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CHAPTER ONE

Grotesque Bodies: Hybridity and Focalization in Victor Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris*

A month after the publication of Victor Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris* (1821), an unnamed reviewer for the politically conservative Parisian newspaper *Le Figaro* wrote that, if novelistic unity is what you want, 'n'en cherchez pas dans l'oeuvre de M. Hugo' (Review 2). What one finds in the novel instead, the reviewer insists, is 'a frightening phantasmagoria or a show of simple-minded fools, a circle of witches, a mystery, a nightmare, a deed without name'[1] that leaves readers 'stunned, dazed, confused … as in a dream or attack of vertigo' (2).[2] The reviewer lists two main grievances: first, Hugo's blending of medieval history with melodrama and, second, the novel's multiple focalizations, of which he claims there are 'no end' (2).[3] But to an anonymous reviewer for the more liberal *Journal des débats politiques et littéraires*, *Notre-Dame de Paris*'s multiple focalizations prove Hugo's artistry: the reviewer describes how Hugo's 'scrutinizing glance' reveals a 'profound knowledge' of 'the crowd, the mob, of men who are vain, empty, glorious, beggars, vagabonds, scholars, sensualists; … of the heart of a young woman and the core of a mother, of the boiling passions of a delirious mind,' all of which Hugo 'manipulates

1 'C'est une effroyable fantasmagorie ou un concert de bienheureux; une ronde de sorcières, un mystère, un cauchemar, une œuvre sans nom.'
2 'lorsque vous arrivez à la fin, étourdi, ébloui, confus, vous voyez tout tourner autour de vous comme dans un rêve ou un vertige.'
3 'D'unité de cette sorte, n'en cherchez pas dans l'œuvre de M. Hugo; l'un vous nommerait la Esmeralda; l'autre Claude Frollo; un troisième l'église Notre-Dame; un autre peut-être, le monstre Quasimodo; ce serait n'en pas finir.'

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according to his will throughout' ('Oeuvres' 4).[4] Both reviewers are right. Hugo's novel does not contain formal unity—but this lack of unity crucially underpins its artistic purpose; indeed, as I will argue, the disunity not only contributes to its aesthetic and political aims, but also suggests how the novel 'thinks,' as Nancy Armstrong might say, about disability.

In *Notre-Dame de Paris*, disability overtly functions as both grotesque and tragic spectacle. The novel opens with the celebrations of Epiphany 1482 in Paris and then follows the interconnecting stories of a dramatist-turned-vagabond, a disreputable knight, a virgin gypsy girl, a lecherous priest, a debauched young student, an insane hermitess, and—the most-remembered character of the novel—in the words of his mockers, a 'hunchbacked … bandy-legged … one-eyed … deaf' bell-ringer, Quasimodo (45). Quasimodo, raised by the priest Claude Frollo, lives entirely in Notre-Dame Cathedral as its bell-ringer. At the Epiphany festival that opens the novel, a crowd elects him the Pope of Fools due to his grotesque appearance. Claude Frollo lusts after the gypsy Esmeralda, who falls in love with the heartless knight, Phoebus, but marries (in name only) the dramatist Gringoire. Frollo then schemes to have Esmeralda arrested and sentenced to be hanged for witchcraft and the attempted murder of Phoebus (neither of which she committed). In an iconic scene, repeated in stage adaptations, movie versions, and countless parodies, Quasimodo—with shouts of 'Sanctuary! Sanctuary!'—rescues Esmeralda and takes her to the cathedral.[5] Esmeralda escapes the cathedral and then discovers that she is the long-lost daughter of Sister Gudule, the hermitess: when Esmeralda was a baby, gypsies stole her and left Quasimodo in her place. However, in the very moment Esmeralda and her mother reunite, she is recaptured by knights and later executed due to more of Frollo's scheming. While watching her execution from the towers of the cathedral, Quasimodo realizes that Frollo orchestrated Esmeralda's death and so pushes him off the tower to his death. The novel resumes two years in the future, inside a crypt where readers find Esmeralda's

4 'Mais style et magie de l'art, facilité, souplesse et abondance pour tout dire, regard scrutateur pour tout démêler, connaissance profond de la foule, de la cohue, de l'homme vain, vide, glorieux, mendiant, vagabond, savant, sensuel; … coeur de jeune fille, entrailles de mère, bouillonnement dans un cerveau viril de passions poussées au délire, l'auteur possède et manie à son gré tout cela.'

5 Charles Laughton's hallmark performance of this scene in the 1939 *Hunchback of Notre Dame* cemented it in our cultural consciousness and provided the foundation on which the latter parodies were based.

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corpse wrapped in Quasimodo's skeleton, which disintegrates when touched. The intertwining multiple plots of *Notre-Dame* are thus framed by Quasimodo's disabled body, in the opening as an emblem of Gothic grotesquery and in the closing as one of melodramatic tragedy.

Understandably, Ruskin blames *Notre-Dame de Paris* for the Victorian British literary obsession with disfigured and diseased bodies, calling Hugo's novel 'the effectual head of the whole cretinous school' ('Fiction, Fair and Foul' 949). Ruskin is right: the wild success of *Notre-Dame de Paris* in the English-speaking world—evidenced by four editions of three English translations by 1840,[6] several popular stage adaptations, including *Esmeralda; or, The Deformed of Notre Dame* (1834) and *Quasimodo; or, The Gipsey Girl of Notre Dame* (1836), both of which opened in London long before Hugo's own operatic stage version (Swydzky 471), and the 1833 adoption of the term *Quasimodo* to refer to an ugly person[7]—testifies to the novel's impact on the English imagination within its first decade of publication. But Ruskin's identification of Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris* as the *urtext* of body-focused fiction further implies that this impact resonated in the Victorian conceptualization of the disabled body's place in fiction. In this chapter, I investigate the novel's structural method of representing bodily difference and reflect on its importance in determining Victorian fiction's representations of disability. Ultimately, I argue that *Notre-Dame de Paris* set a precedent in Victorian fiction for investigating the disabled body through narrative form and focalization.

In claiming that Hugo's novel affected the shape of the Victorian novel, I follow the path of Ian Duncan, who suggests that Hugo's novel provides 'the generative prototype of what would become a distinctively Victorian kind of fiction' (11), one influenced by contemporary philosophical and scientific debates that destabilized human identity. Duncan argues that this instability of human identity materialized in what he calls 'the sublime strain of fiction' by means of 'a grotesque or monstrous deformation of realist norms of human nature' (17). He contends that *Notre-Dame de Paris* and the 'sublime' Victorian novels that follow it are 'premised upon the deformation, mutation

6 Ian Duncan counts four translations, but he mistakenly deems the 1840 Charles Daly single-volume edition a new translation, when it is merely an uncredited reproduction of William Hazlitt's. Kenneth Ward Hooker and John Sturrock likewise claim four translations before 1839 (30, 11), but neither lists titles or publishers.

7 This phrase appears in *The Oriental Observer*'s translation of Pierre-François Ladvocat's *Le Livre Des Cent-et-Un* in its September 7, 1833 issue.

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or dissolution of the human' (11), both thematically and formally. He explains that Hugo's novel marks 'the rise of a modern kind of fiction that is … formally *inhuman*,' bred by the 'changing demographies [*sic*] of readership and modes of literary production': 'a mass reading public' and the 'shapeless infinitude' of serial mechanized production (Duncan 17). As such, the 'overcrowded, tumultuous, polyglot' Victorian environment manifests in the 'excessive internal heterogeneity' of the era's multi-character, multi-plot novel form (Duncan 16–17). *Articulating Bodies* takes Duncan's argument as foundation for its formalist readings of nineteenth-century disability narratives in general, analysing the 'indefinite' and 'heterogeneous' form of Victorian novels (Duncan 16) to uncover how Victorian narrative structure articulates bodies. In this chapter, I argue that Hugo uses authorial, external focalization (that is, narrative focused through a perspective outside the narrative action) to portray the disabled body as inherently deviant and different; however, through strategic internal focalization through characters within the narrative, the novel also destabilizes the boundaries between normativity and disability. Moreover, its overall structure, which hybridizes disparate genres, enables the dialogic conflict of these two opposing voices. *Notre-Dame* thus provides a structural prototype whereby Victorian novels approached bodies deemed deviant.

In making this argument, this chapter primarily uses Frederic Shoberl's 1833 English translation, which helped to popularize the novel in Britain, referring to Hugo's original French only for necessary clarifications.[8] At the urging of an early review by *The Literary Gazette* (Review 713), Shoberl's translation slightly bowdlerized Hugo's original, cutting a few blasphemies (such as the two expurgated from the Cour des Miracles scene discussed below) and overtly sexual references 'which, though not startling to our continental neighbours, would offend the severer taste of the English reader' (Shoberl xiii–xiv). Nonetheless, I chose it as the base text for this analysis rather than William Hazlitt's less popular *Notre-Dame: A Tale of the 'Ancien Régime'* (1833) or Foster and Hextall's serialized *La Esmeralda, or, The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1839).[9] Shoberl's more affordable and

8 I use the Garnier Frères 1844 edition for the French. This edition includes the February 1831 *ΑΝΑΓΚΗ* preface, the October 1832 note added to the text, and the three 'missing' chapters, 'Impopularité,' 'Abbas Beati Martini,' and 'Ceci Tuera Cela,' added in 1832, none of which were included in the Hazlitt, Shoberl, or *The Novelist* translations.

9 This unsigned translation was published in six parts in Foster and Hextall's *The Novelist: A Collection of the Standard Novels*.

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illustrated edition was aimed at a wider audience than Hazlitt's expensive and essentially unillustrated one,[10] and at a more educated audience than the Foster and Hextall pennyblood edition.[11] Most importantly, Shoberl's translation gave the story its standard English name—*The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*—recentring the multi-plot novel on the deformity of a single character rather than on the cathedral's looming presence. Kenneth Ward Hooker argues that this change in title reflects publisher Richard Bentley's 'knowledge of English taste' as well as his wisdom in broadening the novel's audience: 'For the antiquaries [attracted to Hazlitt's subtitle, *A Tale of the 'Ancien Regime'*] were outnumbered perhaps a hundred to one by the readers who were just looking for a good story: and these latter were certain to concentrate their attention on the human (or monstrous) characters anyway' (35). The edition's affordability, popular retitling, and minor censorship to accommodate English prudery, as well as its positive reviews and reprintings,[12] lead me to believe that Shoberl's translation was the most influential edition in popularizing Hugo's novel in England.

Hybridity, Disability, and the 'Modern' Novel

In the 'Preface to Cromwell,' his 1827 manifesto of art and literature, Hugo claims that the ideal modern literature employs a realism that 'results from the wholly natural combination of two types, the sublime and the grotesque, which meet in the drama, as they meet in life and in creation' (373). Modern literature, he explains, represents the culmination of the aesthetics of the ode and the epic, which focused only on the sublime. Accordingly, drama, *the* literature of the modern period, includes the grotesque; drama 'is the grotesque in conjunction with the sublime, the soul within the body; it is tragedy beneath comedy' (403). Lennard J. Davis argues that before the nineteenth century, 'the grotesque as a visual form was inversely related to the concept of the ideal' and thus 'permeated culture and signified the norm'; in

10 This edition contained a single picture of Hugo, but no illustrations of the plot itself.

11 See Marie Léger-St-Jean's Price *One Penny: A Database of Cheap Literature* and Louis James's *Fiction for the Working Man 1830–1850* for information on Foster and Hextall's *The Novelist* series, which published *La Esmeralda*.

12 For example, in 1856 Thomas Hodgson published as number 151 in the Parlour Library Series an uncredited direct replication of Bentley's first edition of the Shoberl translation, excluding the illustrations and the 'Sketch of the Life and Writings of Victor Hugo.'

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contrast, the modern concept of disability 'was formulated as by definition excluded from culture, society, the norm' (*Enforcing Normalcy* 25). However, Hugo's concept of the grotesque indicates a transition between these two modes of conceptualizing the corporeally different: in the 'Preface,' the grotesque is both abnormal and, as a part of nature, normal. I argue that in his aesthetic theory and in *Notre-Dame de Paris*, the disabled body functions in a formally similar way.

The grotesque, Hugo clarifies, represents 'the deformed, the ugly' (374), 'the body,' 'comedy,' 'evil,' and 'darkness,' whereas the sublime represents 'the soul,' 'tragedy,' 'good,' and 'light' (363, 403). However, according to Hugo, in superior modern literature, the beautiful and the ugly are paradoxically distinct but connected, separate but mingled, contrary but harmonious, and capable of 'fruitful union,' unlike the purely sublime arts of the ancient Greeks (364). He suggests that, since 'the grotesque is one of the supreme beauties of the drama' (375), the grotesque itself can be the sublime. Moreover, he insists that 'true poetry, complete poetry' (373), like nature, 'mingl[es] in its creations but without confounding them darkness and light, the grotesque and the sublime' (362–63). At a basic level, *Notre-Dame de Paris* exhibits Hugo's ideal of the 'fruitful union' of grotesque and sublime. That is to say, Quasimodo and Esmeralda allegorically represent the grotesque and the sublime, respectively, and Quasimodo manifests Hugo's theory regarding the sublimity of the grotesque: at his first appearance in the text, he reveals his 'sublimely monstrous grimace' to the crowd at the festival of Fools (43), and at the famous moment when Quasimodo saves Esmeralda from the gallows, he is 'really beautiful' (311). As such, the novel constitutes a 'breaking down of surface oppositions' of the grotesque and the sublime (Masters-Wicks 59).

However, Hugo simultaneously sustains the paradoxical concepts of grotesque and sublime throughout the hybrid generic conventions that he employs in the novel's form. According to Victor Brombert, hybridity—that is, a 'mixture … and processes of becoming'—is the key element of the grotesque in Hugo's aesthetic theory (51), since Hugo claims that 'to be incomplete is the best way to be harmonious' ('Preface' 363). Brombert and many other critics see *Notre-Dame* as ultimately a hybrid text that combines conventions of melodrama and the Gothic (most obviously, flat characters such as a lecherous priest and a beautiful virgin), with lengthy philosophical asides contemplating Parisian architecture and medieval history. Opposing the critics who try to unify the novel's melodramatic plot with its '"art-historical" context,' Zarifopol-Johnston argues that *Notre-Dame*'s 'structure is not one of unity-in-diversity but of willed diversity, of mixture' ('The

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Cathedral in the Book' 22, 29). She also argues that the cathedral—which Hugo describes as a hybrid of architectural styles and eras—and Quasimodo (whose name, the narrator points out, literally translates to 'almost' or 'incomplete')[13] echo the novel's hybrid aesthetic ('The Cathedral in the Book' 25).

The novel's form is likewise hybrid, since it 'allows plot, character, theme, history, melodrama, rhetoric and scene to appear as separate and distinct building blocks' while also 'us[ing] a poetic process to weave all of them together into a complex tissue of signifying relations' (Chaitin 39). That is, the novel's hybrid form holds the genres as both separate (as 'distinct building blocks') and connected (as 'a complex tissue'). Similarly, in 'Preface to Cromwell,' Hugo divides the grotesque from the sublime but simultaneously unites the two as inseparable: he depicts the grotesque as 'the body' and the sublime as 'the soul,' but also insists, 'All things are connected' ('Preface' 363). Because Hugo's theory of aesthetics simultaneously divides and unites the grotesque and the sublime, *Notre-Dame*'s form is likewise divided (into multiple plots, into philosophical treatises, into melodrama, into comedy, and so on) but single as a 'complex tissue of signifying relations' (Chaitin 39).

Combining genres also causes the novel to be 'incomplete' and thus 'harmonious' by removing conventional closures. Isabel Roche notes that, while the novel employs conventions of melodrama—the long-lost child and the changeling motif, for example—those motifs do not act to 'reinforce ethical truths' of good and evil as they would in traditional melodrama (7), but instead 'most often yield instability and uncertainty' (38): for example, Esmeralda and Sister Gudule's 'recognition scene' ends in their tragic deaths rather than in the happy mother-daughter reunion that melodramatic convention promises (38–39). Similarly, Myriam Roman spots an unfulfilled fairy tale in the novel, in which Esmeralda 'restera Cendrillon,' and the beast, Quasimodo, 'ne se transformera pas en prince' (371). That nearly all the subsequent adaptations of *Notre-Dame*, even Hugo's own opera

13 Hugo refers to the Italian *quasi*, meaning 'almost, nearly' ('Quasi') and *modo*, meaning 'way' or 'manner' ('Modo'), when he writes that Claude Frollo 'baptized his adopted child and named him Quasimodo, either to commemorate the day on which he had found him [Quasimodo Sunday], or to express the incomplete and scarcely finished state of the poor little creature' (138–39). Quasimodo Sunday, however, gets its name from the opening words of the Introit prayer scheduled for the second Sunday after Easter, *Quasi modo geniti infantes*, 'as [if only] newborn babes' ('Quasimodo Sunday').

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staging, alter the ending to fulfil the generic conventions of melodrama and romance—usually these endings give Phoebus a change of heart and marry him off to Esmeralda—emphasizes just how 'incomplete' the novel seems due to its hybrid mixture of plots and genres.[14]

Hugo's final chapters further accentuate the arrested (or perverted) development of the genres combined in the novel. The last two chapters' titles imply a comedic ending: 'Mariage de Phoebus' and 'Mariage de Quasimodo,' recalling Pierre Beaumarchais's comic play (1778) and Mozart's comic opera (1786), *Le Mariage de Figaro*. However, the content of the chapters denies those endings. In the former, the narrator describes Gringoire's several career changes, calling them 'silly pursuits' (464) or 'folies' in the original French (482), a term with comic connotations ('*Folies*. C.2.c'). Gringoire's final *folie*, the narrator tells us, is choosing to write tragedies, which Gringoire punningly describes as 'coming to a tragic end' (464). The narrator then ends the chapter by joking, 'Phoebus de Chateaupers likewise "came to a tragic end": he married' (464). The final chapter, 'Quasimodo's Marriage,' is a tragedy with the title of a comedy: it depicts men finding in a crypt what is presumably Esmeralda's skeleton (identified only by her necklace and shreds of dress) wrapped in the embrace of what is presumably Quasimodo's (identified only by its crooked spine, sunken head, and uneven legs). Therefore, in these two chapters, Hugo both provides *and* denies the endings required to make the novel either a tragedy or a comedy. Duncan refers to this fragmentary nonfulfillment of conventions as 'Hugo's audacious refusal to close the gaps' and argues that *Notre-Dame*'s hybrid, 'monstrous' form reflects what was beginning to be seen as humanity's nearly monstrous, non-human state (17, 11).

As the novel's form proves simultaneously incomplete and harmonious, divided but single, so does the novel's understanding of disability, which is likewise in a hybrid 'process of becoming' (Brombert 51). If one were to base a reading of disability in *Notre-Dame* solely on Hugo's claim that 'to be incomplete is the best way to be harmonious,' one might be tempted to argue that, since the novel depicts disability as a state of being incomplete—Hugo refers to Quasimodo's body as 'un corps manqué' (42), literally both 'a spoiled body' and 'a body lacking something'—the novel must privilege the disabled body as being 'the best way to be harmonious.' But Hugo's simultaneous division and

14 For more on how the adaptations reinforce norms by following the 'domestic melodrama' trajectory, see Lissette Lopez Szwydky's 'Victor Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris* on the Nineteenth-Century London Stage.'

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conflation of the sublime and the grotesque are more telling. This simultaneity implies that two conflicting ideas can coexist within a single aesthetic or piece of art, in the same way that Mikhail Bakhtin argued many years later that an 'utterance' from a single speaker can contain 'mixed within it two utterances, two speech manners, two styles, two "languages," two semantic and axiological belief systems'—a narrative technique he calls 'hybrid construction' (304). *Notre-Dame*'s hybrid structure, combining melodrama, Gothicism, history, philosophy, poetry, and epic, is likewise heteroglossic, as are the themes that the structure conveys. For example, Jeffrey Spires contends that *Notre-Dame de Paris* is both linear, with 'clearly-defined temporal progression' in the melodramatic plot (40), and cyclical, with repetitions of history indicated in the political plot and digressions (42); he reads the novel's hybrid form as indicating both a desire for political progression and a 'conservative nostalgia for circularity' (44).

The frequent digressions on architecture in the novel reveal a similar tension, one that is deeply tied to the body and to Gothicism. Here I briefly return to Ruskin, this time to his essay *On the Nature of Gothic Architecture* (1854). To Ruskin, the appeal of the Gothic lies in its emphasis on individuality and imagination, and he exhorts those who see Gothic architecture as flawed to 'examine once more those ugly goblins, and formless monsters, and stern statues' and see in them 'signs of the life and liberty of every workman who struck the stone; a freedom of thought, and rank in scale of being, such as no laws, no charters, no charities can secure' (9). Ironically, the very characteristics of architecture that he praises as supporting the ideals of democracy—variation, formlessness, changeability—he disparages in 'Fiction, Fair and Foul' as repugnant in fictional human bodies.

Like Ruskin, Hugo also expresses contradictory impulses towards and away from the Gothic aesthetic in *Notre-Dame*. In a lengthy description of Notre-Dame Cathedral as it stood in 1833, Hugo's narrator denigrates the refurbishments made after the medieval era in which the cathedral last manifested its supposedly pristine Gothic state. The narrator describes the building in terms of physical disability, as a 'disfigure[d] Gothic architecture' (101), as bearing 'injuries,' 'warts,' 'mutilations,' and 'wrinkles' caused by 'time,' 'revolutions,' and 'the fashions' (101); to renovate the cathedral is to 'amputate' it and 'cover the wound with [a] large plaster of lead' (101). Surprisingly, however, the narrator also speaks of the cathedral's nineteenth-century state using terminology of the Gothic aesthetic with which Hugo praised modern art in the 'Preface to Cromwell': the renovations are 'more and more silly and grotesque' (101) and, in its present state, the cathedral

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'is not what may be called a complete building' (102) but is 'a transition edifice' (103), whose body, like a Frankenstein's monster of plaster and stone, has 'the head of one [epoch], the limbs of another, the trunk of a third, and something of them all' (104), 'blended, combined, amalgamated' (104). The narrator here derides in architecture the novel's very form—hybrid, grotesque, transitional, and unfinished. Brombert argues that the drive towards historical preservation one sees in these detailed depictions of Parisian architecture reveals a politically '"conservative" impulse' (56). I argue instead that we can vividly sense in them a heteroglossia that conveys opposing voices—regarding politics, aesthetics, and the human body all at once. This fluctuating incongruity, visible in form and theme, characterizes how *Notre-Dame de Paris*—and the Victorian novels that followed it—encode disability as a negotiation of what normalcy and difference are and may become.

Hugo develops this negotiation of disability not only at the macro level of plot structure and generic conventions, but also at the micro level through focalization, with which he both distinguishes and blends the subject and the other. By shifting between internal and external focalization, *Notre-Dame de Paris* both establishes and destabilizes the division between self and other that relies on classifying the disabled body as distinctly deviant. Notably, the novel very rarely focalizes through Quasimodo, its most disabled character; instead, it shifts between authoritative external focalization that interprets the bodies of characters (particularly that of Quasimodo) as signs of wickedness or innocence, and internal character focalization that perceives through those bodies (particularly Gringoire's, Phoebus's, and Frollo's). Strikingly, Hugo stresses readerly identification with the focalizer; however, he also denies readerly subjectivity through moments of focalization in which the perceiver is unable to categorize his or her surroundings. In addition, as I demonstrate below, Shoberl's translation often intensifies English readers' experience of focalization by translating the vague French pronoun *on* as either 'you' or the imperative voice rather than in the nearer English equivalents, either 'one' or the passive voice. The novel's shifts in focalization create ambiguity about disability and somatic interpretation, reflecting the era's developing and conflicted understanding of disability.

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Focalization: Externally Authoritative or Internally Ambiguous

Hugo uses focalization in *Notre-Dame* to challenge the reader's perception of subjectivity by directly calling for them to share the focalization of the novels' characters. Within the first pages of *Notre-Dame*, the narrator invites the reader to share the perspective of a crowd of medieval spectators celebrating Epiphany in Paris's Palace of Justice on January 6, 1482: 'If it is agreeable to the reader, we will endeavour to retrace in our imagination the impressions of which he [the reader] would have felt with us on crossing the threshold of the great hall' (3).[15] Shoberl's translation of the imagined impressions especially stresses the embodied state of his readers: 'In the first place, how one's ears are stunned with the noise!—how one's eyes are dazzled!' he writes (3), whereas Hugo's text reads, 'Et d'abord, bourdonnement dans les oreilles, éblouissement dans les yeux' (7). Shoberl's choice to translate the impersonal French (*les oreilles/yeux*) with a more personal and emphatic 'one's ears/eyes' with exclamation points moves the language a step closer to personalization and thus acts to attach even further the anglophone reader to the textually configured body—or the body created, as Hugo puts it, 'par la pensée' (7).[16] Either way, Hugo's invitation to the reader to focalize as a spectator of events immediately signals the structural importance of focalization to the novel and its thematic purposes, in particular its relation to the reader's subjectivity.

Moreover, Hugo frequently calls on the reader's participation in focalization, writing 'Qu'on se figure' six times and 'Qu'on se représante' four times, as well as phrases such as 'Qu'on rêve, si l'on peut' (44) or 'Qu'on arrange ces choses comme on pourra' (230). Shoberl tends to translate these phrases in the imperative, telling readers to 'Imagine such an object, if you can' (43); he even calls directly on the reader, saying, 'The reader must reconcile these things as well as he can' (201). At times, Hugo, too, directly addresses 'le lecteur' and uses the imperative; in the chapter 'Paris à Vol D'oiseau,' or 'Bird's Eye View of Paris,' he charges readers to 'reconstruisez-le [Paris] dans votre pensée, regardez le jour à travers cette haie surprenante d'aiguilles … et assistez à l'éveil des carillons' (127–28), or, as

15 'Si le lecteur y consent, nous essaierons de retrouver par la pensée l'impression qu'il eût éprouvée avec nous en franchissant le seuil de cette grand-salle' (7).

16 Hazlitt's translation personalizes this even further, saying 'our ears' and 'our eyes' (I.12).

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Shoberl translates, 'build up and put together again in imagination the Paris of the fifteenth century; look at the light through that surprising host of steeples … and listen to the awaking of the bells' (127–28). By continually hailing the reader's capacity to imagine, to see, and to hear, Hugo not only creates a textual, perceiving body for his readers, but he also repeatedly aligns his readers with the focalized perceptions that the narrator adopts.

However, as Roman notes, throughout the novel, the narrator's focal perceptions shift between external focalization, in which the narrator describes 'from behind'[17]—meaning the perspective comes from outside characters' bodies and minds, and outside the story itself—and internal focalization, in which the narrative is perceived through characters *within* the story (2). By placing the reader's body in the text as analysed above, especially so early and repeatedly throughout the text, the narrator encourages the reader to adopt the perspective of each character through whom the narrator focalizes—even when that character's beliefs and attitudes are morally flawed, as they frequently are, since the narrator internally focalizes most frequently through the novel's most despicable characters: the self-interested playboy Phoebus, the lecherous priest Claude Frollo, and the pontificating dramatist Pierre Gringoire. I argue that as the focalization shifts between external and internal, so does the text's position shift concerning the interpretability of the body: typically, the novel's externally focalized narration frequently insists on authoritative categorization and explanation of bodies (in particular of deviant bodies), whereas internally focalized narration often ambiguously denies the authority of somatic interpretation and the stability of division between abnormal and normal.

Two chapters of *Notre-Dame* especially exemplify this tension inherent in the novel's use of focalization: 'Bird's Eye View of Paris' and 'Coup d'Oeil Impartial Sur l'Ancienne Magistrature'[18] or 'The Ancient Administration of Justice.' Hugo's chapter titles distinctly highlight the importance of perspective and of the focal view that

17 She uses the phrase 'par derrière,' which Genette applies to zero focalization (what is often called 'omniscient narration') in particular rather than to external (Niederhoff 115). Like Roman, I will be using the term *external focalization* in Mieke Bal's sense, which includes both *external* and *zero* focalization in Genette's theory, in spite of Niederhoff's disapproval of Bal's usage. For further discussion of the term *focalization*, see my Introduction.

18 This translates as 'An Impartial Glance at the Ancient Administration of Justice.'

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readers share. The first, 'Bird's Eye View,' is one of Hugo's historical and architectural treatises on medieval Paris. The chapter describes the cityscape of fifteenth-century Paris as seen from the roof of Notre-Dame Cathedral. Notably, the narrator refers to the shape of medieval Paris's three main districts, 'the City, the University, and the Ville' (109), as the city's 'physiognomy' (108),[19] applying a specifically eighteenth- and nineteenth-century science of reading bodies and faces to the imagined sight of fifteenth-century Paris. Having called on readers to share this imagined perspective from the top of the cathedral, the narrator describes the physical response the sight would inspire:

> The spectator, on arriving breathless at that elevation, was dazzled by the chaos of roofs, chimneys, streets, bridges, belfries, towers, and steeples. All burst at once upon the eye the carved gable, the sharp roof, the turret[,] … the stone pyramid of the eleventh century, the slated obelisk of the fifteenth, the round and naked keep of the castle, the square and embroidered tower of the church, the great and the small, the massive and the light. The eye was long bewildered amidst this labyrinth of heights and depths in which there was nothing but had its originality, its reason, its genius. (112)

In this passage, readers share an internal focalization with the imagined spectator, and rather than easily interpreting Paris's physiognomy, the imagined reader is passively acted upon by it, 'dazzled by the chaos' and 'long bewildered' by the simultaneity and multitudinous differences in shape and time (round vs square, great vs small, eleventh vs fifteenth century). However, the narrator continues by resituating the spectator's eye as active, saying, 'the eye began to reduce this tumult of edifices to some kind of order' (112). At this point, the narrator then shifts to a bodiless external focalization and delineates the architectural character of each district within the city, reading their buildings as 'the hieroglyphics of the feudal system' (113). Thus, the narrative oscillates between embodied bewilderment (including bewilderment about bodies) in internal focalization and disembodied authority in external focalization.

The oscillation between confused internal focalization and authoritative external focalization manifests itself allegorically in 'The Ancient Administration of Justice,' the chapter in which Quasimodo

19 In Hugo's French, 'leur physionomie' (111).

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is tried for attempting to kidnap Esmeralda. The allegory undermines the presumed authority of external focalization by having Master Florian, the deaf judge who 'hears' Quasimodo's case, represent the authority of the novel's external focalization while Quasimodo represents the confusion of the novel's internally focalized perspective. The chapter opens by focalizing through the narrator, who claims here to know less than the characters being described. The narrator invites readers to speculate about the reasons for the 'dogged ill-humour' of Messire d'Estouteville, the court provost, and offers a 'gloomy' sky, a tight belt, the sight of 'ragamuffins,' or foreknowledge of a coming pay cut as options (156). However, the narrator concludes that 'The reader has his choice; for our own parts we are inclined to believe that he was in an ill-humour merely because he was in an ill-humour' (156), joking that 'judges in general arrange matters so that the days on which they have to perform their judicial functions are their days of ill-humour, that they may be sure to have somebody on whom they can conveniently vent it in the name of the king, of the law, and of justice' (157). The narrator here openly reveals a predisposition to consider the medieval judicial system unjust, rendering the 'impartial glance' in the chapter's French title ironic.

Florian (the deaf judge) also lacks impartiality—and in depicting him the narrator mocks the link between impartiality and the inability to see found in the often-blindfolded Roman goddess, Justicia:[20] Florian 'threw back his head and half closed his eyes, to give himself a look of the more majesty and impartiality, so that at that moment he was both deaf and blind—a two-fold condition without which there is no perfect judge' (160). What keeps Florian from being just and impartial is not his deafness, however, but rather his pretence of hearing and his assumption of authority based on the context of how *he* perceives the trial. To assert his control, Florian denies his body—not only by pretending to be hearing, but also by closing his eyes during the case—and thus denies his own confusion regarding the trial. During the trial, Florian asks several questions, which Quasimodo, who is also deaf, does not answer because he cannot hear them. Pretending that he has heard answers, Florian asks the clerk if he has 'taken down the prisoner's answers thus far' (160). This provokes from the audience laughter 'so vehement, so loud, so contagious, so universal,

20 According to Jacques de Ville, images of Justicia as blindfolded first appeared in the late fifteenth century; they and subsequent images of blindfolds and justice in the sixteenth century could refer either to the impartiality of justice or the foolishness of judges (351–52).

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that neither of the deaf men could help noticing it' (160). Denying his deafness and confusion to maintain authority, Florian assumes that a disrespectful response from Quasimodo has caused the laughter and so charges him with contempt of justice.

Quasimodo, in contrast, refrains from judgement; as the narrator notes, he 'alone preserved his gravity, for this very sufficient reason, that he had not the least notion of what was passing around him' (161). Quasimodo does not deny his body (in part because his low social position and people's responses to his extreme physical difference mean that he cannot), and as such he is aware of and accepts his own confusion and his inability to understand the bodies of those around him. However, his confusion breeds further confusion: when Quasimodo later realizes that d'Estouteville has asked him questions, he gives inappropriate answers—his name, occupation, and age—to answer the question of what brought him to court. D'Estouteville, unaware of the deafness of both parties, interprets these answers as further impertinence and adds to the bell-ringer's sentence.

What this scene depicts, then, is the failure of the judge's and provost's authoritative and disembodied (from the denial of deafness) perspective to interpret and control Quasimodo, whose perspective is confused and embodied. Thus, the allegory implies that both the externally and internally focalized perspectives are faulty. Ironically, while this situation would seem to undermine the authority of the narrator's frequent external focalization and thus privilege the internal focalization's somatic confusion, the narrator maintains throughout the chapter that its judgements of the court's injustice and ineptitude prove true. Moreover, the narrator repeatedly makes externally focalized statements in the chapter that authoritatively interpret and categorize bodies: for example, 'Every hunchback holds his head erect, every stammerer is fond of making speeches, every deaf person talks in a low tone' (160). Thus, the chapter preserves the conservative and progressive voices in dialogue with each other by means of the novel's hybrid structure.

To understand the bearing of these conflicting voices and their manifestation within the novel's focalization on the concept of disability as abnormality, we must return to Rodas's question, 'Who am I in relation to this other creature?' and consider how focalization answers it. In *Notre-Dame*, the dramatist Gringoire quite literally asks, 'Who am I in relation to others?' as he stumbles upon a conglomeration of bodies in the Cour des Miracles, home to Paris's vagabonds. As the focalization switches between an external perspective and Gringoire's internal point of view in this scene, readers are left with

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an ambiguous answer to this question that both reaffirms and destabilizes human subjectivity and normalcy. While the narrative focuses through Gringoire's perspective, he is chased into the court by three disabled figures whom the narrator describes as 'a cripple in a bowl, who was hopping along upon both hands' (71), a 'living tripod' whose crutches and wooden legs 'gave him the appearance of a walking scaffold' (71), and 'a little blind man' with a seeing-eye dog (72). As they near the Cour des Miracles, these three are then joined by a crowd of people who were 'halt, and lame, and blind, … one-armed and one-eyed, and lepers with their hideous sores' (72). Sharing Gringoire's perspective, readers also share the sense of being surrounded by an 'irresistible tide' of corporeally and, as the novel here implies, morally deviant bodies (73). For a short moment, the narrative shifts to an external focalization *on* Gringoire rather than *through* him, as, at this point, 'the tripod' drops his crutches to run 'on two … goodly legs' (73) and the beggar with the bowl 'stand[s] bolt upright upon his feet' to jam his bowl on Gringoire's head while the blind man 'stares him in the face with a pair of flaming eyes' (73). This external focalization puts readers in a position of power: rather than sharing Gringoire's experience by means of focalization, they view him being overpowered by those he formerly believed were his physical inferiors. In this position of external focalization, the narrative leads readers to interpret those deviant bodies as malingering mendicants playing at disability.

But Hugo does not allow readers to hold that certainty of interpretation for long. The narrator quickly returns to focalizing through Gringoire, who glibly pretends to interpret those bodies through gospel narrative, saying that the Cour des Miracles is aptly named since it hosts 'blind who see, and lame who run' (73).[21] But with this return to internal focalization comes a return to confusion and an inability to interpret the bodies of others or self:

> All was bustle, confusion, uproar … The limits between races and species seemed to be done away with in this city, as in a pandemonium. Men, women, brutes, age, sex, health, disease, all seemed to be in common among these people. They were jumbled, huddled together, laid upon one another; each there partook of every thing … It was like

21 The reference here is Luke 7:22. Shoberl ends the sentence here, but Hugo's original has Gringoire ask, 'mais où est le Sauveur?' (77). Hazlitt's translation keeps the reference to the Saviour (I.187), as does Hextall and Forster's (415). Presumably it was too blasphemous for Shoberl's intended audience.

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> a new world, unknown, unheard of, deformed, creeping, crawling, fantastic. (74)

This dissolving of boundaries, creating commonality between disparate things, calls to mind Hugo's concept of the union between the grotesque and sublime in which, he says, 'All things are connected' ('Preface' 363). Without the divisions and frames imposed in the normative world, not only is Gringoire unable to distinguish between bodies, sexes, or even species, but he also loses track of his selfhood even as he loses control over his body and mind. Dragged by the three beggars who first accosted him, he is 'deafened' by the noise of the place; he finds himself unable 'to recollect whether it was Saturday or not' and 'doubting every thing, floating between what he saw and what he felt' (74–75). This state of doubt prompts him to ask the vital—or, as Hugo puts it, 'insoluble'—question, 'If I am, can this be? If this is, can I be?' (75).[22]

But this state of internally focalized confusion does not last; the narrator, using external focalization, and the language of miasma, diagnoses Gringoire's confusion as caused by bodily weakness. According to the narrator, 'a fume, a vapour' that emitted from Gringoire's 'poetic brain' and 'his empty stomach' prevented him from viewing the Cour des Miracles in 'reality' and caused him to '[dilate] things into chimeras and men into phantoms' (75). Then, returning to internal focalization, the narrator tells us that 'Reality burst upon Gringoire, paining his eyes, treading upon his toes,' so that he 'could not help perceiving that he was not walking in the Styx, but in the mud; that he was not elbowed by demons, but by robbers; that his soul was not in danger, but merely his life' (75). The narrator places mistaken interpretation within Gringoire's body and depicts reality as an external (and unquestionable) entity that acts upon it and that therefore parallels the function of the authoritative external focalization. In saying that 'upon examining the scene more closely and more coolly [Gringoire] fell from the witches' sabbath down to the tavern' (75), the narrator implies that misinterpretation can be resolved through the intensive scrutiny that can occur only when the fogging 'vapours' of the mind and stomach disappear. At this point, Gringoire's now-whole body can distinguish health and illness in the conglomerate bodies of the Cour des Miracles; for example, he witnesses, and understands that he witnesses, an older beggar

22 'Si je suis, cela est-il? si cela est, suis-je?' (Hugo 78).

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teaching a younger to imitate epilepsy by sucking on soap to create a foaming at the mouth. By implying that Gringoire needs a healthy body to comprehend his surroundings, the externally focalized narration frames the Cour des Miracles scene in a way that implies that disability or physical disorder inevitably provokes confusion and that corporeal health brings a restoration of order.

However, the subsequent dialogue between Gringoire and the 'king' of 'the Vagabonds,' Clopin Trouillefou, suggests that the normative divisions with which the authoritative external focalization categorizes the world are arbitrary. Saying, 'Call me your majesty, or comrade, or what thou wilt' (78),[23] Clopin rejects the social divisions by which Gringoire wishes to understand him. Likewise, he dismisses the moral divisions between what his people in 'the realm of Slang'[24] call themselves and what they are called in the 'the gibberish of those who call themselves honest people' (78). The vagrants call themselves, in Shoberl's translation, 'prig,' 'cadger,' and 'stroller'—all terms denoting transient peddling and connoting petty thieving[25]—or in Hugo's French, 'capon,'[26] 'franc-mitou,'[27] and 'rifodé'[28] (81–82)—all terms that connote lying. To Clopin, these terms prove no different from the names that the so-called 'honest people' give them: 'thief,' 'beggar,' and 'vagrant' (78). The slipperiness of signifiers and the rejection of 'honest' class categories within the Cour des Miracles maintain the lack of divisions that originally caused Gringoire (and the readers focalizing along with him) to question self-identity. Instead, in the Cour des Miracles, the categories through which to make sense of the world are simply 'honest citizens' or 'vagabonds' (78), and Gringoire soon finds that to survive there he must accept that method of categorization and reshape his former identity as an author to fit it. Thus, he argues that since 'Aesop was a vagabond, Homer a beggar, [and] Mercury a thief' (79), he too may be 'a subject of the kingdom of Cant' and a vagabond (81).

23 The original French, as well as the Hazlitt and Foster and Hextall translations, includes 'Monseigneur' (i.e. 'Bishop') among the titles possible (Hugo 84), but Shoberl does not.
24 'le royaume d'argot' (81).
25 Prig, though it now denotes self-righteousness, was a name for tinkers and thieves in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries ('Prig. n3.').
26 A beggar covered in fake wounds ('Capon').
27 A beggar who mimics a disease or wounds to make charitable people feel sorry for them ('Franc-mitou').
28 Beggars who claim public charity under the pretence of having been victims of fires ('Rifodé').

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Overall, Gringoire's interaction with the Cour des Miracles shows that the categories through which one divides 'self' from 'other' or 'normal' from 'abnormal' are arbitrary and negotiable, and that the body is unstable, both as a source of identity and as an interpreter of information. Yet, as the external focalization implies, the interaction simultaneously insists on a division between health and illness, or normalcy and abnormality. The focalization shifts between the internal perspective of the confused Gringoire and the external position of an authoritative narrator ultimately reveal the dialogic tension regarding the disabled body in this novel. On the one hand, the brief external, authoritative focalization indicates a belief in or desire for control, stabilization, and comprehension of deviant bodies. On the other, internal focalization emphasizes general corporeal instability and implies that embodiment necessarily entails confusion.

Reading Quasimodo: Interpretation or Empathy?

The focalization in the Cour des Miracles scene also illuminates the novel's ultimate representation of disability, Quasimodo. Throughout the novel, the narrative that externally focalizes *on* Quasimodo depicts him as embodying alterity—corporeal, emotional, mental, and social difference—and as worthy of either contempt or pity. However, rare but vital internal focalization *through* Quasimodo instead aligns readers subjectively with him via empathy. I argue that internal focalization in Hugo's novel and in Victorian novels more generally causes reader identification with the focalizing characters to create empathy between reader and character. Rebecca N. Mitchell's *Victorian Lessons in Empathy and Difference*, however, convincingly argues that Victorian novels primarily teach empathy through characters learning that they *cannot* understand the interiority of others—that is, through learning that others are always different from themselves and thus 'ultimately unknowable' (ix). This, R. Mitchell argues, 'paradoxically, lead[s] to an enhanced sense of that individual' (2). On the surface, it may seem that R. Mitchell's and my own arguments contradict one another, in that R. Mitchell contends that the recognition of others' unknowability produces empathy between characters, while I argue that identifying with the disabled subject through sharing his or her internal focalization produces readerly empathy. However, our arguments align in the following way. Explaining that a fictional character is 'finite and knowable' to readers (because readers can understand his or her interiority through focalization), R. Mitchell argues that

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'empathetic extension occurs only through the appreciation of the limits of self' (2) and that 'the alterity of the human other is infinite and permanent' (x). Similarly, I suggest that focalization in Victorian novels often works to make readers aware 'of the limits of self' and of the 'infinite and permanent' alterity of all humans and that, in the case of *Notre-Dame*, this empathetic awareness emerges from internal focalization through Quasimodo.

Readers' introduction to Quasimodo, like Gringoire's introduction to the Cour des Miracles, begins with sensory confusion. Here, a crowd at the Festival of Fools chooses a 'Pope of Fools' from a bevy of people pulling faces. Hugo describes this crowd as a carnivalesque blurring of bodies and social divisions and calls on readers to 'imagine' the sight, which breaks the boundaries between 'geometric figure[s],' 'human expression[s], from rage to lechery,' and 'all ages,' as well as between 'religious phantasmagorias' and 'brute [animal] profiles,' 'grotesque' statuary, carnival masks, and living people. The scene represents 'a human kaleidoscope' that levels 'any distinctions of ranks and persons' (41). Without these typical distinctions, individuals become parts of bodies by means of synecdoche, and those bodies become uninterpretable, inarticulate signs: 'every mouth was a cry, every eye a flash, every face a contortion, every individual a posture: all was howling and roaring' (41).

But when the narrator introduces Quasimodo, the disorder and deviance of the crowd are projected onto his body, which both defies and inspires description. The narrator claims to 'not attempt to give the reader any idea of' Quasimodo's face, but goes on to describe each part of it, from the 'tetrahedron nose' to his 'right [eye] completely overwhelmed and buried by an enormous wen' and his 'forked chin' (43). In calling on readers to 'Imagine such an object, *if you can*' (43; emphasis added), the narrator places Quasimodo's body beyond the interpretation and imagination of his embodied readers; by describing the body after declaring description impossible, however, the narrator gives further authority to external focalization. The narrator then continues in external focalization, listing the bell-ringer's deformities—a 'hump' on his back and a 'protuberance in front,' bow legs, and 'immense' hands and feet—and perceiving 'with all this deformity … a formidable air of strength, agility, and courage' (43–44). The narrator next reports the crowd's reaction to the deformities, but with an authoritative distance that mocks their superstition. For example, in describing the scholars' shouted warning to 'Let breeding women take care of themselves!'—presumably to prevent causing the deformity of their unborn babies

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by looking at Quasimodo[29]—the narrator adds, 'The women *actually* covered their faces' (44; emphasis added). This distance dismisses the superstitious medieval readings of the body and privileges the narrator's authoritative interpretation of Quasimodo's body.

When using this external focalization to describe Quasimodo's body, the narrator often employs architectural figurative language, linking Quasimodo to the Gothic and to the grotesque cathedral that houses him. In her essay 'The Drifting Language of Architectural Accessibility in Victor Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris,*' Essaka Joshua brilliantly argues that 'for Hugo not only does the disabled body symbolize the cathedral but also the cathedral symbolizes the disabled body' as 'unique, complex, and beautiful' (n. pag.). Joshua's close reading of Hugo's lengthy somatic descriptions of the cathedral's architecture supports her reading well. For example, she argues that while the cathedral is itself a disabled body with plastered wounds, it also serves as a prosthesis for Quasimodo, providing him with a voice via the bells.

However, I argue that Hugo's union of disability and architecture, and of Quasimodo and the cathedral, is more ambiguous and less affirmative than Joshua suggests and that the novel expresses that ambiguity through its focalization. Specifically, the narrator uses external focalization to render Quasimodo's body interpretable by reading Quasimodo's body and soul as architecture; that is, the narrator combines architecture and body in external focalization to hypothesize Quasimodo's interiority *rather* than focalizing internally through Quasimodo so that readers could textually share that interiority. As such, this external focalization, along with the alignment of disabled body and architecture, separates readers' self-identity from that of Quasimodo. The title of the chapter in which Hugo explores the bell-ringer's symbiotic relationship with the cathedral clearly indicates this distinction: 'Immanis Pecoris Custos, Immanior Ipse'[30] (that is, 'Of a monstrous flock, a more monstrous shepherd'), implying that Quasimodo, as the shepherd of both the Gothic cathedral's towers and its grotesque figures, is even more monstrous than the statuary—and implicitly less than human.

29 Here is another example of Shoberl's bowdlerization. The original French says, '"Gare les femmes grosses!" criaient les écoliers. "Ou qui ont envie de l'être," reprenait Joannes' (45). Hazlitt translates this as follows: '"All ye pregnant women, get out of the way!" cried the scholars. "And all that want to be so," added Joannes' (I.104). Shoberl, however, omits Joannes's slightly bawdy comment.

30 In Shoberl's text, the chapter is simply called 'The Bell-Ringer of Notre-Dame.'

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Quasimodo's body and mind, the narrator claims, 'appear to be moulded by the cathedral' (140). While acknowledging that 'It would be difficult to determine the state of that soul, what folds it had contracted, what form it had assumed, under its knotty covering, during this wild and savage life' (140), the narrator uses architectural language to describe the supposedly indeterminate 'state of that soul,' repeating the pattern above, which suggests that corporeal deviance both defies and inspires description. Fusing the focal perspective of narrator and audience, the narrator says:

> If then we were to attempt to penetrate through this thick and obdurate bark to the soul of Quasimodo; … if we were enabled to hold a torch behind these un-transparent organs, to explore the gloomy interior of this opaque being, to illumine its obscure corners and its unmeaning cul-de-sacs, and to throw all at once a brilliant light upon the spirit enchained at the bottom of this den; we should doubtless find the wretch in some miserable attitude, stunted and rickety. (141)

The narrator's conclusion, 'It is certain that the spirit pines in a misshapen form' (141) or, in Hugo's French, 'Il est certain que l'esprit s'atrophie dans un corps manqué'[31] (142), uses the external authoritative voice to imply that physical deviance, by indicating moral deviance, makes bodies legible.

Primarily using external focalization, the narrator goes on to describe Quasimodo's mental state, implying it is warped by the bell-ringer's bent body; according to the narrator, 'impressions of objects underwent a considerable refraction' as they entered Quasimodo's mind, and 'the ideas which entered it came out quite twisted' (141). Two brief sentences within this description convey Quasimodo's point of view—'He received scarcely a single direct perception' and 'The exterior world appeared to him at a greater distance than it does to us' (141)—but they are not sustained enough to be considered focalization; moreover, the second sentence separates readers' subjectivity from Quasimodo's by including the 'us' that keeps the reader aligned with the narrator's authoritative voice. The narrator does momentarily support readers' sympathy by focalizing through Quasimodo to suggest that the bell-ringer's maliciousness was caused socially rather than physiognomically, saying, 'From his earliest intercourse with men he had felt, and afterwards he had seen, himself despised, rejected,

31 Here, *manqué* carries the meaning of 'not functioning,' as well as that of 'missing' ('Manqué').

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cast off; … he found nothing but hatred around him' (142). However, this passage arouses pity from readers rather than empathy, and thus it distances readers from the character.

Due to the lack of internal focalization through Quasimodo, his mental and emotional interiority most frequently comes to readers via an external focalization that interprets the excesses of his body. In the chapters that focus on Quasimodo's story, particularly 'The Bell-Ringer of Notre-Dame,' 'The Pillory,' and 'The Bells,'[32] readers understand his character primarily through external interpretation of his body. The narrator conveys Quasimodo's 'delight' through his foaming 'at the mouth,' running 'backward and forward,' 'trembling from head to foot,' and from his 'flashing' eye (143–44); his despair through his 'clos[ing] his only eye' and 'dropp[ing] his head upon his breast' (189); and his 'bitterness, disappointment, and deep despondency' through a smile (192). But in the chapter describing Quasimodo's torture on the pillory, while the narrator first uses external focalization to produce a distancing sympathy for Quasimodo, it also complements the external focalization with a rare and extremely significant section of internal focalization that produces readerly empathy and alignment. Whereas internal focalization in the scene of the Cour des Miracles produces instability of corporeal interpretation by denying subjectivity to both readers and focalizer, in the scene of the pillory, interior focalization produces instability of corporeal interpretation by subjectively aligning readers with the disabled other, Quasimodo.

First, the narrator undermines the spectators' pitiless reaction to the sight of Quasimodo's torture by comparing the crowd to a 'mischievous urchin' in a 'state of primitive ignorance, of moral and intellectual minority' (190). Then, in external focalization, the narrator depicts the interaction between Claude Frollo and Quasimodo, interpreting their bodies to portray their interiority, but in a non-authoritative way: Quasimodo's 'strange smile, full of ineffable meekness, kindness, tenderness' that became 'more expressive, more distinct, more radiant' the closer Claude came to him only shows that he '*seemed* to be anticipating the arrival of a deliverer' (191; emphasis added). Likewise, Frollo's eyes are 'cast down' and he uses his spurs in an about-turn on his mule only '*as if* in a hurry to escape a humiliating appeal' (192; emphasis added). Quasimodo's subsequent smile of 'bitterness, disappointment and deep despondency' and the description of his cry 'like the roaring of a wild beast' (192) produce a sympathy that

32 'Immanis Pecoris Custos, Immanior Ipse,' 'Une Larme Pour Une Goutte D'eau' [A Tear for a Drop of Water], and 'Les Cloches' in Hugo's original text.

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further separates Quasimodo from the readers' humanity and personhood. The narrator informs readers that, physically, Quasimodo 'was still more grotesque and repulsive than pitiable' (192), but readerly sympathy increases as the crowd (which the narrator has previously taught readers to despise as 'mischievous urchin[s]') continues to torture him, hurling stones and insults.

At this point, the narrator switches to internal focalization through Quasimodo to describe Esmeralda's approach. Whereas external narration could easily have identified the woman as Esmeralda, the narrator instead adopts Quasimodo's perspective, calling her a 'young female, in strange garb' and 'the Bohemian whom he had attempted to carry off the preceding night' (193). Here, the internal focalization causes readers to experience Quasimodo's subjectivity at the very moment when he seems most separate from humanity. The internal focalization continues as Quasimodo believes Esmeralda is there 'to give him her blow as well as the rest'; it is followed by the brief external focalization of Esmeralda bringing water to his lips while Quasimodo nearly sheds a tear in response, and then returns again to internal focalization as 'he forgets to drink' due to his astonishment at her compassion (193). In this scene, through such alternating focalization, readers both empathetically share identity with the disabled other *and* witness an act of compassion between two marginalized others, since Esmeralda, as a gypsy and vagabond, is nearly as ostracized as Quasimodo. Empathy here conjoins the grotesque and the sublime: the narrator, adopting the crowd's perspective, says, 'Under any circumstances it would have been a touching sight to see this girl, so fresh, so pure, so lovely, and at the same time so weak, humanely hastening to the relief of so much distress, deformity, and malice. On a pillory, this sight was sublime' (194). Witnessing this act of empathy between the two marginalized characters then alters the crowd's interpretation of Quasimodo's body and of his presence on the pillory: 'The populace themselves were moved by it, and began clapping their hands and shouting, "Huzza! huzza!"' (194). Nancy Armstrong describes a similar 'breakdown of the difference between subject and other' that occurs in Henry MacKenzie's *The Man of Feeling* (1771), in a scene in which a grieving madwoman gives the hero a ring, provoking the hero to cry; this breakdown between subject and other, Armstrong argues, 'accompanies the breakdown between spectator and spectacle of grief' (16). In focalizing through Quasimodo and the crowd during this scene of empathy, *Notre-Dame* likewise breaks down the barrier between subject and other and between spectator and spectacle.

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Similar patterns of focalization remove the barrier in two other vital scenes: first, Quasimodo's rescue of Esmeralda, and second, Esmeralda's execution and Frollo's death. In the first instance, Hugo narrates Esmeralda's approach to the gallows alternately in external focalization and brief internal focalization through Phoebus and Esmeralda, to register the one's selfish shame at seeing his forgotten lover about to be hanged and the other's passionate joy at seeing the lover she is accused of murdering still alive. From here, the narrator's focus, like a tracking shot in a film, pulls back from Esmeralda's point of view to show the wider context, and in external focalization notes a hitherto unobserved 'strange-looking spectator, who had till then been watching all that passed, with attitude so motionless, head so outstretched, visage so deformed, that … he might have been taken for one of [the cathedral's] stone monsters' (309–10). Pretending not to know that the 'strange-looking spectator' is Quasimodo, the narrator uses external focalization[33] to describe him swinging from the cathedral pillar to the cart holding Esmeralda, knocking out the guards, and then swinging back to the church with Esmeralda. The unnamed 'spectator' cries out, 'Sanctuary! sanctuary!' (310), but in describing the response of the crowd who watches, the narrator calls him by name: '"Sanctuary! sanctuary!" repeated the mob, and the clapping of ten thousand hands caused Quasimodo's only eye to sparkle with joy and exultation' (310). Hugo separates Quasimodo's cry and the crowd's response with a sentence that brings the reader's body into the text and focalization, saying that had it been night, 'on eût pu tout voir à la lumière d'un seul éclair' (336).[34] The narrator's reintroduction of Quasimodo's name in the scene signals the empathy shared between the crowd and Quasimodo, each of whom played both spectator and spectacle in this scene, and in turn the empathy shared between them and the reader, breaking down the barrier between self and other.

The narrator continues in external focalization to interpret Quasimodo's body but, as in the pillory scene, without the

33 In this case, in taking a perspective outside the text that knows *less* than those within, the focalization is external in Genette's sense as well as Bal's.

34 Or, 'one/we/you could have seen all of this in a flash of lightning.' I use the French above because Shoberl and Hazlitt's English translations do not convey the embodied reader here as strongly as Hugo's original French. Instead of following his usual pattern of highlighting reader presence in the text when Hugo does, Shoberl uncharacteristically translates this part as, 'This was all done with the rapidity of lightning' (310). Hazlitt translates it in the passive, saying, 'the whole might have been seen by the glare of a single flash of lightning' (III.34).

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authority that the external focalizing narrator claims at other times: Quasimodo's hairy and sunken head only '*appeared to be* … like that of the lion,' and his gingerly handling of Esmeralda was only '*as if* he was fearful of bruising or disturbing her' and '*as though* he dared not touch her even with his breath' (311; emphasis added).[35] The narrator again stresses the empathy between crowd and Quasimodo, breaking down barriers between self and other; the crowd interprets Quasimodo's body as he handles Esmeralda, but does so in empathy, even though the external focalization of the action denigrates that body by using the word 'cyclop' (or *gnome*, in Hugo's French): 'His cyclop eye bent down upon her, shed over her a flood of tenderness, of pity, of grief, and was suddenly raised flashing lightning. At this sight the women laughed and cried; the crowd stamped with enthusiasm, for at that moment Quasimodo was really beautiful' (311). At this point, the narrator adopts Quasimodo's focalization and reveals that his selfhood here aligns with the crowd's reading of his body:

> he felt himself august and strong; he looked in the face that society from which he was banished, and from which he had made so signal a conquest; that human justice from which he had snatched its victim; those judges, those executioners, all that force of the King's, which he, the meanest of the mean, had foiled with the force of God! (311)

Fascinatingly, Hugo again comments, as he did in the pillory scene, on the shared marginalization of Esmeralda and Quasimodo, calling their relationship 'the two extreme miseries of Nature and society meeting and assisting each other' (311). The narrator then closes the chapter by alternating between the mob's perspective of Quasimodo's triumphant display of Esmeralda and the non-authoritative external focalization that uses '*as if*' and '*seems*' to qualify its interpretations. In this scene, as in the scene on the pillory, internal focalization through both the crowd and Quasimodo collapses the distinction between self and disabled other, and between the sublime and grotesque.

In the scenes between Quasimodo and Esmeralda in the cathedral following the rescue, internal focalization through Esmeralda reinstates the differences between them as she hears, sees, and reacts to Quasimodo's physicality, while focalization through Quasimodo makes this division ambiguous. As in the narrator's first description of Quasimodo, Esmeralda inventories the bell-ringer's body, 'from his

35 Hugo's original French likewise emphasizes uncertainty with words such as 'semblaient' and 'paraissait' (336).

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knock-knees to his hunchback, from his hunchback to his only eye,' both seeing his physicality as uninterpretable, since 'She could not conceive how a creature so awkwardly put together could exist,' and yet reading 'an air of such sadness and gentleness' within it (329). Quasimodo's conversation with her likewise reiterates their difference via his disability; he says, 'Yes, I am deaf … It is terrible, is it not?—while you—you are so beautiful!' (329). Focalizing through Esmeralda, the narrator blames Quasimodo's body for the division between them; the narrator notes that 'She would frequently reproach herself for not feeling sufficient gratitude to blind her to his imperfections; but decidedly she could not accustom herself to the poor bell-ringer. He was too hideous' (333). Although this comment places the fault of the division on the disabled body rather than on the social structure that devalues it, the internal focalization through Quasimodo on Esmeralda, and on Phoebus shortly after this, denaturalizes the distinction between normative and disabled bodies in two ways.

First, in focalizing through Quasimodo, the narrator depicts an alternate but valid way of reading bodies from that of the authoritative external focalization—a way that is based in Quasimodo's deafness. Without hearing, Quasimodo's primary method of receiving communication is by reading bodily expression. When he sees Esmeralda's body respond to the sight of Phoebus, he reads it as the 'expression of a shipwrecked person who is making signals of distress to a distant vessel sailing gaily along in the sunshine' (334). Using this focalization, the narrator also recognizes the limitations of somatic interpretation, not just that of the deaf Quasimodo, but of the normative body as well; watching Phoebus and his other lover, Fleur-de-Lys, Quasimodo feels relief that since he can only just make out the two in the dark, Esmeralda will not be able to see them at all from her distance. Second, when the narrator reports Quasimodo's thoughts about his physical difference when he sees 'the handsome captain' Phoebus, these thoughts are placed in a social context that highlights how the source of Quasimodo's suffering is not his body, but rather human reaction to his body: 'He thought of the miserable portion which Providence had allotted to him; that woman, love, and its pleasures, would be for ever passing before his eyes, but that he should never do more than witness the felicity of others' (337). Therefore, although internal focalization through Esmeralda in these chapters stresses the differences between the normative self and the disabled other, internal focalization through Quasimodo reveals the socially constructed nature of this boundary and undermines its power.

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The final and most intense internal focalization through Quasimodo occurs when Esmeralda and Frollo die. Here, the narrator alternates among external focalization, internal focalization through Quasimodo, and internal focalization through Frollo; doing so increases readerly empathy with Quasimodo, the supposed other, while simultaneously emphasizing the fragility of all bodies. Of the three perspectives, the narrator not only gives the most space to Quasimodo's but also privileges and emotionally aligns readers with this perspective. The first three pages of the chapter in which Esmeralda and Frollo die follow Quasimodo, primarily focalizing through his perspective, as he searches the cathedral for Esmeralda and contemplates Frollo's role in her disappearance, his love for the gypsy and for the priest 'clash[ing] together in his heart' (458). When Quasimodo finds Claude Frollo watching the execution, the narrator suddenly switches from internal to external focalization, pulling back to provide the visual and aural context of the tower's view of Paris at dawn. This act distances readers from Quasimodo's perspective, telling us of what he and Frollo do not notice: the sound of the blacksmith's hammer and of the bird's song, the sight of smoke from chimneys and of silver water surrounding islands. However, it also effectively places the internal perspective in relief, highlighting the empathetic union between readers and Quasimodo.

After the four paragraphs narrated in external focalization, the narrator returns to Quasimodo's perspective for the emotional climax of the novel in which the bell-ringer slowly realizes that the gibbet and soldiers around it are for Esmeralda's execution and then watches her being hanged upon it. While adopting Quasimodo's physical perspective so deeply, the narrator describes Frollo's response to Esmeralda's death thus: 'a demon laugh, a laugh such as one only who has ceased to be human is capable of, *burst forth upon* the livid face of the priest' (460; emphasis added).[36] Significantly, because the narrator focalizes here through Quasimodo, readers *see* the laugh rather than hear it, which the narrator emphasizes by reiterating, 'Quasimodo heard not this laugh, but he saw it' (460). At this sight, Quasimodo pushes the priest off the tower, and the narrator immediately changes to Frollo's perspective to depict the fall. In focalizing through Frollo, the narrator stresses the physicality of the descent, the 'eager hands,' the 'perspiration [as it] trickled from his bald brow, the blood [as it] oozed from

36 'Au moment où c'était le plus effroyable, un rire de démon, un rire qu'on ne peut avoir que lorsqu'on n'est plus homme, éclata sur le visage livide du prêtre' (478–79).

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his fingers' ends,' the weight of his body bending the gutter, 'his hair standing erect' from vertigo, and 'his arms becoming weaker and weaker, and his body heavier and heavier' (461–62). This internal focalization through Frollo discloses the instability of even the normative body. The narrator returns to focalizing through Quasimodo as he watches Esmeralda's 'last convulsive agonies of death' and then looks at the remains of Frollo below.

Each of these three scenes, the pillory, Esmeralda's rescue, and her hanging—the three main dramatic high points of the novel—remove the distinction between self and other through internal focalization by aligning readers' subjectivity with that of the character whose disability the narrator's external focalization regularly reads as indicating ultimate alterity. However, the last chapter, which depicts the skeletons of the gypsy and the bell-ringer, reinstates the division between self and other through external focalization that emphasizes and then eradicates Quasimodo's physical difference, first by again cataloguing the physical deformity one last time in his bones and then by describing how those bones turn to dust (466).

Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris* formulates the narrative mode, the conflicted form and focalization, through which much Victorian fiction expresses its anxieties about the human body and identity. As *Notre-Dame*'s hybrid form prevents the novel from fulfilling the conventions of its multiple genres, keeping it incomplete even as it finishes, so it displaces anxieties and fears about identity on to the disabled body while also implying that all bodies, even normative ones, are hybrid, developing, shifting things. The novel insists that there is beauty in hybridity, in the incomplete, and in the ugly: it holds beauty and ugliness, normalcy and abnormality, as both distinct and indistinguishable from one another. In doing so, it shows disability as continuously changing in definition. Moreover, the novel's shifts in focalization cause ambiguity about disability and somatic interpretation, primarily through the empathetic erasure of the division between self and other. Azar Nafisi writes that, thematically, 'empathy is at the heart of the novel' as a genre (224). I would argue that empathy lies at the heart of Victorian novels' *form* as well—that the focalization techniques which Victorian narrators adopt fundamentally create empathy between readers and characters of different genders, classes, and bodies. Undoubtedly, empathy drives the Condition-of-England novels published after *Notre-Dame*, and, as the next chapter on Dickens's *Bleak House* will argue, focalization affects how such novels depict disability as part of the country's social condition.

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