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"Curtailed of This Fair Proportion"?-

Disability, Gender Identity and "Embodied Contingency" In

English-Language Literature and Television

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Gewidmet

der Erinnerung an meine Urgroßmutter

Marie Blass (1920 – 2016),

meinem Opa

Kurt Wieme

und meiner Mutter

Josefine Wieme,

ohne die ich nicht wäre, was ich bin

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Seit dem Mittelalter ist es eine allgemein anerkannte Tatsache, dass man als Wissenschaftler wie ein Zwerg auf den Schultern von Riesen steht. Auch wenn diese Arbeit meinen Namen trägt, so verbirgt sich dahinter ein Gemeinschaftsprojekt.

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<u>Introduction: The Question of Disability – Contingent Embodiment, Disability and Gender Identity in English Literature.</u>

If we think of many canonical works of European and English-language literature, the readers automatically also think of certain disabled characters: there is no heroic Beowulf without Grendel (Beowulf 2012), and there would be no need for Parzival to go questing for the Grail if Amfortas had not neglected his duties as keeper and been struck down by a maiming condition in consequence (von Eschenbach 2004: 419, book V, manuscript page 252, v. 11 -18). Throughout classical and medieval literatures, we find characters haunting the margins of the narrative that are marked by an embodiment that diverges markedly from the human norm. It often signals a divergence in their approach to the world. Neither the blind seer Teresias, who addresses the king of Thebes to give voice to the gods' displeasure and thus has direct contact with the divine, nor Grendel, who is the spawn of a demon and thus directly descended from the incarnate forces of metaphysical evil, represent in any way the average lives of people in either Classical Athens or Anglo-Saxon England.

The above examples create the impression that the marginal position of disabled characters and their function –they are represented as outsiders that enter society only to either derange it or correct it and then disappear again beyond its borders – can be explained with reference to Classical and medieval metaphysics (Foucault 1974: 46-56). Disability here works as a metaphor for difference. It is an externalised referent to the transcendental order represented by God or the cosmos. If this assumption were true, the advent of Renaissance Humanism or the Enlightenment would have led to a large-scale shift in the representation and function of disabled characters in narratives written from the sixteenth century to the present. However, very many representations still follow a similar functional logic. Bertha Mason, for all that her mental condition might well engender Jane Eyre's sympathy remains othered on account of her madness as well as her race (and the way she performs her gender). Indeed, as both the title and the content of Sandra Gilman and Susan Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic* shows, the association of femininity and madness remains a powerful trope in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Likewise, Virginia Woolf in *Mrs Dalloway* portrays the war veteran Septimus Warren Smith, who returns from the First World War with severe depression and mental illness, as marginalised, and the character's arc ends in suicide, even though the narrative voice sympathises with Septimus and the critique of British imperialist masculinity he embodies (Butter 2013: 216-229). Recent contemporary depictions of characters with disabilities also often portray the protagonists as marginal to society

or as marginalised by it. In some rare instances – like the autistic protagonist of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* (2005) by Mark Hadden -, however, disabled characters appear as major protagonists in their own stories. But narratives guided by either antagonism or sympathy and pity still exist and persist alongside these disabled protagonists (the villain of the recent *Pokémon* live-action adaptation (Bill Knightly) is a wheelchair user, for instance, and the male protagonist of Jojo Moyes' popular romance novel *Me Before You* (2012) ends his life because he cannot deal with having become quadriplegic after a car accident). Representations of disability still provoke marginalising and othering responses as much as they centre the humanity of these characters.

The cursory line-up given above indicates that the representation of disabled characters and their role in Western European societies and lifeworlds has posed and continues to pose questions. Summarising the above examples, these questions and their potential attendant consequences are often dealt with in the narratives we mentioned by marginalising the disabled characters that embody them, sometimes (as in the case of Bertha Mason and Septimus Warren Smith) to the point of death. At the same time, the preceding paragraphs suggest that recent representations can also respond with attempts at inclusion rather than exclusion to disabled persons and their different ways of approaching life.

In order to further elucidate how these representations differ and why they change as well as persist across five centuries of English literature, this thesis argues that the lives of people with disabilities and their representation in literary discourses fundamentally centre on the relationship between contingency and embodiment. We capture the fact that these two terms constantly influence and impinge on one another by using the deliberately ambiguous phrase "embodied contingency", respectively "contingent embodiment". Exploring contingency, that is, the fact that "things are neither necessary nor impossible and thus can always be other than they currently are" (Butter 2013: 1) elucidates the ways in which persons with disability irritate social assumptions about our bodies, the human capacity for agency and how we constitute and constantly re-negotiate our subjectivation as well as processes of community building. In choosing this concept as one third of its focus of interest, our project ties into other recent studies in literary and cultural studies that focus on the literary representation and the social impact of contingency (Butter 2013: 31-32). As will be explained in detail in chapter one below, Stella Butter's thoughtful distinction between different ways in which (an increased) awareness of contingency affects human lifeworlds is particularly foundational to the present study. In brief, Butter argues that

contingency can impinge on human lives on two different levels, the praxeological – where it concerns a person's ability to act – and the epistemological, which affects people's ability to know something, respectively the extent and accuracy of their knowledge (Butter 2013: 28-31). These different moments of awareness are tied to two different ways of emotionally evaluating them. Persons can focus on how contingency forces them into inaction or limits their agency. They see contingency primarily as a limiting forces and a catalyst of change beyond their control. In this view, contingency is primarily accidental and a threat (Butter 2013: 28). Alternatively, it may also be considered an opportunity for change – a "creative resource" (Butter 2013: 28). We concur with earlier studies that, while things being contingent is an ontological constant (Butter 2013: 20-21), the way awareness of this fact is treated by communities and individuals is dependent on their cultural contexts. These cultural contexts are subject to diachronic change as well as synchronic differences. In particular, cultural theorists like Michael Makropoulos argue that Hans Blumenberg correctly identifies an increased awareness of contingency – especially epistemological contingency – as one of the features that separates modernity from the medieval and classical periods of European history. As the following analyses concur with this claim, this thesis traces one possible trajectory through the history of representations of disability and gender identity in English-language literature and television that ends with *Call The Midwife*, a contemporary television series still ongoing at the time of writing. At the same time, we follow the scholarly consensus in much of early modern and Shakespeare Studies and do not treat modernity as a break or rupture with medieval patterns of thought (Greenblatt and Logan 2012: 531-549); therefore we begin our examination with an early modern text and only then jump to the Enlightenment. Throughout all these texts and their varying depictions of disabled and contingent embodiments, these representations all participate in wider cultural debates on handling and evaluating an (increased) awareness of contingency, we contend.

At first glance, this may seem a problematic claim for some readers. After all, what could be less contingent than the fact that we humans (and all non-human lifeforms we are aware of) all have a body? Looking back at the central term of this dissertation, the two concepts it is made up out of of might be thought to operate in different but complimentary ways: contingency is the flexible element turning around embodiment, which serves as its anchor and point of fixture. However, this project operates with a different conception of embodiment. Firstly, we argue that while the fact that we are embodied is indeed an ontological fact, much like in the case of contingency, the way this embodiment is experienced and lived by each person is constantly subject to processes

of negotiation. Each person navigates their individual conscious and unconscious desires and biases, the material capabilities of their bodies, and the cultural discourse-practices that contextualise these actions and discursively frame them. Secondly, the present thesis follows the phenomenology of embodiment first set out in Maurice Merleau Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* (Merleau-Ponty 1974) and argues that embodiment forms a partly pre-conscious interface between humans and the world. Consequently, the following analyses argue that our embodiment both and simultaneously helps externalise a person's thoughts as actions in the world and internalises impressions the outside world leaves on human beings. Implicitly, the preceding sentence already suggests that this thesis and the theories it follows do not consider bodies inert and passive objects solely animated by the human will but rather active material agents of their own that shape the will working through them dialogically. In order to substantiate the concept of material agency further, we draw on recent developments in material feminisms and the new materialisms (Alaimo and Hekman 2008, Coole and Frost 2010) as well as (feminist) technology and science studies more broadly (Bennet 2010, Chen 2012, Barad 2007). Ultimately, our reflections have two aims: Firstly, to more broadly support the move away from the binary conception of our bodies and embodiments as either the passive vessel of conscious and rational human action (propagated by Enlightenment idealism) or the singular defining mechanical foundation of all human action (as put forward by various branches of physicalism and "old materialism" (cf Coole and Frost 2010: 7-8). Instead, we align ourselves with conceptions of the body and embodiment as a dialogic partner in an individual's agential capabilities that both delimits and enables the actions we perform. It thus diverges from the Cartesian view of embodiment with its assumption that there is a clear line of demarcation and hierarchy between the mental *res cogitans* and the physical *res extensa*. In contrast, we argue for a complex inbraiding of thoughts, emotions, feelings, bodily attributes and bodily functions. This inbraiding also centrally features in the second argument made in chapter two, which is more particular to disabled subjects: the chapter proposes an alternative definition of agency. Rather than being grounded in the ability to ignore and suppress the body, we consider agency a form of dialogue with the body that enables someone to interact with the world successfully. This broader definition of agency thus argues that even persons whose embodiment diverges radically from the way their societies conceptualise average or normal human embodiment have agency and use it to live their lives in any way they can (together with other people they interact with). Thus

reconsidered, disability is no longer primarily defined by a lack. Rather, it is defined as a difference in embodiment.

The second chapter of the theoretical framework summarised above focuses primarily on the negotiation processes between persons and their bodies. But the references to other persons with whom an individual subject interacts and the further reference to cultural norms of embodiment already introduces a third party to the dialogical construction of embodiment this thesis envisages: culture and society. The third chapter of this dissertation's theoretical framework begins by addressing the way in which individuals' lives are shaped and in turn shape the wider cultural context around them. We concur with the consensus view in recent cultural studies that individuals always maintain their personalities in relation to cultural discourse-practices. Identity thus becomes the negotiation of individuality and subjectivity. To reflect this dialogic duality at the heart of all identity formations, this thesis adopts Sarah Heinz's fortuitous phrasing and subsequently speaks of "individual subjects" and "individual subjectivity" (Heinz 2007: 110) throughout. In order to be able to conceptualise which ideals of subjectivity (and thus also this ideal subject's embodiment) are primarily hegemonic in a given period, we draw especially on the work of Andreas Reckwitz, particularly his concept of subject cultures and his analysis of their change in a Western context from the Enlightenment to the present day (Reckwitz 2010, Reckwitz 2012). For the early modern period we draw on Stephen Greenblatt's work on Renaissance self-fashioning (Greenblatt 2012). However, this thesis adapts Reckwitz' thesis and the axioms of cultural sociology that subtend it to problematise the fact that a focus on subjectivity that sees individual agency as either the sole product of subject cultures (Reckwitz 2010: 46) or as an "idiosyncrasy" (Reckwitz 2010: 48) runs the risk of not being able to explain how and why subject cultures change (Reckwitz 2010: 73-76) as it denies that individual subject's actively and creatively adapt (and so modify them) discourse-practices taken from various subject cultures (Glomb 2016: 57-64, 59). In order to be able to explore these mechanisms of change, we draw on Elizabeth Ermarth's conceptualisation of individuality and subjectivity "in the discursive condition" (Ermarth 2000). She argues that identity and individuality result from the variations in which individual subjects actualise the discourse-practices of the cultures that surround them (Ermarth 2000: 405). Individuality thus exists in dialogue with, rather than in spite of, subjectivity. This thesis adapts this general insight to the particular contexts of disability studies. Classical studies within the field have tended to focus either on the "discourses of normalcy" (Davis 1995), and how these discourses other disabled

individual subjects, or on how these othered disabled individual subjects then develop alternatives to the hegemony from the position of the other they occupy and fill. We build on these examinations, but argue also that these positions of othering are never absolute. Othered disabled individual subjects build their senses of self in critical conversation with the culture that seeks to other them; this is why they embody contingency in their various ways and ask societies to reflect on the way they constitute and maintain themselves through acts of inclusion and exclusion. In questioning and addressing these processes of constitution – "the political" (Marchart 2010: 32 – 58, 57 -58) in the broadest sense, disabled embodiments and their representation thus become a "political problem" (Kafer 2013: 9) to which (and the contingency awareness caused by it) the subject cultures in which disabled individual subjects are and remain enmeshed must continually respond. The theoretical frameworks we participate in as well as the analyses we offer emphasise that disabled individual subjects constantly engage with the communities around them (including the potentially othering hegemony). Hence, this study aligns itself with recent developments in disability studies collectively known as "crip theory" (McRuer 2006) that focus on the creative revolutionary agency of disabled individual subjects within hegemony.

Nonetheless, the focus on disability as a political and cultural problem requires us to also consider the question of power and the inclusions and exclusions it enacts, often on the very bodies and embodiments of individual subjects. The second part of the culture-focused third chapter hence engages with the influential nexus of biopolitical theories and theoritisation. Foucault's initial conceptualisation of the term and his analysis of how politics began to work through the embodiments of citizens from the late eighteenth century onwards have already been successfully integrated into the toolbox of disability studies (Mitchell and Snyder 2015). This present thesis expands this use by drawing on theorists who redraw the ancient and medieval branches of the biopolitical concept, particularly the work of Giorgio Agamben (Agamben 2017). To balance Agamben's exclusive focus on death as the ultimate end and means of biopolitics and to emphasise its creative as well as destructive potential, we also draw on Roberto Esposito's biopolitical theories of community (Esposito 2008, Esposito 2010, Esposito 2011). Lastly, as the novels discussed in this dissertation all implicitly draw on the existence of biopolitically constructed and maintained racialisations and the colonialist oppressions and chattel slavery that build on and simultaneously subtend them, our theoretical toolbox also draws on recent theories about the ontological construction of racialisation in general (Hartman 1997, Weheliye 2014,

Gilroy 2000, Lowe 2015) as well as whiteness (Dyer 2017) and Blackness in particular (Wilderson 2010, Wilderson 2017, Warren 2018). In doing so, we take seriously the charge of Eurocentrism levelled at biopolitics in recent years (Weheliye 2014: 5-10) and emphasise that the representations we analyse – although none of the characters we focus is explicitly racialised as non-white (and only the Creature in *Frankenstein* (1818) is implicitly racialised as such) – exist in a context where racialisation is one of the primary biopolitical mechanisms.

Propped up by the elaborate theoretical framework laid out in the first three chapters, the following thesis argues that disabled individual subjects and their representation in literary texts furnish cultures with sites to explore the meaning of various forms of contingency, respectively allow them to explore how changes to this approach affect their cultural contexts. Hence, it axiomatically assumes that texts and non-textual embodiments impinge on and reshape each other. This in turn requires an account of literature and its function that considers literary texts as neither wholly reflective of the discourse-practices and value judgements active in a given culture at a given time nor as wholly separate from it. The fourth chapter sets out to tread precisely such a "third way" (Seel, qtd in Glomb 2004a: 18) between these two extremes, imagining literature as a "specialised interdiscourse" (Glomb 2004a: 49) that dialogically interacts with the wider culture, influenced by it and influencing it in turn. In keeping with these basic assumptions, the five analytical chapters that follow offer contextualised close readings and constantly imagine the potential function of a given scene in how readers or audiences experience the texts in question.

As the beginning of this chapter makes clear, there are many representations of disabled individual subjects throughout the history of English-language literature. The fact that this dissertation aligns itself with Blumenberg's observation that an increased awareness of contingency is one of the hallmarks of modernity limits our potential primary sources and leaves texts in Old and Middle English for others to explore. Still, as behoves a scholar of contingency we now wish to briefly explicate why we have chosen the primary sources we have to trace one path of exploration through the history of representations of contingent embodiment and disability in English-language literature and television.

Having identified the early modern period as the starting point of our diachronic account, it also seems logical to choose a dramatic text. Unlike novels, dramas are "texts intended for performance" (Pfister 2001: 24), that is, they specifically address and work with the embodiment of actors and characters. This also means that they make the cultural role of embodiments – including disabled embodiments – tangible for its audiences. And while dramatic texts are a

decidedly popular genre in Elizabethan theatre, rather than an established one, they both continue and set the terms through which one approach to disabled individual subjects is viewed in the centuries to come: the "absolute Other" of the villain. Shakespeare's *Richard III* is one of the central texts of disability studies (and the medical humanities more broadly). Our reading builds on the analyses that precede it, but diverges from them in its central concerns. The classical reading in disability studies view Richard and his disability as a classic example of a "narrative prosthesis" (Mitchell and Snyder 2000: *passim*). It serves as an externalised metaphor for all the "ills of the world" (Mitchell and Snyder 2000: 9). In the medical humanities, on the other hand, the text often serves as an example of the ways in which medieval medicine externalises medical and ethical phenomena to make them legible on the body (Metzler 2006). The analysis offered below considers the metaphorical and ethical dimensions of Richard's disability, but it argues that the duke and king's embodiment is also dangerous because it exposes the contingency of the early modern biopolitics of kingship and exposes its ideals of the "two bodies of the king" (Ernst Kantorowicz) and the exclusions and violence that subtend them to contingency through the very materiality of Richard's embodiment. It thus invites contemporary audiences to imagine a social system that does not give birth to monsters like Richard of Gloucester.

The critique of some elements of early modern monarchy and the exclusion of contingently embodied individual subjects it effects leads us to the assumption that a period defined by its rethinking of monarchical biopolitics and the campaigning for the "rights of Men" might also lead to a re-evaluation of the contingent embodiment of disabilities. Hence, we chose a text centrally enmeshed in the revolutionary radicalism of the turn of the nineteenth century and concerned with questions of birth and embodiment: Shelley's *Frankenstein*. As the analyses below read the novel as a critique of Romantic ideals of genius embraced by Victor Frankenstein and the ethical failures that lead the Creature to become a monster, they use the first edition of the novel as their source text. The more commonly used second edition of 1832 tends to be kinder to Victor, replacing the ambiguous characterisation of the first edition with a more straightforwardly moral and sympathetic protagonist (Butler 2008). Instead of Victor Frankenstein, we argue that it is the Creature who embodies and enacts an ethical version of Romantic masculine individual subjectivity before he is ultimately excluded when he lays claim to the universal humanity propagated by the Enlightenment. Hence, the Creature acts as a relative Other to the hegemony and exposes its claims to representing a universal ideal of humanity as contingent.

Enlightenment ideals of humanity and their grounding in the exclusion of othered embodiments thus lay the foundations for the racialisations and biological essentialism that underpin the nationalism, colonialism, imperialism and fascism shaping the later half of the nineteenth and the earlier half of the twentieth century. Darwinian evolutionary theory and the controversy surrounding it further increase the tendency to essentialise differences on and through the body (cf Esposito 2013, Gilroy 2000). At the same time, this essentialisation (and the general interest in bodies and embodiment) is not limited to the hegemony: many avant-garde subject cultures share this interest (Reckwitz 2010: 304-306). This thesis examines D.H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928) because the novel also presents an alternative to the current hegemony that focuses on embodiment and sexuality and features a disabled veteran of the First World War as one of its central characters. Our reading of the novel explicitly focuses on Clifford Chatterley and critically counters the narrative tendency to other and abject him on account of his embodiment. Thus, it closes a gap in Lawrence scholarship, which has completely ignored Clifford so far. Similar to the Creature, Clifford Chatterley, despite being a deeply unsympathetic character, acts as a relative Other; his existence and embodiment expose the shortcomings of the embodied utopia embraced by Connie Chatterley and Oliver Mellors and raise the question of a more inclusive alternative that does not pre-select those worthy of inclusion on the basis of their embodiment having certain features or enabling certain actions.

Our analysis of *Lady Chatterley's Lover identifies* racialising discourse-practices as a central mechanism of othering in the novel. Building on this observation, we next seek to examine if and how the representation of contingent embodiments changes in a post-colonial context. In order to problematise the common association of colonised non-white individual subjects with disability and madness in colonialist discourses and to expressly blur the Cartesian division between body and mind, this thesis analyses a primary source that centres the experience of a white individual subject in a former colony of the British Empire who suffers from a mental condition that shapes their whole life. Patrick McCabe's neo-gothic novels fulfil this criterion well. Instead of the more thoroughly analysed *The Butcher Boy* (1992), the following analysis uses *The Holy City* (2008) as its source text Although similarly focused on life in a small Irish town, the life story of Chris McCool draws and comments on a more globalised vision of Ireland and its post-colonial relationship to other places as well as the Irish colonial past. As far as we have been able to determine, the novel has so far received little sustained attention critical attention (the MLA lists four articles and two book chapters). None of them examine the use of madness in *The Holy City*

as anything other than a trope and metaphor. In contrast, the analysis offered here takes the embodied nature of Chris McCool's disability seriously (Schalk 2018: 43-45) and argues that the narrator's internalised delusions show the harm done by (colonialist) discourse-practices that other embodiment. In contrast to the preceding analyses, the chapter argues, the text as a whole neither condones nor participates in this othering. It is primarily the narrator-protagonist's doing. Instead, the text as a whole can be read as arguing for an inclusive sense of community. Such a community would no longer other disability but see it as a different embodiment among others, its contingency a creative resource.

The last chapter of this dissertation explores how the British television period drama *Call the Midwife* (2011 – ongoing) presents the potentials and pitfalls of such an inclusive community in two episodes. The series came to our attention because it features both disabled characters and actors. So far, the whole series has not received any critical attention at all (the MLA lists a single article, focused on the feminist politics of midwifery that mentions it). In choosing a television series as its last primary text, this thesis responds to and addresses the rise in narrative and complex television that has shaped the last two decades (Mittel 2015). At the same time, the episodes and their complex response to disabled individual subjects and their sexuality prevents the author and her readers from mistaking the path we have traced for a necessary liberal teleology.

Instead, the point where this book ends proves as contingent as any other. As indicated above, the next chapter starts building a theoretical framework by elucidating the myriad meanings of contingency. As befits a work fundamentally concerned with *embodied* contingency, we approach the question through the lens of a discourse-practice centred on disability: the American freak shows of the nineteenth century.

Theoretical Framework

1. The Age of Possibility: On the Relationship Between Modernity, Contingency and Embodiment

1.1 The Freak Show As a Site of Embodied contingency

Representations of disability have been part of Western literary canons as far back as the *Iliad,* and they range from the disabled gods and seers of both Greco-Roman and Norse mythology to heroes punished for their moral transgressions by physical mutilation (such as Oedipus, for example). In the case of Anglo-Saxon literature specifically, we can see that the advent of the hero Beowulf is concomitant with the appearance of his most famous adversary, the demon-spawn Grendel. The narrative describes Grendel as a demon (Beowulf 2011: v. 56 - 102) and as a cannibal. The narrative thus embodies Grendel's existence outside the social and moral systems of (Christianised) Anglo-Saxon England in his different and radically anti-social nutritional habits: Grendel sustains his embodiment by literally picking apart and destroying other bodies, degrading them from flesh to non-human meat (Derrida 2008). Grendel's body in particular, and other forms of disabled embodiments in general, thus serve as "transparent sign[s]" (Foucault qtd in Griffiths 2008: 58) for moral systems that deviate from the mores and social structures of "normate" (Garland Thomson 1997: 8) society.

Although the example of Grendel follows mythological rather than realist narrative conventions, the same logic seemingly still governs modern representations of embodiment: various accounts of the representation and treatment of disabled subjectivities have convincingly shown that their being seen as Other and as outsiders to a given social formation has become more pervasive since the mid-nineteenth century. Rosemary Garland Thomson illustrates this process by analysing American freak shows, which saw their heyday from the 1850s to the 1940s. In the pamphlets accompanying the exhibition of individual subjects with different embodiments (dwarfism, conjoined twins etc.), the audience was often asked to decide whether the being before them was human or not (Garland Thomson 1997: 59 - 70). Thus, the designers of these freak shows implicitly endowed their audiences with the epistemological authority to recognise and confirm Otherness, and thus conversely to affirm their own normality (Garland Thomson 1997: 63). Garland Thomson argues further that this discursive move gained a great deal of importance in the context of widespread social and economic change that affected the United States in general,

and those strata of the population with a lower income (who were the majority audience at freak shows) in particular during the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, respectively (Garland Thomson 1997: 65). The framing discourses and practices employed by the freak shows thus permit the audience to epistemologically stabilise their sense of self (of which the certainty to be "human" - as opposed to "non-human" or "animal"- is perhaps the most foundational component for modern conceptions of subjectivity).[1] Thus, Garland Thomson and other critical disability scholars have argued, disabled subjects in modern cultures usually function as the Other whose different embodiments *ex negativo* stabilise a given culture's definition of normality and the institutions who maintain these standards, particular in relation to the material and embodied aspects of human existence (cf. Samuels 2014; Davis 1995; Garland Thomson 1997).

Although the present thesis also analyses on the discursive contexts in and through which the embodiment of disabled individual subjects is constructed (and in most cases regulated and prescribed), it additionally focuses on how the very same discursive constructions allow for readings and practices that deconstruct the discursive and material means through which cultures perceive disabled individual subjects. To achieve this simultaneous focus, it seeks to intertwine recent developments in critical and queer disability studies with contemporary debates in cultural studies (particularly in feminist studies) and philosophy around the terms subjectivity and embodiment. In addition to these theoretical traditions, with which critical disability studies have maintained a dialogue since their inception (cf. Garland Thomson 1997: 24-25, 21; Samuels 2003), this thesis also introduces another concept into the theoretical toolbox of disability studies, which has to our knowledge not made an appearance in critical disability theory up to this point: that of contingency.[2] As will become clear below, contingency is a multi-valented and much-debated term in contemporary cultural studies and philosophy (the debate in the latter field

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[1] For a more detailed discussion of the relationship between non-humans and humans, cf. for example Derrida 1991, Derrida 2008, Wolfe 2003a, Wolfe 2003b, Wolfe 2010 and Wolfe 2013.

[2] A recent search on the MLA databases lists just one article for the combination „contingency" and „critical disability studies", which is concerned with Afro-Portuguese literature, rather than English-language literature or other media. Combining „embodiment" and „critical disability studies" in turn yields three results; all three focus on US-American representations of freaks around the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (both searches were conducted on the 6th of January 2017).

stretches from the philosophers of Ancient Greece to the present day).[3] Hence, the following pages are not intended as either an exhaustive summary of the changing significance and meaning of the concept in philosophy or as a final statement of opinion. Rather, what follows is solely intended as the explication of an initial tool that needs to be concretised and sharpened (as it were) in varying historical and cultural contexts.

1.2 Defining Contingency Synchronically: A Culturally-Variable State

At its most basic, contingency may be defined as the fact (respectively as awareness of the fact) that "things can always be other than they currently are" (Butter 2013: 3). Reading the he example of the American nineteenth-century freak show through the lens of contingency and keeping in mind the above as a definitional baseline provides an easy entryway into the debate: following Garland Thomson's account of these shows, their success with large sections of the public was founded on its framing of the differently embodied subjects it presented as embodied riddles or puzzles, whose status with regard to how they related and compared to dominant definitions of humanity the public was asked to solve. The status of the public as puzzle-solvers and judges of humanity and personhood is further re-enforced by the methods used to introduce the audience to the persons presented as "freaks". Audience members were given a pamphlet, which often addressed a question to the audience.

For example, the pamphlet accompanying the exhibition of the so-called "man-monkey" (Bergmann 2002: 117) Hervey Leach begins as follows: "Is it an animal? Is it human?...[ellipsis in original, MTW] Or is it the long sought for [sic] link between man [sic] and the Ourang-outang [sic], which naturalists have for years decided does exist, but which has hitherto been undiscovered?" (Putnam, qtd in Bergman 2002: 117). The consistent use of closed questions throughout the whole passage is striking. On the hand, this rhetorical device serves the functions outlined above: it positions the members of the audience as arbitrators of normative and epistemological accounts of (and claims to) humanity. Furthermore, the pamphlet also casts them in the role of very skilled explorers who are able to empirically verify what skilled evolutionary scientists have only been able to form hypotheses (that is, speculate) about.[4] Hence, audiences at

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[3] For a more detailed overview on the various debates surrounding, the term contingency as well as the various definitions these debates have generated, see Makropoulos 1997; Makropoulos 2004; Reckwitz 2008, and Butter (2013: 17 - 66).

[4] The „missing link" referred to in the above text refers to the lack of empirical evidence for a humanoid form that shows ape-like humanoids transforming into predecessors of *homo sapiens*. However, considering that evolutionary

the freak show are placed in a position of superiority, not just relative to the differently embodied individual subject before them, but also in relation to scientific discourses. In the context of the freak show visually-mediated "common sense" seems to trump the specialised discourse of evolutionary biology.

On the other hand, the very form used to assert this superiority also deconstructs it. After all, questions indicate uncertainty and closed questions further indicate a need for the terms used in them to be affirmed or denied. Hence, in the above example, the seemingly-fixed meaning of *human* and *animal* has been disrupted – two formerly stable-seeming signifiers that were as distinguishable as Saussure's famous "two sides of the same piece of paper" (Derrida 2004: 285) have suddenly been put under erasure (Derrida 2004: 290). Instead of a clear-cut binary choice, the question before the audience now exposes humanity and animality as relative categories, the definitions of which are always defined *ex negativo* to the other. Since the members of the audience (and most humans raised in Western cultures) have probably been brought up to associate the attribute *human* with positive affects and emotions (and perhaps also with ethical behaviour – see its close English cognate *humane*), the discovery of this mirror relation probably also causes an emotional response: depending on the cultural connotation of *animals*, this may range from euphoric excitement to ambivalence and abject fear. Thus, the formerly simple binary choice between fixed categories is revealed to be a gradient between two poles. Or rather, this sliding scale seems to exist between at least two poles: for the presence of a "man-monkey" (Bergman 2002: 117) literally blurs the two categories into each other. In so doing, the existence of ambiguously embodied individual subjects like the "man-monkey" (Bergman 2002: 117) also raises the second-order question whether the binary opposition "human/ animal" is adequate to describe the particularity and existence of this particular individual subject. By posing this epistemological question, the possibility of a different system of categories becomes thinkable. For example, the category of the "human" might be rephrased to include, rather than exclude, differently-abled individual subjects. In addition to this reforming revisioning, which is relatively close to the present epistemological order, - questioning the "human/animal" binary also opens up more radical possibilities: orders where the question of zoological family is no longer

theory assumes constant gradual variation (cf Gould 1996) as its argumentative baseline, this fixing of a transitional stage in one form constitutes a pre-evolutionary view, the simplifying belief that „a single fossil – one piece of data – constitutes proof of a multifarious process or historical sequence" (Shermer qtd. in Coleman (2016: 4)). In the context of the present argument, the „missing link" discourse could be said to fix the contingency of evolutionary variation and to relate the incommensurate variety of nature and materiality to a comprehensible term.

pertinent to subject status or where subjectivity is no longer defined by an individual's ability to be an active agent, for example. Hence, the presence of a differently embodied subject in any cultural discourse-practice, this thesis argues, always entails the possibility that cultural systems might come to be seen as contingent and relational constructs, which are always subject to change. The seemingly stable fact that subjects are embodied, that they experience and interact with the world with and through their bodies, is thus conceived as a material-discursive relation that can effect both small- and large-scale change in a culture over time. Since their body is an individual subject's primary interface with the world around them, this dissertation assumes that conceptions of embodiment (respectively, the changing thereof) are prime examples of how cultures and periods deal with contingency; disabled subjects (whose embodiment differs from the cultural norm, thereby exposing said norm as contingent rather than necessary) are in turn even more visible examples of the contingency of embodiment.[5] Hence, their discursive treatment as embodied contingency in literary discourses, this dissertation argues, both indicates how cultures conceptualise and deal with contingency and how literary discourses respond to and interact with these treatments of contingency.

The above paragraphs and our working definition treat contingency as something akin to a state with clearly-defined boundaries and clearly-recognisable attributes. A close reading of the traditional definition of contingency as proposed by Aristotle, however, leads to a different conclusion: "Things are contingent if they could also exist in a different form. And this is the case because they do not "possess a necessary reason for existing [i.e. existing either in their present form or at all, MTW]" (Makropoulos 1997: 13).[6] According to this classical definition, the term contingency is "neither ontologically nor sociologically unambiguous [.] [Instead, it is] systematically ambivalent and historically variable" (Makropoulos 1997: 14).

1.3 Defining Contingency Synchronically: A Sliding Scale Rather Than A State
A close reading of the above definition indicates that contingency describes a space, rather than a fixed ontological state. According to the first sentence of Aristotle's definition, whatever is described as contingent must be capable of existing, that is, it must be possible to either encounter the thing under discussion or to imagine an encounter with it. Something which fulfils neither of these criteria (and is thus impossible) cannot be contingent. At the same time, what is

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[5] For a more detailed account of how embodiments serve as interfaces to the world, see chapters two and three.

[6] Unless otherwise noted, all translations from this and other German-language sources are my own.

contingent cannot be necessary. Aristotle first defined contingency as part of a modal logic. Classical modal logic sought to "reflect[] on and enquir[e] into [logical methods and argument patterns], including the syntax and semantics of sentences" (Bobzien 2015). If argument patterns are governed by necessity, Aristotle argues, they follow the logical pattern "If A is true, then B is always and invariably also true" (Bobzien 2015). Impossibility and necessity thus form the two poles between which the space of contingency is mapped. What is declared contingent thus depends on how many things and actions are deemed invariable, respectively unthinkable in a given situation. This ascription of meaning to the world around and inside an individual human subject is considered the primary function of cultural systems and of all the discourse-practices within a particular culture. Thus, this dissertation follows Andreas Reckwitz who argues that all cultural discourse-practices are concerned with "the opening and closing of contingency" (Reckwitz 2010: 79; cf. Reckwitz 2008: 226, 237 - 238).

Variations between discourse-practices and cultures as a whole (on a synchronic level), respectively between two similar variants of a discourse-practice across time (the diachronic level) can be explained using a structural model similar to the one Reckwitz proposes to explain variations between different models of subjectivity (Reckwitz 2010: 75): both currently dominant cultures of subjectivity and currently hegemonic models of contingency propagate their value system as a set of binary oppositions. The positive value of the pair is coded as both "universal […] [and at the same time] attractive" (Reckwitz 2010: 89). At first glance, the affective descriptor "attractive" seems out of place when describing what is necessary. But examples like the subtle conflation of the human and the humane (that is, the ethical and appropriate treatment of other creatures) in the human-animal dichotomy discussed above indicate that the poles of spaces of contingency are always also marked emotionally. In contrast to the positively-marked pole of necessity, the pole of the impossible is usually also associated with negative emotional responses, ranging from mild scorn and apprehension to abject fear and denial. Contingency itself can also be coded differently emotionally, depending on the discourse-system referred to and its relation to other discourse-systems in a culture: Stella Butter distinguishes three broad emotional coding tendencies: "positive, negative, or ambivalent[] […]" (Butter 2013: 25).

So far, we have been able to explain the structural and social indeterminacy of contingency Makropoulos has pointed out above; up to this point, this dissertation has gone with the focus determined by the context of Aristotle's initial definition of the term as a mode of perceiving and interacting with certain things. In order to concretise this further, we now proceed to define the

most common ways cultures intertwine cognitive and emotional evaluations of contingency in order to classify phenomena and thereby to provide individual subjects with habitual structures (*sensu* Bourdieu) that help them respond to contingency.[7]

1.4 Stella Butter's Tripartite Model of Contingency

As Butter notes in her discussion, most attempts to classify contingency (itself a somewhat problematic endeavour for reasons discussed below) construct a dual model to distinguish a form of contingency that offers choices to an individual subject (*Beliebigkeitskontingenz* (von Graewenitz/ Marquard, qtd in Butter 2013: 28)) from cases of contingency that are perceived as a form of chance that acts on individual subjects without their having the ability to intervene. Indeed, often this form of contingency is conceptualised as something that evades even human attempts at mitigating or even comprehending it with adequate terminology (*Schicksalskontingenz* (von Graewenitz/ Marquard, qtd in Butter 2013: 28)). However, the present work concurs with Butter when she argues that this terminology is unfortunate because it conflates not being able to act in the face of an event we perceive as contingent and not knowing what this phenomenon is in the first place (Butter 2013: 29). In other words, it takes for granted a link between the epistemological and the phenomenological-praxeological levels of experience. Even more strikingly: the choice of terms replicates common associations between phenomenological experiences of contingency with particular emotions. For example, the associations of contingency with fate (*Schicksal* in German) takes for granted post-Enlightenment views of the subject that associate unconstrained agency with freedom (and conversely see any trace of heteronomy in an individual subject's life as indicators of bondage and negativity) (cf. Reckwitz 2010: 80). Since this conflation does not pertain in all the periods covered by the analyses below, a more neutral and differentiated terminology is preferable for our purposes.

Hence, this thesis shall adopt Stella Butter's own three-tiered model. On the highest tier, Butter distinguishes between two ways of comprehending and interacting with the world. On the one hand, contingency is a descriptor for things which can be comprehended with terminological tools provided by a culture and can thus open spaces for human individual action and agency. Contingency is encompassed by cultural epistemology and thus available as a resource to draw on. I shall translate Butter's conceptualisation as "contingency as resource" in the discussions

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[7] For a detailed discussion of Bourdieu's concept of habitus as embodied social structures, see Bourdieu (1987: 277-354).

that follow (Butter 2013: 28). In contrast, Butter argues that cultures also possess things that are seen as contingent, but where this contingency marks the borders of human agency and/or human epistemological categories (Butter 2013: 29). These two types of contingency shall be grouped under the header of "contingency as borderline phenomena".

On the second level, Butter deals with contingency as a phenomenon related to human conceptualisations of the world with which they interact. Since a conceptualisation of contingency as a resource and as something that allows for creative agency requires that the individual subject can weigh their choices fully, it assumes that the evaluative categories at their disposal are adequate for the purpose. Where contingency marks an epistemological borderline phenomenon, on the other hand, it is precisely the inadequacy of an individual subject's current epistemological models that is emphasised. This form of "contingency as the irreducible" (Butter 2013: 29) is closely related to experiences of particularity and individuality. Individuality always transcends cultural modes of comprehension to some degree and thus challenges and problematises them (cf. Butter 2013: 50; Heinz 2007: 108-110). The present dissertation shall primarily focus on how different forms of embodiment challenge existing epistemological categorisations and how this challenge is then dealt with in a particular text.

The third and last level of Butter's model focuses on the phenomenological dimension of how individual subjects experience contingency in relation to their own agency. If contingency is perceived as a resource, it is seen as a means that enables creativity and thus expands human agency. Contingency thus signals "creative possibility" (Butter 2013: 28). On the other hand, if contingency is perceived as a marker of the limits and borders of human agency, as a phenomenological borderline phenomenon, it circumscribes an individual's agency. Contingency is thus perceived as indicating "accidental contingency" (Butter 2013: 28 - 29), that is, events that limit a person's individual agency and emphasise the heteronomous aspects of human lives (this includes events such as illnesses, death, accidents etc) (Butter 2013: 29)[8]

At first glance, it is tempting to correlate accidental contingency with contingency as the irreducible. After all, it could be argued that the limiting of a person's phenomenological agency necessarily implies that their epistemological categories are ineffective as far as the area in which

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[8] Notably, two thirds of the examples provided by Butter directly relate to the embodied nature of human lives. For a closer look at how bodies and embodiment simultaneously navigate and problematise culturally-shaped dichotomies of autonomy and heteronomy, see chapter two of this dissertation.

the accident occurred is concerned. However, the following example (adapted from Butter 2013: 29-30) shows that this need not be the case.

Imagine a successful Olympic athlete contracting a disease which weakens their leg muscles and thus ends their active career. According to the model developed above, we are dealing with a clear case of accidental contingency: they have no means of treating the disease (nor had they any means of preventing its contraction in the first place); thus, it clearly limits their agency and exposes the heteronomous aspects of their lives. While the disease cannot be cured or treated, it is well-documented medically, and the team of doctors responsible for treating the athlete can tell them exactly what happened to them and what effects the disease will have on their lives. Hence, the epistemological framework provided by medical discourse-practices is capable of framing the phenomenon adequately, but this has no effect on the phenomenological experience itself. Thus, the following analyses need to examine individually if a text establishes relations between various types of contingency and how these relationships are established, framed, and evaluated.

In addition to keeping the levels of contingency analytically separated, the conflation of these categories with particular emotional judgements must also be examined critically: upon closer inspection, these evaluative judgements prove highly historically variable. To illustrate this, let us return to the athlete in the example above: most Western cultures have adopted the Enlightenment equation of autonomy, rationality, and agency as their common-sense baseline for evaluating agency (cf. Reckwitz 2010: 34, 187). While this equation is increasingly being questioned in post-modern philosophy and literature and various alternative ethics are being proposed and imagined (cf Alaimo and Hekmann 2008; Haraway 2016; Butter 2007; Welsch 1996), it remains largely unquestioned in everyday usage, especially as regards disabilities. Thus, it is likely that the athlete will be pitied by those around them, and their loss of agency seen as a negative turning point in their lives.[9] Other cultures might however see this disability as a sign of divine interference and perhaps evaluate it positively or ambivalently. For example, if the athlete had been a participant in the ancient Olympic Games, rather than the modern ones (as was tacitly assumed up to this point), they may have found a place in a Dionysian cult where their disability

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[9] Keeping in mind Friedrich Nietzsche's assertion that guilt and pity always displays the need of the subject of pity to feel superior to the object of pity (Nietzsche 2011 [1886/1887]: 297 - 302), this emotion also functions as a shielding mechanism against the awareness of contingency as a borderline phenomenon encountering the object can prompt in the subject. On the use of „object" and „subject" when describing emotions cf. de Sousa (2009: 182 – 252, especially 210 - 217).

would have been seen as an asset, rather than a hindrance (Burkert 1987: 290 - 293).[10] Accidental contingency is here evaluated positively, rather than as a negative event that is to be avoided at all costs.

1.5 The Contingency of Contingency – A Model For Cultural Variation and Historical Change

The above examples indicate that there is a huge amount of complex variation in how all forms of contingency interact, both with each other and with other practice-discourses. At the same time, they make clear that the degree of awareness in a culture and the form of contingency the perceived phenomena are associated with are themselves subject to change. This last section of this first theoretical chapter attempts to introduces a model that explains how change occurs in systems that strive to present themselves as "universal" (Reckwitz 2010: 89). It then employs this model to introduce the heuristic definition of modernity that forms the basis of the periodisation used to contextualise the analyses below historically.

In order to explain how change occurs in "contingency culture[s]" (Makropoulos 1998) specifically and cultural discourse-practices generally, the following discussion will focus on the "intra-action" (Barad 2007:33) and interaction between individual subjects and systems of discourse-practices.[11] This focus is deduced from the axiomatic assumption that individual subjects actualise the virtual possibilities offered by a society's practice-discourses (cf Ermarth 2000; Heinz 2007: 114). Although some variants of discourse analysis tend to sideline the agency of individual subjects by focusing on structural changes, the present thesis concurs with recent work in cultural studies that argue adopting this view exclusively is potentially ethically dangerous. As Isabel Ludewig points out, an exclusively structural account of subjectivity turns individual subjects into hapless victims of supra-individual structures and thus absolves them of all ethical responsibility for their actions (Ludewig 2011: 12). Conversely, this dissertation

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[10] For a more detailed account of various treatments of disabled people received and/or were subjected to in Ancient Greece – they ranged from the exposure of infants to people with a speech deficiency holding high office – see Rose (2004).

[11] Karen Barad's complex account of the agency of matter and the co-constitution of epistemology and ontology on an „onto-epistem-ology" (Barad 2007: 185) will be discussed in somewhat greater detail in chapter two below. Briefly, Barad argues that the findings of quantum physics since Nils Boer destabilise both the distinction between ontology and epistemology (Barad 2007: 107) and between active subjects and passive objects (Barad 2007: 119). Instead, it argues for a co-constitutive entanglement between subjects and objects and the material and the discursive (Barad 2007: 193). Her neologism "intra-action" (Barad 2007: 33) highlights the fact that this approach destabilises the formation of discrete units that subtends the use of "interaction" (Barad 2007: 33).

eschews a strong conceptualisation of individual autonomy and instead argues that individual subjects can only exist in and interact with the world around them through the actualisation of various virtual possibilities offered by the discourse-practice systems in the context in which they operate. Hence, agency is not ontologically absolute but rather dependent on the meaning and scope assigned to it in a cultural discourse-system (cf. Heinz 2007: 114). At the same time, the actuality of a concrete practice performed by an individual subject in turn shapes the array of virtual possibilities covered by a discourse-practice. Cultures can thus be described as hermeneutic circles circling between the poles of actuality and virtuality.[12] But just like hermeneutic horizons can never merge completely and seamlessly, so no individual subject actualises the virtuality of a discourse-practice completely. This slight crack in the claims to universality of a cultural system is one way for change to enter and subvert the claims of universality made by a discourse system. As this dissertation argues that "cultures of contingency" (Makropoulos 1998: *passim*) operate along the same structural lines as cultures of subjectivity, it adopts Stella Butter's claim that "model[s] of subjectivity condition [the form and degree of an individual subject's, MTW] awareness of contingency"(Butter 2013: 78).

Two other potential sites of incremental change may be identified in addition to the hermeneutic character of discourse-practices: firstly, the exposure of individual subjects to other discourse-practices, which manage contingency differently, can potentially prompt awareness that things could be different in the observing individual subject. Since all individual subjects actualise the discourse-practices that surround them slightly differently than others they share a cultural context and thus a common virtual reference point, interacting with other individual subjects always entails the possibility of making an individual subject change their own actualisations (or at least making them aware of that possibility). Notably, these other individual subjects need not be real people. Consumers of narrative media construct a system of hypotheses and frames and project it onto the text (Zerweck 2002: 26 – 29 and *passim*). While these frames are usually more complex when applied to other individual subjects in the everyday interactions of our actual and real lifeworlds, their application transcends the distinction between real-world interactions and

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[12] A more detailed discussion of embodiment as a hermeneutic process can be found in chapter two.

fictional spaces to a degree (again, the degree itself is culturally variable) (cf. Iser 1993: 37 - 47). Thus, narrative media also stage encounters that lead to changes in a discourse-practice.[13] .

While the first and second sites of potential change are primarily concerned with the interaction between actualising individual subjects, respectively the interactions between actualising individual subjects and virtual discourse-practices the third site focuses on the internal structure of discourse-practices. Despite their claims to "universal[ity]" (Reckwitz 2010: 89), which imply that the discourse-practice in question applies to all individual subjects equally and thus has a uniform structure that fits all individual subjects equally and in broadly the same way, upon closer inspection discourse-practices transform into "a potentially heterogeneous arrangement of dispositifs [*sensu* Foucault, MTW]" (Reckwitz 2010: 40). All discourse-practices thus have a palimpsestuous character (as do the individual lifeworlds that result from their actualisation).[14]

The metaphor used in the above sentence is particularly apt because, just like a palimpsest, which contains partially visible traces of texts that precede it historically and have been scraped off to make room for the (currently) fully visible text (Winkgens 2008b: 554) as well that text, which may one day be partially overwritten by another (Winkgens 2008b: 554), so currently hegemonic forms of discourses-practices relate to both past and future conceptualisations and transformations of their components. At first glance, a currently-dominant form presents itself as "universal" (Reckwitz: 2010: 89) and therefore as constant over time. However, this claim deconstructs itself the moment it is made. If something were truly universal to all (human) beings (or in all cultural environments) across all of time, there would be no need to assert its universality and necessity. Hence, the stated (or enacted) claim - indicates a repressed awareness of contingency as an epistemological borderline phenomenon. Likewise, attempts of the currently-hegemonic culture to present itself as "attractive" (Reckwitz 2010: 89) imply the existence of alternatives with potential emotional claims on individual subjects. One way of guarding against these alternatives is the creation and propagation of a negatively conotated

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[13] Narrative media and their role as active participants in cultural change generally, respectively in negotiating embodied contingency in particular, is the focus of chapter four of the theoretical framework. See also Kirby (1997); Iser 1993; Glomb (2004a: 46-52, 49-51); Heinz 2007 and Korschorke 2012.

[14] The term palimpsest originates in the study of ancient and medieval texts and has become a potent metaphor for the interaction of practices and texts with other, seemingly abandoned ones. Since parchment was made from calf's skin and was therefore an expensive commodity, medieval scribes attempted to conserve it by scraping off the old text before writing down their own. This scraping-off left traces of the old text under and beside the new and their interaction creates multiple subtexts beside the text (Winkgens 2008b: 554).

"anti-subject" (Reckwitz 2010: 45). This image is usually associated with the negative term of the binary opposition around which a subject culture is organised. Furthermore, this model of the anti-subject is then equated with a subject culture against which the 'positive subject' positions itself – that is, either the former hegemony (if the defining 'positive subject' is currently the hegemonic subject culture (cf Reckwitz 2010: 71)) or the current hegemony (if the subculture in question strives to attain hegemony itself in future) (cf. Reckwitz 2010: 71-72). At the same time, subject cultures that seek to supplant the current hegemony do not create their discourse-practices *ex nihilo*; instead, they usually refer back to various elements of past (dominant) subject cultures and modify them according to their interests. Thus, all currently dominant discourse-practices are framed by the "residual" (Williams 2018: 1344, qtd in Reckwitz 2010: 24) remnants of formerly hegemonic subject cultures and the "emergent" (Williams 2018: 1344 - 1345, qtd in Reckwitz 2010: 24) alternative proposals made by various subcultures that seek to become hegemonic. Additionally, all hegemonies are themselves the product of modified references to other residual discourse-practices (often those belong to the hegemony their immediate predecessor sidelined as an "anti-subject"). Thus, all cultural formations are the temporary product of historical negotiations, both inside and outside their currently-defined borders (cf. Reckwitz 2010: 75 for a clear illustration of these complex processes of exchange). Since an individual subject can choose to actualise elements from the historical archive (or conversely, the historical projections offered by emergent alternatives), this historical dimension is a third source of change in discourse-practices and subject cultures as a whole.

This dissertation argues that representations of disability, gendered embodiment, and contingency have undergone significant historical changes in English-language literature and film from the late sixteenth century to the present day: Initially, embodied contingency was relegated to the role of the "absolute Other", using discursive models inherited from the medieval period. As the religious basis of these models gradually weakens, disability comes to function as a "relative Other" – still mostly living at the edges of "normal society", but something with which discourse-practices have to contend. Finally, the experience of the total collapse of the rational contingency culture the Enlightenment created during both world wars – and the sudden appearance of many wounded men it resulted in – led and continues to lead to a gradual re-evaluation of embodied contingency as a potentially positive, but in any case as an equal, form of difference among other, equally heterogeneously embodied individual subjects.

1.6 Modern Contingency – Increased Awareness of Contingency As a Feature of Modernity

While the preceding paragraphs of this chapter have already illustrated the systematic ties between contingency and historical processes, it is still unclear how contingency is related to "modernity", especially as this period designation is itself a contingent descriptor: depending on the historians consulted, modernity covers either the last five centuries (since the Renaissance began the process of secularisation in Western Europe (Pfister 2012: 71 - 86), or its inception is concomitant either with the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution (Reckwitz 2010: 28) or the beginning of "modernism" as an aesthetic movement (cf. Zima 2014: 28 - 38). Considering the variety of definitions in circulation, this thesis uses the term merely as a heuristic aid to help in structuring the material presented. It treats the sixteenth century reign of Elizabeth and the pre-Restoration Stuarts as well as the English Civil War as a period of transition from the medieval discourse-practices that guide English life until roughly the "War of the Roses" to the eighteenth century and the social structures and discourse-practices that accompany the Industrial Revolution and the rise of the "[early-]bourgeois subject" (Reckwitz 2010: 97). In so doing, it reproduces the heuristic consensus of current early-modern studies (Greenblatt and Logan 2012 532 - 534).[15]

Just as contentious as the duration of modernity are the features that set this period apart from the centuries preceding it: is it the extensive domestication of nature (cf. Grewe-Volpp 2002: 48 - 49) or the increased functional differentiation of different social spheres (Luhmann 2015: 455 - 456)? Is it the individualisation of biographies (Beck 2015) and the weakening of communal ties and the concept of community (Nancy 1991: 1-3, 9-12)? In addition to these four classical sociological features of the modernisation process (the differentiation of social spheres, the domestication of nature, the rationalisation of social processes, and the increased invidualisation of peoples' lives), recent scholarship has also argued that the question of subjectivity (cf. Reckwitz 2010: *passim*) and an increased awareness of contingency also function as hallmarks of modernity.[16]

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[15] For a more detailed historical contextualisation of the Elizabethan, respectively the Romantic, period within the context of this thesis, see chapters five and six below.

[16] For a more detailed discussion of the classical features of modernisation (as well as recent proposals to supplement them with at least two further categories), cf. Rosa/Kottmann/Strecker (2007: 21 - 24); Rosa 2016; Butter (2013: 39-66).

Hans Blumenberg famously argues that "modernity has been shaped by the fundamental awareness that nothing that is has to be." (Blumenberg qtd in Makropoulos 2004: 376). At first glance, this assertion may give readers pause. After all, this chapter builds its argument from a definition of contingency that dates back to Aristotle and thus the fifth century BCE. Hence, contingency did evidently not enter philosophical debates in the Renaissance. This raises the question what differentiates the ancient (and medieval) conceptions of contingency from their modern successors.

A closer look at Blumenberg's definition offers one way of approaching the question: an "awareness that nothing that is has to be" clearly aims at the epistemological (and even ontological) tier of Stella Butter's distinction of forms of contingency discussed above. And the object of the question is nothing less than the form and existence of the world itself – Makropoulos calls this "the fundamental relationship between humanity and the world" (*Weltbezug*; Makropoulos 1997: 141).

Ancient and medieval philosophies assumed that people lived in an ordered universe and that all human actions took place in the context of a "universal reality" (Makropoulos 2004: 372) that was the same for everyone. Hence, for Aristotle, the question of contingency is limited to the "praxeological" (Makropoulos 2004: 372 - 373) dimension: how do an individual subject's actions delimit their agency within an ordered world? But no matter what a subject does: the consequences of their actions do not question the current world order. Since modernity no longer believes in "a universal limit to possibility" (Makropoulos 2004: 373), actions that expose contingency always affect both the praxeological and the epistemological dimension simultaneously – whether this is seen as a chance, a risk or a combination of both.

While the preceding paragraphs have laid out a heuristic definition of the functional features used in this dissertation to distinguish "modern" periods from the periods that preceded them, to wit, the increased awareness of epistemological contingency and this awareness subsequently affecting humanity's understanding of their lifeworlds, some readers may wonder at the lack of even a heuristic delimiting of the time frame covered in this dissertation. In order to make it easier for readers to assess whether the analyses offered subsequently fall within their areas of interest, the following paragraph attempts to trace the framework of our thinking when we chose the Elizabethan period as the starting point of our historical exploration. However, as this dissertation is centrally informed by an increased awareness of epistemological contingency – this awareness underpins the central thesis that the depiction of disabled embodiments and

disabled individual subjects has changed from the sixteenth to the twenty-first century and that this depiction reflects and affects how a given subject culture treats awareness of contingency in general – the following attempt at a periodisation ought only to be taken for a heuristic framework, meant to provide readers with a means of navigating the histories traced in the analyses presented below and to help formulate some foundational theses for comparing works from various time periods. By no means should what follows be taken for a final and conclusive statement of historical fact, not least because the texts we have chosen to exemplify cultural responses to pre-modern and modern conceptualisations of (epistemological) contingency all originate from European cultural and literary traditions. It falls to , scholars more familiar with the cultures of Asia, Africa and the indigenous traditions of Polynesia, Australia and the Americas to augment and expand on what follows and to situate both the debate on contingency generally and the inbraiding with questions of embodiment and disability attempted by this thesis more particularly in a truly global context.

As explained above, thinkers like Makropoulos, Butter, and Blumenberg argue that the defining feature of the post-medieval period called modernity is firstly an increased awareness of epistemological contingency (Blumenberg qtd. in Makropoulos 2004: 376). From this increased then derives the belief that the world and humanity interact and co-constitute each other through actions that may change the universe; it introduces, as it were, a hinge between the formerly separate dimensions of praxeological and epistemological contingency.

Conversely,as the above discussion implies, and as Blumenberg explains in detail in his monograph *The Legibility of the World* (Blumenberg 2014: 36-46), the Classical and medieval conception of the world assumed that reality was both "universal" (Makropoulos 2004: 372) and well ordered, no matter what human individual subjects did. This belief in a "universal limit to possibility" Makropoulos 2004: 373) is evidenced by, for example, the difference between Classical Greek and medieval conceptions of utopia – such as exemplified by the *locus amoenus* topos of the courtly romances- and various modern utopias, from More's *Utopia* onward to contemporary science-fiction literature (cf. Jameson 2007).

In his study on the creation of various different *chronotopoi* – that is, particular combinations of the literary depictions of time and space, Mikhail Bakhtin also spends a chapter analysing the Greek romance novels. In these texts, all written down roughly between the second and fourth century CE (Bakhtin 2008: 24-34), the protagonist travels to various different idylls, all different and far from his homeland, which makes them "non-places" (u-topias) in the eyes of the

protagonist's compatriots. Simultaneously, many of these places are better than the protagonist's homeland (they are eu-topias) (Bakhtin 2008: 28-29). Thus, the stages of the protagonist's journey often combine the two features of utopias identified by Isaiah Berlin – they are radically different from the current everyday reality of the protagonist (Berlin 2013: 32-50), and they are often better than said current lifeworld. Yet, there is one aspect that radically distinguishes the Greek utopias from the modern utopias analysed by Berlin (Berlin 1957: 32): the latter portray a better world that the authors want readers to compare to the readers' current lifeworlds to encourage readers to change their lifeworld to better fit the lifeworld associated with the utopia they have been shown (Berlin 2013: 38). Additionally,they also address the specificity of these lifeworlds, rather than arguing for a universal norm (Berlin 2013: 32,38) In contrast, Greek utopias do present a universal (Berlin 2013: 43-44). Simultaneously, however, once the protagonists of the Greek romances return to their homeland, they also return to their old lifeworlds (Bakhtin 2008: 28-29). Their old reality forms the "ultimate horizon of possibility" (Makropoulos 2004: 373) for these characters; notably, this limit affects non-fictional utopias as much as fictional ones: in Plato's Just City, his image of the citizens, on the one hand includes women as citizens as well as men (Plato 1991: 347-351) – unlike the democracy of his native Athens at the time, but Plato is unable to imagine a polity that does not rely on the distinction between citizens and slaves (Plato 1991: 253-259). Even more importantly, the citizens' ranks are treated as fixed and as an external reflection of the nature of each citizen's soul (Plato 1991: 287-333) As each soul is an embodied fragment of an eternal idea – located in the non-embodied realm of ideas (Plato 1991: 497-505, 509-517) – the political order of the Just City – the very foundation of its justice, if not the reason why it is just, - is grounded in a "transcendental signified" (Derrida 2016 [1967]: 21) that resides in a realm removed from the everyday actions of the citizens. Hence, phrased in terms of contingency, in Classical Greek romances and utopias, these different lifeworlds can affect the actions of the protagonists and expose them to awareness of praxeological contingency, but the order of the world remains grounded in an inaccessible place that is presented as necessary and thus precisely not subject to an awareness of epistemological contingency.

Similarly, medieval romances also have a utopian moment that is deliberately portrayed as separate from the everyday duties and roles of the protagonists. The difference of this utopia is often marked by its being located in a garden (Schwabl 2013: 28) and thus being symbolically associated with the Garden Eden and the time before the fall of Man. But it is precisely this

association also signals the transience of the alternative forms of relationships and love the protagonists of these texts experience: for as soon as they try to affect their everyday lives with their experiences in the locus amoenus, the idyll collapses and their love is discovered – a trauma that forces the protagonists to either abandon their love (Fritsch-Rößler 1998) or to abandon the world by dying (von Straßburg 2002: v. 1259-1285):. Any awareness of the epistemological contingency of the existing social hierarchy and its gendered and intimate discourse-practices the narrative may have engendered in its audience is thus contained in the fictionalised boundaries of the courtly romance (Bumke 2005 : 529-534. 569-571). The laws of the Church – with God as their literal ultimate cause and signified – are thus still upheld as the guarantors of the existence of a "universal reality" (Makropoulos 2004: 373).

As explained above, this thesis argues that modern representations of the embodied contingency of disabled individual subjects both exposes the contingency of various subject cultures and their ideal subjects and often present alternative ways of approaching the question of disabled individual subjects. As the analyses offered below illustrate, these alternatives may be discussed both textually and subtextually. In either case, this project argues thus that these texts presume that the actions of individual subjects interact and are entwined with their and our perception of reality. The central thesis of this dissertation thus assumes that reality is not imagined as a universal in the texts we analyse and that the various audiences of the texts are increasingly aware of the contingency of their lifeworlds, even as they also try to delimit this awareness and evaluate it in various ways (positively, neutrally, or negatively). In keeping with the above, this thesis heuristically defines the post-medieval modern period as fundamentally shaped by the possibility to think the praxeological and epistemological dimensions together and by the awareness that human actions affect the reality (or indeed realities) in which individual subjects live.

So far, the definition of modernity offered by this dissertation has been negative. Keeping the contingency of all periodisations firmly in mind, our selection of texts to analyse follows the consenus of European early modern studies that locates the beginning of modernity somewhere around 1492 (Greenblatt and Logan 2012: 550) when the "radical expans[ion]" (Wynter and McKittrick 2015: 49) of Columbus' arrival in the Americas radically expands the boundaries of geography and ethnography Europeans had hitherto delimited our reality with. In the following decades, as the post-colonialist Sylvia Wynter argues, the discovery of a helocentric universe – in contrast to a common reading of this discovery as the first "degradation" of humanity's

exceptionalism – allows humanity as conceived by Europeans to no longer consider themselves the abject centre of a universe, but rather the independent agents living on a moving star that was now the equal of the other planets in the firmament (Wynter and McKittrick 2015: 14 - 16).[17] Although Wynter's reading the discovery of the helocentric universe as a deciding factor in the development of a model of European subjectivity that imagined human individual subjects as independent agents in the making of their realities is unconventional, her identifying the middle of the fourteenth century as the moment these developments gained enough momentum to slowly become hegemonic is not. In 1485, the Italian Neoplastonist Giovanni Pico della Mirandolà publishes his *Oration on the Dignity of Man*. In it, Mirandolà has God tell Adam that humans are the only creatures "that can make [themselves] what [they] want to be" (Copenhaver 2016: n.p.) According to this statement, human beings are no longer defined by the fixed place in divine creation God has assigned to them as they were in the centuries before that; rather their actions can now affect their relationship to creation and shape the reality they live in. Mirandolà's statement documents the conjoining of epistemological and praxeological dimensions of contingency. From the middle of the fifteenth century onward, to discuss contingency thus means discussing the fundamental relationship between subject and world. Embodiment and the body is the primary site where these two categories meet and mingle. Hence, the above historical overview, cursory as it has been, substantiates the central thesis of this dissertation: in the modern period, contingency encompasses "embodied contingency" At the same time, it raises the question of how to conceptualise this "intra-action" (Barad 2007: 33) between the embodied subject and a world filled with bodies. The following two chapters present a model of embodiment that combines phenomenological approaches (chapter 2) with praxeological concepts taken from cultural sociology and gender studies (chapter 3). The third chapter of this theoretical framework additionally elucidates the ways in which embodiment is both managed by society and how embodiments simultaneously renders these bio-political management mechanisms contingent

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[17] For a more detailed discussion of Wynter's insightful theories regarding the effects of the discovery of the Americas and the „the world post-revolution of 1492"McKittrick 2015: 49 - 62) had on the conception of subjectivity and racialisation in its wake, see chapter three and eight of this dissertation.

2. Embodied contingencies: Embodiments as sites of identity formation and contestation in the course of Western modernity

2.1 The Body and Embodiment – Material Foundations of Individual Subjectivity

Following on from the discussion of how contingency may have influenced the various historical periods usually grouped under the umbrella term of modernity and the central claim of this thesis that one of the ways in which literature problematises these issues is by portraying how contingency influences our awareness of our bodies and embodiments, especially if these move outside current conceptions of 'normal' embodiment and encompass various disabilities and non-normative gender performances, we now turn to the question of how the present thesis defines embodiment. So far, this project has only treated contingency as a problematic term, treating the embodied nature of human existence (as well as the gendered and differently abled variants of this nature) as self-evident fact. The following two chapters problematise this belief and elaborate on the position the present text occupies within the complex and varied debates on the question of embodiment.[18]

The OED defines the noun *body* in a variety of ways, though all of these relate in some way to things which extend in (and thus occupy a certain amount of) space. In addition to this physical definition, we also find the following: "the physical structure, including the bones, flesh and organs, of a person or an animal" ("body | Definition of body in English by Oxford Dictionaries" website, definition 1.1); "a corpse" ("body | Definition of body in English by Oxford Dictionaries" website, definition 1.2) and lastly, "the physical and *mortal aspects of a person, as opposed to a soul or spirit* [my emphasis, MTW]" ("body | Definition of body in English by Oxford Dictionaries" website, definition 1.3). Although dictionaries are not the sole arbiters of language usage and how a culture uses a concept, it is striking how the definitions cited above all concur on three features objects must possess to become bodies associated with animate beings: bodies are material and this material can be described by the biological sciences, they are finite ("mortal" is the phrase used by the OED), and most importantly, they are in some unidentified fashion the opposite of a soul or spirit. Following the binary logic that structures most of Western thought, we can thus *ex negativo* conclude that the spirit is non-material, infinite and immortal,

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[18] As I have explained in chapter one, this dissertation largely focuses on Western and Western-influenced discourses, mainly because these have been the primary influence on the texts analysed below. However, this ought not to be taken for an endorsement of Eurocentrism.

and most importantly for our present purposes associated with life – a life, in which the body implicitly has no independent part to play.

This short close reading of the OED entry on the body already highlights the central issues that have shaped philosophical conceptualisation of what having a body means for human existence since the ancient Greek philosophers. In particular, it highlights that the body has always been conceived as part of a dichotomously-organised dualism, in which bodies occupy the passive position relative to human minds (Grosz 1994: 5-10, 8).

Traditionally, the question of the body (and its relation to the mind) is referred to in the history of philosophy as "the mind-body problem". It covers a wide variety of philosophical disciplines: Howard Robinson lists six main areas: the first two areas are ontology, that is what the mind and the body are, and causality, that is, whether and how the physical and the mental influence each other (Robinson 2016). Between them, these two areas cover the foundation of the body-mind relationship. From these two foundational questions, four others arise: the question of consciousness, agency, subjectivity, and embodiment (Robinson 2016). Each of these questions - problematises a central aspect of human everyday life and interactions between different human individual subjects as well as the non-human world.[19] The fact that all these factors of human everyday life can be related to the relationship between the mind and the body and the question of embodiment provides further evidence of its important role in the life of individual subjects and across cultural and historical contexts.

2.2 Bodies and Individual Subjects – Between the Enlightenment Subjector and The Materialist Subjected

Strikingly, the question of embodiment also intersects with one of the central debates in cultural studies in the last thirty years: the question of how to conceptualise human subjectivity and individuality. For the most part, this debate has focused on two related questions, the answers to which have proven to be extremely historically and culturally variable. The first question asks what a given culture means when it speaks of subjectivity and the subject, as the term is etymologically ambiguous: Andreas Reckwitz captures this ambiguity by referring to the subject

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[19] For the most part, the present work focuses on the inter-human because the issue of disability and different embodiments is only raised through that lens in the texts discussed. This focus does not mean to suggest that the question of embodiment is only relevant for human beings. In contrast, post-humanist scholars like Stacey Alaimo (Alaimo 2008; Alaimo 2010) and Donna Haraway (Haraway 2008; Haraway 2016) bring non-human embodiments into focus.

as "the subjected subjector" (Reckwitz 2010: 10; translation adopted from Glomb 2016: 63). Broadly speaking, the model of subjectivity prevalent in a given culture can thus be described as situated on sliding scale that captures the degree of intermingling between the degree of autonomy and heteronomy a subject is considered to have by a given culture: [20]

One extreme of the scale sees the subject as an actor wholly independent of any forces it might not be able to control and understand (often this understanding is also the result of conscious and logical thought alone). The subject's control extends to both cultural and natural phenomena. In *Dialectics of Enlightenment* (2010 [1944/1947]) Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno describe the conception of nature prevalent under an extreme form of this mode of subjectivity as "nature reduced to mere objectivity" (Horkheimer and Adorno 2010 [1944/ 1947]: 15); nature (including the body and human embodiments) in this view, is nothing more than a conglomerate of objects that can be completely rationally apprehended and thus managed by humanity. According to this model, non-human nature becomes wholly subsumed under the categories of thought humans use to understand it, depriving it of anything that might problematise human epistemological categories. Since such a conception of subjectivity is heavily implied and argued for in many of the philosophical systems developed during the Enlightenment (the systems of Descartes, Kant and Hegel perhaps being the most famous), this form of subjectivity is sometimes referred to as the "Enlightenment subject".[21] The above quote from *Dialectics of Enlightenment* already suggests areas in which this conceptualisation of subjectivity becomes problematic: the assumption that only those persons who have access to public spaces and educational institutions (where they may be taught the prevalent modes of logic) can speak rationally and thus be deemed subjects means that only the contributions of wealthy white men, who constitute the privileged social class in Western patriarchies, are valued in these societies. Women and the less wealthy social classes are systematically excluded – a mechanism that has been well documented by feminist and socialist critics (cf Butler 2006: 7-11; Grosz 1994: 13-14). In addition, this model

[20] The following paragraphs present a largely a-historical model. It is intended to highlight structural correlations between different conceptions of the body, subjectivity, and contingency which then serve to illustrate (in part *ex negativo*) how the present work arrives at its own, processual model of embodiment. This framework will then be more thoroughly culturalised and historicised in chapter three of this theoretical framework as well as in the analyses section of this dissertation.

[21] A more detailed discussion of the conception of subjectivity prevalent in Enlightenment philosophy can be found in Zima (2010: 94 - 115) and Böhme and Böhme 1985. The latter book focuses on Kantian philosophy (in particular the *Critiques*). For a more critical evaluation of the equation of this strong theory of the subject with the European Enlightenment, see Reckwitz (2010: 181 - 187)

also excludes and sidelines non-Western accounts of the world and existence, thereby supporting a Eurocentric and colonialist framework. Lastly, and most importantly for our present purposes, the Enlightenment subject tends to view the body solely as a biological entity that is conceived primarily as the material means needed to actualise the ends envisioned by rational consciousness in the world outside. This world, in turn, is perceived as an Other that the Enlightenment subject then conquers and forces to conform to the terms the subject has constructed rationally in order to make of nature an instrument to the subject's ends.[22] As Horkheimer and Adorno explore in depth in their account of the dialectic of Enlightenment, this engagement with all natural processes subsumes everything – including the body and rationality itself – under a paradigm of "instrumental reason" (Horkheimer). Although the accounts of the Frankfurt School are based on a fundamentally pessimistic view of rationality and human interactions with both the non-human world and the non-rational components of human existence (cf the insightful critiques in Welsch 1996: 85 – 98; Glomb 2004b: 379-380 and Butter 2007: 109 - 110), it also allows us to capture the essential features of this mode of subjectivity: subjectivity is here conceived as rational, transcendental (that is, not modified by individual variations between human beings) and therefore as universal, as guided primarily by instrumental concerns, and as the primary (if not the only) agent of change in the world. Following Reckwitz' classification of the paradoxical nature of subjectivity quoted above, this mode of subjectivity aligns itself with the image of the subject as a "subjector" (Reckwitz 2010: 10, translation adopted from Glomb 2016: 63).

At the other extreme of the sliding scale, the subject is conceived as the product of various supra-individual forces. Since such a view has most famously been propagated by poststructuralist thinkers like Michel Foucault and Louis Althusser (to name just two), it is often referred to under the shorthand umbrella term "the poststructuralist subject".[23] In an attempt to critique the

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[22] While this is no doubt true of Cartesianism and some elements of the Hegelian account of subject formation (cf Butler 2012: 17 - 59) and Hegel's philosophy of history, Kant's account of experience and his derivation of the *apriori* of space and time from the subject's experience of an outside world also potentially offer room for a more dialogical account of human encounters with the non-human world. As this account constitutes the basis of the phenomenological conception of embodiment used in this dissertation, it will be discussed in greater detail below.

[23] Considering that Foucault's conceptualisation of the subject shifted from a focus on supra-individual structures in his early and middle periods (and that even those works consider the role of the individual subject as a potential source of change in the discursive structure (cf, for example Foucault 1983)) to a focus on individual and embodied practices (Sarasin 2010: 172 – 199) in his last published books (Foucault 2015; Foucault 2012), the above classification may be taken as more informative of the way Foucault's subject position was (and in part still is) read rather than as a summary of the statements made in the texts themselves. Similarly, Althusser's famous account of how the subject is "interpellat[ed}" (Althusser 2010: 1358) by the ideological state apparatus (and thereby

universalism of the Enlightenment subject, poststructuralist approaches argue that the subject is fundamentally constructed by and through social discourse-practices. Discourses, according to the definition proposed by Foucault, are the structuring devices of a given society's access to knowledge and experience (Foucault 2013a: 63 - 93). Therefore, the experiences and knowledge individual subjects can express and the terms they have at their disposal to do so are strictly circumscribed – one might even go so far as to say they are dictated - by the discourses circulating in a given society at a given time. Additionally, this supra-individual understanding of society and social processes can entail the extreme position that the individual expressions of various social discourses are merely the effects of a discourse, rather than the product of a person's own individual experience of the world. And even in milder cases than the discursive extreme just outlined, individuality is often simply viewed as an "idiosyncrasy" (Reckwitz 2010: 48).

2.3 Idealism and Historical Materialism And the Problematic of Bodies As Agential Sites of Shared Uniqueness

The debates around the definition of the subject for the most part focus on a person's ability to shape their lives as members of a larger society. Debates around questions of human identity usually also have to address a second axis: how to conceptualise the particularity of (and the variation between) human lives, even when subjects share a common cultural framework. Many common languages tend to efface the association between subjectivity and the things that individual subjects may share with others, respectively the identification of individuality and that which is particular about each human life, and instead treat both terms as synonymous, both with each other and a third term: identity.[24]

This synonymisation reflects a shortcoming of both the Enlightenment and the postmodern subject on a linguistic level: neither conception takes the particularity of individual subjectivities sufficiently into account. Following Kant and his search for the *a priori* conditions of human reason, which he explicitly defined as independent from the particulars of specific human experiences, other Enlightenment philosophers saw the conditions that made humans capable of

constituted as a subject) also offers a possibility of the individual subject transforming societal systems, because the state apparatuses are themselves multiple and non-uniform (cf also Butler 1997: 106 - 119).

[24] The following paragraph summarises arguments made in more detail in Frank 1986, Frank 2012 and Heinz (2007: 98 - 111). For an interesting contribution to the debate around individuality and identity made from an American post-structuralist and feminist standpoint, see Weir 1996.

being rational subjects as standing outside the particulars of human lifeworlds. This abstraction from particularity is reflected in Kant designating his project as transcendental, as beyond the terms of any particular empirical experience (Pereboom 2018). Postmodern conceptions of subjectivity, as indicated above, on the whole tend to also abstract from the particulars of an individual's experience in favour of focusing on the conditions of a social moment. Furthermore, postmodernist conceptions of subjectivity are built on the premise that these conditions may be historically variable, but are not perceived as such by the subjects living their lives within these conditions. Instead, ideologically appellated subjects perceive the discursive contexts in and with which they live as universal and immutable. Foucault aptly calls ideologies and their effects "historical a priori" (Foucault 2013a: 183), thereby capturing the invisible contingency at the heart of seemingly universal social constructs. However, since most of the work inspired by this insight focuses on the perceived universality of these apriori, rather than the particular inroads individual subjects might make to cause these conditions to change, they remain indebted to the same "historical task of speaking the Truth [sic] about everything, about the first causes and the principles of everything that is knowable [...]" (Althusser qtd in Pfeifer 2012: 13) that Althusser criticises in both idealist and traditional historically materialist positions. Both Enlightenment and poststructuralist accounts of subjectivity tend to ignore that which is particular to any given human life.

The above overview of the contemporary debates on subjectivity and individuality seems at first glance have led us far away from the mind-body debate and the ways in which philosophies have tried to conceptualise the fact of human embodiment: however, a closer look at the discursive structures underlying these debates reveals some striking similarities and similar shortcomings: much like the etymology of subject helps us to get a grasp of how the extreme positions on the question of the subjectivity might operate, so too the issues related to embodiment may be delimited more clearly by focusing on what exactly these extreme positions on the sliding scale argue for. Before we analyse these different positions, however, one striking commonality between idealist and materialist positions should be noted. Neither the idealist positions nor the materialist ones, whether essentialist or historically materialist, deny that humans experience their lives as shaped by their existing as embodied beings.[25] Because of this, Maurice Merleau-Ponty also refers to embodiment as a "human apriori" (Merleau-Ponty 1974: 203).[26]

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[25] This is true even of extreme idealist philosophies like those of Descartes, who argues in a letter that one can *think* of oneself as only shaped by thought, but that even an idealist philosopher must live in the world, using their body to

Despite their shared premise, idealist and materialist positions on the body differ radically in the importance they assign to embodiment as a component of human experience.[27] Idealist positions (and here particularly those grouped under the umbrella of "German idealism") argue for a radical difference between consciousness and the natural world upon which it is based:

[C]onsciousness is a self-contained [*selbstgenügsames*] phenomenon[.] The natural basis of consciousness is still only a pre-condition of the Spirit [Frank uses the term in its Hegelian sense, hence I follow the conventions established by translations of Hegel into English and capitalise the term, MTW], which is already *subsumed into consciousness* with the next logical step [my emphasis, MTW]." (Frank 2008: 14).

Frank's choice of words already hints at the central characteristics of idealist accounts of the body: Firstly, idealist philosophies follow traditional accounts of human perception of our own bodies as the place where our "active [*lebendige*] communication with the world" (Merleau-Ponty 1974: 76) occurs, conceiving of bodies as the first object minds encounter and mould. Additionally, they also presume (as Frank's quote indicates) that there is a radical difference between nature and consciousness and that the latter has primacy over the former. Thus, the body as well as non-human nature are subservient to rationality and reason and are accounted no agency within human lives. The body is the instrument of the rational mind and serves no functions apart from those the mind commands it to perform. Based on this belief, some idealists have articulated a radical dualism between the *res cogitans* (literally the things of thought and of the mind) and the *res extensa* (the things which have no being apart from existing in mathematical space), to use Descartes' terms. According to strict Cartesianism, it is only the *res cogitans* that have any bearing on how human beings act in the world. In this view, the body and the non-human world surrounding us are merely the means (in the case of the body), respectively the patients in a linguistic sense (in the case of non-human nature) upon which human rationality works its will. Based on this belief, some idealist philosophies, most famously perhaps the early

do so (Descartes qtd in Merleau-Ponty 1974: 234). The same holds true for radically constructivist positions, such as the "brain in a vat" thought experiment: even if human embodiment is not ontologically true, it remains epistemologically and phenomenologically so. After all, humans think of themselves as embodied and cannot think of themselves as just brains in a vat even if that were what they really are.

[26] Merleau-Ponty's choice of term implicitly assumes that only human animals are capable of conceptual thinking. For a discussion of recent findings in zoology and developments in philosophy that problematise this thinking, see Wolfe (2010: 31 - 48; 2003b: 79 - 84).

[27] The following paragraphs again offer only an overview of an extremely complex and multidisciplinary debate. They are based primarily on the following sources: Bermes 2012, Frank (2008: 1-26), Grondin 2013, Merleau-Ponty 1974, Grosz 1994, Plumwood 1992, Prechtl 2012, Schnädelbach 2013.

Fichte and the mature and late Hegel, went so far as to suggest that the I creates itself and the world surrounding it through what Fichte tellingly calls a *Tathandlung* (Fichte qtd in Zima 2010: 103). The German *Tat* can be translated into English as deed and thus indicates a particularly brave and fundamental act; in turn this hints at the independence and freedom Fichte accords his conception of the mind.[28] Since he follows other variants of idealism and equates the mind with rationality, this position again ignores the body and non-rational cognitive processes. Hence, most scholars interested in the role of embodiment in human lives tend to more or less explicitly position themselves against idealist takes on the mind-body problem and its (implicit) "intellectualism" (Merleau-Ponty 1974: *passim*).

However, there are two elements of Kantian transcendental idealism that have influenced the phenomenological accounts on which the model of embodiment chiefly used in the analyses below is primarily based: firstly, phenomenology shares Kant's goal of searching for the transcendental conditions of human experiences. Edmund Husserl explicitly calls his philosophical project "transcendental phenomenology" (Prechtl 2013: 54, 54 - 59), and Merleau-Ponty adopts the designation for his own project in the foreword to *The Phenomenology of Perception* (Merleau-Ponty 1974: 3, 10 - 11). As indicated above, current engagements with Kantian idealism are often critical of its transcendental aims. However, Manfred Frank argues in his lecture notes that Kant's terminology has often been misunderstood, not least by Fichte and Hegel, as representing a philosophy that "transcends", that is, stands outside of, the material world understood as an ontological reality. Thus, a subset of critical theory, in an attempt to argue for the importance of acknowledging the world that surrounds us as a material reality, explicitly distances itself from Kant (Frank 2008: 14 - 19). However, Kant himself argues against such a reading of his project and defines transcendental insights as follows

All insights which do not concern themselves with [specific] objects, but rather address how we conceptualise objects and how these conceptualisations may be possible apriori [that is, outside the context of a specific experience, MTW] (Kant qtd in Frank 2008: 16).

Although Kant's ultimate decision to focus on reason and to ignore the reality of human embodiment ultimately makes most of his insights irrelevant to both Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of embodiment and the present thesis, both this project and Merleau-Ponty concur with Kant that there are things which transcend the particulars of each human encounter with the world and thereby align themselves with epistemological transcendentalism. One of

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[28] For a more detailed account of how Fichte arrives at these conclusions and how they derive from particular elements of Berkeley's and Kant's (transcendental) idealism, see Frank (2008: 13 -18) and Breazeale 2018.

these *a priori* is the fact of human embodiment. However, for reasons that will be explained in more detail below, this ought not to be mistaken for an endorsement of a particular form of embodiment over another.

Furthermore, Kant's account of how experience works and of how a subject confirms the *a priori* nature of space and time already implies a more processual account of our interactions with the (non-human) world around us; it rests on the following premises: firstly, that the subject is conscious of its own existence in time, since subjects experience events as happening in a certain temporal order.[29] Secondly, humans can only experience themselves as existing in time by comparing themselves to something that is also temporal and thus also exists inside the temporal order. Since humans consciously perceive themselves as existing in time, we cannot use our own conscious states as a reference point from which we could then deduce the existence of time. Likewise, we cannot observe Time (as a principal apriori, as signified by the capitalisation) itself independently. According to Kant, a subject thus needs to observe other things existing in space outside itself which change as time passes. By observing this change in other things, it can thus prove to itself that time is not just a subjective construct of the mind (as a radical idealist like Descartes would claim), but rather something which the mind and the outside world share.

Notably, although Kant remains an idealist in according the conscious mind the sole active role in the process of generating experience and in because he designates the purely rational processes of our mind and Reason the only and ultimate source of our morals and ethical values (Grondin 2013: 23 - 29), we can already glimpse two discursive moves that may accord the body a more active role in human interactions with the world. Firstly, it is important to recall that although Reason (*Vernunft*) is the defining quality of the subject in Kant's view, it arrives at its conclusions about the world, respectively is prompted to examine the axiomatic principles that underlie its experience of the world, by way of the data that it experiences in the outside world. All of this data is sensual data. The senses, in their turn, have traditionally been considered as more a part of the body than of the mind.[30] Thus, although the body still acts in accord with and

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[29] The following paragraphs summarise the more detailed account offered in Diker 2004 and 2008 and Pereboon 2012.

[30] Current findings in the neuroscience of the senses describes them as parts of the brain that receive the data the sensory organs record and then interpret these data points according to the mental frameworks a brain has already accumulated. In response to whatever interpretations this process yields, the cognitive frameworks are then modified to better account for future data (cf. Zerweck 2002; Butter 2007: 67-73). The sensory regions of the brain thus instigate and participate in a kind of 'neurological hermeneutic circle'. In so doing, they blur the lines between

in the service of the mind here, it is no longer deemed irrelevant. Furthermore, keeping in mind that the body may also be called the first object the human mind encounters (if we treat the latter as synonymous with conscious thought), then the body becomes the site where a subject's *a priori* insights, and thus their understanding of the world, is shaped. Kant himself of course only speaks of one way the body can respond to the models Reason provides: verifying them. However, there is nothing in Kant's reasoning itself that logically precludes the possibility that the body might falsify the models created by the conscious mind, thereby asking it to modify its prior postulations. Thus, Kant's account provides subtextual hints at a more active account of embodiment, on which phenomenology could then built. But before we can examine phenomenological accounts of embodiment, we must first examine the second major strand of philosophical writings on the body with which phenomenology engages and contends simultaneously: that of materialism.

Materialism serves as an umbrella term for a wide variety of positions, some of which may contradict one another. However, all these approaches share one common premise: that all phenomena we encounter can in some way be related back to the material conditions in which humans live. The various theories then diverge in how they define matter, materiality and materialisation In the case of (reductive) "physicalist" (Stoljar 2015) and essentialist biological positions, this argument ultimately claims that everything humans can be is defined and circumscribed by the physical and biological conditions in which we live. Matter, according to these accounts, is turned from the silent servant of extreme idealism to the master, becoming the defining moment of human existence.

However, recent debates over the question of materialism, both in (feminist) science studies and the wider context of the feminist new materialisms argue that this reductive understanding of matter is problematic, primarily for two reasons: Firstly, such a view of matter remains implicitly indebted to the (Neo-) Platonist notion that matter is brute (Butler 2011: 11-25; Attel 2015: 108-109), that is, inanimate and fixed.[31] To use Diana Coole and Samantha Frost's suggestive phrase, according to these traditional conceptualisations, matter is characterised by a seemingly a-agential "thereness" (Coole and Frost 2010: 7), a facticity that renders it beyond thought and

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traditional philosophical accounts of body and mind and act as a liminal translator and creator, much like embodiment does according to Merleau-Ponty.

[31] For an interesting alternative reading of the Aristotelian development of Plato's conception of matter, which perceives it as full of potentiality held in abeyance, see Attel (2015: 113-114).

reflection. Similarly to the conceptualisations of matter that underlie idealist philosophy, these extreme materialist positions argue that matter is ultimately passive, immune to processes of interaction, negotiation, and (temporal) change (Grosz 2010: 148, 150) Just like their idealist counterparts on the "other side" of the mind-body dualism, they continue to view culture as the only area where change and dynamism are possible (cf Alaimo and Hekmann 2008: 4)). Building on this dichotomous characterisation of matter, various materialist positions (including some extreme variants of postmodernist discourse-based accounts of embodiment) thus argue from a paradoxical position: for them, matter is simultaneously the thing that delimits and defines the abilities of human and non-human actors and simultaneously the passive and unchanging foundation of our actions. Thus, despite arguing that matter (and consequently the body) is central to how humans experience the world, these variants of materialism remain strangely silent about how matter is constituted, how "*matter* comes to matter [italics in original, MTW]" (Barad 2007: 192).[32]

One of the most influential accounts of "how matter comes to matter [my omission of italics, MTW]" (Barad 2007: 192) is of course provided by various strands of Marxist historical materialism. According to Marx's own writings, the quality that separates humans from non-human animals is the fact that the former exists in social relations (Marx 2013 [1867]: 194 - 196). For Marx, it is thus the existence of social relations that separates human nature from non-human nature. When speaking about the physical conditions of humans, Marx view the latter primarily as a totality of needs and drives (Marx 2013 [1867]: 192), that is, as a psycho-social entity. Since humans are unable to fulfil those needs by means of their bodies alone (a theory reminiscent of Arnold Gehlen's later describing humans as "creatures defined by lack" (*Mängelwesen*) (Gehlen 2016 [1940])), Marx argues on the basis of this proposition that humans create material things through their labour that can help them fulfil those needs (Marx 2013 [1867]: 194). Although he concedes that this account of materialisation as a product of labour might seem at first glance to treat human labour as analogous to forms of materialisation performed by non-human animals, such as, for example, spiders, which construct elaborate nets to catch their prey (Marx 2013

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[32] Proponents of the new materialisms sometimes argue that this silence is the product of an unwillingness on the part of discourse-based feminist and gender theorists to engage with the natural sciences, for fear of falling prey to essentialist accounts of gender again (Alaimo and Hekman 2008: 4) Some feminist theorists have however pointed out that this might be an oversimplified view of the engagements between poststructuralist feminisms and the natural sciences, produced rather by a need to define the "new" in opposition to a stigmatised "old" than an interest in the encounters between science and "second-wave" feminist theories (cf Ahmed 2006).

[1867]: 192 - 193) , Marx ultimately differentiates human from non-human labour and materialisations for two reasons: firstly, humans have imagined the material shape of their creations in their minds before these are materialised as objects in the outside world. Thus, for Marx, the actualisation of human needs and drives still passes through a mental faculty first before becoming materialised (Marx 2013 [1867]: 195). Furthermore, as Kant identified the imagination as a subset of Reason in his *Critique of Judgement* (a fact of which Marx and a large subset of his contemporary readers were likely aware), the Marxist account still retains the recourse to a mental faculty as the sole arbiter of what materialisations take place and how they do so. Ultimately, materialisation, for Marx, can be defined as the process of turning mental concepts created using a (conscious) mental faculty into external material objects which are then used to further human ends.[33]

Strictly speaking, Marxian historical materialist accounts of the body thus remain beholden to the same logic of defining it as the physical and material means to an end that the mind has defined beforehand as Kant's transcendental idealist account of experience, in spite of the way the Marx of the *Theses On Feuerbach* (1844) urges philosophers and social critics to take into account and to take seriously the "sensuousness" ("Karl Marx: Thesen über Feuerbach (aus Marx' Notizbuch)" website) and practical nature of human life. Secondly, traditional Marxist accounts then go on to define (non-exploited) labour as the only foundation of human societies (Vatter 2014: 69). Implicitly, human existence is thus defined as an existence that always-already takes place within the definitional contexts of societies and social formations. As these formations and the material and ideological institutions they create thus delimit the capacities of human existence in much the same way the body does, Horkheimer and Adornos' description of technology as "a second nature" for humans (Horkheimer and Adorno 2010 [1944/ 1947]: 37) strikes me as an apt metaphor for how (post-) Marxist and poststructuralist accounts represent humanity's "social nature".

2.4 Embodiment and Materiality As Agents – (Feminist) New Materialisms
Even so, the present thesis concurs with the proponents of various forms of "new materialism" that too narrow a focus on this secondary nature often tends to result in a concomitant sidelining and denial of our "primary natures", the various ways in which humans are embodied and how

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[33] For a detailed discussion, respectively interesting critique of this component of Marx's theory of labour, see also Harvey (2013: 112 - 113) and Vatter (2014: 63 - 67).

these embodiments are co-constitutive with the non-human nature that surrounds us (cf. Plumwood 2002). Conversely, they also argue that an essentialist focus on the natural foundations of human and non-human lives runs two other risks: firstly, the wholesale denial of any kind of social component to how humans understand and act through their embodiment runs counter to the lived experience of most (if not indeed all) forms of everyday experience and thus limits its own ability to accurately describe how social formations impact how human lives are lived in, through, and with human embodiment. In the case of feminist recourses to forms of gender essentialism, the present thesis concurs with some postmodernist and ecofeminist critiques of these positions. The former position (perhaps most famously exemplified by Judith Butler's critique in the opening pages of both *Gender Trouble* (Butler 2006: 1-7) and *Bodies That Matter* (Butler 2011: 3-22)) argues that a reduction of women to their bodies and natural phenomena risks reproducing the dualist and dichotomous logic of patriarchal discourses which collectively associate women with nature and the body, even as they invert the symbolic logic governing this association by assigning the relationship a positive value overall. Furthermore, ecocritical feminists have argued that this inversion of values continues to treat nature as a monolithic entity and still remains beholden to a discursive logic that regards nature as something Other and therefore as outside human lives, although humans are now encouraged to emulate, rather than to instrumentalise, this non-human Other. In either case, both essentialist and historical materialist discourses have tended to ignore the potential for change and performativity implied in various newer accounts of non-human nature proposed in both the contemporary natural sciences (whether it be evolutionary biology (Grosz 2010; Grosz 2011; Haraway 2008) or quantum physics (Barad 2007)) and (feminist) science studies (Latour 2008; Latour 2002; Haraway 1997).

Considering the elaborate discussion of philosophical conceptualisations of embodiment offered so far, the primary explanation for this silence on the body as an active social site may be found in the association of the body with the big and unavoidable Other of human societies and discourse-practices: a unilaterally and statically-conceived nature. Whether positively or negatively conceived, nature thus understood is something that human flexibility and particularity is contingent on, but which is not itself contingent. The facticity of nature, according to the theories elucidated above, is thus something that serves either as a means to an end (and thus as an epistemological and practical contingency in human life that need not be contemplated because it does not (or even *cannot*) interfere with any plans a rational and independent human

subject might make) or conversely, as a hard limit (whether seen as positive or negative) no human actions, no matter how ingenuous, can ever overcome. According to both materialists and idealists, nature and the body are silent witnesses, accomplices and arbiters of humanity's mental and social life, but they are not considered in their agential activity, for the most part. Most importantly, for the purposes of this discussion, idealism, essentialism, and historical materialism all sideline the ways in which embodiment renders the neat binarisms and dualisms that underlie these discourses problematic, exposing them as contingent.

2.5 Embodiment As Entangled Interface Between Individual Subject and World – Maurice Merleau-Ponty and the Phenomenology of Embodiment

At the very beginning of this chapter, we briefly alluded to the ubiquity of embodiments in human images of themselves. Humanity can only conceive of itself as embodied – the ability to be free of embodiment in general (or a form of embodiment in particular) has often been seen as a mark of supernatural beings, an ability that transcends humanity's current agential limits. Embodiment, according to the Western philosophical tradition, is thus for all intends and purposes, a human (and perhaps also an animal and plant non-human) universal. Hence, it is not surprising that phenomenology, the branch of philosophy concerned with explaining the fundamentals of how humans experience the world and how they relate to the objects surrounding them, accords the body such a central role in its axioms, theories, and studies. The most sustained exploration of embodiment in the phenomenological tradition can be found in the works of the French phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty.

Though Merleau-Ponty's work on the body is the most voluminous and sustained produced during the heyday of phenomenological approaches in the early to mid- twentieth century, he was not the first phenomenologist to deal with embodiment, although Edmund Husserl, for example, does so much more cursorily and more by implication than any kind of sustained analysis.

In his later writings, Edmund Husserl shifts away from his earlier interest in how human perception is involved in the phenomenal construction of objects and in humans experience temporality and space, which he conceptualises as abstract and largely independent of human existence (Prechtl 2013: 55), towards a focus on the ways humans interact with each other and the world surrounding them in their everyday lives (what he calls the *Lebenswelt* or lifeworld) (Prechtl 2013: 120, 120 - 126). Husserl argues that humans co-constitute the environment they live in through interactions with other human beings, whom they recognise as their fellows (Zahavi 2007: 20, 77-78). After having judged the other person similar to themselves, Husserl's

account of intersubjectivity continues, an individual subject then presumes that the other person, seeming outwardly similar to them (as they engage in similar-seeming activities), must also have an inner life comparable to that person's own and thus proceeds to both interpret the other person's actions and to simultaneously and consequently tailor their own responses to the results of that interpretation (Prechtl 2013: 101 - 102). In summary, intersubjectivity, in Husserl's view, is thus the product of the continuous activity of a hermeneutic circle during all human interactions. While few people would disagree with this account in principle (since it accurately reflects how most encounters with other human beings are processed in our minds and reconstructed in memory), upon closer inspection, there are two significant omissions in the Husserlian account of intersubjectivity:

Firstly, Husserl implicitly presumes that an individual subject is more or less capable of consciously choosing to engage with others as fellow individual subjects, and thus of bringing the process back to mind via an act of remembering after it has occurred. Thus, for Husserl, the co-constitution of societies is still largely guided by mental processes that can in some way be tied back to rational decision-making. However, this runs counter to social experiences of stigmatization, which may exist and persist among a group of people, even when the stigmatisers themselves freely admit that they have not consciously chosen to stigmatise. Indeed, empirical sociological studies often note the exact opposite of what Husserl's theoretical model might lead us to presume: asked for their reasons, people often cannot give any that satisfy the criterion of disinterested rationality. Instead, they explain that they "do not like the look of them" or something similar (cf. Goffman 1986); thus, although these thought processes and actions are perceived as rational and logical by their proponents, they elude complete mental awareness, explanation and recollection. At the same time, they are not entirely unconscious in the psychoanalytic sense, as these behaviours can be made consciousness and are not subject to mechanisms of repression. Abstracting from the specific counter-example of stigmatisation, processes that create intersubjectivity as a whole therefore seem to be neither wholly conscious (as Husserl implies) nor wholly unconscious.[34]

Furthermore, and even more importantly, Husserl's account of intersubjectivity skips accounting for a crucial component and simply takes it for granted: he does not explain how we recognise the

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[34] For a more detailed account of how these processes work in the wider context of social formations (and the role of the body and embodiment within these processes), see the discussion of praxeological sociology in the following chapter.

other individual subject as a fellow human being nor why we do so.[35] His account (as far as we are able to determine, as Husserl's reflections on this topic are only extant in note form (Prechtl 2013: 99)) omits two central questions of the process of intersubjective recognition: what is used as evidence of similarity between the self and the other individual subject and how does one individual subject recognise another as similar to themselves? Husserl's phenomenology only starts from the fact that this recognition does happen, while ignoring its conditions, modalities, and the ways it might fail or lead to imperfect conclusions.[36]

Merleau-Ponty's own enquiries into the modalities of human existence centre around the interaction of individual subjects with the world around them through perception, the study of which, Merleau-Ponty claims, shows that the relationship of human individual subjectsto the world difffers radically from both idealist and materialist conceptions:

"[…] [O]ur relationship to the world is not that of a [distanced, MTW] thinker to an object of thought […]. As a result [of the conclusions various psychological experiments on perception have reached, MTW] [,] we cannot apply the classical distinction of form and matter to perception nor can we conceive the perceiving subject as a consciousness which 'interprets', 'deciphers', or 'orders' a sensible matter according to an ideal law which it possesses. Matter is 'pregnant' with its form, which is to say that in the final analysis every perception takes place within a certain horizon and ultimately in the 'world'. We experience a perception and its horizon 'in action' [the translator's note indicates that "in action" translates the French *practiquement* , MTW] rather than by 'posing' them or explicitly 'knowing' them." (Merleau-Ponty 1974: 12-13) Merleau-Ponty's central argument thus undermines the binary conception of the relationship between body and mind as well as their conceptions as two distinct entities, which are interrelated, but not co-constitutive. Instead of focusing on the conscious mind and the material body as two distinct entities, he identifies the body engaging with the world, the 'living body' or embodiment as the source of an individual subject's cognitive framework.

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[35] Although this omission on Husserl's part is in keeping with his desire to accurately describe phenomena without trying to either seek or provide explanations for their form (a method referred to as "bracketing" (*Einklammerung*) (Prechtl 2013: 57), it also indicates a significant blind spot of (traditional) phenomenology: it tends to assume a certain universality of human experience and does not address the ways in which environmental and social factors (as well as differences in the embodiment of human beings) might affect these processes. For a detailed discussion of and an attempt to compensate this blind spot, see chapter three of this dissertation and the detailed discussion in Ahmed 2006.

[36] In addition to Husserl himself, Merleau-Ponty was also inspired by Heidegger's discussion of the modalities of Being developed in the first part of *Being and Time*, in particular Heidegger's developing of an account of Being as a "Being-in-the-world" (*In-der-Welt-Sein*) (Merleau-Ponty 2002: *passim*). A detailed discussion of Heidegger's theories on human Being and his fundamental ontology lie beyond the scope of this dissertation, but see also Todes (2001) and Dreyfus (1991).

This prefigures recent arguments set out by the feminist science studies scholar and physicist Karen Barad. In her *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (Barad 2007), Barad argues for a complex account of the role of matter in the way humans perceive and exist in the world. She positions herself against both the recent discursive focus of poststructuralist theorists like Foucault (Barad 2007: 132 - 133) and simultaneously argues for a view of the world that deconstructs the dualisms that have governed feminist theory (as well as classical Newtonian physics) up to this point (Barad 2007: 191 – 192, 195 - 196). To illustrate her argument for an "entangled" (Barad 2007: 187) reconceptualisation of the world, Barad uses both recent findings in quantum physics and the experiments that founded the discipline, such as the experiments conducted to determine the form of light (Barad 2007: 97 - 106):

Throughout the nineteenth century, physicists debated whether light was a wave or a particle. Arguments for each position were made through a hypothetical *gedankenexperiment* (imagining sending a guided beam of light through an apparatus and noting the shape the beam makes on a screen behind it, to put it very simplistically (Barad 2007: 97 - 100)), When this experiment was actually performed, it returned both results: light can be a wave and a particle, depending on the apparatus used (Barad 2007: 97 – 100). The apparatus thus proved to have agency that could reshape the "subject" of the experiment; rather than separating the two agents along the familiar lines of the Cartesian dualism, the experiment indicates that they shape each other's way of being towards and perceiving the world. The findings of quantum physics, Barad argues, blur the lines between ontology and epistemology, and challenge humans to think and act in an "onto-epistem-ology" (Barad 2007: 185). Returning to Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological account of embodiment, this dissertation locates the first instance of experiencing the world epistemo-ontologically in our own embodiment.

Both Barad and Merleau-Ponty, in arguing for a relational perception of the world, also critique the tendency of the sciences (particularly the natural sciences) to presume to adopt a "God's eye view" (Haraway 1991: 189) of the world that is divorced from any kind of emotional engagement *with* the world (Haraway 1991: 189). Instead, they both argue that all human knowledge is "situated" (Haraway 1991: 183) and is thus coloured by an individual subject's relationship to the world. These relationships encompass both social and concrete physical relationships (the angle from which an individual subject looks at something, for instance). Merleau-Ponty illustrates this by describing the way in which a human subject perceives the front of a house: firstly, what can

be seen of that front (as well as what the subject identifies as that part of the house) varies depending on the location of the person looking, and yet none of these individual apparances equal the house's whole existence (Merleau-Ponty 1974: 91). Thus, it runs counter to the lived experience of individual subjects to suggest that they perceive the objects around them in their entirety *as objects*. Instead, Merleau-Ponty argues that subjects and objects perceive each other in what he calls a "system [of perceptions, MTW]" (Merleau-Ponty 1974: 92), a set of relations, where some things are in focus and other things surrounding those things or individual subjects are out of focus (Merleau-Ponty 1974: 93). However, Merleau-Ponty carefully points out that being out of focus is not the same as genuine invisibility (in the sense of non-existence) (Merleau-Ponty 1974: 93). Thus, he explains that when someone creates an image of an object in its physical entirety (say, by trying to imagine the back and sides of a house while they are only standing in front of the house), it would be more accurate to describe it as taking up "the view from everywhere" (Merlau-Ponty 1974: 93) rather than "the view from nowhere" (Merleau-Ponty 1974: 93). This has far reaching-consequences, as this "view from nowhere" is commonly identified as the hallmark of scientific discourses, which are often differentiated from "common-sense" everday accounts of the world, which are in turn perceived as inferior precisely because everday perceptions are situated and subject- specific (cf. Merleau-Ponty 1974: 96).

At first glance, the above discussion seems to have sidetracked our attention on the body somewhat, but there are two key points that may be derived from it and which form part of the foundations of how the present dissertation understands embodiment: Firstly, it shows that all forms of human knowledge and even our epistemological categories themselves relate to the fact that humans are embodied, even in subjects like mathematics, which aim to give an account of the world that is as free of contingent and situated elements as possible. At the same time, it also shows once more that human embodiments are contingent in all three ways defined by Stella Butter in the first chapter of this dissertation: the fact that human subjects are embodied enables them to gain specific knowledge of the world by simultaneously enabling and barring certain interactions with the world and thus creating an epistemological and practical framework in which humans operate. Most importantly, Merleau-Ponty's description of how this framework is constituted points to a relational understanding of the perceptual fields through which human experiences of the world are created. This is strongly implied by Merleau Ponty's choice of metaphors in the above passage: he writes that humans construct this "view from everywhere" (Merleau-Ponty 1974: 93) by imagining what other objects or persons viewing the other sides of

the house might see (Merleau-Ponty 1974: 94) at the same time as the individual subject perceives the front of the house and then joining these to the things they can see themselvesby way of a cognitive operation.

Therefore, according to Merleau-Ponty, the perception of the world, contrary to traditional idealist and materialist conceptions, is not constituted through an encounter between completely discrete entities (comparable to Leibniz's monads), one of which can be defined as the active subject in any and all cases while the other takes on the passivity of the object. Rather, both entities co-constitute each other through active engagements (in time as well as space), thus rendering the two Kantian *a priori* contigent and relational.[37]. Hence, the perceptual field in and through which an individual subject moves is fundamentally relational and variable, guided by changing interests and varying embodiments. Sara Ahmed captures this by describing phenomenology as fundamentally interested in the notion of orientation (Ahmed 2006: 4): according to Merleau-Ponty's examples above, human beings always exist in relation to or "towards" (Merleau-Ponty 1974: 16) a world, even if they are not constantly conscious of all the acts of orientation that make up their world at any given moment.[38]

Secondly, Merleau-Ponty's conception of perception collapses the clear boundaries between mind and body that define and guide the traditional solutions to the "mind-body" problem discussed at the beginning of this chapter: his notion of embodiment bridges the traditional binary between "empiricism [and] idealism" (Grosz 1994: 94). This is illustrated by Merleau-Ponty's frequent reference to the phenomenon of superimposition: the experience humans have when they touch their own hand. In cases where people touch objects or persons other then themselves, they only feel the sensation of touching the other object, that is, they feel themselves in the active position only, something that allows them to adopt a dichotomous model of the relation between subject and object. However, according to Merleau-Ponty, this perceptual model is disrupted

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[37] For, as Merleau-Ponty points out, for a subject to perceive an object there must be something the object does to draw the subject's attention to it rather than all the other elements of a given perceptual field the subject could focus on (Merleau-Ponty 1974: 93).

[38] This point is interestingly elided in the English translation of *The Phenomenology of Perception* published by Routledge. The German translation quoted above consistently gives Merleau-Ponty's portmanteau for the relationship between an individual subject and the world as "*Zur Welt-Sein*" (Being-towards-the-world) (Merleau-Ponty 1974: *passim*). In contrast, the English translation follows the original French "*être-dans-la-monde*" and translates it as "Being-In-the-World" (Merleau- Ponty 202: *passim*), terminologically echoing Heidegger. This dissertation adopts the conventions of the German translation to emphasise the relationality of Merleau-Ponty's concept.

when a person touches their own hand (or any other part of their own anatomy): they simultaneously feel the sensation of touching and that of being touched (Merleau-Ponty 1974: 118) Using this as an example, Merleau-Ponty argues that embodiment is fundamentally characterised by a disruption of characteristic philosophical binaries: it is neither subject nor object and neither wholly conscious nor wholly unconscious and thus completely cut off from the operations of the mind. Every time an individual subject touches their own hand, they blur the Cartesian mind-body dualism, rendering it contingent and enacting a different, relational view of the world.

The claim that embodiment exists between consciousness and unconsciousness may best be illustrated by reference to a psychological case study on which Merleau-Ponty draws to explain what he perceives as a fundamental difference in how the world is constituted through touching and pointing (Merleau-Ponty 1974: 128 - 138). This difference may surprise readers at first: individual subjects whose sense of their own embodiment is capable of both touching and pointing probably consider the only difference between touching and pointing that the movement of the finger towards an object is not finished in the latter case. Pointing, to them, might best be described as touching without the skin (and thus their haptic nerves) coming into contact with the object, and hence as the more abstract form of touching, so to speak.

The patient described by Merleau-Ponty suffers from both a general disruption of his body image (he can only pinpoint the location of a touch by "looking at the body part" (Merleau-Ponty 1974: 128) or locate an object by "moving his whole body in preparation" (Merleau-Ponty 1974: 128)) and a form of apraxia. Medical psychologists define apraxia as "a neurological disorder characterised by loss of the ability to execute or carry out skilled [that is, purposeful, MTW] movements and gestures, despite having the desire and the physical ability to perform them" ("Apraxia Information Page | National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke" website).[39] In the case of this particular individual subject, he can only perform "abstract" movements, such as pointing at his nose, if and when he is allowed "to grasp it" (Merleau-Ponty 1974: 129) (or when he is permitted to use his whole body as a "motor" for that movement (Merleau-Ponty 1974: 132)). Using this patient's symptoms as a basis, Merleau-Ponty argues that embodiment simultaneously functions as a "matrix of habitual actions" (Merleau-Ponty 1974: 130), that is, a conglomerate of practices that a body knows how to perform through specific and particular

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[39] Notably, this definition already corroborates Merleau-Ponty's argument that embodiment exists between conscious intent („desire") and the physical shape of a human body ("the physical ability") (Merleau-Ponty 1974: 128 - 138).

actions (such as how to grasp a thing that it needs or wants) and simultaneously as "an objective space" (Merleau-Ponty 1974: 131) that can be used to locate "abstract" (Merleau-Ponty 1974: 131, 132) objects or to express "gratuitous" (Merleau-Ponty 1974: 130) movements that have a general end in mind (including ends the person lacks the means to imagine at present). Embodiment thus is a preconscious interface between abstract and concrete thoughts, neither of which are exclusively mental capacities, but always involves the mind and the body.

Following the discussion of the case offered above, some readers might now object that the abstract mode must be conscious and mental, and indeed this particular case might give that impression. However, in her discussion of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of the body in *Volatile Bodies*, Elizabeth Grosz also cites the case of another neurologically-damaged patient whose particular behaviour indicates that this equation is not a self-evident fact but rather itself contingent on a particular form of embodiment (albeit a very common one among humans): this second patient is no longer capable of using objects and performing practices, though they can still point out objects and describe their practical function (Grosz 1994: 69). These symptoms thus indicate that information that can be translated into practices and abstract practices that involve the body in some fashion (to point, one needs to move one's fingers), respectively information that does not require the body to make sense, are two radically different types of information, psychologically speaking.[40]

In addition to exemplifying the pre-conscious nature of embodiment and emphasising how closely embodiment is tied to practices (whether abstract or concrete), the case study referred to by Merleau-Ponty also indicates another important component of how human embodiments and the world around them are "entangled", to use Barad's evocative phrase (Barad 2007: 247). Recall the point with which Merleau-Ponty starts his discussion of embodiment and to which he returns repeatedly throughout *The Phenomenology of Perception*: humans exist "towards the world", that is in relation to the individual subjects and objects surrounding them, and their embodiment provides the field, a bounded space or flexible grid, in which these encounters take place. To visualise this, we might imagine each person as a splash of ink on a grid, the inner and the outer barrier constantly intermingling. Keeping in mind this image of the two-dimensional Cartesian grid, we might then go on to think of the difference between "concrete" and "abstract"

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[40] Certainly, the voicing of a name requires the participation of the vocal tract, but speaking (as a practice) and concepts (which may never be voiced out loud) do not depend on each other, though traditional Western philosophy habitually treats them as co-constitutive (cf. Derrida's critique of logocentrism in Derrida 2016 [1967]).

actions as a difference along a spatial dimension. Merleau-Ponty indeed uses a spatial metaphor himself when he describes concrete actions as "centripetal" (Merleau-Ponty 1974: 137), that is, such actions include parts of the world into the actions of the embodied individual subject, whereas abstract actions are "centrifugal" (Merleau-Ponty: 1974: 131), expanding the reach of the subject beyond those aspects of the world it considers familiar and thereby opening it to experiences of contingency (Merleau-Ponty 1974: 137). Concrete actions affirm and support the current location and practices of an embodied subject, they cover familiar territory. Abstract actions, on the other hand, expand the reach of that embodied subject, into territory which is not familiar and part of the embodied subject's immediate comfort zone.[41]

In light of the above visualisation, we may be tempted to ask ourselves if there exists a temporal as well as a spatial axis in the grid that defines human situated embodiments in time as well as space. Merleau-Ponty's own use of the term "habitual actions" (Merleau-Ponty 1974: 131) as a synonym for concrete actions seems to hint at an affirmative answer. The details of this temporal dimension are elucidated in Merleau-Ponty's detailed phenomenological account of the phantom limb (Merleau-Ponty 1974: 100 - 112) Phantom limbs occur in some amputees, who can still feel a limb after it has been removed, sometimes weeks or months after the operation or trauma took place.

To explain this phenomenon, Merleau-Ponty introduces the distinction between the "habitual" (Merleau-Ponty 1974: 107) and the "immediate" (Merleau-Ponty 1974: 107) body. It is important to recall that embodiment, in Merleau-Ponty's account, is always-already both psychological and material. Thus, he understands the "body image" a person has of their own body as more than a mental representation of that body. (Merleau-Ponty 1974: 123-124) Rather, each part of the body takes on meaning in relation to the practices it can perform and accrues the memory of actions it was involved in (Merleau-Ponty 1974: 125). As these practices are repeated again and again with the same body parts involved each time, they congeal into habits, even though slight variations may be introduced or exist over time. Taken together, all these habits form a given embodied subject's habitual body. In contrast, the "immediate body" (Merleau-Ponty 1974: 107) describes how a body perceives itself and acts while it is - performing a particular practice at a specific point in time. In essence, Merleau-Ponty's distinction is thus comparable to the structuralist distinction between *langue* and *parole* (Saussure 2004: 59 - 60): Much like Saussure's language

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[41] See also the insightful discussion on why a person moves differently in a house they know (which they might consider „home") and one they do not (yet) know in Ahmed (2006: 6-10).

system, the habitual body seems a-temporal, but can in fact be changed by the iterative performances of the immediate body, thereby introducing an element of Derridaen *differance* into the materiality of embodiment. [42]

Interestingly, Merleau-Ponty himself does not address the potential for quotidian changes to a person's embodiment at all, focusing instead on events that rupture the relationship between the immediate and the habitual body. Using the explanatory framework outlined above to explain the occurrence of phantom limbs, Merleau-Ponty argues that the limb the patient can feel and wants to interact with although it is objectively gone is the vestige of that embodied subject's old habitual body, which attempts to re-establish the person's former bodily habits over the new immediate body, which at the same time tries to habituate new practices. According to this model, the gradual shrinking of the phantom limb happens as a new "habitual body" slowly replaces the old one (Merleau-Ponty 1974: 112).

In summary, Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological account of embodiment helps to explain why the body has been seen as a site of (potentially dangerous) contingency throughout the history of Western thought: fundamentally, embodiment marks the epistemological limits of philosophy, in particular its reliance on binary oppositions. Embodiment as conceptualised by Merleau-Ponty exemplifies the "logic of the *And* [italics in original, MTW]" (Kandinsky qtd in Heinz 2007: 1) it is universal and particular, static and dynamic, mental and physical, creative and restrictive, and it simultaneously occupies temporal and spatial dimensions.

Furthermore, as hinted at above, phenomenology also renders contingent the claims to objectivity that inform more traditional idealist or materialist accounts of the world. Instead, it concurs with recent findings in the philosophy of emotion that argue that emotions construct our relationship towards the world (de Sousa 2009). Additionally, as emotions then vary from embodied individual subject to embodied individual subject – they may in fact do so because of some preconscious aspect of their particular embodiment – this also confirms Heidegger's claims that the body and emotions constitute part of the individuality (*Je-Meinigkeit*) of each individual subject (Heidegger 2006: 41 – 42). Merleau-Ponty's conceptualisation of embodiment thus supports the axiomatic premise of this dissertation that human beings are not completely heteronomous subjects as some proponents of poststructuralism argue. Instead, it highlights the

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[42] For a very detailed and insightful account of how deconstruction can illuminate the complexities of embodiment, see Kirby (1997).

agential capabilities of individual subjects that arise from their dependence on changing embodiments and cultural discourse-practices.

2.6 Embodiments and Cultural Variation Merleau-Ponty's Universalist Blind Spot

Unfortunately, even though Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of the body provides a detailed and illuminating account of how the fact that humans have bodies furnishes a primary opportunity for them to experience contingency, it fails to contribute more than general observations to answering the question of how different social ways of enmeshing an individual subject's body with discourse-practices (Reckwitz 2010: 44, 39 - 50), rendering them culturally legible through genderisation, racialisation and ascribing a level of ability to them, interacts with their embodiment. Hence, Merleau-Ponty seems to ultimately concur with the universalist assumptions subtending idealist and materialist accounts of the body and to sideline the fact that an individual subject always exists in and in relation to a social world that subjectivises it.

In so doing, it also provides examples of both the entanglement of philosophy and hegemonic cultural positions in general and the hegemony of patriarchal masculinities (Connell 2005: 77 - 78) in particular. Although various feminisms have engaged and continue to engage fruitfully with *The Phenomenology of Perception* and other works by Merleau-Ponty, they have all pointed out that his examples are only drawn from the experiences of masculine subjects despite Merleau-Ponty dedicating a whole chapter to the question of sexuality (Merleau-Ponty 1974: 185 - 206).[43] This somewhat puzzling omission perpetuates the sidelining of feminine bodily experience that difference feminists consider the founding gesture of Western philosophy (Braidotti 2011: 143 - 144). Similarly, Merleau-Ponty omits questions of disability from his work (almost) entirely and never touches on questions of racialisation at all. The few cases of disability he does touch on involve people who have lost abilities their embodiment at birth was capable of rather than people who were born differently embodied. In so doing, Merleau-Ponty continues to perpetuate dominant discourses of disability, which associate disability with lack or deviance, rather than conceiving them positively as different, but equal, forms of embodiment. Despite his fruitful insight into the role of the body, Merleau-Ponty's thus replicates the operations of exclusion on which Western white patriarchies are based, even as he problematises one of its

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[43] The engagements most relevant to my own work include Judith Butler's gender performance theory (Butler 2006; Butler 2011), Elizabeth Grosz's corporeal feminism (Grosz 1994), Sara Ahmed's queer phenomenology (Ahmed 2006) and the new feminist materialisms (Alaimo and Hekman 2008).

central Others (the body) and exposes its central mechanism (the dichotomous dualism) as contingent and problematic. As indicated above, the present thesis argues that embodiment and the body function as the central site of an individual subject's engagement with the world and that this engagement is mediated through various discourse-practices (Reckwitz 2010: 40) and their "entanglement" (Barad 2007: 247) with an individual subject. The following chapter examines the socio-cultural situatedness of embodied individual subjects in greater detail.

3. Neg(oti)ating Embodiments: Embodiments Within Social Processes

3.1 Amending Merleau-Ponty: the Entanglement of the Phenomenology of Embodiment and Cultural Studies

At the end of the first chapter of this theoretical framework, one question loomed over all the reflections on the complex relationships between how humanity has experienced contigency during modernity, and how these experiences have in turn shaped and changed the period in which they arose, gained, and then lost their hegemony presented: Why did the changing perceptions of various embodiments make for such an accessible (not to say self-evident) example of how these questions play out across time and between cultures? Why do many people in Western cultures associate embodiment with contingency?

The discussion in the preceding chapter ultimately concluded (to echo Merleau-Ponty's terminology) that this is because embodiment is fundamentally structured by the dialogical relationship between "empiricism" (Grosz: 1994: 94) and "idealism" (Grosz 1994: 94). Contrary to both materialism (which Merleau-Ponty associates with "empiricism" (Grosz 1994: 94) and idealism, the two umbrella terms under which we can group most accounts of embodiment put forward during the history of Western philosophy, Merleau-Pontyian phenomenology, as we argue in the preceding chapter, envisions human embodiments as something that is neither merely a material given, an inert nature wholly separate from an individual's conscious thought, nor - something that can be wholly and absolutely controlled by an individual subject's conscious thought and intentions. According to Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, embodiment thus appears as a field of negotiable positions rather than as a fixed state that only allows for one type of interaction between human minds, human bodies and the external world surrounding these mind-body complexes. Furthermore, this model deliberately complicates the very distinctions we have made in the previous sentence. The examples shown in the preceding chapter illustrate how embodiment conditions both the way individual subjects experience themselves (recall the patient no longer capable of moving his finger in isolation from the rest of his arm) and the ways they interact with the outside world (recall the patient no longer capable of pointing at things). Hence, this approach raises the question how feasible the strict separation of mind and body, whether they are conceived of as equal entities or as levels in a hierarchy ultimately is. Although Merleau-Ponty's account retains the difference between self and world (Merleau-Ponty 1974: *passim*) on the level of the text, his account of embodiment enables us to understand this difference as a constantly shifting entangled intraction (to use Barad's terms (Barad 2007: 33)) and negotiation

rather than as a static relation between two discrete states. Since the exact nature and number of the factors a person thus experiences as part of their embodiment as well as the relationships between these factors is constantly in question, embodiment is thus always contingent. Furthermore, by reconceptualising embodiment as complex (and largely preconscious) set of processes of constant negotiation between an individual subject's needs and desires on the one hand and the form and constraint provided by their bodies on the other, this model also questions the static conceptualisation of nature implicit in the more common approaches to the question of embodiment discussed previously.[44] For if meaning is a negotiated process (and thus subject to temporal change), it follows that all entities that enter into negotiation therein must themselves be capable of change over time. Thus, according to Merleau-Ponty, nature is not the static Other of human life but rather one of its dynamic (one might even say vital) co-constituents.[45] His work thus prefigures important current debates in the fields of body studies, ecocriticism, ecofeminism, and animal studies (Grewe-Volpp 2016; Grewe-Volpp 2004, Alaimo and Hekman 2008).

At the same time, however, there exists a striking gap in Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, which he shares with other classical phenomenologists such as Husserl (cf. Ahmed 2006): although he wishes to examine how embodiment shapes the everyday experience of individual subjects, Merleau-Ponty fails to address the social embeddedness of an individual subject's actions and perceptions. This "bracketing"(Prechtl 2013: 55) of cultural elements is aided in part by the focus of the study on clinical experiments, and thus on individual subjects whose embodiment has been classified as "deviating" in some way from the norm established by the medical discourses current in France in the 1940s. Furthermore, the fact that the text draws on documented clinical trials also means that these observations have been made largely within the isolated, "heterotopic" (Foucault 2013b) spaces of specialised hospitals rather than being developed within

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[44] The term preconscious originates in the Freudian tripartite model of the mind. It describes those "contents of the mind […] [that are] *descriptively* [emphasis in original, MTW] unconscious but not blocked from access by repression or other psychological defenses [sic]" (Davis 1998). Though Merleau-Ponty himself does not use the term, it serves as an appropriate illustration of the intermediate status he assigns perception and embodiment in his phenomenology.

[45] While this reconceptualisation of nature for the most part remains implicit in *The Phenomenology of Perception* (henceforth abbreviated as *Phenomenology*), recent scholarship emphasises that such a complex account of the relationship between nature and culture was a central concern of Merleau-Ponty's work after *Phenomenology*, in particular in his lectures on nature at the Collège de France and the fragments of his last book *The Visible and The Invisible*. For a detailed account of Merleau-Ponty's later thought on the relationship between nature and culture, see for example Grosz (1994:95 – 103), Horlacher (1998: 180 – 193), and O'Mara 2013.

that context of a person's everyday life. Additionally, various feminist critics have rightly noted that all of the examples mentioned in Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology* deal with individual subjects who are raced, gendered and sexed in the same way as the author (Grosz 1994: 103 – 108; Ahmed 2006).

Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of embodiment thus fails to address two axes of analysis that are central to current cultural studies generally and this dissertation in particular: historical and cultural variation. This interest stems from the central premise of this dissertation: the project argues that the cultural representation of different embodiments (exemplified in the texts analysed by a range ofdifferently embodied characters) can be related to how aware of a given culture is of contingency and how this awareness is entwined with other social processes, respectively how it is represented in various literary texts. As discussed in the first chapter, this dissertation argues that the form this awareness of consciousness takes is historically and culturally variable (Butter 2013: 31).

Keeping this argument in mind, it logically follows that the perceptions and practices of embodiment must also be historically and culturally variable. Taken together, embodiment thus becomes a process of negotiation which involves a wide variety of actants (Latour 2004: 75) and in which different factors may be "residual, dominant, or […] subversive"(Williams 2018; 1343 - 1345, qtd in Reckwitz 2010: 24) at various moments in history.[46]

3.2 Post-structuralist Accounts of Subjectivity and The Sidelining of Individuality and Embodiment

In order to explore how cultural phenomena (that is, discourse-practices with material, psychological and symbolic origns and effects) influence and regulate the perception and performativity of embodiment for the members of a social group (particularly those individual subjects whose embodiment deviates from a given group's norm), the rest of this chapter elaborates a model of individual subjectivity that explicitly pays attention to its "naturecultur[al]" (Haraway 2007: 15) character. It draws on a wide variety of sources and disciplines concerned with the complex nature of how humans relate to their bodies, ranging from cultural sociology (Andreas Reckwitz) to Michel Foucault's genealogical history of normalisation, the docile body,

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[46] The term actants describes components of a system that "modify other actors through a series of […] actions" (Latour 2004: 75). At first glance, this definition may seem so broad as to be meaningless, but it allows for an important observation: According to Latour, things and non-humans are actants even though they lack the potential for self-reflection (cf. Bennett 2010: 9).

and biopolitics, as well as gender studies in the form of Judith Butler's politics of performativity, to name but its main influences. Before turning to a closer examination of these main theoretical strands, we now first clarify a few problems readers may have with the above list and its theoretical provenance: the majority of the theories employed in this dissertation may be grouped under the umbrella term of 'poststructuralism' and social constructivism. Both of these theoretical branches have been criticised as "culturalist" (Glomb 2016: 61, 57 - 61).

On the one hand, critics argue that social constructivists privilege the cultural dimension of human existence over the non-human factors that shape the lives of human subjects. For example, Karen Barad argues that Judith Butler's account of "materialisation" (Butler 2011: *passim*) only pays attention to how the performativity of human actors becomes externalised in their perception and handling of objects, whether these be things (Bennett 2010; Chen 2012) or non-human animals (Haraway 2008; Wolfe 2003a; Wolfe 2003b; Wolfe 2013). It thus ignores what Jane Bennet calls "the out-side of things" (Bennett 2010:5), that material component of things that can only insufficiently be reduced to human categories of perception, as well as how the ontology of things shapes human understanding of them, and therefore non-human forms of agency (Barad 2007: 196, compare also Bennett 2010: 1- 19; Chen 2012: 11, 159 - 232). Instead, these constructivists present theories that only focus on culture and thus the (direct or mediated) results of a form of agency that is seen as the exclusive forte of human beings.

At the same time, some extreme versions of poststructuralist sociological theory, even as they focus on culture, severely delimit the reach and influence of individual human agency. As explained in chapter two, many structuralist and poststructuralist thinkers seek to problematise the claims to universality and unlimited agency often implicit in accounts of subjectivity that are based on Enlightenment ideals of humanity as a free association of rational, independent, and moral individual agents. To effect this problematisation, thinkers like Foucault analyse the extent to which specific discourses (such as biology, linguistics, and economics as well as politics) shape what a given culture considers a "proper" subject through a complex series of inclusions and exclusions. Often these exclusions have affected people whose gender, sexuality, class, race, or bodily ability diverged from a socially defined norm. These theories seek to emphasise the contingency of Enlightenment conceptualisations of individual agency and argue that its scope is

much more delimited by what supraindividual discourses define as "proper" subjectivity than individual subjects living in these discursive-practical contexts are capable of recognising.[47]

On the one hand, this poststructuralist focus is to be commended because it permits the questioning of the methods by which subjectivities are constituted and thus exposes the historicity and contingency of all discourse-practices and cultural formations. While this bird-eye view of social and cultural formations has undoubtedly proven useful, in particular for social studies, the focus on the cultural also poses a major risk: at its most extreme, poststructuralist theory tends to reduce variations between individual subjects to mere "idiosyncrasies" (Reckwitz 2010: 48). Stefan Glomb points out succinctly that viewing individual subjects as merely subject to various discourse-practices partly clashes with the emphasis on historicity most variants of poststructuralist theory favour (Glomb 2016: 48): for how are we to imagine the change in discourse systems over time if not as the incremental shifting of discourse-practices brought about by the actions of various individual subjects (Glomb 2016: 61-62)?

At first glance, these twin blind spots are particularly troubling for this dissertation and its focus on embodiments in general and disabled embodiments in particular. Lennard J Davis in his book *Enforcing Normalcy: Disability, Deafness and the Body* (Davis 1995) points out how disabled bodies are marginalised in theory because they represent elements of biology that cannot be subsumed under either cultural discourses or psychoanalytic imagery that sees the body as the site of either Lacanian *jouissance* (Fink 1995: 60) or the home of Freud's pleasure principle (Davis 1995:5). Afraid to face this symbol of epistemological contingency and the limits of autonomous subjectivity the body in general and "the body in pain" (Elaine Scarry) in particular (Scarry 1987) delimit, critical theory has chosen to ignore disability and relegated it to the outside of culture and thus outside the remit of its own theorisations (Davis 1995: 5). In so doing, critical theories perpetuate (rather than problematise) currently hegemonic notions of "the norm" and normality (Davis 2013: 4) and the statistical assumption that an able-bodied norm can be defined (Davis 2013: 2-8). In contrast, Davis and other first-generation disability theorists highlight the constructed nature of normalcy and how this normaly is contingent on the exclusion and Othering of disabled bodies (Davis 2013: 6). Additionally, Davis in particular analyses the culture of Deafness in the United States, which turns this Othering into a community beyond the borders of

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[47] For an insightful analysis of propriety as a bio-political category, respectively its constitutive role for modern conceptualisations of embodiment, see the detailed discussion of Roberto Esposito's bio-political theories below and in chapter nine as well as Cohen 2009.

hegemonic culture (Davis 1995: *passim*). Davis thus simultaneously points out that critical theory has tended to other the materiality of disabled embodiments and turns this othering into a potentially positive and active source of at least partial identification for disabled individual subjects. In his conceptualisation, disability becomes the foundational, or constitutive, Other of normalising conceptions of human embodiment. However, even so disabled bodies are mainly positioned outside the boundaries of human society as conceptualised by poststructuralist cultural theory. They may haunt and so problematise the processes of normalisation that have excluded them, but for all that their origins remain outside culture (and thus beyond the primary focus of cultural studies), even in Davis' positive reimagining of the association between disability and nature as the outsides of culture.[48]

Furthermore, the sidelining of individual agency in poststructuralist cultural theory is doubly limiting for most disabled individual subjects. In general, the subject model of a given culture (what Reckwitz calls its "subject cultures" (Reckwitz 2010: 11)) strives to create a "passionate attachment" (Butler 1997: 7-8) in the individual subjects who adopt its practices. Subject cultures generally present themselves as both "universally applicable […] and attractive" (Reckwitz 2010: 89). In order to appear attractive, each subject culture presents a wide variety of discourse-practices, the adoption of which marks a given individual subject as a "proper subject" - in other words, a person who is autonomous and in possession of individual agency. (cf. Reckwitz 2010: 34). As Reckwitz repeatedly emphasises, subjectivity is the result of actualised discourse-practices. Subject cultures are simultaneously constituted by various forms of praxis that provide frameworks for specific bodily actions and emotional attachments and discourses (that is, various sets of symbolic and cognitive distinctions, which may underwrite practices but are not subsumed in material enactments) (Reckwitz 2010: 43). Consequently, subject cultures act on and through bodies and bestow agency (or rather the illusion thereof) on those individual subjects who perform acts in accordance with the practices they propagate and present as normal. Since they need to appeal to the largest number of humans possible, subject cultures use biological discourses to see what most human beings are statistictically capable of: walking, using both hands to accomplish a task, using their mouth and vocal cords to form a string of sounds, hearing sounds, using their eyes to process visual data, feeling emotions, or processing concepts of a

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[48] For a more detailed account of the role of disability as haunting culture and its political significance, see the analysis of *Frankenstein* in chapter six below. A general analysis of the cultural significance of haunting – a "hauntology" (Derrida 2006: 9 and *passim*) can be found in Derrida 2006.

certain complexity in a certain amount of time, to name just a few possible criteria. In contrast to Foucault, whose use of the term *discourse* is ambiguous and could be read as indicating an exclusive focus on purely symbolic and cognitive distinction, Reckwitz makes the entanglement of culture and materiality explicit from the start, whereas they remain mostly hidden or implicit in Foucault's work until *Discipline and Punish* (Foucault 1977).

According to this account of culture, every form of symbolic system is always intertwined with the both the embodiment of human life and the materiality of existence generally. However, since the two (respectively, three) categories are entangled in Karen Barad's sense, culture and embodiment cannot be understood apart from each other. Hence, culture also influences embodiment. Since culture, according to Foucault, is always constituted through relations of power (Foucault 1983: 100 -101), power always exerts an influence on how embodiment is understood and lived. In short, human biology is always interwined with biopower (Foucault 1983: 139-142). Together, they create various forms of bio-politics. At the centre of these biopolitcs stands the ideal of a "human norm", which the bio-politics strive to maintain and propagate (Foucault 1983: 142; Foucault 2004) through acts of normalisation (Link 2013: 34). Those embodied individual subjects who meet the standards demanded by the norm then go on to internalise the specific way in which the subject culture wants them to use their bodily capabilities. They become, to use Foucault's evocative phrase, "docile bodies" (Foucault 1977: 173). Rendered docile by the discourse-practices of a given subject culture, these subjects then think of themselves as "individual agents". Individual subjectivity thus seems to become yet another example of a very subtle form of Marxist "false consciousness" (Marx 2004: 656).

We will examine this process in greater detail below, but for now it is important to note the following: According to a strict reading of poststructuralist theories of the subject that build on Foucault's microphysics of power (Foucault 1983: 100-101), individual subjects whose embodiment differs from a given cultural norm are always and completely excluded from the cultural systems to which they belong (or rather, alongside which they exist). Even more importantly, these strict readings of poststructuralist theories once again tend to re-inscribe an image of nature as an essentialist Other that remains fixed and inert, existing forever outside historicity and agency because they generally tend to focus on how power renders bodies docile, that is, on how power subjugates bodies that are seen as having little or no agency (cf. Foucault 1977: *passim*). Most of these theories minimise the role of the body as the site of resistance and change and ignore the role of non-human agencies and materialisations completely (Alaimo and

Hekman 2008: 3-5). On a meta-level, they thus seem to re-introduce the very binarism Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of embodiment problematised in the previous chapter.

The early work of Davis and other "first-wave" disability theorists (cf. Samuels 2002: 62) consequently focuses on society as the normalising institution who suppresses and excludes disabled subjectivity. Simultaneously, these works aim to give a voice to the Other of culture embodied by disability. Adapting a phrase coined by the French difference feminist Luce Irigary (whose conceptualisation of femininity as existing outside all cultural (and thus patriarchal) discourses participates in the same structural logic as these early forays into disability studies (cf Samuels 2002: 68), disabilities thus become "the embodiments which are not one", to modify Luce Irigaray's famous title.

3.3 Crip Theory and Subjectivities In Process (Elizabeth Ermarth) – Positioning (Disabled) Embodiment Within Culture

The previous discussion may have created the impression that the introduction of contemporaray theory in cultural studies into any account of different embodiments and disabled individual subjectivities entails the introduction of a concomitant binary opposition: oppression and exclusion are the inevitable boon companions of culture while individuality and the potential for heroic resistance sides with the disabled individual subject. Though the present thesis by no means wishes to deny that the history of disability is full of stories of abuse and degradation by society and the medical establishment and the important work done by scholars who expose these mechanisms of exclusion, the above binary has strong and problematic Manichean overtones (JanMohamed 1985). It implicitly invites readers to assign moral values to supraindividual processes and thus to think of culture as always and everywhere "bad" and detrimental to a pre-cultural "absolute freedom".

Furthermore, this "narrative of normalisation" runs the risk of remaining blind to the complex intersections of disability with other, better-theorised vectors of social hierarchisation and domination: class, race, gender, and sexuality. Much like queer feminists and feminists of colour have continued to problematise the central premises of second-wave feminism while building on the foundations laid by preceding thinkers, the present thesis aligns itself with recent developments in both disability, gender and queer studies (as well as elements taken from feminist science studies and the feminist new materialisms) to present a non-binary account of individual subjectivity that emphatically includes the biological features of embodiment. In particular, it draws inspiration from the works of Alison Kafer and Robert McRuer, who have

woven together the cultural flexibility and focus on the performance of identities championed by queer theorists with insights derived from the interest in systems of "power-knowledge" (Foucault 1983: 83) to argue for a "crip" model of subjectivity (Kafer 2013: 15) and a "crip" theory" (McRuer 2006) of disability. Much like queer theory adopts the perjorative "queer" as a positive term to signal how relationship forms and gender identities that do not conform to the heterosexual and cisgendered norm, so crip theory attempts to develop an intersectional account of the lives lived by individual subjects with embodiments mainstream culture considers "disabled". The subject model put forward by crip theory seeks to illustrate the entanglements between disability and other minoritarian identity positions along the axis of race, gender, sexuality and class and to illustrate how each of these identity positions offers individual subjects practices and discourses they can use to reclaim agency through their divergent embodiment (Kafer 2013: 9 – 10, 15 - 18). Like their predecessors in the "first wave" (Samuels 2002:) of disability theory – on whose groundbreaking work crip theory stil relies – crip theories remain aware of the modes of Othering and social discipline that have shaped and abused disabled individual subjects for centuries (Kafer 2013: 7, 69 - 102); they do not wish to deny and ignore to deny the pain and suffering of disabled people has been and continues to function be an important factor of medical advancement (Schalk 2018: 63 - 66). But neither do these theories focus on these acts of violence and risk portraying disabled individual subjects as hapless victims without agency. Instead, crip theory argues that the relatively marginal position of individual subjects with disabilities in modern societies continues to silently and vocally problematise the liberal promise of equality at the heart of modern Western democracies (Kafer 2013: 9-10, 149-169). Their consistent othering thefore renders the foundations of politics contingent and highlights its bio-political character. Furthermore, crip theory seeks to give back agency to the victimised and pay attention to the complex intersectionality of disability with racialised, gendered, and classed discourse-practices (Puar 2017; Puar 2007; Kafer 2013; Schalk 2018).

Thus, rather than articulating an agency from the "place of the Other" as Davis and other disability theorists have done (Davis 1995; Garland Thomson 1997) or unearthing the bio-political instruments of oppression (Samuels 2014), the present thesis aligns itself with the complex model of agency put forward by crip theory and argues that the contingent embodiment of disability has the potential to unearth the agency needed to imagine a different bio-politics – one focused on the embodied difference and its contingency as lived in various ways by *all* individual subjects – from within the current hegemony. The present thesis thus analyses the

agency of disabled individual subjects and their contingent embodiment represented in various works of English-language literature and film as imbricated in the social structures of a given culture; from this place of imbrication (rather than Otherness) contingent embodiments can either support existing hegemonies or act as a force of transformation.

The development of this model of the social agency of disability starts from a moment of agreement with models built on Foucauldian microphysics of power: Andreas Reckwitz claims that "unique individuals, though separated from other beings by the borders provided by their bodies can only be recognised [as individual subjects and beings, MTW] because they are turned into subjects through the [creative and partial, MTW] adoption of socio-cultural codes" (Reckwitz 2010: 48). As explained above, subjectivity for Reckwitz describes socially-variable models of discourse-practices that give an account of how cultures want their members to act, think, feel, and perceive the world around them. The present thesis agrees that no individual subject can exist without relating to various subject cultures existant around them. Unlike the narrative of normalisation, however, it argues that adoptions can be incomplete, contradictory, and that individual subjects can refuse to adopt (elements of) the dominant subject culture of their day. Indeed, Reckwitz's own account of subject cultures implies as much when he describes subject cultures as varying in both the degree to which they are capable of attaining hegemony and when he describes the various hegemonic subject cultures as consisting of resistant, dominant, and emergent elements (Reckwitz 2010: 81 - 87). For, if the dominant system were really and completely "universal" (Reckwitz 2010: 89), there would neither be any residue of any previously-dominant system left nor would there exist the possibility that a future different from the current present might ever emerge. Furthermore, a truly universal hegemony would have no need to constantly re-enforce its universality through the speech act of proclamation, it would simply *be*. The same awareness of contingency is implied in Foucault's metaphor of the "docile body" (Foucault 1977: 173), which always carries as its unacknowledged constitutive other dogging and haunting its steps the shadow of a "wild", or at least a "recalcitrant", body that refuses to accept one form of discipline (even though it might still be docile when faced with another). Thus, even the microphysics of power retain an awareness that narratives of normalisation can and do fail. Indeed, both Foucault in his middle phase and Reckwitz's model of subject cultures more or less make explicitly room for contingency: Foucault uses the first volume of his *History of Sexuality* (Foucault 1983) to refute the idea that social power is always repressive. Instead, he argues that power has a dual character: it produces identities and then uses

the categories created through knowledge discourses (themselves infused with the dynamics of power that created and sustain them) to repress these identities in new configurations of power (Foucault 1983: 100 - 101). Power, according to Rosi Braidotti's summary of the Foucauldian model, has thus both "repressive […] and productive […] aspects". (Braidotti 2011: 171). Although Foucault mainly focuses on the negative aspects of such a power-infused culture when he introduces the notion of the "microphysics of power" (Foucault 1983: 101), the model implies that different arrangements are possible, and although individual subjects cannot escape living in some sort of power-knowledge arrangement, the relationship between specific knowledge-power configurations is contingent enough that interventions can be staged and alternative arrangements become possible. This implies that all power relations are to some degree contingent even when that contingency is denied and othered[49]

While the relationship between contingency and a given culture's discourse-practices remain implicit in Foucault, Reckwitz explicitly states that modern subject cultures (particularly the currently-dominant form) always strive to "clos[e] contingency" (Reckwitz 2008: 226). Keeping in mind the premise of this dissertation developed in chapter one that it is the awareness and conceptualisation of contingency (that is, its epistemological dimension) which is historically variable, rather than the existence of contingency (its ontological dimension), the result of these attempts can be easily predicted. Even as they manage to close contingency in one social field, the very act of closure as well as the non-uniformity of even a hegemonic subject culture opens the formation to new forms of contingency. As individual subjects then strive to minimise their awareness of contingency in this new social field, the hegemonic subject culture is transformed through changes in the (evaluation of the) discourse-practices that constitute it. When these transformations reach "critical mass", the former hegemonic subject culture gets replaced by a different one (Reckwitz 2010: 81 -83).

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[49] In the two last-volumes of *The History of Sexuality* published in his lifetime, Foucault locates such an alternative model of power-knowledge arrangements in the self-care practiced in the Greco-Roman world in late antiquity (Foucault 2015; Foucault 2012). In particular, he associates these practices with an increased awareness of the body as a site of pleasure that individual subjects can mould as they please. He aligns these practices with the *ars erotica of* India and Japan (Foucault 1983: 61) and opposes these *ars* (traditionally associated with the body and emotions) to the *scientia sexualis* of the post-Christian and post-Enlightnment West (Foucault 1983: 71 - 73). He even goes so far as to claim that these are "two completely different discourses" (Foucault 1983: 73) – a statement that runs the risk of Orientalising both pre-Enlightenment Western and non-Western cultures through its binarisms, as Janet Afary and Kevin B Anderson have pointed out (Afary and Anderson 2005: 15-17).

Notably, Reckwitz makes it clear that these transformations are the result of smaller, gradual, and more or less incremental changes from inside the current hegemony (Reckwitz 2010: 81). This implies that there must be factors within each subject culture that effect those changes, and this dissertation follows Glomb in locating them in the agency of individual subjects (Glomb 2016: 62). In contrast to the strictly post-stucturalist theories of subjection of Foucault and Reckwitz, this dissertation draws on models of subjectivity that do not axiomatically and universally equate agency with omnipotence and Enlightenment universality. This thesis uses Elizabeth Ermarth's model of a "subjectivity in process" (Ermarth 2000: *passim*) to restore agency to individual subjects who are neither omnipotent mortal gods (as Fichte would have contested) nor the slaves of an omnipotent supraindividual power-knowledge system, but "individual subjects", to use Sarah Heinz's evocative phrase (Heinz 2007: 110).

Ermarth begins her search for a "third way" (Martin Seel, qtd. in Glomb 2004a: 18) of conceptualising subjectivity by noting that the post-structuralist model troubles various connected notions related to ethical concerns, most importantly "agency, moral freedom and responsibility" (Ermath 2000: 405, cf also Ludewig 2011: 15). In order to maintain the ability to evaluate the actions of individual subjects ethically Ermarth takes seriously the structuralist and poststructuralist assertion that "[l]anguages are our tools of thought" (Ermarth 2000: 406). Though this dissertation briefly parts ways with Ermarth when she asserts that "[languages are] the precursors of praxis" (Ermarth 2000: 406), it concurs with her larger point: human beings understand the world as a collection of symbolic systems, as "languages" or discourses in the wider sense. Structuralist linguistics and post-structuralist accounts of textuality offer meaningful ways of understanding how these symbolic systems operate on a meta-level. Ermarth turns the Sausurrean distinction between *langue* (the structural system of a language) and *parole* (individual utterances a person might make) (Sausurre 2004 [1916]: 59) into a model for conceptualising individual subjectivities (or "subjectivities in process", to use Ermarth's terms) (Ermarth 2000: 408). Additionally, she takes the post-structuralist critique of Sausurre to heart when she notes that subjectivities (like texts, which post-structuralists understand as an endless chain of signifiers) must "be kinetic, not static" (Ermarth 2000: 408). Thus, individual subjectivities can only be understood as the temporary results of a potentially endless and variable process of simultaneous subjectivations and individuations.[50] For Ermath, subjectivities

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[50] Strikingly, Ermarth herself shrinks from the implications of her model at one crucial point. For even as she affirms the plurality and contingency of all the selections and choices an individual subject makes at any given moment in a

can only be thought of as the plural frameworks through which and in which every human being moves. The moment of individuation lies not in freedom from all discourses, but rather in "the complex subjective specification of multiple codes" (Ermarth 2000: 412). Instead of the oppressive limit to individual freedom, discourses here become the open and interpretable "potentialities" (Ermarth 2000: 412) without which individuality is meaningless. Conversely, this model restores agency to individual subjects by giving them back the opportunity to choose which potentiality latent in the discourse-practices surrounding them they want to actualise and even more importantly how to do so (Ermarth 2000: 413). With the possibility of choice the possibility to evaluate these choices ethically is opened up once again and historical and cultural change once again become the collective effects of individual actions and no longer remain the mysterious traces left by an unidentifiable agent on discourses that are paradoxically presented as both universal and culturally variable, as transhistorical and subject to historical change.

At first glance, Ermarth's intervention thus seems to precisely deal with the problems and contingencies the models of subjectivity discussed previously left underproblematised: it offers an account of subjectivity that acknowledges the paradoxical status of individual subjects as neither completely heteronomous nor wholly autonomous. It offers a way of theorising "the conquered conqueror" (Reckwitz 2010: 10; translation according to Glomb 2016: 63). Furthermore, it explicitly accounts for cultural and historical changes when it insists that individual subjectivity is "kinetic" (Ermarth 2000: 408) and that history be again thought of as "a grammar or perspective founded by individual subjects" (Ermarth 2000: 412).

However, it could be argued that Ermarth's very rescue of agency founders when confronted with subjectivities that are embodied in radically divergent ways. It seems strange to suggest that a disabled individual subject chooses their lived embodiment in the conventional sense of the word, which always contains traces of the suggestion that this choice happened more or less

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specific discursive condition (Ermarth 2000: 412), she identifies the "uniqueness" (Ermarth 2000: 412) of each individual subject with the "trajectory" (Ermarth 2000: 412) of their life sequence. Trajectories, however, are calculable and observable arcs of objects through space, meaning that their ultimate destination and by extension the path taken towards that destination can be predicted. As Philip Griffiths notes, Ermarth's metaphor thus partially undermines her positive evaluation of contingency as the source of individuality and ethical agency (Griffiths 2008: 39 - 40). Furthermore, it runs counter to the lived experience of individual subjectivity, which allows only for the narrative construction of potential futures, not definitive ones. Instead, most individual subjects experience their lives as something they need to make sense of while living it, rather than as something that has a sense before it begins (Griffiths, adopting Heidegger to draw attention to the contingency Ermarth here ignores, describes this as the fundamental "thrownness" (Griffiths 2008: 41) of all individual subjectivities).

consciously and for reasons that can be articulated in some form or other, even if they are not at the forefront of that individual subject's mind when they made the choice in question. It seems cynical and callous to suggest that a person with severe chronic pain or wildly deviating cognitive abilities can be said to choose anything about their condition. Once more, Davis' suggestion that disability marks the point where the human ideal of a *jouissance*-trenched embodiment founders against the rock of the Lacanian Real (Fink 1995: 24 - 25) in the form of a painful embodiment that evades comprehension within existing social codes and norms, seems to hit its mark (Davis 1995: 5).

The present dissertation agrees with the above reading to the extent that Ermath's subjectivities-in-process is not careful enough to indicate how the mechanisms of choice operate, leaving open the possibility of reading her account as advocating a form of limited conscious choice as the root of human individual subjectivity. She mentions once that most of the choices individual subjects (and the incremental changes these choices then cause) are made "unaware[s]" (respectively, they do not enter an individual subject's consciousness) (Ermarth 2000: 413), and the theoretical tradition on which she draws for the most part seeks to move away from (Sausurre), or even to problematise (Kristeva) or deconstruct (Derrida, Lyotard) any accounts of individual subjects as rational agents. Considering this theoretical genealogy, it seems highly unlikely that Ermarth's use of the word "choice" ought to be read as advocating an equation of choice with either consciousness or Enlightenment rationality. The following paragraphs will attempt to explicate Ermarth's definition of agency and to build an account of culture that includes disabled human individual subjects (and some non-human species) as equal agents in within culture on those foundations. In other words, it attempts to exorcise the image of disabled individual subjects the restless ghosts of Otherness and contingency who have their home outside culture even though they haunt its border that initially enthralled both mainstream discourses and disability theory.

Like Ermarth's own intervention in the debates around the question of subjectivity, the following broadening of her ideas is also motivated by ethical as well as theoretical concerns: as hinted at above, Davis' account accepts the views of the non-disabled cultural hegemony that disabled individual subjects are not "proper subjects", even as he insists that this is a positive, rather than a negative trait (allowing for the questioning of discourses of 'normalcy' (Davis 1995: 5 -10)). Furthermore, and even more problematically, this model unwittingly perpetuates this exclusion: it accepts the premise that a disabled embodiment is always accompanied by a loss of agency on the part of the individual subject rather than being the consequence of supra-individual and

collective cultural formations having their exclusion inscribed in their operation (cf. Linton 1998: 526-527) or the intersection between individual subjects and their discursive conditions. We are confident that the supporters of the "Otherness model" have positive ethical interests at heart and seeks to free disabled subjectivities from the pressures of hegemonic cultural formations to live their own lives as they wish (much as the difference feminists do with femaleness and patriarchy). But this account explicitly strengthens the hegemonic narrative, rather than dissecting it from the inside.

Additionally, this theoretical framework also runs into explanatory problems when it is applied to the lives of concrete individuals. On the one hand, it cannot account for the reasons why people like Ludwig van Beethoven, John Milton, or Helen Keller and Frieda Karlo were accepted (even lauded and praised) within the social circles in which they moved even though they were disabled. If we were to apply the "Otherness model" strictly, it would yield three possible answers to the above question, all three of which again place the focus on the individual subjects, rather than cultural processes: either the four of them were simply lucky, living in the right places at the right times, they were exceptional people who were wanted by the societies in which they lived (this account relies on Romantic notions of the genius as an essential and unique quality of a person (Reckwitz 2010: 213-215), which again prevents "ordinary" disabled individual subjects from approximating or replicating the experience), or the accounts we have of their lives gloss over them never feeling like they belonged to society. Now, while Beethoven for example is known to have raved bitterly against his hearing loss and even to have contemplated suicide in a letter to his brothers known as the *Heiligenstadt Testament* (Beethoven 1996 [1802]: 122), he neither committed suicide nor gave up on music, even though that art form is intimately connected to hearing. Instead, he identifies art as his means of salvation, as the thing that saved his life, rather than as what convinced him to abandon it (Beethoven 1996 [1802]: 122). This discursive move strictly accords with Romantic discourse-practices (Reckwitz 2010: 229 - 231). Beethoven, for all his rancour, ultimately wishes to belong to culture and does not exclude himself from it. This urge to belong is important enough that its affirmation prompts the very writing of the letter itself. The text opens by explaining that the author is not "a misanthrope"(Beethoven 1998 [1802]: 121) (that is, a person who is not interested in belonging to a community) and then proceeds to explain his behaviour. Similarly, the Mexican painter Frieda Karlo also used her chronic pain as inspiration for her art (cf. "Frieda Kahlo – In Our Time" podcast) and then exhibited her paintings publicly to great acclaim. She thus entered into a

dialogue with the society surrounding her, once again using her different embodiment as a means of communication, rather as a reason for withdrawing from society ("Frieda Kahlo – In Our Time" podcast)

On the other hand, and even more problematically, the "Otherness model" fails to explain the behaviour of people who exist on the very margins of culture and still want to engage with it: it sidelines the individual subject who can neither move their body nor make sounds, but still communicates with others by way of looks or the number of times they blink when asked a closed question, or the severely cognitively-disabled person who still expresses a consistent preference for blue over green – a preference they express by stiffening their limbs whenever their carer approaches them with clothes dyed green, to name just two examples of this type.. Just like some poststructuralist cultural theorists do with individuality generally, "the Otherness model" assumes that these actions are "idiosyncracies" (Reckwitz 2010: 48), rather than sustained forms of individual agency that exist inside culture.

In order to develop the latent ideas for a model of embodied subjectivity that allows for an account of disabled individual subjects as agents inside culture hinted at in the preceding discussion, the following pages offer a close deconstructivist reading of Ermarth's intervention. This reading uses the structural conception of the subject model posited by Ermarth: just as we argue that individual subjectivities exist inside culture even when their acts destabilise the hegemonic image of the "ideal subject" the dominant subject culture perpetuates, the following analysis broadens Ermarth's model from the inside out, using seeds the text itself has left dormant. Once again, the methodology employed here echoes the ethical aims of this dissertation: the desire is not to dominate and so suppress different expressions of individual subjectivity by way of a hierarchy, but rather to broaden and transform the hegemony by way of interaction.[51]

A first point of intervention is Ermarth's very convincing actualisation of Sausurre's distinction between *langue* and *parole*. Recall that Ermarth explains that dicursive conditions are structurally equivalent to Sausurre's *langues* while the acts of individual subjects are the equivalent of Sausurrean *paroles* (Ermarth 2000: 410). To circumvent the criticism that Ermarth ignores the complexities of embodiment we broaden her account by again borowing from Sausurre: in addition to the distinction between langue and parole, he introduced a third term: *langage*

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[51] For a detailed discussion of the difference between social organisations based on dominance and those based on hegemony and the different forms of political engagement and intervention these modes of organisation require and support, see Laclau and Mouffe 2014, Marchart 2010 and Marchart 20132.

According to Sausure's *Course in General Linguistics*, *langage* describes "the general biological ability of humans to speak" ("Ferdinand de Saussure - Langage, Langue und Parole / Signifikant, Signifikat / Bedeutung" website). As Sausurre defines "speaking" as the use of a symbolic system (Kirby 1997: 15- 31) and his definitions have been expanded to include human symbolic systems not based on sound (Davis 1995: 51 – 67; Derrida 2016 [1967]), we can similarly broaden the definition of *langage* and use it to designate the fact that humans are biologically incapable of existing without being imbricated in some form of sign system (irrespective of its concrete form).[52] Thus, the Genevese linguist implicitly prefigures and supports Donna Haraway's claim that humans coexist with other species in "naturecultures" (Haraway 2008: 16), and that the distinction between "nature" and "culture" ought to be treated only as a epistemological heuristic, if it is used at all (Haraway 2008: 3 - 42).[53]

Applying this insight to the description of disabled individual subjects (or other individual subjects who are excluded from specific "discursive conditions" (Elizabeth Ermarth) or "subject cultures" (Andreas Reckwitz)) leads to the conclusion that they are never the Other of *all* discursive conditions and thus that they always have some degree of agency. Even at the very margins of embodiment and life, humans tend to look for some degree of agency.

The extent to which agency and life are treated as synonyms or near synonyms can be seen in the medical and ethical debates around long-term coma patients and the medical definition of life and its end (Cooper 2014). Even crude descriptions of coma patients as "vegetable" reflect this association of life with agency. After all, plants still react to their environment in a variety of ways, ranging from photosynthesis to curling their leaves to avoid the heat of flames. Conversely, death tends to be associated with non-animate objects which are perceived as lacking agency ("he was as dead as a doorknob").[54] Considering this association, it is logical that Foucault identifies

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[52] Of course, the fact that Sausurre does not do so himself reflects hegemonic assumptions regarding a "normal" human as being capable of using sign systems with phonetic components, and thus the ableist dimension (Davis 1995: 15- 22, 60 – 61) of the "phonocentrism" (Derrida 2016 [1967: 12-13]) of the current hegemony.

[53] Keeping in mind Haraway's assertion, this account of culture can be broadened further to include non-human animals that also use some form of symbolic communication and/or are capable of emotional attachment to other species members. In order to include all forms of existence on earth, one could add a further more general degree of relation above *langage*. At this level, existence would be defined as being material and being capable of forming relationships as an actant in Latour's sense (Latour 2004: 75 and *passim*).

[54] For a convincing account of the agency that non-animate things do have see Latour 2008 and Bennett 2010. See also Mel Y Chen's convincing proposal that our ethics rely on the ascription of "animacy" to human and non-human animals and to inanimate creatures (Chen 2012: 26 - 28).

the power to have people killed ("to make [them] die" (Foucault 1983: 132)) or to ignore their living conditions even when they are detrimental to their life expectancies ("to let [people] die" (Foucault 1983: 134) as the two extremes of the power society can exercise over the individual.[55] The above reflections already imply that the definition of agency used by Ermarth and this dissertation is not indebted to an Enlightenment conception of agency as primarily conscious and rational.

Instead, it may broadly speaking be defined as the ability to form passionate attachments to something or someone. The term "passionate attachment" was first used when we introduced Reckwitz' conception of subject cultures and their need to present themselves as universal by appealing to as many people as possible. It first originates as a sociological term in Judith Butler's book *The Psychic Life of Power* (1997) and develops the psychoanalytic observation that "no subject emerges without a 'passionate attachment' to those on whom he or she is fundamentally dependent (even if that passion is 'negative' in the psychoanalytic sense)" (Butler 1997: 7). Initially, this describes an individual subject's awareness of the emotions their mother or other primary carer feels, even if they resent this awareness at the same time. In an effort to please this person, the child does their best to imitate the carer's behaviour, for that is how "normal people" (that is, people who feed the child and keep it warm) behave. As the child ages, the individual subjects with whom they interact and to whom they can form passionate attachments multiply and even come to include the idealised image of a subject propagated by various subject cultures either through real individual subjects (celebrities of various stripes) or various fictional forms of subjectivity as presented in all kinds of texts (cf Reckwitz 2010: 73-79).

This multiplication of possible sources for a passionate attachment has three important and interconnected effects: firstly, an individual subject will very seldom form an exclusive passionate attachment to just one other idealised individual subject which they maintain for the duration of their life. Most individual subjects will form various passionate attachments to different ideals at the same time and combine them in their own actualisations of various discourse-practices. Although each individual subject will probably think of their actualisations at

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[55] For a more detailed account of the state's power to shape and end life and the bio-political dimension of sovereignty, see below and the detailed theoretical frameworks set out in Agamben 2017, Esposito (2008: 57 - 63) and Mbembe 2003. The analysis of Shakespeare's *Richard III* in chapter five of this thesis offers a more concrete application of Agamben's theories in particular.

any given moment as part of a uniform whole (in other words, as constituting an identity), this identity is always also a conglomerate of various discourses and practices incorporated and adapted from various sources.

In addition, these various discourses and practices are also the result of incorporation processes that happened at various times in an individual subject's life. This is what Ermarth seeks to capture by her use of the term "palimpsestuousness" (Ermarth 2000: 411) as well as her claim that "[i]dentity is both sequence and palimpsest" (Ermarth 2000:410). Originally, the term *palimpsest* describes a piece of used parchment that has been scraped clean, but on which one can still find traces of the text that used to be written on it. These traces now shimmer through the text that now fills the page, even if it only does so when the light illuminates the parchment a certain way (cf. Winkgens 2008b: 554). Similarly, traces of former discourses-practices may be present in their actions even if an individual subject now prefers to actualise a different discourse-practice at the current moment in time.

In addition to being a record of the historicity and contingency of all forms of individual subjectivity, this palimpsestuousness also serves a psychological function in relation to an individual subject's awareness of contingency: it ensures that an individual subject perceive changes in their discursive condition as gradual and meaningful, rather than as literally radical and contingent and therefore as dangerous to their sense of self. This is true even if individual subjects consider the change as radical when consciously thinking about them. This mechanism conversely permits an individual subject to think of themselves as essentially the same person throughout their life (or at a particular moment in that life) and thus protecting them from a potentially psychologically-damaging awareness of the contingency of their own identity. Because even if an individual subject thinks of themselves as having changed radically, they make that statement in relation to a "trace" (Derrida 2004: 293) of a former passionate attachment. The very existence of this trace implies, however, that no individual subject can ever get rid of all passionate attachments or change beyond the confines of symbolic systems and embodiments. All they can do is change passionate attachments (or the valences thereof) and incrementally shift subject cultures or broaden the reach of their current discursive condition as a result of their changed discourse-practices.

Lastly, the introduction of the concept of passionate attachments also allows us to account for how a subject culture is maintained as hegemonic for a certain time period. Having attained that hegemony, most individual subjects will most likely consider most of the discourse-practices

associated with that subject culture attractive and thus seek to mimic and propagate them. Hence, most individual subjects born into that culture and period will be exposed to discourse-practices that relate to the hegemony through some form of passionate attachment. Since these attachments can include negative emotional reactions as well as positive ones, even individual subjects who engage in discourse-practices that are associated with the "anti-subject" (Reckwitz 2010: 45) of the current hegemony can be contained within the logic of the system to a degree. Only when the binary oppositions that form the core of a subject culture's ideal are radically shifted (Reckwitz: 2010: 82) can the hegemony itself be changed. But even so, the structural logic that requires the existence of a discursive condition and passionate attachments, irrespective of what form they take, cannot be broken, in contrast to what classical narratives of liberation may claim (cf. Foucault 1983: 17-20). But whereas theories following Foucault's microphysics of power may see this as a lamentable fact, the present dissertation argues that this state of affairs is something to be thankful for. Because, as Ermarth's account of subjectivities in process indicates, the loss of all discursive conditions also entails abandoning all forms of agency, collectivity, and ethical responsibility. And even though the association of agency and life may be no more than an anthropocentric conceit, abandoning it would mean embracing a very active variant of "being towards death" (Heidegger), which strikes at least the human penning these lines as extremely problematic.[56]

In addition to providing a convincing elaboration of poststructuralist accounts of the subject as well as a definition of agency that is broad enough to include humans who are differently embodied (as well as most non-human animals), Ermarth's conceptualising of individual subjectivity as "subjectivities in process" (Ermarth 2000: *passim*) also helps to problematise the negative view of culture as an exclusively excluding and disciplining force that permeates the so-called "thanatological drift" (Wolfe 2013: 32) of the Foucauldo-Agambian branch of the study of biopolitics.

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[56] Although Afary's and Anderson's claim that Foucault's work is informed by a conception of freedom as a "freedom-towards-death" (Afary and Anderson 2005: 32-35) strikes me us as potentially problematic (since it could be seen as mainly the result of a reading informed by a negative opinion of Foucault's interest in sado-masochism (cf. Miller 2000), it supports our own circumcumspectly-phrased problems with a wholesale adaptation of a Foucauldian framework in this instance.

3.4 The State, Community and the Body: Biopolitics and the (Bio-)political

Introducing concepts covered by the expanding field of biopolitical studies and under the umbrella of biopolitics allows the present thesis to address two related questions: firstly, how does a given text represent a community managing the contingent embodiment of disabled individual subjects? And secondly how does the material agency of these contingent embodiments shape these communities and societies in turn? Hence, the present thesis analyses the reprsentation of the contingency of the relationship between life as a "naturecultural" (Haraway 2008: 15) phenomenon – what Aristotle calls *bios* (Aristotle qtd in Agamben 2017: 6) and the structures of society (the political in the broadest sense). Following recent work in political theory, this thesis proceeds from the axiomatic premise that there exists an ontological difference between "the political" (Marchart 2010: 1, 17-18, 32- 58) – the ontological fact that societies exist and have a form – and "politics" (Marchart 2010: 1), the concrete political actions and systems active in a society. Neomarxist theorists like Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (Laclau and Mouffe 2014: 79, 107 - 131) argue that the relationship between these two forces cannot be mapped in a relationship of signification; instead, the political serves as the "absent foundation [*Ab-grund*]" (Heidegger quoted in Marchart 2010: 68) of all politics, only glimpsed through the constant active struggles and the "agonism" (Mouffe 2013: 9, 9-15) of social interaction. Following these observations, the present thesis argues that literary representations of disability as contingent embodiment always simultaneous present an image of a society in which individual embodied subjects exist as embodiment and whose embodiment is interpreted by that society in a certain way. The present thesis axiomatically assumes that, as individual subjects always exist in societies, which provide a shared resource of discourse practices on which to draw, and simultaneously exist as embodied creatures, all individual subjectivities are affected by and play an active role in negotiating bio-political issues. Literary representations of these embodiments thus serve as "spaces of reflection" (Glomb 2004a: 46) on the question of bio-politics in the broadest sense.

Biopolitical studies and the debates around them often intermingle a wide variety of theoretical inspirations, including the philosophy of Martin Heidegger (usually read in conjunction with neo- or post-Marxist concepts (cf Marchart 2010: 20 – 21. 59-84 and Marchart 2013: 12 – 14, 48-63) and the political philosophy of Hannah Arendt – particularly her thoughts on the "right to have rights" (Arendt 2017: 614) and the exclusionary politics enabled by the Declaration of the Rights of Men and the assumption that to be human, an individual subject has to be a citizen, a member

of a particular polity or state (Arendt 2017: 570) and that, conversely, those who are not recognised as (full) citizens are also not (fully) human.

The term biopolitics itself originates from Foucault's using and his heuristic definition of the term in his lectures at the Collège de France from 1975 to 1979 (Foucault 2004; Foucault 2001).[57] While a general interest in the treatment of life and death and the imbrication of the body in various social structures has been a theme in Foucault's work since his earliest publications (Foucault 1973; Foucault 2011), he coined the term to describe a radical shift in the relationship between the body and society he locates at the end of the eighteenth century. During the medieval and early modern periods, the state for the most part only becomes interested in the lives of its subjects (that is, the literal fact that these individual subjects are alive) if and when they have offended state power, and the state is consequently required to change that subject's life through the use of force (Foucault 2001: 58 - 61). The most extreme expression of that power over life and death was the power of the king to have people executed, to literally "make [them] die" – a power that was symbolised by a sword being part of the royal regalia (Foucault 1983: 131; Foucault 2001: 282 - 284) Apart from these cases (and during the outbreak of plagues (Foucault 1977: 251 - 256)), early modern secular authorities do not interfere overmuch with how people conducted their lives, Foucault claims.[58] At the end of the eighteenth century, states begin to become interested in the modalities of how individual subjects manage the biological side of their lives. They begin to conduct investigations (using the newly-invented discourse of statistics, among other methods (Foucault 1983: 135- 136; cf. Link 2013)) to conduct research to answer questions like the following: what do people eat? How old do they become? How many times a year are they ill (and how severe are those illnesses?)? How many children do people have? On the basis of these statistics, states then begin to implement programmes that seek to improve people's lives and to help them stay healthy (Foucault 2001: 297 - 298)

Now, it may be argued that individual subjects have always been offered discourse-practices that addressed their biological health. For example, religious discourse-practices like Buddhism and Sufism generally include dietary regulations that will affect their practitioner's embodiment.

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[57] The structure of the argument presented in the following paragraphs is based on the overview of the state of scholarship concerned with biopower and biopolitics in Folkers and Lemke (2014: 1- 37). All other sources referenced are given in brackets in the body of the text.

[58] For an alternative analysis that positions the beginnings of govermentality discourses in the cameralist politics of absolutist France and the republican philosophies of Thomas Hobbes, see Cohen (2009: 87 - 97).

However, Foucault's account of biopolitics accentuates a structural difference between religious discourses and the new forms of biopolitical "governmentality" (Foucault 2004): religions and other non-governmental discourses-practices address each subject as an isolatable unit. The priest is not interested in the believer as a specimen of the species *Homo sapiens*, but rather as an individual and singular being whose soul (which is as unique as its host) needs to be guided on the path to salvation. Similarly, traditional "disciplinary" regimes focused their attention on the individual criminal and person and inscribed their power through isolating that individual subject and marking them as isolated (Foucault 1977: 181 - 191). At the same time, these disciplinary regimes had no means of controlling the mass (one might specify, the *undifferentiated* mass) *as a mass.* Speaking metaphorically, under disciplinary regimes (Foucault 1977: 175) there is still safety in numbers, but that safety disappears with the rise of governmentality regimes.

The above metaphor already hints at the defining characteristic of governmentality regimes according to Foucault: state power now shifts its attention to large numbers of people, rather than isolated attention and regulations are created that seek to improve life for the population as a whole: states create health systems and initiate infrastructures that support that system. At first glance, this may seem like a genuine improvement over the killing state of the disciplinary regime that precedes it. But Foucault's account immediately forecloses a naively liberatory reading like the one sketched in the preceding sentence. By correlating the rise of governmentaliy biopolitics with the expansion of liberal and neoliberal capitalism (Foucault 2004), Foucault argues that the main aim of these new biopolitical discourse-practices is the maintenance and expansion of an efficient work-force. Any improvements in the quality of life of individual subjects are no more than a side-effect. Considering the cynical and pessimistic overtones of Foucault's account of the benefits of health-care reform in the nineteenth century (Foucault 2001: 297 - 299), one might be inclined to dub these side-effects "collateral benefits".

Furthermore, even though state power mostly expresses itself as the power to shape lives and "make [people] live" (Foucault 1983: 134), the state has not divested itself of its old power to "make people die" (Foucault 1983: 132). But that power now marks the exception rather than the rule of how state power is used. Instead, people are ostracised by "letting [them] die" (Foucault 1983: 134), isolating them from the existent biopolitical systems and not vesting any state power in their nurture and protection

The distinction between sovereign biopower and governmentality furnishes the first distinction between two branches in post- Foucauldian bio-politics studies: on the one hand, thinkers like

Thomas Lemke and Nicholas Rose analyse the mechanisms used in contemporary neoliberal societies to manage and sustain the lives of populations (Bröckling, Kassmann and Lemke 2000; Rose 2006). Drawing on the above metaphor, we might call them the "population-based" branch of bio-political studies. On the other hand, and in partial opposition to Foucault's thinking on the subject, a second branch of biopolitical studies examines the relationship between biopolitics and sovereignty, the foundational status of the sovereign power to "make die" (Foucault 1983: 131-132, 132), respectively the ways in which (groups of) individual subjects are included and excluded from social formations when they are accorded or denied status as proper human beings and proper forms of social life. Foucault argues that biopolitics constitute an alternative to the sovereign power of medieval and early modern monarchies (Foucault 2001: 55). In contrast, thinkers like Giorgio Agamben, Roberto Esposito, Sylvia Wynter, Alexander Weheliye, Achille Mbembe, and others argue that all social formations rest on a biopolitical foundation. All societies implicitly distinguish between a life in society and a life outside society (Agamben 2017: 10-11). Thinkers in the vein of Agamben are interested primarily in how power structures and conceptions of sovereignty found and maintain communities by stripping non-members of their right to life as recognised members of any human community. The ultimate expression of sovereign power is not, as Foucault suggests, the power to kill and "make die" (Foucault 1983: 132), so much as the power to divest individual subjects of everything but their biological existence, to reduce them to "bare life" (Agamben 2017: 10). This act of othering means that individual subjects who have been thus punished by the judicial power of the sovereign exist at the limit of social life. Their life is not taken away from them through an act of public execution To do so would be to acknowledge them as members of a community who have wronged said community; conversely and correspondingly, individual subjects who have been reduced to bare life cannot be murdered as a murder is defined as a killing of a member of a community that the judicial authority of this community considers unlawful and consequently has to .

Individual subjects have been reduced to bare life thus act as the embodied representatives of the upper limit of the law, whose material existence is maintained even as they are no longer sustained by any kind of community and subject to a literal "social death" (Orlando Patterson). Agamben substantiates this analysis by using the Roman legal fiction of the *homini sacri* as an example (Agamben 2017: 13-15). According to Agamben's reading of this legal device, *homini sacri* were a class of person in Roman law who had been sentenced to an existence as a form of bare life (Agamben 13 – 15). They embody the ultimate power of the law to divest individual

subjects of their subject status. Having been declared *homini sacri*, these individual subjects could no longer be sacrificed as their lives – in an ironic inversion of their title (which translates to "sacred men" (Agamben 2017: 10)) – no longer had any social value they could give up to help the Roman community survive. Simultaneously, these individual subjects could be murdered without their killers having to face any kind of trial: as predicted by Agamben's theories, the *homini sacri* lack a life the violent loss of which needs to be acknowledged and responded to by the power of the state. Having been deprived of the social value of their life and reduced to bare life, the *homini sacri* signify the most extreme application of bio-political power possible for Agamben. They also illustrate that, contrary to Foucault's definition addressed at the beginning of this chapter, bio-politics are not opposed to disciplinary and sovereign state power.

Indeed, Agamben's theories intertwine conceptions of (monarchical) sovereignty and bio-political othering as practised on the bodies of *homini sacri* and present them as interdependent.

The above summary of the existence of homini *sacri* implies that they exist in a strangely paradoxical relationship to the law and the society that has punished them: on the one hand, the law does touch these individual subjects when sentencing them to their present state. On the other hand, once they have been punished, these same individual subjects no longer fall within the remit of the law. Accordingly, the *homini sacri* mark the paradoxical point where the power of the law is at its most powerful precisely because it can suspend its reach and application and so create the limit of its own power by exercising it to the fullest extent possible.

This paradox resembles the definition of the "state of exception" [*Ausnahmezustand*] (Agamben 2017: 94) put forward by the German legal theorist Carl Schmitt: Schmitt argues that the state of exception does not revoke or annul the law when it is invoked, but rather suspends its application and puts it in abeyance. Schmitt (and Agamben concurs with his claims) identifies the individual subject who can invoke the state of exception as the sovereign in a given culture or legal system: the sovereign is "he [sic!] who defines the state of exception" (Agamben 2017: 5).[59] Hence, the sovereign is themselves removed from the sphere of the law as they alone have the power to suspend it. Ultimately, Agamben argues that sovereignty and the sovereign are thus both the mirror image of the *homini sacri* the state of exception creates and dependent on these othered

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[59] Schmitt's defining the sovereign as a single male (presumably white) individual subject hints at his own political beliefs, which were strongly conservative and made Schmitt a leading thinker in both the „Conservative Revolution" of the late Weimar Republic and the legal community of the Third Reich. Both Agamben and this present thesis consider the dynamics elucidated by Schmitt something to be wary of and something that society ought to no longer make use of, if at all possible, however (Agamben 2018).

individual subjects as only their existence makes the sovereign's own state visible and arguably defines it. Agamben argues further that the violent paradoxes of these bio-political mechanisms should be exposed and replaced with a different form of community formation and commonality (Agamben 2017: 147). Our subsequent analysis of Shakespeare's drama *Richard III* uses Agamben to elucidate how the play portrays its titular character as an absolute Other because of his disability and an early modern *homo sacer* and thus as a source of dangerous epistemological contingency that needs to be (and ultimately is successfully) contained. At the same time, however, our reading of the play seeks to address how the fact that the absolute other can and wear the crown problematises the form of sovereignty championed by the play.

Considering that most of the legal manoeuvres and codices Agamben draws on to substantiate his exploration of the bio-political mechanisms that underlie social othering and claims to sovereignty encompass texts from Greek and Roman antiquity as well as the Middle Ages and the early modern period, many bio-political theorists have abandoned Foucault's temporal definition of the term. They now see bio-political discourse-practice as a part of all power formations across European history – a claim with which this thesis concurs.

So far, this discussion must however have created the impression that bio-poliical discourse-practices are primarily a feature of political systems that are not based on the democratic principles set out by Enlightenment thinkers and first tested in the French Republic of 1789 and the American Republic and honed and adjusted ever since. One might thus argue that a rise in bio-political discourse-practices could been seen as a warning sign that democratic structures are about to be put in abeyance – like the constitution of the Weimar Republic was consistently suspended again and again from 1919 to 1933, and this use of the state of exception helped the Nazis to power (Agamben 2017: 148-19). Agamben's describing concentration camps as the "new biopolitical *nomos* of the planet"(Agamben 2017: 145*)* – as the unarticulated premise of the law – would, according to this weak reading, be a warning that democracies can collapse (and have collapsed) because various anti-democratic forces used the weaknesses and loopholes of a democratic system to collapse those systems. This analysis of bio-political mechanisms would argue that the dangers of bio-political discourse-practices could be turned aside by an inclusive democratic system.

Our careful phrasing in the above paragraph reflects Agamben's reading his claim strongly rather than weakly: according to that reading, all political systems that have been founded on the thought processes popularised by the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle (both of whom assume

that communities are founded through processes of exclusion and that life as a social category can be differentiated from mere existence (Agamben 2017: 5-6)) and the Roman legal system (which endows the law with the ability to enforce this separation and thus creates communities founded on the violent reduction of some of its members to their mere existence and "bare life" (Agamben 2017: 141. 140-141)) are destructive and deadly at their core, whether they call themselves democratic or not. He substantiates this claim by pointing out that the "war on terror" declared by the US government in the wake of the attacks on the 11th of September 2001 instantiates a state of exception that invests the US state with the power to declare some individual subjects homini sacri whether they are citizens of their own polity or not (Agamben 2017: 129-131, Puar 2007: 79 - 113); conversely, the treatment of refugees and the handling of various refugee crises since the Second World War by the United Nations and various nation states, which often end up excluding refugees by forcing them to live in refugee camps (thereby marking them as not belonging to any citizenry) rather than ensuring that communities can no longer expel members from their polity (Agamben 2017: 103-111, 107-109). Hence, democratic polities informed by the ideals of the Enlightenment and a belief in the existence of human rights are as capable of bio-political practices of exclusion as absolute monarchies or dictatorships (Agamben 2017: 145).

In making this argument, Agamben follows a line of thought set out in Hannah Arendt's *Origins of Totalitarianism* (Arendt 2017: 559 -625): as part of her attempt to explain how the Nazi regime and Stalinism could arise and maintain themselves, Arendt argues that the Declaration of the Rights of Men by the French revolutionary government introduced both the concept of human rights and an implicit exception to their universal application. The full title of the document approved by the French National Assembly reads as follows: "The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen" ("Avalon Project – Declaration of the Rights of Man – 1789" website). Furthermore, the document, immediately after declaring that "men are born and remain free and equal in rights" ("Avalon Project – Declaration of the Rights of Man – 1789" website, article 1), invests the state and only the state with the power of protecting these rights (Arendt 2017: 603 - 605; "Avalon Project – Declaration of the Rights of Man – 1789" website, articles 2 and 3). Hence to have rights that a nation-state considers worth protecting, an individual subject has to be a citizen of a state, according to the Rights of Man. Conversely, this joining of citizenship and human rights means that a state could question and violate an individual subject's human rights

once their rights as citizens have been revoked or altered, and they are no longer considered members of a polity qua community (Arendt 2017: 619-625).

Arendt explores these processes of revocation and alteration enabled by the Declaration of the Rights of Man through a detailed analysis of a political events that shaped the political culture of the French Republic (the birthplace of the declaration) in the decades around the turn of the twentieth century the Dreyfus Affair. [60]Arendt considers the lines along which the French public was split around the question of Dreyfus' innocence or guilt not just an example of the tenacity of antisemitic discourse-practices; it also illustrates how democratic polities, although claiming to be based on the belief that all humans are equally worthy on account of their being human, differentiate between humans they consider worthy and capable of becoming citizens and those they do not. In the case of the Dreyfus Affair, those who believed Dreyfus was a traitor argued that he could not be a French patriot (and thus a "proper" citizen) because he already belonged to the Jewish "nation" (Arendt 2017: 227-228).[61] Conversely, the defenders of Dreyfus' innocence argued that he was a proper French citizen, (Arendt 2017: 245-246) . Interestingly, the question of whether a Jewish individual subject could be or ever become a French citizen ansd whether the Jewish diaspora counted as a nation in its own right had been part of the debates around the phrasing of the Declaration already (Schama 2018: 378-400). Hence, Arendt and many bio-political theorists taking up her analysis argue that the mechanisms of citizenship even in societies built around the ideal of human equality often declare some individual subjects "less equal than others", to adapt George Orwell's phrase from *Animal Farm*. The present thesis argues that disabled individual subjects and their contingent embodiments are one of the social groups who have been sidelined by some interpretations of equality. It analyses Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (in particular the version of 1818) as both a representation of the bio-political othering mechanisms enabled by the political and social ideals of Enlightenment and Romantic philosophy as well as a first attempt at applying the inclusive and emancipatory potentials of those same discourse-practices.

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[60] Arendt's other example is the figure of the stateless refugee who has been exiled from their community and exists now as someone reduced to their existence (Arendt 20171: 606-614).his example is taken up by Agamben (Agamben 2017: 107-109) and in more recent examinations of political refugees and the US immigration debate (cf. Cacho 2012).

[61] For a more detailed discussion of the bio-political weight attached to terms like *proper* and *improper* in bio-political discourse-practices and the theoretical debates around them, see the discussion of Roberto Esposito's bio-political theories below.

3.5 Inscribing Humanity Through the Skin: the Law, Racialisations and Disability and the Bio-politics of Afro-Pessimism

Although the various biopolitical theories introduced above have proved extremely trenchant when analysing and critiquing European and Euro-American processes of exclusion, their major proponents and theories have also been criticised for outright ignoring or misrepresenting one of the major biopolitical processes of exclusion that helped shape and enable the democratic ideals of Enlightenment philosophy: the slave trade and the exploitation of non-white individuals subjects in colonialist contexts, particularly Black individual subjects. Various theorists working in Black studies, African-American studies as well as post-colonial, decolonial and indigenous studies more broadly have taken up the concept of bio-politics and argue that the experience of Black individual subjects, both those abducted into or raised in colonial slavery and those who remained on colonised African soil, function as the early modern and modern prototypical application of the reduction to bare life and the creation of *homini sacri*. Overall, this theory is treated as axiomatic by most theorists; the conclusions they draw from this axiom vary to the degree to which they think of the difference between Black and non-Black individual subjects as ontologically foundational to contemporary (as well as historical) formulations of Western conceptions of the subject: at one end of the spectrum, thinkers like Paul Gilroy argue that it is possible for Black individual subjects to adapt European models of subjectivity and to form coalitions across racialised lines, if the racialisation of all subjectivities and their historical entanglements with hierarchical systems of oppression is addressed rather than sidelined in favour of an othering universalism (Gilroy 1993, Gilroy 2000, Gilroy 2002,). Other thinkers like Alexander Weheliye (Weheliye 2014), Achille Mbembe (Mbembe 2003) and Saidiya Hartman (Hartman 1997) contend that such a reconciliation would only be possible if the model of subjectivity espoused by and inherited from the Enlightenment is completely overhauled and current bio-political conceptions of belonging and exclusion rethought in turn. Hartman substantiates her argument with a close analysis of judicial concepts that enabled slavery and the status of slaves as living objects in the antebellum South (Hartman 1997. 90 - 112), respectively why Blacks were and could be treated as "separate but equal" second-class citizens in the southern states of the US during Reconstruction and until the Civil Rights Movement in spite of what the Thirteenth Amendment claims to have intended (Hartman 1997: 115 - 123); she is thus closer to Gilroy and those who analyse the (harmful or potentially revolutionary) potentials and effects of various discourse-practices used in the subjectivation (or rather, objectivation) of Black

individual subjects during slavery. The analyses offered in the chapters that follow showcase how some of these discourse-practices of othering affect various contingently embodied and disabled individual subjects, even though they would racialise themselves as white or would be racialised thus by the audience or the text as a whole. They thus substantiate Foucault's using racism and racialisation as one of the foremost examples of biopolitics in his Collège de France lectures (Foucault 2001: 78-106).

Weheliye, on the other hand, turns to the broader epistemo-ontological implications of conceptualising slavery and the objectivation of Black individual subjects as a necessary pre-condition of the form European cultures of subjectivity have taken on since the Enlightenment. In so doing, Weheliye substantiates and explores the theories of the Jamaican cultural studies and feminist scholar Sylvia Wynter (Weheliye 2014: 21 - 32). As Katherine McKittrick explains in her preface to her long interview with Wynter (Wynter and McKittrick 2015), Wynter's interventions in post-colonial theory primarily focus on the ways in which Renaissance conceptions of the human as a political being and eighteenth-century models of humanity as fundamentally guided by (capitalist) economic principles –Wynter calls these "Man1" and "Man2", respectively (Wynter and McKittrick 2015:10) – have sustained their hegemony and power by associating alternative and non-Western approaches to the ontology of humanity and individual subjects who did not fit the "Mannish" conceptualisation of human ontology (in particular but not exclusively, Black individual subjects) with animality, negativity, and nothingness (Wynter and McKittrick 2015: 10, 14–16, 21 -24, 46-49, and *passim*). She focuses in particular on the "bio-centric" (Wynter and McKittrick 2015: 18) understanding of humans as beings defined by their organisms (Wynter and McKittrick 2015: 18-19), which in turn leads to the hegemony classifying some humans as "eugenic" (Wynter and McKittrick 2015: 19) – and therefore as in need and worthy of protection by society – whereas others are declared "dysgenic" (Wynter and McKittrick 2015: 19) and thereby associated with negativity and nothingness and so declared disposable (Wynter and McKittrick 2015: 19). In contrast to Weheliye, who is, as we shall see, more cautious and pessimistic about the possibility of a different way of conceptualising humanity without the ontological classification of bio-politics and the destructive politics that result from it, Wynter argues that just as modern "bio-centric" (Wynter and McKittrick 2015: 18) conceptions of humanity themselves replaced earlier European conceptions of the universe centred on God (Wynter and McKittrick 2015: 10 – 12), so too the current hegemony may be displaced in turn. Wynter's conceptualisation of individual subjectivity as a

process of negotiation between biology, psychology – her term for an individual subject's agential capabilities and actions (Wynter and McKittrick 2015: 15) – and sociology (Wynter and McKittrick 2015: 15) echoes the one embraced by this dissertation. Furthermore, as we shall see in the analyses offered below, the main character's contingent embodiment and disability and their complex entanglements are often presented as levers that could, so to speak, tilt the world onto a different axis – a potential each narrative evaluates differently, as shown in our analyses below.

As indicated above, Weheliye uses Wynter's theories to offer a profound critique of the blindness of major bio-political thinkers and theories to the role race and racialisation play in the constitution of the modern bio-political world (Weheliye 2014: 4). Like Weheliye, the present thesis understands racialisations "not as a biological or cultural classification but as a set of sociopolitical processes that discipline humanity into full humans, not-quite humans, and non-humans" (Weheliye 2014: 4);an examination of the racialisation of contingent embodiment in *Frankenstein*, D.H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928) and in the narration of Patrick McCabe's *The Holy City* (2005) reveals these mechanisms of racialised classification at work in these texts. In light of this definition, the analyses offered below also examine the interaction between processes of racialisation and conceptualisations of gender and disability, all three are tied to political processes of identification, and based on the results of this identification, subsequent acts of inclusion and exclusion (cf Samuels 2014). In his 2014 monograph *Habeas Viscus: Racialized [sic] Assemblages, Bipolitics and Black Feminist Theories of the Human* Weheliye argues that Agamben's and Foucault's conceptions of racism, biopolitics and bare life perpetuate the racialised othering of people of colour in general and Black people in particular when they treat bare life as a phenomenon that marks the limits of (European) social life and ignore the ways in which Black lives were reduced to "the flesh" (Spillers 2003: 205 qtd. and adapted in Weheliye 2014: 39) by colonialism and imperialism in the centuries that led up to and in some sense laid the groundwork for the Holocaust. (Weheliye 2014: 53 – 65, 33 – 36,). In sharp contrast to Agamben, who associates bare life with the complete loss of any social formation and all kinds of agential capability (Agamben 2017: 795, 797-803), Weheliye argues that an awareness of the ways in which racialisation subtends biopolitics and dominant Eurocentric conceptions of subjectivity and agency can in fact be used to articulate a new form of biopolitics not founded on the categorical death and sidelining of Black lives (Weheliye 2014: 131 - 138). Although the texts analysed below originate from a European and White cultural

context, our reading of the representation of contingent embodiments also addresses the ways in which conceptualisations of whiteness inform and shape the representation of races and racialisation. They thus participate in the de-universalisation and problematisation of white racial identity (Dyer 2017: 9-10), particularly in the analysis of *The Holy City* offered in chapter eight below. Simultaneously, however, all of the texts chosen still centre white male individual subjects and their experiences even as our theoretical apparatus destabilises their claims to universality by drawing on theories formulated by thinkers in post-colonial and decolonial studies as well as Black/ African-American and ethnic studies. I am fully conscious of this gap in my present work, and I look forward to its being worked on either by other scholars, particularly those working at the intersection of critical race and disability or crip theory or by my own future scholarship.[62]

While Weheliye's account of the way racialisation is foundational to bio-political conceptualisations of subjectivity is critical of the way the European hegemony has sidelined the role of Black people and other people of colour in both the evolution and the theorisation of bio-politics (and is thus itself racist in the process), he concurs with Sylvia Wynter and the Black feminist Hortense Spillers that Black individual subjects can articulate a new subjectivity from the position of the seemingly abjected and "vestibular" (Spilers 2003: 155) flesh (Weheliye 2014: 41-45) From this belief in agency even under conditions of absolute or near-absolute abjection, Weheliye contends further, that it is possible to articulate a new biopolitics that accounts for racialised experiences of abjection, rather than sidelining them (Weheliye 2014: 133). His intervention in the theoretical discourse of bio-politics may thus be described as critical but with a cautiously optimistic trajectory.

By contrast, some recent theories in Black/African-American Studies argue that all contemporary cultures of subjectivity and community are structurally and ontologically built on and are thus always-already implicated in, the fundamental structural "anti-Blackness" (Wilderson 2010: 22-

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[62] The work of Sami Schalk and her trenchant analysis of the representation of Black disabled individual subjects in Black speculative fiction (Schalk 2018) offers one way of approaching the „entanglement" (Barad 2007: 33) of racialisations, gender and disability that has been particularly influential to this thesis, in part because Schalk also argues (as this project does) for analysing representations of disability as commentary on the lived experience of disabled individual subjects and as metaphors (Schalk 2018: 43 - 45). While this thesis was being graded, Theri Alyce Pickens' *Black Madness :: Mad Blackness* [sic] (Pickens 2019) was published, which examines the entanglement of Blackness and neurologically-divergent embodiments in particular and offers a detailed overview and critique of the ways in which disability studies and crip theory have addressed questions of racialisation (or indeed, how they have failed to do so yet) (Pickens 2019: 23 – 49 and *passim)*.

23, 29 and *passim*; cf. no author 2017: 7, 8, 10-11) of Western and colonised subject and political cultures. Thinkers like Frank B. Wilderson, Saidiya Hartman, Jared Sexton, Calvin C Warren, and others begin their theorising of Black experience with Orlando Patterson's concept of slavery as an experience of "social death" (Patterson 1982: 38 and *passim*). Patterson used the phrase to describe the fact that Black chattel slaves were treated and ontologically conceptualised as human-shaped "objects" in (White) slave-holding societies. Patterson's approach to slavery focuses on the way slavery was enacted on the ontology, on the very "being" (Wilderson 2017: 25) of the slaves. This contrasts with class-based (Marxist) definitions of slavery. The latter defines slavery as "forced labour"" (Wilderson 2017: 17) visited upon one group of humans by another group of humans. Implicitly, this definition assumes that slaves and masters share the founding condition of being human, even as one group abuses and disenfranchises the other. Slavery, according to the class-based definition is thus just the most extreme variant of the underlying and foundational confrontation between capitalists and workers (Wilderson 2010: 8, 24). Furthermore, these theorists argue that class-based (Marxist) accounts implicitly presume that workers and capitalists see the other parties as fundamentally capable of having the same rights as they themselves currently enjoy, as part of the same group of humans that can potentially have the same rights and hence can struggle to achieve and be granted these rights – even if that happens in the very distant future (Wilderson 2010: 8, 65). Ontologically speaking, they are thus assumed to be "Human [sic]" (Wilderson 2010: 23), to be beings that possess the "right to have rights" (Arendt 2017: 614), irrespective of whether these individual subjects currently have particular specific rights or not.[63]

By contrast, Patterson and other theorists interested in the ontology and the bio-political measures that enable and sustain slavery argue that slavery is a condition that radically differs from Marxist accounts of the labour struggle. Slaves, Patterson argues, are subjected to "social death"

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[63] Wilderson and other thinkers in this theoretical tradition use the capitalised spelling when talking about various ontological positions a given individual subject occupies according to the hegemonic logic of the dominant political paradigm(Wilderson 2010: 23). In keeping with the guiding interest of this group of theories in political ontology and the deep structure of social processes (which they share with other interventions in the fields of bio-politics (Murray 2010: 57 -58; Weheliye 2014: 1-9, 12-15) and cultural sociology more generally (Reckwitz 2010: 45 and *passim*), Wilderson argues that this ontological deep structure defines delimits, and subtends all individual experiences a racialised subject makes in society, irrespective of whether their experience of their lives fits the expectations set out by the hegemony for people of their race (Wilderson 2017: 22). This approach thus also treats individual subjectivities as „idiosyncrasies" (Reckwitz 2010: 48) and runs the risk of being unable to explain how individual subjects (particularly Black individual subjects) manage and channel critical and radical potentials for change (cf. Glomb 2016: 62 -63).

(Patterson: 1982: 38 and passim) and are thus turned into "quasi-human or non-human" (Weheliye 2014: 8) beings. Wilderson elaborates the concepts behind the role of slaves in the making of humans as follows:

One of the points Patterson makes […]is that the concept of community, and the concept of freedom, and the concept of communal and interpersonal presence, actually needs a conceptual antithesis. […] [H]e says that communal coherence has a lot of positive attributes [such as a shared language, a shared body of laws and customs, amongst other things, MTW] […], but at the end of the day it needs to know what it is not (Wilderson 2017: 20).

According to Patterson, it is the slave who materially represents this antithesis by being subjected to social death: the moment an individual is declared socially dead by a community, "everything changes in the structure of that person's dynamic with the rest of the [community]." (Wilderson 2017: 20). For while the individual subject still thinks of themselves as having a family and as sharing the features their community associates with beings considered human, their position as a slave now marks them as the embodied "antithesis" (Wilderson 2017: 20) of that concept. The way slaves exist and are subjected marks the very border of what it means to be human because non-enslaved individual subjects can compare themselves to slaves and affirm their humanity through that comparison, or rather through the radical (and unbridgeable) difference between them and those they consider slaves (Wilderson 2017: 19-21; Patterson 1982: 11-13). Hence, according to this model of slavery, slaves are ontologically separated from humanity and are not considered humans that could struggle for their rights; rather, they are turned into human-shaped "objects" (Patterson 1982: 7), whose very lack of rights is the pre-condition for other individual subjects – those who are considered human (still) – to have rights and be able to engage in the struggle for various other configurations of the concepts underpinning a community (Patterson 1982: 5-7: Wilderson 2010: 43-45). According to this logic, any and all attempts by those who are considered slaves to abolish or change the system that creates and maintains their slavery must be perceived by those who the system considers human as an attack on their very humanity (Wilderson 2010: 44-45). Hence, those whom the present system deems human cannot and will not accord the slaves any share of humanity, and no reconciliation is possible in this kind of struggle. To capture the foundational nature of this ontological struggle, Wilderson labels it an "antagonism" (Wilderson 2010: 5, 39). By contrast, potentially reconcilable differences between individual subjects considered humans are declared "conflicts" (Wilderson 2010: 6, 45).Patterson's analysis of the social ontology of slavery and the mechanism of social death as well as theories that build on this foundation thus belong to a branch of theoretical conceptions of "the political" (Marchart 2010: 17-18) as primarily "agonistic" (Marchart 2013: 231-254), as

defined by a process of (often violent) differentiation and struggles that always entail the exclusion and othering of some beings as not belonging – and often as ontologically not capable of belonging – to a given polity (Marchart 2013: 249-259).

Structurally, the concept of social death are similar to Agamben's *homini sacri* – both are legal mechanisms that turn individual subjects from "humans" into "non-human[s]" (Weheliye 2014: 33-39; cf. Esposito 2015: 24-33) or "quasi-human[s]" (Weheliye 2014: 8; cf. Esposito 2015: 49-56). This may raise the question of why both feature in the theoretical framework. Two related reasons make an engagement with both theories fruitful when analysing the representation of contingent embodiments and disabled individual subjects.

Firstly, the concept of social death also examines the ways in which this state is actively maintained through particular discourse-practices by the existing hegemony and how social death can thus be extended across generations to affect whole societies, classes or (racialised) communities (Wilderson 2017: 20-21). Agamben's account of the creation of *homini sacri*/the socially dead focuses on how the hegemonic legal conception of sovereignty in the European tradition enables the creation of socially dead individual subjects; even more importantly, it focuses on the process of exclusion and on how individual subjects who used to be human come to be non-human or quasi-human. His using the legal mechanisms that subtend and enable the reduction of Jewish (and, we might add, Rromani) individual subjects to non-humans and ultimately to corpses by the Nazis during the Shoah/Porajmos as the prime modern example of the modern creation of *homini sacri* hinges upon his interest in the way former humans are pushed to the very margins of society – a push they cannot undo through their own agency and margins as zones of almost-death where individual subjects can do naught but exist, but where they are also not forced to procreate and transmit their social death to another generation, as all the hegemonic state power wants to do is to undo the lives they have lived and could live and to give them the final push into biological death and extinction as a culture and people.

Patterson instead showcases that socially dead slaves were and are not left to their own devices and allowed to exist in marginal peace; rather, the social death of the slaves was and is constantly re-enacted and re-inscribed on their "flesh" (Spillers 2003: 205), on the socially ignored matter of their physical life. Or, to re-introduce the Aristotelian terms discussed in our initial discussion of Agamben: the discourse-practices of social death strip individual subjects of a valued from of *bios* (social life) and simultaneously create a new abjected social existence on the foundations of their *zoe* (biological life). Broadly speaking, this abjected life is maintained and characterised by

three features created and maintained by social discourse-practices: slaves lived and live under the constant threat of "gratuitous violence" (Wilderson 2017: 18); they were and are considered to be "without honor [sic] and independent social existence" (Patterson 1982: 10); and lastly, they are "natally alienated" (Patterson 1982: 7).

Throughout history and across cultures, slavery was most commonly the fate of warriors who had been captured during war – social death was the consequence of having been defeated but having escaped physical death (Patterson 1982: 5). But even the chattel slaves created by the Middle Passage and maintained across generations in the US were kept from asserting their humanity by the constant threat of violence. This violence is gratuitous because it needed no justification As Wilderson explains violence employed by the hegemony against those considered human is always in response to some actual or perceived transgression on the part of the punished (Wilderson 2017: 18). Conversely and in stark contrast, violence against those considered non-human needs no justification; rather, this violence itself justifies something – the authority of the masters and the hegemony, their subjectivity and the fact that they are human (Patterson 1982: 11-12). Notably, this violence does need to actually be visited upon the bodies of the slaves. It just needs to exist as a latent possibility to maintain and create the subjectivity of humans against the abjectness of the slaves. Slavery thus illustrates one instance of the use of "binding violence" (Fradinger 2010: 1, 15-18), a series of violent acts used to create a community and to maintain its boundaries. As we shall see in the analyses of *Richard III*, *Frankenstein*, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, and *The Holy City*, disabled individual subjects are often associated with and subjected to gratuitous violence and this subjection – particularly in the case of Frankenstein's Creature, Clifford Chatterley and Chris McCool (albeit *ex negativo* in the latter case) is often presented as a necessary founding event for a communal structure either by some characters in the text (in which case the text as a whole tends to be critical of the endeavour) or by the text as a whole.[64]

The effectiveness of these acts of violence both rests on and helps maintain the slave's lack of "independent social existence" (Patterson 1982: 10). The dominant social system perceives them only as "extensions of their master's will" (Patterson 1982: 7), as embodied instruments. Hence, every time a slave acted or acts against their master – and thus questions their own role as the abjected foundation of the dominant conception of subjectivity – the hegemony as a whole acts

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[64] For a detailed critical examination of the inbraiding of violence with Enlightenment conceptions of freedom and individual subjectivity, see Fradinger 2010, Lowe 2015, and Hartman 1997 as well as the analysis of *Frankenstein* offered in chapter six of this book.

violently in defence of its very existence. Anything a master does with their slave, however, is seen as a legitimate extension of their authority, even if their perpetuating the same act against an individual subject considered a human being would have to lead to legal punishment. Saidiya Hartman illustrates this process by referencing the case of a female in antebellum Missouri (Hartman 1997: 82-86): the young woman had been repeatedly and brutally raped by her master and his foremen, and she ultimately killed her master. In keeping with her not being a full individual subject with the "right to have rights" (Arendt 2017: 614), the repeated rape – albeit undoubtedly a crime if perpetuated against a white woman of a certain class (a "lady") as Hartman notes (Hartman 1997: 83-84) (and at least a potential source of moral outrage and condescension if the woman were just white) – is not considered by the judge, either as a crime in its own right or as a factor in the murder of the slaveholder. The only factor that interests is the fact that the slave as an embodied object has acted against the subject wielding them (Hartman 1997: 86). Slaves have no subjectivity or value that the law needs to recognise or defend (Patterson 1982: 10). Hartman argues that the consistent use of the slur commonly used to label Black individual subjects in the antebellum South even in the legal documents surrounding the trial – where the discourse-practices constituting the law as a "neutral realm" (itself an ideological construct (Loick 2017b: 9 – 17, 15)) require language that does not reflect anything the dominant culture recognises as biased or prejudicial – indicates that the function of Black individual subjects as embodied objects was ideological common sense (Althusser 2010: 1368-1369) in the slaveholding antebellum South. Although the precise function of this discourse-practice differs from text to text in the analyses offered below, all the representations of contingently-embodied individual subjects as relative Others concur in their portrayal of societies in which social value is assigned. In *Frankenstein*, for example, Victor feels the need to ostracise the Creature – a claim deemed just by the narrator – and the Creature himself is ultimately denied any recourse to justice for the crimes others have committed against him even as he is implicitly judged for the very same crimes. And although the text as a whole recognises the validity of the Creature's claim to individual subjectivity and uses it to critique the variations of Enlightenment and Romantic subjectivity espoused by Victor Frankenstein, our analysis argues that it ultimately leaves the Creature in his othered position and presents his suicide as the only and logical consequence of his existence. Similar denials and self-contradictions affect the ideology espoused by the text as a whole in *Lady Chatterley's Lover,* respectively by the narrator-protagonist in *The Holy City*. And although we argue and demonstrate that the disabled individual subjects

represented in our selection of episodes of *Call the Midwife* (2011 – ongoing) are seen by the text as a whole as differently embodied and not as others, the narrative still contains traces of societal dishonouring: both disabled individual subjects are believed by some characters to be incapable of working for their living and hence of living by their own independent means. Even more strikingly, this belief in the radical difference of disabled individual subjects extends to their biological ability to have children, their legal and ethical ability to consent to sexual activity, and their social ability to form any kind of family unity. Taken together, this widespread social disbelief and dishonouring thus primarily centres on the ability of a disabled individual subjects to participate in the discourse-practices of natality.

Notably, complete "natal alienation" (Patterson 1982: 5) is the third attribute of social death: Alienated from all "rights" or claims of birth, [the slave] ceased to belong in his own right to any legitimate social order. All slaves experienced, at the very least, a secular excommunication. Not only was the slave denied all claims on, and obligation to, his parents and living blood relations, but, by extension, all such claims on his more remote ancestors and his descendants. He was truly a genealogical isolate. […] Slaves differed from human beings in that they were not allowed freely to […] inform their understanding of social reality with the inherited meanings of their natural forebears, or to anchor the living present with any conscious community of memory. That they reached back for the past, as they reached out for the related living, there can be no doubt. Unlike other persons, doing so meant struggling with and penetrating the iron curtain of the master, his community, his laws, his policemen or patrollers, and his heritage [general masculine pronoun form in original, my italics, MTW] (Patterson 1982: 5).
While we argue and illustrate that the natal alienation of disabled individual subjects in *Call the Midwife* is both only partial and problematised by the text as a whole, all the other texts analysed below also feature natal alienation whether from the social heritage of a character's parents (*Lady Chatterley's Lover*), the process of natal alienation as part of a general social ostracising (*Richard III*), or complete social and biological natal alienation that makes it impossible for contingently-embodied characters to integrate themselves (*The Holy City*) or to be integrated into a community (*Frankenstein)* that the texts as a whole portray as fitting for them at least as far as the ideological discourse-practices and self-image of these communities are concerned.

3.6 Natal Alienation, Natality and the Constitution of Communities in Black (Feminist) Studies and the Bio-politics of Roberto Esposito
Hence, using the concepts of natality and natal alienation for our analyses allows us to examine the role contingently-embodied individual subjects play in the active self-constitution of human communities; in addition, as the above discussion and our frequent use of examples from our text corpus illustrates, Patterson's reflections on the methods used to bring about and maintain social

death concretises the somewhat abstract concepts laid out in the theoretical reflections of Agamben and Foucault, with which we began this overview.

At the same time, using Patterson's concepts and the development they have undergone in the hands of various Black feminist theorists allows our own approach to the texts to be more open to the intersectional entanglements of contingent embodiment, racialisations, gender identities and other aspects of individual subjectivity. The passage from Patterson on natal alienation makes clear why an intersectional approach is necessary and particularly fruitful if one wants to explore gender identities and gender relations: as noted in my comment on the quoted passage, Patterson consistently uses "he" for all masters and all slaves. While this is in keeping with the rest of his study, this stylistic choice ignores the ways in which female slaves were doubly natally alienated.[65]

As Spillers and Hartman explain, firstly female slaves were not permitted to adopt or adapt the discourse-practices the hegemony associated with femininity and womanhood (Spillers 2003: 207) and neither were the relationships between slaves recognised as either families or marriages (Hartman 1997: 152-163). Where the children of white people were recognised and given the surname of their paternal family lines to signal their "claims on [their] […] ancestors and [their] descendants" (Patterson 1982: 5) as well as the emotional investments, material goods and the communal acceptance this natal recognition entails (Hartman 1997: 84), the children of slaves were never given any surname at all and only recognised as the children of their mothers (Spillers 2003: 227-229). This social practice ensured two things: firstly, it allowed slave owners could sell children away from the plantation on which they grew up, increasing their own profits while perpetuating the natal alienation of slaves and weakening communal ties between them (and thus minimising the risk of exposing the hegemony to an increased awareness of their own contingency as represented by slaves resisting their slave status and forming alternative communities). Even more importantly, Spillers and Hartman both argue, the natal alienation of slaves allowed white men to rape Black women without any fear of repercussions.

If they had raped a white woman of a certain class, they would have been obliged to natally acknowledge and incorporate both the women and the children into their own families, by way of marriage in one case and the giving of a surname in the other. To do so for the children that

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[65] The following passage uses „female" and „woman" as shorthand for „person with a uterus who is capable of conceiving and giving birth". In using it, no claims are being made as to the slaves' gender conceptions and gender identities.

resulted from intercourse with a Black woman would have meant acknowledging that Black individual subjects are human, could consent and that this consent was violated both during the sex act(s) from which the children resulted and in the larger context of slavery as an institution. Hence, the three dimensions of natal alienation for Black slave women - from their own bodies and their sexualities, their capacity to consent to a sexual relationship and to have that consent or its lack recognised as such, and the right to raise their own children in their own families and communities – highlights the complex entanglements between conceptions of community and femininity. As these discourse-practices are in turn inseparable from discourse-practices associated with masculinity and, respectively or, other gender identities, the analyses of the primary texts all highlight the ways in which historically changing conceptions of natality, natal alienation and gender affect the representation of disabled individual subjects in each text.

Featuring concepts taken from Patterson's approach to the question of slavery thus has a variety of benefits for the analysis of contingent embodiment and disability and the representation of both in conjunction with individual subjectivity: firstly, it concretises the mechanisms of othering European bio-politics for the most part approach from a universalist meta-perspective. Secondly, they acknowledge the ways in which Western bio-political discourse-practices throughout modernity are entangled with and the built on the subjection and subjugation of Black individual subjects, Indigenous subjects, and other people of colour. Thus, they open spaces within the subsequent analyses to discuss both the logic of racialisation generally and simultaneously the historically variable racialisation of whiteness in particular even in those texts where racialisation is not explicitly addressed through references to non-white characters. Conversely, in the one selection that explicitly features a Black individual subject as a central character – Marcus Otoyo in *The Holy City* – the concept of social death helps to explicate why Marcus' *Blackness* in particular is so important to the narrator-protagonist Chris McCool's self-image, on the one hand and the novel's thematic deep structure on the other. Overall, paying attention to discourse-practices and non-white theories of racialisation helps this project to engage both implicitly and explicitly with an interest in the complexities of how identities are constantly formed and reformed through an intersectional engagement with the world (Crenshaw 1989; 150-152, 154-157, 166-167; Crenshaw 1991; Hill Collins and Bilge 2016: 1-97). This engagement keeps in mind that individual subjectivities oscillate between and engage with a lot of identity vectors the following either ignores completely – age, engagement with technology, and the difference between rural and urban lifeworlds are just three omissions that come to mind – or minimises –

class being the most obvious choice here – in favour of our focus on the entanglement between embodiments, disability and gender and sexuality. In short, keeping in mind intersectional analyses to our objects of analyses reminds us of the contingency of our own arguments and conclusions.[66]

Finally, and most importantly, the insistence of many theories concerned with the bio-political ontology of slavery and Blackness that Black slaves attempted to build communities and to reach out both to their past and "the related living" (Patterson 1982: 5) – a phrase that resonates with a claim to humanity even in the face of nigh on absolute alienation and abjection – points to a duality at the heart of community. The European bio-political theories we built on and have discussed so far are fundamentally concerned with the dissolution and weakening of communal ties; only those inspired by post-colonial and Black, Indigenous and other individual subjects of colour also address the positive adoption and creation of community. However, as will be made clear in a moment, this ought not to be mistaken for a simple theoretical dichotomy, much less a romanticised dichotomy. What it does do is highlight that thinking about the constitution of community (in the broadest, least prescriptive sense of an assemblage of various individual subjects) offers one way to escape the "thanapolitical" (Wolfe 2013: 53) trajectory of the major thinkers of European bio-politics with their overwhelming interest in bio-political processes whose ultimate horizon is death, whether it be social or physical. Indeed, as we have seen, and the analyses below also illustrate further, in most cases it is both.

The second aspect that makes recent developments in the theorisation of the ontology of Blackness and the "afterlives of slavery" (Hartman 2007: 6) useful in the present context also renders the use of these concepts in the present project and any facile dichotomy or liberal teleology that ends in the perfect community and complete freedom contingent in turn. As indicated above, these theories build on Patterson's concept of social death and his remark that looking at slavery as a mechanism also entails recognising that "freedom" is a historical construct and not the ontological and teleological constant of (white) liberalism. Hartman, Wilderson, and others argue that slavery did not disappear with the last act of abolition and manumission, but that its structures and measures still influence and sustain the psychological structure, the "libidinal

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[66] For a critical engagement with some applications of the concept of intersectionality which tend to treat identity as conceptually similar to points that can be mapped on a graph and then presume that mapping these points can and ought to result in a complete account of an individual subject's identity, see, for instance Massumi (2002: 2-5); Puar (2007: 211 – 216, 213 – 215 and 2017a). While the dissertation on which this publication is based was being graded, I also became aware of the critical discussion of intersectionality in Wiegman (2012: 239-300) and Nash (2019).

economy" (Wilderson 2010: 7) of contemporary society. In Hartman's evocative phrase, the legally liberated slaves of 1865 were endowed with the "double bind of freedom" (Hartman 1997: 115): they were ostensibly "freed from repression" (Hartman 1997: 117), but they also remained "free of resources" (Hartman 1997: 117), so the system of repression could and does continue even after legal emancipation. Indeed, Hartman and Wilderson both argue, there is no way this could be otherwise.

> It is not simply that rights are inseparable from the entitlements of whiteness or that blacks should be recognised as legitimate rights bearers; rather the issue at hand is the way in which *the stipulation of abstract equality produces white entitlement and black subjection* in its promulgation of abstract equality (Hartman 1997: 116)

Hartman argues from a historical perspective that the republican ideals of Enlightenment liberalism depended on the structural position of the slave being occupied by someone for their deep-structural and affective coherence (Hartman 1997: 115-116) even after legal emancipation; hence, as she showcases through the experiences of Black freedpersons during American (First) Reconstruction, the mechanisms of slavery identified by Patterson are simply internalised into affective structures. "The whip" (Hartman 1997: 140) becomes "the will" (Hartman 1997: 140) in Hartman's evocative phrase. Wilderson also contends that the continued police violence that threatens Black communities in the United States in the present day continue the threats of gratuitous violence that maintained slavery in the antebellum South and continue to maintain Enlightenment conceptions of humanity and subjectivity today (Wilderson 2017: 18; Wilderson 2010: 19-23).[67]

For these critics, modern conceptions of subjectivity are all built on a fundamental Anti-Blackness. Hence, they argue, it is not possible for Black people to structurally create a different world built around these principles and proper abolition ultimately means to undo the world (Wilderson 2010: 22-23). In light of this, Wilderson and other theorists working on the ontology of Blackness argue it is impossible for Black people to form coalitions with whites or other ethnic minorities in other to gain rights in the present system. For, as these other groups are or can be recognised as human subjects and proper subjects with rights according to the logic of the (post-) Enlightenment subject, they structurally participate in its constitutive othering of and violence against Black people. In Wilderson's evocative and provocative phrase, other ethinic minorities –

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[67] Writing these words and revising these reflections in the summer of 2020, the death of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and other Black Americans at the hands of police and the resurgence of Black Lives Matter protests in their wake stand as further proof to the trenchancy of Wilderson's critique.

with the exception of Native Americans, who are also othered in the structural position of "Savages" (Wilderson 2010: 29) – are "junior partners" (Wilderson 2017: 21) in the system and benefit from its Anti-Blackness. Hence, these critics are fundamentally pessimistic as regards the possibility of anti-racist coalitions and describe their thinking as Afro-pessimism or "Black Nihilism" (Warren 2018: 9, 26 - 28).

In the context of the present thesis, the claims of Afro-Pessimism on the one hand act as a useful and cautionary corrective to our own claims regarding the racialisation of white disabled individual subjects and the possibility of exclusion that remains even in the inclusive vision of society and community our arguing for a conceptualisation of disability as a different embodiment among others espouses: does our adapting some mechanisms of social death to the analysis of contingent embodiment and disability echo the white liberal who looks at the enforced joviality of the slave coffle and finds himself unable to describe the horror of the situation without transposing it onto white people (Hartman 1997: 18-23)? I am aware of the contingency of my claims and their being articulated from a position of privilege and yet I must ask other theorists to problematise and improve (or replace) them in this instance.

In addition to problematising the theoretical framework as a whole, Afro-pessimism also helps to explain why the mechanisms of racialisation and othering used in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and *The Holy City* still employs motives and discourse-practices associated with Black chattel slavery despite their story events taken place almost a hundred and fifty years after slavery was abolished in the British Empire, respectively the novels being written a hundred years or even two hundred years later.

On the other hand, Afro-Pessimism itself showcases the problematic of bio-political approaches focused on the dissolution of communal ties: as Wilderson explains, the methodology and its theories are not meant to offer solutions or alternatives to the present system. Much like Agamben's theories, which imagine justice and just communities as something instigated by a singular event of messianic revolution (*sensu* Walter Benjamin (Benjamin 2017 [1920/1921?]: 59, 59 -64) located outside and beyond human political structures and thus result in fundamentally "apolitical politics and […] communities" (Marchart 2010: 237 – 238), Afro-Pessimisms critique is "so profound and foundational that it becomes almost impossible to glimpse the better alternative they argue for" (Glomb 2004b: 380). As we have illustrated in our discussion so far, this charge can to a greater or lesser extent be levelled at all mostly "thanapolitical" (Wolf 2013: 53) biopolitical theories we have discussed up to this point.

Since the present thesis builds on a conception of individual subjectivity that conceives of it as a negotiation between restrictive and enabling discourse-practices and the individual agential actualisation of them, it views critical biopolitics as primarily illustrative of the restrictive branch of bio-political discourse-practices. Our discussion of Patterson and Weheliye already hints at a potential source of a creative and generative counterweight: the entanglement between an individual subject's sense of their own natality and community.

As indicated above, natality describes an individual subject's sense of connection to both "the related living" (Patterson 1982: 5) and past and future generations of their family and community, respectively the recognition of this sense of belonging by a community. Following Augustine and his association of human natality with creativity – humans are born "so that something new enters the world" (Augustine qtd in Arendt 2016b [1967]: 20) – Hannah Arendt uses natality as an explicit counter to the Heideggerian conception of life as a "being-towards death". And as we have have seen above, various thinkers in Black Studies use the concept as a signifier of resistance, of life and a positive sense of belonging even under conditions of dehumanisation.

Similarly, the Italian philosopher Roberto Esposito uses community as one of the two pillars of his alternative approach to bio-politics meant to counter the negative bio-politics of Agamben and Foucault (Esposito 2008: 112-117). To counter the thanapolitical strain of biopolitical theory, Esposito begins by noting that such accounts of biopolitics and human communities all implicitly assume that human life as part of a community – Aristotelian *bios* – is defined solely by its difference from forms of life not organised in either a community or at the very least in *this particular* community (Esposito 2008: 45-46). From this basic observation follow two other premises central to both Esposito's thought and the analyses to follow: firstly, biopolitics are fundamentally concerned and entwined with issues of how a given community defines itself and thus ultimately with what community is (Esposito 2008: 46). Secondly, biopolitics as conceived by Agamben and Foucault is primarily concerned with the health and safety of a community, with keeping it safe from potentially lethal outside forces, which are considered to be "enemies" of a given community. Hence, they conceive of politics as primarily guided by a "dissociative" (Marchart 2010: 38) and antagonistic understanding of its underlying foundations, that is, they conceive of the political as a space guided by the fundamental dichotomy of "friend"/"enemy" relations.[68][69]

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[68] Considering the centrality of Carl Schmitt to Agamben's thought, this is hardly surprising (Murray 2010:62-63). Schmitt first introduced an explicit distinction between "politics" (Marchart 2010: 1) and "the political" (Marchart

In order to propose a complex view of biopolitics, Esposito begins by noting that this conception of community is immunitarian, as it seeks to protect the "friend" from the "enemy" (Esposito 2011: 171-172). Hence, it conjoins community with immunity; this juxtaposition in its turn highlights that the two terms are etymologically related: they both descend from Latin words that are similarly differentially conjoined: immunity has its root in *immunitas* – the negating prefix *im-* hinting at a lack of the thing that *communitas*, the root of community precisely shares in, as indicated by the prefix *com* – (meaning "with"). The morpheme *munitas* has its root in the word *munus*, which Esposito translates as "gift and office" (Esposito 2011: 5). To share in a community, according to Roman law, was to hold the gift of an office, to have something that is shared between people and can never be reduced to the possession of only one person. Esposito describes this metaphorically as "the gift that can never be returned" (Esposito 2011: 6). To be part of a community is thus to share it with others. In the words of another important theoretician of community, Jean-Luc Nancy: "Being is always "being-in-common" (Nancy 1991: 58).[70]

Conversely, *immunitas* means that which is unique to one individual subject, that which cannot or will not be shared in common. In Roman law, according to Esposito, *immunitas* describes a legal

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2010: 1) into political theory in 1923. For a more detailed discussion of Schmittian political theory, see Marchart (2010: 38-42, 190 – 194); Mouffe (2013: 137 – 138) and Mehring (2011: 20 – 58).

[69] The following discussion follows recent post-foundationalist discussions in political theory. At their core these theories seek to reformulate the social and the political as spaces of difference and interference in the Derridaen sense (Stäheli 2000: 11; Marchart 2010; Marchart 2013). In order to do so, they act on the following axiomatic assumptions: firstly, they argue that social formations cannot be explained by or logically derived from a single and uniform foundational principle (such as „God", „the Subject" or „History"), since all these foundations are contingent and thus can be disrupted by „traces"(Derrida 2004: 275) of the things they exclude or their own iterability as signs. However, contrary to some anti-foundationalist postmodern theorists, this does not result in any kind of stable social formation becoming completely impossible (as Jean Baudrillard claims (cf. Marchart 2010: 16, 220)). Hence, they adopt an post-foundationalist axiom that recognises the necessary contingency of social formations while also considering some form of foundation necessary to all social formations (Marchart 2013: 31 – 63, 59). Methodologically, these theories distinguish between the political and politics and examine the relations and interferences between the two terms. Politics describes the concrete social practices within a society, whereas the political describes the „quasi-transcendental" foundations (Marchart 2010: 61) and the processes of change that underlie the current concrete form and conception of politics (Marchart 2010: 61 – 67).

[70] On the surface, one might be tempted to read Nancy's statement as an assertion of community as a uniquely positive facet of life and hence as a re-emergence of Ferdinand Tönnies' utopian and Romantic ideal of *Gemeinschaft* and all the totalising and therefore excluding processes this entails (see Marchart (2013: 15 – 63 and *passim)*; and Nany (1991: 11) for a more detailed critique of Tönnies). However, Nancy describes „being-in-common" as an ontological factor of human life, the fact that no one watches themselves being born or dying and thus exists only in relation to other beings, irrespective of the shape of that relation (and also irrespective of whether these other beings are humans or animal other-than humans) (Nancy 1991: 5-7. 11).

exemption from public office – from *communitas* - granted to certain professions (for example, doctors). Hence, *immunitas* and *communitas* are mutually interdependent constituents of society and any social formation, according to this model. Communities also have to respond to the individual subjectivity of their new members, integrating them precisely by allowing them to flourish in immunitarian spaces. Simultaneously, and consequently, no individual subject can immunise themselves completely from community in this most basic sense of being-in-common as they cannot witness their own birth or death. Esposito thus conceives of communities as spaces or "spacings" (Fynsk 1991: xv) in which the modalities of communal being are constantly under negotiation. This quasi-transcendental model, in its turn, allows for the description of different actualised versions of community.[71] Esposito acknowledges that in its most extreme immunitarian version, the bio-politics of community have a strong tendency to collapse into an "autoimmune" (Esposito 2011: 17) mode and thanapolitically destroy both itself and those outside a given community – a tendency horrifically actualised in the politics of Nazi Germany (Esposito 2011: 128-133).

In light of the extremes to which autoimmune societies have gone, it is tempting to dissolve the intertwining of the two principles into an ethical hierarchy, aligning *immunitas* with evil and *communitas* with good. However, Esposito problematises this simplifying and problematic operation by giving the following example from human biology (Esposito 2011: 169-171): when an individual subject with a functioning uterus and reproductive system becomes pregnant, their body will begin developing antibodies around the end of the first trimester (around the fourth month of pregnancy). These antibodies then surround the developing fetus and protect it from other antibodies, also developed by the mother's body. This second group responds to the fact that a distinct organism has developed within the body and is drawing on its resources. They seek to dissolve this "parasitic organism" in the original organism. Keeping in mind that *communitas*, according to Esposito, is defined by that which cannot be assigned to any one individual subject and is dissolved between all those who move in a given social space (Esposito 2010: 7), these antibodies thus operate according to an extreme form of the communitarian principle, which seeks to take a life. Conversely, the immunitarian principle of the first group of antibodes seeks

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[71] For the sake of readability, the analyses that follow refer to the processes of spacing between *communitas* and *immunitas* as community, though they maintain a processual and post-foundational understanding of the term throughout. Each term will be used individually when the analyses wish to draw attention to the emphasised or neglected part of the process in a given text.

to protect a life by defending its individuality. Hence, this example shows that assigning some form of essentialised ethical valence to these two biopolitical principles is counterproductive. All ethical judgements of communitarian and immunitarian actions are instead highly context-sensitive.

Considering the dialogical conception of contingency, embodiment, and individual subjectivity presented as the cornerstones of the theoretical framework of this thesis so far, the principle of dialogism likewise guides the conception of bio-politics this dissertation follows. Each analysis references concepts from the dissociative and the generative branch of bio-political theory presented above with the focus shifting as needed. The analyses offered below illustrate that there tends be a preference for and focus on immunitarian discourse-practices when the embodied contingency of a disabled individual subject is othered; depending on the degree and ways in which this othering is relativised (respectively, in the case of *Call the Midwife*, replaced with an acknowledgement that all human embodiments are contingent), the disabled characteres are increasingly included and allowed to (potentially) participate equally in processes of subjectivisation and community formation, respectively reformation.

Overall, the theoretical reflections on, contingency, embodiment, individual subjectivities, agency, and biopolitics that constitute the foundation of this project attempt to develop a view of human individual subjectivity that allows for a broad range of interactions between embodiments, discursive conditions, and individual subjectivities. It seeks to go beyond mere binarisms while still acknowledging that violence and exclusions are a part of human life and very present in the lives of disabled and contingently embodied individual subjects. The account of individual subjectivities as entangled developed above is based on the that everything has some degree of agency and can participate in some social negotiations, no matter how marginal the hegemony may think both the negotiations and those who conduct them.

The following chapters analyse how the negotiation between forms of embodiment, various forms of entangled individual subjectivity and the awareness of contingency is staged and conducted in selected texts of English and Irish literature. To prepare the analyses that follow, the next chapter argues for a conception of literature as a "space of reflection" (Glomb 2004a: 46). According to this approach, literature engages with other discourse-practices circulating in society, modifies their claims according to its own discursive rules and thus offers its own contribution to interdiscursive debates. Literature thus serves as an example of a "specialised interdiscourse[]" (Glomb 2004a: 49-51; Link and Link-Heer 1990: 92 - 93) in society.

4. Textualised Bodies, Embodied Textualities: Literature as a cultural room of reflection on embodied contingency

4.1 Literary Texts As Sites of Reflexion On Embodiment and Disability

The previous three chapters have established the theoretical framework upon which the concept of embodied contingency is based. As has been shown, this framework draws primarily on three interrelated sources: The first of these is a historically sensitive reading of contingency as that which "is neither necessary nor impossible" (Butter 2013: 1), awareness of which may differ across time periods and which affects the epistemological and praxeological models circulating in a culture at various historical moments. The focus of this dissertation on modern (in the sense of post-medieval) cultural formations derives directly from Hans Blumenberg's argument that an increased awareness of contingency is one of the defining features of European modernity. Following on from the exploration of contingency as an epistemo-praxeological phenomenon, the second chapter explores the contingent nature of embodiment and the body as a site - where contingency is negotiated. Drawing on both recent work in the new feminist materialisms (Alaimo and Hekman 2008) and Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of the body (as developed in *The Phenomenology of Perception* (Merleau-Ponty 1974), the second chapter makes a two-fold, dialectical claim: it argues that an individual subject's experience of the world is shaped by the changing nature of his or her embodiment, which the person is only partly aware of and which they also cannot alter radically. Conversely, all individual engagements with the world are mediated (and thus co-shaped) by an individual subject's embodiment: for human individual subjects engaging with the world means negotiating (that is, both negotiating with and through) contingent embodiment (Merleau-Ponty 1974: 6 and *passim*). Hence, this dissertation concurs with theorists like Jane Bennett and Karen Barad, who argue that bodies have a "not-quite human capaciousness" (Bennett 2010: 3) to act and that this agency shapes the "onto-epistem-ological" (Barad 2007: 185) experience of individual subjects, thereby asking them to deal with the contingency that arises. This awareness of contingency is further increased, this dissertation argues, if the embodiment under consideration is disabled, deviating from the forms of embodiment normalised by cultural hegemonies. The third chapter of the theoretical frame addresses the role of individual subjects in negotiating cultural spaces. Echoing recent attempts to find a "third way" (Seel, qtd in Glomb 2004a: 18) between the omnipotent Enlightenment subject (Zima 2010: 94 - 115) and the heteronomy of classical post-modern theory, the present thesis adopts a creative model of individual subjectivity first formulated by Elizabeth Ermarth (Ermarth

2000) and more recently substantiated by Sarah Heinz (Heinz 2007: 112-117) and Philip Griffiths (Griffiths 2008: 37-47), among others: Ermarth argues that subjectivity in the discursive condition can be located in the actualisation of various discourse-practices by individual subjects, rather than being conceived of as something they do either in spite of cultural mores or under duress from the same forces (now conceived as supra-individual disembodied agents).[72] At the same time, Ermath's account makes it clear that an individual subject always needs various cultural models to which it can refer and on which it must draw to actualise forms of individual subjectivity. Hence, this dissertation conceives of individual subjectivity as a three-way negotiation between the materiality of a person's embodiment, the various discourse-practices and "subject cultures" (Reckwitz 2010) that circulate around them, offering virtual models of personhood to emulate and the individual actualisations a person makes of the possibilities offered by culture and their own bodies. In their turn, these choices have repercussions for both the subject cultures in which a person is enmeshed and (their experience of) the materiality of their bodies. Ultimately, the theoretical framework puts forth a model of embodied individual subjectivity as a space of constant and ever-changing negotiation, the ever-shifting form of which constantly challenges both individual subjects and cultures by exposing their contingency to varying degrees. This process is made particularly visible when cultures are asked to deal with the embodied contingency of disabilities, which bring both the materiality of human existence and the arbitrariness of cultural formations into starker relief than individual subjects whose embodiments are within the range declared "normal" and therefore unremarkable by the cultural hegemony (cf. Link 2013: 34). Hence, an analysis of literary and cultural representations of disabled individual subjects also offers a means of analysing how various media and the cultures in which they circulate deal with both disabled individual subjects in particular, respectively, how these disabled individual subjects deal with their own embodiments and the contingency inherent in the embodied nature of human existence in general.

The particular focus on literary representations in the analyses that follow arises from the cultural functions this thesis sees literature as enacting in various cultural contexts: it argues that literary forms (which include televised media in for the purposes of this dissertation) function as "spaces

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[72] For a more detailed and trenchant critique of postmodern conceptualisations that ascribe very little or no independent agency to individual subjects enmeshed in the discourse regimes they describe, see Zima (2010: 237 – 276, 365 - 430) and in particular Glomb (2016: 61-62).

of reflection" (Glomb 2004a: 46) in relation to other discourse-practices of a given culture.[73] The following pages elaborate on this concept and explore the methodological consequences of this definition for the analyses undertaken hereafter. What follows is a proposal for a functional understanding of literature, rather than a prescriptive definition. As Winfried Fluck explains, functional analyses of literary texts (as well as other cultural products) seek to offer plausible hypotheses for how a literary work interacts with other discourse-practices and for how it might be read and interpreted by individual subjects engaging with it (Fluck 2005: 31 - 33). Hence, functional analyses are based on hermeneutic models of readership and engagement rather than on empirical data, the usefulness of which for the analyses of literary texts is doubtful in any case unless the empirical study is based on a very large sample of readers, as Marion Gymnich and Ansgar Nünning observe (Gymnich and Nünning 2005: 5-6). The present thesis also assumes a functional and hermeneutic definition for two further, content-related reasons: firstly, a hermeneutical approach echoes the conceptualisation of contingency as a negotiation space and a negotiation process between necessity and impossibility, respectively virtuality and actuality, developed in chapter one above. Since the tripartite model of individual subjectivity also emphasises the interaction and the various interdependencies between its component parts, it follows that the theoretical premises of this project are hermeneutic in origin and thus structurally resemble and interact well with a functional model of literature. Furthermore, as Terry Eagleton notes, functional definitions of literature implicitly entail an increased awareness of cultural variation and historical change (Eagleton 2008: 9 - 11); they thus accord well the historicist component of the analyses that follow.

4.2 Literature as Specialised Interdiscourse

Having briefly established the reasons for preferring a functionalist definition of literature and hinted at the advantages of a hermeneutical approach in the present context, the rest of this chapter more closely examines the definition of literature as a space of reflection. At first glance, the metaphor makes it clear that literature is thought of as a space that is partly removed from more directly pragmatic discourse-practices in a culture, and Glomb emphasises this partial distance as a positive trait. It allows literature to become a space for experimentation, where the

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[73] In addition, this broad definition of literature also includes the new narrative medium of video games. It would be interesting to explore both how narratives in video games treat disabilities and how different embodiments change how players experience the narrative. For an overview of the burgeoning discipline of video game studies and the work on disability done within that discipline see Carr (2014).

implications of discourse-practices as well as their contingency can be explored without it immediately having (potentially negative) repercussions on existing social formations and human relationships (Glomb 2004a: 48-49). Conversely, this metaphor imagines literature as interacting with the wider socio-cultural context in a variety of ways (depending on both the intra-and extra-literary codes in which a given text participates). The German original makes this possibility of participation more explicit than the English translation: the word *Raum* is more ambiguous than *space*: while the latter is used to describe a more amorphous spatial area, the latter encompasses both the amorphousness of spatial concepts captured by the English term *space* and the most concrete form of a spatial arrangement: a room in a house.[74] Hence, the image itself already entails the assumption that literature is simultaneously a discrete entity and interacting with other semi-discrete entities making up a culture.

Glomb argues that literature constitutes an "interdiscursive" (Glomb 2004a: 49) discourse, adapting terminology first coined by Jürgen Link and Ursula Link-Heer (Link and Link-Heer 1990: 92). Building on Foucault's definition of discourses as cultural formations that regulate "forms of thinking and arguing" (Tietzmann 1989: 51, qtd in Butter 2007: 28), Link and Link-Heer assume that each specialised area of society has its own unique discourse system.[75] They also assert that these "specialised discourses" (Link and Link-Heer 1990: 92) culturally and linguistically map the increased specialisation of modern societies (Link and Link-Heer 1990: 94).[76] Ultimately, they argue that literary discourses are defined by their unique ability to take up elements of various specialised discourses and to "re-integrate" (Link and Link-Heer 1990: 94 - 96) various discourse elements through combining them in a literary text. Hence, literature is thus re-imagined as a cultural process of discursive mosaic-making on the parts of both the producers and the recipients (whether contemporary or future), with other specialised discourses providing material for the *tesserae* and the text itself (along with the intra-literary conventions (for example,

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[74] For a more detailed examination of various spatial concepts in English as well as their epistemic implications, see Cresswell (2004).

[75] Foucault's definition of discourse in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (Foucault 2013a: 33-112) has often been criticised for being too vague to use effectively as an analytical tool (Butter 2007: 28-29; Link and Link- Heer 1990: 89 - 91): The term describes an entity consisting of sequences, of signs, that are enouncements [*énoncés*], statements in conversation. (Foucault 2013a: 99 - 111). Hence, Michael Tietzmann's definition here functions as a concise short-hand for the baseline of discourse analysis.

[76] For a more detailed account of the increased specialisation of modern societies, see for example Niklas Luhmann (Luhmann 2015: 585 - 592).

generic and formal conventions) forming the model (itself also subject to potential re-adaptation) for the product.[77] The text with which readers engage then itself becomes part of the circulation process and may be adopted by other texts (or re-translated by recipients into other discursive-practical contexts) in its turn.

As a descriptive metaphor, the image of re-integration employed by Link and Link-Heer thus proves extremely fruitful for describing the role of literary discourses in "[t]the circulation of social energy" (Greenblatt 1988: 1). However, as used in the original article, the term is also explicitly prescriptive in intent: Link and Link-Heer argue that the re-integrative features of literature as a specialised interdiscourse allow for the partial re-integration of contrary or contradicting non-literary specialised discourses (Link and Link Heer 1990: 97). This statement has two implications, both of which are problematic and thus are not endorsed by the adoption of the term *interdiscourse* in the present context: firstly, it implicitly assumes that the increased specialisation of society is a problematic or even negative feature of post-medieval societies (this feature is also often associated with Marxist or Marx-inspired analyses of (social or individual) alienation (Marx 2015 [1844]: 85 - 92; Jaeggi 2016)). Hence, the ability to re-integrate specialised discourses in and through literary media (and their subsequent effects on the lives of readers) is subtly associated with the potential to overcome the fragmentation and alienation of society and hence the goals of a teleological (or indeed an eschatological) branch of Marxist philosophy and practice.[78] The present thesis eschews imposing an overarching narrative on the historical representation of embodied contingency and although the development of forms of representing disabled individual subjectivities from the focus on their absolute Otherness to a relative conception of Otherness and a representation as different embodiments among others may at first glance read like a liberal left-wing teleology of history, it is not meant as such. The following analyses instead aim to point out examples of residual forms retaining their power and presence in representations of disability even as other, seemingly more inclusive forms, gain

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[77] For a more detailed exploration of mosaic-making as an effective metaphor for (post-modern) literary forms (as well as contemporary literary theory), see Butter (2004: 369 - 370) and Heinz (2007: 194 – 195, 195, FN 165). The metaphor of *tesserae* for the using of discourse-practices is particularly suggestive because, as Stella Butter notes in her discussion of this art form, mosaics can be built from pieces of *tesserae* as well as from whole tiles (Butter 2004: 370). The image thus suggests that literary texts can selectively adopt whatever element they require from another discourse-practice without also having to adopt its wider context at the same time.

[78] For an observant critique of one model of unification (albeit here it concerns the philosophical conception of reason and rationality), see Wolfgang Welsch's critique of Jürgen Habermas' tripartite model of reason in Welsch (1996: 135 - 138).

dominance and emerge onto the cultural stage. In addition, the following analyses remain conscious of the productive tension the difference between the cultural and historical situatedness of the text can generate when confronted with that of its readers (including the author). Lastly, my own situation as a disabled individual subject who has the means to engage with the dominant society to a relatively large degree already results in my wishing for further inclusion, respectively in my wishing that other disabled individual subjects might likewise be included. But I do not mistake this wish for an a-historical universal; rather, I conceive of it as the product of specific historical formations and struggles, the results of which have to be maintained and changed through further engagement and struggles. This insight results in my belief that what I believe to be best (for me) at the present moment need not be so either for other individual subjects now or in future (it need not even be the best course from the vantage point of my future selves). Hence, the present thesis remains wary of the totalising implications of Link and Link-Heer regarding history.

Similarly, the fact that the article only mentions one potential role that literary discourses might play among other specialised discourses is also problematic and potentially misleading: as Hubert Zapf points out in his ecology of literature (Zapf 2002), there are at least three other roles literature might play in relation to other discourse-practices in a given culture. Briefly, a literary text could also easily affirm and support the hegemony of one discourse-practice over another by depicting its chosen subject as universally positive and as something worthy of emulation (Zapf 2002: 64). Secondly, it is possible for a text to critique another discourse-practice without also offering a re-integrative possibility of engagement or an alternative to it (Zapf 2002: 120). Additionally, Zapf also notes that the descriptive variations mentioned themselves reflect primarily the dominant functions adopted in various literary texts – thus leaving open the possibility of further differentiating the relationship of cultural discourses along axes of dominance and subversion. This interaction between dominant and potentially subversive meanings in a text is of particular interest in the present context because it offers a glimpse into how texts both formally encode contingency and how this coding then structures the audience's potential response (for example, through the "gaps" (used here in Wolfgang Iser's sense (Iser 1984: 283) readers encounter in a narrative).

Although the above elaborations on the complexity of the adaptation processes indicates how literature can be defined as a functional space simultaneously connected to *and* different from other discourse-practices in a culture, they remain implicit on the factors involved in the

processes of adaptation. However, the descriptor used for the axiomatic assumption regarding the general function of literary media in human cultures provides a means to examine the issue of how representations in literary media work: The second component of the term uses "reflexion" (Glomb 2004a: 46) to describe the function of the spaces created by literature. Both in German and in English, reflection is an ambiguous term that describes both the process of thinking about an issue ("reflection | definition of reflection in English by Oxford dictionaries" website, meaning 1a) or the process of mirroring another object or the actions of another person.

4.3 Literature as a Product Of and Participant In Cultural Negotiation: Wolfgang Iser's Anthropology of Literature and Paul Ricoeur's Cycle of Mimesis

Following recent developments in neuroscience (particularly, the study of empathy and the role of mirror neurons (Breithaupt 2012: 36 - 52)) and philosophy (Döring 2009: 14-15 and *passim*), understanding mental processes as negotiations has become an increasingly accepted way of conceptualising how humanity engages with the world. Apart from the phenomenological foundations of this view (discussed in chapter two above), these more recent developments also provide empirical support for a model of thought first systematised by the American pragmatist philosopher George Herbert Mead: he argues that human self-awareness (and thus the ability to reflect upon oneself and the world) is eminently a social process and that it is characterised by a dialogic and hermeneutic structure of an individual subject's (socially-mediated) self-perception (Aboulafia 2016). According to Mead, when an individual subject reflects on their own actions, they separate themselves into a "subject-I" (Aboulafia 2016) (that reflects on something) and an "object-I" (Aboulafia 2016) (whose actions prompt reflection). The act of reflection thus creates a potentially dialogic set-up, since the subject-I is shaped by an individual subject's prior experiences, which were made by it before it split itself to reflect on its actions; this enables the object-I to actively influence the act of reflection. Conversely, the subject-I will once again "merge" (to stay within the epistemic fiction created by Mead for the sake of modelling the process) with its object and the factors that guided the reflection (as well as its results) then shape an individual subject's actions thereafter. As the above examples indicate, it is comparatively easy to see the mental process of reflection as a dialogic process.[79] The same holds true for reflection as a physical process: if one applies Jane Bennett's concept of "vital materiality"

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[79] For a more detailed account of human mental processes as dialogically structured (especially in the context of memory and remembering), see Glomb (1997: 16 - 26), and Birke (2008).

(Bennett 2010: 6), then mirrors and their differing materialities (their shape, the state of the surface, the material used to create said surface etc.) become agents in the dialogic process of reflection. Hence, reading the term as a metaphor for a process that is both material and epistemological in the context of all human lifeworlds   strengthens the processual conceptualisation of literary spaces hinted at in the ambiguous usage of *Raum* explicated above. In addition, it also provides a structural lens for the further contexts the term reflection evokes, in particular the debates around - mimesis and what it means for the function of literature and its operations. Of particular interest in the present context is Ricoeur's re-consolidating intervention in this debate, which articulates a hermeneutic answer to the charge voiced by some prominent deconstructivist thinkers that any search for meaning constitutes a logocentric imposition on the free-flowing *différance* of the text (Derrida 2004: 290). At the same time, Ricoeur's hermeneutics take into account the thrust of the deconstructivist argument: the model does not assume that there is a singular meaning buried in a text that simply needs to be uncovered through interpretation. Neither does it argue that the text is of necessity interested in communicating a meaning to the readers, which is the central premise of Gadamerian hermeneutics.

Instead, Paul Ricoeur's three cycles of mimesis combines a wide variety of theoretical approaches to offer a descriptivist account that circumvents the more prescriptivist interventions that have characterised parts of the debate ever since Plato first instigated the debate. Ricoeur's concept is built on a combination of the Aristotelian view and the Kantian and post-Kantian expansion thereof:[80] Ricoeur, like Aristotle in his *Poetics* (Aristoteles 1982: 31, 33), argues that the mimetic act at the heart of literature is an expression of humanity's desire and need to act and thereby to shape reality in some fashion. Of particular interest in the context of this project is Aristotle's praise of poets: in the *Poetics*: he argues that what distinguishes poets from historians is that the latter "describe what has happened" (Aristoteles 1982: 29), while the former describe what "could happen" (Aristoteles 1982: 29). Thus, in this account, poets are viewed as shapers of a contingent space of possibility, and contingency is here used to describe a creative resource. This creative resource is implicitly tied to societal welfare when Aristotle then argues that the function of good literature (at least in the dramatic arts) is to engender *catharsis*, the affective cleansing of a society that happens at the end of a play. For Aristotle, the contingent shaping of society thus helps keep society clean and affectively healthy, (Aristoteles 1982: 19) (thus

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[80] The following observations and summary are based on the following sources: Butter (2007: 43-49), Aristoteles 1982, Ricoeur 1988 and Anderson 1991.

enabling the *polis* to function smoothly, as the citizenry will not be adversely affected by fear in their decision-making (cf. Reinhard-Lupton 2005: 2-5; Fradinger 2010).

Ricoeur's definition of mimesis is less prescriptive than the Aristotelian one. As Pamela S Anderson explains, here mimesis describes "humanity's natural mode of constructing and inhabiting the universe" (Anderson 1991: 207). In his further elaborations, Ricoeur distinguishes three cycles of mimesis, all of which are activated in a literary text (Ricoeur 1988: 121). Each of these cycles is activated in an individual literary text both consecutively and simultaneously.[81] When looking at them consecutively, we can thus also identify various different focal points in a given text. *Mimesis I* (also called prefiguration by Ricoeur (Ricoeur 1988: 121) describes the selection and activation of various "symbolic, structural and temporal resources" (Anderson 1991: 209) that are active in a cultural system. As Anderson elaborates, *mimesis I* is the literary function that mostly covers the mimetic or referential function of literature: it asks which elements of a cultural system are referenced and reflected (respectively, reflected *on*) in a literary text. Additionally, it also takes into account the expressive function of literature, as the selection of and the emphasis placed on certain elements indicates what meaning a text wishes to convey (or conversely suppress) Notably, Ricoeur's use of the term figuration for all three of these forms of mimesis always acknowledges that they are all constantly enmeshed in processes of narrativisation, even when they seem to be reified facts: the French word *figuration* has echoes of the French *figure*, a literary device or form. Hence, all forms of culture are seen as both a passive product of and an active agent in processes of cultural transformation.

This co-existence of passivity and activity is carried over into Ricoeur's definition of *mimesis II* and *III*. *Mimesis II* (or configuration) describes the processes of arranging the materials prefigured through *mimesis I* (Ricoeur 1988: 121). For the purposes of configuration, however, the text is treated as largely autonomous – while the structures discussed above may guide the arrangement of elements (Ricoeur: 1988: 121), they do not determine them wholesale, making each text unique in arrangement and structure. Literary texts, according to this theory, are thus similar to Ermarth's conception of individual subjectivity: it is the "sequence" (Ermarth 2000: 412) of materials that makes both unique, rather than a creation of elements out of some mythical *ex nihilo*. At the same time, however, these elements can take on meanings wholly different from

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[81] Due to Ricoeur's research focus on the representation of time in narrative (Ricoeur 1984, Ricoeur 1986, Ricoeur 1988), he is particularly interested in the correlation between differences in the arrangement of these elements on the plot and story levels (Anderson 1991: 213 -. 214). The account given here has a different focus, explained below.

the meanings they have in other societal contexts. They become "signs for something else, [an attribute or context] that they do not possess, but which becomes imaginable through the use of these [particular] signs" (Iser 1993: 38), and these signs and their relations of signification are unique to each literary text.

As the arrangement of elements partly influences how a work is received (and what it is understood to express by an audience), we can say that in the space of *mimesis II*, three of Jacobson's speech functions come into play simultaneously: the expressive, poetic, and interpretive functions. Anderson also supplies the observation that in looking at *mimesis II*, a text is treated for a time as an "autonomous" (Anderson 1991: 209) entity. Considering the role played by both the elements assimilated through *mimesis I* and the shaping impulses of the readers it appeals to through *mimesis III,* the present thesis modifies this reading slightly. It argues that literary texts, conceptualised as spaces of reflection, are characterised by simultaneously being autonomously heteronomous and heteronomously autonomous. That is, they are neither ever wholly independent from either the existence of cultural codes that they modify or the presence of an audience that decodes them nor wholly determined by either of these extra-textual forces. Hence, the autonomy of a literary text is contingent, rather than absolute. Considering that contingency is thus inscribed into the empty signifier of "literature" to some degree, this theory provides a starting point for exploring the function of contingency in concrete literary texts in the analyses that follow.

In the paragraph above, we have hinted at the role played by an audience in the function (and functioning) of a text. The formulation chosen by me emphasised their active role as "decoders" of a text, but Ricoeur emphasises that, once again, the reconfiguration of a text by a reader is both an active doing and a passive receiving (Ricoeur 1988: 167, qtd in Anderson 1991: 209):

A new element enriching poetics arises here out of an aesthetics...if we restore to the term ,aesthetic' the full range of meaning of the Greek word *aisthesis* and if we grant to it the task of exploring the multiple ways in which a work, in acting on a reader, affects that reader. This being-affected has the noteworthy quality of combining in an experience of a particular type passivity and activity [ellipsis in original, MTW].

Furthermore, since the Greek word *aisthesis* also includes sensual experience and not just intellectual analysis, Ricoeur's concept of the effects of texts on readers indicates how a literary text can model and modify how members of the audience experience their bodies and the world and how they interact with both. Hence, Ricoeur follows Kant's view in the *Critique of Judgement* that art is valuable in part because it offers spaces for experimenting with subjective experiences (Kant 2010: 447). Kant's own account of this function of artistic spaces still has a

prescriptive component: art is labelled a true artistic work when the insights it generates aid the rational assessment of the world by the audience (Kant 2010: 442-443). Ricoeur agrees with Kant that art influences an audience's assessment of the world and so does this dissertation. But neither subscribes to a prescriptivist narrowing of the pragmatic function covered by *mimesis III* or reconfiguration to only a rational assessment of the world that all texts should enable. Instead the following analyses argue for a genre-and context-sensitive reading of the response modalities of each text as well as of some consequences an actualisation of these possibilities might have, both for a potential audience contemporary to the text's initial writing or staging and a present-day audience. The following analyses thus aim to offer context-aware readings of a text that primarily focuses on Ricoeur's *mimesis III* or, more precisely, on the complex and contingent interaction of the potential pragmatics of a text with its form and context. It derives in part from the central theoretical premise of this thesis that human pragmatics are informed by humanity's contingent embodiment. Hence, it seems logical to assume that the pragmatic function of literature must also engage with embodiment and that these engagements will be particularly prominent when divergent embodiments form a significant part of the events represented or the themes addressed.

This focus on the pragmatic function however raises one serious question that needs to be clarified briefly before we can proceed: recall that we argued at the beginning of this chapter that a functional conceptualisation of literature as a textual form was to be preferred in the context of this dissertation partly because it is very difficult to gain significant empirical data on the meanings readers assign to literature. Keeping this in mind, every time the following analyses speak of "readers" or "members of the audience" (or for that matter, use the term "author" or the author's name), this is to be understood as a linguistic short-hand meant to keep the text readable. Both usages refer to textual functions, and only implicitly to the extra-textual individual subjects involved in the actualisations of a text: following Wolfgang Iser, they have been labelled "implied author" (Nünning 2008: 42 - 43) and "implied reader" (Winkgens 2008a: 419-420), respectively. The former term describes the structures a text implements to create the impression of a specific meaning in a reader's mind; these structures may problematise statements made by narrators (in texts with epic components) or characters, as well as support them. In order to emphasise their being a textual function, the analyses that follow primarily speak of "the text as a whole" rather than the implied author.

The act of reading, conversely, is conceptualised as the actualisation of virtual structures latent in a text (Iser 1984: 175 - 177). These analyses focus on how a text structures the reading

experience and what assumptions it makes regarding what the "ideal reader" should know, concentrate on, and (particularly interesting for a project interested in the representation of contingency) ignore. In order to emphasise the contingency of these structures, the chapters that follow highlight ways in which these structures may be read against the grain and thus how – alternatives (individual or social) to the propagated view may be explored in a text.

Keeping in mind the above argument for seeing literary texts as complex spaces of reflection, the next chapter explores how Shakespearean theatre put the embodied contingency of Elizabethan political theology on display and explores its contingency by making an alienated hunchback its temporary centre.

Textual Analyses

5. "Unfinished, Scarce Half Made Up" – *Richard III* and the Contingency of Early Modern Masculinities and Political Theologies

5.1. Enacting Embodiment – Drama and the Representation Of Embodied Contingency In Early Modern England

The end of the first chapter of the theoretical framework of this dissertation briefly discusses the connection between a heightened awareness of contingency and modernity. To re-iterate, Hans Blumenberg has convincingly argued that an increased awareness of contingency is one of the major markers of difference between ancient and medieval conceptualisations of the world on the one hand and modern ones on the other (Makropoulos 2004: 376). According to Blumenberg, the former periods of history minimised awareness of contingency by referring to a concept outside the world itself that guaranteed its purpose and order, even when this purpose and this order contradicted human perception of the world and human conceptualisation of these terms. (Blumenberg 2014: 18). Using terminology derived from Jacques Derrida's critique of logocentrism, we might thus describe the Greek ideal of the *cosmos*, the well-ordered universe, respectively the Christian idea of God (whether in the form of a personified deity or the Scholastic idea of the first cause) as "transcendental signified[s]" (Derrida 2016 [1967]: 21) that stabilise both metaphysical as well as cultural models of order, presenting them as and thereby defining cultural models of non-contingent necessity.[82]

With the advent of modernity, Blumenberg continues, these mechanisms of stabilisation either gradually fall away entirely or dwindle from their former near universal status to one means of dealing with contingency among others. However, as the need to deal with various forms of contingency both practically and epistemologically remains, various alternative discourse-practices seek to fulfil the same stabilising function: as discussed above, Andreas Reckwitz argues convincingly that all models of subjectivity that have reached hegemony since the eighteenth century present themselves as universally applicable to humanity, for example (Reckwitz 2010: 89, 97).

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[82] Even so, the above statements and the cultural formations they describe are themselves contingent. In the case of Greek classical cosmology, for example, various mystery cults circumvented and problematised them the hegemonic conceptualisation of necessity propagated by more widespread discourse-practices (Burkert 1987: 276 - 278).

While the present thesis concurs with both Blumenberg's assessment that the awareness of contingency has increased since the eighteenth century and the resultant focus of subsequent scholars on cultural developments since that period (Makropoulos 1997: *passim*), it also wishes to look past this scholarly consensus to a degree and analyse how this awareness of contingency begins to gain momentum, or rather how this process is presented, evaluated, contextualised, and dealt with in Shakespeare's *Richard III*. As this play is centrally concerned with the embodiment of a disabled masculine subject, it illustrates how disabled embodiments function as sites of negotiation of contingency and cultural change. Furthermore, the following analysis also showcases how forms of embodiment intertwine with conceptions of gender identity and subjectivity more generally. Lastly, the generic framework in which the play operates also supports the extended thematisation and problematisation of embodiment, contingency, and the intersection between these categories as well as questions of power, political structures and community formation.

In order to substantiate this last claim, we need to briefly examine the generic context of *Richard III*.[83] At first glance, the fact we are dealing with a dramatic text and hence "a text actualised in performance" (Pfister 2001: 25) might seem little more than a theoretical triviality. Combining this with the defining features of the dramatic textual genre as defined by Pfister, however, yields the insight that dramatic performances are well-suited to representing the intertwining of mediated representation, phenomenological experience, and actualised embodied discourse-practices postulated and developed theoretically in chapters two and three above. According to Pfister, theatrical performance is experienced as a sequence of events that cannot be repeated in exactly the same way an indefinite number of times (Pfister 2001: 63). Hence, while the arrangement of scenes can problematise phenomenological experience of time and space and point the audience to an understanding of how discourses and practices intertwine in complex ways to create social reality, the sequential nature of the action in the scene (that is, actions are performed one after the other, even when the plot of the play assigns non-sequential meaning to

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[83] Since a detailed examination of current debates around the meaning and scope of the concept *genre* lies well outside the scope of this dissertation, all subsequent uses of the term rely on the following functional working definition, which is based on the detailed discussion in Heinz (2007:55-71) and Fish 2018. Genres are a means to classify texts and to define how a given "interpretive community" (Fish 2018: 1899) reads and decodes a text's signal structure. This community-based definition may be grounded in either formal or content-based features or arise from a combination of these. Genres thus provide a basis for hermeneutical pre-conceptions (*Vor-Urteile*) while themselves remaining subject to historical and cultural change.

these actions at the same time) simultaneously affirms the part played by the information humans gain through their senses in the construction (and maintenance) of ways and means to navigate and interact with the world around us, whether human or non-human.

Secondly, drama emphasises the importance of human embodiment to all forms of cultural interaction because its genre conventions (including the spatial conventions of theatre that mark off the stage), such as the fourth wall, draw audience attention to the simultaneous difference and similarity between the embodiment of actors and the embodiment of the characters they portray: indeed, even when a given performance weakens the fourth wall by addressing the audience directly (or even including them in the onstage action), events like this , generally still distinguish functionally between actors and audience members as well as actors and characters, thus maintaining the fourth wall *ex negativo*. Acting as a social role in a cultural context, whether performed by professional or amateur actors (say, audience members invited on to act during a happening) is defined by the ends to which these individual subjects use their embodiment: they lend their bodies to the characters they play and usually that lending process is signalled to an observer in some fashion. Hence, in addition to perceiving the close relationship between embodiment and (socially comprehensible) action more directly than in prose or poetic texts,(which usually portray embodiments in a more consciously mediated fashion) theatre audiences can more immediately observe bodies in the process of becoming social signs. Adopting Maurice Merleau-Ponty's model of embodiment referenced in chapter two above, drama as a genre thus thematises the body as a space of negotiation between sensory experience and representational systems (Merleau-Ponty 1974: 211). Unlike prose or poetic texts, we argue, drama foregrounds the sensory parts of the process rather than its more representational and conceptual elements.[84]

Thus, actors and their bodies become their characters and bodies (the same holds true for the material embodiment of objects used as stage props):_ both transform and change to take on additional or alternative significations. When this process of "bodies being taken for signs" (to adapt a famous quote regarding signification from *The Tempest*) is disrupted, it potentially problematises cultural mechanisms that enable us to read bodies, thus making audience members

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[84]. Following Pfister's excursus on the nature of film as a mixed genre between theatre and prose (Pfister 2001: 47 - 48), we argue that film also takes up a mediating position between a representation of embodiment that uses phenomenological experience as its starting point (as drama tends to do) and one that starts from conceptual frameworks and symbolic systems (as we contend prose and poetic works do).

(more) aware of the process by making it visible, observable and explicit. Differences between an actor's embodiment and the way they enact the embodiment of a particular role , whether they are made explicit (as in Brechtian epic theatre) or remain implicit (when actors adopt certain mannerisms for their characters that their non-acting selves do not employ) thus potentially sensitivise audiences to the symbolic functions bodies and embodiment take on during social interaction.

The play *Richard III* dramatises this connection between acting in society, acting on stage, and its symbolic en-and decoding in a variety of ways. For example, in order to convince the mayor and free citizenry of London that his imprisonment of Hastings (as well as his subsequent claim to the throne) is both just and lawful, Richard instructs his associate Buckingham to adopt a specific bodily habitus:

"[…] [C]ousin, canst thou quake and change thy colour,
Murder thy breath in the middle of a word,
And then begin again, and stop again,
As if thou wert distraught and mad with terror?" (*Richard III* 2009: 280 - 281, 3.5.1-4) [85]

Notably, none of these instructions address   any kind of verbal communication or aspects of bodily habitus generally considered consciously controllable; on the contrary, Richard's instructions require a complex and precise control and active interference with aspects of human bodily habitus that are relatively hard to consciously control (breathing and the amount of blood circulating in the face). This being the case, pre- and unconscious physical responses like these generally culturally function as unambiguous signifiers of an individual subject's emotional state. These physical responses are treated as straightforward and unambiguous social signs. Their appearance in situations of high emotional tension (such as Richard and Buckingham claiming to be under attack from antagonistic political factions for being concerned with the safety of the realm (R3, 3.5.42 – 46)) thus suggests to most people that the claims put forward by the individual subject showing these kinds of reactions are both truthful and accurate.

Thus, Richard's ability to describe the bodily reaction needed to evoke a specific emotional reading in their future onstage audience highlights his awareness of societal reading of the body and his ability to manipulate social conventions to his own (duplicitous and malignant) ends. Additionally, as these kinds of social conventions usually form part of a pre- or subconscious

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[85] All subsequent references to the text of the play use the edition edited by James R. Siemon for the Arden Third Series, employing the abbreviation "R.3" followed by the appropriate act, scene and line numbers. In case other plays are referenced, they use the standardised abbreviation for the p in question and reference the single-volume edition of the play in the Arden Third Series unless otherwise noted.

social habitus that individual subjects are often only partly able to consciously reflect on and explain (Bourdieu 2012: 277-278), Richard's awareness also   emphasises the degree to which he stands outside the societal norms that govern early modern England. Richard occupies a position both inside the social system and outside it and is thus not unlike an anthropologist who examines a culture as an observer-participant.[86]

In the context of early modern culture, however, the scene has more sinister connotations: the first political tract to explicitly identify non-verbal bodily signals as important social and political currency for a successful (Renaissance) rule was Niccolò Machiavelli in his book *The Prince*. Famously, Machiavellì argues that "anyone compelled to choose [between inspiring love or fear in others, MTW] will find greater security in being feared than in being loved." (Machiavelli 1984 [1532]: 27). In the context of Elizabethan drama and the anti-Catholic discourse popular in Protestant countries of the time, the Florentine's precepts were interpreted as further proof of Catholic brutality and tyranny. This view coalesced in the English stage figure of the machiavel, who represents the ability to manipulate society's norms for evil ends and personal gain (Siemon 2009: 8-9). In the third part of *Henry VI*, Richard explicitly relates his own newly-awakened desire for the crown to Machiavelli and the machiavel by associating his tactics with Machivellì's emotional politics. Furthermore, Richard claims superiority to both the Florentine and the stage trope: "I'll wet my cheeks with artificial tears/ […] / And send the murderous machiavel to school" (3H6. 3.2.184; 193). The fact that Richard successfully manages to manipulate both the mayor in the scene in *Richard III* with which we began this analysis and other characters in previous scenes of that play(most notably in the present context, the now-beheaded Lord Hastings, who felt safe in his position because he believed Richard incapable of hiding his emotions (R3, 3.4.52-54)) thus highlights again the nefarious manipulations the character engages in and as the danger this poses to England's political and social order according to the structural logic of the text. Furthermore, the fact that up to this point in the play, no one has managed to successfully oppose Richard's stratagems removes the character even further from

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[86] Traditionally, ethnographers since Bronislaw Malinowski use the term "participant-observer" to describe the ideal subject position of an ethnographer engaging in field work (cf. Gottowik 2004: 158). Rather than standing apart from the indigenous populations they study, ethnographers engage with the peoples and cultures and their discourse-practices as equals while remaining aware of their own cultural location (Geertz 2000: 70). However, as Richard both wants to and is portrayed as standing apart from society when participating in it in the play, his position is exclusive, rather than inclusive, and so inverts the logic of Malinowski's term. To reflect this, the terms of the expression have also been flipped in the above sentence.

the bounds of socially accepted and expected behaviour; thus, *Richard III* at first glance firmly positions the protagonist outside early modern society and assigns him the position of absolute Other.

5.2. Richard of Gloucester As Catalyst and Prism Of an Increased Awareness of Contingency In Social and Political Structures

Before examining how Richard is assigned his position by the structure of the play, respectively how this position is maintained, we briefly return to the meta-theatrical content of the scene at the gates. For, upon hearing Richard's instructions, Buckingham does not deny any skill at deception – as we might perhaps assume if Richard were as unique as the above analysis implies. Rather, he boldly asserts that he "can counterfeit the deep tragedian/[…]/ And both [=ghastly looks and enforced smiles, MTW] are ready in their offices,/at any time to grace [his] stratagems" (R3. 3.5.5; 3.5.10-11). Hence, Buckingham possesses the same skill set as the protagonist, notably without also sharing Richard's physical disability. At this point, the symbolic economy of the body the scene has so far treated as axiomatic wavers. So far, the play and our analysis (as well as the main character himself (R3.1.1.28)) assume that his disabled embodiment is the reason for Richard's skill at manipulation and villainous attitude. Simultaneously, the reverse of this logic means that non-disabled individual subjects do not have access to Richard's skills at observation and manipulation. Their position – safe in the centre of a community – does not require them to manipulate their position within it. These two ideological arguments are in turn sustained by the ideological assumption that an individual subject's ethics and attitude towards the world is accurately reflected – and legible – on the surface of their bodies. In short, the ideological common sense of early modern England assumes that a body mirrors the soul it houses, that an individual subject's embodiment signifiers accurately their role in society, and that this society in turn corresponds to the order of the heavenly kingdom and a just world. In Foucault's phrase, this order is built on the belief that microcosm and worldly life always reflect the macrocosm and the eternal transcendence of God (Foucault 1974: 62 – 63). Clearly, these social metaphysics minimise awareness of epistemological contingency.

But if neither good nor ill intent can be read with any certainty on the outward appearance of a person – as is the case if Buckingham can simultaneously shape his embodiment into that of a loyal subject (R3, 3.5. 42 - 43) and inwardly be a traitor to the king- , then social order (up to and including the feudal order of the kingdom) can no longer be fixed through reference to an immutable referent, such as God. Instead, human actions in their individual variation are the only

source of a viable and changeable truth. In other words, the medieval social order is slowly giving way to a more modern arrangement (Glomb 1997: 6).

At the same time, Buckingham's choice of words illustrates that the old, medieval symbolic systems with their assumption of a mirroring of macro- and microcosm (Foucault 1974: 62 -63) still holds social currency: While the verb *counterfeit* functions as a synonym for acting in a theatrical sense in the cited context and in early modern English (R3. 3.5.5.n) more generally, it also describes the forging of goods or general acts of pretence ("counterfeit | definition of counterfeit in English by Oxford dictionaries" website, verb, meanings 1 and 1.1). It has been current in English in both meanings since the fourteenth century, so both would have been available to Elizabethan audiences ("counterfeit | Origin and meaning of counterfeit by Online Etymology Dictionary" website). Buckingham's statement closely juxtaposes the idea of forgery with a title given to professional actors at the time. As their actions are what the duke wishes to counterfeit, his phrasing implicitly echoes well-known critics of the theatres in the 1590s. These often argued that theatre led audiences away from the reality and rules of a divinely-created world by allowing them to engage in a pretend world which flouted God's decrees by allowing people to assume roles to which they had no access in their socially-stratified ordinary life (Montrose 1995: 20).[87] This imaginary access was perceived as particularly dangerous because humanist thinkers (adopting a line of thinking found in Aristotle's *Poetics* (Aristoteles 1982: 29)) argued that that merit of literary engagements and the imagination lay in their ability to imagine the world as it might be rather than merely describing its current state (Sidney 2012 [1580-1581/1595]: 1055). They thus associate literary genres explicitly with the ability to increase one's awareness of contingency and to increase one's individual agency thereby. In the minds of some political officials, this awareness and ability to act on contingency posed the risk of rebellion and civil war, something the existing social structures had been explicitly instituted to contain as Louis Montrose notes (Montrose 1995: 20). In using the word counterfeit Buckingham initially affirms this belief: like an actor, he and Richard fake the behaviour of honest people who are shocked by the actions of one whom they believed their ally. Furthermore, they do so with the ultimate aim to make Richard king, deliberately disrupting the line of succession and killing both former allies (as in this scene) and innocents (R3, 4.3.36 – 39) to achieve that goal. Thus, Richard

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[87] Apart from that, theatres were seen as spaces of licentiousness and sin because they were located in places that lay outside the – often strict – moral jurisdiction of the mayors and guilds of London, in the so-called "liberties" (Mullaney 1988: 54; Montrose 1995: 21 – 22).

and Buckingham perfectly exemplify the actions of actors (both stage and pretend) and their destructive influence on the social order.

The above reading is however problematised by the second meaning of *counterfeit*. As noted above, the word is commonly used to describe the forging of material goods specifically, most often currency. As the minting of coins was a royal privilege in early modern England, the term again metaphorically points to Richard's goal of fraudulently assuming royal power. However, the metaphorical space opened up by Buckingham's choice of words also problematises the social rules seemingly affirmed by our analysis up to this point. Counterfeit goods can only circulate in a society willing to buy them, that is, potential buyers must take them for real goods. Applying this observation to Richard's and Buckingham's elaborate social charade, leads us to the conclusion that other people who act by the rules of society and employ its codes for reading bodies are as much to blame as the two successful actors. And indeed, the play confirms this reading throughout.

During the events surrounding the execution of Lord Hastings, the audience can see all strata of society who influenced politics in England being successfully duped by Richard and Buckingham: Richard accuses Hastings of protecting a witch, who has cursed his arm, forcing it to wither in the context of a meeting of the Privy Council, the highest authority in medieval and early modern England save the monarch. Hence, it is an assembly of the highest lords and bishops in the land. Richard manoeuvres Hastings into the position of outsider, traitor and supporter of witches – the absolute Other – by appealing to direct (that is, unmediated and seemingly straightforwardly accessible) phenomenological experience: "Then be your eyes the witness of their evil" (R3.3.5.69). Simultaneously, this statement assigns the role of witnesses to all the other lords present. They become people whose judgement can be trusted directly and without need for interpretive deliberation.[88] Richard himself takes on the role of the wronged righteous party whose uncompromising willingness to have their body examined by a third party indicates their blamelessness and ethical conduct. Hence, Richard constructs an effective divide into 'in-group' and 'out-group' between Hastings on the outside of this newly created society and himself and the other peers of the realm on the inside. Witchcraft was commonly associated with (older) women and female attempts at seizing power and destabilising the dominant patriarchal

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[88] In a Protestant context, the term potentially takes on further symbolic weight. Many radical movements within Protestantism saw bearing witness to the deeds of Christ as their primary task (cf. Kastan 2002: 52) – the term thus accrued additional associations with ethical behaviour and social responsibility.

system (Clark and Mason 2015:6) and with contingency in early modern England. Definitions of witchcraft are notoriously "porous" (Clark and Mason 2015: 6, FN 1) and "fluid" (Clark and Mason 2015: 6, FN 1) at the time. This discourse thus mirrors linguistically the association of its subject matter with anomy and disorder, By accusing Hastings of consorting with female performers of witchcraft in particular, Richard also further enhances his own "self-fashioning" (*sensu* Greenblatt) as the man at the centre of current political culture, as the lord protector of England in deed as well as title. Notably, this self-fashioning also has a gender component: for, as the summary by Sandra Clark and Pamela Mason referred to previously indicates, witchcraft was predominantly seen as a crime performed by women. In keeping with this belief, Richard explicitly blames a conspiracy of women for the withering of his arm ("And this is Edward's wife, that monstrous witch/ Consorted with that harlot, strumpet Shore", R3. 3.4.72-73). Hence, Hastings' doubting Richard's account is swiftly related to his loss of independent thought and consequent masculine authority, since he is known to be Jane Shore's current lover (R3.3.1.186). In terms of gender politics, Richard thus preserves the divinely ordained control of men over women. This, together with his swift execution of power over Hastings (whose fate is sealed in a matter of twenty-four lines), is enough to convince the other lords to "rise and follow" (R3.3.5.80) Richard, even if they may have cause to doubt his account. The audience in the theatre is of course aware that it is highly unlikely that the Dowager Queen "consorted" (R3.3.5.73) with a woman who used to be her husband's mistress. [89]

Consequently, the behaviour of the lords is either motivated by fear or, like Buckingham (R3 4.2.125 -126, "Made *I* him king for this? [my emphasis, MTW]"), they see a chance for greater personal influence and are thus motivated by greed and a hunger for power not unlike Richard's own – a state of affairs that confirms the doubts sown by Tudor historiographers regarding the going-ons at the York court, *ex negativo* praising Elizabeth's government by implication at the same time (Siemon 2009: 53).

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[89] In addition to misogyny, there may be also an element of class-based discrimination involved in Richard's construction of the case against Hastings and the two women. Throughout the play, Jane Shore is referred to by the title "mistress" (R3 *passim*), which (in addition to derisively hinting at her role at court) was used to address both female commoners and aristocrats equally ("Etymology Online dictionary" website), thus blurring the line between classes and signalling her status as a destabiliser of the currently-hegemonic order. Likewise, Queen Elizabeth used to be married to a mere knight and thus only raised to her station as a consequence of Edward's attentions – a process that Richard often draws retrospective attention to, even when addressing the queen directly (R3,1.1, 81-83; 1.3.21; 1.3.127). Hence, Richard also presents himself as the defender and preserver of England's nobility when indicting Hastings and his seeming co-conspirators.

The analysis given above implies that Richard's success with his fellow nobles rests in part on his ability to successfully express his own will to power and to manipulate theirs. One again, this conforms to the central tenets of Machiavellì's political theory. At the same time, however, it also opens the possibility of resistance from another quarter of society. Recent scholarship on the early-modern English political landscape has increasingly pointed out how an emerging middle-class of merchant and artisan citizens sought to mitigate the unmediated power of the aristocracy and an increasingly absolutist monarchy – a struggle that came to a head in the English Civil War (Eisaman Maus and Lewalski 2012: 1360 - 1364). In his influential study on the subject, *The Third Citizen: Shakespeare's Theater and the Early Modern House of Commons*, Oliver Arnold argues that the depiction of non-aristrocratic subjects' voices raised in political debates in the drama of the time helped to increase a political consciousness of their liberties on the part of English subjects, particularly non-aristocratic merchants and artisans, both against the sovereign and as individual subjects against the "representationalism" (Arnold 2007: 15) of the House of Commons, whose representatives tended to treat those they were meant to represent as an amorphous mass (Arnold 2007: 7 - 8). Most of the regular audience members of the Globe were members of this under-represented and de-individualised social group despite their increased skill set and education (Montrose 1995: 208 – 209). Thus, Shakespeare's initial audiences may have hoped that the representatives of their part of the "mixed estate" (Arnold 2007: 2) of England are able to withstand the power of Richard's persuasions, although they lack the means to stop him, thereby representing the audience's own loyalty to the Tudor dynasty on the fictionalised stage.

The play itself largely discounts these hopes, however. When faced with the performance Richard and Buckingham discuss at the beginning of the third act (the scene with which this analysis begins), the mayor initially doubts their claim that Hastings' planned to threaten the kingdom and was detained to be executed as a result: "Had he so?" (R3, 3.5.40). Notably, Richard refutes his doubts by angrily appealing to the early-modern belief in England as "God's chosen nation, […] that 'England was the most happie [sic] of all the nations under heaven' and 'blesst [sic]' because the people of the realm consented to the laws that govern them [my single quotation marks, MTW]" (Arnold 2007: 1):[90]

 "Rich: 'What, think you we are Turks [sic] or infidels?
Or that we would, against the form of law,

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[90] The quote within the quote from Arnold refers to a speech given by Christopher Yelverton to Parliament and the Queen at the closing of Parliament in 1598 (Arnold 2007: 1)

Proceed thus rashly in the villain's death,
But that the extreme peril of the case,
The peace of England and our persons' safety
Enforced us to this execution?
[…]
[Buck:] Yet had we not determined that he [= Hastings, MTW] should die
Until your Lordship came to see his end" (R3, 3.5.41-46; 52-53)

Richard and Buckingham simultaneously flatter and pressure the mayor with the citizens' claims to their rights as an estate with a voice in the running of the kingdom. Since these rights (and by extension, the mayor's office as both a part of these rights and as their their embodied representative) are derived from the laws of England and these in turn are seen as a sign of God's goodwill towards England (Arnold 2007:1), any attack on the laws threatens to destabilise the other two elements in the chain. This example indicates the structural weakness of all medieval symbolic systems, which, as Foucault has argued, fundamentally relied on the mirroring of one element (in one sign system) in another element of another system that was either more general or more particular (Foucault 1974: 46 -56). Furthermore, the metaphor is mirroring implies that the two things compared are perceived as exactly identical, rather than as structurally or functionally equivalent. This implies that to render one element of the chain potentially contingent – as the mayor does by questioning whether the charges levelled against Hastings are lawful (R3, 3.5.40) – is to render the whole unstable and to threaten the social and metaphysical order, threatening the lives of English individual subjects both before and after death. As this charge thus questions the validity of England's jurisprudence and God's judgement thereof, it is only logical that Richard responds with an angry repudiation of the charge of unbelief. Implicitly, he doubts the mayor's own care for his soul and "the peace of England" (R3, 3.5.45) – specially emphasised by its being placed at the beginning of a line - and thus his fitness for office. In order to defend himself against these implicit charges, the mayor asserts (not unlike his aristocratic equivalents in the previous scene) the truthfulness of his unmediated phenomenological experience, which confirms Richard's and Buckingham's goals: "But, my good lord, your Grace's words shall serve/As well as I had and seen and heard him speak;" (R3, 3.5.62 -63). Notably, while "your grace" is the common address for nobles of Buckingham's rank, considering the charges Richard accused the mayor of levelling at them, its usage here additionally asserts their goodly behaviour and emphasises that they have applied the charges correctly. Furthermore, it indicates that the mayor has fallen prey to Buckingham's flattering description of his office as keeper of the lawful liberties of the English people. The scene thus

portrays how the very logic that justifies the independence of the English relative to their monarchs becomes a cage that forces them to follow a tyrant.[91] Additionally, it also confirms Arnold's thesis that Shakespeare's representation of Parliament critiques the members of the House of Commons who claim to represent the people but who act for themselves and thus potentially *against* the interests of the people (Arnold 2007: 17 – 18).

Interestingly, Richard's successful political manipulations discussed so far, all have two things in common: firstly, they address either individuals or small groups of persons, with whom Richard and Buckingham can create either individual relationships (see for example Richard's friendly interest in the Bishop of Ely's strawberries (R3 3.5.31 -34)) or with whom they can share a collective identity that allows them to create and maintain a dichotomy between a collective self (of which they present themselves as a well-meaning part) and an isolated Other, in the form of their enemy, as discussed above. Secondly, all the individuals they address are individual, subjects near the centre of the political and social order. Hence, they have power and seek to maintain it, a desire Richard understands well and can thus exploit. The play strongly implies that Richard's success is not solely the result of his own demonic genius but rests in part on the symbolic structure that upholds the political order as a whole.

If the above conclusions are correct, they also imply groups of persons who may be better able to contain Richard's attacks on the political order of England: firstly, large groups of people, which make it harder to isolate individuals, and secondly, people who are closer to his own position as an Other of the symbolic politics of Elizabethan England. As regards the first assumption, the play indeed portrays one instance involving a crowd where Richard's machinations fail prior to his assumption of the crown and subsequent general decline.[92]

Directly after the successful manipulation of the mayor, Richard instructs Buckingham to "go after […]/ the mayor [who] [hies] towards Guildhall […]" (R3.3.5.72 -73) and there to argue that Edward's line cannot assume the vacant kingship because his children are bastards. Once again, Buckingham confidently asserts his skill at manipulating genealogical, body-based (bio-)politics.

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[91] For reasons of space, this thesis omits a discussion of Richard's manipulation of the clergy and canonical law. For an insightful discussion of the depiction of canonical sanctuary law, its manipulation by Buckingham and the relationship of this depiction to the debates around sanctuary spaces in Tudor England, see Woodring 2014.

[92] Richard's only direct address to a group of commoners in the play itself is discussed below. The analysis argues that its content and failure are intimately related to his previous confrontation with the supernatural other and his own self in the ghost scene.

(R3.3.5.95, "Doubt not, my lord. I'll play the orator"). But this time their manipulations fall flat: "The citizens are mum, say not a word" (R3.3.7.3). Strikingly, the refusal of consent on the part of the citizenry is based on their refusal to use language. Hence, Richard's strongest tool cannot be used because it is impossible to "moralise two meanings in one word" (R3. 3.1.82-83) if no language is being used in the first place. In their silent refusal of consent, the citizens of Shakespeare's imaginary London help to hinder "their tyrants without burying monarchy itself." (Reinhard-Lupton 2005: 2).

Furthermore, their refusal to just accept tyranny without registering their protest recalls "the constitutional themes of Athenian tragedy[,] […] [which were] [p]erformed before the assembled Athenian citizenry and celebrated the survival of the *polis*" (Reinhard Lupton 2005: 2). While the citizens of London of course lacked the political self-determination of the Athenians, this sentence is significant if we consider the relationship between *polis* and its close cognate *politeia*. According to Aristotle's political theory, the former term designates those persons living in Athens who had voting rights and were thus directly involved in the politics of the city-state; the latter term, in contrast, applied to individual subjects involved in the life of the city and particularly in the circulation of goods within it, even though they had no access to political participation as such (Reinhard-Lupton 2005: 2). Subsequent changes in Roman law then introduced the possibility of a movement between these "civilian" and "civic" (Reinhard-Lupton 2005: 26) forms of participation. In light of these developments, the refusal to engage with the future tyrant on the part of the citizenry positions them in the role of protectors of the realm and the monarchy against the Lord Protector, whose title the play thus implicitly calls into question.

Additionally, the populace depicted on the stage thus becomes a loyal subject of the Tudor dynasty *avant la lettre,* thereby again affirming the suitability of this dynasty for the throne of England. Simultaneously, the same act also serves to make the argument that the people are better able to represent themselves than their current representatives (who are shown to be duped by Richard). The actions of the populace thus render the logic of early modern representationalism subtly contingent and implicitly argue that a more republican form of representation can help protect the nation during a "state of exception" (Agamben 2017: 19) when false contenders vie for the throne or have usurped the sovereign position (Arnold 2007: 38 – 39).Even more importantly, however, this affirmation is significant for examining the role of the extratextual audience to the play's examination of early modern models of subjectivity, masculinity, its bio-politics of embodiment, and its representation of political theology. At first glance, this scene

allows the audience to act as witnesses of the adequacy of the judgement expressed by their onstage equivalents, as their knowledge of the events to come (as well as of the uniformly negative view of Richard and his reign taken by influential Tudor historians (Siemon 2009: 53 - 74)) corroborates the doubts of the onstage London citizenry. This discursive move simultaneously assures the Elizabethan authorities that the playgoers are loyal subjects of the monarch.[93] The events of act three thus seem to confirm the traditional reading of the first tetralogy as a straightforward and conservative re-enactment of Tillyard's eponymous "Tudor myth" – a semi-hagiographic account of the rise of the Tudor dynasty out of the hell-like events of the so-called War of the Roses, which was presented as divine retribution for the forced abdication and murder of Richard the Second. Richard the Third's occupying the English throne was, according to this account, reimagined as the nadir of England's descent into chaos; a point further strengthened by reference to his prominent physical disability (Siemon 2009: 57-58). For the most part, the play agrees with the othering of Richard, but it also problematises the potentially smug righteousness of the audience in its very first scene.

5.3 Richard's First Sololiloquy – The Contigency of Early Modern (Embodied) Metaphysics and Ethics and Early Modern Conceptions of the Subject

Famously and uniquely in the Shakespearean canon, *Richard III* begins with a speech by its main character uttered on an otherwise empty stage. For the most part – a total of twenty-eight lines (R3, 1.1.14 -42) – the speech has the traditional characteristics of a soliloquy uttered by a villain or the Vice (a stock figure of the early modern stage, who sought to corrupt the protagonist and did so through notable verbal agility (Siemon 2009: 6-8)). Richard expostulates on his difference from all other characters and uses that difference to justify his own malicious intent towards them and the society they live in. He thus declares himself an agent of accidental and destructive contingency, associated with the forces of hell (R3.1.1.30, "I am determined to prove a villain"). As these lines express the character's innermost thoughts and motivations but lack an onstage audience, scholars usually label the whole speech until the arrival of Clarence a soliloquy.

However, the present thesis would like to draw attention to the first thirteen lines of the speech, which disrupt the soliloquy by prominently using an odd linguistic feature. These thirteen lines use the word *our* prominently, most often in the anaphora of lines five to eight, which rhetorically

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[93] This discursive move also contains the epistemological contingency the events of the play (Richard being able to seize the crown) and the actions of the citizenry (with their silent argument for a new form of political representation) expose early .modern political theology to.

capture the changes English society has undergone in giving up war for peace (R3.1.1.5-8). On the one hand, one could argue that these lines form part of the subsequent soliloquy and implicitly signal Richard's ambitions to the audience because he fraudulently adopts a royal linguistic marker in the form of the *pluralis majestatis*. On the other, considering the theatrical and political awareness Richard exhibits in the scene analysed above, it could also be argued that the character is to some degree aware of the extra-textual audience of the play *as an audience.* The first lines of the play would then become legible as a monologue of asides, to coin a phrase, as a verbal performance on Richard's part.

Notably, both of these interpretations share a crucial feature: they both linguistically create and appeal to a community that involves the audience, at least implicitly: the use of *pluralis majestatis* indicates that the monarch using it is not speaking as an embodied, and therefore mortal and fallible, individual subject, but rather as the current inheritor and ruler of the eternal and infallible body politic (Kantorowicz 2016 [1957]: 9-11).[94] It articulates the monarch's position at the centre of medieval and early modern political theology and made the community and *polis* of the kingdom legible on and through the individual body of the person occupying the throne; a confluence the monarch also materially represented by (re-)presenting their (mortal and individual) bodies as free from age and decay as best they could to reflect the supra-individual timelessness of the *polis* (Cook 2013: 24 – 25). In adopting this linguistic marker, Richard creates and maintains a community with himself as the centre. However, the play also reminds us that this community of Richard's is a linguistic illusion as there are no characters onstage to confirm or deny his claims in the play. This has two consequences for the extra-textual audience: firstly, the play from its first sensitivises them to the relationship between theatre and (Richard's) politics, as his invocation of a community mirrors the way actors on the Elizabethan stage create the world of the play largely through words (Schabert 2009: 111). In addition, the play also adopts and responds to the Elizabethan commonplace of creating equivalences between the stage and the political arena: "We princes […] are set on stages, in the sight and view of all the world." (Elizabeth I, qtd in Greenblatt 1988: 64).

More importantly still, the lack of onstage confirmation shifts the responsibility for evaluating what Richard is doing and what effect these linguistic actions have or are supposed to have to the extra-textual audience. Hence, Richard's use of the first person plural possessive can also be read

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[94] For a discussion of the relationship between the features of the body politic and Richard's negative perception of his own body as a potential explanation of his desire for the crown as a mark of sovereignty, see below.

as an early display of his skill at "moralis[ing] two meanings in one word" (R3.3.1.82-83), for it creates a community between Richard and the audience through his appeal to them that assumes the shared experience of a past "winter of our discontent" (R3.1.1.1). Simultaneously, the first part of the speech draws attention to the fourth wall and the historical distance between the events on stage and the audience. This is made particularly clear by the semantic ambiguity of "now" (R3.1.1.1), which begins the play. Functioning as a deictic marker, the word derives its meaning from the speaker's desire to establish a relationship between them and a given moment in time; this forming of a relationship based on common temporal ground may also include an audience. In the case of its usage in the play, the deictic marker disrupts, rather than creates, a common temporal ground because it reminds the audience of the distance between their time and the time represented onstage. Specifically, they are reminded that their time (governed by a descendant of the marriage between the Earl of Richmond and Elizabeth of York) and the time of the play are divided by the events of the battle of Bosworth and the previous murder of the king and the York princes. According to Tudor historians, both of these events could be laid to the charge of the very person who is now practising his rhetoric of peace in front of them (Siemon 2009: 58). Hence, the audience is subtly attuned to critically distancing themselves from Richard's claims from the first. The play further encourages the audience to keep in mind this temporal (and moral) distance in a variety of ways: for example, the "clouds that loured upon our house" (R3.1.1.3) return before the battle of Bosworth to obscure the army's field of vision (R3.5.3.299, "the sky doth frown today and lour upon our army").[95] Likewise, Richard's seemingly high praise of the "glorious summer […] of York" (R3.1.1.2) already entails the idea of its decline and eventual end: unlike spring, which is symbolically associated with "new beginnings [and] […] youth "(Naschert 2008: 117), evoking summer already implies that the dynasty of York has reached the zenith of its peace and prosperity – no matter how high the sun stands now, its warmth will have to decline in the autumn and winter. Notably, this choice of metaphor already hints at the accession of Richard as well. Winter is associated with "death", (Naschert 2008: 415) but it is also related to animals, especially pigs and boars, since these animals were hunted and butchered in autumn and winter to supply people with meat and sustenance. (Hutton 2001: 362). The play often reminds the audience that Richard's heraldic animal is the boar (R3.3.2.11, "he dreamt the boar had razed his helm" hints metaphorically at Richard's desire to behead Lord

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[95] Additionally, these events again emphasise Richard's literally un-natural struggle with nature and the divine order it represents from which he is both exiled and exiles himself.

Hastings). Richard is thus once more othered and de-humanised through association with non-human animals (Wolfe 2013: 22 - 28).[96] For even though the existence of heraldic animals was a cultural commonplace in medieval and early modern culture, Shakespeare's play lacks references to heraldic animals other than Richard's boar. No other character is referred to by their heraldic animals and even the kingship curiously lacks any reference to the famous lions of the Plantagenets. Even more strikingly, all references to boars are destructive and negative, most prominently showcased in Richmond's first address to his troops before they march to Bosworth:

[…] *The wretched, bloody, and usurping boar*,
That spoil'd [sic] your summer fields and fruitful vines,
Swills your warm blood like wash, and makes his trough
In your embowell'd [sic] bosoms, *this foul swine*
Lies now even in the centre of this isle,
[…] To reap the harvest of perpetual peace,
By this one bloody trial of sharp war [my emphasis, MTW] (R3, 5.2.7-11, 15-16)

Throughout his speech, Richmond uses Richard's heraldic device as a metonymy for his adversary as well as his destruction of England and its prosperity caused by his reign. Once again, Richard is equated with a non-human (animal) other who must be removed from society and killed to ensure the return of order and peace.[97] This return is also hinted at in Richmond's invocation of the end that is to be brought about by his final confrontation with Richard: in his first speech Richard only invokes two seasons, the extremes of "winter" (R3, 1.1.1) and "summer" (R3 1, 1. 2), notably two seasons characterised by a relative dearth of human agency in the agricultural calendar; in contrast, Richmond invokes the "harvest" (R3, 5.2,16) of autumn, a transitional period of collective action that ensures the "perpetual peace" (R3, 5.2. 16) of the Tudor dynasty once Richard has been overcome. The imagery used by Richard in his first speech, although primarily intended to turn his presumed audience into collaborators of his cause

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[96] At the same time, however, this metaphoric association enmeshes Richard's death in a kind of sacrificial matrix (René Girard), showcasing the social mechanism of creating a social "scape-goat" (Girard 2013: 87) in action and thus creates an inadvertent relationship between English society and its Other. Boars are butchered to sustain a community, and Richard's death likewise ensures the renewed prosperity of the English political system. The play thus implicitly casts his protagonist in the role of the "tyrant-martyr" (Walter Benjamin, qtd in Reinhard-Lupton 2005: 1), whose death ensures the health of the *polis* and the birth of collective citizenship. This in turn renders his killing into a metaphysical act of violence that constitutes (Fradinger 2010: 15-17) and protects Richmond's kingship and the early modern individual subjectivity of his subjects and their descendants. As we will discuss in greater detail below, Richmond's struggle thus becomes a metaphysical battle for the very soul of the English polity – a true and justified antagonism in Wilderson's sense (Wilderson 2010: 29)).

[97] For reasons that are discussed below in greater detail, we treat Richard's being ostracised and his eventual killing by Richmond as two distinct processes, even though the former requires the latter to be successful.

thus inadvertently allows sceptical members of the audience to detect traces both of his real plans – the assumption of kingship prefigured in the use of the *pluralis majestatis* – and his eventual decline and fall in the character's opening statement.

At the same time, the rhetorical construction of a sceptical observer position partly mirrors Richard's own in relation to the subject culture and embodied masculinity ideal of his time: his praise of the current state of the house of York collapses when he begins to mock "[g]rim-visaged war" (R3.1.1.9) as now capering "nimbly in a lady's chamber / To the lascivious pleasing of a lute" (R3.1.12-13). He metaphorically mocks the collapse of an ideal of warrior masculinity in favour of a masculine model of subjectivity that emphasised non-martial alongside martial ways of conduct and bodily exercise: the courtier as popularised by Baldessare Castiglione. In addition to skill at arms and in sports (Castiglione 1903 [1518]: 25 -31), the Renaissance tract emphasises courtiers ought to be "well built [sic] and shapely of limb and, and […] show[ing] strength and lightness and suppleness, and know all bodily exercises that befit a man of war: whereof I think the first should be to handle every sort of weapon well on foot and on horse [.] (Castiglione 1903 [1518]: 25). This combination of physical grace and martial skill finds its highest expression in riding a horse well – thus showing mastery of one's own body as well as mastery at controlling another (non-human) being through the actions of that body. Considering Castiglione's praise of riders, Richard's being unseated from his own mount at the play's version of the Battle of Bosworth (R3.5.4.9) serves as a further indication of the audience of his unfitness to rule, thus implicitly exposing Catesby praising his doing "more wonders than a man" (R3.5.4.2) as only another example of empty flattery. Instead, Richard's actions expose him as less than a proper man by the standards of the early modern period. And once again, his embodiment is once again presented as the cause of his impropriety.

Additionally, Castiglione emphasises that beauty as an outward quality leads to greater appreciation of that person by others than accorded those who have less physical beauty (Castiglione 1903 [1518]: 50). Hence, the characters in Castiglione's dialogue implicitly echo the Renaissance fascination with well-proportioned and symmetrical male bodies inherited from Classical Antiquity. As Rosi Braidotti has convincingly argued, this relating of body shapes and conduct has shaped humanist conceptualisations of humanity ever since (Braidotti 2013: 13 - 15). She identifies Leonardo da Vinci's Vitruvian Man as the most famous visual representation of that belief because, in that sketch, the human body is seen encompassing the human globe. As the hands reach upward and the feet ground the body on the ground, the limbs of the body are

arranged so that the whole accords with the Golden Mean. This proportion was seen both as the most pleasing and as reflecting the proper order of the universe by Renaissance artists. Hence, the drawing of Leonardo's reveals that humanist conceptions of the world conceive the ideal being with the most influence in and on the world as being human, male, and able-bodied (and white) (Braidotti 2013: 15).[98] Conversely, Richard associates himself with everything that is not natural. Indeed, he claims that he has been "curtailed of this fair proportion" (R3.1.1.18) that is actively forbidden by some higher power from possessing it. Implicitly, this description characterises his body as literally a-symmetrical, as lacking in any kind of adherence to any concept of order, whether embodied, social or indeed divine. Thus, he positions himself as an absolute other and the play associates its protagonist with an extreme form of accidental contingency, to wit, chaos. As noted above, contingency designates an epistemological space between necessity and the unknown. In terms of that space Richard is consistently associated by the play and consistently associates himself with phenomena the cultural codes of early modern England connote as negative or dangerous. He focuses on his "shadow in the sun" (R3.1.1.26) and argues that he has been sent into the world "before [his] time" (R3.1.1.20). Hence, his very existence is portrayed as disrupting the flow of time itself. Interestingly, other characters agree with this account when they tell stories of Richard possessing teeth hours after his birth (R3.2.4.28) and his being long "a-growing" (R3.2.4.19). Notably, the mental image of a child with teeth also corroborates Richard's being born to harm and implicitly claims that Richard had access to his favourite weapons from a very early age – humans require teeth to be able to form words properly. The soliloquy thus portrays the protagonist as a disruptive force on the level of bodies and the laws of nature itself.

Even more importantly, Richard declares himself "unfashionable" (R3.1.1.22) near the end of his speech. As Stephen Greenblatt has noted in his book of the same name, self-fashioning, that is, the ability to change and transform the self and to play a certain role in a social context, was one of the central discourse-practices that separated Renaissance conceptions of subjectivity from their medieval predecessors, which assumed the complete fixity of an individual subject's rank within the social order (Greenblatt 2012: 2-4; cf. also Glomb 1997: 6). In his choice of words, Richard once again confirms his non-conforming to the standards of his social contexts – he can neither be shaped by its rules nor contained by them (if we read "fashionable" in the sense still

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[98] Additionally, the painting indicates that the ideal male is also racialised as white, an othering mechanism Shakespeare addresses in *Titus Andronicus* (largely affirmatively) and *Othello* (critically).

current in contemporary English as a descriptor for someone who follows social trends ("fashionable | Definition of fashionable in English by Oxford Dictionaries" website)). Additionally, in light of the early modern connotations explored by Greenblatt (Greenblatt 2012 2-4, 8-9), Richard also claims that "dissembling nature" (R3.1.1.19) by giving him no comely appearance has denied his subjecthood and therefore his humanity. Shortly afterwards, he also refers to himself and his brother Clarence as "abjects" (R3.1.1.106) in relation to the queen. While this primarily signifies their dependent relationship to an individual subject they despise in the context of the scene itself, abject also correctly describes Richard's relationship to the overall social structure: according to Julia Kristeva's psychoanalytic definition of abjectivity, it encompasses all things that an individual subject perceives as unclean, as something it needs to expel from within in order to maintain the boundaries of proper community and selfhood. Abject things are closely tied to images of bodily waste, which is often coded as disgusting and wrong (Kristeva 1982: 2-4). Using the bio-political conception of immunity theorised by Espositio and introduced in chapter three above, we could also describe abjects as those things or individual subjects upon which (respectively whom) immunitarian discourse- practices (Esposito 2011: 21, 29-34,) are brought to bear., Richard is recognised as abjected, as malicious and dangerous by some characters, and Anne even attempts to expel him from her presence at the beginning of his courting of her. Once Richard has identified himself as her wooer, "she spits at him" (R3.1.2.149 SD), a practice associated with the expulsion of bad-tasting (and thus potentially dangerous) food. Metaphorically, to spit at someone is to deny them any standing within a given social order and thus is interpreted as an extreme expression of contempt in Western cultures. Anne explicitly refers to poison and disease (and thus the embodied dimension of this practice) in her explanation for her action and refers to Richard as "poisonous" (R3.1.2.151), accusing him of "infecting" (R3.1.2.152) her in the following line. Furthermore, she also compares him to an animal ("poisonous toad", R3.1.2.151) and thus again denies Richard his status as a human being. In fact, the animal chosen positions Richard as standing particularly far outside the boundaries of human subjectivity: toads are associated with slime (another of Kristeva's abject substances (Kristeva 1982: 3)) and were often seen as typical witches' familiars and considered poisonous (Sieg 2008: 116) in early modern Europe. Hence, Richard is not just an animal other, who may not be human but is at least part of the natural order, but rather a metaphysical other, closely associated with the devil and thus metaphysical evil.[99]

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[99] The play makes this association even more explicit in Richard's last monologue: when addressing his soldiers at

Hence, the play emulates the medieval conception of the universe into the representation of its politics: the microcosm of Richard's mind reflects the crookedness of his body, and both of these in turn connect him to the macrocosmic realm of metaphysics, and in particular to metaphysical evil. Thus, once again, the struggle between Richard and Richmond takes on aspects of the struggle between God and the devil, the foundational antagonism of Christian metaphysics. Unlike the racialised antagonisms between slaves and masters analysed by Afro-Pessimist theories, however, the play leaves very little room for the audience to doubt Richard's role as the antagonist, respectively to question whether killing this absolute Other is in fact the most adequate response to the contingency Richard's behaviour exposes.

Even so, as we shall see, there are some elements of the text as a whole that open the play to the possibility of reading Richard's contingent embodiment and his antagonistic role more critically, too. The audience is thus potentially exposed to an increased awareness of the contingency of the play's judgement of its protagonist. One way of exposing this contingency is to compare the representation of Richard's contingent embodiment to one of his literary predecessors.

Richard's desire to destroy and corrupt the state of England connects him to another famous absolute other of medieval literature: Grendel, the first of Beowulf's antagonists. The Anglo-Saxon epic emphasises that Grendel is the monstrous-looking child of a demoness and kin to Cain (Beowulf 2011:v. 102-114) – thereby also connecting a deviating embodiment to a destructive position relative to society – and Grendel's eating of Beowulf's companions collapses a fundamental way of distinguishing between humans and non-humans. As Jacques Derrida argues, humans draw the boundary between the macro-community of humanity and non-human beings on the grounds of which of these beings is considered an acceptable (everyday) food source or not by a given community at a given time (Derrida 1991: 112 - 116). Since Anglo-

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Bosworth, Richard enjoins his army to fight "with the spleen of fiery dragons" (R3.5.3.352). It has often been noted that Richard' conflation of the saint and the monster he killed indicates the final collapse of his ability to appeal to a sense of community rhetorically, revealing his asocial beliefs beneath his words (R3.5.3.352.n) because he misrepresents not just any saint but the national saint of his kingdom. Even more importantly for our present purposes is Richard's positive representation of Saint George's adversary as a source of strength. Dragons in Western culture were often identified with paganism or the devil in medieval literature (Lauer 2008: 68 - 69) and their non-natural appearance (they resembled no animals people commonly encountered in their everyday lives) associated them with the realm of the asocial monster (cf. Steel 2011); hence, Richard's identification with the dragon confirms both his own association with the devil throughout the play (made explicit in Richmond's speech to his troops some lines earlier (R3.5.3.252, "One that hath ever been God's enemy")) and casts Richmond in the role of the slayer of what Benjamin calls the 'tyrant martyr, who ensures the stability of the *polis* through this act (Reinhard-Lupton 2005:2).

Saxon culture did not consider eating humans acceptable, – least of all a member of the elite *horsecarls* – Grendel's actions clearly mark him as a destructive outsider. This association with absolute Otherness is further emphasised by the symbolism of the cannibalism scene. Grendel is drawn to the lights shining out from Beowulf's hall and flees back into the darkness of night once he has completed his meal (Beowulf 2011: v.115, 125). Both the hall itself and the light symbolise "truth" (Voß 2008: 205) (and mark Beowulf's hall as a proto-Christian space, as religious symbolism associates the divine with light (Voß 2008: 205)); Grendel's being fascinated by the light strongly implies that his usual lifeworld is defined by darkness and hence symbolically connected to fear and paganism, respectively to the devil and demonic forces (Voß 2008: 205). Furthermore, Grendel is excluded from the field of language – he does not speak throughout the epic.

The above somewhat longer excursion highlights three crucial differences between Richard and Grendel as well their common social exclusion on the basis of their divergent embodiment: unlike Grendel, whose lack of speech aligns him with animal non-humans, Richard's manipulation on the contrary hinges on his mastery of that particular medium. As language has long been considered a uniquely human skill (Wolfe 2010: 31 - 47; Steel 2011: 32 - 36), Richard is positioned by the play as the absolute other *within* culture, as a thief and pretender – "a base, foul stone, made precious by the foil/ Of England's chair" (R3.5.3. 151-152) in Richmond's evocative phrase – and therefore as even more dangerous than a Grendel-like invader figure.[100]

Before we explore both the exact nature of the unique danger Richard poses to the English monarchy of the play and examine how this threat is neutralised, we briefly analyse the culmination of the introductory part of the opening soliloquy in which Richard declares his general intent:

"And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover
To entertain these fair, well-spoken days,
I am determinéd to prove a villain,
And hate the idle pleasures of these days" (R3.1.1.28-31)

On the one hand, these four lines summarise our previous discussion as Richard claims that his social role is the result of his exclusion from current society (which he describes as a realm defined by the going-ons in "ladies' chambers[s]" (R3.1.1.12), whose men must be physically

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[100] Note how Richmond's „stone" (R3.5.3.151)" denies Richard even the basic animacy and concomitant degree of usefulness humans accord plants and animals (cf. Chen 2012: 41); instead, Richard is literally reduced to the lump on his back and portrayed as an easy and inconsequential thing to kick aside.

capable of "sportive tricks" (R3.1.15)), due to the caprices of a – implicitly also feminised – "dissembling nature" (R3.1.1.19). Richard thus portrays himself as excluded by an alliance of both cultural mores and natural facts. As most human discourse-practices position each of these individually as beyond the control of change effected by an individual subject alone, Richard thus presents himself as a completely heteronomous victim, even more so as nature and culture were perceived as ultimately intertwined in medieval and early modern discourses, both existing under the laws of the "translunar" divine, the signifier of which they are (Foucault 1974: 48). As explained above, they also were perceived as reflective of God's ideal for humanity; hence Richard's exclusion is reflective of and ordained by divine order – a view that reflects his role in the Tudor myth as the punishment of England for the deposition of Richard II (Siemon 2009: 69 - 70). At first glance, the play makes this explicit by using a phrasing that can be read as a passive statement: "I am determined [by God as the ultimate ruler of the world, MTW] to prove a villain" (R3.1.1.30), irrespective of what Richard himself would do. Such a view of subjectivity echoes Puritan and radical Anglican conceptions of divine grace and providence: according to Calvinist beliefs at the time, God had already chosen his elect before the beginning of time and all others were doomed to hell and damnation, no matter their actions (cf. the summary in Eisaman Maus and Lewalski 2012: 1348). This differentiated Puritans radically from both Catholics – who embraced an ethics based on proper deeds rather than just belief – and Renaissance humanism.

The latter modified medieval conceptions of the role of humanity to introduce the possibility of a choice for humans: while retaining the idea that the universe was ordered hierarchically along a Great Chain of Being (Schabert 2009: 20 - 21), humanists claimed that humanity – being the order of beings positioned in the exact middle of that chain - was special because they were given a choice. The Italian Neo-Platonist Pico della Mirandolà argues in his *Oration on the Dignity of Man* (1486/1557) that "God told Adam that Man alone is given a choice to make himself what he wants to be" (Copenhaver 2016: n.p.), and then goes on to argue that humanity should become like angels, that is sexless beings who have moved beyond all desire (Copenhaver 2016: n.p.). In light of this humanist belief, Richard's statement, rather than being a statement of heteronomy becomes a declaration of autonomy. Simultaneously, it also exposes the radical contingency of Richard's being in relation to the metaphysics and ethics of both his fellow characters and the audience: on the one hand, the fact that he can make a choice – and that this choice is borne out by all subsequent events of the play – seemingly confirms that he is human, one of God's creatures and not a demonic outsider (like Grendel). At the same time, his choice to become a

villain, thereby actively denying any chance he might have at salvation and seemingly also refuting any divine authority over him, makes him a worse villain than any outsider could ever be. According to Elizabethan religious imagery, Richard thus perverts God's gift and is arrogant enough to place himself beyond divine redemption.[101] If we consider the heteronomous ("Calvinist") reading and the autonomous ("humanist") reading in conjunction, the play positions Richard as an othered non-subject in relation to every member of the audience, no matter their understanding of humanity; simultaneously the ambiguity of the character's statement highlights both his linguistic skill and his role as the embodiment of accidental contingency.

Thus, the play precludes any kind of sympathy for Richard, whose disability instead becomes a narrative prosthesis, which is overdetermined because it serves as a common signifier, around which discourses as divergent as ethics, religion, natural philosophy and debates about society and political order coalesce. According to David T. Mitchell and Sharon Snyder, disability serves as a central "metaphor for that which refuses the mind's desire [and, we might add, the cultural desire, MTW] for order and rationality. Within this schema, disability acts as a metaphor and fleshly example of the body's unruly resistance to the cultural desire to 'enforce normalcy' [single quotation marks in original, MTW]" (Mitchell and Snyder 2000: 48).[102]

5.4. *Richard III As A Critique of Early Modern Political Theories of Sovereignty and the "Two Bodies of the King" (E. Kantorowicz)*

As the above close reading indicates, the play activates a wide variety of discourses to present Richard as an Other that has to be excluded from the society in which he moves and the rules of which he apparently understands quite well. Even though post-Enlightenment audiences are likely to concur with the play's negative judgement of its main character in the wake of his actions – particularly once Richard resorts to indiscriminate murder to stabilise his reign – there remains one question at this early stage: why does Richard declare himself "determined to prove a villain" (R3.1.1.30) this early in the play, and why does the play consider his wish to get and

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[101] This reading is once again affirmed at the end of the play when Richard ignores his own admission of guilt in the wake of the appearance of the ghosts of his former victims. He declares "conscience is a word that cowards use /Devised at first to keep the strong in awe" (R3.5.3.511-512). As Christian doctrine sees conscience as the voice of God, Richard's proto-Nietzschean disavowal seals his turning away from divine order and justifies Richmond's killing of him.

[102] The concept of normalcy and its enforcement by the able-bodied hegemony through the exclusion of divergent embodiments, which are declared disabled, originates with Lennard Davis (Davis 1995: 23 – 49). See chapter three for a critical analysis of the theoretical premises and implications of this concept.

keep the crown worse from the outset than similar desires or actions on the part of his brothers or father? The latter question becomes particularly acute in productions that treat the three parts of *Henry VI* and *Richard III* as a tetralogy.[103] Members of the audience who have seen the earlier plays might recall that Clarence betrays his political allies twice (3H6.4.1.118-120; 3H6.5.1.94-102), that Lady Anne when wooed by Richard is in a position similar to that of Lady Grey when she is wooed by Edward (her late husband fought on the side of the Lancastrians, just like Prince Edward does) (3H6.3.2.2-3 and note), that Edward woos Lady Grey using similar methods of bantering and verbal persuasion as Richard does with Lady Anne (3H6.3.2), and that the York brothers' father, Richard of York, simultaneously makes a claim for the throne when he argues that he should be reinstated as Duke of York in the famous rose garden scene in the first part of *Henry VI* (1H6.2.4). Even Richard's greatest crime, the murder of innocent children is not unique to him, as the Lancastrian side has murdered the youngest son of the Duke of York, who is portrayed as a child in the play and whose murder is referenced as a great offence by the Yorkist faction in *Richard III* (R3.1.3.182-183). In light of the whole tetralogy and considering that, as we have seen, Richard frequently appeals to a hunger for power common to all the lords to persuade them, audience members who have seen the three parts of the first Henriad ought to conclude that Richard's villainy is less the result of his methods as such (which seem common enough during the War of the Roses as portrayed onstage) than of the ruthlessness with which he is willing to use them. This reading concurs with Richard's role in the Tudor myth where he was portrayed as the culmination (that is, the most extreme expression of) the chaos into which the deposition and murder of an anointed king plunged the English political system (Siemon 2009: 70). Such an interpretation allows the audience to reconsider the claims made by Richard in his opening speech in two different ways: the first of these readings reconsiders it in accordance with the cues for interpretation provided by the play, the second reads it somewhat against the grain and thereby uncovers a critique of early modern political theology in the play's deep structure.

As noted above, the opening speech emphasises Richard's exclusion from all kinds of social formations by emphasising an extremely wide range of Elizabethan mechanisms of othering; it thus produces an overdetermined discourse. Furthermore, the character's claims to exclusion are initially contradicted once the audience sees him interact with other characters. Both Clarence

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[103] Recent scholarship on the histories has begun to doubt that they were either conceived as a whole or performed as such by the Lord Chamberlain's Men. Performing the plays together has instead been declared a performative praxis that only became popular in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (cf Kastan (2002: 92-94)).

and Hastings attribute no malicious intent to Richard; on the contrary, both of them remain sure of his goodwill and good intentions towards them until the very moment of their death (cf. R3.1.4.218 – 232, particularly 232, "Oh, do not slander him [=Richard], for he is kind" and the scene of Hastings' imprisonment discussed above). Hence, a critical audience is invited to conclude that Richard is lying when he blames "deceiving nature" (R3.1.1.19) and his "want [of] love's majesty" (R3.1.1.28) for his villainy. According to this reading, Richard's attempt to give reasons for his being a villain must be read as a rhetorical manoeuvre meant to achieve the unachievable: to make the "soul[s]" of the audience "pity [him]" (R3.5.4.204) and, motivated by that pity, forgive his sins in advance by justifying them. A further conclusion of this reading of the opening speech strengthens the play's tying Richard to contingency even further: for if he has invented the reasoning he gives for his role as villain, that implies *ex negativo* that Richard is just evil and needs no reason to have become thus. In addition to praxis-oriented accidental contingency, this reading of the play associates the character with epistemological contingency and the danger that all models of order and morals might eventually collapse, if he were not curtailed.[104]

While the above reading is corroborated by the play and fits its general thematic concerns, some audience members may also read the soliloquy differently. Throughout his ascent to the throne, the play shows Richard employing one particular tactic more often than any other: in keeping with his association with contingency, Richard tends to use ambiguous phrasing that reassures his victims, but also reveals his real intentions to the audience, both directly (usually via asides) or subtextually. For example, when Clarence is led to the Tower, Richard assures his brother "I will deliver you" (R3.1.1.115). Clarence understands "deliver" in the sense of "free", but a few lines later, Richard, now of course by himself, plays on another sense of the word that mocks his brother's desire for freedom: "[…] I will shortly send thy soul to heaven"(R3.1.1.120). In the religious discourses of the time, particularly in certain Puritan sects, death, especially when experienced as a result of punishment dealt by the state as a consequence of one's religious practices, was seen as a positive experience, an election on the part of God (cf. the discussion in Kastan 2012: 52, 59-60; Schabert 2009: 13 - 15). In light of this discourse, Richard is telling

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[104] The play as a whole hints at this danger of epistemological contingency through Richard's disdain for religious explanations and references well as direct and sincere acts of belief. Richard's lack of faith is highlighted by Richmond's being presented as extremely religious in contrast. Whereas Richard publicly and explicitly misremembers the legend of Saint George, the patron saint of England (R3.5.3.252), Richmond explicitly places the outcome of the Battle of Bosworth into God's hands (R3.5.3.111, "Oh thou, whose captain I account myself").

Clarence his real, final intentions towards his brother; for their part, the audience is thus trained to listen and look for the meaning behind the statements made by the main character.

Applying this reading to the opening speech once again highlights how the play emphasises that Richard and his reign are a dangerous exception to the political system. Additionally, as analysed in detail above, this exception is perceived as an embodied exception, visible for all to see on Richard's skin. Irrespective of whether the audience agrees with the play's moral judgement of its main character, even before he begins his tyrannical bid for power, the play presents Richard as an embodied bio-political crisis , for England. This reading gains additional traction because the character voices it himself, thereby making it a fact of both the play's interpretive structure and the onstage world.

In order to examine this problem in detail, we need to return to the theories of Agamben discussed in chapter three, whose expansion of Foucault's biopolitics beyond the late eighteenth century into the pre-modern and early modern era hinges precisely on the question sovereignty and the state of -exception. As elaborated on above, Foucault coins the term biopolitics to describe an increased interest on the part of the state in how people conduct their lives from the late eighteenth century onwards (Foucault 2001: 53 – 55 and *passim*). Prior to that, Foucault contends that power only intervenes in people's lives when ending it: in Foucault's famous phrase, the power of the pre-political sovereign is the power to "let live and make die" (Foucault 1983: 132). Agamben argues further that this power on the part of the sovereign is merely the practical consequence of the true meaning of sovereignty. Ordering a subject's death is contingent on a sovereign's prior decision that this person is no longer a subject and thus no longer protected by the sovereign's law from their might. Following the German legal theorist Carl Schmitt, Agamben contends that "[t]he sovereign decides the state of exception [*Ausnahmezustand*, MTW]" (Schmitt qtd in Agamben 2017: 17-18, 17).[105] The most extreme case is the application of the state of exception to the question of life and death; hence, according to Agamben, every political order in Western Europe is founded on a bio-political distinction: differentiating people who have a life in society and those who have a mere biological existence (Agamben 2017: 10 – 11).

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[105] In accordance with Schmitt, Agamben defines states of exception as periods of time when the rule of law is suspended, though he is careful to note that this suspension does not declare the law invalid; rather, it is held in abeyance and not applied in specific cases (cf. Agamben 2017: 94).

To corroborate this claim, Agamben notes that Aristotle introduces a distinction between forms of life at the heart of his political theory.[106] Aristotle distinguishes between *zoë*, life in the sense of being alive, a trait shared by all living beings, whether plant, animal, or human, and *bios*, the life that is recognised as proper and as worthy of being called life by a given culture or community (Murray 2010: 61). Adopting a term coined by Donna Haraway, Aristotle's definition renders visible the intertwining of nature and culture into a "naturecultural" (Haraway 2008: 15) phenomenon.

Using the above definition as a basis, Agamben argues that the most far-reaching decision a sovereign can make relative to a subject – the state of exception when it comes to life in a community – is not, as Foucault argues, to kill them, but rather to deprive that subject of everything *except* the fact that they are alive. The sovereign declares the subject still alive, but at the same time deprives them of every protection the law formerly gave that life (Agamben 2017:10-11). Agamben calls this state of being barely within the law "bare life" (Agamben 2017: 11). He illustrates this mechanism with various examples taken from European legal history. One of them is the medieval concept of the outlaw: literally declared outside the law by a sovereign power, these individual subjects existed outside all communities, since they were driven from their home towns and forbidden from dwelling in other fortified communities (Agamben 2017: 88 - 89). At the same time, their lives existed outside the law, as their killing by another no longer constituted murder; outlaws have no life that the law recognises as such. However, paradoxically, the law simultaneously recognises the state of being an outlaw – therefore outlaws exist at the vanishing point of the reach of the law, rather than outside it.

Simultaneously, this very state is the product of the law's very own constitutional blind spot, as it has been declared by the institution of the sovereign. Applying Schmitt's statement quoted above reveals that the declaration of bare life constitutes the very definition of sovereignty: the sovereign is the sovereign because, although they exist and operate within the law most of the time, they can move beyond the law and suspend it (Agamben 2017: 17). According to Agamben's theory, the normal reach of the law is thus constituted by two liminal figures, whose functions mirror and depend on each other: the outlaw, who exists mostly outside the law as far

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[106] Agamben has been criticised for falsely attributing this distinction to the amorphous and unspecified mass of „the Greeks." His supporters argue, in contrast, that his argument is structural, rather than Classicist, and that this equation can be forgiven because of the reach of Aristotle's ideas in subsequent epochs of the Western history of ideas, where many recipients likewise saw Aristotle as speaking for all Greeks, often due to a lack of other sources (cf. the summary of this discussion in Murray 2010: 134-135).

as its protective reach is concerned, and the sovereign, who operates within the law except when moving beyond it to declare a state of exception. Although Agamben only hints at this conclusion, the above discussion implies that the rule of law would collapse if these two figures merged and became one.

At first glance, this excursion seems to have led us far afield from Shakespeare's play, but it helps to clarify Richard's role if we treat him as an outlaw within English society. Alldiscourse-practices exclude him and yet he has not been killed – his life and his body, which maintain the state of exception in which he exists, are still left to him and continually foreclose his acceptance as a subject to "love's majesty" (R3.1.1.29). Since Richard considers the ability to be a courtier as the foundational law in the current "glorious summer" (R3.1.1.1), it follows that applying this law results in his being relegated to the margins. Furthermore, Richard's status as an outlaw also explains why the audience and the onstage world concur in perceiving him as a "villain" (R3.1.1.30). Outlaws and vagabonds were perceived as unlawful and portrayed as evil in Elizabethan state discourses, and the play concurs with this reading. (Reynolds 2002:1, 19-20).[107] Richard's adoption of this role thus has a twofold result for the play's interpretive structure: firstly, it furnishes another example of how the play as a whole operates within the parameters set by existing Elizabethan conceptions of law and propriety: no matter how much joy the audience might take in watching Richard's Vice-like play with language, the character's manipulation of the existing social order still operates within its structural logic, never transcending it in favour of a completely different system of cultural organisation. Hence, Richard's life and individual subjectivity being accurately described (and thus *circumscribed)* by the structural role of outlaw secondly and more importantly contains the threat of an increased awareness of contingency that his initial characterisation potentially poses. For if Richard were not to characterise himself as a "villain" (R3.1.1.30) from the outset and chose to operate differently (say, by leaving his brothers alive and choosing to act through them, rather than against them, or by withdrawing from the realm of the law entirely), it would render contingent the realm of law and sovereignty as such,. Richard's withdrawal from the law would mean that the embodied exception refuses to acknowledge both itself and consequently the sovereignty that made it. Since sovereignty depends for its status on the declaration of the state of exception (Schmitt qtd in Agamben 2017: 17), an unacknowledged declaration would render the whole dialectic paradoxical. And this, in

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[107] The only exception are the comedic and satirical branches of popular tradition, which often portrayed Robin Hood-like outlaws are forces of anarchic good and positive alternatives to state power (Dusinberre 2006: 55 - 58).

turn, would render the whole political system "inoperative" (Agamben 2017: 599) It would expose all Elizabethan conceptions of order – and the installed to maintain these conceptions - as contingent and force the audience to think outside the law in order to find new ways of constituting their individual subjectivity, respectively a community.

Just how dangerous the play considers this option is made apparent by an interpretative gap in the opening scene: as discussed above, Richard – again like the Vice character type of Tudor theatre (Siemon 2009: 6) - confesses the "plots [and] inductions" (R3.1.1.33)" he has planned from the outset, allowing the audience to experience dramatic irony in relation to all characters.[108] Curiously, however, there is one plot he does not mention. Nowhere in the first half of the play does the character indicate that he desires the crown for himself. The most Richard says is that he wants his brothers dead, so that "the world [is left] for [him] to bustle in" (R3.1.1.154). It is Buckingham who first makes their ultimate goal explicit: "for the instalment of this noble duke/ In the seat royal of this famous isle" (R3.3.1.164-165) two acts later.

One explanation of this gap lies in the text's generic convention as a history play. As the reign of Richard was not that far removed in time from the end of Elizabeth's reign (the battle of Bosworth had occurred a little over a hundred years ago at the time of the play's first staging) and still functioned as an important discursive referent in late-Elizabethan England (Siemon 2009: 51 - 67), Shakespeare could apparently safely assume that his audience knew Richard had sat upon the English throne and hence, that this must be his ultimate aim when laying his plots.

A second explanation relies on the bio-political axis we have uncovered in the play's deep structure. Once Richard has been placed in the role of the villainous outlaw, his desires are structurally fixed into a literally ambivalent frame of reference: the only desire that contains the risk of contingency posed by his existence and yet itself remains legible according to the operative logic of the law of Elizabethan bio-politics is for Richard to desire to be sovereign and thereby to lift his own state of exception.[109] The lack on an explicit mention in the play marks this

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[108] This includes Richard himself once he has become king, when he assumes that he has convinced Queen Elizabeth to woo her daughter for him (R3.4.4.336) or that the weather at Bosworth means that Richmond will be in as bad a tactical position as he is (R3.5.3.286).

[109] The earlier characterisation of Richard of Gloucester in the third part of *Henry VI* makes this affective and desiring component more explicit: in a soliloquy, Richard characterises his relationship to the crown as follows:

Why, then, I do but dream on sovereignty;
Like one that stands upon a promontory,
And spies a far-off shore where he would tread,

as a structural relationship that Shakespeare assumes members of the audience can deduce for themselves. The bio-politics of sovereignty are thus revealed as a component of Elizabethan ideology; as something that "must be so, […] if the reproduction of the [political hegemony] is to be assured" (Althusser 2010: 1360) and which thus is placed beyond any awareness of contingency.

Applying this bio-political framing also sheds light on a further structural component of the plot: as many critics have noticed: from the moment Richard ascends the throne, all his plans seem to go awry; indeed, he seems to lose the Machiavellian ability to manipulate the social norms that has brought him to this position in the first place (cf. Siemon 2009: 8-9). Using Agamben's structure, one might say that the law, in order to maintain itself when faced with the embodied paradox of Richard, the sovereign outlaw, has to gradually propel Richard back to his proper place as an exemplar of 'bare life', at the farthest reaches of its influence: at the end of the play, Richard has been deprived even of speech – his battle with and subsequent killing by Richmond takes place in silence, confined to a non-verbal stage direction (R3.5.5.1.SD). Notably, this pushback is, as noted above, not the work of the male nobles, who are for the most part presented as at least partly complicit in the state of exception that Richard creates, as the events of act three analysed above indicate. Instead, the play presents individual subjects as the agents of the law who also exist closer to its margins and are thus in a structural position similar to Richard himself: women, especially those who have previously lost husbands or fathers (or both) and thus exist outside the patriarchal control structure of the family that governs female agency in early modern England (Schabert 2009: 25 - 28). The second major agent of Richard's defeat is even more surprising: the play emphasises how Richard's embodiment and the remnant of his soul ultimately collude to deprive him of his mental agility. For reasons of space, the following analysis focuses on one scene showing Richard losing an engagement with one of these external or internal "others-within-culture" each.[110]

Wishing his foot were equal with his eye,
And chides the sea that sunders him from thence,
Saying, he'll lade it dry to have his way:
So do I wish the crown, being so far off" (3H6.3.2.134-140)

[110] In addition to the scenes chosen here, there is one other opponent of Richard's who deserves a more detailed analysis than the present thesis can provide: rather than simply making him a child victim, the younger son of Edward IV, Richard of York, is presented in the play as equally as proficient at rhetoric as his adult namesake and as oddly wise to both the latter's methods (R3.3.1.123 -126) and his weaknesses (R3.3.1.130 -133). Unlike his elder brother, who seeks to make amends for his brother's behaviour (R3.3.1.128, "Uncle, your Grace knows how to bear

Before turning to the analysis of the rebellion of Richard's embodiment against his now sovereign mind, we briefly wish to analyse one person who does not aid in the defeat and the slow draining away of Richard's power, even though the play's structure might lead some members of the audience to expect them to. If Richard is the villain of Shakespeare's history play, then there is little doubt just who the audience ought to cast in the role of the hero: Henry Tudor, the Earl of Richmond. However, there is one element of this casting that might strike members of post-Elizabethan audiences as odd: Richmond kills Richard (R3.5.5.1.SD), but, contrary to our expectations, there is no confrontation between the two characters beyond that. Unlike, say, Macduff, who gets to triumphantly declare that he "was from his mother's womb/ Untimely ripped" (Mac.5.8.14-15) and hence fulfils the requirement that Macbeth cannot be slain by a man born of a woman, Richmond never engages with Richard directly; we might say that Richmond has no role beyond moving his arm to slay the "tyrant-martyr" (Benjamin qtd. in Reinhard-Lupton 2005:1). This lack of agency may strike audiences at first as hardly heroic, but a closer look at the presentation of "hero-slayers" (Walter Benjamin) in early modern drama clears up the confusion.

In his study of the political dimensions of Baroque theatre, Walter Benjamin argues that most heroic slayers of the tyrant monster themselves run the risk of becoming "infected with the poison of their [= their foe's, MTW] anarchic corruption of the law" (Reinhard-Lupton 2005: 1). In contrast, Shakespeare keeps Richmond entirely safe from any direct contact with Richard and the state of exception his body represents. Stanley takes off the symbol of "long-usurped royalty (R3.5.5.5) from Richard's head, who in death has been reduced to a "wretch" (R3.5.5.6), a term that etymologically derives from Old English *wrecca* and now verbally denotes Richard's outlawed state as a "banished person" ("wretch | origin and meaning of wretch by Online Etymology Dictionary" website). At the same time, it already connoted a depraved mental, physical or moral condition, as it still does in contemporary English ("wretch |Definition of wretch in English by Oxford Dictionaries" website, noun, meaning 1). Stanley's use of the term to describe Richard's corpse signals that the bio-political problem posed by Richard has finally been moved beyond a boundary from which he cannot return: death. This terminal banishment re-

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with him") by appealing to the customs of social courtesy (as is proper for the Crown Prince), thereby acting within the law and opening himself to his uncle's manipulation, Richard of York can still use the freedom accorded children below the age of majority and face his uncle at the margins of law and custom. Notably, his skill affords him the praise of Buckingham, even though it cannot prevent s death hiR3.3.1.133 – 136).

(155)

aligns the material and the discursive realms and closes the gap through which Richard manipulates the social structure; "wretch" (R3.5.5.6) accurately describes both Richard's embodiment and assigns him an appropriate social role. Richard's literal ontological wretchedness at the end of the play also retroactively confirms his killing as an act of propriety and protective immunitarian justice (Esposito 2011: 21). Furthermore, Esposito's concept of the *munus* also explains why Richmond and Richard do not speak to each other, either before or during their final confrontation. Firstly, according to Christian metaphysics – the foundation of the characters' ontological antagonism – language and the power to name are the mark of humanity (Gen. 1,). [111] Hence, the use of language implies that two parties – no matter how contrary their attitudes – share the assumption that they both are human and have the right to the same treatment (Wilderson 2010: 9). Language is a "gift (or obligation) that cannot be returned" (Esposito 2011: 6) that founds a community. For the Elizabethans, this community most likely encompasses both the gift of salvation through faith and the political community of "[English] liberties" (Arnold 2007: 3) we discussed above. As we have analysed above, Richard scorns and abuses both these communities; what is more, he uses language to do so. Hence, it is in keeping with the play's deep structure that he is ultimately stripped of the *munus* of language and revealed as an antagonistic absolute Other.

As the ascension of the Henry Tudor represented in the play as free of any contamination by the embodied Ricardian state of exception; both the ascension of Richmond and the founding of the Tudor dynasty are seen as a return to and of the laws of peace that governed England before Richard's seizing the throne, if not the War of the Roses as a whole: "Now civil wounds are stopped, peace lives *again* [my emphasis, MTW]" (R3.5.5.42). This emphasis on the return of peace, rather than on its being founded by the Tudors, echoes the Schmittian definition of the state of exception as a period that holds the law in abeyance, rather than destroying it (Agamben 2017: 10-11). Strikingly, Richmond's last speech also draws repeated attention to the embodied nature of the body politic: in the line cited above, he uses a medical metaphor – stopping wounds after battle – to describe his political programme. Furthermore, he draws particular attention to the embodied sexual dimension of the union of York and Lancaster through his marriage to Elizabeth when he enjoins his "heirs" (R3.5.5.33) to create a "smooth-faced peace" (R3.5.5.34.). This last image is particularly interesting, as it combines the affirmation of Tudor peace with the

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[111] All references to Biblical narratives refer to the version of the text printed in the fourth edition of the Oxford Study Bible, edited by Michael Coogan, Marc Z. Brettler, Carol A Newsom and Pheme Perkins.

double refutation of war in general and Richard in particular. In addition to evoking a lack of scars, the attribute subtly associates peace with youth and thus with longevity. Furthermore, it functions as the exact inversion of "grim-visaged war" (R3.1.1.9) and his "wrinkled front" (R3.1.1.9), an image used by Richard to express his disdain for the peace at Edward's court. This second peace, the peace of Henry Tudor, is true and sincere, rather than the pretence of a machiavel like Richard, because youth has no need to artificially smooth wrinkles it does not have. Even more importantly in the present context, a smooth face indicates that the person has no visible physical deformities. Hence, the play signals that the threat posed the contingency of Richard's disabled individual subjectivity becoming the sovereign has been successfully contained (Greenblatt 1988: 65); the absolute Other has been relegated to the margins, where "it belongs" according to the ideological common sense of early modern England.[112]

5.5. Women and Embodiment – The Marginalised As Restorers of the Hegemonic Order
Our analyses so far emphasise Richard's embodiment as the passive cause of his othering and eventual exclusion from both English society in particular and life in general; the play, however, also represents his embodiment as an active participant in his eventual loss of sovereignty. Various post-Elizabethan critics of the play have remarked on Richard's loss of his Machiavellian ability to manipulate others and the social organisation around him, which immediately follows the achievement of his ends when he ascends the throne (cf. Siemon 2009: 8). The first time the audience encounters Richard after he and Buckingham have successfully duped the citizens of London into giving their assent to his schemes, the stage directions explicitly emphasise that Richard enters "in pomp" (R3.4.3.1.SD). Therefore, we may assume that he wears the crown and

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[112] Interestingly, the containment strategies employed by the play and Henry Tudor in this last scene are not confined to Richard. Richmond designates both himself and Elizabeth as the "*true succeeders* of *each* royal house [my emphasis, MTW]" (R3.5.5.31), thereby implying that the House of Lancaster had a false heir as well. While the play makes it clear that Richard is the false heir of York, members of the audience might ask themselves who the play considers the false heir of Lancaster. As both the ghost of Henry VI and that of his son Edward take part in the final condemnation of Richard, they initially seem excluded from Richmond's charge (R3.5.3.123-137). However, we could argue that the charge still applies to Edward, as his mother, Margaret of Anjou, is presented as a fearsome Other who subverts hegemonic constructions of gender, embodiment and even species throughout the play and the tetralogy as a whole. She used to be a "tiger wrapped in a woman's hide" (3.H6.1.4.138), thus confounding species lines. And now Margaret has become the prophetic Other, a madwoman whose prophecies disrupt the temporal order of the play (R3.1.3.295 – 300). Furthermore, Margaret alone among the female characters in the first part of the play is deemed dangerous by Richard, who would have run the risk of "curs[ing] himself" (R3.1.3.325) if he had condemned Margaret openly. Hence, the play positions the two characters as structurally alike and as both as in need of containment.

thus is explicitly marked as endowed with "ancient sovereignty" (R3.5.6.5). Similarly, Richard explicitly draws attentions to his being physically separated from ordinary aristocrats – whom he used to address as his peers (R3.3.4.22 "my noble lords and cousins all") when he praises Buckingham with "*Thus high*, by thy advice and thy assistance/Is King Richard seated [my emphasis, MTW]" (R3.4.3.2-3). Additionally, he also isolates Buckingham from the other nobles when he commands them to stand "all aside" (R3.4.3.1.). Hence, the actions of the newly-crowned king emphasise division and hierarchy as well as the fact that he has the power to lift individual subjects beyond the reach of normal community. In the initial tableau that begins the scene, Richard's words create a three-tiered hierarchy that places Buckingham above his peers and Richard himself beyond both groups. From the first, the actions of King Richard are the actions of a sovereign of exception rather than a sovereign who straddles the border between normal social rules and the invocation of exception (Agamben 2017: 10-11).

Considered in isolation, the designation of favourites by a sovereign might still be a part of common social practice. But Richard immediately expands his powers beyond accepted social boundaries. He declares that he "wish[es] the bastards [= his nephews, MTW] dead" (R3.4.2.19). This statement is striking in several ways: firstly, it of course indicates that Richard is willing to kill two children, individual subjects who would not be considered active political agents in early modern political practice. Richard's transgressing of social and ethical boundaries in the name of his sovereignty thus positions him in line with other portrayals of tyranny, most obviously perhaps Herod's murder of the infants of Bethlehem (which the latter also performs to find the infant Jesus, who threatens Herod's rule, or so the king believes) (Matthew 2: 16-18). Hence, Richard is subtly aligned with "one who has ever been God's enemy" (R3.5.3.225).

However, the positions his protagonist even farther outside the ethical norm than the Biblical king of the Jews. For Richard denies the bonds of family to justify his murder: the children he wishes to kill are related to him by blood. In addition to his wishing to destroy and deny intergenerational family relationships, the king also uses his power to cut *intra*generational ties by declaring his wife Anne dead. Richard orders Catesby to "give out/That Anne my queen is sick and like to die" (R3.4.2.59-60). He thus literally makes use of the sovereign's power to "make die" when rearranging his family (Foucault 1983: 132). Richard's immunitarian sovereignty has a clear "auto-immunitarian" (Esposito 2011: 17, 164) trajectory that destroys even Richard 's closest family and allies, individual subjects he ought to protect according to the implied ethics of the play (ethics members of the audience most likely share) whether he be king

or no.Notably, Richard uses the sovereign power of death in a bio-political key and for a bio-political reason. Claiming illness as the reason of Anne's death makes it impossible to trace the murder back to him, turning the facticity of her embodied nature into the cause instead. Furthermore, Richard needs to dispose of Anne to marry his niece Elizabeth and so strengthen his hold on the throne (R3.4.2.62-63 "I must be married to my brother's daughter/ Or else my kingdom stands on brittle glass").

Since marriage between near relations (even relations by marriage) was considered incest, Richard once again violates ethical norms. Even more importantly, the world of the family had been declared the seed from which all social formation springs both in Christian ethics (Agamben 2017: 373) and in early modern secular thought (Arendt 2016b [1967]: 39).[113] Richard thus abuses his sovereignty to manipulate the foundation of society itself. He also positions himself outside (or more precisely still, beyond) language. He explicitly asks Buckingham to "think now what I would speak" (R3.4.2.11). Richard places the burden of knowing what he is thinking on Buckingham and initially refuses to articulate his thoughts. Indeed, when the king articulates his intention, he is clearly furious at having to do so: "Shall I be plain?" (R3.4.2.19).. In refusing to use the shared *munus* of language initially, Richard thus indicates that for him, the sovereign exists beyond language and all kinds of communal ties. The sovereign is the ultimate exception (Agamben 2017: 17-18), the ultimate immunitarian individual subject (Esposito 2011: 6). In Richard's opinion, the monarchical subject is the one who has to guess the sovereign's mind, while the latter conversely exists in sovereign solipsism. Richard's sovereign solipsism attacks both the social bonds of family (Anne and his orphaned nephews) and fealty (Buckingham) Richard ought to maintain. Once more, Richard's actions mark him as an Other English society ought to be saved from. Notably, Esposito's metaphor with its reference to autoimmune diseases already hints at Richard's ultimately becoming the agent of his own banishment from sovereignty and the sphere of culture and consequent destruction.

The first step in this process of is Richard's no longer treating Buckingham as a valued ally but rather as a mere subject beneath the notice and regard of the solipsistic sovereign: the extent of this solipsism is hinted at in Richard's designating his nephews as "bastards" (R3.4.2.19). Recall that Richard is talking to Buckingham only and that they are alone - he has asked the other

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[113] Our analyses of *Frankenstein*, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, *The Holy City*, and *Call The Midwife* will consider the representation of the „entangled" (Barad 2007: EN 337) the relationship between family, natality, fad political community in Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment discourse-practices below.

nobles to let them speak in confidence (R3.4.2.1) - and that he is speaking to the very person whom he initially instructed to make the claim of bastardy (R3.3.5.75). But instead of acknowledging the shared nature of their fiction and their alliance, Richard now claims his fictions as truth and degrades his former allies to mere subjects. When confronted with Richard as sovereign, all claims to community are rendered void. In light of the above analysis, the failure of Richard's previous methods becomes easy enough to understand, since he removes himself from the communal space in which these could operate.

While Shakespeare's protagonist sees his actions as perfectly in keeping with his role as sovereign, the play as a whole portrays this as the beginning of Richard's loss of control. According to Kantorowicz, the medieval theory of the two bodies of the king conceptualised the body politic as a representation of the people as a whole (Kantorowicz 2016 [1957]: 9). Hence, the king does not exist outside or beyond community; rather, he is literally invested in it. According to Kantorowitz, medieval ideals of sovereignty thus maintained a close relationship with the community and its rules, rather than declaring them void. Instead of affirming Richard's right to the crown, his refusal to remain aware of the community around him and increasingly paranoid behaviour signal that he is not fit to rule – a judgement confirmed as it were *ex negativo* by the crown on his head, since Richard openly flaunts even the need to pretend to conform to social rules only once he wears it.[114]

Furthermore, as Agamben notes in his discussion of the two bodies of the king, this medieval model of sovereignty hinges on the simultaneity of the king's body politic and his body natural (Agamben 2017: 85), even as they are conceptualised incommensurable. Contrary to what Richard seems to believe, his natural body (and hence the visible indications of his disability and status as an outlaw in the Agambian sense) do not disappear when he assumes sovereignty so much as they are covered for a time by the second, collective body politic. Sovereignty, for Kantorowicz, constitutes an embodied performance – just like clothes cover the body, the body

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[114] Indeed, Richard himself indicates an awareness of this judgement when he berates Stanley for reporting to him that Richmond has set sail for England. He demands angrily: "Is this chair empty? Is the sword unswayed?/ Is the king dead? Is the empire unpossessed?" (R3.4.4.474–475). The emotional context of the exchange makes it clear that Richard treats these questions as rhetorical and expects Stanley, cowed by Richard's being invested with sovereignty, to reply with a simple denial. Yet, the very fact that these questions are posed renders his claims contingent and forces Richard to confront the possibility of a non-denying answer. Indeed, Stanley's answer plays precisely on this ambiguity: "Unless for that, my liege, I cannot guess" (R3.4.4.476). He simply refuses to answer either way. At the same time, the play as a whole encourages the extra-textual audience to answer with a "Yes because the man who claims to be king is not fit to be so" to all of these questions.

politic covers the body natural for a time. But just like we may glimpse a person's skin through a gap in their clothes, this model implies that the body natural may assume and retain a power of signification independent of the official body politic (Kantorowicz 2016 [1957]: 9- 10). Considering that Richard's particular embodiment constantly renders visible the difference and relationship between the ideal body of sovereignty and his imperfect real natural body, he thus exposes the politics of embodiment that constitute the heart of Elizabethan biopolitics as contingent.

Simultaneously, the play as a whole tries to contain this awareness of contingency on the part of the audience by limiting it to the surface structure of the play; hence, Richard's embodiment disrupts his performance of sovereignty, but no similar moments of disruption exists for Richmond's non-disabled embodiment, for example., Richard's body natural exposes the character's violence, his origin at the margins of society and his destructive intentions towards social relations: confronted with Buckingham's hesitancy, Catesby observes the king's reaction and explains to it to the other courtiers: "The king is angry. See, he gnaws his lip" (R3.4.2.29). This statement thus establishes a direct relationship between the emotion as signified and the bodily action as signifier. As this relationship can be established by Catesby at a glance and is not contradicted by Richard's actions or statements either previously or subsequently – unlike the protagonist's earlier performances -, the play as a whole encourages the audience to consider it an unfeigned view of Richard's true feelings. Adapting Freudian terminology, we might call it a glimpse of his unconscious. This glimpse associates Richard explicitly with the violent animality of predator species as he gnaws on a piece of flesh. Furthermore, animals gnaw on things when they seek to destroy the structure of their food to better be able to digest it thereafter. Invoking this image makes it clear that this is Richard's true purpose: he seeks to destroy the society of which he is now head, not merely to invert its rules for his own benefit.

Initially, this analysis might seem excessive on our part. After all, biting your lip when you are nervous – and Richard has every reason to be so at this point in the play – is a common enough unconscious action. Might it thus not mark the very opposite of our claim – the tenuous link between Richard and his fellow humans, abjected and denied though it might be? Indeed, Richard's embodiment again proves contingent to the last: considered in isolation, Richard's action would indeed have a positive connotation. However, the wider context of Shakespeare's play shows *gnaw* to have negative connotations the one time it features in another play: Othello, too, gnaws his lip when he prepares himself to kill Desdemona – the culmination of Iago's

incitement to violence and chaos (Oth. 5.2.43) For Shakespeare, gnawing seems to carry exclusively negative connotations. Ultimately, the play thus positions the protagonist as the same kind of absolute destructive Other as Grendel. Since the king was charged with maintaining order, rather than destroying it, and the actions of Richard's body natural expose his abiding association – we might even speak of an embodied equivalence – with accidental contingency and the destruction of order, this scene makes it clear that Shakespeare's protagonist divests himself of the crown in the very moment of his ascension.

Additionally, the play as a whole activates a more complex process to reduce Richard back to the structural position of bare life, and it is this process that distinguishes Richard's decline and othering from how Grendel is treated in *Beowulf*. As indicated in the discussion of the two characters above, the difference between them rests on Richard's being an Other within culture whereas Grendel never moves from his liminal position as a bare life on the margins of society. In addition to the increase in the complexity of their characterisation discussed previously, this also influences how their deaths are treated. Grendel is killed by a single stroke of Beowulf's, which is narrated in three verses (Beowulf 2011: v. 815 - 817); in keeping with the fact that Grendel already stands on the border of the law and has never moved from it, a single action suffices to render him and the threat he poses permanently inactive.

In contrast to Shakespeare's portrayal of Richard's namesake in the second tetralogy, who is initially only asked to abdicate and is not killed (R2 4.1.416), to depose Gloucester would risk a repeat of the action of the first three acts – considering that the protagonist of the play defines himself and the state of being a subject through the (manipulative) use of language, reducing him to the status of a subject would leave the means of a new rise in his hands. Conversely, killing Richard without reducing him to the state of bare life would leave society as presented in the play open to the question of why it permitted this evil incarnate to operate within its bounds in the first place – a question that would expose the structural order of society as contingent and thereby disrupt the societal containment enacted by the play's ending. In accordance with this logic, after removing Richard from any just claim to sovereignty and before removing him from life by Richmond's sword, Richard is deprived of his claim to *bios*, to life as a naturecultural (Haraway 2008: 15) entity. To do so, he must be deprived of his natality, which recognises each individual subject born into a community as a member of that community, with all the rights and obligations (Arendt 2016b [1967]: 20: Patterson 1982: 5) this recognition entails. Thus, we might say that a society declaring the life of one of its (former) members forfeit, whether through a death penalty

(that is, within the law) or by declaring them outlaws and stripping them of their legal life, derives its power not from human mortality, but from our collective natality. For normally, the birth of children is socially marked, whether it is as a happy occasion or as a sombre one; newborns demand a response from society (Arendt 2016b [1967]: 20) .[115] This social event bestows a genealogical right on the human being in question, it declares them a member of a family and hence a part of a community and society as a whole. Notably, the declaration of a genealogical right is not dependent on culturally changing notions of legitimacy. Instead, we might think of the charge of illegitimacy as the right of genealogy read in a negative key, for calling someone a bastard still presumes that they are part of society. To exclude someone from society, the recognition of their birth as a social event has to be revoked.

In light of the above considerations, it is no longer surprising that Richard's mother justifies her vocal opposition to him through her motherhood and simultaneously wishes that she had denied him the right to natality by aborting him: "Oh, she that might have intercepted thee/ By strangling thee in her accurséd womb" (R3.4.4.138 -139). Notably, the duchess uses the informal "thee" rather than the formal "you" and thereby indicates that she is addressing her son, rather than the king.,We might say that she is addressing him on the level of the household, rather than that of the state. As indicated above, Christian theology (and Enlightenment political theory in its wake (Honneth 2015: 279-282, Hartman 1997: 120-124) perceived the order of society as deriving from the logic of the household; the family constitutes the model of a true Christian (and later also a secular) community (Agamben 2017: 412-413; Arendt 2016b [1967]: 39).[116] Hence, the duchess ignores her son's claim to sovereignty (a rhetorical move that underscores that Richard's claim is false) and directly addresses the foundational moment of community to negate his right to *bios*. In subsequent lines, she even addresses him as "toad" (R3.4.4.146), removing him from the community of humanity as a species entirely.

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[115] For a more detailed analysis of birth as an event that demands a response from society and thereby shapes it, see chapter nine of this dissertation as well as the analysis of natality in chapters six and eight below.

[116] This contrasts with Classical Greek (more precisely Classical Athenian) conceptions of the relationship of home and state. According to Greek thinkers in antiquity only engagement with the state and a public life of politics offered a space for the development of individual freedom and the enactment of agential freedom (and even that was limited to free men of a certain class). In contrast, the Athenians thought of the home as a sphere of constraint, defined as it was by having to provide for the daily biological needs of its inhabitants and their embodiment (Arendt 2016b [1967]: 39 - 43; Agamben 2017: 408 - 410). For an analysis of the role of the home in Enlightenment conceptions of the political, see chapter six below.

By itself, the insult and its attempt to push Richard beyond the boundaries of the human species is not new. Anne uses the same expression when she initially denies Richard's suit for her hand (R3.1.2.152). However, Richard's response to either insult differs radically: in Anne's case, he ignores it and pushes on until he has persuaded her to marry him. His mother's insult, on the other hand, occasions an angry response: "Either be patient and entreat me fair/Or with the clamorous report of war/Thus will I drown your exclamations" (R3.4.4.153-155).

However, by responding with actions that rely on his sovereign authority (here, sounding the war trumpets), Richard reveals the effectiveness of his mother's claims rather than rendering them inoperative. First of all, in contrast to his behaviour in his conversation with Anne, he initially appeals to his sovereignty and the authority of God to declare her statement void. He describes himself as "God's anointed" (R3.4.4.152). Considering that the duchess is explicitly addressing her son and that the powers of the king are modelled on the father's power in the household, the former machiavel commits a rhetorical category error; he uses a derived authority in an attempt to weaken the social foundation of that very authority. Richard clearly cannot refute to his mother's charge on the same rhetorical level she uses to make it. And so his very appeal to power lays bare his loss of power rather than reasserting it: Richard has lost the ability to appeal to and persuade people, which was based on his being able to communicate with them as an equal.

In addition to the distinction between state and household, Richard also appeals to the gendered hierarchies of early modern England to refute his mother's charge: he threatens her and Elizabeth "with the clamorous report of war" (R3.4.4.154) and describes them derisively as gossips or "telltale women" (R3.4.4.151). Hence, he invokes a patriarchal masculinity – notably the one social arena in which he has no need to pretend to participate but rather participates fully from the first when talking in the "homosocial" (Sedgewick 2016: 1-3) circle of the male aristocrats (cf. R3.1.1.71-83) – to sideline the women through misogynistic insults. However, these two insults once again rhetorically backfire upon Richard in two ways:

Firstly, he uses the insult "telltale women" in conjunction with an invocation to his own claim to sovereignty. By juxtaposing the two images in the head of the audience, the play invokes a particular gendered Elizabethan political praxis: chiding. Chiding involved a group of women publicly berating the sovereign during their progress through the city; "[p]resumption of reduced agency [of women, MTW] could also lessen criminal culpability [for breach of the peace, MTW]." (Siemon 2009: 24, 23 - 25). The play thus implies that Richard simultaneously misnames a political practice as private and invests it with political power by responding to it In

his function as sovereign. Hence, his own actions strengthen a claim meant to destabilise his power rather than diffusing it.

Secondly, Richard invokes the male prerogative to be a warrior to silence the women's claims. On the one hand, this seems to strengthen his position, as only men could be legitimate warriors in early modern Europe. The first tetralogy persistently others all women who bear arms, associating them with evil metaphysical power (Joan La Pucelle is accused of witchcraft in *The First Part of Henry the Sixth* and Margaret becomes a "prophetess" (R3.1.3.307)) and non-Englishness (both of the martial women are French). Hence, Richard is perfectly within his rights as a male to threaten women with mortality.

On the other hand, the very fact that Richard invokes mortality to attempt to counter the withdrawal of his natality indicates his failure to manipulate the underlying biopolitical logic. The social invocation of mortality depends on natality for its very power. To kill someone ends their life, but it does not revoke the social recognition of their birth. Therefore, it is only logical that the duchess calmly proceeds to withdraw her son's natality, unconcerned by his blustering. She does so by rendering it contingent: "Art thou my son?" (R3.4.4.156); this question gains particular force from the patriarchal social context in which it is posed: the structure of Elizabethan marriage forced women to have only one husband at a time; this was often justified through recourse to an edict of Roman law: *pater semper incertus est*, "paternity is always uncertain". Maternity could be confirmed through the act of birth itself and so mothers became the ultimate source for the confirmation of the "symbology of blood" (Foucault 1983: 143) and the social powers this bestowed, especially on sons and even more particularly on the sons of noble families (Stoler 1995: 156).[117] Husbands, by contrast, gained their right to fatherhood indirectly by making sure they were their wife's only sexual partner.

The play as a whole indicates that Richard is aware of this law. When he tells Buckingham to lie to the citizens and to claim that Edward was a bastard, he also admonishes his ally to be careful "because, [Buckingham] know[s] [their] mother lives" (R3.3.5.54) and that she might thus contest the charge of infidelity if she were to be informed of it. Furthermore, it is this law that ensures Richard's own social position. The only reason Richard is not outlawed from society – as, the play suggests, he should be – is because all nobles recognise him as a legitimate son of Richard of York and thus as younger brother to the king.

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[117] For a more detailed discussion of Elizabethan marriage law, see Dolan 2011.

According to the play, this recognition constitutes a grave error and a social misjudgement that is now corrected by the duchess' pronouncement. Richard's lack of a response confirms this interpretation on the part of the audience. Initially, the protagonist tries to refute the charge by answering her question in the affirmative and invoking three authorities to substantiate his claim: "Ay. I thank God, my father and yourself" (R3.4.4.157). But this answer once again is empty of any social power of persuasion: first of all, since children do not recollect the immediate aftermath of their birth, Richard cannot confirm his own parents. Furthermore, considering his brutal and unethical behaviour so far, which contradicts all accepted Christian ethics, the audience may consider highly dubious that divine intervention will confirm his paternity. Instead of a certain source of confirmation, Richard's appeal to God highlights his own hubris. As for the two worldly sources of his natality, the audience knows that his father has died and so cannot confirm anything. So the only source left is the person who just cast doubt on Richard's natality. As their conversation progresses, Richard withdraws more and more into sullen silence (R3.4.4.162, "Do then [=speak, MTW], but I'll not hear"). The fact that he subsequently resorts to direct physical violence towards his subordinates (R3.4.4.513 SD) and ultimately no longer speaks at the moment of his death indicates that the duchess' act of denial was successful: Richard has become an animal with a human shape, a bare life defined by his deformity, whom – we might be tempted to say *which*- Richmond can kill with ease, restoring order and containing the threat of contingency posed by the disabled absolute Other striving for and briefly sitting on the throne of England.

Throughout the above analysis, we have shown that Shakespeare's play treats Richard's disabled individual embodiment as a symbol for chaos and accidental contingency; hence, he cannot be other than a villain – his actions and choices confirm what society could read on his body from infancy. In keeping with the medieval model of the sign as a symbol, his misshapen body (in particular his crooked back) maps unto his crooked mind and both lead to a bending and breaking of social rules, rendering them crooked and thus exposing their epistemological contingency. The impact of this increased awareness of contingency is further heightened because it initially seems to conform to early modern epistemology. Just like the macrocosm maps unto the microcosm, Richard's anti-social and destructive discourse-practices emerge from a misshapen body and render the world misshapen. However, the very fact that he can act and render the social order contingent, potentially increases the awareness among audience members that their epistemological systems, albeit instituted to manage and minimise aware of contingency are

themselves contingent. Hence, the threat of Richard's embodied contingency is removed by his killing, which is imagined as an act of restoration; the founding of the Tudor dynasty contains and banishes all the confusion of the social order Richard caused, or so the play suggests on the surface. But like all acts of ideological containment, there are moments where a critical audience might question this resolution. After all, Richard only used the discursive resources provided by society, and he clearly found other, non-disabled, subjects who were willing to side with him for the sake of political power.

Additionally, Richard's embodiment and its usage within the political sphere prefigures the changes the bio-political dimension of British politics undergoes in the next two centuries: recall the analysis of his conversation with Buckingham when Richard first wears the crown and renders his claim to sovereignty materially tangible , Richard attempts to manipulate the common Elizabethan distinction between the shared community (Esposito 2010: 7, 29) of subjects and the unique individuality of the sovereign. Early modern political theology generally did not mark the individual subjectivity of political subjects when contrasted with the sovereign. This is best illustrated by the famous frontispiece of the first edition of Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* (Agamben 2017: 268). Once the members of the body politic have ceded their power to kill to the absolutist monarch, they also cede their individual subjectivity and embodiment; viewers of the illustration cannot distinguish each individual subject as an individually-embodied person; rather, the individual embodiments of all members of the commonwealth are melded together into the sovereign's singular embodiment.

As analysed above, Richard's embodiment precludes both his melding into the community of subjects and his adopting the mantle of sovereignty; hence, he continues to remain visible as an individual subject before the sovereignty of the law. While the play portrays this as an indicator of his absolute Otherness, it can also be read as prefiguring the increased political importance individual embodiment takes on in the decades after the British Civil War. Ed Cohen notes that the Restoration monarchy introduces strict laws built on the principle of *habeas corpus*; this legal principle requires the monarch to present the body of the accused before the law when enacting a punishment (Cohen 2009: 73). Hence, the accused becomes visible as an individual subject before the law and their concrete embodiment limits the reach of the law (by forbidding the punishment of persons *in absentia*, for example) (Cohen 2009: 79 - 81). "[C]ountering the monarch's *spiritually ordained* [sic] power over 'bodies and goods', 'the boy of the party' forms *a material impediment*, a ground on which citizen-subjects can stake their claim to due process of

law [quotation marks in original, my emphasis, MTW" (Cohen 2009: 79). Additionally, embodiment begins to serve as the kernel from which the idea of a social space that is different from the political logics of sovereignty can take shape and develop into a discourse-practice that sustains a social space between the "private" individuality of each individual subject and the "public" politics of early modern sovereignty. Although Richard's actions are viewed as negative by the play and most audiences, the fact that his embodiment marks him as an individual subject within the body politic thus prefigures the bio-political changes in English and European conceptions of individual subjectivity and embodiment that accompany the emergence of the Enlightenment subject and a "bourgeois public sphere" (Habermas 2015: 142 – 195 and *passim*).[118]

This structural questioning is further hinted at in the play. The analyses above show that the declaring Richard an absolute Other depends on discourse-practices that deprive him of his humanity, which is simultaneously declared a static, rather than a fluid, category. Audiences watching the play after the French Revolution and the Declaration of the Rights of Man (which made it possible in theory to appeal for inclusion within the category of the human according to liberal discourses (Arendt 2011a [1965]: 55-56; Lowe 2015: 107 – 118, 56 - 71)) may thus wonder if the representation of disabled individual subjects shifts away from mechanisms of absolute othering once notions of humanity broaden and it is no longer quite so easy to deny them any kind of influence and any part in the community of humans. Hence, they might expect literature written at the start of the nineteenth century that features disabled individual subjects to grapple with what it means if the Other is no longer absolutely outside human society but instead becomes legible as a potential human *even while* they remain Othered due to their divergent embodiment. How does the representation of disabled masculinity and contingency, respectively a disabled individual subject's role in society, change under these discursive conditions? The analysis of Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein* in the next chapter addresses these questions.

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[118] In his study, Habermas argues that the early -modern theatre does not constitute a predecessor to the bourgeois public sphere because it remains beholden to the codes of representing power dictated by the courtly hegemony, rather than instituting political self-awareness in the non-aristocratic citizenry, in Habermas' opinion (Habermas 2015: 63-65). While the analysis offered in this chapter provide a partial counterargument to that curiously normative judgement, see Mullaney (2015: 251 - 259) for a detailed analysis of early modern theatre as predecessor to the bourgeois public sphere.

6. "I Would Have Been the Adam of Your Creation" – *Frankenstein* and the Romantic Struggles With Recognising the Relative Other

6.1 The Question of Embodiment In the Age of Reason and the Romantic Period

The preceding analysis of Shakespeare's *Richard III* focused on the intertwined representation of contingency, disability and Elizabethan bio-politics in the play, particularly in the representation of its eponymous main character, and how the increased awareness of epistemological contingency shown in the drama is managed and largely contained through Richard's successive exclusion from all forms of human sociality, both through the actions of others and his own. Ultimately, he becomes an absolute Other and the cause of this Otherness is located in his disabled embodiment, which also acts as a signifier for the contingency Richard's deeds expose within the Elizabethan political system and Elizabethan society as a whole. Conversely, the play presents Richard's fall and death as a necessary sacrifice that both marks and stabilises the border between the ordered realm of the law and the unordered and chaotic realm of contingency existing beyond those borders: Richard is thus turned into one of Giorgio Agamben's *homini sacri* (Agamben 2017: 63), and his death gurantees a return to the old stability of the monarchical system, symbolised by the symmetrical embodiment of Henry Tudor.

One of the primary areas of social life examined (and critiqued) in *Richard III* (as well as various other Shakespearean plays, particularly the histories and the mature tragedies (Reinhardt-Lupton 2005)) are the bio-political discourse-practices that shape early modern conceptualisations of monarchy – in particular the discursive figure of "the two bodies of the king" (Kantorowicz 2016 [1957]) – and the political in general. As both are thought of closely tied to theatrical paradigms and thus to bodies embodying ideas, the Elizabethan political focused on bodies that literally embodied ideas of order and symmetry. The origin of that order was located in God, who acted as a "macrocosm[ic]" (Foucault 1974: 63) signifier, but these ideals were ultimately made visible and tangible in the microcosmic body of the monarch. In the early modern period, to vary an expression by Claude Lefort, "the symbolic location of power" (Marchart 2010: 132) is not empty. It is occupied by a concrete embodied individual subject who mediates the symbolic demands of a role and in relation to whom social conceptions of "normalcy" (Davis 1995: 5-10) are negotiated. As indicated in the preceding chapter, all individual subjects within society are conceptualised politically and socially in relation to this centre, the sovereignty of which is maintained through complex processes of contingency management and exclusion.

The two centuries that separate Shakespeare's play (written and first performed around 1593) and the initial publication of the first edition of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) illustrate an increase in the awareness of contingency across a wide range of cultural discourse-practices: the increased demands of the non-aristocratic members of Parliament for participation culminate in the British Civil War, when the House of Commons sentences Charles the First to death on the basis of their authority as the representatives of the body politic (Esposito 2013: 55); hence, they separate the confluence of the two bodies of the king in one person and thereby start the process of dispensing sovereignty across a populace. As far as Britain is concerned, hegemonic discourses and the representatives of the House of Hanover argue in the eighteenth century that this development reached its apex in the so-called "Glorious Revolution" of 1688, when Parliament invited the future monarchs William and Mary to become the crowned heads of England because they were Protestant (Noggle and Lipking 2012: 2179). According to hegemonic discourses around the turn of the nineteenth century, this move ultimately contained the political, religious and social disorder represented by the Civil War and ushered in a new age of economic prosperity.

 Additionally, it led to an increased awareness of their own unique individual subjectivities on the part of the subjects of the monarchy. The "body politic" was no longer an amorphous mass contrasted to the "singular" (Reckwitz 2017: *passim*) individuality of the sovereign; instead, each subject now sought to retain their unique individual subjectivity even against the judicial power of the monarchy (Cohen 2009: 79 - 87). As discussed at the end of the preceding chapter, the embodiment of each individual subject is transformed into the signifier of this individual subjectivity – a semiotic relationship ultimately inscribed and verified in British law through its enthusiastic adoption of the legal principle of *habeas corpus* (Cohen 2009: 79 - 81). Hence, it can be argued that the British public of the Restoration has now adopted Richard of Gloucester's embodied relation to sovereignty as its new "normalcy" (Davis 1995: 5). Just as he always stood apart from the mass of the body politic by virtue of his disability, from the reign of Charles the Second onwards, Richard's stigma is turned into the privilege of all British subjects.

The economic and cultural developments of the mid-eighteenth century and the (First) Industrial Revolution concurs with the rise of what Andreas Reckwitz identifies as the first modern subject culture to aspire to (and later achieve) cultural hegemony: the "[early]-bourgeois culture of subjectivity" (Reckwitz 2010: 97). Defining itself against a form of subjectivity it labelled "aristocratic" (Reckwitz 2010: 178), early-bourgeois subjectivity centred on three core features: it

is "anti-artificial, anti-excessive [and] anti-parasitic" (Reckwitz 2010: 175). As the usage of negative definitions highlights, the early-bourgeois subject culture (like all subject cultures) derives its self-definition from separating itself from the "constitutive outside" (Laclau and Mouffe 2014: 129 - 131) of an "anti-subject" (Reckwitz 2010: 47), in this case embodied by the "aristocratic anti-subject" (Reckwitz 2010: 178). Early-bourgeois subjects emphasises discourse-practices that built on three overlapping code systems, which emphasise morality and acting in accord with universally agreed-on concepts of rationality. Being universal, acting rationally also ensures that a given individual subject who acts in accordance with these discourse-practices is perceived as dependable and reliable by other individual subjects (because their shared discourse-practice allows them to engage with the world and each other in similar ways); conversely these discourse-practices also allows individual subjects to actively experience and engage with the world on the basis of the likewise rational rules human discourse-practices observe and define when engaging with the world around them (particularly when they operate under the discursive rules of discourses in natural philosophy and science).[119] Hence, rationality is treated as the primary instrument early-bourgeois individual subjects use to manage contingency, This eminent social function simultaneously turns rationality – often equated with reason in Enlightenment discourses (most famously in Kantian philosophy (Kant 2018 [1784])– into the primary instrument of early bourgeois ways of "being-towards-the-world" (Merleau-Ponty 1974: *passim*). Being thus able to manage the contingency of the world and keeping awareness of accidental and epistemological contingency to a minimum by using their rationality, early-bourgeois individual subjects see the ability to use reason autonomously (Kant 2018: second line) as the mark of a proper hegemonic individual subject.

However, this focus on rationality as the marker of autonomy itself opens up early-bourgeois subjects to potential moments of increased awareness of the contingency of their model of subjectivity: firstly, as indicated above, early-bourgeois subjectivity defines itself in large part against an anti-subject that is primarily identified with the aristocracy. But at the same time, the fact that aristocrats do not depend on work for their livelihoods and can thus seemingly act independently of the complex social entanglements that define the sphere of work for early-bourgeois subject, aristocrats simultaneously come to embody complete autonomy. The figure of

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[119] For a more detailed discussion of how discourse-practices in the natural sciences interacted with the beginnings of an "early-bourgeois" conception of subjectivity in seventeenth-century France, see Antonio Negri's study of Descartes' philosophy (Negri 2007).

the aristocrat thus becomes both acknowledged anti-subject and unacknowledged ideal subject for early-bourgeois individual subjects (Reckwitz 2010: 177).

Secondly, the focus on rationality as the defining cognitive feature of a successful early-bourgeois subject also produces tensions through its simultaneous focus on universally comprehensible rational action and the belief that individual subjects at the same time possess a unique psychology and a complex "interiority" (Reckwitz 2010: 190) that partly evades rational and universal explanations through their particularity (Reckwitz 2010: 190). As Reckwitz explains in detail, one of the central marks of differentiation between early-burgeois models of subjectivity and their aristocratic anti-subjects is defined by the early-bourgeois claim that aristocratic subjects use their emotions as mere investments in a game of social calculation (Reckwitz 2010: 178-180), rather than openly and "sincerely" (Reckwitz 2010: 181-182) expressing what they feel; early-bourgeois subject train themselves to instead act in accordance with the assumption that there is an equivalence between one's internal thoughts and feelings and the discourse-practices through which these are externalised (Reckwitz 2010: 181). At the same time, however, early-bourgeois subjects restrain themselves from expressing any feelings excessively or immoderately. For example, although both genders are encouraged to form friendships with members of both the same and other genders through conversation, these conversations should only be used to train yourself in "seemingly neutral, disinterested [ways of] present[ing] and problematising various 'topics' without becoming too emotionally invested in these areas of interest [quotation marks as in original, MTW]" (Reckwitz 2010: 189). Hence, although early-bourgeois subjects begin to develop techniques to become aware of themselves and others as individual subjects who have a complex psychology, these "technologies of the self" (Reckwitz 2010: 58), particularly the focus on reading and all forms of literacy (a mediated form of communication), also ensure that individual subjects only act moderately, both in the use of their bodies and in the externalised expression of their affects (Reckwitz 2010: 191). This moderation guards against all forms of bodily and affective excess and aims to institute a bodily praxis that models and respects the body as a clear zone of demarcation from the outside world (including other individual subjects). Additionally, the body becomes an instrument to actualise the individual subject's rational goals (Reckwitz 2010: 191). In accordance with this belief, early-bourgeois models of subjectivity conceived of romantic love as a special case of friendship, rather than as a unique and unrepeatable experience as Romantic models of subjectivity do (Reckwitz 2010: 140, 218-222).

The ambiguous position of embodiment and non-cognitive processes in early-bourgeois subject culture indicates one of the major differences between it and Romantic forms of subjectivity. Like other aesthetic subcultures that succeed it over the course of the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first centuries (Reckwitz 2010: 181,211), Romantic models of subjectivity are an attempt to "generate meaning out of the perceived gaps in [currently hegemonic, MTW] forms of subjectivity" (Reckwitz 2010: 206). In the case of Romanticism as an alternative to early-bourgeois models of subjectivity, these gaps include tensions between the simultaneous early-bourgeois demand that individual subjects pay attention to emotions, yet also require them to act rationally and to thus not be guided by the things they are tasked to observe. Another source of tension derives from the early-bourgeois culture simultaneously praising the individuality of individual subjects while at the same time being highly-suspicious of theories and practices that focus on just this individuality to engage with the world. The above names just the two contradictions most pertinent to the analyses that follow. For all their critique, however, Romantic modes of subjectivity remain indebted to the premises of the early-bourgeois subject as far as the value of autonomy – most often embodied in the discursive figure of the genius (Reckwitz 2010: 207) – and the claim to universality are concerned (Reckwitz 2010: 207-209).

While a structural claim to universality is one of the defining features of all subject cultures that have assumed or striven for hegemony in the course of Western modernity up to this point, according to Reckwitz (Reckwitz 2010: 89), the claim to universality gains additional force in the specific context of Enlightenment liberalism and serves as an additional point of entry for an increased awareness of contingency and a potential reformulation of the Enlightenment subject and a society guided by its principles in the decades surrounding the French Revolution. As indicated above, Enlightenment philosophy assumes that the use of rationality and reason is the defining mark of the proper subject. From this axiomatic assumption it then derives two conclusions: Firstly, all those who can argue and act rationally, whose acts can be empirically deduced and verified, are equals by virtue of that capacity. Secondly, since government institutions should be based on rational decision-making (and a code of behaviour that echoes early-bourgeois modes of subjectivity and their morals, rather than the privileges and excess of the aristocratic anti-subject (Reckwitz 2010: 190 - 195)), that societies should be governed according to principles based on equality and rationality, thus making the bourgeois individual subject a natural active agent in political processes, exercising both the active and the passive right to vote, that is, being part of these processes as both a voter and an elected official. In

Britain, where the potential for a democratic institution already exists in the form of Parliament, liberal dissenters often praise Parliament as an institution and then use that praise to argue for the expansion of voting rights (cf. Price 2011 [1789]: 185 -186). In keeping with the discursive and practical inbraiding of liberalism, rationality, equality, and universality in Enlightenment discourses, this possibility of expansion should, according to its own internal discursive logic, culminate in the *telos* of attaining universal liberty and equality. This implies that those who are not currently deemed rational can attain rationality.

However, the need of the early-bourgeois subject culture to maintain its own hegemony – a hegemony based in part on their own business interests and thus on the availability of an increasing number of urban workers who are not part of the vestiges of the artisanal guild system in Britain, respectively on the presence of indentured or slave labourers in the colonies – requires that it declares many individual subjects incapable of equal political participation. Hence, within Britain, the increase of enclosures deprives many rural workers of their means of subsistence, forcing them to migrate to the industrial towns, a major factor in the "making of the English working class" (Thompson 1966: *passim*). Outside the borders of Britain and Europe, slave labour and the complex vagaries of colonial work and *laissez-faire* trade relations constructs the racialised colonialist anti-subject of the nineteenth century.[120] Inside the social and domestic spaces of the home, an increased concern with the protection of women and their increased association with emotions and sentiment (Ferguson Ellis 1989: 8) creates a gendered anti-subject and helps to entrench a "domestic ideology" (Nancy Armstrong). This ideology associates women with the domestic space of the household and charges them with the education of children and the maintenance of familial cohesion (Armstrong 2004: 572) while associating them particularly with the "education of sentiment" (cf. Ferguson Ellis 1989: 12). This discursive correlation of women with the household and the increased emphasis on female "innocence" (as regards both matters of the wider social sphere and the complexities of their own desires and bodies) deprives women of knowledge and a form of self-awareness (of both themselves and the gendered social relations in which they live), Kate Ferguson Ellis argues, a change in female social roles that contrasts sharply with the sexual awareness evinced by female writers of the Restoration (Ferguson Ellis 1989: 11).

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[120] For detailed discussion of these processes of racialisation, see Mbembe (2017: 11 – 15 and *passim*) and Lowe (2015: 107 – 118, 140 - 148).

This relegation of women to the home structurally mirrors "the great confinement" (Foucault 1973: 68) of people with mental illnesses in the 1780s. The last decades of the eighteenth century, according to Foucault, see a restructuring of the practices of treating patients with mental disabilities: while they remained largely unmolested and are allowed to for the most part exist with and alongside their communities of birth in the early modern period, in the eighteenth century, individual subjects who are deemed non-"able-minded" (Kafer 2013: 6) are relegated to asylums and clinics where they are subjected to attempts to diagnose or treat their condition. Individual subjects with physical disabilities, in turn, are often the subject of increased medical attention as well, especially in cases where their inability to control their bodies through their will does not suffice to meet early-bourgeois standards of how the body ought to be instrumentalised (Reckwitz 2010: 181). Hence, it seems as if the absolute othering of disabled individual subjects reaches its apex during the Enlightenment. All these subject formations are simultaneously constituted and excluded on the basis of some aspect of their embodiment. Therefore, it seems reasonable to conclude that embodiment itself has been absolutely Othered in both early-bourgeois and Romantic discourse-practices.

This line of argument at first glance contradicts the differences between the Romantic culture of subjectivity and its early-bourgeois counterpart: whereas the latter tends to "subsume the individual intuition that 'your inner life' – an individual's experiences, feelings, perceptions, thoughts, and fantasies – is radically different and ultimately something that can never be fully shared with or communicated to outsiders" under "the early-bourgeois assumption of universal equality (*bürgerlicher Allgemeinheitshorizont*) [single quotation marks in original, MTW]" (Reckwitz 2010: 212), Romantic individual subjects define themselves precisely through identification of their own selves with their mind and its depths. In so doing, they establish a "post-Cartesian binary opposition between inside and outside, between their proper inner self and the outside world" (Reckwitz 2010: 212). One might thus be inclined to think that Romantic forms of subjectivity institute embodiment in its very contingency and particularity as positive, disrupting the instrumentalising reduction of the body and embodiment by the early-bourgeois subject.

However, Reckwitz's own description of the Romantic sense of the depth of the self ought to give one pause when assigning values to the early-bourgeois and Romantic conceptions of the body. He calls the Romantic re-evaluation of the inner life of an individual subject and the outside world "post-Cartesian" (Reckwitz 2010: 212). While it is true that the Romantics value

emotions and feelings – especially when they exceed early-bourgeois notions of morality and propriety (Reckwitz 2010: 210) – and thus move outside the broadly rationalist scope of Descartes' classical reading of the binary opposition between *res cogitans* and *res extensa,* they remain beholden to both the structural logic of Cartesianism and the primacy of the *res cogitans* it institutes. Recall that Descartes himself does not explicitly exclude emotions and feelings from the realm of the mind, although they are subordinate to rational thought, as briefly alluded to in chapter two (cf. Merleau-Ponty 1974: 234, FN 41). Hence, it could be argued that the differences between early-bourgeois and Romantic conceptions of the mind are superficial and result from different answers to the question which constitutive part of the *res cogitans* should be considered superior to the others and the *res extensa.* Both still fundamentally agree that an individual subject is defined by their thoughts and mental activities; the Cartesian "hyperseparation" (Plumwood 1993: 49) of mental self and material others is treated as axiomatic by both the early-bourgeois and the Romantic culture of subjectivity.

As discussed in chapter two,, Cartesianism results in a constitutive blindness to the "entanglements" (Barad 2007: 247) of the human body as a liminal zone that is partly constituted by interaction with the world beyond the body. Hence, both conceptualisations of subjectivity concur in tending to sideline the body as a site of negotiation and of world-making (*sensu* Arendt (Arendt 2016b [1967]: 219)); both thereby also minimise exposure to an increased awareness of the contingency embodied by and lived through forms of human life that do not concur with these cultures of subjectivity. Reckwitz implicitly confirms these complimentary forms of world-blindness when he writes of the Romantic subject: "The Romantic subject being located in the 'depth' of a subject's individual inside does not mean that acts [performed] outside this mental and emotional sphere [*geistig-seelischem Inneren*] become entirely irrelevant; however, in a Romantic context, they acquire meaning *exclusively in relation to a subject's inner life* [my emphasis, MTW]" (Reckwitz 2010: 213). His description of the early-bourgeois subject's treatment of their embodiment echoes this in inverted form: early-bourgeois bodies are products of a "domestication of the body, making it the *instrument of a non-bodily self* [my emphasis, MTW]" (Reckwitz 2010: 182).

Ultimately, both these variations of the Enlightenment subject seem incapable of thinking embodied individual subjects as complex, "entangled" (Barad 2007: 33) beings and instead each favours one side of the Cartesian binary that reduces the complex contingency of human interaction and seemingly denies the intra-action of "mind" and "body" wholesale. However, a

closer look at British literary genres popular in the decades around 1800 renders the certainty of the above statement contingent in its turn. Between novels that propagate Enlightenment values and the moderation of sentiment (Samuel Richardson and his successors being the most prominent writers in this genre (Schmidt 2012: 195 – 199, 204 – 208; Seeber 2012: 272 - 274)) on the one hand, and the ecstatic focus on individual embodiments portrayed in Romantic poetry (Seeber 2012: 243 - 272), the Gothic embraces a variant of the "logic of the 'and' [single quotation marks in original, MTW]" (Kandinsky, quoted in Heinz 2007: 1) and attempts to represent the complexity of embodiment beyond the Cartesian dualism.

Recent scholarship on the genre has emphasised how its eighteenth-century variation helped to articulate a form of subjectivity, particularly female subjectivity, that argues for using sentiment to help women negotiate the demands of a male-dominated culture. The scholarship analyses how these texts portray forms of subjectivity that negotiate between rational and emotional responses to life. Ferguson Ellis argues that the novels of Anne Radcliffe, the popularity of which shaped many of the conventions of the genre (Botting 2014: 58 - 65), position the terror of the Radcliffean heroine as the initial prompt for her subsequently taking action against the men who have imprisoned her, for example (Ferguson Ellis 1989: 99 - 101). Conversely, men in these novels fall into three divergent categories, according to Ferguson Ellis, of which the father and the villain are the most interesting in our present context: the daughter's troubles usually go back to a father who has deliberately kept her from knowing a central fact about their family, which affects relationships among family members adversely, in order to preserve a model of female innocence (propagated in contemporary morality tracts as well as political and legal decisions (Ferguson Ellis 1989: 11 - 18)) that sought to keep women from any kind of awareness of the public sphere. As it is precisely this lack of knowledge that leads to the heroine's captivity in the first place, Gothic novels champion social awareness and knowledge of public life for both men and women (though its form and extent are still segregated by gender (Ferguson Ellis 1989:12). Interestingly, the villains of "female Gothic" (Ferguson Ellis 1989: 43) fiction also critique a component of the early-bourgeois socio-domestic nexus.

The villains of Radcliffe's novels are often younger sons who have been passed over during the allocation of family property and who now seek to violently seize assets. Often they are also associated with the aristocratic anti-subject, as they violate the rights and corporal independence of a third party to finance their excessive spending habits (Reckwitz 2010: 181; Ferguson Ellis 1989: 43-44) – a trait that also characterises them as *exempla* of the early-bourgeois "speculating

subject" (Reckwitz 2010: 132) and thus as individual subjects who exist outside the early-bourgeois sphere of propriety. Upon their defeat, the inheritance they have seized passes to the heroine, usually making her the affluent party upon marriage rather than the man she marries (Ferguson Ellis 1989: 123). Radcliffe's novels thus critique abusive forms of (masculine) subjectivities and offer alternatives that are built on negotiations between rationality and sensibility as well as between genders and various discourse-practices, thus rendering the increased confinement of women to the private sphere and the beginning hegemony of the ideology of separate spheres epistemologically contingent in turn.

6.2 Reading Victor Frankenstein As an Ethical Critique of Romantic and Enlightened Ideals of Genius

First published two decades after Radcliffe's most famous novels, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein or the modern Prometheus* follows this tradition, but it adds the dimension of embodiment to its deliberations, presenting readers with one of the most memorable contingently-embodied characters of British literature.[121] Both the question of a new relationship to embodiment and contingency appear in Victor's narrative even before the Creature opens his eyes for the first time "on a dreary night in November".[122] When talking to Walton about how he first obtains his "materials" (F 35), Victor sets out to explain to his fellow scientist how he managed to bear his frequenting of cemeteries and other institutions associated with death and decay: "In my education, *my father had taken the greatest precautions that my mind should not be impressed with supernatural horrors* [my emphasis, MTW]" (F 34).

In this passage, the narrator takes great care to establish his credentials as a rational Enlightenment subject who is not given to any kind of non-rational imaginations. Victor repeats this discursive move a number of times in the pages leading up to the moment the Creature comes alive: a few lines after the ones just quoted, he charges Walton (and the reader) to "remember [that he is] not recording the vision of a madman. The sun does not more certainly shine in the

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[121] The *story* of the novel immediately became popular even though its *discourse* was not: even though the novel's first print run sold only slowly, by 1827 the first stage adaptation of the novel featured many additions that were to enter popular consciousness and stay there for the next two centuries, most famously perhaps that the Creature loses the ability to speak and "has the mind of an infant" (Butler 2008: xlix), just as he does in the most famous film adaptation.

[122] Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein. The 1818 Text.* Ed. Marilyn Butler. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008, 38. All subsequent references to the novel are to this edition and placed parenthetically in the body of the text following the abbreviation "F".

heavens than that which [he] now affirm[s] is true" (F 34). However, the two passages focus their appeal on different models of subjectivity, although the use of imagery derived from Enlightenment discourses in both simultaneously reveals the entanglement of early-bourgeois and Romantic subjectivity in their depth structure.

The "vision of a madman" (F 34) might be conceived as a variation of a Romantic subject's "internal experience" (Reckwitz 2010: 212), motivated by an "anticipation of the future" (Reckwitz 2010: 212) that it effectively (as well as *affectively*, as the vision cannot be consciously categorised and thus controlled) collapses the perceptive and apperceptive boundaries between present and future.[123] It thus constitutes an experience of Romantic particularity *par excellence* (as reflected in the famous last verses of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *Kubla Khan*).[124] By evoking this image *ex negativo*, Victor identifies himself with the rational early-bourgeois subject. Notably, this very act of claiming also contains "trace[s]" (Derrida 2004: 295) of its very disavowal: firstly, in choosing a negative statement, a negation rather than an affirmation, Victor's choice of words retains the possibility that he is in fact a madmen, even as (and perhaps because) he puts it under linguistic erasure. Furthermore, the invocation of madness to affirm rationality also confirms Foucault's assertion in the preface to *Madness and Civilization* that the Enlightenment constructs madness as the dark background against which the properties of rationality and Reason can be defined and affirmed (Foucault 1973: 7-8, 10). Hence, the two categories are placed in a relation of constitutive Otherness, which enables them to commingle and infuse each other. Readers are thus left to wonder whether Victor might not in fact be driven by the "vision of a madman" (F 34). Even so, his madness would remain a state of mind circumscribed by the boundary and particularity of his own inner life.

Strikingly, even his attempt to create a basis of shared experience with Walton (and the reader) is unsettled upon closer inspection by the image he selects and the purpose to which it is metaphorically put. Most readers would agree that the ability of the sun to shine (to emit heat and light that reaches the atmosphere of Earth) is a universal; however, it is by no means equally

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[123] According to recent scholarship in affect studies, affects (in contrast to emotions and feelings) are not directed towards a self or other individual subjects. Instead, they constitute multi-directional phenomena and thus exceed conscious tracing (Massumi 2002: 5-15). For a detailed discussion of the differences between affects and emotions, see the essays in Gregg and Seigworth 2010.

[124] „In a vision once I saw […]/ His shining eyes, his floating hair[…]/ For he on honey-dew have fed/ And drunk the milk of Paradise!"(Coleridge 2012 [1816]: 461 -462, verse 44, 50, 53 -54).

certain that this light is perceived by humans in the same, universal way. A blind individual subject might not see it shining and instead feel different degrees of warmth upon their skin, whereas sighted individual subjects might debate whether one would say the sun was shining on a cloudy day, and so on. Hence, the universal experiential basis upon which Victor's claim to equality and commonality is meant to rest is itself shot through with traces of differentiating particularity and singularity. Notably, these traces are grounded in the embodied character of human experience, whereas the community Victor tries to create draws on the conceptual equation of light and truth, which in turn draws on a shared store of imagery uniting the Ancient Greeks and Christianity (Voß 2008: 205).[125]

Additionally, the image chosen by Victor is tied to conceptual frameworks that also subvert his own claim to community. The most famous Ancient Greek source for the metaphorical equation of light and truth is Platonic philosophy, where Plato equates the sun with the *idea* of unmediated truth, making it one of the few instances in his philosophy where the secondary materialisation of an *idea* in a thing does not weaken its power and reach (Plato 2010: 63). The most famous appearance of this symbol is the "allegory of the cave", the last section of Plato's *Republic* (Plato 2010: 61-64). In this allegory, it is a single individual subject who becomes aware of the fact that he and his fellow humans are spending their lives watching shadows play on a wall.[126] Baffled, he turns around and notices that these shadows are cast by objects being carried in front of a fire burning in the middle of a cave. The no-longer entranced man circles the fire and moves to the mouth and then outside the cave where he sees the sun, that is, a natural, rather than man-made, source of light. Traditionally, the allegory has been interpreted as symbolising philosophy's search for and attainment of truth. Hence, in drawing on this image, Victor aligns himself – and potentially Walton – with both those who seek "the mystery of life" (F 33) and the smaller group who has attained it. This hints at Victor still being proud of what he has achieved, in spite of his claim that "a man who believes his native town to be the world" (F 35) – thus living in a lifeworld with strict boundaries. It is thus structurally equivalent to the Platonic life of the people inside the cave - is infinitely "happier" (F 35).

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[125] This dual source of the imagery Victor employs again confirms his attempt to simultaneously declare his allegiance to the principles of the Enlightenment and claim the role of Romantic genius for himself, the discourses of which often draw on Classical imagery (Voß 2008: 205) while also drawing inspiration from non- Anglican forms of Protestant Christianity, including Miltonian Republicanism (Ferguson Ellis 1989: 33-52).

[126] The choice of pronouns in this summary is deliberate and reflects Ancient Greek assumptions regarding gender, which excluded women from the *agora*, the place of politics and philosophy (Cavarero 1995; Irigaray 1985).

Additionally, the evocation of the allegory of the cave also highlights the non-social (or even anti-social) elements of Victor's individual subjectivity, which echoes Romantic disdain for early-bourgeois "morality" (Reckwitz 2010: 210), that is communally shared notions of right and wrong. As Arendt notes in her analysis of the allegory in *Vita Activa oder vom tätigen Leben*, it also symbolises (or, in Arendt's reading, narrativises) the "unbridgeable difference between the philosopher's life and [the life of] the polis" (Arendt 2016b [1967]: 30) in the wake of Socrates' death sentence and execution (Arendt 2016b [1967]: 31): the man who leaves the cave does so alone, and even more importantly, he does not return inside to inform the others of his discovery or to help them go outside.[127] Thus, the metaphorical association of the sun and truth also implies that a successful philosopher or scientist has to move outside the circles of "propriety" (Esposito 2011: 10) delineated by society to achieve his ends.

The above observation helps pinpoint the difference between Victor's attempt to defend himself from the charge of madness and his explanation of his indifference to cemeteries as spaces charged with negative and repelling emotions, such as fear. The former rhetorical strategy appeals primarily to a Romantic emphasis of an individual subject's individuality, while the latter positions Victor in a specific social and communal context (aligned with early-bourgeois discourse-practices). The narrator presents himself as a dutiful pupil and son trained according to the models and precepts propagated in the education pamphlets of the time. Following Rousseau, British writers on children's education like Maria Edgeworth and Mary Wollstonecraft argue that children should be exposed to nature from a very young age, but that children's literature – which both Edgeworth and Wollstonecraft themselves wrote – should not feature supernatural phenomena, focusing instead on moral precepts derived from Christian teaching but applied to the child's immediate lifeworld. At first glance, Victor thus presents himself as an ideal early-bourgeois subject and simultaneously ensures that neither Walton nor the reader blames his father for the events he is about to narrate.

Throughout the novel, Victor is at pains to associate Alphonse Frankenstein with proper early-bourgeois subjectivity and to position the father as the son's ego ideal: Frankenstein describes himself as being "[urged forward] [by] a resistless [sic] and frantic impulse" (F 36), painting his

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[127] Arendt used the initial publication of *Vita Activa/ The Human Condition* in German to revise the text, thus creating differences in content between the English and German editions of ostensibly the same book. All direct quotes refer to the German editions of the works cited. For a detailed account of the role of language difference in Arendt Studies see Ludz 2011.

period of study and experimentation as a quintessentially Romantic experience of excess (Reckwitz 2010: 212) that affects his usual conduct, disrupting the patterns of behaviour his early- bourgeois upbringing has instilled in him (Reckwitz 2010: 167 – 168); it even affects his body, which becomes "emaciated" (F 36); the choice of adjective indicates that Victor was on the brink of death and that his hunger for "the mystery" (F 33) almost exceeds his biological capability to stay alive.

But even during this experience of biological and mental excess, he "thought [his] father would be unjust if he ascribed [Victor's] neglect to vice" (F 37). Hence, Victor continues to justify his pursuits by reference to early-bourgeois conceptions of the "subject of work" (Reckwitz 2010: 52). Even though he abandons "early-bourgeois ideals of moderation" (Reckwitz 2010: 125), Victor justifies this through reference to the early-bourgeois assumption that products of work should be means to an end and that this end should be useful (Reckwitz 2010: 126). The experiencing-I remains indebted to an early-bourgeois frame of reference for his self-justification – a frame that is the product of his father's education.[128]

Ultimately, both the narrating-I and the text as a whole concur that Victor has failed in attaining the goal of producing something that serves a beneficial social purpose – that he has failed in being a proper early-bourgeois subject of work: "A human being in perfection ought always to preserve a calm and peaceful mind, and never to allow passion or a transitory desire to disturb his tranquillity" (F 37). Rather than calling his father "unjust" (F 37) – accusing him of violating Victor's inner sense of justice – the narrating- I now judges the deeds of his younger self "unlawful" (F 37). The frame of reference thus shifts back from the singularity of an ultimately incommunicable individual feeling to a bourgeois interest in universalised and externalised sets of rules (cf. Loick 2017b: 7, 36 -39, 59 - 66). Alphonse Frankenstein is presented by the narrating-I as the ideal moral reference point, and the text as a whole for the most part concurs with the narrator's claims.

Still, the question remains if the elder Frankenstein is in fact "entirely free of blame" (F 37). The narrator himself notes that his interest in Agrippa, Paracelsus, and Albertus Magnus – all three of whom are pre-modern writers with a mystical and supernatural bend – is spurred on, rather than deflated, by his father's "careless" (F 23) dismissal of his interest (F 23). His further exploration of the events surrounding his interest in medieval approaches to anatomy culminate by the

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[128] As will be discussed below, the early-bourgeois entanglement of ethics and work both explains and critiques Victor's actions after he has given life to the Creature.

narrator's own account in the desire to "banish death from the human frame, and make man [sic] invulnerable to any but a violent death" (F 23). The product of Victor's imagination thus already centres on the entanglement of life and death that leads to the later experiments (F 33). The only difference between them is an inversion of the principle invoked: he initially wants to bring a dead body back to life rather than preventing a living body from dying. Ultimately, the Creature is in fact physically "stronger than [Victor]" (F 77).

Interestingly, Alphonse Frankenstein's error lies in the insufficient application of the early-bourgeois and Enlightenment principles that guide the moral precepts he transmits to his children: Victor tells the reader that the children of the Frankenstein household are "never forced (F 21) to study anything and that their education follows an Enlightenment educational precept that "some ends [be] in view" (F 23) during lessons and thus on intersubjectively-comprehensible "achievements (*Leistungen*)" (Reckwitz 2010: 126). Therefore, education in the Frankenstein household at first glance follows the Enlightenment suggestion to reform child-rearing into a "space of education" (Reckwitz 2010: 144), analogous to the social fields of friendship and marriage. The analogy rests on the discursive assumption that all participants in these three social fields are encouraged to communicate as equals on the basis of similarities in personality that engender and maintain mutual sympathy (Reckwitz 2010: 146). However, in the case of education, this assumption is limited by the constitutively "ambivalent structure" (Reckwitz 2010: 144) of this social field, which stems from the difference in knowledge (and in the case of children, of the overall amount of life experience) that defines the role of student and teacher in the first place (Reckwitz 2010: 144). It is against this ambivalence that Victor's interest in maintaining and restoring life is formed: Alphonse bases his dismissal of his son's interests on his own greater life experience, which enables him to declare Agrippa "sad trash" (F 27). Simultaneously, this very same life experience informs his assumption that he has become "a reasonable adult human being" (Reckwitz 2010: 144) due to these experiences; this in turn justifies the hierarchical difference between himself and his son. As this is a hierarchy based on reason and education, rather than inherent, aristocratic privilege, it does not contradict the early-bourgeois championing of "equality" (Reckwitz 2010: 144).[129] After all, the gradual decrease of hierarchical difference through communication (Reckwitz 2010: 144) is precisely the goal of early-bourgeois discourse-practices. Crucially, this moment of communication is missed by

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[129] The above description deliberately omits questions of class, gender, racialisation and embodiment. They are addressed in the following discussion of the cemetery scene and the subsequent analysis of the Creature's birth.

Alphonse, who, contrary to the Enlightenment model of the ideal teacher-student relationship, does not "take[] the pains to explain to [Victor],[*sic*] that the principles of Agrippa had been entirely exploded [by the modern natural sciences]" (F 21). Victor, for his part, becomes convinced that his father has simply not read the ancient philosophers carefully enough and pursues their study without communicative interactions to direct his engagement. Instead, the books convince him of his singularity and particularity, their contents elevated to the status of "treasures known to few beside [Victor]" (F 23).

Even more importantly, Alphonse Frankenstein conceives of his children's education as something that is entrusted to him and him alone. Despite the increased association of education with women – at least as far as young children are concerned – in the Frankenstein household, "[F]ather directed our [= the children's, MTW] studies, and […] [M]other partook of our enjoyments" (F 23). Hence, the domestic duties are strictly segregated, depriving Madame Frankenstein (as well as Elizabeth after her death, who assumes her structural role in the household (F29)) of the possibility of even noticing her son's interests. The episode thus furnishes a subtle critique of the practices of the emergent ideology of "separate spheres" (Ferguson Ellis 1989: 1): readers are told that Alphonse marries the much younger Caroline because her emotional conduct in the face of her father's death – captured in the image of her "weeping delicately over her father's body" (F 19), a scene that appeals directly to eighteenth-century ideals of female sentiment, as Ferguson Ellis notes (Ferguson Ellis 1989: 190). She seems the perfect embodiment of female virtue; however, Madame Frankenstein is not allowed to put this virtue to use. As the expert in emotional education, she could have pointed out to her husband that his eldest son, even though he is seen to read all the time, never talks about his readings when the family congregates and that he seems particularly reluctant to talk about it to Alphonse. Considering that the text as a whole provides no indication that Monsieur Frankenstein is not motivated by concern for his children, such prompting – based on the image of the ideal spouse as an individual subject who is "simultaneously empathetic and communicative" (Reckwitz 2010: 153) – would probably have encouraged him to communicate with Victor on his own initiative. Yet neither Caroline Frankenstein nor Elizabeth are portrayed in the novel as actively engaging in equal communication with the men of the Frankenstein family, enabling them to correct the family's problematic structures of communication. Notably, Elizabeth, though kept out of the communicative loop by Victor as regards his interests in the domestic sphere where he "[swears] her to secrecy" (F 27) on the matter of his interest in Agrippa, is capable of

"generous approbation" (F 64) in a public court of law and in the face of male political authority. The novel thus exposes early-nineteenth-century domestic ideology as contingent and self-contradictory.[130]

Furthermore, this focus on the male line of inheritance and natality already prepares the audience for the Creature's struggle and failure to attain recognition of his "independent social existence" (Patterson 1982: 10) and natality when he is barred from both membership in the De Lacey and the Frankenstein family and denied the right to found his own. Reckwitz notes that the ideal of the early-bourgeois family focuses on "a husband and wife and their children" (Reckwitz 2010: 144), presenting it as the (gender-bifurcated) (Ferguson-Ellis 1989: 3-31; Armstrong 2004: 572 – 577 575) nucleus and seed of individual subjectivity, and both social and political communal life (Honneth 2015: 279-282), However, this ideological construct implicitly requires both genders to have the possibility to educate and influence their children. Yet Victor's narrative makes it clear that the Frankenstein family was shaped primarily by Alphonse even when Caroline was alive. After her death, it thus becomes exclusively patriarchal. When he makes the Creature, Victor, as we shall discuss below, makes him male and thus continues the exclusively androcentric family tradition.[131] As he never tells Elizabeth about the Creature, Victor deprives her of the chance to speak for his creation and to take the Creature in. As this acceptance would have prevented Elizabeth dying at the hands of the Creature, the text as a whole seems to suggest that patriarchal exclusions of women undermine Enlightenment claims to equality and to instead argue for women becoming equal citizens and members of society alongside men. Shelley's novel thus echoes (her mother) Mary Wollstonecraft's *Declaration of the Rights of Women* (Wollstonecraft 1999 [1789]: 85 -149)

The self-contradiction and epistemological and praxeological contingency of the ideology of separate spheres affects Victor and his father as much as it does the female characters. During

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[130] Interestingly, the novel employs the same rhetorical strategy as Mary Wollstonecraft does in her famous *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (Wollstonecraft 1999 [1792]): instead of directly arguing against the premise and pointing out that it is wrong, both authors expose the irrationality of these discourse-practices by exposing their self-contradictions and their violation of axiomatic Enlightenment and early-bourgeois assumptions regarding subjectivity. For a detailed discussion of the roles played of the female members of the Frankenstein household in the text, see Ferguson Ellis (1989: 188 – 200).

[131] Additionally, the fact that Victor gives the Creature his own gender (F 39) and attempts to make him in „his own image" (Genesis 1) – as the Biblical account states God did when creating Adam – subtly indicates the hubris inherent in Victor's claim to genius (and perhaps in the construction of this discursive role generally). See below for a reading of the Creature's embodiment as a problematisation of Victor's self-image.

Justine's trial, for example, Victor, in sharp contrast to Elizabeth, cannot find the courage to confess to his knowledge of the crime, keeping "silent" (F 63) instead. Even more strikingly, he focuses on his own guilt during the trial, considering it more important than keeping Justine alive and proving her "innocence" (F64) through his knowledge and testimony. He even states that "the *agonies of the accused [do] not equal [his]* [my emphasis, MTW]" (F 64), once again placing himself in a unique emotional position relative to the other individual subjects present and immunising himself from his communal responsibilities (Esposito 2011: 6).

Victor's attitude to and behaviour during Justine's trial violate both early-bourgeois injunctions to modulate one's behaviour according to socially-agreed on mores and Romantic respect for the particularity and singularity of each individual subject. Readers are thus encouraged by the text as a whole to consider Victor's response inappropriate and potentially ethically problematic. The fact that Justine – though readers know that her claim to be innocent is factually correct and that Victor could supply a defence for her – is condemned not just morally but physically and that this condemnation is spoken by a public court that represents a republican city-state (rather than, say, an absolutist monarch), additionally exposes early-bourgeois ideals of communality and government as contingent and as prone to abuses as other forms of government; hence, it destabilises Enlightenment political ideals and the binaries upon which revolutionary agitation in the period rests as contingent.(cf, Menke 2015: 7 – 11 and *passim*; Loick 2017b: 161 - 175).

Even more importantly in the present context, Justine's trial proves that "[the] precariousness [of life] is co-extensive with birth" (Butler 2016: 14), that life always depends on the presence of other people and an individual subject's relationships to them (Butler 2016: 14), even when those relationships are not positive or beneficial. The novel confirms this when it exposes Justine (and, as witnesses, Victor and Elizabeth) to the death-dealing judgement of the "popular voice and the countenance of the judges." (F 64); the fact that a community can condemn one of their number to death and does so exposes the Enlightenment "ontology of the person" (Butler 2016: 19), which generalises processes of "biological individuation" (Butler 2016: 19) to the relational realm of the social (Butler 2016: 14 – 19). The scene problematises this ontology and creates a radical degree of awareness of the socio-ontogenetic constitution and the naturecultural entanglement of life in both the novel's readers and its characters. In short, both groups are exposed to a radically increased awareness of new forms of accidental and epistemological contingency.

6.3 The Birth of the Creature and the Trauma of Radical Embodied Contingency

Ultimately, Victor cannot face the (implications of) Justine's sentence and "rush[es] out of the court" (F 64) On the surface, one might be tempted to ascribe this action primarily to his emotional state and perhaps an increased awareness of his own guilt and the wrongs he has perpetuated by being silent for his own sake (F 62). Upon closer inspection, however, his tendency to flee when faced with ethically-challenging situations points to a literally far more radical problem with the Enlightenment models of subjectivity Victor's sense of self draws on: at this point in the narrative, his audiences (both extradiegetic and intradiegetic) have witnessed Frankenstein flee from a place while under strong emotional duress once before. "Unable to endure of the aspect of the being I had created, I *rushed* out of the room[.] [my emphasis, MTW]" (F 39). This repetition is noteworthy on a number of levels: for it connects the two events on at least three different axes. Firstly, the experiencing-I responds to both situations in exactly the same way; secondly, and even more importantly, this response happens exclusively on a somatic level, independently of any conscious choice on Victor's part. And finally, the impact of both situations on Victor's consciousness is apparently so intense that even the narrating-I feels compelled to use the same syntactical structure when narrating both events.

On the one hand, this last observation linguistically marks and highlights the causal chain and the patterns of ethical responsibility that link Justine's sentence and Victor's experiment. Early-bourgeois models of subjectivities of work "attribute successes or failures, guilt or innocence, conceived as the consequence of the actions of particular individuals, to these particular individuals […] [and thus] individualise lack of success or failure [by seeing them as a result of] a lack of self-discipline" (Reckwitz 2010: 125). As Justine's death is the result of the Creature's actions, who is in turn the product of Victor's work, this work ethic ultimately blames Victor for Justine's fate.[132] Additionally, it corroborates Alphonse Frankenstein's suspicion that his son did not conform to early-bourgeois notions of disciplined work, instead being "idle" (F 37) even as he "toil[s]" (F 39). Since he evidently has no compunction about murdering people, the Creature as Victor's work also refuses to participate in "a social sphere defined by moderation and purposefulness" (Reckwitz 2010: 126); even worse, the Creature (acting as the Other that moves inside a social formation) exposes this society to its own epistemological and accidental contingency by killing its member, and in particular by killing children, who symbolise a

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[132] The consequences of Victor's work being a „being"(F 39) for these processes of ethical attribution are discussed in greater detail below.

society's "futurity" (Edelman 2004: *passim*), a society's ability to project itself forward into a future.[133] Hence, Victor's flight signals that he has internalised the ethical dimension of the early-bourgeois conception of work as part of his habitus (Bourdieu 1987: 278 - 283) and illustrates the reach of a habitus, which goes beyond the level of conscious action to the psychosomatic component of pre-and unconscious embodiment (Merleau-Ponty 1974: 112). Thus, Victor's very body confirms the validity of the early-modern bourgeois ideal work ethic, instantiating it as the ethical framework that guides the novel as a whole.

On the other hand, this somatic response of Victor's potentially instantiates a far-reaching critique of both the early-bourgeois and the Romantic culture of subjectivity. As remarked on above, it is Victor's body that responds to the events around him, rather than his mind: hence, his actions disrupt the relationship between "soma and psyche" and "overwhelm" (Van der Kolk and McFarlane 2004: 488) Victor. The psychologists Bess van der Kolk and Alexander Mc Farlane define this "intrusion" (Van der Kolk and McFarlane 2004: 490) as one of the central features of post-traumatic stress disorder. "[…] [T]raumatic experiences can alter people's *psychological, biological, and social* equilibrium to such a degree that the memory of one particular event comes to taint all other experiences[.] This tyranny of the past interferes with the ability to pay attention to both *new and familiar* situations [my emphasis, MTW]" (van der Kolk and Mc Farland 2004: 488). In Frankenstein's case, the trauma of his having created the Creature, another living being, both interferes with his ability to enjoy meeting Clerval, upon whose coming to Ingolstadt, Victor thinks "[he sees] the dreaded spectre glide into the room" (F 47) and falls into a fit (F 47) – meeting his friend is a familiar experience – and to appreciate the difference between his own mental agitation and Justine's unique position as the accused in a murder trial (F 64). The reach of this trauma is exemplified by its leaving a readable narrative trace even in a speech act that Victor performs months after the events in question. Hence, he confirms Jacques Derrida's claim that "speech can never be fully present to itself" (Derrida 2004: 286); the *différance* and contingency of the Creature's embodied contingency haunts Victor and the narrative throughout.

Before examining the root cause of Victor's trauma by returning to the "night in November" (F 38), let us briefly note that the fact that Frankenstein's actions can be described – and it seems to us accurately so – as post-traumatic stress *avant la lettre* itself furnishes a critique of both models

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[133] For a more detailed analysis of the Creature's relationship to natality, futurity as well as homosociality and – sexuality, see the detailed discussion of the murders and his first meeting with Victor below.

of subjectivity active in the narrative. The early-bourgeois culture of subjectivity is founded in part on the belief that the internalised morality of an individual subject, in addition to enabling them to interpret and to adapt their own individual emotions and feelings to the demands of an outside world (Reckwitz 2010: 167 -168) and to communicate with other early-bourgeois individual subjects (Reckwitz 2010: 167) also "actualises an intersubjective (*übersubjektive*) form. It imagines this morality as reflecting society as a universal (*Verköperung einer Allgemeinheit*) and believes morality to – ideally – ensure the perfectability of a rational and reasonable (*rationalen und vernünftigen*) order" (Reckwitz 2010: 178).[134] Using "morality" (Reckwitz 2010: 178) as an unacknowledged "onto-theological […] [and transcendental] signifier(Derrida 2016 [1967]: 11, 21), the early-bourgeois form of subjectivity thus creates a metaphysical model of an ordered world and universe that subsumes first the non-rational components of human life under the auspices of a form of Reason reduced to rationality – as reflected in the latter being the first attribute used to describe the ideal early-bourgeois image of order in the Reckwitz quote above -, then expands to include the individual subject under the immanence of a social collectivity, and lastly places society under the auspices of a deified reason.[135] Contrary to this assumption of unilateral reflection along all these different axes, Victor's trauma makes the body its own independent agent that cannot be fully controlled (or even apprehended) by conscious and rational operations; the body thus asserts itself as an end in itself, which ought to be considered an equal actor alongside consciousness.

The phenomenon of trauma seems at first to precisely echo and confirm the Romanticic focus on the non-sociality of the "inner self" (Reckwitz 2010: 209) and its construction of an "alternative code [of subjectivity, MTW] that metaphorically constructs a sense of a subject's inner 'depth inside' the subject and assumes the existence of a 'world' beyond appearances (*Hinterwelt hinter den Erscheinungen*) that can only partially be apprehended rationally or empirically but is ultimately beyond the control of either" [single quotation marks in original, MTW]" (Reckwitz 2010: 209). However, the narrative critiques this view as well by pointing out the destructive consequences of a model of subjectivity that assumes others should apprehend and respect an individual subject's particularity (as Victor does when he is charged by his father with being idle

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[134] Interestingly, Reckwitz himself references the body metaphorically in his description of a model of society that minimises the role of embodiment within its system.

[135] For a more detailed discussion of the difference between rationality and Reason, see Welsch 1996 and Butter (2007: 19-24, 31-41, 37).

(F 37), yet they themselves are incapable of perceiving others in the same way. Hence, the novel charges Romantic individual subjects with a dangerous (literal) dis-regard for the social complexity of recognition.

After all, Victor's trauma originates precisely from such a scene of being looked at:

[…] I saw the dull, yellow eye of the creature open; it breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs.
How can I describe my emotion at this catastrophe, or how delineate the wretch whom with such infinite pains and care I had endeavoured to form? His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features to be beautiful. Beautiful! – Great God! (F 38 -39)

The first sign of life the Creature emits is opening his eyes and looking at Victor. Although the action is as yet not deliberate (it is doubtful whether he actually sees Victor as he later reports that he "saw, felt, heard, and smelt all at the same time" (F 88)), it immediately creates a space of relation between the two beings in the room, and, even more importantly, it puts Frankenstein in the passive position of the object who is looked at. Following Sigmund Freud, Laura Mulvey notes that the pleasure of the look and of looking has two dimensions: the first, which Freud calls scopophilia, takes "pleasure in looking at the other as object" (Mulvey 2010: 2088). The second dimension involves the narcissistic identification with the object one is looking at (Mulvey 2010: 2088); this identification thus collapses the difference between the subject and the object of the gaze. In contrast, if the object is capable of looking back at the subject, one supposes, the identificatory relationship based on subsumption is shattered, thereby exposing the subject to the contingency (and precarity (Butler 2016: 14)) of their sense of self.

The psychoanalytic terminology introduced above furnishes an explanation for why Victor considers the Creature's opening his eyes "a catastrophe" (F 39), that is a fundamental negative disruption of both his individual life and (by implication) the natural order of things. After all, as the Creature is made, rather than born, considered by itself, the colour of its eyes as such can be no surprise to the person who assembled the "materials" (F 37) and placed the eyeball within its socket. And yet, the narrator 's speaking of the body parts he has assembled as "materials" (F 37)emphasises that he considers them inanimate and passive objects; objects that gain their meaning solely from the arrangement he puts them in (F 36-37); his subject status as creator is thus contingent upon the simultaneous passivity and lack of both animation and agency of the objects he chooses as materials, as the passive means only given purpose by the ends imagined by Victor to which his actions alone employ them . Hence, the fact that these materials have now become a subject, an end in itself whose body is no longer an instrument of Victor's will explains why Victor considers the existence of the Creature a "catastrophe" (F 39) well before the

Creature commits any of the acts readers might condemn him for: as illustrated above, the Creature showcases the limits of Victor's agency and forces him to confront a relational way of existence, shattering the imaginary hierarchy Frankenstein's sense of self depends on.[136] However, the narrator's highlighting of the unbridgeable difference between him and the Creature subverts the overt claims made by the passage. Quite apart from the ways in which Victor's claims subvert and deconstruct themselves (which will be analysed in the following paragraphs), his almost obsessive need to re-iterate his difference to and lack of relationship with his Creature encourages readers to question and problematise Victor's sense of self and the rhetorical purpose of the passage quoted above (as well as the means it uses to that end):

As explained above, Victor's initial description of the Creature's first conscious actions tries to paint the Creature as passive (or as "less active") and therefore as more object-like than Victor through its phrasing and choice of words: first of all, although the narrator later switches to a gendered pronoun – notably Victor chooses "he" (F 39), that is, the pronoun that signals the creature's belonging to the gender category Victor claims for himself – he initially refers to the creature as "it", the pronoun the English language reserves for things and what "non[-]persons" (Esposito 2013: 140), persons who belong to the genus *homo sapiens* but who do not fulfil the criteria of autonomy that define a full person in the legal and moral sense (such as infants, severely disabled individual subjects, or comatose patients, for example).[137] Therefore, Victor distances himself from the being coming to life on his laboratory table, affirming his own autonomy and subjectivity *sui generis* in a classical humanist sense (Esposito 2015: 90) *ex negativo*. Additionally, the narrating-I emphasises that the creature is the patient (in the linguistic sense) rather than the conscious initiator and agent of the actions his body performs by using the passive voice. The choice of attribute in the above quote additionally declares these actions both excessive and pre-conscious: "a *violent* motion *agitated* its limbs [my emphasis, MTW]" (F 39). Through these discursive manoeuvres, the narrator maintains a hierarchical distance between

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[136] Additionally, this dynamic recalls Jacques Lacan's description of the mirror stage and the dangerous sense of omnipotence it may invoke in children (Pagel 1989: 21-36; Lacan 2004[1966]: 461-466).

[137] For a detailed analysis of the intimate relationship between the concept of the person and that of the thing in Western legal and moral discourses, which often entailed a sliding scale between the full person and the non-person, see Esposito (2013: 138 - 141) and Esposito (2012: 90 - 100). The choice of *it* is particularly marked here also because, intradiegetically, is not available to a "native of Geneva" (F 18): French has no neuter third person singular pronoun.

himself and the Creature, maintaining the former in his accustomed role as active and controlling subject.

His designation of the Creature as a "wretch" (F 39) infuses this distinction – so far maintained mostly along axes associated with biology rather than culture – with a class component. As discussed in the previous chapter, in early modern English, *wretch* was commonly used for a peasant as well as a person who existed under abject moral conditions ("wretch | Definition of wretch in English by Oxford Dictionaries" website). Whereas it signals the end of Richard's decline and fall and his final push beyond the boundaries of the social into absolute Otherness in Shakespeare's play, here the term serves the inverse purpose. By using a social designator to describe the Creature, Victor inadvertently introduces him into the realm of the social, putting him in - relation to and conceding that he can form relationships with other beings (including Victor himself) even as the Creature retains his status as an Other due to his embodiment.

But even in the realm of the biological the Creature asserts his relationship to humanity and exposes Enlightenment ideals of autonomy and complete mental control as contingent: the one act Victor describes him as the active agent of is "breath[ing] hard" (F 39). Breathing is both an essential act of life and one that is governed by the vegetative system and thus mostly performed pre-consciously in the everyday course of life; this state of affairs is shared by both humans and non-humans, and thus blurs the distinction between the two categories (and destabilises any hierarchy humanist thinking maintains between them (Wolfe 2009: *passim*). Furthermore, breathing as an embodied experience inverts the Enlightenment association of consciousness with proper life and active existence. In the case of humans, breathing consciously is usually indicative of something that interrupts the instrumental usage of the body, and it indicates that an individual subject has been exposed to (accidental) contingency. Thus, the Creature by virtue of its very existence reminds his creator that his achievements rest on an unacknowledged biological foundation that conditions and limits the agential autonomy of an individual subject.

Interestingly, the discovery of the vegetative nervous system in the early-nineteenth century has two points of intersection with Shelley's novel: firstly, the scientist who discovered the vegetative nervous system, Marie Francois Xavier Bichat, is a pathologist and anatomist, much like Victor Frankenstein. Secondly, and even more importantly, Bichat calls this system "organic life (Esposito 2012: 22) and emphasises that this form of life is independent of conscious thought, which he calls "animal life" (Esposito 2012: 22; 22-23) and thus considers something shared

between human and non-human animals rather than the sole purview of rational humanity.[138] This inbraiding of extratextual and textual information is striking for two reasons: firstly, it indicates *ex negativo* how isolated Victor Frankenstein is from the currents of anatomy and natural philosophy circulating in Europe during his studies at Ingolstadt. The narrative never mentions any interactions between Victor and his peers; the only conversations with other people the narrative reports are between Victor and his teachers (F 28 – 31); hence, much like during his primary education, all of Victor's social interactions are shaped by the hierarchical difference constitutive of the relationship between students and teachers. He is never exposed to interaction with his equals; simultaneously, he is also sheltered from the experience of epistemological contingency and failure. M. Waldmann, the professor to whom Victor grows the most attached, explicitly designates him as literally peer-less: "'I am happy,' said M. Waldmann, 'to have gained a disciple, and if your application equals your ability, I have no doubt of your success' [single quotation marks in original, MTW]" (F 31). Victor's teacher implicitly ties his student's academic success to social isolation: if Victor applies himself, he spends a lot of time alone in a laboratory rather than interacting with other individual subject in social spaces outside the confines of his laboratory. His self-chosen isolation encompasses both familiar social contexts ("for two years […] I paid no visit to Geneva" (F 32)) as well as the exploration of new environments. Victor Frankenstein the scientist lives as if he had no social life and no social responsibilities – as if he were removed from all social obligations, much like the doctors of Ancient Rome (Esposito 2011: 5-6). As we shall see, the Creature – and thus the consequence of Victor's scientific isolationism – exposes this isolation as contingent and highly ethically problematic.

In light of the blending and blurring of seemingly distinct and often hierarchically differentiated areas occasioned by the Creature's very existence above, Victor's first failure also combines the spheres of the social and the biological and so problematises Enlightenment conceptions of rationality: the Creature's "yellow eye" (F 38) signals that the organ once belonged to an animal rather than a human. As it seems to directly look at Frankenstein, it disrupts and problematises the second component of the psychoanalytic function of scopophilia; the Creature does not have

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[138] For a reading of Bichat and his work that sees both as a disruptor and problematiser of Enlightenment subjectivity as well as the point of origin for the biological conception of race, see Esposito (2012: 20 – 28, 70 – 73). In contrast, Foucault proposes a reading that positions Bichat as a proponent of the rationality-based authority of the medical gaze (Foucault 2011: 160 - 161).

eyes in the same colour range as humans, thus making it impossible to subsume its embodiment under human –centric categories, including those of "proportion" (F 39) and "beauty" (F 39). Hence these concepts are revealed to be particular and based on emotional and cultural judgements, rather than universal and rational.

Notably, both"proportion" (F 39) and "beauty" (F 39) are mediated for Victor exclusively through the sense of sight. Victor thus seeks to "delineate" (F 39) and understand the Creature by sight alone. Furthermore, both ideals are tied back to his own labours, rather than being sought in the particularity of the Creature's specific embodiment: "[…] [Victor] had endeavoured to form [a proportionate face] [with infinite care], and [he] had selected his [=the Creature's face, MTW] to be beautiful" (F 39). True to the narcissistic structure of Victor's sense of self, he is the signified for which the Creature's embodiment is supposed to act as merely an indexical signifier. Additionally, the narrating-I's insisting with such notable linguistic vehemence on the ideal of beauty that Victor (supposedly) followed, indicates that the scientist adheres to the ideology of the "transparent sign" (Foucault qtd in Griffiths 2008: 58). This ideology posits a relationship of equivalence between outer appearance and inner self, and it informs Romantic ideals of externalising the inner self (Reckwitz 2010: 211). The narrative also hints at the Enlightenment subject's tendency to read this signification process in an ethical key: by insisting that he conceived the creature as beautiful, Victor claims both that his work is not to be blamed for the Creature's appearance and states that he could neither have predicted nor prevented the Creature's turn to evil. Victor thus attempts to position himself as the hapless victim of accidental contingency rather than an active agent in the events to come.

However, the text as a whole subtly implies that this account of Frankenstein's may in fact point to another explanation for his shock at the Creature's appearance: his response again showcases Victor's inability to interact with the relationality of the social sphere, and its constitutive contingency. "[P]roportion" (F 39) is fundamentally a relational category; in mathematical and geometric contexts, this term describes "the correct or most attractive relationship between the size of different parts of the same thing or one thing and another" ("proportion | Meaning in the Cambridge English Dictionary" website, "proportion (noun) (size)" section, definition c2); hence it always signals a relationship between at least two things, one of which is always external to the thing under consideration. Furthermore, while "correct" in the above definition suggests a reference point that is free from contingency and change, this assumption is itself the product of an ideological management of contingency: a correct mathematical formula carries the "traces"

(Derrida 2004: 295) of all the miscalculations that went into it and remains subject to being potentially superseded by the next paradigm shift (*sensu* Kuhn). In the case of beauty, the association with culture is even more pronounced: norms of physical beauty shift along cultural as well as personal axes (cf. Davis 1995: 126 - 157). Strikingly, Victor remains silent on what or who he used as a reference point, instead treating "beauty" as both a transparent and an "onto-theological" (Derrida 2016 [1967]: 11) signifier, which represents truth and propriety.

Natureculture (Haraway 2008: 15) acts as a contingent force of interruption on a variety of levels here: considering the narcissistic component of Frankenstein's project we have analysed above, one way readers might close the interpretive gap left in the text is to assume that Victor modelled the Creature on his own self-image. On the one hand, this approach would mirror the Romantic ideal of engaging the world by externalising Frankenstein's "inner self" (Reckwitz 2010: 211); on the other hand, this externalisation deconstructs itself: firstly, it reveals this self-image to be both beautiful and ugly at the same time: "his hair was of a lustrous black and flowing; his teeth were of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrible contrast with the watery eyes […], his shrivelled complexion, and straight black lips" (F 39). The fact that this face then frightens Victor points out that the straight and unilateral relationship between inner self and outside world envisaged by the early-bourgeois culture of subjectivity (Reckwitz 2010: 168) and parts of its Romantic counterpart (Reckwitz 2010: 212) are both inaccurate and ethically dubious: Victor's flight and inability to deal with the Creature's face and actions show him unable to deal with the contingency and ethical challenge posed by the literal "face of the Other" in Emmanuel Lévinas' sense (Lévinas 2017 [1969]: 351 - 353); all Victor is capable of is conceiving the world in terms of similarity to himself, and he requires it to stay at a distance, so he can safely "delineate" (F 39) and analyse it. As this analysis is primarily achieved through a relationship mediated by sight and vision, Victor confirms Lévinas' assertion that "[i]n knowledge or vision, the object seen can indeed determine an act, but it is an act that in some way appropriates the seen to itself, […] and constitutes it." (Lévinas 2017 [1969]: 349). When the Creature opens his mouth to speak to Victor or when he "reaches out a hand" (F 40), Frankenstein immediately assumes that this will "detain him" (F 40), that is, limit his ability to escape. Considering the degree to which the Creature's mere existence already threatens Victor's sense of self, this negative reading is logical: in order to maintain his subject status, Victor must cast the Creature in the role of the ontological antagonist and defend his own subject status through the use of violence (Patterson 1982: 11-12).

In contrast to the struggle between Richard of Gloucester and Henry Tudor, however, Shelley's novel problematises an unthinking acceptance of this narrative of ontological struggle: If we recall Maurice Merleau-Ponty's argument that touch circumvents the difference between subject and object (Merleau-Ponty 1974: 118), the Creature's gesture takes on a different meaning. The Creature attempts to communicate with Victor and acts in ways readers may interpret as resembling the actions of a human infant or toddler. He even "mumble[s]" (F 40) as he tries to touch Victor. The Creature, by choosing non-visual communication styles throughout during that first encounter with Frankenstein, engages in what Lévinas calls "discourse" (Lévinas 2017 [1969]: 349). "In discourse, the divergence that inevitably opens between the Other as my theme and the Other as my interlocutor, emancipated from the theme that seemed a moment to hold him, forthwith contests the meaning I ascribe to him" (Lévinas 2017 [1969]: 349). Hence, the Creature's face and behaviour both draw attention to Victor's inability to deal with ethical difference. The fact that the narrator proudly tells Walton of his "youngest brother" (F 29) and Willhelm's "endearing manners" (F 29) draws further attention to this failure, as it implies that Victor cannot recognise individual subjects as human if their embodiment exceeds the parameters of "propriety" (Esposito 2011: 10) and the variations of embodiment that Victor has been exposed to in his life so far. As most of the individual subjects he interacts with (and all the children he encounters) are members of his extended family circle, it seems reasonable to assume that they all look more or less alike and that Victor's exposure to embodied difference has thus been very limited

The narrowness of Victor's imagination even affects areas outside the scope of Lévinasian individualised ethics, as becomes evident when we turn our attention back to the Creature's concrete appearance. The narrator reports with evident disgust that the Creature has "sallow skin" (F 39) and "black lips" (F 39). Reading these two descriptors as medically accurate allows for two interpretations, both of which highlight the inbraiding of culture and nature as well as the resistance of materiality to Enlightenment models of the world and subjectivity: notably, both *sallow* and *black* are relative adjectives, referring to discolorations of the skin relative to an unarticulated norm. In light of both Victor's own European origins and the Eurocentrism of nineteenth-century medicine (Gould 1996), it seems reasonable to assume that this norm is that of a white middle-class adult human male. Sallow skin can be a symptom of vitamin and iron deficiencies and dehydration ("sallow skin – advanced dermatology institute" website); hence, it is indicative of the sort of malnourishment the urban or rural poor routinely suffer from in the

nineteenth century (Thompson 1966: 287 - 290) and *ex negativo* points to the social destitution and the forms of labour on which the relative economic independence of scientists like Victor is built; simultaneously, this "congeal[ing] into a corporeal reality" (Kirby 1997: 72) highlights exclusion that sustains the Enlightenment subject and shows that the "materials" (F 37) Frankenstein uses are not neutral or passive but enmeshed in complex social relations. In addition, the association the text creates between the Creature and the poor also carries traces of the violence that undergirds Victor's middle-class existence and is always in danger of erupting into revolutionary violence: the Creature is a being made up of a multitude of other beings – it thus echoes Hobbes' famous frontispiece illustration of *Leviathan* (Agamben 2017: 268). In contrast to Hobbesian theory, Frankenstein's description of the Creature's face indicates that the head is also made up out of different elements (F 39). Considering that Hobbes' metaphor is meant to illustrate how the sovereign, acting as the uniform 'head' of the body politic, ensures that the rest of the body no longer falls into civil war (the eponymous "war of all against all"), the multiplicity of the Creature's head exposes this theory of uniformity as contingent.[139]

Additionally, Victor having procured the bodies that make up the Creature's out of "charnel houses" (F 34) implies that these individual subjects either died a violent death or were too poor for individual graves. Hence the Creature literally embodies the multitude of the poor – the very social force in whose name the Jacobins unleash Revolutionary Terror (cf Schama 1989; Arendt 2016a [1965]: 97 - 181) in France and against whom the British government institutes draconian measures in the wake of the French Revolution and the Gordon Riots (cf Thompson 1966: 71 - 72; Zamoyski 2011). And indeed, the Creature bears traces of violence on his face: whether we read "black lips" (F 39) as indicative of lack of oxygen at the time of death or as lips that formerly belonged to a Black individual subject, they signify violence either on an individual or a social scale. As the book is set in the 1700s (F 1), the events narrated in the novel either precede or coincide with abolitionist movements, making it very likely the Black individual subject was a (former) slave, whose subjectivation was shaped by the violence of the slave trade and whose individual subjectivity and agency were systematically and ontologically denied.[140] Thus, the

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[139] For a detailed discussion of Hobbesian civil war as a bio-political model, see Agamben (2017: 247 -293). An overview of Hobbesian theories of sovereignty can be found in Loick (2012: 55 -86).

[140] For a detailed account of the constitutive role played by violence in the subjectivation (in both senses of the term) of Black individual subjects during slavery and after its abolition, see Lowe (2015:21 – 25, 43 – 72), Patterson (1982: 27-101), Warren 2018, Wilderson 2010 and Hartman 1997.

Creature symbolises and animates the social spectres of violence that "haunt Europe", to quote *The Communist Manifesto* (Marx and Engels 2008 [1848]: 1). Additionally, his head is visibly reminiscent of a skull – "the skin stretch[ing] over veins" (F 39) implicitly suggests that the Creature's bone structure is visible beneath the veins as well. This turns him into a walking *memento mori* reminiscent of the skull in Holbein's portrait *The Ambassadors* (Greenblatt 2012: 18 - 21) and thus into a walking reminder of the finitude and contingency of all human embodiments and all human agency.

Hence, we can now identify why the Creature's existence is so traumatic for Victor Frankenstein: in an attempt to circumvent the embodied and thus constitutive contingency and limitedness of human existence (F 27), Frankenstein has created a being who embodies these very limits and who draws attention to the liminality and contingency of the culture of subjectivity Victor follows. Furthermore, in creating an individual subject in an experiment meant to explore ways of re-instituting life after death (F 33), Frankenstein collapses the terms and distinctions of the most famous Enlightenment ethical dictum: Kant's categorical imperative. Kant defined a proper ethical action of the part of individual subjects as follows: "[…] [E]verything one chooses and *over which one has any power* may be used merely as a means, Man alone is an end in itself [my italics and subsequent original italics omitted, MTW]" (Kant qtd in Spivak 2017 [1987]: 1151). The ethical imperative thus rests on the assumption that one can always rationally distinguish between means (or things) and ends (or persons).[141] The outcome of Victor's experiment renders this distinction fluid and contingent: the Creature, who began existence in Frankenstein's brain as a virtual means to a different end, now stands before his maker as an end-in-himself whose actions are as obscure and in need of contingent acts of interpretation as that of any human being. Considering the potential racialisation and the embodied potential signifiers of class membership present in the Creature's embodiment, he signifies the naturecultural limits and operations of exclusion that uphold the genius subjectivity of Victor Frankenstein.

6.4 The Creature and His Search For A Family: A Possible Alternative Way of Living Enlightenment and Romantic Subjectivities Inclusively and Its Denial
Hence, the Creature's contingent embodiment delimits the reach and hegemonic claims of the Enlightenment subject in a manner that seems structurally equivalent to Richard of Gloucester's

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[141] For a detailed discussion on how this distinction is in fact the product of a social sliding scale that includes slavery, see Esposito (2013: 138 - 142) and Esposito (2015: 55 -74).

position relative to the embodiment of monarchical power in Tudor England. However, unlike Shakespeare's character, Shelley's contingently-embodied protagonist is not universally villlified nor is he functionally dismissed by the text as a whole. As indicated above, the Creature attempts to actively engage in a relationship with Victor from the first.

In contrast to Richard's (or Grendel's) absolute Otherness, which is based on the structural differentiation of an inside-outside dichotomy, the novel associates the Creature with liminal spaces. According to the anthropologist Victor Turner, liminal spaces are social areas (most often created for the purpose and in the course of initiation rituals) that exist between an old social space and a new form of sociality. Hence, the rules governing the old space no longer apply and those governing the new sociality have not yet been formalised (Wiest-Kellner 2008: 733). As the Creature himself notes, his (re-)entry into life is also marked by the simultaneous confusion of sensory data and his inability to rely on conceptual knowledge that would help him organise his experiences: "A strange multiplicity of sensations seized me, and I saw, felt and heard all at once. […] I knew, and could distinguish, nothing[.]" (F 79-80). The narrative emphasises that this lack of data relates to the Creature's ability to interact with the outside world and to create an interactive sociality in which he can participate. From the first, the Creature emphasises his possession of a developed sense of his own emotions and feelings. "[…] [F]eeling pain invade me from all sides, I sat down and wept" (F 40). He thus possesses and has access an "inner self" (Reckwitz 2010: 209) that cannot be distinguished from that of a Romantic subject who is embodied in a more pleasing fashion. Readers are encouraged by these frequent references to this inner world throughout the Creature's autobiographical narrative to see him as related to humans through the way he responds to experiences – and hence as alike to humans in spite of his appearance – the Creature is humane even if he is not biologically human. The narrative thus forecloses a simple exclusion and Othering of the Creature even after the murders he commits, instead maintaining a form of relative Otherness.

This relative othering also raises possibility of creating a different form of community and polity. This community would include the Creature. Those who have been marginalised both socially and materially – the multitude are after all literally joined in the Creature's body and embodiment. Hence, the novel encourages readers to think along the lines that led to the articulation and declaration of the Rights of Men during the French Revolution (Menke 2015; Menke 2017: 15 -20; Mirabeau 2017 [1789]: 37, §1) while also encouraging them to reflect the contingency and exclusions present in the current form these rights have taken at the turn of the

nineteenth century. The novel therefore subtextually argues for a radical expansion of their scope and so participates in some currents of radical thought at the time of writing (cf. Wollstonecraft 2008 [1792]: 65 -69; de Gouges 2017 [1791]: 54 – 57, Robespierre 2017 [1793]: 79.) Radical thinkers inspired by the French Revolution argued that "it is impossible to predefine cases of oppression" (Robespierre 2017 [1793]: 79 - 80) and thus sought to expand the Rights of Man towards universal suffrage and an inclusive image of the citizen as differently raced, gendered and as belonging to different rungs of the class structure, including non-propertied labourers and peasants. *Frankenstein* thus confirms Percy Shelley's claim that the French Revolution is "the master theme of the epoch in which we live". (Percy Shelley qtd. in Lynch and Stilinger 2012: 183).

The centrality of the question of how to organise social relations to the narrative is also prefigured in the novel's title. Traditionally, critics have read "the modern Prometheus" (Shelley 2008: n.p) as an epithet for Victor Frankenstein (Spivak 2017 [1987]: 1153), as a reference to his attempt to create a new human being, just as Prometheus is said to have done in one variant of the Greek myths surrounding the deity ("PROMETHEUS [sic] – Greek Titan God of Forethought, Creator of Mankind" website).[142] These interpretations thus read the conjunction "or" (Shelley 2008: n.p) that precedes the epithet as an inclusive rather than exclusive conjunction; this in turn allows various readings of Frankenstein's role as a creator: the reference to Prometheus can be read as a straightforward description of the deed successfully performed by Victor, but the narrative's overall tone suggests there is also an ironic or critical inflection to the epithet. The latter case is given further credence if we consider Prometheus' additional roles in Greco-Roman mythology: he is said to have stolen fire and brought it to humanity and to have taught them the basics of culture and the political, deliberately circumventing Zeus' decree in the process. And although Prometheus is ultimately punished for his transgressions and chained to an isolated mountain range where a pair of eagles eats his liver every day, his rebellion is successful: Zeus does not revoke the gifts he has brought humanity. Hence, in addition to being a scientific inventor (like Victor Frankenstein), the Titan is also a rebel against established conceptualisations of normality, sociality, and authority. Even more importantly, he is a rebel advocating the inclusion of humans into a social field, rather than just a rebel who wants to gain individual and singular autonomy. Hence, we argue, it is possible to read the reference to Prometheus as an

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[142] All subsequent references to the Greek myths surrounding the deity are based on the summaries and sources provided by this website, unless otherwise noted.

epithet for the Creature, rather than his creator. Consequently, we argue that the title of the novel can also signify a choice for the reader: a choice between Victor Frankenstein and the current (partial) realisation or the Creature as "modern Prometheus" (F n.p.) who exposes the contingency of the old order.

The Creature for is explicitly described as being fascinated by fire when he stumbles across it in the woods of Ingolstadt: "I found a fire which had been left by some wandering beggars and was overcome with delight at the warmth I experienced from it" (F 81). From the first, the Creature experiences fire as symbolising a (vacated) social space. But he also immediately experiences it as an ambiguous element that can burn as well as warm (F 81). This ambiguity is carried on later in the narrative:fire is the means by which the Creature destroys the De Lacy's cottage, externalising the "rage of anger" (F 113) he feels at his exclusion from the only domestic space he has ever known or felt at home in. Notably, at this point in the narrative, the Creature still refrains from harming any human being.

At the same time, his fascination with fire connects the Creature to that other famous light-bearer of European mythology: Satan or Lucifer. Just like Prometheus, however, the Creature's identification with Satan is ambiguous: on the one hand, it corroborates Victor's own repeated insistence that the being he created is a (or indeed the) "devil" (F 77). On the other hand, the Creature is not exposed to the Satan of the New Testament but rather to the Satan of John Milton's *Paradise Lost*. In the latter narrative, Satan's rebellion against God is explained by God's instituting Jesus (here imagined as the equal of the other angels) as his son and the Christ without caring for the sentiments and social structures of Heaven; hence, like Prometheus, Milton's Satan can be read as rebelling against unjust authority and for a more egalitarian social arrangement (Ferguson Ellis 1989: 43). And even Adam is shown by Milton to rally against God in much the same way the Creature rages against his "cursed creator" (F 110). Indeed, Adam's ironic and bitter question – "did I request thee, Maker, from clay to mould me/Man, did I solicit thee/ from darkness to promote me?" (Milton 2008: X, v. 743 – 745) – is the epigraph to Shelley's novel (F n.p). During his stay in the orbit of the De Lacy's, the Creature becomes acquainted with a variety of books. The three works of which he acquires his own copies – "*The Sorrows of Werter* [sic], a copy of Plutarch's *Lives*[,] and *Paradise Lost* [italics in original, MTW]" (F 105) – are three of the most formative texts for Romantic individual subjects (Ferguson Ellis 1989: 33-54; Spivak 2017: 1158). Thus, the Creature is once again positioned as the ideal Romantic subject in terms of his education. At the same time, his increased investment

in the narrative of *Paradise Lost* in particular, seems to corroborate early-bourgeois warnings against the dangers of intensive reading (Reckwitz 2010: 172), which blurs or erases the difference between the worlds evoked by fiction (including one's own emotions) and the moderation and rational engagement needed to navigate the outside world as a successful early-bourgeois subject (Reckwitz 2010: 173).[143] Simultaneously, the intensive emotional experience of Milton's epic once again confirms the Creature's Romantic subjectivity.

Additionally, it furnishes an explanation for the Creature's isolation that the text as a whole does not contradict; instead, it concurs with the Creature's defining his physical appearance the cause of his isolation (for which Victor's inability to "[take] pity on him" (F 113) (in contrast to God) is blamed *ex negativo*) and his lack of "companions to encourage him" (F 113). As the Creature associates the latter element of his plight with Satan, the Christian light-bearer is turned into a rebel for a sociality, much like Prometheus and the Creature, who identifies with Milton's Satan "more […] than with Adam" (F 114). Still, this identification also prefigures the Creature's later turn towards corrupting and destroying the existing human social order. Functionally, the Creature's association with Satan in general and Milton's Satan in particular also sensitivises readers to the ambiguity and liminality of ethical judgements, exposing even "absolute evil" to a more relational re-framing.

The preceding analysis of the Creature's desire for inclusion in a social space has focused on his own individual attempts to articulate his desire for a society-of-his own (to paraphrase Virginia Woolf). However, the text as a whole makes it clear that social spaces are by definition spaces of interaction by inscribing the Creature into a process of civilisation (*sensu* Norbert Elias). This process combines ontogenetic and phylogenetic axes: as hinted at above, the Creature begins his existence with an embodiment similar to that of an infant. When he flees from Frankenstein's laboratory, he reports that he "covered himself with some clothes [on a sensation of cold]" (F 80). Hence, his adoption of clothing is not motivated by cultural and social reasons (such as discourse-practices of modesty); instead, the Creature's existence is defined by sensory experiences, ranging from the pleasant (he enjoys the light of the moon or birdsong (F 80 -81)) to unpleasant sensations like "hunger and thirst" (F 80). Hence, the Creature's initial lifeworld – including his ignorance of both the properties of fire (F 81) and of how to rekindle it once it has

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[143] Considering the notorious waves of copy-cat suicides that followed the initial publication of Goethe's *Werther,* the choice of texts also implicitly opens the possibility of future violence (whether as self-harm or aimed at a third party).

gone out (F 81) - is delimited by the unmediated (or seemingly unmediated) experience of life in and through non-human nature.

Two aspects of this way of life are particularly noteworthy: the Creature mentions various meals he eats both during his time in the forest and after he has quitted it (but before he joins the De Lacey's domestic sphere). He draws attention to his eating of "roots and berries" (F 80), both raw and cooked (F 82) during his stay in the forest, and a later meal consists of cheese, bread and wine (F 83). Although it is possible he consumes meat when he steals part of the De Lacey's food, it is not explicitly mentioned in the narrative. This suggests that the Creature is a vegetarian. The fact that he only requires "roots, nuts, and berries" (F 88) to sustain himself (as that is what he returns to when he learns of his friends' meagre food supplies) corroborates this reading. At first glance, this piece of information may seem incidental. However, as Jacques Derrida notes in an influential essay, the hierarchical distinction between humans and animals is significantly informed by the distinction between flesh that can be eaten and flesh that cannot (Derrida 1991), that is, creatures who can be killed without invoking the ethical dictum "Thou shalt not kill" and those whose killing does invoke it. The fact that the Creature does not make this distinction indicates that, for him, himself part animal (F 38), this speciest distinction does not exist, putting him closer to nature than the humans he encounters.[144] Even more importantly, the Creature is described throughout the narrative as a lover of music and this love of music is instilled in him by "the pleasant songs of the birds" (F 81) he listens to in the forest. And although he describes the sounds he "makes in [his] own key" (F 81) as "uncouth" (F 81) at this point in the narrative, the fact that he can and does make them connects him to a Romantic subject, for whom music "effect[s] a loosening of a subject's self-control and their conscious self-referentiality in favour of an other-focused [*fremdreferentiellen]* 'non-pragmatic' experience of a non-human Other that transcends the self, whether this Other be nature or music [single quotation marks in original, MTW]" (Reckwitz 2010: 224). In light of the preceding sentence, the Creature's learning his love of music from a natural source (combining the two sources referenced by Reckwitz) further corroborates his adopting elements of Romantic subject culture and his becoming legible to readers as a (potential) member of this subject culture.

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[144] Indeed, it could be argued that the Creature inverts this ethical dictum: all the killings he commits are meant to „cause pain and anguish"(F 117) and thus to be socially recognisable as acts that wound the fabric of society, attacking (and thus drawing attention to) sites of exclusion and othering.

In summary, all the discourse-practices the Creature engages in during his stay in the forest of Ingolstadt echo the description of a state of nature put forward by another man who was "by birth a Genovese" (F 6): Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Contrary to Hobbes, who identifies the state of nature with civil war (Agamben 2017: 55 – 74), Rousseau's theory of the social contract argues that humans in the state of nature are solitary and generally happy without the trappings of society (cf. Loick 2012: 108 – 111). As the state of nature precedes civilization, Rousseau's theory has a notably anti-civilisational bend that associates Enlightenment society with a fall from an original form of grace. Furthermore, this fall, like its Biblical counterpart, is phylogenetic, rather than ontogenetic (cf. Heiler 2004: 18); it affects the human species rather than a single individual subject. Thinkers other than Rousseau (most famously perhaps the German Enlightenment thinker Johann Gottfried Herder) argue that the state of nature is not just one event but rather dispersed and shared by different civilizations, with the tribal peoples of Africa and the Americas still living closest to it and Western European civilizations being the most developed and hence the farthest removed from it (Herder 2013 [1965]: 240 – 248). However, Herder is careful to point out that this does not mean that humans are different in the sense proposed by theories of racialisation built on the assumption of successive stages of creation – all humans share a common origin and go through a phase of dependence on a state of nature (Herder 2013 [1965]: 250). By having the Creature experience a state of nature that combines the ontogenetic and the phylogenetic, the novel – in addition to confirming his participation in Romantic discourse-practices – indicates that his embodiment relates to human conceptions of their origin. The Creature confirms this relationship and common descent when he later responds to an account of the extinction of various Native American tribes, "weeping over the[ir] hapless fate" (F 89). He clearly considers humans as equal to him and thus positions himself as at one with the community of humanity.

Subsequently, the Creature leaves the forest and although he sometimes longs to go back to it and the state of nature it represents (F 88), and some readers might interpret the turn to violence that stands at the end of his sojourn at the De Lacey home (F 115 and 118) as indicative of a fall, the trajectory of the Creature's journey also suggests a more complex process of social *Bildung*. Notably, even after he has been driven from the cottage, burnt it down, and killed Wiliam, (indirectly condemning Justine to death in the process), the Creature appeals to Victor to "listen to [his] tale" (F 78). This autobiographical narration is explicitly framed by the Creature in terms taken from a conception of law that is social and communal: "The guilty are allowed, by human

laws, bloody as they may be, to speak in their own defence before they are condemned" (F 78). At first glance, this appeal may seem ironic as the Creature mocks "the eternal justice of man [sic]" (F 78) a few lines later. However, he does not mock the existence of these laws but rather their contingent and illogical application, respectively the fact that they sustain a hierarchy of subjects that decides who is deemed worthy of justice and who is not, with beings like him occupying the latter category and Victor occupying the former, even though they are both contemplating the same deed: the killing of a being that is intelligent and capable of feeling and sensation and thus possesses the features Enlightenment philosophy ascribes to an individual subject (F 78). Hence, the Creature critiques the modes of exclusion that render a supposedly universal concept and institution incapable of recognising him as an individual subject within its purview. He does not consider justice itself obsolete; on the contrary, he appeals to the ideal underwriting the actual discourse-practice of law to make the law more "humane" (Loick 2017b: 297) and align it more closely with the ideal of justice the law professes to actualise. More concretely the Creature wishes to institute a form of law that recognises and respects individual differences between subjects (Loick 2017b: 331 – 332), treating those differences as the basis for rational understanding and communication (Loick 2017b: 332 – 334), rather than as a justification for excluding those who do not fit the universalised categories of an idealised Enlightenment subject. He thus considers justice as a social arena that enables others to re-cognise each other or a third party as equal individual subjects, provided it is actualised according to its full potential.[145] In keeping with this belief, his appeal to Victor asks the other man to reframe their differences as a "struggle" (Wilderson 2010: 24), to recognise the Creature as a socially human being that has the "right to have rights" (Arendt 2011: 614) and to fight for these and other rights in the social arena of humanity.

This evaluation of justice and law as an institutionalised discourse-practice of re-cognition resembles Hegel's early theories on justice, respectively the process of subject formation. Hegel's most famous account of subject formation, the master-slave dialectic proposed in *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, internalises the process of subject formation (the master and the slave can also refer to two parts of an individual subject's psyche (Honneth 2016: 52 - 53)) (Hegel

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[145] The following paragraphs built on recent work on modes of recognition put forward and inspired by the work of Axel Honneth (Honneth 2016; Honneth 2015). Honneth's theory are in turned based on early Hegelian theory; in order to differentiate Honneth's conceptual framework from a more ocularcentric model, we use the spelling re-cognition when talking about the former.

2010 [1807]: 541 – 547) and "spirit" there refers to an idealised form of social consensus that has largely been divorced from the complexities of concrete social interactions (Honneth 2016: 53). Furthermore, the fact that this struggle initially includes a desire to annihilate the Other in favour of the self (Butler 2012: 47-59. especially 51-56) shows Hegel's mature theory as invested in an idealisation of antagonism (Wilderson 2010: 54-55) and a belief in the constitutive violence at the heart of all communities (Fradinger 2010: 13-18, Marchart 2013: 231 - 254). For its part, Shelley's novel, as we shall see, problematises this account of both subject and social formation. At the very end of their relationship, both Victor and the Creature resort to a naked desire to destroy both each other and their families and communities (F 138-140). Rather than one of them triumphing, however, Victor loses his family and succumbs to an illness (F 165, 186) and the Creature commits suicide (F 191). Violence and auto-immunitarian inclusion (Esposito 2011: 21, 164-167), one reading of the novel's subtext suggests – contra the mature Hegel – do not ensure freedom and enable agency. Rather, the antagonists (Wilderson 2010; 5) always remain subjected to the violence they have drawn on; their violence turn on them.

In works that precede the completion of Hegel's "turn to a philosophy of consciousness" (Honneth 2016: 53), he conceives of re-cognition as a social achievement, as the result the processes of re-cognition that enmesh the burgeoning individual subject in ever-widening spheres of social relations. These spheres range from the domestic realm of the family, where an individual subject is taught to be loved and appreciated (Honneth 2016: 34, 62 - 68) (thus increasing their self-confidence and self-awareness) to the realm of contract-based market relations (Honneth 2016: 34, 83 – 85) and finally to the realm of liberal rights and justice shaped by a sense of mutual recognition and solidarity between equal individual subject, guaranteed by an idealised state (Honneth 2016: 23, 43-45). Notably, these spheres are not imagined by Hegel to be analogous to each other. They are not independent social spheres that have a similar function and structure (Honneth 2016: 33-46), rather, each of these spheres is the teleological precondition to each of the others (Honneth 2016: 33): to become a free contractor on the market, an individual subject needs to have experienced the realm of a family, and the abstract justice of the law expands the logic of the contract, in Hegel's view (Honneth 2016: 33, 41)

In light of the above considerations, the Creature's sojourn with the De Laceys can be read as a primer in the foundational forms of sociality and as his attempt to be granted not just natality (Patterson 1982: 7) but a chance to become a mature member of the Enlightenment political. In

time, the Creature believes that he can become a citizen of the world (if not a particular nation (F 78)) and found his own line of descent and natal recognition (F 78) .

The text as a whole supports this reading in two ways: firstly, the cottage the family lives in explicitly separated from the village the Creature was hounded from, both spatially and in terms of its architecture: "I fled to the open country and took refuge *in a hovel* […], [that made] a wretched appearance after the palaces I had beheld in the village. This hovel was joined, however, to a cottage of a *neat and pleasant appearance* [my emphasis, MTW]" (F 83). Palaces are usually associated with the upper classes and thus with the early-bourgeois anti-subject of the aristocrat. Conversely, the hovel in which the Creature resides is associated with the working-classes and the socially abjected persons from whom the Creature takes his embodiment. Hence, the cottage is associated with a middle-class ethos shared by the Romantic and the early-bourgeois model of subjectivity. The occupants of the cottage signal their status as appropriate representatives of middle-class ideology to the Creature through the father playing "an instrument" (F 85)-.The music he produces "sounds sweeter than those of the thrush or the nightingale" (F 85). Music connects the realm of domestic culture to the realm of nature, but at the same time the former surpasses the latter because it enables the Creature to experience emotions and to learn to interpret non-verbal actions through his observing the cottagers (F 85). The importance of music is tied in the Creature's mind to the figure of the father. Keeping in mind that the old man is blind (F 113), the Creature's identifying with him in particular becomes more complex still. Firstly, the man being identified throughout by a single moniker – "father" (F 87) – whereas his children are given various relational identifiers by the Creature (Agatha is also "sister" (F 87) and Felix, is "brother" (F 87) or "son" (F 87)), highlights that the elder De Lacey enacts an emotional engagement (between parents and children) that the Creature has not experienced for himself (F 87). At the same time, Monsieur De Lacey's contingent embodiment and blindness are idealised (rather than abjected) by the Creature. For him the father's life shows both that individual subjects with contingent embodiments can become part of a cultural system and that the fear and anger the Creature has experienced from other humans in his life so far is contingent on a particular hierarchy of the senses, rather than being a universal response to his embodiment.

True to the Creature's assumption, when the Creature first enters the cottage, the blind man initially offers to "listen to [the stranger]" (F 110), accepting him as an equal on the basis of his aural appearance. In keeping with the preference Romantic forms of subjectivity accord music

over the early-bourgeois practice of "extensive reading" (Reckwitz 2010: 169), the Creature also first experiences reading as "[Felix] […] utter[ing] sounds that were monotonous" (F 86), that is, as lacking the musicality accorded to either "songs" (F 86) or "the sounds [used] to communicate" (F 85)" in spoken language, which fascinate the Creature. As he is the person who first introduces the Creature to human-made music, the father takes up a particularly prominent position in the Creature's emotional economy, representing a symbolic nexus between nature and culture, a contingent form of embodiment, and a successful life as a member of a a community. The blind man navigates his life using language, a means of symbolic production the Creature also successfully adopts. Verbal communication renders both communicating parties equal, as hearing and speaking happens to both parties at the same time and in comparable ways: The speaker always hears their own voice when they are speaking. In contrast, visual engagements with the world are hierarchically organised (the person who sees need not be seen in turn) (cf. Horlacher 1998: 48 - 49). As the Creature's traumatic experiences up to this point all relate to somebody taking fright at his looks, the literally phonocentric (Derrida 2016 [1967]: 12 - 13) nature of the DeLacey household renders it additionally attractive to a being for whom sight has so far only been an instrument of Othering.

In terms of the novel as a whole, the De Laceys represent an ideal version of the domestic sphere that separates them from all the other families the novel introduces its readers to. Like the Frankensteins and the Waltons, the De Lacey family is motherless. However, the intimate relationship between father and son (whom the Creature both describes as "excellent" (F 87)) sets it apart from the other three families and family-like arrangements readers encounter in the novel: the Creature and Frankenstein, although they are "father" and "son" in the most abstract sense have no paternal or filial relationship. In fact, their continued insistence of thinking of each other as "maker" (F 79) and "Creature" (F 81), that is, conceiving their relationship through terms taken from a solely instrumental subject/object dichotomy where emotional attachments are one-sided (if present at all) and the ideal of equality between partners that shapes both early-bourgeois and Romantic conceptions of all forms of intimacy (Reckwitz 2010: 143, 223) is foreclosed by one party literally depending solely on the other for his very existence, renders any engagement in social interactions that are based on the assumption of (eventual) equality impossible for both Victor and the Creature. As far as readers are made aware, Walton goes on his expedition explicitly against his father's wishes (F 2), and although Alphonse Frankenstein cares about his

sons, Victor and he communicate past each other, and Victor never confides his secret to his father (F 72).[146]

Beyond the relationship between the male members of the household, the De Laceys are also the only family group encountered in the narrative that has two female characters who occupy different social roles in relation to the male focal character, with whom they share a generation: Walton writes to his "dear sister" (F 1), and this sister (addressed in his letters as "Mrs Saville (F 1)) has married an esquire. Walton himself makes no mention of any kind of (heterosexual) romantic attachment of his own. Considering the homosocial nature of his undertaking (Sedgewick 2016: 1-3) and the evident admiration he expresses for Frankenstein (both his looks and his manners (F 5)) immediately upon meeting him, it is possible that Walton experiences homosexual passionate attachment towards his guest. Ferguson Ellis argues that Walton's wonder at his master of the ship supporting the woman he loves marrying another (F 3) points to his having no investment in the "heterosexual […] matrix" (Butler 2006: 24) at the heart of domestic ideology (Ferguson Ellis 1989: 188). Hence, the Waltons as a family only enact a fraternal relationship within their domestic sphere.

This lack of any romantic attachment for the Waltons is highlighted by comparison to the Frankenstein family. Elizabeth Lavaza, Victor's cousin, combines all potential female roles in the social field of intimacy available to early-bourgeois and Romantic female individual subjects: she is "the daughter of [Alphonse Frankenstein's] sister" (F 18), but when the Frankensteins take Elizabeth in upon her parents' death, Frankenstein senior explicitly instructs his wife to "treat [Elizabeth] as [her] own *daughter* [my emphasis, MTW]". Paternal authority thus erases the difference between the children on all levels but the biological. Elizabeth now shares the same fraternal relationship to Victor as his brothers do.

Furthermore, she becomes his "playfellow and […] his friend" (F 18). The text as a whole does not imply that this is a negative development, and it is no doubt beneficial for both children to have friends. However, a closer inspection of the early-bourgeois discourse-practice of friendship signals some potential pitfalls and dangers of this arrangement: as Reckwitz notes, the early-bourgeois discourse of friendship is built on the assumption that another individual subject is "similar[] [my omission of italics, MTW]" (Reckwitz 2010: 138) to a given individual subject This labelling requires an individual subject "to become sensible of and to notice differences

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[146] For a more detailed discussion of the critique of the ideology of the domestic sphere articulated by the example of the Waltons, see (Ferguson Ellis 1989: 186 - 188).

between oneself and another individual subject and to consequently approximate the ideal of 'complete understanding' [single quotation marks in original, MTW]" (Reckwitz 2010: 139) with this friend. Thus, friendship presumes the existence of differences between friends that can be negotiated and thereby overcome in time (Reckwitz 2010: 139). Victor having the same friends throughout his life (F 25) – one of whom is even closer to him than the other, since they share a home and are raised in a relationship of intimacy closer than the relationship friends usually enjoy – shelters Victor from any exposure to difference and relationality. Elizabeth likewise never leaves the confines of her native home and the city of Geneva, either before or after she assumes "her aunt's duties" (F 29).

In doing so, Elizabeth becomes the centre of the Frankenstein domestic universe. Lastly, she is also from the first treated as Victor's "future wife" (F 21). Notably, neither she nor Victor objects to this plan at any point.[147] Elizabeth thus occupies all female roles at once; in its turn, this social "overdetermination" (Laclau and Mouffe 2014: 83, 83 - 84) seals the Frankenstein family into a world that is co-extensive with the domestic sphere they have known since childhood. Their limited exposure to unfamiliar social contexts and different individual subjects renders them unable to negotiate differences and to potentially transform them into similarity. As indicated above, one consequence of this is Victor's inability to deal with the Creature as an equal in his otherness. Once the Creature – the ultimate relative Other and contingently-embodied being – enters Victor's bridal chamber and kills Elizabeth, the domestic universe of the Frankensteins collapses, its embodied keystone now dead.

In contrast to both the Waltons, who do not have to integrate another woman into their own family circle, and the Frankensteins, who are ensconced in a hermetically sealed "domestic sphere" (Armstrong 2004: 575), the De Lacey's do integrate an outsider into their family space: Safie, a "sweet Arabian" (F 93). When she first appears, she does not speak French (F 93), although her voice is "musical" (F 93). Initially, Safie recognises the father as an authority figure and places herself under his authority by kneeling before him and attempting "to kiss his hand" (F 93). But he "raise[s] her up and embrace[s] her" (F 93), replacing a gesture of hierarchy-based subjugation with a bodily act that signals and enacts belonging and equality (to embrace someone

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[147] It has been argued that Shelley grew uncomfortable with the quasi-incestuous relationship between Victor and Elizabeth, fearing the social scandal it might cause for her and her son, and turned her into an orphan in the 1831 edition of the text (Butler 2008: l - li). Notably, this does not lessen the character's functional overdetermination nor make the Frankenstein domestic sphere any less difference-averse. For a detailed analysis of Romantic representations of incest generally, see Stansbury 2008.

one has to be roughly on the same physical level as they are). Subsequently, Felix and his father talk about Safie for a long time that same evening, and it is this talk that inspires the Creature to learn to communicate in human language (F 94). Throughout this learning process, the Creature constantly relates himself to the Arabian girl, through their educational achievement ("Safie and I improved rapidly in our knowledge of language […]" (F 94)) or their shared emotional response to the events they learn of: "I wept with Safie over the fate of the original inhabitants [= Native Americans, MTW]" (F 97). The Creature's identification with Safie culminates in his imitating her exact actions: "[he] seize[s][the father's] hand" (F 110) when entreating his protection. However, the identification is ultimately refused when Safie "rushes from the cottage (F 110) once she catches sight of the Creature. In addition to breaking the emotional and cognitive alliance the Creature has created with her (he still refers to her as "my Safie" (F 110) even when she deserts him), Safie's physical response has an even more devastating impact. She responds exactly as Victor does (F 39), thereby aligning herself with him.

To understand the full implication of this othering and exclusion, we need to now turn our attention to the mechanisms that include Safie in the De Lacey family: firstly, the Creature himself mentions that she is physically beautiful, with "dark hair" (F 93) and "dark, […] vivacious eyes" (F 93). As he is already aware of his own divergent embodiment at this point (F 90), the Creature's identifying with another human may at first seem paradoxical. However, the text as a whole indicates that at this point in the narrative, the Creature considers himself content to be identified with a domesticated animal ("the gentle ass" (F 92)) and to be accepted by the cottagers on the basis of his actions and "gentle demeanour" (F 87) rather than his looks. Rather than looking for some physical *alter ego* to identify with, the Creatures thus focuses on the actions Safie performs and how the De Lacys respond to them in turn (particularly the long and intimate conversation Felix and his father have about her (F 93) – an event that shows the two men sharing an emotional moment of mutual comprehension, something the Creature never experiences himself, least of all with his "father").[148] The fact that she is included in the De Lacy

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[148] Potentially, the Creature's identification with Safie may also indicate that his (sexual) desire renders the "heterosexual matrix" (Butler 2006: 24) of both the early-bourgeois and the Romantic fields of intimacy contingent: the text indicates that he identifies with the young woman in large part because she makes Felix, who had been "sad" (F 87) before her arrival, "smile[]" (F 93). Hence, the Creature may desire not just to be like Safie, but to *be* Safie and to occupy her place in Felix' emotional landscape. Additionally, this reading renders visible the inbraiding of heteronormativity and racism in homophobic discourses: the Creature identifies with a non-European individual subject (*ex negativo* identifying European culture with "proper" heterosexuality) and a woman, hence men who desire men must be "like women" to maintain the gender binary underlying the early -bourgeois and Romantic

household while he is cast out and violently beaten by Felix rather than embraced by him (F 110; F 93) points to the assumption of physical similarity and sameness that sustains the discursive ideal of "humanity" (F 112).[149] Old Monsieur De Lacey invoking this ideal to assure the Creature of his welcome minutes before the "stranger" (F 111) is violently removed from the domestic space of the cottage (F 111) only highlights the contingency of the ideals espoused by liberal humanism and their dependence on abjected racialised others (Hartman 1997: 115.118; Wilderson 2010: 29, 43, 54-55,).

Additionally, the scene also illustrates the complex relationship between occularcentrism and the Romantic affirmation of aural modes of communication. Although seemingly opposed on a surface level, the two discourses remain connected by their common assumption that each of them offers the best sensory access to a logocentrically-conceptualised "onto-theological" (Derrida 2016 [1967]: 11) transcendental signifier. Safie's beauty may deviate from the modalities of the European norm, but she still conforms to general standards of beauty tied to the proportions of the human face. This beauty is corroborated by her "musical" (F 93), that is, harmonious, voice. In accordance with Romantic "phonocentrism" (Derrida 2016 [1967]: 12-13), her voice externalises an inner harmony and thus connects her to European notions of humanity. Since the Creature cannot make his voice accord with his looks – the latter are "ugly" (F 92) while he can train his voice to be "pleasant" (F 79), the difference between these two embodied signifiers exposes the sensory hierarchy (and its essentialism) as contingent.

Even more importantly, the Creature disrupts the cultural essentialism at work in Safie's entering into the De Lacy family. He reports that Safie is a "Christian Arab" (F 99), daughter of a slave and a "Turk" (F 99) who does not wish to be imprisoned by her father and fled to the Delacys to keep her greater independence than is "permitted the female followers of Mahomet [sic!]" (F 99). Although some feminist analyses have noted that Safie is the only female character the reader encounters who asserts her independence against the ideology of the domestic sphere (Ferguson Ellis 1989: 201), this independence is contingent and relative. Safie's backstory rests on the invocation of a variety of Orientalist stereotypes. This combination of "images and vocabulary"

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intimate subjectivities (Reckwitz 2010: 142, 221). To ensure the discursive hegemony of European heterosexuality, homosexuality is associated particularly with Middle-Eastern cultures subsumed under the ideologically-charged label of the "Oriental" (Boone 2015).

[149] For a detailed analysis of this assumption in the context of racialised others, see Lowe 2015, Hartman 1997, and Weheliye 2014.

(Said 1994b: 5) creates a "reality in and for the West" (Said 1994: 5); however the two entities also constitute each other in relation (Said 1994b: 5). Hence, the novel's insistence that Safie was right not to want to suffer in a "haraam" (F 97), implicitly allows readers to question why it is right that she (or indeed Elizabeth) should be ideologically confined to the house and thus to problematise the emergent ideology of separate spheres. The difference between a harem and a European house is thus implicitly exposed as contingent, as being one of degree – the existence of a concrete material objectification of the symbolic logic of separation that both spaces share – rather than kind. [150]

This contingency is made even more obvious if one considers the conflations operative in the above passage: firstly, it treats "Arab" as a collective noun for a wide variety of peoples who are not Turks but still live nowhere near the Arab Peninsula (consider the Christian communities in the Levant, for example). Furthermore, by calling Muslims "followers of Mahomet" (F 97), Orientalist discourses make the prophet into a quasi-deity and obscure the shared participation of Islam in the Abrahamic tradition.[151] Even more importantly, it unifies the Christian tradition and assumes that the Western Christian sects and Aramaic Orthodoxy share the same theology and discourse-practices, therefore excluding the contingency of Christian belief systems (as well as the violence of the schism that occurred in the eleventh century). By reducing the various complexities of European and non-European cultures to an easily-navigable dichotomy, "the West" is allowed to "always" retain "the relative upper hand" (Said 1994b: 6).

Creating a succession of internally-monolithic cultures also enables the creation of a diachronic narrative of liberation and civilization; it renders both history and cultural variation into stepping stones towards a *telos* defined by European liberalism and Enlightenment philosophy (cf Lowe 2015: 64 – 65, 140 - 148) . When applied to individual subjects, this *telos* functions as a reference point that enables members of hegemonic cultural formations to place the non-European individual subject in a fixed position relative to themselves, using a scale of similarity that

[150] By making Safie's father a merchant, who encourages her to marry Felix based on the size of the DeLacy fortune (F 101) rather than love, the narrative also excludes and others the market sphere as a legitimate area of re-cognition (Honneth 2016: 34, 83 – 85; Honneth 2015: 317 - 334). Indeed, it praises the DeLacys for giving up their material wealth (F 102) and thus participates in the Romantic disinterest in "purposeful work" (Reckwitz 2010: 208 - 209) as a site of early-bourgeois subjectivation (Reckwitz 2010: 120)

[151] For a detailed and informative account of European images of Islam and the Islamic world, see Said 1994b and Boone 2015. Although she refers primarily to early-modern religious practice-discourses and literature, Julia Reinhard-Lupton (Lupton 2005: 65-66 and 60- 63) is also instructive on this topic.

precedes the particularity of each cultural encounter and that remains static so it can claim an unproblematised "universality". The non-European individual subject thus becomes legible precisely only to the degree they fit into the categories set out by Europeans beforehand ; simultaneously, the potential exposure to an increased awareness of contingency for the hegemonic subject inherent in any negotiation of similarity (Reckwitz 2010: 139) and difference is also minimised. Safie as "an Arabian" (F 97) fits the moulds provided by Enlightenment teleology and hence can easily be adopted; the Creature, although he speaks French and is moved by the narratives of Enlightenment historiography (F 97), does not belong to any particular culture and so exposes the epistemic contingency of both a monolithic conception of human cultures (as well as the exclusions and oppressions it helps justify (cf Bhabha 2004; Said 1994a; Said 1994b; Lowe 2015: 139 - 175) and the teleology of Enlightenment historiography.[152]

6.5 From Creature To Monster: the Othering of the Creature and the Problematic Reassertion of the Hegemony

However, while his contingent embodiment and cultural allegiances factor into the Creature's refusal, the deciding factor of his expulsion from the De Lacey domestic sphere is his gender: when he finally approaches the father of the De Lacey's, he takes his hand, just as Safie does, but instead of being embraced by the old man, the blind man questions the Creature's identity ("'Great God! […] [W]ho are you?' [single quotation marks in original, MTW]" (F 110)), and Felix hurls the Creature away from his father, "to whose knees [he clings] [with supernatural strength]" (F 110). Rather than being embraced, the Creature's presence prompts the old man to question the identity the Creature has created for himself and to invoke God in what is clearly a plea for protection. To grasp what God is meant to protect the DeLacy's from, we need to return to Safie's role in the family: she is the outsider, who, as Felix' future wife, will carry the family name forward; thus she is granted access to the lines of natality symbolised by the DeLacy family name (Patterson 1982: 5, 7). But, in accordance with eighteenth-century English law, the name she bears is not hers – instead, like Mrs Saville, on the day of her marriage, she will become Madame Felix De Lacy and be covered and ensconced under Felix' authority. By contrast, a son – even an adopted one (as the Creature would be) - has the authority to shape the meaning and value of the family by his own actions. In accordance with this symbolic logic, if the Creature

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[152] For a detailed analysis of the role played by Volney's *Ruins* in both Romantic educational paradigms in general and *Frankenstein* in particular see Spivak 2017 [1987]: 1161, FN 27.

were adopted, he would become an authority over the name of De Lacey. Considering this authority is embodied in its male members and their embodiment thus functions as a "transparent sign" (Foucault qtd in Griffiths 2008: 58) for authority, adopting the Creature would render the authority of the De Lacey name contingent and expose the contingency of English patriarchal family structures and inheritance laws as excluding and contingent.

Additionally, this particular scene – an outsider asking for the blessing of a blind family patriarch – may remind readers of the Biblical story of Jacob who steals primogeniture from Esau by pretending to be him in front of a blind and aged Isaac (Gen 25,28). Although this move results in strive between the brothers, ultimately Jacob's deed is divinely vindicated. Like the Creature struggling with his "Creator" (F 110), Jacob also literally struggles with divine authority; unlike the Creature, for whom the struggle ends in loneliness and suicide (F 203), he is ultimately blessed for his struggle and becomes the father of a people. Hence, the Creature's being deprived of his own blessing and re-cognition into the domestic sphere of the De Laceys already hints at the failure of his attempts at relating to either Frankenstein or creating his own family. Instead, the narrative suggests, the very ideals of Enlightenment inclusion require the Creature to become a "genealogical isolate" (Patterson 1982: 5), on par with the slaves and colonialist Others he physically resembles (Hartman 1997: 115-116)

At the same time, both the Creature's engagement with the Frankenstein family through the murder of William and Victor's ultimate refusal to create a female companion for him expose the contingency of the domestic ideology and Enlightenment conceptions of femininity.[153] Initially, upon encountering William, the Creature reports that he did "not wish to harm [the boy]" (F 117). Only when William mentions his father – "Monsieur Frankenstein" (F 117) - does the Creature change his plan to wreak emotional havoc equivalent to his own on his "enemy" (F 117). Thus begins the narcissistic relation of mutual destruction – the beginning stage of Hegel's master-slave dialectic (Hegel 2010 [1807]: 521) - that ends only when Frankenstein dies, the Creature having destroyed his domestic universe, and the Creature goes "triumphantly" (F 191) to his "suicide" (F 191), his joys likewise turned to agony and his own sense of self reduced to an imitation of his creator, whose death must mean the death of his own self.

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[153] For reasons of space, the present thesis focuses on the Creature's encounter with Willhelm and omits a discussion of Victor's attempt to create a female Creature, which has been well-covered in the literature (cf. Spivak 1987; Mellor 1988: 39, FN 3).

Initially, the killing of William, the youngest of Alphonse Frankenstein's children (he is still a child), actualises the loss of the creature's innocence as his hatred of the Frankensteins destroys any aversions he had to killing before (recall he burns the De Lacey's cottage only after they have quitted it (F 113)). Children symbolise innocence in Western thought (Erdmann 2008: 180); hence the Creature externalises his own innocence and destroys it with William's murder. Furthermore, this deed implicitly associates the Creature with forms of life and sexuality that are not governed by reproductive conceptions of heteronormative futurity, for which children act as ideological shorthand (Edelman 2004: 25 - 29). This murder thus marks him as an Other who stands at the margins of society, haunting it with the possibility of (sexual) relations not beholden to the heterosexual matrix of "domestic ideology" (Armstrong 2004: 574 - 576).[154]

At the same time, the subtext of the scene also offers a critique of the conceptions of domestic spaces and family life current in Enlightenment subjectivities, exposing their limits and epistemological contingency. Recall the discussion of Turner's concept of liminality introduced above: through Felix' actions, the Creature has been "cast out" (F 113) from the new family into which he wants to inscribe himself. The structural model of liminality offers the possibility that a liminal subject can "turn around" and (violently) gain re-entry into their former social space (actual initiation rituals of course discursively and practically preclude this option). In the Creature's case, that original space is the Frankenstein family. According to his experience of family spaces – a domestic space he has idealised (F 87) – families consist of two generations: parents (the mother being absent) and children (one of whom is the son). The Creature's ideal thus echoes early-bourgeois ideals of the family, which centre on husband and wife "with children and servants in the background [my omission of single quotation marks, MTW]" (Reckwitz 2010: 142): an ideal that sidelines multi-generational families (Reckwitz 2010: 142). In keeping with this ideal, the Creature assumes that Victor is "Monsieur Frankenstein" (F 117) and consequently that the boy before him as usurped his own position as "son". Consequently, he responds as Felix did and strangles the "usurper".

Although the above reading by no means excuses the murder of William nor makes the Creature any less of a perpetrator, it showcases how he once again renders existing discourse-practices contingent and suggests an alternative through his actions: if the Creature had known that fraternal and familial relationships beyond the parental exist, he might have found acceptance

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[154] For a detailed discussion of the association of non-normative sexualities (especially homosexuality) with death and destruction, see Berlant and Edelman 2014.

with the Frankensteins – perhaps especially from the formerly "sickly "(F 45) Ernest whose embodiment is as contingent (F 45) as the Creature's own.

At first glance, it seems as if the text as a whole concurs with Victors's othering of the Creature in the end. Although the Creature declares that he initially "[did] not intend to hurt" (F 117) William, he is not that circumspect when killing either Clarval or Elizabeth. Indeed, Victor's description of the Creature's expression before he disappears to murder his friend strongly implies that the Creature now defines himself solely through the violence he commits: "You can blast my other passions, but revenge remains; revenge – henceforth dearer than light or food" (F 140). In embracing revenge, the Creature now willingly chooses to become the "devil" (F 140) Victor has always taken him for. Now his thoughts and actions seem to match and confirm the fear his physical appearance has always evoked in other human beings (F 39). In particular, his desire for "revenge" (F 140) is shown to be aimed at "all human kind [sic] (F 189) and not just at the particular individual subjectivity of Victor Frankenstein. Hence, the Creature's desire for retribution exposes all human individual subjects and the social structures they use to organise their lives to the radical revolutionary threat of the his embodied accidental and epistemological contingency.[155] The narrative's relegating him to the non-social space of "darkness and distance" (F 191) may thus at first appear a necessary discursive move to immunise society against this threat. It seems as if the novel ultimately returns to associating the Creature's contingent embodiment with absolute Otherness and the only difference between the Creature and Richard of Gloucester is that Frankenstein's experiment at least contemplated a different path for a time.

However, the novel ultimately problematises the above reading through the last conversation the Creature has with Walton. Once Victor has succumbed to his illness, Walton leaves his cabin for a time and returns to the following scene:[156]

I entered the cabin where lay the remains of my ill-fated and admirable friend. Over him hung a form which I cannot find words to describe[.] […] As he hung over the coffin, his face was concealed by long locks of ragged hair; *but one vast hand was extended[…] [.] When he heard*

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[155] For a detailed discussion of the literary representation of violence as a source of radical social change during the Age of Enlightenment, see Fradinger (2010: 87 – 117).

[156] Incidentally, the fact that Victor Frankenstein dies of fever, rather than any intervention on the Creature's part once again showcases Victor's blindness to his own contingent embodiment. He reduces his life to the destruction of the Creature (F 195) – incidentally mirroring the Creature's focus on revenge (F 140) – and even charges a complete stranger with continuing his task (F 185). Locked in this violent struggle for recognition (Hegel 2010 [1807]: 543), he denies that his body is still prone to being threatened by other sources of contingency and is ultimately killed by a fever, that is, by an illness induced by literally microbic agents, utterly unrelated to the threat he has fixated on.

my approach, he ceased to utter exclamations of grief and horror [.] [my emphasis, MTW] (F 196 - 197).

The Creature's somatic agency evidently contradicts Victor's earlier description of him as a devil (F 140). Based on Victor's account, we would have expected the Creature to express satisfaction at his "maker" (F 143) dying. Instead, he attempts to once again establish a connection to Victor by touch, just as he did at the beginning of his existence, with "one hand stretched out" (F 40). Furthermore, Walton, for all his revulsion at the Creature's physical appearance (F 187) clearly recognises his conduct as "grief" (F 187). Even more importantly, the Creature acknowledges that he has harmed Victor in turn and accepts the blame for his actions and the murders, which he clearly has not enjoyed or relished: "That is also my victim! [my omission of single quotation marks, MTW]" (F 187).

Walton recognises that the Creature possesses a sense of a "mental, affective and perceptive interiority" (Reckwitz 2010: 207) comparable to that of a human being; in keeping with this insight, Walton in turn considers the Creature someone who has a Levinasian "face" (Levinas 2017: 350) – even when Walton cannot look at the Creature's physical face - and refrains from killing him outright (F 197): "I […] endeavoured to recollect what were my duties with regard to this destroyer. I called on him to stay" (F 197). In response to this effort at an appellation and the attempt to treat him as human in mind, if not in body, the Creature makes one last effort to return to a minimal sociality with humankind. "He paused, looking on me with wonder" (F 197).

But the promise of a conversation as equals between him and Walton is ultimately dashed. Victor is "dead, and may not answer [him]" (F 187), so a reconciliation is rendered ontologically impossible, and his creator cannot serve as a mediator between the Creature and Walton. Even more importantly, although Walton is afraid of the Creature's "powers of eloquence and persuasion" (F 188), it is ultimately the power of Victor's narrative to persuade that shapes their encounter and prevents Walton from taking the Creature at face value. The fact that he does not look human outweighs the fact that the Creature thinks and speaks like one. As the Creature bitterly notes, Walton refuses to even consider that other humans who look like him – Victor or Felix (F 191) – may be partly to blame for their actions; for Walton, the Creature is the only "wretch" (F 188). Consequently, he lacks social "independence" (Patterson 1982: 10) and the worth associated with it; hence, the Creature can be and must be ostracised.

Thus, the text as a whole cannot yet imagine contingent embodiments as a resource for transformation; the Creature remains doomed to a life in "darkness" (F 191) and at a "distance" (F 191) from human habitats. Yet, unlike Richard, whose condemnation is presented in the play

as an unmitigated good, Shelley's novel allows the Creature to present his own analysis of the events presented, and this narrative exposes readers to an increased awareness of the epistemological contingency of the Enlightenment subject. For, if the ideological self-conception of the early-bourgeois and Romantic cultures of subjectivity were true and universally applicable, as the Enlightenment hegemony claims, then the Creature's physical appearance would not bar him from being recognised as human. As his thoughts and actions prior to his being attacked by Felix attest, his feelings and ethics are closer to early-bourgeois and Romantic ideals of ethics and community than Victor's egoistical genius.

Instead, the tragedy at the heart of Shelley's novel reveals that, for all the Enlightenment's lofty claim to universalism, and the novel's critique of segregated gender roles, it remains beholden to the emergent logic of "separate spheres" when it comes to divergent and disabled contingent embodiments. As the nineteenth century progresses and the early-bourgeois subject culture is replaced by the hegemony of the late-bourgeois subject culture (Reckwitz 2010: 240), this focus on the body leads to an increased formation of essentialised hierarchies on the basis of embodiment. At the same time, this focus on embodiment itself destabilises the late-bourgeois hegemony and once the First World War has left not just a "heap of broken images" (T.S. Eliot) in its wake but also returned the broken but alive bodies of its men to British society, the contingent embodiment of the war veteran itself problematises the hegemony of the "eugenic ideology" (Schalk 2015: 150), even though it cannot yet be rendered "residual" (Williams 2018: 1344) and the contingent embodiment of the war veterans must remain one of Britain's relative Others.

7. "Neither my mind nor my will is crippled, and I don't rule with my legs" –Relative Otherness, and the Bio-politics of the Eugenic Ideology in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*

7.1 The Bio-politics of the Eugenic Ideology of the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Hegemonic and Avant-garde Subject Cultures

The analysis of *Frankenstein* offered in the preceding chapter showcases both the positive and negative changes early-bourgeois conceptions of humanity and embodiment effect on the representation of the contingent embodiment of disabled individual subjects compared to the absolute othering of Richard of Gloucester in Shakespeare's play. On the one hand, the Enlightenment subject is invested in a conception of universality and the liberal acknowledgement that all individual subjects ought to be able to achieve this ideal of freedom and self-determination. Unlike Richard, the Creature can and does appeal to Enlightenment notions of rational humanity; the text as a whole acknowledges his claim to inclusion in the community created by rational conduct by letting him narrate part of the events that lead to his exclusion himself. On the other hand, the fact that the Creature is still excluded and othered on the basis of his embodiment problematises Enlightenment ideologies and reveals that they are underwritten by discourses of hierarchical differentiation, most of which are mapped unto the body. As discussed above, the Creature's physical appearance is an embodied amalgam of those racialised and class Others upon whose abjection the lofty ideals of the early-bourgeois subject are built, n othering that encompasses the ultimate foundation of all human life: natality and mortality, as well as particular individual subjects. Another major societal developments critiqued by the relative Otherness and embodied contingency of the Creature is the emergent ideology of separate spheres (Ferguson Ellis 1989: 11-13).

The successful relegation of the critique of the burgeoning ideology of separate spheres embodied in both Frankenstein and the Creature to the margins of the narrative space prefigures the containment of the embodied contingency of disability during the following decades. Throughout the nineteenth century – during which the bourgeois culture of subjectivity attains hegemony (Reckwitz 2010: 240) – characters with disabilities are either presented as villains and successfully marginalised or as minor characters whose support for the hegemony stabilises it further. A few cases of genre literature raise the question of how madness is attributed to innocent supporters of the hegemony (these are usually female). But for the most part even narratives such as Wilkie Collins' *The Woman in White* (Collins 2008b [1860]) or *The Law and the Lady* (Collins 2008a [1875]), even though they critique the uses and abuses of the system by vilified individual

subjects (Miller 1989), the system as such – whether it be the biopolitical inflection of the incarceration system (Foucault 1977) or the ideology of "separate spheres" of public and private spaces (Reckwitz 2010: 255), respectively the "post-Enlightenment, scientivist discourse of subjectivity" (Reckwitz 2010: 245) that partly underwrites all of these discourses and functions as the primary interdiscourse of the bourgeois subject culture in its hegemonic form (Reckwitz's "late-bourgeois subject" (Reckwitz 2010: 243)) maintain the hegemonic status of these discourses. In contrast to its early-bourgeois predecessor, the hegemonic late-bourgeois subject distinguishes itself from constitutive Others defined as primitive, rather than aristocratic, in response to the loss of the aristocracy's own claim to political and cultural hegemony during "the Age of Revolution" (Eric Hobswain). These new Others are "not (politically) superior to late-bourgeois subjects but rather (economically) inferior" (Reckwitz 2010: 244). The development of an independent working-class culture (particularly a political culture (Thompson 1966: 17 – 185, 451 - 832)) challenges the late-bourgeois subject culturally as well as economically (Reckwitz 2010: 244). Together with the racialised non-European Others embodied in colonised peoples, the working classes simultaneously represent a form of inferiority, from which the late-bourgeois subject can pretend to have emancipated itself through a civilising process, and also the risk of regressive degeneration and degenerative elements within each seemingly-civilised late-bourgeois subject (Reckwitz 2010: 249).[157] In contrast to the early-bourgeois subject, whose conception of "natural" is meant to distinguish it from the politically-hegemonic aristocracy, which is labelled "unnatural" (Reckwitz 2010: 247), thus stabilising the early-bourgeois in its role as the emergent form of proper subjectivity, late-bourgeois forms of subjectivity, influenced by discourses taken from the emerging natural sciences locate the difference between the late-bourgeois "civilised" subject and its bodily-excessive constitutive Others primarily in the question of whether one has the ability to adequately control an "excessiveness" primarily localised in the body (Reckwitz 2010: 250). Questions of hygiene and bodily management increasingly become the subject of a group-based understanding of nature as the "biologist-essentialist nature of a species" (Reckwitz 2010: 250), which is in turn associated with instincts and the "animal life" (Esposito 2012: 22) of humanity. In late-bourgeois discourse, these areas of human life precede – and partly underwrite – civilisation, and their management thus engenders

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[157] For a detailed account of the concept of degeneration in British literature and culture around the *fin de siècle* and in the first four decades of the twentieth century, respectively, see the contributions to Chamberlain and Gilman 1985 and Gutenberg 2009.

(221)

the need for increasingly bio-political approaches to life (in the Foucauldian sense (Foucault 1983: 134-136 ; Foucault 2001: 286 - 301)) and the engagement in a "civilising mission" aimed at the body (Reckwitz 2010: 253) and especially at sexuality and reproduction.[158] Additionally, the Enlightenment conception of a common humanity shared by all humans is replaced by the notion of different human "races". This discourse transposes the concept of species, their essential character of species differences and the process of species differentiation from the observation of non-human animals to humans The working class person, the colonialised inhabitant of the Empire as well as middle-class men and women, they all share the fate of Foucault's homosexual: under the auspices of a *scientia biologis et sexualis*, all of them become "a species" (Foucault 1983: 47). That is, cultural differences become essentialised in biological processes and inscribed in embodiments. Simultaneously, however, these embodied social identities and human species are imagined as susceptible to management through social and cultural discourse-practices (Cohen 2009: 130-205 and *passim*, Schuller 2018: 1-32 and *passim*; Gutenberg 2009). Indeed, the hegemony begins to assume that it needs to manipulate the cultural and biological conditions of individual humans in order to ensure the procreation of the "fittest" members of each race and humanity as a whole (Schuller 2018: 35-99, 172 -204). In keeping with the discursive logic outlined above, in particular its racialisation of class differences and identities, this management included attempts to reduce birth rates among the working classes, either through the use and dispensation of contraceptives and sex education or sterilisation (Gutenberg 2009: 262-266, Schuller 2018: 100-133). And although these discourse-practices became associated almost exclusively with Fascism and Nazism in the wake of the Second World War (Gilroy 2000: 137-176), this way of thinking is common across the political spectrum around the turn of the twentieth century. Both progressives and conservatives share the belief that humanity's embodiment could and should be classified into different "races" and that doing so would ultimately improve humanity's existence and lead to better lives for all. Adapting the work of Wendy Kline, Sami Schalk labels this belief part of "eugenic ideology" (Schalk 2015: 150).

As the nineteenth century draws to a close, an increase in events like the London riots of the 1880s, the Woman's Suffrage Movement (in particular the militant suffragettes (Showalter 1992)), and the trial of Oscar Wilde expose the increased contingency of the late-bourgeois culture of subjectivity and in particular its essentialising biologisms. For the most part,

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[158] For a detailed discussion of the politics of sexuality employed in a colonial context from the turn of the twentieth-century until the era of decolonisation, see Stoler 1995; Stoler 2010; McClintock 1995.

scholarship on the period agrees that the management of contingency effected during the Victorian consensus literally exploded during the First World War and exposed the late-bourgeois subject to an increased awareness of both epistemic and accidental contingency.[159] However, Andrea Gutenberg argues that biopolitics and the discourse of re- and degeneration reaches new heights in the decades after 1918 (Gutenberg 2009: 1-2). Depending on the text in question, the discourses are used either to stabilise the late-bourgeois ideal of separate spheres – and thus to control its being exposed to contingency by the experience of women working for the war effort (Gutenberg 2009: 171), respectively the association of men with self-control and self-discipline that had been disrupted by the traumatised wounded who return from Flanders (Gutenberg 2009: 253 - 258)-, or to argue for a form of sexuality and embodiment that transcends these categories in favour of a different future (Gutenberg 2009: 407 - 414). The following analysis focuses on how the body-based alternative subject culture championed in D.H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* itself appeals to ideas of "eugenic ideology" (Schalk 2015: 150) and degeneration to exclude and other Connie's first husband, Clifford. At the same time, Clifford's relative othering exposes the ideals propagated by the narrative to contingency and presents its own potential approach to different embodiments not founded on exclusion, violence and othering. As this potential approach however remains latent and subtextual compared to the ideals of embodiment championed by the narrative, Clifford ultimately remains a relative Other.+

7.2 Reading Clifford's Wounds and Contingent Embodiment As Representations of Loss, Violence and a Destructive Past – Disabled Embodiment As Other

In keeping with its revolutionary and utopian context, the novel begins with an argument for a different rebuilding of life in a "tragic age".[160] The omniscient narrator argues that humanity is "among the ruins" (LC 5) of a "cataclysm" (LC 5) and must now build "new habitats" (LC 5). In calling the events of the world war a "cataclysm" (LC 5), the narrative immediately begins by setting out two of the central themes that will guide the following analysis: first of all, the OED defines cataclysm as "a large scale and violent event" ("cataclysm | Definition of cataclysm in English by Oxford Dictionaries" website, definition 1) or as "violent social or political upheaval"

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[159] For a detailed discussion of the perception of contingency in high modernist literature addressing the First World War more specifically , see Butter (2013: 216 - 223).

[160] Lawrence, D[avid] H[erbert]. *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Eds. Michael Squires and Paul Poplawski. With an Introduction by Doris Lessing. London and New York: Penguin, 2006, 5. All subsequent citations from the novel follow this edition and are given in the body of the text (in brackets, using the abbreviation "LC").

of the survivors of the cataclysm as homes or using other terms that allow for a complex intermingling of natural and cultural components.[162] Instead, this initial passage inverts the progressivist logic of the late-bourgeois civilization/nature dichotomy, but retains the hierarchical structure that informs the dualism. Ultimately, civilization remains the constitutive Other of "nature" as championed by the text. Conversely, this retention of hierarchies itself opens the text up to the exploration of contingencies that allow for another alternative model of society, different to the one propagated by the text as a whole.

Secondly, the use of "cataclysm" (LC 5) strengthens the anti-civilisational deep structure of the text further. Etymologically, the word first enters English usage from Latin via French in the seventeenth century and is initially used to refer to a singular mythological event: the Biblical flood ("cataclysm | Definition of cataclysm in English by Oxford Dictionaries"" website, "etymology" section). In his comparative study of creation myths, Mircea Eliade notes that flood narratives commonly assume that there exists a cultural or natural form of organisation that precedes the flooding event and the degeneration of which prompts divine intervention (Eliade 2002). By conjoining the events of the First World War with the decades that preceded it, the text as a whole both participates in contemporary arguments that it expresses "a bourgeois crisis" (Reckwitz 2010: 275) and declares late-bourgeois forms of subjectivity the cause of these events, thereby in braiding them in turn with the war and creating a traceable causal chain of decline and fall. The decades of the *fin de siècle* (if not the hegemonic phase of the bourgeois subject as a whole) thus provide a foundation for the events of the World War, thereby minimising the experience of contingency caused by both the deaths and maiming at the front and the increasing weakening of ideals of gender separation at the home front (Gutenberg 2009: 403). Additionally, creating a linear framework that builds on existing teleological narrative structures also minimises both the potential traces of contingency within the narrative of the novel itself and enables it to access formerly existing narrative forms and hence to battle the dearth of narratable experiences – and the ultimate decline of the narrative form described by thinkers like Walter Benjamin (Benjamin 2007 [1936]: 104).

True to its focus on embodiment and bodily experience, the novel embodies its critique in Clifford Chatterley, who is introduced to the reader as a disabled veteran of the First World War:

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[162] For a comprehensive introduction into contemporary debates on the complexity of the term "home", see Blunt and Dowling 2006.

She married Clifford Chatterley in 1917, when he was home for a month on leave. They had a month's honeymoon. Then he went back to Flanders: to be shipped over to England again six months later, more or less in bits. […]His hold on life was marvellous. He didn't die, and the bits seemed to grow together again. For two years he remained in the doctor's hands. Then he was pronounced a cure, and could return to life again, with the lower half of his body, from the hips down, paralysed for ever. (LC 5, 6)

From the very first page, Clifford is defined through his embodiment, which in turn is defined by paralysis. Initially, readers are encouraged to think this primarily a description of Clifford's embodiment after the events of Flanders. However, the narrative soon expands the reach of this attribute to include his family and his life before the war. Notably, the narrator begins by telling us that Clifford is "aristocracy" (LC 10) whereas Connie's Fabian background places her in the "well-to-do intelligentsia" (LC 10) (that is, she is a member of the upper-middle class). Hence, initially their marriage evokes the ideal of upward class mobility for the middle classes prevalent in Victorian and Edwardian fiction (Armstrong 2004 [1987]: 580). However, this narrative and its conventions are immediately disrupted when the narrator further comments on Clifford's claim to aristocracy and reveals that he is "[n]ot the big sort, but still, *it* [my emphasis, MTW]" (LC 10). Firstly, by following the claim to aristocracy with a negative statement that narrows the reach of the term, the text as a whole renders Clifford's claim contingent. This contingency is expanded by placing the definition of the Chatterley's aristocracy through an attribute in abeyance; instead of labelling a concrete feature upon which the aristocracy of the Chatterley's rests, the pronoun *it* acts as an empty signifier. The family are clearly not *aristoi* in the original Greek sense of the word (there it signified those with the greatest skill in certain discourse-practices and hence connected nobility with merit and (respectively, or) acclaim (Plato 2010: 53-54)), a definition again popularised by Nietzsche in the decades around the turn of the twentieth century (Nietzsche 2011 [1886/1887]: 54 – 55, 60 - 63). [163]

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[163] In light of the Platonic connotation popularised by Nietzsche, one might argue that Connie and Mellors are both Nietzschean *aristoi*: Mellors is given "a commission" (LC 132) and prior to that attends "grammar school" (LC 200). Although Clifford is not certain of his gamekeeper's exact origin in the community (LC 68 – "He was a Tevershall boy…son of a collier, *I believe*. [my emphasis, MTW]"), a lack of knowledge that further confirms that Clifford's fear of the "masses" (LC 12) is at least partly the product of his own ignorance rather than reflecting any real engagement with his tenants as concrete individual subjects, Mellors is definitely of working-class origin. Hence, his achievements are probably the result of individual merit and hard work in contrast to Clifford whose privileges are the result of inheritance and tradition. For her part, Connie is the daughter of a knight ("old *Sir* Malcolm Reid [my emphasis, MTW]", LC 6); unlike other social ranks above the bourgeois or working-class "Mr" or "Mrs.", which rely on a bio-political "symbolics of blood" (Foucault 1983: 143, translated according to Stoler 1995: 49), knighthoods are bestowed after a nomination and due to "a preeminent contribution to a field or activity" ("Guide to the Honours – BBC News" website). Both of them can thus point to concrete actions they or their immediate family performed as the reason for their social advancement. Notably, the narrative further confirms its approval of merit-

Even more strikingly, the family history of the Chatterleys centres on degeneration and loss of status even before Clifford's birth. The narrator tells us that "his father was a baronet" (LC 10) whereas his mother descends from a "viscount" (LC 10). According to Foucault, the interest in the bio-political management of the sexuality, fertility and birth-rate of large numbers of the population, divided into groups, which were often conceptualised as distinct "races", does not originate in the nineteenth century (Foucault 2001: 93 - 102); rather, it expands a logic and discourse-practices that have been employed by European aristocrats since the Middle Ages: the reach of this "symbology of blood" (Foucault 1983: 143) is merely broadened to include all classes and scientifically bolstered in support of bourgeois and state-based power and thus becomes "the analytics of sex" (Foucault 1983: 143). Aristocratic families sought alliances between individuals on the basis of their family's social influence as expressed through the titles and connections each family possesses, with daughters as the exchange capital of this "traffic in women" (Rubin 2004: 770, 776 - 790; Foucault 1983: 143). Accordingly, the "symbology of blood" (Foucault 1983: 143) still addresses the choices of concrete individual subjects rather than populations, but both this ancient form of sexual management and modern bio-politics are based on the goal of improving a family or a larger population by managing the sexuality of the parties involved. Improvement in turn implies the eventual attainment of an ideal of normality: in the case of aristocratic families this ideal is represented by familial alliance to a sovereign dynasty (or several dynasties).

In the particular case of the Chatterleys, this logic of improvement has been disrupted and rendered contingent: if it held, Clifford's mother (as a member of the peerage) would have married an earl or other member of the high nobility rather than a member of the lowest aristocratic rank and a non-peer. Thus, the descent of Clifford and his siblings already renders contingent their claim to social pre-eminence and instead signals the degeneration, of aristocratic ways of "civilising" nature and sexuality through the usage of cultural codes, respectively their

based social advancement by having Sir Malcolm approve of the match between his daughter and Mellors both generally and on the grounds of their sexual compatibility rather than being concerned about any loss of respectability (LC 283) He also shares in the narrative's general debasement of Clifford, whom he describes as a "lily-livered hound with never a fuck in him" (LC 283). Sir Malcolm's opinion further confirms Clifford's general lack of "honour" (Patterson 1982: 11-12. 77-101) and his "quasi-human" (Weheliye 2014: 8) status relative to the characters the narrative wants readers to support. At the same time, his being compared to" a hound" (LC 283) points to the ambiguous representation of nature in the novel. Hounds are bred and domesticated animals and closely associated with human culture and civilisation. According to the logic of the narrative, nature is only positive if it is not "entangl[ed]" (Barad 2007: 33247) with culture.

universal inadequacy when engaging with nature. The events of the Great War further problematise the internal family structure as the death of Clifford's elder brother makes him, the younger son, his father's heir (LC 11).

In addition to revealing the contingency of the bio-political management of aristocratic inheritance (in the form of both patriarchal lines of inheritance and primogeniture), the death of his brother reveals Clifford's psychological dependence on the contingency-free functioning of social systems. From the first paragraphs of his backstory, he seems incapable of managing contingency, both in relation to his own personality and other individual subjects:

He was terrified even of this [=being heir, MTW]. His importance as son of Sir Geoffrey […] was so ingrained in him, he could never escape it. And yet he knew that this too, in the eyes of the vast seething world, was ridiculous. Now he was heir and responsible for Wragby. Was that not terrible? And also splendid, and at the same time, perhaps, purely absurd? (LC 11)

The above passage clearly prefigures a variety of issues on Clifford's part that precede his disability and trauma: firstly, he admits that his role as a member of the Chatterley family is "ingrained" (LC 11). The choice of words implies that it is a foundational part of his self-image, influencing his emotional self-relation and, externalised through various discourse-practices, his relationship to other individual subjects and the outside world. Hence, Clifford is introduced to readers as following a version of the late-bourgeois code of "respectability" (Reckwitz 2010: 249). This code argues that one ought to manage one's conduct – whether internal or external – in such a way that "others respect the perfection of [an individual subject's] conduct […] [,] who therefore come to respect themselves" (Reckwitz 2010: 250). An individual subject's morality is measured by comparing their externalised conduct to a social standard (Reckwitz 2010: 250). Accordingly, this model of subjectivity and social interaction presumes the existence of communicable relations between the individual subject and the community structures in which they live, respectively that these community structures in turn reflect a coherent social system. It manages contingency through the assumption of society as a referential and rationally-manageable sign system. However, Clifford's inability to negotiate either his own inner response to the actions of others or to assert confidently that he is proud of being heir of Wragby points to his inability to deal with any form of contingency, particularly the contingency embodied in concrete individual subjects, from whom he distances himself via reference to the image of the othered "hordes of middle and lower-class humanity" (LC 10), or by eschewing all social interactions, which he cannot read as positive moments of creative engagement: for Clifford, social interactions only ever pose the (potentially two-fold) risk that his inner self might be

rendered contingent through his interactions with other people or that it will be ridiculed by his interlocutors and observers: "But when it [= awareness of the contingency of one's social actions, MTW] came too close and oneself became ridiculous too…?" (LC 11). Clifford's self-image is thus highly immunitarian in Esposito's sense (Esposito 2011: 6): its primary goal is to maintain his difference from others – whether as an individual subject or as a member of a social class.

Notably, the above thought as reported in free indirect speech renders ambiguous whether the narrative reports the thoughts of Clifford Chatterley (the specific individual subject) or comments on thoughts shared by a great number of individual subjects among those who are "conscious of [their] own defencelessness, even though [they] have all the defence of privilege" (LC 10). By describing this analysis as a "phenomenon of our day" (LC 10), the narrator thus makes Clifford the embodied representative of a larger social trend that signals the contingency of all cultural formations or privilege-based social arrangements. As Clifford already feels "[conscious of his own defencelessness] in some paralysing way" (LC 10) when thinking about contact with persons beyond his social circle before the war, his wounding in Flanders and subsequent disability merely externalise his feelings, making his fears visible on the body itself. The narrative even uses the exact same descriptor for both the physical and mental component of Clifford's condition: "with his body […] *paralysed* forever [my emphasis, MTW]" (LC 5). The text as a whole extends this logic further when describing Clifford's stay in the hospital. Strikingly, the doctors pronounce him not just healthy but "a cure" (LC 5), in spite of his chronic paralysis, the resulting erectile dysfunction, and "the watchful look, the slight vacancy of a cripple" (LC 6). Labelling Clifford a "cure" (LC 5) implies that he has returned to a state of embodiment society considers non-disadvantageous and hence an embodiment that fits society's ideals of "normalcy" (Davis 1995: 5). The doctors' inability to diagnose Clifford as disabled thus imbricates British hegemonic cultural formations and institutions in the normalisation of a crippled and crippling form of subjectivity.

Hence, Clifford's disability and his subsequent conduct in the novel are used as a "narrative prosthesis" as defined by Mitchell and Snyder: a master metaphor for all social ills (Mitchell and Snyder 2000: 48-50) and a sign of "social collapse" (Mitchell and Snyder 2000: 47). Simultaneously, , using disability as a metaphor for other cultural structures risks forgetting the specificity and concrete reality of the existence of particular individual subjects with disabilities (Davis 1995: 127) and how they navigate their lives through their specific embodiments. Following Sami Schalk's call to consider the materiality of disability experiences alongside their

metaphorical application to highlight the problems inherent in disabled individual subjects and their specific disability being lost when disability is only interpreted as a metaphor for other social issues (Schalk 2018: 39-41), the following analysis focuses on Clifford as a particular individual subject whose actions subvert the metaphoric message of the novel as a whole, exposing it as contingent and offering the kernel of a reading beyond the nature/culture dualisms that structure dominant readings of the text. Instead of reading it yet again as a "book about sex" (Shiach 2001: 87), this chapter focuses on the representations of (contingent) embodiment in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and the bio-political implications of this representation.

7.3 The Alienated and Alienating Pseudo-Creativity of Clifford's Writing: Defences Against Accidental and Epistemological Contingency

Clifford initially seems aware of his inability to deal with contingency and recognises it as a lack. Instead of educating and training himself through exposure to individual subjects of other class backgrounds, however, he provides a solution by acceding to his father's "silent and brooding" (LC 12) injunction that he should "marry" (LC 12). He attempts to solve his issues through an appeal to a genealogical institution, marriage. Notably, the fact that his father does not have to speak to make this injunction heard or felt by Clifford already points to both the centrality of systematic thinking to Clifford's way of life (as does his education in "the technicalities of coal-mining" (LC 10)) and his inability to deal with others as individual subjects. In keeping with this systematic thinking and his faith in late-bourgeois ideals of inheritance and propriety, he marries Constance because "she [is] so much more mistress of herself in that outer world of chaos" (LC 10). In describing the world around him as chaotic, Clifford emphasises its lack of comprehensible order and his inability to subsume his everyday experiences under the rules of a logical system; he perceives the world as a source of accidental and epistemic contingency. Simultaneously, he ignores the positive potentiality hidden in chaos: according to Greek mythology, the *kosmos*, the order of the Olympian gods, is created out of chaos, even though chaos was also allied with the Titans – the negative deities whom the Olympians just defeated ("Titans (Titanes) – Elder Gods of Greek Mythology" website). Thus, chaos, understood as potentiality, has the ability to be both danger and resource. In praising Constance's ability to mediate between chaos and self without losing herself as well as the middle-class ability to "be earnest about something" (LC 11), thus delimiting and minimising the dangers to a self-image that adhere to an increased awareness of contingency, Clifford and the narrator highlight the positive effects of considering "contingency [a] resource" (Butter 2013: 28).

When they return to Wragby, Clifford spends most of his time writing books. Initially, this provides both him and Connie with a means of having "their interests flow[] together" (LC 18). It seems as if Clifford might slowly be learning to manage the contingency of human existence with the help of his wife. We might even argue that Clifford's successful novel-writing might be an attempt to re-attain the capacity to desire things in the broadest possible sense. In his analysis of imagination as a psychological capacity, Jean-Paul Sartre argues that desire, conceptualised as the drive to relate to and be recognised by another being outside the self, exists in three different modalities: the first and most basic form of desire seeks to annihilate the Other by turning it into an object for consumption or its complete domination by the subject and self (Butler 2012: 94-95) Mature forms of desire, on the other hand, have to deal with the difference between self and Other as inscribed in the facticity of their existence (including, Judith Butler notes, the materiality of their embodiment) (Butler 2012: 104). Sartre defines the imagination as an intermediate stage, which allows a subject to deal with the contingency of the facticity of the Other because the extent to which the Other is imagined as different from the self can still be manipulated by the subject in question, respectively because its results still remain potential, rather than actual (Butler 2012: 114 - 120). Hence, Clifford's creative work might be seen as him training his imaginative faculties and slowly learning to engage neutrally or positively with the different ways of being in the world represented by other individual subjects.

However, the text as a whole immediately discounts Clifford's novels as areas of interaction with the contingent embodiment of other individual subjects, whether encountered in the past or present; instead, they further confirm Clifford's solipsism and inability to engage with the world around him:

"He had taken to writing stories, curious, very personal stories, about people he had known. […] But there was no touch, no actual contact. It was as if the whole thing took place in a vacuum. […] But to Clifford the blame was torture, like knives goading him. It was as if the whole of his being were in his stories […] They [=Clifford and Michaelis, MTW], wanted to make a real display… a man's very own display that should capture for a time the vast populace." (LC 16, 51)

Once again, the narrative voice connects Clifford's personal lack of connection to the world around him to a wider false ideal of masculinity that imagines individual subjectivity as existing completely separated from all other kinds of human interaction, specifically relationships mediated by touch, which blurs subject/object dichotomies (Merleau-Ponty 1974: 118). Clifford and Michaelis objectify themselves when they imagine themselves as someone other individual subjects, who are equally de-individualised in the image of the "vast populace" (LC 51), can only

gaze at and when they totally obliterate the difference between their embodied selves in their factual materiality (Butler 2012: 151) by addressing each other as parts of a uniform "they" (LC 51); hence, their ideal of masculine individual subjectivity forecloses the potentiality of a different approach to the world in the form of another individual subject the imagination could ideally access. Clifford and Michaelis seem to think that their work still participates in the late-bourgeois association of masculinity with shared forms of social publicity (Reckwitz 2010: 264 - 265); or at least they believe that it accords with forms of subjectivity built on the ironic distancing from societal convention propagated by the aesthetic branch of turn-of-the-century subcultures (Reckwitz 2010: 297). The text as a whole presents these aspirations as fruitless and indeed as de-individualising and objectifying (both of Clifford and Michealis themselves and other individual subjects). This objectification extends even to the material conditions of Clifford's writing: "when he was alone, he tap-tap-tapped on the typewriter, to infinity" (LC 83). Moragh Shiach notes that here "aesthetic creativity is reduced to repetitive and mechanical tapping" (Schiach 2001: 95).

Examining these processes of reduction more closely reveals two additional dimensions of Clifford's problematic relationship to communication and communal interaction in general: firstly, his tendency to write "to infinity" (LC 83) or to "always talk […]" (LC 83) to Connie (something she experiences as drowning in words (LC 50, 93)) both indicate that language generally and Clifford's language use specifically are not capable of enabling proper communication according to the logic of the narrative. Shiach explains that acceptable use of language is grounded in material experience (Shiach 2001: 92-93) in the context of the novel; hence, Clifford's inability to "touch" (LC 16) others with his writing symbolises and signifies his inability to let himself go in front of and for other people. This is a trait Clifford again shares with his privileged associates.

This negative judgement remains valid even if we replace the materialist signification model propagated by the novel with a deconstructivist reading of language. Clifford produces signifiers that question the metaphysics of presence attached to the notion of the signified. The material tapping of the typewriter, which is independent of any meaning Clifford is trying to produce, disrupts the notion of writing as the externalisation of mental "intellectual" work and points to the foundational materiality of writing (Derrida 2016 [1967]: 37). At the same time, it draws attention to the communal aspects of communication: the sign systems used exist as resources that define communities of users and in which individual subjects are simultaneously inscribed in

(using a sign system that precedes them and defines their role within it) and which they inscribe themselves in (by actively modifying the sign system in their individual utterances) (Ermarth 2000: 410). Using sign systems thus requires an individual subject to oscillate between modes of communitarian sharing, externalising themselves in the shared space of language and respecting other users and their needs in this shared space, and the immunitarian uniqueness of one's own idiolect, which cannot be shared by definition. Language is thus a foundational *munus* in Esposito's sense (Esposito 2010: 5) – a gift shared in the giving, rather than the receiving, a part of the shared obligation of community. As a *munus*, language also renders fluid and contingent the distinction between subject and object. Clifford, who is afraid and "defenceless" (LC 10) in spite of his privilege (itself an expression of immunitarian withdrawal from shared obligations (Esposito 2011: 6)) is thus - incapable of engaging in a medium that requires the acceptance of contingency as its foundation. Even as he spends all his time with Connie "talk[ing] or reading" to her (LC 83), he never enters into a situation where he has to be the passive or receptive partner in their communicative interactions. Instead, Connie is increasingly cut off from the "flow[ing] together" (LC 18) of their ideas and becomes the mere mediator between Clifford's ideas and his readership, pushing buttons to "type[] them [=Clifford's manuscripts, MTW] out for him" (LC 99). Considering that the words Constance puts on the page are marketed as Clifford's, this further confirms the objectification of women in general and Constance in particular in these conceptions of art and artists.[164] It also renders contingent Clifford's assertion that his work is "a man's very own display" (LC 51), revealing it instead as the product of interaction between genders and under conditions dictated by a medium, namely language, that shapes all bodies (Kirby 1997: 71). Apart from questioning the gender binary, the description of Clifford's writing process also enmeshes him in a mechanical process that is ultimately structurally equivalent to working in an industrial factory: typewriter keys are levers that lift and then press an inked letter cast to a page; hence, Clifford's writing, although seemingly part of the life of the mind (it is meant to externalise his thoughts) is thus as infused with the materiality of mechanised processes as the industrial work done in Tevershall village. Indeed, the typewriter translates the creative usage of signs into a monotonous "tap-tap" (LC 83). Hence, Clifford's work is translated into a single sound emitted by a machine , just as life in Tevershall is experienced by Connie through

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[164] However, it is also possible to read Constance's ability to render Clifford's incessant "words" (LC 50) into coherent narratives on the page as an assertion of her ability to deal with contingency and even to find traces of creative potential in something others (including Clifford) might consider "chaos" (LC 10).

the "rattle-rattle of the screens at the pit, the puff of the winding engine, the clink-clink of shunting trucks, and the hoarse little whistle of the colliery locomotives" (LC 13). Through this description the narrative collapses class distinction and the underlying mind-body dualism that seemingly separates the miners and the self-declared intellectual (LC 31) aristocrat. Instead, they all live in a world where the dominant sounds perceived are those of inanimate objects, which condition and define inter-human communications. Some of these objects even assume human-like qualities: the narrative voice uses "hoarse" (LC 13) to describe the sound of a whistle, thus equating it with the qualities of the human voice. As hoarseness in a human signals physical and mental exhaustion, one might even argue that this sound of the whistle exemplifies the bitch goddess' "grimmer appetite for meat and bones" (LC 107). The subjectivation of objects rests on the alienation and objectification of humans, their degradation from flesh to meat. As meat is the term used to describe flesh that humans consider edible (Derrida 1991:114 - 116) and the distinction between flesh and meat is inscribed in the mechanisms of "hyperseparation" (Plumwood 1993: 49) between human and non-human animal species, this choice of words identifies the bitch goddess as an agent of alienation in Lawrence's narrative: she alienates human beings from their own material existence and prevents their considering either themselves or other humans members of a common "species" (Marx 2015 [1844]: 90) as signalled by their shared embodiment (Marx 2015 [1844]: 87 – 90) . Since Clifford is already beholden to hegemonic notions of success (LC 21) – which he later describes as the "[appetite] for flattery, stroking, tickling, and adulation" (LC 107) artists are subjected to in hegemonic society– the text as a whole thus signals that he is also already imbricated in the same mechanisms of alienation as his workers.

7.4 The Estate Grounds and Garden – A Training Ground For Creatively Dealing With Contingency and Otherness

Arguably, Clifford represents a case of worse alienation than his workers do, as his embodiment is fundamentally dependent on mechanical aid in the form of his motorised bath-chair (LC 15). The narrative begins by telling us that Clifford has two chairs and uses the manual one to wheel himself around inside the house (LC 15). As Clifford is described as being "strong and agile with his arms" (LC 48), we can assume that he is independent inside the house. Considering Clifford's strong attachment to ideals of masculinity and the renewed tendency to re-erect the differences between genders in terms of their association with the domestic and public spheres, respectively the hegemonic emasculation of wounded veterans who cannot return to work as "degenerate", in

hegemonic discourses in the decade after the First World War (Gutenberg 2009: 257 -258), his usage of the motorised wheelchair can be read as an attempt to reclaim and assert his masculinity. Initially, the narrative reads this as a potentially positive development, as it enables him to visit natural spaces attached to the estate, such as the "garden" (LC 5) and " fine, melancholy park" (LC 5). Additionally, it provides the means for him to spend time with Connie away from the typewriter and the outpouring of words that dominate their meetings in the parlour (which are defined for Connie by "the noise of […] reading" (LC 138), rather than by shared experiences). Clifford's existence thus contains traces of the existence of a "cyborg" (Haraway 1991 149) in a post-modern sense: according to Donna Haraway, a cyborg is "a hybrid of machine and organism" (Haraway 1991: 149), "simultaneously animal and machine, who [sic] populate[s] worlds ambiguously natural and crafted" (Haraway 1991: 149). Parks and gardens are also liminal spaces, situated between the domestic space of the house and the feared wilderness of non-domesticated nature (Grewe-Volpp 2004: 105).[165] As they also enable Clifford to feel emotions he otherwise represses (he is "ever so proud" (LC 5) of the park, although his adherence to societal conventions prevents him from articulating it or examining just why he feels "curiously angry" (LC 42) at the sight of the trees his father felled in service to the war), they allow for the questioning and blurring of gender lines and class norms of embodiment.[166] Furthermore, the park has also been filled by Clifford with new gravel "from the pit bank" (LC 41) that changes colour under different conditions (LC 41). Connie is "pleased" (LC 41) by this

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[165] The following analysis of Clifford's relationship to the park of his estate focuses on the positive changes to his embodied individual subjectivity it might enable; however, the symbol of the garden also has negative connotations that tie it to Clifford's tendency to see other individual subjects only as parts of a system and as undifferentiated "masses" (LC 138 and 182). As Zygmunt Bauman notes, sociological discourses of the early-to mid twentieth - century often used the image of the garden (respectively, the gardener) to represent new approaches to the management of society, which abstracted from the individual subject to manage society as a whole and even begin to equate individual subjects with weeds that needed to be eradicated. Thus, they prefigured the fascist movement and their embrace of a genocidal eugenics (Bauman 2000: 57). As discussed below, Clifford is shown embracing similarly proto-fascist imagery in the novel (LC 182).

[166] Gardens are seen as female spaces of domesticated nature (from which further attempts to domesticate greater swaths of wilderness" – performed by individual subjects of all genders – can be initiated) in the nineteenth century (Grewe-Volpp 2004: 105 and FN 29; Kolodny 1984: xiii). In Lawrence's own novel, gardens take on additional meaning as spaces of independence and individual work for both genders, allowing both Connie and Mellors "to control [their] own environment" (Shiach 2001:93) . Reading this function narrowly would bar Clifford from this space of change as he does not work in his own garden. Reading the term "work" broadly, on the other hand, and allowing it to encompass changes not made with his own hands but through an affective engagement with the landscape, we can restore Clifford's role as an active participant in the spatial logic of the park, a place he uses to work through his own thoughts and feelings.

"naturecultur[al]" (Haraway 2008: 15) hybrid. In sharp contrast to the roses covered with smut (LC 13), where the refuse of industrialisation covers and ultimately destroys natural organisms and life as a whole, the new gravel in the park enacts a mediation and creative negotiation between the otherwise opposed spheres. This mediation process furthermore extends between the practical and the aesthetic spheres. On the one hand, a gravel path ensures that the park remains accessible to Clifford even after his wounding; on the other hand, this accessibility adds a new dimension to the landscape, the effect of which is independent of both its context of origin and its practical usage. The motorised wheel-chair thus acts as an agent of positive change in this scene as well as a symbol of creative epistemic contingency that questions the dichotomies the text as a whole is largely built around.

However, the narrative immediately problematises readings that focus on the mechanised wheelchair as a medium of access and positive change: The narrative voice forecloses any positive evaluation of Connie's and Clifford's stroll in the park when it withdraws the inclusion of Clifford's mode of transportation under the umbrella of "walking" (LC 41) and instead emphasises the difference between Connie's body-based engagement with the world and his "chuf[ing] in his motor-chair" (LC 41). Once again, the sounds made by a mechanical device signify its agential status in the scene and minimise Clifford's agency. Furthermore, the construction of the sentence ignores (or effaces) that this enables a shared experience between Clifford and Connie.

Readers' first encounter with the chair as an inanimate quasi-object is still relatively benign, however, especially when compared to the next scene in which it makes an appearance. During their first outing in the park, the chair helps Clifford manage the terrain, but its efficacy is limited. Occasionally, Connie is required to help Clifford as he "steer[s] down a slope" (LC 41) and he refuses to use the wheelchair to go down the "long, and very jolty down-slope" (LC 42). Hence, the chair acts as an aid to Clifford, but it also keeps him aware of the limits of his own skill, respectively shows that he is still dependent on the aid of other individual subjects, whose motor skills and muscles allow for movement without the aid of a third party. Notably, Clifford does not seem to consider this a limitation worthy of note: the text as a whole does not report him either commenting on it to Connie or voicing any chagrin at his being confined to the top of the knoll. At this early stage of the novel, the motor chair marks an irreconcilable difference between the organic embodiment of Connie or Mellors and the composite, quasi-objective embodiment of

Clifford.[167] Although the hierarchical dimension of this difference remains latent in the scene analysed above, the text as a whole assumes that life with a disability and the aid of prostheses is defined by a permanent loss and lack of autonomy, which must be mourned, rather than creatively transformed (Kafer 2013: 27-28, 65-67, 98-102) and that the "slight vacancy of a cripple" (LC 6) is the defining feature of Clifford's existence. Furthermore, since the text-as a whole fundamentally treats mechanical devices as instruments of de-subjectivation and exclusively associates them with the alienation of industrial labour (Shiach 2001: 97), Clifford's use of a wheelchair is seen as a potential cause of his degeneration throughout the novel. This is made explicit on a variety of axes in the longest scene featuring Clifford using his motor-chair for an outing in the estate park

7.5. The Domination of Mechanisation – Clifford's Wheelchair As a Vehicle of Othering
When readers next encounter Clifford and his chair, his attitude towards both the medical device itself and the things it enables him to do has changed markedly: the narrative voice now describes the wheelchair as an intruding force that "surge[s] into" (LC 184) the flowers on the path, destroying them in the process; Clifford for his part remains oblivious to this destruction and thinks of himself as "steer[ing] the middle course" (LC 184). His ability to move independently is now shown to depend on the large-scale destruction and far-reaching objectification of non-human nature, unlike his earlier attempts at negotiating interactions. Even more strikingly, Clifford also remains oblivious to any violence done to humans, whom he does not see as individual subjects (much less as *fellow* individual subjects) but whom he rather de-individualises and de-subjectifies into quantitatively-defined "masses" (LC 182). During a conversation with Connie at the beginning of their walk, he asserts that "the masses have been ruled since time began" (LC 182) and have to be ruled again with "whips and swords" (LC 183). Asked whether he considers himself one of the rulers, Clifford affirms this because he considers ruling solely a mental activity, rather than an embodied one. "'I don't rule with my legs!' [my single quotation marks, MTW]" (LC 183). Using a functional motor chair thus enables Clifford to forget his

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[167] Bruno Latour defines quasi-objects as things that have their own kind of agential power because their presence enables a certain action or set of practices in the first place; and any actions individual subjects perform with and around them are conditioned and mediated by the presence and behaviour of the object in question (Latour 2008: 67 - 72). As Clifford can only move his lower body independently with the aid of a wheelchair (whether motorised or manual), his chairs constitute quasi-objects for his experience of embodiment. For a detailed discussion of the role prostheses play in the life of disabled individual subjects, see Kafer (2013: 115 - 123).

embodied nature and the (inter-)dependencies with, respectively on, other individual subjects it occasions. Additionally, this statement implies that Clifford has now fully embraced the division between his upper body and "his dead legs" (LC 48) his paralysis has imposed on him; respectively, he has always considered his embodiment both accidental and incidental to his real self, which he locates exclusively in the products of his mind. Hence, he now applies the dichotomy between subject and object to all areas of life, including his own embodiment and builds a hierarchy on this distinction:

On the one hand, the chair, by providing a non-embodied means of transportation, provides the material conditions necessary for Clifford's dividing his self (which he now aligns with the abstract and universal realm of (Platonic) ideas (LC: 234 - 235)) from his own materiality. Rather than blurring the terms of a dichotomy, as Haraway's cyborg does, it seemingly cements them. Even though the chair blurs the difference between Clifford's embodied existence and non-human, mechanical materiality, it inscribes a hierarchy rather than enabling a lateral interaction between equal but different parties, again unlike Haraway's cyborg. Clifford's earlier praise of industry (LC 180) conceived of this system as a de-personalised and universal actant (Latour 2004: 75) that stands above human forms of being and sociality (and is thus imagined to be non-contingent), rather than conceptualising industrial work as a series of interactions by the embodied individuals working in it, Clifford's image of life around him and the foundation of his social position once again centres on violence and hierarchical dualisms.

Since it is a product of industrial mechanisation, it is not surprising that Clifford expects the chair to be constantly functional and "ready-to-hand" (Rentsch 2013: 57) for a captain of industry like himself. This blind belief now makes him ignore the limits of the chair and its capacity, even Connie points them out again before they set out down the slope ("Will the chair get up again?" – (LC 185)), and Clifford should already be aware of them in principle. Interestingly, Clifford replies to Connie's concerns with a proverbial reference to his own mental acuity; he no longer seems to recognise the difference between his own materialisation and that of the chair (LC 184). Rather, he takes to collapsing the material boundary between humanity's animated embodiment and the inanimate materiality of the chair in the direction of the human; that is, he subjectifies the chair at the expense of the objectifying of human individual subjects. Throughout the episode, Clifford refers to the chair as "she" (LC 185) as long as it is, to use the Heideggerian term, "ready-to-hand" when he wants to do something with it (irrespective of whether the manoeuvre

ultimately proves successful or not).[168] Hence, like the whistle of the colliery train, the products of industry are shown as invested with the humanity and individuality of the "men, not men, but animas of coal and iron and clay" (LC 159) who have produced them.[169] Strikingly, however, Clifford partially seems aware of the de-subjectivating quality of his chair because he keeps it at some linguistic distance from himself: while referring to it with pronouns usually reserved for humans, he neither collapses the distinction between himself and the chair completely (he does not use "I" when referring to the chair successfully managing the slope), nor does he address the chair as an equal, but different, being by using second-person pronouns. Clifford is careful to hierarchically distinguish himself as a unique individual subject from the wheelchair. However, his choice of pronoun when describing the readiness-to-hand of the chair re-introduces this inanimate object into the realm of humanity as a whole. It simultaneously equates humans other than Clifford with objects, which may sap their strength, becoming more "human" as humanity becomes more object-like. Yet, both humans and machines are imagined as remaining subservient to Clifford's self-image as a ruling subject, defined by his ability to manage technology and other individual subjects according to the same disembodied managerial principles that govern the "technicalities of coal-mining" (LC 10).[170] Thus, the text as a whole implicates Clifford in the creation of a three-tiered hierarchy: at the bottom of this hierarchy, non-human and non-animate nature serves as something to be shaped by human will, rather than as a part of the world with a capacity for independent agency. This is reflected in Clifford's reply to Connie's concern about the weather changing to rain. "Rain! *Why? Do you want to it to?* [my emphasis, MTW]" (LC 186). He imagines the weather as subservient to a human individual subject's wish rather than as possessing a non-human form of agency. Additionally, Clifford can

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[168] "Ready-to-hand" (*zuhanden*) describes the phenomenological perception of an (inanimate) object we use for a specific purpose as long as it is fit for purpose (Rentsch 2013: 57). We perceive it as an extension of our own human capabilities. Objects become "extensions of men" (McLuhan 1964). The presence-at-hand (*Vorhandenheit*) of an object, the rules of its material existence, only become relevant to most interactions if and when the object refuses to fulfil the purpose it has been designed for (Rentsch 2013: 57). For a more detailed discussion of Heidegger's phenomenology of object use as well as their biopolitical implications, see Campbell (2011: 1-30 and *passim*).

[169] For an interesting critical analysis of the narrator's attitudes towards the working classes and their lifeworlds beyond the solitary individualism of Mellors and, to a lesser degree, Mrs Bolton, see Shiach (2001: 96 – 98). The tendency of the narrative voice to maintain the categories it critiques on the surface in its deep structure is analysed further below.

[170] For a detailed discussion of the importance of management discourses to the newly-hegemonic "post –bourgeois subject-as-employee" (Reckwitz 2010: 275), see Reckwitz (2010: 343 – 347).

only see non-human nature through the lens of human aesthetics and responds to the different and potentially disruptive embodiment of the mole – the warrens it builds might make it harder for Clifford to traverse the woods or even lead to the collapse of some of the structures he has designed – with a desire to annihilate it (LC 186).

Throughout the scene, Clifford responds to any reminder of the limits of his own embodiment with denial and violence. He makes "shattering efforts" (LC 187) to mount the slope, hence subjecting the wheelchair – which has now once more been relegated to the realm of the inanimate and objectified (or more precisely de-subjectified) "it" (LC 187) – to his "destructive will " (Shiach 2001: 89). Notably, he returns to his former usage of a personal pronoun only when both Mellors and Connie consistently use it for the chair in spite of its malfunction (LC 187 - 191). Their using the pronoun in this fashion exposes Clifford's use of language as an immunising (Esposito 2011: 86–87, 95-97) means of defence against both the accidental contingency of machinery malfunctioning and the difference of other individual subjects and their opinions, which Clifford considers excessive and inappropriate. Furthermore, it also returns language from Clifford's monopolising and immunitarian usage to a more communitarian (Esposito 2010: 5) and communal context that accepts contingency, rather than fighting against it. Throughout his earlier conversations with Connie, Clifford consistently maintains a position of authority relative to his wife. When she voices opinions contrary to his image of mastery, he refuses to either listen or reply, retreating instead into a "vacant apathy" (LC 184). By refusing to engage with his wife's concerns, Clifford once again proves unable to deal with contingency and relate to Connie as an individual subject with her own particular outlook on the world, respectively to adopt a more interdependent and passive role as listener, whose centre of attention is moved outward from himself towards other individual subjects for parts of a conversation[171] The term "vacant apathy" (LC 184) signals that he instead withdraws into an inner self that consists of nothing and which has no relationship to the world at all. This form of interiority contrasts sharply with the Romantic image of an "interiority" (Reckwitz 2010: 207), which is actively constituted by the interaction between exteriorised and interiorised emotions as well as the ability and willingness of an individual subject to partly give themselves up to experiences of

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[171] In addition, his moniker "Evangelist" (LC 180) suggests that Clifford considers Connie to be merely repeating social commonplaces, rather than acknowledging her as a person capable of creatively adopting her own opinions. Instead, he associates her with a non-rational, faith-based discourse and contrasts it with his own, supposedly rational approach to life. Strikingly, Clifford is later described as adopting theological tenets meant to separate him from the materiality of embodiment (LC 232 - 234).

the sublime (Reckwitz 2010: 207 .210). Clifford's sense of self appears to be defined by an extreme form of late bourgeois norms of "civili[ty and] self-regulat[ion]" (Reckwitz 2010: 252).[172] But whereas the latter still allows for some form of engagement with the outside world – albeit heavily regulated by societal convention (Reckwitz 2010: 251 - 253) -, Clifford effectively bars himself from any sort of interaction with others that is not defined according to his terms. Since this behaviour ultimately leads to his wife's complete estrangement and his complete isolation from most forms of social interaction, it reveals the self-destructive component of all attempts to isolate oneself from any awareness of contingency. Clifford's immunitarian (Esposito 2011: 6) denial of his own dependence on others and the embodied contingency of human life thus culminates in an "autoimmune" (Esposito 2011: 17) attack, both on his own relationships and other individual subjects: when Mellors accurately points out the limits of the wheelchair's technological capabilities and thus of Clifford's independence, Clifford snarl[s]" (LC 189) in response to the other man's acceptance of the machine's lack of function and Mellors' offer of help. He still refuses to acknowledge his own imbrication in the scenario and the contingent character of the independence he had before imagined as absolute: "Keep off! […] She'll do it by herself!" (LC 188). Most importantly, when he decides to make another attempt to manage the cliff, Clifford ascribes the entire energy and agency invested in the attempt to the chair rather than claiming it for himself. Readers would probably consider it more natural for him to ask Mellors to "let [me] try! [my omission of italics, MTW]" (LC 189), potentially interpreting it as an attempt to assert his agency and to not be relegated to the status of a mere "cripple" (LC 6). Instead, by using the third-person pronoun, he distances himself from a "try" (LC 189), an event linguistically marked as being ambiguous in its outcome, as being as likely to fail as it is to succeed. Clifford's inability to force the chair to do something casts doubt on his earlier confident assertion that he "can do [his] share of ruling" (LC 183). Instead of being a means of mastery, the chair now becomes a symbol of complete dependence for Clifford, as he depends on the chair, and it is in turn mastered by inanimate nature. The contingency of nature and human embodiment is further emphasised by Clifford's inability to manage his own emotions. His "anger" (LC 189) is clearly visible on his skin which turn yellow despite his verbal performance of "sang froid [my omission of italics, MTW]" (LC 190). As this in turn the result of a changing amount of oxygen

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[172] In contrast, Connie is described throughout the narrative as capable of strong emotional engagement (whether positive or negative), and her relationship with Mellors fundamentally rests on their mutual ability to open themselves up to the embodied contingency of the other, even when they are afraid of losing themselves.

and blood flowing to the skin, and this process is controlled by the vegetative nervous system, it serves as a reminder that some elements of human embodiment by their very nature subvert and exceed both conscious awareness and conscious control. Hence, awareness and acceptance of contingency are fundamental to all human forms of embodiment and material existence. In Clifford's particular case, the wheelchair here becomes a marker for a limit rather than enabling any fantasy of mastery. "It is obvious I am at everybody's mercy!" (LC 190).

Notably, despite the experience of fear and potential loss of control being potentially shared by all the characters in the scene, the text as a whole positions Mellors' experience as exemplifying a masculine ideal of restraint whereas Clifford's responses are coded as excessive: although Mellors' face is as pale as Clifford's, the narrative voice specifies that it is "white *with the effort* [my emphasis, MTW]" (LC 191); hence, it is the product of active physical engagement with the world, of working towards a goal, rather than a "wast[e] [of] nervous energy" (LC 187) as Clifford's attempt at managing the cliff is. Throughout the novel, the narrative voice propagates a form of work as an ideal that both aims at a concrete goal and achieves said goal by material and embodied labour (Shiach 2001: 98); hence, Mellors' ability to push Clifford's chair to the house despite his own physical discomfort can be seen as an assertion of a hierarchy of propriety. Mellors' engagement with his body and his putting it to use to assert his independence mark the gatekeeper as a proper masculine individual subject the text as a whole presents as worthy of emulation. But propriety is also discursively connected to both unbridgeable difference – what is "proper" belongs to a single and particular individual subject in particular – and communal notions of cleanliness (McClintock 1995: 31-36, 98-114, 207-213) and appropriate conduct (Reckwitz 2010: 249-250). This latter aspect implicitly requires and entails the definition and exclusion of an improper "anti-subject". The scene makes it clear that Clifford, barred by his disability, from using his embodiment the way Mellors does, need not be recognised as an individual subject with the "right to have rights" (Arendt 2017: 614) in the same way Mellors is. According to the deep structure of the narrative, there can be no "common humanity" (LC 183) between the two men. Clifford lacks the social recognition needed to substantiate that claim; a lack made evident by his refusal to consider Mellors equal to himself (LC 163), much less to recognise the superiority the text as a whole argues for. Once again, according to the novel's deep structure, Clifford proves to be "quasi-human" (Weheliye 2014: 8) and lacking in social independence (Patterson 1982: 10).

Even more importantly, this act of labour furnishes a new form of intimacy with Connie that is said to "[bring] them much closer than they had been before" (LC 192). As this intimacy ultimately results in a child and thus proves viable, it highlights the propriety of Mellors' masculinity and Connie's feminine subjectivity of intimacy.[173] Notably, their closeness is always enacted materially, rather than verbally: "he laid his hand on her round white wrist […] [and] the flame of her hand went down his back and his loins and revived him" (LC 192)

When either Clifford or Mellors verbalises their dependence and disability, in contrast, the answer is always the same: "no-one answered." (LC 190, 191). Verbal and linguistic engagement with others engenders difference and hierarchy in this scene, and Clifford's politeness towards Mellors reveals rather than mitigates his dislike of the other man's seeming independence and solitary stillness.

In this last section of the scene, the chair becomes a means to an end in Clifford's aim to reveal Mellors' own disability and his contingent embodiment. Ultimately, his hatred of Mellors and the latter's deviation from the existence of the masses (LC 49) and his subsequent attempt to put Mellors back in his place (or rather, the place Clifford considers appropriate for the other man, "[…]below [the] level" (LC 69) of proper human beings, one of whom Clifford considers himself to be) results in Connie's coming to hate him as well. But whereas she reprimands him for his appeal to violence, appealing to both a "common humanity" (LC 183) and later to the ideals of a mental aristocracy, which is defined by its paternalistic care for the individual subjectivity of his tenants (LC 193), no such common humanity is invoked in Connie's relationship to Clifford: instead, the narrative voice associates freedom for Connie with vitality ("how free and full of life it made her feel" (LC 193) and simultaneously with a hatred of Clifford who is associated with clinging death ("skeleton", LC 194)). This hatred does not just result in her wishing to distance herself from her husband – a sentiment readers might find comprehensible, considering that Clifford only invokes their special bond (LC 44) when this makes him as the beneficiary, even to the point of declaring that Connie could only care for another man, if her lover does not feel any antipathy towards Clifford (LC 45). Clifford seems fundamentally incapable of following Willhelm Schmid's definition of love as recognising the difference and particularity of a lover's life choices and affirming them, even if they do not coincide perfectly with one's own (Schmid 1998: 262). However, Connie's hatred goes beyond that: she feels "as if he ought to be

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[173] For a detailed discussion of how the text as a whole others Clifford's attempts to create a new subjectivity of intimacy that does not centre on penetrative sex and dichotomous gender with Mrs Bolton, see below.

obliterated from the face of the earth" (LC 192), hence she now considers Clifford the embodied representative of a form of life that ought not to exist. The narrative voice does not chastise Connie for feeling this way or evoke the idea of a common humanity on Clifford's behalf. In fact, later on in the novel, Mellors, who has been given the ability to "distinguish between degenerate empty forms of subjectivity, such as those associated with his ex-wife and Clifford Chatterley, and creative forms of self-realisation" (Shiach 2001: 93) declares that "they [= people who do not fit and act in accordance with the embodied ideal of the narrative, MTW] ought to be put down" (LC 280). His choice of words is particularly illuminating here: first of all, it equates humans with animals that are either too sick to go on living or who are considered dangerous to others, especially humans ("put | definition of put in English by Oxford Dictionaries, phrasal verbs, meaning 3); hence, it implies that there is something fundamentally wrong with Clifford's embodiment and that this cannot be rectified while he is alive. Instead, he must be killed to correct this flaw, which is otherwise dangerous to other human beings. Hence, Clifford and his disabled embodiment are subjected to the same eugenic ideal Clifford applies to Connie and the father of her child. Whereas the text as a whole invites readers to consider Clifford's reduction of his future child to yet another "link in a chain" (LC 43), reduced to being "a perfectly competent Chatterley" (LC 183) and devoid of any individual subjectivity that might be captured by giving him a first name, as yet another example of the objectivisation and alienation signalled by his affirmative relation to the works of industrialisation and thus consider it another step on Clifford's path to degeneration, Mellors' invocation of the same logic to exclude Clifford goes unremarked.

7.6 Neither Body Nor Mind But Rather Both: Reading Clifford's Disability As a Deconstruction of the Eugenic Ideology

This lack of commentary itself signals the pervasiveness of discourses of "normalcy" (Davis 1995: 5) in early-twentieth-century literature and its imbrication with "eugenic ideology" (Schalk 2015: 150). Used across a wide range of political positions, eugenics were invoked by socialists and conservatives alike to ensure the healthy life of classes of people of all classes, races, degrees of ability, genders, and sexualities (Gutenberg 2009: 45- 47; Schalk 2015: 151). Summarising the work of Wendy Kline, Schalk continues "by making claims about proper reproductive bodies, eugenicists overvalued uniformity and stigmatised difference" (Schalk 2015:

151).[174] The uniformity of the norm "does not exclusively and primarily rely on a single category. Instead, when referencing a single issue, such as race, one is also implicitly relying on other discourses within the normal/abnormal symbolic framework" (Schalk 2015: 152). Hence, the norms invoked by eugenic ideology assume that "proper individual subjectivity" combines markers across categories like race, class, ability, gender and sexuality into a single legible identity. Simultaneously, this means that all identities that blur these categories and thus render them contingent must be relegated to the margins and problematised. Keeping in mind the ways in which "gratuitous violence" (Wilderson 2017: 20, Patterson 1982: 11-12, 77-101) against racialised Others allows humans to maintain their humanity (Wilderson 2017: 20), Mellors' response to Clifford must be violent to maintain the form of subjectivity the text as a whole wants to propagate. At first glance, the narrative role of Clifford Chatterley seems to thus perfectly embody the absolute Other of the embodiment propagated by the narrative voice.

However, keeping in mind D.H. Lawrence's own dictum to "never trust the teller, trust the tale" (Lawrence, qtd, in Watson 1985: 1), it is possible to re-read Clifford's narrative arc as pointing towards the potentialities of embodied contingency and disabled subjectivities beyond the boundaries of eugenic ideology. The very fact that the text as a whole leaves traces of this alternative reading that exist outside the umbrage of the narrative voice indicates that Clifford, though marginalised within the narrative to a greater degree than Frankenstein's Creature, is not an absolute Other. Additionally, the text as a whole does not argue that Clifford's "distorted and destructive will" (Shiach 2001: 89) or his "impotent hate" (LC 296) are caused by his disability; instead, it allows readers to argue that Clifford's inability to move beyond "the defences of privilege" (LC 10) is independent of his physical and mental condition. Indeed, as shall be shown below, his new embodiment allows readers to imagine a third possibility situated between the dichotomy of (asexual) "mind" (LC 234) and the genital sexuality of the "body" (LC 234).

Clifford's body problematises eugenics discourses from the moment of his wounding. In her 1987 study of narratives featuring war wounds, Elaine Showalter notes that these texts usually split the types of wounds characters incur along class lines: in keeping with the late-bourgeois association of the working classes with "excess [that] express[es] itself as lack […] (of bodily control, manners, hygiene [and] enunciation)" (Reckwitz 2010: 250) and the body in general,

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[174] For a detailed discussion of Kline's findings on eugenics (although these are primarily based on an American rather than British context), see Kline 2001. For a discussion of eugenics in a British context, see Gutenberg (2009: 21-43, 45-52 and *passim*).

they usually incur physical wounds, whereas middle-and upper-class characters more often suffer from mental conditions related to trauma (Showalter 1987: 62; Gutenberg 2009: 209 - 214). Clifford, in contrast, suffers from both these types of conditions at the same time, thereby blurring the eugenic system of classification and essentialised racialisation and rendering it potentially open to epistemological contingency. In addition to classifying conditions along class lines, early-twentieth-century medical discourses also associated conditions with masculinity or femininity, respectively. Both depression and hysteria were (and in the case of depression are (cf. Hirshbein 2009)) more commonly associated with women than with men. As Brent W Misso explains "[t]he hysteria malady, closely linked with femininity over the course of its long medical history, provided physicians with a diagnosis that allowed them to discourse on social concerns about gender difference" (Misso 1996: 2). Hence, this diagnosis on the one hand allows the text as a whole to argue for the effeminate character of mainstream masculinities and to argue that Clifford is not (and has never been) a "properly masculine" individual subject (LC 5 – 6, 10-12). On the other hand, the very same diagnosis renders this judgement on the part of the text contingent: Elisabeth Bronfen notes that "hysteria – that infamously resilient somatic illness without organic lesions" (Bronfen 2014 [1998]: xi) is primarily defined by its showing different symptoms to the doctors who examine it, thus leading to the assessment that there is nothing wrong with the patient (Bronfen 2014 [1998]: xii). Simultaneously, however, this inability to form a diagnosis and a therapy makes hysteria a liminal disease that showcases the limits of the readability of the body and of social discourses in general:

"Lucien Israel suggests that the language of hysteria be considered a mode of communication, an attempt to establish a relation with the Other, to broadcast this message of a recognition of lack – 'I am not complete' – yet accomplishing this in contrast to all other forms of neurosis by transforming anxieties and desires into somatic manifestations. […] [T]his conversion of psychic anguish into a somatic symptom can be interpreted as the enactment of a message in code. Yet what the hysteric broadcasts is a message about vulnerability – the vulnerability of the symbolic (the fallibility of paternal law and social bonds), the vulnerability of identity (the insecurity of gender, ethnic, and class designations); or, and perhaps above all, the vulnerability of the body, given its mutability and mortality. (Bronfen 2014 [1998]: xii – xiii)

In light of Bronfen's analysis, Clifford's outbreak of hysteria (as diagnosed by Mrs Bolten) when Connie's letter arrives and informs him of her intention to leave him (LC 289) indicates that he is aware of the collapse of his relationship to his wife and all the bio-political discourse-practices of the proper heir tangled up in it. Far from being ignorant of Connie's feelings, he is, as the narrative voice acknowledges "inwardly" (LC 288) very much aware of what has happened. However, in addition to rendering his individual relationship to Connie contingent, the "terrible

blow and shock" (LC 288) of her letter also prompts him to reframe his relationship to "class designations" (Bronfen 2014 [1998]: xiii):

Although he has allowed Mrs Bolton to wash him prior to the arrival of the letter – an act the text as a whole reads as a sign of Clifford's beginning degeneration and regression into childhood, as he apparently washed himself before Mrs. Bolton's arrival - this act by itself does not indicate a particular intimacy between the two characters washing people is within the professional remit of a nurse. Once he has received Connie's letter, Clifford commands Mrs Bolton to "read it" (LC 289) and thus breaks down the class and professional barrier between them, exposing it as epistemologically contingent and insufficient. Furthermore, his hysteria prompts the only time in the narrative Clifford expresses any sort of emotion in a material fashion that is neither based on words nor makes use of the vocal tract: he "weep[s]" (LC 290). And although the narrative voice castigates him for "weeping for himself" (LC 290) rather than for others – thus continuing his refusal to share in the "common sympathy" (LC 193) of shared emotion just as Connie accuses him of doing -this judgement ignores the material situation Clifford finds himself in in this scene: Clifford responds to Mrs Bolton's tears, and, contrary to the reader and the narrator (and Mrs Bolton), he does not know that they are a deliberate, meant to provoke a therapeutic reaction from him (LC 290). Hence, for Clifford, his tears are in response to another individual human subject sympathising with him and his grief. From Clifford's intratextual vantage point, his emotional response creates a community of intimate sharing with Mrs Bolton, which reframes subjectivities of intimacy along previously hierarchically-segregated axes of identity. Building on this non-sexual form of intimacy, the characters then progress to a sexual subjectivity of intimacy.

This new subjectivity of intimacy is described by the narrative as "sinking back to a childish position, that was really perverse" (LC 291), as a form of degeneration and regression into an approximation of a pre-oedipal maternal unity. The narrative voice presents Clifford and Mrs. Bolton as the inverse mirror image of Mellors and Connie. A closer look at the terminology and imagery invoked by this passage also provides clues for a reparative reading (Felski 2015: 17, 32 - 33) that also problematises the "genital, goal oriented sexuality" (Wendell 1996: 69 qtd in Schalk 2018: 108) the narrative voice champions. By calling Clifford "child" or "child-man" (LC 291) the narrative voice suggests that he has regressed, that is, moved back to an earlier ontogenetic stage of human evolution (Heiler 2004: 1), more precisely, to an earlier stage in human psycho-sexual evolution. In his *Three Essays On the Theory of Sexuality*, Sigmund Freud

distinguishes three different sexual impulses, ranging in a hierarchy of development from singular investment in each form of sexuality and its corresponding erogenous zone to "erogenous zones subordinate themselves *under the primacy of the genital zone* [my emphasis, MTW] " (Freud 1997: 279). This turn of phrase implies that, although the genital zone is primary (and that it ought to be the means by which sexuality expresses itself, according to Freud's norms (Freud 1995: 247)), its supremacy does not destroy the other zones, meaning they are still part of adult sexual expression. At the same time, Freudian psychoanalytic theories of sexuality presume that the bodies of individual subjects who regress are physically still capable of expressing other forms of sexuality, including genital variations of sexuality. Hence, psychoanalytic theories of sexuality are also problematised by the different materiality of disabled bodies (Goodley 2011). Furthermore, Freud's own turn of phrase allows for his own normative claims (Freud 1995: 247) to be subverted and rendered contingent

In the particular case of Clifford Chatterley, the fact that his embodiment irreversibly precludes the genital sexuality lived by Connie and Melllors, for whom sexual celibacy is a "*pause* and peace of our fucking [my emphasis, MTW]" (LC 301) highlights the centrality of genital sexuality to the form of human communality propagated in the narrative. Describing celibacy as a "pause" (LC 301) implies that it is a conscious deviation from the unconscious sexual capability of human beings. This definition also emphasises that Clifford is not just physically rendered incapable of participating in proper human community but has psychologically been alienated from this community of genital sexuality even prior to his paralysis. This alienation expresses itself both through his lack of sexual experience before meeting Connie ("*he had been virgin when he married* [my emphasis, MTW]" (LC 12) and a continued lack of interest in "the sex part" (LC 12) of marriage thereafter, which ultimately culminates in Clifford's idealised view of asexuality and embodiment in general. He eulogises the "supreme pleasure [of] the life of the mind" (LC 234) and thus continues the Cartesian tradition of maintaining a radical separation between *res cogitans* and *res extensa*.

Within the logic of the narrative, Clifford's regression to a pre-genital form of sexuality completes his degeneration and confirms "what [the high and mighty Chatterleys] have *come down to* [my emphasis, MTW]" (LC 291). The choice of words in the above quote further emphasises the imagery of a physical fall (the opposition between the family's former "high" state and the dynamic process of "com[ing] down" (LC 291)) and a simultaneous social decline, which combines a communal and an individual component: the family's former "might[] (LC

291)" rested upon their unquestioned dominant position in Tevershall and Wragby, the acceptance of a difference in kind between the upper and the lower classes (LC 14). Connie and Mellors both question the veracity of this hierarchical difference - Mellors may be the "son of a collier" (LC 48), but Connie thinks of him as "so unlike a working man" (LC 68). Hence, the source of the family's authority – as well as the possibility of a continuation of its male line – is erased or at least rendered contingent. Individually, after receiving the letter from Connie that severs their relationship, Clifford is initially described in terms associated with death: his voice becomes "sepulchral" (LC 289) and his face is "yellow [and] blank" (LC 289). While Mrs. Bolton compares it to a state of mental decline – "idiot" (LC 289) describes a particular degree of deviation from the standard degree of intelligence and mental acuity in the early twentieth century (Davis 2013: 3-6; Kafer 2013: 31) -, Clifford's condition also evokes the image of a corpse; hence, the text as a whole implies that he has now moved outside the circumference of personhood (Gugutzer 2015: 16) and has thus completely lost his agency. Clifford's response to the arrival of the letter thus marks the nadir of his humanity, respectively the apex of his decline and failure.

7.7 Ivy Bolton and Connie Chatterly vs Mellors and Clifford: Traces of Creative Contingency and the Reassertion of the Eugenic Ideology Through Ontological Antagonism

In light of the preceding analysis, however, his subsequent behaviour towards Mrs. Bolton also enables a more positive reading than that implied and supported by the text as a whole. Firstly, compared to a corpse, a child has agency, even if it is limited and the child remains dependent on others to survive. Notably, unlike in his interactions with Connie, whom Clifford "never quite forg[ives] […] for giving up her personal care of him" (LC 83) but whom he also never tells of his feelings or desires, Clifford articulates his intimate desires to Mrs Bolton (LC 291). Furthermore, their new relationship confuses the clear hierarchies of independence and dependence that have structured Clifford's life and his relationship to Mrs. Bolton up to this point: he no longer denies the importance of the body, demanding that she "kiss [him]"(LC 291). Kissing requires that an individual subject touches the body of their partner with their lips, and touch, as discussed above, phenomenologically renders the toucher and the touched individual subject indistinguishable for the duration of the act (Merleau-Ponty 1974; 118); hence it creates a bodily-mediated parity between Mrs. Bolton and Clifford that momentarily disables and diffuses the class hierarchy that differentiates the two of them.

Interestingly, this diffusion of class differences not only echoes the relationship between Connie and Mellors but also has in fact been a feature of the relationship between Clifford and Ivy Bolton prior to the arrival of the letter: throughout the novel: we occasionally are told that the two of them regularly play games with each other. The first and most elaborate scene shows them playing chess (LC 99 - 100) and at first glance, the narrative voice again emphasises the disparity in knowledge between them (itself the result of class difference): Mrs Bolton does not know how to play and Clifford "enjoy[s] teaching her" (LC 100), that is, he derives pleasure from his own knowledge compared to Ivy Bolton's ignorance. This is made particularly evident by his teaching her the French phrase used to signal uncertainty about a move: "You must say *j'adoube*. [italics in original, MTW]" (LC 99). Additionally, chess as a game is based on the clear binary opposition between two parties, differentiated by the distinct colours of their pieces, one of which will usually win the game (more or less decisively). Hence, their playing chess seems to contradict the assumption of parity proposed above and instead furnishes further proof of Clifford's investment in hierarchical differentiation.

However, the logic of games as a specific practice partly subverts the simple transposition of hierarchy into the game on two different levels: firstly, all games assume a structural parity between players for their duration. The logic of games thus subverts the discourse-practices of life outside the game and allows for the arrangement of contingent potentialities, which can in turn influence the relationship of the players outside the game.[175] In the particular case of Clifford and Mrs Bolton, he increasingly shifts his centre of attention and primary social interaction from Connie to her, with them playing "cards […] until midnight" (LC 195). Secondly, and even more importantly, the existence of a phrase to mark doubt indicates that the rules of chess in particular contain and manage the possibility of contingency and distribute them evenly: within the context of chess, it is possible that Clifford may have to use the phrase himself when contemplating a particular move in a future game of theirs. Hence, the phrase establishes a moment of equality within difference for the two characters and opens the possibility that the student can be the teacher's equal in a future game, irrespective of their other hierarchically-organised relationships of master and servant, respectively of nurse and patient. Lastly, the phrase itself also participates in the semantic field of creating equality out of difference when read

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[175] In this regard, games constitute a specialised interdiscourse similar to the role of literature discussed in chapter four of the theoretical framework. For a more detailed discussion of games and toys, see the discussion of their subversive potential in Attel (2015: 259 - 262), in particular his references to Walter Benjamin.

outside the context of chess: in French, *adouber* is a synonym for "arming a person during their knighting ceremony" ("Définitions: adouber – Dictionaire françois Larousse" website, definition vt 1). Hence, it signifies precisely the attainment of the "possession of all that the gentry knew" (LC 100) that Mrs Bolton desires for herself. The text as a whole describes it as "a thrill" (LC 100) , a term used to signal "[a] superficiality of experience" (Shiach 2001: 92) throughout the novel; hence the narrative designates Mrs. Bolton's wishes as forms of false, potentially destructive desire. In light of Mrs Bolton's "old grudge […] against the masters" (LC 140) and her "being a nihilist and really, anarchic" (LC 140), the text as a whole strongly suggests that her desire to be like the ruling classes – who, as discussed above, are presented exclusively as agents of abuse and degeneration – lays the foundation for Clifford's becoming a "child-man" (LC 291). The arrangement of the narrative arc strongly suggests to readers that Mrs Bolton's nihilist tendencies, (together with her independent income, exemplifying the results of a "woman an[d] [her]own self-will" (LC 245)), result in Clifford's ultimate sexual and moral degeneration. The novel further strongly implies that Mrs. Bolton as a "true nihilist believe[s] in nothing, […] [and] has no purpose other than, perhaps, a desire to destroy" (Pratt [2018]: n. p.). The text as a whole portrays Ivy Bolton as thriving on Clifford's degeneration. She becomes a deified "Magna Mater, full of power and potency, having [him] under her will and under her stroke entirely" (LC 291). Their mutual dependence on each other increases to the extent that she no longer considers the Clifford and herself separate individual subjects, but rather ascribes all of Clifford's industrial success after Connie's letter to her inspiration: "How he is getting on! […] And *that's my doing* [my emphasis, MTW]" (LC 292). According to the eugenic ideology underlying the text, Clifford and Mrs Bolton exemplify a reduction "to mutual dependence and perversity" (Shiach 2001: 96). However, the very designation of Mrs Bolton as a "nihilist and […] anarchic" (LC 140) also allows for a reading that permits the creative usage of contingency to remodel hierarchy: the narrative voice seeks to evoke the negative image of anarchism as a terrorist ideology that arose in Britain in response to bombings and assassinations (respectively, attempts on the life of government officials in Britain itself) carried out by anarchist groups in continental Europe, particularly in France around the turn of the century and in the decades leading up to the First World War, respectively the terrorist attacks of Irish nationalists in Britain itself, which turned anarchism into a byword for destruction and mayhem (Showalter 1992: 3; Shaddock 1993). Anarchist theorists themselves, however, argue primarily for the establishment of a society without entrenched privileges, "order without rule" (Proudhorn, qtd in Loick 2017a: 9).

Similarly, nihilism may be interpreted in a way that enables positive change, rather than foreclosing it. Using Friedrich Nietzsche's definition of nihilism as "revers[ing] values," (Nietzsche 2017 [1901]: 470), it could be argued that Mrs. Bolton's desire to learn to behave like the ruling classes and the fact that Clifford can teach her their mannerisms proves that the "gulf impassable" (LC 14) between the Tevershall colliers and their employer and landlord can be bridged through the very practices that seem to sustain it, respectively that areas can be created where the gulf can be partly suspended and ignored(such as the potential social space of a board game) . Considering that the utopian ideal championed by the text as a whole also depends on a "gulf impassable" (LC 14) between old and new forms of subjectivity -embodied in the masculinity of Clifford and Mellors, a more positive account of Mrs Bolton would problematise the idealised position of the gamekeeper and the lady and render the lives they live contingent in turn. For the text as a whole to maintain its functional coherence, the narrative has to primarily portray Mrs Bolton and her actions and philosophy of life negatively.

However, the fact that board games only partly suspend social differences already illustrates the limits of their transformative potential: games must remain blind or indifferent to the particularity of each individual subject engaged in them. Connie's accurate assessment that Clifford, although he needs someone to help him, does not need her specifically (LC 288) is further corroborated by his expression of physical desire towards Ivy Bolton shortly thereafter: "[d]o kiss me" (LC 291) as a statement omits the subject position and thus reflects the very indifference to other individual subjects that Connie critiques in her letter. Furthermore, by using only the imperative form and because this is the only verbalisation of Clifford's desire the reader encounters after the arrival of Connie's letter, his wish is explicitly coded as a command. A command in its turn implies that Clifford has merely extended the hierarchy of duty and obligation to the social field of intimacy, rather than gaining access to discourse-practices that raise his awareness of contingency. Notably, the same is true of Ivy Bolton. Although she critiques his lack of self-awareness regarding Connie's affair initially ("If he would have admitted it and prepared himself for it […], that would have been acting like a man", LC 289), she makes no effort to instil such a form of self-awareness in Clifford herself, despite her great influence on him. Instead, she objectifies him in her turn – his successes after his degeneration is complete are no longer criticised as "awful" (LC 291); rather, Mrs Bolton considers them her doing. Once again, a hierarchy is established, and Clifford is reduced to an object, rather than an active participant in his own life choices: "'And that [= Clifford's economic success, MTW] is *my doing! My word, he'd never have gone on like*

this with Lady Chatterley!' [single quotation marks in original, my emphasis, MTW]" (LC 292). And even in the initial moment of critique, when Mrs. Bolton declares Clifford's emotional outburst shameful and improper, marking it as a degenerative way of life in accordance with the judgement of the narrative voice, she appeals to the Chatterley family tradition ("Oh *high and mighty Chatterleys* [my emphasis, MTW]", LC 291) rather than Clifford as an individual subject. Hence, even in moments of physical intimacy, which are usually coded as revealing the "contingency of the other person's presence [and the contingency of their existence as such, MTW]" (Schmid 1998: 261) precisely through access to their embodiment, Clifford for the most part maintains existing class hierarchies, respectively he is himself only perceived as a "link in a chain" (LC 43) by Mrs Bolton, who/which aids the expression of her power. The potential creative transformation of standards of sexuality or gender identity the relationship could effect is ultimately contained and annulled by three different factors:

Firstly, as discussed above, Mrs Bolton desires to "com[e] bit by bit into possession of all that the gentry knew, all that *made them upper class* […] [.] [my emphasis, MTW]" (LC 100). Clearly, Mrs Bolton, although she hates "the masters" (LC 140), still believes in the essentialist foundations of the class system as such, rather than advocating for a more flexible and individualised system. This is made evident if we compare Mrs. Bolton's attempts at imitating the upper classes to Mellors' parodic performance of Hilda's assumptions of what he, as a "working-class man" (LC 243), ought to behave like. Unlike Mrs Bolton, who accepts the class-based distinction between various discourse-practices and thus the ideology of the class system as fact and ideological common sense (Althusser 2010: 1360), Mellors disrupts the system in two ways while talking to Connie's sister: firstly, in the particular context of his conversation with Hilda, he refuses to speak "natural [sic!] English" (LC 243). Both sisters unthinkingly accept the normative hierarchical distinction between middle-class forms of English and working-class dialects. Indeed, as their choice of words shows, they go so far as essentialise and naturalise the linguistic hegemony of the Home Counties. By calling Mellors' dialect a "vernacular" (LC 244), they also assume a certain universalising power for their own speech patterns and simultaneously marginalise his way of speaking by associating it with a cultural periphery; the term *vernacular* has its ultimate etymological root in the Latin noun *verna*, which refers to home-born slaves or the natives of non-Latinate regions ("vernacular | origin and meaning of vernacular by Online Etymology Dictionary" website); subsequently, the use of southern and middle-class variants of English and their classification as "normal" (LC 244) is problematised through Mellors' actions

and exposed as the product of specific processes of social and civilisational domination (together with the conflation of differences between Derbyshire and Yorkshire into one anomalous "northern" identity (LC 243)). Hilda's inability to see Mellors' true personality behind her class-based value judgements and the sisters' shared inability to articulate a counter-argument to Mellors' performed critique ultimately validate Mellors' problematisation of middle-and upper-class discourse-practices. It renders their hegemony epistemologically contingent. Also, it implicitly asserts a positive working-class English identity that does not depend on the standardisation of discourse-practices primarily propagated by the middle – and upper class élite of London and the Home Counties, presenting Mellors' working-class identity (and working-class identities generally) as a legitimate alternative.[176] On the most basic of levels, Mellors' "acting" (LC 243) enables him to question the existing hierarchy and to assert an equality between classes, rather than accepting the ideological premises of the current class system and simply seeking to become part of the élite it defines as Ivy Bolton does.

Beyond the assertion of an independent working-class identity, however, Mellors (as a representative of the views championed by the narrative voice) broadens his criticism to include contemporary civilization *tout court*:[177] His critique of the "second nature" (LC 244) of "manners" (LC 244) during his conversation with Hilda reads like a polemical predecessor to Norbert Elias' analysis of the civilization process (Elias 2013: 324). Elias argues that changes in social conduct from the Renaissance onwards result in an increased internalisation of violence (in the form of self-consciousness and the subsequent internal control of strong emotions (Elias 2013: 380 - 420)) and thus in the decrease of societal acceptance of the open expression of physical instincts and the increased abjection (*sensu* Kristeva) of bodily substances. For readers reading the novel in the wake of the "general catastrophe" (LC 72) of the Second World War, this passage also anticipates Horkheimer and Adorno's critique of the Enlightenment domination of nature, where the increased instrumentalisation of humanity's "inner nature" (Horkheimer and Adorno 2010 [1944/1947]: 42 - 43) corresponds to their domination and instrumentalisation of

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[176] However, this critique is partly problematised by the narrative voice framing Mellors' dispute with Hilda in terms of an opposition between "the quiet self-contained assurance of the English" (LC 244) and Hilda's "Scottish clumsiness" (LC 244). The dangers of the racialised essentialism that permeates the nature image of the text and its consequences for the representation of embodiment and embodied contingency are discussed in greater detail below.

[177] For a more detailed analysis of Lawrence's critique of civilisation beyond *Lady Chatterley's Lover,* see Williams 1983: 199 – 215.

non-human nature and other human beings (Horkheimer and Adorno 2010 [1944/ 1947]: 20-24, 42 - 44). In Lawrence's phrase, this constitutes a complete and utter subjection under the demands of the "bitch goddess" (LC 107).

Indeed, one might in fact argue that Clifford's "reserved" (LC 293) appearance upon his last meeting with Connie and his insistence on keeping his rage "cold" (LC 294) (at least until she reveals to him the father of her child and her marriage plans (LC 296)), both precisely exemplify the internalisation of emotions and their falsification through the reign of "manners" (LC 244) discussed by both Elias and Horkheimer and Adorno. In keeping with the text as a whole championing "the body" (LC 234), Clifford's embodiment subverts his claim to "civilized" superiority , however: He "change[s] colour" (LC 293) when Connie implicitly conflates Mrs Bolton with the servants and thus reminds him that he has in fact destabilised the class barrier he bases his argument against Mellors on. Furthermore, even as he refuses any and all connection with Mellors, the very fact that he behaves "like a cornered beast" (LC 295) at the mention of the other man's name and turns "yellow" (LC 295) with anger, belies the continued influence of emotions and feelings that humankind shares with non-human animals and showcases his inability to sublimate his emotions and violent impulses completely; furthermore, although the text as a whole itself employs the conventions of late-bourgeois notions of propriety and civility when deriding Clifford's rage as "impotent" (LC 296) and therefore as sickly – a reading supported by the colour of his face, which symbolises "sickness" (Meineke 2008: 126) as well as "jealousy" (Meineke 2008: 126) – it ignores that negative emotions still establish a relationship based on their particularity between two individual subjects (de Sousa 2009: 194 – 231 and *passim*).

Additionally, describing Clifford's attempt to physically express his violent impulses either directly or through the mediation of social norms as ultimately "impotent" (LC 296) and associating it with animals also recalls the way the narrative voice describes his writing process earlier in the novel: "But it [= Clifford's writing, MTW] was really rather like puppies tearing the sofa cushions to bits; except that it was not young and playful, but curiously old and almost obscenely conceited" (LC 50). Like the dogs in other novels by Lawrence, the dogs of the metaphor above act as "interstitial beings, [that exist] precariously in the no-man's land between human and non-human worlds" (Serpell, qtd. in Neill 2015: 96). The adverb "conceited" (LC 50) already implies that the cultural codes Clifford employs in his writing do not just mediate the expression of violence, whether verbal or physical. Rather, they prohibit them completely. The

text as a whole notably only chastises Clifford's culturally-mediated forms of violence, not violence as such: when Mellors advocates the expression of negative emotions in his conversation with Hilda and connotes it as "natural" (LC 244) to "wish the other to hell" (LC 244) in light of the irreducible animosity between Mellors and Hilda, thus ignoring and destabilising the notions of civil society as propagated by late-bourgeois and middle-class hegemonies (Reckwitz 2010: 250 - 252).[178] Hence, the text as a whole concurs with Freud's argument in *Civilization and Its Discontents* that the civilisational suppression of drives (including the suppression of the violent urges of the death drive) are psychologically unhealthy and ought to be discouraged (Freud 1995: 738 - 763).[179] Simultaneously, this critique also encompasses the notion of a shared communality and shared communal spaces early-bourgeois conceptions of non-statist society sought to institute (Habermas 2015: 89). Respectively, the narrative points out its shortcomings and problematises its decline under the pressures of capitalism and industrialisation. According to the logic of the narrative, the Hegelian means of mutual re-cognition early-bourgeois and Romantic cultures of subjectivity propagated have been replaced by a form of "collectivism" (Thompson 1966: 424) that ignores and sidelines individual differences and eccentricities. The above analysis creates the impression that violence can be a source of positive change and transformation. In the context of Lawrence's novel, however, violence is primarily a means to mark differences between proper and improper forms of masculine embodiment and to present them as fundamentally and ontologically opposed. When he becomes aware that Mellors has fathered a child – something Clifford cannot do either mentally or physically but considers his duty to his line and father (LC 12, 44, 183). This duty is, as discussed above – deeply "ingrained" in Clifford (LC 11). His connection to past and future generations of Chatterley as a "link in a chain" (LC 44) – his natality in other words (Patterson 1982: 5), forms the core of Clifford's very being. Hence, Mellors being the father of Connie's child is not just an insult to Clifford. It is an existential threat to his very being. The simile used

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[178] In keeping with the distinction between „natural" and „unnatural" (culturally mediated) forms of violence, the text as a whole does not linger (and neither does the narrative voice comment on) the acts of physical violence Mellors commits when Connie does not immediately consent to performing anal sex, which is presented by the narrative as a sexual act that renders the false forms of sexuality civilization approves of contingent: "It cost her an effort to let him have his way and his will of her" (LC 247). The phrase implies that Connie initially struggles against Melllors (either physically or psychologically), but as it is an expression of "will" (LC 247) – a term that is associated with wrong internalised social norms throughout the narrative (Shiach 2001 9) – the narrative presents its overcoming by direct physical force as a positive, rather than a problematic, action.

[179] For a detailed discussion of Lawrence's representation of violence generally, see Squires 2007.

by the text confirms this as non-human animals "[…] at bay [snarl[]]" not because they are aggressive but because they feel their lives are threatened. The fact that the narrative voice dismisses Clifford's anger as "impotent" (LC 296) and does not consider his fears and concerns worth, further confirms his role as a relative Other in the novel's deep structure. Furthermore, this also suggests that the narrative imagines the struggle between the two male characters to be an existential "antagonis[m]" (Wilderson 2010:5, 29, 43, 54-55). Just like the struggle between Richard and Richmond, respectively Victor and the Creature, the narrative suggests that Mellors and Clifford are divided by a "gulf impassable" (LC 14) that cannot – indeed, perhaps even must not – be bridged by a sense of community and shared experience. Instead, as we shall discuss in greater detail below, the text as a whole encourages readers in believing that Clifford's death – at Mellors' word – would be "the tenderest thing you could do" (LC 280). The "eugenic ideology" (Schalk 2015: 150) of the novel arrives at the same (auto-) immunitarian conclusion Nazism did (Esposito 2013: 80-82): to ensure a "good life" (*eugenia*), some have to suffer the paradox of a "good death" (*euthanasia*).

Notably, the narrative only negates the potential for a relationship based on emotion and the recognition of mutuality in difference between its two central male characters, respectively when they comment on relationships; in so doing, it attempts to prevent any association between the "solitary and intent" (LC 89) masculinity of Mellors and Clifford the "child-man" (LC 291) and to maintain the existential "antagonis[m]" (Wilderson 2010: 5) that minimises any awareness of the contingency of its vision for a new society. In contrast to the difference between the male characters and their ideal of a separate and non-communal form of independence, the female characters make attempts to articulate forms of communality that negotiate between individual independence and subjective interdependence: Connie does not chastise Clifford for having talked to someone about the situation, and her expression of indifference is ambiguous enough that readers may read it as her doing for Clifford (and his relationship with Ivy Bolton) what he cannot do either for her and Mellors or himself: accepting the contingency of all human relationships. "I don't mind" (LC 293) is her only response to Clifford's blush. It indicates both that she is no longer restricted by internalised societal conventions in the expression of her own emotions and that she is willing to accept their free expression of their individual subjectivities in others. Likewise, Mrs Bolton also argues that it might be better for Clifford to simply let matters be and to accept the different *status quo* of Connie's relationship, rather than investing his energy into the reconstruction of his former relationship with his wife: "But is it any use? […] Can't you

let her go and be rid of her?" (LC 292). Furthermore, despite her earlier deference to social conventions (when she maintains that she reads the letter "to obey […] Sir Clifford" (LC 289)) and thus hides her emotional interest in the affair behind an obedience to demands made on her as Clifford's servant, (rather than expressing them directly without discursive mediation), Mrs Bolton expresses an opinion that allows for the contingency and complexity of human interaction during her last conversation with Connie: "I'll be faithful to Sir Clifford, and I'll be faithful to you, for I can see *you're both right in your own ways* [my emphasis, MTW]" (LC 297).

In addition to these verbal moments of bonding (which subverts the text's usual critical attitude towards verbal communication that is not accompanied by physical non-verbal contact (Shiach 2001: 92)), Connie and Mrs Bolton also share a culturally-mediated practice: before Connie leaves Wragby for the last time: she gives an unspecified gift to Ivy Bolton ("And look! I want to give you this – may I?", LC 297). At first glance, it appears as if the gift-giving fails rather than succeeds. The preceding quote neither specifies what Connie's gift is by merely using the deictic "this" (LC 297) nor are readers given any kind of indication of whether Mrs Bolton accepts the gift or not. According to Marcel Mauss' famous anthropological account of gift-giving practices, the giving of a gift establishes the expectation of reciprocity. Building on that initial exchange "a system of reciprocity, in which the honour of the giver and the recipient are engaged" (Douglas 2002: xi) is created. Hence, it could at first glance be argued that the giving of a gift by Connie subverts rather than enables an equal relationship between her and Ivy Bolton because it draws attention to their difference in status: Connie has the means to give gifts to Ivy Bolton while the latter is not independently wealthy and thus is reminded of her economic inequality by the very gift meant to establish this equal relationship through a community-establishing praxis. Furthermore, as economic relations are the basis upon which the class hierarchy depicted and critiqued in the novel rests, Connie's gift-giving appears to exemplify the tenacity of the very civilisational principles the novel seeks to supplant.

However, Connie's gift-giving does not fulfil the definition supplied in Mauss' essay: firstly, the actual gift is neither named ("this" (LC 297), as indicated above, is a deictic) nor acknowledged by Mrs Bolton. Thus the readers are never told of what the gift consists in; hence, they are prevented from economising it by calculating the value of the obligation it invokes; respectively the lack of an explicit acknowledgement suspends the establishment of the economical logic of the gift (Mauss 2002 [1925]: 3). Instead, the unknown gift functions as an example of an-economic gifts as defined by Derrida (Derrida 1994: 6-7). "A gift, therefore, stands in contrast to

the idea of economy – and its principle of exchange and circulation, of calculation and return." (Jeanes and Muhr n.d.: 2). According to this reading, Connie's unnamed and unacknowledged gift to Mrs Bolton might serve as an example of an alternative social relation built on particularity and singularity, which is positioned against the universalising and exploitative economic logic embraced by Clifford in his relationship to Mrs Bolton in particular and his servants in general. Connie's unnamed gift instead resembles a variant of the Latin legal fiction of the *munus*. But in contrast to the original *munus*, which centres on the gift as a signifier of eternal obligation (as it can never be returned (Esposito 2010: 5-6), Connie attempts to establish a new ideal of community beyond obligation. Hence, her intangible gift to Mrs Bolton provides an example of her building a new community from the "ruins" (LC 1) of the old social system and its dependence on financial and social debt.[180]

Indeed, the text as a whole subtly suggests that this community might in fact be tenable as the two parties in the exchange share one part of their identity in which they are absolutely equal and have identical worth: the meaning of their names. Connie or Constance is literally named for her defining character trait. Ivy Bolton, for her part, is named after a plant that serves as a metaphor for fidelity ("IVY| Symbols" website) – a constant attachment to a person, a community or an idea.[181] The text as a whole, as discussed above, prefers to associate Mrs Bolton and Connie with one side in the antagonism between the two men, the struggle between past and future, and so leaves the creative potential of community in the face of antagonism under-examined.

This omission is particularly striking as Connie's creative act is ultimately closer to some of the ideals presented in the text as a whole than Mellors' approach to the "problem with work" (Weeks 2011). As Shiach notes, the narrative champions Mellors for "not car[ing] about money" (LC 220) or any other form of societal acclaim (Shiach 2001: 100). Even so, a lack of emotional investment in a given social system without a corresponding emotional investment in an alternative variant *ex negativo* maintains the hegemony of the system one seeks to leave behind. Clifford, for his part, is wholly invested in the economic logic of exchange and acclaim throughout; he personifies the judgement of the narrative voice that "civilised society is insane. Money and so-called love are its two great manias; money a long way first. The individual asserts

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[180] For an interesting analysis of debt as a category of capitalist discourses that "entangle[s]" (Barad 2007: 247) economic and bio-political elements (particularly racialised discourse-practices), see Wang (2018).

[181] I thank Professor Dr Caroline Lusin for pointing out this aspect of Ivy Bolton's name and thus preventing an erroneous association of Mrs Bolton's name with poison ivy.

himself [sic] in his disconnected insanity in these two modes" (LC 97). In the particular case of the owner of Wragby Hall, this insanity expresses itself particularly in his inability to acknowledge the particular individuality and unique embodiment of those other individual subjects who exist in a relationship to him that is mediated by money. In Mrs Bolton's case, he insists on framing the potential equal space of the game discussed above within the logic of a betting system, which institutes a hierarchy of winners and losers that is expressed through the "universal exchangeability" (Vatter 2014: 77) of money. Once that system is instituted, Clifford ignores the embodied individual subjectivity of Mrs Bolton as well as her socially different position. At one point, the narrative voice tells us that "when [Clifford and Mrs Bolton] play[] cards, they always gamble[]. It made him forget himself. And he usually won. […]. So he would not go to bed until the first dawn appeared. *Luckily*, it began to appear at half-past four or thereabouts [my emphasis, MTW]" (LC 141). The adverb indicates both that Mrs Bolton is the focaliser of the above passage and implies that she would be glad to go to bed earlier, presumably because she is physically exhausted from her work. Conversely, it showcases that Clifford is indifferent to her particularity, especially when money is involved. When Connie first hears that Mrs Bolton is gambling with her husband (rather than playing a game with him, which exists outside the medium of class difference), she is "aghast" (LC 215) - especially because Clifford uses the terminology of aristocratic privilege ("[d]ebt of honour" – LC 215) to justify his taking money out of Mrs Bolton's wages. But even when Connie confronts both of them, presumably with the intended aim of making Clifford aware of Ivy Bolton's different relationship to money and to consequently persuade him to give up gambling, Clifford responds within the discursive logic of economic exchange: "Sir Clifford raised Mrs Bolton's wages a hundred a year, and she could gamble on that" (LC 215).

This economic logic of exchange also problematises the potential positive aspects of the sexual component the relationship between Clifford and Mrs Bolton assumes discussed above. Since the narrative makes no mention of Clifford offering to let her live with him in an intimate relationship that is not defined by the exchange of money for care, and it does not mention Mrs Bolton asking for a new arrangement either, it seems reasonable to assume that the monetary aspect still pertains; thus, the text as a whole presents their relationship as a form of prostitution, where affection becomes an exchangeable use-value rather than an emotion tied to and dependent on the particularity of the partner's individual subjectivity (Schmid 1998: 262). Rather than ascertaining the equality of all partners involved in an exchange, as the ideal market of early-

bourgeois liberalism sought to do by instituting the market form and the discourse-practice of the contract (Honneth 2015: 327-328), the industrialised exchange circuit existing between Tevershall and Wragby reveals the logic of functional equivalence. It completely effaces individuality and particularity for the sake of a disembodied universality that ultimately privileges the moneyed and landed classes (Loick 2017b: 164 - 174). This effacement is at the heart of the industrialised market economy shown in the novel. Hence, the narrative also problematises the continued efficacy of the Hegelian ideal of the market as a space of social re-cognition (Honneth 2015: 327 - 334), revealing it to be based on the hegemony of middle- and upper-class discourse-practices, just like the conception of manners and civil society analysed above.[182]

At first glance, Connie's passionate anger at Clifford openly expressing his contempt of Mellors as an individual subject and his using the market economy as justification ("To what should it [=Mellors being an individual subject with emotions, MTW] oblige me? […] I pay him two pounds a week and give him a house." (LC 193)) may thus appear no more than a residue of a "Fabian[]" (LC 6) middle-class upbringing centred around the belief that wealth obliges the élite to help the working classes – hence her wasted appeal to the notion that "*noblesse oblige* [italics in original, MTW]"(LC 193) and her anger at Clifford's indifference to the principle. The fact that he remains indifferent to a practical and concrete realisation of the ideological principles championed by the "ruling classes" (LC 183) to justify their privileges in general and a principle of ethical obligation in particular justifies Connie's scoffing realisation that the rule of the aristocracy is not based on individual capability or earned merit, but simply on their "bully[ing] with […]money" (LC 194). Connie's usage of "you" (LC 194) in the preceding quotation also indicates that she has divorced herself mentally (and indeed physically) from both Clifford and her tenuous attempts to embody the class interests and class character inherent in the social persona of "Lady Chatterley", which are presented as anathema to Connie's individual subjectivity from the start (LC 15).

In addition to being yet another example of the ways in which the discourse-practices of the class system suppress the expression of all forms of individual subjectivity in favour of the functionalist and abstract logic of a smooth-running society, Connie's reference also serves as a

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[182] For a detailed discussion of the early-bourgeois conception of the market as an ideal social space where equal exchange guarantees equal social standing for all participants, see Reckwitz (2010: 110 - 128); Honneth (2016: 34) and Honneth (2015: 327 - 330).

reminder that class systems are not essentialised states of being but the temporary product of "human relationships, […] embodied in real [and thus psychologically complex, MTW] people" (Thompson 1966: 9); hence, they are contingent in a way that can be modified creatively to ensure productive change. In the particular case of Tevershall village, this potential for change is implied by the only positive reference Mellors makes to the working classes: "it's a shame what's been done to people *these last hundred years* [my emphasis, MTW]" (LC 220). Considering the time-frame of the narrative, a hundred years before the events narrated would be sometime in the 1820s. On the one hand, this date fits with the narrative's valorisation of "artisanal and individual" (Shiach 2001: 99) forms of work, which still predominated in Derbyshire in the early nineteenth century despite increased encroachment of industrial forms of work on established working-class patterns of life (Thompson 1966: 269 - 349). Even more importantly, in the present context, however, the working classes of the 1820s fought for the recognition of their rights as workers on the basis of existing English laws, the full enforcement of which in the late eighteenth century had provided many of them with a modicum of independent wealth (Thompson 1966: 297-298, 245). Notably, according to E.P. Thompson's account, some of the masters and aristocrats fought with, rather than against, the workers because they had a concrete individual relationship to the working classes from which they benefited, which the London-based proponents of *laissez-faire* usually lacked, and which was threatened by the new economic policies (Thompson 1966: 182 - 183). Although the support from the gentry and middle-classes had decreased rapidly by the 1850s, the former existence of a concrete individual relationship renders the "abstract sympathy" (LC 14) of the present a temporary result of a historical process – according to the logic of the novel, this is a process of degeneration and ossification. This process might be reversible, although Mellors himself is caught up in the decline of the conviction that independent agency is an effective element of social change ("But since I can't [undo the effects of industrialisation, MTW], an' [sic] nobody can, I'd better hold my peace, an' [sic] try an' [sic] live my own life." (LC 220)); hence, the potential for change within society is either presented as a lost opportunity or as latent, depending on how readers interpret the reference to the former state of the working-classes.

The narrative voice itself suggests that the law – instead of being a means to assert their individual subjectivity as it was for the workers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century according to Thompson (Thompson 1966: 78 - 89) – serves as a means of perpetuating social relations and hierarchies that have become stifling and damaging to the individual subjects

caught up in them, whether they be masters or servants. Notably, when Connie returns to Wragby for the last conversation with Clifford, he argues that she has to remain with him because she is his wife and thus appeals to a structural role (and one sustained by ideological "common sense" (Althusser 2010: 1350) and ossified as a tradition).[183] In the subsequent elaboration of his position, he ignores both the individual subjectivity of the person who occupies the role of his wife (linguistically marked by his consistent use of the third person pronoun, respectively the noun denoting Connie's legal function in relation to him), and the fact that he is addressing her directly in spite of talking about, rather than with, her: his refusal to use "you" denies the existence of a communicative equality between himself and Connie; instead, the law maintains a hierarchical relationship between the two of them with Clifford as the definitional centre (the person from whom "his wife" derives her status):

"I want my wife, and I see no reason for letting her go. If she likes to bear a child under my roof, she is welcome, and the child is welcome: provided that the decency and order of life is preserved" (LC 295). Laws in Clifford's mind maintain decency and order, irrespective of whether it coincides with the wishes of the person intimately concerned with the case; hence law has been emptied out of the ethical dimension it had for early-bourgeois individual subjects (cf. Loick 2017b: 47 - 56). Instead, it now maintains empty functional principles that do not even consider the particularity of individual subjects in the most basic sense of their embodied discreteness, much less their individual subjectivity as such. Clifford's statements regarding the child that will be his heir trace precisely that trajectory: initially, his bio-political management of Connie's future reproductive partner still implies that he considers her independence and agency, even though he believes that she will use them in accordance with a definition of decency he assumes they share: "I should trust your natural instinct of decency and selection" (LC 44). And even though he speaks of his future child as "it" (LC 44), the process of making a "Chatterley" (LC 183) out of the child (LC 183) suggests that the child has a personality of their own, which can and will be moulded as needed. And even a "link in a chain" (LC 43), though inert, anonymous and non-individualised, is still a discrete entity, distinguished from the other links in a chain by its position relative to the others. As Clifford degeneration progresses, however, he

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[183] The fact that Connie initially finds her life partner in an extra-marital relationship, respectively that she married Clifford at all despite their evident difference in character (LC 12, 15) also exposes the naturalisation of marriage championed by both variants of bourgeois subject culture as contingent (Armstrong 2004 : 575). Even so, the fact that Mellors and Connie plan to marry (LC 298) also showcases shows the f a subjectivity of intimacy that sees marriage as its core or *telos* (Reckwitz 2010: 367).

increasingly ignores any contingency to his model of the order of life. Hence, his refusal to either care that a child exists (LC 294-295) or to consider the possibility of divorcing his wife function as further indicators of Clifford's fear of contingency and chaos (LC 10).[184] The very existence of divorces as a provision in law implies that the order and perpetual promise of marriage can be broken and thus that the social system is aware of its own contingency.

Confronted with this functionalist view of the law that ignores the individual subjectivity of her own emotions and the future individual subjectivity of her child, Connie initially attempts to convince Clifford with an appeal to the "symbolism of blood" (Foucault 1983: 143) and the genealogical logic of the aristocracy – much as she does when appealing to the ethical component of "*noblesse oblige* [italics in original, MTW]" (LC 193) when trying to make Clifford see that Mellors "[is] a man as much as [Clifford is]" (LC 193) – by reminding him that "if it's a boy, it [sic!] will be legally your son, and it will inherit your title and have Wragby" (LC 297). Clearly, Connie has been trained in middle-class Enlightenment assumptions that the law ensures the individual subject will be judged rationally by their peers and hence in the belief that the juridism of modern society, its belief that the law" is meant to settle social conflicts by instituting order and providing a universal framework for civic and civil conduct" (Loick 2017b: 9), that humans can follow, and acts accordingly here. Daniel Loick uses the term *zivil* in the original German version of the above quote; the term combines a political connotation (captured by the English translation "civic") with an ethical one ("civil"). It thus showcases the bourgeois collapse of the ethical and the political dimension in an ideal image of the law as a practice-discourse. According to this image, if one appeals to the law, one does so on ethical grounds that one imagines oneself sharing with other individual subjects (or a polity as a whole); hence, one recognises these other individual subjects as equal to oneself.

Connie is shocked to see the law used as a means to bolster Clifford's ego-centrism (LC 295) rather than as a site of Hegelian re-cognition, to see it into an instrument that destroys and denies

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[184] Clifford is portrayed as slowly degenerating into a „genealogical isolate" (Patterson 1982: 75): first, his disability removes his ability to fulfil his obligation to his „ancestors" (Patterson 1982: 57) and his father to sire an heir (LC 12). And then his indifference to his child deprives him of the chance to have „social",„descendants" (Patterson 1982: 5) at least. At the same time, his coldness ensures that his wife – the only living relation he has – also treats him with contempt. As we discussed at the beginning of this chapter, he thus continues the process of degeneration the narrative associates with all aristocrats. Removed from the possibility of biological procreation, the narrative argues that Clifford is simultaneously removed from the communal ties of natality and need thus only be considered „quasi-human"(Weheliye 2014: 8) – with all the vulnerability to death and „gratuitous violence"(Wilderson 2017: 20) that always implies (Patterson 1982: 12. 77-101).

the validity of human individuality instead of protecting and guaranteeing it. In keeping with the tendency of Lawrence's novel to be organised around dichotomous dualisms (LC 234) Connie, confronted with this law-based opposition to her emotions, opts for "illegitima[cy]" (LC 297). She thus consciously chooses to exist outside the law if the law cannot re-cognise Mellors' fatherhood (or her child's individual subjectivity).

Even more importantly, the law as presented in the context of the novel is a space that is entirely subjected to the verbal rules of civilisation and fundamentally ignores (or abjects) the embodied dimension of human life. Clifford exemplifies this when he insists on Connie's status as his wife, even though their marriage can no longer materially fulfil the structural purpose of marriage, namely, the perpetuation of the family line (irrespective of the titles or privileges attached to each family), respectively, ensuring that patriarchal family lines are maintained (Rubin 2004: 778-779). Considering that Clifford cannot sire a child himself, the line of descent has to be broken to be maintained; this paradox in its turm highlights the non-natural character of civilised family structures and their epistemological contingency. Notably, these structures are not limited to the aristocracy: when Mellors talks to Connie's sister Hilda, he refers to her "as more or less [his] sister-in-law" (LC 245) and she denies it vehemently: "Far from it, I assure you" (LC 245). Unlike Hilda, Mellors and the reader know that Connie is pregnant with his child and thus that he is physically and sexually Hilda's brother-in-law even if the law does not recognise his status. In keeping with this critique, Connie's father is presented throughout the text as a proper man ("Why, even my father is ten times the human being you are […]!" (LC 194)) and a good father precisely because he recognises that Connie is an individual subject and a sexual being. He declares his approval of Mellors and their relationship by directly commenting on his daughter's sexual embodiment: "You can tell just *by the feel of her bottom that she's gonna come up all right* [my emphasis, MTW]" (LC 283). Though some readers may be baffled by this statement and the frankness of a father when talking to his daughter's lover about his daughter, the narrative voice does not judge Sir Malcolm for his statement (even though it frequently calls Clifford's non-sexual activities "vulgar" (LC 100).

At first glance, the above analysis suggests that the narrative is on the whole constructing a binary opposition, according to which characters invested in existing hierarchies attempt to mould and break the individual contingent embodiment of individual subjects, whereas the narrative voice argues for its unconditional acceptance as-is. Upon closer inspection, however, the narrative voice and the positively-portrayed characters are as prone to arguments based on the

eugenic ideology as Clifford is: Mellors articulates this very clearly when he states that "nearly all [women] are […] dead inside" (LC 203) when classifying the wrong relationship of most women to the sexual impulse. He then continues to pass judgement on these women, whom he equates with lesbians (LC 203), turning their lack of interest in (heterosexual) sex into a metaphysical transgression that needs to be answered with the most extreme form of violence possible: "I could kill them. When I'm [sic] with a woman who's [sic] really Lesbian, *I fairly howl in my soul, wanting to kill her* [my emphasis, MTW]" (LC 203). As "Mellors has been given the power by the novel to distinguish […] empty and degenerate forms of subjectivity" (Shiach 2001: 93), the novel does not object to his judgement and thus relegates women who do not fit its image of the "right relation between men and women" (Thompson 1966: 394) to the status of improper life that ought to be expelled to save proper forms of life (Esposito 2011: 84-85).

At first glance, Mellors' judgement of lesbian women seems unrelated to the novel's treatment of Clifford, who is not presented in a way that might suggest any form of bisexual desire or trans gender identity. The relationship becomes clearer if one keeps in mind early-twentieth-century theories of sexology: theorists like Havelock Ellis and Richard von Kraft-Ebbing argue that there exist two types of women in a lesbian relationship: so-called "inverts" who dress and behave like men and who are "men in women's bodies", and women who engage in heterosexual relationships and according to hegemonic notions of femininity, but who may be tempted by "inverts" to engage in homosexual sex (Gutenberg 2009: 326). As Andrea Gutenberg has shown, this view of female sexuality was propagated in novels that presented lesbian women as vampiric homewreckers (Gutenberg 2009: 326-328). In discourses around sexology in the early twentieth-century and literary representations of these sexualities, women who desire women constitute an Other on two different but complementary axes: firstly, "inverts" are seen as ontologically different from women. But at the same time, they are capable of convincing women who adhere to the conceptualisations of femininity and the heteronormative form of sexuality championed and naturalised by the hegemony of the early-twentieth-century to have sex with them and leave their heterosexual lives (Gutenberg 2009: 347 - 352). According to the sexologists of the time, the accidental contingency embodied in Lesbian women thus attacks both sexual practices and even more fundamentally the ontology of embodied existence current at the time, which maps a bifurcated gender matrix (Butler 2006: 24) unto a heteronormative matrix of sexuality (Butler 2006: 24) and reads gender and sexuality as caught in a signifying loop. According to this logic,

to be heterosexual is to be gendered as "man" or "woman", and "men" and "women" always have heterosexual (or at least penetrative) sex.

During the last decades of the nineteenth century homosexual men were similarly considered an ontological threat (as evidenced by the Wilde trials (Gutenberg 2009: 298-301)). Hence, prominent gay thinkers like Edward Carpenter and Max Nordau worked hard in the succeeding decades to establish an image of male homosexuals as masculine and focused on physical work (Gutenberg 2009: 299) and to thereby represent homosexual men as differing from heterosexual men only in their object choice and not in their gender identity, in marked contrast to Wildean "aesthetes" (Gutenberg 2009: 299 -300) , who sought to experiment with gender norms and gendered discourse-practices (Reckwitz 2010: 323). Advocates of homosexual rights like Carpenter represented homosexual men as essentially supporting the hegemonic gender matrix, rather than rendering it contingent through their very existence.

Keeping in mind the above, Mellors' lumping together Clifford and his sex-averse wife Bertha (LC 208) together with the "Lesbians [sic]" (LC 203) reveals a problematic subtext with implications that go beyond a dismissive remark about a former rival; Mellors' insult showcases that he still remains invested in the hegemonic structures of embodiment current at the time despite the gamekeeper's otherwise anti-social attitude and his positive engagement with the contingency of sexualised embodiments. Clearly, both Mellors and the text as a whole consider Clifford's attainment of a queer heterosexual masculinity with Mrs Bolton an ontological threat, as a form of dangerous "non-being" (Warren 2018: 13) that destabilises the eugenic dualisms that form the subtext of Lawrence's novel, rather than a valid alternative form of contingent embodiment; consequently, the novel lets Mellors articulate a wish to euthanise individual subjects like Clifford: "Yea, even the tenderest thing you could do for them, perhaps, would be to give them death" (LC 280).

Notably, although Connie argues for a "common humanity" (LC 183) and "common sympathy" (LC 193) when Mellors is the individual subject under discussion, she does not object to Mellors' ideas on Clifford's behalf (seemingly, she is more engaged in preventing Mellors (as a particular individual subject) from becoming a murderer than in worrying about the universal implications of the ethical judgement he has just made (LC 280)). The novel seemingly concurs that there are forms of life that do not *live*; these embodiments instead merely *exist* because "their souls are awful inside them" (LC 280). Keeping in mind both Mellors' remarks about Clifford and Clifford's vested interest in demeaning Mellors, the text strongly implies that the two men both

wish each other dead because they consider each other an aberration, an "improper" (Esposito 2011: 86-87) form of life that should not exist (LC 280 and 296); Clifford and Mellors both remain stuck in an ontological conceptualisation of their struggle. They cannot recognise each other's embodiment and individual subjectivity as "in conflict[]"(Wilderson 2010: 5) with their own. Instead, they see each other as an eternal "antagonist[]" (Wilderson 2010: 5) that threatens their ontological being.

Antagonisms are struggles that concern themselves with this ontological foundation: they are concerned with the question of whether former non-beings (such as freed slaves and their descendants, in a U.S. context (Wilderson 2010: 8, 10-11)) can be accorded rights in the first place; respectively they are grounded in assumptions of ontological incommensurability. Clifford and Mellors clearly consider each other antagonists in Wilderson's sense – to them, the chasm of class and being really is "impassable" (LC 14) because there is no common ontological ground between them. As illustrated throughout this chapter, the text as a whole clearly concurs with this ontological reading of the two men and their differences. And it also makes its own partiality clear by having Connie object to Clifford with an appeal to a "common humanity" (LC 183), but having her make no comparable appeal on Clifford's behalf.

Reading this novel after the Second World War, we cannot help but hear echoes of the justification the Nazis employed to euthanise disabled people (and their ideological struggles for a literal space to live in (*Lebensraum)* as a pretext for ravaging Eastern Europe and subjugating Slavic populations); they, too, argued, that individual subjects with disabilities or chronic illnesses were "lives unworthy of life" (*lebensunwertes Leben*) (Esposito 2008: 194; Bauman 2000: 102-104).

Additionally, the ontological antagonism between Clifford and Mellors the novel presents also raises another question: is the recognition of the contingency of embodiment itself dependent of the necessary assumption of a non-contingent similarity? In the case of Lawrence's novel, the answer is most certainly affirmative, and the ground of this similarity between Mellors and Connie is actually marked by a concrete signified: a body that is responsive to heterosexual touch. When the lovers have intercourse for the first time, "it is dark" (LC 116) in the hut where they meet, and neither -neither Connie nor Mellors speaks to the other while they have sex (LC 116); the couple exists outside the hegemonic parameters of logocentrism (Derrida 2016 [1967]: 11 - 13) and occularcentrism (Horlacher 1998: 8). Instead, the touch of Mellors' "hand groping softly, yet with a queer, thwarted tenderness" (LC 116) establishes an equal, balanced, and

particular connection between them. The fact that he does not immediately know where he needs to touch Connie indicates his acceptance of her contingent embodiment as an individual sexual subject At the same time, his ability to bring her to orgasm (LC 116) indicates an embodied similarity between the lovers that is simultaneously guarded and verified by Connie's sexuality; her body reassures him through her orgasm that she is a heterosexual woman and thus confirms a similarity and mutual compatibility between her and Mellors. Their ability to verify this connection through touch and intercourse (LC 116) thus ensures that Connie and Mellors can deal with the contingencies other individual subjects (LC 298) or their own (linguistic) socialisation and biographies (LC 243) force them to confront. Their ability to share a form of "sensuality, sharp and searing as fire" (LC 246) ensures that Connie and Mellors always have a ground, from which "common sympathy" (LC 193) can stem (but which is itself removed from any awareness of its own contingency). As indicated above, Clifford's very existence and his non-penetrative sexuality serve as an embodied reminder of an awareness of contingency that could threaten Connie and Mellors' relationship and its roots in heterosexual intercourse, respectively the new "habitat" (LC 5) the text as a whole wants to build upon this foundation; hence, it is only logical that Clifford and his contingent embodiment has to be marginalised and threatened with permanent extinction. And yet the very presence of Clifford highlights a constitutive danger of "eugenic ideologi[es]" (Schalk 2015: 150): because they fill the structural scaffolding of a "common humanity" (LC 183) with a concrete embodied image, they simultaneously exclude other embodiments, first discursively and then perhaps also practically through sterilisations and genocide (Gilroy 2000: 81-96)

Comparing the treatment of Clifford Chatterley to the Creature and Richard of Gloucester, one may at first be inclined to consider the character an example of disability imagined as "absolute Otherness". And yet, while the character is without a doubt portrayed more negatively than Shelley's Creature, there exist glimmers of a more positive portrayal in the Clifford readers encounter at the beginning of the novel. There, Clifford is still capable of creative engagement with the world around him – as exemplified by his interest in the decoration of the garden (LC 41) and still expresses interest both in his wife as an individual subject (LC 45) and the world outside Wragby (LC 31), even though both are subsumed under his egocentrism. In contrast to Richard, this character trait of Clifford's precedes his wounding and is never presented as contingent upon his embodiment; rather, it is contingent upon his class and the fact that he lives in an "essentially […] tragic age" (LC 1). Notably, it is Clifford himself who points out the major

gap in the ethics favoured by the novel and the story it tells: it represents a world that has no sense of a "common humanity" (LC 183). As Roberto Esposito explains, Enlightenment philosophy propagated the image of humanity as a group united by their attainment of a common quality: the use of Reason, defined as rationality (Esposito 2012: 20-21).[185] But as the nineteenth century progresses, new discoveries in biology and anthropology (especially the discovery of the vegetative nervous system, which guides bodily actions that never reach the threshold of consciousness) are increasingly translated into the idea that the biological body and its condition – most importantly its racial characteristics – determine the degree to which each individual subject can be rational (Esposito 2012: 32-50). Humanity becomes fractured into "races" and essentialised types (Gilroy 2000: 68-73). Hence, in Lawrence's novel Connie and Mellors can invert Clifford's privileging of the life of the mind in favour of being for "the life of the body" (LC 234), but neither party argues for a life that is both of the mind *and* the body. Clifford's contingent embodiment – this third category, never mentioned in this body-centric novel-, points to a lack sustained by the "eugenic ideology" (Schalk 2015: 150) of life as the universal signifier (Esposito 2011: 128-135); in the context of Lawrence's novel, disability does function as the permanent and aggressive negation of *jouissance* (Davis 1995: 5) that destabilises a body-based idyll and poses the unanswered question of how to think embodiment and the physical within the cultural, respectively how to think humanity without assigning (bodily) attributes to this idealised collective. The following analysis of Patrick McCabe's *The Holy City* showcases both the tenacity of dualistic conceptualisations of life, particularly virulent and tenacious in the racialised discourse-practices of post-colonialism, and attempts to creatively transcend them in favour of "the logic of 'and' [my translation and single quotation marks]" (Kandinsky quoted in Heinz 2007: 1).

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[185] For a detailed discussion of conceptualisations of rationality as the emphatically non-embodied part of human life in and since the Enlightenment, see Butter (2007: 175 - 177); Welsch (1996: 252) and Böhme and Böhme 1985. For an interesting analysis of how Enlightenment philosophies in fact prefigure the racism and imperialism of the later nineteenth-century, see Gilroy (2000: 55-71), Mbembe (2013: 11 - 20), and Lowe (2015: 43 – 71, 107 – 118).

8. "It's duh-duh-difficult, that's all" – Relative Otherness, Contingent Embodiment, Creative Subjectivity and Postcoloniality in *The Holy City*

8.1 Embodiment and Discourses of Whiteness and Racialisation in (Post-) Colonial Ireland

Analysing *Lady Chatterley's Lover* has indicated that the representation of disabled individual subjects disability as relative Others in texts produced in the wake of the Enlightenment is often entangled with discourse-practices used to racialise (non-European colonial) individual subjects. Furthermore, the negative characterisation of Clifford Chatterley throughout the novel emphasises that the embodiment of a particular character can render claims made by the narrator contingent in turn. Texts thus can become a complex palimpsest of different approaches to contingent embodiment. The text as a whole need not map neatly unto the views of the narrator or particular characters (as it did in *Richard III* and ultimately in *Frankenstein*), nor vice versa. Rather, each presents differing points of view that can be presented as contingent in relation to the model favoured by other characters or the text-as-a-whole.

 In *Lady Chatterley's Lover,* the material facticity of Clifford's embodiment continues to disrupt the silent normalisation of heterosexual ablebodied embodiments propagated by the narrative. By drawing attention to the normalisation enacted by the narrative voice, Clifford's embodiment offers a potential alternative; the fact that this alternative combination of culture and nature cannot be actualised within the confines of the narrative as set out in the novel renders the entanglement of the narrative with the "eugenic ideology" (Schalk 2015: 150, 149 - 151; English 2004) simultaneously visible and contingent in its turn. In light of this entanglement, it seems reasonable to assume the following: firstly, that the essentialised racialisation that underpins the eugenic ideology hinders the formation of a community – understood in the widest possible sense as simply an awareness of an individual subject's ontological condition of "being-in-common" (Nancy 1991: 57) with others. Such a community would permit the simple recognition of embodied difference and its contingency as a part of the human condition. Secondly, and more importantly, the unarticulated contingency of Clifford's embodiment poses the question of an alternative engagement with relative embodiment that both recognises this relativity and does not try to subsume it under a universalising content-based image of humanity as the Enlightenment subject does.

Strikingly, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* itself offers hints of a site that might offer potentialities for articulating a counter-hegemonic narrative in the very place where the racialised hegemony that

others Clifford gained its clearest articulation. Mellors recognises the contingency of middle-class hegemony, respectively of the bourgeois culture of subjectivity, while he is on military service, which leads him abroad, to "Egypt" (LC 215) and "South Africa" (LC 215), two colonies of the British Empire. Additionally, Connie also compares him to "C.E. Florence [sic]" (LC 281), a thinly-veiled stand-in for T.E. Lawrence. T.E. Lawrence, also known as "Lawrence of Arabia" was the major agent of the British against the Ottoman Empire and helped start a rebellion among the tribes of the Arabian Peninsula based on the promise of national independence (cf Silverman 1992: 299 - 338). Lawrence's actions thus combine individual investment and interest in Arabic cultures with the imperial and Orientalist politics of the British Empire. As imagined in the time period and D.H. Lawrence's novel, colonial encounters thus retain the hierarchical structure of the imperialist colonial ideology, which confirms the white masculinity of the coloniser over and against the abject femininity or non-masculinity of the colonised subject. But even so, as Ania Loomba points out, these hierarchies of gendered racialised identities are inherently contingent:

> Racial difference has functioned as one of the most powerful yet most fragile markers of human identity, difficult to police and maintain yet persistent, a constructed idea yet all too real in its devastating effects. […] Is difference defined primarily by racial [attributes] [that is, attributes that have been essentialised by being inscribed on the materiality of bodies, MTW] or cultural attributes? Colonial and racial discourses and their attendant fictions and sciences, as well as as anticolonial thought, have been preoccupied with these questions. The construction of vast numbers of people as inferior or 'other' was crucial for constructing the European 'self' […]. In reality, any simple opposition between […] races is undercut by the fact that there are enormous differences within each of these categories as well as cross-overs between them (Loomba 2015: 112).

Hence the colonies are sites where the contingency of the hegemony is exposed and contingent embodiments need to be managed; Mellors' exposure to different embodiments and the workings of the logic of racialisation helps to articulate a new form of subjectivity based on a different awareness of embodied subjectivity and embodied contingency. Simultaneously, mentioning colonial discourse-practice also renders the racialised undercurrents of the novel's alternative body-based social structure potentially contingent in its turn.

In his influential study on the construction of whiteness, Richard Dyer argues that both the question of sexual reproduction and the larger question of embodiment are intimately tied to the question of racialisation in general and to the definition of whiteness in particular (Dyer 2017: 14-40). The first of these correlations is relatively straightforward. Racialised discourses essentialise the qualities they ascribe to each race on the basis of a combination of cultural traits

and phenotypical characteristics.[186] The latter are then used as an essentialised signifier for the former. Frantz Fanon's term for this process, "epidermalisation [sic]" (Fanon 2008 [1952]: xv), highlights the central role the skin and its colour is assigned in such processes. These essentialising techniques reveal the need of racialised hegemonies to keep these social and biological identifications relatively static over time and across generations This maintain the legibility of each racialised category and their relation to each other. It also minimises awareness of the epistemological contingency of these bio-political chains of signifiers. A strict bio-political management of sexuality in general (othering non-heterosexual relationships) and heterosexuality in particular (focusing on and presenting intraracial married couples as the sole site of and children as the sole end of sexual intercourse) in turn ensures the transference of this racialised hegemony across generations. Racialised identities are thus fundamentally discourses of reproduction that seek to reproduce a set of discourse-practices with as little variation as possible from an idealised past into an equally idealised future.

Secondly, and more importantly, Dyer argues that whiteness as a racial category in particular is defined by its relationship to embodiment. We could rephrase Dyer's main thesis regarding the role of the body and embodiment in the ideological construction of whiteness as follows: these discourses argue that white individual subjects *are embodied* (Dyer 2017: 24) whereas an individual subject with an ancestry or cultural background defined as non-white *has a body*, which literally delimits their actions and ability to develop (Dyer 2017: 22-24). Thus, whites are defined by their ability to consciously experience and manage their bodies whereas non-whites are thought of as imprisoned in their bodies (Dyer 2017: 23). This conceptualisation of racialised embodiment thus replicates the Cartesian dualism discussed in chapter two of the theoretical framework.[187] Dyer argues that racial discourses of whiteness originate in Christian conceptions of embodiment. Following the model of Christ, the ideal white masculine individual subject controls his body and emotions and is not defined by them. The mind and its goals use the body and do not have to take its material condition into consideration. The body is an instrument that is "ready-to-hand" (Rentsch 2013: 57) at all times; Hence, white masculine individual subjects attain their whiteness through a great deal of mental work (Dyer 2017: 17). Ultimately, whiteness

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[186] For a detailed analysis of the racialisation of cultural traits in recent variants of racist thought, see Balibar and Wallerstein (2011: 17 - 29)

[187] For a detailed discussion of the conceptualisation of differences between "being embodied" (Gugutzer 2015: 16) and "having a body" (Gugutzer 2015: 15 - 16), see Gugutzer (2015:15- 17).

is defined in racialised discourses as an "aspirational structure" (Dyer 2017: 80), in particular the aspiration towards a form of transcendence (Dyer 2017: 16, 24), that endows an individual subject with an indifference to the body that in turn ultimately culminates in the ability to completely ignore the bodily and material condition of humanity (Dyer 2017: 24).

However, this conceptualisation of whiteness as an "aspirational structure" (Dyer 2017: 80) itself introduces a twofold source of contingency. Firstly, the fact that white masculine individual subjects have to control their bodies to maintain their whiteness implies that they can lose this control; within the context of the ideology of whiteness, the "dark […] threat" (Dyer 2017: 28) against the perfect state of whiteness is located in sexuality. To curtail and delimit this threat, the ideology of whiteness positions white feminine individual subjects as the keepers and maintainers of whiteness, whose own sexuality is subsumed under a maternal ideal of domesticity modelled on Christian depictions of the Virgin Mary (Dyer 2017: 16-17, 29). Consequently, hegemonic discourses of whiteness depend on a misogynistic and heterosexist management of sexual desire in general and women's heterosexual desire in particular (Dyer 2017: 29). The second consequence of conceptualising whiteness as an "aspirational structure" (Dyer 2017: 80) is that non-white individual subjects can adopt the discourse-practices associated with whiteness, thus exposing their contingency; similarly, the contingencies of embodiment – such as a disability incurred in an accident – destabilises the ideal of whiteness as such, since they limit the extent to which an individual subject can transcend the materiality of their embodiment.

8.2 Chris Mc Cool's Violent Striving After the Transcendence of White Protestantism
From the first page of *The Holy City*, the novel's first-person narrator and protagonist, Christopher McCool, presents himself as striving after the ideal of transcendent whiteness. He even literally describes happiness as transcending his embodiment: the novel begins with the following sentence: "Now entering upon *one's* sixty-seventh year, one is at pains to recall such a degree of contentment – ever [my emphasis, MTW]."[188] The persistent usage of the de-individualising *one* rather than *I* indicates that the narrator implicitly associates happiness with a permanent immunitarian removal from any sort of interactive relation to other human or non-human beings. For whereas *I* as a deictic marker invokes the relational construction of a corresponding *you* – whether explicit or implicit -, *one* collapses this experience of difference

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[188] McCabe, Patrick. *The Holy City*. London: Bloomsbury, 2010, 1. All subsequent citations (given in the body of the text following the abbreviation "HC") refer to this edition.

into a uniform and amorphous similarity. This similarity, J. Hillis Miller argues with reference to the Heideggerian concept of *das man* (*man* is the German equivalent of *one*, though Heidegger's term is usually translated in English as "the they" (Miller 2015: 9)), allows communities to construct a supraindividual sense of self that amalgamates or ignores particular differences and particularity as such (Miller 2015: 9-10). From the very beginning, the narrator-protagonist thus positions himself at edge of average human social relations, more particularly at its sovereign (rather than its abject) limit.

The character's sovereignty is also emphasised by the class-related pragmatics of *one*: customarily, a particular individual subject distancing themselves from their own emotions through the use of *one* rather than *I* is taken to signal an upper-class background; additionally this distancing from emotions and non-rational forms of embodiment indicates the inbraiding of class and racialised discourses and points to the implicit assumption in a colonialised system that the class-based elite in a given colony is also racialised as white.[189] Chris McCool, the narrator-protagonist seemingly further confirms his own adherence to such a conception of whiteness and class when he describes his own physical appearance as "tall and handsome" (HC 2) and emphasises that the "appreciation" (HC 1) of unnamed observers encourages him to clothe himself in "the smartest […] neat" – and costly – attire and to use "the most expensive aftershave available" (HC 1). Hence, as initially presented to readers, Chris appears to combine both the association of whiteness with class-based affluence and its unique capability for individualism (Dyer 2017: 16). He emphasises that his "dashing" (HC 1) appearance has been preserved in spite of his age and "a recent hip replacement" (HC 1).

However, the text as a whole immediately alerts readers to Chris' fundamental unreliability. The text as a whole problematises his appearance, in so doing highlights the naturecultural entanglement of notions of racialisation, and simultaneously raises the question of the contingency of Chris McCool's own embodiment. Firstly, Chris explicitly withdraws one element of his own description as a "jest" (HC 1) and admits that the "most expensive aftershave available on the market" (HC 1) does not "exist[]" (HC 2). Thus, the text as a whole suggests the

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[189] For an interesting discussion of the ambiguous role of educated non-white communities during colonialism(for example in British India, where civil servants of Indian descent were precluded from taking on senior positions in government) and the role played by these individual subjects in anti-colonial movements, see Anderson (2016: 54 – 59, 113 - 131).

possibility that the narrator-protagonist's invents events to present himself to the audience in a certain way. Chris associates the image he projects with social and individual exceptionalism.

Hence, Chris McCool is revealed to be an unreliable narrator. According to Wayne Booth's classical definition "a narrator is 'reliable' […] when he speaks for and acts in accord with the norms of the work […], unreliable when he does not" (Booth 1983: 158 – 159, qtd in Phelan and Martin 1999: 89). Additionally, Booth distinguishes two types of unreliable narration that occur on two different narrative axes: a narrator "may be unreliable about either facts (the axis of events) or values (the axis of ethics)" (Phelan and Martin 1999: 89). In their groundbreaking analysis of the unreliable narrator of Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day*, James Phelan and Mary Patricia Martin introduce a third axis of unreliability: "the axis of knowledge and perception" (Phelan and Martin 1999: 92). As we shall see in our subsequent analysis of *The Holy City*, the unreliability of Chris McCool's narration constantly demands that readers navigate and evaluate the truth claims the narrating-I makes both about his own actions and the social world in which he lives (including his biological and social parentage).

This first instance of unreliability along the axis of facts analysed above immediately presents Chris as a character who defines himself primarily in relation to other's perception of him, respectively through his management of these relationships and perceptions. Throughout his initial introduction, phrases like "it has been remarked of late" (HC 1) abound, and he also anonymises being described as "dashing" when he says that this adjective "has been generously – and not infrequently" (HC 1) applied to him. This rhetorical strategy presents this description of Chris as a natural fact because it transcends the communicative context of a particular individual interlocutor (respectively of an identifiable group of individual subjects); thus this evaluation of Chris is presented as standing above social particularity; even if we read it as still referencing human interlocutors, describing Chris as "dashing" (HC 1) is presented as a universal response, a common consensus. Furthermore, the text as a whole emphasises the character's interest in (his) physical and outward appearance: notably, Chris compares his appearance to the James Bond interpretation of Roger Moore (HC 2). He also refers to the literary origins of Bond in the novels of Ian Fleming (HC 2), which were published in the 1950s. Both the films and the novels propagate a hegemonic ideal of masculinity (and gender identities in general), which focuses on physical appearance and bodily conduct (Reckwitz 2010: 373). In contrast to the previous hegemony of the bourgeois subject, the subjectivity of intimacy propagated by the modernist "subject-as-employee" (*Angestelltensubjekt*) (Reckwitz 2010: 336) is based on an interest in

visual media that explore the appearance of individual subjects and objects – such as the newly-developed medium of film (Reckwitz 2010: 371, 390 - 397; Reckwitz 2012: 239 - 268), the generic norms of which were codified in the star and studio systems of Hollywood (Reckwitz 2012: 249 – 252, 254 - 257). Concomitantly, this newly-hegemonic subject culture de-emphasises the focus on the construction of an "inner self" which shapes bourgeois attitudes towards the subject (Reckwitz 2010: 373). The modernist subject culture instead treats the inner motivations of an individual subject as a (partial) black box. In light of the above, Chris McCool seems to ally himself particularly with the hegemonic subject culture of the 1960s and its focus on the smoothness of direct embodied conduct, rather than with the emergent subject culture of the "creative subject" (Reckwitz 2010: 441) that begins to gain traction at the end of the sixties.

At first glance, the narrator-protagonist's interest in a form of subjectivity that minimises the role of cognitive and emotional difference and awareness thereof may seem harmless in itself, but the text as a whole already hints at its potential association with violence (cf Esposito 2011: 29-36). Considering Chris' self-representation as a "refined boulevardier of some local distinction" (HC 2) and his subsequent efforts to describe the material wealth of his apartment (HC 4), readers may so far consider him little more than an aged dandy. However, his comparison with James Bond already hints at the negative and darker implications of Chris' self-image: the image the character projects towards readers in the initial passages of the book create the impression that he is particularly fascinated by Bond's performance of his embodiment in interactive, social spaces, that he prefers the gentleman to the spy, in other words. If that were true, we would expect Chris to cite Bond's second catchphrase: "Shaken, not stirred". The fact that Chris cites Bond's official remit as a spy – his "licence to kill" (HC 2) – as his own point of identification prepares readers for the gradual revelation that the narrator-protagonist has committed murder.

In addition, this phrase also intratextually elucidates the detailed modalities of Chris' self-image. Firstly, Bond's remit implies that violence can be licensed and therefore be considered justified if and when it meets the conditions set out in the remit. As a member of the British intelligence services (and a specialist programme within MI 6), Bond's violence is not that of an individual subject simply acting on impulse. It functions instead as the expression of a communal (specifically national) interest mediated through the actions of an individual subject. This mediation has a threefold effect: firstly, the actual perpetuation of violence can be presented as a means to an end and the acting individual subject has not chosen this end for themselves; hence, they can present themselves as being at the very least less emotionally invested in the acts of

violence than their superiors. Thus, the Chris' self-identification with a spy already shows his investment in a hierarchically-organised conception of subjectivity and community with himself at the top. At the same time, it implies that the narrator-protagonist contextualises his actions within a structural system that, firstly, is built on the ideas of another individual subject (or a group of individual subjects) and secondly and most importantly, that these actions are rationalised through reference to a supra-individual "imagined community" (Anderson 2016: 6, 7), which the Chris considers free of emotional attachment and which thus makes rational decisions, he believes. In Bond's case, this imagined community is identified as the British nation and its role in the world after the Second World War. In Chris McCool's case, he initially identifies with the "[m]ysteries of Protestantism" (HC 65) as his preferred imagined community to which he wants to belong. Before examining the ideology Chris espouses in detail, it ought to be noted that the rationalisation of violent acts of cultural suppression alluded to through the Bond reference also echoes colonialist and imperialist literatures that argue for the intellectual and physical superiority of white coloniser populations over and against (colonised) populations who are racialised as non-white (cf. Dyer 2017: 145-173; McClintock 1995: 36- 56). The reference to Bond can thus be read as an early reference to the complex entanglement between Chris's sense of self and embodiment and Ireland's colonial past and post-colonial present.

As Ann Stoler and Anne McClintock argue in their influential studies *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things* (Stoler 1995) and *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (McClintock 1995) the bio-political management of the family – specifically a family model built around an ideal of the nuclear family as it was hegemonised by the early-bourgeois subject culture (Reckwitz 2010: 150) - forms the central element of colonial bio-politics, the literal nucleus of its hegemony. As discussed above in the analysis of *Frankenstein*, the early-bourgeois reconceptualisation of the family – partly in opposition to pre-bourgeois conceptions of the multi-generational family and its complex kinship structures (Habermas 2015: 107 - 109) – focuses on the relationship between two generations and the relationship between parents and children, which is imagined as both pedagogical (parents raise their children to become rational Enlightened individual subjects in their own right) (Reckwitz 2010: 152) and affectively governed. Under colonial conditions, the families of the English, respectively European, colonisers install complex laws and discourse-practices to ensure the family remains at the centre of the "deployment of sexuality in the context of white kinship – the proprietorial relationship of the patriarch to his wife and children, the

making of legitimate heirs, and the transmission of property" (Hartman 1997: 84). This "proprietorial relationship" in turn forms part of a complex network of relationships and material goods that ensure the hierarchical and material dominance of a group of individual subjects – usually declared white because their material wealth and domination of other individual subjects are presented as signs of "enterprise" (Dyer 2017: 30) and "leadership" (Dyer 2017: 31), both of which are central features of the ideological structure of whiteness (Dyer 2017: 31) – against a materially and discursively subjugated majority group (Hartman 1997: 84 – 85). The family thus becomes a literal site of reproduction: the children are imagined to both biologically and culturally reproduce the modalities of family life they inherited from their parents according to this genealogical model. The patriarchal and patrilineal conceptualisation of this mode of racialised inheritance is expressed through the naming of children. As Hortense Spillers has shown in the case of American chattel slavery, racialised systems maintained their notions of supremacy by denying American slaves their natality (Spillers 2003: 203 - 206) .This expressed itself in the custom of giving children born to slaves either their mother's surname, or indeed no surname at all (Hartman 1997: 157). As this practice affected both marriages (which existed outside the legal parameters defined by slave states) and children born of rape or coerced intercourse with white men (acts that were therefore legally obfuscated and ensured the continued sexual mastery of white men over female slaves (Spillers 2003: 205, 223- 231), the lack of a patrilineal surname marked the children's existence as outside the realm of the patriarchal gender and kinship exchange and confirmed their status as person-objects who were defined by their subjection to "social death" (Orlando Patterson). Conversely, the practice implies that the patriarchal system marks an individual subject that conforms to its biological, social, and affective propriety by bestowing upon them the literal "name of the father" (which incorporates the Lacanian sense of the term with its connection to a culture constituted by patriarchal law (Butler 2006: 75-77)); through this speech act, the hegemony grants them access to the realm of discursive power and material wealth these kinship systems are installed to regulate and maintain (and the system ensures the perpetuation of its own hegemony).

At first glance, the above excursus seems to be inapplicable to the social context of *The Holy City*. Yet the narrator-protagonist references this mode of thinking when explaining why (and for whom) he tells the story of his life. As noted above, Chris anonymises the individual subjects who he claims confirm his "dashing" (HC 1) appearance and his "cool, suave, unflappable" (HC 2) conduct. Therefore, he presents himself different from this undifferentiated adoring mass by

virtue of his having a name and thus being identifiable as a unique individual subject This discursive move also perpetuates classist stereotypes regarding appropriate and inappropriate bodily conduct. Chris thus also tries to disassociate himself from the working and underclasses, who were usually identified as an amorphous mass and thus denied the ability to express the individuality that liberalism defined as the core trait of an individual subject (cf. Reckwitz 2010: 190-193; Arendt 2017 [1968]: 478 - 502) This is explicated in the text by the one person whom Chris identifies as a fellow individual subject, whom he indeed directly addresses as such and whose approbation he seems to want to solicit with his narrative:

[The fact that Chris is said to be like Roger Moore is] [a] piece of intelligence which, were he to become acquainted with it, *my dearest old papa* would, I feel confident, have found immensely gratifying. *Dr. Thornton* being something of a gentleman himself, of course – bred of the *noblest, verifiably Protestant stock*. [my emphasis, MTW]" (HC 2).

On the one hand, the above passage further emphasises the conceptualisation of whiteness as a structure of attainment on the part of the narrator. Furthermore, it also identifies the person he perceives as the individual subject on whom he wants to mould himself: an individual subject, whom readers may at first identify with his "father", as this is clearly what the narrator-protagonist wants them to do.. As parenthood is the fulcrum of all racialised "symbolics of blood" (Foucault 1983: 143; translation according to Stoler 1995: 49) and consequently all lines of inheritance based thereon (Stoler 1995: 101 - 116), it seems at first as if Chris McCool embodies and enacts precisely this logic of inheritance: he calls his father "dear old dad" (HC 2) and so expresses affection and follows the logics of family espoused in racialised conceptions of this social unit. Families are the sentimental point of origin (Hartman 1997: 52, 94, 157-158) of the logic of kinship that governs the nation, both economically and discursively. The narrative in fact emphasises that Henry Thornton has inherited both social and financial capital (*sensu* Bourdieu) and has thus participated in the circuits of governance Hartman identifies. His "eighteenth-century Palladium-style mansion, set in […] sumptuous grounds [that boasts] many priceless works of art […][,] a 'capital' stables [single quotation marks in original, MTW" (HC 2) and a library with "wainscoted" (HC 2) books. All the material goods mentioned commingle financial wealth and an upper-class social status and habitual discourse-practices (such as an interest in literature and books as material goods) commonly associated with the upper classes.

Thornton's abode also implies that he is a landowner by evoking the imagery of the "Big House" and thus positions him materially within the landowning gentry and the managerial classes of

Ireland.[190] Furthermore, the narrative also suggests that his "Protestant stock" (HC 2) reaches back to the institution of the tenancy system that began the full-scale colonisation of Ireland as an agricultural colony to supply the resources for the beginning industrialisation of England. It further continues the association of Protestantism with cultural and material dominance the English had legally imposed upon Ireland through the Penal laws of the eighteenth century (Kiberd 1996: 17). This in turn illustrates the cultural tenacity of the ideology underwriting these laws in the self-fashioning of the Protestant Ascendancy. Parliament repealed the Penal laws in the 1820s (Kiberd 1996:18), but the Thorntons still represent an explicitly Protestant hegemony to Chris' mind in the early 2000s. The narrator thus presents Ireland as still governed by the ideologies it was governed by when it was part of the colonial periphery of the British Empire. In so doing, he wishes to present the Thorntons as part of the colonialist gentry, who define themselves through their ability to rationally manage nature (whether non-human like their "painstakingly maintained" (HC 2) grounds or human).[191] By associating rationality with the control and management of nature, the text as a whole also indicates that Thornton's conception of rationality primarily focuses on instrumental reason as defined by Horkheimer and Adorno. In *Dialectics of Enlightenment*, they define this form of reason as an instrument of control and ultimately destruction, particularly in relation to nature (Horkheimer and Adorno 2010 [1944/1947]: 9-11). Nature is in turn divided into exterior and interior nature (Horkheimer and Adorno 2010[1944/ 1947]: 13-19).

Chris McCool's description of the gardens of Thornton Manor reproduces precisely this narrative of control. Firstly, because gardens, as opposed to forests or other spaces that are mainly defined by the presence of non-human organisms, are more obviously constructed in accordance with aesthetic and thus "cultural" discourse-practices, they are conceptualised as spaces engaged in domesticating nature, respectively as themselves defined by the rules of domestic or domesticated cultural spaces (Grewe-Volpp 2004: 105); furthermore, since these discourse-practices define gardens as a space, it implies a hierarchy between human and non-human culturenature (to invert

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[190] For a detailed discussion of the "Big House" gentry and the country house as tropes and myths in contemporary English literature and culture, see Butter (2013: 432 - 436).

[191] Cedric Robinson argues that the racialisation of the Irish as another race compared to the English working class in part prefigures and aids the racialisation of Africans slaves as lesser beings in the Americas (Robinson 1999: 29 – 42, in particular 39). For a discussion of Chris' evocation of the abjection of Blackness to immunise himself against attacks on his sense of self, see below.

Donna Haraway's term (Haraway 2008: 15) and highlights the hierarchical subtext of this dualism. Additionally, Chris' description of the gardens also implies a hierarchy between non-rational cognitive processes and rationality, respectively between menial (and thus body-based) and mental forms of labour,. In accordance with the general focus on culture and the mind in these discourses, the latter term always controls the former. The extent of this control is already implied in the attribute Chris chooses to describe the gardens: pain is a non-cognitive emotional response that emphasises the particularity and individuality of the organism in question (Scarry 1987: 27), but it also can be used to dehumanise an individual subject, turning them into an object and a means to another individual subject's ends (Hartman 1997: 93-94). As the gardens are maintained this meticulously to ensure their conforming to a certain aesthetic ideal, the narrator's description already evokes a binary opposition between nature and culture, with the cultural term seen as dominant because it allows an individual subject to transcend the limits of their own embodied particularity. Furthermore, following the Kantian definition of aesthetics (Kant 2010 [1795]: 414 - 419), the ability to transcend the particularity of individual sensory experience forms one of the pillars of an understanding of culture based on rationality. Hence, the narrative presents the form of life propagated and embodied by the Thornton family as based on a series of binary oppositions and the simultaneous ability to clearly differentiate each side of the division in question from the other, respectively to maintain a clearly-recognisable border between them and to thus minimise the risk of change; according to this system, change is equated with the risks and dangers of epistemological and accidental contingency. Additionally, the way the Thornton's way of life sidelines and ignores pain – which, the text as a whole implies subtextually, their own actions have caused themselves and others – already exposes the constitutive role violence plays in the actualisation of their ideals. Furthermore, as pain is an embodied warning signal meant to ensure that an individual subject survives, the fact that Thornton ignores this signal in both himself and others (and that Chris praises him for doing so (HC 2) prefigures Chris' later destructive and self-destructive actions in the name of "the muscular Protestant character" (HC 10). Similar to Clifford Chatterley, then, the Irish gentry embraces an immmunitarian approach to the world, and Chris ultimately realises its auto-immunitarian extreme (HC 53) through his killing of Vesna and his own suicidal ideation.

Like all immunitarian discourses, Henry Thornton sees life as an "antagonis[m]" (Wilderson 2010: 5) between rationality and accidental and epistemological contingency, as a struggle and fight between "friend" and "foe". Society, for Thornton, is defined by an ontological agonism

(Marchart 2013: 231-262, 231). A proper individual subject thus possesses "a muscular Protestant character" (HC 10), which is implicitly equated with masculinity and defined by Thornton as follows, according to Chris:

"[It is] '[a] sovereign, autonomous, self-contained ego formation [and this formation must be defended] against all possible incursions or admixtures, endogenous or exogenous.' […] The muscular Protestant character, he [=Thornton, MTW] insisted, must at all times be secured against both its own passions and the invasions of others. [single quotation marks in original, MTW]" (HC 10). The above quotation firstly indicates that Henry Thornton associates subjectivity with a radically autonomous version of the early -modern and Enlightenment subject that considers rationality as the only appropriate way to cognitively engage with the world. In calling the subject an "ego formation" (HC 10), the above quote assumes that the difference between ego and *alter* can be rationally determined and fixed, thereby removing it from the sphere of historical processes and change. According to Henry Thornton's ideal, an individual subject is a human monad in Leibnitz' sense, which is governed only by the conscious choices it makes in accordance with rational principles and which is "windowless" (Heinz 2007: 354, FN 191). It does not require any exchange with the outside world to gain information or reach conclusions about the world beyond its borders As these circular modules of Leibnitz's imagination have a recognisable shape, they also have a recognisable border, and these borders ensure the easy recognition of "exogenous" and "endogenous" (HC 10) elements are easy to identify. Additionally, the strong association of Henry Thornton's strong identification with an essentialised conceptualisation of rationality is further reflected in the occupations Chris lists for him. As a "historian, literary critic and essayist" (HC 17), Thornton participates in discourses that define themselves through their supposed rational distance from their discursive objects: for example, normative dualistic conceptions of nineteenth-century cultural criticism and the cultural critic associates associate literature with emotions and non-rational cognitive operations (Butter 2007: 4, FN 3 whereas philosophy and forms of cultural criticism are seen as exemplifying a sort of meta-perspective. . This meta-perspective also participates in the normalisation of certain hegemonic discourse-practices and ideals. In the case of the Protestant Ascendancy these hegemonic ideals originate "far from Cullymoref, […] in London or the Home Counties of England" (HC 11). [192] Therefore, "intellectual[s]" (HC 17) like Thornton occupy a meta-position,

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[192] For a detailed discussion of the ideals of nineteenth century Victorian cultural politics and discourses and its imbrications with colonialist politics, see Said (1994a).

whose rationality is presented as superior because of both its association with culture in the narrow sense. The narrator implicitly associates culture (which the narrator implicitly associates with belonging to a racialised and cultural elite (HC 17). In turn, he invests this elite with an emotionally-charged air of "mysteries" (HC 16). Chris McCool presents the "muscular Protestantism" (HC 10) he associates with Henry Thornton and the latter's approval as with the confirmation of his own "aspirational structure" (Dyer 2017: 80). This structure also perfectly replicates the colonialist ideological geography of colonialism: the colonial centre and its representatives are equated with positive associations and values; the text by Thornton quoted above already associates Protestantism with rationality, culture, and literacy (the passage on Henry Thornton's conception of subjectivity is quoted by Chris from a book, rather than a conversation (HC 11)). The quote represents Protestants as persons of the mind, rather than the body, which the narrator. The narrator clearly considers this a positive trait and he constantly impresses this assessment upon readers by emphasising Thornton's academic title (HC 2) as well as the older man's status as an intellectual, that is a person who uses their advanced degree to influence society; thus, Chris also identifies Henry Thornton as the representative of the positive part in a Manichean order (Fanon 2001 [1961]: 28 - 31), the party that is associated with the "triumph of the mind".

According to the binarisms of the Manichean allegory, the colonial project is imagined as a liminal phenomenon engaged in at the outskirts of "civilization". The imperialist hegemony represents the colony as a world "that has not (yet) been domesticated by European signification or codified in detail by its ideology. […] Motivated by his desire to conquer and dominate, the imperialist configures the colonial realm as a confrontation based on differences in race, language, social customs, cultural values and modes of production" (JanMohamed 1985: 64). Henry Thornton's attitude towards the Catholic Irish population exactly reproduces this schema, turning religion into a racialised marker of absolute difference: "Consequently, to him [= Henry Thornton, MTW], all Catholics were to be apprehended as unreasonable and quite hysterical – as the creatures of their own effeminate imaginations – the banshees" (HC 11). Imagined as a complete Other and defined by the traits the "muscular Protestant character" (HC 10) abjects in himself – femininity, the body, and non-rational cognitive processes are the three evidenced in the preceding quote – Catholic Irishness thus constitutes a dejected state of being that is perceived as static and incapable of change. Conversely, Protestantism, as presented by Chris Mc Cool, also constitutes a closed system of reference in which the genealogical (belonging to

"verifiably Protestant stock" (HC 2)) neatly maps unto the material and functional (it ensures membership in the gentry and access to culturally influential occupations), which in turn ensure the maintenance of a hegemony based on the ideals propagated by and for "the Home Counties" (HC 17)). As presented and embodied by Henry Thornton, the Manichean allegory of English colonialism seems to be hermetically sealed against any and all forms of contingency, narrowly conceived as epistemological and accidental contingency only and hence solely deemed a force of chaos and destruction . At first glance, it seems as if the subjectivity of Protestant Irishness propagated by the narrator exemplifies all the features of bio-political propriety as defined by Roberto Esposito in his discussion of the "immunitarian" (Esposito 2011: *passim*) discourse: However, the very confluence of biological and cultural principles and the philosophy of subjectivity – the adjective *propre* in French designates something that is unique to a particular individual, highlighting the inbraiding of conceptions of property, propriety and individual subjectivity active in Western thought since the establishment of Roman law (which defines the proper individual subject as a male who owns property while not being another's property) (Esposito 2011: 26) – also furnishes a point of entry for the very Other it seeks to exclude. Thus, Thornton's sense of self and the Manichean allegory it is both sustained by prove constitutively contingent. Firstly, returning to the above passage Chris quotes emphasises that an "autonomous ego formation" (HC 10) must be "defended" (HC 10) against the incursions of its Other; hence, this choice of metaphor implies both that the Other is not completely devoid of agential potential and that the hegemonic form is not statically and universally positioned in the centre; instead, both are imagined as locked in perpetual war (Wilderson 2010: 23-29, 43, 54-55). Incidentally, by imagining the "Protestant" hegemony as in need of defence, Thornton's statement subtly implies that his own association with the British Empire is on the wane and is no longer the defining influence in Irish cultural politics. Invoking the imagery of war connects the "muscular Protestant subject" (HC 10) to the first early modern articulation of individual subjectivity, the Hobbesian "war of all against all" (cf. Cohen 2009: 87 - 91). Hobbes locates the natural state of humanity in the perpetual conflict of individual subjects against all other individual subjects; thus, everybody is defined through their difference from others and their ability to overcome and subjugate others to their will. Hence, Ed Cohen argues that the concept of subjectivity is intimately tied to ideals of immunitarian defence (Cohen 2009: 1-22 and *passim*).[193] However,

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[193] This metaphor of struggle and non-negotiable difference is also implied in the phrase the passage uses to describe an individual subject: the term "ego formation" hints at the Freudian division between psychological forces, where

this immunitarian logic itself also has a more complex dimension: operating at the level of the organism, the immune system as such also exists to defend an organism from potentially dangerous organisms, which may be external or in some cases originate from the organism itself (Esposito 2011: 169-171; Cohen 2009: 1-31, 269 - 281); however, in order to be capable of such acts of defence, the immune system must be exposed to these outside influences, so the appropriate antigens can be produced in the first place. Hence, the immunitarian principle needs to be implicated in constant processes of negotiation to remain functional: it is based on the "constant need to redefine the threshold in life that distinguishes what is inside from what is outside" (Agamben 2017: 109). Thus, the viability of the body's defence mechanisms depends on the body maintaining contact with the potential attackers (Esposito 2011: 18); biologically as well as socially, a functioning organism is thus characterised by the mediation of immunitarian and communitarian principles – it is heteronomously autonomous.

Conversely, if the organism is "at all times […] secured against both its own passions and the invasions of others" (HC 10), it risks turning on itself, the immune system being transformed into an auto-immune disease (Esposito 2011: 17). In keeping with this turning upon itself, the Thorntons die "quite unexpectedly" (HC 14) and "some complicated wrangling in the family over the will" (HC 14) indicates that the "symbology of blood" (Foucault 1983: 143) from which the narrator derives his praise of Thornton as a proper – in all senses of the term discussed above – Protestant subject has been exposed as contingent and non-viable by the text as a whole.

This non-viability is also highlighted by the second logical deduction readers are invited to make from the presentation of Henry Thornton's ideal of subjectivity. As noted above, his defensive and abjecting account of the self as an ego formation explicitly includes the injunction to defend it against an individual subject's "own passions" (HC 10) and to focus instead on their "rational self-interest" (HC 10).[194]   Hence, readers may assume that this man is unlikely to have had a

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the ego as the conscious and self-aware rational part of the mind is separated from both the id and unconscious drives, which are closely entwined with the somatic component of experience (Freud 1995: 631 - 637) and the super ego, the power of which derives from internalised cultural prescriptions (Freud 1995: 642 - 644). Hence, the ego, the id and the super-ego all either reproduce or engage with prescriptions, images and discourse that have their source in something that originates beyond the borders of the ego formation. , Respectively, this phrase shows that the ego cannot exist independently, without reference to the other two components of the mind (Freud 1995: 651 - 658).

[194] The dangers of Henry Thornton's approach to emotions are also signalled by the intertextual echoes of the Thornton family name. It recalls the name of John Thornton, the male main character and Northern English industrialist in Elizabeth Gaskell's novel *North and South* (1854/1855).Like Henry Thornton, John Thornton begins the novel considering his workers nothing more than a means to his own, more abstract, ends (to wit, profit). Just like Henry Thornton in McCabe's novel, John also marries a woman from the south of England who was raised in

particularly strong or affectionate relationship to Chris. This in turn furnishes a potential explanation for the narrator-protagonist's uncertainty over Thornton's response to news of his achievements. It also seems to explain why Chris McCool refers to Thornton as "Father" (HC 2), rather than continuing to use the more affectionately familiar "dad" (HC 2). A functionalist description and way of conduct within the sphere of the family, which has been imagined as expressive of a "subjectivity of intimacy" (Reckwitz 2010: 57) would probably suit an individual subject who considers emotions dangerous and whose image of rationality limits its scope to the reduction of other individual subjects to instruments serving that individual subject's ends, respectively abjecting them to Others that exist beyond the borders of subjectivity and humanity. At the same time, however, Henry Thornton's lack of emotional engagement with Chris McCool – who readers are invited to think of as his son in the first chapter – disrupts the sentimentalist narratives of paternalist care that shape post-colonialist assumptions regarding the ability of colonised peoples to govern themselves (cf. Lowe 2015: 113 - 118); It problematises the ideological foundations of sentimentalism and reveals how sentimentalism as an ideology often obscures how "instrumentalist reason" (Horkheimer) intertwines with bio-political principles to ensure that the Protestant gentry accumulates and maintains both superior material wealth and the cultural hegemony in Ireland .Furthermore, sentimentalism also subtends and supports the colonial racialised order of things and the bio-political discourses of family and intimacy that imagine the descent of families, communities and ultimately racialised social groups as co-extensive and mutually indexically referential (Weinbaum 2004: 34-39. 59). That is, individual subjects are affectively joined together in a family, which is part of a community that, in turn, belongs to a racialised and nationalised group of communities. Sentiment thus forms one of the

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„London and the Home Counties" (HC 11) – Margaret Hale. As Margaret's telling last name implies, Thornton's falling in love with Margaret allows him to ultimately come to recognise the workers in his cotton mills as fellow human beings and their complaints as justified. Gaskell's romance ultimately appeals to the genealogical and sentimentalist conception of heterosexual love and the family that underwrites colonialism and racism (Stoler 1995: 95-164; Hartman 1997: 84,-93, 155-161)to heal the intra-English conflicts between north and south caused by the First Industrial Revolution. As we shall see, no such healing is even possible in McCabe's novel; the marriage of Henry and Lady Thornton and the events surrounding Chris's conception and birth rather function like the dysfunctional mirror of Gaskell's narrative. In so doing, *The Holy City* exposes the ways in which the tropes and discursive conventions used in *North and South* were used to sustain and perpetuate English imperialism as well as the violence (physical, psychological and symbolic) they simultaneously obscure, normalise, and effect. It exposes the contingency of the structures the earlier novel stabilises. As the analysis below shows, both this contingency and the violence of colonialism literally come to be embodied in Chris McCool and his mental condition. I thank Prof. Dr. Caroline Lusin of the University of Mannheim for reminding me of the connection between McCabe and Gaskell's novel.

ideological foundations of a racialised hegemony. Hence, the lack of an affective bond between Chris McCool and Henry Thornton already hints at the instability of the colonialist immunitarian ideology of community the Protestant Ascendancy builds its ideological hegemony on. Indeed, the hold of these affective entanglements is further weakened by another prominent gap in the narrator-protagonist's account of his family life: Chris initially tells readers only about his father, not about his mother. On the one hand, this prefigures his pervasive misogyny and interest in homosocial relationships (most prominently, Chris' obsession with Marcus Otoyo, which we will discuss in detail below). On the other, this gap also signals the failure and contingency of the ideology of sentimentalism colonialist discourses propagate and which Chris wishes to embrace. According to this ideology, motherhood and sentimentalist femininity form the keystone of their ideological edifice around family life and proper intimacy – a discursive construct that simultaneously sustains forms of degradation through elevation (Stoler1995: 119, 134- 135).

8.3 Chris and/As the Embodied Contingency of Narratives of Irishness

Overall, so far Chris' narrative still suggests that his relationship with Henry Thornton accords with the patriarchal assumption that biological paternity maps unto cultural paternity and that Chris thus continues the Thornton line even if the idealised third component – the affective relationship introduced and emphasised in post-Enlightenment forms of intimate subjectivity – is weakened or absent in this particular relationship. Hence, Chris' designating Thornton as "dear old dad" (HC 2) and his constant emphasising of the other man's achivement may at first appear nothing more than attempt to re-inscribe himself into the affective economics of whiteness and the Protestant hegemony.

However, the narrator-protagonist soon admits that his initial representation of his family structures and their affective economics has not just "undervalued" (Phearson and Martin 1999: 89) but has in fact "underreported" (Phelan and Martin 1999: 90) them:

They could possibly have influenced him [=Henry Thornton], who can tell? *To the extent that he might have come to regard me as a perfectly reasonable and valid human being. Not to mention his son and heir.* Sired though I was at the back of a barn by a representative of that despicable breed, which he loved with all his being, and routinely defined as 'Catholic scum' [single quotation marks in original and my emphasis, MTW] (HC 3).

The above quote indicates that Henry Thornton is not Chris McCool's biological father at all and that Chris McCool's very embodiment, his very existence, destabilises the bio-political assumptions upon which definitions of Irishness – whether those propagated by the British and the Protestant Ascendancy prior and during the independence movement or those of Irish

nationalists after Irish independence – are based. As Martin McLoone, explains the Irish nationalism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, constructed Irishness as unique (McLoone 2000: 12) and defined it "against its 'other' [single quotation marks in original, MTW]" (McLoone 2000: 12). McLoone elaborates this anti-Britishness of Irish cultural nationalism further by analysing its relationship and commitment to a pastoralised, idealised rural identity formation:

Whatever its positive attributes, crucially Irish identity was not British. […] In its fundamental principles, cultural nationalism defined Gaelic Irish identity as essentially rural in character. […] This commitment to a rural economy was, in a real sense, a flight from modernity itself, understandable, perhaps, if modernity was associated only with the colonial exploitation of British imperialism as it inevitably was in post-Famine Ireland. (McLoone 2000: 12, 18).

Together with a strict focus on and interest in the consolidation of farming land and the hereditary titles to said land, whichsought to tightly ontrol extramarital sexual relations and female sexuality in general propagated by a Catholic Church with intimate ties to the popular faith of rural populations (McLoone 2000: 21 -22), the above paragraph highlights that identical bio-political mappings held sway on both sides of the Irish colonial divide: For British imperialists and anti-imperialist nationalists (whether Irish or otherwise) alike, the nation is generally constituted by a common imagined hereditary origin, which is in turn materialised through efforts on the part of the state to ensure the continued effectiveness of the nationalist "symbology of blood" (Foucault 1983:).[195] In keeping with Homi K. Bhabha's famous twinning of "[n]ation and [n]arration" (Bhabha 1990), narrations and nations are thus intertwined and both shape how the fact of human natality is interpreted; each "imagined community" (Anderson 2016: 6, 7) created and maintained by nationalist discourses assumes that it addresses a homogenous group who then transmits this homogeneity to future generations, both discursively and biologically. Narration writes the nation that forms natality in its own image, and natality then begets the nation according to this image. Alys Eve Weinbaum calls this twinning the "race-reproduction bind" (Weinbaum 2004: 5, 5-13) and analyses how this assumption leads to racist and racialised discourse-practices throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Gradually, the narrator reveals that the very act of his conception and thus the very fact of his embodiment disrupt the immunitarian logic of the "race-reproduction bind" (Weinbaum 2004: 5). He is the "issue" (HC 11) of extramarital sex between a Catholic man and a woman who is

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[195] For a detailed examination of Foucault's bio-political theories in a colonialist context, see Stoler (1995: 19 – 94 and *passim*).

married to a member of the Protestant Ascendancy (and whose accent (HC 11) at the very least suggests that she was educated according to English notions of propriety, if she is not in fact herself of British – as opposed to Protestant Ascendancy Irish – heritage). Chris' very existence thus disrupts the ideals of natality that shape both of Ireland's communities in their position on the question of Irishness. Strikingly, the narrator-protagonist himself concurs with discourse-practices that view his existence as an example of accidental contingency that pollutes the proper subjectivity of Protestant masculinity: Chris approvingly reports Thornton describing his biological father in terms that deny the other man his individuality and his humanity: as "a member of that breed" (HC 3), Stanislaus Carbarry is described in ways that emphasise his animality in general and his sexuality — in particular. Stan's sexuality is in turn reduced to the act of copulation. Furthermore, the intercourse that results in Chris' birth takes place in "a barn" (HC 11); thus Chris' conception is again associated with rural and animal spaces. Furthermore, the whole event is associated with uncontrolled physicality and animality. Both of these spheres of life are abjected in Henry Thornton's account of ideal subjectivity (HC 10). The text as a whole thus already hints at Chris' later autoimmunitarian investment in his own annihilation (HC 57) and his wishing for his own non-existence.

The more concrete place where the Stan and Lady Thornton had intercourse -"at the back" (HC 11) - further underscores the illicit nature of the sex act itself, as it implies that it took place away from public scrutiny, a choice on the part of the lovers that hints at awareness that their being together, were it to become known in the community, would be met with social ostracism and abjection rather than approbation and approval. Indeed, the fact that the initial descriptions of Chris' conception either makes no mention of Chris' mother, focusing only on the individual subject who "sired" (HC 11) him or considers her as the passive receptacle of a "penetration by one of them" (HC 11) further signals Chris' identification with patriarchal forms of masculinity and his attendant misogyny.

On first reading Chris' description of his conception, the narrator's choice of words invites readers to potentially consider the sexual actions that led to Chris' birth not just transgressive and potentially illicit but as illegal. In this reading, the intercourse between Stan and Lady Thornton does not just result from a form or a degree of physical desire the narrative voice codes as excessive (in its very physicality) and thus as "vile" (HC 11) and something from which one needs to distance oneself by using terms such as "congress" (HC 11), which connote simultaneously rational detachment and ethical disapproval. Instead, Chris becomes the

straightforward result of rape. As a crime, the actions of Chris' biological parents (especially his father) would then fall within the purview of the law, an immunising discourse" (Esposito 2011: 21) and delimits the borders of a socially acceptable sphere of discourse-practices. Reading his existence through this combined socio-juridical lens turns Chris McCool into an extra-judicial phenomenon, a liminal modern *homo sacer* in the Agambian sense (Agamben 2017: 10) along three different axes, all three of which are also inbraided with each other: the legal, the religious and the social: Chris' existence makes both their accidental and epistemological contingency starkly visible:

Firstly, as far as the law is concerned, the fact that a child was conceived in an illegal act (whether the conception was rape or adultery) results in there existing an embodied vestige of the act even after it has been adjudicated. As the law cannot undo the child's birth – and may in fact be obliged to protect the child's best interests in light of their innocence, in keeping with the law's own ideological self-conception (Loick 2017b: 9) – it is also obliged to leave a reminder of the crime that has been committed. But this incarnated reminder additionally constantly signifies that the immunitarian purpose and function of the law is always incomplete and contingent. The child's very existence shows that the law could not undo the breach of communal integrity against it is meant to guard a community. Having been breached once, the community is now exposed to the threatening awareness that its immunitarian apparatus can be breached again and thus that the safety of the community is contingent rather than absolute. The child of a rape thus constitutes an embodied legal paradox for the community.

This paradoxical position of the law when it comes to the patriarchal regulation of female sexuality is particularly evident in the law codes of the Irish Free State (which would have been asked to adjudicate the rape of Lady Thornton): They emphasised the "natural and primary function [of women] as wife and mother" (Beaumont 1997: 568) in accordance with Catholic social doctrine and the foundations of the Irish state in Irish cultural nationalism (McLoone 2000: 21). In keeping with Catholic doctrine at the time, the Free State also forbade abortions and the use of contraceptive materials (Beaumont 1997: 571). Thus, the imbrication of cultural and religious discourses that shapes the law in Ireland and the imagination of Henry Thornton (respectively that of Chris McCool) forbids all means women might use to express any kind of active or self-determined sexuality.[196]

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[196] The role of the Catholic Church in the juridico-social life of Ireland is also illustrated by the fact that the men who bring Chris to the psychiatric hospital after the events in the church, are accompanied by the canon:" Canon Burgess

Considering the emphasis the narrator places on Thornton's abjecting attitude towards "Catholic scum" (HC 3), readers might conclude that he would object to the Irish cultural nationalist image of sexuality and perhaps deliberately contravene its precepts and integrate the child of his wife's sexual actions into his own household and family. However, when it comes to the maintenance of patriarchal privileges and the "sexual contract" (Pateman 1988: *passim*), both nationalists and the Ascendancy gentry act according to the same principles. Carole Pateman's phrase describes the assumption underlying classical political contract theory that women cannot be independent (sexual or political) agents but must be defined by the authority (and the authoritative actions) of a male individual subject. According to the narrator, both Henry Thornton and Stanislaus Carberry concur with this assumption even as they simultaneously affirm their antipathy towards each other by appealing to these self-same principles. The text as a whole thus shows that patriarchal forms of masculinity are part of the unexamined deep structure of both Irish nationalism and British imperialism in spite of their surface antagonism:

When he learns that a child has been born from his wife's "vile congress" (HC 11) with the "accountant looking like a labourer" (HC 182), the master of Thornton Manor "inform[s] her [=his wife, MTW] if she ever so much as looked in my [= Chris', MTW] direction, or associated my [=Chris', MTW] despicable existence 'in any way' with the big house, she would end up disgraced. She would die on the road like her Fenian friends during the famine [single quotation marks in original, MTW]" (HC 11). Notably, Chris does not report Lady Thornton responding to her husband's injunctions in any way. Throughout her son's narrative of her condemnation, she instead remains invisible, her individual subjectivity and agency obscured by her husband's judgement. What is more, Lady Thornton seemingly assents to her husband's decree to remove her son from the material and social orbit of the manor, to "make sure that he never darkens the door of this house, never sets his foot across our threshold [, and to][n]ever ever even dare to

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had accompanied them, providing, I suppose, the requisite moral authority" (HC 23). Similarly, it also helps to explain Chris attacking a man whom he mistakes for "a priest" (HC 71) during his stay in the psychiatric hospital: he imagines his victim and Chris' attending psychiatrist to be talking and laughing about what he considers Dr. Mukti's deception of him (HC 71). Hence, according to the logic of propriety discussed above, Chris perceives their actions as collusions by the medical and religious branches of the immunitarian discourse (Esposito 2011: 51 – 79, 112 - 165) to mark him as a "freak" (HC 203), a "non-person" (Esposito 2013: 140). In Chris' own mind, the attack thus constitutes an act of self-defence. This line of thinking illustrates that modern ideals of individual subjectivity and individuality are built on a logic of defence (Cohen 2009: 28 - 31). For readers and the text as a whole, however, it also shows how immunity and immune defence can collapse into an auto-immune response and lead to an indiscriminate destruction and killing of every thing and everyone that (potentially) endangers the self and its statically-conceived self-image.

bring him inside the gates [or] I'll [= her husband, MTW] see you walk the roads of this country for the humiliation *that bastard Carbarry* has visited upon *me* [=Henry Thornton, MTW] [my emphasis, MTW]" (HC 14) without objection, but the audience never sees any verbal or emotional hint of the form this assent takes. Despite the association of women with the management of sentiment in patriarchal discourses (Berlant 2008), the narrator-protagonist leaves his mother an emotional and physical blank with no responses of her own, except as they relate to his own imaginary relationship to her in his dreams and fantasies. Her "discrete" (HC 11) conduct as a "proper Protestant" (HC 11) woman here collapses into a blank, object-like status. This object-like status once again prefigures he auto-immune dangers of Chris' ideal form of subjectivity: a capacity for emotional engagement with the world and a recognition of the differently- embodied being of other individual subjects is the foundation of the most basic form of community, what Jean-Luc Nancy calls "being-in-common" (Nancy 1991: 57). But the narrator-protagonist remains silent on any way this scene could have become a dialogue between two equal individual subjects.

Instead, the narrator clearly identifies solely with Henry Thornton and participates in the objectification of his mother by the "male gaze" (Mulvey 2010: 2088). When describing her sexual relations with Stan for the first time, the narrator takes up (and encourages readers to take up) the position of the cuckolded husband over and against both his biological parents. "How he must have reacted to the penetration of his wife by 'one of them' can only be imagined [single quotation marks in original, MTW]" (HC 11). Chris' choice of words implies that he specifically imagines Henry Thornton to have experienced strongly negative emotions of anger and revulsion upon hearing news of the event. Considering the model of subjectivity Thornton propagates in the narrative, the very fact that Chris can guess at Thornton's emotions signifies that Chris' conception disrupts the particular mapping of epistemology onto agency that Henry Thornton's sense of self depends on. Once again, Chris imagines his very existence and the fact of his embodiment as an eruption of contingency that ought not to have happened – and would not have done so in a world the narrator-protagonist considers ideal. The wording of the passage itself reflects this belief: when Chris speaks of himself as "issue" (HC 11); this phrase reduces him to a cluster of cells and denies him a human shape and form. The narrator makes no effort to inscribe himself into a subjectivity that is set in partial opposition to Henry Thornton's (by designating himself as a "child", for example, and thus asserting a basic form of subjectivity against the de-humanising "issue" (HC 11)).

8.4 Gender and Natality: Lady Thornton, Dimpie McCool and the Ghost of a „Third Way" (M. Seel) Beyond the Catholic-Protestant Dichotomy

Instead, as implied above the narrator-protagonist considers himself an incarnated epistemological problem and identifies positively with his own de-individualisation and death (or rather "non-being" as he wishes to never have been born). Chris McCool thus acts as an extreme and liminal example of embodied contingency. Whereas all the other characters analysed in this thesis assert some form of agency and a concomitant right to live over and against discourse-practices that seek to marginalise and kill them, he concurs with the hegemony's desire to marginalise and kill him. The narrator's desire for self-annihilation serves as an extreme example of how discourse-practices inscribe themselves into an individual subject's embodied engagement with both the world and themselves. As we shall see presently, in Chris' case this inscription leads to a mental breakdown and institutionalisation and blinds Chris to the creative potential for inclusion offered by other discourse-practices circulating in the community.

The clearest articulation of Chris' affective investment in his suicide and annihilation occurs during his stay in the so-called "White Room" (HC 57) after his attack on the visitor to the asylum whom Chris mistakes for a priest.[197] While in the room, his mind returns to the event of his conception: "I couldn't stop wishing Stan Carberry hadn't interfered with my mother. I wished more than anything that he'd left her alone. Why did he have to go and do that – bring her out to the barn that night?" (HC 57). Even in the privacy of his own mind, Chris McCool is incapable of thinking and naming his conception; "that" as a deictic marker slides along a chain of signifiers and cannot be fixed to a particular signified or form of individual subjectivity either by the narrator, the text as a whole, or indeed the reader. Chris' choice of expression reveals that he cannot conceptualise or live any form of individual subjectivity allows for forms of creative

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[197] It is likely that the „White Room" (HC 57) is in fact a padded cell to keep patients in solitary confinement. As such, it probably also reduces sensory experience in a variety of ways: the padding reduces impact and may muffle sound, thereby reducing the sensory acuteness of the occupant's hearing. Furthermore, consistent exposure to white as the only colour may render a person blind over time. Hence, the "White Room" (HC 57) showcases the dangers of de-individualisation and de-sensitisation (and hence a loss of the embodied phenomenological engagement with the world (Merleau-Ponty 1974: 93) upon which ideologies of whiteness as a racialised category (Dyer 2017: 14) rely for their (self-) definition). For a detailed and extremely well-informed reading of Chris' stay in the white room as a critique of ideologies of whiteness, see Heinz 2014. Additionally, the room also acts as an intertextual echo of the "Red Room" in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) But whereas the Red Room endows Jane with the means to construct her own individual subjectivity (cf. Griffiths 2008: 62-66), Chris is never challenged to give up his desire for death during his stay in the White Room. Again, I thank Professor Dr. Caroline Lusin of the University of Mannheim for pointing out this intertextual connection.

engagement with others and the world. Chris categorically and ontologically forbids himself to become a creative subject (Reckwitz 2010: 441). Some lines below the quote given above, he explicitly addresses his inability to live his individual subjectivity creatively despite his wishing to do so: "Why could I not be like everyone in the sixties, I asked myself […]?" (HC 57).

The text as a whole partly answers this question by illustrating the narrator-protagonist's inability to creatively adapt the discourse-practices that circulate in Cullymore to his own life. Instead Chris insists on making all different individual subjects and discourse-practices he encounters fit the binary model of subjectivity he has constructed for himself. As the emergent "creative subject" (Reckwitz 2010: 441) of the counter-culture emphasises the recognition of a plethora of potential subject positions as equal (Reckwitz 2010: 463-468), respectively ties its own recognition of proper subjectivity to the ability to creatively combine or adapt discourse-practices taken from different sources (Reckwitz 2010: 461-462), Chris in fact embodies a form of subjectivity the creative subject associates with its anti-subject. The text as a whole emphasises this by making the choices Chris McCool makes in his life explicitly result in harm and death for other individual subjects that come into contact with him.

One of the primary dangers of Chris' sense of subjectivity as shown in the text is his objectification of other individual subjects, particularly female individual subjects: when Chris narrates Henry Thornton's reaction to the news of his conception, for example, the way he presents the scene emphasises and empathises with Henry Thornton and his position of power and hegemony: Thornton argues that his wife has been abused and hence sullied because her "autonomous [Protestant] ego formation" (HC 10) has been "penetrated" (HC 11) – and thus breached and compromised – by "one of them [single quotation marks omitted, MTW]" (HC 11). As discussed above, Lady Thornton herself remains silent. Strikingly, although he sees "that bastard Carberry" (HC 14) as the source and instigator of "the humiliation" (HC 16) and social ostracism that is now associated with his family, Henry Thornton only considers himself the victim of this act and its consequences ("the humiliation that bastard Carberry has visited upon *me* [my emphasis, MTW]" (HC 16)). The fact that it is Lady Thornton whose sexual and bodily autonomy has been violated never occurs to either Henry Thornton or Chris McCool. All that matters is the relationship between Carberry and Thornton – she is but an externalised object of social exchange between the men.

In this imaginary scenario, the sexual relationship between Lady Thornton and Stan Carberry provides an example of Gayle Rubin's traffic in women (Rubin 2004), albeit one rendered in a

negative key: Rubin famously argues that women in patriarchal societies act as a medium of exchange to create and maintain relationships between men (Rubin 2004: 778-779). Although the relationship between Henry Thornton and Stan Carberry is one of hate, rather than affection, the master of Thornton Manor and Chris' biological father still use Lady Thornton as the means of transaction in their libidinal economy. Her symbolising this relationship between the two men also explains why she is the individual subject to be punished to eradicate and mark "the humiliation" (HC 16) of Henry Thornton by Stan Carberry. Furthermore the form this punishment takes reproduces the association of women with the home and domestic spaces: "I will see you walk the roads of this country […] [.] […] She would die on the road like her peasant Fenian friends during the famine" (HC 16, 11). Henry Thornton's verdicts regarding both Lady Thornton's and Chris' separate fates after her transgression answer it with an expulsion. Chris is barred from making the manor his home in the first place (HC 11). His mother is threatened with expulsion from a space coded as an extension of prelapsarian Eden in classical eighteenth and nineteenth-century Gothic texts (Ferguson Ellis 1989: 7- 8) and essentialised as female and belonging to the coloniser's "civilised spaces" in a colonialist or imperialist context (Stoler1995; McClintock 1995: 167-169). The association of non-domestic spaces with death and movement (that is, the denial of any kind of semi-sedentary existence and quasi-permanent community) further highlights the Manichean allegory at play in Thornton's imaginary geography and its mapping of power relations with which we began this analysis. This is also evidenced by Thornton's invoking the famine – the principle moment of colonial abuse of power and "exploitation" (McLoone 2000: 18) and proof of colonial abuses in the discourses of Irish cultural nationalism (McLoone 2000: 18). Lady Thornton's silence throughout the scene may at first glance appear as her assenting to nineteenth-century rules regulating her life in the mid-twentieth century. After all it was the late-bourgeois culture of subjectivity that particularly associates femininity with passivity and quietness, emotional restraint, and silence. (Reckwitz 2010: 264-265).

In keeping with the masculinist alliance between the two men in Lady Thornton's life, Stan Carberry also focuses only on his own actions during their intercourse, casting her as passive and inert. Carberry boats that he managed to "breach the city" (HC 183) and to "tear the fucking gates down" (HC 183). By comparing Lady Thornton to a city, he also objectifies her and simultaneously narrows the potential ambiguity and the oscillation between rape and seduction that had characterised earlier depictions of their sexual encounter. This includes Stan's own

report of the conversation that took place before the sexual encounter, in which Lady Thornton is (for the first and only time) allowed to speak (HC 183). The words that Stan reports articulate her sexual frustration with Henry Thornton ("it's like making love to a statue", HC 183); she instead praise the "warm[th]" (HC 183) of Catholics. Lady Thornton's pleading with Carberry to take her "away" (HC 183) on the one hand emphasise that she wants a different life for herself; on the other hand, however, Lady Thornton presents herself as passive and as conforming to the patriarchal gender binary (Reckwitz 2010: 264 - 265) in her need to eulogise Carberry as her male saviour that will "take [her] away" (HC 183). Notably, the passage thus retains the binary oppositions that govern Henry Thornton's views of how his wife should conduct herself. Imagining the woman as a city that can be breached or raped ("rape | Definition of rape in English by Oxford Dictionaries" website, verb meaning 2) not only denies her any kind of agency, it assumes that Lady Thornton's sense of self is built around notions of complete autonomy and thus evokes imagery (both as it relates to semantic field of war and the image of the city itself) that is intimately tied to immunitarian discourses (Cohen 2009: 28 – 31, 87- 90). This seemingly runs counter to Stan's denial of the "mysteries" (HC 182) that his son associates with Protestantism: at the beginning of the scene, he argues the social status of the Protestant Ascendancy is a result of material factors based on "money and class" (HC 182) – which can be lost (in the case of money) and change (the class one belongs to may do so as one's fortunes increase or decrease, which may result in change of an individual subject's habitus over time) – and is thus epistemologically contingent and not an innate quality that is incarnated in every individual subject and their embodiment by virtue of their blood (Foucault 1983: 142 - 144) or other essentialist modes of racialisation. Instead, Stan Carberry points to the political origins of racialisation and their being used to manage individual subjects to enable the perpetuation of particular politico-economic relations (cf. Weheliye 2014: 74 - 88).

However, despite these elements of critique in the passage above, the scene for the most part reproduces the same views on sexuality and embodiment (as well as their racialisation) that Henry Thornton espouses. Firstly, Stan describes himself as an "accountant who looks like a labourer" (HC 182) – a description that indicates that he identifies himself as an individual subject through his body and that he associates this body with concrete physical and manual labour rather than the 'more abstract' mental work of an accountant; additionally, Stan's self-evaluation itself reproduces the structural anti-modernism of Irish cultural nationalism described by McLoone (McLoone 2000: 18). Furthermore, his description of the sex act as "slipp[ing] her a

bit of pipe" (HC 182) once again reproduces Henry Thornton's association of Catholics with materiality and inanimate objects.

As humans use animacy to construct hierarchies of subjectivity and ethical responsibility (Chen 2012: 27, 43), Stan's associating his moment of absolute autonomy with both an act of domination and a non-animate object problematises the events he narrates in three inbraided ways: firstly, like Henry Thornton's monadic model of subjectivity, Stan's autonomy in the act of procreation hinges upon the passivity (and thus the partial objectification of) Lady Thornton. Secondly, however, because he describes himself as partially inanimate and non-human, Stan also participates in his own de-personalisation and illustrates the reach and explanatory power of colonialist discourses. They shape even the identities of those that seek to supplant them. The anti-British position of Irish cultural nationalism itself depends on a definition of Britishness as its anti-subject (Reckwitz 2010: 178) and thus maintains the centrality of the former hegemonic position as the "onto-theological" signifier (Derrida 2016 [1967]: 11) of its own discourse-practices.

Even more strikingly, Stan's triumphant account of his sexual encounter with Lady Thornton reproduces the transcendental undertones of Dyer's account of the role of women in racialised discourses of whiteness. As Dyer notes, while men are presumed by these discourses to still be prone to their controlled and self-aware relationship to their bodies being disrupted and "taint[ed] [my omission of single quotation marks, MTW]" (Dyer 2017: 28) by reminders (or remainders) of their bodily materiality (Dyer 2017: 28). Conversely, white women are encouraged to transcend even these constraints by becoming virtually sexless (Dyer 2017: 29) and are thus imagined to act as guardians of men and the "race" (Dyer 2017: 29) against the dangers of sexuality (which are also simultaneously abjected and racialised as non-white by way of the colour associated with them) (Dyer 2017: 29).[198] Keeping this in mind, Stan's description of the sexual encounter with Lady Thornton combines elements of a fall (by describing her relatively direct reference to her own sexual frustration and her pleading with a man to commit adultery with her, HC 183) with imagery connoting sexual innocence ("One wee tickle" (HC 183) seemingly was enough to bring Lady Thornton to orgasm). Even more importantly, even though

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[198] For a detailed discussion of the racialisation of Blackness in particular and its marking of an ontological antagonism relative to Whiteness, see Hartman 1997, Wilderson 2010; Sexton 2008; Spillers 2003, and Warren 2018. These and other Afro-Pessimist thinkers also provide the inspiration for my subsequent analysis of Chris' relationship to Marcus Otoyo.

he earlier assures Chris that there is no transcendental component, no "myster[y]" (HC 182) to Protestant embodiment, Stan still uses a strongly racialised and sacralised metaphor to describe Lady Thornton's orgasm: "didn't she go and let out the sacred light" (HC 183). Hence, he too shares Henry Thornton's belief that proper white women are the keepers of a particular form of non-material sexuality; notably, they remain passive keepers and not active guardians (who can decide who to give access to this light and how much they want to release). Lady Thornton immediately loses all her self-control in response to active male intervention (the way Stan phrases the above sentence strongly implies the "tickle" (HC 183) is a heteroerotic act performed by him, rather than an auto-erotic one she performs on herself). Furthermore, the phrase "let out" (rather than, say, a more active verb like "release") implies that this was something the body did as a response to an overwhelming stimulus, a response that thus circumvents full cognitive awareness and exists rather under the purview of the somatic systems that regulate the body's continued existence. Thus, although it also illustrates the material agency of the body outside the realm of conscious awareness (and thereby argues for a more complex view of embodied subjectivity than the ideological conjoining of the Cartesian dualism to the Manichean allegory allows for), Stan's description again highlights the presumed passivity of feminine white individual subjects. Furthermore, Lady Thornton's passivity and the connotations of "let go", which emphasise the involuntariness of her actions and that she was overpowered by her own body, once again suggest that Chris' conception is a case of sexual coercion or rape, a breach of the immunitarian principles of Protestantism, rather than with an active agential choice by Chris' mother to abandon or circumvent these immunitarian ideals. Lady Thornton ultimately remains defined only by her passivity and her dependence on both Stan Carberry and Henry Thornton.

At first glance, the narrator-protagonist neither reports any objections by his mother to this treatment nor registers any unease at her treatment by her husband. He thus seems to concur with the objectification of women in the negotiation of relationships between and defined by men.[199] The text as a whole however problematises this perpetuation of late-bourgeois gender matrices in at least three ways: firstly, the narrator notes that Henry Thornton pronounces his decision that Chris be raised by Dimpie McCool "primarily, of course, to prevent the impending nervous collapse of my mother" (HC 16). Although Chris, in keeping with his idolisation of Henry Thornton, attempts to label this decision a "bout of largesse" (HC 16) and to thus suggest that

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[199] In part, this may be the result of the narrating-I's interpretation of his relationship to Dolly Mixtures and Marcus Otoyo, which will be discussed in greater detail below.

there existed some kind of positive emotional engagement between himself and Henry Thornton, the text as a whole suggests the decision may in fact have been a response under duress, a victory won by Chris' mother over her husband. And to win that victory, Lady Thornton uses the very attributes usually deployed to maintain the hierarchy of men and women. In deploying her condition to ensure that her son is at least cared for, she exemplifies the agential potential inherent in a politicised use of mental illness argued for by Thomas Szaz. Szaz positions individual subjects afflicted with mental illness as potentially capable of upsetting the political order of a given social system; as their existence showcases the epistemological contingency of the current hegemony and may potentially point to alternative arrangements of the social order (Szaz 1991). Lady Thornton's imminent mental collapse acts as an example of the threat of contingency that affects her husband's idealisation of an immunitarian and proper model of subjectivity Firstly, because it forces him to acknowledge his own emotional investment in the libidinal economy of male homosociality that connects him to Stan Carbarry. Furthermore, it also forces him to acknowledge her son's existence and to assign him a role in his own social universe, abject though it may be. Secondly, the threat of her scandal being externalised through its embodiment in Chris forces Henry Thornton to make a decision that renders the axiomatic assumptions of his own individual subjectivity epistemologically contingent: a man of "verifiably Protestant stock" (HC 2), he embodies a form of subjectivity in which the biological descent of a person both reflects and conditions their cultural heritage and habitus, respectively their (future) social position. As discussed above, Irish cultural nationalism and its equation of Irish Gaelic speakers with both (future) proper Irishness and the past of the nation as an "ancient civilisation", the continuance of which is assured through the pockets of native Gaelic speakers and mandatory Gaelic lessons for school children (McLoone 2000: 19-21) as well as its belief in the pastoral unity of the nation (McLoone 2000: 2) employs the same discourse-practices as its supposed Other.

In letting the child of his wife be raised by a Catholic, Henry Thornton scrambles the mapping of nature through and unto culture that unite the imperialist and the nationalist across their conflictual divide through the very act that seeks to re-institute the propriety of the old colonialist order (symbolised by the threat of "the famine" (HC 11), an event that is nearly a hundred years in the past at the time the scene takes place).[200] The child of a Catholic and a Protestant who will

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[200] Similarly, the very fact that Henry Thornton can threaten his wife with permanent expulsion from her home addresses the essentialising mechanisms (and hence their socio-political origin and contingency) of the association of

be raised by a cultural foster parent not related to either of his biological parents (and who also invests a third party, who is also not related to him by blood, with the affective role of a father (HC 3)) simultaneously showcases the contingency of an Irishness that is defined solely through the genealogical imagery of descent and culture, highlights the hybridity that characterises all engagement between the coloniser and the colonised (Bhabha 2004: 275 - 282), and imagines an Irishness beyond the static essentialised identities of "Protestant" and "Catholic" as a potential future. As will be discussed below, the text as a whole suggests that Chris McCool's embodying the contingency of all racialised narratives of Irishness points a way towards more communitarian and creative visions of community that potentially include both differently-embodied subjects and a global sense of Irishness. Unfortunately, Chris himself ultimately proves incapable of realising and enacting the potentials his very embodiment makes possible.

Thirdly, and most importantly, the narrator-protagonist deconstructs all the dynamics analysed in both the preceding conversation with Stan Carberry and in Henry Thornton's judgement regarding his fate: per Thornton's own words, the child is told to "never darken the door of this house [=Thornton Manor, MTW], never once set[] his foot across our threshold" (HC 16). Firstly, these pronouncements metonymically associate the home with subjectivity and light (thus evoking the discourses of purity, rationality and propriety that Western thought has attached to this image (Voß 2008: 205)), respectively equates darkness with Otherness and a literal outsider status (Voß 2008: 205) and embodies the latter in Chris; hence, they reproduce the mechanisms of the colonialist Manichean allegory discussed at the beginning of this chapter. However, the very words that Henry Thornton speaks reveal the scene evoked by his judgement to be fantastic and imagined: true to Thornton's decree, Chris grows up at the far corner of the estate under the guardianship of Dympna McCool, who teaches him "rustic authenticity" (HC 15). When we next see Chris visit Thornton Manor as an adult, he stands "outside on the porch" (HC 18) and looks in on the "high French windows" (HC 20); the house has begun to grumble and "[is] on its way to becoming a ruin" (HC 18). Just as Henry Thornton does in the preceding excerpt, Chis then metonymically connects the "Gothic" (HC 18) state of the house to the model of subjectivity espoused by Henry Thornton and attempts to suggest that it has been as overcome by the new creative subjectivity Chris associates with the "sixties" (HC 57) and wants to espouse himself (HC 57). Notably, Chris associates the grumbling manor metonymically with its last lord, Henry

women with domestic spaces and opens the potential to think non-domestic femininities that some characters in the chronologically later sections of the story (attempt to) actualise.

Thornton, whose face is said to be as "ashen" (HC 22) as the walls of his manor (HC 22) when he passes judgement on his wife and her child. It seems as if the formerly banished son has come back to mock the vanishing might that barred him from his inheritance. Some readers might be inclined to think that Chris McCool standing in front of Thornton has overcome the pull "muscular Protestantism" (HC 10) has on him, at least for a time.

The text as a whole immediately problematises such a triumphalist reading of Chris' return. Instead, his Chris' description of the derelict building strongly suggests that his earlier description of its interior (HC 2) does describe the real building at all, but rather describes a fantasy space built by Chris' psychological preoccupations, rather than existing in reality. Thornton Manor as described by the narrator-protagonist is at best a projection and at worst a delusion. This in turn strongly suggests that the conversations analysed above all constitute imagined spaces and relationships and created defined by Chris' psychological needs. If so they are not based on even indirect knowledge of these individual subjects in their embodied particularity. The text as a whole confirms this reading in the context of Chris' conversation with Stan Carberry. Their talk is preceded by Chris beginning to think that he has been hailed by a group of eggs he has seen in the market (HC 179), and he imagines "memory's lava" (HC 182) dripping out of a fissure in the surface of his apartment wall (HC 182),. Both these hallucinations indicate that the narrator is on his way to a (second) psychotic break. Immediately before the meeting with the projection of Stan Carberry, readers are confronted with an event that Chris has imagined and narrated repeatedly throughout the narrative so far: Chris observes his mother either by herself or reading to him or to "Little Tristram" (HC 17), her son with Henry Thornton, while Chris is asleep and dreaming

And I would see myself there then, standing outside the high French windows of Thornton Manor, with Lady Thornton kind of blurred inside – as she sang 'All People That On Earth Do Dwell", turning the pages of the dreambook she was perusing. […] *It's you that I'll always love the most, not Tristram.* […] I had imagined Little Tristram – of course there was no son in existence named Tristram Thornton […]. And yet he would seem so real to me when I stood there thinking abut him that I could scarcely bear to look through those windows [italics and single quotation marks in original, MTW] (HC 17)

Chris is here for the first addressed by the figure of his half-brother (only to be formally recognised by Little Tristram as expelled from the "mysteries" (HC 15) Chris associates with Protestantism – "Or are you not permitted [to enter the libidinal space of "belonging" signified by Thornton Manor, MTW]?" (HC 182)). This occurs immediately before Stan Carberry addresses Chris, and the older man "turn[s] away" (HC 183) without the narrator mentioning anything

about Stan walking away or taking any further notice of him. Considering the strange juxtaposition of events, conversations and characters in the above scene (all of whom address Chris, but never take note of each other), the text as a whole invites readers to consider Stan Carberry as much a dream or hallucination as Little Tristram.

Similarly, readers have been told that Chris never speaks to Lady Thornton when she visits the Nook (HC 11) – he does not "remember a great deal" (HC 11) about her or the visits generally and describes her as appearing "alien but quite lovely" (HC 11) -, and they are also told that she dies when he is in his teens or early twenties (HC 14). Hence, it seems reasonable to assume that the scene of his expulsion from Thornton Manor is the product of Chris' imagination rather than a case of his reporting anything that actually occurred to his implied readers.

8.5 Hallucinations of Wholeness: Chris' Disability and the Asylum As A Site of Creative Contingency and Post-colonial Community

The passage quoted above highlights that Chris' imagination is so "vivid[]" (HC 17) that it blurs the distinction between experience and narrative on which the classical analysis of the narrative situation in fictional autobiographies implicitly depends (Stanzl 2008: 272 - 273); additionally, it also indicates how all forms of engagement with the colonial situation depend on the simultaneous distinction between the real and the false (Bhabha 2004: 150) – exemplified by the narrative's governing distinction of the binary opposition of Catholic and Protestant – and their simultaneous confluence and contingent interdependence as the products of constant acts of narration, which do not allow for them to be assigned any kind of epistemological or ontological essence (Bhabha 2004: 152-153). Lastly, the fact that Chris McCool's hallucinations directly affect his somatic existence and embodiment emphasises that human existence cannot be neatly separated into mental thoughts and externalised physical actions. Readers experience this directly in three interrelated ways when it comes to Chris McCool's narration.

Classical conceptions of fictional autobiographies and their first-person narrators assume that the function of the narrative situation depends on the establishment of a more or less well-articulated difference between an "experiencing – I "and a "narrating-I" (Stanzel 2008: 271-273; particularly 271). These two narrators usually are separated by some distance in time. Implicitly, this narrative situation thus relies on an epistemological axiom: namely, although the narrating-I and the experiencing-I may evaluate and see the narrative world through radically different eyes (something Phelan and Martin capture with their first and second axes of unreliable narration discussed above (Phelan and Martin 1999: 89), this description of first-person narration assumes

that they nonetheless experience the *same* narrative world. In contrast, since Chris McCool by his own admission cannot distinguish between the world outside his mind and the one inside it at all times (HC 17), we might say that in this case the distinction between narration and experience upon which both the narratological conception of autobiographical first-person narration and the realism effect (*sensu* Barthes; cf Bhabha 2004: 68 - 70) of social discourse-practices rely –both assume that individual subjects remain identical to themselves over time (Bhabha 2004: 68 – 71; Heinz 2007: 104 - 110)-, is rendered epistemologically contingent and thus destabilised. Chris' inability to distinguish reliably between the two sides of human experience - the mental and the physical - shows how much human embodied experiences of the world are narrativised. It thus reveals reality as the production of a reality effect. Like an individual subject's particular embodiment, the reality in and through which individual subjects live is thus transformed from a static state into a dynamic process. It negotiates the acts of human and non-human actors as well as the influence of how discourse-practices encourage individual subjects in a particular way. Reality thus appears to be an umbrella term for a set of individual and collective discourse-practices and performative acts, just like the embodiments and subjectivities embedded in them. The negotiation of reality thus exposes the fundamental contingency of humanity's experiences of the world. This extreme epistemological contingency is managed, the narrative argues, by the reality effect forcibly subsuming divergent practical and discursive ways of embodied engagement with reality under the auspices of a hegemonic discourse. We might argue that it is this violent process of oppression and subsumption that produces Chris' delusions and violent psychosis. He becomes alienated from his embodiment, his individual subjectivity and a shared ethical reality because Chris is too passionately attached (Reckwitz 2010: 46) to performing a hegemonic immunitarian culture of subjectivity. In other words he is literally disabled in his embodiment by these investments in immunitarian ideals of "able-mindedness" (Kafer 2013: 6) and the reality effect they produce. .

This investment affects both Chris' choice of words and the somatic way he produces speech: In the initial passages of the novel, the narrator employs a great number of elaborate phrases and expressions that readers are invited to decode as the idiolect of "a gentleman" (HC 1) and "refined boulevardier of some local distinction" (HC 2). Recall, for example, Chris' admission that he may not know what his "father-figure" Henry Thornton might make of his achievements: "a piece of intelligence, which, were he to become acquainted with it, my dearest old papa, would, I feel confident, find immensely gratifying" (HC 2). Many words in the above passage

have etymological roots in Latin or French, and this tendency to use words with Latinate origins is usually associated with individual subjects of a more upper-class or educated background. Simultaneously, some of these words appear gratuitous in this context (the whole second phrase might, for example be replaced by "would, I feel confident, have pleased my papa immensely" without any semantic shifts). Hence, they create the impression that the narrator-protagonist is performing an identity and engages in an act of failed mimicry (Bhabha 1994: 126). Although the creative subject of the sixties counterculture no longer normatively condemns performance (Reckwitz 2010: 489-494), it still maintains a correlation between performance and self-expression (comparable to the Romantic culture of subjectivity (Reckwitz 2010: 498)). Hence, Chris' performance – aimed at creating a favourable impression in his audience – may be perceived as an act of deceptive imitation, rather than as creative self-expression, by readers. This impression is strengthened by readers learning later that the narrative voice read on the page does not reflect the way Chris-the-experiencing-I speaks.

During his stay in St. Catherine's, the local psychiatric hospital, the narrator-protagonist encounters a hallucination of his therapist Dr Mukti, and this hallucination makes Chris (and the reader) aware of the imaginary (and thus contingent) nature of his experience of reality. This passage illustrates quite a few of the immunitarian attributes employed by both the narrative situation in the novel and by the protagonist Chris McCool to maintain his sense of self and thus merits quoting at length:

- You must be imagining things, Christopher, he said, because you see, I didn't say anything at all.
I had become extremely agitated now and was fumbling awkwardly, without success, for words […]
Of fuh-fuh-for [sic] God's sake, Dr Mukti! I bawled, my voice now in a higher register than his. Will you stop this nonsense once and for all, for goodness' sake! I know what you're trying to say – that my intentions towards Marcus Otoyo were somehow dishonourable and that all this talk of literature is just a smokescreen of some kind. Well, let me tell you something: how about you and that Pandit take off and go back home: back to India or wherever it is you come from! […] Any views on that, Mahatma fucking Gandhi? […] Wuh-Wuh-Well [sic]? [dash in original, MTW] (HC 63-64)
Strikingly, the collapse of Chris' narrative voice corresponds directly to a hallucination – a product of his own mind, in other words – pointing out that his perception of reality is defined exclusively by his own mind and independent of any external sensory stimulus, whether derived from another individual subject or the non-human world. It is expressly called out by the hallucination as not based in any dialogue ("I didn't say anything at all", HC 63). In other words, Chris' embodiment is not a phenomenological nexus between the contingency of the human mind

and that of the outside world. Instead, he has immunised himself against awareness of the agential possibilities of other individual subjects and things that lie outside the scope of his own narrative and the lifeworld he is invested in. Any reminder of this source of contingency ruptures the unity of Chris' autonomous individual subjectivity – a rupture that is externalised in his stammer, even as the narrator tries to contain its effects by suggesting to the audience that it is a rare occasion and not part of his usual individual subjectivity. Chris thus attempts to shift the blame unto his (imaginary) interlocutor: "Now he was making me stammer, something I did rarely, only when I was very upset" (HC 63). However, as this interlocutor is itself an externalisation of his own mind, this discursive move only highlights the monadic self-referentiality of Chris' engagement with the world.

At the same time, it also reminds readers of the material agency of the body that exists alongside but also at a remove from its instrumental use by our conscious minds. Chris cannot get his stammer under control nor keep his voice from rising to a "bawl[]" (HC 63). Notably, this bawl expresses emotion without using the conscious realm of words, what Julia Kristeva calls "the symbolic" (Kristeva 2010: 2076) and which she conceptualises as governed by cultural codes (Kristeva 2010: 2076); in addition, she also identifies bodily expressions that precede or exist alongside the cultural with the semiotic realm of material embodiment (Kristeva 2010: 2071-2072).

Additionally raising the tonal register of your voice to a certain pitch is coded as emotional. So this somatic act disrupts Chris' ideal subjectivity by externalising the fact he has been overpowered by his emotions. The semiotic here exposes the epistemological contingency of the management of the body as an instrument that underwrites and subtends the immunitarian rationalist discourse Chris espouses. It instead asserts the somatic agency of the body.

Even more importantly, this somatic agency addresses the discursive construction of social practice discourses in general and hegemonic cultures of subjectivity in particular. Before readers hear Chris' stammer for the first time, the conventions of first-person narration lead us to assume that the idiolects of narrating and experiencing-I are co-extensive. That is, we assume that, even though the facts of the narrative world (and/or their evaluation) may have changed in the temporal gap between the two narrating individual subjects, the words they chose accurately mimic the narrator's view of the world at the time in question; in short, we assume that language is mimetic, rather than agential in its own right. Based on this assumption of Platonic mimesis (Plato 2010: 64-67), readers then tend to sideline the discursive construction of the world and its

formal attributes, focusing on the realism effect discussed above. This realism effect in turn leads audiences to assume that the narrator operates in accordance with Western phonocentric assumptions. Jacques Derrida describes phonocentrism in part as the assumption that a spoken voice expresses a person's "inner thoughts" whereas writing is a derivative secondary act (Derrida 2016 [1967]: 11 – 12, 37). The interruption of the narrative voice and its mimetic effect thus highlights again that the statements Chris makes depend on his adherence to a certain culture of subjectivity which he wants to actualise this way. Even more importantly, the pauses his stutter creates draw attention to the ruptures and inaccuracies of his narrative, inviting readers to seek alternative explanations of the interstices this narrative device opens. It thus highlights the creative potential of the contingencies of speech when it is not conceptualised as mimetic but rather as expressing and interacting with the world through interactions between human embodiments that are themselves sites of interaction and confluence between soma and consciousness and the outside world.

Overall, the representation of Chris McCool's contingent embodiment as fractured and conflictual also raises a second question: can his embodiment be classified as a disability? Alison Kafer argues that disabilities are usually defined as mental or physical deviations from normalised forms of embodiment that either cannot be cured or which the individual subject in question has no desire to cure (Kafer 2013: 28-29). Unlike Richard of Gloucester or Clifford Chatterley, Chris' contingent embodiment is not visible on his body and thus not legible on the body according to the hegemonic ocularcentric discourses of embodiment and disability (Kafer 2013: 7-8). Therefore, it allows readers to question the epistemological assumptions medical acts of classifying individual subjects as "disabled" make. Potentially, they may also question their own assumption as the text as a whole never conclusively names a diagnosis for Chris' condition; thus, readers are both exposed to the epistemological contingency of Chris' embodiment and invited to temporarily contain it themselves. The text as a whole offers clues that allow readers to see Chris' actions as the result of a lifelong disassociation from his embodiment (which may be classified as a mental disability), but it also suggests that the narrator might be suffering from a psychosis (with the narrative gap of the events in the church (HC 24; 83) signalling the moment of psychotic break). For the most part, mental illnesses like psychosis are excluded from contemporary definitions of disability as they are deemed curable (Kafer 2013: 27-28) through medication. Yet, we argue that Chris McCool's embodiment remains relevant to disability studies precisely because it shows how dependent notions of illness, disability and cure are on discourses

of "normalcy" (Davies 1995) and the ability to confidently read the disabled individual subject's divergence on some part of their bodies whether external (a limp) or internal (for example, the neurochemical process that cause depression) (Kafer 2013: 4-6).

Additionally, the text as a whole raises the question to what extent individual subjects need to conform to visual standards of normality in the first place. As will be discussed in greater detail below, the positive life of Chris' fellow patient Mike after his stay in the psychiatric hospital (HC 7) suggests that Chris stumbles across the demands his ideal subjectivity makes on his embodiment and fails because of his non-ethical actions towards others and himself rather than because of how he looks or speaks. He excludes himself while his community could and would include him. In essence, the relative Othering of Chris McCool is the inverse of the one experienced by the Creature in *Frankenstein*: recall that the Creature's actions initially accord with Enlightenment ideals of individual subjectivity and ethical behaviour, but he is othered on the basis of the way his body looks. Conversely, Chris others himself and divorces himself from the community to make his embodiment fit an ego ideal the text as a whole codes as inappropriate for living in the community of Cullymore – a community that would, the text implies, accept him (stammer and all) if Chris could accept his embodiment himself. Interestingly, it is Chris' somatic embodiment (his stammer and its consequences) that unearths the ethical issues brought up by the racialised discourse-practices Chris has chosen to embrace and their influence on his constitution of reality. The text as a whole, like this dissertation and various crip theorists, thus makes the case that disability is fundamentally a question of how embodied individual subjects co-constitute their communities and reality and only secondarily a medical issue (Kafer 2013: 7-10). Instead, it becomes an ethical, social and political problematic.

Faced with an interpretation of the events that led to his stay at St. Catherine's that highlights his inability to act in accordance with his own ideals and also further explicates the agential role of narrativisation in creating an acceptable form of subjectivity, Chris responds not with introspection or partial acceptance of Dr Mukti's approach but with linguistic expulsion and stereotyping. In a classic racist move, he denies that Mukti and Pandit have any kind of adequate knowledge about Irish culture – Meera Pandit only "pretends to understand" (HC 39) and thus engages in false acts of mimicry that cannot ever adequately reflect the genuine Irishness lived by people like Chris (although they can of course detect the falseness of Pandit's claims and performance of Irishness). This discursive move simultaneously asserts a non-negotiable ontological otherness which defines and positions Pandit and Mukti outside the community of the

"properly Irish" even when they try to assimilate themselves to the cultural context they now live in- This belief thus asserts and assures the cultural integrity and uniqueness of Irish culture as well as Chris' belonging to this proper community. In keeping with the essentialised spatialisation of nationality and nationhood characteristic of nineteenth- and twentieth-century nationalisms (Anderson 2016: 85, 170-178) Chris thus evokes, he simultaneously denies the validity and relevance of Mukti and Pandit's spatio-cultural origins: "go back to India or *wherever it is you come from*! [my emphasis, MTW]" (HC 64). To him, these other (that is, non-Irish and non-Cullymorean) places are origin are just a white spot on the map- No discourse-practices that originate there could have any relevance whatsoever to the question of Irishness in general or Chris' individual subjectivity in particular.

At first glance, this act of expulsion and immunisation seems to succeed in establishing both clear lines of demarcation between self and Other and denying this Other any kind of socio-cultural validity. As Benedict Anderson notes, a spatio-cultural conception of the nation rose to particular prominence (over and against a linguistic-cultural nationalism, which allowed for the potential inclusion of different cultures within the future nation-state (Anderson 2016: 47 - 82)) in the context of European imperialism and its attempt to justify itself through the construction of a pan-nationalism that subjugated difference, rather than including it, during its colonial expansion (Anderson 2016: 83 - 103). Such literal indifference to cultural specificity beyond the borders of the "self" (whether that self is conceived as a nation or an individual subject), however, also reveals that the coloniser's logic remains blind to the different individual subjectivity of the colonised – or rather that their power/knowledge and its objectifying constitutively depend on this epistemological blindness (cf. JanMohammed 1985; Bhabha 2004: 67). In Chris' case, his inability to locate Pandit or Mukti more specifically within the vast complex of cultures that is India or even to recognise that Bangladesh has been its own independent nation since 1975 (respectively, depending on when the conversation between him and Meera Pandit takes place, that it was not yet an independent nation from 1969 to 1974 (HC 31, "[she was] from somewhere out near Bangladesh") subverts his self-image as a cosmopolitan gentleman as well as his claim to "local distinction" (HC 2)- It once again draws attention to the limited and tightly circumscribed character of Chris' understanding of community and the exclusionary ignorance and violence that subtends his autonomy.[201] The difference of other individual subjects can thus

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[201] Additionally, Chris' investment in an "imperialist" (Anderson 2016: 83) model of the nation emphasises his investment in essentialised bio-political notions of community. For although the cultural nationalisms of the

exist in the interstices the hegemonic discourse creates through its very assertion of dominance; like Chris' stutter, which highlights the performativity and epistemological contingency of his (and all) speech, his response to Dr Mukti also exemplifies the creative potential of the Other, which Chris cannot acknowledge and adopt as a productive force in his own individual subjectivity.

Frantz Fanon famously argues in *Black Skin, White Masks* (Fanon 2008 [1952]) that the coloniser's expulsion of the colonised to the realm of the Other always happens in response to an action by the colonised that traumatises the coloniser in some fashion (Fanon qtd in Bhabha 2004: 86): in Chris McCool's case, this trauma has two different dimensions, as we have seen above, one of them relates to Chris's inability to switch to a creative and conflictual (Wilderson 2010: 5, 8, 24, 43) model of social interaction that recognises and creatively engages with the contingency of other individual subjects (to which Dr. Mukti nonetheless tries to appeal).[202]. The other dimension of the narrator-protagonist's trauma stems from the communitarian and immunitarian dynamics that shape Cullymore as well as Chris' ontologising community as a static unity built on an ontological antagonism (Wilderson 2010: 23, 43, 54-55) (as Meera Pandit discovers in her therapy sessions with the narrator-protagonist):

Chris complains repeatedly that Meera Pandit misnames Cullymore as "Ballymore" (HC 33) despite his "remarkable patience with her" (HC 33). Additionally, he also presents her as fundamentally incapable of understanding Ireland "because she [has] done all her training in London" (HC 39); hence, he shares the axiomatic assumption of Irish cultural nationalism that to be Irish is to be "not British" (McLoone 2000: 16) even before an Irish individual subject has a positive Irish identity of their own. At the same time, Chris also asserts that the particular social structures of Cullymore in turn transcend and are different from any form of Irish culture someone one may be educated in through living in Dublin or by being exposed to "some Irish poets" (HC 39). Poetry is perceived as the genre most conscious of its formal devices; hence, it

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eighteenth century excluded some persons on the basis of essentialised race racialisations (Anderson 2016: 142 – 143), their linguistic basis and cultural roots always include the possibility that individual subjects conceived as "foreign" acquire and adopt the nation's cultural and linguistic codes, thereby becoming members. A racialised image of the nation supports a more binary and immunitarian conception of community and thus forecloses this process of inclusion either partly or completely. .

[202] For reasons of space, the following discussion focuses primarily on Chris' ontologising community and fear of the sharing of *communitas* (Esposito 2010: 3-7), using his relationship to Marcus Otoyo as a reference point. Dr. Mukti's treatment re-iterates much the same ground as Pandit's and attempts to raise Chris' communal awareness by relating his own experiences to the wider social context of the "sixties" (HC 55).

became one of the cornerstones of the search for a uniquely Irish mode of literary expression among Irish nationalist literati in the decades before independence (Kiberd 1996: 115 – 129), a position further augmented by the central role poetry had played in pre-conquest Irish culture (Kiberd 1996: 14-16). Thus, Chris McCool's disdain for "some Irish poets" (HC 39) implies that the hegemonic discourses of Irishness are inadequate to describing Cullymore and its social structures, just as any British image of Irishness is in the eyes of the nationalist movement. Figuratively speaking, Chris champions his Cullymorean identity as the genuine expression of rural Irishness over and against a hegemonic metropolitan Irishness. In so doing, he once again stumbles across the contingency and constantly shifting acts of differentiation that shape (post-)colonial discourse-practices. The narrator-protagonist conceptualises Irishness as simultaneously a majoritarian and colonising discourse (relative to the specificity of Cullymore) and a minoritarian and colonised one (relative to Britain). However, this discursive move fractures the hierarchies of essentialised specificity that place Cullymore at the top of a hierarchy of essentialised Irishness (on which Chris claims to be the primary authority of course – similar to the role he associates with Henry Thornton (HC 11)); Instead, it reveals the complex nets of social relations that constitute the (unacknowledged and abjected) deep structure of essentialised hierarchies.

These fluid deep structures permit an expansion of shifting alliances and questions of (post-)colonial embodiments beyond the duality-dichotomy of Britain and Ireland. The text as a whole suggests that Meera Pandit's "forg[ing] a link between Cullymore and […] Indian villages" (HC 39) may in fact prove insightful and reveal various similarities-in-difference (Heinz 2007: 3) both between Ireland and India as sites of colonial experience and resistance and between Britain and Ireland as sites of relative domination compared to India.The latter relationship when put in relation to India as the third term of comparison focuses on the shared feature of "Whiteness" the two former terms share when compared to the latter location.[203] Recent work in critical race

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[203] Spelling Whiteness with a capital W in the following paragraphs signals the ontological focus of the critical race and Afro-Pessimist theorists on whose work the following analyses build. As discussed in chapter three, Wilderson explains that thinkers interested in the "ontological antagonism" of race relations (Wilderson 2010: 5,9, 23-24) consider designations like "White" or "Slave" structural positions in an antagonism that cannot be solved within the existing liberal logic of "Humanism" (Wilderson 2010: 20, 20-23). This usage mimics the Marxist usage of "Worker" and "Capitalist" (Wilderson 2010: 24) and is meant to address the deep structure of race relations, which remains active despite the conflicts and victories over questions of civil rights changing the shape of conflicts on the surface structure of the liberal order(Wilderson 2010: 5, 8-11). For a critique of the ontologising assumptions Afro-pessimist theories make regarding race relations in general and the agential possibilities for change in particular, see Kyriakides and Torres 2012.

studies argues that the definition of the human (usually termed "Man", following the influential work of Silvia Wynter (Wynter and McKittrick 2015: 14-16)) only took on its humanistic qualities (the ability to possess and fight for rights and to be recognised as the citizen of a country, for example) once it could be differentiated from a form of existence that, albeit embodied in the same way "Man" is, was barred ontologically from the qualities of "Man" (Wynter and McKittrick 2015: 49). Black slaves were fundamentally barred from ever being human, even when they are free: Calvin Warren argues that the slave constitutes a site of "non-being" (Warren 2018: 13) in the strong Heideggerian sense of Being as an ontological rather than sociological category (Warren 2018: 10-15) and thus a liminal phenomenon within White conceptualisations of the world and the self, marking the point beyond human epistemologies. Following the above logic, the shared "Whiteness" of British and Irish populations others the Indian permanently and denies them any access to understanding the cultures of "Man" (Wynter and McKittrick 2015: 46 - 49). Thus, they are ontologically barred from escaping their own Othering.

8.6. Holding On To Self-destruction: Afro-Pessimism, Ontological Antagonism and Chris' Obsession With Marcus Otoyo

At first glance, we might argue that this deep structure does not pertain to the relationship between Chris and Drs. Mukti and Pandit. Although British colonialism in India employed forms of indentured servitude that bordered on chattel slavery during the reign of the East India Company (cf. Lowe 2015: 45), India was never subjected to the widespread deportation and social killing that shaped the colonial experience of the plantation system in the West Indies and Americas (Wynter and McKittrick 2015: 46-49). Hence, people born on the Indian sub-continent seem to exist between the extreme ontological poles Afro-Pessimist thinkers identify as the foundations of the liberal humanist system.[204] Even so, Meera Pandit's comparison destabilises the assumptions of Irish exceptionalism that shape the discourse-practices upon which Chris draws to explain the events that landed him in a psychiatric institution: she questions his essentialising assumptions and asks him to explain them, exposing their contingency and their

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[204] Wilderson even suggests that Indian and other Asian minorities are „junior partners of civil society" (Wilderson 2010: 24) in the ontological position of Whiteness (Wilderson 2010: 24) and thus participate in the antagonistic struggles of race relations on the side of the oppressive *status quo*. Although this may be true of contemporary race relations in the United States, from which Wilderson draws most of his material, it seems dangerous to universalise this claim even when adopting an ontological perspective. For an alternative analysis of Afro-Asian relations and alliances in the U.K. and the West Indies, see Gilroy (2002: xii – xiv, 36 - 28) and Lowe (2015: 21-25).

being discursive constructs as well as their tendency to racialise certain personality traits by limiting their applicability only to certain groups of individual subjects and turning particular qualities into readable symbols of these essentialised groups.

For example, when Chris talks about Ethel Baird (a former lady companion to Lady Thornton (HC 11)), who nearly dies of a heart attack during his visit and whom he leaves to die instead of helping her (HC 24, 81)), he asserts that Ethel has (and therefore *is*) "the quality" (HC 32). According to a later scene, he reveals that this was the term his foster-mother Wee Dimpie used to describe Protestants (as opposed to Catholics, whom she considers "liars" (HC 75) and implicitly associates with an undifferentiated and de-individualised mass of people) and to linguistically reflect their status as individual subjects whose individuality can be accurately identified.[205] For Wee Dimple, all Protestants are unique, but Chris' mother is even more unique than the average remarkable Protestant: "your mother is the best, the bestest [sic] quality of all" (HC 75). When Meera queries the function of this designation as an essentialised signifier by asking to what it refers, Chris becomes annoyed. And yet, in given an explanation, he reveals the "mysteries" (HC 81) to refer to qualities that need not be assigned exclusively to Protestant women: "Upper crust. Respected. Well-off, but not showy [..,]" (HC 32). Indeed, the list instead reveals that Stan Carberry's materialist reading of Protestantism is right on the mark. The discursive construction of (Protestant) quality espoused by Chris McCool combines class identity with a certain habitual bodily conduct (HC 182). But most of all, the attribute "respected" (HC 32), contrary to Chris' understanding of Protestantism as an innate essence that expresses itself through social conduct, highlights that the standing of an individual subject in a community constitutively depends on the opinion others have of that individual subject and their conduct within their community. Meera Pandit thus encourages Chris to read habitual behaviours as "signs" (which can be adapted to different discursive contexts (Bhabha 2004: 274)) rather than "symbols" (which have a fixed essentialised meaning (Bhabha 2004: 70)).

Considering this goal, it is fitting that she uses the incident at Ethel Baird's house to deconstruct Chris' narrative: Chris had after all visited Ethel to have her "explain"(HC 75) the "mysteries" (HC 75) of Protestantism to him and to initiate him into his ego-ideal; he imagines Ethel's words on opening the door to him as follows: "Welcome Christopher Thornton, our own Protestant kind" (HC 77). Through this appellation (Althusser 2010: 1358), Chris would finally be

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[205] For a critical reading of liberal disdain for the masses of the poor, see Arendt (2016a [1965]5 73-83, 93-146) and the critical commentaries on Arendt's own complicity with this disdain in Straßenberger (2015: 127-142)x

recognised – an act that assumes an essence that can shine forth and is easily readable on the surface of the skin without any act of decoding (Bhabha 2004: 68-71) - and be initiated into a kinship group that is defined by the shared trait of Protestantism; a membership and sense of belonging that is simultaneously also signalled to the outside world by his last name. Instead of wearing a matriarchal name that excludes him from the patriarchal order of recognised kinship groups (Hartman 1997: 94, 99-100), Chris would finally be the son of Henry Thornton.[206] In light of his emotional investment in a transcendentally-legitimised form of bio-political belonging based on immunitarian difference, Chris has to reject any kind of materialist interpretation of his life that focuses on what he shares with everyone (what he has "in-common" (Esposito 2010: 7-8) with them) and what thus cannot be exclusively associated with his individuality.

In contrast to the narrator, the text as a whole favours a communitarian reading of individual subjectivity as an interactive process. The narrative implicitly reveals this through the narrative arc of a minor character in the novel. Mike Corcoran, like Chris McCool has a speech defect (he has a "cleft palate" (HC 9)) and spent time in St. Catherine's. Apparently, he used to have delusions of somebody "screw[ing] his wife" – a wife he does not have (HC 42) – again, like Chris who will kill his girlfriend Vesna for her imagined infidelity with someone (HC 211, "And I did not stop trouncing her with my cane until finally, regrettably, my partner was entirely

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[206] The exclusion is effected on two additional levels as well. Firstly, if we assume that Lady Thornton is Chris' birth mother, his wearing the name of his wet nurse (rather than, say, Lady Thornton's maiden name) marks the narrator-protagonist as a liminal figure in the bourgeois family space. As Ann Stoler and Anne McClintock note, colonialist images of the family excluded governesses and wet nurses when they praised the maternity of women in the colonies, even as they relied on them to support their children (McClintock 1995: 84-91); alternatively, they decried native wet nurses as possible agents of corruption by the colonial Other, threatening the colonisers' hegemony (Stoler1995: 149 - 164). Additionally, Hortense Spillers notes that matrilineal names held an additional function in the context of American chattel slavery: any children a master begat on a slave woman were named after their mother. Thus, the genealogical responsibilities and privileges of fatherhood were obscured and abrogated: the children remained slaves, and their mothers remained property the masters could continue to sexually abuse at will without having to worry about their offspring rendering the kinship systems of plantation slavery contingent (Spillers 2003: 204- 205, 223 - 229). Although we by no means with to equate the exploitation systems of chattel slavery with the social context of Irish tenant farmers, this correlation between the novel and Spillers' Black feminist analysis raises an interesting question: what if Chris *does* wear his mother's name and is *Henry* Thornton's son? Recall that he never talks to Lady Thornton (HC 11), never meets Henry Thornton face-to-face and that Dympie McCool only curtly answers "yes" (HC 13) before "shuffl[ing] off" (HC 13) when he asks if Lady Thornton is his mother (HC 13). Closing the interpretative gap that is Chris' heritage this way destabilises Henry Thornton's embodying an ideal white masculinity for Chris. In this reading, Thornton would have given in to his sexual drives, which discourses of whiteness code as "dark" (Dyer 2017: 27-28) and threatening to the control of their bodies, and this control in turn defines white masculinity (Dyer 2017: 27). Hence, Henry Thornton and the ideal individual subjectivity of Whiteness Chris espouses and associates with Henry Thornton would be at odds and marked as hypocritical, as well as being founded on gendered, class-based, and racialised abuse and violence.

lifeless"). In sharp contrast to Chris, however, Mike is "cured" (HC 10) by Mukti and spends his later years as the leader of the band in a nightclub Chris frequents (MC 9). Mike thus takes up a creative occupation and invests his identity in a humorous engagement with the world: Because "surely youse [sic] have to laugh?" (HC 171)

Hence, the text implies that Chris is not barred from a non-othered existence within the community of Cullymore due to his embodiment as such. According to the logic of the text as a whole, Chris is not a "*freak* [italics in original, MTW]" (HC 203) because of his embodiment but because of how he habitually engages with the world through his embodiment; others label Chriis a freak (HC 203) because he *acts freakishly*. The text as a whole indicates two reasons for his acts being freaskish: Chris' essentialising and ontologising imagination and his concomitant inability to imagine identity as a non-essentialised creative act.

Returning to the concepts of Afro-Pessimism elucidates the extent and pitfalls of Chris' ontologising imagination: when Meera Pandit unearths the social and communitarian character of Protestantism and subverts its immunitarian ideology, Chris responds by calling her "stupid black fucker" (HC 32). Although this epithet fits Chris' own descriptions of his actions as an act of "xenophobia" (HC 31) and as calling her "unsavoury names" (HC 31) – acts the narrator professes to regret (HC 31) -, it seems odd that a trained psychotherapist like Pandit would stop treating a patient after this comparatively mild insult (HC 39). However, the text as a whole suggests two potential readings that close this interpretive gap. Chris points out in the same passage that Meera Pandit is "not proper black" (HC 31) and although he seems aware of the insulting connotation of "proper" (HC 31) in this context, he still insists that she is not "fully black" (HC 31) like the "shining black […]Marcus Otoyo" (HC 31). As discussed above in relation to Henry Thornton, bio-political conceptions of propriety are inbraided with discourse-practices that aim to build and maintain binary oppositions and clear lines of demarcation between proper individual subjects, improper individual subjects of the human *genus*, and things (Esposito 2015: 115 - 118); adding the central tenets of Afro-Pessimism, that is defining Blackness as an ontological position of racialised antagonism (Wilderson 2010: 5, 10-11, 20-24, 43, 54-55 and *passim*; Warren 2018: 10-21) and associating it with complete social death within the humanist world of "Man" (Wynter and McKittrick 2015: 49; Wilderson 2010: 7, 11, 20-24), reveals a deep structure of Chris' obsession with Blackness. It is an attempt to establish an essentialised binary opposition that is not subject to social change, precisely because it defines the Other as ontologically outside the sphere of the social, indeed of change and becoming as

ontological capabilities, thus turning this Black Other into a human-shaped object (Warren 2018: 13). Considering that describing a person whose phenotype is not normally coded that way as black (as the narrator himself acknowledges (HC 31)) again exposes the contingency of the designation, it is possible, however, that Chris used a more radical signifier of exclusion and tries to hide its use from his audience.

Irrespective of how readers interpret the events in the cathedral – whether the "black piece of ankle" (HC 24) one of the men who visit Chris and commit him to the psychiatric hospital is a piece of the statue of Martin de Porres or a piece of Marcus Otoyo (who plays the saint to perfection in a church play (HC 82)) -, the narrator reports writing the following sentence on the windows of the cathedral:[207] "Fuck the holy city and fuck all niggers [sic]! [my omission of italics, MTW] (HC 83). In contrast to the label "Black", which may be interpreted neutrally or signify positive modes of identification, the preceding term has only negative connotations; furthermore, it is unambiguously associated with the complete abjection of human individual subjects that is (Black) slavery (Hartman 1997: 194). If Chris uses this label for Pandit, it would reveal both his need to defend himself from the contingency she espouses and propagates through her questions in general and his need to disavow any form of common sociality with her (or anyone else) in particular. After all, slaves were denied all access to marriage or any family life of their own (Hartman 1997: 98), so they had no community the hegemony recognised either socially or legally and politically; they were property and deemed incapable of any kind of "proper" (Esposito 2011: 6) human sociality, as indicated by the emphasis advice pamphlets for the newly-freed slaves of the American South placed on personal and domestic cleanliness (Hartman 1997: 157 - 159). The abjecting reference to the "holy city" (HC 83) in the same sentence also continues the theme of ontologically barring individual subjects the hegemony considers "quasi-human" (Weheliye 2014: 8) from the ideal and actuality of natality and community (Patterson 1982: 5-8). Instead, it again remands them to social death (Patterson 1982: 5)

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[207] The latter interpretation fits with Chris's tendency to objectify Marcus, turning the younger man into a perfect object for to fulfil Chris'psychological needs. As the narrative strongly suggests that Chris kisses the body of Vesna (HC 4, "as I press my lips to her so-called dead ones") , the girlfriend he murders (HC 211) when she has been dead for some time, it leads readers to conclude that for Chris' perfect partner is literally a dead object. In fact, depending on how one reads the passage about his entering the "holy city" with Vesna (HC 8), it is possible that Chris finds this objectification sexually arousing, commingling destruction and desire in the fulcrum of necrophilia.

 On a general level, the "holy city" is a Christian theological synonym for Jerusalem; rather than referring to the actual city in the Middle-East, it signifies its heavenly counterpart, conceptualised by thinkers like Augustine as the ideal social formation (cf. Arendt 2016b [1967]: 64-66); notably, this social formation was characterised as a community that does not require its members to assert their individual subjectivity or to negotiate the different individual subjectivities of their fellow citizens (Arendt 2016b [1967]: 66). Thus, this idealised Jerusalem reflects (and normalises) Chris' immunitarian inability to manage difference creatively. In the particular idealised dynamic of the relationship Chris McCool imagines between himself and Marcus Otoyo, the "holy city" (HC 83) also serves as a symbol of Chris attaining a perfect form of subjectivity:

And that, when, at last, I gained the walls of the holiest city: the one that is called love and is sacred above all others. [sic] That no answer might be made to my knocking upon the gates of the new [sic] Jerusalem. [...] Let me in, I might cry, above all things, please let me in. Lift up these gates, for more than anything I need to belong [my omission of italics, MTW] (HC 87).

Notably, the above passage is clearly set off from the text of the narrative by the way it is set off from the rest of the text: it is typeset entirely in italics; the typeface signals two things to readers. Firstly, as italics are conventionally used to convey emphasis, they suggest that this particular passage (and others like it) is especially formative for Chris McCool's sense of self. Secondly, and even more importantly, the italics signal that the passage in question affects a different psychological plane than the rest of the narrative. As discussed at the beginning of this analysis, Chris McCool initiates the narrative to convince his ideal father-figure, Henry Thornton, that he, Chris, is a "perfectly reasonable and valid human being [and] his son and heir" (HC 3). In order to prove this assertion, Chris models his narrative voice on the immunitarian ideal subjectivity set out by Henry Thornton in his writings; hence, the main thrust of the narrative is literally defined by the "Law of the Father" (Jacques Lacan), even when its ruptures reveal the shortcomings and contingency of this law.

The passage about the holy city quoted above, in contrast belongs to an imaginary space. Considering the abundance of religious symbolism in the text almost creates an overdetermined text, it is likely that we are dealing with a dream or other fantasy, which Freud defines through their excessive use of symbolic content that displaces the latent meaning of the dream unto manifest symbols functioning as signs and ciphers (Freud 2010 [1900]: 818 - 824). Hence, imaginary spaces and fantasies are not subject to intervention from an external world; rather, they articulate the unconscious logic of the psyche. In Lacan's formulation, a child establishes an

Imaginary relationship with its mirror image when it first sees it in the mirror. It seems to the child that this other self in the mirror is their perfect or perfected counterpart (Lacan 2004: 442), and the child begins to identify with its mirror-image, misrecognising it as another child. Of particular importance is the mirror image is assumed to have greater control of its own body (exemplified by its ability to stand without aid (Lacan 2004: 442)) than the child in front of the mirror currently has. .Other Imaginary relationships mimic the schema of the mirror stage: just like a mirror image (which, after all, depends on the individual subject standing in front of it for its very existence), the individual subject subsumes others under their will and their rules, ignoring any assertions of their own different individual subjectivities (Fink 1995: 84 - 85). As Homi Bhabha writes these types of relationships combine a narcissistic (the subject desires the object as long as it is like them) and a destructive (the object has to be destroyed as soon as it is no longer like the subject) streak (Bhabha 2004: 109-110).

Chris' relationship to Marcus Otoyo shares all the hallmarks of an Imaginary relationship. When he first meets Marcus, the narrator-protagonist wonders at his being "so calm, […] composed and self-reliant" (HC 26) and notes that the younger man carries himself "in a refined, almost haughty, manner" (HC 24). Marcus' bodily conduct thus draws Chris attention; in part, this happens because this "nigger boy [sic]" ought to be "lower than the dog" (HC 26) according to all the sources Chris consults (HC 26), which assume the utter abjection of the boy due to his skin colour and attendant quasi-human status (Warren 2018). Far from confirming his own abjection, Marcus confidentially engages with his body and through it with the community of Cullymore. Thus, just like the Lacanian mirror image, Marcus' command of his body leads Chris to admire him in the first place. But, unlike Chris, who is obsessed with the circumstances of his birth and his racialised genealogy (cf. Weinbaum 2004: 39-60), Marcus never mentions his (likewise absent) father.[208] Instead, he confidently walks the streets of Cullymore in his "braided bottle-

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[208] Chris identifies with Marcus in part because he thinks that their conditions of natality are alike: "[Chris identifies with Marcus] [p]artly […] on account of his equally 'morally dubious' parentage. With the licentious miscreant in his case, *reputedly*, being a sailor from Middleborough. Who had disappeared forever after a night of illicit passion [single quotation marks in original and my emphasis, MTW]" (HC 20). The passage above suggests that Chris is merely projecting the story of his own conception onto Marcus because the narrator-protagonist wants them to be alike. The adjective "reputedly" (HC 20) confirms this reading as it implies that Chris has picked up his knowledge of Marcus from anonymous third-party sources rather than engaging with Marcus directly by asking him. After all, Otoyo is a name of Nigerian origin ("What does the name Otoyo mean?" website). Considering that children conceived and born out of wedlock whose fathers *had* absconded would not wear their fathers' surnames according to Irish law at the time (McLoone 2000: 18), it seems likely that Marcus is the opposite of Chris when it comes to the conditions of his birth; he wears "the Name of the Father" (Jacques Lacan) Chris covets. Additionally, Marcus' name

green blazer" (HC 45). As green is the national colour of Ireland, Marcus implicitly identifies himself as Irish and exposes the imbrication of discourses of Irishness with discourses of whiteness in general and white supremacy in particular. Hence, the text as a whole implies that Chris could learn to creatively adapt various Irish identities to his needs and thus create his own individual subjectivity if he engaged with Marcus.

However, Chris' behaviour once again forecloses this possibility: like the child of the Lacanian mirror stage, who looks at the child in the mirror, fixing it as an object of his gaze and in fact creates this other child by looking at it (Lacan 2004: 443), Chris' relationship to Marcus is mediated by a gaze that invents Marcus' individual subjectivity and indeed subjects the young man to constant surveillance: for example, Chris sits opposite Marcus in a café at one point when he notices that the younger man is reading James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (HC 53). On the basis of this observation alone, Chris immediately forms a strong emotional connection to Marcus ("it was as if a hand was reaching into my soul[…]", HC 53). He subsequently strongly desires to know Marcus' place in the book. Normally, we would expect Chris to strike up a conversation with the younger man and to simply ask him what he thinks of the book. Instead, Chris waits for Marcus to leave his booth and then glances at the open pages (HC 53). At first glance, this behaviour illustrates Chris' deep-set need to evade the communitarian aspects of a conversation, which might force him to confront Marcus' different individual subjectivity and the fact that other individual subjects might be differently invested in Joyce's novel. Even more importantly in the present context, Chris' need to *see* the page Marcus is reading illustrates the scopic nature of desire and its role in the maintenance of narcissistic power-knowledge relations (cf. Bhabha 2004: 109). Waiting until Marcus is gone ensures that Chris can examine the page without being observed by Marcus in turn– he thus is the only individual subject to assert his agency in this scenario. Both the book and Marcus as its former reader are objectified by the power of the narrator-protagonist's knowing gaze: "I embraced every word that I found in *A Portrait,* surrendering to their 'passionate euphony'. And became

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also suggests that Mr Otoyo was not a "miscreant" (HC 20) and that Chris once again prefers invoking an immunising stereotype of Black men as lascivious (Gilroy 2002: 126-127) to engaging with the complexities of his '"friend's" genealogy. And even if Marcus Otoyo was born out of wedlock to an interracial couple, the boy seems to embrace his natality (in both senses of the world discussed so far) and not deny it as Chris does and to be confident in his individual subjectivity and his natality (Patterson 1982: 5). Indeed, this confidence forces Chris to confront the contingency of his individual subjectivity at the climax of the plot (HC 203).

convinced that Marcus Otoyo was a kindred spirit in this regard, that he had been thinking along these lines, too [italics and single quotation marks in original, MTW]" (HC 66).

In his exploration of the psychoanalytic effects of the colonial condition on individual subjects caught in it, Fanon argues that the relationship between coloniser and colonised oscilates between a desire to have or be the Black abjected Other that denies difference through (sexual) unity and a desire to annihilate the Other by killing them (Fanon qtd in Bhabha 2004: 110); desire and destruction thus commingle in the individual subject's psychic structure under colonialism. Chris McCool experiences this when he imagines himself and Marcus Otoyo having an intimate conversation, in which they sing each other's praises while looking at a young woman bathing. This scene also uses Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist As A Young Man* as a means of establishing a connection between Chris and (his imaginary version of) Marcus. As Yi-ling Yang notes in their article in the use of Joyce's novel in *The Holy City* (Yang 2019), Chris references the scene he saw Marcus read in the café (Yang 2019: 230). In keeping with his egocentric self-image, Chris puts himself in the position of Joyce's protagonist Stephen Dedalus (Yang 2019: 230).Notably, although the beauty of the girl they both watch serves as an entryway to their conversation (HC 54, "she's beautiful, isn't she, Marcus?"), it soon shifts to Chris expressing his admiration of Marcus ("You were wonderful, you know, in the [church, MTW] play" (HC 54)) and the younger man discussing his and Chris' future plans to go to San Francisco together. When Chris' fantasy ends, he responds physically in a way that indicates he experiences some form of physical arousal at Marcus' imagined future with him: "San Francisco, I heard myself sigh, moving about the cottage flushed and out of sorts – in a helpless daze" (HC 55). As this response is prompted by Marcus' imagined words rather than the unnamed girl's appearance, it strongly suggests that Chris' desire is homosexual, rather than heterosexual. At the very least, the use of the girl's physical attractiveness to mediate the imagined encounter between the two men points to a discursive strategy Eve Kosovsky Sedgewick identifies as a common way to depict homosocial desires that slide into homosexual ones in Victorian novels, thereby minimising the degree to which homosexuality could threaten the bifurcated gender matrix (Sedgewick 2016: 21 - 23). Admitting to any kind of homosexual desire would also threaten Chris' investment in an individual subjectivity defined by its bio-political purity and its ability to control the body. Homosexual intercourse cannot serve a reproductive function and giving in to these desires would be an admission that the body can circumvent the conscious mind.

In any case, Chris' imagined encounters with Marcus Otoyo do not engage with the other young man in his unique individual subjectivity; instead, they serve to assert Chris' narcissistic sense of his own superiority: during their shared girl-gazing, Marcus is not equal to Chris but instead "look[s] up" (HC 55) at both Chris and the girl; he occupies the lowest rung in the scopic ladder of subjectivity Chris has created. According to the logic of the scene, Marcus may look at the girl, but he may not touch her, and the terms of his scopic engagement have been set by Chris at the beginning of the fantasy. Marcus only consents that she is beautiful – he does not offer any observations of his own regarding the girl's appearance or contest Chris' assessment (HC 54).

Although the fantasy analysed above does not state this outright, Marcus is never shown wanting to touch the girl in question. Chris clearly considers this a violation of their relationship; desiring the same woman would render them equal and break the narcissistic cycle of Chris' desire for Marcus.

The threat Marcus' desiring agency poses to Chris' sense of self is made explicit later in the narrative. At that point, Chris has begun a relationship with Dolores Mc Causeland (also known as "Dolly Mixtures" (HC 23)), a Protestant "lady who hail[s] from the North" (HC 22), who lives in Marcus' home and is friends with Marcus' mother (HC 22). Dolly occasionally sings at the local pub and often addresses Chris as "Mr. Wonderful" (HC 90), a sign that "her affections [are] trained exclusively towards [Chris]" (HC 90), according to the narrator's reading of the situation; hence, she seems to confirm his narcissistic libidinal economy as correct and fruitful. Additionally, Dolly's desiring Chris ensures that the attraction of Protestant like to like still holds true even though , she embodies a new form of Protestant femininity that is "forthright" (HC 23) and aware of its own sexuality rather than "discreet" (HC 11) (like Lady Thornton and Ethel Baird). In other words, his relationship to Dolly confirms and authorises both Chris' "Protestant stock" (HC 2) and his own narcissistic investment in being unique (HC 90). The bond Chris imagines between himself and Dolly, respectively between himself and Marcus, is frayed when he finds a love letter that Marcus has written to Dolly (HC 157), and later imagines Dolly removing Marcus' clothing and calling him "Mr Wonderful" at a holiday resort the three of them visit together (HC 152). However, the text as a whole strongly implies that these events may have been a product of Chris' imagination. When he narrates his last meeting with Dolly before she disappears from his life, the narrator first claims to have confronted her about the letter when breaking off their relationship (HC 157) to which she responds by trying to convince him not to

send her away (HC 157). Strikingly, the narrator returns to the scene later in the novel, and this second version (analysed in part below) does not mention the affair at all.

During the first version of this conversation Dolly voices the suspicion that "it's not [her] [he cares] about at all" (HC 157). Strikingly, Chris does not deny the charge that it is his relationship to Marcus he cares about most. His comments on having seen the two other characters kiss and flirt address Marcus rather than Dolly, labelling him a "[v]ile betrayer" (HC 152) because of whose actions "love's holy city now falls into sand! [my omission of italics, MTW]" (HC 152). Considered in isolation, "love's holy city" (HC 152) might perhaps refer to the relationship between Chris and Dolly as well. But in the wider context of the narrative, it functions as metaphoric shorthand for the Imaginary relationship between Chris and Marcus.

As indicated above, Chris uses the city as a metaphor for the perfect form of subjectivity and community; notably, he imagines its attainment as contingent upon Marcus serving as his helping hand when opening the gates: "He [= Marcus, MTW] extend[ed] his hand and in a soft voice told me: "You are welcome, friend. To this holy place where we venerate and praise love. Come in. Now, Christopher Maximus, you are one for ever with us." (HC 87). At first glance, one might think that the scene enacts a moment of equality and shared communal belonging between the two men, subverting the narcissism and desire that has shaped Chris' image of their relationship: after all, by extending his hand, Marcus ensures that their bodies exist on an equal plane (they are both standing). Furthermore, they are about to enter the ideal Christian community, the politics of which (according to Saint Augustine) rest on the perfect equality of humans under God (cf. Arendt 2016b [1967]: 64-66). However, this communitarian ideal is once again disrupted by Chris' immunitarian concept of subjectivity. Firstly, Marcus does not describe the city as a space where different individual subjectivities interact under the premise of respect for their similarities-in-difference (cf. Heinz 2007: 3). Being "one with us" (HC 87) (rather than "one *of* us") in contrast evokes an image of community *in extremis* – a space where everything is shared and any sense of individual difference is lost (Esposito 2010: 7-8). Esposito points out that such a conception of community is as deadly as its autoimmunitarian counterpart, since it precludes any kind of negotiation and fruitful dialogic creative engagement with other individual subjects (Esposito 2010: 27).

Secondly, despite the possibility of equality evoked by the material agency of their imagined bodies, Chris still considers himself superior to Marcus who calls him "Maximus" (HC 87), the superlative of *magnus*, which means a "great man" ("Latin study tool" website, meaning of

"maximus2"), thus signifying Chris' uniqueness. Once again, Imaginary Marcus confirms his own abjection relative to Chris and seems to have no desire for any kind of independent existence or forms of desire that do not have Chris as their ultimate object. Within the confines of Chris' Imaginary, he and Marcus exist within a literal closed-circuit of desire and subjectivity, with Marcus' skin colour acting as a symbol of his eternal object status. However, the text as a whole strongly implies that Chris is equally invested in his relationship with the younger man; he would translate any kind of agency Marcus exhibits that lies outside the symbolic circuits Chris has reserved for him as instances of epistemological and accidental contingency; these could become strong enough to ultimately rupture Chris' immunitarian sense of self.

Additionally, the scene also helps to explain why Meera Pandit's attempts to make Chris aware of the social component of individual subjectivities (respectively, their communal element) must be answered with her being expelled into the realm of "social death" (Patterson 1982: 38, 5-12, 38 – 45) and labelled an "ontological […] antagonist[]" (Wilderson 2010: 5). To Chris, community in its ideal form entails the loss of his jealously-guarded individuality; he cannot imagine it as a process of creative negotiation.

7.7 The Ambiguity of (Dolly) Mixtures and the Creative Contingency of an Inclusive Community
This is also exemplified by the narrator-protagonist's ambiguous relationship to the "sixties" (HC 51). For although Chris treats the decade as a signifier of change that allows him to imagine a world beyond the borders of Cullymore (HC 55) and he objects to Dr. Mukti's critique of the "turbulence" (HC 51) of the time, Chris ultimately confirms Dr. Mukti's major criticism of "that lunatic decade" (HC 51): [They initiated] the primacy of the individual and the end of the concept of 'the common good'" (HC 51). During his stay in the "White Room" (HC 53), the narrator claims the following regarding the hegemonic view of identity in the sixties:

[I]n the sixties, people liked being a little bit mixed up. That was what the Beatles were always insisting: *I am he as you are he etc.* [sic] […] Identities were frivolously encouraged to fracture in those days, to turn themselves upside down and inside out. […] You could be everybody and nobody all at once[.] […] But things did not turn out that way for me. I heard later from Mike that Mukti was heartbroken with the way things had turned out [italics in original, MTW] (HC 57 -58).

Once again, Chris articulates an opinion on identity concepts circulating in the decade that focuses on the extreme edges – the place where everything becomes nothing; implicitly he alleges that to favour a less discrete version of individual identity and subjectivity (as Mukti seems to do) is to court death. This view is contradicted by the text as a whole in three ways:

firstly, because Mike, Mukti's other patient, lives a happy creative life after his stay at St. Catherine's (HC 9) – even though his embodiment and life trajectory mirror Chris McCool's prior and during his stay at the psychiatric hospital, as briefly analysed above. Judging by Mike's positive life after he leaves Mukti's care, the text as a whole presents the psychiatric hospital as a positive site invested in the re-socialisation of its patients and in their recognising their individual subjectivity and contingent embodiment as a resource rather than an accident. Notably, Mukti and Meera make no effort to cure Mike's cleft palate and it later forms an integral part of his stage persona as Mike Martinez (HC 9). Secondly, the presentation of Chris' treatment throughout the novel presents psychiatry as a form of medicine that is re-integrative rather than normative. Although Chris enters the psychiatric hospital after he has exhibited violent behaviour in his native town (HC 18, 83), he is not confined to the White Room immediately. Instead, both doctors engage him in therapeutic conversations and try to sensitivise him to communitarian connections between his lifeworld and others beyond the borders of his town and country (HC 39, "some kind of link between Cullymore and all these Indian villages she kept going on about"). They only confine Chris to the White Room once he attacks a visitor; his elision of any description of the man's wounds – Chris only describes "[t]he scream that followed […] [as] really appalling" (HC 72) – strongly implies that Chris' victim was very severely injured.[209] Hence, Chris' confinement to a padded cell is coded by the text as a primarily a protective, rather than a punitive or othering, act. Hence, it conforms to Esposito's definition of positive immunitarian actions (Esposito 2011: 171) and further highlights that the text as a whole argues for forms of subjectivity and community that creatively switch immunitarian and communitarian discourse-practices.

In marked contrast, Chris' experiences in (and of) the White Room are shaped by his auto-immunitarian sense of self and his positive association of whiteness with death and the loss of his self and individual subjectivity: "And [I] deserved to be, as I duly was, […] dumped, […] into the Spartan solitude of the White Room[.] To become a bleached soul in a neutral enclosure. It was

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[209] Notably, Chris responds to these events with a withdrawal into his own sense of self and his own embodiment. Although he is careful to tell readers that he swings his weapon "perfect[ly]" (HC 72) and thus implicitly wishes to be complimented for his "white" control of his body (Dyer 2017:28), he does not do his victim the courtesy of addressing him as a human being whose pain is particular and was caused by Chris. "The scream" (HC 72) could have been anyone's, after all – rather than being embodied and particular, it is literally disembodied and allows Chris to not have to face the Other (Levinas 2017: 351-353, 351), absolving him of concrete ethical responsibility. Indeed, this scene strongly suggests that Chris is not capable of genuine ethical engagement with other individual subjects.

entirely appropriate" (HC 53). For him, transcendence ultimately takes on the shape of circle, a literal zero (HC 137), which he describes as "perfectly formed, as consecrated bread" (HC 211). In contrast to the narrator, the text as a whole deems this the apex of the immunitarian discourse of whiteness that Chris has taken up from Henry Thornton and which shapes his whole life: as indicated above, his Imaginary relationship with Marcus Otoyo could also be described as circular and repetitive, oscillating between the two poles of violence and sexual desire. Notably, it is also this circular structure that explains why Mukti and Pandit fail to instill a creative sense of his own individual subjectivity in Chris McCool (and why our own analyses so far have tended to return to the same events and deep structures from a variety of angles): caught within a closed-circuit sense of his own individuality, Chris precisely fails to think or act iteratively in the Derridaen sense. He cannot adapt his actualisation of discourse-practices to different contexts and become sensible to other individual subjectivities. For him, sharing the "consecrated bread" (HC 211) of his identity with others (as would happen both during the literal ritual of Communion, respectively in social interactions, which are communitarian (Esposito 2010: 8-9) discourse-practices if one remains conscious of other individual subjects) is to kill him.

Hence, it seems logical that Chris experiences Marcus' rejection of him as the breaking of a circle – the circle of mutual desire and self-confirmation he has fantasised about in his dreams and now wants to enact in real life, shifting it, to use the Lacanian phrase, from the Imaginary to the Symbolic realm. However, according to Lacanian psychoanalysis, this cannot happen because whereas the Imaginary is characterised by relations of similarity and difference to the child's ego (Fink 1995: 84), a relationship from which the ego derives the expectation that their desires will be instantly fulfilled (Fink 1995: 54-55, 55, fig. 5.2), the Symbolic is characterised by the insurmountable difference of an Other (that may even make demands on individual subjects, rather than acquiescing to theirs) (Fink 1995: 87).The Symbolic thus exposes individual subjects to the fact that desires need to be deferred and cannot be fulfilled instantly (Fink 1995: 53-54). Additionally, Chris also shows the behaviour patterns of a "paranoid" (Bhabha 2004: 142): like a "paranoid", who claims to initially "love [the object of his obsession]" (Bhabha 2004: 142), Chris sets out to give Marcus a book and have the "longings of his heart [appeased]" (HC 203). When commenting on the incident during his stay in the asylum, Chris affects a rational outlook on the events and blames Marcus' response on his own emotional excess (HC 66). Additionally, "Marcus Otoyo […] picked him up all wrong" (HC 37). The latter interpretation suggests that Chris' problem was merely one of communicating intent properly, rather than Chris' intentions as

such. Furthermore, it implies that the two characters are on an equal footing relative to each other; in keeping with post-Enlightenment ideals of the communicative sphere as the basis of an ideal society (Chang 1996; Habermas 2015: 86-90). At first glance, Chris seems to accede to this ideal by taking on part of the blame and recognising that he gave the younger man "a stupid kid's book" (HC 38). While Chris infantilising Marcus – hence establishing a hierarchy with him at the top again and participating in the partial de-humanisation of his interlocutor by re-enacting the racist assumption that Black people are onto-and phylogenetically inferior to Whites (cf. Mbembe 2017: 55-56; Schuller 2018: 13 – 14; Lowe 2015: 107) – certainly plays a part in Chris' actions and Marcus' response, this interpretation downplays the importance of this particular book in Chris' Imaginary.

A Child's Garden of Verses is given to the narrator-protagonist by Ethel Baird when she and Lady Thornton once visit the Nook during his childhood. Since then, it symbolises the aspirational structures of whiteness and Protestantism to Chris, featuring in every fantasy he has of his mother. It thus represents his need to be "*inside* […] [and] *belonging* [italics in original, MTW]" (HC 135). The book thus also serves as the material representative of the ideal of hegemonic colonialist subjectivity (mirroring the dominant function of books in colonial spaces (Bhabha 2004: 152-166)) Chris has adopted as his ideal; conversely, it simultaneously represents the danger of annihilation that Chris' autoimmune reading of whiteness always appeals to. If Marcus were to accept Chris' offer, he would subject his own individual subjectivity to Chris' ideals and thus undergo a partial "symbolic and social death" (Patterson 1982: 38). The threat of death represented by the book is indeed physical as well as social: whenever readers observe Chris' fantasy of his mother reading to him (or Tristram) from the book (HC 135), the boy sits in her lap (respectively an adult man imagines himself as a child sitting in her lap). As the lap is the point at which a child physically enters the world (through the membrane of the womb), this raises a disturbing possibility: namely, that Chris' longing for unity is not limited to social and communitarian belonging but could also refer to a physical regression to the undifferentiated unity of the mother's womb. Notably, the passage above is again italicised, pointing to its belonging to a different social sphere than the Symbolic of the main narrative; indeed, the analysis of the space above fits the Lacanian Real. Hence, it seems likely that Chris does wish to ultimately undo his own physical existence.

The above analysis implies that taking the book is potentially existentially threatening to Marcus, something the boy seems to grasp instinctively. Hence, he responds with the same immunitarian

discourse-practices that Chris used to create his Imaginary Marcus: "turning an accusatory gaze" (HC 203) on the narrator inverts the scopic regime that normally shapes colonialist relations: in the words of Fanon, Marcus instrumentalises the "white man's eyes" (Fanon qtd in Bhabha 2004: 60), and Chris is the one who feels the "weight" (Fanon quoted in Bhabha 2004: 60) of their gaze. Even more importantly, Marcus pushes Chris outside the realm of the social by labelling him a "*freak* [italics in original, MTW]" (HC 203). As this happens in response to Chris' stutter, it seems at first as if the text as a whole ultimately embraces the immunitarian logic it condemns in its narrator when it is aimed at Chris and his own contingent embodiment. Once again, Lennard Davis seems to have it right when he interprets the treatment of disability by mainstream culture as fear of the body in pain that disrupts the enjoyment of the body propagated by the sixties counterculture in particular (Davis 1995:5; Reckwitz 2010: 483-484). In the terms we introduced above at the beginning of this dissertation, we seem to be dealing with an absolute Othering rather than a relative one.

However, the text as a whole offers an alternative to this reading in Chris' last encounter with Dolly Mixtures. As indicated above, he narrates the events in the supermarket twice: during the first iteration, only Chris sets the terms of the discursive agenda and ends his relationship with Dolly, blaming her for the affair with Marcus (HC 157); in other words, Chris and Chris alone decides on the discursive agenda of their conversation while she remains a passive listener who never attempts to correct his accusations. The immunitarian circle of Chris' sense of self remains complete and uncontested in this account of the conversation.

In sharp contrast to this first version, during the latter second version of events – which the text as a whole strongly implies was the one that "actually" happened, since it differs from the first but is not itself superseded by a third version – Dolly asserts her own individual subjectivity and its own power-knowledge as well as her agency in relation to Chris: "It's lovely to see you, but *now I really must be going* [my emphasis, MTW]" (HC 197). Notably, this assertion of agency destabilises Chris' claim to knowledge (his main contribution to this second conversation are questions (HC 197)) and forces him into an inferior position relative to Dolly, with whom he pleads to stay – a plea she does not accede to. Most importantly, she confronts him with an attempt to raise awareness of the consequences of his actions: "You know what you have done" (HC 197). Thus, Dolly, in contrast to both Marcus and Chris, who both deprecate the individual subjectivity of their interlocutors when asserting their individual subjectivity, remains aware and respectful of Chris as an equal but different individual subject, who may "deceive other people"

(HC 197), but still remains capable of the potential to recognise his mistakes and change in future. Her suggestion that Chris ought to "get[] help" (HC 197) functions like the discursive equivalent of an extended hand. Although Dolly herself cannot help Chris – she immunises herself from him by walking away (HC 197) and leaving his life, and thus defends her individual subjectivity (Esposito 2011: 6) – Dolly maintains that Chris *can be* "helped" (HC 197). Thus, she mentally includes her former boyfriend in a future community; her sense of self "mixes" *immunitas* and *communitas*. Unlike most of the men in the novel, Dolly's gender identity is not defined by the need to defend herself collapsing into an "autoimmunitarian" (Esposito 2011: 17) desire to kill. Furthermore, she feels threatened by Chris' past actions rather than his embodiment as such. Considering that she is the only main character the narrator interacts with to fully escape his grasp alive (HC 198) (there is not suggestion in the novel that she might have been killed), that Dolly is "the one that got away", the text as a whole seems to strongly favour her approach to Chris' embodiment and actions: were he to take her advice to heart and let himself be helped by Mukti and Meera, the text as a whole suggests, Chris could become an individual subject like Mike who embodies difference creatively. The narrative thus again conceptualises contingent embodiments and disabilities as "political" (Kafer 2013: 9-10) issues, rather than as "medical" (Kafer 2013: 7-8) problems. According to this perspective on disability, curing and changing an individual subject's embodiment takes a back-seat to questions of how to integrate their contingent embodiment into a community and how to make them equal members of society.[210]

As the narrative identifies the immunitarian elements as the reason the narrator remains a relative Other and illustrates how they permeate the post-colonial community of Cullymore, it also asks readers to question the deep structural effects of colonialism on racialised and disabled identities. Additionally, most of the male characters (except Dr Mukti and Mike) embrace a strictly antagonistic and immunitarian form of masculinity that often results in their abusing both themselves and other individual subjects. Hence, the second question raised by the narrative concerns the possibility of imagining a non-immunitarian form of masculinity.

Lastly, the narrative poses the question of how to imagine a community that treats disabled individual subjects as persons with a different embodiment rather than as Others (relative or otherwise). On the one hand, it shows that Chris' approach to (his) embodiment through a lens that presumes that minds and bodies must map onto each other without any gaps and that all

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[210] For a detailed analysis of a text that addresses these questions directly and represents positive efforts to integrate disabled individual subjects into a community by treating them as equals, see the following chapter.

embodied actions must be consciously accessible and governed by rational concerns only, a Cartesian view of embodiment, in other words, is deeply damaging to both individual subjects themselves and the community in which they live. Chris' life story and collapse at the end of the novel (HC 211) illustrates that such an approach to themselves and the world blocks an individual subject from creatively and affectively engaging with other individual subjects as equals; instead, this immunitarian and exclusive approach to bio-politics engenders destructive and damaging hierarchies of racialisation and genderisation. These are consequently ingrained into the deep structure of a community and ultimately turn the defensive impulse of *immunitas* into the destructive killer instinct of an auto-immunitarian negation of everything, including individual subjects themselves. On the other hand, it also shows that there is an alternative possibility of approaching the different embodiments of disabled individual subjects, one that sees their difference as a "creative resource" (Butter 2013: 28) rather than as an accidental or epistemological threat. This is evidenced especially by the way the text as a whole and the doctors at the hospital approach Chris' and Mike's contingent embodiments: both Meera Pandit and Dr Mukti try to help their patients to re-integrate themselves into the community; hence, they (like Dolly Mixtures) believe that such a re-integration is fundamentally possible and would be beneficial to both men. Unlike Chris, who uses discourses of ontological othering to hermetically seal the boundaries of his own sense of self, and Marcus, who merely inverts the subject-object designators to assert his individual subjectivity and thus remains dependent on the same immunitarian axioms as Chris, these three characters assume that difference is the structural nexus of all embodiments and that embodied difference is the basis of all communities. Hence, psychiatry as practised by the two Indians is not a normalising discourse in the Foucauldian sense (they do not correct either Mike's cleft palate or Chris' stutter) but a rehabilitative one that seeks to integrate different embodiments into a community of embodied differences. In keeping with this non-normative reading of medicine – Chris is only sent to the White Room after he has actively harmed another individual subject person and not prejudged because of his embodiment – the text as a whole also refuses to provide readers with an authoritative label for his condition. Hence, it invites them to consider his actions rather than the facticity of his embodiment and to consider the power of bio-political rules and regulations in defining and shaping an individual subject's role in a community. After all, Chris' own affective investment in normalising discourse-practices that instrumentalise embodiments as signifiers of (race, class, and gender) hierarchies ultimately isolates him from the very community he wants to belong to.

Although the dominance of the narrative voice points to the deep structural imbrication of this hierarchical understanding of embodiment in postcolonial conceptions of both communities in general and Irishness in particular, the survival of Mark Martinez and Dolly Mixtures also hints at an alternative conception of how disabled individual subjects might live both with and through their embodied differences and in communities. Fundamentally, the trajectory of these characters and the text as a whole pose a question for readers to answer: in what sort of community would we live if we began to view contingent embodiment as a creative resource (Butter 2013: 28) rather than a threat? The following analysis of the way embodiment, disability, gender identity, and community are represented in the fictionalised East End of *Call the Midwife* attempts to analyse and illustrate one answer to this questions. As will become apparent, this answer takes the creative potential of embodied contingency seriously and attempts to articulate an emergent (Wiliams 2018: 1344 - 1345) alternative to the hegemony of viewing disability as relative Otherness.[211]

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[211] The analyses of the episodes of *Call the Midwife* in the next chapter do not address issues of racialisation (although the series as a whole has done so repeatedly) as they do not feature in the narrative. For an excellent analysis of the representation of race and whiteness in recent Irish fiction (including *The Holy City*), see Heinz 2014.

9. "You Cannot See It, But She Can" -Creating and Maintaining Communities Across Ability Differences in Call the Midwife

9.1 The Creative Contingency of Community: Call The Midwife And the Bio-political Procedural
The three preceding chapters examine the changes in the representation of disabled individual subjects as relative Others from the beginning of the nineteenth century (under the auspices of the early-bourgeois and Romantic cultures of subjectivity) through the beginning of the twentieth century. During that period ,the bio-politics of both the formerly-hegemonic late-bourgeois subject and the naturalist avant-garde subject (Reckwitz 2010: 263-267,325) that seeks to replace it, normalise embodiments according to eugenic models and ideologies of propriety (Schalk 2015: 150). And although eugenic approaches to life are discredited in the wake of the exposure of Nazi eugenic, racist, and genocidal practices (Schalk 2015: 150 - 151; Bauman 2000: 208-221; Esposito 2015: 79-87), the self-destructive conception of subjectivity embraced by the protagonist of *The Holy City* signals their endurance and tenacity. However, McCabe's novel differs in various ways from the representation of contingent embodiment in both *Frankenstein* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*: firstly, as indicated above, the text as a whole showcases that Chris McCool is not ontologically excluded from a fruitful and positive engagement with the community and society of Cullymore; *his actions* exclude him rather than his embodiment. And even when they are faced with the results of these actions, characters like Dolly Mixtures and the psychiatrists at the hospital Chris is treated at do not see them as grounds for irreversible exclusion. Unlike the Creature and Clifford Chatterley, Chris is constantly treated as a *potential* member of the community who could make a positive contribution to it if he so wished.

In contrast to *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, which treats Clifford's degeneration and exclusion from the new community represented by Mellors and Connie as a *fait accompli* from the beginning, the text as a whole of *The Holy City* raises the question what a community that includes rather than excludes the contingency of different embodiments, that considers them a resource rather than treating them as a threat, would look like. In so doing, it aligns itself with *Frankenstein*, which also questions the societal ideals of embodiment that lead to the Creature's exclusion. Ultimately, both of these texts imagine a different form of community that sees embodied difference as a structural condition shared by disabled and currently non-disabled individual subjects alike.

The present chapter analyses three episodes of the BBC television series *Call the Midwife*, which offer an emergent alternative to the representation of embodied contingency as relative Otherness

and the hegemonic exclusion of disabled individual subjects propagated thereby. The series began airing in 2011 and has won various awards during its run (still ongoing as of 2018), proving the "BBC's biggest new drama in over a decade" (Plunkett, The Guardian, 28th of August 2012).[212] The series has so far addressed the experience of disabled individual subjects three times and has twice portrayed these characters as individual subjects who engage in positive and nurturing sexual relationships. Hence, it counters both the assumption that disabled individual subjects are non-sexual beings (Kafer 2013: 76 - 85) and the prevailing representation of sexuality as a destructive force in the hands of disabled individual subjects in the texts analysed so far. As we shall see, the adult disabled individual subjects featured on *Call the Midwife* neither abuse their partners (as Richard and Chris McCool do) nor are their sexuality and future-oriented natality viewed as a threat to themselves (in contrast to the avowed anti-sexuality of Clifford Chatterley's public conduct) or others, much less society as a whole (as the Creature's is by Victor Frankenstein). Instead, sexuality is viewed by the episodes as a part of human life that is ultimately not contingent upon the able-bodiedness (and/or able-mindedness (Schalk 2018: 53 - 81)).of an individual subject.

By featuring disabled individual subjects as regular guest stars on the show, *Call the Midwife* participates in a trend in television shows produced the last twenty years. In the case of the American television series *Monk*, for example, the protagonist is autistic and often solves cases because he notices things neurotypical persons would not.[213] The series primarily uses comedic tropes to problematise the assumptions about rationality and the solving of crimes that underlie Golden Age crime fiction. It even invites audiences to question the underlying social assumptions regarding the rationality or irrationality of individual subjects who suffer from mental disorders that underlie these tropes, or indeed to question current definitions of rationality and their societal implications as a whole. At the same time, the structure of the series allows audience members to reflect on the assumptions regarding able-bodiedness and able-mindedness that inform their laughing at the main character's mannerisms and needs. At a meta-structural level, it exposes the

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[212] *Call the Midwife.* Prod. Heidi Thomas. London and Manchester: BBC One, 2011 - ongoing. All the references to the programme refer to the DVD version: *Call the Midwife. Series One To Three*. Prod. Heidi Thomas. 2entertain, 2014. All subsequent sequence references are based on the DVD version of the programme and will be given in brackets in the body of text using the following format: Series number x episode number, running time. The timestamps reflect the running speed of a Playstation 3.

[213] *Monk*. Prods. Andy Breckman and David Hopeman.Touchstone Television; Mandeville Films, 2002 -2009.

association of structural positions within the narrative with particular forms of embodiment as contingent and potentially ableist. Furthermore, the fact that the autistic main character is played by a non-disabled actor enables audience members interested in a series' paratext, such as its casting decisions, to explore the role of disabled actors within the television industry and to ask for the representation of disabled characters in a narrative by actors whose embodiment is shaped by the same or similar experiences. Hence, *Monk* first addressed many of the questions regarding the representation of embodiment and disabled individual subjectivities the episodes of *Call the Midwife* discussed below also raise.

Most importantly for our present purposes, however, is the show's genre. As a police procedural, *Monk* pivots around an "investigating agent […] [who] discover[s] the cause of a crime, restore[s] order, and bring[s] the criminal to account" (Knight 1980: 8). In the case of *Monk,* we are dealing with a restoration on the social and judicial levels, as has been traditional for the genre since its inception in the short stories of Edgar Allen Poe. Recalling the distinction between "immunitarian" (Esposito 2011: 5-6) and "communitarian" (Esposito 2010: 5-6) discourse-practices discussed repeatedly in the preceding chapters, one could argue that detective stories as a whole constitute an immunitarian genre. They portray the protective mechanisms of the current hegemony at work and aid it in ideologically defining the Others it needs to exclude to maintain that hegemony. However, the inclusion of formerly-excluded or marginal sections of society in recent crime dramas also problematises the very immunitarian discourse-practices the genre is built around. In the case of disabled detectives like Monk, it thus highlights that previous representations of disabled individual subjects imagined them as part of the group against whom these immunitarian discourse-practices are employed, but now they are the ones to wield them; in doing so, these characters expose the contingency of these particular practice-discourses.

As its title indicates, *Call the Midwife* centres around the event of birth, in which biological processes and social processes (such as the recognition or denial of community membership and natal belonging) intertwine, as symbolised by the midwife who helps mothers during the birthing process: midwives are members of a community that help render a natural process socially legible and acceptable, specifically by helping women navigate the changes their bodies undergo during and after pregnancy and childbirth, respectively by integrating newborns into the community of humans into which these children have been placed by the contingent act (in both epistemological senses of that word) of birth. Thus, the profession manages a naturecultural or bio-political act of border-crossing and liminality.

In addition to emphasising the thematic focus of the series, the title also implies its generic origins. Considering the popularity of the crime fiction genre across a range of popular media, including television (Boltanski 2015: 13, 16-17), it seems reasonable to assume that the title of the series will remind viewers of the phrase "Call the police!" which starts the diegetic presentation of events in a crime narrative. Thus, the series title signals the generic affinity between *Call the Midwife* and procedural crime dramas in terms of the narrative conventions both employ. At the same time, it also calls attention to the difference the series injects into the (gendered) conventions of the procedural as a genre: as indicated above, it focuses on the procedures and processes of the beginning of life, rather than its violent and untimely end. Hence, *Call the Midwife* also addresses questions of communitarian inclusion as much as those of immunitarian exclusion. Furthermore, it positions a female-dominated cast of characters at the centre of its narrative world, as signalled by the emphasis on a profession that is coded as feminine and is dominated by women. Thereby, the drama draws attention to the extent to which more traditional crime dramas are governed by implicit codes of hegemonic masculinity, even when they are problematised or actualised by female characters.

As explained above, midwifery can be understood as a complex process of "naturecultural" (Haraway 2008: 15) navigations of embodiment, in which midwives function as guides (and potentially as gatekeepers) – and hence as a form of bio-political police force, not unlike the detectives with whom the genre conventions of the crime procedural correlate them – with all the problematic associations this implies (eugenics and the wider management of births by the state.[214] Hence, I would like to describe the genre of *Call the Midwife* as a bio-political procedural. In order to be able to capture the particular form this bio-political focus takes, I would like to briefly compare it to another very successful procedural with a medical focus and bio-political subtext: *House M.D.*[215] Originally broadcast on the American channel Fox from 2004 to 2012, this television show centres on the fictional diagnostics department of an American teaching hospital, led by Gregory House (Hugh Laurie) and his team of assistant doctors. Each episode centres on a "patient-of-the-week", who suffers from a mysterious illness that the doctors try to diagnose and cure. Usually, the episode consists of four acts, separated by commercial

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[214] For a detailed discussion of the ways disabled individual subjects were and are subjected to eugenic state control when it comes to their natality and sexuality, see especially Kafer (2013: 29- 32, 161 - 166) and Samuels 2014.

[215] *House M.D.* Prod. David Shore. Heel and Toe Films; NBC Universal Television Distribution, 2004 -2012.

breaks during the initial broadcast (respectively, a brief black screen in the versions recorded on DVD); in the first act, which precedes the opening credits, the audience is introduced to the patient in a seemingly everyday situation. These opening shots usually invite the audience to examine the patient's environment closely (through lingering shots of particular features of the scene), activating a "forensic" (Mittel 2015: 52) attitude in viewers. This forensic attitude is retroactively justified when the audience sees the patient collapse or suddenly suffer from inexplicable symptoms. Illness *on House M.D.* is uniformly coded as accidentally contingent for people and as epistemologically contingent for the extratextual audience. After the opening credits, the patient is diagnosed by House and his team. Two of the initial diagnoses and the resultant courses of treatment end in the patient suffering from worse or additional symptoms; thus, they structurally echo episodic crime dramas, with the additional symptoms acting as indicators of the wrong medical "suspect", so to speak. In the last act, House and his team derive a correct diagnosis from pieces of information that seemed tangential or outright irrelevant earlier in the episode (Bittner, Armbrust and Krause 2013: 38). According to an interview, showrunner David Shore specifically wanted the show to put Sherlock Holmes into a medical setting (Barnett 2010: 14). In keeping with this narrative mirroring, his main character also derives his diagnoses through rational deductions building on detailed empirical observations of the patients' lifeworld (Bittner, Armbrust and Krause 2013: 38). Furthermore, although the diagnostic process is of course expedited in the show to fit the demands of the episodic structure, it is detailed and accurate enough that medical departments use the series as teaching material (Wicclair 2008). Hence, one could describe the effect of the series as potentially immunizing: in the story world, House and his team help prevent potentially lethal diseases from spreading while the series extratextually raises awareness of rare diseases and medical procedures among the general public.[216] Up to this point, the discussion has presented the immunizing effects of the series as a positive effect and used immunising in a metaphorical way that builds on medical usage. Just like antibodies help prevent contact between an organism and germs and through this contact gain information that makes them more effective in future, the series spreads information that helps prevent diseases.

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[216] The public response to the series also mirrors the consequences of Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories, which raised both the scientific method and the police force in the estimation of the late-Victorian public, especially regarding the relatively new technique of finger-printing (cf Miller 1989).

However, the immunitarian logic of *House M.D*. also has potentially negative and at very least problematic social implications. Throughout the series, House the character is notorious for his immunitarian (*sensu* Esposito) character traits and personality: he dislikes change generally and fundamentally, but especially when it affects his own circumscribed social circle. Additionally House makes every attempt to eschew his mandatory clinical hours (that is, the hospital's walk-in patients and the concomitant community service). Overall, the character is portrayed as very immunitarian in his habits and practices. The most extreme expression is his treatment principle for his patients. House assumes that "Everybody lies" and so refuses to engage with the individual subjects directly, if at all possible (and is unspeakably rude whenever he cannot avoid patient contact). Firstly, this diagnostic principle and communicative habit both reduce House's communal field almost to the Nancyian extreme of pure "being-in-common" (Fynsk: xv), to merely existing side by side without interacting, as the assumption that everybody lies renders it unnecessary to communicate with them in the narrower sense. As the aim of communication in a medical context is to build trust and to gather potentially relevant diagnostic information (Bittner, Armbrust and Krause 2011: 39), House consciously counteracts this communitarian axiom of contemporary medicine, replacing it with the rather paternalistic assumption that he in his role as "'doctor knows best' [quotation marks in original, MTW')" (Bittner, Armbrust and Krause 2011: 39). This reduction of autonomy and the immunitarian isolation of people is further intensified if we read House's motto literally: House does not claim and state that everyone is a liar – despite its semantic equivalence to his catchphrase. Instead, he identifies the body as his focus of interest ("*every body* lies"). As Uta Bittner notes, this catchphrase thus emphasises House's focus on isolated, generalised and anonymised bodies rather than on embodied individual subjects (Bittner, Armbrust and Krause 2011: 38, footnote). Furthermore, when arriving at his diagnostic conclusions, House does not rely on other people's opinion or input (indeed, he often deliberately ignores the advice of his colleagues and superiors (Bittner, Armbrust and Krause 2011: 38)). And while the series as a whole tends to criticise the titular character's attitude when it concerns his inter-personal relationships, the fact that he is usually right in his diagnostic conclusions validates House's immunitarian approach to life on the level of discourse. Hence, the series might be described as an immunitarian biopolitical procedural.

9.2 Embodiment Contingency As a Fact of Life and The Midwife As Its Agent: Ethics, Community, and Different Embodiments

This long excursion into a series that is not the actual focus of the chapter was meant to illustrate parts of the wider generic context in (and partly also against) which the discourse of *Call the Midwife* operates. Following Jason Mittel's observation that series pilots are important because "[they] teach us [=the audience, MTW] how to watch the show" (Mittel 2015: 56, 56 - 57), the following analysis focuses on the important thematic paradigms established in the first episode of *Call the Midwife* before analysing their expansion and modification when the narrative deals with disabled individual subjects.[217] The series features primarily female characters as agents of community and women have been portrayed as agents of harmony in patriarchal discourses of femininity from the Victorian period to the middle of the twentieth century (Reckwitz 2010: 265; McClintock 1995). The pilot episode partly plays with the residual status of this gender role in contemporary discourse-practices in the 1950s story-world in its opening sequence: initially, it shows its main focal character (Jenny, played by Jessica Raine) walking alone along the East End docks. The only other people she encounters are men, all of whom walk in the opposite direction to her and some of whom whistle at Jenny as she passes (1x1, 01:05). A brief shot of her face illustrates that this makes the young woman uncomfortable (1x1, 01:06). Additionally, the quality of her clothes and her hairdo – which resembles that of famous stars of the 1950s like Doris Day (1x1, 00: 50) - signals to the audience that Jenny is middle-class and thus an outsider along the axes of gender and class to the people she walks among. Hence, the episode begins by showing the immunitarian interaction of two communities: the middle-class hegemony represented by Jenny and the working classes of the East End. For the moment, both communities appear as the famous "two cultures" of Benjamin Disraeli and this in turn raises the question in the minds of the audience if Jenny can ever become part of this other community,

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[217] At the time of writing (November 2018), *Call the Midwife* has featured narratives dealing with disabled individual subjects in every series expect the first and the most recent seventh. Four of these episodes deal with different disabled characters as part of a plot confined to a single episode. Two episodes in the fourth and sixth seasons, respectively, feature recurring characters and deal with a continuing plot: the children have shorter limbs because their mothers were prescribed Thalidomide during pregnancy. In the second episode in season six, the same parents and children meet at a clinic for artificial limbs. As a result, the children form friendships and the parents form an activist group aiming to prosecute the pharmaceutical company responsible for the marketing of the drug. When revising this chapter for publication, I noted that the count of disabled characters has gone up by two, and the most recent ninth series again features a disabled mother-raising her child with the help of her family and community while navigating the lifeworld of a blind individual subject in its fifth episode. For reasons of space, the rest of the chapter focuses on the pilot episode and two of the three episodes that have featured individual disabled subjects as patients for a single episode only (episodes 2x4 and 3x5).

The next shot shows a large group of women and children running in the same direction, forming a circle in front of a tenement building where two women have begun fighting and tearing at each other's hair (1x1, 01:30 – 02:20) while the onlookers egg them on with shouts of "Go on!" and "Come on" (1x1, 02:30 -02:50). Thus, the sequence disrupts various ideas the audience may hold regarding communities generally and communities dominated by women and children in – the main supporting cast of all *Call the Midwife* episodes- in specific: firstly, it emphasises that a depiction of community life ought not to be naively equated with a depiction of these communities as universally happy and harmonious spaces. Instead, the fighting sequences showcases – albeit refracted through the methodologically individualistic lens of fiction – the antagonistic and dissociative component of all communities and community formations and the central role of violence and power relations in all of them (Marchart 2013: 307 – 308, 03 - 332; Mouffe 2013: 1-15).[218] In this particular case, the power relations are explicitly tied to sexual pleasure: the women are fighting because one of them slept with the others' husband and gleefully informs her that she was the better lover while beating her ("*I had* him *weepin'with gratitude* [my emphasis, MTW]", 1x1, 02: 55 – 02:59)).[219] Notably, the other woman responds to this with a simultaneous invocation of both societal conventions ("Yeah? Well, he's *my* husband[.] [emphasis in original, MTW], 1x1, 02:59 – 03:00) and the dissociative force of retributive violence against the very same institution ("[A]nd I'll bloody kill him once I'm finished with you!", 1x1, 03:01 – 03:05)). Thus, she invokes the contingent interference of discourses with each other in society to justify her actions and her using non-sublimated violence as her tool of choice. Considering that this contingency enables her to retain her agency in the face of her husband's adultery – from a feminist perspective one might even consider her acts as creating a new form of agency against the patriarchal assumption that a wife ought not to notice

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[218] See also the discussion of Frank Wilderson's conceptualising race relations as "antagonistic" (Wilderson 2010: 5, 29) rather than as being in "in conflict" (Wilderson 2010: 5, 30) in the preceding chapter.

[219] Interestingly, the statement also problematises gender roles. According to this statement, it is the woman who takes on the active role in the relationship and the man who responded with embodied displays of emotion. At the same time, this inversion of gender roles may itself not be an accurate reflection of the state of affairs in the affair but rather be made up in order to fulfil its pragmatic purpose in the present situation as a gloating taunt. Hence, the audience is once again exposed to the contingent antagonist relationships of language games (Marchart 2010: 38 - 42) that constitutes human being-in and being-in-common in a shared world.

her husband having affairs – the woman herself definitely considers this form of contingency as positive and enabling rather than disabling or unsettling.[220]

At the same time, the further context of the scene makes it clear that this sort of behaviour is perceived as damaging and accidental, if not as epistemologically incommensurable, by the hegemonic standards of our middle-class protagonist: Jenny watches the scene and the audience watching it with horror – her eyes wide and her mouth agape (1x1, 02: 18- 02: 20). Additionally, she keeps looking round, evidently expecting other people to be as horrified as she is and to respond to that horror by breaking up the squabble, that is by restoring order (1x1: 02:42). Most importantly, this shock is enough to break the main character's silence. In a voice-over, she addresses the extratextual audience and expresses her emotions on being exposed to the epistemological contingency of the scene in front of her: "I must have been mad. I could have been an air hostess. I could have been a model. […] [Instead, MTW] I sidestepped love and set off for the east end of London. Because I thought it would be easier. Madness was the only explanation." (1x1: 02:18- 02:41) At first glance, the young woman thus seems to declare her decision as retrospectively wrong and irrational, descriptors that also metonymically extend to the scene in front of her (the visual track of the scene underscores this interpretation by showing images of the jeering spectators of the fight) (1x1, 02:18 – 02:48). However, this very description also highlights elements that counteract this reading and present seeds of a positive reading of the scene, which are developed over the course of the episode and the first three seasons. They present Jenny's character arc as being about the acceptance of contingency as a part of community and acquiring the ability to translate it from an accident into a resource: two elements of the above statement already hint at this development.

Firstly, the woman says that she could have chosen professions other than being a nurse. All of the professions she lists have one thing in common: the air hostess, the model, and the concert pianist all three emphasise their individuality and uniqueness over and above their existence with others. In contrast, nurses are defined as a profession by their caring for others. The fact that Jenny evidently has chosen to become a nurse indicates her interest in communities and other people. The text even implies that her interest in community-building and maintenance lies behind her shock at the physical fight in front of her: she assumes that communities are happy

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[220] This assumption that she ought not have noticed her husband having an affair is a residual form of the Victorian notion that women ought to be chaste and demure in order to sublimate the sexual desires of men through marriage (Reckwitz 2010: 265).

spaces without conflict or strife and hence categorises the scene in front of her as madness and thus as the irrational Other outside of community conceived as an immunitarianly secluded space. However, madness is a figure of inclusion as well as exclusion: whatever we define as "reasonable" or "rational" depends on madness as its "constitutive outside" (Lauclau and Mouffe 2014: 127 - 131; Foucault 1973: 7-8). Because of this, the madness at the heart of rationality always disrupts any totalising effect rationality might claim for itself. Similarly, the violence Jenny is shocked by can be seen as a needed element of any community – in the case of the women in question, it helps to articulate the inadequacy of existing gender roles to their own lived experience.[221]

Furthermore, the presence of the voice-over narrator creates an auditory bridge between the audience and the story-world they see on-screen. This auditory link is both emphasised and historicised by the fact that we are not presented with the voice of a woman that the audience would be inclined to interpret as a young woman's voice (in keeping with the age of the woman shown in the images so far). Instead, the audience decodes the non-verbal sign of the voice (spoken by Vanessa Redgrave) as belonging to an older woman. At the same time, she uses the pronoun "I" and is thus marked as sharing the identity of the character the audience sees on screen. Hence, the narrator's voice calls attention to the scenes and emotions presented as located in a past. Furthermore, this technique enacts the narratological difference between the "narrating and experiencing I" of an autobiographical narration (Stanzel 2008: 271). As Franz Stanzel notes the narrating I usually possesses greater life experience than its experiencing counterpart (Stanzel 2008: 272) and its statements are thus endowed with greater authority relative to the ideal reader – presuming, I would add, that the text as a whole does not provide signals pointing towards a form of unreliable narration (Nünning, Suhrkamp and Zerweck 1998).[222] Due to this greater narrative authority, statements made by the narrating-I are endowed with a stronger ability to guide audience members in their reception of the narrative; in the case of *Call the Midwife*, the voice of the narrating-I provides a framing narrative, indicating the central thematic concerns of a

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[221] The implicit association of „love" with something that disrupts community, rather than aiding the communitarian elements (as nursing does) will be discussed in greater detail in reference to episode 3x5 below. But see Nancy (1991: 37 - 38), Heinz (2007: 79 - 86) and Belsey (1994: 109 – 129) for detailed discussions of this side of love.

[222] For an example of just such a problematisation, see the analysis of the narrative situation in *The Holy City* in the preceding chapter.

given episode through an opening statement, respectively providing a closing statement that provides closure for the audience and closes dangling plot hooks.

In the case of the pilot episode, the narrating-I, in addition to introducing the audience to her younger self as the primary focaliser of the narrative, also characterises the profession of midwife and so introduces the show's concern with communitarian processes and their intertwining with embodiments and gender identities: shortly after the main character has left the scene of the two women's brawl and the audience has watched two police constables unsuccessfully try to separate the two combatants (1x1, 03:00 – 03:24), another main character enters the scene. Her habit and medical supplies bag (1x1, 03:24) implies that she is one of the district midwives – most of whom are members of an Anglican monastic order.[223] Unfazed by either the throng of onlookers or the violence exhibited by the women, she manages to separate them by identifying one of the women as "[her] patient" (1x1, 03:29 – 03:31) and by then appealing to her as an individual subject with an individual history within the community (" Pearl Winston. Why am I *not* surprised? [emphasis in original, MTW]" (1x1, 03:40 – 03:44).

This contrasts sharply with the desperate appeals of the police constables shown earlier: the men argue from a position informed by societal gender norms, in particular a residual late-bourgeois concept of "gentleness and domesticity" (Reckwitz 2010: 265) that still informs their conceptualisation of women in general and politeness towards women in particular: they address the two women as "ladies" (1x1, 03:21) (rather than using their names), that is by a discursive-practical role model that institutes a subject through the naming process and the authority of an "ideological state apparatus" (Althusser 2010: 1341). In contrast to Althusser's policeman, whose "Hey you!" succeeds in constituting the subject of its address (the person thus addressed stops and looks around (Althusser 2010: 1357)), the address of the two police constables fails, proving its inadequacy.

The midwife, who is later introduced to Jenny and the viewers as Sister Evangelina (Pam Ferris) (1x1, 08:47), also begins by addressing the two women as "ladies" (1x1. 03:21); however, her

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[223] Notably, the series connotes uniforms as an aid in belonging and being recognised in a community without simultaneously denying the singularity (Reckwitz 2017: *passim*) of each individual subject, unlike some modernist fiction (Woolfe 1987 [1927]). Instead, the uniform helps Jenny to be recognised as a person belonging to the community when she first cycles through the docks in uniform. At the same time, the series shows one of its main characters give up life as a nun (2x01 -2x6) while another becomes a postulant and then a novice (2x04 – ongoing). Hence, the series treats these communities as parts within other communities or societies rather than as autonomous entities. Likewise, uniforms are an expression of an individual subject's choice and not universally associated with totalitarian oppression.

appeal emphasises the women's shared status as her (potential) patient (1x1, 03:28 – 03:30). The patients of midwives are mostly women who are pregnant and who are often at quite an advanced stage of pregnancy, too, so that the foetus is affected by physical stimuli and has reached a form of embodiment that most human conceptualisations of embodiment associate with babies or children. Sister Evangelina's appeal thus implicitly refers to a naturecultural or bio-political ethics.[224] This appeal has two components, both of which derive from the liberal humanist bias of the series' ethics: firstly, the midwife reminds both women that their brawl involved a third party, who cannot yet defend themselves against the blows exchanged, but may already be harmed or even killed by them. Indeed, both of the combatants concur with the implicit argument that Pearl's foetus is a being that can be harmed by their violence. They both stop their physical altercation, and Pearl even shields her belly with her hand (1x1, 03:37). At the same time, the end of physical violence does not mean that the social violence ends – the women still refer to each other as "tart" or wicked bitch" (1x1, 04:05 – 04:07). Notably, the nun ignores the insults exchanged, and neither does she reprimand either of the women through reference to the normative component of gender roles. The composition of the scene strongly suggests that the text as a whole wishes to present its audience with an example of lived ethics that problematises essentialising other individual subjects through reference to unreflected cultural discourse-practices and rather seeks to acknowledge their merit as human beings in and through forms of difference and conflict. Sister Evangelina parts the circle of jeering onlookers and confronts the two women without showing any sign of shock at their fighting (1x1, 03:20-03:24). This lack of a moralising or essentialising response is emphasised because it contrasts markedly with the viewers' recollection of Jenny's morally-motivated outrage, which is shown only seconds earlier (1x1, 03:18). Similarly, Sister Evangelina's individualising reprimand to Pearl remains ambiguous enough to leave it up to the audience how they want to answer the question "why [the nun is] not surprised[.]" (1x1, 03:42 – 03:44). On the one hand, this could be a reference to Pearl's violation of accepted discursive-practical and ethical mores regarding how women ought

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[224] Some members of the audience may interpret this as a conservative ethical stance on the matter of abortion and female bodily autonomy. The interpretation given above may remind them of the arguments of opponents of abortion, who indeed often argue that the foetus is a human being from the moment of conception, making abortion murder. While a detailed examination of the stance implied in *Call the Midwife* regarding this issue lies very far outside the scope of this chapter, we would briefly point to later episodes dealing with unwanted pregnancy and amateur abortion before contraceptive pills were invented, all of which centre on women making independent – though often desperate- choices and their choice being accepted by the main cast.

to behave. On the other hand, it could also refer to Pearl's forgetting her late stage of pregnancy in her need to avenge herself on her rival. The text as a whole implies that the interpretive structure of the episode (and, we would argue, the ethics-related components of the series's narrative structure as a whole) points to the latter reading as more likely. After all, the midwife does not reprimand the non-pregnant woman as she would be bound to do if the violation of codes of femininity were the source of her annoyance.

At the same time, Sister Evangelina also fails to explicitly verbalise any disapproval at Pearl's behaviour as a pregnant woman. On the one hand, Pearl's immediate non-verbal response indicates that the question operates as an appeal to a subject culture and as a non-verbal reprimand. At the same time, Pearl's non-verbal response may be understood as an answer to this particular reprimand, an externalised expression of her affection for the foetus (that is, she wants to have this child, even as she also wants to make her displeasure at her husband's affair known and felt in the community), or a combination of both. Since the episode itself gives no answer to the question (the subject of the brawl is never referred to again), it points to the complex entanglement (Barad 2007: 247) of embodiment, culture and ethics that characterises issues of embodiment and bodily autonomy as well as communal existence. The fact that the midwife does not assume the role of arbiter or judge – and the fact that the policemen, who do attempt to perform this function, fail – places the need to answer the question outside the frame of the narrative itself and asks the extratextual audience to actively engage with the dilemma presented in the story. Furthermore, this ability to either not provide definitive answers or to remain aware of the contingency of all answers, no matter the discursive authority they may assume, also trains audiences in greater awareness of contingency.

This awareness of contingency is also echoed in the description of the profession of midwifery given by the narrating voice of mature Jenny immediately after we see Sister Evangelina accompanying Pearl back to her flat. The voice of the narrating I emphasises that "[midwifery] is the very stuff of life" (1x1, 04:11 – 04:14). She then proceeds to give a definition of the profession that functions as one of the series' thematic guiding statements: "Every child is conceived in love, or lust, and born in pain, followed by joy, or by tragedy and anguish. Every birth is attended by a midwife. She is in the thick of it. She sees it all." (1x1, 04:11 – 04:39).

The description is framed by two images that evoke contingency. By using "stuff" (1x1, 04:11), the narrator emphasises the amorphousness of life, the fact that each new life disrupts the known routines of a community and asks it to once again think about the mechanisms processes and

assumptions that maintain it. As "stuff" (04: 11) –unlike other forms associated with life (the hexagonal shape of developed cells, for example) – has no fixed shape, the metaphor emphasises both that newborn babies are shaped by the culture into which they are born and that their individual subjectivity exceeds the discursive-practical limits of any given subject culture, exposing its contingency. *Call the Midwife* thus perceives life as a source of contingency. The natality of every individual subject engenders their Arendtian natality as each new life is a new creative beginning (Arendt 2016b [1967]: 216 - 217). Strikingly, the series does not proceed to define life as expressive of any particular form of contingency or as fixed: there is no causal relation between love and joy or lust and tragedy, for instance; hence, a conception that was initially interpreted as an instance of accidental contingency may later prove to be a resource of creativity for both the child and the communities in which they live or vice versa.

This entanglement in its turn also requires a rethinking of morals as ethics. In her Adorno lecture on the critique of ethical violence, Judith Butler introduces a distinction between morals and ethics. Morals, she contends, are based on an act of judgement and judging (with all the violence this choice of words implies (Butler 2014: 23 - 27) whereas ethics are more broadly interested in rendering other people or individual subjects themselves recognisable and at least partly comprehensible to themselves or others – in accordance with specific discourse-practices (Butler 2014: 39 - 57). In order to judge the existence of a being individual subjects require norms that allow them to evaluate the deeds of another, partly by projecting from their present and past behaviour into a future (reducing the radical contingency of the future in the process). Since the entanglement of emotions quoted in the above statement refuses to be interpreted as two uniform chains of ethical causality, the narrating-I implicitly presents the midwife as somebody who observes the deeds of others, but needs to evaluate them ethically (that is, by keeping in mind the individual subjectivity of all persons involved – including herself - and negotiating between them and societal demands) rather than morally. The metaphors used in the passage confirm this reading. They place the midwife in "the thick of it" (1x1, 04:32 – 04:35). This idiomatic expression signifies "the most active or dangerous part of a particular situation or activity" ("in the thick of sth Meaning in the Cambridge English Dictionary" website). As the busiest or most active part, the thick of it is characterised by constant change and a certain amount of unpredictability and contingency. The description of midwifery thus once again emphasises the exposure to and the ability to adapt to change as one of the central features of the events surrounding birth. Notably, the children themselves are also considered to be participants in these

complex processes; thus, it could be argued that the series presents the ontological fact of human natality (Patterson 1982: 5 Arendt 2016b [1967]: 215 - 217) as implicitly tied to the ontological fact of contingency. This conjunction, in turn, allows us to reformulate the varying degrees of contingency across the span of human lives as potentially related to a "naturecultural" (Haraway 2008: 15) conception of human natality, which varies across time and culture. In the last instance, it allows us to see natality with Esposito as the ever-repeating demand placed on communities by life itself (as it were) to re-negotiate the relationship between immunisation and communisation.

At first glance, it might seem as if the above description of midwifery elides the importance of cultural elements in the processes surrounding natality. The narrating-I focuses on emotions and feelings, and thus on processes that are commonly perceived as constituting the border between cognitive processes, which can be intersubjectively communicated, and unconscious feelings and emotions, which are seen as either pre- or even as non-rational and thus as either completely beyond the realm of signification or as only partly covered by cultural discourse practices (Butter 2007: 4, FN 3). However, recent developments in the philosophy of emotion have begun to re-conceptualise emotions as communicative processes, which construct a relationship between the person experiencing an emotion and the object or person to whom, respectively to which, it is addressed (de Sousa 2009: 194 – 195 and *passim*). Thus, they are processes that constitute and maintain relationships between an individual subject and the world around them, similarly to Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological analysis of embodiment (Merleau-Ponty 1974: *passim*). Notably, the narrating I's statement focuses on emotions. "[L]ove" and "lust" (1x1, 04:17 -04:18) both depend on an individual subject addressing themselves to another person as the object of their emotion, as do "joy" (1x1: 04: 26) and "anguish" (1x1: 04:27 -04: 28). Tragedy, for its part, can refer both to intense negative emotions and a genre of literature that dramatises precisely the relationship between individual subjects and the communities surrounding them (respectively their political constitution) (Reinhardt-Lupton 2005: 2 - 5). Hence, the focus of this passage reveals that societal communication is conceptualised as a process that encompasses a far wider range of elements of the human condition than a narrow understanding of communication focused on verbal exchanges might suggest.

However, the passage also acknowledges the importance of feelings (or rather a feeling) to the interaction of society, embodiment and nature in the moment of birth, when the contingency of human natality makes itself known and felt. Feelings, according to contemporary findings in the philosophy of emotions, are distinguished from emotions by their *lack* of an external object –

they constitute the relationship of a being to itself, rather than to the world around them (Döring 2009: 12). The feminist phenomenologist Elaine Scarry identifies pain as one of the primary agents in "making and unmaking […] the world" (Scarry 1987). While Scarry focuses on the intertwining of a prisoner's pain with their torturer's sense of power (Scarry 1987: 2), and thus on pain as the means of political subjection in the narrower sense, the moment of pain focused on during the birthing process shows that pain, much like power when conceptualised as both *potentia* and *potestas* (Braidotti 2011: 167) can be productive as well as destructive. Mothers-to-be experience intense bouts of pain once the contractions have started and begin to focus exclusively on their bodies. Any particular expression of pain exceeds language and the "world" (Arendt 2016b [1967]: 133) as a whole – as Arendt notes, the descriptor "pain" is fundamentally exceeded by the experience it attempts to capture in words (Arendt 2016b [1967]: 133). Furthermore, as pain is a feeling rather than an emotion and can thus likewise only be approximated by non-verbal signs, it cuts the person feeling them off from most channels of communication that grow out of and built on being-in-common (Nancy 1991: 11). Hence, the pain of contractions immunises the woman from the community outside the feeling of pain. On the other hand, this pain enables the expansion of community for the family. The child enters the world through the mother's pain – one could say the child's world is fundamentally made *by* the mother's pain (Scarry 1987: *passim*). Even more importantly, the first experience of "being-in-common" in Nancy's sense (Nancy 1991: 57) between mother and child is signaled by this seemingly immunitarian feeling:

For the mother, the birth process externalises a being she has lived and shared her body with for the past nine months. As this being is now recognisable as an Other, she can now begin to reframe her relationship with her child as another individual subject – a reframing process that extends beyond the biological mother-child dyad to all those who encounter the child and thus to society as such.

The series' emphasis on the processuality of embodiment and exposure to contingency as a result of the ontological necessity of human natality mirrors precisely the view of embodiment subscribed to and argued for throughout this thesis. Additionally, it also results in a concomitant conceptualisation of cultures as spaces of negotiation and contingency, exposed to continuous acts of attempted translation and mediation. Following on from the description of the midwife as being "in the thick of it" (1x1, 04:42 -04:45), the description implies that midwives need to

develop a particularly fine-tuned ability for translation and mediation.[225] Simultaneously, the series emphasises that this contingency and need for translation and processual engagement affects the whole community and is not limited to women in general or mothers in particular.

9.3. Betting Against the Odds: Disabled Embodiment and the Restructuring of Hegemonic Gender Matrices in the Nuclear Family

As the thematic concerns of the series mirror the central theoretical premises of this project, we shall now examine how it represents entanglements between gender, contingency and disabled embodiment. Considering that the series centres each of its episodes on the focal moment of birth, usually showing the events surrounding it in chronological order, it seems reasonable to structurally assume that all scenarios featuring disabled individual subjects fall into two narratives types: firstly, the parents of the child to be are not currently marked as disabled themselves, but the child is born with some form of congenital disability. The second narrative type features parents who are themselves disabled. The latter variant could then theoretically be split into three subtypes: the woman loses her child due to some unforeseen complications – a turn of events that the series has already used with non-disabled characters -, she gives birth to a child who has a congenital disability, or she gives birth to a child who has no congenital disability. The two episodes of the series analysed next show a father having to rethink his own understanding of masculinity when his son is born with *spina bifida*, respectively raise the question of how society deals with consensual sexual activity between two disabled individual subjects and how their existence challenges social ideologies of gender, sexuality, and natality.

The first episode opens with an image that combines questions of masculinity and the future: as the narrating-I introduces viewers into the episode, we first see Jenny cycle through an underpass where a group of young men call remarks after her (2x4, 00:38-00:56). Then the camera switches to the image of Fred (Cliff Parisi), the middle-aged handyman at the monastery, playing cards with a younger man, whom the dialogue introduces as "Dougie" (played by Jamie Thomas King

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[225] The events of the pilot episode literalise this as Jenny's first patient does not speak English and the two women need a translator during their dealings with each other (1x1, 50:00 – 50:55 and *passim*). Furthermore, the woman's poor background and large family force Jenny (and potentially the audience) to rethink their image of what constitutes their prototypical mental image of a family (1x1: 28:50 – 30:12).

(2x4, 01:24 – 02.12, 01:54)). Initially, their conversation centres on the group of Teddy Boys that passes them. [226]

Fred articulates a version of masculinity explicitly positioned in contrast to the emergent form embodied by the passersby: "Teddy Boys. […] I know women who spend less time on their hair than they do" (2x4, 01:29 – 01:34). When Douglas tries to calm him down, Fred asserts the claim to universality that characterises all dominant cultural formations (Reckwitz 2010: 89): "Men are supposed to be men, not wasting all their money on Brylcreem and fancy waistcoats" (2x4, 01:36 - 01:45). Like most of the declarations of proper masculinity analysed in the preceding chapters, Fred's definition of masculinity sees the Teddy boys as threat or at least as embodying a scandal because they blur the lines between cultural signifiers of gender and creatively combine them, exposing their contingency and troubling them (*sensu* Judith Butler). Furthermore, Fred's mutterings also indicate the dependence of hegemonic masculinity on concomitant misogyny: his main criticism is that the boys pay attention to their looks, a discourse-practice he associates with femininity; indeed, his claim to "know women who spend less time on their hair" (2x4, 01:33) signals that the boys violate the discursive norms of hegemonic femininity as much as hegemonic masculinity as well as the interdependence of hegemonic patriarchal constructions of masculinity and femininity, despite the former gender identity claiming to be independent from the latter (Horlacher 2006: 62 – 65). According to the hegemonic logic that guides Fred's utterance, the Teddy boys are positioned below women in the hierarchy of patriarchal gender propriety.

At the same time, however, the words uttered by the older man also deconstruct the version of masculinity they are meant to affirm in the very moment of their utterance: most viewers will note that Fred begins his explanation and defence of masculinity with a tautology. While the phrase is meant to invoke the ideological self-description of dominant forms of masculinity as self-evident, it in fact exposes the emptiness of the term, which has no stable signified filled with positive content. This lack is further emphasised by Fred's only actual reference to concrete discourse-practices being formulated in the negative. Masculinity is not "spend[ing] [money] on Brylcreem and fancy waistcoats" (2x4, 01:43 – 01:45). Furthermore, Fred's tautology, in addition

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[226] "Teddy Boys" or "Teds" was the name given to the first organised youth subculture in 1950s Britain. It combined sartorial influences from *fin de siècle* dandyism (tailored long waistcoats) with a liking for American rock-n-roll and jazz music. The movement was painted as violent and socially deviant by the conservative mainstream press and government officials when youth gangs clashed in a cinema in 1953. Some Teds were also part of the race riots that swept London in 1958 (incidentally the year this episode is set). For a more detailed examination of the Teddy Boy subculture, see Williamson 2014.

to exposing masculinity (or gender identities in general) as a floating signifier (Laclau and Mouffe 2014: 103 - 105), also hints at its being subject to iterability in the deconstructivist sense, that is, it changes its meaning subtly every time it is evoked. If the reference process is imagined as pointing to two different instances, both labelled masculinity, it implies that the meaning of the term is both shaped by its former instances of use and changes subtly every time it is used, as it cannot be exactly the same way every single time. Thus, masculinity as imagined by Fred fulfils the post-structuralist definition of *iterabilité*: the seemingly stable and atemporal signifier masculinity changes its meaning depending on the contexts in which it is uttered; hence, it is exposed as being defined by the very temporality it seeks to deny.

The scene extends questions of time and particularly of futurity beyond the realm of this definition in two ways. Firstly, as explained above, Fred's statement is prompted by an encounter with a group of Teddy Boys. As a subculture explicitly associated with "young men from the working classes" (Williamson 2014: 49), they represent a form of futurity that Fred, as a representative of the past (his white hair clearly marks him as the eldest male present in the scene (2x4, 01:24 – 02:12)), finds threatening and destabilising. Douglas, who represents the currently-dominant form of masculinity, in contrast, seems unfazed by the different subject culture of the Teddy Boys, even though his own form of masculinity is closer to the form represented and advocated for by Fred. Fred's deconstructive defence of masculinity can thus be read as a statement in the fight over shaping the future.

The question of the future of masculinity, respectively of the form it will take, is explicitly addressed in the scene when Fred changes the subject to Douglas' wife and her pregnancy ("Ruby ready to drop?", 2x4, 01:42 -01:43).[227] This reference signals to viewers that they have met their patients-of-the-week. However, the episode also introduces a significant variation into the episode structure: for the past ten episodes, audiences have been introduced to the pregnant women first, with their husbands or other family members introduced (slightly) later. The

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[227] Fred's choice of words also indicates the relationship between patriarchal conceptions of femininity and their conceptions of nature and animality (Plumwood 1993: 19 – 27 and *passim*): "drop" evokes images of mammals that give birth to their young while walking rather than lying down. The episode additionally illustrates the pervasiveness of this structural equivalence by showing that Fred intends no offence with this question, rather aiming for an informal euphemism. Most viewers will also read his speech pattern as friendly rather than aggressive.

inversion in this episode signals that this time the father will be the focal parent and that the natality of his child will probably necessitate a renegotiation of masculinity.[228]

The importance of masculinity is made explicit by Douglas' answer to Fred's friendly enquiry: "She is. *I'll have my handsome son* by the end of the month [my emphasis, MTW]" (2x4, 01:49 - 01:51). Douglas' certainty that he will have a son is framed and supported by two other important thematic signals: the character using the will-future highlights that he is certain of what the future will bring and ignores the fact that human conceptions of futurity are usually seen as defined by their embracing all three forms of epistemological or discursive-practical contingency. Peter Szondi, writing on modern drama, notes that humans tend to imaginarily align the past with the Aristotelian pole of necessity and that the present and the future conversely are aligned with contingency (Szondi 1971: 17-20).[229] Douglas does not seem to fear or doubt the future. Even when Fred reminds him of its contingency which he cannot ignore, by ironically referring to the younger man as a "one of those clairvoyants" (2x4, 01:54 -01:55), - and thus as someone for whom the future is as certain as the past because they claim to see it and to know what shape it will take - Douglas stands by his claim that his child will be a boy. Later in the scene, Douglas is shown making a bet with Fred regarding his child's gender and confidently giving the older man the better odds because he is "dead cert[ain]" (2x4, 01:54 -01:55). Douglas' idiomatic conflation of the future with the necessity of death also underlines his confidence. Later in the episode, the audience learns that Douglas is a habitual gambler ("You been gamblin' [sic]?", 2x4, 05:54); however; he comes home with coins he won jingling in his pockets, and the home he and his family of four inhabit is presented as tidy, neat and well-lit (2x4, 05:32 – 06:08), indicating that he has not yet lost the gambles he has made. Additionally, Douglas seems confident that he "know[s] [he is] gonna [sic] win" (2x4, 06:09 -06:11) in future as well, enabling him to get his family out of the relative "pit" (2x4, 06:05) of their present home and into a better one. Thus, the Roberts family is presented as a group of people who either ignore contingency or see it as a source of exclusively positive change, as a "resource" (Butter 2013: 28) on which they can draw to enable their further progress towards greater happiness. In contrast to the characters, however,

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[228] The episode also shows Ruby (Leanne Rowe) struggling with her self-image as the wife of a successful man in the wake of her son's birth. In the analyses that follow, the focus will remain on Douglas and their son primarily for reasons of space.

[229] Szondi argues that the present is the most contingent time period as it only ever exists relative to the other two and vanishes the moment it comes into existence (Szondi 1971: 17).

the audience is already prepared for an event that embodies either accidental or epistemological contingency. The narrating- I points out at the beginning of the episode that her younger self has not yet learnt to "look at the darker things beneath" (2x4, 01:11) and that "[i]t was a safe bet that surprises lay in store" (2x4, 01:12). Since the surprises are thus implicitly associated both with the semantics of betting in general and with Douglas' character, respectively his bet with Fred, in particular, the text as a whole suggests that its subject will be the source of this experience of contingency.

In order to examine this source of contingency more closely, we need to examine the statement by Douglas that prompts Fred's reminder. The younger man claimed he would have "his handsome son" (2x4, 01:50 -01:51) soon. He assumes both that his child will be male and that his embodiment will conform to standards of symmetrical and functional embodiment. Feminist theorists like Rosi Braidotti argue that images of proper masculinity and humanity (such as Leonardo DaVinci's Vitruvian man) are also endowed with symmetrical limbs, all of which are or will become fully functional (Braidotti 2013: 13 - 15). Robert McRuer terms this assumption of able-bodiedness and able-mindedness that undergirds the assumption of a gender identity that conforms to the binary gender model, respectively a heteronormative sexuality, "compulsory able-bodiedness" (McRuer 2006: 7). In keeping with this ideological norm, neither Fred nor Douglas applies their awareness of contingency to the child's *embodiment* rather than their gender: Douglas counters Fred's query with "She's given me two girls. It's time for a boy" (2x4, 01:54-01:56). In turn, Fred asks for "the odds" (2x4, 01:57) clearly referring to the odds of the child being a boy rather than a girl.

In contrast to the two characters, the audience is likely to doubt that the series (which has embraced feminist concerns and shown mothers giving birth to daughters in previous episodes) would see the birth of a girl as a loss or associate a girl child with "the darker things beneath" (2x4, 01:11). Thus, the text as a whole signals to the audience that the source of this increased awareness of contingency will be the newborn's embodiment rather than their gender. Additionally, it prefigures this symbolically in the way Douglas wins the men's card game: he places a row of picture cards on the table, all of which are "male" –kings and jacks, rather than queens (2x4, 02:06), and he refers to them as "all boys" (2x4, 02:06). The picture cards shown have no lower limbs; the image on the card mirrors their upper body, hands and head (2x4: 02:06).

The image thus symbolically prefigures the embodiment of Douglas' and Ruby's son, who is born with *spina bifida*. Later on in the episode, Sister Evangelina explains that the disease probably means "that the child will, more often than not, have no bowel control, will have renal complications and a drastically reduced lifespan. And for the rest of that short life, it [sic] will be confined to a wheelchair."(2x4, 22:32 – 22:36). Use of terms like "confined" (2x4, 22:36), or the fact that the sister refers to the child with a pronoun reserved for objects, that is, things that are not usually recognised as constitutive members of a given community (Latour 2008: 22- 24; Bennett 2010: 1-3), highlight her opinion that the child will lead a life defined by suffering separate from any community. After all, those who are confined lead a life defined by their inability to move and participate in a community freely. Considering that a wheelchair (as opposed to a normal chair) is designed to enable precisely such movement, however, some members of the audience may doubt that the form the baby's life will take is ultimately adequately captured by the exclusively tragic inflection of Sister Evangelina's description. Furthermore, the other nurses and sisters around the dinner table respond with shock and a horrified "no!" (2x4, 23:35) to the eldest nun's (Sister Monica Joan, played by Judy Parfitt) recollection that in the 1900s chloral hydrate was considered the "humane" response (2x4, 22:20 -22:22) when a midwife encountered a neonate with *spina bifida*. Hence, it was once deemed acceptable to kill children with disabilities, thus excluding them from the community (and immunising that community against these relative Others in the process).[230] The younger women's collective response – itself immunising, this time against designating a member of their community as "Other" – indicates that the ethics and politics propagated by the show no longer see disability as either a collective signifier of difference or as solely representing contingency in all its forms. Rather, both difference and contingency are seen as features of humanity as a whole; therefore, people with disabilities remain part of the community of humanity. The midwives and doctors all refer to the baby as part of this universal community – by exclusively using a gendered pronoun that accurately captures the baby's current gender performance – or indeed to the particular community of the Roberts family. When he first explains the disease to the parents and fetches the baby for treatment at the London Hospital, the district doctor Patrick Turner (Steve McGann) assures Douglas: "Your son will receive the best treatment in the world,

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[230] *Call the Midwife*, in keeping with its liberal inflection, engages in a somewhat romantic view of the past here. Forced sterilisations were common until the 1980s, and euthanasia was propagated in the 1930s and 1940s, a decade before the series takes place (Kafer 2013: 31).

Mr Roberts. See to your ladies. *We'll* take great care of *your son* [my emphasis, MTW]" (2x4, 19:16 – 19:24). He emphasises the communal connection further by placing a hand on Douglas' shoulder before leaving (2x4, 19:22 – 19:24), thereby establishing a connection using tactile contact, the sense that requires the closest proximity between an individual subject and the world around them (cf. Merleau-Ponty 1974: 118, 128-132).

Strikingly, the doctor's advice and actions also prefigure the problems the Roberts family in general and Douglas in particular experience once their youngest child is born. While Doctor Turner talks about their son's illness, Douglas is standing at one end of the bedroom and keeps his arms crossed defensively the whole time (2x4, 18:53), as if meaning to shield himself from the consequences of his son's existence; in contrast, Ruby is lying on her bed (straight across the room from the window) with her face turned away and crying silently to herself (2x4: 19:55). The characters are thus positioned as separated both physically and verbally – the communication and touching viewers observed in the scene prior to the birth (2x4,05:23 -07:06), which encouraged audiences to read them as a happy couple, has broken down. This reading is further emphasised by the lighting in the two scenes: the earlier scene is bathed in a warm orange-red, a colour symbolically associated with "vitality" (Michelmann 2008: 305) whereas the latter scene is lit by a washed-out white light and hence comparatively associated with death. However, the text as a whole emphasises that this collapse is not the result of the baby's existence but rather the effect of his parents' current inability to negotiate their form of community. This is made clear by Ruby and Douglas consistently referring to their son as "he" (2x4, 20: 55). They accept him as a member of humanity in general, and yet they do not give him a name, thereby refusing to acknowledge him as part of their family in specific. Furthermore, Doctor Turner appeals to the protective element of masculinity when he asks that Douglas "see to [his] ladies" (2x4, 19:21 - 19:23). Since the doctors at the London Hospital, who take care of his son for a time and Douglas thus share the task of protecting others, the doctor discursively includes Douglas in the protection of his child as well; conversely Doctor Turner thus signals to the younger man that his sense of masculinity has not failed because he now has a disabled child to care for.[231]

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[231] This declaration gains further traction in the context of the series as a whole. Long-time viewers know at this point that Doctor Turner lost his wife and currently raises his teenage son by himself (series 1 and 2: *passim*). As neither single working parents in general nor single working fathers in particular conform to the gender ideology of the 1950s, the doctor thus serves as an example of caring being a successful viable of a functioning and acceptable form of masculinity.

Even so, the Roberts family remains in a state of communicative and affective crisis when the child returns. Ruby develops symptoms of lethargy and refuses to either touch or feed her son (2x4: 23:38 -23:39). Although the episode does not name it, most viewers will read her case as one of post-natal depression. Notably, she explains to Jenny that she does not fear scorn from the community because of her child (2x4, 42:10 – 42:12); instead, she blames herself and her insistence to keep on working while she was pregnant (2x4, 27:40 – 28:00).

Ruby's need for an explanation showcases the ordinary human response to epistemological contingency: Douglas also asks the director of St Gideon's, a care home to which he and Ruby briefly consider sending their son at the end of the episode, "why" (2x4,49:44 – 49:55) congenital disabilities like their son's occur. Mrs Peacock (Susan Brown) cannot provide an explanation as far as causes are concerned (2x4, 45:46 – 45:47, "It happens"), thus maintaining the medical epistemological contingency of disability appropriate to the historical setting. But she does provide something very familiar to Douglas: statistical odds. In so doing, she makes it clear that this element of their son's embodiment is not unique. Instead, "one in a thousand" (2x4, 49:48 – 49:52) children are born with similar conditions each year. As each of these children has parents (and perhaps siblings), this number provides Douglas, Ruby, and their children with a sense of community. This sense of community eradicates the belief shared by both parents that they "did something" (2x4, 28:12) to make their son disabled.

This belief means that Ruby and Douglas assign blame to themselves and to each other – a discursive move that ruptures their ability to talk out of a sense of shame and anger. When their son initially returns from hospital, Douglas talks about his son's treatment, but he does not respond to Ruby's lack of either verbal or non-verbal reaction (her face is turned away from him during the whole of the scene (2x4, 25:35 -26:10). Furthermore, neither of them is capable of providing their daughters with an explanation for "what is wrong with [their brother's] legs" (2x4, 25:35) when their girls see him for the first time. As Ruby's shame also prevents her from holding her son (2x4: 27:40), and Douglas likewise seems uncomfortable and unhappy when holding the boy (2x4, 29:40 – 29:46), they also close any kind of communicative and affective channel to their youngest child. Touch, according to the scientific consensus in both developmental psychology and psychoanalysis, is the first nexus a child develops to the world (Butler 2014: 69 - 97). Hence, their shame immunises the Roberts' from each other, their children and the wider community. Ruby only declares her belief to Jenny, who is bound not to discuss it with others, due to doctor-patient confidentiality. Douglas, for his part, only vents his anger at

Ruby when drunk. After getting into a brawl with one of the Teddy Boys of the opening scene, he sits in a corner, nursing his wounds and muttering, half to himself and half to the reverend who prevented the younger men from beating him to death (2x4, 40:33 – 40:36, "Leave him! Leave him, unless you all wish to be tried for murder?") (2x4, 40:47 – 40:50)

Before analysing the restorative effects the visit to the nursing home has on Douglas' sense of self and how his reconceptualisation of his masculine individual subjectivity as creative and adaptive in turn enables him to restore his communicative channels with Ruby and his community (or to begin building new ones with his son), we need to briefly examine the cause of the depressive immunisation Ruby and Douglas maintain for most of the episode. In her struggle to find an explanation for her son's disability, Ruby says that she "should have stopped working" (2x4,27:43) and wonders whether her lifting heavy baskets hurt her son's back (2x4, 27:48 - 27:52). In her groundbreaking analysis of images of femininity hegemonic in the 1950s and 1960s, Betty Friedman shows that the then-dominant subject culture identifies proper femininity in married women with domestic spaces rather than the workplace. American middle-class women are encouraged to both train for a job and to relinquish it once married to become mothers, a role the hegemony considers their "true" purpose (Friedman 2003 [1963]: 413- 415; cf. Reckwitz 2010: 376). Although Ruby – as her accent shows – is a working-class English women rather than an American, she is also introduced to the audience wearing clothes fitting the newest fashions (2x4, 03:39 – 03: 47); hence, it seems reasonable to assume that she has been exposed to this hegemonic image and that she has internalised it as what a "proper woman" ought to do. This reading is further supported by the couple's aspirations to get out of their present home and into a bigger house (which would presumably have a garden and thus be closer to the ideological image of the middle-class home). Consequently, this ideological ideal – which denies women economic and social independence and ignores the harsh living realities of working-class women, which may require both spouses to work – now serves as a source of internal punishment for Ruby. In her desire to keep working, Ruby has shown herself to be "improper", unfit for her ego ideal.[232] In turn, this impropriety is then externalised and embodied in her son, never to be undone (2x4, 27:57 – 28:00, "he came *out of me* like that [my emphasis, MTW]").

In keeping with the show's emphasis on women as active agents in their own lifeworlds, Jenny immediately denies that Ruby's female individual subjectivity, that is, her way of actualising

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[232] For a detailed analysis of the relationship between immunisation processes and conceptions of (im-) propriety in a variety of discourses, see Esposito 2011.

various discourse-practices as a woman, is to blame. Rather, the discourse-practice itself is at fault because it identifies being a woman exclusively with being a housewife and mother. Notably, once again, Jenny supports her argument by including Ruby in a community. She assures her that "lots of women work" (2x4, 27:54).

The text as a whole strongly suggests that Douglas' struggles with his masculinity follow a similar structural pattern to Ruby's with her gender identity. In the scene immediately following the conversation analysed above, the camera shows Douglas washing his family's dishes. During the washing process, a piece of the rim breaks off. Douglas pauses for a moment, examining the chip, and then he dashes the whole of the dish in the washbasin (2x4, 28:40 – 28:48). On the one hand, the scene exemplifies that Douglas has not been adequately trained in tasks patriarchal gender conventions associate with the domestic sphere and thus with femininity. Douglas' breaking the dish thus signals his frustration with the task at hand and his general anger at being forced to do household tasks. Considering that washing dishes ensures hygiene in a kitchen and a home – something essential to people's health regardless of their gender or the size of their household – this example of the gendering of household tasks also prevents individual subjects from engaging with the world productively and safely. Furthermore, the scene allows viewers to question gender roles more broadly: if doing the dishes is frustrating and isolating, it is that way for individual subjects, regardless of their gender. Hence, the scene subtly deconstructs the strict gendering of everyday discourse-practices, allowing audiences to question how they themselves gender practices.

On the other hand, the scene symbolically represents the breaking of community currently underway in the Roberts household: dishes symbolise sharing or shared activities and objects, and the sharing of food with others is often perceived as a ritual that creates and maintains community by making strangers part of the same dinner table. The breaking of a dish thus connotes the fragility and breaking of communities. In keeping with the communitarian theories of Jean-Luc Nancy introduced earlier, communities are thus revealed as the temporary results of negotiation processes which require maintenance and re-negotiation (Nancy 1991: xxxvii). But if communities are maintained by individual subjects, they can also be broken by them.

When Jenny enters the kitchen with the baby, she asks Douglas whether he "could maybe take [his son] for a walk" (2x4, 29:10) and explains that the boy "needs sunlight" (2x4, 29:12). Thus, there exists a reason related to health as humans need to be exposed to light to stay healthy. Douglas refuses with a reference to a gendered discourse-practice: "a man does not go about

pushing prams." (2x4, 29:15). Since the episode has exposed this sort of claim as tautological in the scene we analysed at the beginning of the discussion of this episode, the audience probably reads Douglas' statement as another example of internalised discourse-practices unnecessarily limiting human forms of interaction for both the boy and his father. The scene supports this reading further, for when Jenny demurs to the gender matrix articulated by Douglas – "well, then maybe the girls could…" (2x4, 29:16) – he still refuses, claiming they are "too young" (2x4, 29:21). As most girls are allowed to push around doll prams from a young age, it is unlikely that Douglas' daughters would not know what to do with their brother's pram even as young girls. Hence, the episode implies that Douglas considers himself and his daughters incapable not so much of pushing a pram as of dealing with their neighbours' reaction to the baby. This assumption in turn implies that Douglas assumes these reactions will be uniformly negative or excluding. Notably, this shame and fear is also expressed in Douglas' body language: when he makes his verdict regarding his going on a walk with the boy, he is facing the cupboard rather than the kitchen window (through which his neighbours might see him) or Jenny, who is standing in the doorway (2x4, 28:58 – 29: 23). His posture shields him from the eyes others (and thus from their judgement), thereby expressing his shame. Interestingly, the scene is ambiguous regarding the cause of this feeling: at first glance, the scene suggests that Douglas is ashamed of being seen with his son in public. At the same time, he only shows this defensive body language while uttering his defence of the form of masculinity he adheres to (2x4, 28:50 – 29:50); during the rest of his conversation with Jenny, Douglas faces her normally without any visible sign of discomfort at her presence (2x4, 29: 50 – 29:58). In light of this, it seems possible to conclude the character is beginning to feel ashamed of the form of masculinity he is maintaining through his denying his son a walk in the sunlight.

Douglas' shame erupts shortly thereafter when he drunkenly provokes a group of Teds into attacking him. In retaliation, they beat and kick him until a cleric who comes upon the beating intervenes (2x4, 40:17 – 40:58). At first glance, we could interpret this eruption of violence as symbolising the collapse of the certainty and ease that currently hegemonic forms of masculinity promise the individual subjects who adopt and desire them. Instead, they show the violence – both symbolic and physical – at the heart of all social formations (Marchart 2013: 203 – 332; Girard 2013; Fradinger 2010: 3-18). Douglas' role in the initial encounter with the Teddy Boys supports this reading: while Fred, as a representative of formerly dominant forms of masculinity, which are now on the brink of becoming less dominant, responds with an excluding definition to

the presence of the emergent form of masculinity represented by the Teds, Douglas gently mocks Fred's fervour: "You're just jealous, Fred" (2x4, 01:33 -01:35). Simultaneously, he does not defend the Teds either or express any outright sympathy with them. Hence, his attitude towards both Fred's anger and the Teds' emergent masculinity at this early stage may best be described as sympathetic condescension. This in turn expresses Douglas' confidence in the stability and hegemonic dominance of the subject culture he embodies.

If the diachronic component of the above analysis is extended to the second encounter with the Teds, Douglas' attack on them and the fact that he is beaten thoroughly in the process, we arrive at the following reading: Douglas not just externalises the violence to be found at the heart of all subject cultures, he externalises his own fear and frustration at the futurity represented by the younger men. Furthermore, he particularly expresses his growing awareness of and shame at (what Douglas considers) his son's inability to express any form of futurity Douglas sees around himself, whether it be that of the Teds or the one he might have imagined and favoured. Consequently, he concludes that his son has no future – at least none outside complete heteronomy. His muttered invective against this state of affairs gains additional weight from the above considerations: firstly, his injunction against Ruby who "[has] turned her back on [his] flesh and blood" (2x4, 40:47 – 40:50) provides yet another example of the excluding mechanisms of Othering analysed in its various guises in the preceding chapters. In order to maintain his masculinity as well as a sense of community – no matter how tenuous and contingent a community built on a gender identity he is increasingly ashamed of may ultimately prove – with his son, Douglas excludes Ruby and pretends that his son is solely his child and not an individual subject born to and reared by (at least) two people. Even more importantly, he attempts to communise his son by denying that the baby is a separate being, no matter how much he may depend on the help of others (Esposito 2011: 96-97). Hence, Douglas' declaration, although it reveals his love for his son, is also ethically highly problematic and misogynist.

But the declaration can also be read as an indirect admission that Douglas is ashamed of himself for turning his back on Ruby and their children. For, just like Ruby, Douglas now bears a physical mark of his own internalised shame and psychological investment in notions of gender propriety, or more precisely, *im*propriety. Analysed as part of the fight for hegemony, the reaction of the Teds against Douglas' initial provocation – they beat and kick him to the ground – symbolises their wresting the hegemonic ability to embody the dominant form of masculinity from him. Additionally, this fight leaves Douglas with a bruise across his chin (2x4, 46:50). In

the seconds after the fight, Douglas reads this as a signifier that he has lost an adequate understanding of the gendered part of his individual subjectivity. Notably, he does not respond to the attempts made by the reverend that saved him to make light of this inexplicable eruption of violence the other man has just witnessed and diffused (2x4, 40:50 – 40:58). Clearly, some part of Douglas considers his bruise an appropriate result of his actions, proving what he has felt for some time. He is no longer a proper man and thus cannot be a proper father to his child.

However, the text as a whole disagrees: at the end of the episode, Douglas' bruise becomes the founding moment of a new form of masculinity. As hinted at above, the family ultimately decides to send their son to a care home for people with disabilities close to their district. Before meeting the director of St. Gideon's, Douglas encounters two of its male inhabitants: the first – a boy with Down syndrome led by a nurse (2x4, 46:48 – 46:52) clearly makes Douglas uncomfortable. His nervousness is clearly signalled to viewers: the character keeps twisting his cap in his hands (2x4: 46:52). The boy recalls Douglas' association between his son needing others and his own internalised sense of guilt. The next man they encounter already problematises the equations that maintain Douglas' guilt: Jacob (Colin Young) has a pronounced limp, needs the support of a cane and has an unfamiliar enunciation pattern (probably due to his cerebral palsy) (2x4, 46:53 – 47:03). But he can clearly walk and talk by himself, and, even more importantly, he takes an interest in and has opinions about the outside world: Jacob greets both Jenny and Douglas with a friendly "hello" (2x4, 46:53), thereby establishing all three of them as equal partners in a conversation. Jacob then follows up with a comment addressed directly to Douglas in particular. Having noticed the other man's bruise, he comments jokingly: "Did you have a fight with King Kong?" (2x4, 47:00 – 47:03). Initially, Douglas does not respond to the question; rather he breaks the communicative bond Jacob has woven by asking Jenny: "what did he [= Jacob, MTW] say?" (2x4, 47:05 – 47:06), referring to Jacob as someone *about* whom individual subjects with standard elocution can speak but who cannot intervene in a conversation as an equal partner. Jenny (in keeping with her function as a mediator), however, does not exclude Jacob by telling Douglas what he said; she asks the young man to repeat himself instead, thereby re-establishing the bond (and strengthening it by deeming Jacob an independent and autonomous party). This time, Douglas responds directly to Jacob, referring to him with a friendly, colloquial "mate" (2x4, 47: 15 – 47:18) Informal language use here indicates that Douglas has stopped thinking of the other man as an excluded other, from whom he can (and perhaps needs to) differentiate himself by invoking the discursive mechanisms of hierarchically-conceptualised exclusion. Instead,

Douglas now perceives Jacob as a differently embodied equal. Additionally, Jacob's question allows him to rephrase the shaming events of the brawl in his mind. The punishment of the Teds now becomes the action of "half a dozen little monkeys" (2x4, 47:17), who are a nuisance, but not an existential threat.

In order to examine how Jacob helps to restore a form of masculinity to Douglas, a close reading of his question proves enlightening: firstly, as indicated above, Jacob addresses Douglas directly after he has noticed his bruise: the fact that he does so while also being severely disabled indicates to his interlocutor that people who are as dependent on others as his son is still have the ability to engage with the world in general and particular individual subjects, whom they can separate from the rest both reproductively (Jacob can see a bruise and cognitively comprehends its meaning) and productively (the other man externalises the conclusions he has reached to engage with the world). Hence, Jacob's actions prove to Douglas that people like his son live in the world actively and do more than just exist.

Secondly, Jacob's reference to a pop culture phenomenon and his ability to joke about a serious event indicate that he is a member of communities that transcend the binary between disabled and currently non-disabled individual subjects. Jacob watches films and is aware of societal conventions that ask people to make light conversation with strangers, even or especially when it is evident something serious has happened to them. Hence, the short conversation in the corridor enables Douglas to begin imagining a form of futurity for his son that positions the boy – and the man he may become – at the nexus of a net of discourse-practices as complex and as varied as Douglas' own. His disability may thus inflect and shape his son's life, but it is not its sole defining element. Consequently, Douglas no longer needs to feel guilty that his child will have no productive life and no possibility to engage with the future.

In addition to providing a future for his child, Jacob's statement also provides a means for Douglas himself to reconceptualise his masculinity: as discussed above, his fight against the Teds can be interpreted as a fight against the future – an extreme immunitarian response. In keeping with Esposito's observation that extreme immunitarian actions always run the risk of becoming auto-immunitarian, that is, they risk turning on the organism they mean to protect (Esposito 2011: 17), the fight turns, and Douglas is attacked himself. Likewise, his need to protect his masculinity from the (imagined) censure of his neighbours prevents his spending time with his son outside, consequently attacking and destroying Douglas' bond with his family. Thus, he needs to replace

his auto-immunitarian understanding of masculinity with one that balances protective and inclusive elements.

The narrative of the "fight with King Kong" (2x4, 47:02) contains all of these elements for Douglas to actualise: on the one hand, the narrative of the film centres on a giant ape threatening the population of New York and so provides a legitimate threat. The urge to protect others from King Kong is thus definitely coded as a positive immunitarian response that serves a community, rather than harming it. On the other hand, the size of the creature makes it unlikely that one individual subject could win against him by themselves. However, even an individual effort would probably be made under the ethically sanctioned premise of wishing to protect third parties. Hence, the community would probably interpret Douglas' bruise as a mark of distinction (he tried, even though he failed), recognising him as one of their own, rather than excluding him. Jacob's narrative thus neutralises the shame Douglas feels and also helps him recognise that he needs a community to win his own "fight with King Kong" and make sense of his son's disability.

As discussed above, Douglas' conversation with Mrs. Peacock provides him with a new community of fellow parents and children, engaged in similar struggles. Furthermore, her reference to "one in a thousand children" (2x4, 49:48) reminds him of his former ability to treat contingency as a creative resource to ensure and further his family's happiness with his bets and gambles. Initially, Douglas responds bitterly to the statistic having the same format as betting odds. "[I] should have had money on that," he grumbles (2x4, 49:53 – 49:55). But immediately afterwards, he becomes active in the struggle to keep his son in their family home. Notably, Douglas turns to the disabled person in the room – Jacob – and asks him directly (reaffirming him as an equal partner in a conversation) what his experiences in the care home are like. This discursive move transforms Jacob from an equal partner into an authority, whose statements guide Douglas' own subsequent actions. Furthermore, it affirms and approves of Jacob's emotional and cognitive autonomy, thus recognising him as a fellow individual subject in the Hegelian sense as well (Honneth 2016: 27 - 28). Jacob's honours this gesture by telling the truth: At first, he admits that the inhabitants of the care home are treated kindly by the outside world (a local biscuit factory brings them biscuits). Douglas approves of the gesture initially, calling it "nice" (2x4, 50:23). However, Jacob adds something in a serious tone: "We get the broken ones." (2x4, 50:25 – 50:32) Hence, disabled people are not perceived as equal by the proprietors; the act of kindness is revealed to be an act of pity. Following Nietzsche, acts of pity are informed by

condescension, by the need to hierarchically distance oneself from the person thus pitied (Nietzsche 2011: 297 - 302). Therefore, rather than establishing community, in this case the act of sharing food is an excluding mechanism, signalling the impropriety of the factory owners' disabled neighbours.

Furthermore, Jacob's statement is tellingly ambiguous. While the context of the conversation suggests that "the broken ones" (2x4, 50:25 – 50:26) refers to biscuits, it could just as well refer to the inhabitants of the care home, whom the outside world (including perhaps even the people who place them in the care home, away from other communities) consider "broken". Thus, Jacob reveals an awareness of the excluding effects current discourse-practices have for people like him. Notably, Mrs Peacock does not object to her charge's account, giving it further weight through her silence (2x4, 50:25 – 50:37).[233]

Throughout the middle section of the episode, the text as a whole takes care to consistently remind the audience that neither Douglas nor Ruby blames their baby for his embodiment. Both parents consistently acknowledge his humanity, and Douglas' most extreme outburst of violence is motivated by anger at Ruby for supposedly abandoning their baby ("She turned her back on my flesh and blood" (2x4, 40:47 – 40:50)). Hence, they do not consider him "broken" and the care home would not be an appropriate place for him, as it symbolises precisely that stigma. In order to convince Ruby to keep their baby, Douglas explicitly tells Jenny that he will draw on his ability to creatively transform accidental contingency into a resource ("I like a gamble", 2x4, 50:45 – 50:46) as well his returned awareness of and confidence in the communal ties of his family ("I know my Ruby", 2x4, 50:46 – 50:47). All of these actions are motivated by a desire to protect his son from being reduced to an object of pity (and conversely to enable him to participate in society as an equal individual subject). Hence, Douglas actively draws on the awareness of a potential future and his renewed investment in a balancing masculinity his encounter with Jacob has given him.

Douglas' actions accurately read Ruby and trick her into including their son into their family as well as humanity by giving him a name, enabling him to be addressed as an individual subject in

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[233] Some viewers may recall Mrs. Peacock expressed similar sentiments in an earlier conversation with Jenny when she points out that her establishment "is is a home in name only [,but] it is not home" (2x4 32: 39 – 32:42) and thus acknowledges the exclusions and separations of disabled individual subjects from the general community that make care homes necessary in the first place.

the future.[234] Notably, Ruby gives her son his own father's name ("*Douglas Jr.* is going nowhere. He's staying *right here, with us*. [my emphasis, MTW]", 2x4, 53:39 – 53:44). That way she signals the continuity of masculinity in the family – as well as the fact that she and her husband approve of their son's individual gendered subjectivity, no matter the form it might take.

Her husband in turn adapts his own gender identity to his family's needs, and no longer considers it unmasculine to accompany Ruby and the girls on a walk with the baby (2x4, 55: 48 – 56:17). Contrary to his own auto-immunising fears earlier in the episode, the community does not disapprove of either Douglas' actions or Douglas Jr's embodiment. In the last sequence of the episode, the Roberts family encounters Fred. Recalling his bet with the younger man, Fred pays his dues and greets Douglas Jr warmly: "Hey there, fella!" (2x4, 56:05 – 56:06). The older man's choice of words emphasises this acceptance further. *Fella* is the colloquial form of *fellow*, which means shared or common, respectively refers to a person with whom the speaker shares attributes ("fellow | Definition of fellow in English by Oxford Dictionaries" website, noun meaning 2 and adjective).

Overall, the episode thus argues for accepting disabled individual subjects as equally different to other individual subject, not as Others who are "broken" and thus can be excluded. Instead, *Call the Midwife* highlights that all embodiments and discursive-practical systems are contingent to a greater or lesser degree. In keeping with the contemporary hegemony of the "creative subject" (Reckwitz 2010: 441), it also emphasises the adaptability of subject cultures and conversely associates strict interpretations of discourse-practices with (self-destructive) effects. The plot of the episode underscores the equality of disabled gendered subjects because it shows a disabled man helping a non-disabled one to rethink his gender identity and to subsequently act on the insights he has gained. Hence, Jacob seems to have overcome the isolating tendencies that shape the lives of Richard, the Creature, Clifford Chatterley, and Chris McCool. Although the young man still lives in an institution that isolates him, audience members may conclude that these homes will die out once societies have created the means to "re-cognise" (Honneth 2016: 287 and *passim*) disabled individual subjects as equal members with different embodiments of a given community.

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[234] For a detailed discussion on names as an interface between the individual features of a being and the elements it shares with categories under which it is subsumed, see Horkheimer and Adorno (2010 [1944/ 1947]: 27-35).

9.4 Disabled Sexuality And the Challenge of Including All Forms of Embodied Contingency In Communities

Even so, conceiving of communities as idealised spaces of Hegelian re-cognition into which disabled individuals can be simply integrated is problematic because these liberal models of community are centred on the attainment of negative freedoms first and foremost. To them, being free from oppression suffices as a basis of community (Loick 2017b: 38 – 39, 38, FN 18, 39, FN 19). The freedom to be fully oneself within a community of different and equal individual subjects is treated as secondary to this negative conception of rights in this post-Kantian understanding of rights, as various critiques of this conception of freedom since the Enlightenment make clear (Loick 2017b: 59 – 66, 37 – 39, 331 – 335 and *passim*). Hence, disabled individual subjects would then be considered free even though they cannot express their differently embodied subjectivity fully. In order to understand the function of this discursive move completely, it is necessary to re-examine the differences between Jacob and Douglas:[235] Other than their differenced embodiments (the impact of which the episode explicitly seeks to elide or minimise during their conversation) and their different localisations within the community (which the narrative implicitly critiques), at first glance the two men seem to come from the same social stratum and to share a similar habitus. One could argue that Douglas calls attention to this very similarity when he addresses Jacob as "mate" (2x4, 47:15) at the begining of their first conversation.

The difference between the two characters is only implicit in the episode itself: Douglas, as a parent-of-the-week is both a son and a father – as analysed above, the driving force of his narrative arc is precisely a concern for his son's ability to have a future and an active futurity. Hence, his natality reaches out to "remote ancestors and descendants" (Patterson 1982: 5) as well as the "related living" (Patterson 1982: 5). It encompasses the future as well as the past and present. Conversely, Jacob can reassure Douglas precisely because he is a son as well (presumably also of currently non-disabled parents) who has reached adulthood. At the same time, the episode implies that "the broken ones" (2x4, 50:25 – 50:26) cannot (or must not?) be fathers (or mothers) themselves Hence, Jacob could be argued to derive his inspirational function for Douglas from standing outside the reproductive logic and anxiety that shape the other man's

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[235] For a detailed critique of the liberal notion of rights see the discussion of Sergeant Noakes' conversation with his wife below and Menke 2015 and Loick 2017b. For an overview on different conceptions of freedom as negative, reflexive and communicative in modern European political theory, see Honneth (2013: 44 - 119).

masculinity, as signalled by Douglas' reference to his son as his "own flesh and blood" (2x4, 40:49), an image that evokes the idea of familial responsibility as founded on the literal moment of embodied continuance. According to these implications, Jacob still remains a relative Other in relation to Douglas (and other able-bodied individual) subjects because he is a "genealogical dead-end" (to adapt Patterson's metaphor of the "genealogical isolate" (Patterson 1982: 5) slave). The hegemony still presumes that Jacob is a non-sexual individual subject because he is differently embodied.

To elucidate this argument further, we return to McRuer's concept of "compulsory able-bodiedness" (McRuer 2006: 7, 6-10). He traces the genealogical roots of the term to Adrienne Rich's famous 1980 essay *Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence* (Rich 2010). Rich argues in her essay that women are pressured by patriarchal cultures to only allow themselves to experience forms of sexual desire that fit cultural models of heterosexual sex. This demand is ideologically cemented in people's minds through everyday interactions and narrative media portraying only romantic or sexual relationships that fit these models (Rich 2010: 1593). Similarly, McRuer argues that able-bodiedness is propagated as "natural" by excluding presentations of differently-embodied individual subjects and associating them with pity and loss (McRuer 2006: 8). Further, he argues that compulsory able-bodiedness is ideologically positioned as "the invisible foundation [*Ab-grund*]" (Heidegger qtd in Marchart 2010: 69) and cause of compulsory heterosexuality. To be a sexual individual subject is to be able-bodied. At first glance, this ideological structure seems to have been subverted by the episode analysed above. However, a closer look reveals it is still active even as Jacob is beginning to be accepted as an individual masculine subject with a different embodiment.

Judith Butler has shown that the othering mechanisms non-heterosexual individual subjects are subjected to in patriarchal societies can be structurally understood as an ideological defence mechanism that seeks to minimise awareness of contingency when it comes to, in Butler's terms, "[the] heterosexual […]'matrix of intelligibility' [single quotation marks in original, MTW]" (Butler 2006: 24). The heterosexual matrix has three effects on the one hand, it regulates all forms of desire and declares only heterosexual ones valid, much like Rich's compulsory heterosexuality (Butler 2006: 24). Secondly, it organises all discourse-practices along dichotomous gendered lines and attempts to minimise their intermingling (Butler 2006: 24). Thirdly, and most importantly, the heterosexual matrix obscures its two axes, instead presenting a particular form of desire as the natural equivalent and effect of a particular gender performance,

which might be extended (using McRuer's insights) to include their ideological founding in an assumption of able-bodiedness.

Hence, the acceptance of Jacob as an individual subject by the text as a whole already hinges upon a partial exclusion: he is presented as a gendered individual subject, and the episode presents his version of masculinity as a legitimate alternative to Douglas' former actualisation of hegemonic masculinity. However, this acceptance is contingent upon the fact that Jacob has no active sexuality, that he does not share Douglas' desire to be a good father and is instead content to articulate a son's desire to *have* a good father. This exclusion of disabled individual subjects as parents is based on patriarchal societies identifying children with the future of a given cultural system as a whole. Lee Edelman has analysed how the figure of "the Child" (Edelman 2004: 27) (rather than actual children as individual subjects) is used to manage and exclude various forms of futurity (Edelman 2004: 25- 29). Regarding the contingent embodiment of disabled individual subjects, Alison Kafer argues that the assumption that "the future is able-bodied" (Kafer 2013: 100, 200, EN 21) structures debates around the reproductive rights of people with disabilities (for example, their access to reproductive technologies) (Kafer 2013: 69- 85) and culminates in the assumption that disabled individual subjects are non-sexual beings.

Call the Midwife addresses these ideological mechanisms of exclusion in the fifth episode of its third series. It centres on a young woman with Down Syndrome, Sally Harper (Sarah Gordie), who lives at St. Gideon's. The nature of Sally's embodiment addresses the question of reproducing the *status quo* and the ideal of able-bodiedness, of carrying it into the future directly, using Sally's body as a material site of representation: Down Syndrome is "a chromosomal condition, associated with mental disability[…][.] Individuals with Down Syndrome have an increased risk of developing several medical conditions…[.]" ("Down Syndrome - Genetics Home Reference - NIH" website: n.p.). As most audience members will be aware that the physical appearance, speech patterns, cognitive abilities, and behaviour patterns of individual subjects with Down Syndrome can differ markedly from the unmarked norms of society, Sally's very existence exposes the contingency of these normalisation processes – especially since her embodiment cannot be cured (Kafer 2013: 27-28), as it is the result of genetic mutation and random variation. Thus, she also represents embodied accidental contingency. If Sally were to have children, the episode suggests, there is a chance that her children would share her embodiment with all its attendant medical difficulties. Furthermore, they would expose the ideological "common sense" assumptions that disabled individual subjects are non-sexual,

respectively, that the future is the time after disability, as contingent. As discussed above, these two assumptions underwrite the "heterosexual matrix" (Butler 2006: 24) of the contemporary hegemony, and thus Sally's condition endangers that hegemony. Hence, "the Sally Harper case" (3x5, 26:25 – 26:30) activates almost all the excluding and immunising discourse-practices analysed in previous chapters to position Sally (and her boyfriend) as relative Others when it comes to the active and reproductive aspects of "the social field of intimate relationships" (Reckwitz 2010: 55).

Sally initially complains to her mother (Debra Gillett) that she cannot get out of bed because "[she's] not well" (3x5, 20:01). Mrs Harper at first treats her daughter as if she merely lacks proper mental control of and awareness of her body: "It's no use giving in to it; you just have to get up and get your circulation moving!" (3x5 19:56 – 19:58). Implicitly, Mrs Harper infantilises Sally by treating her (visibly adult and full-grown) daughter like a recalcitrant child. Even more importantly, she assumes that Sally, due to her cognitive differences and concomitant inability to understand the world the way the hegemonic subject culture requires her to, also cannot grasp her own embodiment adequately. Mrs Harper assumes that her daughter's embodiment, as her interface between world and self, is radically different from the norm. At the same time, her advice and relenting both indicate that Mrs Harper cares for her daughter and that she assumes that Sally's embodiment can be brought into closer alignment with the norm as far as "proper" degrees of interaction and activity are concerned. Her advice is meant to render Sally's body "docile" (Foucault 1977: 173), thus enabling her to participate in other discourse-practices as a differently-embodied subject.

However, Sally's body refuses to be made docile; instead, her daughter's pregnant belly confronts Mrs Harper with an increased awareness of epistemological contingency: "I don't know what this is […]" (3x5, 20:13 – 20:15). This piece of dialogue makes it clear that Mrs. Harper expresses an ideological blind spot with her surprise and that she is not unable to interpret her daughter's embodiment as such. The fact that Sally has her "monthlies" (3x5, 20:15), that she is allowed to biologically be an adult woman, seems to countermand her mother's inability to interpret her swollen belly: for, if Sally has her period, she is biologically capable of bearing children. Her mother's shock thus signals the breaching of a social taboo that has been reified through reference to the patriarchal image of nature as a passive (feminised) ground, seemingly

removed from the active sphere of culture (Grewe-Volpp 2004: 25), rather than an actual ontological impossibility.[236]

The extent to which the facticity of Sally's pregnancy upsets the existing cultural hegemony, and particularly the ways in which Western cultures (particularly after the Enlightenment) conceptualise and genders the realms of nature and culture, is further emphasised by Mrs Harper's need to have Sally's physical state confirmed by the midwives of Nonnatus House. The text as a whole strongly implies that this need for confirmation is actually a desire to have the fact of Sally's pregnancy explained away and to have her fears assuaged. Incidentally, Mrs Harper articulates this cultural fear by explicitly referring to Sally as being "in the family way" (3x5, 22: 11 – 22:15) when talking to the midwives. She thus explicitly ties her daughter's condition to the instantiation of a new social unit, which would demand recognition from the community and society around it. In contrast to their actions in preceding episodes, the two nurses from Nonnatus House answering the door are themselves clearly momentarily unable to deal with the contingency exposed by Sally's current embodiment: they respond with looks of surprise (3x5, 22:15), and the newest recruit to the team, Patsy Mount (Emerald Fennel), even asks whether Sally's condition is "even possible" (3x5, 22:32).

Questioning the very possibility of Sally's pregnancy once again confirms the extreme degree to which sexually-active disabled individual subjects are being marginalised in contemporary cultural discourses. As discussed in chapter one and three of the theoretical framework, all subject cultures seek to minimise awareness of contingency and in order to do so each of them declares only certain discourse-practices open to contingency in the first place. All other phenomena are assigned to the seemingly-fixed pole of either "impossible events" or "necessary events", and neither pole is coded as being open to change or questioning. Patsy's speech act of asking questions thus opens the cultural mapping of the awareness of contingency, from which all subsequent responses to the ontological reality of contingency derive, to an awareness of its own

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[236] Considering how common sterilizing women with severe cognitive disabilities was in the 1950s (Kafer 2013: 30 - 31), the fact that Sally has been allowed to be an adult woman biologically shows that the staff at St. Gideon's makes an effort to treat its inhabitants as individual subjects whose bodily autonomy ought to be respected. Additionally, this treatment also highlights the status of reproductive sexuality as an ideological battleground , proving and highlighting the fact that current hegemonic discourse-practices associate the (reproductive) sexuality of disabled individual subjects with impossibility and effectively place them outside the lifeworld these discourse practices describe and exist in and in which they are hegemonic. At the same time, it showcases natural processes actively subverting the cultural matrix supposedly founded on their being "nonhistorical, naturalistic, […] passive [and] inert" (Grosz 1994:3;cf. Alaimo and Hekman 2008: 4)

contingency; hence, a positive response risks the current hegemony losing its ideologically-fixed claim to be "universal" (Reckwitz 2010: 89).

In order to manage this awareness of contingency, Patsy herself tries to contextualise Sally's swollen belly within safe epistemological categories. She decodes it as a symptom of other medical conditions. Being able to identify the diseases in question means that the epistemological contingency of Sally's embodiment can be successfully managed culturally, immunising the existing hegemony against an increased awareness of its own contingency in the process. Notably, this act of social immunisation is clearly more important at the moment than Sally's physical safety as an individual subject: after all, "an abdominal tumour" (3x5, 22:26 – 22:28) probably poses as much of a medical risk to Sally as her pregnancy does.

In addition, the list of known medical conditions that precedes the more ambiguous question contextualises Patsy's last question, as audience members are implicitly invited to add an attributive adjective to the question: "Is it even [medically/biologically] *possible*? [my addition and emphasis, MTW]" (3x5, 22:32) . Rephrasing the question in this way in turn signals how the midwives – although clearly familiar with the complexities and contingencies of human embodiments – rely on the cultural conception of nature as the passive other of culture, the invocation of which allows cultural formations to be removed from the possibility of contingency and active change through processes of essentialisation and passivisation. Nature here functions as the "constitutive outside" (Laclau and Mouffe 2014: 127 - 131), stabilising and supporting the universalising claims of cultural formations.

Contrary to the discursive role assigned to biological processes, however, Sally's body asserts itself as an active agent: the young woman is found to be "six-and-a-half months" (3x5, 22:45) pregnant.[237] Rather than supporting the cultural claim that Sally is biologically incapable of sexual activity, the actions of her body – conceiving and protecting a foetus, allowing it to grow – highlight that the assumption of non-sexuality when it comes to disabled gendered individual subjects is a cultural construct, maintained by (and sustaining) hegemonic interests, and therefore potentially subject to change by individual subjects. Even more importantly, the evident contradiction between discourse-practices and natural processes emphasises both the complexity of all the phenomena subsumed under the unifying heading of nature and their active role as

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[237] However, Nurse Noakes indicates that she is unsure of her diagnosis when she frames it with "I think" (3x5, 22:45). This discursive framing draws further attention to the fact that Sally's pregnancy exposes even the midwives to an unfamiliar degree of epistemological contingency.

actants (Latour 2004: 75) in the "entanglement[s]" (Barad 2007: 247) of human embodiments.[238] If the cultural hegemony recognised these actants, it would have to give up the hierarchies built on the nature/culture dichotomy, respectively the epistemological stabilising they perform for the current hegemony, and expose the limits of its knowledge and thus the contingency of its own claims to universality.

In order to contain this contingency, Sally's parents are thus forced to accept that she had sexual intercourse and is in fact pregnant. However, the fact that she had intercourse is still treated as a violation, albeit now it is conceptualised as a violation of cultural norms. Her parents and the community assume that Sally has been raped and that her constant references to "[her] boyfriend" (3x5, 28: 42 – 28: 44) indicate a category mistake on her part. Due to her disability, Sally is unable to conceptualise what happened to her as a violation of her rights and erroneously interprets the crime as an act of romantic attachment (or so the ideological explanation of the story-world runs). The parents' attempts to have the crime against society that is Sally's pregnancy solved even involve the police (3x5, 26:25 – 26:30) – hence, the immunising forces of repressive power (Foucault 1983: 11 - 20) appear in both their legal aspect – which is supported by the state (Honneth 2015: 148 – 149; Althusser 2010: 1339 - 1340) – and their non-statist "ideological" (Althusser 2010: 1340 - 1343) and social form.[239]

Yet both of these forms are revealed to be ineffective (and thus themselves contingent) over the course of the episode. When Constable Noakes (Ben Caplan) is first put on the case, he explains the legal situation to his wife as follows: "According to the '56 Act, it's an offence to have intercourse with a mental defective" (3x5, 24:31 – 24:34). Several things are striking about this explanation: firstly, the character's use of the abbreviation "'56" (rather than listing the law with

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[238] Although this remains implicit in the episode, pregnancy is a concrete example of this contradiction: when speaking of pregnant individual subjects, most Indo-European languages use an adjective, implicitly equating pregnancy with a static quality. Empirically observing pregnancy – though these analyses are of course themselves entangled with cultural conceptions of sexuality and gender (cf. Fausto-Sterling 2000) – reveals that this state is in fact a process. A nine-month old foetus is not the same as a four-month old, and neither is the same as the dividing impregnated egg that starts these processes.

[239] Even the district general practitioner, Dr. Turner, sees fit to reprimand Ms Molyneux for her "negligence" (3x5, 24:00 – 24:12) as a representative of medical authority and to order the director to "question every male patient, orderly and visitor" (3x5, 24: 08 – 24:12). This conversation entwines gender hierarchies with those of medical knowledge, as Dr. Turner's authority in part derives from his gender as much as from his wrath at his patient's medical condition. (Most viewers probably consider the latter concern justified at this point in the narrative. Yet this story also invites audiences to examine and question how their understanding of legitimate authority is entangled with racialised, gendered, classed and variously embodied notions of personhood (cf Loick 2017b, Hartmann 1997).

its full year) indicates that the law is recent (having been written in 1956, three years before the episode's events happen in the story-world). This piece of information invites the audience to imagine the content of the law to follow to be close to their own contemporary notions of justice and ethics (both of which are themselves entwined with wider discourse-practices in a given subject culture (Loick 2017b: 28 - 47)). This assumption probably includes a definition of rape as a violation of a person's right to sexual self-determination, which in turn assumes that every individual subject who can come under the authority of this law is defined first of all by *possessing* a right to sexual self-determination. This right in turn implies that there are components of the subjectivity of intimacy (Reckwitz 2010: 57) an individual subject can give their consent to and engage in with other individual subjects *without* coming under the purview of the law.

However, the law quoted by Sergeant Noakes denies "mental defective[s]" (3x5, 24:34) any rights of sexual self-determination. Intercourse is forbidden, even when it is consensual. Indeed, the assumptions expressed in the law deny that individual subjects with cognitive disabilities might have romantic and sexual feelings they wish to share with other individual subjects. When his wife Camilla (played by Miranda Hart) - the midwife who confirmed Sally's pregnancy (3x5, 22:45), thus turning it into a cultural issue- responds to her husband's explanation with "that sounds terribly unfeeling" (3x5, 24:36 – 24:38), she voices precisely the criticism the presentation of the law is meant to invoke in viewers: the law as presented in this scene is built on abstracting from the concrete contexts of the individual subjects involved. It reaches its judgement by being "[in]humane" (Loick 2017b: 297), by abstracting from the concrete social entanglements of the persons who invoke it. It instead constructs a universal scene, in which each participant has to play an archetype (or more precisely still, a stereotype). The characteristics of this type are derived from an abstracted ideal subject (respectively a universalised ideal of community) rather than from a consideration of (or communication with) the concrete individual subjects who await the judgement of the law in each case or the concrete communities in which they live (Loick 2017b: 297 - 302).

Furthermore, the particular scene invoked by this law subjectivises the disabled participants of any kind of sexual intercourse as uniformly incapable of genuine emotional attachment or desire, and thus as unable to give or withhold consent. Instead, they are uniformly cast as the hapless victims of non-disabled subjects who abuse their mental state. Hence, it also re-inscribes the need of hegemonic cultural formations to treat disabled individual subjects as non-sexual.

Sergeant Noakes confirms the above analysis of the gender- and-ability matrix this law seeks to maintain as hegemonic when he refutes Camilla's criticism: "It's the *man* who's the unfeeling one [my emphasis, MTW]" (3x5, 24:48 – 24:50). According to the subtext of the law analysed above, he assumes that the man is able-bodied and that he has raped Sally only for his own sexual gratification and because she cannot defend herself due to her cognitive differences. At the same time, however, Peter's attempt to refute Camilla's charge of the law's lacking the ability to engage with each case in its intersubjective specificity, including its emotional entanglements confirms, rather than denies, her claim: he describes the subject position of the man as "unfeeling" (3x5, 24:49). He thus gives up the abstract discursive-position of the law (whose executing representative a police officer is supposed to act as) and admits that he is as entangled in the individual complexities of the concrete lives of his community as any other inhabitant of this district.

This admission of his own emotional entanglement results in Sergeant Noakes' having to admit the limits of the law: when he visits the Harper family, Sally refuses to "tell [him] things" (3x5, 26:50) and so he cannot pursue the matter further legally. Sergeant Noakes' being forced into inaction by the silence of the person the law claims to protect once again draws attention to both the contingency of the claim to universality characteristic of the law and its implicit basis in abstract subject positions based on the interests of the hegemony rather than those of the concrete individual subjects supposedly addressed by a case.

At the same time, Sally's actions emphasise her role as an active participant in her own legal fate. Hence, the law as practised already recognises the legal subjectivity of disabled individual subjects even when its discursive side does not, thereby producing a site of tension that may allow for a change in the law in subsequent decades. Furthermore, Sally's refusal to co-operate already hints at the possibility of the subject position constructed by the law not being adequate to the situation. This interpretive gap allows audience members to wonder whether Sally's pregnancy might have been the result of a consensual relationship.

In contrast to the extratextual audience, however, Mr Harper remains invested in the idea that his family and his daughter have been violated. Faced with a failure of the law, he instead tries to resort to his own, social, authority as Sally's father: "If the girl were normal, I could go after whoever it was with a hatchet. I could make him marry her. I could make everything all right." (3x5, 27:09 – 27:15). Like the old masculinity embraced by Douglas Roberts, Mr Harper defines his role through the use of defensive violence through which he seeks to stabilise his family unit

and immunise it against the awareness that the hegemonic association of active sexuality with marriage and patriarchal family structures is contingent.

Notably, the description of Mr. Harper's preferred course of action points to the centrality of "women on the market" (Irigaray 2004: 799) that underlies even mid-twentieth century notions of family, marriage and love: the French structuralist anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss argues in his seminal work *Elementary Structures of Kinship* (Lévi-Strauss 1992) that family structures are based on the incest taboo. The incest taboo prevents people from marrying within the same kinship group – in the context of the contemporary Western societies, this would be the family unit -, conversely forcing them to find partners in a different kinship group. Marriages thus function as mechanisms of alliance-making. Building on these insights, feminist scholars like Gayle Rubin (Rubin 2004: 776 - 790) and Luce Irigaray argue that Lévi-Strauss's model positions women as objectified goods in exchanges governed and made between men (Irigaray 2004: 800). Thus, women are objectified, reduced to their exchange value for a given alliance. Mr Harper's declaration that Sally's embodiment prevents him from engaging in this sort of match-making *ex negativo* reveals that these structural considerations are still present in contemporary conceptualisations of family and community and also indicates that disabled individual subjects are structurally excluded from being the heads of their own families (that is, of partly autonomous social units) according to the logic governing current conceptualisations of family in the story-world. Again, we see that disabled individual subjects are subject to partial "natal alienation" (Patterson 1982: 5) and that this alienation remains central to the hegemony of even contemporary liberalism (Hartman 1997: 115 - 117)

The above description implies that the men of a kinship group treat their female kin as objects in the "hommosocial" (Irigaray 2004: 800) exchanges that stabilise society. According to the ethical and affective logic of contemporary society, viewers may thus initially be inclined to treat Mr Harper as "unfeeling" (3x5, 24:38) and cold. However, the character's heightened colour and body language – he keeps wringing his hands during his pronouncement – imply that he is emotionally upset by Sally's pregnancy, and his wish to make "everything all right" (3x5, 27: 15) is as much the result of his caring for his daughter as an individual subject as of a need to immunise his family against the social stigma attached to having a child out of wedlock.[240] The

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[240] Mr Harper expresses that stigma himself when he refers to the man who did it as a "bastard" (3x5, 27:01 – 27:03) throughout the scene. One of the archaic meanings of the noun designates "a person born to parents not married to each other" ("bastard | Definition of bastard in English by Oxford Dictionaries" website, definition two) as well as an

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episode also prevents viewers from vilifying Sally's father when he is shown upset and close to tears during Sally's labour pains (3x5, 46:10 – 46:25). Unlike Douglas Roberts, however, Mr Harper remains unable to overcome the gendered spacings associated with birth in the 1950s, which prevent men from being present during the birthing process. The episode thus illustrates the tenacity of gender roles and models of sexuality, even when some individual subjects make their objections heard (as Sally does, when she protests that "[she is] normal" (3x5, 27:20 – 27:24) and therefore can marry and be married).

The strongest display of the strength of the hegemonic assumptions regarding the non-sexuality of disabled individual subjects comes when their contingency is made the most obvious. For about two-thirds of the episode, the audience has been invited to assume that the characters are correct when they assume that Sally has slept with an able-bodied man who has abandoned her (even if some viewers may doubt that this intercourse was non-consensual, given both Sally's repeated and vocal verbal and non-verbal objections to this assertion and the way this narrative of rape supports the hegemony by devaluing Sally's individual subjectivity and agency). Hence, the re-appearance of Jacob at Sally's house and his polite request to "see [his] girlfriend" (3x5, 34:40 – 34:47) may be as much of a surprise to members of the audience as it is to Sally's mother (3x5,34:47).[241] His appearance replaces the unfilled subject-position created by hegemonic interests with a concrete individual subject who is anything but selfish or callous when it comes to Sally as an individual subject.

Jacob's desire to "do the decent thing" (3x5, 35:47 – 35:48) exposes the contingency of the assumptions about marriage guiding Sally's parents: in the scene analysed earlier, Mr Harper was willing to "go after [Sally's lover] with a hatchet" (3x5, 27:09 – 27:12) and to force him to marry Sally. Confronted with a disabled potential son-in-law, who wants to follow societal conventions

"unpleasant or despicable person" ("bastard | Definition of bastard in English by Oxford Dictionaries" website, noun, definition one). Hence, Mr. Harper's using this term functions as a projection of his fears for his daughter (and potential grandchild) and their future unto the subject position of the biological father.

[241] At the same time, it may remind some audience members of a scene earlier in the episode: during the yearly ball at St. Gideon's, the camera shows Jacob looking at someone with an affectionate look in his eye. After a cut, the audience sees Sally dancing by herself to a romantic ballad (3x5, 14:18 – 14:28). The position of the camera (a so-called "point-of-view-cut" (Bordwell, Thompson and Smith 2016: 241)) marks this as the scene in front of him, which prompts his feeling of romantic affection. These romantic associations are heightened by soft lighting and romantic music playing in the background. Hence, it uses techniques and stylistic features common in romantic films. Audience members may thus wonder why they themselves did not connect Jacob's affection for Sally to her pregnancy before and begin to question the extent to which they are as implicated in the Othering of sexually active disabled individual subjects as the characters they are watching on screen.

and is willing to recognise Mr Harper's authority in the currently hegemonic conception of the family ("when does Mr. Harper come home? […] I'm going to ask him if I can marry her." (3x5, 35: 31 – 35:41)), Mrs. Harper denies that Jacob could be an appropriate son-in-law. Notably, she does not give his embodiment as a reason when talking to the young man directly. Instead, she mentions the fact that he does not have an income, no identity as an economic subject, as a reason why he cannot marry Sally: "You can't work, you can't keep her!" (3x5, 35:41 – 35:47). Mrs Harper's statement implies that Jacob would always be unable to get and hold down a job; however, the audience has repeatedly seen him perform secretarial tasks for Ms. Molyneux (Rosalind March) at St. Gideon's throughout the episode, and in order to visit his girlfriend, Jacob steals an index card with the Harper's address from the rolodex (3x5, 33:18 – 33:26). Combined with a note he leaves for Sally before leaving St. Gideon's (3x5, 57:09), this implies that Jacob has sufficient literacy skills to be employed as a clerk, if somebody were willing to accommodate his lack of motor skills.

Unlike during his encounter with Douglas Roberts, Jacob's ability to creatively adapt existing discourse-practices to his embodiment this time forecloses communication, rather than enabling it. Being "sharp[] in the head" (3x5, 35:04 – 35:06) allows Mrs. Harper to blame him for Sally's pregnancy by clinging to the assumption that he should have denied his feelings for Sally. The fact that he has not done so allows her to push Jacob into the subject position of the "unfeeling man" (3x5, 24:39 – 24:40) invoked by Sergeant Noakes and hence to exclude him as a relative Other. She goes so far as to refuse the younger man a cup of tea. The English anthropologist Kate Fox argues in her popular account of various English customs, *Watching the English: the Hidden Rules of English Behaviour* (Fox 2004), that tea serves as a polite "displacement device" (Fox 2004: 185, 185 – 186) in English culture, meant to turn attention away from sites of social conflict and to foster community-maintaining communication. Although it is possible to doubt the universality of Fox's claim, Nurse Noakes uses tea to dissolve the tension Jacob's appearance in the Harper household has caused; in fact, she uses tea to acknowledge and praise Jacob for being able to exercise his autonomy while making "a long journey" (3x5, 35:18 – 35:20) from St. Gideon's to Poplar by himself. Mrs Harper refuses the acknowledgement and the communal bond created by the sharing of food and drink, once again implying that Jacob cannot partake of the "community of the tea drinkers" due to his disability ("he'll just spill everything" (3x5, 35:25 – 35:27).

As Mrs Harper persists in excluding Jacob from - hegemonic discourse-practices, the younger man shifts his frame of reference accordingly: first, he refers to ethical standards rather than explicit discourse –practices. In so doing, Jacob appropriates the post-Enlightenment assumption that ethical and moral norms transcend particular cultural formations and may in fact point towards a different cultural formation that will allow for their realisation through other, improved, discourse-practices (Honneth 2015: 27 - 28). When his reference to ethical "decen[cy]" (3x5, 35: 47 – 35:48) enrages Mrs. Harper to the point that she is willing to strike Jacob (35:49 – 35:51) – thus treating him as an absolute Other for a moment – he shifts gears one last time. In his last discursive move, Jacob affirms his love for Sally by removing himself and the possibility of their romantic love from the dimension of the actual: he follows Wilhelm Schmied's definition of love as the "ability to recognise the other person in their difference" (Schmied 1998: 262). He wants to make sure that Sally is loved and treated well but is conversely willing to give up his own claim to her affection (3x5, 36:17 – 36:21); instead, he lets his erotic love transform into *agape* – a love that merely cares for the well-being of the other individual subject and does not require reciprocity to exist.

9.6 The Embodied Contingency of Disability As a Challenge To the Audience
On the one hand, this move allows the discursive hegemony to win: Jacob is removed from St. Gideon's (albeit under protest – "I have not agreed!" (3x5, 51:31 – 51:33) - and he points out that this removal makes things "bearable" (3x5, 51:51) for the non-disabled parties in this conflict at the expense of pain to himself and Sally (3x5, 51: 54 – 51:59)), Sally loses her baby (3x5, 46:54) and seemingly confirms the hegemonic assumption that romantic love between disabled individual subjects has no future (Kafer 2013: 27-28) beyond the intimate circle of the family (Kafer 2013: 63 - 65). *Call the Midwife* thus seems to confirm the liberal association of disability with "tragic" accidental contingency (Kafer 2013: 27 - 28), rather than daring to show a radically different community.
On the other hand, Jacob's defence of his love for Sally voices precisely the ex-static quality Nancy sees as the defining characteristic of love (Nancy 1991: 37-38). Because it ignores the rules established by the currently hegemonic communal order, it forces the hegemony to change in response to the experience of the lovers (even when that love is not allowed to exist beyond the end of the story) (Nancy 1991: 38; Belsey 1994: 3-10, 37-41; Heinz 2007: 79-82). Thus, Jacob moves the acceptance and acknowledgement of him and Sally as legitimate desiring subjects

whose desire is "seen" and accepted into the future: as the audience is positioned in the future relative to the 1950s of the story-world, he charges them to learn to "see [what Sally] can" (3x5, 36:08 – 36:14) and to find ways to name this "something" (3x5, 36:08) more concretely than his present vocabulary allows Jacob to.

Hence, the episode as a whole both enables audiences to actively struggle with the contingency of the entanglement of bodies, discourse-practices and contingency that is our lifeworld. It also showcases the limits of the currently hegemonic creative subject when it comes to the desiring disabled individual subject. In the context of this dissertation, it hopefully prevents readers (as well as the author) from reading this chronological narrative as a grand tale of triumph. The acknowledgement of forms of relative Othering alongside the emergent form of embodiments with difference (and the ghost of the absolute Other that haunts Mrs. Harper's raising her hand to strike Jacob as much as the euthanasia programmes of the early twentieth century) proves that the question of humanity's contingent embodiment and its entanglement with the world remains a "matter of concern" (Latour 2010: 2282) beyond the scope of these pages (whether their writing or their reading). Hence, allow us to close with (or should that be open with?) the famous last lines of Brecht's *The Good Person of Szechwan*, keeping in mind that in German *betroffen* has the same ambiguity as to *be concerned with or about* has in English, describing both a static emotion and the desire to engage in a process of change regarding a particular issue: "Wir steh'n selbst enttäuscht und seh'n betroffen/ der Vorhang zu und alle Fragen offen!" (Brecht 1953:).The concluding remarks in the following chapter briefly summarise the findings and axioms of the present thesis, and, in keeping with the Brecht quote, attempt to broaden the field of analysis by drawing attention to the questions and new areas of study that derive from the conclusions the analyses offered here have provisionally drawn.

Conclusion: Touching the Unknown – Contingent Embodiments, Disabilities and Gender
Identities in English-language Literature and Film

Throughout the preceding analyses, contingent embodiment has consistently served a two-fold function: on the one hand, the disabled individual subjectivity of all the characters analysed problematises the hegemonic models of embodiment, gender and sexuality as well as the ideal forms of social life presented in each text. Their embodiments and individual subjectivities thus represent forms of epistemological and accidental contingency that have to be managed by the current hegemony. On the other hand, even though contingency is only explicitly related to creativity and re-imagined as a resource in *The Holy City* and *Call the Midwife* – a shift in focus that corresponds to the rise of the "creative subject" (Reckwitz 2010: 441) to hegemony – all the disabled characters featured in the texts analysed above raise the question of how the existing hegemony should be (or at the very least how it might be) re-imagined to include them. Overall, the analyses above confirm both Stella Butter's and Michael Makropoulos' thesis that all cultures are "cultures of contingency" (Makropoulos 1998: 55; Butter 2013: 2 and *passim*), which this dissertation treated as axiomatic, and our own additional claim that representations of embodied contingency illustrate how various subject cultures present in English-speaking cultures over time have addressed the issue.

The fact that these representations map out a space with varying degrees of othering and various shifts in focus from epistemological to accidental contingency, respectively to viewing contingency as a creative resource, takes up the observation with which the theoretical framework begins: since Aristotle, the term "contingency" has not described a logical state but rather a space between what a given culture considers necessary and what it considers impossible. As Michael Makropoulos elaborates, contingency describes the fact that "things can always be different than they currently are" (Makropoulos 2004: 370); hence, some things are always contingent. The presence of contingency is an onto-epistem-ological (Barad 2007: 185) constant; however, how great the awareness of contingency is in a given culture at a given time varies along with the areas that are viewed as contingent, respectively which discourse-practices are removed from contingency and how this awareness of contingency is evaluated. In order to capture the difference between various forms of contingency seen to affect societal conceptions of a given culture's lifeworld (the epistemological dimension) and those that affect an individual subject's agential possibilities (the praxeological dimension), the present thesis takes up Stella Butter's two-tiered model and distinguishes between epistemological contingency and

(implicitly) epistemological certainty and the practical response to awareness of contingency (Butter 2013: 28-29). An individual subject may respond to a moment of contingency either by perceiving it as a limit to or an intrusion into their lifeworld (accidental contingency (Butter 2013: 29)) or conceive of it as a possibility to creatively modify their lifeworld (Butter 2013: 28), using it as a resource or inspiration.

In addition to these axiomatic synchronic considerations, the present thesis follows Hans Blumenberg, Butter and Makropoulos and places its focus diachronically on texts produced after the heyday of medieval Christian philosophy. For whereas the metaphysical systems of the ancient world for the most part minimise awareness of epistemological contingency by tying the epistemological order of their lifeworld to a transcendental signified; once the hold of God as such a signified has weakened, awareness of epistemological contingency increases and becomes part of the contingency management of both individual subjects and various subject cultures.

Embodied contingency as the central theoretical concept of this thesis builds on the structural analogy between how both contingency and embodiment are experienced. Like contingency, the fact of human embodiment as a central referent of human experiences of the world is treated as an ontological constant; building on the phenomenology of Maurice Merleau-Ponty and various recent feminist new materialist thinkers, the thesis argues that individual subjects always express their "being-towards-the-world" (Merleau-Ponty 1974: *passim*) through their embodiment.

At the same time, both the ways individual subjects experience their embodiment and how this embodiment affects the world and is affected by the world in turn is subject to constant synchronic cultural variation and diachronic change. In keeping with recent developments in science studies and Merleau-Ponty's focus on the pre-conscious agential potential of the body, the present thesis emphasises that bodies and minds are interrelated and complex sites of negotiation, where cultural and biological forms of agency mix and render each other contingent. Emphasising the complexity of agency ensures that even individual subjects with severe cognitive or physical deviations from a culturally defined norm retain some form of animacy and agency. In turn, this axiomatic assumption ensures that we remain sensible to the discourse-practices and power relations that some hegemonies have used in the past (and continue to use in the present) (Kafer 2013: 65 - 67; Puar 2017: xv – xxiv, 11- 31) to marginalise disabled individual subjects both discursively and practically.

At the same time, the above analyses also argue that the evident contingency of disabled embodiments is not the only feature of a disabled individual subject's lifeworld, though it may be

the one that defines them (either by choice or hegemonic labelling). The above analyses showcase how individual subjects and their contingent embodiments are modified by and modify various discourse-practices beyond the singular focus on disability. This attempt to "crip" (Kafer 2013: 15 - 17) discourses by introducing the question of disability to it problematises both the hegemonic tendency to other disabled individual subjects and some works in first-generation disability studies that embrace this marginalisation and conceive disability as an identity that creates an alternative individual subjectivity and sense of community beyond the discourse-practices of ableist culture (Davis 1995: 5). In so doing, they accept the discursive claim of the hegemony that disabled people are outsiders and outlaws, merely inverting its ideological valences. Instead, the present thesis firmly entangles disabled individual subjects with the cultures and societies in which they live and follows Elizabeth Ermarth in emphasising a theory of subjectivity that locates agency and the ability to influence culture within and through cultural discourses. Individual agency and cultural subjectivity are not opposed here; rather, each is thought through the other, in ways analogous to the "naturecultur[al]" (Haraway 2008: 16) entanglement of embodiment.

As all human beings exist and "intra-act[]" (Barad 2007: 33) with some form of cultural discourse-practices, these discourse-practices are themselves entangled with the managing the cultural awareness of contingency. This management includes presenting a given subject culture as "simultaneously universal […] and attractive" (Reckwitz 2010: 89). In order to fulfil this function, this thesis argues, all subject cultures have a bio-political component that simultaneously propagates an ideal form of (engaging with) human embodiment and sidelines or even destroys forms of embodiment that problematise the current hegemony. In order to capture the interaction between creative and delimiting bio-political actions, the analyses also pay attention to how the texts chosen address the formation and constitution of a community – "the political" (Marchart 2010: 1) in the widest possible sense. To do so, it expands the definition of bio-politics and argues with Roberto Esposito that all communities are combinations and interactive processes of exchange between "immunitarian" (Esposito 2011: *passim*) and "communitarian" (Esposito 2010: *passim*) discourse-practices. Whereas the former processes establish and maintain differences between individual subjects, the latter emphasise similarities. The analyses follow Esposito in using these terms descriptively: a balance between the immunitarian and the communitarian is needed to create a "healthy" and adaptable society, an

excess in either direction leads to the community attacking and killing its own members as well as non-members in a deadly auto-immune attack.(Esposito 2008: 193-194)

Since the cultural management of (embodied) contingency affects a variety of discourse-practices, the present thesis argues that literature – itself an interdiscourse (Glomb 2004a: 49) that spans and mediates between other discourse-practices active in a culture at a given time – is also entangled in the management of embodied contingency through its representations of disabilities as *exempla* of contingent embodiment. Literature not only serves as a replicator of existing cultural discourse-practices, but as a "space of reflexion" (Glomb 2004a: 46) where the current hegemony can be questioned and alternatives tested; exposure to these alternatives in a fictional context may then influence the audience's future engagement with contingent embodiments and over time, this in turn reshapes the existing hegemonic consensus.

Traces of such a reshaping regarding the hegemonic consensus on embodied contingency are already present in the first text analysed. Shakespeare's *Richard the Third* follows the medieval tradition of treating disabled individual subjects as dangerous representatives of contingency that have to be excluded and othered; Richard's actions are presented as threatening to the coherence of the English national "body politic", and he needs to be curtailed by death and the ascension of the Tudor dynasty to the English throne; the crown itself – as the objectification of the principle of sovereignty - seemingly ensures this when the formerly wily protagonist loses his ability to manipulate the principles of English politics that has led him to the throne in the first place. Furthermore, Richard himself confirms and accepts his role as a villainous absolute Other. Yet, although this reading is clearly favoured by the play, it also raises questions that render the medieval and early modern ideologies of embodied sovereignty contingent. Unlike medieval absolute Others, Richard has clearly been accepted into the circles of power and many of the most powerful men in the land are both unable to recognise his manipulations and are shown using similar methods to Richard's own; the corruption evidently goes deeper than a single hunchback, no matter how wily. Richard's exclusion is ultimately effected by individual subjects who are themselves marginalised because of their female embodiment. Hence, even as it affirms the propriety of the Tudor monarchy, the play also questions the embodied discourse-practices that sustain the corrupt political order shown on stage.

Building on the findings of the analysis offered above might furnish a new angle of analysis for other plays by Shakespeare and his contemporaries. Although he may be the only disabled individual subject, Richard is hardly the only contingently-embodied one to interact with a

political system on the Shakespearean stage: how does its representation shift when concerned with warriors like Coriolanus and Othello, a merchant like Shylock (whose contingent embodiment is hidden from the Christian audience yet all too evident in a Venetian court), or the child king Henry? How do other playwrights address the contingency of embodiment haunting the nation with every year Elizabeth remains "the Virgin Queen", or when the elder son of the new king dies in 1612? Considering that Charles I. is ultimately beheaded in the name of the body politic (Esposito 2013: 55), it would also be fascinating to see if and how contingent embodiments are treated in the years leading up to the Civil War and what role contingent embodiment plays in mid-century radicalisms.

Although its path of development still needs to be traced, by the end of the eighteenth century the representation of contingent embodiments has undergone a shift to a new form, which still remains hegemonic to the present day. Under the influence of Enlightenment ideas and their reconceptualisation of humanity as an expandable category defined by the universal possibility to attain Reason, disabled individual subjects are now seen as relative Others; they are acknowledged to share some traits with other humans and to exist within its borders, albeit at the margins. But even so, both the early-bourgeois subject culture and the Romantic reconfiguration of its core principles, rest on a valorisation of mental capabilities – whether rationality or the emotions and feelings – and a concomitant degradation of the somatic components of embodiment. Mary Shelley's 1818 novel *Frankenstein* addresses this dichotomy and its disastrous ethical consequences in both of its main characters. Victor Frankenstein's Romantic genius is contingent upon his remaining blind to a wider social circle beyond the borders of his narrowly-defined and overdetermined family circle. Hence, he is unable to deal ethically with the difference of other individual subjects and to take responsibility for the Creature he has created, even though it does not fit his ideals of physical beauty. The Creature, for his part, must learn that he cannot and will not be recognised as a proper individual subject because his appearance bars him (and individual subjects who look similar to him) from ever being considered appropriate applicants to the status of humanity, no matter how well their mental capabilities and ethical conduct fit the expectations of Enlightenment culture. His tragedy reveals that Enlightenment claims to universality are epistemologically contingent themselves and are built upon divisions that are inscribed on the body and thus essentialised.

As these essentialisations become only more hegemonic as the century goes on and the late-bourgeois culture of subjectivity gains ascendancy, tracing how the representation of relative

Otherness shifts and changes under the influence of the debates around the natural sciences – the evolution controversy taking pride of place among them – seems a very fruitful line of analysis. In light of the wide reach of these debates, the question could be divided into two more narrow enquiries: as *Frankenstein* is a Gothic novel, it should prove interesting to track shifts in the representation of contingent embodiments in its generic descendants – the sensation novel of the mid-nineteenth century and the Gothic revival of the *fin de siècle*. Furthermore, one could also examine differences in the Gothic form between Britain and the U.S. and how these reflect different national *foci* when it comes to contingently-embodied individual subjects. On the other hand, considering the reach of the debates around Darwin's evolutionary theories and their rendering the embodiment of all humans epistemologically contingent, realist novels and scientific discourses were also charged with containing and managing this source of epistemological contingency.

British society finds itself confronted with a literal army of contingently-embodied Others when the wounded of the First World War return home from Flanders and upset the hegemonic discourse-practices of the late-bourgeois subject cultures. The representation of various forms of contingent embodiment in D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* illustrates how embodiments can simultaneously critique and maintain the hegemonic view of essentialised embodiments that are placed on a hierarchy of propriety that underlies the late-bourgeois culture of subjectivity in general and its interest in eugenic bio-politics in particular. The novel portrays the relationship between Connie and Mellors as positive because their touch-based engagement with each other's bodies and sexualities circumvents and problematises the negative view of the body propagated by Clifford; on the other hand, the narrative voice itself portrays Clifford's disabled embodiment negatively (describing his attempts to live a non-genital sexuality as degenerate) and considers it an example of negative contingency throughout the novel. In contrast to the absolute Othering of Richard of Gloucester in Shakespeare's play, however, the text does not treat Clifford's disability as the cause of his negative and selfish conduct. Rather, it only externalises problems that affect Clifford, his family, and society as a whole. Although he is thus indubitably portrayed as a negative figure that renders Mellors' and Connie's approach to embodiment contingent – their aggressive attitude towards Clifford is endorsed by the narrative voice, throughout the novel -, some glimpses of a creative and positive engagement with Clifford's disability can still be found: the fact that Clifford used to write novels and engage with other people despite his ego-centrism, the equality and contingency of the games he plays with

Mrs Bolton, and his initial engagement with his wheelchair (functioning as an aid to engagement rather than a tool of domination) all point to a contingent space of possibility. The fact that the narrative does not realise these possibilities reflects the hegemonic acceptance of essentialisms and eugenic ideologies until they are rendered residual by the autoimmune horrors of Nazi bio-politics.

The analysis offered above could be fruitfully contextualised by comparing and contrasting Lawrence's representation of the war wounded with other representations in early-twentieth-century British texts and how these address the problematic of contingent embodiment. Considering that the First World War is a pan-European phenomenon, scholars might find the concept a good starting point for comparative analyses across national borders. Furthermore, considering its focus on the representation of eugenics, it hopefully offers a new angle from which to analyse the disturbing fascination of the early-twentieth century with creating better lives and how these discourse-practices affect contingently-embodied individual subjects.

Although the essentialising discourse-practices of eugenics are discredited in the wake of the Second World War, essentialising racialisations remain active in a colonial and post-colonial context, as illustrated in Patrick McCabe's *The Holy City*. The novel's protagonist, Chris McCool, builds his very self-conception on proving that his embodiment fits the hierarchical conception of whiteness he has chosen as his ego ideal. In pursuit of this embodiment, he ontologises racialised differences and ultimately commits murder and festishises nothingness. While the novel condemns the acts he performs to immunise himself against the contingency of his and other's embodiments, the novel showcases that Chris' embodiment as such is not a bar to his entering the community as an accepted individual subject; various characters make attempts to re-integrate Chris into his home town, and the novel even treats his actual medical condition as a source of contingency that even the medical personnel of a psychiatric institution he attends treat as secondary to re-integrating him into his community. Rather, his embodiment is a political problem: it raises the question of how to integrate differently-embodied individual subjects into the same community. Essentially, Chris McCool's contingent embodiment is treated inversely to that of the Creature. While the Creature is barred by society actualising immunising discourse-practices to keep him out while he wants to include himself, Chris bars himself from inclusion into a social formation that could include him.

Patrick McCabe's novel offers a complex representation of the role embodiment plays in post-colonial discourse-practices, yet it remains focused on the complexities of whiteness. Hence, the

analyses above ought to be complimented by introducing the component of contingent embodiment into the discursive fields of post-colonial, race, or globalisation studies and examining it through the lens of post-colonial experiences of migration and diaspora. In doing so, one might uncover different forms of complexity, agency and community beneath the surface of relations of domination, which render its hegemony contingent.

The concluding analysis of *Call the Midwife* offers precisely such an alternative view of society. The series emphasises and embraces the contingency of all embodiments, portraying it as a universal consequence of human natality and hence as something all embodiments, whether disabled or not, structurally share. The individual actualisation of embodiment varies from individual subject to individual subject, but the series treats both as a potential resource, as evidenced by the character arcs of the Roberts family. When Douglas and Ruby Roberts first see their youngest child, a son, who is born with *spina bifida*, it throws their sense of self in general and their gender identities into crisis. Interestingly, this crisis is alleviated when Douglas encounters a young man who also lives a viable form of sociality and masculinity through his disabled embodiment. By treating Jacob as an equal individual subject with a different embodiment, he is encouraged to both rethink his own masculinity (removing the immunitarian elements that nearly destroy his relationship to his family) and his son's future role in the community he lives in. Both decisions are ultimately rewarded when Douglas' son is welcomed by, rather than ostracised, the Roberts' neighbours.

At the same as these episodes show a more positive approach to the contingent embodiments of disabled individual subject, the series also addresses an area where the equality of disabled individual subjects is still perceived as problematic by hegemonic society: when Sally Harper, a woman with Down Syndrome becomes pregnant, the whole community of Poplar (including the midwives) treats this as an impossible event and denies Sally's sexual agency, instead assuming she must have been raped by a non-disabled man. And even when it is revealed that her account (which insisted on the sex having been consensual) was correct, her boyfriend Jacob is still not allowed to marry her; their relationship remains othered.

However, both characters emphasise their individual agency and protest at their treatment; hence, the narrative invites audiences to re-examine the relations between contingent embodiments and various discourse-practices. Furthermore, *Call the Midwife* as a whole invites analysis and comparison to other texts that deal with community formation and maintenance. One might compare it directly to certain detective stories, with which it shares a generic family resemblance

as indicated above. Other potential points of comparison include famous novels dealing with community formation (Jane Austen's work, *Middlemarch*, and *Cranford* are the ones that come to mind immediately, due to their female focal characters). Similarly to Jacob's and Sally's intratextual statements, this dissertation also hopes to invite further examinations of the entanglements between contingent embodiments and various other practice discourses more generally, from biology to law and from gender to community formations. In doing so, it hopes to lead to a different lived engagement with contingent embodiments in the future, whether they are our own or those of others, both inside and outside the academy.

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