing or marked by pain. The more painful the experience that causes the alteration, the more notable and lasting the physical changes are. The more notable and lasting the physical changes are, the more the narrator and other characters react and draw the reader's attention to them and thereby provide added details and opportunities for the reader to imagine the characters' bodies. This project explores reading a text for character's bodies rather than reading through the text for the meaning behind characters' bodies. It focuses on a subject people tend to avoid, pain, to show how it connects readers to characters and how Victorians present it as uniting rather than individualized and isolating.

Elaine Scarry writes on both pain and imagining characters' bodies, indicating that pain and readers' envisioning of characters are connected. She addresses the problem of imagining

physical things and argues that people cannot imagine objects as vividly as they can perceive them, that "the imagined object lacks the vitality and vivacity of the perceived" ("On Vivacity" 1). The one exception to this general rule are the "verbal arts"; verbal descriptions stimulate readers' and listeners' imaginations so that they can picture the "vivacity of perceptual objects" in their minds (2). Scarry argues that good writers draw comparisons between the solid and transparent objects, the hard and soft, and that this layering of various materials "entails a coaxing of the imagination into outcomes that move it beyond its ordinary Aristotelian enfeeblement" (6-7). Scarry contends that solidity is more difficult than the visual "to reproduce in the imagination because it entails touch, the sense whose operation is more remote to us in imagining" (7). Yet she gives an example of a furnished room that encourages readers to imagine the touch and sight of objects. The reader may struggle to imagine the solidity of a wall, but by placing drapes on the wall, a substance with different, even oppositional qualities from the material of the wall, such as texture, color, and opaqueness, a writer encourages the reader to imagine two objects and increases the vivacity of the imagining by layering the two differing objects in the reader's mind. The wall seems more solid, more like a barrier, because the drapes are not; the wall seems taller because the drapes are shorter, and the wall seems harder because the drapes are softer. The space of the room may be made apparent by further descriptions of what it holds; it seems bigger, for example, if it holds specific furniture.

In a different article, published many years later, Scarry examines verbal representations of bodies specifically, noting that faces are much less easy to remember or picture in the imagination than flowers: "Probably everyone has…heard…Marcel's lament in *Remembrance of Things Past* of not being able to picture a certain face with a vivacity commensurate with one's affection for the person. But has any one ever encountered someone complaining that though

she loves columbine best above all other flowers, or meadow rue best in the world, she just cannot get an image of it clearly in mind?" ("Imagining Flowers" 92-93). Scarry specifies why flowers are easier to mentally see, arguing firstly that readers more readily imagine the vitality and vivacity of flowers than bodies because flowers are smaller. Secondly, she contends that the differences in a flower's texture, the "attributes of transparency or filminess," further support imagining in ways that "substantive phenomena" does not (102). I argue, however, that faces, too, can have "attributes of transparency or filminess." While faces may not be as physically opaque as flowers, their features can alter, both temporarily and permanently, and these alterations act much like the transparent aspects of a flower or the layers of varying texture that Scarry discusses.

Bodies may be more complicated to imagine than flowers, however, because, as Judith Butler points out in *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex*, people never view human bodies as merely physical things. A description of a human's features, particularly his or her face, may not have layers of different material like a room filled with drapes, furniture, and other decorations, yet we add many layers to our perception of bodies. Elizabeth Grosz agrees, noting there is no such thing as a "natural" body because "representations and cultural inscriptions" of bodies "quite literally constitute bodies and help to produce them as such" (x). Peter Brooks suggests that these cultural inscriptions of bodies lead to the endeavor to bring the body into language, to represent it, so that it becomes "part of the human semiotic and semantic project, a body endowed with meaning….Narratives in which a body becomes a central preoccupation can be especially revelatory of the effort to bring the body into the linguistic realm because they repeatedly tell the story of a body's entrance into meaning" (8). In other words, a

body is never just a physical thing, which both causes and results from verbal descriptions of bodies that inevitably inscribe them with meaning.

Bodies may be more difficult to convey in words than other objects because of their sheer size and because skin and hair offer too little of a contrast to evoke a clear picture in readers' minds, yet readers inevitably approach any description of a body with a set of preconceived cultural notions of gender, sex, beauty, and so on. These notions help us mentally picture bodies because we have set expectations for those bodies that can fill in any gaps or lack of details in a narrative's description of a body. Preconceived notions of bodies may also inhibit our ability to imagine bodies or to register certain specific traits because those traits may not fit with our ideas of what bodies should be. For example, a nineteenth-century reader of a nineteenth-century novel may read about a heroine with the assumption that the heroine has an unnaturally small, corseted waist; a twenty-first century reader may not approach the text or heroine's description with the knowledge of this now (mostly) obscure practice and the ideal of female beauty it attempts to substantiate. So if a narrator explains that the heroine has a beautiful figure with a small waist, the two readers may have different conceptions of what her figure looks like because one is accustomed to seeing corseted bodies while the other is not. The readers, presented with the same details about a character, may not, and probably will not, picture the character in the same way. Yet, regardless of any differences in their imaginings, the readers' cultural assumptions help them imagine a character's body outside of any specific details the verbal description supplies.

This study does not focus on biological or psycho-sexual constructions that readers may bring to a text. Instead, it focuses on moments when texts from various genres provide specific details of characters' bodies and, particularly, when previously detailed features change and the

narrators and characters react to the alteration. This change, I argue, acts as a layering of the body, allowing readers to compare the body as formerly described with the changed feature to strengthen their imaginings of the character's body. Others' reactions to the alteration further call the reader's attention to the body. Just as Scarry argues that furniture, drapes, differing textures strengthen a reader's imagining of a wall or room, I argue that descriptions of changes in a body's physical features and other characters' reactions to these changes reinforce the reader's imagining of that body. I return to the example of the heroine with the beautiful figure to explain my point. In an initial description of the heroine, the narrator tells the reader that the character has a beautiful figure and the reader promptly begins to imagine the character's body in accordance with his or her tastes of what a beautiful figure is. Halfway through the novel, the narrator describes a change in the character's figure, such as frailty and thinness brought on by sickness. The reader, then, has both his or her initial picture of the character and must reimagine it to fit this new description. In essence, the narrator reminds the reader of his or her initial imagining, bolstering the reader's initial picture of the character, and then directs a change in this image that forces the reader to reconsider his or her picture and alter it accordingly so that he or she can envision the difference between the character's body when healthy and when sick. Then other characters in the novel collaborate on the narrator's assessment of the altered figure by viewing and reacting to the sight, such as commenting on the heroine's thinness, offering to call a doctor, or insisting that the heroine try to eat; their reactions reinforce the description of the heroine's ailing body and again remind the reader of the heroine's physical change, of the reader's initial picture of the heroine and the changes that have occurred to her body.

While this study does not focus on biological or psycho-sexual constructions that readers may bring to a text, it does consider one cultural construction strongly supported throughout the

Victorian Age and that lingers today, that of bodies acting as signs for mental states, how a thought may be expressed on a body. The use of emoticons in much of our own communication today demonstrates our continued reliance on facial expressions as a means of conveying emotions or thoughts. In literature, descriptions of what a body "means" or "says" about a character invite the reader to imagine the character's body and can reveal much about what that body physically looks like. Embarrassment may lead to a blush, and that blush acts as a method of calling the reader's attention to the body so that he or she recalls and alters his or her imagining of it to incorporate the facial expression. Brooks notes that the "structures and systems" in which we view and interpret bodies, such as a blush, "move us away from the body, as any use of signs must necessarily do" (7). My project does consider the "sign" on the body, the blush and what it means, yet it also considers how such "signs" depend on a description of the body, how they direct our attention to, instead of away, from the body.

Mary Ann O'Farrell terms these bodily exhibitions of mental states the "readable sign system" of the body (5). She, Athena Vrettos, and Ellen Bayuk Rosenman examine interpretations of bodily signs in Victorian literature. The idea of interpreting bodily signs was popular in the Victorian Age, fed by other sciences, such as phrenology and physiognomy, that tried to read the body for character traits. While both these sciences faded in popularity as the Victorian Age progressed, the study of reading emotions did not, as demonstrated by Charles Darwin's 1872 publication, *The Expression of Emotions in Men and Animals*. O'Farrell, Vrettos, and Rosenman consider how Victorian fiction and popular culture developed and engaged in the readable sign system, which led me to consider how bodily signs depend on descriptions of physical features and question why and how Victorian fiction subverts the readable sign system. I find that when texts engage in the readable sign system of the body, they must necessarily

provide some description of that body. Similarly, when the readable sign system is disrupted so that a body does not readily reveal the character's thoughts or feelings, the physical aspects of the character are drawn to the forefront; the body is not lost behind its meaning but becomes more visible to the reader and/or other characters as a physical thing rather than an intangible sign.

Physiognomy and phrenology became popular sciences in the eighteenth century and through the nineteenth, and both encouraged "reading" the body, studying physical traits and correlating them with mental ones. I touch on both sciences briefly throughout this project. The popularity of phrenology and physiognomy, like that of the bodily descriptions in medical texts, encouraged authors to include descriptions of bodies, particularly faces, in their novels. Physiognomy "achieved almost universal penetration into the Victorian consciousness….Vaunted for its speed, physiognomy offered a way to suture the crisis of urban interaction by providing a means of making judgments even in the most passing encounters" (Pearl 2). John Caspar Lavater, the father of physiognomy, used the "lines, marks, and transitions of the countenance" to read the "moral life" of a man, his "powers and desires, his irritability, sympathy, and antipathy; his facility of attracting or repelling" (Lavater 8). In her work on character, Deidre Shauna Lynch explains that physiognomy "provided one influential account of what an appropriate character reading was—how a 'pact' between physiognomic reading and the project of collecting 'specimens of English manners' helped render the character a legible, consensual object" (12). She contends that physiognomy and character-reading originally focused on legibility of general nature but became more concerned with "depth," with how the character is "made and remade over time," so that one's body can be read for one's character at that particular time (12).

Phrenology focused on the shape and measurement of the skull. Founded by Austrian Franz Joseph Gall, the science spread to England with his "Foremost student Johann Gaspar Spurzheim" and was adopted and proliferated in England by George Combe (Dames 80). In this science of reading people, the body, "synecdochically reduced to the face and skull," was interpreted as different traits and sizes of bumps on heads were corresponded with mental propensities (79). Because phrenology encouraged but was not dependent on touch, unlike physiognomy's sole reliance on sight, it did not allow for such a quick, unobtrusive reading of a person's character. Yet it as well as physiognomy were theories "that were wedded to sight, and the triumph of sight over the invisible"; "in a phrenological world everything is visible, and therefore visibility is everything" (81). Victorians used these sciences to read the body as a text for character. There is a contradiction here: physiognomy and phrenology garner attention for the physical body even as they rely on the body being seen less as an object and more a means of expressing the intangible aspects of a person.

Literary authors incorporated contemporary scientific developments in phrenology and physiognomy in depicting their characters. Charles Dickens insisted that "Nature never writes a bad hand" but that "Her writing, as it may be read in the human countenance, is invariably legible, if we come at all trained to the reading of it. Some little weighting and comparing are necessary" (qtd. in Pearl 41). Sally Shuttleworth and Nicholas Dames note that Charlotte Brontë returns repeatedly to physiognomy and phrenology in her novels. Dames explains that Lucy of *Villette* is hired based on Monsieur Paul Emmanuel's "swift acts of reading" (82). Jane Eyre, for example, reads Mr. Rochester's features after he injures himself, and in the process, provides a detailed description of his facial features so that readers can picture their shapes: "I recognised his decisive nose, more remarkable for character than beauty; his full nostrils, denoting, I

thought, choler; his grim mouth, chin, and jaw—yes, all three were very grim, and no mistake. His shape, now divested of cloak, I perceived harmonised in squareness with his physiognomy" (*JE* 141). And Jane's are in turn read by St. John when she is weak from hunger and fatigue: "Mr. St. John came but once: he looked at me....He said every nerve had been overstrained in some way, and the whole system must sleep torpid a while….and added, after a pause, in the tone of a man little accustomed to expansive comment, 'Rather an unusual physiognomy; certainly, not indicative of vulgarity or degradation'" (390). From one look, he determines not only the cause of Jane's suffering but also the general decency of her personality.

Victorian science and medicine did not, however, limit the body's readability to long-term character traits; transitory feelings also influenced bodies. Alexander Bain, a nineteenth-century philosopher, describes this process as the Law of Diffusion: "According as an impression is accompanied with Feeling, the aroused currents *diffuse* themselves freely over the brain, leading to a general agitation of the moving organs, as well as affecting the viscera" (3, original emphasis). Emotion spreads throughout the body and stimulates the body's material substances. Strong feeling influences and even dictates the body's functions in both men and women. Isaac Watts's earlier work, *The Doctrine of the Passions* (1751), defines passions as "natural affections" that are of mind and body, "partly belonging to the Soul or Mind, and partly to the animal Body, i.e. the Flesh and Blood" (1, 9). Thomas John Graham, author of *Modern Domestic Medicine*, further explains the effect of passions on the mind and body:

> It is certainly of great consequence, as it respects the health of the body, to possess a command over the passions of the mind. All physicians agree, that the passions, if given way to, have a strong tendency to exhaust the finest of the vital powers; to destroy, in particular, digestion and assimilation; to weaken the vigour of the heart, and the whole nervous system; and, by these means, to impede the important business of restoration. (*Modern* 164-165)

Graham allows passions quite a bit of authority over the body; not only can they write themselves on the body but also "exhaust," "destroy," "weaken," and "impede." He focuses on the negative influences unhappy feelings can exert on the physical, indicating they more strongly write themselves on the body.

Buchan, author of the popular Victorian medical manual for the home, *Domestic Medicine*, details how specific emotions affect one's body, and he, too, suggests that what Sianne Ngai terms "ugly feelings" have a stronger effect than feelings associated with happiness or contentment. Anger, for example, "ruffles the mind, distorts the countenance, hurries on the circulation of the blood, and disorders the whole vital and animal functions. It often occasions fevers, and other acute diseases; and sometimes even sudden death" (86). Anger annoys or stresses the body but does not actually harm it; the feeling "ruffles," "distorts," "hurries on," and "disorders" without conquering or defeating. Fear, according to Buchan, is even more destructive than anger because it affects physiology to the point of inviting disease: "by depressing the spirits, [fear] not only dispose[s] us to diseases, but often render[s] those diseases fatal which an undaunted mind would overcome" (86). Fear shows itself on the body and may even encourage an illness that may last after the feeling that causes it is gone; in such a case, the body would be legible for the emotion after the emotion is no longer felt.

Darwin certainly advocated for reading external expressions for mental states, for transitory feelings as opposed to more permanent character, which became a more credited method of reading bodies than phrenology or physiognomy in the second half of the nineteenth-century. His *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* divides expression into three groups based on what it results from, and proceeds to catalog how animals and humans evidence emotion. His book indicates that there are set feelings, each of which evokes physical

expression, and that different types of animals convey the same feeling in different manners, but that man's expression is universal, and thereby easy to interpret regardless of his cultural background. Darwin even encourages his readers to "conduct their own experiments" of emotional depictions, as he had done with his children, and gives instructions for how to contort the face to indicate specific emotions (White 209). But though Darwin propagates reading certain facial expressions as testimonies of mental states, his very evidence of such interpretation is partially composed of snippets of novels that depict characters, of bodies he cannot physically see. These literary depictions of characters' faces serve as examples of how one might describe physical manifestations of emotions, but they also encourage literary readers to engage in the novel as interpreters of character: "By reading literature as scientific testimony, Darwin provided an alternative to the sentimental response of the novel lover….He did not call upon readers to weep in sympathy, but rather to become witnesses and studied observers themselves" (209). Darwin invites readers to actively attempt to "see" literary characters and not only read the text but "read" the characters' bodies. In doing so, Darwin himself practices imagining character's bodies and encourages other readers to do so too while pointing out that these descriptions, in which characters physically show emotions, make both the characters' minds and bodies apparent to readers.

Many literary critics, such as Shuttleworth, O'Farrell, Vrettos, and Rosenman use the guidelines of nineteenth-century science and medicine to read female bodies. Shuttleworth and the characters of *Jane Eyre* view bodies through the lens of phrenology, on the more permanent bodily indications of character as written on the shape of the head and face, but the other literary critics follow Darwin's challenge to consider how momentary emotions appear on characters' bodies and what they relate about the characters' immediate thoughts. As *The Picture of Dorian*

Gray demonstrates, Victorians believed, or wanted to believe, that emotions, particularly socially condemned ones, stamp themselves on the body. Dorian is an unusual case in that his internal states do not affect his own appearance until his death, but until then, they affect the replication of his appearance in Basil's painting. Each immoral mental state and the deeds it leads to write themselves on the portrait's face and body so that it can be read for transient thoughts; the repetition of such thoughts and the behavior they incite change the portrait's appearance permanently.

Nineteenth-century writing, as literary critics have shown, certainly invites interpretations of bodies and even takes advantage of depictions of physical traits to indirectly convey a character's transitory mental state, or what Lynch suggests is the character's "depth," its ability to change. O'Farrell, for example, studies blushing and how to interpret the somatic sign for emotions such as embarrassment, desire, and even anger. She notes that the blush "can seem, then, to partake of both body and language—supplementing language with an ephemeral materiality—and novelistic usage would even suggest that, by means of the blush, body and language are identical and simultaneous in function and effect" (4). Vrettos agrees that "the human body—and particularly the female body—[is] a text that offers privileged access to the emotional life of the subject" (15). Rosenman explains that Victorians wanted all bodies to be readable. Belief in bodily legibility roused the concern that the meaning behind body traits and expressions could be faked, that the body could be made to deceive: "And this fear of self-authoring and self-display led to an obsession with the real meaning of women's bodies, especially in an age when gentility was increasingly a function of money, status symbols, and behavior as well as genealogy, so that middle-class status and its attendant virtue could convincingly be fabricated" (*Unauthorized* 10). Rosenman continues, pointing out that Victorian

fiction might delay the body's role as a true indicator of a woman's thoughts and emotions, but reinforces the idea that physical appearance faithfully indicates character flaws: the female character's "depravity is eventually written on her body: Becky Sharp's metaphorical serpent's tale, the shocking red hair of Lydia Gwilt (not shocking enough for one reviewer, who demanded that she be even more visibly deformed to signal her iniquity), and the lurid portrait of Lady Audley all offer reassurance that the body will somehow give itself away…affirming its legibility" (10).

All three of these literary critics concentrate on female bodies in their studies because female characters are and were generally expected to be more emotional than men yet simultaneously more modest, and therefore display rather than state their feelings. Partially because of this focus on what the body displays about the mind, literary critics, as Vrettos asserts, tend to view female characters as unembodied. For instance, Nancy Armstrong claims that Victorian literature "would eventually hollow out the material body of the woman in order to fill it with the materials of a gender-based self, or female psychology" (71). Helena Michie argues that female bodies are not made visible in the Victorian novel, that, though plots, particularly marriage plots, depend on heroines' bodies—on their beauty to attract attention and on some mishap or misunderstanding in which the suitors read their beloveds' bodies wrongly—descriptions of female bodies are often absent in Victorian fiction and poetry (5). Michie dwells on nineteenth-century taboos in representing women and how synecdoche, cliché, and metaphor both portray and erase female bodies and sexuality. I agree with Michie that bodily details are not profuse, and this project considers male and female characters, though it includes more examples of female characters. I find that bodily legibility is prominent in Victorian fiction, but also that it depends on physical descriptions of characters. Such descriptions, I argue, may be

subverted, particularly when the characters are experiencing pain, so that they do not convey intangible aspects. A body acting as a sign draws attention to the intangible, yet intangible aspects of the body must be included for it to act as a sign. Yet, instead of focusing on bodies as signs, I focus on the physical details narratives must include to signify character traits.

In the course of writing this dissertation, I realized that bodies are most visible when undergoing a painful, or at least uncomfortable, alteration. This pain may have a physical cause or be the result of extreme mental anguish that writes itself on the body. Pain seems an important element for eliciting details of a character's body for several reasons. First, visible physical pain or evidence of previously experienced pain attracts greater attention than wellness, just as any difference stands out among otherwise homogenous things. A yellow tulip surrounded by red tulips stands out just like a person with a cast on his or her leg stands out from a group of people with no broken bones. Pain is also difficult to conceal; mental anguish and physical discomfort disrupt a body's ability to act or perform. Theories of disability inform my examinations of pained bodies; I do not study characters born with disabilities but rather characters that are physically harmed. Martha Stoddard Holmes explains that disabilities make bodies prominent, reassert that all bodies are "impermanent," and "remind us of that which is most personal (and thus shameful) in the intellectual life, [the body] which is not aesthetic or abstract" (x).[1]

The disabled body "presents a threat to the very idea of the body, the body in its pure, empty form" because it is either "too real or not real enough" (Porter xiii). The imagination struggles, as Scarry notes, to mentally picture a whole body or recall minutely a face. But a physical disability or even an abnormality, such as a scar, emphasizes the realness of a body by attracting notice of one specific, smaller aspect of that body and by providing the body with

layers, an appearance of both substantiality and vulnerability, of wholeness or wellness and destruction. Furthermore, whole bodies in literature act as a contrast for harmed ones so that the harmed ones, in their specified atypical marks, become more memorable to readers.

I turn again to Scarry's work to provide further reason for why pain makes bodies prominent and thereby supports readers' imaginings of them. She argues that pain is difficult to explain or express because it, "unlike any other state of consciousness—has no referential content" (*The Body* 5). Because people do not feel pain "for" or "of" something in the way that we have feelings for other people or a love or fear of someone or something (5), pain is difficult to describe or convey verbally. Pain "does not simply resist language but actively destroys it, bringing about an immediate reversion to a state anterior to language, to the sounds and cries a human being makes before language is learned. Pain and other internal bodily experiences 'destro[y]' and 'shatter' language because they cannot be seen, even by the person who is experiencing them" (5). In other words, pain limits one's ability to think or experience anything other than his or her own body: "The body in pain stands in danger of regressing to a state in which there is nothing except a body, in which pain represents the nothingness to which our condition of embodiment always implicitly leads back" (Morris 145). It obliterates consciousness, preventing thought and even perception through the five senses (*The Body* 54). Yet, though these deterrents make pain difficult to convey verbally, pain will "at last [find] a voice…[and] tell a story" (3); the distress, privation, and destruction induced by pain will, paradoxically, lead to new creative acts as one attempts to relieve him or herself of pain or express that pain. Pain brings the physical body to the forefront of one's consciousness and inspires language of the body. Pain prevents a body from being a sign; when in pain, the body is only a body.

Scarry notes that pain resists yet creates expression. Writers, in describing physical discomfort, must promote the body and find a way to make the reader grasp that pain even though, as Scarry shows, pain has no referential context. I explore how Victorian authors represent pain. I argue that they present physical distress and emphasize characters' bodies in moments in which the narrator or affected character directly describes physical pain and when the character describes the pain in a roundabout manner after the fact. Furthermore, marks or mutilation may appear on the affected character as visible indications of the pain that character experienced, and characters react to indications of another's pain. Victorian authors, in describing a character's distressing experiences, bring attention to the body. Discomfort brings the reader's focus to the body and, because of the difficulty in expressing pain verbally, authors often utilize details of the body, particularly marks on the body such as scars, to convey a character's pain. Furthermore, they include other evidence of that pain through, for example, other characters' responses to visible injuries. If a heroine is scarred, not only does she feel the pain that causes the scar and think about its mark on her body, but every character she interacts with notices the scar, reacts to it, and reminds the heroine and the reader of the mark of injury.

Visible indications of distress may, however, also bring attention away from the body. Vrettos considers how illnesses "frequently appear as indirect expressions of emotional meaning" (15). Using somatic signs and illnesses to portray a painful emotion is "indirect" as the emotion is not explicitly stated, yet such portrayals seem more important because they are not merely "spoken language" but language conveyed on "the more immediate, material reality of the heroine's ailing body. They thereby construct both a semiotics of emotional distress and an affective hermeneutics in which the nurse becomes the privileged interpreter of embodied emotions" (15). Vrettos finds the hurting body more "material" and "immediate" and therefore

prime for comprehension. My project turns to suffering bodies for the same reason because the body in pain is more material. I, however, focus on how texts encourage readers to imagine suffering bodies as material things. In pursuing these descriptions of characters' bodies, I consider how other characters "read" them for mental states. The process of reading a character's body for a mental state necessarily depends upon that body's appearance. Furthermore, descriptions in which one character reads another as a somatic sign also call attention to the physical interactions of characters. For example, if a character sees another blush, the viewing character may interpret the emotionally-induced bodily change as an uncomfortable feeling like embarrassment. The viewing character may express more concern for the feeling rather than the body, yet that character's interpretation of the other's body signs depends upon a description of that body, the blush that changes facial coloring. In putting the two characters together for one to read the other, the author also encourages the reader to imagine their interactions, the juxtaposition of their bodies and their attempts to read each other.

Some characters' bodies resist legibility because they are ailing. Wounded bodies, physically and visible altered by pain, do not necessarily engage in somatic language but can disrupt such language of the body. Physical pain may change a body's appearance, covering any indications of mental states. Marks caused by pain write over the body's expression of mental states. The marked body, then, is not legible for the mind. The body may become illegible to the point of being unidentifiable. Or it may portray something other than one's mental state. Regardless of what a body may or may not signify as it experiences pain, it is changed by that pain; in order for this change to become apparent to the reader, the writer must detail it, describing the body and how it is altered.

This argument, that bodily change, particularly when caused by distress and pain, encourages readers to envision the body as a thing rather than a sign, can be applied to literature of any time period, yet I restrict my study to the Victorian Age. The single most important aspect of nineteenth-century British culture that renders this period's literature prime material for my argument is the rise of the medical profession, which led to the publications and popularity of medical texts that detail bodies in pain and encourage reading the body as a sign. As the nineteenth-century progressed, the medical field became more established and trusted. In his 1836-1837 serialized novel *The Pickwick Papers*, Charles Dickens writes of one character, Sam Weller, disrespectfully referring to surgeons as "sawbones" (12), but by 1858, Anthony Trollope created in *Dr. Thorne* a well-respected doctor and loving uncle, who is admired in the town for his skillful work and whose success in treating various maladies inspires trust and even dependence. As George Frederick Drinka explains, "Doctors had once been almost of the servant class, coming to the houses of the rich and mighty, fawning and ingratiating themselves with slick statements. [But the] physicians and scientists in this age who worked with microbes became prominent oracles, national heroes" (62). As doctors became more respected, medical texts became popular household items; as Vrettos notes, the "sheer bulk of published writings on the human body in Victorian medicine and science" indicates how medical texts created a well-received spectacle of the body (6). The Brontë sisters' father, according to Shuttleworth, used Graham's *Modern Domestic Medicine* as one of his "primary medical texts" and supplemented it with William Buchan's *Domestic Medicine* (79). To meet the demand for this guide, between the original publication in 1769 and Buchan's death in 1805, a new edition of *Domestic Medicine* appeared, on average, every two years to the total of eighteen authorized versions, with each edition published in "large print runs of two to six thousand copies" (Sher 45).

As Meegan Kennedy argues in *Revising the Clinic: Vision and Representation in Victorian Medical Narrative and the Novel*, these medical texts affected fictional writings. Kennedy explores how nineteenth-century medical narratives and novels appropriate structure and rhetoric from each other; novels "may employ clinical observation and representation even where medicine is not strictly at issue" (2). These medical texts do little to describe healthy bodies but focus instead on bodies in pain, whether through illness or injury; they include entry after entry describing various maladies and how they present themselves on bodies. For example, Thomas John Graham gives the symptoms of apoplexy in a description that mixes the first-person account of the affected individual and a third person account so that one may recognize apoplexy in oneself or in another:

> We are sometimes warned of the approach of apoplexy by a dull pain in the head, accompanied by a sense of heaviness; giddiness; drowsiness; frequent fits of nightmare; fullness and redness of the face and eyes; obscurity of sight; bleeding from the nose; faltering in the speech; ringing in the ears, and loss of memory: but its attack is more frequently sudden, and the patient falls to the ground with scarcely any warning, and lies as if in a deep sleep, from which he cannot be roused. In this state, his breathing is laborious, and generally accompanied by stertor, the face is red and puffed, the veins of the head and neck are distended, the head is hot, and often in a copious perspiration, the eyes are prominent, bloodshot, sometimes half open, but more frequently quite closed, the pupils dilated, and a frothy saliva is often excreted from the mouth. The pulse is at first regular, strong, full, and slow, but soon becomes weaker, frequent, irregular, and intermitting. The pupils of the eye are commonly dilated, but they are now and then much contracted. (218)

Graham specifies how the illness affects the body, including coloring and swelling of the face and eyes, the increasing prominence of veins, various excretions including saliva, sweat, and blood, and the rate of heartbeat. In essence, he and other medical writers depend on descriptions of bodies in pain and, as the medical genre became average household reading, influenced fictional writers to similarly give specific descriptions of discomfort, illness, or injury. Similarly, medical texts encouraged their readers to pay attention to signs of pain.

Victorian physicians also became opinionated about pain and the ethics of relieving it. Dr. James Young Simpson first utilized the drug chloroform as an anesthetic in November of 1847. He specifically encouraged its use to make childbirth an easier experience. The drug's application for labor, however, was not popularized until Queen Victoria accepted chloroform in 1853, for the birth of her eighth child (Poovey 24). Many physicians opposed its application for two reasons. First, they assumed that "women in labor came under God's jurisdiction" and that they should not interfere with women's pain in labor because of God's curse on Eve (26). Secondly, they worried that the drug occasionally excited "sexual passion" in women while they lay under its thrall (31-32). Some considered pain necessary to the birthing process; Graham contends that all women should patiently bear the duress as all pain aids the birth: "Since severe pain is difficult to bear, I would for the encouragement of pregnant women remark, that no woman in labour ever had a pain, depending on her labour, which was in vain. It is not true that women in this situation often have unprofitable pains….every pain has its use, as preparatory to, or absolutely promoting, the effect" (*On the Diseases* 198). The invention of chloroform turned medical attention to the universal experience of pain and roused debates about whether pain should be relieved.

Medical texts' lengthy details of bodies in pain, as Kennedy points out, influenced novelists' depictions of characters. Not only were medical professionals climbing the social ladder and publishing extensive descriptions of bodies in pain, but trends in fictional writing changed. John Mullan describes eighteenth-century novels as marked by sentiment, one in which "the articulacy of sentiment is produced via a special kind of inward attention: a concern with feeling as articulated by the body—by its postures and gestures, its involuntary palpitations and collapses….It its construction of the body—its fixation upon tears, sighs, and meanings

beyond words" (Mullan 16). This language of sentiment remained popular in nineteenth-century writings and, as Mullan explains, influenced medical beliefs, helping fuel the idea of bodily legibility. The end of the eighteenth century also gave rise to the realist novel, a form that remained popular and was further developed through the nineteenth century. Brooks explains that the realist novel depends upon the body: "those stories we tell about the body in the effort to know and to have it…result in making the body a site of signification—the place for the inscription of stories—and itself a signifier, a prime agent in narrative plot and meaning" (5-6). But the realist novel also depends on lengthy descriptions, which makes objects and bodies in particular, rather than only their significations, visible to the reader:

> Representation finds its most elaborated rhetorical form in description, the attempt to render the appearances of the visible world in writing; and such descriptive representation becomes most extensive, most important, in what we think of as "realism," that species of literature for which the careful registering of the external world counts most. Thus we may expect that the body in literature narrative will have its most developed presentations in "realist" literature….And indeed, this is the period of the rise of the novel, of lengthy narrative fictions concerned most often with the individual in the social and phenomenal world. (3)

The realist novel, rising into prominence throughout the Victorian Age, makes a fitting study because of its elaborate descriptions of the individual. Bodily pain and the focus it brings to the physical is not, however, limited to one genre.

Not all Victorian writings were dedicated to realism. Sensation fiction also became popular during the mid to late nineteenth-century. This type of novel, according to contemporary critics, "was founded on incident and abounded in murders, crimes, [and] secrets" (Gilbert 79). The genre not only details the bodies of characters, but the plots often depend on cases of mistaken or hidden identity, in which one character's body becomes paramount for uncovering the secret. As their plots tend to revolve around murders and other crimes, sensation novels often include violence and other circumstances in which bodies experience pain. Sensation

novels also reach beyond describing the bodies of characters to affect the bodies of readers: "The sensation genre is a category of readings particularly concerned with violation of the domestic body, with class and gender transgression, and most importantly, with the violation of the privileged space of the reader/voyeur, with the text's reaching out to touch the reader's body, acting directly 'on the nerves'" (4). Readers, then, physically experience, to some extent, what the characters feel, which further encourages readers to vividly imagine characters' bodies and their situations. For these reasons, sensation novels are prime candidates for my study, and I discuss several throughout this project and rely heavily on them in the first half of this project as I establish the preliminary points of my argument. My dissertation is not, however, limited to sensation novels; I bring in realist and melodramatic novels after the first chapter and find that, even in less extreme plot situations, authors depict characters who experience some discomfort or pain that causes physical change, and thereby, their bodies become visible and imaginable.

Physical pain is universal in Victorian literature. Descriptions of bodies experiencing distress or pain abound. I find that bodily pain and my argument cross genre boundaries; discomfort and pain elicit physical descriptions regardless of how sensational or realist a novel is. This study includes a wide range of Victorian novels, from Wilkie Collins's and Mary Elizabeth Braddon's sensation novels to Dickens and the Brontë sisters' melodramatic novels, to Elizabeth Barrett Browning's novel-in-verse, and even to Anthony Trollope's serialized novels of political commentary.

My dissertation contains three chapters, each of which studies how discomfort or pain elicits descriptions of the body either directly from the narrator or indirectly through other characters' descriptions or reactions to a body. The discomfort I study is often fleeting, an emotional response that inscribes itself on the body and is read by other characters. For example,

embarrassment may cause a blush that defines the character's flushing face for the reader or that the reader imagines because other characters respond to, "read," the blush. Regardless of its fleeting nature, however, the discomfort alters the body, creating a new version of it that encourages the reader to envision the new description. The pain I examine is more lasting and marks bodies so that they experience some external change that the narrator details for the reader and that other characters respond to, helping the reader imagine the extent of the change. I am interested in lasting bodily changes that may be caused by physical pain or strong emotions that manifests physically. Overall, the dissertation moves from studying a single character, to the physical interactions between two, to the physical and emotional interactions of a multitude of characters. The single characters considered in the first chapter experience discomfort or pain, the second chapter discusses how one character causes another pain, and the third discusses how characters' relationships with others cause both pain and support that can alleviate that pain. Pain caused by one relationship may be offset by comfort brought by another.

In Chapter One, Visible Bodies: The Readable Sign System, Masks, and Mutilation, I demonstrate that both the readable sign system of the body and mutilation elicit bodily descriptions so readers can imagine the characters as physical beings. I find that a character's body is most visible when it cannot be read for transient mental states. Charles Dickens's *Bleak House* and Ellen Wood's *East Lynne* present bodies as legible. Facial expressions, such as blushes and pallor, act as vehicles to indicate thoughts and emotions, and the narrators of these two novels actively teach readers how to interpret them. Even when a character's body adopts a metaphorical mask, attempting to prevent an emotion from manifesting physically, the motionless face attracts notice. However, at other moments, these sensation novels, which both have plots that depend on female bodies that become not only inscrutable but at times

unrecognizable, present bodies as unintentionally defying comprehension after enduring mutilation. In these two novels, the heroines' bodies experience physical pain and become extensively scarred so they are hyper-visible but unreadable and unidentifiable. The narrations dwell on the characters' changed appearances, describing the female bodies more when their bodies are mutilated than when they can be deciphered. Similarly, other characters have strong reactions to the altered bodies of the heroines. Both narrator's descriptions and characters' reactions serve to represent the altered bodies to readers while simultaneously reminding readers of what the characters once looked like, providing the layering that Scarry notes is necessary for readers to picture verbally described objects. Mutilation disrupts the sign system so that the physical body becomes prominent rather than what the body signifies. Scarring and ensuing incomprehensibility accentuate characters' bodies and, as I attest in the next chapter, indicate at one's tangibility because he or she is harmed.

I contend in Chapter Two, Tangible Bodies: Injury as Evidence of Abuse, that an assault against a character makes his or her body visible to the reader and further encourages the reader to see the character as embodied, as a tangible object. Mutilation, as shown in Chapter One, disrupts the readable sign system of the body; scarring and other signs of injury obscure the expressions of thoughts and emotions the characters' bodies revealed when whole. Chapter Two argues that physical assault wounds the victim, but these marks are not legible for the victim but are instead legible for the *abuser*. In novels with varying forms of narration, such as Anthony Trollope's *Can You Forgive Her?* and Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White*, characters are abused. The narrators of these novels demonstrate how physical marks can be read, and physical injuries continue to attract notice after the violence ends. The contusions and abrasions show how and where a person was touched, suggest the abuser's intent to harm, and even identify the

abuser through such means as hand-shaped bruises. Marks of assault encourage the reader to imagine the tangibility of both the victim's and the abuser's bodies. The marks also play with temporality by making the victims' bodies readable for another point in time, for the moments of abuse rather than the current time in the narrations. This chapter opposes Scarry's theory that touch is more remote than sight in writing. Narratives emphasize touch for the reader. This touch does not need to be directly described. Charlotte Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* and Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh* depict sexual violence against female characters: how it marks bodies, remains invisible, and is reconceived by female narrators. Sexual violence does not directly write itself on bodies; the victims' bodies do not indicate the violence they experience, but the narrators depict sexual violence and the bodies that experience them indirectly.

My third chapter, Networked Bodies: Physically Manifested Emotions and Relationships, argues that two types of networks affect bodies: the network of the mind's influence on one's body and networks between characters, composed of strong, long-lasting emotions for and relationships between characters. Relationships and the feelings they rouse, particularly painful ones, inscribe themselves on the body more strongly than the passing feeling and its expression discussed in Chapter One; these harmful relationships mark the body as does mutilation or another's physical abuse. Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Aurora Floyd* and Trollope's *He Knew He Was Right* demonstrate how networks within and between characters elicit descriptions of bodies as narrators explain how the characters' feelings for each other act on their bodies and create lasting alterations of their physical features. Charlotte and Anne Brontë indirectly convey characters' feelings and their manifestation by comparing the characters to nature. The sisters' novels, particularly *Shirley*, depict these networks between characters as composed of physical,

bodily substances; relationships are often construed by narrators as bodily materials that expand beyond human forms to physically connect the characters. Both the bodies and emotions of the characters, then, are reinforced in the reader's mind through this seeming expansion of the bodies. Bodily descriptions are not always localized where one might expect as novels try to express corporeality and networks between characters through depictions of embodied materiality that exude between human figures as physical connections. Victorian fiction often presents pain as a means of connecting characters and even readers by emphasizing how pain never affects just the individual but also the individual's friends and relatives.

Marks on the body give it texture and depth, encouraging the reader to envision and remember it. Character interactions, particularly when they read others' somatic signs and experience or cause brutality, further flesh out characters, emphasizing their physical presences in the reader's mind. The somatic sign system depends upon both alterations to the body and character interchanges in which other characters view a somatic sign. Yet this sign system is often disrupted; some forms of physical change confuse or deflect legibility. Extensive scarring prevents the typical manifestation of bodily signs; bruises or other marks caused by inter-person violence reveal more about the abuser than the victim, and one's manifestation of strong emotions reveal as much about her multiple relationships with others as her own personal feelings. In each chapter, I consider somatic signs, complications of the sign system, and disruptions of it. I examine moments in which characters experience or show marks of previously experienced pain because I find that pain, which is difficult to express verbally because it has no referential content, is readily conveyed by descriptions of how it affects the body.

[1] Please see Holmes's *Fictions of Affliction: Physical Disability in Victorian Culture* for an extensive list and analysis of disabled bodies in Victorian literature.

CHAPTER ONE
VISIBLE BODIES: THE READABLE SIGN SYSTEM, MASKS, AND MUTILATION

> [T]here dwelt with Peffer in the same law-stationering premises a niece—a short, shrewd niece, something too violently compressed about the waist, and with a sharp nose like a sharp autumn evening, inclining to be frosty towards the end. The Cook's Courtiers had a rumour flying among them that the mother of this niece did, in her daughter's childhood, moved by too jealous a solicitude that her figure should approach perfection, lace her up every morning with her maternal foot against the bed-post for a stronger hold and purchase; and further, that she exhibited internally pints of vinegar and lemon-juice, which acids, they held, had mounted to the nose and temper of the patient….So now, in Cook's Court, Cursitor Street, Mr. Snagsby and the niece are one; and the niece still cherishes her figure, which, however tastes may differ, is unquestionably so far precious that there is mighty little of it. (*BH* 116-117)

Charles Dickens consistently emphasizes characters' physical traits as if to help the reader remember and distinguish between characters by their physical features if not by name. His novels are heavily populated with characters and many minor characters have one or more distinguishing traits. Many of these distinguishing traits suggest the character is in, or has experienced, pain or discomfort. Mrs. Snagsby's tiny waist identifies her. The reader can imagine this one specific, emphasized trait, and associate it with Mrs. Snagsby for the remainder of the novel. Phil, another minor character in *Bleak House*, is unusual in his many notable, small features; he is "lame," and his limp leads to other unusual features, such as a difficulty in balancing his figure that shows itself in the way he carries his head (*BH* 272). Instead of holding his head aloft on his neck, he leans it against walls as he walks. His head seems to be greasy as its touch "has left a smear all round the four walls" of his workplace (272). His face replicates the imbalance of his physical form: "On the speckled side of his face he has no eyebrow, and on the other side he has a bushy black one, which want of uniformity gives him a very singular and rather sinister appearance" (272). His hands also lack symmetry: "Everything seems to have happened to his hands that could possibly take place consistently with the retention of all the fingers, for they are notched, seamed, and crumpled all over" (272). Yet in spite of his

abnormalities, he is a good worker, "able to move very quickly" and is "very strong and [capable of lifting] heavy benches about as if he had no idea what weight was" (272). This description of Phil, composed of small specific traits, certainly renders an idea of his body to the reader. The figure's physical differences are so bluntly presented that it almost a caricature of a human body. Yet all the memorable aspects of Dickens's description of this character depend on the character having experienced or continuing to experience pain. He has one crippled leg, which prevents him from standing straight and enforces a slant in his posture, and his fingers are scarred and have been injured so frequently that none are whole. Dickens draws the reader's attention to this body by describing its unusual features; Phil's physical differences depend upon details of those differences. The body that experiences pain, that bears the effects of that pain visibly, depends on the narrator to describe that individual's unusual physical features for the reader to imagine them. Such bodies are memorable in their difference and thereby more vivid in readers' imaginations. Ironically, physically manifested pain encourages readers to remember bodies though most people tend to avoid experiencing pain or empathetically experiencing another's pain.

This chapter argues that characters' bodies elicit detail and become apparent as physical beings when they experience some external change. The narrators and other characters describe and react to external alterations. The change may be caused by emotional or mental discomfort, such as embarrassment that rouses a blush that the narrator or other characters attempt to interpret, or by some mishap that mutilates the body and evokes various emotional and physical responses from other characters. The atypical nature of an uncontrollable expression or of an injury highlights a character's body, or some aspect of it, within the text and thereby within the reader's imagining of that body. Robyn Wiegman, in theorizing seeing race and the "ascendency

of the visual" in modern culture, contends that "particularities associated with the Other are, quite literally, *seen*" (3, 6, original emphasis). While race is not part of this chapter's focus, the theory remains useful for my argument: difference must be made clear through "particularities" so that it is seen and separated from "universality." Difference requires details. Furthermore, the disabled or otherwise "different" body causes "cognitive dissonance," which imprints it on the viewer's, or reader's, mind (Davis 63, 60). Dickens emphasizes Phil's unusual features, his limp, posture while walking, and missing eyebrow, rather than the features that are homogenous with those of other bodies. And just as one might notice an acquaintance's appearance more when it has changed, narrators and characters often notice physical change, whether minor, such as a flush or paleness or an attempt to control one's features, or major, such as mutilation.

Victorian scientists, poets, and fiction writers advocated reading bodies as signs for thoughts and emotions. Darwin, in *The Expression of Emotions in Man and Animals* (1872), devotes a chapter to understanding the blush, explaining that it is caused by "the relaxation of muscular coats of the small arteries, but which the capillaries become filled with blood" (309). He considers the blush a physical phenomenon as well as the potential result of strong, often uncomfortable or disconcerting, feeling: if the blush is caused by a strong "mental agitation," then "the general circulation will be affected" as "the heart beats rapidly and…breathing is disturbed" (309, 323). Darwin continues his discussion of the legibility of facial coloring by noting that blushes indicate certain feelings, such as shyness, shame, or modesty, but that other strong emotions, such as rage, occasionally manifest a red face as well (74).

Victorian fiction participates in and reinterprets this cultural idea of somatic signs. Characters' facial features often portray mental discomfort. O'Farrell explains that blushing is somatic language and therefore can be interpreted in literature: "identifying the blush entails

imagining it as the writing of the body" (4). O'Farrell analyzes the blush's ability to "render body and character legible" in spite of the "confines of a readable sign system" inherent in fiction, which include "both the challenges posed by the body and the anxieties the novel itself imposes on particular bodies" (4). Facial expression, then, becomes a useful tool for authors to emphasize characters' mental states, to make the strength of a feeling or thought apparent to the reader, or to indicate a character's feeling or thought without explicitly stating it. In this chapter, I examine how Victorian writings engage with what O'Farrell terms the readable sign system of the body. I also argue, however, that novels disengage from it, preventing a character's body from revealing mental states. Both participation in and removal from the sign system highlight characters' bodies, but illegibility attracts more attention to a character's body. A blush indicates a physical feature, but authors often use it and other somatic signs to focus on the intangible and invisible, such as a feeling, rather than the body. Physical pain and illegibility force other characters and the reader to focus solely on physical aspects of a character.

This chapter demonstrates that novels actively model how to interpret somatic signs, and that bodies are removed from the legible sign system and become hyper-visible to readers as bodies sans meaning. This removal relies on the masking of features, which is accomplished by maintaining a straight, unreactive face, or more successfully, through bodily destruction. Characters that suffer from scar-causing violence are made hyper-visible by their marks. Yet these same marks also obscure the characters' features, their ability to embody somatic signs. They become unreadable and able to exert more agency on their perceived identities. In writing on disability, Lennard J. Davis argues that terms such as "*disability* and *the grotesque*…disempower the object of observation" because the "body is seen through a set of cultural default settings arrived at by the wholesale adoption of ableist cultural values" (64,

original emphasis). The novels studied in this chapter make the harmed body visible by depicting its difference, and the mutilation is often a source of shame to the harmed characters as it provokes others' judgments or even repugnance. Yet, the characters are also empowered by their scars because the marks remove them from the legible sign system so that their thoughts and emotions are protected from others' scrutiny. Blushes and other somatic signs draw attention to and then through the body as the reader searches for meaning. Physical mutilation, however, keeps minds private and draws more attention to the body because one cannot read through it.

This first chapter focuses on two sensation novels, *Bleak House* (1852-1853) and Ellen Wood's *East Lynne* (1861). Sensation novels lend themselves to my argument because they evoke readers' imaginations to the point of strong mental reactions (such as fear) and physical responses (such as a rapid heartbeat). In other words, they rouse the reader's "vivid imaginations" of the characters and their circumstances so that the reader, to some extent, mentally and physically feels what the characters feel. Secondly, sensation novels tend to have convoluted and almost fantastic plots that often include extreme physical injury. This physical injury may mar a character's appearance, which occurs in both *East Lynne* and *Bleak House*. These two novels include characters that experience minute, temporary physical differences, such as blushes, as well as characters that undergo painful incidents that leave more lasting marks.

This chapter reads *East Lynne* and *Bleak House* against the cultural backdrop of somatic legibility. Both texts participate in the tradition of the legible sign system of the body and thereby depict bodies. I argue that they also disrupt it. In both novels' plots, the heroines are mutilated and hide their identities, and they, the narrators, and other characters become more

aware of the heroines' bodies as their original features become obscured and their bodies atypical. *East Lynne* is undoubtedly a sensation novel; it constantly explains characters' sensations and how these sensations write themselves on the body. *Bleak House* may be considered as taking part in other genres, such as detective fiction, though the plot is sensational: it is convoluted, focuses on the detection of a secret, and is based on hidden identities and connections between characters. The novels depict somatic signs of their heroines differently because of their narrations. *East Lynne* has a third person omniscient narrator who relays characters' discomfort and physical indications of that discomfort to the reader. *Bleak House* has two narrators, one of which is a third person limited omniscient who provides the reader with details much like the one of *East Lynne*. The second narrator is Esther, a first-person narrator. Because she so rarely depicts her own appearance, information about it must often be gathered from her descriptions of others reacting to her. I argue that these two novels both participate in and, through mutilation, disrupt the legible sign system of the body regardless of narrative form. Even though Esther does not provide many details of her own appearance, the novel uses other characters' reactions to her appearance to convey her altered features to the reader. Both novels portray characters' minds and bodies though *East Lynne* continually describes characters' physical changes while the characters of *Bleak House*, concerned with secrecy, attempt to prevent embodiment of their emotions.

Though there is some overlap between the three sections of this chapter, the first on discomfort and temporary facial color relies heavily on *East Lynne* because the novel stresses blushes and paleness and explains their meanings to readers. The coloring makes the individual visible, and the narrator instructs the reader on how to interpret these somatic signs. The second section turns to masks in *Bleak House*, a novel that utilizes the conscious covering or hiding of

facial expressions rather than their display as characters try to prevent others from noticing or guessing the causes of their distress. The third on mutilation considers both novels as I argue that scarring brings one's body to the forefront with details that encourage the reader to imagine it. Simultaneously, this scarring securely masks thoughts and emotions, thus disrupting bodily legibility. This disruption makes the characters' bodies exist as physical things rather than signs for mental states. Before turning to the first section, I will review the heroines' appearances as first detailed to the reader. The initial descriptions of the heroines of *East Lynne* and *Bleak House,* like many others in Victorian novels, are vague. These first descriptions contrast with later ones that highlight differences and details of bodies as characters reveal or obscure distressing thoughts and emotions, or experience pain. Unlike the later illustrations of mutilation, the first depictions do not readily provoke vivid imaginings.

By describing two female heroines early in the novel, the third person omniscient narrator of *East Lynne* encourages the reader to make comparisons between the few details of both characters' bodies. Descriptions of Isabel's body emphasize the unmarried aristocrat's purity, a trait that does not lend itself to physical details but, in this novel, relies on comparisons to nonhuman figures.[1] Upon seeing her, Carlyle, her eventual husband, is "not quite sure whether it was a human being" before him because Isabel looked "more like an angel" (Wood 13). Though providing hair and eye color, the narrator does not name a distinguishable trait, such as a specific detail of her facial features. As Helena Michie notes, the heroine's body disappears in this lack of concrete specification. Her body is "light, graceful, girlish," her arms "fair, delicate," and her face is "of surpassing beauty, beauty that is rarely seen" (13). Her hair and eyes are brown or black and lustrous; her hair is of "dark shiny curls," and her eyes are "soft," "dark," and "so pleasing" with their "sweet expression" (13). Her father sees her as a "vision" of "a beauteous

queen, a gleaming fairy" (74). The narrator does not hide Isabel's beauty, rather he focuses on her beauty without explaining what traits make her so physically appealing. Isabel rarely draws attention to her body with accessories. In this way, she differs from the norm, and the narrator describes the difference. She typically wears "plain" dresses that contrast so sharply with the expectations and practices of West Lynne residents that her rival, and the secondary heroine, Barbara Hale, wishes she had not complemented her own outfit with a feather like the other "jackadaws" (64). Barbara's coloring offsets Isabel's dark hair and eyes; she is a "pretty girl, very fair, with blue eyes, light hair, a bright complexion, and small aquiline features" (22).

The differences between the two characters' bodies emphasize their appearances. Though these descriptions are not too specific, they do create a vague portrait of the characters, one that is somewhat visible to readers even though the characters seem, for the most part, immaterial and bodiless, composed mostly of hair, eye, and skin color. These depictions contrast with the post-mutilation ones, in which the details of the altered bodies emphasize them as material to the reader. The vagueness does, however, allow readers' opinions of the characters and the readers' understandings of the readable sign system to shape their ideas of the women's appearances. One nineteenth-century reviewer of the novel clearly prefers Isabel's character over Barbara and openly sympathizes with Isabel and not Barbara. This reviewer interprets these initial, broad strokes of the characters' appearances in his quick outline of the characters and plot, claiming that Isabel "is endowed with even more than the traditional loveliness of heroines," and Barbara "is the provincial beauty, a little of the Dutch-cheese order" ("Review of *EL*" 372). The reviewer cannot explain how or why Isabel or Barbara is beautiful yet agrees with the narrator that one is more physically appealing than the other. But in his dislike of

Barbara's character, he readily dismisses her appearance as "provincial" or unsophisticated, a trait he also assigns to her mind.

The third person narrator of *Bleak House* does not provide an introductory description of the heroine, and neither does Esther, as first-person narrator, provide one of herself.[2] D. A. Miller contends that "novel reading takes for granted the surveillance…of others"; that the reader can "oversee" the characters and violate their privacy (116). But in not detailing her pre-scarred body, Esther maintains a corporeal privacy from the reader, though she cannot sustain this privacy from characters who encounter her. She dwells on the faces and figures of others, but never herself. The other narrator also details the appearances of others, such as Phil, and particularly Esther's mother. The resemblance between the mother and daughter threatens to expose their relationship, which indicates Esther's features are, to some extent, a reflection of her mother's. The second narrator depicts some of the mother's traits, but the first-time reader of the novel would not at first apply elements of Lady Dedlock's body to Esther's as their relationship is not revealed early in the novel. Furthermore, the reader cannot fully apply elements of the mother's appearance to Esther as the narrator focuses on aspects of Lady Dedlock's appearance that she controls rather than those she would be born with and pass to her daughter.

According to the third-person narrator, Lady Dedlock is some twenty years younger than her husband, who is in his late sixties, which puts Lady Dedlock in her late forties. The narrator insists that her age does not affect her appealing features, that "She has beauty still, and if it be not in its heyday, it is not yet in its autumn" (*BH* 13). Her face is "fine," though the narrator suggests she does not have strong facial features: they are "originally of a character that would be rather called very pretty than handsome" (13). This phrase, "very pretty," is the only one that suggests what the mother's face looks like. The narrator informs the reader with details of many

characters' hair—the word is repeated slightly less than eighty times in the novel, yet Lady Dedlock's hair color is not detailed, and Esther does not describe her own. Lady Dedlock's socioeconomic position and haughtiness, the "acquired expression of her fashionable state," greatly affects her appearance, has actually, according the narrator, "improved" her appearance "into classicality" (13). Because of her careful dress, "Her figure is elegant and has the effect of being tall" as "the most is made…of all her points" (13). The end effect, according to one character, of her figure and presentation of her body is that "she is perfectly got up" and "the best-groomed woman in the whole stud" (13). Lady Dedlock's face is feminine, and the reader knows she dresses to highlight appealing points of her body, and, if she were an animal, she would stand out as the one most physically cared for, yet this ultimately tells the reader little about shared traits between the mother and daughter, especially since Esther is not of so high a socioeconomic station and therefore unable to spend much money on clothes. Their faces look similar, but their clothing shows a gap between their social statuses, creating a prominent difference in their appearances.

These initial descriptions do little to detail the female characters' bodies. The narrator describes their dress and demeanor, and gives minor descriptive details that establish their attractiveness and social states, but the characters often seem unembodied. As Michie argues, the tropes vaguely describe the women but do not provide readers with the specifics needed for readers to envision the characters vividly. Isabel is attractive but the narrator does not specify the features that make her so. *Bleak House* lacks details of Esther's pre-mutilated body and provides hints of her appearance only by noting that her body is similar to her mother's, and this hint does not come until halfway through the novel.

Yet Esther's body acts as a somatic sign to other characters, and through their reactions, to the reader. Her and other characters' participation in the readable sign system describes and draws attention to the characters' bodies. But once Esther and Isabel are scarred they become more visible but unreadable, even unrecognizable, from their previous appearances. Their mutilations play important roles in the plots; though this mutilation is a painful experience for both, it does have its rewards: Esther can protect her mother's secret once their faces are dissimilar, keeping her past and her mother's secret hidden, and Isabel can return to England and to her children, which she greatly wants to do. The narrators stress the heroines' bodies when they describe the alterations and how time affects them. Similarly, other characters react to marks on the heroines' bodies and further stress them for the reader. Other characters are more aware of Esther's and Isabel's bodies once they are made different; as the bodies become hyper-visible to other characters, they similarly become hyper-visible to readers. This hyper-visibility is at odds with their legibility; the mutilations obscure expressions of emotion, disengaging the body from the legible sign system.

Temporary Color: Flush and Pallor

After the initial vague descriptions of the heroines and other characters, the authors establish a sign system for reading bodies for thoughts and emotions. This sign system depends on the emphasis of corporeal traits. The narrators explain that certain physical changes occur in response to mental discomfort and strong emotion, and the narrators provide examples of how to read these traits for mental states. Authors use physical changes, such as flush, pallor, and to a lesser extent, movements of the lips, to convey characters' emotions, particularly painful ones. Descriptions of such changes remind the reader that the character has a physical body and is

viewed by other characters. The novels encourage the reader to picture the character's physical embodiments of thoughts and emotions, yet the sign system also encourages the reader to think less of the body and more about what it signifies. Instead of focusing on how a frown changes a characters' appearance, narrators and readers tend to focus on what emotions elicit the frown. Comparisons between characters, such as Isabel's dark beauty and Barbara's fairer traits, certainly help establish their characters as embodied, but they do not constantly recur in the narration. Though the readable sign system encourages reading through the body, character embodiment is continuously accomplished by their engagement with it.

Isabel's blushes stress her physical attractiveness; the color receives a description from the narrator, and the narrator notes that this facial color highlights her beauty. One of the first portrayals of her body as Isabel Carlyle, rather than Isabel Vane, is of her sleeping as she waits by the gate to meet her husband on his return home from his office: "her lips [are] partly open, her cheeks flushed, and her beautiful hair falling around" (Wood 143). This description highlights changes in her appearance, the flushed cheeks, open mouth, and disarranged hair. Her hair is still pretty, and she still looks innocent. Though she is quietly sleeping, the blush somewhat counteracts her stillness as it indicates blood flow (143). This suggestion of blood flow is replicated on Carlyle; as he stares at his wife, "his heart beat quicker within him as he felt that *it* was his own" (143, my emphasis). Carlyle's use of the non-gendered pronoun calls attention to her body as an object. Furthermore, he thinks he can possess and read this object and interprets her sleeping form as expressing innocence; he compares her to a "lovely child" (143).

As O'Farrell argues, blushes may act as speech, and Isabel's often signify mental agitation and are understood as such by other characters, who model how to interpret somatic signs for the reader. The plot depends on characters being able at times, and unable at others, to

learn of her emotions by viewing her body. Her relative Raymond Vane, who replaces Isabel's father as Lord Mount Severn, accurately interprets them soon after her marriage to Carlyle. Surprised by the news of her marriage to her social inferior, he mentions her choice in husband and she promptly blushes. He then asks Isabel if she married for love, which rouses no blush as Isabel explains that she likes but does not love Carlyle. This brings the earl to a third question, whether she loves anybody else:

> The question turned home, and Isabel turned crimson. 'I shall love my husband in time,' was all she answered, as she bent her head, and played nervously with her watch chain.
>
> 'My poor child!' involuntarily exclaimed the earl. But he was one who liked to fathom the depth of everything. 'Who has been staying at Castle Marling since I left?' he asked sharply….
>
> 'Only Francis Levison,' she replied.
>
> 'Francis Levison! You have never been so foolish as to fall in love with him?'
>
> The question was so pointed, so abrupt, and Isabel's self-consciousness, moreover, so great, that she betrayed lamentable confusion, and the earl had no further need to ask. (Wood 130)

In this passage, Isabel's face twice acts as somatic language; the last blush tells the earl that she loves someone besides her husband, and the self-conscious "confusion" tells who she loves. The blushes result from mental discomfort that manifests physically. These descriptions delineate her body and, to a lesser extent, Lord Mount Severn's within the world of the novel (Isabel's blush is visible to Lord Mount Severn who can see it) and to the reader (Wood recalls Isabel's physical self and Lord Mount Severn's eyes to the reader's notice).

Before and after her marriage, the novel mentions Isabel's purity and compares her to a child and an angel. Yet Isabel marries without love, and worse still for Victorian propriety, while wishing she were marrying another. Wood portrays Isabel's attachment to another man through the blush; the blush reveals her love but also shows her consciousness that she, as a married woman, had better not speak of this feeling for a man who is not her husband. As

O'Farrell argues, "The blush's efficacy in fulfilling its pledge for the novel depends upon its seeming, by means of its involuntarity, to evade the constructive capacities of gesture, disguise, and will" (4). Isabel's involuntary blush is an honest portrayal of her attachment to a man she is not married to; simultaneously, it turns her body into an exhibit for her thoughts and emphasizes its material nature. She cannot control her facial coloring, and until she is mutilated, her face reveals strong passions. Blushes allow others to glimpse the thoughts and emotions that disconcert her whether she wishes them to or not.

O'Farrell contends that the blush is often used to represent desire; it is also used for other emotions in this novel, both happy and unhappy ones. Pallor acts as a somatic sign too, one that represents only negative reactions and physical or emotional pain, and in many examples, lasts much longer than a blush.[3] Pallor represents distress or pain while blushes may correspond with both happy and unhappy emotions. In lasting longer than blushes, pallor, I argue, often draws more attention to characters' bodies so that bodies typically receive more detail when experiencing pain rather than pleasure. Paleness is also involuntary: "[I]n spite of her own efforts for calmness, every feature in [Barbara's] face turned to a ghastly whiteness" when she hears that Carlyle, the man she loves, marries Isabel (Wood 127). Despair is not the only emotion that evokes a bloodless appearance. Miss Corny turns "grey and ghostly" when she feels guilty for Isabel's departure from her married home (265). Lady Mount Severn, with whom Isabel resides after her father's death, is jealous of Isabel's beauty, and when she suspects her favorite flatterer is more attracted to Isabel, she "turned white with rage, forgot her manners, and, raising her right hand, struck Isabel a stinging blow upon the left cheek" (110). Isabel's body seems so bloodless as she grieves for her father that it resembles his corpse; upon news of his death, "Her face turned of a ghastly whiteness—as white as another's not far away" (85).

The narrator depicts her demeanor as "a panting heart and ashy lips" when she is beset by creditors shortly after her father's death (87); the description of the typically red lips as pale indicates the situation is so terrible to Isabel that blanched cheeks are not rare enough to convey the extent of her horror and grief. And when Carlyle enters the house soon after, "He caught sight of [her] white face and trembling hands" (89). Wood uses pallor as a readable somatic sign to display the physical manifestation of uncomfortable emotion.

Bleak House does not rely on pallor as much as *East Lynne*, but it similarly connects pallor and death. Esther's appearance, as previously noted, is elusive because she, as a first-person narrator, is oblivious or unwilling to provide many descriptions of herself. But even she, in a roundabout manner, depicts her body when it turns so pale it resembles death; this portrayal is, however, brief. Her body elicits comments from herself and another character, thereby becoming apparent to the reader and other characters, when it seems more like a corpse than a living thing. Upon entering her dead and unknown father's former room, her body alters: "A sad and desolate place it was, a gloomy, sorrowful place that gave me a strange sensation of mournfulness and even dread. 'You look pale,' said Caddy when we came out, 'and cold!' I felt as if the room had chilled me" (*BH* 178). She feels grieved though she does not know what she has lost, and her body reflects this grief and the appearance of the dead corpse previously found in the room.

Bloodless pallor suggests death as, to produce this lack of color beneath the skin, the very blood stops flowing. Carlyle's body turns pale upon recognizing the governess as Isabel, pale as the dying woman: "Certain it is that his face and lips turned the hue of death" (Wood 579). Similarly, Isabel's body resembles a corpse, in more ways than color, after leaving her family for Levison; "misery marks the countenance" for so long that "Her face was white and worn, her

hands were thin, her eyes were sunken and surrounded by a black circle—care was digging hollows for them" (269). Ashy, deathly paleness draws the narrator's and other characters' attention to the body. The change elicits concrete description rather than vague comparisons to fairies and angels. This description details the body for the reader to envision, reminding the reader of the character's typical features and encouraging the reader to re-imagine the character with different traits. Elisabeth Bronfen argues that representations of death are pleasing "because they occur in a realm clearly delineated as not life, or not real" (xi), but these representations are often confined to the "body of a beautiful woman" (xi). Isabel's appearance is not as pleasing in this description as the "death" has caused the loss of her beauty rather than prevented suffering and preserved her youthful appearance. The absence of her former beauty, however, requires and receives more description to become apparent. Her mutilated body, detailed unlike her unmarked one, invites a more specific imagining of her face and body.

Wood does allow her characters to hide their pallor from others, not by masking them, which I discuss in the second section, but by having the characters remove their faces from others' views. Occasionally, the characters do not display their bloodless faces but try to hide them so they cannot be read; their efforts to do so demonstrate the characters' knowledge that others notice somatic changes and read them for mental states, particularly for painful ones. In such instances, the narrator makes the altered features visible to the reader, but other characters do not necessarily see them. After she turns pale upon news of her father's death, Isabel "turned to hide her face and its misery away from" Carlyle. This movement, however, fails as Carlyle watches her face as it turns pale. Barbara also attempts to shield her pallor, her sign of disappointment that Carlyle has married another. Miss Corny notices that Barbara blushes whenever she mentions her brother and, angry at her brother's quick and quiet marriage, Miss

Corny seeks out Barbara to inflict the news and read Barbara's body. Upon hearing Miss Corny say she wants to talk to her about Carlyle, "[Barbara] could not suppress the flush of gratification that rose to her cheek and dyed it with blushes. 'You are going to be taken down a notch or two, my lady,' thought clear-sighted Miss Carlyle'" (Wood 127). Barbara does turn pale, and though she initially succeeds in hiding her despair and jealousy from Miss Corny by leaving the room, the bloodlessness, unlike any blush portrayed in the novel, lasts for days, too long for her to continue hiding her body from others' eyes. She cannot obscure her jealousy when first seeing the married couple at church. Wood details these bodily signs and ensures that the reader interprets them as readily as Miss Corny does.[4] In this passage, the narrator explains the cause behind Barbara's blush, and Miss Corny prepares the reader for the tenor of Barbara's reaction to news of Carlyle's marriage, warning that her feelings will be physically manifested.

The narrator brings bodies to the forefront in three ways: by describing their physical changes, depicting other characters reading them for mental states, and demonstrating that characters are conscious that they take part in a readable sign system. The narrator also teaches the reader how to decipher them, how to read bodies for pain. Following Barbara as she removes herself from Miss Corny's gaze, the narrator explains that "She swiftly passed upstairs to her own room, and flung herself down on its floor in utter *anguish*….With a sharp wail of *despair*, Barbara flung up her arms and closed her aching eyes….There lay Barbara, and there was no mistaking that she lay in dire *anguish*" (128, my emphasis). The narrator quickly interprets Barbara's pallor and actions for the reader and continues to inform the reader how to understand her physical features as she attends church and sees the married couple: "Her face wore a gray, dusky hue, of which she was only too conscious, but could not subdue. Her *covetous* eyes would wander to that other face" (145, my emphasis). In this particular example, Barbara wishes to

"subdue" her gray face so others cannot read her jealousy as the narrator does, but she fails, very aware that other church-goers can understand her jealousy. "Suspense—fear" also "[turn] her very pale" (342). The narrator similarly names emotions that bring forth blushes. While Barbara's face turns pale with jealousy, the narrator explains that Isabel, more secure in her position as Carlyle's legal wife, blushes in envy: "A hot flush passed over the brow of Lady Isabel; a sensation very like jealousy flew to her heart" (151).[5] When Carlyle, before their marriage, gives Isabel money, she blushes in resentment: "Her cheeks burned, her fingers trembled, her angry spirit rose up in arms. In that first moment of discovery, she was ready to resent it as an insult" (104). The narrator often focuses on the manifestation of painful emotions but also provides demonstrations of happier ones, like Barbara's upon Carlyle's proposal. When Carlyle proposes to Barbara after his divorce, she is both happy at the prospect and sad because she is not sure he proposes out of love, and her face reflects both emotions: "The scarlet flush of emotion and happiness. Then it all faded down to paleness and sadness" (346). The narrator calls Lady Mount Severn's blush upon realizing Carlyle wants to marry Isabel a "flush of gratification" (115). Isabel blushes with pleasure when Francis Levison compliments her.

The descriptions of blush and pallor materialize the characters' bodies for the reader, but this materialization is limited to their facial coloring in a way that mutilation, as I will demonstrate, is not. The narrator carefully teaches the reader to interpret these moments in which the body appears as a somatic sign. Occasionally, however, the narrator emphasizes a body by describing a change but does not name its cause. Blush and pallor still act as signs, but are not always directly explained. In these instances, the novel invites the reader to picture and interpret the legible body. The reader can then utilize the narrator's other examples to explicate the feeling that causes a blush or pallor; the reader learns to decipher what blood flow means in

terms of the novel's readable sign system. The narrator's silence also indicates that the emotion is not one that the propriety of the character or reader would want named; before and after Carlyle marries Isabel, Barbara's emotions are often unspecified, and when the (almost) married Isabel is near Levison, the man she leaves her husband for, her emotions are similarly unnamed.

Before Carlyle's marriage, Barbara, realizing that confessions of her love with such little encouragement would be inappropriate, often hides her physically-manifested feelings from his view; though her feelings are not specifically named at this point, the narration depicts their physical manifestation and thereby encourages the reader to examine and comprehend them. Her emotions often show themselves in the form of a blush: "Her heart was beating, her whole frame trembling, and she feared he might *detect* her *emotion*….Her face flushed painfully; her heart beat" (121-123, my emphasis). Carlyle either does not see or does not correctly read the meaning behind the blush. The narrator, in explaining she is overcome with emotion but not telling which one, challenges the reader to imagine Barbara's appearance and "detect" the exact cause of the blush. In the following passage, Barbara almost confronts Carlyle for marrying another when she loves him; she can no longer hide the external evidence of her emotion: "Barbara was trying to keep down her *emotion*….On it came, *passion, temper, wrongs, and nervousness*, all boiling over together. She was in strong hysterics….Barbara struggled with her *emotion*, struggled bravely, and the sobs and hysterical symptoms subsided….leaving her face still and white" (156-157, my emphasis). The narrator does not explain which feeling(s) overwhelm Barbara to the point of hysteria, but twice mentions that her body strongly reacts to this "emotion." The word "wrongs" is also left unexplained: does Barbara feel wrong in her love for a married man, or wronged by Carlyle's behavior?[6]

Isabel's blushes and pallor for Levison are similarly unnamed. Upon seeing him after her marriage, "a brilliant flush of emotion" colors her face. But after he approaches her, the flush turns to pallor: "She was aware that she looked unusually ill at that moment, for the agitation and surprise of meeting him were fading away, leaving her face an ashy whiteness. Exceedingly vexed and angry with herself did she feel that the meeting should have power to call forth *emotion*. Until that moment she was unconscious that she retained any sort of *feeling* for Captain Levison" (195, my emphasis). The narrator explains that "agitation" and "surprise" show themselves on her body, hinting that these feelings cause her first physical response, the blush. The cause of her sudden paleness is vaguely described as an "emotion." Isabel herself seems unable to understand her own previously dormant emotions though they are obviously strong and demand her attention in this meeting. And again, she physically responds to his flirtation; her countenance becomes "crimson" so that she "turn[s] her face away" as if to prevent Levison from reading her blush and understanding her feeling for him (204). The narrator shies away from designating the feelings that bring forth these responses; this reticence invites the reader to infer her emotional state from her physical reactions, to see her body change and engage in interpreting what that change implies.

The sign system depends on emotions manifesting physically and also on others' abilities to see and interpret these signs. The narrator trains the reader to do so by naming specific emotions that cause outwardly visible responses and hinting at other emotions even when they are not actually named. But what about the characters' interactions within the world of the novel? Can they all decipher this sign system, understanding other characters' blushes and pallor? Many seem to correctly read blush and pallor. Isabel's uncle understands her blushes, realizing she loves Levison. Miss Corny accurately interprets Barbara's blushes as

demonstrating her love for Carlyle, yet she is unable to understand the unhappiness of Isabel's situation or her attachment to Levison. No character is able to read Isabel's countenance for this attachment to Levison except himself. Granted, however, they assume Isabel loves her husband and will stay with him. Yet her own husband, who continually mentions his love for his wife, is blind to her feelings, is unable to read her somatic signs though he occasionally sees the same blushes and paleness the narrator describes for the reader.

Carlyle, whose body rarely portrays mental states, is not capable, as Ellen Bayuk Rosenman convincingly argues, of reading others even when their features participate in legibility ("Mimic" 31). He does not understand Barbara's blushes as a sign of her love for him, nor does he correctly read Isabel's suffering, including her fear that he loves Barbara. Most importantly for the plot, he does not realize, despite her many blushes, that Isabel attracts and is attracted to Levison nor conceives why she begs to return home (from a vacation that her sister-in-law insists must be solitary but that is haunted by Levison) and then begs "with clasped hands" that Levison not be allowed to visit their home (Wood 213). He does not imagine her capable of loving another while she is married; though others warn him of Levison's ability to wreak havoc upon families ("In your house, perhaps, there may be no field for his vagaries; but rely upon it, where there is one he is sure to be at some mischief or other"), he does not understand Levison's nature, cannot read Levison's somatic signs (211). Carlyle is, as Rosenman claims, "emotionally illiterate" ("Mimic" 31). His inability to interpret emotions suggests he is incapable of noting bodily differences or of attributing meaning to differences.

Though Carlyle cannot read these bodies, the narrator provides explanation for the somatic signs he sees so that the reader can imagine and interpret them even if Carlyle cannot. His emotional illiteracy, however, interferes not only with his interpretation of others' emotions

but also with his own expressions of feelings and thereby with others' understanding of him. Isabel and Barbara struggle to understand Carlyle's emotions. Isabel leaves him because she thinks he, in spite of his words, does not love her. His lack of display, lack of blush and pallor, causes her to doubt his attachment to her. Barbara reddens whenever the single Carlyle acts in some way that she interprets as affection for herself, such as when he gives her a locket as a present. He does not pay attention to or does not understand her body's expressions of love, her "trembling" frame and "flushed" face (Wood 121, 123). While he does not notice her emotion, she misinterprets his, wrongly reading too much into his actions as she hopes he will propose marriage to her when he is secretly engaged to Isabel. Isabel, too, incorrectly deciphers his body and behavior as showing his love for Barbara. His body's lack of obvious display is one of the motivators in her decision to leave him. The narrator references Isabel's inability to read Carlyle at the novel's close as well. Barbara, told that Isabel was living in the house as Madame Vine, asks Carlyle if this circumstance has lessened his love for her. In response, he holds her, "never speaking, only looking gravely into her face. Who could look at its sincere truthfulness, at the sweet expression of his lips, and doubt him? Not Barbara" (588). Carlyle's face is neither white nor red; his lips hold a "sweet expression" and do not quiver. The narrator turns the sentence into a question, suggesting some would not be able to read his "truthfulness," and a clear example is Isabel. Barbara, having grown up with Carlyle as a close family friend and eventually his second wife, does eventually learn to read his somatic signs or else interprets them for what she wishes Carlyle to think and feel.

Carlyle fails to notice Isabel's physical manifestations of her mind, and his inability to engage in somatic legibility is not one-way; he does not often interpret others' signs, but his own countenance rarely acts as a sign for others to read. The narrator comments on Carlyle's body

when it acts as a sign and when it conspicuously does not act as a sign. Carlyle's face betrays his feelings occasionally, but these examples are much rarer than those of the other characters and not so noticeable. Carlyle is "a man as little given to show emotion as man can well be" (579). While neither Isabel nor the narrator attempts to extrapolate the meaning behind his "agitated…countenance, impeded…breath," and "blood-red" face as he prepares to propose marriage to her, his changed expression and breathing intimate his impending proposal (113). This instance is by far his most expressive one. His feeling on hearing of Isabel's departure with another man barely appears. A servant notes that "Never had she seen him betray agitation so powerful," but his body is only remarkable at this instance by his "blanched face" (266). He blushes only once more in the novel, a reaction to being teased about a second marriage: "A very perceptible tinge rose to the face of Mr. Carlyle, telling of inward emotion, but his voice and manner betrayed none" (297). The coloring is "perceptible" only as a "tinge," which contrasts with his previous "blood-red" blush as well as the blushes of both Isabel and Barbara as they receive his proposals. And though his appearance does act as a readable sign in these two instances, it shows less feeling as the novel progresses. This ability to control his expressions may result from age and practice, but he also seems to feel less. Though his proposal to Isabel is paired with a flushed face, his proposal to Barbara is devoid of any indication of strong feeling. His features are not altered, nor is his voice; he asks "in the quietest, most matter-of-fact tone, just as if he had said, Shall I give you a chair, Barbara," which conflicts with "the change that passed over her countenance" (346). His body, lacking many reactions that need descriptions, stays obscure, less imaginable throughout much of the story.

Though Carlyle cannot read emotions, the other major male character, Levison, reads them well and takes advantage of the information he learns from them. Isabel never mentions

her jealousy of Carlyle's relationship with Barbara, but Levison finds the feeling on her countenance, using her somatic signs to understand her feeling and exploit it. Carlyle's body is rarely inscribed with indicators of his mental state, and though Levison understands somatic legibility, or perhaps because of it, he hides emotion, other than fear, well, or does not strongly feel anything else. Yet the narrator details his body in such a way that it invites phrenological study; the very physical shape of his head indicates the criminal tendencies of his mind. As Andrew Maunder contends, Levison's "'shallow pated' skull" suggests his "inherent depravity" (64). The nineteenth-century practice of physiognomy, of judging the expressions of others for evidence of their mental characteristics, also encourages such a reading of Levison's body; as Sharrona Pearl notes, this science of reading the shape of the head and face allowed one to understand, even in passing encounters, aspects of another person's character (2). Daniel Novak explains that physiognomy was particularly used to identify potential criminals; the concern with reading features to recognize criminal tendencies in others led to Francis Galton's attempt to find common features in the faces of lawbreakers. He created a photographic composite of criminals' faces to help others identify potentially unruly people (64).

The main characters of the novel do not, however, phrenologically read Levison's face and skull. The narrator aids the reader in translating the readable sign system of bodies, emphasizing their features in these moments, but the characters fail fairly often to do so correctly. In accordance with his inability to understand Isabel's and Barbara's love and despair, Carlyle does not read Levison's features accurately. Isabel realizes Levison is not a good man but follows him anyway. Ironically, the wayward, terrified Richard Hare, Barbara's brother and the man accused of the murder committed by Levison, notices and correctly interprets Levison's face, explaining that Levison "had the expression at times of a demon" (Wood 253). Similarly,

Isabel Lucy, Isabel and Carlyle's daughter, recognizes Levison's lack of sympathy for others. The child explains to her mother and then her father that she does not like the man, is "afraid of him," because "there was an ugly look in his eyes'" (216, 215). Carlyle's face is difficult to read, and Levison's is similarly difficult because he tends to be unemotional, yet the shape of his head manifests his inability to empathize with or pity others. Unfortunately for Isabel, few understand Levison's faults, his capacity for causing pain, though they appear on his body in a more permanent form than a blush or bloodless paleness.

The novel relies on characters reading bodies correctly for signs of emotions at times and yet also on characters' failure to do so; it is the characters' inabilities to interpret somatic signs, particularly distressing ones, that lead to the twists and turns in the plot. The narrator teaches the reader how to read bodies for manifestations of emotion and specifies changes in countenances so that, even when the narrator or other characters do not name the emotions they find on others' bodies, the reader can picture the blush or other indications and guess its cause. While both happy and unhappy emotions manifest physically, the unhappy ones affect one's features longer and call more attention to them.

Metaphorical Masks

East Lynne provides many instances in which male characters' faces are unreadable. The narrator draws little of the reader's attention to Levison's and Carlyle's appearances because they do not readily convey emotion. Characters' physical features become present in texts when they act as signs, but they also may become present when the characters strive to absent legibility from their countenances. Barbara and Isabel conceal their faces by turning them aside when their coloring reveals something about their feelings that they do not want any viewers to know,

and Dickens has his characters' faces obscure their expressions in other ways. The characters' efforts to hide or prevent somatic signs are not as successful as mutilation, studied in the next section, which completely removes them from the readable sign system. But even as the characters attempt to mask their emotions (whether successfully or not), the text calls attention to their bodies and invites the reader to picture them. Dickens gives one example of a character who consciously hides her somatic legibility yet emphasizes its physical nature by covering it with make-up, but he provides several instances of characters who strive to make their faces immobile so that few or no emotions or reactions show through. The narrators and characters describe this immobility as assuming a mask. The characters are aware that their appearances can reveal their mental states and do not want others to access their mental anguish and secrets, so they attempt to adopt a demeanor that masks their emotions. They are conscious of their legibility.

Lady Dedlock often adopts a mask to shelter herself and her past, but she struggles to maintain it as constantly as she needs to in order to keep her secret. The mask is difficult for her to bear but necessary to protect herself from exposure. It is impermanent, so her emotions are visible occasionally and attract the reader's and Esther's sympathy. If and when she does drop her façade, others can read her expression for mental and emotional states, particularly painful ones, that may betray her past. She is not the only or the most successful character to hide her emotions by controlling her facial expressions; the Dedlocks' lawyer Mr. Tulkinghorn is so unemotional that he seems more machine than human. The narrator emphasizes their appearances as they maintain their masquerades, and for Lady Dedlock, in suddenly dropping it; other characters also view and respond to these façades and moments in which faces resume animation.

One older female character, Sir Leicester's cousin and occasional dweller in the Dedlock home, attempts to obscure not her emotions, but her age and aging body from other characters. Ironically, this effort towards concealment only calls more attention to her body and its advanced years as well as her desire to appear younger, creating a humorous image for the reader to envision. Volumnia passes from age twenty to forty in "an agreeable manner" but "Laps[es] then out of date" (*BH* 348). The narrator suggests her body has already lost life by comparing Volumnia to the "frozen" paintings of her deceased ancestors and to a "ghost" when she walks around the house as night (498, 800). The narrator also explains how she copes with her missing youth, that she is uncomfortable with her age and attempts to appear younger; she is "a young lady (of sixty)" who attempts to lessen her age with a mask composed of powder, rouge, and jewelry as she admires the "bloom" of younger women (347, 349). The narrator's parenthetical inclusion of her age replicates Volumnia's efforts to hide it; just as she attempts to cover but draws more attention to her older body with make-up, the narrator includes her actual age as a side-note that garners more attention because it is one of few parentheticals in the novel.

Other characters agree with the narrator that her endeavors are wasted. She does not realize that, while she sees her "charms" as "humanizing," Sir Leicester looks upon her "indiscreet profusion in the article of rouge, and persistency in an obsolete pearl necklace like a rosary of little bird's-eggs" with "magnificent displeasure" (349, 347). To him, her body is marred by her own hand rather than her unadulterated aged appearance (630). The red cosmetic covers any paleness, and the white pearls contrast with the red to highlight the falsified color of her skin. She also emits "sharp" or "little screams" while in conversation to express her feelings and perhaps remind her companions of her living presence. She strives to act younger too, "a trifle too innocent, seeing that the innocence which would go extremely well with a sash and

tucker is a little out of keeping with the rouge and pearl necklace" (350, 501). This disguise does not serve its intended purpose; she fails to obscure bodily features and instead makes them grotesquely visible to other characters and the reader, arousing her relations' disgust, Lady Dedlock's boredom, and the reader's humor for her use of make-up and jewelry.

While Volumnia's physical mask of rouge and accessories fail, Tulkinghorn is so successful in maintaining his metaphorical mask, in preventing somatic legibility, that he seems inhuman. His appearance does not express pleasure or pain, and the narrator indicates Tulkinghorn is so successful in masking his features because his body is a different physical thing, not human. His one desire is to know about wealthy people of rank, particularly what they do not want others to know, and his physical nature seems made for this purpose. He seeks out and keeps the secrets of others "in every limb of his body, in every crease of his dress" (147). This passage depicts his body as literally holding secrets though other characters cannot read the information. Dickens compares him to emotionless objects that resemble Tulkinghorn's mental and physical traits; Tulkinghorn is "always the same speechless repository of noble confidences," "an oyster of the old school whom nobody can open" (150, 119). These comparisons to nonhuman and even nonliving things are further supported by his seeming agelessness: "He is of what is called the old school—a phrase generally meaning any school that seems never to have been young—and wears knee-breeches tied with ribbons, and gaiters or stockings" (14). George compares him to a machine that runs without the weakness of a human frame, encouraging the idea that Tulkinghorn has not grown to maturity but was created so: "he is a confoundedly bad kind of man. He is a slow-torturing kind of man. He is no more like flesh and blood than a rusty old carbine is" (566). His gait seems standardized like a machine; he walks at his "usual methodical pace, which is never quickened, never slackened" (147).

George's metaphor coincides with the narrator's descriptions of Tulkinghorn's home and behavior; his home is "rusty," and his clothes seem mechanical: "One peculiarity of his black clothes and of his black stockings, be they silk or worsted, is that they never shine. Mute, close, irresponsive to any glancing light, his dress is like himself" (13-14). Just as his clothes are "muted," he is often silent, only speaking when prompted: "He never converses when not professionally consulted. He is found sometimes, speechless but quite at home, at corners of dinner-tables in great country houses" (14). Tulkinghorn's robotic nature strengthens his mask; he seems less human and thereby less able to engage in the readable sign system, to express emotion. His body is, however, detailed because it is unusual in not showing emotion; the reader can picture his typical dress, never hurried movements, and mask-like, expressionless face. Tulkinghorn's mask is as effective at inviting physical descriptions as Isabel's blushes and paleness because his body is an enigma, different from all others in the novel.

The narrator doubts Tulkinghorn's ability to feel emotion, providing further explanation for why his metaphorical mask is so successful at concealing his mental states. After the narrator reminds the reader of Tulkinghorn's closer resemblance to a machine than a person by noting his mechanical movements, his "slowly rubbing his rusty legs up and down, up and down, up and down," Tulkinghorn objects to Lady Dedlock's concern for her maid Rosa (581). Accusing Lady Dedlock of breaking their agreement to protect the girl, he shows his lack of sympathy for the maid: "As to sparing the girl, of what importance or value is she? Spare!....One might have supposed that the course was straight on…sparing nothing, treading everything under foot" (581). The ruin of the girl's reputation does not concern him, and neither does the death of a destitute man, even though Tulkinghorn knows the man could help him learn Lady Dedlock's

secret. Having discovered Nemo's corpse, and standing at the bedside with the surgeon, Krook and Flite, he is:

> equally removed, to all appearance, from all three kinds of interest exhibited near the bed—from the young surgeon's professional interest in death, noticeable as being quite apart from his remarks on the deceased as an individual; from the old man's unction; and the little crazy woman's awe. His imperturbable face has been as inexpressive as his rusty clothes. One could not even say he has been thinking all this while. He has shown neither patience nor impatience, nor attention nor abstraction. He has shown nothing but his shell. (127)

In this passage, the narrator compares him to the other viewers of the corpse, emphasizing how Tulkinghorn shows no mental agitation. The narrator notes that Tulkinghorn reveals only his "shell" to others. Others see his façade only as an expressionless mask.

With equal apathy for others, he pursues Lady Dedlock's secret, determined to know her story and perhaps use it to his advantage. He constantly reads her body, waiting for moments when her mask fails. Furthermore, he suggests to Lady Dedlock what his purpose is, terrorizing her in the hopes of aggravating her into making a mistake and revealing something. Yet while torturing her with his determination, he acts as if nothing has changed, as if he is no more than her husband's polite lawyer:

> he and she are as composed, and as indifferent, and take as little heed of one another, as ever. Yet it may be that my Lady fears this Mr. Tulkinghorn and that he knows it. It may be that he pursues her doggedly and steadily, with no touch of compunction, remorse, or pity. It may be that her beauty and all the state and brilliancy surrounding her only gives him the greater zest for what he is set upon and makes him the more inflexible in it. Whether he be cold and cruel, whether immovable in what he has made his duty, whether absorbed in love of power, whether determined to have nothing hidden from him in ground where he has burrowed among secrets all his life, whether he in his heart despises the splendour of which he is a distant beam, whether he is always treasuring up slights and offences in the affability of his gorgeous clients—whether he be any of this, or all of this, it may be that my Lady had better have five thousand pairs of fashionable eyes upon her, in distrustful vigilance, than the two eyes of this rusty lawyer with his wisp of neckcloth and his dull black breeches tied with ribbons at the knees. (357-358)

Tulkinghorn is without "compunction," "remorse," "or pity"; he is "inflexible" and perhaps "cold and cruel" or at least "immovable" in his purpose of pursuing her secret "doggedly and steadily," regardless of what pain he causes. The narrator hazards several guesses as for why the character desires secrets, but, though omniscient, the narrator is unsure as to what constitutes Tulkinghorn's motive. Even the narrator remains ignorant of Tulkinghorn's mental states as if the character truly is a machine.

Tulkinghorn's body offers nothing to read because he so effectively conceals any somatic signs of his knowledge and has no strong emotion that could write itself on his face; he allows no expression or evidence of humanity. He always "wears his usual expressionless mask" and acts with "customary deportment," though even the narrator doubts "if [the face] be a mask" (147). His mental states are so well and so constantly hidden that the narrator indicates that the man is not wearing a mask but simply has no emotion and no thought other than to collect information. Unlike the other characters in the novel, and in Wood's novel, his appearance is completely unreadable and appears in the text as such, as more mechanical than human. The narrator suggests that he is so successful at hiding his features in part because of his lack of emotion and machine-like existence but also because of his profession. Lady Dedlock struggles with her mask, but Tulkinghorn succeeds because his only personal secret is whether or not he cares about anything other than the secrets of others. He hides the answer so well because he is his own client, and just as he will never divulge the information of a wealthy client without cause, he will never spread information about himself: "Whether his whole soul is devoted to the great or whether he yields them nothing beyond the services he sells is his personal secret. He keeps it, as he keeps the secrets of his clients; he is his own client in that matter, and will never betray

himself" (147). With only one well-kept personal secret, he can chase others' mysteries and take advantage of such knowledge while no one can read his mechanical body.

Lady Dedlock adopts a physical show of a haughty demeanor to limit her participation in the readable sign system, but she is not as effective at hiding her emotions as Tulkinghorn is, or as Esther is once she is mutilated. Within the first few pages of *Bleak House*, the narrator explains that Lady Dedlock is the epitome of fashion and the ruler of the highest social circles. Aided by her social power, she is marked by coldness, and her most common mental state seems to be boredom. She is deemed "perfectly well-bred" because "having conquered *her* world, [she] fell not into the melting, but rather into the freezing mood. An exhausted composure, a worn-out placidity, an equanimity of fatigue not to be ruffled by interest or satisfaction, are the trophies of her victory" (13, original emphasis). Through this overt appearance of "exhausted," "worn-out," "not to be ruffled," "freezing" boredom, she hides herself. But just as Carlyle and Levison occasionally show their feelings, Lady Dedlock drops her mask, and Tulkinghorn, on the watch for such moments, makes the most of them.

The moments when Tulkinghorn, a careful viewer of her body, suspects her secret most are those in which she, incapable of maintaining her masquerade, reveals an "interest or satisfaction" or pain. The narrator and Tulkinghorn's interest draw the reader's attention to her features in these instances. Barbara worries that Carlyle will "detect" her love for him, and in Dickens's detective novel, Lady Dedlock fears that Tulkinghorn will detect her secret by reading her somatic signs (Wood 121). He begins to investigate the law copier Nemo because Lady Dedlock cannot control her voice but speaks with "animation and her unusual tone" when asking who transcribed the lawyer's document (*BH* 16).[7] Realizing she has, through movement and the change of her tone, hinted at her concern for the scribe, she continues her questioning but makes

a point of again masking herself: "looking full at [Tulkinghorn] in her careless way again and toying with her screen" (16). The screen becomes a prop in her performance; by "toying" with it, she seems unconcerned with the topic, but it also acts as a shield for her face, hiding it from Tulkinghorn's scrutiny under the guise of protecting her from the heat of the fire. By reassuming her indifference, her mask, she attempts to lessen her mistake, but in this instance, fails. The news of her former fiancé's presence in England alarms her so that her lips become "white" and she feels faint (16). In a desperate attempt to protect herself in her suddenly vulnerable state, she asks that no one speak to her. While this partially succeeds—Tulkinghorn does not question her—Sir Leicester's comment, "I never knew my Lady swoon before," accentuates the strangeness of the woman's ensuing fainting fit, which is secondly emphasized in the narrative as it fuels Tulkinghorn's belief that she has a secret and motivates him to learn it (17). Lady Dedlock's expression of pain on recognizing the handwriting draws the interest of Tulkinghorn and the narrator, and thereby the reader as the narrator explains what about her appearance suddenly interests Tulkinghorn.

Though Lady Dedlock's façade occasionally indicates her mental state, Tulkinghorn does, with good reason, admire her ability to control her expressions, to maintain her mask:

> She is very pale. Mr. Tulkinghorn, observing it as she rises to retire, thinks, 'Well she may be! The power of this woman is astonishing. She has been acting a part the whole time.' But he can act a part too—his one unchanging character—and as he holds the door open for this woman, fifty pairs of eyes, each fifty times sharper than Sir Leicester's pair, should find no flaw in him. (579)

She maintains a "studied impassiveness" that becomes "habitual" to her (352). When Lady Dedlock next hears news of her former fiancé, she reacts merely by walking. When Guppy confronts her about Esther's history, she, realizing her mask is failing, uses a fan to shade her face. The narrator calls attention to her face at this moment, noting its move from a mask to an

expression. The narrator directly questions if Lady Dedlock's face signals an emotion in this moment, and thereby encourages the reader to see it as a potential sign: "Is the dead colour on my Lady's face reflected from the screen which has a green silk ground and which she holds in her raised hand as if she had forgotten it, or is it a dreadful paleness that has fallen on her?" (362). As Guppy's guesses of Esther's origins become more poignant, Lady Dedlock becomes "for the moment dead" (362). Yet she recovers her former nonchalance with only a few small tokens of her emotional state: "a tremor pass[es] across her frame like a ripple over water…her lips shake, [she] compose[s] them by a great effort, [and forces] herself back to the knowledge of his presence and of what he has said" (362). In these two passages, Lady Dedlock's thoughts seem physical as they physically affect her body. Her thoughts "[fall] on her" and pass over her body "like a ripple of water." The narrator notes these physical betrayals of emotion for the reader, encouraging the reader to imagine and interpret the somatic signs, but they happen so quickly that Guppy wonders whether he has accomplished his point. He thinks Lady Dedlock responds to his threat, of telling others of her pregnancy outside of wedlock, but the woman is actually reacting to this threat and more unexpected, provoking news, that of her child's survival.

She conquers her features so they rarely betray her thoughts or emotions, but she also suggests that her life would be better if she did not continuously struggle to maintain her mask. Both her ability to hide her mind and the marriage that protects her are a "reward and doom" (352). Others see her as "brilliant, prosperous, and flattered," but she warns Esther to "think of [her] wretched mother, conscience-stricken, underneath that mask!" (352).[8] Lady Dedlock hides her secret to protect her husband's reputation and the identity she worked to achieve as a high-ranking wife and social queen. Yet, in spite of all her efforts, she fails because Tulkinghorn sees her body physically express mental pain.

To Esther, Lady Dedlock's mask makes her seem less human. Esther notices similarities between herself and her mother but also between her mother and the painted face on an inanimate object; her mother's concealment of her emotions causes her face to resemble a doll's, one of Esther's childhood toys. The very sight of Lady Dedlock excites Esther's memory of both her aunt's house and her own face in the mirror. She does not, however, describe or even note her reflection but instead refers to the doll: "very strangely, there was something quickened within me, associated with the lonely days at my godmother's; yes, away even to the days when I had stood on tiptoe to dress myself at my little glass after dressing my doll" (224). Esther knows she has not seen the woman before and vaguely wonders what resemblance causes the "rapid beating" of her heart. She is reminded of her aunt and herself, but mentions her doll as she describes looking in the mirror (224). Guppy's discovery of the mother-daughter relationship demonstrates the likeness between the two women's faces, but Lady Dedlock's masking of her emotions also makes her face seem lifeless, as the face painted on Esther's childhood toy. Lifelessness, then, seems tied to lack of legibility as if readable emotions are necessary and an innate part of life. After Esther learns her mother's secret, is mutilated by disease, and matures with age, grief, illness, and marriage, she refers to herself as a doll, indicating a resemblance between her and her doll's appearance, and thereby her mother's; Esther names her self-designed home with Woodcourt a "rustic cottage of doll's rooms" (751). Once mutilated, she sees her face as like her mother's, masked to the point of appearing doll-like, lifeless.

Ironically, Lady Dedlock shows more emotion in death than while living. The cold weather overcomes Lady Dedlock's cold demeanor as she dies attempting to reach the grave of Esther's father; Esther interprets the corpse's position as suggesting affection, as if the mother could physically reach her former lover by being near his grave, "with one arm creeping round a

bar of the iron gate, and seeming to embrace it" (713). Ellen Moers names Lady Dedlock as one of Dickens's "agitating women" because she seems constantly moving (130). Her death and stillness, then, are particularly significant. Laurie Langbauer adds that the placement of Lady Dedlock's corpse symbolically joins the family unit as she reaches towards the grave of Esther's father and Esther finds her there (131, 152). Lady Dedlock's change in expression, the display of loving emotion in death as opposed to her mask of boredom in life, is a contrast to the emotional display of her sister's corpse. What Esther notices most about her aunt as she dies is how little her appearance changes. Her frown is so customary that her face shows no other feelings; in death, she "little altered outwardly; with her old handsome resolute frown…carved upon her face" (*BH* 21). Her face is "immoveable," and "even afterwards," after her death, "her frown remained unsoftened" (21).

Lady Dedlock is one of many characters in the two novels who are aware their features will be seen and interpreted for thoughts. In an attempt to hide her emotions, Lady Dedlock masks her face for much of her married life. The mask stifles the physical manifestation of emotion. Her efforts to mask her features are strenuous but necessary for her to maintain her secret, that she is a mother. The characters attempt to read her for somatic signs and occasionally succeed. They, with the narrator's help, chronicle Lady Dedlock's displays of emotion when her mask fails, and the end of these displays when the mask is resumed. The novel details her body in these moments of revelation and concealment, continuously highlighting her body.

Mutilation as Mask

The only successful metaphorical mask in the two novels is Tulkinghorn's; the lawyer's façade is both the most effective and least needed metaphorical mask because he is machine-like and unemotional. Mutilation, however, emphasizes Esther's and Isabel's faces while obscuring expressions of feeling. Esther and Isabel feel much, unlike Tulkinghorn, yet facial scars conceal their thoughts and emotions so that they are not legible. Their changed features draw attention to their appearances; the narrators and characters give more consideration to the marked bodies, rather than unmarked ones, as they detail how the scars alter the faces and react to the differences. Illness amends Esther's face, rendering it less like her mother's, and a train wreck transforms many of Isabel's original features. These painful physical alterations highlight the characters' figures while simultaneously removing them from legibility much more effectively than Lady Dedlock's mask; physical pain in these novels elicits more corporeal description than momentary mental anguish or efforts to conceal mental anguish. Scarring is visible for longer than a blush or pallor which are, by nature, more transitory. Mutilation obscures Esther's and Isabel's very identities as their appearances drastically alter. Esther's scarring causes her face to differ from her mother's, shielding her biological connection with Lady Dedlock, and Isabel's wounds prevent her own family from recognizing her. The novels stress the heroines' bodies, their painful mutilations, to hide the characters' minds; the physical features are made viewable to readers but cannot be interpreted for mental states. Through these scars, the bodies become exempt from the most basic readable sign system, that of a person's external features indicating his or her identity to his or her acquaintances, while simultaneously becoming hyper-visible in the novel and thereby for the reader. This unreadable hyper-visibility occasionally frustrates or offends the dignity of the scarred characters. However, it also empowers them, allowing them to

protect those they love: Esther's new face conceals her relationship with her mother, upholding Lady Dedlock's secret; and Isabel's provides her with the opportunity to return to her former home as a governess and care for her children with a maternal love that Barbara admits she cannot replicate.

In *East Lynne* and *Bleak House*, the heroines' acquired disfigurements accentuate their bodies more strongly than facial coloring or metaphorical masks. The novels stage difference as more apparent than homogeneity so that mutilation highlights the visible body. As disabilities theorist James I. Porter notes, the disabled body "seems somehow *too much* a body, *too real*, too corporeal" (xiii, original emphasis). This is not a recent cultural development; so many Victorians worried about even minor disfigurements on the surface of female bodies that doctors tried to prevent scarring particularly when treating women. They worried that scars would excite increased attention and negative reactions to the woman's appearance and even negative readings of her somatic signs. One lecture published in *The Lancet* warned that doctors should seriously consider potential scarring when treating a woman or risk condemning her to a single life: "This [scarring] may appear to you of little consequence, but I tell you it is not so: scars, from abscesses in the neck of females, excite in the minds of most of our sex a reluctance to associate with them, and thus many a fine young girl may, for these blotches and scars, be doomed to perpetual celibacy" (Cooper 194). Mutilation on female bodies would not only affect others' ideas of their beauty but would deter many potential suitors.[9] Sir Astley Cooper presents the male sex as scornful or disapproving of any physical marks on women, but he claims women are not subject to the same repulsion in regard to male bodies (194).[10] This male distaste for scarred female bodies may simply result from the woman's disrupted features, but one psychologist suggests that this distaste occurs in both sexes and results from the viewer's judgment of the

meaning behind the scar. After acknowledging that physical features are interpreted by others, that "The human countenance gives equal significance to all," nineteenth-century psychologist Baron Ernst Von Feuchtersleben argues that "a slight convulsive movement may look like derision, [and] a scar like falsehood" (156). A scar may be read as a sign for a tendency towards deceit.[11] Some Victorians, then, saw scars as indications of a person's character and read them much like the face is read in physiognomy and phrenology. The novels studied in this chapter, however, portray extensive marks as preventing bodily legibility.

O'Farrell considers scars, as well as blushes, in her study of the readable sign system of nineteenth-century characters. She argues that Dickens in particular uses both scars and blushes to physically manifest emotions, but that he exhibits some anxiety over the impermanence of the blush, which is not an issue for scarring: "Where the blush fails in its promise to render character legible, the scar speaks to a fantasy of violent corrigibility and promises to ensure legible permanence" (O'Farrell 86). For Dickens, then, a scar is a method to make a permanent sign on a body. In Dickens's *David Copperfield*, Rosa Dartle is desirous of Steerforth, and Steerforth makes the desire legible by throwing a hammer at her, mutilating her face. This act changes Rosa's personality as much as her face; "Like her scar, Rosa Dartle, too, seems to have absorbed with Steerforth's blow something of the fierce energy with which the novel encourages readers to imagine it must have been struck…. [The scar] aptly signif[ies] the 'second nature' Mrs. Steerforth tells Rosa Dartle she has acquired" (88). O'Farrell argues that Rosa similarly attempts to mark Lil' Emily's face after Lil' Emily's attraction to Steerforth and his social station prompts her to become his mistress (97). Rosa claims, "I would have *branded* her on the face, drest in rags, and cast out in the streets to starve" (*DC* 478, my emphasis).

Ellen Bayuk Rosenman associates scarring specifically with sexual desire; she argues that Margaret's body in Wilkie Collins's *Basil* is deceptive because it does not reveal her adulterous love for a man. But the character's body does eventually become "truly exposed, revealed as a sexual predator" as the "novel takes its revenge by disfiguring her beauty" so that she is "grotesque" (*Unauthorized* 56). The mutilation is "reassuring" and restores Basil's "equilibrium" because it suggests that "sooner or later, the truth of a woman's character will be written on her body" (56). Elsie B. Michie notes the strength of this tie between scarring and sexual desire in medical texts: "Writers such as Greg and Acton almost invariably represent their approach to the subject of prostitution as similar to lifting the veil from the face of a woman who has been scarred by a disfiguring disease" (102).

Though scars may be interpreted as a legible sign, Esther's and Isabel's scars defy interpretation. Their mutilations emphasize yet obscure their physical features so their identities cannot be read, are not legible to, other characters.[12] But before turning to how extreme physical changes and illegibility affect the ways characters see each other and thereby how the reader sees them, I will first consider what these changes are in these two novels and how the narrators emphasize the heroines' bodies through mutilation. *Bleak House* presents Esther as open, both physically to disease and emotionally to other people, instead of masked and haughty like her mother. Her charity, much like Lady Dedlock's pride, is apparent; she becomes scarred by taking in a poor, sick boy who then passes the disease to her maid Charley, who passes it to Esther as she devotedly nurses the younger girl while declining help for the fear that the disease will spread to more people. Esther refuses to say much about her illness in her narration: "Perhaps the less I say of these sick experiences, the less tedious and more intelligible I shall be" (*BH* 432). She connects her silence with intelligibility; in doing so, she indicates that pain is

difficult to express in language for another to understand, that it is unintelligible. She does not mention any specific pain but compares her experience to climbing endless stairs. The illness temporarily blinds her so she cannot describe her appearance even if she saw it and wanted to do so. The reader knows, in spite of Esther's silence, that the illness manifests itself in some manner on her skin, such as pock marks, because it scars her face. She does not describe the pain of any lesions; they only become known to the reader after she recovers her sight. Building up the suspense of the mutilation's extent, Esther explains that her nurse Charley hides the one mirror in the bedroom so she cannot see her scars. She also mentions that she suspected her face was changed, that "she had thought of this very often" and "was now certain of" her mutilation (433). Her face, too, is unintelligible. No one can read it for the expression of emotions.

When she finally does find a mirror and examine her reflection, Esther excludes many details of her changed face. Yet this description is also the closest she comes to illustrating her own features either before or after illness:

> My hair….was long and thick.…I was very much changed—oh, very, very much. At first my face was so strange to me that I think I should have put my hands before it and started back….Very soon it became more familiar, and then I knew the extent of the alteration in it better than I had done at first….I had never been a beauty and had never thought myself one, but I had been very different from this. It was all gone now. (444-445)

She tells the reader the length and thickness of her hair, but not its color, and details no specific facial feature either before or after her illness except that her face has "very much changed." The extent of this change is visible only in Esther's realization that no one can trace her mother's facial features on herself: "I felt, through all my tumult of emotion, a burst of gratitude to the providence of God that I was so changed as that I never could disgrace her by any trace of likeness, as that nobody could ever now look at me and look at her and remotely think of any near tie between us" (449). Esther's scars, then, mask her face much more effectively than her

mother masks herself with boredom and indifference. While Lady Dedlock hopes her performance of pride will subdue suspicions and accusations, Esther's marred face ensures no one will see "any trace of likeness" again and thereby prevents other characters from suspecting a familial tie between the two as Guppy does before Esther's illness.

The narrator of *East Lynne* similarly delays providing Isabel's new appearance post-train wreck. The wreck injures "one leg and lower part of her face," but the narrator does not explain how the "medical men" see her body other than that they believe the wounds are fatal and that an operation would not help (Wood 303). Like Esther, Isabel absents explanation of the pain she feels; "the shock had deadened sensation" so that "she was not yet in pain" (303).[13] The "not yet" indicates that the wounds do eventually cause her pain, but the narrator does not report it. The story skips over the three months she spends in the hospital to describe her appearance after her wounds heal; the focus is not on the pain she experiences or the depth of and damage caused by the wounds but on her body's visible alteration. The narrator emphasizes the extent of this change: "no one could have recognized in the pale, thin, shattered, crippled invalid she who had been known as Lady Isabel Vane" (305).

While the novel contains only one short sketch depicting her innocent beauty, it contains a drawn-out illustration of her post-injury, obviously changed, body:

> But how strangely she is altered! Yes, the railway accident did that for her, and what the accident left undone, grief and remorse accomplished. She limps slightly as she walks, and stoops, which takes from her former height. A scar extends from her chin above her mouth, completely changing the character of the lower part of her face; some of her teeth are missing, so that she speaks with a lisp, and the sober bands of her grey hair—it is nearly silver—are confined under a large and close cap….Who could know her? What resemblance was there between that grey, broken-down woman, with her disfiguring marks, and the once lovely Lady Isabel, with her bright color, her beauty, her dark flowing curls, and her agile figure? Mr. Carlyle himself would not have known her. But she was good-looking still, in spite of it all, gentle and interesting; and people wondered to see that grey hair in one yet young. (367-368)

The narrator repeats that no one could recognize her, not even her former husband, to draw attention to her externally visible, altered features and to demonstrate that her body is no longer interpretable, no longer recognizable as Isabel Vane Carlyle's. Whereas, as O'Farrell illustrates, Rosa Dartle's strong emotions turn her face either pale or red and thereby emphasize her scar so that her passion is very legible on her face, Isabel's mutilation so strongly prevents her somatic legibility that her appearance becomes unrecognizable. Yet her wounded body does not appall those who see her, as Victorian doctors warned scars might do. No one, not even the narrator, calls her beautiful post-injury, but neither does her scarred face repulse as Victorian physicians warn. The people who see her do not find her scars repulsive; neither do they assume her disfigured face embodies some character fault. Though scarred, limping, stooping, gray-haired, and missing teeth, she is still "good-looking," "gentle and interesting." She is covered with "disfiguring marks," but others are still attracted to her and look at her curiously as if trying to read her past on her new face.

Both Isabel and Esther highlight their physical changes to further mask their features and identities. Isabel does so, and aids her mutilation in preventing Carlyle, Barbara, and her own children from recognizing her, by wearing loose-fitting clothing, much different in style than those she previously wore, and blue-tinted glasses. The accessories further obscure her shape and emotional displays. Her ill-fitting jackets cover her thin body loosely, hiding "her bosom rise and fall" so that no one can read any emotionally-caused quickened or labored breathing (Wood 373). Her clothes play a role in drawing attention to and distinguishing her body as Lady Dedlock's do. The blue spectacles not only obfuscate her eyes but also the occasional tears emitted by those eyes; her bonnet shades her face, and her veil further conceals her features. Her altered façade and adornments baffle perception and recognition but also draw attention to her

features; the narrator and other characters constantly refer to her appearance, especially the "frightful 'loose-jackets'" (367). Mrs. Latimer, her reference for her work as a governess, describes her form and dress as strange: "She is the oddest-looking person; wears spectacles, caps, enormous bonnets, and has a great scar on her mouth and chin" (377). And Miss Corny and Barbara wonder aloud why she wears blue-tinted glasses. Yet no one understands that Isabel's accessories work as a disguise either; Mrs. Latimer explains that, though Isabel looks odd, "she is a *gentlewoman*, with it all; and looks one" (377, original emphasis). She does not look as if she is trying to conceal something. Carlyle concludes that her mutilated figure is so different as Madam Vine that "The likeness was not sufficiently striking to cause suspicion" that Madame Vine is Isabel; instead, "It was the disguise that we ought to have suspected" (585). Isabel, however, is so changed, and the change seems so natural, that even her disguising clothing arouses no suspicion.

Isabel's worn, wounded appearance contrasts with Barbara's. The narrator asserts early in the novel that Isabel has dark hair and Barbara light; that Isabel typically dresses down for her station while Barbara does not. These notes of disparity continue after the train wreck, emphasizing the differences between the two women and showing yet again how much Isabel's appearance changes. The narrator details Isabel's altered features several chapters before the two women meet again, and on this meeting, Barbara's is described. Isabel is "grey, broken-down" with gray hair but Barbara looks "Not a day older" and "Her pretty features were attractive as ever, her cheeks were flushed, her blue eyes sparkled, and her light hair was rich and abundant" (367, 382). The narrator directly compares their hair: "A contrast, her hair, to that of the worn woman opposite to her" (382). Isabel's dress reflects her situation as a governess, though she could claim an aristocratic title, while Barbara wears a "gold chain" necklace and "gold

bracelets" and a light blue gown (382). And while Barbara's face is "flushed," Isabel's already gray face is "intensely pale" (382).

Though none of the characters recognize Isabel except for, eventually, the servant Joyce, many note the similarities between Isabel and Madame Vine. Carlyle recognizes a resemblance the day of her arrival; he begins "in a dreamy tone" to tell Barbara that Madame Vine "puts [him] in mind of—of….Her face, I mean," but he stops, "rousing himself" as if realizing how his noticing the likeness would affect his new wife (391). Miss Corny sees a "an extraordinary likeness" when Isabel/Madame Vine breaks her glasses so that she cannot wear them but Miss Corny quickly feels secure that the two women are not the same person (438). Barbara has a vague dislike for Madame Vine, which the narrator explains as resulting from similarities between Madame Vine and Isabel: "for, in her heart of hearts, [Barbara] had never liked [Madame Vine]. She could not have told why….Perhaps it was the unaccountable resemblance that Madame Vine bore to Lady Isabel. A strange likeness, Barbara often thought, but whether it lay in the face, the voice, or the manner, she could never decide. A suspicion of the truth did not cross her mind" (461). But while the adults notice similarities between the governess and the former wife, the children do not. They do not think of Madame Vine as their mother, but they do adore her: "she had greatly endeared herself to them, and they loved her; perhaps Nature was asserting her own hidden claims" (414). Isabel benefits from her disguise and altered features in spite of their painful creation because they make her unrecognizable. Mutilated, she has the agency to return with a new identity to East Lynne to love her children and receive their love in turn.

The narrator of *East Lynne* provides descriptions of Isabel before and after the train wreck and compares the two. Esther, as one of the narrators of *Bleak House*, does not. By not

detailing her original physical features, Esther seems to make herself "bodiless" until she is marked by illness (Fasick 138); she describes her original features only as blushing or pale, as a method of displaying her emotions to the reader, but her concern with her new face and her constant referrals to the veil that hides it emphasize her post-scarring physical presence though they do not specify its alterations. Her body becomes more visible in the text, though the text lacks concrete details of it, because of the scarring that hides her original resemblance to, and thereby her relationship with, Lady Dedlock. Esther emphasizes her altered appearance by wearing veils. Before the change, Esther's head never seems veiled, but they become a noticeable part of her wardrobe afterwards as she actively conceals her mutilated face from other characters. She allows her guardian Jarndyce to see her, and he does so without seeming to react to her scarring, but she postpones seeing her closest companion Ada, who also does not seem to react to her mutilation. Esther's concern with how they will react, however, constantly reminds the reader of her changed face and thereby encourages the reader to imagine it. She hesitates to unveil herself to old and new acquaintances and raises the veil in stages when she meets Woodcourt again. He reacts to her new face; Esther claims that she sees "that he was very sorry for [her]" (*BH* 549). Phiz, the illustrator for the novel, portrays Esther's face before her illness, though the view is often from the side rather than face-on. After she becomes ill, however, Esther's face is always averted in the drawings so that only the back of her head or the brim of her bonnet is shown. The disappearance of her countenance in the illustrations reinforces that her body cannot be read for emotions.

While the narrator of *East Lynne* does not hesitate to portray Isabel's body, Esther, as a first-person narrator, avoids describing her physical self. She is not trustworthy when it comes to her appearance because of her overt modesty and noticeable silences, and she does not provide

much detail of her features even after she is scarred but instead dwells on her use of veils. Ironically, her descriptions of another character, however, indirectly draw attention to her body. Guppy acts as an outward gage of her appearance; his reactions, unlike Jarndyce's, Ada's, or Woodcourt's, convey the extent of her mutilation. Guppy's figure is abundantly detailed, highlighting Esther's less obvious physicality. He compliments her looks during their first meeting, but the compliment is difficult to interpret. Esther comments on the fog, and he responds: "it seems to do you good, miss, judging from your appearance" (36). Esther blushes and laughs, a seemingly appropriate reaction to the ambiguous remark; is he telling her she is pretty or is he suggesting she is more attractive when her face is somewhat veiled by the fog? It is explicitly named a compliment, and as such is an indication that he finds Esther physically appealing; his comment also draws notice to Esther's un-described appearance and incites a physical reaction, one Esther names, and thereby encourages the reader to view her laughing, blushing face.

Guppy's interest in her is further excited when he sees a portrait of Lady Dedlock; it "acts upon him like a charm," so that "he seems to be fixed and fascinated by it" (82). The narrator at this point, not Esther but a third person, does not explicitly interpret Guppy's reaction, but the character's subsequent behavior does hint at the meaning behind his interest. Lady Dedlock is beautiful, which may initially attract his attention, but he also sees a strong likeness between her and Esther. He has only met Esther once and never seen Lady Dedlock, yet the resemblance is so strong that he can trace their biological connection through the painting. With this knowledge of Esther's parentage, he would be able to threaten exposure and take advantage of the aristocrat, especially if he were securely tied to Esther by marriage. His initial compliment and his notice of the similarities between Esther and her mother also suggest that Esther is physically appealing

like her mother, perhaps as much as her mother. Her scarring, however, has happy results for Esther as it allows her to dissociate herself from her mother, protecting Lady Dedlock from social scorn, and saves her from Guppy's unwanted attention and advances. Her altered appearance provides her with the ability to help a loved one and deter an unwanted admirer.

Guppy is not interested in Esther solely because of her relationship with Lady Dedlock; her pleasing face is also of great import to him, as shown when he revokes his proposal after her illness. While his previous comment on Esther's features is ambiguous, his response to her mutilation is not. Upon first seeing her changed face, he has a noticeable reaction, which she carefully records, encouraging the reader to imagine and interpret his response and thereby understand that her face is marred. He stares and attempts to speak with "such faltering, such confusion, such amazement and apprehension" (478). As Esther watches with her maimed countenance, "Something seemed to rise in his throat that he could not possibly swallow. He put his hand there, coughed, made faces, tried again to swallow it, coughed again, made faces again, looked all round the room, and fluttered his papers" (478). The strength of Guppy's reaction serves as self-belittlement; Esther's narrative does not stress the cruelty of his behavior to her and the pain it causes her but mocks him, his arrogance and his superficiality, while also invoking sympathy for and indirect attention to Esther's body. He becomes farcical in insisting Esther speak aloud that his marriage proposal is no longer offered, and the comedy continues as he runs after her and returns to his house more than once to secure this statement from Esther and ensure a witness hears her say the words.

Guppy's elaborate reaction indicates Esther's alteration but also disparages the man for judging a woman by her face, for seeing her as a "marked" woman. As Kimberle L. Brown argues, "Esther learns…that while some people may see the scars on her face as evidence of a

taint to be avoided, other characters…regard Esther's scars as a badge of honor representing her performance of good works" (164). Brown sees Esther's scars as proof of her charity though she also notes some disruption in this reading as different characters have varying ideas on how to interpret the marks. In ridiculing Guppy and focusing on his physical response to Esther's new face, the novel seems criticize those who rely on such readings of the body. While Dickens's 1849 novel, *David Copperfield*, seems to encourage such readings of physical features through Rosa Dartle's scarred face, his 1853 novel, told from the perspective of a scarred woman, complicates such readings to the point of the body's removal from legibility.

The novel strengthens Guppy's role as a comic weathervane for Esther's physical attractions by having him renew his proposal after many months have passed and Esther's mother dies. Esther does not directly comment on her face recovering its former comeliness; she actually indicates the opposite in spite of Woodcourt's remarks. She concludes the novel by listing the physical attractions of her friends and ignoring her own, which she may or may not have regained: "that they can very well do without much beauty in me—even supposing—" (*BH* 770). She has no reason to rejoice in her scars as her mother's death prevents comparisons between their faces and Sir Leicester knows of the connection; she no longer needs a mask. But Esther's noticeable silence on her appearance is complemented by Guppy's second marriage proposal. He, accompanied by his mother and another witness, explains to Esther and Jarndyce that "Miss Summerson's image was formerly imprinted on [his] art, and that [he] made her a proposal of marriage" (756). The word choice demonstrates Guppy's concern with Esther's physical appearance; the "image" of her is what appeals to him, and the language used suggests that this image is embodied on himself, that his physical heart holds the memory of Esther's face. When "circumstances…over which [he] had no control" occur, the "impression" of that image is

"weakened" (756). In other words, when illness mars her attractions, he no longer values her. His accent shortens the word heart to "art," conflating his organ with art as if the attractive pre-scarred body image is pictured on one of his own body parts. His heart, therefore, does not respond to an altered view of that image. Previously, upon explaining that the proposal is no longer valid, he suggests that financial matters prevent their union, but he reveals that he is much more concerned with her face. And his second proposal indicates that her former appearance is restored: "the image which [Guppy] did suppose had been eradicated from [his] heart is *not* eradicated" (756). Though Esther, as narrator, does not guess at his thoughts, his behavior reveals more about her appearance than she does and invites the reader to picture her as restored to her former beauty. Her marred features are apparent in spite of her narration, veils, and her hesitation to show her face. Her scars and veils make her seem more physical as a character, more viewable to a reader, but Guppy's actions also indirectly describe her appearance. Like Isabel, Esther is scarred, but unlike Isabel, she recovers her health and beauty. Her mutilation aids the plot, and her own wishes, in explaining why no one but Guppy sees the relationship between her and Lady Dedlock, just as Isabel's mutilation prevents her former husband and family from recognizing her.

As Pamela Gilbert argues, wounds in Victorian fiction symbolize the "testing and creation of the self" (*Mapping* 129). Isabel's and Esther's bodies are legible through facial coloring, but made illegible through mutilation, reshaping their bodies and how others can read them. Once Isabel's body suffers in the train wreck, her body is recreated as similar to but also very different from her previous body. This recreation of the physical, marked by scars, prevents her body from revealing her identity, which gives her the opportunity to change her identity from Lady Isabel Carlyle nee Vane to Isabel Vine, a Frenchman's widow. Both hers and Esther's

marks obscure somatic signs yet make their bodies hyper-visible to the narrators, other characters, and in the reader's imagination. Before their mutilation, both characters blush and turn pale as their bodies express their mental states, but afterwards, their bodies rarely do and are not comprehended by others in these moments. Like Phil, they are so marked that their bodies are made "*too much* a body" (Porter xiii); disability often represents or exposes "symbolic values" (Mitchell and Snyder 12), yet Dickens and Wood use mutilation to draw attention to the body's appearance and to redefine its symbolic value. After all, Isabel's and Esther's scars do not encourage others to think they are liars or morally inept as Cooper suggests. Yet, the novels do indicate that mutilation prevents others from interpreting their bodies. This disability certainly has its benefit as the characters can and do recreate themselves according to their own desires; Isabel certainly breaks social mores, without repercussion, in hiding behind her new face to return to her old home.

For both the protagonists of *Bleak House* and *East Lynne*, scars remove female bodies from the legible sign system while making the bodies hyper-visible to the narrators, characters, and reader. But mutilation is not the only method of making a character's body viewable; facial coloring and the metaphorical masking of features do so as well but to a lesser extent. Blushing, pallor, and masks may act as somatic signs for mental states, but this system encourages not only a description of the affected features but also an interpretation of what they indicate about the character's mental state. Somatic signs bring attention to the body but also direct attention away from it. The scars on the two women effectively, and at least for Isabel, permanently, obscure the legibility of bodies. This obfuscation does not depend on making the bodies less visible but rather focuses attention on the body instead of what it may signify. The bodies become more visible because of their atypical marks and as other characters try and fail to read them.

Narratives, then, can use marks of physical pain to draw attention to the body and to overwrite any participation in the legible sign system so that the character is visible less as a sign, as an embodied being, and more as a body.

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[1] According to Gilbert and Gubar, male writers set a dichotomy of woman's bodies, "extreme images of 'angel' and 'monster'" (17). The descriptions of Isabel's body before her marriage clearly align her with the "angel," beautiful and pure. Wood does complicate her angelic appearance and behavior and disrupt the dichotomy of angel/monster as Gilbert and Gubar argue female writers should do: "women must kill the aesthetic ideal" (17).

[2] Of course, there is some difficulty in a first-person narrator describing him or herself; in another Dickens' novel with first-person narration, *David Copperfield*, the protagonist does not describe his features. This difficulty may be worsened for a nineteenth-century female character if the author does not want her to appear vain; Jane Eyre tells her reader that she is "plain" and "small" but gives no details, even when she sees herself in a mirror (*JE* 292). Wilkie Collins maneuvers around this problem for his female narrator of *The Law and the Lady*; Valeria avoids seeming narcissistic though she describes her reflection as she and her husband look in a mirror on their wedding day. Instead of directly describing her body, Valeria tempers the potential impropriety of such a description through the use of several caveats. She is not so much chronicling her own features as she is explaining what a mirror pictures; she does not only delineate herself but also the husband who stands at her side. She only looks in the mirror at her aunt's insistence, and the mirror itself is placed in a church instead of a dressing room or other place associated with vanity. Since *Bleak House* contains two narrators, the third-person narrator could provide Esther's features; Collins's *The Woman in White* uses several narrators who give descriptions of each other. The other narrator of *Bleak House* does not, however, depict Isabel's body.

[3] Elaine Scarry contends that non-viewable or nonphysical pain is often described in terms of the physical, by weapons and wounds (*The Body* 16), and Wood occasionally uses such metaphors. Isabel's regret for leaving her husband, for example, "sharply wound[s] her with its adder-like stings" (Wood 269). More often, however, Wood's narrator demonstrates nonphysical pain through pallor rather than descriptions of physical harm. Darwin pairs pallor with terror, envy, rage, and grief (77, 79, 74, 176).

[4] Indeed, Wood's descriptions of characters reacting to feelings reads like fictional examples for Darwin's *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*.

[5] Jealousy is, as Sianne Ngai explains, "Moralized and uglified to such an extent that it becomes shameful to the subject who experiences it" (129). Not only do Barbara and Isabel feel jealous of each other, but they are also ashamed of this jealousy. Isabel's jealousy is perhaps more reasonable as she is Carlyle's wife and knows he has some sort of relationship with Barbara,

most of which is carried on in secret, but even with this justification, Isabel rarely speaks of her envy. The shame that accompanies this feeling strips envy "of its potential critical agency—as an ability to recognize, and antagonistically respond to, potentially real and institutionalized forms of inequality" (129).

[6] One nineteenth-century reviewer certainly interpreted her love for a married man as something indecent or wrong: "When we leave the married life of Isabel for that of Barbara, we feel that we have left a rarer, sweeter, deeper nature for one that is comparatively vulgar and uninteresting" ("Review of *EL*" 371). The writer acknowledges that Isabel "falls" from social grace while Barbara does not, but claims that "Barbara's avowal of love for the married Carlyle, together with the entire absence of any conscientious endeavor at a self-conquest, causes her not remotely to approximate the offense. Moreover, Barbara has not been tempted like her unhappy rival" (371).

[7] I am not suggesting that the sound of her voice is physical but rather that her throat, mouth, and vocal chords are. In her excitement, she does not control these body parts as much as usual so that her mental state shows through her lack of control, her brief inability speak in her normal tone.

[8] Nadya Chishty-Mujahid argues that George Eliot's Hetty Sorrel and Elizabeth Gaskell's Ruth link fallenness with "an emotional fall and a loss of self-esteem" as well as a "tenuous sense of identity" (58). Except for a few passages, Lady Dedlock succeeds in hiding her "conscious-stricken" and "wretched" self, but she never seems to lose her sense of identity (*BH* 352). Esther, however, does have an initially unknown and then purposefully hidden identity that does connect her with the confusion of self that Chisty-Mujahid argues is innate for the fallen women of Victorian novels.

[9] Victorian physicians also directly connected marks with female physiology and reproductivity by claiming each menstrual cycle scars women's sexual organs; in doing so, the doctors tie female bodies with mutilation. Charles Meigs explains how he performs an autopsy on a woman who died while menstruating. He notices several marks on the ovaries and cuts through one to examine how menstruating affects the female body. He comes to the conclusion that every menstrual period scars the ovaries:

> There were other cicatrices of still older menstruations; and I doubt not that, if the young woman had had during her life forty menstruations, she had had forty cicatrices of the wounds or ruptures of the Graafian cells, through which the ova had escaped.
>
> I do not mean to assert that an anatomist ought to be able to count, upon the ovaria of a subject, the number of menstruations, by counting the scars; for many of the succeeding ruptures must take place through old scars, thus confounding or blending them together. What I wish to express is, the opinion that a woman never does menstruate without rupturing a Graafian follicle and discharging an ovulum, and leaving a scar of the hila. (142-143)

Though Meigs equivocates in this discovery by contending that the marks cannot be accurately counted as they occasionally overlap, his first assertion, that if the woman had forty cycles, her ovaries would have forty scars, and his insistence that menstruation leaves a scar, demonstrates

his belief that the mutilations can be read as a history of the women's reproductive processes, that the inner functions of female bodies are legible via autopsy. In doing so, he closely relates female bodies and scarring.

[10] Cooper's claim is supported by examples of scarred men in two nineteenth-century novels. Sir Percival Glyde, the illegitimate baronet of Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White* (1859-1860), has a "red scar" on his hand (103). Although this scar is seen by his fiancé and then wife Laura, her sister, and the man she loves, no one judges him for or thinks less of him because of it. In *Can You Forgive Her* (1864-1865), Anthony Trollope marks George Vavasor's face with a scar that remains fairly noticeable at all times and prominent when the face expresses anger. When frustrated, George's scar opens to that it resembles a new wound: "On some occasions, when he was angry or disappointed, it was very hideous; for he would so contort his face that the scar would, as it were, stretch itself out, revealing all its horrors, and his countenance would become all scar" (49). George obtains the scar in what his fiancé considers a worthy fashion; when robbers threaten his sister's belongings and person, he fights and kills one. Yet in spite of and because of its formation, the scar does not deter his cousin from accepting his marriage proposal. Though no character in either work despises Glyde or George for their marks, validating Cooper's point, the marks are limited to the bodies of the villains of both works, which suggests that scars on men may be legible. A review of descriptions of missing or wanted persons, entitled "Rather Personal," similarly ties villainous behavior with mutilation on a male body; it names a sailor wanted for robbery as a "marked man" because of the detailed description of his appearance, which includes "a slight scar on forehead, mole on left cheek, two moles on chest, one mole in bend of right arm, scars on each groin, many scars at the bottom of his back and left hip," and a tattoo (322).

[11] This view may result from the increasing prominence of and backlash against the use of cosmetics, which sellers promoted as able to hide marks like scars. Creams and cosmetics were "generally held under…moral suspicion" as an attempt to deceive, indicating the body should be displayed as is, though any marks might be held against it (Briefel 463). While these cosmetics may have hidden superficial defects, they likely caused physical harm as they often included toxic ingredients such as arsenic, lead, and mercury; with these ingredients, they might irritate the skin, disfigure the face, or fatally poison (463-464). Victorian doctor Lionel J. Beale does not claim that covering a scar with cosmetics is immoral, but he does argue that "sound" minds lead to "sound" bodies (viii). Though he focuses on deformities and other features more disabling than a simple scar, his claim implies that those with atypical features are not mentally well or whole; any person with an unusual physical aspect causes his or her own ostracism through a matching mental or character deficiency.

[12] In spite of the anonymity allowed by Isabel's scarring and the lack of other characters interpreting her scars as a sign of some illicit desire, her death is "generally viewed" by literary critics as the inevitable result of her behavior, "a punishment inflicted by Wood as the penalty for her heroine's adultery" (Beller 220). Anne-Marie Beller, Winifred Hughes, Kimberly Reynolds, Nicola Humble, Stevie Davies, and Lyn Pyckett are examples of these literary critics. Gail Walker, however, argues that Isabel's punishment is her adultery, a "punishment visited upon her for her earlier failure to abide fully by the sentimental ideal of true womanhood" (24). Tamar Heller attests that the narrator may not encourage sympathy for the novel's heroine, but

the inclusion of a narrator and "the 'wild tumult' of Isabel's thoughts" evokes more sympathy for Isabel than stories of fallen women generally allow (137). I agree with Heller that Isabel's mutilation garners sympathy rather punishes her for her behavior; it has its benefits. Her wounds allow her to return to her family and nurse her dying child. Furthermore, she can fulfill her own maternal desires better as a governess than as Carlyle's wife. While married, she had little control over her household and children because of Miss Corny's interference. Rosenman notes that Isabel as governess does not suffer under the "constraints" of the ideal mother, one that is "never angry, never possessive, never, one infers, passionate in any way" but can enjoy a "daily intimacy" with the children and can express her "emotional investment" more passionately than she could as a wife ("Mimic" 29). Dan Bivona, however, suggests Isabel as governess's mothering is too passionate, even erotic.

[13] For further reading on Victorian ideas of shock and psychological reactions to physical trauma, see Jill L. Matus's *Shock, Memory, and the Unconscious in Victorian Fiction*.

CHAPTER TWO
TANGIBLE BODIES: INJURY AS EVIDENCE OF ABUSE

"Just put your hand in mine, Janet—that I may have the evidence of touch as well as sight, to prove you are near me" (*Jane Eyre* 351).

"The muscular hand broke from my custody; my arm was seized, my shoulder, neck, waist….'Is it Jane?....In truth?—in the flesh? My living Jane?" (500).

The previous chapter considers how descriptions of mental discomfort and marks of physical pain elicit details of characters' appearances. This chapter dwells on moments of touch that encourage the reader to imagine two characters as tangible as well as visible beings. Narratives emphasize characters' physical interactions with each other when they are violent. Portrayals of abuse are made physical to the reader (and often viewable) through descriptions of both the moments of abuse and the victims' healing, as the marks fade to unmarked skin. The abused bodies become imaginable to readers as the text draws attention to the injuries, victims, and abusers, providing the details necessary to demonstrate the changes on their bodies.

I argue in this chapter that violence makes characters and narrators more aware of their own and others' physical features. Violence often acts as a means of exhibiting bodies regardless of the characters' socioeconomic class or desires. Most of the examples of violence between two characters studied in this chapter involve a man harming a woman or child; male to female violence is a popular motif in Victorian literature, and such violence was socially scorned by Victorian culture. This scorn often spurs characters to hide any evidence of the abuse, which adds interesting complications to the narrators' and other characters' portrayals of evidences, a point I will return to throughout the chapter. Destruction emphasizes the physical nature of characters as descriptions of harm focus on their bodies and on the physical changes they experience. Mutilation accentuates a character's appearance because marks elicit descriptions that provide details of that changed appearance. Violence similarly elicits details of how one is

harmed by touch, and encourages readers to imagine that touch, to imagine the character's tangibility. Consider the epigraph above, which demonstrates the importance of touch in addition to or instead of sight to "prove" a person's presence. In the first quote, the touch is mentioned but not detailed. In the second, however, the then blind Rochester seems violent. Unable to view Jane, Rochester grasps her, and Jane describes his "muscular" hold upon her; his heavy-handedness causes her to detail his touch and thereby her own physical presence for the reader. In depicting his physical hold on her, she makes both of them tangible to readers.

This chapter will examine several examples of violence from eight novels and a novel-in-verse; it is divided into three sections. Overall, it argues that corporeal violence, often demonstrated through details of touch between characters, fleshes out these characters as tangible, and often visible, objects for other characters and the reader. The first section, titled, Abused and Tangible Bodies, establishes this point. The remaining two sections consider how violence manipulates or does not participate in the readable sign system of the body. The first section considers a lower-class character in *Oliver Twist* and a higher-class character in *Jane Eyre* to demonstrate that violence between characters is not restricted by socioeconomic status. Violence draws attention to the characters' bodies so that the reader reads for a bodily experience and description rather than reading through bodies for mental states.

In the next section I consider how evidence of violence redirects the readable sign system discussed in the Introduction and Chapter One. It is divided into three subsections that consider variations of this redirection. First, I focus on characters from Trollope's *The Small House at Allington*, Dickens's *Dombey and Son*, and Collins's *The Woman in White*. In these novels, the victims leave the privacy of their homes and turn their bodies into public matter: open for discussion, capable of being read, and even displayed as proof of another's hurtful conduct. By

placing their injuries on display, these characters upset the typical readable sign system as the abused figure becomes legible for something other than the victim's mind. Bruises indicating a character experienced pain reveal not the harmed character's thoughts and emotions but rather the thoughts and emotions of the *abuser*; a battered body can be read for another's mental states rather than one's own. Yet their injured bodies are, or can be, empowering because they are evidence of another's misuse and can be used as such. While the abuse emphasizes the physical vulnerability of the victims, the evidence of that abuse can make the abusers' social positions vulnerable. Secondly, I turn to characters in Trollope's *Can You Forgive Her* and Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* who feel ashamed of their marks and do not want them, and the experience of obtaining them, to become public knowledge. Physical marks may evidence pain and the character may hide the marks, indicating they are a source of shame. Victims' wounds can bring social scorn to the batterers, but some of the abused characters act, with various levels of success, to keep their experiences private by lying about the cause of harm or secluding themselves. They limit physical descriptions of their bodies. But though the victims prevent others from seeing their bruises or understanding the causes of their contusions, the characters are curious about the injuries. This curiosity of the characters invites the reader to similarly wonder about the victims' experiences, to attempt to read the victims' bodies and read into their explanations for the harm they experienced. Lastly, I examine Cathy of Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* as an example of a character who harms herself to manipulate others' interpretations of her physically manifested violence.

The third and last section of this chapter examines female characters subjected to sexual violence in *Wuthering Heights* and Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh*. This section separates the discussion of sexual violence from other types of physical abuse, giving this topic

special attention because of the difficulty in portraying sexual sadism while remaining within acceptable limits of mainstream Victorian propriety. Sexually abused bodies do not readily signify the abuse they experience; they do not engage with the readable sign system. Yet the narrations, unable to display this violence on the victims' bodies, displace elements of the sexual abuse so that it becomes apparent in the texts. The abused characters cannot physically display sexual abuse, but the narratives emphasize body parts and make violence prominent so that the reader envisions violence against the character. Because they do not show much evidence of sexual assault, the victims of this abuse often appear less tangible or are more difficult for the reader to envision than the victims of other forms of physical abuse. I argue that the violence they experience becomes apparent on other characters and objects; the violence is displaced but apparent so that the reader can imagine it.

Before I turn to these works, I will define what I mean by the term *violence*. This chapter narrows my focus to intentional, physical harm. I do not use the term *domestic violence* because, while much of the violence happens in domestic spaces, it does not remain confined to the home. News of the injuries spread, making the abuse and event public within the worlds of the novels. This chapter relies heavily on sensation novels as many include villains who readily abuse others. However, it also includes other popular Victorian works, realistic novels and even a novel-in-verse, all with diversified modes of narration to demonstrate how violence pervades conventional nineteenth-century literature. The dependence on violence in literature registers a broader and growing concern with abuse against women and children, regardless of their social statuses, in Victorian culture.[1] In considering varying forms of abuse, I expand our understanding of Victorian ideas of physical violence and how narrations, in depicting violence, depend upon details of corporeality. Novels and poetry, regardless of whether they strive for

realism or sensationalism, describe how such violence occurs to and appears on the body, emphasizing characters as tangible beings for the reader.

Abused and Tangible Bodies

This section considers physical abuse to demonstrate how fiction reveals characters' physical features through violence. Perhaps the most notorious depiction of physical abuse in Victorian fiction is Bill Sikes's murder of Nancy in *Oliver Twist*. Issues of class often color literary criticism of this episode, which this chapter considers before turning to instances of brutality among bourgeois and upper class characters. In *Jane Eyre*, the upper class status of the Reed family affects how the family views Jane and the wounds that demonstrate the abuse she experiences in their home. These novels have different narrative structures and include violence within different socioeconomic situations, yet both provide many specific details of abuse.

Nancy's death in *Oliver Twist* (1838) is an infamous scene of violence in Victorian literature. Descriptions of Nancy's physical features occur before her death, especially when she dresses the part of Oliver's brother, but Sikes's attack against Nancy emphasizes her material nature as the narrator describes him continually hitting her, destroying her flesh. Dickens was certainly proud of this passage; he was "quite literally obsessed" with the character's death and constantly performed it in his public readings (Preston 91). He divides this section between two chapters. In the first, the omniscient narrator highlights Sikes's violence against Nancy, and thereby materializes the character so that she has a tactile presence in the text. Sikes "grasp[s] her by the head and throat," "drag[s]" her out of bed, and "place[s] his heavy hand upon her mouth" as if to suffocate her (*OT* 316). The word choice and active voice create a picture of his strength and her vulnerability. Nancy escapes from his hold, "wrestling with the strength of

mortal fear," only to grab ahold of her attacker, "clinging to him," as a sign of her affection, so that he cannot "tear" her away (316). Her embrace clashes with his murderous thoughts so that he seems to kill her less from revenge than simply to release her physical hold upon him. He does not try to suffocate her again but avoids directly touching her, yet his weapons make her body as tangible as his fists. Realizing the noise of a gunshot would lead to his immediate capture, he strikes her with the pistol, "beat[ing] it twice with all the force he could summon upon the upturned face that almost touched his own" (316). Blood from the "deep gash on her forehead" blinds Nancy so that she falls, but she "with difficulty" maneuvers herself into a kneeling position of prayer (316, 317). The "ghastly figure" of her bloodied body in this form is too much for Sikes, much like her touch, so he raises his hand to block the view of it. He does not want to see the destruction he causes. But though Sikes covers the body, the narrator continues to detail the violence Sikes enacts against it. These details encourage the reader to envision the body as Sikes tries to stop picturing it.

At this point, Dickens pauses the narrative with a chapter break; the preceding chapter ends with Nancy alive while the next chapter, the second section, focuses on her flesh without referring to the (still living but soon dead) figure as Nancy, emphasizing specific features rather than the character as a whole. The figure becomes the "murdered woman" and then is referred to only by sounds, movements, or parts (317). There is a "moan," a "motion of the hand," eyes "glaring upward," and "the body" (317). The moan suggests pain, but the omniscient narrator does not describe what Nancy feels.[2] The noise terrifies Sikes; he attacks her for a second time ("with terror added to hate, he had struck and struck again") and throws a rug over the form to hide it from his sight only to find that the hidden body is more horrifying to him because he imagines Nancy watching him rather than a corpse with unseeing eyes (317).[3] He would rather

see her corpse than imagine she is alive. The last time the narrator refers to Nancy's corporeality, it is no longer described as a human corpse but marked only by an excess of bodily components: "*mere* flesh and blood, *no more*—but such flesh, and so much blood!" (317, my emphasis). The amount of blood is overwhelming; Sikes has to rip off pieces of his blood-stained clothing and notices that the dog is tracking blood throughout the room. Much like Isabel's and Esther's, Nancy's mutilated body becomes hyper-visible, too visible for Sikes, though it no longer reveals her emotions as it did when she clung to her attacker. Instead, her destroyed flesh is a sign of his violence. Dickens's narrator makes Nancy's figure tangible to the reader by detailing Sikes' abuse against it so that the reader imagines him striking her until her body lies broken. It becomes known to the world created by the novel as well; Sikes literally exposes it in cutting it open so that internal materials escape. Then he and the dog track Nancy's blood outside of the home, turning her body into a public display. The spreading news of the murder further exhibits her corpse.

Yet several critics suggest that Nancy's violent death and the ensuing display of physical parts do not seem so unusual because of the character's socioeconomic standing in the novel. While Oliver, born to parents of a higher class, rises above the values, behavior, and even the speech of Fagin and Sikes, Nancy does not. Her digression from social rules is evident in the scene of her murder; she is not married, and the narrator explicitly states that Sikes enters his "own room" and finds her "lying, half-dressed" (315). Recent studies on violence against women in Victorian literature, such as Marlene Tromp's *The Private Rod: Marital Violence, Sensation, and the Law in Victorian Britain*, Kate Lawson and Lynn Shakinovsky's *The Marked Body: Domestic Violence in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Literature*, and Lisa Surridge's *Bleak Houses: Marital Violence in Victorian Fiction*, consider this relation of class and abuse in

nineteenth-century literature and connect violence, and the ensuing exposure of bodies, with a lower class. Tromp questions why sensation novels, often made sensational partially by the physical abuse of characters, were popularized by the middle class, a group which, one would expect, would find such abuse appalling; Lawson and Shakinovsky argue that Victorian fiction conveys domestic violence against bourgeois women with a "certain invisibility and silence" (7); and Surridge notes that what is shocking about many examples of domestic abuse in Victorian fiction is that they are *not* confined to the lower classes.

The reader can imagine Nancy as tangible because of the violence she faces, but this materialization and the violence that causes it are not dependent on her lower socioeconomic standing. Nor is it dependent on her prostitution and the role her sexuality may or may not play in her work. Nancy Armstrong argues convincingly that the "illicit desire[s]" of "monstrous women" are the "cause of all the disruptive events" in Victorian novels, and that such women are typically not of "middle-class origins" (177, 183). Yet in concentrating on reading for desires of lower-class female characters, suggesting that their desires written on their physical features by labeling them "monstrous,"[4] we dismiss actual corporeal descriptions.[5] I contend that in reading for class and desire, we overlook characters' material nature, how touch invites readers to imagine them as physical beings. Marks caused by violent touch disrupt the readable sign system discussed in the last chapter, that of reading one's body as a sign for one's mental state. Characters may still engage in a readable sign system, but violent touch can interfere with a character's somatic signs for her mental states. Violence between two characters highlights their physical features for the victim, abuser, other characters, and the reader.

In Charlotte Brontë's 1847 novel, Jane Eyre relates her own story and does not hide the abuse she endures in her upper-class home. She focuses on her physical sufferings and the

upper-class bully who causes them, making them known to her readers and giving herself a strong material presence in her narration. This materiality becomes evident within the first chapter of the novel as she details moments in which her cousin injures her. Her cousin torments her in a three-pronged attack.[6] Jane's account focuses on the moment of abuse rather than the visible signs of violence that would inevitably have followed. First, John Reid "str[ikes] suddenly and strongly," causing her to step back out of his reach (*JE* 13). Secondly, continuing his abuse without leaving his chair, he employs a book as a missile. The actual book hurts her less than the fall it causes; Jane explains: "I instinctively started aside with a cry of alarm: not soon enough, however; the volume was flung, it hit me, and I fell, striking my head against the door and cutting it. The cut bled, the pain was sharp" (13). Last of all, he wrestles her while she, bleeding, lies on the floor and fights back: "I felt him grasp my hair and my shoulder: he had closed with a desperate thing….I felt a drop or two of blood from my head trickle down my neck…and I received him in frantic sort" (14). Jane claims in her narration that she does not know how she responds to the attack, but she does harm him so that he cries out and her aunt ends the fight and blames Jane for attacking John. Though Jane provides little detail of the pain she feels or causes, she dwells on her physical experiences during the fight, cataloging affected body parts (such as her hair, head, neck, and shoulder), encouraging the reader to imagine the depth of her figure by explaining that the cut releases blood, and emphasizing her materiality by suggesting she is confined and subject to further harm by the limited space of the room.

As the first-person narrator, Jane controls the reader's access to details, and her description of John's violence brings the reader's attention to her physical self. Within the novel, however, Mrs. Reid limits the exposure of her son's abusive nature and how it affects Jane. She seems less concerned with Jane's injuries than in maintaining her family's

respectability. She blames Jane rather than her son for the violence and attempts to punish as well as hide the girl and her injuries by "shut[ting] [her] up in the red-room" (29). The aunt also keeps Jane in the house the next day while she takes her children out. Her efforts to prevent others from noticing Jane's wounds continue as she employs the cheaper apothecary whom she usually calls for the servants rather than the physician whom she utilizes for herself and her children. This choice of care also reflects her own disinclination to spend money on her niece but simultaneously indicates her conviction that the wounds are serious enough to warrant medical attention. Furthermore, the aunt prompts the servants to dislike Jane and conceal the violence she faces in the house. The maids, Bessie and Abbot, comply with their mistress's orders to lock Jane in the red room, but they also threaten to increase the punishment by using garters as "bonds" to keep the child sitting on a chair (25). Bessie attempts to conceal the abuse Jane faces within the home by telling the apothecary that the cut on Jane's forehead is caused by "a fall" and that Jane cries because "she could not go out with Missis in the carriage," but Jane "blunt[ly]" asserts that she "was knocked down" and that she cries because she is "miserable" (28). The apothecary decides from Jane's account that she needs a "change of air and scene" and convinces the aunt to send Jane to school and away from her tormentor (31). Ironically, however, Jane is further harmed and further obscured during her stay at Brocklehurst's charitable institution.

Jane's suffering garners attention from some characters, such as the Reeds, Bessie, Abbot, the apothecary, and Miss Temple, yet the Reeds and Brocklehurst limit its availability to within the home and the school. Jane does not illustrate the aftereffects of abuse, such as bruises, on her body for the reader. However, simply in narrating her story, she makes these events public to any readers, whether her supposed readers exist within the world of the novel (which

might include Miss Temple, her cousins, Rochester, and readers Jane might not know) or readers outside of the novel (those who read Brontë's novel narrated by Jane Eyre). Yet she also limits the extent of the exposure of her physical self; her features are not displayed as openly as Nancy's as she slowly dies and as materials from her corpse are spread outside the place of murder on Sikes's feet and the dog's paws. Charlotte Brontë, in creating a first person narrator who experiences much physical abuse and who, many years later writes of her life, enables her novel to focus on the narrator's physical presence without suggesting that Jane partakes in socially scorned behavior as Nancy does. Brontë also shows how other characters limit the exposure of Jane's physical suffering. Jane, in detailing the violence she faces, discloses the abuse she experiences at others' hands and thereby demonstrates her own corporeality. Just as she tells the apothecary of her mistreatment, Jane also tells her "dear reader," whom she directly addresses more than thirty times in the story.[7]

Violent Disruptions of the Readable Sign System

Jane spreads stories of the abuse but does not dwell on physical proof of her suffering. How long does it take for the cut on her forehead, caused by John throwing the book so that she falls, to heal? Does it leave a scar? She is less concerned with making her body visible than giving it a physical presence through language, in sharing her bodily experiences. By explaining what she physically experiences, juxtaposing her figure with John's, the wall, and his weapons, her narrative details her sufferings and thereby makes her seem physical, touchable, to the reader. The marks she does describe, such as the cut, do not point to the abuser; Jane could have, as Bessie tells the apothecary, received the cut on her head by accident, by tripping and falling, instead of through violence at another's hands. This section considers examples from novels

with other forms of narration to analyze marks caused by abuse. The first of the three subdivisions considers the somatic language of bruises. Attackers leave bruises that act as signs of their identities on the victims' bodies, creating potentially public indications of their assaults. The abuser's harm tends to overshadow signs for mental states that the victim might display. Whereas *East Lynne* and *Bleak House* depict scars as more completely obscuring characters' somatic signs, the texts examined in this chapter depict marks of violence as overwriting the victims' somatic signs, highlighting the abusers' mental states on the victims' bodies instead of the victims' feelings. The second subdivision turns to portrayals of violence in which the narrators and other characters conceal the extent of abuse and thereby limit the corporeality of the victims, restricting the exhibition of the wounds from the reader. The last subdivision considers how the sign system can be manipulated by self-violence; it studies Cathy of *Wuthering Heights*, who exhibits her injuries, making her self-caused injuries public, to sway interpretations of her body.

Bodies Evidencing Abuse

Bruises do not break the skin to reveal interior physical spaces as Sikes's assault against Nancy does, but they do allow the interior blood to show through the skin in a way that it usually does not. They are both temporary and, regardless of severity, readily hidden by a layer of clothing as they do not require bandages. Like scars, they make characters visible because they stand out from un-injured skin and attract attention, but their temporary nature, like a blush or pallor, serves as a reminder that the mark is atypical and will fade. Isabel's and Esther's scars become less noticeable to other characters as they become accustomed to the mutilated bodies, but the more fleeting nature of bruises reminds the reader and other characters, for as long as the

bruises remain, that each one was made because the character was recently strongly handled. Most importantly for these novels, the bruises, unlike the scars in *East Lynne* and *Bleak House*, reveal the size and shape of the things that cause them. Trollope's *The Small House at Allington* (1864), Dickens's *Dombey and Son* (1846-1848), and Collins's *The Woman in White* (1859) use pain to encourage readers to imagine characters' physical features. In these novels, marks caused by abuse point to the perpetrator; they reveal not only the attacker's violent tendencies but also his identity. The authors reconfigure the reading of one's façade for one's mental states by having marks of abuse on a victim signify the mind and body of the attacker. They accomplish this redirection through the use of bruises. Trollope, Dickens, and Collins use bruises, often in the shape of handprints, to emphasize the characters' physical natures to other characters and the reader. The violent characters literally imprint themselves onto their victims. These injured characters do not need to tell of their abuse as Jane does to counter her aunt's lies; their bruises speak for themselves. The victims' features do not reveal their own mental states but act as testimonies of another's thought and behavior, pointing to their abusers and indicating the abusers' tendencies towards violence. The victims' wounds reflect their own materiality but also the materiality and minds of others.

In *The Small House at Allington*, Trollope uses a black eye to valorize Johnny Eames and cause Crosbie public discomfort for breaking his first marriage engagement to Johnny's friend Lily. Violence, in this example, is not necessarily malicious: Johnny's purpose is to mark Crosbie in such a way that others may see him and know he has been thrashed for humiliating and abanoning Lily so that he can marry a woman with a title. Johnny yells at Crosbie ("You confounded scoundrel"), "seize[s] him by the throat, throw[s] himself upon him," and the two fall into a book stall, where Johnny "laid his foe prostrate among the newspapers, falling himself

into the yellow shilling-novel depot" (371). Johnny manages to "lodge one blow with his fist in Crosbie's eye—one telling blow" (371). Johnny worries that he fails in his attempt to publicly shame Crosbie with a thrashing that will be apparent to any who see the man, but the hit to the eye is "telling," proof of the "great fact" of Johnny's success and Crosbie's shame (372). Crosbie's eye is "swollen and closed, and [soon] it would be as black as a hat" (372). The policeman who breaks up the scuffle assures Crosbie that Johnny's has already succeeded in spreading news of the engaged man's misbehavior through the black eye: "All London shall hear of it, and shall know why. If you have any shame in you, you shall be ashamed to show your face" (374). Crosbie explains to his employer and housekeeper that the black eye as the result of an "accident," but viewers can tell "that the mark had been made by another man's fist" (376). The black eye ensures that news of Crosbie's broken engagement spreads, so that others seem able to read of Crosbie's callous treatment of a lady on his face. Yet the mark on Crosbie also reveals much about his abuser, Johnny; it shows Crosbie's shame as well as Johnny's feelings. As Johnny is no close relation to Lily, unlike her cousin who also contemplates fighting Crosbie, his punch demonstrates that he loves one of the two women engaged to marry Crosbie.

Florence of *Dombey and Son* is hit only once by her father, but the action brings her body to the forefront of the story. The omniscient third-person narrator often emphasizes her emotions rather than her body. As she approaches her father to condole him after his wife leaves, she "felt as if her heart would burst with grief," but, "Yielding at once to the impulse of her affection, timid at all other times, but bold in its truth to him in his adversity, and undaunted by past repulse, Florence….hastened towards him unchecked, with her arms stretched out…as if she would have clasped him round the neck" (*D&S* 632). She hurries across the house and raises her arms, but the passage focuses more on her often-repulsed affection for her father instead of her

physical self. Her intent of a loving embrace resembles that of Rochester's grasp of Jane in the epigraph. While Rochester's grasp is more violent, Florence's embrace is incomplete as her father hurts her to prevent her touch. She remains in the background, referred to in passive voice, when her father reacts against her: "But in his frenzy, he lifted up his cruel arm, and struck her, crosswise, with that heaviness, that she tottered on the marble floor; and as he dealt the blow, he told her what Edith was, and bade her follow her, since they had always been in league" (632). The passage focuses on his actions, the "blow" and condemnation of her as physically impure like her (seemingly) adulterous step-mother, rather than her experience of being hit.

After the blow happens, however, the omniscient narrator conveys Florence's wound as a matter of concern and shame for her; she views the bruise as evidence of her father's dislike of her. The bruise caused by the blow does not readily fade. Florence's preoccupation with it emphasizes the materiality of her body to herself and the reader, manipulating the reader to continuously picture the mark on Florence. She sees or purposefully avoids seeing it a few times; both actions bring the reader's attention to it: "Then she knew—in a moment, for she shunned it instantly, that on her breast there was the darkening mark of an angry hand" (646); "She dared not look into the glass; for the sight of the darkening mark upon her bosom made her afraid of herself….She covered it up, with a hasty, faltering hand" (653); "The cruel mark was on her bosom yet. It rose against her father with the breath she drew, it lay between her and her lover when he pressed her to his heart" (747). To Florence, the bruise offends her father as well as herself. It offends her father because the "darkening mark" is "of an angry hand," his hand, so that it identifies him as the abuser. She dwells on the visible and tender mark of the injury rather than the original physical and emotional pain caused by her father's abuse, and her worry over it makes her "bosom" apparent in the story as something physical, potentially awful in that it

makes her "afraid of herself" and in need of covering. Because of its placement on her chest, the bruise rises with each intake of breath so that each breath "rose against her father" as a censure to him and a reminder to her of their shame.

The bruise physically manifests her father's anger, and her constant worry about it, as well as others' reactions to it, encourage the reader to continually imagine the mark on her body. Just as Sikes worries about blood on his clothes and on his dog's feet, both of which carry evidence of the murder outside his home and thereby bring Nancy's corpse into the public eye, Florence worries about undergoing others' scrutiny and the shame such scrutiny could bring on herself and her father. Nancy, having died, does not feel any repercussions, but Florence fears them. The mark is shaped like her father's hand and is noticeable on her figure though its placement does allow her to discreetly and carefully cover it so no other characters see it. Yet her body becomes a social spectacle post-abuse in other ways than the bruise. She does not cry when her father strikes her but does as she runs from his violence, from the house and through the streets, outside of domestic privacy: "In the wildness of her sorrow, shame, and terror, the forlorn girl hurried through the sunshine of a bright morning, as if it were the darkness of a winter night. Wringing her hands and weeping bitterly, insensible to everything but the deep wound in her breast, stunned by the loss of all she loved, left like the sole survivor on a lonely shore from the wreck of a great vessel, she fled" (633). The daughter flees as though she is protected by darkness when the day is actually "bright." She considers herself alone, as an only survivor, though there are others on the street. She originally moves "without a thought, without a hope, without a purpose," but soon realizes the exposure of her situation, the fear of exposure that the bruise subjects her to, and changes her behavior so that she is not so noticeable: "Checking her sobs, and drying her swollen eyes, and endeavouring to calm the agitation of her

manner, *so as to avoid attracting notice*, Florence, resolving to keep to the more quiet streets as long as she could, was going on *more quietly* herself" (633, my emphasis). She attempts to minimize the chances of her being seen and read for her father's domestic abuse and her own anguish.

The novel maintains its focus on the material nature of her character to a lesser extent even after she confines herself to the Midshipman store; Captain Cuttle stays in the shop with her and simultaneously makes her physical form less and more available. He removes her from the attention of other characters by helping her hide, yet he emphasizes her features to himself and the reader with his concern for her health. He seems to realize she has been abused, and his fear of causing her further harm draws attention to her figure: "The Captain, pale as Florence…raised her like a baby, and laid her on the same old sofa" (635). He attempts to revive her by carefully stimulating and comforting her body:

> Captain Cuttle snatched…a basin of cold water, and sprinkled some upon her face….the Captain then, using his immense hand with extraordinary gentleness, relieved her of her bonnet, moistened her lips and forehead, put back her hair, covered her feet with his own coat which he pulled off for the purpose, patted her hand—so small in his, that he was struck with wonder when he touched it—and seeing that her eyelids quivered, and that her lips began to move, continued these restorative applications. (635)

Ironically, both Dombey's abuse of Florence and Cuttle's care for her highlight her physical nature as they react against and to her body. Dombey's harm and her ensuing bruise, however, are more lasting and cause greater exposure of her physical form to herself and others.

The bruise torments her even though she covers it and even after the physical mark fades; the story continually reminds the reader of the mark, how it signifies her father's violence, and how it makes Florence more aware and ashamed of her body. Safe under Cuttle's protection, she continues to hide the mark from others but this secrecy does not prevent herself from "shunn[ing]" it, from feeling "ashamed and afraid of it," from causing her to be "her afraid of

herself, as if she bore about her something wicked" (646, 653). The bruise demonstrates her father's, rather than her own, thoughts and emotions, his tendency towards violence and anger towards his daughter and wife. Yet she does not begin to overcome the shame of her injury until she agrees to marry Walter and thinks of him as her new family and protector; she no longer imagines the bruise rising with each intake of breath but instead considers how their love resounds with each of their heartbeats: "In the beating of that heart for her, and in the beating of her own for him, all harsher music was unheard, all stern unloving hearts forgotten" (747). Once she associates herself more with Walter than her father, once she sees herself through his eyes, she forgets the wound; her bosom does not remain a place of shame but becomes part of a "world out of his image." She does not retain the mark of harm, either physically or emotionally, and thus ends the emphasis on her material aspects. Her mind is relieved from the shame of being abused and marked. Her father's part in the affair, however, remains shameful and threatened by social scrutiny, especially since she abruptly leaves his house, until he asks forgiveness from her and restores their familial relationship. She responds by returning his hands to the place they injured as if to undo the past: "Upon the breast that [Dombey] had bruised, against the heart that he had almost broken, she laid his face, now covered with his hands" (799).[8] At this point in their relationship, his own figure, through the positioning of his hands, indicates discomfort; her body stops acting as a sign for his materiality and mind while his own demonstrates his regret.

Dickens, Charlotte Brontë, and Trollope openly depict a character's violence against others, but Wilkie Collins, in a very sensational novel, conveys Sir Percival Glyde's physical harm of his wife Laura only through her recounting the occurrence to her sister, who then surveys the bruises and records the story in her diary, which forms part of the novel's structure. Ironically, the most sensational novel exhibits the injury least in comparison with the other

examples of violence considered so far. Through this roundabout portrayal of Glyde's mistreatment, Collins recounts the physical abuse and shows another character's knowledge of it while avoiding a direct representation of Laura's physical features or wounds. Laura tells Marian of the experience: "Then he clasped his hand fast round my arm, and whispered to me, 'What did Anne Catherick say to you yesterday?'….I was alone with him, Marian—his cruel hand was bruising my arm—what could I do?" (*TWIW* 321). The violence happens outside the scope of the current narrator, and this, compounded with the past tense and Laura's own inability or refusal to react to her husband, complicates the reader's capacity to envision her body. But the end product, the material and visible bruise, is a part of the narration though it is not detailed. Laura, emotionally and physically pained by the experience, does not want to show the bruise, but upon Marian's insistence, she does:

> 'Is the mark on your arm still? Let me see it.'
> 'Why do you want to see it?'
> 'I want to see it, Laura, because our endurance must end, and our resistance must begin to-day. That mark is a weapon to strike him with. Let me see it now—I may have to swear to it at some future time.'
> 'Oh, Marian, don't look so—don't talk so! It doesn't hurt me now!'
> 'Let me see it!'
> She showed me the marks. I was past grieving over them, past crying over them, past shuddering over them….
> 'Don't think too seriously of it, Marian,' she said simply, as she pulled her sleeve down again. 'It doesn't hurt me now.' (321)

In hiding the wound and insisting twice that "It doesn't hurt [her] now," Laura attempts to limit attention to it yet also demonstrates that the abuse and ensuing shame make her more aware of her body. She shows the marks and pulls her sleeve down, but neither she nor Marian describes the contusions. Laura also obscures how much she is bruised; she describes Glyde as grabbing her arm once with a "cruel hand," and her sister assumes the action would leave one bruise, "the mark." But Marian records seeing "the marks" and repeats the word "them" to emphasize that

the wound is worse than Laura initially leads her to believe. Marian protects the privacy of Laura's figure by not meticulously describing the bruises in her diary, which is open for the reader and other characters such as Walter and Fosco, but she is willing to promulgate the wound and its cause if it would protect her sister from future harm. She realizes the importance of the physical evidence, how Laura's bruised arm might be a "weapon" against Glyde, a text revealing his mistreatment. In doing so, she indirectly highlights Laura's arm for the reader and shows how the arm and marks do not indicate Laura's own thoughts and emotions but Glyde's anger instead.

Florence's and Laura's bruises are impermanent and, unlike Crosbie's, easily hidden. Yet, to varying extents, all three stress the materiality of the characters and reveal their abusers' feelings and physical features; the narrators model how to interpret the marks for details about the abusers. The heroines of *East Lynne* and *Bleak House* are empowered by their mutilation because it prevents their countenances from signaling their feelings, protecting their agency, but Florence's and Laura's marks stress their physical vulnerability. Their bruises show others' violence but also indicate their own capability to be harmed; they do not readily benefit from the marks as Esther and Isabel do, though Marian does see potential empowerment in Laura's contusions as they evidence her husband's abuse and may be used in divorce court. When other characters respond to the marks, they further emphasize the victims' physical aspects and thereby encourage the reader to envision the characters as material; all the bruises and thereby the bodies become public within the worlds of the novels to some extent, whether through Crosbie initially refusing to go to work but eventually showing his black eye there, through Florence leaving her father's house, or through Marian preparing to testify that Glyde physically abuses his wife. Furthermore, these bruises point to the batterer's identification; even Laura's barely detailed

injury is created by one hand that imprints itself on her arm. The abusers' violence *and* physical features become visible on the victims' bodies.

Concealed Bodies

Assaulted bodies may become a public display within the novel (to other characters and thereby indirectly to the reader) and/or outside of the novel (directly to the reader). The publicity of the assaults depend on whether and how the plots, characters, and narrators limit or propagate the news and evidence of them. Regardless of a novel's form or narration, violence against a character and the character's body can be emphasized to the characters and reader, or obscured. I have considered examples in which the narrators emphasize the victims' corporeal forms through bruises, and having explained how these bruises can be interpreted for the abusers' intents and hands or other features. I now turn to two examples in which the extent of molestation or the intent behind it remains concealed from the reader and/or other characters, either through the victim's or the omniscient narrator's silence. The first is George's mistreatment of his fiancée Alice and sister Kate in Anthony Trollope's *Can You Forgive Her?* (1864-1865). Second is Arthur Huntington's assault against his wife in Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848). In both novels, the heroines and/or narrators attempt to limit the exposure of the wounded figures and the men that harm them, to prevent other characters from seeing them as vulnerable flesh and thereby prevent their materialization for readers. Yet the victims do not completely succeed in their efforts to obscure the violence; some extent of the pain the women face becomes apparent to the reader and other characters.

In his novel *Can You Forgive Her?*, Trollope presents two victims: one deliberately remains silent, as does the narrator, about the abuse she experiences; the other (unsuccessfully)

encourages her family to misread her wounds. The victims in *Can You Forgive Her?* protect both each other and the man who harms them. As Lawson and Shakinovsky note, Trollope's novels warily include violence, both against men and women. In *Barchester Towers* (1857), the widow Eleanor slaps Mr. Slope, the chaplain, for forcing a "demonstration of [his] affection" on her person (*BT* 144). The narrator does not describe the affectionate touch but details Eleanor's violent response: "She sprang from him as she would have jumped from an adder…and then, quick as a thought, she raised her little hand and dealt him a box on the ear with such right good will, that it sounded among the trees like a miniature thunder clap" (144). While Eleanor's slap sounds impressive, it leaves little if any mark. Slope's wine drinking reddens his face so that any redness from Eleanor's slap is unnoticeable. Lawson and Shakinovsky examine Trollope's concern with this description of violence and how readers will react to it: "In describing the single slap which Eleanor Bold inflicts upon the repugnant Mr. Slope, the cautious Trollope expresses his fear that such a graphic description of violence will induce 'every well-bred reader of these pages [to] lay down the book with disgust'" (43). Yet in spite of this caution, Trollope "sets himself the much harder task of describing Signora Neroni, an abused wife and the victim of unspecified enormities. Trollope's depiction of violence…tread[s] a fine line between an acceptable vulgarity and commonness on the one hand, and a repellent pollution and morbidity on the other" (43). In *Barchester Towers*, Trollope debuts Neroni as married, abandoned, and already crippled by her husband's abuse. In his later novel *Can You Forgive Her?*, Trollope more explicitly, but still cautiously, includes violence. George physically assaults his fiancée Alice to obtain money from her, but Trollope does not have the omniscient narrator directly depict this scene. Instead, the reader becomes aware of George's abuse through a letter that Alice writes to Kate, George's sister.

Alice provides little description of her interaction with George, continuously apologizes to Kate for conveying such news about her beloved brother, and asks the sister to forgive her for telling the story though acknowledging such forgiveness might offend the sister's attachment to her brother. Her refusal to tell all or describe any lasting marks on her body creates what Surridge names "powerful silences" that "[suggest] the unspeakable aspects of the topic" ("Unspeakable" 119). Even with this censorship, Alice's letter gives some form to her body and the assault upon it, demonstrating how it responds to George's behavior: "I thought of running to the door to escape…had I not distrusted my own power.…I threw myself back and covered my face with my hands. Then he came and sat by me, and took hold of my arms….I cannot tell it you all. He put his mouth close to my ear, and said words which were terrible" (*CYFH* 496). George grabs her arms with, as Kate imagines, "something worse than a cut-throat's violence, the strong man's hand placed upon the woman's arm in anger and in rage" (498). One of the few details Alice gives is of George's hands on her arm, and it is the only detail Kate, or the reader, can imagine about Alice during the attack. She focuses on what she imagines her brother's attitude must be at that time instead of wondering what other physical harm Alice experiences. Kate and the reader can little envision the other details and any evidence of George's assault as Alice and the narrator refuse to "tell it…all."

Through this roundabout depiction of the scene, a letter read by Kate days after the event occurs, and by excluding the narrator's direct portrayal of it, Trollope uses Alice's own words to limit the display of her victimization and obscure any lasting signs of George's violence. Alice could easily expose George for his behavior, but she tells no one except Kate. Her silence prevents her body from becoming public evidence of George's mistreatment. She chooses to warn the other woman close to George but then remains quiet in respect to Kate and in shame for

her own position. Though making the mistreatment known would help protect her from other attacks and explain the broken engagement—for she does end it—she realizes it would also call attention to her bad judgment. Previously engaged to George, she breaks the engagement for reasons not detailed but that are generally thought reasonable and that are George's fault; even he "acknowledge[s] that he had been wrong" (106). She becomes engaged to marry another only to end that arrangement and return to George, much to the disappointment of her relatives. The series of made and broken marital plans, however, increases Alice's shame about George's abuse and encourages her to keep silent.

While Trollope indirectly informs the reader of George's violence against his fiancée, he, through the narrator, directly portrays George's abuse against his sister, encouraging the reader to envision Kate as a tangible form. Aided by the use of details, Trollope enables the reader to more readily picture the interaction between the siblings. Yet Kate attempts to obscure the violence from other characters by lying to her family, claiming the harm to her body is the result of an accident. The family members realize she lies to protect George and correctly interpret the cause of her injury, but they content themselves with privacy rather than making George's actions known. George takes Kate out of the house and away from witnesses with the excuse of walking the grounds. He ironically becomes frustrated she will not lie so that he has a stronger case opposing his grandfather's last will. He places "his hand upon her breast up near to her throat," and shakes her (516). With his hand positioned as if ready to suffocate her, he threatens murder. Finally, he "pushe[s] her from him with great violence, so that she [falls] heavily upon the stony ground," and he walks away without helping her stand or noticing any injury (517). And she is injured; "She knew that her arm had been hurt" and uses her other arm to explore the

extent of the injury: “her right arm was powerless, she put up her left hand and became aware that the bone of her arm was broken below the elbow” (518).

Though both women are physically marked by George, they attempt to suppress correct readings of their wounds. Alice promises Kate that she will tell no one else of George’s molestation, and Kate continues to keep his violence, both her and Alice’s sufferings at his hands, quiet. The narrator directly relates George’s attack against Kate to the reader, but Kate conceals the details from other characters. She tells her family that she broke her arm in a fall, and the doctor chooses to believe her as his “business was with the injury, not with the way she got it” (520). Her uncle decides that this lie should stand even if proclaiming his suspicions would bring George a just punishment. He realizes that the broken bone, unlike the hand-shaped bruises in the other novels, does not readily evidence or identify her attacker: “But how to prove it?...Will it not be better for her to let it pass as though we believed her story?” (521). Kate’s aunt “would have sacrificed much to bring [George] to punishment” but promises to desist as long as the brother remains away (522). Through Alice’s letter and Kate’s lie, the characters remain ignorant of George’s intent and actions in spite of the violence evident on the women’s figures. The reader, however, is informed of his abuse and directly shown Kate’s broken arm, though Alice’s abused form is veiled by indirect description and secreted details. The violence remains unspeakable within the story, between all the characters except two, but the second instance is speakable to the reader; the description of the moment of harm and its subsequent injury invite the reader to more readily envision Kate as a physical being than the undetailed Alice.

Surridge notes that *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* has many instances of undetailed violence; it “contains both implicit and explicit scenes of marital violence” as Helen, the narrator

for much of the novel, hints at abuse without openly describing it and her vulnerability within her husband's house (*Bleak* 75). Hattersly, a friend of Helen's husband, causes explicit violence that Helen sees and writes about in her diary; he "grabs his wife, Milicent, 'remorsely crushing her slight arms in the gripe of his powerful fingers,' shaking her, and pushing her so hard that she falls over" (75). Kate Lawson and Lynn Shakinovsky dwell on Milicent's reply to her husband's behavior; she tells him to remember that they are "not at home," a plea that "is both indirect and highly suggestive in its evocation of that life" (7). Milicent seems to suffer much outside of the novel's narrative scope; Helen, the narrator, remarks on this circumstance in her diary though she cannot detail the violence Milicent experiences in her own home. Yet Helen includes little of her own physical suffering or her own physical interactions with her husband; she does not materialize herself even in her own diary. She shuts the door against him when she does not want him in her bedroom, but there is no sign of a struggle in this instance in the novel. Although Arthur's threats frequently appear in her diary, including one in which he tells his friends that they are welcome to use his wife's body as they wish, she records only one instance of actual physical violence against herself, and she does not dwell on the event. Through her absence of details, she prevents herself from assuming a strong physical presence in her own narration, from becoming a spectacle in her own diary. Her very silence prevents the reader from interpreting her wounds as a sign of her husband's violence; while his behavior may mark her features, she does not let it mark her diary and overshadow her own thoughts. Her silence, however, indicates her pain, shame, and unwillingness to expose her husband as a wife-beater.

Before Arthur physically hurts her, Helen provides many details of her emotions about and thoughts of their relationship in her diary, but very few of their physical interactions or her appearance. Within six months of their marriage, she and Arthur have their "first quarrel" and

her arm briefly becomes apparent in her narration as she indicates that her husband injures her (*TTWF* 208). As he ignores his wife, Arthur beats his dog and becomes angry with the dog for refusing to return to him and with his wife for refusing to send the dog to him: "[Arthur] struck it off with a smart blow; and the poor dog squeaked, and ran cowering back to me" (212). Arthur shows his anger by throwing a book at his dog and wife, much as John Reid throws one at his cousin Jane. Helen explains: "Enraged at this, his master snatched up a heavy book and hurled it at [the dog's] head. The poor dog set up a piteous outcry and ran to the door. I let him out, and then quietly took up the book" (212). In this initial description of the event, Helen, unlike Jane, does not mention her own injury, but when she takes the book back to Arthur on his request, she, according to her record in her diary, asks if the book "perhaps…was intended for me?" (212). Arthur claims it is not, but he reacts to her appearance, noticing that her hand "had also been struck, and was rather severely grazed" (212). Helen neither openly acknowledges nor conveys the extent of her wound; the paradoxical phrase "severely grazed" further confuses the seriousness of her injury and of her husband's abuse. She writes that she returns to her reading but does not explain whether she treats the abrasion in any way, nor does she comment on Arthur's insistence that the strike against her was accidental. This instance, coupled with her lack of commentary about Arthur's offer of her body to his friends, indicates the extent of her efforts to keep her body private; she limits discussion of her physical form in her own diary to undermine its publicity to herself as if she could similarly limit its availability to Arthur and his friends.[9]

Surridge contends that this injury and further violence are "implicit," that "the novel suggests physical violence by using the trope of the abused animal" (*Bleak* 76); she reads the dog's wound for Arthur's malicious feeling. Arthur's willingness to throw a book at his dog

while his wife stands near certainly indicates a tendency towards violence, but what does Helen's silence suggest? William A. Cohen explains that silence "composes a strategic form, not an absence, of representation" (2). She, a painter, is accustomed to using a medium to render objects visible, yet she obscures her own figure. Helen's lack of description about her and her husband's physical interactions raises the question: why would the character not record details of personal physical trauma as she records her emotional trauma and her plans for escaping the house with her son? Especially this second inclusion, her scheme for leaving Arthur with her child, demonstrates that she thinks Arthur and his friends will not read her diary; she has nothing to lose by writing of his physical abuse. Her silence, her refusal to directly represent violence in her diary, is particularly interesting considering her almost complete seclusion in her husband's house; as their marriage continues, her husband becomes more abusive, and she becomes more imprisoned. She does not describe her body and few others see it because of the privacy of their residence.

Her silence and Arthur's behavior indicate a shared desire to keep her private, physically within the home; on their honeymoon, he does not want to "[bring her] into contact with society" but "to get [her] home…to have [her] all to himself, and to see [her] safely installed" in his house (*TTWH* 203). He briefly exhibits her body in London as "spark[ling] in costly jewels and deck[ed]…out like a painted butterfly" (217). Yet Arthur refuses to take her with him on his subsequent trips, and once he learns of and thwarts her first plan of escape, he does all he can to secure her confinement to the house. He tries and succeeds to keep her mostly invisible; she is seen only by servants who are limited in their ability to leave the country house and by Arthur's closest and similarly abusive friends. In refusing to record her physical experiences, Helen aids Arthur in keeping her injuries, and his abuse, private. Though she cannot avoid Arthur's ill

treatment while they live together, she can prevent herself from dwelling on the violence she faces and is threatened with by limiting her physical presence in her diary. Gilbert, her eventual second husband, details and emphasizes the beauty of her physical features in his narration (which is a letter to a friend), forming a contrast to Helen's diary. He is willing to extol her beauty, but she refuses to expose her physical form and the battering it experiences and thereby remains silent about Arthur's abuse.

Helen and Alice limit the exposure of the physical signs of their abuse and abusers, from other characters and the reader by concealing details. Kate and Crosbie restrict others' knowledge of the assault they experience by lying about the cause of their wounds. Florence's and Laura's features evidence the assaults against them and, because all their bruises are caused by hands that leave hand and finger prints, readily signify their abusers and serve as a physical as well as visible reminder of the harm they experience and the men who cause the harm. Jane, however, openly discloses the abuse she experiences. Regardless of the individual character's intentions or how her story is told, acts and marks of violence tend to render each character and each narrator hyper aware of the victim's body, point to the abuser and his intent to harm, and may also draw the attention of other characters. The bodies of abused characters, even those of upper-class women, are evident in Victorian literature.

Violent Exhibition

In each of the novels considered so far, the violence is episodic, limited to certain characters at specific times. These novels also contain one or more characters, typically the victim of abuse and/or the abuser, who wish to limit knowledge of the body marked by abuse. Yet violence is not always localized to short episodes in literature. In Emily Brontë's *Wuthering*

Heights (1847), violence overshadows the story and the characters seem eager to make the violence known. As Clare Jarvis states, the novel "[insists] on a generalized experience of extreme violence" (33). The violence in the novel seems ubiquitous partially because the protagonist, Cathy Earnshaw Linton, constantly enacts violence, experiences abuse, and harms herself, turning her body into a display of protest to manipulate others.[10] She wants her body to be, and uses it as, an exaggerated public display of her own and others' feelings. Instead of letting her countenance naturally manifest any distressing feeling, she physically harms herself to show her thoughts and manipulate her husband.

Nelly, the third person narrator of *Wuthering Heights*, emphasizes Cathy's tendency towards violence and the ensuing exhibition of her figure. Nelly continuously depicts Cathy's physical traits and demeanor as she ages: Cathy as a neglected young woman, as dressing and acting in accordance with her social station, as self-starved, as having lost her physical strength and mental faculties, and then as she nears her death. Nelly explains that, as a child, she was thin, nimble, and always making noise: "Her spirits were always at high-water mark, her tongue always going—singing, laughing, and plaguing everybody who would not do the same. A wild, wicked slip she was—but she had the bonniest eye, the sweetest smile, and lightest foot in the parish" (E. Brontë 49). Cathy causing or experiencing brutality, however, leads to the vast majority of Nelly's descriptions of the character; the explanations of her violence elicit descriptions of her physical features, making her corporeality evident in the narrative. Cathy, according to Nelly, utilizes physical violence to manage others, "using her hands freely, and commanding her companions," and though Nelly claims she "would not bear slapping" like the other companions, Cathy, while in a passion that turns "her ears red with rage," does hit her (49, 72). One of the punishments Cathy endures is also physical; she is sent to bed without supper, a

penalty she empathetically reenacts on herself whenever Hindley punishes Heathcliff (49, 52). While Heathcliff's chastisement is flogging, an active, more directly physical disciplinary measure, Cathy's is based on deprivation. Her punishments are physical but less directly so as they diminish her form by preventing food intake so that it remains small, rather than overtly harm it by wounding. She experiences random violence as well. A dog bite acquaints her with the Lintons, and Heathcliff asserts that the bite makes her sick "not from fear…but from pain" (54).[11]

Cathy's physical expressions of love for Heathcliff enact violence on both of them. These descriptions encourage the reader to envision the characters as material. Nelly details Heathcliff's bruises on her arms and indicates that these contusions signify their violent desperation to be near each other. Ill, Cathy regains sanity and awareness of her surroundings only when Heathcliff visits and "he grasp[s] her in his arms…for some five minutes, during which period, he bestowed more kisses than ever" (E. Brontë 141). When he attempts to move away from his position of embracing, "she seize[s] his hair, and [keeps] him down" (141). He begins the embrace, but she prolongs it, and when it finally ends, Nelly notes the evidence that the brutal clasping leaves on Cathy's arm: "so inadequate was his stock of gentleness to the requirements of her condition, that on his letting go I saw four distinct impressions left blue in the colorless skin" (142). Heathcliff's physical hold on Cathy is so tight that each of his fingers leaves a mark on her skin so that it shows his passionate, harmful embrace. When Cathy wants to touch him, she, exhausted, leaps into his arms, and Nelly fears they hold each other so tightly that they together will destroy Cathy's weakened form: "An instant they held asunder…but Catherine made a spring, and he caught her, and they were locked in an embrace from which I thought my mistress would never be released alive" (143). Cathy encourages the harmful

strength of the embrace; she does not break away from him but keeps him close: "A movement of Catherine's relieved me a little presently: she put up her hand to clasp his neck, and bring her cheek to his as he held her" (143). Nelly, who observes and retells the scene, describes both Cathy's and Heathcliff's actions as physically harmful to her; Heathcliff bruises his lover's arm, but Cathy does not worry about this evidence of their embrace. Instead, though she knows her husband will see them, Cathy "clung fast, gasping," her face displaying "mad resolution," as Heathcliff attempts to leave (145).

Cathy experiences much physical pain from Heathcliff. Yet Heathcliff also imagines her ghost haunting him; ironically, because her ghost is not a visible—or real—being, he sees it as a source of pain. Yet the ghost also seems corporeal because of the many descriptions of it as a breathing, living thing. Heathcliff finds the ghost tormenting because he can never see it as well as feel it. He hears her breathing as he opens her grave and feels her presence: "There was another sigh, close at my ear. I appeared to feel the warm breath of it….I knew no living thing in flesh and blood was by; but, as certainly as you perceive the approach to some substantial body in the dark, though it cannot be discerned, so certainly I felt that Cathy was there….Her presence was with me: it…led me home" (242). He feels her "presence," but it tortures him because he cannot see it: "I looked round impatiently—I felt her by me—I could *almost* see her, and yet I *could not*! I ought to have sweat blood then, from the anguish of my yearning" (242, original emphasis). The seemingly physical but invisible ghost also prevents Heathcliff from sleeping: "I couldn't lie there; for the moment I closed my eyes, she was either outside the window, or sliding back the panels, or entering the room, or even resting her darling head on the same pillow as she did when a child; and I must open my lids to see. And so I opened and closed them a hundred times a night—to be always disappointed!" (242).

Heathcliff is desperate for a glimpse of Cathy, to view her as simultaneously a tangible and visible being. He ensures he will see her again by digging up her grave; the ghost seems tangible but is invisible, and the corpse is visible but Heathcliff cannot touch it. According to Heathcliff, her corpse looks exactly like her when living though it has been buried for eighteen years: "I thought, once, I would have stayed there: when I saw her face again—it is hers yet!" (241).[12] But he cannot both see and touch her after she dies; when viewing her corpse, he resists touching it because the sexton "said it would change if the air blew on it" (241). Neither the sight nor the feeling of her physical nearness fully satisfies him. Though he digs up her grave to see her, he continues his own pain by not touching to avoid causing it more physical destruction.[13] He deems Cathy's post-death presence lacking because he cannot simultaneously see and touch it. The corpse and Cathy's ghost separate sight and touch; one seems tangible, but its invisibility haunts Heathcliff, the other looks like she is alive, is unharmed, but cannot endure the slightest touch.

Cathy's violence is not restricted to punishing Nelly or loving/haunting Heathcliff; she readily harms herself to manipulate her husband, a scheme that depends on her husband encountering her body while emphasizing it as a physical object for the reader to picture. Cathy purposefully mimics symptoms that suggest mental anguish and physical illness, and Edgar cannot recognize the falseness of these symptoms. She harms herself to cause him pain, indirectly hurting her husband by physically hurting herself. While the abused characters' wounds previously discussed show their attackers' behavior, her injuries show her own thoughts and emotions as she is her own injurer. Her body, then, demonstrates her own feeling while seeming to demonstrate another's. Yet her wounds still depend on an interaction between two individuals; she inscribes violence on herself for her husband to read. If he or his stipulations did

not limit her, she would continue living with him as she does when Heathcliff initially returns, without hurting herself to influence him. Cathy threatens Edgar that she will "cry [her]self sick!" (73), that she will make herself ill to manipulate him into doing what she wants him to. She fakes a seizure, performing to alarm her husband, who fears his actions cause the malady. But though the seizure is an act, she readily injures herself in her performance: "There she lay dashing her head against the arm of the sofa, and grinding her teeth, so that you might fancy she would crash them to splinters!" (110). Cathy ends the show upon hearing Nelly tell Edgar that she is pretending. Yet Cathy continues harming herself. After Nelly ruins the effect of Cathy's "seizure" by telling Edgar that it is not a symptom of some sickness or exhibition of a strong feeling but a conscious act, Cathy, unable to find immediate benefit in harming herself, seems to want to assault Nelly: "she started up—her hair flying over her shoulders, her eyes flashing, the muscles of her neck and arms standing out preternaturally" (111). The muscles, visible in their tightness, are restrained from harming Nelly, but Nelly's insistence that they "preternaturally" show themselves on Cathy's body both foreshadows Heathcliff's conception of Cathy's ghost as physical and reinforces the idea that, if Cathy cannot enact violence on another, her violent tendencies, her frustrated desire to cause pain, can be seen on her own form.

Cathy harms herself to the point of not being able to recognize her own body; her self-harm weakens her to the point that her idea of her body image becomes irreconcilable with her appearance. As the seizure does not provoke her husband, Cathy turns to another form of violence to influence Edgar; she reenacts her childhood censure of starvation. As in the time before her marriage, she deprives herself of food when Heathcliff is punished, which Edgar does by banishing him from Thrushcross Grange. Cathy is pregnant, but Nelly does not describe any physical traits that indicate Cathy's condition; this aspect of her body remains elusive in the text.

Her starvation, however, does make Nelly note her figure, and Nelly exhibits its appearance to her listener and the reader. After three days of fasting, her face is "wasted" and "ghastly" while her manner is "strange, exaggerated" (E. Brontë 112). She does not recognize her reflection in the mirror, initially asking "Is that Catherine Linton?" and then thinking the image is a ghost haunting her (112). The image of herself becomes so fearful to her that she does not want to recognize it as her own. Her starvation's lack of immediate influence on her husband, who does not see her until several days have passed, forces her to realize she "has no real power, after all; nothing more than requests [Edgar and Heathcliff] might or might not choose to fulfill. And at the moment when Catherine recognizes this fact, she is forced, too, to recognize her insanity" (Ablow 59). Even after she has time to partially recover, she cannot identify with her altered body. Her self-starvation terrifies her husband when he does see it, and he immediately acts to make her life more comfortable. Her self-caused physical alteration is not restricted to only his view. The doctor sees her and assumes Edgar causes Cathy's illness: "I can't help fancying there's an extra cause for this. What has there been to do at the Grange?...A stout, hearty lass like Catherine does not fall ill for a trifle" (E. Brontë 119).

In starving herself, Cathy literally lessens her form, but she also draws attention to it. She seems to be suffering from anorexia nervosa rather than experiencing pregnancy; though the term "anorexia nervosa" was not coined nor the illness recognized as such until a physician presented a paper on the topic in 1868, fourteen years after Brontë published her novel, Cathy's behavior would be associated with that of fasting girls (Furst 5). Joan Jacobs Brumberg explains in her study of fasting girls that "there is a long history of food-refusing behavior and appetite control in women dating back, at least, to the medieval world" (2). Fasting is a social act that women could engage in for attention or to have their desires heard and fulfilled. Brumberg

contends that the nineteenth century in particular gave rise to many well-known examples of self-starved women because many associated slimness with ethereality and even morality, a point I will return to in the next chapter.[14] Cathy, however, resembles the fasters that seem moral in their denial while demanding attention or the fulfillment of some want. She fasts to highlight her mental and physical suffering and influence others who see and empathize with her pain, understand its cause, and act to fulfill the want.[15] Cathy uses her fasting to demonstrate her disapproval of her husband's behavior and to assert her own demands. She wants to be marked by violence, for her husband to see her self-caused harm as a sign of her unhappiness that will disappear if he fulfills her desires. Susan Bordo, in writing of anorexia nervosa, expounds upon the causes behind self-starvation as the "historical heritage of disdain for the body [and] our modern fear of loss of control over our futures" (88). Her reasoning also fits Cathy's situation. Without control over her husband, Heathcliff, or even her body's gestation, Cathy attempts to control her hunger, to change her eating habits in an attempt to control her husband, and eventually becomes hysterical from "isolation, boredom, and intellectual frustration" (93, 104). Accustomed to violence, she enacts violence on herself to exercise control over something and attempt to manipulate others as they notice her physical pain and act to relieve its cause.

The violence Cathy brings on herself is not always within her control, subject to her conscious stipulations. Her very heartbeat seems painful: "the *violent*, unequal throbbing of her heart…beat visibly and audibly under this excess of agitation" (E. Brontë 142, my emphasis). As she experiences brutality, a result of her self-inflicted pain expanded beyond her control, she loses influence over her body and what it signals and learns to distrust and dislike it. Her self-caused harm becomes limiting to her, no longer a mode of empowering herself by manipulating others. When Edgar touches her, she threatens more violence against herself; this threat

manipulates him but also shows her disdain for herself, for what her figure has become, painful and uncontrollable. She exclaims, "You mention [Heathcliff's] name and I end the matter instantly by a spring from the window! What you touch at present you may have; but my soul will be on that hill-top before you lay hands on me again. I don't want you, Edgar: I'm past wanting you" (118). Death is preferable to Edgar's touch. Heathcliff's embrace does not evoke a threat of suicide, but neither does it cause her to accept her altered form. She cannot at first identify her reflection, and at this point, cannot identify with her physical self. Her body, post-starvation, is not the "half savage, and hardy, and free" figure she formerly enjoyed, one in which she could enact or experience violence while "laughing at the injuries, not maddening under them!" (116). Instead, it is no more than a "shattered prison" to her (143); she concludes, "I'm tired of being enclosed here" (143).

Nelly notes that Cathy seems happy to die and escape her destroyed form and painful situation. She can inflict no more violence on herself and, physically weakened, loses her desire to manipulate her husband and even seems to temporarily forget Heathcliff. While Edgar's living features are careworn, "*hers* [in death are] of perfect peace. Her brow smooth, her lids closed, her lips wearing the expression of a smile; no angel in heaven could be more beautiful than she appeared" (146). Though Cathy's repeated self-inflicted violence continues encouraging the reader to envision her, her pregnancy and physical relationship with her husband are absent, not described for the reader to picture, except in the brief exclamation that she does not want her husband to touch her. Cathy and Nelly say little about her husband's physical relationship with her and her gestation. Heathcliff is not, however, silent about his abusive marriage with Isabella and what may be the night of her conception.

Sexual Violence and Displaced Bodies

In spite of Victorian propriety and literary censorship, *Wuthering Heights* and *Aurora Leigh* hint at sexual violence. Specific descriptions of sexual abuse are absent, and the victims are disengaged from the readable sign system. Their somatic signs cannot be read for sexual violence, even though physicians and scientists propagated the idea that women's sexual organs, particularly the uterus, connect all aspects of the female body and the mind (Poovey 145). By this reasoning, women's sexuality and sexual experiences should be easier to see on their bodies. Nevertheless, though not explicitly written on the victims' bodies, sexual violence is apparent in these texts. In *Wuthering Heights*, Isabella's and her husband's language and abuse bring attention to her body and hint at sexual violence. In Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh* (1856), a character directly tells Aurora, the narrator, that she is raped but does not describe the experience, and her appearance shows no sign of it. Though Aurora cannot read the physical features for evidence of the rape, she displaces the violence onto other characters and materials. The victims in these instances do not physically indicate this specific form of abuse; they cannot be read for the abuser's assault. Yet the abuse and pain the women face become apparent as the novels portray the violence against them obliquely, on objects other than the victims' bodies.

The sexual violence that Heathcliff enacts on Isabella is mentioned by both her and Heathcliff but, as far as the reader knows, is not apparent on her figure. Brutality overshadows their marriage from its beginning. Upon her running away from her home to elope, Heathcliff hangs her dog to strangle and silence him. The pet is Isabella's personal one, one who typically follows her "to bed" (119). Isabella explains in her note to Nelly that Heathcliff's attempt to kill her dog is not the reason for her regret in marrying him; the remorse seems to come later, from Heathcliff replacing the dog's space in her bed, as her "heart returned to Thrushcross Grange in

twenty-four hours after [she] left it," soon after their wedding night (124). Heathcliff's account coincides with Isabella's. Nelly tries to blame Heathcliff for the unhappy marriage, suggesting "Somebody's love comes short in her case" (135), but Heathcliff insists Isabella's love for him is the one that falls short: "She is tired of trying to please me uncommonly early. You'd hardly credit it, but the very morrow of our wedding, she was weeping to go home" (135). The timing of Isabella's regret, so shortly after their wedding night and the dog's hanging, indicates that Heathcliff's violence against her is sexual; Brontë "explicitly ties Isabella's desire to leave him to their wedding night" (Jarvis 56). And Isabella certainly associates him with pain and fears him; she assures Nelly that "a tiger or a venomous serpent could not rouse terror in [her] equal to what he wakens" (E. Brontë 131).

Heathcliff's further explanation of his abuse and his wife's response indicates that Isabella "may be willing, on some level, to engage with his misuse of her" (Jarvis 57), but only if she is not injured. Heathcliff, however, seems too willing to hurt her. He explains that the wedding night and his continuing abuse, though terrible to Isabella, are within his legal rights as her husband. Yet, in spite of the suffering he causes her, she "so obstinately [persists] in forming a fabulous notion of [his] character and acting on the false impressions she cherished" (E. Brontë 135). Heathcliff is disgusted by her "delusion" of believing he cares for her, concluding she is not a very "rational creature" because it was a "marvelous effort of perspicacity [for her] to discover" his lack of affection (135). He has not shown "a bit of deceitful softness" yet "no brutality disgusted her" (136). He puts so much effort into arousing her hatred with so little success that he "suppose[s] she has an innate admiration of [brutality], *if only her precious person were secure from injury*!" (136, my emphasis). Heathcliff indicates that Isabella would

join him in brutal conduct as long as her body is not targeted; to convince her he does not care for her, he enacts his brutality against her.

But neither does he want to inscribe his abuse on her body; though he "experiments on what she could endure," he "avoid[s]…giving her the slightest right to claim a separation" (136). He remains within the legal limits of a husband's treatment of his wife, confining his assaults so that he cannot be accused of endangering her life; he does not mark her with extensive, easily visible signs of abuse. Furthermore, Isabella is secluded at Wuthering Heights, limiting the exposure of any signs of his violence. Only when she flees from Heathcliff and their marriage, briefly stopping at Thrushcross Grange, does Nelly detail to the reader the marks of brutality on Isabella's body: "a deep cut under one ear, which only the cold prevented from bleeding profusely, a white face scratched and bruised, and a frame hardly able to support itself, through fatigue" (150). Heathcliff has "extinguished [her] love so effectually" that she no longer tries to protect him but readily explains how she receives the wound, from a knife he throws at her, and provides other examples of his mistreatment. Yet no further information on or indication of sexual abuse is provided. The physical pain she endures is invisible, except for the marks incurred as she abandons her husband. Though Heathcliff indicates he sexually abuses her and though his other forms of abuse materialize her body, her body never signals sexual violence. The reader may guess at how Heathcliff harms his wife's body, but the lack of information about Isabella's bodily pain prevents readers from explicitly or even somewhat uniformly imagining her physical experiences. The reader and other characters cannot read Heathcliff's sexual abuse on Isabella's body. Instead, they must read between the lines of Isabella's and Heathcliff's descriptions of their nonsexual interactions, which focus on Isabella's body.

The sexual violence that Emily Brontë hints about in *Wuthering Heights* finds more explicit description in Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh* though it, too, is not written on the victim's physical features. The novel-in-verse consists of three main female characters, but only one, Marian, is sexually abused. Marian's figure lacks many details and remains, for the most part, immaterial and unreadable for sexual assault. Her body exhibits little evidence of rape. The second character, Lady Waldemar, is not sexually assaulted but sends Marian on the journey that leads to her rape; the narrator Aurora suggests Lady Waldemar's features should show involvement in sexual abuse. Her physical traits are conspicuous in the text; Aurora describes them as sensual but unmarked, as if they should reveal her misdeeds or infliction of violence on others. Aurora details the aristocrat's appearance, encouraging the reader to picture it, and attempts to interpret it, but she finds little sign of Lady Waldemar's depravity and no sign of her involvement with Marian's rape. The third character, Aurora, does not focus on marks or lack of marks on herself as indicators of sexual assault but instead reconceives sexual violence as inspiration for her poetry. She displaces the sexual abuse that Marian endures onto other figures, such as muses that inspire her poetry, reconceiving rape as beneficial, as nonviolent. Aurora describes Marian's features and describes sexual violence, but she does not bring both elements together; though sexual abuse appears in the text, it is not written on Marian's figure. The narration shows little if any touch on her body, and it remains difficult for readers to envision.

The rape that leads to Marian's motherhood occurs outside of Aurora's sight, yet Aurora hears Marian's story and imagines her gestational processes and post-partum traits. Marian elicits little direct description before she is raped and gives birth. Her figure is childish and marked by ambiguity; her skin is neither "white nor brown," while her hair is "'twixt dark and bright," and her frame is topped with "so small a head" that exaggerates her "infantine"

appearance (*AL* III.810, 814, 816, 823). Just as Marian's appearance and manner are placed between opposites, she is caught between her innate, childlike purity and the dangers inherent in her poverty and immoral family, which lead to others forcing prostitution on her. Her mother attempts to sell her daughter's virginity, a transaction that Lady Waldemar's servant completes.

Marian gives some explanation of the threat of and fulfilled violence in these two instances, but her physical features remain elusive, lacking detail, though she faces brutal men both times. Each seems to her to be a death. The first happens when she runs away from her family to avoid being prostituted by her mother. She wakes in a hospital that she compares to a cemetery: "She stirred; - the place seemed new and strange as death; / The white strait bed, with others strait and white, / Like graves dug side by side at measured length" (III.1106-1108). The look of the hospital encourages her to think she dies and wakes in a graveyard, and she finds the idea of death, of being a non-feeling corpse, comforting after her ordeal.[16]

Aurora does not see Marian directly after her horrifying experiences. There is, however, one event that Aurora witnesses that results from the first rape attempt and leads to the second rape: Marian's wedding. Aurora displaces descriptions of Marian's harmed body onto guests at this event. Aurora peculiarly depicts Marian's wedding guests as a wound. The difference in Marian's and Romney's social standings attracts a motley collection of guests that elicit more material, corporeal detail than her character does. Aurora explains that Marian's guests, the poorer attendees, enter the church as if they are bodily substances leaving a lesion. The lower-class people are "The humours of the peccant social wound" (IV.544). The guests are "All pressed out…. / They clogged the streets, they oozed into the church / In a dark slow stream, like blood" (IV.545, 553-554). The lower-class people are described as parts of a wound that releases blood. Aurora seems to displace the attempted rape onto these guests rather than

Marian; the wound has a "social" cause, indicating social values inflict this bloody wound. The social wound of poverty that leads to the unhealthy and unsightly wedding guests also leads to Marian's mother's attempt to prostitute her daughter. The upper-class guests visibly react to the poor people in the church, and Aurora describes their reactions and interprets them for the reader. Notably, none of the upper class guests show any indication of wanting to aid the social wound, the poverty-stricken guests:

> The noble ladies stood up in their pews,
> Some pale for fear, a few as red for hate,
> Some simply curious, some just insolent,
> And some in wondering scorn…
> These crushed their delicate rose-lips from the smile
> That misbecame them in a holy place (IV.555-560)

In her first encounter with rape, Marian seems bodiless as Aurora gives no details of her physical self. Yet the results of the rape, her hospital stay and introduction to Romney, lead to a wedding in which the violence she faces is connected with a larger "social wound" and evidenced by her wedding guests. Unable to picture sexual violence against Marian, Aurora displaces her envisioning of the violence onto several people. This group of people signifies the cause of the violence: poverty; and Aurora imagines them as embodying the wound Marian experiences.

Marian's second death, which occurs in the course of her fleeing the wedding, results from rape and impregnation and has a much more lasting effect. Again, however, neither Aurora nor Marian materializes her body with details of the assault. After convincing Marian that Romney cannot love and should not marry her, Lady Waldemar sends Marian out of the country with her corrupt servant; the servant takes her to a brothel in France where she is drugged and raped. Instead of comparing the situation to waking in a graveyard, Marian describes this second experience as being buried alive:

To go down with one's soul into the grave,
To go down half dead, half alive, I say,
And wake up with corruption…
…when waking up at last . . .
I told you that I waked up in the grave. (VI.1199-1201, 1216-1217)

Though this passage does not detail Marian's body or explicitly state that she becomes pregnant, it does hint at the lasting fear and pain of rape and pregnancy. She is "half dead, half alive," which suggests that the drug inhibits her body but that she is not fully unconscious during the rape. Furthermore, in spite of the drug, she wakes "with corruption," which suggests she knows rape occurred and feels contaminated by it ("Corruption"). This passage implies that her body shows some marks from the assault that are not depicted, such as bruises, a word she uses later in the passage. Her first deathlike encounter is overcome, but not this second one. When meeting Aurora after the rape, Marian refers to herself in the third person to deny herself life, her body; she says, "Marian Erle, / Picked up and dropped… / And bruised from what she was, - changed! death's a change, / And she, I said, was murdered; Marian's dead" (*AL* VI.809-810, 812-813). While Marian mentions bruises, she does not detail the marks or specifically apply them to her physical self; her body seems immaterial in her description.

Marian reassures the reader that the sexual violence she experiences kills her, destroys her. Romney's renewed marriage proposal shows the extent of her self-imposed death-in-life; Marian once again refers to herself in the third person, asking if Romney could accept her and her son in their fallen state. She idolizes him for his benevolence but refuses to marry him because she is "colder than the dead" (IX.387). The rape leads to a maternity that subsumes her, metaphorically kills her, instead of causing the "happiest changes" of her life as doctors such as Thomas John Graham assured ("Early Marriages" 188). After all, if, as G. H. Lewes claimed, "The grand function of woman…is, and ever must be, *Maternity*," then Marian has fulfilled her

life's duty and is incapable of repeating it honorably in her fallen state (155). With no other purpose, she has nothing else to live for. While one contemporary review suggests her situation is "happy" ("Review" *Leader* 1144), another notes her problematic place at the plot's finish; the critic attempts to reassure his readers that Marian's unwritten fate does not mean her future is bleak: "In the story, too, there is an omission, which seems unintentional, and which the interest excited makes unpardonable—an omission of any mention of Marian Erle's subsequent fortunes" ("Review" *New Quarterly* 34). By describing the lack of information as "unintentional," the reviewer tries to lessen the inherent dangers of Marian's position as a fallen woman and mother supported by her friend and former fiancé while scorned by others. His hopes for Marian's future are unfounded as all evidence suggests that Marian is dead, at least in spirit, once she gives birth.

In preserving her life for her child, Marian, as Dorothy Mermin notes, resembles the pure but threatened aspects of the portrait of Aurora's mother, becoming more mythical, less earthly and bodily (192).[17] Aurora focuses on the mother's appearance as both her mother and as a woman who dies in childbirth.[18] The death picture becomes "mystic," and the depicted woman "by turns" embodies innocent but threatened femininity (a Muse who eyes Death, a stabbed Virgin Mary) and dangerous womanhood (Medusa, the child-killing Lamia) (*AL* I.152, 153). Marian assumes the form of the Muse, moving into Aurora's house and inspiring the poet, though she constantly eyes death because she can neither forget her rape nor recover her former identity. Aurora idealizes Marian as a Virgin Mary, virginal, as Aurora notes, because she is the victim of assault, not ruined by her own sexuality. Aurora does not depict Marian's body as if to reinforce her roles as a legendary, impossibly pure, muse and Virgin Mary.

Unlike other abused bodies considered in this chapter, Marian's does not point to her abuser. It remains elusive, yet, as I will show, its experiences inform how Aurora represents Lady Waldemar's and her own figures. Isabella's injuries display other forms of abuse, but Marian's body gives little to no evidence that she is harmed or raped. Victorian society would be little inclined to recognize Marian's purity because physicians would most likely deny she had been raped: she is drugged, so she would not be marked by struggle, and because she is destitute, some doctors would be more likely to attribute any internal signals of rape to the lack of hygiene inherent in poverty-stricken living situations. William Acton, author of several popular medical works, quotes at length another doctor's story of a girl they both assume is not raped because she has "no traces of recent violence…on the surface of her abdomen or thighs," and Marian gives no indication of having sought medical advice or aid after she wakes (*A Complete* 200). Acton continues his discussion of rape by explaining its relationship to poverty, which Marian endures until she lives with Aurora; he notes that many symptoms associated with rape appear when a woman has not cleaned herself properly, thereby tying poverty with filthiness and disease. Furthermore, he also explains that many poor mothers claim their daughters are raped so they can sue the perpetrator for money (202-203). Two of Acton's subheadings in his small section on rape, "Rape, Reputed Cases Of" and "Rape, Cases That May Be Mistaken For," reveal his general skepticism of rape and his encouragement for others to be suspicious of rape charges.

And neither Marian nor Aurora provides details of the violence and the marks it leaves on Marian's skin. Marian gives a vague account of the rape, which includes her semiconscious state and a remark that she is bruised, but she and Aurora remain silent of any details or marks of the impregnation, pregnancy, or birth. The few descriptions of her appearance do not indicate rape and its results. Yet depictions of bodies are tied to sexual violence in the novel-in-verse; Aurora

describes such harm through other characters, displacing Marian's physical experience onto others such as Lady Waldemar. The violence Marian faces does not make her much more tangible to the reader as the previously discussed assaults do for other victims. Yet Aurora details Lady Waldemar's unmarked, unharmed figure and ties it to sexuality and abuse. Marian experiences violence but it leaves no readable sign on her. Aurora, however, depicts Lady Waldemar in violent terms and with references to abuse though noting the aristocrat's skin is conspicuously white, not bruised or wounded. In doing so, Aurora implies that Lady Waldemar's form should show a tendency for brutality and suggests that Lady Waldemar's role in Marian's rape is larger than explicitly stated, that Lady Waldemar arranged the rape.

Though Aurora rarely describes Marian's physical features, even with a suckling infant, she fully details the sensuality of Lady Waldemar's figure, particularly her breasts, emphasizing her physical presence in the poem. On hearing the men at Lord Howe's party lust after her, the narrator describes Lady Waldemar's "alabaster shoulders and bare breasts, / On which the pearls, drowned out of sight in milk, / Were lost, excepting for the ruby-clasp" (*AL* V.619-621). The shoulders and breasts are pale, and the breasts are large enough to overwhelm a necklace in their cleavage. The necklace is of white pearls, yet the unmarked whiteness of the flesh is like "milk," overwhelming the pearls' color. The account indicates that her figure is powerful in its attractiveness and able to drown others in its desires; her milky breasts are thereby associated with the ability to harm. Her skin is also unmarked, white. Though her voluptuous shape appears destructive to Aurora, it gives no prominent sign of this tendency or sign of having experienced abuse. Yet this concentration on the breasts and the use of the word "milk" also suggests motherhood, and Lady Waldemar is childless. The description indicates breastfeeding,

an act that Marian fulfills with her child but one that Lady Waldemar does not. This aspect of Lady Waldemar's figure seems to belong to Marian's body.

Aurora explains Lady Waldemar's sensual form in such terms that reveal both her sexual desire and tendency towards violence. She also indicates that Lady Waldemar cannot have children. Describing how Lady Waldemar's clothes complement her figure "with the audacious press / Of full-breathed beauty" (V.623-624), Aurora compares Lady Waldemar's interior worth to her outside beauty, concluding that the aristocrat's form could not be so beautiful and so displayed if she were a good, whole person. The "heart within" cannot be half as white as her breasts because, "if it were, perhaps / The breast were closer covered and the sight / Less aspectable, by half, too" (V.624, 625-627). Lady Waldemar's emotions, like love, and her organs, like her heart, do not and cannot live up to the extremely feminine standard set by her shape. Aurora reads Lady Waldemar's body as legible for her character and the health of her internal organs, and Aurora determines that the beauty of Lady Waldemar's exterior suggests a problematic interior. The exaggerated femininity of her body is limited solely to its outward appearance and not her character or her internal physiology; the breasts that seem to produce milk cannot actually do so, reinforcing the idea that the description of maternal breasts should be applied to Marian rather than the childless aristocrat. Aurora insinuates that Lady Waldemar's sexuality and sexual desire destroy her feminine emotions, which enables her to enact violence without regret. Yet in spite of this tendency, Lady Waldemar is, as Aurora emphasizes, unmarked by violence. The very whiteness and its voluptuous beauty of her body act, unexpectedly, as legible signs for her violent nature.

Having partially blamed Lady Waldemar for Marian's rape, Aurora eases her own discomfort in her perception of Marian's rape and the pain it causes by reconceiving it as less

violent. She does this in three ways: by displacing descriptions of violence onto other figures, such as Lady Waldemar; by depicting her and Marian as other objects; and by considering herself the recipient of metaphorical rape. Having seen the destructive effects of conception and birth on her mother and Marian, Aurora hesitates to depict her own or Marian's feminine or reproductive body parts. For example, while traveling with Marian and the suckling infant, she does not comment on the actual maternal breastfeeding or consider her own feminine figure but imagines hills as nourishing breasts. Italy's landscape becomes a mother's body, potentially Marian's and/or Aurora's:

> And now I come, my Italy,
> My own hills! Are you 'ware of me, my hills,
> How I burn toward you? do you feel to-night
> The urgency and yearning of my soul,
> As sleeping mothers feel the suckling babe
> And smile? (V.1266-1271)

Confronted with her friend's rape and resulting motherhood, Aurora turns the scenery into a mother-figure instead of acknowledging her own female, or even Marian's maternal, body.

Aurora continues minimizing her own female physical features when considering her poetry's limitations. She tells herself to be humble and gives a list of "mysterious tune[s]" that her poetry will never match (V.2), and after several abstract examples, such as God's unknown universe and the human capability for emotion, the list centers on a human sensation she has never fulfilled: "sexual passion" (V.15). This catalog then turns to a result of sexual passion, motherhood. Aurora does not directly apply the physical nature of motherhood to herself or Marian but aestheticizes the female form and motherhood as something beyond the corporeal:

> … with all that strain
> Of sexual passion, which devours the flesh
> In a sacrament of souls? with mother's breasts
> Which, round the new-made creatures hanging there,
> Throb luminous and harmonious like pure spheres? (V.14-18)

The list of "mysterious tunes" acknowledges that sexual passion is powerful, so much so that Aurora's writing cannot fully represent it. And to Aurora, female sexuality is directly connected with motherhood, with "mother's breasts." Yet these erotic and life-sustaining breasts intimidate her so that she separates them from both sexuality and the female form altogether—they become two unattached, floating spheres and cannot, therefore, convey her own or Marian's mental or physical states. This anatomization of the female figure replicates Aurora's own displacement of her and Marian's bodies.

Wanting to be an inspiring poet instead of conforming to the more expected and, for Aurora, frightening role of mother, Aurora connects the two, considering herself a mother who births art. She cannot completely separate her own body from the violence of Marian's rape, but she does reinterpret it. As a poet who will die and leave only her work behind, Aurora compares herself to a body preserved by burning lava, like a victim of the Pompeii volcano. This fossilization is tangible to others, who can touch and learn from it. Marian thinks of herself as dead after experiencing sexual violence, and Aurora thinks of herself and her art as a dead female body for men to examine: "the men of that [Age] / May touch the impress with reverent hand" (V.217-218). If the men find the art worthwhile, they claim it as a mother to their own age: "behold the paps we all have sucked! / This bosom seems to beat still… this is living art, / Which thus presents and thus records true life" (V.219-222). The artist/woman is both a mother and dead yet lives through her art. Fearful of sexual violence and childbirth, Aurora rejects physical motherhood and instead becomes a mother in birthing poetry for the ages; in doing so, she lives solely through her art while her physical form dies. Haunted by images of violent conception and maternity, Aurora renounces physical motherhood, displacing her female form to an ideal of art-producing maternity.

If Marian tells Aurora more details of her rape, Aurora does not record them. Yet she does use images of mythic rapes to describe the birth of her poetic inspiration, referencing Zeus and Ganymede, Jove and Danae, and Jove and Io. Though Aurora associates conception with violence, she removes physical abuse from these rape myths, reinterpreting Marian's own experience and modeling how sexual activity and desire should appear on the body. As Leslee Thorne-Murphy contends, Barrett Browning "portrays her poet Aurora Leigh as a direct recipient of divine truth, and Aurora receives this truth through moments of inspiration metaphorically illustrated by Greek myths of rape" (242). But while Marian's rape is a terrible experience that leads her to childbirth, social rejection, and a conviction that she is dead, Aurora's rape victims happily produce art and not children. In her versions of the tales, Aurora removes the violence. The descriptions work as another means of displacement for Aurora: fearful of facing life-threatening and destructive impregnation and childbirth as her mother and Marian do, Aurora lives through reinterpreted myths of sexual encounters. Instead of interacting with real men and risking sexual violence or dwelling on Marian's painful physical experience in her narrative, she idealizes rape myths.

Both Thorne-Murphy and Linda Lewis conclude that these metaphors suggest Aurora "is impregnated with poetic language" by mythic gods (Thorne-Murphy 244), but also question why Aurora connects writing poetry with rape, particularly since she describes the desired effect of her poetry as discouraging such abuse:

> If a man could feel,
> . . . . . .
> The spiritual significance [of poetry] burn through….
> Henceforward he would paint the globe with wings….
> [And reverence] even his very body as man,--
> Which now he counts so vile, that all the towns
> Make offal of their daughters for its use. (*AL* VII.857, 860, 862, 864-866)

In reading poetry, man feels an excess of spirituality that lifts him to higher beliefs and truths, thus discouraging him from his previous "vile" tendencies, such as rape. Yet this picture of destructive sexual violence is dropped in Aurora's descriptions of poetic rape. Lewis notes that this is a "bold" move for a female poet because it promotes a rape fantasy in which the woman asks for and enjoys being raped (166), and Aurora does present these mythic rapes as pleasing to the women. Her Ganymede is "still hot / From Zeus's thunder" and Danae is "overbold and hot" with "Both arms aflame" to meet Jove (*AL* I.919-920, III.122, 123). Aurora's position changes in the last rape metaphor as she assumes the perspective of the male god who feels lust "hound" him through "the wastes of life" (VII.829).[19] In these first two scenes, Aurora/the goddesses are expected to be passive but instead relish their sexual desire and bodies and reach out to the gods, which Aurora eventually does herself as she accepts Romney's marriage proposal. In the third scene, Aurora is not the goddess but the confident and pursuing Jove. As she nears professing her love for Romney, she changes the image of herself from the presumed passive, but actually welcoming, goddess to the active, lustful god. Aurora is not asking for or condoning violence; rather, she welcomes and even pursues poetic inspiration without hesitation as she wishes to pursue Romney. What prevents her from realizing these desires are the example of Marian's conception and her own ensuing anxiety of sexual violence.

Through allusions to rape, *Wuthering Heights* and *Aurora Leigh* do not openly describe sexual violence and its effect on Isabella's and Marian's bodies. Censorship norms in the Victorian Age prevent Emily Brontë and Barrett Browning from directly depicting rape as Jane Eyre depicts her cousin's attack or the narrators of *The Small House at Allington, Oliver Twist,* and *Dombey and Son* detail Johnny's, Sikes's, and Dombey's abuse. Neither can Emily Brontë and Barrett Browning give concrete descriptions of evidence of sexual assault on the victims'

bodies as the characters and narrators of *The Woman in White*, *Can You Forgive Her?*, and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* do for other forms of violence. Indeed, evidence of sexual assault was difficult to show and defend in general; Victorian medical men would probably approach Marian's case with a strong suspicion that she was pretending, that any signs of such violence were self-caused like Cathy's of *Wuthering Heights*. Yet even though Emily Brontë and Barrett Browning cannot make their characters tangible by describing the moments of violence against them or even by showing evidence of such violence, they find other methods to detail their characters bodies: hinting at sexual violence while detailing physical abuse or by having signs of sexual violence appear on another's body or even mythical bodies.

All these novels do, however, depend on two characters to encourage the reader to envision the violence. The moments of and marks of abuse emphasize the batterer and battered, or for *Aurora Leigh*, the enemy and the friend of the victim. Marks of violence, such as bruises, draw the reader's and other characters' attention because they both engage in and disrupt the readable sign system, redirecting for what and whom one's body is interpreted. By having characters physically interact or show signs of such interactions, the authors encourage the reader to imagine the characters not only as visible beings but as tangible ones.

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[1] For more information on violence against women and laws protecting women, see Lisa Surridge's *Bleak Houses*. I would like to point out that Victorians had varying views on this subject; John William Kaye, for instance, while arguing against "outrages on women" does qualify that a "wretched home" and the "provocations" of a woman's behavior or conduct may merit a blow (238).

[2] In "Porphyria's Lover," Robert Browning seems to poke fun at such representations of women's bodies undergoing destruction while the women appear to feel or express no pain. Porphyria's body becomes prominent in the poem as she presents it to the narrator and he decides to murder her: she kneels by the fire, takes off her cloak, hat, and "soil'd gloves," lets her hair down, puts her lover's arm around her waist, and "ma[kes] her smooth white shoulder bare"

to pillow her lover's hair (Browning 12, 17). The lover murders her by strangling her with her own hair yet is convinced that she feels no pain in the process: "No pain felt she; / I am quite sure she felt no pain" (41-42).

[3] F. S. Schwarzbach claims Dickens raises sympathy for Sikes in the reader by presenting the bloody murder only to have the narrator within Sikes's mind during his flight in the following chapter (97). Even though Sikes cruelly murders his lover, the omniscient narrator follows the character, stressing murderer's feeling of guilt and thereby indicating his humanity, until Sikes is confronted by an angry mob that ironically chases him to his death while trying to capture him so he can face lawful punishment for his actions.

[4] The word "monster" originally referred to a mythical part-human and part-animal creature and later, and more generally, to "any imaginary creature that is large, ugly, and frightening" ("Monster"). The word referred to physical aspects rather than mental ones.

[5] Conversely, we may forget how detailed and disturbing Nancy's and other lower class or otherwise too-physical female characters' battered bodies are. Take, for example, Bertha Mason Rochester of *Jane Eyre*. Rochester describes Bertha as having a mind that is "common, low, narrow, and singularly incapable of being led to anything higher," and her "coarse" and "perverse" nature, which Gilbert and Gubar, Jean Rhys, and even Rochester to some extent, attribute to sexual desire, leads to her madness, a mental state seemingly reinforced by descriptions of her body (Gilbert and Gubar 353). She is monstrous: her body "a clothed hyena," her face "purple" and "bloated" (*JE* 338). And she is treated monstrously; she is locked in an attic, tied to chairs, and looked after by a woman who drinks heavily and manages to leave knives and other potential weapons in Bertha's reach. Lawson and Shakinovsky briefly consider Rochester's brutal treatment of his first wife and Jane's response to this treatment, which is sympathetic to the man rather than the mad woman: "Rochester himself, the bourgeois gentleman, claims that he is in fact not cruel but exhibiting a commendable 'restraint' in his dealings with Bertha Mason: '[H]er vices,' he says, 'were so strong, only cruelty could check them, and I would not use cruelty' (*JE* 333-34). Even Jane is seemingly impressed by Rochester's self-control: 'He could have settled her with a well-planted blow; but he would not strike: he would only wrestle'" (335). Yet Jane also recognizes that Rochester's behavior towards Bertha is "cruel" and questions how Rochester would hate her if she lost her mind (347).

[6] Jane's narration does more than explain her physical sufferings, though she devotes much attention to this topic, which includes her starvation at Lowton and as she flees Thornfield; she also details her physical contact with Rochester. She informs her reader that he leans on her when injured (*JE* 136), she holds his hand (235), rides behind him on a horse (320), and sits on his lap (507).

[7] Jane's physical presence is made more interesting because of the novel's conception; Emily and Anne Brontë challenged Charlotte to write a novel about a non-beautiful heroine. Jane informs the reader more than once that she is "plain," but gives few facial details (*JE* 292). Yet her body is not lacking in the novel.

[8] Dickens also addresses abuse and bruises as identifying the abuse through Mr. Quilp of *The Old Curiosity Shop*. Florence's bruise resembles the hand of her father, and Quilp's torture of his wife is well-known and well-recorded on her body: "Mrs Quilp hesitated….for she knew very well that her husband wished to enter the house in this order, that he might have a favourable opportunity of inflicting a few pinches on her arms, which were seldom free from impressions of his fingers in black and blue colours. Mr Swiveller, who was not in the secret, was a little surprised to hear a suppressed scream" (*TOCS* 107). Quilp leaves "impressions of *his* fingers" on his wife's figure (my emphasis). Swiveller's ignorance of the circumstance is ironic. The event has little interest for him; as the narrator notes, "he did not remark on these appearances, and soon forgot them" (107).

Unlike Dombey's abuse, which Florence fears will become known and carefully hides from others, Quilp's violence does become known. The wife's mother Mrs. Jiniwin, who lives in the married couple's house, observes it often, gossips about it, and occasionally experiences it herself as Quilp determines to keep both women "in a state of incessant agitation and suspense" (376). And since many are familiar with his brutality towards his wife, Mrs. Jiniwin and her friends discuss it. Unlike Florence, they do not view the abuse as the most shameful aspect of the familial circumstances but rather Mrs. Quilp's lack of retaliation. Mrs. Jiniwin explains: "if [my husband] had ever ventur'd a cross word to me, I'd have—' the good old lady did not finish the sentence, but she twisted off the head of a shrimp with a vindictiveness which seemed to imply that the action was is some degree a substitute for words" (37).

[9] Helen's diary does not remain private, however. Arthur finds and reads it, learning of her first plan of escaping him and his abuse. In spite of this instance, she continues to record her plans of leaving her married home in her diary and does succeed. She later gives her diary to Gilbert, who becomes her second husband and who shares it with at least one friend.

[10] While Cathy's violence is a rather extreme example, this idea of women self-inflicting or performing pain to obtain notice and influence others recurs in Victorian literature. In Trollope's *The Duke's Children*, for example, the Duke prevents his daughter Mary from marrying the man she loves. As long as Mary is under the care of Lady Cantrip and out of the Duke's presence, he maintains his purpose of preventing the marriage. But when he travels with his daughter and sees her unhappiness, which shows itself through headaches and sickliness, he doubts his decision. The narrator does not explicitly state that Mary exhibits her unhappiness as illness when the Duke is near, but she does not noticeably suffer when her father cannot see her, suggesting that her illness is a public protest to his decision. He certainly thinks so and worries that she will "avenge" herself against him and his decision by dying (*TDC* 331).

[11] This theme of the fear of pain resulting from a dog bite also appears in Charlotte Brontë's *Shirley*, which I will discuss in depth in the following chapter. Shirley has the opposite reaction to a bite; her character is more concerned with the fear caused by the bite than the pain.

[12] Ruth Richardson describes how Victorians typically prepared corpses for the grave: "It involved washing the corpse, plugging its orifices, closing the eyes and mouth, straightening the limbs, and dressing it in winding sheet or shroud" (18). Because embalming and thick coffins were popular in the 1800s, a corpse could be preserved for some time.

[13] Heathcliff is not the only character who experiences the post-mortem Cathy as a physical being associated with pain and punishment. The listener to Nelly's tale, Mr. Lockwood, also encounters her ghost as corporeal as well as visible. He dreams about her trying to enter his borrowed bedroom at Wuthering Heights; the dream quickly turns to a nightmare as Lockwood thinks her hand grasps his arm so strongly that he cannot make her loosen the hold even though he wounds it by scraping the wrist across the broken glass of the window pane: "my fingers closed on the fingers of a little, ice-cold hand! The intense horror of nightmare came over me: I tried to draw back my arm, but the hand clung to it….finding it useless to attempt shaking the creature off, I pulled its wrist on to the broken pane, and rubbed it to and fro till the blood ran down and soaked the bedclothes" (36). Lockwood is dreaming, but his very dreams conjure a physical Cathy though he does not know who she is or that she is dead. His dream also suggests the girl's violence as she clings to him and her own tolerance for violence against herself. Furthermore, the ghostly Cathy, as both viewable and tangible, and her attempts to enter Lockwood's room despite Lockwood's abuse, connect the character with materiality; she seems to wish to materially enter Lockwood's narrative as she tries to climb in the window.

[14] William Acton, a popular Victorian doctor and author, certainly supported a disdain for fat women and inversely associated thin women with morality and health. He claimed that bigger women were more likely to have venereal diseases like blennorrhagia and would suffer more from the symptoms of the disease than thin women (*A Practical Treatise* 145-146).

[15] Susan Rubinow Gorsky explains that Emily and her sisters were not strangers to self-starvation to demonstrate and petition for some desire. They partook in a hunger strike to protest the intended dismissal of a servant (183). Emily also refused to eat when at school and when working as a governess; she was sent home on both occasions (183).

[16] If Marian had truly died in the hospital, her poverty would prevent her burial in a lovely graveyard. The Anatomy Act of 1832 gave all unclaimed corpses, or those whose families could not pay for burial, to anatomy or medical schools for dissection (Richardson xv). After the anatomists' perusals, the school was legally responsible for paying for the burial, but there are no records of the dissections and burials to ensure this happened, and many accused the schools of not burying the dead properly (106).

[17] Carolyn Dever argues that fictional mothers can be readily and successfully idealized when they are absent. Barrett Browning's diary indicates that she idealized her deceased mother. Three years after the death, which occurred when the daughter was nineteen, Barrett Browning yearningly recalled the strength of her love for her mother, using her diary to venerate the absent figure: "And how I felt that to hear again the sound of those beloved, those ever beloved lips, I wd. barter all other sounds & sights—that I wd. in joy & gratitude lay down before her my tastes & feelings each & all, in sacrifice for <the> love, the exceeding love <which> I never, in truth, can find again" (*Diary by E.B.B.* 88). Olivia Gatti Taylor notes that the number of books in *Aurora Leigh*, nine, is a significant number as a reference to motherhood. Yet Aurora both idealizes and vilifies her mother as both mythic goodness and inspiration and as mythic murderers; she sees her mother as, to borrow Nancy Auerbach's terms, an angel and a demon.

[18] While no information on birthing mortality rates was collected until the century's end, mid-century rates were no better, and, more likely, worse. In 1899, four out of twenty-five children died within their first year (Flanders 78). The mothers had a better chance of surviving—one in two hundred pregnancies ended in the mother's death, though lack of effective or socially approved birth control meant many married women became pregnant several times and had an average of 5.5 births (50). Barrett Browning experienced the difficulties of childbirth and complications; already ill to the point of invalidism and forty years old at the time of her marriage, she became pregnant several times between 1846 and 1850, with only one pregnancy, her third, ending in a healthy birth while one miscarriage was "particularly dangerous" (Calcraft-Rennie 11).

[19] Barrett Browning positions Aurora as inspired by rape stories and also as the characters within them, both as the male rapists and female victims. Similarly, as Adrienne Auslander Munich notes, Robert Browning named Andromeda, the mythic woman chained naked to a rock by her parents as a gift to a monster, as his muse. He also "imagined himself as the chained and helpless Andromeda," inverting expected gender roles, rather than identifying with the monster, who would destroy her, or Perseus, who would rescue her (Munich 11, 21).

CHAPTER THREE
NETWORKED BODIES: PHYSICALLY MANIFESTED EMOTIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS

> Heavily the thunder-clouds of Affliction had gathered over the house—heavily, but not at their darkest hour yet. At five, that evening, the shock of the calamity had struck its blow. Before another hour had passed, the disclosure of the husband's sudden death was followed by the suspense of the wife's mortal peril. She lay helpless on her widowed bed; her own life, and the life of her unborn child, trembling in the balance. (*No Name* 83)

The first two chapters of this dissertation focus on how characters' expressions appear on their faces and how wounds convolute the readable sign system. These wounds elicit descriptions of the characters' bodies and changes to them, encouraging the reader to envision them as visible, fully-fleshed figures. They concentrate on physical harm caused by physical things, a train wreck, a contagious disease, and physical abuse by oneself or another person. This chapter does not, however, look for physical causes to bodily changes. In the first chapter, I demonstrate that temporary mental discomfort often appears on bodies in Victorian literature in the form of paleness or a blush. Mutilation brings more attention to the individual body while obstructing the appearance of these less visible signals of discomfort. Yet strong feelings can act strongly on bodies; in addition to causing facial expressions to change, they can alter a body in a more profound and lasting way, much as mutilation does. In this chapter, I explore the mind/body network, how emotional duress writes itself on and within the body, drastically altering its features. Extreme emotional anguish causes visible signs of physical pain that narrators describe and other characters react to, drawing the reader's attention to the suffering character and his or her physically manifested anguish. This bodily change reveals much about the individual's emotions but also about others' and the individual's relationships with them, much as the bruises do in Chapter Two. This chapter considers how mental states affect the body but also discusses inter-body networks, how one character's appearance indicates not only

his or her feeling but also the feelings, and potentially the bodies, of others. Emotional distress, unlike mutilation and abuse, is caused by and affects more than the individual or even a pair of characters. Instead, it influences and ties together many, all of those in a social group.

The passage from *No Name* exemplifies the intra-body network. The Vanstones' governess attempts to inform Mrs. Vanstone of her husband's death gradually to ease the shock. She fails, and the news is so devastating to Mrs. Vanstone that she, anguished, immediately faints, becomes ill, goes into labor though she has not yet reached full term, and dies along with the infant. Her grief, then, affects more than her facial expression as it causes both her own and her infant's death. The governess does not worry about the elder of the two daughters; she does not concern herself with Norah because "The agony of Norah's grief had forced its way outward to the natural relief of tears" (*No Name* 83). Norah finds relief from her anguish by openly expressing and accepting it. Generally, her emotional expressions are weaker, less intense than her relatives'. Magdalen particularly thinks Norah has an "old-fashioned formality" that "seem[s] our of harmony" with her family's expressions (7). Magdalen internalizes her despair, and it affects her appearance but not her overall health: "Tearless and speechless, [Magdalen] sat in the room where the revelation of her father's death had first reached her; her face, unnaturally petrified by the sterile sorrow of old age—a white changeless blank, fearful to look at. Nothing roused, nothing melted her" (83).

No Name also provides examples of inter-body networks, of how one person's physical manifestation of emotion results from and affects other characters. Magdalen's features visibly alter, becoming pale. But her grief develops a stronger effect on her body. Her mother's death causes her further anguish, as does the news that she is illegitimate and therefore will not receive her inheritance or her father's name. Furthermore, her fiancé abandons her. She artfully hides

any signs of her grief but dwells on it for motivation in her attempts to enact revenge against the relative who usurps her inheritance. Eventually, this emotional pain causes physical destruction, drastically altering her appearance; a doctor explains: "No common cause will account for the illness which has laid my patient on that bed. She has suffered some long-continued mental trial" that causes "a dreadful change" in her face, "shivering fits and hot fits," sleepiness, light-headedness, and a wandering mind (580, 577). Notably, both the mother's and Magdalen's mental states cause pain internally, within their bodies, instead of merely expressing their emotions on their façades. The mother's and daughter's physically altering grief shows how strongly their emotions affect them. Their grief, inscribed within and on their bodies, also shows their emotional networks; their feelings, physically visible, highlight their relationships with each other. Their happiness depends on Mr. Vanstone, indicating that he is a source support and a strong part of their emotional networks. Without his support, they suffer mentally and physically.

I argue in this chapter that Victorian authors emphasize characters' bodies in describing emotional distress and relationships as they depict mental pain as altering characters' physical features. In doing so, writers encourage their readers to envision how a character's feeling inscribes itself on and within the body. The body with meaning, however, both draws attention to and directs it from the physical. Victorian authors do not just describe how a passion alters the character's appearance but stimulate the reader to imagine how this feeling results from one or more of the character's relationships, and how the characters in his networks respond to the physical manifestation of emotion. Victorian fiction often describes passions as overwhelming a character and causing declining health as Magdalen's do, teaching readers how to interpret bodies and how other characters can access another's feelings. The reader of *No Name* pictures

Magdalen's altered form, which is so changed it is hyper-visible just as Isabel's and Esther's scarred bodies are. The reader also realizes her suffering is so strong because she has few supportive relationships; her body is legible for her own emotion but also for others' feelings. Magdalen's despair and subsequent illness result from her networks with others: the end of her father's and mother's support, her fiancé's rejection, and her sister's formality that Magdalen interprets as a lack of care. But strong positive relationships may promote an emotionally and physically supportive inter-body network. Norah does not suffer like Magdalen because she finds sympathy and love in her former governess and future husband. She remains healthy. The narrator details how she and other characters react to Magdalen's ailing form. Norah's concern shows that she cares for her sister and will be a source of support as Magdalen recovers. Her emotional and physical recovery, however, demonstrates her increasing reliance on Norah; her recovery shows her own mental states but also Norah's care for her.

Much of Victorian fiction implies how character networks act as a source of strength or, if lacking, a source of pain. These networks also draw attention to a sufferer's body as those in his network react to it. Anne and Charlotte Brontë, however, emphasize relationships by representing them as physical. In their novels, feelings become materials that leave the body. This loss either demonstrates how mental states negatively affect physical health, or it connects to another character to form a seemingly corporeal emotional tie. Narrators describe an emotion as an expansion that appears outside the bounds of the human form; though other characters cannot see it, narrators can make it physical for the reader and teach how to read it for the relationships between characters and their health in general. Descriptions of connections highlight materiality as the networks seem composed of bodily matter. This embodied matter indicates an intangible relationship while simultaneously emphasizing the material nature of the

characters. Characters are emotionally connected, and narrators indicate the strength of such ties by describing them as physical connections.

Strong emotional connections, as James Krasner and Elizabeth Grosz explain, may seem physical because individuals incorporate close relationships in their body schemas. Grosz notes that something that "comes in contact with the surface of the body and remains there long enough," whether this thing is "clothing, jewelry, [or] other bodies," "will be incorporated into the body image" (80). One's image of one's physical self, then, may include other people because, as Krasner elaborates, "we experience our loved ones' bodies as contiguous with our own" (221). If one engages physically with loved ones on a daily basis, or is merely constantly in their presence, then his or her "love for them exists in an embodied environment" (222); "the body schema thus extends beyond our skin across intervening space, and to our loved ones who are physically attached to the surface of our bodies at various times throughout the day but are more often annexed to us by a thin band of intervening space" (225). Krasner argues that, if a loved one dies, then the survivor loses "a body [as well as] one's bodily engagement with it. It means losing a set of postural habits formed in the rooms, halls, beds, sofas, and cars those bodies shared" (222). Krasner compares this feeling of loss of another's presence to phantom limb phenomena, in which a person with an amputated limb continues to incorporate it into his or her body schema. The amputee continues to feel that limb as if it still exists and tries to use that limb only to be constantly shocked by its absence. Scarry, as noted in the Introduction, contends that faces are difficult to remember "with a vivacity commensurate with one's affection for the person" ("Imagining" 93), but the memory of a body's presence and one's interactions with it are easy to recall because they depend on feeling and one's idea of physical self. When suffering the loss of a loved one, the survivor feels the "terrible confusion when the space turns

out to be not between two bodies but only around the edges of [one's own]" (Krasner 225). While Krasner focuses on death as causing emotional pain and affecting a survivor's body schema, Victorian literature explores how emotional pain, instigated by another's death, absence, or rejection provokes a feeling of loss that leads to bodily harm. The loss of a network causes anguish that not only affects self-perception but, if the anguish is strong and prolonged, physically influences the body.

This chapter first describes nineteenth-century scientific theories of passions influencing physiological activity and even others' bodies to set up its analysis of intra- and inter-body networks. This chapter then considers how emotional pain, caused by feelings for or about others, writes itself on characters' bodies in two novels of differing genres, Mary Elizabeth Braddon's sensational *Aurora Floyd* (1862) and Anthony Trollope's realist social commentary *He Knew He Was Right* (1869). Fictional characters engage in a form of legibility that inscribes itself more noticeably and permanently than facial expression or coloring. *Aurora Floyd* and *He Knew He Was Right* detail how strong emotions create lasting, drastic, bodily changes. Furthermore, they indicate how feelings and subsequent bodily changes affect and are affected and interpreted by others. Emotional networks may be described directly or conveyed through comparisons. Charlotte and Anne Brontë's novels frequently rely on natural images to convey how emotion manifests physically and how feelings create networks. Feelings, as described by the Brontë sisters, leave the body as material things. This loss affects the body's external appearance and specific aspects of its physiology. Lastly, this chapter considers depictions of relationships as composed of seemingly bodily substances that emphasize characters' connections and states of health. These emotions, represented as material substances, leave or exceed the corporeal bounds of one body to link to other characters and thereby embody the

emotional networks between them. The previous sections of the chapter focus on emotional pain causing physical pain, but this last section also considers how emotional support inspires physical health. The Victorian body, then, is not only physical but also emotionally-based.

The first two chapters of this project focus on how physical destruction emphasizes the material nature of a body, but this chapter, in its last section, examines physical harm and restoration caused by feelings between two of more characters. The networks between characters, if strained, harm their bodies. This suffering elicits details of their bodies much as mutilation does. Yet, instead of preventing legibility, the distress constantly reminds the reader of the characters' physical features, feelings, and relationships. Physical indications of emotional pain signify the individual's emotional state, participating in the legible sign system. Such indications of mental affliction also add to this system; the individual is readable for his own feelings and also the feelings of others. Literary critics such as Sally Shuttleworth and Nancy Armstrong note Charlotte Brontë's success in conveying "the inner workings of the mind" to "[establish] a reassuring sensation of realism" (Shuttleworth 3). But the Brontës and other Victorian authors do not only depend on intangible, invisible thoughts and emotions to make their characters realistic; they encourage their readers to understand a character's mental states and imagine the character as a material being. As Alex Woloch notes, a protagonist's success depends on his or her thoughts and on his or her physical existence (25). Victorian novels closely tie the mind and body as many authors participated in a broader cultural trend of mind/body influence. Emotional agony influences and writes itself on the body so that feeling is externalized.

Victorian Medicine and the Mind's Influence on the Body

Many Victorian authors partook in a broader, medically-endorsed cultural dialogue about the mind and body network. Their portrayals of characters rely on the conception of emotions as capable of influencing the physical and physiological, of marking the body in more lasting ways than facial expressions. As I discussed in the Introduction, Victorian medical texts supported this mind/body connection;[1] they often conceive of passions as running through and affecting humans like blood. Alexander Bain, for example, describes how feelings influence the physical in a process he calls the Law of Diffusion. Emotion is a "current" that spreads throughout the body, stimulating its material substances (3). Passions may not only appear on one's face as a legible account of what one was feeling, but they could also exercise corporeal harm, causing lasting or permanent changes. Famous scientific and medical writers such as Charles Darwin, Thomas Graham, and William Buchan espoused this idea. Many medical works also insist that women in particular are subject to mental disquietude; passions such as anger, fear, and grief affect physical processes, particularly reproductive processes, and thereby affect women's general health. These texts depict passion as causing the body to self-destruct to some extent; passion influences physiology so that emotion causes physical unhealthiness.

Victorian doctors thought women's emotions were especially strong and capable of changing the body's physiology. Menstruation, pregnancy and breast-milk production or problems could have, according to Buchan, physical or emotional causes. Buchan and other physicians such as George Man Burrows and Charles Locock, Queen Victoria's obstetrician, specifically related menstruation to mental states and thereby focus on how feeling affects and is affected by female physiology. They encouraged women to monitor their menstrual discharges because regular periods marked not only physical but also emotional health; menstruation, they

believed, worked as a "moral and physical barometer of the female constitution" (Burrows 199). Burrows compares menstruation to a scientific instrument that measures atmospheric pressure and is used in predicting the weather; this analogy suggests monthly cycles can be studied to predict the women's moods and physical issues. Physical issues, such as improper diet and tight-fitting undergarments, could cause irregular menstruation, but emotional distress, such as "anger, fear, grief, and other affectations of the mind" could too (Buchan 399). But disrupted menstrual cycles were not the only indications of strong emotion or the only aspect of reproductive physiology influenced by feelings.

Buchan explains how emotions more readily affect female reproductive processes when a woman is pregnant; emotions, then, could physically affect the mother and her unborn child. Having already noted that fear enacts a stronger physical reaction within those with less than courageous minds, he specifically describes how fear, with other strong emotions, is particularly dangerous to pregnant women and their fetuses: "violent passions or affections of the mind, as fear, grief, &c." cause accidental abortions (409). Similarly, fear is responsible for difficult childbirths: "The methods taken to impress the minds of women with the apprehensions of the great *pain* and *peril* of child-birth, are very hurtful….A woman after delivery, finding herself weak and exhausted, immediately apprehends she is in danger; but this fear seldom fails to obstruct the necessary evacuations, upon which her recovery depends" (87, original emphasis). Ironically, the very fear of physical pain causes physical pain. By blaming women's fears for endangering their health and pregnancies, Buchan also holds women responsible for causing birthing complications and damaging the next generation. He argues that, if women could control their fear of childbirth, then childbirth would be easier on them and their children: "there would be no danger, did they apprehend none" (87).

Other strong emotions could permanently harm a child. In his *Illustrations of the Mind Upon the Body in Health and Disease Designed to Elucidate the Action of the Imagination*, Daniel Hack Tuke examines the idea of mother's marks, marks that form on a fetus because the mother sees and is disturbed by some image. He wavers between endorsing and discrediting the mind influencing the body to the extreme of mother's marks. Yet he provides several medically noted examples of women who unconsciously harm their fetus' development because they are disturbed by some sight. For example, "Madame C—, during the second month of her pregnancy, saw a cart pass containing three men condemned to death. One of them, faint, had *his head inclined to the right;* his appearance indicating the most complete mental prostration. This lady gave birth to a child, having *the head turned to the right* shoulder—a morbid contraction which was permanent" (268, original emphasis). Tuke suggests that this sight so impressed the woman that her body reacts to it. Pregnant women do not retain their impressions solely within their minds but also, according to Tuke's semi-endorsement of the stories, form the images on their fetuses so that, when born, the infants replicate specific aspects of the images. Their bodies resemble the sights that strongly affect their mothers' minds. Though Tuke presents the woman's emotions as affecting her body, it is actually the child's body that can be read for the mother's thoughts and emotions while the mother's body exhibits no sign of this previously experienced emotion. Poignant emotions affect mothers emotionally but physically affect the fetuses.

Yet mother's passions can influence her children after birth too. A mother and child establish a strong inter-body network after birth through breastfeeding. Tuke also discusses harmful effects of breast-milk when a woman is experiencing passionate emotion. He contends that the quality, potentially even the color and consistency, of her breast-milk changes so that it

may harm her suckling child rather than nourish (293-295). The mother's feeling affects her body, her production of breast-milk, which, when consumed, affects the child. He warns that mothers should abstain from breastfeeding when experiencing a strong feeling or they may unintentionally hurt or even kill their children as their breast-milk, influenced by emotion, becomes more poisonous than wholesome.

Victorian physicians contend that emotions strongly influence one's body and potentially others. Though these examples depict strong emotions affecting one's physiology, such as reproductive processes that are not readily visible to an external viewer, Victorian scientists also, as discussed formerly, believed emotions write themselves on one's appearance. Emotion might appear temporarily on one's facial features. But according to many Victorian novels, a feeling, if long-lasting or particularly strong, affects the body's functions. The authors considered in this chapter depict strong emotion as causing illness and longer-lasting, more extreme, and more notable external marks. These marks indicate the sufferers' emotion but also suggest which relationships incite this response.

Perhaps the most familiar example of strong emotions affecting the physical in Victorian literature is that of the love-sick character. Many novels and poems depict a heroine who becomes distraught after a man rejects her love; her disappointment often leads to illness and physical alteration. Furthermore, more astute characters can read the sufferer's appearance not only for her emotions but also for the relationship that causes the emotional pain; they can guess the sufferer is love-sick, whom she is love-sick for, and assume that the object of her affection does not return her feelings. In this way, authors hint at relationships between characters. Mary Elizabeth Braddon, for instance, has her protagonist of *Aurora Floyd* physically sicken from emotional strain after her fiancé ends their engagement. Aurora is, as the narrator repeatedly

tells the reader, an unusual woman, strong and "fearless" (Braddon 21). She has "one of those impressionable natures which quickly recover from any depressing influence" (25), and as such, seems protected from the influence of passionate feeling. Yet Braddon brings this paragon of womanly strength to emotional turmoil and thereby physical weakness. Meanwhile, Braddon juxtaposes Aurora to other characters, both male and female, providing different variations of how their disappointed love or anxiety for others influences their health. In having male characters show emotion more readily than Aurora and manifest emotions physically, Braddon diverges from contemporary medical theories that women more readily succumb to passions, that their minds and bodies are more closely networked. The many plot twists of the sensation novel, complete with a love triangle, a secret, and a murder, allow each of the five main characters to mentally suffer because of his or her concern for a loved one. This suffering appears on their faces and figures, displaying the characters' emotions but also indicating which other character inspired that emotion.

Though the narrator suggests Aurora's strength safeguards her from physically-altering emotion, she arouses powerful feelings in others. Talbot Bulstrode, her first fiancé, is a careful man who, until he meets Aurora, lives a spotless life because he has full reign over his emotions. Though he feels stirrings of love for various women and wants to marry, he refuses to allow himself to become attached because "he had never met with a woman whose stainless purity of soul fit her in his eyes to become the mother of a noble race, and to rear sons who should do honour to the name of Bulstrode. He looked for more than ordinary every-day virtue in the woman of his choice; he demanded those grand and queenly qualities which are rarest in womankind" (31). Yet Talbot is susceptible to Aurora's beauty, which clouds his mind like alcohol: "he could not help fancying that the beauty of this woman was like the strength of that

alcoholic preparation; barbarous, intoxicating, dangerous, maddening" (33). He knows he should avoid the heiress but cannot, though her interest in horse racing rouses "a feeling of pity mingled with horror" (35). He continually warns himself to distance himself from Aurora but "was nevertheless allowing himself to be bewitched by this black-eyed siren; freely drinking…and rapidly becoming intoxicated"; he "can't help" his growing attachment to her though he "blindly struggle[s] with the growing passion" (47, 55). He is unable to contain or control his affection, and when Aurora refuses his first marriage proposal, his body is susceptible to his disappointment. It becomes a sign for his feelings but also for the status of his relationship with Aurora. Lucy knows Aurora rejects Talbot simply by looking at him: "He was so pale and cold and wretched-looking…Aurora had refused him—it was perfectly clear" (70). Lucy interprets Talbot's "clammy palm" and pale face as a sign of his disappointment and for Aurora's behavior, her refusal to marry him (70). When they do become engaged and he calls off the marriage, his face remains "pale" for weeks afterwards, a testament to his family that Aurora could not give him an acceptable account of her past (111). Talbot's emotion overwhelms his better judgment and eventually influences his physical features though the narrator assures the reader that he typically controls his emotion with little effort.

Braddon also juxtaposes Lucy to her cousin Aurora. While Aurora seems physically strong and more than capable of withstanding other's influences, Lucy seems physically weak and unfit for passion in general; she depends on Aurora for emotional support. Her features are insignificant next to Aurora's; Talbot "had not taken much notice of Lucy…[as] Lucy was scarcely a candle-light beauty; her hair wanted the sunshine gleaming through it to light up the golden halo about her face, and the delicate pink of her cheeks waxed pale in the glare of the great chandeliers" (40-41). Her appearance constantly fails to attract notice when she is near

Aurora: "Aurora's beauty extinguished poor Lucy, as the rising sun extinguishes the stars" (41). The narrator notes that such is always the case because "There are so many Lucys but so few Auroras" (48). Her personality is timid, similarly eclipsed by Aurora's confident nature. Even her horse-riding cannot compare to her cousin's. In spite of these many suggestions of her various weaknesses, she loves Talbot deeply while realizing that he loves Aurora and not her. The pain of this unreturned love evidences physically, and the narrator accentuates the effect of the emotion. Her eyes continually fill with tears, and her cheeks "lost much of their delicate colour" (74). Lucy, however, is difficult to read because of her fragile health. Most of her friends and relatives assume Lucy's physical change results from physical illness. No one understands that Lucy suffers from her passion, except John Mellish, who is also suffering from unrequited love. He readily "read[s] poor Lucy's secret" (93). Instead, those who see her, taking note of her alteration, assume she suffers from a purely bodily malady because her life seems so blessed yet her body so weak:

> Everybody was ready to ascribe [her pale cheeks] to a cold, or a cough, or constitutional debility, or some other bodily evil, which was to be cured by drugs and boluses; and no one for a moment imagined that anything could possibly be amiss with a young lady who lived in a luxurious house, went shopping in a carriage and pair, and had more pocket-money than she cared to spend. (77)

Her emotion is visible but only one character correctly reads it; others think she has no reason to be disappointed in any aspect of her life and therefore blame her physical fragility for the signs of emotional pain that manifest on her body. The narrator does not specify exactly when Lucy's dejection disappears from her appearance or how she looks once she is no longer envious or depressed, but by the time she is a bridesmaid in Aurora's wedding to John several months later, Lucy "no longer walked about 'corpse alive'" but appears "hearty" (128).

Excepting Aurora, her husband John Mellish and her father Mr. Floyd face the most, and longest lasting, emotional distress because of their anxiety for her. John marries her knowing she has a secret in her past, and the secret weighs on him but not heavily enough to physically affect him except in momentary expressions on his face: "terrible doubts and anxieties [creep], like venomous living creatures, stealthily into his heart" provoking "an expression of newly awakened doubt, of dim, struggling perplexity" on his face (213). The revelation of the secret, and even Aurora's running away, have little effect on him as he trusts in his love for her and her love for him; his face is merely "pale" (358). It is not until John thinks that Aurora has murdered her first husband that his passions strongly write themselves on his figure. He is pained by the idea of her suffering from her first husband's abuse and blackmail. He also fears that Aurora, driven to desperation, committed the murder, and worries that she might be accused of the murder, stand trial, and be imprisoned. John's appearance alters: "The Yorkshireman's blue eyes had lost their brightness, his step its elasticity; his face seemed sunken and haggard, and he evidently avoided meeting Talbot's eye" (402). Talbot understands the cause for this alteration ("I can guess what your trouble is, John"), that John's fear for his wife's future pains him (403).

Unhappy emotions permanently mark Mr. Floyd. He first grieves the loss of his wife who dies giving birth to Aurora. This sadness affects him like "a stroke of paralysis" for six months (18). After months of grieving, he devotes his life to his daughter: "That pale black-eyed baby became henceforth the idol of Archibald Martin Floyd, the one object in all this wide universe for which it seemed worth his while to endure life" (19). It is perhaps this devotion that causes Aurora's biggest mistake to harm him more lastingly than it harms her younger and more resilient figure. He knows of Aurora's first marriage to the greedy and ambitious groom, and spends little more than a year separated from his daughter because of this marriage, regretting

her fate and aware that the lower-class husband is using Aurora to inherit the Floyd wealth. This knowledge wears on him so that he is prematurely aged: "[he] had grown an old man in one day—that terrible and unexpected day of his wife's death; but even the grief of that bereavement had scarcely seemed to affect him so strongly as the loss of his daughter Aurora during the fourteen months of her absence" (23). Aurora's return and lie that her husband is dead do little to restore her father's happiness or strength: "the shallowest observer could have scarcely failed to notice his watchfulness of Aurora. It was ever present in his careworn face, that tender, anxious glance which turned to her at every pause in the conversation" (43). His hands remain "tremulous," his mind "feeble," and his "strength has been shattered by one great shock," never to fully recover (221, 222). The narrator describes the other characters recuperating from their emotional strain and its physical manifestation or else emphasizes their happiness and thereby encourages the reader to assume the characters recover. The narrator does not, however, hint that Mr. Floyd regains his former health; instead, Mr. Floyd seems perpetually anxious and fragile, and all who see him know he worries continuously for Aurora. The two great mental shocks of his life, his wife's death and Aurora's unseemly marriage, permanently enfeeble him.

Aurora suffers more directly than her father, both physically and emotionally, for her marriage. She realizes, too late, that her husband marries her for money, that she has been used, and that he will not hesitate to abuse her. He batters her as well as conducts extramarital affairs. Yet his conduct has less visible strain on her own features than her father's. Her father is prematurely aged but she quickly recuperates from her suffering. Upon her return to her father's house, she "had no appetite, slept badly, was nervous and hysterical," and her good looks are "impaired" (25). Within weeks, however, her good looks return. Though her husband's conduct offended her, it is also her salvation as it provides her with the ability to blackmail him with the

threat of divorce, to ensure he will leave her alone so that she can return to her father's house. Within a few short weeks, her appearance gives no sign of the emotional and physical pain she experiences.

But Aurora, like her father, experiences more than one shock; throughout the novel, they come in waves so that she has little time to recover from one before receiving the next. She refuses to divorce her first husband in the worry that the scandal will further harm her father, and news of the husband's death greatly affects her: "She did not stir….Her face was as white as the face of a dead woman, her nerveless hands hung over the cushions of the arm-chair….She had quietly swooned away sitting there by herself, with no one by to restore her to consciousness….In two or three moments she began to shiver violently" (72). She quickly recovers from the surprise and engages herself to Talbot only to experience further humiliation and depression that cause physical pain when he breaks the engagement upon learning she has a secret; her passion incites illness, a "raging fever" that gives her "burning cheeks and blood-shot eyes" (108). Her health and contentedness return when she agrees to marry John. Upon learning that her first husband lives and is coming to work at their home, she alters again: "So terrible a transformation had come over her during the reading of that letter, that the shock could not have been greater had he looked up and seen another person in her place" (172). Her unhappy emotions are clear on her body and take a toll on it; other characters respond to them and the narrator details them for the reader. She remains "haggard" and "ghastly" through her first husband's murder and the inquest that reveals their marriage (173, 351). The cycle continues; she regains her former beauty briefly when John marries her again but "change[s] terribly" when she fears he does not love her (401). The narrator assures the reader that Aurora has a strong constitution and she continuously returns to her equanimity and beauty. Yet she, like her father,

experiences too much mental pain by the end of the novel to fully recover her former health and prettiness: "So we leave Aurora, a little changed, a shade less defiantly bright, perhaps, but unspeakably beautiful and tender" (459). Ultimately, the constant anxiety that she and her father feel wear on their minds and figures so that the two never fully overcome its affects, and others can see its signs in their appearance.

Braddon's novel provides sensational situations that explore how love for others can torment, how emotional anguish can write itself on the body, exposing networks within one and between characters. Though the novel's plot depends on characters keeping secrets, all of the main characters' bodies drastically manifest emotion and are, at times and with varying success, interpreted for that emotion. The physical changes highlight their bodies and encourage viewers to realize what relationship provokes the strong emotions. Aurora's feelings for example, are instigated by John's expressions of feeling for her. Her feelings inscribe themselves on her body so that Lucy understands what Aurora is feeling and who incites that feeling. But such physically manifested emotional pain does not depend on sensational situations or appear only in sensational novels.

In *He Knew He Was Right*, Anthony Trollope depicts how a couple's love for each other and their child twists from a happy emotion to a source of pain as Louis Trevelyan suspects that his wife is having an affair. The wife Emily is innocent in that she does not love or have a physical relationship with the suspected man, Colonel Osborne, but she is offended by her husband's accusations and does not ease his fears. The emotions that formerly tied the couple together quickly turn into feelings of shame and repugnance. The husband's accusations pain both him and Emily, but Louis quickly becomes obsessed with making his wife obey him, with looking like the master of the house. This obsession brings him, according to the narrator, to a

state of anguish and then to paranoia verging on madness. As the paranoia and madness grow, Louis's appearance becomes more ridiculous and his strength wanes.

Trollope, like Braddon, presents the heroine as having more physical and emotional strength than her male counterparts, though she, too, visibly suffers. Emily, unlike her husband, is "very strong, as are some girls who come from the tropics" and withstands her husband's suspicions better than he does his own accusations against her (7). Within the first chapter, the narrator assures us that her emotions often inscribe themselves on her countenance and are open for interpretation: "As [Emily] spoke the fire flashed from her eye, and the bright red colour of her cheek told a tale of her anger with her sister well knew how to read" (*HKHWR* 20). Emotions flicker across Emily's face throughout the novel, but it is not until the story nears its close that the narrator describes more substantial alterations. Her husband's accusations, his leaving her, his taking of their son wounds her but her anguish does not strongly affect her body until she confesses to adultery that she does not commit, and her dying husband submits himself and their child to her care. Her physical strength, though, does not falter but rather her idea of and presentation of herself changes:

> [Mr. Stanbury] would hardly have known her,—not from any alteration that was physically personal to herself, not that she had become older in face, or thin, or grey, or sickly,—but that the trouble of her life had robbed her for the time of that brightness of apparel, of that pride of feminine gear, of that sheen of high-bred womanly bearing with which our wives and daughters are so careful to invest themselves. She knew herself to be a wretched woman, whose work in life was not to watch over a poor prostrate wretch, and who had thrown behind her all ideas of grace and beauty. (864)

She physically shows her inner turmoil in her demeanor and clothing, her "black and somber" dress, "a veil [that] habitually covered her face," and a bonnet instead of the "jaunty hat" she previously favored (864). The narrator explains that anger fuels her until this point, and when she is no longer angry, her appearance alters: "unhappiness had not then told upon the outward

woman [as it did now]….It was not till her child had been brought back to her, and she had seen the life which her husband was living, and that her anger,—hot anger,—had changed to pity, and that with pity love had returned…that the prettinesses of her life were lain aside" (864). The strength of her indignation against her husband and conviction that she has done no wrong protect her from becoming physically and emotionally overwhelmed by disappointment, sadness, anxiety, and shame, yet she does eventually show her unhappiness so others can see it by looking at her. This unhappiness results not from her husband's anger and suspicions but from his wretchedness.

Emily's feelings do not alter her body much, but emotion strongly affects Louis. He, as the title of the novel states, thinks he is right, from his first accusation to his last demands. Upon his suspicion that the Colonel has unsavory intentions for Emily, Louis is "quite sure" that his "wife was innocent," but "nevertheless, he was himself so much affected by some feeling which pervaded him in reference to this man, that all his energy was destroyed, and his powers of mind and body were paralysed" (17). But while Louis feels paralyzed, his body does not initially alter. His suspicions, however, continue to weigh on his mind until he becomes obsessed with the idea of his wife having an affair. Indeed, he almost hopes she is because he cannot stop his mental turmoil on the subject and would feel justified for his anguish and subsequent actions if he learned, beyond a doubt, that his wife was unfaithful: "He came to believe everything; and, though he prayed fervently that his wife might not be led astray…yet he almost came to hope that it would be otherwise;—not, indeed, with the hope of the sane man, who desires that which he tells himself to be for his advantage; but with the hope of the insane man, who loves to feed his grievance, even though the grief should be his death" (364).

This hope encourages him to embrace any outward signs of his emotional turmoil and display it to those who see him, and, as if to oblige Louis's wishes, the narrator continually returns to the subject of Louis's changed appearance, cataloging how his physical health visibly weakens. Having convinced himself of his wife's "vice," Louis allows his dress to become unkempt, unlike Emily who merely changes her style of dress; he "was conscious too that he himself was not in outward appearance as he used to be;—that he was ill-dressed, and haggard, and worn, and visibly a wretched being" (558). But his mental suffering continues to plague him and is exacerbated by others' doubts and his wife's insistence that she has done no wrong. His increased misery further marks his physical form, as the narrator details; he is "strangely…altered," his demeanor "ridiculous," his face "thin, and pale, and haggard, and mean" (568). The "strangely…altered" body becomes "frightfully altered" as his eyes brighten while his body "wither[s], as it were, as though he had melted away" (632, 633). The "frightfully altered" body then becomes "as wretched a being to look at as it might have been possible to find" as it continues to shrink so that his cheeks look "contracted" and his eye sockets like "sunken caverns" (649). Eventually, Louis celebrates his changed form because he knows others can read it for his emotions and his relationships, particularly his relationship with Emily. He wants others to see him, understand what he feels, and blame her. He wants her to see him to ensure she feels regret for her behavior: "He put out his thin wasted hands and looked at them, and touched the hollowness of his own cheeks, and coughed that he might hear the hacking sound of his own infirmity, and almost took glory in his weakness. It could not be long before the coals of fire would be heaped upon her head" (788). When his wife finally admits to adultery she does not commit, Louis's legs "would hardly bear his weight" and his hair and beard "so covered his long thin cheeks, that there was nothing left of his face but his bright, large,

melancholy eyes" (856). Yet, in spite of his infirmity, he is content; his wife's confession (which he readily believes) proves that he was right in his suspicions and treatment to her, and he trusts that his sufferings, manifested physically, encouraged her to make the confession.

Louis's paranoia weighs increasingly on his mind until his body visibly and permanently reflects his unhappiness. Like the many characters in *Aurora Floyd*, his passionate emotions manifest physically. Those characters who see the various sufferers of both novels realize the sufferers are in ill health and often understand that the bodily distress results from mental trouble. They can even read a character's relationship with another or others based on the one's appearance; John sees Lucy and knows she loves Talbot, and Talbot later sees John and knows he suspects Aurora killed her first husband and fears for her fate. Louis hopes his altered appearance will garner sympathy for him. For a time, it does, but then the plan backfires. His supporters, such as Lady Milborough, eventually revoke their support for his behavior and agree with Emily's family that he has become somewhat mad. His feelings for and about others, like those of the characters of *Aurora Floyd*, cause mental anguish and physical harm. The physical distress that the characters experience because of their strong emotions materialize them in the narratives, especially as others react to them. The various viewers of another's weakened or telltale body often understand that long-term emotions cause the ill health and realize which relationship or network with another instigates the feeling and bodily pain.

Figurative Descriptions of Physically-Manifested Emotions

Aurora Floyd and *He Knew He Was Right* directly describe how emotional distress influences the body. The Brontë sisters' works, however, do not always describe the mental and physical natures of their characters in terms that straightforwardly detail the body's traits.

Barrett Browning displaces signs of sexual assault onto other characters in her poem, and Charlotte and Anne Brontë's novels dwell on images of flora, seasons, the weather, and climate, particularly wet and dry, to illustrate how feelings influence bodies. Like the medical texts, the Brontë sisters' works suggest that women's bodies are subjected to their emotions more than men's bodies. The images for the female characters tend to more strongly convey emotional attachment and support between characters. Characters who do not form close ties but continuously release passionate emotions in their attempts to do so become physically unhealthy; strong, unrequited emotions form the basis of ill health for many of the characters considered in this section as for those involved in the love triangles of *Aurora Floyd*. Yet, as I show here and develop in the next section, such releases, when coupled with the acceptance of another's emission, are the basis for strong, mutually beneficial, seemingly material networks between characters. Though characters physically harm themselves with passionate releases, they cannot form or benefit from close connections with others unless they release and intake emotion. Bodily health for the characters of Charlotte and Anne Brontës' novels depends upon emotional exchange. This section first considers how figurative or indirect descriptions depict emotions affecting characters' general states of health before demonstrating that such descriptions occasionally convey emotions influencing specific body parts or functions.

The Brontës depict the release of emotions and networks through natural imagery, particularly in terms of wet and dry. Victorians, as Jules Law argues, viewed human fluids as connecting people. He notes that "the specific case of Victorian culture and the Victorian novel contribute not only an important chapter in the social history of fluids but a vital opportunity for imaginative reflection on the way in which 'fluids' connect the individual subject to the social collective" (xi). Law studies, for example, how the pollution of the Thames with excrement

demonstrates how an individual's emissions can affect a social group, the Londoners who experienced the Great Stink of 1858. The use of bodily fluids and the fear of contamination by them in Victorian novels demonstrates "a historical point about the Victorian obsession with fluids," while also "illustrat[ing] more enduring formal and theoretical problems in representing the body" (xi). Anne and Charlotte Brontë adapt imagery of emotional/bodily substances spreading between characters to depict relationships as affecting one's own person but also influencing all those with whom one has a relationship. Descriptions of emotional/bodily substances highlight one's own social collective. They demonstrate the state of one character's emotions and health and how that character's mental and physical states affect others. Anne and Charlotte Brontë portray networks between characters as physical connections that lead multiple characters to either physical and mental health or weakness.

William Crimsworth of *The Professor* (1857) actively attempts to prevent ties between himself and others and conceal his internal states so that they do not become physically manifested. He imagines himself as covered with armor as he hides his thoughts and emotions from others. Yet his sole friend Hunsden recognizes and explains that William is emotional by comparing William's emotions to a body of water; there is a "fathomless spring of sensibility in [William's] breast" (*The Professor* 122). William successfully conceals his interiority from most of his acquaintances, and neither Hunsden nor the narrator describe the spring as leaving William's interior to connect him to other characters, to form inter-body networks. When near his older brother Edward, he is a "statue" wearing a "buckler of impenetrable indifference" (56). William realizes that "it would be folly to let one's temper effervesce often with such a man" as Edward, especially since Edward is his employer, so the younger man refuses to become irate, to change the nature of his internal spring by becoming hot with anger, or show any physical or

behavioral indications that his brother has upset him. William controls his feelings so that they do not, to continue his metaphor, turn gaseous and affect his physical state, yet he seems to draw and store strength from Edward's passions, which, in the older brother's anger and dislike, do overrun his body. William accepts whatever strength Edward's negative emotions can give him: "I said to myself, 'I will place my cup under this continual dropping [from Edward]; it shall stand there still and steady; when full, it will run over of itself'" (53). Surprisingly, William depicts Edward's release of anger and jealousy as a nourishing drink, replicating the phrasing of the twenty-third Psalm as if Edward's passion is a blessing for William.[2] By accepting his brother's many criticisms and abuses but not responding in kind, William further irritates his brother and gains an upper-hand in the relationship. Edward's emotions, represented as material, leave his form, and are collected by William, who benefits from absorbing his brother's emotion without retaliating. This behavior is not reserved for his brother; as a schoolteacher, William does not drop his armor but "buckle[s] on a breastplate of steely indifference, and let[s] down a visor of impassible austerity" so that the pretty school girls cannot affect his feelings (115).

William Cohen argues that William's assumption of "metaphorical armor…alludes to the idea of the human subject inhabiting the material container that is the body" (43). This bodily container is not physically impervious but both enables and limits "the self or soul immured within" (43).[3] William imagines wearing armor to hide his internal state, the emotions that are represented as a "fathomless" body of water, but the armor is not always effective. It is penetrable, and it occasionally confines his emotions even when he would like to release them. Cohen explicates the following passage from the novel, in which the schoolmistress Zoraïde studies William to find a moment of weakness so she can access his thoughts, as an example of William's armor failing: "Me she still watched, still tried by the most ingenious tests….Still she

persevered and at last—I am bound to confess it, her finger, essaying, proving every atom of the casket—touched its secret spring and for a moment—the lid sprung open" (qtd. in Cohen 47-48). Hunsden and, to a lesser extent, Zoraïde can understand William's thoughts and emotions as they penetrate his armor, but he tries to maintain a barrier between himself and others by lack of display or release of feeling. Frances is a suitable spouse for him because "the well bubbled in her heart" too, but she also dislikes emotional exhibitions (*The Professor* 196). The couple maintains emotional distance; he avoids visiting her when he knows he could not "address her only in the language of Reason and Affection," and even when they are engaged and married, she calls him "monsieur" instead of by his name (225).

Monsieur Paul Emmanuel of *Villette* does not hide his emotions. Charlotte Brontë depicts his feelings leaving his figure as Edward's do; Paul's feelings appear as substances that pour from his body. He seems as emotional as the heroine Lucy Snowe and more likely than her to display his feelings. Paul constantly emits and performs varying emotions; he is marked by a "love of display" that Lucy enjoys evoking: "I had a certain pleasure in keeping cool and working him up" (*Villette* 237, 225). Feelings "[play] rapidly over his countenance" (226). Although he can adopt a "mask" as Lucy does (355), his happier feelings do occasionally leave the boundaries of his human form: "his face…was *overflowing* with a smile, coloured with the bloom [she] had seen brightening it" (363, my emphasis). Paul does not hide his emotions with armor nor do these embodied emotional descriptions re-shape his human figure though they, depicted as a physical substance, occasionally leave it. Instead, they show the character's attempts to exert his Catholic morality on others. Lucy ascribes his religious beliefs as the cause of his passions; his religion encourages his surveillance of others, strong reactions to what he deems inappropriate, and also an innocent earnestness that appeals to Lucy as he tries to convert

her. The embodied emotional depictions often result from his desire to spread his religion and maintain others' devotion, to form networks of religious and moral support.

William conceals his mental states, and Paul readily displays feeling. Like William, Lucy hides her thoughts well and does not readily release emotion to form ties with others though her happiness and health depend on her forming and being supported by networks with others. Her face is often a "mask," "pronounced marble" that does not reveal her internal workings so that she seems physically unaffected by passions (392). Yet she is emotional, and her corporeal form is subject to her emotion. The narrator uses natural images to describe her feelings. Her very name ties her to precipitation as well as suggests her ability to adopt a cold rather than feeling demeanor, to mask her emotions. As snow covers the ground, she freezes sentiments to make them less obvious to the observant Madame Beck or Paul. Her emotions are very much tied to weather; natural atmospheric events, such as rain and storms, mark every significant, upsetting event in her life (the death of her companion Miss Marchmont, her arrival in Villette, her mental breakdown, and Paul's shipwreck). She once blames the weather for causing her mental and physical distress: "Three weeks of that vacation were hot, fair, and dry, but the fourth and fifth were tempestuous and wet. I do not know why that change in the atmosphere made a cruel impression on me, why the raging storm and beating rain crushed me with a deadlier paralysis" (134).

These storms actually occur in the novel, yet she also describes other moments of mental distress as storms even when the weather is clear. When upset, her "nightmare" is similarly one of a "storm" that brings a flood of sea water, "the rush and saltness of briny waves in [her] throat and their icy pressure on [her] lungs" (39). But while her own melancholy is depicted through the weather, its relief appears in the form of bodies of water she can consume and benefit from.

She uses images of tumultuous weather to depict her strong emotions and images of peaceful nature to depict her mental and physical contentedness. She falls ill once in the novel; loneliness seems to be the cause of the physical malady (176). When feeling alone, she encounters a child and compares the expression of affection she receives from the child as a "too sweet" and "pure little drop from a pure little source" that "sent a gush to [her] eyes" (134). Lucy's mask prevails, however, as she prevents the gush from leaving in the form of tears. She describes her friendship with the Brettons as a "living stream" and Dr. John's letters to a "well…to the parched wayfarer" (199). Emotional comfort appears as something to drink and appease her thirst. Lucy compares the intake of others' emotional releases to a drink. The comparison indicates that others' affection is as necessary for her survival as drinking fluids. Her physical health depends on establishing and maintaining her relationships.

Anne Brontë's protagonist in *Agnes Grey* (1847) loves her family and is emotionally sustained by them even when physically separated; she is never parched for love like Lucy. She thinks of her body as well-filled with emotions; her feeling "swell[s] [her] heart" when she moves away from her family (*Agnes Grey* 70). Instead of letting this sadness weigh on her so that it could cause physical pain, she finds release in the form of tears: "I could scarcely keep my eyes from overflowing," her face is "bathed in tears," and she "burst into a flood of tears" (70, 71). Unlike Lucy, Agnes reveals her internal spring when undergoing separation from her family, and the acknowledgment and release of her sadness in crying sustains her health emotionally and physically. She does not let her sadness dwell on her as Lucy does and has less reason to as her family provides a supportive network. Agnes never feels emotionally "parched."

Charlotte Brontë relies less on images of water and more on other natural objects, such as plants and rocks, to describe the emotions and their bodily effect that Caroline Helstone of

Shirley (1849) experiences. Her original description vaguely ties Caroline to a happy picture of health: "Her shape suited her age: it was girlish, light, and pliant; every curve was neat, every limb proportionate; her face was expressive and gentle; her eyes were handsome, and gifted at times with a winning beam that stole into the heart, with a language that spoke softly to the affections. Her mouth was very pretty; she had a delicate skin, and a fine flow of brown hair" (*Shirley* 102). Her body is "pliant," docile and easily directed, and her feelings are strong and affect others as they "[steal] into [their] heart[s]" through the "beam" of her eyes. The word "beam" connotes happy sunlight, indicating Caroline's cheerful state. Though the omniscient narrator dwells on her feelings—which are dominated at this point by a love for Robert—her body displays this relationship, her love, and the conviction that it is returned, only in her health. This emotion does not seem to obviously affect her physically until his behavior suggests he is not interested in her. Before this shock to her feelings, the only unhappy feeling that plays out physically is her nervousness, which is conveyed as a liquid that she tries to "wring from her body": "her habit was to wring her hands very nervously" (131). The word "wring" indicates that she can physically release her nervousness by squeezing and twisting her hands as if her body is a too-damp rag.

This emotional contentedness and healthiness do not, however, last. The references to sunlight end, and her health wanes as she feels anguished by Robert's rejection. Her mental and subsequently bodily suffering is made apparent by many natural images. The narrator provides these images and implies how the reader should interpret them for Caroline's physical health, showing her mind/body relationship and the inter-body network that causes her emotional distress. Robert becomes cold to her, and the narrator represents this seeming disinterest as a "stone," which turns into a scorpion instead of the affection she desires. Lucy thinks of

emotional care shown to herself as a refreshing drink, and the narrator of *Shirley* presents Robert's rejection of Caroline's care as a hard stone. The narrator advises women how to react to such situations:

> you have got a stone; break your teeth on it, and don't shriek because the nerves are martyrized: do not doubt that your mental stomach—if you have such a thing—is strong as an ostrich's—the stone will digest. You held out your hand for an egg, and fate put into it a scorpion. Show no consternation: close your fingers firmly upon the gift; let it sting through your palm. Never mind; in time, after your hand and arm have swelled and quivered long with torture, the squeezed scorpion will die, and you will have learned the great lesson how to endure without a sob. For the whole remnant of your life, if you survive the test—some, it is said, die under it—you will be stronger, wiser, less sensitive. (128)

Caroline must take the stone/scorpion and attempt to live with it instead of returned love, which is represented as a nourishing egg. The narrator suggests that she should digest the stone "without a sob," without a display of passion, and endure the scorpion's poison though it will cause her to "swell." The swelling references her retained and un-displayed feeling, one that, the narrator warns, should not be eased by the release of tears as Agnes releases her sadness. Because Caroline cannot tell Robert of her love and disappointment, she must contain her mental state though it "torture[s]" her and causes physical pain that is shown through her "quiver[ing]." Caroline attempts to take the narrator's advice but does not succeed. Caroline does not become "less sensitive" but physically sickens because she cannot digest the stone; she struggles to overcome this rejection, to live without his emotional support and the network it would provide, but she cannot. The anguish she feels causes illness, and the narrator emphasizes this mind/body influence by displaying her emotions in physical terms, as stones and eggs, and the effect consuming such objects would have on her body.

The novel dwells on her emotional and physical ill health, which is described in terms of loss, winter, and dryness. Notably, the narrator continually depicts her mental suffering before

the physical. In doing so, the narrator demonstrates that her passion, her dejection, influences her material form and thereby teaches the reader to think likewise: "she wasted" both mentally ("[growing] more joyless") and physically ("and more wan") (199). Images of physical aspects of winter as opposed to sunny spring, of barren land as opposed to showers and verdure, convey her mental anguish and its physical effect: "it seemed strange the sick girl did not get well; yet such was the case: she wasted like any snow-wreath in thaw; she faded like any flower in drought" (205). The narrator explains that her mental anguish causes somatic pain; by noting that she is mentally and physically influenced by Robert's rejection and comparing her fading health to physical things, the narrator encourages the reader to interpret this passage for her body, to imagine her figure as faded and wasted. Of course, the passage is not composed of direct details of her somatic features, but the images of melting of snow and dryness rather than the replenishing rain and subsequent blooming of spring suggest that she is physically deteriorating rather than growing as a healthy young woman should.

Mr. Helstone, Caroline's uncle, compares her to plants as he considers her physical change. He is not aware of the emotional cause and is incapable of understanding her bodily change for emotional issues, yet he dwells on her appearance. He thinks of healthy women as juicy fruit, marked by redness and roundness, and sickly women as dying plants, broken and pale: "To-day you see them bouncing, buxom, red as cherries, and round as apples; to-morrow they exhibit themselves effete as dead weeds, blanched and broken down" (204). After Caroline emotionally suffers, crying constantly for a few nights, her uncle notes that she "had *experienced* a change," and finds examples of her seeming illness in her appearance: "the rose had dwindled and faded to a mere snowdrop; bloom had vanished, flesh wasted; she sat before him drooping, colourless, and thin. But for the soft expression of her brown eyes, the delicate lines of her

features, and the flowing abundance of her hair, she would no longer have possessed a claim to the epithet pretty" (203-204, original emphasis). He deprives her of any subjectivity in causing her altered features by using the passive voice; to him, her change is incomprehensible though his diction shows that he notices she has lost health and substance (by the "dwindled," "faded," "vanished" bloom, "wasted" "flesh," and "drooping" and "thin"—as opposed to "pliant" and "proportionate"—body), and his observations reaffirm the change in Caroline's figure in the reader's mind. Only her hair and not yet sunken expression of her face and eyes protect her appearance from becoming unattractive, pallid and wasted, as her strong emotions harm her beauty. The comparisons of her to a rose when healthy and a "mere snowdrop" when she is in emotional turmoil encourage the reader to envision her with delicate features, flushed cheeks, upright and with rounded limbs, and then to picture her as pale, drooping or hunched, and small like the snowdrop's flower. The metaphor also supports the narrator's comparison of her life seeming more like spring, when roses begin to bloom, and then winter as snowdrops only bloom in winter.

The novel suggests Caroline attempts but cannot overcome her depression nor prevent its physical manifestation. Helstone, however, thinks Caroline passively and inexplicably experiences some change. He cannot read emotions, even when they noticeably affect the health in general and thereby write themselves on the body, and he is not enlightened or taught to do so by the novel's third-person omniscient narrator as the reader is. Caroline's features are legible to other characters and the reader, but Helstone denies Caroline's autonomy over her own body and seems to deny the strength of her feelings altogether. His ignorance of embodied emotions and somatic signs of emotions, according to the narrator, leads to his own wife's death: "when she one day, as he thought, suddenly—for he had scarcely noticed her decline—but as others thought

gradually, took her leave of him and of life, and there was only a still, beautiful-featured mould of clay left, cold and white, in the conjugal couch, he felt his bereavement—who shall say how little?" (82). The narrator also equivocates on how grieved Helstone is by her death; the above quotation suggests Helstone feels the "bereavement" only a "little," but the narrator adds, "Yet, perhaps, more than he seemed to feel it; for he was not a man from whom grief easily wrung tears" (82). Nervousness makes Caroline wring her hands, but Helstone cannot "[wring] tears" from his grief. Helstone "ma[kes] no pretence of comprehending women" and does not notice the change in his wife Mary, her unhappiness and its physical manifestation, so the death seems sudden to him (82). His own emotions have little sway over him, and he cannot comprehend Mary's or Caroline's physical suffering from lack of returned emotion. He does not realize that the two women's ill health results from mental anguish; he does not understand that his wife's illness reflects his inattention or that Caroline's suffering results from unreturned love. Even so, he notices the physical change in his niece, recognizing that she does not fit his idea of fruitful women. He, along with the narrator and other characters, reacts to her ill health. Caroline's mental anguish leads to physical pain so that her altered features invite elaborate description from the narrator and reactions from various characters. Her emotional suffering elicits descriptions of her body, makes her body visible in the novel and to the reader, and acts as a sign of the state of her relationships with others.

The same language used to describe Caroline's ill health comes into play with Mary's. The wife becomes like a stone; her corpse is a dried clay model, beautiful but "cold and white." Her husband shows no feeling to or for her and she sickens, just as Caroline sickens from Robert's seeming indifference towards her. The narrator describes Caroline's pain as a stone she must consume, but depicts Mary as becoming a stone. Both women fulfill the prophecy of their

last names; by marrying a Helstone, Mary becomes stone-like, and by maintaining the Helstone name rather than changing her surname by marriage, Caroline suffers as if she must eat stone. By expressing the wife's death as a result of her husband's lack of attention or affection for her, Charlotte Brontë develops a theory of female health: that women must receive love from others for mental and physical health, that emotions affect one's own body and the materiality of others. Victorian physicians agreed that healthy minds lead to healthy bodies (Beale viii), but Charlotte Brontë specifically correlates healthiness to feeling loved, suggesting that healthy relationships lead to healthy bodies. Caroline cannot overcome her ill health because she feels unloved. When not loved, the women suffer somatically and mentally like Caroline, until they are "cold and white" and dead, like Mary.

Brontë compares Mary's body to clay to show how health could have benefitted from her husband if he had provided or exhibited feeling for her. The narrator describes Mary as slowly drying out so that her body becomes a mold as opposed to hydrated soil. For her to maintain life and avoid stoniness, she would need to be replenished with an emotional display of love for her as a plant needs water, and Helstone is incapable of displaying much emotion or of sustaining an environment that would protect his wife from turning to stone. Tears are not "easily wrung" from him; the death of his wife does not activate weeping. He is not described as releasing emotion, either as a named feeling or through depictions of natural occurrences affecting his body, such as sunlight beaming from his eyes, storms disrupting his mind, or unhappiness ossifying him to stone. Helstone does not even exhibit religious feeling though he is a member of the clergy. While the husband does not suffer from lack of emotional connections, his wife does. By pairing Mary's concretion with Helstone's tearless and dry indifference, Brontë presents Helstone's lack of emotion for her, lack of support and display, as the cause of Mary's

death; Mary needs his love, needs to form emotionally supportive networks, to live. The housekeeper and Mary's attendant recognize this cause of her failing health, are "scandalized" by Helstone's "dry-eyed and sober mourning," and spread the story that a "broken heart" kills her (82). The neighborhood, however, does not entirely accept this explanation that the wife dies from her husband's indifference, but elaborates on the story, claiming that "hard usage" and "harsh treatment," physical causes, incite the woman's death (82). The housekeeper and attendant see Mary's form and understand why it weakens. The neighborhood assumes the newlyweds are happy. Unable to see the sickening wife and interpret her appearance for emotion, the neighbors think her poor health has a physical cause.

Anne Brontë similarly engages in this imagery of emotional mistreatment producing stone. In *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, Helen suffers from her husband's neglect and physical abuse, both of which worsen as he increases his consumption of alcohol and number of extramarital affairs. Arthur's attention and attachment to her wane so that she lives in a situation of neglect, of marital abuse like Mary's, but with the additional difficulties of a husband who refuses to follow social expectations for monogamy and temperance. She continues to act in the hopes of rousing these traits until she, too, feels turned to stone. She writes in her diary:

> No answering spark of kindness, no awakening penitence, but an unappeasable ill-humour, and a spirit of tyrannous exaction that increased with indulgence, and a lurking gleam of self-complacent triumph at every detection of relenting softness in my manner, that congealed me to marble again as often as it recurred; and this morning he finished the business:—I think the petrifaction is so completely effected at last that nothing can melt me again. (*TTWH* 323)

Helen actively blames her husband's disregard for and persecution of her for the petrification and notes that, though he has reversed this process before, he can no longer do so. She will not "melt" back into some less solid substance so that he can manipulate her emotions for his use. Indeed, Arthur previously encourages her to not indulge exhibitions of her feelings, particularly

in the form of tears. He tires of such displays and warns her against allowing them: "A burst of passion is a fine rousing thing upon occasion, Helen, and a flood of tears is marvelously affecting, but, when indulged too often, they are both deuced plaguy things for spoiling one's beauty and tiring out one's friends'" (259). Unlike Caroline and Mary, however, she leaves him, abandoning her established but draining network, and loves another rather than suffering to the brink of or actual death.

When Helen returns to him, however, their situations are reversed; she is no longer turning to stone, and Arthur is the one raked with physical and emotional thirst and in need of care, which she, with caution, provides to the detriment of her own health. Having satiated his physical and mental desires with alcohol for much of his life, he comes as dependent on this drink as Helen is dependent on mutually supportive and loving relationships. Anne Brontë uses language of liquidity and thirst to convey Arthur's addiction, illness, and feeling, particularly religious passion, as he dies. Arthur constantly indulges his physical desires though they harm his health; when he makes himself ill through excessive consumption of alcohol, he complains of thirst which he then attempts to quench with alcoholic beverages. He claims he has a "burning thirst," "an infernal fire in [his] veins, that all the waters of the ocean cannot quench," and that a "cursed thirst is burning [his] heart to ashes" (441, 253, 427). His complaints become louder and more common, but his requests for alcohol are still refused. As his health further deteriorates, he begins to see his wife Helen as capable of ending his thirst through love for him and her religious devotion. Loving relationships emotionally support her, strengthening her health, and Arthur hopes her love for him will mentally and physically support him. As he nears death, he insists she stay near him, "will not let [her] go" regardless of her own increasing unhealthiness and driven by the idea that her emotions will "quench" his own thirst, that "nothing can benefit [him]

if *she* can't" (442, original emphasis). Helen's religious devotion supplements her emotional needs, and Arthur hopes her strength will similarly end his emotional and physical thirst, provide him with supporting relationships, including religious belief, and remove his dependency on alcohol.

When she fails to comfort him and alleviate his pain, he thinks of them post-death, she in heaven and he in hell. He compares her to Lazarus of the Biblical story: "my immaculate angel…when once you have secured your reward, and find yourself safe in heaven, and me howling in hell-fire, catch you lifting a finger to serve me then! No, you'll look complacently on, and not so much as dip the tip of your finger in water to cool my tongue!" (441). In this quotation, he thinks of her as unfeeling, as he is soon after their marriage, while he is in pain. He ignores her while living together, and he assumes she will do the same in their afterlives. He also indicates that she will feel little for him in heaven because he has mistreated her and she is "safe" from him and any emotional or physical pain he could cause. She would no longer need his affection for her own physical or mental health. Yet Helen assures him that she would look out for him after their deaths, though her conception of such care is different from his. He wants relief from pain, and she wants him to suffer in purgatory if it will atone for his sins and lead to his acceptance into heaven: "If so, it will be because of the great gulf over which I cannot pass, and if I *could* look complacently on in such a case, it would be only from the assurance that you were being purified from your sins, and fitted to enjoy the happiness I felt" (441). Once he has suffered bodily harm and the burning of "hell-fire," he, according to Helen, will also be "melted" and able to give and receive love.

Charlotte and Anne Brontës' novels frequently use figurative language to indicate a character's mental or emotional health. The reader can understand this language for the

characters' general states of health, Arthur's thirst as a sign of physical illness and fear, Caroline's drooping as a sign of depression and physical weakness, various characters turning to stone as a sign of poor emotional and physical health. The reader can also interpret this language for the status of characters' inter-body networks. The literary examples considered so far depict anguish as causing general physical illness that may last for a few days or may be completely debilitating to a character, even leading to death. However, the Brontës' novels occasionally show more concern with which specific part of the body is altered by certain emotions. Anne and Charlotte present emotions as networked to individual aspects of the body. For example, in *Villette*, Lucy, acting as narrator, reads Ginevra's passionless nature not for her external appearance but for internal aspects of her body, the physiology of her blood flow:

> With one of these beauties I once had the honour and rapture to be perfectly acquainted: the inert force of the deep, settled love she bore herself, was wonderful; it could only be surpassed by her proud impotency to care for any other living thing. Of blood, her cool veins conducted no flow; placid lymph filled and almost obstructed her arteries. (235)

Lucy's musings of Ginevra's mental states lead to physical descriptions, but not ones that Lucy can see. She imagines that Ginevra's personality characteristics correlate with an internal bodily function, her blood flow.

In describing only female characters, such as Helen Huntington, Mary Cave Helstone, and Caroline Helstone as turning to stone, in reserving the majority of natural imagery for female characters, Anne and Charlotte Brontë seem to portray more than an emotional injury affecting one's appearance; descriptions of a woman becoming stone also indicate changes in her internal physiology, ones that seem specific to women, to female reproductive issues. Charlotte Brontë depicts Caroline of *Shirley*, for example, in terms that exemplify mental barrenness: "the mind's soil and its treasures were *freezing* gradually to *barren stagnation*" (*Shirley* 199, my emphasis). The language of barrenness demonstrates the strength and depressing nature of her emotions, but

this passage about the mind is suggestive of physical traits too; if her mind is frozen to the point of barrenness, could not her body be too? The mind produces "treasures," suggesting that its "soil" refers to the body, the mind's birthplace and the circumstance that makes the mind's existence possible. "Freezing" indicates a liquid solidifying, no longer flowing, as if Caroline's bodily fluids, like her menstruation, are no longer what they were when she is emotionally happy and physically healthy.

The Brontë sisters had access to Buchan's *Domestic Medicine* as their father kept a copy of it, and as already noted, Buchan firmly believed that women's emotions affect their bodies, especially their reproductive physiology (Shuttleworth 253). He argued, in opposition to some nineteenth-century physicians, that sterility occurs in the female sex more often than the male because women's passions so strongly affect their bodies. Though much may cause childlessness, including "high living, grief, and relaxation," its most common cause, according to him, is "an obstruction or irregularity of the menstrual flux" (Buchan 421). Buchan and other physicians agreed such a disruption in menstruation could be caused by strong emotions; "violent passions" and an "irritation of the nerves" could instigate or prevent menstruation and thereby cause barrenness (322-323). Buchan insists that emotions have somatic influence, particularly over female reproduction. In her inability to overcome her grief, Caroline may cause an "irregularity" in her "menstrual flux" and deter her reproductive ability. By emphasizing her character's emotional "barren[ness]," Brontë indicates a physical change, and she further ties the mental with the physical by following this description of Caroline's mental state with one of her changed figure.

Caroline is not only deprived of emotions, of Robert's and her uncle's affection, but also of physical sustenance. This self-starvation could, in turn, affect her physiology and prevent

menstruation, making her physically and mentally "barren." The uncle's comparison of women in general to fruit and Caroline specifically to a flower is intriguing as she refuses to or cannot eat after Robert's rejection; her uncle suggests her body is not fruitful. Her emotional dilemma affects her appetite; she feels herself cut off from Robert's nourishing love and she correspondingly refuses the physical, substantial nourishment of food. The narrator claims "People never die of love or grief alone," but Caroline is further grieved by an addition to her romantic dilemma, the mistaken belief that Shirley loves Robert and that this feeling will be returned (*Shirley* 401). This belief further promotes her starvation; Caroline thinks of her nourishment as given to Shirley: "A few minutes before her famished heart had tasted a drop and crumb of nourishment, that, if freely given, would have brought back abundance of life where life was failing; but the generous feast was snatched from her, spread before another, and she remained but a bystander at the banquet" (254). The "generous feast" of Robert's love is given to Shirley so that Caroline is a mere spectator, hungry but not able to partake of the nourishment.

Descriptions of Caroline starving, coupled with her desire to be more charitable, create a strong resemblance between Caroline and the Victorian phenomena of fasting girls. While Cathy of *Wuthering Heights* starves herself to manipulate others, Caroline follows another purpose of fasting girls, that of becoming ethereal by denying the body. Joan Jacobs Brumberg discusses the fame of self-starving girls in the nineteenth century and the responding medical concern with loss of appetite and emaciation.[4] Many fasting girls achieved some fame and were featured in "regional newspapers and medical journals"; some of the girls, such as Ellen Sudworth of Lancashire, claimed to have not eaten solid foods for years (73). Brumberg focuses on the social causes and effects of the trend: self-starvation would attract attention, and thereby give some power to otherwise obscure, powerless girls, and the physically self-denying nature of the act led

to its association with morality and personal salvation and its disassociation with the body (6, 134, 7). Helena Michie argues that food denial is a sign of morality in Victorian literature, explaining that "The portrait of the appropriately sexed woman, then, emerges as one who eats little and delicately. She is as sickened by meat as by sexual desire" (17). In other words, the "appropriately sexed" or innocent woman must consistently deny her body to maintain her righteousness. Through fasting, as opposed to eating "little and delicately," a woman could promote her purity, and if she starves herself to emaciation, she could render herself unable to reproduce by ending her menstrual cycle, a notable sign of her sexuality (21), which would emphasize her un-embodiment and ethereality.

Caroline, dejected and convinced she will become an old maid, limits her eating and desires to be righteous like her model Miss Ainley. The corresponding physical change removes her from the marriage market. Her body, starved to unhealthiness, loses its feminine figure and ceases to menstruate so that she becomes incapable of reproducing and seems, to a certain extent, unsexed. She refuses to eat in her anguish and righteousness, her dedication to helping others since she will not be a wife and mother, yet as she starves herself, her figure changes. Others note this change, which leads to details of its alterations in the novel.

Caroline deprives her body of sustenance as she dedicates herself to charity, and this deprivation invites the attention of the narrator and other characters. The narrator explains that "every one noticed the change in Miss Helstone's appearance," and that this change arouses "more curiosity than sympathy" (*Shirley* 206). The narrator also explicitly notes that women take more notice of Caroline's altered form, find its decreased health legible for an emotional cause, and respond to it differently based on their ages: "Old ladies were always offering her their advice, recommending this or that nostrum; young ladies looked at her in a way she

understood, and from which she shrank. Their eyes said they knew she had been 'disappointed,' as custom phrases it; by whom, they were not certain" (206). In dividing responses based on sex and age, the narrator indicates that women are more likely to read and understand the reason behind Caroline's ill health, to realize she has lost a hoped-for emotional and physical connection, and thereby prescribe a proper treatment; older women, who are more familiar with menstrual fluxes through pregnancy, menopause, or other health reasons, or who are single, and may have survived romantic disappointment, think that the illness can be treated. The "commonplace" younger ladies, who think "to 'love' is merely to contrive a scheme for achieving a good match," who, in other words, have not yet experienced a romantic passion, realize Caroline feels rejected but do not fully understand the depth of Caroline's attachment and the loss of her emotional and physical health (206).

Charlotte Brontë juxtaposes Caroline, in her illness, to two old maids in the novel, Miss Ainley and Miss Mann. Brontë depicts Caroline's emotional anguish and physical deterioration as a barren, dry winter, and Miss Mann and Miss Ainley similarly lack love and appear as dry, but they are not suffering through winter; they have no promise of spring as Caroline does. Miss Mann has a gaze that is "stony," her voice is "indescribably dry," her face "bloodless," and her overall appearance "crabbed" and "corpse-like" (194, 195). She is not compared to verdure, spring, or fruit. Touched by Caroline's sympathy rather than the "coldness and ridicule" she typically faces, Miss Mann tells Caroline of her "cruel, slow-wasting, obstinate sufferings" (195). Her history is such that Caroline appreciates her demeanor: "Well might she be corpse-like; well might she look grim, and never smile; well might she wish to avoid excitement, to gain and retain composure. Caroline, when she knew all, acknowledged that Miss Mann was rather to be admired for fortitude than blamed for moroseness" (195). Miss Ainley is "even plainer than

the other old maid. In her first youth she must have been ugly; now, at the age of fifty, she was *very* ugly" (196, original emphasis). She is more "decayed" and "looked, spoke, and moved the complete old maid" (196, 197). Kay Heath notes that "Brontë describes these spinsters in precisely the same terms as Braxton Hicks uses to delineate the menopausal model—the 'neutral man-woman' who assist others, a conflation that suggests all women eventually will take on the spinster's role, desexualized servants to their families and community" (90).

Caroline, however, is not meant to be an old maid or be forever prematurely aged. The old maids are, as Heath explains, sexless, have "age[d] out of sexuality" (74). This state is the "matron's norm" which, Heath argues, is why older, single women are often utilized in stories to promote marriage to the younger generation while "surrender[ing] her own matrimonial chances" (74). Caroline admires the older, single women and thinks she is ready to step aside and let Shirley have the "feast," the marriage with Robert while she becomes "loveless [and] so forlorn" like the old maids. Robert certainly does not think of her as an old maid; he thinks of the contrast between her and Miss Mann, providing a few details of the characters' bodies for the reader to envision the differences between them: "he had amused himself with comparing her fair youth—delicate and attractive—with shriveled eld, livid and loveless, and in jesting repeating to a smiling girl the vinegar discourse of a cankered old maid" (*Shirley* 193). When Caroline suggests to him that she too may one day become an old maid and that he should not criticize what women have little or no control over—their appearances, voices, and marital statuses—he claims that "Nature" made Miss Mann to be an old maid, shaping the woman as nature shapes "her briars and thorns" (193). In doing so, he indicates that Miss Mann may not have control over her appearance and fate but that she became what she was "created" to be (193). Caroline is not created for this purpose; as Robert states, "even at fifty [she] will not be

repulsive" because "Nature" made her with the "May morning hours," "light and dew," "the primrose," and "the lily" (193). According to Robert, Caroline is supposed to be a flower, more delicate than the round and fruit-like girls in her uncle's imagination, but still associated with bloom, dew, and fertility, rather than stone and aridity.

Neither Miss Mann nor Miss Ainley overtly aids Caroline's path to marriage as Heath contends is a norm in nineteenth-century fiction, but Miss Ainley's habits so impress Caroline that she adopts them. These habits briefly aid her in stemming her mental and physical suffering so that her body balances between health and illness. In copying Miss Ainley's devotion to charitable work, Caroline exercises greater regulation over her emotions; though she continues to feel sadness so that her body indicates fruitlessness like the old maids', she learns to exert some temporary control over her flux of feeling. She is temporarily able "to stem and keep down anguish" and prevent her depression from irreversibly affecting her body (199). Miss Ainley's lifestyle will not sustain or fully return her health; she realizes "with pain that the life which made Miss Ainley happy could not make her happy: pure and active as it was, in her heart she deemed it deeply dreary because it was so loveless" (198). Yet she determines from Miss Ainley's example that "it was despicable…to pine sentimentally, to cherish secret griefs, vain memories; to be inert, to waste youth in aching languor, to grow old doing nothing" (198). By following Miss Ainley's charitable dedication, Caroline slows the change wrought by her sadness but does not stop it; her "buoyant youth" is prematurely aged (199). Karen Chase demonstrates that Victorians tended to consider women old, especially if they are unmarried, at a younger age than men (64). Though Caroline is not yet at the age where her peers would consider her an old maid, which Heath asserts is near the age of thirty (9), her ill health seems to

temporarily advance her age as her depression over her unreturned affection makes her resemble the old maids.

Shirley, the second heroine of the novel, is not an old maid, but neither is she as openly sentimental as Caroline; she is unfeminine in her physical health, emotions, and even social situation. She does not, at this point in the novel, seem to dispense emotion or need networks for her health. While many of the Brontës' female characters fulfill the nineteenth-century medical idea that women are more likely to be physically affected by emotion, Shirley does not. However, she does attempt to emotionally support Caroline to end Caroline's suffering. Shirley has no network, but she does not sicken like Caroline or seem barren. She adopts a demeanor of masculinity, and her health correspondingly seems more independent of mental and emotional fluctuations like many of the Brontës' male characters. Her health does not depend on an emotionally supportive network. The narrator also avoids comparing her to flora and weather. Her masculine persona depends, in part, on disassociating herself from femininity. Her social station is already set apart from typical young single women of the Brontë sisters' novels. While Caroline is set in "situational powerlessness," Shirley "possesses all the material, non-gender specific bases upon which social power is grounded" (Shuttleworth 187). As Shirley explains, "I am indeed no longer a girl, but quite a woman and something more….They gave me a man's name; I hold a man's position. It is enough to inspire me with a touch of manhood" (*Shirley* 213). Helstone recognizes her desire for a man's standing and teases her, calling her "this future magistrate, this churchwarden in perspective, this captain of yeomanry, this young squire," all positions denied to her because of her sex (215). Shirley herself adopts one of the positions, calling herself "Captain Keeldar" whenever she involves herself in "gentleman's affair[s]" (273). Mrs. Pryor warns her to drop the habit because it is "strange" and "Those who do not know you,

hearing you speak thus, would think you affected masculine manners" (217). As her former governess, Mrs. Pryor attempts, but often fails, to align Shirley's behavior with that of acceptable femininity.

Armstrong's study of "countless conduct books and works of instruction for women" demonstrates "a specific configuration of sexual features" upheld as "appropriate" for women; by following this configuration, a woman could make herself an acceptable wife "for men at all levels of society to want" (59). The "domestic" woman, as Armstrong names one Victorian pattern of womanhood, strives to be all that a man could desire in a wife, which includes making efforts to save money but lacking "competitive desires and worldly ambition" (59). Elizabeth Langland adds that she would be the manager of the political economy of the home and use funds "toward the acquisition of social and political status" (7, 8). A man, however, desires for himself to be prosperous, competitive, and ambitious and thereby appreciate his frugal wife. Shirley, because she is wealthy, of age, and not easily influenced by others like her uncle, does not even need a husband for financial security and independence. She more closely resembles the male paragon: she has money, enjoys spending it, and is prosperous and ambitious; she manages her funds but also engages in business to generate more income. When Helstone asks her why she is "fond" of trade, insinuating that she is amorous of the "heroic" tradesman, Shirley replies with a practical, financial reason as opposed to romantic answer: "Because I am a mill-owner, of course. Half my income comes from the works in that Hollow" (*Shirley* 215). She shows little desire to conform to the domestic woman, to depend on others' emotional, physical, and even financial presence for her health. Caroline sickens because she fears she will never become Robert's wife, but economic rather than emotional issues concern Shirley, and she remains healthy for the majority of the novel.

Her masculine persona is complemented by her unfemininely healthy body, one that elicits few details while it remains healthy. Caroline fades in physical and emotional loss, but Shirley's physical health and behavior resembles what Victorian physicians assigned to men.[5] The narrator explains that she has "[p]erfect health" (341). Though she loves Louis and does not know whether they will marry, she is not dejected; for the majority of the novel, she has no emotions strong enough to physically affect her. Her body is not cold, dry, or stone-like however; she feels but Brontë does not describe her emitting passion or associate the character with wilting or thriving plants. Instead, the narrator conveys the strength of her constitution by explaining that natural elements do not much affect her: "Though warm-hearted and sympathetic, she was not nervous: powerful emotions could rouse and sway, without exhausting, her spirit: the tempest troubled and shook her while it lasted; but it left her elasticity unbent, and her freshness quite unblighted. As every day brought her stimulating emotion, so every night yielded her recreating rest" (341). The tempest, or rain storm, temporarily "trouble[s]" her, but does not overwhelm her as storms affect Lucy of *Villette*. She is not easily harmed by emotions, and the narrator tells the reader her health and youth are apparent in her appearance but gives no concrete details of her features.

She is "not nervous" like Caroline; emotions "rouse and sway" without depleting her body, which is why she thinks she will be able to aid her friend in stemming anguish. She occasionally cries, but this release does not result from strong emotion; she explains that she weeps because her "heart is both sad and glad" and that her tears are "delightful and soon wiped away" (235). Caroline, meanwhile, cries daily, but Shirley notes that Caroline's tears are of "gall" (235). In saying so, Shirley relates Caroline to Miss Mann, the old maid who attempts to relieve her physical sufferings by traveling to "Wormwood Wells" (419). The novel provides no

description of the place, but the context suggests it is an area known for its healing water. Though Miss Mann goes "in the hope of alleviating sufferings greatly aggravated by the insalubrious weather," the name "Wormwood" implies that the water is marked by bitterness, seeming to fit with Miss Mann's personality (419). The Bible certainly connects Wormwood with bitterness and lifelessness. Revelations prophesies that the star called Wormwood will fall to the earth and turn a third of the world's water bitter, too bitter to sustain life (8:11). Caroline's tears are bitter, like Miss Mann's Wormwood Wells. The King James version of the Bible actually pairs both words, "wormwood" and "gall," in describing what one would suffer if all, including God, turned away without compassion for one's sufferings, if one had no inter-body networks (Lamentations 3:19). This scenario is particularly relevant to both Caroline and Miss Mann as Caroline feels the person she loves most has forsaken her, and Miss Mann is scorned by others though she reached her state of ill health by nursing her relatives, who died, leaving her lonely. Shirley's tears are not of "gall" and do not wear on her; she feels less need to connect with others. She refuses to "pour out [her] secrets" to Caroline though she knows Caroline's; she releases "no simple gush of feeling" when an arrogant curate is convinced that she could not remain indifferent to his good looks and opinions (*Shirley* 263, 359). She does not need to release or receive emotions for health as Caroline and other Brontë characters do; she is not tied to barren dryness though she, at this point in the narrative, has no strong emotional ties.

Though Shirley's body and mind seem masculine, she is not above performing traits of femininity to achieve something she desires. She does not readily embody feeling as other Brontë heroines do as they sicken from sadness and loneliness, but when she wants to save a seat for Robert at the Sunday school feast, she cannot do so while in her masculine persona without insulting anyone. So she adopts feminine physical weakness, acting in a way that "might have

become the most delicate and nervous of her sex" (306), to keep the seat empty until Robert claims it. As Beth E. Togerson notes, "she will feign illness as a weapon to get her own way" (48). To rid a potential suitor from her company, she pretends she will be sick: "she was hot…complained of want of air and space…, and announced distinctly that she expected to faint" (*Shirley* 305). When he leaves and the seat is taken by another, she spills her tea, marking her dress and her own chair, and though "usually almost culpably indifferent to slight accidents affecting dress," she "now made a commotion" (306). Charlotte Brontë juxtaposes Shirley's usual behavior with that of her performance of femininity, emphasizing Shirley's typically unfeminine outlook and actions while also demonstrating the potential social benefits of feminine emotion and its embodiment, which include attention and lessened probability of giving offense to men for her behavior.

While Charlotte Brontë portrays Caroline as emotional and physically sickening because she is deprived of Robert's love, Shirley seems impermeable; the narrator does not depict emotion as leaving or fulfilling her. Until late in the novel, such descriptions apply to Caroline only. Shirley's health and body do not depend on networks. She does not include others in her body schema; unlike the old maids, she is happy and healthy in and of herself. But this emotional impenetrability, ironically, seems to encourage the disease hydrophobia. A dog bite that draws blood rouses fear in Shirley; this strong emotion renders her physically and mentally more feminine though she does not passively allow this blood flow but staunches it by cauterization. The infection that Shirley fears she has been exposed to is aptly named for her character; she avoids comparisons of her body and emotions to luscious things like fruit and flowers, she does not let tempests affect her, and, as I will discuss, finds mermaids monstrous; she thereby fears the disease named after a terror of and strong desire to avoid water.

As Gisela Argyle notes, Shirley's self-cauterization also resembles the metaphor applied to Caroline when rejected by Robert, that she should close her hand over the scorpion sting and learn to accept the pain without tears (747). Shirley does not fully accept the "sting"; Caroline sickens from depression because she cannot accept Robert's lack of love, and Shirley also sickens from fear that she will become rabid, infecting others until they kill her. This physical pain and the fear for self that it provokes is the turning point for Shirley's health; the fear for her own body harms it when her other emotions do not. Neither heroine can hide her emotions or prevent them from eventually influencing and becoming inscribed on the internal functions and exterior of her body. Though Shirley resists for much of her single life, her and Caroline's feelings are, as nineteenth-century physicians proposed, closely tied to their bodies' appearances and functions. Though Shirley's "sting" is not that of rejection from a lover but terror of a disease, this emotion pains her body, turning her "nervous, thin, and foolish" (*Shirley* 476). Her figure "waste[s]. Her hands [grow] quite thin, and so [does] her cheek" (471). She becomes "quite pale," and "her large eye looked hollow" (466, 467). Shirley's concern that she will develop hydrophobia causes her to realize she should share or "pour" her emotions rather than retain them, that her lack of emotional exchanges leads to this illness (263): "But when I have any grief, I fear to impart it to those I love, lest it should pain them; and to those whom I view with indifference I cannot condescend to complain….[yet] griefs and fears nursed in silence grow like Titan infants" (481). Caroline and Shirley suffer ill health because of their strong emotions and inabilities to share them through networks. Caroline grieves because she thinks she has lost Robert, and Shirley grieves because she refuses to share her fear with anyone and be comforted. The narrator details how the two heroines' emotions appear physically, encouraging

the reader to envision their alterations, recalling their previous health and imagining how their bodies are changed by emotional trauma.

Forming Embodied Emotional Networks

What is most intriguing about this rhetoric of physical and emotional health, of feeling affecting the physical in the Brontës' novels, is how emotions are not bound within the human form. Charlotte and Anne Brontë often describe emotions as pouring out, reshaping the confines of the human figure, such as how William Crimsworth imagines his brother's anger as spilling from him and into William's waiting cup. Discussion of the emission of feelings so far has been on emotions that are not requited, but this section turns to emotions that are released and returned. One character's outpouring does not always disappear and lead to physical pain but occasionally goes to satiate another character's physical and emotional distress; when strong, this emotional network seems corporeal. If the emotion is not returned, it causes pain, but if it is returned, both characters are emotionally and physically strengthened. In the first example I provide of this embodied connection, the emotional tie is particularly strong because it reinforces a biological one. Networks form between many characters but do not always strengthen to the point of seeming physical; this section considers stronger, seemingly physical connections before turning to a weaker one. Anne and Charlotte Brontë embody the strongest of these networks between women as if women are more dependent upon release and intake of emotions for physical and mental health. Though these connections do not describe typical female forms, they do briefly materialize characters as their figures, in sharing seemingly physical matter, conjoin. The emotions are not physical, yet the bonds they create are depicted as material and thereby remind the reader of the characters' physical presence; strong emotions materialize the characters

even though this material is not actually corporeal or located on or within the human form. This conjoining strengthens their physical and emotional health. As with previous chapters, this one contends that bodies receive more specific description are further visible to the reader, when they are different from the norm, when they are in discomfort or pain. Once an emotional/physical network restores a body to health, the body becomes less visible, less emphasized in the story.

Charlotte Brontë presents emotion between biological relatives as enabling a network of mutually beneficial transfers that spawns other networks. The emotional support aids ailing characters while emphasizing their physical connections. This support, however, diminishes the individual's expressions of physically-manifested pain, so that descriptions of the body fade as it returns to health and homogeneity and is no longer marked. Emotional pain is staunched by another's support so that the body does not show physical pain, does not act as a sign for extreme emotional distress. Two sets of characters successfully establish an interchange, one female-female that facilitates a female-male, spousal one, and the narrator suggests a third will soon form. Mrs. Pryor helps Caroline, ending her depression that causes her to "wilt" and resemble the old maids, by providing her with another emotional tie. Mrs. Pryor returns Caroline's affection instead of dismisses it as Robert does. Yet this network does not form and support the two characters until Caroline knows they are biologically connected. Charlotte Brontë relies on images of breastfeeding and blood to depict Mrs. Pryor's maintenance of Caroline and emphasize their biological and emotional ties. Before she tells Caroline of their biological relationship, Caroline rejects Mrs. Pryor's proposal that they live together, rejects the woman's support. Mrs. Pryor's efforts to aid the ailing Caroline initially fail: "the patient was as willing to be cherished as the nurse was bent on cherishing" but "the sick girl did not get well" (401).

When Caroline's lips are "parched," Mrs. Pryor provides a "cooling beverage" (400), but this drink does not stem the girl's emotions or return physical strength.

The daughter does improve, however, when the mother reveals her past and their blood tie and the daughter finally accepts maternal love. Athena Vrettos contends that Mrs. Pryor succeeds in nursing Caroline to health because she reads and understands Caroline's illness and its emotional cause (42). But Shirley also understands but fails to help Caroline, and Mrs. Pryor herself does not succeed until she tells Caroline of their biological link. Caroline does not accept or depend on her relationship with Mrs. Pryor until she knows it has a physical foundation. Their physical connection enables her to help her daughter, allows her love to replace Robert's rejection. Their biological connection fosters an emotional tie, and Brontë emphasizes the strength of their emotional tie by representing it as physical. Mrs. Pryor clasps Caroline to her "throbbing bosom" as her "full heart flowed over," cries while holding Caroline, and reveals that she is Caroline's mother and that she loves her daughter: "from my veins issued the tide which flows in yours….I bore you—nursed you" (409). In this passage, Brontë describes Mrs. Pryor's emotions as leaving her body along with the "tide" of her blood that throbs and flows over; Caroline receives both. Mrs. Pryor, having reminded her daughter that "You drew life and strength from my breast when you were a tiny, fair infant," promises to "nurse" her daughter again (410). The term "nurse" as well as the mother's throbbing blood and tears, seem to provide Caroline with sustenance, filling the daughter with emotion/bodily substances and tempering her life-threatening depression, her release of unreturned emotion. The language of these passages demonstrates both an emotional and physical connection between the two; they mutually love each other and are physically tied through their shared blood (the "tide" in their "veins") and through the mother's breastfeeding (the "nurs[ing]").

Mrs. Pryor aids and staunches Caroline's excess, indicating that, for Brontë, one woman's emotional and physical loss can be treated by another woman's love, especially when they have a biological connection. Though Caroline still loves Robert and is hurt by his inattention, her health no longer suffers from her anguish over losing his love once her mother identifies herself and proclaims her love for her daughter. Instead, Caroline's resulting "abundant gush of happiness," which reciprocates for her acceptance of her mother's "flowed over" feeling, leads to her recovery (409); her mind and body lose their aridity, coldness, and barrenness in exchange for the water and spring sponsored by her mother's love: "So long as the breath of Asiatic deserts parched Caroline's lips and fevered her veins, her physical convalescence could not keep pace with her returning mental tranquility; but…wet and tempest prevailed a while. When that was over the sun broke out genially, heaven regained its azure, and earth its green" (420). Finding someone to devote her affection to and who will cherish her in return, heals Caroline's emotional pain, which then stimulates a physical recovery. Caroline no longer suffers the loneliness that Miss Mann and Miss Ainley do.

The language of physical transfer between Caroline and her mother relies partially on references to breastfeeding to solidify their inter-body connection. Breastfeeding signals both a physical and emotional tie; many Victorians worried how or whether breast-milk influenced a child mentally as well as physically. Melisa Klimaszewski notes that some Victorians feared that their carefully chosen, physically healthy wet-nurses "could transmit negative moral, mental, physical, and emotional traits to infants through their nearly magical breast milk" (327).[6] This belief in the physical and emotional power of breast-milk is echoed in the corporeal and mental dynamics of Mrs. Pryor's care for her daughter; Mrs. Pryor's nursing physically and emotionally aids her child, strengthening the connection between their bodies and minds. Her

physical/emotional sustenance fortifies her daughter when she is an infant as well as a depressed adult. In breastfeeding the daughter when an infant, Mrs. Pryor solidifies the inter-body tie between them, preventing the daughter from developing her father's traits though she is under her father's care for more time. This tie enables the mother to aid the daughter years later. The mother happily realizes that, though the daughter's features reflect her father's, her mind reflects the mother's. The restored connection is mutually beneficial; Caroline is nursed to health by her mother, and the mother delights in claiming her lost progeny.[7] Mrs. Pryor explains that Caroline took in her mother's thoughts and feelings as an infant and developed them into all the mother could wish: "Papa…gave you your blue eyes and soft brown hair: he gave you the oval of your face and the regularity of your lineaments: the outside *he* conferred; but the heart and the brain are *mine*: the germs are from *me*, and they are improved, they are developed to excellence" (*Shirley* 410, original emphasis). Her repeated emphasis that Caroline belongs to her evinces her own joy in forming such a child, that her body produced a child with a mind like hers.

Through the reestablished physical and emotional tie to her mother, Caroline recovers so that her figure no longer shows she is "disappointed" and is no longer threatened with the barrenness that affects the old maids. She still loves and wishes to marry Robert, but her body stops displaying and suffering from this passion. The tie with her mother supports her emotional and physical health. This seemingly physical connection is so strong that her appearance can be read for it, and Brontë describes the connection in physical terms: as blood and breast-milk. The tie provides Caroline with the strength to aid Robert when he is in physical and emotional pain. Though previously healthy and able to stifle his emotions, Robert suffers from rejection too, as Shirley scoffs at his marriage proposal, and from a near-lethal wound and resulting illness. He becomes a "tall, thin, wasted figure," and his mind is "dark, barren, impotent" as it experiences

"terrible depressions" (*Shirley* 540, 542, 541).[8] His recovery speeds when Caroline sneaks into the Yorke house to visit him; once he is sure of her love for him and the support it will give, that she will marry and legally and physically connect herself to him, he has the energy to remove himself from his sickroom, return home, and ask her to visit again.

Robert also shows himself capable of further perpetuating this spread of emotional health. He previously thought Miss Mann too ugly and sharp to desire her company or regard. But he gives her a plant, a physical sign of his developing sentiment and aid for others. The plant is also significant because the narrator compares Caroline to plants when she is emotionally and physically content. Furthermore, he speaks to Mrs. Pryor and convinces the mother to share a home with him and Caroline when they marry. After his illness and recovery, after experiencing emotional anguish and benefitting from Caroline's support, Robert shows more care for others. His scheme prevents a separation between the mother and daughter and protects Caroline from suffering if their marriage is not happy; if Caroline becomes depressed again in thinking Robert does not love her, her mother can once again solely support her and be supported by her daughter. The mother's confession and outpouring of emotion sustains Caroline regardless of Robert's admission, or lack, of love; her appearance does not noticeably change to reflect either his rejection or proposal after she forms such a close tie with her mother.

Charlotte Brontë's heroine depends upon her mother for physical and mental recovery, a woman she has both biological and emotional ties to. Anne Brontë, however, creates supportive relationship between friends in *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*. Helen finds strength in her relationship with her friend Milicent whose husband is also abusive. Helen explains that the two women refuse to dwell on the sadness of their own situations but instead grieve for each other: "How odd it is that we so often weep for each other's distresses, when we shed not a tear for our

own! Her heart had been full enough of her own sorrows, but it *overflowed* at the idea of mine; and I, too, *shed* tears at the sight of her sympathetic emotion, though I had not wept for myself for many a week" (*TTWH* 284, my emphasis). In this passage, Helen compares their hearts to containers and their friendly, empathetic emotion as a physical substance too ample for their hearts/containers to hold. So the feeling/substance spills over from their physical forms as tears to connect the two women and emphasize their emotional attachment. The passage indicates that the two women feel anguish but try to prevent its expression. Helen feels concern for Milicent but does not dwell on her own unhappy marriage; instead, Helen's tears are for Milicent's pain and vice versa. Helen, knowing of Milicent's love for her, "shed[s] not a tear" for herself. When Helen speaks to Milicent's husband, convincing him to treat his wife better, "Milicent flew to thank [her], overflowing with gratitude" (381). Though Helen establishes an emotionally supportive network with her friend, she does not form one with her husband. Arthur dies asking Helen for aid, hoping her religious devotion and love will save his life or reserve a place for him in heaven: "he earnestly seized [her] hand, and looked into [her] face with such imploring eagerness" (441). Helen cannot help the dying man, and though she empathizes with him, she does not describe any embodied connection between them. Though her "heart bled for him, and [she] could not speak for tears," he does not find lasting relief from her but dies fearful and unhappy (441); neither her blood nor tears reach him.

Charlotte Brontë does not depict a female friendship as providing the support that Helen and Milicent give to each other. Nor does she grant Shirley a network as strong as the one Caroline forms with her mother. Shirley eventually realizes she must share her emotions, relieving her fear that she is infected with hydrophobia, or continue mentally or physically suffering from her fear and the loneliness it makes her feel. But before this sickness and

realization, and before Caroline learns that Mrs. Pryor is her mother, Shirley attempts to aid Caroline, to establish a supportive connection between them so that her love replaces the withdrawal of Robert's and spurs Caroline's recovery. Her attempt fails, however, because the women are rivals in the marriage market.

Shirley's relationship with Caroline attracts much critical attention and raises questions of female friendship and sexual desire.[9] Shirley and Caroline are close. And since Shirley is masculine in her health and lack of physiologically harmful passions, and Caroline is physically sickening from her romantic disappointment, then why cannot Shirley's affection and comfort ease Caroline's pain? Of course, Caroline prefers Robert's love, but Shirley's friendship would at least prevent her from becoming as lonely as Miss Mann. Shirley tries to help Caroline, as she more than once attempts and succeeds in using her wealth to ease others' hardships. Miss Mann relieves her own physical afflictions and emotional anguish by visiting Wormwood Wells, and Shirley plans to improve Caroline's health by taking her to "Scotch lochs or the English lakes" (247). Caroline likes the idea and wishes to see the sea: "I long to hear the sound of waves—ocean-waves—and to see them as I have imagined them in dreams, like tossing banks of green light, strewed with vanishing and reappearing wreaths of foam, whiter than lilies" (248). This wish seems appropriate considering the narrator's depiction of Caroline's disappointment turning her mind and body to arid desert.

Yet Shirley, in her health, and to foreshadow her potential hydrophobia infection, is not attracted to water nor needs to visit lakes or seas for health as Caroline and Miss Mann do. She thinks of water as feminine and scorns it; she specifically mentions mermaids, female figures dependent on water, as monstrous women. She imagines seeing a mermaid with Caroline:

> We both see the long hair, the lifted and foam-white arm, the oval mirror brilliant as a star. It glides nearer; a human face is plainly visible—a face in the style of yours—

> whose…straight, pure lineaments paleness does not disfigure. It looks at us, but not with your eyes. I see a preternatural lure in its wily glance. It beckons. Were we men, we should spring at the sign…being women, we stand safe, though not dreadless…. Temptress-terror! monstrous likeness of ourselves! Are you not glad, Caroline, when at last, and with a wild shriek, she dives? (249)

Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar note that the mermaid is physically "desexed," arguing that, in this female but non-female state, she destroys "the men who have enslaved such pure women as Caroline and Shirley" (387). But Shirley finds the figure fearful, though the mermaid only "beckons" men, having no power over or feeling for women. The mermaid is "wily" and "wild," but this is not what upsets Shirley. She finds the mermaid too passionate with her "preternatural lure" and strong response to rejection, a "shriek," and these excessive passions are, according to Shirley, aimed at men and deter women, which both tempts and terrifies her. She initially distances herself from the image, noting that the face looks like Caroline's. Before the character's disappointment and illness, the narrator describes Caroline as like a mermaid; her hair is "as long as a mermaid's" (*Shirley* 122). The narrator also describes this feature as a "flow," "falling thick, soft, and wavy" (121, 122). Yet Shirley does relate herself to the mermaid by the end of her speech; it is a "monstrous likeness" of herself as well as a potential future for herself. In seeing the mermaid as unappealing to women, she indicates that women's emotion, so strong it affects the physical and needs a return of feeling or else it promotes arid barrenness and thereby incites visits to spas, hinders friendship between women.

Caroline nears such physically-destructive passion because of her love for Robert. Shirley, who appreciates their female friendship, wants to protect Caroline and maintain their relationship by emotionally supporting Caroline, by giving her strong affection and strengthening the tie between them. Yet Shirley fears how a more emotional existence, a dependence on networks for physical health, will change her. To safeguard her independence, she defies

becoming a mermaid, becoming dependent on returned affection, though she realizes Caroline is, or almost is, one. And, indeed, Caroline cannot fully return Shirley's friendship because of her love for Robert, because of his interference. As Shirley herself asserts, Robert "keeps intruding between you and me; without him we should be good friends" (264). Though Shirley has a masculine body in its health and lack of emotional releases, and though she wants to alleviate Caroline's suffering from rejected love, she cannot because Robert intrudes in their relationship. Shirley cannot solidify her female friendship because a potential suitor prevents Caroline from accepting Shirley's aid without adding to her own anguish. No relationship, so supportive that it seems physical, forms between the two.

Linda C. Hunt argues that both *Shirley* and *Villette* "[probe] the possibility that female friendship could be a preferable alternative to romantic attachments to men" yet present "female friendship [as] inevitably defined and limited by woman's economic position" (56). Shirley and Caroline's relationship occasionally seems to provide the emotional network needed to support both. Their friendship is less disrupted by Shirley's wealth and Caroline's relative poorness, or, if their positions are applied to their emotions, by Shirley's initial unaffectedness and Caroline's depression, than by Robert's ambitious desire for Shirley's money, for the love triangle he simulates that prevents Caroline from depending on Shirley. As Sharon Marcus notes, the women's friendship does aid each in becoming a Mrs. Moore, "[sustaining] the preexisting [social] bond between brides who begin as friends and end as sisters-in-law" (96). Shirley, before the dog bite, is peculiarly suited as a close friend for Caroline because she knows how to stem her own emotions and understands that Caroline's health depends on her need to do likewise; furthermore, by rejecting Robert's marriage proposal yet loaning him money so his business recovers, Shirley enables Robert to marry. It is Robert who disrupts this friendship by

thinking Shirley's aid is a sign of her attachment to him instead of realizing that it results from her own business sense and attachment to Caroline.

Shirley feels little for their shared suitor, but Caroline, already suffering from emotional anguish, is only further harmed by viewing Robert's attentions to her friend/rival. Hunt argues that Shirley attempts to solidify her female friendship by exploring a dell, complete with the ruins of a nunnery, with Caroline: "The vaginal imagery of this passage is indeed striking, although it is unlikely that Brontë was conscious of it. Certainly, however, she was consciously using 'Nunnwood' and the nunnery at its heart to symbolize a mythic, matriarchal world" (58). Charlotte Brontë depicts a female-dominated community as one that would naturally exclude physically dangerous emotional outpourings, from the disappointment of romantic endeavors, yet this community is not formed by Shirley and Caroline; neither provides much aid to the other, as demonstrated by Shirley's condition at the novel's conclusion and Caroline's declining health regardless of her increasing intimacy with Shirley. Both actually encourage the other to marry, which strengthens their relationship as they marry brothers but also increases their dependence on the men who cause or exacerbate destructive mental states.

When Shirley fears hydrophobia, she sickens like Caroline, but fear causes her emotional anguish, whereas disappointment causes Caroline's. By sharing her emotions with Louis, crying in her distress and accepting his comfort, Shirley solidifies their relationship, benefitting from his support, and begins the course that leads to their engagement. His comfort relieves her fear, breaking the "cloud" and returning her mind "to its own natural clime" (*Shirley* 479). She describes her emotional state as one of thankfulness that causes physical contentment: "Gratitude is a divine emotion. It fills the heart, but not to bursting, it warms it, but not to fever" (481). The gratitude she feels towards Louis prevents further deterioration of her mental, and thereby

physical, health. The movement of emotions between Louis and Shirley bonds them, but it does not restore her former strength.

Critics debate whether Shirley's marriage with Louis offers the same relief to her that telling him of the dog bite does; they do not form an inter-body network though they profess their love for each other. Shirley's state as she nears her wedding day is not one of health and happiness; she does not seem to find emotional or physical support in her love for her future husband or his attachment to her. She appreciates the network when it relieves her fear but then appears to regret losing her emotional and bodily independence. Rebecca A. McLaughlin notes that the narrator concludes the novel with a depiction of the two female friends standing near each other, but these friends are not referred to by their first names as they are for the majority of the novel; instead, Caroline is "Mrs. Robert" and Shirley "Mrs. Louis," suggesting that Shirley has lost her "freedom" by marriage (221). Louis himself realizes that she has lost her independence: "She has dreams of her wild woods and pinings after virgin freedom" (*Shirley* 584). Deirdre Lashgari argues that Shirley's health is not as strong after her engagement, that she starves herself post-engagement as Caroline does upon Robert's rejection (151). Though Shirley states that "Louis" is a "liquid name," as if his very name repels hydrophobia, she remains sickly after telling him of her worry, as if she still fears hydrophobia, as if their love is not strong enough to fully return her to health as Caroline's network with her mother heals Caroline (585). Louis explains that Shirley's dependence on him negatively affects her health but insists that his presence restores her to emotional, but not physical, tranquility: "It had needed a sort of tempest-shock to bring her to the point [of setting a wedding day]; but….There she lay, conquered by love….Thus vanquished and restricted, she pined, like any other chained denizen of deserts. Her captor alone could cheer her….In his absence she sat or wandered alone,

spoke little, and ate less" (*Shirley* 592). Shirley, though comforted by Louis in regards to the dog bite, is shocked by Louis's "tempest" into relinquishing her single state. This is the first tempest to affect her once she overcomes her fear of a hydrophobia infection, and its influence shows the weakness in her emotional and physical health.

Shirley weakens after accepting Louis's love, and emotionally and physically struggles as if living in a desert; she "pine[s]" and eats little, much as Caroline does in her depression. As the narrator explains, she is "conquered by love" so that she loses her own health and freedom. She relinquishes her economic standing over Louis by having him manage her estate while she fulfills the feminine role of wife. Shirley briefly benefits emotionally and physically from Louis's comfort when she tells him she fears she is infected. Sharing her concerns seems to act as a partial restoration of her lost health, only partial because she never regains her former state. Though she enjoys and depends on Louis's affection, his love cannot return her to her former state of health, and she regrets the loss of it, unable to find full consolation in her married state. Their relationship does not strongly benefit her as Mrs. Pryor's and Caroline's mutually supports them. Shirley demonstrates the connection of her own mind and body, but her and Louis's love does not materialize as an inter-body network.

Victorian novels depict characters' emotions as influential on their physical health; emotional pain often expresses itself physically, causing bodily pain. Emotions can mark and emphasize a character's body, encouraging the reader to imagine its appearance as mutilation and bruises do. Charlotte and Anne Brontë depict strong emotions as releasing from the body, draining one's health. These releases, however, can benefit the characters mentally and physically by connecting them so that emotional pain ends, which also, in these novels, relieves physical pain and expression of that pain. Both sisters portray the harm and benefits of the

formation and loss of emotional and physical connections in their novels. Passions can harm bodies, particularly female reproductive cycles, and the novels use comparisons to and imagery of natural processes to indicate these changes in the characters' bodies and minds. These passions can also spread from one body to bolster another. The novels encourage such ties, indicating that they may be strong enough to help one's health withstand romantic passions, disappointment, fear, and other strong emotions that enact physical changes. Through emotions and corresponding physiological activity, characters are made physical and interact, physically and emotionally, with each other.

Emotions manifest physically. The manifestation may be as transitory and small as a facial expression or as permanent and noticeable as mutilation. Marks of emotional pain do not, however, reject the readable sign system; characters' features portray emotional pain. Yet these features are not transitory, faint, or merely legible for the individual. They indicate how others feel about and behave toward the sufferer. Furthermore, characters react to and interpret such signs. In emphasizing characters' emotions as not only affecting their own bodies but also each other's, Victorian authors suggest that emotional pain is never confined to the individual. Just as one character's anguish affects his or her body, it also affects the bodies of loved ones. Even *Aurora Floyd* and *He Knew He Was Right* demonstrate how one character's feeling inspires responses in their close friends and relatives though Braddon and Trollope do not represent these cause-and-effect emotional ties as explicitly as Charlotte and Anne Brontë do. Emotional pain is not confined but spreads throughout the body and between characters, affecting both mental and physical states.

[1] Medical texts were widely read and popular household items throughout the Victorian Age. The Brontës, for example, owned books by William Buchan and Thomas John Graham, among others. One of Charlotte Brontë's characters, the doctor in *Villette,* is named John Graham after the famous physician.

[2] In Psalm 23, the speaker explains that God blesses him, using language of a cup that "run(s) over": "Thou anointed my head with oil; my cup runneth over" (*The Professor* 53, Psalm 23).

[3] Acton describes female bodies in such a way that they seem to be a collection of storage containers. He indicates that outside sources, such as venereal disease, provoke little to no response within her body. Her body does not experience or fight the disease; it merely holds the virus. A woman's body allows her to carry and spread disease without showing symptoms as if her body was not a whole in which all parts are linked; the majority of the internal body was nothing more than an assortment of contained areas. Acton praises the speculum for allowing the study of women's sexual organs because their concealed, yet inner state, essentially forces them to act as repositories for disease that do not become apparent because the female body, segregated into sections, does not readily show symptoms. In his words, "she is the *reservoir* simply" (*A Complete* 152, my emphasis). Male reproductive organs fight the entrance of contagious disease in their bodies; female ones do not. Acton's equation of a woman with a reservoir further reconfigures her body as a container. To Acton, these storage container-like, internally segregated bodies are difficult for an external viewer to read, much like Esther's and Isabel's bodies post-mutilation.

[4] Lilian R. Furst explains that William W. Gull, a British physician, first used the term "'anorexia nervosa' in a paper presented to a medical forum in London in 1868" (5). The disease received its first clinical description in 1873 "as a result of two influential clinical reports—one from a famous London physician and the other from a reputable Paris neurologist" (Gorsky 175, Brumberg 110).

[5] Shirley's body appears masculine because it is so healthy; Victorian physicians emphasized that female reproductive processes act like illness on the body. In a chapter entitled "Diseases of Women," Buchan states that "the chief of [women's illnesses] are, their *monthly evacuations, pregnancy,* and *child-bearing*" (397, original emphasis). He somewhat backpedals, assuring his reader that, though he compares these physiological states to sicknesses, he knows they are not truly sicknesses, that they "indeed, cannot properly be called diseases" (397). Yet he reaffirms how detrimental these processes can be to woman's health by noting that "[the stages are] often improperly managed in such situations, [so] they become the source of numerous calamities" (397). Edward John Tilt connects menstruation to disease by claiming that menstruation is "accompanied by an amount of pain and other symptoms really sufficient to give them all the importance of a disease" (8). He then laments that the process is not called a disease because, if it were, then women would have physicians examine their bodies while undergoing menstruation, and physicians would subsequently know more about the process. In other words, Tilt compares the pain of menstruation to the "importance" of an illness and then regrets that the process is not actually termed an illness, indicating women do not recognize the importance of their bodily functions, are unable to exercise conscious direction on their bodies' activities and,

therefore, that they need for doctors to understand them and need to give doctors more opportunity to study the process.

[6] The nurse's potential effect on the child's mind led to surveillance of wet-nurses; Buchan claims "*That every woman who nurses for hire should be carefully looked after, otherwise she will not do her duty*" (456, original emphasis). He also encouraged women to nurse their own children, admonishing those who did not as "hardly deserv[ing] that name" of mother (439). Alicia Carroll argues that this fear of wet-nurses' effects on children encouraged some mothers to breastfeed but others to replace themselves and wet-nurses with dairymaids and cows' milk (166).

[7] For an example of breastfeeding as not mutually beneficial but draining to the mother, see *Esther Waters* and Jules Law's chapter on the novel.

[8] Athena Vrettos notes that Caroline becomes a ghostly figure to Robert, a manifestation of his own guilt in rejecting her (41). Twice, he thinks he sees her: "I seemed to see a figure resembling yours. It was some effect of doubtful light or shade, or of dazzling sunbeam" and "There you were, Lina, at the casement, shrinking a little to one side in an attitude not unusual with you. You were dressed in white, as I have seen you dressed at an evening party. For half a second your fresh, living face seemed turned towards me, looking at me; for half a second my idea was to go and take your hand, to chide you for your long absence, and welcome your present visit. Two steps forward broke the spell" (*Shirley* 258). When Robert becomes ill, he imagines himself as a ghost for Caroline because of his weakened body and her reorganization of affection to include her mother and stop suffering so much over Robert. He recognizes that he is a "mere ghost" to her (542).

[9] Much of this attention arises from biographical criticism of Charlotte Brontë's relationship with Ellen Nussey, the popularity of cross-dressing actresses, and Emily Brontë's short-lived physical proximity to Anne Lister, a lesbian land-owner. For examples, see Jin-Ok Kim, Anne Longmuir, Elliott Vanskike, Tess Cosslett, and Terry Castle.

CONCLUSION
FINDING EXPRESSIONS OF PAIN IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Narrators and characters in Victorian literature focus on a body when it is different, particularly when it is marked by pain. The cause of the discomfort the character faces, whether physical or emotional, often writes itself on the body. I remarked in the Introduction that Elaine Scarry's research progression from the body in pain to remembering the body suggests that there is a strong connection between pain and the visible body. Victorian literature found reason for this connection in scientific and medical texts of the time, which supported reading bodies for expressions of emotion and, in focusing mostly on ill or injured patients, detailing bodies when they are in agony. The Introduction also gives my reasons for focusing on this subject within a limited time frame, with only Victorian works. I also note that the details of that changed or distressed body encourage the reader to solidify the character's appearance in his/her mind, can be applied and supported in writings from other times and cultures. Readers remember characters because of their marks of affliction.

In the international best-selling *Harry Potter* series, the author J. K. Rowling provides many details of Harry's appearance, including his green eyes, which he inherits from his mother, and his dark, messy hair, which he inherits from his father. Rowling tells the reader a little about his thin frame and his glasses, but the most remembered and significant aspect of his appearance is a scar across his forehead. Others know and recognize him by this mark. Esther and Isabel's scars obscure their identities, but Harry's scar confirms his. Most of the Victorian novels I discuss present marks as either resulting from emotional or physical pain; Harry's scar, like Florence's bruise, functions as a sign for both because it is caused by an attack he faces that physically marks him and kills his parents. Interestingly, Rowling's subsequent novels also include characters with noticeable indications of pain: the protagonist and private investigator

with the amputated leg in *The Cuckoo's Calling*; the morbidly obese, heart-attack prone, and rash-covered Howard Mollison of *The Casual Vacancy*; and the teenaged girl Sukhvinder Jwanda who expresses her emotional pain by cutting her arms in *The Casual Vacancy*.

Physical indications of distress invite attention and remembrance, and Western culture tends to denigrate such marks. Medical advances make us more successful at preventing or "fixing" them, even to the point of experiencing more pain as a result of cosmetic surgery. There are many scar-reduction or scar-prevention products with widespread availability, and there are many websites with various and often contradictory information about the best scar-reduction treatments or the best home remedies. The American Society of Plastic Surgeons encourages any healthy individual who is bothered by a scar to consider "scar revision surgery," which, the website assures, is merely "minimally invasive" ("Scar Revision"). Virginia L. Blum points out that the language of cosmetic surgery centers on "necessity," the necessity of surgery for one's self-esteem, because such procedures inevitably have some element of risk (13); the easiest way to justify risking one's life to alter one's appearance is to claim the operation is necessary for one's mental health. Blum also notes that, ironically, scars become an acceptable trade-off in cosmetic surgery as long as they are readily hidden by clothing (183). Tummy-tucks and breast augmentations leave scars, but ones that are covered by clothes and can even be designed so that a woman's string bikini can cover them. Blum quotes plastic surgeons who warn about how often and at what time of life to have face-lifts so that the scars are minimal to the point of invisibility. Cosmetic surgery presents pain as acceptable if it prevents the body from showing, or limits any sign of, change like a scar, weight gain, or even the natural aging process. Patients readily accept varying levels of distress for the benefit of their bodies remaining as unmarked, as un-different as possible. Ironically, the surgery purposefully changes bodies and causes pain

while trying to make such changes and any signs of surgery unrecognizable. The surgeons do not want to leave any marks of their physical interaction on the patient's body.

Modern medicine can also limit wrinkles and, in doing so, mask facial expressions. Botulinum toxin, or Botox, reduces the appearance of wrinkles. Medical professionals inject the substance into muscles to paralyze them. The substance, which is, after all, a toxin, "blocks muscular nerve signals" ("What Is"). If facial muscles are exposed to Botox, they cannot move to express emotion. Of course, the recipient could express emotion in other ways, as Lady Dedlock does with her voice, but Botox essentially masks the face. It works retroactively; not only are current expressions limited, but it also removes signs of previously experienced emotion.

While many people voluntarily undergo "minimally invasive" procedures in exchange for a physical un-marking, pain remains a difficult subject to express yet a prominent one in the medical field. Our advances in treating or dulling agony makes pain one of the top reasons for a person to check him or herself into an emergency room; more than 20% of emergency room patients are composed of people who are looking for relief from bodily distress (Curtis and Morrell 1). Yet there is comparably little research on pain as opposed to other medical concerns. Less than one percent of the U.S. National Institute of Health budget is devoted to pain research though half the country's population self-reports chronic pain (4). Hospitals and medical professionals try to combat this lack of information about and difficulty in discussing pain through the use of self-assessment scales.

Pain tolerance varies from person to person, and one's current state of pain can only be measured by one's imagination of how it could be worsened and one's past experiences. Pain cannot be uniformly quantified and, because of this, is difficult to communicate. Yet medical

treatment depends in part on the amount of and type of pain one is in. Victorian physicians depended on the sight of a patient and the patient's descriptions of bodily pain to diagnose. This practice is still employed today, though it is supplemented by technological advances that create a more accurate picture of the patient and the cause of pain than the patient's descriptions tend to do. Modern hospitals, however, ask patients to judge their own levels of pain. Medical professionals use patient's judgments to determine the severity of injury or illness, to evaluate whether the patient needs immediate treatment or if other patients need treatment first, or to limit possible diagnoses. In an attempt to ease communication and to standardize pain levels, many hospitals employ pain scales.

According to the U.S. National Library of Medicine, four pain scales are popularly used: the Numerical Rating Scale, Verbal Rating Scale, Visual Analogue Scale, and the Faces Pain Scale, such as the Wong-Baker Faces Pain Rating Scale. Each one is a tool for communicating a sufferer's pain to another. For the Numerical Rating Scale, a patient is asked to pick a number between one and ten, ten being the worst possible, that represents his/her pain (National Initiative). In the Verbal Rating Scale, the patient is given more limited options; s/he must choose which phrase best describes his/her pain: no pain, mild pain, moderate pain, severe pain, very severe pain, worst possible pain. In the Visual Analogue Scale, a patient is given a paper with a line drawn across; one end is labeled "no pain" while the other is labeled "worst possible pain" (National Initiative). The patient is asked to mark on the line, indicating where his/her pain falls on the spectrum. The Visual Analogue Scale is the most accurate of these scales (Ferreira 2399). It and the Faces Pain Scale are the two that depend upon the patient seeing the scale. The last version, the Faces Pain Scale, uses a series of five or ten simple, even cartoonish drawings of faces, which progress from a smiley face, to less of a smile, to a frown, and finally

to a teary face. The faces are sometimes printed in black-and-white and sometimes colorful, moving from yellow to red as the faces express more pain (National Initiative). This scale is particularly useful as a communication tool because it circumvents the need to read or understand English. All of these pain scales provide health care professionals with an easy assessment of another's pain, which as I noted in the Introduction, is difficult to speak about.

The use of the Faces Pain Scale is interesting in the context of my argument as it asks patients to judge their pain by visualizing how it, if manifested on their faces, affects their appearances. This scale circumnavigates language to communicate pain. Instead, it asks patients to imagine physical signs of pain, much as Victorian authors explain a character's pain by describing its physical manifestation. Hospitals expect patients to imagine pain in relation to sight for the Visual Analogue Scale as well. The patient must visualize his own pain within the set spectrum provided by this scale rather than imagine his or her own appearance. For both of these popular scales, the patient must decide what the pain looks like: visualizing his own body and imagining how pain affects its appearance or else visualizing his pain on a graph.

Of course, the use of pain scales, even visual, easy-to-understand ones like the Faces Pain Scale, may not succeed in communicating one's level of pain because pain is difficult to explain or quantify and because patients do not always choose to be accurate. Many blogs offer advice on how patients should rate their pain to receive the best possible care from hospitals; one blogger insists patients should never rate their pain at the highest level because the highest level is the most commonly chosen expression of pain, and the simple universality of its use renders it unreliable ("Never Say 10 (How Doctors Interpret the Painscale")). Another blogger insists patients should always rate their pain at the highest possible level to ensure immediate attention ("Survival Guide to Hospital: Hacking the Pain Scale"). The author continues to argue that the

pain scale itself is at fault because it assumes some level of pain is acceptable. The author assures his readers that this assumption is wrong, that patients should refuse to live with any level of pain and thereby should rate pain as highly as possible to receive enough pain-killers to end it.

The writer is correct in noting that hospital policies assume some pain is acceptable. The Stanford Hospital and Clinics system educates nurses to perform a pain assessment when a patient is first admitted and an hour after treatment or pain-killers are given. A level of four out of ten is considered acceptable post-medication: "If the pain score is greater than 4/10 or unacceptable to the patient, the RN will provide other interventions per orders or contact the physician/AHP for further orders" (HealthStream Training"). Nurses and medical practitioners tend to become frustrated with rules such as this one since they know some patients, much like the blogger mentioned, exaggerate their pain. They also must consider serious consequences to giving more drugs to numb pain: they have to worry about drug addicts, and they have to consider whether pain medication might aggravate a condition or even hasten death (Kennedy-Schwartz 49).

Although many hospitals now require patients to assess their own pain, nurses and physicians once solely and still continue to assess pain levels themselves by evaluating a patient's appearance. The Nonverbal Rating Scale allows one to assess pain levels in others. Hospitals frequently regulate that this scale should be used only those who cannot speak (infants, or those that are unconscious or incubated or otherwise unable to articulate their conditions), yet doctors and nurses are accustomed to using this scale and, almost inevitably, think of it when checking a patient and when some patients verbally express their pain. For this scale, medical professionals score their patients a 0, 1, or 2 in five categories. The categories are face,

restlessness, muscle tone, vocalization, and consolability. All the categories but one depend on the patient's appearance. "Consolability" depends instead on how the patient interacts with others, whether he accepts comfort or is unmoved by other's efforts as Magdalen of *No Name* refuses Norah's support. Each potential score for each category has a description to help the medical professional choose which score best suits the patient. For example, the 0 score for the face category is applicable if the patient's "face muscles [are] relaxed," the 1 score if the patient exhibits "facial muscle tension, frown, grimace," and the highest score if the patient has a "frequent to constant frown, clenched jaw" ("Pain Management Protocol"). The scores for each category are added to give the patient a total score out of ten, ten being the worst possible pain.

Studies, however, show that physicians and nurses tend to underestimate patients' distress (Curtis and Morrell 4); they do not always establish relationships that allow them to understand or empathize with another's pain. Liesl A. Curtis and Todd D. Morrell theorize that medical practitioners become desensitized to others' experiences of pain because discomfort is a common, almost universal, complaint in hospitals. Yet these professionals are not alone in underestimating others' experiences; studies show that parents similarly undervalue their children's ratings of their afflictions. One might expect a parent to be more concerned with their children's maladies than professionals, yet "parents tend to believe their children are overreacting to painful stimuli" (4). Curtis and Morrell suggest that parents should be held to a higher standard in understanding their children's feelings and should advocate for their children in the hospital setting: "Without the parents' advocacy for their child's pain, physicians are at an even greater disadvantage when addressing pain control" (4). In other words, Curtis and Morrell find that parents and children do not readily form networks as strong as Mrs. Pryor and Caroline's in *Shirley*. Mrs. Pryor effortlessly understands her daughter's pain. Most parents do

not intuit their children's suffering, and as a result, their children are undertreated. Even those who are physically and emotionally close to a sufferer struggle to understand his pain.

The only method medical professionals can use to form an unbiased estimate of a patient's physical duress is through an examination of vital signs. Just as in Victorian fiction, one must turn to the body for hard evidence of pain rather than the sufferer's verbal expressions of pain. But modern medicine examines a body's workings in addition to its appearance. Pulse, respiratory rate, and blood pressure tend to increase with increased levels of distress. If patients are unable or unwilling to accurately express discomfort, then physicians and nurses must "read" their corporeal signs. Medical advances allow doctors and nurses to find empirical, specific data from their patients' bodies that indicate levels of distress. Modern descriptions of pain tend to rely less on the patient's appearance and more on measurable aspects his physiology. Furthermore, the medical field now views pain as more of a symptom of a bodily issue rather than a feeling. These developments helped instigate a lack of descriptions of pain in medical texts. Curtis and Morrell note that a study performed in 1985 found that, in 25,000 pages of 50 major medical textbooks, only 54 pages were devoted to issues of pain and its management (24).

Pain is, however, regaining popularity in the medical field as a topic worth discussing and researching. But, in spite of the training of hospital personnel, pain assessment scales, and technological advances that complement our understanding of another's distress, pain remains a difficult subject to express. Evidence of discomfort still, however, draws attention to the body and encourages viewers to remember it. People continue to "read" one's appearance and physiology, believing corporeal features will express pain more truly than language. To understand the extent of another's pain, then, one looks to the sufferer's body. Victorian fiction suggests pain is a means of connecting one character to others; characters see, interpret, and

empathize with the sufferer and often provide physical and/or mental support. Characters who face domestic abuse also find support systems, and the portrayals of assault resulted from and helped fuel a widespread concern with violence within the home and desire to protect battered wives and children. Even mutilation that sponsors hidden identities creates supporting relationships in Victorian novels; Esther's scars, caused by her willingness to help those in need, attract the respect and love of others. Isabel's mutilation allows her to reestablish herself in her former home with her children. Victorian authors present pain as physically and emotionally hurtful yet as a means of connecting people. Yet current studies show that parents often do not understand the magnitude of their own children's pain. The need for various tools and training for modern medical professionals to understand pain further suggests that pain is isolating. The sufferer becomes more aware of and, eventually, only aware of his own body as his agony increases. Others, however, remain distanced because they cannot comprehend the sufferer's pain. Victorian literature, then, may be trying to confront the isolating dynamic of pain by emphasizing bodies and the networks between them.

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