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Prosthetic performatives: reading disability's discomfort through emotives and affect patterns in *Jane Eyre*

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, I explore how, in the final scenes of the novel Jane Eyre, disability is a vehicle for the involved characters to be able to designate emotional states to themselves and the other through performative emotional language usage, called 'emotives'. Through examining this use, I argue that the exchange of emotives cannot fully alleviate the different emotional states designated through them, but rather allow for a prosthetic relation of co-dependency to form between the novel's two main characters. Subsequently, I argue that the exchange of emotives and the use of language as prosthesis produces legible gaps in and between various performative speech-acts, which through this legibility may generate traceable patterns of affect.

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Introduction[1]

Charlotte Bronte's Victorian novel *Jane* Eyre[2] has been a popular choice for readings that take a disability studies perspective. A few years ago, a collection of essays entitled *The Madwoman and the Blindman: Jane Eyre, Discourse, Disability*[3] was published in which various aspects of Jane Eyre that engage with disability, both explicitly as well as implicitly, were examined. The present study seeks to contribute to literary scholarship regarding this novel by doing a close-reading of its final scenes through a specific theoretical framework. With this framework, I will look at how different emotional states are both exchanged and designated through the use of performative language between the novel's two main characters, Edward Rochester and Jane Eyre. Through the reading of these final scenes, I explore how disability is an

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initial source of anxiety for both of these characters, which leads these characters to exchange so-called emotives: performative language that designates emotional states which require a response in turn. Through this exchange, I argue, it becomes possible for Jane to imagine a future relationship of prosthesis between her and Rochester. As I propose in my conclusion, however, it becomes clear that any 'negative' emotions Jane might have regarding Rochester's disability does not mean that these are fully alleviated through their exchange of emotive statements. Through this lack of a full resolution, I explore how the gaps that are created by the use of emotives become themselves constitutive for the evocation of affect.

Perlocutionary force and disability's anxiety

In the following analysis, I will focus on the episodes that detail the reunion of the Jane and Rochester after they have been apart for some time. In these episodes both Jane and Rochester designate different emotional states to themselves and one another (e.g. 'I find you lonely'). Such designation (or expression) of emotional states through language has been defined by William Reddy as an *emotive*: a (first-person) speech act that is performative, in that it has the appearance of a description (e.g. 'I/you feel angry'), but, by designating the emotional state as such, the utterance also changes that specific emotional state *through* the descriptive act, rejecting others;

> Emotives are influenced directly by, and alter, what they 'refer' to. Thus, emotives are similar to performatives (and differ from constatives) in that emotives do things to the world. Emotives are themselves instruments for directly changing, building, hiding, intensifying emotions, instruments that may be more or less successful.[4]

Reddy emphasises the way emotives can be used instrumentally, since designating (or being designated with) an emotive consequently requires a response from the party to whom that emotion was designated. I will examine how emotives are exchanged between Jane and Rochester, initially in an attempt to alleviate the anxiety and insecurity they both experience towards the other. After Jane discloses to Rochester that she has inherited a small fortune, the following dialogue and events ensue between them:

> 'But as you are rich, Jane, you have now, no doubt, friends who will look after you, and not suffer you to devote yourself to a blind lameter like me?'
>
> 'I told you I am independent, sir, as well as rich: I am my own mistress.'
>
> 'And you will stay with me?'
>
> 'Certainly – unless you object. I will be your neighbor, your nurse, your housekeeper. I find you lonely: I will be your companion – to read to you, to walk with

> you, to sit with you, to wait on you, to be eyes and hands to you. Cease to look so melancholy, my dear master; you shall not be left desolate, so long as I live.'
>
> He replied not; he seemed serious – abstracted; he sighed; he half opened his lips as if to speak: he closed them again. I felt a little embarrassed. Perhaps I had too rashly overleaped conventionalities; and he, like St. John, saw impropriety in my inconsiderateness. I had indeed made my proposal from the idea that he wished and would ask me to be his wife: an expectation, not the less certain because unexpressed, had buoyed me up, that he would claim me at once as his own. But no hint to that effect escaping him, and his countenance becoming more overcast, I suddenly remembered that I might have been all wrong, and was perhaps playing the fool unwittingly; and I began gently to withdraw myself from his arms – but he eagerly snatched me closer.
>
> 'No – no – Jane; you must not go. No – I have touched you, heard you, felt the comfort of your presence – the sweetness of your consolation: I cannot give up these joys. I have little left in myself – I must have you. The world may laugh – may call me absurd, selfish – but it does not signify. My very soul demands you: it will be satisfied, or it will take deadly vengeance on its frame.'[5]

Jane, encountering Rochester, emotes a particular attitude towards him, designating him as 'lonely', which she aims to solve through particular forms of companionship. The forms of companionship Jane proposes to Rochester relate a series of actions (reading, walking, sitting, waiting, and being hands and eyes to him), that has a complex relationship with Rochester's disability. These actions are all perlocutionary in the way that J.L. Austin has originally defined them, that is, to bring about an effect through the speaking act in itself.[6] The perlocutionary force of Jane's list of verbs lies in its power to alter the present by *imagining* a particular future, in which their companionship will take on a specific form through the aforementioned activities. Of the various activities, walking and sitting are, in relation to Rochester's particular disability, seemingly trivial in relationship to any physical impairments caused by Rochester's disability as such. But as Rochester lost one of his hands and his sight in the fire, both reading *to* him and being eyes and hands *to* him follow a prosthetic logic where Jane can *become* his hands and eyes, and thereby placing herself in the position of becoming a prosthetic companion. This is further emphasised by Jane's suggestion to wait on Rochester, suggesting her willingness to be of his service. Here then, Jane's perlocutionary act – her desire to *effect* through her words – succeeds because the suggested future relates a future of possible prosthesis. Through relating this series of possible actions via which she could serve Rochester, however, Jane also suggests a reversed relationship of dependency, as these suggestions emphasise Rochester's inability to do these things himself.

Isobel Armstrong, in an article that delineates carefully the idea of a so-called 'perlocutionary poetics', argues that such a poetics is in part founded by how we may consider what different verbs do in reading literary texts: 'Perlocutionary

verbs seem to me to appear in chains or as compounds with other verbs, persuading us to make careful distinctions between them'.[7] Armstrong argues that the perlocutionary force of verbs, when chained together, changes because they may signify differently from verbs that are not presented together; it presses us to examine the particular signification of the series of verbs that are placed together.

Coming back to the list of actions Jane presented to Rochester, it is when these actions are formed into a series that the illocutionary act, the locution, and the perlocutionary force of the verbs compounded into a series can be explicated. Of all the verbs listed, reading to, walking with, and sitting with appear to be all conveyed in their literal usage. 'To be eyes and hands', however, are suggested through a relationship of metonymy; Rochester's sight and hands have been damaged in a house fire, and as such Jane sees the possibility of placing herself in the role of filling the loss of ability of Rochester's own eyes and hand. To wait on Rochester, finally, suggests a relationship of servitude that becomes prosthetic in nature due to Jane's suggestion of her ability to replace the functions of his sight and hand, signifying the potential instrumental usage of her body in relation to Rochester's. Thus, while the locution of the first verbs can be interpreted literally and create no distance between the illocutionary and locutionary act, as a series the verbs offer a different perlocutionary force, that of an offer of prosthetic companionship to Rochester. With respect to the persuasive force of the perlocutionary, Stanley Cavell explicates this in the following way:

> We might say: Perlocutionary acts make room for, and reward, imagination and virtuosity … Illocutionary acts do not in general make such room – I do not, except in special circumstances, wonder how I might make a promise or a gift, or apologise, or render a verdict. But to persuade you may well take considerable thought, to insinuate as much as to console may require tact, to seduce or to confuse you may take talent. Further, that perlocutionary-like effects – for example, stopping you in your tracks, embarrassing or humiliating you – are readily, sometimes more effectively, achievable without saying anything, indicates that the urgency of passion is expressed before and after words.[8]

Whereas Jane's action resonates with Cavell's suggestion that imagination (by her use of perlocutionary verbs) and virtuosity (which will be displayed by her wit, as we shall see), Cavell's use of 'persuasion' here is particularly telling, because persuasive acts necessarily try to manifest a particular future outcome. In Jane's case, she tries to persuade Rochester by 'playing the fool unwittingly'. Yet, after concluding that this does not have the desired outcome, she slowly draws away, which in turn evokes a response in Rochester. Cavell's argument that perlocutionary effects may occur without saying anything is especially relevant with regard to Rochester's reaction to Jane, as the absence of words does not equate to the absence of a response.

The perlocutionary effect Jane's suggestion has on Rochester is that Rochester in turn initially only offers the suggestion of a response through a series of three

other verbs: sighing, opening his mouth and closing it again. In performative terms, this initial response is more complicated. Here, the sigh, the opening and closing of the mouth do not have a clear illocutionary intent; they may signify fatigue or discontent for example, but this remains open to a variety of interpretations. The perlocutionary force, however, is much clearer; it causes Jane's embarrassment. What causes this gap between the illocutionary and the perlocutionary in this instance, is the *lack* of accompanying emotive statements; Rochester initial response signifies not one suggested interpretation but rather a myriad of them. The open-endedness of Rochester's response (or, rather, its lack of clarity), then has Jane considering several possible motivations, and that she had been wrong to think Rochester would want her for his wife.

Sianne Ngai argues that feelings in themselves can arouse new feelings *about* these feelings, and are thus, in a sense, meta-feelings:

> In fact, I would suggest that what each moment produces is the inherently ambiguous affect or affective disorientation in general – what we might think of as a state of feeling vaguely 'unsettled' or 'confused', or, more precisely, a meta-feeling in which one feels confused about *what* one is feeling. This is 'confusion' in the affective sense of bewilderment, rather than the epistemological sense of indeterminacy.[9]

Although Ngai's insight about the 'meta-feeling' is relevant to Jane's response, I wonder why she separates the 'affective sense of bewilderment' from the 'epistemological sense of indeterminacy', as it seems to me that these two different senses are often closely related, certainly in the study before us. In Jane's case, the sense of confusion was produced not by her own emotions per se, but rather initially by Rochester's response (or lack thereof) *towards* her suggestion of companionship. In this case, then, confusion is *both* bewilderment and indeterminacy in the sense that Jane cannot determine what is the cause of Rochester's reluctance, which then in turn causes her sense of bewilderment and insecurity. The relationship thus established between these two senses is relevant because it shows us that they are affects produced through what remains concealed to us as readers as well as Jane, namely the supposed turbulence of Rochester's inner life.

In a chapter concerning the relationship between practices of representation and affect entitled 'Thinking Affect' in her monograph *The Radical Aesthetic*, Armstrong argues that affect, problematic in relation to representation since it cannot be represented directly, thus asks for a renewed investigation in how it may relate to representation, which she details as follows:

> If affect is untranslatable, and cannot be in language, cannot have content, we might seek for devious evidences of its inscription and consider the way it cheats itself into language or inhibits symbol-making, but in the last analysis the idea of substitution has to be abandoned and replaced by a dynamic understanding of the text as generating new affect patterns and thought structures.[10]

Although various scholarly literatures differentiate between 'affect' and 'emotion' (and in different ways), what I am interested in exploring here is rather how Armstrong's poetics of affect relates to Reddy's theory of performative emotives. What is clear is that for Reddy, emotives, as performative speech acts, also have a perlocutionary force in changing situations or states in other agents. Armstrong is more interested in how these exchanges, since emotives are signs with semantic and legible 'content', are involved in generating so-called 'affect patterns', as she takes as her point of departure the notion that affect cannot directly be represented through language. In an earlier passage, Armstrong suggests that we need to read for both the prosody of the gap *and* the body in order to be able to trace these affect structures within texts:

> We should be thinking not only of the prosody of the body – the grimace, the shudder, and their somatic inscriptions in languages – but also of the prosody of the gap, the blank space, articulation through the pause, the moment of void.[11]

In regard to the first prosody, the gaps are things which the text, in our reading of it, might suggest, but may be easily looked over, precisely because we have to be aware of an absence, a pause, or a break of something in our reading.

In the context of this reading, what's happening in Rochester's inner emotional life may be such a gap, for example, since the reader does not have access to it because of the performed gesture of opening his mouth, it is implied that she has to consider the myriad things Rochester *could* say. The prosody of the body, in turn, refers to the way in which bodily gestures are represented and inscripted *into* language (that is, how the gesture itself is represented in a text). It is in Rochester's response to Jane that the two coalesce. Rochester's gesture is itself a response given through his body, but there is a gap between this response and one that would be articulated (like an emotive), thus not only leaving, but rather creating room for suggestion. It is only as Jane withdraws her body in turn from his – creating distance – that he pulls her closer, and that the caesura between suggested response and uttered response comes forced into being. Here Rochester combines both sensuous experience ('I have touched you, heard you') with how it moves him affectively through the use of emotive statements ('felt the comfort of your presence – the sweetness of your consolation'), concluding that these are the joys he cannot do without, as he has little left *in* himself.

Here, Rochester (inversely) mirrors Jane in several ways. First, there is the repetition of relating a series of acts, but in Rochester's case they are not activities related to imagined companionship, but rather relate personal sensuous experience. Secondly, whereas Jane's list offered a projection of the recent future, Rochester's list is an account of the recent past; both of the lists

derive their perlocutionary force in part from their relationship with temporality, then, but when Jane expresses her insecurity regarding Rochester's inconclusive acceptance of her shared future, he does so by relating to her what he is experiencing in the present. Rochester here appears to mirror Jane's emotive projection (in his suggestion of consolation), but rather than projecting this on her attitude, as Jane did with him, he finds her to be able to be the source of his emotional state of joy which he finds to be lost in himself. The suggestion that Jane's relationship to him is one of dependency is emphasised by Rochester himself, as without Jane, Rochester's soul would 'take deadly vengeance on its frame', which simultaneously removes the possibility of a life apart without seemingly lethal consequence.

As such, the future proposed by Rochester contrasts that of Jane in that, whereas Jane suggested dependency through becoming his prosthetic companion, Rochester's proposed future is a binary one; it will either be satisfied or have death as its consequence. Jane, rather than being disparaged by Rochester's words, discovers that rather than a lack of attraction towards her, it is his disability which cautions him:

> 'I will think what you like, sir: I am content to be only your nurse, if you think it better.'
>
> 'But you cannot always be my nurse, Janet; you are young – you must marry one day.'
>
> 'I don't care about being married.'
>
> 'You should care, Janet; if I were what I once was I would try to make you care – but – a sightless block!'
>
> He relapsed again into gloom. I, on the contrary, became more cheerful, and took fresh courage.[12]

Here we find another gap, as Rochester's exclaims; 'I would try to make you care – but – a sightless block!'. I read the em-dashes as a form of aposiopesis, which, similar to Rochester opening and closing his mouth without saying something, then create a space to imagine what is *not* said, and what this could imply. The presence of 'but', however, suggests that *because* of the sightless block he cannot make her care, but due to the use of aposiopesis it remains unclear what the function of 'a sightless block' is to Rochester – the identification *as* one or the presence *of* one, for example. If we would follow the second possibility, we may then read 'a sightless block' as metalepsis, a 'block' as something – Rochester's disability as being in the way, a contrast to a prosthesis – as blocking Rochester from making Jane care. As such, the identification *as* a block and the presence of one become not separate options but rather are compossible. What Armstrong referred to as 'affect patterns', then, might be related to Reddy's theory of emotives in that in literary

texts, these patterns might become traceable through those places in which we may simultaneously read for gaps in the text. The difficulty here lies that we may then apprehend these gaps as signifiers that have a difficult relation with their supposed 'signifieds'. Both the gaps and the 'apparent' signs may form a series that is legible, but the legibility of gaps is different than that from other established signs, in that they appear to only create room for this very possibility of legibility, whereas the use of an emotive, for example, appears to attempt to designate an emotional state.

As the focus of what the source of Rochester's countenance is in Jane's focalisation shifts from herself towards Rochester's disability, there is a concurrent change in their described emotional states. Rochester falls back into gloom, whereas Jane becomes increasingly cheerful. This then gives way to Rochester presenting his deformed arm to Jane in the following scene:

> 'On this arm, I have neither hand nor nails', he said, drawing the mutilated limb from his breast, and showing it to me. 'It is a mere stump – a ghastly sight! Don't you think so, Jane?'
>
> 'It is a pity to see it; and a pity to see your eyes – and the scar of fire on your forehead: and the worst of it is, one is in danger of loving you too well for all this, and making too much of you.'
>
> 'I thought you would be revolted, Jane, when you saw my arm and my cicatrized visage.'
>
> 'Did you? Don't tell me so – lest I should say something disparaging to your judgment.'[13]

In this scene, Rochester shows his 'mutilated limb' not initially for Jane's original aesthetic judgement, but rather to agree with his own emotional appraisal, expecting her to be 'revolted'. In performative terms, this appraisal requires the confirmation of Jane's aesthetic judgement as being revolted. Jean-Marie Schaeffer argues that

> the distinction between pure and impure aesthetic judgement seems to me to be pointless. The cogent distinction is rather that between judgements based on aesthetic appreciation and judgements based on other criteria … , it being understood that the same object can at the same moment, or at different moments, be judged according to several kinds of criteria, that it can be the object of a composite judgement.[14]

If Rochester's own judgement *is* aesthetic in nature, his invitation to Jane to either concur or deny this judgement is a different kind of judgement, as it one in which he expects her to condemn him based on his aesthetic visage, or, rather, to prove him wrong in this assumption.

Rather than agreeing to either of the two options presented to her, in a swift sequence, Jane instead moves here from expressing first pity and then love, which is accompanied by explicitly addressing each of Rochester's disabilities

or disfigurements, and following this addressing that they risk her to 'love too well' and 'making too much' out of Rochester, not in spite of, but *because* of his disability, ridiculing the pity she expressed previously, thus suggesting that the pity she emoted may itself be a potential source for an excessive and even dangerous love, a love that would be 'too much' – that is, dangerous *because* of its excessiveness and what that might imply (which remains undisclosed). Rochester again asks for Jane's appraisal ('"Am I hideous, Jane?" "Very, sir: you always were, you know"'[15]), showing Jane's attempt to use irony in order to alleviate any insecurities Rochester might possess about his appearance being too gruesome for him to imagine Jane still desiring him. Linda Hutcheon has argued that

> from the point of view of the interpreter, irony is an interpretive and intentional move: it is the making or inferring of meaning in addition to and different from what is stated, together with an attitude toward both the said and the unsaid. The move is usually triggered (and then directed) by conflictual textual or contextual evidence or by markers which are socially agreed upon.[16]

What is left unspoken between Jane and Rochester is the fact that Rochester presents Jane with an either/or option: irony is employed here by Jane as a strategy to not have to submit to the bifurcating question presented to her.

At this point, Jane's initial reluctance is being replaced by confidence. Jane's use of irony here implies that she perceives a shift in that, rather that Rochester would have an issue with her as his partner, he finds himself an unfit partner due to his disfigurement and disability. Although Jane's use of humour seemingly alleviates the tension between the two characters in the earlier scene, this does not mean that their anxieties and discomfort have been resolved. As the following scene shows, Jane has difficult feelings regarding Rochester's disability, as we are offered the thoughts of Jane as she perceives Rochester sitting in a room:

> I came down as soon as I thought there was a prospect of breakfast. Entering the room very softly, I had a view of him before he discovered my presence. It was mournful, indeed, to witness the subjugation of that vigorous spirit to a corporeal infirmity. He sat in his chair – still, but not at rest: expectant evidently; the lines of now habitual sadness marking his strong features. His countenance reminded one of a lamp quenched, waiting to be re-lit; and, alas! it was not himself that could now kindle the lustre of animated expression: he was dependent on another for that office! I had meant to be gay and careless, but the powerlessness of the strong man touched my heart to the quick: still I accosted him with what vivacity I could.[17]

In this encounter between Jane and Rochester, we are offered only her thoughts and consequently her focalisation, not the words between the two characters, and instead of Rochester *presenting* his body to Jane for aesthetic appraisal, this situation has markedly shifted from the previous scenes. Here, Jane *reads* Rochester both as image and mood through the use of catachresis; in her

reading, habitual sadness is expressed through the lines on his features, his countenance metaphorically compared to a quenched lamp, an object, 'waiting to be relighted', that is: altered. She narrates her emotion not as pity to be erased by the danger of an excessive love, but rather the opposite. Here, it is a mournfulness for his 'corporeal infirmity' which she is captivated by, and the way Jane narrates her own relation to him once again follows a prosthetic logic, relating that it is 'not himself that that could now kindle the lustre of animated expression', but with a more careful tone than she did previously, accosting him with 'what vivacity' she could. As she feels mournful for his somatic condition, this is different and distinct from the feelings she disclosed to him earlier, where she manoeuvred rhetorically in order to persuade Rochester, starting at pity but ending decisively at love, in which she didn't recount the emotional turmoil that this passage discloses. In this sense, we could read this scene as Jane 'telling one thing and meaning another'.

What I argue, however, is that Jane is telling something and feeling something else. That is, her discourse with Rochester and her emotional inner life are indeed not the same, but also allow us to read this differently than Jane intentionally concealing part of her feelings for Rochester. This reading is made possible because of the differences in the set-up of the scenes themselves. In her exchange with Rochester, I showed how there was a quick succession of emotions either displayed or designated between the two lovers, but constantly engaged with one another. In this last scene, however, the form of engagement is marked by the distance that allows Jane to read Rochester, thereby not engaging him in a direct way. In performative terms, this gives way to two different kinds of performative action that take place within the story. On the one hand, it shows how emotives are initially exchanged in relation to disability in order to attempt to alleviate any anxiety that appears to be caused by it. But it is also performative in another sense, in that Jane then relates her feelings, through metaphor, to the (implied) reader, simultaneously designating her own emotional state back to herself.

Between affective conditions and prosthetic logics

The various scenes I have close-read follow a rapid succession of different emotional states both felt and projected by the two characters in relation to Rochester's disability. First it is Jane who feels uncertain, doubting whether Rochester wants her for his wife while simultaneously projecting loneliness on him as part of an argument to open the way for the possibility of Rochester making her his companion, in which she also casts this companionship as a form of prosthesis, offering to not only becoming his sight and hands, but also the companion who is willing to wait on him, foregrounding Rochester's disability, and consequently giving her the insight that it is not her, but rather Rochester's disability which arouses feelings of uncertainty in Rochester.

My use of the term 'prosthesis' here requires further elucidation. Mitchell and Snyder define the concept as follows:

> In a literal sense a prosthesis seeks to accomplish an illusion. A body deemed lacking, dysfunctional, or inappropriately functional needs compensation, and prosthesis helps to effect this end. Yet the prosthesizing of a body or a rhetorical figure carries with it ideological assumptions about what is aberrant. The judgement that a mechanism is faulty is always profoundly social.[18]

The prosthetic logic I have alluded to both follows and deviates from the definition that Mitchell and Snyder propose. For Jane, Rochester's disability is turned into an imaginative space that she can occupy through various forms of proposed prosthetic companionship. Yet, rather than a lack, it is *because* of Rochester's disability that Jane can imagine a role for herself in their relationship; in this sense Rochester's disability becomes Jane's opportunity. Here, Rochester's disability then becomes a prosthetic *for* Jane through which she understands that she can still become his wife. For his part, Rochester's disability complicates how he expresses himself, creating various gaps whenever he attempts to reply to Jane.

My use of the term prosthesis, then, is closely related to how Mitchell and Snyder define the twofold function of their concept 'narrative prosthesis'; 'disability pervades literary narrative, first, as a stock feature of characterization, and, second, as an opportunistic metaphorical device'.[19] Although it is true that the anxiety evoked by Rochester's disability in both characters propels the narrative forward, my argument here more specifically entails that, while emotional language evoked through disability can *perform* alleviation of those emotions through language, this performative use of language does not entail a full resolution of feelings (in this case pity) *towards* disability. This is what I call a prosthetic performative: those emotions related to discomfort and anxiety raised by and through disability which may then be attempted to be 'worked through' by the performative exchange of emotive utterances. Following Mitchell and Snyder in that rhetorical figures too may serve as prosthetic functions, these exchanges themselves become affective in that the perlocutionary force that is generated through the use of emotives not only affects the intended recipient, but also works back on the speaker, who then needs to readjust their position in relation to the situation accordingly – in this case study we can trace this development from Jane starting out with a sincere plea to Rochester, followed by her use of playful irony, followed again by emotions of pity when she finds him by the fireplace.

In this sense, inasmuch as Rochester's disability may be considered 'stereotypical' or, more actively, stereotyping in that he appears to pity himself, the duality of Jane's shared and concealed feelings for him can make us question the extent to which Jane's use of emotives are intentional; concealment

implies the intention to *not* share, while simultaneously her reading of Rochester is in itself also a performative act, designating an emotional state of pity on herself for the reader.

Mitchell and Snyder cite David Wills, who espouses four different relationships between body and word that allow us further insight into the relationship between prosthetic and affect at play here:

> The word that issues from a body is often believed to glean a corporeal aura from its material host.
>
> …
>
> The word always augments a prosthetic relation to an exterior material that it cannot possess or embody.
>
> …
>
> A word returns to the body a sense of possession of the external world that it cannot possess.
>
> …
>
> The body's need to comprehend a materiality external to it is answered via the ruse of language – that is, the word provides the body with the necessary illusion of its successful entrance into the space of the Other.[20]

Wills' relationships point not just to the semantic content of language, but also to its affective charge. The 'corporeal aura' is not just the words that are said, but, in Rochester's case, also what is *not* said, or said incompletely, opening a space for suggestion and guesswork by their interpreter. The corporeal aura is espoused by a material host, in Rochester's case by opening his mouth and not saying anything, or by saying incomplete sentences. What Wills refers to as 'the ruse of language', the entrance into the Other's space provided by words, is then also further complicated by Rochester's *lack* of words. In the scenes I've close-read, Rochester constantly sought affirmation of his disability through asking for Jane's judgement ('It is a mere stump – a ghastly sight! Don't you think so, Jane?') but through asking for Jane to agree with his own aesthetic judgement, this also sets up the possibility for Jane to disagree, and fall into pity – something Jane appears well aware of by replying 'one is in danger of loving you too well for all this, and making too much of you'.

What is telling about the four prosthetic relationships delineated by Wills, is the use of the words 'return a sense of possession' of something – a world or a body – that it cannot possess. This may be read as Rochester asking for Jane's agreement regarding his own negative aesthetic appraisal of his body, as confirming the negation of the possibility of a shared world between him and Jane. But Rochester's initial inability to speak, or the gaps in his

speech, can also be interpreted as a distance between word and body. Earlier I read Rochester's seemingly referring to himself as a 'sightless block' as metonymy, as something that is blocking Rochester from having a sense of possession of his *own* body. Jane, by contrast, uses language to engage with Rochester via articulation of her imaginative desire to become a prosthetic companion to Rochester. Jane's relation between body and word is the opposite of Rochester's. Whereas Rochester's dependency on Jane lies in her acceptance of his visage, and also disagreement, or at least the complication with his own aesthetic judgement of his own body, Jane in turn uses her words – prosthetically – to imagine and offer a future to Rochester where she could place her own body in a prosthetic relation to Rochester's.

The two positions delineated above regarding the relationships between word and body – Rochester's seeming sense of a lack of possession of his body, and Jane offering hers to him in service through specific bodily functions – need to be elucidated further in terms of their respective prosthetic natures, as these are both congenial to but also dependent on one another. Wills writes that

> the body can only be named thanks to the word, and the word can only take form thanks to the idea of the body. The struggle here is therefore with a reciprocity of body and word that cannot be reduced to reference, that continues beyond any hope of unity, and that on the contrary installs divisibility as the principle of any enunciation whatsoever. There is no body that is not also an articulation, and no articulation that does not imply a radical notion of divisibility.[21]

In Wills' writing we find that neither body nor word is originary to the other, but rather that they coincide. The possibility of simply referencing the body through speech, is in Will's estimation a reduction of the relationship between body and word, because when we speak of the body, this is not only a reference *to* it but automatically an articulation *of* it. As such, language is the primary prosthesis of the body in that through our means of articulating it, we offer a division of the body and how it may be experienced or imagined. As body and word necessarily coincide, the latter a condition of divisibility of the former, while the word can only 'take form thanks to the idea of the body', the notion of prosthesis itself is therefore reimagined. Rather than understanding prosthesis as a recuperation of a supposed originary lack or deficit, Wills argues that

> It is therefore the figure of the chiasmus, that between body and word – or indeed a chasm, that into which the words of prosthesis fall locked in a corporal embrace – that structures or at least regulates the words that follow, marking the time of the prosthetic condition.[22]

To mark the 'time of the prosthetic condition' for both Rochester and Jane, leads us not only to two different relationships that are imagined between

word and body, but also the ability of establishing of a new, third relationship *between* their own respective relationships. Rochester's body becomes divided because of his metaleptic relationship to his own disability, the articulation of his corporeal state blocked, which thus cannot but become articulated through these aposiopetic gaps. Meanwhile, the very same troubled articulation of Rochester's body allows Jane to imagine dividing her own body into the functions that could be of service to Rochester. Therefore, what the logic of prosthesis offers is not only to make legible the relationship between word and body of the individual, but also the creation of a new, third relationship in and through the generation of prosthetic language between and through different bodies.

I now come back to Armstrong, who argues that we should read for 'the reproduction of the conditions of affective life within texts'[23] in contrast to the notion that affect could be directly representable. This also clarifies the distinction between affect and emotion within the context of this study further, as I have used the term 'emotion' in relation to emotional states either described or designated by the two characters through the use of emotives, which does not mean, however, that this performativity equals direct representation of emotion. Rather, as Reddy argued, they *refer* to those states. In this I follow Rei Terada's reading of how emotions function in relationship to textuality:

> Unrepresentable by any individual sign, emotion is represented by traces in a differential network. Textuality offers an alternative to expression and indication. Textuality plays in poststructuralist theory the double role that expression plays in philosophy, being both a means of representing emotion and an explanatory scheme of the operation of emotion.[24]

This double role mirrors Reddy's theory somewhat closely, as when we speak *of* emotions, this act of speaking itself can in turn produce emotional states.

So how does this relate to affect? Particularly challenging in Armstrong's formulation regarding affect is the question concerning how we can read for the reproduction of the conditions of affective life, given that affect cannot be directly represented through representational means. As I have tried to show with my reading of *Jane Eyre*, at least a part of the ability to analyse these conditions lies in the combination between the formal structure of the text – the build-up of the dialogue exchanged between Rochester and Jane – in relation to how emotions are discussed and emotional language usage is performed. In this I have been careful not to suggest that emotional states *are* directly represented through the textual sign, but rather have argued that the act of naming an emotional state is itself a locutionary act that requires a response – thus both affect and emotion, as used here, share their lack of unrepresentability, albeit for different reasons.

How are the conditions of affective life reproduced in the sequence of the scene given above, then? Affect, as we have seen in Armstrong's argument, is

not *in* language, but rather may be generated *through* the way in which these conditions are reproduced, including the *gaps* we might read for; this includes the gaps that are created through those emotives that do not get a response in turn. The language of prosthesis similarly deals with the chasm between word and body, that allows us to read for how the body is not only itself articulated through the word, but also becomes divided through the use of the word, thereby contributing to the possibility of reading for the affect patterns that are formed in and through this process of articulation, including where and when gaps occur. Thus, it is through these gaps that the text opens up a space for a multiplicity of interpretations, through which it comes to carry an affective charge.

Conclusion

The aim of my reading of some of the closing scenes in *Jane Eyre* has been to trace how affective patterns can be generated through literary structures in which emotional states are rapidly performed and interchanged, where disability is placed to function as a prosthetic device in order for the succession of the exchange of emotional states to continue, while simultaneously this exchange itself becomes generative of affect.

I have argued that the usage of emotional performative language can both designate and navigate different emotional states aroused through disability. This designation and its required response then become a vehicle through which the two characters discussed here, Jane and Rochester, are able to discuss the perceived limitations of Rochester's disability. Simultaneously, these limitations are an opportunity for Jane to envision a form of prosthetic companionship. Once it has become clear for Jane that it is Rochester's disability which is the source of his anxiety, this knowledge then becomes a source for Jane in order to try to alleviate this anxiety through the further use of emotives. I have called this a prosthetic performative; the way in which emotional language concerning disability is performed in order to navigate the feelings aroused by it.

I have concurrently asserted that the prosthetic performative function of this emotive does not, however, render a full resolution of emotion possible in this story. The distinction that is made by what Jane shares with Rochester and what she shares with the reader shows the importance of which emotives are shared with whom. This distinction challenges the (implied) reader because it confronts her how to relate to this distinction. Furthermore, I have argued that, while both the terms 'affect' and 'emotion' are not directly representable through language, their respective 'unrepresentability' follow different logics: emotives can be used to designate emotional states on others, while this process of linguistic emotional designation can itself become generative of affect. This is done precisely through the gaps that

are created *through* the use of emotives, further elucidating the relationship between affect and emotion in their relation to textuality.

Notes

1. Selected parts of this manuscript are also part of my forthcoming PhD dissertation.
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3. D. Bolt, J.M. Rodas, and E.J. Donaldson (eds), *The Madwoman and the Blind-man: Jane Eyre, Discourse, Disability* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2012).
4. Reddy, *The Navigation of*, p. 105.
5. Brönte, *Jane Eyre*, pp. 501–2.
6. J.L. Austin, J.O. Urmson, and M. Sbisà,*How to Do Things with Words* (Harvard: Harvard University Press), pp. 101–2.
7. I. Armstrong, 'Towards a Perlocutionary Poetics?', in *Nineteenth-Century Radical Traditions* (New York: Springer, 2016), p. 200.
8. S. Cavell, *Philosophy the Day After Tomorrow* (Harvard: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), p. 173.
9. S. Ngai, *Ugly Feelings* (Harvard: Harvard University Press), p. 14.
10. Armstrong, *The Radical Aesthetic*, p. 124.
11. Ibid.
12. Brönte, *Jane Eyre*, pp. 502–3.
13. Ibid., p. 503.
14. J.M. Schaeffer, *Beyond Speculation: Art and Aesthetics Without Myths*, trans. D. Roberts (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 2015), p. 96.
15. Brönte, *Jane Eyre*, p. 503.
16. L. Hutcheon, *Irony's Edge: The Theory and Politics of Irony* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 11.
17. Brönte, *Jane Eyre*, p. 506.
18. D. Mitchell and S. Snyder, *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), p. 6.
19. Mitchell and Snyder, *Narrative Prosthesis …* p. 47.
20. D. Wills. *Prosthesis*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995). pp. 137-141.
21. Wills, *Prosthesis*. p. 141.
22. Ibid.
23. Armstrong, *The Radical Aesthetic*, p. 124.
24. R. Terada, *Feeling in Theory: Emotion After the "Death of the Subject"* (Harvard: Harvard Univ. Press, 2003), p. 45.

Disclosure statement

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