



ANIMALITY-PATRIARCHY IN MENTAL DISABILITY REPRESENTATIONS

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Abstract

In this article, I theorize an *ableist, familial discourse of animality-patriarchy* through examination of Foucault's (1988), Gilman's (1976, 1988, 1995, 1996), and Kromm's (2002) histories of mental disability representations. These scholars show how animal as well as female and infant human characteristics were each used to signify inferiority, but they overlook the collective function of such characteristics within a discursive system that appeals to hierarchical animal taxonomies. Utilizing perspectives from Disability Studies, Gender Studies, and Animal Studies, I provide a historical overview of how representations of mental disability in Western cultures rely on multiple, overlapping types of oppression, specifically ableism, paternalism, and speciesism, which I argue coalesce as a form of patriarchy. Contrasting Mitchell (2012), who asserts that madness was always represented as an exaggeration of what society perceives as normal thinking, I argue that the taxonomic aspect of what I am calling animality-patriarchy implies absolute difference between disabled and non-disabled people, between men, women, children, and pets, and so on, which is used to rationalize the oppression of such groups.

Keywords: animality, patriarchy, mental disability, disability studies, animal studies

Animality-patriarchy in Mental Disability Representations

Scholars in diverse fields have critically examined historic representations of mental disability (i.e., hysteria, insanity, lunacy, madness, mental illness) with considerable attention to gender. The research of Michel Foucault (1988), Sander Gilman (1976, 1988, 1995, 1996), and Jane Kromm (1994, 2002), which focuses on the development of madness representations during early and middle Modernity, demonstrates different aspects of how visual representations of mental disability in the modern era reflect patriarchal values. Citing humoral theory (i.e., the four temperaments), W. J. T. Mitchell (2012) asserts that madness was “merely an extreme version of ‘normal’ and normative facial and bodily expression” (p. 5), hence quantitative difference rather than qualitative difference—an assertion that recognizes the explicit features of madness representation but not its implication. Challenging the notion that madness can be “seen” in any mode, Mitchell rightly evaluates such representations “as social, cultural, and political constructions aimed at confining, excluding, curing, exorcising, or conquering certain forms of non-normative behavior” (p. 6). As major scholarship shows, most representations of mental disability are masculinized or feminized, such as Goya's [ca. 1812–1819] *The Madhouse* and [ca. 1749] *Yard with Madmen* (Figure 1), Géricault's portraits of madpersons, Horace Vernet's painting *La Folle par amour* and Maurin's [ca. 1825–1929] lithograph copy (Figure 2), and Dr. Hugh W. Diamond's staged photographs (Figure 3) of psychiatric patients (Gilman, 1976). Such images typically feature traditional gendered traits, with madmen exhibiting masculine traits and madwomen exhibiting feminine traits, although sometimes traits are reversed. The reversal is evident in examples of gendered animality, where masculinized savage beasts are meant to elicit fear, and docile beasts indicate weakness, inferiority, and defeat (Kromm, 1994). For instance, William Blake's (1795) portrait of Nebuchadnezzar (Figure 4) presents the Biblical figure as an emasculated, mad man-beast.



Figure 1. Francisco Goya. [ca. 1794]. *Yard with Madmen*. Meadows Museum, Dallas, TX. Oil on tin plated iron. 43.8 cm x 32.7 cm.



Figure 3. Hugh W. Diamond. [ca. 1850–1858]. *Patient, Surrey County Lunatic Asylum*. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY. Albumen silver print from glass negative. 19.1 cm x 14 cm.



Figure 2. Antione Maurin dit l'aîné. [ca. 1825–1829]. *La Folle par Amour* [after Horace Vernet, 1819]. Galerie du Palais Royal Meadows Museum, Paris, France. Lithograph on paper. 22 cm x 18.3 cm. Reprinted with permission. © Trustees of the British Museum.



Figure 4. William Blake. (1795). *Nebuchadnezzar*. Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Minneapolis, MN. Color monotype in tempera, finished with pen, black ink, and watercolor on paper. 43 cm x 60.3 cm.

In this article, I examine multiple histories of Modern mental disability representations to theorize an *ableist, familial discourse of animality-patriarchy*. I bridge the attention that Foucault (1988), Gilman (1976, 1988, 1995, 1996), and Kromm (1994, 2002) pay to animality and patriarchy separately by closely examining their intersection. What I am asserting as animality-patriarchy provides a comprehensive picture of how representations of mental disability rely on multiple, overlapping types of oppression, specifically ableism, paternalism, and speciesism, which are coalesced as a form of patriarchy. Other types of oppression also target mental disability, but these three types are most evident in the historic visual culture of mental disability, providing the strongest examples of how patriarchy overarches other types of oppression. Specifically, I explain how mental disability oppression appeals to animal (and family) taxonomies, in which the power imbalance between mentally disabled people and their authoritative “caretakers” is positioned as reasonable, necessary, and even benevolent. I argue against Mitchell’s (2012) notion that madness representations were merely quantitative by demonstrating how animality implies a significant qualitative difference between mad (animal) and sane (human), which is common to the oppression of women, children, animals, and perhaps others including people of color and visibly disabled people. Such myths are based on overestimations of human superiority that were introduced in Aristotelian philosophy, canonized in Judeo-Christian theology, formalized in Enlightenment philosophy, and crystalized in early psychiatry and evolutionary science. Secondly, this study provides an example of addressing gender in visual culture through interdisciplinary methods, and it carries implications for the fields of Animal Studies, Disability Studies, and Gender Studies as well as Art Education. I do not suggest that any of these fields is more basic, essential, or important than others, but rather that it can be advantageous to consider how multiple forms of oppression contribute to broader oppressive discourses.

Animality and Patriarchy in Foucault’s *Madness and Civilization*

Before giving close attention to the rise of animality-patriarchy, I will clarify how Foucault (1988) addresses the two themes in *Madness*

and *Civilization* and how his discussion of animality relates to current thinking in Animal Studies. *Madness and Civilization*, published in the mid-1960s, was the first and most important critical history of discourses of “madness,” as it was formerly called, and institutional psychiatry. Foucault addresses animality as a prominent dehumanizing theme in the representation of madness in such diverse visual media as oil painting, medical illustration, theater, and photography. It is perhaps obvious that one of the most straightforward ways to dehumanize a group of people is to depict them as literally non-human. However, it is important to understand that in Enlightenment representations, animality specifically signified that people with mental disability were incapable of reason, which was the supposed evolutionary gain that qualitatively separated humans from other beings.

Hence, Foucault’s (1988) criticism of animality foreshadows what Animal Studies now refers to as *speciesism*, the discriminatory belief that humans are fundamentally unique, superior to, and of greater value than all other life forms. Such arguments have appealed to humans’ use of tools, language, culture, reason, empathy, self-reflection, self-determination, and self-refinement. It is debatable whether or not any of these marks a true qualitative difference and, if so, whether such differences beget different rights. In the classic animal rights book *Animal Liberation*, Peter Singer (1975) argues that sentience—the capacity for suffering and enjoyment—constitutes self-interest and that humans, as rational beings conscious of our actions, are morally obligated to consider sentient beings as equally important. The degree of suffering of any being, Singer argues, is equally important to the suffering of another being, all other things being equal, per the “principle of equality” (p. 9). While anti-speciesists grant that species have different biological attributes, needs, and ecological purposes, the sentience of all sentient beings is equally authentic and important. If a dog and a human experience the same degree of pain, for example, we should regard their pain as equally significant, regardless of how the two beings cognitively process it. The fact that humans conceptualize pain through language and culture does not make human pain greater. Singer argues that sentience “is the only defensible boundary of concern for the interests of others” and that “to mark this boundary by some other characteristic like intelligence or ra-

tionality would be to mark it in an arbitrary manner” similar to skin color (p. 9). Singer equates speciesism with racism and sexism, in that similar to favoring one’s own race or sex, “the speciesist allows the interests of [the speciesist’s] own species to override the greater interests of members of other species” (p. 9). Tom Regan remarks, “[T]o persist in judging human interests as being more important than the like interests of other animals, because they are human interests, is speciesism. It is not rationally defensible. It is a moral prejudice . . . it is wrong” (Cohen & Regan, 2001, p. 297). The poignancy of Regan’s statement to this article is threefold: First, it is irrational to suggest that human suffering is more important than equal suffering of animals *just because it is human*. This is particularly important to the ableist discrimination of mental disability that Foucault criticizes, because its main tenet is that mentally disabled people are irrational. Second, speciesism hides behind a prejudicial, ironic veil of morality, which is a common underpinning of how animality and patriarchy are used to frame and discredit people with mental disability. Third, it points out the faulty logic of taxonomies that imply superiority of different beings: (a) All humans are animals. (b) Most mature humans have capabilities that nonhuman animals do not have. (c) Therefore, humans are superior to animals, have greater worth and rights than animals, and/or are not animals.

In terms of patriarchy, Foucault’s (1988) chief concern is the role of the psychiatrist as a paternalistic authority over people with mental disability. Foucault is concerned with psychiatric writing and Freudian theory as well as actual practices of psychiatry, including the everyday treatment of asylum patients and the act of psychoanalysis. Because Foucault (1988) associates patriarchy with institutionalized psychiatry, he introduces it late into his chronological study. However, his extensive criticism of animality reveals patriarchal sentiments. Alluding to the Biblical book of Genesis, where Adam is given dominion over animals, but later sins and hence becomes subject to their peril, Foucault (1988) suggests that the true nature of humankind is our untamable, “hideous” animality, and that it is this “knowledge” that fascinates and tempts us (p. 21). Foucault presents this as an analogy for madness, implying that notions of sanity, reason, civility, and so on constitute a façade of privilege that humans who hold power strive to maintain. Foucault implies

that in doing so, we fear animals, madness, and other “primitive” things because we recognize them in ourselves. To this end, madness must be vigilantly controlled, similar to our controlling of domesticated and wild animals. As madness came to be regarded as the “anti-natural violence of animality” (p. 78) that is released when madmen are abolished by their latent, internal animal presence, society determined that madness “could be mastered only by *discipline* and *brutalizing*” (p. 75). A discourse of animality-patriarchy conceptualizes the natural behavior and power of animals as unnatural masculinity, and because of this, animals, as well as humans who exhibit animalistic deviance, must be forcibly contained and sternly managed in order to maintain qualitative distinction.

The Evolution of Animality-patriarchy in Modernity Early Renaissance: The Departure of Christological Children

Foucault (1988) argues that during Medieval times and the early Renaissance, madness was recognized as a sign of human weakness rather than as illness, an indication of the “guilty innocence of the animal in man” (p. 82). According to Foucault, in the Christian theological narrative, Christ had honored madness by surrounding himself with lunatics and the poor and even choosing “to pass in their eyes for a madman” (p. 80), and Christ assumed madness in his Passion and crucifixion, placing madness as “an object of respect and compassion” (p. 81). In this sense, madness can be seen as an affliction of God’s imperfect children, separated from God as the result of the fall of humanity. Foucault suggests Bosch’s painting *Ship of Fools* (1490–1500) (Figure 5) illuminates madness as a metaphor for the pride of secular humanity and the foolishness of knowledge. Regarding the fall of humanity, Foucault suggests that the ship’s mast—a tree containing a skull-like form—is an allusion to the forbidden tree in Eden. The tree arguably also alludes to the crucifixion of Christ, the new Adam and redeemer. Gilman (1996) argues that *Ship of Fools* illustrates society’s moral failure and the idea that society had gone mad. Everyone aboard Bosch’s small raft, clergy and laypersons alike, appears mad, gluttonous, or both. Of historic importance, though, Bosch’s ship is more than an allegory. Such ships were real. When families grew tired of caring for mad loved ones, they were report-

edly boarded onto ships that sailed from town to town, literal voyages to nowhere, effectively banishing madpersons from society while keeping them on exhibition (Foucault). Gilman argues that Bosch's painting is chiefly about both the literal and figurative separation of madness from sane society and an indication that our sociocultural disdain for mentally disabled people was already in place in the 1400s. Thus, *Ship of Fools* indicates a drift away from the responsibility of communities to care for madpersons in the Middle Ages (Roffe & Roffe, 1995) and from the Church in the Renaissance. Most significantly, the ship represents confinement, which had become a popular, institutional solution to madness in the seventeenth century, as madpersons—at one time an alarming one percent of all Parisians—were confined in the same places as prisoners, the poor, and the unemployed (Foucault, 1988).

Figure 5. Hieronymus Bosch. (c. 1490–1500). *Ship of Fools*. Musée du Louvre, Paris, France. Oil on wood panel. 58 cm x 33 cm.



The Classical Period: Taming the Unnatural Beast (Within)

A qualitative shift occurred over the classical period—the late 1600s through 1800s—as madness became “a thing to look at: no longer a monster inside oneself but an animal with strange mechanisms,” the inconceivable mystery of “man without thought” (Foucault, 1988, p. 70). Foucault (1988) explains that during this time, animality in madness came to be understood as a performative revelation of “the dark rage, the sterile madness that lie in men’s hearts” (p. 21). Jane Kromm’s (1994) attention to gender in visual representations of madness clarifies this shift. Stereotypes of madness leading up to the eighteenth century were distinctly gendered, Kromm notes, with common depictions of madmen as “potentially combative figure[s]” of “uncivilized animality,” while madwomen were shown as “sexually provocative” and self-abusive (pp. 507–508). Both stereotypes were constructed according to a masculine viewing position, as madness threatens man’s desire for physical domination and control (the madman) and sexual authority (the madwoman) (Kromm, 1994). Representations of the madman as a muscle-bound savage beast, which Foucault notes must be literally chained in cages and beaten into submission, dominate during this time. This glaring, conspicuous example of animality, I suggest, marks a reformation of madness into the pervasive, familial discourse of animality-patriarchy.

In the early and middle eighteenth century, Kromm (1994) notices, the madwoman is rarely depicted because she is of no interest to image-makers. Kromm notes that the depictions of males in early asylums document the factual separation of men from women in separate wards, but they also document a fantastic obsession with masculine endeavors, including men’s victimization of each other in private madhouses. Kromm may be correct about the imbalance of gender representations during this time, but visual histories of madness, including Kromm’s, indicate that fine art images of madness at the time were sparse, suggesting image-makers were disinterested in madness altogether. Medical discourses, however, continued to theorize madness, especially female madness. Foucault (1988) suggests that female mental disabilities of this time were based on humoral theory, the four humors of Hippocratic medicine—

blood (air), phlegm (water), black bile (earth), and yellow bile (fire)—particularly in response to Descartes' (1649/1989) *Passions of the Soul*. For instance, according to Foucault, hysteria was considered a “disorder of the spirits” that was “based upon a movement of the animal spirits” (pp. 147–148). It originated in the womb, spread to the brain, then spread through the entire body. Such possession of the entire body was an implication of moral density, as evidenced by the assumed common idleness of women, which led to madness as well as frailness. Hysteria was generally understood to be a natural moral punishment resulting from the unnatural urbanization of women, and eventually hysteria and other passions came to be recognized as mental disabilities (Foucault), which apparently were chiefly identifiable through the visible performances of their gender-specific actors. Moreover, such “abnormal” sufferings of passions were diagramed in the ongoing pseudoscientific visual culture tradition of physiognomy, which holds that personality and character can be discerned through physical appearance. The tradition of physiognomy, which was based on humoral theory, had long considered madness analogous to animality (see Gilman, 1996, pp. 58–61), and despite advances in medicine, physiognomy had a strong resurgence in staging mental disability as evolutionary regression.

In the late eighteenth and nineteenth century, madness came to be understood as a deficiency of reason, illustrated in relation to occupation and profession for men and relationships and domesticity for women (Kromm, 1994, p. 519). As previous generations' idle women brought on hysteria, madmen began to include grandiose perversions of work such as creative geniuses and inventors (Kromm, 1994, p. 508). Echoing yesteryear's blaming of idle women for their hysteria, madmen became culpable for their incapacity to work, deserving of “natural punishment of a moral evil” (Foucault, 1988, p. 158). As madness was increasingly represented in terms of occupation, images of brute animality in men were replaced with pathetic men exhibiting weakness and defenselessness, which William Blake's famous portraits of *Nebuchadnezzar* (1795) (Figure 4) exemplify. Nebuchadnezzar was a monarch who ruthlessly tormented Judah, and who, according to the Book of Daniel, went insane because of his idolatry and pride and lived like a wild animal for seven years before turning to God (Dan. 4:25–33 New Revised Standard Ver-

sion). Blake depicts the monarch as a crazed, whimpering man-beast, crawling on all fours in what appears to be a small, solitary cave. Like Bosch's fools, Blake's Nebuchadnezzar is confined by his own disorder, except his folly has given way to shame. The emasculation of the savage is not an empathetic display of humanness, but a triumph of man over beast, bolstering the legacy of Aristotle's classification of humans as rational animals and our continued natural evolution, through reason, refinement, and work, into superior beings (Roberts, 2008). Kromm (1994) notes that as images of madmen became emasculated, images of madwomen became increasingly ferocious, marking a pivotal moment when madness representation shifted from primarily male to primarily female. According to Kromm (1994), the role of the madman receded until it was irrelevant to the construction of madness, which is attributable to the anxiety about social unrest that culminated in the French Revolution. This transformation toward the depiction of madwomen as “antisocial, violent, unruly, and oversexed” positioned madwomen under patriarchal reign “as specimens for observation configured within the asylum's precincts” (Kromm, 1994, p. 531).

Modernism: The Disease of Unreason and the Institution of Psychiatry

The advent of the asylum and institutionalized psychiatry, and the accompanying shift in madness representation during the nineteenth century, emerged from this anxiety and unrest. Foucault (1988) tells us that mythical images of leprosy were suddenly resurrected and transferred to madness as a sign that marked “the corruption of morals as well as the decomposition of the flesh” (p. 203). This deeply visual concept—which conflated mental disability and disease and bolstered the premise that mental disability can be seen—created a panic that madness was contagious, which demanded the visible response of quarantining madness to protect the public. Thus, prior to asylums, people with mental disabilities were confined within various institutions including hospitals and prisons. Despite the fact that many incarcerated criminals were liberated following the French Revolution, it was understood that most madpersons, by virtue of their visible unreason, remained unfit for society. With the

increased concern for social justice, prisons were regarded as unsuitable for confining madpersons, so madpersons were sent to hospitals such as Philippe Pinel's (1745–1826) Bicêtre, which released all non-mad patients, resulting in dedicated asylums. Historians Gauchet and Swain (1999) argue that the emergence of the asylum was a responsible project that intended to communicate with, cure, and finally release insane people and to remediate the isolation and homelessness of people who experience mental illness. But critical histories of the asylum, such as Foucault's, excavate the silent, problematic history of psychiatry as a patriarchal enterprise whose treatment involves unilateral power and perpetual control.

To demonstrate the collusion of science and religion in early psychiatry, Foucault (1988) focuses on two key figures of the early asylum: Quaker philanthropist Samuel Tuke (1784–1857), and Pinel, overseer of La Salpêtrière and Bicêtre. According to Foucault, Pinel aspired to liberate madness by professionalizing it and treating it according to its own symptomology by its own professionals. But despite claims to be purely scientific, early psychiatry mingled religious morality and myth, theatrical illusion, and secular pseudoscience. Pinel advocated a purely medical approach and vehemently disavowed organized religion, but he endorsed “Natural” religion with values of family and work and of “moral and social uniformity” (p. 268). Having noted that a farmer once cured madness by using madpersons as beasts of burden and beating them, Pinel endorsed the treatment of “discipline and brutalizing” (p. 75) as a cure, not as a means of restoring sanity to the insane person, but as a rite of passage from man-beast to beast. Foucault argues that the asylum visualizes this model of animality through its architecture of cages and shackles and punishment, which were used to restrain madwomen and madmen. But Foucault cautions that while such images elicit fear of animals, the contemporaneous meaning of animality in madness was that madpersons indicated a dispossession of reason, the very essence of humanness, and “it was this *animality of madness* which confinement glorified” (p. 78). Pinel's asylum functioned as “a uniform domain of legislation, a site of moral syntheses where insanities born on the outer limits of society were eliminated” (p. 260), with four principal means for instigating moral synthesis. The first was *silence*, as patients were shamed by social ostrac-

cizing until they became ready to be delivered from madness. The second was *recognition by mirror*. Patients would watch others acting out mad behavior and, through reason, would recognize their own folly, resulting in cure. The third was *perpetual judgment*—it was believed that treatment could only work if the patient was constantly aware of the threat of punishment. But above all, the early asylum revolved around the *medical personage*, a titular physician who was more of a sage than a scientist, a moral and social figure charged with maintaining order. The promise of cure was contingent upon the patient's rigorous submission to the authority of the doctor-patient relationship, a tenet Freud would soon ratify as absolute. This institutionalization of the traditional nuclear family power structure, in which the chief male possesses full authority over subordinate Others, is a perfect demonstration of patriarchy.

Foucault (1988) refers to the creation of the doctor-patient relationship as the lone reality of mental illness, written as a “new structure of language without response” (p. 251), which I suggest refined and crystallized the image of animality to its paternalistic, familial underpinning. The beast that Foucault argued had “escaped domestication” in the Renaissance (p. 21) was finally tamed. As the ethical responsibility of caretakers to mad loved ones was expunged, the psychiatrist legally assumed the unwanted paternalistic role formerly held by society, the Roman Catholic Church, nuclear families, and prisons in caring for and disciplining the infirm. Kromm (1994) remarks,

In this new therapeutic orientation ..., treatment was structured to reinforce the ideals of familial domesticity, with asylum staff functioning as the inmate's surrogate family. Those stereotypical conceptions of madness as defined by family relations seemed to validate the new domestic moral emphasis. (p. 515)

Moreover, Foucault explains: “The physician could exercise his absolute authority in the world of the asylum only insofar as, from the beginning, he was Father and Judge, Family and Law” (p. 272). He was expected to dominate patients by being stern and non-threatening, but ready and willing to immediately punish patients whenever they disobeyed him, in the spirit of punishing stubborn animals.

Foucault (1988) relays an example cited by Pinel, in which an unruly seventeen-year-old girl who had slipped into delirium was cured by the keeper of the asylum. Foucault quotes Pinel's account of the event:

“The keeper, in order to tame this inflexible character ... expressed himself forcibly concerning certain unnatural persons who dared oppose their parents and disdain authority. He warned the girl she would henceforth be treated with all the severity she deserved, for she herself was opposed to her cure and dissimulated with insurmountable obstinacy the basic cause of her illness.” (pp. 272–273)

Through his paternalistic threats, the keeper worked to mediate the qualitative disparity by resuscitating the vestiges of reason in the young girl. Moved by this new rigor and these threats,

“she ended by acknowledging her wrongs and making a frank confession that she had suffered a loss of reason as the result of a forbidden romantic attachment. ... [Consequently,] a most favorable alteration occurred. ... [S]he was henceforth soothed and could not sufficiently express her gratitude toward the keeper who had brought an end to her continual agitation, and had restored tranquility and calm to her heart.” (p. 273)

According to Foucault, Pinel concluded that the medical personage was successful, not by responding to “an objective definition of the disease or a specific classifying diagnosis, but by relying upon [the prestige of patriarchy] which envelops the secrets of the Family, of Authority, of Punishment, and of Love” (p. 273). Foucault theorizes that madness was reinvented as a rebellion against the Father (p. 254), a point that begins to illuminate Kromm's concern that the image of the madwoman had to do with patriarchal fear of rebellious women. Through this reinvention, madness became a “minority status” or “childhood” (p. 252), in which the voice of the madperson was considered senseless gibberish like the vacuous wailing of a toddler or a dog's incessant barking. The image of the madman as child and animal, Foucault contends, also reiterates the forgotten signs of incest and punishment.

Animality-patriarchy in Evolution Theory and Pseudoscientific Visuality

Gilman (1976, 1995, 1996) bolsters Foucault's and Kromm's claims by analyzing how institutional psychiatry constructed false medical images to pathologize mental illness through the pseudoscientific practices of physiognomy and phrenology. Physiognomy, introduced above, is the study of how peoples' physical appearances, especially facial expressions, reveal personality and character. Belief in physiognomy has gone in and out of favor in the West, originating in Greek philosophy, finding great popularity in the nineteenth century and enjoying a recent resurgence in contemporary neuroscience, for example in the ubiquity of brain scan images that, while unreadable to most people, are used rhetorically as visual evidence of abnormal and deviant cognition. In the nineteenth century, prior to the invention of photography, illustrated images of physiognomy gained tremendous popularity. Physiognomy visualized madness through exaggerated facial expressions and anatomical cranial and facial structures, often connoting animality. Gilman (1995) discusses several examples, perhaps the most pertinent of which is August Krauss's table of animal analogies and mental illnesses. The illustrated table pairs profiles of different breeds of horses with impossibly proportioned human busts, each representing a particular mental illness—a trick that also implied “objective” differences between social classes and human races. In *The Face of Madness: Hugh W. Diamond and the Origin of Psychiatric Photography*, Gilman (1976) explores work surrounding Diamond, a physician and psychiatrist, and the “father of clinical photography” (p. 5). Gilman presents previously unpublished photographs—mostly of women—and a lecture by Diamond along with engravings that were based on the photographs. Diamond attempted to document different categories of mental illness developed by Pinel, and his photographs were used in therapy sessions to treat patients with mental illnesses. The photographs were intended to appear candid, but the technology of the time required long exposures and, therefore, static poses, suggesting they were highly staged, and it is clear that the engravings were not faithful to the photographs, with the supposed evidence often exaggerated. The ex-

ample shown earlier (Figure 3), although not included in Gilman's study, is typical of Diamond's portraits, in that the woman is dressed in asylum garments and posed in a traditional counterbalanced posture against a neutral fabric backdrop. Diamond suggested that such photographs could be used for study by medical professionals, in therapy sessions by showing the images to patients, and for future use in evaluating patients' progress. Diamond viewed these works as clear and objective proof of contemporary theories of physiognomy and insanity, superior to written clinical narratives, arguing that

“the Photographer secures with unerring accuracy the external phenomena of each passion, as the really certain indication of internal derangement, and exhibits to the eye the well known sympathy which exists between the diseased brain and the organs and features of the body” (Diamond as cited in Gilman, 1976, p. 20).

Some of Diamond's subjects do exhibit stereotypical “crazed” looks, whereas with many, like the example (Figure 3), it is remarkably difficult to see even the faintest hint of insanity, stereotypically or otherwise. Diamond's photographs, and his specious argumentation, follow the longstanding tradition of promoting cultural myths about marginalized groups of the people through the aid of cutting-edge visual technologies. In terms of animality-patriarchy, Diamond's photographs suggest a departure from the visualization of madpersons as animals, away from fictitious drawings toward a new, austere tradition that was deeply invested in medicine and the paternalistic authority and gaze of the psychiatrist. But beyond the specific domain of psychiatry, highly influential scholars, specifically evolutionary theorist Charles Darwin (1809–1882) and neurology founder Jean-Martin Charcot (1825–1893), used photography to crystalize animality within mental illness discourses. Darwin used photographs to establish a hierarchical taxonomy of animals, and his research was used to correlate insanity with sub-human animal behavior, thus positioning insanity as an evolutionary regression (Gilman, 1996). Darwin's thoughts reflect Aristotle's “teratology” animal taxonomy, in which human males are championed as the most pure and

natural life form, while animals are ranked progressively lower according to biological deformity, with “monsters” at the very bottom (Cherney, 2011, para. 18–23). Charcot, founder of neurology, also relied heavily on photographs and cinematography to document performance as objective medical evidence of dysfunction, the characteristic of biologic inferiority. Gilman (1988) explains that Charcot and colleagues “presented an image of the insane as the hysteric ... that dominated the visualization of the insane well into the twentieth century” (p. 43), which elaborates the gendered shift identified by Kromm. Importantly, Gilman remarks, “their classificatory system was as fictive as were the actions of their ‘pet’ patients who quickly learned to act out the stages of hysteria expected by the head of the hospital ...” (p. 43). They were indeed “pets,” trained to perform their madness the way sideshow “freaks” performed as animals for circus masters, and whose photographs asserted their freakish nature (Hevey, 2006; Millett-Gallant, 2010).

Beyond Major Critical Histories: The 20th Century and Now

According to Foucault (1988), Freud disregarded visual imagery, favoring time-based observations and listening. Foucault argues that once psychiatry was established, the institutional power of psychiatry was secured, so it seems that the purpose of representational discourses—to convince the public—had for the moment been fulfilled. The danger of mentally disabled people roaming the streets and burdening families had been removed, and the ideas of animality-patriarchy were firmly planted in the foundations of institutional psychiatry. This is where most critical histories of mental disability end, including those of Foucault, Gilman, and Kromm.

It is not, however, where the discourse of animality-patriarchy, representations, cultural stigma, or profound oppression of mentally disabled people ends. In the early twentieth century, for example, the Nazis murdered about 200,000 disabled children and adults, starting with mentally disabled children who were considered “way down in the animal kingdom” and were more burdensome than animals (Roberts, 2008, p. 98). Although the operation, coded T4, was predominantly secret, it was accompanied by a visual propaganda campaign. Further into the

century, patients in U.S. psychiatric hospitals were routinely raped, tortured, and killed, and following deinstitutionalization, many people with severe mental disability remain disenfranchised and homeless, carrying the stigma of animality-patriarchy that twentieth century Western visual culture has perpetuated (Philo, 1996; Wahl, 1995). Studies in the late twentieth century indicate that the general public views people with mental disabilities as aggressive, dangerous, violent, morally flawed, weak in character, and responsible for choosing to be ill. Exiting the twentieth century, the stigma for mental illness remained so extreme that it exceeded that of all other stigmatized categories, surpassing alcoholism, felony conviction, and even leprosy (Wahl, 1999). Disparaging representations of people with mental disabilities as dangerous criminals, erratic weirdos, and unproductive bums in popular media continue to feed the alarming stigma of mental illness, such as the Showtime television series *Dexter* (Figure 6) whose main character is a psychopathic forensic scientist who doubles as a serial killer, and sensationalist TV news coverage of public and school shootings.



Figure 6. Rosenberg, M., West, W. (Writers), & Dahl, J. (Director). (2009). Dex takes a holiday [Television series episode, screenshot]. In C. Phillips & M. Rosenberg (Executive producers), *Dexter*. New York: Showtime Networks Group.

rary representations of mental disability, and their social effects, remain necessary. Mitchell (2012) optimistically suggests that “cinema compels the eye of the spectator to engage in an ever-closer proximity to the eye of insanity, providing an ‘in your face’ encounter with madness that animates and intensifies the old repertoire of facial expressions of the passions” (p. 9). In addition to movies and TV shows like *Dexter* that problematically represent mentally disabled people, cinematic representations are increasingly including self-representations of mental disability by contemporary writers and artists (Mitchell, 2012), including Art Education scholars (e.g., Derby, 2012, 2013; Eisenhauer, 2009, 2010, 2012). A major call from Disability Studies—like Critical Race Studies—has been for the arts and entertainment industries to employ disabled actors to represent disabled people. Self-representations of mental disability in art and visual culture can help viewers to better understand what mentally disabled people experience, including oppression as well as struggles, accomplishments, and mundane events, which all people experience.

As viewers gain insight and awareness of how the visuality of mental disability works, society can potentially become more supportive of disability rights and advocacy. In addition, I suggest that such self-representations, and possibly others that emphasize the complexity of intersecting identities, could contribute not only to our understanding of mental disability, but also the ways in which disability intersect other forms of identity. In particular, I suggest deeper study within scholarly and creative arts fields as well as Disability Studies on the intersection between animal rights, disability rights, and women’s rights with respect to visual culture. Interested scholars may consider Donna Haraway’s (2008) work on relationships between humans and animals and the inaugural *eco-ability* book *Earth, Animal, and Disability Liberation: the Rise of the Eco-Ability Movement* (Nocella, Bentley, & Duncan, 2012). Along with popular media, scholars should critically examine the proliferation of contemporary artists whose work explores such intersections (see Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, 2005), including Ann-Sofi Sidén, Patricia Piccinini, Mark Dion, Valérie Blass, Jeff Koons, Vanessa Beecroft, Jane Alexander, Kathy High, and Matthew Barney, particularly Barney’s *Cremaster III*, which features amputee supermodel and decorated athlete Aimee Mullins as a dominant she-animal. In order to

understand how mental disabilities are both experienced and oppressed, it is necessary to identify the unique perspectives and contributions that emerge from mental disabilities, but it is also necessary to obliterate discursive, ableist taxonomies that relegate life forms into fixed, hierarchical categories, such as animality-patriarchy.

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