THE REPRESENTATION OF MADNESS IN VICTORIAN FICTION

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ABSTRACT

This thesis takes seven key texts which represent some aspect of madness, providing close analyses of the inter-relationship between that representation of madness and other strategies adopted in the text. The novels which are analyzed are: Charles Dickens, Barnaby Rudge (1841), Charlotte Brontë, Jane Eyre (1847), Wilkie Collins, The Woman in White (1860), Mary Braddon, Lady Audley's Secret (1862), Charles Reade, Hard Cash (1863), Sheridan Le Fanu, The Rose and the Key (1871), and Bram Stoker, Dracula (1897). An introductory chapter discusses some of the features of the treatment and conceptualization of insanity that are of particular importance to the fictional texts which are analyzed in the subsequent chapters: the growth of the public lunatic asylum, the concept of 'moral madness', the relationship between madness and gender, and the connection between the social conventions surrounding madness and the conventions of literary form. Two themes are common to all the chapters. One is the dilemma posed by the paradox that madness is both 'otherness' and something to which anyone can succumb: that, despite the concept of madness as alienation, there is only a narrow dividing line between sanity and madness and that this line is easily crossed. The other theme, related to the first, is that of confinement and control. Madness is seen as a threat to the order of society in all these texts and the move towards closure demands the removal of the mad person or a transformation into sanity. In most cases removal is effected through death. The chosen texts are also examined in terms of the moral stance they adopt, to investigate the way in which this is related to issues of insanity. In discussing this aspect it will be seen that a gender differentiation commonly results in women being categorized as 'mad' for behaviour that society regards as bad. A further dimension is added to the thesis in the argument which traces the problems of generic categorization. Madness is seen as a valuable strategy in the techniques of the non-realist novelist, and the texts are read with these categories in mind, but, it is argued, it is the novels' very concern with insanity that leads to a breaking down of barriers, both formal and conceptual.

CONTENTS

ILLUSTRATIONS

PREFACE

During the nineteenth century madness was much discussed and much written about. It was the subject of intense legislative activity and during this period became the focus of the new discipline of psychological medicine. Fictional writing contributed to the debate. The purpose of this thesis is to examine seven key texts from the Victorian period which all explicitly represent aspects of insanity. In analyzing what 'madness' means in these novels and how it is related to the other strategies adopted in the texts, I shall examine them in the light of contemporary discussion and the movement towards the institutionalization of the insane, which is the particular feature of nineteenth-century Britain.

The novels I shall be discussing are: Charles Dickens, Barnaby Rudge (1841), Charlotte Brontë, Jane Eyre (1847), Wilkie Collins, The Woman in White (1860), Mary Braddon, Lady Audley' Secret (1862), Charles Reade, Hard Cash (1863), Sheridan Le Fanu, The Rose and the Key (1871), and Bram Stoker, Dracula (1897). They are united, not only in that madness in one way or another forms an important issue in the text, but also in that although all make claims of realism, none of them belongs to the mainstream of what has been called 'classic realism'. A subsidiary aim of the thesis, therefore, is to trace those features of insanity and its treatment that relate to questions of genre. An introductory chapter discusses some of the features of the treatment and conceptualization of insanity that are of particular importance to the fictional texts which are analyzed in the subsequent chapters.

Every thesis has its limitations and there will be those readers who are disappointed by the lack of more substantial reference to the work of Freud. But a psychoanalytical interpretation of literary texts is not part of this particular project, and Freud's contribution to society's thinking about insanity came too late to be regarded as

contemporary with the novels discussed here. Similarly, although I am aware of the gender implications in the issues raised by my research, it has not been possible to explore them in any detail. This is an omission that could well be remedied by future research.

The loneliness of the long-term research student is a well-known phenomenon. That this has not been my fate is in large measure due to the stimulating *camaraderie* which I have experienced in the English Department of the University of Liverpool. I have much appreciated the forum provided by the Postgraduate/Staff Seminar where I have tried out work-in-progress. I have also benefited in a more general way from the discussions of that group as well as those of the Women's Studies Seminar. Particular thanks are due to two friends, Brean Hammond and Grahame Smith, who have read and commented on my work from time to time, and who also provide most generous support and encouragement. But it is to my supervisor, Dr.David Seed, that I owe the greatest debt of gratitude. Our discussions never failed to provoke new thoughts and his wise guidance has propelled me into finishing this thesis without losing my wits. I should also like to acknowledge the help of the librarians at the Sidney Jones Library. Finally, my thanks to my husband, Arthur, and our children, who must often have wondered what I was up to, but never asked me to stop.

CHAPTER 1

MADNESS AND REFORM?: THE TREATMENT OF INSANITY IN VICTORIAN SOCIETY AND THE LITERARY TEXT

'I would first remark, that a lunatic asylum is intended to be not merely a place of security but a place of cure; and that every case of insanity is curable or improvable up to a certain point'. These words come at the opening of John Conolly's volume on The Construction and Government of Lunatic Asylums, which was published in 1847, in the wake of the important Lunatics Act of 1845 obliging the local authorities to build county asylums.[1] Writing with the optimism of one who felt himself to be a leading activist in reforming the treatment of lunacy, Conolly expressed what many others felt. As the fuller discussion of his status and work in chapter 6 will indicate, he was not an uncontroversial figure, but his faith in the public asylum and in the possibility of cure were typical of mid-Victorian practitioners. This faith has not been shared by later twentieth century commentators, nor was it endorsed by nineteenth century sufferers. The history of madness in the nineteenth century is obviously too vast a subject to be comprehensively treated in this introductory chapter and therefore I have focused on issues of particular pertinence to the discussion of fictional texts that is the main concern of this thesis, and the lunatic asylum itself, the very building, looms large in most of the novels I analyze. As succeeding chapters will indicate, however, there was a great difference between the blatantly institutional aspect of the public asylums and the pretence of being an ordinary country house that was adopted by many private madhouses. Jane Eyre lacks such an institution, but the country house has in fact *become* the asylum in this novel. The first section of the present chapter, accordingly, will look at the history of asylums in Britain. An important feature of

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[1]John Conolly, The Construction and Government of Lunatic Asylums and Hospitals for the Insane (London, 1968), p.1.

discussions of madness in the Victorian period was their involvement with questions of morality. Since this is also characteristic of contemporary fictional writings, a preliminary investigation of the association of madness with morality will form the subject of the second section. This will be followed by a brief consideration of the vexed relationship between gender and madness. Two volumes offer ideas which are of particular relevance here, The Madwoman in the Attic by Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, and The Female Malady by Elaine Showalter; Showalter's thesis will be outlined in the third section of this introduction, whilst Gilbert and Gubar's more specifically literary approach will be discussed in the chapter on Jane Eyre.[2] A final section discusses the relationship between the social conventions regarding madness and the literary conventions lying behind the texts whose analysis forms the main part of this thesis.

THE GROWTH OF THE ASYLUM

Michel Foucault called the eighteenth century the period of 'the great confinement', but other historians, notably Roy Porter and Andrew Scull, have disputed the applicability of this concept to the analysis of the British experience.[3] In Mind-Forg'd Manacles, a pragmatic history of madness, Porter documents the variety of ways in which madness was tackled before the mandatory provision of public asylums in 1845. If there was an increase in the number of private asylums - and there was - this was the result, he maintains, of entrepreneurial drive rather than the

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[2]Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, The Madwoman in the Attic. The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Imagination (London, 1979); Elaine Showalter, The Female Malady. Women, Madness and English Culture, 1830-1980 (London, 1987).
[3]Michel Foucault, Madness and Civilization. A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason, translated by Richard Howard (London, 1967). The continuing debate is discussed by Colin Howell in a review article, 'Asylums, Psychiatry and the History of Madness', Queen's Quarterly, 93 (1986), 19-24.

workings of a *system*.[4] Scull's main concern is to question the 'naïve Whiggish view of history as progress', which sees the changes operating in the treatment of lunacy during this period as 'reform'.[5] Like Porter he is concerned to distinguish English from continental experience, stressing the variety of provision in the eighteenth century. A traditional line of argument, advanced, for instance, by David Mechanic, represents the increasing concern regarding provision for the insane and its gradual institutionalization as part of the social spin-off from urbanization with the breakdown of traditional patterns of caring, increased population, greater visibility of social problems and the threat to social control.[6] Scull counters this with what seems to be a convincing alternative. The campaign for institutional provision began early in the nineteenth century *before* England could reasonably be called an urbanized country, and the provision stimulated by this act was not associated with urban communities. Rather, he proposes, the interest of the English ruling ıss in institutional provision for the problem sector of the community was associated with structural reformations caused by the transition from a paternalistic order to a fully capitalist social system. Additionally, the proportion of the population in receipt of relief was rising (outdoor relief was not abolished till 1834), so it is not surprising if collecting paupers of whatever kind into receptacles where conditions would discourage all but the most severely needy from applying and where the inmates could be trained in the 'rigours of discipline demanded by a wage labour system' became a preferable alternative to 'outdoor relief', which was less easily tied to social control.[7] Whilst not denying the altruism of many of the people concerned, he is severely critical, then, of the idea that the huge Victorian county asylums were the result of 'humanitarian concern for one's

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[4]Roy Porter, Mind-Forg'd Manacles. A History of Madness in England from the Restoration to the Regency (Harmondsworth, 1990).
[5]Andrew T.Scull, Museums of Madness. The Social Organization of Insanity in Nineteenth-Century England (Harmondsworth, 1982), p.14.
[6]David Mechanic, Mental Health and Social Policy (London, 1969). Quoted in Museums of Madness, p.26.
[7]Scull, Museums of Madness, p.35.

fellow citizens, and the advances of science and human understanding'.[8]

Because of the horrors uncovered by early nineteenth century investigators, such as the notorious case of William Norris, confined in Bethlem and immobilized in an iron cage; because of the outrage excited by these discoveries, and because of the welter of government legislation, it is easy to characterize the Victorian period as one of increased concern for the welfare of the insane. This is disputed on two grounds: in the first place the lack of humanitarian concern in the eighteenth century has not gone unquestioned, and in the second place the humanitarianism of the nineteenth century has, as I have said above, also been doubted. The fact remains, however, that the nineteenth century was indeed one of governmental involvement in the management of madness and it is this that I propose to chart briefly before turning to certain aspects of the discourse relating to madness.

Provision for the insane in Britain in the eighteenth century was unsystematic. In fact many lunatics found themselves not so much provided for as dumped in workhouses, prisons, or general hospitals. Private madhouses, of various sizes and offering a range of facilities, existed for those who could pay, and some increased their profitability by taking in paupers on behalf of the parish. Bethlem, originally a general hospital but since 1377 used solely for lunatics, was the first of the charitable institutions to cater specifically for the insane. In 1713, the Bethel Hospital was built in Norwich and in 1728 wards for chronic lunatics were established at Guy's Hospital. St.Luke's was built in 1751, Newcastle Lunatic Hospital in 1764, Manchester Lunatic Hospital in 1766, then lunatic hospitals in York, Liverpool, Leicester and Exeter.[9] The York Retreat opened its doors in 1796. By the second half of the eighteenth century there was already concern that the practice of confining the insane was leading to abuse, in that some people were being put away less because they were mad than because relatives stood to gain by their incarceration. Defoe, for instance, comments

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[8]Scull, Museums of Madness, p.14.

[9]It is perhaps worth commenting that the word 'hospital' had at this time similar connotations to the word 'asylum' which became the preferred alternative as a designation of the institutions for the insane in the nineteenth century.

on the situation in Augusta Triumphans (1728) and Mary Wollstonecraft, in a fictional narrative, The Wrongs of Woman:or, Maria (1798), explores the situation of a woman committed to a madhouse for the sake of her money. Despite a range of regulatory legislation, much of it designed to protect the rights of individuals, wrongful confinement remained a tender issue and indeed, as I shall be arguing in later chapters, became something of a national paranoia. The Woman in White, Hard Cash, The Rose and the Key and, arguably, Lady Audley's Secret are all concerned with the problem of confinement for expediency rather than therapy.

It was the fear of such abuse of the system, rather than concern at the conditions under which inmates were kept, that, according to Kathleen Jones, led to the 1774 Act for Regulating Private Madhouses.[10] But the 'madness' of George III, which made genuine madness a public and political issue, was another important factor in bringing insanity into the arena of general discussion and common concern.[11] His death was in fact preceded by a select Committee, which, investigating the plight of pauper and criminal lunatics, recommended the building of county asylums. It would be simplistic to suggest that the king's madness was the cause of legislative involvement in the plight of these lowlier members of society; nevertheless it can probably be considered a contributory factor to the changes in the way madness was conceptualized, which I shall be discussing in the next sections.

The recommendations of the Committee were implemented in the Act of 1808. This was, however, only a permissive act and the response was, not surprizingly, less than enthusiastic; in the next twenty years only nine counties responded. During the first half of the nineteenth century, the provisions for the care, if not the cure, of the insane were, accordingly, various. Despite the rationalizing legislation of 1828 and 1832, there still remained four different types of institution, answering to different

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[10]Kathleen Jones, Lunacy, Law and Conscience 1744-1845, (London, 1955).
[11]The question of George III's illness is thoroughly explored in Ida Macalpine and Richard Hunter, George III and the Mad Business (London, 1969). Their contention is that the King was suffering from a disease called porphyria, which produced symptoms that could easily be mistaken for insanity.

authorities and administered in different ways. Private madhouses, long established in all their variety, were the responsibility of the Lord Chancellor's Office; workhouses, confining an estimated population of 9,000 lunatics in 1828, were answerable to the Poor Law Commissioners; the new county asylums were under the jurisdiction of the Home Office; and Bethlem, a receptacle for the mad for over four hundred years already, was still exempt from all legal supervision.[12] In addition, single lunatics might be kept at their own or other people's homes. The number of county asylums increased in the next twelve years and so did the size of their populations, regardless of medical recommendations for moderately-sized institutions and regardless also, very often, of the buildings' actual accomodation capacity. Hanwell, made famous by John Conolly, whom I have already quoted, illustrates the compromise of ideal to expediency. This asylum was built by Middlesex County Council in 1831 to house 500 inmates, which was already 200 more than had originally been planned for. By 1838, William Ellis, the superintendent, was reporting a population of 615 and new building was required, so that by 1844 the asylum had room for 1,000 lunatics and did in fact contain almost that number.[13]

If the local authorities were reluctant to make specialist provision for the apparently increasing insane population, the commercial sector was more willing to oblige. The number of private madhouses grew from forty-five in 1807 to 139 in 1844.[14] Although some institutions were well-run on humanitarian principles, private investigators, such as Godfrey Higgins, Edward Wakefield and Henry Alexander, brought before the public horrifying stories of the unsanitary conditions and cruel treatment lunatics were subjected to in both private and county receptacles.[15] The

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[12]In addition to the work of Porter and Scull already mentioned, my account of the legislation concerning madness is heavily indebted to Kathleen Jones and William Llewellyn Parry-Jones, The Trade in Lunacy. A Study of Private Madhouses in England in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries (London, 1972).

[13]See Scull, Museums of Madness, pp.117, 249.

[14]Scull, Museums of Madness, p.50.

[15]A contemporary account of conditions in the asylums and of the efforts to improve them can be found in 'Insanity and Madhouses', Quarterly Review, 15 (1816), 388-417. Kathleen Jones and Andrew Scull look back from their, rather different, twentieth

Select Committees of 1815-16 published evidence that made sensational reading, but it did not lead to any immediate legislative steps, partly because of the opposition of the medical profession.[16] However, another Select Committee appointed in 1827 to inquire into conditions in private madhouses and more or less confining its attention to Warburton's White House at Bethnal Green , exposed the atrocious conditions and treatment of pauper lunatics there, which were taken as exemplary of the state of things in many madhouses. The legislation following this report went part of the way towards establishing a system of inspection and control, but its measures were restricted to metropolitan establishments; the regulation of provincial madhouses continued to be in the hands of magistrates. The County Asylums Act of the same year did require magistrates to send annual returns of admissions, discharges, and deaths to the Home Office, and the Secretary of State was empowered to send a visitor to any county asylum, but the visitor had no power to intervene in asylum administration.

Throughout the following decade, madness remained a live issue, well aired in publications, some of which asserted the benefits to be derived from treatment in a properly administered asylum, whilst others gave evidence of atrocities in unregulated asylums and of wrongful confinement. W.A.F.Browne's What Asylums Were, Are And Ought to Be, which I shall be discussing in more detail later in this chapter, presents possibly the most idealistic vision of the asylum's possibilities; John Perceval gives the obverse in the Narrative of his personal experiences.[17] As Chapter 6 will show, this double aspect to the question of confinement extends into the middle of the nineteenth century and is particularly pertinent to the discussion of Hard Cash. Finally, in 1842, the Metropolitan Commissioners, led by Lord Ashley, had their

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century perspectives.

[16]The medical profession's resistance to reform is discussed by Scull, pp.145-148.

[17]W.A.F.Browne, What Asylums Were, Are, And Ought To Be (Edinburgh, 1837). John T.Perceval, A Narrative of the Treatment Received by a Gentleman, During a State of Mental Derangement (1838/40), quoted in Roy Porter, The Faber Book of Madness (London, 1991). Porter also discusses Perceval's case in A Social History of Madness. Stories of the Insane (London,1987), pp.169-188.

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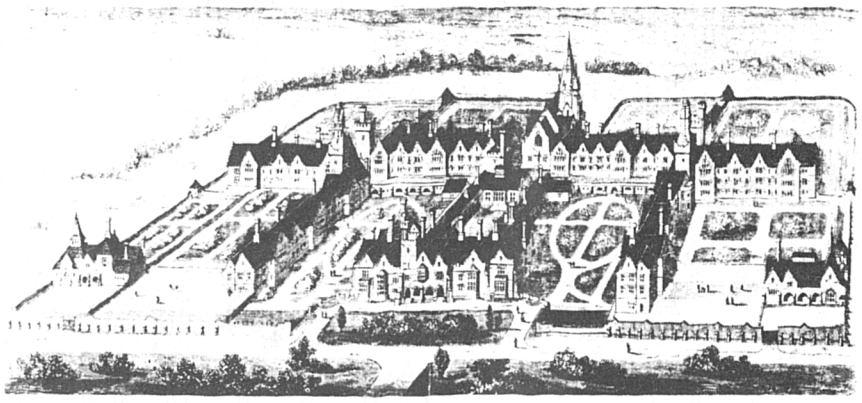

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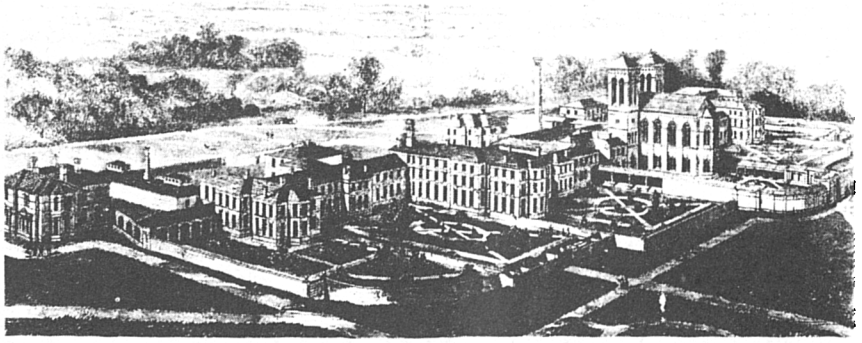

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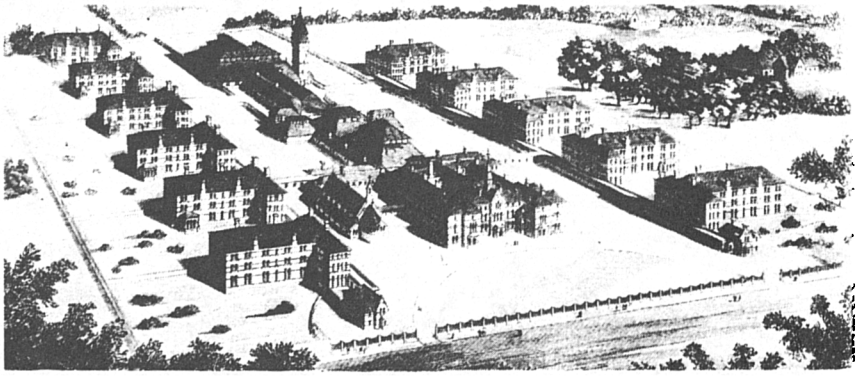

1, 2 The Essex County Asylum at Brentwood and the City and County Asylum at Hereford. Asylum architects endeavoured to make the running of each institution as self-contained as possible. Their designs commonly made provision for such things as a gasworks, a farm, a chapel for the patients (note its prominence in the examples shown), a mortuary, a graveyard, a laundry, housing for staff on the grounds. Asylums were thus equipped to provide for almost all the wants of their inhabitants, from admission to the grave.

3. General view of the design for the Metropolitan asylums for chronic lunatics at Caterham & Leavesden.

powers extended to enable them to survey conditions in madhouses and asylums throughout the country. Their report recommended a powerful national inspectorate on a permanent basis and more public asylums. These recommendations, which had been the aim of reformists for most of the century, were finally accepted and in 1845 two Lunatics Acts made the provision of county asylums compulsory and appointed Lunacy Commissioners to inspect, license and report on all institutions for the confinement of lunatics. By 1890 there were sixty-six such asylums, but the growth of public arrangements did not entail the disappearance of the private madhouse.[18] County provision was primarily for pauper lunatics, and, although some asylums also had private wings, there was still room for entrepreneurial initiative; John Conolly was not the only asylum superintendent to make extra income by establishing a private madhouse of his own. Until well into the twentieth century, then, it was official opinion that the best place for a mad person was inside a private madhouse or county asylum, and huge numbers of people did, in fact, undergo such confinement.[19] As numbers grew, the ideals of treatment in the asylum became impossible to sustain, so that their function became custodial rather than curative, protecting society from those individuals who could not only not contribute to the running of society, but who had become a threat to, or a drain on the resources of those who could at least keep themselves afloat. The barracks-like buildings of the county asylums reflected the need to confine large numbers as cheaply as possible and the analogy with prison was soon spotted, as the next chapter will show, by Dickens.

MADNESS AND MORALITY

In What Asylums Were, Are, And Ought to Be, published in 1837, Dr.W.A.F.Browne

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[18]Scull gives figures for the number and average size of asylums, Museums of Madness, p.198.
[19]See Scull, Museums of Madness, p.232.

ends by depicting a utopian vision of life in an asylum which is worth quoting at length.

> Conceive a spacious building resembling the palace of a peer, airy, and elevated, and elegant, surrounded by extensive and swelling grounds and gardens. The interior is fitted up with galleries, and workshops, and music-rooms. The sun and the air are allowed to enter at every window, the view of the shrubberies and fields, and groups of labourers, is unobstructed by shutters or bars; all is clean, quiet, and attractive. The inmates all seem to be actuated by the common impulse of enjoyment, all are busy, and delighted by being so. The house and all around appears a hive of industry. When you pass the lodge, it is as if you had entered the precincts of some vast emporium of manufacture; labour is divided, so that it may be easy and well performed, and so apportioned, that it may suit the tastes and powers of each labourer. You meet the gardener, the common agriculturist, the mower, the weeder, all intent on their several occupations, and loud in their merriment. The flowers are tended, and trained, and watered by one, the humbler task of preparing the vegetables for table, is committed to another. Some of the inhabitants act as domestic servants, some as artizans, some rise to the rank of overseers. The bakehouse, the laundry, the kitchen, are all well supplied with indefatigable workers. In one part of the edifice are companies of straw-plaiters, basker-makers, knitters, spinners, among the women; in another, weavers, tailors, saddlers, and shoemakers, among the men. For those who are ignorant of these gentle crafts, but are strong and steady, there are loads to carry, water to draw, wood to cut, and for those who are both ignorant and weakly, there is oakum to tease and yarn to wind. The curious thing is that all are anxious to be engaged, toil incessantly, and in general without any other recompense than being kept from disagreeable thoughts and the pains of illness. They literally work in order to please themselves, and having once experienced the possibility of doing this, and of earning peace, self-applause, and the approbation of all around, sound sleep, and it may be some small remuneration, a difficulty is found in restraining their eagerness, and moderating their exertions. There is in this community no compulsion, no chains, no whips, no corporal chastisement, simply because these are proved to be less effectual means of carrying any point than persuasion, emulation, and the desire of obtaining gratification. But there are gradations of employment. You may visit rooms where there are ladies reading, or at the harp or piano, or flowering muslin, or engaged in some of those thousand ornamental productions in which female taste and ingenuity are displayed. You will encounter them going to church or to market, or returning from walking, riding, and driving in the country. You will see them ministering at the bedside of some sick companion. Another wing contains those gentlemen who can engage in intellectual pursuits, or in the amusements and accomplishments of the station to which they belong. The billiard-room will, in all probability, present an animated scene. Adjoining apartments are used as news-rooms, furnished

> chastely, but beautifully, and looking down upon such fair and fertile scenes as harmonize with the tranquillity which reigns within, and tend to conjure up images of beauty and serenity in the mind which are akin to happiness. But these persons have pursuits, their time is not wholly occupied in the agreeable trifling of conning a debate, or gaining so many points. One acts as an amanuensis, another is engaged in landscape painting, a third devolves to himself a course of historical reading, and submits to examination on the subject of his studies, a fourth seeks consolation from binding the books which he does not read. In short, all are so busy as to overlook, or all are so contented as to forget their misery.
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> Such is a faithful picture of what may be seen in many institutions, and of what might be seen in all, were asylums conducted as they ought to be.[20]

Instead of the whips, chains, darkness and filth associated with Bedlam and eighteenth century disgust at the animality of madness, Browne envisages sun and air, gardens and workshops, busyness and contentment. The inmates are denizens of an idealized community of spontaneous cooperation, where productivity is achieved without compulsion and there is no threat to the social order. Roy Porter in particular has done much to disabuse twentieth century readers of the notion that the eighteenth century offered an unremittingly bleak environment for madness, and that there is a clear divide between eighteenth century and nineteenth century thinking and practice. Nevertheless the dominant image of the asylum in the age of reason was that of Bedlam and in general it stood as a warning, as in Hogarth's Rake's Progress or as a criticism of society, as in Swift's Tale of a Tub. Browne, on the other hand, associates the asylum with the ideal; it presents an ideal picture not only of life in an asylum, but of life in society. The architecture and surroundings are those of a 'palace', which is also a 'vast emporium of manufacture', where the division of labour accommodates individual interest as well as ability. But it is a labouring world governed by middle class values, giving the tending of flowers higher status than the preparation of vegetables for the table and whilst men and women 'toil incessantly' for no other recompense than 'being kept from disagreeable thoughts and the pains of illness', ladies

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[20]Browne, pp.229-30.

and gentlemen engage in the familiar occupations of the leisured classes: music, reading, painting, walking, riding, sick-visiting (for the ladies) and billiards (for the gentlemen). The occupations for both classes are carefully gendered in conventional ways and the insistence on work, which brings its own reward, on order, and on tranquillity anticipates the dominant ideology of the Victorian period, based on the 'gospel of work' and showing faith in the social and natural order.

It is noteworthy that there is no mention in this vision of treatment, but in fact for Browne treatment meant 'moral treatment' and that, for him, meant 'kindness and occupation'. His understanding of insanity was, as for so many doctors, a somatic one, based on the connection of mind and brain, postulating 'organic change' to the brain involving 'destruction or injury of the nervous structure'. His faith in moral treatment, then, is justified on empirical grounds - it produces cures - rather than by means of aetiology. Moral treatment was much discussed in the nineteenth century and, even when the actual term is absent, its connotations can often be detected, as, for instance, in The Woman in White. Scull discusses in some detail the problems the efficacy such treatment relative to that of physical treatments posed for the medical profession in its attempt to monopolize the care of madness.[21] Moral treatment to twentieth century ears has the ring of nineteenth century earnestness and of judgemental attitudes to madness that the antipsychiatric movement of the 1960s, associated, for instance, with the names of R.D.Laing and Thomas Szasz, has taught us to treat with suspicion. In fact it was and has been conceived as a shift from basically punitive ways of coping with madness to a more humanitarian approach. Instead of the chains, purges, vomiting, leeches, shower baths and opium that had been considered appropriate during the age of enlightenment, Tuke at the York Retreat and Pinel at Bicêtre and Salpêtrière, operating from rather different starting points, but sharing a belief in the need to treat symptoms rather than search for causes, recommended firmness,

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[21]'Moral management' was the earlier term, being replaced by 'moral treatment' in the early years of the ninteenth century. See Alexander Walk, 'Some Aspects of the "Moral Treatment" of the Insane up to1854', The Journal of Mental Science, 100 (1954), 807-37.

kindness, fresh air and exercise, discussion and occupation. Neither, however, entirely abolished the use of physical restraint.

Freeing the insane from their chains was for Pinel a symbolic act given the climate of liberation fostered by the French Revolution. Acutely aware of his revolutionary surroundings, he saw madness as caused by disappointed or ungovernable ambition and religious fanaticism, as well as by the revolution itself. He writes in a tone whose humanitarianism contrasts strikingly with the tracts of earlier writers; nevertheless his belief in his own authority is manifest and, given the fundamental importance of observation in his epistemology, there is inevitably a conceptualization of the mad as specimens. Pinel expressed his ideas in A Treatise on Insanity (1801) that appeared in an English translation by D.D.Davis in 1806. His work is referred to frequently by writers throughout the century, giving him an almost mythic status. Of equal eminence was the reformist approach of William Tuke, which, unlike the secularist stance of Pinel, was informed by religious tenets. The Retreat was founded in response to what were felt to be unsuitable conditions at York Asylum. This asylum was indeed spectacularly exposed in the Report of 1815-16, but in 1792 it was the fate of a Quaker woman that was in question and the matter remained for the time being simply one of the Quaker mad being better cared for by their own kind. Quaker beliefs, like those of the revolutionaries, rested on the assumption of the equality of mankind, with modifications, however, that were almost inescapable in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century; the Retreat, for instance, offered higher quality accomodation to 'higher' class inmates. And informing Samuel Tuke's description of how things were done there, for all the concern and compassion he projects, is an understanding of the mad as intrinsically different, possessed of an 'opposite' state of mind.[22]

Under both regimes, then, madness meant otherness, and the system of moral

[22]Samuel Tuke, grandson of William, the founder of the Retreat, gave the history of the foundation and a comprehensive survey of the conditions at the asylum, the treatment it offered and the degree to which it was able to help patients in his Description of the Retreat (York, 1813).

treatment was intended to restore sufferers to the community of mankind. It is significant in this context that the term 'alienist' was coined around the middle of the nineteenth century as an alternative to the older term, 'mad-doctor', and the insane were conceived as being alienated, not simply from ordinary life, but from their 'right' minds. Insanity, as a form of alienation, was very much the theme of the writings of Henry Maudsley, whose contribution to the history of insanity will be examined later in this chapter and can also be seen as a fruitful metaphor in Victorian fiction. Of the texts to be examined in this thesis it is perhaps most obvious in Jane Eyre and Dracula, though it lurks in the margins of all of them.

In the Victorian period the loss of reason no longer entailed demotion to animal status and the surrender of rights to humane treatment, but the reconditioning process that was moral treatment implied inhumanity of a psychological complexion. This has been spelt out most famously by Foucault. Pinel, he says, used three main methods in the attempt to reconstitute a sense of ethical standards in the insane: silence, recognition by mirror and perpetual judgement. The silence is that of others; confronted by a mad *hubris* they refuse all acknowledgement, denying the madman even the confirmation of persecution. As Foucault points out this has a paradoxical meaning for liberation: the madman is delivered from his chains, but is now chained in silence. Recognition by mirror he sees too as another sort of confinement. Having admitted to the absurdity of the mad pretensions of others, the madman is brought to a recognition of those same pretensions in himself; no longer can he enjoy 'solitary exaltation', for he is imprisoned 'in an infinitely self-referring observation'.[23] These are but two particular ways in which, as Foucault analyzes Pinel's regime, the asylum was made into a place of perpetual judgement. It is not

> a free realm of observational diagnosis, and therapeutics; it is a juridical space where one is accused, judged, and condemned, and from which one is never released except by the version of this trial in psychological depth - that is, by remorse. Madness will be punished in the asylum, even if it is innocent outside of it. For a long time to come, and until

[23]Foucault, p.265.

our own day at least, it is imprisoned in a moral world.[24]

This is strong language and clearly spells out the way in which moral treatment was moral in the ethical sense, but it is important, I think, to be clear that there had been a shift in ground in two ways since the beginning of the century. Apart from the reservation (that is not always acknowledged) that practice did not necessarily follow theory, the practice that was recommended did surely promise more benevolent care for the insane. But this is difficult territory and it is impossible for someone who has not experienced both to say with certainty that the teasing, however well-intentioned, of delusions and hallucinations, and the enforced socialization was preferable to the neglect and physical hardships suffered under the *ancien régime*. The change of approach, though, implied a change in the conceptualization of madness. If the loss of reason had previously consigned the mad to mere animality, the expectation of moral sense now constituted the mad as autonomous moral agents; it allowed for free traffic as it were, between sanity and insanity. This might have been accompanied by a recuperation of the medieval carnivalesque in madness, but in fact the threat to law and order was too real to permit a sense of play, and the consequence was a fear that madness was lurking round the corner ready to swamp any unwary citizen. One English doctor, Andrew Wynter, writing in 1875, gave his volume the significant title, The Borderlands of Insanity.[25] In it he refers to the fine line between sanity and insanity and the many inhabitants of the border area, where extreme vigilance was needed if they were not to go over to the other side. A similar awareness is apparent in the texts I shall be examining in the following chapters.

It might seem that the benevolent regime operated by the Tukes at the Retreat, with its emphasis on the community of the 'family' offered a better chance of reducing the *threat* of madness and of removing the burden of blame, but Foucault is as critical of the Tukes as he is of Pinel. The rigorous Quakerism of their approach, he maintains, merely shifted guilt from the fact of being mad to the interiority of the

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[24]Foucault, p.269.

[25]Andrew Wynter, The Borderlands of Insanity (London, 1875).

disease; the madman must now assume responsibility for that within him that is likely to disturb morality and society. His confinement is effected through a system of rewards and punishments, a conditioning process that, in the end, recognizes only the outer face of madness: 'It is judged only by its acts; it is not accused of intentions, nor are its secrets to be fathomed. Madness is responsible only for that part of itself which is visible. All the rest is reduced to silence. Madness no longer exists except as *seen*'.[26] Within the asylum the madman is confronted with authority rather than repression; the community imitates the patriarchal, bourgeois family, with the mad instituted as children. In Samuel Tuke's words : 'The principle of fear, which is rarely decreased by insanity, is considered as of great importance in the management of the patients. But it is not allowed to be excited, beyond that degree which naturally arises from the necessary regulations of the family'.[27] Here madness is domesticated.

Andrew Scull in his article, 'The Domestication of Madness', distinguishes two senses of 'domestic', one defining the opposite of wild or untamed, the other the opposite of public.[28] He re-examines the changing concepts of madness from the end of the eighteenth century to the beginning of the nineteenth century in terms of the metaphor of domestication. It is, again, the transition from 'efforts to tame the wildly asocial to attempts to transform the company of the deranged into at least a facsimile of bourgeois family life' that is being commented on.[29] But, I would suggest, it is still the outer forms of behaviour that are prioritized and in this, as in the continued conceptualization of the mad as 'other', there is a continuity with the past. Nevertheless, Scull is surely right to focus on the 'domestication' of madness as a salient characteristic of Victorian ways of handling lunacy. The family and home were viewed with veneration in this period, despite glaring instances of their failure to

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[26]Foucault, p.250.
[27]Tuke, p.141. Alexander Walk, in the article previously referred to, maintains that Samuel Tuke, when he wrote the Description, understated the part played by fear in actual practice at the Retreat.
[28]Andrew Scull, 'The Domestication of Madness', Medical History, 27 (1983), 233-48.
[29]'The Domestication of Madness', p.233.

provide comfort, safety and support. Freud's essay on 'The Uncanny', however, draws attention to the ambiguity that is inseparable from the concept of home, and if medical writers were anxious to represent the asylum as a 'home', the fictional writers whose work I discuss give an alarming picture of home as not simply harbouring but fostering madness.

The head of the 'family', the superintendent of the British asylum or madhouse, was not necessarily, as I have already indicated, medically trained, since the appropriation of madness as a medical speciality only really gained ground after 1845. Nevertheless, Foucault's comments on the 'medical personage' are relevant, since the increased status of the profession can, in his analysis, be seen as having more to do with moral authority than with medical expertise. Because, it was felt, the lunatic had lost the power of moral judgement and was constituted as a child, the superintendent stood in loco parentis. As Michael J.Clark points out in his article on the psychological approaches in late nineteenth century psychiatry, this relationship still obtained after the lunatic had been redefined as a patient in the supposedly morally neutral terrain of disease.[30] It was particularly noticeable in the handling of hysteria, where so many sufferers were women, and in that area, as in every other, relied upon the virtual silencing of the patient. This is a subject I shall return to in the next section.

The term 'moral' in the context of nineteenth century psychiatry can be seen, then, as embodying two meanings: psychological, mental, or emotional, as opposed to physical, on the one hand; and ethical, on the other hand, and the relationship between these two meanings is extremely complex.[31] Clinical writers in the early years of the

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[30]Michael J.Clark, 'The Rejection of Psychological Approaches to Mental Disorder in Late Nineteenth Century British Psychiatry', in Madhouses, Mad-Doctors, and Madmen. The Social History of Psychiatry in the Victorian Era, edited by Andrew Scull (London, 1981), pp.271-312.

[31]The question of moral treatment has been much discussed. In addition to the article by Alexander Walk already referred to, there is a useful chapter by Andrew Scull, 'Moral Treatment Reconsidered: Some Sociological Comments on an Episode in the History of British Psychiatry', in Madhouses, Mad-Doctors and Madmen, pp.105-18, and a sophisticated discussion by Jenny Bourne Taylor, In the Secret Theatre of Home. Wilkie Collins, Sensation Narrative, and Nineteenth-Century Psychiatry (London, 1988).

nineteenth century frequently adopted a division between moral and physical causation in their nosology of mental diseases. Moral causes had to do with the passions, which could be excited by unrequited love, domestic troubles, and grief, as well as economic hardship; madness lay in excessive response, in fact, to the trials of life. But the notion of excess already involved an appeal to normative standards and thus undermines any idea of diagnosis as a straightforward assessment of facts. The physical causes listed by early nineteenth century writers might encompass disease to the brain, but would also include drink, fever, masturbation, injury to the head and even over-study. Moral causes, therefore, did not cover all the behaviour that might have been registered as ethically suspect, but they do seem to incorporate eighteenth century ideas about the need for passion to be regulated by reason. Instead of a simple two-fold division of causes, Alexander Morison adopts a more structured analysis, distinguishing, first between predisposing or hereditary causes and occasional or exciting causes, the latter being either physical or moral.[32] This way of thinking, or some version of it, seems to have persisted even up to the present day and can be detected in several of the novels I examine, in particular, Jane Eyre and Lady Audley's Secret.

Classification and the link between madness and morality became still more complex with the introduction of the concept of 'moral insanity'. James Prichard is commonly credited as being, and indeed was concerned to establish himself as the inventor of the term 'moral insanity' and with popularizing it in his influential Treatise on Insanity (1835).[33] In fact the term is also used by Thomas Mayo in 1834. Mayo distinguishes moral insanity from intellectual insanity, though both types of insanity lack the conflict which the sane experience by having standards of judgement: 'Many a

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[32]Alexander Morison, Outlines of Lectures on Mental Diseases (Edinburgh, 1825).
[33]The concept of moral insanity is discussed by Eric T.Carlson and Norman Dain, 'The Meaning of Moral Insanity', Bulletin of the History of Medicine, 26 (1962), 130-40; Vieda Skultans, Madness and Morals (London, 1975); Jenny Bourne Taylor, In the Secret Theatre of Home. Hunter and Macalpine give a brief discussion of the controversy surrounding the category in Three Hundred Years of Psychiatry 1535-1860. A History Presented in Selected English Texts (London, 1963), pp.837-8.

sane person indeed, may envy the contented and self-satisfied lunatic'.[34] In thus explicitly linking madness and morality, Mayo recognizes the existence in the human mind of a 'moral sense' analogous to the 'intellectual sense'; it is not the case that insanity simply 'unseats the moral principle'.[35] Prichard's nosology recognized four types of insanity, three of which constituted 'intellectual insanity', whilst the fourth was designated 'moral insanity', which was defined as 'a morbid perversion of the feelings, affections, inclinations, temper, habits, moral dispositions, and natural impulses, without any remarkable disorder or defect of the intellect or knowing and reasoning faculties, and particularly without any insane illusion or hallucination'.[36]

The concept of moral insanity has particular relevance for the discussion of Jane Eyre, but by the middle of the century it was of less concern, as the medical profession turned its attention to the physical aetiology of insanity that had developed from the interest in phrenology. By this time, though, by removing from diagnosis the defining necessity of delusion or hallucinations, the idea of moral insanity, had already opened up for *medical* inspection a range of behaviour that would previously have been subject to official or unofficial *moral* judgement only. Once again the result was a blurring of the boundaries between diagnosis and judgement, and in Lady Audley's Secret we can see a complex interplay of the two. But in any case the concept of diagnosis implies judgement since it involves the measuring of an individual's physical or mental state against some standard of health or normality. Where madness was concerned opinion and practice fluctuated between appeal to a standard conceived in the abstract, some sort of ideal state, and a standard established through common patterns of behaviour, or an amalgam of these two things. But it was also recognized by some writers that the question of aberrancy concerned only the comparison of an individual's behaviour and emotional state with what it had been previously. Once it

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[34]Thomas Mayo, An Essay on the relation of the theory of morals to insanity (London, 1834), p.15.
[35]Mayo, p.22.
[36]James Cowles Prichard, A Treatise on Insanity and Other Disorders Affecting the Mind (London, 1835)

had been accepted by the medical profession, enshrined in law and acknowledged by the public at large that confinement in an institution of one kind or another was the appropriate way of handling madness, the question of diagnosis became crucial and imaginative literature was not slow in exposing its juridical nature and the difficulties and ambiguities this involved. Both Hard Cash and The Rose and the Key are crucially involved with the problems of diagnosing insanity and the correlative problem of defining sanity.

As the next chapter will show, the idea of madness being imprinted on the body, manifest in physiognomy or posture, was widely accepted. That 'there is an art to find the mind's construction in the face' is a tradition going back, as Jenny Bourne Taylor points out in her excellent summary, to Aristotle. Sander Gilman's fascinating survey of the visual representations of madness from the middle ages to the end of the nineteenth century traces the shifts in such perceptions and, as a particular example of the thesis aired by Ernst Gombrich in Art and Illusion, the degree to which they were influenced by traditional conventions.[37] But, whereas physiognomy conceived of the face and body as the outward expression of internal processes, phrenology, interested in cranial formation, regarded the shape of the skull as indicative of the particular organs it contained. Roger Cooter has isolated four key tenets in phrenology: the brain was seen as the organ of the mind; the brain was a congeries of organs; each cerebral part corresponded to a particular moral or intellectual quality; since the cranium was ossified over the shape of the brain its shape could be used to determine the state of the internal parts.[38] These ideas, linked to the physiognomic studies of Lavater, whose work will be examined in more detail in chapter 2, and originating in the observations of Franz Joseph Gall, were popularized in England by J.G.Spurzheim and George Combe, and, as Cooter explains, were used to give moral therapy scientific status. Since mental health, it was thought, depended on the equal development of all the

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[37]Sander Gilman, Seeing the Insane (New York, 1982); Ernst Gombrich, Art and Illusion (Oxford, 1959).

[38]Roger Cooter, 'Phrenology and British Alienists, ca.1825-45', in Madhouses, Mad-Doctors, and Madmen, pp.58-104.

organs of the brain, the treatment for those who showed over- or under-development of one particular faculty was precisely along the lines of contemporary morality: sobriety, chastity, self-improvment, and moderation in all things. So, on the one hand, phrenology commandeered the sphere of morality, and on the other hand, instituted a physiological justification of practices which had previously relied on religious sanctions.

By the time of the upsurge in county asylums, however, phrenology had fallen from favour and doctors were anxiously searching for the causes of madness in other ways. During the latter part of the century the influence of Darwinism had encouraged belief in the hereditary aspect of madness, and two French writers, B.A.Morel and Jacques Moreau, had introduced ideas of degeneracy that were to be taken up by the most influential psychiatrist of the late nineteenth century, Henry Maudsley, Conolly's son-in-law, who presented a bleak vision not just of madness, but of life in general. Basing his analysis on an assurance that mental illness had a physical basis as well as being inherited, he saw madness as an inevitable destiny, in which the lunatic, unable to escape the 'tyranny of his organization', was ill-adapted to cope with the harshnesses of life. Despite his reliance on a somatic aetiology, Maudsley castigated madness as moral degeneracy and projected a gloomy future of racial decline. The opening of The Pathology of Mind (1879) incorporates several of the motifs that have already been touched on in this introductory chapter and will later be explored further in the discussions of the novels:

> By insanity of mind is meant such derangement of the leading functions of thought, feeling, and will, together or separately, as disable the person from thinking the thoughts, feeling the feelings, and doing the duties of the social body in, for, and by which he lives. Alienated from his normal self and from his kind, he is in the social organisation that which a morbid growth is in the physiological organism: something which, being a law unto itself, in the body but not of it, is an alien there, a morbid kind, and ought in the interests of the whole either to be got rid out of it or sequestrated and rendered harmless in it. However it has come about, whether by fate or fault, he is now so self-regarding a self as to be incapable of right regard to the notself; altruism has been

swallowed up in a morbid egoism. [39]

The ideas of alienation and egoism expressed in this extract will be seen to resurface in the discussion of Dracula, but what I should particularly like to comment on here is the strong moralistic tone, which by comparing the deranged person with 'a morbid growth', denies him or her the sensibilitites of humanity as effectively as the eighteenth century insistence on the animality of the insane. Maudsley links the mad with the bad: 'It is not possible to draw a distinct line of demarcation between insanity and crime...There are criminals who are more mad than bad, insane persons who are more bad than mad', but in both cases 'a man's nature is essentially a recompense or a retribution'.[40] Like Dickens earlier in the period, Maudsley sees the sins of the fathers being visited upon the children, but he promotes a more judgemental attitude by suggesting that a person will not only have a 'tendency' to 'perform the function pre-ordained in his structure', but it will also be his 'pleasure'.[41] By amalgamating the basic principle of utilitarianism with strict determinism, Maudsley illogically manages to blame people for what they cannot help. The penultimate sentence of this volume indicates the pessimism of his thinking:

> Nor would the scientific interest of his [a physician's] studies compensate entirely for the practical uncertainties, since their revelation of the structure of human nature might inspire a doubt whether, notwithstanding impassioned aims, paeans of progress, endless pageants of self-illusions, its capacity of degeneration did not equal, and might some day exceed, its capacity of development.[42]

Andrew Wynter, who has already been referred to, was obviously indebted to Maudsley's ideas, but writes in a more humane spirit, concerned to remove the 'moral stigma' from madness, but he, too, fosters the fear of inherited insanity; even when it has not become apparent, there are 'latent seeds' which only require 'some exciting cause to force them into vigorous growth'.[43] Even though madness is a 'brain disease',

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[39]Henry Maudsley, The Pathology of Mind (London, 1979, based on edition of 1895), p.1.
[40]Maudsley, p.82.
[41]Maudsley, p.83.
[42]Maudsley, p.563.
[43]Wynter, p.45.

the 'changes that take place are of too delicate a nature for our science to reach in its present condition',[44] therefore the physician is driven back on the usual moral treatment in which the true principle of cure and support is 'an association with healthy minds'.[45]

MADNESS AND GENDER

In his novel, The Man of Feeling (1771), Henry Mackenzie describes the visit of Harley, the 'man of feeling', to Bedlam. There he meets a young mad woman: 'Her face, though pale and wasted, was less squalid than those of the others, and showed a dejection of that decent kind, which moves our pity unmixed with horror'.[46] There is a comparable incident in Henry Cockton's The Life and Adventure ofValentine Vox, the Ventriloquist, (1840). Goodman and Whiteley, two sane inmates of an asylum, beg a keeper to let them see a 'poor lost creature' whose screams have aroused their curiosity:

> from the harsh screams and bitter imprecations which preceded from this den, Goodman was led to imagine that its inmate was an old withered, wretched-looking creature, whose intemperance had reduced her to a raving maniac, and whose former life had been spent among the vilest and most degraded. Conceive, then, his astonishment when, instead of a miserable, wasted, haggard being, he beheld a fair girl, whose skin was as pure as alabaster, and whose hair hung luxuriantly down her back in flaxen ringlets, running round, shouting, screaming, and uttering the most dreadful imprecations that ever preceeded from the lips of the most vicious of her sex.[47]

Playing on the contrast between expectation and actuality, in a way that I shall be referring to later in the discussion of Lady Audley's Secret, Cockton makes all the more striking the contrast between apppearance and voice, almost as though we are witnessing yet another ventriloqual feat, such as Valentine has been dislaying

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[44]Wynter, p.14.
[45]Wynter, p.129.
[46]Henry Mackenzie, The Man of Feeling (Oxford, 1967), p.33.
[47]Henry Cockton, The Life and Adventures ofValentine Vox, the Ventriloquist (London, 1840), pp.173-4.

throughout the novel.

Both these examples rely on the pathos of the conventional situation of a beautiful young woman who has lost her wits, but the later piece lacks the romantic sentimentality of the earlier one. In Mackenzie's novel madness is represented as the result of thwarted love; in Cockton's novel it is the result of sexual frustration or what was generally known as erotomania. Responding to Whiteley's observation that her disease must be 'very dreadful', the keeper replies: 'No, there ain't much the matter with her. She only wants a husband'.[48] As if to give substance to his words, her behaviour presents a parody of matrimonial embraces: 'At this moment the poor girl saw them at the window and her shrieks were truly awful. She raved, and spat at them, and flew round the den, and endeavoured to clutch them and folded her arms as if she had one of them in her embrace, and then she shrieked again horribly'.[49] The mad woman in The Man of Feeling is pathetic and proper, never losing sight of her 'poor Billy', and her discourse has the lyricism of one of the mad songs that were so popular, but the woman in Valentine Vox has lost the attributes of womanhood and is condemned to an animal existence. It is a pattern that is repeated in Bertha Rochester, where, as I shall discuss, the moral implications are made still clearer.

Feminist critics have drawn attention to the way in which the connection between madness and morality has wrought madness into yet another weapon in patriarchy's defensive armoury. During the eighteenth century the private nature of the madhouse trade meant that some proprietors were women, since the business tended to be handled by families and passed on from one generation to the next, and there was no question of professional qualifications. With increasing regulation and the growth of public asylums the medical profession gradually established its hegemony in the field of madness and, since until the end of the nineteenth century doctors were invariably male, women were squeezed out of positions of authority in the private asylums,

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[48]Cockton, p.175. Interestingly, this exchange between Whiteley and the keeper is omitted from some of the later editions of the novel.
[49]Cockton, p.175.

except that of matron, responsible of course to the physician. Elaine Showalter in The Female Malady quotes statistics to show that women have formed the larger proportion of lunatics since the 1850s.[50] Breaking new ground by specifically addressing the gender issue, she draws attention to the two assumptions usually made to explain this predominance. The first assumption is that there is a real difference in the rate at which the two sexes succumb to madness and that women's madness is the product of their social situation: 'their confining roles as wives, and mothers and their mistreatment by a male-dominated and possibly misogynistic profession'.[51] Showalter cites Richard Napier in this context, but the Victorians, too, recognized the particular risks posed in women's lives. Andrew Wynter, for instance, notes the deleterious results of leaving girls with 'imperfectly educated minds', especially when the developments of a railway network left wives stranded for long days in the suburbs whilst their husbands were at work.[52] The other assumption has to do with the difficulties of diagnosis that I have already commented on, and suggests that madness is attributed to women on the basis of qualities and aspects of behaviour that are simply not-male. There is a 'fundamental alliance' between women and madness, the argument runs, with women being 'typically situated on the side of irrationality, silence, nature, and body, while men are situated on the side of reason, discourse, culture and mind'.[53] Given these underlying homologies, madness as a cultural or discursive construct belongs in the female domain with the power of definition resting inevitably in the hands of men. Whether they manifested exaggeratedly female traits, then, or behaved in unfemale ways, Victorian women were, in Showalter's analysis, being punished for sexual rebellion. In an article published in 1981 she cites Lady Audley's Secret as an example of the way 'any act of feminine passion, self-assertion, or violence' is explained as madness, and I shall be returning to this discussion in my

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[50]The Female Malady, p.52.
[51]The Female Malady, p.3.
[52]Wynter, p.62.
[53]The Female Malady, pp.3-4.

chapter on that novel.[54]

A particularly interesting section of Showalter's study draws attention to the fashion for photographing mad women from the middle of the nineteenth century:

> That we should have so many remarkable pictures of Victorian madwomen and so few of their words, reminds us how strongly the power of definition rested with the male observer. In the photographs of Victorian madwomen by Diamond [physician at Surrey Asylum from 1848] and others, we are made to *see* the moral management of female insanity, as well as its reduction, in Victorian terms, to visual conventions. The act of photographing itself is a form of appropriation: a capture of the subject.[55]

Not only does this relate to the tendency I have already noted to treat madness in terms of behavioural patterns, but the observational aspect of the relationship between madness and its doctoring, by treating the patient as a 'specimen', runs the risk of allying scientific curiosity with the less respectable curiosity of those who, like the eighteenth century visitors to Bedlam, viewed the mad as a species of entertainment. The practice of writing case-studies, often with accompanying illustrations of cranial formation or facial expression, seems to me to be a borderline exercise between documentation and voyeurism, such as is to be found in the anonymous Sketches in Bedlam.[56] Overwhelmingly, madness was seen from the outside; the mad may have been talked to, but they were not listened to, until the advent of Freud and the 'talking cure'. Furthermore, the emphasis on the visual aspect of madness received 'scientific' backing from, on the one hand, phrenology, and, on the other, physiognomy, as I have commented in previous pages. In this, as in other respects, the conventions regarding nineteenth-century madness played into the hands of non-realist fiction-writers. The texts that I shall be examining show a strong bias towards the visual and the representation of external characteristics, but they subtly undermine any simple-minded reliance on the cognitive possibilities of sight: neither people, nor places are always

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[54]Elaine Showalter, 'Victorian Women and Insanity', in Madhouses, Mad-Doctors, and Madmen, pp.313-336.
[55]The Female Malady, p.97.
[56]Sketches in Bedlam; or Characteristic Traits of Insanity (London, 1824).

Figure 1. Tony Robert-Fleury, "Pinel Freeing the Insane," 1887.

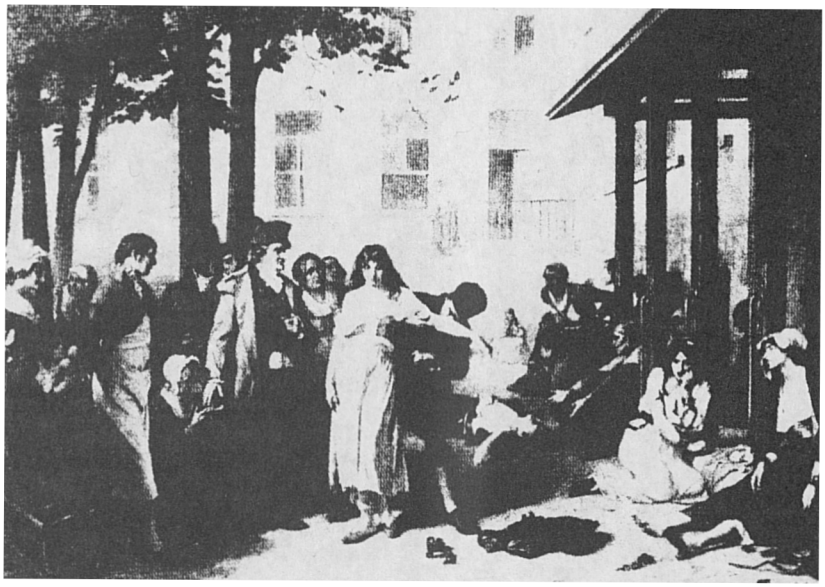

Figure 2 Charcot lecturing on hysteria at the Salpêtrière.

quite what they seem to be.

The element of display was unavoidable, too, in the practice of giving demonstrations. Charcot's public exhibitions of hysteric women at the Salpêtrière were a major attraction and there is a strong suspicion that the women were to some extent performing for the audience.[57] Elaine Showalter comments on the strong bias towards the visual in Charcot's work and the way in which his clinic was filled with the photographs of patients taken by Albert Londe. Hanging in the hall where he gave his lectures was also Tony Robert-Fleury's large painting of Pinel Freeing the Insane (1876). In 1887 André Brouillet, as Gilman puts it, 'paraphrased this painting in Charcot at the Salpêtrière.[58] It is a good example of the way particular images are perpetuated, and Gilman draws attention to the limited historical value of such picture, but both paintings also show the good opportunity that the representation of madness provides for the display of parts of the female body that were normally covered.

Hysteria has become in recent years a dramatic forum for the discussion of gender politics in the late nineteenth century. At the time it was seen in Britain as an affliction that was confined to women. Charcot's work in Paris, however, was also concerned with male hysterics, and Mark Micale has discussed the failure of his findings to cross the Channel, for the possibility that men too might suffer from what had been considered a female weakness was not really faced until the nerve-shattering events of the First World War.[59] I shall not enter into the debate since hysteria as such is not mentioned in the texts that I am concerned with, but the issues of gender raised here are of relevance to the discussion of madness generally. If there is a 'fundamental alliance' between women and madness, then those men who succumbed to madness,

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[57]The Female Malady, pp.147-54.
[58]Seeing the Insane, pp.212-3.
[59]Mark S.Micale, 'Charcot and the Idea of Hysteria in the Male: Gender, Mental Science, and Medical Diagnosis in Late Nineteenth-Century France', Medical History, 34 (1990), 363-411; Mark S.Micale, 'Hysteria Male/Hysteria Female: Reflections on Comparative Gender Construction in Nineteenth-Century France and Britain', in Science and Sensibility. Gender and Scientific Enquiry, 1780-1945 (Oxford, 1991), 200-239.

Showalter argues, put themselves or were put into a 'female' position. As such they found themselves silenced and, although considered as moral subjects, were yet objectified by the (male) clinical gaze. In the following chapters I shall be analyzing texts where men as well as women suffer the indignities of insanity, are scrutinized, categorized and misunderstood.

MADNESS AND LITERARY FORM

The preceding sections have drawn attention to some of the conventions which affected the way madness was treated and thought about in Victorian sociey, and there is an interesting interaction between these social conventions and the conventions of literary forms. Although she does not concern herself with madness in the Victorian period, Lillian Feder in Madness in Literature comments that 'Imaginative writers... have always been concerned with madness as a revelation of the processes of the human mind'.[60] But of course, as she goes on to show, literary depictions both reflect and question current medical, cultural, political, religious and psychological assumptions, and thus the way insanity is represented within imaginative literature will change over time. John R.Reed's mammoth study, Victorian Conventions, examines insanity within that specific historical period when the novel was the predominant literary form, associated with both entertainment and didacticism.[61] Of the vast quantities of poetry which were also written, much aspired to the novelistic conventions of narrative and character, but its rather different traditions and conventions allowed for a more direct exploration of the *experience* of insanity than anything to be found in fiction. Through the dramatic monologue in particular, Tennyson and Browning, for example, voiced internal processes, leaving the symptomatic behaviour to be deduced and relying on the reader's complicity with the implied author's rather than the

[60]Lillian Feder, Madness in Literature (Princeton, New Jersey, 1980), p.xi.
[61]John R.Reed, Victorian Conventions (Athens, Ohio, 1975), pp.193-215.

protagonist's moral standards to communicate criticism. In Maud, perhaps the most extended analysis of mental pathology, the protagonist's fragile mental balance both determines and is reflected in the fragmentary plot. The characteristic romantic preoccupation with emotion and states of being is here pushed to extremes so that the external world seems a projection of the speaker's obsessions rather than as having its own objective reality. Both social and literary conventions are pushed to limits that take the poem to the verge of modernism and question the stability of standards of judgement. In Browning's 'Porphyria's Lover', the technique is rather different. Outrageous behaviour is made to seem almost normal because of the reasonable tone of voice; it is only the disparity between the description of Porphyria's behaviour and her lover's reaction to it that allows the reader to deduce insanity. Browning, in fact, gives a particular instance of Locke's theoretical statement that madmen, 'having taken their fancies for realities', 'argue right from wrong principles'.

Whatever the differences between these two writers of the dramatic monologue, in both cases character inevitably determines narrative, and events come to seem insubstantial, figments, almost, of the protagonist's imagination. In the novel, on the other hand, even of the 'realist' kind, narrative has a substantive importance; character may be of great moral significance but it is more clearly separated from the events and inhabitants of a world that is recognizably external and drawn in terms that allow the reader to recognize it as her or his world too. The examination of madness from within is seldom attempted in the prose fiction of this period. Wilkie Collins's Basil with its first-person narrator who suffers a mental breakdown comes close to the psychological drama of, say, Maud, but the novel is inevitably a less intense form than the dramatic monologue and Collins concentrates on the process of breakdown, never allowing Basil to suffer the indignity of incarceration in an asylum. Of the novels that I shall be examining, only Jane Eyre offers a deep and intimate psychological portrait, and there, whatever the subtextual ambiguities, madness is ostensibly Other.

Within the literary criticism of both the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries a distinction has commonly been made between realist and sensationalist literature, with

sensationalism, until relatively recently, being regarded as definitely inferior. In his Autobiography (1883) Anthony Trollope discusses this distinction, which he sees as artificial and not altogether helpful, and it is interesting that, of the generally recognized 'realist' writers, he provides possibly the most sustained analysis of madness in He Knew He Was Right (1869).[62] Starting with an obstinate man and a self-willed woman, Trollope traces, with painful detail, the breakdown of their marriage and the husband's descent into insanity and death because of an unreasonable jealousy. The handling of madness in this novel, however, is noticeably different from that in the texts I shall be discussing. Following the psychological manoeuvres by which reasonable people find themselves in unreasonable positions, the drama of the text is predominantly internal, with little violence and none of the trappings of the madhouse, but, given the device of a third-person narrator, this novel lacks the personal involvement of Jane Eyre, the narrator maintaining the relatively objective pose of analyst and commentator.

If Trollope, a writer whose fiction can be classed as 'realist', tries to find the reasons for madness, and probes the internal processes by which a person slips into insanity, the sensationalist writers and their gothic predecessors tend to look at madness from outside; it functions as a strategy or trope, rather than as the primary focus of exploration. The frequency with which the theme of madness occurs is noted by several commentators.[63] To those writers whose literary imagination was fired by the desire to arouse horror and terror madness presented a ready-made locus of the horrible and the terrifying in human existence, and the reasons for this are not hard to find. Given the eighteenth-century conception of the asylum as a repository for those who have broken their tie with humanity and who are therefore to some extent

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[62]Anthony Trollope, An Autobiography (London, 1950), pp.226-9.
[63]See in particular Elizabeth MacAndrew, The Gothic Tradition in Fiction (New York, 1979); Winifred Hughes, The Maniac in the Cellar. Sensation Novels on the 1860s (Pronceton, New Jersey, 1980); Rosemary Jackson, Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion (London, 1984); Eve Kosovsky Sedgwick, The Coherence of Gothic Conventions (London, 1986); Jenny Bourne Taylor, In the Secret Theatre of Home.

regarded as exotic beings, and given its prison-like status, it is unsurprizing to find the madhouse favoured by gothic writers. Like the monastery it stood as a threat, a place for the removal of unwanted members of society, or those who had transgressed social codes. This attitude can be seen to persist in the nineteenth-century texts that I shall be analyzing. Despite the changes in the way the mad and their treatment were conceptualized in the clinical writings of the Victorian period, the representation of insanity in fiction perpetuated in many ways the ideas of the previous age. Dickens, for instance, presents a somewhat different attitude to idiocy in Barnaby Rudge from that promoted in the journalistic articles of Household Words. Again, Jane Eyre, Hard Cash, The Rose and the Key and Dracula all draw on the tradition of perceiving the mad as animals. Here, though, it is interesting to see how the significance of a outwardly regressive conceptualization changes. In Jane Eyre the madwoman, whose 'speech' is confined to animalistic noises, is kept, as far as possible away from the zone of human interaction. Dracula, on the other hand, allows the madman a voice, which contributes an important narrative strand and his sphere, the madhouse in general and his cell in particular, is an operational area. The concept of man, gifted by God with reason and thus intrinsically different from a beast, had been undermined by the Darwinian theory of evolution, so the detection of the animalistic in the mad becomes only an exaggeration of something that is true of us all.

For sensationalist and gothic writers alike, madness and the madhouse represented sources of secrecy and mystery. As philosophy merged into the new discipline of psychology and doctors authoritatively produced 'explanations' of insanity, these might be incorporated into the discourse of fictional characters, as, for instance, in Lady Audley's Secret, or acknowledged in authorial comment, yet the depiction of madness and its contribution to plot relied upon a continued belief in the mystery of the mind. As Jenny Bourne Taylor and Winifred Hughes both point out, sensationalism prioritizes plot, which in conjunction with the interest in deviant and abnormal figures, functions to present a vision of existence where people have little control over their destinies or even identities. Unlike the fictions which expose by rational analysis, the

less restrained imaginative power of the sensationalist writer undermines the prevailing belief in the possibility of understanding and controlling through reason and obedience to conventional moral codes.

Of the writers whose work I shall be examining, five are commonly regarded as sensation novelists and the other two are generally aligned with the gothic. All, however, in one way or another, make claims to realism, and a subsidiary theme of this thesis is the problematic nature of generic categories. Barnaby Rudge, the first text I shall examine, is the only example here of an historical novel, but in it documentary 'fact' is recounted with Dickens's unique imaginative power and combined with fiction to produce a sensational text whose insights reach beyond the particular circumstances of the historical event described. Jane Eyre claims the realism of autobiography, yet combines the prosaic language of realism with the highly-charged language of gothic and includes incidents that owe more to the conventions of tnat genre than to those of nineteenth-century realism. Both The Woman in White and Dracula evince an almost neurotic insistence on the truth and accuracy of their accounts of events that are in the first text sensational enough to stretch credulity, and in the second text sensational to the point of fantasy. Like Jane Eyre, Dracula has been included under the umbrella of gothic, but gothic in this instance, because of the text's primary *donnée,* has a more combative relationship with realism than in the earlier novel, so that it seems fair to say that the attempt to arouse horror or terror takes it into the realm of fantasy. Rosemary Jackson in her book on Fantasy makes the point that the 'fantastic exists as the inside or underside, of realism'. At the same time the 'fantastic is predicated on the category of the "real", and it introduces areas which can be conceptualized only by negative terms according to the categories of nineteenth century realism: thus, the im-possible, the un-real, the nameless, formless, shapeless, un-known, in-visible' and, I would add, the un-dead. I shall be returning to this question of fantasy more fully in Chapter 8's discussion of Dracula. The other three novels that I analyze, Lady Audley's Secret, Hard Cash and The Rose and the Key, all employ third-person narrators, who from time to time, as was conventional in realist fiction, 'break the frame' of the text by

referring to the world outside the fictional one. Charles Reade in Hard Cash indeed goes one stage further by writing a preface that lays before his readers the documentary basis of his fiction.

In this thesis I shall be analyzing texts which not only focus explicitly on issues of madness, but which lie outside the mainstream of classic realist fiction. I shall be reading them with an awareness of the various conceptual frameworks to which they could be assigned; thus, Jane Eyre can be seen as a 'romance' as well as a gothic tale, The Woman in White owes much to the conventions of stage melodrama as well as to those of sensation fiction, Hard Cash is both campaigning polemic and a sensation adventure story, and The Rose and the Key combines features of the mystery tale and the gothic novel. The distinction between different fictional genres, in fact, becomes increasingly blurred as the century progresses, and at the same time there is a greater willingness to fuse the states of sanity and insanity. Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that it becomes increasingly difficult for fictional writers to separate sanity from madness. Moving from Barnaby Rudge, a novel that distances madness by contextualizing it in the eighteenth century, this thesis traces steps by which insanity is gradually incorporated into the patterns of contemporary life and accepted as a problem with which ordinary men and women have to wrestle. This process is accompanied by the blurring of categories and the erosion of certainties, so that by the time of of Bram Stoker's fantasy, written at the end of the century, we find questions of ontology and identity probed in a way that was to be typical of modernism.

CHAPTER 2

DICKENS AND BARNABY RUDGE: HUMANITARIAN CONCERN BUT RHETORIC OF REGRESSION

'It is something to look upon enjoyment, so that it be free and wild and in the face of nature, though it is but the enjoyment of an idiot', says the narrator of Barnaby Rudge. 'Who would not rather see a poor idiot happy in the sunlight, than a wise man pining in a darkened jail!'[1] It is striking, that, for all his interest in asylums and the institutional treatment of lunacy, Dickens does not feature the institutions of madness in his fictional work. A range of mad and eccentric men and women contribute their individuality to the panorama of human types in the Dickens world. Some are confined, voluntarily or involuntarily; for instance, the madman in Pickwick Papers is in a cell, Miss Flite is in the debtors' prison, Miss Havisham incarcerates herself in Satis House. Others, such as Mr. Dick in David Copperfield, roam freely. How far the gentleman next door to Mrs. Nickleby is constrained is not made clear. In many of these instances madness is not explicitly acknowledged and in some cases, for example Miss Havisham, it is arguable. Indeed, one of Dickens's contributions to the fictional exploration of human nature is precisely his recognition of the variety of quirks and eccentricities that blur the distinction between sanity and insanity. The novel, however, that does deal explicitly with madness is Barnaby Rudge, an early work, published in 1841, ten years before the first of the journalistic pieces on insanity published in Household Words. Here madness is not only explicit but a central theme of the novel.

Although its unusually long gestation took place during years when madness was a subject of popular and official interest in which two of Dickens's friends, John Forster and John Conolly, were deeply involved, the novel is set at a time well before the main period of

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[1]Charles Dickens, Barnaby Rudge (Harmondsworth, 1973), p.249. All future references will be incorporated into the text and will be to this edition, based on Dickens's revision of 1868, which, in the absence of a standard scholarly edition, I have preferred to the volume in the New Oxford Illustrated Dickens series, whose editor is less scrupulous.

legislative interest in insanity , and one of the aims of this chapter will be to assess the ways in whcih the historical context allows Dickens to preserve a critical distance from the madness he depicts. Barnaby Rudge is remarkable for its foregrounding of madness, not only in the eponymous character of an idiot, but in the insistence on the madness of the mob in the riot scenes surrounding the historical figure of the 'half-crazy' Lord George Gordon. Madness, then, operates in three different ways in this text: there is the fictional construction of what might count as a case study of an idiot, there is the retrospective glance at an historical example, and there is the metaphorical or quasi-metaphorical appeal to madness to describe, explain and criticize the behaviour of the mob . In this chapter I shall start by reviewing some twentieth century assessments of Barnaby, before turning to a discussion of non-fictional writing on the subject of madness by Dickens himself, and articles that appeared in Household Words and were, therefore, thoroughly scrutinized and sanctioned by him. Returning to Barnaby Rudge, I hope, by comparing the meanings of madness and idiocy within the novel with the meanings in contemporary clinical, philosophical and juridical writing, to show that it draws on conventional and sometimes rather punitive conceptions at the same time as revealing preoccupations in common with the later, 'reformist' writing by Dickens and others.

In 'Idiots Again', one of the later pieces written for Household Words in which Dickens clearly had a hand even if he was not the sole author, there is a lengthy anecdotal exploration of the consequences for a household of having an idiot member.[2] As the author vividly unrolls the process of discovery of this idiocy, he adopts a rhetoric that idealizes the 'normal' business of the expectation and arrival of a new baby, thus increasing the horror of the disclosure of abnormality; painstakingly tracing the signs by which a mother gradually grows to awareness of her child's idiocy, the writer communicates his own feeling that this is the most terrible thing that can happen to her:

> How sweet was the prospect of the little one coming...And when it came, how amiable, and helpful, and happy everybody was...Perhaps there was a wager that baby would 'take notice'...at the end of ten days or a fortnight, and the wager was lost. Here, perhaps, was the first faint indication. But it would not be thought much of, the child was so very young!...Time goes on; and the

[2]'Idiots Again', Household Words, 10 (1854), 197-200 refers to the case of Laura Bridgman, whom Dickens had seen and commented on at length in American Notes.

> singularity is apparent that the baby makes *no response* to anything...His mother longs to feel the clasp of his arms round her neck; but her fondlings receive no return. [3]

Similarly, in Barnaby Rudge, as Barnaby and his mother come within sight of the Warren, the narrator conveys her thoughts and memories of the years in which the 'conviction forced itself upon her' of his 'darkened intellect' (p.250). Like Tommy, 'the favourite' at St. Luke's, a 'harmless old man...at once so childish and so dreadfully un-childlike', Barnaby in his early years is childish, but gives tokens of something 'unchildlike in its cunning' (p.250).[4] The whole of this description, as Michael Hollington notes in his investigation of the importance of physiognomy in Barnaby Rudge , appears to confirm 'a traditional association of idiot children with demonic changelings'.[5] But, Hollington's argument runs, Dickens's 'grotesque art' comes close to a 'physiognomical paradox' by which 'the most apparently monstrous creatures are innocent and harmless, whilst those with the most apparently attractive surfaces are the most terrifying monsters'.[6] Barnaby, lacking the ability or even the intent to control his features, stands at the opposite end of the moral spectrum from Sir John Chester, whose mastery over his features allows him to deceive Mrs Varden and (at least temporarily) the waiter at the Covent Garden coffee-house into thinking him saintly. If anyone is saintly in this book it is Barnaby himself.

But the question of Barnaby's moral status is one that has vexed critics as much as has the question of his madness. Some writers have seen Dickens as drawing on an older tradition of madness where it is conceived as having a positive aspect that was usually denied it in Victorian thinking, which was more likely to see insanity as 'the most dreadful visitation to which our nature is exposed'.[7] Ascribing the appellation of Holy Fool to Barnaby rescues him from potential charges of evil in his enthusiastic support of the rioters and installs him in the fold of Christianity. Penelope Doob has discussed the conventions of madness in Middle

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[3]'Idiots Again', p.197.
[4]Dickens and W.H.Wills meet Tommy during their visit to St.Luke's Hospital for the insane described in 'A Curious Dance Round a Curious Tree', Household Words, 4 (1852), 385-9 (p.388).
[5]Michael Hollington, 'Monstrous Faces: Physiognomy in Barnaby Rudge', Dickens Quarterly, 9 (1991), 6-15 (p.12).
[6]Hollington, p.7.
[7]Charles Dickens, American Notes, (Harmondsworth, 1972), p141.

English literature, paying particular attention to the dramatic portrayals of Herod where he is opposed to all that Christ stands for, thus representing 'the spiritual madness of those who reject Christ' as opposed to 'the madness of Christianity as seen by the worldly wise'.[8] Though he clearly lacks worldly wisdom, there are signs that Barnaby possesses especial grace in, for example, the scene when he stands as sentry before The Boot (p.478). Thus Jack Lindsay, in his influential essay in Dickens and the Twentieth Century, calls both Barnaby and Lord George Gordon 'fool-figures [who] are meant to supply the positive aspect which Dickens feels unable to impart to the direct revolt-formulations of Tappertit and his comrades'.[9] They are 'the mouthpiece of wisdoms rejected by the world of privilege and money' and 'represent the future striving to be born'.[10] One of the reasons he feels the novel falls short is that the figure of the fool, at home in the medieval world, loses its magic in 'the world of developing industrialism'.[11] Steven Marcus recognizes elements of the Holy Fool in Barnaby, but sees also signs of affliction rather than grace, aspects of Tom o'Bedlam and Wordsworthian lunatics: 'In Barnaby's nature, innocence alternates with generalized emotions of anger, vindictiveness and violence, and his innocence is of course qualified by them'.[12] The debt to Wordsworth and the darkening of the image of the simple-minded is more deeply explored in an article by Iain Crawford that I shall refer to later. Acknowledging the insights of Lindsay's essay, John Lucas is still more reserved about designating Barnaby a folk-fool. He agrees with Lindsay that Barnaby is rather an unsatisfactory figure, but this is not because he is a fool out of his element, but because 'he is too obviously a reductive symbol of the chaotic forces that may be let loose once order is abandoned...as an embodiment both of irrational envy and mad destructiveness, Barnaby represents something of a withdrawal on Dickens's part from the contemplation of a revolutionary situation, not because envy and destructiveness may not play their part but because in Barnaby Rudge they are moved too swiftly to the centre of affairs'.[13]

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[8]Penelope B.R.Doob, Nebuchadnezzar's Children. Conventions of Madness in Middle English Literature (Yale, 1974), p.110.
[9]Jack Lindsay, 'Barnaby Rudge', in Dickens and the Twentieth Century, edited by John Gross and Gabriel Pearson, (London, 1962), p.101.
[10]Lindsay, pp.100-1.
[11]Lindsay, p.104.
[12]Steven Marcus, Dickens: From Pickwick to Dombey and Son (London, 1965), p.192.
[13]John Lucas, The Melancholy Man. A Study of Dickens's Novels (London, 1970), p.102.

This analysis concentrates on Barnaby's inherited corruption and particularly his love of gold, playing down the more positive aspects of his presentation. A.E.Dyson, too, moves away from the idea of the Holy Fool, not so much because Barnaby represents immoral longings, but because he lacks wisdom, because, in fact, he is an idiot: 'Dickens finds pathos, tenderness, tragic truth in him [Barnaby] even but no wisdom. We are not, finally, offered the paradox of wisdom in the fool'.[14] Juliet McMaster takes a different tack, concentrating not simply on the imaginative power shared by Barnaby and his creator, but on the thematic significance of imagination in the novel. Barnaby's idiocy is not denied, but is elevated in a return to the concept of the Holy Fool: 'He is not merely an idiot, but the Holy Fool endowed with a path to truth more direct and immediate than that available to educated minds'.[15] McMaster's analysis makes sense of much of the text's symbolism and a persuasive case is made for reading Barnaby Rudge as a ghost story, in which Dickens shows the power of the imagination to mediate between the 'conscious and unconscious', 'authority and impulse', 'the governing and the governed', but it does not do justice to the political and historical aspects of the novel.[16]

Despite the paucity of criticism of Barnaby Rudge in the first part of the twentieth century, there were one or two essays which concerned themselves more narrowly with Barnaby's state of mind.[17] In 1910 The Dickensian published a two-part rhapsody by John MacLeod on 'The Personality of Barnaby Rudge', praising his innocent, childlike qualities and denying that he is either mad or bad: 'His life was blameless and pure, and his record was never so much as once smudged by an unfair or dastardly action'.[18] Referring to these articles, a later commentator, Ernest Polack, says that MacLeod is trying to ascertain what grade of idiocy Barnaby belongs to.[19] This makes the earlier discussion sound more scientific than it in fact is and masks what seems to me to be a fundamental agreement between these two writers.

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[14]A.E.Dyson, The Inimitable Dickens. A Reading of the Novels (London, 1970), p.60.
[15]Juliet McMaster, 'Better to be Silly': From Vision to Reality in Barnaby Rudge', Dickens Studies Annual, 13 (1984), p.2.
[16]McMaster, p.15.
[17]Barnaby Rudge, although receiving rather more critical attention now, was at one time perhaps the least read and least discussed of Dickens's novels, something which earlier commentators apparently felt obliged to notice at the outset of their discussions.
[18]John A.MacLeod, 'The Personality of Barnaby Rudge', The Dickensian, 5 (1909), 262-6 and 291-3, (p.293).
[19]Ernest E.Polack, 'Was Barnaby Rudge Mad?', Dickensian, 7 (1911), 298-99.

Macleod distinguishes idiocy from eccentricity and lunacy from simplicity, involving himself in another questionable assessment of Barnaby: 'He was mercifully free from those dark and dismal forebodings which commonly haunt deranged intellects'.[20] It is perhaps the writer's appreciation, shared with a number of other critics, that Barnaby 'possessed many characteristics which were Dickens's most poignant and noticeable characteristics' that inhibits him from allowing that Barnaby is mad.[21] Polack, equally inclined to panegyric, does not make the comparison between Dickens and his creation explicitly, but it is implicit in the view that the character is 'blessed with the boundless, overflowing imagination of the poet' .[22] There is, though, a slippage in this essay to try to accommodate the question of idiocy. Instead of the sort of distinctions that MacLeod draws, Polack denies that Barnaby is a serious study of an idiot at all: 'Barnaby is no more than a poetic and artistic creation' and 'his life is one long poem'.[23] But this writer, too, concludes that Barnaby is a child-like character, kept 'pure and undefiled amid the bloody horrors of the Gordon riots' because of his 'simple love of right and truth', 'his unquestioned trustfulness in everyone' and 'his innocent self-pride'.[24] Despite the assertion that 'Barnaby is no more than a poetic and artistic creation', the essay ends by discussing him, conventionally enough, in terms of character. The problem, for both Polack and MacLeod, seems to be reconciling Barnaby's imaginative affinity with Dickens's and a mentally defective state and willingness to join in the unlawful excitement of the riots. They are both constrained by a reluctance to convict Barnaby, and implicitly Dickens, of wrong-doing or insanity and are thus reduced to a judgement of childishness, which seems to be the only other way of accommodating Barnaby's character and behaviour.

A more recent discussion of Barnaby's state of mind in the same journal by Thelma Grove makes a whole-hearted attempt to establish, as earlier commentators have done in other instances, Dickens's remarkable ability to describe psychological conditions that have been

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[20]MacLeod, p.291.
[21]MacLeod, p.262.
[22]Polack, p.299.
[23]Polack, p.298.
[24]Polack, p.299.

named and clinically described only in the twentieth century.[25] It is her contention that Barnaby possesses enough of the nine features given by Leo Kanner and Mildred Creak to be classified as suffering from Early Infantile Autism. Again, the writer produces a sympathetic study of Barnaby, paying little attention to the part he plays in the riots and failing to assess his contribution to the novel as a work of art. But more importantly this analysis denies historical specificity in the attempt to accomodate Dickens's strikingly individual but nevertheless nineteenth century discourse to a twentieth century conceptual framework. In what follows I shall incorporate a discussion of Barnaby as a character in a work of fiction with a more far-ranging examination of contemporary understanding of the term 'idiot'. I shall begin by looking at the non-fictional writing by Dickens and his collaborators on the subject of idiocy and madness.

Dickens was familiar with the Bedlam of 1815 which he mentions in Sketches by Boz (1836), drawing an analogy with Newgate prison:

> If Bedlam could be suddenly removed like another Aladdin's palace, and set down on the space now occupied by Newgate, scarcely one man out of a hundred, whose road to business every morning lies through Newgate Street or the Old Bailey, would pass the building without bestowing a hasty glance on its small, grated windows, and a transient thought upon the condition of the unhappy beings immured in its dismal cells.[26]

Both Newgate and Bedlam stand as representatives of a confinement that may be just but is certainly inimical to human dignity, and will probably corrode rather than restore the soul. Barnaby Rudge, of course, allows Dickens to vent his spleen against Newgate, but Bedlam is a less concrete presence in this novel. This cannot be explained as the consequence of unfamiliarity, for his involvement with the treatment of insanity was intimate and long-lived, and Barnaby is certainly not the first lunatic to appear in his fiction. However, the non-fictional writing on madness and its treatment started shortly after the completion of Barnaby Rudge, when Dickens paid his first visit to America and recorded his visits to three asylums in

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[25]Thelma Grove, 'Barnaby Rudge: A Case Study in Autism', The Dickensian, 83 (1987), 139-148.

[26]Charles Dickens, Sketches by Boz, The New Oxford Illustrated Dickens (London, 1957), p.201. Bethlem had been moved from Moorfields to St.George's Fields (its third building) in 1815. That building is now the Imperial War Museum.

American Notes (1842). This was followed by the articles that appeared frequently in Household Words that, even if they were not written by Dickens, were included in the periodical only with his approval. Running through all these pieces is an steady concern for society's unfortunates, belief in the possibility of cure, or at least improvement, and the advantages of sufferers being cared for in a well-run institution. But the discussions of their plight and treatment reveal continuity of feeling also in the frequent observation of the alienation of the insane, which is persistently expressed in terms of internal darkness. It is the insane's lack of ability to relate to others that can be seen as a variation of the typical nineteenth century castigation of egotism.

Dickens shows great faith in the need for confinement if insanity is to be cured, but the asylum must offer appropriate conditions. At Long Island or Rhode Island ('I forget which'), he criticizes the dreary asylum with 'a lounging, listless, madhouse air, which was very painful' and deplores the effect of party politics on the organization of 'this sad refuge of afflicted and degraded humanity'.[27] Ten years later the better-known piece, 'A Curious Dance Round a Curious Tree', was published, in the first part of which the inhumane practices of the eighteenth century when St.Luke's was founded are outlined, re-fuelling, incidentally, the myth of the eighteenth century as a period of exclusive torture of the mad. Madness is seen in the workings of the asylum in those days, as much as in the inmates. The doctors themselves are said to suffer from monomania in their belief in the efficacy of 'wildly extravagant' and 'monstrously cruel' devices for the 'coercion of the outward man', and 'rabid physicking' of the inward man, whilst the hospital's consequent resemblance to 'a collection of chambers of horrors' is a sight likely to ensure the loss of reason in even 'the least irrational new patient' .[28]

Given the allegedly more enlightened attitudes of the nineteenth century, the articles continue to wage war against the parsimony of the local authorities or the misguided belief that the county asylums can expand ad infinitum. The first of the Household Words articles, published in 1851, is a severely documentary piece on 'The Treatment of the Insane', written in the aftermath of the 1845 Act which compelled local authorities to provide for the insane.[29]

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[27]American Notes, pp.140,141.
[28]'A CuriousDance', p.385.
[29]'The Treatment of the Insane', Household Words, 3 (1851), 572-6.

Backing up his argument with official statistics on the one hand and, on the other, two individual cases, the writer draws attention to the continuing ills the pauper class may still have to endure because of the parsimony that frequently attends public provision, and to the lack of suitable public provision for private patients. The latter point may have less humanitarian force for readers who are out of sympathy with Victorian fine-tuning to considerations of class, but the article's concern for the plight of the insane is undeniable. Reviewing the statistics, the author unhesitatingly attributes the cause of insanity to 'poverty and its attendant evils'. Since, however, those attendant evils include not only 'defective education', but 'the unrestrained sway of appetites and passions', it is clear that we are not far from the prevailing moralistic attitude to madness.[30] The last of the Household Words articles, written in 1859, returns to the question of county asylums and abhors the possibility of an increase in the size of the already large Middlesex asylums, Hanwell and Colney Hatch.[31]

But if these pieces recommend the confinement of the mad, it is not because confinement as such is considered desirable, though it might sometimes be necessary, but because the asylum is considered better able to provide the right environment and treatment than the home, offering, in particular, the help of practitioners experienced in the handling of lunacy. But confinement does not mean for the writers of these articles that it is right to shut people away out of sight and out of mind. The first piece about idiots, published in 1853, includes a Sterne-like address to the reader (assumed unfortunately to be a female) to castigate the 'class of persons...who are so desperately careful to receive no uncomfortable emotions from sad realities or pictures of sad realities, that they become the incarnation of the demon selfishness'.[32] The perennial concern for egocentricity impels the writer to the conclusion that people have no right to be so 'sensitive' that they require 'the putting away of these unfortunates in past years, and ...the putting away of many kinds of unfortunates at any time'.[33] The periodical itself is testimony to the desire to make public the plight of the insane and other unfortunates.

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[30]'Treatment', p.575.
[31]'The Cure of Sick Minds', Household Words, 19 (1859), 415-8.
[32]Charles Dickens with W.H.Wills, 'Idiots', Household Words, 7 (1853), 313-7 (p.316).
[33]'Idiots', p.316.

Although confinement in this sense is generally approved, there is another type of confinement that seems to be the worst aspect of insanity for Dickens. Time and again the articles return to the idea of the mad confined by their inability to interact, trapped in an inner life. In the 1852 piece about St.Luke's, he conveys his depression at the solitude of the women and men in their separate sitting-rooms, caged within their own preoccupations as the fires are caged for security. Paying tribute to the resident matron, Dickens sees her shining 'like a star in a dark spot' amongst the afflicted people she regards as her children.[34] The conceit of a star shining in the darkness is picked up again and elaborated in an article called 'The Star of Bethlehem' which Household Words published in 1857.[35] Here the star is Bethlehem Hospital itself, whose history is traced up to the prevailing supervision of Dr.Hood, when the unenlightened methods of the past having been abandoned, it is able to lighten the darkness of the insane.

The first asylum that Dickens had visited in America, an institution in Boston, had struck him as similarly enlightened, but it is worth noting also the preceding account of his visit to the Perkins Institution and Massachusetts Asylum for the Blind.[36] Like the mad, the blind and especially those such as Laura Bridgman, who lack also hearing and a sense of smell, are also shut off from the outside world, imprisoned in the limited world of their own being. Dickens is impressed by the kindliness with which workers at both establishments seek to integrate the inmates into some sort of social network, to break down their isolation. 'It is obvious', he writes of the hospital for the insane, 'that one great feature of the system is the inculcation and encouragement, even among such unhappy persons, of a decent self-respect'.[37] A post-Foucauldian reader, however, is likely to be more critical of the methods he describes. The treatment detailed falls into the familiar pattern of moral treatment: lack of physical restraint, occupation, fresh air and exercise, dances and friendly informal contact with the staff, which sounds humanitarian. But in giving a detailed study of one of the patients whom, with literary self-consciousness, he describes as a sort of Madge Wildfire in appearance,

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[34]'A Curious Dance', p.388.
[35]'The Star of Bethlehem', Household Words, 16 (1857), 145-50.
[36]American Notes, pp.79-94.
[37]American Notes, p.97.

Dickens reveals the cruel irony that results from taking literally the woman's delusions. As in the examples Foucault gives in Madness and Civilization under the heading 'recognition by mirror', the physician talks to the woman as though she were indeed as important as she thinks she is, thus establishing, according to Dickens, 'a thorough confidence' with the patient and, incidentally providing amusement for the other patients, who 'seemed to understand the joke perfectly (not only in this case, but in all the others, except their own), and to be highly amused by it'.[38] As Foucault puts it: 'Madness is made to observe itself, but in others: it appears in them as a baseless pretense - in other words, as absurd'.[39] At the Boston asylum, 'opportunities are afforded for seizing any moment of reason, to startle them [the mad] by placing their own delusion before them in its most incongruous and ridiculous light'.[40] Dickens provides no example of how this *volte face* is effected, but his reference to 'any moment of reason', like Foucault's reference to approaches made when the patient is 'calmer', suggest that disabusing a madman of his delusions relies upon the operation of reason, of pouncing on moments of sanity and using them to break up the carapace of madness and pull the patient back into the 'real' world. By 'moral influence' the inmates are re-trained in the ways of respectable society.

The belief in the possibility of cure persists, provided, according to the article of 1859, the patient is caught soon enough, and great emphasis is placed on the need for good physical health and well-being. Cure is not supposed to be possible, however, in the case of idiots, the subject of two articles in Household Words to which reference has already been made. The first extols new efforts at caring for idiots, which means stimulating their defective faculties at the same time as developing their idiosyncratic talents:

> a closer study of the subject has now demonstrated that the cultivation of such senses and instincts as the idiot is seen to possess, will, besides frequently developing others that are latent within him but obscured, so brighten those glimmering lights, as immensely to improve his condition, both with reference to himself and to society.[41]

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[38]American Notes, p.96.
[39]Foucault, p.263.
[40]American Notes, p.96.
[41]'Idiots', p.313.

Drawing on the contrast between light and darkness yet again, this piece seems to me to spring from genuine humanitarian concern, whatever may be said about the way it is informed by bourgeois ideology. The following year the second article, 'Idiots Again', appeared in which the reference to Laura Bridgman, the deaf girl he had met in Massachusetts, indicates the pen of Dickens. Repeating the injunction of the earlier article to care for idiots and develop what abilities they have, this article reads as a warning against intermarriage, one serious and common consequence of which is said to be the production of idiot offspring. There are implications here that are important for the meaning of idiocy in Barnaby Rudge, for the situation reads as one where the sins of the fathers are being visited upon their children.

'Idiots' offers a distinction between insanity and idiocy: 'in the Insane certain faculties which once existed have become obliterated or impaired...in Idiots, they either never existed or exist imperfectly'.[42] A quotation from Dr.Voisin is added, specifying the faculties in his definition of idiocy as 'that particular state in which the instincts of reproduction and preservation, the moral sentiments, and the intellectual and perceptive powers are never manifested, or that particular state in which the different essentials of our being are only imperfectly developed'.[43] This is a variation on the distinction presented by John Locke, which influenced not only nineteenth century thinking, but is still quoted in medico-legal texts.

> 'The defect in *Naturals*, seems to proceed from want of quickness, activity, and motion, in the intellectual Faculties, whereby they are deprived of Reason: whereas *mad Men*, on the other side, seem to suffer by the other Extream. For they do not appear to me to have lost the Faculty of Reasoning: but having joined together some *Ideas* very wrongly, they mistake them for Truths; and they err, as Men do, that argue right from wrong Principles. For by the violence of their Imaginations, having taken their Fansies for Realities, they make right deductions from them'.[44]

The word ' natural', that was a common enough synonym for idiot, underlines the relationship with the natural rather than the man-made scheme of things and emphasises the concept of idiocy as inborn rather than acquired. Locke's discussion concentrates on the idiot's inability

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[42]'Idiots', p.313.
[43]'Idiots', p.313.
[44]John Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding (1690), quoted with commentary in Hunter and Macalpine, Three Hundred Years of Psychology, pp.36-7.

to grasp, remember and connect ideas, which in turn impairs their ability to handle language, to make judgements and to reason.

It is interesting that to Locke's definition Voisin adds the concept of 'instinct' and it is possibly this idea that underlay one of the common indices of idiocy, ie. the inability to beget a child, the other tests traditionally being of the abilities to count to twenty, to measure a yard of cloth, to name the days of the week, to give the age and name of parents and to read. In aggregate, these tests provided an assessment of an individual's ability to function in society and to manage his/her own affairs. Where those affairs were of some significance the matter could be brought to court, but, as Sir William Blackstone points out in his Commentaries on the Laws of England (1765-9), there were few instances of juries convicting anyone of idiocy; they were more likely to bring in a verdict of *non compos mentis* which had different legal consequences. The distinction drawn in the Household Words article is close to the legal definition of an idiot *a nativitate*, who 'hath had no understanding from his nativity, and therefore is by law presumed never likely to attain any', whereas 'a lunatic, or *non compos mentis*, is one who hath had understanding, but by disease, grief, or other accident hath lost the use of his reason'.[45] Also classed as an idiot in law was anyone born deaf, dumb and blind, 'he being supposed incapable of understanding, as wanting those senses which furnish the human mind with ideas'.[46]

By the beginning of the nineteenth century recognition was dawning that not all those classified as idiots had the same problems. John Thelwall, in Imperfect Developements of the Faculties, Mental and Moral (1810), drawing on his experience of working with handicapped children, repudiated the notion that all idiocy was incurable, having learned that in some cases the child's mind 'is contracted in its sphere of activity by physical privation', thus producing the impression of 'supposed Deficiency of general Faculty'.[47] Such children could, he maintained, be helped with care and training. Not all writers on idiocy were as enlightened. Dickens owned an 1840 edition of John Abercrombie's Inquiries Concerning the Intellectual Powers

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[45]Sir William Blackstone, Commentaries on the Laws of England (1765-9), quoted in Hunter and Macalpine, pp.434, 435.
[46]Three Hundred Years of Psychology, p.435.
[47]John Thelwall, Imperfect Developements of the Faculties, Mental and Moral (1810), quoted in Three Hundred Years of Psychology, p.657.

and the Investigation of Truth (1830) and in 'Idiots' quotes with disapproval the old-fashioned ideas about idiocy expressed therein. But the discussions of Dr.Howe's institution in Boston and the efforts of Drs. Reed and Conolly in England indicate the more general awareness by the middle of the century of what could be done in this direction. It is the 1848 report of the Massachusetts' commissioners led by Dr.Howe that Dickens and Wills draw on for the second article on idiots in Household Words, seizing upon one particular statistic - that 44 out of the 95 children born into 17 families where the mother and father were related by blood were idiots. This is taken as reason enough to speak out against intermarriage, where, it is implied, the selfish desires of the parents can cause great suffering for themselves as well as their children. Once begotten, however, idiots must be properly treated and the article ends by recommending that we 'act upon the medium view...neither to cast out our idiots, like the savages who leave their helpless ones to perish, nor to worship them, as the pious Egyptians did'.[48] Comparing Barnaby Rudge with Wordsworth's 'The Idiot Boy', Iain Crawford suggests that although Dickens was not as interested as Wordsworth in revising attitudes to idiots and savages, he was perhaps more concerned than has usually been recognized. My survey of Dickens's non-fictional writing on idiocy and madness suggests that he certainly was, in one area of his work, involved in reforming public attitudes to those who were mentally defective, but I do not think that this was particularly part of his aim in writing Barnaby Rudge.

In examining the way Barnaby is represented I am not concerned with the issue of realism so much as with the degree to which that representation draws on the contemporary concept of an idiot. It will be my contention that, although in many ways he stands as a convincing enough idiot in nineteenth century terms (his lack of memory, his disjointed utterances, his seemingly irrational fears can all be accomodated within the contemporary understanding of the simple-minded, as can his attachment to and integration with the world of nature where he roams freely and unharmed, and his alienation from the social world where his simplicity is a source of danger), there are also extraneous elements in his representation that need to be accounted for otherwise. On the whole, Barnaby is presented externally and much emphasis is placed on his appearance. Not only is this typical of Dickens's method, but it can

[48]'Idiots Again', p.200.

Depiction of an idiot from Johann Jakob Engel, *Ideen zu einer Mimik* (Berlin: Mylius, 1785)

be related to the interest in physiognomy which developed into the phrenology that was so popular in the first half of the nineteenth century. In Barnaby Rudge, furthermore, the illustrations by George Cattermole and Hablot K.Browne (Phiz) play a particularly important role.[49] It is worth, therefore, looking at the relation between the illustrations of Barnaby and those of idiots in the studies of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

Probably the most influential study of idiocy for the nineteenth century was that of Johann Caspar Lavater, which was based on the tradition of classical physiognomy, the main source of his influence being the four-volume illustrated study of human physiognomy which appeared between 1774 and 1778. In this he characterizes the idiotic thus: 'Indolent distortion, animalistic obtuseness, convulsive attitude, crooked smiles, inconstancy, indifferentiatedness, vacancy, looseness - the usual, most common, most evident signs of inherent and natural stupidity'.[50] Publishing his Ideas toward a Mimetic Theory (1785) partly in response to Lavater, Johann Jakob Engel concentrated less on facial structure and more on the role of movement and gesture 'as a reflection of the intrinsic relationship between soul and body'.[51] His portrait of an idiot shows dropped head, unclosed lips, hanging chin, half-open eyes and hands in the pockets, and has an accompanying comment:

> Who does not recognize at first glance the weak inactive mind incapable of attention or interest; a mind, which never can bring even the limited energy to create a tension in his muscles so that the body carries itself correctly, that the limbs are held correctly. Only the most stupid and lazy can assume such a meaningless, mindless position.[52]

By moving outside those aspects of appearance that are beyond an individual's control (eg. bone structure), Engel might seem to legitimate the harsh moralistic attitude which lay behind the eighteenth century treatment of idiots and of which Dickens patently disapproved. And

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[49]The illustrations in Barnaby Rudge are discussed by Michael Steig in Dickens and Phiz (Bloomington, Indiana, 1978) and Jan Stevens, '"Woodcuts Dropped into the Text": The Illustrations in The Old Curiosity Shop and Barnaby Rudge', Studies in Bibliography, 20 (1967), 113-34.

[50]Quoted in Sander Gilman, Seeing the Insane, p.63.

[51]Gilman, Seeing the Insane, p.66.

[52]Gilman, Seeing the Insane, p.67.

the depiction of the whole of an idiot's person was unusual at a time when attention was usually concentrated on the face and cranium.[53]

There is some similarity between this depiction and that of Barnaby, most obviously in the late eighteenth century style of dress, but also in the drooping stockings and the long hair hanging in jagged clumps. But whereas Engel's idiot has his coat and waistcoat unbuttoned, Barnaby's is always done up, except in the third illustration of his sojourn in prison, and never is he represented, even in the prison scenes, in the posture of torpidity. On the contrary, his stance always demonstrates vigour and emotional alertness; even in the third prison scene, it is his mother who droops on his shoulder in the pose of the idiot, whilst Barnaby's arms are raised, occupied with decorating the hat he holds almost unnaturally high. Pictorially, then, Barnaby's idiocy is represented in the conventional drooped stocking and lanky hair, but otherwise he lacks the torpor of the Engel figure. That Dickens was well aware of the conventions of idiocy is made clear, not only in the opening paragraph of 'Idiots' which surveys the several types of representation he sees as belonging to different countries, but also in the section of American Notes that deals with the asylum on one of the New York islands. Here the inmates are described as types and include the 'moping idiot, cowering down with long, dishevelled hair'.[54] In fact, though, the dishevelled hair is, if anything, more a sign of the maniac than the idiot whose hair hangs lank and, apart from the detail of the broken sword, which might be symbolic of an idiot's supposed impotence, it is with characteristics of mania that Dickens describes Barnaby's first appearance in the novel (p.73-4). Also, the protruding eyes of the verbal description are as likely in the conventions of illustrating madness to represents mania as idiocy. The illustration at this point incorporates other signs of mania: splayed legs, waving arms, wild clothing and the fool's staff as represented by the flaming torch. Once Barnaby has become involved with the rioters, however, it is his care of his person, rather than the neglect and apathy of the idiot or the wild dishevellment of the maniac, that is remarked upon; Barnaby as the sentry outside The Boot has an 'erect and lofty bearing'

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[53]The work of Lavater and Engel was well-known in England, appearing in adaptations by Thomas Holcroft amongst others, and contributing to handbooks of theatrical gestures and expressions.

[54]American Notes, p.140.

and his 'poor dress' shows signs of 'careful arrangement' (p.478). There is no illustration of Barnaby at this point, but there is one of him defending himself against the Foot Guards who have come for his arrest, and this shows an almost heroic pose, Barnaby's person dominating the composition and only the somewhat anguished expression on the face giving him away. Equally significant is the first illustration showing him in Newgate. Although his body huddles in the typical posture of the melancholic, his face looks up and catches the sunlight that is streaming through the grated window. The image here is of one who is especially favoured by heaven. What I am suggesting is that both in the illustrations and the verbal descriptions, Barnaby is more alert than the conventional idiot of documentary accounts; that, in fact, his representation combines elements of both mania and idiocy, as well as aspects that are characteristic of neither, but might, as I shall later discuss, be attributed to a Holy Fool.

In making Barnaby an idiot, Dickens coalesces in symbolic form a number of motifs that run throughout the text. As an innate deficiency, idiocy dramatizes the tyrannical hold the past has over the present and, what is more, the deforming influence of a past that consists of greed, violence and fear. Many commentators have written about this theme in the novel and especially the way it is expressed through the parallel father-and-son relationships, which of course include Barnaby and Rudge. In this case the stigmatizing power of past evil is made still more emphatic by the literal stain on Barnaby's skin. This is an acute example of the materialism that Dickens embraces and that underpins the physiognomic tendency both of his fictional method and of so many of the studies of idiocy. As a pastor, it is not surprizing to find that Lavater was persuaded of every person's uniqueness, but his equally firm belief in the correspondence between outward and inner being has little to do with religious belief:

> For everything, because it is itself and not something else, has something in it with which it can be distinguished from everything else. Does this not tell us that an exact relationship exists between the soul and the body, between the internal and the external of man, that the infinite variety of the souls or the internal nature of man creates an infinite variety in his body or externality.[55]

But, given the infinite variety of souls and the infinite variety of bodies, there still remains the problem of pinning down the correspondences between states of the soul and their external

[55]Quoted in Gilman, Seeing the Insane, p.62.

expression. In his attempt to find the mind's construction in the face, Dickens plunges into superlatives and negatives when it comes to the difficult task of rendering the suggestion, merely, of horror:

> One thing about this face was very strange and startling. You could not look upon it in its most cheerful mood without feeling that it had some extraordinary capacity of expressing terror. It was not on the surface. It was in no one feature that it lingered. You could not take the eyes or mouth, or lines upon the cheek, and say, if this or that were otherwise, it would not be so. Yet there it always lurked - something for ever dimly seen, but ever there, and never absent for a moment. It was the faintest, palest shadow of some look, to which an instant of intense and most unutterable horror only could have given birth, but indistinct and feeble as it was, it did suggest what that look must have been, and fixed it in the mind as if it had had existence in a dream. (p.87)

I have quoted at length this description of Barnaby's mother to show how Dickens lingers over the mysterious blend of the physical and the psychological. Obviously the creation of mystery is one of the objects of this passage and equally obviously taking time over a description is one way of giving it importance, but the expression of the mother's face is important not only in itself and for clues it sets for the plot, but, as the subsequent paragraph makes clear, it is also significant in the way it is imprinted on Barnaby: 'More faintly imaged, and wanting force and purpose, as it were, because of his darkened intellect, there was this same stamp upon the son'. It is as if Barnaby, whilst still in the womb, had suffered the same terror as his mother. However telling facial expression is, though, it cannot tell the whole story: 'Seen in a picture, it must have had some legend with it, and would have haunted those who looked upon the canvas' (p.87). Barnaby, born on the very day the murder became known, his body and mind marked by the deed, seems to carry an overloading of signifiers indicative of the horror of Rudge's murder of his master and indicative, also, of the dire results attendant upon such actions.

Making Barnaby stand as mute testimony to his father's evil deeds is one way in which Dickens draws on conventional beliefs about idiocy. As I have already argued, though, the represention of idiocy in this case is not whole-hearted and there are features of the way that Barnaby is presented that are more usually associated with mania. But there is one aspect of both idiocy and insanity that, striking Dickens the journalist most forcibly, is rendered

imagistically in terms of darkness and light. Barnaby, too, is said to be of 'darkened intellect' (see quotation above) and later the narrator, in the summary description of the time spent in the country retreat, says: 'The daily suns of years had shed no brighter gleam of reason on his mind; no dawn had broken on his long, dark night' (p.416). Leaving aside the evidence of the later writing, what might be a *façon de parler* receives additional significance when it is remembered that so much of the action of the novel takes place in the dark. Furthermore, Barnaby's inseparable companion is a black raven who repeatedly insists 'I'm a devil'. There is a sense in which Grip functions as Barnaby's other self, hovering about him like a familiar, or like the shadow of the past as represented by his father.[56] Possibly there is also the suggestion that Barnaby has inherited his father's guilt, which is reinforced in the scene of recognition when, at the height of the disturbances, the three are united in prison. In the dark cell Barnaby hugs his father, questioning him about his mother: 'Not a word was said in answer; but Grip croaked loudly, and hopped about them, round and round, as if enclosing them in a magic circle, and invoking all the powers of mischief' (p.567). The tableau crystallizes symbolically what is happening in society at large, but Grip is too much of a comic creation to be taken seriously as a representative of evil. He is a *reductio ad absurdum* of Barnaby, who is himself an extreme instance in so many ways; Grip's parody of human speech emphasises the unthinking parroting that is really all that Barnaby's involvement in the riots amounts to, just as his discovery of the plunder hidden in Hugh's bed, a more successful effort than Barnaby's to find gold in London, is ultimately just as fruitless.

Grip is, as it were, an externalization of Barnaby's inner darkness, the 'blindness of the intellect' (as Stagg the evil blindman puts it, p.422) which alienates him from normal human life and, in some of the text's formulations, denies him a soul. The narratorial comment on his first appearance makes a harsh judgement: 'the absence of the soul is far more terrible in a living man than in a dead one; and in this unfortunate being its noblest powers were wanting' (p.74). Analogous with this observation is John Willet's facile dismissal of Hugh's claim to

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[56]The suggestion has been made that it is Hugh who is Barnaby's *doppelgänger* by Iain Crawford, '"Nature...Drenched in Blood": Barnaby Rudge and Wordsworth's "Idiot Boy"', Dickens Quarterly, 9 (1991), 28-47. I am not convinced by this. There are a series of parallels between them, but this is not enough to establish the mysterious symbiotic reationship that the concept of the *doppelgänger* requires.

consideration as a human being and the verdict that if he has a soul 'it must be such a very small one' that it does not signify what he does in the way of praying (p.150). Willet's attitude to Hugh, in fact, is very similar to the eighteenth century attitude to lunatics that Dickens the reformer so abhorred; considered to be 'quite an animal', the youth is indeed treated like an animal. The narrator does not otherwise align himself with Willet of whom the novel is clearly critical, but this early comment on Barnaby does betray conservative thinking about madness that is to become still more manifest in the second part of the book. But if Barnaby, especially at the opening, is depicted like one of the living dead in the emphasis on his vacant stare, the paleness of his complexion and his unfathomable appearances and disappearances, this is countered by his wild disorder and consternation at the sight of blood. And in later episodes there is little in Barnaby's conduct or the narratorial comment on him to support the theory that he lacks a soul. Having been captured at The Boot and confined at the barracks, for instance, he is described as behaving and feeling in a way that would be quite appropriate for any man of normal intellect with the narrator venturing to represent the scene through the idiot's perceptions and Barnaby's speech totally coherent. One may feel that his attachment to Grip would be better directed towards his mother, but in the latter important relationship, the son is again not consistently lacking in sensitivity. When, Rudge hidden in the closet of their London home, Mrs Rudge listens as Barnaby gives an account of his day's activities, he notices her fear, and a little later, in the dialogue about his birthday (p.191-2), he shows, not only remarkable perception, but greater powers of memory than were generally attributed to idiots or are attributed to Barnaby elsewhere in the novel.

Another feature of Barnaby's representation that is difficult to accommodate within the confines of idiocy is his vivid, premonitory imagination that, as has been so often noticed, links him with his creator. This imaginative power gives Barnaby a visionary role, that is one of the features of the Holy Fool. Furthermore, in his almost heroic indifference to intrigue and personal safety, and in his essential innocence, Barnaby does indeed stand above his companions. The passage where Dickens tells of his condemnation to death, like the description of the death of Little Nell, employs the device of a simple repeated phrase ('Barnaby was to die') to drive home the fate of a character who, a victim of circumstances

beyond his/her control, has risen to heights of dignified acceptance of his plight. And the illustration I commented on earlier casts the same, rather sentimental aura about the idiot. Unlike Little Nell, though, Barnaby's innocence is not combined with understanding; he has already shown the 'taint' of his inheritance and been swayed by the forces of corruption, and he therefore lacks true heroism. Similarly, he falls short of the status of Holy Fool, I think, in that he cannot really be said to possess the 'madness of Christianity'. There are indeed scenes where Barnaby is shown as being endowed with the grace of Christianity, but it is a gift outside his own sphere of action, undeserved by behaviour that is especially meritorious. In chapter 73, for instance, when, captured for the second time, Barnaby lies 'caged in his narrow cell', the moon shines in and he 'was as much lifted up to God, while gazing on the mild light, as the freest and most favoured man in all the spacious city' (p.658). If there is a sense of epiphany here, however, it seems to be gratuitous. There is no particular reason why Barnaby should be especially favoured at this point, nor has his mother acted with unusual merit. The suggestion of virtue is, in fact, slipped in by means of simile:

> But the moon came slowly up in all her gentle glory, and the stars looked out, and through the small compass of the grated window, as through the narrow crevice of one good deed in a murky life of guilt, the face of Heaven shone bright and merciful. (p.658)

The association of natural phenomena with God is common enough, not only in Dickens's work, but in that of many other writers, but here the further association with a 'natural' and his mother puts Dickens in the Wordsworthian camp of elevating the socially down-trodden and neglected. In the absence of any justification of this position in terms of actual deeds, though, this passage is representative of the retreat into a rather sentimentalized Christianity that seems designed to reduce the blame that must otherwise attach to Barnaby's behaviour. It is only possible to accept Barnaby as a Holy Fool, in fact, if one also accepts that imagination is equivalent in its mediations in the world of personal, social and political intrigue to those of Christianity. This is a proposition that Dickens develops more fully in Hard Times, but which is only suggested in Barnaby Rudge.

In choosing a species of madman as the eponymous protagonist, rather than, as was originally proposed, Gabriel Varden, the leading (though not unflawed) representative of

virtue, Dickens gives importance to that element of society which demands wise guidance if it is not to be corrupted by those self-seekers against whose wily machinations naivety is no protection. For the innocence, which might have been a defence, is no part of this materialistic world; Barnaby, literally tainted by the past, shares his father's and society's longing for wealth, which leads him into the centre of corruption. As another example of naivety manipulated by opportunists, Lord George Gordon stands as Barnaby's historical counterpart, as Gashford is Sir John Chesters' and Grueby is Varden's. But whereas Gashford and Grueby are semi-fictionalized, Gordon is not. It is perhaps for this reason that he is left as a fairly shadowy figure and his madness not fully explored. The first description of him, again focusing on externals, indicates insanity in comparatively subtle ways: his dress is remarkable only for its sobriety, but the lack of vitality is discernible also in the 'sallow' complexion, 'a certain lankness of cheek and stiffness of deportment'. In striking contrast, however, is his 'very bright large eye, which betrayed a restlessness of thought and purpose, singularly at variance with the studied composure and sobriety of his mien, and with his quaint and sad apparel' (p.336). It is the restlessness signalled in the eyes that associates Gordon with Barnaby. Dickens goes to some trouble to explain the expression of the nobleman's eye and face:

> It had nothing harsh or cruel in its expression; neither had his face, which was thin and mild, and wore an air of melancholy; but it was suggestive of an indefinable uneasiness, which infected those who looked upon him, and filled them with a kind of pity for the man: though why it did so, they would have had some trouble to explain. (p.336)

For all Dickens's mockery of religious extremism in general, he here seems concerned to treat Lord George with some sympathy, but at the same time to reveal him as a source of danger. The dialogue after their arrival at the inn shows how his deficiency of wit permits a stronger man to work on the 'something wild and ungovernable' that lies beneath his puritan demeanour (p.340). In this he is allied with Barnaby who has similar outbreaks and with the crowd, which also can be manipulated into becoming wild and ungovernable. Later we see Gashford pouring poison into his lord's ear and Lord George responding like one who is hypnotized. Dickens then makes explicit his assessment of the nobleman's state of mind:

> 'This lord was sincere in his violence and in his wavering. A nature prone to false enthusiasm, and the vanity of being a leader, were the worst qualities

> apparent in his composition. All the rest was weakness - sheer weakness; and it is the unhappy lot of thoroughly weak men, that their very sympathies, affections, confidences - all dwindle into foibles, or turn into downright vices. (p.346)

The final picture of Lord George before he rides off to London, is of a Don Quixote, grotesquely ill-suited to his situation and totally oblivious to the eccentricity of the effect he is creating. Like Barnaby, Gordon lives largely in a world of his own imagination, but unlike Barnaby his social position allows his sway to extend beyond his immediate circle and his qualities of mind are therefore of importance in the world at large.

Having established the position of the nominal leader of the riots, Dickens allows him to remain as a fairly shadowy figure. In part this is no doubt to be explained by the exigencies of historical fact; changing the names of the secretary of the association and Lord George's personal servant allows him some latitude for invention with respect to those two figures, but this is not possible with Lord George himself and presumably an absence of relevant material precluded a fuller investigation of the causes of his 'weakness'. But it is also appropriate in a text that is heavily symbolic that the 'leader' of the riots should remain pretty well hidden behind his henchman and the new recruits: Hugh, Dennis, Tappertit and Barnaby. He does, however, come centre-stage again for the important scene when he and Barnaby come face-to-face. This is one of those coincidences that can perhaps be accommodated, as Stignant and Widdowson suggest, by the 'random detailing of the "world"', but it is obviously crucial that they should meet.[57] The striking feature of the accompanying illustration is the contrast between Barnaby's fantastically ornamented clothing and the dour simplicity of Lord George's, but their stance and their holding of staffs gives the effect of a mirror-image. Lord George's involuntary recognition of their affinity is indicated by the blush which twice rises to his face belying his confidence in his own words. Like the episode in American Notes, this scene, schematically, represents the belief in the ability of madness to recognize itself in others. Lord George recognizes madness, but does not acknowledge it. To do so would, of course, have necessitated acknowledging the feeble-minded among his own supporters, if not his own weakness, and to do so would have required greater independence of Gashford's evil

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[57]Paul Stignant and Peter Widdowson, 'Barnaby Rudge - A Historical Novel?', Literature and History, 2 (1975), 2-44 (p.25).

promptings than is at any time conceivable. This scene underlines, then, the degree to which the riots are the responsibility of the maliciously self-seeking, as well as differentiating between the suppressed awareness and implicit rejection of moral responsibility on the part of the insane Gordon, as opposed to the oblivion of Barnaby, who, as an idiot, is absolved from such responsibility.

Lord George confronts Barnaby a second time, in chapter 57, whilst he is holding the fort at The Boot. On this occasion their companions are Grip and John Grueby instead of Gashford and Mrs.Rudge. Grueby's uncompromising answer to Lord George's question about Barnaby brings madness to the foreground:

> 'Did - did it seem to you that his manner was at all wild or strange?' Lord George demanded, faltering.
> 'Mad', said John, with emphatic brevity. (p520)

In response to his master's request for the signs of madness, Grueby draws attention to Barnaby's dress, his eyes, his restlessness, his cries of 'No Popery!'. Gordon recognizes the signifiers of his own madness, but when his rephrasing of the particular in general terms ('So because one man dresses unlike another...and happens to differ from other men in his carriage and manner, and to advocate a great cause which the corrupt and irreligious desert, he is to be accounted mad, is he?') is answered by Grueby's 'Stark, staring, raving, roaring mad, my lord', he refuses to acknowledge what is signified and arranges to part company with his one true adviser (p.520). Gordon by now seems to have surpassed the need for Gashford's tutelage and to be confirmed in his fanatical madness beyond the control of reason and in this he is representative of the mob, for by this time the crowd, too, has become excited beyond the control of reason, so that, interpolated between the scenes of riot and destruction, the meeting becomes emblematic of the state of things generally, a counterpart to the scene between Barnaby and his father commented on earlier.

The riots, then, can be seen as the result of manipulative, vengeful and greedy power-seekers working on the gullible and the oppressed so that they lose the defining attribute of humanity and become bestial; like the Gadarene swine, the crowd rushes into the arms of the unholy in the name of religion and, forgetting their higher purpose in the satisfaction of their appetites, become, like the mad, immersed in their own desires. The word 'mad', which has

been avoided in the descriptions of Barnaby and Lord George, is hammered out in scene after scene, as the crowd becomes a mob, and significantly, as he defends himself after Gordon's departure, even Barnaby is said to be dealing blows 'like a madman' (p.525) . As an idiot, he is not really mad; as a rioter, it is as if the metaphorical madness through which Dickens criticizes the behaviour of the mob, 'a moral plague...whose contagion spread like a dread fever: an infectious madness' (p.484), has infected him too. Sometimes, though, the description of the madness of the crowd slips its metaphorical moorings and appears real enough. Describing the frenzy of the rioters as they lay siege to Newgate, whose door 'although a sheet of flame, was still a door fast locked and barred' (p582), the narrator conveys the madness of the throng by describing the tremendous energy and senseless activity of the scene:

> The women who were looking on, shrieked loudly, beat their hands together, stopped their ears; and many fainted: the men who were not near the walls and active in the siege, rather than do nothing, tore up the pavements of the street, and did so with a haste and fury they could not have surpassed if that had been the jail, and they were near their object. Not one living creature in the throng was for an instant still. The whole great mass were mad. (p.583)

The madness of a crowd is something that Hobbes, in Leviathan (1651), treats very seriously:

> Though the effect of folly in them that are possessed of an opinion of being inspired, be not visible alwayes in one man, by any very extravagant action, that proceedeth from such Passion; yet when many of them conspire together, the Rage of the whole multitude is visible enough. For what argument of Madnesse can there be greater, than to clamour, strike, and throw stones at our best friends? Yet this is somewhat lesse than such a multitude will do. For they will clamour, fight against, and destroy those, by whom all their life-time before, they have been protected, and secured from injury. And if this be Madnesse in the multitude, it is the same in every particular man.[58]

In Hobbes's thinking, Rage of Madnesse is caused by 'excessive desire of Revenge' or 'Vehement opinion of the truth of any thing, contradicted by others'; madness is, in effect, excessive passion.

Thus far, Dickens would seem to be in agreement with Hobbes, and his depiction of the riots might well be a visualization of the concept of the 'Madnesse of the multitude' quoted above, but for the novel's ambiguity towards the lower classes and their relationship with

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[58]Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan (Harmondsworth, 1968), pp.140-1.

authority. Insofar as they are seen in the mass, they are damned by the narrator as 'the scum and refuse of London, whose growth was fostered by bad criminal laws, bad prison regulations, and the worst conceivable police' (p.453); but the treatment of the representative figures indicates a more complex set of attitudes. The long article by Paul Stignant and Peter Widdowson referred to earlier discusses in detail the novel's historical credentials and particularly the received opinion that Dickens was sticking close to the facts of the Gordon riots. They make out a strong case for bias on the novelist's part in that he ignores any possibility that riot might be the result of genuine working class agitation and not the goadings of evil-minded leaders. Certainly there is no part allowed to rational debate or working class initiative on ideological grounds and, although Dickens did abandon the original plan of having as leaders of the riots three lunatics escaped from Bedlam, the persistent references to madness harness old-fashioned notions of insanity to a nineteenth century preoccupation with the possibility of losing social control. The writing of these episodes, however, has an excitement and an intensity that indicates more than simple criticism; in common with many Victorian writers, Dickens shows a voyeuristic enjoyment of the depravity of the 'low' life he outwardly condemns. Inspired by Bakhtin's conception of carnival and the grotesque, Peter Stallybrass and Allon White in The Politics and Poetics of Transgression look at the high/low opposition as it cuts across four 'symbolic domains' at various times. Those symbolic domains they identify as: 'psychic forms, the human body, geographical space and the social order'.[59] Unlike the wholehearted enjoyment of the carnivalesque in earlier periods, the nineteenth century, they maintain, in its documentary as well as its fictional writing, displays a fascination and a disgust with the low and the dirty, but allows mention of the 'low' of the bourgeois body only when it is transcribed in terms of the topography of the city which already inscribes relations of class, gender, and race. [60] In Barnaby Rudge Sir John Chester represents the extremity of bourgeois rejection of and fear of contamination by the low, and through him Dickens exposes the hypocrisy of Victorian attitudes. But at the same time the very way the mob are reduced to ' a mad monster' and seen 'for the most part' as the detritus of the city

[59]Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, The Politics and Poetics of Transgression (London, 1986), p.3.
[60]Stallybrass and White, p.145.

(p.453), yet described with such exultation indicates an ambiguity of response on the part of the author.

The inconsistencies and contradictions of this novel which have been remarked on by Stignant and Widdowson amongst other critics, extend to the way madness and idiocy are treated in the book, as I have already shown, and yet another element is added to an already complex situation with the mention of Bedlam in the latter part of the book. As I pointed out at the beginning, Dickens does not appear to be concerned with the reproduction of an historically accurate picture of the institutional treatment of insanity in his fictional writing, and the evocation of Bedlam in Barnaby Rudge has less to do with the concrete presence of the asylum and more to do with the author's attitude to the rioting Londoners. In the description of the attack on the Warren (chapter 55) when similes of madness abound, the climactic point is signalled by the comparison of the frenzy of the attackers with the image of opening the gates of Bedlam and the issuing forth of the maniacs. This is a fairly commonplace device, drawing on popular conceptions of the lunatic hospital, but it is given a new twist, when, in chapter 67, as the riots gather in fury, we are told that there was a rumour that the rioters meant to throw open the gates of Bedlam:

> This suggested such dreadful images to the people's minds, and was indeed an act so fraught with new and unimaginable horrors in the contemplation, that it beset them more than any loss or cruelty of which they could foresee the worst, and drove many sane men nearly mad themselves. (pp604-5)

But this 'dreadful image', is, of course, the one that the narrator has already employed to describe the behaviour of the people. It is as though the 'mirror of recognition' has been brought before the mob and not only do they, like Lord George, fail to acknowledge the resemblance, but they do not even recognize themselves in the mirror. Drawing on the hyperbole of traditional fears of madness rather than a humanitarian understanding, Dickens conveys his own fear and detestation of the mob.

This quotation, furthermore, indicates why a mad mob should be so fearsome, for if the freeing of lunatics should suggest 'unimagineable horrors', more troubling than the worst of foreseeable consequences, then the madness of the mob, too, can lead them to act in ways that are disturbingly unpredictable. The fear of the unknown is surely a contributory factor in

Dickens's much-remarked conservatism. Unlike Carlyle, who saw the mob as an agent of necessary historical progress, Dickens, a sympathiser with 'moral force' rather than 'physical force' Chartism, had a horror of the loss of order and control that was implied when a crowd turned into a mob.[61] But it is a cruel irony that in Barnaby Rudge, the public authority that he sees as necessary to preserve law and order, perpetually threatens to 'resolve itself into nothing more than the violence at its disposal [and]...thus...presents the threat of becoming as savage as the savagery it was instituted to civilize'.[62] As Barnaby and his mother journey to London they meet, or rather are accosted by 'a fine old country gentlemen', a magistrate. It is a picaresque episode unnecessary in terms of the plot, but important in terms of theme. As a representative of law and order, he stands for harsh punishment and a total inability to understand the hardships of the poor. He is a character that Fielding would have recognized and his attitude to idiocy is one that nineteenth century reformists felt belonged to the eighteenth century: 'It's an excuse not to work. There's nothing like flogging to cure that disorder' (p.435). The other suggestion he makes is that the widow should shut Barnaby up. It is interesting that here Dickens falls into an anachronism, since the 'county institutions' which the 'gentleman' refers to belong to the time of the novel's composition rather than the time in which it is set. The slip is a mino. one, but betrays, I think, the way in which Dickens was in fact writing about his own society.

The widow does not, of course, have Barnaby confined, but the legal system does. As a leading rioter he must take his share of the guilt. By having him imprisoned and threatened with hanging, Dickens is making the point that even an idiot must be held responsible for such dangerous behaviour. But his subsequent last-minute release and pardon is achieved on the grounds of his idiocy, which indicates a less severe attitude. There is, though, some difficulty about allowing an exception to be made of Barnaby. His state of mind, it is made clear, is the result of his heritage, yet he is not alone in being thus at the mercy of the past. All the young men in the novel are, in one way or another oppressed by paternal authority, and Hugh, in particular, is shown to be one of society's unfortunates. By having Barnaby rescued from the

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[61]Dickens's attitude to revolution is compared with that of Carlyle by William Oddie, Dickens and Carlyle: The Question of Influence (London, 1972), chapter 7.
[62]Myron Magnet, Dickens and the Social Order (Philadelphia, 1985), p.6.

fate that the other rioters suffer, Dickens seems to be exonerating him on the grounds of diminished responsibility, but his consciousness of wrong is reflected in the break-down and amnesia he suffers after his rescue. The shadow that the past has exerted over the present thickens into 'a dark cloud' which effectively cuts him off from all that has happened previous to his recovery (p.737). Barnaby is allowed to survive, but only on the condition of temporal and geographical severance; not only does he lose contact with his past, except insofar as he conceives of his condemnation and escape as 'a terrific dream', but 'he never could be tempted into London' (p.737). Having learned his lesson, he is rewarded by the bestowal of greater rationality; he is said to have 'a better memory and greater steadiness of purpose'; restored to the rural community, he presents no threat to society. The nostalgia of this ending is reflected in the fate of the other leading characters. Tappertit alone, 'Shorn of his graceful limbs', finds a modest prosperity in the urban environment (p.734). Barnaby, thus excluded from the site of his crime and mentally divorced from it by reason of his breakdown and loss of memory, is a re-formed character and the moral slate is wiped clean.

CHAPTER 3

VISION AND REVELATION: JANE EYRE AND THE 'MIRROR OF RECOGNITION'

In the chapter on Jane Eyre in that classic of feminist criticism, The Madwoman in the Attic, Gilbert and Gubar draw attention to the novel's borrowing of 'the mythic quest- plot...of Bunyan's male Pilgrim's Progress'.[1] In thus drawing attention to one of the novel's literary forebears, they emphasise the elements of Bildungsroman and religious allegory, but mask the novel's trajectory which is more complex than Christian's linear progress. Twice Jane returns to a previous home, finding it either metaphorically or literally in ruins, and her final resting place is also a return 'home' because it is a return to Mr Rochester. Gilbert and Gubar argue for a reading of Jane Eyre as her struggle from 'the imprisonment of her childhood toward an almost unthinkable goal of mature freedom'.[2] Reversing the direction of Paradise Lost, they say that goal is achieved, not in the Celestial City, but in the 'natural paradise' of Ferndean.[3] In accepting their insights into the novel's criticisms of patriarchal attitudes and institutions, I intend to examine the extent to which, for Jane, the realization of self is the discovery of home. Both the concept of 'self' and that of 'home' are, I shall argue, imbricated with the issue of madness and in trying to unpack the layers I shall be concerned with what the text reveals of the interplay between madness as a convention of gothic literature and madness as it was understood in contemporary clinical writing. For Jane Eyre is also more complex than Pilgrim's Progress in its use of symbolism and its counterpointing of different modes of writing. As many critics have noted, the novel contains elements both of romanticism and of realism, swinging from rational

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[1]Gilbert and Gubar, p.336.
[2]Gilbert and Gubar, p.339.
[3]Gilbert and Gubar, p.370.

explanation to melodramatic outburst, from the prosaic to the poetical, from the mundane to the mystical.[4] By offering itself as an 'autobiography', the text confines itself to a single consciousness and makes a plea for realism; by orchestrating a linguistic polyphony, however, it undercuts any attempt at monologic interpretation and exposes the extent to which that consciousness is formed by a multiplicity of social forces. In addition, the strong symbolic element encourages a play of meaning, such as we shall find also in Dracula, in which interpretation will be an imaginative as much as a rational endeavour.

Mary Coleridge's poem, 'The Other Side of the Mirror', quoted in Gilbert and Gubar, has a striking resemblance, in its representation of a mad image caught in a mirror, to Jane's vision on the eve of her wedding. In both, the speaker sees in the mirror a 'face bereft of loveliness' belonging to a savage woman who has 'no voice to speak her dread'; in both the imagery of fire is used to suggest destructive passion. I would suggest, however, that there is an important difference in that what the poet sees is a metonymic vision, whereas Jane's is metaphoric. The mad woman in the poem is recognized as contiguous with or part of the woman writing; the mad woman at Thornfield, however closely she may be identified with Jane (and this is something that I shall discuss later) is nevertheless an autonomous character and it is indeed her separate existence and the attempt to substitute Jane in her place as Rochester's wife that leads to the novel's central peripeteia. If, by the end of the century, Mary Coleridge can turn to madness as a way of talking about herself, the writer in the middle of the century must be more circumspect - in fiction at least. I am suggesting, as a working hypothesis, that the conventions of fictional writing generally, until the end of the nineteenth century, were incompatible with an interior representation of madness in any obvious way, because of society's understanding of and reaction to insanity.

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[4]These ideas are expressed by, for instance, Terry Eagleton in his chapter on Jane Eyre in Myths of Power, (London, 1975), pp.15-32, and David Lodge in 'Fire and Eyre: Charlotte Brontë's War of Earthly Elements' in Language of Fiction. Essays in Criticism and Verbal Analysis (London, 1966), pp.114-143.

The gothic and sensationalist genres, however, did allow possibilities that were denied to social or psychological realism. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick in The Coherence of Gothic Conventions, has drawn attention to the importance of convention in gothic fiction; like melodrama, it is a formulaic genre.[5] In such writing, she contends, surface is all-important, not for what it conceals, but in itself. Characters are revealed in terms of speech and behaviour; there are no hidden depths. As Peter Brooks observes of melodrama, so Sedgwick notes that the gothic is frequently involved in the 'unspeakable'.[6] This relates not just to characters who cannot or will not speak, but the difficulty stories have in getting themselves told, the missing or undecipherable manuscripts, interrupted revelations, words that cannot quite be heard and so forth. Madness has a natural place in this world; an object of normality's gaze, seen as a surface distortion, it too has unique problems of expression. Robert Heilman assesses the effect of the gothic in Jane Eyre as releasing 'new patterns of feeling'; in Brontë's novels, he writes, gothic 'is no longer oriented in marvelous circumstance but moves deeply into the lesser known realities of human life'.[7] Sedgwick is critical of Heilman's approach because it loses touch with the original idea of gothic; she maintains that he reinterprets the conventions in terms of psychological insight, which misses the fundamental concern of these conventions with, precisely, surface. Unlike Ann Radcliffe, Brontë does not always contrive to explain rationally 'supernatural' phenomena, but her use of the autobiographical mode and one, moreover, that is 'written' by an unusually astute and self-aware subject does, I feel, indicate an interest in the depths of the human psyche that, according to Sedgwick, is lacking in the eighteenth century gothic novel. But this is not to deny that madness is represented here in terms of such external aspects as physiognomy and behaviour and, on the surface, is condemned in terms that were strong even for the first half of the nineteenth

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[5]Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, The Coherence of Gothic Conventions.
[6]Peter Brooks, The Melodramatic Imagination (London, 1976). For a fuller discussion of the ideas expressed in this book see chapter 4.
[7]Robert B.Heilman, 'Charlotte Brontë 's "New" Gothic', in From Austen to Conrad, edited by R.C.Rathbone and M.Steinmann (Minneapolis, 1958), pp. 118-132 (p.123).

century. What I hope to show is that the device of the mirror, a reflecting surface, permits a more complex response to be detected.

Rosemarie Bodenheimer has analyzed the various fictional modes operating within the text, thus indicating its concern not simply to tell the story of Jane's life, but to lay bare the struggle of finding a way of telling that story.[8] Illuminating as this article is, it largely ignores the biblical element which seems to me to be such an important dimension. Religion, as represented by Mr.Brocklehurst and St.John Rivers is a major theme, and also the language is shot through with biblical references, both implicit and explicit. Not only does this encode Jane's experiences as spiritual trials, but, insofar as she is depicted as struggling against patriarchal restrictions, those restrictions are represented as having the force of religion behind them. The Law of the Father hardly admits of appeal when it is also the Law of God. Bearing in mind, then, the religious dimension of the text, I should also like to focus attention on its preoccupation with ways of seeing. Bewick's vignettes, and Jane's paintings and drawings are the more obvious ways in which the visual is highlighted, but also, at key moments, Jane views herself in mirrors as if she is gazing at a portrait, and verbal portraits are painted by, for instance Mrs. Fairfax and Mr.Rochester, as well as by Jane herself. The frequent recourse to the present tense, too, indicates an interest in the synchronic as well as the diachronic in story-telling; a particular moment is caught in time and preserved like the lovers on Keats' urn, framed, as it were, grammatically. The moments then become another type of fixed image, outside the narrative movement of the rest of the text, and thus analogous with the other fixed images of painting, portraiture and so on. Furthermore, verbal description of surroundings, whether inside or out, manifests an interest in visual effect and even, as when Jane, with ingenious synaesthesia, describes the scene of her first meeting with Mr.Rochester, makes explicit the pictorial analogy: 'A rude noise broke on these fine ripplings and whisperings...which effaced the soft wave-wanderings; as, in a picture,

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[8]Rosemarie Bodenheimer, 'Jane Eyre in Search of Her Story', in The Brontës, edited by Harold Bloom, Modern Critical Views (New York, 1987), pp.155-168.

the solid mass of a crag, or the rough boles of a great oak...efface the aërial distance of azure hill...where tint melts into tint'.[9] An article by Peter J.Bellis differentiates between the male gaze, 'penetrating, fixing and defining woman as its object' and the female gaze, operating from a marginal position, aiming to conceal or withhold itself from the male.[10] 'In Jane Eyre', he says, 'sexual power and social power is visual power',[11] and he traces the way in which Jane, whilst remaining bound by masculine structures of power, tries to reverse and redefine them, appropriating both the gaze and the written word for the heroine. As I have discussed in chapter 1, madness represents a supreme example of the objectification of the male gaze, on the one hand, and also of the deprivation of verbal authority, on the other. I shall now trace the sequence through the novel of those occasions when attention is focused upon insanity.

The first time that madness is mentioned in the book is associated with one of these moments of stock-taking. Having flown at John Reed in 'a moment's mutiny', Jane is compared by Bessie to a 'mad cat'. She is seen as a 'picture of passion', acknowledges herself to be 'a trifle beside myself' and is immediately locked in the red-room (pp.11-12). The phrase ' a trifle beside myself' which she then glosses as 'or rather *out* of myself, as the French would say', seems to be an attempt to distance her 'normal' self from the disgraceful aspects of behaviour which embroil her in a familiar picture of Victorian madness: uncontrollable passion, animalism, physical strength and the need for confinement. As Charlotte Perkins Gilman was to do in 1892 and Antonia White in 1954, Brontë tackles the task of depicting the emotional turmoil attending an imprisonment that is felt to be both frightening and unjust. The sane adult self acts as an observer of her younger self, just as throughout the novel she acts as the observer of others, her own respect for justice guaranteed by the attempt to see things from

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[9]Charlotte Brontë, Jane Eyre, edited with an Introduction by Margaret Smith,Oxford English Novels (London, 1973), p.113. All references will be to this edition and will be incorporated in the text.
[10]Peter J.Bellis, 'In the Window-Seat: Vision and Power in Jane Eyre', English Literary History, 54 (1987), 639-652, p.639.
[11]Bellis, p.639.

Mrs.Reed's point of view. At the time, though, it is the feeling that she is 'the scapegoat of the nursery' (p.16) that predominates and it is John Reed, the representative of patriarchal authority, who is her chief persecutor. If the young Jane is depicted as out of control of her self, the adult Jane secures control of the text and the way she tells her own story ensures that the accusation of madness is fleeting only and, outside of the Reed household, her behaviour carries little moral opprobrium. Involuntarily catching sight of herself in the looking-glass, Jane sees a 'strange little figure...I thought it like one of the tiny phantoms, half fairy, half imp, Bessie's stories represented' (p.14). The exchange of gazes ('the strange little figure there gazing at me') emphasises both the extent to which Jane is registering a double identity and their equality of status, one of the figures being as conspicuously an alien in the human world as Jane, the 'noxious thing' is in the Reed household.

Ernst Gombrich in Art and Illusion has drawn attention to the way in which our expectations affect what we see, how representation and perception are determined by frame of reference. Here, of course, there is a transference from the verbal (Bessie's tales) to the visual (the image in the mirror), which is itself verbally re-created. The use of a simile at this point, making the comparison explicit, emphasises Jane's role in shaping the image; however powerless it is, she has the power to shape it. Not only does she change the little girl into a supernatural creature but she transforms the 'great looking- glass', into a 'visionary hollow' in which her surroundings look 'colder and darker than in reality'. The word, 'visionary' here draws attention to the distinction between vision as 'a thing actually seen' (OED) or the act of actually seeing, and vision as something 'which is apparently seen otherwise than by ordinary sight; esp. an appearance of a prophetic or mystical character, or having the nature of a revelation' (OED). Taken together with the simile, it seems to emphasise the degree to which we are entering into Jane's imagination. It is particularly this tenuous distinction between vision and revelation, the possibility of the vision's presenting the appearance of a revelation that is, I think, important in this novel, and one way of reading it is to see Jane's quest not simply for 'mature freedom' but for revelation. In other words it is a

quest for some sort of truth, not necessarily a God-given truth, but a truth she has created for herself. In this incident, then, Jane sees herself as a spirit and is seen by others as mad, both visions drawing on the concept of alienation, which is to be explored throughout the novel. Madness in this scene is revealed as a label of convenience in that it justifies the confinement of someone who proves to be troublesome, but at the same time internal analysis explains and validates the 'mad' behaviour as a natural response to injustice.

Bertha Rochester is, of course, the focus of the book's interest in madness. Gilbert and Gubar maintain that 'every one of Bertha's appearances - or, more accurately, her manifestations - has been associated with an experience (or repression) of anger on Jane's part' (p360). The incidents that are then cited ignore the very first 'manifestation' and make no attempt to justify the charge of repression on those occasions when Jane's 'anger' is not itself manifest. In a circular argument, it is Bertha's manifestation that is interpreted as evidence of repressed anger. These critics thus, I would argue, are as unjust to Bertha as the characters in the novel, for the sequence through which Bertha gradually reveals herself can be seen as a subsidiary narrative, whose protagonist lacks the power of verbal articulation, so that there is a constant struggle between her own vocal and physical declarations and the interpretations of them that are imposed by others. Yet, at the same time, the novel's claim for symbolic reading directs the reader towards just this sort of interpretative activity.

She first reveals herself as a noise, 'a distinct, formal, mirthless' laugh emanating from one of the rooms in Bluebeard's castle (p.108). The laughter follows Jane's venture on to the battlements, where she has contemplated a scene of pastoral peace and idyllic beauty, 'a sunlit scene of grove, pasture, and green hill' with the hall at its centre (p.107). The descent back through the trapdoor then seems like a descent into the nether regions, the attic is 'black as a vault' after the 'arch of blue air' she has been gazing up at (p.107). It is the hall itself that is harbouring not only mystery, it seems, but evil. Jane's view from the battlements consequently comes to seem idealistic, an

open space in contrast with the confinement of Thornfield Hall, a vision, though, not a revelation. This view, however, has further significance, for it is linked with the reference to Bluebeard's castle. Rochester, whose name is presumably meant to remind readers of the eighteenth century rake and poet, is, as we later discover, a small-scale Bluebeard, so in this sense the allusion is premonitory. Also, just as the wife's sister in the fairytale anxiously scours the countryside from the top of the tower, looking for signs of their rescuing brothers, so, as is soon made clear, Jane's view from the battlements becomes a measure of her confinement. Despite the fairytale reference, the scene is depicted as one of extreme mundanity, the 'preternatural' quality of the laugh defused by the unromantic, unghostly appearance of Grace Poole. Grace acts as scapegoat, bearing the blame for Bertha's misdemeanours; her very name, in a novel where names are richly suggestive, indicates an association with Christian virtue. As Bertha's public image, she bears responsibility, at least initially, for her transgressions, allowing for a commonsense explanation of apparently supernatural phenomena. The juxtaposition of the imaginative with the prosaic does to an extent deflate the gothic terrors, but it does not entirely dissipate them.

The following chapter opens with a summary of Jane's early days at Thornfield and the second reference to Bertha's presence is less the recounting of a specific incident than a general reference to the hearing of 'the same low, slow ha! ha!' and 'eccentric murmurs' she 'not unfrequently' hears whilst walking along the third storey corridor, trying to relieve the restlessness and agitation she cannot help feeling, given her sequestered life and lack of 'practical' experience, by allowing her 'mind's eye to dwell on whatever bright visions rose before it ... and, best of all, to open my inward ear to a tale that was never ended' (p.110). Jane longs for 'a power of vision' to overpass the limit of the 'dim horizon' she sees from the leads, the ambiguity of the word 'vision' here including both physical sight and a more metaphysical concept that unites power and the ability to form ideals. Speaking from her vantage point as narrator rather than participant, she addresses the reader in a direct polemic that takes on a feminist hue, vigorously protesting against the claim that 'human beings ought to

be satisfied with tranquillity' and asserting that women, who are 'supposed to be very calm generally', 'feel just as men feel' (p.110). The passage ends: 'It is thoughtless to condemn them, or laugh at them if they seek to do more or learn more than custom has pronounced necessary for their sex' (p.111). When, in the very next sentence, 'Grace Poole's...low, slow ha! ha!' breaks out, therefore, it is as if it is mocking Jane's aspirations and might be considered 'thoughtless', but for the irony that it emanates, as we later discover, from one who is even more confined than Jane.

In his essay 'The Domestication of Madness', Andrew Scull, as I pointed out in the first chapter, draws attention to two different aspects of the 'domestic'; on the one hand it is used in opposition to wild or untamed, on the other hand it defines the opposite of public. Both these meanings are, he finds, implicated in the changes that took place during the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries as the social responses to madness switched from efforts to tame the wildly asocial to attempts to transform the insane into better socialized members of a family. Jane Eyre represents a domestication of madness in rather a different sense; it is literally made part of the home. The significance of Thornfield as a place of discomfort, difficulty and trial that is embedded in its name, is partially occluded by Jane's realization on her return from the visit to Gateshead, that it is her home. But her idea of home is intimately connected with her love for Rochester: 'wherever you are is my home - my only home' (p.248). The succeeding manifestations of the mad wife can be plotted against Jane's developing relationship with Rochester, forming, in fact, a commentary on it and finally forcing them apart. Until he appears on the scene madness is confined to laughter in the attics, counterpointed by appearances of the prosaic Grace and her bottle of porter. Since Rochester's return is immediately prefaced by the passage referred to above, his arrival seems like a response to Jane's desires. But if the 'bright visions' created for her mind's eye and the tale told to her 'inward ear' are greeted by mocking laughter, the bright visions and the tales following his return would appear to precipitate a more violent reaction.

Jane's third experience of Bertha follows her internal declaration of interest in

Mr.Rochester, her realization that should he be absent during the the ensuing months 'how joyless sunshine and fine weather' would seem (p.148). The mysterious sounds, 'a vague murmur, peculiar and lugubrious' and the subsequent discovery of an attempt to burn him in his bed appear as if in answer to her question, 'What alienates him from the house?' (p.148). I shall be talking in a later chapter about the association, typical in gothic literature, between the house and its owner, in which the house functions as an allegory of the owner's soul. Here, the idea of alienation is reflected in the madness within, for, as I have already pointed out, 'alienation' was a common term in the nineteenth century for insanity, and again Bertha, manifesting herself as if in response to Jane's internal thought processes, is associated with the disruption of tranquillity: Jane's 'inward tranquillity' is 'broken' by hearing the sounds. The account of the laughter which seems to be at her very keyhole is given a more melodramatic flavour this time; the incident is 'marrow-freezing'; the laughter is non-human, 'demoniacal' or 'goblin'. 'Was that Grace Poole? and is she possessed with a devil?' Jane wonders, with unconscious ironical reference to medieval conceptions of insanity (p.149). But although on this occasion no Grace Poole appears to dismiss the terrors, Jane still holds out the possibility of a rational explanation: perhaps the touch against her bedroom door is the fault of the wandering Pilot. Instead, Jane finds Mr.Rochester like a demon himself surrounded by tongues of flame. In his analysis of the part played by the elements in the semiotic of Jane Eyre, David Lodge focuses on the important and complex role of fire imagery, both literal and figurative, in the novel. He does not, in fact, refer to this instance, because his main concern is with hearth-fires, which are 'important points of reference in the depiction of Jane's struggle towards a life of decent animal comfort', on the one hand, and, on the other, metaphors of fire, which 'express the exciting, invigorating, frightening inner life of passionate self-fulfilment, and at the same time the disaster and punishment that wait upon an excessive indulgence in passion'.[12] As Lodge points out, there are references to hell-fire, and it

[12]Lodge, pp.121-2.

also seems that this aspect is implicated in the condemnation of passion. Bertha's incendiarism, then, both here and later, can be interpreted as both a parody of the domestic fire and home comforts, and their destruction. In this first outbreak, however, it is not so much the home, but the owner of that home who is the object of her attentions and the fire, in recalling the fundamentalist ideas of Mr.Brocklehurst, suggests that Bertha is condemning her husband to hell, as, he later tells Jane, he was condemned to hell by his marriage to her (p.312). Nor is the incident free of the figurative equation of fire and passion. As Rochester finally dismisses Jane, she comments: 'Strange energy was in his voice, strange fire in his look' (p.152).

In a crucial congruence of two main elemental motifs of the novel, she has thrown water on to the flames; the couch has thus been 'baptized' and she has extinguished the fire 'by God's aid'. Jane's introduction of a Christian dimension is comically reduced to superstition by Rochester's exclamation: 'In the name of all the elves in Christendom, is that Jane Eyre?...What have you done with me, witch, sorceress?' (p150). Through bathos, the text at this point appears to deflate Jane's claim to the status of religious saviour; symbolically it asserts the dousing of his passion by her common-sense. A footnote to the scene is provided by the description of her sleepless night, 'tossed on a buoyant but unquiet sea' (p.153). It is, then, no dream that she experiences, though it seems like one, but a rendering of her thoughts in visionary terms. As earlier on the battlements, she looks towards a paradisiacal scene she is unable to enter, but this time she recognizes the vision as indeed a vision and the concluding gloss, 'Sense would resist delirium: judgement would warn passion' (p182), stands also as a gloss on the incident as a whole, in which Jane's sense has resisted Bertha's delirium and Rochester's passion. His command of silence, though, ('say nothing about it') draws her into the deceitful territory he already largely inhabits and has reaffirmed through his acquiescence in her suggestion that Grace Poole has been responsible for the conflagration.

Shortly after this Blanche Ingram is introduced and Jane is forced to confront her own 'senselessness' (p.163), recognizing that she is capable of delirium. There is,

however, an intermediary passage in which Jane tries to fathom the mystery of Grace Poole. She focuses on the question of the power that Grace seems to hold over him and in so doing could in fact be reflecting on the power that she herself holds over their master: 'I don't think she can ever have been pretty; but, for aught I know, she may possess originality and strength of character to compensate for the want of personal advantages' (p.158). Having balked at Grace's 'uncomely' appearance, she realizes that she is trying to understand by making a comparison with her own situation and realizes further how little she wants to be compared with Grace, and, indeed, how little she merits it. It is a question of appearance and of social standing, and on both these grounds, no matter how Jane may congratulate herself on how she appears in comparison with Grace, she makes a poor showing beside Blanche Ingram. Just as she has constructed an image of a desirable Grace in her head, so she now constructs an image of the obviously desirable Blanche on ivory. In the first case she tries to reach behind the impression created by first-hand visual perception; in the second case she gives pictorial expression to Mrs.Fairfax's verbal description; in both cases she makes direct comparison with herself and uses Mr.Rochester's taste as her frame of reference.

Fundamentally the situation is one familiar to the 'romance' that in various guises has appealed throughout the ages: the heroine is confused by the hero's ambiguous behaviour and intrigued by his mysterious past. Janice Radway draws on the psychoanalysis of Nancy Chodorow in her analysis of American women's favourite romances, arguing that 'the female self is a self-in-relation, which is later generalized as a view of the self as an extension or continuation of the world and others'.[13] This not only explains the appeal of romance, which replicates the desire of its female readers for a reciprocal psychic involvement and provides a successful outcome, but accounts for the conventional pattern of romance writing. Radway directs attention to the frequency with which the life of the romantic heroine starts from a blank, and this is also observed by Sedgwick in respect of the gothic heroine. Sedgwick, of course, is

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[13]Janice A.Radway, Reading the Romance (London, 1984), p.136.

concerned with literature whose conventions aim to arouse horror and terror, where shock and the thrill of the strange are the chief ends. Radway, on the other hand, is writing about a genre that works towards domestic realism, whose appeal lies largely in the exciting overlay to a familiar psychic drama. Jane Eyre combines features of both and, thus, both Sedgwick's emphasis on the importance of surface in gothic conventions and Radway's mode of psychoanalytic interpretation seem to be relevant. The heroine of many a romance is 'plucked from her earlier relationships and thrust out into a public world'.[14] In a variation on this pattern, Jane, having been 'thrust' (not entirely against her own desires) into the world of Lowood, thrusts herself into the rather private world of Thornfield. Indeed, it is precisely her inability to enter into a 'public' world that I have drawn attention to above. Partly, of course, this is a factor of historical context, but it is also to do with the intensely internal approach of the novel. Jane never does enter a public world; the communities she lives in are small-scale and patriarchal, cut off from 'the masses of life'. It could be said that, in its reliance on symbolism and its often 'poetical' mode of writing, Jane Eyre is characterized by metaphor as much as metonymy, and that the situations, characters and events of the novel stand for, rather than realistically represent their counterparts in the real world.

Radway comments on how, in the romantic narrative, 'two initially distinct stories are progressively intertwined; in fact, the heroine's search for her identity dovetails rather quickly with the tale of her developing relationship to the hero'.[15] Jane's progress is not quite a 'search for identity', though she does indeed find her nominal identity in discovering her cousins. Sedgwick notes the frequency with which gothic heroines have names suggestive of whiteness or innocence, or begin with the initial letter of the alphabet. In Jane Eyre Blanche's name, her fine bust, sloping shoulders, long graceful neck and the pure white clothing Mrs.Fairfax describes might qualify her as a heroine, but her glossy black hair and swarthy complexion are not typical, uniting her rather with the vampiric figure of Bertha, as Mr.Rochester is later

[14]Radway, p.138.
[15]Radway, p.139.

to remark. Moreover, it is Jane whose life starts from a blank, and the intrusion of Blanche at this point in the narrative, when Jane is beginning to gather confidence through her realization of her power over Rochester, and the textual juxtaposition with the passage reflecting on Grace Poole seems like the testing of another hypothesis, the trying out of a different kind of 'heroine' as a possible partner for Rochester, 'an accomplished lady of rank' instead of 'a Governess, disconnected, poor, and plain' (p.163). In her recent study of Brontë's work, Penny Boumelha suggests that Jane Eyre has a 'singleness of focus' that 'extends even to making most of the characters projections or fragments of Jane Eyre, J.E., "je", the narrating "I"'.[16] During this episode Jane seems to take on a Grace-like role: she emerges from her 'asylum', which confines the reluctant Adèle, to fetch victuals, like Grace leaving her lair on the third storey, and, seated with her book in the window-seat, she is the silent observer of Blanche's social performance. It is soon established that Blanche's qualities of personality disqualify her for the role of 'heroine'; they also, as we later discover, disqualify her for the role of the second Mrs.Rochester. I shall return to the significance of Blanche in the symbolic working of the text, but for the moment I shall explore the stimulus which jealousy of her apparent success provides for another passage of self-examination.

As I noted above, Jane confronts her own 'senselessness'; in an extended metaphor she presents herself for legal judgement and reaches a verdict on her 'folly': 'it is madness in all women to let a secret love kindle within them' (p.163). The conflation of madness, secrecy, love and fire is central to the plot, and the metaphors through which its meaning is explored focus at various times on different elements. Here, the focus is on fire. The quotation continues: '...which, if unreturned and unknown, must devour the life that feeds it; and, if discovered and responded to, must lead *ignis-fatuus*-like, into miry wilds whence there is no extraction'. The first alternative absorbs fire into a secondary metaphor of food, whilst the second reduces it to an hallucination

[16]Penny Boumelha, Charlotte Brontë, Key Women Writers (Brighton, 1990), p.76.

and loses it in the combination of the elements of earth and water. There is a strange inconsistency in the second alternative, which of course foreshadows (except that extraction is possible) Jane's eventual fate, since presumably the secrecy of the love is its unknown-ness. If, in the face of existing circumstances, Rochester was to discover and respond to Jane's love, there seems to be no reason why they should not live happily ever after. The secrecy of the love, then, must lie in the social incompatibility, which reads retrospectively as a metaphor for what is at the time a spiritual incompatibility.

When Bertha disturbs the apparent tranquillity of Thornfield the next time it is to attack her brother, Richard Mason, whose arrival has coincided with Rochester's abandonment of his gypsy masquerade. Elaine Showalter's comments on Bertha's madness in The Female Malady emphasise the connection with the moon: 'Her worst attacks come when the moon is "blood-red" (ch. 25), or "broad and red" (ch. 27), suggesting that the madness is 'linked to female sexuality and the periodicity of the menstrual cycle'.[17] I am not denying the connection with sexuality, nor indeed that there is some connection with the moon, but the lunar association is not what Showalter describes. Neither of the references quoted above refers to an occasion when Bertha is having one of her 'worst' attacks, and the assault on Mason, which could be reckoned another bad one, happens when the moon is 'silver-white and crystal clear' (p.207). Jane is awoken by the moon shining in through the 'unveiled' panes. It is her move to draw the curtain that immediately precedes and, in fact, seems to provoke the cry. Veiling is a common image for concealment, suggesting purity and decorum, as well as mystery, and has a significance in this text far beyond its almost casual use here, but the connotations of the combination of moon and veiling can only be fully explored in this instance retrospectively. At this point the cry seems to read as a protest against shutting out the moon, and what she represents. The cry's close connection with Jane herself is reinforced by its provenance from overhead - 'yes, in

[17]Showalter, p.67.

the room just above my chamber-ceiling' (p.208). Rending the night's rest 'in twain', it presages both the splitting of the horse-chestnut and, even to the use of the same biblically-flavoured phrase, the ripping of the wedding veil. This 'wild shriek' is described in melodramatic detail, recalling the Bewick illustrations in the comparison with the condor, and, by attributing the utterance to an 'it', a 'thing', implying Bertha's non-human status and again linking it to Jane, who is herself described on more than one occasion as a 'thing'. The non-human is revealed as more explicitly animal, when, having been taken up to the third-floor apartment, Jane hears 'a snarling, snatching sound, almost like a dog quarrelling' (p.211).

Rochester appoints Jane as custodian whilst he fetches the doctor and, fastened into the 'mystic cell', her vigil is chronicled with melodramatic rhetoric. This is only one of a number of solitary ordeals that Jane is subjected to: in the red room, shamed at Lowood, wandering on the moor. As at Gateshead, she is locked into a room of forbidding aspect and uncertain illumination, but this time she is a trusted aide and confidante, not a terrified little girl undergoing punishment; this time madness is presented as external to her. But, like Bertha, Jane is silenced; forbidden conversation with Mason, she can only ask questions of herself - questions which remain unanswered. She is confined to a world where the only dialogue permissible is in her own head. Madness is not mentioned; the hidden Bertha is reified as a 'crime', a 'mystery'. Mr.Rochester's explanations have led only to a discrepancy between visual and aural evidence, which focuses attention on the disparity between outward appearance and inner nature: 'What creature was it, that, masked in an ordinary woman's face and shape, uttered the voice, now of a mocking demon, and anon of a carrion-seeking bird of prey?' (p.212). Again the images recall the Bewick illustrations, taking us back to the childhood world where the outcast little girl found a refuge from her hostile environment, physically in the window-seat, imaginatively in the History of British Birds. As so often, she is the silent observer, but, whereas in the earlier scene she has sat 'shrined' from inward view by the scarlet curtains yet with a clear view out of the window, now her vision is confined to speculation, on the one

hand, and, on the other hand, her bleeding patient. She seems almost literally to be shut up in the world of her own head. The forbidding of conversation between them, the length of the vigil, the oddity of the surroundings, the night-time setting all contribute to the surreal drama of the scene.

Jane's temporary usurpation of Grace Poole's place and of her role as nurse is a continuation of the identification of the two women I referred to earlier, but the religious symbolism of the room's strange furnishings suggests another identification of a more sinister aspect. The last figure she recognizes in the 'flickering gleam' is that of Judas, whose 'devilish' face threatens a 'revelation' of 'the arch- traitor - of Satan himself - in his subordinate's form' (p.212). This reinforces the impression of Bertha's domain as a hell, an impression that is later confirmed by Rochester's assertion that, for him, Thornfield Hall, not just Bertha's den, is an 'accursed place', a 'tent of Achan', an 'insolent vault', a 'narrow stone hell' (p.304). But the devil of this hell is not unequivocally Bertha. Certainly the sounds coming out of the den are described like those of a 'mocking demon' and certainly for Rochester his wife is that demon, but the emphasis on the figure of Judas highlights the element of treachery that, with hindsight, can be attributed to Rochester, in respect of both Bertha and Jane. Furthermore, Rochester seems unwittingly to be accusing himself of duplicity in the reference to Achan.[18] Achan's tent was indeed 'accursed' because of the 'thing' it contained, but it was Achan himself who had 'trespassed' in the first place by defying God's prohibition against looting Jericho. The near-parallel between Rochester and Achan is continued later. Achan was stoned to death, burned and then buried under a pile of stones; Rochester is badly burned and buried beneath the rubble of Thornfield. The possibility of seeing Mr.Rochester as a traitor is strengthened when, having dispatched Mason to the outside world, he symbolically re-encloses his territory and takes Jane to the garden. He presents himself here as a man of experience whose knowledge of the world and whose bitter personal sufferings make him Jane's superior, privileging his

[18]The story is told in Joshua,7.

vision of the garden as an Eden. More Satan than Adam, he tempts Jane with the story of his own downfall.

Jane's eventual encounter with the madwoman is given special status by being related to the reader obliquely. For the first time in the novel, information known to the experiencing Jane is withheld and only imparted to the reader as Jane tells Mr.Rochester the story of the visitation. Thus narratorial secrecy is added to narrative secrecy and the secrecy is further underlined by the symbolism of having Jane tell the story on a night when the moon has 'shut herself wholly within her chamber, and [drawn] close her curtain of dense cloud' (p.280). Emotional intensity is increased by prefacing Jane's account of her dreams and the visitation with the description of the storm and the symbolic splitting of the chestnut-tree. The moon, as Jane reflects on the 'loyalty' she descries in the tree's holding fast at the base, is personified in particular detail: 'her disc was blood-red and half overcast; she seemed to throw on me one bewildered, dreary glance, and buried herself again instantly in the deep drift of cloud' (p.279). The implication is that the moon has been wounded and desires the protection of, not so much a veil, as a blanket of cloud. David Lodge suggests that

> The moon...has a multiple and ambivalent function in Jane Eyre...its variable aspect is exploited *via* the pathetic fallacy to reflect inner states of being; while its ancient, mythical associations and its prominence in Romantic poetry of the supernatural make it an appropriate feature of those scenes in the novel when, for good or ill, non-rational forces command the situation.[19]

I would, further, want to emphasise the consistency with which the moon is identified as female. 'A prominent feature of the natural world', as Lodge puts it, the moon is part of a configuration which includes the female, nature and whatever might be the antithesis of reason: Brontë 's novel is rich in suggestions, which range from unreason and lunacy to mystical understanding and revelation. I would say, then, that the moon here symbolizes more than inner turbulence; it suggests a disturbance within this configuration.

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[19]Lodge, p.140.

The effect of penetrating to some hidden preserve is strengthened by the prefatory narration of the two dreams. Jane admits the reader again to the intimacy of her unconscious, but only as an eavesdropper on the other intimacy of her conversation with Rochester. It is as though the latter has become the intermediary between her and the public world and this reflects her insecurity over her identity. The visitation she describes, unlike the earlier manifestations, does not disturb an existing tranquillity. Her relationship with Rochester is now on the threshold of union and her relationship with the unknown Bertha, likewise, has been proceeding towards a face-to-face encounter. More than that, though, the novel's rhetoric suggests that Bertha's mad behaviour can be read as the outward expression of Jane's inner turbulence, for a number of parallels are drawn between the two women: both are accused of madness, both behave like wild animals and both are imprisoned in their homes. These parallels crystallize in the degree to which the scene in Jane's bedroom on the eve of her wedding mirrors the earlier incident in the red room. On both occasions Jane suffers a frightening vision or visitation and collapses into unconsciousness; on both occasions it is a mirror-image that so frightens her. But the vision in the mirror in the later scene is no fairy or imp, but a savage vampire; arrayed in the bridal veil, it represents a parodic version, a travesty of the role Jane is due to perform. Both the fairy/imp image and the vampiric image draw on superstition and folklore, but the ghostliness of the former has been replaced by the full-blooded sexuality of the latter; passion has undergone a Blakean metamorphosis from innocence to experience. Jane hesitates to ascribe the bloated and discoloured features to a woman; the description in essence recalls the 'tigress' Mason found drawing blood by biting his shoulder.

By recounting the scene to Rochester in this way Jane specifically adopts the role of story-teller, which would seem to confer some sort of power, but this story-teller cannot determine the reality of her own tale, her lack of control over her story, thus echoing, as Bodenheimer points out, her lack of control over her identity. Mr.Rochester usurps authority by insisting on his right to determine what is real: 'And since I cannot do it [explain the mystery]...it must have been unreal' (p.287). Jane's

insistence on the material reality of the torn veil provokes an attempt at rational explanation that not only fails to convince at the time, but is shown eventually to be nothing more than further deceit. Jane is thus caught between Rochester's attempt, both metaphorical and metonymic, to veil the truth and Bertha's efforts, symbolically to tear the veil of secrecy. As I pointed out earlier with reference to the torn tree, there is a biblical allusion to the veil of the temple.[20] This mysterious manifestation is a reaction to the death of Christ; it is a protest against betrayal. Bertha's action can, then, be seen as a protest against her husband's betrayal. It can also be read as foreshadowing the interruption of the marriage. But if, as I suggested above, Bertha appears to be giving expression to Jane's feelings, the action must be read, too, as Jane's protest against betrayal. Both at the level of content (Bertha's protest is the non-verbal communication of a non- rational being) and at the level of rhetoric (the veil is a traditional gothic prop and the tale is told so as to arouse gothic horror), the text asserts the power of the imaginative rather than the intellectual, the emotional rather than the analytical. Bertha's nocturnal visit is a turning point in the novel. The next night Jane does not dream of children, but lies in full consciousness, a real child in her arms. And next morning, as she frees herself from Adèle's embrace, she recognizes the child as 'the emblem of my past life' (p.289). Mr.Rochester, however, is still trapped in the world of fairy tales: the full explanation will come, he promises, when they have been married 'a year and a day'. Jane's next vision of herself in a mirror shows her 'a robed and veiled figure, so unlike my usual self that it seemed almost the image of a stranger' (p.289).

Jane's final, climactic encounter with the madwoman, when she sees her by daylight in her own abode, follows, of course, the equally climactic attempt at marriage. Her description at first focuses on the difficulty of defining the category of this being ('What it was, whether beast or human being, one could not, at first sight, tell') and then adopts the vocabulary appropriate to the former: 'it grovelled, seemingly,

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[20]See St.Matthew 27: 51 - 'And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom'.

on all fours; it snatched and growled like some strange wild animal: but it was covered with clothing; and a quantity of dark, grizzled hair, wild as a mane, hid its head and face' (p.295). Bertha is not totally relegated to the animal kingdom; the similes, the hesitancy of 'seemingly' and the qualification ('but it was covered with clothing') increase the horrific prospect of a human being behaving just like a wild animal. A little later, she is described as if she were a circus animal: 'the clothed hyena rose up, and stood tall on its hind feet' (p.296). Again it is the juxtaposition of the human and the bestial elements that is so disconcerting and demeaning of both. As Bertha sees her visitors and moves in on her husband, Jane's language changes; the madwoman is called explicitly a 'maniac' and 'lunatic', and the impersonal pronoun is replaced by the feminine. Finally, describing the struggle with Rochester, Jane recognizes Bertha as 'a big woman'. The language which has served to emphasise the difference between Jane and Rochester's wife in ontological terms gives way to language that sees the difference, less drastically, on the basis of physical appearances and behaviour, and the behaviour that is being described amounts, as Rochester points out, to a travesty of a 'conjugal embrace'.

Bertha has, as was popularly supposed of all mad people, both strength and cunning. The unsympathetic portrayal of madness here might appear to have more in common with eighteenth century perceptions of insanity than with the tendency of nineteenth century clinical discourse to see the mad as unruly children, but in fact, as both Peter Grudin and Philip Martin note, the account of Bertha's madness given by Rochester accords closely with James Prichard's concept of 'moral insanity'.[21] It might seem, in a novel of such intense interiority and imaginative symbolism as this, that reference to questions of verisimilitude is out of place, and this is the position taken by Grudin, who says: 'Questions of verisimilitude and liberalism are inapplicable to the treatment of madness here'.[22] There may be some justification for this attitude, but I

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[21]Peter Grudin, 'Jane and the Other Mrs. Rochester: Excess and Restraint in Jane Eyre', The Novel, 10 (1977), 145-57; Philip Martin, Mad Women in Romantic Writing (Brighton, 1987).
[22]Grudin, p.157.

think that it is a mistake to divorce the text from all considerations of its contemporary contextualization. In her biography of Charlotte Brontë, Mrs.Gaskell tells an anecdote that would have come to Brontë's ears and certainly indicates a documentary basis for the triangular situation and the secret madness in Jane Eyre.[23] The fact that this story was omitted in the third edition of the Life suggests that it was one of a number of excisions required by the offended sensibilities of readers of the first two editions. In any case, the question of confinement and the conditions in which lunatics were kept was a subject of much public discussion around the time of the 1845 Lunatics Act and would certainly have come to the attention of the Brontës by means of the journals to which they subscribed. Furthermore, a letter to W.S.Williams, the reader for Smith and Elder, shows Charlotte Brontë's familiarity with contemporary discourse relating to madness:

> Miss Kavanagh's view of the maniac coincides with Leigh Hunt's. I agree with them that the character is shocking, but I know that it is but too natural. There is a phase of insanity which may be called moral madness, in which all that is good or even human seems to disappear from the mind, and a fiend-nature replaces it. The sole aim and desire of the being thus possessed is to exasperate, to molest, to destroy, and preternatural ingenuity and energy are often exercised to that dreadful end. The aspect, in such cases, assimilates with the disposition - all seem demonised. It is true that profound pity ought to be the only sentiment elicited by the view of such degradation, and equally true is it that I have not sufficiently dwelt on that feeling: I have erred in making *horror* too predominant. Mrs.Rochester, indeed, lived a sinful life before she was insane, but sin is itself a species of insanity - the truly good behold and compassionate it as such.[24]

Given the customary Victorian grounding of morals in religion, it is not surprizing to observe in this letter a religious cast of language which can speak of the insane as being 'possessed' and 'demonised', and of immoral behaviour as 'sin'. And it is interesting to note Brontë's inclination to dissociate herself from the attitude to insanity expressed in the novel. The only expression of pity comes from Jane, who reproaches

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[23]Elizabeth Gaskell, The Life of Charlotte Brontë (Harmondsworth, 1975), pp.159-60.
[24]Charlotte Brontë, Letter to W.S.Williams, January 4, 1848, in Clement Shorter, The Brontës: Life and Letters, 2 vols. (London, 1908), II, 383-4.

Mr.Rochester: 'Sir...you are inexorable for that unfortunate lady: you speak of her with hate - with vindictive antipathy. It is cruel - she cannot help being mad' (p.305).

Rochester's reaction to his wife is validated by his account of her madness, which is explained as a matter of heredity aggravated by the excesses of a nature 'at once intemperate and unchaste' (p.310). Rochester thus betrays both his hypocrisy and his desire to distinguish as firmly as possible between his rejected and his desired bride. At this point, when Jane and Bertha are brought simultaneously before the male gaze, the male voice makes explicit the comparison between them: 'This is *my wife*...And *this* is what I wished to have...Compare these clear eyes with the red balls yonder - this face with that mask - this form with that bulk' (pp.296-7). The comparison is once again based on external characteristics and incorporates an un-graceful reference to his proposed union with Jane: 'I wanted her just as a change after that fierce ragout' (p.296). As if to emphasise the impossibility of confusing Bertha with Jane, he also, in the later dialogue, observes that Bertha's appearance recalls that of Blanche Ingram, from whom Jane has already disinguished herself.

In exalting Jane as Bertha's antithesis, Rochester emphasises the otherness of madness and in particular its otherness from Jane. His first wife is literally an alien from the British perspective, but he also talks of her as being of a nature 'wholly alien' to his own (p.310). In fact, though, all three of these characters are united by reason of their passionate natures and Rochester has no very distinguished record for chastity, so that to distinguish himself from his wife in this way has the effect of transferring on to a powerless other, a stereotype, those features of his own nature that threaten his self-esteem.[25] But the subtextual parallel between Bertha and Jane, that other 'alien', suggests the possibility of a swing of understanding between the two; if Bertha behaves like Jane, whose behaviour is understandable, then maybe there are similarly extenuating circumstances lying behind the animal howls that is all that is left to Bertha of speech, circumstances that Mr. Rochester either cannot or will not reveal in his

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[25]For a discussion of the psychological dimension to stereotyping see Sander L.Gilman, Difference and Pathology: Steretypes of Sexuality, Race and Madness (London, 1985).

version of her story. Her exposure after the attempted wedding leads to Jane's most solemn moments of self-examination, during which she confronts her own insanity. Religious precept, the 'law given by God; sanctioned by man' is what sustains Jane at her first great moment of trial, when her 'very conscience and reason [have] turned traitors ' against her (p.321). She has confronted the reality of madness face-to-face and now, tempted to see the indulgence of her own desire as validated by the opportunity it offers to secure Rochester's salvation, she brings herself to heel, wrenches herself away from potential insanity by the indomitable cry: 'I care for myself'. What Tuke termed 'the need for esteem' has clearly been internalized. Jane's recognition of her insanity at this point is fundamentally a confirmation of her sanity, but her method of dealing with herself, the dramatized internal debate, and the almost mechanical adherence to principles even when the reason for them has become obscure mirrors the ideals of moral treatment as expounded by Samuel Tuke: 'where these [religious precepts] have been strongly imbued in early life they become little less than principles of our nature; and their restraining power is frequently felt, even under the delirious excitement of insanity'.[26]

After the visit to Bertha's lair, Jane describes the depth of her suffering in melodramatic terms which combine the emotional with the mystical. This culminates in the quotation from Psalm lxix,1 (p.299), one of the psalms which is quoted in the New Testament and can be seen to prefigure Christ's suffering. The biblical references abound at this point and when later, she rouses herself to full consciousness, she determines to be her own avenging priest and, anticipating Mr.Rochester's fate, to pluck out her own eye and cut off her own right hand. There is a stress on the fallibility of sight: her 'view must now be hateful to him', she has been 'blind', and the ensuing remorse emphatically repudiates external vision: 'My eyes were covered and closed' (p.299). It is now insight that Jane can claim. The ensuing struggle between Conscience and Passion, which is initially internal and then enacted in dialogue with

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[26]Quoted in Foucault, p.244.

Mr.Rochester culminates in the question of Jane's significance, her place in the wider scheme of things (p.321). It is interesting that at this moment her response to the self-imposed question, 'Who in the world cares for you?' is not that God cares for her, but that she cares for herself. This could be considered a form of apostasy, yet it denotes her abandonment of idolatry. This is the moment, too, when she recognizes her own insanity. The vision of Bertha, without control of her life, her movements, her speech, unable to relate her own history, her very identity misappropriated, has opened Jane's eyes and turned them in on herself. The literal madness with which she is confronted, enables her to recognize the spiritual madness to which she has succumbed, the worshipping of a false god and the loss of control over self. By imbuing her sufferings with such a strong religious significance she seems to be taking on the persona of the suffering Christ, condemned to another solitary ordeal wandering ,as she does, on the moors. It is not, however, God the Father, the patriarchal authority, who is her guide but a mystical Mother-figure allied with the moon. Like many a biblical saint and prophet Jane has her moment of revelation when the 'white human form' breaks through the clouds and speaks to her spirit: 'My daughter, flee temptation' (p.324).

Jane had left Gateshead in the hope of building a new life for herself, free from the patriarchal despotism of a family to which she did not really belong. Lowood, of course, had been equally patriarchal, equally despotic, only this time in the name of religion. Again Jane had attempted to command her own fate by leaving the school, only, again, to find that, delightful though it might have been in many respects, she has indeed only found a 'new servitude' at Thornfield. But in discovering the extent to which passion has enslaved her yet again to a patriarchal master, she finds the power to escape her oppression. At this stage in the plot it becomes apparent that the sequence of Jane's experiences is following closely the sequence marked out in Rochester's narrative: estrangement from the family home; an unfortunate liaison that founders because it is built on false foundations; a moment of epiphany followed by flight and lonely wanderings. If Rochester's story reads up to the moment of his flight from Jamaica as mirroring Jane's, it ceases at that point to be a copy and becomes the

original, with Jane's experiences now mirroring his. The patterning is like that of a musical canon in which the leading part switches from the upper to the lower voice halfway through the piece, and, like a canon, poses the problem of how to bring the sequence to a satisfying conclusion. If Jane's movements were to follow his exactly she must inevitably be brought back to Rochester, since the end of his wanderings was Thornfield and their abortive marriage, but Brontë introduces a new community en route. Because of its placing in the sequence, then, Moor House reads as a 'home' for Jane in the sense that Thornfield was 'home' for Rochester. In neither case is the sense of home complete: Thornfield has been a hell for Rochester, despite Jane's presence; Moor House is an icy desert for Jane, despite the kindness of her female cousins. Almost simultaneously St.John Rivers is despatched abroad and Bertha falls to her death.

I remarked earlier in this chapter on the conflation of madness, secrecy, love and fire that lies at the heart of the plot. Bertha's death is an obviously crucial moment, when the secrecy of her existence and of her madness is liberated as she sets fire to Thornfield, thus liberating also the love of Jane and Rochester. The rightness of their union now is confirmed by the uncanny call that frees her from St.John Rivers and the allure of duty and summons her back to Mr.Rochester. It is a mystical revelation where the emphasis is on spirituality, lifting their partnership above the common-place and the merely physical. Jane's home is now truly with him, both partners having been purged by their ordeals and trials. As we shall see in chapter 7, the theme of an innocent, but spirited young girl whose suffering in a house of madness is apparently incommensurate with her failings will recur in Sheridan Le Fanu's The Rose and the Key. In Brontë's novel madness as a pathological phenomenon is exploited in terms of those connnotations which ally it with the conventions of gothic literature - confinement, secrecy and mystery. The difficulties of communication typically experienced in the gothic novel are here reflected in the silencing of Bertha's human voice, a silencing that was generally suffered by the mad in the nineteenth century. The structural and imagistic parallels that have suggested a comparison

between the mad woman and the heroine have allowed the apparently unenlightened representation of madness to be reviewed and a subtextual concern with madness as a response to injustice and oppression to emerge.

CHAPTER 4

DRAWING A BLANK: REPRESENTING THE LOSS OF IDENTITY IN THE WOMAN IN WHITE

An early critic remarked of Wilkie Collins: 'He could not, as a rule, get forward at all without the help of some physical or moral infirmity in some one of the leading agents or patients of the story' (Swinburne, quoted in Swinburne as Critic ed. Clyde K.Hyder p211).[1] That 'physical or moral infirmity' includes madness is made quite clear by the following comment that describes Anne Catherick, in terms characteristic of the later nineteenth century, as being 'abnormally and constitutionally deficient in nerve and brain'. The Woman in White, compared with The Heart of Midlothian or Hamlet, is, says Swinburne, dependent 'for its very existence on this insanity'. I do not think that the novel's dependence on insanity is quite as obvious as Swinburne seems to imply. Certainly madness figures prominently in Collins's fiction. Jezebel's Daughter, for instance, is interesting for its representation of an unreformed Bedlam and the feeble-minded Jack Straw who responds so well to the humane 'moral management' of Mrs.Wagner. An institution called the Sanatorium, an asylum for 'nervous invalids', figures as a locus of conspiracy and crime in the last chapters of Armadale; 'Mad Monkton' takes up the theme of hereditary madness and 'A Mad Marriage', about which I shall say more in chapter 6, deals, like Reade's Hard Cash, with the problem of wrongful confinement. Basil is particularly notable for its attempt to depict madness from within.

As far as The Woman in White is concerned the mainspring of the plot is not Anne's madness, which is in any case questionable, but her physical resemblance to

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[1]Algernon Swinburne, 'Wilkie Collins', in Studies in Prose and Poetry (London, 1897), pp. 110-128, 112.

Laura. In an article for The Globe Collins described the central idea of the novel as 'the idea of a conspiracy in private life, in which circumstances are so handled as to rob a woman of her identity by confounding her with another woman, sufficiently like her in personal appearance to answer the wicked purpose'.[2] Provided with a physical doubling, Collins's problem then becomes one of finding circumstances in which an individual's assertion of identity is likely to be disbelieved. Interestingly Collins's account in this article of how the idea of the lunatic asylum came to him differs from that offered in Edmund Yates's report of an interview with Collins.[3] Nevertheless, it is clear that the idea of insanity is important as providing the required circumstances for a switch in identity, since one symptom of insanity was commonly taken to be the suffering of delusions. The concept of delusion is not only important in terms of plot but an aspect of the basic theme dealing with the relationship between appearances and their interpretation. Madness is, as I have already had occasion to notice, a way of silencing. Particularly in the asylum, the voices of the mad, if they are heard at all, are taken to relate less to the world without them than to the world within, the internal drama of their own psyches. Collins, is not, in this novel, dedicated to exposing the abuses of the private asylum system, or investigating the difficulties of proving sanity. His preoccupation is the more fundamental one of exploring the nature of identity, and in this project the asylum is seen as a place where it is all too easy to lose the self.

The Woman in White is characteristically self-reflexive, foregrounding the whole business of writing, both in terms of content and in terms of the novel's intricate structure in which Walter Hartright, as an authorial surrogate, oversees and collates a number of narratives. The aim of Walter's enterprize is to reconstruct the chain of events that led to his wife's loss of identity as part of a larger aim of restoring that identity, and he makes a bid for the credence that would be granted evidence in court.

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[2]Wilkie Collins, 'How I Write My Books: Related in a Letter to a Friend', The Globe (26 Nov. 1887), reprinted as Appendix D of Wilkie Collins, The Woman in White, The World's Classics (Oxford, 1980). All references will be to this edition and will be incorporated in the text.

[3]Reprinted as Appendix C of The Woman in White.

As Bram Stoker was to do later, Collins constructs his novel primarily from journals, and letters, which, however authentic they may pretend to be as eye-witness accounts, must nevertheless operate with limited perspectives. If Walter is concerned for realism at a procedural level, Collins claims realism in the presentation of his characters, who, as he write in the Preface to the Second Edition, are fundamental to the success of the story, 'their existence, as recognizable realities, being the sole condition on which the story can be effectively told'. Because of the way in which the novel appears to bite its own tail/tale, however, it is tempting to reduce it, in Walter Kendrick's words, to a 'grand rhetorical quibble'; there seems, in the end, nothing in the text outside of its own writing, nothing that the reader is justified in comparing with 'real' life.[4] Kendrick locates a break in the textual chain at the point when Walter finds the 'Narrative of the Tombstone' contradicted by the living presence of Laura, and suggests that this is an important moment for Walter, since it allows him to break out of the network of words. For the reader, though, the sense of making contact with a 'real' world is illusory because of the novel's continued preoccupation with textuality and the deceptive potential of texts. As he puts it, 'The Woman in White violates the realist's faith at every turn'.[5] This is a clever article which addresses the novel on its own terms, but I do not feel that it is an entirely satisfactory reponse to the text's undoubted claims to realism.

Jenny Bourne Taylor, on the other hand, establishes a metonymic relationship between the novel and 'real' life on the basis of shared discourse. Her impressive study of Collins's fiction, In the Secret Theatre of Home, shows the extent to which the text both assimilates and resists a 'contradictory set of contemporary discourses' and examines the relationship between nineteenth century psychology and literature as it is revealed in the novelist's interest in 'consciousness and identity...the social formation of the self...the workings of the unconscious and the interlinking of the mind and the

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[4]Walter M.Kendrick, 'The Sensationalism of The Woman in White', Nineteenth Century Fiction, 32 (1977), 18-35 (29).
[5]Kendrick, p.34.

body...the problematic boundaries between sanity and madness'.[6] In so doing she thoroughly explores the relationship between 'sensationist' psychology and sensation fiction. My purpose, rather, is to investigate the way in which the novel exploits the conventions of melodrama and their imbrication with certain features of Victorian conceptions and treatments of insanity. I shall focus firstly on the convention of the heroine and the presentation of the key female characters: Laura, Anne and Marian. The discussion will then shift to a consideration of the way the Asylum figures in the text, not simply as a silencer, but as the epitome of the images of confinement and control which permeate the novel. Madness, I suggest, can be seen as a way of exploring genre, just as generic conventions are exploited to say something about the significance of madness in society. As I have already indicated, insanity and its treatment in Victorian Britain offered Collins the elements of mystery and secrecy that are vital to the plot of this novel, but by focusing on the text as melodrama I hope to move beyond the formalistic and to elucidate the novel's equivocal stance towards contemporary morality.

In The Melodramatic Imagination, Peter Brooks, starting from an interest in the melodramatic qualities of the fiction of Balzac and Henry James, analyzes the salient features of what is commonly thought to be melodramatic writing and traces their derivation from the particular form of drama in revolutionary France that presents these features paradigmatically. He summarizes the connotations of the word 'melodrama' as follows: 'the indulgence of strong emotionalism; moral polarization and schematization; extreme states of being, situations, actions; overt villainy, persecution of the good, and final reward of virtue; inflated and extravagant expression; dark plottings, suspense, breathtaking peripety'.[7] Whether referring to the historical genre, dating back to revolutionary France, or to derivative uses of the term, melodrama is typically 'not only a moralistic drama but the drama of morality'.[8] Accounting for the

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[6]Jenny Bourne Taylor, p.2.
[7]Peter Brooks, The Melodramatic Imagination, pp.11-12.
[8]Brooks, p.20.

absence of psychological analysis, Brooks says, 'It is delusive to seek an interior conflict, the "psychology of melodrama", because melodrama exteriorizes conflict and psychic structure, producing instead what we might call the "melodrama of psychology".[9] The prime aim of this sort of drama is *expression*: ' The play typically seeks total articulation of the moral problems with which it is dealing...Melodrama appears as a medium in which repression has been pierced to allow thorough articulation'.[10] Yet, paradoxically, it is a drama which often has recourse to non-verbal means of expression (music, gesture, tableau) and in which the figure of the mute makes a frequent appearance. Brooks resolves the paradox by suggesting that gestural language, like music, can reach into areas where the verbal medium is at a loss and that melodrama is tapping the dream world of psychic images, seeking expression at the deepest level.

The theatrical element in Collins's fiction has not gone unnoticed by other critics, and Collins himself, in Basil (1852), makes explicit the analogy between home and stage that is elsewhere implicit:

> There, in that mild, wan face of hers [Mrs. Sherwin's]...I could see one of those ghastly heart-tragedies laid open before me, which are acted and re-acted, scene by scene, and year by year, in the secret theatre of home; tragedies which are ever shadowed by the slow falling of the black curtain that drops lower and lower everyday - that drops, to hide all at last, from the hand of death.[11] (Basil pp75-6)

Wilkie Collins was a prominent member of the dramatic fraternity clustering around Dickens, visiting with him the theatres of Paris and himself writing prolifically for the stage. He adapted The Woman in White as a play in 1871, scoring notable success at the Olympic Theatre. Both the Times and the Daily Telegraph commented on the extent to which Collins had re-worked his material for the stage. Obviously the novel's use of multiple narration and exploitation of different kinds of written 'evidence' was unsuitable for dramatic presentation, and it is noticeable how many of the secrets,

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[9]Brooks, p.35.
[10]Brooks, p.86.
[11]Wilkie Collins, Basil, The World's Classics (Oxford, 1990), pp.75-6.

which are so striking a feature of Collins's fiction, are revealed in the expository Prologue. Neverthless, the novel is characterized by many of the features of melodrama and the basic division of the evidence into three 'epochs' in fact gives the underlying structure of a three-act play, with three basic locations (Limmeridge, Blackwater and London) and chronological space between the 'acts'. The use of the word 'epoch' in this context is itself indicative of the hyperbolic mode of expression typical of melodrama, and on a superficial level the novel can be seen to feature tableaux, characters who openly declare themselves and grand gestural effects, as well as the fundamental struggle between good and evil.

In The Woman in White, however, that struggle is represented in more complex ways than is typical of stage melodrama and one of the reasons for the greater complexity lies in Collins's treatment of the figure of the heroine. As a stock character, she conventionally symbolized virtue, but Collins reassesses the concept of the heroine in his fiction. In Basil, his first major novel, Collins presents Clara (Basil's sister) and Margaret (his wife in a secret, unconsummated marriage) as polar opposites. Furthermore, Clara is initially depicted in contrast to women of an 'exclusively modern order', who 'appear to be ambitious of morally unsexing themselves before society'.[12] Basil's romantic adherence to a sexually differentiated morality anticipates Ruskin's ' Of Queens' Gardens', which was written thirteen years later:

> Few men have not their secret moments of deep feeling - moments when, amid the wretched trivialities and hypocrisies of modern society, the image will present itself to their minds of some woman, fresh, innocent, gentle, sincere; some woman whose emotions are still warm and impressible, whose affections and sympathies can still appear in her actions, and give the colour to her thoughts; some woman in whom we could put as perfect faith and trust, as if we were children; whom we despair of finding near the hardening influences of the world; whom we could scarcely venture to look for, except in solitary places far away in the country; in little rural shrines, shut up from society, among woods and fields, and lonesome boundary-hills...When any women happen to realise, or nearly realise, such an image as this, they possess that universal influence which no rivalry can ever approach...It was thus

[12]Basil, p.19.

with my sister.[13]

Enshrining his sister as an ideal, Basil betrays the nostalgic longing for childlike innocence and rural peace that was expressed by many a Victorian: the rustic John Clare, as well as the urban John Ruskin.

Margaret, whom he sees travelling on an omnibus, does not obviously fall into the role of one of the brilliant and beautiful society women who have just been castigated: the immediate contrast is between her darkness and Clara's paleness. These two women are provided with oneiric counterparts whose symbolic opposition is much starker. In Basil's dream the dark woman offers sexual passion; what the fair woman offers is less clear, but could be seen as an anodyne, a quasi-spiritual influence: 'and from her outstretched hand came long thin rays of trembling light, which penetrated to where I stood, cooling and calming wherever they touched me'.[14] Margaret's immorality is attested by her expedition to a sleazy hotel with Mannion on the eve of the day she expects to consummate her marriage with Basil. She is then revealed as materialistic, self-seeking and deceitful. Virtue, insofar as it is identified with Clara and the fair woman in the dream, seems to amount to little more than emotional bandaging. Unlike the typical heroine in stage melodrama Clara suffers no assault on her virtue. Rather, like Little Nell, or, to take an earlier example, Fanny Price, she stands by her erring relative, attempting to alleviate the situation and suffering silently. Her strongest intervention, when she tries to force a reconciliation between father and son, pushes her to the brink of insanity and ends in unconsciousness. Margaret, on the other hand, having contracted typhus, does actually lapse into the 'pining madness of fever'.[15] If, as Taylor suggests, this malady indicates the character's 'moral corruption', Clara's breakdown and her often-mentioned paleness would seem to indicate the attenuation of moral ideals in the modern world.[16]

In The Woman in White Collins again polarises his two central female

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[13]Basil, pp.20-21.
[14]Basil, p.46.
[15]Basil, p.288.
[16]Taylor, p.84.

characters, but the polarities do not in this case extend along the moral axis. It is Marian who draws the contrasts:

> I have got nothing and she has a fortune. I am dark and ugly, and she is fair and pretty. Everybody thinks me crabbed and odd (with perfect justice); and everybody thinks her sweet-tempered and charming (with more justice still). In short, she is an angel; and I am - Try some of that marmalade, Mr Hartright, and finish the sentence, in the name of female propriety, for yourself. (p.27)

The sentence is never finished. The word to be supplied would, to continue the antitheses, need to be 'demon' or 'devil' and this would secure the placing of the two woman in the moral dimension so far as Marian's schematization is concerned. This open-endedness indicates a playfulness towards the conventions of representing woman, comparable with the knowingness of Marian's teasing words, for, of course, Marian is no demon and is indeed saluted by Walter at the very end of the novel as 'the good angel of our lives' (p.584). But if Marian's moral status is at the beginning left ambiguous, that of Laura is made clear; she is established through the testimony of Walter and Marian as the conventional heroine, innocent, virtuous and wronged. The first description of Laura given by Walter draws attention to her purity: 'Lovely eyes in colour, lovely eyes in form...but beautiful in all things in the clear truthfulness of look that dwells in their inmost depths, and shines through all their changes of expression with the light of a purer and a better world' (p.41). This, it turns out, is what he has seen and remembered and has tried to capture in a water-colour drawing, but he finds in the representation only 'truthful, innocent blue eyes' (p.41). The second description gives the stereotypical view, but the essential qualities remain. Walter, the first witness to report, is at this stage in the book, seeing in terms of conventional images. But in the case of both Laura and Marian the conventional is highlighted *as* convention, and this allows for a minor peripeteia as Marian turns round and reveals a face at odds with the beauty of her figure. Walter describes the contrast in terms of traditional expectations of masculinity and femininity and compares his discomposure to the 'helpless discomfort' experienced in the inability to 'reconcile the anomalies and

contradictions of a dream' (p.25). The encounter is not itself dramatic, but its description is melodramatic. In fact the techniques of melodrama are being employed at a point when a convention of melodrama is itself being questioned. Instead of meeting the heroine, as he expects, Walter finds himself face-to-face with a lady who is not at all easy to categorize and who falls outside conventional literary models.

If the two women are not symbolic of good and evil, the question of the darkness of one and the whiteness of the other must be explained in other terms. What I shall be arguing is that whiteness in this text is associated with blankness, muteness, passivity, all features of nineteenth-century conceptions of madness, and against this Marian's darkness can be interpreted as inscription, articulation and activity. These oppositions highlight the issue of expression and make problematic the identification of virtue.

Laura is identified by Marian, in the passage already quoted, in terms consistent with the convention of heroine, and when Walter does eventually meet her, her introduction has the effect of a theatrical 'appearance' that has been prepared for: she has already been discussed, yet has failed to appear at two meals, building up a sense of anticipation. It would, however, be truer to say that she was discovered rather than that she appeared; Walter comes upon her in a summer-house at the end of a winding path (p.40). As I have already said, Walter describes her in terms of a palimpsest of his own remembered impressions of that first meeting overlaying a portrait drawn at a later time, which frames her - doubly frames her in fact. Throughout this passage one feels that Walter is struggling to express something which is actually inexpressible, the whole emphasis falling on the difficulty of expression. The reader's attention is thus drawn both to the artifice of the enterprize - to the fact of expression - and to the problem of finding the meaning of this character. Like Basil's Clara, Laura represents for Walter, at this point, an ideal, but a rather more complex ideal, in which the moral is conflated with the aesthetic, the spiritual and the emotional. As if to compensate for his own incomplete attempt at expression, Walter appeals to the reader, who is assumed to be male, to join in the creative process: 'Think of her as you thought of the

first woman who quickened the pulses within you that the rest of her sex had no art to stir' (p.42). In a role- reversal, Pygmalion is brought to life by a woman's art, but Pygmalion here is nevertheless a painter and thus there seems to be a hint of the solipsism of the artist, who perceives the world in terms of his own creative sensibility and is in turn (re)vitalized by what he finds there. It is surely no coincidence that Laura's name is shared with that of Petrarch's ideal, unsubstantial love.

The sense of incompleteness is voiced, too, in another way:

> Mingling with the vivid impression produced by the charm of her fair face and head, her sweet expression and, and her winning simplicity of manner, was another impression which in a shadowy way suggested to me the idea of something wanting. At one time it seemed like something wanting in *her*: at another, like something wanting in myself, which hindered me from understanding her as I ought. (p.42)

In the earlier novel Basil states his opinion authoritatively: 'Among women, there always seems to be something left incomplete - a moral creation to be superinduced on the physical - which love alone can develop and which maternity perfects still further, when developed' (p.30). But Walter's feeling is elusive and more ambiguous. The way it is expressed here and becomes a recurring idea, is reminiscent, rather, of David Copperfield's 'old unhappy loss or want of something' that punctuates his marriage with Dora.[17] For David the want is associated with his incomplete realization of boyish dreams, for which he partly blames his 'child-wife', who is incapable of helping him more and sharing 'the many thoughts in which I had no partner'.[18] David is, of course, indicating his own immaturity as well as the unsuitability of the marriage, and Walter, too, is conveying something about his own personality, an awareness of psychological deficiencies or, perhaps, a suspicion that he has not achieved access to all the information he needs in representing her. Although the passage can be read as the cultivation of suspense and mystery which is part and parcel of sensationalist techniques and as a mystery which is eventually solved when Walter realizes that the

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[17]Charles Dickens, David Copperfield, (Harmondsworth, 1966), p.713.
[18]David Copperfield, p.765.

something 'wanting' is a recognition of the resemblance between Laura and Anne Catherick, nevertheless the repetition of the phrase 'something wanting' and his way of putting the troubling feeling as 'a sense of incompleteness', rather than, as one might expect, a sense that she reminds him of someone, gives the reflections psychological weight.

Walter finally locates the 'something wanting' in himself: 'That 'something wanting' was my own recognition of the ominous likeness between the fugtive from the asylum and my pupil at Limmeridge House' (p.51). Recognition dawns in a scene of melodramatic intensity, where the emphasis is on the conterpointing of the visual and the verbal. Marian's reading of her mother's letter about Anne Catherick is punctuated by Walter's observations of Laura who is walking up and down the terrace dressed in white. The moment of recognition occurs at the point of coincidence of the two elements of this scene; as Marian reads her mother's description of the similarity between Anne and Laura, so Walter sees in Laura the image of 'the woman in white'. But the 'something wanting' in Walter also becomes expressed as his doubts about his own faculties. In an episode that forms a parallel with the one just described, Marian reads a second letter to him, this time from Anne Catherick herself, describing her dream of Laura's marriage. As in the earlier scene, an aposiopesis allows the moment of recognition to be shared by Walter and Marian. It is Walter's action ('I started up from the ottoman, before Miss Halcombe could pronounce the next words' etc.- p.51) that interrupts the speech in the first instance. In the second example it is Marian who interrupts Walter's speech:

> 'It seems to me to be not only the letter of a woman, but of a woman whose mind must be -'
> 'Deranged?' suggested Miss Halcombe. 'It struck me in that light, too.' (p.69)

If, as Jenny Bourne Taylor suggests, Walter is broken down in the feminine context of Limmeridge House, if he is failing to demonstrate the 'Man's resolution', which the story, according to the Preamble, is to show, his weakness is compensated for by Marian's resolution, and this moment would seem representative of the interchange. In

fact it leads to a pivotal point as Walter begins to distrust his own sanity: 'I began to doubt whether my own faculties were not in danger of losing their balance. It seemed almost like a monomania to be tracing back everything strange that happened, everything unexpected that was said, always to the same hidden source and the same sinister influence' (p.69). Such an observation tends to define the organization of data around a single source, and possibly even the whole enterprize of detection, in terms of pathology. Walter's solution is to assert his resolution : 'I resolved, this time, in defence of my own courage and my own sense, to come to no decision that plain fact did not warrant, and to turn my back resolutely on everything that tempted me in the shape of surmise' (p.69).

One of the 'facts' he establishes is that there is indeed 'something wanting' in Anne, the want of intelligence, which also becomes the 'something wanting' that he has felt in respect of Laura. The conspiracy that lies at the heart of the novel, substituting one woman's identity for another's, is achieved by also making the something that is wanted a voice. If the crime committed against Laura is to rob her of her identity, the means by which this is done entails rendering her, to all intents and purposes, mute.

In a narrative sense, Laura is mute throughout: she is a key witness who is not allowed a first-person narration. This diminishes her and suggests that the experiences encompassed by the text do not culminate in her restitution as an autonomous human being. It is confinement in the Asylum that deprives her of her rights. In exploiting the prevalent belief that the increasing asylum population was frighteningly being swelled by unfortunate people whose relatives found it expedient to have them put away, Collins relies also on the associated belief that the mad lose crediblity and are, therefore, effectively silenced. Laura's assertion of her own identity is made to seem a delusion, just as earlier Anne's knowledge of Sir Percival's Secret has been employed as a symptom of madness. In the latter case, however, 'knowledge' is shown to be an 'empty boast' (p.498) and the parallelism, therefore, raises the possibility that the assertion of identity is also an 'empty boast'. The problematic epistemological basis of identity is further underlined by the fact that the Secret itself concerns identity, Sir

Percival's identity, which does in fact turn out to be based on falsified records. The ease with which a lie can be made to seem the truth and truth made to seem a lie undermines Walter's attempt to establish the truth. Further than this, the conflation of Laura and Anne makes the role of heroine not only extremely passive, but also curiously lacking in substance. This is not to say that the heroines of stage melodrama are necessarily of more active virtue, but that The Woman in White seems to be questioning or at least drawing attention to this passivity. Laura's virtue, like her identity, seems to lack substance; she takes no action on her own initiative and indeed, once the marriage to Sir Percival becomes a settled thing, she seems to withdraw into a state of blankness.

In melodrama, according to Brooks, muteness is associated with expressionism; it represents a level of expression deeper than can be achieved through the verbal medium, granting access to a world of psychic images, and emphasising the inadequacy of words. A novel, unlike stage melodrama, is of course dependent on words, but time and again in this novel, the emphasis shifts on to the importance of the visual. This is particularly noticeable towards the end of the scene of Walter's second encounter with Anne. As he utters the words 'Don't let me think that the person who put you in the Asylum might have had some excuse -' (p.91), she registers her reaction in a dramatic dumb-show:

> A most extraordinary and startling change passed over her. Her face, at all ordinary times so touching to look at, in its nervous sensitiveness, weakness, and uncertainty, became suddenly darkened by an expression of maniacally-intense hatred and fear, which communicated a wild, unnatural force to every feature. Her eyes dilated in the dim evening light, like the eyes of a wild animal. She caught up the cloth that had fallen at her side, as if it had been a living creature that she could kill, and crushed it in both her hands with such convulsive strength that the few drops of moisture left in it trickled down on the stone beneath her. (p.91)

I have quoted the whole passage to show how important the visual element is at this moment. The description here compares with the virtuoso displays of miming that were characteristic of the earlier melodramas, but it also, in depicting a moment of madness,

focuses on what can be seen, as representations of madness so often do. This is even given a clinical justification somewhat later, when the proprietor of the Asylum gives his impression of 'Anne Catherick' (ie.Laura) on her return. Acknowledging that he had observed 'some curious personal changes in her', he accounts for them as follows: 'Insane people were often, at one time, outwardly as well as inwardly, unlike what they were at another; the change from better to worse, or from worse to better, in the madness, having a necessary tendency to produce alterations of appearance externally' (p.386). It is a belief we shall find explicitly stated again in Hard Cash, but it is also implicit in the images of madness in the other texts. In this novel, the prevalent symbolism of whiteness that is associated with the similarity between Anne and Laura, means that their almost complete interchangeability is the result of absence, and this has deleterious consequences for any essentialist view of identity. The best that the proprietor can do in trying to define the slight difference he was aware of is to say that it was 'something he felt, more than something that he saw' (p.386).

It is precisely this difficulty of providing visual evidence that hinders Walter's investigations; he finds himself understanding what the sequence of events must have been, but, improbably enough, no impartial eye-witness is able to give him the proof he needs. Establishing Laura's identity, then, seems depend on contradicting the false testimony of her aunt, the death certificate and the tombstone with recognition of her restored appearance and her handwriting by those who knew her previously at Limmeridge, thus undermining all the customary means of authentication. Furthermore Laura has lost all memory of the events leading to her confinement in the Asylum and this other aspect of her 'blankness' will, it is feared, prejudice her case. Innocence being unable to declare itself, it becomes necessary to force villainy to confess. It is, appropriately enough, through the discovery of another secret of identity, ie. the Count's identity as a betrayer of the Brotherhood, that Walter is able to bring this about. In a parody of the professional author, Count Fosco, the 'author' after all of the plot, dashes off his narrative or confession. The establishment of Laura's identity, in the end boils down to the extraction of a name from a jumble of dates, just

as Sir Percival's identity has depended on words in a parish register and the Count's 'identity' is determined by the brand cut into his flesh. By treating Basil as a first-person narrator in the earlier novel, Collins had explored the effects of paternal repression on a consciousness sensitive to beauty, avid for affection and ill-equipped to deal with the commercial world of Victorian society. The madness resulting from his exposure to deception in Margaret had been revealed as a delirium in which are mingled physical sensations, thoughts and visions, in which his re-interpretation of previous scenes had indicated a new stage in his development. In The Woman in White, on the other hand, there is no such psychological analysis; Laura, seen as I have said, always through the eyes of others, is presented as a symbol rather than a 'character', and in this respect Collins's method is typical of stage melodrama.

The Woman in White, however, does not create the effect of a stage melodrama of establishing the presence of virtue (personified by the heroine) in a wicked world (personified by the villain) by re-establishing Laura in society. The possibility of such an effect is undermined not only by the fact that, as other critics have pointed out, she is re-established as Walter's wife, rather than as Laura Fairlie, but also by the way Collins has treated the concept of heroine. The possibility of a simple black-and-white morality is further eroded by the novel's complex network of images of confinement and control, culminating in the dominant image of the Asylum, which leads to a position where the only security seems to lie in the enterprize of artistic ordering. In Basil the protagonist finds his employment in keeping a journal the 'only safeguard that keeps me in my senses' (p.329). As the journal disintegrates, the writing that is to keep him sane becomes writing about Clara, the sight of whom is his only hope of salvation: 'I shall die out of my senses, unless Clara -' (p.329). His writing becomes illegible and finally ceases, but Clara arrives and effects his recovery. The example of Frederick Fairlie, however, shows artistic control to be of doubtful morality, a way of controlling the environment in an attempt to escape responsibility; his efforts to exclude real life are condemned as a decadent, self-regarding luxury and it is appropriate that his death at the end of the book should be caused by a stroke of

paralysis. Similarly, Sir Percival's confinement in the vestry with hampered locks turns out to be a supreme example of dramatic irony; the man who has confined two women is now confined himself, and in the attempt to make himself safe ensures his death. Physical freedom, on the other hand, also seems likely to lead to premature death, as the fates of Fosco and Anne Catherick and Walter's adventures appear to indicate. The best, if not the ideal state, would seem to be the voluntary semi-seclusion enjoyed by the ensemble pictured in the domestic tableau at the end of the book.

The Asylum itself is first mentioned in a 'curtain-line' at the end of what would have been the first instalment.[19] Accosting a policeman, the proprietor asks if he has seen the 'woman in white' and to stop her if he does meet with her.

> 'Why are we to stop her, sir? What has she done?'
> 'Done! She has escaped from my Asylum. Don't forget: a woman in white. Drive on.' (p.22)

It is a melodramatic moment, allowing the original readers to linger over the implications before the next instalment, which opens by repeating the crucial words, 'She has escaped from my Asylum', and offering Walter's meditations on those implications. He voices the conventional fear of 'absolute insanity which we all associate with the very name of an Asylum'. The idea of 'absolute insanity', like the idea of a 'true maniac' which finds expression in Reade's Hard Cash, suggests a certainty about what madness is, which here assimilates that certainty with procedure. At the same time, though, the over-simplification of this attitude is indicated in his accompanying reflections on the actual manner of the woman in white, to whom, even with hindsight, he finds it impossible to ascribe 'absolute insanity'. He polarizes the quandary this places him in between the issue of wrongful confinement, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, a failure on his part to recognize a lunatic whose actions it was his duty 'mercifully to control'.

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[19]The Woman in White was first published in weekly instalments in Dickens's journal, All the Year Round between 26 November 1859 and 25 August 1860. The OUP edition follows this version and marks the instalments.

Having established the Asylum from the outset as primarily a place of confinement and control, Collins shows no interest in it as a place of treatment - or even ill-treatment. There is no suggestion that conditions there approach the atrocities uncovered by, say, the 1842 commission, or that the keepers share the callousness of Jack Straw's custodians. However benign it might be, its threat lies in its capacity to withdraw people from society. In introducing the institution of the Asylum, then, the novel raises questions about the concept of asylum. From its original meaning of 'a sanctuary for criminals and debtors from which they cannot be forcibly taken without sacrilege' (OED), the word had acquired its institutional connotations from its application to the particular sanctuary afforded to society's unfortunates, and especially lunatics.[20] In the nineteenth century, however, the fears of being wrongfully assigned to such a sanctuary and the tales of the treatment they afforded, had aroused such distrust of these establishments that the word 'asylum' had acquired a meaning almost antithetical to its original one. The Woman in White exploits the gap between these two meanings. On the one hand, the Asylum itself is not represented as a place of safety, but as a convenient receptacle for inconvenient members of society. Mrs. Catherick makes this quite clear in her letter of evidence towards the end of the novel as she repeatedly refers to 'shutting her [Anne] up' (pp.498-9). Literally shutting Anne up, figuratively silences her. On the other hand, emphasis is laid on the difficulty of finding safety in the traditional asylum of home. Laura, Marian, Anne and later Walter all face problems in finding a safe place to live. Limmeridge, which has provided a temporary secure home for Anne in childhood, is a home from which Laura is torn by her marriage. Although the religious implications of the concept of asylum are overwhelmed in the predominantly secular ethos of this novel, the failure of Limmeridge to protect Laura hints at sacrilege and provides a good example of the much-discussed tendency of the sensation novel to undermine the dominant ideology

[20]The word 'asylum' only incurred its institutional connotations at the end of the eighteenth century (1776), receiving official imprimatur in the County Asylums Act of 1808.

of the Victorian period. The home, in many of these novels, simply does not function as bourgeois society would make itself believe.

Blackwater is established as clearly a dangerous habitation for both Laura and Marian. Whilst there, they are both spied upon and, in different ways, confined to their rooms, Laura by command of her husband, Marian through illness, so that what should be an asylum in the first sense, becomes an asylum in the later, derogatory sense. Walter's quest for a 'retreat' in London leads him to lodgings in an unlikely area where he and the women feel the necessity of exercising extreme caution in their movements:

> I reached home on foot, taking the precaution, before I approached our own door, of walking round by the loneliest street in the neighbourhood, and there stopping and looking back more than once over the open space behind me; I had first learnt to use this stratagem against suspected treachery in the wilds of Central America - and now I was practising it again, with the same purpose and with even greater caution, in the heart of civilised London! (p.418)

As Conrad was to do in The Heart of Darkness, Collins is questioning the meaning of civilization, the threat, in this instance, being posed by Count Fosco, a foreign spy of no moral standards and anarchic principles, desperate for money, who does indeed force them to move to other rooms before he is exposed. But even his removal cannot confer the freedom that only release from 'the long oppression of the past' (p.578) can secure.

Paradoxically, once she has escaped from the Asylum, Anne Catherick appears to be freer than anyone, except possibly the Count. This is partly a function, as Jenny Bourne Taylor points out, of the variety of ways in which she is treated. Taylor sees her as 'a problematic uncanny figure who hovers on the boundary between madness and sanity, rationality and superstition, literal and figural modes of representation'.[21] She flits through the text, I would suggest, like a free-floating signifier which is attached in different ways to a number of signifieds. For Mrs Catherick she is a reminder of the past and a nuisance, for Mrs Clements she is the daughter she never

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[21]Taylor, p.101.

had, for Mrs Fairlie she is an object of benevolence, for Sir Percival she is a threat, for Count Fosco a blank to be inscribed with Laura's name if not her identity. Anne, however, refuses appropriation, as she moves from home to home, and, in her very absence, presents a mystery.

Walter expresses the way she mystifies. Like the Count he sees her as a blank, an obstructing rather than enabling blank: 'I sat down and tried, first to sketch, then to read - but the woman in white got between me and my pencil, between me and my book' (pp.22-3). She hinders both execution and assimilation and herself becomes something to interpret. Again Collins involves Walter in conventional expression; it is a commonplace of descriptions of romantic love to find reading obstructed by the image of the beloved. In Armadale,for instance, Collins writes of the impressible Allan:

> He took many volumes off the shelves, and put a few of them back again - and there he ended. Miss Milroy contrived in some mysterious manner to get, in this case, between the reader and the books. Her formal bow, and her merciless parting speech, dwelt, try how he might to forget them, on Allan's mind.[22]

It is not long of course before Walter does fall in love with the other woman in white, but the questions which follow the quotation given above make it clear that it is not merely physical attraction that brings Anne Catherick into his mind's eye as a white presence. Her insistence on wearing white is, in terms of the plot, an expression of her gratitude to Mrs.Fairlie, but it can also be read figuratively as a way of blanking herself out, or as symbolic of innocence and purity. And in a way she does represent innocence by virtue of her simple-mindedness, which means that in threatening Sir Percival with his Secret she blurts out words ignorant of their substance. Hers is the innocence of the blank page, which, it is suggested in an article by Susan Gubar, acquires power so long as it resists inscription.[23] As an escapee from the Asylum she

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[22]Wilkie Collins, Armadale, The World's Classics (Oxford, 1989), p.219.
[23]Susan Gubar, '"The Blank Page" and the Issues of Female Creativity', Critical Inquiry, 8 (1981), reprinted in The New Feminist Criticism. Essays on Women, Literature, and Theory, edited by Elaine Showalter (London, 1985), pp.292-313.

can be classified as either 'the victim of the most horrible of all false imprisonments', or 'an unfortunate creature, whose actions it was my duty, and every man's duty, mercifully to control' (p.22). The easy assumption that madness required control was frequently made, but control does not necessarily mean confinement in an asylum, though that is what Walter appears to understand.[24]

Another possibility is both preached and practised by the Count in the moral restraint he exerts on both his wife, his birds and his mice. Marian, his most formidable opponent, locates the source of his 'influence' physically in his glittering eyes and psychologically in the combination of admiration and fear that he arouses. This almost mesmeric power he exerts, which we shall see is shared by Dr.Antomarchi in Le Fanu's The Rose and the Key and by Dracula, is something that had been noted in some mad-doctors since the eighteenth century, distinguishing those who could restrain their patients without resorting to physical force. In fact, John Ferriar, writing in 1795, might almost be describing the Count's technique when he talks of 'the first salutary operation in the mind of a lunatic' lying in 'creating a habit of self-restraint' through 'the management of hope and apprehension..., small favours, the show of confidence, and apparent distinction' rather than by coercion.[25] Describing the 'moral treatment' which made Tuke's establishment at the York Retreat so remarkable, Andrew Scull says: 'moral treatment actively sought to *transform* the lunatic, to remodel him into something approximating the bourgeois ideal of the rational individual'.[26] This Fosco has already achieved with his previously 'wayward' wife, who now regards her husband with 'the look of mute submissive inquiry which we are all familiar with in the eyes of a faithful dog' (p.195). In comparing the present meekness of the Countess with her previous capriciousness Marian's depressing vision of Madame Fosco reduced to animal submission links the taming process with that thought appropriate to madness

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[24]Mr.Rochester says of his wife: 'since the medical men had pronounced her mad, she had, *of course*, been shut up' (my emphasis). Jane Eyre, p.312.
[25]Quoted in Scull, Museums of Madness, p.67.
[26]Museums of Madness, p.69.

and this alone is sufficient to refute Nina Auerbach's statement that 'nothing in the novel denies that the Countess Fosco is an exemplary British woman'.[27] A later image of Madame Fosco recalls another equivalent of the subdued lunatic as she sits 'like a quiet child', rolling the Count's cigarettes (p.240), the alternative occupational therapy to her 'monotonous embroidery work' (p.195).

Although Marian is able to 'find him out' when away from him, she nevertheless still finds herself 'blinded' by him when in his company: 'He can manage me as he manages his wife and Laura, as he managed the bloodhound in the stable-yard, as he manages Sir Percival himself, every hour in the day' (p.200). His 'method of recommending himself' is different for each person, and for Marian consists in the way 'he flatters my vanity by talking to me as seriously and sensibly as if I was a man'. By the end of the book, Fosco's power seems to have extended beyond domestic confines and the final revelation of his political activities makes a menacing suggestion of underground forces at work not just in the 'secret theatre of home', but in society at large, that we shall encounter again in the paranoia of Dracula. But although Marian may feel that she and Laura are being 'managed', they are not under Fosco's control in the way that his wife and Sir Percival are. Partly, of course, this is because they have different interests, but also, I think, it is because they have a degree of self-control that Madame Fosco lacked before her marriage and Sir Percival still lacks. The only opportunity the Count gets to control Marian is when she is confined to her bed through illness and loses herself in feverish delirium, and he has finally to resort to chemistry to complete his control over Laura.

Having been confined in the Asylum and treated as a lunatic, Laura does indeed take on Anne's feeble-minded identity. The investigations trace her loss of identity, memory and, it would appear, sanity. It is never explicitly stated that Laura has become 'insane', but it is strongly implied that this is the case. Summing up Laura's

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[27]Nina Auerbach, Woman and the Demon: the Life of a Victorian Myth (Cambridge, Mass., 1982), p.142.

state of mind after her rescue from the Asylum, Walter says:

> These were the only recollections - all of them uncertain, and some of them contradictory - which could be extracted from Lady Glyde...she had been under restraint; her identity with Anne Catherick systematically asserted, and her sanity, from first to last, practically denied. Faculties less delicately balanced, constitutions less tenderly organised, must have suffered under such an ordeal as this. No man could have gone through it, and come out of it unchanged. (p.394)

Her past life having been wiped out, Walter endeavours to occupy 'the blank of her existence' with the therapy of painting (p.400), an attempt to restore her to full humanity which is another illustration of the re-socializing procedures of moral treatment. Despite her plea not to be treated like a child, like a child she is given her drawing materials and addressed in patronizing tones: 'Try to finish this little sketch as nicely and prettily as you can' (p.442) and, like a child, she receives fictional 'payment'. Occupational therapy here may occupy the patient's mind and time and, to a degree, it does prove therapeutic, but it does not provide her with a way out of confinement and it does not demonstrably restore her to full autonomy. From the Asylum she is removed to the seclusion of lodgings in London, only emerging to be taken out to walk on fine days, and the image of her walking between Walter a Marian is sustained at the end in the image of a marriage that returns the three of them to Limmeridge, when Laura's identity is secured as that of Walter's wife rather than that of Laura Fairlie. The blank that she has become on Anne's death, has indeed been appropriated in the customary way by husband and son, and the institution of a new order is patriarchal, since the property, by-passing Laura on Frederick Fairlie's death, passes to her son.

Moral treatment confuses the issues of infirmity and immorality in a way that is characteristic of the period when psychology and psychiatry were marking out territory independent of philosophy. Melodrama, originating in France at the same time as Pinel's introduction of moral treatment at Bicêtre and Salpêtrière, treads a similarly wavering line between morality and psychology, revealing good and evil in personal rather than mystical terms. So far I have concentrated on The Woman in White's critical debt to the formal conventions of melodrama, but I should like to conclude by

focusing on the scene in the boathouse which highlights the question of crime and morality, juxtaposing the traditional position with one that is more wayward and more acute psychologically. Ranged against Marian and Laura who support a conventional, almost platitudinous view of crime, which identifies goodness with wisdom, the Count proposes a pragmatic and subversive alternative which recognizes that in fact crime often does pay and that detection is a game between the criminal and the police which the cleverer wins. In fact it is the hypocrisy of society that is to blame for this state of things, and on which the weight of the Count's monologue falls. The discussion is counterpointed by Marian's observation of and the Count's address to his white mice, who, allowed out of their pagoda, are roaming freely over his person. These mice seem to be, in Fosco's eyes at least, symbolic of women and their whiteness suggests a comparison with the figure of the woman in white and, like her, they appear to be associated with innocence and purity. As I have already shown, however, whiteness in this novel also means blankness and Marian's reaction to the mice offers another way of reading the whiteness. In an imaginative and uncharacteristically nervous aside, she likens the sight of the 'pretty, innocent-looking little creatures' crawling over the Count's body to 'crawling creatures of the dungeon' preying on men dying in prison (p253). It is a strange inversion of the relationship between mice and man, depriving the Count momentarily of power, freedom and vitality, thus foreshadowing his eventual overthrow, but it also suggests, however fleetingly, the possibility of a predatory aspect to innocence. Moreover, because of the association between the mice and the 'white' women in the book this vision of Marian's can be linked with the experience recounted by Walter already discussed,where the memory of the woman in white interferes with his activities of drawing and reading. Whiteness has an obvious importance in the text as a device for highlighting the similarity between Laura and Anne and linking them with the mice and with the blank page. But if, as I have already suggested, whiteness is representative of morally neutral blankness as much as the moral quality of innocence, then the reinscription of a socially viable identity on to the blank appearance that has been shared by Laura and Anne Catherick can be read as a

metaphor for the business of representation. The complex self-consciousness of The Woman in White, concerning both narrative method and melodramatic conventions, has the effect of framing the fictional world. It indicates a probing of the relationship between convention and reality that I feel leads in the end to a deconstructionist position *avant la lettre*, which confronts a world where virtue is problematic. Lacking the living presence of actors, it is all the easier to deny the metonymic connection between art and life and, stressing the discontinuity, to find in identity no more than conventional nomenclature and in morality no more than an arbitrary code of conduct.

CHAPTER 5

THE SECRET WORKINGS OF THE MIND: LATENT MADNESS AND THE MYSTERIES OF FEMININITY IN LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET

Like Wilkie Collins, Mary Braddon found madness a useful trope; insanity features in several of her novels, and, given the circumstances of her private life, this was not altogether surprising.[1] I shall confine myself to Lady Audley's Secret (1862), the novel with which she established her reputation. If Collins had broken new ground by allowing his active heroine, Marian Halcombe, to subvert conventional expectations of female behaviour, Braddon went a stage further and made of Lady Audley a protagonist, an adventurer, and one moreover whose moral standards are somewhat dubious. In A Literature of Their Own Elaine Showalter suggests that Lady Audley's Secret is a 'satire of the conventions of The Woman in White' and quotes Norman Donaldson, the editor of the Dover Edition of Lady Audley's Secret, as saying that Braddon 'owed the idea of the book' to Collins's novel.[2] There is, though, no corroboration of this in the standard biography by Robert Lee Wolff. The satire, in Showalter's opinion, lies in turning Collins's victim into a villain and in other unspecified details: 'Throughout her novel, Braddon shows that a determined woman can liberate herself by actively applying the methods through which Collins' passive heroine is nearly destroyed'.[3] Certainly Lucy benefits from the changes in identity that

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[1]Robert Lee Wolff, Sensational Victorian: the Life and Fiction of Mary Elizabeth Braddon (London, 1979) mentions Taken at the Flood, where a wife has her elderly husband put in an asylum; Strangers and Pilgrims, where the heroine catches plague and loses her intellect (pp.240-1). W.F.Rae, 'Sensation Novelists: Miss Braddon', North British Review, 4 (1865), 180-204 (p.193) mentions John Marchmont's Legacy, where the evil Olivia goes mad. Braddon herself lived for many years with John Maxwell, whose wife was in a lunatic asylum, before marrying him in1874 on the death of his wife.

[2]Elaine Showalter, A Literature of Their Own. British Women Novelists from Brontë to Lessing, (London, 1982), p.166.

[3]A Literature of Their Own, p.166.

she acquires through her own efforts, but the final change is foisted upon her and, as Madame Taylor, she is confined in the Belgian maison de santé where she dies. It is difficult to see, in this context, what Showalter means by liberation. Besides, as I have argued in the previous chapter, Collins is himself subverting the way women are conventionally represented, a process he carried still further with Lydia Gwilt in Armadale. Jenny Bourne Taylor puts it better when she says that 'Collins and Braddon are each in different ways challenging the blonde child-wife stereotype, both probing the links between the confining constructions of femininity and of insanity'.[4] Part of my analysis here will be concerned with exploring this idea.

The comparison with Collins extends, of course, to the question of genre. Both The Woman in White and Lady Audley's Secret were recognized as sensation novels and both led to extremely successful melodrama adaptations.[5] Mary Braddon had been an actress for a short time in her youth and, like Collins, wrote a number of plays, none of which seems to have been successful. Her novels, however, were. Lady Audley's Secret heaped coals on to the burning fire of sensationalism, arousing both admiration and detestation: admiration for Braddon's technique, detestation of Lucy's immorality. Henry Mansel, writing anonymously in Quarterly Review in 1863, praised the 'real power' of the author, but thought it should be employed on better materials and saw Lady Audley as a powerful character worthy of comparison with Vittoria Corombona in John Webster's White Devil.[6] The hostile W.F.Rae criticized the unnaturalness of Lady Audley who was 'at once the heroine and the monstrosity of the novel', and Mrs.Oliphant, out of sympathy with her colleague's different literary leanings, used the columns of Blackwood's Magazine to rail against the immorality of the heroine.[7] Henry James, on the other hand, writing in 1865, condemned Lady

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[4]Taylor, p.11.
[5]At least three different play versions were published, if not performed, within two years of the novel's publication.
[6]Henry Mansel, 'Sensation Novels', Quarterly Review, 113 (1863), 482-514 (p.492).
[7]Rae, p.186; Mrs.M.Oliphant, 'Sensation Novels', Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, 91 (1862),

Audley as being 'diabolically wicked', but commended Braddon for writing with 'a woman's finesse' and 'a strict regard to morality'.[8] The divergence of opinions about Lady Audley's Secret is, I shall argue, partly to be explained by the failure of the narrator to take a secure moral stance. This is particularly noticeable in relation to the heroine and is linked with the ambiguity surrounding madness in the novel.

An article on the subject of madness in novels in The Spectator drew attention to the advantages of making the heroine mad.[9] For Miss Braddon's purpose, according to this anonymous writer, 'it was necessary to strengthen the old machinery of novel-writing, to introduce changes more frequent, acts more unaccountable, catastrophes more violent and appalling'.[10] Mary Braddon is credited with hitting upon madness as a way of introducing and explaining such effects. 'Madness may intensify any quality, courage, or hate, or jealousy, or wickedness', and once introduced, 'probability became unnecessary, vraisemblance a burden, naturalness a mistake in art, everything was possible, and the less possible the emotion the greater the surprise and pleasure'.[11] Looked at in this way, madness is the great mediator between realism and sensationalism; it is the locus of the sensational in the real world. Unlike the legislative view of insanity that demanded its confinement in municipal institutions, or the medical view that saw it as a disease of the brain, or the moralistic view that condemned the loss of self-control, the concept projected in this article is apparently 'carnivalesque', a celebration of the loosening of bonds. In murder one may recognize, it is suggested, 'the undeveloped wild beast in one's own heart'. But for this to happen the murder must be presented 'artistically'. This can be accomplished, it is implied, by making it the result of insanity. As far as Braddon is concerned insanity can be exploited not simply because, as The Spectator suggests, it makes the improbable probable, but because the web of societal attitudes and expectation, and the ways in which madness

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[8]Henry James, 'Miss Braddon', in Notes and Reviews (New York, 1921, reprinted 1968), 108-116.
[9]'Madness in Novels', The Spectator, 3 February, 1866, 134-5.
[10]'Madness in Novels', p.134.
[11]'Madness in Novels', p.135.

was conceptualized allow for its inclusion in the secret areas of life.

The writer of the Spectator article, like Henry James, takes Lady Audley's madness for granted: 'she [Braddon] made Lady Audley mad'.[12] Twentieth century critics are more sceptical. Elaine Showalter broke new ground when she declared: 'Lady Audley's real secret is that she is *sane*'.[13] The progessive revelation of secrets in the text, according to Showalter, runs as follows: 'first, that she has a double identity; second, that she is a bigamist; third, that she has attempted murder; fourth, that she has not succeeded; and finally, that she is mad'.[14] The 'real' secret is only to be detected by the reader. Showalter's work has been of great importance in the feminist readings of texts and the recuperation of cultural values that have been ignored by the academic tradition, but I would argue that the seductiveness of an interpretation of Lady Audley's Secret that simply inverts the apparent values of the text must be resisted. The 'disclosure' of Lucy's madness is not so unproblematic as this listing would suggest, nor does the list exhaust, even at surface level, the secrets of the narrative. In the chapter headed 'My Lady Tells The Truth', Lucy sends for her husband, so that he with Robert Audley may hear 'the secret of my life'.[15] At this stage Robert has already confronted her with his knowledge of her previous identity as Helen Talboys, and of her faked death, and, having accused her of attempting to murder him by starting a fire at the Castle Inn, has heard her self-accusation of madness. 'The secret of my life' is a phrase that has been found earlier by Robert in a letter written to her father after her desertion of him and of her baby. His recollection of her words in the earlier context leads to a repetition of the phrase, which, together with the chapter heading and the build-up to a confession scene that will bring a 'terrible revelation' to Sir Michael, suggests that in this climax the deepest secret of her life is to be told. What she then tells is the story of her life, and the secret of her life turns out to be that her mother

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[12]'Madness in Novels', p.135.
[13]A Literature of Their Own, p.167.
[14]A Literature of Their Own, p.166.
[15]Mary Elizabeth Braddon, Lady Audley' Secret, The World's Classics (Oxford, 1987, p.346. All references will be to this edition and will be incorporated in the text.

was mad and shut in a mad-house.

Madness was indeed something to be kept secret in Victorian society for two main reasons. In the first place there was a general belief in the possible inheritance of madness and in the second place there was fear of the social stigma. It is this latter consideration that underlies the need to give the young Helen a 'respectable' reason for her mother's absence ('she was ill, and she was away' p.348) which contrasts with the horrible truth. Once this is revealed, she is 'haunted' by the thought of her mother's madness:

> I was always picturing to myself this madwoman pacing up and down some prison cell, in a hideous garment that bound her tortured limbs; I had exaggerated ideas of the horror of her situation. I had no knowledge of the different degrees of madness; and the image that haunted me was that of a distraught and violent creature, who would fall upon me and kill me if I came within her reach. This idea grew upon me until I used to awake in the dead of the night, screaming aloud in an agony of terror from a dream in which I had felt my mother's icy grasp upon my throat, and heard her ravings in my ear. (p.349)

In this gothic nightmare madness is first pictured suffering in the confinements of strait-waistcoat and cell, and then, free of restraint, seen as a threat. The images are not dissimilar to those presented in Jane Eyre, but in this instance the horror is enhanced by the subversion of the conventional image of mother and child. Furthermore, the murderous feelings imputed to her mother in these imaginings might be seen as indications of Lucy's own subliminal murderous impulses.

Reality turns out to be very different from these imaginings.When she goes to see her mother, she finds:

> no raving, strait-waistcoated maniac, guarded by zealous gaolers; but a golden-haired, blue-eyed, girlish creature, who seemed as frivolous as a butterfly, and who skipped towards us with her yellow curls decorated with natural flowers, and saluted us with radiant smiles, and gay, ceaseless chatter. (p.350)

Braddon here, like Dickens in Barnaby Rudge, draws on the Romantic tradition of insanity, which saw madness in terms of childlike simplicity, innocent gaiety, and absorption in the world of nature. As a child of nature Lucy's mother is impartial in

her attentions, incapable of recognizing her husband or child: 'She would have spoken in the same manner to any stranger' (p.350). But if Lucy's mother has become a 'natural' by losing her wits, she has also become 'unnatural', since the bond between mother and child has been broken by her puerperal insanity: 'She...had been, or had appeared, sane up to the hour of my birth; but from that hour her intellect had decayed' (p.350). This was one of a number of points in the female life-cycle where women were thought to be particularly at risk of madness and it poses a particular problem in the discussion of moral responsiblilty, for, if madness has been entailed by what is, after all, part of the 'natural' life-cycle, it is not something for which the suffering individual can be blamed, and the behaviour resulting from such insanity must surely also be similarly exonerated.

The picture of a mother who has been unable to fulfil her duties proves in reality to be attractive enough and indeed bears a striking resemblance to the apparently commendatory description of Lucy early in the novel, when, in between her two marriages, she is the governess at Mr.Dawson's:

> People who observed [her contentment] accounted for it by saying that it was part of her amiable and gentle nature always to be light-hearted, happy, and contented under any circumstances.
> Wherever she went she seemed to take joy and brightness with her. In the cottages of the poor her fair face shone like a sunbeam. She would sit for a quarter of an hour talking to some old woman, and apparently as pleased with the admiration of a toothless crone as if she had been listening to the compliments of a marquis. (p.5)

Whether or not Braddon had Wordsworth's Lucy in mind as she wrote this, the representation incorporates contemporary ideas of the woman's role in bringing light and sunshine into the drabness of everyday existence, but there is also a hint of a more egotistical side of her easy adaptation to circumstances. '"What shall I do to gratify myself - to be admired - or to vary the tenor of my existence ?" are not the questions which a woman of right feeling asks on first awaking to the avocations of the day', announced Mrs. Ellis in The Women of England, her best-seller of 1839.[16] Lucy's

[16]Mrs.Ellis, The Women of England, their Social Duties, and Domestic Habits (London, 1839), p.23.

claim to admiration is almost taken for granted in the quotation above, for she is endowed with more than ordinary beauty. This, even more than madness, is the result of inheritance. But the possibility that madness has been inherited, along with the beauty, is indicated in the similarity between these two descriptions.

As I have already commented, though, madness, seen as a matter of heredity, becomes difficult to judge in terms of morality. Lucy's grandmother, too, had been incurably mad, and Lucy claims madness as her inheritance, even though it had not manifested itself at the birth of her child. Although the connection of madness with ideas of racial degeneracy had not yet entered general discourse, insanity, it was considered, could be transmitted as a 'taint' rendering the subject liable to outright madness given exacerbating circumstances. The concept of 'latent' madness, to which I shall return later, overlaps, in its connotations of the hidden or concealed, with the theme of secrecy which is fundamental to this novel, and it is in one of the moments of revelation needed to release the accumulation of secrets in the plot that Lucy presents an apologia, which is in effect the story of her life. Her well-ordered narrative distinguishes between the hereditary factors (both her mother and her grandmother had been insane) and environmental effects. In this confessional scene she quite clearly enumerates the disabling effects of poverty, her phraseology drawing attention to each of her points as if she were giving a lecture. As in the latter dialogue with her husband when they discuss the possibility of Robert's madness, we see, in her general knowledge and command of language, quite a different Lucy from the frivolous girlish creature she has been presented as earlier.

Justifiying her adult behaviour in terms of values inculcated in childhood, and drawing attention to the social conditioning to which women were exposed, she explains how, like Dickens's Estella, she has been taught to prize her own beauty, and has learnt that 'my ultimate fate depended upon my marriage' (p.350). Like Estella, too, she recognizes her own selfishness and inability to love: 'The mad folly that the world calls love had never had any part in my madness' (p.354). Unlike Estella, however, she shows no regret at this incapacity, for 'the vice of heartlessness became

the virtue of constancy' (p.354). Her driving force is not the need for affection, or a desire for revenge, but a quest for financial security, and, in articulating this, her story makes a convincing tale of a woman seeking the goal for which she had been educated and finding it sadly disappointing. The information that her 'latent' madness did not become manifest until after her desertion by George Talboys, leaves some of the blame for her predicament at his door, and it would be easy to read this as the confession of a woman who has been wronged by her husband and by society. Further support for the image of Lucy as a victim is provided by George's story told to the governess on board the ship from Australia, which reveals, for all his attempts at self-justification, an extraordinary neglect of his wife. But, on the other hand, a narratorial interjection in Lucy's narrative seems to be aimed at reducing her implicit claim for sympathy:

> She paused for a moment, and shuddered convulsively. It was impossible to see any of the changes of her countenance, for her face was obstinately bent towards the floor. Throughout her long confession her voice was never broken by a tear. What she had to tell she told in a cold, hard tone; very much the tone in which some criminal, dogged and sullen to the last, might have confessed to a gaol chaplain. (p.351)

The harsh image of the criminal which is conveyed with careful emphasis jars by the contrast with her present situation as a well-cared-for woman in the most comfortable circumstances, but it also indicates her eventual fate, hustled out of the country and into an asylum. Comparing her with a criminal during this scene would appear to indicate narratorial disapproval, an implicit endorsement of what the characters in the novel believe her to be. Its placing, however, makes another comment. Coming after her remark about the degrading effects of poverty, it seems to show some understanding of the social causes of criminality, on the one hand, and, on the other, a sense that the pressures operating on impoverished women are not very different from those leading to crime. Lucy makes it quite clear that she is marrying for financial security, both in her account of her marriage to George and in the scene when Sir Michael proposes to her. Despite his avowal that there is scarcely 'a greater sin...than that of the woman who marries a man she does not love' (p.9), he does allow her to

marry him, knowing full well that she 'cannot be blind to the advantages of such an alliance', and that she cannot simply marry him for love. It is her passionless behaviour that is so infuriating to the men - her lack of passion, that is, in her relationships with the opposite sex.

In leading the attack against her, Robert seems to be motivated, at least in part, by a desire to punish her for the emotional hurt she has caused his friend, her first husband. Although Robert's role as amateur sleuth makes him the prime discoverer of secrets, this role merges, as Ian Ousby points out in Bloodhounds of Heaven, into that of chivalric knight.[17] Discovering at this stage in his life a Christian belief, he becomes 'anxious to keep to the strict line of duty; fearful to swerve from the conscientious discharge of the strange task that had been forced upon him; and reliant on a stronger hand than his own to point the way which he was to go' (p.157). The 'stronger hand' would appear from this passage to be that of God, but it shortly becomes that of Clara Talboys: 'But amid all, and through all, Clara Talboys, with an imperious gesture, beckoned him onwards to her brother's unknown grave' (.p253). And, a little later, when she unexpectedly appears, having been playing the church organ, he is not entirely pleased to see her:

> That the sister of his lost friend should be here - here where she could watch his every action, and from those actions deduce the secret workings of his mind...made a complication of his difficulties that he could never have anticipated. It brought him back to that consciousness of his own helplessness, in which he had exclaimed - "A hand that is stronger than my own is beckoning me onward on the dark road that leads to my lost friend's unknown grave." (p.257)

As a religious sign-post, Clara represents a knight's lady, urging him to battle in the hope of attaining her favour. The medievalism of this representation, common enough in the art of the Pre-Raphaelites which Braddon refers to in passages I shall be discussing later, is an example both of the 'confining constructions of femininity' Taylor refers to and of the historicism which so often coloured Victorian attitudes.

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[17]Ian Ousby, Bloodhounds of Heaven: The Detective in English Fiction from Godwin to Doyle (Cambridge, Mass., 1976), pp.135-6.

Robert now finds himself with two fights on his hands. Not only is he engaged against Lucy (and the battle imagery is explicitly recognized by both of them), but he finds himself also ranged against Clara herself, who might 'deduce the secret workings of his mind'. As she comments on his ill appearance, fixing her eyes on his face, 'he knew that she was trying to read the innermost secrets of his mind' and reflects, 'How unequal the fight must be between us' (p.258). Taking no-one into his confidence Robert becomes almost hermetically sealed, forever prying into other people's secrets whilst anxiously defending his own, leaking only into the narratorial passages, which do, in fact, offer great insight into his thought processes. Troubled by the elusive nature of the 'truth', he, like Walter Hartright, fears he is on the verge of 'monomania'. In the present case, however, the suggestion takes on more significance since Lucy also accuses him of being monomaniacal. Originally proposed by Esquirol as a nosological category in 1820, the word was in wide currency in the mid-nineteenth century, and received endorsement by James Prichard in his influential A Treatise on Insanity of 1835, where it is defined as a 'partial' insanity: 'the individual affected is rendered incapable of thinking correctly on subjects connected with the particular illusion, while in other respects he betrays no palpable disorder of mind'.[18] It was included under the general heading of 'intellectual' insanity (which also covered mania and dementia) and distinguished from moral insanity. In practice, however, the distinction was blurred, since Prichard recognized that monomania could lead to moral insanity if unchecked.

Robert's fear of monomania intensifies as he builds up a chain of circumstantial evidence to which no-one else gives credence. Although it is clear to the reader, sharing the investigative procedure, that Robert is not constructing a chain out of his own folly and that the cause of the mystery he is trying to unravel is more than 'nervous fancies' (p.254), nevertheless, there are indications in the text that his is not an entirely stable frame of mind. The hyperbole of his unspoken speeches might be

[18]Prichard, p2.

considered typical of the melodramatic mode, but it is also characteristic of a neurotic over-reacting to circumstances. The narrator's comments on his state of mind, shortly before his mention of monomania, have the same excessive gloom and forboding that colour his reported thoughts:

> His thoughts wandered away to that gloomy prospect in which he saw no gleam of brightness to relieve the dull, black obscurity that encompassed the future, shutting in his path-way on every side, and spreading a dense curtain around and about him, which Hope was powerless to penetrate. He was for ever haunted by the vision of his uncle's anguish, for ever tortured by the thought of that ruin and desolation, which, being brought about by his instrumentality, would seem in a manner his handiwork. (p.253)

Again, explanation can be found for the tone of this passage by accommodating it to the melodramatic mode, but it reads like a convincing account of mental depression. Robert's determination to pursue his inquiries despite the distress likely to ensue for his uncle seems irrational indeed, given that there is no absolute need to expose Lady Audley. Although it is established, then, that Robert is not suffering from a delusion, he cannot quite be acquitted of the suspicion of insanity and this reinforces the point made explicitly in two passages I shall discuss later, that the balance of the mind is a fragile thing.

But it is the concept of delusion that seems to offer Lucy a way out of her predicament, since accusing Robert of monomania would carry the corollary that he cannot be believed. Sir Michael becomes therefore the helpless adjudicator of truth in the battle for credibility fought between Lucy and Robert. Unwilling, in the first instance to distrust his wife's judgement since that would entail imagining 'some weakness in her own mind' (p.331), his solution is to build up the case against his nephew in a way that shows how the 'symptoms' of madness (eccentric behaviour, marked changes in behaviour etc.) can be reinterpreted. The clinching factor, in the old man's estimate, is Robert's failure to fall in love with Alicia, but it is almost this which ensures his sanity, for love is 'a madness, and a scourge, and a fever, and a delusion, and a snare' (p.332), and on this score Sir Michael is madder than his

nephew. But Robert's secret from Clara is in fact his love for her, so, in the text's terms he is indeed suffering from a secret madness.

In thus linking Robert Audley with the idea of monomania, Braddon not only reveals the convenience of madness as a functional device in the mechanics of plotting, but, by making him wonder about his own sanity, she establishes him as a character of sensibility, and reduces the alien aspect of madness. It thus becomes, as I have said, an infirmity that could afflict anyone. Having finally learned from Lady Audley the story of her attempted (as it turns out) murder of George Talboys, Robert becomes 'hypochondriacal', brooding in his solitary chambers, plagued by the thought that his friend's dead body might return to haunt him, seeing himself in fact in terms of a story 'morbid, hideous, yet delicious' (p.402-3) which he had once read. The narrator takes the opportunity to comment on the ubiquity of insanity, making explicit what has already been indicated subtextually: 'Do not laugh at poor Robert because he grew hypochondriacal, after hearing the horrible story of his friend's death. There is nothing so delicate, so fragile, as that invisible balance upon which the mind is always trembling. Mad to-day and sane to-morrow' (p.403). Hypochondria was a fashionable malady in the eighteenth century, when it was believed to be an unfortunate consequence of fine-strung nerves, of over-refined sensibilities, and thus lacked the pejorative overtones of mania. And reference to the eighteenth century is made here as Robert is associated with greatness by the narrator's reference to Doctor Johnson, but the discourse has a nineteenth century moralizing attitude to Johnson's failure to learn from his sufferings, which might seem to deflect criticism on to Robert too. Furthermore, the repetition in interrogatory form of the idea quoted above ('Who has not been, or is not to be, mad in some lonely hour of life? Who is quite safe from the trembling of the balance?' p.404), in appealing to the reader, could be read as a hint that Robert might have been more sympathetic towards Lady Audley. But this interpretation would depend on the establishment of Lucy's insanity, on the necessity of understanding her murderous behaviour as the uncontrollable reaction of a mad woman, and this is a matter which remains ambiguous.

There is another narratorial intervention earlier in the novel, when, having been accosted for the first time by Clara Talboys who has revealed to him her passionate sorrow at the loss of her brother and desire for revenge, Robert returns to London. His musings in a slow-moving hackney cab, interrupted by the need to pay the cabman, merge into the narrator's melodramatic address to the reader. Taking up the notion of the irritation caused by the unceasing regularity of the 'meaner mechanism of the human machine...though the mainspring be for ever broken ' (p.205), the narrator, in hyperbolic style, herself rages against the 'mute propriety' of the 'apparatus of existence'. The discourse crystallizes in the contrast between outward order and inner confusion and culminates in the reflection: 'Mad-houses are large and only too numerous; yet surely it is strange they are not larger...when we remember how many minds must tremble upon the narrow boundary between reason and unreason, mad to-day and sane to-morrow, mad yesterday and sane to-day' (p.205). Like the quotations given above from a later point in the novel, the emphasis is on the pivot between madness and sanity, and madness becomes a common and reversable condition ('mad yesterday and sane to-day'). In this formulation madness is seen as diffuse, a natural response to sorrow and to the frustration caused by the impossibility of seeing reflected in the world outside the 'riot and confusion within'. The effect of the passage is to assimilate the strange and the unmanageable with the ordinary and to encourage the reader to distrust appearances.

Another explicit discussion of madness helps with the familiarization process that the novel is advancing. Following her accusation of monomania on the part of Robert, various conventional beliefs are aired in a dialogue between Lady Audley and her husband. Sir Michael, like his eighteenth century predecessors, is attracted to the idea of madness as attendant upon 'great intellects', whilst Lucy, ironically enough, urges the possibility of inherited insanity, then suggests the more fashionable theory of madness as 'a mere illness of the brain' (p.286). She then speaks as if turning to 'the wider question of madness in the abstract' (p.286), but by the reader, who a few pages earlier has read her threat to Robert ('Do you want to drive me mad? Do you know

what it is to wrestle with a madwoman? p.275), she must surely be suspected of pleading her own case. Madness here is seen as a closely guarded secret: 'People are insane for years and years before their insanity is found out. They know that they are mad, but they know how to keep their secret; and, perhaps they may sometimes keep it till they die' (p.286). It is an interesting concept and raises the problem of how madness is known at all, but it further confuses the issue of whether Lucy herself is, or is not mad. In a long speech, moving from the general to the particular, she adopts the language of the clinician (even to the incorporation of a 'poetic' simile), arguing for Robert's monomania on the basis of obsession. Her analogy with the way language itself can be reduced to meaninglessness does not seem to me to clarify her argument, but it does, subtly, emphasise the conception of madness as an ordinary part of life. Her analysis repeats the confusion so frequently to be found in the clinical literature between the characterization of madness as physical disorder and its cause in traits of personality. But because Robert has already suspected himself and indeed given signs of being obsessional, and because her version of the psychological process by which an individual becomes monomaniacal could describe his experience, there is the possibility that, despite its motivation as a blow against his credibility, Lucy's accusation has in fact a grain of truth in it.

On the surface, however, Robert presents little that is secret, since the narrator spends much time revealing his inmost thoughts. Lucy, on the other hand, remains mysterious. The earlier descriptions of her are purely external, concentrating on her beautiful child-like appearance and amiable disposition. Intimations of a hidden inner life are signalled by the portrait which is exhibited not in one of the public rooms, but in the ante-chamber to her boudoir. Because the door to the ante-room is locked, Alicia, Lucy's antagonistic step-daughter, shows Robert and George an alternative route along a secret passage, which brings them into the dressing-room, which leads into her boudoir and thence into the ante-room. It is a tortuous means of entry, creating, like the earlier intrusion into these rooms by Phoebe and Luke, a sense of trespass. In entering the rooms in her absence, they seem to be claiming an intimacy

with Lucy that she herself would repudiate and the narrator contributes to this feeling by commenting that George Talboys 'wondered to see how out of place he seemed among all these womanly luxuries' (p.69). The distaste she would feel were she to know of this invasion is indicated metonymically, when George's glove, which he leaves behind, is seen by Lucy on her return as 'litter'; he is out of place both literally in her room and metaphorically in her life. Braddon, an admirer of Balzac, emulates the French author in her detailed and psychologically telling descriptions of interiors. The dressing-room, despite Phoebe's assurances to the contrary, is in disorder. It indicates a Lucy who is the very opposite of a creature of nature; the flowers are from the hothouse, and even they are withering in the oppressive atmosphere.

In the centre of the octagonal room stands the Pre-Raphaelite portrait, which is important in terms of plot, but still more important for its very different representation of the woman. The face is still 'delicate', the eyes blue, the hair golden, the lips pouting and complexion 'blonde', but now the eyes have 'a strange sinister light', the hair gleams with 'red gold', the mouth has 'a hard, almost wicked look', and the complexion has 'a lurid lightness'. Instead of the insistence on fragility and childishness that has characterized the earlier images, this portrait is bathed in a red light, 'as if you had burned strange-coloured fires before my lady's face' (p.70), which brings out 'new lines' and 'new expressions', so that 'my lady' has 'the aspect of a beautiful fiend'. Enveloped in a 'crimson' dress that, like a 'raging furnace', threatens to engulf her, she could be, like Mr.Rochester, a devil in hell. The picture is 'so like and yet so unlike': recognizably Lucy, yet not the Lucy anyone knows.

Alicia puts forward a possible interpretation of it as depicting the hidden Lucy, and it is worth considering this point of view. As in Jane Eyre, fires and fire imagery pervade the novel and the colour of crimson is frequently present, evoking the intensity of sexual passion and, in this instance, through the demonic associations, implicitly condemning it. I have already suggested a comparison between Lucy and Mr.Rochester, but it might be more meaningful to see in Lucy a conflation of Bertha and Jane. The fire imagery encourages the reader to see her as a figure whose desire

for sensual pleasure has developed into a strong sexual appetite, masked for the sake of propriety by her winsome child-like persona. But physical passion, I have already argued, is foreign to Lucy's nature. Passionless and almost heartless herself, she has, on the contrary, an innate capacity to arouse passion in men. Like La Belle Dame Sans Merci she bewitches men, without becoming herself ensnared. Even the 'lymphatic' Robert shows signs of falling under her spell and, as I pointed out above, it seems to be the desire to avenge his friend's broken heart that, as much as anything, motivates his relentless investigations. This portrait is another male attempt to penetrate her secret; in this case, the secret of her being, comparable perhaps with Walter Hartright's less flamboyant attempt to render Laura in water-colours. Characteristically vampiric, it may say as much about the Pre-Raphaelite painter as it does about Lady Audley, representing the fire of his passion rather than hers. Alicia's approving judgement is not to be trusted, since she is herself a hostile witness. The narrator's language in describing the picture, on the other hand, also indicates criticism: 'No-one but a pre-Raphaelite' could have painted it like this, and the painter seems to have 'copied quaint mediaeval monstrosities until his brain had grown bewildered'. But these turns of phrase are equivocal and could equally well come from a naïve or obfuscating narrator. It is only later, when Lucy is about to accuse Robert of madness to her husband, that the narrator notes that the 'hard and cruel lines which Robert Audley had observed in the...portrait, were plainly visible in the firelight' (p.285).

Madness has been for Lucy a weapon of attack on Robert and defence of herself. If the reader is able to assess its validity with respect to Robert, it is less easy to know how justified it is as a label for Lucy. To try to elucidate the problem it is necessary to analyze the narratorial attitude to Lucy. Generally speaking she is held at a distance, the main perspective being Robert's. In volume II, chapter XIII, 'Phoebe's Petition', however, the reader is led into the boudoir again, but even now, when the narrator is purporting to represent Lucy's thoughts, there is less than full intimacy, there are too many speculations and rhetorical questions (pp.296-7) for the reader to have a secure position. The room, though, is described at length in sensuous detail.

Braddon brings out the opulence and artistic refinement of the room, and emphasises Lucy's incorporation into her surroundings by describing the mirrors which 'multiply my lady's image, and in that image reflected the most beautiful object in the enchanted chamber' (p.294). The description recalls Enobarbus's veneration of Cleopatra in her barge, but Lucy is not elevated by her surroundings; rather, she is reduced to an artefact, beautiful and well-wrought, but less than human. As the description continues, reference is made to the Pre-Raphaelites and Holman Hunt in particular. Braddon's representation of the room is indeed Pre- Raphaelite in its intricate detail and lush adjectives, and in the contrast between the luxurious furnishings and the 'moaning' of the wind and 'flapping' of ivy leaves outside. There is here, though, no lurid light as in the portrait, and the 'raging furnace' is domesticated to 'burning coals'. Like Louisa in Dickens's Hard Times (1854), Lucy is represented gazing into the fire, into its 'red chasms'; like Louisa, it is suggested, she has a secret inner life. But, whereas Louisa's inner life is repressed by the life-denying austerity of her upbringing, Lucy's is screened by the artifice of her surroundings.

The Pre-Raphaelite analogy, then, prods the reader into reading this description not just symbolically, but for its didacticism, which becomes explicit in the following paragraph: 'I should be preaching a very stale sermon, and harping upon a very familiar moral, if I were to seize this opportunity of declaiming against art and beauty, because my lady was more wretched in this elegant apartment than many a half-starved sempstress in her dreary garret' (p.295). There is a glimmering of sympathy as the narrator draws close to study her state of mind: 'She was wretched by reason of a wound which lay too deep for the possibility of any solace from such plasters as wealth and luxury'. The word 'wound' makes sense given the repeated use of 'fight' and 'battle' imagery, but here, totally divorced from that context, it makes her sound wronged, a victim. However, the reader is not allowed to dwell on that possibility, for the narrator proceeds to expound on the nature of her wretchedness, which is tied up with her loss of innocence. There is here an interesting confusion concerning the concepts of innocence and guilt. In the vocabulary of religion, they

have an ontological significance; in legal terminology they refer to specific acts. But there is one specific act which is associated with loss of innocence in the religious sense and that has to do with sexual temptation and carnal knowledge. When the narrator compares Lucy with Lucretia Borgia and Catherine de' Medici, she talks of the 'dreadful boundary line between innocence and guilt' (p.296). The guilt derives from their crimes, but it seems to entail a total loss of innocence, as though their crimes against society included that other 'crime' of sexual transgression. And indeed contemporary ideology would have found the ruthless pursuit of power and the murders committed as a betrayal of their femaleness and of the obligations of beauty. Putting Lucy into this company would seem to imply political ambition and intrigue on her part, which is at variance with everything the novel says about her desire for domestic peace and comfort, but it also suggests that the desire for power to organize one's own existence and the determination to acquire that power lurk beneath the respectable exterior of British upper-class life.

Not only is it difficult to assess the sanity or otherwise of Lady Audley's state of mind, but, as I have already noted, the narrator's moral position in this text is particularly unstable. Her easy-going tolerance of Robert's cigar- smoking, French-novel-reading indolence seems as genuine as the approbation of his missionary zeal in pursuit of his female quarry; the refusal to preach 'a very stale sermon' against art and beauty gives way to an indulgence in just such a sermon. As the narrator speculates on the direction of Lucy's thoughts, the source of her sinfulness is located firmly in her beauty:

> Did she remember the day in which that fairy dower of beauty had first taught her to be selfish and cruel, indifferent to the joys and sorrows of others, cold-hearted and capricious, greedy for admiration, exacting and tyrannical...? Did she trace every sin of her life back to its true source?...Surely...she must have repented in bitterness and despair of that day in which the master-passions of her life had become her rulers, and the three demons of Vanity, Selfishness, and Ambition had joined hands and said, "This woman is our slave; let us see what she will become under our guidance." (p.297)

Despite the suggestion in the word 'dower' that Lucy's beauty is an inheritance and therefore not something for which she can be blamed, there is an evangelical fervour here that recalls the voice of Mr.Brocklehurst ordering the 'top-knots' of the Lowood girls to be cut off. The moral attitude informing the rhetoric of the narrator's reflections at this point is not dissimilar to that of the narrator of Middlemarch towards Rosamond Vincy, but, as I noted at the beginning of the chapter, it interesting to find that contemporary commentators did not necessarily agree with Henry James's recognition of Braddon's 'strict regard to morality'.

W.F.Rae, for instance, the anonymous writer of the lengthy review of six Braddon texts, including Lady Audley's Secret, in the North British Review , which I referred to earlier in this chapter, condemns her, ostensibly on the grounds of lack of realism:

> A novel is a picture of life, and as such ought to be faithful. The fault of these novels is that they contain pictures of daily life, wherein there are scenes so grossly untrue to nature, that we can hardly pardon the authoress if she drew them in ignorance, and cannot condemn her too strongly if, knowing their falseness, she introduced them for the sake of effect. (p.203)

Compared with the work of Scott, George Eliot and Bulwer-Lytton (Braddon's mentor), her fiction is found to be untruthful and of Lady Audley's Secret it is said: 'The artistic faults of this novel are as grave as the ethical ones' (p.187). Because of Rae's refusal to apply a 'moral test' to Braddon's work, however, it is not entirely clear what the ethical faults are. Presumably it is the immoral behaviour of certain characters that is being referred to rather than the absence of authorial censure. At least it was widely agreed by the reviewers that Lucy was a wicked woman, and Rae, more unusually, also castigates Robert for not repenting 'of having been the means of causing his aunt to end her days prematurely in a madhouse, charged with a crime of which she was innocent' (p.186). Rae apparently places no faith in the possibility of Lucy actually being mad. For him she is simply an impossible character: 'In drawing her, the authoress may have intended to portray a female Mephistopheles; but, if so,

she should have known that a woman cannot fill such a part' (p.186). His preconceptions of how a woman can behave enable Rae, therefore, to slip neatly out of the mad/bad quandary, but it remains, nevertheless, a quandary. The narrator neither shows that Lucy is indubitably sane nor explicitly says so. At the time of the Mount Stanning exploit, the second attempted murder, her behaviour twice causes the maid, Phoebe, to doubt her mistress's sanity and Lucy herself maintains that once she had had her child she became 'subject to fits of violence and despair' and needed to be soothed by her father 'as only mad people and children are soothed' (p.353). It is not only the circularity of this last observation that clouds the whole issue; Lucy's behaviour can be attributed to madness only if bigamy and attempted murder are necessarily consequences of insanity. As I have been arguing, madness is a missile that is thrown pretty indiscriminately around this text and in the case of Lucy there are inadequate guidelines for assessing the truth of her self-accusation.

Robert, her 'denouncer', 'judge' and 'gaoler', follows up her confession by consulting Dr.Alwyn Mosgrave, a physician experienced in cases of mania. The doctor is presented with two sorts of evidence. In the first place, Robert tells him the story he has just heard in her confession, stopping at the same point, and omitting any mention of Georges's disappearance and the fire at the Castle Inn. On the basis of that evidence, Dr.Mosgrave utters his opinion that she is not mad but a criminal. His verdict of insanity is only made *after* Robert has confided his fears that Lucy has murdered her first husband, and his desire to spare the family the shame of a trial in a public court. This diagnosis is arrived at on insubstantial evidence derived partly from a ten-minute interview with Lucy, but mostly from what Robert has told him:

> 'I have talked to the lady', he said quietly, 'and we understand each other very well. There is latent insanity! Insanity which might never appear; or which might appear only once or twice in a life-time. It would be dementia in its worst phase perhaps: acute mania; but its duration would be very brief, and it would only arise under extreme mental pressure. The lady is not mad; but she has the hereditary taint in her blood. She has the cunning of madness, with the prudence of intelligence. I will tell you what she is, Mr.Audley. She is dangerous!' (p379)

Like Robert Audley, the doctor has apparently forced a secret out into the open. The detection of latent insanity in a ten-minute conversation, however, seems to indicate supernatural powers, rather than those of medical diagnosis. He rehearses the current jargon of 'latent insanity', 'hereditary taint', 'dementia', 'mania', without the slightest indication of the means he has adopted to arrive at his conclusion. Thus the suspicion that madness is, in this case, a label of convenience is reinforced.

Although firmly repudiating any suggestion that he might be abetting Robert in his aim of preventing a family disgrace, the doctor does indeed recommend Lucy's confinement in the asylum: 'if you were to dig a grave for her in the nearest churchyard and bury her alive in it, you could not more safely shut her from the world and all worldly associations' (p.381). This, he goes on to say, would be doing a 'service to society', but it is difficult to see why Lucy's case should provoke such an extreme reaction; she is not an indiscriminate murderess and has tried to harm only those men who threatened her security. The melodramatic conclusion to the speech quoted above indicates the doctor's fear without providing any foundation for it, and his claim that 'If she could have sprung at my throat and strangled me with her little hands, as I sat talking to her just now, she would have done it' (p.381) again sounds like a rhetorical gesture, in which hyperbole takes the place of clinical analysis.

Following a procedure of certification that would not have been legal, Lady Audley is confined to an an asylum, not in England, but in Belgium, as if to stress the importance of removing her from society. In a letter to Bulwer-Lytton, the novel's dedicatee, Braddon admits that her knowledge of such institutions was scanty:
'I had no one to consult about "Maisons de Santé " and it was only when the book was printed that I heard from a lady whose husband was an inmate of such a house, that what I had done abroad was more impossible than it would have been at home'.[19] This is not, however, a point of defective realism that seems to have troubled her critics; the

[19]Mary Braddon, Letter no.3, in Robert Lee Wolff, 'Devoted Disciple: the Letters of Mary Elizabeth Braddon to Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton 1862-73', Harvard Library Bulletin, 22 (1974), 5-35 and 129-161 (p.12).

possible use of the asylum as a receptacle for unwanted members of society was well established in the popular imagination. Here, the comparison with the grave made by the doctor underlines both the necessity for Lucy's death and the function of the asylum as a form of punishment. Driving the point home, the chapter in which Lucy is taken to the *maison de santé* is called 'Buried Alive'. The journey there is described in some detail as if to emphasise the distance of her removal, and the dreariness of the journey through Belgium is stressed. That Lucy has been brought to a place of burial is reflected in the description of the apartments she is consigned to: the lobby is of 'cellarlike darkness', and the saloon is furnished with 'gloomy velvet draperies, and with a certain funereal splendour' (p.388). A striking image draws attention to the bed which is 'so wondrously made, as to appear to have no opening whatever in its coverings, unless the counterpane had been split asunder with a penknife' (pp.388-9). This contrasts with the disorder that has been commented on in the descriptions of Lucy's private rooms at Audley Court, and in that respect indicates the extent to which her removal from England is a way of restoring order. However, there is possibly an alternative interpretation of this image, for Lucy is not yet in the bed, and the apparent difficulty of opening its coverings could hint that it is not going to be so easy as Robert imagines to put her away. Having described the rooms as if from Lucy's point of view, the narrator then focuses on Lucy herself ('My lady stared dismally round at the range of rooms', p.389), before concentrating attention on the flame of the 'single wax candle'. The juxtaposition of the figure of the woman with the flame of the candle suggests a diminution of the earlier association of Lucy with glowing fires of one kind or another, poetically conveying the pathos of her new situation and her loss of power. Furthermore, the parallel with the earlier scene in her boudoir (p.294), which I have already discussed, reinforces the identification of Lucy with the flame of the candle. Besides this, though, there is another implication in the mutiplied reflections. The reflections are of the flame, but if Lucy is now reduced to a single flame, these reflections could be seen as the 'pale and ghostlike' figures of countless other women, who are similarly repressed and confined.

In Difference and Pathology, Sander Gilman discusses madness as a form of stereotype in a way that is, I think, helpful for understanding the need for this punishment. Basing his analysis on object relations theory, he identifies stereotypes as crude mental representations of the world which perpetuate a necessary sense of Other. They arise, therefore, when our self-integration is threatened. One of the categories by which both the self and, necessarily, the Other are defined is our sense of our own mutability, which expresses itself in the concept of illness and the differentiation of "healthy" from "sick": 'The very concept of pathology is a line drawn between the "good" and the "bad"'.[20] Gilman continues:

> Of all the models of pathology, one of the most powerful is mental illness. For the most elementally frightening possibility is loss of control over the self, and loss of control is associated with loss of language and thought perhaps even more than with physical illness. Often associated with violence (including aggressive sexual acts), the mad are perceived as the antithesis to the control and reason that define the self. Again, what is perceived is in large part a projection: for within everyone's fantasy life there exists...an incipient madness that we control with more or less success.[21]

In Lady Audley's Secret, there are, I think, two partly conflicting conceptions of madness at work. On the one hand, the discussion of Robert's 'monomania' and the narratorial commentaries urge an understanding of insanity as a common occurrence, liable to afflict anyone of sensibility, and deserving of sympathy. Thus Braddon would seem to be questioning the concept of a pathology of the mind, or at least denying the rigidity of its boundaries. On the other hand, the treatment of Lady Audley both by the other characters and by the narrator suggests a more inflexible position and this is surely tied up with the intricacies of sexual politics. Showalter's argument that Lady Audley's Secret presents a satire on The Woman in White is attractive but facile. There are indeed a number of similarities between the two novels, which suggest that the later text may be making reference to the earlier one, but Braddon's is characterized by an ambiguity that makes it far more elusive than Showalter allows. In

[20]Difference and Pathology, p.23.
[21]Difference and Pathology, pp.23-4.

Collins's novel, I argued, the issue of madness is linked with the concept of the heroine; in Braddon's it is indissolubly linked with issues of femaleness, both in its biological and its cultural aspects. Madness thus becomes a way of emphasizing difference. Her consciousness of her own beauty, in society's eyes the supreme attribute of a woman, because it is unmitigated by the Christian virtues endorsed in Victorian ideology, imprisons her within a solipsistic world, into which her sexual attraction threatens to draw men on her terms rather than on theirs. Their fear of the loss of control which would condemn them to animality demands the redefinition of the situation as her loss of control in the animality of madness. In this analysis it does not matter whether Lucy is mad or not; what does matter is that she is said to be mad on the basis of a keen appreciation of a dividing line between normal and abnormal, good and bad. As a mad woman she becomes the Other on to which can be projected the violent fears of society. Her actual state of mind remains a secret which is conserved in the secrecy of being buried alive in the maison de santé . Clara's fate, removed by marriage to a 'fairy cottage', would seem to indicate that even the woman who has absorbed the Christian lessons of humility and self- sacrifice is not safe from being also buried alive.

CHAPTER 6

'SANE AMONGST THE MAD': HARD CASH AND WRONGFUL CONFINEMENT

Of all the texts with which this thesis is concerned, Hard Cash is the one that raises most acutely questions of contemporary practices in the handling of lunacy and lunatics. Reade's prefatory material demands that the novel be read as an exercise in social realism; his rhetorical techniques, however, not only exploit but exaggerate the potential for sensationalism of his subject-matter. In discussing the interplay between these two different modes of operation this chapter will reveal aspects of sensationalism which contrast markedly with those of the preceding chapter. Indeed, whilst the impulse of Lady Audley's Secret might be said to be the *preservation* of the secrecy surrounding madness, the impetus behind Hard Cash is an angry desire to rip away the masks and expose the devices by which the truth is hidden, and the issue on which this aim is concentrated is that of the illegal confinement of the sane. Even before the large-scale building of county asylums promoted by the 1845 Lunatics Act, the fear of wrongful confinement was apparent. In 1728 Daniel Defoe castigated the 'vile Practice now so much in vogue among the better Sort, as they are called, but the worst sort in fact, namely, the sending their Wives to Mad-Houses at every Whim or Dislike, that they may be more secure and undisturb'd in their Debaucheries'.[1] John Conolly voiced a similar anxiety over the possible abuse of the system in 1830:

> The facts which have been alluded to in the foregoing Inquiry, show, that the present regulations regarding the insane are at once inefficient for the protection of the insane themselves, and dangerous to the public;---that it results from them that some are improperly confined, and others improperly at large;---that whilst the eccentric are endangered, those actually mad are often allowed a dangerous liberty;--

[1]Daniel Defoe, Augusta Triumphans (1728), quoted in The Faber Book Madness edited by Roy Porter (London, 1991), pp.354-5.

-that the public are dissatisfied, and medical men harassed and perplexed.[2]

And in the extended Preface to the later editions of Valentine Vox, Henry Cockton draws attention to the deficiencies of the 1828 Madhouse Act, which, he maintains would not prevent wrongful confinement for reasons of adultery, reappropriation of property, revenge, or the prevention of unapproved marriages.

Defoe's recommendations (licensed houses subject to 'proper Visitation and Inspection', no confinement without 'due Reason, Inquiry and Authority') were finally embodied in legislation in 1845, but legal safeguards did not calm the fears, and in the same year John Perceval's Alleged Lunatics' Friends Society was founded, achieving sufficient credibility to present evidence of abuse of the system to the 1858 Select Committee.[3] Accounts of illegal or unjustified confinement had all the sensationalism of fiction. The narrative of Charles Merivale's experiences, for instance, contains many of the elements of the various fictions examined in this thesis.[4] He protests that the doctors find someone mad because they have been told that person is mad; he draws attention to the importance for the patient of keeping calm lest anger be considered yet another symptom of insanity; he describes oppressive treatment and the use of drugs to procure docility; he comments on the attitudes of doctors who seem to be as mad as their patients. And, like the authors mentioned above, he makes adverse comments on the operation of the asylum system. Merivale mentions Hard Cash, specifically, as containing an attack on private asylums which was widely taken to be incredible, and notes that his own account had indeed been condemned as 'sensational' on its first appearance in the press. Both, he protests, are no more than the truth. The fiction of Wilkie Collins's 'A Mad Marriage', on the other hand, claims to be based, according to an authorial note, 'on a case which actually occurred in England, eight years since'.[5] Both stories attest to the ease with which aspects of behaviour that

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[2]John Conolly, An Inquiry Concerning the Indication of Insanity , reprinted with an introduction by Richard Hunter and Ida MacAlpine (London, 1964), p.478.
[3]See Jenny Bourne Taylor, p.43.
[4]My Experiences in a Lunatic Asylum by a Sane Patient (London, 1879).
[5]Wilkie Collins, 'A Mad Marriage', Mr. and Mrs. (London, 1875), p.298.

others find disturbing for one reason or another can be twisted into evidence of insanity with the connivance of incompetent or corrupt doctors. Merivale admits to 'hypochondria' and accompanying delusions, which he classes as a nervous disorder, and which he maintains is clearly distinguishable from madness and should not be treated as if it were madness. Collins's Roland Cameron finds himself in confinement the first time by an act of parental control to thwart a disapproved marriage. Having later come into a fortune, his relatives find an excuse in 'an act of violence' to return him to the asylum. Despite differences in emphasis in these two accounts, there is a shared insistence on the blighting that results from being labelled insane and of the effectual silencing that label entails. It is easier, it appears, to be certified mad than it is to prove one's sanity.

When it came to it, as Peter McCandless points out in his article, 'Liberty and Lunacy: The Victorians and Wrongful Confinement', a 'verdict of sanity simply meant that a charge of insanity could not be upheld'.[6] Recognizing the emotional heat generated by this issue, he tries to discover to what extent the fears of conspiracies to confine people who were not really insane were founded on fact, and concludes that, although there were undoubted dangers to individual liberty, deriving from widespread ignorance within the medical profession as to what constituted insanity, occasional malpractice, subjective indices of madness, and the tendency to confuse insanity with immorality, nevertheless there is no firm evidence of conspiracy or corruption. There was indeed the suspicion of conspiracy in a few cases, but on the whole, 'the men who certified and confined lunatics did so because they believed that it was in the best interests of society and the individuals concerned'.[7]

McCandless is one of many twentieth century medical historians to cite Charles Reade's Hard Cash for its sensational account of wrongful confinement, which, by its popularity, helped to publicize the issue and fan public fears. Like Collins, Reade was

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[6]Peter McCandless, 'Liberty and Lunacy: The Victorians and Wrongful Confinement' in Madhouses, Mad-Doctors, and Madmen, edited by Andrew Scull, p.356.
[7]McCandless, p.357.

anxious to assert his novel's foundation in fact. Published in 1863, it forms part of a compaign that he was conducting to publicize and reform the abuses of private lunatic asylums. It was preceded by letters to the press, which Reade later published under the title 'Our Dark Places' in Readiana, and the text of the novel was, in its later additions, accompanied by 'Correspondence elicited by the first edition of "Hard Cash"'.[8] He called his novel, a 'Matter-of-Fact Romance', a favourite designation that he applied to five of his fictional works, and prided himself on his meticulous research: 'these truths have been gathered by long, severe, systematic labour, from a multitude of volumes, pamphlets, journals, reports, blue-books, manuscript narratives, letters, and living people, whom I have sought out, examined, and cross-examined, to get at the truth on each main topic I have striven to handle'.[9] But he also worried over the relationship between fact and fiction: 'Sometimes, I say, it must be dangerous to overload fiction with facts. At others, I think fiction has succeeded in proportion to the amount of fact in it'.[10] Reade considered himself to be a reformer, who could transmit his message to a wider audience by working through fiction:

> I have taken a few undeniable truths out of many, and have laboured to make my readers realize those appalling facts of the day which most men know, but not one in a thousand comprehends, and not one in a hundred thousand realizes, until fiction - which, whatever you have been told to the contrary, is the highest, widest, noblest, and greatest of all the arts - comes to his aid, studies, penetrates, digests the hard facts of chronicles and blue-books, and makes their dry bones live.[11]

Reade's statements about fiction are not always as positive as this. In A Terrible Temptation (1871), another novel concerned with madness and questionable confinement, he draws what, according to his biographer, Wayne Burns, is an 'acknowledged self-portrait, in the character of Mr. Rolfe, a novelist and dramatist who

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[8]Charles Reade, Readiana (London, 1883); Hard Cash (London, 1880?). All references will be to this edition and will be incorporated into the text.
[9]Preface, Hard Cash. Wayne Burns details the elaborate procedures Reade adopted to control the mass of information he had accumulated in 'Hard Cash: "Uncomparably My Best Production"', Literature and Psychology, 8 (1958), 34-43.
[10]Quoted in Malcolm Elwin, Charles Reade (London, 1931), p.155.
[11]Last sentence of Put Yourself in His Place (1870), quoted in Elton Edward Smith, Charles Reade (London, 1976), p104.

is also a lawyer, whose fictions are 'works of laborious research'.[12] Rolfe's books, says the rector, Mr.Angelo, 'bring about the changes he demands...he has taken a good many alleged lunatics out of confinement'.[13] But it is not as a writer of fiction that Rolfe helps to release Charles Bassett from the asylum; he is effective insofar as he is an active campaigner rather than a novelist, and the text, in fact, indicates the queasiness about the status of fiction that is reflected also in Reade's protestations about the factual basis of his novels. Rolfe, in fact, articulates a cynical point of view:

> "Well, you are a writer [says Dr.Suaby, the 'mad-doctor']; publish a book, call it "Medicina Laici", and send me a copy."
> "To slash in the *Lancet*? [replies Rolfe] Well, I will: when novels cease to pay, and truth begins to."[14]

Rolfe confirms his position a little later: 'Oh...all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. My business is Lying, and I drudge at it; so to escape is a great amusement and recreation to poor me. Besides, it gives me fresh vigour to replunge into Mendacity; and that's the thing that pays'.[15] These comments might be taken as dinner-party repartee in the first case and a self-deflating escape from gratitude in the other, were it not that lying, especially insofar as it leads to abuse in the private asylum system, comes in for strong condemnation.

The ambiguous status of books is also evident in Hard Cash. Having been lured to Siverton Grove House, Alfred, still officially a free man, is left in an unkempt room, one side of which appears to be all books, including the door by which he has entered. Having 'learned to pick up the fragments of time', he goes to take a book from the shelves, only to find that it and all the others are 'iron and chilly' (p.261). There seems to be no reason for the deception: 'What a fool the man must be!' thinks Alfred, 'Why he could have bought books with ideas in them for the price of these imposters' (p261). Further exploration reveals that he is in a topsy-turvy world where

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[12]Wayne Burns, Charles Reade, a Study in Victorian Authorship (New York, 1961), p.234.
[13]Charles Reade, A Terrible Temptation (London, 1880?), p.154.
[14]A Terrible Temptation, p.203.
[15]A Terrible Temptation, p.205.

the door has no door-knob and the door-knob no door. He also realizes that he is a prisoner within these illusions. The room is never referred to or visited again, and its function here seems to be to emphasise, symbolically, the degree to which the hero has been trapped in a world of delusion and hallucination. Not only has he entered the domain of the mad, where the madness is not confined to the kept, but he has himself arrived under the delusion that he is to meet Peggy Black, and there is to be a further conspiracy of pretence and misconception that he is mad. But the inclusion of books as an element of deception perhaps indicates, regarding the symbolism as psychological rather than structural, Reade's own mixed feelings regarding the craft of fiction. It is the fact that the 'books' are revealed to be made of iron that makes the room so curious; doors pretending to be book-shelves are not unknown in the English country house and a wall painted *trompe l'oeil* fashion is conceivable. Iron, on the other hand, is associated throughout the novel with constraints on individual freedom - iron gates, iron manacles, iron handcuffs, iron bars - and Alfred is shortly to be strapped to an iron bedstead. It is possible, then, to read this scene as having a significance beyond that of mere plot and as expressing anxieties similar to those that are aired more explicitly in A Terrible Temptation. Books here are not simply empty of ideas, but are implicated in the idea of imprisonment.

Reade did in fact communicate his feelings of being overwhelmed by the material he had accumulated as source material for his fiction. Elwin refers several times to the difficulty Reade expresses about keeping his narrative alive through the masses of documentary material he considered necessary for The Cloister in the Hearth and later for Hard Cash, and quotes from a letter to Mrs. Seymour, his long-term housekeeper and confidante, where he reflects on the pull between research and creative writing: 'Sometimes I say, it must be dangerous to overload fiction with facts. At others, I think fiction has succeeded in proportion to the amount of fact in it'.[16] Wayne Burns explains what seems like a neurotic dependence on facts as a camouflage

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[16]Elwin, p.155.

for the emotional scars left by the deficiencies of his childhood relationships. He advances, furthermore, the theory that Reade exerted an unusual degree of control over his material and prized self-control so highly because he feared the encroachment of insanity that would be the all-too-swift consequence of loss of control. Whatever the truth of this claim it is certainly true that, as we shall see, control, whether of self or written material is highly valued in the text under consideration.

For Hard Cash, a novel which wavers uneasily between lurid sensationalism and polemic, Reade drew on his own experiences. Like Rolfe in A Terrible Temptation, he was actively involved in a case of wrongful committal of a young man called Fletcher which is documented in the series of letters that was eventually published as 'Our Dark Places', and in writing Hard Cash he added to the material he had already accumulated by consulting Dickson, the Scots doctor he had had dealings with over the Fletcher case and who served as a model for Dr.Sampson.[17] A number of critics have discussed the relationship between fact and fiction in Reade's work, frequently finding it problematic. The deleterious effect of over-researching his fiction is, for instance, commented on by Winifred Hughes in her study of sensation novelists.[18] She notes that a 'crazy-quilt effect' results from the cramming in of as many sensational occurrences as possible in Hard Cash, without allowing for the inclusion of intermediate matters to give a sense of perspective. I would add that the concommitant absence of psychological exploration not only weakens the characterization but reduces the polemical drive of the text. Reade's earlier 'Matter-of-Fact Romance', It Is Never Too Late To Mend (1856), which also aims at social reform, lacks neither sensationalism, nor polemic, but it also makes a greater emotional appeal than Hard Cash. In the earlier work it is the 'separate and silent' system that Dickens had so condemned in American Notes that Reade attacks. Concentrating on a single prison, its governor, a handful of warders and prisoners, he powerfully conveys

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[17]Documented in Elwin, p.166.
[18]Winifred Hughes, The Maniac in the Cellar: the Sensation Novel of the 1860s (Princeton, 1980).

the deleterious effects of the system itself and of the additional punishments that are the whim of a sadistic governor who is ill-controlled by the feeble inspectorate. Hard Cash tells a similarly harrowing story, but its impact, for all the documentation, is weaker.

Contemporary critics were rather more impressed with Reade's artistic achievements (as opposed to his campaigning zeal) than are those of the later twentieth century. H.P.Spofford in an article in The Atlantic Monthly gives a high opinion of Reade's work: 'Charles Reade is not a clever writer merely, but a great one'.[19] Pointing out that several of the characters are carried on from the earlier Love Me Little, Love Me Long, Spofford declares that 'Very Hard Cash' (as it was known in the serialized version) is 'the finest of all that Charles Reade has given us' and that his earlier works read like 'studies' for it. Despite one or two striking improbabilities, it is held to be 'wrought with the finest finish, yet nowhere overdone' and 'the characterization in this book is wonderful'.[20] Another American journal, The Galaxy, published an article by Justin McCarthy which was rather more moderate in tone. McCarthy draws attention to the new skill developed by Reade, which enabled him 'to convert a Parliamentary blue-book into a work of fiction', but deplores the poverty of his characterization.[21] Much the same opinion is expressed in W.L.Courtney's chapter on Reade in his volume, Studies New and Old, where the statement that he is not unworthy to be ranked with Thackeray and Dickens, hardly seems to be supported by the criticism that his work is overweighed by fact at the expense of imagination and that his characterization is monotonous.[22]

Hard Cash was originally published in serial form in Dickens's periodical, All the Year Round from the March to the December of 1863, coming out in three-volume

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[19]H.P.Spofford, 'Charles Reade', The Atlantic Monthly, 14 (1864), 137-149, p.137.
[20]Spofford, p.148.
[21]Justin McCarthy, 'Charles Reade', The Galaxy, 14 (1872), 437-446, p.439.
[22]W.L.Courtney, Studies New and Old (London, 1888).

form a week or so before the conclusion of the serial.[23] The embarrassment its close modelling on the people and events of 'real life' caused the editor of the journal is discussed in an article by MacAlpine and Hunter which I shall return to later, but the novel's reception seems also to have caused Reade himself some embarrassment. The Preface, which was not written until 1868, says that the madhouse scenes have not only led to 'bold denials of public facts', but to 'a little easy cant about Sensation Novelists'. Although Reade shuns the label ('This slang term is not quite accurate as applied to me'), it has regularly been attached to him by critics of the twentieth century as well as those of his own period, and it is Dickens himself, in an article published in All the Year Round two months after the three-volume publication of Hard Cash, who gives a justification of sensationalism that Reade himself must surely have endorsed. He writes: 'Now, there can be no doubt that very beautiful and interesting fictions may be made, and have been made, out of the simplest elements of every-day life...But why is all art to be restricted to the uniform level of quiet domesticity?'.[24] He wants to include also 'adventures, crimes, agonies', 'the awful visitations of wrath and evil and punishment' and 'wonderful and unwonted accidents of fortune'. 'Let it be granted', he goes on, 'that such things *are* sensational; but then life itself is similarly sensational in many of its aspects'.[25] Reade, reversing the assumptions, says something similar towards the end of Hard Cash: 'No life was ever yet a play: I mean, an unbroken sequence of dramatic incidents. Calms will come...' (p.415). He then compares the detailed record he has given of the events of one year with the abridged account of the succeeding year that he is to trace next, where chronology is to be subservient to topic. His justification for this proceeding is that all narratives do the same thing, because no-

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[23]See John Sutherland, 'Dickens, Reade and Hard Cash', The Dickensian, 81 (1985), 5-12 for details of the prolonged negotiations betwen Dickens (operating through Wills) and Reade.

[24]Charles Dickens, 'The Sensational Williams', All The Year Round, 10 (1864), 14-17, p.14.

[25]'Sensational Williams', p.14.

one wants to read about the normal and the mundane. Thus does he echo the sentiment of his prefatory footnote: 'Without sensation there can be no interest'.

In fact the early chapters of Hard Cash do deal with pretty mundane affairs concerning undergraduate life and the burgeoning love between Julia and Alfred; the sensational element is only introduced later with the financial wheeler-dealings of Hardie senior and thereafter is to be found in just those elements of life that Dickens recognizes as co-existing with the cosily domestic: 'adventures, crimes, agonies', and the 'wonderful and unwonted accidents of fortune'. But, in refuting the accuracy of the term 'Sensation Novelist' as applied to him, Reade says that his plan is to mix such incidents with 'a little character and a little philosophy' (footnote to Preface). Dr.Sampson does have some originality, but on the whole, as two of the critics noted above point out, the characters in Hard Cash are cardboard cut-outs, subservient to plot on the one hand and social compaigning on the other, whilst the philosophy seems to amount to little more than narratorial inveighing against a variety of topics from 'cant' to the iniquity of the asylum system. The sensationalism of the text lies in the adventures at sea in the first part and the various madnesses that are triggered off by the collapse of Hardie's bank in the second half. In the interest, presumably, of a wide coverage of the different aspects of lunacy and its treatment, cases are crammed in past the bounds of credibility. Two victims of the fraudulent banker, Richard Hardie, are Captain Dodd, tricked out of his savings, who falls into a fit and loses his senses as well as his money and the labourer, Maxley, who becomes subject to hallucinations and fits of violence, having lost his savings in the bank's fall. The third victim, and the hero of the novel is Hardie's son, Alfred.

Alfred remains obstinately sane, but is accused of lunacy and tricked into confinement at Silverton Asylum in order that his money should become available to alleviate his father's financial embarrassment. His conviction that his father has appropriated David Dodds's fourteen thousand pounds is taken as further evidence of susceptibility to delusions. Later he is moved to Wycherley's establishment which is run on the most enlightened principles, though Dr.Wycherley is represented as being

himself monomaniacal on the subject of Hamlet's madness, and then to Dr.Wolf's asylum at Drayton House which is 'conducted on the old system' (p.341). At Drayton House he meets Dodds as a fellow inmate and together they escape under cover of a fire that has conveniently broken out and that Dodds's son, Edward, is helping to extinguish. The final part of the book concerns Afred's attempts to prove that he has been wrongfully confined. It is at this stage that Alfred's uncle, whose signature has confined him to the asylum, is revealed to be feeble-minded, and his father's criminal obsession with money is finally classified by the author as a monomania such as Alfred himself has been unjustly accused of. Cash is the pivot of the plot and, as the above shows, it is directly linked with lunacy. The world of Reade's fiction is grounded in the struggle between money and morality, and in this novel it is explored by exposing the commercial nature of the private asylum business, where therapy comes second (if indeed it comes anywhere at all) to profit. Reade's aim in writing was explicitly to campaign for a reform of the asylum system. I should like to look more closely than has previously been done at the concepts of madness that underlie his reformist pleas, at his attitude to the medical profession and at the picture he presents of asylums.

In the year that 'Very Hard Cash' was being serialized in All the Year Round, Dr Thomas Laycock published an article in The Journal of Mental Science, 'On the Naming and Classification of Mental Diseases and Defects'. This was a prestigious journal in the profession and Laycock, a writer of some eminence, repeats there ideas that are also to be found in other clinical writings, so what he says here can, I think, be taken as reasonably representative of mid-century psychiatric thinking. Naming is important, Laycock says, because it indicates both the appearance and the causality of a mental disease. Having distinguished idiocy, or 'primary' mental defect, from the various 'secondary' mental defects 'consecutive to certain other morbid states occurring in a previously healthy brain' , he defines mania or insanity as: 'a disease characterized by disorder of the intellect, but without coma or fever' .[26] Given the impossibility of

[26]Thomas Laycock, 'On the Naming and Classification of Mental Diseases and Defects', The Journal of mental Science, 9 (1863), 153-170, pp.154 & 158.

entering into the consciousness of another person, idiocy or insanity can only be established by an examination of external phenomena, action, conduct, speech and, in the case of idiots, formation of body generally and head and face in particular. In all cases, though, the assessment of mental defect involves a comparative process, requiring, in the first place, a standard of 'mental soundness and completeness', and, in the second place, knowledge of the individual's customary state of mind. The article expresses both uncertainty in its recognition, for instance, of the difficulty of inferring a state of mind from external characteristics, as well as confidence in the possibility of defining ideal types. A similar confidence is imparted to Hard Cash through the narrator, who maintains an authoritative stance on the subject of madness, yet a lack of confidence is also evident in the exposure of the disastrous results which incompetence and undue confidence in the shaky procedures of diagnosis can lead to.

In his biography of Reade, Malcolm Elwin, in an unattributed quotation, says that Fletcher, Reade's protegé, 'drank, had fits, wasted money' before claiming the money he believed to be his inheritance and being certified by his father's firm.[27] Alfred Hardie, on the other hand, is set up as an ideal type, a 'young Apollo', whose brilliant intellect is matched by outstanding achievements as a boatman and cricketer. There is no suspicion of wild living as far as he is concerned. I shall come back to the importance of his intellect later on, but my immediate point is that a comparative situation is established early in the discussions of lunacy. It is whilst Dr.Wycherley is at Richard Hardie's house, passing unofficial judgement on Alfred's state of mind, that Maxley turns up 'accusing himself of being deranged' (p.209). Maxley's insanity, explained as the result of the loss of his money compounded by the loss of his wife who has died of 'Breast-pang', takes the form of hallucinations which he is able to explain in his lucid moments: 'I do see such curious things, enough to make a body's skin creep at times' (p.209). These hallucinations, he fears, makes him a danger to the community and for that reason he requests confinement in the public asylum:

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[27]Elwin, p.166.

> Now suppose I was to go and take some poor Christian for one of these gre-at bloody dragons I do see at odd times, I might do him a mischief you know, and not mean him no harm neither. Oh dooee take and have me locked up, gentlemen, dooee now: tellee I ain't fit to be about, my poor head is so mazed. (p.210)

Here Reade, like an examining doctor, relies on the external evidence of insanity that is provided by words, actions and appearance. The representation of the labourer's dialect adds to the effect of authentic testimony, and Maxley gives clear physical signs of the derangement his words assert:

> His beard was unshaven, his face haggard, and everything about him showed a man broken in spirit as well as fortune: even his voice had lost half its vigour, and whenever he had uttered a consecutive sentence or two, his head dropped on his breast, pitiably: indeed, this sometimes occurred in the middle of a sentence, and then the rest of it died on his lips. (p.209)

And his actions provide further corroboration in that he has, by his own account, already killed his 'missus's favourite hen' in an attack on an illusory 'fiery sarpint'. His subsequent, fatal, attack on Jane, Hardie's beloved daughter, vindicates his own fears and makes an ironic criticism of Hardie, who, as a magistrate, has been prepared only to follow the rules and give Maxley an order for the workhouse. Expressive of the Victorian belief that the insane *should* be confined, this case also allows for adverse comment on a system which refuses help to a man who is and knows himself to be dangerous, and, furthermore, it shows up the irresponsibility of medical men who are so obsessed with their own ideas of insanity that they fail to see the madness which is obvious. Subsequently Maxley is represented in terms of the pre-industrial conventions of madness, as he roams round the village with his madman's staff, taunted by the local boys (pp.235, 306).

He stands, in fact, as a negative image against the positive of Alfred. The former, protesting his madness, is forced to stay unconfined; the latter, protesting his sanity, is forced to remain in confinement: there is a failure of justice in both cases. Alfred's status is made still more positive in that he frequently seems to speak for the author, he acts in fact as a surrogate, so that 'to give his [Alfred's] evidence would be

to write "Hard Cash" over again' (p.444). In the scene I have just discussed, for instance, his comment on Maxley's predicament is representative of the narrator's indictment of the system:

> 'Look here, Maxley, old fellow,' said Alfred, sarcastically, 'you must go to the workhouse, and stay there till you hoe a pauper; take him for a crocodile, and kill him; then you will get into an asylum whether the Barkington magistrates like it or not; that is the *routine*, I believe; and as reasonable as most routine.' (p.210)

Alfred also follows the narrator's lead in realizing the importance of external appearance as an indication of state of mind: 'Now Alfred had already observed that many of the patients looked madder than they were...So he made his toilet with care, and put his best hat on to hide his shaven crown' (p.276). Thus arrayed, his 'dress, address, and countenance left no suspicion of insanity possible in an unprejudiced mind' (p.276). The point is reinforced later in the case of David Dodds, who goes unrecognized by his old friend and cousin by marriage, Captain Bazalgette, because, amongst other reasons, 'insanity alters the expression of the face wonderfully' (p.428). Dodds only resumes his former appearance after his almost-death by drowning and restoration to sanity. Appearance is also a give-away, in the case of Alfred's protegé, Frank Beverley, who is 'not the least mad nor bad, but merely of feeble intellect all round' (p.349), and who despite the poverty of his clothes, shows the ineradicable characteristics of his class: 'his hands, his features, his carriage, his address, had all an indefinable stamp of race' (p.349).

Given the importance of appearance as an indication of a person's mental state and social position, it is perhaps rather surprizing that it receives little attention in the presentation of Alfred, whereas the question of intellect is returned to again and again. It is almost as though Reade had in mind a definition such as the one give above where insanity is regarded as 'disorder of the intellect', and was determined to exonerate his hero from any suspicion of madness, Alfred is consistently and frequently referred to as 'brilliant' and evidence given of his ability to outwit anyone in argument or learning. At the second asylum he engages in studies for his degree and enjoys academic debates

with Dr.Wycherley, who warns the examining commissioners that they 'might examine my young friend for hours and not detect the one crevice in the brilliancy of his intellectual armour' (p.334). But it is clear from the text that madness is not *just* 'disorder of the intellect', but loss of self-control. It is his ability to preserve his self-control that ensures Alfred's sanity and in tracing the role he fulfills as authorial surrogate it is worth noting the way that control is reflected in his writings. Time and again he is commended for his ability to present a 'well-governed narrative' (pp.279, 295, 390, 407-8), and Dr.Sampson, whose probity and authority is well established, comments on Alfred's SOS from Drayton House: 'There...didn't I tell you? This man is sane. There's sanity in every line' (p.368). Reading a text here is analogous to reading a face; in both cases sanity will be obvious to unprejudiced scrutiny. It is the difficulty of finding readers, whether of texts or faces, who are free from prejudice that constitutes a leading theme of the novel. Time and again Reade returns to the problems of erasing labels and of evading the facile presumptions that labelling incurs. Because he has been labelled insane, for instance, Alfred's story of his father's misappropriation the £40,000 is taken to be an hallucination and no attempt is made to check the truth of his statement. Also any outburst is automatically assumed to be a further indication of insanity.

Paradoxically, though, for all the reiteration of the ease with which madness can be known, what the novel actually shows is how difficult it is to diagnose madness. During the legal proceedings Alfred is asked by the judge to define insanity and he does so by example, contrasting the madmen he has met with the sane who were to be found in the asylums: 'This was the most remarkable part of the trial, to see this shrewd old judge extracting from a real observer and logical thinker those positive indicia of sanity and insanity, which exist, but which no lawyer has ever yet been able to extract from any psychological physician in the witness-box' (p.445). It is noticeable that these 'indicia' are not spelt out at this point, so it is worth investigating what evidence is presented in the text to substantiate the claim that there are infallible ways of distinguishing between the mad and the sane.

In the third asylum of his confinement, Dr.Wolf's Drayton House, Alfred is tricked into violent behaviour so that he can be punished by being sent to the 'noisy' ward, where, 'His ears assailed with horrors, of which you have literally no conception, or shadow of conception, his nose poisoned with ammoniacal vapours, and the peculiar wild-beast smell that marks the true maniac, Alfred ran wildly about his cell trying to stop his ears, and trembling for his own reason' (p.373). The use of the second person pronoun is a characteristic device to draw the projected reader into imaginative involvement with the text and shock her/him into sympathy with the plight of the wronged Alfred. Here, he is confronted with the 'true' maniac, who, in terms familiar to the eighteenth century, is represented as bestial, distinguishable by the senses of smell and hearing. The bestiality of these madmen, comprising both the wildness that has always been found so threatening in insanity and the lack of the supremely human power of reason, is insisted on in this episode. As Alfred approaches the ward he hears strange noises that gradually grow louder until they are discerned as 'Singing, roaring, howling like wolves' (p.372). With a slight variation, the sounds that he hears throughout the night are described as 'Singing, swearing, howling like wild beasts!', whilst his left-hand neighbour 'alternately sang, and shouted...and howled like a wolf, making night hideous' (p.373). Alfred himself comes close to the level of these unfortunate creatures as he runs wildly about his cell, but, although to the naked eye his behaviour is that of a wild animal, Alfred makes no inhuman noises and, of course, emits no ammoniacal smell.

Smell was indeed one of the indices of madness in the eyes of Dr.George Burrows, but his bulky treatise dates from 1828 and aroused ironical comment in the Lancet even then, so it is difficult to understand why a 'reformist' writer like Reade should adopt such a retrograde attitude, which seems here to be employed without irony.[28] It is not, however, a contention of the book as a whole that such 'symptoms' are the only ways of telling 'true' madness. Rather, the animalistic hyperbole is an

[28]Burrows and The Lancet are quoted in McCandless, p348.

aspect of sensationalist rhetoric that not only helped to give sensation fiction a bad name, but in this novel confuses the issue of diagnosis. Maxley, for instance, is established as truly insane and truly dangerous. In the scene when he attacks Jane Hardie he is given the usual animal characteristics: he appears 'all grizzly and bloodshot' and, like a bear, is 'baited' by the boys (p.309); he cowers 'like a cur'; he finds out Julia's flagging courage 'by some half animal instinct'; he attacks Edward 'like a Spanish bull' (p.310); and the place where he has fallen is so covered with blood that 'a bullock seemed to have been slaughtered at the least' (311). But there is no mention of the sounds he makes nor of 'ammoniacal' smell; his maniacal behaviour is apparent to the eye alone.

In fact the novel exhibits a tendency to believe in the power of detecting insanity through the power of the eye, which echoes Reade's account of Dr.Ruttledge's diagnostic process in one of the letters in 'Our Dark Places':

> Dr.Ruttledge...sat down by me first, with an eye like a diamond: it went slap into my marrow-bone. Asked me catching questions, touched my wrist, saw my tongue, and said quietly. "This one is sane." Then he went and sat down by----drove an eye into him, asked him catching questions, made him tell him in order all he had done since seven o'clock, felt pulse, saw tongue: "This one is sane too."[29]

Although other tests are applied, the language highlights the acumen of the boring eye as paramount, if inexplicable. But if it is the most reliable means of ascertaining insanity, the eye is not infallible. Previous to the scene in the 'noisy ward' referred to above, Alfred has been depicted as at the deepest pitch of despair: 'Pale, thin, and wo-begone...Even an inspector with a naked eye would no longer have distinguished him at first sight from a lunatic of the unhappiest class, the melancholic' (p370). The implication is that although Alfred might *appear* mad, he is not really so, but what it is that distinguishes his state of mind here from that of the melancholic is not spelt out. Believing perhaps with Laycock that the individual consciousness is inaccessible to others, Reade makes little attempt to enter into it either here or at those other moments

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[29]Readiana, p.115.

that focus on Alfred's tormenting predicament This leaves the question of Alfred's sanity at the level of authorial assertion and implies, without accepting the consequences of the implication, that there is a liminal area between sanity and insanity that may be inhabited temporarily by people who would otherwise be declared 'normal'. One of the consequences of this position is surely the difficulty of diagnosis and the impossibility of relying purely on external appearances.

There are other occasions, too, when the young man behaves in a way that is to the naked eye indistinguishable from that of a maniac which are not acknowledged by the narrator. In the fight that precedes his relegation to the 'noisy' ward, the young hero is seen taking physical revenge on the keeper, Rooke, who has been victimizing the feeble-minded Frank. On this occasion, however, not only is the motivation clearly different from Maxley's, since Alfred is defending, whilst Maxley is attacking, unaware in his insanity that Jane is coming to his rescue, but the fight itself is described in the manner of a boxing or wrestling commentary, Rooke being accredited with skill 'in the art of self-defence' (p.371), and there being a suggestion, therefore, that this fight is governed by certain rules. All the rules are broken, on the other hand, in an earlier fight. At the first asylum, Silverton Grove House, Alfred arouses the enmity of the head keeper, Cooper, by revealing to the visiting justices the hidden instruments of restraint. In revenge, the keeper determines to administer a powerful dose of croton-oil, a drastic purgative; Alfred is equally determined not to be dosed. In the three-volume version the incident is taken as an opportunity to expose, fictionally, the brutality of keepers which Reade has already brought to the attention of the public in his letter to the Pall Mall Gazette that is reproduced in the prefatory 'Correspondence'. Alfred punches Cooper twice before he is handcuffed, put in a strait-jacket and given the 'kneeling' treatment, which is only halted by the interference of another keeper, Brown, and the handcuffing of Cooper (pp.284-5).

The serial version is somewhat different, extending the struggle between Cooper and Alfred in a way that requires lengthy quotation. I give below the passage

that appeared in All the Year Round after the sentence that describes Cooper kneeling on Alfred's chest ending 'and he could scarcely breathe' (p.285).

> Cooper warmed to his work and kneeled on Alfred's face. Then Cooper jumped knees downwards on his face. Then Cooper drew back and jumped savagely on his chest. Then Alfred felt his last hour was come: he writhed aside, and Cooper missed him this time and overbalanced himself; the two faces came together for a moment, and Alfred, fighting for his life, caught Cooper with his teeth by the middle of the nose, and bit clean through the cartilage with a shrill snarl. Then Cooper shrieked, and writhed, and whirled his great arms like a windmill, punching at Alfred's head. Now man is an animal at bottom, and a wild animal at the very bottom. Alfred ground his teeth together in bull-dog silence till they quite met, and with his young strong neck and his despair shook that great hulking fellow as a terrier shakes a cat, still grinding his teeth together in bull-dog silence. The men struck him, shook him, in vain. At last they got hold of his throat and choked him, and so parted the furious creatures: but not before Mrs. Archbold and nurses Jane and Hannah had rushed into the room, drawn by Cooper's cries. The first thing the new comers did was to scream in unison at the sight that met them. On the bed lay Alfred all but insensible, his linen and his pale face spotted with his persecutor's blood. Upon him kneeled the gory ruffian swearing oaths to set the hair on end.
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> "I'll stop your biting for ever," said he, and raised a ponderous fist: and in one moment more Alfred would have been disfigured for life, but Brown caught Cooper's arm...[30]

At this point the serial version coincides with the book version, which reads : 'But Brown drew Cooper back by the collar, saying, "D'ye want to kill him?" (p.285) and there are no further differences between the two versions in the succeeding description of Alfred being handcuffed by the nurses. Whatever the reason for the alteration, it is interesting to see the effect of the longer and more violent passage that was published in the periodical. The viciousness of Cooper's attacks on Alfred does indeed turn him into a savage, but the full weight of animal imagery falls on Alfred, who behaves with a scarcely credible ferocity. Furthermore, the general statement: 'Now man is an animal at bottom, and a wild animal at the very bottom' suggests a continuum rather than a dichotomy between sanity and madness, and if that is so then, as I remark above, it becomes far more difficult than the text makes out elsewhere to tell the 'true maniac'.

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[30]Charles Reade, 'Very Hard Cash', All The Year Round, 10 (1863), 121-8 (p.124).

In fact the novel is torn in two directions. On the one hand, it is asserted confidently that an unprejudiced naked eye can detect insanity; on the other hand, Alfred, who is said to be unquestionably sane, is represented as behaving in a way that is indistinguishable from the behaviour of a madman. There is a firm belief that true madness is discoverable, but uncertainty as to how it is to be discovered.

This is not, however, exactly the quandary that Hard Cash concerns itself with. According to this novel what causes so many problems and leads to travesties of justice is the difficulty of finding a diagnostician who is free from prejudice. Reade's novel makes a scathing indictment of the medical profession just at the time when it was establishing its scientific credentials and laying claim to the field of madness. He makes his attack in several ways. The tone of heavy irony with which he recounts the approaches taken by various doctors to Julia's 'illness' leaves no doubt as to his adversarial attitude, and their incompetence in the field of physical illness is stressed by having Captain Dodd's madness incurred through the administering of inappropriate treatment for apoplexy. As owners of or attendants at asylums they are seen as negligent, insufficiently scrupulous, or downright corrupt. Dr.Wolf is an extreme case, running an institution purely for money and prepared to countenance the admission of a man he suspects is sane. His name indicates a greedy bestiality which spreads throughout the asylum and is reflected in the brutality of the keepers, male and female. Then, Dr.Sampson, excitable and voluble, himself a proponent of a naturalistic approach he calls 'Chronothairmalism', is given a lengthy diatribe criticizing the rogues' gallery of doctors who have been 'treating' Julia for being far more interested in cash and jargon than the patient. He denounces them as 'monomaniacs', interested to the point of obsession in their separate specialities, unable therefore to see the patient as a whole. It is the 'monomania' of the medical profession that is its most serious prejudice, and this is illustrated in the figure of Dr.Wycherley.

In an article in the Times Literary Supplement , Richard Hunter and Ida MacAlpine shed new light on Hard Cash through their discovery of correspondence that not only pointed to a friendship between Dickens and John Conolly but revealed

that Reade was lampooning Conolly in the character of Wycherley.[31] Conolly had won great acclaim for his abandonment of restraint in a large county asylum, but he was not without his critics. Dickens, however, was certainly not one of them. In 'Idiots' he and W.H.Wills describe their visit to Park House, Highgate, one of two establishments that Conolly and Dr.Andrew Reed had opened for the care and education of idiots.[32] The institution is described in glowing terms, and commended for the quiet and orderliness that govern the activities there. A few years later Household Words paid Conolly the tribute of recording his career and achievements in the care of the insane in an article entitled 'Things Within Dr. Conolly's Remembrance' . The article opens as follows:

> Most of our readers know that one of the best achievements of the present century is a complete reversal, in the treatment of madness, of opinions and practice which had previously been in force for five-and-twenty centuries at least...The blessing of [the change] has been secured to England - and, by the example of England, more widely and certainly diffused among civilised nations - mainly by help of the wise energy of DR. JOHN CONOLLY.[33]

Conolly is placed in the reforming tradition of Pinel and Tuke and his first volume, An Inquiry into the Indications of Insanity (1830), approved for its recommendation that asylums be removed from the hands of private speculators, and its suggestion that many harmless lunatics are better cared for within the love and relative freedom of their families. Whilst acknowledging the pioneering work of Dr. Charlesworth and Mr. Gardiner Hill at Lincoln and Dr. T.O.Prichard at Northampton, the writer sees Conolly as the man who brought non-restraint to public attention because of the size of the asylum that he ran and because of its proximity to London, then, as now, the seat of power and influence. He is, further, commended for his modesty, his prioritizing of actions over words and the 'abundant store of anecdote and illustration, chiefly drawn

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[31]Richard Hunter and Ida MacAlpine, 'Dickens and Conolly: An Embarrassed Editor's Apology', Times Literary Supplement, (Aug.11, 1961), 534-5.
[32]'Idiots', pp.313-7. The other institution visited was Essex Hall near Cochester.
[33]'Things Within Dr.Conolly's Remembrance', Household Words, 16(1857), 518-523, p.518.

from experience, partly from reading, with which he defines every point of his argument'.[34]

It is difficult to recognize this portrait in the character of Dr.Wycherley in Hard Cash. Wycherley is represented as a verbose, canting 'monomaniac'; blinded to truth by his obsession with his pet theories, he is accused by Alfred of founding 'facts on theories instead of theories on facts' (p.335). As proof of his moral superiority, it is Alfred, too, victim though he is, who delivers the only sustained praise of Wycherley:

> Dr. Wycherley is the very soul of humanity. Here are no tortures, no handcuffs nor leg-locks, no brutality...And, gentlemen, I must tell you a noble trait in my enemy there: nothing can make him angry with madmen; their lies, their groundless and narrow suspicions of him, their deplorable ingratitude to him...all these things seem to glide off him, baffled by the infinite kindness of his heart, and the incomparable sweetness of his temper; and he returns the duffers good for evil with scarcely an effort. (p.335)

The narratorial comments are savage; Dr Wycherley is:

> bland and bald,with a fine head, and face naturally intelligent, but crossed every now and then by gleams of vacancy; a man of large reading, and of tact to make it subserve his interests. A voluminous writer on certain medical subjects, he had so saturated himself with circumlocution, that it distilled from his very tongue: he talked like an Article; a quarterly one; and so gained two advantages: 1st, he rarely irritated a fellow-creature; for, if he began a sentence hot, what with its length, and what with its windiness, he ended it cool: item, stabs by polysyllables are pricks by sponges. 2ndly, this foible earned him the admiration of fools; and that is as invaluable, as they are innumerable. (pp.203-4)

The doctor's polysyllabic windiness is then demonstrated at length. Still more damaging, though, is the suggestion that Wycherley is himself insane. The 'gleams of vacancy' with their suggestion of idiocy, are replaced, later in the book, by the more sinister insinuation of monomania. Raging at Alfred's contention that Hamlet was not really mad, Wycherley falls down 'in a fit of an epileptic character, grinding his teeth and foaming at the mouth' (p.340). Alfred's reaction again shows his superiority: 'Alfred had studied true insanity all this time, and knew how inhumane it is to oppose a

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[34]'Things Within Dr.Conolly's Remembrance', p.522.

monomaniac's foible; it only infuriates and worries him' (p.340). Wycherley, convinced that 'consciousness of insanity is the one diagnostic of sanity' and, conversely, that 'an obstinate persistence in the hypothesis of perfect rationality demonstrates the fact that insanity yet lingers in the convolutions and recesses of the brain' (p.332), becomes the lord of misrule of what, if left to him, would be a topsy-turvy world, where the sane are confined for asserting their sanity and the insane are left at large though protesting their madness.

Conolly, as he is represented in the Household Words article, is not an obvious target for Reade's satire: opposed to private speculation in the trade of lunacy, opposed to the unwarranted confinement of the insane, an elegant writer using experience and reading to support his arguments, he would seem a more likely model for Alfred than for Dr.Wycherley. Hunter and MacAlpine, however, build up a convincing case for what they see as a cruel attack on Conolly, including in their evidence references to his Study of Hamlet, where he attempts to 'prove' Hamlet's madness and which was published in the same year as Hard Cash. It is still, though, difficult to understand the reason for the attack. Andrew Scull takes a rather more sceptical view of the career and writings of Conolly than do Hunter and MacAlpine, drawing attention to the way that the opinions he expressed in print seem to have altered according to the fluctuations in his career.[35] Conolly began his career as an ordinary practitioner before moving to London in 1828 to become Professor of the Principles and Practice of Medicine at University College, and his writings at this stage, when he was still outside the asylum system, public and private, were critical of existing practices. In 1839 he succeeded to the post of resident physician at Hanwell Asylum on his second application and his ideas changed, so that from railing against the indiscriminate confinement of the insane, he became a supporter of institutional treatment. Disputes with the Middlesex magistrates led to his resignation of this

[35]Andrew Scull, 'A Victorian alienist: John Conolly, FRCP,DCL (1794-1866)', The Anatomy of Madness, Volume 1, People and Ideas, edited by W.F.Bynum, Roy Porter and Michael Shepherd (London, 1985), pp.103-50.

position after only four years, and, after a short spell as visiting consultant, he devoted his remaining years to writing and acting as expert witness in legal cases where the question of sanity was in dispute, whilst making an income as proprietor and consultant in the private asylum business. His publications now expressed his faith in the private institutions he had earlier condemned. Whether this change of attitude was ideological or pragmatic it is difficult to say, but critical voices were heard even at the time, Reade's amongst them.[36]

By the time that Reade was writing Hard Cash, Conolly thus represented someone who not only relied on insanity for his income, but whose pronouncements were invested with considerable authority and influence. His 'reforms' at Hanwell had secured him a place in the limelight, so that in attacking him Reade was throwing darts at a recognizable public figure, not, however, for the work that had made him famous, but for the things he did and said thereafter. In The Female Malady, Elaine Showalter hints at an obsessional side even to Conolly's humanitarian work at Hanwell, saying that he developed 'a kind of driven identification' with the insane poor and, plagued by a chronic skin irritation became an insomniac ' who prowled the wards restlessly at night'.[37] But more pertinent to Reade's enmity is Scull's exposure of the frighteningly wide range of behaviours that Conolly, as an official diagnostician, would define as insane, including: 'excessive eccentricity', 'utter disregard of cleanliness and decency', 'perversions of the moral feelings and passions', and a disposition 'to give away sums of money which they cannot afford to lose'.[38]

Reade interrogates this past presumption in the court-room scene. Under cross-examination, Wycherley is forced to admit that his diagnosis of Alfred's 'insanity' had been based on 'guess-work and hearsay', that he had intruded on a family disagreement and had himself provoked the 'very irritation that he had set down to madness' (p.452). Most damaging of all, and another missile in the specific direction of

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[36]Scull mentions, for instance, the opinion of John Bucknill, p.135.
[37]The Female Malady, p.47.
[38]John Conolly, A Remonstrance with the Lord Chief Baron Touching the Case Nottidge versus Ripley, quoted in 'A Victorian Alienist', p.129.

Conolly, is the admission drawn from Wycherley that 'he received fifteen per cent from the asylum keepers for every patient he wrote insane' (p.452). Conolly had been recently involved, to his discredit, in just such a case and sued for false imprisonment. But it is important to be clear that the legally-trained and litigiously-minded Reade was not simply aiming his criticisms at the medical profession, but at the law and legal processes. In this scene both are condemned. Alfred's morally upright and generous gesture of signing his money away in favour of the Dodds as reparation for his father's theft, a gesture that would for Conolly have been a symptom of madness, causes a similar reaction amongst the lawyers: 'All the lawyers present thought this looked really mad' (p.453).

Alfred's suing of his father for false imprisonment in the asylums, like most adversarial cases, encounters many obstacles as his father's lawyers and his father himself play all the tricks that procedure allows. The question is finally one of Alfred's sanity, but, as Colt, Q.C. puts it, 'in a case of this kind, it lies upon the defendant to prove the plaintiff's insanity' (p.464), and this the defendant ie. Alfred's father, is unable to do. Alfred's lucid disquisition on insanity is in fact irrelevant, since the case relies on Mr.Hardie's inability to prove that Alfred's allegations of emi element were the result of a delusion. In other words it has to be, and is shown that, although Alfred has acted with impetuosity and chivalry, he has not acted insanely; insanity is revealed as a convenient ploy at the service of the unscrupulous. Its convenience is the result of both the difficulty of definition and the enormous range of behaviours that could be subsumed under the heading of insanity. It is also dependent upon the belief, unquestioned even by Dr.Sampson, the representative of enlightened medical practice, that the mad should be confined. But Reade's main point is that abuse of the system is inevitable so long as the care of the insane is a commercial operation. He has nothing to say about the public asylums; the weight of his invective falls upon the 'dark places' where patients too easily become victims, inadequately protected against self-interested parties. The 'protection' afforded by the Commissioners is exposed as a sham and the only route to fair play seems to be through the agency of those in national office, such

as the Lord Chancellor, who are removed from the sway of private interest. At the end of the book, Frank Beverley, revivified by the (somewhat incredible) love of Mrs. Archbold, in a proceeding that for brevity and fairmindedness presents a marked contrast with all that Alfred has to endure, is examined by the Lord Chancellor and found perfectly capable of managing his own property.

Reade in effect makes a stand against a society and institutions that prioritize money over individuals. He is loud in his criticism of cumbersome legal procedures and asylums where torturous practices such as 'tanking' are tolerated and even actively encouraged. But his aims and sympathies are limited. Since his case is fortified by dwelling on the horrors of confining the sane with the 'truly' mad, his depiction of madness draws on traditional concepts of the inhumanity of the insane, emphasising the degree to which they are different from other people. Conservative, then, in his belief that confinement is essential for the truly mad and that there are 'positive indicia' of insanity, he nevertheless finds himself having to acknowledge the murky area where sanity and insanity are not so clearly distinguished. The figure of his hero represents a standard by which the sanity of others can be judged and he himself learns the means of assessing insanity. According to the text his knowledge is acquired through observation, but, as I have indicated above, he has in fact also experienced mental torments that allow him an insight into the world of madness. By skating over the implications of these experiences, Reade is able to present an argument for reform of the system that is apparently clear-cut, but because it fudges the issue of diagnosis the practical problems are still unresolved.

CHAPTER 7

MAUD THROUGH THE LOOKING-GLASS: THE COUNTRY HOUSE AS AN ASYLUM IN THE ROSE AND THE KEY

Like Charles Reade (whose Hard Cash had been serialized in the same journal, All The Year Round, eight years earlier) Sheridan Le Fanu sets out to expose the abuses of the private asylum system, but The Rose and the Key (1871) is not, like Reade's, a campaigning book. Rather, it is a mystery story, a tale of deception, and it is probably the lengths it goes to to preserve its secrets that has led to the critical neglect of the text. In the most recent biography of Le Fanu, W.J.McCormack dismisses it as abounding in 'the wild and ludicrous' and refuses to comment further.[1] Certainly this novel tests credulity and the obfuscation of the reader is carried to extreme lengths, but it makes an interesting link between the socially aware sensationalism of Hard Cash and the gothic detection story of Dracula. The degree to which Le Fanu's fiction-writing influenced Stoker is something I shall return to in the next chapter; the extent to which Le Fanu and Reade covered common ground can be usefully discussed here. In his modest volume, Sheridan Le Fanu, Nelson Browne specifically links The Rose and the Key with Hard Cash, and, considering their common publication in All the Year Round, it is not unreasonable to assume some influence of the earlier novel on Le Fanu's work. Browne forms a more favourable judgement on Le Fanu's novel than does McCormack, commending the characterization that he finds 'always competent, sometimes masterly'.[2]

In many ways The Rose and the Key can be seen as a reworking of Le Fanu's more popular earlier novel, Uncle Silas (1864). Structurally, the latter, as McCormack points out, falls into two parts, with many parallels between the two parts, each

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[1]W.J.McCormack, Sheridan Le Fanu and Victorian Ireland (Oxford, 1980), p203.
[2]Nelson Browne, Sheridan Le Fanu (London, 1951), p66.

centered on a stately home with an ageing and reclusive owner who has become a Swedenborgian. The first house, Knowl, is the home of Austin Ruthyn, the second, Bartram-Haugh, is lived in by his brother, Silas, and the first-person narrator, Maud, who is the daughter of Austin, is transported with her maid from one home to the other, as part of a scheme which is not only designed to restore the family honour by proving her uncle's integrity, but acts as a test of her own 'nerve'.[3] At Bartram-Haugh Maud finds herself plotted against by Silas, who eventually tries to have her murdered in an attempt to appropriate her considerable inheritance, but instead of Maud, it is her comically sinister governess, Madame de la Rougierre, who is killed. Her uncle dies of an overdose of laudanum and Maud herself is happily married to Lord Ilbury. The end of the novel is, however, somewhat muted as Maud mourns the infant mortality which has left her with only one son, and concludes with Swedenborgian solemnity:

> This world is a parable - the habitation of symbols - the phantoms of spiritual things immortal shown in material shape. May the blessed second-sight be mine - to recognise under these beautiful forms of earth the ANGELS who wear them; for I am sure we may walk with them if we will, and hear them speak.[4]

The Rose and the Key is similar in both plot and structure. The heroine, again called Maud, is plotted against by her mother who wants to gain possession of her money, and again the action takes place in two stately homes, with Maud travelling from one to the other accompanied by her maid and finding herself a prisoner in the second. In both the heroine is befriended and helped by an older female cousin, who acts as confidante. The later novel, too, ends with the conventional happy marriage of the heroine and the death of her oppressive relative. But there is a structural difference in the addition of a first section, set in Wales, which functions as a prelude to the two main sections, concerning life at Roydon and then life in the asylum. Each part hides a secret from the reader as well as from some, or most of the characters; in the first it is the secret of Maud's identity, in the second the secret of Lady Vernon's first marriage

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[3]Sheridan Le Fanu, Uncle Silas, The World's Classics (Oxford, 1981), p103.
[4]Uncle Silas, p.424.

and her relationship with Captain Vivian, and in the third it is the secret of the asylum. The secrets of the second part are not revealed until the end of the book. They form the dark heart of the plot, the source of all the other mysteries.

This is novel in which great emphasis is placed on the visual, on sight and on seeing. Eyes play an important part in the description of characters; mesmerism, as in Dracula, is recognized as a potent means of control; and the visual identification of place is seen as both powerful and delusive. It is the visual representation of the country house that allows for what seems to be an incredible deception, whereby confinement in an asylum is, as in The Woman in White and Hard Cash, part of a plan to defraud. Both the reader and Maud are misled into mistaking Glarewoods, the asylum, for Carsbrook, Lady Mardykes' residence; the revelation of Glarewoods being made to reader and Maud simultaneously. The first description of Carsbrook is entrusted to Maud's eccentric aunt (p.209), Miss Max, and certain features are emphasised in a secondary description: it is 'huge', an old black-and-white structure, having a square flower-garden of Dutch design with trim hedges surrounding it and a central lawn used for croquet and an old mulberry-tree in the middle.[5] When Doctor Malkin a few pages later (p.216) arrives at a house that is described by the narrator choosing just these details only articulated in more 'literary' language, the reader is being invited to identify it as Carsbrook, although it is in fact Glarewoods. Finally Maud arrives and the house is again described still more imaginatively, in a way that renders it a gothic image: it is seen in 'the moon's intense splendour', the black beams are compared with 'gigantic symbols', and (also symbolically) the structure is said to be of 'the cage-work sort' (p.292). Coming to the croquet-ground, she recognizes it from Miss Max's description; the narrator even takes up the old lady's carpet comparison: 'As you look down on them [the flowers] from the terrace, they seem like the pattern of a thick-piled carpet' (p.209). The 'quaint Dutch flower-beds', says the narrator, are

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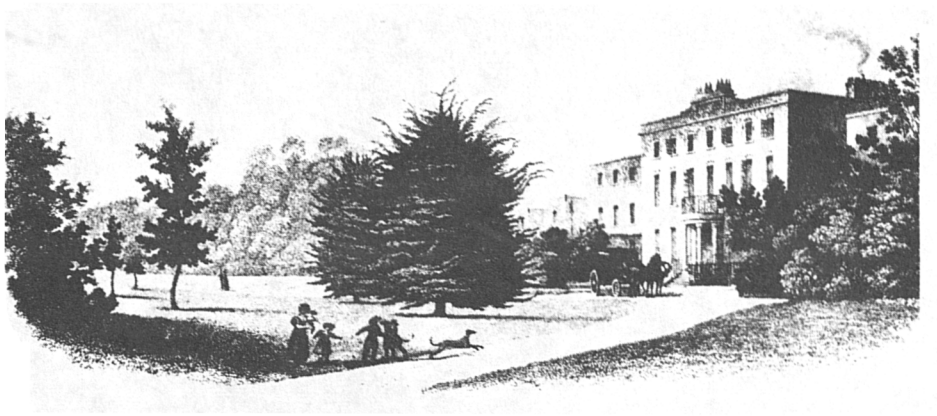
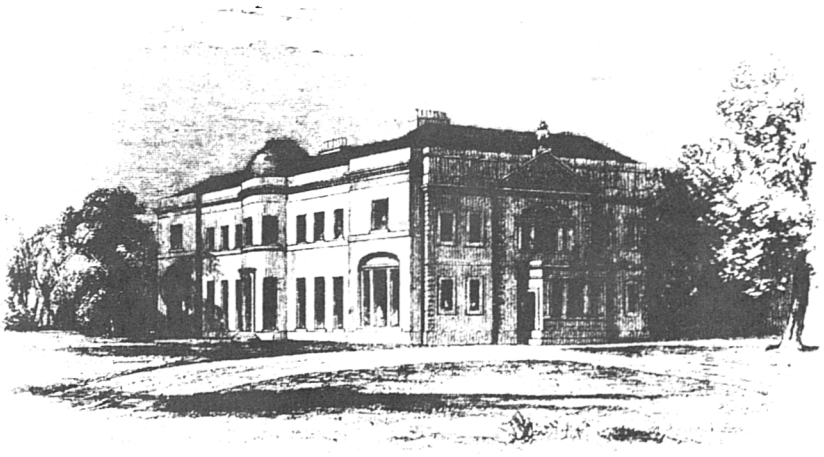
[5]Sheridan Le Fanu, The Rose and the Key, (New York, 1982), pp.209, 212. All references will be to this edition, which is an unabridged republication of the edition published London, ca. 1895, and will be incorporated in the text.



Brislington House, the first purpose-built private asylum in England. Completed in 1806 for Edward Long Fox, it was designed for an upper-class clientele and was located in the centre of a well-wooded estate some three miles from Bristol. In addition to the central asylum buildings, a brochure of 1836 advertises a number of houses on the estate 'inhabited by members of the nobility, who are accommodated with servants from the institution; and are allowed to pursue any style of living and expense as to carriages, horses, etc. most suitable to their former habits, and not inconsistent with their present situation'.

Ticehurst Asylum, Sussex, taken from a brochure, 1830



Haydock Lodge Institution, Lancashire, taken from a brochure, *c.* 1845

like a 'fanciful carpet pattern' (p.293). This simile is also used by the first- person narrator of Uncle Silas, Maud Ruthyn, which suggests that Le Fanu's stories drew on a common stock of source material, but in this instance the transference of the simile hints that Maud is seeing the scene in terms of her aunt's description. She sees what she expects to see.

In this way Maud's deception is accounted for in terms of psychological realism. Charles Merivale, in the text cited in the previous chapter, describes how he imagined himself to be entering a hotel, when, weak with hunger, he had been transferred from one asylum to another, and how, despite seeing the strange appearance and behaviour of the other inmates, he had for several days existed in a kind of dream-world believing himself to be in a place for 'nervous' people. Maud, too, has been 'weakened' by a long, frightening journey and by the puzzling behaviour of her mother, and, expecting to arrive at Carsbrook, finds enough of the features of the description she has been given to confirm her expectations. Furthermore, as the accompanying illustrations will indicate, private asylums were commonly designed along the lines of a country house and the range of activities provided was similar to that to be found in any aristocratic gathering, so that Maud's confusion, at least in the initial stages, can be justified not just in terms of psychological realism, but of social realism too.

It is worth looking at these descriptions in more detail, however, since confusion based on similarity of appearance plays such an important part in the plot. Miss Max represents Carsbrook as a location for human activity. Vast numbers of house guests play croquet or lawn billiards when they are not 'out driving, or picnicking, or sight-seeing'; the mulberry-tree is the focus of 'so many curious stories'; there is evidence of gardeners' handiwork in the 'trim' hedges and grass 'kept...as smooth as velvet' (p.209). The carpet image I have already remarked on increases the domesticity of the setting. Finally the effect is of vivacity, but order, the house being of less importance than the garden, as though that is where life is really lived. Miss Max is, in fact, particularly associated with outdoors and we never see her inside her

own home. This might mean that she has hidden depths, but there is nothing in the story to support this idea, and I would suggest, rather, that she is a character without secrets, whose external aspect bespeaks the inner woman. As the novel progresses it becomes evident that although she is involved in the machinations of the plot, she is not engaged in psychological manipulations.

By contrast, the description (as it turns out) of Glarewoods, despite the 'trim' hedges, lacks human involvement; the emphasis is on the geometric patterning of both house and garden. The personification of the 'lonely old mulberry-tree', however, endows the vegetable with human feeling and emphasises the absence of human life. A 'ruddy' light glowing from the windows indicates that human life is within. The two men, Doctor Malkin and Antomarchi, who are approaching the house are made into spectators and the scene into a 'picture', which is 'pretty', 'striking', 'festive and hospitable'. These last two epithets imply, again, the human life and comforts that are likely to be found inside, so that it is a shock to find the clipped hedges described as 'tall and straight as prison walls'; hospitality seems to be linked with the idea of confinement. Even stranger is the way the narrator images the house as the pedestrians draw close: 'It was, as I have said, a great black and white house, and, as they approached, its walls and windows seemed to expand, and the whole building to grow almost gigantic' (p.216). It is a nightmarish image of the inanimate becoming animate and the presence of the first-person pronoun causes an ambiguity in the focalization so that it is difficult to know whether to attribute the image to the narrator or the characters. It is also a fairy-tale image, recalling the explicit reference to Cinderella earlier. I have already referred in chapter 1 to the growing importance of fantasy in fictional writing as the nineteenth century progressed and this is a theme that will recur more strongly in the next chapter. Here there is just a hint that we are entering a fantasy world; the incongruities dislocate the novel's realism, which is still further disturbed by the strange experience that Doctor Malkin suffers that night, and which I shall discuss in detail later on.

Maud's approach to the house is rather different. Coming in a carriage, she

first sees it from near to. Again the idea of confinement is present, diluted, in the term 'cage-work', but this time the vocabulary of geometry is translated into the symbols, V, X and I, more graphic and more suggestive. Although the rather loose syntax indicates that the description is being focalized through Maud ('Maud was looking at the house - a huge structure' etc. p292), her actual viewpoint, from the carriage window by the steps leading to the front door, is unlikely to afford her a sufficiently comprehensive sight of the house's façade to allow her to construe the black beams in this way. It is the narrator, therefore, who seems to be envisaging the house like a runic stone, an edifice of public but arcane symbolism, preparing the reader for its enigmatic identity. If in the previous description the house has been represented as a picture, festive and hospitable, now the frame is removed and the house is opened up, revealing the life within. The use of light and dark is particularly striking. The moon's 'intense splendour' shows up the white plaster 'dazzlingly' in contrast with the black beams, and the windows are 'sparkling'. The open door spills out light from the hall, less dazzling than the moonlight, but still picking out the gilt buttons and gold lace of the footman's livery and 'flushing the white powder on his head' and thus making him a contrasting figure with Mr.Darkdale (a significant name), who remains in the dark threshold (p.292). The splendour that is given to the image by the light has to do, I think, with Maud's perception; she is expecting to be received at Lady Mardykes' stately residence, seeing her visit as an adventure and an escape from her mother, as was the trip to Wales. But there are also indications that there is more to the situation than meets the eye and these grow stronger as the chapter proceeds.

Maud's entry into this house is not accomplished directly; she must skirt the outside and go through several doors and along passages before reaching even the reception room. It is in the course of this approach that she encounters the Dutch garden and croquet lawn. As I remarked earlier, she has been prepared by Miss Max for what she sees, but in fact the description from which she recognizes the garden is this time given by the narrator, thus endowing authorial sanction to the similarity between the two places. A new element enters into the description at this point,

though, with the mention of 'cloister-like seclusion'. It is just a hint, combined with Maud's indirect route into the house, Darkdale's demeanour and the eventful journey she has endured, to suggest that she is not making for gaiety and festivity, but for a rather more straightening or testing experience. If, on the one hand, then, the predominant focalization through Maud encourages the reader to share her naive reading of appearances, on the other hand, there are narratorial hints that this *is* a naive reading and that an alternative reality exists. At the same time the importance accorded to Maud's arrival at the house and the language used in describing it, suggests that the house has a symbolic value and that the experiences within its confines are of some, as yet undeclared, significance.

Like Alfred Hardie, Maud is left in a large reception room of a bewildering severity, inconsistent in appearance with the assumption of having arrived at an ordinary country house. Here Le Fanu, as so often in this novel, slips into the present tense, thus heightening the drama and immediacy of his description, which in any case gives the room importance by focusing on the size of its fittings. As a way of alerting the reader to a significance of the room which transcends the purely social, Le Fanu analyzes its effect:

> There is something queer, and almost dismaying in the effect of this bare and massive room with its four huge, modern, purple-leather chairs.
>
> The immense solidity of the mouldings and panelling that surround it, as well as its peculiar shape, would reflect back and muffle any sound uttered within it. And, somehow, it suggests vaguely the idea of surgery, the strap, the knife, and all that therapeutic torture.
>
> The effect of the mild equable light is odd, and the monotony with which the doors, or the sham doors, match one another all round, has something bewildering and portentous in it. (p.297)

Although the suggestion of surgery belongs more conventionally to the idea of a hospital and the treatment of physical disease, its alternative description as 'therapeutic torture' is certainly applicable to the operations that are later revealed to be performed within these walls, and the oxymoron plays on gothic expectations of imprisonment

and suffering. Like the room in which Alfred finds himself, there is an emphasis on a peculiarity of the doors, so that, although Maud does not, like Alfred, try to get out, there is a strong implication that she is indeed confined and the sounds that the mouldings and panelling would muffle would include her cries for help. The continuance of the present tense in the succeeding description of Maud's actions and thoughts implies that these are the effects felt by the young woman, but the element of prescience belongs with the narrator. As so often in this text, the reader is given a position mid-way between Maud's ignorance and the narrator's knowledge, given intimations that there is something wrong with the heroine's interpretation of what is happening to her, but not told how to correct it. It is, of course, a very different handling of the subject of wrongful confinement from Reade's, and the deliberate and sustained deception combines with the symbolism of the descriptions of the house, to suggest that more is at stake than defrauding Maud of her inheritance.

Before speculating further on the significance of the house, I should like to look at the final description of its external aspect as the narrator transfers attention from Marston and Miss Max to Antomarchi and Doctor Malkin. Again Le Fanu adopts the present tense, as though giving stage directions for the dialogue that is to follow. Now there is no need to hide the identity of the building, a new element is added to the description with the 'peculiar soft light' from the patients' rooms peeping through the windows (p.412). Incongruously, given the conversation we are about to witness, the scene is compared with Belmont, 'as Lorenzo and Jessica beheld it in the moonlight' (p.413). This reinforces the idea of a stage set, but also draws attention to the discrepancy between outward appearance and inner reality: this 'Belmont' houses a 'colony' of lunatics. The Shakespearian allusion suggests the future happiness of the lovers, Maud and Marston, but if the house, as I indicated earlier, has symbolic/psychological significance, then the fact that inner light is shining out could mean that their happiness is to do with personal enlightenment. The Jessica/Lorenzo image is centered in a sentence that moves from 'great house' to 'madhouse'; the secret of the second part of the book has been revealed, but in so far as the house itself is

concerned there is still ambiguity as to its ownership and its connection with Lady Mardykes.

Preparing the way for a plausible confusion between stately home and lunatic asylum, Miss Max has told Maud that at her last visit there was a house-party of sixty, yet there remained 'whole galleries perfectly deserted' (p.209). She has commented further on Lady Mardykes' propensity for 'collecting celebrities'. When the reader, with Maud, makes the acquaintance of the various odd characters resident in the house, the most likely hypothesis is that Lady Mardykes is keeping a lunatic asylum. The fact that she has been presented as only a shadowy figure and one already associated with Antomarchi, the mad-doctor, confirms rather than negates this idea. It is not at all clear, however, why she should invite Maud, or have previously invited Miss Max to visit her establishment. Furthermore, it seems strange and somewhat incredible that Maud should not tumble sooner to a realization of her true situation. Of course this long drawn-out, elaborate and manipulative process of mystification could be explained by criticizing the author, as does McCormack. But, 'ludicrous' as it may appear to twentieth-century eyes, I would suggest that the confusion of stately home with madhouse has a significance it is well worth exploring; in any case, it is fundamental to this book. Apart from the substitution of Glarewoods for Carsbrook, there are a number of structural parallels between the second and third parts of the novel that reinforce the comparison of country house and asylum: the two versions of the legend of the rose and the key; the Wymering ball and the Glarewoods ball; and the riot that finally exposes the madness of Glarewoods' inhabitants, which is foreshadowed by the 'skirmish' at Roydon Hall, where Lady Vernon's guests are depicted as having idiosyncrasies different in degree rather than in kind from those of the lunatics.

The parallel between Roydon and Glarewoods is reinforced by the confusion between Glarewoods and Carsbrook and the social delusions of some of its inmates. Mr.Sidebotham the grocer imagines himself to be a 'mechanical genius', the discoverer of perpetuum mobile; Mr.Ap-Jenkins, 'who has a slate quarry in Carnarvonshire',

imagines himself to be the Spanish Minister; whilst the Duchess of Falconbury turns out to be merely Mrs.Fish of New York. These elevated personages are exactly the sort of company Maud could expect to find at Carsbrook; indeed two of them (the Spanish Minister and the Duchess) are reported in the Morning Post that she finds on her breakfast table as amongst Lady Mardykes' current guests (p.329). The smoke screen that this detail throws up is thickened by the linguistic decorum that is on the whole observed by the inmates of Glarewood, even when the content of their discourse disturbs conventional propriety. A small lapse is easily accounted for by Maud; self-praise such as the Duchess offers when introducing herself to the new resident, unacceptable if serious, can be accomodated as a 'pleasantry', for instance. There is a degree of authorial contrivance that emphasises the comparison between lunatics and country house guests which constitutes satirical criticism of the latter. But there is also a degree of gullibility on Maud's part which it is difficult to know how to interpret.

The Duchess is the focal character in Maud's duping, and in her eventual enlightenment. There is nothing in her appearance to give her away:

> A prepossessing young lady, dressed in very exquisite taste, walking slowly, and looking about her with an air and smile of quiet enjoyment and hauteur, hesitated as Maud approached, stood still, looking on her with a gracious and kind expression, and a countenance so *riant* that Miss Vernon hesitated also in the almost irresistible attraction. (p320)

There is a syntactic oddity about this sentence (the result of carelessness?), but otherwise the language is appropriate to the description of a society lady, preserving the neutrality of a narrator offering an official introduction. The French words 'hauteur' and '*riant*' indicate a certain pretentiousness that characterizes the Duchess herself, who criticizes Lady Mardykes as '*passé* ' and '*funeste*' (p.323), and are also to be found in the narratorial discourse elsewhere. As the Duchess proceeds with her tale there is nothing in her linguistic usage to indicate madness. Her story about her supposed hostess is, it is true, somewhat sensational, but then so is the story about the Vernons. Le Fanu, however, arouses the reader's suspicions in a parenthetical comment: 'This lady spoke... in a particularly low, sweet voice, and with a curious

fluency, which, if one had only heard without seeing her, would have led one to suppose that she was reading a written composition rather than talking in colloquial English' (p.323). This draws attention to a certain artificiality about the Duchess, and of course the persona she presents to the world is an assumed one; once the Duchess becomes 'blooded' she loses her society language and propriety gives way to 'Billingsgate'; social decorum is revealed as a mask hiding aggression (p.344). Like the animal or child that mad people were usually assumed to be, she scratches, stamps, kicks and bites. Finally, she is overpowered and tied into a strait-waistcoat. This episode is reminiscent of the scene in Hard Cash discussed in the previous chapter in which Alfred is similarly restrained, but whereas Alfred (who is of course sane) inflicts considerable damage on his assailants, the Duchess is very much the loser. As I pointed out in the earlier discussion, Alfred's struggle is represented as a wrestling match; there is no element of sport about the Duchess's situation, though. The emphasis is on the gross physical evidence of her despair: 'she yelled, she foamed, the veins of her forehead started and darkened, and her eyes rolled. Her handsome figure writhed and quivered in the contortions of the pythoness' (p.345). And as she is dragged away a contrast is drawn with the way she had entered the garden: 'She was quietly and completely overpowered, and hurried...swiftly across the grass to the terrace, and so disappeared into the door through which she had lately emerged in so different a mood' (p.345). The scene ends with a short dialogue between Maud and one of the keepers which sounds for all the world like one of Alice's inquiries, but that the keeper smiles on her 'cynically'. The secret of madness is now out in the open and, having overheard a conversation that reveals the reason for the 'theft' of her scissors, penknife and paper-cutter, Maud is aware of the implications for her own situation.

The Duchess is an important figure in Maud's experience of the asylum, since she acts as her guide and, as I shall discuss later, is used as an exemplar. It is she, too, who first suggests the idea of madness to her new friend by commenting on one of the other inmates. As someone who could, up to a point, pass muster in polite society, she is an equivocal figure, but some of the others that Maud meets are not. In the chapter

entitled 'Odd People' Maud encounters a variety of eccentrics as she walks round the garden. In quick succession she meets a very little lady afflicted with religious fanaticism, an elderly gentleman who apologizes for her, a pair of lovers and an ape-like man swinging in the trees and uttering gibberish. She appears unsurprized by any except the last, who is, indeed, exaggeratedly grotesque. It takes oddity, both behavioural and linguistic, of this extremity to arouse in her the suspicion of madness, and this reinforces the impression of extreme naivety on Maud's part. Le Fanu implies that there is a border-line territory where there is little difference between the insane and the mildly eccentric, but also he recognizes a clearly defined area where undeniable madness is to be identified with the animalistic. Like Lewis Carroll's Alice, Maud is confronted by these characters in a random fashion; they appear and disappear for no particular reason and the only coherence behind this scene seems to be that of the heroine's consciousness Like Alice, too, she accepts their oddity with remarkable *sang-froid.* It is the predominant focalization through Maud in this part of the book, combined with the symbolism I have already remarked on, which leads me to the hypothesis that the scenes in the asylum have a significance beyond that of a satirical commentary on aristocratic society.

Before looking more closely at the treatment of the heroine, I should like to examine another aspect of the asylum. Like Reade, Le Fanu shows himself to be thoroughly critical of the medical profession. There are three doctors in the novel, all of whom have some connection with Glarewoods, although only two are mad-doctors. Doctor Malkin is the local practitioner and toady to Lady Vernon.[6] He is introduced with touches of irony and an emphasis on facial characteristics that suggests a less than prepossessing character: 'The doctor is a little bald, with a high pale nose, a long upper lip, a receding chin, very blue, and a pair of fine dark eyes, set too close together, and with a slight obliquity which spoils them a great deal, and does not improve his

[6]The name has a host of unpleasant connotations listed in the OED, as well as phonetic similarity with Poor Tom's fiend, Smulkin (King Lear, III,iv). Curiously, it was also the Middle English diminutive for Maud.

countenance' (p.62). The squint turns out to be moral as well as optical, yet this detail is important too in that it draws attention to Malkin's eyes, for eyes and seeing, as I have already noted, receive constant emphasis in this novel, both compromising its movement towards realism, yet at the same time adding a psychological dimension to what could be read as broad-brush social satire. In this instance, Malkin is the subject of a strange experience that seems to operate at a different level from the rest of the book. In his introduction to the Dover edition, Norman Donaldson remarks that 'With the notable exception of The House by the Churchyard, Le Fanu kept his ghost stories and mystery novels quite distinct'. As I pointed out earlier, The Rose and the Key is a mystery story, but Doctor Malkin suffers a ghostly visitation whilst spending the night at Glarewoods. It is introduced by an authoritative statement by the narrator:

> There are abnormal states in which the partners, the spirit and the animal, that jointly constitute man, are oddly divorced. The body will lie with eyes closed in deep slumber. The spirit will sit up with its interior vision and hearing opened, and see and hear things of which, in other states, it is not permitted a perception. (p.220)

This addresses an apparently psychological phenomenon in mystical language; it is a metaphorical approach to the subject of cognition which delves into the mysteries of human experience. It seems to indicate that in this house the spirit is able to sit up and see; in other words that it is a place of recognition or enlightenment. The treatment of sight here, combined with the ghostly symbolism of what Malkin *does* 'see' is surely a sign that what happens in this house cannot be taken at surface value. There is, however, a strange inconsistency about the recounting of this incident, for, having carefully laid the doctor's body asleep whilst his spirit looks around, the narrator silently reassembles him, as if the initial explanation were now redundant and indigestion on top of a guilty conscience was sufficient to explain his 'visitation or nightmare'. It is a graphic illustration of the way that this text fluctuates between mysticism and realism and contributes to the complexity in interpreting the asylum scenes.

This scene also alerts the reader to Malkin's villainous role in the plot. It is he

who submits an affidavit which is part of the evidence for committing Maud to the asylum. At the sitting of the commissioners this affidavit is considered and thus indirectly submitted to the reader's judgement. As family physician, he claims that she is 'of a highly nervous temperament, with strange ideas...that she is hysterical and impetuous, and without sufficient self-control to counteract the obvious tendencies of such a mental and nervous condition' (p.398). These characteristics he refers to as the 'predisposing causes' which lead him to conclude that the 'facts' set out in the other two dispositions are attributable to 'insanity too inconsiderably [sic] developed to be safely committed to any but the constant supervision and treatment of an able physician, residing under the same roof, and experienced in the treatment of insanity' (p.398). The medical language of this indirect speech is coloured by the usual jargon of the nineteenth century, emphasising the value of self-control and presenting judgement in the guise of psychological analysis. Describing Maud in this way not only puts her in the company of the Duchess, whose impetuous and uncontrolled behaviour has been so harshly punished, but unites her with her own mother in a way that I shall discuss later in this chapter. The reader, however, having been 'shown' (to use Wayne Booth's term) Maud's behaviour and been given the narrator's internal analysis, is thereby encouraged to read Malkin's testimony as biased. In exposing the convenience of masking discipline as medical treatment, Le Fanu aligns himself with thinking that is familiar enough to twentieth century feminist critics but less common in male-authored texts of the nineteenth century.[7]

The most prominent physician in the novel is Antomarchi, 'stronger, abler, more learned' (p.401) than Malkin. The initial description of this man concentrates upon his eyes:

> But we have not yet done with that remarkable-looking man, pale, with a statuesque regularity of feature, with long, smooth, coal-black hair, and a black, square-cut beard, all the life of whose face seems concentrated in his extraordinary eyes...Those eyes of his are oddly set, intensely cold and hard, and their colour a sort of grey-green, with very

[7]See in particular Elaine Showalter, The Female Malady, chapter 3.

contracted pupils. (p.181)

Unlike Malkin, he has no obliquity of vision, metaphorical or literal; his gaze is direct and unflinching, and, like those other sinister foreigners, Count Fosco and Count Dracula, mesmeric. But he possesses none of Fosco's playfulness, or Dracula's sexual allure; his eyes silence and paralyze. Miss Max feels the power of his gaze as 'a sensation the most unpleasant and overpowering she had ever experienced' (p.213), and Maud is totally overwhelmed by 'indescribable coercion' (p.353) his eyes exert. This and the 'treatment' he administers recalls Georgian ways with lunacy. The Revd.Dr.Francis Willis, the clergyman turned mad-doctor who finally 'tamed' George III, prided himself on the power of his eye and he was not the only physician to feel that this was a potent source of authority over patients.[8]

Antomarchi administers a treatment Le Fanu clearly views as 'therapeutic torture', underlying which is a concept of madness as recalcitrant behaviour to be punished. Since much earlier times when madness had been seen as devilish possession, violence had been adopted as a logical means of ejecting the evil spirit, or, as men's thinking moved from a 'magical' approach to an 'organic' approach, of jolting the senses back into order.[9] This treatment, which had been quite popular in the eighteenth century, was indeed still being recommended in some of the medical texts of the nineteenth century.[10] Alexander Morison, for instance, in Cases of Mental Disease, not only recommends the use of the cold water douche or rotatory machine in certain cases where the excitation of shame or fear is considered useful, but provides diagrams to guide the asylum carpenter in building these contraptions.[11] Another writer, later in the period, is still more explicit about the disciplinary function of the shower-bath whilst also referring to it as a medical treatment: 'The matron uses the shower bath for

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[8]See Roy Porter, Mind-Forg'd Manacles, pp.209-10 and the entry for William Pargeter in Hunter and Macalpine, Three Hundred Years of Psychiatry, pp.538-42.

[9]These are the terms used by Franz Alexander and Sheldon Selsnick in The History of Psychiatry (New York, 1966) to describe the move from thinking that amalgamated medicine, magic and religion to the conception of man in mechanistic terms.

[10]Examples of its recommendation can be found in Three Hundred Years of Psychiatry, and Roy Porter, The Faber Book of Madness.

[11]Alexander Morison Cases of Mental Disease (London, 1828).

swearing, bad language and filthy habits. The whole question of its use I consider to be entirely within the province of the Superintendent, as much as any other medical treatment he may think necessary to employ'.[12] Such tortuous operations had already entered fiction when Charles Reade, writing Hard Cash in 1863, had referred to the nasty practice of 'tanking' whereby the 'keeperesses' would

> Drag a patient stark naked across the yard, and thrust her bodily under water again and again, keeping her down till almost gone with suffocation, and dismissing her more dead than alive with obscene and insulting comments ringing in her ears, to get warm again in the cold.[13]

In Reade's novel the reference to barbaric treatment is included as a documentary detail, evidence of the cruelty practised upon vulnerable inmates by keepers who were not particularly concerned with therapeutic ideals. The shower-bath in The Rose and the Key plays a more significant role. A whole chapter is devoted to the scene in which Maud is forced to witness the 'practice to which the refractory are subjected' (p.354), and the agonies caused to the Duchess are indicated in the detailed observation of the unease the treatment causes not only Maud but such a hardened observer as Mercy Creswell. The narrator's statement on p.359, vouching for the historical authenticity of the shower and emetic is not entirely characteristic. There are a number of generalizing comments throughout the book, but this is the only appeal to a specific extra-novelistic source. Summarizing the theory behind such treatment in the non-fictional world, its punitive aim is implied in terms that closely follow Antomarchi's earlier statement:

> in the awfully depressing malady of madness, if a patient is 'violent', 'noisy', 'excited', and 'destructive', 'quiet' and 'docility' are legitimately to be induced by 'overpowering' him, and 'prostrating the system', by a continuous shower-bath of monstrous duration, followed upon his release from the bath by a nauseating emetic, still further to exhaust an already prostrate system. (p.359)

The narratorial comments contribute to the sense of outrage already aroused by the

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[12]John Ferriar, Bucks County Asylum, Superintendent's Diary, 18 August 1856, quoted in Andrew T.Scull, Museums of Madness, p202-3.
[13]Hard Cash, p.345.

dramatic presentation of the scene and the passing comparison with the ducking of witches, but they also associate Antomarchi with the world at large. This is one of the most striking moments when the text adopts the conventions of realism and contrasts radically with the supernatural cast of a scene such as Malkin's vision.

Doctor Antomarchi barely masks the punitive purpose of the shower-bath: 'You are here, Miss Vernon...to witness, in part, the practice to which the refractory are subjected' (p.354). What is more, this experience clearly has a monitory message for Maud. This is indicated at first obliquely ('She was now perfectly alone in this oddly adjusted room. Could its mysterious and in some repects sinister furniture portend any coercion designed for *her*?' (p.354)), and later articulated by Antomarchi: 'Miss Vernon, a spirited young lady...She has had her first lesson' (p.359). There are implications here to which I shall return, but my present concern is with Antomarchi. He is depicted as an unscrupulous and demonic potentate, as tyrannous in his domain as Lady Vernon is in hers. As the doctor in charge of the asylum he has immense power, which he utilizes for his own purposes - financial gain:

> Antomarchi's energetic soul was in his work. Mammon was the god of his worship. He knew nothing of Macbeth's falterings, for he divided his faith with no other divinity. The world, the flesh, and the devil, he liked very well, as cognate, but subordinate powers. But Mammon, the lord of all, the foundation of his universe, the king of his paradise, he served with an inflexible adoration. (p.371)

By linking Antomarchi with Macbeth, rather than, say, Volpone, the narrator is placing him in the realm of tragedy and stressing the gravity of the case against him. He is seen as a fanatic and therefore as obsessional, almost, as one of his patients. The religious language makes of him a priest-in-charge who is abusing the authority invested in him by working for an unChristian divinity.

If Antomarchi functions as a priest-in-charge, Doctor Damian operates as a *deus ex machina.* Absent from the asylum and from most of the book, he is no more than a name and a reputation until he is finally introduced via a meeting with Marston. He is introduced as a stern judge and there is initially a disturbing parallel with Lady

Vernon: 'He [Marston] had heard that this man was benevolent and pious. He saw nothing in his face but cold command and rigour' (p.408). Marston addresses the white-haired old man in strong language: 'I want you, with the immense powers you possess in this matter, to recognise the awful obligation so obviously imposed on your conscience, and to take the task of inquiry into your own hands' (p.409). It is a reproach, an accusation of negligence to a god who seems to belong to the Old more than the New Testament. Marston's language is not exclusively religious in its connotations, but it is consistent with an address to a god who appears to have neglected his duties just as much as with the situation the novel denotes. Doctor Damian's god-like status is affirmed by the ease with which he is able to release Maud and his ultimate authority over Antomarchi[14]. Bearing in mind the book's dedication, it would seem that Le Fanu was paying a graceful compliment to Thomas Beatty, at least insofar as Doctor Damian's skill and benevolence are concerned. The criticism he faces has to do with his position of authority rather than his reputation as a practitioner and it is here that I feel he is implicated in the religious theme that pervades the novel. His appearance to the conspirators, Antomarchi and Malkin, at the end of ch.LXXXV is that of an apparition:

> A slight noise at the other end of the room attracted the eyes of both. They saw a tall, broad-shouldered man in a short black cloak, with a resolute face, and hair white as snow, standing near the door, hat in hand, as if off a journey. With an odd sensation, for he did not know at what moment he had entered, Doctor Malkin, sitting in the moonlight with his claret glass in his fingers, recognised Mr. Damian, exhibited, like a figure of Schalkin's, partly in deep shadow, and partly in the oblique candle-light. (p.415)[15]

The Rembrandtesque chiaroscuro of this representation adds to the mystery of Mr.Damian's appearance, whilst also taking up a motivic thread that is to be the focus of the next chapter, 'Light'. Damian and Antomarchi, then, the white-haired and the

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[14]It might also be worth remarking that Damian was, with Cosmas, a parton saint of medicine.

[15]Schalkin would seem to be an re-spelt allusion to Le Fanu's own 'Schalken the Painter'.

black-haired, seem to stand for the principles of good and evil, God and the devil, with Malkin performing a supporting role on the side of evil. Their world is the asylum.

I remarked earlier that the asylum scenes were viewed predominantly through the eyes of the heroine and I should like to consider now what the significance is of her confinement there, given that the novel cannot be read purely as a realist text and her confinement explained solely in terms of plot. As a heroine she is far more active than, say, Laura Fairlie, but she still seems to be trapped by circumstances, especially the circumstance of her birth. Well provided for financially, she is emotionally deprived, bearing the brunt of her mother's hatred for the father. In the first part of the novel we see her attempting to escape the oppression of her heritage, with a companion old enough to be a mother-figure who submits to Maud's authority. She is trailed in this adventure by Lizard, the 'unoculos' of the chapter heading, who, like the blind man in Barnaby Rudge, is an unsavoury spy, here commissioned by Lady Vernon. The deposition he presents to the commissioners testifies to the 'very marked eccentricity' of Maud's masquerade in Wales, stating that at the time she actually believed that she was 'miserably poor', of 'extremely humble' social position and obliged to make a living by selling water colour sketches (p.399). Having had the adventure treated by the narrator more in the light of a caprice, like Marie-Antoinette playing at being a dairy-maid, the reader is enabled to to judge this witness as indeed one-eyed. In this part of the book, as in the other two parts, though, full information is withheld. Maud teases the reader as she teases Charles Marston with the ambiguity of her responses, an ambiguity which serves to show the deprivation that can affect an heiress as much as the unprovided-for. Here, as elsewhere in the novel, the reader's only advantage over the character who is being deceived lies in the witnessing of intimate conversations which avoid revealing the whole story.

Back at Royden, 'the home that she loves not', we find out the truth behind Maud's façade and are introduced to her formidable mother. Interest in this part of the book shifts from Maud and centers on Lady Vernon and her secrets, whilst a complicated network of financial and affective relationships is built up. Charles

Marston, who has acted as *ingénue* in part one, here retires partially in favour of Captain Vivian. In trying to keep secret the latter's real relationship with Barbara Vernon, Le Fanu again exploits the device of ambiguous conversations. For example, a discussion between Mr.Dawe, who functions similarly to Dr.Damian and Lady Vernon, about Captain Vivian, a matter where they have no secrets from each other, is rendered in terms that seem designed to mislead the reader, as indeed other characters will be misled. It is as though Le Fanu had designed a test of perceptual ambiguity where, instead of two different contexts producing two totally different meanings, the meaning derived from the first context still hangs over the meaning that the second context is expected to produce. In this particular instance the conversation concerns her dealings with Vivian as her unacknowledged son, but the reader is led to believe she is conducting a secret love affair. Even when the 'true' relationship is revealed, it does not entirely dispel the original interpretation, so that a suspicion of incestuous love is aroused, with the mother seeing her daughter as a rival for her son's love.

During this conversation Lady Vernon twice associates herself with the idea of madness (pp.115, 118), which, given the circumstances of this novel acquires more than colloquial significance. She reveals herself, and is revealed by Mr.Dawe, in conversation with Miss Max, to be 'passionate and violent', to a greater degree, even, than her daughter, despite the cold exterior which deceives most people (p.126). There is some irony, therefore, in the affidavits sworn by Dr.Malkin and Lady Vernon herself testifying to Maud's insanity in terms that could equally well apply to her mother. As in Lady Audley's Secret there is a strong indication that madness is to be equated with a strong female will, though Lady Audley eschews the passionate involvement with men that Lady Vernon experiences, but there is an even greater similarity with Jane Eyre. 'A Chapter in the History of the Tyrone Family', one of the stories in The Purcell Papers, shows the influence of Brontë's novel in a plot which concerns a bigamous marriage, insanity of the first wife and her attempt at murder.[16]

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[16]Sheridan Le Fanu, The Purcell Papers, vol.III (London, 1880), pp.29-135.

Lady Vernon is not certified as mad, and their positions are very different, but her behaviour has the wild impetuosity and sexual drive that characterizes Bertha Rochester. Furthermore the rhetorical workings of the text construct a bifurcated approach to the issue of madness through the relationship between Lady Vernon and her daughter, that is similar to the effect created by the subtextual relationship between Bertha and Jane.

However Lady Vernon's implication in the asylum scenes is more complex still. The book's structure, I have argued, encourages us to read the asylum scenes as an allegory, almost, of the Roydon world, with, I am now suggesting, Maud standing in, as it were, for her mother. Further substantiation for this interpretation is provided in the relationship of Antomarchi with, on the one hand, Maud and, on the other hand, Lady Vernon. In fact the relationship between Antomarchi and Lady Vernon is purely textual. A dialogue in which Miss Max draws information out of Doctor Malkin about 'the man with the dark face, and very odd eyes, and black beard' (p.203) leads to the revelation of his name, Antomarchi, which, comments the old lady, is the same as that of Napoleon's physician on St.Helena (p.204). This might be regarded as serendipity were it not for an earlier discussion about a portrait of Lady Vernon:

> 'Did it ever strike you, sir, making allowance for the difference of sex, that her eye has a very powerful resemblance to that of a remarkable historic genius?' asks Doctor Malkin.
>
> 'Ah - well, I can't quite say; a - do you mean - I don't quite see,' says the vicar.
>
> 'A large wonderful grey eye that will be famous as long as history lasts - I mean Napoleon, the First Consul, Napoleon the Great. It is powerfully like some of the portraits.'
>
> 'Well, do you know, I should not wonder. I believe there is - very likely,' replies the vicar.
>
> 'Now, Miss Maud's, you see, although they are large and grey, they haven't got that peculiar character - a look of severe command, and what some people would call cold; it is very fine'. (p.77)

Collating the information contained in these two conversations, then, I would suggest that there is some encouragement for us to regard Antomarchi as Lady Vernon's physician, and the fact that they never meet in the novel precludes the possibility of a

'real' relationship interfering with this textually constructed one.

But the identification with Napoleon is also made on Antomarchi's behalf: 'This doctor had the peculiar marble skin which is ascribed to the first Napoleon' (p.351) and furthermore the command and coldness of the eyes identifies Lady Vernon *with* Antomarchi, the physician who exerts over Maud a similar sort of power to the coercion she experiences at the hands of her mother. This identification is reinforced by a parallel between Antomarchi's interrogation of Maud in the scene with the commissioners and an interview at Roydon with her mother in the second chapter with the title 'Mother and Daughter'. In the interrogation at the asylum the notion of ambiguity with which the book has been playing relies on the fact that Maud hardly says anything; her utterances are characterized by aposiopesis, allowing Antomarchi to complete the sense and thus distort and subvert her meaning. Questioned by her mother, she deliberately remains silent on the subject that has most need of clarification ie. her relationship with Captain Vivian, thus allowing the older woman to interpret it in her own way. This is a pivotal scene, since in the first place it seals Maud's fate, as Lady Vernon is provoked by her daughter's insolence to put carry out her threat, 'Then take the consequences of your insanity' (p.237), and in the second place Maud is shown through the 'eye' imagery to be on a par with her mother: 'These two pair [sic] of large eyes were encountering, all this time, in defiance' (p.237). The resulting estrangement is not only a necessary element in the plot but accommodates my suggestion that henceforth the daughter functions as a representative of her mother. Thus, if Maud in the asylum can be seen as an envoy for her own mother, Antomarchi becomes the oppressor of Maud/Lady Vernon that Lady Vernon has already been for Maud and Maud appears to be doubly punished.

Most obviously she is being punished for her own 'insanity'. A narratorial comment following the chilling drama of the shower-bath scene points the moral:

> It is well when, even in after life, we can see that our sufferings have made us better, and that God has purged the tree, and not cursed it. This awful time in Maud's life will do good work in her. Her

> character has suffered from the coldness of her mother, from occasional periods of parental caprice and coercion, and from long intervals of the indulgence of absolute neglect. God has found her a time and a place in which to think upon Him, and on herself. These awful days, if they lead her to see and to amend her faults, will not have passed in vain. (p.360)

Again, the characteristic switch into the present tense insists on the contemporaneity of the text, even while its historical character is indicated, reinforcing a major theme of the novel concerning the mutual implication of past and present. The use of the word 'purged' is, of course, perfectly legitimate in the religious context, but it also links back to the shower and emetic treatment just administered. It is not just Maud who has been purged, however, but 'the tree', and this indicates that Maud's sufferings are not warranted on purely personal grounds, but are meted out to her as scion of her family. She is punished both for herself and for her mother. The effectiveness of the punishment is demonstrated a little later. When Mercy (in an irony that contradicts her name) has refused a request to smuggle out a letter to Maud's attorney, insisting that the only way out is through following the rules and having patience, Maud controls the urge to quarrel: 'It was dismaying to meet this frank rebuff, where she had begun to hope for sympathy and active aid. What sordid brutality it was!' (p.367). 'But', the narrator continues, 'already she had grown more tolerant. In this strange seclusion, she had learned more of human nature, and had her sense of superiority more humbled, in two or three days, than in all her life before' (p.367). This would seem to justify not only the whole business of the shower bath, but even Lady Vernon's plan of confining her in the asylum. That Maud has been effectively purged is confirmed by the assurance that the 'tree' will grow through her production of children.

The concept of the family 'tree' and of 'house' in the sense of family is important in Le Fanu's work, but the image of the house has other connotations which should be noted at this point. Maud Ruthyn in submitting to the test of nerve which going to live with Uncle Silas consititutes, finds herself in a gothic situation of threat, loneliness and mystery, where the decaying house finally becomes the locus of a nightmare situation. In Horror Fiction in the Protestant Tradition, Victor Sage draws attention to the prevalence of the metaphor of the isolated house in the tradition of horror writing,

connecting this with Freud's insights in 'The Uncanny': 'The domestic space, in isolation, is neither comforting nor familiar', he writes.[17] Uncle Silas clearly falls into this tradition, allowing Bartram-Hough to be interpreted in terms of Christian iconography as the mansion of Silas's soul. Neither in Uncle Silas nor The Rose and the Key can the familial connotations of the word 'house' be ignored, but Glarewoods is a house of a different kind from the others in these two novels. For much of the time it receives a veneer of domesticity which is either cosmetic (the attempts to render Maud's quarters suitable for the habitation of a lady accustomed to comfort and luxury) or illusory (focalizing through Maud, the text describes the place as a home rather than an institution). Once the illusion is dispelled, Maud is taken to a room, the one which contains the shower, which is far from ordinary or domestic and is represented as a torture chamber. If this house, then, cannot really be connected with the domestic, neither can it be easily associated with one owner. Antomarchi does not own it and the real owner, Mr.Damian, is hardly there, so the Christian identification of house and soul is difficult to sustain. Instead it becomes a public place which yet is cut off from 'normal' society.

In this place Maud Vernon, like Maud Ruthyn, is tested, and also tried in a more formal way, since she is placed before the commissioners of lunacy with the problem, like Alfred Hardie in Hard Cash of proving her sanity. It is interesting that she herself puts the problem differently: 'How can she prove that she is *not* mad? Prove a negative?' (p.365). This seems to underline the powerlessness of her position, which is in any case emphasised in the scene with the commissioners when she is oppressed, not only by a system that is inept and corrupt, but by an individual, Antomarchi, whose eyes virtually hypnotize and silence her. On the surface, Maud has the problem of showing that the behaviour that is criticized as the uncontrolled behaviour of madness is not, once the circumstances are known, insane so much as, perhaps, reprehensible; it is behaviour that might, metaphorically, be termed 'mad', but

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[17]Victor Sage, Horror Fiction in the Protestant Tradition (London, 1988), p7.

which is not literally so. At the metaphorical level, though, Maud is a substitute for her mother, and her escape to Wales resembles her mother's rather more serious flight to Wales to conceal the birth of her son, the offspring of an impetuous and, as it turns out, bigamous marriage.[18] An individual peccadillo is reinterpreted as a misdemeanour of grave consequence to the family, and it is this that seems to be punished in Lady Vernon's death, but for which Maud must be tried in an extension of the biblical threat that the sins of the father (mother) will be visited upon the children. In the end, what Maud proves is that she is capable of self-control. It is a lack of self-control that Mr. Dawes has criticized in her mother, and her mother in Maud, and Antomarchi in the Duchess and the insane generally.

But if the novel involves itself in questions of morality, it also shares in the polemic that sustains Hard Cash. Through Maud the individual is shown to be at the mercy of the system. She is instrumental in her own rescue to the extent of enlisting the help of Michael Doody, using, in an economical and artistically satisfying way, the language of heraldry. She thus makes her heritage work for her instead of against her and gives evidence of enough vitality in the 'house' to ensure future progeny. If this has begun the rescue operation, however, it has still needed the intervention of, almost, a *deus ex machina* for completion, as if human efforts without divine backing are likely to flounder. Confronting Antomarchi, finally, Damian employs the imagery that Reade had previously favoured: 'It [Maud's case] can't bear the light...It is a very black case' (p.419). By the end of the book the asylum has become illuminated by a soft light as Maud, chastened and enlightened, is released and returned to the world and a happy future.

Through the imagery of light and by means of the parallels that are drawn between Maud and her mother, social satire is extended into psychological analysis and rigid boundaries between sanity and insanity are denied. As Maud is freed from

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[18]This is a part of the story that is not entirely explained. The final chapter gives Lady Vernon's early history, but does not tell how the death of Howard's first wife became suspect.

Glarewoods, so her mother, in a climactic scene, is released from the prison that Roydon turns out to have been. In a dramatic death scene she hides herself from the light for her final encounter with Mr.Dawe and expires muttering vengeful phrases from the bible. Her last enigmatic words are about darkness: 'wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness - for ever' (p.428). Mr.Dawe symbolically flings open the shutter and the air of the outside world blows in. The significance of Lady Vernon's death is indicated metonymically, as her most precious possessions are damaged and the sanctuary of her room violated. Her bible, symbol of a cruelly pietistic religion, 'lies flat on its face...with its covers open', and the paper-cutter given to her by her secret husband is broken, drawing attention to the two important elements in her life causing the unjust treatment of her daughter. Moreover, the images of confinement and darkness, which have played such a large part in the novel, are here deployed so as to reveal the powerful oppression that has been caused by Lady Vernon's 'one great and untold affection among the living' and her 'one passionate affection among the dead' (p.429). It is her death, whereby the consequences of past misdeeds are finally worked out, as much as Maud's 'purging', that allows for the restitution of dynastic order and the fruitful flowering of old stock.

CHAPTER 8

THE ZOOPHAGOUS MANIAC: DRACULA'S DISCIPLE

When Bram Stoker wrote Dracula in 1897 there was already a tradition of vampiric literature stretching back to John Polidori's short story, 'The Vampyre', but the creation of the Transylvanian Count Dracula brought in new ideas drawn from still older eastern European legends and superstitions, and the incorporation of the lunatic asylum, madman and doctor was particular to Stoker. The working notes for the novel show that the idea of madness was present from an early stage;a cast list dating from the spring of 1890 includes a mad doctor and a mad patient who has 'a theory of perpetual life'.[1] In the chapter outline dated 14 March 1890 Dr.Seward's diary in Book 1 includes mention of 'the fly patient' who is in love with death, and two years later, as the 'Fly man', he figures in Seward's diary as a herald of Harker's arrival at Castle Dracula rather than of Dracula's arrival at Carfax. It would seem, then, that the idea of insanity was an integral part of the Stoker's conception, but his reading of clinical literature does not appear to have been extensive. Frayling's list of books in Stoker's library relevant to the writing of Dracula mentions only Lavater's Essays on Physiognomy. On the other hand, three of Stoker's brothers were medical men and in addition to any help they could give Clive Leatherdale notes that Stoker's source material, as revealed in the papers held by the Rosenbach Foundation, included books by Herbert Mayo (On the Truths contained in Popular Superstitions, with an Account of Mesmerism, 1851) and Thomas Pettigrew (On Superstitions connected with the

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[1]Christopher Frayling, Vampyres (London, 1991), p.35. Frayling's discussion of Stoker's Working and Research Papers for Dracula shows that Stoker started preparing for the novel in March 1890.

History and Practice of Medicine and Surgery, 1844).[2] It is not the purpose of this chapter, however, to trace a one-to-one correspondence between Stoker's representation of madness and that of any particular clinical source, but to see what conception of insanity informs his writing and the part that it plays in the novel as a whole. In so doing I shall be concerned with the complicated interplay between realism and fantasy and with the progressive dissolution of the demarcation between sanity and madness.

One of the chief narrators in Dracula is the doctor of the asylum in the grounds of Carfax, Dracula's first London residence. Like The Woman in White, the novel is constructed from diary entries, letters, newspaper reports etc., but, unlike the earlier novel, the assemblage does not appear as the work of one individual operating as an author/editor and there is greater emphasis on the recording of events, impressions, thoughts almost as they happen rather than submitting formal reports afterwards. This is particularly the case before those having some sort of contact with Dracula have joined forces and pooled their information. Apparently disparate phenomena are recorded, for which causes have to be discovered and between which links are gradually revealed. Amongst these phenomena are the symptoms of madness exhibited by Renfield, Dr.Seward's 'pet' lunatic in the asylum in the grounds of Carfax, Dracula's first London residence. Dr.Seward's diary, with its comment, '*Kept in phonograph*', which accompanies the first entry, is one of several reminders that we are in the mechanized world of the late nineteenth century, but there are features of the text's rhetoric that reduce its contemporaneity. For instance, Seward's position as one of three suitors who all propose to Lucy Westenra on the same day puts him in a fairy-tale situation, and the parallels with the earlier journal of Jonathan Harker add further allusions which strengthen the suggestion of fantasy. As David Seed notes in his article on the novel's narrative method, the numerology forms a parallel with the three

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[2]Clive Leatherdale, The Origins of Dracula (London, 1987) mentions particularly Pettigrew's On Superstitions connected with the History and Practice of Medicine and Surgery.

female vampires who have advanced on Jonathan Harker. But whereas their aggressive sexuality and, still more, his susceptibility have hinted at an affinity with Macbeth's witches, there is another parallel along the lines of fairy tale, since Harker's confinement in Dracula's castle presents a comparison with the Bluebeard story, with Harker, interestingly, put in the position of the wife. In his determination to find consolation in work and in particular to understand the unusual lunatic, Renfield, Seward follows in his own way the pattern set by Harker, for whom keeping a journal 'becomes a therapeutic act of self-preservation'.[3] For both it is a means of exerting some control in circumstances that highlight their vulnerability.

In this first outlining of the mystery presented by the madman, Seward draws on the terms conventionally employed in the discourse of madness, but without noticeable coherence. He remarks on the need to make himself 'master of the facts of his [Renfield's] hallucination', describes him as being of a 'sanguine temperament' and then gives details of his swings of mood from morbid excitability to periods of gloom.[4] Hallucinations of course had long been established as one of the standard symptoms of insanity, but the concept is not particularly pertinent to Renfield's madness and is not mentioned again in connection with him, though, as I shall later discuss, it is of relevance to the text more generally. The reference to a 'sanguine temperament', on the other hand, recalls the ancient humours-based theory of personality, which usefully introduces the motif of blood, and this is combined with more contemporary ideas of mood and the notion of manic-depression.[5] Already the text gives signs of swinging between old wisdom and superstition, one the one hand, and, on the other, late nineteenth century rationality and positivism. This is in fact a key feature of the text

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[3]David Seed, 'The Narrative Method of Dracula', Nineteenth Century Fiction, 40 (1985), 61-75, (p.65).
[4]Bram Stoker, Dracula, The World's Classics (Oxford, 1983), p.61. All subsequent references will be to this edition and will be incorporated in the text.
[5]The term, 'manic-depression' was not yet in general currency. Daniel Hack Tuke's A Dictionary of Psychological Medicine, 2 vols. (London, 1892) does not include it amongst the other manic disorders.

and madness becomes a crucial arena for the interplay of the two modes of interpretation and understanding, just as it does for the oscillation between realism and fantasy. Seward presumes that Renfield's madness is the result of some 'disturbing influence' on the sanguine temperament, the two together giving 'a mentally-accomplished finish' (p.61). Just what this means is unclear, but it does give the impression that once all the operative factors have been determined the case of Renfield will become comprehensible. As a case study, then, Renfield has an analogous position in the text to that of Dracula. Both represent phenomena underlying which, it is assumed, there is a coherent pattern to be discovered, provided one follows the correct procedure of sharp observation, meticulous record-keeping and logical deduction.

Renfield's scheme of collecting and eating flies, then spiders, then sparrows, which has culminated in a request for a kitten leads Seward to the hypothesis that he is an undeveloped homicidal maniac who, like the old lady in the nursery rhyme, is working his way up a hierarchy of consumption in the interests of absorbing as many lives as he can through a cumulative process. Having confirmed this hypothesis by offering Renfield a cat as a preferable, because more vivacious (ie. containing more life) alternative to a kitten, Seward invents a new classification for the lunatic and calls him 'a zoophagous (life-eating) maniac'. This term was not part of nineteenth century nosology, but is borrowed from natural science, and the transference underlines the degree to which Renfield is seen as an animal, a specimen for the scientist to observe and catalogue, a not unusual attitude in Victorian medicine. Renfield's blood-lust thus establishes him as a ready-made acolyte for Dracula. For neither is the absorption of blood necessary to sustain life, since the vampire is immortal and the lunatic, being alive, still has access to more normal means of sustenance. In Renfield's case his zoophagy is an attempt to eat his way up the Great Chain of Being, in the hope that by absorbing other lives he will indefinitely prolong his own; it takes the rationale of food to an illogical conclusion, by assuming that 'life' is a quantifiable commodity, and that it is capable of indefinite prolongation. Dracula's aim, of course, is not simply to

prolong his own life, which is already endless, but to colonize the world with his own kind. His encounters, with their heavy sexual overtones, represent blood-sucking as a form of mating, the progeny of which is the women themselves, transmogrified into vampires; mating, therefore, seems more like infecting. In addition, the comparison with Renfield, whose 'cause' is defined as insane solipsism, has the effect of pathologizing Dracula's equally solipsistic mission.

Several commentators have remarked on the possibility of Stoker's own sexual fears and problems entering into his fiction, but, that apart, the equation of sex with infection had been given wide publicity through the controversy over the Contagious Diseases Acts in the 1870s and 1880s. Sex and infection are both, moreover, here associated with what is hidden, invisible. The last quarter of the nineteenth century had made great advances in understanding the part played by bacteria in the transmission of disease, but the fact that they are invisible to the naked eye reduces the power of ordinary men and women to avoid contamination. Like Dracula, germs can lurk in the most unexpected places and moral goodness gives no security from attack. Once their presence has been detected, however, and defensive measures discovered, their power is, like his, drastically reduced. It is significant, then, that Dracula's boxes are 'sterilized', since this implies medical counter-measures, whereas the means actually adopted have more to do with religion and magic.

The question of the relative force of science and religion, superstition or magic is also raised in another aspect of Dracula's near-invisibility and his power that also, though with rather more complexity, focuses on ideas of pathology. Like a snake, the vampire is able to fascinate his victims into paralysis and compliance by a sort of mesmeric or hypnotic process that was itself a matter of intense interest and debate in the nineteenth century. Mesmerism, or 'animal magnetism' was a theory and practice that had been promoted by Franz Anton Mesmer in pre-revolutionary France, based on the idea of a universal energy that manifested itself in a fluid or force that flowed between people and the cosmos. It was popularized in Britain by Dickens's friend, John Elliotson, whose position as a scientist helped to confer respectability on a theory

that could easily lend itself to cranks.[6] Elliotson, however, was also partly responsible for the disrepute into which mesmerism fell, since he was in the habit of giving public displays and his career at University College ended with the scandal aroused by the case of the Okey sisters, which involved charges of sexual manipulation. The popularity of mesmerism in the 1830s, 40s and 50s gradually waned as hypnotism gained favour owing to the work of James Braid in England and Charcot in France. Abandoning the notion of mesmeric fluid, hypnotism emphasised the importance of the subject's psychological state, the 'suggestibility' that governed the hypnotist's chance of exerting power, and thus also aroused distrust since it could be equated with mental despotism.[7]

That Stoker was familiar with the work of Charcot is evident from the text. In an important scene, Van Helsing tries to combat Dr.Seward's scientific arrogance:

> 'Do you not think that there are things which you cannot understand, and yet which are; that some people see things that others cannot?...I suppose now you do not believe in corporeal transference. No? Nor in materialization. No? Nor in astral bodies. No? Nor in the reading of thought. No? Nor in hypnotism -'
> 'Yes,' I said. 'Charcot has proved that pretty well.' (p.191)

Van Helsing here includes hypnotism in a list of concepts belonging to the paranormal, yet it proves, from Seward's acceptance, to be a process that has acquired at least partial scientific respectability. As Jenny Bourne Taylor points out, mesmerism was a peculiarly fruitful subject for the nineteenth century novelist:

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[6]The case of James Tilley Matthews (see Roy Porter, A Social History of Madness, pp.55-59) illustrates the ease with which belief in mesmeric rays could be taken as a symptom of insanity.

[7]Fred Kaplan, Dickens and Mesmerism. The Hidden Springs of Fiction (Princeton, 1975), gives a general account of mesmerism in England. Michael J. Clark, 'The Rejection of Psychological Approaches to Mental Disorder in Late Nineteenth-Century British Psychiatry', in Andrew Scull (ed.), Madhouses, Mad-Doctors, and Madmen summarizes attitudes to hypnosis as a method of mental treatment in the latter part of the century. Jenny Bourne Taylor in In the Secret Theatre of Home offers a comprehensive and interesting overview, indicating the relevance of the mesmerism/hypnotism debate for fictional writing.

> Mesmerism...made up an extraordinarily rich and flexible discourse, providing a set of terms and references that could invoke, in a simultaneously realistic and figurative way, processes of dominance and subordination, hidden forces within the self, secret traces of the past, links between the body and the surrounding world and the psychic and the physical, correspondences and modes of transference between self and other.[8]

The mythic approach of Dracula draws on all these aspects of a process that, as the quotation above shows, is seen as both scientific and mysterious, but I shall concentrate on its significance in the structuring of power relations in the book.

Mesmerism or hypnosis is exerted in some degree by three different characters, linked always with the establishing of dominance and subordination. Least explicit are the references to the power of Seward's eye. Commenting on the doctor in generally favourable terms, Lucy considers 'what a wonderful power he must have over his patients' (p.55). Like Antomarchi in The Rose and the Key (and like the historical figures I mentioned in that chapter) Seward possesses an unflinching gaze: 'He has a curious habit of looking one straight in the face, as if trying to read one's thoughts' (p.55). But Seward's power extends only to his patients; although he tells Lucy that she affords him 'a curious psychological study', his behaviour towards her implicitly acknowledges her power over him, and, like Renfield, he makes obeisance to a higher authority, something I shall come back to later. His power over his patient is limited too, because he is in contest with Dracula who is stronger.

When first the lunatic tries to resist him, Dracula subdues Renfield by a sort of mesmeric process combined with the tempting offer of lives:

> He held up His hand, and they all [the rats]stopped; and I thought He seemed to be saying: 'All these lives will I give you, ay, and many more and greater...if you will fall down and worship me!' And then a red cloud, like the colour of blood, seemed to close over my eyes; and before I knew what I was doing, I found myself opening the sash and saying to Him: 'Come in, Lord and Master!' (p.279)

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[8]Jenny Bourne Taylor, p.58.

In fact, despite the physical trappings, which might seem to suggest mesmerism rather than hypnotism, I would suggest that what is essential here is Renfield's psychological state which, it has already been established in the text, is eminently susceptible to Dracula's persuasion. His reference to the voice is so tentative ('I thought He seemed to be saying') that it might be read as merely the externalization of his own desire, and the cloud 'the colour of blood', which seems to close over his eyes, might be seen to represent his own obsession with blood. 'Cloudiness' is, indeed, a word that is attached to insanity by Seward (p.269). In addition, the clear reference to the tempting of Christ as described in St.Luke 4, 5-7 superimposes a spiritual coding through which the mesmerist acquires satanic overtones, as do those other fictional mesmerists, Antomarchi and Svengali.

Dracula appears to have easy access also to the volition of Lucy, who, like Renfield, has shown a susceptibility to Dracula's attentions in her somnambulism. She, too, describes the feeling of powerlessness: 'I tried to stir, but there was some spell upon me...' (p.43). In neither of her accounts of Dracula's attacks is she able to remember what has actually happened in terms of person-to-person contact. The Whitby encounter is rendered in mystical terms and elemental imagery with Dracula's presence indicated solely through the red eyes and the howling of dogs. This allows for a flexibility of interpretation but the parallel with Renfield lends weight to the suggestion that Dracula is in fact offering a temptation and that by submitting to his desires, Lucy is following the dictates of her subconscious. Furthermore the earliest, quite explicit, instance of vampiric hypnotism in the text shows Jonathan Harker on the point of succumbing to primitive desires: 'I felt myself struggling to awake to some call of my instincts; nay, my very soul was struggling and my half-remembered sensibilities were striving to answer the call. I was becoming hypnotized!' (p.44). It is interesting that he expresses the process as one of struggling to awake, when the usual image is of being put to sleep, as if the life the three women offer him is one of greater awareness and activity. His earlier encounter with them has left no doubt as to his 'wicked, burning desire' for their kisses (p.37). The novel seems, then, so far as the male victim

is concerned, to be communicating anxieties about the relaxation of conscious self-control which can lead to the unleashing of instincts inimical to the respectability and order of society, but it also seems to reflect currents fears about the possibility of sexual manipulation of the hypnotized female subject, in the course of which she is infected with a predatory sexuality that threatens the most cherished values of Victorian society.

Mina, too, has suffered the Count's hypnotic attentions and, like Harker, discovered that his quasi-sexual advances were not entirely unwelcome: 'strangely enough, I did not want to hinder him' (p.287). The cry with which she responds to Dracula's disappearance after he has been discovered *in flagrante delicto* is ambiguous; it seems to be interpreted by the men by as an agonized awareness of her contamination, but it could equally well represent the frustration of *coitus interruptus*. What is interrupted is a travesty of *fellatio*, since with Mina Dracula goes a stage further, and not only drinks her blood, but, in an inversion of both the image of suckling a child and the Christian legend of the pelican feeding its young from the breast, forces her to suck blood from his chest. Dracula's gross physical abuse secures him partial psychological mastery of Mina who then, in effect, offers herself,as a traumatized (hysterical) subject, to the hypnotic attentions of the physician/magician, Van Helsing. Oscillating between allegiance to the vampire and obedience to the vampire-hunter, Mina is put into a position analogous with Renfield, who has been the locus of a struggle between Dracula and Seward. Van Helsing thus takes over Seward's place, as Dracula's opponent, but, since he is forced to fight according to the rules of superstition and folklore, the professor is no more a representative of scientific procedure than is Dracula himself. His ability to hypnotize Mina, for instance, is limited by the laws that determine the vampire's cycle of power, and his entry into her mind is governed by a similar condition to that ruling a vampire's first entry anywhere, which must be by invitation. As the action of the novel moves deeper into Transylvania the struggle becomes more clearly one between good and evil, in which good is identified with Christianity.

Dracula has achieved access to Mina in the first place through his domination of Renfield, who, in addition to being an ally in his obsession with building up strength through the consumption of other lives, has worshipped the vampire as God. Religious mania, unlike zoophagous mania was a commonly recognized category of madness in the nineteenth century, which could be used to cover a multiplicity of cases, amongst which was the perversion of customary religious observances and beliefs. In Renfield's case the issue is one of idolatory in which the idol has a satanic status, most clearly in the scene of temptation referred to earlier which is comparable to Jesus's temptation by the devil in the wilderness. It is not possible, however, simply to define Renfield as a devil-worshipper. His repeated cry, 'The blood is the life' is in fact taken from Deuteronomy 12, 23-25 and is an invocation of the Judaic belief, shared by other races, that blood literally is the source of life. Renfield thus breaks the taboo which the Old Testament imposes on the eating of flesh unless it has been properly drained, but his desire for blood, together with his worship of the Master also parallels the figurative reincarnation of the belief in the Christian Eucharist. Since, however, the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation holds that in receiving communion wine the communicant is drinking the blood of Christ, Renfield's abstention from lower life forms in the promise of something better (Seward deduces that Dracula has promised him a human life) seems *parodic* of conventional religious beliefs only to the extent that his drinking necessitates a preliminary killing for that specific purpose. Renfield's madness, in fact, returns to literality what has become a figurative practice. Dracula, similarly, gives literal substance to the Christian belief in resurrection, but thereby inverts religious values, as David Punter points out, since his soul has failed to find God.[9] His vampirism, unlike Renfield's, has no regard for souls; it is his insistence on living at a purely physical level, his transgression of all social and moral laws that

[9]David Punter, The Literature of Terror. A History of Gothic Fictions from 1765 to the Present Day (London, 1980), p.261.

makes him such a formidable opponent, for he is limited by none of the qualms that affect even a lunatic. As Punter notes, he represents pure desire.

Taboos, of course, though frequently validated in terms of religion, are a matter of social expedience. The taboo that Renfield is breaking focuses attention on the subject of food and the distinction between the eating of flesh purely for the purposes of sustaining life and the drinking of blood for the purposes of increasing power: 'I don't want souls, indeed, indeed! I don't. I coudn't use them if I had them! they would be no manner of use to me. I couldn't eat them...' (p.269). Dracula's transgression extends the implications by considering the social, moral and spiritual dimensions. By insisting on his involvement with the natural world and his regulation by 'natural' laws, the novel might seem to be relegating the vampire to a sphere outside human responsibility, but Van Helsing does place great emphasis on Dracula's previous life as a warrior who is good and strong: 'it is not the least of its terrors that this evil thing is rooted deep in all good; in soil barren of holy memories it cannot rest' (p.241). Dracula is, in fact, an example of 'a great and noble race' who is thought to have had dealings with 'the Evil One' and those very qualities that are necessary to preserve and aggrandize a race have been perverted. David Punter has commented on the function performed by old legends in establishing a connection between aristocracy and immortality and in this particular case how the myth created by Stoker, by exploring the connotations of lineage and nobility that are contained within the word 'blood', combines ideas of aristocratic immortality with fears of invasion and the threat to bourgeois values and beliefs imposed by a degenerate aristocracy. Providing further substance for the parallel between Dracula and Renfield, Renfield's periods of sanity are important in establishing his good birth and education; he, too, is, in fact, a gentleman who has degenerated.

Through the figures of both Dracula and Renfield, then, the novel articulates symbolically the fears of degeneracy that were prevalent in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and given more forthright expression in the writing of, for instance, Nordau, Morel, Lombroso and, working in the field of madness, Henry Maudsley.

Daniel Pick has discussed the contribution Dracula makes to the debates about degeneracy, drawing attention to their moralistic dimension:

> The novel provided a metaphor for current political and sexual political discourses on morality and society, representing the price of selfish pursuits and criminal depravity. The family and the nation, it seemed to many, were beleaguered by syphilitics, alcoholics, cretins, the insane, the feeble-minded, prostitutes and a perceived 'alien invasion' of Jews from the east who, in the view of many alarmists, were feeding off and 'poisoning' the blood of the Londoner. [10]

Punter maintains that Dracula attacks 'the whole concept of morality by preying upon and liberating aspects of the personality which are not under moral control, and colonising on his own behalf by infection in a savage and quite unintentional parody of imperialism'.[11] I would argue, however, that it is not so much a matter of Dracula taking advantage of insufficient moral control, but of actually breaking down the barriers of bourgeois socialization through his hypnotic skills. Further, because the hypnosis is practised without the subject's permission and is described as a kind of magical operation, it has the effect of exonerating the victim from responsibility. In addition, by externalizing the source of degeneracy on to the parasitical figure of Dracula, Stoker protects bourgeois society from charges of immorality and reinforces the claims of conventional restraints, though the justification for them is not well substantiated. Responsibility for the degeneracy is placed on the shoulders of an outsider, who becomes a scapegoat for the ills of modern society.

Dracula is positioned by Van Helsing as radically outside, not just the social, but the natural order, though this does not give him freedom: 'he is even more prisoner than the slave of the galley, than the madman in his cell. He cannot go where he lists; he who is not of nature has yet to obey some of nature's laws' (pp.239-40). It is difficult to know what this can mean, because his capacity to metamorphose and to command the elements and certain animals does seem to make Dracula part of the

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[10]Daniel Pick, '"Terrors of the night": Dracula and "degeneration" in the late nineteenth century', Critical Quarterly, 30 (1988), 71-87 (p.80).
[11]Punter, p.263.

natural scene. What Van Helsing really seems to be expressing is the desire to deny the terrifying possibility of the dead walking the earth and to outlaw the primitive and outrageous instincts that determine the vampire's being. The 'laws' that constrain his behaviour are as much part of superstition and folklore as is belief in his existence in the first place; there is no 'scientific' method of overcoming him, sterilization is by means of a ritual that gives magic power to religion and this in the end seems to be the only defense against degeneration.

The possibilities that medical science might stem degeneracy are explored through the relationship of Dr.Seward and that other vampire, who is literally a 'madman in his cell'. In Francis Ford Coppola's 1992 film, Renfield's madness is explained by his having been Harker's predecessor at Castle Dracula and thus learned his vampiricism at first hand. This actually makes sense and is consistent with the madness that Harker feels is threatening and the brain-fever he does in fact suffer, but it is not written into the text, where the aetiology of Renfield's madness is not discussed. Nina Auerbach interestingly links Dracula with both Trilby and with Freud's Studies on Hysteria. She writes: 'Dr.Seward's relentless attempt to make sense of his patient Renfield's "zoophagy" is a weird forecast of the later Freud rationalizing the obsession of his Wolf Man and Rat Man'.[12] Auerbach speculates that Stoker might have known about Freud's work through the Society for Psychical Research, since there was a report on his research at a general meeting there in 1893. Whatever Stoker's knowledge of psychoanalysis, the case study he presents in Renfield bears few signs of psychoanalytic understanding on the part of the 'therapist'. A Freudian approach is classically retrospective, aimed at uncovering causes; here, on the other hand, there is no mention of a history to the disorder, no attempt to detect causes; the trajectory is forward, and the object of understanding not so much the patient but a situation, and the means of bringing that situation under control.

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[12]Nina Auerbach, 'Magi and Maidens: the Romance of the Victorian Freud', Critical Inquiry, 8 (1981-2), 281-300 (p.290).

Before it has become clear that Renfield is a piece in a jig-saw, Seward's aim has been to 'master' the facts, and there is something almost Faustian about his desire for knowledge. In this first diary entry he indicates his awareness that there is an element of cruelty in his pressing Renfield with questions: 'In my manner of doing it there was, I now see, something of cruelty. I seemed to wish to keep him to the point of his madness - a thing which I avoid with the patients as I would the mouth of hell' (p.60). His following comments are cryptic to the point of obscurity: '(*Mem.*, under what circumstances would I *not* avoid the pit of hell?) *Omnia Romae vernalia sunt.* Hell has its price! *verb. sap.*' (pp.60-61). Translating the Latin as 'everything in Rome was up for sale', what he seems to be saying is that there might be something he would go to hell for and that if everything can be bought still everything must be paid for. Like Faust, Seward, it appears, could be tempted to sell his soul for knowledge. His next entry provides further evidence of his ambition:

> Why not advance science in its most difficult and vital aspect - the knowledge of the brain? Had I even the secret of one such mind - did I hold the key to the fancy of even one lunatic - I might advance my own branch of science to a pitch compared with which Burdon-Sanderson's physiology or Ferrier's brain knowledge would be as nothing. If only there were a sufficient cause! I must not think too much of this, or I may be tempted; a good cause might turn the scale with me, for may not I too be of an exceptional brain, congenitally? (p.71)

Unlike George Eliot's Lydgate, the motivation underlying professional ambition is not the alleviation of human suffering but personal aggrandisement and these reflections are reminiscent of Macbeth's attempts to avoid temptation. Seward resembles Macbeth, too, in that he is not basically an evil man, merely an ambitious one. There are sinister signs here that it is not only the madman who has sympathies with Dracula, but the doctor too.

Dracula does not, as does Hard Cash or even The Rose and the Key, offer an explicit condemnation of the medical profession, but there seems to be implicit criticism, not only in this depiction of the medical scientist risking human cruelty in the course of advancing knowledge, but also in the failure of Seward (and Van Helsing) to

recognize and respond to the urgency of Renfield's pleas to be removed from the asylum. As Reade had done, Stoker testifies to the stranglehold that the label of madness exerts; Renfield's vehemence in pleading not even for release, but simply to be moved elsewhere is seen, partly because he is unable to advance a reason, as further evidence of insanity rather than as a legitimate response to circumstances. In his introduction to A Social History of Madness, Roy Porter writes of the difficulties of communication faced by people who have been designated mad, since their protests 'have been interpreted as symptoms of their madness'.[13] Yet, he maintains, the stories of the mad *do* relate to the world around them, and should not be ignored; 'The writings of the mad challenge the discourse of the normal [and] the assumption that there exist definitive and unitary standards of truth and falsehood, reality and delusion, is put to the test'.[14] Paradoxically, it is when Renfield is speaking in his sanest voice that he is not taken seriously. As a zoophagous maniac, his every utterance and movement is a clue to happenings in the larger world of Dracula's invasion and significance is thus attached to him even before it is quite realized what he signifies. 'If normality condemns madness as irrational, subhuman, perverse' as Porter puts it, then the subhuman, perverse world that Dracula inhabits is similarly condemned as madness.[15] . It is only in fact when Renfield is speaking with apparent rationality, but without full explanation that he is distrusted, since his alignment with the vampire has been taken for granted. Stoker thus stresses the fact that it is precisely madness that enables Dracula to make an ally of Renfield.

If it is a point of the text that similarities exist between the lunatic and the vampire, it is also established subtextually that there are points of identification between the lunatic and his doctor. Both, for instance, keep meticulous records, Seward in words, Renfield in figures, and Seward might, figuratively, be said to be preying on Renfield, whom he sees as a distraction from his disappointed love, as

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[13]A Social History of Madness, p.5.
[14]A Social History of Madness, p.3.
[15]A Social History of Madness, p.3.

Renfield preys on insect and animal life. Seward does, indeed, at one point wonder if the lunatic might think they have something in common as he reflects on the implications of Renfield's scorn of the attendants' fear that he might attack the doctor (p.107), but the fact that he *is* attacked would seem to indicate that the alternative hypothesis (that Renfield is using him) is more likely. Nevertheless both are implicated in the theme, so prevalent in Victorian literature, of egoism. Seward's first diary entry ends with some reflections on this subject. He hypothesizes that Renfield is probably more dangerous if unselfish: 'In selfish men caution is as secure an armour for their foes as for themselves...when self is the fixed point the centripetal force is balanced with the centrifugal: when duty, a cause, etc., is the fixed point, the latter force is paramount, and only accident or a series of accidents can balance it' (p.61). In the second entry he records his envy of the lunatic whom he sees as having a strong cause to give purpose to his life ie. the absorbing of as many lives as possible. He seems to be unaware at this stage that such a cause is as selfish as any could be and also as dangerous to others, and longs for similar motivation: 'If I only could have as strong a cause as my poor mad friend there, a good, unselfish cause to make me work' (p.71). Seward's more speculative ruminations are certainly difficult to make sense of and raise the suspicion that there lurks in his characterization traces of the projected mad doctor, but once he has enlisted in the chivalric 'cause', his entries become less speculative and consequently less obscure. Before being persuaded of the nature of the cause, however, he has to overcome his own resistance to Van Helsing's suggestion of vampirism and, interestingly, he compares his position to that of 'a mad man, and not a sane one' (p.193). For him madness lies in 'going in my mind from point to point', without the coherence of an underlying thesis, and he further compares this position to that of 'a novice blundering through a bog in a mist' (p.193). The imagery here links, of course, Seward's state of mind with the 'cloudiness' of Renfield's insanity and the mist of the protean Dracula, but there is a further association with the narrative method of the text, where it is only the reader's preliminary witnessing of the events at

Dracula's castle that enable some sort of sense to be made of the fragmentary evidence that comprises the rest of the novel.

Presented with the thesis he demands, Seward still finds difficulty, because, as a representative of science and rationality, he is ill-equipped to understand the alternative world of superstition and the senses, and again he seeks an explanation in the conveniently capacious and ill-defined concept of madness As a doubting Thomas, he is singularly resistant to Van Helsing's theory that Lucy has been rendered Un-Dead through Dracula's attacks: 'Yesterday I was almost willing to accept Van Helsing's monstrous ideas; but now they seem to start out lurid before me as outrages on common sense'. The emotive language, though, indicates that it is not just rationality that is offended but the sense of decency, of what is socially acceptable. Against the need to find '*some* rational explanation of all these mysterious things' he balances the possibility that Van Helsing is mad and has done the mysterious things himself, only to find that 'almost as great a marvel' as the vampire theory (p.204).

Yet Van Helsing, too, comes close to doubting his sanity. Clive Leatherdale, in his book, Dracula: the Novel and the Legend, commenting on the way various characters in the novel come to doubt their sanity, points out that this was not uncommon in nineteenth century literature.[16] I would certainly agree with this, but I would not agree with the suggestion he then makes 'that Stoker seems almost to be saying that madness is nothing to be afraid of'.[17] Leatherdale quotes an exchange between Seward and Van Helsing in support of this view :'"Dr.Van Helsing, are you mad?"..."Would I were!...Madness were easy to bear compared with truth like this"' (p.194). But later there is evidence that the contrary opinion is held. Van Helsing and Mina stop at the foot of Dracula's castle at twilight and are there visited by the vampire

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[16]Guy de Maupassant's short story, 'The Horla' (1887) is a disturbing dramatization of the quandary in which not only the sufferer but the observer is placed when faced with invisible persecution.

[17]Clive Leatherdale, Dracula; the Novel and the Legend (Wellingborough, 1985), p.170.

women. It is this incident that causes him to question his sanity, or at least to fear that others will:

> Let me be accurate in everything, for though you and I have seen some strange things together, you may at the first think that I, Van Helsing, am mad - that the many horrors and the so long strain on nerves has at the last turn [sic] my brain. (p.365)

The stress on accurate reportage recurs throughout this text, frequently being associated with the need to establish the veracity of an individual's experience, as if the ability to record it in detail is proof of sanity. Van Helsing, however, proves his sanity by proving the hypothesis that his vision is not just the result of his memories of Harker's experience 'befooling' (p.366) him, but has substance. Having completed the 'butcher work' (p.371) of driving the stake into the bodies of the three women, he can exclaim: 'I am at least sane. Thank God for that mercy at all events, though the proving it has been dreadful' (p.369). Compared with the greater weight of this instance, the exchange quoted by Leatherdale treats madness as a colloquial hyperbole to stress the awfulness of Lucy's vampirism. The languorous sexuality of the temptation scene and the brutal sexuality of Van Helsing's revenge, however, suggests that sanity for him is equated with potency or virility, or at any rate with the ability to take control of the situation. Furthermore, the evidence of the text itself is of the need to control by imposing order on what seems like chaos. The characters record, collate and compare in an effort to prove that the experience of the senses, contrary to the dictates of rationality, is to be trusted.

Peter Keating puts Dracula in a tradition of literature which sees facts and science as obscuring rather than revealing the truth about life; in fiction of this kind 'True knowledge is attained not by marching doggedly forward with each scientific discovery, but by moving further and further back to a point where the mind is no longer corrupted by modern scientific reasoning'.[18] There is, however, a binary

[18]Peter Keating, The Haunted Study. A Social History of the English Novel 1875-1914 (London, 1989, republished 1991), p.350.

opposition informing this approach that the text of Dracula questions. Scientific fact is not established purely through reasoning, but, particularly in the nineteenth century, on the basis of empiricism. The recording, collating and comparison that leads to the deduction of vampirism at work in the 1890s amounts to the establishment by scientific methods of facts that folklore and superstition had long recognized without feeling the need of proof. Where the problem lies in this case is in the apparent uncovering of facts that contradict customary experience and expectations; what defies belief is the insistence that the dead will not necessarily lie down, and this is as likely to be resisted by the reader as it is by the characters in the novel. Lacking direct sensory experience, then, the reader must needs see what the book has to say as 'real' on a different basis - if indeed it is seen a real at all - and interpret the text as allegorical, poetic, mythic, at any rate symbolic in one way or another. In her volume on fantasy literature, Rosemary Jackson, working on a basis of Todorov's formulation, describes the fantastic mode as confounding 'elements of both the marvellous and the mimetic'. She goes on: 'They [fantastic narratives] assert that what they are telling is real - relying upon all the conventions of realistic fiction to do so - and then they proceed to break that assumption of realism by introducing what - within those terms - is manifestly unreal'.[19] Situated between the marvellous and the mimetic, fantasy borrows 'the extravagance of one and the ordinariness of the other' (p.35). Since fantasy bears a problematic relationship with 'reality', then, it raises questions about the nature of reality and truth which cannot be answered in as straightforward a way as they can be in, say, allegory, where a meaning can be 'read off' from the story. Nor can the ambiguities of fantasy be interpreted in terms of the metaphorical constuctions of poetry, since in the former the vehicle has actually *become* the tenor. As Jackson says: 'the fantastic cannot be placed alongside allegory nor poetry, for it resists both the conceptualizations of the first and the metaphorical structures of the second' (p.41). Fantasy's concern with the unseen and the unsaid, and its dislocation of the 'normal'

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[19]Rosemary Jackson, Fantasy: the Literature of Subversion (London, 1981), p.34.

lead to a characteristic preoccupation with certain themes including insanity. Through the concept of hallucination, insanity offers the possibility of reconciling fantasy with reality by pathologizing the power of the imagination, hence, in Dracula, the frequent references to insanity on the part of characters who are unable to assimilate otherwise experiences that so radically subvert their expectations.

On the other hand, the one character who is, as far as the text is concerned, indubitably mad, is not, after the very first diary entry, accused of suffering from delusions; what particularly interests his doctor is, first, his 'zoophagous' habits and, second, his swings of mood. Like Bersicker, the wolf that escapes from London zoo only to return 'in a sort of penitent mood' to be 'received and petted like a sort of vulpine prodigal son' (p.140), Renfield is seen as a phenomenon of nature, another of the indices of Dracula's whereabouts. The wolf's name, with its connotations of frenzy, and the degree to which he is personified brings him close in status to Renfield, who is represented as animalistic, as is also, of course, Dracula. Underlining the association between the wolf and Dracula is its name. The OED attributes the word 'berserk' to 'A wild Norse warrior, who fought on the battle-field with a frenzied fury known as the "berserker rage"', and Van Helsing refers to such a 'berserker Icelander' in his long disquisition on vampirsm (p.239). The vampirism which is, as Van Helsing points out, part and parcel of the animal kingdom, enters into the human world by means of the fantastic category of being, the 'Un-Dead', but also through a madman's distorted understanding of scriptural teaching. These two characters might seem to stand for opposed ways of thinking, since Dracula represents what can only be understood in terms of ancient beliefs and folkloric values and Renfield represents an object for scientific scrutiny, but the polarity is obscured by a conceptual framework that owes as much to outmoded conventions as it does to the theories of contemporary medical science.

It is partly through the ambiguous figure of the lunatic that Dracula's behaviour is interpreted so as to secure a relevance that cannot be simply dismissed as fantasy. If through the text's rhetoric vampiric behaviour is both naturalized (blood is their

'pabulum') and pathologized (they are parasites who spread disease), Dracula's relationship with Renfield extends still further the pathological implications of his behaviour. Their shared obsession with blood and with the colonizing of lives which is categorized as mania on the part of Renfield, extends the label of madness, and its connotations of immorality, to Dracula also. But the comparison works both ways, and if the taint of madness paradoxically reduces the vampire to a kind of normality, so the symbiotic relationship with Dracula extends the range of implications contained in the idea of insanity. When he describes his last encounter with the vampire, Renfield shows a peculiar self-awareness that amounts almost to double identity. Drawing on the conventional attributes of the mad, he says: 'I had heard that madmen have unnatural strength; and as I knew I was a madman - at times anyhow - I resolved to use my power' (p.280). Renfield's strength is nothing, however, compared with Dracula's greater psychic and, it turns out, physical power and he is literally smashed up. Although some moral remnants are salvaged that procure him an undeniable humanity and allow him to be the narrator of the last episode in his own story, he is seen, finally, as the weakness in the defences surrounding Mina, the representative of virtue.

But if madness seems to be an endemic degeneracy through which foreign influences of a far more dangerous degeneracy can attack civilized society, there is a range of comparisons that still further undermines the relative security that is apparently offered by confinement in a lunatic asylum, for not all insanity is so confined. By allowing most of the characters to doubt their sanity at one time or another and by hinting at an affinity between the lunatic and his doctor, the novel questions the possibility of any easy distinction between sanity and madness, just as it blurs the boundaries between science and superstition, and the final disposal of both Dracula and Renfield is no sure guarantee that the dangers they represent will not return. Dracula is disposed of satisfactorily on the level of explicit action, thus removing the threat to the social and moral order, but the implications of the earlier

responses of the other characters and the mixed blood of Mina's child allow for doubts as to whether the threat is entirely dispelled.

CONCLUSION

As the anonymous writer of the article in The Spectator mentioned in chapter 5 noted, madness offers great possibilities to the sensation novelist, permitting excesses of behaviour that were nevertheless within the bounds of credibility. The domestication of the mad (in Andrew Scull's phrase) in the nineteenth century, the tendency to incorporate them into the familial community that was the focus of Victorian values, rather than, as in the eighteenth century, to estrange them from human society, provided a clinical counterpart to the sensation writers' exposure of the shocking secrets in the bourgeois home. Similarly the gothic writer's interest in the irrational, the strange and the frightening could easily be accommodated within the ample province of lunacy.

What unites these novels is an avoidance of the examination of the psychological phenomenon of madness by direct internal analysis. There is no example here of an unambiguously mad person given narratorial privileges or made the subject of detailed internal analysis and this, it seems to me, is linked to the prevalent attitude in Victorian society that refused to recognize the mad as fully autonomous beings whose voices were worth listening to. Anthony Trollope's approach in He Knew He Was Right and Kept in the Dark, painstakingly charting the psychological manoeuvres by which apparently normal people gradually work themselves into extreme positions, including that of insanity, is unusual in this period and is not the one that is adopted in these texts, but that is not to imply that they lack psychological awareness or ignore the tortuous complexity of mental processes.

Most of these texts start from a position which clearly distinguishes madness and sanity, but close reading reveals greater ambiguity. Through the exploitation of the literary devices available to fictional writers, and in particular through the exploration of the possibilities of madness as a metaphor, the novels I have examined do suggest something about what it means to go mad. In Jane Eyre, a text where the first-person narration encourages the most intense analysis of the workings of the

mind, we have Jane's predicaments described in terms of madness on the metaphorical level. But because of the structural and imagistic parallels, we can also, I have argued, interpret this as comparable with 'real' madness. She does not, of course, ever officially classify as insane, but the mental tortures she endures allow us to reassess the enigmatic figure of Bertha Rochester, and to take a more sympathetic attitude to her literal madness than the text would otherwise seem to allow. Similarly The Rose and the Key, where the patterning is given an extra twist, presents a daughter being 'treated' for her mother's undeclared insanity and the psychological probing fluctuates between the two of them, drawing attention to the importance of heredity. One consequence of these minglings of identities is a tendency to blur the boundary between sanity and madness, and this tendency is given firmer direction in the even more ambiguous situation in Lady Audley's Secret. In this novel 'madness' is a word that is handled so freely that it becomes difficult to determine who, if anyone, is actually mad, or, indeed, who is sane. Thus the obsessional behaviour which the novel explores is represented as behaviour that typically wavers between sanity and madness.

The instability or even the existence of such a boundary throws into agonizing relief the policy of confi. g in special institutions those certified as mad. Whatever the actual state of affairs, for writers of both sensation and gothic genres the asylum building, as a large and obvious symbol of confinement, as a prison to which it was easy to be consigned but from which it was extremely difficult to escape, as a 'total' institution where the norms of society at large were abrogated in favour of the crazy ways of the keepers and the kept, is a potent motif. It is, above all, the horror of wrongful confinement that fascinates several of the authors discussed in this thesis. Such is the theme of The Woman in White, Hard Cash and The Rose and the Key. Lady Audley's Secret, again takes up an ambiguous position. Although there are, within this general theme, huge differences in treatment, veering from the carefully documented work of Reade to the cavalier handling of procedural questions by Mary Braddon, the emphasis falls on the arbitrary nature of such confinement which seems a matter of convenience and self-interest rather disinterested care of the patient.

There are further ramifications to the question of wrongful confinement when it is juxtaposed with the equally important issue of the relationship between morality and madness. At a time when the problem of insanity was leaving the philosophical realms of theoretical speculation and entering the medico-scientific arena of empirical investigation, it dragged in its wake a concern for questions of morality that are only dubiously related to medicine. Despite the manifold problems of justifying the inclusion of insanity as an ailment subject to the traditional concerns of medicine in diagnosis, prognosis and therapeutics, madness did, in the course of the century, become reclassified as mental illness. By fostering their professional interests, therefore, nineteenth century doctors found themselves in the position of adjudicating behaviour and attitudes in the name of symptomatology. Quite apart from the *frisson* of madness then, the access it allows to a world of mysterious imaginings, the link between madness and morality was a fruitful area for the writer of fiction, given the novel's traditional didacticism. The concept of moral insanity, even if it is not identified by name, is at the heart of the discussions of madness in Jane Eyre and The Rose and the Key; nor is it entirely absent from Lady Audley's Secret, where it merges into the concept of puerperal insanity. It is noticeable that in all these texts it is women who are accused of madness, and in The Woman in White it is women who are subjected to, in effect, moral treatment. Where the madness of men is represented it follows a different pattern, monomania in one guise or another being the dominant category. Obsessional behaviour thus plays a significant role in Barnaby Rudge, and Dracula. Both Walter Hartright and Robert Audley arouse suspicions of monomania or suspect it in themselves, whilst Alfred Hardie's wrongful confinement is apparently justified by the actually unjust accusation of such insanity.

Whatever the particular type of madness, though, it is striking that the impulse towards closure at the end of the novels, with one exception, necessitates the removal of madness from society. This is achieved not simply through the confinement of the lunatic asylum, but also eventually through death. Only in the cases of Laura Fairlie and Captain Dodds is recovery recognized and for both these characters madness has

been an accident of the plot rather than a given at the outset of the narrative. The exception is provided by Barnaby Rudge, whose madness is generically different from the other instances, except possibly Anne Catherick. Even Barnaby, a re-formed character, is exiled to a secluded existence in the country and thus effectively removed from society. Dickens is explicit about the connection between madness and the threat to social control, using Barnaby as a paradigm for the dangerous impulses lurking in the populace that an unscrupulous leadership can exploit with catastrophic consequences. Although the danger seems to be averted in the restitution of law and order at the end of the book, Barnaby's continued existence is evidence of a less confident stance. Similarly, the apparent deliverance of bourgeois society from the predatory attentions of Dracula is subtly undermined by the subtextual indications of the threats to social and moral order lying beneath the surface of civilized life. Mina's child has, after all, inherited some of Dracula's blood. Because of the way the madness has leaked into all these texts, although the most obvious threats have been obliterated in the endings, there is an avoidance of real closure, a nervous awareness that complete order is an unobtainable ideal. And in the blurring of generic categories, the refusal to deny even the most outrageous fantasy an element of realism, can be seen the questioning of traditional boundaries that was to be characteristic of modernism. For writers in the twentieth century, madness became all too obviously part of the 'civilized' world.

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