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Documents in Madness: Mental Disability and Affective Play in Twentieth Century Irish and Caribbean Literatures

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Documents in Madness: Mental Disability and Affective Play in Twentieth Century Irish and Caribbean Literatures

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in

Literature

by

Jennifer Anne Marchisotto

Committee in charge:

>Professor Michael Davidson, Chair
>Professor Kimberly Devlin
>Professor Brian Goldfarb
>Professor Margaret Loose
>Professor Daniel Vitkus
>Professor Winifred Woodhull

2019

The Dissertation of Jennifer Marchisotto is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

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Chair

University of California San Diego

2019

iii

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to Paul, Linda, and Amy Marchisotto.

EPIGRAPH

Madness and non-madness, reason and unreason are confusedly implicated in each other, inseparable as they do not yet exist, and existing for each other, in relation to each other, in the exchange that separates them.

Michel Foucault, *History of Madness*

Scriveners learn several mortal tongues as children, before they begin learning the gods' language. This helps them understand the flexibility of language and of the mind itself, for there are many concepts that exist in some languages that cannot even be approximated in others. This is how the gods' tongue works; it allows the conceptualization of the impossible. And this is why the best scriveners can never be trusted.

N. K. Jemisin, *The Hundred Thousand Kingdoms*

Life doesn't make narrative sense.

Josh Groban, *Crazy-Ex Girlfriend*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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VITA

EDUCATION

2019	Ph.D. in Literatures in English, University of California San Diego
2016	C.Phil. in Literatures in English, University of California San Diego
2013	M.A. in English, California State University Fullerton (including Professional Certificate in Teaching and Writing)
2009	B.A. in Comparative Literature, University of California Los Angeles (minors in French and Italian)

RESEARCH

DISSERTATION:
"Documents in Madness: Mental Disability and Affective Play in Twentieth Century Irish and Caribbean Literatures"
Doctoral Committee: Michael Davidson (chair), Margaret Loose, Winifred Woodhull, Daniel Vitkus, Kimberly Devlin (English, UC Riverside), and Brian Goldfarb (Communication)

RESEARCH INTERESTS:
British and Irish Modernism; Twentieth Century Anglo-Caribbean Literature; Mad Studies; Disability Studies; Trauma Theory; Women and Mental Disability; Disability Pedagogy.

PUBLICATIONS

"Playing Nothing: Games and Cognitive Difference in *Murphy*." *Journal of Literary and Cultural Disability Studies*, vol. 13, no. 2, 2019. DOI: 10.3828/JLCDS.2018.44.

"I Have Been Knotted; I Have Been Torn Apart." *DASH Literary Journal*, vol. 6, pp. 87-89, 2013.

REVIEWS:
Review of *Surreal Beckett: Samuel Beckett, James Joyce, and Surrealism*, by Alan Warren Friedman. *James Joyce Quarterly*, vol. 55, no. 3-4.

MANUSCRIPTS IN PREPARATION:
"The Anti-Erasure of Lucia Joyce: Literary Adjacent Women and the Resignification of Mad Histories," solicited for *Joyce Writing Disability*. Ed. Jeremy Colangelo.

AWARDS

2018-2019	UC President's Dissertation-Year Fellowship
2018-2019	UCSD Literature Department Dissertation-Year Fellowship (Declined)
2014	International James Joyce Foundation Graduate Student Scholarship
2013	CSUF Graduate Excellence Award

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

UC SAN DIEGO
      LITERATURE DEPARTMENT:
      Summer 17-Spring 18
      LTEN 22: Intro to the Literature of the British Isles: Pre-1660 (Teaching
          Assistant)
      LTEN 23: Intro to the Literature of the British Isles: 1660-1832 (Teaching
          Assistant)
      LTEN 23: Intro to the Literature of the British Isles: 1832-Present (Teaching
          Assistant)
      LTEN 149: Topics in English Language Literature: "There's No Place Like
          Home": Aesthetic Responses to Traumas in 20th Century Anglophone
          Literature (Instructor of Record)

      MUIR COLLEGE WRITING PROGRAM:
      Fall 13-Spring 18
      MCWP 40: Critical Writing (Teaching Assistant)
          Course Topics: Wilderness; Water; Perspectives on Climate Change
      MCWP 50: Critical Writing (Teaching Assistant; Instructor of Record)
          Course Topics Developed: Disability and Popular Culture; Grimm
          Retellings: Fairy Tales and Adaptation; Affect and the Making of Modern
          Monsters
      Department Writing Tutor

      TRITON EDGE PROGRAM:
      Summer 15
      EDS 21: Writing and Learning (Teaching Assistant)

CSU FULLERTON
      ENGLISH DEPARTMENT:
      Fall 11-Spring 13
      English 101: Beginning College Writing (Teaching Associate; Instructor of
          Record)
      English 342: Explorations of Literature: *Harry Potter* (Instructional Assistant)
      English 99: Developmental Writing (Instructional Assistant)
      Writing Center Tutor

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Documents in Madness: Mental Disability and Affective Play in Twentieth Century Irish

and Caribbean Literatures

by

Jennifer Anne Marchisotto

Doctor of Philosophy in Literature

University of California San Diego, 2019

Professor Michael Davidson, Chair

This dissertation takes up questions of access at the level of language itself, as
well as in the context of cultural institutions in emerging global communities. Using the
texts of James Joyce, Samuel Beckett, and Shani Mootoo, I argue experimental narrative
techniques develop new understandings of mental disability by pushing against the limits
of language, particularly in relation to mentally disabled women. The novels and plays
examined function as creative objects that refigure the reader's relationship to mental
disability through embodied reading practices. In resisting previous tendencies to read
literary representations of mental disability as metaphor, I offer an alternative framework
for understanding mental disability as an ongoing interactive process between bodies.
Drawing on work from disability studies, critical gender studies, and trauma theory, I call

for approaches to mental disability in literature that understand reading as an interactive process *between* reader and text, proposing a methodology for understanding how embodied reading practices inspire new understandings of mental disability and trauma in emerging global communities. In appreciating mental disability as an ongoing interactive process between bodies, readers can better attend to the nuanced ways in which complex embodiment calls for innovative modes of storytelling that challenge histories of representation.

INTRODUCTION

"Atoms as they Fall upon the Mind": Mental Disability and Twentieth Century Aesthetics

In "Modern Fiction," Virginia Woolf writes, "[Modern authors] attempt to come closer to life, and to preserve more sincerely and exactly what interests and moves them, even if to do so they must discard most of the conventions which are commonly observed by the novelist" (150). Woolf, who writes extensively in her fiction and nonfiction about the experience of illness and disability, is marking a shift in style characteristic of the early twentieth century. Woolf goes on to write, "Let us record the atoms as they fall upon the mind in the order in which they fall, let us trace the pattern, however disconnected and incoherent in appearance, which each sight or incident scores upon the consciousness" (150). While Woolf is not speaking directly about mental disability, she demonstrates an investment in the variabilities of consciousness, and how those variabilities influence experiences of the world.

Woolf, along with other modernist writers, became increasingly interested in the interdependent relationship between body and mind. However, disability inhabits a complicated position in modernist literature due to the contemporary interest in eugenics. Maren Linett claims, "Modernism's emphasis on making it new implies a desire to jettison elements associated with the past—and in the eugenics period, disabled people were firmly linked to the evolutionary past" ("Cripping Modernism" 2). Many modernist authors, including Woolf, drew on the language of eugenics when describing modernist

aesthetics.[1] However, even with the pervasiveness of eugenicist principles, modernist texts were deeply preoccupied with contemplating the future of disabled bodies and minds. When Woolf calls for authors to "record the atoms as they fall upon the mind" she emphasizes the importance of individual experience to contemporary writing. Perhaps unsurprisingly, this investment in the body mind connection led many modernist authors to explore experiences of cognitive difference. As Linett points out, "Given the strong links between modernism and psychology and the history of readings of literary madness that either accept the medical model or dematerialize madness so that it stands for feminist resistance, disability studies approaches to madness in modernism [are] particularly valuable" (*Bodies* 7). Disability studies brings an attention to the socio-political experience of mental disability.

　　While modernism is traditionally dated as beginning in the very late nineteenth century and lasting through the end of World War II, I analyze the ways modernist aesthetics, and in particular questions about individual consciousness, extend to post-colonial writings from the later twentieth century. In extending my analysis through the twentieth century, I show how this artistic preoccupation extends beyond the modernist period as it is traditionally conceived. Charles Pollard has argued that "Anglo-American postcolonial theory has failed to see the implicit modernism in Caribbean literature because it has relied too readily on a faulty historical parallel (i.e. that modernism is to postmodernism as colonialism is to postcolonialism)" (15). In including an analysis of

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[1] For further discussion of Woolf's complicated place within disability studies see Matt Franks, "Crip/Queer Aesthetics in the Great War," and Louise Hornby, "Downwrong: The Pose of Tiredness."

how mental disability appears in post-colonial Caribbean writing, I show how representation is further complicated by what Liam Kruger identifies as "situations of extreme precarity" (133). "Situations of extreme precarity" connect to Tobin Siebers' concept of *complex embodiment*. Both scholars identify situations where different marginal identities overlap, making the individual vulnerable to multiple normative social and political powers at once, further complicating issues of ethical representation through the multifaceted ways these intersections affect lived experience.

This dissertation takes up questions of access at the level of language itself, as well as in the context of cultural institutions in emerging global communities. Using the texts of James Joyce, Samuel Beckett, and Shani Mootoo, I argue that experimental narrative techniques develop new understandings of mental disability by pushing against the limits of language, particularly in relation to mentally disabled women. The novels and plays examined function as creative objects that refigure the reader's relationship to mental disability through embodied reading practices. In resisting previous tendencies to read literary representations of mental disability as metaphor, I offer an alternative framework for understanding mental disability as an ongoing interactive process between bodies. Drawing on work from disability studies, affect theory, critical gender studies, and trauma theory, I call for approaches to mental disability in literature that understand reading as an interactive process *between* reader and text, proposing a methodology for understanding how embodied reading practices and affective registers of texts inspire new understandings of mental disability and trauma in emerging global communities. In appreciating mental disability as an ongoing interactive process between bodies, readers

can better attend to the nuanced ways in which complex embodiment calls for innovative modes of storytelling that challenge histories of representation.

Mad Studies and Disability Studies

Representations of mental disability appear throughout history, but it is only recently that these representations have been given concerted critical evaluation. in all areas of culture. In her introduction to *Mad at School* (2011), Margaret Price identifies some of the most common stereotypes associated with mental disability, many of which are associated with violence and erratic or irrational behavior (1). In 1985, Elaine Showalter declared mental disability "the female malady," with two main representations: "These dual images of female insanity—madness as one of the wrongs of woman; madness as the essential feminine nature unveiling itself before scientific male rationality" claiming these examples "suggest the two ways that the relationship between women and madness has been perceived" (3). These stereotypical representations have shaped cultural understandings of mental disability. In the early twentieth century, dramatic social upheavals caused by new technologies and the world wars, and the birth of psychoanalysis, colored much creative writing of the period.[2] Michael Davidson points out, "Although we tend to think of literary modernism as a revolution of the material word, it is less often noted that it is underwritten by the material body" (74). Davidson calls attention to modernists' investment in both mental and physical subjective

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[2] Michael Davidson notes "A standard reading of [the] emphasis on disease and disability in modernism would see it as the result of late nineteenth-century developments in medical science, evolutionary biology, and psychology" (75). While these are by no means the only causes of modernists' investment in disability, they broadly reshaped the socio-political context in which these authors were writing.

experiences. Authors like Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, among others deeply probed the intersections of mental and physical experience. However, despite this investment in body *and* mind, because of disability studies' contentious relationship to mental disability, investigations into representations of mental disability (through a disability studies framework) have only begun to appear.[3]

Mad studies' contested position under the umbrella of disability studies has impeded the sub-field's development. However, in the last decade, journals like *Disability Studies Quarterly*, and *Journal of Literary and Cultural Disability Studies*, among others have published an increasing number of articles on mental disability, and texts like Price's *Mad at School* (2011) and the collection *Literatures of Madness* (2018) have garnered increasing attention. Elizabeth Brewer argues the rift between mad studies and disability studies is caused in no small part by a conflict of identification: "A deep rift between the approaches exists because many psychiatric survivors do not identify as being disabled, and likewise, many disabled people do not identify as psychiatric survivors. More than a problem of recognition, members of both communities sometimes actively resist the other identity" (15). The active resistance identified by Brewer precipitates divergent mindsets between physically and mentally disabled individuals, undermining efforts to synthesize analysis of each field. These complexities of identification have led to divergent ideologies deeply embedded in disability studies: "While disability studies and mad studies scholarship frequently reference both

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[3] For texts dedicated to disability in modernism see Rebecca Sanchez *Deafening Modernism* (2015), Maren Tova Linett, *Bodies of Modernism* (2017), and Michael Davidson, *Invalid Modernism* (2019).

experiences seamlessly and without comment, both fields also include word choice and comparative claims that actively separate the communities" (Brewer 26). Contemporary work in mad studies recognizes this tension, finding new avenues of scholarship that help navigate the relationship between mad and disabled identities. In the following chapters, I analyze the ways authors use style to manipulate the relationship between reader and text, allowing audiences to play with different valences of identification while understanding the material effects of identifying as mentally disabled.

Literature has long invoked disability, both physical and mental, for metaphoric purposes. I argue that by looking at the way authors use affect to create bodily experiences for the reader, we can better understand the socio-political experience of mental disability. While this focus on material experience is not new to disability studies overall, in focusing on how mental disability affects subjective experience I claim literature can provide a space of access through which readers can engage with mental disability beyond metaphoric capacities. Disability has long been invoked for its metaphoric power in literature. David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder have famously dubbed the tendency *narrative prosthesis*. They argue, "[disability] in literary discourse is primarily twofold: disability pervades literary narrative, first, as a stock feature of characterization and, second, as an opportunistic metaphorical device" (47). Mitchell and Snyder point to the tendencies of authors to either use disability to represent a moral failing (for example Captain Ahab of *Moby Dick* or the titular *Richard III*), or use it as a convenient plot point to create added interest for the audience (for example, *The Steadfast Tin Soldier*). Mitchell and Snyder see this pattern throughout literary history, claiming

"while stories rely upon the potency of disability as a symbolic figure, they rarely take up disability as an experience of social or political dimensions" (48). Rather than engaging the material experience of disability, texts more often use disability to represent something else, contributing to longstanding stereotypes of disability.

Mitchell and Snyder are primarily concerned with the history of physical disability; however, mental disabilities have been similarly evoked for metaphorical purposes. Oftentimes madness comes to represent oppressive socio-political forces (for example patriarchy or heteronormativity) or it is read as a form of resistance to those forces. Using the figure of Bertha Mason from *Jane Eyre* as a case study, and citing readings by Gilbert and Gubar and Gayatri Spivak, Julia Miele Rodas et al. point out, "The 'madness' of Bertha…has most frequently been seen as standing in for some other veiled or unspeakable condition" (3). Moreover, Rodas et al. explain, "even fictional interpretations of [*Jane Eyre*], like Jean Rhys's groundbreaking *Wide Sargasso Sea*, seem to see Bertha's disability as representing something else; in this instance, her 'madness' is reconstructed as the strangulating mask of sexist and imperialist power imposed by an insecure and jealous husband, rather than as an intrinsic quality of Bertha's embodied experience" (Rodas et al. 3). I will discuss Jean Rhys' novel at length in chapter three; however, this pattern of representation is not unique. Both critical and creative readings of Bertha's mental disability understand her disability, in Mitchell and Snyder's terms, as an "opportunistic metaphor."

While Rodas et al.'s reading of Bertha Mason is limited to a single character, metaphoric uses of mental disability extend beyond any particular individual or character,

7

building associations between mental disability and other "unspeakable conditions,"

while producing false understandings of the disabilities themselves. Catherine

Prendergast has also addressed the metaphoric use of mental disability, arguing post-

modern writers have contributed to a false understanding of schizophrenia by using it to

characterize late twentieth-century culture. Prendergast claims "Postmodern theory owes

a great debt to schizophrenics…Without schizophrenics, postmodernity would struggle to

limn its boundaries, for the schizophrenic in postmodern theory marks the point of

departure from the modern" ("The Unexceptional Schizophrenic" 55). Prendergast admits

that using the figure of the schizophrenic to characterize the post-modern has helped

disability studies; however, the same moves that have furthered disability studies overall

have led to incorrect assumptions about schizophrenia as an identity:

> Postmodern theory has been indispensable to disability studies because it
> has allowed not only for a challenge to normativity, but also for the
> destabilizing of narratives of national progress, social order, and identity
> (Corker and Shakespeare). However crucial texts of postmodern theory
> have only achieved these destabilizations by holding one identity stable:
> that of the schizophrenic. (55)

In using schizophrenia to characterize postmodernism, theorists implicitly rely on a

definition of schizophrenia as inherently chaotic and abnormal. Schizophrenic individuals

have become a casualty of postmodern moves to challenge normative cultural

expectations. Because schizophrenia is defined by hearing multiple voices or acting

through multiple identities, the individual is used to represent the postmodern decentered,

plural subject position. In figuring schizophrenics as definitively instable, theorists like

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, Jean Baudrillard, and others assume and disseminate

knowledge of a diagnosis without situating that diagnosis as part of an individual socio-

political experience. Prendergast argues, "Postmodern theory values schizophrenics precisely because it imagines them insulated from civic life," functioning as narrative prosthesis (57). However, beyond the theory itself, this metaphoric use of schizophrenia has led individuals to "self-identify as schizophrenic without having to embrace the stigma associated with the term nor undersign any medicalized investment…claim[ing] the right to unexceptional instability, which is not something postmodern theory has readily granted them" (57). Schizophrenia becomes a marker of the postmodern, embraced as progressive, yet uninterrogated as a material experience of mental disability.

The use of schizophrenia in postmodern theory is a large-scale example of the how mental disability is invoked metaphorically, and how those invocations precipitate misunderstandings that further marginalize disabled individuals. Mental disabilities in particular, because they are nonvisible, are easily appropriated and used to describe experiences or phenomena not tied to any particular body.[4] As a way of countering this trend, Elizabeth Donaldson argues we must focus more on mental disability as a biological experience. She claims, "Critical approaches which view mental illness as symbolic or as primarily socially constructed often seem to deny the material conditions of the body. Corporealization recognizes a more complex, tangled relationship between the somatic and the semiotic" (28). By considering mental disabilities with an emphasis on their physiological manifestations, collectively we can move away from

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[4] The term *nonvisible disability* or *invisible disability* are used to describe disabilities without identifiable visual markers. Common examples of this are mental disabilities and many chronic illnesses. For further analysis of nonvisible disabilities and nonvisibly disabled individuals' position within disabled communities see Ellen Samuels, "My Body, My Closet."

metaphorizing and better consider mental disabilities as individual socio-political experiences.

In the following chapters, I analyze texts that use fiction to create embodied reading experiences, asking readers to engage with mental disability as a process of exchange between reader and text, communicating experience through language as well as practice. Yet, these embodied reading practices are sustained through inarticulate exchange. These texts help support affective maps, a concept developed by Jonathan Flatley. Affective maps situate readers within, and orient them towards, social histories of mental disability, an effect I explain in more depth later on. I argue for a consideration of experience alongside the texts themselves as a method of understanding mental disability by emphasizing the material ways the language affect audiences. In shifting the focus of readerly experience from the literal text to its affective registers, we can better understand how the narrative extends beyond the page to encompass the material, socio-political experience of mental disability. The stylistic choices made by Joyce, Beckett, and Mootoo encourage readers to confront the limits of language, and find meaning in the gaps left by direct knowledge. However, while these choices precipitate embodied responses in readers, they often lead to unknown, inarticulate results.

<div align="center">(Un)Diagnosing the Bodymind</div>

The *bodymind*, a term originating in western trauma studies and developed by Margaret Price in relationship to feminist disability studies, recognizes the mutually constitutive relationship between the body (the physical) and the mind (the non-physical). In order to follow Donaldson's call to consider mental disability as a biological

experience, we must first address the mind's role in the biological. As a term, *bodymind* encompasses both physical and non-physical elements of experience: "According to this approach, because mental and physical processes not only affect each other but also give rise to each other—that is, because they tend to act as one, even though they are conventionally understood as two—it makes more sense to refer to them together, in a single term" (Price, "Bodymind" 269). Price highlights the tie between the physical and non-physical, pointing out that a consideration of the biological experience must include mental experience.

This is particularly challenging in the context of mental disabilities because of the ways that diagnosis, and other attempts at naming or defining cognitive difference, have shaped cultural perceptions of madness. The limits of diagnosis have long been a subject of critique in disability studies. Eli Clare writes, "Simply put, diagnosis wields immense power. It can provide us access to vital medical technology or shame us, reveal a path toward less pain or get us locked up. It opens doors and slams them shut" (41). While diagnosis can provide access to care, it is often accompanied by assumptions that do more harm than good. Diagnosis is born out of efforts to understand difference. However, in practice it often becomes a tool of oppression contributing to the marginalization of mentally disabled individuals. Clare continues: "All too often diagnosis is poorly conceived or flagrantly oppressive. It is brandished as authority, our body-minds bent to match diagnostic criteria rather than vice versa. Diagnosis can become a cover for what health care providers don't understand; become more important than our messy visceral selves; become the totality of who we are" (42). In its ideal form, diagnosis *would* help to

reliably and accurately understand illness and disability. However, this is unfortunately rarely the case. I do not want to imply that diagnosis is *never* helpful. As Clare acknowledges, within current healthcare systems it is often necessary to provide evidence of diagnosis in order to receive care. Diagnosis is not inherently oppressive. Rather, it becomes oppressive through the administration of diagnosis as an inflexible, inaccurate, or inadequate method of labelling and control, a barrier to necessary care.

Lennard Davis has similarly questioned diagnosis, particularly its claim to certainty. Davis qualifies his argument claiming, "I'm not [questioning diagnosis] to question whether it is possible to diagnose, nor am I questioning the often helpful and therapeutic outcome of diagnoses. What I am wondering about is the aura of faith that accompanies the process of diagnosis" (82). Diagnosis is not in fact absolute or essentialist knowledge, rather it is a pretention to that knowledge. Diagnosis functions as an attempt to identify and define conditions not yet understood. However, in establishing a standard diagnosis, one establishes a definition that is then taken as fact. The "aura of faith" Davis identifies is the cultural acceptance of a purported truth tied to a diagnosis that then accompanies future uses of the term. While diagnosis is meant to help, and it sometimes does, it also carries potentially damaging associations that are given authority through medical institutions.

The relationship between mental disabilities and diagnosis is particularly problematic due to the way diagnostic criteria are recorded. *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM), currently in its fifth edition, is a reference volume published by the American Psychiatric Association. It compiles the standard

diagnostic criteria used by mental health care professionals. However, throughout its history, the DSM (and the most recent edition, the DSM-V in particular) has been critiqued from both within and outside of the psychiatric community for its broad guidelines regarding diagnosis.[5] Margaret Price ties many assumptions about mental disability directly to diagnostic criteria found in the DSM: " It's no coincidence that anecdotal stories about crazy people have proliferated along with the number of diagnoses in DSM, *for a diagnosis is in essence a story* [my emphasis]—*especially* in DSM, which relies mainly upon descriptive criteria" (3). In identifying diagnoses as stories, Price emphasizes the fictive nature of the practice. Diagnosis requires the interpretation of symptoms, the organization of individually identifiable symptoms underneath the umbrella of a diagnosis that offers an explanation for why they appear together. Because the DSM uses descriptive criteria, as opposed to testing or scientific data, diagnosis is always already a process of subjective interpretation, dependent on the

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[5] Catherine Prendergast points out, "The [American Psychiatric Association]'s urtext has been viewed by many as an illness-constructing document of incredible rhetorical power" ("Rhetorics" 48). Citing scholars such as Berkenkotter and Ravotas, Sarbin, and McCarthy and Gerring, Prendergast summarizes view points within disability studies which see the DSM as "the psychiatric profession's main vehicle for maintaining dominance" (48). Members of the medical community have also openly criticized the DSM. Most recently, Allen Frances, a certified psychiatrist who led the team responsible for developing the DSM-IV, has written extensive critiques of the fifth edition. Many of his concerns stem from the DSM-V's broader guidelines for diagnosis. Frances believes the new diagnostic standards will cause patients to be over diagnosed and consequently pharmaceuticals would be over prescribed. Frances has published several of his critiques in *The Huffington Post*, and wrote the book *Saving Normal: An Insider's Revolt against Out-of-Control Psychiatric Diagnosis, DSM-5, Big Pharma, and the Medicalization of Ordinary Life*.

administrator's perceptions as to the patient's behavior. Diagnosis relies on the judgment of one individual by another.

While all diagnoses are dependent on judgment in some way, mentally disabled individuals are particularly vulnerable to socio-political prejudices attached to psychiatric diagnosis. Davis claims, "In the case of psychiatric disorders, particularly affective disorders, there is a complex cultural and historical scenario…that has in effect formed and preselected the categories available for diagnosis, positioned the diagnostician and the patient within an inevitable power relation, and raised basic problems around the activity of diagnosis itself" (83). The power dynamic between diagnostician and patient makes the latter susceptible to the perceptions of the former, and ultimately exposed to the socio-political assumptions that automatically accompany the diagnosis given. And, while diagnoses may be subject to change, illnesses fluctuating in their manifestations and effects over time, diagnosis itself assumes certainty, undermining its own ability to change. Theoretically, any new diagnosis would counter previous diagnoses through a new claim to certainty: "[Diagnosis] has to willfully suppress the diachronicity of its own coming into being, because such history might reveal contingency, chance, convention, and so on. By definition, the diagnostic criteria of the moment are always right, and previous criteria are almost always wrong" (Davis 90). While in practice diagnoses can often overlap, the principle behind diagnosis as an act of knowing interferes with its ability to recognize multiple disabilities simultaneously. Diagnosis claims certainty over an identity in a moment, theoretically explaining both the individual's past and future experiences.

Although diagnosis is rooted in an effort to care, its claim to certainty and the power dynamics accompanying its administration often interfere with effective treatment. In the context of mental disability in particular, diagnosis as a singular label is inherently at odds with the varying and unknown ways in which madness manifests. Margaret Price sees evidence of this double bind in the DSM itself:

> I argue that, while remaining skeptical of the motivations that have brought the enormous DSM into being, we might also take this proliferation of stories [of different mental disabilities] as evidence of two important truths about disorderly minds. First, such minds show up all the time, in obvious and not-so-obvious ways; and second, recognizing their appearance is not a yes-no proposition, but rather a confusing and contextually dependent process that calls into question what we mean by the "normal" mind. (*Mad* 3-4)

Price sees the overwhelming number of diagnoses included in the DSM as evidence of its own fallibility, its effort to discretely identify mental disabilities showing just how limited we are in doing so. In Prices' description, "disorderly minds" are unexceptional, appearing in society and throughout history in both blatant and subtle ways. It is the labels placed on them through diagnosis that mark them as exceptional, deviating from the assumed norm. The variety of diagnoses, but more importantly the variety of minds themselves, invites a disability studies framework. As Price points out, "That realization, that minds are best understood in terms of variety and difference rather than deviations from an imagined norm, is aligned with a theoretical and activist stance called disability studies" (4). In prioritizing understanding the "variety and difference" of minds over understanding each diagnosis in its singularity, disability studies encourages an appreciation of mental disabilities as contextually dependent manifestations of difference.

Diagnosis is not always (and does not have to be) structured as a process by which one individual has power over the other. Alternatively, diagnostic practices that educate patients and allow them more control over their treatment would help dismantle the hierarchy between practitioner and patient.[6] Davis claims, "To be ethical in the broadest sense of the term, the encounter must constitute a dialectic between [the patient's history as well as their current interactions with the practitioner], must be based on mutually involved subjects interacting with each other in a time-space continuum" (91). The practitioner and patient must work together to come to a diagnosis. In this context diagnosis becomes a process of exchange rather than administration. However, because such exchanges are unique, it is difficult to standardize a medical practice. The DSM professes itself to be "intended to facilitate an objective assessment of symptom presentations in a variety of clinical settings—inpatient, outpatient, partial hospital, consultation-liaison, clinical, private practice and primary care" ("About *DSM-5*"). The emphasis on "objective" directly conflicts with understandings of mental disability rooted in their individual variability. To develop an "objective" definition of a mental disability

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[6] The mental health users' movement is a contemporary political movement seeking to re-empower mental health patients. Some countries have begun to implement policies calling for increased participation of the general public in the organization of mental health services. These policies would give patients more autonomy when choosing treatment plans, and aid in the deinstitutionalization of mental health. In particular, psychoanalytic practice in Argentina has shifted its relationship to diagnostic practice and the pharmacological industry. Psychoanalysts treat patients based primarily on "the suffering caused by the social situation" as opposed to any biological measurement of the illness (Lakoff "Anxieties"). For further discussion see Andrew Lakoff "The Anxiety of Globalization" and *Pharmaceutical* Reason, Juan Eduardo Bonnin, "Treating without Diagnosis," Ardila-Gomez et al. "The Mental Health Users' Movement in Argentina from the Perspective of Latin American Collective Health," and *Ruined Lives*, a report from Mental Disability Rights International and the Center for Legal and Social Studies.

assumes that all occurrences of that disability are objectively the same. However, as Davis, Price, and others note, mental disabilities, even ones that present in similar ways, cannot be absolutely homogenized under a singular label.

<div align="center">The Inarticulate and New Kinds of Listening</div>

If mental disabilities inherently undermine current diagnostic practices, how might we develop alternative methods of understanding cognitive difference? The literature analyzed in this dissertation provides models for engaging with mental disability beyond the scope of a specific diagnosis. The characters I focus on are not given specific diagnoses, but rather present as, to borrow Price's terms, obvious and not-so-obvious disorderly minds. However, in moving the focus away from diagnosis, and the assumed certainty that accompanies diagnostic language, the authors embrace more fluid understandings of mental disability, ones that deny concise, even articulate, description. To navigate the inarticulate elements of mental disability alongside the material socio-political experience of living with a mental disability, I introduce discourses of trauma and affect theory, both of which decidedly deal with immaterial aspects of experience.

I argue understandings of mental disability can develop out of the integration of inarticulate experience alongside material socio-political experiences. In situating the metaphysical within embodied reading practices, the authors analyzed in this dissertation confront the limits of language in relation to mental disability. In placing the unknown at the center of their respective texts, Joyce, Beckett, and Mootoo prioritize the experience of the mentally disabled individual. The authors allow their characters to retain authority

over their own experience by denying readers the ability to understand them with absolute certainty. Readers are asked to suspend their own desire for mastery in favor of knowledge that will always remain incomplete, partially illegible.

These authors invoke illegibility as point of entry rather than a point of dismissal. Catherine Prendergast reflects, "I've noticed that if I mention mental illness in the company of many [rhetoric, English literature, and cultural studies] colleagues, I become suddenly culturally unintelligible" ("Rhetorics" 46). Here Prendergast refers to anxieties over mental disability itself, the unintelligibility caused by the extreme othering caused by mental disability. In this moment, mental disability constitutes an erasure, the subject itself inciting incomprehension. However, incomprehension, when framed differently, becomes a point of access. Prendergast goes on to argue that "To be disabled mentally is to be disabled rhetorically" (57).[7] Through diagnosis, as well as cultural histories of marginalization, the mentally disabled individual is denied a voice. Prendergast puts it

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[7] Prendergast is not the first scholar to comment on the inaccessibility of language. In his preface to the 1961 edition of *History of Madness*, Michel Foucault writes:

> modern man no longer communicates with the madman: on the one hand is the man of reason, who delegates madness to the doctor, thereby authorizing no relation other than through the abstract universality of illness; and on the other is the man of madness, who only communicates with the other through the intermediary of a reason that is no less abstract, which is order, physical and moral constraint, the anonymous pressure of the group, the demand for conformity. (xxviii)

Foucault similarly comments on the way the mentally disabled individual is displaced from normative rhetorical contexts. In Foucault's formation the mentally disabled are reliant on the medical professionals as intermediaries between them and the realm of *reason*. This framework is perpetuated in contemporary diagnostic practices, patients reliant on a professional who judges them to be deserving of care based on their medical assessment. The patient cannot request treatment on their own. The doctor must rearticulate the patient's symptoms so they can be read by the man of *reason*, in this case insurance agencies and other branches of medical institutions.

frankly: "If people think you're crazy, they don't listen to you" (57). Ultimately

Prendergast poses two questions: "Does some kind of al/chemical transformation need to

occur before the mentally ill can be heard? And in whom does it need to take place?"

(57). Prendergast does not have an answer for these questions. She concludes her chapter

on a note of uncertain possibility, wondering "how a rhetoric that renders mental illness

irrelevant can contribute to healing" and "if there will ever be a rhetoric of mental

disability that the mentally disabled themselves will have the greatest part in crafting."

(58-59).

This remains a dilemma. How can those who have been rendered voiceless

communicate their own experiences in understandable and meaningful ways?[8]

Furthermore, what would it mean for an author to ethically communicate experiences of

mental disability they cannot claim as their own? I would say they cannot, or at least they

cannot do so with absolute clarity and certainty. This is why questions of the illegible,

inarticulate, and unknowable are central to this dissertation. Rather than force mentally

disabled histories to conform to traditionally accepted rhetorical forms, I argue we must

shift our understanding of what counts as rhetoric, of what is recognized as language, and

therefore effective communication. In the tradition of the social model, it is not the

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[8] In the context of autism spectrum disorders, authorial communication has been less of an issue. There are high numbers of auto-biographies written by autistic individuals, for example Temple Grandin. Often, those auto-biographies narratives about autism itself. However, in her recent book, *Authoring Autism: On Rhetoric and Neurological Queerness*, Melanie Yergeau approaches this history with caution. She argues that "Even when autism is depicted as a condition that resists the narratable, … the narrating impulse remains entrenched in the act of diagnosing unto itself: Traits and check boxes tell a story" (2).

individual's responsibility to change, but rather the framework through which we read that individual's experience. To do this, I use affect and trauma theory, both of which deal with intangible forms of information and communication, to structure my analysis of the relationship between inarticulate knowledge and material experiences.

Historically, trauma theory has long had a vexed relationship to disability studies due to their divergent temporal orientations, a conflict I will explore in detail in chapter three. However, theorists have increasingly called for alliances between the two fields. The tension between the fields is rooted in their rhetorical framing. While disability studies is often described in terms of gain and futurity—the possibilities of access, crip epistemology, independent living both now and the future, trauma studies is primarily concerned with loss—of a loved one, an ideal, or a population. In *Unclaimed Experience*, Cathy Caruth defines trauma as "not locatable in the simple violent or original event in an individual's past, but rather in the way that its very unassimilated nature—the way it was precisely *not known* in the first instance—returns to haunt the survivor later on" (Caruth, *UE* 4). This phrasing, denying power or agency to the individual in favor of the unknowable event, precipitated binary understandings of traumatic experience. *Unclaimed Experience*, along with other work done in trauma theory, emphasizes the inability of the individual to claim or maintain agency as a part of his or her own experience.

However, while the focus on loss and lack of agency inherent to trauma studies conflicts with disability studies' focus on futurity and independence, disability itself is inherently connected to ideas of lack and/or disqualification. Tobin Siebers argues that

20

exploring this connection further would improve disability studies scope, particularly

with regards to artistic engagement with experience:

> I want to insist that disability studies include trauma within its definition
> of disability, but it is equally important to insist that trauma studies accept
> disability as a key concept. First, a merger between disability studies and
> trauma studies will allow us to conceive of wounds as disability
> representations on a par with those typically considered in disability
> studies. Second, it will allow us to borrow the interest of trauma studies in
> global media to think about the disabled body as a product of the
> electronic age. Third, and most crucial, it will allow us to enlarge the
> concept of mental disability to include the psychic impairments,
> psychological injuries, and mental traumas provoked by modern life.
> (*Aesthetics* 102-103)

By including a more central discussion of loss as part of disability studies, Siebers claims

we can expand understandings of experience in relation to disabilities, and in particular

improve conversations about the mental effects of disability. Siebers focuses on the ways

wounds produce mental and physical experiences, disability in particular. Rather than

focus on trauma as a loss located in the past, he focuses on trauma as it effects the present

and future. Siebers' emphasis on the psychic effects of trauma is particularly important

here because of the opportunities it reveals for mad studies. Siebers goes on to claim,

"Trauma art poses a radical challenge to conventional models of aesthetic explanation"

(103). I would include rhetoric as a form of aesthetic explanation. Trauma, and mental

disability, fundamentally rework conceptions of the self and its relationship to culture.

Consequently, aesthetic representations of these concepts challenge conventional ideas of

art, asking audiences to engage in new ways.

To do this, we must reconceptualize the ways meaning is communicated along

non-traditional valences. Caruth claims "history, like trauma, is never simply one's own

… history is precisely the way we are implicated in each other's traumas" (*UE* 24). The effects of trauma cannot be contained within an individual body. While trauma doubtless affects the individual, its effects extend beyond that individual into wider socio-political contexts. However, while we can recognize these effects, Caruth's point that the traumatic event "was precisely *not known* in the first instance" makes understanding those effects an act of interpretation and approximation. While this impossible certainty has contributed to the conflicted relationship between disability studies and trauma theory, by embracing it as essential to the nature of mental disability, we can develop new forms of rhetorical analysis that consider inarticulate and articulate meaning alongside one another.

In her more recent work, Caruth describes "a new kind of listening" that would bear witness to traumatic experience while knowing that understandings of the event will always be uncertain. Caruth develops this concept through an analysis of *Death and the Maiden*, a play by Argentinian writer Ariel Dorfman. *Death and the Maiden* is the story of a woman, Paulina, who, several years earlier, had been tortured by the police during the Dirty War. The action of the play surrounds a chance meeting Paulina and her husband have with Roberto whose car has broken down. Upon hearing Roberto's voice, Paulina immediately identifies him as her torturer years before. However, Paulina never saw her torturer's face. The question of the validity of Paulina's identification is never answered. Paulina is never given the authority to claim her experience with certainty. Throughout the play Paulina and her husband stage a trial for Roberto, forcing him to testify to his crimes against Paulina. Caruth argues:

the play specifically links the question of truth to the nature of its appearance, or the role of 'performance' in the undoing and reconstituting of justice. At the heart of performance in the play…is a struggle between the reappearance of democracy and the disappearance of history, between the reenactment of trauma and the possible performance of *a new kind of listening*. (my emphasis; *Literature* 55)

The play, as well as the staging of Roberto's testimony, constitutes a performance of possible identification. Through the retelling, there is the possibility of what Caruth calls "a new kind of listening." This "new kind of listening" is a listening that is only made possible by the identification of Roberto through the recurrence of his voice.

This way of understanding the event of trauma, while still presenting the original event as in some ways unattainable, finds a way to move forward despite uncertainty. Paulina, through her identification of Roberto controls the event of her trauma, placing herself in relation to Roberto, and consequently her previously unclaimed experiences. Her agency, while vulnerable to error and contingent upon the coincidental events that brought Roberto to her door, allows her to re-listen to her past. Ultimately, whether or not Roberto is truly her torturer, Paulina's encounter with him offers a new form of listening, not to what is definitively true, but to what is identified and performed as such. Furthermore, the theatrical nature of the text extends to the audience, calling into question their reliance on particular forms of certainty regarding identification. Ultimately, Caruth argues, the play brings up more questions than answers about Paulina's experience (*Literature* 72). However, those questions are oriented towards a futurity, towards the possibility of "a new kind of listening."

Affective Mapping

23

Just as *Death and the Maiden* stages "a new kind of listening," the texts analyzed in the following chapters propose new kinds of reading, practices that place uncertainty, and as a result possibility, at the center. The texts participate in *affective mapping*, a term coined by Jonathan Flatley to describe the ways texts situate readers within cultural networks of feeling.[9] Flatley uses Henry James' *The Turn of Screw* to define affective mapping, claiming "the affective map narrates the production of its own reader" (7). Flatley explains the term further, claiming the author "provides a nugget of affective experience for the reader" that extends beyond the text itself to comment on a particular moment in history (7). As a result, "the reader has an affective experience within the space of the text, one that repeats or recalls earlier, other experiences, and then is estranged from that experience, and by way of that estrangement told or taught something about it. This is the moment of affective mapping" (7). Flatley's framework for understanding how texts affectively organize bodies relies on intangible points of connection sustained through feeling. Flatley claims, "it is a map less in the sense that it establishes a territory than that it is about providing a feeling of orientation and facilitating mobility" (7). Affective maps do not contain or define landscapes, literal or metaphorical. Rather, they help situate the reader as part of that landscape, tying them to a cultural history. For example, in the context of mental disability, literary representations

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[9] Affect theory builds on Raymond Williams' concept of "structures of feeling" developed most clearly in *Marxism and Literature*. The term has since been applied in various ways. I use *networks* here to emphasize the fluctuating nature of affective maps and the active role bodies play in helping to organize and shift meaning as part of a mutually constitutive cultural body.

of madness help orient the reader towards madness as it exists in cultural histories more broadly.

Flatley calls for increased attention to the ways affect transforms and is transformed by bodies. Neither understanding literature as part of cultural history, nor appreciating the emotional registers of a text is new. However, shifting the focus from emotion to affect calls attention to the active ways texts use feeling to incite change. Differentiating between affect and emotion, Flatley explains, "Where *emotion* suggests something that happens inside and tends toward outward expression, *affect* indicates something relational and transformative" (12). While the terms are often used interchangeably, *affect* better lends itself to conversations about how feelings help shape culture. Texts work as part of an active and shifting network of meaning that helps organize and transform cultural ideals. In "Affective Economies" Sarah Ahmed shows how affect's transformative properties apply to bodies, organizing them into common and opposing groups: "emotions *do things*, and they align individuals with communities—or bodily space with social space—through the very intensity of their attachments" (119). Both Flatley and Ahmed's emphasize how affect organizes bodies. However, Ahmed distinguishes less between affect and emotion, using both terms to describe how language invokes emotion to create (and separate) communities.

In "Affective Economies" Ahmed primarily discusses political speech; however, her argument is not limited to that space. Language in fiction similarly creates connection between bodies. The texts analyzed in this dissertation guide these sorts of associations while leaving room for interpretation. The authors create meaning by moving the reader,

knowledge emerging as the reader's relationships are transformed. Ahmed describes how

emotions move through different contexts by way of what she calls *sticky associations*:

> Psychoanalysis allows us to see that emotionality involves movements or associations whereby "feelings" take us across different levels of signification, not all of which can be admitted in the present. This is what I would call the rippling effect of emotions; they move sideways (through "sticky" associations between signs, figures, and objects) as well as backward (repression always leaves its trace in the present—hence "what sticks" is also bound up with the "absent presence" of historicity). (120)

Patterns of association allow emotion to move through different temporal and physical

spaces, sticking to different bodies and putting them into relation with one another.

Feelings are signified through different objects whose presence or absence precipitates

connection. In literary contexts, authors use different ideas and concepts to manipulate

these sticky associations, shifting understandings of the texts from their literal language

to their experience. Meaning develops out of the emotions attached to and inspired by the

text itself.

Affect theory's emphasis on anti-essentialist approaches to language follows the

work of post-structural and gender theorists such as Jacques Derrida and Judith Butler

among others, who have challenged understandings of grammatical language as

performative in and of itself. However, as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick has noted, while

affect theory is indebted to the antiessentialist work of post-structuralist and gender

theory, it pushes analysis further away from an "essential truth" (6). Sedgwick goes on to

posit, "I assume that the line between words and things or between linguistic and

nonlinguistic phenomena is endlessly changing, permeable, and entirely unsusceptible to

any definitive articulation" (6). This is not incompatible with Derrida and Butler's

respective moves away from fundamental linguistic meaning. However, affect theory further deemphasizes the importance or even the possibility of any essential truth. For Sedgwick, language is defined by its endless malleability as opposed to any concrete demarcation.

<div align="center">Chapter Abstracts</div>

Joyce and Beckett both illustrate language's affective possibilities, the former through an abundance of signifiers, the latter through a dearth of them. While Joyce uses an overabundance of references in *Finnegans Wake*, his former amenuensis' use of language becomes increasingly sparse over time. However, while these styles initially seem opposing, a point I will discuss in depth in chapter two, both rely on affective forms of meaning production. The proliferation of linguistic references in *Finnegans Wake* is profoundly anti-totalitarian.[10] No single reader can master it. Rather, the text evolves and transforms as part of a reading community, meaning produced through the network of bodies that encounter and add to the text through sticky associations. Beckett's work, through its sparse language and denial of clear reference, is similarly anti-totalitarian. Beckett's work creates an abundance of possibility by subtracting linguistic signifiers and leaving space for reader interpretation. Both authors invite playful exchange as a way of navigating these networks of affect.

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[10] While I primarily focus on *Finnegans Wake*, anti-totalitarian aesthetics can be seen in much of Joyce's oeuvre. For further discussion see Marian Eide, *Ethical Joyce*, Zena Meadowsong, "Joyce's Utopian Machine," and Pedram Lalbakhsh and Wan Roselezam Wan Yahya, "Making or Destroying the Labyrinth of Totalitarianism."

In chapter one, "Literary Adjacent Women: In-Between the Narratives of Ophelia, Lucia Joyce and Issy in *Finnegans Wake*," I argue that *Finnegans Wake* challenges histories of mentally disabled women by reworking the narrative of Ophelia from *Hamlet*, and that of his daughter, Lucia, through the character of Issy. *Finnegans Wake* calls attention to marginal sources of information, the unwritten affective presences that help to produce central narratives. Through adaptation, Joyce challenges assumptions about mental disability, refiguring Ophelia alongside his daughter to undermine histories of representation. *Finnegans Wake* calls attention to the affective spaces that influence ideas about mental disability, obscuring assumptions about the line between sanity and madness. Joyce asks readers to engage with an in-between position similar to the way affect exists between bodies. In doing so, Joyce shows readers how representations have shaped, and continue to shape understandings of mental disability, calling attention to the possibility of alternative histories hidden behind normative assumptions.

Chapter two, "'Revolving it All': Games and Cognitive Difference in Samuel Beckett," analyzes Beckett's use of games and rituals to undermine expectations of cognitive normativity. I argue that Beckett uses games to re-contextualize mental disability as an interactive process rather than a frightening otherness, encouraging more fluid understandings of consciousness. Focusing on three novels, *Murphy*, *Molloy*, and *Malone Dies*, as well as a selection of his shorter plays, I claim Beckett employs ludic frameworks to open new possibilities for recognizing others' experiences of mental disability, countering stereotypical assumptions about madness. Beckett's representation of actual games, such as the game of chess played by two characters in *Murphy*, as well

as his use of linguistic games, wordplay that asks the reader to interact with the text itself as a game. Informed by his own visits to mental hospitals and personal experience with psychoanalytic treatment, Beckett's characters enter interdependent relationships that question their own subjectivities, exploring what it means to be recognized as mentally disabled and creating space for understandings of cognitive difference existing outside normative conventions, expanding considerations of mental disability through processes of exchange.

While Joyce and Beckett encourage play as a mode of engagement with affective networks of meaning, Shani Mootoo embraces affect as an epistemological premise. In *Cereus Blooms at Night*, communication amongst characters is often based in affect, the character's openly recognizing moments where they "feel" something to be true rather than knowing absolutely (Mootoo 48). Through her reliance on affect, and by placing uncertainty at the center of the novel, Mootoo demonstrates the challenge "situations of extreme precarity" and forms of complex embodiment pose to traditional narrative structures (Kruger 133).

The final chapter, "Affect, Animality, and Animacy: At the Intersection of Trauma and Mental Disability in *Cereus Blooms at Night* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*," analyzes how issues of access and adaptation work alongside traumatic histories of colonization in the context of mental disability. I argue *Wide Sargasso Sea* by Jean Rhys, and *Cereus Blooms at Night* by Shani Mootoo, through their adaptation of Bertha Mason from Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, inherit and reshape the trope of a mad Caribbean woman and undermine the figure's long-standing literary history. The authors

progressively question assumed hierarchical binaries between sanity and madness, male and female, colonizer and colonized, and human and animal, all of which associate rationality with the former and irrationality with the latter. In foregrounding mediation as essential to navigating the intersection of these points, Rhys and Mootoo use shifting perspectives and non-linear narrative structures to invert traditional hierarchies of oppression as they narrate histories of trauma.

In placing disarticulate forms of communication at the center of their narratives, Joyce, Beckett, and Mootoo, push readers to interact with undefined meaning, questioning what we think we know, undermining previously held assumptions and creating space for new understandings of difference. These authors adapt and transform famously mad characters such as Ophelia and Bertha Mason to challenge histories of representation, particularly in relation to mentally disabled women. By looking at female characters of heavily canonized texts, I argue, we see how women, oft associated with hysteria and madness, are more vulnerable to patriarchal narratives, often appearing on the sidelines of artistic production. By shifting the focus of these narratives to the margins, Joyce, Beckett, and Mootoo ask readers to embrace the uncertainty of affective forms of communication. In doing so, the authors create more dynamic forms of storytelling that embody the history of marginalization concerning mental disability, and more effectively communicate the how mental disability affects material socio-political experiences.

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CHAPTER 1

Literary Adjacent Women: In-Between the Narratives of Ophelia, Lucia Joyce, and Issy

in *Finnegans Wake*

In "Nightlessons," Book two, Chapter two (II.2) of *Finnegans Wake*, Issy, the only daughter of Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker (HCE) and Anna Livia Plurabelle (ALP), speaks through a series of footnotes.[11] Issy's voice stands out. While she is often a fleeting presence throughout the rest of the novel, here she has a designated space, interrupting and undermining the center text from her marginal position. Approximately one third of the way through the chapter, Issy speaks at length, her footnote almost completely overwhelming the page (see fig. 2). The footnote overflows with pleas for understanding as well as myriad references to madness, some more direct than others. She calls directly to her father, mother, as well as ambiguous others, singing a melody that dramatically diverges from normative expectations of communication. In the second sentence Issy shares, "I was thinking fairly killing times of putting an end to myself and my malody" (Joyce 279.F1). Issy's clear reference to suicide, and the joining of malady and melody, foregrounds madness for the rest of the footnote. As the footnote continues,

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[11] While drafting *Finnegans Wake* Joyce often used the initials of HCE and ALP, as well as a series of sigla, or signs, to replace full names (Crispi, Slote, and Van Hulle 9-19). He referred to the characters as such in letters to his patron, Harriet Shaw Weaver, as well as other close confidents (17). Throughout the *Wake* the characters appear in abbreviated or augmented forms. HCE and ALP are also present whenever a series of words with the same initials appears, although their order and conjugation may change (for example, "Howth Castle and Environs," or "ever hawked crannock" and "Alas for livings' pledjures!" or "Allapolloosa!" (Joyce 3.3, 507.36, 496.1, 494.25).

it begins to address the relationship between fact and fiction, culminating in the claim "For tough troth is stronger than fortuitous fiction" (279.F1). *Finnegans Wake* often questions the dynamic between truth and fiction; however, within the specific context of mental disability, that dynamic takes on new meaning, recalling Joyce's daughter Lucia who was first institutionalized in 1932 and ultimately diagnosed with schizophrenia.[12] This chapter analyzes how *Finnegans Wake* incites a rupture between expected and unexpected meaning, a space that is in-between: in-between fact and fiction, in-between sanity and madness, and in-between self and Other.

The rupture incited by the *Wake* accentuates the influence seemingly small or barely visible characters can have on narratives. I take the idea of "literary adjacent women," which I define as female characters or figures that produce narratives from marginal positions, as a starting point for my analysis of Issy and Lucia. These women are often next to the male author or protagonist, out of center but none the less influential on the text's production and narrative. Combining my analysis of Lucia and Issy with a reading of Joyce's adaptation of *Hamlet*'s Ophelia, I argue that Joyce inverts previous narratives by repeatedly calling attention to what is at the margins, producing a narrative from the sidelines and emphasizing what is not known, what occurs off-stage, ultimately

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[12] Lucia's earliest surviving institutional records are from 1932 (Shloss 231). However, as Shloss notes, "few doctors were hesitant to label Lucia" (231). Doctors' responses ranged from claiming there was little wrong with Lucia, that it was just a phase, to calling her neurotic or catatonic (3-4). One doctor refused to admit a diagnosis after seven months of treatment, finding her symptoms inconclusive (4). The diagnosis of schizophrenia was in fact one of many. However, it is the most enduring. While I will talk about Lucia in relation to schizophrenia specifically, I also challenge diagnostic practices more broadly, questioning the effects of definitive diagnoses.

allowing space to produce alternate histories, rewritten from the margins, by those

adjacent to the main narrative rather than in the middle of it. In the case of Ophelia,

Lucia, and Issy, what is not known is often tied to ideas of cognitive difference, re-

contextualizing madness by re-positioning the reader in relation to their understanding of

the relationship between sanity and madness.

Finnegans Wake adapts the fictional Ophelia, through the factual Lucia Joyce to

create Issy. In doing so, *Finnegans Wake* questions our assumptions in relation to

consciousness and undermines the permanency of history.[13] Joyce weaves together fact

and fiction to generate imagined futures, while simultaneously encouraging new

understandings of the past.[14] *Finnegans Wake* and Ophelia's song both undermine

traditional expectations of language and performance. Each creatively opens up meaning,

denying any single definitive meaning. The possibilities each text opens up allow for an

open system of identification through which readers and listeners can find meaning. Rita

Felski has argued that art can use an aesthetic of "shock" to expose how institutional

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[13] Ophelia is by no means the only reference for Issy. I will primarily focus on Ophelia in this chapter, but I do not intend to present her as the only influence. Throughout the *Wake* Issy is aligned with myriad figures from factual and literary histories.

[14] Joyce famously structured *Finnegans Wake* according to Giambattista Vico's cycles of history in *Scienza Nuova* (*New Science*). Vico claims that history is a repeating cycle of four stages: divine, heroic, human, and ricorso. In *Finnegans Wake* the first book is divided into eight chapters, each aligning with one of Vico's cycles, repeating the set once. The following two books contain four chapters each, again aligning with Vico's understanding of history. The final book contains one chapter, a final ricorso. The cycle repeats within each book, but also in the novel as a whole, the four books overall also aligning with Vico's cycles. This cyclical understanding of history emphasizes repeated patterns. However, every repetition produces new experiences and understandings. When the last sentence of the novel, "A way a lone a last a loved a long the," leads back to the beginning, "riverrun, past Eve and Adam's," readers begin again, each new reading adding to a collection of readings that are produced over time.

hierarchies limit our thinking. She claims shock, "blur[s] the distinction between self and other, to unravel the certainty of one's own convictions rather than sustaining them. Shock in this sense is not a blithe herald of future freedom from all tyrannies and oppressions but a graphic illustration of the internal as well as external obstacles that lie in the way of such freedom" (110). In the context of *Finnegans Wake*, the shock and anxiety induced by Joyce's style unravels the reader's faith in his or her ability to read. By interrupting the reader's convictions, the novel, as Felski points out, exposes the ways standardized expectations of language impede freedom of thought. By disrupting the relationship between reader and text, *Finnegans Wake* encourages new understandings of mental disability while simultaneously exposing the limitations of more traditionally linear narratives. In allowing for multiple interpretations the text asks readers to consider myriad meanings at the same time, some of which may be contradictory. While this abundance of potential interpretations can often lead to anxiety as we see in the other characters' reactions to Ophelia's song in *Hamlet*, it can also lead to new understandings of history through the possibilities of narrative. Through use of music and melody in relation to the different figures, Joyce plays with meaning by asking readers to inhabit an in-between position, and in doing so dismantle the binary between sanity and madness.

This in-between position emphasizes understanding as a form of exchange, as a process rather than a fact. Rather than offering knowledge based in any essential quality, *Finnegans Wake* involves its readers in the creation of the text, their responses adding to and expanding the narrative. *Finnegans Wake* embodies an anti-totalitarian aesthetic, asking readers to abandon traditional reading strategies and engage with the text while

always uncertain of its meaning. The uncertainty, or more appropriately, the open-endedness of the *Wake*, allows for connections between fact and fiction that encourage readers to re-evaluate preconceptions about the world around them. I argue *Finnegans Wake* is written with a mad aesthetic. Reading the *Wake*'s aesthetic form in the context of Disability Studies and Mad Studies shows how the text creates a recuperative and productive space that reframes madness as a narrative and aesthetic exchange between reader and text. While Modernism more broadly questions ideas of self and community, *Finnegans Wake*'s situating of the non-fictional within the fictional obscures assumptions about the line between sanity and madness. The *Wake* gives a voice to Lucia, as well as other literary-adjacent women, interrupting patriarchal control and mastery in favor of knowledge that is in-between—occurring in the spaces left by what we already know that otherwise might be glossed over by assumptions.

<div align="center">"A Document in Madness"</div>

Ophelia, Lucia, and Issy are each literary adjacent women, affecting narratives from the margins. They are each pushed to the sidelines because of their gender and cognitive difference. In "The Corpus of the Madwoman," Elizabeth Donaldson responds to Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's use of madness as metaphor in *The Madwoman in the Attic* by arguing for a more thorough consideration of the "material conditions of the body" (15). Donaldson claims that by "repositioning mental illness as a physical impairment" within Disability Studies, we can engage with mental disability as an embodied experience (30). In *Hamlet* and *Finnegans Wake*, mental disability does take on metaphoric functions. However, considering these metaphoric connotations while

recognizing the material experience of these characters expands our understanding of mentally disabled individuals position in society. As Donaldson notes, "fictional representations of madness have a way of influencing clinical discourses of mental illness and vice versa" (14). In *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce uses adaptation to develop a network of meaning and signification, undermining any certainty over what it means to be mentally disabled by expanding any single definition through the accumulation of figures we already think we know.

Through *Finnegans Wake* Joyce questioned assumptions about Lucia's mental disability by reimagining and adapting aspects of her character and experiences alongside those of Issy and Ophelia.[15] In a letter to Eileen Joyce from 1912, Nora Barnacle (Lucia's mother) recounts a family trip to her home town of Galway as well as a day spent at Howth near Dublin.[16] When describing the then five-year-old Lucia, she emphasizes her habit of singing: "Lucia sleeps with mother you'd be surprised at how homely she has got every night about ten or so when we are leaving Mothers's we say good night to Lucia and she goes up to bed singing she is wonderful she is as rosey the two children love the place….[we] all went up to Howth we had tea and sandwiches Lucia sang so we got back about six o clock" (Joyce, *LII* 302-303). The image of Lucia as a child singing late at night and as she walks through the port town of Howth echoes Ophelia's presence in

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[15] See Luca Crispi, "Storyella As She Were Wryt: Chapter II.2," for an analysis of how Issy developed in Joyce's drafts over time in relation to Lucia's repeated institutionalizations.

[16] Similar to the "Penelope" episode of *Ulysses* where Molly Bloom speaks in an extended monologue, this letter lacks punctuation and reads as a stream of consciousness. Howth is also the site of Leopold Bloom's proposal to Molly, a moment they each remember in *Ulysses* (8.896-918; 18.1571-1609).

Hamlet act 4 scene 5. When prefacing Joyce's letters from 1920-39, Richard Ellmann describes the surfacing of Lucia's schizophrenia, saying it "had presumably begun during her girlhood, but had been dismissed by her parents as childish eccentricity" (Joyce, *LIII* 7). While what Ellmann terms "childish eccentricity" is by no means a definitive marker of mental disability, this image of Lucia retrospectively resonates with Issy and Ophelia.

Lucia is in many ways a ghost, hovering over the *Wake* without ever fully coming into view. Following the publication of Carol Loeb Shloss's biography, *Lucia Joyce: To Dance in the Wake*, in 2003, there has been a renewed interest in Joyce's daughter. In a 2016 *Irish Times* article, Genevieve Sartor describes this phenomenon: "Rather than provoking a growth in scholarship on Lucia, Shloss's text has instead instigated a series of 'interpretations' that conflate the historical with the fictive, publicly disseminating an often-faulty depiction of Lucia and her life." Creative interpretations of Lucia have been released over the past decade and a half, often with authors using their own personal experience to write over Lucia's.[17] While scholars such as Finn Fordham and Luca Crispi have analyzed Lucia's influence on the *Wake* from a genetic perspective, few others have done in-depth analysis of the relationship between daughter and text, life-writing and fiction-writing. In part this is due to how protective the Joyce estate has been over her history.

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[17] Some examples of this trend include Michael Hastings play *Calico* (2004), Mary and Bryan Talbot's graphic memoir *Dotter of her Father's Eyes* (2008), a short story by Megan Mayhew Bergman titled "Expression Theory" which can be found in the collection *Almost Famous Women* (2015), and most recently Annabel Abb's novel *The Joyce Girl* (2016).

Ophelia is often in the background of *Hamlet*, present but quiet. Nonetheless, she incites much action of the play, her final appearance and subsequent suicide precipitating the final actions of the characters. In *Finnegans Wake* Issy occupies a similar position. She flits in and out of focus, bearing with her many of Ophelia's characteristics (madness, song, and drowning most notably), but rarely speaks directly. Joyce's adaptation of Ophelia in the *Wake* blurs distinctions between sanity and madness by calling attention to the limitations of language, and the effect those limitations have on our ability to sympathize with non-normative consciousnesses, producing an experience that extends beyond the text. By adapting Ophelia alongside Lucia, Joyce further complicates traditional conceptions of history by linking fact and fiction. *Finnegans Wake*, which constantly builds layers of meaning, challenges readers to imagine possibilities inspired by personal experience as it relates to creative narratives. Ophelia's mental disability, drawn through Lucia's mental disability, is made new through Issy, bringing the two mad women into a context where their fates are changed, rewritten and reborn as a part of a circular narrative, challenging linear conceptions of history.

Adaptations play on ways the audience's knowledge of the original affects the adaptation. It brings audiences into a reciprocal relationship between the different texts, suspended by the duration of time between them. *Finnegans Wake* generates a similar mode of reader engagement through its continual use of allusion, undermining traditional reading practices. In *A Theory of Adaptation* Linda Hutcheon discusses modernist fiction's resistance to adaptation (particularly the practice of adapting written texts to film). Of the *Wake* she claims, "No film, it is said, can be as experimental as James

Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*" (38). *Finnegans Wake*'s extreme experimentalism defies

adaptation across mediums.[18] However, the challenges of adapting *Finnegans Wake* stem

from the text's inherent ability to engage readers at a sensory level. By this I mean

Finnegans Wake is always already asking readers to engage through telling, showing, *and*

interacting—it is always aural, visual, and collaborative. Readers see the words as they

are written (often misspelled or interrupted by unexpected punctuation or syntax), hear

them spoken (it is a common practice within the Joyce community to read the text aloud

when working on it), and interact with it by playing with the different meanings

precipitated by the experimental syntax. The book as a whole asks to be read this way.

Many readers, including some Joyce scholars, often turn away from or resist the text,

disturbed by its challenge to expected reading practices.[19] Like Gertrude, Laertes, and

Claudius when they hear Ophelia's song, readers can react to the *Wake* as another

"document in madness," a quote I will take up more particularly later on (Shakespeare

4.5.172). *Finnegans Wake* asks readers to become comfortable with the fact that they will

never fully understand its meaning. However, when readers are willing to play with the

book, interact with the possibility of meanings it opens up, they enter into a narrative that

is always layering meaning through differing modes of engagement. *Finnegans Wake* is

always adapting, but also always being adapted according to each reader's individual

frame of reference. When Joyce brings Ophelia into the *Wake* he adapts her madness to

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[18] *Finnegans Wake* was adapted to film in 1965. The film is called *Passages from Finnegans Wake*, directed by Mary Ellen Brute. It is somewhat of a collage, bringing together different brief moments of the text and adapts them using different scene cuts.
[19] See Knowles, "*Finnegans Wake* for Dummies."

help give meaning to Issy. Joyce extends the reader's understanding of Issy by linking the characters through this reference, joining her with another famously mad girl. Issy is both new and old. For the reader, identifying the reference to Ophelia improves his or her understanding of Issy, and by extension Lucia.

The obscure nature of Lucia's history has often caused Issy to be discussed as a double or version of Lucia. I argue that Issy is an adapted version of Lucia, one with privileges denied to Lucia after her initial institutionalizations. Lucia started exhibiting the signs of schizophrenia while Joyce was composing *Finnegans Wake*, and his perception of her experience, as well as the limits of that perception, began to work its way into the text. While this identification can become problematic when Issy and Lucia are made out to be equals, Issy, the fanciful daughter of HCE and ALP, often demonstrates characteristics reminiscent of schizophrenia, particularly when interacting with the other characters. The symptoms of a diagnosis are shown, but not used to contain readers' impression of her character.[20] Issy, Lucia, and Ophelia are not the same. Issy retains the ability to speak and be considered equal to the characters around her while Lucia and Ophelia were effectively silenced and permanently marked as Other because of their perceived madness.

Joyce and Lucia's eccentricities made them exceptional. However, while Joyce was lauded as a creative genius, Lucia was labeled as mad and institutionalized. Nevertheless, their similar eccentric tendencies brought them closer together. Joyce and

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[20] For a further discussion of how Disability Studies have responded to diagnostic practices over time see Snyder and Mitchell, "Re-engaging the Body."

Lucia sympathized with each other's artistic impulses. Growing up on what Shloss describes as "the margins of someone else's creativity," Lucia forged a strong bond with her father through similar artistic pursuits (80). After the family's move to Paris in 1922 Lucia found a passion for dance, working with several avant-garde troupes of the time, and studying under several dance masters including Raymond Duncan (brother of Isadora) (99). Lucia chose to work with dance masters who changed the way dance was conceptualized in the same way that Joyce challenged ideas about writing. Shloss describes their relationship saying they communicated in "a language not yet arrived into words and concepts but a language nonetheless, founded on the communicative body.…They heed desires that are unfettered by social convention, before they are made presentable to the commonplace world" (153). Lucia was also one of the only people with whom Joyce shared drafts of *Finnegans Wake* (then titled "Work in Progress"). After her initial institutionalization, Joyce attempted to find her work as an illustrator. He asked her to create illustrations and illuminated letters for the different chapters as a way of building her resume (see fig. 1.1) (Shloss 240).

In the 1930s, the stigma attached to madness hindered the development of deeper, more nuanced, understandings of mental disability. People with mental disabilities were ostracized and sent away, rarely given the opportunity to navigate life outside of an institution. Joyce tirelessly worked to find ways for Lucia to become self-sufficient. He searched for new treatments for schizophrenia, eventually sending Lucia to be treated by Carl Jung, against whom Joyce held a long-term grudge because of his scathing review of *Ulysses*. However, in the 1930s understandings of and treatments for mental disabilities

Figure 1.1: Illustration by Lucia Joyce for "The Mime of Mick, Nick, and the Maggies" (1934)

lacked development; much remained unknown. In a broadcast by the "Voice of America," titled "Recent Thoughts on Schizophrenia," approximately two decades after treating Lucia, Jung states, "We know far too little about the contents and the meaning of pathological mental products, and the little we do know is prejudiced by theoretical assumptions. This is particularly true of the psychology of schizophrenia" (250). The idea of schizophrenia, as it existed in both public and medical consciousness, greatly affected its treatment. During Lucia's time, the diagnostic definitions for many mental disabilities were new; processes of identification were flawed and left a great deal unknown.

<p style="text-align:center">"Myself and my Malody"</p>

Contemporary understandings of schizophrenia and many other mental disabilities are still limited. Moreover, diagnostic criteria for schizophrenia others patients further by emphasizing their difference and a need for separation. The fifth edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-V), released in 2013, gives the diagnostic criteria as an individual who experiences two or more of the following: delusions, hallucinations, disorganized speech, erratic behaviors, and lessened emotional expression (99). The openness of the diagnostic approach, the numerous possible ways for symptoms to manifest, is not unique to schizophrenia. The descriptions of the individual's actions focus on what they lack, or how they deviate from what would be considered normal. The "delusions," "disorganized speech," and "erratic behaviors" emphasize an unpredictability that can imply danger or violence. Furthermore, while the DSM has been a longstanding scientifically "objective" resource in psychiatry, it has also

faced tremendous critique from both inside and outside communities.[21] From the

perspective of Disability Studies, Margaret Price argues, "[The DSM's] claims to

objectivity, its implication with capitalist structures…help sustain the complementary

impulse from teachers and scholars across the disciplines to regard mental disability as

something radically 'other' to everyday life" (33-34).[22] The tool used to diagnose mental

disabilities further separates the individuals it portends to treat. The DSM-V's definition

of schizophrenia reinforces the individual's Otherness, ensuring a cycle of care that often

occurs outside the boundaries of normative society. Although methods for classifying and

diagnosing mental disabilities today remain inexact and often open to interpretation, as

Jung points out, this is not a new phenomenon. Prejudice and fear of what is Other are

embedded in psychiatric practice, and often reinforced by institutionalization.

By resisting traditional generic expectations, *Finnegans Wake* resists

classification as much as Ophelia and Issy's myriad characteristics resist any singular

diagnosis. The fluidity of style allows the text to move in, around, and through different

genres and languages. The instability of the style situates it as something that is always

becoming, a book that has not yet (and won't ever) reach its end. This malleability

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[21] As mentioned in the introduction, Allen Frances, a certified psychiatrist who led the team responsible for developing the DSM-IV, has written extensive critiques of the fifth edition. Many of his concerns stem from the DSM-V's broader guidelines for diagnosis. Frances believes the new diagnostic standards will cause patients to be over diagnosed and consequently pharmaceuticals would be over prescribed. Frances has published several of his critiques in *The Huffington Post*, and wrote the book *Saving Normal: An Insider's Revolt against Out-of-Control Psychiatric Diagnosis, DSM-5, Big Pharma, and the Medicalization of Ordinary Life*.

[22] Price is by no means the only scholar to take issue with the DSM. Her critique follows those made by Lennard Davis, Mitchell Wilson, and Anne Wilson and Peter Beresford to name a few.

extends to Issy, who, like Ophelia, is not given a diagnosis in the text. While critics have

described Issy as having multiple personality disorder and/or narcissism, the *Wake* does

not offer a set of symptoms by which Issy could be diagnosed. Within the context of the

novel this is freeing. However, if extended into a non-fictional environment this lack of

diagnosis, and the recognition that accompanies it, affects the formation of disabled

communities. Anna Mallow describes disabilities whose symptoms do not comply with

official diagnostic criteria as "undocumented disabilities" (185).[23] Disabilities that do not

adhere to guidelines set forth by the DSM are difficult to prove because there is no

language that officially recognizes them as disabilities. Lucia was diagnosed with

schizophrenia in 1932 (Shloss 231). However, while her disability was given a name, the

treatment that accompanied it showed minimal results.[24] For Joyce, who persistently

looked for new treatments that might help Lucia, the process of trying to understand her

experience was full of failure and uncertainty. Lucia was diagnosed as schizophrenic,

however the knowledge and understanding of the condition that diagnosis assumes was

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[23] *Mis*-diagnosis is also a concern. As discussed in the introduction, diagnosis can both open up avenues for treatment while closing others. The urge to diagnose a disability is a move to identify and define a particular condition, allowing those involved to say they *know* what is wrong. However, as our understandings of disabilities, particularly mental disabilities, evolves, it is clear that diagnosis is often a limiting factor concerning treatment. For further discussion see Davis "Diagnosis."

[24] In some cases the treatments showed negative results. In the mid-1930's Lucia was prescribed Veronal, a dangerously addictive drug that when taken with alcohol can induce severe depression (Shloss 340-341). Lucia shared these thoughts with her cousins while staying with them. She also began enacting patterns of suicidal behavior: "[her cousin] Bozena Berta came to understand that these anxieties were a steady undercurrent in her cousin's life. The suicidal gestures recurred night after night, as Lucia's turning on the gas tap became a ritual that was met by her cousin's repeated resourcefulness in turning it off" (Shloss 342-343).

unsound. For Lucia, diagnosis recognized her experience but rather than admit her to a shared community, it served to further mark her as Other.

The definition of schizophrenia, both during Lucia's lifetime and today, is inexact and by no means complete. Schizophrenia is identified through non-specific behavior, only known through a comparison to what is considered normal. The *OED* defines schizophrenia as "A mental disorder occurring in various forms, all characterized by a breakdown in the relation between thoughts feelings, and actions, usu. with a withdrawal from social activity and the occurrence of delusions and hallucinations." While the clinical definitions of the disease focus on symptoms and external demonstrations of the disease, the *OED* focuses more on the way the illness affects the way the individual looks at the world. This definition asserts that a main characteristic of schizophrenia is "a breakdown in the relation between thoughts, feelings, and actions." The connection between what the individual perceives and how the individual reacts is unclear. Schizophrenia compromises the individual's ability to translate his or her reactions to the surrounding world properly. He or she has trouble linking his or her feelings to thoughts and actions. There is a rupture between what is observed and what is done or said in response.

This rupture is central to the aesthetic of *Finnegans Wake*. In *Ethical Joyce* Marian Eide describes the *Wake*'s notoriously difficult style saying, "The fluid disorganization of the text redefines signification as that which generates possibilities of meaning as it touches upon and interacts with a reader's boundaries of knowledge and experience" (96). Eide's claim echoes Margaret Price's claim in "'Her Pronouns Wax

and Wane.'" In her article, Price analyzes the ways autobiographies of persons with mental disabilities use shifting pronouns to constantly reposition the reader in relation to the text. In doing so, these authors can establish what Price calls a "counter-diagnosis" (13). Price explains, "In counter-diagnosis, the autobiographical narrator uses language … to subvert the diagnostic urge to 'explain' a disabled mind" (17). While *Finnegans Wake* is not an autobiography, its style similarly undermines any attempt to master or define the text. The fluidity noted by Eide invites readers to move in-between points of understanding. It calls to what they already know while making it clear what they do not, rupturing traditional reading practices and asking the reader to continue from a fluid, in-between position. The *Wake* challenges readers to encounter a narrative in a different way. Its style "does not merely parallel or replace the conventional diagnostic story [or narrative]: it ruins it altogether, attacks its foundations, queers it" (Price 17). Through the destruction of anticipated norms, *Finnegans Wake*, as a counter-diagnostic narrative, rejects anticipated norms and re-stages mental disability in a way that actively resists categorization.

More specifically, Issy in particular transgresses linguistic conventions to confront pre-conceived ideas of the power dynamic between reader and text, but also between character and male author. In the words of Jen Shelton, "Issy disrupts readers' expectations of what comprises proper knowledge for a character. Improper knowledge, in face, defines Issy" ("Issy's Footnote" 203). According to Shelton, Joyce uses "a narrative principle homologous with the discursive structure of incest" through which his female characters question his own male authority as author (204). Shelton uses the term

incest to articulate a transgressive desire to control and resistance to that control which she sees in Joyce's narrative figuring of Issy and other female characters.[25] Speaking specifically of Issy's long footnote in II.2, Shelton claims "Issy, by daring to write at all, is asserting a power of creation and self-definition that is forbidden her" (211). Joyce fictionally sets the stage for Issy to deliver an autobiographical monologue in which she re-presents herself, providing a counter-diagnosis for the reader. Through "improper knowledge" Issy presents a version of herself that has been deemed improper, or mad, and in doing so calls attention to the nuances of her own experience, asking the reader to re-assess judgements they otherwise might have made.

Finnegans Wake asks readers to engage with the text while knowing that they could never master it. Eide suggests, "To interpret this permeable text thus demands not just comprehension but exchange, not consumption but response" (96). Upon being institutionalized, Lucia was removed from the community she once belonged to. Her otherness impeded any hope to communicate (whether through conversation or artistic expression) with others. *Finnegans Wake* re-presents the possibility for exchange through a back and forth reading practice, reader and text responding to one another. It radically breaks from traditional narrative forms, challenging expectations of what it means to read. As Eide notes, comprehension is not the point. What the text communicates is not a single narrative. Rather, it is a new way of experiencing a text. The book challenges

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[25] In her essay "Bad Girls: Gerty, Cissy, and the Erotics of Unruly Speech" Shelton analyzes the discourses of the two women in *Ulysses*. While not using the idea of incest specifically, she does take up similar questions of power and authority as it is gendered through the women's thought and speech.

readers from the very start to notice what is not there. However, readers have the choice to close the book and disengage. In his article "*Finnegans Wake* for Dummies" Sebastian Knowles confesses that even after over twenty years as a Joyce scholar he had not yet read *Finnegans Wake* (97). He traces his resistance to his days as a graduate student when his advisor pointed out a typo in a draft saying "'There's no apostrophe, Sebastian…in *Finnegans Wake.* You're going to need to know that'" (99). *Finnegans Wake* interrupts normative expectations, making its readers uncomfortable, giving them the choice to continue past the title, to begin in the middle of a sentence.

This ruptured communication parallels to Ophelia's song in *Hamlet*, illustrating the disruption that can occur in response to mental disability. In her discussion of colleagues' reactions to students who act, or attempt to communicate, in ways perceived as inappropriate Margret Price describes the continued reliance on normative discourse concerning the ability to perceive mental disability. Cases demonstrating symptoms related to autism often came up in conversation with fellow teachers. Responding to a student described by a colleague, Price explains their reaction saying, "My colleague and I struggled to know what to say because this student's behavior had taken us outside of our conventional understanding of what should go on in a classroom. Not only was she not following the tacit script for classroom participation, she wasn't even following the tacit script for classroom resistance" (59). The "script" that tacitly governs classroom participation is a script that, in varying forms, governs our communication. The student deviates from normative expectations of communication, the inability to read her actions as neither engagement nor resistance separating her from other students, causing her to

remain in-between points of recognized participation. This failed recognition precipitated by symptoms of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), but also madness more broadly, incites a rupture similar to that caused by *Finnegans Wake*'s style. *Finnegans Wake*, like the student, follows a different script. Joyce uses style to shift readers' expectations of meaning challenging them to let go of normative expectations of meaning. In mirroring an encounter with cognitive difference Joyce's experimental style develops a new language, voicing what might not be heard and opening a space of alternate experience.

Finnegans Wake's aesthetics, alongside the character of Issy, illustrate how schizophrenia and madness more broadly create a rupture between an individual and their surroundings. This rift is literal, the individual often both actively shunned by those around her and/or secluded in a mental institution, but also figurative, caused by gaps in understanding and failed communication. Eide remarks on this sort of splitting caused by schizophrenia saying, "It describes a split between commonly perceived realities and the schizophrenic's emotional and intellectual responses" (113). It is a radical destabilization of any expected norm; recalling Price, it goes "off-script." The text often leaves gaps in understanding that the reader is asked to fill in. The imprecise understanding that the reader learns to accept and respond to mimics the symptoms of schizophrenia.

"They Carry but Half Sense. / Her Speech is Nothing"

Similar to the *Wake*'s overall style, Ophelia's song in Act IV Scene V resists any single reading. The song's significance is developed through the combined reactions of other characters, each of whom is unsettled by what they assume Ophelia to mean. *Finnegans Wake* destabilizes their sense of normalcy, diverging from expectations at

every turn. Eide sees Joyce's use of different associations as an ethical move meant to produce new meanings through processes of exchange. This process implicates the reader as part of a reciprocal relationship: "this experimental text engages the reader in acts of interpretation that will, of necessity, affect that readers' ethics not by instruction or influence (which are potentially coercive modes) but through the agencies of interpretive exchange, which in Joyce's works demands reciprocity" (1). *Finnegans Wake* is constantly adapted by the reader's individual response. The *Wake*, as a synthesis of many narratives, refuses recognition as a singular adaptation. Eide claims, "The fluid disorganization of [the *Wake*] redefines signification as that which generates possibilities of meaning as it touches upon and interacts with a reader's boundaries of knowledge and experience….To interpret this permeable text thus demands not just comprehension but exchange, not consumption but response, in other words, an ethical interpretation" (Eide 96). *Finnegans Wake* is enriched by the reader's response, expanded through the associations embedded in the texts complicated style. *Finnegans Wake* embraces intertextual connections generated through the reader's ethical response to the text, building significance through interpretation and association despite its anti-totalitarian defiance of precise meaning.[26] This open intertextuality connects back to Ophelia's song through the other characters' responses. The words of Ophelia's song are open without clearly identified reference points, allowing each character to hear something they see as

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[26] In the introduction to *Adaptation and Appropriation* Julie Sanders discusses the ways in which *Ulysses* operates similarly. She specifically notes the way *Ulysses* simultaneously draws meaning from Homer's *Odyssey*, *Hamlet*, and Shakespeare's personal life to give the work as whole more "intellectual richness" (6).

applying directly to them. Through the accumulation of their reactions, Laeretes,

Gertrude, and Claudius add meaning to the lyrics.[27]

For Joyce, Shakespeare was a respected rival. Shakespearean allusions overflow

Joyce's works. In reference to her husband's work on *Finnegans Wake*, Nora Joyce

famously told Frank Budgen, "'Ah there's only one man he's got to get the better of now,

and that's Shakespeare!'" (Joyce, N. qtd. in McCourt 72). Joyce as an artist strived to join

the ranks of elite artists, of whom Shakespeare is often thought to be chief. As Maud

Ellmann points out, "Digestion—and indigestion—of Shakespeare's works takes place at

every level of Joyce's writing, shaping action, character and language" (10).[28]

Furthermore, Shakespeare was also a symbol of Joyce's colonial education. Joyce, who

was predominantly educated through Jesuit schools, was taught Shakespeare as the

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[27] The open identifications embedded in Ophelia's song echoes Margaret Price's definition of the term "madness." Price claims that *mad* has a level of flexibility that other terms do not because "it unites notions of that 'central concept' through time and across cultures. As with *queer*, the broad scope of *mad* carries the drawback of generality but also the power of mass" (10). In *Hamlet* the generality of the concept instates fear and anxiety. However, through the lens of disability studies, Ophelia's song, like term *madness*, has the potential to account for the "contextually dependent process" of recognition, as well as a fluid understanding of cognitive difference as a mental disposition constantly shifting between specific diagnoses, but also broader titles of identification (4).

[28] This statement also clearly references Stephen Dedalus' theory on *Hamlet* in the "Scylla and Charybdis" episode of *Ulysses*. Here Stephen offers a biographical reading of the play, claiming Shakespeare modeled the character of King Hamlet after himself and originated the role on the stage as a way of performing a response to his wife Anne Hathaway and his deceased son Hamnet. Sam Slote points out that in Stephen's reading, "art is not an abstracted idealism, but rather is inseparable from its material circumstance" (129). Stephen's invocation of Shakespeare, and his emphasis on the influence of material circumstance on artistic production, echoes Joyce's own interweaving of fact and fiction.

quintessentially English poet, one that suppressed more traditionally Irish poetics.[29]

However, Joyce's use of Shakespearian allusions in the *Wake* is multi-faceted.

Continuing the gustatory imagery from above, Ellmann writes:

> Joyce swallows Shakespeare whole, incorporating his precursor into his
> own creatures. In other instances, Joyce takes bite-sized pieces out of
> Shakespeare, snatching 'quashed quotatoes' from the Bard, such as this
> version of Hamlet's most famous question: 'me ken or no me ken Zot is
> the Quiztune' (*FW* 183.22; 110.14). These mashed quotations testify to
> Joyce's ambivalence towards Shakespeare, since they acknowledge the
> authority of that which they distort. What looks like iconoclasm also
> serves as an inverted form of reverence. (Ellmann 11)

Joyce's works clearly acknowledge the value and power of Shakespeare, using the Bard

to elevate his own writing, while also simultaneously questioning that same power,

calling attention to the fragility of any work's perceived permanence. Joyce saw

Shakespeare as a rival, one with whom he had to contend to establish himself as a true

artist.

In Joyce's mind, Shakespeare was a figure of past oppression, but also a figure

through which to generate new imaginative possibility. Because Shakespeare is such a

prominent figure of literature, he was an essential part of Joyce's ambitions to re-define

the relationship between history, imagination, and possibilities. While many texts from

Shakespeare's oeuvre appear in *Finnegans Wake*, *Hamlet* most often takes center stage.

Vincent Cheng states, "There are by far more allusions to *Hamlet* than to any other play

(Shakespeare or otherwise); and the parallels are more frequent, precise, and insistent:

HCE as King Hamlet, Shem as the prince, Issy as Ophelia, Shaun as Laertes/Polonius.

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[29] See Vincent Cheng's *Joyce, Race and Empire* for a more detailed analysis Of Joyce's
work in relation to the British empire and the English canon.

References to Hamlet are ubiquitous; and, as in the case of *Ulysses*, the themes and

motifs in *Hamlet* are structural counterparts to those in *Finnegans Wake*" (141).

Performance, Shakespearean performance in particular, was always a part of the *Wake*'s

development. By incorporating references to *Hamlet* throughout the novel Joyce

enhances the already dramatic nature of the text. Cheng notes, "Joyce conceived of the

world of *Finnegans Wake* as drama, as a Shakespearean play" (140). *Finnegans Wake* is

meant to be performed; it is meant to be read, listened to, and acted out through the play

of different potential meanings. The inclusion of Shakespearean references adds to the

text's multi-faceted nature, using the cultural capital of Shakespeare as the preeminent

English poet as well as a symbol of English colonial power.

Joyce's self-imagined rivalry with Shakespeare is rooted in his artistic aspirations.

For Joyce, the artist is godly. However, the idea of a godlike artist is often troubled in

Joyce's fiction. In his creative work Joyce sets up these expectations of artistic might, but

also questions the value of such identification. In "Scylla and Charybdis," the ninth

episode of *Ulysses* which deals most directly with Shakespeare, *Hamlet* in particular,

John Eglinton states, "After God Shakespeare has created most" (9.1028-1029). While

the claim is made partially in jest, it still holds truth for Joyce. As Cheng states:

> As a god and an artist, a poet triumphs over confining reality by creating
> worlds through the imagination—and each of his works is an exploration
> into the possible "history" of such worlds. As a god and an artist, Joyce
> carried the exploration of this general notion of "history" furthest in
> *Finnegans Wake*—with the construct of a dream, the perfect vehicle for
> repeated motifs and variations, for all possibilities and all history in the
> course of a night's dream. (142)

Finnegans Wake is atemporal in its dream state, the fluid associations built into the text itself reaching both backwards and forwards to create a space that re-signifies readers' conceptions of history by undermining accepted understandings of the references it continually recycles. As an artist-god Joyce can undo traditional understandings of influence. However, that undoing also ruptures the idea of an infallible or supreme god. In an artistic context, divinity becomes the power to strip away conventions to better understand that which was previously assumed to be something else. Joyce re-presents history, both fictional and not, forging new associations that demonstrate the possibility of transformation: "narratives written as counter-diagnostic stories can also be used to disrupt conventional dynamics of power, to claim the advantages of disability, and to call for [able persons] to join us in the coalitions" (Price, "Pronouns" 31). Potential empowerment is attached to counter-diagnostic stories. The *Wake* reclaims agency for Ophelia, Lucia, and Issy, foregrounding the un-diagnosability of their histories and asking readers to become part of the coalitions noted by Price. In *Finnegans Wake*, narrative is evolving alongside history, unraveling previously permanent conceptions of reading and the past in order to re-imagine them in a way that gives new meaning to the present.

The stylistic similarities between *Finnegans Wake* and Ophelia's song together rupture conceptions of madness that extend to Lucia's history, re-imagined through the fictional Issy and Ophelia. Elements of Ophelia's particular demonstration of madness are adapted through the *Wake*'s overall ethic. Ophelia's song is similar to *Finnegans Wake* in its unclear meaning, needing to be interpreted by the other characters on stage.

59

But in *Hamlet*, that ambiguity ultimately marks Ophelia as mad. Just as potential readers are often unsettled by the style of the *Wake*, turning away from the text, Ophelia's audience is similarly rattled by her song, her performance causing Laertes to ultimately label her as "A document in madness," in effect dismissing the potential meaning introduced through the song (4.5.172). In her seminal essay "Representing Ophelia" Elaine Showalter points out, "To liberate Ophelia from the text, or to make her its tragic center, is to re-appropriate her for our own ends….Ophelia *does* have a story of her own that the feminist criticism can tell; it is neither her life story, nor her love story, nor Lacan's story, but rather the *history* of her representation" (79). Similar to recent representations of Lucia, Ophelia's history has been appropriated. The ambiguity surrounding her narrative (most of her time is spent off-stage, and when she is on-stage her speech is limited), has been taken as an opportunity for scholars to impose their own histories on the character. *Finnegans Wake*, as a creative adaptation rather than a theoretical interpretation, adds to Ophelia's story without attempting to rewrite the original. Rather, it re-contextualizes it to imagine new possibilities of history.

The different networks of references built through adaptation add layers of meaning to the different texts, creating a constantly evolving narrative. Ophelia's song itself is, at least in part, an adaptation of the Walsingham song, a popular ballad during the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods (Sternfeld 108). The first line, "How should I your true love know," would have been recognizable to Shakespearean audiences (Shakespeare 4.5.23). While a handful of different versions of the song from the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods exist today, the first line of Ophelia's version is present

in all (Sternfeld 111-113). Having Ophelia's song begin with a recognizable lyric initiates

a feeling of familiarity, but then immediately challenges that familiarity by changing the

following lyrics. This reaction is possibly felt by Ophelia's audience on the stage and in

the theater, setting up expectations of meaning but then immediately dismantling them.

Even before Ophelia's entrance, Gertrude is reluctant to see her, having already been told

by a gentleman that Ophelia's words "carry but half sense" (4.5.7). The Gentleman goes

on to describe how others have been interpreting Ophelia's mannerisms and speech:

> That carry but half sense. Her speech is nothing,
> Yet the unshaped use of it doth move
> The hearers to collection; they yawn at it,
> And botch the words up fit to their own thoughts,
> Which, as her winks, and nods, and gestures yield them,
> Indeed would make one think there might be thought,
> Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily. (4.5.7-13)

When others hear Ophelia's speech "they yawn at it," dismissing it as tired and without

meaning. But they also "botch the words up fit to their own thoughts." Her listeners adapt

Ophelia's words to fit their own ideas. For Gertrude, guilt over Polonius' death, and over

her marriage to Claudius so soon after King Hamlet's death takes up all her focus. So,

once Ophelia begins to sing, the lyrics, read through Gertrude's perspective, speak to her

guilt, enhancing Gertrude's anxiety over her own role in the death and violence building

in the castle. Like Ophelia's other listeners, Gertrude "botch[es] the words up [to] fit

[her] own thoughts." However the uncertainty of Ophelia's words, and the anxieties

affected in the listeners because of that uncertainty, precipitates assumptions about

Ophelia's own sanity. By framing Ophelia's entrance in this way Shakespeare calls

attention to the song's more fluid signification of meaning and foreshadows the character's reactions to such ambiguous meaning.

When Ophelia begins singing her song, she momentarily causes listeners to question their own situations; however, that questioning rapidly turns back on Ophelia, marking her in the eyes of her audience as mad. When Ophelia begins singing her audience consists of Gertrude and Horatio. The first two stanzas of her song recall the Walsingham song but then introduce a shifting subject that her listeners can easily inhabit. By placing themselves in the context of the song, Gertrude and Horatio, who are uncertain as to Ophelia's knowledge of wrong doings in the castle, interpret the song as dangerous and potentially revealing of their individual wrong doings:

> How should I your true love know
>   From another one?
> By his cockle hat and staff
>   And his sandal shoon.
> …
> He is dead and gone, lady,
>   He is dead and gone;
> At his head a grass green turf,
>   At his heels a stone. (4.5.23-32)

The identity of the "I", the "true love," and the dead "he" is open to interpretation. The pronouns do not designate specific individuals, and the syntax only further encourages more fluid identifications. The "I" in the first line can be read as the true love, or another. Is the "I" "your true love," or is the "I" questioning an unknown third body, asking why he or she should have any knowledge of the other's true love? The following lines referring to "his cockle hat and staff / And his sandal shoon" further destabilize the relationship between the "I" and the "true love." The cockle hat marks the "he" as a

62

pilgrim visiting the shrine of St. James the greater, invoking religious ideology, which, for the characters in *Hamlet* is particularly important due to their morally questionable activities. But to return to the first stanza, the "he" brings a more fluid interpretation of gender into the song. Ophelia may be inhabiting a male singer, the gender fluidity further undermining her audience's ability to identify the subject . The different potential identities attached to the persons in the song unsettle the audience, Gertrude in particular.

Although the first stanza introduces a pilgrim visiting a saint's grave, the "He is dead and gone, lady, / He is dead and gone" speaks directly to Gertrude's decision to marry Claudius so soon after King Hamlet's death. Furthermore, these lines tie back into the first stanza, adding meaning to what initially could have been an anonymous true love. Playing on Gertrude's internal conflict over her marriage to Claudius, she might hear the song as speaking directly to her, Ophelia questioning the identity of Gertrude's true love, either the dead King Hamlet (aligning him with St. James) or Claudius. Although Ophelia's song initially seems to be only "half sense" its elements resonate with the characters. Ophelia, whom they subsequently label as mad (a label that would imply she is out of her mind, not making any sense), also has an almost mystical ability to speak directly to the anxieties in the other characters' souls. The "half sense" first described by the Gentleman is in fact a plurality of senses that lends itself to shifting meaning and identifications. While Hamlet's actions are repeatedly and definitively deemed mad throughout the play because of his intense actions and reactions to the changes he finds upon his return to Denmark, Ophelia's madness is represented through a lack of stable identification.

In *Hamlet* Ophelia's song takes up an ethic similar to that of *Finnegans Wake* in its denial of clear, identifiable meaning. Both ask readers and listeners to recognize the limitations of language, but also to not let those limitations curtail interpretation. Language binds us, but by pushing against traditional forms we can open up new ways of conceptualizing ourselves in relation to the world. In his article "The Mediation of Poesie: Ophelia's Orphic Song" Scott Trudell claims,

> Ophelia's distinctively feminine madness exposes early modern anxieties
> about how bodies and other types of "matter" come to signify, asking us to
> reconsider how drama simultaneously resides in physical substances on
> the page or in the air, amounts to insignificant and impalpable nothings
> that disappear as soon as they are uttered, and signifies so multifariously
> as to exceed matter entirely. (49)

Trudell is more specifically concerned with *Hamlet*'s awareness of the "materiality of dramatic production" (46). Ophelia's song calls that materiality into question through its lack of fixed meaning. I extend Trudell's point by underlining his call for a reconsideration of assumptions as to the physicality of meaning. Trudell links Ophelia's madness to early modern anxieties in relation to identity formation.

Similar anxieties were plaguing Joyce when writing *Finnegans Wake*. Joyce wrote *Finnegans Wake* between the world wars, from 1923 to 1939. Joyce, who wrote much of the *Wake* while living in France, had lived through one World War and was waiting for another. His home country of Ireland had formally won independence just a couple years prior in 1922 and was still reeling from the violence of that conflict. As much as he distanced himself physically from Ireland (he first left in 1904 at the age of 22 and returned rarely), his identity as an Irishman was tremendously influential on his work. He was also writing at a time of tremendous scientific and technological advances.

Joyce was extremely fascinated by popular technology, particularly film, and incorporated many elements of it into his work. Furthermore, while Europe as a whole was going through tremendous socio-political changes, Joyce underwent many personal challenges. Joyce's eyesight was continuing to deteriorate and his daughter Lucia, who was following her first admittance to a *maison de santé* in 1932, was repeatedly institutionalized for the rest of her life. Joyce, who died in 1941, spent much of the last nine years of his life attempting to free Lucia from different institutions and find a treatment that might help her re-assimilate into society.

The anxieties over meaning and identity, which Trudell reads as intrinsic to Ophelia's song (to its open signification of meaning and identification), are similarly present in *Finnegans Wake*. Trudell continues from the previous quote, "Through the extremes of materiality and immateriality with which she is associated, Ophelia forces audiences to confront the ways in which, as Judith Butler puts it, 'Think[ing] through the indissolubility of materiality and signification is no easy matter,' querying an unexamined reliance upon (or, worse, fetishization of) materiality" (49). Ophelia as a character, and her song in particular, interrupt the otherwise ordered performance of *Hamlet*. As a song, it interrupts the form of the rest of the text, its sung nature already marking it as outside of normative discourse within the play. When Laertes declares that Ophelia "A document in madness" he attempts to diagnose that which actively resists any such qualification. *Finnegans Wake* similarly defies diagnosis.

Both texts are products of anxieties haunting individuals. However, because of their base concerns about the materiality of language and identity, *Finnegans Wake* can

adapt and extend the uncertainty of Ophelia's song to a larger context. Linking Ophelia

with Lucia to make Issy further explores the issue of feminine madness. Gina Bloom,

Anston Bosman, and William West comment on the variety of ways Ophelia is

performed:

> Ophelia's performances resist singularity and iconicity … [and]
> underscore that theatrical actions are not necessarily subordinated to larger
> categories of plot, purpose, or character—one gesture can recall another
> without being named, grouped, sorted, or passed through an intervening
> conceptualization….Ophelia's performances demonstrate a theatricality
> that is productive rather than reflective or derivative. (Bloom et al. 169)

Ophelia's inherent resistance to singular interpretation is an expression of her difference

from the other characters. Mental Disability is often marked because of inability to

understand (that which is other than *sane* logic and language). While that lack of

singularity incites fear in the other characters of the play, it also opens up possibilities of

representation. As Bloom et al. note, these myriad representations are productive. And

through these possibilities, performance (and adaptation) can expand conceptions of

madness, using creative fictions to extend understandings of agency and meaning into

real life contexts.

<center>"All your Pupilteacher's Erringnesses in Perfection Class"</center>

In thinking through Joyce's attitudes towards Shakespeare, alongside his

ambitions to reorganize the relationship between history, imagination, and possibility, it

is perhaps not so surprising that, while Issy is in many ways an adaptation of Ophelia, the

references to Issy's literary predecessor are rarely explicit. But knowing Joyce's

knowledge of *Hamlet*, and the extent to which the play's themes helped organize *Ulysses*

and *Finnegans Wake*, it is impossible to deny a link between the two mad women. Issy

<center>66</center>

and Ophelia are both mad. They both sing. Moreover, Issy, through her depiction as a cloud, is often described as dissolving into rain, falling back into the Liffey (the embodiment of ALP) in a kind of death by transformation. Even without direct reference to Shakespeare, Ophelia haunts Issy. In *Hamlet*, Ophelia has very few lines. The majority of her dialogue is sung during Act IV Scene V, and she commits suicide, drowning in a river, soon thereafter. Ophelia is often present but silent in the *Wake*, much as she is in *Hamlet*, haunting Joyce's new mad girl.

Although the references to Ophelia in *Finnegans Wake* are brief, they create ties that help develop the haunting network that binds Ophelia, Issy, and Lucia. Book I Chapter V of *Finnegans Wake* opens with a list of titles for the "Mamafesta," a letter often mentioned, but never read, that circulates throughout the *Wake*. The letter, dictated by ALP, purportedly describes a crime committed by HCE in Phoenix Park. Embedded in the list of possible titles is "*Ophelia's Culpreints, Hear Hubty Hublin, My Old Danish, I am*" (Joyce, *FW* 105.18). The first phrase, "*Ophelia's Culpreints*" directly recalls Shakespeare's Ophelia. The use of "*Culpreints*" refers both to the latin phrase "O felix culpa!" roughly translated as "Lucky/happy fault/fall," and the french word "*cul*" meaning ass (McHugh 105). In this context, Ophelia's fall, her madness or her suicide, is both lucky in its fortuitous exposition of meaning, precipitating the concluding action of *Hamlet*, but it is also vulgar. It is common. The following phrase, "*Hear Hubty Hublin*" references "Dear Dirty Dublin" a common phrasing of the city characterizing it as a place of unrest and violence (McHugh 105). By having a reference to Ophelia lead into the reference to Dublin, the two are linked. Furthermore, "Dear Dirty Dublin" can be

connected to the "Rottenness" in Denmark. Both cities have been corrupted: by political

agendas and violence. The last potential title included in the quote, "*My Old Danish, I

am*" further reinforces the relationship between Dublin and Denmark, while also putting

it in the context of a song ("My Old Dutch" is also a song) (McHugh 105). Even though

this is a small moment, embedded in an extensive list with titles referring to a broad

spectrum of geographic locations and literary figure, the mention of Ophelia, and the

clear connections between her character, Dublin, Denmark, and song illustrate the way in

which her presence, and the presence of *Hamlet* and Shakespeare haunt *Finnegans Wake*

as a whole.

The second appearance of Ophelia I focus on is from Book III Chapter II.

Embedded in a 7-page long paragraph is the imperative, "Be irish. Be inish. Be offalia.

Be hamlet. Be the property plot. Be Yorick and Lankystare" (465.32-33). This series of

commands instruct the reader to be different places and people: be Irish, be inish (be an

island, "inis," pronounced "inish," is Irish for island), be Ophelia (but also be Co. Offaly

in Ireland), be hamlet (be Hamlet, but also be a hamlet, or a small village) (McHugh

465). The first four imperatives implore the reader to inhabit different individual human

character traits, but they also instruct the reader to be different places, plotting him or her

on an island, in a county, and in a town respectively. "Be the property plot" refers to the

Popish Plot 1678, a fictitious plot crafted by Titus Oates that claimed there was a

conspiracy to assassinate Charles II (McHugh 465). The Popish Plot is another narrative

surrounding the overthrowing of a king, but one that was artificially constructed. It

caused hysteria that partially characterized a period of history, but that hysteria was

inspired by a false story. The Popish Plot is then an example of narrative's productive and destructive power, speaking to narrative's influence on the course of history whether fictitious or not. The last sentence of the quote, "Be Yorick and Lankystare" further connects *Hamlet* to history, linking the character of Yorick to the conflict between York and Lancaster, which instigated the Wars of the Roses (McHugh 465). In this passage, fictional characters run into a historical plot, which runs back into a character who is immediately reinscribed as a part of a historical war. In this passage, the Shakespearean characters, Ophelia, Hamlet, and Yorick, are equals. They are all possible identifications to be inhabited, and they all have ties to history. Man or woman, sane or mad, alive or dead, each persona has influence. By commanding readers to "be" each of these identities, Joyce integrates the performative nature of theater within his written text. These identities are shifting personas that can be engaged to produce meaning.

While the above passages move to deconstruct Ophelia by recalling her directly, it is Joyce's transformation of Ophelia's suicide by drowning that most clearly expands her position in history, rewriting her death as a moment of rebirth. In the last pages of *Finnegans Wake* ALP is drifting out into the ocean. Her soliloquy is mournful, letting go of her life with HCE and children while inviting them to take her place. Issy, who often referred to as "nuvoletta" or little cloud, begins to rain (Joyce 157.17; 159.05; 159.06; 329.35). ALP invites her daughter to rain into her, transforming into a new version of each character's self: "First we feel. Then we fall. And let her rain now if she likes. Gently or strongly as she likes. Anyway let her rain for my time is come" (627.11-14). Ophelia's suicide by drowning is refigured here. Issy dissolves herself into rain, falling

69

into her mother, sinking into the Liffey. However, that fall does not end in death. In *Hamlet* Gertrude describes Ophelia's death saying she "Fell in the weeping brook" (Shakespeare 5.1.174). Ophelia's fall in *Hamlet* is final. In *Finnegans Wake* however, ALP welcomes the fall of her daughter, understanding it as a choice. The repetition of "if she likes" returns agency to ALP's mad daughter, emphasizing Issy's power in a moment of transformation. Unlike Ophelia and Lucia, Issy may still control her destiny. By refiguring a moment of death Joyce adapts narratives that previously ended in tragedy by creating a space where, even in a kind of death, as one character dissolves into another, Issy, haunted by the presence of Ophelia and Lucia, retains her agency.

Issy's agency within the *Wake* is often limited by other characters' judgments of her. However, ultimately she is allowed a choice, allowing her the freedom to control her fate, a possibility Ophelia and Lucia are denied. In a 1953 interview, years after having treated Lucia, Carl Jung told Richard Ellmann that "she [Lucia] and her father [Joyce] were like two people going to the bottom of a river, one falling and the other diving" (Jung qtd. in Ellmann 679). Jung's statement contrasts the perceived control (or lack thereof) each person had over their own actions. Agency separates a mad girl from a creative genius. One can control their actions, while the other cannot. Furthermore, Jung's use of the river as a metaphor underlines images of suicide and rebirth. Although not a direct reference to *Hamlet*, the quote resonates with Ophelia's suicide, her fall to the bottom of a river. While in *Hamlet* Ophelia drowns, in the *Wake*, Issy learns to dive. She learns to control her descent into the river. She falls as rain into the Liffey. In the final pages of the novel, as ALP feels herself flowing out to sea, she claims Issy can "rain now

70

if she likes. Gently or strongly as she likes," controlling the speed of her transformation

(627). Haunted by the figures of Ophelia and Lucia, *Finnegans Wake* creates a space in

which the factual and fictional women are reborn, giving them a future that was

previously taken away. *Finnegans Wake* builds on the free association of language that

caused others to label Ophelia as mad, activating the silent presence she maintains in

Hamlet through the fleeting presence of Issy. In linking three women, Ophelia, Lucia,

and Issy, Joyce creates a framework through which readers engage with uncertain

(otherwise insane) meaning. By emphasizing the instability of language in relation to the

imaginative possibility of adapted histories, Joyce offers readers an adaptation of Ophelia

inspired by the same socio-cultural anxieties that inspired her initial song in Shakespeare.

However, while in *Hamlet* Ophelia's madness ends in drowning, Issy drowns through

rain, falling into the river Liffy ready to evaporate into new clouds and repeat her

narrative with a difference. Through that difference, through the re-imagining and re-

narrating of history, new possibilities rise from madness to build fresh avenues of

understanding and identification.

<div align="center">"A Viry Vikid Girl"</div>

In narrativising history, Joyce also re-identifies historical figures, re-situating

them within the text. In particular, Joyce often invokes literary adjacent women, calling

attention to the women who inspire narratives rather than the men who wrote them. He

ruptures non-fictional histories as well as fictional histories. Some of the most mentioned

non-fictional women include Alice Liddell and Isa Bowman, who were in turn inspiration

and friend to Lewis Carroll, W.B. Yeats' muse Maud Gonne, and Esther Johnson (also

called Stella) and Esther Vanhomrigh (also called Vanessa), two lovers of Jonathan Swift. Joyce situates these non-fictional women within the fictional narrative of the *Wake* and in doing so highlights the influence these women had on the narratives published by their male author counterparts.

In Book three chapter three (III.3), these women appear together, through Issy's words, and are aligned with Isolde of *Tristan and Isolde* one of the narrative frameworks repeatedly invoked throughout *Finnegans Wake*. In this section of the text, Shaun (hear here called Yawn) is "interrogated by four old men," Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, often referred to as the Mamalujo (*FW* xxxiii). The Mamalujo has been interrogating Yawn for more than fifty pages when John makes a direct call to women saying "woman will water the wild world over" (526.20-21). He goes on to list women including "two stripping baremaids" or barmaids and "Stilla Underwood" a reference to Swift's Stella and her underwear (Joyce, *FW* 526.23; McHugh 526). But halfway through the paragraph he singles out one women in particular: "There was that one that was always mad gone" (526.26). This line directly references Maud Gonne, as well as a woman who has gone mad. One who "was near drownd in pondest coldstreams of admiration forherself" (526.28-29). The "one that was always mad gone" was mad because of her narcissism. Throughout the *Wake* Issy is described as looking in mirrors, seemingly obsessed with herself. However, scholars have pointed to the double nature of Issy's gaze. Jen Shelton defines "mirror-speech" in Joyce more broadly as "baby talk" ("Bad Girls" 95). Referring to Cissy Caffery's speech in "Nausicaa" alongside "Issy's childish, sexualized lisp in *Finnegans Wake*" Shelton claims "adults who use it are attempting to reflect the child's

own sounds, but the adult desires the child in turn to mirror the adult, to 'repeat after me,'" which shows the power dynamics intrinsic to language itself (95). Kimberly Devlin, speaking of Gerty MacDowell in *Ulysses* as well as Issy states, "Joyce's narcissistic females are indeed often presented as working to display themselves as visually pleasing sights, as voyeuristic objects, yet herein lie the potential paradox of narcissism…in order to present oneself as a voyeuristic object, one must first be aware of a voyeur, and to be secretly aware of a voyeur is to be a voyeur oneself, a furtively viewing subject" (140). Gerty and Issy are both aware of themselves as objects of male desire and are concerned with their own appearance in response. Joyce has his women use that narcissism, often represented by a mirror, as a form of resistance. As Michael Powers claims, drawing on theories from Judith Butler and Louis Althusseur, we can read "Issy's mirror not as a symbol of female narcissism, but as a sign of the doubling necessary for her mimetic resistance" (120). Issy's narcissism in part conforms to a voyeuristic male gaze, but more significantly, through the dream-state of *Finnegans Wake*, Issy redefines the terms of that voyeuristic relationship (Powers 120-121).

When John refers to the "one that was always mad gone," lost in an obsession with herself, he sets up a judgment of Issy as narcissistic. However, that judgement is directly and immediately in Issy's response when she claims "Nircississies are as the doaters of inversion" (526.34-35). Narcissists, and Issy (in all her forms), are daughters of inversion. They are the product of a reversal. The line also recalls the proverb "Necessity is the mother of invention," pointing to the necessity of revision for the creation of something new or invented (McHugh 526). "Nircississies" are necessary, as

both product (daughter) and creator (mother), for creation. It takes something new, something transgressive through inversion, to produce something new. Here Issy asserts her power as creator, claiming authority through her own narcissism. The emphasis in the line on inversion further reinforces Joyce's method of rewriting fictional and non-fictional histories. In *Finnegans Wake* narratives are continually inverted and shown from new angles. Issy is a "[doater] of inversion" but also the mother of invention. Her language, which constantly goes "off-script" is an inversion of expected communication. The girl that "was always mad gone" is not in fact gone. Her position is just inverted alongside her language. From that marginal position Issy calls to other women, both fictional and non-fictional, inverting a male-centered history and ultimately recasting Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John as women: "Magda, Marthe with Luz and Joan" (528.12-13).

Issy's response to John begins with a mirror-self, reinforcing her narcissistic tendencies. However, through her address she claims a space not only for her own voice, but for the memory of other literary-adjacent women. Her initial imperative "Listenest, meme mearest!" calls for attention, and describes her audience both as her dearest and the same. "Meme," meaning same in French (*même*), positions the speaker and audience as mirror images. And, while "meme" clearly recalls the idea of being "dorowned in pondest coldstreams of admiration forherself," it also allows her to enter the ongoing conversation throughout the chapter as an equal. She is the same as those around her. Issy's opening confuses the relationship between speaker and audience. In the following lines she continues to address a feminine audience calling her a "viry vikid girl" and her

"lickle wiffey" (527.5; 11). As the passage continues the "v" and "k" sounds sounds of "viry vikid" and "lickle" are repeated, becoming infantilizing in "vickyvicky veritiny" (very very very tiny), and then reinforcing the idea of wickedness in "very wickred" (527.16-17; 527.25). Issy's self-reflexivity imagines herself as something wicked, or, at the very least deviant. The "one that was mad gone" is aberrant and potentially malicious.

Repetition in and of itself is not uncommon in the *Wake*. Here the repeated sounds, and later in the paragraph the repetition in "Listen, meme sweety!" followed by "It's meemly us two, meme, idol," helps establish a rhythm oriented around Issy's address to herself. In response to the judgment as "mad gone" offered by John, she uses what scholars have called her *mirror language*.[30] She reflects and inverts John's judgment and reclaims it as her own. While Issy's agency throughout *Finnegans Wake* is limited, her speech resists oppression. She asserts herself through moments of interruption. Furthermore, beginning with John's mention of Maud Gonne, women saturate the ensuing passage. In order, Issy recalls Alice Liddell, her fictional namesake, Isolde Blanchemains, Isolde la Belle, Isa Bowman, and Swift's two Esthers (526.34; 35; 527.21; 29-30; 528.12). In aligning herself with other fictional and non-fictional women of varying fame, Joyce extends the narrative framework of *Finnegans Wake* into a larger historical context.[31] Through Issy's mirror language the women are brought to the

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[30] While Michael Powers uses this phrase most directly in "Issy's Mimetic Night Lessons," much has also been said about Issy's mirror-self, and the recurring motif of mirrors throughout the wake. For further discussion see Bruns, "What's in a Mirror," Hein, *The Double Life of Issy Earwicker*, Robinson, "The Girl in the Mirror," and Bernard Benstock, "The Final Apostacy."

[31] In "*Finnegans Wake* and the Girls from Boston, Mass," one of the first pieces of scholarship to speculate on a potential inspiration for Issy, Adaline Glasheen argues that

forefront while they otherwise remained on the sidelines, footnotes to the narrative of their male counterparts' literary fame.

<center>"Bewise of Fanciulla's Heart"</center>

While III.3 brings literary adjacent women to the center of the text, the "Nightlessons" chapter explores the potential of this adjacent position to interrupt traditional narratives. Throughout the text *Finnegans Wake* uses unexpected words and phrases that, on their own challenge the reader's ability to read; however, much of the text is formatted as typical prose. "Nightlessons" is not (see fig. 1.2). The coming together of voices in "Nightlessons," the overlap of the marginal Shem and Shaun (also referred to as Dolf and Kev in this chapter) and Issy's footnotes, further encourages multifaceted readings of the text. Joyce employs this method to re-cast the scene of Lucia hurling a chair at her mother through Issy, in a literary space where assumptions as to her sanity can be suspended in favor of alternate narratives.

The chapter counters the traditional purpose of marginalia as either to affirm or extend information already in the text to open up alternate narratives through the disruption of authority. Marginalia, foot notes in particular, traditionally further explain the text they appended. They are literally and figuratively subordinate to the main text:

Issy is based on a young woman known as "Miss Christine L. Beauchamp" (90). Miss Beauchamp's history of mental disability was recorded in Morton Prince's *The Dissociation of a Personality*, an early case study of diagnosed multiple personality disorder. Both Christine Beauchamp and the letter in *Finnegans Wake* are from Boston, Massachusetts. Glasheen ties these multiple identities to both Issy and the rainbow girls in *Finnegans Wake*, juxtaposing Prince's writing with passages from the Wake that demonstrate similar language. Glasheen's work is foundational in that it helped support future readings of Issy as narcissistic and mad.
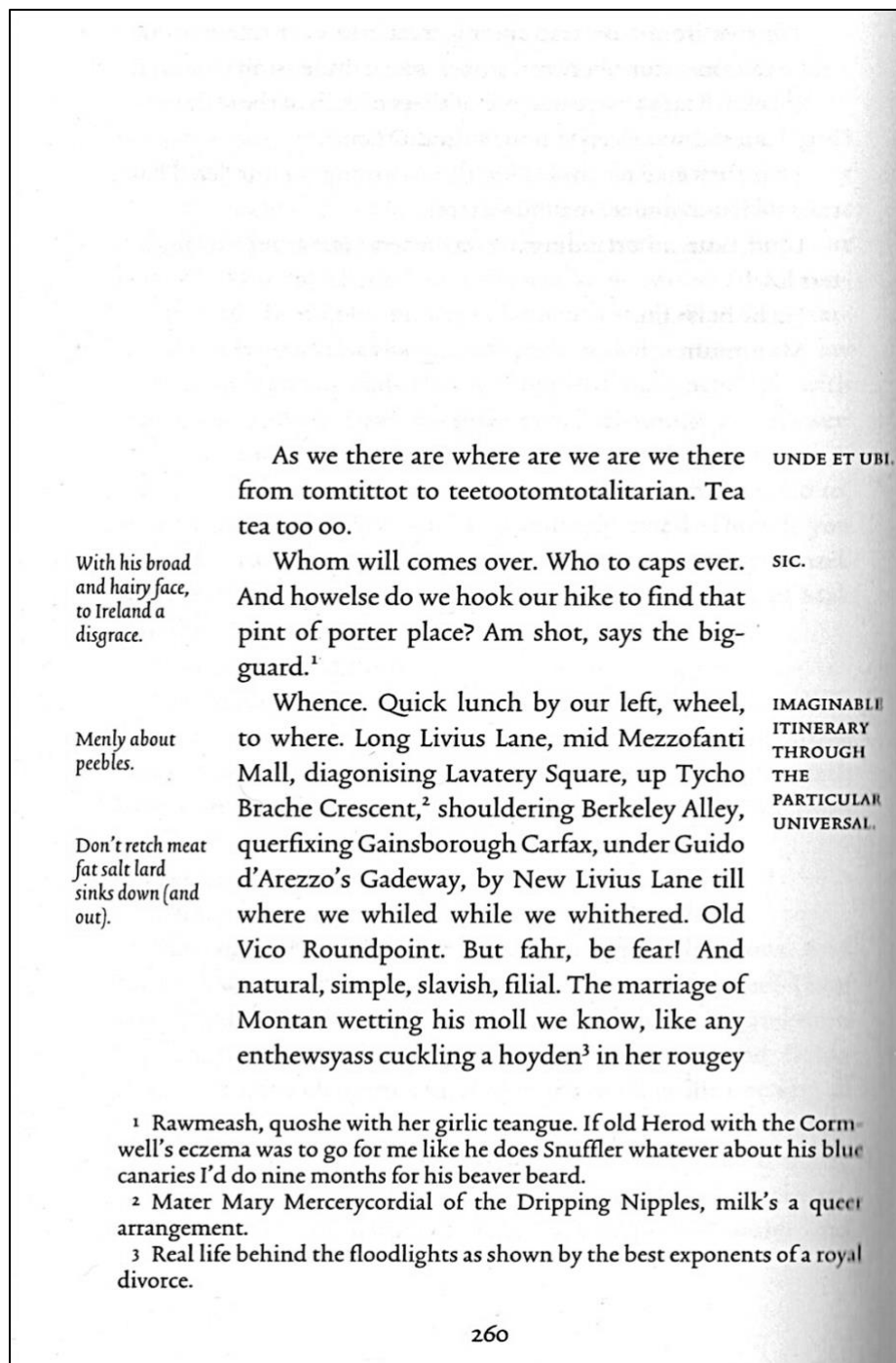
As we there are where are we are we there
from tomtittot to teetootomtotalitarian. Tea
tea too oo.

Whom will comes over. Who to caps ever.   sic.
And howelse do we hook our hike to find that
pint of porter place? Am shot, says the big-
guard.[1]

Whence. Quick lunch by our left, wheel,   IMAGINABLE
to where. Long Livius Lane, mid Mezzofanti   ITINERARY
THROUGH
Mall, diagonising Lavatery Square, up Tycho   THE
Brache Crescent,[2] shouldering Berkeley Alley,   PARTICULAR
UNIVERSAL.
querfixing Gainsborough Carfax, under Guido
d'Arezzo's Gadeway, by New Livius Lane till
where we whiled while we whithered. Old
Vico Roundpoint. But fahr, be fear! And
natural, simple, slavish, filial. The marriage of
Montan wetting his moll we know, like any
enthewsyass cuckling a hoyden[3] in her rougey

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[1] Rawmeash, quoshe with her girlic teangue. If old Herod with the Corm-
well's eczema was to go for me like he does Snuffler whatever about his blue
canaries I'd do nine months for his beaver beard.

[2] Mater Mary Mercerycordial of the Dripping Nipples, milk's a queer
arrangement.

[3] Real life behind the floodlights as shown by the best exponents of a royal
divorce.

260

Figure 1.2: Finnegans Wake *p. 260, the first page of "Nightlessons"*

77

"By definition, footnotes are physically more constrained than the primary text: they are minimal, skeletal, succinct, their purpose being to elaborate on the text without engulfing it; at the same time, they are freer to adopt a new line of rhetoric" (Benstock 204). When incorporated into works of fiction, this "new line of rhetoric" can call further attention to the relationship between reader, text, and author. In "Nightlessons," where the voices of the three Earwicker children surround the main text, enclosing it on three sides, the divergent responses to the central text incite new narratives that implicate the reader as a part of their production. Referring to "Nightlessons," Benstock goes on to claim that the children, in their work in the classroom, break down the texts they are trying to understand, working through them both in both written and spoken contexts, creating "a kind of double reflection for the very process that we ourselves are completing as we read the chapter" (216). In the classroom environment of "Nightlessons," the children learn through collaborative effort. Within the narrative of the *Wake* they combine modes of engagement (written and oral, reading and listening) to make sense of what they are learning.

Extending beyond the text, readers are likewise implicated, moving between and across the different marginalia and the center text, engaging with the text from a non-linear perspective. Building on the work of Gérard Genette, Benstock goes on to point out, "Particularly in works that subvert our notions about narrative…we may discover not only that marginalia—notes, prefaces, afterwords, appendixes, and epilogues—are part of the text but that we are as well. In other words, we may participate in an authorial prerogative that would *seem* to rest inside the text with the author" (210-211). The reader

makes decisions about how and when to combine the marginalia as a part of the center text. Benstock focuses on the footnotes in the chapter most clearly. While footnotes are meant to confirm or extend the text they add to, in fiction, and in *Finnegans Wake* specifically, they do precisely the opposite. The footnotes interrupt the center text to undermine its assumed authority. In "Nightlessons," however, traditional formatting with numbered superscript mark the exact moment when the footnotes append the center text. When dealing with the marginalia from Shem and Shaun, no markers dictate the specific points at which they enter. While the content of the marginalia and center text are always connected (sometimes more clearly than others), there are no clearly demarcated points where the twins interrupt. Rather, their marginalia creates the impression of chatter occurring at the same time as the center text is being read. The twins either speak over the middle or mutter under their breath in the background.

Shem and Shaun speak on the sides of the center text, but their contributions, without direct reference, can often become background noise, lacking the assertive tie that a footnote marker would provide. We see this from the opening paragraphs of the chapter (see fig. 4). The second paragraph of the center text reads, "Whom will comes over. Who to caps ever. And howelse do we hook our hike to find that pint of porter place? Am shot, says the bigguard.[1]" (260.4-7). The twins both speak marginally, beginning at the same time, in line with the first line of the paragraph. On the left Shem states "*With his broad and hairy face, to Ireland a disgrace*" (260.L). Shaun merely states "SIC" (260.R). Not only do the marginal comments differ drastically in length and content, the point at which each brother's voice enters the text is unclear. The reader is

implicated through his or her choice as to when and how to read each brother's marginalia. Yes, they are responding to the very beginning of the chapter, but it is unclear if they are speaking at the same time, at the end of a sentence, or in the middle of one. And each potential point where their statements could enter shifts the meaning of the marginalia, and consequentially the center text. Furthermore, Shaun's statement "SIC" implies that there are errors in the center text, ones that he identifies but does not change. But, without a clear entry point for the marginalia, we cannot identify the error. The reader is left thinking that something might be wrong, but without any certainty of what that error is, creating confusion from the beginning.

Issy's entry into the chapter continues to cast doubt on the center text, further destabilizing its authority. The paragraph ends with Issy's first footnote: "Rawmeash, quoshe with her girlic teangue. If old Herod with the Cormwell's eczema was to go for me like he does Snuffler whatever about his blue canaries I'd do nine months for his beaver beard" (260.F1). In her opening words, Issy, in her "girlic teangue" (girlish and gaelic tongue) declares the center text either a romance or nonsense, the Irish translation of raumaush (McHugh 260.F1). If "old Herod with the Cormwell's eczema," HCE who shares a skin condition with Herod and who is also Mark of Cornwall from *Tristan and Isolde*, goes for her, she would "do nine months" hard labor (McHugh 260.F1). Issy's entry into the chapter immediately undermines the authority of the center text. The reader must look down and then back up, rereading the center with Shem, Shaun, and Issy's commentary before continuing. The act of moving back and forth between the separate margins and the center text necessitates an almost schizophrenic reading practice. This

challenge to traditional reading practices does not attempt to replicate exactly an experience of mental disability. However, it does reposition the reader in relation to the text, shifting their perspective. The reader juggles different voices in his or her head, physically looking back and forth, and up and down, continually negotiating the narrative through the combination of each child's input, each of which notably casting doubt on the authority of the center, Shem, Shaun, and Issy, declaring either the text or its speaker a disgrace, error, and nonsense respectively. Rather than reducing schizophrenia to a superficial, static metaphor, the aesthetic of the chapter actively engages the reader and encourages him or her to expand their expectations and allow for unexpected narrative possibilities. The chapter shifts the act of reading, changing the way the reader relates to the text both mentally and physically. With each child's initial challenge to authority the reader is asked to make his or her own judgement based on a collection of perspectives rather than a singular impression.

Through the layering of the children's voices, those ruptures illustrate the limits of understanding precipitated by schizophrenia. "Nightlessons" presents an opportunity to understand Issy's moments of madness within a classroom community, a designated site of learning. However, as Price points out, classrooms may also be sites of transgression. Neither Joyce's style, nor the children's' responses, follow a "tacit script" of communication. Shem, Shaun, and Issy's presence in "Nightlessons" is a community that demonstrates the way Issy's schizophrenic tendencies create ruptures between those around her. Shem and Shaun are split, only communicating across the distance of the center text, but, while Issy remains constant in the footnotes of the chapter, Shem and

Shaun can swap sides after what Joyce refers to as "half-time," a period of approximately five and a half pages where the twins remain silent and the only child left speaking is Issy[32]. Each of the three children has a voice, but only two have the freedom to move. Shem and Shaun are always separate but are fluid in that they can change sides. Issy is constant in that she is never silenced, her footnotes never disappear, but she does not have freedom to move. She is set in her place.

However, the consistency of Issy's position gives her more focus, and provides a position from which to interrupt male authority. As Shelton argues, "Joyce harnesses that intrinsic polyvocality to foreground a power relationship in which the voice of a young girl interrupts, countervails, and subverts the masculine discourses the novel otherwise establishes" ("Issy's Footnote" 204). When Shem and Shaun swap positions, it is at first difficult to tell. Issy's unchanging position in the footnotes, while her siblings move about, suggest that she is most reliable, consistent in her inconsistent interruptions of the male voices. It is the world around her that changes. Relating this to Lucia, her identity did not change, but her identification did. She remained as she always was, but was given a new mad label. The brilliant dancer was still there, still needing to express herself, but she was stigmatized by schizophrenia. Her thoughts could no longer be smoothly integrated into the main text of existence. In "Nightlessons" Issy's footnotes consistently

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[32] Joyce's use of the term "half-time" also alludes to a game or sporting match where two teams switch sides at half, for example soccer. Were the page a field, Issy, remaining in the footnotes, is a spectator. She is not allowed on the field. Nonetheless she breaks rules of participation, moving from the sideline onto center field. The regulations governing play, paralleling the script governing communication or narrative, are forcibly interrupted by Issy's presence on the field, pausing the action.

illustrate this rift, her thoughts shedding new light on what it means to be labeled as mad within a normal, or sane, community.

<p style="text-align:center">"When We Will Conjugate Together Toloseher"</p>

Through his adaptation of Lucia into Issy, Joyce uses *Wakean* language to recreate the scene of Lucia's institutionalization, rupturing assumptions as to the event, and questioning his daughter's actions and understanding them from a different point of view. The chapter's use of marginalia and footnotes is jarring and can become distracting. As Joyce worked on revising this chapter, the voices in the marginalia and the footnotes became more distinct. The individual children began to shine through. "Nightlessons" evolved over the course of several years. Joyce began conceiving the chapter in 1925 and did not finish editing until the final text was published in 1939. In a letter to his friend, Frank Budgen, Joyce described the chapter as the most difficult to read: "The part of *F.W.* accepted as easiest is section pp. 104 et seq and the most difficult of acceptance pp. 260 et seq—yet the technique here is a reproduction of a schoolboy's (and schoolgirl's) old classbook complete with marginalia by the twins, who change sides at half time, footnotes by the girl (who doesn't), a Euclid diagram, funny drawings etc" (*LI* 406). The spatial arrangement of voices on the page challenges readers to move between different voices, and therefore move between different trains of thought.

As Joyce revised this chapter, Issy's voice became increasingly individual, further distinguishing the children from one another. In *How Joyce Wrote Finnegans Wake*, Luca Crispi uses genetic criticism to trace the evolution of "Nightlessons." Regarding the chapter's increasing focus on Issy, Crispi comments, "Joyce may simply have favored the

more recently written texts because they gave a more prominent voice to Issy, whose place in II.2 up till *then* had been minimal" (Crispi 234; emphasis added). The "then" Crispi is speaking of is 1934, two years after Lucia's initial institutionalization. Issy's presence in the footnotes increased the more Lucia went through unsuccessful treatments for her schizophrenia. As Lucia's schizophrenia became more visible, so did Issy's voice in *Finnegans Wake*.[33]

Lucia first entered a *maison de santé*, a facility specializing in mental health, in 1932; and while she was not given a specific diagnosis until years later, this change of fate dramatically altered Lucia's future role in her family, as well as in society in general (Shloss 216). Joyce's biographer, Richard Ellmann, describes the circumstances leading to this event as follows: "Clinging to a conviction that a change of surroundings might cure her, [Joyce] wrote to [his brother] Stanislaus to ask if she might visit Trieste. But before his brother could reply, Lucia upset the birthday party on February 2, 1932, by striking [her mother] Nora, and her internment in a sanatorium could no longer be deferred" (668). Shloss describes the same occasion slightly differently saying, "On 2 February, Lucia, dangling irresolutely around the edges of her previous life, suddenly

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[33] In "Lightning Becomes Electra: Violence, Inspiration, and Lucia Joyce in *Finnegans Wake*," Finn Fordham charts how Issy's character changed throughout different chapters after Lucia was first institutionalized, particularly looking at manuscripts edited to include motifs of lightning and female aggression or violence, the latter which Fordham connects to the event of Lucia throwing a chair at her mother. However, while Fordham argues that Lucia was one of Joyce's strongest influences in writing the *Wake*, he ultimately sees the *Wake* as a text meant to control or confine Lucia's madness. My reading diverges in that I read the *Wake* as opening up Lucia's madness, allowing it to be read in new contexts without the same stigma or fear that would have characterized reactions to Lucia in life.

leaped from her liminal position to the forefront of everyone's awareness by throwing a chair at Nora…. The theatricality of her feat caught everyone's attention" (215). Lucia was thrust into the spotlight from the sidelines, her entrance jarring and unrecognizable in terms of normative actions. For Shloss however, Lucia's entrance into a sanatorium was less certain. Shloss states that it was her older brother Giorgio's idea: "Giorgio alone responded to [Lucia's] action without hesitation: he took her immediately to a *maison de santé*. He thereby changed her fate" (216). Although no diagnosis was reached on Lucia's first commitment to a hospital (she was released shortly after and returned to her parents' house), the event of her entrance defined how she was treated for the rest of her life: "[Giorgio] had stigmatized his sister before any doctor had offered a professional opinion about her state of mind" (Shloss 219). Giorgio's placement of Lucia in a *maison de santé* was immensely problematic, and caused Lucia much more trouble than her outbursts might have caused on their own. The stigma of mental illness changed the way she lived her life. It changed the way other people saw her.

Rather than allowing her to re-assimilate to life outside of an institution, her repeated stays in a variety of mental hospitals, and the series of ineffective treatments she went through, increased the trouble she had interacting with her friends and family. She would enter a hospital and stay for anywhere from a week to several months. This frustrated and angered Joyce. He sympathized with Lucia and desperately tried to free her from institutionalization. Joyce alone stood by her and continued to deny the stigma of mental illness placed on her by her brother. Ellmann describes Joyce's interactions with his daughter at the time saying, "[Joyce] listened to her always with respect, and when

85

she concocted a story of having been seduced by all the young men who visited him, he sent them all away" (667). Joyce resisted committing Lucia to a sanatorium for many years. He listened to Lucia with a sympathetic ear. Of his relationship to his daughter, Marian Eide says:

> Joyce's letters reveal a strong identification with his daughter … a preoccupation bordering on obsession with her disorder, and, most tragically, a fear of his own culpability in producing her schizophrenia. Examining his conscience in the fear of revealing a sin, he worries that their family history of wandering (moving and changing homes frequently, changing languages and cultures) throughout Lucia's youth produced the wandering of her mind. He also worries that her unusual thought processes might be a displaced and damaged version of his own artistry. (111)

Joyce felt a great deal of sympathy for his daughter and guilt over Lucia's diagnosis. Rather than committing her to a sanatorium as a problem for someone else to deal with, he thought of several potential solutions for accommodating her condition and constantly looked for ways to help her. Joyce worked tirelessly until the end of his life to find a cure for Lucia, or at the very least a way for her to regain autonomy and assimilate back into normative society. He wrote to her regularly while she was in the asylum and continued to trust her implicitly. Until her death, Lucia moved in and out of different institutions, alternating between clinical treatment and staying with different friends of the family. Oftentimes she stayed far away from her father. Many of his main supporters including Paul Léon and Harriet Shaw Weaver saw Joyce's devotion to his daughter as a distraction and felt she interfered with his creative process; as such, they would encourage him to let Lucia stay with friends and acquaintances who lived far from Paris (Shloss 307). In May of 1935 Paul Léon, a friend of Joyce, wrote in a letter to Joyce's patron, Harriett Shaw Weaver, "Mr. Joyce trusts one person alone, and this person is Lucia. Anything she says

or writes is the thing by which he is guided" (qtd. in Ellmann 682). Joyce's extremely close relationship with Lucia affected him daily. He trusted and identified with her. He wanted to understand how she experienced the world. In his writing, this effort to understand became incorporated into the character of Issy in *Finnegans Wake*.

<div align="center">"For Tough Troth is Stronger than Fortuitous Fiction"</div>

Joyce's efforts to understand Lucia's experience become most direct as "Nightlessons" begins to shift towards half-time. Issy's footnotes continue to question the center text and express ideas increasingly akin to Lucia's experience, reframing the event that incited her institutionalization. Shaun's marginalia marks the shift towards half-time: "INCIPIT INTERMISSIO" translated from Latin means "intermission begins" (see fig. 1.3, Joyce 278R, McHugh 278). His statement shows the beginning of intermission and shifts the focus of the following page to Issy. On the left, Shem remains silent for a few lines as the center paragraph begins, "Bewise of Fanciulla's heart, the heart of Fanciulla! Even the recollection of willow fronds is a spellbinder that let to hear.[3]" (Joyce, *FW* 278.7-9). The passage begins with a demand to "Bewise," or beware, of "fanciulla," young girl in Italian (McHugh 278). It refers to Issy, but also to Lucia who was born in Trieste, a part of modern-day Italy and who spoke Italian as her first language. The center text warns the students to beware of her heart. The heart may be dangerous, or it could be fragile, at risk of cracking if others are not careful. This tension between danger and fragility evokes Lucia's romantic history. From approximately 1929 to 1931 Lucia was involved in a series of failed romantic relationships, including an infamous affair with Samuel Beckett who worked as her father's amanuensis at the time, and a broken engagement to a man

gobbet for its quantity of quality but who wants to cheat the choker's got to learn to chew the cud. Allwhichhole scrubs on scroll circuminiuminluminatedhave encuoniams here and improperies there.[1] With a pansy for the pussy in the corner.[2]

Bewise of Fanciulla's heart, the heart of Fanciulla! Even the recollection of willow fronds is a spellbinder that lets to hear.[3] The rushes by the grey nuns' pond: ah eh oh let me sigh too. Coalmansbell: behoves you handmake of the load. Jenny Wren: pick, peck. Johnny Post: pack, puck.[4] All the world's in want and is writing a letters.[5] A letters from a person to a place about a thing. And all the world's on wish to be carrying a letters. A letters to a king about a treasure from a cat.[6] When men want to write a letters. Ten men, ton men, pen men, pun men, wont to rise a ladder. And den men, dun men, fen men, fun men, hen men, hun men went to raze a leader. Is then any lettersday from many peoples, Daganasanavitch? Empire, your outermost.[7] A posy cord. Plece.

We have wounded our way on foe tris prince till that force in the gill is faint afarred

[1] Gosem pher, gezumpher, greeze a jarry grim felon! Good bloke him!

[2] And if they was setting on your stool as hard as my was she could beth her bothom dolours he'd have a culious impressiom on the diminitive that chafes our ends.

[3] When I'am Enastella and am taken for Essastessa I'll do that droop on the pohlmann's piano.

[4] Heavenly twinges, if it's one of his I'll fearly feint as swoon as he enter-rooms.

[5] To be slipped on, to be slept by, to be conned to, to be kept up. And when you're done push the chain.

[6] With her modesties office.

[7] Strutting as proud as a great turquin weggin that cuckhold on his Eddems and Clay's hat.

278

Figure 1.3: Finnegans Wake *p. 278*

named Alexander Ponisovsky (Shloss 185-217). The connection to Beckett is particularly important because it has long been hypothesized that it was the sight of Beckett at her father's fiftieth birthday party that set off her fit of violence, culminating in the chair thrown at her mother. Borrowing the language of the *Wake*, Beckett, someone who was not "bewise" enough of Fanciulla's heart, caused her to lash out.[34] As the paragraph continues, these associations build, and Issy's footnotes reinforce the connection, building a narrative that counters assumptions as to how and why the situation escalated.

Beginning this paragraph with a warning sets up what follows, prepares readers to be on guard, aware of the plurality of meaning attached to the text and the alternate narratives attached to those meanings. While a warning is clearly present in "bewise," at the more literal level it is also "be wise." Fanciulla, as well as the auras of Issy and Lucia brought in through association, needs to be considered carefully, further developing a hesitant tone. Fanciulla, also Issy, is someone to watch out for. She is an outsider, a foreign other. She requires careful thought, and when approaching her one must stay alert. Issy's status as dangerous is, according to the center text, triggered by grief or presumably by other overpowering moods—the willow is a symbol of grief and, through memory, the "fronds" of that grief can cast a spell (McHugh 278). She goes through life knowing that others keep her at arm's length, afraid, either for her sake or their own, that

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[34] Although Lucia was hurt by her relationship to Samuel Beckett, the hurt was not intentional. He did not intend to break her heart. They had simply entered into a relationship neither was prepared for: "Were Lucia and Beckett lovers? … We cannot know…. But as Beckett well knew by 1932, the important question was not whether the two of them had slept together but whether they had created lasting emotional ties" (Shloss 191).

she will react, casting a frightening spell that has the power to harm. But while this potential to harm is frightening, it is not something inapproachable. One must simply remain wary, wise and sympathetic to the ways of "fanciulla."

Issy's footnote to these sentences further paints her as an outsider, highlighting her role as adjacent to the actions of her brothers and the center text. She is conscious of her own status: "[3]When I'am Enastella and am taken for Essastessa I'll do that droop on the pohlmann's piano" (Joyce, *FW* 278.F3). When Issy is a "stella," a star in the sky, she will be taken for "essa stessa," "She herself" in Italian (McHugh 278). She is only taken as herself from an astronomical distance. She cannot get close to the other individuals. She is a sparkling beauty, but she is always far away and at risk of combustion. "Essatessa" also references Vanessa, also known as Esther Vanhomrigh, a young girl who was a romantic interest of Jonathan Swift (McHugh 278). Swift's relationship with Vanessa, a woman much younger than him, was extremely controversial. The two were in love but never married. Swift's opinions drew Vanessa to him. Claude Rawson describes Swift's perspective on love saying, "Swift taught that qualities of mind, not beauty, are the surest foundation of love, and denounced social conventions that treated women alternately as goddesses and decorative idiots" (Rawson xii). The mind is important; it needs to be found out. The superficial is secondary. When Issy declares herself to be "taken for essa stessa," she is being taken for Vanessa, a young girl ruined by the scandal that followed her love for an older man. But Issy is also someone whose beauty lies in her mind, hidden by her outward looks and actions. Like Lucia, Vanessa lived a part of her life on the margins of another's creativity. Vanessa was loved by Swift.

Lucia was loved by Joyce. The two women were defined by someone more famous than they were. Issy's self-identification as having the air of "essa stessa" connects the three women as sisters in their relationships to other artists. They do not exist on their own but as footnotes to another's work.

Issy's script invokes myriad modes of engagement. She sees how the world sees her, but doesn't quite know how to effectively respond from her position on the margins. She declares she will "do that droop on the pohlmann's piano," responding through music. By turning what is said around her into a song, she transforms what has been said of her into something new, creating a new tone transcribed onto a piano. This connects back to Margaret Price's point about mental disability and expected scripts of interaction. Issy's response requires a musical response, while expected communication, the "normal" script, does not. She converts "that droop" into something new. "Droop" implies both physical and auditory movement, a drooped head signaling a downcast mood, or a swing in musicality, dropping to a lower note or changing keys. Furthermore, the sound of the word itself invokes singing, the "oo" a part of a larger melody, what later becomes her "malody." What she says, as well as the meanings that could be attached to her response, proliferate out of the literal, auditory, and aural elements of her song.

Even though the reasoning behind what Issy says is uncertain, by illustrating the process of her thoughts, the text encourages readers to embrace the multi-faceted nature of Issy's perspective. This need for transformation demonstrates a split or rupture between her perspective and her brothers'. While Shaun can make the straightforward declaration of "INCIPIT INTERMISSIO," to the warning about "fanciulla," Issy imagines her

response in a new form. In answering a warning with a song, Issy shows how individual perception transforms meaning. And while readers can imaginatively connect the dots through Issy's footnote, they can also imagine how such a call and response would seem to someone without insight into Issy's thought process, insight into her madness. Joyce draws out Issy's response and in doing so helps readers to imagine Issy's perspective.

As the center text continues, Issy continues to respond in this way, further demonstrating her unique perspective in relation to those around her, opening new possibilities of interpretation, and encouraging alternative histories. Her brothers come into the center text more clearly while Issy laments her marginal position: "Jenny Wren: pick, peck. Johnny Post: pack, puck.[4] All the world's in want and is writing a letters.[5] A letters from a person to a place about a thing" (Joyce 278.12-15). In these sentences Shem is the penman, Jenny Wren, and Shaun is the postman, Johnny Post.[35] However, these identities are not as straightforward as that. Jenny Wren also recalls ALP, a woman's voice that dictated the letter recorded by Shem. The "pick, peck" and "pack, puck" mimic the clucking of hens that found the letter, further underlining a feminine

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[35] The name Jenny Wren also comes up in relation to disability in English children's literature as well as the work of Charles Dickens. *The History of Jenny Wren* is a children's picture book from 1860 in which a bird, Jenny Wren, falls ill but is then revived by Robin Redbreast who brings her sops and wine, notably reminiscent of the spilled whiskey that revives Finnegan in the folk song "Lots of Fun at Finnegan's Wake." However, when Jenny Wren is revived and does not return Robin's love, he casts her out. After being cast out Jenny Wren falls ill again. While several animal doctors come and try to heal her or discern cause of death, Robin shoos them away leaving Jenny Wren dead and alone. The nursery rhyme "Jenny Wren Fell Sick" is a shortened version of the story ending with Robin casting Jenny Wren out. In Dicken's last novel, *Our Mutual Friend* (1865), Jenny Wren is a disabled girl who takes care of her alcoholic father as well as other ailing men in the novel.

presence gossiping over the letter's scandalous content. Issy's footnote to this sentence reads, "[4]Heavenly twinges, if it's one of his I'll fearly feint as swoon as he enterrooms" (Joyce 278.F4). The "Heavenly twinges" are the heavenly twins, Gemini, also the twins Shem and Shaun (McHugh 278). The brothers are heavenly in comparison to Issy. They are above her, literally and figuratively. She must dance in the footnotes. The "it" that Issy references is the letter (McHugh 278). The letter could be the letter that appears throughout the *Wake*. It describes a crime committed by HCE in Phoenix Park, but its literal content of the letter is never revealed. It could also be a letter written by one of the lovers who were not "bewise" of her heart, would "fearly" or nearly, make Issy, out of fear, "feint," lash out with a deceptive blow. She might pretend violence. The violence is not intended to harm; however, it might not be perceived that way. This warning of "feint," in the context of Lucia, gives a new perspective to the motive behind her violent outbursts. Perhaps the blows were meant to be impotent. Lucia may not have thrown the chair at Nora intending to harm her. Nonetheless, she could not control her actions. Something, or someone, may have set her off. No one can ever know for certain. Here the *Wake* offers a hopeful alternate narrative of Lucia's outburst. Feinting blows are not malicious; however, the difference between something meant to mimic an attack and an attack can be difficult to discern. Again, she and her audience are not acting according to the same script.

Joyce uses style to open the possibility of sympathetic relation to the reader, asking him or her to read the passage not just as added information, but as a multi-faceted event, open to different interpretations. "Feint" does not only refer to aggressive action.

Issy is also admitting her own lack of strength. She might faint into unconsciousness, and/or her strength might become faint, weakened by the presence of the letter. She cannot stand up to the "he" who "enterrooms." If the letter were not "one of his," she would react differently. She fears "his" words, and she fears "his" appearance. She would "feint as swoon" or as soon as the mystery "he" enters the room. "Swoon" repeats the same "oo" as "droop" from the previous footnote, continuing Issy's melodic response. Emphasizing the "he," she will lash out or she will fall unconscious, weak and unable to control her actions in "his" presence. In this context, "his" presence is the source of the problem. Joyce creates sympathy for Issy by shifting the responsibility for the event. Lucia was sent to a *maison de santé* because of her violent outburst towards Nora (probably) in reaction to Beckett's presence. She was forever stigmatized for something she could not control. Joyce emphasizes both Issy's lack of control and her consciousness of that lack. Likewise, Lucia may have anticipated her reaction to Beckett, but was unable to stop it. In either case, the reaction follows a different pattern, or script, of cause and effect that can only be read as mad by the others at the party. Joyce returns agency to Lucia through the fictional Issy, removing her from the objectifying diagnosis of doctors and latently questioning her actions in 1932.

However, Issy's thoughts, and their implications regarding Lucia, remain in the margin; but through their liminal position, they question the authority of the center text. The center text continues, "All the world's in want and is writing a letters.[5]," pointing to how history is established through constantly writing stories, translating thoughts and actions into words. However, Issy's thoughts, as well as Lucia's, cannot always be put

into words. Lucia's actions did not fit cleanly into a letter. Her letter, her story, became something Other. To those around Lucia, excepting Joyce, her removal from her family and placement in an asylum defined her. Issy responds to the center text saying "[5]To be slipped on, to be slept by, to be conned to, to be kept up. And when you're done push the chain" (Joyce 278.F5). Issy is "slipped on," stumbled over, and "slept by"; she is ignored. Those around her sleep through her actions, her decisions, and are conscious only of their affects. But she is also "slept by" in that she is well guarded. She is never left to sleep alone or left to her own devices. Then she is "conned to," tricked, just as Lucia was tricked into "voluntarily" entering a sanatorium. They told her they would make her better. They did not. They told her she had to be cured. Joyce disagreed. But Issy must "be kept up." She must be maintained for appearances sake. She is there for show, someone who is tended to like a garden. And when all this is done, someone "push[es] the chain." Someone pulls the chain, and flushes her away. Issy is simultaneously lamenting and scoffing at her position. She sees how people see her, something to be hidden or tucked away. Unfortunately, she cannot change what they see. She has been classified, separated and sent to the margins. However, Joyce's use of footnotes brings focus to that liminal position and asks readers to think again and imagine new ideas about what is being taught in the center.

The reader is directed to Issy and asked to listen. By imagining Issy's voice, her account of how the world sees her, Joyce imagines her perspective, while opening that perspective to readers as well. In doing so, he is bringing Issy a new audience, one that will not "push the chain." This new audience will not discard her as waste, they will,

hopefully, "bewise" of her heart and learn to consider her as she is rather than as a stigmatized object. If readers can learn not to "push the chain" with Issy, they can learn not to flush away a different person marginalized by labels or actions not yet understood. Issy is not Lucia; however, by beginning with Issy's thoughts, one can better understand his or her perspective and become more sympathetic to his or her actions. The individual can be understood on his or her own, as a part of his or her individual society, the society created by stigmas and fear.

"Come, Smooth of My Slate, to the Beat of My Blosh!"

The shock of what is different interrupts expectations, creating the rupture between what is recognizable and therefore understood, and what is not. Paralleling the moment when Lucia "suddenly leaped from her liminal position to the forefront of everyone's awareness," on the following page of *Finnegans Wake*, Issy's footnote overwhelms the page (Shloss 215). While previously her footnotes maintained a brief and flighty tone, in this moment she speaks at length (see fig. 1.4). Throughout the footnote Issy calls out to her father, and makes a myriad of pleas for understanding. She begins her monologue, "Come, smooth of my slate, to the best of my blosh! With all these gelded ewes jilting about and the thrills and ills of laylock blossoms three's so much more plants than chants for cecilies that I was thinking fairly killing times of putting an end to myself and my malody, when I remembered all your pupilteacher's erringnesses in perfection class" (Joyce, *FW* 279.F1). She calls someone, the "smooth of [her] slate," he or she who can polish her and make her smooth again, giving her a clean slate. But she is also calling to the smooth parts of her slate, her schedule or her book. She entreats the moments not

96

and the face in the treebark feigns afear. This
is rainstones ringing. Strangely cult for this
ceasing of the yore. But Erigureen is ever.
Pot price pon patrilinear plop, if the osseleton
of the onkring gives omen nome? Since alls
war that end war let sports be leisure and
bring and buy fair. Ah ah athclete, blest your
bally bathfeet! Towntoquest, fortorest, the
hour that hies is hurley. A halt for hearsake.[1]

MODES COA-
LESCING
PROLIFER-
ATE HOMO-
GENUINE
HOMOGEN-
EITY.

[1] Come, smooth of my slate, to the beat of my blosh! With all these gelded
ewes jilting about and the thrills and ills of laylock blossoms three's so much
more plants than chants for cecilies that I was thinking fairly killing times of
putting an end to myself and my malody, when I remembered all your pupil-
teacher's erringnesses in perfection class. You sh'undn't write you can't if you
w'udn't pass for undevelopment. This is the propper way to say that, Sr. If
it's me chews to swallow all you saidn't you can eat my words for it as sure as
there's a key in my kiss. Quick erit faciofacey. When we will conjugate to-
gether toloseher tomaster tomiss while morrow fans amare hour, verbe de vie
and verve to vie, with love ay loved have I on my back spine and does for
ever. Your are me severe? Then rue. My intended, Jr, who I'm throne away
on, (here he inst, my lifstack, a newfolly likon) when I slip through my pettigo
I'll get my decree and take seidens when I'm not ploughed first by some
Rolando the Lasso, and flaunt on the flimsyfilmsies for to grig my collage
juniorees who, though they flush fuchsia, are they octette and virginity in my
shade but always my figurants. They may be yea of my year but they're nary
nay of my day. Wait till spring has sprung in spickness and prigs beg in to pry
they'll be plentyprime of housepets to pimp and pamper my. Impending mar-
riage. Nature tells everybody about but I learned all the runes of the gamest
game ever from my old nourse Asa. A most adventuring trot is her and she
vicking well knowed them all heartswise and fourwords. How Olive d'Oyly
and Winnie Carr, bejupers, they reized the dressing of a salandmon and how a
peeper costs and a salt sailor med a mustied poet atwaimen. It most have
bean Mad Mullans planted him. Bina de Bisse and Trestrine von Terrefin.
Sago sound, rite go round, kill kackle, kook kettle and (remember all should
I forget to) bolt the thor. Auden. Wasn't it just divining that dog of a dag
in Skokholme as I sat astrid uppum their Drewitt's altar, as cooledas as cul-
cumbre, slapping my straights till the sloping ruins, postillion, postallion, a
swinge a swank, with you offering me clouts of illscents and them horners
stagstruck on the leasward! Don't be of red, you blanching mench! This
isabella I'm on knows the ruelles of the rut and she don't fear andy mandy. So
sing loud, sweet cheeriot, like anegreon in heaven! The good fother with the
twingling in his eye will always have cakes in his pocket to bethroat us with
for our allmichael good. Amum. Amum. And Amum again. For tough troth
is stronger than fortuitous fiction and it's the surplice money, oh my young
friend and ah me sweet creature, what buys the bed while wits borrows the
clothes.

279

Figure 1.4: Finnegans Wake *p. 279*

yet full of appointments, the hours that are still open. She wants those moments for the "best of [her] blosh!" or "brush" (McHugh 279). Her "blosh" is her brush that she can use to paint or write, the brush she uses to communicate. It is the tool she uses to create and imagine. "Gelded ewes," impotent sheep, but also "gilded youths," surround Issy. Their powerless voices are muttering about, saying this and that. To Issy they are gelded. They cannot procreate, but they are still gilded, shiny and sparkling to the eye and ear. They are entrancing in their appearance but have no longer have the power to create life. Try as they might, their voices cannot change her. The voices are "jilting about and the thrills and ills of laylock blossoms." Ups and downs of lilac blossoms, the changing of seasons, buoy the cacophony of their interactions (McHugh 279). Time passes but the voices do not. They do not end and they do not evolve, they only rise and fall according to the season. However, "laylock" is also a reference to the term "Miss Laycock," a slang word for a cunt (McHugh 279). The voices are all concerned with a woman's private parts. The voices gossip about its every move, concerned with the private life of another in their impotent rages. All around Issy voices are gossiping. They are crowding her with sound. She needs the quiet, the "smooth of [her] slate" to speak. Like Lucia, Issy is surrounded by those telling her what to do and how to feel while critiquing her every move. The voices are overwhelming her, but she must remember that the voices have been gelded; they are, at least in part, powerless against her. She cannot be turned into another "gelded ewe."

Issy speaks in the footnotes, a marginal space that is none the less hers to control. The voices that surround Issy, and the voices that surrounded Lucia, continue to chatter;

98

however, Issy can see past them, "three's so much more plants than chants for cecilies" (Joyce, *FW* 279.F1). "Three's," the three Earwicker siblings or the holy trinity, are too many, "so much." But "three's" is also there's, there is "so much more plants than chants for cecilies." "Plants" are growing and blossoming, or they are possibly spies. Informants are planted around Issy waiting to report her every move to a superior. Issy cannot necessarily trust those around her. "Chants," the droning repetition of words, the repeated performance of the same script, also surround Issy. The "chants" of others can drown out Issy's voice, muffling the sound of her own voice. But "chants" can also be prayers, the voices of those hoping for her to succeed, searching for a way to help her. In relation to Lucia these chants can be repeated attempts to commit her to mental institutions, and Joyce's unending quest to understand and be sympathetic to Lucia. Lucia was burdened by the constant noises around her, the voices that have become unintelligible and undistinguishable. There were so many people telling her that there is something wrong with her that Lucia's own voice was stifled. However, in *Finnegans Wake*, the chants can also be Issy's. Issy's voice is given a context and room to be heard. The chants are "chants for cecilies." St Cecilia was the patron saint of song, a melody (or "malody") for Issy to set herself to.

However, Issy's tune is not necessarily a cheery one and can become difficult for her to play. She continues and says, "I was thinking fairly killing times of putting an end to myself and my malody" (Joyce, *FW* 279.F1). This line takes on a more ominous tone and implies some of Issy's darker thoughts. The use of the word "killing" and the phrase an "end to myself and my malody" allude to suicide. Issy has thought of ending herself

and her "malody," her malady or sickness, but also her melody, the song of her life. Issy has considered suicide. There are more "plants" threatening to gossip about her than there are chants for cecilies. Few remain praying to the patron saint of song. Issy's song may as well end. But it hasn't yet. She has only thought about it. She thought about it and then "Remembered all your pupilteacher's erringnesses in perfection class" (Joyce, *FW* 279.F1). Issy has gone through dark moments. She, like Lucia, has been subjected to ridicule and any number of judgments. Something keeps each of them going. Joyce imagines Issy remembering a teacher, who is also a student, one who failed constantly "in perfection class." Another's failures distract Issy from "putting an end to [her]self and [her] malody." She is attracted to the imperfections in others. She relates to imperfection.

Joyce, through Issy, questions what allows Lucia to keep going. He uses Issy to imagine Lucia's perspective and attempt to understand how she bears the stigma of illness. In some cases the treatments showed negative results. In the mid-1930's Lucia was prescribed Veronal, a dangerously addictive drug that when taken with alcohol can induce severe depression (Shloss 340-341). Lucia shared these thoughts with her cousins while staying with them. She also began enacting patterns of suicidal behavior: "[her cousin] Bozena Berta came to understand that these anxieties were a steady undercurrent in her cousin's life. The suicidal gestures recurred night after night, as Lucia's turning on the gas tap became a ritual that was met by her cousin's repeated resourcefulness in turning it off" (Shloss 342-343). Lucia struggled with the ideas that Issy brings up in this footnote. Lucia's ritual turning on of the gas tap was a dangerous game. However, she was continually saved by the concern and attention of her cousin, Bozena Berta. Lucia's

suicidal tendencies find a voice through Issy. Lucia also thought of "fairly killing times of putting an end to [her]self and [her] malody." Through Issy Joyce imagines what stopped her. Issy finds comfort in the failures of others, relating to them through their imperfections. Issy does not need perfect people surrounding her; she needs others who, like her, have failed to perfectly abide by society's standards, others who act according to a different script.

As Issy's extended footnote continues, it increasingly resonates with Lucia's illness, recalling events more and more directly. Issy begins to muse on what helped her. She meditates on what it means to try to understand: "When we will conjugate together toloseher tomaster tomiss while morrow fans amare hour, verbe de vie and verve to vie, with love ay loved have I on my back spine and does for ever" (Joyce, *FW* 279.F1). The "we" in this passage is unclear. It may be Issy and her "pupilteacher" or her siblings; but in relation to Lucia, it may be all those who attempted to understand, help, and/or love her. Even though she saw doctor after doctor who purportedly specialized in treating schizophrenia, no one could understand her. Though many tried to decipher it, Lucia's madness remained a mystery. They came to "conjugate together," transforming actions and making sentences detailing what they thought they understood about Lucia's madness. However, the myriad of conjugations and interpretations eventually made them lose her. In *Finnegans Wake* the Earwicker children have come together at their lessons, but in learning their history, math, and grammar, they lost Issy in the footnotes. But "together" can also be "to get her" (McHugh 279). And, as the line continues, "toloseher tomaster tomiss," Joyce echoes the goals of those who attempted to treat Lucia. They

tried to get her, to trap her. They wanted to master her, to control the madness that they saw as controlling her. In spite of these efforts, they missed. Conjugating her symptoms as if they were verbs in a sentence did not work.

Issy's footnote continues to offer connections between Joyce's fictional and biological daughters. Issy's disjointed sentences dance around different suitors and illnesses, reinforcing the connection between her and Lucia. Issy's complaints at times mirror Lucia's: "Wait till spring has sprung in spickness and prigs beg in to pry" (Joyce, *FW* 279.F1). Issy echoes the nursery rhyme "Sing a Song of Sixpence," invoking the innocence of a child (McHugh 279). She makes herself vulnerable as she sings to her listener, telling him or her to wait until "spring has spring in spickness" or sickness. "And prigs beg in to pry," echoes the saying "when pigs begin to fly;" but the "prigs," or pricks, may also be the doctors that invaded Lucia's privacy after her sickness appeared, begging to be let into her mad experience. The doctors pried into her life, examining every detail to allegedly help her. They begged entrance so they could begin to pry into her personal life. Moreover, the sexual connotation of "prick," further underlies a connection between sex and madness, and resonates with Lucia's series of failed romantic relationships leading up to her institutionalization. The moment she was labeled as mad, Lucia's life drastically changed. Madness pounced on her, and so did an army of diagnosticians who poked and prodded her without much success. Lucia continued to act out in protest, but her credibility was taken away by stigma. She had lost her voice; anything she did say or do followed a different script, one others could not or would not read. Shloss describes Lucia's new language saying, "Lucia's primary creative language,

however, was gestural: she enacted her resistance and continued to 'dance' her protest" (Shloss 372). While Issy sings when "prigs beg in to pry," Lucia danced and acted out.

Issy gives voice to Lucia's experience; the factual inspired the fictional which is now offered up to new audiences through *Finnegans Wake*. By including moments that so closely recall Lucia's experience throughout the *Wake*, in "Nightlessons" most specifically, Joyce inscribes Lucia in his characters. Although Lucia is shrouded in fiction, her experience is offered to readers, giving them the chance to understand her in a way no one in her own time could or would. The footnote ends with a promise, the promise of a father to a daughter, through fiction and the words of a character, that he will never stop trying to help Lucia in whatever way possible: "The good fother with the twigling in his eye will always have cakes in his pocket to bethroat us with for allmichael good. Amum. Amum. And Amum again. For tough troth is stronger than fortuitous fiction and it's the surplice money, oh my young friend and ah me sweet creature, what bys the bed while wits borrows the clothes" (Joyce, *FW* 279.F1). "The good fother" has a twinkle or inkling in his eye, a mischievous glint of hope. "Fother" may be father, mother, and other, each possible identification made possible by the change of one letter. "The good fother," a will always be there. Issy cannot be severed by those who sired her or those surrounding her. Most importantly they "will always have cakes in his pocket to bethroat us with." The father and mother will always be there. He always has something to give, something to "bethroat," something to feed his children with, but also to betroth to them. Joyce left Lucia *Finnegans Wake*. The book is the legacy he gave to her. The text repeats "Amum. Amum. And Amum again," in a chant to a god for strength. It has

the impression of a desperate prayer, the voice of someone earnestly hoping for understanding.

Lucia challenged Joyce to imagine. Issy was his vehicle for doing so. At the end of the above quote, the biological and fictional daughters come together: "For tough troth is stronger than fortuitous fiction and it's the surplice money, oh my young friend and ah me sweet creature, what bys the bed while wits borrows the clothes." The tough truth of Lucia is stronger, if also stranger, than the fortunate fiction of Issy (McHugh 279). *Finnegans Wake* is Joyce's legacy, but it is still fiction. It is only ever an approximation. Fiction is fortuitous, the unexpected adventure that Joyce can use to respond to the "tough troth" of his relationship with Lucia. It is the "surplice money," the surplus of money, that houses them both. Joyce made a living from his fiction; the "what" of his texts gave them a home, while his "wits" earned them clothing. His fiction is fortuitous in many ways. It allows him a medium through which to connect with Lucia, giving life to and housing the imagined possibilities of her experience.

By reading *Finnegans Wake*, readers enter a conversation with cognitive difference. They read a different script. Joyce used writing to attempt to understand his daughter and give her comfort. He used *Finnegans Wake* to let himself imagine, and let others see that imagining. By infusing the text with elements of Lucia's madness, Joyce gives her experience a new context, one that was not ruled by the stigma of schizophrenia. Illness pushed Lucia to the margins, but that did not keep Joyce away: "He went where Lucia led. The 'rooms' of Lucia's inner life were apparently as wild and electrifying as they come" (Shloss 459). Joyce did not recoil at the thought of illness.

Through writing he introduced readers to the same "rooms" of Lucia's inner life that he could glimpse. *Finnegans Wake* encourages sympathy for Lucia through Issy, evidence of Joyce's continual attempts to understand what life was like for her, without expecting to ever understand her experience exactly, and without confining her to a single character or identity.

Finnegans Wake is a text that is in-between, always being produced and reproduced through readers' responses. Through the fluid, or mad, nature of the text, Joyce imagines a new context through which to understand cognitive difference. By resisting traditional narrative forms, he encourages readers to respond to the text, expanding understandings of mental disability from a point of rupture. In interrupting expectations, we (author, reader, and text) create something new. "Nightlessons," through the play of space on the page alongside the uniquely *Wakean* language, invites the reader to move between perspectives and sympathetically relate to things not previously understood. In aligning—but not replacing—Lucia with Issy, Joyce imagines a space not governed by an assumed script of communication; the *Wake* as a whole asks readers to let go of any such expectations, creating an even playing ground and allowing Issy to express her "malody" without fear of being silenced. And through the opportunity offered by the *Wake*, when we "conjugate together" we no longer "loseher."

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CHAPTER 2

"Revolving it All": Games and Cognitive Difference in Beckett

In the first chapter I analyze the ways *Finnegans Wake* uses an open system of

identification to undermine histories of representation of mental disability. In this chapter

I move to analyze Samuel Beckett's use of literal and metaphysical games to push against

accepted understandings of mental disability. As Beckett evolved as a writer, his work

became more and more experimental, stripping language back more and more,

"subtracting rather than…adding" to create his own style, inviting readers to engage from

points of "non-knowing" (Beckett, *Remembering* 47; Knowlson 319-320). This decision

was made in part as a response to his relationship with James Joyce, wanting to separate

himself from his friend and former employer.[36] As a result, Beckett's work became

increasingly open ended, calling attention to the relationship between the body and mind,

the tangible and intangible, through his sparse use of language. In this chapter I first look

at three of Beckett's novels: *Murphy* (1938), *Molloy* (1951), and *Malone Dies* (1951).[37] I

then move to look at Beckett's shorter plays, written in the second half of the twentieth

century. These texts are progressively more abstract, increasingly resistant to traditional

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[36] Dirk Van Hulle has argued that in moving away from the oversaturation of possible
meaning in the *Wake*, Beckett's work in fact further emphasized some of the themes
discussed in chapter one. Van Hulle claims, "That Beckett took his distance from the
Wakean method does not necessarily imply that his work would be more closely linked to
imagination. He did thematize both these aspects of the creative act (fancy and
imagination) in a more explicit way than Joyce, but in order to do so he radicalized
elements that were already present in Joyce's work" (23).
[37] The French editions of *Molloy* and *Malone Dies* were published in 1951, their English
translations in 1955 and 1956 respectively.

expectations of character, setting, and narrative. Using *Murphy*, Samuel Beckett's first published novel, as a starting point, I argue that over the course of his career, Beckett increasingly uses play to refigure relationships between individual minds and bodies. Through chess in *Murphy*, the ritualistic stone sucking in *Molloy*, linguistic play in *Malone Dies*, and the staging and ritual in his later plays, Beckett challenges understandings of mental and physical relationships through an emphasis on Nothing as not an absence of substance but as something yet to be defined through articulate language.[38]

Murphy follows its eccentric titular protagonist as he moves from Ireland to London where he dies in a fiery explosion at the psychiatric hospital where he works.[39] But, *Murphy* is about Nothing.[40] The first line, "The sun shone, having no alternative, on the nothing new," introduces nothing as part of the mundane circularity of everyday life (1). The sun's lack of "alternative" implies an inability to step outside convention and see what seems to be nothing as something, a routine that fails to recognize the fluidity of life as it shifts in imperceptible ways. The opening's playful tone sets up the literal and linguistic games that follow. Articulating nothing is impossible; but the attempt to do so opens channels of communication that defy traditional understanding. I argue that

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[38] This understanding of Nothing runs counter to Jean Paul Sartre's definition in *Being and Nothingness*. There Sartre argues *nothingness* is absolute, and the precise opposite of consciousness. Sartre claims nothingness is essential to our sense of being as the absence by which we can judge the substance of our experience.

[39] Beckett's first novel, *A Dream of Fair to Middling Women* was written in 1932 but published posthumously in 1992.

[40] "Nothing" is a theme in Beckett's work overall, extending through his later plays and fiction. For example, similarly to *Murphy*, *Waiting for Godot* begins with an emphasis on Nothing when Estragon states "Nothing to be done" (2).

Beckett extends this impression of repetition to recurring failed attempts to articulate forms of cognitive difference which fall outside of previously recognized conditions. In employing a ludic framework, Beckett's texts overall provide spaces for characters, and by extension readers, to enter interdependent relationships that use play as a model for discovering new Nothings, questioning what it means to be mentally disabled.

Beckett uses games to undermine expectations of cognitive normativity, disrupting the sane/insane binary by reimagining nothing as Nothing, the presence of an inarticulate something rather than a void.[41] Inspired by personal experience, Beckett stages questions of identification and diagnosis as play. The text provides a ludic model for challenging understandings of cognitive difference, a space of play that suspends expectations and provides a framework through which to engage cognitive difference. He re-contextualizes mental disability as an interactive process rather than a frightening otherness, reframing mental disability as a series of games, both literal and figurative, that seek to produce new knowledge and recognition of Others' experiences rather than reinforce what is already known.[42] Beckett uses the ludic literally, through characters who play chess and other recognizable games, and figuratively, through the staging of rituals and the language he deploys.

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[41] For a discussion of how Nothing, and in particular the tension between being and non-being, in Beckett relates to the theories of Henri Bergson see Colangelo, "Nothing is Impossible."

[42] While madness has often been read as a form of resistance, I follow Elizabeth Donaldson's call for an increased attention to the physical experience of mental disability (see "Corpus"). Here, play is a framework through which to navigate different approaches for communicating that experience rather than a form of rebellion.

In *Murphy*, and in Beckett's work overall, games become a mode of access for mentally disabled characters, both diagnosed and undiagnosed. The characters gain access to language and a stronger sense of self through ludic practice. Through play, Beckett emphasizes his protagonist's non-normative viewpoint, while facilitating moves across difference. In the beginning of *Endgame*, Hamm, who is blind and unable to stand, declares "Me—(*he yawns*)—to play" (2). These are Hamm's first words. He introduces himself through play, setting up a ludic framework that extends through the rest of the play. Here Beckett invokes play directly. However, that is not always the case. In *Murphy* the games begin more subtly. Murphy is first described as sitting in a chair with "seven scarves [holding] him in position" (1). However, when the narrator describes Murphy's position in the following sentences, only six scarves are identified. One is always unknown. The reader must pay attention, attempt to map out the scene themselves before identifying what is missing. The relationship between the characters within the novel, as well as between the reader and text, is interdependent, Beckett asking the reader to play alongside the characters throughout the narrative. He undermines the reader's trust by using uncertainty, conflicting information, and unreliable narration as a foundation, questioning his authority as author. As Beckett's writing develops over time, he continues to emphasize Nothing through play, further expanding understandings of how interdependent relationships between bodies (animate and inanimate) constitute the self. By showing identity as constantly in flux, Beckett challenges expectations of autonomy, calling attention to what is yet to be known as opposed to what is already assumed as true.

Play and Mental Disability

Games manifest as gestures analogous to lived experience, reflecting reality while providing the opportunity to transgress what we might consider *normal* boundaries.[43] They are played for pleasure, or used as formative practices to learn skills for the future. Chess is used to practice strategy, while animals often "play" fight to practice survival skills. Brian Massumi, referring specifically to animal play, reads gestures of play as animalistic instincts which "create the conditions for language" (8). The inclination to play leads to meaning that is *later* translated into language. Speaking of play's metaphoric relation to lived experience, Massumi claims, "The gap between the ludic gesture and its analogue creates a margin of maneuver: it opens the door to *improvisation*. Play is the arena of activity dedicated to the improvisation of gestural forms, a veritable laboratory of forms of live action. What is played at is invention" (12). The creativity of play produces meaning. In its analogous relationship to life (we play *as if*, or pretend *like* we are doing something else), play pushes against accepted norms, and in doing so invents new meaning.

Beckett often calls attention to the essential but inadequate nature of language to demonstrate play's productivity.[44] His style invokes Ludwig Wittgenstein's claim that

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[43] The term "Handicap" itself derives from a game. Douglass Baytnon, in the *Encyclopedia of American Disability History*, connects the term to a seventeenth century game of chance called "hand-in-cap" (420). The original game had to do the balancing of value between two players' items as judged by a third party, the umpire (*OED*). The term later became used in horseracing to describe a race where horses were weighted with stones to establish a more equal playing field between faster and slower participants (Baytnon 420).

[44] While *Murphy* is the earliest representation of play in Beckett's oeuvre, it is a trope that repeats in much of his later work. Characters constantly negotiate their own identities

language games are "not preparatory studies for a future regularization of language […] language-games are rather set up as *objects of comparison* which are meant to throw light on the facts of our language by way not only of similarities, but also of dissimilarities" (§ 130). Language games open spaces of comparison that address difference. Like Massumi's focus on the analogous relationship between the play action and its counterpart, Wittgenstein emphasizes play's ability to underline difference to facilitate the production of meaning. Inspired by personal experience, Beckett uses games to unsettle logical sequences and permit unanticipated results, employing a ludic framework that emphasizes how games share certain features we associate with non-normative epistemologies, or "cripistemologies."[45]

Within Disability Studies, several scholars have analyzed the myriad ways in which physical disability permeates Beckett's narratives. In both explicit and implicit ways, Beckett incorporates disability to question normative expectations of physical and mental potentiality. Ato Quayson claims Beckett is "a writer of [physical] disability" (*AN* 55). However, I claim Beckett engages issues of mental disability to a similar extent. Beckett often presents disability as an almost mundane presence. Many of his characters, both primary and secondary, are physically and/or mentally disabled. However, those characters demonstrate little surprise or shock at their physical and mental impairments, rarely viewing their conditions as disabling. Although Murphy is never explicitly

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through processes of exchange with other persons or objects. For example, Hamm and Clov in *Endgame*, Molloy and his sucking stones, or Winnie and Willie in *Happy Days.*
[45] For an ongoing discussion navigating different but overlapping understandings of living with disability in contemporary geo-political settings, see McRuer and Johnson's "Cripistemologies," and "Proliferating Cripistemologies."

diagnosed in the novel, he exhibits many tendencies and habits often identified as evidence of mental disability. In a diagnostic move, Quayson argues for what he calls "a latent autistic dynamic" that informs Murphy as a character, but also the novel overall ("Autism, Narrative, and Emotions" 839-840). While I agree with Quayson's identification of Murphy as mentally disabled, the specificity of his diagnosis is less central to my concerns. Rather, based on Murphy's eccentricities, I read him as falling on the spectrum of mental disability as defined by Margaret Price, noted in chapter one. In the introduction to *Mad at School* Price acknowledges the myriad definitions and diagnoses of mental disabilities presented by the DSM. She claims this proliferation is, "evidence of two important truths about disorderly minds. First, such minds show up all the time […] and second, recognizing their appearance is not a yes-no proposition, but rather a confusing and contextually dependent process" (3-4). Price reads these characteristics as aligning with Disability Studies through their call for understanding minds "in terms of variety and difference" which are delineated through linguistic structures (4). The fluidity of Murphy's madness reinforces the need for new linguistic structures through which to understand cognitive difference.

Much of Beckett's writing uses shifting linguistic frameworks to emphasize his characters' cognitive differences, blurring boundaries between sanity and madness. Beckett rarely provides diagnoses for his characters' disabilities, further resisting assumptions that might be associated with a particular disability. Through this resistance, Beckett denies any presumed knowledge or certainty that accompanies diagnostic

116

practices.[46] In *Murphy,* the titular character's relationship to mental disability remains

ambiguous. He identifies as mentally disabled, but seemingly falls outside of diagnostic

qualifications, illustrating what Anna Mollow identifies as an *undocumented disability*, a

disability not aligning with formally recognized symptoms of an established condition

(185). The undiagnosed nature of Murphy's disability excludes him from the community

of patients at Magdalen Mental Mercyseat (the M.M.M., a psychiatric hospital where he

works as a nurse); but, it also allows room for Beckett to explore what it means to have a

mental disability that escapes identification, falling outside of normative social and

cultural understandings of identifiable mental disability. As Lennard Davis argues, "In

the case of psychiatric disorders, there is a complex cultural and historical scenario …

that has in effect formed and preselected the categories available for diagnosis" (83).

These categories continue to enforce a power dynamic between doctor and patient that

perpetuates "problems around the activity of diagnosis itself" (83). Murphy's lack of

diagnosis prevents him from receiving treatment; however, it allows for a more playful

engagement with mental disability free from the assumed knowledge that accompanies

diagnosis. By contrasting Murphy with Mr. Endon who *is* diagnosed as schizophrenic,

Beckett accounts for what Margaret Price calls the "contextually dependent process" of

recognition, as well as a fluid understanding of cognitive difference as a mental

disposition constantly shifting between specific diagnoses, but also broader titles of

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[46] As discussed in my introduction, diagnosis, while claiming to be a productive process, often leads to a power dynamic between patient and medical professional that makes the former extremely vulnerable to institutional powers, a tool wielded to either grant or withhold necessary care.

identification (4).[47] The interaction between the two men, one definitively labeled as mentally disabled and the other not, stages the relationship between diagnosed and undiagnosed disabled identity, emphasizing the fluid nature of either category.

Murphy, unbound by a state administered diagnosis, maintains the freedom to move in and out of the institution at will. What begins as sympathy for the patients at the M.M.M. becomes a drive towards equal recognition. In this context diagnosis is both a form of invalidation and validation. While diagnosis often disqualifies individuals, identifying them as Other and pushing them into hospitals and barring them from conventional society, by withholding explicit diagnosis of his protagonist, Beckett questions how we identify ourselves in relation to others and presents identity as an interdependent process. By placing this urge for identification in context of mental disability, Beckett further emphasizes the role pathological diagnoses play in the way we view others. Murphy exhibits mad characteristics throughout the novel, and ultimately seeks sympathy from the patients of the M.M.M. However, diagnosis' role in delineating sanity and madness relegates him to the role of sympathetic observer.[48]

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[47] While Murphy's relationship with Mr. Endon helps facilitate his own sense of self, Mr. Endon does not fall into the pattern of narrative prosthesis as defined by Mitchell and Snyder. Murphy's understanding of Nothing at the end of the novel stems from his *failure* to use Mr. Endon in a prosthetic way. Although Murphy attempts to use Mr. Endon for the purpose of recognizing his self-identified mental disability, Mr. Endon retains an identity separate from that of Murphy. His inner thoughts remain unknown, independent of Murphy's intent to connect with Mr. Endon in order to understand himself.

[48] See Mallow "Criphystemologies" for an analysis of how diagnosis, or lack of diagnosis, affects the construction of disabled communities.

Murphy's attempts to communicate with the patients of M.M.M. result in Nothing. But, that Nothing is based on a lack of perception rather than a lack of presence. Murphy learns from and connects with Mr. Endon through a game of chess; however, their encounter escapes linguistic representation. Something occurs, but Murphy can only describe it as Nothing. He *wants* to share his experience but is unable to do so in a recognizable way. Murphy's experience underlines issues of representation surrounding what it means to make mental disability visible, illustrating what it might take to recognize the possibility of Nothing: meaning and knowledge that defy representation through articulate language or image. The game of chess, the series of moves and countermoves performed by Murphy and Mr. Endon, models an understanding of mental disability as an interdependent exchange, the duration of which is vital to the knowledge each player gains through the process. However, just as vital to any knowledge gained, is the failure of either player to see what the other desires them to see. This failure is mirrored in the listed moves of the game which transgress traditional moves of the game and end without a resolution (145-147).

From Fact to Fiction

Beckett's fluid understanding of madness is intricately tied to his own personal experience with anxiety as well as his interactions with patients at Bethlem Royal Hospital in London. In the mid-1930's Beckett often visited his friend Geoffrey Thomson who worked at Bethlem. These visits ultimately provided concrete background for *Murphy* (Knowlson 197). Beckett never told Geoffrey Thompson he was working on a

novel, but his visits were documented in fiction (197).[49] The M.M.M.'s location and

architecture are almost identical to that of Bethlem (198). While there, he often interacted

with patients. In a letter to his friend Thomas MacGreevy Beckett describes time spent at

Bethlem with the patients saying "I was down at Bethlem this day week [sic.] & went

round the wards for the first time, with scarcely any sense of horror, though I saw

everything, from mild depression to profound dementia" (Beckett, *Letters* 277). Beckett's

lack of horror in reaction to the patients at Bethlem presents their experiences as

unremarkable, not to be feared. Beckett continued to interact with the patients at Bethlem,

and according to his biographer James Knowlson, the evidence of that interaction can be

seen in in *Murphy*'s attention to the "different categories and names of the mental

illnesses" and the precise habits of the patients at the M.M.M. (198).

　　While Murphy is not an autobiographical representation of Beckett, I suggest

Beckett's lack of horror provides a historical foundation for what Murphy describes as a

lack of terror. Murphy's first tour of the M.M.M. brings him face to face with a diverse

community of mentally disabled patients. His first impression counters the descriptions of

others: "[they] were not at all the terrifying monsters that might have been imagined from

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[49] Additionally, Beckett's experience with mental disability extended to his personal
relationships. One example is his infamous affair with Lucia Joyce between 1929 and
1931 while working as an amanuensis for her father James Joyce. It has long been
hypothesized that it was the sight of Beckett at her father's fiftieth birthday party that set
off the fit of violence that led to her initial institutionalization in 1932. The exact nature
of their relationship remains unknown. However, it is clear they were romantically
involved, and that Beckett chose to end the affair feeling Lucia was more invested than
himself (Shloss 187-195). Lucia was ultimately diagnosed with schizophrenia, and while
Lucia was heartbroken, the two remained friends throughout the rest of her life, most
which she spent in institutions (415). It is generally accepted that Lucia inspired the
character Syra-Cusa in Beckett's *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*.

Ticklepenny's account" (101). Beckett's letter to Thomas MacGreevy is adapted in Murphy's first reaction to the patients at the M.M.M. as each man questions the conventional boundaries between sanity and madness from a position of curiosity rather than fear. Murphy's first reaction echoes Beckett's lack of "horror," and the detailed description of the M.M.M. and its mentally disabled residents that follows challenges assumptions about what it means to live with mental disabilities. However, the institutional setting transforms those activities, juxtaposing a setting of madness with ordinary, sane activity. In a hospital assumed to house the unwanted and unproductive members of society, Murphy sees an overflow of artistic production. From "Paranoids, feverishly covering sheets of paper," to "a hebephrenic playing the piano intently," to "An emaciated schizoid, petrified in a toppling attitude as though condemned to an eternal *tableau vivant,*" Murphy describes an aesthetic production, directly countering an otherwise assumed expectation of monstrosity (101-102).

In the patients, Murphy identifies a mutual divergence from expectations of cognitive normativity. Murphy admits a sense of profound recognition: "[The patients] caused Murphy no horror. The most easily identifiable of his immediate feelings were respect and unworthiness […] here was the race of people he had long since despaired of finding" (101). To Murphy, the patients are a race of people outside of normative society for whom he has been looking. In Murphy's first encounter with the patients, when he meets the "people he had long since despaired of finding," the importance of that recognition for Murphy's personhood is unclear. However, as Murphy's sympathy for the patients grows, so does his need for recognition. The more time Murphy spends working

at the M.M.M., the more he sees himself in the patients. While there is possible danger in this recognition (Murphy's self-diagnosis potentially overshadowing the individual experience of the patients), his perceived connection suggests an identification with his patients that complicates the reader's ability to differentiate between the two, blurring the distinction between the initially merely eccentric Murphy and the recognizably disabled patients. By generating a sympathetic description of life within the mental hospital Beckett challenges his reader to see the mentally disabled not as horrific, but as individuals with unique conditions and habits.

Beckett's personal experience with psychoanalytic treatment gave him insight into patients' perspectives; and while all individual experiences are unique, Beckett drew on his history as a patient of Dr. Wilfred Bion to inform Murphy's encounters at the M.M.M.[50] Rather than recoil, Beckett engaged with the cognitive difference that surrounded him. His work questions unknown, and potentially unknowable, aspects of mental disability. Beginning in 1934, Beckett underwent a range of treatments for severe anxiety (Knowlson 170). In a 1989 interview, Beckett recalled his time with Bion, emphasizing his inability to communicate while in moments of duress: "I remember feeling trapped, of being imprisoned and unable to escape, of crying to be let out but no one could hear, no one was listening. I remember being in pain but being unable to do anything about it" (qtd. in Knowlson 171). Through treatment, Beckett was immersed in

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[50] For a more extensive analysis of Beckett's treatments with Dr. Bion see Thurston, "Outselves."

a process of failed communication. But that failure allowed him to better understand his feelings.

The impulse to articulate that which is impossible to understand comes up in *Murphy* as Nothing, an absence that has the possibility to either annihilate or transform.[51] In Beckett's words, Murphy cries out to an audience who hears Nothing, juxtaposing a moment of noise with an inability to hear. Those around him hear Nothing. However, it is Nothing only because they cannot understand the cry as language. The lack of recognition, the inability to understand that which falls outside of conventional norms of articulation, is common with reference to mental disability. In *Murphy*, Beckett uses play to expand conceptions of *normal*. While Beckett's style of play is different from his protagonist, both figures expand understandings of mental disability through ludic gestures. While Murphy literally plays a game of chess with Mr. Endon, Beckett experiments with linguistic meaning, imbuing nothing with Nothing, playing with the possibilities that reframing opens up. Beckett transgresses traditional linguistic definitions to invent new understandings of experience, which translates into Murphy's more literal game of chess with Mr. Endon. While on the surface the game produces Nothing, they share a moment of failed communication that creates connection while

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[51] Victoria Stevens sees this as a link between Beckett and Bion's individual work. In *Murphy* and Bion's work, Nothing comes up as that which cannot be identified. It is there. It must be there. But it isn't noticed, and therefore is nothing. Stevens sees this as a point of intersection through which to explore the work of both men: "This exploration of the work of an artist and of a psychoanalyst can open up important paths of understanding how and why human beings experience the state of nothing as either annihilating or transformative" (610). The possibility for nothing to either annihilate or transform is important in relation to understanding mental disability.

eluding articulation. Murphy and Mr. Endon's moment of failed communication is a misunderstanding that opens a space through which Murphy can connect with previously inaccessible sense of community. Beckett's redefinition of Nothing is not a literal misunderstanding. Rather he calls attention to the possibility of a misunderstanding, finding possibility in absence. In that space of possibility readers can, alongside Murphy, expand considerations of mental disability.

<div align="center">Checkmate</div>

The novel begins with the perception of nothing new, but Beckett continually questions this perception, redefining Nothing (and failure) as transformative. Referring to the sun in the opening, Victoria Stevens claims the "closed system" of the sun rising and setting highlights an "illusion of free will" (624). She argues, "The idea that any attempt at movement will lead to failure is most clearly shown in the metaphor of the chess game that Murphy plays with Mr. Endon at the climax of the novel" (624). The sun's mundane appearance, its lack of alternative to shine on anything new, creates the feeling of repetition remarked on by Stevens. However, Beckett undermines this impression of repetition that leads nowhere. Although there is a sense of fate pervading the novel, through the re-definition of Nothing as an unrecognized presence rather than a void, Beckett illustrates the flexibility within the hopelessness identified by Stevens. What Stevens reads as an "illusion of free will," I see as an ethical demand to play and create new forms of knowledge. The characters may be hopeless to change their fates, but they are not passive. Murphy learns Nothing. While it does not allow Murphy to escape his fate (burning to death in a fiery explosion that same night), it affords him an inarticulate

understanding of his relationship to Mr. Endon. "Nothing" is inherently impossible to

articulate, but an increased awareness of underlying presence opens channels of

communication that defy traditional understanding. Murphy's chess game with Mr.

Endon, the urge to be seen, to bring to the foreground what otherwise would be dismissed

as nothing, emphasizes the desire to form connections through the disclosure of

profoundly subjective experiences.[52]

Murphy enters an interdependent relationship with Mr. Endon to express his

subjective experience and establish a presence for himself. Murphy sees himself reflected

in Mr. Endon, and wants to form a bond with him. However, Murphy's attempt to

disclose their similarities results in failure. He is repeatedly met with a lack of

appreciation of any exceptional similarities between himself and Mr. Endon:

> Friend's eye? Say rather, Murphy's eye. Mr. Endon had felt Murphy's eye
> upon him. Mr. Endon would have been less than Mr. Endon if he had
> known what it was to have a friend; and Murphy more than Murphy if he
> had not hoped against his better judgement that his feeling for Mr. Endon
> was in some small degree reciprocated. Whereas the sad truth was, that
> while Mr. Endon for Murphy was no less than bliss, Murphy for Mr.
> Endon was no more than chess. (144)

Murphy and Mr. Endon are each defined by their perception of the other. Their identities

are interdependent. If either perceived less or more than they intended it would change

who they are. Mr. Endon, had he realized Murphy's desire for friendship, would not be

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[52] The potentiality of the game echoes Stéphane Mallarmé's 1897 poem "Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hazard." The poem similarly brings up questions of chance in relation to thought and existence. The last line of the poem, "Toute pensée émet un Coup de Dés," can be translated as "all thought (or all minds and opinions) produce a throw of the dice," meaning, all ideas are efforts of chance (my translation). They are unpredictable and have the potential to precipitate myriad results, including Nothing.

Mr. Endon. If he had the ability to perceive the world in a predictable way he would not

be at the M.M.M. Murphy sees in Mr. Endon an idealized version of himself, Murphy

wants to be Mr. Endon. But Mr. Endon only sees Murphy as his chess partner.[53]

However, Murphy's perception of Mr. Endon shifts to Nothing when he realizes

that Mr. Endon sees him as Nothing as well. The feeling of Nothing transforms the

characters, creating for Murphy a sense of comfort and the idea that the Nothing resulting

from the failure of disclosure was more affecting than the game itself: "Mr. Endon's

finery persisted for a little in an after-image scarcely inferior to the original. Then this

also faded and Murphy began to see nothing, that colourlessness which is such a rare

postnatal treat, being the absence (to abuse a nice distinction) not of *percipere* but of

percipi. His other senses also found themselves at peace, an unexpected pleasure" (147-

148). As the two men played chess something unintentional was communicated.

Juxtaposing *percipere* with *percipi* highlights the difference between learning and

knowing, the former implying action and the latter implying passivity. Like many of

Beckett's other paired characters (Vladimir and Estragon, Hamm and Clove, Winnie and

Willie, etc.), Murphy and Mr. Endon constitute each other's sense of being. They depend

on one another to give their presences meaning. However, from the perspective of the

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[53] While Catherine Prendergast argues that postmodern literature has long relied on the schizophrenic as "one stable identity," Mr. Endon resists that categorization precisely because his consciousness remains unknown (55). While postmodern theorists often discuss schizophrenics with "certitude," Beckett, who straddles traditional periodization of Modernism and Postmodernism, presents a character whose identity is defined by its unknowability (56). The "certitude" with which Murphy approaches Mr. Endon fails.

narrator, this dependence is mostly felt by Murphy.[54] Murphy's chess game with Mr.

Endon is an appearance of George Berkeley's paradox, "esse est percipi" translated as "to

be is to be perceived" (Berkeley 25). This paradox straddles the limits of perception and

existence. It manifests through Murphy's desire to be seen as equal, and Mr. Endon's

failed potential to validate that equality. The line, "Whereas the sad truth was, that while

Mr. Endon for Murphy was no less than bliss, Murphy for Mr. Endon was no more than

chess," identifies the encounter as a *mis*recognition. Mr. Endon sees Murphy as a chess

partner, while Murphy sees Mr. Endon as an abstracted feeling of pleasure. Each man is

perceived, but that perception is unexpected, the respective conclusions divergent in

significance. Murphy is left with a passive form of knowledge that is felt rather than

actively sought out.

     The Nothing that follows the chess game suspends experience for a moment, but

allows Murphy to recognize the subjectivity of experience through an Other. This

recognition prevents him from effectively communicating with Mr. Endon:

> Not the numb peace of their own suspension, but *the positive peace* that
> comes *when the somethings give way, or perhaps simply add up, to the
> Nothing,* than which in the guffaw of the Abderite naught is more real.
> Time did not cease, that would be asking too much, but the wheel of
> rounds and pauses did, as Murphy with his head among the armies
> continued to suck in, through all the posterns of his withered soul, *the
> accidentless One-and-only, conveniently called Nothing.* The this also
> vanished or perhaps simply came asunder, in the familiar variety of
> stenches, asperities, ear-splitters and eye-closers, and Murphy saw that
> Mr. Endon was missing. (148, my emphasis)

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[54] For more on interdependency in Beckett see Davidson, "'Every Man his Specialty,"
and Quayson, *Aesthetic Nervousness*.

The moment when "the somethings give way," is a moment when conventional modes of understanding break down, allowing Nothing to take center stage. Time presses forward and Murphy goes with it, realizing that the "One-and only, conveniently called Nothing" is unique, so unique that it escapes all labels, leaving Nothing. But, the singularity of Nothing, the unique moment of "positive peace" identified at the beginning of the passage is fleeting. Knowlson describes the chess match as "an exercise in total noncommunication" (199). But, these moments of noncommunication lay the foundation for new communication unhindered by normative expectations of articulate language. Murphy and Mr. Endon lack an agreed system of linguistic signifiers that would facilitate discussion. Yet, despite that lack of agreement, they depend on each other. They rely on the act of seeing for validation (even though they are not perceived as they expect or wish to be). That misrecognition leaves room for the experience of Nothing. Through play, moves and counter moves, the two men communicate a feeling of inarticulate something, the presence of which exists through playful exchange rather than individual speech

Individuals' ability to communicate with one another depends on a shared understanding of expectations. When influenced by mental disability, communication often transgresses normative expectations, inciting judgment and dismissal. Margret Price describes the continued reliance on normative discourse concerning the ability to perceive mental disability in her discussion of colleagues' reactions to students who act or communicate in ways perceived as inappropriate. Regarding a colleague's response to a student Price points out that reactions to cognitive difference are often triggered by a failure to follow what would be considered normal patterns of engagement: "My

colleague and I struggled to know what to say because this student's behavior had taken us outside of our conventional understanding of what should go on in a classroom. Not only was she not following the tacit script for classroom participation, she wasn't even following the tacit script for classroom resistance" (59). The "tacit script" that silently governs classroom participation is a script that, in varying forms, guides communication more broadly. Murphy and Mr. Endon have different expectations of the scripts used to orient communication. Their scripts concerning the purpose of the game diverge, emphasizing their difference, and illustrating the failure of language while also underlining their interdependency. Murphy and Mr. Endon depend on one another regardless of Mr. Endon's misunderstanding of Murphy's intention regarding the game. The conventions of the game become the script through which Murphy communicates. However, to Mr. Endon, the audience of his disclosure, he remains unseen. While they both follow the script of chess, there remains an unspoken and unshared script of Murphy's identity.[55]

Murphy believes he can make himself seen to Mr. Endon through chess; however, Mr. Endon does not know that script. Stevens describes Murphy's final decisions in the chess match saying, "Murphy's moves become increasingly more frantic as he tries to get Mr. Endon to see him. At the end, Murphy had a chance to move his queen in such a way as to force Endon to notice the move—and therefore Murphy—but at that point he

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[55] Wittgenstein uses the game of chess to help articulate language as a game where words are similarly ascribed meaning that is not always agreed upon. He presents it as a concrete example of a game where shapes and a board must be used according to specific pre-ascribed roles (for example the bishop can only move diagonally). However, those roles are only known to those who have learned to play chess (§§ vi).

resigns himself to not being seen by Mr. Endon and gives up—he surrenders. This is

what led to his spiral into nothing" (628).[56] Rather than leading to despair, Murphy's

concession to not being seen by Mr. Endon ultimately allows him to see Nothing and

realize the discrepancies between each man's manner of communication. While he

previously assumed similarities between himself and Mr. Endon, Murphy surrenders to

the fact that they play by different rules, and those differences prevent them from

mounting their subjective differences in an articulable way. To appreciate their

differences of communication, he must first "spiral into nothing."

The chess scene naturalizes the failed exchange between Murphy and Mr. Endon

similarly to how the lack of horror felt by Beckett at Bethlem and the lack of terror felt by

Murphy as he tours the M.M.M. result in lack of *aesthetic nervousness* on the part of the

reader. Ato Quayson defines *aesthetic nervousness* as the tensions that arise between

disabled and nondisabled characters, and that often extend to the overall structure of a

text and the reader's relationship to the narrative (*AE* 15).[57] However, Quayson argues

Murphy is an exception to this trend because the process of moves and counter-moves

that structures Murphy and Mr. Endon's interaction follows a rhythm that, while not

visible to the characters, is seen by the reader ("Autism, Narrative and Emotions" 859).

For Quayson, the inability of the characters to see this rhythm is important because,

"Were it placed at the level of their consciousness it would have opened for Murphy and

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[56] Stevens's description of Murphy's increasingly frantic behavior also anticipates
Keaton's actions in *Film* (1963), as he tries to escape the "eye" (Beckett, "Film" 162).

[57] See Quayson *Aesthetic Nervousness* for a lengthier definition and discussion of this
concept.

Endon the dimension of emotion and fellow-feeling, and thus attenuated the process of absolute othering that in reality takes place" (859). But, by exposing "the process of absolute othering" to the reader, Beckett underlines issues of communication emphasized in the context of mental disability. The ability to transfer understanding across consciousnesses while operating according to different "scripts" requires interpretation. Quayson claims that through literary representation that identification can be used to develop interpretive strategies that help to understand the boundaries of feeling experienced between individuals with mental disabilities within a larger system (841). These strategies play out across the chess board.

Murphy and Mr. Endon rely on inexact interpretation throughout their game of chess. As a well-established game of strategy, chess requires players to interpret and predict the other's moves, basing each action on what has come before and what *might* come after. Quayson describes the two men's moves as a "discursive process of metonymic transfers" that take place both as a part of the chess game itself, as Murphy attempts to mirror each move made by Mr. Endon, and in Murphy's attempts to connect emotionally with Mr. Endon (840). The players' respective mental disabilities generate frustration, frustration that leads to Nothing new. However, while the characters experience what Quayson identifies as "aesthetic nervousness," the tension between the autistic (Murphy) and schizophrenic (Mr. Endon) chess players that exists within the narrative, the reader who is outside of the narrative is more conscious of the transfers that facilitate relation between Murphy and Mr. Endon. Quayson claims "in the case of *Murphy*, the aesthetic nervousness is […] augmented by tensions refracted across other

131

levels of the text such as the disposition of symbols and motifs, the overall narrative or dramatic perspective, and the constitution and reversals of plot structure" (854). While in his larger body of work Quayson defines aesthetic nervousness as the unease felt by the reader when facing a character with a disability, he sees it existing between the characters in *Murphy*. The chess game between Murphy, whom Quayson diagnoses as autistic, and Mr. Endon defies expectations of direct representation: "the dominant protocols of representation within the literary text are short-circuited in specific relation to disability" (854). Mental disability and the failure of the chess game to inspire Mr. Endon to recognize himself in Murphy are at the center of the scene.

Murphy wants to be "seen" by Mr. Endon through their game of chess. He wants Mr. Endon to recognize him as a mentally disabled individual, dealing with shared issues of judgment and dismissal based on failed communication.[58] That night, Murphy burns to death while sitting in his Garret.[59] However, before returning to the Garrett Murphy visits Mr. Endon in his room and looks him in the eye:

> Kneeling at the bedside, the hair starting in thick black ridges

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[58] The issue of recognition has been brought up in similar ways in recent political theory. Nancy Fraser and Seyla Benhabib have both analyzed the important but complicated role recognition plays in political justice for communities that have been historically discriminated against. Fraser specifically looks at what she terms the "redistribution-recognition dilemma," arguing for a reconceptualization of each term in order to redress injustices ("From Redistribution to Recognition?"). Benhabib's book *The Claims of Culture: Equality and Diversity in the Global Era* builds on Fraser's work to further analyze contemporary rights movements as they speak to "struggles for recognition" which challenge conceptions of liberal democracies.

[59] Upon his return to his room following the chess game, Murphy is overwhelmed by an inability to picture his loved ones. He becomes engrossed in the stars, the mixture of light and dark in the night sky, and is unable to light the gas meant to heat his room, and consequently, the fumes ultimately explode. Whether or not Murphy intended to light the gas on fire remains ambiguous.

between his fingers, his lips, nose and forehead almost touching Mr. Endon's, seeing himself stigmatized in those eyes that did not see him, Murphy heard words demanding so strongly to be spoken that he spoke them, right into Mr. Endon's face, Murphy who did not speak at all in the ordinary way unless spoken to, and not always even then.

> "the last at last seen of him
> himself unseen by him
> and of himself"

A rest.

"The last Mr. Murphy saw of Mr. Endon was Mr. Murphy unseen by Mr. Endon. This was also the last Murphy saw of Murphy."

A rest.

"The relation between Mr. Murphy and Mr. Endon could not have been better summed up than by the former's sorrow at seeing himself in the latter's immunity from seeing anything but himself."

A long rest.

"Mr. Murphy is a speck in Mr. Endon's unseen." (149-150)

Murphy accepts that he will continue to be "unseen" even by those whom he feels have the best chance of seeing him. Despite his desperate need to disclose what he sees as his own mental disability, he cannot find the recognition that would connote acceptance. He cannot articulate Nothing. Murphy and Mr. Endon are absolutely Other, unique in their respective identities as mentally disabled. Despite this Otherness, they share an inability to effectively function as parts of normative society. They do not communicate according to the same scripts, and their interactions lead to Nothing. However, that Nothing is not obscured by potentially misleading language. It exists outside of articulate meaning, defying conventional modes of description.

I return to the first line of the novel: "The sun shone, having no alternative, on the nothing new" (1). The Sun does not have a choice; it only shines according to an expected pattern, presumably shining on the same things as the day before. Yet, by re-framing Nothing as a failure to perceive rather than a void or absence, we find a richer

understanding of what is at stake when the sun shines "on the nothing new." "The nothing new" becomes the Nothing new, encouraging new appreciation for understandings rooted in subjective feeling that escape articulation. Relating the sun's lack of alternative to the reader's understanding of the relationship between Murphy and Mr. Endon, the Nothing experienced by Murphy after resigning the game contains and creates opportunities of understanding. By remaining conscious of unconventional possibilities one stays open to new avenues of communication. Murphy attempts to make himself seen by Mr. Endon by mirroring his choices in a game of chess. However, mirroring cannot account for otherness, it merely re-presents assumptions. Re-contextualizing otherness as part of a game warps the mirror. The playful series of exchanges between the two men incorporates impressions of Other knowledge that, while escaping articulation, signify meaning. Murphy begins the game intending to disclose his experience to Mr. Endon. However, because they each deal with different mental disabilities the transfer of information between the two characters results in Nothing: an absence of articulable connection, but not an absence of exchange. And, in appreciating more fully the possibilities that exist outside of normative conventions, we remain cognizant of alternative understandings so that when the sun shines on Nothing, it is in fact new.

From Chess to Stones

Murphy and Mr. Endon play a physical game of chess that creates metaphysical Nothing. In Beckett's later works, the physical becomes increasingly internalized, the outward games played between two characters becoming internalized by his narrators as

they use play to negotiate their relationships to the world around them. The interdependency of Murphy and Mr. Endon is translated into interdependency between bodies and objects, and as I will discuss later on, individuals and their former selves. As in many of Beckett's works little is permanent or assured. While Murphy's relationship with madness remains open ended in that he is never recognized as definitively mad in the novel, Molloy and Malone have more explicit disabilities. Molloy is plagued by increasingly stiff legs as he tries to ride his bicycle, while Malone is an inmate in an institution for the criminally insane.

In Beckett's trilogy, *Molloy, Malone Dies,* and *The Unnamable*, there is a progressive devolution of structure. The first half of *Molloy* is made up of Molloy's stream of consciousness narrative, the second of Moran's search for Molloy. However, in this detective story, "clues lead nowhere; plans appear aimless and go significantly awry; characters shade into one another, as in dreams; events lack importance, at least in terms of the plot; meetings are arbitrary and lead to no new developments" (Knowlson 337). Expectations such as these continue to break down in the other two novels, progressing towards *The Unnamable*, which is without any identifiable characters or setting. The lack of clear structure in Beckett's texts invites the reader to enter the role of what Ato Quayson names the "skeptical interlocutor." In his chapter "Samuel Beckett: Disability as Hermeneutical Impass," Quayson claims that the constant questioning and uncertainty on the part of Beckett's narrators develops a "rigorous process of unnaming" (*AN* 59). As the narrators make claims and then, often immediately, second-guess those claims, their absent or unknown audience becomes the boundary for understanding both on the part of

the narrator and the reader[60]. The skeptical interlocutor that is born from these

uncertainties becomes the standard by which all else is judged and or defined: "Molloy's

account raises for us the issue of the skeptical interlocutor integrated into the very system

of one's own thought. Throughout his reflections there is a hint of the presence of an

implied interlocutor or addressee…the skeptical interlocutor provides an important

horizon against which the disabled character defines him or herself" (60-61). In *Molloy*,

the uncertainty becomes a condition of being. He is unable to assure his audience or

readers of anything that occurs (or does not occur). In relation to disability, Quayson

argues that this uncertainty becomes necessary to Molloy's, and later Moran's

understanding of their own bodily experiences of pain.

In one of the most oft-discussed passages from Beckett's oeuvre, Molloy

describes his sucking stones, and the process by which he sucks and moves them from

pocket to pocket as efficiently as possible, a ritual Molloy uses to reflect on his own

consciousness and retain a sense of self. The use of ritual to construct the self is not

limited to *Molloy*. As Michael Davidson notes, ritual can be seen across Beckett's work

as a way of maintaining inter-dependent relationships ("Every Man"). We see this

between Hamm and Clov in *Endgame*, Winnie and Willie in *Happy Days*, and Vladimir

and Estragon in *Waiting for Godot* among others. However, like Molloy, many characters

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[60] While Quayson's argument in his chapter, "Samuel Beckett: Disability as
Hermeneutical Impass," focuses primarily on *Molloy* and the play *Endgame*, I extend
Quayson's framework for understanding how Beckett's unique structure and style
challenge representational norms in order to elucidate Malone's narrative, and his
narrative of narratives, throughout *Malone Dies*.

also perform rituals using objects, even as they perform rituals with other characters. For example, Winnie's repeated searching through her bag or Hamm's movement around the room. In *Molloy*, Molloy's sucking as the internal processes of solving a mathematical problem. By playing with a series of options in turn, Molloy measures his options, engaging with a game of figuring a relationship with his stones that will give him the most pleasure. For Molloy it as an opportunity as he first sits on the beach: "I took advantage of being at the seaside to lay in a store of sucking-stones. They were pebbles but I call them stones" (63). The setting is, for Molloy, pleasurable. He immerses himself in sucking-stones. In renaming the pebbles stones, Molloy claims them for his own use, giving them a purpose. The Stones now have roles to play as a part of his game of sucking. Daniel Katz describes the scene as dealing "with Molloy's imperious imperative that he suck all his stones 'turn and turn about' (69,70) and is in many ways a parody of the compulsions and rituals of obsessional neurotics, for the ultimate solution to Molloy's conundrum is simply to abandon the initial imperative, the presence of which, after all, was never justified in any way but simply accepted as a given" (248). Molloy's presumed neurotic tendencies are a parody, a form of imitation or play that generates humor for the reader and pleasure for Molloy. Through the methodological weighing of his options, Molloy plays with different scenarios, imagining choices for himself that reflect back on his present consciousness. Katz goes on to observe, "Indeed, 'measuring' in Beckett seems hardly a way of ordering or controlling the world, a Cartesian 'method' of mastering it (despite what some of his narrators on occasion profess), but rather an activity that becomes its own *raison d'être*, with its alleged 'practical' ends serving as no

more than a pretext for the process, in and of itself" (248). Molloy's process of engaging

with different configurations of stones is what is important. The result of his calculations

is not important.

As he debates his options, Molloy also reflects on the different options' effect on

his mood, emphasizing the connection between his body and mind as mutually

constitutive. The mathematical game affects his connection to the world around him.

Through weighing his myriad options and their disadvantages, Molloy is drawn into the

series of overwhelming choices:

> I was beginning to lose all sense of measure, after all this wrestling and
> wrangling, and to say, All or nothing. And if I was tempted for an instant
> to establish a more equitable proportion between my stones and my
> pockets, by reducing the former to the number of the latter, it was only for
> an instant. For it would have been an admission of defeat. And sitting on
> the shore, before the sea, the sixteen stones spread out before my eyes, I
> gazed at them in anger and perplexity. For just as I had difficulty in sitting
> on a chair, or in an armchair, because of my stiff leg you understand, so I
> had none in sitting on the ground, because of my stiff leg and my
> stiffening leg, for it was about this time that my good leg, good in the
> sense that it was not stiff, began to stiffen. (65)

As Molloy continues to wrestle with the options for how to arrange his stones, he begins

"to lose all sense of measure." Through playing with his options, he loses sight of the

standards by which to judge his options. However, Molloy also notes that to reduce the

number of stones to equal his number of pockets would be "an admission of defeat." He

cannot change the rules of the game. He must continue to engage according to the same

standards, despite the fact that that engagement has begun to obscure those standards.

Molloy is bound to the game as a process of being, both mental and physical as illustrated

by Molloy's stiffening body as it reflects his stiffening mind. In his moment of mental

stagnancy, his physical body ceases to move. However, Molloy continues to weave between different options for arranging his stones. The choices he makes affect, and are affected by his physical condition, his "stiff leg and [his] stiffening leg." Although it is never stated in such terms, Molloy becomes increasingly physically disabled as the novel continues. He learns to navigate his physical and mental abilities as they develop, using a game of sucking stones to do so. But, through the process of weighing his options Molloy, as Katz notes, does not come to an illuminating conclusion. Instead, the practice of thinking through the different arrangements, playing with configurations, serves to constitute his physical and mental presence.

As Molloy's game comes to an end, he reflects on his engagement with the process, directly addressing the importance of the process to both his mental and physical experience of the world. For Molloy, the thinking through of his options is necessary. By mentally playing with the different options, Molloy fulfills a bodily need, dependent on the act of play as well as the stones themselves. Molloy meticulously thinks through different possible configurations for sucking his stones, playing with different options for moving them from pocket to pocket most efficiently so that all are sucked equally. He turns the ordering of stones, pockets, and sucking into a game. He eventually comes to a mostly satisfactory solution but continues to describe the physical effect of what he sees as a still "uneven distribution" (68).

Although Molloy can maintain the balance for a while, eventually it gives way, his mental and physical imbalance returns and pulls him from side to side. Molloy uses his game of sucking stones to balance an otherwise disabled body and mind. Molloy

139

speaks of his physical and mental experience in terms of an equilibrium, not explicitly in the binary terms of ability and disability. His language always already undermines the normative boundaries separating those identities. The game of sucking stones becomes a medium through which Molloy, and by extension the reader, navigate his increasingly impaired senses. Although Molly is "quite pleased" at having found a limited solution, he notes how the imperfections continue to affect his body and mind (68). Molloy claims that "it was above all inelegant in this, to my mind, that the uneven distribution was painful to me, bodily," and that "it was something more than a principle I abandoned, when I abandoned the equal distribution, it was a bodily need" (68). Molloy's intellectual puzzlement over the ritual is both the cause and result of his physical disposition. He concludes "to suck the stones in the way I have described, not haphazard, but with method, was also I think a bodily need" (68). Molloy desires the balance of his ritual as he desires food and water. It is nourishing. But, Molloy's *attempts* to find balance, not the balance itself, become what sustain him. He is more dependent on the process by which he seeks balance than by balance itself. Molloy needs the games he plays with the stones and their arrangement, sustaining his consciousness through the interchange between himself and the stones. Balance may be his goal, the solution Molloy proudly finds on his own, however, playing with different methodologies for achieving that goal help mentally and physically orient him to the world around him.

<div style="text-align:center">Skeptical Storytelling in Malone Dies</div>

       The strategies by which Beckett's characters seek recognition become increasingly abstracted, paralleling Beckett's style which is increasingly stripped down

over time, denying traditional expectations of character, setting, and narrative structure. Where *Murphy* sought recognition by an other through a game of chess, *Molloy* uses objects and games to attain balance, conceptualizing himself in relation to the stones and later his bicycle. *Molloy* becomes a bridge between *Murphy* and *Malone Dies*, offering a protagonist dependent upon his interchange with inanimate objects, but who still exists in an identifiable setting. In *Malone Dies*, the next novel in the trilogy, objects fade into the background. Readers hear Malone's voice, but are not given access to the environment that surrounds him. The setting of the novel remains obscure. In the last pages of the novel his environment is revealed as an institution for the criminally insane. Malone, whose crime and sentence remains unknown, is initially shrouded in literal and figurative darkness. Malone periodically breaks from his narration to wonder about the location of his meager possessions; however, unlike Molloy, he cannot establish a physical relationship with them. He must play before he can find the only possessions he has left (an exercise book, a hat and a pencil). In the dark setting of *Malone Dies*, before he can see the world around him, Malone must reestablish an individual voice through telling stories. The narratives eventually lead him, and the reader, back to his physical body.

Malone Dies opens with the titular narrator's assured claim "I shall soon be quite dead at last in spite of all" (Beckett 173). Malone proclaims the end as the text begins. Throughout the novel the prediction of his own death acts as a refrain. He intermittently wonders what word will be his last as he chronicles the story of Sapo (whom Malone later renames Macmann) from a dark square room. Sapo's story is on the surface unremarkable: he lives with a family on a farm, helping them, then is sent to a hospital

where he has an affair with a nurse. As he tells the story, Malone continually interrupts himself, often to look for his remaining possessions. For the reader, Malone's voice is the sole source of information, the novel itself a running monologue that meanders between different temporalities and spaces. In the dark setting of *Malone Dies*, before he can see the world around him, Malone must reestablish an individual voice through telling stories. The narratives eventually lead him, and the reader, back to his physical body. Like many of Beckett's narrators, Malone often questions his own reliability, second-guessing himself as he tries to remember and describe where, who and when he is. Malone endeavors to return shape and voice to himself through a running dialogue that invites the reader to fill the role of absent (at least within the text) audience (174).

Beckett uses language games to build a constantly shifting framework that denies permanent definition. What is true one moment becomes a mistake the next, illustrating Malone's cognitive difference and asking the reader to become comfortable with difficulties while juggling the variable possibilities. His atypical communication becomes the foundation for a group of isolated persons living in an asylum, attempting to communicate a sense of unique self-hood that transgresses linguistic expectations. For a man locked in a cell, both physically and mentally, play is where he must begin to navigate the conflicts inherent to his own subject-hood, eventually leading him to escape from the institution that had previously condemned it. In exerting himself as narrator, Malone has the power to play with his stories, shifting the identifiable reference points into new settings. Malone's ambition to play produces Quayson's skeptical interlocutor, shedding doubt on Malone's statements, helping give form to his previously shapeless

existence. By telling stories that first seem imagined but become tied to those around him

Malone can work within the space of uncertainty generated by his particular

consciousness. And, when he ultimately escapes from the institution, he shifts his own

identity, moving himself into a new role as a free escapee rather than a nondescript

prisoner.

Beckett's narrators make claims and then, often immediately, second-guess those

claims, while their absent or unknown audience becomes the boundary for understanding

both on the part of the narrator and the reader. To Malone, play is the act most basic to

existence (174). Play is the best humans and animals can do because it allows them to

exercise choice, and individual choice can generate language and invent new senses of

self. Through play, picking up and putting down different options, moving between and

through different possibilities, Malone endeavors to give himself shape. After ceasing to

play for a period of time, Malone decides to try again:

> All went well at first, they all came to me, pleased that someone should
> want to play with them…But it was not long before I found myself alone,
> in the dark. That is why I gave up trying to play and took to myself for
> ever shapelessness and speechlessness, incurious wondering, darkness,
> long stumbling with outstretched arms, hiding. Such is the earnestness
> from which, for nearly a century now, I have never been able to depart.
> From now on it will be different. I shall never do anything any more from
> now on but play. No, I must not begin with an exaggeration. But I shall
> play a great part of the time, from now on, the greater part, if I can. But
> perhaps I shall not succeed any better than hitherto. Perhaps as hitherto I
> shall find myself abandoned, in the dark, without anything to play with.
> Then I shall play with myself. To have been able to conceive such a plan
> is encouraging. (174-175)

Prior to the start of the novel, when Malone ceased to play, when he "found [himself]

alone, in the dark" he lost both his shape and voice. The novel begins with his decision to

play. His initial choice is the creation of the narrative. *Malone Dies* as a whole is the product of Malone's story-game. Although the incitement of this change is initially unclear, at the end of the novel one can infer that Malone's entrance into the asylum caused this darkness. Without light or company Malone lost his sense of self. In order for Malone to regain that sense of self he must learn to play on his own, to become his own audience and partner. He claims that he has spent nearly a century in this darkness, but it is finally time to start playing again. However, Malone already undercuts his own assertions; there is no certainty in his decision to play. Malone proposes that he "shall play a great part of the time, from now on, the greater part, if I can." The final moment of the quote, "if I can," already undermines Malone's perception of his own ability as well as the reader's trust of Malone's assertion. This is what Quayson identifies as a "rigorous process of unnaming." The question of "if" in the previous quote setting a precedent that carries through the rest of the novel. All further action is conditional.

Without any tools with which to play, Malone uses language. He can use language to build narratives, and through those narratives expand his understanding of the world. However, as he continues to second-guess his own perception of the space around him, he blurs the boundaries of certainty, calling into question the reliability of language to represent action and memory in a trustworthy manner. Malone plays with language, following Wittgenstein's point that use of language, while governed by strict rules of grammar, allows plenty of opportunities for variation. Malone takes advantage of these opportunities, making claims then undoing them according to his uncertain perception of space. This aligns the reader with Malone, similarly unsure of the setting.

Malone extends his linguistic play beyond just the space of his cell to push on assumed boundaries of sanity and madness, applying the same pattern of certainty and uncertainty to undermine assumptions, both his own and the reader's. This space of uncertainty is productive. While Malone's initial uncertainty is eventually revealed to be an unnamed form of cognitive difference, his linguistic play undoes assumptions as to the literal space surrounding him as well as the concepts he muses on including his own sanity. For Malone, the mad prisoner, that lack of diagnosis allows him to play through storytelling, eventually re-narrating his identity for both himself and the reader, leading to his eventual escape: a literal escape from the madhouse, as well as a metaphysical escape from linguistic boundaries. The oscillation between truth and fiction destabilizes the narrative and opens up the possibility of producing new limits of discourse that address thought processes previously irreconcilable through normative language.

The language games in Beckett's work ask the reader to participate as a skeptical interlocutor, contributing to a new thought by negotiating linguistic boundaries that extend beyond assumed limitations. Jeffrey Nealon claims, "the goal of the [language] game is to make moves which expand the limits of the game, constantly disrupting its margins" and in doing so "allow for a corresponding expansion of what can be thought" (522). Expanding what can be thought, expands what can be represented, creating something new through what Nealon calls "the de-limitation of an existing language" (522). *Malone Dies* questions the boundaries it creates through Malone's second guessing of himself, elucidating how new language might reconcile understandings of seemingly disparate ideas. In engaging with the text, the reader is engaging with uncertainty. They

enter Malone's present as he perceives it and become part of the story's skeptical interlocutor, engaging with the back and forth play that is the necessary starting point Malone requires to regrow his own shape and voice. The play of language presents cognitive difference as a process, one negotiated through different perspectives— Malone's, the skeptical interlocutor, and the reader—further emphasizing its plurality and resistance to diagnosis.

The reader, as Malone's audience and skeptical interlocutor, is invited to identify with Malone, aligning them sympathetically through the potentially common experiences, Malone establishing his own identity through the possibility of a shared history. While that does not necessitate a response, the text's invitation provides the reader entrance into Malone (and Beckett's) game as part of the skeptical interlocutor. As Malone attempts to describe his surroundings it becomes clear that he does not know how or why he got to his current location, a fact that does not seem to bother him. He claims to have woken up in the cell with no memory of getting there, but immediately questions that lack of memory stating, "I can hardly have been oblivious, at the time" (177). Malone leads with a contradiction, although he could "hardly have been oblivious" to the circumstances of his re-location, he does not remember them. While he may not have been oblivious at the time of the event, he is now. Malone offers drunkenness as a reason for his lack of knowledge, reaching out, inviting his audience (both himself and the reader) to sympathize with that experience, reassuring himself through explaining that his position is not exceptional, in fact it is rather ordinary (177). However, while this explanation seems to satisfy Malone, it also extends the uncertainty that has already been

146

discussed. While drunkenness *could* explain his lack of memory, Malone (and by extension the reader) cannot be sure. Trying to reason with himself, Malone rhetorically asks "who has not experienced such lapses?" (177). By opening up the text in this way Beckett offers further access into Malone's existence, one without normative boundaries of understanding.

As Malone moves in and out of what eventually becomes one extended story, his ability to push the boundaries of his own consciousness increases, a sense of consciousness that is initiated through play. As Malone plays with his own perceptions, the reader must play with Malone's interpretations as they continually challenge traditional expectations of understanding. Malone tells the story of Sapo to himself as play: not just a singular narrative, but one with an interactive audience. Within the context of the novel that audience is Malone himself. The novel's reader becomes a secondary audience.[61] Through the interplay between Sapo's story and Malone's vision of himself, the reader becomes increasingly uncertain of the reliability of any given point. The different layers of uncertainty and potential error create an understanding that is always fluctuating, manipulated by each teller's individual impressions. The reader, destabilized by Malone's lack of reliability, must constantly balance between what the text communicates, infers, and what remains silent. The game that guides Malone's storytelling bleeds into the reader's engagement with Malone.

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[61] This structure is repeated in Beckett's plays, where the audience watches characters telling the story of a story. The best examples of this are "Krapp's Last Tape" and "Rockaby."

Malone's responses to his own story guide him back to his body and allow him to re-engage with the world outside of his dark cell. While his interjections seem abrupt and unrelated to the story he is telling at times, they are necessary. Malone reflects on his process: "I mean in imagining I had grasped at last the true nature of my absurd tribulations" (218). Malone finds knowledge through imagined possibilities, developing his sense of self through new and creative thought as opposed to assumed facts. In understanding atypical processes of perception as less exceptional and allowing imagination to help negotiate seemingly desperate moments of awareness, Beckett presents Malone's mind in a sympathetic way. Beckett brings out new possibilities of understanding through Malone's uncertain and unpredictable narration.

Malone Dies challenges assumptions about consciousness and disrupts traditional reading practices by short-circuiting the reader's ability to ever be certain of what they are being told. Malone proclaims, "I don't know. I simply believe I can say nothing that is not true, I mean that has not happened, it's not the same thing but no matter" (229). All he can do is communicate his experience as he perceives it. Ultimately readers learn Malone has been imprisoned in an institution, placed in his cell due to his non-conventional view of the world and presumably violent behavior. The final events of the novel are excessively violent as the patients, while an outing to the beach, join together to murder one of their two guides (the other joins the patients as they sail away together in the final moments). Because of this violent climax, one can infer that they were locked away in the asylum as the result of otherwise threatening or aggressive action. However, Beckett is less concerned with the action of the characters as the novel contains little in

the way of a progressive plot. The focus is on how Malone, an individual previously judged to be deviant and mad, negotiates between numerous uncertain realities of perception to generate his sense of self. Although those perceptions may not adhere to preconceived notions of identity by locating uncertainty at the root of Malone's person, that is his truth. It is a truth constantly in flux, moving between different possibilities, playing with options without letting the erratically shifting uncertainty prevent knowledge.

Malone's initial decision to play let him build his consciousness, to recreate himself out of a previously shapeless speechless state and rejoin his present community. Near the end of the novel, just before Sapo/Macmann is revealed to be a fellow inmate of the asylum, Malone makes a speech to himself. He takes on a more mournful tone, before once again being cut off by another interruption. In this monologue he most clearly situates his storytelling in relation to his present condition as a man waiting expectantly for death:

> But that is all beside the point, like so many things. All is pretext, Sapo and the birds, Moll, the peasants, those who in the towns seek one another out and fly from one another, my doubts which do not interest me, my situation, my possessions, pretext for not coming to the point, the abandoning, the raising of the arms and going down, without further splash, even though it may annoy the bathers. Yes, there is no good pretending, it is hard to leave everything. The horror-worn eyes linger abject on all they have beseeched so long, in a last prayer, the true prayer at last, the one that asks for nothing. And it is then a little breath of fulfillment revives the dead longings and a murmur is born in the silent world, reproaching you affectionately with having despaired too late. The last word in the way of viaticum. Let us try it another way. The pure plateau (269-270)

Malone claims all he has told his listener is pretext, just a lead up to his final point. However, he never comes to that point. He is cut off before he can articulate it. Malone has ambitions of coming to a conclusion, but he does not dole out an easily consumed moral. While Malone may claim it "is all beside the point," the process of imagining himself back into the world is the point. He learns to navigate his madness, the madness of his mind, body and social context, through play. It may all be "pretext," but it is a pretext necessary for him to escape. In using a game of storytelling, Malone narrates himself back into the current moment, providing a structure (however uncertain) for his madness, understanding himself and his surroundings in new ways.

Play is the starting point. That is the only way Malone can begin. While he initially sets out to do no more than pass the time, Malone's engagement with stories leads him to reflect on and question his perceptions as they occur, expanding the limits of his experience. While Beckett's unique style always engages readers in unique ways, preventing them from consuming his texts without question, in *Malone Dies* the uncertainty that underpins every claim made throughout the novel becomes a model of engaging with non-normative consciousnesses. Beckett prioritizes imaginative play between possibilities over accepted logic, using creativity to expand the boundaries of experience. Play allows Malone to rejoin his comrades in the asylum, and while their escape is not without issue, it is an escape. Malone's meandering narrative is a possible model for using playful imagination to approach atypical experiences. By adopting a more flexible conception of how non-normative consciousness work in unique ways, we can more sympathetically relate to individuals whose experiences would otherwise have
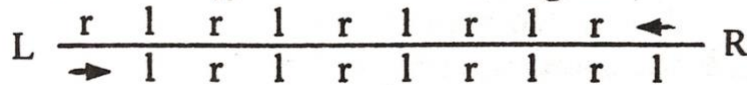
been shut down and condemned by standardized expectations of experience. While Malone is not personally a role model, his reflection on his own experiences, when combined with the reader's relationship to the text, can open up new possibilities for understanding the ways consciousnesses interact. Madness becomes a game the narrators and their readers play to re-conceptualize themselves and the world around them. By understanding cognitive difference through play it is easier to see the more nuanced layers of engagement that, because they challenge preconceptions of sanity, are often pronounced dangerous or fearful. Beckett, who once claimed a lack of horror upon his first visit to Bethlem Hospital (an asylum), generated texts that demonstrate cognitive difference with a similar lack of horror. Although Becket's style can generate uncertainty and doubt in the reader, horror is suspended in favor of playful curiosity.

Performing the Self

Murphy, Molloy, and Malone negotiate their identities through their relationships to other bodies and objects around them. While increasingly abstract in their depiction of character and setting, the novels incorporate clear references to mental and physical disabilities. In Beckett's later life, he moved more and more towards short form writing, focusing on short plays for stage, radio, and film. Beckett uses specific stage directions alongside dialogue to situate his characters in relation to one another, moving the linguistic games of his prose into a physical space. While this is true of many of his plays, I will specifically focus on "Krapp's Last Tape" and "Footfalls." Each of these texts address questions of aging. The characters use repetition to constitute their current selves through engaging with the past. In "Krapp's Last Tape," written in 1958, an

elderly Krapp listens to a recording of his decades-younger self, rewinding and fast forwarding as audiences gradually hear of a relationship with a woman from his youth. Krapp judges his former self harshly, seemingly disconnected from him even as he repeats patterns of speech and habit. In "Footfalls," written in 1975, May and her mother (identified as "V") speak of each other's lives, questioning their worth. Throughout the play May paces back and forth according to a clearly set pattern (see fig. 2.1) as her mother remains in the dark upstage. Each of these works use exchange as a form of play to negotiate identity as it exists on a spectrum, creating connections between points in time showing the fluctuation of consciousness and cognitivity in response to aging. In "Krapp's Last Tape" Krapp literally plays and replays his memories of the past, creating a dialogue between his present and former selves. The ritualistic recording and replaying of his voice structure his identity. Krapp figuratively with the thoughts and opinions of his former selves as a way of identifying his present. In "Footfalls" May paces back and forth, as if moving herself as a piece across a board. She shares memories as she paces, memories different from those of her mother, the two women's perspectives overlapping

Strip: downstage, parallel with front, length nine steps, width one metre, a little off centre audience right.

$$L \; \frac{\text{r} \quad \text{l} \quad \text{r} \quad \text{l} \quad \text{r} \quad \text{l} \quad \text{r} \quad \text{l} \quad \text{r} \; \longleftarrow}{\longrightarrow \; \text{l} \quad \text{r} \quad \text{l} \quad \text{r} \quad \text{l} \quad \text{r} \quad \text{l} \quad \text{r} \quad \text{l}} \; R$$

Pacing: starting with right foot (r), from right (R) to left (L), with left foot (l) from L to R.
Turn: rightabout at L, leftabout at R.
Steps: clearly audible rhythmic tread.
Lighting: dim, strongest at floor level, less on body, least on head.

*Figure 2.5: Stage Directions for "Footfalls" (*Shorter Plays *239)*

through memories of an unidentified "she." In allowing the identity of "she" to shift, the women, and by extension the audience, play with perspective as it hovers between different possible origins that span a generation. In both texts the characters use play as a form of care, self-care in the case of Krapp, and intergenerational care in the case of May and V.

In the 1940's, Beckett's style transformed, becoming increasingly abstract and sparse in its nature, further emphasizing the roll of imagination in the production of ideas. Deeply influenced by his mentor, Beckett further developed strategies Joyce used in *Finnegans Wake*. However, while Joyce encouraged imaginative connections through a surplus of words and meanings, Beckett did so through what he identified as an "impoverishment" of language (*Remembering* 47). Dirk Van Hulle claims "Beckett … radicalized elements that were already present in Joyce's [*Finnegans Wake*] to draw attention to the underlying grid and thematize the creative act in an even more explicitly metafictional way that Joyce had done" (17). This is especially visible in Beckett's shorter plays, which heavily rely on pauses. For example, "Krapp's Last Tape" contains approximately eighty pauses as both Krapps, the Krapp on stage and the Krapp on the recording, hesitate as they encounter memories. Inspired by love letters Beckett wrote to his former lover Ethna MacCarthy as she was dying of cancer, "Krapp's Last Tape" is mournful in tone as the elder Krapp laments what he sees as errors of his youth (Knowlson 397). In moving between his present and past self Beckett further develops the themes of play and cognitive difference introduced in *Murphy*, *Molloy*, and *Malone Dies*.

In "Krapp's Last Tape," Krapp often reacts with surprise or disbelief at what his younger self says, seeming to separate himself from his younger self's thoughts, even as he repeats his physical habits.[62] The mental and physical experiences intersect as part of an exchange, Krapp defining his current mental state in response to his former self while maintaining a continuous connection through his physical habits. The recorded Krapp explains, "Just been listening to an old year, passages at random. I did not check in the book, but it must be at least ten or twelve years ago" (58). This makes clear that Krapp makes a habit of recording himself as well as listening to those recordings. Like Molloy and Malone, Krapp uses repetition to sustain himself, the physical habits providing the underpinnings for his mental shifts, creating a timeline by which to measure his own consciousness. Even as he performs the same actions (and repeats some of the same words) as his former self, present-day Krapp responds with disbelief: "Just been listening to that stupid bastard I took myself for thirty years ago, hard to believe I was ever as bad as that. Thank God that's all done with anyway" (62). Krapp expresses a disconnection from his former self, disparaging his thoughts and ideas. But that dissociation is paired with the literal repetition of phrasing and actions. Krapp's ritual provides continuity between selves where his ideas do not.

I read Krapp's habitual listening to recordings of his younger self as play. He uses the tape recorder to stage an exchange, connecting moments in time through repetition

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[62] "Krapp's Last Tape" is not the only of Beckett's plays to employ this framework. In "Rockaby" (1981) an old woman sits in a rocking chair listening to a recording of her own voice. However, in "Rockaby" there is less of an exchange as the woman on stage repeats "more" and the voice continues to speak in short lines of what a mysterious "she" did "till the end" (275-282).

even as the differences between those moments remain clear. The play as a whole takes on a mournful tone, Krapp still mourning the lost love the recorded Krapp is describing. Continuing to record himself in the present, Krapp emphasizes this sense of loss, sustaining the memory as he continues to question its continued importance to his life: "Everything there, everything, all the—[*Realizes this is not being recorded, switches on.*] Everything there, everything on this old muckball, all the light and dark and famine and feasting of…[*hesitates*]…the ages! [*In a shout.*] Yes! [*Pause.*] Let that go! Jesus! Take his mind off his homework! Jesus! [*Pause. Weary.*] Ah well, maybe he was right. [*Pause.*] Maybe he was right" (62). Even as the contemporary Krapp commands "Let that go!" he is recording himself again responding to the memory, saving his reactions to share with an older version of himself. Krapp is building a network of memories associated with a single event, each bridging it to a different point in time. In doing so Krapp plays with different senses of self, questioning the certainty of his memories, and his responses to those memories, as a way of understanding his current position.

The ending of the play implies that Krapp will continue in the same way, re-listening to himself, playing with memory as a way to understand the present. The last lines belong to Krapp the younger as the recording ends: "Here I end this reel. Box—[*Pause.*]—three, spool—[*Pause.*]—five. [*Pause.*] Perhaps my best years are gone. When there was a chance of happiness. But I wouldn't want them back. Not with the fire in me now. No, I wouldn't want them back. [*KRAPP motionless staring before him. The tape runs on in silence.*]" (63). The Krapp on the tape concludes with a sense of isolation, separated from the happy future he once thought possible. Throughout the play the

Krapps' claim their feelings, responding to one another and exposing their differences. Debra Malina claims "Krapp's impulse to dissect his Self along the lines of those differences is always at war with his drive to (re)construct a whole" (404). Malina sees Krapp's habitual re-listening as an effort to re-construct himself has whole; however, the versions of his self-preserved through the recordings remain fragmented. I read the relationship between Krapp's efforts to create a whole and the disparate nature of the tapes as less oppositional. For Krapp to understand himself, and for audiences to understand him, we must hold both together, appreciating the mental fragmentation as an essential part of the Krapp who continues to perform the same tasks. Through Krapp's exchanges with the tape, audiences understand him as he has aged, grasping the generational shift of his consciousness.

"Footfalls" directly addresses the effects of aging, the elderly mother and the middle-aged daughter each reflecting on how time has affected their consciousness. The play begins with several short exchanges before the mother, V, and then the daughter, May, perform individual monologues. The beginning conversation shows both women lacking confidence in their memory, neither able to remember her own age, while V seemingly depends on her daughter for physical care. As neither woman remembers her age, the play undermines their authority from the outset. In the monologues that follow, boundaries of individual consciousness blur, as V then May encourage a sense of repetition that is contained within an individual while spanning generations. Before V begins her monologue, May asks her mother if she needs to be moved or have her pillows, drawsheet, bedpan, and other conveniences rearranged or exchanged (240).

However, when V begins to speak at length, she seems to interrupt May's seemingly habitual care for her:

> V: Will you never have done? [*Pause.*] Will you never have
> done…revolving it all?
> M: [*Haulting.*] It?
> V: It all. [*Pause.*] In your poor mind. [*Pause.*] It all. [*Pause.*] It all. (240)

In asking when May will be done "revolving it all," V highlights the repetitive nature of May's questions, seeing her daughter as caught in a cycle of service. As V's monologue progresses, she watches her daughter pacing back and forth and reflects on May's childhood and later life, lamenting what she sees as a series of lost opportunities. As the first woman to speak at length, V sets up May's monologue. But while V sees May's life as unfulfilling and mundane, May sees her mother as misremembering her own youth and having settled into a sedentary existence.

As May begins her monologue, she reflects on a "she," either herself or her mother, claiming that "she" similarly paced throughout the night, opening the possibility of misidentification, and further undermining the audience's certainty as to who is being described. Without clearly identifying the "she," May's monologue might be interpreted as either an explanation for her own actions, or as exposing an intergenerational pattern.[63] In her monologue the pacing becomes a method of response to unknown causes, either to trauma or aging. While V questions her daughter's purpose, May comes closer to exposing a cause, telling the story of another mother/daughter pair, Mrs. W and Amy. May's monologue destabilizes identity in the play overall. While V, despite not

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[63] For further discussion of the mother daughter relationship in "Footfalls" see Ahlawat, "Tracing the Mother to the Daughter, the Self to the Image."

remembering her own age, is seemingly responding directly to her daughter's actions, the unknown "she" and second mother/daughter of May's monologue create a sense of overlapping identity, blurring the lines between the different women. After V ends her monologue again with the repetition of "It all," May pauses and a chime sounds before she resumes (241-242). From the moment she begins to speak, May reinforces the continuity between her mother and herself, repeating "sequel" twice before moving into memory (242). In declaring it a sequel from the beginning, May implies a sequence, emphasizing the women's shared habits, creating continuity between her choices and the unidentified "she." May begins to explain the origin of the pacing:

> A little later, when as though she had never been, it never been, she began to walk. [*Pause.*] At nightfall. [*Pause.*] Slip out at nightfall and into the little church by the north door, always locked at that hour, and walk, up and down, up and down, His poor arm. [*Pause.*] Some nights she would halt, as one frozen by some shudder of the mind, and stand stark still till she could move again. But many also were the nights when she paced without pause, up and down, up and down, before vanishing the way she came. (242)

The pacing begins secretively and in darkness. The cause of pacing is unclear, phrased metaphorically, "as though" an unknown something and someone had ever "been." From the beginning the pacing is regular, following an "up and down" pattern, deviating only when she felt "some shudder of the mind." The pattern of movement is echoed in May's own pacing on stage. The pacing continues through interruptions, but takes on a ghostly nature, without sound, "None at least to be heard" the woman "vanishing the way she came" when done (242). May's description of the pacing destabilizes the audience's ability to identify character while also creating a sense of questionable permanence, the

uncertain reasons for the pacing, the lack of identifiable noise, and the woman's fleeting presence giving May's description an eerie tone.

Like "Krapp's Last Tape," "Footfalls" creates tension between physical repetition and mental shifts over time. While May and V share thoughts, repeating phrases while each forgets or mis-remembers facts like their own age, they are oppositional in tone, questioning one another throughout the play. V is first to ask, "Will you never have done…revolving it all," however by the end of the play May asks the same question, repeating it as the stage fades to darkness (240). Like Krapp and his younger self, May and her mother repeat phrases that create continuity despite oppositional questions and ideas. V sees May as having wasted her life; however, May's monologue describes a woman aimlessly pacing, the habit the seemingly defining point of her identity. Like Krapp's relationship with his younger self, May and V's relationship is maintained through physical practices that create consistency between separate mindsets.

As play, the physical habits of Krapp, May, and V, create the context through which each individual understands themselves and their relationships to others as they change over time. Like Murphy and Mr. Endon, Molloy and his stones, and Malone and storytelling, the ritualistic recording, listening, and pacing are physical practices that help develop cognitive relationships. For Krapp, May, and V, these habits show a clear preoccupation with aging and memory. In his later works, Beckett increasingly uses play as a form of care, further emphasizing the roll of dependency in negotiating individual identities. In "Footfalls" in particular this is made clear through May's care of her mother. However, while May performs typical tasks of care related to hygiene and other

domestic needs, she is also dependent on her mother as a companion, their relationship mediated by ritualistic pacing. Ellen K. Feder and Eva Feder Kittay claim "The fact of human vulnerability and frailty that dependency underscores must function in our very conceptions of ourselves as subjects and moral agents" (3). This can be seen in Beckett's work through his use of pairs and overall emphasis on relationships of exchange between bodies and objects as a form of identity building. Over the course of his career, Beckett increasingly uses play as mode of access for mentally disabled characters. While his characters rarely receive diagnosis, Beckett's preoccupation with cognitive difference is evident in his characters' emphasis on the relationship between internal and external identity.

Beckett's work emphasizes the relationship between body and mind through play. As a mode of access and learning, play becomes the method by which characters, and by extension readers, expand understandings of cognitive difference. Over the course of his career, Beckett's use of play becomes increasingly abstract, moving from literal games of chess to repeated rituals used to connect one moment to the next. Beckett's characters all confront senses of lack or loss, senses of Nothing. Through play these characters learn to navigate spaces of uncertainty, pushing against the limits of language and emphasizing the mutually dependent relationship between mind and body.

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CHAPTER 3

Affect, Animality, and Animacy: At the Intersection of Trauma and Mental Disability in

Cereus Blooms at Night and *Wide Sargasso Sea*

Thus far I have argued James Joyce and Samuel Beckett use adaptation and play as a mode of access for mentally disabled characters, emphasizing understandings of cognitive difference through processes of exchange between bodies. In doing so, the two ex-pat Irishmen challenge literary histories of representation as well as twentieth century processes of diagnosis and institutionalization. In this chapter, I extend those questions to a global context to analyze how these issues of access and adaptation work alongside traumatic histories of colonization in the context of mental disability. I argue *Wide Sargasso Sea* by Jean Rhys, and *Cereus Blooms at Night* by Shani Mootoo, through their adaptation of Bertha Mason from Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, inherit and reshape the trope of a mad Caribbean woman and undermine the figure's long standing literary history.[64] The authors progressively question assumed hierarchical binaries between sanity and madness, male and female, colonizer and colonized, and human and animal, all of which associate rationality with the former and irrationality with the latter. [65] In

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[64] *Jane Eyre*, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, and *Cereus Blooms at Night* were published in 1847, 1966, and 1996 respectively. While Mootoo's protagonist, Mala Ramchandin, shares narrative elements with that of Bertha Mason of *Jane Eyre*, Rhys' novel is a direct adaptation of the character, establishing a history for Antoinette Cosway and exploring her childhood prior to meeting Edward Rochester and subsequent marriage to him and move to England.

[65] In the introduction to *Mad at School*, Margaret Price analyzes the different language used to describe mental disability. With reference to "madness" Price notes that "*mad* achieves a broad historical sweep" and that "the broad scope of *mad* carries the drawback

foregrounding mediation as essential to navigating the intersection of these points, Rhys and Mootoo use shifting perspectives and non-linear narrative structures to deconstruct traditional hierarchies of oppression as they narrate histories of trauma.

Rhys' novel is a direct adaptation of Bertha Mason from *Jane Eyre*, writing a history for the character and giving her a distinct identity that counters her depiction in *Jane Eyre* as bestial and mad, an obstacle Jane and Mr. Rochester must overcome to find love. *Wide Sargasso Sea* tells the life story of Antoinette Causeway (as Bertha is called in *Wide Sargasso Sea*) in Jamaica and Domenica leading up to her move to England and the events of *Jane Eyre*. Antoinette narrates the first section of the novel, recounting her childhood in Jamaica, the marriage of her mother Annette to Mr. Mason, and the death of her younger brother. At the end of the first section the grieving and emotionally unstable Annette is sent away, Mr. Mason not wanting to deal with what he sees as mad behavior. The second part of the novel is primarily narrated by an unnamed Englishman who has now married Antoinette. While the Englishman is unnamed in the text itself, it becomes clear he is Edward Rochester, the male protagonist of *Jane Eyre*. Antoinette's behavior and thoughts become increasingly volatile in response to her emotionally abusive husband's torments, one of which is calling her Bertha, the name by which she is known in *Jane Eyre.* After finding out Antoinette secretly requested help from Christophine, the woman who cared for her as a child, asking her for a potion to save her marriage, Edward

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of generality but also the power of mass" (10). Although *mad* has been taken up in activism surrounding mental disability over the last forty years, the term's generality often leads to fear and the unknown. The clearest example is Bertha Mason in *Jane Eyre* who in the original novel lurks in the background, a foreboding presence but also the obstacle Jane and Rochester must overcome to find their own happiness.

takes Antoinette back to England. The last section of the novel chronicles the events of *Jane Eyre* from Antoinette's, now Bertha's, perspective as she is sequestered in the attic, eventually setting fire to the house.

While *Wide Sargasso Sea* gives Bertha a history and an individual identity, to do so Rhys relies on a human/animal binary, writing against Bertha's animalistic portrayal in *Jane Eyre*. Mootoo further adapts the figure of a mad Caribbean woman but embraces the relationship between human and animal as constitutive of Mala's identity, essential to her continued existence and ability to communicate following trauma. Readers meet Mala Ramchandin, the protagonist of *Cereus Blooms at Night*, when she is been to an alms house, unspeaking and presumably mad in her old age. Through flashbacks and memories we learn of her childhood and the violent and long-term abuse suffered at the hands of her father. Like *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*, *Cereus Blooms at Night* tells the story of a woman judged mad, who after years of seclusion sets fire to her house. However, unlike Bertha, Mala survives and is sent to the alms house where she meets Tyler, and through a connection based in what he terms a "shared queerness," Tyler begins to articulate Mala's history (48). Overall the novel is framed as a letter written by Tyler. Tyler acknowledges his own influence on the narrative's fidelity from the outset, but puts the story down on paper and sends it into the world in the hopes that Asha, Mala's younger sister who had escaped her father's abuse as a young girl, will recognize it, and asks readers of the letter/novel to pass the story along in the hope that it will one day reach Asha. The letter/narrative begins with Mala's arrival at the alms house in the

fictional Caribbean town and island of Paradise, Lantanacamara.[66] From that present moment, her history is non-linearly revealed through Tyler's conversations with Mala herself; his Nana; Ambrose, Mala's childhood friend and later lover; and Otoh, Ambrose's transgender son who meets Mala shortly before she is found and sent to the alms house. I use the term "conversations" here loosely, as the novel does not stage precise exchanges of information. Rather, the reader must actively infer who contributed what to the story. Ultimately, Mala's history leading up the present moment of the novel is revealed.

Rhys and Mootoo present women at the center of intersecting traumatic histories, their voices heard in the echo of male dominated narratives. *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Cereus Blooms at Night* each take up issues of Caribbean decolonization, situating their heroines in eddies of violent patriarchal control, further saturated with issues of class, race, and sexuality. However, while Rhys combats masculine and colonial power by metaphorizing them through Antoinette Cosway's mental disability, Mootoo challenges the relationship between these dominant systems, showing Mala's mental disability as it informs and is informed by issues of gender, imperialism, and sexuality. In his analysis of *Wide Sargasso Sea*, John J. Su claims "Reconfiguring narrative…can change our evaluation of events by changing the way we experience the relationship between events and their contexts; in other words, refiguring narrative time can alter the meaning of experience and thereby transform how we understand the history of figures like Bertha

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[66] Paradise, Lantanacamara is modeled on Trinidad, where Mootoo grew up. See Burns for an analysis of how *Cereus* interrogates past representations of the Caribbean as paradise.

Mason" (164). Although Su is specifically referring to *Wide Sargasso Sea*, this statement can be extended to include *Cereus Blooms at Night.* Both novels re-narrate the trope of a mad Caribbean woman. However, while *Wide Sargasso Sea* reconfigures Bertha Mason's past, the narrative itself still follows a linear pattern. In *Cereus Blooms at Night*, Mootoo narrates the past alongside the present while at the same time orienting it toward the future, further transforming understandings of trauma and mental disability.

While all narratives involve mediation by their very nature as fictional representations, I argue that in cases where the narrative concerns *complex embodiment*, and *situations of extreme precarity*, straight forward narration is inadequate. Tobin Siebers claims *complex embodiment* "theorizes the body and its representations as mutually transformative. Social representations obviously affect the experience of the body…but the body possesses the ability to determine its social representation as well, and some situations exist where representation exerts no control over the life of the body" (25-26). I use this framework for understanding how Mala's intersectional identities (as female, mentally disabled, and as the daughter of an Indian immigrant to Lantanacamara) help shape their representation through Tyler's non-linear narrative. Liam Kruger identifies situations of intersecting oppressive forces, defining *situations of extreme precarity* as situations where identity involves "multiple exclusions from the political or social sphere on such bases as race, nationality, class, and/or gender expression, among others" (133). Siebers and Kruger both note the ways issues of marginalization affect representation, both socially and politically. In *Cereus Blooms at Night*, Mala's story helps "determine its social representation." Siebers goes on to explain that in relation to

theories of intersectional identity, complex embodiment may help navigate different "hierarchies of oppression" when "coming to an understanding of intersecting minority identities demands that one imagine social location not only as perspective but also complex embodiment" (29). Understanding intersectional identities, in Mala's case but also more broadly, requires attention to the individual's perspective as it exists in a physical, social environment. Complex embodiment accounts for experiences in their variability as individuals navigate social ideologies and representations contributing in varying ways to the oppression of different points of one's intersectional identity.

Wide Sargasso Sea and *Cereus Blooms at Night* rely on mediated knowledge or information as both a plot device and an epistemological premise, reinventing the trope of a mad Caribbean woman through affective narrative structures. I define *affective narrative structures* in terms of *animacy*. Mel Chen claims that "animacy most generally refers to the grammatical effects of the sentience or liveness of nouns" (2). Chen argues that words, and objects, carry meaning through affect which "potentially engages many bodies at once, rather than (only) being contained as an emotion within a single body" (11). These affective connections help build the narrative, connecting not just material bodies (humans, animals, plants, objects etc.) but also points in time. Through networks of affective associations, histories of trauma and mental disability become recognizable as they are told through the simultaneous integration of past and present, and, particularly in Mootoo's case, rely on information that is indirect and inarticulate, the interpretation of which is necessary for communicating a history saturated in both individual and cultural trauma.

Mootoo employs an affective narrative structure which highlights intersectional identities of gender, race, and cognitive difference traditionally othered by socio-normative expectations. The narrative of *Cereus* is predominantly filtered through Tyler, a queer male nurse at the alms house where Mala is sent to at the beginning of the novel. In a non-linear structure, Tyler recounts Mala's history by inferring meaning from her limited speech and translating the memories of people from her past. In placing the possibility of error, Tyler's own fallibility as authority, at the center of the novel, Mootoo positions readers as further interpreters of Mala's history, who must rely on linguistic animacy and affect rather than words themselves as sources of knowledge. Mala and the queer male protagonists (Tyler as well as Otoh) connect through difference, as affective, or felt, understandings supersede articulate language as the primary form of communication. The voices that make up the narrative intersect and overlap at different points throughout the novel, alongside the reader's experience as interlocutor, together allowing the narrative to be told.

Wide Sargasso Sea and *Cereus Blooms at Night* each present a woman at the intersection of mental disability and trauma, struggling to communicate *dysarticulate* (a term borrowed from James Berger) experiences within communities reliant on *articulate* language. Drawing on work from affect, trauma, and postcolonial theory, I claim Rhys and Mootoo manipulate temporalities to illustrate how affective forms of communication fluctuate and create meaning over time to produce narrative, emphasizing the necessity of non-traditional modes of storytelling when writing histories of mental disability amid cultural and individual trauma. Mootoo in particular foregrounds the necessity of

mediation, embracing more animal and bodily forms of knowledge, unsettling the binary

hierarchies between human and animal. Mala communicates more through animalistic

sounds than articulate language. Tyler, and by extension readers, are then reliant on

feelings of understanding, the communication facilitated by affective connections rather

than identifiable words. In a conversation with John Hector, the gardener at the alms

house, Tyler tries to explain his relationship with Mala, Hector remarking "'You real

sensitive to her, eh!'" (70). Tyler claims to understand Mala's needs and desires despite

the fact that "'She has hardly said any words'" (70). Tyler and Mala's connection is

abstract, based in shared feelings rather than language. One day as they are walking

through the garden Mala begins to sing a song. Tyler, walking at Mala's side begins to

join in, and through sharing the song he seems to gain access to Mala's thoughts and

desires: "I walked lighter and clapped my hands to her chant. I felt like an explorer

charting her life in murky, unmapped waters. I was not sure what I was discovering

beyond her voice but I felt it would not be long before I would have the privilege, and

honour of entering her world" (72). This shared moment becomes the foundation for later

understanding of Mala's history. We later learn that the song is one she and other sang

and played games to. It provided the soundtrack for a particular day when she stood up to

a bully and then ran with Asha to hide in a tomb. Tyler's understanding of this history

begins with a moment of affective connection while singing. He is not told the story but

gains access to it through a sensitivity to Mala's emotions. This affective form of

communication structures the narrative overall while showing the ways in which

mediation is integral for retelling histories of disability and trauma, not in spite of but

because of its necessary uncertainty. *Cereus Blooms at Night* places the inaccessibility of individual experience at the center of the narrative while asking readers to act as further mediators in its communication, illustrating the complexity of making these histories recognizable in increasingly global contexts.

<div align="center">Trauma, Mental Disability, and New Kinds of Listening</div>

Mala's experience with mental disability and trauma, in the form of long-term incestuous rape, beatings, severe emotional abuse by her father, and extreme isolation, has very real and material effects on her autonomy, leading to her confinement in the alms house and affecting her ability to narrate her history on her own. When Mala burns her house down, the police take Mala in for the murder of her father, but the case is dismissed before Mala stands trial due to lack of evidence. "Out of compassion for her health and welfare" Mala is sent to the alms house (8). Upon her arrival, all but Tyler view her with a combination of fascination and disdain. She is institutionalized, but in an institution claiming not to serve her. The Sister in charge claims, "'[the alms house] is for poor people. This is not the place for psychiatrics'" (9). However, alms houses at the time were common in more rural communities. While they served the poor, they also acted in place of hospitals and often housed elderly people who had dementia as well as other mental disabilities. The Sister's statement further others Mala, marking her as even more exceptional, beyond the scope of help they are willing to give.[67]

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[67] Following my use of the term in previous chapters, I use *mental disability* when referring to Mala who is undiagnosed in the text. While she most clearly exhibits symptoms of PTSD, the specific diagnosis is of less concern to me. I am more concerned with how mental disability as a marker of identity is represented and communicated in the novel.

Mootoo manipulates narrative structures through layering different perspectives and temporalities to show how mediation can also function as a potential space through which to develop new forms of relation and communication in histories of trauma. In a 2000 interview, Shani Mootoo states, "Mala…is not, as everyone in the novel thinks, a madwoman, but she is someone who has found extraordinary ways to survive incest and abuse and society's neglect and scorn. Mala gives up verbal language, while I use verbal language to detail her trauma and her triumph" (111). Mootoo's claim here normalizes Mala's mental disability while also falling into the language of an overcoming narrative. While those surrounding her in the alms house often dismiss or avoid her out of fear, Tyler forms a bond with Mala and in doing so shares her story with the world. I read Mootoo's claim that Mala is not a madwoman as an indication of the shifting perspectives on mental disability. While Mala is not mad in a frighteningly violent or unknown way, she does exhibit cognitive difference, much of which can be read as a result of the trauma suffered at the hands of her father.[68] While the novel does not explicitly diagnose Mala, it does describe the trauma she experienced in detail, implying that Mala has Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), a recognized mental disability. Mootoo's desire to "use verbal language to detail her trauma and her triumph" in and

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[68] In the introduction to *Mad at School*, Margaret Price analyzes the different language used to describe mental disability. With reference to "madness" Price notes, "*mad* achieves a broad historical sweep" and that "the broad scope of *mad* carries the drawback of generality but also the power of mass" (10). Although *mad* has been taken up in activism surrounding mental disability over the last forty years, the term's generality often leads to fear and the unknown. The clearest example is Bertha Mason in *Jane Eyre* who in the original novel lurks in the background, a foreboding presence but also the obstacle Jane and Rochester must overcome to find their own happiness.

through Tyler only further reinforces the necessity of mediation in the context of trauma and mental disability. In calling the novel itself a "triumph," Mootoo uses the language of Mala somehow overcoming her mental disability.[69] But again, by recontextualizing Mootoo's claims within contemporary disability scholarship, what Mootoo describes as a "triumph" is the very ability to tell Mala's story. Mala does not triumph by overcoming her mental disability, forgetting the stigma and marginalization attached to it. At the end of the novel she remains in the alms house, still separate from normative society. Readers are positioned as further mediators of Mala's history, essential for the repetition of Mala's story as readers of Tyler's letter, passing the narrative along in a way that Asha Ramchandin might recognize it.

The importance of mediation in understanding trauma has long been a focus of trauma studies. In *Unclaimed Experience*, published in 1996, Cathy Caruth defines

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[69] The use of overcoming language has long been a focus in disability studies in relation to the trope of "supercrips." Joseph Shapiro describes supercrips as "glorified disabled role models," disabled persons who are disproportionately praised for seemingly overcoming their disability to achieve greatness (16). The issue with this particular type of praise is that it objectifies the individual, not recognizing the material, socio-political challenges of being disabled and focusing instead on the perceived triumph over what audiences assume to be debilitating disabilities. Like Mootoo, other critics have similarly described mentally disabled characters according to these terms. With reference to Antoinette Cosway, Kathy Mezei claims, "the secret of *Wide Sargasso Sea* is Antoinette's valiant, heroic attempt to tell her story" (196). Again, we see the language of triumph or overcoming used to describe what might be considered the simple task of telling a story, but which is perceived as exceptional in the context of disability. In this chapter I hope to emphasize the ways in which Mootoo and Rhys make stylistic choices that re-narrate histories of trauma while challenging and reworking (but not overcoming) longstanding masculinist, colonial, and ableist linguistic expectations that might otherwise prevent them from being told. Mootoo and Rhys develop styles that confront normative expectations, exposing the challenges of communicating histories of trauma in the context of mental disability.

trauma as "an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena" (11). The experience of the traumatic event is delayed, occurring in the recurrent reminders of the trauma at varying times after the original event. For Caruth, this is what defines an event as traumatic. It is "not locatable in the simple violent or original event in an individual's past, but rather in the way that its very unassimilated nature—the way it was precisely *not known* in the first instance—returns to haunt the survivor later on" (Caruth 4). The traumatic event is traumatic precisely because it too overwhelming to be understood at the moment of its occurrence. Its effects are gleaned gradually, and often unexpectedly, in their influence on future moments. In *Cereus Blooms at Night* Mala is reexperiencing her past through this new telling. Mediation is necessary because the trauma itself must be "delayed" and "unassimilated." While memories are often mediated through new experiences and contexts, Caruth sees traumatic memories as exceptional. While an average experience might be mediated at a later point, the individual's experience of that event as it happens is not delayed in the way traumatic events are. For Caruth, the moment of trauma is so overwhelming that the brain *cannot possibly* experience it as it is happening. So, while impressions of everyday non-traumatic events might shift in meaning over time, they were still understood as they happened. The traumatic event is *only ever* experienced in retrospect.

However, this phrasing denies power or agency to the individual in favor of the unknowable event and has precipitated binary understandings of traumatic experience.

Unclaimed Experience, along with other work done in trauma studies, emphasizes the inability of the individual to claim, or maintain agency as a part of his or her own experience. As James Berger notes, this initial approach to trauma in literary criticism is in conflict with many aspects of the ethos of disability studies. Berger states:

> Trauma studies describes a condition—of disintegration and negation, revealed and obscured by symptoms—but it does not describe this condition in terms of its possible agency or abilities, or in terms of abilities that might have been lost…Disability studies, on the other hand, since it has developed together with movements for disability rights, is necessarily more mundane and anti-apocalyptic. It is concerned with particularities of physical difference rather than with radical, incommensurable otherness. (569)

Although trauma studies is largely concerned with loss, mourning for what was, and disability studies more clearly engages ideas of futurity, possibilities of what can be, both fields have begun to shift towards a less binary relationship between the two. Berger claims that despite mutual interests, the fields lack a shared "critical vocabulary" ("Trauma" 577). In many ways, this lack of vocabulary is mirrored by the temporal relationship between trauma and mental disability. By this I mean, the individual's experience of the traumatic event causes a break.[70] The world changes in the moment of

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[70] In *The Body in Pain*, Elaine Scarry analyzes the relationship between language and physical pain, an argument I read as applying to mental pain as well. Scarry claims, "Physical pain is not only itself resistant to language but also actively destroys language, deconstructing it into the pre-language of cries and groans. To hear those cries is to witness the shattering of language" (172). Pain forces a break with articulate language, not just denying but destroying it so that the individual has no access to words that might communicate their experience of trauma. Communicating a traumatically painful experience then becomes an act of creation: "to be present when the person in pain rediscovers speech and so regains his powers of self-objectification is almost to be present at the birth, or rebirth, of language" (171). In *Cereus*, Mala births a new language, one dependent on feeling rather than words. Only through allowing the inarticulate to supersede the articulate can Mala speak again.

trauma so that the once adequate language used to describe experience is no longer

sufficient. In the case of *Cereus Blooms at Night*, Mala's withdrawal from articulate

language is described as a logical choice. While living in isolation for decades, Mala

releases the ties of civilized society and embraces the non-human, preferring murmurs

and echoes of birds as a form of language.

Beyond Berger's claim as to their divergent temporalities and vocabularies,

disability studies often suppresses narratives of trauma because of their tendency to frame

disability as tragedy. However, trauma and disability studies moving away from

previously binary modes of thinking to better open up understandings of how bodies are

always moving in relation to each other. In her more recent work, *Literature in the Ashes

of History*, Caruth argues that literature can provide a performative space, the retelling of

traumatic histories opening the possibility of "a new kind of listening" (55). Encountering

the past within the present moment provides a new perspective while moving the event

into a future space. In Caruth's analysis of *Death and the Maiden*, she argues this

retelling as part of the present moment brings up more questions than answers (72).

However, those questions are oriented towards a futurity, towards the possibility of "a

new kind of listening." Ultimately Caruth claims, "For these stories of trauma cannot be

limited to the catastrophes they name, and the theory of catastrophic history may

ultimately be written in a language that already lingers, in these texts, after the end, in a

time that comes to us from the other shore, from the other side of the disaster" (92). The

language of disaster, of the traumatic event, exists in the present and in the future, in

terms yet to be discovered. The traumatic event is no longer an event of the past never be

understood, but an event that can be rearticulated in the future. However, the way in which trauma rearticulates itself is neither straightforward nor predictable.

Drawing on her own experiences of unexpected triggers, Alison Kafer uses contemporary debates around trigger warnings as a starting point to theorize strategies for new alliances between disability and trauma studies. Kafer points out that despite efforts to the contrary, we "cannot cleanly separate *being* disabled from *becoming* disabled" and that "attending to violence and trauma does not run counter to but is actually an essential part of critical theories of disability. Or, to put it differently, an acknowledgement of loss or a deep reckoning with the aftermath of trauma can co-exist with critical anti-ableist politics" (6). Kafer identifies the deeply embedded complexities of recognizing trauma within disability studies. The separation of *being* and *becoming* that Kafer points to is, in the interest of anti-ableist representations of disability, a response to histories of representation that defined disability (physical or mental) as something to be feared and/or pitied. However, as Kafer notes, by not acknowledging the event of *becoming* disabled, or persistent pain that might result from a disability, we censure part of the narrative surrounding disability. The fear of disclosure eliciting pity must not override the need to appreciate and understand how these experiences continue to influence disabled lives.

Cereus Blooms at Night spans two generations, but the narrative itself only comes together at a particular moment in time, as the characters meet and share the bits of knowledge that allow the story to become whole only at this point in the future. To understand both Mala's experience of trauma, and her experience of mental disability

which follows, both trauma and disability studies must come together. Morrison and Casper describe the temporal possibilities of this alliance: "We also want to note a temporal dimension to [traumatic] wounding, and to the ways in which we may read wounds across various iterations. While disability studies often posits disability as an acute, singular thing, static in time and place, critical trauma studies allows us to examine both pre-and post-wounding conditions and all points in between." The novel relies on affect to help maneuver these different positions in relation to trauma. Affective understandings help connect bits of knowledge, mediating between subjectivities, ultimately giving the story shape and making it recognizable as a history.

Tyler is presented as the primary mediator of Mala's, Otoh's, and Ambrose's parts of the story. However, throughout the novel Tyler's narration fades to the background as portions of the story unknown to anyone but Mala herself come to the fore. Tyler seems to have access to more detail than seems possible. For example, he remembers first hearing of Chandin from his Nana, a cautionary response to his childlike question: "'Can your Pappy be your Pappy and your Granpappy at the same time?'" (25). His Nana's memory of Chandin is vague and brief: "'Look here, son, you see, there was a fellow…not from near here, he was from Paradise, a fellow name Chandin, Chandin Ramchandin. You know, he only had a handful of years over me but when I was your age or so, they used to tell us that we must study hard so that we could have the luck of that Ramchandin fellow. Hmmm, I wonder what become of him?'" (25). The direct quote we as readers are given does not mention Chandin's abuse of Mala. However, Tyler's question sets up the connection. Following his Nana's response, readers find a history of

Chandin's parents, childhood, and early adulthood. This section is presumably narrated by Tyler based on what his Nana told him as a child.

In recollecting the story, Tyler locates his connection to Mala as beginning years before, rewriting the past through his association with Mala in the present. Tyler interrupts the temporality of Chandin's story and returns to the present, describing this association: "Reflecting now on the story that Cigarette Smoking Nana had begun to relate to answer my boyish query, I realize I had known of Miss Ramchandin for many, many years…It was as though Nana had introduced me to Miss Ramchandin, and Miss Ramchandin had confirmed Nana for me" (46). The story connects all three characters, reciprocally affirming each individual. However, the story remains admittedly incomplete: "By the time Nana got around to addressing my specific question, she was, in the end, unable to tell me everything" (47). Nana comes to the point but is interrupted by the door opening. She does not explain the story exactly. Like many other culminative points in the novel, there remains a sense of incompleteness. Even though the narrative continues as Tyler continues Chandin's story, the source of his information is in flux, potentially pieced together through points from his Nana, Mala, and other unspecified voices. Tyler presumably understands the rest of the story in retrospect. When he remarks "I realize I had known of Miss Ramchandin for many, many years" Tyler recognizes a history he had known but not fully grasped. Ostensibly he knew who Mala was, but that identification lacked meaning until he met Mala later in life. Tyler's present gives meaning to the past. While as a child Nana was "unable to tell [Tyler] everything," he now fills in the blanks using knowledge from the present. Tyler's affective connection to

Mala allows him to stitch the different threads of her history together, the present association rearticulating both of their pasts.

   Cereus Blooms at Night forces the past, present, and future together, showing how traumatic experiences persist, as memories of the event continue to affect the present while determining one's ability to narrate that event in the future. As readers we hear the history of Mala and her family as it comes together in a present moment, the narrative only becoming recognizable when the pieces are put together (from Mala, Otoh, Ambrose, etc.). In many ways, the story can *only* be told in this moment, when Mala is an old woman. Mala's story becomes provisionally whole in the moment of Tyler's telling it. Tyler functions as the collector of different pieces of the story that would otherwise exist independently. Mala's reconnection with the world through Tyler allows everything to come together, making the narrative recognizable as it is sent into to the world. Because the story is presented as a letter to Asha (or to anyone that might recognize the story and help it reach Asha) it is explicitly unfinished. There is more yet to come. This open-endedness then undermines what might otherwise be traditional endings to a novel: Ambrose and Mala are reunited after decades apart, Otoh and Tyler find love. Because Mala and Asha's relationship, set up as the hopeful endpoint, remains unfulfilled, the other characters' stories are left open-ended as well, without any assured happy ending.

   The novel's open-ended conclusion, alongside its non-linear temporality, structurally inverts narrative expectations and calls for what Caruth names a "new kind of listening." Furthermore, Mala's withdrawal from language in the decades following her father's death challenges expectations of speech, showing her developing new strategies

182

of meaningful communication. A marker of traumatic events is the inability to describe them and therefore assimilate the event alongside others as part of a continuous narrative. Mootoo describes Mala's withdrawal from language as a transformation that is both freeing and confining. Lacking the ability to explain her traumatic experiences using articulate language, Mala embraces more animalistic noises that more accurately represent her feelings. However, in abandoning articulate *civilized* language, Mala loses contact with the world outside of her own yard. Mala's withdrawal hovers somewhere between intentional and unintentional, as if Mala, the words, and the images all possess some form of agency. The tone of the scene describing the undoing of language is emancipatory. However, being *freed* from language precipitates further isolation from the world around her. The novel describes it as a process of undoing:

> In the phase just before Mala stopped using words, lexically shaped thoughts would sprawl across her mind, fractured here and there. The cracks would be filled with images. Soon the inverse happened. A sentence would be constructed primarily of images punctuated by only one or two verbalizations: a noun tentatively uttered in recognition, a descriptive word confirming a feeling or observation. (126)

While the process by which visual images overtake structured language is introduced as one of agency ("Mala stopped"), in the end those images have taken control. The subject becomes the words and sentences. The narrative voice becomes more passive as the grammatical subjects construct themselves. In what follows, Mala moves more and more towards base, bodily experiences, finding language more and more unnecessary. Mala may have "stopped using words," but adapting Caruth's language, we might say Mala no longer even has access to the words that might accurately communicate her experience and partially free her of its hold.

Mala's withdrawal from language emphasizes the physical effects of trauma, describing the shift in language as an embodied experience. Mala's inability to assimilate her experience using traditional language structures aligns with Caruth's definition of trauma as traumatic precisely because it is indescribable. The wound of trauma does not lie just in the event itself but in the inability to assimilate that into everyday life. Readers are never given full access to Mala's experience. Her response to trauma is never described in detail, the novel itself echoing Mala's inability to assimilate the events and their emotional effects as part of a continuous narrative. We see the effects of her feelings, but not the feelings themselves. The novel's description of Mala's withdrawal emphasizes the languages inability to truly represent experience: "verbalization, she came to understand, was not the feeling itself but a name given to the feeling: *pretty*, an unnecessary translation of the delight she experienced seeing the soaring birds. Eventually Mala all but rid herself of words" (126). Mala sees language's deficiencies, with regards to both trauma and more positive experiences like that of seeing birds.

Unable to assimilate her father's years of abuse and eventual death, to describe the events using traditional language, Mala develops her own form of expression. In releasing her ties to words and the rest of *civilized* society, Mala turns to more sensorial and bodily forms of expression. While PTSD, and mental disabilities more broadly, have been figured as psychological experiences, in this moment such phenomena also have physical, material effects, involving Mala's body as a whole: "Many of her sounds were natural expansions and contractions of her body. She grunted when lifting something heavy. She dredged and expelled phlegm. She sighed melodiously. Cried and belched

unabashedly. She coughed and sneezed and spat and wiped away mucus with no care for social graces…She farted at will, for there was no one around to contradict her" (127). Mala's rejection of language and the mind-body hierarchy denounces "social graces," moving to more animalistic or *uncivilized* behaviors. Her bodily instincts overwhelm polite, rational behavior. *Cereus Blooms at Night* highlights the physical effects of trauma. But, while in many ways this is physically freeing for Mala, releasing her from restrictive standards of polite behavior, it moves her further into the realm of irrationality, becoming physical evidence of her perceived mental incapacity.

Mala's withdrawal from language is not only a representation of the psychological effects of trauma, but an embodied response that shapes how she lives her life. She is withdrawing from language, but also withdrawing from the world around her, subsequently living in near absolute isolation until the house fire. In *Animacies*, Mel Chen analyzes the way language functions in relation to its affective registers. In analyzing how humans differentiate themselves from animals Chen claims:

> Who and what are considered to possess 'language,' and the qualities afforded to it within that location, are factors that influence how identification, kinship, codes of morality, and rights are articulated, and how affection and rights are distributed; and hence how ranges of human-nonhuman discourses such as disability, racialized kinship, industrial agriculture, pet ownership, and 'nature' itself are arbitrated.
> Language is arguably a major criterion (or even the defining attribute) that separates humans from animals, even among theorists who decry the fact of the segregation. (91)

Mala's withdrawal from language substantially affects her perceived personhood. As readers are given access to her withdrawal and reasoning for it as it happens. However, for the other citizens of Lantanacamara this further marks her as other, eroding their view

185

of her as human. As Mala's behaviors become more and more animal-like, the distance between her and those around her grows, until she becomes more myth than person.[71] She is talked about as a warning, the symbolic result of her father's wickedness. In re-telling Mala's story, Tyler re-defines Mala, transforming her from a character in his Nana's story into a more fully developed person. In its retelling, Mala's decision to "rid herself of words" is not the out of control rejection of rationality, but a choice made in the wake of her traumatic experiences.

Through her rejection of language, Mala also rejects gendered conventions of home, creating a new space for herself that counters expectations of civil domestic spaces. In "Nostalgia, Desire, Diaspora," Gayatri Gopinath argues Mootoo employs a queer framework to counter colonially imposed "masculinist and heterosexual" standards of domesticity (169). As Mala withdraws from language, the house and its surrounding yard fall into disrepair, becoming overrun by plants and wild animals. Paralleling Mala's prioritization of feelings and bodily functions over "social graces," the house itself becomes the antithesis of a civilized domestic space. Gopinath points to the smell of the

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[71] The dehumanization or "animalizing" of persons with disabilities is by no means new. As Lennard Davis claims, through the construction of normalcy, "to have a disability is to be an animal, to be part of the Other" (8). Stephanie Larson further develops this idea in the context of intellectual disabilities and the novels of William Faulkner claiming, "By psychologically coding characters with intellectual disabilities as animal other…normate characters are able to abuse and neglect those with intellectual disabilities and avoid psychological repercussions like feelings of guilt or shame." Marking the intellectually disabled characters as animals legitimizes the abuses administered by others. But Larson also identifies a reciprocal reaction to this abuse: "by equating disabled characters with animals, and subsequently engaging in the act of repressing their humanness, Faulkner and his normate characters paradoxically admit the humanity of [the intellectually disabled characters]." Staging the relationship between the able-minded human and the animal-like, mentally disabled human, ultimately calls attention to the latter's humanity.

house, another physical aspect often masked in the name of civilization and order: "If the colonial missionary home is marked by economy, order, and sanitization—a distinct lack of smell—the alternative, antidomestic home space that Mala creates is marked by an excess of smell: the stench of decomposition and foulness intermingles with the heady, intoxicating aroma of cereus blossoms" (183). The physicality of the domestic space overrides civilized conventions as Mala's bodily functions override any desire to mask them in the name of "social graces." Gopinath claims this "revises ideologies of 'housewifization' set in place during indentureship, as well as the colonial injunction that urges good housekeeping as the gendered labor of empire" (183). Mala's transformation in the wake of her father's death interrupts patriarchal control at both an individual and institutional levels.[72] Mala's withdrawal from language is a profoundly personal response to individual trauma that occurs within an anti-domestic space which challenges broader cultural traumas of colonization. Mala retains her memories through affective relationships to objects and animals around her; and, in the anti-domestic and anti-colonial space of her former home, she redefines herself through the feelings of her own body. She develops new modes of communication in the wake of trauma that ultimately allow her to connect with Tyler and find a way to articulate the language of disaster.

<div align="center">Plants, Snails, and Peppers</div>

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[72] Lorna Burns further underlines this point claiming, "Mootoo does not establish an easy dichotomy between house/home and oppression on the one hand, and garden/refuge on the other. Indeed the deconstruction of binary representations is one of the key theoretical moves made by *Cereus*" (55). Rather than reversing binaries of power and rationality, Mala undoes them, showing each position to be imbricated in the other.

Despite withdrawing from articulate language, Mala continues to surround herself

with particular objects, namely cereus plants, snail shells, and pepper sauce, which

maintain her connection to the present as well as the past through their affective

associations. In Sarah Ahmed's terms, these objects, and the affect attached to them, help

position Mala in relation to others, those she knew in the past and those she knows, or

will meet, in the future. Ahmed describes affect's ability to organize bodies as "sticky:"

> "Feelings" take us across different levels of signification, not all of which
> can be admitted in the present. This is what I would call the rippling effect
> of emotions; they move sideways (through "sticky" associations between
> signs, figures, and objects) as well as backward (repression always leaves
> its trace in the present—hence "what sticks" is also bound up with the
> "absent presence" of historicity). ("AE" 120)

Patterns of association allow emotion to move through different temporal and physical

spaces, sticking to different bodies and putting them into relation with one another.

Feelings are signified through different objects whose presence or absence precipitates

connection. The narratives in *Cereus Blooms at Night* are sticky. They connect characters

to one another while nesting them within the different temporalities of the novel.

Seigworth and Gregg define affect saying it "arises in the midst of *in-between-ness*: in the

capacities to act and be acted upon. Affect is an impingement or extrusion of a

momentary or sometimes more sustained state of relation *as well as* the passage (and the

duration of passage) of forces or intensities" (1). Mediation in *Cereus Blooms at Night* is

the process by which moments can "act and be acted upon." Consequently, that action

builds layers of mediation involving different characters and temporalities.

Mala's traumatic experiences shape much of the novel. Memories of Mala and

Asha's abandonment by their mother, Sarah, and her mother's lover, Lavinia recur

throughout the text, as well as memories of Chandin's sustained sexual abuse. While her

mothers' departure is described early in the novel and then recalled periodically

throughout, Chandin's abuse of Mala is often alluded to. His violent treatment of Mala is

not described in detail until late in the novel when Mootoo graphically depicts Chandin

and Mala's final evenings together, his final attack culminating in Mala killing her father.

The descriptions of these events are given by an unknown narrator seemingly recounting

them from Mala's point of view.[73] As a young girl, Mala overhears her mother and

Lavinia making plans to leave, fearing for their safety after Chandin realizes that they are

lovers. Chandin, who had long been verbally abusive towards Sarah, was likely to

become extremely violent. Because of the patriarchal and heteronormative legal

structures, Sarah and Lavinia were required to flee in secret, and needed to take the

children with them as Chandin likely had the legal right to control his wife's whereabouts

and would doubtless be legally entitled to custody of *his* children. Similarly, laws and

moral condemnation would prevent Sarah and Lavinia from continuing their relationship

openly. Under the pressure of legal restraints that pertain to the early 20th century

historical period, and in fear of Chandin's violence, they decide to run away. However,

while they planned to take the children with them, Mala overhears Lavinia assure Sarah

that they "will *never* be parted from the children," when it is time to leave Mala, followed

by Asha, runs back into the house for her forgotten bag (59). At the same moment, a

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[73] Although Tyler presents himself as the main narrator of the text, the information is compiled through presumed accounts by Otoh and Ambrose. However, there remains points of the narrative that are communicated by an unknown, seemingly omniscient voice.

suspicious and angry Chandin unexpectedly appears. Consequently, Asha and Mala are trapped. This event transforms Mala's life. She relives the traumatic moment of her mothers' abandonment throughout the rest of her life, and Sarah and Lavinia's departure sparks Chandin's sexual abuse of his daughters.

Mala runs back into the house to retrieve her bag containing a cereus cutting Lavinia gave her. The titular plant, along with other objects tied to Mala's traumatic memories, carry the affect of her traumatic experience. Cereus cuttings, snails and their shells, and pepper sauce, appear throughout the novel, physical objects that help Mala connect with the world even as she withdraws from it. Her connections to the non-human elements of her environment sustain her throughout decades of isolation, often functioning as coping mechanisms when encountering memories of her traumatic past. Mala re-experiences her Mother and Lavinia's departure as well as Chandin's abuse while in isolation. She preserves snail shells as a connection to her mother's love and uses pepper sauce to interrupt but also to deliberately reenact, in a preemptive strike against the self, the most painful moments of traumatic recurrence.

Lavinia taught Mala to protect snails and preserve their shells for her own protection; Mala clings to this memory of both love and safety, using it as a point of connection maintained throughout the rest of her childhood and adult life. While Mala becomes more animal-like in her isolation, this point of human connection persists. Lavinia takes on a fable-like tone when she explains why Mala must protect snails: "'Protect a living snail and when it dies, it doesn't forget. Snails, like most things in nature, have long memories. A snail's soul, which is invisible, mind you, will come back

after it has died, looking for its old home. It will have grown bigger and stronger, and will hover around its old stomping grounds, guarding and protecting you in return—as long as you protected it first!'" (54). Lavinia describes humans' relationship to snails as reciprocal. Insects and humans work with each other, sharing in their protection. By protecting a snail's shell, you ensure your own protection. Furthermore, that protection extends to others you love:

> "Just wait until you find some naturally emptied shells, honey. And this is what you do: display them nicely so they can be spotted by the floating souls of the snails that once occupied them. You press them into the earth—around a bed of plants or just make pretty patterns—and you, my sweet Pohpoh, and your Mama and Asha, and everyone whom you love will be ensured the fullest protection of the benevolent forces in the universe." (54)

When Mala protects the shells later in life, she is remembering being loved by Lavinia, but is also remembering the loss of that love, her distance from it. When Mala protects the shells, the protection extends to all those she loves, wherever they might be in the universe. In preserving the shells, she preserves the feeling of being loved in the past as well as connecting her to her mother and Asha in the present moment. While she lives in physical isolation, the ritual of preserving the shells emotionally ties her to others. As part of a traumatic recurrence, the love of Lavinia always tied to Mala's abandonment and loss of that love, preserving the shells may not be an intentional connection. Nonetheless, it creates continuity for Mala while she lives in isolation.

Snail shells become something Mala continues to share with those she cares about, a tool of connection helping her to build relationships. As a child, Mala meets Ambrose, then called Boyie. They see other boys, including Walter Bissey, torturing a

191

mantis, and in response follow "silver trails" to find a group of periwinkle snails (92). Remembering Lavinia's words and believing the other boys will be punished for their cruelty towards living things, Mala and Ambrose collect all of the snails and move them to safety. As with Lavinia, protecting the snails here is a shared activity, here with Ambrose. In what follows Mala and Ambrose have their first sexual encounter. Protecting snails is repeated as a shared and loving experience. When in the alms house, Tyler notes her muttering words that come to refer to memories of her time with Ambrose: "One day, for example, she would go on and on about some gramophone or other, the next day about spiders, then about peekoplats or snails" (102). Out of context, in the present moment, the words lack the meaning attached to them through memory. However, in learning Mala's history through the memory of others, they come to signify not only the thing itself, but Mala's emotional history with that thing.

Snails and their shells come to signify comfort, protection, and love for Mala, affectively connected through their appearance over time. In "Happy Objects" Sara Ahmed uses an example from John Locke to analyze how physical objects and places organize affective responses: "We move toward and away from objects through how we are affected by them…in Locke's example: we *love* the grapes if they taste *delightful*. To say we love what tastes delightful is not to say that delight causes our love, but that the experience of delight involves a loving orientation toward the object, just as the experience of love registers what is delightful" (32). For Mala, snail shells become sites of experience. Like the Beckettian characters discussed in chapter two, Mala uses the objects to help orient herself towards the surrounding world. Molloy uses the ritualistic

192

sucking of stones to maintain his sense of self, mirroring Mala's use of the shells to guard

herself against the onslaught of traumatic memories. References to the shells continue

throughout the novel. Children who harass her during her solitude, "occasionally [note]

the ever-widening, ever-lengthening rows of bleached white snail shells planted along the

inside of her fence," the unknown narrator describes Mala's yard as "overrun with

periwinkle snails," and when the police walk through Mala's house the constable notes "a

mound of snail shells rising knee-high from the floor" (113; 114; 180). Mala's continued

preservation of snail shells as a form of connection helps maintain a sense of comfort that

is attached to former loving relationships. The physical shells carry with them the

memory of connection that she might seem to have lost in her isolation. The objects take

the place of articulate language; while a word may not accurately represent a feeling, the

shells can.

Moreover, the shells become a shared point of connection, reciprocally tying

Ambrose to Mala as she is tied to him. When he is eleven years old, Otoh sees Mala

collecting snail shells and arranging them along her fence. Finding her actions strange,

Otoh repeats what he sees to his father who responds with "A smile of recognition"

(119). Ambrose continues, recalling the same moment of rescuing the snails from bullies:

> "Snails, eh! She and I, she and I—we used to have this little ritual when
> we were students together…We fancied ourselves protector of snails and
> all things unable to defend themselves from the bullies of the world…[The
> snails] would be crawling up the walls of buildings, shinnying up tree
> trunks, dragging themselves across the concrete paths and lawns, exposed
> and thoroughly tempting to a group of heartless boys who liked to stomp
> on them and watch them shatter and splatter." (119)

193

His memory aligns closely with the memory of the event from Mala's perspective. The affect attached to the snails and their shells is shared. This shared memory ultimately becomes common ground through which Mala and Ambrose reconnect late in life. Ahmed notes, "We are moved by things. And in being moved, we make things" (33). Ambrose and Mala are each moved by the snail shells, and in being moved, they form new attachments—with each other, themselves, and the natural world. Ahmed continues, "the association between objects and affects is preserved through habit" (35). For Mala in particular, the habitual preservation of shells maintains the connection between herself, Lavinia, and Ambrose.

In Mala's isolation, plants and insects take the place of language, objects standing in the place of words and tying her to a past she no longer speaks about. While snails and their shells maintain Mala's more positive relationship to comfort, she also uses objects to deal with more painful traumatic memories. To prepare herself for traumatic memories, Mala "arm[s] herself with a bottle of pepper sauce and a spoon," using the sauce to cause herself physical pain in defense of the mental pain caused by her memories (132).

While the sauce becomes a form of protection for Mala, as the flashbacks unfold, it is also clearly tied to her father's abuse, the pepper sauce something Mala prepared for and presented to her father with his evening meals. One evening in the days before their final confrontation, Chandin, expecting to have chicken curry for dinner and finding fish stew instead, goes into a rage and rapes Mala while holding her face down in the bowl of stew (205). Mala had included scotch bonnet peppers in the stew, and in a moment of

194

dissociation, questions the dish's seasoning as Chandin rapes her: "She felt no pain. She tapped her tongue against the roof of her mouth checking the stew for seasoning. She tasted blood…The stew was indeed well seasoned, perhaps the best she had ever cooked" (205). Here Mootoo shows the complex associations caused by trauma.[74] Mala's focus on the seasoning of the dish, including the spice of the scotch bonnet peppers, is a way to cope with pain, but also a source of that pain. Later in the night, after being forced to prepare the chicken curry, Mala serves her father a curry made with pigeon. Too drunk to tell the difference between the two birds, Chandin "tasted curry spices and that was enough to appease him, and besides, the spoonfuls of hot pepper sauce he doused the food with scorched his taste buds and eliminated the finer details of taste" (207). Again, Mala uses the pepper sauce to distance herself from the emotional pain. Despite using it as a form of protection, the sauce is irrevocably tied to her father and his abuse, part of the tasks she was brutally and repeatedly forced to perform for him. Here Mala relies on the sauce to mask the "details of taste" that would let Chandin identify the meat he ate as pigeon. Later she uses the sauce to mask the details of her memories.

Throughout the novel objects like cereus plants, shells and her pepper sauce keep Mala connected to her past, maintaining the traumatic memories but also helping her deal

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[74] Emy Koopman has pointed to the complex and troubling ways that colonization has been mapped onto incestual rape as a "concept-metaphor" (303). She argues that while *Cereus* does use incest to "foreground other issues of victimization and abjection," Mootoo's framing of the trauma invites further interrogation of these problematic associations (313). I see Koopman as pointing to issues of complex embodiment, and the difficulties associated with developing narratives that bear witness to myriad marginal identities inhabited by a single individual. I argue Mootoo facilitates the interrogation of overlapping sources of abjection through her use of affective associations and emphasis on mediation.

with the emotional pain of those memories. They carry both positive and negative affective histories. In continuing these affective relationships while in isolation, Mala ultimately finds ways to reconnect with other humans years later. When Ambrose and Otoh first try to visit Mala, the day after she entered the alms house, they bring her a clipping of a cereus plant (21-22). Gardening soon becomes one of the first points of connection between Mala and Tyler. The alms house gardener, Hector, helps to "keep a place for [Mala]" where they eventually plant the cereus clipping (70). The objects of Mala's childhood are found again in the present moment, creating new shared experiences that re-narrate history from the point of a thing. Through the web of associations imbued in the objects over time (Sarah and Lavinia's love and protection, Ambrose's love and friendship, Chandin's abuse, and later Tyler's care) Mootoo shows how animate and inanimate relationships build and together narrate histories that otherwise could not be spoken.

<div align="center">Power</div>

Mala's individual denial of articulate language unsettles larger binary categories of sane/mad, and human/animal. Describing Mala's withdrawal as a logical progression undermines both the assumed relationship between articulate language, humanity, and sanity and the relationship between inarticulate language, animality and madness. In James Berger's terms, Mala becomes *disarticulate*: "As *dysarticulate*, the figure is blocked from language, standing at the convergence of all language's impasses…But the 'dys' also renders the figure pathological, an object of diagnosis and treatment, and this, obviously, is a problem, for where truly does the pathology lie, and what would be

required for its cure?" (*Disarticulate* 2). The issue Berger identifies here is how

dysarticulate figures, those who do not use language in expected ways, are automatically

identified as someone who needs to be treated. However, for those living at what Berger

terms "the convergence of all language's impasses," which includes trauma as well as

mental or cognitive disabilities, it may not be possible to articulate themselves according

to normative standards. The impasses identified by Berger extend to delineate the

boundaries between rationality and irrationality more broadly and are often wielded as

tools of oppression.

These divisions encompass to historical categorizations of the rational male

colonizer and the irrational female colonial subject, the later which applies to Bertha

Mason, Antoinette Cosway, and Mala Ramchandin. In her seminal essay, "Three

Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism," Gayatri Spivak comments on Rhys'

adaptation of Bertha Mason, Mala's mentally disabled predecessor, and her rewriting of

Bertha's animalistic characterization, Spivak claims:

> Bertha's function in *Jane Eyre* is to render indeterminate the boundary
> between human and animal and thereby to weaken her entitlement under
> the spirit if not the letter of the law. When Rhys rewrites the scene in *Jane
> Eyre* where Jane hears "a snarling, snatching sound, almost like a dog
> quarrelling" and then encounters a bleeding Richard Mason (*JE*, p. 220)
> *she keeps Bertha's humanity, indeed her sanity as critic of imperialism,
> intact.* (my emphasis; 249)

In Spivak's critique, Rhys re-narrates Bertha's abjection and in doing so retains her sanity

and therefore her humanity. Spivak claims that while in *Jane Eyre* Bertha is shown to be

animalistic and therefore less entitled to equal rights, *Wide Sargasso Sea* troubles this

depiction by showing Bertha to be sane, and therefore human. While Rhys importantly

challenges Brontë's representation, still relies on the sane/insane hierarchy to retain

Bertha's humanity. Spivak locates Bertha's humanity in the final scenes of *Wide*

Sargasso Sea when Bertha responds to Grace Pool's description of a violent exchange

between Bertha and Mr. Rochester where the former reacted to the latter's use of the

word "legally."[75] Spivak explains, "In Rhys' retelling, it is the dissimulation that Bertha

discerns in the word 'legally'—not an innate bestiality—that prompts her violent

*re*action" (250). Spivak claims by reacting to the word "legally," a term signifying both

logic and imperial law, Bertha's outburst is a logical critique of imperialism as opposed

to the irrational actions of an animal.[76] However, while Rhys signals an important

instance of indeterminacy, significantly challenging the ways political representation is

tied to perceptions of animality and insanity, Mootoo's entire novel embodies it.

 Cereus Blooms at Night further troubles the human/animal hierarchy, showing

Mala abandoning human characteristics and adopting more animal-like behavior. As

Gopinath notes, "[*Cereus*] is primarily concerned with those subjectivities, desires, and

modes of collectivity that escape nationalist narratives and that fall outside their

teleological structures" (178). In her decades of near isolation from human contact, Mala

reworks what it means to connect and communicate using techniques not contained by

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[75] In *Jane Eyre*, Bertha is kept hidden in a room on the third floor. Grace Poole is a nurse hired to guard her. However, Bertha escapes in the night sometimes and Jane hears her crawling around laughing and snarling, making Jane, who does not know of Bertha's existence, assume it is part of a demonic nightmare or that there is a beast roaming the halls. In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, we hear Grace Poole describing Bertha's actions to her after the fact.
[76] For further discussion of *Wide Sargasso Sea*'s reliance on traditional binaries of rational versus irrational see Gregg and Su.

masculinist or colonial expectations. Mootoo shows Mala's forms of communication as a new history, one that acknowledges the impossibility of recording traumatic histories, using the rupture as a starting point to show the complex network of associations formed through trauma that are also necessary for its retelling. As Gayatri Gopinath notes, "Mootoo's novel suggests the impossibility of viewing one particular trajectory to the exclusion of others" (185). Mala's history can only ever be heard and interrupted in relation to others, the other histories within the novel itself as well as other histories of mentally disabled Caribbean women. Mootoo offers a collective retelling of Mala's history that foregrounds the unknowability of specific detail as a starting point through which to imagine new forms of communication that would bear witness not just to Mala's story, but to mad Caribbean women as they are constructed in fiction and in imperialistic figuring of an other. The particularities of Mala's experience, her female, mad, and racial identities that overlap and contribute to her *complex embodiment*, are exceptionally unique. They are absolutely individual and therefore unknowable to others. Where *Wide Sargasso Sea* attempts to re-narrate Bertha's history, claiming it as an identifiable narrative, *Cereus Blooms at Night* does not offer a contained or clear history. Rather, Mala's past continually evolves, flexible because of Mootoo's withholding of verified specific details. Tyler fills in the blanks with his interpretations, however by continually reminding readers of his presence and influence as part of the narrative those blanks remain flexible in their content and meaning. While *Wide Sargasso Sea* gives Bertha a history where *Jane Eyre* did not, Edward Rochester is the most prominent narrator, and the text as a whole relies on traditional masculinist binaries of sanity and madness, and

human and animal, writing over the unknowable nuances of Bertha's experience. Even as Rhys troubles the dynamics of Bertha within *Jane Eyre*, that unsettling does not account for larger issues of oppression and marginalization.

Critics have often read Bertha's mental disability as a metaphoric resistance to patriarchal control.[77] As one of the most canonical examples of a mentally disabled woman, critiques of *Jane Eyre* have reciprocally influenced subsequent depictions of mental disability. Critics identify Bertha's "madness" as a form of rebellion as opposed to a biological, socio-political experience. These readings highlight the inferred *causes* of mental disability as opposed to the mentally disabled individual's lived *experience*. As Elizabeth J. Donaldson points out, "Theories that pay attention exclusively to the social causes and construction of mad identity while overlooking the material conditions of the body, and the body as a material condition, have a limited political scope" (*Corpus* 15). Elsewhere alongside Julia Miele Rodas and David Bolt, Donaldson claims,

> Even fictional interpretations of the novel, like Jean Rhys's groundbreaking *Wide Sargasso Sea*, seem to see Bertha's disability as representing something else; in this instance, her "madness" is reconstructed as the strangulating mask of sexist and imperialist power imposed by an insecure and jealous husband, rather than as an intrinsic quality of Bertha's embodied experience. ("Introduction" 3)

The "sexist and imperialist" powers in *Wide Sargasso Sea* are metaphorized through Antoinette's disability. *Cereus* challenges this relationship, showing Mala's disability as it exists in constantly-shifting relation to issues of gender, imperialism, and sexuality.

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[77] The most famous example of this is *The Madwoman in the Attic* by Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar which takes its title from Bertha in *Jane Eyre*. For a specific example refering to *Cereus*, see Patricia Donatien-Yssa.

The relationship between the mental and the physical connects to other binary categories of rational and irrational, human and animal, and more broadly the colonizer and the colonized. Beginning with the dichotomy between the mental and physical, in the context of mental disability, recognizing the two as mutually dependent is necessary for understanding its socio-political ramifications. Ultimately, building on Judith Butler's re-articulation of the "sex-gender system," Donaldson calls for a re-articulation of the mind/body classifications within Disability Studies: "reexamining the impairment-disability system, and moreover repositioning mental illness as a physical impairment, seems appropriate and particularly necessary when we speak of severe and chronic mental illnesses within the disability studies rubric" (29-30). Through this repositioning, mental disability moves from the realm of metaphoric resistance in which it is often categorized, into the more substantial context of personal, lived experience.

Cereus Blooms at Night illustrates how the issues identified by Donaldson are further troubled in postcolonial contexts. Liam Kruger extends Donaldson's argument by explicitly pointing to the mutual dependence of bodyminds and underlining how *situations of extreme precarity*. In his analysis of *A Question of Power* by Bessie Head Kruger claims:

> Brontë says madness is in the body, Rhys says madness is in society, and Donaldson says madness is in the body, which is in society. I'd suggest that Head says madness is in the body, which is in society, but she also understands that the body and society are so contingently constructed in cases of extreme precarity—their borders so fluid—as to make meaningful distinctions moot. (147)

Kruger argues this poses a radical challenge to both the medical and social models of disability (133). I extend Kruger's claim to apply to narrative representations of

disability. *Cereus Blooms at Night* similarly illustrates the ways body and society, in their perpetually fluid associations, are contingently constructed. Donaldson claims we must re-articulate mind/body classifications. Kruger points to the difficulty of doing so in the context of *complex embodiment* or *extreme precarity*. In *Cereus*, Mala's mind is intimately affected by the social and political powers enacted on her body. To attempt to differentiate between them would be nigh impossible, much of her trauma perpetuated by masculinist powers. When she is sent to the alms house, her body is further moved by political intervention, as her treatment there is guided by preformed social prejudices. Tyler is able to connect with her because of his shared experience with those prejudices. Overall, *Cereus Blooms at Night* emphasizes affective forms of connection as a way of highlighting how the bodies and society are contingently constructed, calling attention to the fluid boundaries that lie at the intersection between the two, constantly evolving through shifting feelings and associations.

Through narrative structure as well as content, Mootoo ruptures historical classifications of subjectivity in her characters' intersectional identities with regards to of gender, sexuality, and cognitivity.[78] With reference to Mala's history specifically, Vivian M. May concludes, "Mootoo emphasizes the many disjunctures between the idealized imagery of family, home, love, and the Caribbean and the traumatic events of personal and cultural history…Out of the pages of *Cereus* emerge alternative visions of love and

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[78] While intersectionality has long had a presence in disability studies, in recent years the field has become increasingly interested in these issues at a global level (see Erevelles and Puar). As Lennard Davis posits, "Intersectionality—the subject position of holding multiple identities—makes complex the general rubric of disability itself" (Davis 12).

ethics as grounded in multiplicity, interconnectedness, and difference" (129). Through

Mala's particular history, Mootoo speaks to long standing associations between

rationality and the masculine colonizer, unsettling that relationship through characters

who do not occupy traditionally masculine subjectivities. Mala in particular, as a

mentally disabled Caribbean woman, directly opposes the masculine/rational construct.

Through the novel's collaborative narrative, Mootoo shows that any ethical response to

traumatic histories, at either an individual or cultural level, must account for the inherent

irrationality of a narrative that cannot be put into words.

Narrating the Individual within the Global

Cereus Blooms at Night constantly calls attention to mediation, and the potential

infidelities mediation can cause. Mediation is present in all forms of communication.

However, while mediation often exists in the background, the novel foregrounds

mediation, asking the reader to confront its essentiality. The text's overall structure places

uncertainty at its center—ambiguity over the origin and reliability of what is said. In the

context of post-colonial histories Grace Kyungwon Hong argues, "*Cereus Blooms at*

Night [questions] the presumption that a complete record can exist, and in so doing,

identifies the desire for totality, resolution, or wholeness as fundamentally nationalist and

colonial. Rather, the novel offers another mode of historical memory through an aesthetic

of contingency, unknowability, and the deferment of resolution" (76). Hong claims that

historicization produces a "normative structure" which then "becomes the vocabulary

through which alternatives to this structure are described (74). For Hong, the novel

inverts the language of colonization and historical progress to describe "new modes of

affiliation and connection" (75). However, Mootoo is less concerned with the historical truth of these connections, but rather their possibility. Mootoo addresses these larger histories, and contemporary relationships to those histories, through uncertainty. By calling attention to its characters' limitations, *Cereus Blooms at Night* situates the particularities of its narrative within a larger "historical memory." By framing the novel as a whole as a kind of letter, sent out into the world in the hopes that one person, Asha, might recognize it, Mootoo injects a singular history into a global community of actual and possible readers.

The narrative's structure, pieced together through different individual memories and feelings of understanding, further complicates that relationship, showing how deep-seated affective understandings unconsciously influence our certainty of what is true or not. Mala Ramchandin, has spent years living in the yard of her childhood home after killing her abusive father, Chandin, in self-defense. When a fire at the house leads to an investigation by the police, Mala is taken into custody. However, because the fire destroys Chandin's body, rather than sentencing her to prison, the judge, Walter Bissey who grew up with Mala, sends Mala to the alms house in Paradise, Lantanacamara, claiming lack of evidence. The lack of evidence here reflects a lack of evidence in the text more broadly. Mala does not offer an articulate first-hand account of her experiences. At the alms house, Mala meets Tyler, who infers Mala's history through feeling and Mala's minimal speech which offers no inherent context. Tyler describes words Mala uses; for example, he hears her repeat "gramophone," but cannot contextualize it as a part

of the narrative until he meets Ambrose, Mala's childhood friend and lover, and hears the story of his relationship with Mala (102).

The truth of *Cereus Blooms at Night* is based on its possibility of recognition, not its faithfulness to original events. The novel is framed as a letter, written by Tyler, sharing Mala's story to help attract the attention of Asha, Mala's sister, so that they can be reunited. Tyler opens the text stating,

> By setting this story down, I, Tyler—that is how I am known, simply as Tyler, or if you wanted to be formal, Nurse Tyler—am placing trust in the power of the printed word to reach many people. It is my ardent hope that Asha Ramchandin, at one time a resident in the town of Paradise Lantanacamara, will chance upon this book, wherever she may be today, and recognize herself and her family. (3)

From the outset, Tyler emphasizes his own presence in relation to the story. He also calls attention to how dependent the text is on recognition by someone who already knows the story, whether in part or in full. He is not certain the text will reach Asha, but rather must "[place] trust in the power of the printed word." Written language is the vehicle needed to achieve his goal. However, as we find as the narrative continues, written (or writable) language is often superseded by feelings of understanding. So, to put those felt or affective understandings into "printed word[s]" requires the mediation of others. Furthermore, as Tyler continues, he acknowledges that his audience is not only Asha, and rather than asking for privacy asks for help: "If you are not Asha Ramchandin—who could, for all anyone knows, have changed her name—but know her or someone you suspect might be her or even related to her, please present this and ask that she read it" (3). The network of potential recognition, even if only in part, helps add to and continue the narrative. This openly additive structure underlines the prevalence of mediation

throughout the text. The novel overall is framed as requiring mediation, while Tyler

continues calling attention to his own presence as interpreter as the narrative continues.

Tyler's open acknowledgment of his potential influence on the text often

interrupts the narrative, reminding readers that they are receiving Mala's history second

and third hand, each person involved in the narrative's construction is a part of its final

form. And, while it is most clearly communicating Mala's history it is also telling the

story of those who come in contact with her. In his introduction to the text, he admits his

own inability to communicate the narrative in a clear and direct manner that appears

faithful to an original account or experience:[79]

> Might I add that my own intention, as the relater of this story, is not to
> bring notice to myself or my own plight. However, I cannot escape
> myself, and being a narrator who also existed on the periphery of the
> events, I am bound to be present. I have my own laments and much to tell
> about myself. It is my intent, however, to refrain from inserting myself too
> forcefully. Forgive the lapses, for there are some, and read them with the
> understanding that to have erased them would have been to do the same to
> myself. (3)

Not only does Tyler admit to the possibility of his influence, but states outright that while

he tried to keep himself out of the text, there are still some points where his own

challenges and history come in. However, in doing so Tyler also implies that the potential

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[79] As Linda Hutcheon notes, "as *a process of creation*, the act of adaptation always
involves both (re-)interpretation and then (re-)creation" (8). As Tyler learns bits of
Mala's history through interactions with his Nana, Mala herself, Otoh, and Ambrose, he
must reinterpret and recreate the narrative as a recognizable history. In explicitly
admitting his influence, Tyler reinforces the narrative's growth *as a process*, further
showing how nonlinear points in Mala's history must be rejoined in the present before it
can become recognizable to a larger global audience.

misunderstandings or the unintentional influence of mediation, should not preclude the narrative's recognizability.

I read this mediated narrative structure as integral to the transcription of Mala's history of trauma and mental disability, as well as other such narratives more broadly. As I have argued throughout this dissertation, particularly with reference to mental disability and cognitive difference, we need new understandings of what qualifies as language and communication. Drawing on trauma studies, Cassel Busse reads the novel's narrative structure as "an example of the ethical problems formed between witness and victim" (83). However, while Busse supports the other characters' involvement with Mala's story, it is only to a certain extent. Busse is skeptical of what she calls "slipperiness" in characters' consciousnesses, namely Tyler's influence on Mala's history: "the slipperiness that develops between characters has positive potential [but] this slipperiness also can affect character's lives in unethical and unsettling ways" (87). Relying heavily on Dominic LaCapra's work on trauma and poststructuralism, Busse ultimately argues that Tyler's retelling of Mala's story is "appropriating," and that we need to engage with the relationship between individual "perpetrators, victims, bystanders, and witnesses" with more nuance (91; 98). While I agree that these identities require thoughtful engagement that attends to the particularities of their experience, I argue Mootoo's text *does* this by calling direct attention to the necessity of mediation in the context of trauma and mental disability. Furthermore, by including characters navigating their individual intersectional identities, Mootoo does not hide the difficulties noted by Busse. By embracing these disruptions in our capacity for traditional recitations of history, traumatic

or otherwise, Mootoo shows how the "slipperiness" noted by Busse is in fact constitutive of the narrative itself, the influence of others impossible to avoid.

Mala's history is made up of her individual past, but also the mediation necessary to that history's retelling. And, despite her narrative largely being shared by men, in writing against traditional expectations of masculinity, Mootoo undermines patriarchal authority as a dominant voice in the novel. Gopinath argues "[*Cereus*] can be read as both a response to and a repudiation of its various legacies" (179). Gopinath is primarily concerned with histories of indenture and colonial influence on domestic spaces; however, this point can be applied to the novel's response to the trauma of colonization more broadly. The characters in *Cereus* occupy positionalities that disrupt patriarchal and heteronormative order. The novel's overall structure counters linear patterns of storytelling while relying on collective and felt forms of knowledge rather than precisely spoken words. Overall, Mala's family history is compiled through Tyler's memories of his Nana, Tyler's feeling of understanding Mala's desires and fears, Mala's former lover Ambrose's childhood memories of attending school with her, and Ambrose's son Otoh's memories of bringing food to Mala as an adult. Each of these characters inhabit complex positionalities, experiencing different layers of marginalization within the community of Paradise. Tyler is gay, often described in a stereotypical way in that something about his appearance and demeanor automatically signal his sexuality. Otoh is transgender. At the age of five, as his father continued to sleep, Ambrosia became Otoh. Ambrose, who grew up with and loved Mala ultimately married another woman, Elsie. However, he is not a strong or supportive husband. Rather, "he developed a propensity for month-long

slumbers from which he miraculously awakened only long enough to replenish Mala Ramchandin's supplies" (109). While he is almost completely disengaged from his wife, in his adult relationship to Mala he takes on the more traditionally feminine role of preparing food for her, a task he will let no one else do.

<div align="center">Conclusion</div>

Relationships within the novel are maintained through shared individual difference, reliant not only on the language of telling, but of the animacy communicated in the moment of telling. Looking back from the present moment Tyler claims the narrative is made possible through two positions: "one, *a shared queerness* with Miss Ramchandin, which gave rise to the other, my proximity to the very Ramchandin Nana herself had known of" (48; my emphasis). Tyler recognizes something of himself in Mala. What he sees is not a reflection of himself, but a shared experience of difference or queerness. But, while this shared feeling indirectly allows them to communicate, his literal proximity to Mala is also necessary. The affective understanding is not self-sustaining, it requires physical presence to support it, adding to its mediation. In discussing the levels of communication that exist beyond the words themselves Mel Chen identifies "the 'processing' of language…amounts to bringing a listener's unique conceptualization to bear, via 'blending,' on structures or parts of structures alerted by specific linguistic features" (52). Tyler's understanding of Mala's language is composed through her few words and animal-like sounds, as well as his physical proximity to "linguistic features," her mannerisms, facial expressions, and other affective signifiers of meaning. In translating the inarticulate into an articulately written narrative, Tyler joins

the intangible and tangible, a process that will never represent Mala's history according to traditional definitions of fidelity, but which can make it recognizable to others, hopefully Asha, who shared parts of that history and can see themselves in it despite Tyler's influence on its presentation.

The combination of the intangible and the tangible are necessary for the retelling of Mala's history, which otherwise might remain in unrecognizable fragments. Following Tyler's realization of his "shared queerness" with Mala, the text breaks, returning to Chandin's history at the moment of Mala's birth. However, Tyler's thoughts and memories of his Nana seemingly concluded, the source of this information is unclear. In the present, when talking to Mr. Hector, the gardener at the alms house, Tyler claims "'I am beginning to understand some things about [Mala]'" but also, "'She has hardly said any words and it's a struggle to know what she wants'" (69; 70). Tyler openly admits that Mala has spoken almost no words, but also claims to understand her emotions. He may not know precisely what she wants, but he can understand what she feels. The mediation of one by the other, the emotion and the object of that emotion, are not self-evident. They must be inferred. The exception to this is Asha. Mala repeats Asha's name and directly asks where she is (75). Tyler's compilation of the narrative attempts to fulfill that request; but again, that fulfillment is yet to occur.

Mala's traumatic experience is impossible to communicate according to traditional standards of faithful repetition, but through her unique use of language, and her shared connection with Tyler, Mala begins to reveal her history through the animacies, or affective registers, of sounds and displaced words. When Mala does make

210

sound, she mostly mimics those made by the animals around her. She does not use articulate language when describing the past. One notable exception is her whispered repetition of a childhood song (71; 74-75). However, that song becomes an indirect link to a moment in her childhood as opposed to direct communication, the narrative shortly returning to Mala as a young girl playing a game to the song. Here she mimics a memory as opposed to an animal. For Mala, and for us as readers, the horror of her abuse falls outside articulate language. We access it indirectly, through mediated memories.[80]

By highlighting this impossibility, Mootoo emphasizes the limitations of language as we currently use, particularly with reference to trauma and its after effects. In her reading of *Hiroshima mon amour*, Caruth argues that "seeing" and "listening *from the site of trauma*" is created through the spectator as mediator (*UE*, 56). The gap left in our comprehension is the point at which witnessing begins: "What we see and hear…resonates beyond what we can know and understand; but it is in the event of this incomprehension and in our departure from sense and understanding that our own witnessing may indeed begin to take place" (56). *Cereus Blooms at Night* departs from sense and understanding in that it asks readers to accept the potential losses or mis-representations of mediated information as central to the narrative's ability to be told. It is not told in spite of the risk of mediation, but because of it. However, while

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[80] There are possible exceptions to this. Throughout the novel an unspecified narrator seems to take over, filling in details impossible for Tyler, Otoh, or Ambrose to know. This includes the scene that describes Chandin raping Mala in graphic detail. The narrator and source of the information is unclear, still implying some form of mediation, but the visceral description of the event is such that it is more immediately affecting any other moment in the novel.

incomprehension lies at the center of traumatic histories, the surrounding impressions and possibilities are still productive. Caruth's more recent work, *Literature in the Ashes of History*, more directly argues that history can be found in the incomprehensible remnants of trauma: "For these stories of trauma cannot be limited to the catastrophes they name, and the theory of catastrophic history may ultimately be written in a language that already lingers, in these texts, after the end, in a time that comes to us from the other shore, from the other side of the disaster" (92). Tyler compiles Mala's narrative in a future encounter on "the other side of the disaster." He takes the lingering language of Mala's history (lingering both in her mutterings and Otoh and Ambrose's memories) and turns them into something new. The "shared queerness" Tyler feels with Mala creates an affective understanding that, while potentially flawed in its ability to represent history in an absolutely true way, lets him stick the different bits of story together. And, as the story is offered to the reader, and simultaneously sent into the world in the hopes that Asha will read it and return to her sister, Mala waits, keeping her story with her, "on visiting days [wearing] a garland of snail shells about her neck or a crown of wreaths that we wove with feathers and the wings of expired insects" (247).

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CONCLUSION

On Not Leaving it Alone

In March of 2018, Clint Carroll shared a picture of the cover of *Lucia Joyce: To Dance in the Wake*, Carol Loeb Shloss' biography of Lucia Joyce, to the *James Joyce Quarterly* Facebook group page with the following caption: "A really nice book that makes a pretty convincing argument for the Wake being (on at least one of its many levels) an apology and love letter from Joyce to Lucia. It all makes Book IV [of the *Wake*] even more heartbreaking."[81] What followed over the next few days was a flurry of comments, alternately praising and disparaging Shloss' text. Shloss participated in the conversation, defending her choices in response to attacks from members in the group, as well as what she sees as misinformed reviews from *The New Yorker* and *Irish Times* which had been shared. The discussion escalated and some comments were quickly removed by the group moderators for being too aggressive. At the time I had just finished drafting the first chapter of this dissertation. I am an admittedly silent member of the group (I rarely post or comment on Facebook in general and prefer to use it as an information resource as opposed to a sharing platform), but watched this exchange unfold with interest, anxiety, and no small amount of ire.

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[81] All the posts mentioned here can still be found on the *James Joyce Quarterly*'s Facebook group. However, for privacy reasons I will not be including full names in this discussion beyond that of Shloss, who was both the subject of and a participant in the discussion, and the original poster.

Carroll, the original poster remained positive towards Shloss' work, attempting to

moderate as another group member became increasingly hostile towards Shloss. Two

things stood out to me as part of the exchange. First, the attack on Schloss was

overwhelmingly male dominated. Her primary attacker continually disparaged her work,

insulting her scholarship and dismissing her intelligence. Some of his comments include:

"Lucia's is a tragic story, but her sotry [sic] has little or nothing to do with Joyce's work,

IMHO [in my honest opinion], I've read FW [*Finnegans Wake*] dozens of times, I am

reading it again now, it is TOO easy to think of Issy as Lucia, and pointless to read the

Wake as autobiographical," "How can YOU know what Lucia felt and thought. about

anything? [sic] … The idea that her dancing had any influence on Joyce's writing is

ludicrous," "You may well be an interesting person with some insights into Joyce's work,

who I might enjoy talking with some day, but you need to get over yourself on this

thread," and finally, "you're an asshole." While this poster was the most vocal, other

group members chimed in supporting his claims. When Shloss posted a few days later,

asking how the group planned to handle reports of harassment beyond deleting the posts,

another group user excused the hostility of the original exchange as simply a challenge:

"I don't think that man harassed you; he challenged you. As did *The Irish Times* when

they panned your book."[82] While some spoke up on Shloss' behalf, both during and after

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[82] The Irish Times article referred to here is also mentioned in chapter one: "Lucia Joyce: flawed fictions don't write her back into history but hide her truth" by Genevieve Sartor. The article is not in fact focused on Shloss' text. Rather it reviews *The Joyce Girl* (2016) a fictionalized history of Lucia's life. Sartor comments on the mixed reviews of Shloss's text, acknowledging critiques that have questioned the evidence behind some of Shloss' broader claims, particularly about the relationship between Lucia and her mother, Nora. However, of Shloss' text itself Sartor writes: "rather than provoking a growth in

the initial exchange, many of the more incendiary comments were quickly deleted,

removing hateful speech, but also hiding the evidence of how Shloss was treated by

presumed colleagues.[83] Overall, the discussion unintentionally mimics long standing

histories of male voices dominating those of women, both within and beyond academia.

Moreover, it was ostensibly done to *protect* Lucia's memory, the poster disparaging

Shloss for commenting on Lucia's life at all. In the flurry of comments, the actual content

of Shloss's text was rarely discussed. Commenters extrapolated, claiming Shloss argued

points she did not. When Shloss attempted to politely correct those assumptions she was

further dismissed.[84]

The second thing that struck me was a specific comment in the midst of the

conversation: "please leave Lucia alone." This comment was directed not solely at

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scholarship on Lucia, Shloss's text has instead instigated a series of 'interpretations' that
conflate the historical with the fictive, publicly disseminating an often faulty depiction of
Lucia and her life." Sartor is not panning Shloss' text, rather she is commenting on how
artists have subsequently appropriated Lucia's life for their own purposes.

[83] The group is public on Facebook, welcoming any members interested in Joyce's work.
However, because the group is attached to the primary scholarly journal dedicated to
Joyce's work, much of the content and many of the members skew towards academia.

[84] *To Dance in the Wake* garnered controversy and intense speculation before it was even
published. While working on the manuscript, Shloss was under tremendous pressure from
the Joyce Estate which took issue with the materials being used, namely Joyce's
notebooks. The Estate felt this breached copyright laws and was an invasion of family
privacy. Consequently, much of the evidence for Shloss' claims was removed from the
final publication, contributing to numerous reviews claiming the text sensationalized
Lucia's life and lacked research based support. Quoting a *Los Angeles Times* article
Shloss reasons this pattern: "Well, of course. The notebooks *are* the demonstration of the
ways in which Lucia was 'essential to Joyce's creative output' at the same time that they
provide *de facto* evidence that it was Joyce, and not Carol Shloss, who was the voyeur"
("Copyright" 23). Ultimately, Shloss sued the Joyce Estate, seeking permission to publish
the material from Joyce's notebooks on a website created in 2005 meant to supplement
the biography. The suit was monetarily settled in 2009 in favor of Shloss; however, the
website remains closed.

Shloss, but rather to the thread's audience in general. It echoes rhetorical questions posed by John McCourt in his 2003 review of Shloss' book:

> How far is it legitimate for a biographer to go in investigating the supposed mental illness of the daughter of a great writer? How much does the reading (and, perhaps more to the point, the non-reading) public need to know about a woman who spent the best part of forty years in an asylum, largely forgotten by friends and family alike? When does intellectual curiosity become unseemly prying or voyeurism? (249).

The question of whether or not we should leave certain figures, certain histories, alone is valid. There are ethical responsibilities attached to any representation, particularly when the figure in question, in this case Lucia, is vulnerable to harmful assumptions attached to aspects of their identity. These questions of representation touch on issues of appropriation as well as representation. As I have argued, in Lucia's case there are plenty examples of her history being appropriated and repurposed according to loose interpretations of her history. However, is that the case with Shloss' biography? And does that mean we should simply "leave Lucia [and by extension other mentally disabled women] alone" in the future? I do not think so.

To me this question points to larger concerns about how we remember histories of mental disability, specifically mentally disabled women. Is "leaving them alone" an act of respect? Or merely a continued silencing of their voices? And what is the role of mad studies in responding to these histories? These questions build those posed by Maren Linett in her introduction to a recent special issue of *Modern Fiction Studies* on disability and modernism: "How do we understand a novel's experimental form when it draws on a character's madness for its aesthetic but does not grant that character a future?" (4) Linett specifically refers to the proliferation of disabled characters in modernist texts as well as

the stylistic innovations of the period. While not confined to the modernist period, the texts included in this dissertation all participate in what Linett sees as an aesthetic without a future. However, as I have argued throughout, the future of these characters is not, and should not, be limited to the text itself. While mental disability greatly influences the aesthetics of the texts, I argue the importance of that fact lies in how it affects the reader. The texts' experimental form may not provide their characters traditional futures, but they do affect future understandings of mental disability.

The Facebook exchange over *To Dance in the Wake* points to both the necessity of and the challenges posed to mad studies. In addition to his request to "leave Lucia alone," the man attacking Shloss illustrated the persistence of patriarchal voices trying to control women's influence. While he was dismissive and aggressive towards Shloss, claiming that his readings of *Finnegans Wake* make his interpretations more valid than hers, in asking others to cease talking about Lucia, he is essentially re-institutionalizing her history, relegating it to the past alongside any former interpretations, whether correct, respectful, or not. However, as I have argued throughout this dissertation, continuing to engage with mental disability is essential to evolving our understandings of cognitive difference. Joyce, Beckett, and Mootoo all use formal innovations to challenge normative understandings of consciousness. But, as Linett notes, the innovations on their own neither provide characters with futures, nor change the non-fictional histories which inspire them. Readers must be willing to engage with the innovations, to play with them, and in doing so create processes of exchange that challenge assumptions about mental disability. As I discussed in my introduction, mentally disabled persons are "disabled

rhetorically" (Prendergast 57). I read the aesthetics Linett sees as inspired by madness as new rhetorics of mental disability. While the authors do not offer a future as such, they provide frameworks through which mental disability can be newly articulated.

The evolving field of mad studies continues to question the ethical responsibility of writers and authors when it comes to representations of mental disability. Building on foundations established by disability scholars, mad studies further expands discussions of futurity and autonomy in the context of mental disability, challenging normative rhetorical expectations through an investment in those who have been not just denied access, but who have been deemed incapable of rational speech. Examples like the Facebook discussion of *To Dance in the Wake* signal the necessity of continuing these conversations. I expect to see further such discussions as mad studies grows, bringing mental disability more clearly into academic contexts. As scholars we must remain conscious of the ethical stakes attached to representation while playing with new possibilities of representation, reinventing ideas of what it means to be mentally disabled.

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