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# Narratives of Feeling: The Function of Sympathy in Modern Literary Forms

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# NARRATIVES OF FEELING: THE FUNCTION OF SYMPATHY IN MODERN LITERARY FORMS

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I dedicate this dissertation to my parents

Albert and Yvonne Owens who have influenced me beyond words.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract……………………………………………………………………………...……….v

1. INTRODUCTION……..……………………………………………………………..1

2. CHAPTER ONE – NOVELISTIC SYMPATHY AND THE HUMAN BODY….…....4

3. CHAPTER TWO – THE SYMPATHETIC IMPACT OF RACE AND TRAUMA
IN BELOVED…………………………………………………………………...…27

4. CHAPTER THREE – THE LIMITS OF SYMPATHY: THE CREATION OF
MONSTERS IN FRANKENSTEIN……………………………………………..…62

5. CHAPTER FOUR – THE UNSEEN SYMPATHY: THE ROLE OF THE
OCCULT IN JANE EYRE…………………………………………………..…..83

6. CONCLUSION……………………………………………………………………100

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY……………..………………………….…………103

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH………………..…………………………...…..108

ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the modes and functions of sympathy as they are represented in three forms of modern literature. By assessing the sympathetic aspects of these three popular narratives, I clarify the process by which modern authors have sought to communicate such emotion at the level of the body. The texts studied in this dissertation reflect forms of narrative sympathy as they are presented and communicated through different historical literary periods. These periods include Romanticism, reflected in the novel Frankenstein; the Victorian period, illustrated by the novel Jane Eyre, and Postmodernism, demonstrated in the novel Beloved. The major strategies used to examine the sympathetic import of these novels are character analysis, scene analysis, textual symbolism, and an assessment of the feelings associated with reading. Numerous philosophical texts and articles have been used to enhance commentary on the primary literary works. This dissertation challenges the notion of sympathy that is naturally born of an individual. Some view the feeling as a sensation which manifests purely from the individual consciousness, but more accurately, sympathies conform to one's history, society and environment. Each of these influences compels either the maintenance or dismissal of emotions that one might hold in the perception of an object, or the confrontation of an idea. Each of the texts examined in this dissertation moves beyond the conventional forms of literary sympathy to display how the forces of history, society, and environment physically interact with both readers and characters to produce their sympathetic feelings and behaviors.

# INTRODUCTION

This project will examine the functions of sympathy as presented in three modern novels: Beloved, Frankenstein, and Jane Eyre. Sympathy shall be defined through its existence as a feeling of the body; a point that will be broadened to also examine its influence as a social tool. These objectives are appropriate for the books involved, for each greatly incorporates sympathy as a thrust to its story. Each text in fact is presented as a measure of sympathy itself, to affect particular sensations within the reader. These writings sought to forge their larger meanings through the creation of feelings associated with reading. This objective shall be maintained as a consideration throughout this examination. The modes by which human sympathy is triggered and regularized, are important to understanding its role in the novels. The investigation of subjects such as the politics of feeling, the influence of habit, and the function of emotion in the body, will all clarify the illustration of sympathetic operation within the writings. The body understood as a conductor and receptor of emotion will assist in extracting meaning from sympathetic moments within the narrative, as well as of sensations which arise from reading them. This explanation will precede the investigation of the text themselves to better reveal how emotion is created in the characters and readers alike.

Each of the novels utilize feeling in numerous ways to convey a particular message. In Beloved, the affective currency is framed in the context of slavery, thus the definition of terms within the institution, such as race and family, are conspicuously present as sympathetic stimulants. The investigation of this novel will deal primarily with the emotional repercussions of trauma within the slave society. The passionate effects of servitude are shown to uniquely affect different slave characters by influencing their habitual actions. This analysis then will greatly observe the growth of habit in sympathizing. The characters of the novel have endured such fear and pain through slavery, that sympathy among them becomes a feeling debased by the force of habit. Through their memories, an evolution toward emotional stoicism is maintained by the display of their consistent behaviors. Despite this however, the prospect of re-engaging with sympathy is shown to be possible through the affirming influence of the imagination. Through its characters and storyline the novel ultimately presents a

message which implores the reader to find sympathy with the harsh conditions and lasting effects of slavery, but also to become liberated from its widely negative influences.

While the traumatic effects of bondage are revealed in the investigation of the initial text, the examination of Frankenstein will more generally address the causes of sympathetic limitations. The boundaries of this novel are erected by the politics of judging beauty. It suggests an aesthetic extent beyond which sympathy cannot reach according to traditions popularized in western society. The denial of sympathy in the text creates monstrous difference, in which a character's attributes are transformed to reflect the devalued and the unfamiliar. In a statement of irony though, Shelley shows how the intensive embrace of another through sympathy can produce the same monstrous deviation. The novel has a definite intention to reveal these boundaries on each side. The politics of the image alludes directly to the politics of feeling, a reference quite important to the creation of monsters. For the feelings experienced upon the perception of a character's form triggers the emotions which cast their acceptability to others. Amid the circumstance of social rejection, alternate means of gaining sympathy will be observed to reveal the obstacle of unfamiliarity. The isolation of the image as a measure of justifying one's emotion marks the text as a valid reference to associationism, both in the context of the novel and the influence upon its reader. The novel is presented as a means to urge the reader to question the political influences upon their own beliefs and judgments, thereby seeking to prevent the creation of monsters in the real world.

The investigation of sympathy in the Gothic novel Jane Eyre will conclude the project's examination. This text will be assessed to portray the characteristics of emotional connections as they manifest in occult forms. The interaction of the characters with the forces of the supernatural will be analyzed to reveal the operation of sympathy as it pertains to numerous ideas. The quest of ascension from immaturity to divine enlightenment is a lynchpin to this investigation, for the characters are shown to progress and evolve at different levels. Through their beliefs and behaviors, they gain different degrees of sympathetic sensitivity with the occult. The role of sympathy as a determination of Christian righteousness also is central to the examination. The forms of religious embrace which the novel presents are either catalysts or obstacles to achieving

emotional unity with the God through nature. The text will also be assessed as a tale which reveals the proper necessity of sympathy in the growth of romantic love. The connection which binds lovers in passionate union is shown to be incomplete without the sympathetic favor of the divine. The means by which this determination occurs shall be an important aspect of this chapter. Finally, the prospect of becoming a sympathetic agent will be highlighted as a central objective of the novel. To become a stimulant for another's sympathy results from achieving personal ascendancy through a union with supernatural righteousness. This objective is laid not only upon the characters but also upon the reader, for the path by which divine enlightenment occurs in the story is offered as an experience for those willing to adopt the same principles and beliefs.

This dissertation will assess the manner in which modern novels use sympathy as an impetus to narrative development, but also as a medium to convey their narrative meaning. Each novel was written with a distinct purpose, and sympathy is the central and necessary medium to achieving its objective. When the story's portrayal of emotion is transferred to the reader's body as sensations, the novel's intentions are accomplished by one's sympathetic relation to the subject matter.

# CHAPTER 1

## NOVELISTIC SYMPATHY AND THE HUMAN BODY

Sympathy, the vicarious experience of another's sensations, has long held an important role in western literature. From the 18th century onward especially, novelists have emphasized the emotional connections between their characters as a way to express their story's meaning. Dating back to the middle ages, emotional content has driven the plots of romance, adventure, and horror tales, etc., suggesting the long and varied history of stimulating feeling that such genres have had. The narrative portrayal of feeling has been increasingly integral to modern literature. Contemporary stories have followed the course of their predecessors, and have achieved new and innovative ways to illustrate and convey emotion. Different literary techniques, such as stream of consciousness and deep dialect of narration, have inserted more realism into character emotion, and consequently have enhanced the affective experience of reading. But these approaches, despite their novelty, are still only as effective as a reader's sensibilities. Their thoughts, beliefs, attitudes and expectations, all involve them as active co-creators of feeling. To experience with fiction is to actively engage with the mental and emotional states made potentially available through examination. The feeling of reading literature occurs as a creative event established at the intersection of one's perception of the story, and the story as an object itself. This feeling is not purely the effect of a narrative cause, but instead exists given the reader's existent emotional capacity. It follows a psychological order in which one may, with greater or lesser intensity, regard an object of their narrative representation as if they were objects of their realistic perception. The experience of being moved by the reading of emotion is a display of novelistic sympathy. It is the story's portrayal of feeling which prompts a similar experience in the body of the reader.

To advance the study of this subject, the component ideas of sympathy, feeling and affect, must first be given basic definition. Affect is the means by which sympathy occurs; it is an influence between people characterized by one's ability to alter the feelings of another, or to assume feelings external to themselves. The power one holds to receive or impress this impact is the measure of experiencing or acting sympathetically;

this point shall soon be elaborated further to show the sway of one's identity and environment upon it, but for the present it is well enough to simply define. As affect determines the potential investment of sympathy, the experience itself is fundamentally characterized by feeling, the conscious awareness of physical sensation. Feelings are distinct references to subjective existence, and during sympathetic episodes, they are intensified to emotional levels that critically determines the subject's perception and attitude. Each of these notions are quite important to the study of sympathy, because they comprise the emotional basics that give way to the experience: feeling is the substance of the actual moment, and affect is the prospect of coming to feel in this intense manner.

The true effectiveness of sympathy in its literary form is only a modified reflection of its worldly double. The real life engagement of such feeling between people is a truth which writers abstract through their fiction. We must first investigate sympathy as an emotion of the real world to properly examine its display and effects in the reading of novels. In order to comprehend the intentions of the authors, the emotional substance of their presentation must first be understood through the ideas which they seek to reflect. The capacity to influence emotionally has long been a vehicle of real social movements. It has conveyed the outcries of many different causes, ranging from conservatism to upheaval, industrial advancement to the abolition of slavery. It also lay at the center of different ethical principles, and inevitably appears in the examination of many religious concepts. As it is, people are prone to be affected by the feeling of sympathy in some form on a consistent basis. Indeed it is a ubiquitous feeling, making it all the more difficult to examine. Sympathy is an emotion, and emotions are generally indistinct; they affect populations, but do so with individualizing results, arising with greater or lesser intensity in various subjects. The feelings of the same stimulus may be entirely different between different people, and therefore consistent and definitive agreement about what is sympathetic is practically impossible. All people live and feel as individuals, thus the only elements of sympathy definite enough to be objectively examined are the processes of its function. The particular motives and operations of its occurrences reveal a history of one's emotional interactions. It is by this comprehension that passionate influences, whether as a reader or character of a narrative, may be perceived and understood.

Conventionally, sympathy can be reckoned as a feeling felt for or with someone else. It is an emotional embodiment of our neighbor's passionate impressions as if they had occurred in our own lives. The extension of this passion is the only requirement for sympathy to manifest. If, for example one man is saddened by the drastic circumstances of an occasion, and another man in turn becomes saddened by the emotions of the first, then we have the necessary elements of sympathetic activity. The passion of the first subject is both a reaction to a stimulus, and a stimulus itself influencing the emotions of another. The framework of sympathy then is constructed by the existence of a particular relationship between multiple passions, in which the feelings of one, is the catalyst for the feelings of another.

A deeper analysis though, will reveal a more ambiguous operation than this simple description. First, sympathy has an immeasurable space of influence; its function may occur between many people as it does among a few. A multitude may be moved to emotion by the passions of one person. We can also imagine the outward growth of a single extended connection, whereby the emotion of one man affects another, and then a third man is affected by the passions of the latter, and so on. We can multiply this occurrence indefinitely, each person involved acting as both a conductor and receptor of a stimulus. The makeup of this scenario of sympathy is the thrust of a stimulus moving from person to person and encompassing an area of function. This area can permeate wide or narrow spaces depending on how the strength of the stimulation moves the dispositions of those involved. There is no determined boundary for this area; a stimulus spreads to the extent that people are emotionally influenced by it.

In addition to having no definite area of function, sympathy has no definite order of function. Among the activity of its area, we may also imagine the functional process operating in reverse, whereby the passions reflect back to the original subject from whom the parade of emotions began. As the second man becomes affected by the emotions of the first, and the third by those of the second, the initial man, through the passion he created in his fellows, may be stimulated again to a different degree. All components of the process are defined as subject or object, stimulator or receptor, by their active relationship at the moment stimulation occurs. As the area of function expands or contracts, and the emotional intensity multiplies or tapers, the subjects and objects of

these extensions become more or less integrated into the web of influence. In this way, they move beyond any clear and discrete classifications.

Finally, sympathy operates by a time of indefinite influence. An experience of emotion need not be sympathetic only during the first instance of stimulation, but it may become manifest after some period of dormancy. Relative emotions can appear long after the particular experience has occurred. A widow for example may become overcome with grief weeks after the death of her spouse when again recalling his final moments, or one may be overwhelmed with laughter at the thought of a humorous past experience. By way of memory, emotion acquires an elastic quality in which one event may similarly influence passion in different moments greatly separated by time. Moreover, given an emotional event of the present, future perceptions which otherwise would have been judged indifferently may come to have significance as emotional triggers. Because of the obscurity linked to the arousal of sympathy - such as the shifting classification of the sympathizer and the sympathized, and the difficulty in outlining the limits of its operation - the resultant emotion is often an idiosyncratic, yet forceful reality (which explains its popularity in fields of the occult). Although its functional characteristics may be difficult to define, its effects are certainly undeniable.

The operational process of sympathy can be further clarified by examining the relationship between perception and emotion; for perception is the means by which emotional conclusions are achieved. Emotion functions in the same manner as perception, only with intensified sensations. A perception is a latent action caused by neurological movement, whereas emotion is the provocation of impulsive bodily movement. William James describes the relationship that exists between perception and emotion. He writes that "emotional brain processes not only resemble the ordinary sensorial brain-processes, but are nothing but such processes variously combined." He later directly explains the accord between the two as they relate to bodily capacities: "…bodily changes follow directly the perception of [an] exciting fact,… our feeling of the same changes as they occur IS the emotion" (James, 13). In this way, perception constitutes the necessary basis on which emotion must be built. Given the connection in their functional capacity, sympathy may be better understood as a feeling which arises upon the perception of another's feeling. One may perceive the world without emotion,

but one cannot respond emotionally to an event without first perceiving it. The relationship between these faculties is distinguished by the impulsive physical movement of emotion which is absent in the simple perception of objects. Some of the chief questions concerning this critical factor and its relation to sympathy are, 'under what circumstances must emotional feelings arise', and 'what consequences do they have within the subject?' In order to determine these things, let us more closely examine the similarities and distinctions between these faculties.

As a manner of navigating one's way through the world of images, perception is an adequately positioned ability. It stands at the gateway of interpretation; that which finds equilibrium between internal and external stimuli, and translates external conditions into inner states. In the most basic act of perception, the characteristics of any object are defined by their subjective effects upon the perceiver. Through these effects we interpret the world around us, make judgments of quality, and then perceptibly contribute ourselves back into the world through action. By the term 'interpretation', I do not mean a philosophical speculation, but rather an automatic judgment of quality that corresponds to our identity as human. The reception of a stimulus sees the sensory capabilities of the body translate the perceptible details of the world into forms of matter that may be qualified. James Kalat provides this example to demonstrate the process of sensory interpretations in his text, Biological Psychology.

> Imagine that you are a piece of iron… there you are sitting around doing nothing, as usual, when along comes a drop of water. What will be your perception, your experience of the water? You will have the experience of rust. From your point of view, water is above all else rustish. [This same principle] is true of human perception. In vision for example when you look at the leaves of a tree, you perceive them as green. But green is no more a property of the leaves themselves than rustish is a property of water. The greenness is what happens when the light bouncing off the leaves interacts with the neurons in the back of your eye, and eventually with the neurons in your brain' (Kalat, 142).

At the level of neurological activity, our interpretations determine our response to basic stimuli, and guide our interaction with external objects. We act upon these objects given the unique projections we make as human beings; in short our perceptual interpretations are wholly wrapped up in who we are. This process will soon be further examined as the basic stimulation of neurons, the building blocks of our sensation, which will more clearly reveal the function of perception in the creation of sympathy.

This view of perception already underscores the reality of literature to uniquely persuade through sympathetic power. In the content of many narratives, the characters evolve to become more or less sympathetic with the figures around them according to judgments that they make through perception. And as we read these stories of emotion, our perception of its characters, language and content, likewise determines our own emotional changes. Frankenstein's creature for example, certainly feels admiration and envy in his perception of the DeLaceys, for when he first beholds them he is filled with a desire to be among them. Yet when they reject him, his admiration for them is lost. His emotion is altered with this change in his perception, he no longer judges the family to be admirable, and his affection for them wanes. In the same way that the creature's interpretation determined his emotional state, as readers of the story, we feel through the interpretive filters of our own perception of it. We may find the creature detestable in Victor's narrative, but entirely sympathetic when reading his own tale. In this way, such literature holds perceptual judgment to the same standard of its existence in the real world; the story of emotion calls upon the reader to perceive, judge, and sympathize with reference to their own identity.

Let us further address the process of interpretation before continuing to analyze how this process is functional in the reading and experience of sympathy. Our interpretations of the world embody a ground from which our judgments can be projected back into the world. To clarify the operation, it is necessary to mix both the realist and idealist philosophies of perception. While each of these approaches embrace a central truth of reality, each also forces perception into opposite corners of interpretation, with mutually exclusive functions. The realist claim suggests that we purely interpret a pregiven world outside of us, and then process that information via our central nervous system. The idealist claims the converse; that the information processed does not exist exclusive of a pregiven status; rather it is manifested by the human being and is alternatively projected out into the universe. The mixture of these two notions eliminates the concept of an exclusive reality existing only within us or without us. Instead, perception can be more clearly understood as a quality embedded in the world around us. It is something drawn by the subject from the world, and extended through the subject back into this world. The analogy of describing human beings as mirrors to reflect

perception is tempting, but a mirror is characterized by a purely objective reflection, producing a replication of the image without distortion or amplification in each circumstance. On the contrary, humans variously reflect a number of different images of the same real object, depending on numerous influences upon the observer. We partake of the object's existence by way of perception, and avail the object to our purposes as we contribute ourselves through feeling and action back into the perceptible universe.

The need to converge realist and idealist principles in the definition of perception is evident if we examine the conventional knowledge that exists about perception in the brain. It has been commonly accepted by cognitive science that all sensory information, except for olfactory information, first travels to the thalamus, a region in the forebrain. That information is then distributed to areas of the cerebral cortex for interpretation. It is possible, however, with the support of human biological knowledge, to imagine a process of perception traveling in the other direction, towards the periphery of the body rather than toward the center. This suggests the production of perception rather than its exclusive infusion. The cognitive scientists Francisco Varella et al, in their text, The Embodied Mind, point to the possible network of cells affecting the lateral geniculate nucleus, a region in the thalamus that receives visual information through connecting optic nerves. While it is unquestionable that this region is influenced by visual sensation, it is also interconnected by axons and dendrites that stem to other regions of the brain; regions which were found to influence its function with four times the import as the retina. Thus it is just as reasonable to view the motion of information flowing in the reverse direction, out towards the retina. This theory alters the common understanding of perception as the translation of information drawn exclusively into or out of the self. The text further elaborates, "The encounter of these two ensembles of neuronal activity is one moment in the emergence of a new coherent configuration, depending on a sort of resonance or active match-mismatch between sensory activity and the internal setting at the primary cortex. (Varella et al, 96). Thus, within the function of human perception, there is evidence of a coherence of internal and external forces whose product is perception itself. As we shall observe, the production of human emotion follows these same guidelines, yet builds upon them. Now with the dismissal of perception existing exclusively inside or outside of the body, we may come to the reality of how we perceive.

The alteration that takes place among a multitude of neurons to create sensory information is the establishment of action potentials; the movement of electrical impulses along routes of axons. Neurons are interconnected by axons to link the brain and spinal cord to muscles and sense receptors. In all areas of human sensory perception, the distinction between realities such as hot and cold, near and distant, or green and yellow, is based upon either the excitation or inhibition of different neurons in the central nervous system. An excited neuron is defined by its production of an action potential, and an inhibited neuron by its lack of production. There are a number of things that need to happen among the neuronal network in order for a sensation to be realized. The arousal of any perception first sees stimulant molecules attach to receptors which absorb their physical energy. This energy is then converted into an electrical pattern that moves among the neurons. The system interprets the meaning of action potential combinations by judging the spatial characteristics of the impulses, the time they take to traverse the space within the network, and the places in the body which mark their ultimate destination. All of these elements form a relationship which allows us to determine our reality and give it significant meaning.

While the excitation of neurons is the substantial feature of our senses, it is certainly not the end of our perception. The judgments which arise at our interaction with the perceptible world, greatly influences the state of our future perceptions. Judgment, the substance of interpretation, references our ability to determine an object's usable characteristics in relation to ourselves. It is in short the act of representation, the insertion of meaning into an object. By our judgment, the attitudes which we develop in life are formed, outlining the possible actions that we might apply. Henri Bergson in his text Matter and Memory, defines human representation in this way: "[it] is the measure of our possible action upon bodies: it results from discarding what has no interest for our needs, or more generally for our function" (Bergson, 30). The cognitive act of representing is the determination of an object's usefulness. With consistent exposure, the purpose an object may hold for us becomes deeply integrated into our memory. But these representations are continuously modified by our memory, which constantly influences our sense of the possible uses that we may glean. Memory functions as the historian of our perceptions, giving practical meaning to past exposures, and through them we predict

the actions that we might partake. When our predictions are deeply ingrained, behavioral patterns occur as habits.

This is how representation, itself a product of perception, comes to figure heavily into the perceptual process. As we repeatedly confront objects and environments, our judgments of them turn increasingly commonplace, altering the way that we interact with them. This familiarity spawns a habit when an automatic projection of meaning occurs. Our representation of an object's use turns from a search for purpose, to a solid prediction whose end we fully expect. Giles Deleuze in his text Difference and Repetition, describes this phenomena as a synthesis of the past and future moments into the present. He relates how the repetition of the past and the expectation of the future, both contract into our present interpretation. "The past" he writes, is "no longer the immediate past of retention, but the reflexive past of representation, of reflected and reproduced particularity. Correlatively, the future also ceases to be the immediate future of anticipation in order to become the reflexive future of prediction, the reflexive generality of understanding" (Deleuze, 92). As our memory alters our representations, our perceptions invite the predictable movements of our body. We habitually respond when consistent exposure establishes representation as a bodily reflex. But this habit, though comfortable, obscures. Our dependable expectations cloak our perception with a vagueness that limits the possible extraction of meaning we may discover. As our interaction with these objects is mechanized, the uses or benefits that we may otherwise perceive are narrowed. Through habit, representation is married to perception in a relationship of reciprocal influence. It arises from our perceptions, and we now see how representations may circle back to effect the very perceptions which created them.

Between the point of perception and the subsequent motor response, attitude poises us to extract the uses that we may avail from the objects that we perceive. In developing behaviors, attitudes are a continuous influence. As a collection of representations, they relate those feelings which are instilled by perception. They are formed by our judgment of an object or idea as beneficial, and they position us to best extract the perceived resource. In its role in sympathetic literature, attitudes are often vital to the intended meaning of the narrative. In Toni Morrison's Beloved for example, characters are susceptible to their passionate action by the display of a certain attitude;

this fuels the thrust of emotion which overtakes them, making their past either forceful or futile through its display. In those held by different figures, we find various possibilities of action; submission and defeat for some, rebellion and triumph for others. As the story depicts these different paths of emotion through its characters' attitudes, the reader reinforces their own unique attitudes in their personal response to its scenes of sympathy.

The novel's figures reveal their sensibilities by how their passionate actions have progressed over the course of the story. Sethe experiences extreme trauma as a slave, which modifies her attitude and presages her violence toward her children. Though in the end of the text, her outlook is redirected and hope is re-embraced. In perusing the events of her narrative, readers may feel with distinct sensitivity, especially during scenes of great emotion. Some may read her moments of violence at Sweet Home with pity for her circumstance, others may feel a greater sense of resentment for her tormentors. And as her story progresses and she transitions to assume extreme attitudes and violent emotions, the reader's feeling toward her are likely to change as well. Our bodily sensations as we read is felt according to our own projections of the scene and its characters. As the figures evolve and interact in different sympathetic moments, our judgment of their attitude is altered. This change occurs as we apply new meaning to their thoughts and behaviors, and this affects change in the feelings we undergo when reading these scenes. Sethe would ultimately advance a perspective that liberates her from the trauma she lives with. In reading of her past emotion and experiencing our own feelings in the process, her final attitude might provoke a more ingrained and intimate awareness of the obstacles which faced the enslaved. This conclusion is the central objective of the novel; that the act of reading the emotions of slavery may affect the reader through sympathy to enlighten or refine their own attitudes upon the subject.

The examination of perception and attitude in stories of emotion is appropriate, for these factors indicate the way that passions are brought into reality. Emotions are the impulsive feelings and movements that are triggered by perception and prepared by attitudes. We feel emotion just as any other sensation, like pain or heat; but the movement of impulses during emotional stimulation are greatly intensified. The neuronal changes of the body during emotion manifest uncontrollable feelings and actions, such as trembling, perspiration, or quickened breathing and heart rate. This reflexive quality of

movement distinguishes emotional activity from basic perceptual occurrences. Sensory stimulation is akin to an invitation posed by the central nervous system to the body's muscles. Afferent impulses beckon a single movement out of a multitude of possible movements; one that would adequately respond to the sensation experienced. During emotional stimulation however, the body is no longer invited to choose a course of action. Instead it moves impulsively on its own, with an objective that conforms to the historical mechanisms ingrained within the nervous system. This is precisely why literature is adequate to study as a medium which stimulates sympathy, for the feelings of reading stories are intimately tied to the reader's own identity, and emerge involuntarily at their perusal of the text. The judgment of different characters, feelings of support or resentment, moments of anticipation or wariness, all derive in great part from the beliefs, attitudes, and values that are brought to the novel by the reader. Marshall McLuhan describes this interaction as 'dissociation', calling it the most potent benefit that may be taken from the printed word. It is, he claims "a power to act without reaction," or a disconnection of action from feeling and emotion when reading (McLuhan, 162). This claim asserts that the feelings experienced while engaged are out of the reader's control, but still asserts their capacity to create new extensions of their energies in the real world. In short, the involuntary arousal of feeling while reading indicates the development of a reader's present consciousness, and assumes the possibility of its refined evolution.

Let us demonstrate how the controlled movements of perception become the impulsive activity of emotion, by examining the relationship between action and emotion in the brain. We shall thereafter address the social influences upon behavior to more broadly show how sympathy is generated in reading. The way that the body operates under emotionally provocative conditions is greatly influenced by the limbic system, a component part of the nervous system. This is an area in the brain which controls primitive functions, such as aggression and escape, commonly held by all mammals. It achieves this control through a very strong influence on both the central and autonomic nervous systems. The degree to which a stimulant will trigger emotional movement is determined by certain areas within the limbic system that represent its affective force. Take the function of two important components of emotional activity operating within the system, the amygdala and hypothalamus. Each is located in the temporal lobe of the

brain, and lay just beneath the thalamus. In reaction to a stimulus, they both influence other sections of the brain to initiate impulsive activity. Their function is, in great part, to develop the body's emotional disposition by determining the necessity of passionate action, and initiating their movements. These two faculties are indispensible in determining emotional behaviors.

Although it has a central role in regulating different bodily functions, such as temperature, hunger and thirst, when stimulated by certain conditions, the hypothalamus can produce aggressive behavior. If stimulated with enough duration and consistency, similarly aggressive responses may occur in increasingly milder circumstances. (Kalat 334). The hypothalamus also influences mood to a degree by governing the secretion of hormones through its influence upon the pituitary gland. It functions in this manner to bring about a temperance of action in relation to a stimulus, by maintaining a constant circulation of some hormones, and ordering an influx others into the blood whenever circumstances demand it. In other words, it operates to create an internal state which balances with the external conditions of the world. With its great range of function, the hypothalamus even influences behaviors beyond emotional stimulation. Its effects through hormones are quite vast, directly impacting the different phase cycles of life (e.g. puberty, menoupause), but its primary function is in preparing the body for emotionally charged activity.

While the hypothalamus is the brain's chief contributor in determining the body's emotional identity, the amygdala is the means by which emotions are authorized to operate. The amygdala, a collection of almond shaped neurons grouped together in the limbic system, has its greatest influence in judging emotional experiences in their aftermath. It functions to process the recollection of emotional events, and is thus a very important component of affective conditioning. As a form of emotional memory, it identifies the characteristic similarities of impulses across the neurological manifold, and it recognizes how combinations of impulses have historically interacted with one another to bring about emotional action. By its operation, the amygdala forms a substantive link between perception and sensation, to produce the growth of emotional habits. Kalat explains how these properties cohere in their function to manifest emotional conditioning. "Many cells in the amygdala, especially in the basolateral and central nuclei, get input

from more than one sensory modality, such as vision and pain, or hearing and pain, so the circuitry is well suited to establishing conditioned fears" (Kalat, 338). In short, the amygdala is the foundation of emotional learning. It gives meaning to past sensations, and compels the body into reflexive action when similar sensations arise in the present. Its operation is the basis for all forms of emotional adaptation, and hence a very strong impetus for passionate action. According to research of how long term emotional influences lead to behavioral conditioning, "sensory stimuli reach the basolateral complexes of the amygdala, particularly the lateral nuclei, where they form associations with memories of the stimuli. The association between stimuli and the aversive events they predict may be mediated by long term potentiation, a lingering potential for affected synapses to react more readily" (Kindler, 125). The recollection of past stimuli leads to the present tendencies of action potentials during excitation. This asserts as emotional conformity to ones history of nervous impulses; this is the very context of experience when reading emotional literature. The feeling of reading discards volition in order to embrace what is appealing and provocative. These conclusions are reached through one's history of emotional reactions.

Passion eschews deliberation and is comprised only of feeling and movement. James, in defining the substance of emotion, writes that "[it] both begins and ends with what we call its effects or manifestations. It has no mental status except as either the presented feeling, or the idea, of the manifestations which latter thus constitute its entire material, its sum and substance its stock-in-trade" (James, 25). The idea of our emotion is a mental application comprehended through the brain's cortex, whereas emotion itself is reflexive activity of the body orchestrated by the subcortical features of the brain. In this way, emotion is stationed between the perception of a given reality, and the deliberation of that perception. As a reflex it cannot be justified prior to its manifestation. Physical sensation and bodily movement are all that consume the moment of emotion; cognitive interpretation occurs only after the conditions have subsided beneath the level of active stimulation.

Understanding the arousal of emotion and its shifting sensitivity to different objects, ii to grasp the way that impulsive activity changes in its tendencies. The point at which voluntary movement becomes impulsive is determined by a figure's particular

threshold. This marks the limit of perceptual authority, and the start of emotional control. The impetus for ordinary movement is quite general and deliberate. When one decides to wiggle the fingers or move the eyes, there is a corresponding nerve impulse sent from the brain to those parts of the body. Its propulsion is initiated towards muscle glands by the disturbances of the equilibrium among the inner and outer environments of a neuron. This is the origin of neuronal excitation. Prior to stimulation, the inside of a neuron is more concentrated with potassium ions, and the outside has a higher concentration of sodium ions. Such an environment maintains a polarized cell membrane. This distribution of ions forms a negative electrical charge within the neuron, and a positive charge outside of it. When a neuron is stimulated, the membrane becomes depolarized and sodium ions gradually enter the cell as potassium ions simultaneously exit. If enough of the ions transfer across the membrane, a threshold is reached, and the flow of sodium ions flood the neuron, as the potassium ions quickly depart. This initiates the movement of a nerve impulse towards the periphery of the body. However, the threshold that determines the launch of an impulse operates independently of the conditions which approach it. It does not matter how quickly or how slowly a neuron is depolarized, once the threshold is reached, a vigorous depolarization will occur and an impulse will be sent.

The changes of human emotion is an effect of a molecular singularity – the point at which neuronal tendencies begin to change. Such an occurrence results from exposure to an environmental turbulence. The change that is brought about is a dynamic restructuring of impulsive movement. Singularities function to develop the critical thresholds. These are forged to prepare the course of emotional change, as such they mark a person's growth and evolution. As such, one may retroactively trace the patterns of change in a species, culture, technology, or universe, by the thresholds it has crossed. This excerpt from Manuel Delanda's text Intensive Science and Virtual Philosophy, describes the role that singularities play in the behavior of an entity's elemental features.

> Singularities may influence behaviors by acting as attractors for [ ] trajectories. What this means is that a large number of different trajectories, starting their evolution at very different places in the manifold, may end up in the exactly the same final state (the attractor), as long as all of them begin somewhere within the sphere of influence of the attractor (the basin of attraction). Given that, in this sense, different trajectories may be attracted to the same final state, singularities are said to represent the inherent or intrinsic long-term tendencies of a system, the

> states which the system will spontaneously tend to adopt in the long run as it is not constrained by other forces (Delanda, 14).

Delanda outlines the basic diagram of change on a molecular level in the body. This event of emotional transition prescribes the habits of passion; coupled with past singularities the path one takes to their current affective identity may be retraced. Just as perception was previously explained as a culmination of events taking place at the body's intersection with its exterior, emotion also follows these guidelines. However notice that emotion produces a far more exacting and organized capacity for movement; all molecular action is directed by the body toward a specific activity. Emotional arousal reacts to both internal and external conditions, and the collection of physical impulses across a manifold are poised to respond as a unified force. The mind is no longer replete with thoughts of mundane activities, and the body is primed to reflexively behave in its own interests. Affective intensity synthesizes bodily impulses into focused activity, a fact which contradicts conventional beliefs about passionate actions. Because emotional movement seems to manifest chaotic behavior, a general assumption is that it also spawns from internal chaos. But on the contrary, emotion on a molecular level forms quite a focused alliance; all impulses move for what is considered to be the best interests of the body.

Understanding the operation of bodily emotion is critically important to the study of sympathy, because the force of affect which mediates such feelings varies in its influence between individuals. This grasp of the operation of passion within the body will provide an explanation of how one person's emotional identity is formed in contrast to another. The capacity to trigger such feeling hinges upon affect, an influence which permeates every level of the subject matter under examination. It represents the body's potential to be moved through feeling toward the execution or a prohibition of action. Singularities mark the change in the behavioral tendencies of a subject, but affect is the means by which this change does or does not occur. The power of affect develops its unique sensitivity in people according to numerous influences. Ones own history must be considered; those interactions with objects or situations which have provoked past feelings are distinctly important, for they make one either susceptible or numb to such stimulants in the future. A person's cultural background must also be recognized as a

factor, for the collective beliefs and understandings which derive of culture are central to the interpretations which produce sympathy. Finally, ones environment is critically important to their affective identity, for the ideology which pervades the place of existence may open an individual more readily to particular realities. Emotional history, cultural background, and social ideology form a broad scope of impact upon affect. Religious affiliations, relations of kinship, and associations of class are all components of these influences. Such foundational causes as these are referenced through ones power of affect, and they function continuously to direct the potential for emotion, and the action of its stimulation. The external world interacts with our internal thresholds set by these influences, and together they compel our behaviors. Suppositions about external objects gradually become a part of the body's reactive capacity, and thereafter these prejudices are projected into the objects themselves to emit an automatic reaction in the perceiver. There are certainly points in the history of a subject's existence where either the internal or the external environment has had a more noticeable degree of affective influence, but none was ever completely absent; they generally combine to create distinct and immediate sensations. Brian Massumi writes, in explanation of these two realms of influence, that

> [t]he body doesn't just absorb pulses or discrete stimulations; it unfolds contexts, it infolds volitions and cognitions that are nothing if not situated. [Affect] is asocial, but not presocial – it includes social elements but mixes them with elements belonging to other levels of functioning and combines them according to different logic (Massumi, 30).

Affect is a capacity which opens the body to a pathway of functional singularities. It ranges in influence from perception, the molecular stimulation of an impulse, to emotion, the distributed alliance of many uncontrollable impulses, and to sympathy, the emotional embodiment which occurs between people.

These influences are true both for characters involved in emotional scenes of a narrative, created to reflect reality, and for the reader of a literature who imagines these moments in their examination of the story. The scenes of sympathy between literary characters is built upon the narrative history and culture of the textual figures involved; but in the same way, the vicarious emotional experience of a narrative event for the reader is dependant upon his own history, cultural background, and environment. The

characters feel as a reflection of the way that sensations emerge in real life, the reader feels with the mimicry of emotion in the text; through an imagined participation in the experience of the characters situation.  These feelings, although assumed, are impulsive, and out of the control of the individual experiencing them.  In the context of an emotional event, either felt by the reader or described in the narrative, the moment of passion is comprised solely of feeling, and only afterward is it deliberated.  The subject examines their feelings when they subside beneath emotional levels, and then assigns them with value.  This occurrence in the aftermath of feeling, shows emotional definitions to be reincorporated into a figure's affective identity; or as Massumi stated, the body 'infolding cognitions'.  The feeling experienced through affect is judged with intellectual scrutiny; potentially altering the affective sensitivity to the prompt of the feeling.  Thus the experience of narrative emotion not only reveals something of who the reader is, given the narrative events which they passionately project, but it also illustrates something of who they could become since the deliberation of feeling feeds back into their capacity to feel.  In a word, the experience of such feeling has the potential to alter ones sensitivity to the triggers which provoke them.  When the event of passion is over, the experiencing subject may be differently poised to respond in future encounters of similar contexts. They may be more or less inclined to feel in similar ways, or what once stimulated pity may next bring resentment.  This is why the judgment of emotional literature is properly a judgment of different readings, for as times change, readers change, and one reading will likely evoke different feelings from another.  The engagement with emotional sympathy depends heavily upon presently held beliefs and values, and these convictions are modified by the deliberation of past feelings.

The role of affect in sympathy is such that its function is culminated through the exercise of and action.  This action in every view, defines the relationship between component parts.  The function of neurons, component parts of the body, can only be determined by the movements that are created or inhibited between them.  Their potential for movement occurs only by the transference of messages; communication dictates the actions and inactions of the system.  The realities of social influence upon the body are similarly formed by the methods of interaction that exists between people.  Just as neurological impulses are coded by space, duration, and nerve energies, social contexts

are coded by the rules of culture, geography, and the influence of history. Within society these factors assist to initiate the emotional movement of bodies, and so influence the means by which sympathy is displayed. There are several objectives which need to be outlined in order to examine sympathy and its functional role as a social force: the organization of society as a system and, the human body as a basic and influential component of this system.

The examination of society is necessary to illustrate with greater detail how the affect is influenced through cultural and historical realities. The interpretation of emotional feeling is very much associated with those social characteristics which describe an individual. Gender, race, nationality, educational level, etc, all offer the conceptual framework to determine emotional meaning. These factors shape one's psychology via the embraced principles, values, and histories which have been instilled over time; they are self referential to the subject. Sympathy is an attainable emotion of reading largely because characters of literature clearly reflect this fact in humanity; the features of social meaning offered through ones own image and judgment alludes a basic reality which more deeply explains them. The groupings, affiliations, and interactions which have marked past experiences, direct one's interpretation of what is felt during emotional moments. These influences, referenced through an individual's body and judgment, cover various associations and very broad ideologies.

The world of society is divided into nations with political borders. These nations are formed of states and provinces, and these areas consist of cities and local areas which are merely a multitude of active groups, communities and organizations. Each formation within this multileveled reality conforms to a functional ideology within a collection of differentiated conceptions, beliefs, and expressions. The interaction of human beings is the fundamental force driving this system. As such, he signifies the most basic operating component, and is the standard through which social value and productivity may be assigned. In becoming functional components within the system, individuals are actively divided from self interests in order to uphold social principles. This explains ideological embodiment, in which loftier state interests are grafted with the values of the individual. Such notions are the conceptual substance for emotionally charged actions like slave rebellions and military warfare. Ideologies are forged into the process of judgment, and

indirectly influence bodily affect. When this occurs, social cues can both stimulate emotion and direct its interpretation afterward. Through institutions such as the church, the school, and the family, moralities and values are coded into the individual consciousness. Ones image and behavior draws distinct judgment in relation to conventional norms, such that one is afforded praise as a model or censure as a deviant, based upon how they align with popular standards. This system compels the acceptance of beliefs through ideology to create and maintain social identities.

Since society can be viewed as a complex fusion of smaller relational entities, with the human being as its most differentiated component, the interactions among people normalize operations throughout the system. One person for instance, may meet another and befriend them. In time their relationship will develop a habit of interaction. These two friends may join a group that is organized by certain rules, and recognized as a smaller chapter of a regional collection of such groups. Within the group their actions may be bound by a set of written guidelines, to which conformity reveals their identity as members of this group. These two companions might travel some distance to meet with other chapters of this group from different areas about the country in a nationally recognized meeting. And this group may also have active and participating chapters which exist outside of the country, through which these friends may make foreign companions. This short example demonstrates the formation of a social whole from the stitching together of its lesser components, and the normalizing of interaction between them based upon a set of codes or rules. These rules, which influence the simple communication between people, are integrated into each level of this social formation. By these terms, individuals participate in the exercises of the larger social groupings by extending their own influence as intermediaries. Each component of the social group has some measure of influence upon the direction of the whole. The action at each level contributes to the formation of the entire system. But this influence also works in reverse, whereby the objective of the social assemblage directs a significant impact back upon the thoughts and actions of the intermediate levels which comprise it. What is left is a double moving path of influence where the component lends determination to the objective of the whole, and in turn is determined in its capacity by the whole. Perhaps the clearest example of this dynamic is the influence of the family, both as an expansion

of individual characteristics, and as an apparatus used to limit thought and movement within the particular boundaries.

Families expand an individual into a larger social component, while at the same time cultivating individual development. The family represents a critical ideological in-group where thoughts and moralities may be rigidly prescribed, resulting in a distinct overlap of beliefs, values, and attitudes. The individual is expanded into the group, and terms like 'we' and 'us' apply to all members with the same essential meaning. Gordon Allport examines this expansive quality of family in his text The Nature of Prejudice. He writes, "In every society on earth the child is regarded as a member of his parents' groups. He belongs to the same race, stock, family tradition, religious caste, and occupational status. To be sure, in [U.S.] society, he may when he grows older escape certain of these memberships, but not all. The child is ordinarily expected to acquire his parents' loyalties and prejudices…" (Allport, 31). Allport alludes to the status of social influence conferred upon an individual through their integration into the family, and all existent familial conventions. However, the family is also a quintessential example of how the doctrines upholding social objectives are contracted into basic levels of human interaction and individual perception. Jacques Donzelot in his text, The Policing of Families, explains how social government is corroborated by familial interaction. "The family," he writes

> constituted a plexus of dependant relations that were indissociably private and public, a social linkage that organized individuals around the possession of [a state authority] which was granted and recognized by larger social groupings. Hence it was the smallest political organization possible, set directly within social relations of dependence, it was integrally affected by the system of obligations, honors, favors, and disfavors that actuated social relations in general (Donzelot, 48).

The family as a social force dually operates by moving on parallel avenues in opposing directions, applying social pressure on some account to both the collective group and the individuals who comprise it. This can be clearly seen if we examine the double meaning of the term family. On one hand, the family refers to ones' relatives, parents, children or siblings; an extension of oneself through the relations of kinship. On the other, the family is a term which maintains political currency, and represents a social doctrine to be protected. If we apply both these meanings to the operation of the social organism, it is

clear that the family expands the individual into a group, while at the same time contracting a larger social importance onto the individuals comprising this group.

This feature of sympathetic function is indispensable to the forthcoming analysis of the literature, for the plot in each text is driven by in-group and out-group relations, as the standard for treating with sympathy. In Jane Eyre for example, the narrator searches for group involvement throughout her story. At Gateshead she claimed that she "could not sympathize with one amongst [the Reeds]," and departs with hopes to find acceptance elsewhere (Bronte, 47). At Lowood, Helen Burns teaches her to overcome the resentment of exclusion, later allowing her to seek sympathy with Mrs. Reed, her past tormentor, and to feel "a[n] anguish for her woes" as she lay on her deathbed. Despite Jane's forgiveness for past disregard, she maintains her desire to specially feel with another through in-group inclusion, and she indulges her want for this sympathy with the Rivers when she splits her inheritance between them all. While this act is selfless, it certainly satisfies her self proclaimed "craving for fraternal and sisterly love" (Bronte, 413). As Jane's experiences are largely framed by the emotions that accompany group relations, our association with her as readers of the story appropriately follows this dynamic as well. The narrative is presented through Jane's personalized feelings and perceptions, and within her narration we are welcomed into an intimate and private in-group of her own making. We are even addressed directly as readers from time to time, and she often uses digressions in her storytelling to directly convey her personal feelings. This practice establishes an exclusive relation between reader and narrator, as Jane covets our feeling by freely offering through narration the embrace which she so desired. Through our familiarity with her, we are able to further sympathize with her circumstances; pitying her sorrows and rejoicing her triumph.

Sympathy occurs when the emotional experience of another, whether real or imaginary, arouses our passion. The means by which we experience this, and the movements which substantiate the experience, are coded by ideology. These accepted ideas stabilize the body's potential to transition into an emotional state, and influence the manner of its resultant movements. As one consistently responds with passion to a stimulus, the type of feelings and movements that define the emotion are fixed by habituation. The capacity to stimulate particular actions and feelings is increased through

frequent interaction with particular stimulants. The refined development of this influence in the masses has led to large scale social change. In the west alone it has been at the forefront of numerous political causes. It was the guiding force behind the citizen engendering theories of nationalism, and was at the heart of revolutionary activity; and likewise it has always maintained its influence in the imaginative projection of literature. Its capacity to be influential upon the body certainly marks its effects in social history, but it also derives sympathy's great role in the history of storytelling. Ones beliefs and attitudes forge the terms of their affective conditioning, and manifest their personal emotional embodiment through literary ideas.

To conclude this assessment, let us posit the grounds upon which the ideas within the subsequent chapters shall be explained. In each of the following sections, the process of socialization among the subjects and objects of sympathetic action will be shown to determine the ends of their activity within the narratives. The interactions which occur between the characters are often methods of conflict or communion that has been coded by their history, and represents merely another moment in the coding of their future experiences. In this way, their tales reflect the circumstances of those who read them. Differing social contexts will be shown to dictate contrasting emotional responses in both characters and readers, and consequently different ways of embodying passionate moments. The role of the body, both as a feeling receptor of sensations and as a moving object of perception, will figure into the examination of sympathy in each text. The creation of sympathetic principles in the novels will be shown with intentions to be physically influential through sympathy. As a figure's behavioral effects refine the already existing guidelines of their social world, their emotional actions will simultaneously affect the reader with unique results. In short, the rules of sympathy will be explained according the conditioning of subjects by the infusion of stimulants from without, the habituation of sensations within, and the affective translation of these influences into emotional behavior.

These texts will also be broadly illustrated as a collection of literature which reveals sympathy as an emotion that soothes psychological turmoil and advances self-awareness. Each story fashions sympathy in a context different than the others, and the study of each will focus the unique elements of its function to show a unity of influence

that exists between them. The initial examination of Beloved presents sympathy to operate amid the brutal domination of the body. With the graphic display of physical violence in the narrative, analyzing its use of emotion requires a forthright confrontation with the gravity of trauma. This is an appropriate text to begin the literary study for the stakes of sympathy through bodily trauma will establish the foundational tone of the examination. The subsequent assessment of Frankenstein shall build upon the points of conflict that are conveyed by the action of Beloved. The social conditions of slavery produced the horrid actions of the enslaved, yet Shelley's novel refines this point of emotional causality in its progression. Rather than society affecting the oppressed to commit horrific acts, the devastation forged by Victor's creature may be directly and singly linked to treatment offered by Victor himself. The unfeeling social institution of slavery becomes the lone actions of an individual, thus culpability for the effects of mistreatment can be applied with greater precision. Moreover, what was the effect of physical force for the slave is now a slight of judgment and morality; the affront is now wrought upon the mind to create affective changes in the body. Frankenstein refines the characteristics of Beloved into a more focused example, just as Jane Eyre, takes this notion of sympathy staked in moral expectations, and casts it with greater attention for the sublime. It is the prospect of bypassing God's will for human desire which founds the sympathetic merit of this novel. Jane strays in her story from a path of deference to a supernatural order. Though in the sympathy she would later experience through divine influence, she reclaims her course, marries her beloved, and embraces selfhood. The forthcoming analysis will show the expansive and progressive manner of sympathy, as the premise of one novel contributes to the study of the next, to reveal a widely unified representation which connects the body, mind and soul.

# CHAPTER 2

## THE SYMPATHETIC IMPACT OF RACE AND TRAUMA IN BELOVED

The presentation of sympathy in Toni Morrison's novel Beloved is pivotal to understanding the meaning of her text. Conventional academic assessments of the story's sympathetic merit have become increasingly popular since its publication in 1987. Recent articles have ranged in focus from the passion borne of horrid slave experiences, to the influence of song in the novel as an emotional stimulus. This essay will follow the course of this reception history with an assessment of the provocative influences of trauma, libido, fear, faith, memory, and imagination; each will be shown to stand as a factor which connects the individual to the larger social environment. Sympathy is the embodiment of another's feelings, sufferings, mental state or emotions. It is the transference of these passionate realities between bodies. The feeling of sympathy and its consequences are fundamental to the meaning to the narrative. It not only compels the action of the story, but also asserts its essential purpose. Engaging with the text itself is intended to be an event which affects the sensations of the reader.

A critical point of the novel is to show the emotional effects of extreme brutality. This feat is accomplished through a story driven by deeply harsh social conditions. Scenes of rape, murder, and helplessness bind the reader to feel with the characters in their intensely dramatic moments. Morrison dedicates the novel to the "60 million and more" individuals who perished, often anonymously, as victims of slavery; and the novel is commemorative as a virtual medium to feel with their experiences. This story is replete with examples of family, freedom, and physical safety being prevented in the lives of slaves; and as we read of their ordeals, we are moved by passionate sensations to gain a higher understanding of their trauma. Through this passion, the reader will have the historical allusion of the text inscribed upon their own emotional history, and the event of slavery will become a far more personal and familiar subject. The story, in short, is written to arouse the reader's sympathy for the history of U.S. slavery. Perusing the text with a felt experience of its action compels a greater feeling for the horrors of the slave experience. To fully comprehend how sympathy develops from reading the text, the interaction between the reader and the narrative as an object must be understood.

The reader's perception is merely an interface between one's own inner vibrations and the influence of the story as an external object. The novel's meaning is gleaned through examination, yet meaning is also invested by the reader into the narrative. As the story's progresses, their own experiences, beliefs and values, define the passages, descriptions and dialogue with subjective meaning. These personal feelings and attitudes greatly influence one's proclivity for emotion toward the subject matter. Ideally, the horror conveyed through the graphic nature of the text, along with an intimate identification with the characters, creates feeling intense enough to forge an emotional attachment to the subject of slavery. Joseph Jones, in his text Affects as Process, defines emotion as the "experiential monitor of complex motivational systems." He claims that "[b]y cross comparing the affective intensity of feelings from competing systems, the organism has a simple effective way of prioritizing information and thus reaching a decision, which, in turn, initiates a course of action" (Jones, 44). If one's feelings can be made intense enough through the described tribulations of the characters, then sympathy with the history of slavery can be achieved. The outlook which culminates the reader's feeling would be the dismissal of misplaced attitudes, and the embrace of appropriate ones about slavery. The institution would be represented through the text to provide a greater awareness of its longstanding traumatic effects. The remnants of slavery that persist in the contemporary would be traced to distinct causes through the story, and relationship of historical causation will remain with the reader given their emotional reading the narrative.

A primary means of gaining these new attitudes is feeling along with the characters and embodying their emotional moments. They display great passion, often directly the result of oppression they endured as slaves. Abuse is experienced and witnessed in different forms: beatings, hangings, torture, and other manners of maltreatment fill the pages of the text; an environment which noticeably alters the emotional patterns of the characters' bodies. Subjected to punishment with intense severity and civil license, the characters were physically changed to function as social tools; this influenced their psychology and modified the state of their passions. The brutal conditions of their existence often saw an increase of a particular sensation which affected their feelings and behaviors. These changes would determine what functioned as

a stimulant to them, by conditioning their body's sensitivity to certain triggers. The narrative description of these changes in the characters is simultaneously a call for change to occur within the reader. As their experiences are conveyed and they are moved with emotion, the reader is summoned to feel with their plight, and then act with a new recognition of the effects of this history. The characters are changed by their environment, though still labor to create change within it; and the reader is prompted by these events to alter their own attitudes, and create novel outlooks where it concerns the understanding of slavery's horror.

This narrative is intended to achieve the reader's sympathy by pushing their sensations to the extreme of emotion. As we read the text, our bodies are continually transitioned between different internal states which parallel the story's moments of fear, desperation, insanity and triumph. Through the capabilities of affect, the novel triggers our sensations, moving us to feel a barrage of sensations. As the characters are in every way damaged by the environment, the reader tends to be sensibly affected by the condition of their trauma. Morrison portrays the effects of slavery in emotional and psychological terms in order to evoke this sympathy. She gives a complex background to each of her characters, dramatically heightening the readers' potential to emotionally connect with them. This goes beyond the standard for emotional association with literary characters as explained by Suzanne Keen in her text Empathy and the Novel. Keen describes how simply emotion rests upon the image of the character behind the prose. "[The] reader's empathy may be swiftly activated by a simple sign of an active agent… Empathy for fictional characters may require only minimal elements of identity, situation, and feeling, not necessarily complex or realistic characterization" (Keen, 68). The identification of Morrison's characters through race, gender, age, and experience, deepens the potential connection with each figure. In addition, the novel uses a unique manner of presenting its action to further provoke the emotion of reading. Temporal nonlinearity, shifting voices of narration, and the presence of a mystical figure, all assist to relay the experiences of slavery in a way that more aptly attests to all facets of its debilitation. This assessment will deal primarily with the emotional action of the narrative as a stimulant to sympathy, though later, the sympathetic consequences of the novel's unique presentation style will be more directly considered.

To qualify as sympathy, the emotional influence should be discernible on the body of the sympathizer. However, as the object of punitive force in the novel, the body itself was a catalyst for arousal. In many cases it was the primary emotional stimulus, representative of the parsing of social freedoms. Through their blood, scars, wounds, and pains, the slave's body bore witness to the experience of social debasement. In the moments of Sethe's disclosure to Paul D of the circumstances surrounding her escape from Sweet Home, she candidly speaks to him of her past tribulation as Denver silently listens. Her disclosure of abuse, bolstered by the image of scars on her back, moves everyone in the room toward emotional activity. Sethe says,

> After I left you, those boys came in there and took my milk. That's what they came in there for. Held me down and took it. I told Mrs. Garner on em. She had that lump and couldn't speak but her eyes rolled out tears. Them boys found out I told on em. Schoolteacher made one open up my back, and when it closed it made a tree. It grows there still.

The "chockcherry tree" scars reflexively stimulate emotion from all those who see it. Paul D, after hearing this revelation, immediately embraces Sethe, palming her breasts and gently feeling the scars with his cheek. The two women in the room, Sethe and Denver, are emotionally moved as well. The text reads "...Denver dripped tears onto the stovefire… fifteen minutes later, after telling him about the stolen milk, her mother wept as well" (Morrison, 17). This early instance demonstrates the body as an intensely sympathetic catalyst, able to affect others as a graphic sign of slavery's abuse.

This example is the initial scene of passion in a narrative whose action is built upon non-linear progression. As such the moment illustrates a connection between perception and movement that has already been coded into the characters behavior. Through flashback scenes their histories would be directly referenced, and by their responses in this initial scene, it is indirectly referenced. The means by which perceptual recognition of the scars becomes the intense sensations of their bodies, is due to the evolution of affect. For Sethe and Paul D, the scars were an object which described a history of woe, intensely moving them by the force of their memories. Their judgment of meaning yields eroticism, and the scene ends with the two hurrying up the white staircase to satisfy what has become their sexual desire. This feeling spawns from a vulnerability which their histories of affect have ingrained, and which the scars have intensely called

forth. Paul D is displayed as a comforter. He is not only able to assuage the grief of women about him, but also to present himself as an emotional outlet. Describing his response to Sethe after her disclosure, the text reads, "He rubbed his cheek on her back and learned that way her sorrow, the roots of it; its wide trunk and intricate branches. Raising his fingers to the hooks of her dress, he knew without seeing them or hearing any sigh that the tears were coming fast" (Morrison, 17). Paul D recognizes the origins of Sethe's grief, and is able to embody the desperate sensations she feels in this moment. Sethe, amid the pain of her disclosure and the attentiveness of Paul D, defers her own habit of matriarchal obligation, and allows him to caress her back tissue. In the end their union allows a mutually felt sexual desire to envelope the moment.

Paul D responds to the scars by feeling sensations of anxiety with Sethe, and then offering his security. Sethe was first introduced to the brutality of slavery by the actions of Schoolteacher's nephews who beat her and took her breast milk. His cupping of her breast is a figurative act of release from the trauma of this prior incident, and a promise of security that he is willing to provide. The text reads, "she [now] knew that the responsibility for her breasts were in somebody else's hands" (Morrison, 18). The disclosure of her scars aligns the bodily feelings of Paul D with those of her own. He displays protective actions toward Sethe, and in turn alters her feelings by growing her sense of trust. The change in the context of their interaction occurs with shifts in the intensity of their sensations which produces their erotic emotions. While this example alludes to the pertinence of history in one's emotional development, it also references the operational process of sensation; a function which must be clearly understood in the context of the novel.

Perception is the means by which one comprehends the external world. It is the power which reveals the potential uses of objects. Sensation comparatively is the felt awareness of potential to the body. The perception of Sethe's scars initiates the characters' sensation toward a particular intensity. Paul D, through his body, is able to perceive himself perceiving the scars; he feels 'increasingly concerned' at the sight of them. His intensity occurs as an outgrowth of his perception and triggers the increase of a particular sensation within him, in this case the increase of custodial anxiety. The reality of his bodily change makes the exposure of those scars the stimulus of an internal

event. They create a condition in the environment which penetrates his body, alters its energies, and activates him toward movement. This change is both felt from within and perceivable from the perspective of another. Sethe and Paul D each experienced the feelings of their own internal changes, and they simultaneously perceive the dispositional changes of each other. The disclosure of the scars literally sets their bodies into a connective motion with them. Their image instigates affective changes in the characters by stimulating intense sensations. Often, the desires of sensation may only be satisfied by the refinement of one's perception. The text states that Paul D "would tolerate no peace until he had touched every ridge and leaf of [her scar tissue] with his mouth...." He feels a frustration within himself which directs him into closer contact with Sethe's body. This feeling continues until he can intimately perceive her scars. Her sensations are evident as well. Of her, the text reads, "Maybe this one time [Sethe] could stop dead in the middle of cooking a meal – not even leave the stove – and feel the hurt her back ought to" (Morrison, 18). She materializes a yearning to trust and accept the protection of another. The change in their affective intensity prepares the erotic passions which unite them. An increase in Sethe's vulnerability is coupled with the growth of Paul D's protective anxiety, and produces their emotional behavior.

The intensity of passion is certainly important in conditioning the characters' identity, but it also affects the atmosphere in which they exist. As their sensations arise by their perceptions' reference to the past, a concurrent influence is made through them upon the exterior world. For example, Paul D's sensations urge him to exorcise the spirit of the ghost inhabiting the house, but this leaves the character Denver in a sad and lonesome mood. After the adults hurry off, Denver recalls her brothers and grandmother, all relatives broken by the spirit in some fashion. In her solitude, the spirit had become her companion. The initial chapter ends in this way, "her mother was upstairs with the man who had gotten rid of the only company she ever had. Denver dripped a bit of bread into the jelly. Slowly, methodically, miserably she ate it" (Morrison, 19). The spirit-less atmosphere of the home is the result of actions compelled by the anxious sensations of Paul D, actions which effectively change the sensations of Denver. He is moved by an object of his past, acting upon him by an occurrence of his present. And through his

action the spirit is dismissed, but the structure of the family and its relationships is also reconfigured. Denver loses her companion and Sethe gains a new one in him.

This initial example contrasted with others will further display the catalyzing potential of the body, but will also demonstrate how one's history impacts their potential to sympathize by the creation of a social identity: the judgments, passions, and outlooks which derive from one's image, profession, or experiences. The characters' identities are imperative to analyzing their interactions through sympathy, because they determine what would be perceived as a passionate stimulus. As the identities of former slaves directed the emotion of the opening scene, similar realities would likewise affect others in the display of their feelings. The fateful day soon after Sethe received the flogging which produced her scars, she is assisted by Amy Denver in the woods. The sight of a runaway slave in such a broken condition moves Amy to become speechless. "[Amy] said, 'Come here Jesus', when she saw [the wounds]. Sethe guessed it must be bad because after that call to Jesus Amy didn't speak for a while. In the silence of an Amy struck dumb for a change, Sethe felt the fingers of those good hands lightly touch her back. She could hear the breathing but still the whitegirl said nothing…. Amy spoke at last in a dreamwalker's voice" (Morrison, 79). This character is garrulous throughout the scene, but when she first perceives the mutilated slave she is made quiet; and when she does speak again there is a noticeable change in her voice. Her emotions in this encounter result from the strong force of recollection upon her, and the historical creation of her own social identity.

The contexts of the two characters are quite different at this time. Amy is an indentured servant escaping to Boston to satisfy her whimsical desires for velvet, while Sethe flees with thoughts of survival for herself and her unborn child. As a young white female, Amy might easily make the transition from indentured servant to anonymous Bostonian, but Sethe's blackness and runaway status mark her with penetrating social identifications; she is a fugitive from the law, and a recoverable asset of industry. In spite of their contextual differences, Sethe's wounds still move Amy in a way similar to how their scars would move Paul D many years later. Each is made silent, touches them tenderly, and offers some assistance in the way of sympathy. A contrast of these reactions show that although one's provocation may be influenced by social mandates, it is certainly not limited by them.

The sight of a wounded slave body was an emotional catalyst for Amy because her history allowed her to sympathize with the experience. Her feeling is cued by the image of Sethe's wounds, and is intense enough to hold her speechless and motionless. Brian Massumi in his text, Parables of the Virtual describes such a reaction as the 'perception of suspense.' It occurs as a suspended moment of circuitry in the path of stimulus and response. He writes, "The space into which [viscerality] jolts the flesh is one of an inability to act or reflect, a spasmodic passivity, so taut a receptivity that the body is paralyzed until it is jolted back into action-reaction by recognition. Call it a space of passion" (Massumi, 61). Amy's response occurs exactly in this way. Her quiet stillness occurs at her body's emotional command. She gives meaning to the scars in light of her own past as an indentured servant from which she recalls personal episodes of violence. When she eventually does speak, she measures Sethe's injury to her own torment at the hands of the mysterious Mr. Buddy. She says, "I had me some whippings, but I don't remember nothing like this. Mr. Buddy had a right evil hand too. Whip you for looking at him straight. Sure would. I looked right at him one time and he hauled off and threw a poker at me… [but] whoever planted that tree beat Mr. Buddy by a mile" (Morrison, 79). Her experiences of violence provide the ground from which an embodiment of Sethe's pain could occur within her. Amy is sympathetic with helpful and compassionate actions. She tends to Sethe, finds her shelter, and guides her to the river. Her memory of physical violence prepares her concern, for in witnessing the moments of Sethe's torment, she behaves in acknowledgment of the similarity between them. Although she runs toward velvet as Sethe seeks freedom, each absconds from a past with some looming threat of bodily harm. Amy confronts a figure mauled by an intensified version of the political forces that she flees.

Both Paul D and Amy would act with compassion towards Sethe's back, the site of her trauma. The sympathetic actions they display are similarly defined by a shift in control. Their deliberate movement comes beneath emotional government, as their perception of Sethe's back triggers an immediate and distinct change of their activity. But despite their sympathy, the characters still maintain different social identities, thus their compassionate action is distinguished by contrasting attitudes. Paul D is tender and custodial, seeking to protect Sethe from the trauma of her past. But Amy, in the midst of

her sympathy, is bound by the social implications of race, for she derides Sethe with slurs and insults amid her assistance. A contrast of Amy's disparaging descriptions of Sethe, with some quite uplifting ideas about herself, reveals an influence far more entrenched than simple vanity; instead it openly asserts the importance race plays upon their differently valued social identities. Notice the tone of these statements; upon first seeing Sethe, Amy says, "Look there. A nigger. If that don't beat all." Later she says "You 'bout the scariest-looking something I ever seen" (Morrison, 32). And soon after she had massaged Sethe's swollen feet, she ironically offers this belittling statement, "Don't up and die on me in the night, you hear? I don't want to see your ugly black face hankering over me. If you do die, just go off somewhere where I can't see you, hear?" (Morrison, 82). Amy contrasts her debasing descriptions of Sethe with statements proposing her own sense of beauty and prestige. Responding to Sethe's query about velvet, she says, "Boston, got the best velvet. Be so pretty on me" (Morrison, 33). And after she has delivered the baby Denver in the paddle boat, she lifts her head triumphantly and implores Sethe to tell the newborn about her. "You better tell her. You hear? Say Miss Amy Denver. Of Boston." (Morrison, 85).

Amy's thoughts throughout this interaction reveal the conditioning of her feelings. Her sympathy aligns with sentiments of nineteenth century northern abolitionism. She exclusively references ideas of repulsiveness when describing Sethe, an ironically telling sign considering her service. Although helpful in Sethe's moments of absolute pain and weakness, Amy's help was not predicated upon a binding ideal of human equality. She is not compelled by an egalitarian spirit, but instead acts despite her feeling of racial bigotry. Such thought arises from a process understood to regularize sensation. Thought itself is the extension of perceptual activity toward a very abstracted extreme. The consequence of this extension assists in producing a durable relational context between subject and object. The content of Amy's history compels her to act in spite of social conventions, but it does not dispel their affective influence upon her. The thoughts which she articulates about Sethe, places a limitation upon their relationship. As the object of her thought, Sethe is generalized in a way which prescribes Amy's feelings. Each act of the human psyche is but a mingling of thought and feeling, and here Amy's thoughts are ordered with socially conceived notions. We may infer from this

response that there has been a consistency of this association within her, generally stabilizing her interactions with blacks, and now specifically regulating her feelings toward Sethe as the object. "The thing," Massumi states, "becomes… the object of a set of regularized… connections systematized in such a way as to ensure the maximum repeatability of the largest number of actions with the maximum uniformity of result. Predictability: anticipation perfected" (Massumi, 94). Amy might have acted with a sense of equality, but her thoughts suggest a feeling of offense. By their interaction, we see that although sympathy was inspired across distinct social divisions, it did not supplant the attitudes which those divisions have instilled.

Leon Litwack in his text, North of Slavery, describes this reality as a veiled fact of nineteenth century American abolitionism. "Abolitionism" he writes, "had to strike at the roots of slavery, show the Negro's capacity for self improvement, and demonstrate the sincerity of [white abolitionists] own professed sympathy for the Negro's plight" (Litwack, 215). This objective though was compromised by divisive attitudes and actions towards the American Negro in general. This was perhaps most openly demonstrated by the disallowance of Negro membership in many of the abolition societies in northern states. Edward Adby, an influential British abolitionist who traveled to the U.S. in 1833, wrote these words to a friend and colleague about the prohibition of blacks from antislavery movements. "It really seems [that] many considered an African… as entitled to the same sort of sympathy as they subscribe to the society for the prevention of cruelty to animals" (Adby, 219).

I indulge into this foray of abolitionist justifications in order to more openly consider the social forces which contributed to Amy Denver's attitude, and to address the way that a reader is intended to judge her outlook. The sympathies embodied in this moment align with the conventional politics of the period. Amy, with her helpful actions and disparaging attitude, acted with the contrasting morality of abolitionist logic: to assist the misbegotten slave in her plight of servitude, while still maintaining the doctrines of inferiority upon which slavery was originally founded. In reading the interaction between them, one is made to feel with the situation of the characters as a reflection of this historical sentiment. The type of feeling which prompted the abolitionist movement is apparent in this moment of the text to convey a realistic illustration of such unique

obstacles confronted by American slaves. The emotion of reading such moments are not passionate in themselves, they instead reflect the reader's history, environment, and cultural understanding. Just as Amy judges Sethe with limited sympathy by her own identity in these areas, modern readers will judge the scene between them according to their identity as well. It is likely that contemporary readers will more freely offer compassionate feeling for Sethe's tragic state than Amy does, due to the different historical perspective. However, through the observation of Sethe's pain, the understanding of Amy's past, and the awareness of her disparaging attitude in this interaction, Morrison urges the reader to regard the wide scope of dehumanization that slavery presented, by feeling with the overt slight even while assisting those in bondage. Amy shows sympathy toward Sethe all the while holding her to be racially inferior. Contemporary readers will certainly pick up on the contradictory impulses of Amy, because modern cultural and environmental attitudes greatly differ from the nineteenth century context that Amy reflects. And the clear presentation of her prejudice allows the reader to gain a felt awareness of those impulses which she signifies, the racist attitudes which affected even those who felt sympathy for slaves, and supported their liberation.

A final examination of sympathy formed of social identity, suggests the extreme to which sensation and emotion are dispassionately conditioned. This reaction is in fact, the lack of any overt emotional response. When Sheriff, Schoolteacher, and his two younger nephews witness Sethe executing her children, the two older men act with clear indications of their profession. No discernible 'event' occurs within them; their demeanor aligns with their identity as governing components of the political system, and they are inclined to differently value those involved. Conversely, Schoolteacher's nephew is not yet desensitized to the sight of trauma. He had previously abused Sethe on the plantation, but he now passionately questions the motives of her emotion. His uncle and the Sheriff are the only characters in this scene who respond with indifference. The stoicism in each figure references their particular social identity. The Sheriff is symbolic of the law, which was utterly blind to the inhumanity of slavery, and upheld the concept of slave inferiority. His function at the event transforms from overseeing the recovery of runaway slaves to prosecuting an arrest, and throughout the scene he acts only as an executor of the law. In the novel's description of the nephew's questioning and

trembling reaction, there is an enlightening contrast with Sheriff's calm demeanor. "The nephew… didn't know he was shaking. …What she go and do that for? And that is what he asked the sheriff who was standing there amazed like the rest of them, but not shaking. [The nephew] was swallowing hard, over and over again… The sheriff turned then said to the other three, 'You all better go on. Look like your business is over. Mine's started now.'" (Morrison, 150). He does not shiver at the sight, but immediately references his political purpose. To his perception, Sethe's action did not signify the throes of emotional intensity, but instead illustrated black savagery. This attitude, reflective of the law, touches upon his counterpart's role as well. Schoolteacher signifies the monetary and industrial objectives of slavery. He perceives the death and injury of the children merely as a loss of property, and this scene of violence evokes his concern only for the economic reality of the plantation. Notice his immediate reasoning of their value when he first comes upon the scene.

> Right off it was clear, to schoolteacher especially, that there was nothing there to claim. The three (now four because she had the one coming when she cut) pickaninnies they had hoped were alive and well enough to take back to Kentucky, take back and raise properly to do the work Sweet Home desperately needed, were not. Two were lying open eyed in sawdust; a third pumped blood down the dress of the main one – the woman schoolteacher bragged about, the one he said made fine ink, damn good soup, pressed his collars the way he liked besides having at least ten breeding years left. (Morrison, 149)

Schoolteacher's thoughts openly display the influence of social mandates upon him. He values the slaves only to the extent that their labor adds to the bounty of the plantation, and since they can no longer make a contribution, they are devoid of worth and purpose. Each of these men held political identities which were components of the slave society, and so they feel no sympathy for those involved in the scene. The outlook of slave inferiority rationalizes Schoolteacher's occupation, and it is rationalized by Sheriff's; and in this moment of drama, each man falls in line with the dictates of their job. Their detached affect reinforces the ideologies which have granted them civic authority. If we combine the logic which restrains these two characters, the destruction of the slave body that is here initiated by a slave herself, is the illegal destruction of personal property. The Sheriff places Sethe under arrest as Schoolteacher rides off embittered at what he could

not recover; and both believed that the scene testified to the barbaric nature of blacks, a belief that would certainly reinforce their affective detachment to slaves in the future.

These characters have been shown to be both stimulants of emotion and repositories of sensation. They have been tearful and disbelieving, detached and visceral, but the emotional effects of suffering bodily harm as a slave has yet to be completely examined, and must be more closely observed to address the impact of sympathy in this atmosphere. I earlier suggested how the characters' history influenced their capacity to become emotional when witnessing the physical signs of Sethe's abuse. The actions of Amy, Paul D, Schoolteacher or Sherriff, indicate how previous experiences may condition the sensations and alter future perceptions. With this understanding, a past of experience within the brutal slave environment had very direct influences upon the emotions of those in bondage. Affective influences function via cognitive faculties; namely, the faculty of memory. But when these memories are dominated by trauma, the recollection of experience often embodies an emotional context itself. In fact, the memory of past trauma is most directly accessible through relative emotions; those which place the event in a spatial or temporal context may not be as evident as the recollected feeling of the event. Hence, such experiences may be continually relived as if they were presently happening (Laplanche, 467). The connection between the experiences of the past to those of the present, is sustained by the present events' ability to inspire a recollection. The traumatic past, through the pervading aspects of memory, unceasingly contributes a felt potential to present moments. Gilles Deleuze, in defining the function of memory, states that the term itself simply refers to the relation of affect upon the self, by the self. This relation is suggested both by Deleuze, and the events of the novel, to be quite a valued commodity in social politics. Given slavery's brutal characteristics, the memories instilled by traumatic events may function to enact social control. He writes, "[Memory] will be reintegrated into those systems from which it was originally derived. The individual is coded or recoded within a 'moral' knowledge, and above all he becomes a stake in a power struggle and is diagrammatized" (Deleuze,[1] 103). In the novel, memory forges an ominous and haunting condition for the slave; it sustains the forceful impact of the institution even after the slaves are liberated. This force is

[1] Deleuze *Foucault*

personified by the young girl Beloved, the ghost of Sethe's slain daughter. She operates as a collective memory for the characters, constantly interacting with them to rationalize their thoughts, compel their actions, and color their perceptions of the present. The most lucid and emotionally provocative memories for the characters were those which referenced bodily punishment. The experience or witness of physical trauma affected them with great intensity and longevity. To explain the affects of corporeal severity, we must observe its occurrences with a distinct consideration of how it figures into the cognitive lives of the characters.

The affective inclination of the slave identity is clearly shown in a character's bodily reactions. They would often cringe, tremble, or breathe heavily when confronted with an emotionally provocative context. In more intense situations they would lose control of their deliberate movement altogether. The emotional behaviors which spawn from their memories are often lessened in degree, but still of the same kind as Sethe's brutal execution of her daughter Beloved. This implies a pattern of influence where the politics of a slave's historical identity cause them to move, feel, and react according to coping mechanisms that their servitude has installed. The passions create changes in the surrounding environment as well, and as we will soon observe with Sethe's emotion, these changes may be quite significant.

The character Paul D offers a basic example of how an emotional event will affect the body as a memory for years into the future. The height of his emotional intensity occurs after he is sold away from the Sweet Home plantation. The introduction of Schoolteacher as his new master disabuses him the sense of manhood he embraced under the clement rule of the Garners; his emotions here are an outgrowth of this recognition. As he reveals to Sethe what he experienced on the night her milk was stolen, he is moved to emotional stimulation. The events of this evening long ago had shown him his real social value. After being sold himself, seeing the other Sweet Home slaves sold off or killed, and watching Halle, a once dedicated and resourceful man, suddenly become distant and uninvolved, Paul D perceives the fallacious authority that he held for his condition. This epiphany provokes a bitter attitude in him toward the authority of others; their dominance reflecting his newly possessed sense of worthlessness. Unlike the other slaves, he ends up on a chain gang headed to a Georgia prison. The limitation of his body

by the chains, his loss of his esteem, and the knowledge of his impending incarceration, all increase the intensity of his sensations, and move him towards progressively intense feelings. His emotion is first triggered when he is arrested, and in the moments thereafter, it grows from mere feelings of anxiousness, to outright bodily paroxysms. As he nears the Georgia prison with the reality of his worth solidified, his emotional intensity increases. The novel speaks of its initiation and growth in his body.

> A flutter of a kind, in the chest, then the shoulder blades. It felt like rippling-gentle at first and then wild. As though the further south they led him, the more his blood, frozen like an ice pond for twenty years, began thawing, breaking into pieces that, once melted, had no choice but to swirl and eddy…. By the time they unhitched him from the wagon and he saw nothing but dogs and two shacks in a world of sizzling grass, the rolling blood was shaking him to and fro…. [] when they shoved him into the box and dropped the caged door down, his hands quit taking instruction. On their own they traveled. Nothing could stop them or get their attention. They would not hold his penis to urinate or a spoon to scoop lumps of lima beans into his mouth (Morrison, 106).

The throes of this experience arise from the perceptions that he has at each moment of his detainment. The sight of the prison intensifies his anxiety, and the experience of being an actual prisoner pushes his movements beyond deliberate control. Years later, when recalling to Sethe this experience of bondage, he compares his confinement with the liberties enjoyed by Mister, a rooster on the plantation. As he speaks, his emotion is noticeable. "'Mister, he looked so… free. Better than me. Stronger, tougher. Son of a bitch couldn't even get out of the shell by hisself but he was still king and I was…..' Paul D stopped and squeezed his left hand with his right. He held it that way long enough for it and the world to quiet down and let him go on" (Morrison, 72). The intense sensations which this recollection inspires, is simply the continuation of those feelings which were initiated in his past. The arousal of passion after so many years indicates the elastic quality of passionate stimulations. Through memory, the feelings of the bygone event have endured and now fold into his present life to breech his threshold of emotion. But unlike the events of yesteryear he is now reconciled to his condition and can assuage these passions. Despite this example of Paul D's focus, the novel does suggest the capacity for memory not only to continue the influence of past emotional events, but to inspire them with an even stronger intensity than previously experienced.

The emotion which the characters display, arise as symbolic allusions to the

institution of slavery. We are to feel in the course of reading the narrative, a sensible response to such events as Paul D's compassion, Amy's assistance, Schoolteacher's abuse, Sherrif's indifference, etc., and as these events produce drastic changes in their feelings and behaviors, the reader's attitude concerning slavery is affected by the strength of physical sensations. The feelings which the characters experience in the narrative, prompts one to feel distinctively about the revealed truths of slavery. Especially since the novel is based upon the historical events of the fugitive slave Margret Garner, who in 1856, killed her children rather than returning them to bondage. But as mentioned earlier, these feelings experienced are merely derived of a figure's identity. Let us take a brief moment to address the emotional value of a significant identity trait affecting characters and readers alike in their feelings: the influence of race. Both the white and black characters in the text are directly influenced by the social power of this feature. White characters are shown to be mocking and abusive toward blacks in many situations; but even characters like the Garners, who were not overtly racist or harsh, maintained attitudes of superiority among the black characters which they confronted. Blacks in contrast, are depicted differently; there seemed to be a free flow of sympathy between them, especially in their moments of need. But in many interactions with white characters, a sense of inferiority and weakness, as previously explained by Paul D, defined their attitudes. The politics of interaction between the races in the text is important to the inspiration of sympathy to these same races who read the text. The novel casts such a drastic examination of the psychological and passionate effects of slavery, that both black and white readers of the text will be affected by the allusions to race as a standard for treatment. Although both the black and white modern reader may share a common language or environment, their histories are grossly dissimilar within the institution. From these points, the emotions of contemporary readers may divide somewhat along these racial lines since the history of each group is being portrayed in the narrative. Blacks may experience feelings of sorrow, resentment, or disbelief at the novel's scenes of sympathy, whereas whites may feel pity, guilt or enlightenment when reading the same scenes. One's feelings when reading a story of racial oppression are comprised of what is revealed about oneself through the culture and history which is referenced.

To further demonstrate the psychological effects of trauma and its influence upon emotional operations, an analysis of the female slaves, namely Sethe and Baby Suggs, is necessary.  Highlighted in their condition is memory's influence on the slave's damaged emotional reality.  These characters had histories that were so influenced by bondage, that the activity of their present became fully driven by emotion.  Their emotional habits originate in past events, many of which had unique familial implications.  Through them, increasingly hopeless representations of the external world would diminish their will with hopeless outlooks of the future.  This suggests the capacity of servitude to alter sensations by weighing upon the fundamental ability that cognition asserts; the power to choose one's thoughts and actions.  These characters were streamlined toward one thought, and soon lost the capacity to entertain ideas outside of its consideration.  For Sethe and Baby Suggs, their impotent volition was an inevitable consequence of how memories of persecution came to bear upon their imagination.  The events of each woman's life shaped the substance of her emotional reality by exploiting the connection between cognitive faculties – the imagination and the memory.  The role of the imagination as a display of ideals greatly depends upon the state of the memory.  By the horrors of their memories, the penchant to imagine became dormant, and their wills inevitably became weak.  They might have been able to conceive themselves in circumstances other than their present reality, but if their memories showed repeatedly intense contradictions to that possibility, their projected ideal quickly became an implausible fantasy.  These women's comprehension of their own social identity was so rigid, that the very idea of a different reality existed fancifully beyond the scope of their consciousness.  For each of them, the period over which remembering extended was wholly defined by tragedy, and the sensation of grief became the mental landmark that directed their past into their present, and cloaked any discernible difference for their future.

The presence of these characters allows the reader to feel for the psychologically tragic impact of slavery; influences that arise through brutality and sap the body and mind of vigor.  Such effects reveal themselves in community and lineage, and are influential through multiple generations.  Take the impact of slavery on the condition of Baby Suggs.  Her character presents the capacity for dissociation in the novel.  She is a slave who had not experienced the trials of bondage in the manner that others did.  She served

as a house slave for the duration of her time at Sweet Home, supporting the domestic desires of the Garners. She had not participated in the manual labor of the field hands, nor had she been physically abused by her master. Moreover she was legally freed by the labor and contributions of her son. But despite her avoidance of corporal punishment, her final condition best displays the psychological characteristics of a suppressed agency. As a result of her inept imagination she is forced into a state of affective stoicism. It is not that she is unable to feel the intensity of sensations, instead the stimuli for such intensity is relegated to a single subject – colors. Her dissociation from all else is a psychological mechanism intended to deal with her experiences of trauma. She is the novel's strongest willed character, drawn oppositional to Schoolteacher by her passionate connection to others, but her state before death suggest the weight of slavery's burden upon these connections. Through its impact on the black family and community, its ability to estrange kinship and abolish cultural norms, slavery created the conditions for her emotional indifference. Her sole endeavor before death, the contemplation of colors, is presented as an innocuous thought, but to the slave experiences of her past, color difference rationalized othering. The weight of servitude would alienate her from the once sustained and strong bonds with the community. In describing the circumstances of her lethargy, the text states, "Her faith, her love, her imagination and her great big old heart began to collapse twenty-eight days after her daughter-in-law arrived (Morrison, 89). The "collapse" of her imagination at the event of Sethe's violence, disallowed any connection between herself and another.

Baby Suggs' had once greatly invested herself in the community, thus she suffers in witness of slavery's effects upon it. The confrontation with social authority enacted an unstable ground upon which the slave community represented its values. It imparted ignorance about historical links of kinship and culture, and caused them to devalue themselves. Their attitudes are especially influential to Baby Suggs' detachment in considering her message to them. She speaks of the importance of appreciating one's own humanity, suggesting it as a critical factor in obtaining agency and freedom. At the Clearing, she urges the listeners to love themselves and each other for their blackness, just as they are otherwise hated for it. But judging from the peoples' response, it is clear that they are instilled with faulty representations of themselves. The text highlights a link

between the slave existence and a diminished capacity for self esteem. It was this objective that Baby Suggs focused upon in her addresses to the people imploring them to love their own flesh. "Love it hard" she shouts. "Yonder they do not love your flesh. They despise it… Love your hands! Love them. Raise them up and kiss them. Touch others with them, pat them together, stroke them on your face 'cause they don't love that either. *You* got to love it, *you!*" (Morrison, 88). She endeavors to change their manner of representation, and recondition their affects towards social health and stability. But the people, in spite of these exhortations, show their bitterness towards her. Certainly after Sethe attacks her children, there is a feeling of resentment towards anyone associated with the home where the violence occurred, but even before the tragic act, the people begin to respond unfavorably to Baby Suggs. After she expands in the fashion of Christ, the few berries that Stamp Paid assiduously plucked into a feast for ninety people, these same people question her gesture with resentment and jealousy after consuming the meal. The text speaks about the people's sentiments of disdain, "124 shook with [the people's] voices far into the night. Ninety people who ate so well, and laughed so much, it made them angry" (Morrison, 136). Their contemptuous attitude illustrates the difficulty they have imagining for the sake of their own well being. It is especially evident given that their feelings do not reflect the doctrine of their scapegoat who preached the importance of reclaiming the imagination in her messages. "She told them the only grace they could have was the grace they could imagine. That if they could not see it, they would not have it" (Morrison, 88). They are unable to comprehend her gestures of love and charity, and instead of using their imagination to fill the space of misunderstanding with ideas aligned to her good will, they use it to justify their contempt for her. Their attitudes preface Sethe's tragic act, which is itself but a more intense manifestation of the same idea, each playing a critical role in surrendering Baby Suggs from the struggle for the imagination, into its trivial use contemplating colors.

To the situation of the reader, as well as in the context of the story, Baby Suggs' message is intended to resonate. We shall soon discover in Denver, a figure willing to embrace her teaching, and through them, find a path to personal victory amid the lingering effects of brutality and hopelessness. It is within this message that readers are also led to cast their attitudes toward slavery, considering the triumph over brutality that

many actual slaves accomplished. Let us examine the influence of slavery upon Sethe and her daughters, to more distinctly reveal the text's intentions to show triumph through sympathetic relationships. Of all figures who exhibited strong emotional behavior, Sethe reveals a potential for action that is the most embodying, and with the greatest versatility. Her emotion anchors the novel's assertion of slavery's negative impact on slaves, and relative to the other characters, her emotions are intensely overwhelming. She is completely engrossed in singular thought and action during her passionate responses, but acts with great range in her emotional behavior. The story's climax sees her quite excitable, yet towards the end of the novel she moves with the indifferent willfulness of Baby Suggs. To fully understand her capacity, we must account for how the impact of fear altered her perception of the world, and forced hopelessness upon her outlook.

Under the Garner's lenient authority Sethe possessed a sense of belonging. She has a husband and children who give her a real identity outside of slavery. Her familial membership provides her with an alternative outlook that is profound, but deceptive. She is allowed to envision herself as a caretaker, wife and mother, yet she is blind to how these terms are generally defined for the slave. In the Garner's protective environment she cultivates an obligation to her family, but also an ignorance of the political license granted the slave master. After she is beaten and raped, under Schoolteacher's rule, she realizes the cruel truth of her social value, which reconditions her sensation and emotion. The attack intensifies her aversion for slavery and creates in her an acute fear and disdain for white men. Couple this with the views of motherhood that she had already developed, and Sethe is inclined towards particular bodily reactions to distinctive stimulants. Her history has distinguished for her both an adversary to avoid and a clear connection to protect. In the aftermath of the attack at Sweet Home, during her escape in the field of wild onions, she is poised for an outburst. When she first perceives the moving figure while hiding in the woods, she believes it is a white male slavecatcher, and given the violence she had recently suffered, her first impulse it to attack. In telling the story to Denver she claimed that "*something* came up out of the earth into her – like a freezing, but moving too, like jaws inside, 'Look like I was just cold jaws grinding,' she said. Suddenly she was eager for his eyes, to bite into them; to gnaw his cheek." When Amy calls out 'Who that back there?', Sethe thinks to herself, "Come see'[]. 'Be the last

thing you behold,' and sure enough here come the feet so I thought well that's where I'll have to start God do what He would, I'm just gonna eat his feet off" (Morrison, 31). When she sees a white woman instead of a white man, her intensity is assuaged, and so begins the process of rebuilding her broken hope. Amy Denver's assistance reconstructs Sethe's belief of again seeing her children and sustaining the role of motherhood that she had embraced at Sweet Home.

When she finally arrives at 124 Bluestone and encounters her children, she is overwhelmed by a feeling of reconnection with kinship, but retains an awareness of the dangers that she fled. The text states,

> Sethe lay in bed under around over, among but especially with them all. The little girl dribbled clear spit into her face, and Sethe's laugh of delight was so loud the crawling-already? baby blinked…. She kept kissing them. She kissed the backs of their necks, the tops of their heads and the center of their palms, and it was the boys who decided enough was enough when she lifted their shirts to kiss their tight round bellies. She stopped when and because they said, 'Pappie come?' She didn't cry. She said 'soon' and smiled so they would think the brightness in her eyes was love alone (Morrison, 94).

The described reunion suggest her feeling of a liberty to belong, but also implies her fear within this freedom. Sethe stifles her own emotions for the sake of maintaining the children's optimism. In this moment of liberty, she possessed a right to protect that even superseded these privileges at Sweet Home. While her children could only partially be regarded on the plantation, here they could receive her full attention. This experience enhances her interpretation of the mother's obligations, but also heightens the intensity of her fear, as she now intimately feels what she has to lose. Years later, when questioned by Paul D about her violent act, she admits this influence of freedom upon her, "…I loved em more after I got here. Or maybe I couldn't love em proper in Kentucky because they wasn't mine to love. But when I got here, when I jumped down off that wagon - there wasn't nobody in the world I couldn't love if I wanted to" (Morrison, 162). The freedom to feel for her children, and her fear of losing this freedom, each became a major factor in the conditioning of her emotion.

The arrival of the 'four horsemen' at the home pushes Sethe's feeling to the limits of impulsive action. The emotional potential which these men held as mere ideas has been established, their actual presence embodies her with a passion not experienced in

thought alone. The men represent concepts and experiences from her past, now folding into her present to infringe on the liberal relationship she enjoys with her children. The trigger for her sensation is the perception of the Sheriff's hat, which immediately pushes her beyond the threshold of emotion, and springs her body into fearful action. Her behavior now reflects feelings she had experienced on many occasions before: e.g. after she is beaten at Sweet Home, when she first encounters Amy Denver in the woods, when she is first reunited with her children; each of these prior moments precipitate this attack. Her bygone feelings reemerge at the perception of the men's presence, and her anxiety is actually increased at the prospect of what may happen. Brian Massumi in his article *Fear*, describes this process. He writes, "Anticipation is... a triggering of changes in the body. That affective reactivation of the body then develops unrefusably into a reemergence of fear. What we sloppily think of as the idea of an emotion, or the emotion as an idea, is in fact the anticipatory repetition of an affective event, precipitated by the encounter between the body's irritability and a sign" (Massumi, 40). Sethe's previous experiences are embodied in her present emotional activation, directing the impulsivity of her movements and the logic of her purpose. The men's presence transition the foreboding concept of her mind, into the palpable feelings of her body, and then into emotional movement. Her actions show the overwhelming prominence of fear to her consciousness. She is deeply afraid that her children will endure the same torture which she experienced as a slave.

Though compelled into emotional action, Sethe's objective reveals an essential irony of purpose: in order to protect her children, she attempts to kill them - and is successful in Beloved's case. This irony is a consequence of the condition she faced in slavery, mingled with her own mysterious conceptions about death. Accompanying the notion of motherhood that she embraced at Sweet Home, and again embraces when she escapes the plantation, Sethe also is very much influenced by new ideas about death. Having to encounter the possibility of her own demise in the 'field of wild onions' as a fugitive slave beaten and six months pregnant, she began to represent death as a state which would lessen her grief; a condition through which the tribulations of servitude would be non-existent. However, the painless relief that death seemed to her at this time, immediately conflicted with her held notions of motherhood. She claimed, "'I believe

this baby's ma'am is gonna die in wild onions on the bloody side of the Ohio river.' …And it didn't seem such a bad idea, all in all, in view of the step she would not have to take, but the thought of herself stretched out dead while the [unborn child] lived on – an hour? A day? A day and a night? – grieved her so she made the groan that made the person walking on the path…[]..halt and stand right still" (Morrison, 31). The ideas of mothering and death now run contrary when Sethe's own demise is concerned, because it would be a barrier to caring for her children. However, when applied to the children themselves, facing the authority of Schoolteacher no less, this idea exudes affective urgency. Her emotional objective at this moment combines her representation of death as a means of refuge, with her comprehension of maternal protection. In deliberation of the event, she admits to having protected by the warrants of motherhood. Her thoughts justify her actions eighteen years later when Paul D questions her with the newspaper clipping.

> 'I stopped him', she said…. 'I took and put my babies where they'd be safe'
> ….'Did it work?' he asked.
> 'It worked,' she said.
> 'How?.... How did it work?'
> 'They ain't at Sweet Home. Schoolteacher ain't got em.'
> 'Maybe there's worse.'
> 'It ain't my job to know what's worse. It's my job to know what is and to keep them away from
> what I know is terrible. I did that' (Morrison, 165)

Her desire to preserve her children's lives is maintained with her representation of death as a safe haven. Her aversion for slavery obtained an intensity which superseded the misgivings she had about death; and given the abhorrence she feels for Schooteacher's rule, death is seen as an appropriate escape from the worst form of slavery's torture. Her projections and sensations are organized into emotion which governed the act of infanticide.

The aftermath of this event sees Sethe's emotion become self catalyzing. By the occurrences which grew from this - her acquisition of the headstone, the departure of her sons, the stoicism of Baby Suggs, etc. - her emotional identity is sensitively attuned to historical stimulation. She is increasingly susceptible to affective movement at the recollection of her violent act. The event endures indefinitely as an emotional memory, and it moves her frequently enough to deeply intertwine her passionate and habitual

behavior. The intensity of her memory gives way to an enduring potential for action which spawns, sustains, and triggers itself. Unlike Paul D who was able to enact control upon the passionate urges that his memory incited, Sethe is perpetually victimized by hers. The memories which initiate her present emotions function to the same end as they did in the past, and quite often with the same intensity. For Sethe, the past was an inescapable and all powerful force that was completely integrated into her life. Memories reproduced her previous passions, transforming them into present actions with such consistency, that her emotional behavior became a daily custom.

When Sethe first tells Paul D about being raped by Schoolteacher's nephews, she is emotionally moved by its recollection. As she first speaks of it, she walks to the stove and begins kneading dough for biscuits. This occurs in the opening chapter of the novel, and there is not yet any real meaning attached to her actions; however, she would behave in the same way on many occasions that followed in the narrative. As she is speaking to Denver and Beloved about her memories of her own mother, she begins to remember her lost comprehension of her native African language. When this remembrance occurs, she is immediately overcome with similar movements.

> Sethe walked over to a chair, lifted a sheet and stretched it as far wide as her arms would go. The she folded, refolded, and double-folded it. She took another. Neither was completely dry but the folding felt too fine to stop. She had to do something with her hands because she was remembering something she had forgotten she knew. Something privately shameful that had seeped into a slit in her mind…. (Morrison, 61).

This example considers the pleasure associated with these actions, suggesting their psychological value. But coupled with her earlier behavior, they display a habitual response to affective stimulation. Finally, as Paul D is explaining to Sethe his experience on the day she was raped, she attempts to comfort him by rubbing his knee. Just as kneading the dough and folding the sheets were, this final example is also the result of feelings aroused by memory. The text states,

> Sethe rubbed and rubbed, pressing work cloth and the stony curves that made up his knee. She hoped it calmed him as it did her. Like kneading bread in the half light of the restaurant kitchen…. Working dough. Working, working dough. Nothing better than to start the days serious work of beating back the past (Morrison, 73).

These instances suggest Sethe's developed pattern of emotional movement in response to provocative situations. The frequent contamination of her present by the past incites a feeling which demands the working of her hands; a process that has been gradually structured into her bodily patterns. Henri Bergson describes this as memory in action. He explains the influence of the memory that occurs in such a way, by explaining the process of learning a lesson 'by heart'; an idea that certainly applies to the creative development of Sethe's emotional action. He writes

> the memory of a lesson I learnt [by repetitive study]… requires a definite time, the time necessary to develop one by one, were it only in imagination, all the articulatory movements that are necessary: it is no longer a representation, it is an action…, the lesson once learnt bears no mark which betrays its origin and classes it in the past; it is part of my present, exactly like the habit of walking or writing; it is lived and acted, rather than represented (Bergson, 91).

Sethe's frequent encounters with the affective stimuli of memory, causes her emotional impulses to exert habitual movements. This action is repetitive, therapeutic, and like all habits, occurs with a diminished sense of her awareness.

These habits illustrate something more about the traumatic experience that she recalls. Her intentions also reveal her desperation to postpone pain. Olivia Pass describes such acts as a form of bargaining, a conventional step that delays her inevitable confrontation with horror. "Morrison," Pass claims, "uses the metaphor of [physical activity] to show how Sethe is trying vainly to '[beat] back the past,' and it clearly exemplifies the bargaining position that Sethe occupies. Although the dead, reluctant to let go of life, have a reason to cling to those who are alive rather than leave them forever, the living must let go of the dead in order to resume real life for themselves" (Pass, 121). Sethe cannot reconcile the death of her children in the aftermath, so she acts to indefinitely delay her confrontation with the horrifying memories of the event. Her bargain consists of wholly evading any moral judgment of her prior choice between enslavement and death. However, this stage, as Pass describes, is merely a precursor to emotional depression. Through her profound grief she becomes vulnerable to the influential powers of Beloved.

Sethe's final emotional state is one that mirrors the blunted affect which defined the final days of Baby Suggs' life. Just as Baby Suggs eschewed all social relationships

and came to focus primarily on colors, Sethe ultimately attends to a single subject as well - Beloved. After seeing the long scar on Beloved's neck, she is convinced that the young girl is in fact her slain daughter, and becomes obsequious to her desires. To fully understand the meaning of Sethe's final state of emotional embodiment, we must examine the significance of the characters Denver and Beloved. Not only do they each directly affect the emotions of Sethe, but they also represent ideas which are greatly influential to the atmosphere of the novel. These characters oppose one another in many elements of their identity: Denver is human and Beloved is a ghost; Denver alienates herself while Beloved is prone to direct confrontation with others. These features reflect the more substantial contrast of their symbolic meaning. Beloved represents the impressions of the memory, and Denver the force of imagination. Their influence upon Sethe is but an intensified manifestation of these representational roles.

These characters' identities in the story, parallel the influence which memory and imagination have upon the human mind. David Hume in his text A Treatise of Human Nature describes the basic connection between the emergence of these two faculties. He writes

> when any impression has been present with the mind, it again makes its appearance there as an idea; …. it may do [this] after two different ways: either when in its new appearance it retains a considerable degree of its first vivacity…; or when it entirely loses that vivacity, and is a perfect idea. The faculty by which we repeat our impressions in the first manner, is called the memory, and the other the imagination (Hume, 56).

The symbolic presence of these ideas in the characters occurs through shifts in their own affective intensity, and the ways that their subsequent actions influence others. Beloved stimulates those around her by modifying the emotional meanings that their own memories have upon them. Her influence reflects the practices of the occult; a fact underscored by the absence of any lucid memory of her own history, despite her ability to create affective meaning for the recollections of others. Peter Ramos describes the larger significance of the ghost's haunting. Beloved, he claims, through her supernatural authority and her indistinct and permeable history "illuminates the extent to which the characters in the novel are haunted by an unspeakable past – one that can only be partially revealed by, or in the presence of, someone uncannily connected to and cut off from the past" (Ramos, 60). This influence which takes hostage the emotions of others,

is most evident in her relationship with Sethe, whose affective change first occurs when Beloved raises questions to her about her earrings:

> 'Tell me,' said Beloved, smiling a wide happy smile. 'Tell me you diamonds.' It became a way to feed her. …Sethe learned the profound satisfaction Beloved got from storytelling. It amazed Sethe (as much as it pleased Beloved) because every mention of her past life hurt. Everything in it was painful or lost. She and Baby Suggs had agreed without saying so that it was unspeakable…. But, as she began telling about the earrings, she found herself wanting to, liking it. Perhaps it was Beloved's distance from the events itself, or her thirst for hearing it – in any case it was an unexpected pleasure (Morrison, 58).

Beloved's role as a listener mystically changes Sethe's reaction to the subject matter. Memories that were once painful to contemplate are now pleasurable to relate. This feeling is unusually new and directly opposed to sensations which this activity had produced before; what was a negative experience is now satisfying. But in addition to prompting her fixation with memories, Beloved also inspires Sethe's adverse reactions to imaginative concepts. She assuages Sethe's reluctance to focus upon the past, while simultaneously creating reticence for figurative ideas. Sethe had already been described as having a burdened imagination. The text states that "her brain was not interested in the future. Loaded with the past and hungry for more, it left no room to imagine, let alone plan for the next day" (Morrison, 70). But when she discovers the true identity of Beloved as the daughter she slew many years before, a direct and forceful hindrance upon this capability is enacted. As a result, Sethe becomes totally deferential to Beloved's desire. She fears the ghost's departure and thus acts to please her, while Beloved – an agent of unspeakable memories - craves her mother's acknowledgement with the passion of an infant child. The bounds of Sethe's imagination limit her ability to alter the situation between them. When she attempts to change her own identity, and become "the unquestioned mother whose word was law and who knew what was best" Beloved becomes excitable and Sethe relents (Morrison, 242). This ultimately results in Sethe's indifference towards the future, or any real objective of her imagination: "neither Beloved nor Sethe seemed to care what the next day might bring (Sethe was happy when Beloved was; Beloved was lapping devotion like a cream)" (Morrison, 243). Sethe's imagination turns increasingly useless, and her memory becomes a source of obsession; this state sustains her action of infanticide as an intense affective stimulant. By

Beloved's influence, Sethe is desensitized to anything but the memory of her slain daughter. Her demeanor ultimately comes to resemble the stoic lethargy of Baby Suggs.

While the ghostly daughter Beloved leads Sethe away from all but her memory, Sethe's living daughter Denver provides her a path to return. Denver would assuage the effects of memory that Beloved had brought upon her mother. She symbolizes the force of imagination, marking her as a very liberating character, and while Beloved entraps Sethe with hopes of rectifying a past regret, Denver, by her own ability to overcome the past and positively influence the community, is able to free Sethe from psychological bondage. At the story's beginning, Denver is plagued by the same torment that affects the other characters. When she realizes that her mother had killed her sister and attempted to kill her as well, she becomes very reclusive. She would crawl into the space of the boxwood, a space shielded from sight of others by the leaves of trees; for her, a place where she is protected from criticism. Here she would avoid the forces able to recondition her sensations, a process which the rest of her family had already undergone. "In that bower" the text reads, "closed off from the hurt of the hurt world, Denver's imagination produced its own hunger and its own food, which she badly needed because loneliness wore her out. *Wore her out*. Veiled and protected by the live green walls, she felt ripe and clear, and salvation was as easy as a wish" (Morrison, 29). Denver secludes herself from the critical gaze of the community and gains momentary refuge from the ghost inhabiting the home. As such, she cultivates her imagination, a quality which redeems the hope of life that was seemingly lost to her family. This marks her as the perfect counterpart to Beloved, balancing the influence of the ghost upon the memories of the people. Beloved plagues Sethe and Paul D with grim confrontations of their past, but Denver confronts her with boldness and security. Through her imagination, she is able to overcome the aversive feelings for the trauma which marked her lineage, leading her father to death and her foremothers to indifference. In the following example, Denver opposes the affective reaction that her mother experienced by displaying powerful imaginative capabilities in the presence of Beloved. Through her imagination, her feelings intensify to the point where she experiences sympathetic embodiment. As she tells Beloved of her mother's encounter with 'the whitegirl,' she begins to experience Sethe's history. The text reads,

> Now, watching Beloved's alert and hungry face, how she took in every word, asking questions about the color of things and their size, her downright craving to know, Denver began to see what she was saying and not just to hear it: there is this nineteen year old slave girl – a year older than herself – walking through the dark woods to get to her children who are far away…. Denver was seeing it now and feeling it - through Beloved. Feeling how it must have felt to her mother. Seeing how it must have looked. And the more fine points she made, the more detail she provided, the more Beloved liked it (Morrison, 78).

The sympathy which she feels confirms her ability to imagine in the manner that Baby Suggs suggested. While Sethe is plagued with emotional numbness for her memories, Denver's feelings are enhanced by her imagination. She forges experiences which follow the creations of her mind. Sethe's past led to a mental condition which prevented such creativity. The prospects of Denver's emotion imply a far greater level of control for the development of the self. By her imagination she is able to sympathetically influence the world around her, an ability which becomes the remedy for psychological affliction of her lineage.

The impact of the memory leads Sethe to her final state of lethargy, and her imagination is the means of liberation from it. These two mental faculties, memory and imagination, have long been subjects of philosophical speculation; Morrison uses them to illustrate their capabilities in the psychology of trauma. Hume defines the relationship between these two faculties by highlighting the capacity of their theoretical resemblance. He suggests that they might stand in for one another's function in certain contexts. "[A]n idea of the memory" he states, "by losing its force and vivacity, may degenerate to such a degree, as to be taken for an idea of the imagination; [and] on the other hand an idea of the imagination may acquire such force and vivacity, as to pass for an idea of the memory, and counterfeit its effect on the beliefs and judgments" (Hume, 134). The potential for these faculties to swap impressionable force is the lynchpin for the possibility of freedom that the novel implies. Such a role reversal clearly explains Sethe's inclination to relinquish her historical baggage at the novel's conclusion. In the end, she is moved toward the liberation of her mind by imaginative conceptions which supersede her memories. This reality is brought about by the influence of Denver, whose heightened affective intensity creates changes within the external environment. The condition of Denver's psyche affects her sensations, and allows her to form a social

atmosphere which causes her mother to utilize her own imagination, thus freeing her from the past. When Beloved begins to wholly operate upon Sethe's thoughts and actions, Denver uses her imagination to leave the house seeking help and employment. As she stands on the front porch paralyzed by fear, there is a defining moment in which she overcomes her own affective conditioning. She recalls a conversation between her mother and grandmother about the abuses blacks had suffered at the hands of whites. It is not, however, until she begins to imagine a conversation between herself and Baby Suggs, that she is able to take her first step. The novel reads,

> Remembering those conversations and her grandmother's last and final words, ['there ain't no evil in this world but whitefolks] Denver stood on the porch in the sun and couldn't leave it. Her throat itched; her heart kicked – and then Baby Suggs laughed clear as anything….
> 'But you said there was no defense'
> 'There ain't.'
> 'The what do I do?'
> 'Know it, and go on out the yard. Go on' (Morrison, 244).

Denver quells her intense anxiety by imaginative means. Her endeavor into the world would largely alter the community's perception of her family. Her candidness to Lady Jones not only gets her a job, but also prompts acts of charity from those who leave plates of food at the home each day. Through her imagination, Denver creates a context in which Sethe is prepared to be healed, and Beloved is exorcised.

The ghost vanishes when Sethe attacks Edward Bodwin. This occurs as thirty neighborhood women stand before the home praying for Sethe's well being. The event uniquely reflects her previous attack on her children. Like Schoolteacher, Bodwin appears at the home and Sethe is immediately stimulated into action. In describing her reaction to him, the novel reads, "She hears wings. Little hummingbirds stick needle beaks right through her headcloth into her hair and beat their wings. And if she thinks anything, it is no. No no. Nonono. She flies. The ice pick is not in her hand; it is her hand" (Morrison, 262). Her present emotional intensity is no different from the past event, but her directive is. She now attacks whom she believes to be the slave catcher rather than her own children. This change reflects the larger psychological transition which Sethe undergoes. When she discovers Beloved to be her returned daughter, she serves her in desperation to somehow rectify the critical event of the past. When her

service and explanations bring futile returns, it redirects her affective intensity. The wrath of the ghost, an inability to justify to her the reasons for her past act, and her fear of losing this attachment, all compel an alteration in Sethe's impulsive movements by redefining the impression of fear upon her. Previously her ultimate fear was the tribulations of slavery and the wrath of white men; now she fears the loss of Beloved more than anything else.

> Sethe's greatest fear was the same one Denver had in the beginning – that Beloved might leave. That before Sethe could make her understand what it meant – what it took to drag the teeth of that saw under the little chin; to feel the baby blood pump like oil in her hands… Beloved might leave. Leave before Sethe could make her realize that worse than that – far worse… That anybody white could take your whole self for anything that came to mind. Not just work, kill, or maim you, but dirty you. Dirty you so bad you couldn't like yourself anymore (Morrison, 251)

This logic illustrates the new direction of her emotions, Sethe is now afraid Beloved will leave without understanding. Yet, the imperative need to explain herself derives from what Beloved reveals to her about death. Sethe previously considered death as a refuge for her children from the cruelty of slavery, but according to Beloved the conditions of death were themselves brutal. She says that "when she cried there was no one. That dead men lay on top of her. That she had nothing to eat. Ghosts without skin stuck their fingers in her and said beloved in the dark and bitch in the light" (Morrison, 241). Beloved dissolves Sethe's certainty about putting her children in a 'better place.' These new comprehensions change her affective makeup, and reconfigure her sensations to respond differently to ideas like death and maternity. Her tormenting obsession with her history causes her to represent the present arrival of Edward Bodwin as a past event, yet this newly aroused regret for past action stimulates her to protect by attacking whom she now believes to be the slave-catcher, rather than her children.

The final scene of the novel sees Paul D comforting Sethe, kissing her hand and reminding her that she is her 'best thing,' to which she questioningly responds 'Me? Me?' This moment concludes a series of events which underscores the idea of Sethe's healing from the tribulations of memory; a process forged by Denver's ability to provoke the sympathies of others. The scene in which Beloved is finally exorcised is contextually structured by Denver's influence of the environment. Through her ability to gain

employment, Mr. Bodwin arrives at the home to take her to work. In direct opposition to the arrival of Schoolteacher years before, Bodwin comes to assist rather than enslave. Denver provokes the women of the community to give charitable gifts of food, and moreover inspires their arrival during Sethe's confused attack to plea for divine assistance. The peoples' presence here contrasts with the previous scene in that her prior act of violence caused the community to ostracize her, but her present action occurs as people come to alleviate her torment. After the ghost finally disappears and Sethe is left on her own, Denver grants Paul D license of sorts to assist her mother. Again, this action is a stark contrast from the previous context of the narrative. Paul D is initially moved to conflict with the ghost, and departs upon his discovery of Sethe's homicidal act. But he now returns because of how Denver affects him, and allows his offering of support and encouragement toward Sethe's psychological health. The overall shift in context, compelled in great part by Denver, stimulates Sethe to respond with imaginative rather than memorable provocations for movement. By the force of imagination Sethe attacks Bodwin, championing the mysteries of the unknown against her memorable impressions of slavery. This context is maintained by the final assertion of Paul D, who seemingly convinces Sethe that her life and the possibilities of her future are worthy ends to protect. This conclusion testifies to Sethe's recovery from hopeless representations of the world, and illustrates what Denver shows to be possible – an imaginative triumph over one's history.

The cumulative message that the text conveys, is that despite the brutal and negative effects of slavery, both upon the slave and those affected by its history, there exists a path to healing. For all of the pity which may be felt for Sethe, Paul D, and Baby Suggs, the confidence that Denver shows in finally overcoming anxiety is as effective as a tool of feeling. She inspired the townspeople and Paul D to use their imaginations to overcome the influence of their tragedy. We are to feel with Denver's struggle and her impression on others; and in witnessing her growth, we are to be swept in the wave of sympathy that she creates. Through her, we are led to properly project slavery as a historical subject. Denver forthrightly confronts the effects of slavery, with all of its brutality, hopelessness and emotional trauma. She claims it not as a reality to fear, but one to accept and overcome. Her actions culminate the message which is to influence the

reader's emotional attitude; that the history of slavery is tragic and its victims often anonymous, yet its most profound meaning can be gleaned in the triumph and redemption that many have obtained despite these conditions.

Through sympathy, these events of the novel impart the reader with feelings which provide insight into the emotional patterns which the institution has created in the slave. The novel commemorates those millions who perished in slavery; the changing sensations which unfold within the characters are intended to affect similar types of feelings upon the reader. This relation fulfills the novel's primary purpose, to present a story as a historical reference that the reader can engage with emotionally. Of the many ways which this objective is accomplished, the manner of novelistic presentation is perhaps the most influential. In a uniquely postmodern sense, the prose conveys the characters' feeling with definite intensity, but inconspicuous sources of influence. In flashback scenes, personal thoughts, habituated movements, etc., the characters emotions are revealed and explained. But these explanations obscure inasmuch as they reveal. The novel's non-linear temporality, its aspect of haunting, its gothic aura, all contribute to the force which activates the readers sympathy with the characters condition. Our quest for understanding amid the puzzle of their history piques our curiosity, and primes our emotional feeling. Moreover, there are a few chapters which break away from the conventional omniscient voice of narration, and we are momentarily able to read the thoughts of Sethe, Denver and Beloved directly. The lack of stability that such a presentation creates, increases the readers potential to be affected in their reading. David Miall in his studies on literary reading, writes that a key element of a reader's emotional engagement rests upon the power of defamiliarization. The unusual manner in which this story progresses – through flashbacks, mysticism, and introspection – changes the way that a reader connects to it. The deviation from conventional storytelling tempers the reader's pace, arrests his attention, and allows affective changes to occur. As the characters transition from one affective reality to another, patterns of their sensations are altered. And as we read of their emotional changes, we experience our own changing sensations. Interestingly, the very faculties of cognition necessary to regard the passion of these figures are the same ones which this novel contends to be major elements of affective consequence – the memory and the imagination. Memory operates to create

connections in the novel's disjointed presentation, and the imagination gives conceptual form to the story's worded descriptions.  The role of these faculties in the felt experience reading the novel allows one to both perceive the causes which drive a character's affect, and also to become affected oneself.  As the forces which determine their sensations are revealed, their background is colored with far more intimacy and familiarity than race, age, or gender could produce on its own.

Beloved presents the repercussions of slavery as they impress upon the bodies and minds of those enslaved.  It reveals the emotions of characters through behaviors which create distinct social changes.  The overall suggestion of the text is that one's capacity for affective intensity may be altered in such a way that ideas which debase one group and uplift another, are wholly internalized.  This of course leads to the creation of an unbalanced political reality.  The characters experiences of servitude remain as impressionable forces in their lives even after their liberation; it modifies their thought and behavioral patterns, manifests their future actions and ideas, and stabilizes their subjective identity.  The enduring impact of trauma however, is shown to be mitigated by the imagination.  Both as an ideal for the individual and a catalyst for the alteration of communities, the imagination provides empowerment to overcome the influences of the past.  Sethe was beleaguered by memories of tribulation and actions of regret, but she breaks free from them by experiencing a condition which sees social forces teem to encourage a positive view of herself; a view in which she is imagined by the people as a subject worthy of redemption.  Such influences positively reflect the circumstances of her present, and alleviate the weight of her past.  This process changes the pattern of Sethe's thought, feeling, and action, decreasing the import of her memorable influences and commencing her emotional repair.  As hopelessness is presented to her consciousness, her emotions become intensely powerful, overwhelming any sense of willful agency.  She slays her children and creates a change in the social context for herself, her family, and others.  But it takes the enfolding of an altruistic communal response to reverse the nihilistic process of her thoughts and behaviors.  Members of the community, including key characters, influence Sethe to align her affective behavior and deliberations with patterns conducive for emotional health.  The novel ultimately asserts that despite the existence of past tribulations, a stoic lethargy and tormenting memory, the network of

connections between an individual and society may be refined to influence a mutually positive and healthy relationship.

## CHAPTER 3

## THE LIMITS OF SYMPATHY: THE CREATION OF MONSTERS IN FRANKENSTEIN

Frankenstein is Mary Shelley's most notable contribution to the development of Romantic literature. Her narrative scrutinizes sympathetic rules and illustrates the penalty of their defiance. The central characters in the novel, Victor and his creature, each have emotional tendencies that align with enduring historical definitions of sympathy. They feel and act through the influence of several interconnected ideas; aesthetics, civility and companionship. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, each of these notions was used to illustrate the sympathetic components of numerous theories ranging from social government to human introspection. The Scottish philosopher Frances Hutcheson, for example, in his posthumous publication *A System of Moral Philosophy*, argues that human civil behavior is principally motivated by feelings of sympathy and benevolence toward others. And the former English slave Olaudah Equiano, in his memoir *The Interesting Narrative*, is admittedly motivated by the challenge to create European sympathy for the dread of slavery. "Let such reflections as these," he states, "melt the pride of [European] superiority into sympathy for the wants and miseries of their sable brethren" (Equiano, 45). These notions have had an enduring history in western intellectual customs, and appropriately, they are very present in the efforts which Shelley's novel pursues; to question exactly what designates monstrosity, and to find whether that which is defined as such might still evoke human sympathy. The monstrous in the Romantic era is often described as devoid of certain qualities. In aesthetic terms, it is a horrid image which stands in opposition to the evolving concept of idealized beauty. In civil terms it is coarse, aggressive, and lacking in knowledge or reason. Finally the monster is bereft of companions and utterly alone. These characteristics outline the partitions which distinguish man from monster, and Shelley uses them skillfully to show how monsters may be created by the emotions of men.

Presented as the lynchpin of judgment, aesthetics is immediately important to the provocation of sympathy in the novel. It links the historically embraced image of beauty, to the sensations which a character experiences upon its perception. Modern authors of

literature have often used aesthetics as a way to indicate narrative meaning. A figure's virtue or vice, their role as protector or an omen of danger, might be revealed through the aesthetic judgments which they receive from others. In Charles Dickens' novel, *A Christmas Carol*, published only twelve years after Shelley's text, the hideous face of Jacob Marley's ghost exemplifies this literary practice. With its "curiously stirred" hair, "wide open" and "perfectly motionless" eyes, its "livid color" and "dismal light," Marley is a form appropriate to signal the forthcoming and ominous presence of the three spirits (Dickens, 22). The perception of an image as beautiful or hideous indicates this meaning by its tendency to affect others. By the judgments that are made, feelings and actions are thereafter prompted; intensely heightened emotions occur when one's difference is drastically projected. This emotion is sympathy when the observed figure is invested with super-human qualities, and repulsiveness when they are diminished as sub-human. But extreme projections like these are shown to be dangerous, for they maximize the representational limits of object and subject, and belie the expectations of their relationship. And as the emotional intensity of these judgments is consistently increased, monsters are produced by the heightened tension. The provocative relationship between man and monster is conspicuously apparent in Shelley's characters as they transition into their relatively extreme states. The central character Victor Frankenstein, would illustrate this transformation from man into monster both as a character himself, and through the effects of his emotion upon those around him.

In the determination of aesthetic quality, an onlooker projects the idea of what they hold as beautiful or unattractive, onto the object of their perception. Projection is the investment of meaning that is accompanied by a distinct feeling. The features of the object are judged according to the opinions which they hold about the projected idea; thus judgment may be considerably influenced by social norms associated with the form of the object. The tendency to sympathize when projecting the norms of beauty is a standard of action that exists throughout the text. In Victor's glorification of Elizabeth for example, he becomes sympathetic based primarily upon her image. The choice to welcome her into the family occurs only after an investment of beauty distinctly separates her from others with superlative qualities. No one could perceive her, he states, "without looking on her as of a distinct species, a being heaven sent, and bearing a celestial stamp in all her

features" (Shelley, 34). He is enraptured by her image, a condition that eventually leads to catastrophe for them both. Such intense reactions as these are not limited to the judgment of Victor, others, including his creature, sympathize with whomever they find awesomely beautiful. Concerning his initial admiration of the Delaceys, the creature stated that their "gentle manners and beauty… greatly endeared them to me: when they were unhappy, I felt depressed; when they rejoiced, I sympathized in their joys" (Shelley, 109). These characters see others to be beautiful and then develop a sympathetic attitude towards them.

Beauty is perceived in a form which reflects the traditions of aesthetic standards and historical stereotypes. The novel uses these conventions to comment upon the limits of sympathetic connections. Elizabeth is welcomed into the Frankenstein family because her appearance is more admirably judged than the "dark-eyed, hardy little vagrants" who surround her. In more physically descriptive terms, Victor states that she was "thin, and very fair," that her hair was "the brightest living gold" which "seemed to set a crown of distinction on her head" (Shelley, 34). Her features, passionately represented by the Frankensteins, are aligned with the fair skinned, light-eyed, flaxen haired image of beauty that developed in the nineteenth century. This description has long been a catalyst for sympathy on the pages of western literature. The medieval romance author, Chretien de Troyes, in his Arthurian love tale *Erec an Enide*, describes his maiden Enide with likewise physical attributes and affective power. About her, he states, "Never was such a beautiful creature seen in the world… Isolde the Blonde had not such shining golden hair… her face and forehead were fairer and brighter than the lily flower… her eyes glowed with such brightness that they resembled two stars…" (Carroll, 42). Her form would move the knight Erec with such emotion, that he would become lax in his duties toward the roundtable. The strength of this image was maintained by Romantic authors who often used it to signify purity or innocence. The poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge depicts its emotional force in his unfinished poem *Christabel*, when describing his central character.

> It was a lovely sight to see
> The lady Christabel when she
> Was praying at the old oak tree…
> Her face resigned to bliss or bale-

Her face, oh call it fair not pale,
And both blue eyes more bright than clear,
Each about to have a tear. (Coleridge, 31)

Christabel's image endears her to the character Geraldine who would soon approach in need of her assistance. Her fair-complexion and bright eyes portray her virtue as she prays to the altar of nature. As an enduring form in western literature, this image often rendered the onlooker open to the forces of emotion, and primed to act sympathetically toward whomever was so depicted.

But Shelley's text examines the full scope of aesthetic representation, thus it comments on the emotions that arise at the perception of the opposite form as well. Frankenstein's creature stands in contrast to all of the aforementioned attributes which defined Elizabeth as beautiful. He has "yellow skin", "his hair [is] of a lustrous black" and his eyes are "watery" and seem "the same colour as the dun-white sockets in which they [are] set". He also has a "shriveled complexion" and "black lips" (Shelley, 56). His form arouses horror, not sympathy. The fearful reactions to the creature's image highlight one of the novel's chief pursuits: to explore the possibility that what is deemed hideous might indeed inspire sympathy. The creature stands in contrast to the historical figure of beauty, but must his image prevent him from ever activating warm feelings in an onlooker? The answer is clear in the novel's progression – solely due to his image, he will never be treated with sympathy. Perceiving him excites the viewer in ways that oppose the conventional judgment of aesthetic pleasure. He is held as a monster, diminished in humanity, and therefore stifles the fellow feeling he might otherwise provoke.

The creature continuously fails to evoke the kind treatment of others; he is chased away from the first cottages he enters, and can soon anticipate the fear and disgust that his form will arouse in people. He becomes increasingly aware of the factors which prevent his social embrace, but early on he firmly believes himself able to surmount these obstacles. His attempts to overcome the reactions to his form are prompted principally by two engagements; his perception of the DeLacey family, and his study of the writings he finds in the portmanteau. Each educates him in the finer points of language, thought, and expression; an understanding which he feels might supersede his appearance. "I

eagerly longed to discover myself to the cottagers" he states, "[but] I ought not to make the attempt until I had first become master of their language; which knowledge might enable me to make them overlook the deformity of my figure…" (Shelley, 110). The books he reads are important, as they prepare him to consider the doctrines of morality and equality in his situation. One of the texts, Goethe's The Sorrows of Young Werther, resembles Frankenstein to a great extent as another epistolary novel of the Romantic period. Goethe's tale is also one of rejection, in which the central character Werther vainly attempts to arouse the sympathy of someone whom he judges to be beautiful. He describes his soul to be "transfixed by [the] figure" of his beloved Charlotte upon first seeing her (Goethe, 38). He unceasingly pines for her affection until, convinced of its impossibility, he kills himself.

Werther's longing appropriately reflects the creature's feelings toward the DeLaceys. As he views the young girl and old man through the cottage window, he is transfixed by what he sees. "Nothing," he states "could exceed in beauty the contrast between these two excellent creatures" (Shelley, 105). He shares the passion of Werther, and likewise would endure the same denial; though his rejection would only hasten the demise of his warm feelings for mankind. When his desire to stimulate the family's sympathy fails, the ordeal teaches him the rules governing these connections. Most notably he discovers the hard truth excluding him from such a relationship with man - that his image stands outside of what is coded for acceptance. His form is frighteningly hideous to human projections; a reason isolated as the single explanation of his failure to arouse such an embrace.

Through his experience with the DeLaceys, he enters into a world defined by the politics of images, making this a critical event in his subjective development. John Bugg highlights the impact of this experience. He claims that it teaches him "that his body will condition the terms of his existence, and that this principle rules the imperial arena… It is not until Shelley brings the Creature's education into the imperial realm that he will fully understand the 'effects' of his alterity" (Bugg, 659). The ideas which the creature soon understands in experiencing the harsh judgment of humanity are these: what images embody the historical standards of beauty; how his own image is projected in the social

spectrum of determinations; and most importantly, that another's judgment of his similarity, rather than his alterity, is requisite to arousing their sympathy.

Aesthetic judgment is key in defining the limits of sympathy, for the feeling can only be catalyzed by the immediate projection that a figure perceptually reflects oneself. Beyond this self reflection, sympathy is shown to be unsustainable. To demonstrate its influence, it is important to further define the way that feelings of bodily sensation are created by aesthetic determinations. Impassioned behavior is related to how the judgment of one's image affects the exercise of the onlooker's will. Individuals act, or refrain from acting, based upon their projection of an external form. This type of emotion in the novel parallels the psychological consequences of representation articulated by Jean Jacques Rousseau in his essay, *Professions of Faith of a Savoyard Vicar*. Rousseau holds judgment, the lynchpin of aesthetic meaning, to be the critical action in determining the will. He states

> When I am asked what is the cause that determines my will, I ask in turn, what is the cause that determines my judgment? For it is clear that these two causes make but one; and if we conceive that man is active in forming his judgment of things – that his understanding is only a power of comparing and judging, we shall see that his liberty is only a similar power, or one derived from this… What then is the power that determines his will? It is his judgment (Donner, 241).

Judgment moves the will by the inception of a feeling in the body. These sensations correspond with ideas that are habitually embraced through the mind's history of representing. A subject's emotional judgment of an idea is marked by the emergence of their passions relative to that idea. Their will becomes critically involved as their body is overcome with compelling sensations. As this emotion consistently follows projection, beliefs about the idea fuse with the objects held to embody them, and reactionary habits are thereafter developed. These beliefs unite with larger cultural definitions to mechanize the interpretation of quality within aesthetic judgment. As a subject's will aligns with the force of sensation, their behavior more deeply instills the code of feeling transmitted at the perception of the object which reflects this idea.

The fair-skinned image of beauty embodied by Elizabeth is broadly drawn in the novel's presentation of the Frankesteins' judgment. The general acceptance of European features as elegant and desirable is pointedly clear from the outset. In the initial description of Victor, Robert Walton, the captain who sees him sledding after the monster

through the snowy terrain, states that he "was not as the other traveler seemed to be, a savage inhabitant of some undiscovered island but [a] European." The title 'European' as Walton uses it, designates more than a geographical background; it is an indication of popularity; a shared membership within a recognized group. By the value inserted into the image of Europeans, Walton is compassionate toward Victor and the two men become companions. Frankenstein's harrowing circumstance and emaciated body does not prevent him from being embraced as a kinsman. Walton comes to "love [Victor] as a brother", and despite never having seen a man "in so wretched a condition," he is endeared rather than disconcerted by him. He claimed that Victor's "constant grief [filled me] with sympathy and compassion." His image not only arouses Walton's affections, but also influences his positive deliberations. Victor, he states "must have been a noble creature in his better days, being even now in wreck so attractive and amiable" (Shelley, 24). Walton sees beyond the signs of Victor's suffering which cast him as uncomely, to project his beauty through stereotypical features observable in his image. In stark contrast to these lofty representations, Walton would project the creature's image with fright and horror. Upon seeing him standing above Victor's body in the novel's final scene, he is dismayed at his "horrible" face and "appalling hideousness." Instead of moving to embrace him as he previously did Victor, Walton evades him as a reflex, claiming to have "shut [his] eyes involuntarily, and endeavored to recollect what were [his] duties with regard to this destroyer" (Shelley, 211). Moved with emotion to now prohibit the sympathy he had when earlier perceiving Victor, Walton highlights the trend of aesthetic standards which the novel critiques; the western image is accepted, while the creature, an image unimaginably distorted from this norm, is dismissed. Walton now judges the creature as a monster, culminating similarly passionate representations of him that have occurred throughout the text. By the contrasting attitude of Walton, Shelley provides a glimpse of how the emotion which creates monsters must arise from the influence of stereotypes upon individual attitudes.

The creature continues to fall short of arousing sympathy since he fails to meet the requirement of sameness. However it is certain by the emotion that he does inspire, that his onlookers recognize something in him. His image is so far removed from expectations that those who initially perceive him find his form to be unimaginably

deviant. When first seeing him animated, Victor stated that he looked as "a thing such as even Dante could not have conceived" (Shelley, 57). Walton, when perceiving him closely for the first time, claimed that "Never did [he] behold a vision so horrible as his face…," and that there was something "unearthly in his ugliness" (Shelley, 211). The novel's other characters are unable to conceive of such an appearance at all before actually representing it in the moment. Yet their reactions indicate that they perceive the creature through traditional standards of human judgment. While Elizabeth is deemed an elevation of humanity, the creature is held as rejected humanity, but humanity nonetheless. His form is framed in a way that strikingly indicates the human subject – he is constructed from the corpses of human beings, and can reason, feel, move, and speak as any other human can; the instant horror he provokes in others must derive from the painfully surprising observation of his humanity amid his disfigurement. Those who initially perceive the creature must project an image which they could not have previously conceived, yet they are horrified that the inconceivable is framed in such a recognizable form. David Marshall in his text The Surprising Effects of Sympathy: *Marivaux, Diderot, Rousseau, and Mary Shelley* argues that "Frankenstein… created a monstrous image that is most horrid in its resemblance, a figure that is monstrous precisely because it is a figure" (Marshall, 209). The creature, cast as a monster, is but a figure of one; a figure of debased sameness that man wishes not to acknowledge. Victor may refer to his creation as "demoniacal," "wretched," and "fiendish," but only to the extent that he indicates the presence of those very characteristics in mankind (Shelley, 57). In a word, the creature is seen as a monster only because the initial judgments of his image do in fact meet the necessary requirements to engage with sympathy; the subject's horror is merely their frightened reluctance to project his sameness sympathetically. The arousal of fear at their perception exaggerates his appearance, and their deliberation of the event is colored with intense bias. Indeed, the creature is not a monster at all; he is a figure in that his monstrosity formed by the judgment of his onlookers. He is a metaphor, an emblem delineating the boundaries of social norms which the people have adopted. Through the arousal of emotion which he stimulates and the apparent misreading of his image by the public, Shelley makes a notable point: monsters are not born, but created by the projection of abnormality.

By returning to the influence of Jean Jacques Rousseau, we may clearly illustrate the cause and effect of monstrous difference which the novel depicts. His influence is broadly apparent in the narrative, but is especially evident concerning the impulsive repercussions of alienation. The feeling of abandonment is crucial to the story as a force of its progression. This impetus directly results from Rousseau's life and philosophical thought. I shall continue to deal with his philosophical contributions later, but in his life experiences, two passions central to the novel's meaning are explored: the impassioned reality of being alienated, and the emotional impulse to alienate others. His largely autobiographical text, The Reveries of a Solitary, begins by supposing how he came to be held as "a monster, a poisoner, an assassin… the horror of the human race, [and] the plaything of the mob" (Rousseau, 32). He notably states in this, the last of his writings, to have felt greatly misunderstood and wrongly condemned throughout his life. Shelley models Frankenstein's creature upon this sentiment. Like Rousseau, the creature had also lost his parent/creator at birth, wandered at great lengths, and was cast as distinctly abhorrent. The judgment of Rousseau as a monstrous being was ascribed to him mainly for turning over his children to a foundling hospital. But through this act, the orphan and outcast who endured treatment which modeled the experiences of Frankenstein's creature, is also the archetype of Victor's emotional impulses. Rousseau justifies the abandonment of his children, held by most of his critics as a breach of parental duty, by the shuddering thought of its alternative; allowing them to be reared by their mother, Therese Levasseur, and her family. Defending himself against the scrutiny he encountered, he presents the danger to be faced in the opposite path. Their mother, he claims "would have spoilt them," and her family "would have made monsters of them" (Rousseau, 176). In this fashion, Rousseau's behavior anticipates the actions of Victor, who also abandons his creation and denies it sympathy for fear of creating increased monstrosity. Rousseau then is both the product of being made a monster, and the protector of others dreaded at the diminishment of humanity. He inspires an identity that is divided between Victor and his creature. In the development of each character's subjective identity, Rousseau is present as a symbolic influence.

The characters' narrative existence as subjects is based upon the application of aesthetic meaning. Aesthetic judgments originate in the external world, but affect the

body to influence the arousal of emotional feelings. Such judgments are mediated in their affective power by the civil forces involved in the creation of subjects. Individuals are formed subjectively by the intersection of their own beliefs with the enduring doctrines of their environment. They are instilled with a predisposition to judge the external world in a particular way. Understanding this process is central to any analysis of the civil components which define aesthetic value, for it explains how stereotypes are infused to affect judgment and trigger the arousal or denial of sympathy. Subjectivity is a reference to the extended occurrence of the body's interaction with the shared external world. When ideas of the world are accepted, beliefs about one's reality are prompted by the mind, generating bodily sensations which govern habits of action and discrimination. These perceptions are judged, and then rigidly grouped by their features of resemblance to stereotypical ideas. These judgments greatly contribute to the body's arousal of sensation, as they incline the individual to either be affected or disaffected by particular images which surround them. Henri Bergson makes reference to the connection between perception and affective intensity in his text Time and Free Will. "Sometimes," he writes, "we have to make an effort to perceive [the] sensation, as if it were trying to escape notice; sometimes… it obsesses us, forces itself upon us and engrosses us to such an extent that we make every effort to escape from it and remain ourselves" (Bergson, 40). The intensity of the sensation reveals a history of feeling in which one's previous experiences of rebellion or conformity are implicitly involved. Sensations experienced upon perception are in essence the historical forging of a subjective identity. This is the means by which civil forces become present in the functionality of the body, and the body becomes operational as a social instrument. Through a character's responsive behaviors, they reveal themselves to be individual components in a larger system; one in which they are poised to glowingly represent sameness, and vehemently dismiss difference.

The mental habit of comparing one's perceptions with enduring stereotypical ideas, gives rise to other habits of subjectivity; namely, that of pairing causes and effects by the view that they are always conjoined. The physical image of Elizabeth or Victor aligns them with historical symbols of beauty and innocence; they are each judged and then immediately treated by others with sympathy. The judgment of their beauty

emerges from the two prior mental habits - the acceptance of a stereotype itself, and its use as a comparative lens. But it is this final function which crystallizes subjectivity and hastens sympathy, for habitual reasoning establishes beliefs about one's personal reality that fundamentally directs action upon the external world. The habit of linking causes and effects poises the body to pursue emotional ends after the judgment has been made. So when the creature's deviant form is perceived, onlookers are moved to deny him sympathy because of what they feel his image further implies - a likelihood of impending harm. The creature's image consistently moves others to the emotion of terror. The first village he wanders into is "roused" by his presence; "some fled, [some] attacked" (Shelley, 102). Felix accosts him with a stick when he finds him in the cabin, and he is shot by the rustic after saving the young girl. Each of these reactions assert the astonishment of beholding the creature's image as tantamount to the feeling of being threatened. The widespread fear in reacting to the creature is a commentary upon the misplaced stimulation of emotion. The creature does not threaten in stance or attitude, but in image. The response he garners though is not the terror on impending harm, but instead a psychosis of terror; a judgment of emotion based upon delusion and misreading which creates his monstrous difference. The creature is held to be threatening as a measure to reveal the impact of social conceptions which, through emotion, have real effects upon human behavior. The reaction of young William Frankenstein, who the monster initially judges as too youthful to be prejudiced, shows the foundational presence of representing danger through the aesthetic conventions of the environment. "'Let me go,' he cried; 'monster! ugly wretch! you wish to eat me and tear me to pieces" (Shelley, 138). The history of giving meaning to images has associated the creature's grossly abnormal form with danger. The emotional actions prompted by these feelings assist to maintain the concept as a social reality, and the creature is continually denied sympathy for the same reason that others receive it - those who judge him share an enduring history as social subjects.

It is important to explain the value of addressing a character's narrative subjectivity, for the next several explanations will deal directly with this matter. Simply put, the characters identity and evolution as a fictional subjects references the type of emotion which their actions inspire in the reader. Their justification for choices they

make, and the reasons given for their behavior lend meaning to the reader's interpretation, and influences their capacity to sympathize. Subjectivity merely refers to an internal reality which emanates a person's emotions and prejudices. In the same way that a reader's own subjectivity influences their emotion, the creation of a character's identity as a subject also contributes to this experience of feeling with literature. In observation of a character's evolution through their dialogue and actions, readers form affinities and aversions which affect their emotions in the narrative scenes of sympathy. The recognition of who a character is, just as our awareness of who we are, either arouses or prevents our feelings with the literature.

In order to comprehend the narrative dispositions of Victor and his creature, we must first understand them as characters who continuously interact with the larger community. Colene Bentley describes the interaction between the individual and society as the catalyst of each character's quest to arouse and receive sympathy. She claims that Shelley

> renders the connection between subjectivity and collectivity as [a] flexible and dynamic… cultivation of a political realm in which individuals understand themselves to… 'solicit' and be solicited by their fellows…. The novel presents individual and collective identities as mutually constitutive to the extent that one can desire, like the creature, to 'fit' oneself to social norms and yet also formulate demands upon society to be responsive to one's own particular circumstances (Bentley, 331).

Her characters are mutually involved with the external world of the text to produce the outlooks and behaviors which they display. The social reactions triggered by an image functions as continuous influences to their thoughts and judgments. Bodily impulses produce physical effects based upon the political meaning of the perceived form, and the stimulation to emotional action occurs within them by the expectations which these political definitions have instilled.

The creature began his interactions with mankind expecting to be civilly accepted. When the anticipated reaction is not received, his admiration for man becomes contempt, and his identity evolves amid his diminishing hopes. As previously stated, he forms this identity largely through the projections that he makes of the DeLacey family. His admiration for them cultivates his desire for affection and social involvement. In witnessing their emotional moment, he experiences his own emotions for the first time;

an event which crystallizes the process of correspondence between his representative judgments and bodily sensations. After the young girl is moved to tears by the music of the aged cottager, the creature states, "I felt sensations of a peculiar and overpowering nature: they were a mixture of pain and pleasure, such as I had never before experienced, either from hunger or cold, warmth or food; and I withdrew from the window unable to bear these emotions" (Shelley, 104). Although they are unaware of his presence, he has vicariously experienced the emotions of their exchange. The event has established a desire in him to bond with another, and has raised the risk of his own heartache if mistreated. When the family does flee in fear upon seeing him, his earlier feelings compound his present disappointment to affect yet another emotional shift; his longing to be embraced is transformed into resentment intense enough to support a campaign of vengeance for the effrontery of mankind. Realizing the social inequities that entrap him through his image, he reforms his expectations about interacting with man, and further develops as a subject. From this point forward he represents others with anticipation that they will respond with similar rebuke, and thus he maintains bitterness toward all humanity. Note his rage immediately after the DeLaceys have rejected him:

> I, like the arch-fiend, bore a hell within me, and finding myself unsympathised around me, wished to tear up the trees, spread havoc and destruction around me, and then to have sat down and enjoyed the ruin. …There was none among the myriads of men that existed who would pity or assist me; and should I feel kindness towards my enemies? No: from that moment I declared everlasting war against the species, and more than all against him who had formed me, and sent me forth to this unsupportable misery (Shelley, 132).

The feelings he experiences as an outcast, is a function of civil formations as much as they are impulsive sensations in his body. In such a declaration, the creature's sentiment reflects the philosophy of Rousseau in addressing the creation of political power. In language which parallels the creature's desire in this moment, Rousseau, in his text A Discourse on Inequality, describes how such passionate rage must necessarily occur for some as a result of civil development.

> As soon as men learned to value one another and the idea of consideration was formed in their minds, everyone claimed a right to it and it was no longer possible for anyone to be refused consideration without affront. This gave rise to the first duties of civility, even among savages: and henceforth every intentional wrong became an outrage, because together with the hurt which might result from the

> injury, the offended party saw an insult to his person which was often more unbearable than the hurt itself. Thus, as everyone punished the contempt shown him by another in a manner proportionate to the esteem he accorded himself, revenge became terrible, and men grew bloodthirsty and cruel (Rousseau, 114).

The negative judgments of the creature's image develop his identity as part of a larger civil process. His subjectivity develops through his effort to find an accepted place within society, and it is modified by the projections of his form which ultimately prevent it. The creature's adoption of monstrous behavior may be seen merely as an immediate result of his civil education.

The subjectivity of Victor very much mirrors that of his creation. He is also compelled by a yearning to arouse another's sympathy, and he likewise engages this desire through efforts which go beyond the degree of intimacy allowed in his situation. The creature concludes that he could make no companions in mankind, and so to satisfy his desire for companionship, he appeals to Victor for the creation of a mate. Victor would similarly find his relationships within humanity to be unsatisfactory; a feeling that led him to form his creature in the first place. But by the act of granting life through reanimation, Victor foresaw a supremely intimate relationship between himself and his creature. Wishing to improve upon the strength of relational bonds, he forms a being that is explicitly and singly linked to himself. As the sole producer of new life, he anticipated an unobstructed flow of sympathy to exist between them. "No father," he states "could claim the gratitude of his child so completely as I should…" (Shelley, 52). Eschewing the female role in reproduction, he dared to venture beyond social and biological limitations of kinship, and produce more heightened standards in civil relationships. But when he is repulsed rather than endeared by what he forms, his expectations are undone by fear, and like the creature, his identity as a subject transforms as a result. This delineates the parallel between Victor's identity, and that of his creation. The creature held to the same hope that Victor once had in theory; that their unique kinship would merit a free flow of sympathy between them. He appeals to this very desire when he meets Victor and requests a companion. "O Frankenstein," he states, "be not equitable to every other and trample upon me alone, to whom thy justice, and even thy clemency and affection is most due. …I am thy creature, I ought to be thy Adam, but I am rather the fallen angel, whom thou drivest from joy for no misdeed…" (Shelley, 96). Both

characters, in their own way, pine after the same objective. Each sought to improve their social standing and surpass what proved to be the sympathetic limits of their identity, and each invested a great degree of stock in the idea that their unique kinship would oblige their counterpart to behave more sympathetically toward them. It is quite ironic that their histories and passions would prevent any mutual embrace between them, despite the social traditions of kinship (father/son, creator/created) which might otherwise have compelled it.

For each figure, the reality of experience fell short of the companionship they expected, and their desires are betrayed by the intensity of their projections. The emotions which they display led to distinct consequences – their formation as monsters. The extreme passions which foster the excess or deficiency of sympathy in the text, also turns both the subject and object of these feelings into monsters – figures who are physically unfamiliar, socially isolated, and indifferent to civil rules. Their intense emotion alters their representation and distorts their judgment of another's form. This results in an improper and perverted judgment of what they perceive; hence, the creation of the monsters. This reality is clear in the juxtaposition of Victor's abhorrence for his creature, and his overwhelming admiration for Elizabeth. Each object of his emotional gaze becomes monstrous in some form because of his intense projection of them. Victor would also become a monster himself in this process; the result of the sympathetic entanglements which bind characters' emotion. The creature's anger is an effect of Victor's previous emotional action toward him, but through Elizabeth it is also the cause of Victor's own rage. Frankenstein's transition into a monster concludes his continuous impulse to deny sympathy to his 'hideous' creation, and freely offer it to the 'beautiful' stranger.

Having given up on any union with mankind, and in a final effort to arouse sympathy, the creature implores Victor to create for him a companion; a female creature with whom he could "live in the interchange of those sympathies necessary for my being" (Shelley, 140). This request culminates the eloquent and moving narrative of his history. Aware that his image is the major obstacle to fellow feeling, the creature appeals for companionship through the auditory, rather than the visual perception of his creator. "Listen to my tale" he demands, "when you have heard that, abandon or commiserate

me... But hear me" (Shelley, 97). Jeanne M. Britton insists that this difference in his manner of appeal is a narrative attempt to confront long held traditions, and explore alternative means of affecting the body. "Sympathy that is based on listening to narrative challenges the conception of sympathy that is based on visual immediacy, physiological similarity, and sensory response" (Britton, 14). This strategy initially works as the tale momentarily soothes Victor's impulse to dismiss, allowing him to briefly overcome his dread for the creature's appearance, and oblige his request for a mate. But Victor's concern would not be so stimulated, nor is his disgust for the creature's image so extinguished, as to equal the task of creating another, and fully displaying sympathetic behavior. This point clearly displays of the limitations of sympathy, for it is nearest that the novel comes to allowing fellow feeling without a prerequisite of physical resemblance. Ironically, it is the creature's very desire for sympathy which actually prevents Victor from behaving sympathetically. Through his contemplation of the creature's image, the impulse to sympathize becomes fleeting and self reductive. It is diminished by his fear of what such an act might produce. If the two creatures sympathize with one another, then their monstrosity could multiply. "[T]he first results [of these] sympathies" Victor claimed "would be children, and a race of devils would be propagated upon the earth…." The sexual connotation of the creature's desire dissipates Victor's will to continue, because it is once again taken as potentially physically threatening. Although at this point, the creature's image does not emotionally affect Victor with the immediacy that it once did, it still yields the same result. His bodily potential is now developed unconsciously and primed through the medium of thought. While pondering the consequence of their progeny, the creature appears at the casement. His sudden presence amid Victor's contemplation of their offspring, triggers the emotional action which had been latently nurtured by Victor's mind, and claiming to have "thought with a sensation of madness, on [the] promise of creating another like to him, and trembling with passion," he destroys the creature's mate (Shelley, 161). The sympathy he had prepared to display has become animosity merely by the idea of its consequence; an idea which still held the creature's image as its chief support and immediate provocation. Britton marks this moment as the story's return to conventional foundations of sympathy. "The novel's frames explore the narrative potential of

sympathy, but the *sui generis* creature marks the limit of that potential by returning to a notion of sympathy that explicitly requires the most basic physiological resemblance" (Britton, 15). Thus, even as the novel investigates those abstract and alternative avenues through which sympathy might exist despite physical difference, it also shows how intense representations may also act as backdoor obstacles to sympathetic engagement.

Victor's denial of sympathy to his creature ultimately leads to the execution of Elizabeth. This course of events is certainly equitable in terms of loss – the creature kills Victor's wife just as Victor had earlier destroyed his would-be mate. The killing by each character of their counterpart's companion suggests the novel's resolution to define and redefine sameness in light of its importance to sympathy. The series of violent events captures the similarity of meaning between Elizabeth and the creature, given the representation of sameness that they each indicate for Victor. Both characters signify the potential to provoke an extreme offering or denial of Victor's sympathy, based upon the appeal of sameness he perceives in their respective images. Each implicates sameness because they are similarly projected against a historical idea of acceptance. But since Victor projects them with absolutely opposite values, a dilemma is created for him as they cannot both at the same time obtain his sympathy. When he agrees to create a mate for the creature, he demonstrates his willingness to both find sameness within, and provide sameness for his creation. As a result of his new will, Victor begins to feel alienated from emotional engagement with others in whom he had readily perceived sameness and felt sympathy, especially Elizabeth. He claims to have had "no right to claim their sympathies – as if never more might I enjoy companionship with them" (Shelley, 144). Later he would describe his planned marriage to Elizabeth as an idea of "horror and dismay" given the emotion that his commitment to the creature entailed. "I must perform my engagement" he states, "and let the monster depart with his mate before I allowed myself to enjoy the delight of a union from which I expect peace" (Shelley, 147). When he reneges on his promise to the creature, Victor can once again sympathetically engage with those he feels himself to reflect. The morning after he destroys the second creature, he states "…when I awoke, I again felt as if I belonged to a race of human beings like myself" (Shelley, 164). Elizabeth and the creature are made to be similar through Victor, in that they are each extreme models according to his judgment

within the customary standards of sameness. But a sympathetic judgment of both characters cannot simultaneously emerge from Victor, for by the standard through which he judges, they are directly opposed. He must dismiss the judgment of sameness that Elizabeth compels so that he may recognize the quality of sameness in the creature, and vice versa. Marshall describes this parallel between them by claiming that "Elizabeth and the creature are figures for sameness, figures for the sympathy that Frankenstein destroys when he murders the female monster meant to be his double's bride in his symbolic and over determined destruction of monstrous likeness. [They] are the same figure: they are figures of the same, figures for the same" (Marshall, 213).

The creature revenges the dismissal of his sameness by killing Elizabeth, Victor's supreme projection of sameness. He cries ominously after his own mate is destroyed by Victor, "I shall be with you on your wedding-night," and her execution validates his statement in profound ways (Shelley, 163). This scene in the novel manifests the true 'monster' in Victor's creation, because the creature now displays his own profound ability to make 'monsters' of others. Elizabeth is clearly killed to avenge an affront; but in executing his threat, he also ends the perception of resemblance that Victor re-embraces when he destroyed his second creature. Notice the context and language in the portrayal of the moments immediately after her death. Victor, at the sight of her corpse, loses consciousness and is taken by others into an adjoining room. When he revives and returns to her, the characteristics of her sameness are destroyed. Victor claims that "a handkerchief [had been] thrown across her face and neck," and upon embracing her corpse, he states, "what I now held in my arms had ceased to be Elizabeth whom I had loved and cherished. The murderous mark of the fiend's grasp was on her neck" (Shelley, 189). Elizabeth's death literally brings Victor into a transformed awareness, for he awakens from his swoon with novel perceptions and judgments. His sight of Elizabeth is now literally prohibited, and upon closer inspection he notes the extent of his inability to recognize sameness. These discoveries are punctuated by a distinct change in the physical image of his bride; she now bears the marks of the creature's violence upon her body. By killing Elizabeth and distorting her form, the creature has rendered Victor incapable of finding sameness in her, thus making her into a monster. When he sees her corpse, Victor is forced to perceive a figure that he had previously adored, in a form that

is now unfamiliar. This projection also changes Victor into a monster by destroying the companionship which he had sought and long awaited. It alters his outlook in a way that reflects the earlier pains of tragedy endured by the creature. "[N]othing" he states "could appear to me as it had done the day before. A fiend had snatched from me every hope of future happiness: no creature had ever been so miserable as I was" (Shelley, 191). Victor's transformation into a monstrous being illustrates the depth of meaning in the creature's earlier promise to be with him on his wedding night. He chose the night on which Victor would enter into a union with his companion, and in an act crudely reflective of the reanimation which spawned him, the creature makes monsters of both Victor and his bride. His earlier utterance then may be viewed less as the threat of a vengeance filled adversary, and more as a declaration of one who feels entitled to the sympathy that another receives. Victor's consistent inability to overcome his projection, triggers the creature's transformation into a monster, and causes him to cohere his monstrosity with the perceived elegance of Elizabeth, and ultimately with Victor himself. Frankenstein is turned into a monster in the same way his creature is: he is companionless, isolated, and can nowhere locate fellow feeling.

Through this intricate web of causes and effects, Shelley presents the horrid consequence of both sides of the same coin. To intensely embrace another as a companion, or to dismiss another as unsympathetic, will each lead to some variation of monstrosity for all figures involved. Through this conclusion of monstrous creation, Shelley illustrates how the notion of sameness that distinguishes man and monster are substantive to those judgments that either produce or deny sympathy. The dismissed figure is turned monstrous by the feelings aroused at the insult of being outcast; and the overzealous display of sympathy will multiply monsters by raising the consequences of ever falling short of the judgment of sameness. The parameters of finding sameness are shown to be rigidly bounded on each side with similar penalties of extreme judgment; for all projections, whether sympathetic or dismissive, with enough intensity, will yield monstrous consequences.

In outlining sympathetic functions, the novel maintains its central theme; a judgment of similarity is necessary for sympathy to occur. The creature, based only upon the projection of his image, will always be denied sympathy. His form triggers an

emotional reflex steeped in habit and history, and onlookers avert their gaze or flee in fear of the threat they perceive in his appearance. But the reader, who sees nothing but words, is not presented with this threat. Assured of physical and psychological safety, he is made to be curious, not frightened. By using aesthetics as the lynchpin for sympathy in a medium where the image is never revealed, Shelley effectively creates a distance between the reader and the emotional effect that the creature's image is described to stimulate. We may only consider the descriptions and narrative emotion of other characters, limiting our own judgment of what is, or is not, emotionally stimulating. But in examining their emotion, we shall certainly contemplate our own response to the image, if we could in fact see him. This provokes us to question our own impulses and the stereotypes which might affect them. Lori Nandrea claims that the distance created between the reader and the visualized content of the story, substantiates the viewer's aesthetic and stimulates their quest for sympathetic understanding. "Removed from the risks of direct confrontation with the monster… [reading] provide[s] a kind of socially licensed, aestheticized enjoyment of passive curiosity, a being affected rather than an intent to effect." The reader, unlike the textual characters, is able to pursue fellow feeling with the creature through an attempt to bridge the visual handicap. This "curiosity" primes a Romantic desire to transcend the boundaries of narrative interaction, by searching oneself for the flaws apparent in the judgments of different characters. The reader undertakes an introspective assessment to achieve "knowledge, mastery, or identity. 'Am I like that?... do I identify…; do I sympathize, [do I] relate'?" (Nandrea, 345). Reading the novel stimulates this quest to better understand one's own emotional capacity. And because the endeavor of self reflection is based upon imagination, not perception; the act of sympathizing with the creature is merely an effort to examine these limitations which define our own emotional existence.

This novel presents sympathy as having distinct limits that are wholly erected by the judgment of another's appearance. These judgments are heavily influenced by the subjective identity of characters, and the conventions that have commonly defined beauty in the culture of the west. The limitations which are examined display the boundaries of judgment that separate man from monster, companion from adversary, or kinsman from stranger. The intensity of judgment is central to the definition of the identities

themselves; i.e. making monsters of men, strangers of kinsmen, or enemies of friends. The central premise of Shelley's text where it concerns sympathy however, is to find whether it can exist without a degree of self-reflection perceived in the judgment of another's form. The ultimate conclusion which the text asserts is that the limits of sympathy may be overcome only by pushing those historical judgments of beauty and sameness to the extremes of intellectual scrutiny. The boundaries of sympathy are presented as manmade entrapments which result in the characters' inability to realistically and appropriately judge. Monsters are made of men through impassioned representations that are not critically questioned. To avoid the consequences of creating or becoming monsters, the novel urges the action from the reader that Victor is unable to perform as a character – to search the morality of another's desires, and the content of their being, rather than bowing to the force of longstanding visual stereotypes.

# CHAPTER 4

## THE UNSEEN SYMPATHY: THE ROLE OF THE OCCULT IN JANE EYRE

> Presentiments are strange things! and so are sympathies; and so are signs; and the three combined to make one mystery to which humanity has not yet found the key. I never laughed at presentiments in my life, because I have had strange ones of my own. Sympathies, I believe, exist (for instance, between far distant, long absent, wholly estranged relatives asserting, notwithstanding their alienation, the unity of the source to which each traces his origin) whose working baffle mortal comprehension. And sign, for aught we know, may be but the sympathies of Nature with man (Bronte, 249).

Jane's expression here occurs immediately before she receives news of her cousin John Reed's death. For seven previous nights she had dreamed of a small child, and on the morning following these successive dreams, the coachman from Gateshead arrives to say that among other things, John Reed had perished one week ago. Jane's attitude in the above quotation asserts her embrace of an irrational and unseen reality which binds humanity to a natural order. It is this belief now held as an adult, which compels her to accept words that she had indifferently overheard as a child, "to dream of children was a sure sign of trouble, either to oneself or one's kin" (Bronte, 249). In Charlotte Bronte's novel Jane Eyre, sympathy occurs with an emphasis on this extra-rational order. Jane would often emote with and for others, through special intuitive perceptions which thereafter prompted her course of action. Through the refinement of her discipline and a concerted mental focus upon spirit, she expands the limits of her consciousness to sympathetically unite with others in profound and intimate ways.

The connections that Jane makes with other characters, especially those based upon freedom and mutual sympathy, is reflective of the bond she is intended to establish with the reader. This aspect of the novel's function must be considered with the more generally applied effects of Gothic fiction. The affective response to reading Gothic literature is a feeling of anxiety which is held to be satisfactory; a feeling conventionally associated with the mysterious, the horrific, the desolate and grotesque. Bronte's narrative though, emphasizes the Romantic qualities of the Gothic. By bringing the realities to a bodily level in the novel, the text creates an environment that forces the reader to acknowledge a tangible narrator, and asserts a clear demand to heed one's own

passionate urges. The story seeks to influence the reader's emotion as part of the experience of its perusal. And although much of the following analysis will focus on the emotions of the characters and the outlook necessary in submitting to God, let us first briefly address how the reader is meant to be influenced in their reading.

To address the intention of creating feeling through reading this text, let us assess the similar impact of one of its narrative predecessors. In 1678, John Bunyan publishes an allegorical novel called The Pilgrim's Progress. This text lays the groundwork of narrative influence which defines Jane Eyre, for it likewise reflects the author's real life. Bunyan writes the story in part to assuage his personal struggles amid his adoption of Christianity. It is a fictional presentation of religious turmoil that he described himself to undergo in his earlier published autobiography. Like Jane Eyre, this novel establishes a narrator who relates a story of his own recollection to the reader. This narrator conveys his memory of a dream in which he also exists as a character; and likewise his existence is presented through a distinct and authentic figure behind the narration. Aside from these similarities in form, the most notable influence of Bunyan's text upon Bronte's is the similar plot of a quest which takes the protagonist from sin to salvation. In his novel, Bunyan details the events of a Christian everyman who moves from the land of destruction to the 'Celestial Country.' Jane, much like this Christian pilgrim, makes her way through a litany of characters and environments, each lending motive and meaning to her own spiritual ascension. As Sandra Gilbert notes in her text, The Madwoman in the Attic, Jane Eyre, like Bunyan's protagonist, "makes a life journey which is a kind of mythical progress from one significantly named place to another" (Gilbert, 342). Building upon the similar plot of a journey, these novels present the character's transition to spiritual enlightenment as a pathway to attaining such an experience by the reader. Although Bunyan's text is far more devoutly explicit, with such characters as Faithful and Hopeful, and scenes in the Valley of the Shadow of Death, each text nonetheless reveals the dramatically mystical experience of receiving God's favor by following the example of the central character. Jane, on many occasions, is able to determine God's will through intuitive clarity. Similarly, the Christian Pilgrim in Bunyan's novel maintains his fortitude through an obscure guidance which leads him in moments of weakness. When the "wicked ones… whisperingly suggest their grievous blasphemies"

as he walks through the valley, the Pilgrim is maintained steadfastly by the "voice of a man" uttering the twenty-third Psalm (Bunyan, 64). Supernatural experiences like these occur in each narrative, persuading the reader to adopt the religious undertaking of the protagonist, and promising the same sort of revealed understanding if only they are willing to follow a similar course.

As mentioned earlier, Jane's story is not overtly devout. Its symbolism does not directly parallel scripture, but this fact provides the novel the opportunity to create new types of emotional engagements. To nineteenth century readers, the story presents the metaphorical Christian pilgrimage in ways that they might encounter them. The impulses and effects of colonialism, the stakes of engagement with high society, and the comparison of oneself to social standards of beauty, are all realities influential to Jane in her development. If these truths were not apparent in the everyday lives of nineteenth century readers, they certainly would have been present to their awareness. This allows the enduring story of a personal quest for salvation to create novel sympathetic reactions, while maintaining the fundamental pitfalls and triumphs that are confronted along the path which Bunyan's pilgrim walks.

Both of these texts intend to affect the reader through sympathy, yet in Jane Eyre, this emotion also defines the bonds that are established between its different characters. The emotional means by which figures are stimulated in the novel is a hallmark of its value to Gothic literature. It reveals the unseen paranormal influence of the Gothic at work upon the core level of the body. Robert B. Heilman marks this movement toward physical depth as a fundamental attribute of Bronte's work.

> In Jane Eyre and in other novels, as we shall see, that discovery of passion, that rehabilitation of the extra rational, which is the historic office of the Gothic, is no longer oriented in marvelous circumstance but moves deeply into the lesser known realities of human life. This change I describe as the change from 'old Gothic' to 'new Gothic' (Heilman, 101).

This asserted change regards the shift of occult and invisible forces into the lives of the ordinary and average. Arousing their emotion, it influences through the involuntary movements of their bodies, and in the sensations that are experienced at its influence, the spirit realm communicates its desires, pride and disappointment. Accessibility to this realm however is shown to require the cultivation of a spiritual focus and discipline in the

subject's life. A similar objective is asserted for the reader as a measure to illustrate this mystical journey as a possible course of triumphantly achieving their own selfhood.

Throughout the novel, Jane often has very intense experiences of intuition. At the beginning of the text, she shows an aptness to be affected by invisible energies. When thrown into the Red Room at Gateshead, she feels that the spirit of her deceased uncle may arise. While she solidly believes in irrational and invisible forces at this early age, her immaturity casts the occult as frightening, and she is reluctant to embrace it. "I wiped my tears and hushed my sobs, fearful lest any sign of violent grief might waken a preternatural voice to comfort me… This idea, consolatory in theory, I felt would be terrible if realized: with all my might I endeavored to stifle it – I endeavored to be firm" (Bronte, 48). Although open to its influence, Jane is not yet poised to engage with the world through intuition. Fear, presented as one of her lower needs in the text, weighs upon her willingness to recognize the feeling as valuable or useful. She must experience a course of physical and emotional refinement that would allow her to interact more comfortably with this unseen order; focusing her attention away from the trivialities of the flesh, and toward the maintenance of her spirit. Her ascendance though would soon allow her to perceive beyond the limits of the material world.

Ironically, it is at Lowood that Jane would confront the atmosphere and characters that prompt the elevation of her consciousness. In this place that exaggerated divine submission and regimented religious fervor, she would find spiritual enlightenment and set upon her path to personal liberation. This transition occurs through two distinct sympathetic forms acting cooperatively upon her: the disciplinary environment of the school, and the fellow feeling she would come to share with several characters, namely Helen Burns. The operations of discipline are perceivable for Jane during her first moments at the school. Immediately upon her arrival she is led into a room "with a great deal of tables…and seated all around on benches [was] a congregation of girls… dressed in stuff frocks and pinafores… engaged in conning over their tomorrow's task, and [humming]… their whispered repetitions" (Bronte, 76). This environment at the school is fundamentally disciplinary; it focuses the students' bodily movements to act by the guidelines of a factory system. Time and space are divided with detail to physically isolate the girls, training them in deference to the authority of the system. By their

arrangement along rows of tables, they are easily monitored by the "four tall girls" of higher rank who collected their books and supper trays. A distant bell indicates what exercise they are to be engaged with, and they immediately act in unison casting themselves into relations with the larger institutional organism. Meals, prayer, classes and tasks are all regimented by an authority which permeates the school's environment, affecting the students at the level of their physical sensations. Discipline prevails at Lowood, and its presence touches everyone; "the whole school" Jane asserts "rose simultaneously as if moved by a common spring" (Bronte, 79). This atmosphere helps to mature Jane's immature thoughts and behaviors. Her first years at the school she claims "comprised an irksome struggle with difficulties in habituating myself to new rules and unwonted tasks" (Bronte, 92). The sympathy that she would later affect others with operates in great part through the effects of discipline upon her. Her experiences beyond Lowood quickly became a struggle to submit to duty in the face of burning desire. By the exercise of discipline upon her path, Jane acts in submission to a higher order of impulses, and becomes a sympathetic figure capable of forming in others the emotional outlook which she earlier adopted. By allowing her to more ably follow the narrow path of Christian behavior, discipline allows her to access and understand her own intuitive power. Her connection to this realm, as we shall soon discover, is uniquely drawn given her beliefs, attitude and values.

As much as Jane's penchant for transcendence is founded by the discipline of her environment, it blossoms through her friendship with Helen Burns. Helen is the catalyst for Jane's first real experience of sympathy; an event that would propel her to achieve an intimate relationship with the unseen. She invariably perceives in Helen a higher stratum of righteousness than existed at Lowood. Jane is first drawn to Helen by the influence of self sameness. Their first meeting "touched a chord of sympathy somewhere" for Jane since Helen engaged in reading, a favorite pastime of the narrator (Bronte, 81). This initial connection would prelude a far more profound and sensitive relationship between the girls. Jane finds in Helen an example of spiritual integrity, and this discovery allows her to ignore her lower desires and soon unveil her own upright personal manner. On the day after their initial meeting, Helen is lashed a dozen times by Miss Scatcherd with a bundle of twigs for the transgression of having dirty nails. Although Helen stoically

endures this punishment, Jane is emotionally stimulated at the sight of her friend's predicament; "I paused from my sewing, because my fingers quivered at this spectacle with a sentiment of unavailing and impotent anger…" (Bronte, 86). She shows her proclivity to sympathize in experiencing Helen's dilemma, yet her strong feelings of anger reveal her still to be anchored by her lower needs. In hearing Helen's explanation of her stoicism, Jane is unable to emotionally embrace, or even find sense in her friend's passion; "I could not comprehend this doctrine of endurance; and still less could I understand or sympathize with the forbearance she expressed for her chastiser" (Bronte, 88). Jane rages for the affront against Helen, but does not now recognize this as a burden, even in contrast to the spiritual focus which Helen displays. It shall be this observation in Jane which gains her a higher consciousness, and allows her intuitive capacity to fully actualize.

Jane reaches her milestone of transcendence in a scene where each sympathetic form, disciplinary police force and imbibed fellow feeling, continuously interact in an overflow of her sensations. When Mr. Brocklehurst visits Lowood with his wife and daughters, he publicly chastises Jane. After accidentally breaking her slate, she is ordered to stand upon a stool before her peers while Brocklehurst admonishes her as a "liar" and a "little heathen." When called, Jane claims an inability to move; "of my own accord, I could not have stirred: I was paralysed" ( Bronte, 97). Her body atop the stool is gripped by a flow of feelings which arise all at once "stifling [her] breath and constricting [her] throat". She is again overcome with feelings of rage, experiencing an "impulse of fury against Reed and Brocklehurst." But on this occasion she laments her anger, now aware that such base desires would not have affected her admired friend. "I was no Helen Burns" she opines (Bronte, 98). As she stands furious and ridiculed, sympathy would liberate her from these feelings, and elevate her to a heightened consciousness. She meets the gaze of Helen who crosses her path en route to receiving her own penalty, and the paralysis and shame which gripped Jane at the order of Brocklehurst immediately dissolves. Jane's admiration for her friend has finally inspired an introspective perception, and she now wills to ascend to the same admirable levels. She describes the experience to have been "as if a martyr, a hero, had passed a slave or victim, and imparted strength in the transit." The deep influence of Helen as a medium of

sympathy is clearly relayed in this moment, for her penetrating gaze instills Jane with the vision of her onlooker. From this point forward, Jane would judge those who would have formerly aroused her anger, with understanding and forgiveness. The feelings imparted through Helen's gaze supersede those which Jane felt at Brocklehurst's admonishment, and she is immediately able to recapture control of her bodily movements. Speaking of Helen's look, Jane states, "What an extraordinary sensation that ray sent through me! How the new feeling bore me up! I mastered the rising hysteria, lifted up my head, and took a firm stand on the stool" (Bronte, 99).

In this critical moment of ascension, Jane is moved by the simultaneous influence of disciplinary sympathy, and the deeply sensed fellow feeling she has with Helen Burns. Her friend's warm stare gives Jane strength to stoically endure her punishment, because through it, she acknowledges a higher order of ethics and righteousness than existed within the institution. She reclaims control of her body as a rebellion against her lower needs, and in doing so, illustrates a measure of discipline that supersedes the rigid and hypocritical demands of Lowood. She has adopted a loftier focus; the development of more sublime habits and tendencies. The source of this elevated consciousness is the sympathetic call she finds in Helen for spiritual focus amid extreme conditions. She is made to stand upon the stool for "half an hour or longer," while Brocklehurst scorns her as one whom others must "guard against," "shun," "scrutinize," and "punish" (Bronte, 98). A police force operates upon her body by demanding her stillness and silence, and her continence is tried by the cry of public ridicule. Facing these obstacles, both physical and social, Jane submits herself to abide by a Christian example of discipline which she now feels transcends the utilitarian scripture that Lowood imparts, and adopt the spiritual focus that Helen would later exhort; "angels see our tortures, recognize our innocence, and God awaits only a separation of spirit from flesh to crown us with a full reward" (Bronte, 101).

In petitioning this focus, Helen directs Jane to enact a conscious search for experience at its source. By absolutely diverting herself from those lower emotional habits, and focusing completely on the spiritual origins of her experience, she would perceive small elements of the curve of duration stretching before her. Hereafter Jane would operate by an intuitive guidance revealing itself to her through deeply sensed

esoteric perceptions. Intuition is the guiding light upon Jane's path to selfhood. In his text Creative Evolution, Henri Bergson defines the function of this faculty in a way that insightfully reflects Jane's circumstance. It is explained as a modification of the dynamics of instinct. He states

> Instinct is sympathy. If this sympathy could extend its object and also reflect upon itself, it would give us the key to vital operations… but it is to this very inwardness of life that intuition leads us…. [By] the sympathetic communication which it establishes between us and the rest of the living, by the expansion of our consciousness which it brings about, it introduces us into life's own domain, which is reciprocal interpenetration, endlessly continued creation (Bergson, 147).

Jane, in her moments of intuitive clarity, can perceive the operations of life's order. This is communicated to her through a felt language whose terms are comprised of the forms of the introductory quote: presentiments, sympathies and signs. These forms moreover are uniquely appropriate to Jane's identity. Her newfound attitude certainly reflects the integrity that Helen displayed, but it is gradually manifested according to Jane's own values and experiences. The personal quality of her growth is evident in the placement of a stone upon Helen's grave, fifteen years after her friend's death. This act is a testament to Jane's attitude toward the supernatural. Through this tablet, Jane acknowledges Helen's existence for personal reasons, for there were no other humans concerned with marking the grave. Such actions reveal her unwavering connection with the supernatural as intimate and personal. She communicates with these forces through a call and response interaction in which feeling both reveals her desire to the unseen, and forms her reply for the unseen. This mystical relationship is specially hers; only she can feel the sensation and interpret the signs for meaning. She gains access to this insight through Helen, but once achieved she must forge her own course, and advance her comprehension in ways that are sensible to her. This is why she erects the stone, and moreover why she invests herself into the rigidness of Lowood after Helen's death; to recognize the will of this force and conform to it. When preparing to leave the school, Jane takes note of her "more harmonious thoughts… better regulated feelings," and her "allegiance to duty and order" (Bronte, 116). Such characteristics arise in her through novel interactions with sympathy, and prompt her to operate at the turn of experience where she can anticipate the effects of her choices through intuition. Her journey onward in fact begins with the

impulse of a personal intuitive insight; she is compelled by a dream. "A kind fairy… dropped the required suggestion on my pillow, for as I lay down it came quietly and naturally to my mind: 'Those who want situations advertise: you must advertise in the –*shire Herald*'" (Bronte, 118). This presentiment would lead her to confront a reality in which the intuitive is her central, and sometimes her only, guide.

Jane's intuition is most urgently forceful when stimulated in her relationships. Her subsequent bonds of engagement, with Rochester and St John, would prompt her most lucid moments of mysticism. In each of these relationships, she displays the emotional effects of her prior submission to duty and her sensitivity to sympathy. With each potential spouse, she confronts a crisis which requires a pointed decision. Rochester compels her to choose between her visceral passion to be with him, and the demands of integrity which deny her this union. She would choose the latter path leading her toward selfhood, but only through the intervention of the mystical informing her choice. Jane's interaction with him would redouble her focus upon the spirit world; an ironic result of her misplaced elevation of Rochester as an idol. The decision to break the bond she felt with him would be urged by intuition, yet would merely lead to another major choice, also demanding the guidance of the supernatural. In opposition to Rochester, St John seeks complete renunciation from Jane. He proposes a choice between a loveless but lawful marriage as a missionary, and the bitter disappointment of falling short of his approval. In each case, Jane is directed by her intuitive appeals and surreal revelations. Presentiments, dreams, visions and voices, all operate upon her body as components of a larger plane of sympathetic unity. She makes the most difficult decisions about life and love with a heightened insight leading her way.

Her relationship with Rochester is the driving force of the novel's Gothic machinery. It is the stimulus of many of her dreams and intuitions, and often the central object of her mystical awareness. Through him, she experiences a union that develops into an unspoken communication. In dreams it would portend the secret of his nuptials, and at its apex of intensity, their reading and experience of one another's feeling is purely telepathic. In the initial judgments which they shared, there is the sense in each that something is hidden beyond the other's words and expressions. Rochester observes in their early conversations that the constraints of Lowood are "muffling [Jane's] voice",

and "restricting [her] limbs" (Bronte, 170). Jane likewise found there to be something dissembled in him; something diminished by the privations of his past; "I believed he was naturally a man of better tendencies, higher principles, and purer tastes than such as circumstances had developed…." For Jane, Rochester is made of "excellent materials" which are merely "spoiled and tangled" (Bronte, 178). With this outlook they would each enact a search for this missing something, and raise the emotional stakes of their relationship as a consequence.

The intensity between them would cross a pointed threshold on the night of Rochester's return from Mr. Eshton's place at the Leas. Jane's eyes are "drawn involuntarily to his face," as a peculiar emotional unity consumed the physical and psychological space of their separation. Amid her gaze, Jane becomes aware of this new ability to read beyond Rochester's words and features; a mark of kinship she describes in sympathetic terms: "I feel akin to him – I understand the language of his countenance and movements… I have something in my brain and heart, in my blood and nerves, that assimilates me mentally to him" (Bronte, 204). Rochester displays flashes of the same capability when reading Jane's glance in a conversation, and responding "as if the import had been spoken as well as imagined" (Bronte, 166). Jane would later admit he "had sometimes read my unspoken thoughts with an acumen to me incomprehensible" (Bronte, 273). As the development of their relationship expands into the paranormal, their mutual feelings of sympathy would intensify. They each apparently become sympathetically connected to the other through a union which transcends language, but like pain or fear is spoken in sensation. Each acts as an appendage to the other's frame, feeling for them as if stirred by an impulse for their own physical maintenance.

Jane's feeling with Rochester is much more intense than those shared with any other character she interacts with. Her past with Helen Burns has prepared her to sympathize with greater capability. Couple this fact with her search to discover Rochester's hidden qualities and Jane is highly susceptible to a deep fellow feeling with him. In addition to its increased strength, the advancement of Jane's feeling with Rochester is also more versatile than her feelings with others. Through Helen, Jane received emotional messages, but did not offer them; with Rochester however, these feelings move in both directions. Her relationship with him in this way reflects the type

of communication that she possessed with the supernatural order; a similarity that would eventually cause her great turmoil

Although she now feels with Rochester as she had felt with no one else prior, Jane remains unaware of Bertha Mason. The path to Bertha's discovery is quite important to the examination of sympathy and supernatural emotions, for her presence is at once hidden and revealed, portended and deliberated, by the demands of the extra rational. Bertha's existence would be for Jane both a penalty for her sacrilege, and a call to her sacrifice; it would weigh her commitment to duty against her passion to love. In terms of divine justice, Bertha's disclosure is punishment for making an idol of Rochester. After they plan to be married, she admittedly uplifts him to heights beyond what is ethically proper. "My future husband was becoming to me my whole world" she states, "and more than the world; almost my hope of heaven" (Bronte, 302). Jane had notably regressed from the instruction of Helen Burns who had once accused her of thinking "too much of the love of human beings," and she is misled to admire Rochester in a way reserved for religious devotion (Bronte, 101). To preserve her integrity, Jane must shun him as a husband, for the union would compromise the moral standard that she is obliged to display. She is led in this course of action by the insight of her expanded consciousness and her faith in its path to righteousness. The idea that their relationship would be imminently destroyed is communicated to her through dreams which she interprets as a "warning of disaster" (Bronte, 305). In these night visions Jane hastily chases Rochester while carrying a little child; in the first dream she toils down a "winding road" as Rochester "withdrew farther and farther every moment" (Bronte, 309). In a second dream the chase continues atop a thin "shell-like wall" of Thornfield Hall; though as she reaches the summit and sees him as a "speck on a white track" in the distance, the wall crumbles, the child falls, and Jane awakens to find Bertha Mason tearing the wedding veil in two, an explicit allusion to the breaking of their bond (Bronte, 310). The vain chase given for Rochester, the presence of the child, and the crumbling mansion, are all surreal indications of the hollowness of Rochester's present marriage offering. Note this explanation by Mark Kinkead-Weekes, "The house itself is a metaphor of Rochester's heart, a physical embodiment of the tropical hell he has tried to escape… And when he offers [Jane] what seems the full life of [his] heart, Thornfield becomes a heaven, and

Rochester an idol" (Weeks, 83). But as conveyed by her dreams, this heaven is not real, but illusory, and Jane consequently approaches her first attempt at marriage with great doubt and suspicion. She is prepared to choose a path she instinctively opposes, giving her uncertainty not only about the act, but also about exactly who she is. She felt no such reservations about her choice to advertise as a governess; it came 'quietly and naturally' to her mind because it followed an intuitive discovery of her own identity. But when looking at her reflection in the wedding gown, she sees not a certain and secure bride, but a "robed and veiled figure, so unlike my usual self… almost the image of a stranger" (Bronte, 315). Jane's sympathy with Rochester does not at this time produce any mutual selfhood between them, for it is belied by his fear of revealing the truth, and the blindness of her passionate idolatry.

After the content of Jane's dreams becomes a reality through the secret's disclosure, she is urged to sacrifice her bond with Rochester. The choice to leave him is both a concerted movement toward the divine, and a response to a call from the divine. The instruction, "Leave Thornfield at once" emerges as a voice to Jane's mind in the aftermath of the botched wedding (Bronte, 325). She initially wrestles with the decision, but in the evening hears the call again, this time from a clearer source, external to her. The moon, she states "whispered in my heart – 'My daughter, flee temptation.' 'Mother, I will.'" she responds (Bronte, 346). Nature's voice speaks to Jane's heart and calls for its sacrifice. This inclination parallels the sacrifice of Abraham – a sacrifice of man by God. Jane must relinquish what she loves to more patently display her submission to the celestial. At the expense of the human, Jane furthers the divine realm, and her ego is silenced to the advantage of her spirit. The alignment of her impulse with heaven's will is later verified in the assistance she receives amid her despair at Whitcross. She is led to the doorstep of the Rivers home by the light of a candle which she perceives through the rain, the bog, the marsh, the trees, and even the walls of the Rivers house. Once again she perceives beyond conventional limits, this time as a divine response to her desperate plea; "Oh Providence! Sustain me a little longer! Aid! – direct me!" (Bronte, 356). At these words, the influence of the supernatural emerges to again affect the strength of her consciousness.

Jane's communication with the supernatural that prompts her hasty departure from Thornfield conflates conventional notions of Christianity, such as Providence, with clear emblems of the natural world, such as the moon. Each form is receptive to Jane's interaction with this realm throughout the text. These dual influences blend traditional religious impulses with the modern appeal of Romanticism. This is yet another way to offer recognizable cues of sympathy to the contemporary reader, as each of these forces effectively moves Jane to emotional feeling and action. At this time they combine to lead Jane to Moor Head, where her relationship with her cousin St John would similarly push her to be moved by the force of an extra rational call. He is the opposite extreme of Rochester; an unsympathetic being who embodies the utilitarian method of Christianity that Brocklehurst had earlier espoused, a rigid form of self-denial. And in proposing marriage to Jane, he demands that she adopt this course as well. Jane, uncertain of whether a missionary life as St John's spouse is a part of God's will, again calls upon heaven for guidance, "'Show me the path!' I entreated of heaven" (Bronte, 444). Though earlier guided away from Rochester by the call of a divine voice, she would now be guided back to him by a similar call. While pondering whether to be St. John's wife, she is gripped by a paroxysm at her physical center; the beating of her heart. "My heart beat fast and thick: I heard its throb. Suddenly it stood to an inexpressible feeling that thrilled it through, and passed at once to my head and extremities…" (Bronte, 444). Amid this feeling, Jane hears the voice of Rochester calling for her through the distance, and she would ultimately journey away to find him.

A contrast of these two calls, the cry of the moon mother to leave Rochester, and the mystical call to return to him, will more clearly reveal Jane's personal interaction with the forces of the supernatural through sympathy. The urge to flee Thornfield is the culminating presentiment of foreboding which had revealed itself in earlier forms. It is distinct and personified in the figure of the moon, and is built upon concrete evidence; Jane's discovery of Rochester's marriage is the stimulant of the mystical demand. The cry to return to him though is far more personal. It is a call which Jane feels within herself, stopping the beat of her heart "to an inexpressible feeling that thrilled it through." But for all of its physical intimacy, this second call to return to Rochester is also quite obscure. The voice of Rochester calls for Jane, but does not give instruction as her earlier

presentiment had. Moreover, Jane does not know that Bertha Mason has died, nor can she be certain that Rochester would now be receptive to her quest for selfhood. She is blind to the circumstances which she fled, and must properly make a leap of faith to return. Immediately though, she dismisses the prospect of superstition as a source of this mysticism, despite the black phantom which appears at the gate as she follows the call. "This is not thy deception, nor thy witchcraft" she states, "it is the work of nature. She was roused, and did – no miracle – but her best." This mystical event is particular to Jane - St John does not hear it - and must be interpreted for meaning by Jane herself, which she does prior to embarking for Ferndean; "I mounted to my chamber; locked myself in; fell on my knees; and prayed in my way" (Bronte, 445). The noted change in the mystical calls she experiences, and her ways of deciphering its meanings, is a vivid mark of her growth as a figure of sympathy. It indicates her heightened awareness and reveals her readiness to become a sympathetic medium for another. In the midst of her indecision with St. John, the voice calls and she responds in action. The path of her submission has progressed to the point where she needs not instruction, but has faith accordingly to act with the will of the divine. This event marks the arrival of Jane's potential to become a mystical catalyst for sympathy, to cast upon another the sympathetic gaze that she received of Helen Burns.

It is important at this point to understand the full role of sympathy within the extra rational influence that overtakes Jane throughout the narrative. The discipline of Lowood, the gaze of Helen, the dreams of Thornfield, the demand of Providence, the call of Rochester, all build upon one another to compel the emotional stirring which grips Jane's body, and directs its movements. Sympathy in this process is shown to be the means by which Jane achieves the state of ascendancy necessary to receive and make sense of these feelings. Yet in this final case, it has yielded a new and heightened purpose, for it is not only the means but also the objective. In re-establishing her unity with Rochester through this extra perceptive Romantic call, Jane becomes for him the stimulus of intuition. When first speaking to the blind and disfigured Rochester at Ferndean, her voice is described to "waken the glow" of his features. Rochester responds,

> Oh, you are indeed there, my skylark! Come to me. You are not gone, not vanished? I heard one of your kind an hour ago, singing high over the wood; but its song had no music for me, any more than the rising sun had rays. All the melody on earth is concentrated in my Jane's tongue to my ear (I am glad it is not naturally a silent one); all the sunshine I can feel in her presence (Bronte, 464).

Rochester's attitude now shows his awareness that the reality of intuition he projects through Jane, transcends the ordinary vision that he has lost. The moment of her return inscribes in his consciousness what was already prefigured in Jane's interpretation of the divine, the archetypal sacrifice. This is certainly symbolized by his physical deformities borne of Thornfield's conflagration, but it is patently explicit in his new relationship with Jane. She was earlier led by Providence to sacrifice her own heart; when she leaves Rochester, she relinquished the most intimate and intuitive bond that she had ever shared. Now she is used as an instrument of the divine to affect the awareness of her beloved. She is led back to him by the guidance of intuition to instill him with a healthy regard for the unseen. Jane's return demonstrates her acquisition of a consciousness sufficient to understand its own meaning and purpose; to become for Rochester what Helen had been for her; a medium to connect with the unseen order. John P. Farrell puts it this way in his essay *Jane in Wonderland*: Jane has now "realized her own being by reading the signs of the world [and] is able to announce herself symbolically to the other. Into Rochester's parabolic emptiness [she] inserts herself as a presence. It is she who becomes for him, presentiment, sympathy, and sign" (Farrell, 36).

Her journey has now reached its apex of meaning. The bride who could not convincingly relate the foreboding of her dreams to Rochester, is now his spiritual advisor. The young girl who initially feared the force of the unseen, now arouses this presence in the life of another. The previous influence of sympathy upon her creates the present effect of sympathy through her, and this marks her grand achievement in the quest for salvation. This conclusion describes the fundamental thrust of the novel; sympathy is the feeling by which one may forge such a feeling within another. It is both subject and object; a sensation itself, and the bridge which allows one to create likewise experiences in others. The novel illustrates the extra-rational forces of the natural order influencing one character toward engendering a purely sympathetic relationship with another. The sympathy between Jane and Rochester is a call from the heart to the heart,

and specifically a call for the heart. Her union with him now supersedes that which they shared at Thornfield because they are not prevented from giving of themselves by fear or secrets, but instead are united in mutual respect of the other's selfhood. Jane instructs Rochester toward intuitive focus, just as Helen had done for her at Lowood. His blindness for the first two years of their marriage as Jane asserts, is "the circumstance which drew us so very near – that knit us so very close: for I was then his vision, I am still his right hand" (Bronte, 476). This relationship at the novel's conclusion embodies a hypothetical ideal in which each character sacrifices their ego for the dual purpose of their own development, and the acquisition of a transpersonal fate yet to be realized. What had earlier been demonstrated through the divine realm is now reenacted between them on the human level, and each has achieved a sufficient consciousness to understand its meaning.

Jane's journey toward salvation is unquestionably a Romantic one, as the narrative bears many symbols of this artistic movement. Reverence for nature and contentment in simplicity are certainly apparent, but most important it seems is the faith in emotional and intuitive guidance. The presentation of these elements is clearly revealed in the way that this novel is couched. The text is subtitled as an autobiography, which is very important to its influence; it functions much like confessional literature popularized in the 18th century. Bronte portrays the drama of confession in a way that passionately ties the reader's interest to the narrator's. Often Jane makes impassioned and direct overtures to the reader as means of connecting them, through referential exposure, to a figure behind the prose. In short, Jane as narrator presents a distinct object to which the reader may direct their passions. Susan Levin in her text Romantic Confessional Writing puts it this way: "Depending on language to set out a self… confessors can be seen as engaging in a basic statement about the creative potential of language, the idea that words create rather than reflect. They present the possibility that a confession necessitates a confessor, that this piece of writing authenticates the voice behind it" (Levin, 9). This manner of narration validates the reality of Jane as a figure that one may sympathize with. Through her direct address to the reader in revealing thoughts, feelings, fears and worries, she becomes more authentic to our consciousness. She is not merely a character in the writing, but a person behind the prose; and one can

more ably feel with her story since it relates a "real" circumstance.  But the novel, presented as Jane's autobiography, is a fiction that obscures real circumstance.  The story itself references the life of the author Charlotte Bronte.  Jane functions as narrator for Bronte to mirror the truth of her own life experiences.  Both Bronte and Jane Eyre attended boarding school, and each held passionate feelings for married men.  Such parallels signal Bronte's attempt to place her experiences within the text.  She uses an abstracted form, language and storytelling, to disguise concrete experiences of her past. Through Jane's story, and our vicarious experience of her life by reading it, we may likewise engage with the feelings of Bronte and experience the events which stimulated her production of the narrative.  Hence, Jane not only achieves an affect which allows her to become sympathy for Rochester, but in allowing us to feel with the history of the author, she is sympathy for the reader as well.

# CONCLUSION

This assessment demonstrates the experience of sympathy to be felt above all with great intensity and versatility. In the narratives, sympathetic emotion is triggered by numerous contexts. Between them it occurs in response to trauma, aesthetic judgment and pious devotion, consistently overtaking a figure through emotion they feel deeply within themselves. The final conclusion to be drawn from this study is that sympathy in each narrative, acts as a source of healing to those who partake in its experience. The common principle which connects these novels is that sympathy exists within them to assuage the despair felt in its absence. Although each story asserts these points in its own way, the link between them is centrally clear; the absence of sympathy prompts a disorder of sorts, and its presence promotes healing. This influence in the varied contexts of the stories, affects the attitudes and behaviors of its characters toward numerous states: the resolution of past conflicts, a greater sense of self-awareness, a restoration of lost amity, and even a supernatural cleansing which composes them in the face of tribulation. Although the novels reveal these paths of healing in different ways, and the ailments which are eased also vary quite greatly, the experience of sympathy in each text is shown to be conducive for the psychological and spiritual well-being of those involved.

In Beloved, the emotional consequence of physical trauma overwhelms the memories of those oppressed, but the arousal of sympathy among them provides strength and improvement in numerous ways. It instills courage in Denver to find her independence, it prompts Sethe's recognition of her own self-worth, and it galvanizes the community to assist the family in their lean circumstances. Fellow feeling alleviates the severe repercussions of a brutal past by soothing the effects of their psychological injury, which long outlasted their physical pain. Through sympathy the characters are able to embrace a hope for independence and contentment, a reality which had eluded so many of them throughout the tale. In Frankenstein, the evidence of sympathy as a form of healing is most apparent in the consequence of its absence. The characters in their thoughts and actions follow a course of increasing depravity without it, and on different occasions both Victor and his creature singularly crave sympathy as a panacea to their woes. This novel specifically portrays the promise of fellow feeling as a means to allay the grief that one experiences at its outright denial. Thus the tragic conditions of the

characters could be prevented, and their sorrows mollified, simply by the gesture to offer or receive sympathy in their moments of turmoil. In Jane Eyre, such feeling is presented as a device for healing through the intuitive relationship with the supernatural. This connection allows Jane to achieve the selfhood she sought throughout the text, and right her course in her relationship with Rochester, ultimately becoming the catalyst for his sympathetic identity. Such feelings in this text heal through the faculty of intuition, for despite the strong connection that she feels with Rochester throughout the narrative, it is not until they are drawn to one another with intuitive force that the transgressions of their past are dismissed, and they may freely unite in matrimony and spiritual harmony. Although there are stark differences between the novels in plot and subject matter, sympathy in each is indispensable to achieving progress and positive outcomes. The moments of triumph, hope, and reconciliation which culminate the emotion of these stories, are punctuated by different scenes and actions of sympathetic intensity.

Those events which inspire this emotion are properly occasions which progress our humanity. The stakes of such feeling in each novel is depicted along a range of intensity in which sympathy is offered or denied; and invariably, its absence leads to inhumanity while its presence is seen to humanize. Whether the inferior status of slaves, the debased state of Victor's creature, or the critical judgment of Jane in her residence at Gateshead, the figures denied sympathy are drawn as course, defiant, or not properly human. As such, the healing that sympathy provides is the enhancement of humanity for those affected. We may consider the susceptibility to this feeling as a naturally human tendency, but more appropriately it is a humanizing tendency. The offer and reception of the feeling creates the possibility of family, community, and society in general, but these larger effects exist only by this particular influence upon persons. Sympathy is humanizing primarily because the prospect of feeling with another carries with it the urge to focus one's future thoughts, judgments and actions by the emotional discoveries of the present. This leads to greater individual introspection and ultimately a greater self awareness.

With this type of influence, the effects of sympathy are certainly not relegated to the imagined situations of fictional characters, but they also subsist in the consciousness of every reader of these texts. Sympathy not only pervades the action of the stories, but

also asserts the purpose of their existence. By engaging with the narrative, readers cultivate their feelings and investigate their attitudes, and so heal the distress of those afflicted by similar obstacles within the story, or wholly obviate the potential frustrations of those who are not. The lessons to be gained from reading are offered as the same results which occur for the figures of the narratives; the prospect of healing and growth through the experience of sympathy. Readers feel in the process of reading the novels, and lessons are instilled which mirror those that the characters are subject to learn, but at a far less expensive price. In this way characters are symbols for the potential judgments and feelings undertaken by the reader. The effect of sympathy for these figures is objective and particular to the hindrance they face, but the influence that may be gleaned by the reader is absolutely subjective, affecting them according to sensations they experience in their reading. We approach the examination of novels with personal beliefs, attitudes, values and judgments; and the embodied feeling of our perusal reflects these characteristics and directs our experience of sympathy in the moment. Given the observation of the feelings and actions invoked in the characters, the reader, through their moments of emotion, are led to investigate the values and attitudes they hold. In this way, the examination of such narratives enlightens readers about the factors which most genuinely define them. In a word, one may gain a personal measure of healing or self-awareness through the very action of reading such novels.

Sympathy is shown in numerous ways to refine our humanity. It is a force which can move an individual in every part of their being, from the daunting sensations of bodily emotion, to the ethereal forces of the soul. This collection of novels illustrates the expansive influence of this feeling, from the body to the mind, and the mind to the spirit. Through the medium of literature these influences are expanded further as a reader is moved to feel with the scenes of the narrative, and so become involved in the assemblage of feeling. It is no wonder that sympathy is often considered the height of human affections. As feeling with another allows us to gain a greater discovery of ourselves, by perceiving the events of the novel with sympathy, we may grasp the same healing and self awareness which its characters find, and gain its benefits in our own lives.

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Frederick Owens was born and raised in Miami, Florida. His undergraduate and graduate studies were undertaken at Florida State University where he received a B.A. in Creative Writing and General Communications in 2001, and an M.A. in Humanities in 2004. He currently teaches Humanities and Literature courses at Tallahassee Community College in a faculty position which he has held since 2005.